



DR SOPHIE SCAMPS MP  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACKELLAR

# **2024 Federal Budget**

Submission by Dr Sophie  
Scamps, Independent MP  
for Mackellar

2 February 2024

## Introduction

This submission focusses on the broad policy areas that I have advocated for since being elected in 2022: climate change action, environmental protection, integrity measures, primary and preventative health care and advancement of women.

Additionally, I have made some suggestions that are related to measures that will alleviate the cost of living for my constituents and the Australian community more broadly. I am cognisant of the need to avoid spending which will fuel inflation in the current high inflation context.

The second part of my submission deals with Mackellar-specific funding issues.

## Format of submission

Part 1 – Australia-wide policy proposals

Part 2 - Mackellar specific measures

## 1. Cost of Living

### 1.1 Rental Support

**Action: Increase rental assistance for recipients of government support by 40%**

I note that the 2023-24 Budget included a 15% increase in rental assistance. At the time, ACOSS asked for a 40% increase. Since then, rents have continued to climb, particularly in capital cities. In my own electorate of Mackellar, the ability of those on government payments to find affordable housing - either social housing or in the private sector - has become a real crisis. I would urge the government to increase rental assistance by the full 40% in this Budget, to help our most vulnerable

### 1.2 Address duopolies in Australia's economy and price gouging

**Action: Adequately fund the ACCC to undertake the review into supermarkets**

I support the government's review announced in January 2024 which will investigate supermarket prices from the farm gate to supermarket shelves. I also support the measures to have Choice monitor prices. I would support a more permanent form of price surveillance, until such time as we are confident that competitive forces are fully operating in consumers' interests.

**Action: Empower the ACCC to more broadly consider the adequacy of our competition laws**

Australia has some of the most concentrated sectors of industry in the world: supermarkets, department stores, banks, insurance, energy and media. I support funding for a broader competition law review.

### 1.3 Small business insurance costs

**Action: Conduct an independent inquiry into the cost of insurance for small business**

A recent survey of small businesses in Mackellar by my office revealed a common theme of concern about the rising cost of insurance. The rising cost of insurance is also relevant in a climate change mitigation context. I ask that Treasury consider more in-depth work into the rising cost of insurance which is affecting both businesses and families.

### 1.4 Key worker accommodation support

**Action: Develop accommodation for key workers in capital cities**

Housing costs have become so acute in my electorate that schools are struggling to attract teachers. The Northern Beaches Hospital struggles to attract and retain nursing and support staff, and small businesses are struggling to find and retain workers.

I note the government's \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund has now been established to support an ongoing pipeline of funding for social and affordable rental housing.

However, I believe the Federal Government needs to work with the states to secure key worker accommodation, either through this fund or as a separate policy initiative. This has been a priority in cities like London. Sydney now has similarly expensive real estate and should look to these jurisdictions for solutions. These could include tax incentives to encourage private investment in key worker housing, working with the states to develop joint programs, including by taking advantage of state or federal underutilised land – close to government services like hospitals or schools – to drive these developments.

In my own electorate, the state Independent Member for Wakehurst is calling for additional affordable housing in a new development planned for a former school site.<sup>1</sup> This is precisely the sort of development that could be incentivised by federal assistance.

## 2. Health

As a former general practitioner, I have concentrated on the health portfolio and particularly the current issues facing my former profession. These include the shortage of GPs and the decreasing capacity for GPs to bulk bill patients following the several year Medicare rebate freeze for GP consultations. Public health is another policy area close to my heart. Taking steps now to address broader public health issues such as obesity are not only likely to lead to a healthier population, but offer significant budgetary savings in the future.

### 2.1 GP services

Treating people at the primary care level and providing them with affordable access to GPs is the best way to keep Australians healthy and prevent chronic disease. It is also the key to keeping control of our national health care budget.

Visiting the doctor is also a significant expense for families and older people who are suffering cost of living pressures. Budget measures to make GP visits more affordable can take pressure off family budgets with little inflationary impact.

#### 2.1.1 Action: increase Medicare rebate

Lift the rebate on GP consultations to address out-of-pocket expenses.

The current average gap on a standard B consultation is close to \$42.00. This is a considerable expense for many families and meant that in 2023 many people delayed

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael Koziol, [Minns urged to lift affordable housing in a new development planned for a former school site](#), Sydney Morning Herald online, 29 January 2024, accessed 30 January 2024.

or avoided seeing their GP altogether. In this Budget and the next, the government should work toward a serious overhaul of out-of-pocket expenses by increasing the Medicare rebate for primary care services. I support the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' (RACGP) recommendation to focus on longer C and D consultations, which are used by people with more complex conditions.

There is a shortage of GPs providing end-of-life care for patients in their homes, so I would also urge greater rebates for GPs involved in this vital area of care. The initial home palliative care consult should attract a higher Medicare rebate than follow up visits, as it often involves substantial time to set up the person to remain in their home.

### **2.1.2 Action: More support for mental health consultations**

I support the submission made by the RACGP on better funding for mental health consultations. In the wake of Covid, young people are still suffering from the mental health effects of missing school. This is on top of concerns about climate change and the impact of high housing prices on their future.

## **2.2 Play therapy**

### **Action: Add play therapy programs to the Medicare schedule as a rebatable service**

Play therapy is a developmentally responsive, play-based mental health intervention for children aged 3-12 who are experiencing social, emotional, behavioural and relational disorders.

Mental ill health is now so common in Australia that treatment is not keeping up with demand. Investing in treatment options which prevent chronic ill health are essential and commonsense. Children's trauma and mental distress are vastly undertreated in Australia and play therapy is a treatment option that can prevent chronic mental ill health.

Play therapy is well-recognised in the UK and USA. In the UK, most schools have a play therapist on-site as well as a counsellor. Evidence shows that children who undergo play therapy walk away with greater self-awareness, self-regulation, see an increase in pro-social behaviour, and a reduction in emotional distress, hyperactivity and peer difficulties. With 50% of all mental illness beginning by the age of 14, not intervening early results in costs to a child's wellbeing and their future, and costs to the economy.

Currently in Australia, evidence-based early interventions such as play therapy are not available through the Better Access initiative, which means that clients cannot use their mental health plan to access help.

I request that consideration be given to extending the Better Access initiative to child-centred play therapy to ensure all families who need such support can access it.

## 2.3 Improving GP practices

### **Action: Support for multi-disciplinary care teams in GP practice**

I also support the RACGP request for additional financial support for GP practices to employ multidisciplinary teams. This measure will allow practices to employ more nurse practitioners, dietitians, and mental health professionals, which is better for patients and takes pressure off acute care services.

## 2.4 Measures to address the GP shortage

### **Actions: Fund the salary gap for trainee GPs when they transition from hospital training (approx \$30,000, per doctor, per year), and ensure portability of parental and study leave**

The RACGP estimates that Australia will have a GP shortage of 11,000 by 2030. We need to act now to encourage doctors to specialise in general practice. There are a number of impediments to doctors who complete their hospital training and then

move into GP practice to complete GP specialist training, particularly for women doctors.

These include:

- The lack of parental leave and study leave portability, so when a young doctor leaves the state-based hospital system for a GP specialisation in private practice, they lose their accrued entitlements.
- The fall in income that occurs when a doctor leaves the hospital system for a training position in a GP practice, approximately \$30,000 a year.

The RACGP and the GPRA have put forward a number of detailed proposals to address these structural issues but in my view, it will require government funds.

I strongly urge the government to consider their suggestions to address these impediments to young doctors moving to GP practice. Without action, we run the risk of a serious GP shortage, which will ultimately cost future budgets by putting pressure on more expensive acute care services and/or cause people to delay seeking early treatment for complex conditions.

## 2.5 Palliative care

**Action: Support Palliative Care Australia's three priority areas: \$100m over three years.**

I support Palliative Care Australia's three priority areas:

- Establishing a program of non-clinical care for people under 65 with a life limiting illness to allow them to continue with their daily activities and to remain at home and out of hospital.
- Extending palliative care in aged care beyond June 2024.

- Improve access to after-hours palliative care services by analysing gaps in service provision, while working with states and territories and primary care providers to design referral and care pathways that increase access to after-hours palliative care.

I would also urge increased funding for GP-led, community palliative care teams, so that people who choose to stay at home can receive the support they need. One idea is to fund “flying squad” emergency care teams who can visit from hospitals when people reach the acute stage of dying. I realise this may be a state responsibility but with an aging population, it is essential that we allow people the choice to remain in the community to die.

## 2.6 Public health

- 2.6.1 Actions: Implement the National Obesity Strategy in full, beginning with an inter-governmental team to drive and measure progress**
- Implement a ban on advertising unhealthy food to children**
- Fully fund the National Preventative Health Strategy**
- Fully fund the National Diabetes Strategy**

Our health system is coming under ever increasing financial and capacity stress. Ambulances are increasingly ramping for extended periods in emergency departments, which in turn means increased wait times for people in the community. Hospitals are dealing with bed block and long surgery wait lists. There are shortages of medical staff, including nurses and GPs. Prevention of chronic disease is the most commonsense way to reduce the burden on our health system.

As a former GP, I have been promoting a ban on advertising of unhealthy food to children. I look forward to further action later this year following an in-depth feasibility study being performed through the University of Wollongong.

But there is much more we can do. We need to fully fund the **National Obesity Strategy**. It found that the cost of obesity to our community annually was \$11.8bn, with \$5.4bn attributable to direct health costs.

I am also currently a member of the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport's Inquiry into Diabetes. Again, this is an urgent issue. If action is taken, it could yield enormous future dividends. It is also an important equity issue, as many migrant and first nations communities are more vulnerable to this disease. I urge funding for the **National Diabetes Strategy**.

Finally, we need to fully fund the **National Preventative Health Strategy**.

Taking action on these three strategies would demonstrate a powerful commitment by the government to the future health and wellbeing of the nation, and also a commitment to equity in health outcomes, as the burden of chronic disease often falls on those who can least afford it and on rural and remote communities.

As each of these strategies shows there are enormous future savings to be had. We cannot postpone this investment any longer.

### **2.6.2 Meningococcal B vaccine**

#### **Action: Fund the Meningococcal B vaccine for children through the National Immunisation Program (NIP)**

The current recommendation from the Commonwealth Health Department is that infants under 2 should receive the MenACWY vaccine, which is funded through the NIP for all children from 12 months old.

The Men B vaccination is also recommended for children under 2 but is not funded except for children of indigenous background. It costs families who choose to immunise their children \$200 per dose, and depending on age, up to \$600. The

government should consider remedying this situation as both a cost-of-living and preventative health measure.

### 3. Integrity measures

#### 3.1 Embedding ethics in government decision-making

**Action: Support the establishment of an Australian Institute of Applied Ethics to advise government and the private sector: \$30m (capital contribution)**

I support the request by Dr Simon Longstaff's Ethic's Centre, in conjunction with the University of NSW and the University of Sydney, calling for a \$30m investment in a jointly-funded centre to assist the government in embedding ethical considerations in government decision making.

The importance of such a centre will increase as AI becomes part of government processes and decision making. The Robodebt affair showed what can go wrong. But beyond AI, all facets of our democracy would be improved by a consideration of the ethical implications of policy making.

Modelling by Deloitte shows that there is potential for significant economic dividends: as much as a \$45bn improvement in GDP, as well as an improvement in the quality of decision making and public trust in institutions.

#### 3.2 Reforms to government appointment processes

**Action: Establish a Public Appointments Commissioner (PAC) and departmental Independent Selection Panels (ISP), to be overseen by a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Appointments (PJCA) \$5m**

My Ending Jobs for Mates Private Members Bill, which I introduced in 2023, calls for a more rigorous and permanent process to ensure that important appointments by

government are at arm's length. I strongly urge the government to fund the appointments body and adopt my bill. These steps are critical in the re-establishment of trust in our democracy and would demonstrate that the Albanese Government is determined to cooperate differently to the previous government.

## 4. Climate Change

### 4.1 Solar interest free loans

**Action: Interest free loans of \$15,000 to allow home-owners to install rooftop solar**

I strongly urge the Federal Government to consider offering homeowners \$15,000 interest-free loans to install rooftop solar systems, without a cap or postcode qualification. Offering interest free finance will dramatically increase the uptake of household solar.

My colleague in the NSW Parliament, the Member for Wakehurst, has modelled the policy for NSW at a cost of \$1.18bn in interest forgone over twenty years. However, the cumulative economic benefit to households in NSW exceeds \$19bn by 2043 (when the final loan is repaid). Some 33% of homes in NSW have rooftop solar but installations are stalling as those most open to investing in rooftop solar (available cash, 'technology friendly') have mostly done so. Interest-free government loans offer a low-cost way to encourage homeowners and landlords to immediately access savings from rooftop solar and accelerate the state's emissions reduction.

### 4.2 More funds for electrification of households

**Action: Concessional funding to enable replacement of gas appliances in homes and small businesses. A federally led phase out of gas appliances through a ban on new and replacement gas appliances from 2025**

Victoria and some councils are already mandating a phase out of gas appliances in new homes. The Federal Government should take a leadership role and develop a package of financial and policy measures to support the electrification of homes and small businesses, including:

- A concessional financing facility for capital upgrades and replacement of gas appliances, delivered in partnership with the states and territories;
- A progressive phase out of gas appliances by requiring new residential and commercial buildings to be all-electric and banning replacement gas appliances from 2025.

#### **4.3 Incentives for batteries**

**Action: Greater investment in community batteries, subsidies for home batteries to drive greater deployment of battery storage to avoid spending on the grid**

Home batteries should be better utilised in urban settings to help match the supply of electricity with demand in peak periods (by discharging stored electricity back to the grid in peak periods) and reduce the cost of electricity for all households.

Many households are keen to invest in battery storage but are unable to do so either for financial reasons or because batteries remain just out of reach as a financially sound investment.

Some states have introduced subsidies for battery storage as a means of taking pressure off their grids. The Federal Government should encourage the roll out of batteries in consultation with the states. The policy should encourage investment in both household batteries and community batteries. The economic benefits will flow to all households by avoiding capital investment in the grid and providing necessary firming of the system.

#### 4.4 Solar incentives for retirement villages

**Action: Subsidies to retirement villages to incentivise the installation of solar  
Establish an expert unit to assist retirement villages with the transition**

In my electorate we have a large number of self-care retirement villages and aged care homes. The largest, Anzac Village, run by RSL Lifecare, has 700 homes over a 100-acre site, as well as large facilities buildings. But there is not a single solar panel to be seen.

The reason lies in the financial ownership structures. The buildings are owned by RSL Lifecare. Residents generally have a long-term lease (and tenure until they depart) and are responsible for the electricity bills. There is no incentive to the village owner/operator to install solar as it does not pay the power bills, and the return of the upfront payment on departure is fixed on entry to the village.

My electorate staff is aware of strong interest among residents to install solar, but despite raising the matter with RSL Lifecare, it has not been possible to make progress. They report that this is because the operator views other regulatory matters as priorities and it will see no direct financial benefit.

Although there are different arrangements across the retirement village sector, this kind of a misalignment of ownership and financial benefits is repeated frequently in the sector.

Subsidies in this area would deliver real and meaningful benefits to a large population of older people on pensions and fixed incomes, while offering significant benefits to the grid and to the environment, particularly if coupled with community batteries in these medium density villages. As our ageing population increases, implementing such initiatives now will reap increased benefits in the decades to come.

#### 4.5 Solar for renters and unit blocks

**Action: Increase funding for solar on unit blocks, establish an expert unit to assist owners' corporations**

I welcomed the government's announcement of funding to assist owners' corporations (\$30m in NSW), to install solar on unit blocks. This will likely not be sufficient, and I urge the government to increase funding for this important initiative that will particularly help renters. Again, an expertise deficit appears to hinder owners' corporations in installing solar. The policy needs to be coupled with a free advice unit to assist inexperienced owners' corporations to apply and make the transition.

#### 4.6 Prioritise infrastructure investment that drives down emissions

**Action: Immediate implementation of fuel efficiency standards for personal transport, subsidies to federal and state transport fleets, investment in public transport**

I support the announcement of a fuel efficiency standard to encourage decarbonisation of transport as promised by the government at the 2022 election. It will increase choice, lower carbon emissions, and drive down prices of EVs which remain high in Australia.

However, federal funding will likely be needed to support state governments to electrify public transport fleets. Infrastructure investment should be directed to strengthening public transport services that have low or zero emissions (electric buses and trains) and toward significantly improving infrastructure for active transport (bicycles, walking) through shared investment under the Commonwealth Infrastructure Investment Program.

#### 4.7 Decarbonising freight, aviation and shipping

**Action: Funding for a strategy for decarbonising commercial transport**

The Australian Government should develop a transport sector wide plan for decarbonising transport beyond personal transport, addressing key sub-sectors including aviation, logistics, infrastructure and shipping. This plan should include identification of the viable transition pathways and timeframes for implementation by each sub-sector and include funding for studies and later implementation.

Given our transport, construction and mining emissions are increasing and represent a very significant proportion (19.8% in 2023) of our emissions, this should be a priority area for investment in innovation as well as implementation.

#### 4.8 Ending deforestation, preserving native forests

**Action: Declare a timetable for ending all native forest logging, allocate funds for a transition package to assist communities, invest in hardwood plantation forestry.**

I am the sponsor of the Native Forest Pledge which is calling for an end to all native forest logging in Australia.

Serious progress towards our climate emissions targets can be made by immediately ceasing the industrial scale logging of native forests. Victoria and WA have already decided to end this practice but it is still occurring in NSW, Tasmania and in parts of Queensland. NSW and Tasmanian Forestry Corp annual reports show that this form of logging, as opposed to plantation forestry, is loss making and is being subsidised by state governments. It makes no sense to be funding planting of trees under carbon programs when we are destroying mature growth forests that operate as efficient carbon sinks and which are also home to many threatened species.

Multiple economic studies show there will be net gains to state economies in ending native forest logging and moving to hardwood plantations. It will boost tourism, improve environmental outcomes, and contribute to meeting our carbon emissions targets. I therefore ask that Treasury allocate funds to assist in a transition package for the remaining states.

**Action: Re-establish a fund, similar to the defunct National Reserve System program, beginning with a \$1bn investment, to fund private conservation.**

I also ask the government to reinstate a fund to assist in private conservation of valuable forests. This fund was abolished in 2013. We are aware of numerous national and international philanthropists who would invest in projects identified by Pew Foundation, Bushcare Australia and the Nature Conservancy, if there was matching federal support.

## 5. Domestic violence support

### 5.1 Funding to ensure women and children can stay in their homes

**Action: Fund the Staying Home, Leaving Violence domestic violence program on the Northern Beaches and the North Shore – and statewide: \$5m**

I am calling for the Staying Home Leaving Violence domestic violence program to be funded and offered here on the Northern Beaches and throughout NSW.

The program recognises that domestic violence can leave women and children homeless when they are the victims of domestic violence. In conjunction with the NSW police, the program works to ensure women and children can stay in their homes and the abuser is relocated to a new dwelling. Currently, it is common for a woman escaping domestic violence to need to move at least 3 times until they are able to find long term accommodation. If a woman is caring for school age children during this time, this is deeply disruptive for them and may mean the children need to change schools multiple times.

As part of a federal adoption of this program I would advocate for a federally legislated and funded right of all women who are domestic violence victims to have the right to choose to stay home, and keep her children's home safe and stable, when the home is made unsafe.

## **5.2 Women's Resilience Centre – recovery from domestic violence**

**Action: Fund the Women's Resilience program to enable greater reach throughout Australia: \$1m in 2024-25 rising to \$2m in following years.**

The Women's Resilience Centre was developed by constituents in my electorate and offers programs to assist women to recover from domestic violence trauma and to return to the workforce.

In 2023 it helped 229 women in 50+ locations.

This volunteer run organisation fills a vital gap in helping traumatised women get back on their feet. It provides mentoring from people who share experiences of recovery from domestic violence as well as on-line and in-person courses, and advice on re-establishing financial stability. So far it has been funded by a \$75,000 Federal Infrastructure Grant and some small grants via my office but it relies heavily on donors such as Toll Holdings and ASX Ltd. It is currently attempting to extend its services into rural areas where there is high demand and a lack of service.

Federal funding would greatly assist this project and would likely return dividends to the community by helping people return to work. [Women's Resilience Centre](http://womensresiliencecentre.com.au)  
[womensresiliencecentre.com.au](http://womensresiliencecentre.com.au)

## **5.3 Fund a rebuild of the women's shelter at Dee Why – see Mackellar section**

## Part 2 - Mackellar specific measures

### 6. Investment in Mackellar

As an electorate on the very northern tip of the Sydney urban area, Mackellar continues to suffer from some serious infrastructure deficiencies attributable to the neglect of successive Liberal governments which regarded Mackellar as a safe seat (the Liberals) or an unwinnable one (Labor).

#### 6.1 Investment in Mackellar's cultural industries

##### 6.1.1 A new music auditorium and cultural hub

**Action: \$2m to undertake feasibility and planning for a large music auditorium and rehearsal facility on the Northern Beaches. Total cost likely to be approximately \$30m.**

The Northern Beaches are home to many professional musicians, actors, digital music producers and other performers. Cultural industries are one of our major employment sectors. The Northern Beaches also have a vibrant amateur music community, as well as many school orchestras and theatrical groups. The local community, which has given me a presentation, estimated 15,000 people participate in large musical groups on a regular basis.

The Northern Beaches lack a large performance space and cultural hub that can be used by schools, professional musicians and community organisations. The largest space is at Pittwater High School which is more in the nature of a repurposed gym (capacity circa 450 people).

Considerable work has been done by community groups to assess likely demand for a large auditorium and rehearsal spaces in conjunction with Northern Beaches Council.

I understand from the community that the NSW Department of Education has identified and offered to donate land for the auditorium.

This initiative would be consistent with the government's recently announced cultural policy, Revive, which aims to provide strong cultural infrastructure that boosts the creative industries, and co-operation between professional performers and schools.

### **6.1.2 Glen Street Theatre auditorium seating**

#### **Action: \$900,000 to refurbish seating at Glen Street theatre**

The Glen Street Theatre is a cultural institution on the Northern Beaches, having served the community for almost 40 years. Asset renewal is overdue, and many current seats have reached end of life or are no longer providing the support required, particularly for older community members that use this service. The indicative cost of replacement of auditorium seating is \$900,000 to be delivered 2024/25 financial year.

## **6.2 Mackellar Roads**

### **6.2.1 Wakehurst Parkway**

#### **Action: Funds to complete the Wakehurst Parkway upgrade**

The Wakehurst Parkway is a major commuter artery for people on the Northern Beaches to access the Northern Beaches Hospital and to commute to Chatswood and the city for work. It is a single lane road which suffers traffic congestion and regularly floods, limiting access to the Northern Beaches Hospital from several suburbs. It also has a number of dangerous bends and turnoffs. The NSW Government has so far contributed \$75m and has jointly funded flood works with the Council.

The Albanese Government cancelled \$75 million dollars in funding for the upgrade of the Wakehurst parkway in 2022, after the Beaches Link Tunnel was scrapped by the NSW Government. Nonetheless there remains, I believe, a shortfall to complete the

roadworks in a timely manner. I urge the Federal Government to re-allocate \$75 million of federal funding for upgrades to this road to support NSW to create a safe and reliable road.

I reflect that Avoca Drive, a state road in the electorate of Robertson, received \$100 million from the Federal Government for upgrades last year.

### **6.2.2 Warringah Freeway and Pittwater Road Interchange**

**Action: Fund the detailed design work for a flyover for this dangerous and congested major intersection - \$500,000. Assess the project for national funding.**

This dangerous and major intersection, where Warringah Road meets Pittwater Road, is outside my electorate but affects most commuters on the Northern Beaches. The A8 corridor which includes this intersection is one of the five most congested corridors in Sydney.

Known locally as “the Officeworks intersection”, this huge T intersection has been the site of multiple fatal crashes. A proposal was put to the NSW State Government for a flyover/underpass that would mean there would no longer be a need for lights or for traffic to stop.

It would represent a major improvement in commuter and commercial traffic on the Northern Beaches, and for this reason should be considered by the Federal Government as a priority project of national significance.

The proposal, I believe is also supported by the MP for Warringah, Zali Steggall.

### 6.2.3 Mona Vale Road

#### **Action: Assist the NSW Government to complete the widening of Mona Vale Road**

The NSW State Government has commenced widening this important arterial road to 4 lanes (2 each way) and address notorious blackspots. The east side widening is almost complete, but the Minns Government delayed or cancelled the west side in its 2023 Budget, allegedly for financial reasons.<sup>2</sup>

Completion of the full \$600m upgrade requires an additional \$340m. I ask that you consider federal funding to assist NSW, either with a direct infrastructure grant or concessional finance to bring forward this important project.

### 6.3 Telecommunications

#### **Action: Fund upgrades to telecommunications links for “remote” suburbs in Mackellar.**

There are several communities accessible only by boat in my electorate, including Coasters Retreat and Mackerel Beach. They suffer from poor communications due to their relative remoteness. I am seeking additional support to ensure they can access telecommunications services commensurate with the rest of Sydney.

### 6.4 \$15m for Dee Why emergency accommodation for women and children

#### **Action: \$15m to rebuild emergency accommodation in Dee Why to serve women and children fleeing domestic violence on the Northern Beaches and North Shore of Sydney**

This facility is the main crisis care facility for women fleeing domestic violence on the Northern Beaches. The current facilities are very run down and require rebuilding.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Mona Vale Road West - Mona Vale Road upgrade | Transport for NSW.](#)

## 6.5 Cromer High School hall and multi-sport facility

**Action: \$10m, matched by NSW funding for a new school hall and multi-sport courts to for the whole community**

Cromer High School, the biggest high school in my electorate has over 1,100 students but no adequate school hall. There is also a serious deficit of sports facilities; particularly indoor basketball facilities. The school has doubled in student population within the last nine years, with further growth predicted.

The NSW State Government has been presented with a proposal to develop a hall and 5-6 courts that would be run by Northern Beaches Council and the school and provide access for the entire community, which would assist in the ongoing running costs for the facility.

## 6.6 New athletics track for the Northern Beaches

**Action: Fund a new athletics track for the Northern Beaches, repair the Narrabeen facility.**

The Northern Beaches are home to a vibrant athletics scene and has fostered the careers of numerous Olympic athletes. The current athletics track at the Sydney Academy of Sport is closed due to deterioration of its surface from flooding and could remain closed for months, with no guarantee that the flooding issues can be resolved.

There are potentially other sites where a new facility could be built that would be more accessible for clubs and schools throughout the northern part of the city. With the Paris Olympics looming, the demand for the track is likely to increase sharply. It is just not acceptable for Sydney Academy not to have a viable training facility. The spending would pay dividends in the future for Australia's athletics performance at future Olympics.