

SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES

Star Weekly

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Celebrating all things Italian

The Calabria Club is celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Italian Republic with a fun community day in Bulla.

Club president Sam Sposato said it will be a day of celebrations with stalls, food vendors and fun activities, including a spaghetti and chilli eating competition.

"We've got mass in the morning, and then we've got entertainment for the rest of the afternoon," he said.

Other activities planned for the day include live entertainment on the main stage, the Fiat Club Car Show, an animal farm, jumping castles and kids entertainment.

Mr Sposato said the celebration will help mark an important day for the community and welcomed everyone to come along to this free event.

"You can have a dance, listen to music, it'll be a nice day," he said.

The community celebration will be held from 10am for mass with activities starting at 12.30pm at The Calabria Club, Bulla, on Sunday 31 May.

Details: facebook.com/calabriclubbulla

Calabria Club president Sam Sposato.
(Damjan Janevski) 553107_01

Development limbo

By Georgia Tacey

Macedon Ranges council has reignited calls to remove a development plan overlay that has halted residential development in Lancefield.

Mayor Kate Kendall has written to the planning minister to seek the removal of the development plan overlay (DPO) from the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme, saying the "grossly unfair" overlay has resulted in no new development.

The DPO, gazetted in 2020, covers approximately 150 acres of land bordering High Street, Park Street, Showlers Land and Mcmasters Lane in Lancefield, and was

meant to create a coordinated approach to development for the 22 landowners who reside there.

Cr Kendall said the overlay was effectively preventing landowners from progressing even modest development outcomes, as it required a coordinated development plan across multiple properties before any development can occur.

"Those DPOs work well when there's a coordinated approach to growth, but the challenge with this is not one new house has been built because the people who live in that area aren't all on the same page, they're very different people," she said.

"These people are trapped in their homes.

They can't sell, they can't build, they can't subdivide, and we want to see it gone."

This is not the first time council has called for the DPO to be removed from the planning scheme, with a 2023 request rejected by the minister.

Council has met with affected landowners and *Star Weekly* understands the majority are in favour of removing the DPO.

Terry Foster brought his land in 2009 with the ultimate goal to subdivide it, but the DPO means he needs approval from other landowners before he can proceed.

He said he spent about \$70,000 to secure a development plan in conjunction with

two other landowners.

"This was supposed to open up land in town, but not one block's been opened up, not one block has been titled, not one house has been built," he said.

"Six years it's been going on for nothing, it's just caused a lot of heartache, a lot of angst, a lot of cost, a lot of health issues, it's just been terrible to deal with."

Cr Kendall has requested to meet with the planning minister to identify a practical pathway to support the removal of the DPO.

The state government confirmed the mayor's request is currently under consideration.

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Nylon Phoenix is on the rise

A chance meeting and a shared dream was the spark that Sunbury locals Jet Bastos and Floyd Bassett needed to come together. Georgia Tacey caught up with duo Nylon Phoenix to hear more about the band and its origins in the lead up to their debut single *Magenta* releasing this August.

Every great band has that iconic story of how they came to be.

U2 formed through an ad on a bulletin board. For Green Day, Billie Joe Armstrong met Mike Dirnt at a bus stop on their way to school.

But for Nylon Phoenix, it all started in a restaurant and the constant tap tap tapping of Floyd Bassett's imaginary drum.

His future bandmate Jet Bastos, though he didn't know it yet, was working at that very restaurant he came upon looking for his feed.

"Whenever I have to wait for anything in my life, whether I'm at the supermarket or the gym or anything, I just start tapping, going through drum beats," Bassett said.

"I could see Jet watching me as I'm tapping along, waiting for my food, and he walks up to me as he's like 'are you all right man? You've just ordered, it's gonna take a couple of minutes'.

"I'm like 'oh sorry, I'm just practising some beats that I'm working on', and he said 'Wait a minute, you're a drummer? I'm looking for a drummer in this band I'm starting'."

It was perfect timing.

Bassett, a skilled drummer, was looking for a fresh project after his previous band disbanded.

Bastos, already a solo artist, was looking for someone to join him and create a band and accompany his vocals and ukulele.

"We jammed and realised we had a good mix of influences and Nylon Phoenix was born," Bassett said.

Fusing ukulele punk and alternative, the duo has been playing a number of gigs and open mics around Melbourne as they navigate their way through the Melbourne music scene.

Their name - taken from Bastos's middle name Phoenix and the material used to make strings on the ukulele that defines their sound - was the perfect descriptor and title that was all thanks to Bastos.

"The name is a bit of a contradiction in of itself, being a combination of the artificial, contrasted by the natural; it's a critique of the insincerity of the modern popular music scene," Bassett said.

"It however also describes our music perfectly, as we combine live performances of acoustic and electric instruments with synthesized tracks, attempting to blend and balance the two different worlds together."

Over the past two years since their fateful meeting, Bassett and Bastos have been busy honing their sound and recording music, with their debut single set to release this August.

Magenta, their first single, will dive deep into Bastos' trials and tribulations navigating the modern dating world.

"It's pretty much a critique on myself in the modern dating scene, which I find quite funny," Bastos said.

The duo has spent the better part of the past year - alongside other gigs and projects - chipping away at the song, with Bastos taking the lead on production.

"Jet comes up with the initial song idea and shows me and we start to workshop some ideas to flesh it out," Bassett said.

"Jet usually has pretty solid ideas of the feel and mood of the songs as well as the chord progressions, lyrics and structure. I add some drum ideas and then Jet gets into recording mode."

Bastos then layers the tracks, adding drums, bass ukulele and synth before laying down the vocals, which are all produced by him in his own home studio.

Even the music video which they've been



Jet Bastos and Floyd Bassett from Nylon Phoenix. (Pictures: George Johnson)

shooting for the song has all been produced by them with little outside help.

"The music video is based on different caricatures and different people you'd see on online dating apps and I'm playing them in different costumes," Bastos said.

"[The music video had] two shoots, one in a studio with professional videographer and photographer George Johnson, and another on site in Bendigo with our friend Sara Hancock, using various locations and a wider wardrobe to capture the lyrical motifs in the verses of the song," Bassett said.

Now in the final stages, Nylon Phoenix are constantly working, creating music and gearing up for a busy few months as their single goes out to the world.

"We're working on music all the time," Bassett said.

"Every week is different as we sometimes have gigs on consecutive days or just a couple of days apart, but we are pretty strict about rehearsing at least once per fortnight."

Most recently, the duo took to a local stage, helping to put on a showcase of Sunbury's finest performers in the scene at The Industrial.

"Most of our shows are around the Fitzroy, Brunswick area ... which was one of the reasons we wanted to put on the Sunbury show because it's a fair distance for people to travel for those who are local to Sunbury," Bassett said.

"We wanted to give them a chance to hear us play with some of the other local bands around Sunbury."

For Bastos, this was his favourite performance.

"It was such an amazingly unexpected turnout," he said.

"It was a fantastic show, a good crowd,

great energy, a great performance ... I want to play more shows like that."

Bassett agreed, as well as the first show they ever performed together.

Performing live and making music was what they were meant to do, and Bassett said he was proud to work with Bastos on their music.

"The development of the music that Jet's putting together, it's a really unique style,"

he said.

"Not only having the ukulele as the front instrument ... but also the way he's crafting songs, taking elements since recorded music began and over the last 60 years of popular music, it's just something that's totally unique."

"If you come to our shows, you'll see something that you've never seen before."

Details: facebook.com/nylonphoenix



“The name is a bit of a contradiction in of itself ... It however also describes our music perfectly”

- Floyd Bassett

OKPS funding revealed

By Georgia Tacey

Old Kyneton Primary School will share in \$7.1 million in state budget funding to support its maintenance and activation.

The funding has been teased by Macedon MP Mary-Anne Thomas since 5 May, with the funding announcement part of the wider maintenance and activation of state-owned cultural facilities.

The state government also said it expects the announcement of the successful head operator to be announced shortly, after expressions of interest for the site closed late last year.

OKPS closed in 2018, with the school

moving to a new site in Edgcombe Street.

In 2021, the state government announced a \$12 million investment to transform the site into a creative hub, due to be complete in 2024.

However, the project faced lengthy delays, with works not confirmed to be complete until 2025.

The \$12 million stage one redevelopment included the historic 1860s bluestone building being restored, with the space designed for creative and community use.

The former library was also transformed, as well as construction of a new central link building and landscaping in

the grounds.

Works did not include the back part of the school, which includes a cream brick building and classrooms that community groups are advocating to be redeveloped.

The Kyneton and District Town Square Co-Operative has been advocating for community use of OKPS since it closed, and has submitted an expression of interest to become a head tenant at the site.

Chair Peter Henderson said the co-op had a vision for the back part of the school, and said it was the perfect fit for community use, pop up studios and workshops.

Their vision for the bluestone building was for it to be a retail, commercial or

hospitality space.

Mr Henderson said the bluestone building would be very expensive to run in its current form.

"It would be fantastic for community use, predominantly the back part of the school," he said.

"In the refurbishment process, they've put in these 16 big electric reverse cycle heater cooler units, which would be astronomical to run ... it would be very costly without the back part of the school included in the whole project."

The group is calling on funding for the rest of the school grounds to be redeveloped.



Ottimo Bakery owner Bec Bremner (Damjan Janevski) 551188_05

Brain cancer fundraiser in memory of Bek

Ottimo Bakery is once again hosting Baking for Brain Cancer to advocate for a cause close to its heart.

Owner Bec Bremner joined the cause last year to support her cousin Bek, who had been diagnosed with a rare brain cancer.

"We joined it last year in the hope that there might be something that could help Bek, but also other families," she said.

"But unfortunately for Bek, she passed away in January."

Ms Bremner said participating in the cause again will give her and the bakery an opportunity to celebrate her and other people who have lost their lives to this illness.

This year, Ms Bremner and the team will be making special treats in Bek's honour, with some of her favourites including Danishes with passionfruit curd and waffles on the menu.

"It was one of the things we talked about," Ms Bremner said.

"She brought it up and said 'next year for Baking for Brain Cancer, I want you to include waffles and Danishes and passionfruit curd because those are the best things you do!'"

"Waffles and Danishes became one of those things I would bring her, because it gave her a little bit of joy."

Ottimo Bakery will hold the special

fundraising day on 30 May with baked goods for sale, including Bek's favourites and brain biscuits, and a behind the scenes tour of the bakery.

Money raised on the day will go towards Beanies for Brain Cancer.

Ms Bremner said she's inviting the community to share their stories and pictures about how cancer has affected someone they loved.

"It's important not to be scared to talk about them or share a fun, crazy or silly story or just something that makes you smile," she said.

Donate: [carriesbeanies4braincancer.com](https://www.carriesbeanies4braincancer.com)

Don't let frost bite your water pipes

Greater Western Water (GWW) is encouraging customers to safeguard their water meters against freezing as winter temperatures drop.

When temperatures drop below 0°C and frost sets in, exposed water meters and above-ground pipes can freeze. Protecting the water meter from frost helps ensure a reliable water supply throughout winter and can help customers avoid expensive repair bills caused by damaged pipes.

GWW general manager for service delivery Jodie Hallam said the organisation encourages customers to 'dress up' their water meters.

"Whether you show off your footy colours, paint a design on a box, knit a meter 'cosy' or keep it simple and use a bucket, you'll be helping protect your water supply and inspiring others in your street to do the same," she said.

Any covering placed over the meter must be easy to remove and allow a minimum 10cm clearance so meter readers and field crews can safely access it.

If a water meter splits or breaks due to freezing, customers should contact GWW on 13 44 99 to arrange a replacement. GWW will also replace any damaged pipes located between the meter and the street.

If pipes are damaged between the home and the water meter, customers will need to contact a licensed plumber to arrange repairs.

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Hume council adopts AI policy

Hume council has adopted its first artificial intelligence (AI) policy, aiming to keep up with the growing technology in an ethical way.

The policy allows council to use AI tools to assist with some administrative tasks like summarising documents, writing correspondence and drafting materials.

However, it restricts council from using AI to replace human interaction or to make final decisions that impact individuals, businesses or the community.

At the 19 May council meeting, councillor Jarrod Bell said the policy provides important guard rails for AI use.

"AI is one of those double-edged swords that there is a great deal of concern in the community and there is a great deal of excitement about its potential," Cr Bell said. "It's a bit of the wild west right now, there is a lot of different ways, shapes and forms that people can use AI.

"[This policy is] a good governance step to ensure that our people are using this technology in an appropriate and an ethical way."

The policy also includes provisions for AI chatbots deployed by council, and responses to community enquiries.

The council can only deploy

unsupervised public-facing AI chatbots or agents if they have human escalation pathways.

Under the policy, council can use AI to generate draft responses to common community enquiries to support timely and consistent communication.

Cr Ally Watson said the policy explicitly reinforces that AI will not replace human decision-making.

"This policy is not about replacing our staff, it is about supporting them," Cr Watson said.

"Our people are at the heart of everything council does. Their judgment,

experience, and connection to community cannot be replicated by technology.

"AI is a tool that can help reduce administrative burden, improve efficiency, and free up our staff to focus on the work that matters most, serving our community."

She said without a formal policy, AI may be used inconsistently with potential privacy, security, bias, and accountability risks.

"Final decisions and accountability will always remain with council officers and inbuilt within the policy is the need for it to be reviewed within 12 months of adoption by council's IT group."



Staff and students from Woodend Primary School with Macedon Ranges mayor Kate Kendall. (Supplied)

Have your say on Ranges kinders

Macedon Ranges council is seeking feedback on its kindergarten services across the shire as demand continues to grow.

The draft principles are currently out for community consultation, which council said will help guide future decisions about kindergarten planning, services and facilities.

With all eligible children in the Macedon Ranges needing to access up to 30 hours of funded four-year-old kindergarten per week by 2031, council said it will need more kindergarten places, services and buildings to meet the demand.

The principles will help identify what matters most to the community when making decisions, with the principles then weighted based on level of importance. All future projects will then be assessed by how well it aligns with the framework.

Based on community feedback, council said the process would help determine whether it is most appropriate for council to deliver a project directly, or support another organisation to deliver it.

Feedback is open until Monday 8 June, with feedback collated and presented to councillors before the framework is endorsed later this year.

Council will also host drop in sessions on Monday 1 June, from 10am to 11.30am, at Woodend Playgroup, and on Tuesday 2 June, from 10.30am to 11.15am, at Kyneton Library, following Baby Rhyme Time.

Details: yoursay.mrsc.vic.gov.au/kinder-principles

Free reusable period kits in Ranges schools

Macedon Ranges council has partnered with Share the Dignity to deliver period education kits to schools across the shire.

The initiative will see schools in the Macedon Ranges receive a reusable period education kit, designed to assist teachers in delivering accurate and age-appropriate education, while helping to reduce stigma and improve student wellbeing.

Mayor Kate Kendall said the initiative reflects council's commitment to supporting health, inclusion and sustainability across the shire.

"Access to quality period education is important and essential for young people's confidence, health and participation in school life," she said.

"These kits provide practical tools for the classrooms, while also encouraging conversations that normalise menstruation and support all students."

Each kit includes a range of educational materials and products, such as a teacher's guide, posters and classroom resources, alongside both reusable and disposable period products. Items include reusable pads, period underwear, menstrual cups, and swimwear, as well as tampons and pads ensuring the kits cater to diverse needs and preferences.

In a boost for local business, the reusable products included in the kits have been sourced from Romsey-based Darlings Downunder, supporting our local

economy while promoting sustainable alternatives.

Share the Dignity is a national leader in menstrual equity and education and will provide continued support through its online learning hub, accessible to schools via QR codes included in the kits.

"Menstrual equity means ensuring that access to period products is not a barrier to education, work or sport, and that everyone is educated about menstruation," founder and managing director of Share the Dignity Rochelle Courtenay said.


"Without this combination, we cannot dismantle the shame and stigma that have existed for generations."

Details: mrsc.vic.gov.au/period-boxes

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Third runway health study terms set

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

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

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

The Community Health Study was a key condition of the government's approval for the third runway.

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

Developed in consultation with

independent experts from Deakin and Liverpool universities, the Melbourne Airport Community Aviation Consultation Group, international public health experts and community stakeholders, the terms of reference provide guidelines on how health outcomes associated with aircraft noise will be examined, including sleep disturbance, annoyance, mental health, cardiovascular disease, learning impacts and quality of life.

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

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

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

Elite Park plans withdrawn

By Courtney Black

Plans for Melbourne Airport's \$475 million Elite Park entertainment precinct have been withdrawn, after major tenant Topgolf pulled out of the project.

In 2024, Melbourne Airport announced that the US-based sports entertainment company would be one of Elite Park's first tenants. Construction on the precinct was set to commence in 2025 and continue over nine years, subject to federal approval.

A Melbourne Airport spokesperson confirmed that Topgolf has since exited the project and that the Elite Park major development plan was withdrawn fol-

lowing federal government consultation. "Melbourne Airport is governed by the Federal Airports Act and all major developments on the airport estate are subject to a major development plan," the spokesperson said.

Despite this withdrawal, the spokesperson said Elite Park will continue to be developed, but did not provide an updated timeline.

"We are working constructively with the [federal] department to progress our major capital program in accordance with the requirements of the Airports Act.

"The Elite Park vision remains unchanged.

"The only change is that planning

approvals will be progressed on a project-by-project basis."

At its 11 May meeting, Hume council noted its disappointment at Topgolf's exit. According to councillor Naim Kurt, council was informed in February that the Elite Park plans were withdrawn.

Cr Kurt said the precinct, with Topgolf as a tenant, was worth \$475 million and would have provided 2140 jobs in Hume.

"To not have the Topgolf development proceeding, which was going to take place in Tullamarine, was a real disappointment," Cr Kurt said.

"That was going to be a huge economic driver here for our community locally and would have provided particularly for

the Tullamarine community."

The Melbourne Airport spokesperson said it is engaging potential tenants for Elite Park.

"Elite Park is already a big visitor drawcard for Hume, thanks to the likes of UrbnSurf and AFL Max," the spokesperson said.

"Melbourne Airport remains in constructive discussions with numerous potential tenants and looks forward to making public announcements at the appropriate time."

The spokesperson said indoor skiing facility 'Snowtunnel', which was this month announced to open at a mystery location, is not part of current plans.



Ramneek Virk. (Damjan Janevski). 552731_01

Bloom draws inspiration from nature

Craigieburn artist Ramneek Virk has debuted her exhibition at the Sunbury Hume Global Learning Centre.

Virk's exhibition titled 'Bloom: The colours of fragrance' is a collection of works inspired by the nature around her.

"Nature has always been at the heart of my work," she said.

"Growing up surrounded by vibrant gardens and rich cultural traditions, I developed a lasting emotional connection with flowers - their forms, colours, delicacy, and quiet emotional presence.

"Over time, this connection naturally evolved into painting, where I strive to cap-

ture their beauty with realism, softness, and sensitivity."

Working with acrylics and oils, Virk's collection of paintings follows her desires to explore realism, which she said came about in painting roses and peonies, which became a focal point of her work.

"In 2023, I fully immersed myself in realistic floral painting, especially focusing on roses and peonies, which are subjects I deeply enjoy and connect with emotionally," she said.

"Many of my paintings are inspired by flowers from my own garden, as I grow a beautiful collection of roses and continue to

collect and cultivate peonies as well.

"These blooms become a very personal source of inspiration, and I often feel they blossom on the canvas in the same expressive and natural way they bloom in real life."

Virk said she was grateful for the opportunity to present her work, in her first major opportunities to publicly showcase her art.

"The exhibition has given me the opportunity to connect with art lovers, fellow artists, curators, and galleries, while also helping me gain valuable insight into the professional art world," she said.

The exhibition is on display now until 6 September.

New hub name linked to place

Diggers Rest residents will soon have the chance to help name a new community facility.

Melton council unanimously endorsed a shortlist of five proposed names for public consultation for the new community building at its 27 April meeting.

Expected to open in January next year, the new hub is set to include kindergarten facilities, maternal and child health services, and a library lounge.

Council resolved to adopt the naming theme "linking the name to place" before endorsing five shortlisted options for community voting.

The proposed names include Diggers Rest Community Centre, Golden Sun Children's and Community Centre, Volcanic Plains Children's and Community Centre, Goldfields Community Centre - Diggers Rest, and Vineyard Road Children's and Community Centre.

"It's going to be the first of its kind in the City of Melton and the intention here, I'm hoping, is it will support the lack of secondary provisions in the Diggers Rest community," Cr John Verdon said.

Community engagement undertaken between 5 March and 3 April attracted 16 votes on the preferred naming theme, with "Linking the name to place" receiving 50 per cent of support.

Residents also submitted 24 naming suggestions, with officers narrowing the list to five compliant options after assessing them against Geographic Names Victoria rules and council policy.







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Students and teachers from Diggers Rest Primary School, Sunbury Primary School, Goonawarra Primary School and Kismet Park Primary School. (Georgia Tacey)

Camp unites student leaders

School leaders across Sunbury and Diggers Rest have come together for a special leadership camp.

Students from Diggers Rest Primary School, Sunbury Primary School, Goonawarra Primary School and Kismet Park Primary School came together for a student leadership camp, designed to provide authentic leadership experiences and develop life-long capabilities for students in a collaborative environment.

Held at Gilwell Park and the Yarra River on 6 May and 7 May, Diggers Rest Primary School assistant principal Brad Kemp said the first camp of its kind for students was a big success.

“The goal for the camp was for student leaders to communicate and problem-solve effectively, as well as demonstrate exemplary levels of responsibility,” he said.

“We are hopeful that our future leaders are capable of leading themselves, leading

others and leading in the community.”

Mr Kemp said the camp was supported by local businesses and community groups around Sunbury and Diggers Rest, including HiQ, Sunbury Connected Communities and the Diggers Rest Lions Club.

Sunbury MP Josh Bull also came out and did a leadership workshop with the students about their leadership capabilities and practical tools they could bring back to their own schools.

Diggers Rest Primary School student Yusef attended the camp, and said it was a great experience.

“This camp was an amazing experience and a great opportunity to collaborate and work together with the leaders from the Sunbury and Diggers Rest network,” he said.

“The camp definitely enhanced my own leadership skills and capabilities.”

Briefs

Information night

A public webinar will be held for the proposed Clarkefield development. The proposed Clarkefield district town is set to transform the small country town if it is given the go ahead. More than 2300 new houses, a new town centre, parks and education sites are included in the plans that are currently out for community consultation. Held by developer APD, the session will provide information on the proposed development. Community members will also be able to ask questions about the project. The webinar will be held on Thursday 28 May from 7-8pm. Details: apdprojects.com.au/impact/clarkefield/

National Reconciliation Week

Macedon Ranges council will mark National Reconciliation Week with a special performance by acclaimed First Nations artist Mo'Ju, supported by Wild Gloriosa, on 31 May, from 4-6pm, at the Kyneton Town Hall. National Reconciliation Week, from 27 May to 3 June, invites all Australians to reflect on key milestones in our shared history, including the 1967 referendum and the Mabo decision, and to commit to meaningful action. Tickets are available via council's website, with the full national program accessible through Reconciliation Australia's 2026 calendar.

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Bronwyn Wilson, Deidre Knell, Angelique Mott and Guy Walter at the Lancefield Mechanics Institute. (Damjan Janevski) 552208_02



Peter and Eleanor Butland with the nursery owner Geordie Taylor with members of Riddells Creek Men Shed. (Damjan Janevski) 549585_05



Amaria Stark standing next to her painting which is on display as part of the Belong exhibition in South Morang. (Damjan Janevski) 551193_02



Macedon Ranges IDAHOBIT 2026 Working Group and Friends. (Damjan Janevski) 550463_02



Living Legends' Andrew Clarke, Animal Land's Glen Ryan, Marnong Estate's Sylvia Koopmans, Adele Ioannou with horse Efficient from Living Legends, Arundel Farm Estate's Elizabeth Portelli, URBNSURF's Casey Reihana and AFL Max's James Podsiadly. (Damjan Janevski) 551601_03

Out and about

Each week Star Weekly photographers are out and about capturing events and people across the Macedon Ranges, Hume and Whittlesea.



The Embroiderers Guild is starting a free guidance group at Lalor library. (Damjan Janevski) 551456_02



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MY PLACE

Woodend local Neil Fitzgerald wears many hats in the community, and he's about to don on a new one. Georgia Tacey recently caught up with Neil to hear more about what he loves about living around Woodend, and his latest venture - starting up an Australian Air League Squadron for the Macedon Ranges.

What's your connection to Woodend and the Macedon Ranges?

I've lived in Woodend since 1998, I moved from Adelaide during my time with Qantas to seek promotion at the airline. I then began my theological studies in Bendigo in 2010 - for a while I was the male version of 'The Flying Nun' - Qantas during the week and the parish on weekends. I retired from Qantas after 33 years, but as they say, you can take the boy out of the airline...

What do you like about where you live?

The people! The sense of community is very strong and supportive.

Is there anything you'd change or like to see in Woodend or the Macedon Ranges?

Besides a roundabout at the Coles intersection, a parade! This area has so much to be proud of. An annual street parade involving every community group, school and service would give everyone something to look forward to, and participate in - raising funds for charities and celebrating Woodend and our surrounds. I think we all need that especially at the moment. Woodend is the perfect day trip for out-of-towners (or for a weekend) - a good ol' fashioned village celebration!

Where's your favourite local place to spend time?

Nellie's Shed. A beautiful place to sit in their garden and enjoy a cuppa - even in the colder weather!

What's something people would be surprised to know about you?

I've been involved with humanitarian work in North Korea for nearly 20 years and



Neil Fitzgerald. (Damjan Janevski) 552574_05

have visited often. Working with current sanctions, we attempt to help a school and kindergarten with warm clothing and other supplies that we are allowed to take in with us.

Can you tell us a bit about the Australian Air League Squadron you're setting up in Woodend?

The group is Australia's oldest uniformed Air Cadet organisation starting in NSW in

1934 and having squadrons all around the country. There's a gap in this area where we believe we can offer cadets (aged eight-18) fun and friendship while they learn about all aspects of aviation. Cadets can work their way from the very basics of aviation to a pilot's licence and take advantage of the Air League's own training school, and aircraft in NSW.

What will be your role?

I'm currently being assessed for the officer commanding position which requires extensive training, checks and examinations.

Why did you decide to start this for the Macedon Ranges?

We are close to Melbourne Tullamarine Airport and Kyneton Aerodrome - a perfect location to establish working relationships and opportunities for the cadets. The success of the squadron will rely on the participation of adults (to become officers) and parents/members of the auxiliary committee. We hope to work closely with any individual or group who have aviation experience to produce our next generation of aviators!

Is there any other volunteering you do or other groups you're a part of around the Macedon Ranges you'd like to highlight?

I'm a member of the Kyneton Aero Club, Macedon Ranges and District Motor Club, I volunteer at the Kyneton Food Bank Op Shop, the recently relocated TAA/Australian Airlines Museum (at Tullamarine), I'm a CPE qualified community chaplain with the VCEM and currently the Vicar of the Anglican Parish of Woodend.

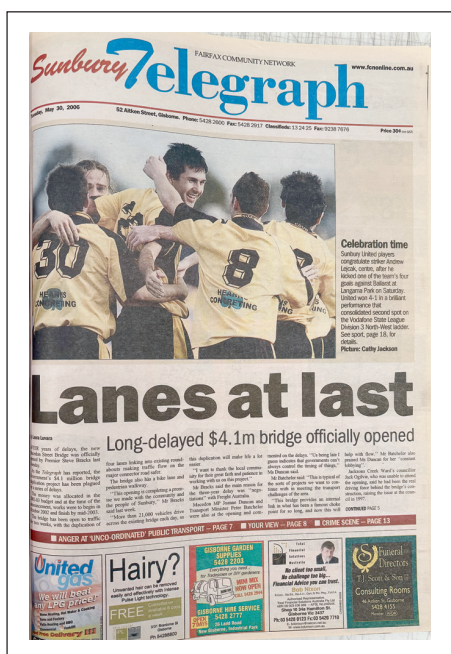
FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors



35 years ago
28 May, 1991

Regional politicians and members of the Shadow Cabinet have overwhelmingly supported the call by independent panellist Dimity Reed that good farming land not be swallowed by housing development.



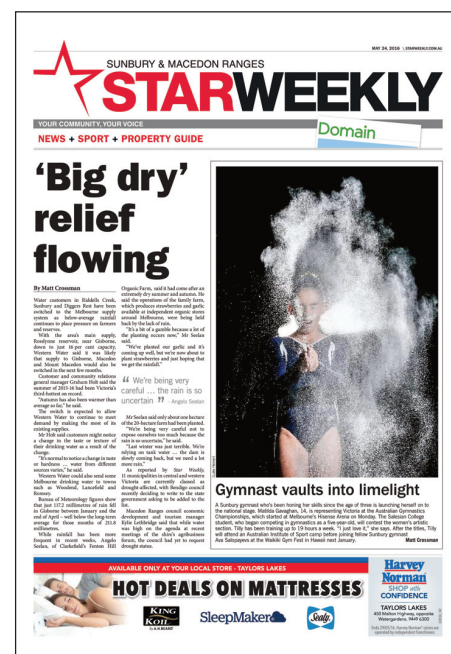
20 years ago
30 May, 2006

After years of delays, the new Macedon Street Bridge was officially opened by Premier Steve Bracks last Tuesday.



16 years ago
25 May, 2010

People living in an assisted care centre in Sunbury have a question mark over their 'home'.



10 years ago
24 May, 2016

Water customers in Riddells Creek, Sunbury and Diggers Rest have been switched to the Melbourne supply system as below-average rainfall continues to place pressure on farmers and reserves.



Now selling in Sunbury

Resort-style living designed for over 55s



Artist's impression - to be used as guide only.

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*Prices are current at the time of publication in April 2026 and may be subject to change.



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INGENIA LIFESTYLE

Sunbury



Charitable fund in spotlight

By Georgia Tacey

Hume council is putting its charitable fund in the spotlight as it tries to get more eyes on the charitable program.

Following a notice of motion by councillor Naim Kurt at the 8 December council meeting, council has investigated ways to improve the visibility of the work being done by the Hume Charitable Fund and how its operation can be improved.

The report, brought to the 11 May council meeting, has enlisted a number of changes to the fund from 2027, including

appointing a formal committee to assess applications for charitable funding, actively promote the fund to the community, and commit an annual contribution from the council budget.

Now, council is currently calling for expressions of interest from Direct Gift Recipient (DGR) status organisations to apply for funding from the fund, to distribute the allocated \$17,930 this financial year.

Cr Kurt said he hopes more awareness will encourage the community to get involved.

Some of the issues we've had in the past

is that it just hasn't had a great amount of visibility in our community and even amongst our own council processes," he said.

Established in 2004 to support and distribute funds to charities in the municipality, the Hume Charitable Fund has a long history of resourcing projects that benefit the community, giving out around \$200,000 in donations gifted by Hume residents, businesses, service clubs and other donors.

"We know in our community there is an incredible amount of need. We have one

of the lowest socioeconomic communities within the state," Cr Kurt said.

"We know that we have an incredible amount of big businesses that generate and derive big profits from this community. But not all of them give back to our community, and many of them want to give back."

Cr Kurt and other councillors said they would like to see Hume put on a big fundraiser every year to support the fund, with a fun run floated.

All expressions of interest will be considered at the 22 June council meeting.

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



Holly Samson with her 1927 Chevrolet Tourer (Supplied).

Monegeetta local races against the clock

Monegeetta local Holly Samson will take to the tracks for the fourth time at the Historic Winton.

The two-day event is one of the largest and most popular historic motor race meetings, featuring historic car races from the 1920s up to the 1980s.

Samson will once again compete in the Regularity time trial challenges, where drivers estimate their race time and the one who races the closest to that time is the winner.

She said she was inspired by a friend

who raced at Historic Winton and thought she'd go it a go too.

"I was quite nervous about it, but I talked to lots of people and got advice, prepared the car, and came and did the practice day on the Friday," she said.

"That was very beneficial as I got a feel for the car on the track in a more relaxed event and it helped me prepare for the Saturday and Sunday events."

Samson said she likes that it's not a race, so she can go at her own pace and aim to be consistent.

"I am only really competing against myself and each race and each year I aim to get better," she said.

"My car, a 1927 Chevrolet Tourer, is obviously not a race car so entering Regularity gives me an opportunity to get on a track that I would not have otherwise."

Samson said she loves the social aspect of the Historic Winton, camping over the two-day event.

The Historic Winton will take place on 30 and 31 May at the Winton Motor Raceway.

Tickets and details: historicwinton.org

Cutting carbon in Diggers Rest

The results of a nation-leading carbon cutting project in Diggers Rest have shown promising outcomes.

Crews working on the Diggers Rest level crossing removal project have successfully trialled a new road surface asphalt that the Level Crossing removal team says has cut carbon emissions and could transform how roads are built on major projects.

At two locations at the Watsons Road site, the project team used asphalt made with biogenic bitumen – a binder created from renewable biological sources such as wood, straw, animal waste and fats, algae derived oils, and biowaste.

The level crossing removal project said the trial was successful, delivering an innovative asphalt mix that achieved a 20 per cent reduction in carbon emissions.

The biogenic bitumen asphalt performed on par with standard asphalt, with no noticeable difference in odour, constructability or overall performance.

The level crossing removal project said asphalt, while central to transport needs, is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions in infrastructure construction, responsible for about 12 per cent of upfront emissions.

The trial is among the first in Australia, and at the time of implementation, only seven successful trials of the product have been recorded nationally.

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Braemar College story is shaped by people and place

For Braemar College, the story of education has long been intertwined with the story of Woodend and Mount Macedon.

Braemar has always been synonymous with secondary education in the region, with its journey shaped by place, community and the people who have walked alongside it.

The story began in the early 1900s when the forward-thinking Miss Henderson moved her girls' school from St Kilda Road and established it within the historic Braemar House on Mount Macedon.

The road leading up to the mountain, originally known as Braemar Road, became a pathway that drew young people to a beautiful and inspiring environment for learning.

From those earliest years, Woodend itself became part of the College story. Students arrived by train and made their way up the mountain, local businesses supplied goods and services, and families travelling to visit children at boarding school formed lasting connections with the township.

One long-time local family recently reflected that many visiting parents would stop to purchase bunches of flowers before continuing their journey to see their daughters, a small but meaningful reminder of the deep ties between Braemar and the wider community.

Across the decades, Braemar and Woodend have continued to grow together.

The school is no longer a girls' boarding school; today it is a thriving co-educational community, educating more than 1000 young people from years 5-12 across two campuses, offering an intentional learning journey where students are known personally, challenged through strong teaching and high expectations, and provided with rich opportunities that build



Braemar College's Woodend Campus, and right, Braemar House.

confidence and purpose.

As the College evolved, so too did its educational journey.

In 2018, Braemar College expanded with the purchase of a 320-acre property east of Woodend on Romsey Road.

A distinctive Middle School campus was developed, intentionally designed to build

belonging, confidence and independence during the important years 5-8 stage of learning, while remaining connected to the broader College journey.

As Braemar celebrates its 50th year, the story continues; one shaped by heritage, strengthened by community, and centred on young people.



50 CONVERSATIONS
50 YEARS
with Russell Deer

⏪ ⏸ ⏩

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BRAEMAR 

For further information regarding enrolments
contact the Registrar: registrar@braemar.vic.edu.au
or Phone: 5427 9161

Ranges potters find new home for show in Kyneton

Celebrating 41 years of creativity, camaraderie, and clay, the Macedon Ranges Potters will present their much-loved annual exhibition this June, this time in a new home.

The potters have moved their exhibition to The Old Auction House Gallery, Kyneton, for a month-long celebration of creativity.

Formed over four decades ago, the Macedon Ranges Potters are a close-knit group who have long shared ideas, food, and plenty of laughter alongside their artistic practice.

Now comprising 13 members, the group brings together a diverse range of ceramic styles, from finely crafted functional ware such as mugs, bowls and platters, to distinctive one-off sculptural and illustrated pieces.

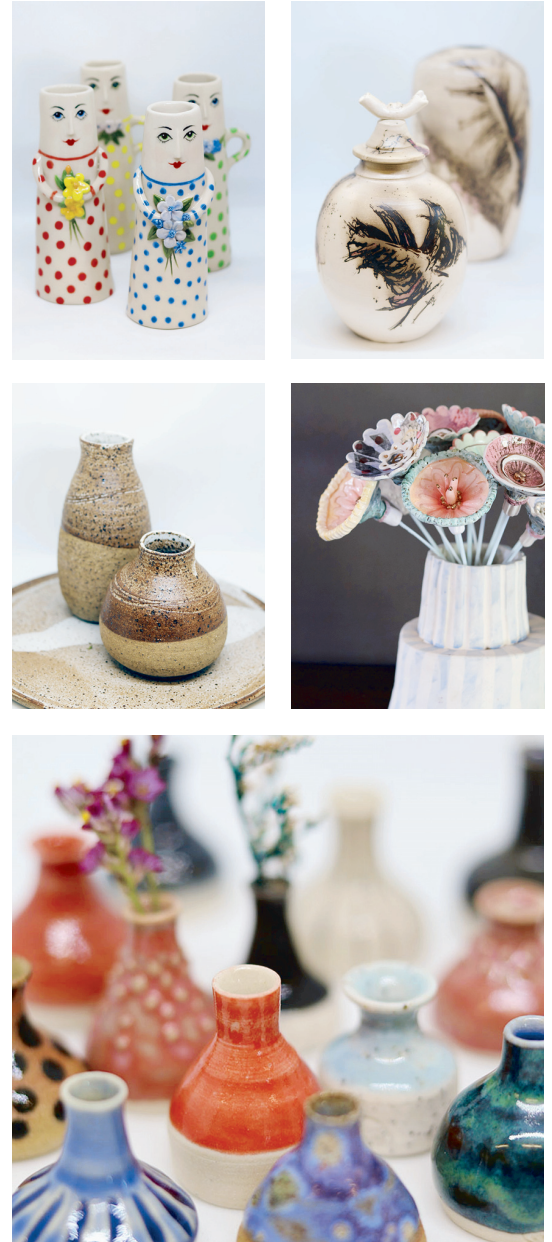
The exhibition has also become a highlight of the Macedon Ranges winter arts calendar, with the group saying the new gallery setting will offer the ideal space to showcase the breadth of their work.

The Macedon Ranges Potters annual exhibition will be held at The Old Auction House Gallery from 4 June to 22 June.

A special free meet the artists morning tea will be held on Saturday 6 June at 11am, to provide the community an opportunity to meet and connect with the makers.



Carolyn Pain on the wheel, and some of the pottery on display in the collection.
(Pictures: Supplied)



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The footwear experts

A leisurely drive down the highway is Macedon Ranges' only dedicated Shoe Store - Kyneton Shoes. Offering family-friendly service, Kyneton Shoes has a wide range for all ages and stages from fit and measured first walkers, to brands including Surefit, Grosby and Clarks, to podiatrist recommended and orthotic friendly brands like Cabello, Propet, Merrell and Hush Puppies.

Kyneton Shoes collaborates with primary schools and secondary schools, to deliver a range of shoes suitable to meet uniform and comfort requirements, for students of all levels.

The team at Kyneton Shoes understands the community's shoe needs, in all weather conditions offering water-resistant, water-proof, gumboots, leather boots, slippers and, of course, a range of UGG products.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 9-5pm Saturday 9-2pm, Kyneton Shoes is easily located at 23 High Street, Kyneton.

One hundred per cent family owned and run, Kyneton Shoes focuses on old-fashioned service while understanding the needs of modern life.



Year 7s first day of school.



Junior school learning in action. (Pictures: Supplied)

Sacred Heart College offers excellence in education

Sacred Heart College has played an integral role in the history of Kyneton and continues to offer students of the Macedon Ranges, and beyond, the opportunity for Catholic education in the Mercy tradition.

This year will mark the 180th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia – a significant milestone worth recognising. From this initial foundation, Mercy schools and ministries spread across the country including the thirteen schools that currently comprise Mercy Education Ltd.

The core values of Mercy education – service, hospitality, justice, compassion, respect and courage – inform all aspects of College life and provide a clear link back to

the lives and work of our founders.

Today, the College's byline 'Learn. Care. Flourish' captures the principles that inform all aspects of a Sacred Heart College education.

Learn – providing an engaging, challenging, and personalised education for each student utilising a breadth of evidence-based strategies

Care – offering wellbeing programs for students and working in partnership with parents to ensure that students grow into resilient, happy and compassionate young people.

Flourish – providing a holistic education for each student. At Sacred Heart College, we want every student to live life in

abundance.

The College's 2026 theme is 'From a Good Beginning, Mercy Flourishes'.

Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, wrote that 'a good beginning is of great importance' and the legacy of the first Sisters on our shores continues to shape us today.

Ensuring a good beginning, each year, our incoming year 7 students participate in a comprehensive transition program that supports their move from primary to secondary school. This strategic approach encourages them to build new friendships, strengthen existing connections, and enjoy the rich learning experiences at Sacred Heart College.

Sacred Heart College looks with expectation and enthusiasm to the future. We encourage those in our local community currently considering options for their children's secondary journey to learn more about the diverse educational offerings of Sacred Heart College Kyneton, by visiting the College website, www.shckyneton.catholic.edu.au, or attending one of our regular tours.

Enrolments for students currently in grade 5, commencing year 7 in 2028, close on 24 July, 2026.

Dr Darren Egberts,
Principal



Learn. Care.
flourish

Enrolments Closing Soon

Enrolments for Year 7, 2028 close on 24 July, 2026 (students currently in Grade 5).

Contact the College Registrar for enrolment enquiries.

The enrolment application form, tour dates and booking information can be accessed via the 'Enrol with Us' page of the College website.



Scan for tour bookings

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 wededitorial@starweekly.com.au by 9am Wednesday the week prior to publication



Through the lens

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



Sunbury Over 55s Social Table Tennis

Every Wednesday from 1-3pm, in the Sunbury Recreation Stadium, Sunbury Recreation Reserve (Clarke Oval). No experience or booking necessary. Come, have a look and give it a try.
 ■ Bruce, 0438 027 978

Sunbury Blue Light Disco

The next disco will be held on Friday 29 May, from 6-8pm, at Sunbury Memorial Hall. The theme will be Masquerade Party – come dressed in your finest! Primary school age. Entry is \$8. Sunbury Blue Light Disco is also looking for more volunteers.
 ■ <https://tinyurl.com/k4crnvua>

Village Connect

Enjoy free coffee and cake while connecting with fellow Macedon Ranges residents 55 years old and older. Happening on Tuesdays and Thursday at cafes across the municipality.
 ■ mrsc.vic.gov.au/Live-Work/Older-People/Village-Connect or 5422 0262

Games Zone Sunbury

Get creative at the Sunbury Youth Centre each Wednesday, from 3.30-5.30pm. The free program is for people aged 12 to 18 years old, at 51-53 Evans Street, Sunbury.
 ■ youth@hume.vic.gov.au

HarmoniX Vocal Company

All-male singing group happening on Thursday, 7-9.30pm, in Sunbury, with a mixed choir, DynamiX Vocal Company, rehearsing Tuesday, 7-9.30pm. Rehearse at Dulap Wilim Hub, Leichardt Street, Sunbury. No auditions required.
 ■ harmonixvcoinc@gmail.com

VIEW Club

Sunbury-Macedon Ranges VIEW Club is a friendly women's organisation and a valued part of The Smith Family. It meets on the third Friday of each month at 11am at Club Sunbury, Riddell Road, Sunbury. New

members warmly welcome.

■ Lee-Anne, 0403 047 909

Sunbury Woodworkers Club

Join the Sunbury Woodworkers Club to learn woodturning. No experience or tools required. The club is a welcoming environment open to men and women who wish to learn. Meetings for new guests are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. Circular Drive, Jackson's Hill, Sunbury. Facebook: Sunbury Woodworkers Club.
 ■ Anita, 0417 402 795

Come have a chat

Delve into deeper topics and enjoy intriguing conversations by joining the Table 8 Discussion Group. Chats every Tuesday, from 10.30-11.30am, at Macedon Lounge, 40 Victoria Street, Macedon.
 ■ Carol, 0431 186 575

Jacksons Creek Combined Probud

The club meets on the second Monday of each month at the Sunbury Bowling Club at 10am. This friendly group of men and women enjoy outings and meetings each month and twice yearly trips away staying in cabins and caravans. Visitors and new members are warmly welcomed
 ■ Doug, 5428 3317, or Teresa, 0417 373 006

Sunbury Seniors

Sunbury Seniors meets on Mondays and Fridays 10am-2.30pm [except Public Holidays]. The Club has returned to its original location now that the Sunbury Seniors Hub, 8 Oshanassy Street, Sunbury has been rebuilt. From 19 January 2026, a variety of activities will be offered including carpet bowls, cards, pool, jigsaw puzzles, board games, darts, table tennis, monthly guest speakers and outings and subsidised lunches or just a cuppa and a chat.
 ■ www.sunburyseniors.com.au or 0434 400 754

Pernaperna Women's Group

The group is currently knitting and crocheting blankets for First Nations peoples in palliative care across Australia. Pernaperna is a friendly group who meet fortnightly at Sunbury Neighbourhood House, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury, on a Thursday, from 1-3pm. It has established a bush tucker garden at Sunbury Neighbourhood House. New members welcomed. If you don't knit or garden but would just like to drop in for a chat, the group would love to meet you.
 ■ Joan, 0418 302 676

Insync Entertainment

Insync Entertainment is an all-female community choir, providing the opportunity to meet others who enjoy singing. The group is seeking new members to join the friendly choir. No auditions required. They rehearse at the Sunbury Baptist Church Hall every Monday from 7.15-9.30pm.
 ■ insyncentertainment@gmail.com

Craft and conversation

Head down to the Sunbury Library on Mondays from 1-3pm for the craft and conversation group. The program is free and open to people aged 15 years and older.
 ■ <https://bit.ly/39Blu20>

Chill Out Sunbury

Chill Out Sunbury is a free event for 12 and 18 years old to participate in activities such as trivia, games, and more. Happening every Wednesday, 3.30-5.30pm, at the Sunbury Youth Centre, 51-53 Evans Street.
 ■ <https://bit.ly/3lmVgVhv>

CWA Woodend Eves

The CWA Woodend Eves Branch is part of the Central Highlands group and meets every third Tuesday at 7pm at the Woodend Golf Club. All women are welcome.
 ■ cwawoodendeves@gmail.com

Sunbury Badminton Club

The Sunbury Badminton Club plays social games on Tuesdays and Wednesdays nights, from 7.30-9.30pm, and on Wednesdays, 10am-noon. Monday night is a round robin competition from 7.30-9.30pm. All are welcome to attend at Clarke Oval Stadium, 49 Riddell Road.
 ■ sunburybc@gmail.com

Toastmasters

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Toastmasters helps its members develop their public speaking, communication and leadership skills. The group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month, from 7.20-9.30pm, at the Sunbury Community Centre, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury.
 ■ vpm-4185@toastmastersclubs.org

Friends of Woodlands Historic Park

Help preserve Woodlands Historic Park and learn about its history by joining the Friends of Woodlands Historic Park. The group consists of volunteers, working one day each month in the park, on projects including plant propagation and revegetation, weed removal, litter control and other activities. Some members may also work in the park on projects at other times. Becoming a member of the group is easy and free, and is open to like-minded people who want to take positive action to maintain our environment. You must be 18 or older and enjoy outdoor activities. The Friends group meets on the first Saturday of each month at the Parks Victoria depot off Somerton Rd, Greenvale.
 ■ Bevan on 0468 469 514 or bevan@keepemail.com

North West District Pipe Band

North Western District Pipe Band meets every week at the Diggers Rest Bowling Club. They're looking for any pipers or drummers out there, retired or beginners, for social play outs.
 ■ Hank, 0412 160 576

Fleetwood's magic captured

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

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

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

Krissy Keys channels the soulful feel of

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

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

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

With sold-out performances, standing

ovations and enthusiastic word-of-mouth following the show wherever it travels, Starshine's growing reputation is certainly not a rumour.

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

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

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



Nikki Canale. (Marjorie Skea).



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

Miss Friby's new show is a different beast

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Slapstick chaos awaits at Melton Community Hall

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dreamlike photos anchor artist's first solo show

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo from the exhibition. (Paul Melnyczuk)



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Did you know that euthanasia at home is available for pets in Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges?

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Planning And Environment Act 1987 Section 52(1)

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Planning Scheme clause	Matter for which a permit is required
52.02 Easements, Restrictions and Reserves	A permit is required under section 23 of the Subdivision Act 1988 to create, vary or remove an easement or restriction.

The applicant for the permit is: **Matthew McKenzie**
The application reference number is: **PLN/2026/123**
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Suzuki's EV debut imminent

By Alistair Kennedy, Marque Motoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Styling

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

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

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

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

Both variants come with 18-inch alloy wheels.

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

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

Interior

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

Powertrain

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

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

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

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

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

Safety

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

front and rear parking sensors and blind spot monitoring.

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

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

Infotainment

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

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

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

Driving

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summing up

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

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

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

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

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


RATINGS

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

Passenger comfort for K4

By Derek Ogden, Marque Motoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Styling

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

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

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

Interior

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

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

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

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

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

Infotainment

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Engines/transmissions

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

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

Safety

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

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

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

Driving

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

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

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

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

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

Summary

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

Tigers tracking along nicely

By Tara Murray

Lancefield entered the bye in the Riddell District Netball League happy with how things were tracking.

The Tigers had a 4-1 record heading into the weekend, with a loss in their most recent match to Woodend-Hesket.

The Tigers started last season with a 6-0 record, with the Hawks inflicting their first loss of the season on the occasion.

Tigers' coach Ciara Stewart said they were continuing to head in the right direction.

She said they were keen to make finals again this year and see if they could progress further than last year.

"I'm really happy," she said. "There's been some hard slogs and not many blow outs.

"It's been good to win those close games

and we've been better under pressure."

Stewart said they've had wins against Riddell, Melton Centrals and Macedon for the first time since she took over as coach and it had been a long time since they had beaten any of those sides.

She said that gave the group plenty of confidence.

"It's a big achievement for us to take the wins," she said.

Even the loss to the Hawks, the three-time reigning premiers, had some good signs.

"The real take away from the Woodend game was that we could have won it," Stewart said.

"We were seven goals up and had opportunities to win the game

"We only had seven players and no rotations and their experience shone through in the end.

"We ran out of legs."



Mia Daly. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 481365_06

Stewart pointed to converting only six of their 11 centre passes in the final quarter and only scoring off two of their recoveries as areas they fell away in.

She said they would look to work on those areas.

Stewart said when they had their full squad together, they had a lot of confidence that they could beat any team.

"We're really happy with the start," she

said.

"The game against Woodend this year was a much closer game than last year.

"We're happy that we feel like we're not far off the top time.

"It's not about our skill set, it's about putting it all together on the day.

"When we have fit available players we can beat anyone."

Stewart said the competition this season had been unpredictable and expected that to continue for the rest of the season.

In matches on Saturday, Woodend-Hesket beat Riddell 51-44 in the grand final re-match.

Kyneton continued its good form as it beat Romsey, 57-44.

Melton Centrals snuck home against Diggers Rest, 58-57, the Gisborne Giants upset Wallan 54-50 and Macedon beat Melton South, 83-33.



Carla Krizanic. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 535885_11

Bowls hall of fame honour for Krizanic

By Tara Murray

Club Sunbury's Carla Krizanic will join the country's best lawn bowlers as she is inducted into the Bowls Australia Hall of Fame.

Krizanic will be one of five inductees at the awards night on 13 June in Gold Coast during the Australian Open.

"It's pretty exciting," Krizanic said. "I got the call while I was at work and was pretty busy, so I didn't have time to process it.

"It's nice and I'm now looking forward to getting up to the Gold Coast and celebrating with the rest of the bowlers."

Krizanic made 212 international appearances for the Jackaroos and claimed goal medals at both of the sport's pinnacle events, the World Bowls Championships and the Commonwealth Games.

Krizanic retired from international competition at just 32 in 2022 to concentrate on her young family.

She said she didn't know whether she would be one of the youngest people to be inducted.

"There's another player from my era being inducted as well," she said.

"I've been to the awards before and

been a presenter as well.

"The best part of the night is the hall of fame and listening to the stories and we're they've come from.

"I never thought what it would be like for myself. I get to share it with my family and friends who have been helpful throughout my career."

Krizanic started playing bowls as her sister was playing and she didn't want to be bored on the sidelines.

She said at no stage did she think that she would play for Australia.

Mark Cowan, who is still playing for Sunbury now, was Krizanic's first coach when she was 18.

Krizanic said she doesn't regret pulling the pin on her international career at such a young age.

"This week the Commonwealth Games team was announced and I wasn't a little bit envious," she said.

"I've got young kids. There's plenty of opportunities to play bowls when you're older, it won't be for Australia, it might be Sunbury.

"The kids run around the greens and it's a real family sport. There's not many sports

that parents and kids can play together."

Krizanic hasn't been lost to the greens completely.

She played a key role as Sunbury finally broke through for the Bowls Victoria division 1 premierships earlier this year.

"At the start of the season I didn't think I was going to play at all," she said

"After Christmas I was able to play the second half of the year. We had pennant success, Tuesday success and night premierships.

"It's a great time to be around the club and the results just take care of themselves."

Krizanic has also competed in state teams and other competitions as she continues to be an inspiration for some of the young female talent coming through Sunbury.

"I started as a teenager and it's good to work with the girls and see where they can go," she said.

"I give them a little bit of advice. I play the odd event when I get the chance to play with Sophie Kurzman, who is a great talent at the club, or Ashleigh Moffat.

"Not singles any more, I enjoy playing with teammates."

Sports shorts

VFL

Sunbury Lions' Jake Egan made his Victorian Football League debut on Saturday for Essendon. The reigning Ballarat Football League Henderson Medallist, Egan got his shot for the Bombers in their win 15.17 (107)-14.5 (89) win against Richmond. Egan had 11 disposals for the game.

RDFL

Lancefield and Riddell both had big wins in the Riddell District Football League women's competition on the weekend. The Tigers were in action on Friday night against Riddell and controlled the scoreboard throughout on the way to a 10.10 (70)-1.2 (8) win. Rebecca Ager kicked three goals for the Tigers in the win and was named their best. Madina Nabole was named the Bombers best. On Saturday, Macedon beat the Mount Alexander Falcons, 17.11 (113)-0.2 (2). Taya Konias kicked five goals in a best on ground performance.

FV

Sunbury United had a day out against Bundoora United in the FV state league 3 north-west competition on Saturday. Scores were level at 1-1 at half time before Sunbury found its scoring range to put in six second half goals to seal a 7-1 win. Alex Dimond, Liam Brian and Christian Marinucci all scored two goals each for Sunbury. After nine rounds, Sunbury sits fifth on the ladder with five wins. In state league 7 north-west, Gisborne lost to Birrarung, 2-1. Gisborne sits eighth on the ladder.

EDFL

The Sunbury Kangaroos added another win to the tally in the Essendon District Football League division 1 women's competition. The Kangaroos, whose match with Tullamarine was cancelled last week, showed no rust as they beat Taylors Lakes on Saturday, 4.7 (31)-1.3 (9). Lisa Kirby was named the Kangaroos best. The Kangaroos sit fifth on the ladder with three wins and two losses. Elsewhere, Gisborne lost to ladder leaders Westmeadows, East Sunbury was beaten by Craigieburn and the Sunbury Lions lost to Tullamarine.

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Hard-fought win for Tigers

By Tara Murray

Kyneton remains in touch with the top two in the Riddell District Football League after a hard-fought win against Romsey on Saturday in the Riddell District Football League.

The Tigers jumped out to a strong start on their home deck and led by 15 points at quarter time before the Redbacks reduced it to four points heading into the main break.

Two goals to none in the third quarter allowed the Tigers to stay in front.

While the Redbacks won the final quarter, it wasn't enough with Kyneton winning, 14.13 (97)-11.3 (69).

Indy Williamson kicked four goals for the Tigers, while Ethan Foreman and Harry Ryan kicked two goals each.

Jacob Grinter and Ethan Turner were named their best.

Redbacks skipper Jack Jedwab kicked

four goals for his side with Corey Pertzelt named their best.

The Tigers sit in fourth spot, while the Redbacks are in eighth.

Diggers Rest returned to the winners list with victory against Melton Centrals.

After an even first quarter, the Burras kicked 14 goals to two in the next three quarters to win, 17.15 (117)-4.11 (35).

Mitchell Day kicked five goals for the Burras who were missing Callum Moore.

Marcus Calvaresi and Day were named the best in the win.

Dylan McDonald was named Centrals' best.

Meanwhile, Macedon lost a thriller to Melton South.

In an important game for both sides, there was not much in it all day.

The Panthers led at each of the breaks and held a 15 point margin heading into the



Isaac Barassi. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 489394_20

final quarter.

While the Cats had their best quarter of the game on the scoreboard in the final quarter, the Panthers did enough to hold on as they won, 9.10 (64)-8.13 (61).

Brodan Collins was named the Panthers best as they remain in touch with the top six.

Hamish and Josh Govan were named the Cats best as they slip from first down to third.

Riddell made it four wins on the trot as it

accounted for Woodend-Hesket.

The second quarter was when the Bombers did all the damage as they kicked eight goals to two to go from a three point lead to a 42 point margin at the main break.

The Hawks never recovered and the Bombers won, 17.11 (113)-10.12 (72).

Zak Saad continued his good form with another five goals for the Bombers.

Matthew Panuccio and Mark Kovacevic were named the Bombers best.

Josh Winchester and Max Panagiotopoulos were named the Hawks best.

Elsewhere, Wallan moved to the top of the table with a big win against the Gisborne Giants.

The Magpies jumped out of the blocks early and led by 52 points at quarter time.

They maintained that momentum throughout on the way to a 27.12 (174)-12.7 (79) win.

Understrength Western Warriors hold on

By Tara Murray

An understrength Western Warriors got their third win of the Victorian Netball League season on Sunday.

Both the Warriors and Geelong Cougars were nowhere near full strength with SN reserves commitments and injuries.

In front of their home crowd in Melton, the Warriors were able to sneak home 54-53.

Warriors' coach Kim Bailey said while it would have been nice to have not played in another close game, it was pleasing to get the win.

"It was good to get over the line this time," she said.

"It was a really good game and both teams were under the pump with players.

"We did some soul searching this week."

The Warriors were without Ruby Shannon, Mia Lavis, Sarah Croft, Poppy Douglass and Kiara Boyd on Sunday.

Holly McCarthy and Leona Hristovska were both promoted from the 23 and under side for the week and did a really good job.

McCarthy played a full game in the midcourt.

Bailey said both players were future championship players and Bailey said they would start to look giving some of those younger players an opportunity.

The other addition was New Zealander Ellie Bird.

Bird had a long national league career in New Zealand while also spending time playing in the Super League in England.

"A lot of teams have been chasing her," Bailey said.

"It's nice to have her service for the rest of the season. We were one team that didn't have that tall post player.

"With Sarah Croft out for the season it allows us to be a bit more versatile with our line ups."

Bird, who won't play every game this season, had a big impact early on as the Warriors led by six goals at quarter time.

Bailey said Bird was a really smart player who isn't just a holding shooter.

The Cougars continued to fight and pushed the game down to the wire.

"I'm pretty happy," Bailey said.

"They come back. We got it out to four goals late but some silly errors didn't help us."

Captain Olivia Ellis was named the Warriors best for a second straight week.

Bailey said it was a real captain's captain and she had led a lot of soul searching during the week.

The Warriors sit 10th on the ladder with three wins, a draw and six losses.



Western Warriors got the win on Sunday. (Supplied)

The Warriors 23 and under side lost to the Cougars, 68-61.

Some VNL reserves players got their opportunity with players pushing up into the championship division.

The Warriors will be back in action on Wednesday night against second placed Casey Demons in another big challenge.

Bailey said they were hopeful of having Lavis, who was called up by the Vixens on Sunday, for at least a half and Shannon for a whole game which would strengthen their line up.

Douglass should be back as well, while Boyd will be available by with her football commitments is limited in minutes.

Bendigo's good day

It was the Bendigo Football Netball League double on Saturday as both the senior football and netball came out on top against the Ovens and Murray Football Netball League.

The two leagues played five games across the football ground and netball courts, with the Bendigo league having the better of the senior inter-league clashes.

In the senior football, Bendigo claimed the win, 14.13 (97)-11.11 (77) looking like a team that had been playing football together for a long time.

Gisborne's Dylan Johnstone was awarded the Derrick Filo medal as the best player on the ground for the Bendigo outfit.

He was one of three Gisborne players in the final team. James Gray kicked three goals in the win, having captained the Bendigo under-19 side last season.

Bendigo coach Simon Rosa said it was a massive result for the league.

"It's been 29 years since we've been able to have this opportunity, like to thank the two boards that made this happen," he said.

"Bendigo footy league we've got a little bit of respect back today [Saturday], which is huge for us and that is what we wanted.

"My boys you were super from the start, it's going to be one to celebrate. Well done."

In the senior netball, it was a dominant performance by the Bendigo league, winning 83-49.

Bendigo coach Tarryn Rymer said she loved watching the team come together and play as a team to get the victory.

Bendigo's Ruby Barkmeyer was named best on court.

Gisborne's Kirby Elliott, Tilly Shepherd and Charlee Kemp were part of the team, along with Rymer, who is the Bulldogs coach.

In the other matches, Bendigo lost the under-15 and under-17 netball in one point thrillers, while the O and M won the under-18 football by 17 points.

The wins in the senior netball and football was enough for the Bendigo league to claim the Beyond Blue Cup.

Giants secure a big win

By Tara Murray

Gisborne Giants finally broke its drought against Wallan in the Riddell District Netball League.

The Giants failed to beat the Magpies last season, but on Saturday was able to inflict the Magpies' first loss of the season.

There was not much between the two sides all day, with one goal the margin at each of the breaks.

A 13-8 final quarter by the Giants saw them come away with a 54-50 win.

Giants' coach AJ Craske said it was nice to finally get a win against the Magpies.

"They beat us both times last year during the home and away season," he said.

"We had depleted squads both times and the second time our captain went down with a broken ankle.

"We then had that depleted squad in the finals. It's nice to get a win against them."

With shooter Malia Seumanutafa missing the game, the Giants pulled in former SSN shooter Kim Borger for the week.

She shot 46 goals from 49 shots. "She's friends with a lot of the girls in the A-grade team," Craske said of Borger.

"There were a few convos that evolved the last few weeks. It happened that Mali wasn't available and Kim was happy to come and fill in as she had a bye.

"The other girls feed off that as well." The win moves the Giants to a 5-1 re-

cord. The top four teams all only have one loss for the season.

Craske said they still have plenty of work to do.

"We haven't set the world on fire," he said. "We've done what we've needed to.

"We're yet to get our full A-grade squad on court in the past two years.

"We've had some B-grade players set up and we've been able to blood some under-19s to get experience at this level.

"We're on the right side of the ratio so far."

Craske said they were hopeful of having their full squad on the court in the next couple of weeks.

"With the couple of additions of Madds

Quigley and Jacqui Mitrevski, who were in our original A-grade plans last year.

"It gives us a fair bit to play with and we can play our best combo week to week.

"We still have to pinch ourselves. We are still a very young team in the early stages of building and we're sitting equal top on points."

The Giants face Riddell this Saturday. Craske said the side's win against the Bombers last season, who went on to play finals, was a breakthrough win for them in year one.

"They have had a fair bit of turnover and are a very young squad," he said.

"We'll see how we go and hopefully it's a good game."

Jets having a tough run as injuries take a toll

By Tara Murray

The Sunbury Jets are battling through as they fell just short of returning to the winners list in the Big V women's championship division.

The Jets won their first three games of the season before losing their next seven, including against the Bulleen Boomers on Sunday.

The Jets pushed the Boomers all day on Sunday, with the Boomers winning 81-77.

Jets' coach Debbie Coulson said it had been a tough few weeks for them.

"We've been limited with numbers and only had eight players due to injuries," she said.

"Abby Hildebrand and Addy Cameron, who are our two point guards are out, while Mikayla Peterson, who is another big asset, has hurt her knee as well.

"We've had to play the last few games with only eight players and having to play players out of position."

Coulson said the injuries were having an impact at training as they don't have 10 players on court, and their eight fit players already includes some youth league players.

Coulson said they were disappointed to drop the match against the Boomers.

Having lost six in a row before that match, they were desperate to get another win on the board.

Coulson said a win would have been a reward for effort.

"We did some good stuff and a win would have meant the world," she said.

"Chloe [Hildebrand] is scoring a lot for us and offensively is not an issue at all.

"Defensively we were really happy with parts of the game but we need to be more consistent with who we are matching up against.

"Fatigue could be playing a part with the decision making, I'm not sure."

Chloe Hildebrand top scored with 17 points, while Lovisa Hevinder had 16 points.

Coulson said they were hoping Abby Hildebrand would be back this week, while Peterson is also a change to return as well.

She said Cameron was likely out for the season.

Coulson is set to miss some games as well in the coming weeks, as she coaches Australia's first under-21 deaf basketball side.

While excited for the challenge, Coulson said it's tough to leave when the side is in the situation is is.

"They have stayed together as a group," she said. "There's no issue which is positive.

"We'll just take it week by week."

The Jets sit seventh on the ladder. The Jets face the Pakenham Warriors on Saturday night in round nine.

Meanwhile, the Jets championship men's side got the win against the Camberwell Dragons on Sunday.



Chloe Hildebrand. (Ljubica Vrankovic)

After trailing by four points at quarter time, the Jets turned that into a five point lead at half time.

They kept the lead heading into the final quarter and were able to finish strongly to

win, 86-74.

Ish Sanders had his best game of the season scoring 40 points while also having four rebounds, five assists and four steals.

The Jets sit third on the ladder.

Big honour for McShane

Melbourne eXtreme's Jack McShane has been recognised on the national sporting stage, named Commonwealth Games Australia's 2025 Emerging Athlete of the Year.

The accolade caps off a remarkable 12 months for the 20-year-old South Australian, who earlier this year became the youngest ever winner of the World Bowls Indoor Championships men's singles title in Aberdeen, Scotland.

McShane was honoured alongside some of Australia's most respected sporting figures and rising stars, with legendary broadcaster Bruce McAvaney also recognised with a Commonwealth Games Australia Order of Merit.

"I've got to be completely honest, I did not expect this at all," McShane said during his speech.

"Thank you so much to all my supporters; my parents, my rocks, my partner and wider group of friends and my family who support me.

"To Bowls Australia, who are doing great things and pushing the sport forward, thank you for all you do and thank you to everyone, it's great to be celebrating sport in general."

McShane was recognised alongside fellow finalists for the trophy, Richelle Hill (triathlon) and Declan Budd (swimming), both of whom made their mark on the world stage in 2025 to underscore the depth of Australia's next generation of sporting talent.

McShane is part of the Club-Sunbury backed Melbourne eXtreme's young squad that competes in the Bowls Premier League.

Earlier this year, McShane was also announced as a recipient of a prestigious Tier 2 Scholarship in the 2026 Sport Australia Hall of Fame Scholarship and Mentoring Program, recognising both his achievements and future promise.

Commentary icon Bruce McAvaney was among those announced as recipients of a Commonwealth Games Australia Order of Merit in other awards.

Joined on the honoree list by Katrina Powell and Warwick Forbes, McAvaney will lead the Seven Network coverage of Glasgow 2026 from Scotstoun Stadium as athletics action enthral audiences in Australia and around the world.



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