



Innovation Youth Centre

The Survive and Thrive Manual

Things for help and to do
while surviving the lockdown.



**Flexing in
March 2019**

**Flexing in
March 2020**

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Acknowledgement of Country

Innovation Youth Centre respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the Aboriginal nations within Victoria where our work takes place. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and acknowledge the children and young people of past, current and future generations.

We also acknowledge that this manual was created on Wurundjeri land of the Kulin Nations. Sovereignty was not ceded. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



Forward

During the Coronavirus Crisis, Innovation Youth Centre's Youth Reference Group in part with Youth Board Member Maria Matthews as chief editor agreed to create an online manual for young people living in the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne relevant for its time. Therefore, the survive and thrive manual was created.

The manual recognises while listening to the advice from leaders and organisations like the Prime Minister Scott Morrison, The Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, and The Victorian

State Emergency Service is important, like maintaining social distancing, a self-help guide can address other needs a young person may want to solve.

We recognise that a young person in this part of Melbourne would like helpful and practical things to help them get through the self-isolation period. We also recognise that they might want to have independence in getting help and practical solutions to whatever need they have. Having a manual by young people living in the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne for young people living close by is a step towards being helpful and practical in this crisis.

This manual has a number of guides that address urgent needs like food, accommodation, and safety to less urgent yet important needs like mental and social stimulation. It is also mindful of the disadvantages a young person could have like being on a low income, so all solutions are made to be either low-cost or free.

We understand that the crisis isn't ongoing, but we hope that the manual can have a second life after it as young people might still find the advice helpful in their own lives.



Important Numbers & Websites

CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE - 1800 675 998

Nurse On Call - 1300 606 024

Emergency Numbers

Name of Number	Phone Number
Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
Poisons Hotline	13 11 26

Police Numbers (When you don't need the lights and sirens)

Name of Number	Phone Number
Epping	9409 8100
Mernda	9216 1200
Mill Park	9407 3333
Northcote	9403 0200
Preston	9479 6111
Reservoir	9479 6744

Hospital Numbers

Name of Number	Phone Number
Austin Hospital	9496 5000
Mercy Hospital	8458 4444
Northern Hospital	8405 8000
Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre	8558 5000
Royal Childrens Hospital	9345 5522

Royal Melbourne Hospital	9342 7000
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Crisis Service Hotlines

Name of Number	Phone Number
Beyondblue <i>Depression and Anxiety Counselling</i>	1300 22 4636
Drug and Alcohol Helpline <i>Support and Referral for people with drug and/or alcohol problems</i>	1300 887 000
Kids Helpline <i>24/7 Counselling for young people aged 5 -25</i>	1800 55 1800
Lifeline <i>Crisis Support and Suicide Hotline</i>	13 11 14
Mensline Australia <i>24/7 Counselling Support to Men</i>	1300 78 99 78
National Disability Abuse & Neglect Hotline <i>Report Abuse and Neglect of People with a Disability</i>	1800 880 052
1800 Respect <i>National Sexual Assault & Domestic Family Violence Counseling</i>	1800 737
Safe Steps <i>Victoria's 24/7 family violence support service</i>	1800 015 188
Samaritans <i>General Mental Health Counselling</i>	135 247
Suicide Callback Service <i>Free Scheduled On-The-Phone Counseling for People Thinking of Suicide and their Carers</i>	1300 659 467
Q Switchboard <i>LGBTIQA+ Counselling 3pm-Midnight, 7 days a week</i>	1800 184 527

Centrelink Numbers

[For more numbers, click this link here](#)

Name of Number	Phone Number
ABSTUDY - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students	1800 132 317
Disability Support Pension	132 717
Jobseeker (Formally Newstart, Sickness Allowance, Wife Pension, Widow B Pension, & Partner Allowance)	132 850
Medicare General Enquiries	132 011
MyGov Helpdesk	132 307
Youth Allowance (Jobseeker)	132 490
Youth Allowance (Study) & Austudy	132 490

Self-Advocacy Numbers

Name of Number	Phone Number
Australian Unemployed Workers Union (AUWU) Advocacy Hotline	1800 289 848
Fair Work Ombudsman	13 13 94
Police Accountability Project (to report unfair police behaviour)	9376 4355
Victoria Legal Aid	1300 792 387
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	1800 800 110
Young Workers Centre	1800 714 754

Local Community Services & Collective Movements

Many community services and collective movements are still operating during the COVID-19 Crisis. They are still running with giving help to the most vulnerable to cope and survive the crisis, although in alternative ways that differ from their usual conditions to maintain safety for both their employees and their clients.

Community Services



Ask Izzy (<https://askizzy.org.au/>)

Ask Izzy is a website that can direct you to meet basic and crisis needs, with 360,000 services to find. Ask Izzy can help you find things in categories like:

- Coronavirus Support
- Housing
- Food
- Everyday things (stuff like clothing, swags, food vouchers)
- Domestic & family violence help
- Health
- Centrelink
- Money Help
- Support & Counselling
- Legal Stuff
- Drug & Alcohol support
- Life Skills & Education
- Finding Work
- Facilities (like public toilets)
- Something to do (libraries, community hubs, & etc)
- Technology (free wifi & phone charging)
- Advocacy (complaints & advice)

Ask Izzy is anonymous and free to use. If your phone provider is Telstra, you will not be charged credit for accessing the website.

Please note that services will be affected by COVIS-19 restrictions so please check the availability of them.

Whittlesea Community Connections

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) is an organisation based in the City of Whittlesea Council area offering a variety of community services. Their main office is located at Pacific Epping Shopping Centre.

During the COVID-19 crisis, WCC is offering three helplines as pictured here to assist people in their needs.

If you are interested what else WCC can do, you can [visit their website here](#) or call 9401 6666

Reservoir Neighbourhood House

[Reservoir Neighbourhood House](#) (RNH) is offering food relief to people living nearby its location on Cuthbert Road, Reservoir. As seen in the screen capture of a Facebook post on the bottom right hand corner.

Food parcels are created in partnership with [Fareshare](#), a charity that rescues extra food from supermarkets and farmers from waste, to give to people in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

To access a food parcel if you are in need, contact the RNH office at 9462 4611 or email admin@reservoirnh.org.au. Make sure either you have a Healthcare Card, Pension Card, or refugee status number.

You can also [follow them on Facebook](#) for upcoming updates on the services offered under COVID-19.



We are here to help

To better respond to community needs and keep everyone safe we are working by phone and home delivering food and material aid



9401 6644

for anyone experiencing hardship, needing information or support

Response line open Monday to Friday 9–1pm



9401 6655

for anyone needing free legal assistance

Legal line open Monday to Friday 9–5pm



0473 019 831

if you would like to volunteer or you feel isolated and would like a phone friend to keep you connected

Volunteer line open Monday to Friday 9–5pm or email friendlyconnections@whittleseacc.org.au



Reservoir Neighbourhood House

3 April at 15:50 · 🌐

To our wonderful community.

Thank you so much for bridging the gap in food relief for members who have been feeling vulnerable in your community over the past couple of weeks. It has been wonderful to see the strength we have together and the care you've shown one another.

As the saying goes 'The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members'.

We have been unbelievably fortunate enough to now have the support of an organisation called Fareshare who are able to premake meals in large quantities, freeze and package for us. This means our community cooks can take a break for the time being. We will still require drivers to deliver packages to people in our local area and we will be contacting everyone on our list to work out the details of times and days.

Thank you for all that you have done in your support for us and your community and all that you continue to do for others in your community.

Remember, if you are in need of a food relief goodies parcel, contact the office 9462 4611 and leave a message or email admin@reservoirnh.org.au, we need your name address and HCC/pension card or refugee status number.

Coming SOON: Keep an eye out for our latest updates on social activities during lockdown. We will be recruiting for people to join us in conversation about ideas!

Help from the Government and Local MPs

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Your Rights (Rent and Consumer rights)

The State Government of Victoria has created a webpage on your rights with renting and consumer affairs. To check out what they are, [click this link](#).

The State Government of Victoria Announces Emergency Relief Packages

All Victorians who are self-isolating due to COVID-19 with no access to food and essential supplies can receive emergency relief packages by the Victorian Government partnered with the Food Bank and the Red Cross.

Each Package is a two-week supply of goods like food, toiletries, and other additional things that suit a household (like nappies and baby formula). They will be delivered door to door.

To access the relief program, call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398. For more information, [click this link](#).

Ged Kearney MP Offers her Office Contact for COVID-19 Help

Ged Kearney has offered her contact open for people living in the electorate Cooper (see page 20 if you live in the area) for people needing advice or help during COVID-19.



Ged Kearney

22 March at 17:38 · 🌐



In troubling times we sometimes need somewhere to look for advice or help. Not everyone will need to but some of us might. We are not able to meet you face to face in our office but we will be here to take your call or email or message and we'll do our best to make sure you're ok. There are so many wonderful people and organisations ready to assist in Cooper. We are all here in this together. All of us. Reach out for help or to help out - you can contact us on 03 9416 8690 or at ged.kearney.mp@aph.gov.au
Thanks and look after yourselves.

According to her [Facebook Page](#), she has a team of volunteers dropping off donated food and calling up people who are self-isolating. She also is encouraging people to join this team of volunteers. She has also created a program to link people to call or facetime a senior citizen living on their own to help with the loneliness and or boredom during these times.

If you think you could need assistance or want to volunteer, you can contact her phone or email as mentioned in the screen capture of this Facebook post.

Workers Unions

Unions are organised groups of workers who aim to improve working conditions in their employment. They are in several different groups depending on what type of work they do. They act as a group to advocate and campaign on the behalf of employees or workers on improving things like making the workplace safer or making sure that they get paid enough money they can get to employers or bosses. They also advocate and campaign for laws that favour standardising and regulating conditions and benefits so there is a balance in what the general workplace is like.

Their history in Australia has been that their advocacy and campaigning has pass laws and incentives like the 8-hour day, anti-child labour laws, anti-workplace bullying laws, the minimum wage, superannuation, equal-pay for all genders, WorkSafe, anti-discrimination laws plus much more.

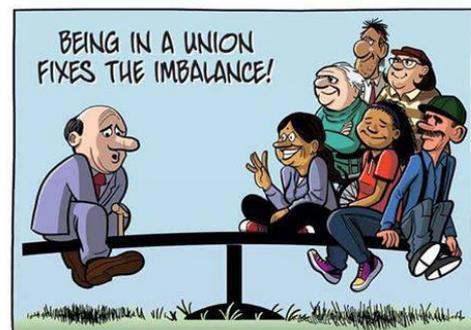
During the COVID-19 crisis, workers unions have been campaigning for better rights and conditions for working people in Australia that is suitable for addressing the crisis. With their work, they managed to get the Federal Government to pass new benefits to working people such as the JobKeeper payment for people who lost their job in the crisis. However, they are still campaigning for more things to be done to help people like making sure that migrant workers are not without pay if they find themselves out of work.

Joining a Union

Joining a union requires a fee ([the average of \\$10 per week according to Australian Unions](#)) that in return has many benefits for you and your colleagues. The cost of the fee depends on what industry you work in, and how much pay you are receiving. The fee helps to support people to improve your workplace or the industry you work in. In return, you have access to call on a delegate, a person that fights on your behalf to an employer that you believe is not giving you fair treatment. You can also have access to discounts to things like the movies, personal services, travel, and some retail businesses.

But you need to find out what union is best for you. As unions are organised by their industry, you need to join the union that has a presence in that industry.

To find out what union is appropriate to you, there are a couple of options to find out:



- Contact a youth advocate from the Young Workers Centre on their hotline as seen on page 8.
- Contact Australian Unions on 1300 486 466 or visit their [website](#).

But What if I am Unemployed or Underemployed? (About the Australian Unemployed Workers Union)



Did you know there is a union for unemployed workers? If you are of working age (15 - 65), you can join the Australian Unemployed Workers Union or the AUWU for [free on their website](#).

The AUWU is for unemployed people run by the volunteering of unemployed people. They run a hotline (see page 8) for people to help them with problems with Centrelink, JobActive or their Job Provider.

They also campaign for better Centrelink conditions for people on Centrelink and incentives like a Jobs

Guarantee program, so people can be offered a paid job by the government if they have been unemployed for a long time.

Just like a workers union, they also run branch meetings according to the nearest city or major town to talk about how things can be improved for unemployed people and how to campaign for them. During the COVID-19 crisis, they are running virtual meetings. If you are interested in joining a meeting with the Melbourne Branch, you can directly message them on [facebook](#).

Tenants Victoria (a union for renters)

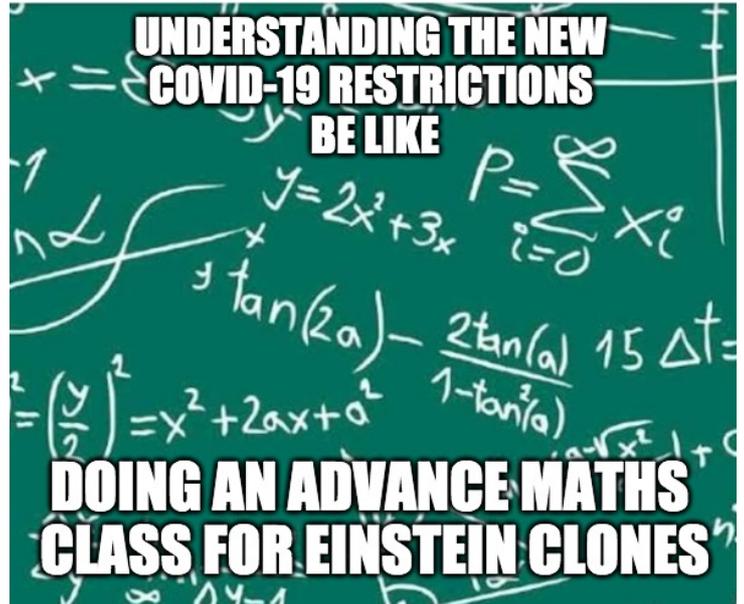
There is also a union for tenants or renters called Tenants Victoria. Tenants Victoria offers education on tenants rights and advice about renting and landlords. They can also refer you to legal help if you believe that your landlord or agent is breaking the law and or treating you unfairly. They also extend their services to people living in public housing or in caravan parks. There is no apparent membership to join but you may volunteer if you wish. The link to their website is [here](#).



The Law and the Police

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, many new changes to the law have been passed by both State and Federal Governments. This includes the Victorian Government allowing the Victorian Police to gain new powers to arrest and hand out large fines to people who break the COVID-19 social distancing laws. This chapter is about understanding what are the new laws in Victoria and Australia, the new powers that the Victorian Police have, and what to do if you get caught by the police and the law.

It is understandable that these new changes can be confusing so this chapter intends to make it easier to understand what they are.



What Are the New Laws I Need to Know?

Both the Victorian State Government and the Federal Government have new laws and guides which are labeled to be restrictions and guides. It is necessary to be aware of them so people not only avoid breaking the law, but to keep themselves and people around them safe from the coronavirus.

The Restrictions By the Federal Government of Australia

The restrictions by the Federal Government are about enforcing rules on public gatherings. They advise people to:

Stay at home unless you are:

- going to work or education (if you are unable to do so at home)
- shopping for essential supplies such as groceries, return home without delay
- going out for personal exercise in the neighbourhood, on your own or with one other
- attending medical appointments or compassionate visits

They are also putting rules on how businesses should be managed and restrictions on visiting places like nursing homes and hospitals. [To find out more, click this link.](#)

The Restrictions By the State of Victoria

The State Government of Victoria has issued an online guide on the new laws which are labeled as restrictions. The full guide can be found if you [click here](#). The restrictions mention what people, groups, and businesses can and can't do. But in this manual and chapter, would only detail what you are allowed and not allowed to do as a person.

According to the State Government of Victoria, the Stage 3 restrictions advice is about making sure that people are staying home as much as possible. This is what they have said but in a short version:

The Stage 3 restrictions came into effect at 11:59pm Monday 30 March 2020. They will be in place for 4 weeks and reviewed as required. (this could mean that new restrictions can be made after that time)

Things like playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor gyms are now closed. Community centres and facilities may remain open for the purposes of hosting essential voluntary or public services, such as food banks or homeless services.

You should only be outside for one of the following 4 reasons:

- shopping for what you need - food and essential supplies
- medical, care or compassionate needs (like looking after an older relative)
- To exercise only at a distance of 1.5 metres from everyone else. Going for walks or bike rides is ok.
- Work and study if you can't work or learn remotely

If people don't follow these rules, they face on-the-spot fines of \$1,652 for individuals and \$9,913 for businesses. Larger fines can also be issued through the courts.

In response to the State Government of Victoria's COVID-19 restrictions, Victoria Police have established a coronavirus enforcement squad of five hundred officers. They would show up more in places like shopping centres and supermarkets, parks, train stations and other public transport stops, and other public areas known to have a lot of people.

They have powers to question people who they believe are not following the restrictions. They can break up groups and or arrest and charge people if they judge that they broke the law according to the restrictions.



However, there are [concerns from organisations like the Police Accountability Project](#) that the police have been too harsh in using their powers against people during COVID-19. They argue that as both people and the police have guides that do not always make sense, people get into trouble with the police.

What I Should Do if the Police Stop Me?

It is understandable that being approached by the police can be stressful and provoking. But the first thing you should remember to do is to remain calm and make your body language neutral as possible. To do this, make sure you are breathing slowly, try to show little emotions, and your voice is calm.

According to [Legal Aid Victoria](#), you then have the following rights if approached by police:

- You can ask them “Am I committing an offense?”. This should be the first thing you do. The police should by law tell you that they are arresting you and why.
- You can ask the police their names, their rank, and which police station they work in. You can even ask for these details in writing if you feel safe to do so. By law, they should answer correctly. This is handy if you want to make a complaint after.
- You are only obliged to tell them your name and address. Otherwise, you do have the right to remain silent. Other questions can be answered with silence or with ‘no comment’. However, this is only if they don’t have a warrant to search or arrest you.

I Saw Someone Breaking the COVID-19 Restrictions. What Should I Do?

You do have the option to call CrimeStoppers on 1800 333 000 and report an incident. But, before you think about dialing, there are some things to know about first.

First, think about doing any of the following:

- Talk to the person at a distance in a calm and caring way that you think they are breaking restrictions. Tell them why there is a reason for the restriction and try to convince them to stop what they are doing.
- Have ongoing caring conversations with friends and family about social distancing.
- Create leaflets about what the restrictions are and drop them in letterboxes in your neighbourhood. You may base them off this manual, but double check with websites from the State Government or the Federal Government.
- Go on social media and post resources about distancing.
- Check with social media groups (See page 26) and ask where you can join a volunteering group helping people get supplies.

Remember, people might not be following the rules because:

- They don’t have the internet or a TV and can’t always keep up with the latest news on what the restrictions are.

- That English is not their primary language and understanding the news is difficult.
- They could have an intellectual disability and don't always understand what the new restrictions are.
- They are homeless and lack access to new information
- They are experiencing abuse at home and keep going out and about to stay away from harm.

So remember, have compassion before you make the decision to call.



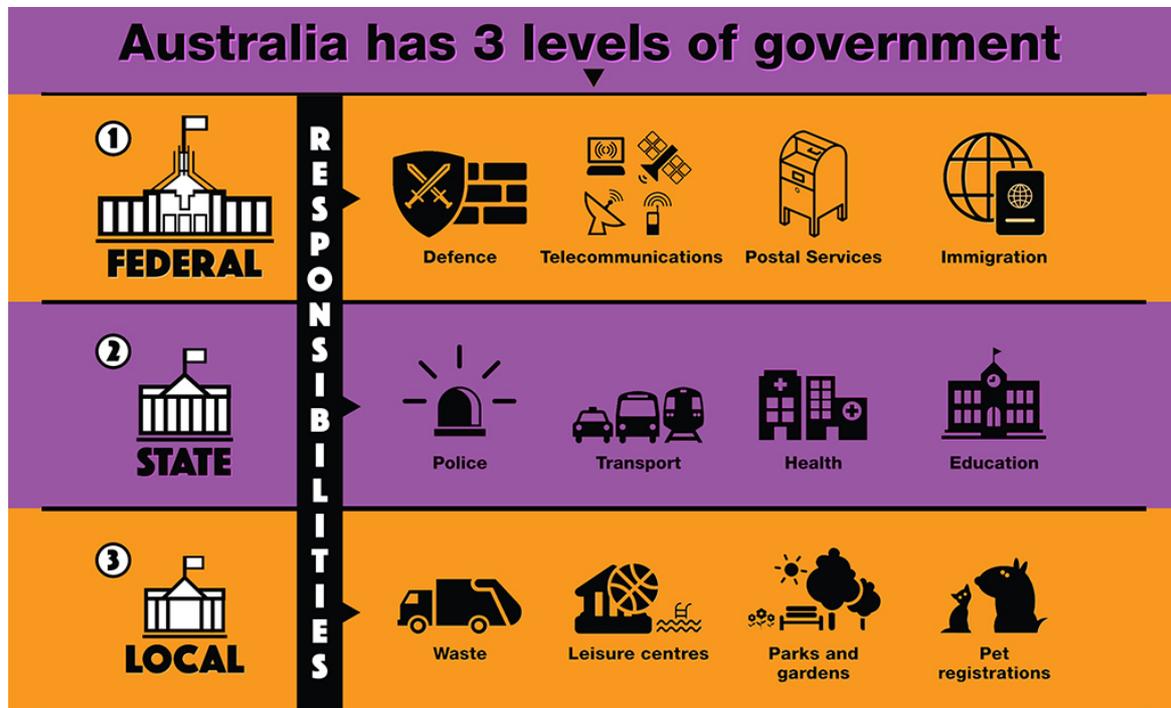
Politics, Politicians & Government

In this time, people have become more active in contacting their local politicians or politicians who have a job in a particular area. For example, when the [Federal Government announced the COVID-19 \\$550 stimulus package for job seekers](#), people contacted [Senator Rachel Swiewert](#) (who has been fighting for better conditions for centrelink recipients) to advocate to Parliament for extending the payment to young people on youth allowance, people on the disability support pension, and people who are carers.

These people simply are everyday people who are concerned for their community and how politics affects them. Getting in touch with a politician for an issue is in some ways, easier than thought of; it's just not taught to everyone how to do so. Unfortunately, democracy for citizens can be assumed that it starts and ends with voting and elections. This is simply not true. It is a democratic right for Australians to be able to contact their local member of parliament over an issue related to their level of government, as explained in the three levels of government.

The Three Levels of Government

In Australia, there are three levels of government; Federal, State, and Local. You can see here with this graphic what they are and what responsibilities they have. There is also a [two and a half-minute youtube clip here](#) that further explains how they operate.



They also have leaders to each level of government.

Level of Government	Title of the Leader	The Current Leader's Name and Party They Lead
Federal (National)	The Prime Minister of Australia	Scott Morrison  The Liberal National Party
State (Victoria)	The Premier of Victoria	Daniel Andrews  The Australian Labor Party
Local (Council) To find out what council area you live in, click this link for a map .	The Mayor	Given that there are several mayors for each Local Government or Council, here is a list of Council websites from the northern suburbs where you can find out the contact details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Banyule • City of Darebin • Mitchell Shire Council • City of Moreland • City of Nillumbik • City of Whittlesea

Local Members of Parliament

A Member of Parliament or MP is a politician that holds a seat or electorate in a part of Australia. When they get elected in an election, their job is to advocate for the needs of people who live in their electorate as a representative. In other words, they speak on the behalf of you and the people who live nearby you in either The Federal Parliament in Canberra or The State Parliament in the City on Smith Street, Melbourne, depending if they are a Federal member or a State member.

Even if you are not interested in contacting them, you might want to think about following their social media just to keep up on what they are advocating for in their office. Also, if you click on their names, you will be directed to their page on the website [They Vote For You](#) where you find out how they voted in parliament on issues that affect Australia.

Table of Federal Members of Parliament From Melbourne's Northern Suburbs

Name of MP & their Political Party	Electorate (including Suburbs)	Do they hold a portfolio? i.e. are they given a role/s in an area of interest?	Website, Contact Details, & Facebook Page
<p>Andrew Giles</p>  <p>The Australian Labor Party</p>	<p>Scullin</p> <p>Epping, Lalor, Mill Park, South Morang, & Thomastown</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs Shadow Minister Assisting for Immigration and Citizenship 	<p>Website: https://www.andrewgiles.com.au/</p> <p>Contact Details: 9404 1911 andrew.giles.mp@aph.gov.au Shop 23-25 The Stables Shopping Centre 314-360 Childs Rd Mill Park VIC 3082</p> <p>Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/AndrewGilesMP/</p>
<p>Ged Kearney</p>  <p>The Australian Labor Party</p>	<p>Cooper (Formerly Batman)</p> <p>Reservoir, Kingsbury, Thornbury, Preston, Fairfield, Northcote, Alphington, and parts of Coburg North, Macleod, & Clifton Hill</p>	<p>Yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shadow Assistant Minister for Skills Shadow Assistant for Aged Care 	<p>Website: https://www.gedkearney.org.au/</p> <p>Contact Details: 9416 8690 Ged.Kearney.MP@aph.gov.au 159 High Street Preston, VIC, 3072</p> <p>Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/GedKearneyLabor/</p>

<p>Kate Thwaites</p>  <p>The Australian Labor Party</p>	<p>Jagajaga</p> <p>Bellfield, Briar Hill, Diamond Creek, Eaglemont, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West, Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East, Lower Plenty, Montmorency, Plenty, Rosanna, St Helena, Viewbank, Yallambie, Watsonia and Watsonia North; and parts of Bundoora, Eltham, Eltham North, Hurstbridge, Macleod, Wattle Glen and Yarrambat.</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.katethwaites.com/ Contact Details: 9459 1411 Kate.Thwaites.MP@aph.gov.au 149 Burgundy Street, Heidelberg, VIC, 3084 Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/KateThwaitesMP/</p>
<p>Peter Khalil</p>  <p>The Australian Labor Party</p>	<p>Wills</p> <p>Brunswick, Coburg, Pascoe Vale, Fawkner, Glenroy and Essendon Airport.</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Website: https://peterkhalil.com.au/ Contact Details: 9350 5777 Peter.Khalil.MP@aph.gov.au 240 Sydney Road, Coburg VIC 3058 Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/PeterKhalilMP/</p>

How to Write a Letter or Email to Your Local MP

One of the best ways to get in touch with your local MP with an issue that you think it needs to be helped with, is via a letter or email.

To write a letter or email, it should be short and no more than three or four paragraphs with 100 words or less per paragraph. The letter then should be no more than 500-400 words long. An example of an email should look like

Dear Mr or Ms (Full Name) MP,

- **First Paragraph:** Introduce yourself including the mention that you live in the electorate including the suburb you live in. You can include things that you are involved in that electorate like the where you study and or if you work or volunteer in something like

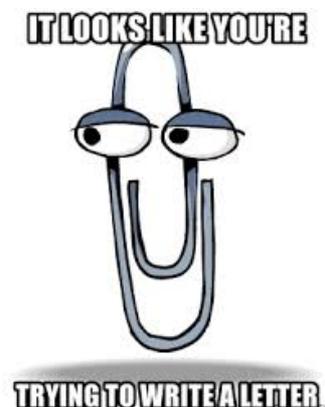
“My name is Sam Doe, I am a young person living in your electorate Cooper in the suburb of Reservoir. I study Hospitality at Melbourne Polytechnic in Preston and volunteer at Reservoir Neighbourhood House.”

- **Second Paragraph:** Tell them the reason you are writing to them. This is where you get to introduce the issue that is important to you, as long it is an issue relevant to their level of government. An example for a Federal Member could be:

“I am writing to you that I am concerned that some people are not able to have the internet at home. They can't have the internet because they are on welfare and can not afford it or that they are a young person living at home and their parents said no. They need the internet during the COVID-19 crisis to do things like doing their studies, meet their mutual obligations if they are on Centrelink, do their shopping, and connect with people while social distancing.”

- **Third paragraph:** Then tell them what you would like changed. Here you can give ideas and or ask if there is anything being done about it. Again here is an example:

“I would like something done about it like a program or incentive to help these people. It could be something similar to the rent assistance where the government pays part of the internet bill for them to make it affordable. Or just have a program where some groups of people, like disadvantaged young people and people with disabilities, get free internet for six months. Could you or your party bring this idea of change to the government?”
AND OR



'I wish that more people can access the internet because it has become a necessary tool in recent times. I want to know if there are changes talked about by the government or anyone in your party is arguing for a change to help people get internet if they find it difficult to do so on their own. Could you be kind enough to tell me if anything is being done about the issue?'

- **Final Line:** Then finish it off with a quick line that sums up the email:

'I hope that you read this letter and think that this is an important issue to do something about it. I also hope that I will see a response from you about it.'

- **Signing Off:** Then sign off with including your full name like:

'Yours Faithfully' or 'Kind Regards'

Then

'Sam Doe'

Remember, no issue is too big or too small to write about and to have it be responded by the MP in question. For example, there has been a story that a seven year old girl wrote to Bob Hawke when he was Prime Minister about her missing her grandmother because she died and he wrote back to her saying that he felt sorry and explained that death was part of life. [You can read the story here](#). Yet, if you should choose to write to your MP, stick to an issue that they could advocate for, not because your nan died and you miss her terribly.

Other Politicians to Consider Writing to:

If you have a yearning to have a particular issue addressed, you might want to think about writing to a politician that holds a portfolio that is relevant to that issue. This could be something to do with young people, welfare, disability rights, healthcare, the environment, or something else entirely. You would need to google 'who is the state or federal minister of (*insert interest*)'. If this is the case, you need to know that there are two politicians who hold that portfolio; the minister whose political party is in charge of government and the shadow minister whose party

theauspolchronicles

coolasakuhncumber asked:

Hey, cool story - I wrote to my local MP (Labor) yesterday about the Stage 3 tax cuts and their office called me to thank me for submitting my thoughts because it gives them a platform to say it's something the constituents care about. They've also raised it with the Shadow Treasurer. A small step towards making a change!

Hell yeah! I also got a response from my Liberal MP that thanked me for my input but did not give as much weight or hope in it ever being raised as an issue as your MP gave to you!

So yeah: people EMAIL YOUR MPs. THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY LISTEN.

[This tumblr post shows that you](#)

is in opposition and not in charge, but otherwise active in advocacy.

For example; Andrew Giles is the Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure, but his party the Australian Labor Party is in opposition in the Federal Government. Meanwhile the Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure is Alan Tudge whose party, the Liberal National Coalition, is in power.

But What if I Don't Want to Talk to a Politician But Want Social Change?

That's ok, you don't have to. This chapter is about letting you know you can if you do want to. It is understandable that talking to a politician can feel a bit intimidating. But there are other ways to get your message across that can get your attention out. Here are a few ways to do it:

Research Activist Groups and Think About Joining One.

Joining an activist group is a great way to get a message across with the support of like minded people. [There is evidence that there are many personal benefits of being with an activist group like improving your well-being, self-esteem, social networking, and having a sense of purpose in life.](#) To find an activist group that has the same interest as you do, try searching on google or social media sites like Facebook or Twitter.

A few social activist groups to name are:

- [Australian Youth Climate Coalition](#): Australia's largest youth movement that fights for environmentalism and against climate change.
- [Young Campaigns](#): Young Campaigns is a group that fights for social change and is concerned about young people facing financial hardship and discrimination.
- [Amnesty International Australia](#): Amnesty International Australia is part of a global network by Amnesty International. They campaign for human rights issues both nationally and overseas. They often encourage a lot of people to write letters or sign petitions to governments all over the world as a big movement to stop human rights abuse.
- [GetUp!](#): GetUp! Is a movement that focuses on improving Australia's policies on the economy, the environment, and human rights for a more fairer and greener nation for everyone to live in.

A few notes:

- You can also look up unions as an activist option if you are concerned about worker's rights or rights with welfare. See page 13 about it.
- You can start a group just like Greta Thunberg (pictured) did with the Climate Strike movement! You can look up how to do it on google and start with a couple of people.

You never know it can get as big as just your neighbourhood, or as big as Australia, or as big as the whole wide world.

- You can follow their social media accounts if you are not sure if you want to join immediately just to gain familiarity about them. Then you can make a decision later if you want to join them or not.
- If you are stuck on finding a group, you can always ask a youth worker may it be from IYC, from a council, or another organisation. [You can even try emailing YACVic for referrals to youth activist groups.](#)
- During the COVID-19 Crisis, many groups are opting to communicate via the app Zoom and via closed groups on Facebook or the app Slack. They are also thinking of ways to campaign and advocate while following the rules of social distancing.



Further information about Australian Politics (and then some)

If you have an interest in learning about politics, there are a number of good resources to know.

YouTube channels to watch for:

- [Auspol Explained](#): Auspol Explained is a channel dedicated to teaching how the Australian Political system works in a non-partisan (which means not from a bias from a political party) way.
- [Parliament Education Office](#): Easy to understand short videos on how parliament works.

Books to get:

- [Australian Politics for Dummies](#): Book that breaks down everything to know about the Australian political system.
- [Politics for Beginners](#): Easy to understand book about politics in general. It mentions different government types according to what other countries have.
- [The Politics Book](#): A dictionary like book on political ideologies and movements.

Technology Use

Facebook Local Community Groups

Facebook has a range of local community groups that are run by people in the local community. These groups are useful to find out about local news and many people offer things like free stuff on them. Just make sure you read their guidelines before joining them and be respectful of their rules and to other people in them.

Coronavirus Orientated Facebook Groups

These groups are created to help people with the social isolation and distancing rules with handy tricks and tips, as well as updating people on the latest news about Coronavirus.

Facebook Group Name	Link
Northside Melbourne CoronaVirus Outreach	https://www.facebook.com/groups/2467532753498978/learning_content/
(more) mutual aid #COVID19	https://www.facebook.com/groups/2319956521631053/?ref=group_browse

Good Karma Networks

Good Karma Networks are focused on what is going on in a suburb with one or two neighbouring suburbs. The idea of these groups are about 'spreading good karma' to all of our neighbours by offering free goods and notifying other people news about the local area.

Facebook Group Name	Link
Brunswick Good Karma Network Also available to people living in Coburg	https://www.facebook.com/groups/brunswickoodkarmanetwork/
Preston Good Karma Network Also available to people living in Thornbury	https://www.facebook.com/PrestonGoodKarmaNetwork/
Reservoir Good Karma Network Also available to people living in Kingsbury, Bundoora, Ruthen, & Regent	https://www.facebook.com/groups/reservoirgoodkarmanetwork/

Council Based Networks

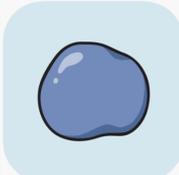
Council Based Networks work the same as Good Karma Networks, but are council based. However, it is still owned and operated by local people and not by the councils themselves.

Facebook Group Name	Link
Darebin Residents Group	https://www.facebook.com/groups/695607447257408/
City of Whittlesea Community Voice	https://www.facebook.com/groups/whittleseacommunityvoice/
Nillumbik & Banyule Community Info	https://www.facebook.com/groups/nillumbik/



Useful Apps

Apps that are useful in the Coronavirus Crisis

App Name	What is it for?	Where can I get it?	How much does it cost?
Coronavirus Australia 	Stay up-to-date with the official news from the Federal Government on the pandemic. Also a COVID-19 symptom checker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple App Store • Google Play 	Free
Vic Emergency 	Official Victorian Government app for emergency warnings and information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple App Store • Google Play 	Free
Smiling Mind 	A meditation and mindfulness app to help with calming down. Developed by Melbourne psychologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple App Store • Google Play 	Free
Niggle 	Created by KidsHelpline, Niggle is an app that helps kids and young people problem solve emotional dilemmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple App Store • Google Play 	Free
Jitsi 	Jitsi is a conferencing app similar to zoom, but has no paid subscriptions needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple App Store • Google Play 	Free

Boredom Busters

While boredom can be scoffed at by others (like omg, you're bored, you are just lazy), it can lead to mental health problems if not addressed. Humans need physical and mental stimulation

to keep healthy. In fact, there is a documentary on how bad boredom can be for a person that can be viewed on youtube [here](#).

This chapter is split into three groups, 100% - 50% online, 50% - 0% online, as to recognise that people have different levels of online access. Again, all activities are of low cost or free.

100% - 50% Online

100% Online is for activities that need an ongoing internet connection.

Yarra Plenty Regional Library eLibrary

Yarra Plenty Regional Library offers a range of media online for free as long as you are a member. They offer a digital membership ([click here to get one](#)) if you are not already a member for instant access to their content. Otherwise, use your library card.

Your use of the eLibrary includes:

- You can borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks
- You can borrow Comics and Graphic Novels
- You can download eMagazines
- You can stream or download digital music
- Unlimited streaming of movies, documentaries, and indie films
- Unlimited access to online video tutorials
- Learn languages and technological skills with online tools
- Play educational games

Some content can be downloaded on a phone app and used offline

Free Streaming Services

ABC iView - <https://iview.abc.net.au/#>

ABC iView is all of the recent content that has been broadcasted on its channels. It has something for everyone, including anime.

Tubi - <https://tubitv.com/home>

Tubi offers free movies and documentaries that are 100% legal to watch online. The catch with Tubi is that viewers will see ads while watching their film. You will however need to create an account or use Facebook to sign in to access their content.

SBS OnDemand - <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/>

Not just foreign films or its long standing risqué reputation (although it still maintains both things *wink*) SBS has come a long way to become a treasure trove of films, shows, and documentaries that are highly popular with its streaming service. Again, you still need to create an account to watch their content.

Vudo - <https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/uxpage/View-All-Free-Movies-TV/210>

Just like Tubi, Vudo offers a platform of free movies but supported with ads. Be sure to check it often as films have a short time on the website. Just be careful that it also offers films for rent but at a low cost.

Virtual Museum and Gallery Tours

Many Museums and Galleries both in Australia and from overseas have interactive virtual tours that you can access at home. Here is a list of them:

- [National Gallery of Victoria](#)
- [The Louvre from Paris](#)
- [The Museum at Home](#) from Museums Victoria
- [State Library Victoria Exhibitions](#)
- [London's British Museum](#)
- [Google's Art Project](#) which showcases art collections from a variety of places.

Virtual Melbourne Zoo

Melbourne Zoo is livestreaming from it's exhibits from Koalas to Lions. Check out [the various video links here](#).

Learn to Code

There is a whole heap of websites that can teach you how to code and build websites with free courses and interactive challenges. They also have forums that can link you with socialise with people passionate about coding. Here is a list of them:

- [Coursera](#)
- [Code Academy](#)
- [Free Code Camp](#)
- [Dash](#)
- [Code.org](#)

50%- 0% Online

50% Online is for activities that need some sort of internet connection, but not always. Either look up references to download things for offline use.

Street Library Australia

Street Library Australia offers mini libraries on the street. They are boxes full of books donated for free by people who live locally. There is no membership needed, but people are expected to give and take books when they can. It is like a lucky dip of books.

To find a local street library, [click on this link](#) to find a map where all of the libraries are geo-located with a pin. Just remember to still practice social distancing rules when you go for a hunt for the street libraries.

Podcasts

Podcasts are a great thing to listen to for fun and for learning. For any topic, there is bound to be a podcast for it; like from popular television shows like *Married at First Sight* that have podcasts like *Talking Married* or a podcast that is dedicated to teaching history like *Stuff You Missed in History Class*. Whatever thing you are interested in, there is a podcast for it as there are hundreds and thousands of them, and you can download them so you can listen to them offline. You can find podcasts with apps like:

- Apple Podcasts
- Spotify
- ABC Listen
- iHeartRadio
- Overcast
- Audible
- TuneIn Radio
- Castro

Card Games

Want to play something other than Go Fish or Solitaire? [PlayingCardDecks.Com](https://playingcarddecks.com) has a list of 40+ card games to teach yourself and anyone in your household to play. Go to <https://playingcarddecks.com/blogs/all-in/40-great-card-games-for-all-occasions> to find gaming instructions to any of the games on the list.

Pick Up A New Skill as a Hobby

Youtube is full of tutorials on picking up a new skill to do as a hobby. You can simply go to search and type 'How To *Insert hobby*'. There have been people doing things like knitting to gardening while being told to stay home. If you want to have inspiration on what sort of hobby to try, check out this [ABC Life article](#) that lists several hobbies suitable for social distancing or take [this BuzzFeed quiz](#).

Bike Trail Maps

Cycling is an approved activity under stage 3 social distancing restrictions and VicRoads has downloadable PDFs on bicycle tracks according to council area. You could discover a bike track that you never know that existed. To find out what they are, [click this link here](#).

Budget Bytes

Budget Bytes is a website full of cheap recipes. They also have an app to download both on Apple and Android. [Check out the link here](#).

Cheap and Easy Recipes

Savory

El-Cheapo Chinese Chow

Prep time: 10 minutes, Serves 1 person

Ingredients:

- 4 Dim Sims or 5 Pork Dumplings
- 1 Cup of Mixed Frozen Vegetables
- 1 Packet of 2-minute noodles
- Soy Sauce and Sweet Chilli Sauce (optional)

Steps:

1. Get a medium sized pot and fill it up with water and put it on the stove to boil.
2. Once the water starts to boil, add the Dim Sims or Pork Dumplings
3. After 2 minutes, add the frozen vegetables and stir
4. Open the packet of 2-minute noodles and break up the noodles in a bowl into roughly four pieces. Add them into the pot four minutes after you added the vegetables.
5. Stir and cook the rest for 2 minutes. Once two minutes are done, turn off the stove and pour the contents into a colander in the sink.
6. Pour the contents into a bowl and add a splash of soy sauce and sweet chili sauce.
Enjoy!

Tuna Pasta Sauce

Prep time: 20 minutes, Serves 2 people

Ingredients:

- Olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic or two teaspoons of chopped up garlic from the jar
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste
- 1 can of freshwater tuna (tip: you can use chili tuna)

Steps:

1. Put a medium sized pot on the stove and add a drizzle of olive oil. Do not turn it on yet.
2. Remove the skin of the garlic and crush and chop the garlic with a knife
3. Add the garlic to the pot and turn on high heat. Cook until the garlic starts to brown and turn off the heat.
4. Wait until the pot cools down and open the tin of tomatoes, tomato paste, and salt and add them to the pot. Stir.
5. Turn back on the heat and wait until the sauce starts to boil.
6. When the sauce starts the boil, turn down the heat to medium and let it simmer until it is 25% reduced or thickened a bit.
7. When the sauce has been reduced, add the contents from the tin of tuna and stir.
8. Cook for an extra 3 minutes and serve with cooked spaghetti or linguine.

Sweets

Rocky-Road Block

Prep Time - 40 mins, Serves 20

Ingredients

- 2 x 200g blocks of dark chocolate (Aldi's Choceur Chocolate is best recommended)
- 1 x 200g block of milk chocolate
- 50g of unsalted butter
- 2/3 cup of desiccated coconut
- 1 packet of marshmallows
- 3 - 4 Fry's Turkish Delight bars
- 1 cup of any nuts of your choice (Optional)
- 1 packet of scotch finger biscuits

Steps

1. With pre-prep, unseal all the Turkish Delight bars and cut them into strips 5mm wide width-ways and put them in a bowl. Break up the scotch fingers and put them in another bowl. Put them aside for later.
2. Put on a saucer with water on the stove to heat.
3. While the water is heating up, break up all the chocolate blocks in small pieces. Put them in a bowl.
4. When the water is hot enough, put it on low heat. Place a stainless steel over the saucer and water and gradually add bits of chocolate as it melts while stirring with a spatula continuously. Add the butter as well.
5. When all the chocolate is all melted, add the turkish delight. Stir.
6. Turn off the heat and add the marshmallows, nuts, desiccated coconut, and scotch fingers.
7. Lay a lamington tray with baking paper and then pour the contents into it. Once all the contents is laid out on the tray, cover it with cling wrap and put it in the fridge.
8. Wait until four-five hours and take out the tray from the fridge. Cut up the rocky road into small squares and place them in an air-tight container for storage.

Golden Syrup Dumplings

Prep time: 40 minutes, serves 6

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (155g) brown sugar
- 2 cups (500ml) of water
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (80ml) golden syrup
- 100g slightly salted butter
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (225g) self-raising flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (185ml) milk

Steps:

1. Combine water, brown sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60ml) golden syrup and 50g butter in a large saucepan.
2. Stir over a low heat until melted.
3. Meanwhile, use your fingertips to rub in 50g butter into flour.
4. Combine milk and 1 tablespoon golden syrup. Stir into the flour mixture until well combined.
5. Bring the sauce to the boil then drop heaped dessert spoonfuls of the mixture into the sauce. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered for 15-20 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.
6. Serve with ice cream.