

Envoa

matters

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

ROADS

KILMORE BYPASS

ENERGY

EDUCATION

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

JOB'S AND DECENTRALISATION

POLICE AND CRIME

YOUTH

SMALL BUSINESS

DISABILITY

KANGAROOS

COMMUNICATION

AGRICULTURE

WATER

COST OF LIVING

SPORT, RECREATION AND ARTS

EMERGENCY SERVICES

8 Budget listening posts

3000+ Surveys sent

337 Survey responses

+ Street walks and conversations with businesses

Survey questions

What are the top three issues in your community?

What would you like to see funded in this year's state budget?

Is there anything else you'd like to make Steph aware of?

Euroa matters

Over the past five years I've been honoured to meet many amazing people across the Euroa electorate. There are individuals and groups in every town I visit working hard for the benefit of our communities.

The hard work and contribution that people in our communities on a daily basis should be backed by government investment. Our electorate has been fighting for funding for our schools, public transport, roads, health and mental health services.

There are also a number of town specific projects that desperately need funding such as the Kilmore Bypass.

Euroa Matters summarises the information I have received through both formal and informal channels about what matters to the community. Community input was crucial to the formulation of this document.

Euroa Matters will be provided to the Andrews Labor Government ahead of the 2019/20 State Budget.

Our electorate's priorities must be addressed with appropriate investment from the government in order for our communities to prosper.

I want to thank those who took the time to contact me, complete the survey or to have a chat at one of my listening posts. Your input is greatly appreciated.

As the Member for Euroa, and with your support, I will continue to advocate for our priorities as outlined in Euroa Matters.

Steph Ryan MP

MEMBER FOR EUROA
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE NATIONALS



Public transport

Public transport was the most commonly raised issue across the Euroa electorate. Communities are fed up with delays and cancellations on the Seymour, Shepparton and north east lines.

Train services

As of April 2019, the north east train service was the worst performing in the state, with just 54 per cent of trains arriving at their destination within 11 minutes of their scheduled time. Just over 87 per cent of trains on the Shepparton line and 88 per cent of trains on the Seymour line met that target.

Concerns over the reliability, punctuality, frequency and comfort of train services have led to the formation of groups such as the Seymour Train line Action Group (STAG) who are pleading with the government for funding and investment.

Those who travel to Melbourne for work are challenged every day to get to work on time due to trains running late, breaking down or being held up by the metropolitan system. Commuters' jobs are at risk if our train line does not improve. Similar concerns have also been raised by those travelling for medical appointments.

The long-haul Shepparton and north east train lines, which also service passengers along the Seymour line, are reliant on old and unreliable N class trains. We desperately need an investment in this State Budget to replace these old trains with new and modern rolling stock. Improvements to signalling and finding a clear path into the city is also required to shorten travel times and improve reliability.

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Speeches Steph has given in Parliament about Euroa's train services

At the 2018 state election, The Nationals pledged to make this investment as part of our \$19 billion plan for regional rail. Unfortunately the state Labor Government did not make a similar commitment.

When asked about the north-east line in 2017, however, Premier Daniel Andrews stated that if the Federal Government invested in improving the condition of the track, the state government 'stood ready' to purchase new trains. That investment was made several months later by the Federal Nationals who have invested \$235 million to date to improve its performance.

In this year's budget, communities across Euroa are calling for that commitment, given by the Premier in 2017, to be honoured.

Our towns cannot grow, our commuters will not be able to hold their jobs, and people will not use our train service if it does not improve.

"The moment the federal government makes a commitment to fix the track I'll be more than happy to be on the phone to the Prime Minister giving him my word and our government's commitment that we'll be good for the rolling stock investment that will be needed"

PREMIER DANIEL ANDREWS

PRIORITY: New trains for the north-east, Shepparton and Seymour train lines as well as signalling works to improve the reliability of Euroa's train services.

Bus services

There is a need to improve bus services in Kilmore and Heathcote. Disability access is a concern in Heathcote, while Kilmore's population growth means the bus service route needs to be extended and more frequent.

"We need better public transport to Melbourne especially for the aged who have to travel to Melbourne for medical treatment"

JOHN SHANNON, BENALLA

Roads

There are thousands of kilometres of roads across the Euroa electorate which need to be upgraded and maintained. Community members are concerned about the state of their local roads and what the conditions mean for motorists safety.

Across Euroa sealed roads also need resurfacing, with potholes and road edges being a concern. There are also unsealed roads which require sealing or at the very least, regular grading.

Our councils are heavily reliant on state government funding for road maintenance. When the Andrews Government cut the \$160 million Country Roads and Bridges Program in 2014, the burden for maintenance of local road networks fell squarely back on ratepayers.

Many also questioned why the Andrews Government is investing tens of millions of dollars into rolling out wire rope barriers when serious safety concerns are not acted on.

The Heathcote-Kyneton Rd, for example, has been the subject of great concern to locals for a number of years. The road is not built to carry the ever increasing number of heavy vehicles which are using the road as they seek to avoid the congestion of Kilmore and Wallan. The road has no centre markings and needs to be widened to improve the safety of local motorists.

At Toolleen, residents have called for improvements to the intersection of the Northern Hwy and the Cornella-Toolleen Rd, where a number of serious accidents have occurred.

The Miepoll community fear the intersection of the Violet Town-Murchison Rd and the Miepoll School Rd is an accident waiting to happen, as children

are forced to cross the road where bends limit the visibility of traffic travelling at 100 kilometres an hour towards them.

A number of near misses has prompted the community to call for action to install turning lanes and reduce the speed limit.

The communities of Colbinabbin and Murchison have raised concerns about the safety of pedestrians as heavy vehicles navigate their towns and local bridges and the growth of Kilmore has prompted parents to raise concerns about the safety of children walking to local schools.

Travelling on roads is part of our everyday life in the country. That's why the condition of our roads and our safety should be a priority for government investment. If you fix country roads, you will save country lives.

“At the moment our sealed roads are well below an acceptable standard”

MARIA KEMP, KILMORE

“Quality of road maintenance in north east Victoria is quite poor and standards have dropped dramatically over the last 10 years, as have equipment availability and budgets for upgrading”

DAVID R, BENALLA

**Premier,
build
Kilmore
Bypass!**

Kilmore Bypass

More than 1600 trucks travel through the heart of Kilmore each day. Heavy vehicle traffic coupled with strong population growth is putting more and more pressure on key road infrastructure – particularly along the Northern Hwy and through the centre of town.

Before the 2018 Victorian election, The Nationals pledged to build the Kilmore bypass if elected to government. This would have continued the work we started when we first elected to government in 2010. At that time, we committed to finishing the project by the end of 2017 – a target we were on track to meet when Labor was elected in 2014. In the five years since, work has ground to a halt and funding has dried up.

Unlike The Nationals, the Andrews Government made no commitment to proceeding with the project at the 2018 election, leaving the future of this vital project again in doubt.

The Kilmore bypass will get trucks and highway traffic off the main street, making it safer for local traffic and pedestrians, giving local traders new opportunities to expand out onto the street and attracting people to the town to enjoy its rich history. Funding to begin and finish the project is imperative in this year's Budget.

Energy

Cost, reliability, the ageing utility network and sustainability are concerns that have been raised by the community regarding energy.

The debate about coal-fired power and renewable energy is common in our communities. While some believe we need coal-fired power for reliability, others believe we must transition completely to the use of renewable energy.

Support for renewables has been increasing and generally the community is willing to transition if baseline power can be guaranteed and the government provides appropriate subsidies and support.

Summer power outages have been financially damaging for businesses and residents across the electorate. The government must work to mitigate any risk to power supply in our area with a goal of keeping the cost of power down, and transitioning to renewable, sustainable power.

Education

Education was raised repeatedly as a budget priority for the Euroa electorate. All young people deserve a quality learning experience and environment.

We have great schools in our electorate and our principals, teachers and other staff work hard to ensure quality learning takes place. It is crucial that they have the backing of state government.

Our public schools need funding for new buildings, specialist programs and assistance for children with additional needs.

The newly opened Weary Dunlop Building and Rex Wills Trade Centre at Benalla P-12 College are the first step in giving Benalla students modern learning facilities and late last year, the Andrews Government finally agreed to match our commitment to fund the completion of the Benalla College rebuild. It is important that the government allocates the remaining funding for this project in this year's budget.

While progress on Seymour College's rebuild is underway, the school community is still waiting for the final stage of funding

to be committed to complete the Seymour schools merger. This is a vital project for capital funding.

Additional assistance is also sought from the state government to address disadvantage and vulnerability. Research shows that children entering schools in rural and regional areas are more vulnerable than their city counterparts. Opportunities exist for government to tackle this disadvantage, and increase literacy and numeracy skills.

The state government should partner with community organisations such as the Tomorrow Today Foundation in Benalla which are undertaking life-changing work.

Results from the 2018 Australian Early Development Census found that vulnerability of Benalla's children had declined considerably due to the magnificent work done by the Tomorrow Today Foundation through programs such as PEEP.



In recent years the Tomorrow Today Foundation has not been supported by the state government.

The Benalla community is also looking to the government to reverse its \$1.67 million cut to Benalla College's operational budget. These cuts will result in job losses at the school and threaten to have a devastating impact on morale. This budget must maintain funding to Benalla College so the school does not have to lay off teachers and increase class sizes.

Kangaroos

Kangaroos are a wonderful part of the Australian landscape but government needs to take a more active role in managing numbers.

Current figures reflect kangaroo numbers are on the rise and concerns have been raised about the impact kangaroos are having on farmers and motorists.

During tough times farmers often don't have enough feed and water for livestock let alone hundreds, sometimes thousands of kangaroos.

Motorists' safety and expensive car repair bills have also been raised in our communities, particularly around towns such as Heathcote.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning have the responsibility to control kangaroo numbers. Programs such as the Kangaroo Pet Food Scheme have been successful in offering a way of proactively converting a program to a product with an economic benefit for rural and regional communities.

Unfortunately even after a successful five years, the Kangaroo Pet Food Scheme remains a trial and is due to expire in October 2019.

The government must act to make this trial permanent. There is significant concern that the model currently proposed by the government is designed to render the scheme ineffective.

“Kangaroo damage is far worse than I have seen in the Seymour area. I have lived here 50 years”

ALAN SEWELL, SEYMOUR

Health and mental health

Need better medical services. Mental health issues should covered by Medicare. Service gap (city vs the regions).

Youth suicide, want prevention meetings or groups

Fund more local health services (Kilmore)

Regional health facilities – namely mental health and aged care

Dental health should be included in Medicare

Recognition of the remaining Bush Nursing hospitals in legislation to ensure funding streams that are not reliant on the government of the day

Access to bed based health service provision. Access to mental health/social work services.

Rural health and health education

More GPs, reduce wait times. More doctors/physios. More health services.

Health and mental health is a common priority in the Euroa electorate. Communities share a variety of concerns about access, cost and quality.

Living in rural and regional Victoria means access to health and mental health services can be more difficult. It means those who are most vulnerable, like the elderly and children, have to travel

Unfortunately the government has not acted to improve access across our electorate, it has only decimated it. An example of this is the decision to withdraw imaging service in Euroa.

While some of bigger towns have some great facilities, more can be done to improve health and mental health services across the electorate.

Nearly everyone living in the Euroa electorate has been touched in some way by mental health. There have been tragic losses in some of our communities and something needs to be done.

Regional and rural areas have difficulty attracting GPs.

Environment and climate change

Environment and climate change is one of the top concerns raised by communities across the Euroa electorate. Community members are calling for genuine action from the government.

Finding a sustainable balance, where our environment and our industries are protected is key. Euroa communities are also seeking support for individual initiatives such as solar energy, recycling and water storage.

In general, communities are supportive of the development of solar energy, however they are seeking a clear planning

framework from the state government to guide where solar energy facilities should be located.

Assistance with recycling has also been raised as an issue in rural and regional areas. It has been suggested that further education on recycling may be one way to increase our communities' commitment to recycling, however frustration exists over the state government's failure to invest in innovative waste recovery initiatives.

Communities across the Euroa electorate are also concerned about the lack of funding for environmental projects. Landcare, for example, delivers excellent programs across the region but groups rely on state government funding for facilitators which runs out at the end of June. It is vital that this budget refunds Landcare facilitators for a further four years to guarantee the great work of Landcare groups can continue.

Jobs and decentralisation

The community's desire to see more job opportunities in the region was a prominent discussion point in consultations.

The state government has a role to play in attracting and encouraging businesses to the area. A lot of people in our communities want to work where they live but the state government needs to be committed to a serious decentralisation agenda in order for this to occur.

The southern end of the Euroa electorate is affected by Melbourne's rapid growth. Infrastructure in communities like Kilmore,

Wandong and Broadford is starting to show signs of strain from the unchecked growth of Melbourne. At the other end of the electorate, smaller towns and communities are having to work hard to keep businesses and critical infrastructure such as schools open as population declines.

This highlights the need for the state government to make a serious and concerted effort to balancing the state's

population growth. Investment in critical infrastructure to enable business to decentralise is key to this.

Our central location also provides a great opportunity to decentralise the headquarters of a government agency to help stimulate our local economy and provide new job opportunities.

Police and crime

Increased police resources are a priority in this year's budget. Community members have conveyed their need for stability to be returned to local law enforcement, including funding for an increase in police numbers and more rostered police patrols, particularly in some of smaller towns such Rushworth.

The government's failure to make Wallan police station a 24-hour station, despite rapid population growth, is stretching police resources and leaving communities like Kilmore and Broadford exposed. Police from communities those stations are having to respond to calls within the urban growth boundary because of insufficient police numbers.

Funding is also needed for a new Benalla police station. The current station was never purpose built and is a safety risk to local police.

Despite the community's calls to have this project funded, it has been overlooked for the past five years by the current government.

Drugs were also raised as a topical issue within our community, with suggestions for safer afterschool programs for older children and young teenagers to be made a priority, as well as incentives to reduce drug abuse and access.

Most recently, some of our farmers have seen themselves targeted by stock theft and break-ins by extreme animal activists, creating fear for their families, businesses and the welfare of their livestock.

Youth

Communities across the Euroa electorate are concerned about the lack of after school and weekend programs for children and young adults in the area.

With the rate of youth suicide scarily high, and mental health services lacking, socialisation, interaction and support for our youth is extremely important.

FReeZA grants have been one way the government has funded the planning and organisation of drug and alcohol free music and cultural events.

However there is no doubt more can be done by the government to assist towns and great local organisations with after school and weekend programs.

Small business

There are so many wonderful small businesses across the Euroa electorate. Whether owned by long-time residents, families or young people, our small businesses are all different in their own way.

Small businesses rely heavily on support from the local community however concerns have been raised about the lack of assistance and support from government.

An injection into small businesses across the electorate would be incredibly beneficial for our local communities.

If a small business grant program was offered, it might mean that an owner has new opportunities, it could support them to take the next step for their business or to employ a local teenager or to offer something new to the community.

Supporting small business is supporting regional and rural families.

Disability

Local residents living with disabilities and families who are caring for children with autism are stretched to the limit.

Many have raised the need for early intervention, more financial support and greater assistance for parents and carers.

The rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a huge step forward for many people however there have been significant transition issues. Local support groups have stepped up to help individuals and families work through the minefield of paperwork.

Additional resources are needed to give these local support groups the tools they need to help local residents with disabilities.

One respondent also raised concerns about a lack of accessible housing for residents who are living with a disability. This includes specialist disability accommodation and supported independent living services.

Communication

Gaps in mobile phone and internet coverage remains an ongoing frustration for many communities. Reliable telecommunications services are vital in the event of an emergency, particularly during fires.

Digital connectivity also opens up a new world of possibilities, enabling our region to use technology to establish and grow businesses, to become more productive and to leverage new opportunities.

Mobile phone reception is a frustration for communities such as Boho, Goorambat, Upton Hill, Avenel and Toolleen. Wandong residents also raised frustrations with the level of coverage provided by the National Broadband Network. Stories of poor internet speeds, patchy mobile reception and poor internet facilities across our region are not uncommon.

A number of residents called for telcos to be subsidised to extend rural mobile phone coverage while others pointed to a need for more flexible and customisable options for emergency notifications.

While responsibility for telecommunications predominately lies with the Federal Government, the state has an important role to play in advocating for these priorities. In the past, the state has also allocated funding to leverage money from the federal government to roll out more mobile phone towers across Victoria. In this year's budget, Euroa communities are looking for leadership from the state government to improve mobile and internet coverage.

Agriculture

Farming is one of the most significant industries in our electorate. It is the backbone of our regional and rural towns.

With feed prices increasing and water supplies scarce, even the most well-established and prepared farmers in our district are struggling.

Communities across Euroa are calling for significant drought support in this year's budget.

The state government's current drought support package doesn't go far enough and farmers across Mitchell Shire have been dismayed to find themselves excluded from what small measures do exist.

The government must provide funding to deliver shire rate relief and waive the cost of water access fees for irrigators to make a meaningful difference. Communities are also seeking support for education, training and the implementation of regenerative grazing practices to help build drought resilience.

Water

The state government needs to take urgent action to assist irrigators in the Euroa electorate who are struggling with exceptionally high water prices.

In addition to providing drought assistance measures such as the waiving of infrastructure access charges for this season, local irrigators are calling on the state government to provide stronger regulation to ensure transparency in the water market and to review carryover

rules to ensure the environment and water traders are not unfairly using carryover to the detriment of productive users.

Irrigators on the Broken system are also seeking more flexible trading rules due to low reliability.

Cost of living

Increased living costs are a concern for many residents.

Feedback from the community suggests that increases in expenses such as electricity and water bills, fuel prices, rates, car registration and stamp duty are putting pressure on everyday living.

The Andrews Labor Government needs to act to reduce cost of living by putting downward pressure on electricity prices and reviewing car registration costs.

Sport, recreation and arts

Grassroots sporting clubs across the electorate are the heart of our communities. It's one of the most common places people come together.

Our sporting clubs range from football and netball to basketball, cricket, squash, equestrian and more. There are specific sporting projects for each town in the Euroa electorate. A variety of grants and funding streams could provide clubs with new change rooms, upgrades to canteens, facilities for increasing female participation, improvements to club rooms as well as much needed equipment and maintenance.

High quality sporting facilities are important if we want to encourage more people to live an active lifestyle, while engaging with their community.

The Euroa electorate is also very lucky to have a range of other groups within our communities as well as a vibrant and growing arts sector.

Art has the power to revitalise and transform small rural communities. The Benalla Wall to Wall Festival, the north east silo art trail and the Gargarro project in Girgarre for example have helped drive tourism and bring a new people to town. Feedback received during consultations expressed a desire to see further investment in the development and appreciation of the arts.

Emergency services

Protecting our volunteer and community based fire and emergency services is extremely important to communities across the Euroa electorate. Our region has a strong tradition of volunteerism and the role the CFA and SES play in protecting our communities is greatly valued.

Local CFA members are exhausted by the ongoing battle with the state government which has refused to acknowledge their concerns about the restructure of the state's fire services. The government's failure to implement presumptive legislation to assist firefighters with cancer and its threats to tie such important reforms to the successful passing of legislation which would give

the firefighters' union control over the CFA and its volunteers has disgusted many. Communities across Euroa are strongly calling for the state government to support our local CFA brigades and volunteers by abandoning its destructive agenda to merge the fire services and by making a commitment in this year's budget to fund presumptive legislation that is equal for all firefighters, regardless of whether they are volunteer or career.

Requests by town

Kilmore

Kilmore Bypass

Second oval in Kilmore

JJ Clancy Reserve revamp

Better bus service to the hospital and Coles

Inject funds into the main street

A public high school for Kilmore

Funding to seal Dry Creek Rd between Kilmore and Broadford

Kerbing along both sides of Mill Rd and White St

24hr Police Station for Kilmore

Support for Kilmore Men's Shed

Funding for Kilmore Hospital

Rail Trail between Kilmore and Heathcote Junction

Weekend bus service to Kilmore East Station

Round-about at Mill Rd Kilmore, where it joins the Northern Hwy

Safety improvements at the corner of Conway St and Lancefield Rd and footpaths in the area

Footpaths

Better street lighting

Duplication of Highway between Wallan and Kilmore

Nagambie

Capital funding for Nagambie HealthCare's refurbished hospital wing and Vale St development

Funding for full time paramedics

Better fish breeding grounds within Lake Nagambie

Entrances and street appeal

Sealing of key outer lying arterial links like Mullers Rd

Funding for Nagambie Winter Festival

Wattlevale Rd upgrade

Broadford

Upgrade netball facilities

Better lighting at Harley Hammond Reserve

Change rooms and showers for netballers

Upgrade Broadford Railway Station

Benalla

Flashing lights for school zone near Australian Christian College

Hospital funding

Funding for Tomorrow Today

Development of Benalla's lake and surrounds

Upgrade Benalla Police Station

Duplication of the Midland Hwy

Increased support for Benalla College

Synthetic hockey/multipurpose field

Benalla Gymnastics Club spring floor

Seymour

Funding for Kings Park

Funding for Chittick Park

Funding for final stages at Seymour College

Funding to upgrade bus stop at St Mary's College

Upgrade corner of Emily St and Tallarook St

Funding for local parks to cater for broader ages

Dog park

Legal aid services

Funding for Tennis in Seymour

Flood mitigation

Improved pedestrian mobility

Improve entrance to town

European wasp management

Longwood

Funding for activities and events that bring the community together

Better mobile phone reception for Longwood

Euroa

Support for businesses and building development on Binney St

Improve drainage on Kennedy St

Fund restoration along Sevens Creek

Shade sail for the local pool

Re-instate imaging service

Toolleen

Funding to upgrade the showgrounds

Upgrade the intersection of Cornella-Toolleen Road and the Northern Highway, Toolleen

Funding to support the aging population

Extension of Cornella-Colbinabbin Pipeline

Wandong

Improvements to NBN

Maintain area around Wandong and Heathcote Junction railway lines

Burning off

Violet Town

Natural gas

Doctor in Violet Town

Ruffly

Improvements to internet services

Tallarook

Sewer for Tallarook

Avenel

Re-surfacing of the Avenel end of Seymour-Avenel Rd

Funding for an upgrade to the freeway crossing/intersection at Avenel Roadhouse

Toilets and water station for Stewart Park

Byrneside

Overtaking lanes in each direction
Midland Hwy Byrneside to Mooroopna

Mt Bruno

Telecommunication coverage and reliability

Toolamba

Toolamba Bridge

Girgarre

Funding for 'Gargarro'

What else was raised?

Western Ring Rd Bypass

Widening of Hume Hwy to Wallan

Cost of living pressure – cheaper car registration, reduce stamp duty for regional people

Homelessness

Housing

Family violence

Funding for activities that bring the community together

Government transparency

Relevant adult training courses

Lack of autism awareness

High rates

Noise increase and possibility of an accident on Mansfield Rd Benalla because of speed increase to 80kms

Equality for all ethnicity, gender etc

Taxation review

Support for those with Cerebral Palsy

Support for Veterans

Wildlife protection for future generations

Support for not for profit organisations who are aiding the community

Funding for GO TAFE in regional areas

Fire safety

Support for small towns

Increased funding for local government

Support for the CFA

Public hospital in Strathbogie Shire

Funding for Men's Shed