

Member	Bridget Vallence	Electorate	Evelyn
Period	01 January 2024 to 31 March 2024		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$10,354.14
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$2,863.68

Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$0.00
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	n/a

Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
27-Nov-23	01-Dec-23	Parliamentary Sitings and Shadow Ministerial meetings*	\$1,358.44	Melbourne	\$1,100.00
13-Nov-23	17-Nov-23	Parliamentary Sitings and Shadow Ministerial meetings*	\$1,505.64	Melbourne	\$1,100.00
30-Oct-23	02-Nov-23	Parliamentary Sitings*	\$1,132.09	Melbourne	\$825.00
07-Dec-23	08-Dec-23	Vic Health Board Meeting*	\$290.69	Melbourne	\$275.00
16-Oct-23	20-Oct-23	Parliamentary Sitings and Shadow Ministerial meetings*	\$1,545.15	Melbourne	\$1,100.00
02-Oct-23	05-Oct-23	Parliamentary Sitings*	\$1,108.29	Melbourne	\$825.00
27-Aug-23	01-Sep-23	Parliamentary Sitings and Shadow Ministerial meetings*	\$1,829.07	Melbourne	\$1,375.00
05-Feb-24	08-Feb-24	Parliamentary Sitings	\$934.24	Melbourne	\$447.12
19-Feb-24	23-Feb-24	Parliamentary Sitings	\$1,166.38	Melbourne	\$697.00

Total number of nights for travel allowance claims **31**
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance **\$10,869.99**

* Please note - these claims were made in Q2 2023-24, but due to administrative error, were not paid until Q3 2023-24.

Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport

Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims **0**
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance **\$0.00**

Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid
13-Jan-24	20-Jan-24	Accommodation in Auckland for electorate business to explore industry and trade opportunities relevant to the state.	\$1,664.20
02-Sep-23	22-Sep-23	Accommodation in London, Rome, Florence, Paris for electorate business to explore economic issues and investigate industry and innovation opportunities relevant to the state.	\$6,901.02

Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims **27**
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance **\$8,565.22**

See attached travel report for further details

Travel Report – Bridget Vallence MP, Parliament of Victoria

Electorate	Evelyn District
Shadow Ministerial Portfolios	Industry, Innovation, Manufacturing, Tertiary Education, Skills and Training
Places visited	Auckland New Zealand
Date of travel	13 to 20 January 2024

Purpose of travel

Innovation, Industry, Manufacturing, Skills and Training, Economic Development, Investment

The primary purpose of this electorate business was to explore economic issues and investigate innovation and technology industry development, skills and training, and trade and investment opportunities relevant to the state of Victoria and the Evelyn electorate. It included engagements with government and industry stakeholders and leaders in my portfolio areas, including a chamber of commerce, tertiary and research institution, trade and investment, and innovation hubs. This provided the opportunity to make key connections and strengthen relationship that will benefit the state of Victoria.

New Zealand is Victoria's closest international trading partner and remains an important and appealing market for our state to conduct business with. In considering the plethora of industry development, trade, and investment opportunities around the world, it is sensible to maintain and strengthen business engagement with countries like New Zealand that are closely aligned and have shared values. New Zealand's population is concentrated in the North Island, with more than a third of residents living in Auckland. Like Victoria, Auckland has a strong indigenous heritage and is a successful multicultural society.

New Zealand is Victoria's third largest export market, with goods exports valued at more than \$3 billion. New Zealand is an attractive target location for Victorian businesses in their early stages embarking on export. It ranks amongst the easiest global economies in which to do business and is therefore a good starting point for Victorian businesses new to export or looking to grow and diversify, including those businesses in the Evelyn electorate.

The Victorian and New Zealand economies have similar economic profiles, comparable business cultures, geographical proximity, regulatory alignment, sporting, and cultural connections. 40 years ago, the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement was established and is one of the most open free trade agreements in the world that should be nurtured. The visit provided insights into emerging technologies (including those that have social impact), risks and opportunities for Victoria to consider.

January 2024

Benefits of travel to the State of Victoria

Innovation, Industry, Manufacturing, Skills and Training, Economic Development, Investment

Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Minister for Small Business and Manufacturing

In Auckland, I met with one of my counterparts in the New Zealand Government, the Hon Andrew Bayly, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Minister for Small Business and Manufacturing, Minister for Statistics, and the Member for Port Waikato.

The Minister's electorate is located around 90 minutes from Auckland's central business district and has similarities to the Evelyn electorate that I represent in Victoria. Like Evelyn, it has an indigenous population, was developed significantly from the 1860s by European pioneering communities, has strong agricultural sector and tourism sector, and has increasing number of tradespeople living in the electorate.

New Zealand's general election was held in October 2023, resulting in a change of government, and the Hon Andrew Bayly being appointed to key economic portfolios. New Zealand's pre-election economic update showed an economic slowdown was underway, with persistent domestic inflation suggesting that interest rates would remain high – a situation that Victoria is also experiencing. Inflation is projected to fall in 2024, but a slowdown in economic growth and increasing unemployment is anticipated.

The new government is committed to measures to reduce spending, pay down government debt, cut taxes, and to explore opportunities of mutual economic benefit with global economies including Victoria. Discussion focused on policy initiatives to tackle government debt whilst also stimulating economic growth, including a focus on supporting and incentivising advanced manufacturing, innovation and technology sectors, enabling the digitisation of small businesses, and ensuring there is adequate focus on training and development of skills with industry engagement crucial to this endeavour.

Unlike in Victoria, where the government has had a dominant focus on Melbourne to the detriment of the regions, there was a recognition that New Zealand has, under the previous government, more of a focus on the regions making Auckland residents and businesses feel ignored. It was interesting to discuss this scenario and how the right balance can be struck for each of our economies and constituencies.

In terms of advanced manufacturing, sustainability, and infrastructure, the Minister outlined there is a pipeline of defence, energy and infrastructure projects that will create opportunities for collaboration with Victorian enterprises. This will enable further opportunities for Victoria to showcase its leading capabilities in these sectors. Furthermore, New Zealand is embarking on a program of health reforms which will include a new national health system requiring investment in new digital technologies, which is likely to create opportunities for Victorian businesses expert in this field. The Minister was particularly keen to explore opportunities for New Zealand and Victorian industries and businesses to collaborate.

Ministry of Business, Innovation, & Employment

New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment plays a central role in shaping and delivering a strong New Zealand economy. Auckland is the main economic powerhouse of New Zealand, contributing nearly 40 percent of the country's GDP, and is an innovative and globally connected city with strong similarities to the state of Victoria.

Whilst in Auckland, I received a briefing from Andy Hill who is the Director of Auckland, Economic Strategy, and Strategic Policy for the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.

There has been a widespread acknowledgement in New Zealand that the former government had insufficiently focused on, or recognised, Auckland's people and businesses, despite its significance to the country's economy. The change of government will bring a renewed focus on Auckland, which is a hub for financial institutions, information technology and communications businesses, and increasingly entrepreneurs and start-ups.

There will be likely opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit with Victoria in health and life sciences, and food and beverage sectors. Indeed, Victoria's Department of Jobs, Skills, Industries and Regions is supporting an Aboriginal Trade Mission to Aotearoa New Zealand with a focus on food and beverage scheduled for February 2024.

Cost-of-living pressures experienced in Victoria are also being experienced in New Zealand, and information was shared in relation to some of the early plans of the government to monitor and address the rising costs to consumers of fuel and at supermarkets. As part of this, the Ministry will be exploring options in relation to stronger powers of the Grocery Commissioner to improve competitiveness in the grocery industry given there is an effective nationwide duopoly. This is an important consideration for Victorian food and beverage exporters, given the potential impact resulting from any changes to operating conditions in New Zealand in the grocery sector.

Auckland Business Chamber of Commerce

As one of New Zealand's predominant chambers of commerce, the Auckland Business Chamber seeks to influence and inspire business vitality in the greater Auckland Region. There is a renewed focus on growing three technology sectors – CreativeTech, FinTech and HealthTech, which could transform Auckland into a world-class tech hub over five years as outlined by the Auckland Tech Council, a group of the Auckland Business Chamber members from across the technology sector. This is important for Victoria for two key reasons – it creates competitive tension as our state too focusses on developing these innovation sectors, as well as creating opportunities for Victorian businesses to export their services and/or to collaborate.

I received a briefing from Simon Bridges, the CEO of the Auckland Business Chamber. Simon Bridges is also a former Member of Parliament and a former Leader of the Opposition. Insights were gained in relation to policy initiatives from the perspective of being a parliamentarian and of being a key external stakeholder advocating to government. The breadth of opportunities of mutual benefit for Auckland and Victoria were explored, and there was a discussion of growth categories for Victoria including premium manufactured foods, health foods, alternative proteins, wine, craft spirits. Certainly, it was noted that New Zealand is open to imports of Victorian food and beverages, especially those that are not locally produced in New Zealand, but that there should be a fostering of two-way trade opportunities for this sector. There has been, and will continue to be, opportunities for Evelyn-based businesses, particularly in wine, craft spirits, and manufactured food.

Discussion focused on increasing opportunities of mutual benefit in technology and creative industries. New Zealand has an active and growing tech innovation landscape with business-to-business and business-to-consumer opportunities for Victoria. Auckland is home to nearly half of New Zealand's creative workforce and contributes NZD\$7.8 billion in GDP as a result of steady growth in this sector over the past decade. Chamber forecasts indicate there will be more than 6,800 new jobs in the Auckland region in creative industries over the next 4 years. Victoria is experiencing similar growth in investment and jobs in this space. The Auckland Business Chamber has identified that with the continued advancement of digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, creative capital will become increasingly important, and as important to New Zealand as financial and natural capital. These insights are important for the state of Victoria because we need to consider how best to capitalise on these opportunities (and not miss out given the fast-paced nature), and the sub-sectors that are most likely are in FinTech, MedTech, SportsTech, EdTech, and AgriTech.

Like Auckland, Victoria has a vibrant Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), as well as numerous suburban and regional chambers of commerce or business groups, yet further insights can be gained on how other countries ensure collaboration across government and industry sectors in order to support continuous improvement of local businesses to increase productivity, to expand, or to access new markets, and to help strengthen industry-led skills and training opportunities for their workforces as they embark on digitisation.

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited – Tech and Innovation

Auckland New Zealand has a globally focused tech industry which has grown five times faster than the general Auckland economy over the past five years. Victoria and Auckland have similar opportunities and challenges in terms of the tech industry to become a key feature of our economies, including industry development, investment, trade, and developing (and retaining) a skilled workforce. Whilst in Auckland I received a briefing from Marissa Brindley, Head of Tech and Innovation at Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, who has been a driving force in the support and development of the innovation sector for Auckland, to gain valuable insights for our own state of Victoria.

The tech industry in Auckland to its fullest extent comprises around 11,000 firms, employing around 70,000 people. The Technology Investment Network report outlined that in Auckland alone, tech exporters have been a result of fast growth, high wage, and high productivity economy, with exports from Auckland tech companies projected to reach around NZD\$11.8 billion by 2027. There is an expectation that the tech industry will unlock the potential for greater prosperity and wellbeing for Auckland.

As part of industry development there has been a focus on diversity and skills in the tech field, export and innovation growth and investment, and especially enabling career pathways for rangatahi (Māori youth). While there are similarities with the Victorian government's intention to enable opportunities for Indigenous communities and Indigenous youth, it appears New Zealand's approach as was described in the briefing is far more practical and outcomes driven, a key insight that can be considered for Victoria. It is vital that any investment and programs to support greater diversity and Indigenous inclusion must be targeted and achieve outcomes in terms of job pathways.

A Tech Summit identified that 'people' really needed to be at the forefront and the primary pillar of industry development to ensure success, there needs to be far greater focus on skills to ensure a home-grown, diverse tech workforce. As Māori and Pasifika populations will increasingly dominate the domestic workforce over time, it is imperative they are enabled to gain skills to participate in the innovation sector. In doing so, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited has been looking at this from both education and industry angles and introduced some effective programs that are targeted at upskilling Pasifika people – particularly Pasifika women – with micro-credentials needed and valued by industry. The Tech Summit also outlined key sectors of focus being clean-tech, med-tech/health-tech, AI, and advanced manufacturing, and that there needs to be ongoing pursuit of international links and connectedness, which is another reason for this visit as Victoria's Shadow Minister.

More than 80 percent of Auckland tech companies' revenues comes from overseas. Australia is a dominant market for Auckland contributing 22 percent of total revenue. Other dominant markets are North America, Europe, and Asia. Finance-tech is one of Auckland's most successful industries and is internationally renowned.

The briefing was held at GridAKL, a fascinating innovation hub with a tour of the facilities being a key aspect of the visit. It is situated in a part of town surrounded by global and local innovation and technology businesses, as well as medium and high density living. GridAKL hosts start-ups and early-stage entrepreneurs with around 60 start-ups mainly SaaS-based, offering space as well as investment seminars in R&D, IP, legal, talent, and information in relation to government funding programs. There is also the Scale-up Hub which is more corporate focus and supports scale, which is supporting around 140

businesses and 1100 people. Other New Zealand hubs include one dedicated to creative/video/animation, and another dedicated to Māori and Pasifika start-ups.

New Zealand's innovation hubs have developed a digital culture and support initiatives from training to business acceleration. For our state of Victoria, consideration should be how we implement innovation hubs not only in Melbourne innovation precincts such as Cremorne, but also in regional or country settings, and there is a lot to learn from other countries and global cities on how they achieve success. It was interesting to note in the briefing the engagement Tātaki Auckland Unlimited has had with Victoria's own LaunchVic, as we can continue to foster dialogue and opportunities for collaboration. Insights will help develop policy initiatives that support Victoria's innovation ecosystem.

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited – International Trade and Investment

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited lays a strong foundation for Auckland's economic and cultural development, and works with partners to grow Auckland's innovation culture, support growing businesses and key industries, and attracts foreign direct investment, international events and tourism.

I received a briefing from Fiona Haiko, Principal Advisor for International Trade and Investment for Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, and one of the organisations senior managers in economic development. As a member of the Shadow Ministry's economic development team, it was particularly important to gain insights into Auckland's approach for trade, investment, and local industry support, as well as identify opportunities for Victoria and Auckland to collaborate particularly in the innovation space. Most of the work recently has focused on foreign direct investment, a strategy that the Victorian government has also been exploring via Global Victoria. The expansive discussion and insights gained will help inform policy initiatives to benefit Victoria as we further identify economic and cultural opportunities to drive growth.

There was discussion about Callahan Innovation which is a central government body that empowers New Zealand innovators and entrepreneurs to develop solutions that will solve complex social problems and can boost the economy and living standards. Callahan Innovation provides funding and scientific expertise, promotes R&D, facilitates collaboration between researchers, scientists, and industry, and supports the commercialisation of ideas with positive impact. In a contemporary sense this government funding body is focussing on clean-tech and aerospace.

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited plays a role as an Auckland-centric 'local government' organisation to advocate and lobby on behalf of industry to the national government. While a comparison may be Melbourne City Council, there seemed far greater sophistication and business focus by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited toward developing and bolstering the Auckland economy; their approach is impressive and much can be learned.

Further, discussion focussed on Auckland's approach in terms of climate action and emissions reduction, and ways in which Tātaki Auckland Unlimited is advocating on behalf of, and supporting, Auckland businesses to reduce emissions. Auckland is a member of C40 and the Paris climate agreement and is keenly working toward climate sustainability, helping businesses to transition, and researching solutions for energy, food, transport, and the built environment. By prioritising innovation and tech in Auckland, they are hoping that there will be entrepreneurial solutions to many complex climate problems.

Another lesson learned for Victoria is how Auckland is actively looking at engaging entrepreneurs to research and propose ways to tackle flooding of Auckland suburbs including drainage. Given the recent flooding and drainage issues, particularly after councils such as Yarra Ranges Council have re-zoned land (including council-owned land) for residential development which then is subject of regular flooding, this was an important discussion with many ideas and opportunities to consider for Victoria and the Evelyn electorate.

University of Auckland

The University of Auckland is New Zealand's flagship, research-led university, ranked first in Oceania and fifth in the world for sustainability. I attended the University of Auckland's Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing and Design at the Newmarket campus, which seeks to address global challenges of energy efficiency, low emissions, and sustainability in manufactured products through greater innovation and productivity in the advanced manufacturing sector. This is a particular area of interest, and opportunity, for our state of Victoria, as to how Victoria can encourage more energy efficiency in design, making/sourcing and using sustainable materials in construction and government-funded infrastructure, and reducing emissions in the value chain.

After an earlier briefing from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, & Employment, I learned the focus of the Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing and Design is directly aligned with this MBIE's 2022-2024 investment plan on creating new knowledge pathways to support the transition to a low emissions and climate resilient economy, as well as supporting new or existing industries as part of addressing challenges identified by the MBIE's Industry Transformation Plan for the Advanced Manufacturing Sector.

Auckland War Memorial Museum

I attended the Auckland War Memorial to pay my respects and commemorate the Australian and New Zealand service men and service women who fought together as part of the ANZAC Forces during the first and second world wars. The Cenotaph and surrounding consecrated grounds in front of the Museum serve as a war memorial to those ANZACs who lost their lives.

Much like our Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) Victoria Branch, the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association are dedicated to protecting and restoring war memorials and cenotaphs. The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association has noted the Auckland Cenotaph area is in need of renovation, and importantly would like measures put in place that ensure the area is treated with more respect by people visiting the area.

In Victoria, and certainly in the Evelyn electorate, there has been increasing vandalism and damage caused to war memorials, such as the Montrose War Memorial and the Seville War Memorial. These are assets of community significance and remembrance, and much like the sentiment in Auckland, Victoria can do better to ensure greater respect is given to these memorials and consider introducing increased penalties where vandalism or desecration occurs. Auckland City has undertaken remedial works to improve the condition of the war memorial. The Museum is iconic and has collections that concentrate on New Zealand history, especially the Auckland region, Māori and Pacific artefacts including carvings and built structures, natural history, and military history which is shared closely with Victoria.

Accommodation in Auckland cost AUD\$1378.19, and taxi travel cost AUD\$286.01.

Bridget Vallence MP

Member for Evelyn, Parliament of Victoria

Shadow Minister for Industry & Innovation

Shadow Minister for Manufacturing

Shadow Minister for Tertiary Education

Shadow Minister for Skills & Training