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Star Weekly
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Abi Bradbury with her dog Abraham. (Damjan Janevski) 571044_04 **Inset:** Abi's winning portrait of Ragnar. (Supplied).

Capturing success

Sunbury pet photographer Abi Bradbury's portrait of Sunbury's most famous feline has earned a distinction at the International Pet Photography Awards.

Ms Bradbury's portrait of Ragnar, a Maine Coon in Sunbury who has amassed a wide social media following was awarded a silver distinction at the awards, and also scored in the top 100 of all entries.

While she usually photographs dogs – and as a dog owner herself – this was her first time entering in the cat category, and was thrilled by the result.

"[Ragnar] was just so much fun to work with, he was like working with a dog actually," she said.

Ms Bradbury said the judges feedback said the styling was outstanding, and that Ragnar "scared" the judges with his intense stare.

"The awards also provide written feedback on every image entered, so for me it's not only about receiving an award," she said.

"It's also an opportunity to have my work assessed by photographers who specialise in this field and to keep developing my work."

Site plans queried

By Georgia Tacey

HiQ says a data centre, residential development and further expansion at its Sunbury Road site are only being explored by the company, as it quietly restricted access to all mentions of the proposal on its website.

HiQ's $15 billion investment pipeline brochure for its Sunbury Eco-Hub site was publicly available at its invest.hiq.au website, but the website was made private after *Star Weekly* put questions to the company about its proposals.

The brochure, seen by *Star Weekly,* spruiked plans for long-term growth at the Sunbury Road site, including proposals for up to one gigawatt of a battery energy storage system, hyperscale data centre up to one gigawatt, an industrial park covering 50-100 hectares, and medium to high density residential housing over 50 hectares, alongside its waste-to-energy proposal and existing resource solutions.

"Our $15 billion investment pipeline will transform the site into a connected precinct where people live, work and shop - creating an enduring platform for innovation, investment and long-term value," the brochure said.

However, a HiQ spokesperson told *Star Weekly* that the only active and confirmed proposal is for the waste-to-energy facility, with all other ideas only in the exploration phase with no confirmed details or applications currently being developed.

"HiQ's site is earmarked in the 2017 Sunbury South Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) as future commercial and industrial land, and we are always looking at what's next to meet the needs identified in the PSP," the spokesperson said.

"With energy and housing being two of the most critical issues shaping the future generation, we are exploring what might be possible.

"These ideas are in the exploration phase only. No details are confirmed, nor are any applications currently being developed."

HiQ said as its broader plan for the site evolves over the coming years, it will continue to engage with the community and all stakeholders for feedback and input.

When questioned about making the website private, HiQ referred back to its statement, confirming it would keep the community informed if more detailed plans are developed.

The No Sunbury Waste Incinerator Group said it was concerned about the potential for a data centre, battery energy storage system and industrial park to be added to the site alongside the waste-to-energy facility.

Continued: Page 2

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Call for data centre halt

By Georgia Tacey

Hume council has called for a moratorium on data centres.

At the 10 August meeting, councillors unanimously have called for the state government to introduce a moratorium on approvals for new data centres and expansion of currently existing data centres until a parliamentary inquiry has been completed.

Councillor Karen Sherry put forward the notice of motion to write to state leaders to request the moratorium, following increased community scrutiny on proposed data centres in Hume.

A number of data centres have been proposed across Hume, including one set for the former Ford site at Barry Road in Campbellfield.

Cr Sherry said some councillors spoke to Data Centres Australia chief executive Belinda Dennett at the recent National Growth Areas Alliance meeting, who revealed there are currently 92 data centres in the pipeline across Australia.

"Each time one is proposed and developed, there's going to be cumulative impacts," she said.

"People in this community are really feeling it. And it's always the north and west of Melbourne, the more working class suburbs because of the supply of industrial land that we have."

Councillor John Haddad, whose ward takes in Campbellfield, supported the motion, and said residents told him they did not fully understand what was being proposed at the former Ford site.

"Lebanese, Arabic, Italian, Assyrian, Caladian, and Turkish languages are the most spoken languages [in the area]. Nothing was sent to the households in a language that they can understand," he said.

"I don't think this is good enough for the Campbellfield community. People deserve to understand what is being proposed next door to their homes and they deserve enough time to ask questions."

The council will request the state-led inquiry to include public hearings and invite evidence from scientific experts, community organisations, Traditional Owners, local residents, local governments, industry representatives and relevant government agencies to consider the full scope of impacts of data centres and recommend appropriate regulatory framework.

The council will also call for a joint state and local government taskforce to develop planning, environmental and infrastructure policy responses for the siting and operation of data centres following findings from the proposed parliamentary inquiry.



Joanna Essex and Susan Doyle with their card creations. (Damjan Janevski). 570976_01

Cards for a cause at neighbourhood house

Woodend Neighbourhood House (WNH) is helping make birthdays extra special for seniors across Australia.

WNH has partnered with Homemade Cards for Seniors Australia to help create cards for aged care residents and Meals on Wheels recipients, in an effort to brighten people's days and spread cheer to those who need it.

The workshop, on Tuesday 11 August was the house's first, with a total of 148 homemade cards created by community members which will now be donated.

WNH activities coordinator Helen Edwards said it was a great opportunity to support those in the community who might feel disconnected or lonely.

"It was lovely to see people come together, get creative and make something for someone they may never meet," she said.



Jeannie Murray, Vicki Maquignaz and Victoria Whitelock helped design birthday cards. (Damjan Janevski). 570976_02

"Handmade cards are such a simple gesture, but they can mean so much to someone who might otherwise receive very little personal mail.

"We're grateful to everyone who came along and helped us spread a little kindness through creativity."

WNH will host a Christmas card making session on Tuesday 27 October, and is currently accepting donations of card making supplies such as card stock, envelopes, decorative papers, stamps, old greeting cards (for repurposing), glue or other creative embellishments with a Christmas theme.

The workshop is open to anyone to participate, with registrations required.

HiQ 'exploring' expansion plans at Sunbury Road site

From page 1:

The group also has concerns about the proposal's mention of adding residential housing to the area, group spokesperson Alison Medforth said.

The group, which was established to fight against HiQ's proposed plans to build a waste-to-energy facility at its Sunbury Road site, has been active against the proposal since 2025, holding a number of rallies and protests in Sunbury and Melbourne.

The No Sunbury Waste Incinerator Group is planning another rally at Spring Street on Tuesday 25 August, which *Star Weekly* understands will be when the findings of a parliamentary inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy infrastructure in Victoria will be tabled in parliament.

The inquiry, which held public hearings in Melbourne and Sunbury in May, is considering the suitability of existing waste-to-energy infrastructure in Victoria, impacts on residential communities and transport infrastructure, the cost benefit for consumers and businesses, as well as plans and policies.

HiQ was due to submit its planning and environmental applications for its waste-to-energy facility in June, but a community update that month revealed it would delay until after the findings and recommendations from the parliamentary inquiry were released.

HiQ has already received a waste-to-energy cap license through Recycling Victoria to accept up to 750,000 tonnes of waste per annum.



Paul and Lou with Heidi

Holy cow! Heidi hits the highway

Best mates Paul Monaghan and Lou Morabito are hitting the open road once again in their second Victorian Variety Bash, hoping to raise $10,000 for children living with illness, disadvantage and disability.

The pair will set off on Tuesday 18 August in Paul's much-loved 1978 ZH Series Ford Fairlane 500, affectionately known as Heidi the Bovine Bandit, joining a colourful convoy of themed classic vehicles in Australia's longest-running charity motoring event.

Paul, who lives in Gisborne and owns Welco Rubber in Tullamarine, and Lou, who works in Broadmeadows and lives in South Morang, were eager to do it all again after raising $8395 last year, driving Heidi the full 4267 kilometres from Hamilton in western Victoria to Darwin in just 10 days.

The pair's third wheel from 2025, Keilor East resident Scott Gowland – who is marketing manager at The Meadows in Broadmeadows – couldn't make it this year, but his graphic design handiwork on Heidi will still be the talk of this year's Bash.

When asked how a classic Fairlane ended up looking like a giant Friesian cow, all fingers pointed at Scott.

"Paul had already named the car Heidi, and Scotty reckoned that sounded like a dairy cow's name. Before we knew it, we looked out from under the bonnet and the car was covered in full cow print," Lou laughed.

Heidi proved to be a crowd favourite throughout last year's Outback Odyssey, drawing smiles and waves from towns people and travellers across the country while helping the Variety Victoria Bash raise a remarkable $1.83 million.

This year's Bash departed Halls Gap on 18 August, with participants travelling across the country before reaching Exmouth, Western Australia, by Thursday 27 August.

Along their journey, teams will be presenting grants, handing out fun packs and much needed equipment to kids who are sick, live in remote communities, are disadvantaged or have additional needs.

Donations can still be made at: https://fundraise.variety.org.au/fundraisers/Car351HeidiandtheBandits/bash



Shadow Planning Minister David Southwick with Liberal Macedon Candidate Kate Kendall (Georgia Tacey).

Lancefield planning issue fix promised

By Georgia Tacey

Lancefield's biggest planning issue could be resolved as a priority if the Liberal Party wins the November state election.

Opposition planning spokesperson David Southwick joined Liberal Macedon candidate Kate Kendall in Lancefield last weekend to announce that development planning overlay 24 (DPO24) would be removed from the 61 hectares and the 27 separate landholders it covers.

Mr Southwick said this would allow up to 300 homes to be built.

Macedon Ranges council has written to the planning minister three times since 2023 to request the overlay to be removed.

Ms Kendall, who is also a Macedon Ranges councillor, sent two of the letters herself while mayor, and said the issue had dragged on for too long.

"This has been going on for a long time, even before I was a councillor," she said.

"[The residents] can't even build a shed. They couldn't even build fences for equestrian activities, even one of them wanted to start a tractor museum. That was all shut down."

The overlay requires all landholders in an area to agree on a single development plan before anyone can build, with one landholder who is not ready to develop able to hold up all housing projects.

Since DPO24 was gazetted in January 2020, not one new home has been built on the land it covers.

Landholders also cover the full cost of preparing the development plan and the reports that go with it, including roads, drainage, power, water, sewerage and open space under the overlay.

Mr Southwick said he met with local residents and council in June to hear how this had affected them.

He called it a priority project if the Liberals were to be elected in November.

"We would seek to have that removed in Parliament ... within our first 100 days," he said.

Labor Macedon candidate Annette Death – also a former councillor – said DPO24 was something she advocated against during her time as mayor.

"Last week I organised a visit with the minister for planning to the Macedon Ranges to advocate to the minister for the overlay removal," she said.

"I will continue to support my community and if elected, I will advocate for overlay to be removed and make it easier for families.

"I would also want to continue talking directly with affected landowners, council and the local community to make sure we get the outcome right for Lancefield."

Lancefield land pledge welcomed

Lancefiled residents have welcomed a Liberal Party pledge to remove a planning overlay impacting 27 landholders.

Resident Joel Fitzgerald is one of the landholders whose property is affected by development planning overlay 24 (DP024). He said the issue had been brewing for close to a decade.

"We're near a point of absolute desperation. Landholders are absolutely exhausted. So for someone like Kate to have the strength and the conviction to actually tackle this issue is fantastic news," he said.

Mr Fitzgerald said he and his family would like the choice to use their block of land as they please.

"The DPO doesn't just impact development, it impacts people's freedom of choice for their property," he said. "If we wanted to put in a granny flat or a new shed, we absolutely can't do it without huge sums of money, years of council approval and permitted access to other's land under, all non-negotiables in achieving a development plan."

Mr Fitzgerald said not everyone wants to develop the land, making it harder for residents to come to an agreement under the overlay.

"Landholders remain unified in the position that the DPO24 must be removed as a matter of urgency, placing the 27 individual landholders back on an even playing field with the rest of their neighbours within Lancefield," he said.

"Entertaining an amendment to the existing overlay, a replacement overlay or 'removal with strings attached' is not in the interest of the community and would be met with strong public opposition."

Macedon Ranges council mayor Cassy Borthwick said council wants the overlay removed. "Lancefield community members have repeatedly told council and state government about the impacts on them, including cost, complexity, delays and uncertainty," she said.

"Council has heard from residents who have been unable to progress even modest development aspirations despite their land being zoned for residential purposes.

"Council has advocated strongly for a solution and remains committed to pursuing every available opportunity to achieve certainty for landowners and a clear pathway forward for Lancefield."



Book characters come alive

Schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and libraries across Melbourne's northern and western suburbs are celebrating Children's Book Week. The annual week, which this year runs from 22-28 August, celebrates children's literature. The theme for this year's celebrations is 'symphony of stories'. Star Weekly asked librarians to share their favourite children's books.



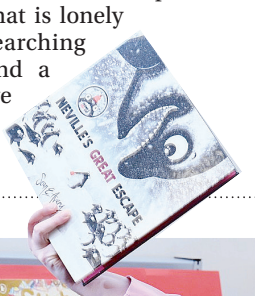
Lalor Library branch manager Alan Sewell dressed as Willy Wonka for Book Week. (Damjan Janevski) 571192_02

Lalor Library branch manager Alan Sewell's favourite children's book is James and Giant Peach by Roald Dahl.
"James and the Giant Peach is my favourite children's book because it is full of adventure and ridiculous imagination. I love how James goes on an amazing journey with the giant peach and meets lots of weird and wonderful characters along the way. I also enjoy how James becomes braver and more confident throughout the story, which is a great theme for young people. Roald Dahl's books explore resilience, friendship and being true to yourself. Dressing up as Willy Wonka from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is so much fun! He is an unapologetically quirky and creative character and is immediately recognisable to young and old alike. He embodies the importance of imagination and the magic of stories."



Romsey Library acting manager Rae Good.

Romsey Library acting manager Rae Good's favourite children's book is The House That Walked Away by Simon Howe.
"This is from a local author and illustrator in the Macedon Ranges, and he did the pictures and the story of this book. It's just a beautiful story about belonging and finding your place in the world, and that could be wherever you land, as long as you land there with the right people and family. It's written from the point of view of a house that is lonely and goes searching to finally find a family to live in it."



Hobsons Bay Libraries family engagement and learning librarian Tace Kelly's favourite children's book is Julian Is a Mermaid by Jessica Love.
"I absolutely love the illustrations. They're painted on brown paper, which is pretty unusual for a picture book, and they're so gorgeous that I even have a print from the book hanging at home! I love the message about being yourself, celebrating creativity and self-expression, and having the confidence to embrace who you are. And the relationship between Julian and his Nan gets me every time. It reminds me so much of my own nanny, who was always so imaginative, playful, loving and supportive. It's such a beautiful, joyful story about love, acceptance and letting people shine exactly as they are. It also makes for great inspiration for a Book Week costume!"



Hobsons Bay Libraries family engagement and learning librarian Tace Kelly with some of her favourite children's books. (Supplied)



Melton Librarian Camie Wu. (Damjan Janevski) 571635_03

Melton Library literacy and learning facilitator Camie Wu's favourite children's book is Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae.
"It is about Gerald the giraffe who longs to go to the Jungle Dance, but his skinny legs and crooked knees make it hard for him to move smoothly. It is great to see Gerald finally find the courage to be himself and to dance his own way to the music he loves. I love the encouraging and uplifting messages of this picture book. It teaches young children 'just be yourself', 'embrace your differences', and 'treasure your unique value'. Anyone can succeed if they find their own rhythm and a method that works for them."



St Albans librarian Sarah Gardiner. (Damjan Janevski) 571438_02



Lerderderg librarian Stevie Fisher. (Damjan Janevski) 570968_06

Lerderderg librarian Stevie Fisher's favourite children's book is Pages & Co by Anna James.
"Pages & Co by Anna James is my favourite children's book/series because it captures the magic of reading, being able to step inside the stories you love and meet characters who feel like old friends. It's a beautiful celebration of books, imagination and everything that makes being a reader so special."



Lerderderg librarian Sam Hartwig. (Damjan Janevski) 570968_05

Lerderderg librarian Sam Hartwig's favourite children's book is The Wrong Book by Nick Bland.
"This is one of the first books I read to children at story time that 'breaks the fourth wall'. It quickly became an instant favourite. The illustrations bring the book to life, and it's such a fun story that children of all ages will love. Also, a simple book week costume idea to dress up as Nicholas Ickle!"

Lerderderg Librarian Sophie Kuyper's favourite children's book is Green Eggs and Ham by Dr Seuss.
"My favourite book is Green Eggs and Ham by Dr Seuss, it brings back my memories of reading it to my dad all by myself in our garden."



Lerderderg Librarian Sophie Kuypers. (Damjan Janevski) 570968_08

St Alban's children librarian Sarah Gardiner's favourite children's book is Neville's Great Escape by Sean E. Avery
"My number one pick right now is Neville's Great Escape. It is a brilliantly silly picture book by Australian author and illustrator Sean E. Avery, and my current favourite since I had the pleasure of discovering it last year. Neville is a bold, brave risk taker of a penguin who never gives up. One day a killer whale leaps up from the icy ocean depths and eats him in one big bite! But don't worry, this is not the end of Neville's story.

"His increasingly ridiculous attempts to escape from the whale are packed with visual gags and deadpan humour. I also love Avery's use of interesting and unexpected vocabulary. He doesn't underestimate young readers or shy away from giving them wonderfully expressive words to play with. I love Sean's playful storytelling, expressive illustrations and celebration of determination and creative problem-solving. We could all be a little more like Neville! It was also named a 2026 CBCA Notable Picture Book."

Airport looks to the future

Melbourne Airport has unveiled a 20-year vision for Australia's largest 24-hour gateway, with plans to enable better connections to Australia, the world and nearby neighbourhoods.

The draft master plan 2027 outlines how Melbourne Airport will expand to accommodate increases in passenger numbers

It puts forth upgrades to the domestic terminals and safeguarding infrastructure with a promise to strengthen links to the airport.

The draft plan also formalises the Eastern Extension Project, a 345-metre extension of the east-west runway, to account for shortening at its western end required for construction of Melbourne Airport's third runway.

The airport's third runway project previously sparked community concerns over how increased air traffic would negatively affect resident's health. In July, Brimbank council secured legally binding measures with Melbourne Airport reporting they had reached a legal agreement to "work together to deliver initiatives that support community wellbeing and deliver tangible benefits to the local community."

Melbourne Airport chief executive Lorie Argus said the draft plan would help ensure the airport has the infrastructure it needs to serve Melbourne's growing population over the coming decades.

"We need to plan ahead to ensure we have the airfield, terminal and ground transport infrastructure in place to adequately service the growing number of travellers, exporters and importers who are using Melbourne Airport," she said.

"As we continue to work with the state and federal governments to deliver their airport rail connection to Sunshine, we also need to plan for better local bus services to our surrounding communities."

Locals can have their say on the plan until 4 November. Details: www.melbourneairport.com.au

Melbourne Airport has also introduced a Noise Sharing Plan for the third runway as required by the government with public consultations open until October. This can be viewed at https://www.melbourneairportprojectshub.com.au/noise-sharing-plan



Dr Fong Yong. (Supplied)

Sunbury dentist stars in documentary

A Sunbury local has made his debut on the screen.

Sunbury Dental House and Dental House Group founder Dr Fong Yong was profiled for an episode of the documentary Dental Masters TV.

His episode, titled The Catalyst for Freedom, explores how Dr Yong has challenged the fear historically associated with dentistry, building a practice grounded in compassion, mentorship and connection.

Through his leadership, Dr Yong has cultivated a culture where patients feel safe and young practitioners are mentored with intention and care, in an effort to turn the dentist experience into a positive one.

Filmed in a cinematic documentary style, The Catalyst for Freedom follows Dr Yong through his daily practice and his interactions with patients and team members, revealing the values that underpin his enduring impact.

Filming took place at his Sunbury practice, as well as at SunFest earlier this year.

Dental Masters TV founder and executive producer Liza Choa hailed Dr Yong's leadership in this space.

"Dr Fong Yong represents a generation of dentists who understand that mastery is not only technical, it is relational," she said.

"His commitment to community and mentorship has influenced far more than smiles. It has changed lives."

Dental Masters TV is a documentary series which profiles Australia's leading dental professionals and the defining moments that shaped their careers.

Each episode explores the human narrative behind mastery and leadership in modern dentistry.



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Hume's push for power

By Glenn Fisher

Hume council wants the state government to change legislation to make it easier dealing with planning compliance matters and enforcement orders.

At its 27 July meeting, the council resolved to write to the planning minister to advocate for simpler enforcement processes and "a greater ability for council to be able to recoup costs outside of expensive court processes".

The resolution comes after council took Fendall Farms Pty Ltd and Paul Attwell to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) over ongoing works at 370 Riddell Road on Sunbury's Canterbury Hills estate.

As reported by Star Weekly, truck movements on Canterbury Avenue due to the works were reaching 300 a day.

In October last year, VCAT ordered all activity at the site to cease immediately and ordered that a permit must be issued before any new works could commence at the site.

The Environment Protection Authority Victoria subsequently fined the occupier of the property $10,175 after an inspection found industrial waste was being burnt there.

In its letter to the planning minister, council also requested law reform to provide more effective enforcement pathways for planning compliance matters, including powers to cease works while investigations were being undertaken.

Council also resolved to better educate the community and promote more public information about the planning investigations function, including how community members can participate in, and remain informed about, investigation processes.

Cr Jarrod Bell told the council meeting that issues such as the Canterbury Hills matter understandably frustrated residents, but that "planning investigations are legal processes, they are not social media competitions".

Cr Bell highlighted a compliance issue currently being investigated by officers that had "seen a degree of (online) commentary and frankly some rage baiting from people who ought to know better".

While thanking the council officers for their diligence and the Canterbury Hills estate residents for their patience, he noted that these types of issues were all too common, not only in Hume, not only Melbourne wide, but statewide.

"Illegal rubbish dumping is still a massive problem in Sunbury and Bulla, and the community's concerns have been highlighted," Cr Bell said.

Council's media unit told Star Weekly that it welcomed feedback and input on issues that community members cared deeply about, but it "expects all interactions with councillors and staff to be respectful".

Romsey Safe Space opens in the Ranges

Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group (MRSPAG) has opened a new Safe Space in the Macedon Ranges.

The group officially opened its second Safe Space in Romsey on Saturday 8 August.

The community-led service are a welcoming, non-clinical environment where anyone can come to connect, share and find support from trained peer supporters with lived experience of suicide.

MRSPAG volunteer coordinator Fiona Lawford said this would give more people in the Macedon Ranges the opportunity to seek care and support closer to home.

"We're trying to reach people where they're at and reducing some of the barriers that are in place," she said.

"For people to get from Romsey to Woodend in the evening can be challenging ... so we're trying to reach people in different parts of the shire without putting the burden on them to have to travel so far to see us."

Ms Lawford said there was also a need for services in the Romsey community, making it a vital location for the Safe Space.

Ms Lawford said MRSAG is also looking for more volunteers with lived experience to help service its Romsey location, with the goal to have the Romsey Safe Space open weekly.

"It is a requirement to have a lived experience of suicide [to volunteer]," she said.

"A lived experience can be having had experienced a loss, it can be supporting someone through suicidal crisis, and it could be that they have experiences of challenges themselves in their lifetime."

Training is also provided for volunteers.

The Romsey Safe Space is currently open fortnightly on Saturdays from 1-4pm at the Romsey Neighbourhood House, 96-100 Main Street, Romsey. No referrals or appointments are needed.

The Woodend Safe Space at the Woodend Neighbourhood House will continue to be open every Wednesday from 5.30-8.30pm.

Details: mrspag.com.au

For support, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636



Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group volunteers Lisa Hutchison, Fiona Lawford and Nadine Hartnett at the Romsey Safe Space. (Damjan Janevski). 570427_01

Make your mark on Hume

Hume council is inviting the community to add their touch to Artrise's latest interactive exhibition.

Artist Sasha Heath's exhibition, Many Hands, One Colourful City is a participatory mural experience that invites the community to become a part of a living piece of art.

Spanning from ceiling to floor, the mural celebrates landscapes and recognisable places across Hume, offering visitors of all ages the opportunity to add colour, creativity and their own mark to the evolving piece.

Visitors to Artrise are invited to pick up a paint brush and add your colour, your line and make your mark on the city and the artwork, as it continues to shift and evolve over the exhibition's run.

The community is encouraged to head on down to help the mural evolve and grow into a colourful expression of the Hume community.

The exhibition is open now for free at Artrise and will close on Saturday 3 October in Building Five.

Artrise is open every Wednesday through to Saturday from 10am to 3pm.

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Q League Basketball comes to Ranges

Q League Basketball is coming to the Macedon Ranges.

Omnia Community Health is partnering with Queer Sporting Alliance and Macedon Ranges council to bring the new basketball league to central Victoria.

Q League offers participants the opportunity to play basketball in a fun, social setting, while meeting new people and learning new skills.

It is open to people aged over 18 years who identify as LGBTQIA+ or who are an ally.

Omnia Inclusive Communities team member Rhani Dean-Talbett said research shows that LGBTQIA+ people are less involved in organised physical activity because of the stigma and discrimination they often experience in mainstream sporting settings.

"We also know that being active in a social setting has significant positive impacts on people's health and wellbeing so we are thrilled to offer Q League in the Macedon Ranges," she said.

To start the season, there will be two beginner-friendly introductory sessions run by Queer Sporting Alliance on Sunday 23 and 30 August in Gisborne.

Queer Sporting Alliance executive director Bindy Cohen said that they hope this is the first of many opportunities to bring safer, inclusive and welcoming sporting competitions to LGBTQIA+ communities beyond metropolitan areas.

Following the come and try sessions in August, the Q League season starts on Sunday 6 September, 1.15pm for a 1.30pm start, finishing about 3.30pm.

Places are limited and registrations are essential.

Details: sunburycobaw.org.au/q-league-basketball, or email players@queersportingalliance.com

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A day with the dead

People can be funny about death - it's uncomfortable, dreary, and solemn, but we must all face it one way or another. For those caring for Maddingley General Cemetery, they face death straight in the eyes every day, but to them, it's their whole life. Jack O'Shea-Ayres spent a day with those behind the plots, headstones, and ashes, which all make up Maddingley General Cemetery.



Maddingley General Cemetery Trust member Rick Dickson and chairperson Allan Comrie. (Pictures: Damjan Janevski)
561735_01

There's a strange contradiction happening at Maddingley General Cemetery.

It is a place defined by death, yet, it is constantly animated by life.

Families carry flowers, mourners gather beside graves, children run between generations of headstones, an abundance of different religious and cultural communities gather in the hundreds, and visitors search for the names of ancestors which have survived decades, sometimes centuries.

And behind it all are the people who keep the cemetery alive and moving.

For more than 160 years, Maddingley General Cemetery has served Bacchus Marsh and surrounding rural communities, with the first recorded burial taking place on 15 October way back in 1857.

Today, the cemetery is a sprawling and carefully maintained resting place, but according to chairperson Allan Comrie, much of what visitors see today has been built by generations of volunteers, including Mr Comrie himself.

"When I first came here, there was nothing," Mr Comrie recalled.

What began as little more than a piece of land surrounded by rudimentary fencing has since evolved alongside Bacchus Marsh itself.

Mr Comrie has spent decades involved with the cemetery, first beginning his term as chairperson back in 1982, helping to construct roads, install fencing, establish water infrastructure, and develop the grounds where the dead are laid to rest.

The physical transformation mirrors the transformation the community has taken beyond the cemetery gates, however the work has never really stopped, and neither has the steady stream of people walking through its gates.

For Mr Comrie, that is one of the most striking things about it – it's not a silent place in the traditional sense by a long hot.

It is busy – in fact, it's one of the busiest places in Bacchus Marsh, according to trust member Rick Dickson, Mr Comrie's main partner in crime at the cemetery.

"I still say that this is the best tourist attraction in Bacchus Marsh," Mr Dickson said.

"How else do you get 1400 people here over two days in the one spot?"

There can be multiple funerals in a day, while people arrive separately to tend graves, search for relatives, or simply spend time with those they have lost.

"See that?"

Mr Comrie points to a thick folder containing this year's burials, sitting as a tangible reminder of the cemetery's growing workload.

"That's burials this year. Each one is an interment."





Headstones are scattered among the trees, where history surrounds both the man-made and natural structures behind the cemetery gates.



> "You've got to sit there and listen. You've got to feel their sorrow. That's the only way you can deal with it"
>
> - Allan Comrie

Yet the demands of the job extend well beyond maintaining lawns and digging graves.

Some people who walk into the cemetery office are often confronting death for the first time.

"They're in an emotional state to begin with," Mr Comrie said. "Most of them have never had to face a burial."

That means the people behind the cemetery need to understand more than just regulations, plots, and paperwork – they're required to understand grief.

"When they come in, they've got no idea what they want," Mr Comrie explained.

"You've got to sit there and listen."

For Mr Comrie, empathy is not an optional part of the job.

"You've got to feel their sorrow," he said.

"That's the only way you can deal with it."

It's an observation which reveals something about the morality of cemetery work –the people responsible for administering a burial ground are dealing with people at one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

An abrupt response, an inflexible interpretation of a rule, or an unwillingness to listen can easily become part of someone's memory of losing a loved one.

Mr Comrie believes the people who work at Maddingley have to meet mourners where they are – and in some funny way, Mr Comrie was born for it.

"I like talking to people, dealing with people…I always have," he said.

His philosophy surrounding care not only for the grounds but for the people who walk them, as well as those buried beneath them, becomes especially important as the cemetery increasingly serves communities from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Mr Comrie describes seeing Muslim and other migrant communities practicing burial rituals that differ massively from other traditional Australian funerals which many of us may be more used to.

Some communities stay for hours after a burial, gathering around the grave rather than leaving immediately after the service.

On one occasion, Mr Comrie recalls, 1400 people attending two funerals across two days.

For the trust, the numbers demonstrate not only how much the cemetery has grown, but how deeply it has become woven into the region's changing social fabric.

"All walks of life now come through those gates," Mr Comrie said.

It's also become quite the repository of stories.

Some are carefully recorded in registers, while others are etched in stone.

Mr Comrie tells stories of headstones whose inscriptions have been rediscovered after decades of neglect, revealing connections between families that even the people tending the cemetery didn't know existed.

"There's stories all through the place," he said.

That is perhaps the cemetery's most enduring and endearing role.

Both Mr Comrie and Mr Dickson explained the grave is more than a marker for someone who has died, but more so evidence for someone who has lived.

A name, a date, a photograph, or a weathered inscription can become a bridge between generations.

For the people working at Maddingley, preserving those markers is about more than appearance.

When plaques were stolen from the cemetery, Mr Dickson recalled the shock of discovering empty spaces where memorials had stood, with nothing but the ashes left behind.

"They left the ashes alone, thank goodness," he said.

The theft was particularly confronting because the plaques belonged to people who could no longer speak for themselves –whose families had entrusted the cemetery with their memories.

Their response was practical but also deeply symbolic: replacing the missing plaques and repairing the damage –it was a simple administrative task approached with care and emotional stewardship that defined the volunteers' relationship with the cemetery.

There are oddities, too – Mr Comrie, Mr Dickson, and their fellow volunteers have witnessed strange encounters, unexpected visitors, and the occasional surreal moment that could only happen behind the gates of a cemetery.

There are funeral traditions that vary wildly between cultures, people who arrive looking for graves decades after a relative's death, flowers stolen from one grave and placed on another.

And then there are the moments of genuine tenderness.

For the volunteers, every visitor arrives with a story, whether they share it or not.

It makes the cemetery a place where morality is lived out in small, often invisible acts: listening to a grieving family, maintaining a neglected grave, protecting ashes, preserving a headstone, keeping the grounds immaculate, or simply opening the gates.

Mr Comrie's own connection to the cemetery has lasted for decades.

He has watched Bacchus Marsh grow from a much smaller rural community into a rapidly expanding region, while the cemetery has grown alongside it, yet the essential purpose has remained unchanged.

People still come to say goodbye, to remember, and to look for those who came before them.

For people like Mr Comrie and Mr Dickson, that history creates an obligation to keep the cemetery standing.

"People don't understand what this place is," Mr Comrie said.

But walk through Maddingley General Cemetery slowly enough and the scale of its story becomes apparent.

More than 160 years of names, families, grief, celebration, remembrance, and ritual exist within the cemetery gates, and behind the manicured grounds are people like Comrie and Dickson, who have spent decades making sure the stories of the dead are not forgotten.

While the cemetery is where people are laid to rest, it is also where their lives continue to speak.

Blitz on pedestrian safety

Police issued more 1000 infringements during an operation focused on pedestrian safety.

As part of Operation Aware, which has been running since May, local and state highway patrols, solo unit, bike and foot patrolshave been targeting behaviour that leads to road trauma involving pedestrians.

Police said a total of 1082 offences have been detected to date during the operation, with close to half issued to motorists for speeding offences.

Police have been conducting the operation in high-risk metro areas including in Hume and Wyndham, as well as Melbourne CBD, Glen Eira, Stonnington, Monash, Whitehorse, Casey and Geelong.

There have been 27 pedestrian deaths on Victorian roads this year, with four in the Hume area alone, following closely behind Casey's five pedestrian deaths.

Police have focused enforcement on areas with 40-60km/h speed zones, where pedestrian trauma most commonly occurs.

Of the 479 speeding offences detected, 82 per cent were for motorists caught travelling between 10km/h and 25km/h over the speed limit.

Police said they detected 16 impaired drivers during the operation, including 12 drug driving and four drink driving offences.

Police also said they issued 70 infringements to motorists caught using a mobile device while driving.

Road policing assistant commissioner Mick Hermans said August remains a high risk month for collisions involving pedestrians.

"During Operation Aware we've witnessed some concerning behaviour, primarily by motorists engaging in dangerous driving activity that put pedestrians at significant risk," he said.

"That's things like speeding in built up areas, driving while distracted by mobile devices, drink and drug driving, and failing to stop and give way.

"We will continue to prioritise pedestrian safety and target those behaviours that put our most vulnerable road users at risk.

"We also ask all road users to consider what actions they can take to prioritise their safety, particularly with inclement weather conditions and reduced visibility to continue throughout this month."

Operation Aware will continue this month, and police said they will continue to target behaviours that put pedestrians at risk.

MY PLACE

Since recently moving to Sunbury, Margaret Leary and her husband have very quickly settled into the community. Georgia Tacey caught up with her to hear more about why she loves living in Sunbury and her involvement with Sunbury Combined Probus Club



Margaret Leary. (Damjan Janevski) 569566_06

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

My connection to Melbourne's north-west is familial; my family home was in Strathmore and my siblings and I went to school in Essendon. Later, I taught at Oak Park High. My husband, Mike, and I are very close to my brother, sister-in-law, and a niece who have lived in Sunbury for many years. We get together
frequently to share meals and books, play cards, and enjoy each other's company.

What do you like about where you live?-

Mike and I love living in Sunbury with its friendliness, accessibility, and well-maintained public spaces. An outstanding public library is a font not just of knowledge and entertainment from books, but also a space to enjoy puzzles, newspapers, and friendship, all while drinking free coffee! Sunbury Square is a great place for mingling, drinking coffee, eating and shopping, and multiple other cafes and restaurants help make "downtown" Sunbury vibrant and attractive. The presence of medical clinics, imaging and laboratory outlets, and chemist shops is very helpful. Local amenities include a swimming pool, gyms, tennis and pickleball, and a skate and BMX park. What's not to love?

Where is your favourite local place to spend time?

My husband has mobility issues, but I like to walk, visit the Nook, a beautiful park off Macedon Street with Jacksons Creek running through it, and enjoy the
fountain on Stawell Street and the gardens behind it. We both enjoy meeting people for coffee at Sunbury Square, visiting thrift stores, and reading newspapers, selecting books, and doing puzzles at the library.

Why did you decide to join the Sunbury Combined Probus Club?

When we came to Sunbury, I had not lived in Australia for many years, and my husband, a Texan, had never lived here, so we set out to become involved in community activities. We joined a church then the Sunbury Combined Probus Club, and I signed up for three classes at U3A, which I've enjoyed immensely. Joining the Sunbury Combined Probus Club seemed a natural step as my
brother and sister-in-law have been involved with the group for many years. The club's commitment to fun, friendship, and fellowship for retired and
semi-retired people, monthly meetings with morning tea and speakers, and travel opportunities ranging from one-day outings to multi-day trips, seemed a good way to start integrating ourselves into the social fabric of Sunbury.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors


Mt Erupts 'not local charity'

The Telegraph

TUESDAY AUGUST 20 1991

Caloola closure: 'I WEPT FOR JOY' ADVOCATE SAYS

By LOUISE ROBSON

ETHEL TEMBY, former executive officer of a leading Victorian advocacy group for the intellectually disabled, has praised the government's decision to close Caloola.

Set a precedent

"It is important that Caloola residents with the greatest needs should be the first to leave the institution"

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35 years ago

20 August, 1991

Ethel Temby, the former executive officer of a leading Victorian advocacy group for the intellectually disabled has praised the government's decision to close Caloola.


Macedon Ranges Telegraph

ANOTHER QUALITY FAIRFAX NEWSPAPER

FOREST FREEWAY

Panel recommends to minister

Picture: SHANN SMITH

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30 years ago

20 August, 1996

An independent panel has recommended to the Planning Minister, Mr Maclellan, that a new freeway be constructed west of the Calder Highway.


Sunbury Telegraph

FAIRFAX COMMUNITY NETWORK

Billion Dollar Baby arrives at Sunbury Holden. See pages 58 & 59

Growth dilemma faced

Road crisis talks

Air Jordan

Picture: Joe Mastroianni

TOBIN BROTHERS FUNERALS

PAY OFF CREDIT CARD

Alchemy

The Shamrock HOTEL

Weddings At Wooling Hill

20 years ago

15 August, 2006

Sunbury's growing traffic crisis has forced a meeting between Hume council and VicRoads.


SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES STAR WEEKLY

YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR VOICE

NEWS + SPORT + PROPERTY GUIDE

Domain

Bush bashers beware

By Esther Lasaki

"Lots of orchids will be gone because of that" - Carolyn Robb

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HARRISON SUZUKI

10 years ago

16 August, 2016

Macedon Ranges council will tighten surveillance and bring in security measures for hikers at Kyneton's Bald Hill Reserve after trail bike riders ripped up the bush.


Salesian College students Xavier (front), Archie and Sierra with teacher Kate McIntosh. (Damjan Janevski) 568919_06


Victorian Trugo Association president Paul Thomas and Footscray Trugo Club member members Michele Mercier, Jon Ellis and Stuart Lucca-Pope. (Damjan Janevski) 570601_01


Werribee River Association and Victoria University have launched the second phase of Platypus Watch. (Damjan Janevski) 568749_03

Faces of the west

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


The Melton Men's Group members Les Chitts and Trevor A. Boyd-King. (Damjan Janevski) 570003_03


Anna Le Masurier and Judith Atkinson at Concern Australia (Damjan Janevski) 569846_02



Sunbury Superoos Basketball Club is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Pictured are Billy, 8, mum Ashlee Ross and life members Mick Betson, Bert Bekker and Gary Thomas. (Damjan Janevski) 568571_01

SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES Star Weekly

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Billy (8), mum Ashlee Ross and life members Mick Betson, Bert Bekker and Gary Thomas.
(Damjan Janevski) 568571_02

Superoos celebrate 50 years

One of Sunbury's first and now biggest basketball clubs will celebrate its 50th anniversary this month.

Superoos Basketball Club was originally known in 1976 as Sunbury Realty (sponsored by this real estate agent at the time and for some years after) but had only one men's team playing at Diggers Rest and later at Clarke Oval stadium.

A women's competition started in 1977, of which Sunbury Realty women won the first Sunbury Basketball Association women's premiership.

The Superoos name came into fruition a couple of years later, with Bert Bekker and Lesley Thomas the founding members.

As the years went on, the club continued to grow, as did the Sunbury Basketball Association. Juniors were introduced at all SBA clubs and, by the early 2000s, Superoos had approximately 200 members, including seniors and juniors.

Superoos is now one of the biggest clubs in the SBA, with 26 junior teams ranging from under 10s to 18s, two under 21 teams and 12 senior teams. The current A Grade women's team has been undefeated champions for the past seven seasons.

The Superoos Basketball Club 50th year celebration will be held on Saturday 22 August at Sunbury United Sporting Club, Mitchells Lane, Sunbury from 7pm.

Tickets at $50 per head include a free drink on arrival, finger food, DJ and door prizes, and are available from: https://www.trybooking.com/DNYNF

Founding member Lesley Thomas said the club would love to see any past or present players, coaches, officials, committee members and supporters to help celebrate this wonderful achievement.

Briefs

Roadworks

Roadworks have started over the bridge expansion joints at the Vineyard Road bridge over the Calder Freeway in Diggers Rest. These works will create smoother journeys for drivers using the bridge that connects Diggers Rest to Sunbury. Most works will be completed between 9pm and 6am, Sunday to Thursday, with some work on Friday and Saturday nights. A nightly lane closure on the Vineyard Road bridge over the Calder Freeway between the freeway interchanges will take place throughout the works. Traffic controllers will be on site to guide traffic through the area one lane at a time. Temporary steel road plates and a reduced speed limit will be in place over the bridge during the day for the safety of road users until works are complete. Works are expected to be complete by the end of August.

Greater Western Water

Greater Western Water has temporarily closed its Sunbury office for upgrades. The office will be closed until 7 September. For those needing support, the team will be at the Sunbury Library from 10am to 4pm on weekdays.

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12892544-AD34-26

Legal help close to home



The team at Nicholas James Lawyers has spent more than 20 years serving Melbourne's north-west.

One firm for every stage of life and business – live local, think big. Our Sunbury office exists for a simple reason: legal help works better when it is close to home.

Most people come to us at a turning point. A house is being bought or sold. A marriage has ended. A parent has died and there is an estate to sort out. A business is signing something it cannot afford to get wrong. Those moments are rarely convenient and almost never simple. What they have in common is that the person in front of us needs to understand their options before they can make a decision.

That is how we work. We explain the law without the jargon, tell you what a matter is likely to cost before we start, and keep you informed as it moves. If the sensible answer is that you do not need a lawyer, we will say so.

"Sunbury has grown enormously, and we wanted a local presence that matched that growth," says Nick Terziovski, principal and director of Nicholas James Lawyers.

"People shouldn't have to travel into the city for good legal advice. Our Sunbury team gives this community the same standard of service we've built our reputation on – just closer to home."

As a full-service, general practice, one relationship covers most of what a family or a small business will ever need. Our Sunbury team advises on family law and parenting arrangements, wills, powers of attorney and estate administration, conveyancing and property, commercial and business matters, employment, and disputes that need resolving – at the negotiating table where possible, in court when necessary.

Call the Sunbury Office at 9740 8453 or book a consultation at njlawyers.com.au You'll find us at 1/17 Brook Street, Sunbury.



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Trust Vic and his team for all your family law matters

The team at Vic Rajah Family & Estate Lawyers recently opened a Sunbury office to service clients in the Macedon Ranges.

Having established a reputation as one of the bayside's leading family law, wills and estates practices, Vic and his team are now able to bring more than 40 years of legal excellence to the region.

Vic, an accredited specialist in family law, leads a team of empathetic and pragmatic family lawyers who deliver results. If you want a second opinion or are coming to terms with a separation, you should reach out to the experienced team.

"We are so excited by the opening of our Sunbury office. Many of my clients hail from the region and this allows us to see clients closer to their homes. Often clients are forced to travel to access premium family law advice. By moving into the area we are hoping to make a positive impact in the local community," Vic said.

The firm's lawyers are experts in divorce, parenting disputes, property settlement negotiations, preparing pre-nuptial agreements and family violence matters.

The firm also runs a well-regarded wills and estates practice. If you are seeking to protect assets for future generations or need advice following the death of a loved one, you should get in touch.

The team at Vic Rajah Family & Estate Lawyers are skilled at drafting wills and powers of attorney documents and have handled many disputes involving contested estates.

Professionalism, quality, respect and service to its clients are the guiding principles upon which Vic Rajah Family & Estate Lawyers was founded.



Vic Rajah and his team. **Inset:** Malcolm Burrell and Tahlia Corbin are the wills and estates team.

"My practice bears my name and I take great pride in the work my team produces. Most of our clients come from word-of-mouth referrals and they appreciate the clear and honest advice we provide and transparency in the costs that will be incurred."

Vic Rajah Family & Estate Lawyers is at 69 Evans Street, Sunbury.



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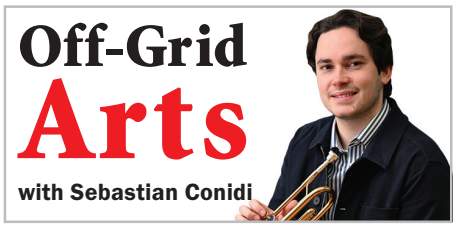
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12891945-CV34-26

Career a collage of inspiration

In a new monthly series, Star Weekly reporter Sebastian Conidi profiles the many interesting and innovative artists working off-grid in the north-west.





Augustine Ang. (Damjan Janevski) 571135_03

Sydenham local Augustine Ang is not deterred by form. A paper collage artist, paper animator, collage workshop facilitator and arts therapist, Ang's passion for all things visual art is demonstrated through his prolific output.

Growing up in Taylors Lakes and Keilor, Ang said he was inspired by his environment.

"A lot of my materials come from op shops in Brimbank," he explained. These days Ang says his biggest inspiration is nature.

"I get inspiration from visiting natural areas. I love the Organ Pipes (National Park) and the river near Horseshoe Bend."

Since hosting his first exhibition at St Albans, Ang has continued to work extensively across the community. Though Ang shifts across different mediums, his current focus is collage.

His artist bio lists his interests as mystery and the absurdity of life and death; dancing with a balance of structured order and fluid play; and importance of movement and body in creative practice.

"I found I was able to use it in a way to help me process and understand things about myself," Ang said.

"I began to meet art teachers and therapists and discovered art therapy as a career."

Following that thread, Ang completed his master of therapeutic arts. He now runs a workshop at Duke Street Community House in Sunshine.

"A lot of the work I've done is in community houses, neighbourhood houses. It certainly has a big impact on health and wellbeing. Community groups really benefit from the social aspect and the art aspect gives everyone access and space that they might not otherwise have."

Ang has presented solo exhibitions including 'Abundant Attention' which took place at St Albans Community Art Centre in 2021 and 'Still moving' staged in Northcote in 2023. He has contributed to exhibitions held in Coburg, Footscray, Fitzroy, Brunswick East, Geelong and St Kilda since 2023.

Ang has recently begun running INfuse Lab at St Albans Community centre. It is an open studio-style session where budding artists can come together to work on projects, socialise with others and embrace creativity in a supportive environment.

"People can bring a project they are working on and be in space together. It's a chance for people to meet fellow artists in the area," he explained.

The session is free to attend every Wednesday from 3.30pm-6pm.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Science Week
Celebrate National Science Week (15–23 August) on Thursday 20 August from 10am-2pm at Macedon Ranges Further Education Centre (MRFEC) with a permaculture workshop and community lunch. Explore the principles of permaculture and how they can apply to your life and garden, then stick around afterwards for the community lunch. Free event, RSVP required for catering purposes.
▪ 5428 3799, mrfec.net.au

Art to wear
Art to Wear in The Gallery is the feature of the Focus Room at the Gallery Mt Macedon until Monday 7 September. Ten textile artists, including members of The Gallery, will show knits, silks, felts, hats and much more. The Gallery is at 684 Mount Macedon Road, Mt. Macedon behind the Trading Post, open Friday to Tuesday, 10am-4pm.
▪ colleenweste@gmail.com, 0419 009 030



This week's photographer's choice picture is of the cast of Lalor Secondary College's The Addams Family. (Damjan Janevski) 570731_01

Riddell and District Seniors Club
Join the club for a chef-prepared three-course meal every Thursday at the Riddells Creek Community Centre. Lunch is held at 11.45am for a noon start every Thursday. Pricing ranges between $15-$20 for members and visitors, with a yearly membership fee of $10.
▪ Margaret 0498 101 008, riddellscrksen@gmail.com

Family history and heritage society
The annual general meeting of Sunbury Family History and Heritage Society will be held on Thursday 20 August at 1.30pm in the multipurpose room at the Sunbury Seniors Hub, 8 O'Shanassy Street, Sunbury. The August meeting will follow the AGM.
▪ facebook.com/groups/415440175310322/

Chamber Poets
The next Chamber Poets Woodend will take place on Saturday 12 September, 1-3.30pm. . $10 cash at the door. All welcome!
▪ facebook.com/groups/ChamberPoets/about

Young Voices of Macedon
A community choir for children of the Macedon Ranges and beyond, Young Voices of Macedon rehearses at the House of the Rock, 247 Station Road, New Gisborne. The choir has separate programs for young children aged five to eight and older children. Rehearsals assist children in developing vocal technique, part singing skills, and general musicianship, across popular, classical, folk and music theatre styles. Rehearsals run on Thursdays, from 4.15pm, with afternoon tea and play time.
▪ yvmacedon.org.au

Hume Men's Shed
Hume Men's Shed (Sunbury) meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 158 Evans Street, Sunbury.
▪ sunburymensshed.com, 0438 677 425

Young artists take on AI

What happens when artificial intelligence decides who you are, what you do and even who you should love?

That's the question at the heart of D/Vision, the latest original production created through Western Edge's long-running Edge Ensembles program.

For almost 30 years, Western Edge has provided young people in the west with opportunities to make theatre, build creative skills and tell stories on their own terms. The free Edge Ensembles program brings together people aged 18 to 30 for weekly creative sessions, where participants collaborate with professional artists, develop their craft and create work for public performance.

This year, the program has turned its attention to a future where AI efficiency has taken control of everyday life.

In D/Vision, autonomy is taken at birth. Citizens are assigned their occupations, social points and even romantic partners, while emotions are considered inefficient and sunglasses become a way to hide what people really feel.

Those who fail to follow the rules lose points and risk being sent to The Unmasking, a gladiator-style event where emotion is allowed to erupt for one night only.

Meanwhile, all citizens are expected to perform for YOUR A VISION, a global talent contest where they must represent their country and bring glory to the winning nation.

With questions about conformity, technology, identity and resistance at its centre, D/Vision asks audiences: would you conform, perform or fight against the system?

The production will be performed at Bowery Theatre, St Albans, on Saturday 29 August at 7pm, before heading to Bluestone Church in Footscray on Saturday 12 September at 2pm.



(Damian Vincenzi)

Van band and church to make holy trinity

The historic Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Williamstown has been a space where people have gathered to worship, pray and enjoy music for almost 200 years.

That tradition will continue next month when a pair of concerts are held at the church overlooking Hobsons Bay.

However, those thinking of attending shouldn't expect to hear the sound of hymns bouncing off Holy Trinity's bluestone walls.

Instead, it will be the music of Van Morrison, played by the appropriately named Trinity Roots Band, that will reverberate through the venue on the night of Friday 18 September and the afternoon of Saturday 19 September.

The idea for the church concerts came from Trinity Roots Band singer and guitarist and lifelong Van Morrison fan, Hayden Jones.

Jones said Morrison's music had a spiritual and mystical quality which had connected with generations of listeners and made a church the ideal place to perform his songs.

"We hope Van Morrison will speak to you on a deep level - soulful, hopeful, and strangely familiar," he said in encouraging people to come along.

"The show will be an experience not to be missed; so please come along, enjoy the sounds of Trinity Roots Band and join us as we take you on a highly accessible journey 'into the mystic'.

As well as Jones, the Trinity Roots Band comprises Liz White (backing vocals), Scott Phillips (vocals, piano), Chris Ringrose (vocals, guitar), Cherryll Courtney (bass and flute) and Laurence Gray (drums).

Details and tickets: https://events.humanitix.com/trinity-roots-concert-in-the-church



The Trinity Roots Band will play the music of Van Morrison at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Williamstown next month. (Supplied)

Ruby Gill and Rainbow Voices set for Kyneton show

A special performance is coming to the Kyneton Town Hall as part of Wear it Purple Day.

Joburg-born and Melbourne-based musician Ruby Gill is headed for Kyneton for a special afternoon performance with local support.

Gill has gained millions of streams for her lyricism, honesty and deadpan wit, earning her the reputation of unmissable.

Her Australian Music Prize-nominated debut record, 'I'm gonna die with this frown on my face' landed at number five on the AIR Independent Album charts in September 2022.

Gill will be supported by local musician Adam Prezwlocki and the Rainbow Voices Community Choir, who will collaborate for an afternoon of harmony, heart, and spirit of connection.

Rainbow Voices Community Choir is a LGBTQIA+ friendly choir in the Macedon Ranges, and since its inception in 2021 has quickly become a place of unity and expression.

Gill will also be supported by opening act Annie-Rose Maloney, who will be performing songs from her recently released debut album, 'Circle Walking'.

Maloney will bring her alternative-folk and country-ish sound to the Kyneton stage.

Ruby Gill, the Rainbow Voices Community Choir and Annie-Rose Maloney will be performing at the Kyneton Town Hall on Sunday 30 August from 4pm to 5.30pm.

Tickets cost between $45 to $35, and are available online.

Details: mrarts.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/157681

Raise a stein in Myrniong

Myrniong is set to enjoy a taste of Bavaria this September, with St Anne's Winery raising a stein to celebrate the first official day of Oktoberfest.

The picturesque winery will transform into a German-inspired celebration on Saturday 19 September, welcoming visitors for an afternoon of Bavarian food, live music, and authentic German beers.

Running from noon to 5pm, Oktoberfest at St Anne's Winery promises to bring plenty of festive cheer to the vineyard, with guests encouraged to gather their friends, embrace the atmosphere, and enjoy a taste of Germany in the Moorabool countryside.

Live German-inspired music will provide the soundtrack to the afternoon, while traditional Oktoberfest fare and authentic German beers will give guests plenty of reasons to say "Prost!".

Set among the vines at 64 Garrards Lane, the event offers a relaxed country setting for those looking to celebrate Oktoberfest without travelling far from home.

Entry is free, however guests are asked to register ahead of time so St Anne's Winery can properly prepare enough food, drinks, and German hospitality for the expected crowd.

Whether you are a dedicated Oktoberfest enthusiast or simply looking for a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon, St Anne's Winery is inviting everyone to join the celebrations.

With steins raised, German-inspired tunes playing, and the vineyards providing the perfect backdrop, Myrniong will be joining the global Oktoberfest festivities from day one.

So gather your friends, bring your appetite and get ready to raise a glass on Saturday 19 September.

Details: https://stanneswinery.com.au/event/oktoberfest-st-annes-winery-myrniong-2/.



Oktoberfest at St Anne's Winery.

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General Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES AND EVENT

Packaged Liquor Licence Application

We Riddells Creek Foodworks applied to Liquor Control Victoria on 13th July for the variation of a packaged liquor licence at 2 Station Street Riddells Creek. The variation is for an increase to the current licensed area.

Any person may object to the grant of this application on the grounds that:

- It would detract from, or be detrimental to, the amenity of the area in which the premises are situated, and/or
- It would be conducive to or encourage the misuse or abuse of alcohol.

An objection must state the reasons for the objection.

All objections are treated as public documents.

Objections must be made in writing to:
Liquor Control Victoria
GPO Box 4356
Melbourne VIC 3001

Objections must be made no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

12885602-AF30-26

Find it in the **General Classifieds** section of Network Classifieds.

PUBLIC NOTICES AND EVENT

Macedon Ranges Shire Council
PO Box 151
KYNETON Vic 3444
Tel: (03) 5422 0333
Fax: (03) 5422 3623
Email: mrsc@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Web: www.mrsc.vic.gov.au

NOTICE OF AN APPLICATION FOR A PLANNING PERMIT

The land affected by the application is located at: **LOT 13 LP 149711Y P/Lancefield, 13 Dowie Court ROMSEY VIC 3434**
The application is for a permit to: **Variation of a covenant**
A permit is required under the following clauses of the planning scheme:

Planning scheme clause Matter for which a permit is required	Matter for which a permit is required
52.02 Easements, Restrictions and Reserves	Under Section 23 of the *Subdivision Act 1988* to create, vary or remove an easement or restriction, or vary or remove a condition in the nature of an easement in a Crown grant.

The applicant for the permit is: **Alan Scott Grierson**
The application reference number is: **PLN/2026/238**

You may look at the application and any documents that support the application using one of these options:

MACEDON RANGES SHIRE COUNCIL	Online	
	In person	40 Robertson Street GISBORNE VIC 3437 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Thursday

You may also call **(03) 5422 0333** to arrange a time to look at the application and any documents that support the application at the office of the responsible authority, Macedon Ranges Shire Council. This can be done during office hours and is free of charge

Any person who may be affected by the granting of the permit may object or make other submissions to the responsible authority.

An objection must be made to the responsible authority in writing, include the reasons for the objection and state how the objector would be affected.

The responsible authority must make a copy of every objection available for any person to inspect free of charge until the end of the period during which an application maybe made for review of a decision on the application.

The responsible authority will not decide on the application before at least 14 days after the date of this notice. If you make an objection, the Responsible Authority will inform you of its decision.

If you object, the responsible authority will tell you its decision.

Date: 8/9/26

12893788-JV34-26

Employment

POSITIONS VACANT



JOURNALIST - FULL TIME

Star News Group is an independent, Australian, family-owned media company and a leading provider of trusted local journalism.

We publish newspapers and digital news services across Melbourne's south east, the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Melbourne's west and north, as well as selected regions in Queensland. Our network also includes a growing portfolio of niche and specialist titles.

With a strong commitment to digital innovation, Star delivers news across multiple platforms – print, ePapers, websites aligned to each masthead, newsletters and thriving social media channels. As a progressive publisher, we continue to invest in quality local journalism and products that strengthen community connection.

About the Role
A rare opportunity exists to join our newsroom as either an experienced journalist or a graduate/cadet entering the industry. These positions are based at our Keilor Park office and form part of a broader network of newsrooms producing weekly newspapers and daily digital content.

Our journalism is hyperlocal – focused on the stories, people, issues and decisions that shape the day-to-day life of our communities. You will work within an experienced independent publishing team with strong editorial leadership and a commitment to public-interest reporting.

What We're Looking For
We are seeking motivated and community-minded reporters – from experienced journalists to high-potential cadets – who can demonstrate initiative in news gathering and a passion for storytelling.

Key duties include:
- Reporting on general news, community issues, local government, sport and events
- Producing engaging digital and print editorial content
- Supporting special features and sponsored editorial as required
- Covering events across the region (including occasional after-hours commitments)
- Meeting deadlines and working within weekly production cycles
- Assisting with proofing and preparing content for print

Qualifications & Experience
- We'd love to hear from applicants who have:
- A tertiary qualification in journalism, communications, media, marketing or similar (or currently completing)
- Strong writing skills and excellent command of the English language
- A news sense and curiosity about local people and issues
- The ability to work both independently and collaboratively within a busy newsroom

To apply please send your resume and cover letter to Laura Michelle: laura.michell@starweekly.com.au

Star

12892938-EB34-26

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SPORTS QUIZ

1. In which year did Roger Federer win his first Grand Slam singles title?
2. Which Dutch professional racing cyclist won the 2026 Tour de France Femmes?



Roger Federer

3. Izobelle Louison-Roe won gold in what event at the 2026 World Athletics U20 Championships?
4. Kade Kolodjashnij, brother of Geelong defender Jake, played for which two AFL clubs?
5. In which 2017 film did Margot Robbie star as an American figure skater?
6. Which former West Indies pace bowler was known as Whispering Death?
7. How many gold medals did Australia win at the 2026 Commonwealth Games?
8. Which Port Moresby-based expansion team is set to join the NRL in 2028?
9. Who is the cover athlete for the standard edition of the *NBA 2K27* video game?
10. The heads of wooden golf clubs were traditionally made from which hard-wood?
11. In boardsports, a 'goofy' stance refers to what?
12. Approximately how long is a full marathon in kilometres?
13. From the perspective of the players, what is the left side of the tennis court called?
14. Ollie, tic-tac and kickflip are terms from what sport?
15. How long is a standard soccer match?
16. Who is the tallest person to ever captain an AFL/VFL side?
17. What is the only F1 team headquartered outside of Europe?
18. Who is the most recent non-European to win a tennis Grand Slam?
19. Which NBA team shares its nickname with AFL team Hawthorn?
20. True or false: athletes from Queensland won more gold medals than any other country at the 2026 Commonwealth Games?



21. In which US city is Fenway Park?
22. And which MLB team is it home to?
23. How many players, excluding the goaltender, are on the ice for one team during a regular season NHL overtime period?
24. Internationally, the WPA is the governing body of which sport?
25. Is the term 'sherpa' named after a job title, ethnic group or a piece of climbing equipment?
26. What does ESPN stand for?
27. The Cleveland Sirens are set to join which US sports league in 2028?
28. Which wrestler features on the cover of *WWE 2K26*?
29. Trey Parker and Matt Stone star in which 1998 film about a fictional sport?
30. Bendigo Spirit and Geelong Venom are teams in which league?

1. 2003 **2.** Demi Vollering **3.** Women's high jump **4.** Gold Coast and Melbourne **5.** *I, Tonya* **6.** Michael Holding **7.** 70 **8.** Papua New Guinea Chiefs **9.** Victor Wembanyama **10.** Persimmon **11.** Leading with the right foot **12.** 42 kilometres **13.** Ad court **14.** Skateboarding **15.** 90 minutes **16.** Jarrod Witts **17.** Haas F1 Team **18.** Coco Gauff **19.** Atlanta Hawks **20.** True **21.** Boston **22.** Boston Red Sox **23.** Three **24.** Pool **25.** Ethnic group **26.** Entertainment and Sports Programming Network **27.** WNBA **28.** CM Punk **29.** *BASEketball* **30.** WNBL

2108



PUZZLES

SUDOKU

No. 303

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

easy

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

medium

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

hard

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

easy

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

medium

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

hard

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

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QUICK CROSSWORD

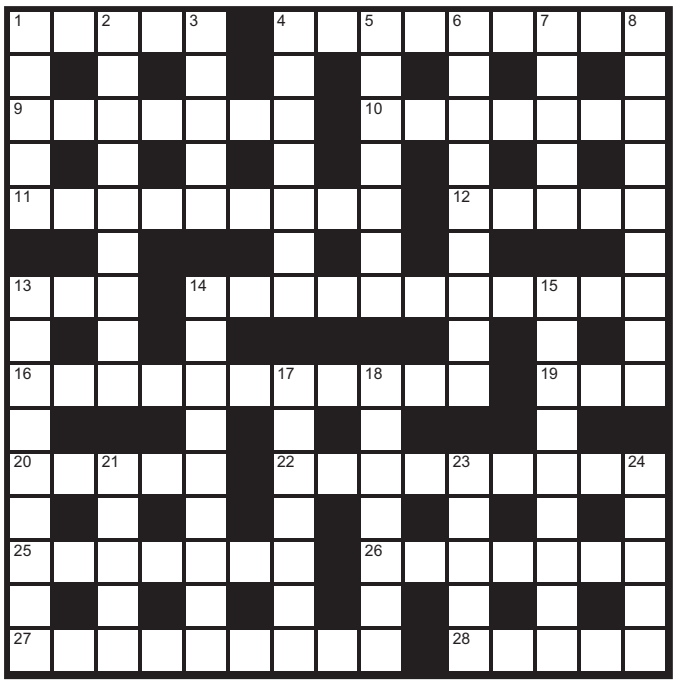
No. 303

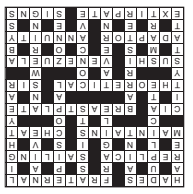
ACROSS

1 Abode of the dead (5)
4 Brotherly (9)
9 Copy (7)
10 Voyaging (7)
11 Keeps (9)
12 Trick (5)
13 US intelligence agency (1,1,1)
14 Armour that covers the chest (11)
16 On paper, say (11)
19 Mister (3)
20 Japanese delicacy (5)
22 South American nation (9)
25 Power plug (7)
26 Regular payment (7)
27 Eradicate (9)
28 Autographs (5)

DOWN

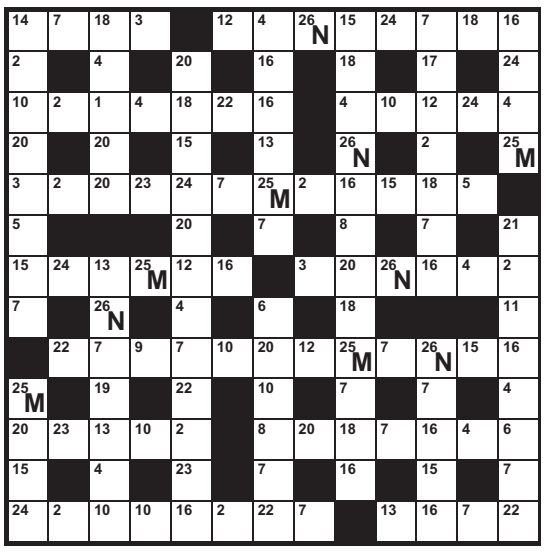
1 Seraglio (5)
2 Reproduce (9)
3 Holy person (5)
4 Brittle (7)
5 Helps (7)
6 Relating to a bishop (9)
7 Gullible (5)
8 Measure of interstellar distance (5-4)
13 Monaco, Singapore or Vatican City, for example (4-5)
14 Lawyer (9)
15 Replying (9)
17 Greek restaurant (7)
18 Hollow and curved (7)
21 Intelligent (5)
23 Regions (5)
24 Bottomless gulf (5)



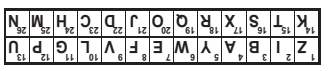


DECODER

No. 335



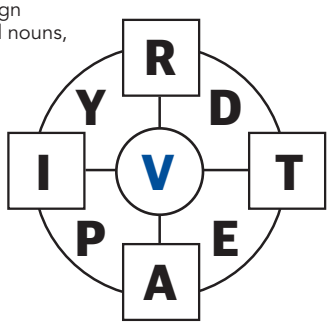




9-LETTER WORD

Using the nine letters in the grid, how many words of four letters or more can you list? The centre letter must be included and each letter may only be used once. No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural nouns ending in 's'.

Today's Aim:
16 words: Good
24 words: Very good
31 words: Excellent



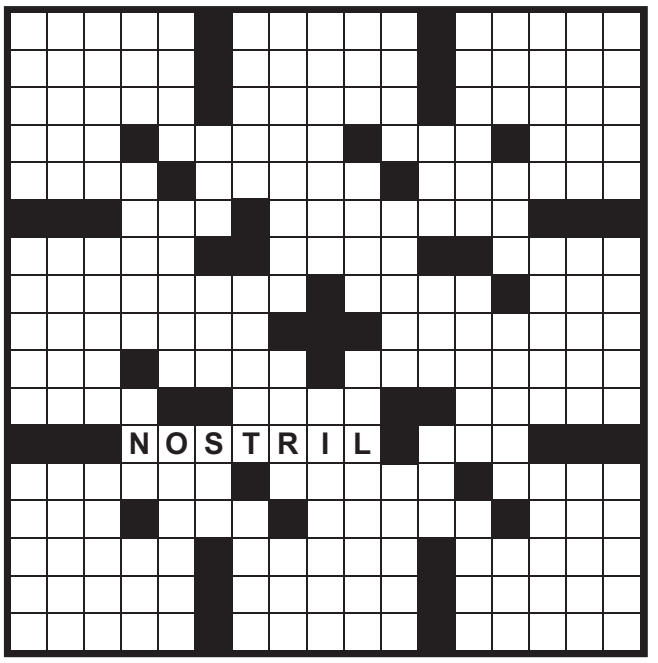
advert, aver, avert, avid, dative, davit, DEPRAVITY, diva, dive, diver, divert, drive, pave, paved, private, privet, privy, rave, raved, rive, rived, rivet, vapid, varied, variety, vary, verity, very, vide, vied, viper

WORDFIT

No. 303

3 LETTERS
ACT
AGE
APT
ARE
BUY
DAD
DIM
EGO
END
ERR
IDS
IOU
OPT
ORE
OUR
PAT
PEN
PET
ROD
SAP
SEA
SEE
SET
TEE

4 LETTERS
CAFE
DRAB
DREW
METE
MUSS
SACS
SEEM
SEER
SETS
SKEW
SPAT
STAB
TART
YETI

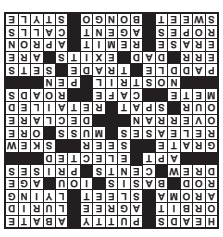


5 LETTERS
ABATE
ABODE
AGENT
AGREE
ALERT
APRON
ARIAS
AROMA
ARROW
BASIS
BONGO
CALLS
CENTS
CRUDE
DITTO
DRAPE
EARLY
EDGES
ENACT
ERASE
ERRED
ERROR
EXITS
GRATE
GROOM
HEADS
HOARD
KOALA
LIONS
LURID
LYING
ORBIT
PASSE
PEARS
PEERS
PUTTY
REMIT
REVUE
ROADS
ROPES
SCARE
SENSE
SLEET
STYLE
SWEET
TINGE
TRADE
TROLL
WATER
WEEDS

6 LETTERS
ALLURE
OLDEST
PADDLE
PRISES

7 LETTERS
DECLARE
ELECTED
FIREMEN
~~NOSTRIL~~
OVERRAN
TRESTLE

8 LETTERS
RELAXING
RELEASES
RETAILED
UGLINESS



21-08-26

5x5

No. 410

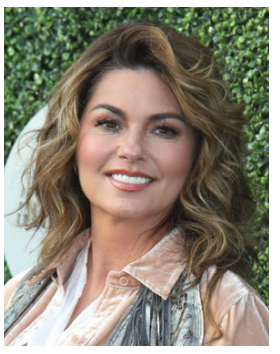
S		A		E
	A		O	
A		O		D
	E		S	
E		G		D

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

NOTE: more than one solution may be possible

S	P	A	R	E
H	A	L	O	N
A	L	O	U	D
D	E	N	S	E
E	D	G	E	D

QUICK QUIZ



1 Which animal is associated with a thought experiment devised by Erwin Schrödinger?
2 In the Halloween franchise, whose likeness inspired Michael Myers' mask?
3 Anna Funder's biography *Wifedom* is about which 20th-century author's wife?
4 In basketball, what is it called when the ball is stuck between the rim and the backboard?
5 New Zealand-born pop singer Rosé is a member of which South Korean girl group?
6 Pastafarians are followers of which modern religious deity?
7 Which Australian singer starred as the titular character in the 2005 film *Hating Alison Ashley*?
8 What three-letter title is bestowed upon the highest-ranking student in a graduating year?
9 Which actor is Shania Twain (pictured) not impressed by in her song *That Don't Impress Me Much*?
10 A colloquial expression for a hangover remedy is the 'hair of' what animal?

ANSWERS: **1.** Cat **2.** William Shatner **3.** George Orwell **4.** A wedgie **5.** BLACKPINK **6.** The Flying Spaghetti Monster **7.** Delta Goodrem **8.** Dux **9.** Brad Pitt **10.** Dog

Corolla sets the benchmark

By Alistair Kennedy, Marque Motoring



RATINGS
Looks: 8/10
Performance: 8/10
Safety: 8/10
Thirst: 9/10
Practicality: 8/10
Comfort: 8/10
Tech: 7/10
Value: 7/10

Launched here in 2022, and given an upgrade in mid-2025, the Toyota Corolla Cross is – as the name suggests – an SUV crossover version of the all-time world's biggest selling motor vehicle.

Corolla Cross is the largest of Toyota's three-model range of compact SUVs above the smaller Yaris Cross and the sportier C-HR.

It shares the same platform as the C-HR and Corolla. On test was the GXL front-wheel drive model.

The original Corolla Cross was available with the choice of petrol or petrol/electric hybrid powertrains but, in line with Toyota's electrification policy all variants are now hybrid-only.

There are six Corolla Cross variants, 2WD GX priced at $37,440, 2WD GXL ($41,190), GXL AWD ($44,190), 2WD Atmos ($47,990), Atmos AWD ($50,990) and added with the 2025 update a new performance flagship AWD GR Sport, also selling for $50,990. On-road costs need to be added.

All Toyotas now come with a five-year, unlimited kilometre warranty. This can be extended to seven years on the engine and driveline, and 10 years on the hybrid battery, subject to all scheduled servicing being done at Toyota dealerships.

Styling

Corolla Cross sits on the same platform as the Corolla hatch and sedan but with a different body as befitting an SUV. The styling is quite conservative but that's unlikely to deter the typical Toyota buyer who prefers function over fashion.

While it shares much with the Corolla its outer appearance is more mini-RAV4 than maxi-Corolla with a snub-nosed grille featuring the Toyota logo, with blue highlights in the centre indicating its electric component.

As well as the addition of the GR Sport, the 2025 update added extra equipment and a refreshed exterior design to the rest of the range. This included a new integrated mesh grille and high-grade LED headlights for GXL grades and up.

GXL and above add enhanced LED headlights, rear privacy glass, front foglights and roof rails. Atmos and GR Sport get a two-piece panoramic moonroof.

GX and GXL roll on 17-inch alloy wheels, Atmos steps up to 18-inch while GR Sport gets darkened 19-inch wheels.

Corolla Cross is available in seven exterior paint colours, with availability depending on trim level. High-grade variants like the Atmos and GR Sport can also be optioned with a contrasting black two-tone roof.

Interior

We tested the latest Corolla hatch recently so had no problem adapting to the dashboard layout of its Cross sibling because, apart from the new touchscreen, they are all-but identical.

We've loved the stylish yet functional Corolla design. Everything is in easy reach and there are physical switches and buttons for commonly used features audio volume and climate control rather than the reliance on touchscreens that have become increasingly prevalent, especially in Chinese vehicles.

The SUV conversion over the Corolla adds more headroom throughout and decent leg and foot room in the rear seats.

The centre console box is very narrow and limits many of the usual items that would normally be stored there. We couldn't even fit two glass cases there.

Interior trim graduates, from fabric in the GX, to leather accents in the GXL and Atmos with suede with silver stitching and highlights in the GR Sport.

Atmos and GR Sport come with a rear seat folding centre armrest complete with twin cupholders.

Boot space varies according to driven wheels and powertrain, ranging from 380 litres in the AWD variants up to 425 litres in the 2WDs.

The 2WD models come with a space-saver spare wheel, AWD has a tyre repair kit.

Atmos is the only variant to provide a powered rear hatch and kick opening feature.

Powertrain

Under the bonnet, there's a 2.0-litre Atkinson cycle non-turbo petrol engine with outputs of 112kW and 188Nm. It's teamed to a single electric motor on the front axle or both front and rear motors depending on variant for a combined maximum power output of 146 kW.

Power is linked to either two or four wheels via a sequential ten-speed continuously variable transmission (CVT). GR Sport has paddle shifters.

Corolla Cross is the first local model to get the 5th generation Toyota hybrid powertrain which combines a lighter lithium-ion battery with a more powerful main electric drive motor.

Safety

Corolla Cross was tested by ANCAP in October 2022 and received the maximum five-point rating. The GR Sport has yet to be tested but will presumably get the same rating.

Standard safety features start with eight airbags including at front centre, side chest and driver knee coverage.

Also standard are advanced ABS brakes, stability and traction control, blind spot monitoring, rear cross traffic alert, reversing camera, hill start assist, and Isofix child seat anchors.

The latest Toyota Safety Sense 3.0 package adds a comprehensive list of features including active cruise control, a pre-collision safety system with pedestrian and cyclist detection, an external low speed pedestrian warning system, emergency driving stop, lane trace and departure alert with steering assist, lane change assist with deceleration assist, intersection turn assist, road sign assist, door exit warning and automatic high beam.

In addition, GSX and above get parking support braking with vehicle and object detection and a panoramic view monitor.





Corolla Cross as the benchmark in what is a large and highly-competitive category.
(Pictures: Supplied)

Infotainment

Corolla Cross is the first Toyota in Australia to get the brand's new multimedia system. The entry-level GX uses an 8.0-inch touchscreen. GXL and Atmos get a 10.5-inch touchscreen with inbuilt satellite navigation.

Screen resolution is sharp and responsive with the option of voice activation.

Both Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are wireless. There's a single USB-C port in the front console of the GX and two in the centre and rear consoles of the higher-spec models.

GX and GXL have a 7.0-inch colour digital instrument cluster, Atmos and GR Sport step up to a 12.3-inch display.

Importantly, the audio and air-conditioning controls are physical knobs rather than being built into the touchscreen.

All but the GX get a wireless smartphone charging pad.

Corolla Cross comes with the latest version of the Toyota Connected Services communications system that uses the myToyota Connect smartphone app to allow owners to do such things as remotely check the status of the doors and lights, access information such as the vehicle's last known location and recent trips, or start the engine or climate control.

Note that, apart from the emergency services components, Toyota Connected Services, after a one-year free trial requires a subscription.

Driving

The extra height when compared to the Corolla sedan and hatch provides easier access although the high seat bolsters could not suit everyone. There is however, unlike many other new vehicles, a grab handle for the driver.

Multiple drivers in the GX and GXL will have to adjust their seat manually or pay nearly eight grand more for the Atmos.

External vision is excellent with a high driving position, large windscreen, side windows and mirrors together with a relatively narrow A-pillar all contributing. On the negative side the rear window is quite narrow.

There's a solid feel to the Corolla Cross and it's easy to drive and park around the urban environment which is most likely to be its home territory. Minimum turning radius circle is 5.2 metres.

There's plenty of power when needed and it cruises smoothly and quietly on the open road.

Steering is well weighted and provides direct, positive feedback to the driver.

Suspension is well-balanced although we did get knocked around when maneuvering through a badly-cratered section of our drive courtesy of some recent flooding.

There is an EV only option as well as three drive modes: Eco, Normal and Power.

Toyota has for long been at the forefront of hybrid technology and fuel consumption from the Corolla Cross is impressively low.

On the combined urban/rural cycle it's listed at 4.2 litres per 100km from the 2WD variants and 4.4 with the AWDs. We averaged 4.8 litres per 100km during our week-long test of the GXL 2WD.

Summing up

Looking for a reason to buy a Corolla Cross?

Start with the base of Australia's top-selling brand for the past 26 years. Add a nameplate that's been around here since 1967 and accumulated more than 1.6 million local sales.

Then bulk it up to get into the booming compact SUV market, and top it off with the latest in fuel-saving hybrid technology.

There are cheaper competitors in its segment but when you factor in the long-term fuel savings together with the overall quality we rate Corolla Cross as the benchmark in what is a large and highly-competitive category.



Macedons' Lilli Collins. 567238_01



Matt Laing with Ruby Watts and Brianna Woodburn. 567238_23



Lancefield's Ashleigh Coates. 567238_13



Lancefield.

Joy as Cats do it again

Macedon won a third straight Riddell District Football League women's premiership on Saturday night, beating Lancefield. Star Weekly photographer Ljubica Vrankovic was out shooting some of the action.



Football views. 567238_08



Macedon's Taya Konias. 567238_20



Macedon's Ruby Watts. 567238_12



Lancefield's Harmony Cassar (left) goes flying. 567238_11



Lancefield players share a moment. 567238_18



Macedon's Sian Andrews. 567238_14

Hawkes leaves Wedgies

By Tara Murray

The Wedge-Tailed Eagles' Central Victoria Football League season came to an end on Sunday and with it, Phil Hawkes' time as coach of the side.

The Wedgies announced on Saturday that Hawkes had decided to step down as coach at the end of the season.

Hawkes has coached much of the group for six years, firstly with Kyneton, then the combined Gisborne-Kyneton United team and then the Wedge-Tailed Eagles this year.

"Phil came to us at a time when our team was struggling to win games and helped turn us into a competitive and professional outfit, fierce on the field, while representing our club and community with integrity and respect," the Wedgies said on social media.

"With more than 30 years of coaching experience across football and volleyball, Phil has dedicated much of his life to developing players, building teams and creating opportunities for people to be involved in sport.

"Along the way, he has coached our playing group through six seasons, more than 90 games, three grand final appearances and two premierships.

"A legacy that will be embedded in our club's history forever.

"For our playing group, Phil has been so much more than a coach. He has been a constant through a pretty extraordinary journey, standing beside our players through some of the most difficult times and helping shape the culture of our team along the way."

Hawkes has also previously coached the Sunbury Lions to four consecutive grand finals in the old Victorian Women's Football League.



Phil Hawkes. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 497597_13

The Wedgies said that Hawkes built confidence into the playing group and made them believe before they released what they could do.

"So many times when we didn't believe we could achieve something, Phil believed it for us first, and success always followed. "

The Wedgies finals hopes ended on Sunday as they finished their season with a loss to Sandhurst.

Sandhurst started the better of the two teams and led 20-1 at quarter time.

That would prove to be the difference in the match, with both sides scoring two goals apiece after quarter time.

Sandhurst won 5.6 (36)-2.4 (16).

Ayesha Nicholson, Teagan Ainslie and Belinda Hateley were named the Wedgies' best in the loss.

A win would have meant the Wedgies would play finals in their first season in the competition, a loss meant that they had to rely on other results.

With Eaglehawk beating White Hills, it snuck into fourth spot, a game ahead of the Wedgies.



Brad Fox. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 501144_30

Fox to finish up as Rupertswood coach

By Tara Murray

Rupertswood premiership coach Brad Fox will conclude his time as coach at the end of the Essendon District Football League division 1 season.

The Sharks announced on Tuesday night, that Fox wouldn't continue on next season.

"Rupertswood Football Netball Club wishes to advise our members and community that, after three years leading the senior men's football program, Brad Fox will conclude his appointment as senior coach at the end of the 2026 season," president Chris Wilson said.

"Brad has made an outstanding contribution to Rupertswood and will always hold a special place in our club's history. His leadership and commitment culminated in the unforgettable 2025 senior premiership, making Brad one of only four senior premiership coaches in Rupertswood's proud history.

Brad is a highly respected figure within our club, and we are incredibly grateful for the time, energy and passion he has invested in our players and football program."

In the statement, Fox said the journey had exceeded anything he could have imagined.

"We shared difficult moments, extraordinary moments and ultimately the joy of a premiership together," Fox said.

"Just as importantly, Rupertswood once again feels like a great football club and community. I thank every assistant coach, player, trainer, team manager, volunteer, supporter and committee member who supported the program and my approach."

The Sharks finished their season with a win against East Keilor.

After only narrowly beating East Keilor the first time the two teams met, the Sharks made sure there was no repeat this time round.

They kept the Cougars goalless in the first half as they led by 51 points at the main break.

The margin extended in the third quarter to 69 points before finishing it off to win, 17.25 (127)-5.9 (39).

Fraser Phelan-Smith kicked four goals for the Sharks, while Clayton Bonello and Luke Sultana kicked three goals each.

Jackson Cardillo, Ethan Fitzpatrick and Mitchell Johnson were the best for the Sharks.

The Sharks finish the season in eighth spot with five wins in their first season back in division 1.

Meanwhile in division 2, the Sunbury Kangaroos and East Sunbury suffered final round losses.

The Kangaroos were hoping to finish their season on a high against Westmeadows, which needed a win to play final.

Westmeadows set the match up in the middle two quarters as it kicked 12 goals to none.

The Tigers finished the game off, winning 21.5 (131)-7.10 (52).

John Corso, Tierone Cuffe and Shawn Bowden were the Kangaroos best.

The Kangaroos finish the season in sixth.

East Sunbury lost to Northern Saints in its final round match, 20.9 (129)-12.11 (83).

There was just nine points in the game at half time before the Saints kicked 10 goals to four in the second half to finish the season on a high.

Todd Elton kicked four goals for the Thunder.

Robbie Gray, James Strauss and Elton were named the Thunder's best.

The Thunder finished the season in seventh with seven wins, after just two last year.

Cats to play finals

Macedon will play finals in the Riddell District Netball League, with a final round win ensuring the Cats top six spot.

Entering the final round in sixth, a win against Lancefield would have been enough for the Cats to play finals.

A loss would have opened the door for Kyneton to play finals for the first time in the RDNL.

The Cats made sure they didn't have to rely on other results as they beat the Tigers, 49-45.

Henrietta Donoghue shot 42 goals for the Cats, while Chloe Williams shot seven.

For the Tigers, Shanae Brundell shot 25 while Lilli Florance put up 20 goals.

The win has the Cats in sixth spot and the Tigers finish the season in fifth.

The Cats will now face Riddell in an elimination final in the opening week of finals.

The Bombers secured third spot with a 94-42 win against Melton South.

Tilly Allen shot 68 goals in a best on court performance for the Bombers.

Lancefield will face the Gisborne Giants in the other elimination final.

The Giants finished their regular season with a 76-27 win against Romsey.

Malia Seumanutafa shot 66 goals for the Giants in the win.

Emma Grech shot 15 goals for the Redbacks.

The Redbacks during the week announced that Justin Philby has been re-appointed coach for next season.

Woodend-Hesket locked in top spot as it aims for a fourth straight premiership.

The Hawks beat Kyneton in the final round, which ended the Tigers finals hopes, 65-32.

Kaylia Stanton shot 41 goals for the Hawks.

Ty Coppinger and Stanton were named the Hawks best. Kristiana Manu'a was named the Tigers best.

The Hawks will face Wallan in the qualifying final.

The Magpies beat Melton Centrals on Saturday, 54-38.

Maeve Donegan shot 38 goals for the Magpies, while Gloria Kolio shot 27 goals for the Centrals.

Woodend's female focus

By Tara Murray

Woodend is aiming to make sure it has the female pathway in place for when its young stars are ready in the Gisborne and District Cricket Association.

After having junior girls teams the past two seasons, Woodend is aiming to put a women's side together for the upcoming GDCA season.

Club president Daniel Heaney said they wanted to make sure their junior players, both male and female, had somewhere to go in the future.

"The idea is that our under-13s will want to keep playing cricket one day and we don't want them to go elsewhere," he said.

"Instead of waiting five years until they are ready for women's cricket, how about we try to build it now so we already have a team when they're ready.

"We've had a couple of girls interested."

Heaney said it had been really amazing to see how many girls love playing cricket.

Woodend has got girls involved in their Cricket Blast program, while the club had under-13 and under-15 girls teams last season.

Heaney said the club was keen to have those sides again, with a real swell of numbers in the under-13 group.

Two Woodend junior girls Lucinda Gray and Sienna Ranson were recently named in the Central Highlands under-15 girls academy.

If the club doesn't have the numbers for standalone junior teams, it would aim to combine with another club to ensure the young players get out on the field.

Woodend is holding a come and try day on 13 September which will be run by Victorian Premier Cricketer Makinley Blows.

Heaney said there had been some early interest in the women's side and were keen to get as many players as possible.

"We're hoping this can spark some excitement," he said.

"We're hoping to join into the B-grade competition and see how the girls go.

"For the girls, it'll be more about having fun.

"They don't have to be a great player, they can be brand new or already have some skills."

The club will also help out equipment for players to use for the upcoming season.

Heaney said they would look at the coaching situation once they had more idea about numbers.

With Woodend one of several clubs aiming to enter women's sides this season, the competition is growing.

Heaney said it was awesome to see.

"It shows that cricket is not just for the blokes," he said.

"The more we build this up, the league and the competition, more will want to play down the track."

Details: Katherine Bailey, 0407 014 679



Holly Clough and Felicity Mahoney celebrate a goal. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 571649_13

Cannons pull off their best win of the season

By Tara Murray

The Calder Cannons got back to what they do best and produced their best win of the Talent League girls season on Saturday.

After two tough losses, the Cannons went back-to-basics and showed what they could do against the Greater Western Victorian Rebels.

The Cannons dominated from start to finish and were able to win, 14.12 (96)-2.2 (14).

Cannons' coach Nic Tenabel said it was the perfect response from the playing group.

"It definitely shows the hard work that has been put in," she said.

"A little bit of belief gets them far.

"Agaisnt Oakleigh and the Eastern Ranges we didn't use the ball that we wanted to.

"Coming off those two losses we regrouped and showed the Cannons game plan and game style."

Tenabel said that they were able to bring it all together as they continued to work on their structures and systems.

She said on Saturday they got the result they were after.

The margin was 17 points at quarter time, 25 points at the main break and was extended to 35 points heading into the final quarter.

With the game over, Tenabel threw the magnets around the final quarter.

"We wanted to see if they could nail those secondary roles for next year," she said.

"It's been massive and it was nice to see them get the fundamentals, be comfortable and get more confidence.

"We put it on them to do the hard work and they've got the results." They've showcased thor strengths and another part of their games."

Tenabel said the players had worked hard at training and also out of training to be able to play multiple roles.

Chloe Bullen kicked five goals for the Cannons, while Marlo Atkins and Isabelle Hannon kicked two goals each.

Victoria Goudy, Charli Calleia and Bullen were named the Cannons best.

The win was the Cannons sixth of the season. They won five games total across the past two seasons.

Tenabel said there had been a massive improvement in the group this season.

"There's a new coaching group, new playing group and a new game plan that has come together," she said.

"We're looking forward to finals and what that brings us."

The Cannons sit ninth on the ladder, but fourth out of the Victoria teams.

The Cannons will finish their regular season against the Murray Bushrangers on Saturday at Wangaratta.

The Cannons boys also had a big win against the Rebels, winning 18.9 (117)-8.19 (67).

The Cannons kicked 11 goals to four in the second half to seal the win.

Thomas Lincoln and Tex Longmire kicked three goals each for the Cannons.

George Holderhead and Slayde Law were named the Cannons best.

The Cannons sit eighth on the ladder.

The Cannons boys also finish their regular season against the Murray Bushrangers.

Voigt named new Rockies coach

Zac Voigt is looking forward to stepping up and taking on the role as the Macedon Ranges Rockies men's coach for the Country Basketball League season.

Having been an assistant coach to Michael Ryan the past few years, Voigt now steps into the main role.

"It's been something that I've been working toward for a little while," he said.

"It's come to fruition and it's exciting.

"Being part of it, not just coming from the outside, makes it a bit more exciting as I'm familiar with the program and have been helping build the playing group and the club."

Voigt said Ryan had decided the time was right to step away from the side as a few of the older players retired and it was a chance for a new voice with the younger players coming through.

Ryan won't be a stranger to the club having taken on the women's coach role.

"We're good friends," he said. "I know that I'll be able to pick his brain.

"He'll be close by which is good."

Voigt takes over a side that made its first north-west grand final last season.

They lost to the Castlemaine Cannons in the decider, 90-81.

The focus this season is to try and go one step further.

"A lot of the core group has returned and we've done some recruiting," he said.

"We have full intentions to go one better this year which is exciting.

"There are some really talented kids in the region and a few are playing in Big V finals, some at the highest level they can.

"Because of where they've grown up, they can play for us, which is awesome."

Voigt said Jack Poyser, Matthew Quinn, Matthew Merrett and Saxon Royal are among the players that have returned.

Quinn will bring some leadership to the young group.

"He's the oldest player by about 10 years," he said. "He has plenty of experience and is pretty level-headed.

"He knows when to speak."

The Rockies will still hold trials, and Voigt said they were hopeful that they might unearth some gems they can add to the team.

Female competitions to grow

By Tara Murray

The Riddell District Football League's senior women's competition will have a new side in 2027, while two clubs are moving their junior girls teams to the league.

The league announced that Wallan was moving both its senior and junior female football sides to the RDFL next season, while the Sunbury Lions junior girls sides will also move across.

The league in its statement said the two transfers represent an exciting step forward for women and girls football and provide players with greater opportunities to progress through junior football into senior competition within the league.

Wallan already has the rest of its senior program, men's football and netball, in the league, with its women's side moving across from the Northern Football League.

The arrival of Sunbury Lions' junior girls program is equally significant, providing young female footballers in the Sunbury and surrounding areas with a pathway into the RDFL junior competition structure.

They will also join the large portion of their club who already participant in the junior boys and mixed football competition and the junior netball competition.

The Lions senior women's team is set to remain in the Essendon District Football League.

RDFL chief Jordan Doyle said the transfers were an exciting development for both the competition and the broader RDFL community.

"We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Wallan senior women and Sunbury Lions junior girls into the RDFNL," he said.

"These are two fantastic additions that further strengthen the pathway for girls and women playing football across our league.

"Our focus has always been on creating opportunities for people to participate in football and netball at every level, and seeing clubs invest in female football is incredibly encouraging. The pathway from junior girls' football through to senior women's football is becoming stronger, and these two clubs are an important part of that growth.

"The RDFNL believe these transfer are a real positive step for football for both their clubs and also the RDFNL and we are grateful to have the support of both leagues through this process."

The RDFL women's senior competition had four teams this year, with the arrival of Wallan to make it at least five teams.

Both Diggers Rest and Melton Centrals are seeking to have senior women's sides next season, to build on their junior girls programs.

It would be a first women's side for the Burras, while Centrals are looking to reestablish their team.



Luzanne de Kock and Lilli Collins. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 567238_03

Tigers fall short in first women's grand final

By Tara Murray

A disappointing grand final will drive Lancefield to further develop in the Riddell District Football League women's competition.

The Tigers were playing in their first grand final and took high hopes into the game against Macedon, which was aiming for a third straight premiership.

The Tigers were tough early, but once the Cats got going they were hard to stop.

The game was all but over at quarter time as the Cats led 39-0 at the first break.

While the Tigers were able to hold some of the momentum, the Cats were able to extend the lead throughout each of the quarters.

The Cats made it a second straight perfect season, as they won 14.8 (92)-2.4 (16).

Tigers' coach Cash Ferguson said it wasn't the game that they were after.

He said they were beaten by a better team on the day.

"Macedon are a really good team and they deserve to win," he said.

"We came with our best, and our best today wasn't good enough."

Ferguson said the first quarter was extremely frustrating.

He said they wanted to go hard from the first contest.

"We thought we had a plan for that, but it was disappointing that we didn't execute what we wanted to achieve," Ferguson said.

"I think it was round seven this year, we went into half time one or two goals up on them, so we know that we have the ability.

"We just can't be consistent."

Ferguson said the Cats class and top players were at another level and they weren't able to go with them.

Meaghan Lyons kicked two goals for the Tigers.

Captain Emily O'Brien led the way and was named in their best with Molly Libardi, Sienna Green and Lilly Bromley.

The grand final was the first for the Tigers in three years of having a women's program.

Ferguson said they continued to make inroads.

"First year we had no aspirations," he said.

"Brand new program and just wanted to get a team out there. We got a couple of wins.

"Last year, we unfortunately went down in a prelim. This year a grand final.

"Every year we get a little bit better, hopefully next year is our year."

Ferguson said they had a core group of younger players that were now leading the way and would be keys for a number of seasons.

He said they would need to find ways to continue to take more steps next season.

"Youth is something we're trying to build into the program early," he said.

"We know we have some older players in the groups, some mums and aunties … They are fantastic at the start of their footy journey but a lot less aspirations.

"We know we have a lot of juniors and younger people coming through, that is where we really look to the future and what we're trying to build.

"We're hoping to keep nurturing those younger talents, by the time one, two, three years time they're going to be the ones that are the mainstays in the club."



Jaimee-lee Wilson. (Supplied)

Wilson steps down

Sunbury Lions will have a new coach for next year's Essendon District Football League women's season.

The Lions announced that Jaimee-lee Wilson won't continue on next year, stepping down from the role.

Wilson stepped into the coaching role for this season, having previously been a co-coach. She is the Lions female games record holder.

"After an incredible year leading our women's football program, we can confirm that Jaimee-lee will be stepping down from her role as senior women's football head coach," the Lions said on social media.

"Throughout her time at the helm, Jaimee-Lee has played an important role in the growth and development of our women's football program, supporting our players and wider football and club community with commitment, passion and care.

"While she is stepping away from the coaching role, we're thrilled that Jaimee-lee will continue to be a valued part of the broader Lions community.

"We thank her for everything she has contributed to our women's football program and look forward to continuing to see her around the Den."

With a young side and plenty of new players, the Lions won two matches for the division 1 season. The Lions had previously advertised for a women's coach, seeking an experienced and passionate leader to coach the side for 2027 and beyond.

It said the side has enormous potential.

"We are now looking for the right person to continue that journey and lead our team into its next exciting chapter."

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Tigers fall short


Fox stands down

Cats three-peat

By Tara Murray

There was no stopping Macedon as it won its third straight Riddell District Football League women's premiership on Saturday.

Having made all four grand finals since the start of the women's competition, the Cats haven't lost a game since the grand final in 2023.

After another dominant performance this season, the Cats kept their best for last against Lancefield in Saturday's grand final.

After starting slowly for the first five minutes—having had the past two Saturdays off—the Cats kicked into gear.

They led 39-0 at quarter time and the game was already over.

The Cats continued the momentum and were able to enjoy the 14.8 (92)-2.4 (16) win.

Cats' coach Matt Laing said there was a bit of relief that they were able to get the job done.

"I'm so proud of our girls who have gone out and won three premierships in a row," he said.

"It's just one of those great achievements in general in sport to win three in a row, it's just an amazing thing.

"We never mentioned the word three-peat but it was probably on a few people's minds, and we'd had such a great season, personally you hope all the things that you have in place, you are able to deliver on the final day and the girls were fantastic."

Laing said he expected the Tigers to bring their strong contested game and they were able to do that early on.

He said once they got going they were hard to stop.

"We had to fight it out and once we got that clearance away our skills were really good and put our skills on show," he said.

"It was exhilarating for 10 minutes there, we kicked five or six in a row, we were really good."

It was the Cats stars that led the way.

Brianna Woodburn in the ruck along with Ruby Watts and Taya Konias were everywhere.

Charlotte Noonan kicked seven goals, while Sharika Parker kicked three goals in the first quarter.

Laing said while they had some of the best players in the competition, it was bigger than that.

"We've got a periphery of players who are so reliable like Laura Wilkinson and Emily Consiglio. Sam Pointer just runs off the back line," Laing said.

"It's not just the stars, right through the side everyone is contributing.

"It's a team game and everyone learned really quickly that we're all here as a team.

"Yes there are better players than others, but we will only get better as a team if everyone is involved."

Konias, who kicked three goals, was awarded the best on ground medal.

Laing said they could see that she was building up for a big grand final.

"She's the hardest trainer in the RDFNL, I think, she set herself to do it, a very determined person, absolutely amazing game."

Laing said the performance of Noonan was what they had come to expect from her.

For 10 of the players, it's premiership number three.

For Laing, who was in his first year as coach of the side, it was a pretty special memory.

He got to share it with his daughter, Watts.

"It's tough being the second best sports person in my family," he said.

"I'm more than happy to wear that tag when you have Ruby Watts around.

"She's a star. I'm really happy to be part of it, it's just unreal."

The celebrations were set to continue into the weekend for the Cats.

Their youth league girls side won a fourth straight premiership on Sunday.

Sian Andrews, who played on Saturday night, was looking to make it back-to-back premierships for a second straight year.

Laing said the connection between the two programs was really important.

"We've spent a bit of time together, the youth league girls and the senior women, over the last month or so," he said.

"We'll all go watch the youth girls tomorrow [Sunday] , which is important because our program is strong and we want to keep it that way.

"We want that collectiveness of building a culture, hopefully two premierships on the weekend."

With the women's competition set to grow, Laing said they were keen for the challenges to come at them.



Macedon celebrates. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 567238_24


Macedon celebrates. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 567238_15


Taya Konias. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 567238_05