

Thursday, 2 December 2021

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Mark Gepp, Member for Northern Victoria, has advised me he will not seek re-election in 2022.

Mark was elected to the Victorian Parliament in 2017, and he's put the needs of hardworking local people first since day one. That's no surprise – Mark spent decades giving a voice to workers before he got to this place.

Growing up in Northern Victoria, Mark saw first-hand the difference good, secure, local jobs can make for regional communities.

Mark's a fighter, and he's always fought to give people the decent working environment they deserve. He's done his bit to help people access safer workplaces, fairer conditions and better pay – close to home.

In particular, he's thought about the difference those things make for young people. How crucial it is for young people to be able to access education and training. What job security means for them in a precarious market. The difference technology can make to a young person's career – and how we can give them the skills to use it.

Mark can be rightly proud of the role he's played in our Government's achievements, just as he can be proud of what he delivered for his local community.

A champion for public housing, he's worked hard with his local community to make sure areas like Greater Shepparton, Swan Hill and Mildura get their share of Victoria's *Big Housing Build*.

He backed the Sunraysia community's campaign to return Mildura Base Hospital to public hands – and he helped get it done.

He worked tirelessly to equip local students with the right skills for in-demand jobs, and earlier this year, he secured a \$10.7 million investment that will help redevelop GOTAFE's Archer Street Shepparton campus.

In his inaugural speech to Parliament, Mark described working to address inequality as the ultimate Sisyphean task – but it's a task he never shied away from. He's treated every day in his role as a member of parliament as an opportunity to stand up for people who needed it.

I want to thank him for his dedication to our party, our parliament, our government – and to working people across Victoria.

I wish him and his family all the best for the years ahead.