

Avoid A Fine – Enrol To Vote



Martin Ferguson welcoming Batman's newest citizens at a recent Citizenship Ceremony at Darebin Town Hall.

The next Federal Election may be as far away as December, but now is the time to ensure you are correctly enrolled to vote so you can exercise your democratic right while also avoiding a fine.

It is more important than ever this year to ensure you are properly enrolled to vote as new legislation rammed through by the Howard Government last year will disenfranchise thousands by giving them less time to change their enrolment details.

The new deadlines mean first-time voters will have only until 8pm the night the election is called to enrol for the first time. If you are re-enrolling the deadline is three working days.

Voting is compulsory in Australia and a Federal Election is scheduled for this year although an exact date has not yet been set.

If any resident is unsure of their enrolment status and details contact your local Federal Member, Martin Ferguson on ph: 03 9416 8690.

Who is eligible to enrol?

- Anyone 18 years of age or over, and
- Is an Australian citizen, or
- Was a British subject on a Commonwealth electoral roll as at 25 January 1984

- Has lived for at least one month at their current address.
- Although the election has not been announced it will be held this year so if you are 17 years old you should enrol now if you are going to be turning 18 this year.
- If you are expecting to become an Australian citizen before the end of the year, it is also a good idea to enrol now in preparation.

You must complete an enrolment form every time you move

If you've moved and not updated your enrolment you may be taken off the electoral roll.

You can check your enrolment status by visiting the AEC website (www.aec.gov.au) or calling 13 23 26. Enrolment forms are also available at Australia Post outlets.

You only need to enrol once for Federal, State and local government elections.

What to do if you are overseas

You can subscribe for free to the AEC email notification system that will alert you when the next federal election is announced.

Enrolment and voting by people outside Australia is not compulsory. Regardless of your length of stay overseas you should let the AEC know. If you don't you run the risk of being removed from the roll.

You can vote while overseas but only if you are listed on the current electoral roll. To check whether you are enrolled contact the AEC.

Non-English speaking voters

A telephone interpreter service is available at the AEC in a range of languages to assist electors from non-English speaking backgrounds. Ring 13 23 26 for more details.

The Ferguson Report

THE AUSTRALIAN DREAM – a fancy youth can not afford

The construction industry continues to be a tale of two sectors as the gap widens between booming commercial building and struggling home ownership.

The face of this sorry situation are the thousands of young people, couples and families for whom the average family home sits well outside the reach of their hip pocket.

Also touched are the stretched home builders for whom there is little consolation for the reported fewer home starts, fewer customer enquiries and fewer invitations to tender in May.

Weakness in house building activity was blamed for a fall of 2.8 points in the AIG-HIA May construction index. The index now sits at 45.1 points, well below the key 50-point level that signifies a healthy housing market for the mums and dads of Australia.

Low housing affordability is seen as the key factor affecting the market by both the would-be home owners and the builders, who reported that the reality that young people were being priced out of the market was having a major effect on demand.

It's also not a rosy picture for those already in the housing game with Australians now paying a record high proportion of their wage into their mortgage. We now spend 50 percent more on paying back our mortgages than during the Keating Government.

It is a squeeze that is being felt more acutely than ever as a result of rising interest rates as disposable incomes shrink.

Interest rates have risen four times since the 2004 election, during which the Coalition promised it would keep interest rates low – a promise they clearly cannot keep.

Rate reprieves are good temporary news for homeowners out there but it doesn't take away from the responsibility the government has to put downward pressure on inflation and the need to address the serious issue of housing affordability, Member for Batman, Martin Ferguson said.

"A lack of productivity and capacity constraints in the economy continues to place pressure on core inflation and it is the responsibility of the government of the day to do something about it."



Martin Ferguson talking with youth at La Trobe University about issues they face today, including housing affordability.

SIX TIPS TO SAVE MONEY

1/ Distinguish between 'wants' and 'needs'

Needs are pretty simple to identify - those items that are necessary to sustain your shelter, food, clothing and transportation. Wants are those things that enhance or possibly improve our family life.

2/ Try before you buy

This goes a long way in helping to avoid the silly purchases of things you rarely or never use.

3/ Home mortgages

Your mortgage is often the largest single expense in your budget. Talk to an independent broker before you take out a mortgage or if you are considering re-financing your mortgage.

4/ Cars

For most families, the second biggest expense after their mortgage is their cars. Could you

downsize and save money, not only in monthly payments but also in maintenance, insurance and fuel? What about public transport, car pooling or walking and cycling.

5/ Insurance

Be sure to shop around. It may be cheaper for you to take out your home and car insurance with the one provider.

6/ Food

Saving \$20 a week on groceries converts to over \$1000 a year. Don't sacrifice fresh fruit and vegetables though for more processed food – a healthy diet reduces health problems (and health bills). Taking your lunch to work can save \$30 a week.

Contact Martin Ferguson's office at 159 High St, Preston or ph: 9416 8690 for information kits on family assistance, warranties and refunds, saving for retirement, assistance for seniors and legal assistance.

DON'T FALL FOR 'DO NOT CALL' SCAM



Local residents are urged to ignore door-to-door traders trying to sign them up to the Do Not Call Register for a fee.

There is no charge to register on the Do Not Call register.

The scam operators appear to be preying on the elderly and the uninformed, charging people for a service that is free.

Residents need to know they can sign up to the register for free by phone, post or online. They can do this themselves and it's free and easy.

Over one million Australians have already signed up the register to ensure that they are

not pestered by annoying telemarketers in the privacy of their own home.

Last year Australians received 53 telemarketing calls per week on average, and that does not include the millions of calls coming from overseas. This equates to Australians spending almost half an hour each week fielding unwarranted calls.

Consumers should make sure they fully investigate any door-to-door offer before agreeing to a service or signing a contract.

When dealing with door-to-door traders people should always:

- ask for full identification from the trader;
- make sure the service they are offering is not available at a better price elsewhere or, as in this case, available for free;
- always get independent advice to confirm what you have been told by a door-to-door trader; and
- ask the trader to leave if you are not interested in their product or service.

If you suspect a trader is being misleading in their sales techniques, you should contact Martin Ferguson's office at 159 High St, Preston Ph: 9416 8690

Exemptions to the Do Not Call register apply to:

- charities or charitable institutions
- education institutions
- religious organisations
- government bodies
- registered political parties and candidates

How to register:

- visit www.donotcall.gov.au
- call 1300 792 958
- fill in a postal application form available at Post Offices and mail to:
Do Not Call Register
Po Box 42
North Melbourne
VIC 3051

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease with potentially serious complications affecting an estimated 1.5 million Australians. Every day 275 Australians develop diabetes.

Fifty percent of people with diabetes don't know they have it yet.

Research shows that most Australians do not understand the severity of diabetes and think they have a lower risk of developing it than they actually do.

A conservative estimate puts the cost of diabetes to the Australian economy at \$3.1 billion but is likely to be much higher.

What is the difference between Type One and Two Diabetes

Type One

- Represents 10-15 percent of all cases and is NOT caused by lifestyle factors
- Symptoms include excessive thirst and urination
- There is no cure and needs to be carefully managed through medication

Type Two

- Represents 85-90 percent of all cases and there is a hereditary factor
- Symptoms can include complications such as a heart attack or vision problems
- Can be managed with regular exercise, healthy eating and weight management

Who is most at risk?

- Over 55 years of age
- Over 45 years with a family history of diabetes or high blood pressure
- People who are overweight or have had a heart attack
- Over 35 years and a Pacific Islander or of Chinese, Indian background
- Women with polycystic ovaries and are overweight

For more information go to www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

Health Alert!



Martin Ferguson at the Darebin Community Health Centre talking with local dentists about health issues.

Contact Martin Ferguson's office at 159 High St, Preston or ph: 9416 8690 for information kits on food and nutrition as well as brochures on mental illness, eating disorders, sexual health and how to save costs when purchasing medicines.

Heart Attack – what to look for and what to do!

People who have a heart attack usually have some warning signs. However many wait too long before getting help – often assuming the pain is indigestion and that it will go away.

It is always better to go to hospital and be told that it's not a heart attack than to stay at home until it's too late.

Most heart attacks occur at home – knowing first-aid is vital and may save a life.

What are the warning signs?

- Chest pain may suddenly occur or slowly develop

- The pain may feel like tightness, pressure, heaviness, fullness or squeezing
- The chest pain may spread to the neck and throat, jaw, shoulders and arms
- Pain in the shoulders, arms and back may occur without chest pain
- Often there will difficulty breathing, nausea, a cold sweat and dizziness

What should you do?

- If you are experiencing warning signs, stop what you are doing and rest
- If you are with someone, tell them your symptoms
- If your symptoms are severe, get worse quickly or last more than 10 minutes, get help fast! Call 000 and ask for the ambulance service.

For more information go to www.heartfoundation.com.au

ASTHMA – PLAN TO STAY SYMPTOM FREE

It may sound too good to be true for the one in six children and one in ten adults that are effected by asthma but there is a way to stay symptom free through a written Asthma Action Plan.

A written plan developed by the patient with their doctor aids self management and can reduce the need to visit hospitals and doctors.

Too many people either don't realise they have asthma or don't realise that they can control it.

Who can use an Asthma Action Plan?

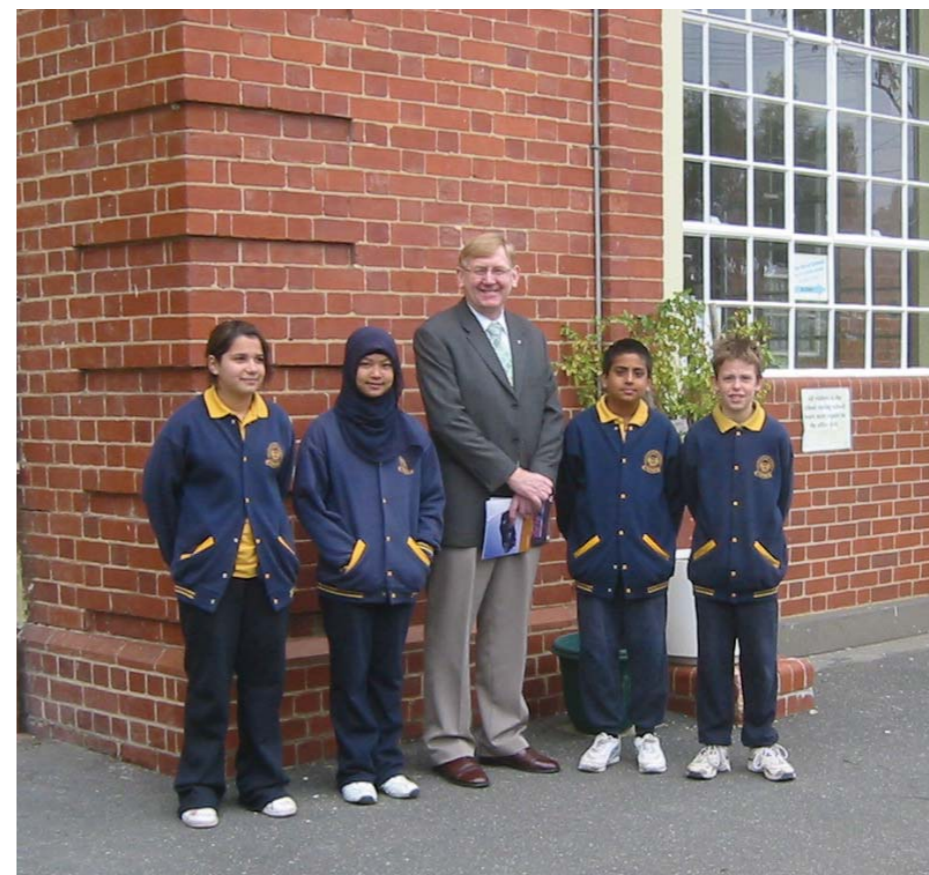
- People who wheeze and cough most days or at night
- People who have frequent asthma attacks
- People who use reliever medication more than three times a week
- People who use preventer medication

How will the action plan help?

- Enable you to better control asthma
- Reduce symptoms and asthma attacks
- Reduce the number of days off school/work due to asthma
- An overall better quality of life

For more information go to www.asthma.org.au

World Environment Day 2007



Martin Ferguson with students from Preston East Primary on World Environment Day inspecting the new energy efficient buildings.

"It is important for everyone to be aware of and informed about global environmental issues, such as global warming, deforestation and depletion of the earth's resources. Don't stop asking questions. Learn about the state of things. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless by global environmental issues – but something that has kept me positive over the past twenty years or so is the adage "Think Globally, Act Locally."

These were the passionate words of Preston East Primary's School Council President, Jane Spracklan.

Jane was speaking at the celebrations at the school on June 5th to mark World Environment Day. The event saw the official launch of the school's new energy efficiency program that has seen the improved installation to the school building, shading blinds to conserve energy and solar-powered sun lizards which generate air currents when required to help regulate the inside temperatures.

The school has also installed shade sails to cover a sun-soaked west-facing wall and broadened and planted garden beds around the junior school area with a water system that utilises a water tank to assist with classroom cooling.

The program shows the great gains in energy efficiency that can be made when a little innovation is applied. The school worked in consultation with CERES Community Environment Park in Brunswick East to develop the program.

Forecasts suggest that an increased uptake of current commercial energy efficiency opportunities could improve Australia's GDP by almost \$1 billion a year. This uptake could result in a 40 per cent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2010.

World Environment Day, commemorated each year on 5 June, is an important day each year which we can use to remind ourselves of what we can do for the environment.

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.

Contact Martin Ferguson's office at 159 High St, Preston or ph: 9416 8690 for information kits on how to help the environment, be waste wise when you shop and how to buy Australian made.

Energy Efficiency Tips

EVERYDAY TIPS

- Turn water heater down to 49C
- Set refrigerator temperature to 3C
- Set freezer to 0-5 F (-18 to -15C)
- Turn off water while shaving and brushing teeth
- Use cold water for washing and wash full loads
- Collect rainwater
- Use the right size pot/pan on the stove burner
- Do not preheat your oven except for baking
- Cover pots/pans when cooking
- Make a draft dodger for use on doors or windows

WINTER TIPS

- Turn thermostat down 5.5C at night
- Turn thermostat down 5.5C when leaving for four hours or more
- Keep curtains open on the south side of the house during the day
- Keep curtains closed on north windows
- Dress in layers of clothing

SUMMER TIPS

- Close curtains on the sunny sides of home
- Turn off furnace pilot light
- Open windows on the cool sides of home
- Wear loose, light coloured clothing
- Use fans to circulate air in the home

