

BRIMBANK & NORTHWEST

Star Weekly

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Altona Meadows Kiss fanatic Phil Cassar in front of the mural of the band he recently had painted on his back fence. (Damjan Janevski) 563305_04

Kiss of approval for fence art

Visitors to Phil Cassar's home in Altona Meadows will notice a new addition to his backyard, one that is as striking as it is unsurprising.

As someone with one of Australia's largest collections of Kiss memorabilia and the founder of a Kiss Facebook page with 9000 followers, it's fitting that the mural recently painted on Mr Cassar's back fence features the four face-painted members of the 70's rock icons.

"When I was a little kid Kiss were like real life super heroes," he said of where his devotion to the band came from.

Following a visit to his nan's place one Christmas, that devotion extended from Kiss's music to their merchandise too. Mr Cassar's obsession led to him starting a Kiss collectibles Facebook page 13 years ago, however it was a post on another local Facebook page from a young artist called Seb, that led to him having a mural painted of the band.

"He did an awesome job," Mr Cassar said.

Station falls short

By Sebastian Conidi

The redevelopment of Albion Station risks delivering a rebuilt station that "falls short of its potential to act as a catalyst for urban renewal", according to Brimbank council.

Council endorsed its submission at its 21 July meeting. It is calling for a range of upgrades, including key safety improvements, to be included in what it describes as a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity".

The redevelopment forms part of Melbourne Airport Rail Stage 1, which will upgrade the rail corridor between West Footscray and Albion.

In its submission, Brimbank council said while the early designs include several improvements, the project remains constrained by an \$80 million budget set in 2022.



Artist's impression of the new Albion station. (Supplied)

"Since that time, construction costs have increased substantially and are forecast to continue rising before construction commences," the submission said.

"In the absence of an increase in project funding, there is a risk that important place-based connectivity and safety outcomes at Albion Station may be compromised to accommodate these

additional project requirements."

The council said its review of the concept designs found several key precinct and connectivity improvements, commonly delivered as part of major station redevelopments across Victoria, had been excluded or deferred.

These include safe, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant pedestrian links across the railway through upgraded station underpasses, and improved walking and cycling connections beneath Ballarat Road on both sides of the rail line.

The submission also calls for an upgrade to the existing underpass, a continuous shared user path along the eastern side of the station, improvements to the eastern Ballarat Road underpass, better pedestrian connections and an expanded forecourt on the eastern side of the proposed

pedestrian crossing.

The council said while further improvements could be delivered in the future, there is currently no funding or timeframe for them.

Councillor Joh Bauch described Albion as "one of the most dodgiest stations" on the Watergardens line.

Cr Lucy Nguyen said the upgrades being sought were "not just nice things to have".

"They are essential to the future of our community," she said.

A Melbourne Airport Rail spokesperson said the redevelopment would deliver additional lighting, stairs, lifts, pedestrian paths and a new overpass, making Albion "more accessible and easier for passengers to get to where they need to go".

The spokesperson said community consultation on the early designs would help shape the final plans for the new station.

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Residents revolt over park

By Jack O'Shea-Ayres

Residents facing the loss their homes to the planned Kororoit Creek Regional Park are warning the state government's approach to compulsory acquisition could have far-reaching consequences for property owners across the state.

A group of Deanside landowners claims their properties were rezoned more than a decade ago without their knowledge, dramatically reducing property values, before being earmarked for acquisition.

Now, as the state government prepares to acquire the land this year, residents say the process has left them fighting not only to save their homes, but also protect what they believe are the property rights of all Victorians.

The state government has earmarked \$315 million to acquire land and deliver its 6500 hectare Suburban Parks Program, 215 hectares of which is the proposed Kororoit Creek Regional Park in Deanside.

Impacted residents claim they had their land rezoned from Rural Development to Rural Conservation classification in 2012 without their knowledge, which reportedly drove down the values of their residences to approximately 1.7 per cent of the true current market value of surrounding properties.

The Firoritti family are among those most impacted by the proposed park and are set to lose 10.5 hectares of their 12.4 hectare property.

Margaret Fiororitti said the state government had failed to be transparent. "The government always told us, even though they were taking our land they would pay us for its best use without the park," Ms Fiororitti said.



Margaret and Walter Fiororitti with fellow protesters who are facing the loss of their homes to the planned Kororoit Creek Regional Park. (Ivan Kemp) 565713_03

"What they didn't tell us is our land was worth next to nothing because they'd already rezoned it to take it on the cheap, knowing they wanted to build this park."

A Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) spokesperson said planning for the new park involved extensive community consultation.

"DEECA continues to work with landowners to establish the new Kororoit Creek Regional Park. Kororoit Creek Regional Park will provide significant new open space for Melbourne's growing western communities while protecting nationally significant biodiversity values, and is informed by years of planning, environmental assessment and community

consultation," the spokesperson said.

Residents campaigning under the 'Fair Go Deanside' banner said they have been living in limbo for over a decade, battling the state government to exclude their land from the park's proposed footprint.

"The government has never stepped foot on our property to determine the environmental values. Yet they rezoned us to Rural Conservation and devalued our home without us knowing," Mrs Firoritti claimed. "We have lived in our home in Deanside for over three decades and the government has taken away our lifestyle and ability to retire comfortably."

Mrs Firoritti said attempts to negotiate changes to the park boundary had failed.

The Firoritti family and other impacted residents are calling on the state government for a minor adjustment to the proposed park's master plan.

They're demanding the park's boundaries be shifted to exclude their properties as well as the removal of the Rural Conservation overlay on their residential properties.

A Melton council spokesperson said "Council has been consulted on the proposal and has communicated residents' concerns to the Victorian government ...and recognises the importance of achieving positive environmental outcomes while also understanding the concerns of affected residents."



Douglas Kay Real Estate staff were delighted with their award. (Pictures: Supplied)



Sunshine's star businesses

The Sunshine Business Awards gala, held on 14 July, brought together the municipality's vibrant business community for an evening of networking, celebration, and recognition. The Sunshine Business Association was proud to honour 15 winners across a range of categories, including hospitality, lifestyle, and community service.

Cung Nguyen of Pho Hien Saigon Restaurant and Dominic Uccelini of Devonshire Pharmacy were recognised as the 2026-27 Legends of Sunshine.



Donut King and Sunshine Marketplace - winners of STAR Sweet & Drinks and STAR Lifestyle & Retail - respectively.



Legend of Sunshine Dominic Uccelini.

Category winners were:

- STAR Barber - Multicultural Barber
- STAR Real Estate - Douglas Kay Real Estate
- STAR Business Services - Kennedy Guy Lawyers
- STAR Restaurant - Thuan An Restaurant
- STAR Sweets & Drinks - Donut King
- STAR Financial Services - ADV Partners Chartered Accountants
- STAR Fresh Food & Groceries - Gasko's House of Fresh
- STAR Take Away & Fast Food - Nene Chicken
- STAR Lifestyle & Retail - Sunshine Marketplace Lotto
- STAR Cafe - The Granary Cafe
- STAR Fashion & Jeweller - Bonds Outlet
- STAR Health & Fitness - Anytime Fitness
- STAR Hair, Beauty & Nails - Natural Hair Design 9
- STAR Medical - Sunshine Family Dental
- STAR Community & Youth Services - Djerriwarrh Community & Education



The Sunshine Business Association Committee organised the gala.

Plea to help stop the itch

By Jena Carr

A western suburbs family is counting down the days until the federal government decides whether to fund a life-changing medicine for children with severe eczema.

Five-year-old Aarav has lived with the condition since he was a baby, which became severe at the age of one when he started frequently waking up at night scratching to the point of bleeding.

Father Gaurav Chawla said Aarav’s skin would be red and inflamed from head to toe during a flare-up and that creams and ointments offered minimal relief.

“Friendships and our family life get affected because he’s like a monkey scratching all over and all day,” he said.

“2024 was the worst time we had with him, as it got to the point where his face, under eyes, arms, behind the legs, and stomach area were all bleeding.

“Mostly, he can’t sleep well, and when a person can’t sleep well overnight, things get worse emotionally and mentally, and he’s not sleeping well 20 to 30 per cent of the time.”

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) held a meeting early this month to decide whether the medicine dupilumab (brand name Dupixent) should be funded through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for children aged six months to 11 years.

Dupilumab is currently only available to Australians aged 12 and older through the scheme, with Eczema Support Aus-

tralia’s SOS (Save Our Skin) for Kids with Eczema campaign calling on the government to ensure all kids have affordable access to the medicine they need.

Mr Chawla said he believed Dupilumab would make a big difference in his son’s life.

“If there is something which can be given maybe once a month where we don’t have to worry so much about his flare-ups, and he has a better life, I think that would be great,” he said.

“I’m also worried for future parents who could have these kinds of issues, as I don’t want them to have to wait for years and years to get treatment for their kids.”

The outcome from the PBAC meeting will be published on the Department of Health’s website on 21 August.



Aarav during an eczema flare-up. (Supplied)

Alarm bells ring on teacher pay dispute

Victoria’s education workers have again walked out of the classroom in pursuit of better pay.

Tens of thousands of Victorian public school teachers, principals, and education support staff walked off the job on 23 July in a 24-hour statewide strike.

The strike was the latest escalation in a dispute over a pay increase between the Victorian Branch of Australia’s Education Union (AEU) and the state government since mid 2025.

The industrial action came after teachers, principals, and education support staff rejected a government pay offer of a 17 per cent increase over three years proposed in March, a revised 28.3 per cent increase over four years made in April, an improved offer in May, and another just this month.

Union members only narrowly rejected the most recent offer, with 51.1 per cent of participating members voting in favour of rejecting the offer, which would have included pay rises of 28.3 per cent to 32.4 per cent over four years.

If accepted, the latest offer would have increased full-time teachers’ salaries by more than \$1000 per month by October this year, and almost \$3000 more per month by 2030. Education staff would have earned up to \$1600 more per month by the same time.

The AEU sub-branch president and Melton Secondary College teacher Abanob Saad said the government could not ignore the striking teachers.

The AEU condemned the state government’s latest offer, with members highlighting teachers, education support staff, and principals are working up to 12 hours of unpaid overtime a week.

“I see passionate people powering our schools being pushed towards burnout,” Mr Saad said. “When educators burn out, students miss out.”



Melton Secondary College AEU sub-branch members joined tens of thousands of education staff at the steps of Parliament House in pursuit of better pay. (Supplied)

The latest offer would have also halved required meeting hours from 80 hours to 40 hours a year.

Education Minister Ben Carroll pleaded with teaching staff to call off the strike saying “Students should be in classrooms and parents shouldn’t be left scrambling

for childcare or losing a day’s pay.”

“We said we’d listen to our teachers, principals and education support staff and that’s what we’ve done.”

Negotiations are reportedly continuing, but union members warn another strike could occur on 4 August.

Hospital makes a sustainable shift

In a major stride towards greener healthcare, Sunshine Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has pioneered the transition from disposable to reusable linen, yielding remarkable environmental benefits.

The switch has cut carbon emissions by 50 percent, preventing over 3.6 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions – the equivalent of driving 1.3 laps around Australia in a car. Additionally, it has averted 2.2 tonnes of waste from ending up in landfills, roughly the weight of a small elephant.

“One of the main findings of the study was that we can reduce carbon emissions by 50 percent,” said Kylie Feely, an ICU equipment nurse who co-led the research alongside Stacey Matthews from Deakin University’s School of Nursing and Midwifery and the Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research.

The study compared the environmental impact of disposable and reusable incontinence pads, known as “blueys” and “pinkies,” before and after their introduction between 2022 and 2024. The analysis accounted for the entire lifecycle, from manufacturing and transportation to laundering and waste disposal.

Significantly, the switch to reusable linens came at a modest cost increase of only 3 percent, while also reducing landfill waste by the equivalent of around 55 full kerbside rubbish bins each year.

“Reusable products have an important role to play in making healthcare more sustainable,” said Professor Forbes McGain, a Western Health anaesthetist and intensive care physician.

“In 2014–15, the Australian healthcare sector was responsible for approximately 7.2 per cent of the nation’s total emissions.”

The research also found that the use of reusable pads did not increase pressure injuries in ICU patients, which can impact recovery and prolong hospital stays. In fact, pressure injuries decreased after the introduction of reusable linens.

Professor Rochelle Wynne, chair of nursing in the Western Health–Deakin University Partnership, emphasised the critical role nurses play in driving sustainable change, as routine ICU care generates significant waste, and small adjustments can yield substantial benefits.

The successful implementation at Sunshine Hospital has led to the expansion of reusable pads across Western Health and several other Victorian healthcare services, paving the way for a more eco-friendly future in intensive care.

Brimbank council votes to not join native title proceedings

Brimbank council has voted to not join native title proceedings as a respondent opting to monitor the proceeding instead.

Council was notified in April that the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people had made an application for native title in the area.

Native title is the legal recognition of pre-existing rights and interests in land and waters, based on the laws and customs of Traditional Owners.

It does not create new rights or transfer ownership of land. Rather, it recognises

rights that have continued since before colonisation, where those rights have not been extinguished by later acts such as freehold grants or certain public works.

Under the Native Title Act, council has the opportunity to become a respondent to the proceedings. A respondent is a party who has an interest that may be affected by the determination of native title rights and interests.

A report to the 20 July special council meeting recommended that council did not join the proceedings but rather take

an active monitoring approach.

“There wouldn’t be a benefit for the residents of Brimbank for us to pursue this matter as a respondent,” Cr Daniel Kruk told the meeting.

“We’re positively engaging with our Indigenous community. We hold consultation groups and we engage on the rights of the land. This decision would not change how we approach a lot of these matters.”

Cr Victoria Borg said, “Council will continue to work respectfully with traditional owners and assess future requirements”.

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Ted can't wait to show everyone his layout.

Show ready to leave the station

The Sunshine Model Railway Club is gearing up to celebrate its 28th annual exhibition over the first weekend of August.

The event will feature roughly 20 model layouts of townscapes and landscapes designed by the community's most eager railway model enthusiasts.

Layout designer and railway model enthusiast Ted Allen is excited to be presenting his layout Eddington Quay.

Mr Allen has presented four exhibition layouts and remains dedicated to the art in his spare time.

"It's either a hobby or an obsession.

Sometimes I don't know which one it is, but it's definitely one or the other," he said.

The layout features a small wharf area and the bottom end of a town. Key structures include a pub, general store, marine engineer, and service station. The diorama took approximately two years to build.

"It took a very long time. It's all made out of cardboard with the finer details 3D printed," he said.

The exhibition will take place at Braybrook College Stadium on Saturday 1 August, from 9.30am to 5pm and on Sunday 2 August, from 9.30am to 4pm.

Briefs

Vision Australia seeks podcast participants

Vision Australia Radio is seeking participants for a new podcast series exploring the lived experiences of people who are blind or have low vision across a range of language communities. The project is looking for storytellers from diverse backgrounds, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic and Vietnamese-speaking communities, as well as First Nations English-speaking participants. If you, or someone you know, meets the criteria and would like to share your experiences, you are invited to email radio@visionaustralia.org with an expression of interest and contact details. Selected participants will receive a gift card.

Coffee with a cop

Brimbank residents are invited to meet local police at the upcoming Coffee with a Cop event on Thursday, 30 July, from 11.30am to 1pm, at The Cupcake Queens, Watergardens Shopping Centre. Hosted by the Brimbank Police Service Area, the informal gathering offers the community an opportunity to enjoy a coffee, chat with officers, raise concerns, ask questions and strengthen connections with local police in a relaxed and welcoming setting.

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WestCasa and Bunnings staff members Agni, Ris, Cheyne, Heather, Adrian, Annette and Kathy launch the new healing space at the Women's Health Hub in Werribee on 13 July. (Gary Sissons) 565219_01

WestCASA's home for healing

The Western Region Centre Against Sexual Assault (WestCASA) has transformed a balcony at its headquarters into a healing space for victim-survivors.

Featuring plants and furniture donated by a local Bunnings and put together by volunteers, the repurposed balcony is aimed at providing a calming, welcoming environment where clients and visitors can breathe, relax and connect with nature.

Located within the Women's Health Hub in Hoppers Lane near Werribee, the healing space officially launched on Monday 13 July.

WestCASA chief executive Annette Vickery said the new space was in keeping with the organisation's commitment to delivering compassionate, trauma-informed care.

"At WestCASA, we know that healing happens not only through specialist support, but also within environments that promote safety, comfort and wellbeing," Ms

Vickery said while thanking Bunnings for helping to make it possible.

"We are sincerely grateful to Bunnings for their generosity in helping us create a beautiful outdoor space that will be enjoyed by victim-survivors, their families, our staff and visitors for years to come."

As well as offering a quiet outdoor retreat, the upgraded balcony will also provide space for informal conversations, moments of reflection and staff wellbeing.

While based in Werribee, WestCASA is a leading not-for-profit sexual assault counselling service operating across the entire western metropolitan region of Melbourne.

The organisation assists in the recovery and healing of victim-survivors of sexual assault as well as providing community education programs.

For more information, visit: <https://westcasa.org.au/>

Recycle for food relief

By Cade Lucas

Victorians can turn empty drink containers into meals for those doing it tough this winter through a new partnership between the state's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic) and Foodbank Victoria.

The 'Your Empties, Full Tummies' campaign was officially launched at Foodbank's Altona warehouse on Thursday 16 July.

As part of the three month campaign, Victorians depositing their empty drink containers with CDS Vic will be encouraged to donate their 10-cent container refunds to

Foodbank Victoria, with every five donations helping to create one meal for those experiencing food insecurity.

Donations can be made by selecting Foodbank Victoria on the screen at a CDS Vic reverse vending machine or choosing the charity as a payout option on the CDS Vic app.

Those depositing their empty drink containers at over-the-counter refund points and depots can personally request that their donations go towards Foodbank as well.

Since the scheme started in November 2023, more than 3.3 billion containers have been recycled through CDS Vic, returning

more than \$330 million to Victorians, including almost \$4 million to charities and community groups.

Foodbank Victoria accounts for more than 70 per cent of all hunger relief efforts across the state and has reported a 10 per cent increase in demand in the past six months as cost-of-living pressures squeeze household budgets.

Foodbank Victoria chief executive Dave McNamara said that as the state's largest food charity, it made sense to join forces with such an effective fundraiser.

"Foodbank's partnership with CDS Vic makes it easy for Victorians to turn their

empties into something that truly matters - meals for people doing it tough," Mr McNamara said. "With demand for food relief at a record high, simple actions like donating your 10-cent containers can create real change for the 76,000 Victorians who rely on Foodbank every single day."

Chief executive of CDS Vic scheme coordinator, Vic Return, Matt Davis, agreed.

"We're proud to partner with Foodbank Victoria to give people another simple way to turn their recycling into meaningful support for fellow Victorians this winter"

The campaign runs until mid-October.

Details: <https://cdsvic.org.au/>



Brimbank's first community battery is in Sunshine West. (Supplied)

Brimbank's first community battery switched on

Brimbank council recently activated its first community battery in Sunshine West.

Brimbank councillor Daniel Kruk was joined for an official launch on Thursday 16 July, by the Special Envoy for Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Katie Thwaites MP, and Fraser MP Daniel Mulino.

"This location was chosen for the Sunshine community battery because of the large amount of rooftop solar in the area," Cr Daniel Kruk said.

Located in Gresham Way Reserve, the battery will aid in the reduction of

household energy bills by storing excess energy from rooftop solar during the day and releasing it back to the grid during peak periods when electricity is at its most costly.

Income generated by the community battery will be reinvested into projects that support the community to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The project was enabled through \$500,000 of funding supplied by the federal government's Community Batteries for Household Solar program.

The battery features vibrant artwork

from Melbourne artist Melanie Caple, depicting flora and fauna such as galahs, Australian Indigo flowers, and large leaf bush peas. The artwork was voted for by the community through the council's YourSay consultation.

In 2019, council declared a Climate Emergency. The community battery has enough energy to power the local low-voltage network for a few hours during peak demand, particularly in the evening.

"We hope that the Sunshine Community Battery will be the first of many in Brimbank," Cr Kruk said.

Ongoing questions over data centres in Brimbank

Brimbank council's recent meeting has prompted further discussion in relation to community fears over the expansion of data centres across Melbourne's west.

During public question time at the 21 July meeting, a question was raised with council over how the community could remain protected from the impact of data centres.

The council responded stating, "All planning applications must be assessed against the planning controls that apply at the time of the application that is lodged. In the absence of specific

planning requirements relating to data centres, council planners can only use their negotiation skills to seek influence to best control the outcome. Council will, however, continue advocating for improved outcomes".

The passing of a motion to endorse a newly drafted climate emergency strategy sparked further commentary. According to Greenpeace, AI data centres prompt further risk to the ongoing climate emergency given their use of natural resources.

"These data centres heavily impact the

environment through massive energy and water consumption, fossil fuel reliance, and electronic waste," councillor John Bauch said.

"Driven by the AI boom, their skyrocketing power threatens local grids while cooling requirements strain the municipality."

Last month, an officer report revealed that the council had been advocating to the state government for stronger transparency and communication when it came to the implementation of data centres in the suburbs.

Liberals wave goodbye to controversial MP

By Allanah Sciberras and Nick Wilson, AAP

Embattled Liberal MP Moira Deeming has been dropped as a candidate by the Victorian Liberals as they head for the polls, after she abandoned an eleventh-hour legal bid to prevent being ousted.

The party voted to disendorse her as a candidate for the November election at a meeting on Friday evening.

The party reached the widely-expected outcome at its Collins Street headquarters, which required support from 75 per cent of its 19 members.

Liberal leader Jess Wilson confirmed the move following the meeting.

"This matter is now concluded. My singular focus remains on the issues that matter to Victorians and outlining our plan to deliver a fresh start this November," Ms Wilson said in a statement on Friday.

The path was cleared after Mrs Deeming earlier in the week withdrew a legal challenge seeking to prevent the party from moving against her.

The state executive had planned to meet to decide on the future of her candidacy earlier in July after she failed to apologise over an incident in May.

The MP had accused colleague and former party leader Matthew Guy of grabbing her "violently" in a headlock, but since claimed she misunderstood the meaning of headlock.

Mr Guy told reporters in June Mrs Deeming owed him a public apology, adding he vehemently denied that anything untoward took place.

"Moira Deeming owes me a public apology. I'm owed an apology by the premier and the attorney-general," he said in a statement outside parliament.

"They can come to me the honourable and easy way, or a harder way."

Mrs Deeming had attempted to stop the party from voting to drop her as a candidate.

She launched the legal action on 3 July, prompting the party executive to give an undertaking it would not take steps to disendorse until it was resolved.

The legal action was officially withdrawn, paving the way for Friday's meeting.

On Wednesday, Mrs Deeming sent a 12-page statement to the party's state executive, providing a mediation proposal that allowed her to end the supreme court action.

Mrs Deeming said she had been overseas when the story broke and the injunction allowed her time to gather her thoughts and recover from illness and jet lag.

Artefacts of Altona

Altona has long been defined by heavy industry and its skyline dominated by factories, gas flares and smoke stacks. Now a group of locals are working to preserve the suburb’s industrial heritage as its factories, refineries and plants rapidly disappear. Cade Lucas reports.

From Spotswood to Seaholm, Point Cook to Point Gellibrand, Skeleton Creek to Stony Creek, residents of Melbourne’s west woke up on Sunday morning asking themselves the same question: what the hell was that noise?

Facebook groups were flooded with posts about what was variously called a big bang, a loud boom and a big bang boom that got people out of bed, shook their homes, rattled their windows, frightened their pets while making their hearts stop and bowels suddenly spring open at about 2am on 19 July.

Lights began flashing and sirens start blaring as dozens dialled triple-0, while some excitable types hypothesised about earthquakes, explosions or cosmic thunder claps.

When it soon became clear it was none of these things but rather the decommissioning a giant piece of machinery at the old Mobil refinery in Altona, most of those who were questioning where they sound came from began asking why they weren’t told about it beforehand?

The uncomfortable answer of course is that they were.

“How Altona’s Skyline Is Set to Change” declared the advertisement from Mobil running across the bottom of page 5 of the 15 July edition of the Maribyrnong & Hobsons Bay Star Weekly.

After a preamble about how in 2021 the company closed its Altona refinery and began converting it into a fuel storage terminal, demolish of a number of tanks and other pieces of infrastructure as a result, the company got to the point:

“Soon you will notice a more significant change to the Altona North skyline as we commence demolition of the Fluid Catalytic Cracking unit and associated infrastructure.”

While most ads overstate things Mobil’s did the exact opposite.

More commonly known as the “Cracker”, the Fluid Catalytic Cracking unit weighs 900 tonnes and is as long as the MCG.

When it arrived from Japan in 1996, Williamstown was quite literally brought to a standstill as a fleet of semi-trailers that were made look the size of matchbox as cars dragged it to the Altona refinery.

Anyone of the thousands of people who lined the streets that day to witness it would have known that demolishing the something of that size was never going to be a small or silent exercise, though Mobil did their best to pretend otherwise.

“The unit will be felled entirely within the Mobil site and then progressively demolished on the ground, with all works approved by WorkSafe Victoria,” the advertisement read, before adding: “The felling will take place on 19 July.”

Even if the language was remarkable in its understatement, anyone who read the ad would’ve known to expect something to happen on the third Sunday in July.

But while just about everyone in the west heard the final crack of the “Cracker”, not all were surprised.

In fact, some were even expecting it, like Graeme Reilly from Altona Laverton Historical Society.

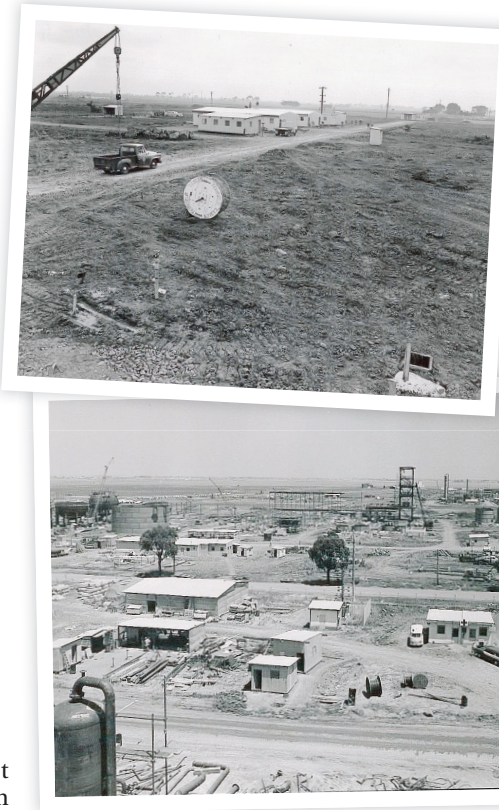
“They are large structures and I guess you can’t pull them apart bit by bit, there’s some parts that are just gonna have to come down at once and make quite a noise,” Mr Reilly said of the demolition.

Mr Reilly is paying closer attention than most to the demolition of the former Mobil refinery due to his role in a new project aimed at preserving Altona’s industrial heritage.

With help from a Make It Happen Grant from Hobsons Bay council, Mr Reilly, former Hobsons Bay mayor Sandra Wilson and one of the last engineers on site at the former Qenos plastics manufacturing plant, Nikki Gaskell, have joined forces to source, sort and save images, artefacts and stories about Altona’s state significant industry over the decades.

“The industrial skyline has defined Altona for over half a century and it is rapidly changing before our eyes; we feel the need to capture what we know before it is too late,” Mr Reilly said of the motivation for the project which is focused on the former Mobile refinery, the Qenos site on Kororiot Creek Road and also the former Toyota plant in Altona North.

Of all these sites, it’s Qenos which closed



Left: A photo of the old Qenos site in Altona when it was first established in 1961.
Below: One of the old photos of the Qenos site that have been collected as part of a project to preserve Altona’s industrial heritage.



Melbourne’s city skyline viewed from the former Qenos site. (Pictures: Supplied)

most recently, with operations finally ceasing there at the beginning of last year. However, it’s also the site which is being demolished the quickest and which the group has been able gain access too, making it the immediate focus.

“Half of Qenos has already gone and there’s another part that’s about to go and once it’s gone all that industrial structure is going to disappear and once that happens, people will quickly forget what was there, why it was there and what they did,” Mr Reilly said.

“And it’s not often that we get in at the ground level to get artefacts from the company. It’s generally much later that you try and search for artefacts but in this case we’ve been able to get them before they’re gone forever.”

So far the more than 4000 images, some dating back to the plant’s beginnings in 1961, have been sourced, as well as 25 videos and even a full scale model.

Some of the material will be digitised and catalogued for future history buffs, but other artefacts will be displayed in an exhibition to tell the story of Altona’s changing industrial landscape as part of the 2027 Heritage Festival.

And while the group has access to the Qenos site and is in negotiations Mobil and Toyota about doing the same, Ms Wilson said there was an even greater resource they were hoping to tap into: former

employees.

“We believe there is rich history to collect from our community so we’re curious to gather anything from people’s photo albums, work files, cupboards, drawers and memory banks!” Ms Wilson said, noting that even though all three sites were being torn down, former employees and their families were not hard to find.

“Just about everyone you speak to in Altona will say “oh I know someone who worked there, my dad, my uncle.

“I was just down at Bendigo Bank in Altona putting up some flyers and someone said “oh my uncle worked there, he died there in an industrial accident.”

Ms Wilson said Altona’s industry has played a significant role in the community, making preserving its history and documenting its end, all the more important.

“This change is happening before our eyes and I think people will notice it once it’s gone. Some people will be glad to see it gone but it’s part of our history whether we like it or not.”

From July - September a series of drop-ins are scheduled at Louis Joel Arts and Community Centre, the Hobsons Bay Men’s Shed and Truganina Explosives Reserve for people to share anything that provides a perspective on Altona industry.

The group is also seeking volunteers to help digitise documents and images into Victorian Collections, an online database. Training will be provided.

Contact: Sandra Wilson, 0432 161 777.



Former Hobsons Bay mayor Sandra Wilson and the Altona Laverton Historical Society’s Graeme Reilly next to Altona’s Cherry Lake with one of the suburb’s former factories in the background. (Gary Sissons) 564383_01

Water exercises for seniors: Improve health and mobility

Staying active matters at every age. It supports strength, balance, and independence. Yet for many older adults, traditional exercise can be difficult. Stiff joints, sore knees, or balance problems make movement harder than it once was. Water-based exercise offers a practical solution.

In the pool, the body feels lighter. The water supports your weight and cushions your joints. You can move more freely with less pain and less fear of falling. That weightless feeling encourages confidence and ease. Water exercises for seniors help build fitness without strain.

At Centennial Living, residents enjoy guided water aerobics exercises for seniors. Instructors tailor sessions to suit different fitness levels. Each class blends movement, breathing, and balance in a friendly, relaxed setting. Many residents describe it as the highlight of their week. The pool becomes a space to connect, move, and feel good again. Here are some simple water exercises to build mobility, strength and confidence without overloading the body.

Walking and Jogging in Water

This exercise strengthens the muscles that support your hips, knees and ankles. It is a low-impact way to move with rhythm and purpose.

Start by walking across the pool in waist-deep water. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight. Let the water resist each step and engage your legs and core. When ready, try a gentle jog.

Marching in Place and Calf Raises

To strengthen your calves, ankles and feet, this exercise helps to support circulation



and makes walking or climbing stairs feel steadier.

Start by standing near the pool wall or hold a noodle for balance. Lift one knee high, then the other, in a slow and steady march. Focus on control rather than speed. Follow with calf raises. Lift your heels off the floor, pause, then lower them again.

Wall Push-Ups and Wall Chair

Both of these exercises are safe and easy to adapt. They help restore control and stability, making daily movement smoother.

Face the pool wall and place your hands on the edge, shoulder-width apart. Step

back a little and lower your chest toward the wall. Push back to your starting position. This builds chest, arm, and shoulder strength.

To do the wall chair, lean your back against the wall and bend your knees as if sitting in a chair. Hold the position for a few seconds, then straighten your legs. This strengthens the thighs and glutes and supports mobility for standing and walking.

The Joy of Movement in Water

The pool offers freedom. It allows the body to move without fear or pain. Each motion supports strength, balance, and calm. Water

exercises for seniors restore confidence and reduce stiffness. They also create space for mindfulness and relaxation. At Centennial Living, water-based programs help residents stay strong and connected. The classes bring people together, encourage gentle movement, and promote a sense of belonging.

If you or someone you care for is looking for a safe, low-impact way to stay active, explore Centennial Living's approach to health and wellbeing. Call 1300 098 000 to speak to a friendly team member, or visit www.centennialliving.com.au for more information.



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Bullant protection push

By Cade Lucas

There are calls for a rare bullant living in native grasslands in Melbourne's north-west to be listed as a threatened species and given greater protection from poachers.

The first detailed study of the *Myrmecia nobilis*, a red and yellow bullant roughly 10-14mm in length that lives in grasslands in Hobsons Bay, Hume, Brimbank, Wyndham, Melton, and Moorabool, was recently undertaken by the Victorian National Parks Association (VPNA).

Among the findings contained in the report, Melbourne's Grassland Bullants,

released this week, are that they're now found in just eight sites, including in Altona and Werribee, and that fire, encroachment from trees and shrubs and introduced grass species are among their many threats.

However, according to the report the biggest immediate threat is from poaching, a practice more commonly associated with giant beasts in the jungle than tiny insects in the grass.

"Ant collecting is surprisingly common, with poaching of wild ant colonies feeding a market for collectors," the report said.

"We don't think anyone has worked out how to breed them in captivity so

poaching wild colonies is the only way of getting this ant.

"With poaching damaging wild populations, it's really important to find out more about these ants and how we can help them."

While urging anyone who witnesses poaching to contact authorities, the report concludes that formal protection is needed for the bullant to survive and that a submission has been made to Victoria's Scientific Advisory Committee requesting they list *Myrmecia nobilis* as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

While the report paints a worrying outlook for the future of bullants, the

VPNA's Grassy Plains Network Facilitator Adrian Marshall said the study was a big step towards protecting them.

"Understanding these ants better is essential if we're going to save both them and the grasslands they call home," Mr Marshall said, adding that he was amazed when he first heard about *Myrmecia nobilis*.

"I had never imagined there would be a rare grassland specialist bullant, let alone one found only in Melbourne."

The grasslands bullants study was supported by the Altona and Laverton Community Bank.

The report can be found at: <https://vnpa.org.au/grassland-bullant/>

MY PLACE

Wolf Heidecker is passionate about promoting artists through his performing arts management company and as a board member of Wyndham Art Works. He speaks with Laura Michell.

What's your connection to Melbourne's north-west?

In 2000 I moved from Albury-Wodonga where I was general manager of The Flying Fruit Fly Circus to Werribee to manage the final stages of the construction and first year of operations of the Werribee Cultural Centre that opened in May 2001. Once the cultural centre was up and running, I resigned from Wyndham City Council and established WHAM, my independent performing arts management company. Soon after I arrived in Werribee, I became involved in the local arts community. I was instrumental in registering CAA-Wyndham Community Arts Alliance Inc and became a volunteer member of the still active group that is today trading as Wyndham Art Works, with its home in Laverton North.

What do you like about where you live?

Coming from the northern border of Victoria I enjoyed the more rural feeling of living in Werribee with the benefit of being so close to the 'Big Smoke' of Melbourne. Seven years ago, my wife and I swapped our house in Werribee and relocated to Tarneit where we are living in a retirement village since. It's just five kilometres from where we lived in Werribee for nearly 20 years, therefore could maintain our connections to friends and the community without any interruption. Though Wyndham experienced significant growth as a city and lots of architectural and infrastructure improvements, the 'old' centre of the municipality still has its charm, homely and inviting image. In the surrounding



Wolf Heidecker, (Supplied)

vicinity we can enjoy the Werribee River and many green areas as well as all the new leisure developments, e.g. in Werribee South.

Where is your favourite local place to spend time?

Werribee Open Range Zoo.

How did Wyndham Art Works come about?

Wyndham Art Works (WAW) is the 'trading as' name of CAA-Wyndham Community Arts Alliance that was a community group

established to support the building of the Wyndham Cultural Centre in Watton Street. After the completion of the building in 2001 I was asked by some local artists to maintain the group as the 'home' for local artists which I then took over as a resident, not as the first manager of the cultural centre, and became the founding president of the incorporated association. I am still member of the board as their treasurer and business manager. It is still the only not-for-profit organisation in Wyndham dedicated to support local artists of all genres, e.g. studios for painters, glass artists, writers and workspace for the local branch of the Egg-Decorators-Guild, and performers from ethnic groups with South Pacific Islander, Samoan and Maori backgrounds.

WAW is entirely self-funded and run by volunteers; our arts centre with 10 studio spaces and two common rooms have been leased from Wyndham City Council for a token rental fee. In 2027 WAW will be negotiating with our landlord for a possible extension of the lease.

Tell us something people would be surprised to know about you...

For the last 25 years I have produced and directed about 30 theatre productions, volunteered managing the local Maori group Te Karangatahi Mana until they moved to WA last year, the Chinese Seniors Choir You Yi Zhi Qiao in Collingwood, ongoing, and officiated numerous weddings in Wyndham and surrounding areas until my retirement as a registered marriage celebrant.

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8 BRIMBANK & NORTHWEST STAR WEEKLY Tuesday, 28 July, 2026



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors



40 years ago
30 July, 1986

Born in 1887, Eileen Veronica Kent celebrated her 99th birthday last Friday 25 July at the Sunshine Heights Hotel.



30 years ago
31 July, 1996

Conflicting eyewitness evidence gave a dramatic start to the committal hearing this week of a 16-year-old girl charged with murder.



20 years ago
25 July, 2006

Brimbank residents have until Friday to lodge submissions to the draft council budget which has already undergone drastic revision in a turbulent week since the original was prepared.



10 years ago
26 July, 2016

Not only does the daffodil herald the beginning of spring, it's seen as an international symbol of hope for people affected by cancer.

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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

Garden club

The Sunshine Golden Age Garden Club meets on the second Wednesday of the month at Glengala Community Centre, corner Simmie Street and Glengala Road, Sunshine West at 7pm. New members welcome.

■ Helen Reid, 9746 3933, reidhm@hotmail.com

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 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.

■ stalbans.bowls.com.au, stalbansbowlsclub@bigpond.com, 9366 0290

Women's only conversation English

Duke Street Community House is inviting locals to make friends, learn new skills and practice English in this fun and free women's social group. Tuesdays during school terms, 9.30am-noon, at Duke Street Community House, 27 Duke Street, Sunshine.

■ 9311 9973, dukest@dsch.org.au

Zumba Class in Deer Park

Locals can vibe and move during sessions of Zumba Gold Toning classes at commUnity+ Neighbourhood House, featuring light dumbbells for strength building. Sessions run from 6-7pm on Thursdays at 822 Ballarat Road, Deer Park. No bookings required.

Budding Artists

Whether it's your first time dabbling in art or you're fully-fledged, Budding Artists is an art program for all abilities. This term's theme is Celebrating Women in Art. Sessions are hosted by commUnity+ Neighbourhood House and run from 11am-12.30pm on Thursdays at 822 Ballarat Road, Deer Park. No bookings required.

Over 50's club

The Keilor Over 50's Recreation Club meets at Kealba Hall, 24 McShane Drive, Kealba, on Tuesdays, from 10am-3pm, and Wednesdays, from 7-10pm. Have a coffee and a chat, play social table tennis, pool and card games, go on organised outings and enjoy barbecues. First two visits are free then annual membership fees apply.

■ Graeme, 0404 809 640, keilorover50@gmail.com, www.keilorover50.com.au

10 BRIMBANK & NORTHWEST STAR WEEKLY Tuesday, 28 July, 2026



This week's photographer's choice picture is of Riverbend Historical Park, which sits on a former settlement area in Werribee.
(Garry Sissons) 563945_29

Popcorn Musical Fun and Learning

Join Popcorn Musical Fun and Learning, a free, evidence-based early education program that combines music, play, and connection for families with children aged 0-5 years. Running for eight weeks, on Tuesdays, 10.30am-12.30pm, this program is designed to incorporate singing, stories, and fun activities to support your child's development. Running from February 11 onwards at the Sunshine Heights Playgroup Centre, 105 Glengala Road.

■ 9663 6733, events@ds.org.au

Crafternoons

Duke Street Community House is inviting locals to a free adult social opportunity to get together and be creative. Learn a new craft or bring along your own craft projects. Tuesdays during school terms, 12.30-2.30pm, at the Duke Street Community House, 27 Duke Street, Sunshine.

■ 9311 9973, dukest@dsch.org.au

Sunshine Community Brass

Sunshine Community Brass is looking for trumpet and percussion players to join its vibrant band of musicians. With more than 90 years of history, the band rehearses at 45 Furlong Road, North Sunshine, on Tuesdays, from 7.30pm.

■ Andrew, 0419 444 620

Deer Park Probus Club

The 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. The club offers bus trips, lunches, morning melodies etc. New members welcome.

■ 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

Brimbank Book Group

Be inspired by thought-provoking books with a group of like-minded, literary fans with our Brimbank Book Group. All welcomed. This group, for adults, meets on the first Monday of the month, from 2-3 pm, at Deer Park library. Bookings are not essential, but please feel free to register your interest.

■ library@brimbank.vic.gov.au

Create & Chat

Dig out your craft projects and get inspiration from fellow like-minded crafters with the create and chat sessions at Sunshine Library, from 10-11am, on the first Tuesday of every month. All skill levels are welcome.

■ library@brimbank.vic.gov.au

Women working together

A program connecting women aged 50 and above and in need of assistance, with mentors and mentees. Open to women across the western suburbs, including Brimbank.

■ 9655 2131, EmploymentSupport@cotavic.org.au, or cotavic.org.au/our-programs/employment-support/

National seniors meeting

On the first Wednesday of every month at 1.30pm, the metro west branch of national seniors meets at the Deer Park Club, with meals available to purchase. The group also holds lunches on different Fridays each month, as well as activities such as theatre visits, bus trips and more.

■ 0425 713 004, lesley1.collins@outlook.com

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

Keilor Day View Club

The Keilor Day View Club meets at 11am on the first Thursday of each month at Green Gully Soccer Club, Green Gully Reserve, Club House Place, Keilor Downs. The club is inviting locals to come along and enjoy a meal and fun with a friendly group of ladies.

■ Robyn, 0425 387 880

Young ‘Newsies’ entertain

The Williamstown Musical Theatre Company (WMTc) is gearing up for its annual junior production at the end of this month.

This year’s production is Newsies Jr, a Disney Broadway musical based on a 90s film about New York newspaper kids, or “Newsies”, and their strike for fairness against some of the richest and most powerful people in Manhattan.

Director Stuart Dodge said he’d always liked the musical ever since he first saw it performed in the very city it’s set in.

“When I saw Newsies on Broadway, I was transported to 1899 New York, and from the

second the orchestra started I was in awe,” Dodge said. “Newsies is a dance-heavy show... when watching the dancers in the Broadway production I thought, ‘surely these boys are on wires... there is no way any human can stay in the air that long, leaping across the stage!’”

Newsies Jr is WMTc’s 13th junior production and also it’s largest, with a cast of 41 children aged eight-18.

“As a team, our goal is always to not only put on a slick and entertaining show, but also to provide our cast of young people with a truly enjoyable experience from start to finish,” Dodge said.

Newsies Jr features a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken (composer of The Little Mermaid, Aladdin) and Jack Feldman and a book by Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein (writer of Broadway musical Kinky Boots).

The cast will be performing it from 31 July to 9 August at Altona Theatre.

Details and bookings: <https://www.wmtc.org.au/>

Some of the cast members of Williamstown Musical Theatre Company’s latest junior production “Newsies Jr”. (Supplied)



ABBA classics set to light up Myrniong

Dust off your flares and warm up your singing voice, as a night of disco classics is coming to Myrniong this August.

SOS: The Australian ABBA Tribute Show has been dazzling audiences since 2011, bringing the music of one of the world’s most beloved pop groups to places all over Australia, and they’re set to bring their electric performance to St Anne’s Vineyards on Saturday 22 August.

Fans can relive the magic of Agnetha, Frida, Benny and Björn as SOS performs ABBA’s greatest hits in a spectacular live production featuring authentic costumes, choreography and a high-energy band.

The audience will have the chance to sing along to timeless favourites including Dancing Queen, Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!, Waterloo, and The Winner Takes It All, as the winery is transformed into a celebration of the Swedish supergroup’s enduring legacy.

“Our favourite ABBA song at the moment is As Good As New,” band manager Sam Bennett said. “However there is always something truly special when audiences hear that first glissando of Dancing Queen, and the room just aligns. It’s pure magic.”

Promising a night of 70s and 80s nostalgia, the event is an opportunity for ABBA fans old and new to enjoy an evening of music, food and drinks with friends.

“We see an incredibly diverse age range at our shows,” Bennett said.

“ABBA is truly multi-generational, and it is an absolute joy to see a whole room come alive.”

Guests are encouraged to arrive early, grab a drink from the bar and enjoy a bite to eat before settling in for the show.

Doors open at 5pm, with the performance scheduled to run from approximately 7 to 9.30pm.

Tickets are \$25 per person and include reserved seating with your group, making it easy to gather a crew and enjoy the evening together.

With ABBA’s biggest hits on the setlist, SOS promises to be a fun-filled night of singing, dancing and nostalgia for fans looking to relive the golden era of disco-pop.



SOS: The Australian ABBA Tribute Show brings the electric hits of ABBA to St Annes Winery on Saturday 22 August. (Supplied)

“This is our second time performing at St Anne’s Winery. Last time was incredible so we expect nothing but an electric dancefloor this year!” Bennett said.

Details: <https://welcometomoorabool.com/events-bacchusmarsh-ballan-gordon-blackwood-greendale/sos-abba-tribute-at-st-anne-winery-myrniong>.

Show pays tribute to the King

A new show at Wyndham Cultural Centre is sure to delight fans of the King of rock ‘n’ roll.

The Watton Street centre will host Elvis Tribute show, Elvis to the Extreme, on Sunday 16 August, from 4-5.50pm.

Celebrating the music, high energy and charisma of Elvis Presley, the performance promises to capture the magic and power of Elvis Presley’s iconic Vegas years.

Starring Marcus Jackson, a five-time, multi-award winning Elvis tribute artist recognised by Elvis Presley Enterprises, this electrifying production features the ETS Band, The BellaTones, and glamorous Vegas showgirls.

Elvis to the Extreme is more than a tribute, its high energy afternoon celebrating the King’s greatest performances, designed to thrill, move and captivate audiences of all ages.

Whether you’re a lifelong Elvis fan or simply love great live music, the show offers something for everyone.

Come along and sing along to favourite tunes, reminisce about the golden age of rock and roll, and enjoy an entertaining afternoon celebrating one of music’s most enduring stars.

Get ready to put on your blue suede shoes and enjoy an afternoon of classic hits and unforgettable entertainment.

The show runs for 110 minutes including an interval.

Tickets are \$50 full price and \$45 concession.

Details: www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/whats-on/elvis-extreme



Catch Elvis to the Extreme at the Wyndham Cultural Centre in August. (Supplied)

Contemporary, prog-rock opera After-Light will glow

Excitement is building for opening night of the original, contemporary, prog-rock opera After-Light, to be presented by the Mount Players for the first time on stage in its complete form.

Mount Players president Craig Lenaine-Smith and other committee members saw a scaled-down version of After-Light at the 2024 Melbourne Fringe Festival but, after speaking with composer Zac Vanstone and creator and musical director Tom Foster, it was decided Macedon’s Mountview Theatre should be the place for the duo to launch the show’s full production.

After-Light is guaranteed to be a production full of excitement, provocation and entertainment. A seven-piece rock band will perform live on stage, in full view of the audience, as singers tell the story of Boy as he struggles through his past mistakes, exorcising his demons in a journey of self-discovery and ultimately redemption.

Penned during COVID, Vanstone said the 18-plus production explored some darker themes.

“This is a show about learning how to let

go,” Vanstone said.

“Following the break-up between Boy and Girl, Boy falls into a life-threatening coma. In order for Boy to wake, he must forgive the past, reconcile with the future and learn to let go of Girl,” he said.

“If Boy fails, his intrusive thoughts of addiction, paranoia and depression will consume his soul.”

The season of After-Light runs from 14 August to 30 August at the Mountview Theatre, Smith Street, Macedon.

Bookings at www.themountplayers.com or 0419 329 052.



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SPORTS QUIZ

1. Which player scored the goal that won Spain the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
2. How many seasons did Brodie Grundy play for Collingwood in the AFL?



Shakira

3. For which FIFA World Cup did Shakira release the hit song *Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)*?
4. Which former Fitzroy and Geelong player was announced as the inaugural coach of the AFL's Tasmania Devils?
5. What number has Taj Gibson worn playing for six different NBA teams including the Grizzlies, Pistons and Knicks?
6. Which player was awarded the Golden Boot for scoring the most goals during the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
7. Teams including the Heights, Hunters and Firebells will play what sport in the US's planned WPBL?
8. Which non-alcoholic mixed beverage of iced tea and lemonade is named after a US golf professional?
9. How many times has Spain's men's national soccer team won the FIFA World Cup?

10. Australia's women's national baseball team is known by what nickname?
11. What year did Spain's national women's soccer team win the FIFA Women's World Cup?
12. What is the boxing term for a right-handed fighter?
13. Chinese Taipei and the US are set to host which international baseball competition in 2027?
14. In 2024, Ariarne Titmus set a world record in the 200m event of which swimming stroke?
15. What kind of sports commonly use terms such as fartlek, bonking and negative splits?
16. Which other nation faced off against Spain in the 2026 FIFA World Cup final?
17. And how many goals were scored in that match?
18. In tennis, which surface is considered fastest: a) clay, b) grass or c) hard courts?



Olympic skateboarding

19. In support of Jai Arrow, many athletes across multiple sports have celebrated scoring with what gesture?
20. In F1 racing, what does a HANS device stand for?
21. St Louis' NHL team shares its nickname with which AFL team?
22. Who is the current captain of the Australian men's T20 cricket team?
23. In which year did skateboarding first appear at the Olympics?
24. What is another name for the white ball in pool or billiards?
25. Cameron Bernasconi is the coach of which AFLW team?
26. In standard darts, which score does each player start with?
27. What was the name of the bowling team originally featuring Homer, Moe, Apu and Otto in *The Simpsons*?
28. Which sport features in the film *Fighting With My Family*?
29. How many seconds is the shot clock in a game of basketball?
30. The Cleveland Guardians play in which league?

1. Ferran Torres 2. 10 seasons (2013-2022) 3. 2010 FIFA World Cup (South Africa) 4. Ken Hinkley 5. 67 6. Kylian Mbappé 7. Baseball (Women's Pro Baseball League) 8. Arnold Palmer 9. Two (2026 and 2010) 10. The Emeralds 11. 2023 12. Orthodox boxer 13. Women's Baseball World Cup 14. Freestyle 15. Endurance sports (running, cycling) 16. Argentina 17. One 18. b) grass 19. Miming shooting a bow and arrow 20. Head And Neck Support 21. Carlton (Blues) 22. Mitch Marsh 23. 2020 24. Cue ball 25. GWS Giants 26. 501 27. Pin Pals 28. Professional wrestling 29. 24 30. MLB

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No. 300

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in: each of the nine vertical columns, each of the nine horizontal rows and each of the nine 3 x 3 boxes. Remember, no number can occur more than once in any row, column or box.

easy

			3	8	9	5	2	
	8	4				9		
			5					
	3	5	2			4		
7	4			3			1	8
		1			8	2	5	
					2			
		3				7	8	
	6	8	7	4	3			

medium

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			7				8	2
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5								

hard

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			3		9	6		5
	9						8	
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easy

5	1	9	3	4	7	8	2
2	6	8	7	4	3	1	5
4	5	3	1	9	6	7	8
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6	7	8	6	7	9	3	1
5	2	6	8	7	4	3	1
2</							

medium

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9	7	4	7	6	8	1	9	3	2
4	8	2	4	3	7	6	1	5	9
6	1	3	9	5	4	2	8	7	6

hard

8	4	9	6	3	2	5	8
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7	6	1	5	9	2	8	4
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4	8	9	7	3	1	5	6
3	9	5	2	7	6	4	8
2	1	6	8	5	4	9	3

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No. 300

ACROSS

- 1 Drench (4)
3 Whatever the risks may
be (2,3,5)
10 Dabbler (7)
11 Worry (7)
12 Aesthetically pleasing (8)
13 Inexpensive (5)
14 Writer of verse (4)
15 Optical instrument (10)
18 US motorway system (10)
20 Domestic animals (4)
21 Educate (5)
23 Speed (8)
26 Permitted (7)
27 Word made from the
letters of another (7)
28 Cut off from the sea (10)
29 Shoot (4)

DOWN

- 1 Graceful bird (4)
- 2 Awe (9)
- 4 Person who uses violence
for political aims (9)
- 5 Overdrafts (5)
- 6 Options (7)
- 7 Show amusement (5)
- 8 Suffering from insomnia (9)
- 9 Tidings (4)
- 14 Colourful team
shooting sport (9)
- 16 Make reprisals (9)
- 17 Removed from power (9)
- 19 Act of refreshing (7)
- 22 UK singer Lily – (5)
- 23 Early form of Sanskrit (5)
- 24 Cousin of the oyster (4)
- 25 Self-satisfied (4)

[illegible]

DECODER

No. 332

14	17	11	13		11	9	7	3	9	13	25	13
17		17		16		14		2		7		17
25	24	1	22	12	21	5		16	24	3	23	13
21		12		12		9		14		9		24
25	22	3	2	8		13	16	9	2	9	13	
3				21		25				10		9
5	3	18	14	9	6		12	11	20	9	16	25
9		14				19		22				24
	13	17	14	17	19	21		17	4	17	22	9
10		25		11		14		10		11		22
17	22	9	2	17		21	25	9	22	17	25	9
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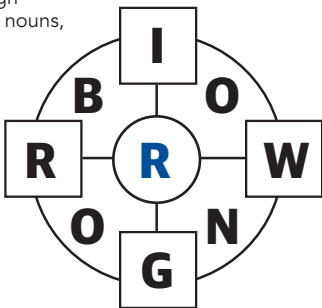
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V	T	H	G	R	I	J	M	P	A	C	F	L
26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14
S	B	O	E	K	Q	X	D	W	U	N	Y	
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

9-LETTER WORD

Using the nine letters in the grid, how many words of four letters or more can you list? The centre letter must be included and each letter may only be used once.

No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural nouns ending in 's'.



Today's Aim:
12 words: Good
18 words: Very good
24 words: Excellent

[illegible]

5x5

S		I		E
	O		E	
A		O		G
	I		S	
F		Y		R

Insert the missing letters to make
10 words – five reading across the
grid and five reading down.

NOTE: more than one solution may be possible

S	P	I	T	E
C	O	R	E	D
A	L	O	N	G
R	I	N	S	E
F	O	Y	E	R

14 BRIMBANK & NORTHWEST STAR WEEKLY Tuesday, 28 July, 2026

QUICK QUIZ



- 1 A person with the condition anodontia was born without what body part?
- 2 What liquid is typically used inside disposable lighters?
- 3 What is the name of Spotify's personalised end-of-year listening summary?
- 4 Which Muse of Greek myth shares their name with a rural town in Queensland?
- 5 NFL's Bengals are based in which US city: Baltimore, Cincinnati or Detroit?
- 6 Name the capital city of Andorra.
- 7 To whom does Hamlet deliver his 'Alas, poor Yorick' speech?
- 8 What was the first name of the Austrian composer Haydn?
- 9 Australian musician James Keogh (pictured) performs under what name?
- 10 What does PVC stand for?

ANSWERS: 1. Ieeth 2. Butane 3. Spotify
Wrapped 4. Calliope 5. Cincinnati 6. Andorra la
Vella 7. His friend Horatio 8. Franz 9. Vance Joy
10. Polyvinyl chloride

31-07-26

Super hybrid ticks the boxes

By Chris Riley, Marque Motoring

It's more than three years since we first drove what was then called the MG HS +EV, or plug-in hybrid as they have come to be known.

And haven't things changed in this time? Not only has the car grown in size, so has the battery and projected, electric-only driving range.

Now in its second generation, the HS has emerged from its cocoon, spread its wings and become a fully-fledged 'Super Hybrid' - it's a much more enticing proposition.

Styling

There are two grades from which to choose, Excite and Essence.

Prices start from \$42,990 for the Excite and \$46,900 for the Essence - both prices driveaway.

Our test vehicle, Essence, was finished in Arctic Blue Metallic, with Classic Tan interior trim - they add \$700 apiece.

Standard kit includes cloth trim and auto air conditioning with rear outlets, along with 18-inch alloys, keyless entry and start, LED lights front and back, power-adjust driver seat, head-up display, auto high beam, adaptive cruise control, traffic sign recognition, auto lights and wipers, rear parking sensors and six-speaker audio.

Essence adds larger 19-inch alloys, artificial leather, dual zone climate air, electric tailgate, panoramic sunroof, front parking sensors, eight-speaker audio, 360-degree camera and wireless phone charging.

There's also heated front seats, power adjustment for the front passenger seat, driver seat memory, power lumbar adjustment, auto folding heated door mirrors, front parking sensors, rear privacy glass, and door mirror memory.

HS is covered by a 10-year, 250,000km warranty, provided the car is serviced by MG, otherwise it reverts the standard seven-year/200,000km.

The high-voltage battery is covered for the same period, but for only 150,000km.

Each service must be performed within the specified time or kilometre window.

Infotainment

Infotainment consists of a combined 12.3-inch touchscreen and 12.3-inch instrument panel, together with Bluetooth, voice control, built-in navigation, AM/FM and DAB+ digital radio, wireless CarPlay and Android Auto, and eight-speaker audio.

There's also wireless phone charging, with two USB-C ports front and back, plus a 12-volt outlet in the front, with iSmart connected services that comes with 12-month complimentary access.

Safety

The MG HS has been awarded a full five stars for safety with seven airbags including a centre airbag to provide added protection for front seat occupants in side impact crashes.

The MG Pilot Safety Suite includes autonomous emergency braking (car-to-car, vulnerable road user, junction and crossing, backover and head-on) as well as a lane support system with lane keep assist (LKA), lane departure warning (LDW) and emergency lane keeping (ELK), and an advanced speed assistance system (SAS) with a speed sign recognition.

There's also blind spot detection, door opening warning, rear cross traffic alert, drive monitor system, unsteady driver warning, and traffic jam assist.



RATINGS
Looks: 7
Performance: 7
Safety: 7.5
Thirst: 8
Practicality: 8
Comfort: 7.5
Tech: 7.5
Value: 8
Overall: 7.6

Where the HS excels is being a Super Hybrid, with ultra-low fuel consumption and a range of more than 1000km. (Pictures: Supplied)

Engines/transmissions

A 1.5-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine is paired with two electric motors; one to drive the wheels, the other to recharge the battery when necessary.

Drive is to the front wheels through a dedicated, one-speed hybrid transmission.

Combined output is 220kW of power and 350Nm of torque, with the switch from petrol to electric power almost imperceptible most of the time.

Driving

In Arctic Blue the HS really stands out. Otherwise, the styling is almost generic for this section of the market, apart that is from the side steps.

They are not quite high enough or wide enough to be practical, but they do enhance the look of the car.

Even the kids commented how difficult they were to use.

Wider and longer than its predecessor, the second-generation HS offers generous head and legroom front and back, with a good-sized luggage area.

With the rear seats in use, it offers 507 litres of space, with the seats folded the boot expands to an impressive 1484 litres. Not so generous is centre storage for loose items, with much of the space given over to two cupholders and wireless charging pad.

The doors are adorned in a fancy, quilted design, but closer inspection reveals they are in fact plastic - as is much of the interior trim. The door bins are able to accommodate larger sports bottles.

The hybrid system in the HS Super Hybrid is underpinned by a 24.7 kWh battery pack, 23.2 kWh of which is usable. The previous model offered 16.6 kWh.

You can switch manually between hybrid and electric modes, but not easily, and we

were inclined to let the system do its thing - most drivers will.

The dash from 0-100km/h takes 6.8 seconds.

Interestingly, although there is sport mode, there is no Eco mode to achieve minimum fuel consumption and no option to change gears manually.

An indicator light and graphical interface reveal what mode the transmission is operating in, while the switch to fully-electric mode seems to depend on several factors - not just speed or throttle input (although both play a part).

At one point we looked down to find the car in EV mode travelling at a speed of 90km/h on a downhill section of the motorway.

During our week with the car we clocked up more than 1000km and can report the HS is a surprisingly easy and comfortable vehicle to drive, and if the battery is charged frequently - it uses very little fuel.

For a vehicle that has not been tuned for our poor Australian roads, ride quality is quite good.

Grip from Bridgestone Alenza tyres is above average and pressed hard the wagon doesn't misbehave.

The brakes bite hard in an emergency stopping scenario.

With a 55-litre tank, the HS takes premium 95 unleaded, with claimed fuel use of 0.7L/100km and energy consumption of 18.0 kWh/100km.

We charged the car three times using the supplied granny charger, averaging 3.4L/100km and 6.9 kWh/100km - with 230km of petrol remaining on return.

The battery in the HS can be charged at a rate of up 6.6kW using an AC charger which we're told takes about four hours. It cannot be charged from a commercial DC fast charger.

Each time we charged the car with the granny charger however, the system told us it would take more than 13 hours. Of note we were surprised to find the supplied charger worked with an extension lead (this is a first for us).

We were also pleasantly surprised to find the dreaded Chinese driver warnings are not as Draconian in this particular car.

But over the speed limit warnings are constant and annoying, and the system seems to have a problem differentiating between posted speed limits.

Corners, roundabouts and car parks involve a bit of guess work because the front roof pillars and large exterior mirrors block vision.

The rear-view camera was also distorted and difficult to use.

Of note, the electric tailgate worked inconsistently, with not enough grunt to lift the tailgate if the car was parked on a slope.

We suspect it's the same electric motor as used in MG's Cyberster electric sports car, whose chic scissor doors refused to open when parked on a slope - whether you're in or out of the car.

Eight months later we are still waiting for MG to get back to us on this issue.

Summing up

We like it. It's not perfect, but then no car ever is.

Where the HS does excel is being a Super Hybrid, with ultra-low fuel consumption and a range of more than 1000km, provided you recharge the battery at every opportunity.

With an electric-only range of 120km, the urban commute is very doable too.

It's easy to see why the popularity of plug-in hybrids is increasing exponentially - especially at these kinds of prices.

FIFTY TIPPING 2026

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They know business....Find out what they know about footy
each week with the STAR WEEKLY TIPSTARS

LW 7

Benny Nguyen O'Brien
Brisbane
Geelong
Adelaide
Fremantle
Melbourne
Hawthorn
Port Adelaide
Richmond
Sydney

OBrien Real Estate
PH: 9366 8188

LW 7

David Thompson Deer Park Club
Brisbane
Collingwood
Adelaide
Fremantle
Melbourne
Hawthorn
Port Adelaide
West Coast
St Kilda

DEER PARK CLUB
PH: 9363 1030

LW 8

Allan Cayzer Wyndham Harbour
Brisbane
Geelong
Adelaide
Fremantle
Melbourne
Hawthorn
Port Adelaide
West Coast
Sydney

WYNDHAM | HARBOUR
PH: 9233 8530

TIPSTARS LEADERBOARD	
Tony Montessano	125
Benny Nguyen	122
David Thompson	121
Allan Cayzer	120
Rod Gaut	120
Mick Trim	107

LW 8

Tony Montessano Taylors Lakes Hotel
Brisbane
Geelong
Adelaide
Fremantle
Melbourne
Hawthorn
GWS Giants
West Coast
Sydney

TAYLORS LAKES HOTEL
PH: 9217 9500

LW 8

Rod Gaut Wyn Active
Brisbane
Geelong
Adelaide
Fremantle
Melbourne
Hawthorn
Port Adelaide
West Coast
Sydney

WYN ACTIVE
PH: 8734 5678

LW 7

Mick Trim Walking Football 4 Health Vic
Brisbane
Geelong
Adelaide
Fremantle
Gold Coast
Hawthorn
Port Adelaide
West Coast
Sydney

WALKING FOOTBALL 4 HEALTH VICTORIA
PH: 0430 163 550

ROUND 21	
THURSDAY, JULY 30 – SUNDAY, AUGUST 2	
Carlton V Brisbane (MRVL)	
Collingwood V Geelong (MCG)	
Essendon V Adelaide (MRVL)	
Fremantle V Western Bulldogs (OS)	
Gold Coast V Melbourne (PFS)	
Hawthorn V North Melbourne (UTAS)	
Port Adelaide V GWS (AO)	
Richmond V West Coast (MCG)	
St Kilda V Sydney (MRVL)	
*Correct at time of publishing	

GROUNDS 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.

DEER PARK CLUB
MELBOURNE CUP EVE
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MON 2ND NOV 12.30PM START
EVENT TICKET INCLUDES – MEAL, ENTERTAINMENT, EXPERT TIPS PLUS MORE

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AFL LEGEND & SPORT ANALYST
MARK HUNTER
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JIM CASSIDY
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BOOK NOW

Local stars shine at Games

By Tara Murray

The first three days of the Commonwealth Games are done and there have been some good results for the locals so far.

On the court, the Australian Diamonds and women's 3x3 basketball team remain undefeated.

The Diamonds started with wins against Tonga on night two and England on night three.

Former City West Falcons pair Kate Moloney and Liz Watson have played big roles for the Diamonds in the midcourt as they've come away with two big wins.

It's been two losses for Uneeq Palavi's Tonga.

Palavi, who played two games for the Falcons this year, shot 30 goals in game one against the Diamonds despite a dislocated finger.

She finished with 29 goals in game two against South Africa, with South Africa winning 96-42.

On the basketball court, Australia's 3x3 women's team are through to the semi finals.

After going 3-0 on day one, the Aussies, including Keilor Thunder's Lara McSpadden went 2-0 on day three.

They beat the Cayman Islands, 21-3, and backed it up with a 21-9 win against Uganda.

McSpadden had her best game from a scoring perspective against the Cayman Islands, finishing with seven points.



Jacob Cassar. (AAP Image/Simon Stacpoole, via Photosport NZ)

The semi finals and medal games will be played on day six.

Taylors Lakes' Jacob Cassar got his boxing campaign underway on day three.

Competing in the men's 65 kilogram event, Cassar sealed a quarter final berth with a 5-0 win against New Zealand's Connor Campbell in the round of 16.

Cassar will be back in action on day five.

In the pool, Bundoora's Tara Kinder just missed the final in the 100 metres breaststroke.

Kinder finished fourth in her heat, but it

was enough for her to qualify 10th fastest for the semi finals.

In the semi finals, Kinder finished sixth in her race.

It was the faster of the two semi finals, with Kinder finishing ninth overall, just 0.03 behind Jamaica's Sabrina Lyn who was the last finalist to qualify.

Kinder still has the 400 and 200 metres individual medley events to come.

In the lawn bowls, Deer Park Bowls Club's Paris Baker and her Tongan teammate Milika Nathan lost a second straight tiebreaker on day three.



Lara McSpadden.

Having won the first set 10-0, the Tongan team lost the second set 6-4 before losing the tie break.

The Tongan side then lost to Namibia 2-0.

After three matches, Tonga sits fifth with one win.

In section D, the Norfolk Island women's pairs team including Deer Park's Ellie Dixon sit second with three wins.

On day three, the pair beat the Falkland Islands 2-0.

The men's pairs, which includes Deer Park's Corey Wedlock and Aaron Teys, gets underway on day five.

Hot competition despite the cold, tough conditions

As the seasons approach finals times, results are even more important in the run home. *Star Weekly* photographer Ljubica Vrankovic was out shooting some of the action.



Gisborne Giants' Olivia Craske. 567372_06



Westmeadows fans watch on. 567702_04



Riddell's Matt Darby and Gisborne Giants' Blake Tirchett. 567707_04



Gisborne's Torie Skrijel. 567375_13



Fans watch on at Gardiner Reserve. 567378_16



Gisborne's Brad Bernacki. 567378_05

Slow start proves costly

By Tara Murray

A poor start proved costly for the City West Falcons in their Victorian Netball League qualifying final on Wednesday.

Facing the Hawks, who have been the best team all season, the Falcons had a task on their hands.

Despite beating the Hawks the last time the two teams played, it was the Hawks that went in as favourites.

The Hawks led 22-15 at quarter time and by 12 goals at half time.

While the Falcons won the second half, the damage had already been done with the Hawks winning, 77-68.

Falcons' coach Marg Lind said defen-

sively they weren't where they needed to be.

"We got off to a terrible start and defensively, we were poor," she said.

"We could not turn the ball over and then when you're in that position, you can't make errors and we did.

"That was the score in the end, what we gave them in the first quarter."

Lind said she thought the Hawks did well offensively, but they went away from what their plan was.

She said the second half was better and they were a bit more patient.

They tried some different things and combinations to try and get things going.

"I thought we were a bit more patient

and defensively we strategised a bit better and we problem solved," she said.

"We ran some things we talked about running and didn't commit to in the first half. I thought Lauren [Hucker] was a bit more aggressive and able to do a bit more in defence.

"We put Maggie [Lind] into the centre so see if we could get a bit more, to try and get the defensive ending going as she's a good leader and to get them talking."

Jane Cook finished with 66 goals for the Falcons.

The Falcons get a second chance and will now face the Bendigo Strikers in a knockout semi final on this Wednesday night.

Lind said they would be tougher again with Charlotte Sexton having an impact since returning to the Strikers side.

The Falcons 23 and under side kept its season alive with a 65-61 elimination final win.

Lind said it was pleasing for them to get the win in the end after it was tight all game.

She said Molly Moylan was steady in goal attack with 30 goals, while Ella Leith and Manon Muir were both good in defence.

The Falcons will face Melbourne University Lightning in a knockout semi final as well.

Lind said that Tully Bethune would likely be available for selection after missing the elimination final through injury.



Darcee Young. (Shooting Australia)

Rising shooting star Young has an eagle eye

By Peter Howe

At just 16, this month's Don Deeble nominee Darcee Young has already had the honour of representing her country on an international stage in Germany and Austria.

Young is an Olympic air rifle and .22 calibre 3P shooter and has been involved in the sport since she was eight.

It's a family affair with her dad Shane and mum Kimberley and her two older siblings all having gained their shooters licences, just to help transport Young to and from training and to competitions, as minors need fully licensed adults to accompany them by law.

Young's journey began when she was in grade 3.

"My family managed ski lodges at Mount Hotham for the winter and I attended school at Dinner Plain and Thursday sport was biathlon - cross country skiing and laser target rifles," she said.

"The students were trained by the Italian Olympic coach based there for the winter with the Australian Biathlon team.

"I had little legs, so skiing was never my strength, so shooting it was.

"I tried dancing and swimming but my passion is shooting"

After joining a small regional shooting club and participating in her school's clay target program, Young was approached by the Victorian state rifle coach to come and try the Olympic disciplines of air rifle and 3P.

This is where Young found her niche and the family made the move to Melbourne in 2025 from East Gippsland, after a six-hour



Darcee Young. (Shooting Australia)

round trip every weekend to train became too much.

She now trains at the Melbourne International Shooting Centre in Port Melbourne five times a week and attends the Maribyrnong Sports Academy.

"Going to school at MSA allows me to complete my strength and conditioning sessions at school and as well I have an external osteopath and my coach," Young said.

"This sport requires you to hold a heavy rifle for a long time so the support from everyone is crucial.

"I hold my 5.5 kilogram air rifle in a standing position and aim for a bullseye the size of a tip of a ballpoint pen from 10 metres away with no telescopic sights.

"When shooting my .22 rifle I do so in three positions, standing, kneeling and laying prone on the ground. The target centre is the diameter of a five cent coin 50 metres away."

Young travels interstate to competitions up to 10 times a year.

Her shooting kit weighs 60 kilograms alone.

Young's air rifle is affectionately known as Frank.

"I am only five feet tall and a standard

rifle doesn't work for my height," she said.

"We had to source parts worldwide to build a rifle to suit me.

"Even my .22 calibre rifle (known as Gru) was imported from Switzerland and designed for me."

In 2025, Young competed at her first international competition. Traditionally a shooter's scores can drop by 20 points, hers only dropped by 10.

She said you are taken out of your comfort zone.

"In the warm up area there are hundreds of athletes all talking different languages, but all with a common purpose," she said.

"I kept telling myself to stay calm, don't spiral, do what you can do and stay in control."

Young holds 12 state records.

She is currently focusing on making the national development team and her longer goal to compete in the Junior World Cup and then World Championships.

Her pinnacle is to represent Australia in Brisbane 2032.

"Shooting challenges you on so many levels," she said.

"There are always so many little things to get right to make that perfect shot.

"I am not daunted by the challenges; I want to meet them head on."

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.

Sports shorts

EDFL

St Albans was able to hold off Rupertswood in the Essendon District Football League division 1 competition on Saturday. The Saints led at each of the breaks with the margin 20 points heading into the final quarter. The Sharks came home strong, but the Saints were able to do enough as they won, 13.15 (93)-13.13 (91). Hok Marial kicked three goals for the Saints, while Joshua Klaromenos and Brodie Lyons-Jones were named their best. Elsewhere, Taylors Lakes lost to Craigieburn, 28.26 (194)-6.7 (43).

Western FL

Albanvale and Sunshine Heights both had big wins in the Western Football League division 2 competition on Saturday. The Cobras had a day out against Laverton as they won, 33.28 (226)-1 (19). Reece Field kicked 10 goals for the Cobras, with Jovian Goulton and James Mcvey named their best. Sunshine Heights beat Tarneit, 20.9 (129)-12.8 (80). Elsewhere, Braybrook pulled off an upset, beating Wyndhamvale, 8.7 (55)-7.12 (54). The win keeps the Brookers slight finals hopes alive.

FV

Sydenham Park's hopes of a top two finish took a hit as it lost to Clifton Hill. Clifton Hill jumped out of the blocks and led 3-0 at half time before, the Reds scored three times early in the second half to level the scores. The Reds then had two players sent from the field and Clifton Hill was able to capitalise and score the winner, as it won 4-3. The Reds sit in third, five points off second. Elsewhere, Westgate drew with Ballarat City, Western Suburbs beat Geelong and Westvale Olympic lost to Altona East Phoenix.

EDFL

Former Hillside and Burnside Heights player Josh Covelli kicked his 1000th career goal on Saturday. Playing for Tullamarine against Avondale Heights in the division 1 competition, Covelli needed two goals to break the milestone, which he got in the second quarter.

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Kopa signs Wildcats deal

By Tara Murray

Keilor Thunder guard Tana Kopa has signed as a development player for the Perth Wildcats for the NBL season.

Kopa has signed a two-year deal, with the second year a mutual option on the roster.

A Perth local, Tana Kopa returns to his hometown NBL club after previously spending time as a train-on player with the Wildcats, where he impressed with his shooting ability, size and professionalism.

The 198 centimetre guard came through the Willetton Tigers junior program before spending four seasons in the US college system.

Kopa began his collegiate career at Spring Hill College, earning Second Team All-SI-AC honours after averaging 19.0 points per game and shooting 42.4 per cent from three-point range during his sophomore season.

He later progressed to NCAA Division I basketball with Long Island University be-

fore finishing his college career at Canisius University, where he started 29 of 31 games and averaged 13.2 points, 3.3 rebounds and 1.3 steals while leading the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference with 3.1 made three-pointers per game.

Returning to Perth in 2025, Kopa suited up for his junior club Willetton in National Basketball League 1 west while continuing to train with the Wildcats, gaining valuable exposure to the standards and daily habits required at NBL level.

He averaged 15.0 points, 3.5 rebounds and 2.0 assists per game for the Tigers, shooting 44.1 per cent from beyond the arc.

Kopa joined Keilor Thunder in the NBL1 south competition this season.

The move has seen the sharpshooter elevate his game, averaging 17.6 points and 3.4 rebounds while shooting 48.1 per cent from the field and knocking down 3.3 three-pointers per game.

He was named as a most valuable player finalist.



Tana Kopa. (Rachel Louise Photography/NBL1)

Wildcats coach John Rillie said Kopa's journey to the Wildcats reflected the persistence and work ethic the club values.

"Tana has been working extremely hard throughout his career for this opportunity," he said. "He did a great job last year while practicing with us so this is a great natural progression in his professional career."

Kopa said signing with the Wildcats was a special moment after years of working towards an NBL opportunity.

"Signing with Perth is a dream come true," he said. Training with the group last year only made me hungrier for this opportunity.

"I'm grateful for the chance and can't wait to get to work"

Wildcats chief operating officer and basketball operations general manager Danny Mills said Kopa had earned his opportunity through both his performances and the impression he made around the club.

"Watching the way he attacked each and every day last season as a training player and now seeing him rewarded with a roster contract, we couldn't be prouder of him," he said.

Thunder ready to give finals their best shot

By Tara Murray

Keilor Thunder's men's side is hoping to do something special in the National Basketball League 1 south men's competition.

The Thunder finished the regular season in sixth spot and had the weekend off before its finals campaign starts this week.

It will be the first time the Thunder's men's side will play finals.

Deng Dut, who joined the Thunder last season, said it was something the whole club had been working towards.

"It's super exciting to get there," he said. "Last year and all of this year we've been working towards it. As the coach would say, we want to continue to build.

"What we are building to is a finals run, a deep finals run and trying to win a championship."

Dut said the last two years had been stepping stone after stepping stone to be in the best position to do that.

He thought they were in a good position heading into finals.

"We're super happy with how we played," he said.

"We've had ups and downs which are all great lessons that have made us the team that we are towards the end of the regular season."

Having started to come together last season under Ash Arnott, the group added some more key pieces this year.

Dut said the new guys had brought in straight away to what they were doing which had been a key to their success so far.

"It was a great recruiting job by the coaches," he said. "They are good players and have high character.

"The guys have fit into the team and elevated the team."

Dut was one of three Thunder men's players named as finalists for the most valuable player and teams of the year.

Daniel Foster and Tana Kopa were also finalists with Foster also named as a finalist for defensive player of the year.

Arnott was nominated for men's coach of the year.

Dut said being recognised was a testament to their teammates who had put them in the best positions to be successful.

Now ahead of their finals campaign kicking off Saturday against the Nunawading Spectres, Dut said they were focused on going as far as they can.

He said from the start of the year they thought they could do something special.

"The roster is talented, but talent alone doesn't get the job done," he said.



Deng Dut. (Andrew Scherer/DLNQNT PHOTOGRAPHY)

"The work put in at training and how we approach every game, game in, game out is the key.

"Hopefully that will allow us to make a deep finals run and hopefully get the championship.

Dut said having the week off before finals gave everyone the chance to rest and reset

both physically and mentally.

With the women's side kicking off its finals campaign on Saturday night at home against the Sandringham Sabres, it's a big week for the club.

Dut said there had been huge support from everyone across the association all season.

Blyth re-signs as Keilor Park coach

Keilor Park has locked in Colby Blyth as its coach for next year's Essendon District Football League division 2 season.

The Devils announced that Blyth would lead them for a third season.

"After another year leading the Devils, Colby has committed to continuing the journey and building on the strong foundations that have been created both on and off the field," the Devils said on social media.

"Colby's passion, leadership and commitment to our football club have been instrumental in driving standards, developing our playing group and creating a culture that everyone is proud to be a part of.

"His dedication extends far beyond game day with countless hours invested in the growth of our players, coaches and club.

"As we look ahead to 2027, we're excited to continue building together. With Colby at the helm, the future remains bright as we strive for continued success and take the next steps in our journey."

After making finals last year, the Devils haven't had the year they were after in 2026.

The Devils have won just two games for the season and sit second bottom.

The Devils faced Keilor Park on Saturday.

The Magpies got out to an early lead in the first half, with the Devils kicking just one goal before the main break.

While the Devils started to hit the scoreboard in the third quarter, the Magpies were still able to extend the lead.

A five goal to two final quarter sealed a 17.13 (115)-7.8 (50) win.

Shylo Smith kicked four goals for the Devils.

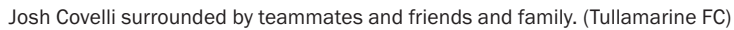
Callum Brown, Nicholas Kilty and Jai Bahnert were named their best.

In round 16, the Devils are at home to Burnside Heights.

The Bears are coming off a 15.11 (101)-7.16 (58) loss to Hadfield on Saturday.

Ethan Dalla Rosa, Matthew Meocecic and Jordan Fraser were named the best for the Bears.

Commonwealth Games update



The Lions host Essendon Doutta Stars this Saturday.

Demons teammate and Hillside premiership teammate Zak Wunhym said

Covelli finished with three goals as the Demons had a big win.