

MARIBYRNONG & HOBSONS BAY

Star Weekly

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We deserve better

By Sebastian Conidi and Cade Lucas

The mayors of the western suburbs are calling for more police on the beat in the region in the aftermath of a series of high-profile violent crimes.

The most recent incidents – assaults on retail workers in Sunshine and Footscray on Saturday 1 August and Monday 3 August respectively – led to calls for more police and resources across the western suburbs.

The victim of the 1 August attack, Van Viet Truong, died in hospital on Wednesday.

The mayors from Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Melton councils said local police resources have not kept pace with the growth of the region and the needs of their communities.

“Recent attacks on traders, including the shocking assaults in Sunshine and Footscray this week, have shaken our people,” they said in a joint statement on Wednesday 5 August.

“Crime rates are rising across Melbourne’s west with a combined 12.7 per cent increase in recorded crimes across the region so far in 2026.

“Our communities deserve to feel safe in their streets. Our traders and workers deserve to feel safe in their businesses. Melbourne’s west deserves better.”

The mayors pointed to a number of recent incidents including shots fired at an Altona North home on Friday 31 July; the arrest of a man in Hoppers Crossing on Friday 24 July who was later charged with a number of offences including rape, false imprisonment and assault; the alleged murder of a man outside a Footscray pub in June; and an attack on two teenagers in Caroline Springs by a group of 11 people armed with machetes in December last year as evidence of the region’s growing crime problem.

Just hours before fronting Wednesday’s joint press conference, Maribyrnong mayor Mohamed Semra, his predecessor Cr Pradeep Tiwari, council chief executive Celia Haddock and council employees were threatened by a man with a knife in Footscray Mall. The group were meeting with local traders to speak about the impact of incidents like the 3 August assault.

“He brandished a knife and obviously it was a very frightening situation for all those involved,” Cr Semra said.

Just a day earlier, Cr Semra and Footscray MP Katie Hall released statements demanding a stronger police presence in



Councillors from across Melbourne's west are calling for more police in the region. (Supplied)

the Footscray CBD. Cr Semra said while policing alone couldn’t solve the problem, the rising amount of violent incidents in the area required more cops on the beat.

The recent victim of a violent assault herself, Ms Hall condemned the 3 August attack. “The incident in the mall is just one of many, it’s just totally unacceptable,” Ms Hall said.

The west’s mayors said there have also been violent machete attacks in community spaces across the region, from libraries to shopping centres and on the streets.

“The impact of this violence has been

compounded by closures of our local police stations.

“Public access to Footscray, Keilor Downs and Caroline Springs police stations has been reduced to three days a week, while the Williamstown Police Station counter is temporarily closed. The Altona Police Station counter is closed overnight and on weekends,” they said.

Speaking at the press conference, Brimbank mayor Virginia Tachos stated that the call to action was in the community’s best interests.

“The community has sent a strong

message,” she said. “Enough is enough.”

The mayors have called on the state government to increase visible neighbourhood policing across the west, improve access to police stations and ensure police resources keep pace with population growth.

They also want more prevention programs for youth outreach and support and more outreach for mental health, homelessness and alcohol and other drugs to support police and prevent problems from escalating.

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Charity funding windfall

More than \$300,000 has been awarded to inner west charities in the annual distribution of grants from the Footscray Rotary and Community Services Foundation.

The Western Health Foundation, Australia Light Foundation, Yarraville Special Development School, Footscray Arts Centre, Gateway and Donations in Kind and Local Impact are the charities that have benefited from the foundation's 2026 grants, which have been distributed from a record \$308,000 funding pool.

A separate legal entity from the club itself, the Footscray Rotary and Commu-

nity Services Foundation is a fund that distributes four per cent of its interest to local charitable causes.

Foundation board member and immediate past president of Footscray Rotary, Elizabeth Drozd OAM, said as the total value of the funded increases, so does the amount distributed.

"I think last year it was \$280,000 or \$290,000 and this year it is over \$300,000 and next year hopefully even more," Ms Drozd said, noting that this year the foundation changed the way it selected which charities to fund.

"In the past we used to do it more by invitation but this time we promoted it to the local community," she said, before explaining some of the initiatives the grants will fund.

"For example, one is to improve the nutrition for people undertaking rehab at Footscray Hospital," Mr Drozd said of what the grant awarded to the Western Health Foundation would go towards.

"For the Australian Light Foundation we gave them money for a vehicle to collect donations. Donations in Kind, they needed some equipment to help them

manage their donations warehouse in West Footscray. Gateway got money to support older people and social support and the Footscray Arts Centre received funding to help their overall priorities."

She said the inner west community enterprise, Local Impact, also received funding to run Money Mentor, a program that teaches financial literacy to young people.

Applications for the Footscray Rotary and Community Services Foundation 2027 grants distribution will open next April.

Liberals reveal candidate to replace dumped Deeming

By Callum Godde, AAP

The Victorian Liberals have selected Melbourne's deputy lord mayor to replace disendorsed MP Moira Deeming as a leading upper house candidate.

Barrister Roshena Campbell was picked to top the Liberal ticket in the Western Metropolitan region for the November state election by the party's state executive on Thursday night.

She beat out sitting Liberal MP Trung Luu, who will have to reapply for second position on the ballot.

Ms Campbell is deputy to Melbourne Lord Mayor Nicholas Reece and ran as the Liberal candidate for the 2023 federal Aston by-election, losing to Labor's Mary Doyle.

It marked the first time in more than 100 years that a government has won a seat from the opposition at a by-election.

The contest for top spot on the Western Metropolitan ticket was reopened after the Liberal state executive unanimously revoked Mrs Deeming's candidacy on July 18 when she declined to apologise over unsubstantiated claims of violence against former leader Matthew Guy.

The first-term MP accused Mr Guy of grabbing her "violently" in a headlock at a community event in May, but later claimed she misunderstood the meaning of "headlock".

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

A police investigation concluded no offence was detected at the event.

Mrs Deeming has since moved to cross bench and is yet to indicate whether she will run as a candidate in November.

Her husband took to social media on Thursday night to slam the party's decision to select Ms Campbell.

"More contempt by the Liberal Party for the voters of the west with non-western suburbs resident Roshena Campbell 'winning' the western metro Liberal pre-selection," Andrew Deeming wrote on X.

Ms Campbell would have to step down from council if elected to parliament, which is almost assured.

In a statement, the mother of four spruiked up her ties to Melbourne's west, saying her parents lived in Point Cook and she had spent many years volunteering at a Footscray soup kitchen.

"Residents of the west are hardworking families from all backgrounds, and they have been let down by a bad government," Ms Campbell said.



Anti-data centre protesters on the corner of Indwe and Cala streets in West Footscray opposite the Next DC data centre. (Cade Lucas) 571139_02

Emotions run high at data centre rally

By Cade Lucas

A West Footscray resident has fought back tears while describing what living across the road from a data centre is like.

Jacqui Glover addressed more than a 100 protesters demanding a moratorium on data centres at a rally at Hansen Reserve in West Footscray on Sunday 9 August. The rally was held a short distance from Ms Glover's Indwe Street home, which is directly opposite the Next DC data centre.

"Living across the street from a data centre means you're relationship with your own home changes completely," Ms Glover said, likening the constant hum of the centre to a jet idling on the tarmac but never taking off. "It penetrates our

walls, it vibrates through our windows. It follows you into bed every night, making a quiet night's sleep a thing of the past."

Ms Glover is the president Citizens of Tottenham, a community group opposed to the continued expansion of the Next DC facility, which already covers four hectares and could more than double to 10 hectares if its latest expansion proposal is approved.

"We need better zoning laws. We need stricter noise regulations," an emotional Ms Glover said to loud applause.

Representatives from community groups opposing data centres in Spotswood and Plumpton also address the rally, as did politicians including Fraser MP Daniel Mulino, Footscray MP Katie Hall, Western Metropolitan MP David Etter-

shank and state election candidates from the Greens, The West Party, Victorian Socialists and community independents.

Protesters then marched down Indwe Street towards the Next DC data centre chanting slogans such as "we will fight, we will win, data centres in the bin".

Among the onlookers was the chief executive of Data Centres Australia - the industry body representing companies like Next DC - Belinda Dennett. "There's clearly a lot of misinformation and misunderstanding of what does go on," Ms Dennett said of the rally, adding that the industry was stepping up its community engagement as a result.

"I think we're getting there but it's always good to hear straight from people what their concerns are," she said.

Free skin checks coming to Altona North thanks to Lions Club

The Lions Club of Altona is bringing a free skin cancer check and awareness unit back to Hobsons Bay on 15-16 August.

The skin check van will be based at Bunnings in Altona North for the whole weekend, providing a free skin checking service to local people operated by fully trained, certificated and professionally supervised volunteers.

The unit will also be a valuable resource for local people to access not only the skin check, but valuable and timely information about skin care and

self-checking techniques.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and the early detection of skin lesions can potentially save lives.

Following the skin check, if any suspect spots or lesions are detected during the skin check, visitors will be issued with a referral to their GP.

The skin check van is not a medical clinic, so diagnosis or treatment requirements will not be not discussed.

It simply provides the skin check and

alerts the visitor to skin lesions that require further checking and attention: an important first step in ensuring urgent needs are addressed.

The air-conditioned van has three fully equipped checking rooms and an entry foyer, as well as a disabled lift and entry at the rear.

To book a free skin check, local and surrounding residents should contact Bunnings Altona at: <https://bookings.bunnings.com.au/events/au>

Mall pizza shop attacked

By Cade Lucas

Police are investigating another violent incident in the Footscray Mall after the front windows of a pizza shop were smashed on Thursday morning.

It is understood a bollard was thrown into the shop front of Slice Shop Pizza on the corner of Nicholson and Chambers streets about 4.15am on 6 August.

An employee of the pizza shop noticed the damage when they arrived for work about 90 minutes later at 5.45am.

No one was injured in the attack and it's understood that nothing was stolen from the premises.

A police investigation is underway to the incident, which is the third high profile criminal act in the Nicholson Street Mall this week.

On the morning Monday 3 August an employee at a nearby business had his arm when hit with a wooden plant after attempting to intervene in a fight in the mall.

At lunch time on Wednesday 5 August, Maribyrnong councils leaders including

mayor Mohamed Semra and chief executive Celia Haddock were threatened by a man with a knife while speaking to traders in the mall.

The man was later arrested.

Slice Shop Pizza manager Finn Ward said he started getting messages about the latest incident at 7am on Thursday morning.

"They didn't steal anything, they just smashed the big window on the (Chambers Street) side and the windows on the front door. They smashed out all the pains on that as well," Mr Ward said, adding that it was the

first time the shop had been vandalised for a number of years and that the damage was more extensive than in any previous attack.

"It's by far the worst."

Despite this, Mr Ward said it would still be business as usual at the shop.

"We're gonna board it up and get open," he said.

"We're gonna keep on truckin."

Anyone with information on the incident is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at: www.crimestoppersvic.com.au.

Trugo club trolley and copper theft

Thieves have broken into the Footscray Trugo Club's new rooms, just months after they were officially opened.

Police are investigating the burglary which occurred at the Buckley Street clubrooms sometime between Saturday 1 August and Sunday 2 August.

The thieves damaged an electric roller door in order to get into the clubrooms which only opened in March.

Once inside they stole sports equipment and a trolley, but according to club president Darren Stevenson, they thankfully weren't too interested in the sport of trugo itself.

"They were actually more interested in our copper piping and the water meter," Mr Stevenson said, adding the thieves probably stole the club's game day trolley to carry the water meter.

As for the value of what was stolen, Mr Stevenson said that was hard to tell.

"I've got no idea how much water meters cost."

Nor does he or anyone else seem to know exactly when the theft occurred, with Mr Stevenson guessing sometime overnight between Saturday and Sunday.

"I went up for a hit on Saturday afternoon and all was fine and then I went past on Sunday morning but I didn't go in the storage area so I don't know if it was broken into on the Saturday night."

"On Sunday evening one of the team members who lives in the local area went past and noticed (the theft)."

Mr Stevenson said it wasn't the first time the club had been broken into, but it was the first at its new premises which were opened to coincide with the club's centenary.

He said while the club was hopeful of having its game day trolley returned and had posted a picture on social media, everything else was back to normal thanks to swift repairs carried out by Maribyrnong council.

"Full credit to the council, there were tradies there on the Monday repairing everything," Mr Stevenson said.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the stolen trolley can contact the club at: footscraytrugo@gmail.com

Anyone with further information on the burglary can contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or: crimestoppersvic.com.au



Yarraville writer Paul Mitchell with tickets for his new footy themed play 'The Ballad of Dan O'Malley: A Football Tragedy' which runs from 12-22 August. (Damjan Janevski). 567628_03

Paul's play recounts a football tragedy

With Melbourne in the AFL's top eight and set to play finals, few fans will want to be reminded of 2009 when the club was accused of deliberately losing for draft picks, aka, tanking.

Fortunately for Dee's fans, Yarraville writer Paul Mitchell's new play on the tanking saga, *The Ballad of Dan O'Malley: A Football Tragedy*, is fictionalised.

Instead of the Melbourne Demons, it's the Central Leopards, where Dan O'Malley has just become coach, that decides to tank for draft picks.

When the truth comes out – and the future of the game is threatened – O'Malley becomes an easy scapegoat and is driven to an early grave as a result. Mitchell said the same thing happened to then Melbourne coach, Dean Bailey.

"He got a 16-week suspension for 'bringing the game into disrepute' and other charges, none of which concerned match fixing," Mitchell said of Bailey who he learnt about by reading journalist Michael Warner's book on the AFL,

The Boys Club.

It's a footy story, but one Mitchell said would resonate with anyone.

"The play asks what we would do if forces of corruption and big money came for us, along with asking how we can keep the demands of money, politics and power away from the heart of anything we hold dear, sporting or otherwise." *The Ballad of Dan O'Malley: A Football Tragedy* is on from 12-22 August: <https://www.theatreworks.org.au/2026/the-ballad-of-dan-omalley>

No train changes in new cross-city service starting on 23 August

Rail commuters in the inner west will soon be able to travel to Melbourne's bayside suburbs without changing trains.

From Sunday 23 August, trains will run directly between Newport and Sandringham via Flinders Street for the first time, with the new cross-city service to operate every 10 minutes on weekdays.

A total of 180 extra weekly train services on the Werribee, Laverton, Williamstown and Sandringham lines will commence on the date, part of an additional 400 services starting across Melbourne's entire train network.

Public Transport Minister Vicki Ward attributed the additional services to the opening of the Metro Tunnel and the extra capacity it had created on the network, allowing more trains to run more often.

Ms Ward said rail commuters across the city would soon notice the difference.

"More trains on the timetable means less time waiting on the platform and more time to enjoy your destination, whether it's getting home, going to the footy, hanging out at the beach, or heading to work," she said in announcing the

extra services on Thursday 6 August.

Footscray MP Katie Hall said the new cross-city service would particularly benefit commuters in her electorate.

"For the first time, you can jump on a train in Melbourne's west and travel straight to the MCG, Chapel Street and Sandringham Beach without changing trains," Ms Hall said.

The new timetable will go live on Friday 7 August.

To find out more, visit: transport.vic.gov.au

Mayor threatened

By Cade Lucas

Maribyrnong council leaders, including mayor Mohamed Semra, were threatened by a man with a knife in the Footscray Mall at lunch time on Wednesday.

The mayor, his predecessor Cr Pradeep Tiwari, council chief executive Celia Had-dock and council employees were meeting with local traders when the man began as-saulting nearby council workers clearing rubbish about 12.30pm on 5 August.

After the group attempted to intervene, Cr Semra said the man turned on them.

“He brandished a knife and obviously it was a very frightening situation for all those involved,” Cr Semra said.

“It wasn’t a machete but it wasn’t a kitchen knife either,” Cr Tiwari added.

“I tried to stand my ground but when someone lunges at with a knife you’ve got to stand back.”

Council staff called police who arrived within five minutes and arrested the man.

Cr Tiwari said new Police Minister Paul Edbrooke was lucky not to be involved.

“He was 10 minutes late,” Cr Tiwari said of the new minister who was due to join the council leaders in speaking to local traders following a violent attack in the mall on 3 August that left nearby shop owner with a broken arm.

Following the incident, Cr Semra travelled to Sunshine where he spoke at a joint press conference of western suburbs mayors who are demanding more police to improve community safety.

In a statement, police confirmed a man had been arrested.

“Uniform police attended and spoke



Maribyrnong mayor Mohamed Semra addresses a joint press conference in Sunshine on 5 August after earlier being threatened with a knife in Footscray. (Cade Lucas) 570234_01

with the male, who was in a possession of a knife,” the police statement said.

“He was moved on from the area and issued an infringement notice for possess a controlled weapon.”

According to Cr Tiwari, who stayed back

in the mall for lunch while the mayor went to the joint press conference, the man soon returned.

“He came back again. He’s still in the mall,” Cr Tiwari told Star Weekly.

Police were contacted for comment.

We deserve better

From page 1

North West Metro Region Acting Commander Troy Papworth said there was no doubt the incident in Sunshine had a ripple effect through the community and had caused angst and concerns.

“Police feel these concerns as well – we are as much a part of the community ourselves,” he said.

“Following the alleged incident, we have enhanced our response to the Sunshine area to provide a dedicated and highly visible presence. Police will be there to provide support and ongoing reassurance as long as it’s needed.

“We also have police patrolling the entire western suburbs community 24-7, including Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Wyndham, Brimbank and Melton areas.

“While some local police stations have reduced public counter hours, officers continue to work and deploy from each station around the clock.

“Our focus is on more street than station. Frontline patrols in the community have remained completely unimpacted, and have actually been enhanced by these public counter revisions.”

Acting Commander Papworth said police have strong ongoing relationships with councils and support services across the west to address key issues including amenity, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction and mental health.



Are you a photographer based in the western or northern suburbs who loves shooting sports and news?

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Sisters Janine Franzi and Gail Franzi visit their former home at the Altona Recycle Water facility with Greater Western Water guide Annmarie Tracey during Open House Melbourne on 24 July. (supplied) 570035_01

Sister’s recycled water plant return

Members of the first family to live onsite at Altona Recycled Water Plant (RWP) in the late 1960s were among the enthusiastic visitors who toured the plant as part of Open House Melbourne on 24-25 July.

About 140 people toured Greater Western Water’s Altona RWP site and its world-renowned land art installation, A Forest for Australia, during the Open House weekend.

Sisters Janine and Gail Franzi were among the Saturday attendees and brought along old family slides offering an even rarer glimpse of the plant – from a time when they both lived on it.

“Our father (Stanley) was here to help establish and run the plant after it was opened,” Gail Franzi said.

“We spent most of our childhood here, we used to bring our bikes and ride them up and down the paddocks (around the plant),”

Janine Franzi said.

It’s the first time the pair had been back since they lived in a house built on the outskirts of the site which accommodated the plant’s first operators and families.

While employees no longer live onsite to support the plant’s operations, and current safety practices would prevent the type of free roaming that the Franzi siblings experienced when they were young, there was a lot they got out of the visit.

“We were surprised about how much has changed, how much the technology has improved. A Forest For Australia artwork was not there before,” they said.

For more information about recycled water at Greater Western Water, visit <https://www.gww.com.au/about/news/week-1-dont-understand-recycled-water-its-nothing-flush-about>



Lettuce protected by bales of straw. (Pictures: Supplied)



“ People get blown away by the diversity in such a space. Essentially, that is a crop to two square metres ”
- Jerry Coleby-Williams

How Jerry’s garden grows

Resilient, reliable, sustainable - Gardening Australia’s Jerry Coleby-Williams has become known nationally as well as overseas for illustrating methods and techniques of gardening that anyone and everyone can have a got at replicating in a way suitable to their home conditions. Erle Levey spoke with the gardening guru.

Jerry Coleby-Williams has always been willing to share his knowledge and tropical growing skills accumulated over a lifetime.

His grandfather was a keen gardener in London and that proved vital to survive in England’s war years.

Jerry is one of the familiar faces on ABC-TV’s Gardening Australia, with his customary trademark boater-style straw hat.

He draws upon his experiences from 23 years of sustainable gardening, which includes everything from starting a garden from scratch to dealing with droughts, floods, heatwaves and a few frosts.

And even though he is based in Brisbane, Jerry’s gardening advice is adaptable and relatable to anyone interested in sustainability and growing their own food.

Jerry’s award-winning, sustainable property is known as Bellis. There he successfully operates a 300-square-metre sustainable garden boasting 127 different plants.

“People get blown away by the diversity in such a space. Essentially, that is a crop to two square metres,” he said.

Bellis is designed to be a model that anyone can replicate, featuring water efficiency, energy production, organic growing and climate resilience.

This involves harvesting rainwater and utilising treated domestic wastewater, generating solar power, cultivating more than 100 different edible crops, rare plants, and heritage seeds.

Planting native and subtropical species adapted to extreme weather, such as droughts, floods, and heatwaves has also been a priority.

In 1992 he emigrated to Australia, following his ongoing passion for West Australian wildflowers. This led to his work at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

In 2017 Jerry was invited to attend the United Nations conventions at Geneva in Switzerland to speak about sustainable food production.

“So many things can change in an instant.

“Remember we’ve been here before during Covid, remember supply chain failures and my responses to them?

“I held drive-by plant sales. I supplied community nurseries with stock. I even sent the ABC an action plan to better support their gardening audience.

“I warned that the Russian invasion of Ukraine would affect global grain, fertiliser



Above: ABC Gardening Australia’s Jerry Coleby-Williams.
Inset: ABC gardening personalities Phil Dudman and Jerry Coleby-Williams.

and oil prices.
“Remember lettuce at \$12 a head? That was due to a flood crisis way back in 2022.

“Now it’s the price of oil triggered by politics that’s behind the latest rising cost of food.

“More prices rises are already in the pipeline because the cost of everything depends on the availability and cost of oil.”

At the same time Jerry has a shared

hope for feeding the homeless through community-led initiatives.

Modern homes have garages for sprouting seed and for growing mushrooms. Sprouting seed is the quickest way to grow nutritionally dense food there is, he said.

“Use a windowsill or a garage. I started

sprouting seed in a linen cupboard.
“Sixty years ago my family used a garage for storing fruit and root crops. My current 1914 Queenslander had space under the house to park a car - until I put that space to horticulture.

“In Sydney I recorded a story on just how productive a sunny garage with a permaculture makeover can be - its sides had potted fruiting tomatoes cascading down them.”

Jerry has been a tenant in five cities, so he knows balconies and windowsills can produce food in containers.

He gained a reputation for beautiful, edible window boxes in 1980’s Paris. Now he grows food in containers, in self-watering pots.

Jerry put a raised garden bed in for his 93-year-old friend and he said she loves it.

Gardening keeps her fit and attached ... watering the plants, collecting seeds.

In a food-sharing community you were not as isolated - anyone can share the catch from a day fishing, or cook a stuffed capsicum and have a gorgeous meal on a bed of lettuce.

It’s a simple exercise that builds community. Garden clubs are another way of sharing propagating material and knowledge.

“A garden is diverse. A lot I get from the garden for a meal is foraged - mint, fennel, parsley - so you are eating volunteers rather than a dedicated crop.

“Lettuce cast their seed in the air. That’s the concept to get into our minds.

“These are non-hybrid crops so the act of preparing dinner is a matter of getting order in your garden.



“A classic example was 10 years ago I had planned an open garden day, but there was a complete crop failure in one bed. So we turned it into an exercise of what could grow in such a situation.

“We created rows and blocks of

useable mulch.
“Enclosed by bales of hay, my crops were sheltered from drying winds and could easily be protected from frost.

“Everyone thought it was planned. So saving face turned into success.”

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Willy update

By Cr Lisa Bentley

The role of local government is a nuanced one.

It's important for councils to invest in the community through services and infrastructure, while striking the balance of responsible financial management of ratepayer money.

Over the last few weeks, my councillor colleagues and I have talked about our budget for the next financial year, applying a back-to-basics approach, and how it aims to strike that balance I refer to.

In my ward of Williamstown, there's been some terrific work recently done that I know the community has been keen to see.

It was great to have the state government recently approve plans for the Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club. I can't wait to see further progress to give this important facility a much-needed upgrade.

I was also thrilled that after several months of repair works, the rotunda at Commonwealth Reserve is open once again.

This is such a popular and important part of our city, and I'm looking forward to seeing the community enjoy it once again.

While we rightly focus on maintaining and improving what we have, I think it's also important to think innovatively and creatively on what we can do differently to continue to improve our city.

At the recent council meeting, I spoke about a passion project of mine, the revitalisation of Williamstown's small business environment and the return of the Williamstown Festival.

I remember the days of the much-loved



Cr Lisa Bentley.

Willy Fest, and the joy it brought to the whole community.

While I recognise the challenges involved in holding events like this, I think it's an idea worth exploring to strengthen community connections, celebrate Williamstown's unique identity, and support local businesses.

Since mentioning my idea at the last meeting, I've received plenty of positive feedback. I think council, community groups and local businesses can collaborate and look at ways we can make more special memories in Williamstown and Hobsons Bay.

Briefs

Waste strategy

Hobsons Bay residents can have their say on the council's draft Waste and Recycling Strategy. The draft strategy has been shaped by input from more than 1670 community members, along with technical expertise, research, and legislative requirements. The draft strategy proposes an effective service that reduces waste and increases recycling as well as keeping public spaces clean and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. Feedback on the draft strategy can be provided until Wednesday 26 August.

Community grants

Maribyrnong council is reminding residents that time is running out to apply for the Community Grants Program 2026-27. Grants of up to \$25,000 are available through the annual program which is aimed at supporting Maribyrnong based not-for-profits deliver projects that address the following areas: build social connection and belonging; increase participation in community life; support community building and wellbeing and demonstrate environmental sustainability in action and/or strengthen climate resilience. Projects should benefit priority communities such as First Nations people, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people, newly arrived migrants and refugees and older people aged 65 and above. Applications close 18 August.

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MY PLACE

Since 2018 Mat O’Keefe has owned and operated Pride of Our Footscray, a prominent queer late night venue on Hopkins Street. He spoke to Cade Lucas about living in the area.

What’s your connection to the north-west of Melbourne ?

My grandfather Jack O’Keefe was from Footscray. He moved over to Pascoe Vale when he got married to grandma, but he took his love of the Bulldogs with him and rarely missed a game despite having 10 kids! So my dad was born in Pascoe Vale and I lived there too, as well as nearby suburbs like Preston, Brunswick West and Brunswick East. Even did a four year stint in Darwin. I found my way to Maribyrnong at the end of 2013, first in Yarraville, but then moved next to the Whitten Oval to be closer to God (Bont). I have finally settled in Maidstone! And of course, I actually spend most of my life in Footscray running Pride of our Footscray. I’m on the Footscray Traders Association committee and am also part of the Future Footscray group through council, so I really do talk about Footscray a lot!

What do you like about living/working here?

I love the area, which is why I both live and work within Maribyrnong. For whatever magical reason, Footscray particularly feels like everyone’s in it together, like it’s a small village, and we’re all doing our best for the village and we’re proud of its achievements. Be it the success of the Bulldogs or when Cavallaro’s cannolli gets some attention or even hyper local amazing things like the Footscray Rubbish Runners or Crokinole Club or Trugo Club, just many very cool things, not to mention the obvious other things like the Vietnamese and African restaurants. Hung Vuong’s pho helped convince me to move to Footscray, and the Banh Mi places all have their own character and stories and are basically legendary. It’s also incredible that Footscray can live so harmoniously together with so many nations represented, possibly the greatest advertisement for multiculturalism in the world.



Mat O’Keefe.
(Damjan Janevski)
553537_02

What, if anything, would you change about the area?

Within the boundaries of Footscray, you have a number of very impressive things: an incredibly busy train station, the home of the world’s greatest football team, the mighty Maribyrnong River, a brand-new hospital, Footscray Park, the Heavenly Queen Temple, Footscray Community Art Centre and of course, the famous market. There’s a lot to be grateful for. But sometimes the centre of Footscray can seem eerily deserted. So we need to encourage people visiting the outskirts of Footscray to also visit the centre and there’s some really good work going on to make that happen, as things currently seem a

bit unbalanced. One simple idea that was mentioned was directing safe slow-speed cycling through the middle of Footscray to encourage visitation.

Where is your favourite local place to spend time?

Footscray Park and the Maribyrnong River trail for Pokemon with my partner Howard. The Local Cafe and French Baguette Bakery for Banh Mi. Hung Vuong for soup, Don Don for bento, Tan Thanh Loi, Viet Kitchen or Co Tham Can Tho for Viet meals, Conway Coffee, and Foodle at High Point! Also special mentions to Savers Footscray and Yen Huot Gift Shop (\$2 shop) on Paisley for shopping.

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

I won the under 14s cricketer of the year in Darwin in 1992, after a good year which included my first century. I thought I was going to open the batting for Australia! But I never made another 100 ever again. So my memories of cricket are quite painful, though I did contribute to a premiership in our park-grade seconds for Melbourne Wanderers as an openly gay player in 2002, wherein they called me Matty “Pretty Boy” O’Keefe in the end of season team report. Like the elusive second century, I was never called pretty ever again! Now I’m bald and hoping to learn golf! Time flies.



The Nritya Rockers host regular Bollywood dance classes. Posing in their colourful costumes are Garima Gupta, Moumita Mukherjee and Ashwini Shetty. (Damjan Janevski) 568088_01



Lisa Peplow has completed 250 parkruns at Brimbank Park. (Damjan Janevski) 567563_02



Moorabool mayor Steve Venditti-Taylor and Cr Sheila Freeman at the Carberry Drive Recreation Reserve new playground. (Damjan Janevski) 568179_01



Young soccer player Rayhaan has raised \$500 for the Cancer Council. (Damjan Janevski) 568670_06



Diane Capelli, Noelene Wattie, Siovhan Brister and Nicole Power; were delighted when they heard that Barro’s Kealba landfill would close. (Damjan Janevski) 568522_05

Faces of the west

Each week, Star Weekly photographers are out and about capturing the people and events across Melbourne’s north-west.



The Tarneit-based United Seniors Club received a funding boost for its Heart Healthy Generations Cricket Cup, which encourages grandparents and grandchildren to play cricket together. (Damjan Janevski) 568771_06

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.

Greening Brooklyn

Greening Brooklyn Together takes place on Friday 14 August, 10am-12pm at 174 Old Geelong Road, Brooklyn. Help make Brooklyn greener by joining this community planting event. Volunteers from the community and local businesses are invited to work alongside the Brooklyn Recycling Group, Melbourne Water and Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek to plant native vegetation and enhance local habitat. No experience is needed.
■ Lisa, 0433 559 530 or brooklynrecycling-group@outlook.com

Hobsons Bay Altona Garden Club.

Come along to the garden club and enjoy an afternoon of discussions and talks about gardening. Guest speakers will discuss what is happening in the garden - keeping and looking after bees and the environment. Meetings are held at the Youth Hall on the corner of Civic Parade and Sugar Gum Drive, Altona on the third Monday of the month at 1pm. New members welcome.
■ Kay, 0411 793 534

AeroSpeakers Toastmasters Club

The AeroSpeakers Toastmasters Club welcomes all who want to improve their communication, leadership and public speaking skills. Meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of every month from 7-9pm at Laverton Community Hub, 95-105 Railway Avenue, Laverton.
■ Helen, 0474 498 052, aerospeakerstm@gmail.com

Social square dancing

Come along to the Maribyrnong Community Centre on Thursday nights from 7.30-10.30pm to learn social square dancing for beginners in a safe and friendly environment. The teaching is in a group but is self paced so there is no pressure to maintain a rate of learning.
■ Janine, 0421 371 883, contact@essendonsquares.com

Free English conversation classes

If English is your second language and you want to improve your English language skills, practice speaking with friendly volunteer tutors in informal and interactive group sessions held every Monday at 1-3pm in the meeting room at Altona Library, 123



Through the lens

This week's photographer's choice picture is of the Indian Bengali adaptation of *Canterville Ghost* featuring director-actor Swastika Ganguly (middle), with actors Sayan Tani and Amitabha Chakraborty. (Damjan Janevski) 569192_01

Queen Street, Altona.

■ Jill MacKenzie, 0439 994 705, jill.mackenzie111@gmail.com

Discover new skills

Join Outlets Newport Community Education Centre for classes in English conversation, computers, devices, sewing and crafts at 43 Mason Street, Newport.
■ 9391 8504, outlets@outletsco-op.com.au

Learn digital devices

Know someone who needs help with their mobile phone or tablet? Outlets Newport Community Education Centre offers small, weekly classes that teach all the basics, tips and tricks to meet your needs. Register now. Classes are Mondays 10am-12pm at 43 Mason Street, Newport.
■ 9391 8504, outlets@outletsco-op.com.au

Cards and conversation

Play cards and games at Altona North Library every Tuesday from 10am-12pm. Free of charge, morning tea provided and no bookings required. Corner of Millers and McArthurs roads, Altona North.
■ 1300 179 944

Community story time

Every Friday during term from 8-8.30am at

the blocks behind Alfa Cafe Yarraville. Free to attend and a free babychino with every coffee purchase, when storytime is mentioned,
■ 9314 5996, office@sayarraville.catholic.edu.au

Book sales

Friends of Altona Libraries (FOAL) hold monthly book sales at the rear of Altona Library during the first week of each month. Books no longer required by the library are sold for as little as \$2. All money is returned to the Library to support community programs. New members who are happy to volunteer to help organise and sell books for only a few hours per month are welcome.
■ Ann Nicol, 0408 460 062.

Rotary Club of Point Gellibrand

The club meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 6pm for a 6.30pm start at Pelicans Landing, Syme Street, Williamstown. Everyone is welcome to attend just contact the club beforehand.
■ Pam Barnes, 0418 347 691, rotarypointgellibrand.com

Church centenary

This year marks a century since Christ Church Newport's red brick church on Mason Street, Newport was established. As part

of celebrating this milestone, the church is seeking any photos people might have of events which have taken place in the building. These can include photos of weddings, baptisms, kids clubs, community events, and more. Those who have photos to share, or who would like to highlight notable key dates, are encouraged to get in touch.
■ 100years@christchurchnewport.org.au

Hip hop dance program

L2R Dance is Australia's only youth hip hop and street dance not-for-profit and social enterprise proudly based in Melbourne's west. L2R makes dance accessible to children and young people who can't access commercial dance opportunities and draws from the history of hip-hop culture with its aims to empower and critique social issues that affect young people in Melbourne's West and beyond. L2R's free Next-Gen dance program is held at Phoenix Youth Hub, 72 Buckley Street, Footscray (Auditorium). Classes will be held from 4:30-6:30pm each Tuesday during term.
■ 0490 811 605, <https://www.l2r.org.au/>

Westgate diabetes support group

Meets on the first Tuesday of each month at Altona Bowling Club at 10am.
■ Elaine, 0415 030 996



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Love the hit ABC series **Muster Dogs**? Now you can bring home your very own team of hardworking four-legged friends! Together with our friends at **Aussie Toys Online**, we are giving **two lucky readers** the chance to **WIN** the complete set of three official **Muster Dogs** plush toys.

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Don't miss this paw-some giveaway!



SCAN ME! TO ENTER





Book in for crafty fun

Each month, Stephanie Martinez will share an exciting craft project designed to inspire and spark creativity. Stephanie starred in the first season of Making It on Network 10, where she discovered and ignited her passion for crafting. Join Stephanie as she explores the endless possibilities of crafting and turn everyday materials into something extraordinary. This month, Stephanie is creating a bookmark.



Stephanie Martinez.



Bookmark

Materials
Coloured cardstock (15cm x 10cm)
Clear plastic pocket
Yarn
Gems

Equipment
Scissors
Heart shaped hole punch (or craft knife)
Hole punch
Double sided tape
Glue

Step 1: Fold the cardstock in half lengthways to create a bookmark.

Step 2: Punch a heart shape through both layers near the bottom of the folded bookmark. Alternatively, draw and cut out a heart with a craft knife.

Step 3: Open the bookmark and cut a section from the clear plastic pocket slightly larger than the heart.

Step 4: Use double sided tape to attach the plastic over the heart on the inside of the bookmark. Add a small amount of gems inside the heart window. Seal the opening with double side tape to create a shaker pocket. Apply double sided tape around the inside of the bookmark and fold it closed.

Step 5: Decorate the front of the bookmark with some hearts.

Step 6: Punch a hole at the top of the bookmark and attach a tassel. To make a tassel, wrap yarn around a piece of cardboard, tie one end, cut the opposite end, then tie a small section below the top to create the tassel head.



Scan the QR code and follow the links for more creative fun.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors



40 years ago
13 August, 1986

Williamstown council has denied it polluted the Eastern Lakes with waste from the proposed Newport Lakes tip site.



30 years ago
14 August, 1996

A tense calm hung over the entrance to the ACI glass factory in Spotswood yesterday as police remained on guard following a scuffle at a picket line on Monday morning in which several picketers were hurt.



20 years ago
9 August, 2006

He's the legend who started out with a dream to play in the big league. Sixteen years on, Chris Grant is the Western Bulldogs' games record holder.



10 years ago
10 August, 2016

Residents have slammed developers for fanning concerns about pokies in order to ram through an "unacceptable" development at Maribyrnong.

Ready to rock the Ranges

The Ranges are ready to rock as some of the region’s best talent battle it out.

Macedon Ranges council youth team’s Music in the Sticks (MITS) will once again host the Battle of the Bands, with the line-up this year featuring five local youth bands with a total of 24 young up and coming musicians.

On Friday 14 August, the Civilians, Dead Silver, Saile, Bandemic and the Felonys will all take centre stage as they vie for the winning crown and top prize.

The bands will be judged by three music industry judges, including MITS graduate and local youth sound engineer Arabelle Poucher, award-winning musician and local music tutor Lucy Wise, and local youth music industry mentor and sound engineer Jacob Munnery, with two prizes up for grabs.

The main prize of the night will be a \$1500 recording opportunity at local Field Day Recording Studio, while People’s Choice will take home a Mannys Music

Store voucher worth \$1000, helping local artists kickstart their careers.

MITS leader and music industry professional Jeff Tynan said there’s a vibrant youth music scene in the Macedon Ranges, with this event an opportunity to highlight their talents.

“MITS events like this one celebrates talent and creativity whilst bringing young people together to connect with peers and contribute to a thriving community,” he said. “It’s as much about the personal growth as it is about the musical journey and through the MITS program it’s a privilege to share with young people skills and opportunities to help fulfil their dreams of pathways into the music industry.”

The five bands will battle it out on the Kyneton Town Hall stage on Friday 14 August. Doors will open at 6pm, with the event expected to conclude at 10pm.

Tickets are \$5 and are going fast. Details: mrsc.vic.gov.au/mits



Kyneton High School’s Bandemic will perform at the Battle of the Bands. Pictured is Francis Allen, Frankie Stagoll, Sidney Price-Robertson, Mila Hardiman, Asher Thomas and James Jarrett. (Supplied)

Greek myths set upon St Albans

A new, original musical, Low Key Chaos, is set to run at the Bowery Theatre in St Albans Saturday 21August and Sunday 22 August .

Written and directed by Sonja Wright, this community production mixes classical chaos with theatrical intrigue.

“It’s original everything. Original story, original lyrics and its fully community based,” Wright said.

“We have talent from ages 17-73 amongst the class from all different backgrounds with people coming from across the state.”

The story centres around the Greek gods of Olympus, with a drama featuring Dionysus, Hera and norse god Loki.

“The central themes are identity, belonging and friendship. It asks the question – is adoration worth sacrifice or should you be your authentic self even if you are not always admired?” Wright said.

Wright was aided by talented family members with her niece and daughter contributing to choreography as well as her brother assisting with sound and audio-visuals.

“It was actually quite daunting,” she said. “I’ve been working my full-time day job as well as doing all the behind the scenes stuff, advertising, meetings. It’s been a huge effort but to see my little story from two years ago about Dionysus now come alive on stage with people wanting to watch feels amazing.”

Wright applauded the cast for its efforts in learning the original material.

“The cast have done an amazing job of learning everything,” she said.



Alexander Glenk as Dionysus. (Supplied)

Wright has already put out a call for those interested for future productions.

“We’ve already got next year’s musical in the pipeline. If people enjoy singing,

dancing and acting then it would be great to see community support.”

Details: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1548029>

Footscray Flix to show 80’s hits

Inner-west film buffs wanting to see a movie have long had the choice of going up to Highpoint or down to the Sun Theatre in Yarraville.

However, up until the late 1980s, Footscray was the west’s cinema central with La Scala, Trocadero, the Grand, and Barkly Theatres once located within 500m of each other.

In honour of those four theatres that closed nearly four decades ago, a for-day film festival will be held in Footscray at the end of this month.

Presented in partnership with Sun Theatre in Yarraville, Maribyrnong council is hosting Footscray Flix from Thursday 27 August to Sunday 30 August.

With none of the four theatres able to be revived for the event, a purpose built 100-seat pop-up cinema will be erected at 34 Moreland Street , in between Yewers and Wingfield streets.

The venue will host four nights of 80s and 90s popcorn classics, with tickets at 1980’s prices.

The program opens on Thursday 27 August with films shot in Melbourne’s west, including The Big Steal, filmed in Footscray, and Mad Max.

Friday 28 August is Slackers Night featuring Dazed and Confused, and Trainspotting, while 30 August is Sci Fi Saturday with ET, Alien, Blade Runner all showing.

Footscray Flix then concludes on 31 August with Swayze Sunday and two of the 80’s heart-throb’s biggest hits: Point Break and Dirty Dancing.

Details: <https://collections.humanitix.com/footscray-flix>

Go Bacchus to the 80s at a spectacular live concert this September

Celebrate one jam-packed, fun filled event for the whole family, featuring your favourite songs from one of music’s most colourful decades over one weekend next month.

Turn back the clock and get ready to relive one of the greatest decades in music when the Bacchus Marsh Theatre Company presents Back to the ‘80s, a spectacular live concert celebrating the unforgettable hits of the 1980s.

Featuring a full cast of talented local

performers backed by live musicians, the high-energy production is set to combine the iconic hits of the 80s with stunning vocals, dazzling choreography, and a spectacular light show.

Organisers have promised an electric night filled with 80s hits to suit everyone, regardless of their age.

Whether you remember the decade firsthand or you’re introducing a whole new generation to the music, there’s something

for everyone in the fun-filled family show that’s guaranteed to have audiences singing along.

“Re-Live the 80’s or share it with a whole new generation - there’s something for everyone,” organisers said.

Everyone young and old is invited to tag along, with four performances across one weekend in September available to choose from for an entertaining trip back to one of music’s most colourful and electrifying

eras.

So get back to the 80s on Friday 4, Saturday 5, and Sunday 6 September with the Bacchus Marsh Theatre Company at the Bacchus Marsh Arts & Cultural Hub, located at 5 Grant Street, Bacchus Marsh.

Performance times are from 7.30pm on Friday, 1pm and 7.30pm on Saturday, and 3pm on Sunday. Tickets and details: <https://events.humanitix.com/back-to-the-80-seq6sa7dc>.



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SPORTS QUIZ

1. True or false: Simone Biles has won the most Olympic gold medals of any gymnast?
2. Terry Bollea is the real name of which late US professional wrestler?



Simone Biles

3. I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here! contestant Luke Bateman played 71 games for which NRL team?
4. Kyle Shanahan is the head coach of which NFL team?
5. Which Fremantle Dockers footballer's nicknames include The Big Cohuna and Cyclone?
6. Which country's national netball team won gold at the 2026 Commonwealth Games?
7. Which New York Liberty player was awarded MVP of the 2026 WNBA All-Star Game?
8. Which country did Australia's national netball team defeat to claim bronze at the 2026 Commonwealth Games?
9. And which country defeated Australia in the netball semifinals?
10. Which state or territory capital is set to host the finals of the NBL's in-season Ignite Cup from 2027?

11. When and where were the first Paralympic Games held?
12. Who has captained the Australian women's football team since 2019?
13. What is considered to be the national sport of Japan?
14. Winning gold in her debut at the London Olympics, who is widely regarded as the greatest female swimmer of all time?
15. Which North Melbourne player captained Australia to victory in the 2026 AFLW Australia v Ireland match?
16. English amateur cricketer Brian Devine has become widely known by what nickname?
17. Which class of car has the highest top speed: IndyCar, NASCAR or Formula 1?
18. What is unique about the technique of table tennis Paralympian Ibrahim Hamadtou?
19. Controversial figure Gianni Infantino is the president of which sports governing body?



Gianni Infantino

20. In the Super Netball league, how many points is a super shot worth?
21. How many balls are on the table at the start of a standard game of pool?
22. Which sport is featured in the movie The Game Plan?
23. Potential Carlton prospects Cody and Lukas are the sons of which former players respectively?
24. What are the nicknames of the two Sydney AIHL teams?
25. Which word that can mean 'the clothes worn by sports players' is used in the NATO alphabet?
26. Who was the only Collingwood player represented in the 2026 AFLW Australia v Ireland match?
27. In which year did Sir Don Bradman die?
28. The Gangurrus is the nickname of which Australian sports teams?
29. Which wrestler became interim WWE Women's Champion at this year's SummerSlam?
30. And which match did she win?

1. False (Larisa Latynina) 2. Hulk Hogan 3. Canberra Raiders 4. San Francisco 49ers 5. Josh Treacy 6. New Zealand 7. Jonquel Jones 8. England 9. Jamaica 10. Canberra 11. 1960, Rome, Italy 12. Sam Kerr 13. Sumo wrestling 14. Katie Ledecky 15. Jasmine Garner 16. Clicky Ponting 17. IndyCar 18. He holds the paddle with his mouth 19. F1 20. Two points 21. 16 (cue ball and 15 object balls) 22. American football 23. Andrew Walker (Cody) and Anthony Koutourides (Lukas) 24. Ice Dogs and Bears 25. Uniform 26. Sarah Rowe (for Ireland) 27. 2001 28. 3x3 basketball teams 29. Chelsea Green 30. Five-way ladder match

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Premium car for less cash

By Alistair Kennedy, Marque Motoring

Launched here in late 2025 the Leapmotor B10 is a fully-electric compact SUV from the new Chinese brand backed by the huge Stellantis group which brings a number of brands to Australia including Jeep, Peugeot, RAM, Fiat and Alfa Romeo.

We're told that the unusual name is a loose translation from the Chinese Lingpao Qiche that means Zero Run Automobile. Makes sense.

Leapmotor B10 is the brand's second model joining the larger C10 SUV that arrived here in early 2025. It's currently EV only but we're told that an extended range hybrid (REEV) version will be added later this year.

We understand that a Leapmotor B05 compact electric hatchback will be added to the range later this year. Others, yet to be confirmed, include a city electric SUV and a large seven-seat SUV plug-in hybrid.

Two variants of the B10 are available, both powered by the same rear-mount motor but charged by different Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) batteries.

The entry-level Style has a 56.2 kWh battery and is priced at \$37,888 plus on-road costs while the B10 Design Long Range generates 67.1 kWh and sells for \$40,888 plus ORCs.

The B10 is backed by a six-year, 150,000km vehicle warranty and an eight-year, 160,000km high-voltage battery warranty.

Exterior

While Leapmotor B10 shares much of its overall styling with its larger C10 sibling, its compact proportions give it a slightly sportier look. Having said that there's little that will have it stand out from its numerous compact SUV rivals.

Both B10 variants come with LED automatic head and brake lights, a fixed panoramic glass roof with a powered blind, LED automatic headlights and 18-inch alloy wheels.

The Design LR grade adds an LED dynamic rear light bar, rear privacy glass, automatic power folding mirrors, rain-sensing wiper and a power tailgate.

Oddly, there are no rear wipers on either model.

Six colours are available. Light White and Starry Night Blue are standard. The other four are \$990 options: Galaxy Silver, Tetra Grey, Dawn Purple and Metallic Black.

Interior

The inside of the Leapmotor B10 is a real surprise with a look and feel that's comparable with a much more established and more expensive brand.

As is the norm with Chinese EVs the dash is dominated by a large touchscreen and no physical controls.

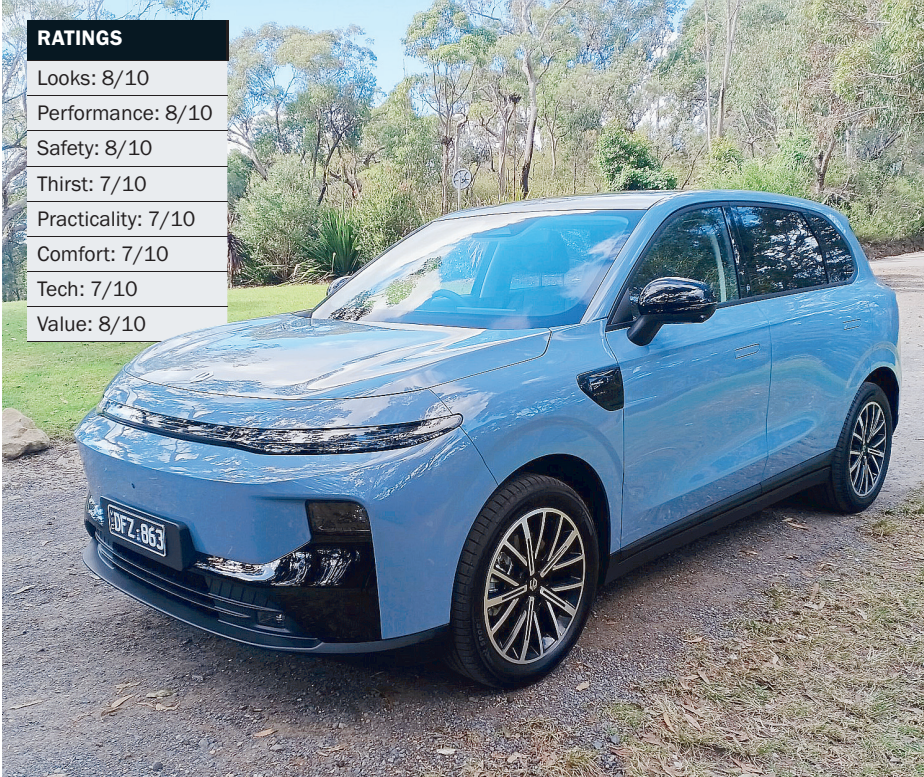
There are some quirky features such as the three oval openings at the top and bottom of the dashboard in front of the passenger. Nobody could work out if they were functional or just decorative.

Style comes with grey fabric seats with the Design getting what Leapmotor calls TechnoLeather aka synthetic seats.

The front seats are heated, ventilated and powered with six settings for the driver and four for the passenger. The steering wheel is also heated.

The customizable 64-colour interior ambient lighting system can sync with the car's sound system.

The twin cupholders in the front are tucked behind the centre console and difficult to reach especially at night. Which isn't a bad thing because they fold up and down, as my grandson suggested, like toilet



The Leapmotor B10 offers outstanding value for money. (Pictures: Supplied)

seats. Five-year olds notice these things.

Boot space, once you discover that it's accessed through a small button in the right centre of the rear, is a decent 490 litres including the extra under-floor space where items such like as the charging cables (mode 2 and 3) and the tyre repair kit which, sadly, is required in lieu of a spare wheel.

There is a small frunk for storage under the bonnet.

Vehicle to Load (V2L) is standard although the cable isn't. It costs around \$280.

With the rear seatbacks folded, boot space expands up to 1475 litres.

The tailgate can also be opened through the touchscreen.

Powertrain

The B10 is powered by a high-efficiency electric motor delivering 160kW and 240Nm of torque. Zero to 100km/h is listed at 8 seconds with a top speed of 170km/h.

The Style has a 56.2 kWh battery with an 11kW maximum AC rate through three-phase power that can charge from zero to 100 per cent in around six hours. With single-phase power that drops to 7.4kW and around 10 hours.

Both Style and Design LR support 11kW AC charging and ultra-fast DC charging up to 168 kW (Design LR), enabling a 30 to 80 per cent charge in approximately 20 minutes.

The charge port is located at the rear driver's side.

Both Style and Design LR support DC charging up to 168 kW (Design LR), enabling a 30 to 80 per cent charge in approximately 20 minutes.

Safety

Leapmotor B10 was tested by ANCAP in November 2025 and received the maximum five-star rating. A positive for parents is a near-perfect child occupant protection score.

There are seven airbags including one in the front centre position. Also standard are adaptive cruise control, autonomous emergency braking, lane keep assist, lane departure warning, emergency lane keeping, speed assist system, blind spot monitoring, front collision warning, rear cross traffic alert and braking, rear parking sensors, and driver attention monitoring.

As is now the norm with Chinese EVs the frustrating and incessant alerts that have drivers screaming 'Just Let Me (expletives deleted) Drive!' such as lane correction, speed limit alert and driver alert can be turned off.

While they do need to be turned on every time the car re-starts there is a customisable button on the steering wheel where they can be turned off again with a single touch.

One surprising omission in either model, and a trap for the unwary, is the absence of front parking sensors.

Infotainment

Standard in both B10 variants are a 14.6-inch colour touchscreen and an 8.8-inch LCD driver instrument cluster. There's also satellite navigation, 360-degree camera with guidelines, an integrated 360-degree dashcam recorder and wireless smartphone charger.

The high-resolution screens are both fast and sharp.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are both wireless.

Style comes with a basic six-speaker audio system. Design adds 12-speaker surround sound.

Driving

At 4.5 metres the Leapmotor B10 is only marginally smaller than the C10 and can carry five adults in reasonable comfort.

Entry into the B10 is through a frustrating digital keyless system that requires an NFC key card to be tapped on a tab on the outside of the driver's side mirror. There is a smartphone app as an alternative. While both methods unlock the doors, they don't open the flush handle which needs a button to be pushed and the handle then pulled out.

The card then has to be placed on the left-hand side of the centre console otherwise the vehicle won't start, although it can then be moved. Fortunately, common sense has prevailed and after a wave of buyer complaints, we're assured that physical keys will progressively be introduced with the keycards remaining only as a backup.

On the positive side there is a Leapmotor App that provides remote access as well features such as vehicle status, vehicle location and scheduled charging.



B10 is a capable city transporter with the smooth, steady acceleration that is the norm in electric vehicles. It lacks the whiplash pick up of performance EVs but does move from zero to 100km/h in 8 seconds making it sharp enough for quick lane changes when needed.

There are three drive modes: Comfort, Standard and Sport. In Sport there's noticeably more response in steering and throttle for greater driving enjoyment.

Stellantis input shows up in a relatively firm but comfortable ride. It grips the road and corners securely with minimal body roll.

There is three-stage brake regeneration with One-Pedal driving available in the Design LR.

Leapmotor quotes NEDC range of 442km from the Style and 516km with the Design. These equate to the more realistic WLTP numbers of 361km and 434km respectively.

Energy usage is listed at an impressive 14.0 kWh (Style) and 14.1 kWh (Design).

Summing up

With so many new brands coming from China it's getting increasingly difficult to evaluate each of their credentials and compare them with each other.

While some like MG, BYD and GWM are now well-established, others, including Leapmotor, are still largely unknown. The fact that it's part of the Stellantis group, currently the world's fourth-largest automobile manufacturing group should reassure potential buyers.

Importantly, Stellantis didn't just take Leapmotor off the shelf. Its engineers provided significant input into the design, chassis tuning and driving characteristics.

It's a reasonably spacious and comfortable family vehicle that's equally at home in either urban or motorway conditions and it's large enough to make for an excellent long-distance cruiser.

Potential buyers will need to be patient as they scroll through the seemingly endless controls stored within the touchscreen but by the end of our week-long test we had grown to understand and appreciate its quality.

Best of all, it offers outstanding value for money especially with the extra features and extended range in the Design variant costing just around \$3000 more than the Style.



Keilor Park's Ashleigh Guest. 569976_06



Craigieburn's Sienna Scuderi.569976_12



Westmeadows' Danielle Linton and Courtney Bligh.569971_04



Deer Park's Kwame McHarg.569972_01

Finals action is underway

Finals action got underway in several competitions, while there were plenty of season defining results on Saturday. Star Weekly photographer Ties Urie was out shooting some of the action.



Deer Parks' Joshua Cooper.569972_13



Darley's Brett Bewley goes flying.569980_08



Westmeadows' Courtney Munn.569971_09



Melton's Adrian Monitto. 569980_01



Lancefield's Meaghan Lyons.569969_21



Riddell's Ruby Ayers.569969_07

Parkside’s future vision

By Tara Murray

The long term future and stability of Parkside is behind the club’s decision to move to the Essendon District Football League.

The EDFL and Western Football League announced on Monday that Parkside’s application to leave the Western league for the EDFL had been successful.

Parkside was a founding member of the former Footscray District Football League (FDFL), now known as the WFL, and has been an integral part of football in Melbourne’s west for more than 90 years.

Parkside president Ben Crook said it had been a very long process to get to this point.

“It’s good to have it finally resolved and the affiliation with the EDFL moving forward,” he said.

“There was a long consultation process with the membership base, scenario based outcomes, certainly polls were taken and feedback taken.

“There was a lot of engagement with the membership base. What the preference was going forward.

“It was certainly a positive consultation process in terms of the consideration of the long term future and stability for the club, that perhaps a move to EDFL would be best suited.”

Crook said he was very much of the belief that committees are custodians of clubs and it’s ultimately not their decision to direct or dictate the direction of the club.

While the Western league fought when Deer Park and St Albans left the competi-

tion at the end of 2022, the league didn’t stand in the way of Parkside’s move.

Crook said it had been a fully transparent professional process between the two leagues, the club and AFL Victoria over a long period of time.

In a letter to EDFL clubs on 2 July, chief executive Andrew Johnston said that Parkside had in principle, agreed to amalgamate-merge with the Ascot Vale Panthers Junior Football Club prior to the 2027 EDFL season.

This would then allow them to be a junior and senior club within the EDFL.

This proposal is fully dependent on both clubs’ members voting in favour of the merger at their respective annual general meetings.

Crook said there were a lot of conversations ongoing between the two clubs.

“We’ll continue to work with them about what a possible future could entail.”

The club has announced a number of re-signings for next season already continuing the continuity it has.

Focus now turns to the rest of the 2026 season.

Parkside’s men’s side sits third on the division 1 ladder after 15 rounds, while the women’s side has claimed the minor premiership.

“It’s a bit of a reset now,” Crook said.

“Focus on what is in front of us in the immediate future, long term future of the club, now have to prepare and undertake the next few weeks, both men’s and women’s.”



Achel Yout defends Ashlea Mawer. (Tara Murray)

Falcons knocked out after a loss to Hawks

By Tara Murray

It was a disappointing end to the City West Falcons’ Victorian Netball League season, having exceeded their pre-season expectations.

The Falcons, who were the only team with two sides through to the preliminary finals, felt like they had overachieved this year.

That meant little with grand final spots on the line on Wednesday, with the club eager to have success on the big stage again.

The championship side lost to the Hawks, while the 23 and under side fell short against the Geelong Cougars.

Falcons’ coach Marg Lind said they were disappointed with the results, but were happy with the bigger picture.

“The 23s are really young. Third spot is probably a good result,” she said.

“They showed their lack of experience, where with champ we lost it in that first and second quarter, we made way too many errors.

“Afterwards everyone said we didn’t

even think that we would make finals at the start of the year.

“I’m not happy that we didn’t get through, but given where we were at the start for the club to finish three and three, is pretty good.”

The Falcons’ championship side, which had been going for a fifth straight premiership, was left to rue a poor first half against the Hawks in the 72-65 loss.

The margin was 11 goals at half time, before the Falcons won the second half.

Lind said the experienced attacking end of Jane Cook, Maggie Lind, Montana Holmes and Olivia Cameron made too many errors in the first half and it proved costly.

“We needed to let loose early, which we did in the second half,” she said.

“We got the pace up a little bit, I thought Lani Faonuku impacted really well, she should be really happy with herself.

“She came on an offered a bit more height on centre pass and also took a couple of intercepts, but you can’t give them that led.

“The second half was a lot better, we didn’t give up.”

Cook finished with 62 goals for the Falcons.

At the other end of the court, Achel Yout had a good game in defence after struggling in the other finals.

Yout and Fauonuku, along with Lara Turner are still eligible for 23 and unders and all got good experience with the championship side this year.

In the 23 and under side lost to the Cougars, 66-61.

The Cougars led throughout the match and had the answers every time the Falcons came at them.

Lind said the focus for them next season would continue to rebuild. She said she hoped that the older players would return for another season to help guide the younger ones through.

She said there were a number of good young ones coming through and would also look outside the club to add some more depth to their defensive end.

“We still need to do some rebuilding, I think it will be two to three years of that,” she said.

Sports shorts

VAFA

Williamstown CYMS moved off the bottom of the Victorian Amateur Football Association premier B competition on Saturday. The CYs got their fifth win of the season as they beat De La Salle. The two teams traded the lead throughout the day, with De La Salle leading by nine points at three quarter time. The CYs kicked four goals to two in the final quarter to seal a 13.8 (86)-12.9 (81). Will Smyth kicked three goals for the CYs, with Harrison Miller and Robbie Cockerell named their best.

Williamstown CYMS remains in the Victorian Amateur Football Association women’s premier B top four despite a close loss on Saturday. Facing Old Xaverians, the CYs lost 4.3 (27)-3.6 (24), with the Old Xavs holding on in the final quarter. Kate Grady, Marli Russell and Jess Court were named the CYs best. Heading into the final round, the CYs sit in fourth, only percentage ahead of the Old Xavs.

Western FL

Finals spots are set in the Western Football League women’s competition. While the top four was set heading into the final round, spots in the second lot of finals, for teams five through to eight, were still up for grabs. Wins for the Suns and Laverton, against Point Cook Centrals and Yarraville Seddon Eagles respectively, sealed double chances. The Eagles will now face the Sharks in an elimination final. There’s a week off before finals start.

The top five in the Western Football League division 2 competition is set with one round remaining. With both Albanvale and the Suns suffering losses to North Footscray and West Footscray respectively on Saturday, it leaves the Cobras six points clear of the Suns heading into the final round. The two sides face each other in the final round. North Footscray also locked in the minor premiership with the win against the Cobras.

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Gators ready for challenge

By Tara Murray

Altona Gators are hoping to fire at the right time of the year in the Big V women’s division 1 competition.

After finishing second, the Gators had a bye in the opening round of finals and now face the Whittlesea Pacers for a spot in the grand final this week.

The Gators lost just three matches for the season, all to minor premiers Melbourne University, which went through the season undefeated.

Gators’ coach Randy Shanklin said they were happy with the spot they found themselves in.

“The girls did well,” he said. “We can’t

get over the hump of Melb Uni yet.

“We were undefeated against the rest of the league which was pleasing.

“We would have preferred to finish first. We didn’t know how good Melbourne Uni would be after we beat them in a practice match.

“Second, we’re happy with that.”

Shanklin said the back part of the season had been challenging as they battled players playing hurt.

Despite this, they were able to come away with the wins.

“The last four weeks I don’t love how we have been playing,” Shanklin said.

“We’ve still been able to do what we need to do to get the wins, which is pleas-

ing.

“We’ve got players playing hurt, which is not ideal, but credit to them for battling through to get us to where we are now.”

Shanklin said he wasn’t sure whether the week off was a good thing or not.

He said the players who were playing hurt wouldn’t recover in the space of a week.

“Sometimes it’s good to roll into the next one,” he said.

“We will have a practice match against my university team. We don’t play well after byes.

“We’re not going to take time off, we’ll keep rolling as sometimes you lose concentration.”

There will be no second chance for the Gators this season, with all finals knockout finals.

They will face the Pacers in the preliminary finals, while Melbourne University will face the Camberwell Dragons in the other preliminary final, with grand final spots on the line in both matches.

Shanklin said the Pacers have a lot of options which would be hard to shut down.

The Pacers beat Gippsland United in the first week of finals, 70-60.

“Ivana [Vasiljevic] didn’t play last time we played them,” he said. “Sharna [Ayres] is tough to guard.

“They have a bit more depth which is hard to match up on.”



Jake Miller. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 486900_09

Miller takes the opportunity to impress

By Tara Murray

Western Jets’ Jake Miller felt he was lucky to get the opportunity to play three games for Vic Metro at the recent under-18 National Championships.

As a bottom age player, Miller was hoping to play one game and enjoy the experience.

The youngster impressed playing three games, kicking five goals and being named in the All-Australian squad.

“I was pretty rapt with my performances, obviously as a bottomager I was quite lucky to get a couple of games,” he said.

“To take that opportunity and play consistent footy in all those three games was pretty special and something I’ll remember for quite a while.

“I was very grateful to play for metro.”

Miller said he had aimed in the pre-season to make the squad, knowing he was a bottom age player.

Once he did, the focus was just taking everything he could out of it.

Vic Metro claimed the championship which made it even more special.

“My goal at the start of the season was to try and get a game,” Miller said.

“I didn’t really expect to play three games but I felt like a bit of reward for my effort in the pre-season and the work that I put in before champs started.

“It was awesome. The whole carnival and eight weeks before the lead up to the champ games and all the training was special and the coaches have been awesome for me.”

The championships added to what is already a busy schedule.

Miller has been playing school football at Brighton Grammar, while also playing with the Western Jets.

It meant little time to go back to his local club Yarraville Seddon.

“It’s been ongoing school and then the Jets once a week with training,” he said.

“Going to Brighton every day for school and school training. It’s pretty fully on, it’s good

“If I’ve got training in the morning I’m normally driving so it’s about 45 minutes ... on the train with a couple of mates who go to school there, it’s not too bad, it’s about an hour train ride.”

Miller was one of two Jets named in the All-Australian squad.

Billy Wigmore, who is also from Yar-

raville Seddon, made the team.

Miller said it was a reward for the form that Wigmore has shown.

“It’s awesome,” he said. It’s a reward for his effort.

“I know Billy and I’m pretty close to Billy, he deserved the opportunity and took that opportunity at Metro.”

Miller and the Jets are hoping to continue a strong season, one of the strongest in the club’s history.

He was full of praise for coach Christian Stagliano.

“I’m pretty close with the head coach, he has been awesome for me individually,” he said.

“The team has been awesome and it’s a good sign that the Jets are going in an upwards direction.”

With Miller still 12 months away from possibly being drafted, he said he’s not looking that far ahead.

He just wants to have fun with his mates.

“You don’t get a lot of time playing football with 10-15 of your best mates and go out and have fun,” Miller said.

“Just having fun and enjoy the moment and just staying present and don’t really think about the future and what is ahead.”



Lachlan Hicks. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 550559_11

Jets named for combines

Western Jets talent will be on full display as a host of players prepare to test at the upcoming AFL and AFLW draft and state combines.

In the AFLW space, seven Western Jets players have been selected to test later this year.

Kiara Boyd (Aberfeldie) and Tayla Oliveri (Keilor) are among the 13 players selected from the Vic Metro squad for the national AFL combine, which will run from 29 September to 1 October.

The national testing schedule includes vertical jumps, 20-metre sprints, agility tests, and a 1.6 kilometre time trial, which has been shortened from two kilometres this year to better reflect AFLW match running patterns.

A further five Jets players – Jacinta Eteuati, Ruby Jones, and Addison West (both Yarraville Seddon), Piper Dixon (Maribyrnong Park), and Aluk Kuol (the Suns)– have been selected to showcase their skills at the state combine.

On the boys’ side, three Western Jets players have earned invites to the four-day AFL draft combine, running from 30 September to 3 October.

Newport’s Khaled El Souki, Altona’s Lachlan Hicks, and Yarraville Seddon’s Billy Wigmore will represent the Jets at the national level.

Wigmore comes into the testing period in strong form, having been named in the all-Australian squad following the AFL National Under-18 Boys Championships, where Vic Metro claimed the title.

Additionally, Western Jets’ Angus Tippet (Point Cook) has been invited to test at the state combine.

Phoenix claims Earley Plate

By Tara Murray

Altona East Phoenix claimed the FV Cecil Earley Plate on Saturday. The Phoenix faced Williamstown in the final on Saturday, following the Dockerty Cup final at Lakeside Stadium. The Cecil Earley Plate is for the top ranked state league teams left in the Dockerty Cup. After a slow start in the final, the Phoenix found its range in the second half to come away with a 2-0 victory. Phoenix coach Paul Donnelly said it was pretty special for the club. “I said to the lads yesterday [Saturday] that finals are few and far between,” he said. “You can end your career and only play in one or two.

“It was a good opportunity to get some silverware. We’ve had some promotions along the way, but we haven’t won anything for a while.” Donnelly said it was a really good atmosphere on Saturday. With more than 5000 people watching the Dockerty Cup, many stayed around to watch the two western suburbs teams go at it. Located near each other, the two sides have a rivalry and know each other well. Donnelly said they were lucky not to be trailing at the break, when scores were locked at 0-0. “I didn’t think that we were fantastic,” he said. “Credit to Williamstown they were good.

Williamstown hit the post just before half time and that could have changed the game.” Donnelly said they made some changes at half time and they came out a lot better after the break. The changes worked and they hit the lead in the 53rd minute through Benjamin Zilic. Zilic made it 2-0 in the 78th minute as the Phoenix had one hand on the trophy. Donnelly said both goals were crackers and it was good to see one of their younger players step up when they really needed it. While there were plenty of celebrations for the Phoenix, they didn’t last that long with the Phoenix’s attention turning back to the FV state league 1 north-west season. The Phoenix sits sixth on the ladder after

18 games. While its promotion hopes are all but over, Donnelly knows they have to keep getting points on the board. “We’ll give them the night off on Monday and then get ready for Pascoe Vale,” he said. “We are not 100 per cent safe yet, we want to lock that one in and we want to finish the season off well. “We’ve got a lot of players back and we want to finish off the season on a high.” Williamstown will resume its state league 2 north-west season against Mill Park. Williamstown sits in fourth spot, six points off second and still in the promotion equation.



Justin Plapp. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 475540_21

Seagulls to part ways with coach Plapp

By Tara Murray

Justin Plapp will finish up as Williamstown coach at the end of the Victorian Football League season. The Seagulls announced on Wednesday that Plapp would conclude his contractual term with the club at the completion of the 2026 VFL season. “Justin concludes an outstanding six seasons as senior coach, leading the club in more than 100 matches and making a significant contribution both on and off the field. “Throughout his time at Williamstown, Justin has earned the admiration and respect of players, staff, volunteers, members and sponsors through his passion for the club, commitment to professional standards and unwavering team-first approach.” Seagulls president Merryl Dooley said the club believes the conclusion of the 2026 season is the appropriate time to commence a new chapter in the leadership of its men’s program. “Justin’s contribution over the past six seasons has been exceptional. He has

helped shape our football program, developed players and built a high performing culture that reflects many of the values our club holds close to our hearts,” she said. “The club’s focus is resolute – to support Justin, our coaches and our players as we strive to achieve the strongest possible finish to the year.” The board acknowledged the significant role Justin has played in strengthening the Williamstown Football Club over an extended period and thanked him for his dedication, commitment and service. The club will commence a thorough process to appoint its men’s coach for the 2027 VFL season at the conclusion of the current campaign. “The Williamstown Football Club asks its members, supporters, sponsors and the wider Williamstown community to continue their outstanding support of Justin, the coaching staff and playing group as they pursue success throughout the remainder of the 2026 season, which will conclude with a celebration at the club’s awards night on 2 October 2026 to acknowledge Justin’s contributions and leadership of the men’s playing group over the past six years.”

Williamstown now has its work cut out for it to try and make finals. On Sunday, the Seagulls lost to Coburg, 9.9 (63)-6.2 (48). With a wind going towards one end, it was a battle of who could make the most of their opportunities while kicking with the breeze. The Lions led early and were able to lead at all the breaks, Five goals in the third quarter gave the Lions a six goal lead heading into the final quarter. While the Seagulls were able to reduce the gap, it wasn’t enough. Kallan Dawson was the lone had up forward with the Seagulls with five goals. Jake Greiser had 33 disposals, while Jack had 26 and Luke Parks had 22. The Seagulls sit 11th on the ladder, two points outside the top 10 and a playoff round spot. The Seagulls face sixth placed Frankston in the final round. In the VFLW, the Seagulls beat Essendon, 11.7 (73)-1.2 (8). They face North Melbourne Werribee in a top of the table clash this week.



Charlie Barnes. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 553488_08

Woodsmen’s finals hopes over

Spotswood’s finals hopes are over, while Albion and Caroline Springs went a step further to securing their spots in Western Football League division 1 finals. The Woodsmen were in action against Albion on Saturday. The Cats jumped out of the blocks and led by 25 points at quarter time. The margin was still 22 points at half time before it was narrowly extended to 24 points heading into the final quarter. The Woodsmen came home hard, but the gap was too big with the Cats winning, 13.5 (83)-10.15 (75). With two rounds remaining, the Cats and Lakers sit three games clear of the Woodsmen.

Hoppers Crossing, which is two games behind the Lakers and Cats, is also a massive percentage behind them, to all but lock in the top five. In other results, Hoppers Crossing lost to Yarraville Seddon, Werribee Districts beat Newport, Parkside was too good for Altona, Caroline Springs snuck home against Point Cook and Sunshine beat Point Cook Centrals. Meanwhile, division 2 final match ups are locked in with one round remaining. North Footscray will have the week off after claiming the minor premiership. West Footscray and Wyndhamvale, who beat the Suns and Sunshine Heights respectively, will finish in second and third, but the order could change. They will play in a qualifying final. Despite a loss to North Footscray, Albanvale remains six points clear of Suns, and will play finals. The Cobras will face Sunshine Heights in an elimination final.

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ROUND 23

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14 – SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

- Brisbane Lions V Gold Coast SUNS (G)
- Essendon V Sydney Swans (MCG)
- Fremantle V Adelaide Crows (OS)
- GWS V West Coast Eagles (ES)
- Hawthorn V Collingwood (MCG)
- North Melbourne V Geelong Cats (MRVL)
- Port Adelaide V Melbourne (AO)
- Richmond V St Kilda (MCG)
- Western Bulldogs V Carlton (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.



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