

Sentinel-Times

COVERING SOUTH GIPPSLAND AND BASS COAST

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SENIORS BID FOR PEACE

Disappointed but undaunted by Planning Panels Victoria's decision to allow the council to rezone the site, members of the Korumburra Senior Citizens, including secretary Kris Crichton and committee member Gilbert Kelly, say there's a strong argument that the council should keep the centre for community use anyway.

PLANNING Panels Victoria has decided that there is "adequate strategic justification" for the South Gippsland Shire Council to go ahead and rezone 14 Radovick Street Korumburra, the site of the Korumburra Senior Citizens Centre, from Public Use Zone to Commercial Zone 1.

Panel chair Penelope Smith handed down her decision on Sunday, January 12, following a public hearing in the Korumburra Community Hub on Thursday, December 4 last year, finding that "the Senior Citizens have been offered appropriate alternative facilities in a space nearby", despite dozens of submissions and a petition signed by 2500 people to the contrary.

It's a win for the council that potentially clears the way for the shire to go ahead and sell the site on which the senior citizens centre stands, which

they say is surplus to council's requirements.

But they're not crowing about it.

South Gippsland Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey, a Strzelecki Ward councillor representing Korumburra, was measured in his remarks.

"There is strong community interest in this site, and we thank everyone who shared their views during the exhibition period. The independent Planning Panel has now provided its advice, and council will consider the report in full at an upcoming meeting before determining the next steps."

However, despite being disappointed by the outcome, officials of the senior citizens club say it essentially makes no difference to their claims on the building and what they say is a demonstrated need for it.

"The hub is totally impractical for

older people, and we told them that before they went ahead and built it," said president of the Korumburra Senior Citizens Inc Jane Grenon this week.

"The area they want us to use at the Hub has a dining room and kitchen that seats 40 people. We have a membership of 140."

"The existing seniors club has a commercial kitchen and can seat 150 for a meal," said seniors secretary Kris Crichton, who represented the organisation at the December hearing.

"And it also offers the town the option of another meeting place, in the absence of a town hall," he said.

Mrs Grenon said many of the centre's members were unable to get into the hub because of its location on a steep hill, and they've been forced to find alternative meeting places.

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TikTok war erupts over clinic closure

By Michael Giles

THE circumstances surrounding the sudden closure of the time-honoured Leongatha Healthcare clinic went from baffling to bizarre in the past week as the doctor at the centre of the crisis took to social media to vent his spleen.

... Or was it simply black humour gone horribly wrong?

Some of the victims of his attacks apparently don't think so.

A prolific contributor to social media, particularly TikTok, Dr Chris Webster has posted a series of fake, AI-generated videos in the past week targeting staff members of the clinic, fellow doctors, officials of the Leongatha hospital and doctors' organisations, even taking aim at local MPs Danny O'Brien and Melina Bath for their efforts following the clinic closure.

He didn't miss many.

The attacks appear to carry some serious commentary from Dr Webster, alleging "rude and hostile" responses from local hospital officials, complicity by staff at the clinic and a lack of due process from doctors' representative and regulatory organisations, couched in expletives and hostile messaging.

Despite not accepting calls from the Sentinel-Times, Dr Webster may have revealed one of his own motivations for the fake video onslaught in a response to feedback from one of his posts.

Dr Chris Webster (creator): "A new video every hour until a lawyer takes our case".

Some of those targeted in the AI-generated content have made efforts to contact TikTok to have the posts taken down, but without success.

They've also reported the "abuse" to the eSafety Commissioner, Julie Inman Grant.

"As you can imagine, the content of these AI-generated posts has been very upsetting for all involved and



The man at the centre of the shock closure of the Leongatha Healthcare clinic on January 16, Dr Chris Webster, has launched a fake AI-generated video onslaught on social media in the past week.

efforts have been made to have TikTok take them down. Failing this, the e-safety commissioner may be involved," said someone close to former clinic staff members.

At the time of its closure, the Leongatha clinic noted on its website that "19 doctors consult from Leongatha Healthcare, providing a wide range of skills, supported by a full time Practice Manager, 13 P/T Practice Nurses and 11 P/T Reception and Admin Staff members".

According to a senior doctor at the clinic, Dr Hugh Chisholm, Leongatha Healthcare had 8,000 patients on its books.

In an article in The Age on Saturday, January 17, the

day after the sudden closure of the clinic the previous Friday afternoon, Dr Webster, the co-owner of the clinic with his wife, was reported as saying that Leongatha Healthcare was no longer viable at its present scale after the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners stripped him of his right to supervise other doctors.

The punishment, according to The Age quoting Dr Webster, meant some doctors at his clinic had to reduce their working hours, rendering consultation rooms useless.

"The decision had an immediate effect and obviously a devastating long-term effect," he said.

In September last year, the Australian Health Practitioner

Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Medical Board of Australia imposed sanctions on Dr Webster over comments he made about convicted Leongatha triple murderer, Erin Patterson.

The sanctions required him to undergo one-on-one education with an approved educator on topics related to professionalism and ethics for a minimum of eight hours and also to undergo five one-hour sessions with an approved mentor on a monthly basis over a five-month period with a focus on professional communication and patient confidentiality.

Dr Webster said at the time that while he stood by his remarks about Ms Patterson and would comply with the sanctions, they were likely to reduce the amount of time he was available to see local patients.

As for the possibility of a resolution of the present impasse, the "Displaced Doctors of Leongatha" stated on Friday, January 23 that "meaningful progress was being made" to return medical services to the town as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, other medical centres in Leongatha and in nearby towns, as well as the Leongatha Hospital's Urgent Care Centre, have moved to provide access to doctors for those who need it.

The Gippsland Primary Health Network (PHN) is offering additional telehealth appointments via HealthAccess for those needing repeat scripts and other services that can be delivered online.

"HealthAccess provides free access to a registered GP by phone or video for Gippsland residents. Phone: 1800 272 767."

Temporary extended hours include from 9am-10pm, Monday, February 2 through to Friday, February 6, 2026.

For health emergencies call 000.

Editors Note: As of Monday afternoon, Dr Chris Webster had deleted all content from his TikTok account.

Seniors bid for peace

From page 1

"We meet at the Middle Pub for coffee on the first Tuesday from 10.30am and for lunch on the second Tuesday at the Top Pub and while we're pleased to have somewhere to go, it's less than ideal and some people simply won't come to the hotel."

They just want to go back to the clubrooms they've owned, used and enjoyed, through concerts, sing-alongs, entertainment, meetings and meals, since they were opened with much fanfare in April 1961.

Mr Crichton believes there's ample evidence to say that the building at least was owned by the trustees for the Korumburra Senior Citizens, if not the land, which he says is still in dispute.

"There's actually a statement in your newspaper, the Korumburra Times (April 15, 1961), where Randall White, the chairman of the Old Persons Welfare Council of Victoria, I believe it was called, thanked the Korumburra Shire president at the time, Cr J Anderson, for the donation of the land on which the building is located.

"He is quoted as saying that at the opening of the building," he said.

As well as there being a demonstrated need for it and evidence which proves the seniors at least own the building and improvements they've made over the years through community fundraising and government grants, Mr Crichton says the council itself set the precedent recently for exactly what the Korumburra Seniors want to do when they moved to award a lease to the Fish Creek Football Netball Club, at a peppercorn rent, on part of John Terrill Reserve to rebuild their clubrooms.

"If they can, why not us?" asked Mr Crichton.

"We'd be happy with that," said Mrs Grenon.

"Our ownership of the building is not in dispute. It's always been ours, but you can't have a building without land," she said.

"Even if they can prove we don't own the land legally, they have a moral obligation to allow us to go on using the site while there's a demonstrated need for the centre."

They're not asking for much, they say, when you look across at Leongatha where the Leongatha seniors have a relatively new building, the Dakers Centre, on centrally located, level ground.

"What have they got against Korumburra?" asked Mr Crichton.

He said the application made by the Korumburra seniors to the Supreme Court disputing the centre's ownership is still on foot, with mediation expected soon but he's offering a peaceful solution.

"We're looking at more than \$200,000 to fight this, it's already cost us a lot, and the council considerably more. I think there's a workable solution here without the lawyers, and we'd be happy to sit down and talk about it."

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WED | Feb 4
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Wind AM: Light
Wind PM: NW 15-25km/h
17° 30°



THUR | Feb 5
Partly cloudy.
Wind AM: Light
Wind PM: SW 15-20km/h
15° 23°



FRI | Feb 6
Partly cloudy.
Wind AM: Light
Wind PM: SW 15-20km/h
10° 24°



SAT | Feb 7
Mostly sunny.
Wind AM: Light
Wind PM: S 15-20km/h
11° 24°



SUN | Feb 8
Partly cloudy.
Wind AM: Light
Wind PM: S-SE 15-25km/h
12° 26°

IN BRIEF

CFA volunteers still waiting on fire station upgrades

CFA volunteers across Gippsland continue to wait for fire station upgrades with Leader of The Nationals and Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien claiming the state government has cut CFA funding by \$55 million in real terms since 2020.

"In Foster and Mirboo North, volunteers have been campaigning for replacement fire stations for more than 10 years," Mr O'Brien said.

"A decade on, they are still operating out of outdated and unsafe buildings that are too small for modern trucks and equipment."

Mr O'Brien said the Yarram fire station site was purchased in 2016 yet took almost a decade to see real progress while Winnindoo had been waiting more than five years and Mirboo North was told funding was coming in 2022 only for it to be withdrawn.

He said the CFA's 2024-25 Annual Report showed spending on protective equipment and operational gear had fallen and the organisation was running a \$50 million deficit.

"Volunteers in Gippsland South do not need excuses or more assessments," Mr O'Brien said.

"They need stations that are safe, big enough and built for the job they are doing."

Marinus Link preparatory works to begin near Sandy Point

THE billion-dollar Marinus Link project is about to get underway near Sandy Point with land preparatory works planned to begin in February.

Temporary traffic changes along Waratah Road will be introduced including reduced speed limits to allow for an increase in heavy vehicles and noise and dust from on-site construction crews.

Affected areas could extend to Tarwin Lower, Cape Liptrap and Waratah Bay with localised traffic management plans to be put in place for community and worker safety.

Marinus Link said teams would have measures in place to minimise the impact on the local community, marine and land environment, businesses and road users.

The project is a new undersea and underground electricity and telecommunications interconnector between North West Tasmania and the Latrobe Valley spanning 345 kilometres including 255 kilometres of undersea cables across Bass Strait and 90 kilometres of underground cables across South Gippsland to Hazelwood.

It includes high voltage direct current cables, fibre optic

cables, a communications station and converter stations at each end.

Marinus Link Pty Ltd is jointly owned by the Commonwealth, Tasmanian and Victorian governments.

Inaugural boat show launches on Gippsland Lakes

THE Gippsland Lakes region will welcome a major new boating event with the inaugural Gippsland Lakes Boat Show set for Paynesville from Friday February 27 to Sunday March 1.

The show will coincide with the Paynesville Classic Boat Rally and the Raymond Island Car and Bike Show creating a festival-style weekend across the region.

Boating Industry Association of Victoria chief executive Steve Walker said the event would celebrate everything that made Gippsland Lakes one of Australia's premier boating destinations.

"From koala-filled Raymond Island to waterfront restaurants, cruising adventures and fishing hot spots, visitors can experience great locations like Metung, Lakes Entrance and Lake Tyers," Mr Walker said.

"It's the perfect excuse to turn a boat show visit into a long-weekend escape."

The program includes on-water demonstrations, sea trials, heritage vessel displays, lifestyle exhibitors, family activities, music and a lakeside car show.

The event will showcase the latest vessels and watercraft alongside traditional boat parades celebrating maritime history and craftsmanship.

For more information visit gippslandlakesboatshow.com.au.

Rotary bushfire appeal raises more than \$15,000

THE Rotary Club of Phillip Island and San Remo held its bushfire fundraising appeal at Rotary Op Shop Cowes on Sunday January 25 with generous donations exceeding \$5000.

The club will add to the total from previous fundraising efforts and donate \$15,000 to BlazeAid providing vital assistance to farming families and communities rebuilding after the recent bushfires across Victoria.

John Lovell of the Rotary Club said a donation of \$1000 would also be made to the Whiteheads Creek Fire Brigade, a small and under-resourced unit that went above and beyond in supporting the Bass Coast Strike Team by providing food, refreshment and emotional support largely from their own pockets.

A representative from BlazeAid said every dollar raised by the community would make a real difference with

the organisation relying on community generosity to help rebuild fences, restore properties and stand beside people as they recover.

Rotary Club president Gea Lovell said the community once again demonstrated its compassion and willingness to stand alongside those in need.

"The funds raised will go directly to where they are most needed and we are deeply grateful for the trust and support of our community," Ms Lovell said.

TAFE network vital for Victoria's AI future

THE Victorian TAFE Association has welcomed the release of the state government's AI Mission Statement which recognises the central role TAFE plays in upskilling and reskilling workers.

VTA chief executive Alex White said by partnering with TAFEs to build a future-ready workforce the government was utilising the public TAFE network's proven capability to drive productivity and decent secure careers.

The association said TAFE provided practical hands-on training for digital technology including AI ensuring Victorians were not left behind as industries evolved.

It called for Skills First funding for AI-related micro-credentials to be provided through TAFE saying shorter targeted courses allowed workers to gain specific high-demand skills quickly.

The VTA said the public TAFE model was uniquely suited to the challenge because it provided training deeply connected to real industry needs with institutes partnering with employers to ensure graduates were job-ready.

The industry-aligned approach was critical for responsible adoption of AI focusing on practical tools and ethical considerations required in modern workplaces.

TAFE training also ensured thousands of Victorians gained qualifications and entered careers that technology and AI could not easily replace.

Gippsland Water urges residents to reduce water use

GIPPSLAND Water has launched its annual Reduce Your Use campaign reminding customers to be mindful of their water usage during an extended period of hot weather.

Managing director Sarah Cumming said demand had increased significantly across the service area during the heatwave in early January and again this week.

The education campaign encourages customers to put sustainable water saving tips to practice and that's even more important when experiencing a

heatwave," Ms Cumming said.

"Following permanent water saving rules, fixing leaking taps and limiting showers to four minutes all help reduce the strain on our systems during hot weather and also safeguard our precious water for generations."

Ms Cumming said the organisation would be at the Wellington Sustainability Festival in Sale on Saturday March 14 to share practical tips and run engagement activities.

Victoria's permanent water saving rules require trigger nozzles on hand-held hoses, restrict sprinkler use to between 6pm and 10am, prohibit water use on hard surfaces and require fountains and water features to recirculate water.

For more information visit gippswater.com.au/reduceyouruse.

Rider airlifted after motocross crash at Wonthaggi

A 19-year-old motorcycle rider was airlifted to hospital with serious injuries after a crash at the Wonthaggi Motocross Track on Sunday.

Police and Ambulance Victoria including the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service were called to the West Area Road circuit just after 1.30pm.

"A man was airlifted to hospital following a crash at a racetrack in Wonthaggi," police said.

"The 19-year-old rider was airlifted to hospital with serious injuries.

"No other vehicles were involved."

Police said they did not expect to have any further involvement.

The Dandenong Motorcycle Club was conducting a practice day at the track on Sunday.

The club was contacted but declined to comment.

Tobacco licence enforcement begins in Victoria

RETAILERS selling tobacco products without a licence now face fines of up to \$1.8 million or up to 15 years jail after enforcement by Tobacco Licensing Victoria began on Sunday February 1.

Between 8000 and 10,000 Victorian businesses sell tobacco products but just 14 licence inspectors have been employed statewide.

Quit director Rachael Andersen said inspectors would be unable to close shops found selling illicit tobacco or act against stores selling illegal vaping products.

Cancer Council Victoria CEO Todd Harper said smoking-caused illness still killed 66 Australians a day.

For support to stop smoking or vaping visit quit.org.au or call Quitline on 13 7848.

Leongatha health care: It's more than a game

By Michael Giles

BAYSIDE Health Regional, which took over management of the Leongatha, Korumburra and Wonthaggi hospitals on January 1 this year, chose an interesting time last Wednesday to highlight the inclusion of 'Leongatha' on a 'Rural Medicine Australia' version of the board game Monopoly.

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), which was formed several decades ago to develop a rural doctors' training pathway, issued the game as a promotional idea back in October last year.

So, why was Bayside Health Regional posting about it on its Facebook page and Instagram four months later, if not to comment obliquely on the disastrous state of affairs at Leongatha Healthcare, which spectacularly closed its doors to as many as 8000 patients on Friday, January 16?

Featured alongside Swan Hill and Mildura in the 'red' property set, which previously included 'The Strand', 'Fleet Street' and 'Trafalgar Square' on the original English board, Leongatha is one of few regional towns across Australia to get a square of its own on the rural and remote medicine game board.

Others include Bourke, Tenterfield and Cowra in the 'green' property set and the likes of Kununurra, Albany and Broome in the 'yellow'.

Perhaps they were trying to underscore the importance of Leongatha Healthcare on Australia's medical landscape or that the clinic didn't operate in isolation of other health services in the area, as evidenced by the wide impact of its sudden closure.

"Leongatha, shaping the game of rural healthcare, some places are landmarks, others shape the game. Of all rural health services across Australia, Leongatha made the Monopoly board," said Bayside in its posts on Facebook and Instagram.

"The ACRRM Rural Medicine Monopoly board was created to recognise the real-world foundations of rural and remote healthcare. The places that support clinicians, sustain



Bayside Health Regional, which took over management of the Leongatha, Korumburra and Wonthaggi hospitals on January 1, has drawn attention to Leongatha's inclusion on a rural and remote medicine version of the time-honoured 'Monopoly' game, four months after the 'Rural Medicine Australia' game went on sale.

services, and deliver care where it is needed most. That's why Leongatha is included," they said.

"Developed with the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, this special edition reimagines Monopoly through the lens of rural medicine. Every property reflects contribution, capability, and commitment beyond metropolitan systems.

"Leongatha isn't a stop along the way. It's part of the structure. A small square on a board. A significant mark of respect in rural medicine."

Their social media posts don't appear in isolation since the Leongatha Healthcare crisis blew up.

In the absence of a proper explanation about what happened or regular updates on what happens next, social media has filled the void, with plenty of commentary by the displaced community but with the owner of Leongatha Healthcare, Dr Chris Webster, leading the charge.

A prolific contributor to TikTok, Dr Webster appears to be providing a running commentary on the key players with a series of fake, AI-generated videos that nonetheless look real enough at first glance.

Online discussion has been posted on Facebook pages such as the Leongatha Community Noticeboard.

"Has anyone got any word on obtaining medical records from Leongatha healthcare yet?" asked one contributor last Thursday.

As well as some helpful responses about access to medical records was this one:

"So much confusion, unanswered questions, worried/stressed patients, along with doctors, nurses and clinic staff, just given the heave-ho with no warning. How one man can do this to so many, is beyond me. Sure, he had worries, but to create this mass worry for so many, is disgraceful. We must all be patient and hope that soon, we may have some

answers/directions."

There has been some helpful information too, like that coming from the Gippsland Primary Health Network, which has posted details about extended hours for telehealth appointments.

"HealthAccess after-hours GP telehealth will continue providing extended hours over the next week, through to Friday, February 6, 2026," said Gippsland PHN in part, listing times and urging those needing repeat scripts or appointments to call 1800 272 767.

In nearby towns, medical clinics have offered additional appointment times for Leongatha patients, while the Leongatha Hospital's Urgent Care Centre has been dealing with the overflow.

The 'Displaced Doctors of Leongatha' are expected to make an announcement this week about standing up a replacement medical service in the town. For the time being, the only place you'll find Leongatha (Healthcare) is on the Monopoly board.

Show some respect for the Wonthaggi cemetery

By Bruce Wardley

AFTER the discovery of dirt piled up on a grave site a visitor to the monument area of the Wonthaggi cemetery has asked contractors to show a little more respect.

Tony Scimonello was visiting the gravesite of his parents when he noticed dirt excavated for a burial had been dumped on the gravesite of a deceased person between two monuments.

"What got my attention was where the dirt was placed," Mr Scimonello said.

"I found this to be disrespectful that deceased can't be left to rest."

"I also noticed there was someone digging up another plot for a funeral at the lawn cemetery."

When approached and asked why the dirt at the monument area had been placed on an existing deceased plot, the gravedigger replied there was no monument there and if he came back tomorrow the dirt would be all removed.

Mr Scimonello asked the gravedigger to be more respectful as there was somebody in that plot.

Another Wonthaggi person was at the cemetery at the same time and dirt had also been placed over her mother's gravestone.

"My concern is to please let deceased be respected," Mr Scimonello said.

Cowes Curry Club spreads the joy

LAST week, the operators of the Curry Club in Cowes, Vanita and Bunty, were blessed with a baby boy so they decided to spread the joy by donating some ready-made food packs to the community pantry at the Phillip Island Community and Learning Centre (PICAL).

And representatives of PICAL, centre manager David Rooks and assistant manager Kerryn Ladell couldn't have been more delighted.

"Instead of celebrating just with ourselves, we wanted to share that joy with the community that has supported us for so many years," said Bunty this week.

"Today, we donated meals to PICAL for people in need, because moments of happiness feel even more meaningful when they're shared."

It's not the first time the Curry Club has supported PICAL and the Phillip Island and district community with pre-packaged meals.

"Food has always been about more than business for us. It's about care, connection, and looking after one another," he said.

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Mayor's Message



Cr Rochelle
Halstead



LAST weekend's Australia Day long weekend was a big one for Bass Coast - busy, positive and full of moments that remind us why this region is such a special place to live, visit and do business.

Across Bass Coast, we supported a range of community-led events that brought people together and helped local businesses thrive.

One of the most meaningful moments of the weekend for me personally was officiating our Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony.

We welcomed 37 new Australians from 19 different countries into the Bass Coast community.

Six children were part of the ceremony and watching them proudly sing the national anthem was incredibly heartwarming.

For many, this ceremonial moment comes after years of waiting, and it is an honour that Council hosts citizenship ceremonies four times a year.

To our newest citizens - welcome to Bass Coast. We are so glad you are here.

Australia Day was also an opportunity to celebrate extraordinary local contributions.

I was delighted to congratulate Wendy Crelin OAM on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community through a range of organisations.

Wendy's commitment spans decades, including two terms as a Councillor for the Borough of Wonthaggi, 20 years as a Board Member of Rose Lodge Community Aged Care, and ongoing volunteer work across the region.

Her advocacy for arts and culture, especially her instrumental role in securing the Robert Smith Collection for Bass Coast, has left an enduring legacy.

Our Arts, Culture & Heritage team is honoured to continue working alongside Wendy as a passionate advocate for this remarkable collection.

That passion for the arts continues today in Wonthaggi.

With the Victorian Women's Public Art Commission now underway, more than 30 people recently attended a public forum at The Union Theatre, followed by a Creative Development Workshop at the Wonthaggi & District Historical Society.

Led by contemporary artist Kay Abude, alongside Tilt Industrial Design, this collaborative project honours the legacy of the Wonthaggi Miners' Women's Auxiliary.

I cannot wait to see it come to life.

Looking ahead, following the successful centenary celebrations, The Union Theatre will soon benefit from investment in upgrades to improve patron comfort and enhance the overall theatre experience.

These works will ensure the theatre continues to serve the Wonthaggi community well into the future. We appreciate your patience during this time.

By Bruce Wardley

COME rain, hail or shine some of us need a bus all year round.

Wonthaggi resident Wayne Hill is a regular user of public transport because of a medical condition but the current state of the Wonthaggi bus shelter opposite the Plaza Shopping Centre in Biggs Drive has Mr Hill seeing red.

"The windows have been broken for more than a year and when it rains everyone gets wet."

According to Mr Hill three window panels are missing in one section and two others in another section.

"When it rains people struggle to sit somewhere," Mr Hill said.

"Only one person can sit while the others get wet."

Mr Hill said he has contacted council several times,

but no action has been taken.

"It's been like that for 12 to 18 months and it's the second time it's happened. I think Bass Coast Shire is better than this."

When the weather changes Mr Hill said it will be hard for people.

"It needs to be fixed before winter."

Instead of clear panels which are easily damaged by vandals Mr Hill suggested council use perforated metal panels such as those used at Koo Wee Rup which would resist being damaged.

"It might cost more at the start, but it might stop vandalism."

"People need to respect council property," Mr Hill said.

With the local population expected to double Mr Hill said we need better transport.



A regular user of public transport Wayne Hill wants to know why broken windows at the Wonthaggi bus shelter have not been fixed. B16_0526

Wonthaggi's Union Theatre closes for \$899,000 upgrade

BASS Coast Shire Council has commenced a major upgrade of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system at The Union Theatre in Wonthaggi.

The \$899,000 project will see the 400-seat venue temporarily closed while contractor Hirotec Maintenance replaces ageing HVAC equipment with works expected to be completed by Friday March 20.

The Union Theatre celebrated its 100-year anniversary

in 2025 marking a century of entertainment, performances and community gatherings since the venue was built by the Miners' Union in 1925.

Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead said the upgrade reflected council's ongoing commitment to maintaining high-quality cultural facilities.

"The Union Theatre is a treasured part of Wonthaggi's identity and cultural life," Cr Halstead said.

"After celebrating 100 years

last year, this upgrade is about making sure the venue remains comfortable, reliable and fit for purpose for decades to come.

"Modernising the HVAC system will improve the experience for audiences and performers alike, while also helping to prevent unexpected system failures that could impact shows and community events."

Works include the removal of existing equipment by crane, installation of a new

steel plant platform, new HVAC equipment, cleaning of existing ductwork and commissioning of the new system.

During the closure patrons are encouraged to attend performances at Bass Coast Cultural Venues' other venue Berninnett in Cowes.

Council is developing a program to celebrate the theatre's reopening including Lights on Wonthaggi, a series of free and low-cost events and behind-the-scenes building tours.

New hospital program keeps older patients closer to home

KORUMBURRA Hospital is now delivering specialist geriatric care locally after launching a new program that means older South Gippsland residents no longer need to travel for treatment.

The Geriatric Evaluation and Management program provides coordinated medical, nursing and allied health care for older people with complex health needs, with patients assessed and treated by a multidisciplinary team including physiotherapists,

occupational therapists, social workers, dietitians and speech therapists.

Geriatrician Dr Jarin Herson said the program took a holistic approach.

"You're not just focusing on one system of the body," Dr Herson said.

"You're working with the patient, their family, the community and allied health."

"It really is a multidisciplinary team and that's what leads to better outcomes."

Korumburra nursing unit

manager Lisa Shannon said the program responded directly to the needs of an ageing community.

"The best part of GEM is making sure older people can live at home for longer, close to family and friends, rather than needing to go elsewhere because the right services aren't available locally," Ms Shannon said.

Occupational therapist Beth Shields said the program allowed care to be shaped around individual goals

rather than a standard acute admission.

"Being able to support people to recover near home makes a real difference," Ms Shields said.

The program is one of the first tangible outcomes of Korumburra Hospital's transition into Bayside Health on January 1, linking the hospital to a network that includes Alfred Health, Peninsula Health, Bass Coast Health and Kooweeup Regional Health Service.

Danny O'BRIEN MP State Member for Gippsland South

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Anderson, San Remo and Island exposure sites for measles

PEOPLE who attended the pelican feeding at San Remo on Friday, January 30 may have been exposed to measles.

There are several other sites locally where people may have been exposed.

They include the Koala Conservation Reserve on Phillip Island (January 30), the South Coast Bus from Anderson Bus Interchange (outbound) to San Remo (January 28) and the V/Line Coach from Dandenong Station (outbound) to Anderson Bus Interchange (January 28).

The Koo Wee Rup Medical Centre is also an exposure site on January 29.

According to the state health department there is currently an increased risk of measles in Victoria and around the world.

"Measles can spread very easily and may result in illness, hospitalisation and complications," the department said.

"Recent measles cases have been infectious while visiting public exposure sites in Victoria."

The exposure date at the San Remo pelican feeding was Friday, January 30 from 12 noon to 12.40pm, with the monitoring period for the onset of symptoms running until Tuesday, February 17.

The exposure date at the Koala Conservation Reserve, 1810 Phillip Island Road, was also on Friday, January 30 between 10.15am and 12.15pm, with symptoms to be monitored until Tuesday, February 17.

The South Coast Bus from Anderson Bus Interchange (out-



If you visited the pelican feeding at San Remo on Friday, January 30, you may have been exposed to measles.

bound) to San Remo is listed as an exposure site on Wednesday, January 28 between 11.08am and 11.48am.

The V/Line Coach from Dandenong Station (outbound) to Anderson Bus Interchange is also listed on January 28 from 9.15am to 11.30am.

The Koo Wee Rup Medical Centre is an exposure site on Thursday, January 29 from 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Residents are urged to monitor

for symptoms of measles for up to 18 days after visiting any of the listed sites.

Symptoms usually start with fever, cough, runny nose, red or sore eyes or feeling generally unwell, usually followed by a rash which often starts on the face before spreading down the body.

Anyone who develops symptoms should seek medical care and call the health service beforehand.

Shocking details from nude rampage

SHOCKING details were revealed at the Wonthaggi Magistrates Court last week of an incident of public sexual indecency allegedly committed by a 36-year-old Wonthaggi man of no fixed address in the town's shopping centre in September last year.

The court heard that an alcohol and drug affected man, nude below the waist, was seen performing a sexual act in and around the Wonthaggi Plaza and outside the Woolworths supermarket at about 8.30pm on Saturday, September 27.

He allegedly only stopped when he was placed in handcuffs by police and could no longer reach his exposed genitals.

The court was told the man, holding a bottle of lubricant, pursued a young female shopper and her family of three, one of them aged under 10, into the carpark at the Wonthaggi Plaza while continuing the same sexual activity.

He also sat on the seat of a motorbike parked at the shopping centre and continued his obscene behaviour.

Sometime later he walked to a bench on the rail trail past the office of Alex Scott and Staff in Murray Street, where he allegedly wiped himself on the window, before continuing his activity outside the Woolworths supermarket.

Police said people would have been coming and going from the supermarket at the time.

The man was arrested by three police officers at around 8.45pm, charged and taken to the cells at the Wonthaggi Police Station.

Police said he acknowledged he was drug and alcohol affected, naming the drug GHB (gamma hydroxybutyrate).

By Michael Giles

But the incident was far from over.

While in the cells he continued to behave in an allegedly vulgar manner, yelling obscenities at police and at one stage blocking the toilet and flooding the cells until the water could be turned off.

Police said he made jokes about his activities, showed no remorse and insisted he had no mental health issues.

The man was charged with 13 offences, one of which was dropped in consultation with the magistrate last week.

The charges included sexual touching of a child under 16, engaging in sexual activity likely to be seen by others, exposing his genitalia in a public place, assault and committing indictable offences while on bail.

He was also charged with the theft of a \$10,000 motorbike and offences allegedly committed while in the police cells.

The man was already facing several other charges unrelated to the September 27 incident, committed a week earlier when he allegedly caused almost \$500 damage to a Court Services water pipe, itself committed while on bail for other offences.

He entered a plea of guilty to the incidents in the Wonthaggi shopping centre but was not sentenced on the day and was remanded in custody to appear at the Korumburra Magistrates Court on Thursday, February 6.

The additional time was provided for further psychiatric assessment if required and to allow victims to submit impact statements.



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An advertisement for short-term holiday rentals. It features a large image of a modern beach house with a glass balcony overlooking the ocean. The text "SHORT TERM HOLIDAY RENTAL" is prominently displayed in large, white, sans-serif letters. Below it, in smaller text, is "NOT ALL HOME & LANDLORDS POLICIES ALLOW SHORT TERM HOLIDAY RENTAL". To the right, a handwritten-style tagline "but we do..." is visible. The background shows a scenic coastal view.

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Extreme heat puts pressure on local wildlife



Ringtail possums Mouse and Dream were brought to Bunurong Wildlife Care recently after they were negatively affected by hot weather. W03_0626

AS temperatures have been climbing towards 40 degrees on multiple occasions recently, extreme hot weather is putting added pressure on native wildlife, including those at Bunurong Wildlife Care in Inverloch.

Working around the clock to keep animals safe, founder and carer Linda Pettit said hot weather impacts essentially every animal in her shelter.

"They all are very heat affected. They do get heat stress," she said.

Preparation usually begins days before a forecast hot day.

The environments are modified to include more shade and enclosures are altered to give animals more options to cool off.

For wombats, extra shade sails are layered over existing structures, large umbrellas are secured against wind and misting systems are added to reduce heat

By Trent Westaway

and humidity.

Pens are thoroughly cleaned, leaving damp concrete floors that animals can lie on should they choose to.

Others retreat into underground tunnels, where added shade over the soil helps to keep them cool.

Extra fresh water is also provided to all animals throughout the day.

In the case of birds and koalas, fans are carefully placed outside the enclosure to move air and remove the risk of injury from birds flying into them.

Sprinklers are also used in the mornings to wet the cages and help retain moisture.

Animals are also often moved inside during extreme heat.

"We bring a lot of them into the care room because we can run air conditioning

and keep them as comfortable as possible," Ms Pettit said.

All animals that live above ground face the highest risk during scorching weather, including ringtail and brushtail possums who are particularly vulnerable when foliage dries out.

Koalas also struggle when eucalyptus leaves lose moisture after multiple hot days.

"In Inverloch we don't have dense canopy cover," Ms Pettit said.

"Koalas come to ground looking for a tree with more moisture, but it's just not there."

Interestingly, rescues don't always increase on hot days but rather on the days following, when displaced animals can turn up in backyards, garages and other unusual places.

If you encounter a distressed animal, Ms Pettit encourages a calm and cautious approach.

"The kindest thing you can do, if it's safe, is place a towel over them and gently contain them in a box or washing basket," she said.

"Do not try to force water down their throat. They can aspirate and develop pneumonia."

She also encouraged people to take animals straight to a local vet or contact Wildlife Victoria.

Ms Pettit said simple actions can make a difference.

"Animals need water and they need habitat," she said.

"Trees provide shade. Big trees and layers of trees help bring temperatures down."

Lack of hydration can be a slow killer on hot days and Ms Pettit encourages residents to place water bowls out prior to the hot day itself so animals have an opportunity to learn their location.

"Get the water out early so animals know where it is," she said.

"Those small things can save lives."

CSEF boosted to \$400 for eligible families

FAMILIES across Gippsland are being urged to apply for increased school funding through the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, with payments rising to \$400 per student this year.

The fund, administered by the state government, helps eligible families cover the cost of school camps, excursions, outdoor education and sporting programs.

Previously set at \$154 for primary students and \$256 for secondary students, the payment was increased to a flat \$400 for all eligible students from January 1 as part of the 2025-26 Victorian Budget's \$152.3 million investment in the program.

Eastern Victoria Region MP Melina Bath said the fund provided important support for families doing it tough.

"Camps, sports and excursions are important educational experiences, yet their cost can place real pressure on families," Ms Bath said.

"These grants help to alleviate some financial pressure to enable children to take part in extracurricular activities alongside their peers."

Ms Bath said she encouraged parents and carers to check their eligibility with their child's school.

"Many household budgets are stretched thin with ongoing cost-of-living pressures, programs like this can make a difference for families and help open the door for young people," she said.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or those in special categories including foster care, kinship care and permanent care arrangements are eligible to apply.

Applications are submitted through the child's school, with funding paid directly to schools to cover approved activities.

Families with more than one child at the same school can combine their funding for a single activity.

Applications opened on January 27 and close on June 26.

For more information visit vic.gov.au/camps-sports-and-excursions-fund or contact your child's school.

medicare

Now more people benefit from cheaper medicine



From January 1st 2026

Anyone with a Medicare card pays a maximum of \$25 for PBS listed medicines, down from \$31.60.

Concession card holders will continue to pay no more than \$7.70 until 2030.

For more information visit

 health.gov.au/cheapermedicines

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The introduction of new tobacco retail licensing regulations and fees has come too late for Wonthaggi's Stephanie who closed the doors of TSG Wonthaggi last Saturday.

Tobacco changes too late for TSG Wonthaggi

By Michael Giles

FAR from saving legitimate tobacco retailers, the introduction of the Victorian government's new licensing regulations have actually set the date for many of them to close.

One of those closing their doors on Saturday, January 31, the last day of trading before the hefty new licence fees kicked in, was TSG Wonthaggi, operated by Stephanie [last name redacted].

But Stephanie was at pains to stress that the only ones she blamed for the state of the industry were the governments, state and federal.

"I don't blame the people who buy the cheaper cigarettes, I blame

the government," she said.

"The government has basically taxed the legitimate retailers out of business and created the situation we see today.

"It's just become too hard."

But it wasn't so much the new \$2000 licence fees (\$1175.20 application fee and \$829.60 annual fee) which sounded the death knell, that came in July last year with new federal regulations and taxes.

"The final crunch came in July when it became illegal to sell menthol cigarettes and they changed the legal sizes for tobacco and cig-

arettes, plus the further increase in taxes, the latest being in September," Stephanie said.

"Look, a lot of people don't want to see cigarette sales at all, but it just became impossible. I chose to close before the new fees came in because I didn't want to give them the satisfaction of taking more of my money."

The rising cost of insurance is another issue, she said, also for shops in the vicinity of tobacco stores.

"It's pretty disheartening but I've also just decided it's time for me to get out. I don't want to have anything more to do with it," she said.

Search called off for missing Venus Bay boy

THE large-scale search for a 12-year-old boy from Taylors Hill in Melbourne, missing believed drowned off Number 4 Beach at Venus Bay on Sunday, January 25, has been called off.

Last week police and emergency services, including members of the Inverloch SES unit and the police Air Wing helicopter, extended their search to Inverloch, where they scoured the beach, rocks and water as far as

The Caves and Flat Rocks, but to no avail.

Previously, surf lifesaving club members and other emergency services personnel also participated in the search.

Police said due to the passage of time and extreme environmental conditions of the area, they held grave concerns for Danny's welfare and had been working to recover his body.

Bass Coast Local Area Police

Commander Inspector Cath Middleton, who joined the search on the beach at Inverloch last Wednesday with members of her team, praised the support provided by local SES volunteers.

Officers have been in contact with Danny's family regarding the developments of the search and will continue with reassurance patrols in the area but have essentially abandoned the search.

Nowhere to go for Wonthaggi offender

By Michael Giles

subject of any intervention orders.

She acknowledged that while her client used drugs from an early age, it only became a serious problem after the tragic death of his mother, resulting also in a marriage breakdown and the loss of permanent employment.

"He admits that he had a problem with GHB but overdosed on it and doesn't use it anymore," said Ms Caile.

She said her client had a permanent address by arrangement, intermittent work as a concreter and was willing to comply with strict bail conditions including a curfew, reporting to police and seeking health support for his drug addiction.

Ms Caile said her client had never spent time in custody, nor been offered the opportunity of a CCO.

"I believe a CCO could be open to [my client] with mental health and drug and alcohol support services, plus community work."

The alleged offender is not blameless, however.

Police alleged in Korumburra Court last Thursday that they discovered what was described as a trafficable quantity of the drug Ice in separate deal bags, plus a quantity of counterfeit money, at his Wonthaggi address when they executed a search warrant there on Tuesday, January 13.

The man, who wasn't home at the time, was arrested by police a week later, charged with six offences, including drug possession, possessing counterfeit money and committing an indictable offence while on bail.

He also has extensive priors for drug possession, assault and failing to answer bail on four separate occasions.

He was in police custody when he was brought into court last Thursday afternoon, the day after his arrest, and placed in the dock, while his lawyer Marli Caile delivered a comprehensive bail plea on his behalf.

Ms Caile cross-examined the police informant, establishing that there was at least some doubt about who owned the drugs and counterfeit cash, and also, that her client was not the

Magistrate Ong then outlined his reasons for refusing bail, noting from the outset that he had to have regard for the provisions of the new bail act which prioritised community safety in all bail decisions.

The risk that he would return to trafficking drugs could not be mitigated by bail conditions, he said.

Voices of Bass Candidate Call!

Voices of Bass is a community group working to elect an Independent for the seat of Bass at the Victorian state election on 28 Nov, 2026.

We are now seeking candidate nominations from people committed to representing the Bass community. Nominations close 6pm, Friday 27 February 2026. Email address below.

Members will meet to hear from nominees and vote for our preferred candidate.

It is free to join Voices of Bass. To support the search and vote for your preferred candidate email us via info@voicesofbass.com.au



South Gippsland
Shire Council

South Gippsland Shire Council News

Book an Immunisation Session

Immunisation sessions occur each week at a range of locations across South Gippsland. Our professional staff provide a warm and efficient service, tailoring their approach to each patient, from little babies to veteran vaccine-receivers.

Our immunisation service offers a full range of vaccines, including those recommended for pregnant women, all National Immunisation Program vaccines for children, older adults, and at-risk groups, as well as a selection of paid vaccines.

To support our community following the recent closure of a local GP practice, we have extended our immunisation sessions and added extra appointment times to ensure everyone has reliable access to the vaccinations they need.

Free Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccines are available to anyone who may not have received two doses previously, as part of a project funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health. Groups at risk include:

- Anyone born during or after 1966 who does not have documented evidence of receiving two doses, or serological evidence of immunity.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.
- International migrants without documented vaccination history, including asylum seekers,

refugees and international students.

- People travelling overseas or returning home to Australia - infants as young as six-months-old can have the vaccine prior to travel.

If you or your family need vaccinations, please book into one of our upcoming sessions.

DETAILS

Foster

Wednesday 4 February, 10.00am to 11.00am, Manna Gum Community House, 33 Station Road.

Leongatha

Wednesday 4 February, 12.30pm to 2.00pm, Customer Service, 9 Smith Street.

Loch

Thursday 12 February, 11.30am to 12.30pm, Loch Memorial Reserve, Loch-Poowong Road.

Leongatha

Thursday 12 February, 2.30pm to 4.40pm, Council Chambers, Meeting Room 1, 2 Michael Place.

Korumburra

Tuesday 17 February, 9.40am to 12.00pm, Karmai Community Children's Centre, 22 Princes Street.

For more information and to book your session, visit: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Youth Strategy 2026 - 2030



The Youth Strategy helps shape how South Gippsland's young people can have a say on issues that affect them, and how Council and the broader community can support their needs and aspirations. We need your feedback to make sure it accurately represents the needs and values of our youth.

If you are a young person aged 12 - 25, or you live or work with young people in South Gippsland, your input is especially encouraged.

For more information and to submit your feedback, visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/youthstrategy

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 February 2026 at 2.00pm.

Details will be available on Council's website: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

To watch the meeting live or when it suits you, visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/live

COAL CREEK FOOD AND DRINK VENDOR EOI

Coal Creek is seeking a local food and drink vendor to join our Living Heritage Days, held on the first Saturday of every month from Saturday 7 March.

To learn more and submit an EOI, visit: www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/CoalCreekEOI

BASS VALLEY ROAD TEMPORARY CLOSURE

Council is undertaking a geotechnical investigation of a land slip on Bass Valley Road near the Bells Road intersection.

To facilitate these works and ensure the safety of workers and drivers, **Bass Valley Road will be closed between Bells Road and Soldiers Road between 9.00am and 3.00pm on Tuesday 10 February.**

All works are subject to weather conditions and may change at short notice.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a new job? We might have the perfect position for you! Check out our current vacant positions here:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/vacantpositions

IMPOUNDED VEHICLE

Council impounded a green Hyundai hatchback from Law Road, Foster (15 January 2026) in accordance with Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Year: 1997

Engine Number: KMHUD11NPWU271440

Unless the vehicle is collected and relevant fees paid within 14 days of the date of this notice, the vehicle will be offered for sale to the public. For enquiries, please contact our Community Safety team on 5662 9200.

CONTACT US

9 Smith Street, Leongatha
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www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au



South Gippsland Shire Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey, second from left, with Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh, Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio and SEC and Delburn Wind Farm representatives turning the first sod at the site.

Gippsland to power Victoria as sod turns on \$650 million wind farm

GIPPSLAND is set to power Victoria after the first sod was turned on the \$650 million Delburn Wind Farm last Wednesday.

Work on the SEC project, about 15 kilometres northeast of Mirboo North, will begin in March with the 33-turbine wind farm expected to be operational by 2028.

The project will generate up to 205 megawatts of renewable energy, enough to power more than 130,000 homes.

South Gippsland Shire Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey said the

project would be a vital injection for the local economy.

"The Delburn Wind Project is expected to create around 300 local jobs through construction and bring lasting benefits to our communities," Cr Hersey said.

"This is fantastic news for Gippsland and surrounding areas, including South Gippsland. The project will be a real boost for our local businesses and workers."

State Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio visited the site for the sod turning last Wednesday.

"Delburn Wind Farm is a step forward for renewable energy in Gippsland, creating local jobs and securing reliable, affordable power while marking the SEC's return to power generation in the region for the first time in 30 years," Ms D'Ambrosio said.

The SEC will hold 100 per cent ownership of the wind farm.

More than \$22 million is expected to flow to the region in community benefit programs over the project's operational life.

SEC chief executive Chris Miller said the project was significant for Gippsland.

"The SEC Delburn Wind Farm is an important project for the SEC and the region," Mr Miller said.

"We're looking forward to engaging with the Gippsland community on the many exciting work and supplier opportunities that it will offer."

Local businesses and suppliers are being invited to register interest in construction and long-term operational opportunities.

Local photographers recognised in Australia Day competition

SOUTH Gippsland photographers recently had the chance to capture the region's best features and landscapes in the 2026 South Gippsland Australia Day Photography Competition.

Two standout images took the top honours in two separate categories, the under 15 award and the open category.

South Gippsland Shire Mayor Nathan Hersey and Deputy Mayor Brad Snell filmed a presentation video, announcing the winners and acknowledging the strong response to this year's theme, 'South Gippsland, our home.'

The under-15 award went to Stephen Rawling for his image, Nature's fireworks, Bottlebrush.

Cr Snell credited all the young photographers, saying it was "so amazing to see the interpretation of South Gippsland through their lens."

In the open category, Ian Osborne claimed first place with his photo Sunrise, topping the list of a packed field of entries.

Council said more than 80 photos were submitted altogether.

Cr Hersey said the competition has become a meaningful part of the Australia Day celebrations.

"Australia Day is always a wonderful opportunity to recognise



Stephen Rawling's image **Nature's fireworks - Bottlebrush**, winner of the under 15 category in South Gippsland Shire Council's 2026 Australia Day Photography Competition.

the spirit and creativity of our community, and this year's Photography Competition has showcased that beautifully," he said.

"The calibre of entries was outstanding, and each photograph reflected a unique perspective of what makes our region special.

"Congratulations to Stephen and Ian and thank you to everyone who shared their talent with us."

Council wished to thank all entrants who participated in the competition.



Sunrise by Ian Osborne took out the open category in this year's Australia Day Photography Competition, showcasing South Gippsland at dawn.

Mayor's Message



Cr Nathan Hersey



Meet the Mayor

STARTING on Tuesday, February 10, I will begin hosting "Meet the Mayor" - 15-minute meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month.

These sessions are an opportunity for you to come along and chat with me about the things that matter most to you.

Bookings can be made via Council's website at www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/meetthemayor

These meetings are in addition to the community presentation times, where groups of individuals can present on topics directly to Council.

We will also be undertaking community days, where councillors will be visiting different areas of our shire.

Sod Turning

On Wednesday I attended the sod turning for the Delburn Wind Farm.

This project mostly sits outside of South Gippsland Shire's boundaries, however there are benefits for our region, including increased employment opportunities and a boost to our local economy, particularly through the construction stage.

I look forward to seeing real outcomes and benefits for South Gippsland and the broader Gippsland region from this project.

Need for Feed

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the Need for Feed run.

We saw donations from across South Gippsland and Bass Coast to the run, which was a terrific show of Aussie spirit and embodied helping out a mate - even if we don't know each other.

Donations of hay, silage and pet food streamed into the Korumburra Showgrounds and most of the feed has now successfully been delivered to fire-affected areas across Victoria.

While donations have closed at the Korumburra site for now due to the Korumburra Show on February 13 and 14, people can still donate hay by contacting Need for Feed directly.

Immunisation

In 2025, the Immunisation program operated by Council performed extremely well.

More than 280 children, 560 Year 7 and 10 students and 2,000 community members were vaccinated through the program - a phenomenal achievement from a small team of dedicated people.

Following the sudden closure of the Leongatha Healthcare Centre, Council's Immunisation team is helping to meet local demand by providing additional sessions to help our community.

The vaccines available include all free vaccines under the National Immunisation Program, plus some paid vaccinations (excluding travel vaccines).

To view session times and book your spot please visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/immunisation

Outdoor Pools

School may be back but our outdoor pools are still open (temperature permitting).

Enjoy a dip and cool off on those hot days.

You can find out more about our outdoor pools, including opening times and upcoming events, on Facebook.

Check out the South Gippsland Outdoor Pools, Foster Outdoor Pool and Toora Swimming Pool pages.



Seatbelts save lives.

Driving unbuckled? If you or your passengers drive without a fastened seatbelt, you could each receive a \$407 fine. The driver will also face 3 demerit points.

If you take risks while driving, chances are you will be caught.

Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.

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Pam Vance, Chris Owens and Sue Thomson all give their time to volunteer at Bunurong Wildlife Care in Inverloch. W01_0626

Hero volunteers help nurse injured wildlife

VOLUNTEERING with Bunurong Wildlife Care isn't always easy and the journey doesn't always start in the same way.

But for Sue Thomson, Chris Owens and Pam Vance, helping the local wildlife is now part of their weekly routine, sharing hands-on work to help injured or orphaned wildlife recover and eventually return to the wild.

Sue has been volunteering for four years, Chris for three and Pam for seven.

They share more than a decade of experience between them, but each of their journeys began from unique circumstances.

"Linda had put a message out on Facebook asking for help digging out some loganberries," Sue said.

"I didn't even know she had animals here at that point. She said to just watch out for the little wombat. Next thing I knew I was watching a feeding session, then helping, and that was it."

Chris, on the other hand, was drawn in through his work with the Wonthaggi Seed Bank nursery, where

By Trent Westaway

he met Bunurong Wildlife Care founder Linda Pettit.

"She said she identified on the first day that I would be suitable as a wildlife carer," Chris said.

Pam's path to Bunurong Wildlife Care developed over years of friendship.

"I've kind of been along on this journey with Linda the whole way," Pam said.

"I very bravely said I would never be a foster carer... it didn't work out that way. I was roped in," she said with a chuckle.

Volunteering can be rewarding but it is also demanding.

"Nobody just does one thing," Pam said.

"We do everything from cleaning pens to nursing sick animals and making milk."

All three admitted that most of the learning is done on the job, although they have each completed wildlife transport and rescue training, allowing them to assist in the event of a callout if an animal is found injured or in distress.

The emotional toll from the work can be heavy.

"If they don't make it, that can be really sad," Pam said.

"You do develop an emotional bond. You just have to remember they were safe, warm, pain free and loved."

The rewards, however, can keep you coming back.

"Releasing them is the best part, knowing you helped them get back to where they belong," Sue said.

"They don't want to know us anymore and that's exactly how it should be," Pam added.

For anyone considering volunteering, their message is as honest as it is encouraging.

"It's not just cuddling animals," Pam said.

"There's a lot of hard work involved."

"You become an expert at analysing poo. It's a great indicator of health," Chris added with a laugh.

"It's a whole new community," Sue said.

"You meet people you never expected to and you feel lucky to be part of it... it's not just the animals but the people too."



Leongatha Memorial Hospital and Lions Leongatha members with the two new portable defibrillators.

Lions donate life-saving equipment to hospital

LEONGATHA Memorial Hospital has received two new portable defibrillators thanks to funds raised through the Lions Leongatha Christmas Cake Project.

The devices will extend cardiac emergency support beyond the main hospital building and can be used at health service community events and within specialist cardiac services.

When defibrillation is delivered within the first few minutes of a cardiac arrest the likelihood of

survival increases significantly.

Director of nursing Kylie Ashton said the donation would have a direct and practical impact on patient care.

"These portable defibrillators make the provision of care for cardiac episodes more timely and effective," Ms Ashton said.

"They support rapid response in critical moments and give our staff greater capability when seconds truly matter."

Lions Leongatha

secretary Les Byrne said the donation reflected the collective effort of local businesses and residents.

"Lions Leongatha would like to thank the businesses in Leongatha, Meeniyana and Dumbalk who donate their time and space to sell the cakes and everyone who buys a Lions Christmas Cake to help make projects like this possible," Mr Byrne said.

Anyone interested in joining Lions Leongatha can email leongathalionscub@hotmail.com.

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SOUTH GIPPSLAND SENTINEL-TIMES | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026 | 13

Have your say on a future vision for the Summerland Peninsula



Phillip Island Nature Parks Visitor Engagement Guide Josh Collier shows visitors around the Summerland Peninsula.



The little penguin colony on the Summerland Peninsula is thriving.

PHILLIP Island Nature Parks is seeking further feedback from the community for the development of the Summerland Peninsula Master Plan.

The Nature Parks is working with the Phillip Island and Bass Coast community and key stakeholders to shape a precinct-wide vision for eco-tourism and recreational experiences that better integrates with the conservation values of the peninsula.

General Manager for Infrastructure and Planning Jarvis Weston said there has been a comprehensive consultation process to date and further engagement is a precursor to the release of a draft plan.

"We know how important this significant landscape is to many, and we want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to express their long-term aspirations for the Summerland Peninsula," Mr Weston said.

The Nature Parks would like to explore ways for people to access the greater area without compromising their user experience or impacting habitat and wildlife, and ensure traditional Bunurong culture was evident to all community and visitors.

"We are looking to refresh the Master Plan first developed in 2012, reset our vision for the next 20 to 30 years and explore opportunities that work harmoniously with our conservation efforts, habitat restoration and eco-tourism."

The Summerland Peninsula is home to Australia's largest little penguin colony, with an estimated 40,000 breeding penguins now calling Phillip Island home.

The colony's remarkable recovery is a direct result of the Victorian Government's historic buyback of the Summerland Estate, which saw 774 housing lots purchased between 1985 and 2010 in what was the largest residential buyback in the state's history.

Penguin numbers have grown from around 12,000 in the 1980s to their current levels thanks to dedicated conservation efforts including habitat restoration, revegetation and pest control programs.

The Nobbies Centre remains closed while planning is underway for the updated Master Plan, with the Nature Parks seeking to ensure any further investment in the facility helps achieve the community's long-term aspirations for the site.

Construction of Stage three of the Penguin Parade boardwalk redevelopment is also expected to begin in early 2026 and run through to mid-2027 to avoid disrupting the penguin breeding season.

The Nature Parks has extended the stakeholder consultation stage to report back to the community on what they have heard so far, and to seek feedback on high-level concepts.

"The consultation process will help inform and guide decision making prior to the release of a draft plan for public comment this year.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the local community and key stakeholders to shape the way that future generations will experience this incredible coast."

The draft plan is expected for public exhibition in April-May, with the final Master Plan delivered in June-July.

The next stage of the project will include a detail design of the Nobbies Precinct later this year.

To have your say visit Phillip Island Nature Parks online to learn more about the project and complete the online survey.

Drop-in consultation sessions will be held upstairs at the North Pier Hotel on Wednesday, February 11 from 9am to 11am, 2pm to 4pm and 5pm to 7pm, and at the Penguin Parade Visitor Centre on Saturday, February 14 from 12pm to 2pm.

Email your thoughts and ideas to community@penguins.org.au

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HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE SUMMERLAND PENINSULA MASTER PLAN

After a comprehensive consultation process to date to seek the community's aspirations for the Summerland Peninsula, where we heard the importance of this significant landscape to many, we have extended the stakeholder consultation stage to report back to the community what we've heard and to seek further feedback on the developing plan.

Project timeline

- STAGE 1: Review of key documents Jul-Aug 2025
- STAGE 2: Stakeholder consultation Aug-Nov 2025
- STAGE 2A: Background studies, further stakeholder consultation Nov 2025-Mar 2026
- STAGE 3: Draft Master Plan Apr 2026
- STAGE 4: Draft Master Plan public exhibition Apr-May 2026
- STAGE 5: Final Master Plan Jun-Jul 2026
- STAGE 6: Detail Design of Nobbies Precinct Jul-Sep 2026

Summerland Peninsula Vision

Summerland Peninsula is a world-class, conservation-focused destination that is inclusive and welcoming, where wildlife thrives and visitors feel nourished, connected and inspired.

HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Visit engage.penguins.org.au/ to learn more about the project and complete the online survey



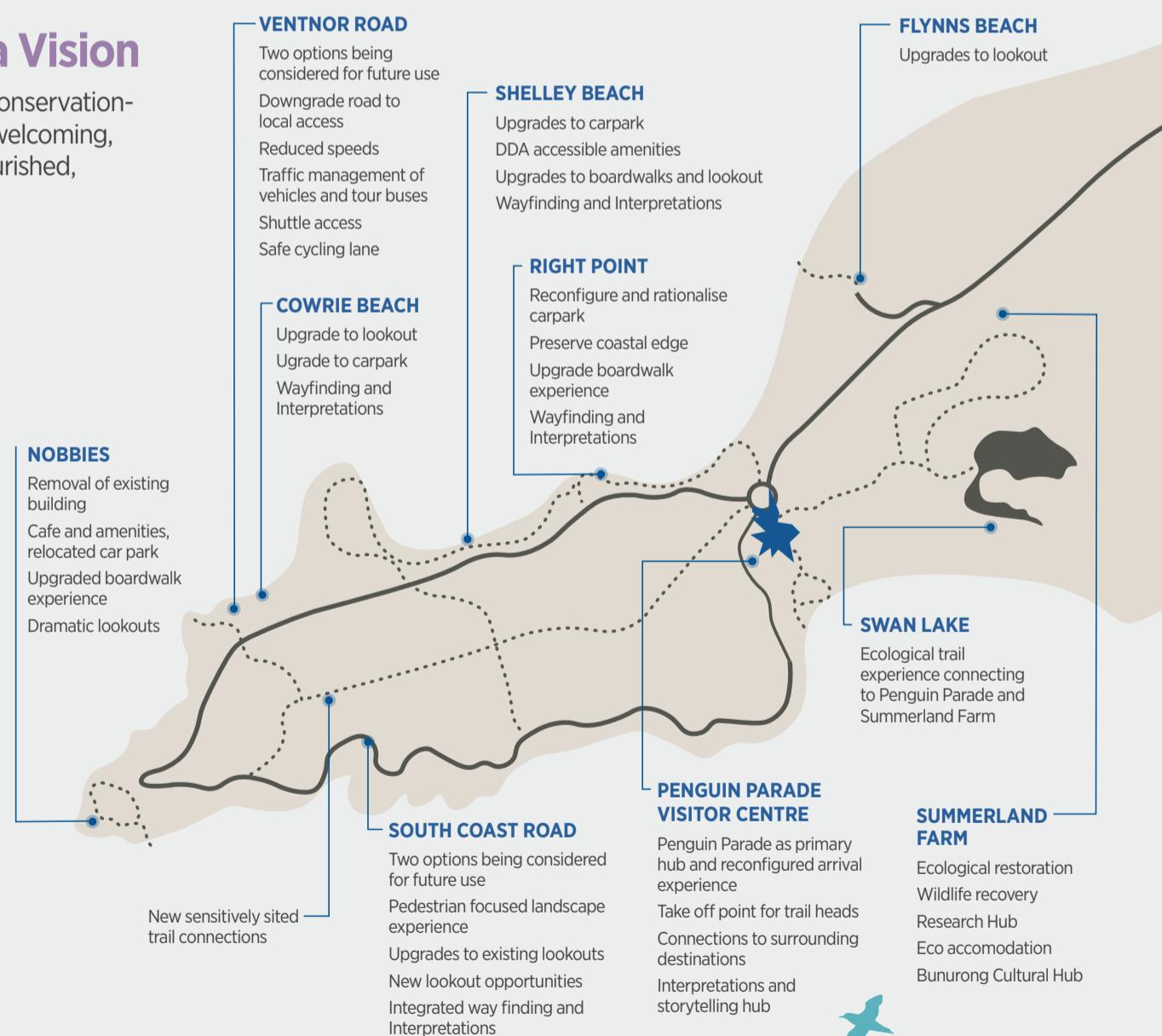
- Attend a drop-in consultation session at the North Pier Hotel at the following times:

- Wed 11 Feb 9-11 am
- Wed 11 Feb 2-4 pm
- Wed 11 Feb 5-7 pm

Penguin Parade:

- Sat 14 Feb 12-2 pm

- Email your thoughts and ideas to community@penguins.org.au
- Connect with the team at the Nature Parks sites as part of our face-to-face engagement



Phillip Island
**NATURE
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For more information visit



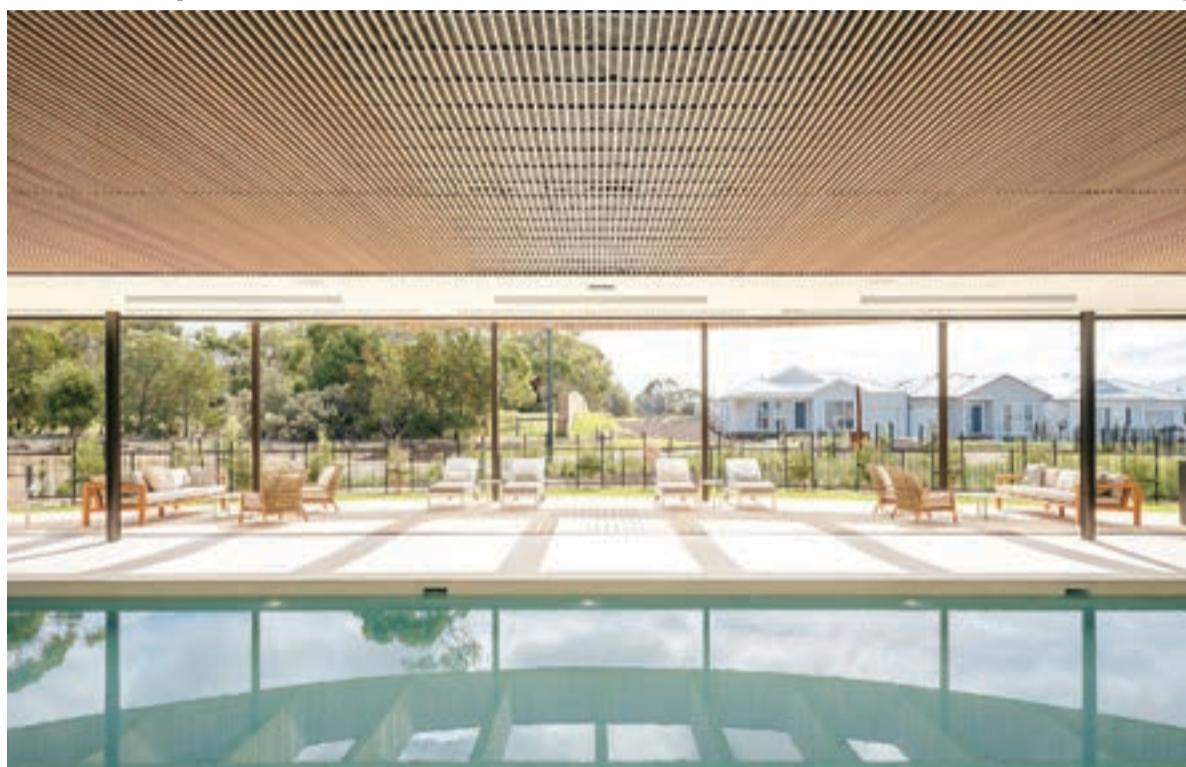
OUR
COMMUNITY





The Lifestyle Phillip Island Clubhouse features distinctive timber architecture surrounded by native landscaping.

Phillip Island retirement community opens doors to public



The resort-style pool and outdoor lounge area at Lifestyle Phillip Island.

PHILLIP Island residents curious about downsizing to a low-maintenance coastal lifestyle can explore what is on offer at the Lifestyle Phillip Island Open Day next week.

The over-50s community at 498 Settlement Rd, Cowes will open its doors on Saturday, February 7 from 11am to 2pm, offering guided tours of the Clubhouse, walk-throughs of display homes and the chance to meet the team.

Lifestyle Communities said the Open Day was designed to give locals a first-hand look at the resort-style amenities on offer.

The company said there is something special about coastal living, with fresher air, a slower pace and a closer community where people take the time to stop and say hello.

For many people, making the move to the coast is not just about finding a new home but discovering a simpler, more joyful way to live every day.

The Phillip Island Clubhouse features a pool and spa, landscaped gardens, a fully equipped gym and welcoming social spaces for residents to relax or connect with neighbours.

Lifestyle Communities operates 31 communities across Victoria, with Phillip Island among its coastal offerings designed for independent downsizers looking to free up cash while maintaining an active lifestyle.

Residents can spend less time on endless home maintenance and more time enjoying the local community, beaches and nature reserves.

The community offers social events and activities for those who want to get involved, but there is no pressure to join in for those who would rather spend the time relaxing.

Free ice cream will be available on the day.

For more information or to book a tour, visit lifestylecommunities.com.au/coastal-living-your-way.

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Lifestyle Communities Phillip Island,
498 Settlement Rd, Cowes



Saturday 7 February, 11am to 2pm

Lifestyle
Communities®

 Phillip Island

Logan swaps the groundwork for the sky up north

AINSLEE Logan grew up in South Gippsland and is now a helicopter pilot, flying a Robinson R22. For Ainslee, a gap year that began as a detour to the Northern Territory became the turning point of her career, where she has since gone on to win the 2025 Youth Shine Award in the aviation industry.

Life as a station hand quickly reshaped not only her daily rhythm but her ambition. With initial plans to study midwifery after graduating from Mary MacKillop College in Leongatha in 2020, Ainslee instead took on a second year up north helping run the crew.

"When I left secondary school, I needed a gap year, because I knew that if I was to start studying straight away, I would probably never finish it as I was so burnt out from high school during COVID. A friend was headed to a station in Queensland, and I thought, well, that sounds good. I looked into it further and applied to whatever I could find until someone took me," she said.

Growing up in Leongatha, every chance she got, including weekends and school holidays, Ainslee would go out to the family dairy farm that has now been in the Dowlings for more than 100 years, so station work seemed a natural fit, and exposure to large-scale mustering soon took her interest. "It was the aerial mustering that drove me to pursue pilot training," she said.

"I was working on the ground at a cattle station. Mustering a property that covered more than a million acres, with roughly a quarter as pastoral land."

Daily duties included mustering on horseback, with choppers and buggies, yard work, drafting, processing, marking and operating machinery. The job was uncompromisingly practical, experience she later identified as essential to aerial mustering.

Helicopters are part of the process on a large-scale property. From the air, crews muster mobs of cattle and work in close contact with the ground crew to get them into the yards as efficiently as possible.

"It was in the Northern Territory that I decided that I wanted to fly helicopters, but obviously it's expensive, and then halfway through my second year on the station, I decided I would sacrifice and go all in," Ainslee said.

"It was one afternoon; I asked my manager if one of the boys wouldn't mind taking me out to see what it's like from the air. When they landed, they looked over at me and said, so, what do you reckon, we turned you off yet? But no, it was quite the opposite, I thought I'm going all in now."

Ainslee then made the move to Western Australia, working as a station hand through 2023 at a property that had two helicopters. She started her theory before heading to Perth and finished training in May 2024.

In Perth, Ainslee was finishing her theory and flying once a week, using that as a break from study to keep herself motivated. "However, once I had finished all seven subjects, I flew twice a day, six days a week, to get through the required 105 hours. It wasn't easy, but at the end of the day, nothing in life is easy. If you want something, you've got to stick with it, and eventually it'll happen if you're willing to put the work in."

"I'd always grown up around cattle, but dairy farming and beef farming in South Gippsland is small-scale compared to big station living," she said. "I get to meet so many different people and travel to so many different places. Our work depends on what's happening for the season; it's all dependent on the rain and what the markets are doing."

Ainslee is now 23, working as a mustering pilot contractor for Fitzroy Helicopters in Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia, and was named a youth category winner at the 2025 Shine Awards for her grit and determination in the Kimberley.



Ainslee Logan left South Gippsland, took a gap year in the Northern Territory and then worked tirelessly to land her dream career as a muster pilot in Western Australia.



Ainslee Logan won the 2025 Youth Shine Award for her work in the aviation industry.

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Lions donation clears way for long-awaited school oval works

THE Lions Club of Inverloch and District has donated \$5000 to Inverloch Primary School, providing the final funding needed for a drainage issue to be solved.

The long-standing issue has plagued the local school, rendering their oval unusable for much of the school year.

"The oval is waterlogged and ankle-deep in mud for much of term two and term three, and we have to make it out of bounds for our children," principal Ben Soumilas said.

"This limits the space we have for children to play outside."

The \$5000 donation will allow for the installation of AGI drains across the northeast corner of the school's oval.

Lions Club president Terry Hall said the club wanted to make an immediate difference for the kids.

"As president of the club, I move around the community quite a bit and talk to people, including the Inverloch Primary School principal," Mr Hall said.

"I invited him to let us know if there were any projects we might be able to help with and outline what was needed. This one stood out."

Mr Hall said the unavailability of the oval for half the year made this drainage project a clear priority for the club's assistance.

"They have an oval at the back of the school, but because of the lack of drainage, they weren't able to use it for a large part of the year," he said.

"If you have an oval and the kids can't use it, that's not good for the school. It seemed like a project we could support."

The \$5000 contribution was finalised just before Christmas last year, completing the funding needed to move ahead with the drainage installation.

Local contractors have also donated machinery and time, while the parent community raised \$15,000 to support multiple projects, including this oval drainage project.

Mr Hall said part of the Lions Club's role in the community is to support local schools.

"Supporting a local school means we are supporting our young children now," he said.

"They are the future of Inverloch, and if they can see that there are people who care about them and want to help them, that is the kind of service Lions like to bring to the community."

Once completed, the drainage works will allow the school oval to be usable year-round, giving the students more outside space.

Traditional and new events to entertain Korumburra showgoers

By Andrew Paloczi



Hobby horse riders show off their mounts at a previous event at the Korumburra Showgrounds.



Rikki Hogarth at last year's Korumburra Show, with patrons set to be entertained by sideshow games and rides again this year. A31_0625



Organiser of the Pygmy Goat Show Trish Joyce of Lals Haven Goat Stud in Jumbunna enjoys success with Patona Park Senator Smooch, informally known as Smoochie, at last year's Korumburra Show. A32_0625



Natasha Pollard with Supreme Sheep Phoenix from Blackpond Hampshire Downs stud in Langwarrin at the 2025 Korumburra Show. A43_0625

THE action-packed 130th Korumburra Show is fast approaching, with locals and visitors set to enjoy a wide variety of entertainment on the evening of Friday February 13 and the following day, the popular fireworks display topping off opening night.

A hobby horse race between entrants representing local businesses and organisations is new this year, turning the tables on traditional equine events with the riders having to do all the work, attendees sure to revel in seeing competitors tackling the jumps and a sprint.

The race takes place on the footy ground about 6pm Friday, with five entrants each paying \$150 to field a jockey and hobby horse in the Burra Bolt, riders to be decked out in racing silks, the winning business or organisation claiming \$500 and the remaining \$250 going to the Korumburra A&P Society.

The competing businesses and clubs are Barry Plant Korumburra, Kelly's Bakery, Korumburra Pony Club, Jumping Horse Club and Adora Hair in Leongatha.

The race will be followed by expert hobby horse rider Kirra Brauckmann from the Mornington Peninsula who'll demonstrate her dressage and jumping skills.

"She has a full tack box, four horses, a bridle for dressage and another for jumping; she's going to be doing the dressage to music," Ms Joyce said, having been an organiser of a recent hobby horse event at Korumburra Showgrounds.

Ms Joyce's daughter Tiffany is running the hobby horse entertainment at the Show.

Ms Joyce is in charge of the Pygmy goat show, which is returning due to its popularity when launched on the opening night of last year's Korumburra Show.

Even more entrants are likely for this year's judging, and a new event has been introduced, that being a junior fancy dress section at about 7pm Friday that will feature children and their Pygmy goats in costume.

Rides and sideshow games will entertain patrons on both days.

Saturday features a free farmers' breakfast at 9.30am, sponsored by Coles.

There'll be an array of market stalls around the Showgrounds.

Day two is filled with traditional agricultural show entertainment, including displays of entrants' handiwork in the Exhibit Pavilion, cattle, sheep and poultry judging, as well as dogs competing in fly-ball and other events.

There's free entertainment for children funded by market stallholder fees.

Korumburra and District Historical Society and the local library will have displays.

People are encouraged to view the Show schedule at korumburra.showgrounds.com.au or pick up a printed program at one of the businesses offering them on the town's main street.


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2021 Ford Ranger XLT PX MK III

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OH WHAT A FEELING

Leongatha RSL hosts FAB Friday for BlazeAid

THE Leongatha RSL will host a special FAB Friday night on Friday, February 13 to raise essential funds for rural Australians affected by the bushfires.

All profits from the mega meat raffle and joker poker tickets will go directly to BlazeAid, a volunteer organisation helping communities rebuild after natural disasters.

Up for grabs on the night will be joker poker cash, the members draw and extra raffles featuring prizes donated by generous local businesses and community members.

RSL staff member Michelle has been driving the fundraising effort, rallying local businesses to donate prizes for extra raffles to maximise the funds raised.

More than 12 local businesses have already donated prizes valued at more than \$1000, with more commitments expected before the event.

Prizes will be advertised in the lead-up, with organisers guaranteeing there will be lots up for grabs that you will not want to miss.

The evening promises to be a spectacular opportunity for networking and showing solidarity with those in need.

Whether you come for dinner, drinks or simply to try your luck in the raffles, every dollar raised will go directly to helping bushfire-affected farming families and communities get back on their feet.

BlazeAid relies on community generosity to help rebuild fences, restore properties and stand beside people as they recover from the trauma of fire.

Book a table for dinner or drinks and bring friends along to support this worthy cause.

Bookings are essential on 5662 2747 or at leongatha-rsl.com.au.

To find out more about the fabulous work BlazeAid does, visit blazeaid.com.au.

Back to School

Newhaven College back to school

ON Friday, January 23, Newhaven College came back to life as students returned to campus for the school year.

Teachers and support staff had completed three days of professional learning, collaboration and planning in preparation for the year ahead.

With 144 new students joining the college community in 2026, all staff were ready to welcome, support and teach every single student across prep to year 12.

The confidence with which the preps joined their classmates on their first day is a testament to the preparation made during the many library sessions and orientation days in 2025, where the development of a learning partnership with families was established.

The preps were welcomed to the college with a special parade, where they were greeted by every Junior School student with a fist bump, handshake or wave.

New year 7 students enjoyed meeting their teachers, connecting with new friends, and exploring their new school environment.

Year 5 students were excited to spend their first day in Middle School and quickly settled into their classrooms.

The 2026 year 9 students have joined the Senior School from afar, beginning their



New staff joining Newhaven College in 2026: Jillian Mulcahy (Middle School Learning Support Teacher), Tamara Mulholland (Middle School Administrator), Siobhan Jagusch (Wellbeing Leader and year 9 Teacher), Tahlia Maher (year 1 Teacher), Claire O'Brien (Middle and Senior School English Teacher) and Kylie Carlson (Prep Teacher). Not pictured: Sara Beale (Music Teacher, Woodwind Specialist), Noah Martin-Endress (AFL SportsReady Trainee).

exciting journey up at the Year 9 Environmental Centre.

A Forum Day was held for the 2026 year 12 cohort.

This specialised program is designed to prepare students for their final year of school, whether they are completing VCE or the VCE Vocational Major.

The construction of the Junior School Adventure Playground is well underway.

The design is inspired by Phillip Island's natural landscape, focusing on the connection

between nature and play, with the installation of logs, rocks and vegetation to create a truly stimulating play space.

The Junior School is also preparing for an extension to the assembly space and the construction of two new classrooms to accommodate growing enrolments.

College principal Tony Corr is excited for the year ahead.

"2026 is looking like an exciting year for our school as we continue to build on the excellent work that has been

done in making this an exceptional school and the school of choice for so many families," Mr Corr said.

In light of the recent events in Bondi, Mr Corr is reflective on the college's school vision, which is to inspire young people to engage in their world with confidence and a sense of purpose.

"We need to continue to instil in our young people a society that fosters and values diversity and embraces different cultures, religions and backgrounds," he said.

"The values of our school, of Empathy, Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Excellence, remain at the core of what we do, but also provide the blueprint for a fair and just society.

"The human, emotional, social and values-based parts of education have never been more important than they are now."

Newhaven College still has limited places available for 2026.

Please contact the college's admissions team to arrange a college tour on (03) 5956 7505 or visit newhavencol.vic.edu.au for more information.

Newhaven College's annual Open Day will be held on Saturday, March 14.

Bookings can be made on the college website.

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Principal Brad Hutchinson with new staff members Chris Kenyon, Ben Stein, Penny Morris, Zhi Xia, Tom Maruskanic and Joel Lindeman-Collins. A09_0526

Leongatha Secondary College welcomes new staff for 2026

By Andrew Paloczi

LEONGATHA Secondary College's six new teaching staff members caught up with Sentinel-Times on Thursday, the first day of classes for the year.

Chris Kenyon is a learning specialist for science, a multifaceted role in which he'll be checking for student understanding and helping improve teaching practice.

He has joined the college after teaching at Dromana College on the Mornington Peninsula, bringing a love for science and the challenging nature of the subject, having developed an interest in biology while at university after originally studying mathematics.

Former student Zhi Xia who graduated from the school in 2023 returns as a PE trainee.

Joel Lindeman-Collins brings experience from Boronia K-12 College and will be teaching English and Humanities in Leongatha, having moved to San Remo with his partner who is a wildlife ranger on Phillip Island.

Mr Lindeman-Collins is not yet

sure what to expect in terms of differences between teaching in Melbourne and the country.

"So far it's been good and everyone's been really supportive and helpful," he said, looking forward to getting to know the students.

Tom Maruskanic is teaching English, having previously taught in the Melbourne suburb of Kew.

This is his third year of teaching, with Mr Maruskanic explaining why he is glad to have pursued that career.

"I love the connection with people and the relationships you build with the staff, and watching the kids grow up and learn; I've always been a people person, so it was an obvious choice," he said of teaching.

While sure there will be differences teaching in a rural area, he doesn't yet know what they'll be but loves new experiences and a challenge and is looking forward to what Gippsland life offers.

Penny Morris arrives from closer by, having taught at Bass Coast College, and will be teaching Food Studies.

"It's just the joy of food, skills, the sharing and connections that you make in the kitchen," she said of what she loves about sharing her subject with students, adding that eating the food is another highlight.

Ms Morris looks forward to building the program.

Ben Stein will teach Product Design, having previously taught at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College.

He loves working with kids who are engaged by hands-on learning, and enjoys providing real-world experiences through different mediums such as metal and wood and fields such as automotive and engineering.

The enthusiasm of the new staff members is evident and no doubt parents and the community wish them well as they establish themselves at the college.

Large numbers kick off school year at Leongatha SC

By Andrew Paloczi

LEONGATHA Secondary College's year seven intake looked to be settling in well when Sentinel-Times popped in on Thursday for the start of the new school year, that cohort numbering 134, with most coming from the adjoining Leongatha Primary School.

There was a large intake from Meeniyian Primary School, with others coming from Leongatha's St Laurence O'Toole Primary School.

Primary schools in Tarwin Lower, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Inverloch were also represented in the year seven intake.

Principal Brad Hutchinson spoke of the impressive numbers beginning their senior school journey there.

"For us, it's great that people are seeing that we're doing really good things with young kids' learning, so I think the numbers are reflective of the strength of our teaching and learning here at the college for a number of years now," he said.

Mr Hutchinson puts that down to taking care of kids and their wellbeing.

Former policeman Dale McCahon continues as year seven coordinator, clearly relishing the chance to work with students and help them address any challenges.

"He's such a great asset to the college," Mr Hutchinson said, praising Mr McCahon's knack for



Eddison Jeffrey and Mac Katz settle into class as they begin year seven. A11_0526

smoothing the transition of students into secondary education.

One of the major adjustments after arriving from primary school is having multiple teachers, and classes held in different rooms.

"They have to get used to that routine of moving classes every hour," Mr Hutchinson said.

Year sevens are given a dedicated area to help them settle in.

All those Sentinel-Times met appeared to be going well.

One of those, Ryder Pedlow came from St Laurence O'Toole Primary School, which he remarked had only 120 kids last year in total.

However, he has made connections with students from various

schools through sport and is excited to be joining lots of mates at the college, not being daunted by the shift to a much larger school.

Moriah Shannon is excited about the sporting opportunities that will be available at her new school, particularly netball in which she usually plays wing attack.

Ada Houston looks forward to music lessons, especially learning the guitar, her vibrant personality suggesting she might just be a future performer.

Overall, the college has 646 students, its biggest number for a long time, suggesting it's on the right course.



The Knox family, Tom, Primrose, Madeline and Banks celebrate Primrose starting school, following in the steps of her older sister who is in grade two. A03_0526

A warm welcome for 2026 at Leongatha Primary School

LEONGATHA Primary School officially welcomed the 2026 school year this week, with a special focus on its newest members, the incoming prep students, who arrived full of excitement and enthusiasm for their first day of school.

There are 61 kids starting their school journey at the school this year, 11 more prep students than last year, with the school having 523 pupils in total, slightly down on 2025 in line with birth rates.

One of the Prep intake Rex Williams was so keen to start school, his mum Clare said, "We actually turned up yesterday," with Rex's dad Brenton adding, "He's been wearing his uniform for the last month."

Starting his second year in charge, principal Warwick Ford was as excited as any of the new arrivals.

He was keen to ensure the day was free from stress as new students joined the friendly school community, preps beginning a 12-year school journey, half of which for most will take place at the next door Leongatha Secondary College.

The new prep cohort was warmly greeted by the 2026 grade six student leaders, who proudly took on the role of welcoming ambassadors.

From friendly smiles to reassuring words, the senior students helped ensure the youngest learners felt safe, supported, and excited to begin their school journey.

On behalf of the school community, Mr Ford shared a heartfelt welcome, highlighting the school's strong commitment to fostering kindness, curiosity, confidence and inclusion.

The school's vision centres on developing lifelong learners who embrace challenges, hold high expectations for themselves and contribute positively to an ever-changing global community.

Leongatha Primary School places a strong emphasis on educating the whole child, supporting not only academic achievement but also social and emotional development.

Building self-esteem, resilience, and confidence in

every learner remains a key priority, underpinned by strong relationships and student wellbeing.

As a Respectful Relationships Lead School, the school reinforces positive behaviours and promotes its core values of Being a Learner, Being Respectful and Being Resilient.

These values are embedded across all aspects of school life and play a vital role in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Students benefit from a wide range of specialist programs, including Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, STEM and Auslan.

Literacy continues to be a major focus, supported by an extensive school library and a dedicated Tutoring Program that provides additional support where needed.

The school also offers a variety of enriching opportunities beyond the classroom, such as gardening, cooking, choir, Hands-on Learning and camping programs.

A strong Support and Extension Program, delivered with the assistance of dedicated Education Support Staff, ensures individual learning needs are met.

Wellbeing remains central to the school's approach, with a Wellbeing and Inclusion Leader and Learning Specialists working closely with students and staff.

Adding to this support are two trained therapy dogs who play a valued role in promoting student calm, connection, and emotional wellbeing.

Embracing the future of education, Leongatha Primary School integrates digital technologies through its one-to-one iPad program, with students receiving their own device in grade three to support digital literacy alongside traditional learning.

With energy, enthusiasm and a strong sense of community, the school looks forward to a successful and rewarding year ahead, as it continues to nurture confident, capable learners, starting with a very warm welcome to the Class of 2026.

Back to School



Foster Secondary College 2026 Captains Anouar Cunningham, Polly Barnes and Ursula John (Jacob Tay absent). B21_0526

TAFE programs for Foster SC

By Bruce Wardley

"When students have a choice of schools they're choosing Foster SC."

Enrolments at junior levels at Foster SC have also improved with new industries moving into the area including Marinus Link and offshore wind energy companies.

School Captains Anouar Cunningham, Polly Barnes and Ursula John say a highlight of year 12 has been having a leadership role working with the teachers.

"We are also involved in fundraising for the valedictory dinner," Ursula said.

"We will have bake sales, a soup day and dressing-up days."

Anouar is hoping for a career in medical research and science, Polly is aiming to study engineering and the environment, and Ursula hopes to study journalism at RMIT.

"Our number one focus is always on student outcomes and student wellbeing," Mr Rotthier said.

Being small Mr Rotthier said Foster SC had a great relationship with students and their families and being so close to the Prom Foster's specialty has been Outdoor Education.

"We had outstanding results across all VCE subjects particularly Outdoor Education."

Mr Rotthier said there had been an increase in student numbers at higher levels with some students returning to school and others moving into the area.



Tarwin Lower Primary School happy to start the new year, with students Rivendale, Kayden, Hannah, Reef, Liam and Eleanor with teacher Lisa Sargent.

Small school with big opportunities

TARWIN Lower Primary School continues to thrive as a small regional school with a total of 45 students, eight of whom were welcomed into prep for 2026.

Principal Jennifer Cox said the whole school swimming program, starting in term one, will be a highlight for the students this summer.

Five sessions for years one to six at SPLASH have already begun, with children excited about the bus trip into town and families thrilled with the free swim lessons offered as part of the school curriculum.

Tarwin Lower Primary staff

welcomed Demi Butterworth as an education support this year.

"In welcoming Demi, we now have an ES for each class at the school," Ms Cox said.

"We also welcome Nicki Robson, who will be teaching two and a half days a week, including Auslan and Physical Education."

Ms Cox confirmed that the biggest educational focus for the year will be their writing program.

For more information on enrolment at Tarwin Lower Primary School, call 03 5663 5263.



Foundation teachers Tomei Del Pozzo and Kath Moore with Lola, Maz and Isla on their first day at school at Wonthaggi Primary School. B10_0526

Back to school with \$6.7 million upgrade for Wonthaggi PS

By Bruce Wardley

WITH work well underway on a \$6.7 million learning and workspace upgrade at Wonthaggi Primary School this year's prep students had plenty to be excited about.

Confidently waving off their mums, dads, grandparents and special friends in the school grounds, the early learning classroom has been a familiar space for these foundation students since last year.

"The step into prep program began in the last term of school, they've already attended school for a session each week in term four, 2025," explained foundation teacher Jo Ross.

Ms Ross said foundation

enrolments were slightly up on last year with 44 students coming from Wonthaggi and Cape Paterson.

"Lots of siblings, brothers, sisters and cousins of current students."

The open space classroom for foundation students has been a major success.

"We team-teach between two classroom teachers, and one education support. It means the students remain connected with their friends from kinder or family friends."

The core principles of foundation studies are understanding

routines, building friendships, language skills and phonics and numeracy skills.

The school's Sounds Write phonics program teaches the skills of reading and writing with all students able to read and write when they go into grade one.

Principal Wendy Truett said with total school enrolments reaching 370 some of the current preps have been in and around Wonthaggi Primary School since they were born.

"We welcome some new teachers and education support staff who are excited to be joining the team at Wonthaggi Primary School," Ms Truett said.



Kongwak PS leaders Charlotte, Letty-Brooke, Hazel, Heath and James. B18_0526

All smiles for back to school at Kongwak Primary

By Bruce Wardley

IT MAY be small compared to some of the bigger schools in South Gippsland but what Kongwak Primary School lacks in size it makes up in community spirit.

Year five and six school leaders for 2026 Charlotte, Letty-Brooke, Hazel, Heath and James come from Outtrim, Wattlebank, Inverloch, Wonthaggi and Leonagatha.

That typifies Kongwak Primary

Kongwak Primary School is committed to providing a high quality education for its students in a safe, respectful, inclusive and engaging learning environment.

"Many of our students come off local farms," prep to year two teacher Sally Dunn said.

They come from rural properties as far as Venus Bay and Ryaston.

Back to School



Phillip Island Village School welcomes nine foundation students for the 2026 year. Christie (Mentor), Delilah, Alaya, Teva, Mia, Zoe, Hutch, Asher, Jack, Remi, Chrissie (Assistant Mentor) and Osa (puppy).

PIVS building confidence, curiosity and a love of learning

PHILLIP Island Village School welcomes nine new foundation students, the largest cohort for PIVS and an increase from last year, with an enrolment total of 48 students.

With new capital works underway, the new build is set to be complete by 2027 to enrich the learning environment on Phillip Island, a project that will provide new classrooms and a large communal space.

All the rooms have recently been revamped over the break, with the Foundy (Foundation) room set beautifully for play-based learning, as well as a new large office space for teaching staff.

Philosophy and Community

Leader Lien Sim said PIVS welcomes several new staff to the school year, including Rick Nixon who has been a part of the PIVS community for several years and has recently come to the end of his teaching degree.

"We're very excited that Rick will be joining us as a Mentor this year," Lien said.

"He is passionate about supporting students to build confidence, curiosity, and a love of learning.

"Rick also brings his considerable experience in cooking and hospitality, and his love of the ocean, and looks forward to sharing both these passions in his role."

After helping at PIVS at the

end of 2025, staff were impressed by the warmth and capability that Annie Hearde carried and together they welcome her to join the PIVS team as an Assistant Mentor.

"Annie looks forward to enacting her values around community, empathy and collaboration in our setting," Lien said.

Annie has experience in environmental management, working with people and is currently studying Education Support.

"Our much-loved Kitchen Coordinator, Kelly Berry is going to be at school four days a week this year; three in the kitchen and the fourth in an Assistant Mentor role," Lien said.

said.

"This will help support the continual expansion of our Kitchen Garden program, as well as helping to facilitate cooking projects, which are always popular.

"We are so happy to have Kelly step into this new role."

As the school continues to grow, PIVS needed additional help in the school office, and has welcomed Misty Johns to join the administration team this year.

Misty has previously been part of the Koonwarra Village School community and brings administration and marketing experience to her role at PIVS, along with a passion for photography and community.



Mason and Samuel buddy up at San Remo Primary.

San Remo Primary's new build begins

AFTER years of patiently waiting, San Remo Primary School's new build is beginning, just in time for 18 new preps to commence their first year of schooling, and an enrolment of 150 students across prep to grade 6.

The school welcomes principal Karen Bowker from leave, where she said the staff did a wonderful job in her absence, especially acting principal Lauren Hamer.

With project works underway, the grade 5/6 classroom has been moved, and so will the old library over the next two weeks.

"When this happens, they will start to prepare the site for building works," Ms Bowker said.

"We are very excited for them to start building two new classrooms, an administration building and staff facilities.

"This will make a huge difference for our families with 21st-century learning happening in 21st-century classrooms."

This year, San Remo welcomes Mim McGraw to the school.

"Mim is excited to move to the area and develop strong connections with the community," Ms Bowker said.

Explicit teaching and student engagement are the focus for the school year ahead, as well as student wellbeing.



St Joseph's Primary School, Wonthaggi, students Elliza and Evelyn at their very first buddy lunch of the year.

St Joseph's welcomes new faces

ST Joseph's Primary School, Wonthaggi is excited to welcome students and families back for a new school year filled with learning, growth and opportunity.

"We are looking forward to continuing to build on our strong academic achievements while providing a supportive and engaging learning environment for all students. I feel very fortunate to lead a school that is warm, purposeful and values-driven - a place where people genuinely care and strive to do their best for children in every sense, not just academically," principal Mrs Joanne Coldebella said.

St Joseph's has welcomed new staff members this year, including Mr Will Meaden as Sports Coordinator and Physical Education teacher - an important role given the high level of student involvement in sporting opportunities - and Mr Liam Anderson to the year five/six teaching team.

The school also welcomes new Parish Priest, Fr Denis O'Bryan.

Among the many opportunities ahead this year, the school is looking forward to the continued growth of the school choir, led by Performing Arts teacher Ms Danielle Paulson, and the many occasions for students to share their talents with the wider community.



Inverloch Kongwak Primary School Principal Ben Soumilas with 2026 Inverloch School Captains Alana, Bella, Rosie and Oskar. B19_0526

keep enhancing the student experience by engaging students in their learning," Mr Soumilas said.

"To do that we're prioritising

supporting our teachers to keep learning. One of the things our school families find is that we've got a great culture at both schools of

older students taking care of younger students and taking their positions as role models very seriously and embracing that responsibility."

"The focus for 2026 is to

Korumburra Stamp Club Annual Fair

LOCALS and collectors are invited to the Anglican Church Hall on Bridge Street, Korumburra, as the Korumburra Stamp Club hosts its annual fair on Saturday, February 14. Entry to the event is free.

It will run from 9am to 3pm with refreshments and food available for purchase on the day. Club secretary Peter Treadwell said both the fair and the club itself had grown steadily since the group relocated to Korumburra almost a decade ago.

"We have 10 active members. This will be our ninth or tenth year," he said.

"Initially we were the Foster Stamp Club and only had about three active members. We decided to move up here and see what would happen, and since then we have picked up new members and things have been running along very well."

The fair will feature six or seven stamp and coin dealers, each offering stamps, coins and collectibles for sale. Dealers will also be happy to assess collections and provide valuations for attendees.

"If people want to bring something along to sell, I am sure the dealers will have a look at it," Mr Treadwell said.

He said the event will cater to collectors of all experience levels.

"Serious collectors might find something special. Beginners will certainly find something. And those in between can ask around and maybe get some leads on what they are looking for."

The club has no joining fee, with members only paying \$3 per meeting night.

Ask Mr Treadwell what he's looking forward to the most on the day, and he'll give you a simple answer.

"Trying to find something I haven't got yet," he said with a smile.

CUC Bass Coast celebrates five years of supporting local students

COUNTRY Universities Centre (CUC) Bass Coast is celebrating five years of supporting local students to access higher education, and the community is invited to help mark the milestone at its upcoming Open Day in March.

Located in Wonthaggi, CUC Bass Coast offers a free study and learning space for individuals pursuing degrees, diplomas or Certificate IV qualifications through any Australian university or higher education institution.

The Centre is one of four affiliated Regional University Study Hubs in Victoria, alongside Wangaratta, Swan Hill and Hamilton, and is part of a national network of 56 hubs supporting more than 15,000 regional and remote students across the country.

Research shows that people living in regional and rural parts of Australia are 50 per cent less likely to engage in higher education.

Country Universities Centres were established to address this gap by bringing higher education support closer to home.

To celebrate five years of operations, the Centre will host



The best ideas start around the table at CUC Bass Coast, where students connect and become part of a local learning community.

an Open Day on Thursday, March 5, from 10am to 2pm.

Members of the public are invited to tour the facilities, meet staff and students, and enjoy complementary coffee and cake to celebrate the Centre's fifth year of operations.

Centre Manager Sarah Bourke encouraged anyone considering higher education to visit and learn more about how CUC Bass Coast supports students to live and study locally.

"Our Centre is a positive and welcoming place for students, offering an additional

space beyond home and work where people feel connected to their learning community," Ms Bourke said.

"For many years, regional students have had to leave home or give up on further study altogether. CUC makes it possible to study locally while continuing to work and live in our region, which is incredibly important for both students and the broader community."

CUC Bass Coast Board Chair Martin Keogh said the Centre is committed to creating a supportive and empowering

environment for regional students.

"We believe in creating a space where regional students feel supported, connected, and empowered to succeed without leaving their communities," Mr Keogh said.

"We have an incredible team that provides academic support to develop the core skills needed for successful independent learning at university."

CUC Bass Coast is a dedicated local learning hub that collaborates with schools, tertiary partners and other educational organisations to expand opportunities for students throughout the region.

Students have access to the Centre seven days a week, with high-speed technology, academic mentoring and a network of like-minded students, creating a strong community learning environment.

To date, the Centre has supported more than 500 students on their higher education journeys, connecting them with resources, community, and tailored academic support.

For more information, call the team on 0472 741 451 or visit www.cucbasscoast.edu.au

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Festival of Golf arrives in March

LEONGATHA Golf Club's Festival of Golf is fast approaching with all golfers possessing a valid Golf Link Australia handicap encouraged to participate in all or part of the four-day event that starts on Thursday March 5 and concludes on Sunday March 8.

The club's Acting President Craig Hams remarked that the Festival is for golfers of all abilities, not just the elite.

That explains the change in name from what has previously been the Leongatha Golf Club Annual Tournament, ensuring people realise that while competitive, the event is enjoyable for all.

At the conclusion of each round, players hang around for a drink and chat prior to prize presentations.

Many visiting golfers from surrounding clubs and Melbourne and beyond will hit the fairways along with Leongatha Golf Club members, with the host club keen to welcome new and returning visitors.

Craig noted Leongatha Golf Club's membership is continuing to grow as a consequence of people embracing the course and its layout, which he describes as "well manicured and challenging".

Festival of Golf action gets underway with teams of two



Leongatha Golf Club's Golf Operations Manager Glenn Marsham and staff member Adrian Banks show off the splendid course Festival of Golf participants will enjoy in early March. A12_0526

playing to a 4BBB Stableford format, with the individual best Stableford score recorded on each hole.

A four person Ambrose event takes place on the Friday, with the best ball selected each time from tee to green.

Saturday features an individual Stableford event, with a 2 Ball Gentsomes format followed on the Sunday where the best drive is chosen and both players play their own balls from that spot to finish the hole individually.

It's a great opportunity to play on a high-quality course at an excellent price, with each visitor paying just \$35 per event or \$120 for the four days, with the cost for Leongatha Golf Club members being \$15 per event or \$50 for all four days.

Those prices include competition and green fee costs.

To enter some or all of the Festival of Golf events, visit leongathagolf.com.au and select 'Book Festival of Golf Now' for an entry form, call the club's Pro Shop on 5664 3314 or pop into the club.

There's plenty happening at the Leongatha golf course, with the club running a district competition every Friday for a competition only fee of just \$12, with bookings to be made through the Pro Shop on 5664 3314 and play commencing at 8am.

Members of golf clubs in South, East or West Gippsland who have a Golf Link number registered to that club are eligible to play in Friday district competition.

In exciting news, Leongatha Golf Club will host a PGA Pro-Am event in February 2027 with work towards that already having commenced and details to be provided when available.

Table tennis season serves up

LEONGATHA Table Tennis Association is open to all and welcoming new and returning players as the season gets underway.

The association has players with a wide range of skills at the table and is often open to opportunities to help members develop their game further.

Starting back up for the season, people are welcome to join the association from 4pm to 7pm on Wednesday, February 4, to have a hit, whether they are new to the sport, experienced or looking for a social sporting experience.

The club can be found between the two Leongatha football ovals, just down the gravel path as you enter the park.

Table tennis bats and balls are available for those willing to give the game a go, so there's no need to bring your own equipment.

Throughout the year, players can play on different nights, whether they are senior players at advanced or A-Grade level, junior players or Keenagers.

The Keenagers sessions offer older players a chance to stay active and social in a relaxed environment.

Games are both competitive and social, with more experienced players often offering advice when needed.

Throughout the year, players involved with the club are also invited to statewide and inter-association competitions, such as Country Championships held over the King's Birthday weekend.

Over the past few years, the club has sent multiple teams to Country Week, which has been hosted in Traralgon.

More information can be found on the Leongatha Table Tennis Association Facebook page.

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Studio Phoenix celebrates 20 years of dance

STUDIO Phoenix celebrates its 20th anniversary of dance on the Bass Coast, showcasing a strong commitment to the arts.

This year, the studio is proud to be collaborating with international ballet artist and educator Elias Frantziskonis as part of its ongoing commitment to providing high-quality ballet training for regional students.

Founded by Wonthaggi local Naomi Laing in her early twenties, the studio began with just 25 students and has since grown into a thriving, purpose-built dance facility in Wonthaggi, providing high-quality performing arts education close to home for local families.

Today, 20 years on, Studio Phoenix is led by co-directors Naomi Laing and Jane Hanley, both Bass Coast locals with decades of experience across dance performance, choreography and education.

Together, they oversee curriculum development and student pathways, supporting dancers from early childhood through to advanced levels in a nurturing, community-centred environment.

"Our classical ballet program follows the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus," Ms Hanley said.

"RAD is a beautiful, internationally recognised syllabus that provides strong technical foundations, clear progression, and a deep understanding of movement and musicality."



Ready Set Dance students at the Studio Phoenix Dance concert.

"It supports a wide range of pathways, from further training and teaching qualifications through to confident recreational dance."

Mr Frantziskonis has performed with leading international companies including Béjart Ballet Lausanne and the Czech National Ballet and trained at world-renowned institutions across Europe and the United States.

He is now based in Victoria, working with dancers across the state.

"Through masterclasses and regular visits, Elias will be working closely with our ballet students and teachers, supporting technical development, musicality, and artistic confidence," Ms Hanley said.

"This collaboration reflects our belief that regional dancers

deserve access to exceptional training and inspiration without needing to leave their community."

Studio Phoenix Dance offers tap, jazz, contemporary, hip hop and musical theatre across preschool, junior, intermediate and senior levels, alongside Royal Academy of Dance ballet.

"We are proud to be the official Bass Coast location for the award-winning Ready Set Dance and Ready Set Ballet programs for preschool-aged children," Ms Hanley said.

"We have also recently expanded our contemporary program to our Newhaven location, offering contemporary training on Phillip Island, which is already becoming a popular class and something we're incredibly excited to grow."

"We have also reintroduced adult classes in response to

interest and community demand.

"We love welcoming adults back into dance, whether they danced as children or are trying it for the first time."

"Adult classes are held at our Wonthaggi studio, which is our main studio location."

Trial classes are available for all ages.

"What a shame if the world's next tap dancer lives in Wonthaggi and never knows it because they never got the chance to try tap," Ms Hanley said.

"Trial classes are about comfort, curiosity and enjoying something new."

In recent years, several Studio Phoenix Dance students have successfully auditioned for the Transat Dance Elevate Program.

Studio Phoenix Dance alumni Marni McGrath performs overseas

and Annabelle Clarkson, who studied RAD with Miss Gemma Brown, is now a certified RAD educator and Ballet Progressions Technique teacher at Laneway Dance in Melbourne.

"We absolutely support students who wish to pursue professional pathways in the performing arts," Ms Hanley said.

"At the same time, dance does not need a professional outcome to be meaningful."

"In regional communities, sport is valued for confidence, resilience, friendships and belonging, even though only a small percentage will ever play professionally."

"Dance offers those same life-long benefits."

"That belief sits at the heart of our studio motto, Dance. For Life."

At Studio Phoenix, students are welcome to join at any point up to Term 4, when concert rehearsals begin.

Competition opportunities are offered as an extension rather than a requirement and vary depending on age and style.

"Families can choose whether competitions align with their goals, with confidence, enjoyment and quality training always remaining the priority," Ms Hanley said.

Studio Phoenix Dance has a faculty of seven experienced teachers across all styles, with teaching staff continuing to refine their craft through ongoing professional development and masterclasses.

STUDIO PHOENIX DANCE

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ME0837



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ME0845

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ME0839

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Summersalt Gymnastics launches new programs for 2026



Catie practises her balance on the beam at Summersalt Gymnastics in Wonthaggi.

SUMMERSALT Gymnastics in Wonthaggi is back for 2026 with new programs and a simple goal.

"We want to be the best part of every kid's day when they come through the door," founder Chelsea Caple said.

The gym has introduced three revamped programs this year catering to children from six months to 18 years old.

Sweet Peas caters to babies and preschoolers with a curriculum developed by specialised paediatricians in the United States to support physical, social and cognitive development.

Gym Zone focuses on gymnastics with a new level-based structure so children and parents can track progression.

Ninja Kids offers high-energy obstacle courses and trampolines for those who love to climb, jump and challenge themselves.

"There's kids that come in here and love the gymnastics equipment and then there's other kids that come in here and love the trampolines," Ms Caple said.

"We've got a little bit of something for everyone."

via the website.

Summersalt Gymnastics is located at 5-6/120 McKenzie Street, Wonthaggi.

For more information visit www.summersaltgym.com.au or call 0447 524 071.

2026 ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN



SUMMERSALT

5-6/120 McKenzie Street, Wonthaggi



TIMETABLE

Inverloch sand dredging is a band-aid solution

LOCALS have expressed deep concern over the \$5.3 million plan to dredge sand from Anderson Inlet and pump it on to the Inverloch surf beach to rebuild eroded dunes.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) admitted last week the replenished sand dunes are only expected to last four to 10 years.

"It will depend on the tides," said a DEECA spokesman.

"We may need to do further renourishment work to retain the integrity of the dunes."

The Inverloch Foreshore Action Group (IFAG) criticised DEECA for failing to reassure the community that the long-term erosion crisis is being addressed in a serious, durable and evidence-based way.

"What was put forward reinforced a pattern of short-term, temporary responses that failed to confront the underlying causes of erosion and offered no credible pathway to permanent protection. Moving sand around without addressing the drivers of erosion is not a solution, it's a holding pattern," said IFAG Chair Kerrie Giles.

"The community has seen this cycle play out repeatedly. Temporary works are undertaken, storms undo them, and the process starts again. What is proposed is a short term fix which eventually will not save the surf life saving clubhouse, the road to Cape Paterson or, eventually hundreds of homes."

Sandbags are also currently being installed in front of the Surf Life Saving Club.

"These works are being presented as mitigation, but in reality they amount to ongoing maintenance of a failing approach," Ms Giles said.

"Each iteration consumes public money yet leaves the beach no more secure than before. IFAG is particularly concerned that the current works are being designed as fully temporary, despite widespread acknowledgement that erosion will continue and that similar



Bass Coast Shire expects an overlap between the start of sand dredging in Anderson Inlet and the extension and repair of the sandbag wall at the Inverloch SLSC which is not expected to be completed until mid-March. m01_0526

interventions will almost certainly be required again."

IFAG said it was deeply frustrating to know this work will have to be redone, yet the infrastructure being installed, especially the pipes will be dismantled and removed rather than left in-situ for the next inevitable iteration.

"This is not efficiency, it is a waste of public money."

"Once again the can has been kicked down the road," Ms Giles said.

"We don't want this problem managed forever, we want it solved," said IFAG.

Riley Hall Contracting one of Australia's largest privately owned dredging, civil and marine contractors said it planned to bring a cutter suction dredge to Inverloch.

The Kirra has been working to repair major storm damage at Bribie Island and will be relocated to Inverloch in mid-February to start dredging by April.

The dredge and workboats will be unloaded and mobilised at Inverloch Charters near Mahers Landing on Treadwells Road, and a grassed area adjacent to the Inverloch jetty used for a site office and unloading of poly pipes.

Senior Project Engineer Riley Darrant said access will be required from time to time from the Surf Life Saving Club.

"The beach area will be temporarily closed for hours while machinery is offloaded."

"Booster pumps are used to avoid blockages and the pipe bursting," said Mr Darrant.

"The floating pipeline acts as a damper for the floating dredge."

An estimated 150 metres of floating pipeline will have yellow marker buoys and lights attached. The remainder of the pipeline is expected to rest on the sea floor with safe crossing points identified with green and red buoys and floating lights.

It is anticipated that 40 to 50 metres of pipeline will stretch along the beach.

"The construction area will be flagged off," Mr Darrant said.

The slushy mixture of water and sand will not be safe to walk on after it is pumped.

Mr Darrant said once it is pumped it may come out as dark but after a couple of days it will lighten and the dark patches will disappear in a couple of days.

Hall Contracting said only 100 to 150 metres of beach will be closed at any time.

"Some areas may be kept open, but some may be closed for three to five days," said Mr Darrant.

Mr Darrant explained the poly pipes came in 20-metre sections and would need to be bolted together to form a total length of 4km.

"Part of the pipeline may be buried so people can walk over it," he said.

Dredging is likely to start at 7.30am each morning with workers on-site at 6am.

A total of 100,000 cubic metres of sand will be dumped onto the beach which DEECA has estimated was equivalent to 4,500 tip truck loads.

Water quality tests will be conducted daily to ensure no poor quality water is pumped onto the beach. The surf beach will remain open but with the possibility of some dirty water swimmers and surfers will be advised to go to clearer water.

The pipeline could be moved to higher ground or placed on blocks during king tides and work will stop during lightning storms for the safety of the crew. According to Hall Contracting the dredge can continue to operate in high winds and a light swell.

New AEDs prompt free hands-on training in Cape Paterson

CAPE Paterson beachgoers were treated to a close-up demonstration of life-saving equipment on Thursday, January 29, when the Wonthaggi Life Saving Club hosted a free CPR and AED familiarisation session on Bay Beach Road.

The one-hour demonstration came after the installation of two brand new publicly available AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) in Cape Paterson, one being installed at the Wonthaggi Life Saving Club, and the other at the Cape Tavern.

From 12pm to 1pm, attendees learnt about emergency procedures before having the opportunity to step in for some hands-on practice with a mannequin and an AED device.

Wonthaggi Life Saving Club president Mark Scott said the primary objective is to increase people's confidence.

"We don't want to demonise the AEDs. We want people to feel comfortable using them."



Mark Scott and Immogen Nolan with a brand-new AED, recently installed at the Wonthaggi Life Saving Club. W02_0526

Mr Scott said.

"A lot of people are scared to use them. They're always dramatised in TV shows and movies, with sparks flying everywhere. It's not like that."

Ambulance Victoria paramedic Immogen Nolan spearheaded the session and

walked the group through things they should be looking for in an emergency situation.

She said people should start CPR when a person is unconscious or not breathing properly.

"You would start CPR first,

call triple zero while you're doing CPR, and request for an ambulance," Ms Nolan said.

"And then if there is someone else available ask them to go and get an AED close by."

She urged people to act early when possible and simply follow instructions.

"We want them to just make sure they're calling triple zero. They're listening to the instructions and trying to get hands on chest before we get there," she said.

Ms Nolan said early defibrillation can be the difference between life and death.

"If someone can apply an AED before the ambulance gets there, it doubles their chances of survival," she said.

Both Ms Nolan and Mr Scott said they hope the session will be the beginning of a broader push for more AEDs in remote areas across the region.

Labor candidate calls for more support for workers

By Bruce Wardley

ENDORSED Labor candidate for Bass Chris Buckingham has called for increased support for working people and those who have served in the defence forces.

"Labor has invested heavily in the local hospital after years of neglect," Mr Buckingham said.

"Ongoing investment is also needed in educational facilities."

In a wide-ranging meeting with members of the Wonthaggi sub-branch of the RSL, Mr Buckingham said it was a balancing act between planned growth and maintaining environmental values to ensure the food and fibre sector continues to flourish and grow.

Having relocated to Inverloch, to a house he has owned for several years, Mr Buckingham said he had been a regular visitor to the area for 35 years.

"My mother lives in Wonthaggi," he said.

The former CEO of the Latrobe Valley Authority and founder of Destination Gippsland said he was eager to support the local RSL.

• FAITH FACTOR

When stress hits home there is hope

Rev. Graeme Liersch, Rector, Anglican Parish of Wonthaggi/Inverloch

I WAS listening to the news the other night and it was reported that the RBA is tipped to raise interest rates in February.

News like this is not good for young home loan borrowers and I couldn't help but wonder how their anxiety and stress levels might be.

Certainly, such predictions wouldn't help those with large mortgages feel good, and if interest rates don't go up, then it would appear anxiety or stress was caused for little to no reason.

We do live in a world of high stress levels, which in turn can affect our overall health.

It is a tough world to live in and at times I wonder what it would be like to retreat into a cave and live a subsistence lifestyle, where I only grow or find what I need to live.

It might sound good, but I doubt many of us have the skills to do it.

How then do we deal with these stress levels?

There are a variety of self-help groups and ideas out there that can give you all sorts of strategies, many of which will cost you financially, but for me I have discovered someone who is a game changer in all this.

It only takes me a few minutes to sit and have a chat with him and within a few minutes I can see things differently and can move from despair to hope.

The good thing is this person is available 24/7 and can give me his full attention.

He is a great listener, even when I don't reciprocate and listen to him with full attention.

Want his number?

Give me a call and I'll introduce you.

There is no guarantee that after speaking with him that you'll be able to solve your financial woes, relationship issues, or whatever, but I do know you'll come away with a clearer head, understanding and a sense of hope.

Who is this person?

His name is Jesus Christ.

He promised the following.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30.

Please do take some time to have a chat with him.

I know you will be surprised and blessed.

My prayer for you is, if interest rates do go up, that Christ will help you find a safe, stress-free way to deal with it.

Sentinel-Times

COMMENT

It belongs to them, so give it back

THERE can be no dispute that the building on the site at 14 Radovick Street Korumburra belongs to the members of the Korumburra Senior Citizens Inc.

There's enough documentation to say that they own the building at least, if not the land that the centre sits on.

They have also been granted a social licence to retain the facility.

But what's a building without the land?

Even if the council can prove they own the site, they've at least got to acknowledge there's a moral obligation to allow the seniors, as the owners of the building, to go on using it until there's a viable alternative for the group's 140 members.

The Korumburra Community Hub is not it.

When you've experienced the many happy days the Korumburra Seniors had in their own rooms over the years; the shared meals, the laughter, the entertainment, the concerts, the games, the fun and yes, the shared grief when one of their members passed, you know what's possible.

And as a community, we should be encouraging our seniors to come out, get together and enjoy their twilight years in exactly those ways. You can't put a dollar value on that!

Following the decision by the independent planning panel, council has the legal right to go ahead and rezone the land, and apparently, to go ahead and sell the property but what's the upside?

They might get \$350,000 for it, but both the seniors and the council have already spent at least \$100,000 each defending their position and will spend double that each if it goes to the Supreme Court.

Purely on financial grounds, the council should call it off and give the site back to the seniors and perhaps, over time, come up with an alternative that not only provides for the group's 140 members now, but encourages double that number to get involved in the future.

That would be a real win for council and for the community of Korumburra.

Gas key to keeping lights on and bills down

AS Victorians endure another severe heatwave, our energy grid is under strain and households and businesses are left wondering whether the power will stay on when they need it most.

Energy experts have repeatedly warned that rising demand during extreme weather increases the risk of blackouts, yet the Allan Labor Government continues to pursue its anti-gas agenda, a policy that will drive up energy costs and undermine reliability across the state.

At the same time, Victorians are being hit in the hip pocket.

Power bills are set to rise sharply again this year, with forecasts suggesting prices could increase by as much as 24 per cent.

For the average Victorian household already paying around \$1700 a year for electricity, that could mean an extra \$400 or more.

Gas is not a fringe energy source.

It is a critical pillar of Victoria's energy mix, particularly during periods of peak demand and extreme weather.

Gas plays a vital role in stabilising the grid and preventing outages when demand surges, and it is essential to have a sensible, affordable transition to cleaner energy.

Ignoring that reality doesn't make the system greener, it makes it weaker and more expensive.

Victoria needs a common-sense energy policy that prioritises reliability and affordability over ideology.

If elected to government in November,

Vox Pop

What is your favourite memory of school?



Warwick Ford

"I loved student versus teacher games such as football and cricket that helped build positive relationships with teachers; the chance to beat your teacher was so exciting."



Daniel Mock

Sunset Strip
"Seeing my friends every day and school sports, both PE and interschool."



Mitch Croatto

Leongatha
"Leaving and schoolies was up there, while building and construction was my favourite subject."



Shem Murphy

Dumbalk North
"Having a day off school to play sport."

The Nationals will end Labor's anti-gas policies and ensure gas continues to play an important role in managing the transition to cleaner energy.

The Allan Labor Government can't manage money, can't manage the energy sector, and once again Victorians are left to pay the price.

Danny O'Brien MP, Leader of The Nationals

Council should support National Day

What gives Bass Coast Shire the right to ban Australia Day? A search of their website found only four events in the shire. South Gippsland Shire to their credit had a full-page spread in this paper promoting 11 events. Recent surveys show some 68% support January 26. Local government should support our National Day.

Dan Drummond, Leongatha

AHPRA decision a grave mistake

In my opinion, the AHPRA Board has made a grave mistake to the town of Leongatha, 8000 patients of Leongatha Healthcare and Dr Webster. The comment, which was true, was after this female was found guilty of murder and this story became worldwide. Can legal action be taken against the AHPRA, as in a class action, to enable both Dr Webster and the other practicing 19 doctors to set up new medical clinics for the 8000 patients?

Michael Quinn, San Remo

Main street chaos

THE main street of Korumburra is full of near misses.

Since the so-called single lane was introduced on both sides with a pull-off lane, cars have been speeding on the left to get in front of general traffic, causing horn blowing and dangerous situations.

In the last month the risk of getting hit by a speeding car has increased.

There are no signs, or no correct signage, and the shire is slow to put signs up or at the correct height.

Cars heading towards Melbourne speed down the inside lane only to pull out at the last point before the pedestrian crossing to avoid hitting the yellow posts the shire fitted.

I've been told to wait by the shire, yet nothing happens.

This shire took 20 months to put up the Korumburra hub signage.

The main street fails on safety, yet the shire believes itself but not the public.

The road to the rear of shops into Korumburra from Melbourne cost \$300,000.

Just before T for Tyres, there were 23 white posts and now there are 10.

The side wall is collapsing.

There is no pedestrian path, no signage and no turning lane.

It is time for the shire to put their hand up.

Most signs in our new main street are too low, as a shire worker told me, yet the shire has decided not to fix them.

The waste of money in this shire is poor and disrespectful to all ratepayers.

David Amor, Korumburra

Aussie pride

GIVEN that Aussie motor cars are now a thing of the past,

Like our other manufacturing, agriculture and orchards vast.

But maybe all's not lost judging by this last weekend Australia Day with motorists,

A message keen to send of Aussie pride and fervour with our flag so proudly flown.

From many autos windows their true blue-ism is shown.

But in noticing these flaggy cars one thing about them grates,

The only bits Australian are the bloody number plates!

David Vance, Inverloch

Blood cancer forcing kids out of classrooms

AS Australian children return to school, hundreds will not. Their desks sit empty as they fight blood cancer, the single biggest disease threatening the lives of school-aged children in Australia today.

This year alone, around 350 children will be diagnosed with blood cancer. It now accounts for more than one in three childhood cancers, yet remains a largely hidden national tragedy.

A blood cancer diagnosis is sudden and brutal. Children are forced out of classrooms and into hospital wards, enduring aggressive treatment that can last years. Many miss 40 to 60 per cent of school in their first year alone, with some absent for up to 18 months. The impacts on learning, wellbeing and social development are profound and long-lasting.

Over the past two decades, blood cancer incidence among children aged five to 14 has risen by almost 30 per cent. If this trend continues, more than 400 children a year could face this devastating diagnosis within the next decade.

At the Leukaemia Foundation, we see the toll this takes on children and families every day, emotionally, financially and socially. While we provide vital accommodation, transport, education and

support services, and invest in life-saving research, we cannot do it alone.

As the World's Greatest Shave launches nationally, I urge Australians to stand with these children and all Australians impacted by blood cancer. Participating by shaving, cutting or colouring your hair helps ensure no person faces blood cancer without support.

Register to participate in the World's Greatest Shave at worldsgreatestshave.com or call 1800 500 088.

Chris Tanti, CEO, Leukaemia Foundation

When stress becomes a heart issue

IN every community, there are families who have lost someone too soon to heart disease, and others quietly living with its long-term effects. For many of us, it's not an abstract issue, it's personal.

Chronic stress has become part of daily life for many of us. When the body doesn't get a chance to reset, prolonged stress can quietly damage heart health, often without obvious warning signs until something goes wrong.

This February, Heart Research Australia is inviting Australians to take part in the free REDFEB Bingo Challenge, built around the four Ms of heart health, Meals, Movement, Measurement and Mental Wellness. The Bingo card encourages small, everyday actions, like sharing a healthy meal, going for a walk, checking your blood pressure or slowing down to take a breath, to help reduce stress and support heart health.

The Bingo Challenge is part of REDFEB, Heart Research Australia's heart awareness month, which this year is raising awareness of the link between chronic stress and heart health while bringing communities together to honour loved ones affected by heart disease. Funds raised support life-saving research that helps turn promising ideas into breakthroughs and keeps families together for longer.

Small actions, taken together, can make a real difference. This REDFEB, I hope our community will join in and help support the research that gives families hope.

To learn more and support Heart Research Australia's critical research, please visit heartresearch.com.au.

Nicci Dent, CEO, Heart Research Australia

The 'Sentinel-Times' encourages readers to write with issues of interest or concern but letters that have a local reference point will be given priority. Writers are also urged to be brief where possible. Letters may be edited for space and legal reasons, and must be submitted with the author's name and contact details of which only the name and town location will appear.

Relocation threat looms for Inverloch Surf Lifesaving Club

By Bruce Wardley

THE final version of the Cape to Cape Resilience Plan has revealed the Inverloch SLSC may have to relocate as soon as 2040 and Surf Parade residents by 2070.

The Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club is considered to be at significant risk when 0.2m sea level rise is reached from 2040 onwards.

Surf Parade including the road itself, residential properties and adjoining utility infrastructure such as telecoms, sewage and water are predicted to be at risk from 2070.

The report recommends moving infrastructure and assets out of at-risk areas over time including the Inverloch SLSC, Surf Parade and Surf Parade residents.

Former Woorayl Shire Engineer and Inverloch resident Keith Godridge said the 91-page report released by Environment Minister Steve Dimopoulos just prior to Christmas was over complex and written in a closed, non-objective style.

"Many statements are self-fulfilling and offer little practical relevance to the erosion issues at Inverloch," Mr Godridge said.

One section of the report prioritises large-scale renourishment without engineering.

"That includes relocation of the Surf Lifesaving Club," Mr Godridge said.

President of the Inverloch SLSC Glenn Arnold said



Former Woorayl Shire Engineer and Inverloch resident Keith Godridge has described the final version of the Cape to Cape Resilience Plan as impractical. B03_0426

time was needed to develop a land-use transition strategy as a prudent consideration of what we do with our public assets and people's homes if all else fails.

"Buy-back policies, relocation policies, potential locations, and timeframes are all things that come to mind," Mr Arnold said.

"The work being done right now along the coast, at the very least gives everyone time to look at these issues more closely and adjust the strategy where appropriate."

According to Mr Godridge the long-term erosion rate is based on data from the 1950s and ignores the dramatic acceleration in erosion observed since 2012.

"It uses the present sea level as a starting point and therefore understates recent losses. Wind-driven wave changes may also be contributing to

rapid erosion, a factor the plan does not adequately consider."

The adaptation of a seawall to protect both Cape Paterson Road and the Inverloch surf beach was a defensible option according to Mr Godridge and one that local groups should press for as a permanent solution.

Mr Godridge said the plan fails to justify the \$5.5 million renourishment project or state its expected lifespan and future maintenance requirements.

"The overall emphasis is to downplay hard engineering," Mr Godridge said.

"The plan does not recognise the extent of erosion since 2012 between Ozone Street and the rock escarpment on the Cape Paterson Road. Approximately 70 metres of sand dunes have already been lost along two

kilometres of shoreline," he said.

The plan is also said to have ignored the costly failures of four wet sand fences.

"The plan's dominant message is still adapt and retreat," Mr Godridge said.

"It does not state the expected lifespan of the renourishment, or the schedule for future replenishment. The study rejects the use of groynes and offshore reefs and dismisses hard engineering on the basis of so-called end-effects and alleged base erosion."

Long-term sea level projections create a false sense of complacency.

"Public consultation appears ineffective and seems to have been used to justify a pre-determined outcome. The document provides no actionable recommendations to permanently protect the surf beach and Cape Paterson Road, instead it foreshadows loss and abandonment without assessing the resulting financial and social costs."

"It is a plan for the future destruction of Inverloch," Mr Godridge said.

"It offers no credible pathway to protect existing assets or the community that depends on them, prioritising long-term retreat over immediate, evidence-based protection."

Mr Godridge said the plan should be rejected in its current form because it fails to provide any permanent solution to the immediate and accelerating threat to Inverloch.



Koonwarra couple celebrate diamond anniversary

A KOONWARRA couple have celebrated a remarkable 75 years of marriage surrounded by family from across Australia.

Pat and Alby Rodwell marked their diamond anniversary on Wednesday, December 31 with a relaxed gathering at the Koonwarra oval.

The couple married in Leongatha in 1950 and have called Koonwarra home for many years.

Their family has grown to include four children, 14 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Local family members were joined on the day by relatives who travelled from Melbourne, Adelaide, Flinders Island, Darwin and Perth for the celebration.



Holiday Salads

By Meg Viney

OVER the holidays I made a zucchini and goat feta salad which proved very popular.

Zucchini and Goat Cheese Salad

Ingredients

- Two or more zucchini about 20cm long
- Lettuce of your choice
- 80gm goat feta or any feta you like (marinated is good)

Method

Dressing: half a teaspoon of Dijon mustard, two tablespoons of balsamic vinegar, three tablespoons of olive oil (or oil from marinated feta)

Slice zucchini into half-centimetre slices longways, oil a tray, place the slices on and turn over so both sides are oiled and chargrill in the oven or barbecue.

Do not turn.

Toss the zucchini and lettuce together and using your hands, toss in the dressing and crumble the feta over the top.

Pumpkin and Fennel Salad

Ingredients:

- One fennel bulb
- A fifth of a Kent pumpkin
- Olive oil
- Half a cup of black olives
- Three tablespoons of balsamic vinegar

Method:

Slice the fennel and the pumpkin into thin wedges.

Oil a grilling pan and place the fennel slices on.

Turn them over so both sides are oiled.

Grill in a hot oven or barbecue.

Do not turn.

Repeat with the pumpkin.

Mix the olive oil with the balsamic vinegar.

Toss the vegetables in the dressing and top with the olives.

Government grant for Inverloch Equinox Festival

By Bruce Wardley

THE Inverloch Equinox Festival has received a grant from the Victorian Government's Visit Victoria's Regional Events Fund for the 2026 festival from March 20-22.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos said festivals such as the Inverloch Equinox play an important role in regional economies.

"Festivals like this, which are funded through our Regional Events Fund, play an important role in driving visitation to the region, supporting local businesses and showcasing everything that makes Gippsland such a great place to visit," Mr Dimopoulos said.

Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale said the festival captures the spirit of the region.

"The Inverloch Equinox Festival is all about great music, creative energy and a fantastic coastal atmosphere, and it's the kind of event that makes people want to stay a little longer and soak it all in," Ms Crugnale said.

Returning to the Bass Coast in March, the festival invites locals and visitors to celebrate harvest, wellbeing and nature in one of Victoria's most loved coastal towns.

The festival opens on Friday night with a curated cheese and wine appreciation event showcasing local producers.



ITA Equinox Festival Organising Committee members Nicole Griffiths, Kate McDonald, Glenn Morrison (President ITA), Louise Litchfield (Director Bendigo Community Bank Inverloch) and State Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale MP celebrating the return of the Equinox Festival to Inverloch from March 20-22. B22_0526

Visitors can also explore Inverloch after dark through guided town tours, stargazing through telescopes supplied by the Mornington Peninsula's Astronomical Society, or Joy in Motion, an experience blending breathwork, yoga, sound healing and dance.

There are horse meditation and bush poetry events at Wattlebank Farm as well as an opportunity to wander the gardens of local artist Carla Van Laar as part of her open studio.

On Saturday from 10am to 4pm the Inverloch Wellbeing Expo will host more than 25 holistic healers and wellbeing

practitioners offering treatments, workshops and demonstrations.

As the sun sets, Live at The Glade offers a free community celebration featuring live music, market stalls, local food vendors and family-friendly activities.

Headlining are surf-folk artist Jack Botts, joined by didgeridoo artist Ganga Giri, dance-floor favourites Hot Tub and local youth bands Zenith Paradox and The Drop Kicks, with the night continuing at the Equinox Encore at the Esplanade Hotel.

On Sunday local markets, coastal exploration and long

lunches at Inverloch's food and wine venues offer a gentler finale, while families can enjoy a fishing competition, Lucky 13 Mini Golf and dinosaur discoveries with the South Gippsland Conservation Society.

Other major festival supporters include the Australian Government's Stronger Communities Programme, Community Bank Inverloch Bendigo Bank and Bass Coast Shire Council.

For event updates, program details and bookings go to inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au or follow @inverlochequinoxfestival on Facebook.



The World Superbike Championship returns to Phillip Island from February 20-22 for Round 1 of the 2026 season.

Meet World Superbike stars at San Remo pub

FANCY trying to beat a factory Ducati rider's lap time on a motorbike simulator with a cold beer in hand?

The Westernport Hotel in San Remo is throwing open its doors for a free World Superbike Championship event on Thursday, February 19 from 6pm to 9pm ahead of the Phillip Island round.

WorldSBK at The Westernport Hotel will bring together some of the globe's best riders from the World Superbike, World Supersport and Australian Superbike grids for an evening of simulators, Q&A and autographs in a relaxed pub setting.

The main attraction is a pair of BMW S 1000 RR and Ducati Panigale V4S simulators where punters can go head-to-head against the professionals for the fastest lap of the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit.

Factory Ducati and BMW riders will take to the stage alongside Australian Superbike competitors, with prizes up for grabs including free tickets to the WorldSBK round, merchandise and more.

Tayla Ralph of the Women's Circuit Racing World Championship will be on the mic to keep the night rolling.

Simulators fire up from 6pm with riders joining from 7pm for lap time battles, the Q&A and signings.

Motorcyclists are encouraged to ride their bikes down to San Remo for the occasion.

The Westernport Hotel is at 161 Marine Parade, San Remo.

The MOTUL FIM Superbike World Championship returns to Phillip Island from February 20-22 as the opening round of the 2026 season, with official pre-season testing on February 16 and 17.

Tickets for the round are available through Ticketek.

Summer art season wraps up at Berninneit

BERNINNEIT Art Gallery in Cowes was alive with warmth and celebration on Sunday February 1 as artists, volunteers and community members gathered to mark the conclusion of the PICES 2025-26 Summer Exhibitions.

Over more than seven weeks three diverse exhibitions showcased an impressive breadth of artistic excellence, creative exploration and community connection at the purpose-built gallery space on Thompson Avenue.

The season attracted strong public engagement, bringing together emerging and established artists while strengthening local creative networks and encouraging meaningful dialogue around contemporary practice.

Phillip Island Contemporary Exhibition Space president Sandra Peeters acknowledged the dedication and generosity of the PICES committee and members who made the program possible.

Ms Peeters also expressed thanks to Bass Coast Shire Council for its continued support and to exhibition sponsors Alex Scott Real Estate and the Arts Society of Phillip Island and Region, whose contributions help sustain regional arts initiatives.

Curator Warren Nichols paid tribute to the curatorial team, gallery attendants and



Ceramics and paintings on display at the PICES Summer Exhibitions at Berninneit Art Gallery in Cowes.

exhibiting artists, recognising their creativity, professionalism and willingness to share their expertise with the wider community.

Mr Nichols said their openness, mentorship and engagement continued to enrich the cultural life of the region and nurture meaningful creative exchange.

A highlight of the evening was the annual raffle draw, with attendees purchasing last-minute tickets in the hope of winning one of several generous prizes while supporting

PICES' ongoing community arts programs.

The raffle was supported by San Remo and Cowes Community Bendigo Bank, Sandra and David Henstridge and Turn the Page Bookshop.

Prizes included an original painting Bush Poem by Rain White, a handmade glass piece Blue Bowl by Marlene Abela, a bottle of vintage French champagne and a \$50 book voucher.

PICES is a not-for-profit community organisation that has been working since 2019

to support contemporary artists and bring quality exhibitions to the Bass Coast region.

With more than 5000 practising artists throughout the Gippsland region including more than 400 on Phillip Island, the organisation plays an important role as a bridge between artists and art lovers.

The success of the summer exhibitions reinforces the important role PICES continues to play in supporting artists, enriching cultural life and bringing people together through shared creative experience.

Send us your photos

If you're having a 21st, club function, wedding, or other social event, take some photos, name the people in the snaps and email to news@sgst.com.au

Sentinel-Times

It won't cost a cent to see them in print!

The ARCHIES CREEK HOTEL PROUDLY PRESENTS

February

SAT 7/2 SUN 8/2
FRI 13/2 SAT 14/2 SAT 20/2 SUN 21/2 SAT 26/2

March

SUN 3/3 SAT 7/3 THU 12/3 FRI 13/3 SUN 16/3 SAT 21/3 SUN 22/3 FRI 27/3 SAT 28/3 SUN 29/3

April

FRI 10/4 SAT 11/4 SUN 12/4

May

FRI 3/5 SAT 4/5 SUN 5/5

OPEN ON SHOW DAYS ONLY DELICIOUS WOOD FIRED PIZZAS

LORETTA MILLER & BAND A PARTY TO END ALL PARTIES - CELEBRATING BOB 'BONGO' STARKIE ALLY ROW ARCHIES CREEK DAY DOOF PONY FACE PRESENTS NEBRASKA THE PLEASURES & THE DESERTERS KAREN LEE ANDREWS + ROBBIE CAVANAH (UK) + BLAIR DUNLOP (UK)

HARRY MANX (CAN) ROSS WILSON & THE PEACENIKS MARY COUGHLAN + MICK THOMAS TRIO HUSSY HICKS THE SILVERSOUND w/ AMARILLO LIZ STRINGER & BAND BONDI CIGARS EMILY LUBITZ & BAND PLAYLUNCH GRACE PETRIE (UK) & THE MAES

FRANK YAMMA KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS ERIC BIBB & BAND

BEN LEE HENRY WAGONS TEENY TINY STEVIES

89-91 ARCHIES CREEK ROAD / WWW.ARCHIESCREEKHOTEL.COM.AU

WONTHAGGI BINGO

WEDNESDAY 1pm - 3pm
THURSDAY 7pm - 9pm

Wonthaggi Workmen's Club, 75 Graham Street
Come and join in the laughs at South Coast FM Bingo

★ RAFFLES ★ DOOR PRIZES ★



CROSSWORD

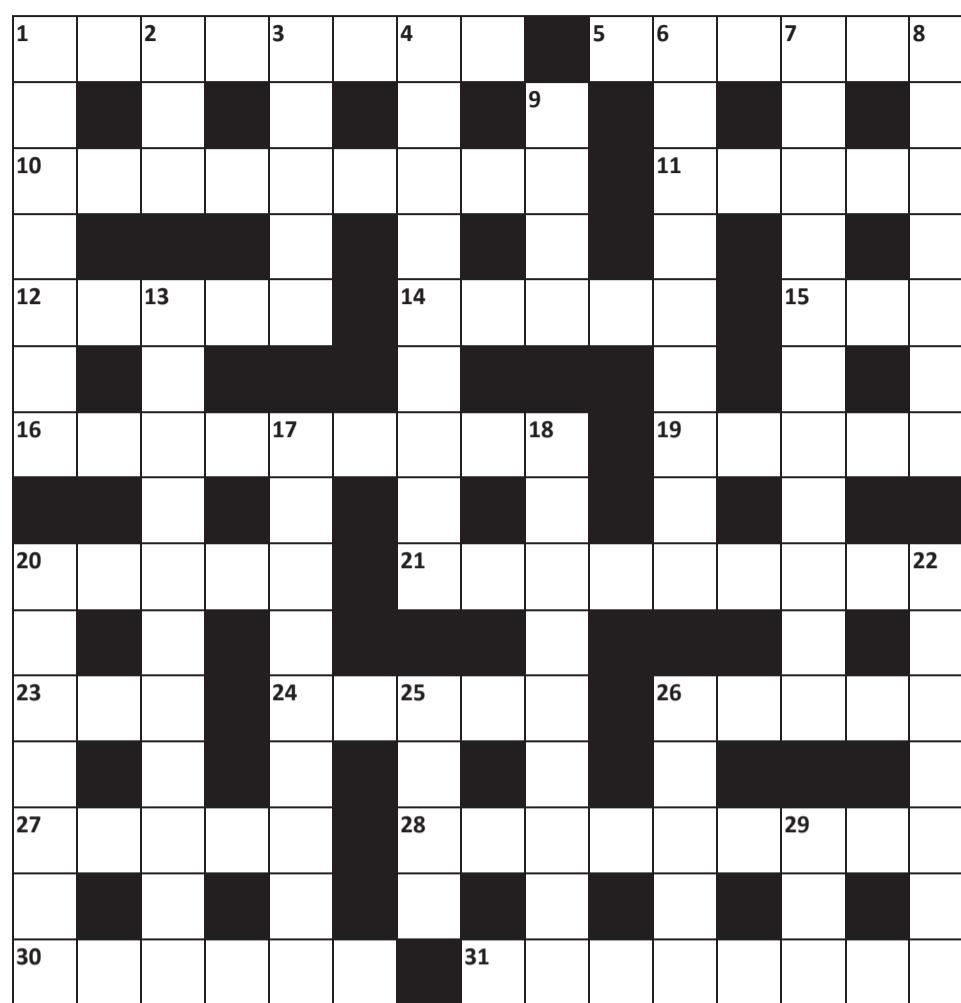
CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 'Dirty old governor, gone!' rejoices Spooner (8)
- Shocked to the core, overcome by gas in a tank opening (6)
- Immediate service without service? (2,7)
- Sprung bed, with old hat overhead (5)
- Direct current air conditioning, made by Sharp (5)
- Nikes made for formation of Swans (5)
- Bird's call, to senior executive, initially (3)
- Crash 'e-claim' preview we've rejected from experience (9)
- Minds and hearts seed revolution (5)
- Eye-opening in pants, these blokes? (5)
- Figure lad is upset by waterside worker? (9)
- 23, 25-down** Bath for one: taps turned on, with water left filling (3,4)
- It follows Timothy's second, on-again, off-again, trip to USSR (5)
- Basket case's initial return-9-down (5)
- Social services hub, cryptically in gaol (5)
- Brushes off, sweeps, and airs off bed (5,4)
- It's oft restated in human tragedies (6)
- G pencil? (4,4)

DOWN

- Flourish a celebrity's signature? (7)
- Twist way round (3)
- Scots lord's land fences address within (5)
- It's eccentric, almost, why I put on musical without you in vocals (9)
- A squirrel-hound, head-to-tail immersed in water, with spirit (9)
- Consul's carry-on, contemptibly: 'Cate's a cheat!' (7,4)
- Dull guy, mounting obligations (7)



- Google 'Forbidden look'? (4)
- Theatre. Shortened, bungled audition. In denial (11)
- Spooner's clearer how disapproval might sound after tackling daredevil (4-5)
- 21-across also being their best self? Sweet! (9)
- Car accessory — front of cabin, automatic, and modern? (7)
- Say table's upset; provides 10-across? On the contrary! (7)
- See 23-across
- Easy clue, not even suspicious (5)
- Trouble caused by stay in hearing (3)

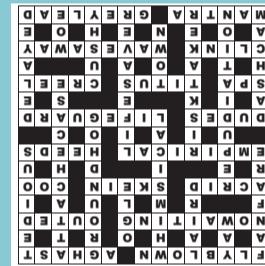
STRAIGHT CLUES

ACROSS

- Dirty, infested (8)
- Shocked, horrified (6)
- (You'll get) immediate service (2,7)
- Sprung, revealed as (5)
- Sharp, pungent (5)
- Formation of swans; also, bundle of thread (5)
- Pigeon call; also, senior executive position initials (3)
- From experience (9)
- Minds, takes notice of (5)
- Blokes (coll.) (5)
- Worker by water (sea, pool, etc) (9)
- 23, 25-down** Bath, England, is one (3,4)
- A book of The Bible (5)
- Type of fishing basket (5)
- Gaol (coll.); also, a metallic sound (5)
- Brushes off, dismisses (5,4)
- Something repeated, often for meditation (6)
- A type of pencil (4,4)

- Flourish - of trumpets, classically (7)
- Twist, as of a ship or aeroplane (3)
- Scots lord (5)
- Eccentric, playful (9)
- A type of rodent or squirrel (US) (9)
- Consul's, diplomat's, businessperson's bag (7,4)
- Dull, tiresome (7)
- Look, stare at (4)
- Denial, disavowal (11)
- Daredevil (4-5)
- 21-across being their best self? (9)
- Filming accessory for vehicle (7)
- Held up (so not '10-across') (7)
- See 23-across
- Easy, undemanding (5)
- Trouble, suffering (3)

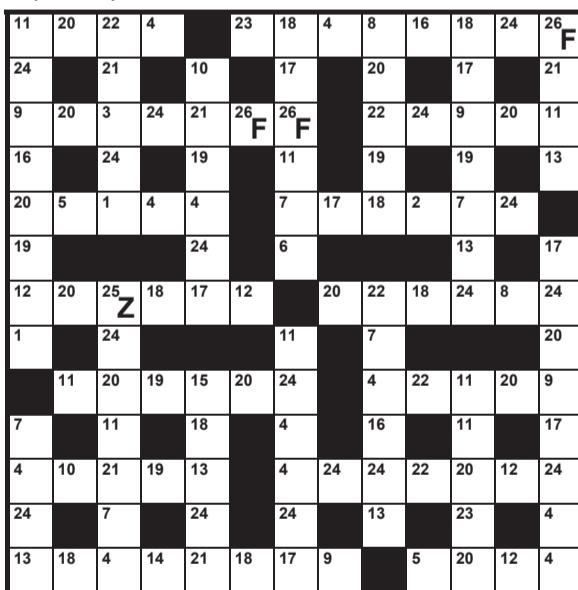
SOLUTION



2301 | PUZZLES AND PAGINATION © pagemasters.

CODEWORD

Each number corresponds to a letter of the alphabet. Two have been filled in for you, can you work out the rest?



No. 307

SUDOKU

No. 316

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



EASY



MEDIUM



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

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

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

QUICK QUIZ

- What is the capital of the Bahamas?
- Who played Samuel 'Sam' Loomis in the 1998 remake of *Psycho*?
- Who won the 2009 Brazilian Grand Prix?
- What was the name of Julia Roberts' (pictured) character in the film *Pretty Woman*?
- The MacDonnell Ranges are in which Australian state or territory?
- Who wrote the 2009 novel *Wolf Hall*?
- A waltz is usually danced in what time signature?
- Which country won the 2011 Rugby World Cup?
- Which chemical element has the symbol Y?
- In Japan, what does the word 'seiyuu' refer to?



6. Hilary Mantel 7. Nassau 2. Viggo Mortensen 3. Mark Webber 4. Vivian Ward 5. Northern Territory

ANSWERS: 1. Nassau 2. Viggo Mortensen 3. Mark Webber 4. Vivian Ward 5. Northern Territory

WORD SEARCH

No. 227



Can you find all the words listed? The leftover letters will spell out a secret message.

AMERICAN
BOBTAIL
BIRMAN
BOMBAY
BURMESE
CORNISH REX
DEVON REX
EGYPTIAN MAU
EXOTIC SHORTHAI
HIMALAYAN
KORAT
LAPER
MAINE COON
NORWEGIAN
FOREST
ORIENTAL
RAGDOLL
RUSSIAN BLUE
SCOTTISH FOLD
SELKIRK REX
SINGAPURA
SNOWSHOE
SPHYNX
TONKINESE
TURKISH ANGORA

SECRET MESSAGE: Looking good, feeling good.



First day at school for Mahli Van Dellen at Wonthaggi PS with parents Shanae and Jay. B02_0526



Cowes locals Kalani and Hunter James are ready for the Little Penguin Dash, with Hunter saying he loves swimming but isn't the biggest fan of running. A19_0526



William Tuff and Lincoln Price of San Remo are excited to take on their first Little Penguin Dash, both preferring swimming to running. A20_0526



Keen runners Kim James and Bronwyn Bersey of Warragul look forward to their first time competing in the Kilcunda trail running event, tackling the 10km distance. A32_0526



Sydney Bux starting school in Wonthaggi with her parents Rhys and Amy. B05_0526



Rosco and Kayla Staley at Wonthaggi PS for Rosco's first day at school. B07_0526



First day at school for Max Kelly and Lola Harley with parents Michael Kelly, Troy Harley and Maddie Dowel. B08_0526



William Welsh happy to be starting school at Wonthaggi PS with Emma Laundy. B09_0526

Snapped Out

Pictures of you and your friends at Kilcunda Trail Running Festival, Wonthaggi Primary School first day of school, and the Little Penguin Dash at Cowes.



Michelle Pauliczek, Katie Swann and Joszilyn McCarthy from the Mornington Peninsula are ready for the 5km run. A37_0526



Trent Williamson of Traralgon and Corey Demaria of Lilydale are set for their first Kilcunda trail running event, taking on the 10km challenge. A33_0526



Rachael and Em Woolcock of Narre Warren South are ready for the 10km run on a brisk Kilcunda morning. A34_0526



Tom Crocker and Chloe Prentice are ready for the 5km run in Kilcunda. A35_0526



Oliver and Cassandra Crane of Coronet Bay are excited to take on the first of their 12 running events for the year at Kilcunda, choosing the 5km distance. A36_0526



Foundation day for Diane Pizzol and Theodore at Wonthaggi PS. B12_0526



Desiree Paisley with foundation students Ryder and Mac at Wonthaggi PS. B04_0526



Hazel of Frankston enjoyed the swimming leg of the Little Penguin Dash, saying, 'I've always dreamt of being in a race and this is my first one.' A15_0526



Tilly Sainsbury of Sunderland Bay and Daisy Ingamells from Ryanston celebrate completing the Little Penguin Dash, Tilly's second time and Daisy's third, with Teddy providing support. A16_0526

Sentinel-Times

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Solid brick home on generous block

THIS well-presented four-bedroom brick home sits on a generous block, offering space, comfort and exciting future potential.

Perfectly suited to families, investors or first-home buyers, the home boasts a practical layout with light-filled living areas and generously sized bedrooms.

Property features include:

- Four spacious bedrooms all feature built-in robes, with the master suite boasting a walk-in robe and private ensuite.
- An open-plan kitchen and dining area is complemented by two separate living spaces, ideal for family living, entertaining or a kids' retreat.
- A wood heater provides cosy winter evenings, with reverse-cycle air conditioning ensuring year-round comfort.
- Outside, an undercover veranda and alfresco area is perfect for outdoor relaxation in any season, while ample shedding caters for storage, hobbies or additional vehicles.

Constructed of solid brick, the home offers durability and low-maintenance living, while the expansive yard provides plenty of room for children, pets, entertaining or future extensions.

Ideally positioned near the stunning South Gippsland and Bass Coast coastline, this property is perfect for beach lovers, fishermen or those wanting easy access to Wilsons Promontory and Phillip Island.

Move straight in with nothing to do but relax and enjoy your new home.



4 | 2 | 3 2,223m²

6 Tobin Street, **Stony Creek**
For Sale \$670,000
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 Kellie Thomas 0438 647 449
 kellie.thomas@nh.com.au

Nutrien Harcourts Leongatha

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MIRBOO NORTH

Build your Dream Home!

- Approx. 4.3 Acre with gorgeous bush surroundings.
- Located in the highly sought after Darlimurla Estate.
- On the school bus route, great location, ready to build.

\$390,000 - \$420,000



LEONGATHA

In Prime Position!

- Spacious family home on 766m².
- Open-plan kitchen, dining and living area.
- Double carport, powered shed, large alfresco area.

\$720,000



KORUMBURRA

Rural Living – Town Boundary

- Solid BV Home on approx. 1.48 acres.
- Spacious kitchen, dual living areas.
- Town water, lock up shed and garage.

\$950,000



Barry Redmond
 Director / Estate Agent
 0477 622 292



LEONGATHA

Great Investment Property!

- Great location close to the CBD.
- Updated kitchen, generous sized bedrooms.
- 835m² block, off street parking & backyard access.

\$560,000



WOOREEN

Stunning Property

- 36 acres with mature gardens, 15 km from Leongatha.
- Plus self-contained one-bedroom second dwelling.
- Dam, large machinery shed, double lock-up shed.

\$1,400,000 - \$1,500,000



FISH CREEK

Stunning 28 Acre Lifestyle Property

- Approx. 28 acres with rolling hills and rural views.
- Modern kitchen, high ceilings, and multiple living areas.
- Alfresco entertaining, double garage, large shed, water tank.

\$1,285,000 - \$1,385,000



Kellie Thomas
 Licensed Estate Agent
 0438 647 449



MARDAN

Lovely Lifestyle Property!

- Renovated homestead on 41 acres with peaceful outlook.
- Open-plan living, modern kitchen, and cosy wood fire.
- Shedding, stock yards, 5 paddocks and spring-fed dam.

\$1,280,000



LEONGATHA

'Montville'

- Federation home on a 1,513m² with westerly views.
- Contemporary kitchen, renovated bathroom, alfresco.
- Double lock up garage and immaculate gardens.

\$899,000



LEONGATHA

Bespoke & Beautiful

- Gorgeous & private family home on 1.28 acres.
- Bespoke kitchen with quality appliances and WIP.
- Resort style pool, lovely gardens, great location.

\$1,600,000



Monique Wightman
 Marketing & Administration
 (03) 5662 2292

FARMING BRIEFS

Have your say on biosecurity

Biosecurity Strategy Victorians are invited to have their say on the state's Biosecurity Strategy. The new plan outlines how to reduce the risks of pests and diseases such as H5N1 bird flu and fire ants.

Consultation is open online for farmers and community members to provide feedback on the proposed actions and timelines.

Bushfire grants available

Grants for Primary producers affected by bushfires may be eligible for recovery grants to assist with cleanup and restoration. Funding can cover hiring tradespeople, equipment, or removing debris and damaged goods. Applications are now open and close on October 21, 2026. Visit the Rural Finance website or call 1800 260 425 for details.

MARKET REPORT

Brought to you by...

CLAAS Harvest Centre 

Smaller yarding, prices firm

By SGSA

APPROXIMATELY 1720 head were yarded at Thursday's Leongatha store sale, a decrease of 1280 from the previous sale.

Quality was limited with a large number of crossbred cattle and plainer conditioned lots on offer.

A small crowd was present with local competition the major bidders and only limited feedlot demand.

Prices were firm in most categories with a few isolated sales easing slightly.

Leongatha Store Sale on Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026

Steers

W & J Bullock, 10 Angus	584kg	\$4.68	\$2740
D Nel, 20 Angus	452kg	\$4.69	\$2120
M & S Hunt, 11 Hereford	433kg	\$4.61	\$2000
M & S Hunt, 15 Angus	404kg	\$4.84	\$1960
DA & PM Conn, 166 Angus	394kg	\$4.99	\$1971
S Conway, 18 Angus	392kg	\$5.01	\$1970
Traselasions, 12 Euro X	384kg	\$4.70	\$1810
Joroka P/L, 11 Angus	369kg	\$4.71	\$1740
S & D Perry, 10 Angus	363kg	\$4.53	\$1650
M & S Hunt, 15 Hereford	362kg	\$5.34	\$1940
T & D Flint, 18 Hereford	361kg	\$4.64	\$1680
French Island Trading, 11 Ang	350kg	\$4.71	\$1650

Heifers

M & S Hunt, 13 Angus BB	386kg	\$4.63	\$1790
G & M Derix, 15 Charo	372kg	\$4.67	\$1740
M & S Hunt, 18 Hereford	371kg	\$4.71	\$1750
Joroka P/L, 14 Angus	357kg	\$4.66	\$1670
CW Littlejohn, 17 Angus	346kg	\$4.44	\$1540
G & T Bird, 13 Euro X	328kg	\$4.65	\$1530

By Andrew Paloczi

WITH only about 1720 head of cattle available at Thursday's Leongatha Store Sale, MLA Market Reporter Brendan Fletcher summed up the quality on offer as "limited again with a large proportion of crossbred cattle and plainer conditioned lots on offer".

He noted prices remained firm in most categories.

Alan McDonald and Sue de Kort introduced themselves to this scribe after spotting him noting details of their Katelea Pastoral steers from Glen Alvie, 81 of which were sold.

While overall quality may have been limited, the couple's steers illustrated there were still high-quality animals on offer, two pens of Angus calves numbering 49 cattle in total, selling together for \$1790 a head.

For the 24 weighing an average of 340 kilograms, that equated to a healthy \$5.26 a kilogram, while for the slightly heavier pen of 25 averaging 347 kilograms, the price per kilogram was a strong \$5.15.

The Katelea Pastoral steers feature Banquet and Rennylea sires, having been weaned in early December.

Mr McDonald reflected on how things went raising the steers and the positive turn in the weather.

"They've had a good run; the weather was a bit dry but the spring kicked on nicely," he said.

"I've been breeding these Rennylea and Banquet calves for a number of years," he remarked, adding he went to school in Wangaratta with Bryan Corrigan who set up



Alan McDonald and Sue de Kort of Katelea Pastoral in Glen Alvie achieved strong prices with their steers. A13_0526

the Rennylea stud at Culcairn in 1968 bringing a consistent focus to achieving returns for the commercial producer.

"I go up and see Bryan and buy some bulls," Mr McDonald said, using them for breeding in Glen Alvie where the good country lends itself to raising healthy and high-quality cattle.

The goal is to have calves born from late January to early February.

"I aim to get close to 400 kilograms into the yearling weaners; they've all been weaned for six weeks and they'll go back, we hope, to local bullock fatteners and hopefully in 12 months' time they'll be top bullocks," Mr McDonald said.

Katelea Pastoral continues to enjoy strong support from local graziers, with repeat buyers.

Mr McDonald stressed "It's critical that we support the market system," resisting the temptation to sell directly at times.

"It gives a lot of transparency to the market; it means that people can come from far and wide to support Leongatha, and it's critical," he elaborated.

Recalling the sadness of the closure of the Korumburra saleyards years ago, he is delighted to see ongoing investment at the now Eastern Victoria Livestock Exchange in Leongatha.

"It's great that Regional Livestock Exchanges has invested in this place, and I hope they'll keep it as it is because it works really well," Mr McDonald said.

Jimmy Kyle of SEJ who auctioned the Katelea Pastoral steers also achieved \$5.15 a kilogram for a pen of 16 Angus steers from S and I Derrick of Mount Eccles, the animals weighing an average of 361 kilograms and fetching \$1860 a head.

The top of the weaner heifers made \$1790 a head for 11 Angus and two Black Baldies weighed at 387 kilograms,

equating to \$4.62 a kilogram.

Those cattle, sired by Latrobe Park bulls, were sold by Jack Ginnane of Nutrien on behalf of Mark and Sandra Hunt of Boisdale, who were very happy with the price which met their expectations.

While the couple hoped to see the cattle remain together, they were divided into two groups by the buyer, heading to different places.

The Hunts form a bond with their heifers, having hand fed them, the animals responding positively with their quiet nature and easy handling.

"Once they come off the mother, they're yard weaned for a minimum of seven days, and my husband feeds them flat out with lucerne hay and silage," Mrs Hunt said, noting the calves enjoy high-quality uncontaminated local fodder.

While some of those heifers were separated at the saleyards, it worked out well.

"We're happy all the heifers went to good homes and we met the new owners and they were stoked with the cattle as well, especially the Herefords," Mr Hunt said, with the Hunts' 18 Hereford heifers, averaging 372 kilograms, selling for \$1740 a head, or \$4.67 a kilogram.

The couple pride themselves on providing excellent quality heifers that will serve future owners well for breeding.

Earlier in the day, they sold steers, with a pen of 15 of their Herefords averaging 363 kilograms returning \$5.34 a kilogram at \$1940 a head, while the same number of their Angus steers weighing 404 kilograms on average made \$4.80 a kilogram at \$1940 each.

**ALEX SCOTT
AND STAFF**

Est. 1886

36 BRIDGE STREET, KORUMBURRA PH: 5655 1133 FAX: 5655 2480

Livestock Sales

KORUMBURRA		FOSTER	
David Ryan	0408 311 895	Dick Faulkner	0408 595 174
LEONGATHA		Brian Vuillermi	0429 436 040
Dane Perczyk - Livestock Manager	0408 176 063	Rob Ould - Livestock Manager	0408 595 183
JACK CURTIS		David Holden	0428 749 390
WARRAGUL		Alan Bolding	0419 723 255
Neil Darby - Livestock Manager	0418 595 265	PAKENHAM	David Setches - Livestock Manager
Terry Ahearn	0438 562 816		0409 443 473
Jordan Sim	0448 058 435		Glenn Barwick
Mark Malacarne	0418 654 590		0408 975 476
Georgie Snell	0417 100 657		Morgan Croucher
			0457 001 877
			Tim Gibson
			0420 306 599
			Imogen Price
			0417 225 498

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Leongatha South's Benjamin Vagg a Farmer of the Year contender

By Andrew Paloczi

STAUNCH dairy industry advocate and keen adopter of technology to improve farm efficiency, Leongatha South identity Benjamin Vagg is in line for lofty honours, having been declared a finalist in The Weekly Times 2025 Farmer of the Year awards.

While the awards have six farming categories, one farmer will be crowned the overall 2025 Farmer of the Year, based on last year's achievements, with the winner to be announced on Friday, February 13 at the MCG.

Sentinel-Times last year enjoyed the opportunity to inspect Mr Vagg's new milking setup featuring eight GEA dairy robots, with other current and retired dairy farmers also paying a visit, excited to learn about how the technology works.

It enables cows to learn to come in for milking voluntarily, receiving grain while being milked, with a separate feeding section providing any remaining grain allocation for each animal.

The system gathers detailed information on each cow, enabling monitoring of health and feeding requirements.

The cattle also graze on pasture, visiting different paddocks throughout the day.

Mr Vagg's willingness to invest in dairy robot technology and the substantial infrastructure requirements to establish the new facility are a strong indication of his belief in the dairy industry.

It demonstrates he is in it for the long term.

However, it's not blind faith, with the third-generation South Gippsland dairy farmer, and board member of Dairy Farmers Victoria (DFV), an outspoken advocate of the need for dairy farmers to be treated fairly and for positive changes to be implemented.

For instance, Mr Vagg called strongly for virtual fencing technology to be allowed in Victoria.

He and DFV welcomed the state government's eventual decision to support that initiative.

While Mr Vagg won't be adopting the technology at this stage on his farm due to the establishment of his robotic dairy, he sees lots of positives for dairy farmers in virtual fencing and virtual herding.

Those positives include a reduction in labour and better pasture monitoring and utilisation, not having to put up strip fencing being one of the major time savings.

Mr Vagg has a long-term outlook to innovation, having told the Sentinel-Times he considers it generally takes three to five years for the full benefits of new farming technologies to become apparent as farmers figure out how to use the technology most effectively and overcome challenges that arise.



Benjamin Vagg, pictured in his robotic dairy, is in the running to be The Weekly Times 2025 Farmer of the Year. A61_0526

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Eddington Holdings, Loch (ALEX SCOTT)

42 Angus steers, 16-18 mths

By stud Banquet, Fernleigh, and Welcome Swallow bulls, drenched with Cydectin and Swish on 20/1/26

C Rawson, Stratford (ALEX SCOTT)

20 Angus steers, 20-22 mths, GF & ABF

J Carney, Grantville (ALEX SCOTT)

7 Angus steers, 24 mths, GF, ABF

B Johnston, Seaton (ELDERS)

8 Angus steers, 15-16 mths

'Tablelands Pastoral', Boisdale (ALEX SCOTT)

6 Hereford steers, 18 mths, By Warragundi bulls, NE Accred, weaned, GF & ABF

GROWN HEIFERS

B & T Dowling, Mirboo (ELDERS)

65 Angus Murray Grey x Heifers, 15-16 mths Woodburn blood, NE Accred, GF & ABF, 2 x 5-1 vaccinated

"Delplant", Cranbourne South (ALEX SCOTT)

35 Angus heifers, 18-20 mths

12 Angus x Hereford heifers, 18-20 mths

By stud Angus bulls, unjoined

A Johnson, Somerville (ALEX SCOTT)

25 Angus heifers, 20 mths,

Unjoined, By stud Angus bulls

AJ, BR & N Moyle, St Clair (ALEX SCOTT)

18 Angus heifers, 12-14 mths

By stud Banquet bulls, weaned and drenched

B Johnston, Seaton (ELDERS)

8 Angus heifers, 15-16 mths

L.A Price, Hazelwood North (ALEX SCOTT)

1 Black Limousin heifers, 24 mths,

Unjoined, Sired by Maryvale Federa, can be registered

WEANERS

"Bingara" Ruffy (ELDERS)

200 Angus m/s weaners, August - October 2025 Drop, 'Kelly & Wattlewood Angus blood', 1st 5 in 1 Inject.

M Wiemann, Hill End (ALEX SCOTT)

100 Angus & Angus Hereford X m/s weaners 8-10 mths, By Lawson & Mawarra bulls. Weaned 4 weeks, 2x5in1, Cydectin Pour on, Easy dose & Multimin at weaning. GF, ABF

J & V Garreto, Gembrook (ELDERS)

50 Angus m/s weaners, 'West Creek Angus Blood'

S Curtis, Leongatha (ELDERS)

40 Angus m/s weaners, 10-11 mths, VB, GF & ABF

D.N & B.M Jenkins, Worri Yallock (ELDERS)

40 Angus m/s weaners, weaned

AJ, BR & N Moyle, St Clair (ALEX SCOTT)

35 Angus steers, 10-11 mths by stud Banquet bulls, weaned and drenched

T Brusamerello, Glen Forbes (ELDERS)

30 Angus m/s weaners, 12 mths, Weaned 4 weeks, Harris blood GF & ABF

D & F Boards, Catani (ALEX SCOTT)

30 Angus steers, 10 mths

Pathfinder blood, weaned, 2 x 5in1.

15 Hereford & Hereford Angus X m/s weaners, 10 mths, By Tarwin Poll bull, weaned, 2 x 5in1

"MHF Pastoral", Moorooduc (ALEX SCOTT)

30 Angus steers, 12 mths

By stud Wattlewood Angus bulls

"Merriview", Beveridge (ELDERS)

27 Angus m/s weaners, weaned 8 weeks, Banquet Angus blood, X Jumbuck Park Blood cows, 2 X 5 in 1 & Metvec Drenched

Jeetho Farms, Jeetho (ELDERS)

25 Angus m/s yearlings, 12-14 mths, VB, GF & ABF

Leighwood Farms, Woodside (ELDERS)

24 Angus, Murray Grey & Speckle x m/s calves, 7-8 mths

Clark Cattle Co, Mirboo North (ALEX SCOTT)

20 Angus mixed sex weaners, 10-12 mths by stud Fernleigh bulls

'Tablelands Pastoral', Boisdale (ALEX SCOTT)

19 Hereford steers, 12 mths By Warragundi bulls, NE Accred, weaned, GF & ABF

G Woolcock, Carrajung (ALEX SCOTT)

12 Angus steers, 20 mths GF & ABF

S Cross, Leongatha North (ELDERS)

11 Pinzgauer mix sex weaners, 10 mths

S & M Dakin, Glen Forbes (ALEX SCOTT)

10 Angus steers by stud Fernleigh bulls, weaned

D & E Crawford, Bass (ALEX SCOTT)

10 Angus steers, 10 mths, by stud Fernleigh bulls, weaned

L.A Price, Hazelwood North (ALEX SCOTT)

2 Black Polled Limousin heifers, 8 mths, weaned, sired by Billy Creek U2

XBRED & DAIRY

Hooper Farms P/L, Heyfield (ELDERS)

180 Angus Friesian X heifers, 12-18 mths

120 Angus Friesian X steers, 12-14 mths

All extremely quiet and present in fresh forward condition.

Jeetho Farms, Jeetho (ELDERS)

25 Friesian x steers, 15-16 mths

JOINED FEMALES & COWS AND CALVES

Herd Dispersal "Bingara" Ruffy (ELDERS)

180 Angus cows, 1st to 6th calvers.

All have been redepastured to Kelly & Wattlewood Angus Bulls from 1st of November till 5th of January. Not PTIC.

To be drafted into various age lines and pen sizes to accommodate all requirements.

This is an excellent opportunity to secure spring calving store cows that present in fresh and forward condition.

This consignment has been on agistment in west Gippsland since early January. All cows to be weighed with weights displayed.

T & B Crawford, Binginwarri (ELDERS)

15x15 Angus/Friesian cows with 3-4 mth old Angus calves at foot

3rd calvers rejoined to the Angus Bulls December 1st for 8 weeks to calve Sep/Oct

L & K Price, Mt Eccles (ELDERS)

10 x 10 Angus cows, 2nd calvers with 2 mth old CAF, not rejoined

10 x 10 Angus cows, 2nd calvers with 3-4 mth old CAF, Rejoined to Battersby Angus bull since calving



Researching the history of Alex Scott and Staff, ahead of the firm's 140th birthday in March this year, has been a labour of love for former South Gippsland Mayor and local historian Bob Newton.

How the Scotts of Poowong made their name

By Michael Giles

in 1850 and established themselves in the Talbot area," he said.

"But I don't think they were prospectors themselves, they set up a store there."

It was an interest in commerce that followed them to Poowong, where the Scotts set up a store for settlers on their farm, with the brothers later branching out into butchering or businesses of their own at Poowong and, when the railway came through in 1890, at Korumburra, buying up prime commercial real estate along the way.

Alex Scott's mother Elizabeth was a full participant in the family business, one of her roles being to make cheese from the dairy herd at Poowong and transport the produce to Drouin where the railway had opened in 1877.

"It's a tremendously interesting story, so much a part of the development of this area and for a family business to be going for 140 years is quite a feat," Bob said.

There'll be all that and more in Bob's book being drafted for the 140-year celebrations on Sunday, March 22 at the Dallyston Recreation Reserve.

"I'm getting a bit smarter as I get older. I've now got someone who does a terrific job on the genealogy for me, Meryl Pyle, which makes it a lot easier." Bob has already published five books including a history of the Korumburra district, two golf club histories and one about the roads, street names and places in the Shire of Mirboo.

Languishing at home after almost breaking his leg when he stepped down a hole on his farm recently, the research has kept Bob busy while he's off the golf course.

"James Scott Senior and his wife Elizabeth came out from The Priory in Scotland



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New Toyota Hilux for South Gippsland and the Bass Coast



The off-road hero of the new Hilux range is the impressive Toyota Hilux Rugged X.

LOADED with major improvements, the new Toyota HiLux has arrived in Gippsland.

Available in extensive cab-chassis or pick-up configurations, 4x4 or 4x2 drivelines, and single, extra and double-cab body styles, the range is keenly priced from WorkMate to Rugged X.

Toyota Australia Vice President Sales, Marketing and Franchise Operations Sean Hanley said the new Hilux would continue to deliver what customers want.

"Australian Hilux customers demand a lot from their vehicle, whether it's tackling harsh outback terrain in extreme temperatures, or hauling a tray full of tools around suburbia day in, day out," Mr Hanley said.

"This new-generation Hilux

By Bruce Wardley

retains its legendary reliability, durability and class-leading off-road capability while delivering vastly improved comfort, functionality and advanced technology."

All variants are powered by Toyota's 1GD-FTV 2.8-litre turbo-diesel four-cylinder engine, producing maximum 150kW of power and either 420Nm of torque with the six-speed manual or 500Nm with the six-speed automatic.

A new multimedia system with a 12.3-inch touchscreen is standard across the range, offering wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, DAB+ digital radio, satellite navigation and voice recognition.

Safety improvements include

the latest Toyota Safety Sense active safety technologies with autonomous emergency braking, active cruise control, rear cross-traffic alert, lane departure alert, lane trace assist, road sign assist and blind spot monitor.

The range includes WorkMate and SR grades with choice of 4x2 or 4x4, while SR5, Rogue and Rugged X are 4x4 only. The exterior and interior design work was led by Toyota's Australian team.

An electric BEV variant is targeted for later in 2026 with an estimated 315 kilometre range and 2000 kilogram towing capacity.

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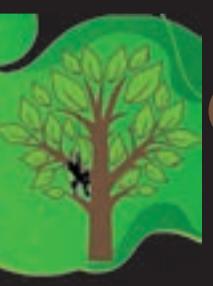
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DEATHS

BUTLER, Moya Theresa:

Passed away peacefully January 24, 2026, aged 88. A very dear friend and neighbour at Moyarra and Korumburra. Wherever a beautiful soul has been. There will be a trail of beautiful memories that will never be lost. Now resting peacefully, sadly missed. Love Alan and Glenyne and Family.

DUNLOP, Graeme Ronald:

24.05.1942 - 27.01.2026. Loving husband of Jean (dec.) and devoted partner to Helen. Father and father-in-law of Andrew and Aude, Lisa and Jason. Papi to Alice and cherished by EJ and Xavier.

DUNLOP, Graeme Ronald:

The Committee and Members of the Inverloch Bowling Club were sad to hear of the passing of popular member Graeme Dunlop. Our sincere condolences go out to Helen, and Graeme's family on their loss. Rest in peace Graeme your presence around the Club will be missed.

CLASSIFIED DEADLINE 12 NOON MONDAYS

DEATHS

FREENE, Robert Heywood:

23.09.38 - 30.01.26 Much loved husband of Diane for 60 wonderful years. Loving father of Craig, Guy and Sara and beloved Grandfather to Ben, Alana, Isaac, Will, Jacob and Xavier. Cherished Father-in-Law to Nicole, Jennie and Stephen. Rob lived a long, very full and successful life and he will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

GILES, Gary Leonard:

10.04.1943 - 23.01.2026. To my dearest hubby, You will always be remembered.

Love your wifey - Carol. As per Gary's wishes a private cremation will be held.

GILL, Anne Penvel:

Passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family. Loved wife of Bruce (dec.). Loving Mum and mother-in-law of Peter and Sandra, Jo and Peter (dec.), David and Helena, Judi and Moz. Adored Nan to 12 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren. Reunited with Bruce.

A Life Well Lived. A private family burial will be held.

A Celebration of Anne's life will be held at a later date.

Please go to www.handleyandersonfunerals.com.au for details.

DEATHS

GILL, Anne Penvel:

Much loved and respected friend of Diane and Stephanie Dunn. Condolences to all her family.

GOWLAND, Valerie Golden:

Passed away peacefully on 27.01.2026. Beloved wife of Nicholas (dec.). Adored mother and mother-in-law of Andrew, Trevor and Michele.

Grandma to Troy; Susan and David. Great grandma to Skye, Noah, Logan, Cooper and Jasmine. Mum and Dad reunited.

HOLWERDA (née Hummel), Lipke:

23.12.1932 - 27.01.2026. Loving wife of Wiebe (dec.).

Loved and loving Mum to Gerda and Arie, Margaret and Ron (dec.), Rhonda, Michael and Tammy (dec.), Bill and Anna. Loved Grandma to all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Rest in peace, we all love you and will miss you every day. Thank you to all the doctors and staff at Kooroaman House for taking care of our Mum.

O'CONNOR (née Drury), Diane Faye:

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our Diane (Didi) O'Connor, who passed away peacefully on January 24, 2026, aged 81.

Beloved wife of John, adored Mum of Kelly-Anne and Shaun, much-loved mother-in-law of Marty and Sophie.

Devoted grandmother to Zachary, Ruby, Grace, Seth and Josephine.

Forever loved and sadly missed.

SMITH (nee Dawes), Judith Beverley 'Judy':

Our treasured Mum and Nan passed away on Friday January 23, 2026, at Lyrebird Village, Drouin. Aged 91 years.

Cherished wife of Ron (dec.).

Much loved Mum of Debbie and Ian, Jan and Pete, Ian and Bev. Adored Nan of seven, Old Nan of 23.

Forever In our Hearts

SMITH (Dawes), Judith Beverley:

Friday, January 23, 2026.

Loved sister-in-law of Doreen and Keith Kelly.

Aunty of Leanne Smith and family, Debbie Patman and family, Sharynne Charles and family. Reunited with Ron xx

DEATHS

THOMAS, Joan Rose:

Formerly of White Rd Wonthaggi.

Passed away peacefully on 19.01.2026 at Inverloch Coast Care Community.

Loving and dedicated mother to Andrew. Sister to Betty of Sydney.

Being a mother is learning about strengths you never knew you had. And dealing with fears you never knew existed.

Sleep peacefully Joan.

Your loving friends and neighbours, Josie and Robert.

For funeral details go to milkinsfunerals.com.au.

Milkins
FUNERALS

FUNERALS

DUNLOP:

The Funeral Service for Mr. Graeme Ronald Dunlop will be held at Handley and Anderson Chapel, 3085 Loch-Wonthaggi Road, Wonthaggi, TOMORROW, Wednesday, February 4, 2026, commencing at 10:30am.

A private cremation will follow. Graeme's service will be live streamed.

Please go to www.handleyandersonfunerals.com.au for details.

In lieu of flowers, donations made here will support the work of Lymphoma Australia and the specialist care they provide to people affected by lymphoma. fundraise. lymphoma.org.au/graeeme-dunlop.

Handley & Anderson
FUNERALS

FUNERALS

HOLWERDA (née Hummel):

A Thanksgiving Service for Mrs. Lipke Holwerda will be held at the Christian Reformed Church of South Gippsland, cnr Peart and Brown Streets Leongatha VIC 3953, Wednesday, February 4, 2026, commencing at 11:30am.

Lipke's service will be live streamed. To view, please visit handleyfuneralservices.com.au.

A Burial will precede the above Service at the Leongatha Cemetery, Cnr McCartin St and Begg St, Leongatha VIC 3953, commencing at 10.30am.

HANDLEY
FUNERALS

O'CONNOR:

A Memorial Service to Celebrate the Life of Mrs. Diane Faye O'Connor will be held at the Leongatha Football Netball Club Rooms, Roughead Street, Leongatha on Thursday, February 5, 2026, commencing at 1pm.

A private family burial will precede this service.

Handley & Anderson
FUNERALS

SMITH (née Dawes):

A Service to celebrate the life of Mrs. Judy Smith, formerly of Korumburra, will be held at the Nielsen Funeral Chapel, Korumburra Rd, Warragul on Saturday, February 7, at 11am.

The Service will also be live-streamed. To view please visit: www.nielsenfunerals.com.au.

A Private Family Burial will precede the Service.

Nielsen
FUNERALS

IN MEMORIAM

PARKES, Alan Vincent:

29.12.1952 - 28.01.2023
'IRREPLACEABLE'
So missed by us all, Anne, the girls, the grandchildren.

HANDLEY
FUNERALS

BEREAVEMENT THANKS

TURNER, June:
June's family wish to sincerely thank everyone for the flowers, cards and messages of supporting after the passing of June.

Sentinel-Times Classifieds

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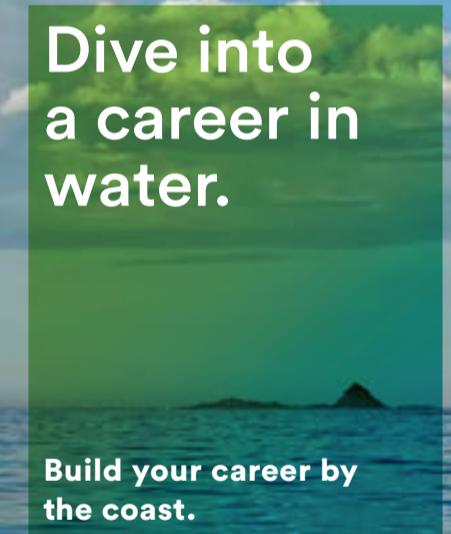
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<https://southgippslandhospital.com.au/employment-2/>

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Further information:
Call Annie on 5683 9704 or
www.southgippslandhospital.com.au/volunteers



Executive Assistant

(Band 4, full time, ongoing)

We seek an experienced Executive Assistant to provide high-level administrative and coordination support to our Executive Team. This role will suit someone who is organised, discreet, adaptable and confident managing multiple priorities.

Applications close - 15 February,
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AF0109

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Much hardship and difficulty is caused to jobseekers by misleading advertisements placed in the employment columns. Our Positions Vacant / Situations Vacant columns are reserved for advertisements which carry a specific and genuine offer of employment. Ads for 'Business Opportunities', 'Commission Only/Sales,' training courses and employment services should be submitted under those headings. Placing misleading job ads is an offence against the ACL and all advertisements are subject to the publisher's approval. For further advice contact the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on 1300 302 502 or Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Bus Drivers wanted

South Coast Bus is seeking experienced Heavy Vehicle Drivers for casual employment based from our Cowes Depot. This role will suit those who like variety in work tasks with previous exposure to driving medium rigid vehicles. Flexibility in availability across the week essential with plenty of work for the right candidates. There is multiple opportunities on offer.

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AF0109



Widening Participation Officer

Join our Country Universities Centre Team!

We are seeking a passionate, enthusiastic individual to join our team and support regional students to access, participate and succeed in higher education.

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For more information about the position and application process, visit
<https://www.cucbasscoast.edu.au/get-involved/>

Applications close:
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States that from July 1, 1998 all advertisements for used vehicles including motorcycles must include the cash price of vehicle and registration number or engine number if not registered.

Sentinel-Times



Bena siblings Oscar and Annika McGeachin say their Japan experience challenged them both physically and mentally.

How Japan challenged two young Bena martial artists

By Trent Westaway

BENA karate siblings Annika and Oscar McGeachin's journey to Okinawa, Japan, was not without adversity.

Travelling to Japan in November 2025 for the Rookie Cup, their first international full-contact karate tournament, the pair faced unfamiliar circumstances, intense preparation schedules, and, in Oscar's case, a significant physical disadvantage.

The siblings' sensei and father, Trevor McGeachin, said the concept alone was daunting.

"Going overseas and competing at a whole new level in a whole new country was a pretty daunting concept," he said.

12-year-old Oscar was placed in an open division based solely on his age, meaning he had to face a significant size disadvantage in every bout.

"Oscar was the smallest in the division by around 10 kilos, with the biggest kid being almost 50 kilos heavier than him," Trevor said. "He was always up against it but fought really well technically."

Oscar said facing the size mismatch was the most difficult part of the trip.

"My favourite part of the trip was meeting the competitors and seeing Japan," he said. "The hardest part was competing against much bigger fighters."

10-year-old Annika faced her biggest challenge well before touching down in Japan.

"Getting to explore a new country was my favourite, but the training to make sure I was ready was definitely the hardest part," she said.

The months leading up to their international debut involved balancing school with frequent training sessions five or six days a week for preparation.

"They train harder than I have seen almost any adults train," said Trevor. "That reward for effort is something that will hopefully stick with them."

Following her Rookie Cup victory, Annika has been invited to return to Japan to compete at the Japan Cup, a tournament that allows previous international athletes as well as black belts.

The experience also inspired Trevor himself, who said his children have paved the way for him to compete internationally.

"They actually fought internationally before I did," he said. "I'm hoping to fight in Papua New Guinea in the middle of this year. They're sort of setting the way for me, really."



Swimmers and water safety volunteers celebrate at the Bay Beach after completing the Beach to Bay Swim.

Cape Paterson hosts big day of surf lifesaving and community swimming

CAPE Paterson Surf Life Saving Club hosted a bumper day of competition and community spirit on Saturday with the annual Bass Coast Interclub Championships followed by the Beach to Bay Swim.

Four clubs from across the Bass Coast came together for the interclub championships delivered in partnership with Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club and supported through Life Saving Victoria's Surf Sports Strategy.

Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club, Waratah Beach Surf Life Saving Club and co-hosts Venus Bay and Cape Paterson competed across a wide range of age groups and disciplines showcasing the strength of surf sports throughout the region.

Venus Bay took out the overall championship with Cape Paterson finishing in second place after fielding 12 competitors who represented the club with enthusiasm and sportsmanship.

Cape Paterson president Paul MacNeill said the result marked a turning point for the club's newly formed focus on building its competitive spirit.

Terry Prendergast and Stellla Crawford-Rust claimed

victory in the Bass Ironman and Ironwoman events respectively to cap off the day for the host club.

Mr MacNeill said the carnival highlighted what made Bass Coast surf lifesaving special with volunteers, athletes and clubs working together to support competition and strengthen connections across communities.

Founded in 1960 with just five active members, Cape Paterson SLSC has grown into one of the most active clubs on the Bass Coast and has a long history of competitive success at district, state and national level.

The interclub championships provided a platform for clubs of all sizes to test their skills in a supportive environment with events spanning beach and water disciplines.

Waratah Beach SLSC, based in Sandy Point, made the trip across from South Gippsland to compete while Inverloch added depth to the field with strong numbers across the age groups.

Cape Paterson thanked all visiting clubs, officials, volunteers and supporters for making the event a success and reinforcing the collaborative spirit that underpins surf lifesaving along

the Bass Coast.

The competition was followed by the Beach to Bay Swim, a 1.4-kilometre celebration swim from Cape Paterson First Surf to the Bay Beach.

The event was originally scheduled for Australia Day but was postponed due to unfavourable swimming conditions and held in near-perfect conditions on Saturday instead.

Around 40 swimmers took part supported by a strong water safety contingent on boards, rescue tubes and inflatable rescue boats.

Water safety teams were provided by Cape Paterson, Wonthaggi Life Saving Club and Waratah Beach.

The swim is not a timed race but a community celebration with swimmers stopping at set intervals to regroup and enjoy the connection between the coastline, fitness and community.

More than 100 participants had registered for the original date with a smaller number able to make the rescheduled day.

"It's fantastic to see a community event like the Beach to Bay Swim delivered with such close cooperation between clubs," Mr

MacNeill said.

"Particularly special was the opportunity to work alongside our neighbouring club Wonthaggi Life Saving Club.

"Following the Bass Coast Interclub Championships we were honoured to have competitors assist with water safety for this event.

"That willingness to step straight from competition into service demonstrates the true spirit of surf lifesaving."

The event awarded the Legend of the Beach to Bay Swim to Jeanine Groves who together with her husband Ken took on the challenge having never swum that far.

Ms Groves said if it were not for the community spirit leading up to the swim she would likely never have attempted the distance.

Brendan Edmonds who petitioned the club for water safety support after the successful running of the inaugural swim in 2025 posted online that everyone finished with massive smiles and a real sense of accomplishment.

Mr MacNeill said the Beach to Bay would continue as an annual event with preparation already underway for 2027.

Record crowds flock to 33rd Inverloch Beach Volleyball Competition



THE 33rd Inverloch Beach Volleyball Competition attracted record entries as six divisions battled it out on the sands of Pensioners Point on Sunday, January 25.

Hosted by the South Gippsland Volleyball Club over the Australia Day long weekend, the tournament drew players from across Gippsland, Melbourne and as far east as Bairnsdale, with international competitors from France and Bali adding a global flavour to Victoria's longest continuously running beach volleyball tournament.

Near-perfect conditions greeted the opening rounds, with a cool coastal breeze and warm sunshine setting the stage for a full day of competition.

As finals approached the wind strengthened, testing players on their ability to adapt to the ever-changing beach conditions.

Tournament director Liselott Webster oversaw the smooth running of the event, with club assistant secretary Poppy

Noble providing organisational support.

Volunteers were instrumental in delivering the day, from digging net posts and raking the beach in the early hours to managing player registration and logistics throughout the competition.

Terry White Chemmart Leongatha sponsored the popular door prize hamper.

With the sand barely settled, the South Gippsland Volleyball Club is now preparing to launch its summer and autumn indoor seasons.

Registrations are open for Spikezone, junior and open competitions as well as the club's inaugural women's league.

Those interested can contact club secretary Jessica Sanders at southgippslandvolleyball@outlook.com.

LEFT: James Ryan, Trent Westaway, Vincent Monaghan and Eldon Westaway competed in the 33rd Inverloch Beach Volleyball Competition.

Local's streetball tournament win sets up shot at \$20,000

A LOCAL basketballer recently helped his team win the Melbourne Summer Jam tournament, one of the biggest streetball events in the country, on Monday, January 26.

They have now punched their ticket to the national championship weekend, taking place from February 20 to 22, where they will compete for \$20,000.

Vincent Monaghan, 26, grew up in the hills of Mardan and played most of his junior basketball with the Leongatha Lightning.

But this tournament was not the neat and polished stadium contest that he's used to. This was streetball.

"We were so tired towards the end of the day, as was everyone else. It was a battle of determination and endurance throughout the whole day," Monaghan said.

"We were told to play through the contact as refs weren't going to call much."

Eight teams competed at the event, each filled with Big V or NBL1 basketball talent.

Monaghan's team played four matches, each lasting 20 minutes, split into 10-minute halves.

He said as the end of the day drew closer, the crowd's energy became more impactful.

"Closer to the end of the day, especially in the grand final, the atmosphere was loud and energetic," he said.

"Mentally we had to be strong to block out the noise."



Vincent Monaghan finishes at the rim at the Melbourne Summer Jam Streetball tournament. Photo by Brynn Lariba-Lay.

He said the nerves hit the hardest just before the final jump ball.

"Leading up is when you have the most nerves, but in the game, I was only focused on what was happening right now," Monaghan said.

"I had confidence that my game would be able to carry me as much as it needed to."

The 6'5" guard said his role changed depending on what the team needed.

"I didn't really have a role," he said.

"Our chemistry together

made us work in unison without even trying."

The final match was not without tense moments, as in the dying stages of the game with his team up by two, Monaghan stepped up to the free throw line with a chance to create some breathing room.

He drilled a clutch free throw to put his team up by three points with just 30 seconds left.

They later won the match by four points.

That victory will send Monaghan and his teammates

to the Summer Jam 2026 Championship next month, the flagship event of the tour.

The tournament will see teams from all over the country, and potentially some international teams as well, compete for the title and a cash prize of \$20,000.

Monaghan is looking forward to the challenge, as he expects the standard to once again lift.

"It will be interesting. I haven't played in it before," he said.

"I know there will be tougher teams and more high-quality players. We might be up against the odds, but I'm keen to see how far we can go."

"The level of IQ on the court will be incredible."

The focus for many is obviously the prize money, though Monaghan says that for him, the game itself is the prize.

"It's enticing, but to me the money is just a bonus on top of what I love to do," he said.

"If I can make some cash playing the sport I love doing for as long as I can, then I'm happy. The main motivation is to play at the highest level I can whilst having just as much fun."

The championship weekend will run from February 20 to 22, beginning with men's and women's seeding games on Friday before moving into the knockout rounds on Saturday.

The weekend ends on Sunday with the men's and women's championship finals.

Surf a wave a day for cancer research

SURFEBRUARY is back for 2026 with registrations still open for the community fundraiser that has raised almost \$2 million for cancer research over the past eight years.

The initiative encourages people of all ages and skill levels to surf, swim, paddle or simply get in the water each day throughout February to raise funds for Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, Australia's most comprehensive not-for-profit cancer hospital in Sydney.

Funds raised have helped establish the SurFebruary Seed Fund which has supported 26 innovative research projects since 2021.

Seed funding helps develop research projects within Chris O'Brien Lifehouse and encourages new collaborations between clinical groups across Australia and the world, providing researchers with the pilot data needed to leverage further funding.

SurFebruary was co-founded by former Chris O'Brien Lifehouse patient Jenna-Lea Clark, who was diagnosed with cervical adenocarcinoma just seven weeks after the birth of her first child.

The innovative treatment Ms Clark received was not only life-saving but also gave her the opportunity to have another child, her son Vander.

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse board member and patient advocate Gail O'Brien AO said she had been thrilled to watch the event grow.

"It's a wonderful community fundraiser for very important cancer research," Ms O'Brien said.

"We are so grateful for the funding from SurFebruary – it is vital to ensure we remain at the forefront of the latest approaches to cancer care and treatment."

Free registrations are open at surfebruary.com.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND BRIDGE

AFTER a break for Australia Day, Neville and Philip Chapman won Tuesday's competition (58.8).

Deb Anglim and John French scored 56.02, Anne Gibson and Alan Johnston 54.63, Ruth Harvey and Su Edwards 54.17 and Bruce Higgs and Jenny Jacob 51.39.

On Friday, Alan Johnston and Clive Hope led N/S with a convincing 69.11, Matti Shub and John Quayle (62.47), Carolyn Barbour (59.51), Julie and Ian MacPhee (53.55), Philip and Neville Chapman (51.69), and Pat West and Lynda De'Laney (51.2).

Playing E/W, Anne Gibson and Bron Sund scored 60.27.

They were followed by Moya Crowley and Michael Dooley (60.1), Faye Rowlands and John Currier (53.41), Marie Sands and Maureen Stiles (51.48), and Ann Marie Tyler and Fred Meislebach with 50.67.

All scores represent percentages of total points available.

Don't forget John French is starting a new round of lessons for newcomers to the game on February 16 in Inverloch.

Please contact him on 0417 568 753 if you're interested.

PHILLIP ISLAND BRIDGE

MONDAY'S bridge competition again saw Greg Nicholson and Jean Barbour outplay their rivals across five tables, achieving a score of 67.13 per cent.

The excitement continued into Wednesday, where Caroline Shaw and Janus Wolnik dominated the play.

They claimed first place with a notable score of 62.5 per cent.

World Superbikes king Jonathan Rea bows out



An unbeatable combination – Jonathan Rea and Kawasaki's ZX-10R.

THROUGHOUT the 38-year history of the World Superbike Championship one rider stands above all others.

The colourful and excitingly dangerous sport has produced household names like Carl Fogarty, Troy Corser, Troy Bayliss and Max Biaggi, however no one comes near recently retired Northern Irishman Jonathan Rea.

Rea announced his retirement toward the end of the 2025 season after a long and illustrious career.

A totally dedicated, humble professional who inspired many British and Irish riders will be sorely missed in the upcoming championship.

From his marvellous season in 2007 in the British Superbike Championship where he finished runner-up, Rea signed with Honda in 2008 to compete in World Superbikes.

His move to the Kawasaki Racing Team in 2015 was the beginning of an incredible run

of dominance not seen before or since in this class of motorcycle racing.

Between 2015 and 2020 Rea rewrote the record books, winning six consecutive World Superbike titles – a feat unmatched in the history of the championship.

Most notably his ability to overcome adversity was

celebrated in the 2019 championship tussle with Alvaro Bautista, who blasted away with an unprecedented 11 wins in a row.

Having witnessed the opening round's three races at Phillip Island the Bautista Ducati combination streeted the field at times by up to 30 seconds.

In dramatic fashion Rea strung together six victories as chinks started to appear in Bautista's armour, turning the tables through sheer persistence, skill and self-belief to finish with 663 points to Bautista's 498.

Switching teams from Kawasaki to Yamaha for the 2024 and 2025 seasons Rea had hoped to relive the glory years but was unable to scale the heights he once enjoyed.

For the record Rea greeted the chequered flag 119 times, had 264 podiums and achieved 104 fastest laps in World Superbike racing.

He was awarded an MBE for services to motorcycle racing.

Rea has recently signed a deal with Honda Racing as a test rider where his knowledge and skills will be used to improve performance development.

Australian motorcycle fans will long remember the brilliant Rea/Kawasaki combination.

TIDE GUIDE

TIDAL PREDICTIONS FROM PORT PHILLIP HEADS

Approx. Tide Variations: Seal Rocks, Venus Bay, Waratah Bay and Cape Woolamai (Same), Tooradin +2hrs 45, Cowes Pier +50, Stony Point +40

TUESDAY February 3	WEDNESDAY February 4	THURSDAY February 5	FRIDAY February 6	SATURDAY February 7	SUNDAY February 8	MONDAY February 9
1:51am 1.53m	2:44am 1.59m	3:29am 1.64m	4:09am 1.65m	4:44am 1.64m	5:15am 1.60m	5:44am 1.56m
7:22am 0.75m	8:25am 0.61m	9:16am 0.49m	10:01am 0.40m	10:41am 0.33m	11:17am 0.30m	11:51am 0.29m
1:30pm 1.37m	2:33pm 1.44m	3:30pm 1.50m	4:22pm 1.53m	5:10pm 1.54m	5:53pm 1.53m	6:33pm 1.49m
7:40pm 0.28m	8:34pm 0.29m	9:23pm 0.33m	10:05pm 0.38m	10:44pm 0.45m	11:20pm 0.52m	11:55pm 0.59m

Email us your fishing photos

news@sgst.com.au



The Breakaway Bowls winners on Friday were Janet Ellsworth, Jan Murphy, Margaret Morgan and Peter Grenville.



The best one game winners for the South West Gippsland Midweek Bowls Group were Bev Elliott (3), Aggie Grattan (2), Tony Morris (L) and Rob Paganoni (S).



This week's South West Gippsland Midweek Bowls Group winners were Lindsay Stevenson (2), Marianne Scales (L) Peter McWilliams (3) and Louis Magri (S).



Winners of the Les and Jessie Chapman Australia Day Memorial Fours sponsored by Ross Chapman Cartage were Charlie Collier, John Hall, Jenny Miller and Dot Shandley, pictured with sponsors Nick and Kaylene Chapman and organiser Ken Cecil.



Winners of the Monthly Triples at Leongatha Bowls Club on Wednesday were Rob, Bruce and Chris, pictured with sponsor Tony Giles from Alex Scott.



Foster Bowls Club's Jack Attack winners the Inbetweeners Tony, Alan and Martin.

BREAKAWAY BOWLS

ANOTHER week has gone - don't they go fast?

The bowlers will be back at the Cape Paterson Community Hall on Monday.

The winners on Friday were Janet Ellsworth, Jan Murphy, Margaret Morgan and Peter Grenville - well done to you all.

FISH CREEK

A GREAT result for the club with three terrific wins from last week's Saturday Pennant.

Division 2 have sewn up a top two spot with the last round of Pennant next week.

Fish Creek had a good win at Toora with scores 64/14 to 54/2.

The rinks of Rob Mortlock and Bill Symmons had convincing wins.

Perhaps the best win for the season saw Division 4 travel to Wonthaggi and defeat the top side 67/16 to 48/0.

All rinks played well and the team has moved into fourth position on the ladder, and a win next week will see it play finals.

Division 6 also ensured finals action by defeating Toora 50/10 to 34/0.

Kelvin Flanders' rink won 27/14 whilst Mark McKenzie's team snuck in 23 to 20.

All teams will be at home next week.

Due to the heat last Tuesday, all midweek games were called off.

Barefoot bowls is rolling along very well with all bowlers enjoying themselves.

Winners last week were John DeCort, and Liz and Doug Brown.

Thanks to the club workers for getting all the jobs done.

Fish Creek has its Invitational Triples on Sunday, February 15 sponsored by Leongatha Optometrists, so get your entries into Bill Symmons or Graham Hoskin.

FOSTER

LAST week was the first round of the main competition for Jack Attack.

Everyone enjoyed a great night of bowls.

The club was hoping for a sunnier night for the dress-up theme, but it was pretty good and quite a few got in on the fun.

Winners for the night were the Inbetweeners, Martin, Alan and Tony.

The sponsor for the night's prizes was Max's Cafe.

Many thanks to them jumping on board as a new sponsor.

Runners-up were the team Edmund F, with Ethan and Mae taking home the chocky prizes sponsored by Promontory Kitchens.

Lots of raffle action with all the usual prizes sponsored by Cellarbrations, Prom Meats and the club.

Dress-up prizes went to Jen the crayfish and Mikey with his didgeridoo playing and then Ben, Nicole and Tania taking on a scene challenge from Jaws.

Also, lots of beach going outfits were to be seen all round.

The club will see you all again next week.

Foster is going very well in Pennant.

Last Tuesday, all bowls were cancelled in the Strzelecki Region due to the heat.

Both Division 1 and Division 3 are currently in third position on the ladder.

In Saturday Pennant last week, Foster saw some great wins by both divisions.

Division 3 battled the testing weather conditions at Mirboo North, coming home with a three-rink win.

Division 4 travelled to Korumburra where they also brought home a very strong three-rink win.

Division 3 is sitting comfortably in top position and Division 4 is now sitting in second place.

It's great to see the club doing very well, with all four teams in contention for finals rounds, which are fast approaching.

Well done, everyone.

INVERLOCH

IT is with sadness that the club shares the news of the passing of one of its members.

Graeme Dunlop was a well-known and loved member of the club.

The funeral service for Graeme will be held at 10.30am on Wednesday, February 4 at Handley and Anderson Wonthaggi.

Thursday social bowls saw 45 bowlers bowl in perfect weather conditions for Inverloch.

Four teams ended the day with two game wins.

The hard luck story finished with two wins and 31 points.

This team consisted of Daryl McStravick (skip), Terry Seaward, Sue Floyd and Jill Edwards.

Runners-up on two wins and 33 points was the team of Keith Cousins (skip), Nic Van Grunsven, Doug Muir and Rob Higgins.

The winning team finished with two wins and 35 points.

This team consisted of Darryl Floyd (skip), Joyce Arnold, Joan McStravick and Gay Higgins.

A reminder that entries for Thursday social close at 9am on Thursday with play starting at 10.30am.

Please bring your own lunch.

The next Monthly Turkey Triples will be on Wednesday, February 18.

KORUMBURRA

RECENTLY, Division 1 was home to Inverloch in Midweek Pennant and came away with the win.

Grumpy won 25 shots to 17 and Ben Peachey won 23 shots to eight while Katrina went down 18 shots to 25 - an overall 16-shot win.

Division 2 hosted San Remo and the news was all bad.

Peter Hearn went down nine shots to 27, Cheryl Moore lost five shots to 24 and Jim Garnham lost 14 shots to 27.

In Saturday Pennant, Division 1 travelled to Wonthaggi.

Shane O'Loughlin had a 21-all draw, Charlie Edgerton lost 20 shots to 16 and Rob Cosson lost 23 shots to 13.

Division 3 hosted Phillip Island.

Gary Dorling won 20 shots to 16, Grumpy won 19 shots to 13 and Rob Sund went down 17 shots to 18 - still an overall nine-shot win.

Division 4 travelled to Phillip Island with Jo Lomagno being the only winner getting up 21 shots to 16.

Alan Cherrett lost 22 shots to 10 and Peter Hearn lost 18 shots to 13.

Division 6 hosted Mirboo North.

Mick Manning lost 13 shots to 26 and Ross Lomagno went down 35 shots to 10 - not a good result.

On Monday, Korumburra Bowling Club held the Les and Jessie Chapman Memorial Australia Day Fours with 11 rinks and players from far and wide.

The winners on the day were the Leongatha team of Charlie Collier, John Hall, Dot Shandley and Jenny Miller.

Runners-up were the local team of Roger Balmont, Mark Bansch, Kevin Watson and Keith March.

Best game went to the Inverloch team of Laurie Gabel, Steve Snelling, Chas Bucelli and Gary Scott.

The club's thanks go to Ross Chapman Cartage for their kind sponsorship.

LEONGATHA

HOPE everyone survived the heatwave.

Good call from Strzelecki to cancel all games on Tuesday.

Tradies' night was also cancelled.

The club decided it was too much of a risk for patrons.

In much cooler conditions, the Monthly Triples went ahead with 18 teams turning up.

You can't get any closer than these two games.

Two teams were on three wins plus 26 shots each, but on a countback one had 26 ends and the other 27.

The winning team was Bruce along with his buddies Chris and Rob.

They made it by the skin of their teeth - congratulations, guys.

Runners-up were Vito, Ray and Sue.

Thanks to the sponsors Alex Scott.

On Saturday, January 31, Leongatha Lawn Bowls Club joined in along with other clubs across the state in taking part in the mental health awareness round.

Bowlers were encouraged to wear a splash of extra green along with their uniform.

It didn't matter what it was as long as it was something green.

Rink fees on the day were donated to Bowl For Your Lives.

What a fantastic idea - thank you to the organisers.

More of these awareness days should be held.

Let's hope everyone joined in for this great cause.

Saturday Pennant.

Division 1:

Only two points separated the sides with Phillip Island just nosing ahead 63 to Leongatha 61.

Division 2:

Away at Meenyan, Leongatha unfortunately lost 52 to 67.

Division 5:

Away at Tarwin, Leongatha brought home the win 80 to 51.

This puts Leongatha on top of the ladder - great effort.

Well done, everyone, it looks like you will be in the finals.

One game to go - keep it going.

MIDWEEK BOWLS

FIFTY-THREE bowlers turned up to Lang Lang on Thursday, January 29, for the weekly meeting of the South West Gippsland Midweek Bowls Group.

They were welcomed to the club by president John Nicholson while Bev and Vern Elliott organised the teams for the day.

Once the bowlers were told their teams and went to the green, the weekly challenge began on a warm and humid summer's day.

As usual a few wrong bias bowls resulted in a donation to the Royal Children's Hospital tin.

An unusual occurrence saw five two-game winners for the day.

The winners on a score of 35 were Lindsay Stevenson (2), Marianne Scales (L) Peter McWilliams (3) and Louis Magri (S).

Runners-up on a countback also on a score of 35 were Steve Muhi (3), Steve Edge (S), Derek Fenn (2) and Sue Buchan (L).

Best one-game winners on a countback with a score of 18 were Bev Elliott (3), Aggie Grattan (2), Tony Morris (L) and Rob Paganoni (S).

A big thank you to Lang Lang president Neville Kitchen for setting up the green.

Also, thanks to Marianne and Colin Scales for manning the bar and to Laurie Bell for looking after the kitchen and cleaning up afterwards.

Next week on Thursday, February 5, the group will be meeting at Loch and District Bowls Club to once again enjoy a great day of social bowls.

Please be on site by 10am to allow time to prepare the teams.

With 53 bowlers attending this week and a capacity of only 56, the club will have to be strict on a 10am cut-off time.

The club looks forward to your attendance again next week.



Wonthaggi Bowls Club's Thursday social bowls winners Steve Bruyan, Rob Powell and Rod Beech.



Wonthaggi Senior Indoor Bowls' Tuesday winners were Fred Demenech, Judy Sweetnam and Jean Wyld.



Helen Rook, Glenda Binch, Pam Russell and Robert McLaren were the Friday winners at Wonthaggi Senior Indoor Bowls.

WONTHAGGI

ANOTHER week has come and gone, along with the month of January.

Tuesday Pennant was called off due to the heat, as was Barefoot Bowls.

Social bowls on Thursday morning at 9.30am saw a good number of bowlers enjoy fine, mild conditions.

The 1pm social bowls session also attracted a very strong turnout, with 37 bowlers taking to the greens on a fine afternoon.

To square up the numbers, teams of three and four were organised.

Two teams managed to win both games.

The winners were Steve Bruyan, Ken Webb and Rod Beech with two wins and 34 points.

Runners-up were Joy Phillips, Rob Powell and Wendy Donohue with two wins and 31 points.

Friday night was a success, with a very good number of members and friends present to enjoy the evening.

The members' draw did not go off, so next week's jackpot will be worth \$60.

Nita was the happy meat tray winner, with Charlie taking home the chicken tray.

Verona and Iris each won a breakfast pack, while other winners on the night included Iris, Dennis and Fred.

Saturday Pennant action saw Division 1 host Tarwin at Wonthaggi on a fine, mild day.

With both teams sitting in the top four, it was always going to be a close contest, with Wonthaggi recording a narrow win, 59 to 52.

Division 2 travelled to Phillip Island looking to bounce back after a loss last week, but things did not go according to plan as Phillip Island proved too strong, winning 82 to 55.

Division 4 (3) played host to Fish Creek at Wonthaggi in another clash between top four teams, with Fish Creek winning 67 to 48.

Division 4 (4) ventured down the road to Tarwin, needing a win to maintain their place in the top four, and all rinks played well to record a solid victory, 72 to 52.

Division 6 travelled to Lang Lang and once again both rinks played well to maintain top spot on the ladder, recording a close win, 39 to 34.

Bowls this week:

Tuesday: Pennant.

Tuesday night: Barefoot Bowls 6pm, doors open 4pm.

Wednesday: Turkey Triples.

Thursday: Social bowls at 9.30am and 1pm.

Friday: Coaching at 10am.

Saturday: Pennant.

Sunday: Jimmy Smith Invitational Triples.

Don't forget the Friday members' draw, with the jackpot now at \$60, plus meat trays and other prizes.

Have a good week and good bowling.

WONTHAGGI INDOOR

IT was another fun week of bowling with lovely afternoon tea provided on both days.

The winners on Tuesday with two games +5 were Fred Demenech, Judy Sweetnam and Jean Wyld.

Runners-up with one game +7 were John Ferguson, Pam Russell and Pat Smith.

On Friday, the winning team consisted of Helen Rook, Glenda Binch, Pam Russell and Robert McLaren scoring +14 (two games).

Runners-up with +7 (two games) were Jim Wilson, Jeanie Slocombe, Maggie Scapin and John Postlethwaite.



The winners and runners-up from Wonthaggi Golf Club's Open Mixed Day were, back from left, Kevin Bayley, Marg Ryan, Kaylene Hodgetts, Steve Kane, front from left, Lisa and Walter Brusamarello, and Donna and Mat Brosnan.

KORUMBURRA

RESULTS: Tuesday, January 27. Stableford: 25 players.

A Grade winner: Roy Fleming (7) 37 C/B.

B Grade winner: Mark Marotti (30) 47 points.

NTPs: first Don Olden, seventh Peter McMaster, 10th David Gow and 13th Greg Wilson.

Thursday, January 29: Stableford: 28 players.

A Grade winner: Guv Fields (5) 39 points.

B Grade winner: Ian Morris (19) 43 points.

NTPs: first Steve Duffield, 10th Steve Rose and 13th Guv Fields.

Saturday, January 31: Sponsor: Sportspower Leonatha.

Stableford: 70 players. A Grade winner: Iain Riddell (15) 45 points.

Runner-up: Zac Scholte (15) 43 points.

B Grade winner: David Gow (24) 40 points.

Runner-up: Blake Walker (23) 39 C/B.

NTPs: first Malcolm Garnham, seventh Billy Wrigley, 10th Noel Ladgrove and 13th Frank Newton.

LEONGATHA

THURSDAY, January 29:

Competition: Stableford.

Total entrants: 83.

Overall winner: Jeremy de Silva (7) 38 points c/b.

A Grade winners: Jeremy de Silva (7) 38 points; Nicholas Byrne (11) 37 points.

B Grade winners: Malcolm Legge (15) 36 points; Colin Bear (16) 34 points c/b.

C Grade winners: Geoffrey McDonald (18) 36 points c/b; John Moor (19) 36 points.

D Grade winners: Hugh Goodman (26) 38 points; Neil Mackenzie (25) 34 points.

Nearest the pin: fifth Paul Deery 9cm second shot; 14th Phillip Edwards 22cm; 16th Mark O'Dwyer 442cm.

Saturday, January 31:

Competition: Stableford.

Total entrants: 106.

Overall winner: Anna de Bondt (29) 43 points.

A Grade winners: Andrew Henley (13) 41 points; Jamie Grenville (10) 39 points.

B Grade winners: Renato Monacella (14) 40 points (Noosa Springs Golf Club); Gordon Morrison (14) 36 points.

C Grade winners: David Barrack (20) 40 points; David Richards (18) 37 points c/b.

D Grade winners: Anna de Bondt (29) 43 points; Margaret Griffiths (34) 42 points.

Nearest the pin: fifth Riley Anderson 36cm second shot; 14th Jamie Grenville 183cm; 16th Paul Deery 258cm.

Ladies

THE Opening Day Ambrose was very well supported, with 52 relieved women thankful for the

milder conditions.

A colourful afternoon tea was provided by the Birdie Bunch, a new name for the women's committee, in addition to a celebratory cake for the women's captain's birthday.

The overall winners, with a score of 60.125 were Lianne Adamson, Joc Howson, Glenys Day and Mandi Moyle.

The runner-up prize went to Maryanne Gartner, Wendy Jepson, Jan Brownlie and Nan Meagher just half a point behind.

Down the line balls went to two teams Glenyne McRobert, Jo McNaughton, Alison Strong and Karen Murchie, and Marie Sands, Helen Mackenzie, Else Gedye and Bronwyn Debenham.

Maryanne Gartner was closest to the pin on the 16th.

MIRBOO NORTH

TUESDAY, January 27: Stableford.

A Grade winner: G. Renwick (10) 41 c/b.

B Grade winner: C. Gunn (18) 41 c/b.

DTL: B. Skinner 41, and R. Felmingham, P. Cummaudo and D. Taylor 36.

Eagle: C. Porto 17th.

Birdie: fourth B. Skinner, G. Renwick, J. Woodall and P. Woodall, sixth N. Rutledge, and 16th G. Shandley and R. Felmingham.

NTP: fourth G. Renwick, sixth N. Rutledge, 13th N. Lugton and 16th R. Felmingham.

Saturday, January 31: Par.

A Grade winner: P. Draper (8) +4 c/b.

B Grade winner: P. Hughes (17) +3 c/b.

C Grade winner: S. Jordan (27) +5 c/b.

DTL: D. Jerram +5, J. Bennett, S. McKenzie, D. Woodall +4 and T. Traill +3 c/b.

Eagle: T. Bradshaw first.

Birdie: fourth S. Woodall and G. Renwick, sixth S. McKenzie, D. Woodall, N. Baker and S. Mills, 13th J. McFarlane, and 16th J. Smeriglio and W. Gervasi.

NTP: fourth E. Woodall, sixth N. Baker, 13th T. Bradshaw and 16th J. Smeriglio.

RESULTS: Saturday, January 31.

Competition: Par.

Overall winner: Martin Jays +6.

A Grade: Darcy O'Halloran +4.

Runner-up: Scott Williams +2.

B Grade: Brandon Lloyd +5.

Runner-up: Mark Nicholson +4.

C Grade: Martin Jays +6.

Runner-up: Glenn Rielly +6.

D Grade: Peter Magnusson +6.

Runner-up: Red Rodgers +1.

Place getters: Ben Clark +5, Paul Jackson +5, Gary Youlton +5, Kevin Loughran +5, Zakk Allen-Ryan +3, Max Aherne +3, Miles Foster +3, Kevin Bayley +3, David Riccardo +2, Frank Loughran +2, Warren Dummett +2, Shaun Stirton +1, Ross Yann +1, Norm Burne +1, Phillip Studham +1 and Rod Walker +1.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SENTINEL-TIMES

NTP: Stephen Kane second, Max Aherne fourth, Peter Hanley pro pin eighth, Steve Brann 13th and Scott Williams money hole 17th.

Ladies

WEDNESDAY was the return of the normal Wednesday ladies' format with nearly a full house of players.

The 32 players enjoyed thankfully a cooler day which ensured lots of good vibes.

The game was individual Stableford with a twist with mystery partners drawn at presentations.

Grade winners were A Grade Catherine Bolding (18) 38 points, B Grade Donna Brosnan (29) 37 points on c/b Irene Walsh, and C Grade and overall winner Kathy Dunscombe (44) 39 points.

Place getters to 37 points.

NTP claimed second Irene Walsh, fourth Andrea Grenville and eighth Kaylene Hodgetts.

The prizes for the mystery partners were fabulous hats and vouchers from Illa May Clothing Wonthaggi, which delighted the pairs of Merryn Dear and Pam Hanley 75 points, and runner-up pair Kathy Dunscombe and Robyn Wilkinson 74 points.

WONTHAGGI OPEN MIXED DAY

SUNDAY was the traditional Opening Mixed Day sponsored generously by Handley and Anderson Funerals, who have done this for many years.

There was a great field of 22 pairs made up of mothers and sons, husbands and wives, partners and just good friends.

Thank you to all for the fabulous roll up.

The game was Canadian Foursomes with NTP on all par threes with a twist.

Thank you to SKA Civil for their generous sponsorship on 17th for the best shot on the day winning a great money prize.

Winning pairs were A Grade winners Mat (8) and Donna (28) Brosnan with 79 (13.5) 65.5 net, A runners-up Steve Kane (8) and Kaylene Hodgetts (21) 79 (10.875) 68.125 net, B Grade winners Lisa (23) and Walter (24) Brusamarello 83 (17.625) 70.375 net and B runners-up Kevin Bayley (17) and Marg Ryan (27) 88 (16.5) 71.5 net.

Place getters were C. Bolding and I. Baker 68.875, M. Scott and C. Sartori 69, M. and M. Johnson 71.125, I. and J. Walsh 72.125, and S. O'Halloran and P. Britt 72.375.

NTP on second was I. Walsh and S. Kane, fourth D. Brosnan and S. Kane, eighth M. Ryan and J. Jordan, 13th Marg Johnson and Peter Hanley, and 17th C. Bolding.

Money prize winner was Mat Johnson.

WOORAYL

Ladies

WEDNESDAY was the official open day for ladies' golf at Woorayl Golf Club.

Twenty players gathered to play an Ambrose event, sponsored by Mitre 10.

The club welcomed three new players, Min Dwyer, Sarah Bourke and Rebecca Wright.

Winners for the day were Jean Hayes, Sarah Bourke, Kath Davis and Jenny Rouse 78 - 61 net.

Runners-up were Heather Sullivan, Min Dwyer and Bev Bridge 79 - 62.5.

BDLs went to Nicki Rendell, Sherrill Winkler, Janet Thompson, Ann Poole 79 - 62 3/4.

NTP on eighth was Jean Hayes and 17th Pauline Lancaster.

King Cowboy Santo Joma hungry for a fight

By Bruce Wardley

BASS COAST'S own King Cowboy Santo Joma is looking for a professional kick boxing match-up after his scheduled K1 bout in Melbourne was suddenly cancelled.

"It's left me without a fight to put on a show," said Santo.

With the Melbourne Pavilion match-up called off Santo's coaching team is now looking for another opponent to take on the tenacious King Cowboy.

The 30-year-old father of four is fighting fit.

"Never felt better," said Santo.

"He kicks like a mule," according to kicking coach James Heenan from Heenan Taekwondo.

Tough and durable with the heart of a lion you can count on an action packed fight every time King Cowboy steps into the ring say fight commentators.

A popular inclusion on premium kickboxing shows around the country."

Denied the opportunity to fight in February Santo is now looking for another fixture.

"I hope to reschedule a fight sometime in the near future," said Santo.

With five professional bouts under his belt for three wins and two losses against highly rated fighters, Wonthaggi's K1 King is anxious to get back in the ring.

"I'll find out in the next few weeks."

One of Santo's biggest fights



Santo Joma looking for another fight after his opponent withdrew from a scheduled bout in February at the Melbourne Pavilion. B01_0426

was a five-round war against Kiwi Byron Pointon for the SCC South Pacific Light Heavyweight Title at the Iron Lion Promotions Spartans Cup Championship last year at the Pullman Hotel and Resort at Albert Park.

"I'm proud of what I have achieved," said Santo.

"Being able to challenge myself and to show young people

in Wonthaggi that they can do anything that they put their mind to.

"They feel they have to go to Melbourne but there are opportunities here.

"They can make their own opportunities," said Santo.

"My whole point is to make a footprint and start a path so they can make a path of their own. There's a lot of talent in

Gippsland."

A boxer for seven years Santo started his fight career at Bass Coast Boxing.

Founder of Coal Kings MMA Santo trains at the Wonthaggi Boxing Club. Santo has retained his amateur status in MMA but fights professionally in K1 and Muay Thai.

Admitting his style can be unpredictable Santo said

he uses slick footwork and different ways of fighting covering the four disciplines of Boxing, Grappling, Muay Thai and Kickboxing.

"The way I take on life is the key," said Santo.

"I'm not going to sit around and wait for an opportunity."

"I'm going to make the opportunity happen by putting myself in the best position."

MMA coach Brad Meldrum said Santo had a huge heart and loved a chat.

"He lights up the room."

In the ring King Cowboy puts incredible pressure on his opponent.

According to Brad he's an inside fighter with lots of body shots.

"Santo doesn't do things that are easy."

"He's been jumping in the ring with K1 titleholders and holding his own," said Brad.

Kicking coach James said Santo doesn't need help with his punching.

"He's a natural."

"For K1 his kick game needs to be enhanced."

"There's always room for improvement," said James.

"He might wear a cowboy hat, he might be a showman but don't be fooled, he's a humble, fast learning, resilient technician."

Santo said he was grateful for the team around him.

"We're showing the world; we're making our own footprint."

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Kilcunda trail runners shrug off conditions

By Andrew Paloczi

over the half-marathon distance, recording 1:33:50, well in front of Lauren Cockerell (1:39:35) and Courtney Ellis (1:45:50).

Dan Lawlor claimed the men's honours in the 10km event, finishing in 41:56, Marcos Solly next in 44:30, then Mitch Whitham (46:20).

Katherine Hobson's winning women's time over that distance was 50:53, with Tilly Sandbach (54:33) and Georgia Mason (57:46) rounding out the places.

Bill Barry earned bragging rights in the men's 5km run, crossing the finish line in 20:00 ahead of Zane Solly (21:02) and Tony Petersen (22:34).

Kristie Mellon took out the women's 5km race in 25:50, Carly Heys next in 29:00 and Katie Swann third with 29:31.

While soft sand in spots posed a challenge for runners, it was surely worth it for Kilcunda's spectacular scenery.

The day's action was run by SingleTrack events, with great support for runners who had food and refreshments at the ready after crossing the finishing line, whether that be fresh fruit or a Wonthaggi Lions Club snag in bread.

A massage and medical attention were available, as was a coffee van for those in need of a caffeine hit.

All eyes on Alex Scott and Staff Woolamai Cup

THE Woolamai Racing Club is preparing for a huge crowd when the Alex Scott and Staff Woolamai Cup returns on Saturday, February 7.

Organisers have promised an affordable, family-friendly outing filled with live music, fundraising for bushfire-affected communities, and of course, racing.

"It'll be our usual Cup Day atmosphere. Super family-friendly and there'll be a lot of people. It's a great day out for family and friends," club secretary Abby Boyle said.

As racegoers are able to bring their own food and drink, Boyle says the day remains a great option for families looking for an affordable afternoon out.

"You're welcome to BYO food and drink, so it's an affordable day out, with live music and face painting," she said.

There are six races scheduled across the day, including the prized Alex Scott and Staff Woolamai Cup.

Boyle says the support the club receives from their main sponsor can't be overstated, as Alex Scott marks 140 years in business this year.

"It means a lot to us as a club. They are our major supporters, not just for Cup Day but throughout every racing season. They're very invested in the races," she said.

Boyle emphasised that their backing stretched across all facets of the club, not just the financial aspects.

"It's not just the monetary side of it, but just the overall support that Woolamai gets from Alex Scott," she said.

"Especially the one-percenters they do. They put up signs for us and do things like that. It's just great support for a volunteer club. They've put a lot behind us."

Fundraising will also feature heavily on the day, with Woolamai directing donations towards communities impacted by bushfires.

Boyle says the club has already made multiple donations to the Need for Feed initiative, sending medical supplies for horses and cattle, and the push for this worthy cause will continue on race day.

"There will be multiple raffles, Country Racing Victoria will be rattling tins, and the local CFA is also going on course," she said.

Fashions on the field will return bigger than ever, with five categories this year: ladies, gentlemen, couples, children, and a brand-new novelty section.

"Fashions on the field at Woolamai is huge every year. We've included a new novelty category because we always get people dressing up in really fun stuff," Boyle said.



The horses and jockeys race to the line at the popular Woolamai Picnic Racecourse earlier this year but there will be even more at stake at the Alex Scott Woolamai Cup meeting this Saturday, February 7.



Jockey Shaun Cooper salutes the crowd at Woolamai after defying the odds on nine-year-old mare Diamanda to carry a record top weight of 74kg at the popular track earlier in the year. He is led back to scale by Andy Taylor who has been an integral part of Woolamai Races for decades.



Some trainers and owners have been trying to win in the annual Alex Scott Woolamai Cup for years. Who'll claim that elusive prize this year?

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7



**ALEX SCOTT & STAFF
WOOLAMAI CUP**

Country Racing at Woolamai - join us to celebrate our Cup Day our way. It's yours too, the moment you arrive. There's live entertainment, fashions on the field and up-close racing action.

General Admission

\$20^{PP}

Gates open at 11am

- + Live entertainment
- + Fashion
- + Up-close racing action

Kids under 17 FREE



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Junior cricket round-up

Koonwarra L/RSL

THE under-17s team rolled out to the Leongatha Recreation Reserve on Saturday morning to face off against Inverloch on the turf.

Koonwarra/LRSL started by winning the toss and sending Inverloch in for a bat.

Inverloch's opening batters started well, as the pair put on 60 before losing their first wicket.

Cooper Newman (26) batted brightly before being caught.

His opening partner Jay Mottram Carter went on to retire without losing his wicket for 29 runs.

The rest of the team struggled on the deck, as Frazer Livingstone proceeded to take 4/24 off his eight overs including two maidens to help the team bowl them out for 111.

Both Max Carter (2/4 off four overs) and Tyson Lund (2/6 off 2.5 overs) picked up a couple of wickets.

The team will come back the next week chasing 112.

The under-15s rocked up to the Foster Golf Course on Saturday morning, facing off against Foster in a two-day match.

Captain Reggie Read lost the toss, and the Cougars were sent in for a bat.

Despite losing opener Joshua Allen (0) early, the boys had a great day with the bat.

Josh's opening partner Callum Smith went on to retire 36 runs not out off his 40 balls, but not before a terrific partnership with Reggie Read (52*) who made his half century to retire off 38 balls.

Ryder Pedlow then came in alongside Dihen Yuthmika (22*) who pushed the scoring further.

Ryder smashed 46 runs not out off 25 balls before the 20 overs were finished.

Unfortunately, Ryder is unavailable second week so he will miss out on the chance of making his half century.

Koonwarra/LRSL finished the day 1/174, the rest of the team keen for a bat next week.

On the bowling side of the day, Shem Hickey (1/0 off two overs with two maidens) opened up alongside young Wade Arnup who got the call up to under-15s at the age of 10.

Wade bowled stunningly, taking 1/2 off three overs with two maidens.

Arky Cameron also in for his first game of the year, taking 1/5 off his two overs.

Multiple bowlers took a wicket in their spells, Nicolas Botha (1/1 off two overs), Dihen Yuthmika (1/3 off two overs), Reggie Read (1/3 off two overs with one maiden), and Joshua Allen (1/1 off one over).

However, it was Hayden Bruce who would finish with the best figures taking 2/0 off 0.5 overs to help the Cougars bowl them out 11/33 in 18.4 overs.

The under-15s will come back next week to continue the match, with Foster having a second innings.

AROUND THE GROUNDS...

MDU

MDU was chasing 217 against Kilcunda-Bass in A2 on Saturday.

Unfortunately the team fell just short with a total of 10/172.

Paul Le Page made 47 off 75, Sembakutige Chathura Lakshan made 36 off 40 and Jai Bright made 26 off 22.

For Kilcunda-Bass, Cameron Davidson was the pick of the bowlers taking five wickets.

Jayden Tregear claimed three wickets and singles were taken by Todd Smith and Ben Rookes.

MDU is set to play Korumburra at the Korumburra Recreation Reserve in round 12.

This could be a gettable game for MDU with MDU and Korumburra sitting sixth and fifth on the ladder respectively.

KILCUNDA-BASS

KILCUNDA-BASS secured an important victory on Saturday, defending 217 to defeat Meenyan Dumbalk United by 45 runs in A2.

Batting first Kilcunda-Bass built a competitive total of 217 thanks to a composed innings from Cameron Davidson who anchored the day with a marathon 66 off 167 balls.

Early momentum came from Aaron Conron's brisk 44 (seven fours) while handy contributions from Greg Miller (23 off 19) and Jackson Baker (22) lifted the scoring rate through the middle overs.

In reply MDU started positively but struggled to capitalise as wickets fell steadily.

Davidson backed up his batting heroics with the ball producing a match-winning spell of 5/49 from 13 overs.

He removed key batsmen through the middle of the innings breaking the chase open.

Support came from Jayden Tregear who claimed 3/14, striking twice late to shut down any remaining hopes.

Ben Rookes also bowled tightly taking 1/36 from 12 overs.

Despite resistance from Paul Le Page (47) and Chathura Lakshan (36) MDU were eventually bowled out for 172 in 44.3 overs.

The win keeps Kilcunda-Bass well positioned heading into the business end of the season with Davidson's all-round performance the standout of the match.

FOSTER

NYORA secured a first innings win against Foster at the Nyora Recreation Reserve on Saturday.

Foster made 144 before it was bowled out by the home side. Jack Gay was the pick of the batsmen with 31 runs, closely followed by Andrew Patie with 30 runs.

Khy Davy, Luke Rooker and Nick Samat contributed 19, 15 and 14 runs respectively.

With the ball, Nyora bowler Mitch Rowe had the most success taking three wickets.

Nyora opted to send Foster into bat again for its second innings.

With 19 overs left in it, Mitchell Jones and Gay remained at the crease making 13* and 31* respectively.

Foster made 0/56 in its second innings.



Mohamed Ashik Mohamed Nizar of Wonthaggi Club is set to deliver, proving difficult for Kilcunda Bass to score from. A53_0526

GLEN ALVIE

GLEN Alvie's A2 side recorded a win against Koonwarra/LRSL on Saturday.

Playing at the Leongatha Recreation Reserve, Glen Alvie was tasked with defending 198.

Shared bowling efforts between vice-captain Matthew Dakin, Archie Luke and Wayne Luke secured victory for the Alvie.

Each took three wickets, restricting traction on the scoreboard for Koonwarra/LRSL.

The single wicket was taken by captain Ben McRae which turned out to be an important one.

James Rushton was the one seemingly unstoppable force for Koonwarra/LRSL who made 73 runs before he was dismissed by McRae.

Next round Glen Alvie has a challenge ahead as it takes on top of the table Nyora at the Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve.

LEONGATHA TOWN

THE B Grade Scorpions showed plenty of grit across the two-day contest, digging deep in the second innings to avoid an outright result.

Leongatha Town posted 101 in the first dig with Ash Hickey (21), S. Clark (14) and C. Bruce (13) fighting hard for runs.

Clark then led the charge with the ball claiming an excellent 3/38, while Hickey (1/41) and Livingstone (1/46) worked tirelessly against a strong Nerrena line-up that piled on 5/242.

Facing a big deficit the Scorpions responded with real determination.

Luke Bowman top-scored with 29, Dave Goss finished unbeaten on 25* and Hickey added 15 as Town battled through to 7/102, showing character and resilience to close out the match.

A tough game but plenty of heart from the group.

Leongatha Town Scorpions Cricket Club is marking its 80-year anniversary this weekend.

The club is celebrating numerous premiership reunions and welcoming back players from throughout the decades.

Town was founded in 1944-45, later merging with High School to become Leongatha Town and adopting the Scorpion in the mid-90s.

These days the club boasts world-class facilities, a thriving

development program for juniors, three seniors sides and a successful women's team.

It's famous for Thursday night schnitzels and being a welcoming and inclusive family environment for cricketers of all levels and their supporters.

This weekend the A Grade and C Grade Seniors play at Scorpion Park on Saturday followed by the big reunion celebration in the evening, backing up with a women's home semi-final against Phillip Island and Sunday barbecue on the pavilion.

Whether you've played one game at Town or one thousand the club would love to see you this weekend to share your stories from years gone by and get behind the current Scorpions.

OMK

OMK's B1 side had a difficult day out on Saturday against Wonthaggi Club.

With Club making an eye-watering score of 314 it was going to be a tough ask to chase down.

The bowling prowess of Club's Mark McCall and Sean Roche offered few opportunities for the Diggers to hit the scoreboard.

Peter Dell stepped up to the crease to give OMK a bit of hope making 106*.

Robert Quaife and Toby Nicholas were the only other batsmen to record double digits with 15 and 10 runs respectively.

This game has been one of OMK's only stumbling blocks, citing lack of patience and a strong opposition as the cause.

Despite the rough result this round OMK has enjoyed a successful 2025/26 season and will be back firing again after using its bye round to regroup.

In the meantime the club is set to enjoy its Pink Stumps Day on Saturday, February 7.

THE IMPERIALS

THE Imperials' B2 side was beaten by an in-form MDU team on Saturday.

MDU was chasing the Imps' score of 199 at the Dumbalk Recreation Reserve.

Despite some excellent bowling efforts from the Imperials, MDU kept its game alive with a number of solid batting partnerships throughout the

innings.

Captain Dale Thomas was the obvious standout with 73*.

"Dale batted extremely well and there were around four other batsmen who batted well with him," Imps president Kristian Gray said.

For the Imperials, Klayton McGrath took the bowling honours with three wickets but it was an exceptional team performance.

The Imperials will play against Kilcunda-Bass on the Leongatha turf in the next round.

"We've made some good scores against most of the teams in the competition this season, so hopefully we are able to put up a good side next week and do well," Gray said.

KORUMBURRA

KORUMBURRA was defeated by Phillip Island in B1 at the Korumburra Recreation Reserve.

Phillip Island successfully chased down Korumburra's score of 151.

For Korumburra, Phil Richards and Jayden Douglas played well across the game.

A highlight was the two wickets taken by Hudson Jefferis.

In C Grade Phillip Island defeated Korumburra in a tight game at the Rhyll Cricket Ground.

Korumburra won the toss and chose to bat.

Captain Patrick Beadel gave a solid performance in his 50th club game.

He made 41 runs and later went on to take two wickets in a good all-round game.

Tom Jenkin made 23 runs and Charlie Carew added 18*.

During Phillip Island's innings Peter Edwards also took two wickets.

Club president Glen Barrett said Korumburra is happy with its season with just a few rounds to go.

"It's going well. This season we were focused on developing our younger players and giving them opportunities to play senior cricket. It's been great to see them emerge and produce positive outcomes," he said.

Korumburra has a big weekend on the calendar to look forward to with its Past Players Day on Saturday, February 14 and Golf Day on Sunday, February 15.



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HMA1329

Madelene shares cricket joy

SINCE discovering cricket for the first time last year, Madelene Ylen has been an asset on Glen Alvie Cricket Club's women's team.

Originally from Sweden, Madelene came to Australia on a working holiday visa in 2013 and is now a citizen.

Starting out in Sydney, Madelene fell in love with Melbourne and was eventually transferred to Victoria.

Since then, she met her partner Jackson, moved to Dalyston in May last year and has been raising infant twins.

Despite her busy lifestyle, she found time to discover a passion for cricket.

"My partner Jackson plays for the Dalyston Football Netball Club and he overheard Gaby (Hynes, coach of Glen Alvie's women's team) talking about cricket at the footy ground," Madelene said.

"I barely knew the sport, but Gaby was really friendly and assured me the club would help me take care of the twins. I thought, why not? Let's give it a go."

Madelene's previous sporting experience included soccer and floorball.

At first, she found the rules of cricket very technical and had to adjust to the motions but has enjoyed every moment of picking up a new sport.

"One of the big reasons I really enjoy it is because we have such a good team. There's never been an issue with me bringing Hunter and Millie, and everyone is always



Madelene Ylen discovered a passion for cricket after joining Glen Alvie's women's cricket team this season.

Tk01_0426

really excited to see them," Madelene said.

"I've also enjoyed getting better each week. Hitting my first four during the doubleheader was a milestone. I'd been smashing ones and twos, but it's really exciting when you get that boundary."

One of the obstacles Madelene has had to overcome is nerves.

"I can get a bit in my head when I miss a ball. The best thing to do is take every ball for what it is. It doesn't matter

what you did last ball, there's a new one coming. I was getting a bit down on myself and I had to overcome that," she said.

Madelene had become instrumental in the success of Glen Alvie's women's team in the 2025/26 season.

She credits her development to extra training opportunities with Jackson.

"I had no expectations, but I am a fighter and I'm very competitive," she said.

"I trained with Jackson

to improve, because I really wanted to make an impact and be a strong team player. He gave me some great pointers. I feel like I had a good coach in Gaby and a second coach in Jackson."

Madelene said it was exciting to see the growth of women's sport in Australia since her arrival in 2013.

"When I first moved to Australia, I was interested in learning Australian Rules Football. I reached out to a few teams, but there wasn't much around. It has grown so much over the last 13 years," she said.

"I've seen more young kids being excited because they can see their role models. With cricket, we have a good area in the country where everyone gets involved, but there's still lots of growing to be done. It still feels like women get the second choice in terms of grounds and availability, but it is amazing to see how in the last 13 years sport for women has grown."

Off the ground, Madelene has been keeping up with the cricket on TV, becoming a Melbourne Stars fan.

Glen Alvie's women's cricket team finished fourth on the ladder following the completion of the home and away season on Sunday, earning a place in the finals.

Madelene is looking forward to competing in the finals and seeing the team perform its best in future games.

Federation Day cricket and picnic at Coal Creek

By Andrew Paloczi

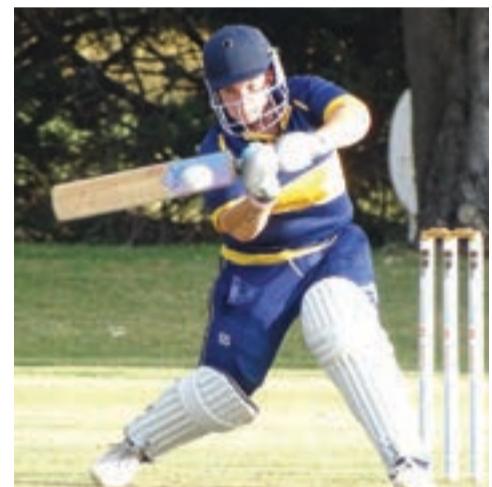
EXPERIENCE Federation Day at Coal Creek on Sunday, February 15, being transported to January 1, 1901, celebrating the new Commonwealth of Australia with a community 'Federation Cricket and Picnic Day'.

Action commences at 10am, with cricket on the lower oval, featuring six mixed teams competing for the Federation Cup, which will be awarded to the team scoring the most runs on the day.

Friends of Coal Creek Secretary Kevin Cook, who came up with the idea of reliving the cricket and picnic celebration held in Kurnurra on Federation Day 125 years ago, has taken charge of organising the cricket competition. The picnic aspect will include traditional games like quoits, bean bag tossing and sack races.

Visitors are invited to dress in Federation era clothing if they wish, with prizes for best attire. A photographer will be using a period camera. Food and drinks will be available, with the local Lions Club providing catering, and a coffee van will be present. Entry is free and people are encouraged to just turn up.

To hear your invitation in the language of the Federation era, visit coalcreekfriends.com.au and click on the link for 'Federation Cricket and Picnic Day', with bright and breezy avatar Jane ready to tell you all about the "momentous occasion".



Melissa Gheller hit 35* in the women's Kookaburra Cup match for Koonwarra L/RSL.

Koony competes for Kookaburra Cup

THE ladies made their way out to Yinnar on Friday to face off against The Raiders Cricket Club in competition for women's Kookaburra Cup, a premier match between the top two women's teams in the whole Gippsland region.

The women earned this honour after their great season last year, which saw them clinch the premiership.

A T20 match on the Yinnar Turf deck started at 5.30pm after The Raiders won the toss and elected to bat first.

The women bowled beautifully to start off, in an effort that saw them hold the Raiders to 7/108.

The best bowling came from Britney Thomas who took 3/9 off her four overs.

Melissa Gheller also took three of her own (3/23 off four overs).

Congratulations to Maddison Winter who made 36*(retired) and Regan Leeson who made 24*(retired) to lead their team's scoring.

The chase was on, as opener and captain Melissa Gheller put the foot down, blasting 35 runs not out to retire, alongside Kathy Zacharopoulos who also made 35 runs not out to retire in the same over (14th).

A position of 1/78 with 31 runs to win, the girls needed five an over, but just fell short finishing 3/91 and falling 18 runs short of victory.

Congratulations to The Raiders on winning the women's Kookaburra Cup.

Koonwarra/LRSL hopes to have this opportunity in the years to come.

Congratulations to the women on earning this opportunity, a true testament to skill and dedication to the game.

AROUND THE GROUNDS...

INVERLOCH

WITH a comfortable total over The Imperials, Inverloch declared with a score of 8/160 having won the match.

Playing at Leongatha's East Campus, Riley Harris and Rhys Newman opened well for the Stingrays with 21 and 26 runs respectively.

Third and fourth in the order, Ron Abeysinghe (35) and captain Kit Rotthier (42) were the ones to solidify the win as an onslaught by Imps bowler Lachie Wright took out the tailenders.

This was an important win for Inverloch as it secured its place in the finals.

"We have some challenging games ahead, coming up against the two top sides to end our season. We have the bye in the last round, which isn't ideal," Inverloch's Dylan Clark said.

"Securing our place in the finals is great for the juniors who have come up to play in A1. We are really stoked for them."

KOONWARRA L/RSL

A GRADE finished off its two-day match against Glen Alvie on Saturday.

Glen Alvie posted a score of 198 last week on the Leongatha Recreation Reserve (turf), now it was the Cougars' turn to chase it down.

The boys did not get off to the greatest start with Glen Alvie firing early and leaving them in a position of 4/13 after 9.3 overs.

With some work to do, James "Jimmy" Rushton came in firing as he and Jason Kennedy (11)

put on 40 runs before Jason was out caught.

Jimmy kept pushing on as the Cougars proceeded to lose another two wickets, leaving them in a position of 7/73.

Jimmy finally found a partner in Mitch Scrimshaw (23*), pushing for a wonderful 44-run partnership before Jimmy was caught out for 73 runs.

Koonwarra/LRSL lost another quickly and with 81 runs to go it looked a long stretch from here.

However, Joshua Thomas (21) wasn't going down early as he and Mitch Scrimshaw batted beautifully to put on 42 runs before Joshua was bowled, helping the Cougars to reach 160 but lose by 38 runs.

Glen Alvie had three bowlers who took three wickets in Matthew Dakin (3/51 off 17 overs), Archie Luke (3/23 off 9.3 overs) and Wayne Luke (3/19 off five overs).

Also the captain held beautiful economy, Ben McRae bowling 19 overs for just 25 runs (one wicket, eight maidens).

The boys will hold their spot at third on the A2 ladder with their next game being against Foster at the Foster Cricket Ground.

B Grade finished off its match against Glen Alvie on Saturday afternoon.

Bowling out Glen Alvie for 226 last week, it had a big chase in store for them.

The Cougars started off well, plugging away and losing just three wickets for 90 runs as opener and captain Brad "Ando" Anderson (34) got

underway before losing his wicket, out caught.

It was then the father-son duo of Ryder (9) and Brett Pedlow out in the middle.

The pair put on 40 runs before losing the wicket of Ryder.

Mick Caruana (0) held down an end as he and Brett put on 21 runs before Mick lost his wicket.

Reggie Read (15) came in after a good session at juniors in the morning.

He and Brett put on another 41 runs before Reggie was out with the score 6/192.

After losing a few more wickets the boys got the job done.

Finishing 8/227 after 65 overs, Brett falling agonisingly short of three figures hitting 96* off 96 balls.

The extras being the second-highest contributor of the day (64).

Glen Alvie's Lachlan McRae picked up three wickets along the way for 37 runs off his 11 overs.

The boys held on to great win over Glen Alvie and hold their spot at third on the B2 ladder.

NYORA

NYORA recorded two out of three wins across the senior divisions on Saturday.

A Grade had a first innings win against Foster after doing all the damage it needed to do the week before.

Daniel Esler's massive 120-run effort led Nyora to a score of 364 which Foster was unable to compete with.

Nyora bowled on Saturday

with Mitch Rowe claiming three wickets, and Trent Breen and Aidan Simmons taking two wickets each.

In B Grade the team made 124, successfully chasing down Kilcunda-Bass' score of 122.

Nyora made a good start to its innings with openers Henry Dolphin and Benn Hayes making 29 and 56 runs respectively.

Kilcunda-Bass' bowlers restricted the run rate for the rest of the batting order so the win rested on the shoulders of Dolphin and Hayes' performance.

C Grade went down to Koonwarra/LRSL at the Poowong Recreation Reserve.

Despite the loss there were plenty of positives to take from the game.

Under-14s player Lily Lovell took her first wicket and under-15s player James MacDonald also played exceptionally well.

"It's great to be able to give our junior players the opportunity to have that exposure to senior cricket," Nyora's Adam White said.

"We're seeing under-13s and under-15s players coming up into C Grade which does futureproof our club."

David Simpkin also played his first game of the season and gave a good performance.

Nyora's Pink Stumps Day is coming up soon, set to be held on Saturday, February 14.

Tickets are selling at \$60 each with only a few left.

Jump onto Nyora Cricket Club's Facebook page to secure a ticket.



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LEONGATHA & DISTRICT CRICKET ASSOCIATION

A1: Ryan Thomas (Club) 59 ; Jarrod Hoy (Nerrena) 5/25

A2: James Rushton (Koon L/RSL) 73 ; Cameron Davidson (K-Bass) 5/49

B1: Peter Dell (OMK) 106* ; Mark McCall (Club) 5/52

B2: Brett Pedlow (Koon L/RSL) 96* ; Lachlan McRae (Glen Alvie) 3/37

C1: Mitchell Davey (Club) 119* ; Peter Francis (Phillip Island) 3/13

C2: Pieter Loos (Glen Alvie) 75 ; Matthew Marston (Inverloch) 2/7

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LADDERS

RD 11

Team	Points	%	Team	Points	%
A GRADE, Division 1					
Nerrena	96	1.575	Nyora	108	1.449
Club	96	1.556	Kilcunda Bass	102	1.527
Inverloch	84	1.261	Koonwarra L/RSL	66	1.408
OMK	66	0.925	Glen Alvie	60	0.980
Phillip Island	36	0.933	Korumburra	36	0.780
Town	12	0.641	MDU	24	0.941
Imperials	6	0.471	Foster	0	0.359
B GRADE, Division 1					
Club	110	2.719	Nyora	96	1.319
OMK	90	2.229	MDU	90	1.002
Nerrena	78	1.727	Kilcunda Bass	84	1.272
Inverloch	60	1.192	Glen Alvie	42	1.046
Phillip Island	30	0.625	Imperials	30	0.716
Town	30	0.387			
Korumburra	6	0.283			

LADDERS

RD 15

Team	Points	%	Team	Points	%
C GRADE, Division 1					
Club	114	1.806	Club	126	2.954
OMK	108	1.399	Inverloch	108	1.619
Phillip Island	84	0.865	Glen Alvie	96	0.852
Korumburra	66	1.050	Koonwarra L/RSL	84	1.364
Nerrena	66	0.855	Nyora	48	0.540
MDU	54	0.773	Town	36	0.532
Kilcunda Bass	48	0.755	OMK	30	0.626

NEXT WEEKEND'S GAMES & UMPIRE APPOINTMENTS

ROUND 12 - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 (DAY 1)

A GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

Inverloch v Club	Thompson Res.	Shane Moore
OMK v Imperials	Outtrim	Ashleigh Stride
Town v Phillip Island	Scorpion 1	John Schelling
Nerrena - BYE		

A Grade, Division 2 - 1PM START

Glen Alvie v Nyora	Wonthaggi Turf	Michael Thomas
Korumburra v MDU	Korumburra	Brad Phillips
Foster v Koon L/RSL	Foster GC	Les White
Kilcunda Bass - BYE		

B GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

Club v Inverloch	McMahon	Geoff Birnie
Phillip Island v Town	Cowes	Steve Williamson
Nerrena v Korumburra	Nerrena	Graham Wightman
OMK - BYE		

B GRADE, Division 2 - 1PM START

Glen Alvie v MDU	Glen Alvie	Tyson Tootel
Imperials v K-Bass	Leongatha Turf	Ian Salmon
Nyora v Koon L/RSL	Nyora	Geoff Parkinson

ROUND 16 - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

C GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

Korumburra v Nerrena	Poowong	TBA
K-Bass v Phillip Island	Bass 1	TBA
OMK v Club	Digger Park	TBA
MDU - BYE		

C GRADE, Division 2 - 1PM START

Club v Inverloch	Wonthaggi SC	TBA
Koon L/RSL v G-Alvie	Koonwarra	TBA
Town v Nyora	Scorpion Park 2	TBA
OMK - BYE		

Subject to Confirmation.

Any prospective umpires can contact

Ash Stride 0432 350 944 or Ken Scrimshaw 0433 297 421



Brodie Johnston of Phillip Island is bowled by Jarrod Hoy early in Saturday's play, failing to add to his opening day score. A57_0526

Nerrena surges back to beat Phillip Island

A GRADE, DIVISION 1

to start the day, Brodie Johnston then unable to add to his opening day score of 18 when he suffered the same fate.

Hoy's demolition of the Sharks continued when he had Phillip Island skipper Daniel Mock caught by Thomas Cameron for just two runs, Phillip Island suddenly teetering at 5/39 and belief surging through the Red Caps.

Wightman backed up the pace onslaught, mesmerising the Sharks with his spin to send middle order players Kohen Beaumont and Heath Womersley on their way, also accounting for a couple of lower order Phillip Island batsmen, with Hoy finishing the job when he dismissed Tom Cameron.

There were no weak links in the Nerrena attack, Mitch Clark's five overs of offspin conceding just five runs, while 17-year-old quick Archie Gannon took an impressive 1/16 off 10 overs.

Archie's dad Brian Gannon, who is Nerrena's club secretary, was busy playing in C Grade but was delighted with news of the A Grade result.

"It's hard to beat Phillip Island over there," Brian said of Nerrena's stunning feat in Cowes, pleased the Red Caps stuck at the task despite setting such a low target on a synthetic pitch.

Acknowledging Phillip Island captain Mock's talent with the bat, Brian identified his dismissal for just two as a key moment in the win.



Mitch Clark bowls during his brief but tidy spell for Nerrena on Saturday. A60_0526

A GRADE, DIVISION 1

Nerrena 105 d Phillip Island 68

PI Batting: B Johnston 18, H Womersley 14, T Niven 13, T Cameron 8

Nerrena Bowling: J Hoy 5/25, T Wightman 4/22, A Gannon 1/16

Club 9/174 d OMK 172

Club Batting: R Thomas 59, J Brann 35, S Beaumont 25*, J Thomas 21

OMK Bowling: T Pickering 5/72, A Trotto 2/18, R Williams 1/43

Inverloch 8/160 d Imperials 130

Inverloch Batting: K Rotthier 42, R Abeysinghe 35, R Newman 26, R Harris 21, T Debono 20

Imperials Bowling: L Wight 4/45, L Anderson 1/8, I Bikge 1/17, T Sauvarin 1/20, A Williams 1/28

Town - BYE

A GRADE, DIVISION 2

Glen Alvie 9/198 d Koonwarra L/RSL 160

K L/RSL Batting: J Rushton 73, M Scrimshaw 23*, J Thomas 21, J Kennedy 11

Glen Alvie Bowling: W Luke 3/19, A Luke 3/23, M Dakin 3/51, B McRae 1/25

Kilcunda Bass 217 d MDU 172

MDU Batting: P Le Page 47, SC Lakshan 36, J Bright 26, W Prosser 15

K-Bass Bowling: C Davidson 5/49, J Tregeair 3/14, T Smith 1/34, B Rookes 1/36

Nyora 8-d/363 d Foster 144 & 0/56

Foster Batting: J Gray 31, A Pattie 30, K Davy 19

Nyora Bowling: M Rowe 3/32, A Simmons 2/16, T Breen 2/35, M Cordeux 1/5, J Watts 1/12

Foster Bowling: J Gay 31*, M Jones 13*

Korumburra - BYE

B GRADE, DIVISION 1

Phillip Island 5/158 d Korumburra 151

PI Batting: T Blackwell 67, D Holmes 19, T Asurumuni 16*, K Lane 13, A Finlayson 12

Korumburra Bowling: J Douglas 2/27, H Jefferis 2/38, G Edwards 1/21

Club 314 d OMK 159

OMK Batting: P Dell 106*, R Quaife 15, T Nicholas 10, N Creed 9

Club Bowling: M McCall 5/52, H Dobbie 2/11, S Roche 2/25

Nerrena 5-d/242 d Town 101 & 7/102

Nerrena Batting: G Murphy 58, W Croatto 50*

Town Bowling: S Clark 3/38, A Hickey 1/41

Town Batting: L Bowman 29, D Goss 25*

Nerrena Bowling: W Croatto 4/22, T Harris 2/17

Inverloch - BYE

B GRADE, DIVISION 2

Koonwarra L/RSL 8/227 d Glen Alvie 226

Koon L/RSL Batting: B Pedlow 96*, B Anderson 34, A Drury 19, K Thorne 15, R Read 15,

Glen Alvie Bowling: L McRae 3/37, D Hale 2/27, E Spiteri-Stevens 2/32, R Sinclair 1/36

Nyora 5/124 d Kilcunda Bass 122

Nyora Batting: B Hayes 56, H Dolphin 29, D Blackney 11, R White 9*

Kilcunda Bass Bowling: R Duff 2/25, J Papworth 2/35

MDU 4/201 d Imperials 8/199

Imperials Batting: G Sauvarin 102, C Bruce 21

Imperials Bowling: K McGrath 3/85, J Jeffery 1/16

MDU Batting: D Thomas 73*, T Zukovskis 31

MDU Bowling: S McRae 3/43, K Sinclair 2/62

C GRADE, DIVISION 1

MDU 3/136 d Nerrena 133

Nerrena Batting: D Curtis 44, M Croatto 16

Nerrena Bowling: B Salmon 1/15, R Harrison 1/21

MDU Batting: D Feild 56*, C Hooper 30*

MDU Bowling: A Richardson 3/17, D Feild 3/23

Phillip Island 7/147 d Korumburra 7/144

K'burra Batting: P Beadel 41, C Carew 18*

K'burra Bowling: P Beadel 2/22, P Edwards 2/23

PI Batting: M Cleary 48*, J Manning 28

PI Bowling: P Francis 3/13, D McCausland 2/22

Club 5/269 d Kilcunda Bass 7/165

Club Batting: M Davey 119*, M Chisholm 57

Club Bowling: A Quilty 2/4, S Liddle 2/12

K-Bass Batting: J Hackett 67*, J Cottrell 35

K-Bass Bowling: A Joseph 2/29, O Jobe 1/23

OMK - BYE

C GRADE, DIVISION 2

Club 2/197 d Glen Alvie 7/194

Glen Alvie Batting: P Loos 75, I Thorn 44*

Glen Alvie Bowling: J Lisis 2/33, B Pentland 1/26

Club Batting: J Lisis 60*, B Osborne 56

Club Bowling: K Andersen 1/7, J McNally 1/37

Inverloch 4/76 d OMK 73

OMK Batting: L Jones 24, S Matthews 16

OMK Bowling: L Jones 2/17, J Battersby 1/18

Inverloch Batting: S Hayes 19*, G Eddy 18

Inverloch Bowling: M Marston 2/7, A Nowell 1/6

Nyora v Koonwarra L/RSL

Results not available at time of printing.

Town - BYE



James Cottrell looks to work the ball into the leg side during his solid innings for Kilcunda Bass. A55_0526



Joel Huckett elects to leave this delivery during his solid knock for Kilcunda Bass in its C1 loss to Wonthaggi Club. A54_0526

Dashing Wonthaggi records strong win over Killy Bass

C GRADE, DIVISION 1

A PACEY unbeaten 119 from opener Mitchell Davey laid the foundation for a massive Wonthaggi Club score, with Matrix Chisholm's blistering half century aiding the cause, Kilcunda Bass never looking on course to make the 270-run target off its 35 overs.

While Sharks opener Joel Huckett batted solidly, finishing 67 not out, and at one stage enjoying a productive partnership with James

Cottrell (35), the required run rate was quickly beyond reach.

That started at an intimidating 7.71 per over and ballooned to 11.16 approaching the halfway point of the Kilcunda Bass innings, the Sharks reaching only 1/69 after 17 overs, managing just 4.05 an over.

While Kilcunda Bass looked to up the scoring rate after the drinks break with some success, the medium pace of Ryan McGuirk accounted for

Cottrell, the bowler getting one through the gate.

Number four batsman James Matser made a brisk 22 off 27 balls but once he fell to the bowling of Sam Liddle, Huckett couldn't find anyone else able to stick around with him.

Wonthaggi skipper Liddle finished with a tidy 2/12 off six overs, Aidan Quilty Club's other multiple wicket taker with a couple of late ones.

Young medium pacer Angus Benetti sent down an en-

couraging seven overs for the winning side, his figures of 1/35 including the wicket of Kilcunda Bass opener Steven Oates.

Although Club's Mohamed Ashik Mohamed Nizar's medium pace failed to capture a wicket, he helped ensure the Sharks couldn't get motoring, his slinging action keeping the batsmen on their toes as he conceded just 23 off seven overs.

Losing late wickets saw Kilcunda Bass finish on 7/165.

ACS win inaugural veterans' tournament

OVER 60s CRICKET

THE inaugural Gippsland Veterans' Cricket Tournament was held in Sale over the last five days.

Over-60 cricket teams from Baw Baw, Australian Cricket Society (ACS), Vic Country Bendigo (VC) and the Gippsland Goannas played a four-game tournament, where the four teams played each other, then the top two teams played off for the Championship title.

VC's team was short of players, so it was augmented with players from the South Gippsland Kookaburras and the Goannas.

The matches were played at Sale Oval on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday, Stephenson Park on Sunday, Monday and Thursday and Bundalaguan on Wednesday and Thursday.

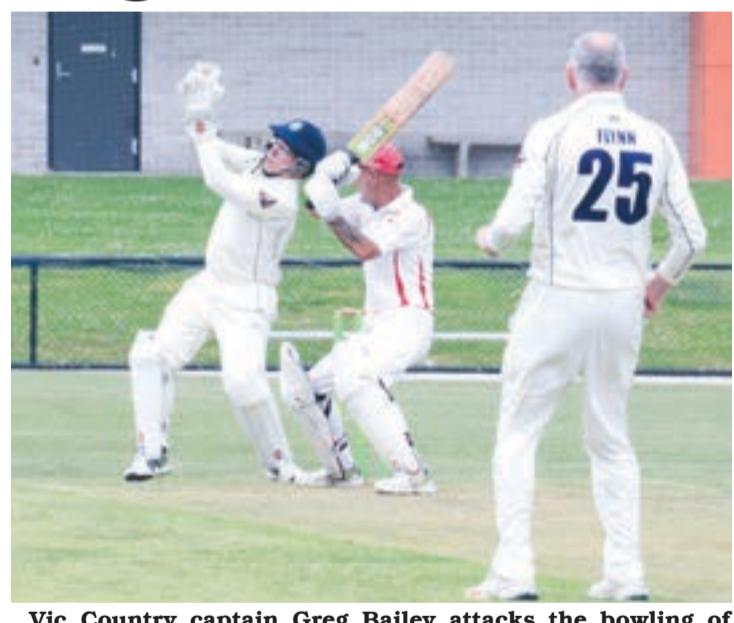
The grounds were in top condition and the pitches prepared by the host clubs were all excellent.

Day one - Sunday: Baw Baw 8/162 defeated Goannas 8/157; VC 9/113 defeated ACS 8/112.

Best performances:

Baw Baw: Mark McLaughlan 32, Colin Parnall 36*, Paul Clarke 22 retired, Steven Head 2/13 and Michael O'Neill 3/17.

Goannas: Adrian Quirk 61, Neil Meredith 20, K. Mealing 2/26 and Graeme Ingle 4/29.



Vic Country captain Greg Bailey attacks the bowling of ACS's John Flynn, with keeper Peter Glenton being acrobatic.

VC: Trevor Sing 35, Greg Bailey 27*, Doug Stone 2/28 and Bailey 2/14.

ACS: Andrew Chisholm 25, Peter Glenton 16*, Peter Carmodity 4/10, Chisholm 2/18 and David Long 2/19.

Day two - Monday: Baw Baw 10/111 tied VC 10/111; ACS 4/119 defeated Goannas 10/115.

Best performances:

Baw Baw: Parnall 37, Clarke 18 ret, O'Neill 2/12, Parnall 2/17, Peter Felstead 2/16 and McLaughlan 2/1.

VC: Stone 21, Murray Moore

29, Bailey 3/14 and Andrew Smith 4/12.

ACS: Jeff Scotland 34, Keith Jansz 22, John Dunnachie 22ret, Mark Dunstan 3/17 and Long 3/9.

Goannas: Graeme Rankin 21, John Daddo 15 and Ian Freshwater 2/24.

Day three - Wednesday: VC 6/145 defeated Goannas 10/114; ACS 1/116 defeated Baw Baw 9/113.

Best performances:

Goannas: Neil White 22, Ingle 19, Peter Loos 19 and White 1/11.

The champions of the week were the ACS team, ably led by Jeff Scotland, whose 87 not out in the final was the difference between winning and losing.

Fifty of those runs came from the last three overs of the ACS innings, after he had been dropped three times upon resuming his innings in the 34th over.

The Goannas team, led by Greg Bailey, finished second on 119 runs.

Best performances:

Goannas: Neil White 22, Ingle 19, Peter Loos 19 and White 1/11.

ACS: Jeff Scotland 34, Keith Jansz 22, Mark Dunstan 3/17 and Long 3/9.

Final scores:

Baw Baw 10/111, ACS 4/119, Goannas 10/115, VC 10/111.

Best performances:

Goannas: Neil White 22, Ingle 19, Peter Loos 19 and White 1/11.

ACS: Jeff Scotland 34, Keith Jansz 22, Mark Dunstan 3/17 and Long 3/9.

Final scores:

Baw Baw 10/111, ACS 4/119, Goannas 10/115, VC 10/111.

Best performances:

Goannas: Neil White 22, Ingle 19, Peter Loos 19 and White 1/11.

ACS: Jeff Scotland 34, Keith Jansz 22, Mark Dunstan 3/17 and Long 3/9.

Final scores:

Baw Baw 10/111, ACS 4/119, Goannas 10/115, VC 10/111.

Best performances:



Glorious day for a Dash and a Classic

Competitors start their watch timers as they head for the water. A21_0526

LOVELY sunny conditions on Saturday greeted entrants in the Little Penguin Dash and the later Cowes Classic, one man heard to remark it was the calmest Cowes Classic day he could recall.

Kiara Mooney's performance was a highlight of the Cowes Classic, her time of 0:20:06.8 seeing her grab third spot overall, comprehensively winning the women's race.

Underlining Kiara's achievement, second-placed woman Hannah Piper was 21st overall, recording a time of 0:22:31.2, with Brianna Behrsin rounding

By Andrew Paloczi

out the women's placegetters in 0:24:12.9.

Tristan Price ensured the men's winner was also clear well in advance, ultimately charging to the finishing line in 0:18:27.4.

Justin Tilley took out the Mature Male Category, his time of 0:19:37.8 placing him second overall, with Sam Walker the third-placed male and fourth overall in 0:20:21.8.

The Cowes Classic, part of the Bass Coast Series, requires competitors to battle it out over

a 500m swim and a 4km run.

Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club and Phillip Island Football Netball Club are supported by the event, which delivers further local benefits.

Cowes was full of happy locals and visitors, relishing the chance to compete or watch the action and to enjoy the town's social vibe.

While there was no official competition in the Little Penguin Dash, that didn't stop the event's young participants, aged from seven to 14 giving their all, ensuring everyone deserved

their medallion.

Attentive and plentiful lifesavers made sure nobody got into difficulties and that all the youngsters swam near the shore and could stand up if they needed, with distance and depth adjusted according to age.

Those aged seven to 10 swam 200m and ran 800m, kids in the 11-14 year age bracket taking on a 400m swim and 1.2km run.

All the Little Penguin Dash entrants Sentinel-Times spoke to preferred the swimming leg to the run.

While some Cowes Classic competitors undoubtedly celebrated their achievements with a cold beer, finishers in the Little Penguin Dash were quick to bite into healthy apples.

Lest anyone think this scribe is passing judgement, he was ready for an amber refreshment too, but duty called with somebody having to cover the cricket.

The Bass Coast Series continues with the San Remo Channel Challenge on Saturday, February 21, followed by the rescheduled Cape Paterson Aquathon on Sunday, March 15.

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