

BRIMBANK & NORTHWEST

Star Weekly

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Keilor Historical Society's Fred Ackerman and Wally Day with some of the items donated by the Milburn family. (Damjan Janevski) 550590_02

Preserving Keilor's history

Historic farming equipment from the founding family of Keilor's market gardens has been donated to the Keilor Historical Society.

The Milburn family, who began Keilor's market gardening tradition when David Milburn settled in the valley in 1857, recently donated a range of farming tools and artefacts that date back to early farming operations.

Also included in the donation was an impressive cast iron sewing machine which would have been used to sow bags.

The historical society's Fred Ackerman said family was in the process of selling its property, known as The Grange, and wanted artefacts stored in its shed to be preserved.

Mr Ackerman said family matriarch, Dorothy Milburn, was particularly keen for the historic items to be kept for prosperity.

He said the tools were a very important addition to the society's collection.

"Keilor Historical Society seek to preserve and promote the heritage of the market gardens," he said. "David Milburn was the first one to undertake irrigation of farmland in Victoria."

Details: keilorhistoricalsociety.org.au

Businesses close

By Tara Murray

Nine properties have been acquired near Sunshine train station as part of the construction of Melbourne Airport Rail.

The acquisition of properties will help make space for the new Sunshine Superhub, which will feature two new regional platforms, new tracks, an extended concourse, new western forecourt and a new access road into the station car park.

As work progresses on the first stage of the rail link, several businesses have closed their doors for the final time.

Dragon Express and Dum Matka Sunshine both announced on social media

that they are closing after their properties were acquired as part of Melbourne Airport Rail link

Both finished trading on 24 May and were based in a strip of shops on City Place near the entrance to the station.

Dragon Express had been open for 15 years.

"As part of the Melbourne Airport Rail development, our location has been selected to support this important project," Dragon Express said on social media. "From the bottom of our hearts, we are incredibly grateful for the support, loyalty and memories shared with us over the years."

Dum Matka said in a comment on its post

that it was searching for a new location.

It had been open for nearly eight years.

Star Weekly understands that seven commercial properties on City Place have been acquired along with two vacant properties on Sun Crescent as part of the Melbourne Airport Rail Link.

The project team is also in discussions with one business leasing VicTrack land along Hampshire Road.

Compensation for affected property owners and impacted parties will be determined in accordance with the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009 and the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986, and based on independent valuations

by the Valuer-General Victoria.

Star Weekly understands that no residential properties are being acquired as part of the Sunshine Superhub works, and no private residential or commercial properties are being acquired to build the new Albion station.

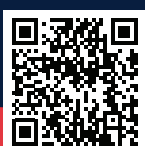
A Melbourne Airport Rail spokesperson said the acquisitions were necessary to make space for the new Sunshine Superhub.

"Property acquisition is never taken lightly, and we are working closely with the property and business owners to minimise impacts and provide support throughout the acquisition process," the spokesperson said.

Luba Grigorovitch

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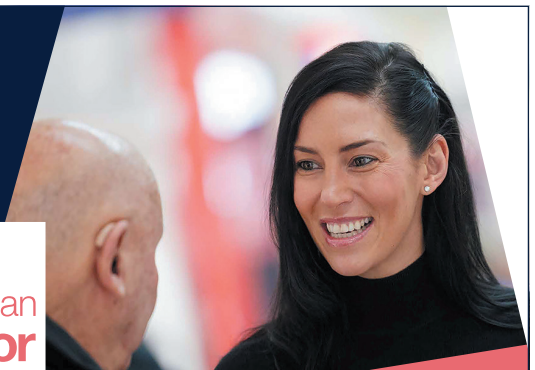
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Council considers bin backflip

By Tara Murray

Brimbank council is considering backflipping on supporting the roll out of glass bins as part of the state government's waste reforms.

In February, council voted to implement a four-bin system which all councils are required to have in place by the middle of next year.

As a number of councils fight back against the four-bin system, Brimbank mayor Virginia Tachos raised a notice of motion asking council officers for a report on the options and implications relating to the kerbside glass bin service.

This includes options to reduce the cost to council and community, including timing, staging and service design consideration as well as options for deferral or non-implementation.

Councillor Tachos said there had been significant feedback from the community about changes to the bin system.

She said the cost to implement the bins could be more than \$8 million.

"For over a decade this council has contributed millions through the landfill levy, of which we have seen miniscule, if any, investment back into our community in the form of sustainability projects," she said.

"And yet the government continues to

increase the landfill levy, increasing waste disposal costs, which has led to our council and our residents in excess of \$60 million to the state's landfill levy since its introduction.

"These new waste reforms should be completely subsidised by the state government landfill levy and not sit in consolidated revenue."

Cr Tachos is also calling for the container deposit scheme to include wine and spirit bottles, removing the need for a separate, largely empty kerbside glass service.

Cr Daniel Kruk said councillors have to keep an open mind, adding that since February, there had been a lot of public commentary about the four-bin system.

"This past month I have monitored my own glass recycling at home and I took a photo of each glass item that I recycled, it was three items," he said.

"Now is the time to question our next steps and to question this council's next step so we can save ratepayer funding and save some funding for our residents."

Cr Katherine Nikolic voted against the motion, while Cr Ranka Rasic abstained from voting.

Crs Kim Thien Truong and Thuy Dang were both apologies for the council meeting.

The state government was contacted for comment.



Lions Club of Deer Park president Maria Meilak (front) with members Malti Devi, Sue Weaver, Vicki Garner, secretary Michael Clark and Jose Campos. (Damjan Janevski). 549090_01

Lions mark half a century helping locals

The Lions Club of Deer Park has celebrated 50 years of serving the community.

Secretary and long-time Deer Park resident Michael Clark, who joined in 2003, said his two decades with the club have been defined by lasting friendships and a deep sense of community.

"We had a member who's done 45 years and another who's done 44. They've given a lot of their time over those years to the community," Mr Clark said.

"It does feel good to help out in the community."

For half a century, the club has helped many community and social organisations through fundraising, projects and volunteer work, including Deafblind associations, Scope Disability Services, the Good Friday Appeal, and Guide Dogs Victoria, among many others. The club also hosts annual Christmas carols, Bunnings family nights, and regular fundraising barbecues in support of local causes.

"We're now trying to help out less advantaged people and we're trying to get into environmental stuff. We have

broad aims and we have a lot of scope to help out in a lot of ways," Mr Clark said.

Most recently, to commemorate its 50th anniversary, the Lions Club donated \$5000 each to the Western Health Foundation and Mercy Hospital on 18 April. "We had a celebration where we welcomed the Deer Park Girl Guides, senior citizens and commUNITY+," Mr Clark said.

He said the club is always on the lookout for new members too.

Details: 0417 307 572

Pre-construction works start on Western Freeway

The federal government has provided \$50 million to commence the upgrade of the Western Freeway between Caroline Springs and Melton.

The pre-construction works involve detailed planning and design, as well as teams out on-site checking ground conditions.

The government said this would lay the groundwork before heavy machinery arrived and will help ensure a smooth and safe construction phase, with as little disruption as possible to people's daily commutes.

These are the final steps before construction can officially kick off and will inform the next round of funding decisions and construction timelines, according to the government.

The pre-construction works are funded as part of the government's commitment to invest \$1 billion in upgrades to the Western Freeway, and build on a business case jointly funded by federal state governments.

According to the federal government, more than 86,000 vehicles travel between Melton and Caroline Springs on the Western Freeway every day.

As the population in Melbourne's west continues to boom, that figure is expected to rise to approximately 113,000 by 2031.

The Melton to Caroline Springs upgrade will improve capacity and safety along this key route for passengers and freight, the government said.

Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Minister Catherine King said the federal and state governments were working together to deliver the vital upgrade.

"We are getting money out the door and detailed planning underway, so we can get this project to a point where it is construction-ready and we can start building," she said.

Hawke MP Sam Rae and Gorton MP Alice Jordan-Baird both welcomed the funding.

"This latest funding commitment is an important step forward for the Western Freeway upgrade - a project our community has long needed," Mr Rae said.

"I look forward to seeing it deliver real, lasting improvements for local families."

Ms Jordan-Baird said the community deserved infrastructure that kept paces with population growth.

"The Western Freeway is already at capacity in peak times, and this investment is another step towards getting the upgrades our community needs," she said.

Third runway community health study terms of reference set

The terms of reference have been approved for Melbourne Airport's Community Health Study, progressing the third runway project.

The federal government's approval of the terms of reference establishes a clear framework for the independent study into the health impacts of aircraft noise associated with the operation of the new third runway on communities surrounding the airport.

Melbourne Airport said the approval represents an important milestone in the delivering one of the first long-term studies of its kind at a major Australian airport.

The Community Health Study was a key

condition of the government's approval for the third runway.

Melbourne Airport said the study will establish baseline data before runway operations begin and continue with annual monitoring for 20 years.

Developed in consultation with independent experts from Deakin and Liverpool universities, the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group, international public health experts and community stakeholders, the terms of reference provide guidelines on how health outcomes associated with aircraft noise will be examined, including

sleep disturbance, annoyance, mental health, cardiovascular disease, learning impacts and quality of life.

The framework will ensure independence and governance, baseline monitoring, annual reporting that is publicly accessible, ongoing community engagement, and the use of noise exposure and health outcome data to monitor trends over time.

The next step will be the appointment of a qualified independent team to undertake the study.

Details: melbournearportprojectshub.com.au/community-health-study

More houses for school site

By Laura Michell

More aged care beds and a 15-dwelling development would be built on the site of the former Calder Rise Primary School site, and five vacant residential lots created, under a planning amendment currently before Brimbank council.

Infinite Aged Care has submitted an amendment to the approved development plan for its aged care facility on the former school site at 32a Green Gully Road, Keilor.

As reported by *Star Weekly*, council approved the development plan for the site in October 2021, having earlier refused a

planning application for the development.

The site was to include a variety of different units, from single-storey independent living units around the northern and eastern sides, to low care apartments within a three-storey building.

There were to be 57 units built, with a maximum of 100 residents allowed.

Under the amendment submitted to council, the site would be subdivided into seven lots and the size of the aged care building would be increased.

The seven-lot subdivision would pave the way for the aged care facility to be built alongside a multi-unit development com-

prising 15 dwellings, and for five residential lots – restricted to a maximum of two dwellings per lot – to be created.

According to planning documents submitted to council and seen by *Star Weekly*, the three-storey aged care building would be located on the northern portion of the site and comprise 131 bedrooms with a maximum of 146 beds and 41 car spaces.

The ground level would include 33 bedrooms with a total of 37 beds, drop off area, reception, administration areas, staff facilities, laundry, kitchen hairdresser, wellness facility, cafe area, outdoor seating area and courtyard, lounge and dining area, private

dining area and multipurpose rooms.

Level one would feature 67 bedrooms with a total of 73 beds, while level two would include 32 bedrooms with 36 beds.

The multi-unit development would comprise 15 three-and-four bedroom dwellings.

The remaining five lots would be located on the southern portion of the site and would all have an area of 601m².

The amendment application is available on council's website until 28 May, with the application to be considered at a future council meeting.

Details: <https://tinyurl.com/mrx8wu4>



The green whistle program was launched at IPC Health. (Supplied)

'Green whistle' to help ease women's pain

A program providing women with free pain management for IUD insertions and removals has launched in Deer Park.

Last week, Premier Jacinta Allen and Health and Ambulance Services Minister Harriet Shing visited IPC Health's Sexual and Reproductive Health Hub at its Deer Park campus to launch the program.

Under the initiative, pentrox – com-

monly known as the green whistle – will be made available at all women's sexual and reproductive health hubs as a free pain management option.

The government said this initiative aims to provide better pain management options to make these procedures more comfortable and accessible.

IPC Health chief executive Jayne Nelson said having access to the green whistle

meant IPC Health can offer women and persons with a cervix a real choice in how they experience care.

"Every day, we meet women at important decision points in their lives. And often, when discussing screening or treatment options, they ask: 'Will it hurt?'"

"That question is about more than just physical pain. It's about feeling safe, supported, and in control."

Pilot jobs program aims to help at-risk Brimbank youth find work

A program tailored to provide support for young people who are experiencing unemployment was launched in St Albans on 14 May.

St Albans MP and Employment Minister Natalie Suleyman launched the Western Pathways Program at St Albans Tin Shed.

The program is delivered by Jesuit Social Services in partnership with Opendoor and will be delivered in three locations, St Albans, Sunshine and Melton.

The inclusive services help young people develop skills, connect with local social support and participate in meaningful jobs, training and community activities.

The two-year pilot program will focus

on people aged 15 to 24, people from multicultural communities and people who are at risk of involvement, or have previously been involved, with the justice system.

Participants can access mentoring and coaching, skills assessments, resume and interview preparation, support with training and tickets, job placement and support, and referrals to health and housing services.

The Western Pathways Program is backed by a \$3.2 million investment by the state government.

Jesuit Social Services acting chief executive Michael Livingstone said the program is a great opportunity to support young

people from Melbourne's west to engage in training and employment outcomes.

"Working in and alongside local communities, we can make a real difference in improving long-term wellbeing and employment outcomes for young people," he said.

Opendoor chief executive Graham Dangerfield said Western Pathways reflects everything Opendoor stands for – place-based, trauma-informed support that responds to the real needs of young people and their communities.

He said the program would help shape a more responsive and effective employment service system for the future.

Police gain momentum on catching car thieves

A 22-year-old Melton man allegedly nabbed for speeding was among 35 arrested during a recent nightly operation in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Police saturated roads across Melton and Brimbank during Operation Momentum between 13 and 16 May, which launched in March last year in a bid to target high-harm crime across the western suburbs.

The operation has led to a recent 35 arrests with more than 240 charges laid, 12 stolen cars recovered, six weapons seized, including a sawn-off shotgun, 10 cars impounded for driving offences, and more than 2800 vehicles checked.

The 22-year-old Melton man who was allegedly travelling at 116km/h in a 60km/h zone on High Street in Melton about 11.55pm on Friday 15 May was arrested after police attempted to intercept the allegedly speeding Toyota Kluger.

Stop sticks were deployed on the Western Freeway on-ramp after Air Wing units followed the vehicle across Melton, with the 22-year-old arrested without incident, according to police.

Also among those arrested were five teenagers who were caught travelling at high speeds throughout Rockbank in an allegedly stolen 2012 Dodge Journey just after 10pm on Saturday 16 May.

Police attempted to intercept the car on Dandelion Crescent before the driver allegedly failed to stop and crashed into two parked vehicles.

The driver then took off again before officers deployed stop sticks in Albanvale, bringing the car to a halt.

The five occupants then attempted to flee into nearby parkland before all five – four 16-year-olds and a 17-year-old – were arrested, police said.

Since the launch of Operation Momentum, police have made more than 180 arrests, laid more than 750 charges and located some 50 stolen cars.

Police said with car thefts reaching decade highs in Brimbank and Melton, they will continue to run targeted operations like Operation Momentum to hold thieves to account.

Detective Senior Sergeant Nick Di-Mieri from Melton's Crime Investigation Unit said police will continue to target car thieves and dangerous driving in a bid to bring down the high rates of criminal activity across the west.

"We are out every night catching car thieves, however this bolstered response allows us to put a real dent in vehicle crime across the western suburbs," he said.



Left: The new station will feature a pedestrian overpass with lifts and stairs. **Centre:** A pedestrian overpass will provide access to the platforms and across the rail line. **Right:** The proposed platform design.

First look at new Albion station designs

Early designs for the new Albion train station, which is being built as part of the Melbourne Airport Rail project, have been released by the state government.

The new station will be delivered as part of the first stage of the project, along with a new station at Tottenham.

The government said rail upgrades were already underway on the corridor, with more than six kilometres of track between West Footscray and Albion being upgraded to boost capacity.

According to the government, the project will untangle one of Victoria's busiest rail junctions and transform Sunshine into a transport superhub, allowing up to 1000 trains a day through the corridor.

The \$4.1 billion project is jointly funded by the state and federal governments.

Albion station will be rebuilt slightly east of its current location.



The new Albion station. (Pictures: Supplied)

The new station will include an accessible concourse with lifts and stairs, plus upgraded lighting, shelters, seating and CCTV.

Crews have already begun relocating underground services between Albion

and Sunshine to prepare for the new rail infrastructure.

Works on the new Albion and Tottenham stations are set to be completed in 2030.

Transport Infrastructure Minister Gabrielle Williams said the new stations

would provide modern facilities for locals to enjoy for generations to come

Residents can provide feedback on the Albion station design until 14 June.

Details: engage.vic.gov.au/airportrail-stage1

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MY PLACE

Diane Di Lallo is a volunteer at Mercy Palliative Care, Sunshine, who is helping ensure residents' stories aren't forgotten. She spoke with Laura Michell to mark National Volunteer Week (18-24 May).

What's your connection to Brimbank?
I currently volunteer as a biographer at Mercy Palliative Care in Devonshire Road, Sunshine. I love the area, and I used to work in Sunshine and St Albans when I was younger. My daughter lives in Brimbank, so I have a few connections to the area. I live in Maidstone, which is very close.

Tell us more about your volunteer role with Mercy Palliative Care Sunshine.
I applied to be a volunteer with MPC in August 2024 after seeing an ad in Star Weekly, and I completed the training program in around October 2024. I am seeing my sixth palliative patient now and completing my fourth biography. I liked the sound of the biography program and so I did the extra training required to take that on. I love writing and collating information so it's a perfect fit for me. I find it rewarding to produce a beautiful written record of the patient's life (with photos) for their family to cherish after they've gone.

The MPC volunteer coordinators - Kellie Sandral and Jim Creaner - are both great at what they do. They look after the volunteers with complete understanding of our varied needs. The best advice I received was how important it is just to listen to people, really listen! Listening is an under-rated skill nowadays and, of course, privacy, respect and non-judgement are so vital in our role as volunteers.

What do you enjoy about helping palliative patients to write their biographies?
Patients sometimes comment that their life is too boring for a biography, but it never is! I enjoy hearing about their life history - their childhood, the adventures, the sagas, the direction their life has taken and the choices they have made along the way that have led them to where they are now. I also really love hearing their life wisdom; what their life has taught them and the wisdom accrued.

I always like to include a section at the end of the biography where they offer



Diane Di Lallo. (Supplied)

advice to their potential readers, such as future great-grandchildren, for example. They provide their insights from the perspective of old age and/or terminal illness as to what they have learnt is the most important thing in life. I believe this advice is invaluable for the reader.

Sometimes patients talk about regrets

and painful issues that don't necessarily make it into their finished biography. They always have full control over what is included, but they may still want to talk these things through. In a way, it can be like a healing process for them, a sorting of their life into things they are proud of and things they may regret having done or

not done. Talking about these things often helps them to accept and let go.

I wrote the biography for a lovely 87-year-old man in Braybrook last year and he gave permission for it to be provided to the Wonthaggi Historical Society (WHS), along with an old photo album that was going to be thrown out. He was so thrilled that they were keen to receive it as he had no idea they even remembered him from his younger years, let alone considered him quite a famous son of the town. He'd lived an adventurous, action-packed life and had amazing exploits both here and overseas. I'll never forget the absolute joy he displayed when I told him the WHS committee was very interested in reading his life story and would make his biography accessible in their archives for other readers. He was very humbled by this.

Why do you believe it is important to volunteer in your community?

I've always believed that a life of service to others is a valuable life indeed. Often people don't realise the effect their time and compassion has on others. Just to be an active listener makes people feel seen, heard and valued. Many elderly people can sometimes feel lonely, invisible or a burden, and often they will tell volunteers things they would not wish to burden their carers or loved ones with. If you can spare a couple of hours a week, I highly recommend you consider volunteering.

The staff at Mercy Palliative Care really go out of their way to make their volunteers feel valued and celebrated. (We also have some wonderful morning teas and lunches!) There are many different volunteering activities to choose from, ranging from making bereavement or carer calls, preparing biographies, visiting patients at home for a weekly chat, collecting equipment, community engagement activities or providing support to patients at the palliative care ward at Werribee Mercy hospital.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors

Private money paid ALP - claim

Breakaway Christians the victims of hate

The Advocate, one of the best

SYDNEY AUCTION

40 years ago
28 May, 1986

Petrol bombs and smashed windows are part of a violent, everyday war against a Deer Park family.

FEAR FOR YOUTH

Centre to help women closes

Doors open at \$3.2m fire station

30 years ago
29 May, 1996

Youth will be hard hit with up to five Brimbank programs likely to get the axe, council staff said last week.

Centre to help women closes

Doors open at \$3.2m fire station

Match nearly called off: page 100

20 years ago
30 May, 2006

The community stepped out to attend the official opening of the Deer Park fire station last Saturday.

STAR WEEKLY

Tribute to rail victims

Gown biz is a winning proposal

The Elvis Tribute Show

10 years ago
31 May, 2016

A memorial at St Alban's notorious Main Road level crossing will be a permanent reminder of the 16 lives lost, according to one victim's mother.



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Join the Hillside Probus Club today for friendship, fun, and fellowship. (Damjan Janevski). 547703_03

Join Hillside Probus Club

The Hillside Probus Club is on the hunt for new members.

Beginning as a humble community group offering unlimited possibilities in retirement to its members just last year, the Hillside Probus is all about friendship, fellowship, and fun for senior members of the community who are retired or semi-retired.

Probus clubs are open to members from the community in support of promoting healthy minds and active bodies through social interaction activities and outings with retirees from across the community, with the initiative looking for members across Australia and New Zealand including in Deer Park, Bacchus Marsh and Melton, which offer ladies only clubs.

Hillside Probus media representative Grace Di Meglio said the group is open to anyone who is keen to join in and around Hillside.

"We only started last year and we've only

got 25 members, so we're always looking to increase that," Ms Di Meglio said.

"Anyone is welcome. There are no upper or lower age limits and our club is for men and women, couples and singles."

Hillside's Probus Club opens the door to new experiences and friendships, where members are given the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, stay active by participating in a wide range of activities and explore what the community has to offer.

Attendance at monthly meetings is required, with the next monthly meeting being held on Thursday 4 June at the Watergardens Hotel, located at 431 Kings Road, Taylors Lakes. The meeting will commence at 10:30am and run through to 12:30pm.

"Come and join us for a cuppa and chat," Ms Di Meglio said.

Details: www.facebook.com/groups/1169055811860330/

Briefs

Next Gen competition

Children and young people with disabilities are being invited to share their ideas for a more inclusive and supportive community through the launch of the Next Gen drawing competition. The competition encourages participants to create artwork highlighting three things that would help improve the lives, wellbeing and inclusion of children and young people living with disabilities. The initiative aims to raise community awareness and appreciation of the challenges experienced by people living with disability, while giving young people an opportunity to have their voices heard through creativity and art. The competition is open to children and young people aged up to 16 years who live, study or play in Brimbank area. The competition closes 11.59pm 9 June and the winners will be notified by email. Budding artists can upload a photo of their artwork via council's 'Your Say' page: yoursay.brimbank.vic.gov.au

Have your say

Brimbank residents have until 31 May to have their say on proposed upgrades to Collenso Street dog off-leash area. Details: yoursay.brimbank.vic.gov.au/collenso-street-dog-leash-area

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Brimbank's top residents

A refugee from Myanmar, a law and science student, a passionate environmentalist and a community kitchen operator are among the winners of this year's We Are Brimbank Awards.

The awards were presented at a special ceremony hosted by Brimbank mayor Virginia Tachos on Wednesday 20 May, and included the prestigious Citizen of the Year.

The annual awards recognise the exceptional contributions, innovation and determination of individuals, organisations, volunteers and community groups making a positive difference to the community in Brimbank.

A panel of independent community leaders judged the nominations across seven categories.

Jacob Thang (Cung Hlei Thang) was named Citizen of the Year for his work advancing opportunities for refugee and migrant communities in Victoria.

A refugee from Myanmar, Mr Thang is the founder of Chin Myanmar Community Care (CMCC), the Auschin, and Auschin Group, a Social Traders-certified social enterprise delivering landscaping and grounds maintenance across Melbourne.

Through CMCC, he supports culturally safe employment pathways, family services, and advocacy, particularly for older Chin women facing workforce barriers. Through Auschin Group, he has created jobs for more than 20 people from diverse backgrounds and secured major contracts worth \$2-3 million annually.

The Young Citizen of the Year Award went to law and science student Todd Truong, who avidly advocates for environmental policy, climate justice, and youth



The 2026 winners of the We Are Brimbank Awards. (Pictures: Bernie Phelan)



Mayor Virginia Tachos with Citizen of the Year Jacob Thang.

representation.

Not-for-profit public space arts company The Task At Hand won the Arts, Culture of Tourism Award for its work to increase inclusion and visibility both within the arts industry and the broader community through the creation of original performances designed for public spaces.

Friends of Kororoit Creek president Jessica Gerger won the Environment or Sustainability Award, while Keilor Village Night Market founder Jodie Robinson received the Community Engagement Award.

Sunshine United Cricket Club won the

Sport and Wellbeing Award for its girls program and Filipino Community Council of Victoria Inc was named community group of the year.

Paradise for Kids Kitchen founder Jane Pallot received the Mayor's Commendation. Ms Pallot and her husband David run a council-approved kitchen that feeds the homeless and hungry every Tuesday night at a local park.

At the ceremony, volunteers from across Brimbank were also honoured for their service to the community.

"The We Are Brimbank Awards represent

the best of Brimbank. They recognise our unsung heroes, people, groups and organisations, who dedicate themselves to making our community a better place," Cr Tachos said.

"Our community is fortunate to have many extraordinary people, who go above and beyond and who inspire all of us through their hard work and determination.

"I want to congratulate all of the nominees and the winners of this year's awards and thank them for their commitment to a stronger, healthier, happier, and more connected Brimbank."

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Mayor's message Cr Lara Carli

Last week, Council announced the winners of the 2026 City of Melton Community Volunteer Achievement Awards at an event celebrating the people who generously give their time, energy and passion to make a difference to others across our City.

Congratulations to this year's award winners for their outstanding contributions: Citizen of the Year, Rohit Kumar; Young Citizen of the Year, Alanis Furtado; Intercultural Engagement Leader of the Year, Amit Menghani; Gender Equity Leader of the Year, Tom Markowski; and Disability, Access and Inclusion Leader of the Year, Michelle Hobbs. The commitment to helping make our community stronger and more connected does not go unnoticed.

The Awards coincided with National Volunteer Week, providing an opportunity to recognise and thank the many volunteers who play such a vital role across our City. Our volunteers are incredible people who give their time on top of other commitments to support others and help create an inclusive community for all. We thank you for your compassion, generosity and quiet determination to make a difference.

Finally, I recently attended the opening of our inaugural Common exhibition at CS Gallery at the Caroline Springs Library and Learning Hub. It was wonderful to see the amazing artwork created by talented members of our community. Art plays an important role in bringing people together and sharing stories, and this exhibition does exactly that. Common runs until August, and I encourage you to visit the Gallery to see the inspiring work of our local artists.

Feel free to contact me about Sugar Gum Ward or our City more generally on 0409 951 020 or email at: lara.carli@melton.vic.gov.au

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[Instagram @cityofmeltonofficial](https://instagram.com/cityofmeltonofficial)

Short Story Competition

Aspiring writers, storytellers and creatives are invited to enter the 2026 Melton City Libraries Short Story Competition.

Celebrating its 21st year, the competition provides the opportunity for entrants to have their work judged by popular authors and go in the running to share in over \$3,000 in prizes.

Entries can be text, illustration, video, verse, voice, or a combination of these across three categories – junior, teen and adult. Written entries are capped at 1500 words for juniors and teens, and 3000 words for adults. All other formats should be no longer than five minutes.

Entries close Friday 10 July and can be submitted online. Authors must live, work or study in the City of Melton.

For information and to enter, visit melton.vic.gov.au/MCLShortStory



Bullum Bullum Ward with Cr Steve Abboushi



It's always great to see investment in the places and spaces where our community lives, plays and connects.

Council's 2026/27 Draft Budget proposes many important projects that support the ongoing growth and evolution of our community, while also improving liveability.

Included in the draft budget is funding to progress the upgrades to Taylors Road, including duplication works between City Vista Court and Westwood Drive. These improvements are designed to provide a real difference to what is one of the busiest roads in our City.

The draft budget also includes proposed upgrades to the play space at Springlake Village Park. Works include upgrading and relocating the basketball facilities, adding a new sheltered area, along with additional tree planting and landscaping to enhance the space. Also proposed in

the draft budget are investments in other local parks, paths and recreation spaces that are critical for young people and families to stay active and connected.

It's also fantastic to see that the redevelopment works at Taylors Hill Recreation Reserve, home of Westside Strikers Soccer Club, have been completed. Council is proud to have delivered these upgrades which included reconstruction of three soccer pitches and two cricket grounds, improved lighting and fencing, and modern facilities that will support this growing club.

Together, these projects are creating spaces that support our community and the everyday needs of our residents.

Feel free to contact me regarding Bullum Bullum Ward or our City more generally on 0437 231 680 or email at steve.abboushi@melton.vic.gov.au

Reconciliation Week event

**Wednesday 3 June, 10am - 12pm
Civic Centre Lawn and Melton Community Hall**

In recognition of National Reconciliation Week from 27 May to 3 June, Council is hosting a free community event to help raise awareness about reconciliation and learn about our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities. Join us for a flag raising ceremony, followed by Indigenous performances and native food tastings. Hear from keynote speaker Tyson Yunkaporta, author, researcher and senior lecturer in Indigenous Knowledges at Deakin University.

For information, visit melton.vic.gov.au/reconciliation-week.

King's Birthday operating hours

Our offices will be closed on Monday 8 June 2026, for the King's Birthday Public Holiday. This includes City of Melton Libraries and the Animal Pound. There is no change to kerbside bin collections, so please put your bin out Sunday night if Monday is your usual collection day.

The Melton Recycling Facility is open 8am - 4.30pm. For information or to report an issue, visit melton.vic.gov.au/public-holidays

Your Councillors – Visit melton.vic.gov.au/councillors to find your ward Councillors and their contact details



Mayor
Cr Lara Carli



Deputy Mayor
Cr Dr Phillip Zada



Cr Steve Abboushi



Cr Kathy Majdlik



Cr Brandi Morris



Cr Sophie Ramsey



Cr Julie Shannon



Cr Bob Turner



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Above: Meg Talekar and Neil (centre), celebrated the book launch with playgroup facilitators Cheryl Paine (left) and Houda Musafa (right). (Pictures: Courtney Black) 553133_08
Below: Neil, 2, played a big part in the book's creation. 553133_06



Children sail into creativity

A new picture book called 'Sailing, Sailing' transformed a local playgroup's favourite toys into characters, their artwork into vibrant designs and their songs into a narrative. The book launched in Dallas on 1 May and Courtney Black joined in to hear the story behind Sailing, Sailing.

In Dallas, a partnership between a local playgroup and a non-profit arts organisation has helped a group of neurodivergent and disabled children create their own vibrant story.

Artists and writers from Kids Own Publishing (KOP) engaged with children from the Dallas Playconnect+ playgroup to create a book, 'Sailing, Sailing'.

Playgroup facilitator Cheryl Paine said creating the book was a personal, meaningful journey for children and families.

"The concept of Sailing, Sailing is actually based on a song that I sing each week with our children," Paine said.

"When the children are a bit unfocused I'll say, 'has everyone got their sailing hand ready?' then I'll start singing."

While moving her hand like a boat over waves she would sing, 'Sailing, sailing, over the ocean - Sailing, sailing, over the sea - Sailing, sailing, over the ocean - Sail back home to me.'

"I think it just captured the hearts of the KOP team."

The playgroup was able to create the book after being offered a \$20,000 Hume council grant from the Dallas Brooks Community Hub.

"The book has given us a purpose and an outcome," Paine said.

"Over five weeks the KOP team came in and engaged with the children in their play.

"They made special allowances for our children in how they directed and participated in the activity of art, because a lot of our children won't sit for very long.

"We had our big plastic stand-up tray with all different lots of paint in it and our children were doing a sensory play experience with the paint.

"Then at the end of it they took these great big sheets of paper, laid it on top and lifted it up and then created these fabulous big pieces of art."

On each page of Sailing, Sailing there are vibrant layers of paint which KOP lead artist Viet-My Bui said speaks for itself.

"All the artwork in the book is made by



This page of Sailing Sailing was inspired by Neil. (Supplied: Mylie Nauendorf)

“All the artwork in the book is made by the children's hands, they are expressing themselves so beautifully and so vibrantly through artwork”

- Viet-My Bui

the children's hands, they are expressing themselves so beautifully and so vibrantly through artwork," she said.

"The way KOP works is that all the books are children-led, so the narrative and the artwork is all by the kids, and we don't direct anything.

"It is a bit more challenging when they're non-verbal but we wanted to really champion the fact that Neil and Lincoln communicate beautifully in their own way.

"We wanted to try to put a book together that seemed true to them."

Bui and her team led finger-painting, water play, and collage activities, encouraging the children to make their own artwork.

"Lincoln loves water play so I thought to combine art-making with the thing that he already naturally gravitates towards,"

she said. "He was just obsessed, he almost wanted to climb in and swim in the paint. He was just making so much art, and I didn't really have to demand anything different of him."

Bui said she observed the children playing and communicating by pointing, jumping and making noises.

"We noticed that the kids gravitated towards certain toys, so we thought, we can make those toys the characters of the story.

"We wove together a narrative based on snippets of conversations we heard and that's how the book came to be."

Paine said while the words appear random in the book, there is a larger story around them.

"A lot of our children are non-verbal, so they might just say random words like, 'what, what, what', or 'splash, splash, splash', which really came in through the book," she said.

One of the pages was entirely inspired by how Neil, 2, played with Velcro fruit toys.

"Neil started cutting the fruit toys and saying 'that, that, that's an orange', and then he chopped a green Kiwi - so that's what's on his page."

Neil's mum Meg Talekar said creating the book was a new and unique experience.

"At home, he normally doesn't do the type of things that we did so it was quite eye-opening for me to see that. It gave me something to sort of take home and learn from," Talekar said.

"Neil was so interested in the fruit platter, so we started putting together some art around the fruits, we used paper to put the different colours together and make a game out of it.

"I'm hoping that it is a memory [for Neil] that no photo or video can capture.

"I hope the book that he has helped put together will become one of our favourites at home for bedtime stories."

Talekar said participating in the Dallas PlayConnect+ playgroup has been really valuable as a first-time mum with a non-verbal child.

"Since coming here it seems like his speech is starting to improve and get better," she said. "It's a nice setting to come in and have a bit of a break, spending time with people and sharing experiences and the roadblocks that they have experienced and how they overcame those."

This Dallas playgroup is facilitated by Playgroup Victoria and one of the many federally funded PlayConnect+ playgroups for children aged up to six with a disability and/or developmental concerns.

Playgroup Victoria programs and social impact manager Louise Buckle-Smith said PlayConnect+ playgroups are a safe, accessible space for families.

"It's challenging for somebody that's had a baby and things can be flowing normally and then all of a sudden there's a bit of a halt, where something's not quite right," Buckle-Smith said.

"The highest emotional journey from there on is where they've got to connect to services and get a diagnosis, a lot of them are going through that period.

"PlayConnect+ really is for families to have an understanding of what services are in their community that can also support them."

Buiv said it was a pleasure to create the book with PlayConnect+, and she hopes to work with children from all backgrounds.

"People might think that neurodivergent kids have limitations when making something like this, and I just want to totally dispel that.

"Your child might not speak in a conventional way, but they are so rich internally.

"All children are innately creative, and they just choose to express themselves in totally different ways."

The KOP community publishing program is open to communities and organisations working with up to 20 children aged 12 and under.

Kids Own Publishing: <https://kidsownpublishing.org.au/>

PlayConnect+: <https://www.playgroup.org.au/playconnect/>

Funding 'not keeping pace'

By Jack O'Shea-Ayres

Melton council is calling for further investment in the city following the release of the 2026-27 federal budget.

As Melton continues to shoulder a significant share of Victoria's housing growth, council is calling for greater long-term infrastructure investment from both state and federal governments to ensure services keep pace with the region's booming population.

Council welcomed the funding for key transport and local infrastructure projects, but has called for further direct investment to support the fast-growing municipality.

Melton's local government area is expected to accommodate about 109,000 new

homes over the next two decades under state government housing targets, which council said would place increasing pressure on roads, public transport and community facilities.

Among the federal budget commitments welcomed by council was the \$152.7 million joint investment by the federal and state governments to progress design and preparation works for the electrification of the Melton line.

However, council said planning alone will not address the immediate transport demands facing the growing community and is calling for a fully-funded commitment to deliver the project by 2030, in line with recommendations from Infrastructure

Victoria.

The budget also included \$50 million for upgrades to the Western Freeway as part of a previously announced \$1 billion package, although council is still seeking clarification from the state government about the scope and timeline of the works.

Additional funding measures welcomed by council include the \$2 billion Local Infrastructure Fund to support enabling infrastructure including water, sewer, and electricity connections, along with \$750 million for future funds of the Growing Regions and Thriving Suburbs programs.

Despite the announcements, Melton council said significant gaps remain in funding for community infrastructure.

Over the next decade, council expects it will need to deliver 20 new community centres, 10 active open space precincts, new and upgraded aquatic facilities, and three new libraries to meet population demand.

Melton mayor Lara Carli said investment was not keeping pace with growth.

"The reality is that our infrastructure is not keeping pace with the scale and speed of growth we're experiencing," Cr Carli said.

"We are delivering a significant share of Victoria's housing targets, yet investment in rail services, bus connections, roads and community facilities is not keeping up with growth.

Federal Treasurer Jim Chalmers was contacted for comment.



Melton mayor Lara Carli with artist Audrey Buttigieg Cardona and her uncle Emanuel Cardona, who is the inspiration behind Buttigieg's work. (Supplied)

Nominate a top Melton business

Applications are now open for the 2026 Melton Business Excellence Awards.

Local businesses across Melton are being encouraged to step into the spotlight and be recognised for the impact they make on the community.

The awards celebrate businesses which go above and beyond in their operations, from delivering outstanding service and driving innovation, to creating inclusive workplaces and giving back to the community.

"The City of Melton Business Excellence Awards program shines a light on the hard-working businesses that help our community thrive," Melton mayor Lara Carli said.

"These awards are about recognising the innovation, passion and commitment that sit behind the businesses across our city."

The 2026 award categories include health, wellness and care, professional services, visitation and hospitality, retail, industry and trade services, sustainability excellence, disability inclusion initiative, workplace engagement, and community impact leadership.

Category winners will also be considered by the judging panel for the business of the year award.

Applications close Thursday 9 July, with winners set to be announced at a special awards night in September.

"I encourage all eligible businesses to put themselves forward, if you know of a business that is doing amazing things, make sure you encourage them to apply for this year's awards," Cr Carli said.

To submit an application, visit: melton.vic.gov.au/MBEA

West's diverse artistic talent on show

Creativity, connection, and community are taking centre stage in Caroline Springs with the launch of the Melton Community Open Group Show's Common exhibition, celebrating the region's diverse artistic talent.

Doors opened to the public on Sunday 10 May, with the exhibition inviting visitors to explore the many creative voices that make up the local arts scene, showcasing works from artists who all share a connection to the Melton community.

Designed to provide emerging and established artists with the opportunity to exhibit in a professional gallery environment, the exhibit offers a platform for cre-

atives who may not yet have enough work for a solo exhibition, but still want to share their practice with the public, and in this case, their very own community.

The exhibition's theme, centred around the idea of "we all have art in common", aims to highlight the shared experiences and perspectives that unite the community through creativity.

Visitors can expect a broad range of artistic styles, mediums and personal stories, reflecting the diversity of Melton itself.

From painting and mixed media to photography and contemporary works, the exhibition works to provide an acces-

sible space for the community to engage with local art and the people behind it.

With artists each having their own ties to the local area, visitors are likely to recognise a few familiar faces.

The group exhibition also works with the aim to offer an opportunity to build confidence, connect with fellow creatives, and gain exposure in a professional setting while contributing to a growing local arts culture.

Common is on display at CS Gallery 193-201 Caroline Springs Boulevard, Caroline Springs.

Details: <https://tinyurl.com/2rh6wyh8>

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

WANT YOUR EVENT LISTED? Community Calendar is made available free of charge to not-for-profit organisations to keep the public informed of special events and activities. Send item details to Star Weekly Community Calendar, Corner Thomsons Road and Keilor Park Drive, Keilor Park, 3042, or email to westeditorial@starweekly.com.au by 9am Wednesday the week prior to publication

Activities for older adults

Keilor Activities for Older Adults meets every Tuesday at 10am for walks and social connection. Whether you can walk for 30, 60 or 90 minutes, you are welcome to come along and join in. The group also has lunches and other social get-togethers throughout the year.

■ Lynda, 0431 345 161

Maltese Folklore Association

All seniors are warmly invited to join Klabb Ghannejja Maltin (Maltese Folklore Association) and enjoy the friendly atmosphere the club provides. The club is open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday with traditional Maltese folk music held every Friday night and social nights hosted once a month on Saturday nights. Come to 4/6 Gooding Street, St Albans, meet new friends, and enjoy the wonderful Maltese culture and entertainment.

■ 9356 4638

Free Bingo

Locals, especially seniors, can enjoy bingo but with a twist. binGO move encourages participants to get active, make friends and improve physical and mental wellbeing all while enjoying a classic game. Sessions run fortnightly on Thursdays from 1.30-2.30pm at St Albans Tin Shed, 309a Main Road East, St Albans.

■ 9366 4302

St Albans Bowls Club

Everyone is welcome at St Albans Bowls - no matter age, gender or ability. Whether you're an experienced bowler or just



This week's photographer's choice picture is Mount Macedon as seen from Tony Clarke Oval on a wintry Saturday afternoon. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 554589_01

curious to give it a try, the club would love to see more locals on the green. The club hosts social bowls every Thursday and Saturday at noon at Kings Park Reserve, off Magnolia Avenue, Kings Park. Come along for a friendly game, meet new people and spend time in great company.

■ stalbins.bowls.com.au, stalbinsbowlsclub@bigpond.com, or 9366 0290

Living and Learning in Sunshine

Duke Street Community House invites community members interested in getting to know the local area whilst practicing their language skills to join this fun and social English class. Held Thursdays

12.30-3pm (term time only) at Duke Street Community House, 27 Duke Street, Sunshine.

■ www.dsche.org.au/

Card games

Love playing the card game 500? Card games are played every Monday, from 7-10pm, at the Sunshine RSL offices, 99 Dickson Street, Sunshine.

■ Leisa, 0425 768 808

Queers Out West

Queers Out West is social programming for LGBTQIA+ adults to build community, hosted by commUnity+ Neighbourhood House. The program features creative

arts sessions and relaxed fireside-style conversations with queer icons across diverse fields. Sessions run from 4.30-5.30pm on Tuesdays at 822 Ballarat Road, Deer Park.

Deer Park Probus Club

Deer Park Probus Club meets at the Deer Park Club, 780 Ballarat Road, Deer Park, on the second Wednesday of the month from February to December. Meet at 10am followed by lunch available from noon.

■ 0427 495 584

Keilor Park Tennis Club social night

Join the club on Monday nights for a free social hit and get to know other club members. All levels are welcome. Female players are also required for Thursday competition from 10am-2pm and also for the B-grade mixed team on Wednesday, 7-9pm.

■ keilorparktennis@gmail.com

St Albans Senior Citizens

St Albans Senior Citizens group meet at the centre at the corner of Alfrieda and William streets, St Albans, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9am-2pm. Annual membership: \$10. Cost: \$1 entry on attendance day.

■ Beverly, 0403 685 632

Deer Park Lions

Deer Park Lions Club is looking for new members. It holds dinner meetings on the first Wednesday of every month at the Deer Park Senior Citizens Club, 119 Station Road, Deer Park.

■ Michael, 0417 307 572



Wyndham teen Busolami, was named the city's young person of the month for May. (Damjan Janevski) 551794_07



B 24 Liberator Museum volunteer John Phillips. (Damjan Janevski) 551792_11



Cassacio Egg Farm owners Josie and Paul Casaccio. (Damjan Janevski) 551932_05



Imran Abul Kashem is starting a podcast highlights migrant journeys. (Damjan Janevski) 553015_05

Faces of the west

Each week Star Weekly photographers are out and about capturing events and people across the western suburbs.



Adam Roberts, Robyn Kennedy, Donna Southern and Braidyn Withers are campaigning for a safer Leakes Road. (Damjan Janevski) 552696_02



Brimbank volunteers Peter Thomson, Lily Simovic, Joan Ellis, Cecilia Gomez, Liljana Simonovska, Pauline Farrugia and Miranda Kwai Chan. (Damjan Janevski) 542220_04

Fleetwood's magic captured

If you never did believe in miracles, you'll be beginning to wonder why after seeing Starshine in Werribee next month.

The Fleetwood Mac and Stevie Nicks Tribute band will be rocking Studio 185 on Friday 12 June, promising to bring nostalgia, mystique and power to their performance.

The gig will be driven by a standout lineup of musicians who embrace their Fleetwood Mac counterparts, featuring former Las Vegas performer Nikki Canale as Stevie Nicks.

Krissy Keys channels the soulful feel of

Christine McVie, Mitchell Jon goes his own way like Lindsay Buckingham, Regotron brings the groove of John McVie, while Brennan Smith glues it all together as Mick Fleetwood did behind the drum set.

"Starshine is about capturing the magic people felt when they first heard these songs," Canale said.

"It's not just a nostalgia trip — it's a shared experience between the band and the audience, where every lyric, harmony and moment matters."

With sold-out performances, standing ovations and enthusiastic word-of-mouth

following the show wherever it travels, Starshine's growing reputation is certainly not a rumour.

The show appeals to lifelong Fleetwood Mac fans, music lovers, and new audiences discovering the timeless power of these songs for the first time.

Tickets can be purchased at the door, but all are encouraged to secure them online.

Tickets: <https://megatix.com.au/events/starshine-a-tribute-to-stevie-nicks-fleetwood-mac-werribee>



Nikki Canale. (Marjorie Skea).



Multi-award winning cabaret artist, Miss Friby, is preparing to unleash her inner-beast in her new show in Footscray next month. (Damjan Janevski) 551682_04

Miss Friby's new show is a different beast

Multi-award winning cabaret artist, Miss Friby, will take over Footscray early next month with her bold new immersive performance, *Beasts of Burden and Other Party Guests*.

Developed through a Maribyrnong Arts and Culture creative residency, the show blends cabaret, dance, satire, and physical theatre into an experience that is part-party, part-ritual, part-beautifully controlled chaos.

Beasts of Burden and Other Party Guests explores the invisible weight we carry in contemporary life.

Set inside a party that slowly slips into its own logic, Miss Friby said the show invites audiences not to escape that weight, but to recognise it together.

"Everyone arrives carrying something," she said. "This show doesn't ask you to define it. It just asks you to bring it with you."

Miss Friby will perform the show for a three-week season at Footscray's Bluestone Church Artspace, the same place where she staged her previous production, *Galah*, in 2023.

It should bring back good memories for the inner west performer, as *Galah* won her

the 'Most Outstanding Cabaret Artiste' and 'Best Production Design' at the following year's Green Room Awards, Melbourne's peer-presented, performing arts industry honours.

With the historic venue to be turned into a bespoke pop-up theatre for *Beast of Burden* - complete with extravagant lighting design, live soundscapes and rhinestones - Miss Friby is every chance to win even more awards this time around.

To judge for yourself, get tickets and details at: <https://www.missfriby.com.au/beastsofburden>

Slapstick chaos awaits at Melton Community Hall

Melton Performing Arts (MPA) presents Terry Pratchett's *Guards! Guards!* at the Melton Community Hall across three entertaining days.

In the sprawling chaotic city of Ankh-Morpork, the once-proud City Watch has fallen into disrepair - its remaining members, Captain Vimes, Sergeant Colon, and Corporal Nobby Nobbs are more accustomed to avoiding crime than fighting it.

But when a secretive brotherhood summons a dragon to seize control of the city, the watch is reluctantly forced into action.

With the help of the idealistic new recruit Carrot Ironfounderson, a six-foot-tall human raised by dwarves, the watch must uncover the conspiracy, face down an ancient beast, and perhaps even rediscover what it means to be heroes.



The cast and crew behind Melton Performing Arts production of *Guards! Guards!* (Supplied)

Packed with sharp wit, slapstick chaos, and Pratchett's trademark satire, *Guards! Guards!* brings the Discworld to life on stage in an epic tale of unlikely bravery, bureaucratic absurdity, and the triumph of a few very odd men (and one very determined dragon).

MPA Secretary Josh Tooth said the community-based performing arts group had developed quite the reputation in the lead-up to their next performance.

"We have 16 actors, most of whom are playing multiple characters," he said.

"Melton Performing Arts has begun to develop a fantastic reputation as a group in general, and there are lots of sneaky little Terry Pratchett fans lurking out there in the wilderness."

You can catch MPA's production of *Guards! Guards!* from 7pm on Thursday 28 May at the Melton Community Hall.

Guards! Guards! will then be presented at the same time on Friday 29 May, and twice on Saturday 30 May for a special day-time show at 1pm, followed by a final performance at 7pm.

Details and tickets: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1543437>.

Dreamlike photos anchor artist's first solo show

Sunbury artist Paul Melnyczuk is hosting his first solo exhibition in Kyneton.

The photographer is exhibiting his collection of works, taken across his travels, featuring landscape photography.

Titled *Impressions*, Melnyczuk said his works have a dreamlike quality to them.

"The way I like to think of it is if you have a memory sort of being on a beach, perhaps a number of years ago, a lovely day, beautiful hot sun, closing your eyes and just trying to remember that image you get."

Melnyczuk said he aims to capture the emotion and image that he saw in that moment through the lens of his camera, sometimes a more impressionist approach, utilising software and intentional camera movement to capture a radically different but equally valid memory of the moment an image was captured.

Melnyczuk has been photographing his world since he first picked up a proper camera while spending three years in Africa from 1981.

After retiring from writing and photography for magazines, Melnyczuk said he began experimenting with different technology and techniques as a way of manipulating images to create his signature impressionist style he has on display now.

He said this collection of works started in Scotland during the covid lockdowns when he began taking landscape photographs.

When he moved from Scotland to Australia in 2024, he continued to capture his new surroundings as he explored Australia from Byron Bay, Mission Beach and Ocean Grove to Mount Macedon and more.

Covering the last six years of his photographic journey, this exhibition is one not to miss.

Impressions is on display until 1 June at The Old Auction House Creative Hub and Gallery, Kyneton.



Photo from the exhibition. (Paul Melnyczuk)



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- What rowing term describes an oar entering the water awkwardly, halting momentum?
- Who is the most recent New Zealand-born NRL player to be awarded the Dally M Medal?
- Former NBA star Dennis Rodman developed a controversial friendship with which political figure?
- What position exists in rugby union, but not rugby league?
- Lou Gehrig, whose name is associated with a form of motor neurone disease, played which sport professionally?
- Who recently became the second tennis player to win all nine ATP Masters 1000 events?

- Soccer star Sam Kerr recently left which Women's Super League club?
- Former Australian Test cricket player Marcus North is the new national selector for which country's men's team?
- Former Australian rugby union head coach Eddie Jones is the national men's coach for which country?
- Which female UFC Hall of Famer recently returned to the ring after a decade out of competition?
- Which state won this year's NRL Women's State of Origin series?
- True or false: a driver named Scott Speed once competed on the Formula One racing circuit?
- Former England Test star Andrew Flintoff is the new coach of which BBL cricket franchise?
- The Coupe des Mousquetaires (Musketeers' Trophy) is awarded at which annual tennis event?
- Brad Scott has coached which two AFL teams?



Sam Kerr

- Which two AFL clubs did Carlton interim coach Josh Fraser play for?
- An AFL Women's international match will be held in August between Australia and which country?
- The 2026 NRL State of Origin series will feature games in Sydney, Brisbane and which other city?
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- Which two teams took part in this year's A-League Men's Grand Final?
- The 2026 Women's T20 World Cup will be played in which country?
- The Buffalo Sabres are a New York-based team that compete in which sporting league?
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- Golfer Aaron Rai is from which country?
- The Santos Tour Down Under race takes place in which state?
- In what year did the AFL's Swans first play home games in Sydney?

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Suzuki's EV debut imminent

By Alistair Kennedy, Marque Motoring

It's been a long time coming, but Suzuki has finally produced its first fully-electric vehicle.

Called e Vitara, it's a compact crossover SUV that won't be in dealerships until late-June or early-July but with preorders being taken.

The e Vitara shares the same platform and many features but styling differences with the Toyota Urban Cruiser. Both are built in India at Suzuki's Gujarat factory on its Heartect-e lightweight dedicated electric chassis.

At this stage it's unlikely that Toyota will be importing the Urban Cruiser.

Suzuki is unique in Australia in that a separate independent company distributes its vehicles in Queensland and part of Northern NSW with the factory-backed Suzuki Australia looking after all other areas. Generally, there are only minor differences including model grades, specifications or styling trims.

In both markets e Vitara will be available in either two- or four-wheel drive with two specification levels: 2WD Motion and AWD Ultra. In Queensland a 2WD Ultra is also offered.

The long-running Suzuki Vitara remains on sale in either petrol or hybrid powertrains but differs significantly from its EV sibling which is marginally longer but with a significantly longer wheelbase that provides additional interior space as well as a bolder, more premium styling and new tech features.

Styling

The design of the e Vitara is a major departure from the fairly bland looks of previous Vitara models. It's much bolder and more adventurous with a smooth but sculpted exterior sitting above, and surrounded by prominent black plastic cladding to infer some off-road credentials.

At the front the tall erect bonnet sits over LED headlights and large LED daytime running lights. The usual narrow 'grille' that identifies most EVs, with a large Suzuki badge in the centre.

The rear doors have the annoying 'hidden' handles mounted high on the C pillars and designed to suggest a coupe appearance.

The rear mirrors have a similar design to those at the front with a full-width light bar linking them.

Both variants come with 18-inch alloy wheels.

Ultra gets a panoramic nonopening glass roof with a retractable sunshade.

There are four colour options. Arctic White is standard. Bluish Black Pearl and Land Breeze Green are an \$890 option with two-tone also available with a Black Pearl roof on the Ultra for \$1340.

Interior

The biggest design feature comes inside the e Vitara. The brown seats and trim will not be to everyone's taste but at least it's different and we loved it.

The floating centre console is piano black that's hard to view in bright sunlight and too easy to smudge. A big plus, at least in our eyes, are physical climate control switches in the centre of the dash.

There are twin large cupholders in the centre console although grippers would have helped for smaller containers. The door bins are large and wide. There's also a large space below the centre console for keeping items away from prying eyes.

Ultra gets a smartphone wireless charger at the base of the dashboard.



RATINGS	
Looks:	8/10
Performance:	7/10
Safety:	7/10
Thirst:	7/10
Practicality:	7/10
Comfort:	7/10
Tech:	7/10
Value:	6/10



Suzuki's e Vitara sits at the top end of the compact SUV EV category and will struggle to compete against Chinese rivals. (Pictures: Supplied)

Some clever design allows rear seat and boot space to be adjusted with the seats able to slide back and forwards. When the seats are all the way back for maximum legroom luggage space is just 238 litres. At the other extreme, legroom is quite cramped but luggage space is increased to 310 litres. With the rear seatbacks folded there's 562 litres.

There is a useful storage compartment beneath the boot floor but no spare wheel.

Powertrain

The e Vitara powertrain combines a lithium iron-phosphate (LFP) battery system, electric drive axles and an integrated heat pump battery management system.

The 2WD Motion variant comes with a 49kWh battery that drives a 106kW/193Nm motor mounted on the front axle. Ultra increases the battery to 61kWh and adds a rear-mounted motor for total output of 135kW and 307Nm.

The charging port is on the front passenger side of the vehicle. Charging time for both variants are an impressive 11kW with AC and 70kW with DC.

WLTP driving range is listed at 344km and 395km respectively. The Queensland-only 2WD Ultra has a claimed 426km range.

Vehicle to Load (VTL) is available in both variants.

Safety

Standard safety in all e Vitara models includes seven airbags, adaptive cruise control, autonomous emergency braking, rear cross-traffic alert, lane keeping assist and departure prevention, forward collision warning, dual sensor brake support, multicollision braking, high beam assist,

front and rear parking sensors and blind spot monitoring.

Ultra AWD adds front LED foglamps, adaptive high beam, hill descent control and a trail mode switch.

The absence of a front centre airbag and a driver monitoring system contribute to the e Vitara only gaining a four-star ANCAP rating. While the extra airbag is disappointing, not being incessantly nagged by a camera pointing at the driver's face may well be a positive selling point for many drivers - including us.

Infotainment

Standard in both variants are 10.1-inch central touchscreen and 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster in front of the driver. There's a 360-degree view camera as well as front and rear USB-A and USB-C ports.

The infotainment screen falls well short of the sharp high-res screens that we're used to from Chinese vehicles.

Motion has four-speaker audio with Ultra stepping up to a premium 10-speaker Harman Infinity system.

Driving

The compact size of the e Vitara and the EV agility makes it an excellent urban vehicle.

The Ultra AWD that we tested came with a 10-way adjustable driver's seat which allowed it to settle into a comfortable driving position.

Visibility is good with a large windscreen, side and rear windows together with relatively thin A-pillars.

The gear selector is a rotary and push-down set-up with a park button above it. There are also physical buttons to adjust

brake regeneration, hill descent, parking brake and auto hold.

Zero to 100km/h acceleration is listed at 7.4 seconds from the AWD Ultra and 9.6 seconds in the FWD Motion.

The ride is relatively soft, aimed at comfort rather than sportiness.

Despite the cladding, a decent 180mm ground clearance and the eAxe. e Vitara is only suited for modest off-road conditions. Those looking for serious bush bashing will be aware that a Jimny EV is under development and will be hoping that it comes here.

Summing up

The compact EV SUV range is growing rapidly with most models coming from China and with very competitive pricing. This is Suzuki's biggest challenge because the e Vitara driveaway prices run from \$48,990 for the 2WD Motion through to \$58,990 for the AWD Ultra.

These prices drop by \$2000 with limited time cashback offers.

Even with these discounts e Vitara sits at the top end of the compact SUV EV category and it will struggle to compete against Chinese rivals such as the BYD Atto, Jaecoo J5 and GWM Ora which are more than \$10,000 cheaper.

The fact that Suzuki is a respected and trusted Japanese brand will no doubt attract buyers, provided they aren't deterred by it being manufactured in India.

It's a capable and comfortable vehicle mostly aimed at urban conditions and with a fair balance between physical and touchscreen controls that will satisfy both tech-savvy and conventional drivers.



RATINGS	
Looks -	8
Performance -	7
Safety -	7
Thirst -	6
Practicality -	7
Comfort -	6
Tech -	7
Value -	8

Passenger comfort for K4

By Derek Ogden, Marque Motoring

After more than two decades and more than 200,000 sales in Australia, the Cerato was fast running out of legs.

The self-styled much loved small passenger car could have kept up with design and technical developments in the segment but Kia had other ideas.

The new K4 kicked down the door in sedan format with four trimlines – S, Sport, Sport+, GT-Line – and two petrol engines before later being joined by hatchback for MY26 models, aligning them with Kia's global naming convention.

Both sedan and hatches score an updated 2-litre MPI Atkinson Cycle engine with CVT in the lower grades, while the flagship GT-Lines retain its 1.6T GDI motor matched with an eight-speed automatic transmission.

Prices open at \$32,090, plus on-road costs, for K4 S 2-litre CVT sedan and hatchback,

rising to \$34,190 with the addition of a Safety Pack. The Sport and Sport+ follow at \$36,690 and \$39,090, respectively, with the GT-Line 1.6L T-GDI, with eight-speed auto, topping off the range at \$43,790. The last was on test.

The entry-level S model can be upgraded with an optional Safety Pack, which includes an enhanced instrument display via a second 12.3-inch instrument layout and 5-inch HVAC interface, plus dual zone climate control, plus an expanded autonomous emergency braking suite offering Junction Turning and Crossing and Direct/Oncoming Lane Change Detection.

The K4 is covered by Kia's seven-year unlimited kilometre warranty, seven years capped price servicing and up to eight years roadside assist by following scheduled Kia services.

Styling

The term hatchback could be something of a misnomer: with a wheelbase pushed out to 2720mm, the sleek K4 hatch exhibits the characteristics of a station wagon. Inspired by Kia's 'Opposites United' design philosophy, vertical headlamps and daytime running lights have been pushed

to the outer edges highlighting the car's wide stance.

Not normally a fan, I can live with the flush rear door handles integrated into the C-pillar and 18-inch wheels, which lend a sporty on-road presence, capped off in the GT-Line by an air diffuser and raked rear window.

Interior

Sitting on a relatively long wheelbase (2720mm), it offers good headroom and legroom in the second row. Adults can fit comfortably, and they score rear air-con vents and two USB-C ports as standard. Kia designers aimed to make the cabin approachable and easy to use via a bank of hard-wired switchgear on the dash.

The fulsome exterior translates to roomier proportions front and back, while front-seat occupants benefit from increased head and shoulder room.

Rear-seat passengers do not miss out on convenience kit with twin USB-C ports at the back of the centre console, together with rear air vents and a neat storage cubby. With 438 litres of boot space, cargo area is larger than some hatchback rivals (Corolla and Mazda 3 spring to mind), the K4 rivals small SUVs for room.

GT-Line emphasises its sporting image with embossed details on two-tone seats and textured console crash pad. A wide sliding sunroof is exclusive to the flagship.

Sustainability is foremost with materials such as Bio plastics, leather, foam, paint and recycled yarns and felt.

Infotainment

A shoutout to Kia for not replacing traditional hard switches with touchscreen controls.

Outsize switches operate air-con temperature and fan speed while incorporating shortcuts for navigation and audio functions. There's also a simple volume roller.

The entry-level S trim is limited to a digital driver instrument cluster with a 4-inch multi-function LCD display. Add the Safety Pack option or move up the gradings for an expansive trio of displays, comprising



Kia's K4 offers style, tech and value for money. (Pictures: Supplied)

a 12.3-inch digital cluster, 5-inch HVAC set-up and separate 12.3-inch infotainment touchscreen.

Kia Connect is a car service providing customer benefits in safety, security, convenience and real-time data including weather and traffic info. Also offered is Over-the Air software updates such as the latest maps without a visit to a service centre.

Wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are standard throughout the range, while the GT-Line adds a Qi wireless charging pad and ambient mood lighting.

Engines/transmissions

The K4 GT-Line has the exclusive use of Kia's 1.6-litre T-GDI turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine putting out 142kW of power and 264Nm of torque, driving the front wheels via an eight-speed automatic transmission.

The maker claims fuel consumption of 6.7 litres per 100km in the combined urban/highway cycle. The test car recorded 9.1 litres/100km in the city and suburbs and 5.4 litres/100km on the motorway.

Safety

The K4 Hatchback has a five-star ANCP safety rating but the base S grade (without the \$2000 Safety Pack) drops back to four stars. Apart from that all grades are subject to an increased focus on driver safety.

Standards are up with features such as Forward Collision Avoidance Assist, Smart Cruise Control with stop/go function, Lane Keep and Lane Follow Assist, Multi-Collision Braking, Blind Spot Collision-Avoidance Assist, Driver Attention Warning, Intelligent Speed Limit Assist, Rear View Monitor and High Beam Assist.

A full complement of airbags includes a front-centre side airbag.

Driving

The Aussie GT-Line, like all K4s, was put through a rugged suspension program to suit local driving conditions. The result is smooth handling of bumpy city streets and a commanding ride over challenging country roads.

In fact the flagship behaves in line with its sporty looks – with a gruff engine note, a pleasure to push to the limit.

Driver warnings and intrusive automatic voice alerts are kept to a minimum. However, Kia's latest Highway Driving Assist is on hand to chip in when travelling on freeways or motorways, incorporating adoptive cruise control with stop-and-go capability.

The system combines Lane Following Assist to keep the vehicle centred in the lane, even through curves, adding Lane Change Assist allowing the K4 autonomously to swap lanes when safe conditions are met.

Improved body rigidity, vibration and harshness are maintained throughout, the result of the use of high-strength steel and reinforced sound insulation.

Summary

With electric vehicle sales bubbling away, when it comes to the ICE (internal combustion engine) alternative, for style, tech and value for money there are few to beat the Kia K4 GT-Line Hatchback.

Falcons are 'stringing' the wins together

By Tara Murray

City West Falcons are starting to put the wins together but there's still plenty of work to do in the Victorian Netball League.

The Falcons have now won their last three games and four out of the last five to sit in fourth spot on the ladder after a slow start.

On Wednesday night, the Falcons got a hard fought win against the Melbourne University Lightning, 69-62.

Falcons' coach Marg Lind said they were happy with the first half but they didn't continue the momentum.

"It wasn't pretty," she said. "We were good early but we took our foot off the pedal a bit.

"We made a few errors off centre pass, just organisation stuff.

"Defensively we got penalised heavily, especially in the second half. So that's something we need to address."

The Falcons had got out to a nine-goal

lead at half time and that would prove to be the difference.

It was a second straight week that Lind had said they had taken the foot off the pedal when they could have gone on to have a big win and got some much needed percentage.

"We are rolling subs a lot too which stops momentum a bit," she said.

"We got less adventurous towards the end and consolidated the line up.

"They got there in the end.

"We are stringing them together."

Jane Cook shot 65 goals for the Falcons, missing just two shots.

She now has 573 goals for the season, at an average of 96 per cent.

Lind said Cook and Maggie Lind were their best in the win and got them out of jail a few times.

she said Montana Holmes had some really good defensive moments picking off a few balls.

Lind said they had a tough draw coming up so they needed to get wins on the board when they can.

The Falcons now have a 6-4 record.

Meanwhile, it was the end of a four game winning streak for the Falcons 23 and under side, losing to the Lightning, 61-53.

Lind said they allowed the Lightning to get off to a good start and couldn't peg it back.

"Too many errors when it counted," she said.

"We chased a bit of a deficit at the start. They got back within three, but failed to recognise some attack patterns from the opposition.

"They will get there."

Holly Adams-Alcock shot 37 goals for the Falcons.

The Falcons face Boroondara Express this Wednesday before facing the ladder leaders, the Hawks in the following round.



Jane Cook. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 495489_16

Eyeing great heights

By Peter Howe

Sliding door moments have been responsible for unearthing many Australian stars including this month's Don Deeble nominee Alanna Mannering.

Mannering once dreamt of representing Australia in gymnastics, but one athletics training session changed all that.

Maribrnyong Sports Academy athletics coach Darren Clark saw potential in Mannering when she trialled for a place in the year 7 program.

She excelled in the 100 metres, 200 metres and long jump at primary school and when she was accepted into MSA she joined the Williamstown Athletic Club.

In March last year, the teenager was at Aberfeldie Athletics Track was ready to start her pre-season campaign with a two kilometre run.

"It's a daunting task and I hated running that distance," she said. "One of our coaches asked if there was anyone who'd like to volunteer to try the pole vault.

"My hand went up without giving it too much thought, anything to get out of the two kilometre."

The rest, as they say, is history.

While Mannering still does gymnastics twice a week, it's the pole vault that has her full attention.

The decision has proven to be the right one with Mannering recently winning the under-16 national pole vault title with a personal best jump of 3.33 metres.

"I bypassed little athletics because I was doing gymnastics and I now run for Keilor-St. Bernards with my girlfriends in their relay teams," she said.

"I picked up the basics of the pole vault quickly.

"I love the feeling of controlling my body in the air. The technique and co-ordination required is quite similar to gymnastics.

"I am lucky I have natural speed, but I am still learning to run with the pole. You also can't be put off by a fear of heights either."

Mannering's training regime is fierce and she's on the track four days a week.

The upper body strength required to vault into the air and maintain control of your movements is immense.

Her training imitates that and includes drills like climbing ropes only using her arms, and climbing ropes upside down again only using her upper body.

Add push ups, yoga ball exercises, core, upper body weights and leg lifts.

Then she moves outside to work on her run up to improve her technique.

Within 12 months, Mannering had set



Alanna Mannering. (Scott Sidley/@ss_athletics)

her sights on the qualifying standards to meet the entry requirements for Victorian, national and Oceania selection.

"I don't get very nervous before competitions," she said. "I am really focussed on beating myself and delivering PB's every time I compete."

At the national titles, Mannering didn't have the competition that she wanted.

She missed her first two jumps at the entry height for the competition.

"I gave myself, my family and coaches a real scare," she said. "I was lucky and got over at my last jump and went on to win the title.

"I remained composed but I was a little nervous. You can never take anything for granted."

Mannering also recently represented Australia in the 2026 Simplot Games held in America, finishing fifth in the 4x200 metres relay.

At Rare Air Meets back in Australia, she

secured top 10 finishes in elite pole vault competitions, competing against athletes much older than her.

So, what does the immediate future hold?

"My end goal is to represent Australia at the Olympic Games," she said. "The Oceania games will be held in Darwin next year and while I cannot compete because of my age at the time, when the pole vault is conducted, I will be age ready.

"My coach Bill Georgantas has set a plan in place.

"I must be jumping 3.9 metre-plus.

"Moreover, to be at my best I must be having fun."

The Don Deeble Sports Star Award is sponsored by the Yarraville Club Cricket Club, Strathmore Community Bank, the Deer Park Club, Ascot Vale Sports and Trophies and Star Weekly.

If you would like to nominate a monthly winner, contact swrsportsclub@gmail.com or 0408 556 631.

United's A-League future in doubt

Western United's A-League future remains in the balance after Football Australia announced it had failed to satisfy the mandatory criteria set out in the regulations for A-League club licensing.

Football Australia released a statement on Tuesday saying that the First Instance Body (FIB) met on 14 May to determine all club licensing outcomes for the 2026-27 A-League season under Football Australia's National Club Licensing Regulations.

The embattled club sat out the 2025-2026 season.

Amid concerns over unpaid wages and superannuation - and while under a FIFA registration ban - Western were stripped of their A-League licence by Football Australia (FA) in August.

A wind-up order followed, and men's and women's players and staff were all left in limbo and unable to join new clubs until the Australian Professional Leagues put the club into hibernation on 6 September.

"The FIB confirmed all current A-League teams, with the exception of Western United FC, have satisfied the mandatory criteria set out in the regulations for A-League club licensing purposes," the Football Australia statement said.

"The FIB's decisions are based on documentation provided by the clubs.

"Western United FC has until 5pm on Friday 22 May, 2026 to appeal the FIB's decision. "Should Western United choose to appeal, they will be heard by the Appeals and Entry Control Body (A&ECB)."

In a statement on its website, Western United said it acknowledges Football Australia's determination regarding the club licensing process for the 2026-27 season.

"The club is currently reviewing the determination and the available pathways moving forward including its appeal rights and ongoing discussions with relevant football stakeholders," the statement said.

"We can assure the community that work continues behind the scenes to stabilise the club and secure a long-term sustainable future for football in Melbourne's west.

"Importantly, the club's academy and community football programs continue to operate, supporting hundreds of young players and families across the region."

Mates make Games team

By Tara Murray

New Deer Park Bowls Club signings and best mates Aaron Teys and Corey Wedlock are headed to the Commonwealth Games.

The pair were named in the Australian Jackaroos squad for the games on Tuesday.

A 12-player squad has been named with six Para-Commonwealth Games athletes in the team.

Teys and Wedlock make up the men's squad along with Aaron Wilson.

Wilson, who will compete in the singles, is going for a third straight gold medal in that event.

Wedlock, who competed at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and Teys, who has been selected for his first games, will compete in the men's pairs event.

Teys said it was an unreal feeling to have

made his first games.

"It's something that I always dreamed of as a kid and being in the squad for a while now and had a couple of setbacks and what not," he said.

"It's a huge relief and I can't wait."

The pair said they can't wait to team up together.

"We're good mates on and off the green, we know each other's game inside out, we know what makes us happy and what ticks us off," Teys said.

"I think it was selected but I think if we both had the opportunity we would have played with each other anyway."

Wedlock added, "I'm really looking forward to teaming up with Aaron Teys, who is one of my best mates, and we've got a great record together, looking forward to get there out on the big stage together."



The Australian Commonwealth Games bowls team. (Commonwealth Games Australia)

The format of the bowls competition this year at the Commonwealth Games is different to the past.

The format is more like the Bowls Premier League competition.

Wedlock and Teys have won that competition together four times, with Teys named player of the tournament three times.

"I get bored pretty easily so this format is

going to be pretty good for me," Teys said

Wedlock said they have a good record and know each other's games well.

"We know what works for each other and what doesn't work for us, having that friendship as well off the green puts us in good stead heading into the games."

It comes after the pair signed with Deer Park for the Bowls Victoria weekend pentant premier division competition.

Teys returns to the club and has signed on for two years, while Wedlock will join the Parkers for the first time and has signed for four years.

Bowls Australia's performance director and national coach Gary Willis said having four Commonwealth Games debutants alongside athletes with multiple games campaigns creates a really strong balance within the squad.



Jacinta Kondis. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 428526_06

Kondis is breaking records at the Lakers

By Tara Murray

No one sits higher when it comes to goals kicked in Caroline Springs Football Club's history than Jactina Kondis.

At just 20, Kondis has broken Caroline Springs all-time goalkicking record.

Already the club's leading female goalkicker, she now has the overall record.

In the Lakers round six match against Oak Park in the Essendon District Football League premier division match, Kondis kicked her 326th career goal to sit number one in club history.

"It's still hard to believe actually," Kondis said about the record.

"There was talk about it for a few weeks. I was one short last week, everyone knew it was going to happen this week.

"Very special and I'm very honoured. "It's a pretty good feeling."

Having played all of her football with the Lakers, Caroline Springs Football Club has a special place in her heart.

"I'm very grateful," she said. "To be up there, I still can't believe it."

Kondis started playing with Caroline

Springs when she was 11 in juniors and has progressed through the ranks.

She said she played a number of sports as a kid and ended up landing on football.

"Shaun Rainer, my coach at the time, is still with me now and coaching me, he was a pretty big part of my career," she said.

"I've always been in the forward line.

"I started seniors when I was 16, I was pretty young when I got chucked straight into the forward line."

Kondis kicked 45 goals in 2022 in first senior season of football, with the Lakers winning their first premierships.

She has beaten that twice, including last season when she kicked 63 goals in the Lakers premierships.

Her best in a game is 15 goals.

Kondis sees herself as a leader in the Lakers forward line as they look for more success.

"At the time [2022] Caitlin Pretty was in there, she's been a mentor for me and is still a mentor for me," she said.

"It was good to be able to learn off her and be able to get to where I am now.

"There's a few young girls who are in

the forward line and having Pretty in the backline, I'm kind of that mentor figure in the forward line now and around the ground as well.

"I like leading young ones."

Kondis said she did consider playing at higher levels when she was younger but for her now it's playing with her friends.

"It's the only reason that I play, the girls are beautiful," she said. "They are best bunch of girls that you can meet and finishing off with a couple of premierships each year is pretty good as well."

The Lakers have a new challenge this season having moved across to the EDFL premier competition.

Kondis said it was the challenge that they needed.

"It's good, very different," she said. "It's just better footy, better for us girls as well and playing against better teams we work up to that standard of footy as well, it's really good."

While she already has the club's goalkicking record, Kondis is just starting out and hopes there's plenty more goals to come.

Sports shorts

VTCA

Sunshine United has signed Nathan Johnson for the upcoming Victorian Turf Cricket Association Isaacs Howarth Shield season. Johnson brings a wealth of experience having played at St Bernard's OC, Yarraville Club, the Druids and played Victorian Premier Cricket with the Greenvale Kangaroos. "Not only does Nathan add quality on the field, but his leadership, experience and character make him a perfect fit for the culture we continue to build at Sunshine United," the club said on social media.

Soccer

St Albans' Oliver Dragicevic has been named in the Young Socceroos 2026 SEAN under-19 championships in Indonesia in June. Dragicevic, who joined Melbourne Victory in the off season with his first professional contract, is one of 23-players named in the squad. The squad features a mix of fresh talent and established contributors, with Dragicevic one of seven players to earn their first call up.

EDFL

Hillside returned to the winners list in the Essendon District Football League women's premier division for the first time since round one. The Sharks were at home against Keilor and put in a dominant display on the way to a 15.7 (97)-0.1 (10) win. Caitlin Sargent kicked five goals and Nyakoat Dojiok kicked four goals. Kiara Rigg was named their best. The Sharks sit seventh on the ladder. Elsewhere, Caroline Springs was too strong for Maribyrnong Park, winning 12.10 (82)-0.2 (2). Jacinta Kondis kicked five goals in the win. The Lakers sit second on the ladder.

NPL

Green Gully and St Albans Saints both suffered losses on Friday night in the National Premier League. The Saints were in action against Dandenong City and found themselves trailing 1-0 at half time. The Saints levelled the scores in the 58th minute through Nicolas Koek before Dandenong City hit back to take the lead and eventually win 2-1. The Cavaliers lost to Heidelberg United 1-0.

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Georgies stay focused

By Tara Murray

Caroline Springs George Cross has a better idea of where it sits in the National Premier League competition.

The Georgies had a big start to the season before slipping back into the middle of the pack as the season approached the half way mark.

Georgies' coach Eric Vassiliadis said they were fairly pragmatic about how the season has gone so far.

"You break it down to facts and it's about the outcome," he said.

"It was important to have a good start to the year and it panned out that way.

"We played a lot of the top end teams late and it was a wonderful reality check on what it takes to be at this level.

"We have a lot of work to do. We're in a

reasonable position and we want to be able to do something special."

Vassiliadis said they the focus was still to play finals.

He said currently the top six sides are long established clubs which is what they want.

On Friday night, the Georgies shared the points with the Bentleigh Greens in a 0-0 draw.

"It was a cagey affair," Vassiliadis said.

"It was a stereotypical performance by them in the first half and they missed a penalty which they would have been disappointed with.

"The second half was more us. We missed the best opportunity to win the game late.

"We were pleased with the output in the second half."

Vassiliadis said their biggest challenge so



Michael Tzoutzidis. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 534346_02

far this season had been not scoring enough goals.

It's something they will look to address in the transfer window.

"We have not scored from the striker position," he said.

"We've had a number of opportunities

we are creating and it's maybe about whether we can be in better positions.

"We need more competition and more support in the front third and a midfielder.

"It will give us more depth and replace the guys that we lost."

The big games continue for the Georgies as they play off on Wednesday night for a place in last 32 of the Australia Cup.

Vassiliadis said the game with the Preston Lions is massive for the club.

"It's big for the club to be in position one game away from the 32," he said.

"It's part of the ambition to do something special. It's difficult managing players loads with all the leagues.

"We play Green Gully three days later which is even more important.

"We need to get max points on Wednesday night and on Saturday.

Lions are fighting to get season back on track

By Tara Murray

Taylors Lakes hopes it has turned the corner as it tries to get its Essendon District Football League division 1 season back on track.

It's been the year from hell so far for the Lions, with injuries and inconsistency leaving the side down towards the bottom of the ladder.

On Saturday, the Lions got their second win of the season as they accounted for Rupertswood, 16.9 (105)-11.12 (78).

Lions' coach Steve Burns said they were starting to have things come together.

"It was nice to get the win, it's been a tough few weeks," he said. "We're not far away.

"The last two and a half weeks we've played some of our best football we have in the last two and half years."

Burns said Saturday's game with Rupertswood wasn't the whole game they were hoping for, but played some good football for three quarters.

After leading by 49 points at half time, the margin was back to just 16 points heading into the final quarter.

The Lions finished strongly to ensure the win.

Burns said one of the pleasing things was that they were now starting to put some scoreboard pressure on.

"We're playing our brand now," he said. "We're moving the ball quicker and taking the game on.

"We're now kicking 100 points a game and there's a lot of upside."

Daniel Younan kicked four goals for the Lions.

Chris Vulic, Lachie Rayner and Younan were named the Lions best.

Burns said having the like of Vulic, Rayner and Brandon Coletta, who was also named in the best, back in the side and playing together helped.

"It's a big difference for us," he said. "Marc Lock should be back next week and hopefully we'll have Jake Hobbs back and Damien Petrone is a chance as well.

"It will give us a chance against Avondale.

"It's been the year from hell so far and we're working it out. The players are glued together.

"The bad start could spur us to to something but the pressure is on for the rest of the year."

In other results, Tullamarine was too strong for St Albans.

"There's been a few things. We didn't have a great pre-season all the way through.

"We were a little underdone and West Coburg was a tough start for us.

"We weren't playing our brand at all.

"It was hard with a lot of players out.



Chris Vulic. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 430072_20

We haven't got the consistency in the side, we've got a few of them back now."

The Lions injuries concerns continued on Saturday.

James Vistarini and Mitchell Jones are both to miss a few weeks.

Burns said while they know that they are

chasing tail after the poor start, they wanted to give themselves a shot to do some damage in the back part of the season.

"We want to be in a reasonable position and have a big run home," he said.

"It always helps having talent back on the park."

Lakers end Roos run

Caroline Springs continued on its winning ways and ended the Sunshine Kangaroos winning streak in the Western Football League division 1 competition.

Both sides entered the match full of confidence having strung together a number of wins.

On Saturday, the Lakers set the match up in the first quarter as they kicked eight goals to one to lead by 44 points at quarter time.

The margin was still 41 points at half time.

Caroline Springs was able to narrowly win the last two quarters to come away with a 17.8 (110)-8.8 (56) win.

Steven Kyriazis kicked six goals for the Lakers.

Max Hudson, Steven Kyriazis and Jesse Cavanagh were the only three named in the best for the Lakers.

Charlie Oughtred was the only multiple goalkicker for the Kangaroos with two goals.

Ethan Sivijs, Kurtis Barnard and Benjamin Mazziol were named the Kangaroos best.

The Lakers remain second on the ladder, while Sunshine sits in sixth.

Meanwhile, Albion lost to Hoppers Crossing, 11.13 (13)-9.12 (66).

The first quarter was the difference in the match with the Warriors leading by 29 points despite not making the most of their opportunities.

Judd Brewster kicked four goals for the Cats in the loss.

He was named their best along with Josiah Garisto and Caleb McPherson.

The Cats sit in fifth spot.

In division 2, Albanvale and Sunshine Heights were on the winners list.

After trailing at quarter time, the Cobras kicked 16 goals to four in the next three quarters to beat Laverton, 18.11 (119)-6.16 (52).

Reece Field kicked seven goals for the Cobras and was named in the best along with David Ranno.

The Cobras sit sixth on the ladder. Sunshine Heights got its fourth win of the season, beating Tarneit.

The Titans stuck around until three quarter time before the Dragons kicked six goals to three in the last quarter to win, 19.14 (128)-12.8 (80).

Bol Kolang and Aaron Williams were named the Dragons best.

Braybrook lost to Wyndhamvale.


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ROUND 12

Thursday, May 28
St Kilda V Hawthorn (MRVL)

FRIDAY, MAY 29
Carlton V Geelong (MCG)

SATURDAY, MAY 30
Sydney V Richmond (SCG)
Brisbane V Fremantle (G)
Western Bulldogs V Collingwood (MRVL)

SUNDAY, MAY 31
Melbourne V GWS (TP)
West Coast V Essendon (OS)

BYES: ADELAIDE, GOLD COAST, NORTH MELBOURNE AND PORT ADELAIDE

**Correct at time of publishing*

GROUND'S KEY: (AO) Adelaide Oval, (AS) Accor Stadium, (BA) Blundstone Arena, (G) Gabba, (GS) Giants Stadium, (M) Mars Stadium, (MRVL) Marvel Stadium, (MCG) Melbourne Cricket Ground, (MS) Metricon Stadium, (SCG) Sydney Cricket Ground, (OS) Optus Oval, (T) TIO Stadium, (UTS) University Of Tasmania Stadium.

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