

SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES

# Star Weekly

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# Waiting for change

By Georgia Tacey

Female footballers and netballers in Macedon are still changing in cars and public toilets as sporting clubs continue the fight for basic facilities at Tony Clarke Reserve.

The five user groups - Macedon Football Netball Club, Macedon Cricket Club, Macedon Tennis Club, and Macedon Ranges Bowling Club - have joined forces to demand urgent upgrades to changing facilities at the reserve.

Tony Clarke Reserve has only one changeroom each for home and away teams. Women and men are forced to share facilities that include one big open room with doorless showers.

“Our netballers have no changing facilities. Our AFLW participants have no changing facilities, so we need to keep advocating”

- Ron Rutledge

As a result, men's and women's teams aren't able to play at the same time, with female players being forced to privately change in their cars or public toilets.

While the reserve had a recent funding win, the fight for change room upgrades continues.

Macedon Football Netball Club president Ron Rutledge said while council's commitment of \$40,000 towards a master plan was welcome, it would do little to solve the immediate problem with football and netball competitions well underway.

“We welcome all of the community to engage and be part of that project which will be carried out in the back half of this year,” he said.

However, Mr Rutledge said the masterplan may take years to be completed.

Council assets and operations director Dom Testoni told *Star Weekly* in May that the masterplan project was a medium-term priority.

“The masterplan will certainly do some good for the whole Macedon community, but we are currently playing football today,



Macedon Football Netball Club president Ron Rutledge with Sarah Miles, Ruby Watts and Tamara Collins. (Damjan Janevski) 561125\_01

and we know that the precinct will not have any remedial updates for at least three to four years,” Mr Rutledge said.

“Consequently, our netballers have no changing facilities. Our AFLW participants have no changing facilities, so we need to keep advocating.”

In the same week the masterplan was announced, clubs were informed that the council's application to the state government for a female-friendly change room upgrade at the reserve was knocked back.

Council had sought \$250,000 through the Country Football Netball Program and committed a further \$380,000 in

its draft 2026-27 budget towards the project. Detailed designs had already been completed to meet AFL and Cricket Australia standards.

However, the seven projects announced by the state government were for lighting upgrades, irrigation and an oval redevelopment.

Mr Rutledge said he was disappointed that female sport was not supported.

“There's not one project under those grants to do with participation of people playing sport, more particularly women,” he said.

“This is a project that should have been approved.”

Mr Rutledge said they will go back to the drawing board and continue the search for funding.

He worries for the future of the club and female sport at the reserve without appropriate facilities.

A state government spokesperson said the Country Football Netball Program was highly competitive and encouraged unsuccessful councils to seek feedback from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The Local Sports Infrastructure Fund is currently open to applications, and *Star Weekly* understands council will apply on behalf of the club, with Macedon MP Mary-Anne Thomas backing the bid.



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# Asylum plan fast-tracked

By Georgia Tacey

The state government has fast-tracked the engagement process of a planning scheme amendment that will turn the former Sunbury Asylum into a mixed-use development.

Engagement has just opened on a draft Hume planning scheme amendment (C283hume) that will rezone the former asylum and Victoria University campus at 2-90 Circular Drive from public use to mixed use.

As part of the proposal, the amendment seeks to update the planning controls to

the site to implement the first stage of the Jacksons Hill Master Plan, adopted in 2018 by the Victorian Planning Authority.

The mixed-use development will provide for a range of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses in the area, including high density housing.

An environmental audit overlay will also apply to the land, after a site contamination review report conducted this year confirmed the soil was contaminated at a number of sites across the precinct. No sensitive uses, including housing, can begin on the land until it is remediated and deemed safe.

In March, the planning minister de-

clared the land in Jacksons Hill as surplus, and no longer needed by the state government. The land cannot be sold until the amendment is implemented.

The Department of Transport and Planning requested the land be exempt from the standard public notice requirements.

The department said in a letter to the minister included in the documents that the exemption will enable a prompt decision on the adoption and approval of the amendment, which will help bring forward the delivery of needed housing in accordance with Victoria's Housing Statement.

Once rezoned, the department said, the

use and development of the site in the future will be subject to the requirements of a planning and heritage permit, with detailed plans and supporting information required as part of the application process.

Community and key stakeholders are also expected to be consulted as part of any future planning permit application.

Engagement opened on 26 June and will close on 12 July, leaving 17 days for the community to have their say.

The planning minister is due to make her decision on the amendment in August.

Details: [engage.vic.gov.au/draft-hume-planning-scheme-amendment-c283hume](https://engage.vic.gov.au/draft-hume-planning-scheme-amendment-c283hume)



Tracey Button and Beryl Clewer celebrate their win against a proposed childcare centre in Gisborne. (Damjan Janevski). 562840\_01

## Gisborne childcare proposal withdrawn

By Georgia Tacey

Gisborne residents are celebrating after successfully fighting against a proposed childcare development.

A planning permit for a childcare centre at 66 Howey Street was originally lodged with Macedon Ranges council in May 2024, and after the planning application was advertised twice to surrounding residents, 64 objections were sent to council.

The planning application was brought to council at the 25 March, 2026 council meeting, after the applicant had already lodged an appeal at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) because council failed to grant a permit within the prescribed

timeframe.

Council said if it was still the responsible authority, the permit would not have been granted due to a number of planning scheme inconsistencies including the building design, the height and style of fencing and the existing or desired future character of the area.

It was due to be heard at VCAT in July, however court documents seen by Star Weekly confirmed the applicant has withdrawn its proceeding as the developer said it is considering alternatives. Resident Tracey Button was an objector to the proposal and part of the VCAT case, and said this was a big win for Gisborne.

"The major thing for us was traffic and safety. There'd been numerous

accidents in the vicinity, and there are no footpaths in a large majority of the area," she said.

Council documents said the proposal failed to provide enough car parking spaces, and would have impacts to road usage due to the increased number of vehicles resulting in traffic congestion and the lack of continuous public footpaths.

Ms Button said Howey Street was inappropriate for this type of development. "All of us were unanimous in that we're not against childcare centres, but it was just absolutely the wrong place for one to be in this old part of Gisborne, with the traffic, the street infrastructure and the lack of footpaths," she said.

## Clause fizzles out

Macedon Ranges council will seek to remove a Community Local Law after it found it was not enforceable.

The local law in question, 38(h), states that an owner or occupier of land may allow fireworks or pyrotechnic displays to be conducted on that land, provided that the fireworks are not used during the koala breeding season of September to April.

In 2022-23, council conducted a review of the Community Local Law in its entirety, including a wide and comprehensive community consultation process to inform its development and account for new and emerging matters for inclusion.

One of the matters was the inclusion of a clause to manage fireworks on private property, to respond to concerns from the community of the impact of fireworks in proximity to livestock.

However, council said this clause is not enforceable as the clause was introduced post public consultation, in conflict with the Local Government Act.

It was endorsed at the 17 June council meeting for council to inform the community of its intention to remove the clause from the local law.

Cr Jennifer Anderson said the issue came to council from affected businesses and landowners.

"The consultation for the local law was a good consultation and we did go out with options for fireworks and we listened and provided good grounding, except for this one particular clause which hadn't been tested with the community," she said.

"We got some legal advice at the time and we thought we were doing the right thing but have subsequently realised it hasn't really been tested with the community and it isn't something that should go in there."

Mayor Kate Kendall said the clause had caused inconsistency across the shire.

"It really kind of shut down small firework businesses from hosting fireworks during peak wedding seasons because it was September through to April, which means pretty much they could not operate at all," she said.

"Over the past year, this is something that I've had a steady incoming steam of communication on from these businesses that were really concerned about this clause."

Council will receive a future report on the proposed endorsement to delete the clause at a future council meeting.

## Feedback wanted on stage two of Sunbury Skate Park upgrade

Feedback is now open on the Sunbury Skate Park stage two.

After the first stage of the redevelopment was completed in 2019, Hume council is now preparing to deliver the final stage of the project.

Stage two will build on the existing facility to expand and enhance skate, scooter and BMX opportunities for the Sunbury community, as part of council's Skate Scooter and BMX Strategy Implementation Program.

The upgrade will include the expansion of the existing skate park with new

riding elements and features, improvements to cater for a wider range of skill levels and riding styles, integration of stage two works with the existing stage one facility, and the refinement and finalisation of the previously developed concept plan.

Included in the plan will be new quarter pipes, a jump box, spine, pump bump, roll-in gap, new paths and better integration with the existing skate park.

Council is now taking feedback from the community who uses the space.

In-person drop-in sessions will be

held at the Sunbury Skate Park during the school holidays on Tuesday 30 June and Thursday 2 July from 11am to 2pm on both days.

The community can also contact council's sport and recreation team to have their say before Monday 20 July.

Construction is currently expected to start in January 2027 and be completed by April 2027, subject to final design and weather conditions.

Details: [hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Current-Projects-and-Works/Sunbury-Skate-Park-Stage-2](https://hume.vic.gov.au/Your-Council/Current-Projects-and-Works/Sunbury-Skate-Park-Stage-2)

# Liberal MP thrown lifeline

By William Ton, AAP

A Liberal MP who sued her party to stave off a meeting that will determine her political future has been handed a temporary lifeline.

Western Metropolitan MP Moira Deeming launched an eleventh-hour Supreme Court challenge against Victorian Liberal Party president Brian Loughnane and the party on Friday morning 3 July, seeking a temporary injunction to stop the meeting.

Party executives, including Mr Loughnane, were set to gather on Friday evening to determine Mrs Deeming's candidacy after she made an unsubstantiated

assault allegation against former leader Matthew Guy.

On Friday afternoon, the party accepted an undertaking "not to take any step that will render this proceeding inutile".

"We give the undertaking not to take any steps to disendorse the plaintiff until the hearing determination of this proceeding," Marcus Clarke KC, representing Mr Loughnane and the party, told the court.

The party issued a statement after Friday's hearing, saying the state executive meeting will be adjourned until the matter can be determined.

Justice Kerri Judd had earlier asked Mr Clarke whether his clients were prepared



Liberal Party leader's representative to the western suburbs, Moira Deeming. (AAP Image/ Joel Carrett)

to give an undertaking.

"Given the court has been accommodating in terms of providing such an early

hearing date, I don't want any step taken that will mean if Mrs Deeming succeeded (in this case), the relief that she is seeking would not be granted," she said.

The judge said accepting the undertaking "does not necessarily mean the 6.30pm meeting could not still go ahead".

Justice Judd acknowledged the need for an expedited hearing, saying she was "not here to review the decision of Victoria Police not to charge Mr Guy".

Mrs Deeming's barrister Ganesh Jegatheesan said the evidence he relied upon would be "of a very narrow scope".

The trial is set for 17 July for a one-day hearing.



The Sunbury RSL Sub-Branch is opposed to the federal government's proposed budget cuts (Damjan Janevski), 560997\_01

## Veteran anger at proposed care caps

Australia's oldest veterans are expected to be hit hardest by the federal government's proposed cap on veteran health services, Sunbury RSL Sub-branch president David Jordan has warned.

The federal government will introduce a \$5000 annual cap on veterans' allied health services from July 1, 2027, a measure expected to save \$748 million over three years, according to figures released by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Jordan fears the changes will have the greatest impact on elderly veterans, many of whom rely on allied health services like

physiotherapy, podiatry and occupational therapy to maintain mobility and independence.

Mr Jordan said there are about 1100 veterans living in Hume, and he knows a number of older veterans who may be affected in the Sunbury sub-branch.

"Some of them are having to get physio two or three times a week just to maintain their mobility," he said.

"If they cap that at \$5000, they could run out of that within 12 weeks.

"The way the government is talking about it is that they're making it easier for

veterans by capping it at \$5000, but I don't think that's the case."

Veterans' Affairs Minister Matt Keogh said the government will work with the veteran community and practitioners over the second half of the year to ensure the system is effective and veterans can access additional care if needed.

Mr Keogh said the median use of allied health services by veterans was about \$1900 a year, well below the \$5000 cap.

Mr Jordan said the cap should be removed to ensure veterans receive the care they need.

## Visting scheme receives award

Macedon Ranges council's community connections team has won the Positive Ageing and Wellbeing Awards 2026 at the 2026 LGPro Awards for its Aged Care Volunteer Visiting Scheme.

The award was announced on Wednesday 17 June and recognises programs that help older people stay healthy, connected and supported.

Director of community Martin Collins said the program shows how small actions can make a big difference.

"This program shows how simple connections can have a big impact. It helps people feel less alone and more part of their community," Mr Collins said.

The program pairs trained volunteers with older residents living in aged care or at home who may feel lonely or socially isolated. Volunteers visit regularly to provide companionship and conversation.

"Our volunteers give their time to support others, and those relationships are changing lives."

The program is funded by the federal government, with council managing delivery across the shire.

Council has been successful in a further five years of funding and will continue to create positive relationships with local aged care providers, volunteers and recipients.

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# The world is their stage

**BoilOver Ensemble fills an important niche in the performing arts scene. The inclusive performance group has been creating opportunities for local artists for over 16 years, becoming a household name and performing on some of Melbourne’s biggest stages. Georgia Tacey caught up with the performers, artist support and creative director of the Sunbury-based performance troop, as they gear up for their next big performance, Glimmer.**

For BoilOver Ensemble’s five current performers — Savannah, Jaymie-Lee, Brendan, Andrew, and Conor— there is no greater joy than being centre stage. Their infectious energy and natural stage presence have made the ensemble a local favourite, with performances ranging from SunFest in Sunbury and The Bowery Theatre in St Albans all the way to the Melbourne Fringe.

Creative producer Carmen Maddison said the idea for BoilOver was sparked in 2009 after Sunbury local Bernadette Hetherington noticed a lack of creative opportunities for adults with disability in the community. The group is now supported by Omnia Health (Sunbury Cobaw Community Health).

“Bernie recognised that there were no creative opportunities for adults with disability in the community,” Ms Maddison said.

“Bernie will always laugh and say she doesn’t have a creative bone in her body, but she did initiate BoilOver for that reason, because she recognised there wasn’t that opportunity.”

A play on words from Sunbury’s other performing group, Boilerhouse Theatre Company, BoilOver created a much-needed space for adults with disability to creatively express themselves.

Performances are adapted to their abilities with help from artist supporters Karen Cleur and Jacquelyn Hughes, making it an inclusive, welcoming environment for adults with a disability to explore their creative sides, Ms Maddison said.

“Often not everyone can read, not everyone can write, so we are heavily based in movement, and physical storytelling is what we kind of call it,” she said.

“It’s a cross between dance and performance and a bit of text but not like set scenes.”

Ms Madison said this helps fill a gap in the performance industry.

“It’s all stories that have come from the artists themselves, and that’s always been a tradition of the BoilOver practice of devised works, finding creative expression because we’re also adapting and working within different abilities and different ways people communicate,” she said.

“Some people who have performed here have been non-verbal ... we have really diverse artists and we need to meet the needs of everybody and that work is adapted and evolves from their stories and their abilities.”

Ms Cleur said she found it inspiring to see the ownership the artists take over each project.

“That was the beauty of seeing the works when I first came and volunteered, thinking to myself that this is really their work,” she said. “When it becomes their work, there’s a certain pride and ownership about it ... and I just love watching that sort of development.”

Each performance is an original piece created for and by the performers, Ms Hughes said, keeping the performers included in every step of the process.

“We always make our own works and that’s the thing I love, is that it comes from the artist, and then it’s just built upon. What they come up with is just magic,” she said.

Last year’s performance, Meet Me at the Disco, was a love letter to music and dance.

Andrew played the lead role in the show. After finding an old record player under his grandparents’ bed, his world transforms



BoilOver Ensemble members Conor O’Keefe, Sarah Ellis, Savannah Coots, Andrew Nicoladies and artist support Karen Cleur. (Pictures: Supplied)

“ We always make our own works and that’s the thing I love ... What they come up with is just magic ” - Karen Cleur

into a classic ‘70s and ‘80s disco fever dream.

“We did that at the Fringe Festival,” Andrew explained. “It was full of energy, the crowd was pumping me up.”

Jaymie-Lee said she played a Dancing Queen, and loved singing in her red dress.

Savannah said the troop took the performance to Sunbury’s SunFest earlier this year, and that she loved performing for her local community.

“It has really good songs and it was really good to perform at SunFest in our own community. We truly loved it,” she said.

“The audience got out of their seats and joined us.”

Ms Maddison said the idea for Meet Me at the Disco came from the performers’ own experiences and conversations.

“That show came about during Covid, because a lot of our artists used to go to the social discos here, and they were all closed down,” she said. “So Meet Me at the Disco was kind of born out of that, being isolated and finding yourself on the dance floor.”

Another iconic show the troop performed across Melbourne was The Birds, an hour-long interactive performance that blended dance, physical performance, circus arts and AI technology to create a compelling audio-visual experience.

Later this year, BoilOver will perform on Sunbury’s newest stage at the new Jacksons Hill art precinct, Artrise.

Glimmer will help activate Artrise with three performances slated for International Day of People with a Disability, in a performance aided by a \$15,000 grant from



A performance of Meet Me at the Disco.



Brendan King with Andrew Nicoladies performing Meet Me at the Disco at Federation Square.

Hume council.

Andrew’s artwork will be featured throughout, and interactive sounds by collaborators The Sonic Rats will be featured as well.

“We’ve been making the show for a little while, so there’s these little snippets of scenes that we can just marry up and story and how lovely it is for them now I think particularly is these artists have been here much longer they’ve developed a real interest in storyline making, set design and lighting and all the back stage aspects as well as performing,” Ms Cleur said.

Ms Maddison said while the full performance was still taking shape, it will be one not to be missed.

BoilOver is on the hunt for more performers to join the troop. It is open to anyone over 18 with an NDIS plan and an interest in performing or working behind the scenes.

Details: [facebook.com/BoilOverInclusivePerformanceEnsemble/](https://facebook.com/BoilOverInclusivePerformanceEnsemble/)



Jaymie-Lee McMahon (front), Conor O’Keefe, artist support Jacquelyn Hughes, Brendan King, artist support Karen Cleur and Andrew Nicoladies. (Damjan Janevski) 558064\_03

## What do you love about performing with BoilOver?

**Jaymie-Lee:** I like to move and dance.

**Conor:** It’s like a family here. I wake up and I want to come back here, it’s my dream job.

**Savannah:** It gives me freedom and helps me get out of my comfort zone. I want to open my heart to the audience. I want the audience to feel the art we have created.

**Andrew:** I’ve been with BoilOver for a long time because I love performing. I love doing things like stage managing.

**Brendan:** It’s good, I like to do singing.

# Reaching out to youths

Hume council has appointed Melbourne City Mission (MCM) to deliver its new Youth Assertive Outreach Program.

The community-based initiative will engage and support up to 2400 young people per year across the municipality.

Starting on 1 July, the trauma-informed, strengths-based and culturally safe program will provide early intervention support for young people aged 10 to 24 years, helping them navigate life's challenges, strengthen their wellbeing and connect with the services and opportunities.

The program will operate four afternoons and evenings each week until 7pm, as well as on weekends, ensuring support

is available when and where young people need it.

The program will combine proactive street-based outreach with relationship-based support. Outreach locations will be informed by local data and community intelligence, including information from Victoria Police and council's community safety team. Key areas will include Sunbury, Broadmeadows, Craigieburn, Mickleham and Kalkallo.

Young people engaged through the program will be able to access information, resources, brief interventions and warm referrals to a range of services, including health, mental health, housing, education, training, employment, family support, le-

gal services and recreational activities.

The program also aims to enhance young people's safety, social inclusion, and participation in community spaces, while reducing the risk of contact with the criminal justice system through earlier support and intervention.

Mayor Carly Moore welcomed the partnership with MCM.

"Young people are at the heart of Hume's future, and this new outreach program will help us connect with those who may be facing challenges, build trusted relationships and ensure they can access the support they need before issues escalate," she said.

MCM chief executive Paul Wappett said

the program will work alongside young people in their communities, build trusted relationships and help them access the services they need.

"By providing early intervention and practical support, we can help address challenges before they become crises, strengthen young people's sense of belonging, and create pathways to better health, wellbeing, education and employment outcomes," he said.

A key feature of the program will be the development of integrated partnerships and referral pathways with health and community services, youth service providers, schools, community and faith-based organisations, and Victoria Police.



Country Cob bakery owner Ryan Khun with staff Fiona Halpin and Leah Coulson (Georgia Tacey).

## Savouring the sweet taste of success

Kyneton has been crowned the home of Australia's best pie.

Country Cob Bakery has taken home a national award for its Malaysian prawn pie, after three tasty days of competition as more than 300 of Australia's best bakeries battled it out to be crowned the homes of Australia's Best Pies.

Owner Ryan Khun said the Malaysian prawn pie was a new addition to the menu, after a night out for dinner

inspired the tasty treat.

"I went out with my wife one night, and we went to a Malaysian restaurant and we ordered a few dishes," he said.

"One of them is the curry seafood, and when we tasted it I told my wife 'oh, this is good. If we can make something like this in a pie, it would be good."

After consulting his brother who is also part of the team, they got straight to work researching and recipe testing.

"It took probably two to three months

to get it right," Mr Khun said.

"Just before the competition, we let the kitchen try it and they said it was a good pie."

Mr Khun and his team are still savouring the sweet taste of success.

"We feel pretty proud, very happy and excited all at the same time because this is our new pie, something we just recently created and it took out the major award at the competition," he said.

## Wildwood property investigated over unlawful waste activity

Hume council and the Environmental Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) have joined forces to address unlawful waste activity at a Wildwood property.

Authorised officers from council and EPA attended the Wildwood Road site on 26 May. They said they observed significant quantities of smouldering industrial waste and multiple truck movements delivering soil.

A prior joint inspection on 14 April identified large stockpiles of industrial

waste at the site, including materials suspected to contain asbestos.

As a result of these findings, EPA has issued an environmental action notice requiring the site occupant to immediately cease burning waste.

The notice also requires the removal of all industrial waste to a lawful facility by 28 July, and independent verification by a qualified hygienist that any asbestos has been safely removed by 3 August.

"This site is not licensed to accept in-

dustrial waste, particularly hazardous materials such as asbestos," EPA north metropolitan regional manager Steve Riley said.

"Burning this material presents significant risks to both the environment and the surrounding community."

Mayor Carly Moore said council is working alongside EPA Victoria to respond to this matter and ensure the safety of the community.

EPA investigations are ongoing.

## Council joins Safe Phone Program

Macedon Ranges council has joined the Domestic Violence (DV) Safe Phone Program as a phone collection partner.

The program provides safe mobile phones to people experiencing domestic violence across Australia, as a mobile phone is often one of the first things taken or monitored by someone using violence.

Without a safe phone, it can be hard to contact police, support services, family or friends. Having a secure phone can help people stay safe and get help when they need it.

So far, the program has provided more than 17,000 phones, thanks to donations from over 1500 collection partners nationwide.

Mayor Kate Kendall said this program offers the community a simple way to help.

"This partnership enables our community to support people in need while also reducing waste. Donating your old phone is small, but it can make a big difference," she said.

"Our Resource Recovery Facilities are trusted places people already use. By adding secure drop-off points, we are making it easier for people to help in a practical way. Every donation goes to people and families in crisis."

You can donate your old mobile phones any time of the year. Before donating, make sure you unlock, sign out and factory reset your phone, make sure it works and is not damaged, and make sure it is still compatible (iPhone 6 or newer, or most Android phones with 4G or higher).

Phones that cannot be used will be recycled via council's e-waste program.

Details: [dvsafephone.org](http://dvsafephone.org)

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Published by MMP Star Pty Ltd ACN 168 220 399  
Head Office Corner Thomsons Road and Keilor Park Drive, Keilor Park, 3042  
Publisher/Managing Director, Paul Thomas  
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Sunbury Toy Library stay and play coordinator Kirsten King with volunteers Eunice (16) and Isabelle (15). (Damjan Janevski) 562348\_03

## More helping hands wanted

The Sunbury Toy Library is calling for more volunteers.

Stay and play coordinator Kirsten King said the Sunbury Toy Library was established in 1990 and has been entirely volunteer run, helping Sunbury families find toys and keep children entertained.

“We’ve got a very wide range of toys with over 800 items available for loan,” Ms King said. “We’ve got puzzles, active toys, a lot of construction and cars, so there’s really something for everyone.”

As term three looms on the school calendar, Ms King is looking for people in the community interested in volunteering.

Ms King said anyone can be a volunteer, with a wide age range of volunteers currently helping out, including teenagers completing their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

“Most of our volunteers are members and other are members of the community, so we

have a lot of grandparents, aunts and uncles helping us out,” she said.

“We even have local high school students volunteering.

“We’ve got a great team of volunteers who make it a really fun, welcoming environment.”

Ms King said volunteers can help run open sessions at the toy library, help kids find a new toy or give a helping hand with stay and play.

“Volunteering at the toy library has added a lot of value into my life,” she said.

“It’s a really enjoyable, fun place to work, and if you’ve got a playful spirit, we’d love to have you come down and volunteer with us.”

The Sunbury Toy Library runs throughout the school terms at 35 Dobell Avenue, Sunbury.

Details: [sunburytoylibrary.com.au](http://sunburytoylibrary.com.au)

**Briefs**

**Customer Care Day**

Greater Western Water (GWW) is holding a Customer Care Day to the Macedon Ranges later this month. The sessions provide customers with the opportunity to speak directly with customer service specialists about billing enquiries, payment plans, grants, concessions and other account-related matters. Customers can access help understanding their bill, setting up a payment plan, or accessing information about grants and concessions. Bookings are encouraged but walk-ins also welcome. GWW staff will be in Woodend on Monday 13 July, at the Woodend Community Centre & Library from 11am-3pm.

**Buses replace trains**

Buses will replace trains from 8.30pm Tuesday 7 July until 11pm Friday 10 July on the Sunbury line due to Metro Tunnel works. Buses will replace trains between Flagstaff and Sunshine, and all stations expect Town Hall and Arden will remain open but without passenger services. A shuttle bus service will operate from Flagstaff for travellers getting to Parkville and Arden, or travellers can passengers can take a City Loop train to Flagstaff to connect with replacement buses. Passengers should allow for extra travel time for their journeys.

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# More Australians are choosing life beyond the big cities

Australians are moving to regional communities in record numbers, with new data showing the shift away from capital cities continues to gather pace.

The latest Regional Movers Index found the number of people moving from capital cities to regional Australia reached its highest level since the index began. In the March 2026 quarter, people moving to the regions outnumbered those heading back to the cities by almost 30 per cent.

Regional Australia Institute chief executive Liz Ritchie said the result reflected the growing appeal of regional living.

“This is the highest level of capital to regional movement the RMI has ever recorded,” she said. “Australians are continuing to choose regional life in greater numbers, even as economic conditions shift.”

While Sydney and Melbourne continue to account for most people leaving capital cities, the trend is becoming more widespread, with increasing numbers of movers also coming from Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

The Sunshine Coast remained the most popular destination for city movers, while Greater Geelong, Fraser Coast, Moorabool and Lake Macquarie were also among the leading destinations.

The data also shows growth is spreading beyond established regional hotspots.

Toowoomba recorded the strongest year-on-year increase in people moving from capital cities of any local government area in Australia. Other locations attracting growing numbers of residents included Broome, Townsville and the Mid-Coast region of New South Wales.

Ritchie said the data helps identify emerging growth areas and gives communities an opportunity to plan for future housing, infrastructure and services.

For regional businesses, population growth can create new opportunities as communities expand and local economies grow.

Read the full story at [CommBank Newsroom](http://CommBank Newsroom).



# Pressure mounts on HiQ as protesters rally for three days

By Georgia Tacey

Members of the No Sunbury Waste Incinerator group spent three days staging a dawn-to-dusk vigil on Sunbury Road as they ramped up their opposition to HiQ's proposed waste-to-energy facility.

The vigil coincided with the company's original deadline to lodge planning applications for the controversial project.

However, days before the planned application deadline at the end of June, HiQ announced it would delay submitting its applications while awaiting the findings of the parliamentary inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy infrastructure, which is

expected to report in August.

Protestors maintained a visible presence on Sunbury Road opposite HQ's Eco-Hub from 6am until 6pm.

No Sunbury Waste Incinerator spokesperson Alison Medforth said the vigil had been "amazing" drawing support from passing motorists and local businesses.

"There have been so many cars passing by to show their support, but we've also had a lot of people stop by and bring us snacks and coffee," she said.

"One local restaurant actually just came out and delivered some complimentary pizzas to us, so it has been overwhelming and fantastic.

"Obviously the weather has been pretty

horrendous, but it's been actually a lot more fun than I think a lot of us were expecting, just with the company."

Ms Medforth welcomed the delay in HiQ's applications, however stressed the fight was not over.

"We think that it is an absolute win for our campaign," she said.

"It shows that the pressure is working, but it does mean that we have to keep that pressure on to make sure that they're not going to just continue to kick this down the road until after the (state) election.

"We're going to keep protesting. We're going to keep doing other actions, and we're going to keep going until this is no longer a threat to our town."



No Sunbury Waste Incinerator group held a public vigil. (Damjan Janevski) 561346\_02

## HiQ delays application

By Georgia Tacey

HiQ will defer submitting its applications for the proposed Sunbury waste-to-energy facility as it waits to hear the findings of a parliamentary inquiry into the technology.

HiQ had planned to submit its planning and environmental applications for the proposed facility at its Sunbury site in June, but now won't until at least August with a Victorian parliamentary committee inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy infrastructure due to release its findings and recommendations this August.

The June deadline was already pushed back at least twice, after HiQ said it planned to lodge its applications by late 2025 and then early 2026.

HiQ has now released an update to the community that said it has carefully listened to feedback from the community throughout the process, and also recognised that the inquiry may make findings or recommendations that need further consideration in its applications, prompting them to delay until they're released.

"That will ensure that when we do make our submissions, they reflect the feedback received from the community and state sources wherever possible," the letter said.

HiQ said they currently do not have a new submission date as of yet, but said it is committed to keeping the community informed and the company will share another update as soon as they have a clearer timeline.

The proposal has received significant backlash from the Sunbury community, Hume council and Sunbury MP Josh Bull.

Residents and community members part of the No Sunbury Waste Incinerator Group have planned a public vigil in protest of the development over three days from 30 June until 3 July from 6am to 6pm each day.



Members of the No Sunbury Waste Incinerator group Barbara Hoewood, Alison Medforth, Adam Bremner, Sarah Notaro and Natalie Harrison.

(Damjan Janevski) 547112\_02

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Census

# VR paves road to recovery

By Glenn Fisher

A Bundoora transport institution is piloting a virtual reality therapy program to help drivers recovering from trauma get back behind the wheel.

When former Dysons bus driver Sarah Griffin talks about the day that changed her life, she still remembers the sound before anything else.

"There are answers I will never have. I still get emotional, but it's a normal part of my life now," she said.

Ms Griffin spent years behind the wheel - years of early mornings, school runs and greeting familiar passengers. But she also experienced the darker side of the job: aggression, intimidation, trauma.

Then, following a fatal on-road incident, Ms Griffin's recovery was long, complex and lonely.

"I drove an extra half hour every day just to avoid the accident scene. A 25-minute drive became nearly an hour ... I was terrified to come back," she said.

She's not alone. Bundoora-based Dysons has seen a steady rise in mental health injury challenges across its workforce - and that's what prompted former head of health, safety and environment Annabel Reynolds to successfully apply for an 'early intervention - mental injury' grant from WorkSafe's Return to Work Innovations.

Dysons' initiative involves a partnership with XRHealth, a clinical VR provider whose AHPRA-registered clinicians deliver immersive therapy through customised virtual environments.

The goal is to help drivers recovering from trauma safely re-enter the community and return to work.



Dyson Bus Group driver Sam Boeti (front) with the VR headset, driver Sarah Griffin, and general manager Vivienne Eyles. (Damjan Janevski) 561565\_01

For Ms Reynolds, who designed the therapy program and is a major stakeholder and adviser in its implementation, the need for a new approach was obvious.

"We have mental health injuries in transportation, particularly buses. The public can get frustrated, annoyed, and they take it out on our drivers. You can't put a bubble around them - the risks are real, and they're frequent," Ms Reynolds said.

She also sees the limits of traditional therapy for a blue-collar, multilingual workforce.

"That whole sitting on a couch talking about your problems ... it doesn't always work. Some of our drivers hold it all in. Culturally, for some men, seeking help is seen as weakness, so what do they do?" she said. "They stay home, they do nothing and it escalates."

With XRHealth, drivers are guided through gradual exposure modules that mirror the real world in a safe, controlled way - from leaving through the front door right through to approaching the depot, stepping into a bus, driving a virtual route

and practising conflict resolution in virtual scenarios.

Clinicians track biometric signs like eye movement, heart rate, hand motion and micro-reactions to identify triggers and shape therapy in real time. Sessions can be completed from home, eliminating travel barriers for workers too anxious to leave the house.

Manpreet Singh joined Dysons in 2006 as a driver, spent 15 years on the road, and now leads a team of drivers in operations. He still steps in behind the wheel when needed - and he's seen how quickly pressure can mount.

But he said the promise of VR is practical, recreating the pressures without the danger and helping drivers rehearse safer responses.

"Giving people a way to face triggers in a controlled environment makes sense. If they can practice what they'll see and hear - before they're back in the seat - they'll be more ready," he said.

Dysons will use the WorkSafe funding to develop three transport-specific VR modules with XRHealth, including approaching and entering the depot, driving and operating a bus, and conflict and challenging behaviour.

"We can't protect drivers from everything. But we can give them real tools to help them process what happens and find their way back to being themselves," Ms Reynolds said.

Deputy Premier and WorkSafe and the TAC Minister Ben Carroll said the government was investing in "ground-breaking solution" to help workers with a mental injury "get back on their feet and back into rewarding work".



Above left: Eliza-Jane Gilchrist is hosting the Strange Garden workshops at Artrise these school holidays. 561881\_01



Above right: Imke (7) has made her own piece for the Strange Garden. 561881\_03



The installation part of the Strange Garden. 561881\_07



Below: Hayden (6) with her artwork. 561881\_05

## Garden grows creativity

Kids across Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges have been making the most of the school holidays, despite the wet weather.

One spot keeping the kids warm and entertained is Artrise in Jacksons Hill, where Hume council has put on a number of fun workshops and activities for kids to enjoy.

Star Weekly photographer Damjan Janevski visited Artrise on Wednesday 1 July as children created their own pieces in the Strange Garden workshop.



Strange Garden. 561881\_08



Mikaela (9) with her cardboard creation. 561881\_04



# Now selling in Sunbury

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Brighton Living (Light). 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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# MY PLACE

Sunbury Toy Library stay and play coordinator Kirsten King is a friendly face helping parents find the right toys for their children. She recently caught up with Georgia Tacey to chat about being born and raised in Sunbury, her volunteer work and how the community has evolved over time.

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

I was born in Sunbury and have spent all of my life on this side of the city. It's where I've grown up, gone to school, worked and even volunteered. My sisters are also raising their families in Sunbury.

I was born at Sunbury Private Hospital in 1984 and have lived in Sunbury most of my life. My parents have been here since 1983 and it's always been my home base, despite a few years spent closer to the city.

**What do you like about where you live?**

I love the balance of natural spaces and native wildlife with the convenience of suburban living. Sunbury also has a great community spirit, whether it's people stopping to chat on a walk, in line at the supermarket, there seems to be genuine connections being made.

**Is there anything about Sunbury you'd change or like to see?**

I'd like the friendly, community feel to continue on. As Sunbury grows, it's important to maintain those values.

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

Despite volunteering at the Sunbury

Toy Library, I don't have any children myself. I'm a proud aunt of five, who love testing out new toys before they hit the shelf!

**Tell us a bit about your involvement with the Sunbury Toy Library.**

I am the stay and play coordinator. Stay and play is a fantastic initiative where members and their families are able to connect. We are lucky enough to have access to the playground at Dobell Avenue Kindergarten on Sunday mornings. It's a lot of fun!

I'm also on the committee and am often helping at open sessions, preparing toys and facilitating loans.

**Why do you like volunteering with the Sunbury Toy Library?**

I love the variety, flexibility and inclusivity. The toy library is entirely volunteer run and there's always something to do. It's a great way to stay connected to the local community and has brought a lot of joy to my life. I love that I'm able to play all day, or work on the website catalogue from home. The best part is connecting with the other volunteers and members, and the friendship and laughs we share. We'd love for you to join the fun!



Kirsten King. (Damjan Janevski) 562348\_04



Farzad Ihaab Ahmad, 17, has been named co-chair of the 2026 Victorian Youth Congress. (Damjan Janevski) 560705\_03



The Bacchus Marsh District & Historical Society president Tim Hogan and secretary Barb McMillan. (Damjan Janevski) 561101\_04



Moorabool mayor Steve Venditti-Taylor. (Damjan Janevski) 561796\_01



Raymond Rowe and David Hoare are opposing a proposed childcare development in Sunbury. (Damjan Janevski) 560713\_04

## Faces of the west

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



Macedon Ranges Further Education Centre manager Pauline Fyffe and admin support Caitlyn Sinclair. (Damjan Janevski) 561133\_02



Salesian College students Ethan, Leo, Caity and Maggie prepare for the school production. (Damjan Janevski) 559782\_04

# Airport encounter takes flight

By Glenn Fisher

Who does one turn to when things don't quite go to plan at Melbourne Airport?

When Jude Troy accidentally left her bags in the back of an Uber just before a flight back to Sydney, airport chaplain Martyn Scrimshaw was there for her.

Three years after that interaction between Scrimshaw and Troy, who is a partner in independent television and film production company Wooden Horse, SBS is about to premiere a new series, *The Airport Chaplain*, starring Hugo Weaving as the chaplain.

Co-creator and executive producer Troy said *The Airport Chaplain* was inspired by that 'unforgettable encounter' she had with Epping resident Scrimshaw, who has been the Melbourne International Airport Chaplain for the past nine years.

“Everyone rushing around in an airport has selfish pursuits, whereas the airport chaplain sees people in need” - Jude Troy

Losing her bags was stressful at the time, Troy said, but that Scrimshaw and his team dealt with events of varying levels of stress, whether it's with a family of refugees who can't speak English arriving in the country, a wedding dress that has been loaded onto the wrong flight or the tragic passing of a relative on a plane landing in Melbourne.

“Dashing to make a flight back to Sydney after a work trip and distracted by an eventful day, I jumped out of an Uber and all too late realised I had left my bags in the back seat. Inside were my phone, laptop, and my identity. I could not board without it!” she said.

“Through the kindness of strangers, I was introduced to someone I never knew existed: the airport chaplain.

“Over the next few hours, Martyn took me on an eye-opening adventure deep into the bowels of the airport, sharing stories of humanity and connection that have stayed with me ever since.”

Scrimshaw told Star Weekly that Troy and the writing team had been in regular contact with him throughout the process, and he had acted as their guide when they visited the airport for more inspiration.

When Troy and her team arrived one day with Weaving in tow, Scrimshaw said that was the moment he realised 'these guys are serious'.



**Above:** Melbourne Airport chaplain Martyn Scrimshaw is the inspiration for the new SBS series, *The Airport Chaplain*. (Damjan Janevski) 562094\_06

**Left:** Hugo Weaving and Shabana Azeez in *The Airport Chaplain*. (Supplied)



“Meeting Hugo was such a highlight, and we spoke at length. He's not only such a wonderful actor, he's an incredible human being.”

Scrimshaw said he was able to give the writers and actors an insight into his job, dealing with all types of emotions and situations on a daily basis.

“I love my job and I value my role. There is grief and loss, and sometimes I'm speaking with people in their darkest moments,” he said.

Led by a cast including Weaving, Shabana Azeez and Claudia Karvan, *The Airport Chaplain's* first season of eight

episodes is now in post-production following two months of filming at numerous locations across Victoria, including Melbourne Airport.

Written by Elise McCredie, Sarah Bassiuoni, Mithila Gupta and Thomas Weatherall, with 78 speaking roles and more than 300 extras involved, Troy said the project had given a sizable injection into the state's film and TV industry.

SBS publicity describes *The Airport Chaplain* as an ambitious, bold and big-hearted workplace drama that dives into the high stakes inner workings of a bustling international airport, seen through the struggles and triumphs of the workers who keep it running.

Leading the charge is airport chaplain Tobias Wallace, played by Weaving, who races through unmarked doors with a constantly ringing phone, pockets stuffed with donated cash and a decidedly unorthodox approach to solving the daily

crises of an airport.

Troy said the team had plans for a long-running series, which had already garnered plenty of interest around the world.

“Everyone rushing around in an airport has selfish pursuits, whereas the airport chaplain sees people in need,” she said.

“The more we researched, the more we realised what a great world of emotions an international airport is.

“And from that experience with Martyn, we then delved into the daily ups and downs of other airport staff such as baggage handlers, security, cleaners and flight crews,” Troy said.

“In these times of uncertainty in the world, we believe this series full of humanity and kindness and drama and lightness is really needed.”

*The Airport Chaplain* will hold its world premiere at the Melbourne International Film Festival, running from 6-23 August, and will screen on SBS and SBS On Demand later this year.

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SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES  
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with Evan Turok

# A lacklustre action movie and a fun watch

Romsey movie buff Evan Turok is Star Weekly's film reviewer. Each month he shares his take on recent releases, cult classics, modern favourites and everything in between.



★★★★☆

## Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu (M)

Too many times, my brother and I turned to each other in silent disbelief, and shared a knowing smirk of hopelessness, directed at the soulless, senseless trainwreck of a film that was Jon Favreau's 'The Mandalorian and Grogu.'

A good fantasy or sci-fi movie should leave you with a sense of wonder and inspire you to let your imagination run wild with the possibilities of the world you have paid your \$18 to enter.

So, with that said, I give full credit to 'The Mandalorian and Grogu' for making me wish I had the powers of the Force, if only for the ability to force my eyes open during the tedious two hours-plus of this mind-numbing film.

From the story to the dialogue, the writers served up a course each of dull predictability and cringe-inducing conversation.

The character of the 'Mandalorian' wears a helmet for almost the entire film, so it made complete sense to learn that during the filming of these scenes,

so-called 'lead actor' Pedro Pascal was not the one inside the armour. Instead, he only provided voice-overs for the film. That alone should be enough to show you the level of passion put in by Pascal, which further reflects in his consistently monotone and blasé performance. A poorly paced film that sadly slammed to a grinding halt with any scene featuring the little green Grogu and his occasionally cute, but always dull shenanigans.

Ludwig Göransson has quickly become the most sought-after composer in Hollywood. He provided The Mandalorian and Grogu with a fantastic, futuristic space-western soundtrack that was well and truly above the standard of the film as a whole.

To pair with the music was a handful of exciting, explosion-filled action scenes that are well shot and genuinely exciting whether you are a Star Wars fan or not. There was also a funny and random voice cameo from the great director Martin Scorsese, which was unexpectedly fitting for this month's reviews.

If you are headed to the theatres for this film, try to treat it as a lacklustre action movie rather than an extremely lacklustre Star Wars movie.

★★★★☆

## The Color of Money (M)

Cinema is exciting when the touch of a director's inimitable style can be seen crafting the shots and using the camera in creative ways, creating memorable scenes that, if nothing else, were certainly 'cool'. The Color of Money (1986) follows Eddie Felson (Paul Newman) as an experienced pool hustler trying to wrangle in the proud, young, unbeatable player Vincent Lauria (Tom Cruise) and teach him that the way to make money isn't always to win every game.

There is also a modern tendency to make a movie colourless. The soulless corporations releasing endless still-camerated grey sludge onto your Netflix accounts is almost enough to make you want to read a book. Don't give up hope just yet, because the works of Martin Scorsese are not yet lost to time. Scorsese puts on a master class in shot styling and colouring a scene.

To make a movie colourful, you can't just saturate each frame with every shade and tone under the sun.

Giving life to a scene comes from

a contrast of colours and sticking to a conscious palette that can act as a canvas to stand behind the rest of the film, accentuating the conflicting colours.

The green felt coating a pool table leaks out into the frame but doesn't become plain or repetitive. The dingy, smoke-filled pool halls are hazy but not grey; ironically, The Color of Money earns its name.

Moving from gangster heists to the limited scale of small-time pool hustling, outstretches a branch of relatability that drags us deeper into the world of the film, but runs the risk of stripping away that classic Scorsese edge that always keeps me engaged. Unfortunately, the grounded scale offered no crutch to support the film's final scenes, and just like following in the white ball after the black, the ending fell flat.

The Color of Money isn't the most revolutionary film of all time, but instead a simple story with memorable scenes and characters with genuine depth and coherently written motivations, all directed by one of the greatest of all time. A fun watch right from the break.

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors



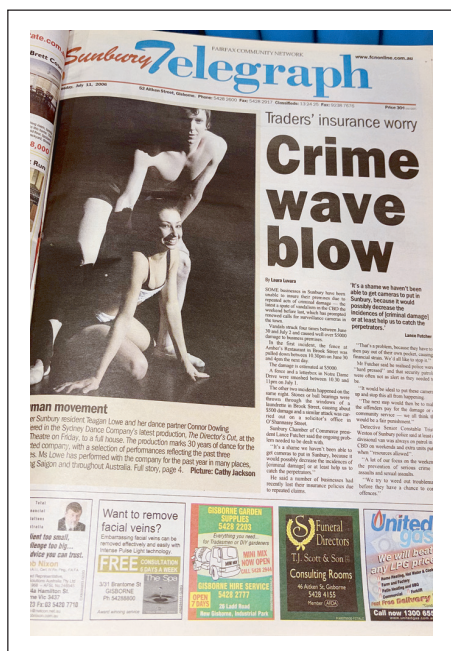
35 years ago  
9 July, 1991

Planning and Housing Minister Andrew McCutcheon has scrapped plans for development (or "betterment") levies at the state level and instead next month will introduce guidelines on developer levies for local councils.



30 years ago  
9 July, 1996

Cuts to job programs will jeopardise the chances of long-term unemployed people returning to work, the Federal Labor MP for Burke, Mr Neil O'Keefe, has warned.



20 years ago  
4 July, 2006

Sunbury resident Rhys Mason was remembered by family and friends as a "generous and enthusiastic young man" during a moving funeral service on Thursday.



10 years ago  
5 July, 2016

Gisborne residents have thrown their support behind a push for a truck bypass of the fast-growing regional centre, with an increasing number of heavy vehicles using roads from Melton and Bacchus Marsh.

# Women In Business

Star Weekly



## Meet Tara - The Heart Behind Hairhouse Sunbury

For the past 16 years, Tara has proudly owned and operated Hairhouse Sunbury, building it into one of the highest-performing salons in the Hairhouse network. Under her leadership, the salon has consistently ranked among the Top 3 salons in Victoria, a reflection of her commitment to excellence and the incredible team she has built.

While the awards and achievements are something to be proud of, Tara will tell you that her greatest passion has always been people—both the clients who walk through the door and the team who make the store what it is every day. She firmly believes that great businesses are built by great people, and she is passionate about creating an environment where both clients and staff feel valued, supported, and inspired. Customer care has always been at the heart of everything she does.

Tara is incredibly proud of the loyal team that has stood beside her over the years. Mel has been part of the Hairhouse Sunbury family for 15 years and is a valued member of the team, whose loyalty and dedication have been a constant throughout the stores journey. Alongside her is Sal, who has been with the store for 10 years. Known for her genuine care, outstanding customer service, and ability to connect with every client, Sal is an invaluable part of the team and someone both clients and colleagues adore. Christine is another talented stylist. Her warm personality and commitment to helping clients look and feel their best make her a much-loved member of the Hairhouse Sunbury family.

Sixteen years on, Tara's passion for the industry is stronger than ever. She genuinely loves what she does, but even more importantly, she loves who she gets to do it with. For Tara, Hairhouse Sunbury isn't just a business—it's a family. The loyalty, passion, and friendships shared by the team have created a culture that clients love being part of, and together they have built one of Victoria's most successful Hairhouse salon stores.



## Meet Carly - The Salon's All-Round Superstar

Hairdressing isn't just a career for Carly—it's been a lifelong passion. With 36 years of experience behind the chair, she's become known for her versatility, creativity, and ability to make every client feel comfortable from the moment they sit down.

A true all-rounder, Carly can do it all. Whether it's precision cutting, colour transformations, styling, or simply making someone feel amazing, she brings the same level of care and professionalism to every appointment. She's also the team member everyone can rely on—so much so that the running joke is that Carly never gets sick!

Outside the salon, Carly has a hidden talent that surprises everyone—she loves playing the harmonica! And while we're clearing up common misconceptions... no, it's not a wig—that incredible head of hair is 100% her own!

With her warm personality, endless reliability, and fantastic sense of humour, Carly is a much-loved member of the Hairhouse Sunbury family. She brings talent, laughter, and positivity to the salon every single day, making her a favourite with both clients and the team.



## Meet Daljeet (Jeet) - Passion, Experience & Beautiful Hair

Known to everyone as Jeet, Daljeet brings over 16 years of experience and an infectious passion for all things hair to the Hairhouse Sunbury team.

Originally moving to Australia in search of a better future, Jeet embraced every opportunity that came her way and turned her passion into a thriving career. Her dedication, hard work, and love for making people feel confident have earned her a loyal following of clients.

If you ask Jeet what she loves most, it's creating beautiful blondes through expert foiling and finishing every appointment with the perfect blow wave. She believes that every client deserves to leave the salon feeling confident, refreshed, and smiling.

With her warm personality, caring nature, and eye for detail, Jeet has become a valued member of the Hairhouse Sunbury family. And when she's not creating beautiful hair, she is an incredible cook who could have easily rocked it on MasterChef!



## Meet Shannon - 15 Years of Talent, Laughter & Great Hair

Known for her warm smile, incredible talent, and genuine care for every client who sits in her chair, Shannon has built lasting relationships with generations of local families. Whether she's creating a fresh new look, sharing a laugh, or making someone feel their absolute best, she brings passion and positivity to work every single day.

Over the years, Shannon has seen trends come and go, mentored team members, and helped make Hairhouse Sunbury the welcoming community it is today. Her experience, creativity, and friendly nature make her a favourite with clients and colleagues alike.

When she's not in the salon creating beautiful hair, you'll find Shannon enjoying time with family and friends, making memories, and bringing the same fun-loving energy she shares with everyone around her.

After 15 incredible years, Shannon isn't just part of the team - she's part of the Hairhouse Sunbury story.



## Meet Anastasia - Energy, Passion & A Rising Bright Future

Anastasia's Hairhouse journey began 9 years ago, joining the Hairhouse Group straight out of school as a retailer. Anastasia then found her home at Hairhouse Sunbury store. From day one, her enthusiasm, positive attitude, and dedication made her a valued member of the team.

As she spent more time in the salon, Anastasia discovered a passion for hairdressing and knew she had found her calling. Today, she is a second-year apprentice who is thriving, constantly learning new skills and embracing every opportunity to grow.

Full of incredible energy and a genuine love for the industry, Anastasia lights up the salon every day. She is committed to making sure every client receives 200% of her best, taking pride in every service and always striving to exceed expectations. Whether she's assisting clients, learning from the senior stylists, or perfecting her craft, her enthusiasm is contagious and her determination is inspiring.

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Thursday 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM • Friday 9:00 AM - 5:30 PM • Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM • Sunday 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Night of hope

Following a devastating accident that left Sunbury local Briohny Kerr with life-changing injuries, the community is rallying to host a fundraising event. The cocktail evening will feature raffles, silent auctions, live auction, great food, and wonderful company, all while raising much-needed funds to support Briohny's ongoing recovery and rehabilitation. Every dollar raised will go directly towards helping Briohny navigate the challenges ahead. The event will be held at Club Sunbury on Saturday 25 July 6-11pm. Tickets are \$100 per person.

■ [trybooking.com/DNBQV](http://trybooking.com/DNBQV)

## Blue Light Disco

Sunbury Blue Light Discos run throughout the year at the Sunbury Memorial Hall for primary school-aged children. Established in 1987, the initiative is led by dedicated Victoria Police members and community volunteers, and are always looking for more volunteers to add to the team. The next disco will be on Friday 7 August from 6-8pm. The theme is Hollywood - dress as your favourite movie star, character or your best Hollywood Glamour. Tickets are \$8.

■ [facebook.com/sunburybluelightdisco](https://facebook.com/sunburybluelightdisco), [sunburybluelight@gmail.com](mailto:sunburybluelight@gmail.com)

## Chamber Poets

The next Chamber Poets Woodend will take place at the Woodend RSL on Saturday 11 July 1-3pm, with special guest poets, live music, open readings, bar and snacks. Donation \$10 at the door.

■ [facebook.com/groups/ChamberPoets/about](https://facebook.com/groups/ChamberPoets/about)

## 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

## 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

## Sunbury Ladies' Badminton Club

The club plays social and competition games every Thursday morning 9.30am-noon, excluding public and school holidays at the Eric Boorman Stadium, Wilsons Lane, Sunbury. All skill levels welcomed.

■ [sunburylbc@gmail.com](mailto:sunburylbc@gmail.com)

## Sunbury Art Society

Join the SAS group for all things arty. The group meets on Fridays and Saturdays at its new location at Artrise in Jacksons Hill from 10am-3pm. New members and beginners welcome.

■ [sunburyartsociety.com](http://sunburyartsociety.com)

## Woodlands Ladies Probus Club of Sunbury

Woodlands Ladies Probus Club is for retired and semi-retired ladies who are looking for new friends and social activities. The club meets on the fourth Monday every month at Club Sunbury, with guest speakers and lunch after.

■ Jessie, 0458 190 254, [woodlandsladies.3429@gmail.com](mailto:woodlandsladies.3429@gmail.com)

## Scottish Country Dancing Group

The Macedon Ranges Scottish Country Dancing Group meet every Thursday, 1-3pm, at Buffalo Stadium, Woodend. The dancing involves social country dancing, not the highland dancing many people think of.

**14 SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES STAR WEEKLY** Tuesday, 7 July, 2026



The group dance in sets, learning different steps and formations - no special clothes needed, just soft flat shoes. The group are a friendly group having fun and keeping fit at the same time. No partners needed, just a smile and sense of fun.

■ Lynne, 0417 331 439, Norm, 0408 592 609

## CWA Sunbury

CWA Sunbury meets second and fourth Mondays at St Mary's Church, 7-19 O'Shanassy Street, Sunbury. All women are welcome, and grandchildren welcome to.

■ Bev Goodman, 0402 988 954

## With One Voice Sunbury

With One Voice Sunbury community choir is changing the world one voice at a time by providing an opportunity for people to meet and experience the joy of singing, often making friends through the shared experiences of singing and performing; although performing is not required.

The choir rehearses each Tuesday from 6.30pm at Goonawarra Neighbourhood House, 8 Gullane Drive, Sunbury. A fun and welcoming choir, new members are welcome.

■ [sunbury@withonevoice.org.au](mailto:sunbury@withonevoice.org.au)

## Neighbourhood garden

Become part of Sunbury's Neighbourhood Garden and grow edible and useful plants in a social group at the Sunbury Neighbourhood House, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury. All skill sets are welcome.

■ [sunburyhouse.com.au](http://sunburyhouse.com.au), 9740 6978

## Malmsbury Farmers and Makers Market

Locals and people from afar get along to this wonderful Farmers Market. Always the third Sunday of the month. Fresh produce, wine, hot food, coffee, plants, artisan foods and crafts that are special. Musical entertainment while you shop and catch up with friends. Located at the picturesque Malmsbury Cricket Ground, Ellesmere Place, Malmsbury from 9am-1pm.

■ Amy, 0423 726 695

## Messy Play in Sunbury

Join in the Messy Play fun with this toddler-focussed program, including messy and sensory child-led play. The program will run from 10-11.30am on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays at the Sunbury Neighbourhood House, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury.

■ [sunburyhouse.com.au](http://sunburyhouse.com.au), 9740 6978

## Shuttles and pickleballs

Macedon Ranges Badminton Club is inviting residents to come and play badminton, or pickleball, or both at Macedon Community Centre. Badminton is played on Tuesdays from 7.30pm and Thursdays at 9.30am. Pickleball is played on Mondays at 6.30pm, Wednesdays at 10.15am and on Tuesday from 10am at the Romsey Recreation Centre.

■ David, 0419 589 425, [macedonrangesbadminton@gmail.com](mailto:macedonrangesbadminton@gmail.com)

## Amateur radio club

The Macedon Ranges Amateur Radio Club meets on the third Saturday of the month at the Woodend RSL Hall, 32 Anslow Street, Woodend, at 10am.

■ [mrrarc.org.au](http://mrrarc.org.au)

## Kyneton Badminton Club

Kyneton Badminton Club is a welcoming, fun and social group that plays on Mondays, at 7pm at the Kyneton Toyota Sports and Aquatic Centre, Victoria Street. All skill levels are welcome.

■ [kynetonbc@gmail.com](mailto:kynetonbc@gmail.com)

## Sunbury Macedon Ranges Masonic Lodge

The group meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm, 73 Main Street, Romsey. New members welcome.

■ Paul, 0479 127 476, Rob, 0428 260 647

## Rotary club

The Sunbury Rotary Club meets every Tuesday at the Ball Court Hotel, 60 Macedon Street, Sunbury, from 7pm.

■ [sunburyrotary@gmail.com](mailto:sunburyrotary@gmail.com)

## Sunbury Ladies Probus Club

The Sunbury Ladies Probus Club meets at 9.45am on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Sunbury Football Social Club rooms.

■ Pat, 0433 789 754, Sylvia, 0417 170 142

# Trees focus of art

Nature has inspired a local artist's latest exhibition at Mount Macedon's The Gallery.

Macedon based artist and member of The Gallery Yvonne O'Connell is the featured artist for July, with a month-long exhibition celebrating her obsession for trees.

O'Connell said she was inspired locally and by her travels for her art.

"During my travels last year to various European destinations, I was inspired by the majesty of the broad leaf trees in summer," she said.

"I was entranced by the dappled sunlight dancing and creating patterns on woodland floors as well as admiring

the gnarled and knobby textures of the ancient oaks."

O'Connell said she was deeply saddened by the felling of the Sycamore Gap Tree in Northumbria.

On her return to Australia, she turned her attention to the beauty of our Australian trees realising they were equally impressive, beginning her obsession with trees.

O'Connell's work aims to capture the essence of those observations through various mark making techniques using charcoal and acrylic paint, exploring a whole range of possibilities when she works.

She said she doesn't visualise an end result rather she takes an explorative journey, constantly reflecting and adjusting her processes.

O'Connell said she hopes viewers to her exhibition will take a moment to pause and appreciate the magnificence of the natural world and the complex beauty of Australian trees because they are fundamentally important to the future of our planet as well as our own physical and mental well-being.

The exhibition will run at The Gallery from Tuesday 7 July until Sunday 2 August.

An opening celebration of the exhibition will be held on Saturday 11 July at 2pm.



Yvonne O'Connell. (Supplied)

## Orchestra brings First Nations story to life

Families can enjoy a captivating introduction to live classical music, storytelling and contemporary First Nations creativity at Wyndham Cultural Centre on Saturday 11 July.

Musicians from the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (MCO) will perform *Wurrtoo: The Wombat Who Fell in Love with the Sky*, based on Tylissa Elisara's multi-award-winning children's novel of the same name.

Narrated by Elisara herself and featuring a quintet of MCO string players, the story follows *Wurrtoo* the wombat on his daring quest to marry the sky in a heartwarming tale of courage, imagination and belonging.

Charming for all ages but especially suited to children aged seven-12, the book was inspired by beloved classics such as *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Blinky Bill* while drawing on stories from Elisara's own *Narunga*, *Kurna* and *Adnyamathanha* heritage.

A new music score by acclaimed Noongar, Yamatji and Wongi composer Aaron Wyatt, brings *Wurrtoo's* journey to life.

Curated by MCO education manager Dr Emma Sullivan, *Wurrtoo* opens with an introduction to string instruments, followed by demonstrations and interactive activities designed to guide listening, encourage participation and help young audiences connect with the story through sound.

Elisara said it was deeply meaningful to see her story brought to life in a new creative form:

"This is a wonderful opportunity to share *Wurrtoo's* story with more children and families in a completely new way, which will introduce audiences to contemporary First Nations storytelling matched with contemporary First Nations classical music," she said.

Sullivan said she was excited to bring *Wurrtoo* to audiences across Victoria:

"When I first came across Tylissa's book, I was struck by the way it tells a timeless tale of adventure and friendship through



Author Tylissa Elisara. (Supplied)

a distinctly Australian lens. Aaron's score beautifully compliments Tylissa's story and brings her characters to life in a really engaging way. It is particularly special to have Tylissa joining us as our narrator, offering audiences the unique opportunity to hear the story of *Wurrtoo* directly from the author. It feels especially fitting to share this exciting collaboration of a First

Nations author and composer during NAIDOC Week," she said.

*Wurrtoo: The Wombat Who Fell in Love with the Sky* will be presented at Wyndham Cultural Centre on Saturday 11 July, from 2- 2.50pm.

Details: [www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/whats-on/wurrtoo-wombat-who-fell-love-sky](http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/whats-on/wurrtoo-wombat-who-fell-love-sky)

## Roll back the years with Creedence revival at Stoney's

Fans of classic rock are set to roll back the years when *Creedence Chronicles Revived* brings the music of Creedence Clearwater Revival to Stoney's Club in Maddingley later this month.

The high-energy tribute show will take to the stage on Saturday 25 July, promising an evening dedicated to one of the most influential rock bands of the late 60s and early 70s.

Billed as Australia's newest Creedence Clearwater Revival tribute act, *Creedence Chronicles Revived* celebrates the unmistakable sound which made CCR a household name, recreating the band's

signature blend of swamp rock, blues, and country-infused rock with powerful vocals, soaring harmonies, and authentic musicianship.

Audiences can expect to hear a string of timeless hits which have remained fan favourites across generations, including *Fortunate Son*, *Proud Mary*, *Born on the Bayou* and *Have You Ever Seen the Rain*.

The show aims to capture the spirit and energy of the original band, delivering the songs with the raw intensity that helped *Creedence Clearwater Revival* become one of the biggest-selling rock acts in history.

Whether you're a lifelong fan who

remembers the songs topping the charts or a younger music lover discovering the greatness of CCR for the first time, the performance promises a nostalgic journey through one of rock's most enduring catalogues.

The Swamp-rock hits kick off at 9pm and will roll on through to 11.30pm at Stoney's Club on Saturday 25 July.

With a setlist packed with singalong classics and unforgettable guitar riffs, *Creedence Chronicles Revived* is inviting music lovers to relive the soundtrack of a generation and get ready to "roll on the river" for a night of classic Creedence hits.

## Substation to host South Asian sounds

Kerfaw, a collective of South Asian artists, musicians and DJs founded in 2022, will take over The Substation in Newport on 11 July with their new program *Testing*.

Described as Kerfaw's most ambitious program yet, *Testing* showcases South Asian artists and performers who bridge and probe between classical, contemporary and experimental music.

Curated and produced by Kamna Muddagouni and Saieesh Shanmugarajah, the program features a line-up that includes a solo set from Aarti Jadu, an artist known for creating cinematic compositions through voice and entrancing electronic compositions.

Among the other performers on the bill is Bengali born and Sydney based DJ Arsonist who will be making his Melbourne debut, violin and mridangam duo Bhairavi Raman and Nanthesh Sivarajah, renowned percussionist and sound artist R Rebeiro, and the theremin-controlled modular synthesisers of Vijay Thillaimuthu.

Beginning at 7pm, those who arrive early can enjoy South Asian food while taking in live instrumental performances steeped in classical and contemporary practices, and then settle in as the performances get more experimental, electronic and moody as the night progresses.

Discounted early bird tickets have already sold out, but cheaper tickets for Hobsons Bay locals and concession car holders are still available, as are those for general admission.

First Nations people can attend for free.

Kerfaw: *Testing* is at The Substation, Newport from 7pm-1am on Saturday 11 July. For more information and to book, go to: <https://thesubstation.org.au/program/kerfaw-testing>



South Asian sound collective, Kerfaw, will take over The Substation in Newport on 11 July. (Sulaiman Enayatzada)



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# SPORTS QUIZ

1. NBA superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo was recently traded to which team?
2. In diving and parkour, what is a gainer?



Giannis Antetokounmpo

3. Which cricketer announced his retirement while England was taking part in the recent third Test versus New Zealand?
4. The Adelaide Thunderbirds and Melbourne Vixens played against each other in the 2026 Grand Final of which competition?
5. Which famous sisters are competing in women's doubles at Wimbledon, their first tournament together since the 2022 US Open?
6. South Korean golfer Hae-ran Ryu recently won which tournament?
7. Which former Illawarra Hawk was recently traded from the Charlotte Hornets to the Minnesota Timberwolves?
8. Which country's men's national soccer team is known as Los Cafeteros?
9. And what does Los Cafeteros mean in Spanish?

10. Dan McKellar last coached which Australia-based Super Rugby Pacific team?
11. During the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Messi broke a record by scoring a hat trick – how many goals is this?
12. What colour are all the soccer cleats at the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
13. Which Belgium and Manchester City winger temporarily left the World Cup camp for the birth of his first child?
14. Which NBA team was the inaugural winner of the in-season NBA Cup tournament?
15. Who did Mirra Andreeva beat in the 2026 French Open final?
16. Australia advanced to the knockout stage of the 2026 FIFA World Cup after finishing second in which group?
17. Which sport features the least amount of balls: billiards, pool or snooker?
18. The FA Cup final has been played at which stadium every year since 2007?



Mirra Andreeva

19. Which team selected Canadian Gavin McKenna first overall at the 2026 NHL draft?
20. Which football confederation does Australia compete in for World Cup qualification?
21. The Illyria Armadillos are a fictional soccer team from which movie?
22. In handball, how many players are on the court at once?
23. And in which year was handball first played at the Olympics?
24. Lucy Cronin has joined the leadership group of which AFLW team for the 2026 season?
25. What is the nickname of Australia's quadball team?
26. True or false: one of the six 'colour' balls in snooker is pink?
27. 'Next Stars' is a player development program in which league?
28. Who is the current WWE Women's Champion?
29. Which AIHL team plays their home games out of the Hunter Ice Skating Stadium?
30. The Pittsburgh Pirates play which sport?

1. Miami Heat 2. A backflip with forward momentum 3. Ben Stokes 4. Super Netball 5. Serena and Venus Williams 6. 2026 Women's PGA Championship 7. LaMelo Ball 8. Colombia 9. The Coffee Growers 10. New South Wales Waratahs 11. Three 12. Pink 13. Jeremy Doku 14. Los Angeles Lakers 15. Maja Chwalinska 16. Group D 17. Billiards (three) 18. Wembley Stadium 19. Toronto Maple Leafs 20. Asian Football Confederation (AFC) 21. She's the Man 22. 14 23. 1936 24. Collingwood 25. The Dropbeats 26. True 27. NBL 28. Rhea Ripley 29. Newcastle Northerns 30. Baseball

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# It's all about style for GR

By Chris Riley, Marque Motoring

Great to finally catch up with the Toyota C-HR GR Sport.

We missed out on driving this car the first time around when it just got the suspension job.

But it was worth the wait because the GR Sport now gets some extra power, with a larger 2.0-litre based hybrid system.

And it shows, remaining responsive to the throttle even with two adults and a couple of kids on board – although we weren't surprised when they complained about a lack of legroom in the back.

More on that in a minute.

## Styling

Launched in late 2016 and now in its second generation, a rationalised lineup sees three models, all of them hybrid with a choice of two powertrains and either front- or all-wheel drive.

Adopting Toyota's new 'Hammer Head' design language, C-HR is distinguished by 17- or 19-inch alloys, LED lights with automatic high beam, a rear spoiler plus a grained pattern for the front grille, black bumpers and pillar trim.

Originally priced from \$29,990, the price has grown, with the GR Sport added in 2019.

Entry GXL is priced from \$46,940 and the flashy, better equipped Koba is priced from \$53,890.

Both come with a 1.8-litre four-cylinder hybrid powertrain, together with a seven-speed CVT style transmission and front-wheel drive.

This hybrid setup is shared with many of Toyota's other models, including Corolla, Corolla Cross and the Lexus CT hatch.

Our test vehicle, top of the line GR Sport, is priced from \$58,890 plus on-roads, with all-wheel drive and a larger 2.0-litre hybrid.

Two-tone paint adds \$775, two-tone plus premium paint \$1550 and two-tone plus premium paint and a panoramic sunroof \$2700.

Toyota describes the second-generation C-HR as a premium offering.

Inside, the fit out uses a range of recycled materials and no animal-derived products.

Standard kit includes heated sport front seats with combination suede-like and fabric upholstery, powered driver seat with memory, dual-zone climate air with nanoe X air cleaning technology, ambient lighting with colour selection and privacy glass for the rear and rear-side windows.

Unique to the GR Sport is combination suede upholstery with leather accents (both synthetic), GR-branded aluminium scuff plates and floor mats, and a perforated GR Sport steering wheel with heating functionality.

There's also adaptive cruise, a digital rear-view mirror, keyless smart entry and start, auto LED lights and wipers, auto-levelling bi-LED headlights, electronic parking brake, front and rear parking sensors, and a 4.2-inch colour driver display and a powered-operated tailgate.

Koba and GR Sport both get a tyre repair kit in lieu of a spare.

C-HR is offered with the Toyota Warranty Advantage, consisting of a five-year/unlimited kilometre term with capped-price servicing for the first five years/75,000km (whichever comes first) and each 12-month/15,000km service costs \$250.

## Infotainment

Infotainment comes in the form of a 12.3-inch touchscreen, with Bluetooth,



The previous 1.8-litre hybrid has been replaced by a larger, more powerful 2.0-litre unit. (Pictures: Supplied)

## RATINGS

Looks:	8.5
Performance:	7.5
Safety:	8
Thirst:	7.5
Practicality:	5
Comfort:	7
Tech:	7
Value:	6
Overall:	7.1

voice recognition, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, cloud-based satellite navigation, and AM/FM and DAB+ digital radio.

Both Koba and GR Sport score premium, nine-speaker JBL audio.

There's also wireless smartphone charging, USB-C and 12V charging ports and a rear USB-C accessory port.

Cloud-based navigation requires a network connection for the latest map, traffic, and routing information.

When connectivity is limited, it uses previously downloaded info to maintain coverage across the entire route.

Specifically, the cloud feature requires an active Drive Connect subscription.

A complimentary one-year subscription includes Safety and Security features, Remote Connect, Multimedia Connect and Driving Insights, accessible through the myToyota Connect app.

## Safety

Comprehensive five-star safety includes 10 airbags, panoramic view camera, colour head-up display and forward collision warning, brake assist and autonomous emergency braking.

The Toyota Safety Sense suite includes the pre-collision safety system, active cruise control, lane trace assist, parking support brake, road sign assist (speed signs only), safe exit assist and more.

## Engines/transmissions

Initially the GR Sport was all show and no go, but the previous 1.8-litre hybrid has been replaced by a larger more powerful 2.0-litre unit that produces a substantial 146kW of power in total – 43kW more than before.

That's a significant increase and, even better and it is impressive that this has been achieved without any adverse effect on fuel consumption, which remains 4.1L/100km for this model.

With a 43-litre tank, it still takes standard 91 unleaded too. Combined CO2 emissions are listed at 94g/km.

Overseas, Toyota offers a 164kW plug-in hybrid (PHEV) version.

As is always the case Toyota does not

supply a combined torque figure for its hybrids.

If it helps, the petrol engine produces 188Nm at 4400 rpm and the two electric motors chime in with a combined 290Nm.

## Driving

In a nutshell, C-HR priorities form over function.

While it's a great looking car that has stood the test of time, the design demands compromise.

For a start, although marketed as a five-seater, rear legroom is tight and it is better viewed as a 2+2 (part-time back seat).

Even then it's a bit of a squeeze and the plunging roofline is problematic. It means you need to duck when getting in and out of the car – or pay the penalty (ouch).

Indeed, at 4362mm in length, the Euro-designed C-HR is actually 28mm shorter than before, although the wheelbase remains the same 2640mm.

But it's 37mm wider than its predecessor which means more shoulder room, but you'll still find yourself fighting over the centre armrest.

Settling into the driver's seat it becomes clear it was designed to accommodate a smaller, younger frame – so older drivers take note.

The back seat meanwhile is claustrophobic, lacks legroom, doesn't have any air outlets and there's no fold down armrest.

Further, there aren't any door bins to be found in the back and only one seatback pocket on the passenger side, with one USB-C port for those in the back to share.

Thankfully, Toyota has dispensed with the awkward, concealed rear door handles, which have been replaced by pop-out handles.

The privacy glass also makes it difficult to see out of the back.

The boot is on the smaller side and conceals a tyre repair kit.

However, the cabin has a premium feel and as before it's worth taking a minute to check it out.

Check out the textures, finishes and the way panels flow into each other – it's really something.

Though, closer inspection reveals much of it is hard plastic.

The infotainment screen is angled towards the driver, but remains separate units to the instrument cluster.

A digital rear vision mirror is fitted, but is a waste of space. It's difficult to bring into focus and liable to make you carsick – we'd ask if it could be deleted?

None of the cupholders will accommodate a sports drink bottle and the small centre cupholders will not accept a thermal mug for tea or coffee.

There's a single USB-C port at the front of the console, with another USB-C port and 12-volt outlet inside the console.

GXL and Koba are front-drive while GR Sport is all-wheel drive.

The extra power shows behind the wheel, with greater electrical assistance where it is needed around town.

The car also spends more time in EV mode, thanks to the better battery and electric motor combination.

But this is offset to some extent by the extra weight of two electric motors and all-wheel drive, which pushes the weight up to 1575kg – 85kg more than Koba and a whopping 120kg more than GXL.

The eCVT transmission provides seven steps or simulated gears that provide a sportier drive, but it lacks any way to change gears manually.

There are three drive modes – Normal, Eco and Sport – along with a Custom mode that allows drivers to set up things the way they want it.

That said, you can't change modes quickly and certainly not on the fly.

The only way to do so seems to be via the touchscreen and that requires the car to be in Park.

There is however an EV or stealth mode button located in the centre console, but this is restricted to low speeds.

The petrol engine will kick in if you punch the accelerator too hard.

Based on a revised version of Toyota's TNGA-C platform, suspension is Mac strut at the front and double wishbones at the rear across the lineup.

Overseas the GR rides on 20-inch wheels, but Toyota decided to with 19s here – no doubt in recognition of our crappy roads.

Ride and handling are very good however, even on said roads, with grippy Bridgestone Turanza rubber.

Don't go getting the wrong idea, however, because the C-HR even in GR form is still no sports car.

The steering feels rubbery at times and the drive experience is far from engaging.

You need to push it hard to get the best out of the car, but the CVT's ability to deliver the goods is limiting.

Under hard acceleration, the engine becomes harsh and noisy, and sounds a bit like a lawnmower about to run out of fuel.

In the end you'll run out of power before you run out of grip.

We were getting 5.7L/100km after more than 300km behind the wheel, including some quick corners, which is still pretty good.

## Summing up

Damn. The C-HR is a car I like the look of but one that always seems to fall short.

It's a hybrid clad in a sporty disguise, short on power, short on space and short on practicality.

Maybe the fully-electric C-HR will be the one that does the trick when it arrives around the middle of 2027?

The letters C-HR stand for Compact High Rider, Cross Hatch Runabout or Coupé High-Rider – in case you're wondering.



Western Bulldogs' Jorja Livingstone and Williamstown's Georgia De Angelis. 563547\_14



Western Bulldogs' Erica Fowler. 563547\_20



Werribee's Sam Donegan. 563555\_12



Werribee's Noah Gadsby is tackled by Brayden Crossley. 563555\_16



Werribee Districts' Jack Fletcher. 563557\_02

# Big wins in big matches

There were plenty of good games across the weekend, including local rivalries, top of the table clashes and grand final rematches. Star

Weekly photographer Ljubica Vrankovic was out shooting some of the action.



Sunbury Kangaroos' Lachlan Treweek. 563558\_11



Caroline Springs' Max Hudson. 563557\_05



Sunbury Kangaroos' Ryan Pretty. 563558\_03



The light fades at Joe Brown Reserve. 563559\_01



Keilor's Liam Hude. 563559\_03

# Thunder plays long game

By Tara Murray

East Sunbury has lifted its levels as it tries to match it with the best in the Essendon District Football League women's division 1 competition.

The Thunder has been one of the big improvers this season, with four wins after not winning any games its first two seasons.

Thunder coach Mark Hourigan said the group now has an understanding what division 1 football is like, having played in division 2 the past two seasons.

"It's been an interesting season," he said.

"We didn't have any expectations of where we would finish. It's a different level of footy and I have to keep reminding the ladies.

"It's been a good start and we've come across the better sides and we've had to re-

assess."

Hourigan said they had increased their training levels, and improving their fitness was one of the key areas they had worked on.

He said they saw the benefit of that in their draw against second side Burnside Heights, in tough conditions.

With a wind blowing to one side of the ground, it made it hard for both sides to score.

"It was one of our weakest sides we've put on the park with injuries," he said.

"We had new players step up and rise to the occasion and it raises the expectations of the players that we're looking to get back.

"Our depth has been great and most players have played a couple of games.

"They're working away to stay in the side and some and working away to get back into



Ruby Taranto. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 546075\_15

the side."

Hourigan said while wins this season were good for the group's confidence, they were more focused on the long time success of the program.

He said they were seeing improvement throughout and they wanted that to contin-

ue for the rest of the season.

The Thunder lost their most recent match to Keilor Park, 15.15 (105)-1.2 (8).

There was a competition wide bye on the weekend before the final four rounds.

The Thunder finishes its season with some winnable games, including against the two Sunbury teams, which they beat earlier in the year.

The first of those is against the Sunbury Lions on 11 July in a twilight match at Clarke Oval.

"We've taken a lot of learnings from all our losses," Hourigan said.

"It's been a learning curve and we see where those other teams are at, and where the competition is at."

In other matches this Saturday, Gisborne is at home to Craigieburn and the Sunbury Kangaroos face Roxburgh Park.



Riley Vernon. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 541887\_07

## Riley steps up as new coach of the Dragons

By Tara Murray

Gisborne cricket star Riley Vernon has achieved a lot in his cricket career so far, but being named the Dragons' new coach sits at the top.

Vernon takes over the coaching role from his brother Jarryd Vernon, who stood down at the end of last season due to family and work commitments.

"It's pretty much a dream come true," Riley said.

"I've had some good achievements in my life with cricket, this is my proudest achievement.

"I grew up playing at the club, I've won a few premierships and taken over from my brother.

"My grandfather played in a premiership with them in 1970."

Vernon, who has run his own coaching academy and helped bring juniors through the club, said being a senior coach was always on the horizon.

He thought he might have been in line to replace his brother when he stood down and when the club asked, he didn't hesitate in saying yes.

While Jarryd has stepped down as coach, he will continue on as a player.

Riley laughed that he would get to tell his older brother what to do now, but was thrilled he was playing on.

"We are best mates and get on well," he said.

"It makes a massive difference having someone with his playing ability and his knowledge and leadership."

Vernon will also have the support of his mentor Dan Salpietro, who returns to the club in a massive signing for the club and competition.

Salpietro has played for Victoria and with Adelaide Strikers in the BBL after starting his career at Gisborne.

Earlier this year, Salpietro was appointed men's second XI coach at Lancashire County, one of England's most prestigious first-class counties.

Vernon said once he got the gig as coach he gave Salpietro, who is his business partner, a call and it was easy to get him on board.

"He's still playing in the UK," he said. "He's working with Jimmy Anderson and Jos Buttler.

"To have him at the club is massive not only for his playing ability, but his leadership role."

The Dragons have also signed Sam McCaskill, who returns to the club from Victorian Premier Cricket.

Vernon said the pair went through the junior and state ranks together and he had been keen to get him back to the club where he began his career.

While Jay King has joined Sunbury United, Vernon said everyone else from last season was returning.

Vernon said the group was hungry for success after falling short last season.

Rain washed out most of day one of the grand final and Woodend got the draw it needed to claim the premiership, having finished on top of the ladder.

"Everyone was flat due to the weather," he said.

"We caught up a couple of weeks ago and I've never seen a team so hungry for success in my time at the club."

Meanwhile, Brianna Woodburn has been reappointed the Dragons women's coach.

## BFNL vote goes Gisborne's way

Ballarat Football Netball League clubs have again voted in favour of Gisborne joining the league.

Clubs went back to vote on Tuesday night for the Bulldogs to join the Ballarat league in 2027, after AFL Victoria and the Bendigo Football Netball League knocked back the Bulldogs application to leave the league last year.

While the vote was 90 per cent last year, Bulldogs president Tony Brancatisano said the vote was about 79 per cent this time round.

"We had a bit of an inclination that it would go that way speaking to a few people," he said.

"We have to wait for the next bit, which is Bendigo having its vote. We'll sit there and see what they come back with."

Brancatisano said the drop in the percentage supporting the move didn't concern them, as it was still comprehensive.

He said with clubs having different vote numbers and committees, there was always bound to be some change.

"At the end of the day we got across the line, it didn't make any difference," he said.

"Everyone has different views and we're happy with the vote and that is the main thing.

"If it had come back that we had just got across the line, you think do we want to go there?"

Brancatisano said they were expecting the Bendigo league to vote in the next couple of weeks.

He had previously told Star Weekly the Bendigo league had told them that they would let them leave this year.

Helping Gisborne's case is Marong and Maiden Gully YCW members have voted for their clubs to join the Bendigo league.

Brancatisano said they hoped at least one of those clubs would get the tick of approval to help their case.

He said they would worry about what happens if the Bendigo league again knocks them back if it happens.

"They know we have to get out," he said.

"We're struggling with our under-18s and using under-17s on permits every week.

"That is why we're going. Retention, recruiting and playing closer to home."

# Big night out for Warriors

By Tara Murray

The Western Warriors produced one of their best ever wins, in what turned out to be a massive night for the club in the Victorian Netball League.

After a number of close misses, the Warriors finally got over the line against the North East Blaze.

There was no close result this time, as the Warriors won, 68-55.

Backing it up, the Warriors 23 and under side pulled off an upset win against the Blaze, 57-53, to keep their finals hopes alive.

Warriors' coach Kim Bailey was ecstatic with the wins

"It was the best game that we [champi-

onship] have ever played," she said.

"It was phenomenal and everyone clicked at the right end.

"The attack end was insane and the defence was really strong too."

Bailey said the Blaze had been their nemesis since they entered the competition, with all previous matches between the sides decided by three goals or less.

While they had shared the points, the Warriors had never got over the line before Wednesday night.

The Warriors led by three goals at quarter time, before the margin increased to seven goals at the main break.

It was 13 goals at three quarter time before the Warriors finished it off as they won the last quarter.

"Ellie [Bird] was a target and the work rate of Mia Lavis, Ruby Shannon and Kali Dolphin was just insane," Bailey said.

"The pressure valve might have come off a little bit.

"Megan Allan had her best game for the club and Eliza Gollant, who had struggled for a few weeks, has hit her straps."

Bailey said with Lavis and Shannon having the chance to recover after a few hectic months, they appeared refreshed.

The other key area of the win was the Warriors tidying up their turnovers with the side having changed their mindset.

Normally averaging in the 20s for turnovers, they had 15 against the Blaze.

Bailey said their conversion from turnover was at 81 per cent as well.

Bird finished with 48 goals, while Lavis scored 20.

The Warriors sit 11th on the ladder with five wins, and are six points outside the top six with two rounds remaining.

The group knows a number of losses have hurt them.

The Warriors 23 and under side sits in eighth spot, two points outside the top six with two rounds remaining.

On Wednesday night, they beat the Blaze, which was sitting second.

Bailey said the shooting combination of Ella Closter (41 goals) and Leona Hristovska (16 goals) were sensational.

The Warriors face the Geelong Cougars on Wednesday night.



Cody Bramble. (Supplied).

## Cody Bramble embraces a second chance

By Tara Murray

The hard work in returning from a serious knee injury has paid off for the Sunbury Lions' Cody Bramble who has earned a Victorian Football League contract.

Bramble signed his first VFL contract with the Footscray Bulldogs last season, but a knee injury in round two of the Ballarat Football League season sidelined him for the year.

Having worked his way back to some strong form with the Lions, Bramble has no signed a mid-season contract with the Bulldogs.

"It's definitely exciting," he said. "I've worked pretty hard for it.

"Obviously coming off last year a horrific knee injury, that cut my season short.

"I only played one and half games last year, to come back from that and earn another contract is really exciting for me,

"So grateful for the opportunity."

Bramble said all his rehab at the Bulldogs and became a train on player for the VFL squad this season.

He said he knew by hanging around the club that if he played some good footy that an opportunity might arise.

"I had to put my head down and work hard for it," he said.

Bramble said his rehab was tough at times including learning to walk again, before getting back into jogging and sprinting.

He said the support from the Bulldogs in his recovery process kept him accountable.

Bramble made his return from injury in the Sunbury Lions round four clash.

He has been named the best in five of the eight games that he has played.

"This year I'm pretty happy with how I'm going," Bramble said.

"A lot of people including myself probably thought it would take a little bit longer to find some good form.

"Obviously doing my full rehab, gave me confidence to hit the ground running."

The Lions have had an up and down season so far, with Bramble saying he was yet to play in back-to-back wins.

He said he hoped that changed in the back part of the season.

As well as some success with the Lions, Bramble is keen to make his VFL debut having only played a practice match last season.

"That's the goal in mind," he said. "I'm going to try my hardest to hopefully get a game this year."

Bramble said while AFL was always a dream of his, he was enjoying his life now playing footy with his mates.

"Being 23 now, the door might be closing a little bit," he said.

"I just want to enjoy my football and play with mates for now and try and strive to play a few VFL games as I haven't been able to do that, just that goal in mind."

Making Bramble's time at the Bulldogs more special is his brother Lachie Bramble, is on the Bulldogs AFL list.

Cody said it's pretty surreal to be at the same club.

"They're normally finishing up as we're rocking up," he said. "It's good to see him in the hallways and say hello.

"It's really good to be a part of the same organisation, I've got his back and he's got mine."

## Inconsistency costs Cannons

By Tara Murray

The Calder Cannons are searching for more consistency in the back part of the Talent League boys season.

The Cannons, who had a bye on the weekend, have a 4-6 record.

Coach Sam Willatt said the results sum up where they are at this season so far.

"We've had some strong performances and some strong performances in moments in games but we haven't quite been able to piece it all together.

"We've been quite inconsistent. We are a bottom age heavy side so you expect that inconsistency.

"The last two weeks we haven't got the results against some really strong teams. We've been really good but didn't get the rewards for effort."

Willatt said there was always the challenge in the Talent League competition of having your best side available.

With injuries, school football and Vic Metro commitments it is a juggling at times.

Willatt said it's about being patient at times.

Two of their stars, Blake Justice and Koby Bewick have returned in recent weeks.

Justice played one match before playing in Vic Metro's second match of the national championships.

"Koby has come back in the midfield. He was his first game back since April," he said

"He found a lot of ball and defended really nicely. He's such a good kick.

"Blake came back in the midfield the week before."

Speaking before Metro's third game of the championships on Friday, Willatt said Bewick and Nic Staropoli, who had been starring at Talent League level, would be pushing to play.

Neither were named in the final team.

Willatt said Staropoli had his defensive and offensive mix right and was setting the standard for intercept marking in the competition.

Other standouts for the Cannons recently are a couple of bottom agers in Dylan Romeril and Oliver Noto, who weren't getting as much recognition as some of the others after they put together some strong football in recent weeks.

The Cannons had a bye on the weekend, with plenty of byes across the competition at this time of year.

# Tigers shoot for the finals

By Tara Murray

Kyneton now has its finals hopes in its own hands in the Riddell District Netball League.

The Tigers got a crucial win against Macedon on Saturday to sit inside the top six as it comes to the pointy end of the season.

The Tigers were able to sneak home on Saturday, 50-48 with both sides missing players.

The day wasn't without drama for the Tigers, with coach David O'Hare not making it to the court after car trouble.

"There was a bit of a pothole on the way home from training on Thursday night," he said.

"It damaged the tyre and wheel but I didn't know. I got to Sunbury yesterday [Saturday] and all the warning indicators were saying something was wrong.

"When I got into Sunbury it was not just

the tyre, but the whole wheel and had to have it towed back to Melbourne."

O'Hare then went into damage control and spent an hour on the phone making sure all the teams were arranged and ready to go.

He said by all reports it was a really strong performance from the team.

Grace Tremayne and Ellie Torney both stepped up from B-grade to make their A-grade debuts.

O'Hare said it was exciting for the club. "I've been told they played well when they were on the court," he said. "They gave us some rotations and changed things up a little bit.

"We have three or four in B-grade that we could have used. We have a bit of an eye to the future and we want to see where the kids are as they may be in A-grade in the future.

"It's a positive for us."

Ellie Bird was again dangerous in goal as



Ellie Bird. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 560548\_13

she shot 46 goals.

O'Hare said the former professional netballer was having an impact on and off the

court.

"By all accounts she is enjoying herself and she's doing some coaching with the juniors along with Kris [Kristiana Manua]. There's a good vibe around the club."

O'Hare said it was important for the side to get the win in a close game after having some narrow losses.

The Tigers have six wins for the season and sit sixth on the ladder.

Just eight points separates second down to seventh, but the Tigers have played one less game than all those other sides.

O'Hare said they know they have their own fate in their hands.

"We have a decent draw," he said. "We play Woodend-Hesket in the last game and Wallan again.

"The first aim is to make finals and see what happens.

"We are good enough to go with every-one, it's just about doing it on the day."



Charlie Thompson. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 560542\_09

## Tigers take on challenge and claim a scalp

By Tara Murray

Kyneton got the scalp it was after in the Riddell District Football League, overrunning Macedon on Saturday.

While cemented in the top six, the Tigers are keen to move up the ladder with not much separating third and sixth.

The Cats, who are also in the top six, presented a strong challenge which the Tigers took on and won.

After a slow start, the Tigers left themselves work to do in the final quarter as they trailed by 14 points at three quarter time.

The Tigers kicked the only four goals of the final quarter to come over the top and win, 10.13 (73)-9.9 (63).

Tigers' coach Ethan Foreman said it was a well needed win for the group.

"We needed a bit of a scalp to get our season back on track," he said.

"We didn't play our best footy in the first half, but in the second half we got our game style going.

"We were able to come over the top of them."

Foreman thought having got their game going in the third quarter, that they still had a little more in the tank.

He said they hadn't hit their straps.

"In the off-season we worked on fitness and speed," he said.

"When we got on top we wanted to keep pounding the rock and back in the work.

"There was the chance to not ease up and keep pushing. It was a tough day but we got on top in a massive last quarter."

Foreman said Haydn Smith had got on top in the ruck and with their potent forward line they were able to capitalise.

Isaac Barassi kicked three goals for the Tigers.

Smith, Hamish Yunghanns and Caleb Fisher were named their best.

Sam Indian, Charlie Rossetti and Leo Webb were named the Cats best.

Among those who were out there for the Tigers, was late signing Shane Page.

Page, a premierships captain at Darley, signed with the Tigers before the transfer window closed.

Foreman said Page is one of the best players to come out of Kyneton the past 20 years.

"We've been trying to get him back for years," he said. "He left the club in 2013 when it folded.

"He has a huge CV and I grew up play-

ing a lot of footy with him. Some of his best mates have been working on him for a few years.

"There was a little itch this year and we got him in on the eve of clearances.

"It's not only his football, but from a leadership point of view he is the exact type of player we needed."

The Tigers remain in sixth spot but are now only a game behind Melton South and Macedon.

Foreman said while the top two would be hard to catch, there was a real battle for the rest of the finals spots..

"We want to continue to get the wins and get the four points," he said.

"If we could get the wins and some percentage, that would be good."

Elsewhere, Lachie Smart kicked 10 goals for Wallan as it accounted for the Gisborne Giants, 23.10 (148)-12.11 (83).

Melton Centrals got the win against Woodend-Hesket, 12.10 (82)-6.11 (46).

Riddell was too strong for Lancefield, winning 19.12 (126)-5.5 (36) with Mark Kovacevic named the Bombers best with six goals.

Diggers Rest was too good for Melton South as it won, 12.13 (85)-8.10 (58).



Joshua Nanninga. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 563558\_12

## Roos win derby

The Sunbury Kangaroos made it three wins in a row and got one back against crosstown rivals East Sunbury in the Essendon District Football League division 2 competition.

Both teams were entering the match searching for their sixth win of the season, with the Thunder having won the early season encounter between the two sides.

There was not much between the two sides in the first half with the Kangaroos leading by nine points at half time.

A three goal to one third quarter at John McMahon Reserve increased the lead to 22 points heading into the final quarter.

When the Kangaroos kicked the first goal of the final quarter, the margin was at a game hit 28 points. The Thunder then kicked three quick goals to reduce the margin to nine points at 16 minutes had played in the final quarter. Neither side was able to find a goal after that as the Kangaroos won, 11.7 (73)-9.7 (61).

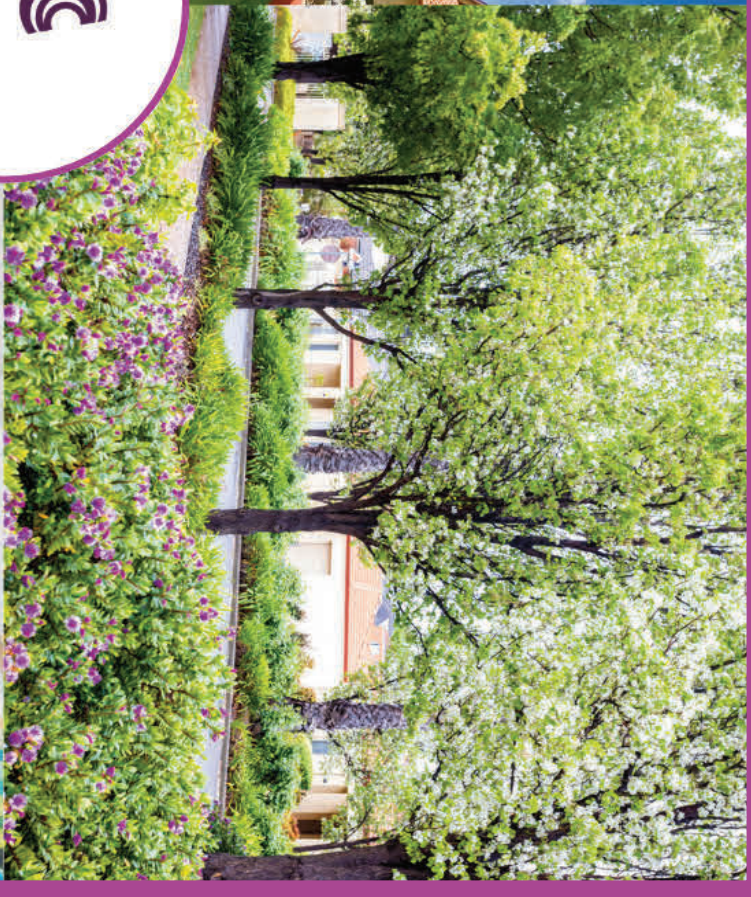
Rhylee Lofts, Mitch Streiff and Rhys Magin kicked two goals each for the Kangaroos.

Sebastian Sanderson, Joshua Nanninga and Jakeb Coles were named their best.

For the Thunder, four players kicked two goals each in the absence of Todd Elton. Chris Samagalski, Daniel Paulete and Joel Bonnici were named the side's best.

After six rounds, the Kangaroos sit in sixth spot a game and percentage outside the top four, while East Sunbury is a further game back.

This weekend, the Kangaroos are on the road against Keilor Park, while the Thunder is away to Burnside Heights.



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