

# Bridget McKenzie

The Nationals Senator for Victoria

## Newsletter



December 2012

**In this edition:**  Federal health cuts bite  Contribute to Coalition cybersafety policy  Labor's debt shame  Recognising local volunteers  Out and About

Victorian Health Service	Budget cut by Labor
Barwon Health	\$4.9million
Bendigo Health	\$2.9 million
Ballarat Health	\$2.8 million
Latrobe Regional Hospital	\$2.2 million
Goulburn Valley Health	\$1.87 million
Mildura Base Hospital	\$1.1 million
Albury Wodonga Health	\$1.1 million
Northeast Health Wangaratta	\$1.1 million

### Fed health cuts hit regional Vic

In a desperate attempt to deliver its promised surplus, Federal Labor has ripped more than \$106 million dollars from Victorian hospitals half way through the financial year.

Several regional hospitals were among the state's biggest losers, including Bendigo Health, Latrobe Regional Hospital and Barwon Health.

The savage cuts have been described as "unprecedented", "drastic" and "totally unacceptable" by Bendigo Health. The hospital said it would have no choice but to close beds, cancel elective surgery and make staff redundant. Labor has blamed lower than expected population growth for the retrospective cuts.

The impacts of this decision will hurt regional Victorian communities and I have written to the Federal Health Minister appealing for common sense to prevail.



### Have your say on online safety

More than two thirds of Australians aged 15 to 65 own an internet-enabled mobile phone and over 90 percent of high school students have a Facebook account. I am sure there are many kids who hope to find a smartphone or tablet under the tree on Christmas morning.

With this shift to wireless technologies, keeping our children safe online isn't as simple as stationing the family computer in the living room where you can keep an eye on things. Parents, carers and teachers say they need some support.

Following a lengthy period of consultation with community and industry, the Coalition online safety working group has released a discussion paper on enhancing online safety for children.

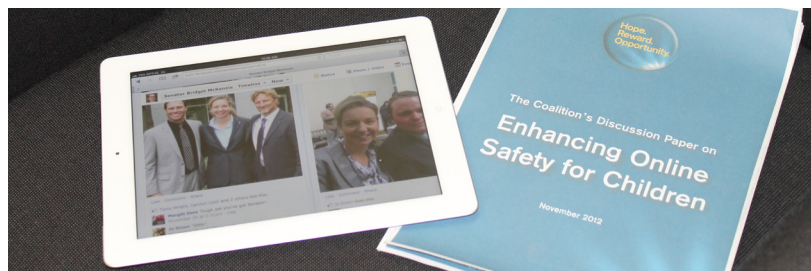
As Victoria's representative on the committee, I firmly believe that more can be done to protect children online without diminishing the freedom, opportunity and individual experiences of the internet.

The paper outlines several policy proposals based on the ideas and feedback received in submissions and forums held across the nation, including in my patron seat of Bendigo.

To ensure we develop the best possible policy solutions, your views are sought on measures including:

- ✓ the establishment of an e-safety commissioner
- ✓ implementing rapid removal protocols with large social media outlets for harmful material targeted at a child, through a co-operative regulatory scheme
- ✓ nationally agreed product requirements for devices and branding indicating their suitability for children, to help parents and carers make informed purchasing decisions.
- ✓ providing greater support for schools through a stronger online safety component within the National Safe Schools Framework, and assistance with online safety resources.

The discussion paper is available at [www.bridgetmckenzie.com.au/policy](http://www.bridgetmckenzie.com.au/policy) or by contacting my office. Written submissions can be sent to me directly by 29 March 2013.





*Psst...visit my website for all my latest media releases and speeches!*

## Labor's debt disaster continues

Since coming to office the Rudd/Gillard government has spent an incredible \$172 billion more than it has raised in revenue. There is no shortage of waste examples, many uncovered by the Coalition during this year's Senate Estimates.

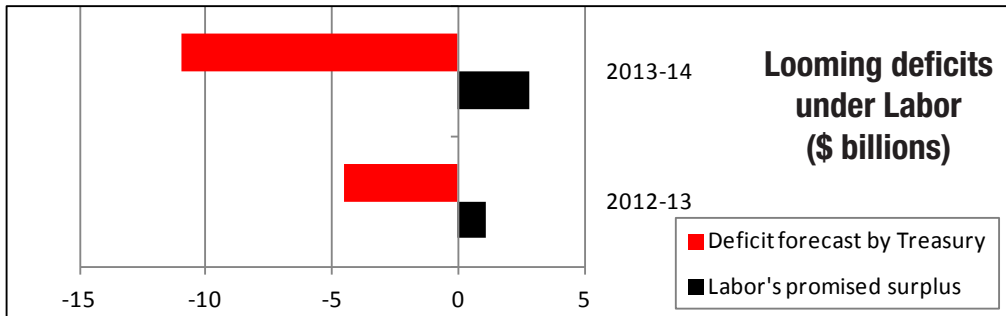
The government's failed border protection policies have resulted in an immigration budget blowout of \$6.6 billion in the last four years, each illegal boat costing taxpayers \$12 million.

Labor is spending \$69.5 million advertising its carbon tax including \$79,700 on building three fake

kitchens for the TV campaign. Using real kitchens would have cost \$5,000 a day.

After squandering the surplus it inherited from the Coalition in 2007, Labor has managed to rack up a \$147.3 billion dollar debt – the biggest in our nation's history – meaning Australians are now paying almost \$20 million in interest every day.

The latest Treasury modelling suggests this year's wafer thin surplus could turn into a \$4.5 billion deficit and that we could be \$11 billion in the red next year.



## Volunteers the heart and soul of our communities

Senator McKenzie used International Volunteer Day to honour Tom Deason and Morley Cooke for their wonderful efforts at the Bendigo District RSL Museum.

"Volunteers perform an essential role in our community, particularly in the regions, and it was fantastic to see how Tom and Morley's involvement in the museum helps promote the ANZAC spirit in central Victoria," Senator McKenzie said.

"The gentlemen take great pride in showing people around the centre and sharing their knowledge, helping visitors understand the sacrifices made by our service men and women, and the significant contribution Australians have made to wars around the world."

Mr Deason and Mr Cooke enlisted for National Service in 1954 and reunited by chance 57 years later, as volunteers at the museum.

## Out & About



**OUT & ABOUT top - bottom:** discussing local issues with Yarriambiack Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Ballantyne; taking on AFL legend Dipper during Parliamentary Sports Day; at Hopetoun Secondary College with Aussie of the month, Sibin; it was a pleasure to present Mr Deason and Mr Cooke with certificates of appreciation and an Australian flag on International Volunteers Day.

### Contact Bridget

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with joy, hope and success. Visit my new office in the Hargreaves Mall in 2013.



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