

Rebekha Sharkie MP MAYO MATTERS



WELCOME

It's hard to believe we're almost through another year.

2025 has been busy with community events, meetings, civics lessons, Parliament and of course an election!

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Mayo community for trusting me to continue as your representative in Canberra.



ALGAL BLOOM

As the weather really warms up, there's increased concern about the ongoing harmful algal bloom and its impacts. As well as the environmental devastation, we've seen consequences for residents, business, industries and coastal communities. I have advocated for, and welcome, the Federal Government investment to match state contributions. We now have more than \$100 million in funding for the environment, science, industry, business and local communities. As the bloom continues, I encourage people to head to our coastal towns and support them as much as possible.

TEAM SA

In August, Great Southern Reef scientists joined a delegation of SA mayors in Canberra, to discuss the harmful algal bloom. I organised a Team SA approach, bringing together MPs and Senators from all sides of politics to show solidarity and a bipartisan approach on this important issue.



GREAT SOUTHERN REEF

Part of the response to the algal bloom is longer-term planning for future bloom events. You may have heard of the Great Southern Reef which spans more than 8,000 kms of coastline, from Western Australia, along South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and into New South Wales. The reef is significant in terms of biodiversity and unique species and supports fisheries, tourism and recreational activities. The Great Southern Reef Foundation is calling for a \$40 million investment over 10 years, for baseline monitoring of the reef. I support this funding and have addressed the issue in Parliament. Monitoring would allow biodiversity assessment and early detection of climate change issues, such as marine heatwaves and changing ocean currents.

DROUGHT

Another environmental issue that's been prolonged in our electorate is the drought. The year began with water shortages after one of the driest summers on record. Both primary producers and residents reliant on rainwater were left high and dry. I raised this with both the State and Federal Governments, and we saw grants and support start to flow. Although we've had some good recent rain, it hasn't been enough to restore deeper soil moisture in most areas. We know the effects of drought are generally felt for at least 18 months after it's broken. Nonetheless, it has been encouraging to see paddocks turn green and primary producers in our region somewhat more optimistic about the future.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional infrastructure, both transit and social, is crucial to Mayo and our residents. The electorate’s largest town is Mount Barker. It’s one of the country’s fastest growing areas, but infrastructure has failed to keep up. I’ve advocated for investment into our region and in the past few months there’s been progress on several projects. Works are underway on the Freeway Interchange Upgrade at Mount Barker. A reminder for busy Mount Barker commuters, that it may be a good idea to use the second interchange at Bald Hills Road, while works are underway. The new section (Stage 4) of the Amy Gillett bikeway between Mt Torrens and Birdwood has also officially opened.



WOODSIDE BARRACKS

I’m hoping clarification is imminent on the future of the Woodside Barracks. I’ve been trying to get an answer from the Federal Government about the Barracks for some time. An audit into Defence land assets was handed to the Government two years ago in December 2023. In September 2024 I asked a question in Parliament about the Barracks, I wrote to the Defence Minister in May this year, I asked another question in Parliament in October – but we’re still waiting for answers. The local community overwhelmingly wants to retain the Woodside Barracks, which are important economically, environmentally and historically.

AGED CARE

I have serious concerns about the Government’s Support at Home Program, which came into effect November 1st. We’re closely watching the impact of the new system on older Australians. I have repeatedly raised my concerns in Parliament and with the Aged Care Minister, particularly about co-payments which many recipients will have to pay. I’m concerned about significant fee increases from some providers, which could result in older Australians receiving less care. Self-funded retirees or those on a part-pension could end up paying hundreds of dollars, simply to have a shower on a weekend or public holiday. And the Government’s cap on pricing isn’t being introduced until the middle of next year. I’m worried some older residents, who can’t afford services, will end up in hospital, putting more pressure on a system that’s already under stress.

We know there are hundreds of beds in our hospitals being occupied by elderly people, waiting for placement in a residential aged care facility. And we’re hearing that some residential aged care operators are cherry picking residents and refusing to accept people with complex issues such as dementia diagnosis.

The waiting lists for help at home continue to grow. As of September 30, almost 122,000 were people waiting for their approved package after being assessed, and a further 116,000 people were still waiting for an assessment. The number of packages being released by the Federal Government falls well short of what’s needed.

For now, we have little choice but to see how the new system unfolds. Rest assured, I will continue advocating for older Australians, who deserve so much better.



POOL OPENING

The official opening of the Summit Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Mount Barker was cause for celebration after years of advocacy. The facility has been designed for future expansion as the area’s population continues to grow. This project was funded by all levels of government, including a \$15 million investment secured from the Commonwealth.





HEALTH

The long-awaited redevelopment of the Emergency Department at South Coast Hospital at Victor Harbor opened to patients in November.

I recently took a tour of this upgraded facility, which is essential to the growing population around the South Coast.

The expanded and modernised Emergency Department significantly increases patient capacity from five to 20 treatment spaces. It includes two emergency resuscitation bays, 12 acute treatment bays, a three-bed short stay unit, consult rooms, a quiet room and four under-cover Ambulance bays.

The Renal Unit has increased from four to six dialysis chairs, expanding services and saving patients from driving to Noarlunga for treatment.

This upgrade has been funded by various Federal and State Governments across many years, including more than \$13 million from the Commonwealth. It's significant to see this important upgrade now completed.

Health services on the South Coast should be further improved with the upcoming opening of the promised Urgent Care Clinic at Victor Harbor. After advocating for this clinic for some time, I'm hopeful it will open within the next few months.

Construction is also underway on the new Mount Barker Hospital, which will be vital for health care in our region. It's due to open at the end of 2027.



SCHOOL VISITS

During the year I've visited schools and pre-schools across the electorate. I've met enthusiastic and engaged students of all ages, held interactive civics lessons, conducted mock parliaments and presented flags. I've also welcomed school group visits to Parliament House in Canberra.

CANBERRA COMES TO MAYO

We had a couple of extra special school visits in August, with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Hon. Milton Dick MP.

There was an energetic group of students at Mount Barker South Primary School for the Parliament in Schools Program. I joined the Speaker in delivering the program, which teaches about federation, democracy and the Australian Parliament. With role-playing by students, we held a mock parliament and voted on whether pineapple should be on pizza. The result may surprise you, as it was a resounding NO.

We also visited St Catherine's School at Stirling and unfurled a giant Australian National Flag as part of the Australian Parliament House Flag Roadshow.

What a memorable day for everyone involved!





HAVE YOUR SAY

What matters to you?

Take a quick 1-minute survey by scanning the QR code below – your feedback helps guide my work for our community.

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GRANTS

My team is available to help with grants. Whether you're a sporting club, community group or business, there may be government grants appropriate for your organisation. I'm happy to provide a letter of support to include with grant applications. Visit my website to see a list of grants currently available.

MOBILE ELECTORATE OFFICES

In the coming months I'll be hosting mobile electorate offices across Mayo. Keep an eye on your letterbox for a personal invitation to meet with me. It's so important to hear about issues that matter to you.



COUNTRY SHOWS

Show season across our region has been spectacular. There are many highlights, but the best is to see so many families enjoying themselves. From baked goods, to animals, arts and crafts, stalls and amusements, our shows are always popular in the community. A big thanks to all the volunteers and committees who work so hard to ensure the success of these events.



OFFICE UPDATES

A couple of months ago we moved our Victor Harbor office to a more central location. Please visit if you're in the neighbourhood!

The new office is at Weymouth House, 51 Torrens Street, Victor Harbor. Our current opening hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9.30am to 4.30pm.

The Mount Barker Office is at Unit 3 Barker Plaza, 22-28 Hutchinson Street, Mount Barker and is open Monday through Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

I'd like to wish everyone in Mayo a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. I hope 2026 is a wonderful year for our families, businesses and community.

