

SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES

Star Weekly

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Friends of Gisborne Botanic Gardens president Amanda Gauci and secretary Nakeshia Mason and her son Van. (Damjan Janevski) 573883_01

Wattle Day signals spring

The Friends of Gisborne Botanic Gardens invites everyone to celebrate the start of spring and National Wattle Day.

The friends group will host free conservation events at the botanic gardens on 1 September, 3 September and Saturday 5 September.

Friends president Amanda Gauci said the events will kick off on 1 September, National Wattle Day, with upskilling conservation skills.

“It’s a little bit of digital skills for conservation for those people that are interested in coming down and actually understanding conservation and how it’s tracked,” she said. “It can also help them learn a lot more about the particular plants as well as their ecology and the environment that these plants are living in, particularly within the niche that the Macedon Ranges is.”

All events will have a conservation theme, focusing on the plants in the botanic gardens, including a Pop-up Pot-up and a day of data discovery.

“This is a focus on not just the wattles themselves, but the community that the wattles are in ecologically and the processes they perform,” she said.

Events are \$5 for non members. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/4ztdhyhk>

Church greenlight

By Georgia Tacey

A new church will be built in Kyneton despite Macedon Ranges planners stating that its construction “would not result in an acceptable planning outcome”.

A planning application for a place of worship at 133 Harpers Lane, Kyneton, was put to Macedon Ranges councillors during the 26 August council meeting, with officers recommending its refusal.

However, councillors vote to give the application the go-ahead instead.

A officers’ report to the meeting outlined concerns raised with applicant Kyneton Gospel Trust for not addressing impacts

on the native vegetation on the site beyond consideration of the land covenant and not providing an acoustic report for noise impacts.

The report stated the proposed place of worship would be part of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church and would be a satellite church to service an existing base community of eight households within the Tylwinda Estate and a new estate under construction in Kyneton.

Cr Alison Joseph, who moved a motion to grant the planning application, said she had read the report and did not find the reasons put forward for refusal clear.

“The report states there are no concerns

of the design and sighting of the buildings, that the subdivision is considered to be an orderly and acceptable outcome, and that adequate car parking has been provided,” she said.

“What is proposed is a place of worship used only a few hours per week for a small number of people located walking distance from many of the parishioners’ homes.”

Cr Jennifer Anderson, who voted against the motion, said she had questions about the two native trees included on the land that would need to be removed to facilitate the proposal, which are under a covenant.

Cr Dominic Bonanno however disputed Cr Anderson’s concerns.

“We’re not talking about remnant native vegetation here. We’re talking about two planted trees,” he said.

Church member Brian Edmonds said he was pleased councillors approved the church.

“We put a significant amount of effort into these plans, and will continue to refine them as we satisfy additional conditions such as undertaking acoustic testing,” he said.

“We will also work closely with our neighbours and community as we move into future construction and ultimately the quiet operation of our new meeting room.”



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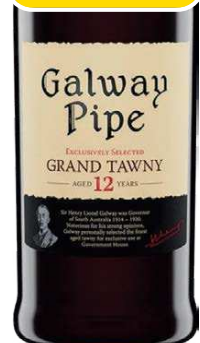
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Call for data moratorium

By Georgia Tacey

Hume council has stepped up its push for tighter controls on data centres, calling for a national moratorium on new developments and mandatory buffer zones between the facilities and homes.

The push comes as data centre development gathers pace across Hume, with one facility already operating in Tullamarine, two under early construction in Craigieburn and another two awaiting approval in Campbellfield and Mickleham.

Council’s submission to the federal government’s Parliamentary Inquiry into Artificial Intelligence and Data Centres was

tabled at the 24 August council meeting.

The submission calls for the federal government to mandate minimum buffer zones for any future data centre developments with distances based on independent, scientific modelling to limit impacts on nearby residents.

Council also wants data centre operators to contribute directly to the communities hosting them, including funding local infrastructure, creating employment opportunities for residents and supporting community programs.

It is also urging the federal government to back a push for a Victorian moratorium on new data centres and expansions of existing

centres while state and local inquiries into the industry are undertaken.

Council also wants greater transparency around proposed developments, including requirements for developers to engage directly with residents and businesses within a five-kilometre radius.

The submission recommends information be distributed in multiple languages and that communities be given several opportunities to provide feedback, both online and in person.

Councillor Naim Kurt, who successfully pushed for additional measures to be included in the submission, said data centres had generated an unprecedented

level of community concern.

He called for stronger culturally appropriate consultation, local employment opportunities, community infrastructure funding and greater transparency about the type and use of proposed data centres.

“We’ve been one of the first councils in the country to be calling for better planning controls for data centres, we were the first council to call for a moratorium, and here tonight we will be expanding that suggestion that the moratorium should be applied nationally as well until those proposed inquiries at different state and territories are conducted, so that we can get a consistent approach to data centres,” he said.



Ammie Jackson from Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network is hosting events near you. (Damjan Janevski) 574353_01

Help Landcare grow and plant more trees

Upper Deep Creek Landcare Network is partnering with TreeProject for a number of plant propagation workshops.

Four workshops will be held throughout the catchment area in September to encourage more locals to become volunteer TreeProject growers.

TreeProject is a volunteer-based organisation which provides low-cost native seedlings to landholders and Landcare groups.

Since it began in 1989, volunteer TreeProject growers have propagated over two million seedlings that have been planted by Landcare groups, landholders,

and environmental volunteers.

To become a volunteer, those interested can register for a growing season of up to six months, nurture their plants from seed to seedlings that are planted as part of environmental restoration projects.

Growers are provided with training, equipment (a growing kit which contains seeds, pots and potting mix to grow 336 seedlings), and ongoing mentoring and support.

The requirements from the growers are to set up an outdoor growing space and water the seedlings each day.

TreeProject’s system has proven to be

a successful way for Landcare groups and landholders to access affordable native seedlings for revegetation projects.

The workshops will be held over Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September in Lancefield, Sunbury, Gisborne and Wallan.

Community members who would like to learn about growing native plants as TreeProject volunteers are encouraged to attend, as well as groups who are interested in ordering low-cost seedlings from TreeProject for their own future revegetation projects. Details: upperdeepcreeklandcare.org.au

Dingoes seized from New Gisborne property

A woman has been charged following a Conservation Regulator investigation that led to the seizure of dingoes from a New Gisborne property.

It is alleged three dingoes were acquired without authority in September 2025 and kept at the New Gisborne property.

As part of the investigation, Conservation Regulator Authorised Officers executed a search warrant at the property on 22 April and seized three dingoes.

The 54-year-old woman has been charged under the Wildlife Act 1975 with three counts of buying threatened wildlife without authority and three counts of keeping threatened wildlife without authority.

The woman has also been charged with three counts of obtaining property by deception under the Crimes Act 1958.

Dingoes are threatened wildlife in Victoria. Keeping a dingo in Victoria requires a licence issued by the Conservation Regulator under the Wildlife Act 1975.

Individual offences relating to the unlawful acquisition or possession of threatened wildlife can attract penalties of up to \$50,184, two years in prison, or both.

The matter will be heard at the Kyneton Magistrates Court in September.

Anyone with information about suspected wildlife crime is urged to report it to Crime Stoppers Victoria on 1800 333 000 or at crimestoppersvic.com.au

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Construction begins on Sunbury TAFE

Construction is now underway at Kangan Institute’s new TAFE campus in Sunbury.

Ground was broken on the new \$25 million campus on Monday 24 August, which is set to open in 2028 and provide training opportunities for in-demand jobs like education support.

The new campus will accommodate up to 200 students in a vibrant learning environment, with high-tech equipment and technologies.

Funded through the state government’s Building Better TAFE Fund, the new Sunbury TAFE will give Hume students the opportunity to to learn closer to home, as well as benefit from free TAFE courses.

Sunbury MP Josh Bull welcomed the investment into the Sunbury community.

“It isn’t just a new building. It’s an

investment in skills, education, opportunity and the future of our community,” he said.

“The new facility will create local access to training and new career pathways, with courses planned in areas including digital technologies, foundational skills, education support, and hair and beauty and more.

“For Sunbury, this investment is a game changer.”

Kangan Institute chief executive Laura Macpherson welcomed the partnership with the state government to bring the education opportunities to Sunbury.

The campus will be at 7 Evans Street and 2-4 O’Shanassy Street, Sunbury.

While construction on the new campus is underway, select courses are being delivered at the Sunbury Hume Global Learning Centre.

Hotspot for roo strikes

Sunbury remains the number one spot for kangaroo-related collision claims, according to the latest data from the RACV.

New RACV Insurance claims data has revealed Victorian motorists experienced a collision with a kangaroo nearly 20 times a day on average last year, with crashes becoming more frequent, costlier and more severe.

RACV members lodged almost 31,000 kangaroo-related collision claims between January 2021 and June 2026, peaking in 2025 with 7232.

Sunbury ranked the top suburb for kangaroo collisions logged by RACV members, with 281 claims made between January 2021 and June 2026.

This was followed by Wallan (232) and Heathcote (230).

Gisborne cracked the fifth spot with 209, with Craigieburn (193), Doreen (165) and Woodend (158) all making the top 10.

The steepest increases between 2021 and 2025 were recorded on Melbourne's fringe, with claims in Mickleham up by 169 per cent and Gisborne up by 93 per cent.

RACV said the average claim reached almost \$9,000 in 2025, up 48 per cent since 2021, while one in six kangaroo collision claims resulted in a write-off in 2025, compared with one in nine in 2021.

RACV general manager insurance and roadside Bill Bloodworth said the growth of Melbourne's outer suburbs, which has

seen the transformation of bush and farmland for housing developments, has resulted in more motorists travelling through areas historically inhabited by kangaroos.

"A lot of people assume this is only a rural-road issue. As our outer suburbs grow, more cars are sharing the road with more kangaroos, and the result is more collisions, more written-off vehicles and bigger repair bills for everyday Victorians," Mr Bloodworth said.

"We tend to see higher claims volumes in the cooler months, when claims from April to August run more than 20 per cent higher than the rest of the year.

"The risk is greatest at dawn and dusk, so motorists should slow down, stay alert

and scan the roadside, particularly where kangaroos are most active."

RACV tips to avoid a kangaroo collision are to avoid travelling at peak times including dawn, dusk and night, slow down in wildlife active areas, scan the roadside, don't swerve if a collision is unavoidable, and use high beams when it is safe to do so.

Mr Bloodworth said while hitting a kangaroo could be distressing, drivers should prioritise safety.

"Pull over safely, turn on your hazard lights and check on your passengers. If anyone is injured, call triple-0, and if the animal is injured, contact local wildlife services on 8400 7300," he said.

Park boundry push

Hume council will seek to extend the boundary of Woodlands Historic Park in its latest bid to squash illegal dumping.

During the 24 August council meeting, councillor Naim Kurt successfully moved a motion to request the boundary of Woodlands Historic Park be extended to the outer perimeter of Oaklands Road.

Cr Kurt said the land along Oaklands Road has increasingly been used for off-road driving, informal 4WD testing and illegal dumping.

"The solution to this really is to move the boundary of the Woodlands Historic Park to incorporate that informal service road that sits along Oaklands Road there and to move the fencing up to the main road. That would increase the size of the Woodlands Historic Park," he said.

"It would stop the access which has been ongoing for years and years and years. People using it for illegal four-wheel driving, taking their trailers there, using it to go off the side of the road and to dump rubbish as well."

The land along Oaklands Road has been previously identified to council as an informal service road by the former roads minister, according to council.

Illegal dumping in the area had also occurred this month, with Cr Kurt calling out a dumper in the chamber and through a Facebook post.

"We had the completely embarrassing situation happen last week where a vehicle became bogged in the wet weather dumping rubbish there and the gentleman ended up being on the front page of every person travelling past sitting under the tree and the tens of thousands of cars driving past getting photographed by it and put up on social media," he said.



Come down to Woodend Neighbourhood House's open day (Damjan Janevski). 573523_04

House welcomes the community to visit

Woodend Neighbourhood House is opening its doors for the community to see everything it has to offer.

Held in conjunction with the Woodend Farmers Market, the Spring Open House gives visitors the chance to meet tutors, activity coordinators, volunteers and staff, explore the Woodend Neighbourhood House spaces and enjoy a range of demonstrations and hands-on activities.

House manager Melissa Baker encouraged the community to come on down and support their local neighbourhood house.

"The Spring Open House is a won

derful opportunity for people to come in, have a look around and see what the Woodend Neighbourhood House is all about," she said.

"Whether you're interested in trying something creative, joining a group, volunteering or simply connecting with people in the community, there's something for everyone."

Visitors can expect a display of work by the Art Club for Kids, craft activities including mandala greeting cards and picket fence painting, and morning tea. There will also be demonstrations showcasing some of the diverse groups and programs on offer at the house, including

Mahjong, acrylic painting, African drumming, family yoga and kirtan.

The Repair Cafe and Bike Shed will be open, providing visitors with an opportunity to chat with volunteer repairers and bike enthusiasts about the services they offer and how to get involved.

Visitors can also pick up a copy of the Term 4 program and find out more about the many activities, classes and groups available.

The Spring Open Day will be held on Saturday 5 September from 9am until noon.

Details: woodendnh.org.au

Gisborne man arrested as part of secret commissions investigations

A Gisborne man was one of five arrested on Monday 24 August after police executed six search warrants as part of an investigation into secret commissions, fraud and drug trafficking.

Six search warrants were executed as part of Taskforce Hawk at an office on Elizabeth Street in the CBD, as well as residential addresses in Gisborne, Chirnside Park, Westbury, Powelltown and Somerville.

A 36-year-old from Chirnside Park, a 46-year-old from Westbury, a 56-year-old from Powelltown and a 37-year-old from

Somerville were also among those arrested, with the Chirnside Park and Westbury men charged.

The Gisborne man, as well as the Powelltown and Somerville men, were released pending further enquiries.

"Criminal conduct, involving corruption, intimidation and violence within the construction industry is unacceptable," Organised crime division Detective Acting Superintendent Jamie Walker said.

Four CFMEU registered vehicles were seized, alongside 10 mobile phones, a

Schedule 4 poison, a number of laptops, documents, iPads and a number of USB storage devices.

Police said the investigation relates to allegations of drug trafficking as well as secret commissions.

Operation Hawk was established in July 2024 to specifically target criminal behaviour linked to the construction industry and transitioned to Taskforce Hawk in June 2025.

This was in response to a number of fresh allegations of serious and violent criminal behaviour.

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Year 9 student Willow Hook-Nicol. (Damjan Janevski) 572007_01

Salesian student set for Vietnam

Salesian College Sunbury student Willow Hook-Nicol is about to embark on the trip of a lifetime.

The year nine student is one of 12 across the state to be chosen to travel to Vietnam as winners of the Premier’s Spirit of Anzac Prize.

The annual competition is open to Victorian students in years nine to 12, with winners receiving a fully funded overseas study tour.

Students will visit historic sites across Vietnam including Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi as well as the villages of Hoa Long and Nui Dat.

The tour is designed to deepen the students’ understanding of Australia’s history of service and sacrifice in relation to the Vietnam War.

Willow said she was thrilled to be given the opportunity.

“I’ve always had a fairly big interest in

history and war and I knew that I had some relatives who had fought in the wars before,” she said. “I thought this trip would be really beneficial for me because I’ve also been considering joining the army when I’m older, and being able to fully immerse myself in such a significant place would just mean a lot to me.

“It would really put all of the stories and stuff that I’ve read into perspective because we’re going to real places where the historical events happened.”

Willow said she was shocked to hear she had won but her mum knew the trip was meant to be.

“My mum from the very start had been saying that she knew I was going to get it as soon as I applied,” she said. “She was very adamant that I was going to get it.”

Willow and the 12 other students will head to Vietnam on 20 September for a nine day trip.

Briefs

Remains found

Police have found human remains as part of their investigation into a shooting in Wildwood. The yet to be formally identified remains were found about 3pm on Wednesday 26 August covered in grass on Havelock Road in Clarkefield. The coroner has been advised. The discovery follows an incident where a 37-year-old Meadow Heights man was allegedly shot following a dispute with the occupants of a property on Wildwood Road on 19 August. A 56-year-old Wildwood man was arrested on 20 August and charged with one count of intentionally cause serious injury. Police said they will consider alternate charges following the results of a postmortem. Police believe the parties involved were known to each other.

Copper theft caught

Police have arrested a woman following a burglary in Sunbury. Officers were called to reports of a woman breaking into an abandoned property on Horne Street about 1.30am on Friday 28 August. A toolbox and multiple piles of copper were allegedly located and seized in the hallway. The Port Melbourne woman was arrested and charged with burglary, going equipped to steal, trespass and possess controlled weapon. She was bailed to appear at court next year.

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Why scammers pretend to be your bank and how the con can work

Scammers impersonate brands people already know and trust, and banks are among the most-effective disguises available to them when trying to catch out people and businesses.

“Scammers love to impersonate known brands, known entities,” said Shannon Brown, CommBank’s Fraud and Scams Industry, Intelligence and Disruption Senior Manager. “But they also really like to impersonate banks.”

The clearest example is the callback scam, and it starts with a message that doesn’t ask you to click anything.

“Customers may receive an SMS or an email asking them to call a number to fix a problem,”

Brown said. Ringing a number feels like the cautious thing to do, which is part of why it works.

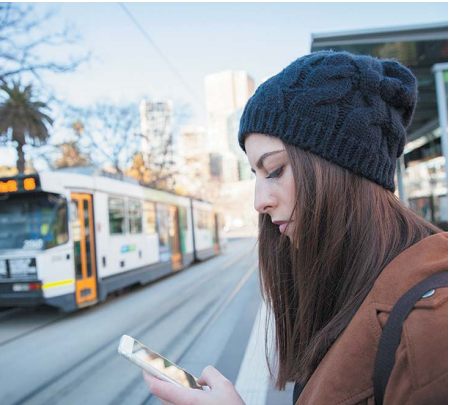
“When the customer calls that number, they actually hear hold music and an automated voiceasking them to select an option to talk with a phone specialist,” Brown said. “It sounds reallylegitimate and really mimics that call centre experience that most of us are familiar with.”

“In a lot of these scam calls, we hear scammers say, hey, I know the first six digits of your card,”

Brown said. “People take that as a sign of familiarity. They think, obviously you must work for the bank because you know my card number.”

Those six digits are not personal information. They can often be a bank identification number,which is standard across a card range, so the same six digits sit on many cards. Brown saysscammers may already know them from publicly sourced information.

Brown says they will ask for details such as a client number, a password, multi-factor authentication codes, or a full card number, anything that helps them take over an account orgain unauthorised access. They may even ask you to download remote access software to access your computer.



The other version is a direct request for money, and it tends to arrive in the same words.

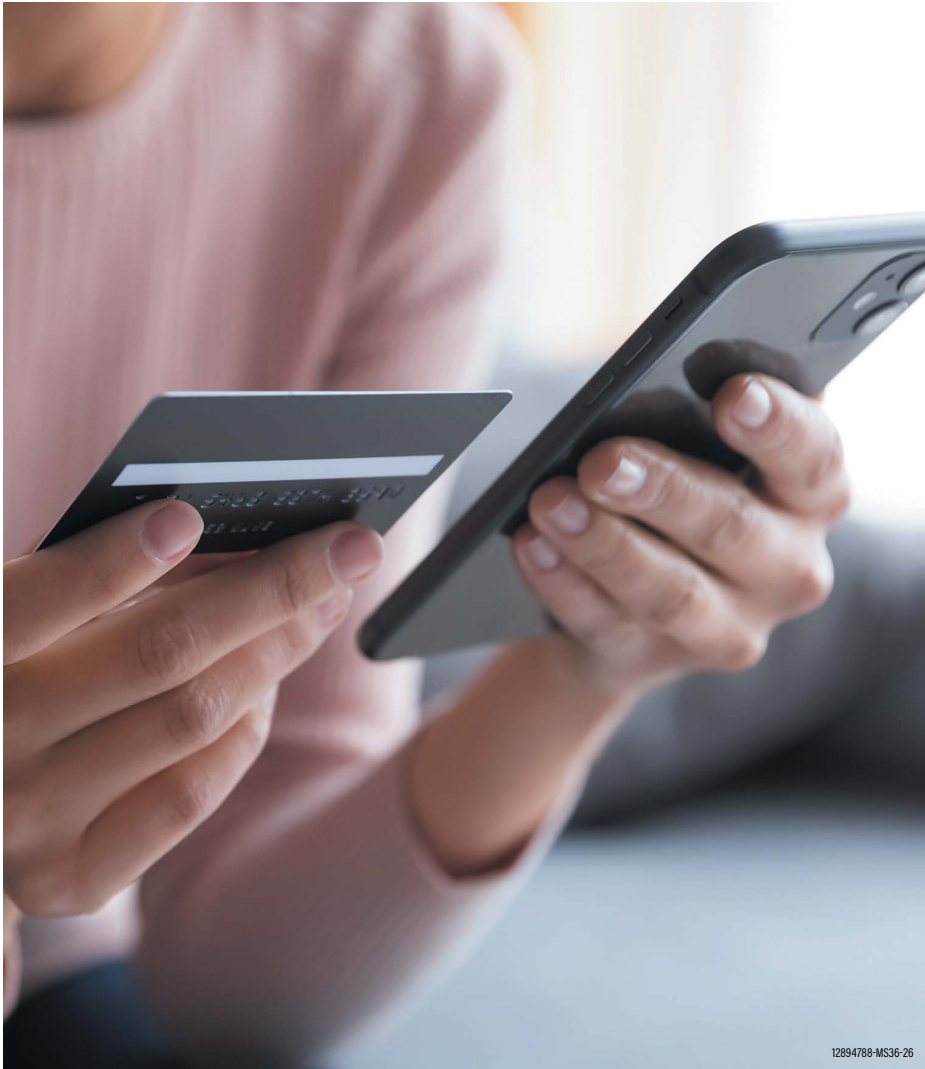
“Often they’ll use language like, make a payment to a safe account, and that’s a really big red-flag,” Brown said.

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A gem that keeps shining

Alice Pung thought her memoir of life growing up as the daughter of Asian migrants in the inner-west would barely make it to the shelves of Footscray Library. Two decades, thousands of copies and a swag of awards later, the 20th anniversary edition of *Unpolished Gem* was recently launched there. She spoke to Cade Lucas about her book that just keeps on going.

When contacted to see if she'd be available for a photo to go with this story on the 20th anniversary edition of her debut memoir 'Unpolished Gem,' Alice Pung kindly replied that the week from 22-28 August wasn't a great time. In fact, it may well have been the 52nd most ideal week of the year to try and find space in the Footscray born author's diary. "I'm so sorry - you've caught an author at the busiest week of the year next week (Book Week)," Pung replied via email, in what must be one of the nicer ways in which one person has told another that he or she is an idiot.

As the author of 14 books, many of them children's titles, of course Pung was going to be in great demand at libraries, bookshops, and schools during Book Week. And given her award-winning memoir about growing up in Melbourne's inner-west in the 80's and 90's as the daughter of Chinese-Cambodian migrants has been re-released to mark two decades since it was first published, of course this year's book week was going to be busier than usual.

After all, Pung credits *Unpolished Gem*'s continued presence on school curricula as a big reason for it being remembered at all. "Every single year there is at least one school, either in Australia or overseas, studying it. It just keeps going and going," Pung said of the enduring appeal her 2006 release has with English teachers and students.

Given many debut authors barely sell 20 copies of their books, let alone have them remain in circulation for 20 years, it's no surprise Pung wanted to spend book week with some of the readers who've helped make this possible.

Which is a long-winded way of saying no photos could be taken with Pung for this story and that book week is probably not a great time to try and organise them with authors.

Fortunately some excellent pics were taken with Pung and her family at the 20th anniversary edition launch in July. That took place at Footscray Library, the same place where Pung spent countless hours writing her memoir two decades earlier after attracting the interest of a publisher through a magazine article she'd written.

Back then the library seemed about as far as the book might go. "I'm always surprised," Pung said of *Unpolished Gem*'s success in an interview with Star Weekly done (thankfully) before book week. "I thought it'd be in print for six months and there'd be a few copies in the Footscray Library and my dad would buy up the rest."

Pung's dad, Kuan, and mother, Kien, loom large in *Unpolished Gem*, as do their extended family who all fled to Australia from Cambodia in the early 1980s to escape the murderous regime of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

Settling in Footscray and then Braybrook, Pung's parents started running an electrical goods store on the corner of Barkley and Donald streets more than 40 years ago and can still be found behind the counter of the now Betta Electrical outlet today.

Pung worked there as a teenager in the 90's, not long after Victoria's large psychiatric institutions were closed and many of the patients ended up on the streets of suburbs like Footscray.

"We had a lot of these eccentric and really wonderful and interesting people suddenly in the community and a lot of them came



Alice Pung (centre) and family at the 20th anniversary edition launch of her memoir *Unpolished Gem* at Footscray Library. (Pictures: Supplied)

“The books that were being published ... told a very specific narrative of immigrant success. Hardship and success. My book is full of losers”

- Alice Pung

into my dad's shop where I'd worked since I was 16, so I got really used to these eccentric people," she recalled, noting that it was these types of stories that helped the book stand out, especially compared to other memoirs about growing up in Asian families.

"I guess, at the time it was published, it was a little bit unusual. The books that were being published came from America or they came from Asia and had titles, such as *Wild Swans*, *Falling Leaves*, *Ten Thousand Sorrows*, and *Chinese Cinderella*, that told a very specific narrative of immigrant success. Hardship and success," Pung said. "My book is full of losers."

Not that there wasn't pressure to succeed at home for Pung too. Combined with cultural differences, prejudice and the emotional toll that being a teenager can have on anyone, it led to a moment that definitely marked *Unpolished Gem* as not your garden variety migrant memoir.

"I had a nervous breakdown at 17 which no Asian Australian puts in a book, but I document it in all its details which was something kind of unexpected at the time," Pung said in an upbeat tone completely at odds with the content, before adding: "it's not a misery memoir, it's pretty funny," just to make sure.

Having people misunderstand *Unpolished Gem* is something Pung has dealt with since the moment it came out.

By way of example, she recalled the book's original launch which took place after she'd graduated from university with a law degree and had begun working as a solicitor.

"My dad invited all his friends," Pung said of the crowd of fellow Footscray shop owners and factory workers from the local Chinese community who came along and bought copies for \$25 each.

"It was an hour's salary back then."

However it was the reaction of their children who also came along that caught her eye.

"Their children looked a bit disgruntled and I kept wondering why and then I realised on the back of the book cover it said 'Alice Pung is a Melbourne born writer and lawyer.'"

"These parents had focused on the word lawyer and thought oh this must be a manual on how to make it for their kids so they were buying it for their kids as a book of inspiration," Pung said of the moment she realised that many of the young people in the audience probably hated her as a result.

"I would have too," she added, before noting that it didn't take long for some of them to change their minds.

"But then I got all these emails from young Asian Australians who'd read my book including of some of the disgruntled kids at my book launch and they said 'oh gosh' I had no idea you had a nervous breakdown' and 'I said to my parents, see this is what happens if you push me too hard.'"

Pung now lives with her husband Nick and three children near Melbourne University where she is the writer in residence at Janet Clarke Hall, though she still returns to the inner west to visit family at least once a week.

"I see wonderful things," she said of her regular visits to Footscray, expressing excitement at the proposed Creative West development at the library.

"But I also see all the poverty there. I live and work near the university which is a very privileged area and then when I go back to Footscray you do see a direct contrast."

Pung said a book like *Unpolished Gem* could still be written in the Footscray of today, though it would come from a different migrant perspective.

"It would be someone like Mayor Mohamed (Maribyrnong mayor Mohamed Semra) or a young Burmese resident of Footscray, because that's the new generation experiencing the same social and financial issues and also the prejudice," she said, noting that many of the labels attached to young African Australians today are the same as those given to young Asian Australians of her generation.

"We were the druggies, we were the gangs back then."

But as much as the skin colour and origin of those on the receiving end of racial prejudice may have changed, Pung said the person inspiring it was depressingly familiar.

"The one constant in my life is Pauline Hanson."

"When I was 16 she was around and now 30 years later, she's still around. This story is still exactly the same because the counter force in our lives is still the same woman."

Unpolished Gem 20th Anniversary Edition is out now, published by Black Inc.



Betta Electrical, Footscray, where author Alice Pung worked as a teenager and which her parents still run. (Damjan Janevski)

Inquiry report released

By Georgia Tacey

The parliamentary inquiry into waste-to-energy has called for tougher regulations but has fallen short of calling for minimum buffers to be established around waste-to-energy facilities.

The inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy in Victoria handed 59 findings and 33 recommendations to the state government.

As part of the recommendations, the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee has called for greater transparency around waste-to-energy licence allocation decisions, public reviews of the state's waste-to-energy cap and a central public register of waste-to-energy projects.

It has also called for greater community consultation requirements, independent auditing and greater public reporting of facility emissions, as well as requiring operators of waste-to-energy facilities to fund an independently administered community health surveillance program as a condition of planning approval.

One of the committee's findings determined that an appropriate buffer between a waste-to-energy facility and nearby residential areas is one of the most significant planning judgements, with no prescribed minimum separation distance provided, however, it did not recommend including a minimum buffer zone for the facilities.

Instead, the recommendation encouraged the state government to provide communities with clear, accessible information explaining how buffer distances for waste-to-energy are determined, including the factors considered, and why those distances are considered appropriate.

The inquiry also found Victoria faces a growing residual waste challenge, with 5.7 million tonnes generated in 2024 and projected to rise to 8.9 million tonnes by 2053.

"Managing Victoria's residual waste is one of the state's most significant environmental challenges," committee chair Georgie Purcell said.

The committee found Victoria is not currently on track to meet its target of diverting 80 per cent of waste from landfill by 2030 and stressed that waste avoidance, reuse and recycling must remain the priority.

"To reduce this challenge the Victorian government should advocate to the Commonwealth government to consider requiring manufacturers take greater responsibility for products at the end of their life," Ms Purcell said.

Two waste-to-energy facilities have been proposed for Melbourne's north, including in Sunbury and Wollert.

Both facilities have received waste-to-energy cap licences under Recycling Victoria, with Cleanway's application for Wollert currently under assessment with the planning minister.

No application has been made by HiQ for the Sunbury proposal.

The state government has six months to respond to the report and its recommendations.

Residents should not be waste-to-energy 'guinea pigs'

By Georgia Tacey

Sunbury residents have welcomed the findings and recommendations of the waste-to-energy inquiry, but question why minimum buffers weren't included.

Around 80 community members from Sunbury, Wollert and Lara gathered at State Parliament on Tuesday 25 August to witness the tabling of the inquiry's final report.

The inquiry looked into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy infrastructure in Victoria making 59 findings and 33 recommendations.

No Waste Incinerator Sunbury spokesperson Alison Medforth welcomed the report, but said she wished the recommendations went further.

"Overall, my thoughts are that the final report is a bit lacklustre, but it's still an absolute positive for us," she said.

"We have presented them with all of our evidence and now we get to hold them to account for what they've put in here or what they've specifically failed to put in here. Everything is out in the open and we have a lot more transparency now."

Missing from the recommendations was a minimum buffer between homes and waste-to-energy facilities, which Western Metropolitan MP David Ettershank revealed was rejected as part of his minority report.

If it goes ahead, the waste-to-energy facility in Sunbury would be 800 metres from proposed residential housing, according to the committee's report.

"I personally would have thought that would be an easy thing that everyone could agree on ... but apparently not," Ms Medforth said.

She also questioned why a recommendation requiring environmental effects statements as part of waste-to-energy applications was not included.

Ms Medforth said the state government should, at a minimum, adopt recommendations 21 and 22, requiring independent audits of emissions from thermal waste-to-energy facilities rather than relying on operators to self-assess and report, along with continuous emissions monitoring and real-time public reporting of contaminants.

Mr Ettershank called on the state government to respond promptly to the report and the community's concerns.

"We're talking about giant industrial incinerators operating around the clock, yet the report still won't recommend a minimum distance from people's homes. That's not good enough," he told Star Weekly.

"Sunbury residents shouldn't be the guinea pigs for Victoria's waste-to-energy experiment."



Sunbury and Wollert residents were among those rallying at parliament on 25 August (Supplied).



Closed for renovations, open for business

Our Sunbury Office is closed until September 7 while we build a more welcoming space.

While we're closed, you can still get face-to-face support next door at the Sunbury Library on set days.

Learn more at www.gww.com.au/contact-us or call us on 13 44 99.



Gisborne librarian Georgina Smith for story time (Photos: Damjan Janevski). 574392_01



Mum Kara Murphy with her children William, 2 and Adalyn, 9 months. 574392_02



Killara Primary School student Paddy. 570931_01

Storybook dress-up stars

Kids across Sunbury and the Macedon Ranges celebrated Children’s Book Week, enjoying storytimes and dressing up as their favourite characters. Star Weekly photographer Damjan Javenski was out and about to capture all the best costumes and fun across Sunbury and Gisborne.



Killara Primary School student Harlow. 570931_03



Mum Lydia Fus with her son William, 5. 574392_03



Killara Primary School student Charlie. 570931_06



Jamielyn Kennedy with Chelsea and Zara, 1. 574392_04



Killara Primary School student Dylan. 570931_02



Killara Primary School student Eden. 570931_05



Killara Primary School student Lachlan. 570931_04

Movies deliver cinema magic



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

The Odyssey - M

There was so much anticipation for Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey I thought it could never meet the astronomical expectations. Then it did.

The Odyssey is the story of the Greek warrior Odysseus' His quest home after a vicious battle, being met time and time again by an array of mythical beasts, witches, and the wrath of the gods themselves.

Christopher Nolan delivers on every promise, an in-your-face story that shows every last detail.

Whether it was bloody battles, the grim realities of the 40 men sealed in a wooden horse for days, or the twisted intricacies of a magical transformation, you see it all.

As much of a visual feast as it was, the immersion reached its peak with the use of



Evan Turok. (Damjan Janevski) 545799_04

immaculate sound design.

A specific scene comes to mind in which the point-of-view character blocks his ears with wax to avoid hearing the dangerously deceptive siren song.

At first, one half of the cinema was dulled and then, separately, the other half. Soon, all you could hear was the gentle wind and a lulling horn amidst the chaos. It was a

surreal experience. The Odyssey is the best film in the last 12 months and demands to be watched in the best format possible.

If you have a chance, take advantage of the fact that we live in the city with the largest screen on the face of the Earth, watch it in IMAX Melbourne, and enjoy the experience as it was intended.

4.5/5

Cool Hand Luke - M

The charismatic Paul Newman gives his finest performance in the 1967 film Cool Hand Luke.

Sent to a prison labour camp for a senseless crime, Luke's defiant positivity makes him a target for the spirit crushing warden.

Cool Hand Luke is a story about brotherhood, learning to lean on one another and enjoying the little things that hold us together.

Newman is a master of expressing the full range of emotions, making the most of every second of screen time.

The film's most powerful scene comes when Newman sings a song to honour his late mother. As the passion pours out on the screen, a single tear rolls down his cheek, expressing more raw emotion than words ever could.

Using the camera to tell a story is the first priority when shooting a film. There's always a straightforward way to tick these boxes, but director Stuart Rosenberg never takes the easy way out.

Shooting scenes through the reflection of a prison guard's sunglasses or interchanging the foreground and background in and out of focus with artistic precision are just some of the ways this film stands out visually.

I often try avoiding diving too deep into the endings of a film. But in this case, you have had 59 years to see Cool Hand Luke – this one's on you! The film's devastating ending was not only ahead of its time, but left me absolutely shattered and loving every second of it. Taking bold risks, both visually and story-wise, makes Cool Hand Luke a film that sits above the standard

4/5

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Tuesday, 1 September, 2026 SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES STAR WEEKLY 11

MY PLACE

Dr Lutfiye Ali is president of the North Cyprus Turkish Community of Victoria. She talks with Sam Porter about her connection to west and its Cypriot Turkish community.

What's your connection to Melbourne's north-west?
For me, Brimbank symbolises connection to family, community, and cultural identity. Although I was born in Footscray, my childhood memories begin in Brimbank after my parents moved from Deer Park in the late 1970s, when I was a pre-schooler. One of my earliest memories is our backyard which was filled with grape vines, olive and fruit trees, and seasonal vegetables that my parents grew in effort to create sense of home connected to their roots in Cyprus. My connection to Brimbank is also shaped by family gatherings at my grandparents' home in St Albans, where we had barbecues, sang, danced, and listened to my grandfather's stories. I feel deeply connected to Brimbank because it is home to a large Cypriot Turkish community, including many of my own relatives. At the same time, I value Brimbank's Indigenous history and acknowledge that our lives here are built on the unceded lands of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land. This awareness developed in my adult years and has become an important part of my connection to Brimbank.

What do you like about Brimbank?
The cultural diversity of Brimbank. It is one of Victoria's most culturally diverse local government areas, home to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as



Dr Lutfiye Ali.
(Damjan Janevski)
546038_01

well as communities from many cultural backgrounds. More than 160 languages are spoken in Brimbank, and the majority of residents speak a language other than English at home. I value the way this diversity has shaped Brimbank's economic and social landscape. I believe there is a strong sense of social cohesion, with people from different backgrounds living, working, and learning alongside one another. Schools, neighbourhoods, and community spaces create opportunities for meaningful relationships and greater understanding across cultures. This diversity fosters a strong sense of belonging and connection among many community groups and reflects the strengths of Australian multiculturalism.

What's something people would be surprised to know about you?
I would say my sewing skills and how it

has shaped my personal and academic development. Although they may seem unrelated, I see a strong connection between the two. As a child, I was introduced to sewing by my mother. Inspired by her, I began sewing at a young age, and later these skills led to employment. For many years, I worked for designer while studying and raising my children as a single mother.

What do you like about being the president of, and a part of, the North Cyprus Turkish Community of Victoria?
The centre holds deep importance for both the Cypriot Turkish community and for me personally. I see it as the heart of our community, it's a place where community members come together to celebrate cultural and social events. It is also home to many other community groups who regularly use the space.

It is a privilege to serve as president of the North Cyprus Turkish Community of Victoria. Being the president allows me to make a direct contribution to the community while applying my background in community psychology in meaningful ways. In this role I work also closely with community members and Brimbank council to establish and support social wellbeing initiatives. One that I value deeply is Minik Hearts Playgroup, which a group of mothers, grandmothers and I established in October 2025. It is a weekly program that creates a welcoming space for the Cypriot Turkish, Turkish, and broader Brimbank community to connect. Through play, music, and storytelling, children are encouraged to learn Cypriot Turkish language and culture, while families come together to socialise, build relationships, and support one another.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Star Weekly looks back through the pages of our predecessors



35 years ago
3 September, 1991

The urban sprawl is having an insidious effect on the cost of housing in rural centres, inflating prices and making it unaffordable to many country families, a Central Highlands forum in Daylesford has been told.



30 years ago
3 September, 1996

More than 40 people will be forced to find new homes if plans to close Kyneton Caravan Park go ahead.



20 years ago
29 August, 2006

The legacy of war is long-lasting and is often passed down to succeeding generations through stories and memorabilia.



10 years ago
30 August, 2016

A new green waste voucher scheme for Macedon Ranges' residents has been put on hold until next year after a public backlash.

Kismet Park PS brings stories to life during Book Week

Students, staff and families at Kismet Park Primary School have celebrated the magic of reading during Book Week 2026 with a whole-school costume parade and a special invitation extended to children from neighbouring McEwen Drive Kindergarten.

The annual celebration sees students dress as their favourite book characters, bringing beloved stories to life while showcasing the joy that reading inspires. The event aims to foster a lifelong love of books and literacy while strengthening connections within the local community.

The highlight of Book Week is the colourful whole-school parade, featuring students from every year level proudly displaying their creative costumes and favourite literary characters. Children from McEwen Drive Kindergarten joined the festivities, giving future students an opportunity to experience the vibrant school community and share in the excitement of Book Week.

Acting principal Sam Carlton said “Book Week is one of the most anticipated events on the school calendar.”

“Book Week provides a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the power of stories and the important role reading plays in every child’s learning journey,” said Sam.

“We are delighted to welcome our local kindergarten children to join us as we share our love of books and literacy.”

Throughout the week, students participated in a range of literacy-focused activities, including classroom reading sessions, creative writing tasks, participation in the State Library of Victoria’s on-line Book Week celebrations, and whole-school competitions such as Guess the Teacher Behind the Book, Book Treasure



Hunts and daily Book Week quizzes, all designed to inspire imagination, curiosity and a lifelong love of reading.

Literacy learning specialist Brodie Lane said the event highlights the school’s commitment to developing strong readers and lifelong learners.

“Books have the power to transport us to new worlds, introduce us to different perspectives and spark creativity,” Brodie said.

“Book Week is a chance for students to celebrate the stories they love and discover new ones.”

The school was excited to welcome families and the kindergarten children to join the celebration and share in a day filled with creativity, learning and community spirit.

For more information, please contact the school or follow its social media channels for updates.



Acting principal Sam Carlton and assistant principal Louisa Beckenham joined in on the fun.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Art to wear

Art to Wear in The Gallery is the feature of the Focus Room at the Gallery Mt Macedon for the month of August 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

Chamber Poets

The next Chamber Poets Woodend will take place on Saturday 12 September 1-3.30pm. Special guest poets, live music, open readings, bar, snacks, prizes. \$10 cash at the door. All welcome!

- facebook.com/groups/ChamberPoets/about

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

Jackson’s Creek Combined Probus Club

The Jackson’s Creek Combined Probus Club meets the second Monday of the month at Sunbury Bowling Club. Doors open 10 am and meeting starts at 10:30 am. New members welcome. We have monthly outings, lunches, speakers and much much more.

- Marilyn. 0412 235 774

Rotary tall ship

Sunbury Rotary are inviting youth aged 15 to 17 years of age for the adventure of a lifetime, aboard a tall ship. Youth will be able to learn how to sail and steer the ship over a short journey alongside other Rotary youth.

- Terry, 0455 667 277, Bob 0407 546 000

Sunbury Blue Light Disco

Sunbury Blue Light Discos run throughout the year at the Sunbury Memorial Hall for primary school-aged children. Established in 1987, the initiative is led by dedicated Victoria Police members and community volunteers, and are always looking for more volunteers to add to the team.

- facebook.com/sunburybluelightdisco, sunburybluelight@gmail.com

Sunbury Woodworkers Club

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

- Anita, 0417 402 795

Come have a chat

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



This week’s photographer’s choice picture is of Donna Jackson who is doing her comedy show Art Accidents & Underpants at The Yarraville Club.
(Damjan Janevski) 573578_01

Macedon.
■ Carol, 0431 186 575

Sunbury Repair Cafe

Happening every third Saturday of the month at Sunbury Neighbourhood House from 10am-12.30pm. Join the team for a cuppa and a skill share repairing broken items to help prevent it from going to landfill.

- sunburyhouse.com.au

Crop Swap

Swap your excess produce and get your hands dirty learning about the edible, indigenous and useful plants in Sunbury Neighbourhood House’s garden. Happening every third Saturday of the month from 10am onwards at the Sunbury Neighbourhood House.

- sunburyhouse.com.au

Sunbury Badminton Club

The club plays social games at all times, with tournament and competition nights during the year. All are welcome to attend at Clarke Oval Stadium, 49 Riddell Road, Sunbury. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday nights 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Plus Wednesdays 10am -noon.

- sunburybc@gmail.com

Sunbury Over 55s Social Table Tennis

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

- Bruce, 0438 027 978

North West District Pipe Band

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

- Hank, 0412 160 576

Sunbury Ladies’ Badminton Club

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

- sunburylbc@gmail.com

Sunbury Art Society

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

- sunburyartsociety.com

Woodlands Ladies Probus Club

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

- Jessie, 0458 190 254, woodlandsladies.3429@gmail.com

Scottish Country Dancing Group

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

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

- Lynne, 0417 331 439, or Norm, 0408 592 609

CWA Sunbury

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

- Bev Goodman, 0402 988 954

With One Voice Sunbury

With One Voice Sunbury community choir is changing the world one voice at a time by providing an opportunity for people to meet and experience the joy of singing, often making friends through the shared experiences of singing and performing; although performing is not required. The choir rehearses each Tuesday from 6.30pm at Goonawarra Neighbourhood House, 8 Gullane Drive, Sunbury. A fun and welcoming choir, new members are welcome.

- sunbury@withonevoice.org.au

Toastmasters

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Toastmasters helps its members develop their public speaking, communication and leadership skills. The group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month, from 7.30-9.30pm, at the Sunbury Community Centre, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury.

- vpm-4185@toastmastersclubs.org

Spend your Fridays in Footscray enjoying creativity

A new series of free Friday night events is set to transform the Footscray Library courtyard.

Running from 28 August to 18 September, Creative West Nights will feature live music, spoken word, Afro beats and comedy from some of Melbourne's most exciting performers.

The four week series begins on Friday 28 August with Footscray Unplugged in an intimate evening of live music featuring Ella Thompson, Grace Robinson and Ruby Gill.

On Friday 4 September, spoken word,

poetry storytelling take centre stage with Words by Candlelight, where Wani Toaishara, John Englezos, Fleassy Malay, Konker Malual and Zaynab Farah will share their powerful voices and local stories.

The following Friday 11 September is Afro Beats, a high-energy night of live music led by Sam Manzanza with support from Jarabi Band.

Comedy Roast will close out the series on Friday 18 September with comedians Geraldine Quinn, William Wang and Oliver Clark bringing the laughs and Lauren Bok acting as MC.

Presented by Maribyrnong council, Creative West Nights is designed to cement Footscray's status as the cultural heart of Melbourne's west following a period where the suburb has been in the news for the wrong reasons.

The series is also aimed at supporting Footscray's night time economy, with patrons encouraged to visit nearby bars and restaurants both before and after each performance.

Each Friday night event runs from 6-9pm at Footscray Library. For more information and the full program,; bit.ly/4fuoVsv



Jungle City is led by professional dancer and educator Cat Sweeney. (Supplied)

Street dance skills

As a hub for street and cultural dance, Jungle City is set to liven the Bowery Theatre, as part of the wonderful 2026-27 residency artist program.

Jungle City has sustained a thriving street dance community through regular street style classes, major events, youth mentoring, camps and tours and festivals. The street dance hub has built partnerships with dance crews, major art institutions and festivals such as Moomba and Fringe to help street dance grow.

Their residency will help build skills through the creative development and

presentation of Let's Get Married, an invitation to street dancers and the broader community to understand the importance of ritual and ceremony.

The Bowery black box will be transformed into a glamorous wedding reception to wed a cast of street dancers inspired by the rich cultural tapestry that makes up the Brimbank community.

The Bowery Theatre Residency program enables artists and arts organisations to make and present work with and for the Brimbank community. The 2025-2026 community-engaged projects span theatre,

music, expanded cinema, and site-specific public performance.

As part of the residency program, the selected artists will take risks and shape new works to be presented at The Bowery Theatre. The program offers financial and in-kind support, to enable creativity, connections, and artist development.

This residency is supported by Creative Victoria and is part of the Assemble project. Local theater-goers can look forward to a spectacular night of dance, culture, and celebration.

All aboard the Gisborne miniature train

After the winter break, the Gisborne Vintage Machinery Society is getting ready to welcome you back to the Gisborne Steam Park for its monthly fun run day.

Society member Ian Northcote said the group had been running for over 40 years, and invited the community to come on down with the whole family and enjoy the miniature train rides.

This month, the society will also host a Town and District Garage Sale, alongside the train rides.

"You never know what you will find at a car boot sale," Mr Northcote said.

"Sometimes people spend five bucks on something and its worth \$500.

"You can just open your boot, empty out your stuff and put a price on everything.

"This is the first time we're doing something like this."

Mr Northcote said alongside the miniature train rides, there will also be an indoor model railway display and a sausage sizzle to enjoy.

The open day and garage sale will be held on Sunday 6 September from 10am to 2pm at the Gisborne Steam Park, Webb Crescent, New Gisborne. The event is free to attend, with \$10 for sellers on the day.

Details: gisbornevmrs.com



Gisborne Vintage Machinery Society members Chris Dixon, Len Redway, Ian Northcott and John Beaty, and dog Theo. (Damjan Janevski) 573848_04



Award-winning Australian songstress Amber Joy Poulton will bring Honky Tonk Queens to the Bacchus Marsh Public Hall on Saturday 9 October. (Supplied)

Country vibes with Honky Tonk Queens

Country music fans are being invited to take a trip down memory lane when Honky Tonk Queens plays at the Bacchus Marsh public Hall on Saturday 9 October at 11am.

Fronted by multi-award-winning Australian songstress Amber Joy Poulton, the live show celebrates some of country music's biggest female voices, including Dolly Parton, Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Emmylou Harris, and Linda Ronstadt.

Presented as part of the Victorian Seniors Festival, the daytime performance promises a lively outing for audiences who enjoy classic country songs, storytelling, and world-class live entertainment.

Poulton is renowned for her powerful voice, heartfelt songwriting, and uncanny ability to channel the spirit of country music legends.

Her career spans original music and acclaimed theatrical productions, including Coal Miner's Daughter, a tribute to Loretta Lynn, and Man, I Feel Like a Woman, celebrating powerhouse women across country and pop.

Since 2017, Coal Miner's Daughter has toured Australia, telling the inspiring story of Loretta Lynn from humble beginnings to becoming the first ever female Entertainer of the Year, while featuring songs from the likes of Patsy Cline, Tammy Wynette and Parton.

Poulton has also continued to release her own music, including her latest album, Pretty Pennies, which explores life, love and the strength of women.

With a love for country music's old-school sound, Poulton continues to draw inspiration from her idols while bringing their timeless songs to new audiences.

Honky Tonk Queens promises an afternoon of classic country favourites and a celebration of the women who helped shape the genre. Details: <https://welcometomoorabool.com/events-bacchusmarsh-ballan-gordon-blackwood-greendale/honky-tonk-queens-at-bacchus-marsh-public-hall>



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Employment

POSITIONS VACANT

Star Weekly
Landfill closed

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Band to make annual stand

Star Weekly
Wendland goes west

Star Weekly
Aged care standoff

Star Weekly
Dipping for dad

Star Weekly
Crime concern dip

JOURNALIST - FULL TIME

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

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SPORTS QUIZ

- 1. Which team finished in last place on the 2026 AFL ladder?
- 2. Who did Carlos Alcaraz team up with to play mixed doubles at the 2026 US Open?



Carlos Alcaraz

- 3. Which basketball team did Knox Raiders defeat to win the 2026 NBL1 Women's National Championship?
- 4. Which basketball team did the Gold Coast Rollers defeat to win the 2026 NBL1 Men's National Championship?
- 5. Australia's two-Test cricket series versus Bangladesh was played in which two cities?
- 6. Which American band is set to perform during halftime at the Los Angeles Rams and San Francisco 49ers MCG game?
- 7. AFL coach Mark McVeigh played 232 games for which club?
- 8. Australia's women's national rugby union team's 100th Test match resulted in a 66-19 loss to which country?
- 9. Which 2014 film starred Kevin Costner as Sonny Weaver Jr., the fictional general manager of the Cleveland Browns?
- 10. Dez the Snapping Turtle and Dot the Arctic Hare are costumed mascots for which WNBA team?

- 11. Carlton coach Josh Fraser played for which two AFL teams in his career?
- 12. Game two of the 2027 men's State of Origin series will notably be played in which city?
- 13. In soccer, a blue card is used in some leagues to signify what?
- 14. The Shrachi Bengal Tigers and the Ranchi Royals play for which Indian sports league?
- 15. Was the *Heroes* character played by late actress Hayden Panettiere a sprinter, cheerleader or swimmer?
- 16. In what year is Australia set to host the 11th edition of the Women's Rugby World Cup?
- 17. Western Bulldogs captain Marcus Bontempelli achieved what life milestone in August 2026?
- 18. With season four currently being released, what sport features in the TV series *Ted Lasso*?
- 19. The East Compton High Clovers and Rancho Carne High Toros are cheerleading teams from which movie?



Nick Kyrgios

- 20. Nick Kyrgios is facing a four-year ban after testing positive for what?
- 21. At the 2026 Cincinnati open, which two Americans made the women's final?
- 22. The Aussie Steelers are the national team in which sport?
- 23. What does the acronym DNF stand for in relation to Formula One?
- 24. Which US rock group with a hockey-related band name has released the albums *Copacetic* and *Shapeshifter*, among others?
- 25. UIPM is the governing body of which Olympic sport?
- 26. And what do the initials stand for?
- 27. What is the name of the WAFL's best-on-ground medal?
- 28. In which year did Italy last win a men's FIFA World Cup?
- 29. How many volleyball players from the same team are on the court at one time?
- 30. NRL team Cronulla-Sutherland shares its nickname with which NHL team?

1. Essendon 2. Serena Williams 3. Bankstown Bruins 4. Forestville Eagles 5. Darwin and Mackay 6. The Jonas Brothers 7. Essendon 8. New Zealand 9. Draft Day 10. Toronto Tempo 11. Collingwood and Gold Coast Suns 12. Auckland 13. Player has committed a minor offence and must leave the field for a short period 14. Hockey India League 15. Cheerleader 16. 2029 17. Became a father 18. Soccer 19. Bring It On 20. Cocaine 21. Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula 22. Men's softball 23. Did Not Finish 24. Knuckle Puck 25. Modern pentathlon 26. Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne 27. Sandover Medal 28. 2006 29. Six 30. San Jose (Sharks)



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SUDOKU

QUICK CROSSWORD

[illegible]

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 3×3 boxes. Remember, no number can occur more than once in any row, column or box.

easy

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

medium

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

hard

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

easy

medium

[illegible]

hard

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

Puzzles and pagination © Pagemasters | pagemasters.com

ACROSS

- 1 Greeting (Ital) (4)
- 3 Entranced (10)
- 10 Unnaturally strange (7)
- 11 Business (7)
- 12 Long foottrace (8)
- 13 Cancel (5)
- 14 Book's leaf (4)
- 15 Science of the mind (10)
- 18 'Idiot box' (9)
- 20 Second-hand (4)
- 21 Gas layer in the stratosphere (5)
- 23 Hungarian city (8)
- 26 Domed building (7)
- 27 Bill (7)
- 28 Recorded (10)
- 29 A unit of length in imperial measure (4)

DOWN

- 1 Intimate (4)
- 2 Heavenly figure (9)
- 4 Grave mental condition (9)
- 5 Get to know (5)
- 6 North American bison (7)
- 7 Combination (5)
- 8 On show (9)
- 9 Former Indigenous people of Peru (4)
- 14 Saint Petersburg, formerly (9)
- 16 State of bliss (5,4)
- 17 Idée fixe (9)
- 19 South-East Asian country (7)
- 22 Sight-related (5)
- 23 Thinking organ (5)
- 24 Lay bricks (4)
- 25 Reticulation (4)

[illegible]

DECODER

No. 337

9	24	23	9	5	6	4		18	12	19	9	21	
26	Q		12		1		16		22		12		8
18	22	8	1	22		12	9	5	3	1	22	4	
8		9		4		8		1		25	W		18
23	1	4	6	23	1	22	9	11	9	22	6	4	
		6		8		3		14				9	
15	8	4	9	5	6		2	1	1	11	9	21	
17				18		7		12		18			
1	12	6	16	1	21	1	22	6	8	4	6	4	
19		12		18		1		20		8		16	
19	12	20	4	4	9	21		15	20	22	13	1	
9		8		17		1		17		19		25	W
21	8	22	19	10		1	21	10	4	4	9	10	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25 W	26 Q

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

9-LETTER WORD

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

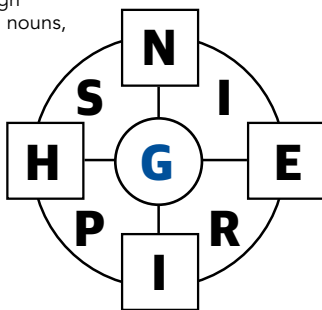
No colloquial or foreign words. No capitalised nouns, apostrophes or plural nouns ending in 's'.

Today's Aim:

18 words: Good

27 words: Very good

36 words: Excellent

[illegible]

5x5

L		K		S
	T		N	
S		A		E
	I		E	
S		A		S

No.412

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	C	A	R	S
T	I	L	E	D
S	T	A	T	E
A	T	O	N	E
L	A	K	E	S

QUICK QUIZ



- 1 Who is the Roman equivalent of the Greek goddess Hera?
- 2 How many main rings does Saturn have?
- 3 Who discovered the double helix structure of DNA?
- 4 And in which year?
- 5 Clownfish are most commonly what colours?
- 6 What sport do the Los Angeles Kings play?
- 7 What colour are the 11 and 3 balls in a standard pool set?
- 8 In which year was the first iPhone released?
- 9 Julia Stiles (pictured) stars in which film franchise as Nicky Parsons?
- 10 Which popular song by KISS is also a girl's name?

ANSWERS: 1. Juno 2. Seven 3. James Watson and Francis Crick 4. 1953 5. Orange with white and black markings 6. Ice hockey 7. Red 8. 2007 9. Bourne 10. Beth

Wrangler loves to rough it

By Chris Riley, Marque Motoring

Jeep Wrangler needs no introduction.

If you're into off-roading, it's up there with the best of them.

In fact, out of the box, Wrangler probably delivers more 4x4 capability than just about anything, with plenty of room for further customisation.

But this ability comes at a cost, because it's not the most comfortable car to drive and these days it is available only with a petrol engine which is a major drawback.

Styling

In the UK the 4x4 scene is about mud and bog holes.

In the United States, it's more about water crossings and rocky hill climbs.

In this great land of ours, it's likely to be a mix of both, with the Outback regarded as the pinnacle of off-road adventure.

It's a market dominated by Toyota in its many shapes and forms as we discovered on a trip to the Top End not so long ago, behind the wheel of a Prado wagon.

Jeeps and Land Rovers are a comparatively rare sight on the corrugations of the Gibb River Road which stretches more than 600km between Broome and Kununurra in Western Australia.

Conspicuously absent is the darling of the western suburbs, the Ford Ranger.

Where does the Jeep Wrangler fit into this scenario?

It's very much a lifestyle choice, with the focus on play rather than work.

It's about going bush for the weekend, with the fam or your mates and maybe dirt bikes.

When we started driving Jeeps, they had two doors and a cramped, emergency rear seat.

Then the four-door Unlimited came along, opening up a whole new world.

Since then, the market for 4x4 dual cab utes has exploded and they account for three of the top 10 selling vehicles in Australia.

Jeep saw this coming and in June 2020 added the Gladiator (great name) to the mix, based on the four-door model, with a proper ladder chassis.

Fast forward and we suspect Jeep is doing it tough, not off road but in the showrooms with sales well and truly down.

You want a Wrangler, the lineup has been rationalised to just the one top-spec Rubicon grade, available in two- or four-door form with the occasional special edition thrown in to spice things up.

There's Wrangler Rubicon two-door (\$81,990) and Wrangler Unlimited Rubicon four-door (\$84,990), along with a four-door 85th Anniversary edition (\$88,490).

At the moment, there's also a strictly limited edition four-door Rewind (\$73,990) which at this price represents a good deal.

On-road costs must be added to all of these prices.

Premium paint adds \$1490 to the cost and the Sky-One-Touch Power Top is a hefty \$6450.

With removable roof panels, the Wrangler is billed as a driving experience unlike anything else.

It's just getting these panels off and figuring out how to put them back on (and the time it takes) that is likely to deter the majority of people.

Jeep's website Visualiser encourages you to build your Jeep, with an accessory list that disappears over the horizon – but it could also be a big deterrent.

It's confusing, cumbersome and time consuming.

Rubicon features 17-inch alloys with BF Goodrich off-road rubber, dual zone climate air with rear vents and heated leather seats along with a heated steering wheel.

There's also LED lighting front and back,



Jeep Wrangler is a car designed for roughing it, not an urban environment. (Pictures: Supplied)



LED daytime running lights, auto lights and wipers, auto dimming rear view mirror, plus front and rear parking sensors.

Wrangler comes with a five-year/100,000km warranty, lifetime roadside assistance if you service the vehicle through Jeep and needs to be serviced every 12 months/12,000km.

Infotainment

Infotainment consists of a 12.3-inch touchscreen, 7.0-inch driver info panel and nine-Speaker Alpine audio, with built-in navigation, Bluetooth phone and audio, AM/FM/DAB+ radio, and wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The lower dash offers USB-C, USB-A and AUX ports, along with a 12-volt outlet.

There's another USB-A in the console box, plus two USB-A and USB-C ports in the back, together with a 240-volt outlet.

Safety

Standard safety extends to four airbags (two front and two side), with Autonomous emergency braking (City and Interurban) and a blind spot monitor.

There's also Forward Collision Warning Plus, Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop, Blind Spot Monitor and Rear Cross Path Detection.

Lane Keep Assist (LKA) and Emergency Lane Keeping (ELK) systems are not available.

Be aware, however, Wrangler is currently unrated for safety. The previous three-star rating expired in December last year.

Engines/transmissions

The 2.0-litre turbo in question generates 200kW of power at 5250 rpm and 400Nm of torque from 3000-4500 rpm.

Transmission is via a ZF eight-speed conventional auto with part-time high and low range four-wheel drive, plus auto engine-stop-start (to save fuel).

Driving

What's hurting Jeep more than anything is the demise of the diesel and in the case of Wrangler, its 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol replacement.

It gets along all right but, like the old Pentastar V6, is something of a sinkhole for gas – and it likes the good stuff – 95 premium unleaded.

With an 81-litre tank Jeep quotes combined average fuel consumption at 10.2L/100km.

Over the course of a week, we clocked up 940km in our test vehicle at a rate of 10.9L/100km.

Of note it was the first time in a long time that we had to dip into the kitty to top up a vehicle which says something.

To give this some perspective, in previous tests, a two-door Wrangler with the V6 returned 10.4L/100km and a Gladiator with the same engine 14.0L/100km.

It's simply not good enough.

At 4882mm in length, Wrangler Unlimited is fairly compact, about 71cm shorter than Gladiator, with an 11.8-metre turning circle.

Weighing in at 2154kg, aluminium is used to reduce weight and boost fuel consumption, including the doors, door hinges, hood, fender flares, windshield frame and tailgate.

Hollow track and stabiliser bars, aluminium engine mounts and steering gear also help to reduce weight.

It has a braked tow rating of 2495kg.

Inside it's a mix of new and old, with a traditional flat dash that contains a long 12.3-inch touchscreen in this iteration that's better suited to the demands of CarPlay and Android Auto.

The dash consists of old-style analogue instrument gauges that flank a 7.0-inch information panel, where speed can be displayed digitally.

Getting in and out of the Wrangler takes some athleticism, due to its ride height and the small doors.

The driver sits close to the wheel and the swap from left to right hand drive hasn't been seamless, with a smaller driver's side footwell that leaves little room for a proper footrest, making it uncomfortable to drive over long distances.

With some negotiation you can slot your left foot to the side of the brake pedal and fold your right leg sideways under it, but after a while even that becomes cramped.

There's not much easily accessible cabin storage either.

Sure, there's the netted door pockets, but with so little room for expansion between the doors and seat sides, their capacity is severely limited.

Placing our phone and wallet in the pocket, sitting one on top of each other, resulted in the power seat adjustment controls being suddenly activated as they were squeezed against them. LOL.

Rear legroom is good and the boot is deep and reasonably sized, with a hidey-hole under the floor, a big Alpine subwoofer built into the side and a 12-volt socket for things like car fridges.

Although the tailgate and window glass

open separately, the tailgate must be opened and closed first which kind of negates any practicality.

Fitting a child seat is difficult because the headrests are not removable.

Rubicon features a long list of 4x4 accessories, with a high/low range Rock-Trac Active On-Demand 4x4 system with a traditional, short stubby transfer lever.

Highlights include heavy duty Dana axles, Tru-Lok front and rear electronic diff locks, electronic front sway-bar disconnect, 77.2:1 crawl ratio and Fox aluminium-bodied two-inch diameter shocks front and back.

With an approach angle of 43.9 degrees, break over angle of 22.6 degrees, departure angle of 37.0 degrees and a ground clearance of 255mm, it has a wading depth of 760mm.

An Off-Road+ Button automatically adjusts throttle, Selec-Speed Control, Traction Control, Transmission Shift Mode.

It has two modes: 4HI for higher speed sand performance and 4LO for very low speed rock hopping manoeuvres Wrangler gets the 'Trail Rated' stamp of approval testifying to its 4x4 capabilities, but as we have shown previously – its meaning is somewhat dubious.

It's a feisty thing, fun to drive with a decent turn of speed, but we would have preferred a diesel.

The steering is rubbery and it has a tendency to wander if left unchecked, but the ride is surprisingly compliant and unlikely to generate complaints.

The chunky off-road rubber is just what you want for the rough stuff but sets up a helluva din at 110km/h on the motorway.

Convex exterior mirrors make judging distance to objects difficult.

You see one thing in the mirrors and another in the rear-view camera which is a trifle confusing.

Summing up

The iconic styling is a big drawback as is the Wrangler's prodigious off-road ability.

This is a car designed for roughing it. For getting scratched and dirty and going back for more the next week.

What it's not, is a car designed for the urban environment.

It might look cool but the novelty will soon wear off and you'll find yourself wanting something with a bit more comfort.

Land Rover has shown you can do this with the new Defender and perhaps it's time Jeep bit the bullet and introduced something safer and more comfortable?



Yarraville Seddon's Susan Prashanth. 574814_06



Laverton's Sina Mason and Yarraville Seddon's Akec Makur Chuot file for the mark. 574814_02



Werribee Centrals' Anna Be is tackled. 574813_22

Finals action in full flight

The sun was out as finals football ramped up another level on Saturday. Star Weekly photographer Ljubica Vrankovic was out shooting some of the action.



Yarraville Seddon's Zachary O'Halloran. _574819_03



Just out of reach for West Footscray's Archie Lorimer. 574818_17



Wyndhamvale's Jessica Spall. 574813_02



Caroline Springs' Tyler Gysberts. 574819_08



Westmeadows' Francis Keenan. 574816_11



North Footscray's Samuel Gunesequera. 574818_20



Westmeadows celebrate a goal. 574816_24

Panthers join the GDCA

By Tara Murray

There's a new club in the Gisborne and District Cricket Association.

The Merrifield Panthers are set to field two senior men's teams this season along with some junior sides.

It will be the Panthers' top two sides that have made the move across from the North West Metropolitan Cricket Association.

The Panthers have been playing in the George Luscombe Shield, the top grade in the NWMCA.

They won the premiership in 2024-25 before finishing minor premiers in the 2025-26 season.

Panthers' president Harman Bhathal said many of their players had been keen to play in the GDCA.

"We've seen a few matches of the GDCA and they've been really good," he said.

"The North West Metro has been good to us, but we've got players who want to play in the GDCA as well.

"We're a growing club and we have to look to cater for everyone."

Bhathal said many of their junior players also wanted to play in the GDCA as it was closer to where many of them live.

He said they were looking to enter under-13s, under-15s and under-17s in the GDCA.

Bhathal said the club had 26 sides this season across the two competitions with some teams having to play in Craigieburn.

Bhathal said they were pushing for a turf wicket.

The Panthers' top side will play in the GDCA Johnstone Shield this season, with the grade expanding to 11 teams.

Bhathal said they were keen to try and get into the top flight, the McIntyre Cup, as



Talwinder Prince. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 507987_06

quickly as possible.

"We feel we're good enough to win every game and try to go up for next season," he said.

"We've got a couple of new players coming in and we will have a strong side this year.

Having kept their core group together from the past couple of years, it's been strengthened with the addition of Rubal

Dhillon.

Dhillon had been playing in the Diamond Valley Cricket Association top grade, where he averaged 67 with the bat, a competition best.

Bhathal said Dhillon had been playing in the winter competition with them and wanted to stay with the club.

Last season there were 10 teams in the competition after just seven the season before.

Riddell steps up into the Johnstone Shield after winning the Jensen Shield last season, while Broadford drops from the McIntyre Shield.

Eynesbury Eagles, who finished last in the previous season, have stayed in the Johnstone Shield.

Harkness, which was narrowly ahead of the Eagles, has not been fixtured in that competition.



Emerson Lakey. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 567375_07

Bulldogs win qualifier in overtime thriller

By Tara Murray

The Bendigo Netball League kicked off with a bang, with Gisborne needing overtime to get over the line against Sandhurst in the A-grade qualifying final.

The battle between two of the powerhouses of the competition, the match lived up to expectations.

The Bulldogs led for a lot of the game before the Dragons fought back and held the lead in the dying minutes.

Gisborne was able to level the scores to send the game to overtime, where it won, 55-52.

Bulldogs coach Tarryn Rymer said it was a game that could have gone either way.

"We were up by five goals at one point," she said.

"The game then seesawed and we had moments where we could have pushed but we weren't able to capitalise on those moments.

"A missed goal or a bad pass and Sandhurst kept coming back."

Rymer said playing in warmer conditions than they were used to meant there were a lot of tired bodies late in the game.

She said Sandhurst went close to stealing the win in the dying moments.

"They led by one and it was our centre pass," she said.

"I didn't want them to shoot too quickly and I don't think the girls realised how long was left.

"The girls didn't want to take a long shot and they played around with it and Sandhurst got a couple of hands on it.

"We wasted enough time."

It was the first time that the Bulldogs were playing extra time since the 2018 grand final, when Sandhurst came over the top.

Rymer was playing for the Bulldogs that day.

"We had to make sure we converted our centre pass," she said.

"Five minutes goes by quickly. We went out there and put pressure on early and kept going."

It was a good day for the Bulldogs, with all three sides winning through to the second semi-final, where a grand final spot is on the line.

The B-grade side had the weekend off after finishing top and will also play in a second semi-final.

"It was nice to have three wins yesterday [Saturday]," Rymer said.

"Next week will be a big one for us."

The Bulldogs A-grade side will face Kangaroo Flat for a spot in the grand final, with the loser to go through to the preliminary final.

The Kangaroos' last loss came in the 2024 grand final at the hands of Gisborne, who came from behind late to win the match.

"It'll be nice to have another shot at Kangaroo Flat," Rymer said. "We played them really early in the season.

"We'll do our homework and try to lift to another level and see if we can beat them.

"It's a good position to be in and the girls will take a little bit of confidence into next week."

Pearce to coach Kyneton Tigers

Erin Pearce will lead the Kyneton Tigers women's program as it returns to the Country Basketball League this season.

The Tigers are reestablishing their women's side, after having to pull out just before the season started last year.

Previously, the Tigers had made several grand finals.

The Tigers announced that Pearce would coach the team this season.

"Erin joins the Tigers as we prepare to rebuild and relaunch our senior women's program, bringing with her a strong playing and coaching background across both senior and junior representative basketball," the club said on social media.

"Erin has been part of back-to-back youth league women's championships with Sunbury, coached three VJBL [Victorian Junior Basketball League] championship teams, and previously played a brief stint with Kyneton in the 2018 CBL season.

"Her coaching experience also includes assistant coaching Sunbury's VYCW [Victorian youth championship women's] program in 2019, working as assistant coach with the Sunbury Jets under-18.1 boys in 2024 and 2025, where the group attended the National Junior Classic and claimed silver in both NJC [National Junior Classic] and the VC [Vic Champ] season, before stepping into the head coach role of Sunbury's under-18.1 boys program this year.

"The return of our women's CBL program is an important step forward for Kyneton Basketball, and we are thrilled to have Erin leading the group into 2026."

Meanwhile, Christian Martinez will continue on as the Tigers men's coach.

The club said he returns with a clear focus on continuing to build the program from a basketball perspective, as the Tigers look to take the next step in their rebuild.

"After laying important foundations, Christian is looking forward to the challenge of bringing competitive basketball back to Kyneton and helping create a senior men's program that local players, juniors and supporters can be proud of," the club said.

"With a number of exciting new signings to be announced, including talented young local players, the Tigers are beginning to build a group that reflects the direction of the program moving forward."

Magpies' amazing comeback

By Tara Murray

Wallan stormed home late to end Kyneton's run in the senior football in one of the more remarkable results, while the Magpies also kept their season alive in the A-grade netball in the Riddell District Football Netball League on the weekend.

Having finished top two in both competitions, the Magpies were hoping to avoid straight set exits. The Tigers had also ended Wallan's finals hopes 12 months ago.

In the senior football, the Magpies left Kyneton stunned with a late comeback which will be spoken about for many years to come.

After an even first half with scores level at

half time, the Tigers then managed to break open to a 20-point lead heading into the final quarter.

When the Tigers kicked four of the first five goals of the final quarter the margin was 33 points and it appeared that the Magpies season would be over.

The Magpies kicked the next two goals before five behinds in a row had the Tigers still leading by 16 points at the 26-minute mark.

Chris Stewart reduced the margin to 10 points before Blaide Dickson made it just four points.

Hayden Gill in the 31st minute put the Magpies in front with about a minute left on the clock.

The Magpies then held on to win, 15.9 (109)-15.16 (106).

Lachie Smart kicked three goals for the Magpies, while five other players kicked two goals each.

Benjamin Dessent, Steven Boyall and Dion Hill were named the Magpies best.

For the Tigers, Angus Nolte was their best as he kicked six goals.

Daniel Davie and Haydn Smith were other standouts.

The Magpies will face Riddell in the preliminary final on Saturday as they look to make their second grand final in three years.

In the A-grade netball, Wallan ended Lancefield's run.

The Tigers, who were happy to be in the

semi finals after their first finals win in a number of years, led by two goals at quarter time.

The margin was still two goals at the main break as they both shot 11 goals in the second quarter.

Wallan was able to put the foot down in the third quarter, with a 14-5 quarter to turn the deficit into a seven-goal lead at three-quarter time.

They were able to maintain that lead to finish with a 45-38 win.

The Magpies will now face Riddell in the preliminary final.

It wasn't all bad news for the Tigers with their B-grade and D-grade sides both winning through to grand finals.



Natalie McDonald. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 489385_07

Fifth straight granny for remarkable Hawks

By Tara Murray

Woodend-Hesket's remarkable run has continued with the Hawks through to a fifth straight Riddell District Netball League grand final.

The Hawks, who are going for a fourth straight premiership, proved too strong for a young Riddell outfit on Saturday, and won through to the final game of the season.

Hawks' coach Ty Coppinger said it was quite amazing what the club had been able to do the past few years.

"It's pretty amazing to be into a fifth straight grand final, when five years ago we hadn't made an A-grade grand final.

"Fast forward to now and we've made five in a row and it's incredible.

"We were so excited five years ago to have made the first one and we lapped it up as you never know what will happen.

"We've built on from that and to do it five times, we could have never dreamt of that at all."

On Saturday, the Hawks were able to lead at every break.

It was one goal at quarter time before increasing to eight goals at half time.

The Bombers stuck with them and decreased the lead to five goals heading into the final quarter.

The Hawks saved their best for last as they won 55-41.

Coppinger said credit to the Bombers who have so much young talent in their side for pushing them all game.

She said she was happy with how her side was going and they were finding form at the right time of the year.

Coppinger said it can be easy to look too far ahead at this time of year, so they were just focused on getting the job done against Riddell.

"They stuck with us the whole game, the whole 60 minutes and we were able to get over the line," she said.

"We stuck to our game plan and we can't get caught up with everything else.

"The girls took one quarter at a time.

"Everyone that took to the court played their role and did really well, I'm proud of the efforts that we put out there.

"There's a lot of external noise and we go back to what we can control each game."

The Hawks will get the week off before facing the winner of the preliminary final between Riddell and Wallan.

The Magpies beat Lancefield in the knockout semi final.

The Tigers led early before a strong season half saw the Magpies win, 45-38.

The Bombers will be aiming for a fourth straight grand final, having lost the past three to the Hawks.

Coppinger said nothing changes for them having been in this position before.

"We will stick to our regular routine," she said.

"We will train on Thursday, get together on Saturday and then train on Thursday.

"It'll be as normal preparation as possible."



Shane Abdilla. (Supplied)

Abdilla to coach Rupertswood

Shane Abdilla will lead Rupertswood into its next chapter in the Essendon District Football League division 1 competition.

The Sharks announced that Abdilla was the club's new coach, replacing premiership coach Brad Fox.

The club said throughout the recruitment and interview process, Abdilla emerged as the outstanding candidate.

"Shane is no stranger to Rupertswood," the Sharks said.

"He has been part of the coaching group for our 2018 under-18, 2019 senior and 2025 senior premierships, and has spent the past two seasons working closely with our senior playing group," the club said.

"He also brings extensive experience across community, talent pathway and elite football environments, with roles at the Western Bulldogs, Calder Cannons, AFL Victoria and Essendon Football Club.

"What stood out throughout the process was Shane's outstanding football knowledge and understanding of the game.

"He has a proven ability to read the game, develop players and communicate football in a way that brings people with him."

The club said combined with his strong relationships, player-first approach and understanding of Rupertswood, it felt that Abdilla is extremely well placed to take our football program forward.

His vision places a strong emphasis on high standards, player and coach development, and strengthening the pathway between our junior and senior programs, while continuing to build a strong one-club culture.

Lions survive a slow start

By Tara Murray

The Sunbury Lions overcame a slow start to win through to the second week of the Ballarat Netball League finals.

Facing Sebastopol, the Lions knew that they would have their work cut out for them.

They trailed early before getting their game going in the second quarter to lead by seven goals at half time.

With the game in their control, the Lions just made sure they got the job done and came away with a 48-41 win.

“It was a danger game for us,” Lions’ coach Kim Bailey said.

“They match up well with us and it’s

only been two or three goals each time.

“They have a lot of height.”

The Burras led by six goals at quarter time.

The Lions’ early hopes weren’t helped with Tayla Honey sent from the court and sinbinned for two minutes.

Bailey turned to her bench and the team kicked into gear.

“We had a 15 goal turnaround and we were up by seven goals at half time.

“It was the brand of netball that we know that we can play.

“Finals are different and most of our girls have been there. Putting Lani Fauonuku into goalkeeper changed things.

“They had a big shooter and we need-

ed a little bit more height than what Elly Randall had.”

Bailey said after half time they cruised to victory as they just made sure they got the win.

Caitlin Hill shot 28 goals for the Lions, while Charlize Bellette, who got the start at goal attack, shot 20 goals.

Bailey said their younger players had plenty of experience and should be able to handle the pressure moments like they did on Sunday.

She said everyone stood up when they needed to and it was a really good team response after the first quarter.

“Good teams respond and it doesn’t mean that we can’t change things,” she

said.

“We worked to the structures and it was good to be seven up at half time.”

The Lions now face North Ballarat in a knockout semi-final.

North Ballarat lost to Darley in the qualifying final, 43-42.

Bailey knows it will be another big battle.

“We take it one week at a time,” she said. “We drew with them the first time and won the second time but this is the first time we’ve had more of our players.”

It was a good weekend for the Lions netballers, with their other five sides all through to first semi finals and will be playing for grand final spots this Saturday.



Sean Reilly. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 560115_03

Lions stun Devils for big elimination win

By Tara Murray

Sunbury Lions were able to break the stranglehold that Darley has had on it in recent times, with a big elimination final win on Sunday.

The season was on the line for last year’s two grand finalists and it was the Lions who found another level in the second half.

The Lions led by 16 points at half time before running away with the game finishing with a 17.12 (114)-6.10 (46) win.

There was a sense of relief for Lions coach Matt White after the game.

“It’s now two from nine against them in my coaching career,” he said.

“It’s been tough so to get a 10 goal win today [Sunday] makes me feel good but there’s more to overcome and we’ll work our focus to North Ballarat.”

White said they felt that the group was really starting to gel and having had nearly the whole team back for the final round of the season really helped heading into finals.

He said getting as many of their Victorian Football League players back as possible

was also pretty handy as they build some connectivity.

That was on show against the Devils.

White said the Devils threw a lot of challenges at them in the first half.

“They were a bit inaccurate in the first five minutes and they threw everything at us,” he said.

“We steadied and then it was similar in the second quarter.

“They were really good at the start of the second quarter. DJ [Daniel Johnston] stood up in the last five-10 minutes in the second and put us in a good position.”

The Lions came out and attacked the second half and kicked five goals to none to lead by 45 points heading into the final quarter.

White said it was their best quarter for the year.

“We got to work in the way we needed to and it wasn’t on the back of one particular player.

“We shared the load and took the opportunities.”

White said they knew the Devils would

throw some weird things at them in the final quarter as they looked to pull off the comeback.

The Lions kicked the first three goals of the last quarter to ensure their season would continue.

“We knew that they would come in the first five minutes,” he said.

“We had to play solid good footy to put to bed the weird moves.

With the game under control, the Lions were able to rest some guys in the dying minutes as they got through unscathed.

Johnston, who was named best on ground, kicked four goals, as did Patrick Scanlon.

Jake Egan and Jack Newitt also had strong games.

The Lions now face North Ballarat in a knockout semi final.

Jake Sutton could possibly return after his VFL season ended at the weekend.

“We’ll put in a few phone calls,” White said.

The Lions reserves side’s season ended after a loss to Ballarat in an elimination final.



Chloe Bullen. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 571649_11

Calder Cannons knocked out

The Calder Cannons return to Talent League girls finals ended in the quarter finals with the Eastern Ranges proving too strong on Saturday, while the Cannons’ boys season ended on Sunday.

Playing finals for the first time since 2023, the Cannons girls had a tough ask against the Ranges, who were the number two ranked metro team.

The Ranges led by seven points at quarter time, and the margin stayed steady with one goal apiece in the second quarter.

Both sides had missed some opportunities to put more score on the board.

Five goals to one in favour of the Ranges blew the game open in the third quarter with the margin 31 points heading into the final quarter.

That would prove to be the difference in the game with the Ranges’ winning, 9.13 (67)-4.8 (32).

It was all single goalkickers for the Cannons, with Coco Balmain, Holly Clough, Lily Frangoulis and Elebertina Schuliga all hitting the scoreboard.

Balmain, who had 26 disposals was named the Cannons best along with Tessa Berryman, who had 23 disposals and seven tackles.

The Cannons finished with eight wins for the season, up from three last season showing the improvement in the group.

Meanwhile, the Cannons boys were in finals action against the Sandringham Dragons.

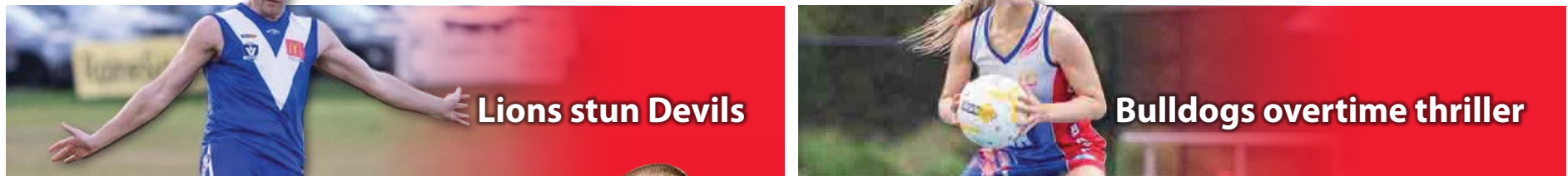
The Dragons jumped out to a 29 point lead at quarter time.

They were able to hold a steady margin the next two quarters, before finishing with four goals to one in the final quarter to seal a 17.18 (118)-10.10 (70) win.

Thomas Lincoln and Jackson Watkins kicked three goals each for the Cannons.

George Holderhead, Watkins and Blake Justice were named their best.

The Cannons finished the season with eight wins for the year.



Callum Moore. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 546093_06

Burras' stunning win

By Tara Murray

Diggers Rest went storming into the Riddell District Football League grand final, as star forward Callum Moore kicked his 100th goal for the season.

The major semi final between the Burras and Riddell proved to be one way traffic for most of the game, with the Burras stamping their authority early.

The margin was 42 points at quarter time and it continued to grow throughout the rest of the game.

With the win locked up at half time, the Burras later in the game turned their attention to helping Moore kick his 100th goal.

He finished with 11 goals for the game, with the final goal seeing the crowd spill onto the ground to celebrate the big milestone.

Burras' coach Shaun Campbell said they were just happy to make sure they locked in a grand final spot.

"It's super pleasing after last year and how we finished," he said.

"It's good to finally be in one, they are hard to get into and they are even harder to win."

Campbell said they were confident heading into the game but never thought the result would be as one-sided as it was.

"We're finding some good form at the right time of the year," he said.

"We're gelling together and doing the small things right and it makes doing my role as a coach easy."

Campbell said there was no conversation as a team about trying to get Moore his 100th goal once the game was in hand.

He said speaking with Moore himself, he knew he would like to get it done and not have that hanging over his head in the grand final.

"When we did get that far in front we did try and help him out," Campbell said.

"There was a bit of relief. He should have got it done a few weeks ago, as he's kicked a lot of points throughout the year and left a lot of points out there."

Campbell said it was big for the league to have someone kick 100 goals and it was a different feeling having the supporters jump the fence to celebrate.

"I've only seen that at AFL level and it was a bit of fun for everyone," he said.

Marcus Calvaresi kicked four goals for the Burras, while Josh Wallace kicked three.

Jaidyn Caruana, Moore and Brad Sluggett were named their best.

For the Bombers, Callum Williamson and Jacob Chahine were named their best.

Campbell said they were able to pull a few guys off late in preparation for the grand final and everyone got through unscathed which was a big thing.

The Burras now have the week off before the grand final.

Campbell said the week off would help them.

"We're banged up and got some sore bodies," he said.

"You will also take the week off when you can get it."

"We'll freshen up and go again."

Bulldogs continue on

By Tara Murray

Gisborne's hopes of one last Bendigo Football League premiership remain alive after accounting for South Bendigo in Sunday's elimination final.

With the Bulldogs' time in the Bendigo league coming to an end at the end of the season, the players are embracing every opportunity as they look to add to the club's history.

On Sunday, the Bulldogs were able to pull away with it in the second half as they beat South Bendigo, 16.9 (105)-7.11 (53).

Bulldogs' captain Zac Vescovi said it was a really special win for the group.

"It was a physical tough game," he said. "It was to see everyone stand up."

"It was close until we got away from them in the third quarter."

The Bulldogs led by just one point at half time, before they kicked the only four goals of the third quarter.

They finished off strongly with six goals to one in the final quarter to ensure their season remains alive.

Vescovi said the second half was really pleasing for them.

"We've had plenty of games where we've had five-goal leads and let teams come back," he said.

"It was good to keep the margin out."

"We were able to move the ball a lot. We're a small team and on a big ground we were able to get running and take the game on."

"We didn't go into our shells."

Pat McKenna kicked four goals for the Bulldogs, while Ryan Bourke, Adam Brancatisano and Dominic Sullivan kicked two goals each.

Brancatisano, Flynn Lakey and Sullivan were named the Bulldogs' best.

Vescovi said they would embrace being a smaller running side compared to some of the other sides and felt they had a really good blend of players to go deep into the season.

"We had a lot of players excited as they were playing their first final," he said.

"They play fast footy athree"

"Then there's the experience of Liam Rodgers and Pat McKenna, who played in the last premiership, that keep everyone in line with structures and the important things."

The Bulldogs will face Strathfieldsaye in a knockout semi final this Sunday.

The Storm lost the qualifying final on Saturday to Eaglehawks by 29 points.

"We have one win against each other," Vescovi said.

"It'll be another neutral ground at QEO [Queen Elizabeth Oval]. It's a big ground and we will enjoy it."

"It could be the last time we play there. We'll take it one week at a time."