

Sentinel-Times

COVERING SOUTH GIPPSLAND AND BASS COAST

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SURF RIP REALITY



Beach deaths prompt safety push across Bass Coast

FIFTY people drowned in coastal waters across Australia this summer at a rate of one death every two days prompting renewed calls for action along the Bass Coast.

The 2025-26 Summer Coastal Drowning Report released by Surf Life Saving Australia found males accounted for 92 per cent of coastal drowning deaths with those aged 55 and older making up 46 per cent of fatalities.

Two-thirds of deaths occurred more than one kilometre from a surf life saving service.

The figures come as Bass Coast Shire Council ramps up its beach safety campaign with new high-impact warning signs installed at some of the region's most dangerous beaches and a major community education event held at

By Rick Koenig

Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club on Saturday.

Bass Coast Police are also increasing their visibility across the region, patrolling local sands in specially equipped all-terrain vehicles to provide assistance on beaches and reach previously inaccessible areas.

Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead told the Sentinel-Times the report reinforced the importance of the work being done locally.

"Any report showing an increased loss of life is concerning and shows just how important it is that we continue to offer programs that educate our communities on the dangers of our beaches," Cr Halstead said.

Cr Halstead said the council had invested considerable time working with neighbouring councils, lifesaving clubs, emergency services and community organisations to deliver new signage, education programs and technology to inform beachgoers.

She shared her own experience as a reminder that the ocean does not discriminate.

"I made a mistake only five years ago when I entered the surf believing my abilities were the same as when I was young," Cr Halstead said.

"I learnt very quickly that was not the case after being smashed by the waves.

"I crawled out of the surf exhausted and with seaweed tangled in my hair and sand stuck to my face."

Continued page 3

A dramatic demonstration by Professor Rob Brander (Dr Rip) using a fluorescent dye in the surf at Cape Woolamai to demonstrate the power of rips.

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Green dye used to show the power of rips at Cape Woolamai

By Bruce Wardley

THE POWER of the surf at Cape Woolamai was dramatically illustrated by University of New South Wales researcher Professor Rob Brander in a demonstration using environmentally friendly fluorescent green and purple dye.

Professor Brander widely known as Dr Rip was invited to Cape Woolamai by Bass Coast Shire Council and Life-saving Victoria to make an educational video on surviving rips.

Bass Coast Shire Council hosted a free, family-friendly beach safety event at Cape Woolamai called 'Beach Smart, Beach Fun - Science of the Surf' featuring Dr Rip.

The event focused on educating the community about the science behind beaches and how to stay safe in the water.

A major highlight was a live rip current demonstration, where environmentally safe green dye was released into the water to visually track the speed and path of a rip current.

Professor Rob Brander is a coastal scientist with more than 35 years of experience.

He created the Science of the Surf program to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge of coastal hazards and public safety.

His work specifically addresses rip currents, which are responsible for an average of 45 drowning deaths in Australia each year.

As the dye was released into the water the Cape Woolamai currents quickly created a trail of green water showing the direction and speed of the



Professor Rob Brander (UNSW), Nick Grant-Collins (Bass Coast Shire Council) and Oliver Woods (Lifesaving Victoria) filming a documentary on surviving rips. B21_1026

rips close to the beach.

"The flow of a rip is very unsteady," said Professor Brander.

"Understanding how they form and how fast they flow is the key to survival."

Rip speeds can double at times caused by what is known as a rip pulse.

Usually they flow at half a metre a second which is hard to stand up in, but Dr Rip said a rip pulse can reach two metres a second which is the speed of Olympic swimmers.

"If you get stuck in a rip the traditional advice was to swim parallel to the beach, but not all rips run straight.

Conserve your energy, tread water, float and relax and signal for help by raising your hand," said Professor Brander.

"Surfers do a lot of rescuing so floating until help arrives is

always the best option."

Bass Coast Shire will use Dr Rip's safety video to educate the public about beach safety.

Professor Brander said drowning rates are going up because more people are going to the beach and many go to unpatrolled beaches.

"The increasing number of drownings is frustrating.

We need to think about how we can reduce it.

When you first arrive at a beach it is important to look at the conditions and think about your safety.

Look for lifeguards and swim between the flags.

If you don't know about rips don't go into the water."

Professor Brander said bystander drownings are also not uncommon.

"They go into the water to

save someone and end up drowning."

Professor Brander said the mistake was to rush in.

"If you see someone in trouble take time to think.

Call for help and look for something that floats such as a boogie board, esky lid or beach ball.

You're going to get tired and you'll be exhausted, so don't rush in."

The safety video will be made available through Life-saving Victoria to local schools and community groups and shared with Mornington Peninsula, Casey, Cardinia and Dandenong councils.

For more information about staying safe in the water go to basscoast.vic.gov.au/community-support-services/beach-safety

Beach deaths prompt safety push across Bass Coast

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New graphic warning signs depicting a man in difficulty in the water with the message "drowning deaths have occurred here" are being trialled at Cape Woolamai Surf Beach, Kilcunda Beach and Forrest Caves Beach as part of a joint project between Life Saving Victoria and Monash University.

New emergency location markers featuring unique six-character codes linked directly to Triple Zero Victoria's dispatch system have also been installed at beaches across Phillip Island, San Remo, Kilcunda, Cape Paterson and Inverloch.

Saturday's beach safety event drew more than 100 people to hear University of New South Wales coastal scientist Professor Rob Brander demonstrate the power of rip currents using coloured dye in the surf at Cape Woolamai.

Professor Brander said drowning rates were rising because more people were visiting unpatrolled beaches.

Federal Monash MP Mary Aldred said the report hit close to home.

"Tragically, we have seen too many drownings and experienced first-hand the trauma and grief that follows in Monash," Ms Aldred said.

"We know drowning can occur in seconds.

"The reality is 50 people did not return home from their day at the beach instantly changing the lives of their families and friends."

Ms Aldred said targeting strategies at men and providing warnings in different languages at dangerous beaches needed to be priorities.

She called for additional investment in life saving clubs and volunteers across the electorate.

"Number one, our incredible life saving clubs and volunteers across Monash need additional investment and support to boost equipment and skills," Ms Aldred said.

The report found life saving clubs saved an estimated 697 lives and performed 3989 rescues nationally this summer.

Coastal drowning accounted for 62 per cent of the national summer drowning burden with only six per cent of Australian beaches patrolled during summer.

The Bass Coast and South Gippsland coastline has been the setting for a series of drowning tragedies in recent years.

Four members of one family lost their lives at Forrest Caves Beach on January 24, 2024.

A 12-year-old boy went missing in the surf at Venus Bay on the Australia Day long weekend this year and has not been found.

Cr Halstead said the work would continue.

"This work will save lives," Cr Halstead said.

"It is important it is continued and provided in all languages as we see international visitors and multicultural communities from neighbouring councils flock to our region."

Permit-approved 93-lot estate near Wonthaggi hits market

A PERMIT-approved 93-lot residential subdivision near Wonthaggi has been listed for sale with a price tag of more than \$10 million as demand for housing land across Bass Coast continues to grow.

The 10.16-hectare site at 28 Station Street, Dalyston — marketed as Waterdale Estate — sits adjacent to the Dalyston township and carries endorsed plans ready for development.

Lot sizes range from 350sqm to 1,095sqm with an

average of 490sqm, targeting owner-occupiers, investors and builders.

Melbourne-based Jones Real Estate is handling the sale by expressions of interest, closing April 8.

The listing comes as Wonthaggi cements its status as one of regional Victoria's fastest-growing towns.

The state government's Wonthaggi North East Precinct Structure Plan — gazetted in 2024 — unlocked land for more than 5,000 new

homes across a 633-hectare precinct, with the Bass Coast Shire poised to nearly double in size over the coming decades.

The Dalyston site sits within the Township Zone under Bass Coast Shire Council and is not subject to Growth Area Infrastructure Contributions or Melbourne Strategic Assessment levies — charges that can add significantly to development costs on growth corridor sites elsewhere in Victoria.

External works are limited to approximately 500 metres of footpaths, a 170-metre link to the Wonthaggi Rail Trail and a \$120,000 VicRoads contribution.

Jones Real Estate managing director Paul Jones said permit-approved sites of this scale were increasingly hard to find in the region.

"Fully endorsed subdivision opportunities of this scale within the Bass Coast Shire are increasingly scarce," Mr Jones said.

Melina BATH MP
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6 Day Weather Forecast

SOUTH GIPPSLAND

WED Mar 11 Shower or two. Wind AM: Light Wind PM: N-NW 20-30km/h	THUR Mar 12 Shower or two. Wind AM: SW 20-30km/h Wind PM: SW 20-30km/h	FRI Mar 13 Cloudy. Wind AM: SW 20-25km/h Wind PM: S 15-20km/h	SAT Mar 14 Mostly sunny. Wind AM: Light Wind PM: Light	SUN Mar 15 Shower or two. Wind AM: Light Wind PM: S 15-20km/h	MON Mar 16 Possible shower. Wind AM: Light Wind PM: Light
14° 28°	12° 19°	11° 19°	8° 21°	10° 23°	13° 22°

IN BRIEF

Clarification

AN article published on February 17 titled 'Independent hits out at major party donation secrecy' stated that "mining magnate Gina Rinehart and related entities contributed more than \$1 million to the Liberals".

Australian Electoral Commission disclosure data for 2024-25 shows Hancock Prospecting donated \$204,000 to the Liberal Party and \$895,000 to Advance Australia, a political campaigning organisation made up of former Liberal Party members.

While the combined total exceeded \$1 million, the majority was directed to Advance Australia rather than the Liberal Party directly.

Devil's Dams golf course open as usual during sale

OWNERS of the popular Devil's Dams par 3 golf course at Inverloch have reassured players the course remains open as usual while the sales process is under way.

Lisa and Stephen Sorrell said they have received a number of enquiries from concerned golfers and diners following a recent Sentinel-Times story on the sale of the 20-acre Bass Highway property.

The nine-hole course, licensed cafe, garden maze and self-contained cottages continue to operate and welcome visitors as they have for the past three decades.

The Sorrells encouraged locals and visitors to keep coming out and enjoying the course and cafe while the sale progresses.

Korumburra skatepark and streetscape projects officially open

THE community is invited to celebrate the official opening of the Korumburra Skatepark and Streetscape Projects on Friday 13 March from 3.30pm at the Korumburra Rail Precinct.

The new skatepark was designed by East West and is aimed at beginners and intermediate skaters.

Grow Skate Society will host a skate clinic and demonstrations along with group activities and giveaways on the day.

The skatepark is part of the broader Korumburra Railway Precinct redevelopment which has been funded through a combination of the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund, the Victorian Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund and South Gippsland Shire Council.

The streetscape renewal project has included replacement of footpaths, changes to Commercial Street traffic flow and the addition of a manoeuvring lane to improve safety.

Skateboarders, rollerskaters, scooter and bike riders and community members are all welcome.

South Gippsland Field and Game AGM

SOUTH Gippsland Field and Game Inc will hold its annual general meeting on Tuesday 24 March at 7.30pm in the upstairs meeting room at the Leongatha RSL.

The club is a branch of Field and Game Australia, a national organisation formed in 1958 for conservation, hunting and clay target shooting.

Members are involved in clay target shooting events, wetland conservation and habitat management and organised hunts across the South Gippsland region.

All members are encouraged to attend the AGM to have their say on the direction of the club for the year ahead.

New members are welcome. For enquiries contact president Scott Grattan on 0400 803 671.

Korumburra RSL Sub-Branch AGM

THE Korumburra RSL Sub-Branch will hold its annual

general meeting on Wednesday 25 March at 7.30pm at 34 Mine Road, Korumburra.

The Sub-Branch has served the Korumburra district since 1919 and supports veterans and their families through welfare services, aged care activities and community engagement.

Members are encouraged to attend and have their say on the direction of the Sub-Branch for the coming year.

Regular meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month.

New members are welcome and the hall is available for community use by donation.

For enquiries contact David Jackson on 0474 136 469.

Wonthaggi RSL introduces 2026 committee

The Wonthaggi RSL Sub-Branch has introduced its 2026 committee after the annual general meeting held on Saturday 1 March.

The committee includes Kevin Walsh as president, Dan Lucas as vice president, Toni Cornelius as secretary and Andy Forster as treasurer.

Other committee members include Tony Ludgate and Patricia Ludgate as appeals coordinators, Melissa Lucas as wellbeing and media officer, Samantha Kimble and Lynda Probitts as committee members and Mark Stephenson as grants officer.

The Sub-Branch has extended an invitation to all emergency services personnel in the community to join as service members in recognition of their service commitment.

Farming decisions workshop heads to Meeniyan

South Gippsland farmers are invited to a one-day workshop at Meeniyan Community Hub on Tuesday 24 March to improve their farm business decision-making.

The workshop runs from 9am to 3.30pm and covers identifying key trigger points for farm business, managing costs and seizing opportunities.

Participants will learn how to navigate strategic priorities, manage risks, optimise resources and respond rapidly to seasonal challenges.

The training covers building capacity in decision-making for profitability, implementing decisions with checkpoints and milestones, and strengthening adaptability to change.

Farmers can register online for the event which focuses on practical techniques to improve overall farm business resilience.

E-scooter and e-bike injuries surge among children

VICTORIAN hospitals are treating record numbers of children injured on e-scooters and e-bikes with emergency department presentations surging more than 900 per cent in five years.

In 2024-25, 719 Victorian children aged two to 18 presented with e-scooter and e-bike injuries, a 67 per cent and 61 per cent increase respectively on the previous year.

Nearly half of e-scooter injuries involve children aged ten to 14 despite Victorian law prohibiting riders under 16.

Boys account for the majority with 71 per cent of e-scooter injuries and 87 per cent of e-bike injuries.

Kidsafe Victoria CEO Sarah Sexton said these are not toys but motorised vehicles capable of significant speeds.

Dr Adam West from Monash Health said patients averaged 13 years of age and experienced grazes, sprains, broken bones, brain injuries and abdominal organ trauma.

Legal requirements include a minimum age of 16, mandatory helmets, maximum speed of 20km/h and restrictions on footpaths.



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 Warragul Campus - 150 Bowen Street

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Police seek witnesses after stolen Prado smashes through two vehicles

BASS Coast Highway Patrol is investigating two collisions believed to involve a stolen silver Toyota Prado wagon taken from Lohr Avenue in Inverloch overnight on Saturday.

Police allege the vehicle was involved in several incidents across Bass Coast and South Gippsland in the early hours of Sunday.

The first collision occurred about 5.52am on Lynnes Road at St Clair between Kirrak Road and Hinterland Rise.

Police allege the stolen Prado was travelling on the wrong side of the road at high speed forcing another driver to take evasive action.

The vehicles collided and the Prado left the scene.

A second collision occurred about 6.55am on the Strzelecki Highway at Boorool between Boorool Road and Toomey Creek.

Police allege the Prado was again travelling on the wrong side of the road at high speed and a 59-year-old Wooreen woman was forced to swerve to avoid a head-on collision.

Both vehicles sustained major damage.

Multiple emergency services including volunteer firefighters and paramedics attended the scene.

The alleged driver of the stolen Prado, a 34-year-old Loch Sport man, was airlifted to the Alfred Hospital with moderate injuries including a broken leg.

The Wooreen woman was taken to Latrobe Regional Hospital for observation.

The Strzelecki Highway was closed for several hours while the road was cleared.

Police believe the stolen vehicle may have been involved in other incidents that have not yet been reported.

Anyone with information or dash-cam footage is asked to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or at crimestoppersvic.com.au.

RIGHT: The wreckage of the stolen Toyota Prado which police allege was involved in two collisions across Bass Coast and South Gippsland.



Wattle Bank winery shines at national tourism awards

INVERLOCH-based Harman Wines has taken home Silver at the national Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, competing against some of the country's best wine and spirits tourism operators at a gala ceremony held at Fremantle Prison on Friday, March 6.

The family-run winery, owned by David and Nicole Harman, claimed Silver in the Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries category at the prestigious annual event, which celebrates excellence across Australia's tourism industry.

Harman Wines earned its place in the national field after winning Gold at the Victorian Tourism Awards in the same category.

Competing against finalists from every state and territory -- including Beenleigh Artisan Distillery (QLD), Killara Distillery (TAS), Printhe Wines (NSW), Sepeltsfield Barossa (SA), Singlefile Wines (WA) and Willing Distillery (NT) -- the Gold ultimately went to Beenleigh Artisan Distillery.

Located at 612 Inverloch-Kongwak Road, Wattle Bank, just north of Inverloch, Harman Wines has built a strong following since David and Nicole Harman established the vineyard in 2004.

The winery specialises in cool-climate, coastal Gippsland wines crafted from estate-grown grapes, with a cellar door offering tastings, wood-fired pizzas, tapas and panoramic vineyard views.

Sustainability underpins the operation, with the winery running as a solar-powered, off-grid facility and sourcing produce locally where possible.

The Australian Tourism Awards, presented by the Australian Tourism Industry Council, require operators to first win Gold at their respective state tourism awards before competing at the national level -- putting Harman Wines among the best in the country in its category.

The winery attracts more than 35,000 visitors a year and is regarded as the most awarded wine business in Gippsland.

Vets sound alarm as one in three pets tip the scales

ONE in three pets are now dangerously overweight according to Melbourne's largest not-for-profit animal hospital, with Lort Smith vets treating growing numbers of animals at risk of diabetes, arthritis and heart disease.

Chief veterinarian Dr Jessica Wilde said excess feeding of treats or multiple family members feeding the pet were common causes of weight gain.

"Being overweight can have disastrous consequences for our pets including diabetes, arthritis and often a reduced life expectancy," Dr Wilde said. The hospital recommends increased exercise, reducing calories and monitoring treats.

Phillip Island celebrates decade of species recovery

PHILLIP Island Nature Parks has released its Threatened Species Report 2025 highlighting a decade of successful conservation work across the islands.

The report celebrates significant milestones in species recovery programs that have brought multiple species back from the brink of extinction in Victoria.

Eastern barred bandicoots were declared extinct in the wild in Victoria before a translocation program saw the species released across Churchill Island, Phillip Island and French Island between 2015 and 2019.

The bandicoot had been largely wiped out on the mainland surviving only within three fenced reserves before the island releases began.

The population is now establishing across the islands and in 2021 the species had its conservation status upgraded from extinct in the wild to endangered under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.



An eastern barred bandicoot forages in native scrub on Phillip Island where the species has been successfully reintroduced after being declared extinct in the wild in Victoria.

Bandicoots have continued to spread across Phillip Island with an increase in sightings around Cowes and Rhyll in recent months as the population grows.

Bush stone-curlews have been successfully reintroduced to Phillip Island after

a conservation breeding program began at the Koala Conservation Reserve.

A trial release of the critically endangered species achieved a 75 per cent survival rate marking one of the best outcomes for a reintroduction of the species anywhere in Australia.

Following the success of the trial 24 additional bush stone-curlews were released in 2025 establishing Phillip Island as a key recovery hub in Victoria for the species.

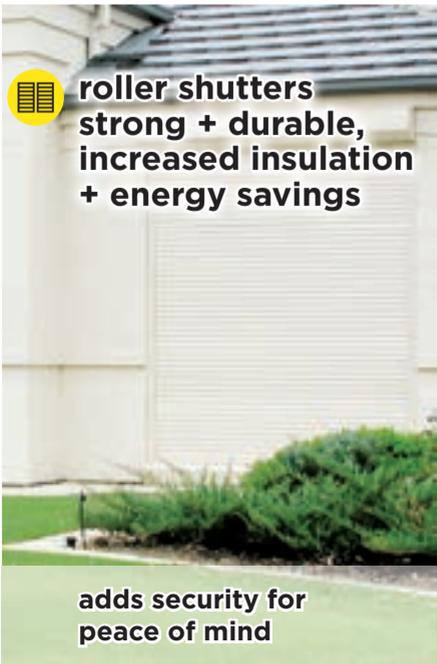
The report also details enhanced technology supporting conservation efforts with positive re-estimation of crimson berry populations indicating improved habitat management outcomes.

Phillip Island Nature Parks manages more than 1800 hectares of Crown Land across the island ecosystem.

The success of these programs reflects the collaborative effort of the community, donors and partners who have contributed to the conservation initiatives over more than a decade.

"These achievements demonstrate what can be accomplished through dedication and collaboration," the report states.

Phillip Island Nature Parks remains committed to protecting and recovering endangered species across the island ecosystem.



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Mayor's Message



Cr Rochelle Halstead



LAST Friday it was a pleasure to spend the afternoon with so many wonderful people from across our community at the Phillip Island Winery for Bass Coast Shire Council's International Women's Day Luncheon.

International Women's Day is always a special occasion. It is a time to come together to celebrate the achievements of women, reflect on how far we have come, and recognise that there is still work to do to ensure women and girls have equal opportunity in every part of our society.

This year's theme, Balance the Scales, is a reminder that progress happens when communities work together to support fairness, inclusion and opportunity.

What made the afternoon so meaningful was the strong sense of community in the room. People from all walks of life joined us, including community organisations, businesses, local leaders and residents who care deeply about creating a supportive and inclusive community for women and girls.

International Women's Day is also a moment to recognise the important role that men play as allies. Real progress happens when everyone is part of the conversation, supporting one another and working together to challenge barriers and create opportunities for women and girls to thrive.

Our keynote speaker, Hannah Diviney, delivered a thoughtful and inspiring address that really resonated with everyone in the room. Hannah's advocacy for disability inclusion and representation is helping shift conversations around equality and reminding us how important it is that every voice is heard and valued.

Supporting women and girls in sport is another important way we can help balance the scales. Council is currently building new netball pavilions at Bass Recreation Reserve and at Wonthaggi Recreation Reserves, providing modern change rooms, showers and amenities for local netballers. It is a small but important step toward ensuring women and girls have the dignity, safety and facilities they deserve when participating in sport, our netballers have had to change in their cars. The new facilities will also provide a welcoming space for families and the wider community.

I would like to sincerely thank our event partners Westernport Water, Bayside Health and Phillip Island Nature Parks for supporting this year's luncheon and helping make it possible.

Across Bass Coast we are fortunate to have so many strong, generous and passionate women who contribute to our community every day. They lead businesses, volunteer their time, support families and help make our community stronger.

To everyone who joined us, thank you for being part of such a positive and uplifting celebration. To the women and girls of Bass Coast, today and every day, we celebrate you.



Women from The Waterline including Bass Coast Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead and former Mayor Clare Le Serve celebrating International Women's Day at The Gurdies Winery. B08_1026

Women from the Waterline gather for International Women's Day

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day was celebrated by the women of The Waterline at an end of week function at The Gurdies Winery.

More than 75 guests attended the event which was supported by Bass Coast Shire Council to listen to three guest speakers talk about the achievements of local women including former Bass Coast Mayor Clare Le Serve, Colleen Williams publican of the San Remo Hotel and Helen

By Bruce Wardley

Zervopoulos President of the Grantville Recreation Reserve Committee of Management.

"It was a celebration of local heroes," said Ms Zervopoulos.

"Waterline women doing extraordinary things."

Ms Zervopoulos said women are making a proud contribution to the local community as volunteers, in

business, giving to the community and through networking and making community connections.

Community leader and event organiser Rowanne Grinstead said the event had been supported by the Bendigo Community Bank at Grantville and San Remo, Grantville Chemist, San Remo Hotel and Bass Coast Shire Council.

San Remo Hotel publican Colleen Williams said she

was proud to be a fourth generation publican of the 'Sunny Hotel at San Remo.

"It's busy, hectic, fun and challenging," said Ms Williams.

Ms Williams had some wise advice for girls in business and the community.

"If someone says no, don't be afraid to be stubborn, and say yes."

You can find The Gurdies Winery at 215 Gurdies-St Helier Rd, The Gurdies.

Entries open for Bass Coast Business Awards

ENTRIES are now open for the 2026 Bass Coast Business Awards with the annual program celebrating the achievements of local businesses for a 19th year.

Bass Coast Shire Council is calling on local businesses to apply for one of the judged award categories for a chance to be recognised and celebrated.

An independent panel of business experts will evaluate each entry with applicants answering specific questions about their achievements over the past year.

Businesses can self-nominate for as many categories as they are eligible for and all judged award applicants are automatically entered into the Business of the Year category.

The awards include six judged categories with Business Innovation among the most popular as well as seven People's Choice Award categories led by Food and Beverage.

Voting for the 2026 People's Choice Awards opened on Thursday with members of the public able to vote for

their favourite local businesses.

Businesses and event organisers do not need to register to be eligible for the People's Choice Awards.

Voters go into the draw to win one of two \$100 local business vouchers.

Last year almost 2000 People's Choice votes were cast across seven categories recognising 149 different businesses.

The judged categories attracted 46 entries across industries such as tourism construction hospitality

events home-based ventures and more.

The awards play an important role in promoting and supporting the Bass Coast business community providing successful applicants with recognition that helps attract customers and build profile across the region.

Finalists will be announced on 29 June 2026 with winning businesses and events to be announced at the awards presentation dinner in August.

For more information visit basscoast.vic.gov.au.

Danny O'BRIEN^{MP}
State Member for Gippsland South

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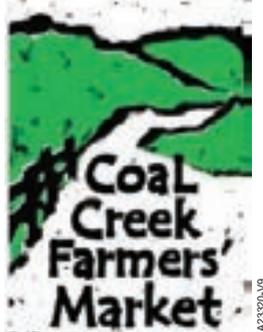


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Be snake-aware this March

AMBULANCE Victoria paramedics and first responders have been called to 171 suspected snakebites since November and are urging Victorians to stay vigilant throughout March.

From November 1, 2025 to February 21, 2026, paramedics attended 48 incidents in Hume, 37 in Metro, 25 in Barwon Southwest, 20 in Loddon Mallee, 20 in Gippsland and 17 in Grampians, with 165 people transported to hospital.

Ambulance Victoria Manager Emergency Management Rebecca Hirsch said most snakes in Victoria are venomous and a bite can be life-threatening.

"Bites can often be avoided simply by being observant in areas that are likely to attract snakes such as near rivers, long grass or sheds," Ms Hirsch said.

"Victorians can also take preventative measures around their home by keeping their property clear of rocks, logs and building materials and keeping grass short.

"If someone is suspected to have suffered a snake bite even if you are not sure you should call Triple Zero (000) immediately."

Professional snake catcher Kevin Girstun, who operates across Bass Coast, has reported up to five callouts a day this season with lowland copperheads prevalent along the coast and tiger snakes more common inland.

Ms Hirsch said if a bite victim is unresponsive and not breathing normally bystanders should begin CPR, and if conscious the patient should be kept still while waiting for help.

Applying a pressure immobilisation bandage to the affected limb can make a big difference to treatment and outcome.

People should not wash the site of the bite as venom left on the skin can help identify the snake and the anti-venom required.

Former Sentinel-Times journalist named Quill Awards finalist

By Trent Westaway

A FORMER Sentinel-Times journalist has been named a finalist in the 31st annual Quill Awards hosted by the Melbourne Press Club.

The awards are one of Australia's most prestigious media ceremonies.

Ashlee Aldridge, who began her career with work experience for the Star newspaper and seven years with the Sentinel-Times, has been shortlisted in the 'Best Breaking News or Live Coverage' category.

Currently working with ABC News, Ms Aldridge received her nomination for her coverage of the tragic Porepunkah police shooting, in which two police officers were allegedly shot dead by Desmond (Dezi) Freeman.

Ms Aldridge said the nomination felt surreal.

"It's honestly still a bit surreal to see my name in a category with major commercial networks," she said.

"If anyone had said I'd be nominated for a Quill Award, let alone in a breaking news category, there's no way I would have believed it. It's a huge honour."

Ms Aldridge was born and bred in Leongatha, attending the local Leongatha Secondary College before moving to Sydney to continue her studies at university. She spotted a job advertisement for the Sentinel-Times and returned to South



Ashlee Aldridge on location in Porepunkah during the police shooting coverage that has seen her named a finalist in this year's Quill Awards.

Gippsland after her application was successful.

She joined the newspaper in 2009 and worked for seven years, primarily out of the Korumburra office which has since been closed permanently.

"It was my first job out of uni," she said.

"I was the sole Korumburra journalist, covering everything from court and council to community events. I genuinely don't think I could have had a better training ground."

"I'm very thankful for the time I spent at the Sentinel," she said.

"I still remember my last

day. I bawled my eyes out when I left to go to WIN News because I genuinely loved my time there."

Ms Aldridge left the Sentinel-Times in 2016, spending the next two years with WIN News before joining the ABC in 2018. She is now based in the Albury-Wodonga area.

The story that earned the nomination began with a tip-off from a local contact who noticed heavy police presence in Porepunkah. After a few calls, Ms Aldridge was able to confirm that something serious was indeed unfolding, and drove an hour to the scene.

When she arrived, the

situation was still developing. "It was pretty chaotic," she said.

"They hadn't confirmed that the police had died at that stage, so it was still unfolding. I've been to a lot of crime scenes over the years, but this one definitely had a different atmosphere. It was very tense."

Despite her success, Ms Aldridge remains a strong advocate for regional journalism.

"I'd highly recommend starting at your local newspaper," she said.

"You already know the community and the contacts, so you're halfway there. Regional journalism is so important."



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Leongatha Red Cross Monster Raffle supports vital aid work

LEONGATHA Red Cross is holding its Monster Raffle to raise funds for the organisation's vital humanitarian work across Australia.

The raffle running from late March until the Saturday before Mother's Day offers tickets at just \$2 each.

Top prize is a high tea and tour of Parliament House for four people valued at \$330.

Second prize is a Little Bit of Luxury hamper worth \$120 while third prize comprises four Robert Gordon mugs valued at \$50.

Red Cross relies on community support to continue its work.

Last year's annual report highlighted the collective impact of the organisation's efforts with 18,209 members and volunteers acting for humanity across Australian communities.

The report noted 1387 employees provided support and care to those in need while 408 branches units and clubs strengthened local connections.

Red Cross delivered 144,964 meals to nearly 1500 older Australians and more than 1.3 million hours of volunteer support were provided through Telecross and Telechat services connecting older and vulnerable people.

In addition 1,672,293 blood plasma and platelet donations were made by the Australian community.

The Leongatha unit has also been holding fundraising activities during March which is traditionally Red Cross Month.

Community members are encouraged to support the Monster Raffle by purchasing tickets when Leongatha Red Cross members are selling in the local area.

War on Waste host guest speaker at Sustainability Festival



Stella Hitchins from Wonthaggi Country Harvest Garden with ABC War on Waste presenter and Sydney ABC breakfast radio host Craig Reucassel guest speaker at the Bass Coast Sustainability Festival. B25_1026



Atticus and Saxon Cathcart at the Bass Coast Sustainability Festival with Emma Jakobson from Animals Oz and a native bettong or rat-kangaroo. B28_1026

ABC War on Waste presenter and Sydney ABC breakfast radio host Craig Reucassel shared his insights and thoughts on environmental action as the featured speaker at this year's Bass Coast Sustainability Festival in Cowes.

Welcoming the festival back to Blue Gum Reserve for the first time since 2023 Festival Coordinator Peter Maganov expected more than 1,000 people to attend.

"A celebration of the work of volunteers to protect the environment," said Mr Maganov.

Supported by the South Gippsland Food Alliance, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bass Coast Shire Council and Bass Coast and Phillip Island Landcare Groups the festival featured more than 20 stalls including community groups, saleable products, recycled clothing and artwork, a community garden and an environmental arts exhibition with creative workshops for children and parents.

The Blue Gum Reserve community garden featured hands-on demonstrations showcasing practical skills for sustainable gardening and local food production.

Live music was provided by local musicians from Green Room Concept Studios (GRCS) music school

By Bruce Wardley

and Newhaven College. Emergency service displays and activities were provided by the CFA and SES.

The festival is part of a broader commitment to sustainability by Bass Coast Shire Council which includes the Living Lightly program a series of 40 free sustainability workshops held throughout the year.

The four episodes of War on Waste on ABC television saw Mr Reucassel on a mission to uncover how much waste Australia produced as a nation and what could be learned.

In the first episode of the series Mr Reucassel focused on the staggering amount of food waste ending up in landfill every year. In the second episode War on Waste went underwater to discover the shocking amount of plastic waste that ends up in our oceans which in turn becomes ingested by marine life.

In the remaining episodes Mr Reucassel explored the impact that coffee cups and fast fashion have on our environment, examined the world's obsession with fast fashion and looked at how Australians have changed the way they think about waste.

War on Waste can be seen at iview.abc.net.au/show/war-on-waste



Tim Morley Gormandale & Tony Platt Rabobank

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Zoe Rotthier, Rural Manager 0419 250 793

Craig Hooper, Senior Rural Manager 0421 097 451

Rabobank 

Bunnings browser and botched getaway among busy week for local police

LOCAL police had a busy fortnight with a bungled burglary in Leongatha, a brazen shopping trip in a stolen vehicle at Wonthaggi and a major road safety operation over the Labour Day long weekend.

In the early hours of Monday March 3 two offenders allegedly gained access to a major electrical supply facility in Horn Street Leongatha in an attempt to steal cabling and copper products.

After being startled by a patrolling security vehicle a 30-year-old Leongatha woman allegedly attempted to flee in an unregistered Holden Commodore.

Police from Wonthaggi and San Remo stations responded and the woman allegedly hid the vehicle in a dark corner of Watson Road before abandoning her hiding spot and hitting a raised gutter and median strip at the intersection of Geary Road and Horn Street deflating both front tyres.

Officers tracked the vehicle through gouge marks left in the roadway as it travelled sluggishly through multiple streets around Leongatha.

The woman allegedly attempted to exit the moving vehicle via the passenger door in Greenwood Parade before fleeing on foot along the rail trail.

Police arrested her seconds later. She was allegedly found in possession of stolen mobile phones and laptops, illegal drugs, an OBD11 vehicle key programming device used to override car keys and tools commonly associated with burglary.

The woman was charged with going equipped to steal, possession of methylamphetamine,

possession of a prescription drug, committing an indictable offence while on bail, two counts of possessing a controlled weapon without excuse and using an unregistered motor vehicle.

She was bailed to appear at Korumburra Magistrates Court on August 13.

Meanwhile shoppers at Bunnings Warehouse Wonthaggi got more than they bargained for on Sunday when a man allegedly arrived in a stolen Ford Ranger bearing false number plates before heading inside to browse like any other customer.

Police allege the 30-year-old Woodleigh man parked the vehicle in the store's timber yard before making his way into the main shopping area.

Upon noticing police presence the man allegedly abandoned his shopping plans and the vehicle opting instead for a sprint across the car park.

The foot pursuit ended quickly with officers apprehending the man nearby.

He was charged and bailed to appear at Korumburra Magistrates Court.

The stolen vehicle was recovered.

The incidents came as police ramped up their presence on local roads over the Labour Day long weekend under Operation Arid which ran from Friday March 6 to Monday March 9.

State and local highway patrols targeted high-risk driving and traffic offences with Bass Coast among the regional areas with the highest number of collisions over last year's Labour Day long weekend.

March recorded more than 1600

injury collisions across Victoria in 2025 including 23 fatalities.

Road Policing Acting Assistant Commissioner Justin Goldsmith said police had a major presence on the state's roads.

"March continues to be associated with road trauma and we need to put a stop to it," Mr Goldsmith said.

"We targeted those high-risk behaviours and locations and prioritised at-risk road users to ensure safety was paramount and everyone was adhering to the road rules."

Rear-end collisions were the most common crash type over last year's long weekend.

Injury collisions involving speed, fatigue, motorcyclists, cyclists and e-rideables have all historically peaked in March.

Police warned motorists to expect widespread alcohol and drug testing particularly around major events.

Police are also appealing for information after a boat was stolen from outside a residential property on Drouin-Poowong Road in Poowong sometime between February 16 and 17.

Anyone with information about the theft is asked to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or at crimestoppersvic.com.au.

Police are reminding residents that most burglars are not criminal masterminds and a locked door is often all it takes to stop opportunistic thieves.

Neighbourhood Watch's Safety in Neighbours campaign encourages communities to look out for one another.

More information is available at nhw.com.au.



Rural romance on the roadside

THIS 'hayppy' couple was spotted on farmland in Leongatha South last week in what was a creative display of rural ingenuity and humour.

The hay bale bride and groom complete with veil top hat and formal attire brought smiles to passing motorists on the scenic stretch of road.

Hay bale art has become a popular tradition in farming communities across Gippsland with landowners using the bales to create eye-catching roadside displays that celebrate local life and entertain travellers.

The tradition extends beyond the paddocks of

South Gippsland, with hay bale artists in Bass regularly transforming their bales into elaborate Christmas displays featuring reindeers, the Grinch and more, proving that when it comes to seasonal creativity, Gippsland farmers are anything but baled up.

The displays have become something of a landmark attraction for locals and visitors alike who make a point of seeking them out as they travel through the region's back roads each festive season, with many stopping to photograph the scenes and share them on social media, turning humble hay bales into viral moments.

NO ONE'S UNSINKABLE

To all those Unsinkable Guys out there –

You might think it's safe to have a few drinks around water, skip the life jacket when you're out on the boat or go for a swim without checking the conditions.

But statistics prove that 4 out of 5 drownings are men.

Just remember that no one's unsinkable.

Q UNSINKABLE GUY

RETHINK
TAKING RISKS
AROUND
WATER





South Gippsland
Shire Council

South Gippsland Shire Council News

Community Training

Council is partnering with Volunteering Gippsland and other Gippsland councils to offer community training.

The training will be held simultaneously at venues across Gippsland, with the speaker presenting live at one location and streamed to the others.

All sessions in South Gippsland will be held at the Korumburra Library - Myli but you are welcome to attend whichever location suits you best.

DETAILS

ALL SESSIONS:

Place: Korumburra Library - Myli - My Community Library, Korumburra Hub, 15 Little Commercial Street.

Time: 6.00pm - 8.00pm.

Volunteer Life Cycle with Hazel Maynard

When: Tuesday 17 March.

This session walks you through every stage of the volunteer journey, providing

practical tools to build a stronger, more connected volunteer team.

Your Roadmap to Community Success: Strategic Planning with Damen Francis

When: Tuesday 21 April.

Whether your group is new to strategic planning or ready for a refresh, learn to map out a future that's focused, realistic and community-driven.

Power in Partnership with Gabbie Farnham

When: Tuesday 26 May.

This session teaches you how to build lasting partnerships that boost your group's impact, turning shared ideas into shared action.

For more information, visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/communitytraining

Korumburra Skatepark Opening



Calling all skateboarders, rollerskaters, scooter and bike riders, and community members!

Join us for the opening of the Korumburra Skatepark.

Where: Skatepark, Korumburra Railway Precinct.

When: Friday 13 March, 3.30pm.

Grow Skate Society will be hosting a skate clinic and demonstrations, group activity, and giveaways.

For more information, visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/skatepark-opening

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next Council Meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 March 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

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

SOUTH GIPPSLAND JOBS EXPO 2026

The Jobs Expo is your chance to:

- Chat with employers who are hiring now.
- Get help with resume writing and interviews.
- Find information on apprenticeships, traineeships, TAFE and university education.

When: Thursday 19 March, 10.00am - 2.00pm.

Where: Memorial Hall, 6-8 McCartin Street, Leongatha.

JOBS EXPO BUSINESS BREAKFAST

Local businesses are invited to join us for breakfast from 7.30am to 9.30am at Council Chambers, Michael Place, Leongatha on Thursday 19 March, proudly sponsored by Marinus Link.

For more information, visit:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/jobsexpo

REQUEST FOR TENDER

Council is seeking submissions from qualified companies/applicants for the following:

RFT/458 - Design and Construction of AFL Sports Floodlighting - Nyora Recreation Reserve & Leongatha Recreation Reserve

Tenders close at 2.00pm AEDT on Tuesday 31 March 2026.

RFT/463 - Resheet Program 2026/27 - Unsealed Roads

Tenders close at 2.00pm AEDT on Tuesday 14 April 2026.

Documentation is available from Council's e-Tendering Portal:

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/tenders

CONTACT US

9 Smith Street, Leongatha
03 5662 9200

www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au

Korumburra outdoor pool not to be overlooked

By Bruce Wardley

WITH South Gippsland Council working on a revised Aquatic Plan Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey has firmly denied the Korumburra outdoor pool had been overlooked.

"Maintenance was done before the start of the current season," Cr Hersey said.

"The pool is an older asset and with that comes extra maintenance."

South Gippsland Shire has six pools to maintain at Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North, Poowong, Foster and Toora, with the indoor pool at Korumburra privately owned and operated.

"The budget has to be carefully managed," Cr Hersey said.

"There are always competing priorities for a limited budget."

A timeline for the Korumburra pool has not yet been considered as council continues to work on an Aquatic Plan as part of council's South Gippsland Asset Plan 2025 to 2035.

"We are not at a stage yet where we could engage with the community," Cr Hersey said.

"Once we have considered the condition of the assets we will engage with the community."

"Council will always look for grant applications."

Cr Hersey said government would like to see a costed and shovel ready project to fund and could not comment on whether a new pool would be needed at Korumburra.

"It's too soon," he said.



South Gippsland Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey said Council's aquatic facilities would be discussed as part of broader budget discussions on how Council is managing its assets for the long term. B07_1026

South Gippsland Shire Council said as with all the outdoor pools there had been numerous works completed or underway at Korumburra Outdoor Pool in the lead up to the season.

These works included replacement of the old concrete wet deck slab, testing, renewal and replacement of chemical storage areas, installation of a chemical mixing tank, servicing of a circulation pump, renewal of a damaged expansion joint and replacement of damaged pool tiles.

Sarah Lawless from the South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and

Employment Network said it was really great to see students at a recent lifeguard training session at the Korumburra pool being engaged in an active program.

Ms Lawless said it was really good to give young people a skill they can use in the area.

"It links them in with indoor pools to gain more experience."

Mark Tudor from the South Gippsland Bass Coast Trade Skills Alliance said it was a wonderful collaboration between the South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN, SGT-SA, Foster S.C. and South Gippsland Shire Council.

Student lifeguard Abbey

Best who has been swimming since she was eight said Toora pool was happy with the course because they now have access to more lifeguards.

"I want people to be able to swim," Ms Best said.

The Korumburra Community Development Association will be holding a community engagement and information session from 6pm on Wednesday April 29 at the Korumburra Scout Hall as a way to inform, plan and connect with the community on local issues.

A KCDA community engagement survey can be found online at surveymonkey.com/r/D9R9QTY.

Toora North landslip repair better than before?

LANDSLIP repairs on Longstaffs Road in Toora North are intended to be delivered during the current financial year with a contract having been awarded for the work by South Gippsland Shire Council.

Huitema Plumbing and Excavation trading as Huitema Civil Projects will carry out the repairs at a cost of \$98,686.70 excluding GST.

Work must be completed by June 30 to remain eligible for funding under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements administered by

By Andrew Paloczi

Emergency Recovery Victoria.

The embankment damage on Longstaffs Road occurred during an August 2022 storm.

"We're building back better I am told so to me this is what we should be doing with everything," Cr John Schelling said during the recent February council meeting.

The DRFA provides funding to restore essential public assets to their pre-disaster function with the Longstaffs Road works being delivered in accordance with eligibility

requirements.

"The road is being reinstated to restore its intended function and service level," a South Gippsland Shire Council spokesperson said elaborating on Cr Schelling's remark about "building back better."

"The phrase 'building back better' is often used in a general sense to describe incorporating contemporary engineering standards and improved resilience into reconstruction works and it does not mean that the project is being upgraded beyond

DRFA eligibility requirements," the spokesperson said.

Council has previously advocated for Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to go beyond what is required to return public assets to their pre-disaster state enabling improvements to be made that boost resilience to future natural disasters.

That advocacy was directed through the Municipal Association of Victoria members of which endorsed South Gippsland Shire Council's motion on the subject.

Pollies push for Nyora to get its own kindergarten

FAMILIES in Nyora are being forced to travel to neighbouring towns to access kindergarten with local politicians calling on the state government to establish an early childhood education centre in the growing community.

Eastern Victoria MLC Melina Bath and Gippsland South MLA Danny O'Brien have called on the state government to work with the community to deliver the project.

Ms Bath said Gippsland has been recognised as an early learning and childcare desert with towns like Nyora lacking

access to local kindergarten programs.

"To attend early childhood education many rural families must travel to neighbouring towns which is inconvenient creates structural barriers and impacts enrolments in our rural schools," she said.

Gippsland has the second-lowest proportion of early childhood teachers in the state with about 350 teachers serving the entire region.

The population of the Nyora, Loch and Poowong district is projected to grow to more than 4600 by 2036 increasing

demand for local services.

Mr O'Brien said a kindergarten co-located next to Nyora Primary School would strengthen the community and support long-term enrolment growth.

"A co-located kindergarten next to Nyora Primary School would support long-term sustainability by strengthening school transitions enhancing enrolments and deepening community connections," he said.

"The Nyora community is highly motivated to see a local kindergarten be realised with

the Community Development Group actively supporting the project and open to flexible partnership approaches."

The Nyora Community Development Group has been actively supporting the push and is open to working with government and partners to deliver the project.

A co-located facility would provide a natural pathway for children transitioning from kindergarten into primary school while also boosting enrolments and providing a hub for young families.

Mayor's Message



South Gippsland Shire Council

Cr Nathan Hersey



Mental Health

SOUTH Gippsland Shire Council is proud to support our young people through the Live4Life. Now in our fourth year, the Program supports students in Years 8, 9 and 10 with opportunities to learn more about mental health and suicide prevention so they can be there for their mates.

We are looking for community members with a passion for youth mental health and support, to apply to become a Teen Mental Health First Aid instructor. In this role, you will do an Instructor course through Mental Health First Aid Australia so you can deliver the Teen Mental Health First Aid training.

For more information and to submit an Expression of Interest, please visit: www.south-gippsland.vic.gov.au/live4life

Our support for the Live4Life program closely aligns with one of our advocacy priorities in seeking improved access to mental health services across South Gippsland. We know that there is a need for more and improved services.

The Labor Government committed funding in the 2023/24 State Budget for a new Mental Health and wellbeing Hub in Leongatha that is yet to be delivered.

Council implores the Victorian Government to keep their promise and deliver a Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub in Leongatha, to ensure local people can receive local support.

Korumburra Skate Park Opening

Join us as we celebrate the official opening of the Korumburra Skatepark and the Korumburra Town Centre Streetscape (Commercial Street) projects.

These projects have been positive improvements to the town of Korumburra, with the Streetscape providing a fresh and inviting look, and the popular Skatepark entertaining people of all ages.

While there may not be another demonstration of my skateboarding skills on the day, there will be a skate clinic and demonstration held by Grow Skate Society – just bring your own skateboard, scooter and safety gear to join the fun.

The opening is taking place on Friday, March 13 from 3.30pm at the Korumburra Skatepark. I look forward to seeing you there!

Coal Creek Exhibitions

On Saturday I attended the opening of a new art exhibition at Coal Creek. Titled TRACE: Sea ghosts and other phenomena, the exhibition combines the talents of Kim MacDonald, Jasmine Susic and Karli Duckett as they explore the coast and our connection to nature.

You can view the exhibition until April 20.

Also, still on at Coal Creek is the Daniel Crook's Phantom Ride exhibition. Immerse yourself in his amazing work that includes videos that truly make you feel like you are part of his world. This exhibition runs until April 20 also.

South Gippsland Jobs Expo 2026

Looking for work or wanting a career change? Come along to the South Gippsland Jobs Expo and meet with employers with current vacancies that could be the perfect for you.

There will also be information on what TAFE and University courses are on offer, and representatives from regional employment networks who could help you find your calling.

The event is free and will be held on Thursday, March 19 from 10am to 1pm at Leongatha Memorial Hall.

There will be on-the-day interviews, so bring along your current resume and dress to impress.

I hope everyone made the most of the long weekend and all that South Gippsland has to offer, being a great place to live, work and enjoy!

Support The Smith Family with Wonthaggi VIEW Club

THIS year, VIEW clubs of Australia are embracing the theme "Give to Gain".

For VIEW, giving is at the heart of everything its members do: giving time, friendship and support to help children and families in need to thrive.

VIEW, which stands for Voice, Interests and Education of Women, is a network of more than 260 clubs and more than 13,000 women throughout Australia.

For more than 65 years, VIEW clubs have supported The Smith Family which is at present supporting the education of more than 1,825 Australian children.

Wonthaggi VIEW Club president Ann is inviting new members to join the group, which meets on the third Monday evening at the Wonthaggi Club for dinner.

The club currently supports six students in The Smith Family's "Learning for Life" program.

Right now, The Smith Family is seeking sponsors and donors for its "Back to School Appeal".

If you are able to sponsor or donate, please go to: <https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/>.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Wonthaggi VIEW Club or who would like to receive further information can call Ann on 0490 061 172.

Warning of 24/7 sand dredging works at Inverloch

By Bruce Wardley

WITH sand dredging set to begin at Anderson Inlet next month the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has warned of the possibility of the Kirra suction dredge working 24 hours a day 7 days a week once operations begin.

Although dredging works were initially planned from 6am to 6pm with vessel noise most likely to occur between 6.30am and 5.30pm, allowance has been made to extend the working hours to allow for 24/7 operations.

Most activity is expected to occur during daytime hours Monday to Sunday.

Noise levels are anticipated to be low and disruption expected to be minimal due to the sand dredging vessels and equipment being fitted with residential-grade mufflers.

Although between 50 and 100 metres of beach will closed at any given time, areas outside the flagged nourishment zone will remain open and safe for public use.

Trucks will not be used to transport sand to the beach.

Sand will instead be pumped directly onto the shoreline through the dredge pipeline, however from time to time trucks will be required to deliver plant and equipment to the site.

Deliveries will be staggered to minimise disruption and it is anticipated traffic will continue to flow freely without congestion.

The main roads likely to be



Depending on weather conditions sand dredging works could be extended 24/7 once beach nourishment works start at Anderson Inlet in Inverloch. B18_0826

used for equipment deliveries include Surf Parade, The Esplanade, Treadwells Road, Inverloch - Venus Bay Road and Williams Street.

Any alternative routes including Ramsey Boulevard will be determined by the transport operators taking into account vehicle access requirements and road limitations.

DEECA has advised that private vessels will still be able to safely navigate over the dredge pipeline, with two designated safe crossing points to be established within Anderson Inlet.

These will be clearly marked with standard port (red) and starboard (green) navigation markers to guide boat operators.

Mariners are encouraged to proceed with caution and follow all signage in the area.

The High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) pipe which will be used to pump sand onto the surf beach will have an inner diameter of 400-450mm and an outer diameter of 500mm.

Sand will be placed along the shoreline from the bend near Cape Paterson - Inverloch Road at the western end of the site, extending east to Ozone Street.

Renourishment will start at the eastern end and progress west.

Comprehensive monitoring will occur throughout the dune reconstruction and beach nourishment works to ensure the intended design outcomes are met.

A pre-dredging survey will be undertaken at the borrow area, nourishment area and in the nearshore waters of the nourishment area to establish a baseline condition.

Weekly dredging surveys will be conducted at the borrow area, entrance channels and nourishment area until dredging is complete.

These surveys will monitor the rate of dredging, guide the placement volumes within the dunes, and monitor how the channels respond to dredging within the entrance.

Post-dredging surveys will be carried out at both the borrow and nourishment areas following completion of dredging to calculate the total volume of material dredged and to compare the completed dune outcomes against the approved design.

Once the works have been completed the site will continue to be monitored as part of the Victorian Coastal Monitoring Program (VCMP) using drone shoreline survey monitoring.

Flights will take place every 6 to 8 weeks depending on weather conditions.

DEECA said it was not possible to predict how the sand nourishment works will affect local surfing conditions.

The sand will largely be stockpiled and contained on the beach to improve dune stability and enhance safety.

"Some natural movement of sand may occur over time."

Surfers and swimmers will not be prevented from entering the water during the works however DEECA has advised against surfing or swimming in the vicinity of the water discharge location.

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Loch's 150th Anniversary celebrations well attended

By Bruce Wardley

LOCH and District 150th Anniversary celebrations held over the Labour Day weekend attracted hundreds of local residents back to the historic South Gippsland town.

The event marked 150 years since the first settlement of Loch in 1876.

Friday night began with a free community sausage sizzle at Sunnyside Park and the launch of a new history book by Lorraine Knox and the 150th Anniversary committee titled Loch & District Settlement 1876 - 2026 Honouring our History.

Saturday's activities included displays of old machinery, memorabilia and historic photos at the Memorial Reserve, Bowling Club and Loch Public Hall, the unveiling of a 150th commemorative seat at Centennial Park by Loch's oldest resident John Tuckfield and a Tree of Life at Loch Primary School and the digging up of a Loch Football Club time capsule at the Loch Memorial Reserve.

Anniversary committee member Roy Jones was given the job of digging up the time capsule from where it was buried in 1993 after the last game of football in 1992.

President of the Loch CWA Helen Bryce and CWA member Louise Batchlor served up scones with jam and cream at



Tim Layton holding the Loch F.C. time capsule buried in 1993 after Loch played its last game in 1992 and dug up again in 2026 as part of Loch's 150th Anniversary. B18_1026

the Loch Public Hall.

"The CWA always welcomes new members of all ages to have a good time, contribute to the community, and get some cookery lessons," said Ms Bryce.

Saturday's activities continued with a Loch Young Farmers Reunion, an Open Day at local facilities, the cutting of a commemorative cake and a very entertaining historical re-enactment featuring one of

Loch's first settlers Mrs A.R. Smith and a local history trivia night at the Loch Public Hall.

The Loch Village Sunday market was popular and on Monday an ecumenical church service combining the Uniting Church, Catholic, Church of England and Baptist Church was held at the Uniting Church in Roy Street followed by a school reunion and gathering at Loch Primary School which

attracted hundreds of former

residents back to Loch eager to swap stories, take group photos and reminisce about their old school days.

The Loch and District 150th Anniversary was supported by South Gippsland Shire Council, Loch Community Development Association and Opportunity Lochs.

For more highlights of the anniversary weekend go to the Loch & District 150 years celebrations Facebook page.

Trivia night to support Bass Coast refugee families

A GALA trivia night will raise funds for newly arrived refugee families in Bass Coast on Saturday March 21 at the Dalyston Hall.

The Bass Coast Refugee Sponsorship Group is hosting the event to support its work with families settling in the region through the federal government's Community Refugee Integration and Support Program.

The group is auspiced by the Wontaggi Neighbourhood Centre and has been welcoming refugee families to the region since 2022.

The group's latest sponsored family, the Al Hajjs, arrived at Tullamarine Airport in early January from Syria.

Khaled and Amira Al Hajj and their four children have already begun putting down roots in Bass Coast, planting a vegetable garden and enrolling the children in school and kindergarten.

Three other Syrian families settled in Bass Coast since 2022 are helping the Al Hajjs navigate their new community.

The sponsorship group provides practical material and financial support to newly arrived refugee families during their first 12 months in Australia, helping with everything from housing and government services to connecting families with schools and local employers.

The trivia night features competitions as well as music, food, games, prizes and plenty of laughs.

Bass Coast Shire Council signed the Refugee Welcome Zone initiative in 2005 committing the region to welcoming people who have sought safety in Australia.

For more information visit the Bass Coast Refugee Sponsorship Group's Facebook page.

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Poowong Consolidated celebrates sustainability at the Harvest Festival

POOWONG Consolidated School's latest Harvest Festival celebrated sustainability and hands-on learning.

The festival began as an extension of the school's focus on reducing food waste and valuing the produce grown on school grounds.

Science and Sustainability Teacher, Lauren Dobie, said the school wanted students to understand where food comes from, how it can be shared, and the importance of not letting good food go to waste.

"In the lead-up to the event, students harvested produce and prepared goods, and our community donated any of their excess harvest," said Ms Dobie.

"A special highlight was working alongside local members of the Poowong District Country Women's Association, who generously shared their time, knowledge and experience."

Students had the opportunity to connect with community members across generations, learning practical skills and hearing stories that brought food and tradition to life.

"After school, our garden space transformed into a vibrant market," Ms Dobie said.

"Families and community members gathered to purchase fresh produce, homemade goods and student-created items, while enjoying soup, smoothies and children's activities.

"The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, with laughter and conversation filling the space."

Ms Dobie said the Harvest Festival was a wonderful reminder of what can happen when a community comes together, sharing food, knowledge and time.

"We are incredibly grateful to the CWA members and our school community, all who contributed to making the afternoon such a success."

Students' choice of experience beyond the classroom at Newhaven College



Newhaven College student Cormac Flynn took on the challenge of Mt Stirling Hike in 2025.



This International Women's Day, Newhaven College Balance the Scales together. L to R: Newhaven College Principal Tony Corr, Macey Sanders-Rogers, Lucas Jungwirth, Carla Sorensen, and Head of Junior School Cath Huther.

THE benefits of school camps extend well beyond time away from the classroom.

Building resilience, independence, connection with nature and strong peer relationships camps can be truly transformative experiences for students of all ages.

At Newhaven College outdoor education remains a central part of the student journey.

Principal Tony Corr said the college remains committed to providing meaningful camp experiences at every year level.

"Camps remain a central part of the school experience," Mr Corr said.

"Whilst other educational sectors have had to compromise or remove camp programs Newhaven continues to offer valuable overnight and camp experiences tailored for each year level."

To help students transition into their senior years after an action-packed Year 9 Newhaven College's Year 10 students have the opportunity to choose their own camp experience.

Recognising that students thrive in different environments the college offers a diverse range of options to suit a range of interests and strengths.

Choices include Beginners' Surf Camp, High Country Horse Riding, High Country Hiking, Art and Wellbeing Camp, Mountain Bike Camp

and the ever-popular Wollangarra Adventure Camp.

By empowering students to select the experience that best suits them the program supports independence, personal growth and a positive start to their Senior School journey.

Camps begin in Year 2 with a supervised sleeperover on campus before expanding to experiences such as the Year 5 trip to Sovereign Hill and the Year 9 City Cite and Wollangarra camps.

Each program is designed to foster independence, teamwork and personal growth.

All camp experiences are included in the college tuition fees.

Families can learn more at the college's upcoming Open Morning on Saturday March 14 from 9am to 12pm or by attending a scheduled college tour.

Registrations are welcome via the college website.

International Women's Day - Balance the Scales

NEWHAVEN College celebrates International Women's Day with the theme Balance the Scales - a promise that every woman and girl, regardless of background or identity, should be safe, heard and free to shape their own lives.

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Dahlias lead the way in Welshpool

By Andrew Paloczi

IT WAS another stunning Welshpool Autumn Flower Show on Friday and Saturday.

While normally happy to remain in the background, Welshpool & District Horticultural Society's Fran Grylls was in the spotlight as her 40-year contribution as Show Secretary was recognised.

"The show is well and truly open for all of you to enjoy," she said before being presented with flowers and a gardening trowel inscribed "Fran, thank you from the Welshpool Flower Show 2026."

A spectacular variety of Dahlias is a highlight this year, with Assistant Show Secretary Prue Fleming saying there are more than ever.

John Rowe's display triumphed in the Dahlia section, with judge Chris Michalopoulos telling the Sentinel-Times the Warragul local's entry also won Best in Show.

Melbourne-based Chris is the senior Dahlia judge in Victoria.

"Fellow judges agreed with me that this was the most outstanding exhibit," he said.

"They're all perfectly matched and met the standards of what a Dahlia exhibit should be all about," he said, noting the winning display is beautifully presented and fresh.

"Nothing is perfect but it was an excellent entry,"



Judge Chris Michalopoulos stands with the Best in Show exhibit of John Rowe, a spectacular combination of Dahlias. A17_1026

Chris said, all the more impressive given challenging weather including 40-degree temperatures, cold nights, wind and rain.

The vastly experienced judge compared a good exhibitor to a "shepherd looking after his flock".

Experience enables exhibitors to know when to plant varieties to look their best for a show, with luck and weather always playing a part.

Chris' love of Dahlias is due to their colour and variations in size and shape, the lack of thorns a bonus as is the lengthy flowering period.

Yarram's Leonore Gilberto was perhaps the most surprised winner, a fig plant earmarked for the tip

bouncing back after re-potting and some TLC.

"I'm in shock," she said of the plant's resurrection and ability to catch the judge's eye.

Neerim's Linda Smith stopped for a chat while her companion scurried off, the pair attending every year.

"He comes for the cakes and I come for the flowers," Linda said.

Latrobe Valley sisters Pamie and Bernie were at the Autumn Show for the first time as Dahlia Society members, Bernie growing Dahlias to sell to Morwell florists through her 'Dairy Fence Flowers' business.

It's not all about flowers, with produce also standing out.

Welshpool's Rodney Grylls

took out the Sedunary Memorial Trophy for his vibrant Harvest Basket.

"Our vegetables are a bit later than normal because it's been humid and hot, and now we've had some rain, fortunately," he said, with about 60mm in the week leading up to the show making a big difference.

The Autumn Show's best exhibits by class were:

Class A - Dahlias (John Rowe), Class B - Cut Flowers (Josie Rutherford), Class C - Cut Flowers, Shrubs and Trees in Containers (Fran Grylls), Class D - Pots and Containers (Sue Scherle), Class E - Floral Art (Arie Boss), Class F - Fruit and Vegetables (Marg O'Donnell), Class G - Preserves (Marg O'Donnell), Class H - Photography (Helen Baud).

Olivia O'Connor awarded ArtsFest Small Sculpture Prize

SOUTH Gippsland-based woodcarver Olivia O'Connor has been awarded the 2026 Neerim ArtsFest Small Sculpture Prize for her hand-carved timber work, Little Frog, Big Climb.

The award included a \$5,000 prize and recognised excellence in small-scale sculptural practice.

Little Frog, Big Climb depicts a small frog mid-ascent, captured in a moment of quiet determination.

Carved in a single piece of Huon pine by hand using traditional reductive techniques, the sculpture allows the natural grain and character of the timber to remain visible.

Ms O'Connor's practice centres on a deep engagement with nature, particularly local wildlife.

Working slowly and intuitively with timber, she seeks to create pieces that invite viewers to pause - to notice the overlooked and to reconnect with the living world around them.

"The frog might be small," Ms O'Connor says, "but there's something powerful about its persistence."

Little Frog, Big Climb is about climate catastrophe, resilience and those everyday acts of effort that often go unseen."

The Neerim ArtsFest is a much-loved biennial celebration of regional creativity, drawing artists from across Victoria.

Winning the Small Sculpture Prize marks a significant milestone in Ms O'Connor's career and continues her growing reputation for finely crafted, nature-inspired works.

Ms O'Connor lives and works in South Gippsland, where the surrounding landscape remains her greatest source of inspiration.

The Neerim ArtsFest runs until March 15 with exhibitions of the Small Sculpture Prize and Outdoor Sculpture Prize.

Visit www.neerimbower.com.au for more information.

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Inverloch EV recharge station operational

THE long-awaited Inverloch electric vehicle recharge station in Ramsey Boulevard behind the Bunurong Environment Centre is now online.

Bass Coast Shire Council has confirmed the four EV charge stations at Wonthaggi, Newhaven, Grantville and Inverloch are all fully operational.

The 60kW fast chargers allow EV drivers to add 100 kilometres of range in just 15 minutes using 100 per cent renewable energy at a rate of 64 cents per kilowatt hour.

The Bunurong Environment Centre was selected for Inverloch because it was considered to be a high-use tourist destination that would help to address barriers to EV uptake including range anxiety and town connectivity.

Each site was anticipated to be completed in two to three weeks but it has taken 12 months to finish the EV recharge station at Inverloch after work began in March last year.

Inverloch traders had expressed frustration at the lengthy delays with one asking why the station had been dormant for so long.

The \$642,000 project across four sites was jointly funded by Bass Coast Shire Council and the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

The EV charger at the Newhaven Visitor Centre is located on the Phillip Island Tourist Road at Newhaven the Grantville Transaction Centre is at 1504 Bass Highway Grantville and the Wonthaggi ArtSpace is at 2 Bent Street Wonthaggi.

Community events celebrated across South Gippsland

SOUTH Gippsland hosted a busy month of community events with thousands of visitors turning out across the region to support local volunteers and organisations.

The South Gippsland Garlic Festival took place at the Korumburra Show Grounds drawing large crowds for a day of gourmet garlic dishes, live music, cooking demonstrations and family entertainment.

The festival is Victoria's biggest celebration of Australian garlic and is supported by the Arawata Landcare Group which helped grow the event in recent years.

The festival stage featured live performances from local and visiting artists throughout the day drawing food and music lovers from across the state.

The Foster Agricultural Show also ran during the period showcasing local farming, livestock and community activities that have been a proud tradition in the town for generations.

Music at Mossvale held at Berrys Creek was officially opened by Federal Member for Monash Mary Aldred and drew a strong crowd despite the summer heat.

The concert featured 10 local acts performing across the afternoon and was organised by a dedicated team of volunteers who worked year-round to stage the event.

Organisers included Jeremy and Julie Curtis, Leongatha Rotary Club, Friends of Mossvale



Federal Member for Monash Mary Aldred officially opens the Music at Mossvale concert at Berrys Creek alongside one of the tireless volunteer organisers Jeremy Curtis.

Park, Mirboo North Bendigo Bank and Mirboo North Community Foundation.

Proceeds from Music at Mossvale supported the Monash Children's Cancer Centre and the Berrys Creek Fire Brigade, with organisers describing the fundraising result as one of the best in the event's history.

"These community events showcase the spirit and energy of South Gippsland," Ms Aldred said.

South Gippsland's festival calendar grew in recent years with events like the Garlic Festival drawing visitors from across the state and providing a significant boost to local businesses and tourism operators.

Ms Aldred said the events were a testament to the community spirit that defined the region and the hard work of the volunteers who made them happen.

Small businesses across South Gippsland benefited from the increased foot traffic with local cafes, shops and accommodation providers reporting strong trade during event weekends.

The active volunteer base across the region demonstrated strong community commitment to organising events, raising funds for worthy causes and connecting people in regional communities.



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Wonthaggi duo tee off fundraiser for Cancer Council

A LOCAL father and son are inviting the community to enjoy an afternoon of mini golf on Friday March 13 at Lucky 13 in Inverloch while simultaneously raising funds for the Cancer Council.

Nathan Leversha and his 14-year-old son Jasper are entering the 2026 Lunchbox Rally under the name Team Skilled.

The rally is a charity event that allows parents and their children to travel regional Australia in a car worth less than \$1500.

However before they are permitted to take part the duo is required to first meet a fundraising target of \$3000.

To reach beyond that amount Team Skilled will be hosting a community mini golf night from 5pm to 8pm.

The event will be a family-friendly evening with mini golf, classic cars on display and a sausage sizzle for anyone to enjoy.

"We have to fundraise a certain amount of money to participate in the rally," Mr Leversha said.

"I just thought mini golf would be something new and it was local, supporting a local business as well as supporting our fundraising for charity.

"It's something people can bring their kids to as well.

"It's more family-orientated."

\$5 from every mini golf player on the night will be donated straight to the Cancer Council.

Visitors will also have the chance to witness Team Skilled's vehicle in person, a Volkswagen Beetle, along with other classic cars from local owners and car

By Trent Westaway

groups who have all been encouraged to bring their vehicles along to the event.

Mr Leversha said the unique event is a great opportunity for parents to share experiences with their children.

"The Lunchbox Rally is like the Sh*tbox Rally but instead of having a co-driver and doing bigger and longer days there's shorter days and you can take your child."

The rally will begin and end in Dubbo, New South Wales, taking place from September 25 to September 29.

Teams will travel together to remote and outback areas continuing to raise money for the Cancer Council.

"The minimum we have to raise is \$3000 but we've set a goal of \$5000 or more," Mr Leversha said.

Supporting the Cancer Council specifically also means a lot to the family.

"Just losing family members and having friends currently dealing with cancer I thought it was a good cause," he said.

"And the rally is sort of the reward for all your hard work."

Wonthaggi AutoPro has also been helping Team Skilled prepare the Beetle for the rally.

The mini golf fundraiser will be held at Lucky 13 Mini Golf, 83/85 Wonthaggi Road, Inverloch.

Bookings are not required and anyone is welcome to drop in and support the cause.



Nathan and Jasper Leversha from Wonthaggi, also known as Team Skilled, are inviting the community to a mini golf fundraiser at Lucky 13 Mini Golf in Inverloch to help raise money for the Cancer Council ahead of this year's Lunchbox Rally.

South Gippsland Jobs Expo returns

THE South Gippsland Jobs Expo will return to Memorial Hall at 6-8 McCartin Street in Leongatha on Thursday, March 19 offering jobseekers and career changers the chance to connect with local employers.

Now in its fourth year the free event runs from 10am to 2pm and brings together a wide variety of industries employment agencies and representatives from TAFE and university courses.

About 40 exhibitors are expected to attend this year representing sectors from agriculture and construction to retail, hospitality, healthcare and education.

Advice on resume writing interviews and training opportunities will also be available on the day.

Previous expos have attracted more than 200 jobseekers with some attendees securing interviews and job offers on the day.

Attendees are encouraged to bring their resume and dress to impress with on-the-day interviews available with local businesses currently recruiting.

The expo provides a rare opportunity for face-to-face conversations between employers and potential employees in a region where many jobs are filled through personal networks rather than online platforms.

A free sausage sizzle and coffee voucher will be available.

South Gippsland Shire Council Mayor Nathan Hersey said the expo has been great for the community.

"I believe it highlights the impact a face-to-face conversation can have," Cr Hersey said.

"If you are looking for work mark the date in your calendar, bring along your current resume and an open mind.

"You could just find the perfect role for you."

For more information visit www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/JobsExpo.

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 Phillip Island

Learn how Korumburra is staying strong



Noelene Cosson and Steve Roberts of Korumburra Staying Strong plan the event for Saturday March 14, with Ms Cosson showing off the Korumburra Community Directions Statement that will be launched then.

WHAT matters most to Korumburra will be revealed on Saturday March 14 when Korumburra Staying Strong (KSS) celebrates the completion of its final project, another step in boosting the town's resilience.

The organisation comprises a collection of interested community members who formed in 2021 with a grant from the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal.

KSS grew out of the national Disaster Resilient: Future Ready program, which supports remote, rural and regional communities to lead initiatives that improve wellbeing, increase preparedness and strengthen resilience in the face of climate events, disasters and other disruptions.

Korumburra has experienced its share of those disruptions over the years, with storms, bushfires, flooding and earth-

By Andrew Paloczi

quakes all having impacted the town.

"KSS learned early on that the key to being a resilient community is increasing connections between people," Noelene Cosson said.

Those connections have led to development of the 'Korumburra Community Directions Statement' that will be launched during an event in the rotunda located in the railway precinct behind the post office.

The Statement outlines achievable priority projects and long-term goals, providing a framework for future decision-making and helping community-led ideas move from concept to reality.

Insights gathered at four community events, online engagement supported by the local Lions Club, and the output of a workshop with the Korumburra Round Table have been factored into the document.

The resilience and emergency plan underpinning much of KSS's work was itself a collaborative effort, developed alongside Milpara Community House, Korumburra Community Hub, the Korumburra Community Development Association, Korumburra Round Table and South Gippsland Shire Council, with emergency services also invited to contribute.

The Statement launch event will also provide an opportunity for anyone interested in contributing to the redeveloped community website, korumburra3950.com.au, with participants receiving clear instructions on how to update information on the site.

You will learn how to keep your community group details current, add events to the community calendar and share news and updates.

"We are making it simple for community groups to contribute, with the aim to ensure local information remains accurate, relevant, and accessible to everyone," Ms Cosson said.

The website is built in partnership between Korumburra Community Development Association and KSS.

It is one of the ways of keeping community members connected, promoting local events, encouraging volunteering and participation in more than 80 listed community groups.

"If we know each other in good times, we are more able to help each other in tough times," Ms Cosson said.

The website is also the place to visit to download the Korumburra Community Resilience & Emergency Plan, a helpful tool to ensure you are prepared as best as possible should an emergency occur.

"We encourage you to come along, review the Directions Statement, and discover how easy it is to share your information online, helping us build a connected and resilient community," Ms Cosson said.

All community members are warmly invited to the rotunda on Saturday March 14 from 10am until 11.30am, with free sausages and donuts available.

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Helping clients to prosper is the priority of the whole Gippsland team.

A vibrant Gippsland team supporting local farmers

It's a strong and enthusiastic Rabobank team backing Gippsland farmers, with a valuable balance of local knowledge, long-term experience, and expertise mixed with youthful energy that underpins the Leongatha, Sale and Warragul branches.

With highly regarded Rabobank stalwart Sally Bull the Regional Manager, plus Pete Evans, Deputy Regional Manager, a familiar face after his years of experience, Gippsland is a well-supported, and inspired, team.

For Pete, there's no greater privilege than working with farmers every day.

"Supporting our clients to prosper is our priority, we all love being on the journey with our clients in this terrific part of Australia."

"The way we work as a team is outstanding, and it's because we all understand our goal, and that's to make sure we deliver for our clients – we all enjoy nothing more than seeing our clients thrive, see them at events smiling, and knowing that we've got their backs," Pete says.

A team dedicated to agriculture

Armed with experience and a genuine passion for agriculture, Pete leads an equally engaged Gippsland team, with the vast majority hailing from farming backgrounds.

"We're grateful to have the likes of Leongatha-based Senior Rural Manager, Craig Hooper, and Senior Rural Manager, Tony Platt



Gippsland Senior Rural Manager, Tony Platt with local dairy farmer, Tim Morley.

out of the Sale branch, and their decades of experience and knowledge – they are experts in their field, with longevity that can't be replicated."

Warragul Rural Manager Cameron de Kok is another team member local to the region who has enjoyed a successful career in agricultural consultancy and banking, with his knowledge of the region an asset to the team, and clients.

"As a bank dedicated to agriculture, there's unique empathy and insight around the challenges clients face, which is important in such a complex industry," Pete says.

Balancing out the more senior team are emerging leaders such as Leongatha Rural Managers, Max Murray, and Alex Bennett.

"Our next-gen team members bring a renewed energy and perspective that we all enjoy, as well as valuable succession to ensure our team remains stable and vibrant."

"Gippsland clients gain benefit from the emergence of a fresh, energetic and knowledgeable team – with the tech, ag and business skills and vision to support clients into the future."

"This youthful energy coupled with the career longevity of some of the State's most respected and experienced Rabobank senior rural managers is a unique and exciting proposition for our clients, and team, and it's a balance we're very proud of," Pete says.

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OH WHAT A FEELING

* Disclaimer: If the price does not contain the notation that it is "Driveaway*", the price may not include additional costs, such as stamp duty and other government charges.



Sophie Jo from Body and Flow will lead an outdoor Yoga Flow session on Sunday morning.

Finding your balance at the Inverloch Equinox Festival

TWICE a year the light shifts, the air softens and nature quietly recalibrates.

The Equinox is a moment of balance and in beautiful coastal Inverloch it becomes an invitation to do the same.

The Inverloch Equinox Festival places wellbeing at its heart showcasing experiences designed to help visitors reset, reconnect and perhaps even discover a new pathway to feeling their best.

Set against sweeping beaches and wide South Gippsland skies Inverloch offers the perfect backdrop for reflection and renewal just under two hours from Melbourne yet a world away from the rush.

The journey begins on Friday March 20 from 6pm to 8pm with Joy in Motion (tickets from \$44).

This immersive evening of movement, meditation and sound healing is designed to help you release what has felt heavy, reconnect with your body and step into the new season feeling lighter and more alive.

Created by a collective of experienced local women it is ideal for those ready to let go, move safely and expansively and welcome clarity, vitality and joy.

Your ticket also includes entry to Saturday's Wellbeing Expo.

On Saturday March 21 from 10am to 4pm the Inverloch Wellbeing Expo (tickets \$5) brings together more than 20 holistic practitioners offering services, products and workshops.

It is a rare opportunity to explore diverse modalities in one place and connect with practitioners who may help shape your next wellbeing chapter.

Also on Saturday from 1pm to 3pm Inverloch local artist Dr Carla Van Laar opens her private home studio for a creative session and artist talk.

Guests can wander her beautiful gardens which inspire her work, enjoy bubbles on arrival and view framed pieces available to purchase.

It is a gentle reminder that creativity itself is a powerful wellbeing practice.

Sunday begins gently with an outdoor Yoga Flow session at 7.30am on the lawn with Sophie Jo from Body and Flow (tickets \$35, with a current bring-a-friend-for-free offer).

Beneath open skies and coastal light it is the perfect way to ground, breathe and carry the festival's energy forward.

This is more than a weekend of events.

It is a chance to pause, rebalance and experience Inverloch as a destination for meaningful wellbeing.

For more information and to book tickets head to inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au and scroll through What's On.

Equine experiences invite festivalgoers to slow down

THERE is a certain alchemy in the presence of horses.

Their steady breath and grounded nature have a way of softening busy minds and reconnecting people to the rhythm of the land.

As part of this year's Inverloch Equinox Festival program Wattle Bank Farm will host a series of immersive equine experiences just five minutes from central Inverloch offering visitors the chance to pause reflect and connect in a beautiful rural setting.

On Friday March 20 as dusk settles across the paddocks guests will gather among grazing horses for an evening of sunset bush poetry storytelling and connection by firelight.

Chai on arrival, fresh house-made bread and soup, shared words and gentle herd energy create a warm and memorable start to the festival weekend.

In the event of wet weather the experience will move into the barn.

On Saturday March 21

families are invited to enjoy relaxed country charm with pony rides farm exploration and thoughtful interactions for children.

Adults can enjoy quality coffee and local produce while soaking in the calm atmosphere of the farm.

On Sunday March 22 a guided wellbeing experience blends walking meditation journaling and quiet reflection among the herd.

Beginning with a welcome ceremony and chai participants will slow their breath and reconnect with themselves in nature.

No prior horse experience is required.

These thoughtfully curated experiences form an important part of the festival's wellbeing offering encouraging meaningful connection with nature self and community.

For bookings and full event details visit inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au or wattlebankfarm.com.au.



A visitor connects with horses during a meditation experience at Wattle Bank Farm near Inverloch.

Inverloch by night offers stories and stars



A costumed guide leads visitors through Inverloch's streets during the After Dark Town Tour.



Stargazers line up behind telescopes under Inverloch's dark skies at a previous Equinox Festival.

AS part of the Inverloch Equinox Festival two signature after-dark experiences invite visitors to see the town in a whole new light or perhaps in the beautiful absence of it.

The After Dark Town Tours run on Friday from 9pm to 10.30pm and Saturday from 9.30pm to 11pm.

When the light fades the stories begin.

The tours weave through Inverloch's streets uncovering mystery secrets and lesser-known tales that linger long after sunset.

Equal parts history and intrigue the guided walks reveal a different side of the coastal town.

Lantern-lit atmosphere, curious whispers of the past and a touch of theatrical storytelling make this a memorable late-night adventure.

Both evenings are ticketed and numbers are limited.

The tours are not suited for pets or children under 12.

Inverloch Under the Stars runs on Friday and Saturday from 9pm to 11pm.

In partnership with the Mornington Peninsula Astronomical Society and the Latrobe Valley Astronomical Society professional telescopes will be trained on Inverloch's famously clear night skies.

Planets, nebulae star clusters and distant galaxies come into breathtaking focus under expert guidance.

For those wanting to go deeper astronomy talks will be held at the Inverloch Bowls Club from 7.30pm prior to stargazing.

Designed for a general audience and rich with imagery the presentation journeys from our solar system neighbours to the nearest stars across the Milky Way and outward to galaxy clusters and the furthest observable objects in the universe.

Both the tours and stargazing experiences are ticketed events offering rare opportunities to explore Inverloch by night.

For more details and to book tickets head to inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au.

Gippsland wine meets award-winning cheese at Equinox pairing night

THE Inverloch Equinox Festival presents a curated cheese and wine pairing event on Friday March 20 designed for those who appreciate the finer things.

Hosted at the Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club one of the most stunning sunset spots on the coast the over-18s evening brings together exceptional Gippsland wine award-winning local cheese and passionate producers.

Inverloch's own Dirty Three Wines will pour its 2025 Dirty

Rizza Riesling, 2024 All The Dirts Chardonnay and 2023 All The Dirts Pinot Noir.

Fleet Wines will present its NV Blanc de Noir Sparkling, 2023 Nostalgia Pinot Noir and 2023 Chirnside Cabernet.

Partnering is Prom Country Cheese maker of the celebrated Inverloch Blue which was awarded Super Gold and crowned Best Australian Cheese at the World Cheese Awards.

Handmade from pure fresh organic milk its artisan range

includes semi-hard natural rind soft cheeses marinated varieties and blues.

The winemakers will present each wine while Daniel from Prom Country Cheese explains the thinking behind each pairing.

Bottled wine will be available for purchase on the night.

Tickets are \$50 per person. Six wines perfectly matched cheese and limited seats.

Book now at inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au.



Prom Country Cheese's artisan semi-hard natural rind cheese handmade from fresh organic milk.

Inverloch Equinox Festival 20-22 March



Mr Marvel creates a canopy of bubbles over the crowd at the 2025 Equinox Festival.

From dinosaurs to didgeridoos there is something for every young explorer

IF your little explorers have energy to burn and curiosity to feed the Inverloch Equinox Festival delivers from sunrise to starlight. Saturday at The Glade is pure family fun.

Expect big laughs with the magical Mr Marvel and his circus tricks surprise visits from giant seagulls and the pulsing didgeridoo dance beats of Ganga Giri.

Kids can line up mini golf hole-in-one shots learn rope-tying skills with the SES or climb the Scouts rock wall for a gold coin donation.

To celebrate the annual salmon run Inverloch Fishing and Outdoors is hosting a fun fishing competition.

Simply purchase a salmon lure to enter, catch and weigh your fish and see who lands

closest to the mystery weight.

A rod and reel prize is up for grabs.

Beyond The Glade adventure continues.

Pony rides at Wattle Bank Farm bring country charm the Shell Museum opens its coastal treasure trove and Dinosaur Discoveries with the South Gippsland Conservation Society run across the weekend.

Budding astronomers can even stay up late for stargazing under Inverloch's brilliant night skies.

Some events are ticketed and many are free but all are designed to get kids outside curious and smiling.

Explore the full program at inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au and plan your family adventure.

Free live music lights up Inverloch coast

AS the sun dips behind the dunes in Inverloch on Saturday March 21 Live at The Glade invites the community to gather outdoors for a free night of music food and celebration as part of this year's Equinox Festival.

Set against the natural beauty of Inverloch's coastal reserve the open-air concert runs from 4pm to 9.30pm.

Headlining the evening is acclaimed surf-folk artist Jack Botts whose sun-soaked sound and heartfelt lyrics echo themes of home family and connection.

Ganga Giri will ignite the night with his hypnotic didgeridoo soundscapes and signature dance beats.

Crowd favourites Hot Tub return to keep the dance circle spinning while two rising youth acts add fresh fire to the lineup.

Zenith Paradox are back by popular demand and Phillip Island's spirited punk outfit The Drop Kicks promise big sound bold attitude and heart.

As the music fades across The Glade the night continues.

From 9.30pm the Equinox Encore live music kicks off at the Esplanade Hotel Inverloch featuring the Jay Santilli and Nathan Duo keeping the festival energy going well into the evening.

Live at The Glade is free to attend and open to all. Bring a chair or rug gather your crew and experience a night where music community and coastal air come together.

Alcohol can only be consumed in the over-18s fenced-off chill-out zone.

Head to inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au for the full program and performance times.

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9PM STARGAZING - ROTARY PARK








LIVE & FREE AT THE GLADE

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HOT TUB	7:30- 8:15PM
THE DROP KICKS	6:30- 7:15PM
GANGA GIRI	5:30- 6:15PM
ZENITH PARADOX	4:30- 5:15PM

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Blue Mackerel progresses to full Environmental Impact Statement

By Bruce Wardley

DESPITE pushback from opponents to offshore wind energy the Blue Mackerel project east of Wilson's Promontory is pressing ahead with an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Critics of offshore energy generation say Bass Strait is the wrong place for an offshore Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) as it is a critical habitat for both birds and whales.

Despite the cancellation of a number of offshore wind projects the Blue Mackerel feasibility study was recently awarded major project status after securing support from the federal Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) to help navigate environmental and regulatory approvals.

Blue Mackerel has now entered the most comprehensive stage of environmental assessment with the Commonwealth Government confirming the JERA Nex bp project will be assessed through a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

Consistent with the process required for other offshore wind projects in Australia, the EIS is used to assess potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance, including listed species and communities, listed migratory species, and Commonwealth marine areas.

Blue Mackerel will continue to be guided by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement.

According to Kim Downs, Manager Environmental Planning and Approvals for Blue Mackerel the EIS will undertake a detailed assessment of potential impacts and measures, to avoid and minimise these impacts.

"The findings of which will guide the windfarm design and make sure stringent regulatory requirements are met," said Ms Downs.

"The Blue Mackerel team is ready to move to the next phase of assessment. An EIS represents the highest level of environmental assessment, and we are fully prepared for that responsibility," she said.

"With our team of scientific experts and experienced environmental impact assessors, Blue Mackerel is committed to delivering a scientifically rigorous EIS and ensuring environmental impacts are minimised and managed to the high standards set by Australian regulators."

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen MP last week decided not to offer feasibility licences for offshore wind energy projects in the Bass Strait/Northern Tasmania zone due to a lack of competitive bids.

State Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio also announced the Request for Tender (RFP) for Victoria's first offshore wind industry auction will open in August 2026 for an initial two gigawatts (GW) of capacity.

Victoria has some of the best offshore wind resources in the world according to Ms D'Ambrosio and being able to harness this energy will further diversify and stabilise our state's power supply.

The offshore industry is expected to create over 6,000 jobs.

"Gippsland has always been critical to keeping the lights on across Victoria and it will continue to be into the future as it hosts the country's first offshore wind projects," said Ms D'Ambrosio.

"We want to give industry the certainty it needs to invest and help us keep building the renewable energy Victoria needs to push down energy bills.

"We're working closely with developers on the progress of this exciting auction to ensure strong competition to secure the best projects and best value for Victorians."

Ms D'Ambrosio revealed in Gippsland last year Victoria would host the country's first offshore wind industry and that was why Victoria had pushed for an Electricity Services Entry Mechanism (ESEM) to accommodate technologies including offshore wind.

Venus Bay pipi campaign gathers community steam

By Andrew Paloczi



Garry Dobbs speaks during Tuesday's Venus Bay meeting about pipi harvesting concerns. A06_1026



Tony Swinden makes a point during the meeting. A08_1026



Kirsty Parini speaks with Chris Bott and Tony Bryant also pictured. A09_1026

VENUS Bay locals are combining to tackle the issue of large numbers of pipi harvesters descending on the town's beaches saying it has led to parking, safety and litter issues and that fisheries regulations are being flagrantly ignored by some.

More than 20 people attended a Tuesday night meeting at the Venus Bay Tarwin Lower and District Men's Shed with strong views expressed on the issue and a focus on the need for an organised campaign for action.

That may involve calling for a closed season in which pipsis are not allowed to be harvested over the busy summer period with that possibility discussed.

While concerns about excessive pipi collection in Venus Bay continue to be expressed through social media the Victorian Fisheries Authority is unconvinced there is a widespread problem.

"Patrols indicate that most fishers are doing the right thing by using their hands and feet to collect pipsis and abiding by the daily bag limit at Venus Bay of two litres of whole pipsis or half a litre of shucked pipsis," a VFA spokesperson said when the Sentinel-Times enquired about the issue earlier this year.

However it was conceded that some warnings have been issued to fishers using digging implements rather than only their hands and feet to collect pipsis.

One of the attendees at the Venus Bay meeting commented on seeing people placing harvested pipsis in their car boots and returning for more.

The VFA says the recreational pipi fishery at Venus Bay is sustainable and the current bag limit shares the resource fairly.

While concerns were expressed at Tuesday's meeting as to how many of those collecting pipsis have a

fishing licence as required VFA told the Sentinel-Times there is a high level of compliance on that front.

The reduced numbers of fisheries officers due to state government cuts fuels local views that insufficient patrols are taking place to monitor pipi harvesting behaviour.

"They know there are no fisheries officers here to catch them," an attendee said.

Venus Bay local Garry Dobbs said he has witnessed people calling their nearby mates if fisheries representatives arrive.

Safety concerns raised included the risk of injury from stepping in holes created by those gathering pipsis and potential alteration of currents along with challenges for emergency services in gaining access to Venus Bay beaches due to haphazard parking.

Pipi gatherers obscuring the view lifesavers have of swimmers at Beach 1 and the presence of young children in surf conditions were other safety matters raised.

An attendee called for the formation of an action group saying "It needs to be focused and convincing."

Another meeting has been arranged for 7pm on Thursday March 26 at the Venus Bay Community Centre.

It is anticipated representatives of the local CERT ambulance service and CFA will be there with organisers also reaching out to Venus Bay Surf Life Saving Club the aim being to highlight safety concerns.

Those wanting to see action taken to manage the pipi situation and associated issues raised the matter with their local councillor Sarah Gilligan and Mayor Nathan Hersey at Venus Bay Community Centre on Wednesday afternoon.

The concerns raised are not new with the ABC reporting the same issues in March 2017.

Offshore wind uncertainty grows as Star of the South pushes ahead

GIPPSLAND'S offshore wind future remains uncertain with Danish energy giant Orsted facing mounting financial and political pressure while the region's most advanced project Star of the South continues to progress.

Three companies have already withdrawn from the Gippsland offshore wind zone in the past 12 months.

BlueFloat Energy scrapped its \$10 billion Gippsland Dawn proposal in July citing commercial viability concerns followed by Germany's RWE cancelling the 2GW Kent project in October and an AGL-backed consortium surrendering its licence for the 2.5GW Gippsland Skies project in January.

Origin Energy's Navigator North proposal has also been scaled back with key staff laid off in recent months.

That leaves Star of the South as the clear frontrunner in

the zone.

The up to 2.2GW project proposed for a 586 square kilometre area 10 kilometres off the Gippsland coast between Port Albert and Woodside Beach could power 1.2 million homes and supply up to 20 per cent of Victoria's electricity.

Developer Southerly Ten backed by Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners and Cbus Super lodged environmental approval applications in December after seven years of technical and environmental studies drawing on 26 separate assessments.

The project has also purchased 120 hectares of farmland near Reeves Beach where underground cables will come ashore to connect the wind farm to the grid through the Latrobe Valley.

Star of the South CEO Charles Rattray said securing the shore crossing site reinforced the project's

long-term commitment to Gippsland.

The Commonwealth Government renewed the project's Major Project Status in late 2025 and the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation signed an Engagement Agreement ensuring Traditional Owners are involved from the earliest stages.

The Victorian Government announced in January it would commence Australia's first offshore wind auction in August targeting at least 2GW of capacity by 2032.

But the viability of the broader industry remains a concern.

Orsted which holds two feasibility licences in Gippsland has faced significant financial challenges in recent years including cancelling major projects in the United States and United Kingdom after rising costs rendered the developments uneconomic.

Its share price has fallen

about 71 per cent over the past five years and the company undertook a capital raising of 60 billion Danish kroner after losses linked to offshore wind developments.

Political uncertainty in Denmark is adding another layer of risk with several political parties calling for the government to sell its majority stake in the company.

Community groups have raised concerns about the possibility of developers exiting the market leaving governments and local communities responsible for decommissioning costs.

Victoria's Auditor-General tabled a report in December warning the state was unlikely to reach its near-term offshore wind targets.

With 90 per cent of Victoria's coal-fired capacity forecast to retire by 2035 the pressure to deliver large-scale generation from offshore wind is growing.



Members of Prom Health Gym in Foster.

Prom Health Gym brings fitness and connection to Foster

WHEN Prom Health Gym opened at 25 Court Street in Foster in May 2025 it set out to make exercise accessible to everyone in the community from busy workers to retirees.

With classes offered before and after work the gym helps people fit fitness into their routines while enjoying a supportive social environment that makes exercise sustainable and fun.

With more than 30 group classes each week across 12

session types there is something for everyone.

The gym's modern floor features strength and cardio equipment while an infrared heated studio offers yoga and mat Pilates to improve recovery mobility and balance.

All classes are group-based with qualified instructors focused on correct form and technique.

Members can book sessions through the Prom

Health app which also tracks classes and allows guest passes.

Prom Health also operates a health clinic at 86 Main Street in Foster offering osteopathy Chinese medicine and massage services.

Now Prom Health Gym is inviting locals to join its inaugural Prom Health Games on Sunday March 29 a one-day community fitness challenge featuring eight exercise stations.

Participants complete two minutes of work and two minutes of rest at each with Green and Blue Tracks available to suit all abilities.

Entries open on Monday March 9.

For details and registration visit promhealth.au or follow Prom Health on social media.

Foster's fitness community continues to grow stronger one class and one challenge at a time.

Pill available at pharmacies without a script from July

VICTORIAN women aged 18 and over will be able to access the oral contraceptive pill at participating pharmacies without a prescription from July, but the peak body for GPs has condemned the move as a safety shortcut.

The state government announced the expansion of its Chemist Care Now program will allow pharmacists at more than 850 participating pharmacies to dispense the pill after a free consultation.

Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas said the change would give women more choice and help them save time, with the announcement expected to particularly benefit women in rural and regional areas such as Bass Coast and South Gippsland where access to a GP can involve lengthy wait times and long travel distances.

Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Health Kat Theophanous said supporting women to access the pill directly at their local chemist was a practical change that brought care closer to home.

But the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) has hit back, saying the state government has overridden repeated warnings from the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and weakened medicines safety regulations.

RACGP Victoria Chair Dr Anita Munoz said the announcement prioritised political expediency over evidence-based public health.

"We are deeply disappointed that the Victorian Government appears to be listening to lobbyists for pharmacy owners rather than the medicines experts, the TGA, whose guidance exists to protect patient safety," she said.

"It has chosen a shortcut on women's healthcare instead of investing in the evidence-based solutions that actually improve access."

Pharmacists who want to deliver the service will be required to complete a postgraduate training module and undertake a thorough consultation outlining any risks, as well as provide comprehensive advice about other contraceptive options including long-acting reversible contraception.

Since the Chemist Care Now program began as a pilot in 2023, more than 76,000 services have been delivered across the state, with more than 17,000 women already accessing oral contraceptive pill resupply through the program.

To find a Chemist Care Now pharmacy visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/chemist-care-now.



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Melina Bath MP, Jenni Keerie (Milpara Community House) and Belinda Nichols (Milpara Community House) on the steps of parliament.

Neighbourhood houses rally for funding certainty

HUNDREDS of representatives from Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria converged on Parliament House for a Day of Action calling for funding certainty.

The Keep Our Doors Open rally highlighted growing concerns about the sustainability of neighbourhood houses as operating costs climb while state government funding has stagnated.

Eastern Victoria MLC Melina Bath said Neighbourhood Houses are struggling to keep the lights on with operating costs climbing and government funding that has failed to keep pace with CPI over many years.

Each week more than 185,000 Victorians access neighbourhood house services in their local communities with many of those in regional Victoria where access to support is most limited.

"The rising cost of living is impacting grassroots community organisations by increasing their overheads and driving demand for emergency food assistance, housing support and crisis counselling higher," Ms Bath said.

Neighbourhood house staff and volunteers work to support vulnerable communities through education, training, emergency assistance and social inclusion programs.

Rising costs are affecting the ability of neighbourhood houses to maintain current service levels and expand programs to meet growing demand from people dealing with cost of living pressures.

"Neighbourhood House staff and volunteers are working incredibly hard to support our communities but without adequate funding, programs will be cut and services reduced," Ms Bath said.

Neighbourhood House Victoria has called on the state government to increase core funding by 25 per cent in the 2026-27 budget.

The peak body's analysis shows additional funding of \$11.7 million per year is needed to ensure the sustainability of the sector and keep doors open.

In Gippsland neighbourhood houses including Milpara Community House in Korumburra and Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre provide essential services to some of the region's most vulnerable residents.

These centres offer everything from emergency food relief and financial counselling to adult education, digital literacy classes and social connection programs for isolated community members.

Victoria has more than 400 neighbourhood houses serving communities across the state with many providing the only accessible community services in small towns and rural areas.

Neighbourhood House Victoria has called on the state government to deliver sustainable funding to ensure services continue and vulnerable people receive the support they need.

Important issue raised at the Foster Show

By Andrew Paloczi

THERE was a serious side to the recent Foster Show with two organisations taking a joint stand to remember males lost to suicide, creating awareness of the extent of the issue in Australia and calling for action.

Showgoers' attention was drawn to a collection of shoes and boots on a patch of grass, each pair belonging to a male lost to the crisis.

Behind the shoes was a truck featuring handwritten messages to some of those blokes, along with others about the general issue.

The Zerosuicide Community Awareness Program was responsible for the display, drawing attention to the 2,529 male suicides in the nation during the last year.

"We lose nine a day, two are women, seven men," the organisation's president Paul Withall said.

He stressed that female suicides are decreasing but it is the opposite with males, arguing that while mental health support is vital, more also needs to be done to deal with male "situational distress".

That includes the impact of issues such as family and relationship breakdown, losing a job and financial problems.

"To get into a psychiatric ward to get assistance, you need to have a diagnosable mental health condition and these main issues that men



Zerosuicide Community Awareness Program president Paul Withall and the organisation's Shane Daniels kneel alongside founder of Daniel's Wings of Pride, Donna Kerr, drawing attention to the issue of male suicide. A14_1026

are going through aren't diagnosable mental health conditions," Mr Withall said.

He continues to highlight the issue in Canberra, calling for Federal Government action including the creation of a Minister for Men's Health and Welfare and drop-in centres for men and boys.

Mr Withall stressed that better help for men will have positive flow-on benefits for women.

Mr Withall's call has the backing of Donna Kerr who

established support group Daniel's Wings of Pride in honour of her gay son who took his life, getting that initiative going with assistance from Zerosuicide.

Ms Kerr stresses the need for more mental health support, particularly in regional areas.

South Gippsland Shire Mayor Nathan Hersey and Cr Scott Rae left a blunt message on the Zerosuicide truck: "More local healthcare across Victoria, this was a promise by

our Vic MPs, yet not delivered. Mental health is more than a media release!!"

If you or someone you know needs support, talk to a GP or health professional or contact: Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36 or beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline on 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au

MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978 or mensline.org.au

Kids' Helpline on 1800 551 800 or kidsline.com.au

SuicideLine Victoria on 1300 651 251 or suicideline.org.au

Have your say on Mossvale Park master plan

By Andrew Paloczi

FRIENDS of Mossvale Park are keen to hear from community members about what they would like to see at the Berrys Creek attraction that includes more than 400 mapped plants and more than 260 species.

People are encouraged to complete the Friends of Mossvale Park Master Plan Community Survey to help the group develop a Master Plan that will include a 20-year vision for the park.

The survey asks why you visit Mossvale Park, how often you go and what improvements you would like to see there.

Possible improvements listed on the survey are upgraded toilets, more paths, more seating and signage, with the

option of suggesting others.

Friends of Mossvale Park secretary Jill Vella highlighted the importance of the Master Plan and of giving park users a say.

"The park's beloved by the people of South Gippsland and we want to make sure we understand how the community wants the park to be used and how they want us to look after it for the future," Ms Vella said.

Ms Vella feels it is important for the broader community to contribute their ideas, so it is not just the Friends group deciding how to manage the park. Ms Vella stressed that people

can have their say with minimal effort, the survey being short and uncomplicated.

Mossvale Park, owned by South Gippsland Shire Council and maintained by it and the Friends group, features National Trust registered trees planted in the late 1800s, along with many other trees well more than 100 years old.

The Friends group holds working bees on the first Thursday of each month from 10am, undertaking activities such as weeding, mulching, planting and basic pruning.

The group also maintains the Mossvale Park tree list and, with council support, applies for grants for upgrades as well as raising funds for

plantings in accordance with the management plan and living collection plan.

Those wanting to join Friends of Mossvale Park or learn more about the group are encouraged to visit mossvalepark.com or attend one of the monthly working bees.

For those keen to help by completing the survey, it can be done electronically using the QR code available at mossvalepark.com or can be downloaded from the website to print a hard copy.

Completed hard copies are to be submitted at the South Gippsland Shire Council office at 9 Smith Street Leongatha, with hard copies available there.

More improvements for Leongatha Secondary College

By Andrew Paloczi

ALREADY busy with previously reported major improvement works, Leongatha Secondary College (LSC) has received further good news in the form of more than \$2.5 million through the State Government's Planned Maintenance Program.

Principal Brad Hutchinson explained that schools are assessed every five years as part of a rolling facilities evaluation process.

"They've identified the need for repair and maintenance of a number of key assets around the school, so primarily it is a lot of the roofing in some of the

older buildings, the technology wing and Mesley Hall in particular," he said.

Some floors also need updating, including old wooden ones in the technology wing, the aim being to ensure facilities remain compliant with modern standards and do not fall into decay.

The principal stressed the importance of the latest funding.

"We're grateful and it adds to ensuring our kids are getting access to high quality facilities that are being maintained

well," he said.

The Victorian School Building Authority will manage a tender process, with those in charge at LSC looking forward to working with any successful tenderer.

Mr Hutchinson is hopeful of engaging with the selected contractor in the second half of this year, with the prospect of starting works in 2026, moving into 2027.

"Works will need to be prioritised around student movement and term breaks," he said.

The latest maintenance funding announcement comes on

top of the \$11.7 million upgrade and modernisation project already underway at the Nerrena Road school that includes a new performing arts centre and gymnasium upgrades.

"Labor is investing in Leongatha Secondary College so local students have an inspiring place to learn," Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh said.

Depending on timing, LSC may have to manage some of the current project concurrently with aspects of the Planned Maintenance Program works.

A tribute to Geoffrey Kim Whykes

~ 4 July 1972 - 19 February 2026 ~

ON Friday, March 6, at Stephen Baggs Funeral Chapel in Bairnsdale, family and friends gathered to honour and remember Geoffrey Kim Whykes, born July 4, 1972.

"Today we honour and remember my dad, Geoff," said daughter, Brooke Tahir.

"Dad lived a full and complicated life - one marked by hard work, generosity, laughter, and love.

He became a father very young; he was still a baby when he had me, but - he went on to raise a big, blended family of eight children and three stepsons.

Our family was never small, never quiet, and never lacking character - and that was very much because of him."

Geoffrey was a butcher through and through.

It wasn't just a job; it was who he was.

He worked alongside his own father, owning the Bairnsdale Butter Factory, both of them proud butchers, both of them proud of their trade.

Later, as a small-town butcher in Korumburra, Geoffrey became far more than the local butcher.

He became part of the fabric of the town.

If you were struggling, Geoffrey noticed.

If you needed help, he found a way.

Geoffrey donated meat to schools and charities whenever he could.

He gave people chances.

He provided work in the shop, a bit of dignity for some, or a simple smile and a joke when life felt heavy.

His heart was big, and he used it freely.

Geoffrey loved people.

He loved his partner Thao,

who brought him happiness and companionship.

He valued the meaningful relationships he shared with Judy and Trudy - not just as former partners, but as life-long friends.

Most of all, Geoffrey loved his kids.

When diagnosed with cancer, Geoffrey worked for as long as his body would allow.

With his passing, Geoffrey left a legacy of kindness, community, humour and care, as well as skill - the best being how to cut the perfect eye fillet.

Geoffrey was born at 8:15 am on July 4, and he passed away at 8:30 am on February 19.

He didn't leave alone.

He passed surrounded by love.

He brought people together."

Geoffrey will be deeply missed by his family, the



Geoffrey Kim Whykes.
4 July 1972 - 19 Feb 2026.

Korumburra community, and everyone whose life he touched with his jokes, positivity and genuine care for others.

The world feels quieter without him, but his impact remains loud and clear in the lives he shaped.

"Rest now, Dad. Thank you for the love you gave, the lives you helped, and the example you set.

You mattered - and you always will."

Billy the 'cardboard man' will be missed

BILLY Hansch, fondly known as the 'cardboard man' was remembered recently at his funeral for his vast contribution to children's health through more than 25 years' volunteering for Uncle Bobs Club.

Along with Christine Ward he collected cardboard year-round from businesses in Korumburra and Leongatha with fees charged raising funds for The Royal Children's Hospital and Uncle Bobs Club.

Half the money raised goes to the RCH Good Friday Appeal with the rest remaining

By Andrew Palocz

with Uncle Bobs Club to direct to other children's health projects.

Billy took on many duties for the cause including selling raffle tickets, standing outside the newsagents with a collection tin and door-knocking on Good Friday.

He also collected items to sell in the annual Uncle Bobs goods and services auction at Korumburra's Austral Hotel.

Long-term volunteer for the South Gippsland Group of Uncle Bobs Club Melissa Whelan paid tribute to Billy

and his contribution at his funeral.

"Billy and Chris had sourced so many businesses to collect from in Korumburra and Leongatha that it became a five-plus days a week role," Ms Whelan said.

Billy originally began collecting cardboard for Uncle Bobs Club with his father.

When the old van used for collections eventually gave out the head office of Uncle Bobs sourced a replacement having recognised cardboard collection as a terrific fundraiser for the club.

"Billy had many other



helpers over the years but he and Chris continued to volunteer their time for the club until Billy became unwell before Christmas and had to retire from the role," Ms Whelan said.

"We thank Billy for his dedication, service and commitment to Uncle Bobs Club and to the community."

Paramedic on a mission to empower local communities

BASS Coast paramedic Lauren O'Dwyer is on a mission to give local communities the confidence to save lives.

When a back injury temporarily left Ms O'Dwyer unable to perform her frontline role she found herself working in Ambulance Victoria's Community Engagement team teaching others lifesaving skills.

In the role Ms O'Dwyer spends her days travelling to businesses and organisations across Gippsland to deliver training in CPR, defibrillator use and emergency response.

She teaches Ambulance Victoria's Call Push Shock program which educates communities that anyone can help save a life in three simple steps: call Triple Zero (000), perform CPR and use an automated external defibrillator.

The program is part of Ambulance Victoria's broader push to build heart safe communities across regional Victoria where ambulance response times can be longer and bystander intervention is often the difference between life and death.

In regional areas where the nearest ambulance may be more than 20 minutes away immediate CPR from a bystander can double or triple a

cardiac arrest patient's chance of survival.

For every minute that passes without CPR a person's chance of survival drops by about 10 per cent.

Ms O'Dwyer has also delivered presentations on heat health, water safety, choking emergencies, snake bites and recognising heart attack and stroke symptoms.

She has taken the program to caravan parks, sporting clubs, community groups, schools, aged care facilities and workplaces across Bass Coast and South Gippsland reaching hundreds of community members since starting the role.

"I absolutely love doing this work, it's important for our community to feel empowered to perform lifesaving actions while they wait for paramedic assistance," Ms O'Dwyer said.

"It saves lives."

Ambulance Victoria Regional Director for Gippsland Ross Salathiel said the organisation is committed to helping create healthier, safer and more resilient communities.

Businesses and community groups interested in hosting a free Ambulance Victoria community education session can contact community.engagement@ambulance.vic.gov.au.



Paramedic Lauren O'Dwyer with Kristian, Kate, Aidan, Steven and Wayne from Inverloch Caravan Park.

Aged care bed funding welcomed but regions miss out

THE Federal Government has announced \$115 million in capital grants to build more aged care beds but regional areas including Gippsland will not benefit from the first round of funding.

The grants through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program will target Adelaide and the Illawarra in the first tranche followed by Perth and the Hunter.

Ageing Australia CEO Tom Symondson welcomed the commitment but warned it was not enough.

"We welcome any commitment that can help us build more beds quickly or bring beds back online," Mr Symondson said.

"Several regions with enormous demand will miss out this time round including Brisbane."

Mr Symondson said Australia should be building about 10,000 aged care beds a year but added only about 800 last year.

"Within the next few years we will find ourselves in a situation where we literally cannot meet demand," he said.

The aged care bed shortage is felt acutely in regional communities including South Gippsland where facilities at Foster, Leongatha, Korumburra and Phillip Island play a vital role in keeping older residents close to home.

More than 3,000 older Australians are stuck in hospital beds nationally waiting for aged care or home care services.

• FAITH FACTOR

What hope is there?

Rev. Graeme Liersch,
Rector, Anglican Parish
of Wonthaggi/Inverloch

ONCE again the Middle East has descended into war resulting in disruption of international travel, the price of fuel increasing and the cost of living for all countries of the world under threat.

It is a sad, concerning, distressing period of time.

Even so, we remain distant from the actual conflict, and hopefully it will stay that way.

Why does the world descend into conflict like this from time to time?

Is it religiously motivated, or done out of selfish desire by those in power, or some other reason?

Whatever the case its essence is evil.

For some it is a religious thing, for others it is a means of expressing their evil desires and for others it is a grasp for freedom.

All war is disastrous with many victims and despite our promises to never go there again, we seem never to learn from the past.

Evil always gives rise to evil.

It begs the question: "What hope is there?"

Evil itself was eternally defeated at that very first Easter when a man named Jesus Christ gave himself up freely to be crucified, murdered, hung on a cross, for the sake of us all.

It may seem superficial to you, and it may seem meaningless to many, but what it has done is given us hope, hope of a better future, a better eternity.

Christians don't see their future as being here in this world, rather they see their future living peacefully in God's heaven for eternity because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

This is our hope.

For me, nothing can separate me from the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

Do you have that hope?

If you don't have it and would like it, seek a Christian minister out or a Christian friend and ask them how to obtain it.

In the meantime, please pray for peace in the Middle East and for the repair of souls affected by this recent conflict.

Sentinel-Times

COMMENT

Life's a beach when it's safety first

THE year was 2019 and Life Saving Victoria's Aquatic Risk and Research Department had prepared a report for our key coastal management agencies as part of the Surf Life Saving Australia Beach Drowning Black Spot Reduction Program.

Funded by the Australian Government, the report was prepared for Bass Coast Shire, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Parks Victoria and the San Remo Fore-shore Committee of Management.

Called the 'Bass Coast Shire Coastal Risk Assessment Report', it included information about our most dangerous beaches and what to do to try to mitigate the risks.

But the report gathered dust on the shelf until the horrific summer of 2023-24 when six people died on Bass Coast's beaches.

The report highlighted the dangers at coastal locations and beaches including Punchbowl east of San Remo, Undertow Bay at Cape Paterson, and Forrest Caves, Woolamai and Sunderland Bay on Phillip Island.

Oddly enough Kilcunda did not feature in the top 15 most dangerous beaches in Bass Coast but the area from Shelly Beach to Second Surf Cape Paterson was listed as a high-risk zone for drownings.

Front and centre in the 'recommended actions' was this: "One key risk treatment strategy proposed for all sites is signage and this report strongly recommends a shire-wide uniform signage strategy."

Used on public land specific to aquatic recreation drowning and injury event minimisation; it should be implemented in a coordinated and consistent manner."

The other key action recommended was "to commit to a systematic monitoring and review process" by all land managers in the Bass Coast Shire so "that new hazards are detected and managed and linked to modification or maintenance of existing action plans".

It's taken time but that seems to be happening now and with lifejackets mandatory at high-risk rock fishing locations, fingers crossed, we've had a pretty good summer, not that we haven't had our share of scares, and our eternal gratitude goes to the surf lifesavers, local surfers and first responders who have kept us and the visiting crowds safe.

It was also gratifying to see the focus on our responsibility to keep locals and visitors safe at the 'Beach Smart, Beach Fun' seminar at the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club last Saturday, an event attended by a good 100-plus people including local MP Jordan Crugnale, the Mayor Cr Rochelle Halstead and representatives of all the land management agencies.

But there's still more to do, there always will be.

As pointed out by Professor Rob Brander, widely known as Dr Rip, 154 people drowned in Australia last year, 43 per cent at the coast, with 10,000 rescues.

The harsh lessons to be learned from our terrible summer of 2023-24 are to respond to expert reports about local hazards and commit to a systematic monitoring and review process.

And make these actions public.

"Ongoing reporting will communicate the activities and outcomes, provide information to inform decision-making, improve risk management activities and facilitate interaction with stakeholders," the Bass Coast Shire Coastal Risk Assessment Report reads.

Beach safety is everybody's responsibility.

Vox Pop

What would you like Phillip Island to become known for following the loss of the Moto GP?



Grace Kindellan
Foster

"I think they should have a festival featuring some of Gippsland's wonderful musicians, artists, children's entertainers and the region's produce, wineries, distilleries and breweries."



Mick Vanderkwast
Leongatha

"It should be known for camping and parkland; the Moto GP was such a big event."



Kylie Ashton
Leongatha

"The food, and beachy holiday culture, the place it always used to be. It's a family destination."



Steph McGeachin
Bena

"The local native areas, the walking tracks and wildlife; that's what we take the kids there for."

Questions remain unanswered at South Gippsland Shire

I'M in disbelief CEO Allison Jones put in your paper page 22 on 3 March, 2026.

For the last six months I have asked questions and not been answered.

Only three weeks ago I sat in front of the Mayor Nathan and the shire's budget man Tony Peterson upstairs in their office for the meet the mayor session.

Questions were: I can not read the budget, you change the headings, take some out, put new ones in.

It is unfair to read, yet in the shire's budget it shows \$25 million missing, approximately 13 months ago, just prior to ex-CEO K. Ellis leaving the shire in a very awkward position just after accepting another five-year deal at SGSC.

Her absence is very peculiar and worrying.

The rate freeze has upset the new CEO with rumours, and pushing not to answer letters. They are weeks behind their own due process.

I, president of SGAG, have asked a lot of questions to understand the shire's ruthless ways to deal with the public.

Shutting down question time, one on one meetings so no one else knows what is going on, closed door sessions, in-house bullying, individuals not concentrating on their job and manipulating to suit their own agenda.

Prior to the last vote for a councillor in Korumburra in an open meet and greet your ward, two councillors spoke about works no longer on the shire due to the CEO getting businesses in to take over what would be normal shire jobs to contractors.

The shire sacked or put off 18 staff no longer needed. Within weeks 12 got new jobs. That is fact. More than 40 people in the room heard this.

SGAG, my group, through 300 hours of time, records and documents have worked out that there are around 35 staff not needed in our shire department.

The shire will not give us staff numbers for inside, outside, admin and the full spectrum. The CEO will not allow it, behind closed doors.

Staff turnover is around 15 per cent.

Total staffing numbers, my guess, is approximately between 278 and 319 as of today. Makes WorkCover worth a lot.

South Gippsland Action Group was set up more than 12 years ago to investigate the shire's assets, ask questions, share ideas from an active group of older people that has a wealth of knowledge and understanding of business overall.

To get it right, our rates were well above other shires 10 to 15 years ago. Shires now have to toe the line.

Our CEO gets well over half a million dollars for her wage including benefits. Yes, well too much.

Our shire, think of a triangle. CEO is at the top, then staff, then employees. The bigger the staff, the more the CEO gets.

Allison Jones, you are not in chambers where you control your own world. Now the public has the right to know the facts.

PS: Once again I am waiting for information promised by your staff three weeks ago.

David Amor, Korumburra

Council's one-way Surf Parade proposal slammed

COUNCIL'S proposal to declare a section of Surf Parade one-way is based on failed arguments and disproven science.

Councillors supporting this proposal show that they are unwilling to stand up for their constituents and will instead kneel to distant bureaucrats, some of whom probably couldn't locate Inverloch on a map.

DEECA decrees that no vegetation, no matter how insignificant, can be removed from the last section of pathway.

Some councillors have now backflipped from the community's preferred design and will support the proposal.

However the arguments put by DEECA now lie in ruins.

They've spent more than five years and millions of taxpayer dollars.

But all the while during their expensive navel-gazing exercise erosion has destroyed most of the dune.

There's now nothing left to study.

For more than half a century Gold Coast Shire Council has proved that seawalls stop erosion and protect assets.

All too late our State Government has recognised this fact.

Under immense community pressure the government has reluctantly and belatedly taken measures to extend the seawall around the Surf Lifesaving clubhouse.

But DEECA refuses to support any additional protective measures, including along the very section of dune which they argue must be protected.

Instead we must "adapt and retreat."

But they haven't figured out what "retreat" looks like.

Credit to Cr Meg Edwards who called for councillors to defer any decision until after the upcoming state election, now less than nine months away.

If you want to stop this one-way proposal then send a brief submission to council.

Submissions must be received by Council by 5pm on 1 April 2026, in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Bass Coast Shire Council, PO Box 118, Wonthaggi VIC 3995.

Kevin Griffin, Wonthaggi

Island lovers should unite and say no to Maccas

I HAVE lived in two other rural communities that eventually succumbed to Maccas.

The increase in roadside and bush litter was astounding.

I would often be out on roadsides, car parks, open land and bush pockets putting their rubbish into big bin bags, sometimes at risk of traffic and snake-bite.

Our wildlife is under enough critical stress without having to wade through more human indifference.

It was interesting that roadside and bush litter was almost entirely Maccas, other takeaway franchise waste, alcohol cans and bottles plus cigarette packs. Says something, does it not.

Will Maccas legally commit to employing people to collect their dumped waste?

Surely that should be a requirement they must agree to before their intrusion can be considered further.

The Island is world recognised as a destination for nature-based ecotourism with Phillip Island Nature Parks, Bird-life International area, marine and land-based conservation areas and reserves.

Why should a US franchise have more power than our environmental organisations and workers and make their jobs even more difficult by trashing the place?

What does highly ultra-processed food with all its proven health detriments have to do with nature, wellness and healthy lifestyles on an eco island?

At the very least, if we must have a takeaway franchise, why not something with more health benefits and eco credentials that fits the island's ethos?

However, I personally think that taking customers from local people and their cafes, vans and restaurants is a slap in the face to small and family businesses.

Why do this to good, hard-working people with island stickers on their cars showing our sense of community?

We are islanders, myself since the early 1980s, and Maccas will only make local businesses suffer.

OK, some kids will get employment but is working for such a company actually a good role model?

Why not have one local sanger and shake business in Cowes that can stay open with similar hours to a Maccas and employ some kids there?

Why should a US franchise be allowed to come in and take livelihoods and profits from local traders who are already dealing with seasonal fluctuations and loss of GPs?

Island lovers, locals, small business and Bass Coast Shire Council should unite and say no.

Mrs L Kannavas and Family, Cowes

End of year deadline for Stewart Road bridge

By Bruce Wardley

A DECEMBER completion target has been set by Bass Coast Shire Council for the renewal and strengthening of the Stewart Road bridge at Kernot.

The new bridge will replace the current structure which was damaged by overloading and general degradation and ultimately closed due to safety concerns in March 2025.

The new bridge will restore safe and reliable access for local residents and improve emergency response times for the Kernot-Grantville CFA who have faced lengthy detours during callouts since the closure.

The structure had a 20-tonne load limit and could no longer safely support heavy vehicles without risk of further damage.

After consultation and detailed cost estimates, council resolved to rebuild the bridge to a higher load rating of 44 tonnes to ensure the structure meets current and future needs.

After securing a \$1.768 million grant through the Australian Government's Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP) a selective tender process was opened before Christmas and closed in January 2026.

Bass Coast Mayor, Cr Rochelle Halstead thanked the Australian Government for its investment and acknowledged the strong advocacy of the local community.

"I want to sincerely thank the Australian Government for backing this project and recognising how critical this bridge is for safety and connectivity," Cr Halstead said.

"I also want to congratulate the Kernot community for their strong advocacy and for working with us to achieve this outcome.

I hope that today's decision brings a renewed sense of optimism, knowing their detour days are finally a step closer to ending."

An additional council meeting was called to account for the lead



Bass Coast Shire Western Port councillors Mayor Rochelle Halstead, Cr Jan Thompson and Cr Jon Temby celebrate the awarding of a \$2.2 million tender for the renewal and strengthening of the Stewart Road bridge. B03_1026

time required for materials and manufacturing, and to ensure the project could begin without waiting for the next scheduled meeting, to help bring forward the construction timeline.

Construction is expected to commence in April with works anticipated to take around six months from the decommissioning of the existing structure.

The project is jointly funded through Council's Structure Renewal Program and the Australian Government's SLRIP program.

Cr Jon Temby said it was most important to get this work started as soon as possible.

"There has been brilliant work by council staff to fast track the process so that as soon as this tender is accepted, work can get started very promptly and that is going to improve emergency response which has been of great concern to all in the area," said Cr Temby.

Recognising the enormous work done by the community in expressing their concerns, Cr Temby said council had responded and the bridge was going to

greatly improve community access and amenity in the area.

Cr Jan Thompson said the community had been on tenterhooks waiting for a whole year.

Thanking the local community for working with council officers, Cr Thompson said the team had gone above and beyond to complete the process as fast and as efficiently as possible to streamline construction of the bridge.

Local farmers had complained the bridge closure was having a significant impact on daily life for local landholders, residents and access to essential services.

The Federal Government committed \$1.7 million to the project late last year with Bass Coast Shire required to fund the remaining portion of the \$2.21 million total cost.

An evaluation panel comprising three council officers evaluated all tender submissions against the approved selection criteria and concluded the tender submitted by Timber Restoration Systems Pty Ltd would meet the requirements of the works and provide council with best value for money.

Expressing concern about the impact of B-double trucks crossing the bridge, Cr Tim O'Brien asked if there would be monitoring of traffic once the bridge was completed.

Council was advised the bridge would accommodate agricultural industrial vehicles and would be of such a standard that monitoring would not be required.

Cr O'Brien said there were a number of bridges across the shire which were being compromised by very heavy traffic, including the Bass River bridge.

"The CFA can't get across that bridge and have to go around," said Cr O'Brien.

Cr O'Brien asked if a better regime could be introduced to monitor what's going over the bridge so that trucks that shouldn't be going over, are snapped and caught.

Council was told the significant risk that the bridges pose had been included in council's new structures asset management plan which identified that additional risk. To learn more go to engage.basscoast.vic.gov.au/stewart-rd-bridge-kernot

CUC Bass Coast marks five years of empowering local students

COUNTRY Universities Centre Bass Coast has marked five years of supporting local students in accessing higher education with a successful Open Day in Wonthaggi.

The centre provides a free study space for students completing degrees, diplomas or Certificate IV qualifications with any Australian university.

With people in regional and rural Australia 50 per cent less likely to access higher education, Country Universities Centres were created to bring university support closer to home.

CUC Bass Coast is one of four affiliated Regional University Study Hubs in Victoria and part of a national network of 56 hubs supporting more than 15,000 regional and remote students across the country.

Community members toured the facilities, met with staff and students and enjoyed complementary coffee and cake while reflecting on the centre's achievements.

Centre Manager Sarah Bourke said the milestone acknowledged the centre's growth and impact.

"In 2025 the centre experienced significant growth with 50 more registered students than the previous year and overall usage increased by 66 per cent," Ms Bourke said.

"These figures demonstrate how CUC has made it possible to study locally while continuing to work and live in our region which is incredibly important for both students and the local community."

To date the centre has supported more than 550 students on their higher education journeys.

"Last year alone more than 50 local students were graduating from a range of different degrees all wanting to remain local, creating a ready-made workforce to address local employment gaps," Ms Bourke said.

Ms Bourke also acknowledged the team at CUC that provides local academic support in building essential study skills to help guide students through assignments, time management, referencing and exam preparation.

A group of Year 12 students from Bass Coast College attended the Open Day and spoke with current student ambassadors about choosing to remain local while continuing their higher education studies.

Current student Kasey, who is studying a Bachelor of Marine Science at Deakin University, said she was the first in her family to attend university.

"The study centre is fantastic -- having the study space, kitchen and fast internet, it's a game-changer," she said.

Another student, Aimee, is studying a communications degree at Deakin University majoring in journalism and has recently completed internships at ABC and WIN TV.

Ms Bourke said strengthening engagement with local secondary schools through the FutureBound widening participation program was a key priority over the next two years.

"Research tells us that the earlier we can work with young people and get them thinking about their future aspirations the better," she said.

Students have access to the centre seven days a week with high-speed technology, academic mentoring and a network of like-minded students.

For more information visit www.cucbasscoast.edu.au or call 0472 741 451.

Foster Secondary students train as pool lifeguards

By Bruce Wardley

THIRTEEN more lifeguards are on their way to local pools after a group of students from Foster Secondary College successfully completed their training as pool lifeguards.

Working in conjunction with the South Gippsland Bass Coast LLEN and South Gippsland Bass Coast Trade Skills Alliance the Martin Carlson Foundation (MCF) funded the program to ensure that every student undertaking a two year Sport and Recreation Certificate had the opportunity to train for their Pool Life Guard and Certificate III First Aid.

Mark Tudor from the South Gippsland Bass Coast Trade Skills Alliance said pools that were likely to benefit included Toora, Foster, Korumburra, Mirboo North, Poowong, Leongatha and Wonthaggi.

The Pool Life Guard program was a two day course conducted at the Korumburra outdoor pool with the Certificate III in First Aid to be delivered at another location.



Foster Secondary College students Oscar Bright and Sophie Milton training as pool lifeguards at Korumburra with South Gippsland Mayor Cr Nathan Hersey. B05_1026

Water skills included rescuing a 40kg dummy from the bottom of the pool to the edge of the pool, a 200m swim and a spinal rescue using a submerged stretcher to lift the patient to the edge of the pool.

The second day included CPR training and the use of oxygen and a defibrillator.

Several students had already attained their Surf Bronze

through Lifesaving Victoria.

MCF Trustee Gary Brittle said it was an amazing investment in our young people and cemented the outdoor pool at Korumburra for further future opportunities.

"We anticipate this program will be ongoing and only offered from the Korumburra pool moving forward as it ticks all the boxes due to its central location

and size," said Mr Brittle.

"The program will inject more lifeguards into our community and provide young people with life skills and qualifications and the opportunity to volunteer or gain employment in this occupational area.

"It will enable greater use of Korumburra's outdoor pool for the training of our youth and provide a qualification for young people to gain recognition should they wish to travel overseas.

"It will also enable young people to gain employment within our region which effectively means that we retain our skill sets and youth, injecting additional skills and employment opportunities within our South Gippsland and Bass Coast region."

Martin Carlson Foundation Trustees have agreed to support additional training moving forward at a cost of \$15,000 per year by engaging sport and recreation students from a different school in the region to undertake training at the Korumburra swimming pool each year.

Solace strikes a chord

BASS Coast vocal ensemble Solace is set to delight local audiences once again with a vibrant new concert at Wonthaggi Town Hall on Saturday March 21 at 2.30pm.

Performing for one show only the 11-member vocal group promises an afternoon of musical discovery in their latest production *It Ain't Necessarily So*.

Musical Director and arranger Martin Cox describes the program with characteristic humour.

"We have borrowed Dr Who's TARDIS to venture through space and time on a musical treasure hunt to find the most diverse and spell-binding repertoire imaginable," Mr Cox said.

Audiences can expect an eclectic mix spanning centuries and continents from Renaissance gems and French impressionists to Tin Pan Alley jazz classics.

The journey continues through a Mexican bolero, Brazilian bossa nova, Morna music from Cape

Verde, a Taize prayer chant, pop hits from the 1970s and '80s and even a rousing French drinking song.

The ensemble will also perform their title track from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

Special guest musicians Diana Reardon on flute and local legend Dave Carlos on saxophone and harmonica will join the ensemble.

Solace tenor Colin Bokulic will add his uniquely constructed washboard to selected numbers.

"I love this thing, I am always adding bits to it," Mr Bokulic said.

Alto Kate Cleeland will showcase her tap-dancing flair.

Formed in 2024 Solace brings together singers from across the Bass Coast region including Cowes, Kilcunda, Archies Creek, Ryanston and Inverloch.

Now presenting their third major concert the group continues to expand its already diverse repertoire.

Tickets are \$10 cash at the door.



Silversound - Andrew Tanner on lead vocals and guitar, Leroy Cope on drums, Stu Thomas on bass and Shane O'Mara on guitar and vocals will perform live at Archies Creek Hotel on Sunday, March 15, with doors open at 3pm on the outside stage.

Silversound to erupt an English-psychedelic sound at Archies Creek

SILVERSOUND will bring a 1970s English-psychedelic sound to Archies Creek on Sunday March 15 with doors open at 3pm.

The band was born from burgeoning friendships of like-minded musicians with similar musical tastes.

Initially coming together in guitarist and singer Shane O'Mara's studio, Andrew Tanner on lead vocals and guitar, Leroy Cope on drums and Stu Thomas on bass delved into their own sound.

They deliver almost a

kraut rock with psychedelic styles, long drawn-out songs and a lot of spontaneity in performance.

Shane said Silversound write their own music with a quality and experience that seeps through every note.

The blistering hazy fugue of psychedelia that is 'Rose City' is the band's new single, with guitars that shimmer like light in the desert.

It is a sonic mirage that shape-shifts with layered dreamy harmonies.

"It's like someone threw Brian Jonestown Massacre

into a bubbling pot with The Dandy Warhols and every '60s psychedelic band you can think of and added healthy doses of illicit chemical substances and filtered sunshine," Shane said.

Silversound came from a collective of musicians who weave through various bands and artists but make a deliberate choice to compose new sounds together when thoughts arise.

"We live close together in the west," Shane said.

"We play separate gigs

in Melbourne but I'm astounded how many people do traverse that two-hour drive to get to Archies.

"It sounds amazing and it's just a thrilling venue run by people who genuinely love music for the right reasons."

Archies Creek promises the attentive crowd and reverent sound that suit Silversound and Amarillo, the opening act on the outside stage.

Tickets are available online at www.archiescreekhotel.com.au.



Solace

'It Ain't Necessarily So' Concert 2026

Solace, a Bass Coast vocal dectet joined by guest instrumentalists, will perform an eclectic mix of classical, jazz, latin and popular music. This vibrant and varied program promises rich harmonies, elegant musicianship and even a touch of tap dancing!

An afternoon of entertainment not to be missed.

Wonthaggi Town Hall
Saturday 21st March, 2.30pm
 \$10 (cash only)
 Students and children free

The ARCHIES CREEK HOTEL
 PROUDLY PRESENTS

Month	Date	Act
March	WED 11/3	MARY COUGHLAN + MICK THOMAS TRIO
	FRI 13/3	HUSSY HICKS
	SUN 15/3	THE SILVERSOUND w/ AMARILLO
	SAT 23/3	LIZ STRINGER & BAND
	SUN 25/3	BONDI CIGARS
	FRI 27/3	EMILY LUBITZ & BAND
	SAT 28/3	PLAYLUNCH
April	FRI 10/4	FRANK YAMMA
	SUN 12/4	TRACEY MILLER & BAND w/ THE DUSTY MILLERS
	SAT 18/4	KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
	SUN 19/4	ERIC BIBB & BAND
May	FRI 1/5	BEN LEE
	SAT 2/5	HENRY WAGONS
	FRI 8/5	NOT DROWNING WAVING
	SUN 10/5	TEENY TINY STEVIES
	SUN 17/5	FOR THE SAKE OF THE SONG - SARA STORER, SHANE HOWARD & SHANE NICHOLSON

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Morning Today Show to launch Inverloch Equinox Festival

By Bruce Wardley

CHANNEL Nine's Today Show will be broadcasting live weather crosses from Inverloch from 6.30am on Friday March 20 to launch this year's Equinox Festival and the public is invited to come along dressed to celebrate the equinox.

The equinox occurs twice a year on March 20 and September 22 when daytime and night-time are exactly the same length at 12 hours each.

The first Inverloch Equinox Festival last year proved to be a huge success attracting more than 4000 visitors to the town for the festival weekend.

Planning for the 2026 Inverloch Equinox Festival is well advanced with Inverloch preparing to host yet another celebration of wellness, nature and harvest.

This year's program offers a wide range of themed events highlighted by a free music performance at The Glade featuring headline act Jack Botts.

Inverloch Tourism Association president Glenn Morris said the Today Show weather segment broadcast presents a fantastic opportunity to showcase both the festival and the beautiful town of



Ashleigh Urry from Aligned by Nature meditating with opening night guests at last year's Inverloch Equinox Festival. B96_1225

Inverloch to a national audience.

The community is encouraged to pop into The Glade from around 6.30am dressed in a tasteful or quirky outfit that showcases the fun festival and the town of Inverloch.

"Let's make the weather crosses memorable for everyone watching throughout

Australia," Mr Morris said.

The Equinox Festival starts on Friday night March 20 with Joy In Motion Sound Movement Meditation, After Dark Tarot Cards at the Inverloch library, Sunset Bush Poetry with Horses, a wine and cheese appreciation night at the Inverloch Life Saving Club, Inverloch Under The Stars and After

Dark Tours Secrets by the Inlet.

The Invy Park Run kicks the festival off on Saturday morning March 21 followed by Dino Discovery Paleo Lab, Wellbeing Expo at The Hub, Pony Rides and Farm Gate at Wattlebank Farm, Inverloch Shell Museum and an Artist Talk and Open Studio.

Saturday from 4pm to 9.30pm will see an exciting program of live and free entertainment at The Glade with food trucks, kids activities and entertainment including Mr Marvel Circus acts and live music from Zenith Paradox, The Drop Kicks, Youth Band, Snuff Puppets, Didgeridoo Beats Ganga Giri, Hot Tub and renowned Australian singer-songwriter Jack Botts.

Saturday late evening will also see Inverloch Under the Stars, After Dark Town Tour Secrets and the Equinox Encore music at the Esplanade Hotel.

On Sunday March 22 enjoy Morning Flow, Inverloch Lions Club Market, Dino Discovery at The Caves, Inverloch Shell Museum, Walk Journal Meditate with Horses and a long brunch celebrating Inverloch.

For more information go to inverlochequinoxfestival.com.au.

Exhibition explores ocean mysteries

COAL Creek's latest exhibition TRACE: Sea Ghost and Other Phenomena opens on Saturday March 7 with a launch event from 1pm to 3pm at the Coal Creek Entrance Building at 12 Silkstone Road Korumburra.

The exhibition features works by artists Jasmine Susic, Kim MacDonald and Karli Duckett and runs until Sunday April 20.

Susic and MacDonald are Bass Coast-based artists who share a deep connection to the ocean and have collaborated on printmaking, film, dance and installation works inspired by the marine environment of the Yallock Bulluk Marine Park.

The pair previously exhibited Kelp and the Sentient Sea at Berninnet Art Gallery in Cowes in 2025 a show that explored the energy and life force of the local coastline.

Duckett is a photographer whose work has documented creative and community events across Gippsland.

Coal Creek boasts two distinct exhibition spaces the Entry Gallery and the Auditorium which are open on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday during school terms and every day during school holidays.

Entry to Coal Creek and its exhibitions is free. The park is open from 10am to 4pm with last entry at 3.30pm. For more information phone 1800 630 704 or visit coalcreekcommunityparkandmuseum.com.

Film group backs dark horse at this year's Oscars

MEMBERS of the Bass Coast Fine Film Group are eagerly awaiting next Monday's Academy Awards to see if their pick of the season proves a winner.

The group has thrown its support behind Norwegian film Sentimental Value which has been nominated for nine Oscars including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress.

Directed by Joachim Trier, the film follows two sisters who reconnect with their estranged film-director father after their mother dies.

It won the Grand Prix at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival and Best Film in a Foreign Language at the BAFTAs last month.

It faces stiff competition from Ryan Coogler's Sinners with a record 16 nominations and Paul Thomas Anderson's One Battle After Another.

The 98th Academy Awards hosted by Conan O'Brien will be broadcast on Monday March 16 on the Seven Network and 7plus from 10am.

The BCFG will present two screenings of Sentimental Value at the Union Theatre in Wonthaggi on Sunday April 5 at 10.30am and Tuesday April 7 at 4.30pm.

Admission is free for members and the general public is welcome.

Feather Antics presented by Ian McGill in Tarwin Lower



Feather Antics Photography Exhibition by Ian McGill will be presented at Thirsty Work Studio Gallery in Tarwin Lower.

RETIRED television cinematographer Ian McGill will present his first photographic exhibition titled Feather Antics exploring the beauty and diversity of birds in the wild at the Thirsty Work Studio Gallery in Tarwin Lower from March 29 until April 18.

Ian's photography is reproduced on stretched canvases and focuses on the often unique birds of South Gippsland and their often quirky behaviours.

Ian McGill has a 35-year history as a cinematographer in television news and current affairs.

But his love of still photography capturing birds and landscapes has endured for much longer.

He studied photography at Canberra Arts School and the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education in Churchill.

His first TV job was at GLV8 in Traralgon.

Ian ventured to Venus Bay in the mid-1980s and in 1986 he built a pole house with a work colleague.

In retirement Ian has been able to concentrate his photography on the extraordinary

birdlife of Venus Bay and other parts of South Gippsland as well as in the tropical Northern Territory where he grew up on a cattle station known as Tipperary.

"It's a privilege to be able to capture images of these amazing birds in particular at Anderson Inlet in Venus Bay which is recognised as a critical high-value bird habitat on the South Gippsland coast," McGill said.

"And I am always surprised and delighted by their feather antics where their wings paint poetry in the sky."



will be broadcasting live in Leongatha from the Rail Trail Community markets on Sunday, March 15.

Are you looking for a great market and a slice of local history?

The Rail Trail Community Market Leongatha has you covered.

Held on the third Sunday of the month from 8:30am - 1pm.

Set in the stunning surrounds of the historic Leongatha Railway precinct the Rail Trail Community market has everything you need for a fabulous day out. With amazing arts, crafts and food and beverage stalls, bring the whole family.

South Coast FM will be broadcasting live on March 15 so come along to enjoy the markets and say hi!

JAC3830

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Trybooking



TRIVIA NIGHT

the Freeman Brothers comedy duo

door prizes

live music raffle

games (need a gold coin)

light supper BYO drinks

Dalyston Hall

Saturday March 21 at 7pm

\$35pp

enquiries & donations: bcrsg2021@gmail.com

ME0918



Linda Smith of Neerim loves attending the Welshpool Autumn Flower Show each year. A20_1026



Pamie and Bernie from Latrobe Valley attend the Welshpool Autumn Flower Show for the first time, being keen dahlia growers. A21_1026



Marzia Maurilli of Foster and Hedley's Ali Gardiner enjoy the Welshpool Autumn Flower Show on Friday. A22_1026



Rodney Grylls entered the winning Harvest Basket in Welshpool. A23_1026



Bass Coast Mayor Rochelle Halstead and Cr Jan Thompson were among the many prominent women celebrating International Women's Day at The Gurdies winery. B10_1026



Annie Loughridge and Jan Van Doorn at a well-attended event for International Women's Day at The Gurdies. B16_1026



Gail Nash, Colleen Hennequin and Julie Jones enjoying the International Women's Day event at The Gurdies winery overlooking The Waterline. B12_1026



Margaret Deslandes and Vicki Gusner celebrated the many achievements of local women as part of International Women's Day. B13_1026



Wendy Anderson and Linda Pratt enjoying International Women's Day with friends and neighbours from The Waterline. B14_1026



President of the Loch CWA Helen Bryce and CWA member Louise Batchlor serving up scones with jam and cream at the Loch Public Hall. B38_1026



Paul Knox President of the Loch 150th Anniversary Committee at the Loch Recreation Reserve with John Fisher the last senior coach of the Loch Football Club. B31_1026



Former Loch residents Paul and Carmel Kennedy (O'Halloran) and Christine Clifton at the Loch Recreation Reserve for the digging up of the Loch F.C. time capsule. B32_1026

Snapped Out

Pictures of you and your friends at the Welshpool Autumn Flower Show, International Women's Day at The Gurdies, Korumburra Working Horse and Tractor Rally, Loch's 150th Anniversary and the Bass Coast Sustainability Festival.



Adam Wylie, Andrew Holman and Stephen Halliday at the Loch Recreation Reserve ahead of the Korumburra Working Horse and Tractor Fun Day in Nyora on March 21 - 22. B30_1026



Lauren Grylls and Georgia Martin from Bass Coast Shire Council explaining how to recycle waste at the Bass Coast Sustainability Festival in Cowes. B26_1026



Kate Adams Community Impact Manager for Phillip Island Nature Parks at the Bass Coast Sustainability Festival at Blue Gum Reserve. B23_1026



Jarrah Van Stek from Loch with her range of Rad Dacks clothing made for children from 100 per cent upcycled textiles. B27_1026



Brothers Billy, Heath and Jude Brain at the Loch Recreation Reserve for the digging up of the Loch Football Club time capsule. B34_1026

Sentinel-Times

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Sellers urged to act before Easter

BASS Coast and South Gippsland sellers are being urged to act before Easter as national data points to the strongest autumn selling season in years — and local price points continue to attract a steady stream of buyers priced out of the city.

Raine & Horne data shows listings surged almost 37 per cent month-on-month in February nationally, with property appraisals up 23 per cent year-on-year — a strong lead indicator of sales activity in the months ahead.

Open for inspection attendance was up 15 per cent month-on-month in February, confirming buyers remain active despite the Reserve Bank lifting the cash rate to 3.85 per cent at its first meeting of 2026 — the first rise since November 2023.

Raine & Horne executive chairman Angus Raine said savvy vendors had not been deterred by the rate rise.

“The combination of increased listings and resilient buyer numbers augurs well for a healthy autumn 2026 selling season,” Mr Raine said.

“For those vendors sitting on the fence, the pre-Easter period represents a great time to make a move with many buyers desperate to get their real estate goals in place before the next holiday season arrives.”

Easter falls on April 3, compressing the prime campaign window and giving sellers a narrow but active period to reach motivated buyers.

LJ Hooker head of research Mathew Tiller said the rate rise would not switch off demand.

“Buyer activity doesn’t stop with an increase in interest rates; the property market moderates and becomes more price sensitive,” Mr Tiller said.

“While no one likes an interest rate rise, it won’t switch off demand, with data showing there are still buyers out there.”

The urgency is particularly relevant for the local market where Wonthaggi’s median house price sits at around \$525,000 — significantly more accessible than Melbourne’s fringe suburbs and beachfront Bass Coast alternatives like Inverloch where the median sits at around \$842,000 and Cape Paterson above \$700,000.

Across South Gippsland Shire the typical house price is about \$672,000 with a median weekly rent of \$476 and vacancy rates sitting below one per cent, keeping investor interest steady with gross rental yields of about 3.7 per cent outperforming many metropolitan alternatives.

Properties in Wonthaggi

are currently spending a median of around 113 days on market while Inverloch homes are averaging 116 days — longer than the pandemic-era frenzy but consistent with a market that rewards correct pricing and presentation rather than speculative offers.

Domain chief of research Dr Nicola Powell said supply constraints would continue to underpin values nationally despite the rate pressure.

“Supply constraints will continue to underpin prices, so we’re not talking about a sharp correction,” Dr Powell said.

“But higher borrowing costs do slow things down.”

For the Bass Coast and South Gippsland market that dynamic plays out as a window of relative stability — prices are not falling sharply but the days of unconditional offers above asking on the first weekend are largely behind the market.

Sellers who price correctly and present well are finding buyers.

Those who don’t are sitting, often long enough to require a reduction before achieving a result.

With Easter arriving early this year the autumn selling window is shorter than usual, making the next few weeks among the most important of the 2026 property calendar for anyone considering making a move.



South Gippsland’s property market is holding strong as Melbourne stalls with buyers increasingly looking to regional areas for better value.

Local property market holds strong as Melbourne stalls

SOUTH Gippsland homeowners are sitting on stable ground as new housing data confirms a growing divide between regional Victoria and a stalling Melbourne market.

The latest figures from Cotality show Melbourne property values remained flat over February and dropped 0.4 per cent over the rolling quarter.

In contrast regional Victoria continues to show resilience with positive month-on-month growth.

Locally the South Gippsland Shire median house price is hovering around the \$578,000 to \$650,000 mark presenting an affordable alternative to the capital city squeeze where Melbourne’s median sits at \$977,579.

Property analysts point to the region’s lifestyle appeal and space as key drivers sustaining buyer demand with sea change and tree change buyers continuing to look south for better value.

A tight local rental market is also keeping investor interest steady with vacancy rates sitting below one per cent and gross rental yields outperforming the Melbourne average at about 3.6 per cent.

While higher interest rates and borrowing constraints have put a ceiling on capital city buyers the comparatively lower price points across South Gippsland and Bass Coast are keeping the local market insulated from the metropolitan downturn.

Nationally dwelling values in regional



areas rose 3.2 per cent in the three months to January outpacing the combined capitals at 2.1 per cent according to Cotality.

The data follows a broader trend of renewed regional migration first sparked by COVID-19 lockdowns that shows no sign of easing.

Cotality head of research Gerard Burg said momentum was building across a wide range of regional markets.

“This reflects a renewed movement of people and capital into areas where buyers’ budgets stretch further and competition for available homes is strong,” Mr Burg said.

Ray White searching for next team member

RAY White Wonthaggi and Cape Paterson is searching for an enthusiastic individual to join its award-winning team.

Sales agent and director Chris Wood said the agency is casting a wide net to find the right fit with potential opportunities across multiple locations.

“We have opportunities in Wonthaggi, Cape Paterson and Inverloch,” Mr Wood said.

“We just want to see who surfaces and see who’s out there.”

The agency is looking for someone who is hard-working, high-energy and passionate about connecting with people from all walks of life.

Mr Wood said the variety of people you meet is one of the best parts of working in real estate.

“You get to meet lots of people, all different ages, backgrounds and cultures every single day,” he said.

For Mr Wood one of the most fulfilling aspects of the job is guiding first home buyers through the process of finding a place to call their own.

“It’s always great to help first home buyers and hold their hands through the journey of buying their first home, finding them something that they want or love,” he said.

The satisfaction does not end at settlement either.

Mr Wood said the relationship with clients often extends well beyond settlement day.

“It’s always great when you sell to people and they say they’re going to do something, whether it’s renovations, subdivisions or building their house, and then you go back and see that finished product come to fruition,” he said.

Ray White Wonthaggi has established itself as one of the leading agencies in the Bass Coast property market with Mr Wood recognised as a Premier Performer for four consecutive years.

The agency covers residential sales across Wonthaggi, Cape Paterson, Inverloch, Dalyston, Kilcunda and surrounding areas and prides itself on a team culture where agents work together to achieve the best result for clients.

The role suits someone ready to build a career in a supportive environment with access to the resources of Australasia’s largest real estate group.

No specific experience is required but candidates should bring energy, a strong work ethic and a genuine interest in helping people.

For a confidential discussion contact Chris Wood on 0423 461 703 or email chris.wood@raywhite.com.

Ray White.



Auction

34 Stewart Street, Wonthaggi

POTENTIAL PLUS!

Located on a rear block of a previously subdivided lot, this three-bedroom, one-bathroom weatherboard home offers a central location.

Property Features:

- Living & Dining: A living area with timber flooring and a wood-burning fireplace.
- The kitchen/dining area includes a dishwasher and freestanding electric stove.
- Bedrooms: Three bedrooms in total, with main bedroom with built-in wardrobes.
- Bathroom & Laundry: Functional bathroom with wood-panelled walls and a separate shower, plus a dedicated laundry and separate toilet.
- Exterior: Fully fenced yard on a low-maintenance rear block, with a small garden shed and a rainwater tank.

This residence is in original condition and requires updates to both the interior and exterior. It represents an opportunity to secure a home on a tucked-away block in a growing regional centre.

3 1

Auction:
Saturday, March 28,
11am onsite

Siaan Grinham
0422 418 132

Chris Wood
0423 461 703

Ray White Wonthaggi

HNI3360

38-40 McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi | 5672 1833
www.raywhitewonthaggi.com.au



Record lending drives investors as new builds stall

AUSTRALIANS borrowed more money for property in a single quarter than at any point in history and Bass Coast and South Gippsland buyers are feeling the consequences.

New lending data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows mortgage values hit \$115.18 billion in the three months to December 2025 a 23.6 per cent jump on the same period a year earlier and the first time the \$100 billion barrier has been broken in a single quarter.

The surge is being driven heavily by investors.

Investor loans grabbed a record 39 per cent share of the mortgage market in 2025 with loan numbers rising 12 per cent over the year, three times the rate of growth recorded for owner-occupiers.

Investor loans for existing dwellings jumped 15 per cent and now account for 82 per cent of all investor lending with many turning to renovation and improvement strategies rather than new builds.

Money.com.au property expert Debbie Hays said the lending boom was not translating into new housing supply.

"The lending market is continuing its recovery from the 2021 heyday but construction is barely budging which means supply is not improving," Ms Hays said.

"Until construction activity meaningfully rebounds the supply squeeze will continue to put upward pressure on house prices and rents."

Construction lending tells the story starkly with owner-occupier land and construction loans flat at just 56,686 over 2025 leaving volumes 58 per cent below their 2021 peak.

Loans for new dwellings also fell with owner-occupier loans in that segment down nine per cent over the year and investor loans for new dwellings dropping four per cent even as the broader market expanded.

More money is chasing fewer homes. For buyers in Bass Coast and South Gippsland the dynamic is familiar.

Vacancy rates sit below one per cent across South Gippsland Shire with a typical weekly rent of about \$476 while the region continues to attract investors and sea change buyers seeking value compared to Melbourne where the median dwelling value sits at \$826,132.

In South Gippsland the typical house price is about \$672,000 offering significant savings over every capital city market.

The average new owner-occupier loan in Australia now sits at \$693,801, a figure that underscores why regional areas with price points well below that mark continue to attract attention from buyers priced out of the cities.

Refinancing also hit record highs in 2025 with 641,552 loans refinanced over the year, 20 per cent higher than 2024 levels, as borrowers shopped around for better rates.

The total number of mortgages issued annually at 556,092 remains 12 per cent below the 2021 peak of 628,520 loans but the average loan size has risen 24.7 per cent since then showing how rising property prices are doing much of the heavy lifting in driving market growth.

The Federal Government expanded the First Home Guarantee in October 2025 to allow eligible buyers to purchase with as little as five per cent down without paying lenders mortgage insurance.

First home buyer loans lifted 10 per cent in the December quarter with New South Wales leading the charge but overall volumes remain subdued. Whether that meaningfully shifts the coastal markets where investors now dominate remains to be seen.



Prospective buyers crowd a property inspection as record investor lending squeezes the regional market.



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With no income caps and a wider range of eligible properties, the expanded Australian Government 5% Deposit Scheme is helping put home ownership back in reach for first home buyers.

To learn more visit

firsthomebuyers.gov.au



Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra



Riverfront retreat in picturesque fishing village

AN exceptional lifestyle opportunity has hit the market in picturesque Port Franklin with 13 Fisherman's Way listed at \$780,000.

Set on approximately 2797sqm and perfectly positioned beside parkland and the Franklin River reserve the property offers a riverfront retreat close to nature.

With first option on a mooring at the bottom of the garden, access to the pristine waterways of Corner Inlet for boating, kayaking or paddleboarding could not be any easier.

Designed to connect interior spaces with the bushland setting the home enjoys ample natural light with every window framing a private leafy view.

The open plan living room is comfortable year-round with a large wood heater and energy efficient double-glazed windows.

The well-appointed kitchen is equipped with an underbench oven, dishwasher, ceramic hob and breakfast bar to the dining area.

Sliding doors open

onto the lower deck ideal for morning coffee or outdoor dining.

The lower level includes two generous bedrooms, a sleek contemporary bathroom and a fitted laundry.

Upstairs a light-filled second living space extends to a treetop-height deck with glimpses of Wilsons Promontory.

The master bedroom is a peaceful retreat with a walk-in robe and stylish ensuite.

At just nine years old this residence offers the convenience of modern living without the long wait of building.

The large shed has a concrete floor, lights, power and wood heater making the ideal studio, workshop, entertaining space or storage for outdoor gear.

Outdoors a picturesque billabong invites abundant birdlife with plenty of flat parking space available for additional cars, caravan or boat.

This property provides a unique chance to reconnect with nature in your own private sanctuary.



3 **1** 2,797m²

13 Fisherman's Way, **Port Franklin**
For Sale \$780,000
Agent SEJ Real Estate
 Andrea Adams 0429 822 801



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 Ph 5662 4033



SANDY POINT



- Vacant block approx. 653sqm
- Corner of quiet court, easy access
- Sheltered northerly aspect
- 6 mins walk Surf Beach/Shop

New Price \$450,000

Contact Andrea Adams 0429 822 801

LEONGATHA



- Ideally located on a flat block is number 60 Hassett Street
- Brick veneer home, with two living areas and patio
- 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms (family bathroom updated)
- Wood heater in the main living room, and sundry shedding
- Solid home, ready for your cosmetic touch and it will shine
- Ideal for entry level home, easily accessible to all the town offers

\$520,000

Contact Irene Walker 0429 045 632

DOLLAR



- Situated at 65 Dykes Outlet Rd
- Aprx. 3.4 acres gently undulating
- Northerly aspect, shelter trees
- Choice of locations to build STCA
- Power connected, shedding

New Price \$320,000

Contact Andrea Adams 0429 822 801

MARDAN



- 38.5 ac / 15 ha gently undulating
- Ideal, cattle, horses and sheep
- Classic neat 1960's B/V Home
- 3 bed, 1 bath, in est. garden
- Picturesque and peaceful

\$990,000

Contact Irene Walker 0429 045 632

MARDAN



- Gently undulating & well sheltered with red & grey soil profiles
- 115 ha / 286 acres ideal for both breeding / fattening of cattle & sheep
- Neat 2 bed, 1 bath cottage & machinery shedding
- Exc. Stock yards for both cattle & sheep with 15 paddocks
- Natural springs & stock troughs with excellent fencing
- 20km* Leongatha, 7km* Mirboo North in high rainfall district

\$2,820,000

Contact Irene Walker 0429 045 632

LEONGATHA NORTH



- Lifestyle living at its best
- 4ha/10ac flat with views
- Impressive home & shed
- 3 bed, 2 bath, cinema room
- Est. orchard and 3 paddocks

\$1,730,000

Contact Irene Walker 0429 045 632



Your private escape above the rolling hills

SET on just over nine acres this secluded lifestyle property offers elevated living with breathtaking views across the rolling hills of South Gippsland.

The tidy three-bedroom home feels comfortable and welcoming perfectly positioned to soak up the outlook and enjoy a slower more peaceful way of life.

The light-filled home features three bedrooms with built-in robes including a master bedroom fitted with a reverse cycle split system for year-round comfort.

At the heart of the home is an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area warmed by a wood heater and complemented by a split system creating a relaxed and inviting space for everyday living.

A generous bathroom, separate toilet and dedicated laundry add practicality while the front verandah is perfectly positioned to capture panoramic rural views across the surrounding countryside.

Outside a long tree-lined laneway leads past established gardens to a circular driveway enhancing the sense of privacy.

The well-fenced land is ideal for running cattle, sheep or alpacas and is supported by excellent infrastructure including steel stockyards with a loading race, a hayshed, woodshed and a substantial 6.9m x 6m powered shed.

A large dam services the property while established gardens feature a mix of fruit trees, natives and mature trees completing this well-rounded country holding.

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		Brian Vuillermin	0429 436 040
LEONGATHA		WONTHAGGI	
Dane Perczyk - Livestock Manager	0408 176 063	Rob Ould - Livestock Manager	0408 595 183
Jack Curtis	0427 762 670	David Holden	0428 749 390
		Alan Bolding	0419 723 255
WARRAGUL		Imogen Price	0417 225 498
Neil Darby - Livestock Manager	0418 595 265	PAKENHAM	
Terry Ahearn	0438 562 816	David Setches - Livestock Manager	0409 443 473
Jordan Sim	0448 058 435	Glenn Barwick	0408 975 476
Mark Malacarne	0418 654 590	Morgan Croucher	0457 001 877
Georgie Snell	0417 100 657	Tim Gibson	0420 306 599

Real Estate Sales

KORUMBURRA	LEONGATHA	MELBOURNE LAND
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	Peter Dwyer 0428 855 244	
WONTHAGGI	Emily Hillberg 0422 622 299	COWES
Phillip Hanley 0417 140 508	Tony Giles 0407 528 192	Greg Price 0419 337 441
Cal Nation 0439 334 163	Dan Huther 0418 334 801	Brian Silver 0407 347 509
Mick Chambers 0418 349 783		George Grigg 0458 478 308
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Angus Hall 0466 326 487	Alan Steenholdt 0409 423 822	Daniel Lawrie 0417 631 252
		Sue Lawrie 0419 885 489
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Tom Gibson 0438 574 472	Scott McKenzie 0427 552 898	Jason Ross 0408 285 678

SUCCESS THROUGH SERVICE



Dane Perczyk of Alex Scott and Staff sells heifers. A10_1026

Heifers perform well at Store Sale

By Andrew Paloczi

WHILE a meeting delayed Sentinel-Times' arrival at Thursday's Leongatha Store Sale, that proved a blessing as it meant being there just in time to see heifers fetching excellent prices.

Alex Scott and Staff Leongatha livestock manager Dane Perczyk may have been the last cab off the rank when it came to auctioning heifers but those he sold from Watergrasshill Angus in Drouin South were well worth the wait.

"This is a complete run of heifers," he said, describing them as a pleasure to draft, with no kicking or bucking.

A change of approach on farm means cattle will no longer be joined there, with a decision to trade cattle, buying in steers.

The run featured Te Mania Angus blood, with all pens attracting strong prices, highlighted by 20 heifers averaging 358 kilos that went for \$1,810 a head at \$5.05 per kilo.

A pen of 16 heifers from the same vendor, declared by Mr Perczyk to be "ready for that bull," achieved \$2,000 each, a return of \$4.87 per kilo, averaging 410 kilos.

Another 19, averaging 458 kilos managed \$4.80 a kilo at \$2,200 a head, while 21 weighed at 323 kilos made \$1,550 apiece, a return of \$4.79 per kilo.

Alex Scott and Staff of Warragul bought the first couple of pens of the Watergrasshill Angus heifers for clients, with the Wonthaggi branch of Alex Scott and

Staff doing likewise for the other two pens.

Those cattle are likely to be joined, with the first couple of pens deemed ready for that now and the others in late Autumn.

Again, it wasn't only black cattle impressing, with seven Simmental heifers from Roanda Farms in Thorpdale, averaging 338 kilos, going for \$1,600 a head at \$4.73 a kilo, those being knocked down by Travis Sutton of Baw Baw Livestock.

"The heifer job, I felt was very strong," Mr Perczyk said of Thursday's sale, putting prices at 20 to 30 cents a kilo dearer than the Leongatha Store Sale of two weeks prior.

"It improved dramatically; it's amazing what a couple of inches of rain does over a fortnight," he said, adding, "The confidence was back in the job today, and you could see that in the buying gallery."

While recent rain is encouraging, Mr Perczyk said more is needed, suggesting another two or three inches towards the end of March would be ideal.

"If we don't have any rain for three or four weeks and it turns dry again, the feed that has shot off now will soon dry up," he said.

Mr Perczyk was pleased with how steers performed at Thursday's sale, suggesting prices lifted 10 to 20 cents a kilo.

Victoria leads nation on livestock tag prices

VICTORIAN livestock producers continue to access Australia's lowest priced National Livestock Identification System ear tags after a new tender process secured competitive wholesale pricing.

Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity executive director Charlotte Austin said the cheapest NLIS cattle tag is now available for 72 cents when ordered online down from 75 cents last year.

By comparison cattle producers in other states are paying between \$2.50 and \$4 per NLIS cattle tag.

"Victorian producers continue to access NLIS tags at some of the nation's lowest prices keeping on-farm costs down and upholding our world-class traceability reputation," Ms Austin said.

The range of approved NLIS cattle tags has also expanded including a one-piece metal tag from Shearwell Australia and NLIS tags manufactured by Enduro Tags and FOFIA.

Sheep producers will also benefit with the cheapest NLIS sheep tag now available for \$1 well below unsubsidised prices in other jurisdictions.

More than two million cattle tags and

10 million sheep tags are expected to be purchased in 2026.

The electronic tags enable livestock movements to be recorded on the NLIS database as animals move between properties, saleyards and abattoirs allowing livestock to be traced quickly during food safety or disease incidents.

Ms Austin said Victoria led the development and introduction of the NLIS cattle system in the 1990s with the NLIS sheep and goats system commencing on a mandatory basis in 2017.

The competitive pricing is good news for South Gippsland and Bass Coast beef and dairy producers who rely on the tagging system to move stock through the Koonwarra and Korumburra saleyards and to processors across the region.

"Victoria's livestock industries can be justifiably proud of their long-standing contribution to the development and operation of Australia's internationally recognised traceability system," Ms Austin said.

Producers can order NLIS tags online through Agriculture Victoria or call 1800 678 779 during business hours.

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Fingers crossed for autumn break

By Andrew Paloczi

HOPES of an autumn break are high after recent healthy rain, with improved confidence showing at Thursday's Leon-gatha Store Sale, but more is needed.

"It's the start of an autumn break but we definitely need some follow-up rain, another two or three inches towards the end of this month," Alex Scott and Staff Livestock Manager Dane Perczyk said.

Mardan dairy farmer Alex Mathews is pleased with a couple of inches recently after a dry summer but feels the season outlook will become clearer by April and things will hopefully be much more moist than that time last year.

"Day by day, one day it's good and the next day it's not," Alex quipped when asked how farmers define a season.

"You look for that Autumn break around the end of March or early April and you can kind of tell how your autumn's going to shape up; a lot of people calve cows through that period hoping to get them onto some green grass and have a bit of feed coming ahead of them,"



Alex Mathews, with some of her Mardan dairy herd, is happy with recent rain but keeping an eye out for more. A24_1026

she said.

Alex stressed that depending on what week rain falls, it can completely change farmers' decision-making patterns.

"I think there's decent amounts of silage around for everyone," she said of the current situation.

Dane elaborated on the need

for more rain for an autumn break to occur.

"It's all well and good having a couple of inches now but if we don't have any rain for three or four weeks and it turns dry again, the feed that has shot off now will soon dry up again," he said.

Still, things look promising

for now, with Thursday's Store Sale reflecting a boost in confidence in the buying gallery.

"It's amazing what a couple of inches of rain does over a fortnight, how the confidence was back in the job today," he said.

Fingers crossed that the skies deliver what is needed in coming weeks.

Learn how greening your dam can boost productivity and biodiversity

LOCAL farmers and landowners can learn how revegetating farm dams delivers real benefits for productivity and biodiversity at a free field day later this month.

The South Gippsland Landcare Network is hosting the Greening Dams information session and farm walk on Thursday March 19 at Fish Creek Hall from 10.30am to 2pm with a guided farm walk at the nearby property of Paul and Sam Crock.

Attendees will see the before during and after stages of dam greening and hear first-hand how the Crocks have successfully balanced revegetation with running a productive enterprise that prioritises stock health.

Native fish breeder Chris Lamin will be on hand to talk about small-bodied native species including the endangered Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon and explain the conditions needed to release these fish into your own dam.

Enhancing a dam is one of the simplest and most effective ways to improve water quality reduce erosion and increase on-farm biodiversity.

The event is part of the Greening Gippsland's Dams project now in its third year with more than 31,000 trees planted across the region in the past 12 months alone.

About 1200 seedlings were planted in fenced dam areas during the most recent planting season using indigenous species from the Wonthaggi Seedbank and Nursery selected for their suitability to wetland environments.

Lunch and refreshments are provided and registration is essential through the Humanitix website at events.humanitix.com.

The project is supported by SGLN with funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund the Victoria Drought Resilience Adoption and Innovation Hub and Food and Fibre Gippsland.

For more information contact SGLN project officer Kirby Leary on 0480 749 731 or email kirby@sngn.net.au.

Sapphire Ewes set new record in Foster Show win

THE Foster Agricultural Show hosted a round of the 2026 International Back to Back competition, and what a day it was.

The Koorooman Sapphire Ewes, based in Leongatha, were competing for the third year defending their title of Australian Champions.

Their competitors were Priscilla's Shepherds from the Box Hill Spinners and Weavers, competing for the first time.

The day started dramatically. The expected Cheviot sheep

By Linda Howie

arrived without their fleece, so Pete the Shearer stepped in with two Border Leicester eight-month-old lambs.

At 8.10am, Stuart from Shearer and Woolhandler Training and Chloe from Churchill Island joined the teams to shear.

Stuart has been an instructor on the shearing floor for 35 years; this was Chloe's first ever blade shear despite eight years of shearing experience, and she

did an amazing job.

The Show committee had to rely on a laptop for timing, which ran out of battery an hour and a half in, saved only by team members' phone stop-watches.

Foot traffic through the Sheep Marquee was a record for the show.

The Koorooman Sapphire Ewes were chasing their 2025 best of 11hr 42min 12sec.

They pulled back two extra rows in a sleeve rather than

risk disqualification, adding 15 minutes, and still finished in 11hr 26min 33sec.

Priscilla's Shepherds struck a pattern mishap at the 17-and-a-half hour mark and called it a day, finishing over bacon and egg rolls the following morning.

Rob Davidson handmade 16 trophies for competitors plus a winning trophy presented to the Koorooman Sapphire Ewes.

The teams have already been asked back for next year.

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Nyora shearer hosts free seminar for hobby farmers

NYORA shearer Chloe is hosting a free Sheep Basics seminar at Nyora Community Hall on Saturday, May 2 to help hobby farmers and small mob owners manage their flocks with confidence.

The event runs from 1pm to 4pm with afternoon tea provided by the Nyora CWA for \$8.

Chloe said she started the seminars after becoming frustrated with unintentional neglect caused by a lack of knowledge among hobby sheep owners.

"I noticed trends in sheep illnesses within the hobby farmer community stemming from lack of or incorrect information around sheep care and management," she said.

"I found other seminars to be more created for the commercial sheep owner.

"Sheep Basics is very much an entry level event designed to be digestible for newcomers to the sheep world."

The seminar covers topics including worming, parasites, flystrike, foot care, nutrition and when to call a vet, giving hobby farmers practical skills to keep their animals healthy.

Previous seminars in Bass and Callignee attracted 30 to 40 people each, reflecting strong demand for accessible sheep management education.

The Nyora event is one of six planned for 2026, with further seminars in Redesdale on May 16 and Inverleigh on June 13, along with three other locations to be confirmed.

The seminar is supported by Shoof. To register visit chloetheshearer.com.



High-voltage transmission infrastructure is a growing concern for farmers facing compulsory acquisition of productive land.

Farmers and MPs slam new compulsory acquisition laws

THE Victorian Farmers Federation and Eastern Victoria MP Melina Bath have condemned new laws allowing energy companies to compulsorily acquire farmland before environmental assessments are complete.

The Energy and Other Legislation Amendment (Resilience Reforms and Other Matters) Bill 2026 passed state parliament on Thursday.

The legislation allows the compulsory easement acquisition process for transmission projects to proceed while an Environment Effects Statement is still underway.

VFF president Brett Hosking said the amendment would pour fuel on the anxiety and uncertainty already gripping communities at the heart of the energy transition.

"Families now face the shadow of compulsory acquisition hanging over them while they are still trying to understand what a

project means for their homes and livelihoods as well as provide comprehensive information to the EES process," Mr Hosking said.

"It sends a clear and devastating message to regional Victoria that getting towers in the ground matters more than delivering a robust Environmental Effects Statement with dignity."

Ms Bath said no government should override farmers' rights in this way.

"Seizing land before the independent Environment Effects Statement is complete is an abuse of power," Ms Bath said.

"Pathways to renewable energy must not come at the expense of the regional people who feed and clothe us."

Ms Bath said the VFF had warned the amendment would bypass normal safeguards and expose taxpayers to compensation risks if routes change.

"Farmers deserve proper transparency and a

thorough assessment of agricultural impacts long before government decides where transmission lines will go," she said.

Mr Hosking said Victoria's farmland underpins more than 150,000 jobs and contributes more than \$20 billion to the state economy annually.

Gippsland is among the regions most affected, with proposed offshore wind transmission corridors running through South Gippsland and Bass Coast farming country.

Under current proposals landowners would receive \$8000 per kilometre per year to host energy infrastructure, but farming groups say compensation does not reflect the disruption to agricultural operations.

Community group Better Transmission Gippsland has been campaigning for underground transmission, arguing overhead lines damage productive farmland.

EV LX - LEONGATHA

STORE SALE

2500 CATTLE 2500

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026 - Starting at 9am

GROWN STEERS

DA & PM Conn, Hedley (PHC)
80 Angus steers, 14-15 mths,
Flinders Island bred, Landfall, Rosedale & Cluden
Newry blood

Jackson Pastoral, Cowwarr (NUTRIEN)
80 Angus steers, 18-20 mths
X Pathfinder & Merdeduke bulls

J Daniels, King Island (NUTRIEN)
58 Angus steers, 15-16 mths

S & R Anderson, Glen Forbes (NUTRIEN)
50 Hereford steers, 22-24 mths

Patanga Properties P/L, Bombala (NUTRIEN)
44 Hereford steers, 17-18 mths
NE Accred, milk teeth

GA & JA Breeden, Buln Buln (SEJ)
30 Angus steers, 2 yo
Eagle Rock blood line, GF & ABF

FT Exner, Cobains (NUTRIEN)
26 Angus steers, 2 yo

M A Wilson, Dromana (ESB)
22 Angus steers, 22 mths
One mark, Western District bred

R Loveridge, Shoreham (ESB)
22 Angus steers, 18-20 mths
One mark, Lawson blood

J Flint, Willung (NUTRIEN)
20 Angus mixed sex, 14 mths

Bannah Beef, Fernbank (SEJ)
20 Angus steers, 14-15 mths

M Finlay, Flinders (NUTRIEN)
15 Angus steers, 2 yo

RW & HJ Harrison, Arawata (NUTRIEN)
14 Angus steers, 20 mths

G Turner, Trafalgar (NUTRIEN)
12 Angus steers, 16 mths

A O'Loughlin, Berrys Creek (NUTRIEN)
12 Angus steers, 14-15 mths

LSE Flinders Pty Ltd, Flinders (ESB)
12 Angus steers, 18 mths
One mark, Gippsland bred

S Winneke, Flinders (ESB)
10 Angus steers, 24 mths
One mark, Table Top blood

Doonagatha, Sandy Point (SEJ)
100 Angus steers, 9-10 mths
VB, GF, ABF, NE Accred
Yard weaned 15/2, Trifecta, Copper, Deltamax, 5in1 &
Multimin 20/2, Mordallup & Harris Farms blood

AW & CM O'Mara, Glengarry (NUTRIEN)
50 Angus steers, 12-14 mths
30 Angus heifers, 12-14 mths
Leawood, Bowman & Te Mania blood, NE Accred

Katelea Pastoral, Glen Alvie (SEJ)
60 Angus steers, 6-8 mths
Banquet & Rennylea Sires, VB, GF & ABF

B Dungey, Traralgon (NUTRIEN)
46 Angus m/s weaners, 7-8 mths
EU & NE Accred, 6 weeks weaned, X Sparta bulls
2x5in1, PiliGuard inj, drenched 3/3

H & J Bland, Yarram (NUTRIEN)
32 Charolais steers, 12-14 mths
weaned, out of Mt William Bulls

R & E Egan, Yarram (NUTRIEN)
21 Angus weaners, 8-12 mths
10 Hereford weaners, 8-12 mths
8 weeks weaned, NE Accred, 2x5in1

J & S Kelly, Korumburra (NUTRIEN)
30 Angus steers, 10-12 mths, JB Angus & Harris Farm
blood, yard weaned, 2x5in1, drenched

Omaru Park, Red Hill South (ESB)
30 Angus mixed sex weaners,
Barwidgee & Table Top bloodlines

Ridgewood Glen (NUTRIEN)
28 Angus heifers, 10-11 mths

D & L White, Fernbank (SEJ)
24 Angus steers, 11 mths,
VB, GF & ABF, NE Accred

Merlewood Angus, Mirboo Nth (NUTRIEN)
20 Angus heifers, 13-14 mths,
weaned, GF, ideal future breeders

M Jeffery, Phillips Island (NUTRIEN)
20 Angus & Black Baldy m/s calves, 10-11 mths
By Wattlewood & Fernlea stud bulls, weaned 6 wks

RA Jones, Glen Forbes (NUTRIEN)
20 Angus m/s calves, 7-8 mths, weaned

P Matern, Alberton (NUTRIEN)
15 Charolais steers, 12-13 mths,
weaned 10 weeks, 2x5in1

Cambridge & Carter, Hedley (NUTRIEN)
15 Angus steers, 12-14 mths

R & H White, Fernbank (SEJ)
14 Angus steers, 11 mths, VB, GF & ABF, NE Accred

K & L Holmes, Boolarra (NUTRIEN)
14 Hereford steers, 12 mths

Janinco Nominees P/L (NUTRIEN)
5 Angus Blonde Aquitaine x weaners, 10-11 mths

GROWN HEIFERS

GS Pastoral Company, Anderson (NUTRIEN)
62 Angus & Black Baldy heifers, 15 mths

SJ & LJ Campbell, Mardan (SEJ)
30 Angus heifers, 18 mths
Leawood blood, 2 x 5 in 1

WEANERS

Von Pace Past, Giffard (NUTRIEN)
200 Angus steers
180 Angus heifers
By Leawood & Absolute Angus bulls, NE Accred

NP & JA Chandler, Hedley (PHC)
90 Angus steers, 10-11 mths
40 Angus heifers, 10-11 mths
Langi Kal Kal & Leawood blood, weaned
Annual Draft

COWS & CALVES

Janinco Nominees P/L (NUTRIEN)
10 Angus X cows & calves, mixed ages

X BRED & DAIRY

Jelbart Dairy P/L, Leongatha (NUTRIEN)
30 Friesian steers, 16 mths

M & R Coleman, Maffra (NUTRIEN)
15 Friesian steers, 16-18 mths

Cape Community Farm hosts annual passata day

THE Cape Community Farm at Cape Paterson is hosting its annual Passata Day on Sunday, March 22 from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

The community event brings together volunteers to make fresh passata from home-grown tomatoes in a celebration of the age-old Italian tradition of sauce making.

Previous Passata Days have attracted more than 100 community members, with more than 100 kilograms of farm-grown tomatoes harvested and transformed into more than 200 bottles of homemade passata.

Activities include washing, chopping and bottling tomatoes while participants enjoy wood-fired pizzas, live music and community connection throughout the day.

The farm is a not-for-profit social enterprise in the heart of The Cape sustainable housing development near Wonthaggi.

The Cape is one of Australia's first agrihoods,



A huge tomato crop at the Cape Community Farm ready for passata day.

pioneering local food production alongside energy-positive housing that saves residents up to \$6000 per year in avoided power and fuel costs.

The farm features water-efficient raised wicking beds, rainwater harvesting systems, a nursery, community buildings, composting facilities and an outdoor classroom used for workshops and school visits.

It grows tonnes of fresh

food each year for residents and regularly hosts community events and workshops that bring people together from across the Bass Coast region.

The farm provides all materials and expertise needed and newcomers are welcome to come along and join in.

For more information or to help out contact Brendan Condon on 0412 198 974 or farmer Adrian on 0493 398 628.



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SOUTH GIPPSLAND ASSOCIATED AGENTS



MARKET REPORT

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CLAAS Harvest Centre

Confidence lifts sale

By SGSAA

AGENTS yarded 2000 head at this weeks EVLX store sale in another good offering.

With recent handy falls of rain in most areas and a strengthening fat market has led to improved confidence and demand for store cattle from local graziers along with the regular feedlot orders still securing a good share of feeder weights with rates firm on last weeks gains.

Light weight cattle seen the biggest lift again with some sales another \$50 - \$80 dearer in places.

Leongatha Store Sale on Thursday, Mar. 5, 2026

Steers			
K & L Armatas 12 Angus	599kg	\$5.00	\$3000
D & T Pamment 13 Angus	610kg	\$4.77	\$2910
Bluegrass Arabians 15 Angus	601kg	\$4.74	\$2850
Dr & Hl Reid 13 Angus	598kg	\$5.08	\$3040
AI & JE Macaulay 14 Angus	576kg	\$4.98	\$2870
Wanjo Consulting 12 Angus	545kg	\$4.95	\$2700
P Jacques 11 Angus	538kg	\$4.92	\$2650
AI & JE Macaulay 10 Angus	530kg	\$4.90	\$2600
Red Gem Growers & Packers			
12 Angus	491kg	\$4.68	\$2300
J W King 15 Angus	475kg	\$4.92	\$2340
Nicky Reeves Livestock 12 Spk	415kg	\$4.57	\$1900
M A Sterling 17 Angus	400kg	\$5.12	\$2050
Icr Contracting 13 Angus	385kg	\$5.19	\$2000
RK & WJ Horner 17 Angus	381kg	\$5.43	\$2070
Trandarra P/L 16 Angus	380kg	\$5.28	\$2010
GR Bastin 20 Angus	375kg	\$5.22	\$1960
R J Mackenzie 16 Hereford	368kg	\$4.75	\$1750
Northside Pastoral 15 Angus	367kg	\$5.23	\$1920
Trandarra P/L 20 Angus	364kg	\$5.27	\$1920
J Gathercole 20 Angus	358kg	\$5.25	\$1880
Trandarra P/L 20 Angus	349kg	\$5.41	\$1890
Gr Bastin 24 Angus	323kg	\$5.63	\$1820
AJ & BR & NB Moyle 12 Angus	322kg	\$5.52	\$1780
Trandarra P/L 10 Angus	303kg	\$5.64	\$1710
J & O Currie 15 Angus	287kg	\$5.54	\$1590
T Warren 14 Angus	253kg	\$5.53	\$1400

Heifers			
Watergrass Hill Angus 19 Ang	458kg	\$4.80	\$2200
C Christensen 11 An/Bb	358kg	\$4.90	\$1760
LB Price & K Shandley 12 Ang	341kg	\$4.54	\$1550
S Saner 10 Angus	327kg	\$4.09	\$1340
Trandarra P/L 22 Angus	323kg	\$4.89	\$1580
Watergrass Hill Angus 21 Ang	323kg	\$4.79	\$1550
Trandarra P/L 17 Angus	288kg	\$4.89	\$1410
Clarendon Park 10 Angus	266kg	\$4.28	\$1140
C & K White 10 Angus	261kg	\$4.55	\$1190
T Warren 11 Angus	215kg	\$4.74	\$1020

X/Bred Steers			
RC Douch 11 Angus/Ff X	535kg	\$4.29	\$2300

Cow & Calves			
L Comfort 4x4 Angus			\$3250

Lardner Park Calf Market Report

Monday, March 2, 2026

Jersey & Jersey x.....	\$17 to \$155
Friesian Bulls	\$49 to \$70
Jersey Heifers	\$78
Beef Bulls	\$50 to \$310
Beef Heifers	\$46 to \$160

Number of Calves: **136**
Number purchased to rear: **63**

Steers	\$290 to \$1150
Heifers	\$480 to \$1310

Number of Cattle: **121**



Left to right: April Huijbregsen (Elders Stud Stock Team), Hannah Bufton (Auctions Plus), Glenn Bowman (Stud Principal) and Jessica Probert (Stock and Land).

Bowman Performance Genetics brings elite draft to Autumn Sale

CONFIDENCE is building across the beef industry and Bowman Performance Genetics is heading into its 2026 Autumn Sale on Thursday, March 20 with one of its strongest drafts to date.

The Eastern Young Cattle Indicator has lifted around 200 cents in the past 12 months, supported by strong global demand and tightening supply.

In the United States cattle numbers sit at their lowest level in 75 years pushing beef prices to record highs.

As global pricing heavily influences domestic markets the shortage is translating into firm returns at home with many expecting favourable conditions to continue while herd rebuilding remains slow.

Australia is now entering its own rebuild phase.

Reduced availability of slaughter females and tighter yard numbers are driving stronger competition.

For producers the current cycle presents a rare opportunity to upgrade herd genetics while the change-over margin remains historically attractive.

Against this backdrop Bowman Performance

Genetics has assembled a high-performance 2026 Autumn Sale draft showing significant year-on-year improvement.

A large proportion of the bulls rank toward the top of the breed for Angus Breeding Index values reflecting a consistent focus on fertility, growth, structural soundness and carcase merit.

The influence of sires such as Dunoon Recharge, a powerful curve-bending bull combining calving ease with performance, and Woodhill Comstock, renowned for exceptional carcase traits including a top one per cent Eye Muscle Area ranking, has added strength and depth to the offering.

Homebred sires continue to perform alongside leading AI genetics with first-calving heifers producing standout 2024 male progeny demonstrating consistency and rapid genetic gain.

All sale bulls are genuine grass-fed cattle supplemented with vetch hay through the drier months to promote longevity and structural integrity, a philosophy proven for more than 50 years within the associated commercial operation.

A defining feature of

Bowman Performance Genetics is its full commitment to genomics.

Every registered animal is genomically tested and with the herd now exceeding 1,000 HBR females this represents a significant long-term investment in accuracy and integrity.

Parent verification is assured and breeding values for economically important traits carry enhanced reliability giving buyers confidence in performance outcomes from day one.

As processors and leading buyers increasingly select cattle based on verified performance data this level of transparency and precision is becoming essential.

Strong maternal lines underpin the entire draft with proven female families appearing consistently throughout elite pedigrees reinforcing the program's focus on fertility, doing ability and generational consistency.

With market fundamentals strong and genetic opportunity at its peak the 2026 Autumn Sale offers producers the chance to position their herds for sustained profitability.

Inspections are welcome by appointment or from 10am on sale day, Thursday March 20.

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Firewood collection areas now open in South Gippsland



Heavy penalties apply to those caught breaking firewood collection rules.

FREE firewood can now be collected for personal use in designated state forest firewood collection areas from March 1 to June 30, 2026.

DEECA has advised that although the autumn firewood season is open until the end of June 2026 individual collection areas may open later if affected by bushfires or recovery work.

Collection areas are closed earlier if no more firewood is available.

Interactive maps are updated throughout the season as collection areas open or close.

Forest Fire Management Victoria Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman said FFMVic was working quickly to establish new collection points in fire-impacted areas where firewood can be cut and collected.

Mr Hardman urged Victorians to collect wood safely and responsibly.

By Bruce Wardley

"Please check daily fire conditions and road closures before travelling to collection areas and only drive on formed roads," Mr Hardman said.

Firewood collectors are advised to wear the right safety clothing and be aware of the environment around them and the safety of themselves and others as trees may fall or drop limbs without warning.

Within designated collection areas collectors can collect and cut wood that is on the ground due to natural fall or forest and fire management works.

Heavy penalties apply to anyone who cuts down a tree, living or dead.

Mr Hardman said wood would be of varying sizes and may not be the same quality as the firewood sold by a commercial cutter.

"You may need a wheelbarrow to transport wood to the vehicle as the vehicle cannot leave formed tracks," he said.

Up to two cubic metres of firewood can be collected per person per day and a maximum of 16 cubic metres per household per financial year.

Authorised Officers patrol state forests throughout the year and can issue fines of more than \$814 to those caught breaking the firewood collection rules.

If prosecuted in court more serious offending can result in maximum penalties of \$10,175 and/or 12 months in prison.

Officers can also seize chainsaws, trailers, vehicles and equipment used in the commission of offending.

Suspected illegal firewood collection can be reported to Crime Stoppers.

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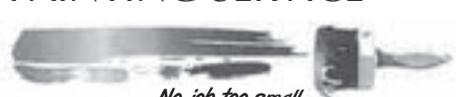
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DEATHS

ARTHUR, Anthony Sterling:
03.08.1946 - 05.03.2026

Passed away peacefully after a long illness.

Loved by Denise, Garth and Myla.

Now at Rest.

Privately Cremated.

DORLING, Arthur Robert (Mick):
03.10.1943 - 27.02.2026.

Husband of Eileen (dec.)

Passed away at Foster Hospital.

Highly respected brother and brother-in-law, uncle and great uncle.

Susie and Peter (dec.)
Tori, Ian and Val Dorling, Anne Griebenow, Doug and Chris Campbell, Geoff and Jo Campbell, Barry Campbell.

Rest in Peace
Master Mechanic - King of the Road.

DORLING, Arthur Robert (Mick):
Born on October 3, 1943. Passed away February 27, 2026.

Much loved father of Andrew and father-in-law to Kaz.

Poppy Mick to Shane and Ellie, Skye and Isaac and Darby.

Great Poppy to Evie.

Thank you for your wisdom, guidance and stories you shared with all of us and for many adventures we were lucky enough to have by your side.

You will be deeply missed every day.

Now reunited with Mum - together again.

Your legacy lives on in all of us.

DORLING, Arthur (Mick):
To My Dad, My Mate, My Hero

I will be forever grateful for all your love, guidance and knowledge, to make me the man I am today.

I will miss talking to you everyday at the shed.

We will miss you everyday in every way.

Your Son, David x

Adored father-in-law to Bec and Poppy to Kairon and Ema xx

DEATHS

DORLING, Mick:
With love and heartfelt sympathy to all the Dorling family, on the loss of Mick.

A great mate and friend, at rest now.

- Les Jones

GHELLER, Maria Carmela:
Passed away peacefully at Rose Lodge on March 5, 2026, surrounded by her family.

Loved wife of Luigi (dec.).

Loving Mum and mother-in-law of Lou and Lisa, Franca (dec.), Frank, Julie and Vince, Robert and Dannielle.

Adored Nonna to eight grandchildren and Great Nonna to nine. Beloved cousin to Domenico.

Thank you to all the wonderful staff at Rose Lodge for the love and care shown to our Mum over the last five years.

VAN BREEMEN (nee Donovan), Karren Marie:
23.10.1953 - 26.2.2026

Loved daughter of Jim (dec) and Joyce Donovan (dec). Sister to Robert, Janiece, Michael (dec) and Damien. Sister-in-law to Maree, Tony, Yvonne and Brendan.

Wife of John for 53 years.

Mother and mother-in-law of Deanne and Paul and loving Nan of Austin and Harrison and their fur babies Olly (dec) and Tex.

Aunt of Kerryn and Steven, Simon and Chrysa, Erin and Jacob, Justin, Melissa and Belinda. Great aunt of Imogen, Henry, Florence and Emilio.

Karren passed away peacefully at Frankston Hospital.

Heartache will be felt by siblings, nieces and nephews and extended families.

Dearly loved by all her family and will be sadly missed. Rest in peace Karen xox

DEATHS

VAN BREEMEN (nee Donovan) Karren Marie:
Karren passed away peacefully at the Frankston Hospital on 26.2.2026.

Loved sister of Janiece and Tony and aunt to Kerryn and Simon and great aunt to Imogen, Henry and Florence.

We will miss her cups of tea and joy of children. Every child deserves an Aunty Karren.

Forever in our hearts. Rest in peace big sister xox

VAN BREEMEN (nee Donovan), Karren Marie:

Loving sister of Damien and sister-in-law of Brendan.

I have so many wonderful memories of Karren and am deeply saddened by her passing.

I cherish the magic holidays at Cape Conran and Walkerville as a kid and later in life our trips to Bali, these memories will always be as close to me as you were.

Never missing an opportunity for a cup of tea and your love of jewels and dressing up to go out, a sister of elegance and style. These memories will never leave me.

Always in my thoughts.

Rest in peace Karren xox

FUNERALS

DORLING:
The Funeral of Mr. Arthur Robert Dorling will be held at Fish Creek Memorial Hall, Fish Creek on Friday, March 13, 2026, commencing at 12.30pm.

At the conclusion of the Service the Funeral will leave for the Meeniyon Cemetery.

Arthur's service will be live streamed. To view the service please go to www.handleyfunerals.com.au.



FUNERALS

DOWEL:
A Service to remember the life of Kristy Dowel (Kiddo) will be held at the Nielsen Funeral Chapel, Korumburra Rd, Warragul on Thursday, March 12, at 10.30am.

The Service will also be live-streamed. To view Kristy's Service please visit: www.nielsenfunerals.com.au

A Private Cremation will follow.

Kristy's family would like you to wear something bright to her Service.



GHELLER:
Funeral Prayers for Mrs. Maria Carmela Gheller will be offered at Handley & Anderson Chapel, 3085 Loch-Wonthaggi Road, Wonthaggi, tomorrow, Thursday, March 12, 2026, commencing at 11am.

At the conclusion of Prayers the funeral will leave for the Wonthaggi Cemetery.

Maria's service will be live-streamed, go to www.handleyandersonfunerals.com.au.



IN MEMORIAM

McGLASHAN, Susan Elaine:
04.08.1947 - 13.03.2024.

Forever in my heart. Miss you every day. Love always, Terry.

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SG JAZZ SOCIETY
The AGM of the South Gippsland Jazz Society will be held at the Inverloch RSL on Sunday, April 5, 2026, at 2pm.

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The Nationals Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien is encouraging local clubs to apply for sporting grants.

Gippsland South clubs score funding boost

MANY local sporting clubs and community groups are celebrating after securing funding under round one of the 2025-26 Sporting Club Grants Program.

The Nationals Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien congratulated the successful clubs on their funding and is encouraging those that missed out to apply for round two.

"Local sporting clubs bring people together, keep us active and provide opportunities for people of all ages to get involved," Mr O'Brien said.

"It is fantastic to see so many Gippsland-based clubs successful in this round."

Successful recipients include Foster Bowls Club, Gippsland Lakes Roller Derby, Gormandale Football Netball Club, Korumburra Golf Club, Leongatha Girl Guides, Maffra Sale Motorcycle Club, Mid Gippsland Football Netball League, Rosedale Junior Football Club, Sale Little Athletics Centre, South Gippsland Umpires Association, Toongabbie Cricket Club, Wellington Hockey Club, Woodside Public Hall Committee of Management and Gippsland Regional Sports Academy.

The grants provide up to \$3000 for community sport and recreation clubs to improve participation, build capability and strengthen club operations.

Clubs can use the funding for equipment, uniforms, volunteer training, safety improvements or programs that encourage participation from under-represented groups including women, people with disabilities and culturally diverse communities.

The program is a key source of support for grassroots sporting clubs across regional Victoria where volunteer-run organisations often rely on small grants to maintain ageing facilities, replace worn equipment and deliver programs.

In many small towns across Gippsland sporting clubs are the heart of the community providing not just sport but social connection and a sense of belonging for people of all ages.

"This funding will make a real difference, whether it is improving facilities, purchasing uniforms or equipment or supporting volunteers," Mr O'Brien said.

Round two of the Sporting Club Grants Program opened on 25 February and will close on 7 April 2026.

The program is open to not-for-profit community sport and active recreation clubs that are incorporated and based in Victoria.

Mr O'Brien said he encouraged all eligible clubs to apply before the deadline.

"I would love to see more local clubs benefit from this funding stream," Mr O'Brien said.

For more information or to apply visit sport.vic.gov.au/funding/sporting-club-grants-program.

Red and Yellow Day marks a National Recognition of SLSC volunteers

COMMUNITIES across Australia marked the first Red & Yellow Day on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, recognising the thousands of volunteer surf lifesavers who dedicate their time to keeping the beaches safe.

The National Day of Appreciation comes as the 2026 Summer Coastal Drowning Report highlights both the ongoing risks along Australia's coastline and the extraordinary impact of volunteer lifesavers.

Over the 2025/26 summer period, 50 coastal drowning deaths were recorded nationwide, with two-thirds of deaths occurring more than one kilometre from a surf lifesaving service, often at unpatrolled or remote locations.

In Victoria, six coastal drowning deaths were recorded this summer.

Volunteer surf lifesavers across the state carried out 564 rescues, more than 259,000 preventative actions, and more than 1,200 first-aid treatments, reinforcing the vital role of patrol services.

Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club is proud to be part of this national network, working alongside Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club, Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club and Wonthaggi Life Saving Club to protect beachgoers across the Bass Coast.

Paul MacNeill, President of the Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club, said Red & Yellow Day provides an important opportunity for the community to acknowledge the commitment of local volunteers.

"Members of surf lifesaving clubs give up countless hours to patrol our beaches, train,



Sarah Prendergast at Monash University, completing her honours, wearing her SLSC uniform on Red and Yellow Day.

and respond when it matters most.

They do it because they care about the community," he said.

"Red & Yellow Day is about recognising that commitment.

By wearing the colours, supporting and donating to your local club and making safe choices at the beach, you're helping ensure we can continue this lifesaving work."

Beachgoers are reminded that every coastal drowning death is preventable.

The safest place to swim is always between the red and yellow flags at a patrolled beach.

Patrol locations and times can be found via the Beachsafe app or at beachsafe.org.au.

Donate at <https://red-and-yellow-appeal.raiselysite.com/>.



Paul MacNeill, President of the Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club, dressed in Red and Yellow at work on Wednesday, March 4, to recognise the volunteers who dedicate their time to water safety.

Longboard season closes on a high at Cat Bay

CAT Bay turned on classic conditions to close out the longboard season, offering clean lines, light winds, and the perfect canvas for stylish surfing across all divisions.

With the event falling on the long weekend, even more spectators and families were able to make the trip down, giving the beach an extra buzz and making the day feel like a true celebration of community and coastal life.

Competitors took full advantage of the long weekend energy and stepped up with some of their best performances of the year.

Long rides, graceful footwork, smooth cutbacks, and impressive nose-riding highlighted the day, showing just how much everyone has grown across the season.

"Couldn't have asked for better conditions to finish the season. Congratulations to all competitors - so nice to see everyone improving throughout the season. Well done to Nala for coordinating the season; so much goes on behind the scenes. Huge thanks to the Nature Parks and the community for allowing us to surf at our beautiful beaches," Andy McHenry said.

Cat Bay is part of Phillip Island's National Surfing Reserve, one of Victoria's most



Nose-riding is one of the most celebrated skills in longboard competition.

significant surfing sites and home to some of the best longboard waves in the state.

Shelley Beach, at the western end of the bay, is a slow-rolling reef break that rewards style and footwork over raw power - making it a natural home for longboard competition.

The break is well suited to longboarders, with long, slow swells rolling into a flat reef-bottomed peak that gives riders the time and canvas needed for nose-riding, cross-stepping and drawn-out cutbacks.

Cat Bay has hosted state-level competition including rounds of the Victorian Longboard Titles, drawing competitors from

across Victoria to the island's celebrated west-facing breaks.

McHenry, a standout competitor and former longboard coordinator at Phillip Island Boardriders Club, has been central to the growth of the division in recent seasons.

The club has run continuously since 1963, making it the oldest continuously running surfing club in Australia, and its competition season spans from spring through to the start of winter across a rotation of the island's breaks.

The longboard division has grown steadily, attracting surfers of all ages across Open Men, Open Women and Style

Masters divisions, with specialty awards for best nose ride and best cutback recognising technical skill alongside outright scores.

Adding to the celebrations, longboard coordinator Nala Taylor reflected on the season and her time in the role.

"It has been a privilege to be coordinating the Longboard Division for the past two years. I've loved the opportunity and I'm looking forward to plenty more quality surfing ahead," she said.

Taylor, who placed first in the Open Women division on the day, has been a standout both in and out of the water during her tenure.

Previous Cat Bay Classic events have drawn as many as 55 competitors across all divisions, with the event broadcast online and attracting surfers from well beyond Phillip Island.

Results:
Open Men: Andy McHenry (16.50); Luke Johnson (11.33); Matt Krumins (10.00).

Open Women: Nala Taylor (12.10); Lucy Camenzuli (10.50); Jacque Chambers (8.00).

Style Masters: Tomy Bellisai (11.00); Mark Letts (8.73); Andrew Lidsey (8.54).

Specialty award:
Best Nose Ride: Andy McHenry.
Best Cutback: Matt Krumins.

Local surfers reach final rounds of Phillip Island Pro at Cape Woolamai

By Bruce Wardley

A QUARTERFINALS berth for Phillip Island surfer Sophie Fletcher in the World Surf League (WSL) Phillip Island Pro Qualifying Series (QS) 4000 saw her succumb to eventual winner Lucy Darragh in a hard-fought elimination round.

Darragh and Alister Reginato (AUS) won the WSL Phillip Island Pro QS 4000, the two Australians claiming victory over Anon Matsuoka (JPN) and Tully Wylie of Jan Juc (AUS) in a three-to-five-foot swell.

Darragh capped off a dominant season with her third major QS victory.

Competing in her first full year on the QS, the 15-year-old from the NSW South Coast won the Australia/Oceania QS title for 2025/26 by a large margin.

"I'm so stoked," Darragh said.

"Honestly, I was just fighting for my life out there though.

"I was just paddling the whole heat.

"I just could not get any waves but eventually found a couple.

"My plan was to go to the little rip bowl right on the inside.

"I was hoping to go further out the back but it kind of



Sophie Wilkinson delivered a standout performance posting the highest women's heat total on the opening day of the Phillip Island Pro Qualifying Series at Cape Woolamai. Photo: WSL / Hughes

moved in so I ended up being really close to the shore."

Mornington Peninsula's Sophie Wilkinson reached the Women's Round of 32, placing 25th in the QS 4000.

Joe Van Dijk of Phillip Island made it through three rounds to the round of 32 where he was eliminated by Torquay's Xavier Huxtable and Indonesian Dylan Wilcoxon.

Reginato's victory -- the biggest of his career -- secured the 25-year-old Sunshine Coast surfer a place back on the Challenger Series.

Posting the highest score on finals day with an 8.75 in

his semi-final defeat of Harley Walters (AUS) courtesy of a lofty air reverse, Reginato largely moved through the draw on the strength of his power surfing.

"I'm pretty frothing, keen to be back on the Challenger and back with all the boys," Reginato said.

"It's pretty similar here to home except it's usually four-foot bigger here than it is on the Sunshine Coast.

"The only time we get a wave is when it's rip-bowling so I felt pretty at home but just not in boardies.

"I knew Wiz (Tully Wylie) was waiting for a pretty good

wave and I saw he got one and just fell.

"It was pretty hard out there at that out-the-back bank on the high tide.

"I was just stoked that he didn't get another wave."

In the Australia/Oceania men's QS rankings, Reef Heazlewood held onto the regional title with Lennix Smith and Caleb Tancred in second and third.

Harley Walters took the No. 4 position from Dane Henry who was eliminated in the Quarterfinals by a buzzer-beater from Marlon Harrison.

Reginato jumped to No. 6 with Xavier Huxtable holding the final qualifying position at No. 7.

The 2026 Phillip Island Pro QS 4000 was run at Cape Woolamai from February 26 to March 4, supported by Visit Victoria and Bass Coast Shire, and is planning to return in 2027.

"We absolutely love coming to The Island," said Tour Manager Bonnie McLeod.

"As the final event of the Asia and Australia/Oceania region's qualifying series season, this event solidifies our Challenger Series qualifiers and shapes the year ahead for surfers who are one step closer to reaching the elite Championship Tour."

Phillip Island Boardriders hungry for redemption

FINISHING in 21st position was not the result the Phillip Island Boardriders (PIBC) team hoped for at the 2026 NRMA Insurance Australian Boardriders Battle on the Gold Coast but after progressing to the quarterfinals PIBC President Jake Eisen said he is proud of the team's resilience and the strong community backing with more than 30 people travelling interstate to support them.

The event is Australia's biggest grassroots surfing series with 42 clubs competing, including the PIBC team of Carl Wright, Harry de Roth, Sage Goldsbury, Jarrah Cicero and Joe van Dijk.

Goldsbury replaced Nikki van Dijk at the last minute.

Sage said PIBC always comes in as the underdogs but brings plenty of fun and energy.

"Team surfing is a whole different ballpark!

The nerves are insane because you're surfing for your teammates, not just yourself.

It didn't quite go our way, but we gave it everything."

The Boardriders Battle is



Joe van Dijk in the line-up representing Phillip Island Boardriders at the 2026 NRMA Insurance Australian Boardriders Battle on the Gold Coast. Photo: Simon Garrett

a tag-team event with timed heats where strategic positioning and timing are crucial.

"If a team runs out of time, that's it," said Jake.

"Missed opportunities can make or break a heat and unfortunately it zipped and we zagged."

In the first round PIBC showed great resilience.

"We had a pretty poor start,

the waves were not coming our way and we clawed our way back and got through.

"Carl Wright was a stand-out on day one -- if it was not for his experience it would not have happened," said Jake.

"He's just a kid and he was under immense pressure but Jarrah pulled through and got the score we needed.

"We were wrapped to get to

the quarterfinals."

Although Sunday was not in their favour Jake said PIBC will carry the positives forward.

"The atmosphere was electric with at least 10,000 people there despite the rain and to have support from the club was a big win," said Jake.

"Now we're hungry for redemption later in the year."

Goannas shine at Over-70 Cricket World Cup

THE Korumburra Goannas celebrated on the international stage in February as two players and a husband-and-wife management duo represented Australia at the Over-70 Cricket World Cup in Christchurch.

Ray Smith and Ian Southall were selected in the Australian squad, with Goannas secretary Ian Gibson and his wife Heather Farley serving as co-managers.

A warm-up injury kept Southall out of the Silver Ashes series against England, which Australia lost three-nil.

Smith played all three Ashes internationals, scoring six and 63 across the matches.

At the World Cup, eight nations competed across seven 45-over group games each.

Australia won six of their seven group games, including a victory over England.

Southall returned to play four group games, finishing with bowling figures of 1/103.

Smith was exceptional, scoring 61, 83, 31 and 77 -- all not out -- for 252 runs without losing his wicket.

In the final at Hagley Oval, England posted 288 and Smith was 26 from 34 balls when he hit a return catch to the bowler.

A sixth-wicket stand of more than 100 gave Australia hope but they fell 15 runs short.

Smith finished with 278 runs at one dismissal, leading the batting averages for the entire Cup.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND BRIDGE

ON Monday night Susan Ruffin and Alan Johnston scored 63.33 per cent in the lead.

They were followed by Ann Marie Tytler and Fred Meiselbach (55.83) and Bruce Higgs and Sean Munley (50.00).

Tuesday at Wonthaggi RSL saw a tie between Deb Anglim and John French and Lois Dwyer and Alan Johnston (59.9) then Hannah Martin and Maureen Stiles (58.8) Bron Sund and Mike Dooley (57.81) and another tie Su Edwards and Ruth Harvey and Anne Gibson and Julie Perriam (55.73).

Alan Johnston and Clive Hope won N/S on Friday (61.81).

They were followed by relative beginners Janine Thomas and John McLennan (56.71) Amanda Stewart and Adam Trumble (55.09) Philip and Neville Chapman (50.69) and Pat West and Lynda DeLaney (50.00).

Playing E/W Faye Rowlands and Bron Sund (60.42) Moya Crowley and Mike Dooley (59.95) Anne Gibson and Julie Perriam (59.49) Su Edwards and Ruth Harvey (56.48) and Maureen Stiles and Marie Sands (48.84).

It should be noted that Alan Johnston featured in the winning pairs on all three occasions - nice work.

Anyone wanting to know more about Bridge in the South Gippsland area should contact president John on 0428 204 902 or secretary Kathy on 0438 859 561.

PHILLIP ISLAND BRIDGE

MONDAY'S Duplicate competition featured five-and-a-half tables and saw Bronwyn Sund and Anne Gibson emerging as clear winners achieving an impressive score of 62.5 per cent.

On Wednesday the Phillip Island Bridge Club hosted a nationwide event that drew five tables of eager competitors.

Caroline Shaw and Janusz Wolnik emerged victorious securing the day's win.

TIDE GUIDE

TIDAL PREDICTIONS FROM PORT PHILLIP HEADS

Approx. Tide Variations: Seal Rocks, Venus Bay, Waratah Bay and Cape Woolamai (Same), Torradin +2hrs 45, Cowes Pier +50, Stony Point +40

WEDNESDAY
March 11

▲ 5:34am
1.49m
▼ 11:46am
0.29m
▲ 6:30pm
1.52m

THURSDAY
March 12

▼ 12:00am
0.66m
▲ 6:05am
1.44m
▼ 12:20pm
0.33m
▲ 7:07pm
1.46m

FRIDAY
March 13

▼ 12:35am
0.72m
▲ 6:39am
1.39m
▼ 12:54pm
0.37m
▲ 7:50pm
1.39m

SATURDAY
March 14

▼ 1:12am
0.78m
▲ 7:15am
1.33m
▼ 1:30pm
0.42m
▲ 8:43pm
1.33m

SUNDAY
March 15

▼ 1:52am
0.85m
▲ 8:01am
1.26m
▼ 2:13pm
0.48m
▲ 9:45pm
1.29m

MONDAY
March 16

▼ 2:45am
0.90m
▲ 9:03am
1.20m
▼ 3:07pm
0.54m
▲ 10:53pm
1.28m

TUESDAY
March 17

▼ 3:56am
0.90m
▲ 10:25am
1.17m
▼ 4:18pm
0.59m
▲ 11:58pm
1.31m

Email us your fishing photos

news@sgst.com.au



Monday's Breakaway Bowls winners were Glenda Binch, Ken Webb and Jan Clark.



Thursday's social bowls winners at the Inverloch Bowling Club were Paul Davis, Carol Waters, Harry Dunn and Bill Selby.



The Friday winners at Breakaway Bowls were Marj Ford, Les Stanbury, Helen Gladstone and Jan Clark.



Mark Hanrahan (S), John Williams (3) and Ron Hughes (L) were the South West Gippsland Midweek Bowls Group winners this week.



Foster Bowls Club's Jack Attack winners were the Old and Young Bastards, Baden, Justin and Benny.



Leongatha Bowls Club's Saturday social bowls third place winners, Ryan and Allan, second place winners Ken and Anne, and first place winners Rosa and Jannette.

BREAKAWAY BOWLS

IT was another great day of bowls at The Cape.

Twenty members turned out for the day.

The winners were Glenda Binch, Ken Webb and Jan Clark.

They won with a very impressive +25 – well done.

Everyone enjoyed the competition at Friday bowls.

The winners were Marj Ford, Les Stanbury, Helen Gladstone and Jan Clark.

They just managed to win with +42.

Runners-up were Graeme McAlpine, Mandy Irvine and Ken Webb.

A great day was had by all.

FOSTER

IT was an exciting weekend at the Foster Bowls Club.

Two divisions in the Strzelecki South Weekend Pennant grand finals and both come home with the flags.

Division 3 was victor over Port Welshpool and Division 4 was victor over Wonthaggi.

What an awesome achievement for the club.

Everyone is over the moon and elated by the results – a fantastic end to a great season.

Congratulations go out to everyone who helped get there.

Drinks and nibbles were enjoyed at the club afterwards.

Mick Flanagan even put pen to paper writing a club song, sung to the tune of Road to Gundagai.

Sadly, the Midweek Pennant grand final didn't go Foster's way.

It was a tough battle out there, going down overall by only two shots.

Congratulations go to Phillip Island on its win.

Two out of three ain't bad – go Foster.

Jack Attack was a little quiet last week.

The weather was looking ordinary, but it cleared up nicely for those that were keen.

Winners on the night were the Old and Young Bastards with Baden, Justin and Benny winning vouchers from Foster Takeaway.

Thanks to them for their support.

Runners-up were the Robblecocks, Alan, Justin and Leigh, winning the chocolate prizes sponsored by Promontory Kitchens.

How can Justin be in two places at once?

No questions asked, the club is just sharing the love and prizes around.

Free for all bowls and presentation night this Wednesday.

INVERLOCH

SOCIAL bowls day at Inverloch on Thursday, February 26, saw 37 players play two games of three bowl triples.

In the end, there were four teams that won both their games.

After counting points and then shots up, the winners were the team of Jon Justin, John Cook and Peter Gentsch with 35 points.

The runners-up with 32 points and 22 shots up were Geoff Coleman, Ted Lee and Arthur Moule.

On Thursday, March 5, Inverloch social day had 48 players.

With 12 teams of four they played two games.

Four of the teams won both their games.

The winning team on the day with two wins and 35 points was the team of Bill Selby, Paul Davis, Carol Waters and Harry Dunn.

The runners-up with two wins and 34 points were Terry Orford, George Scott, Diane Hallas and Jim Simema.

Inverloch hosted a number of visiting players from Cranbourne RSL.

A momentous event happened on Tuesday, March 3.

The Division 2 midweek team won the grand final against Fish Creek.

Being premiers doesn't happen that often, so congratulations go to the bowlers on the day and those who played throughout the year in Division 2.

Congratulations also go to the Division 1 Saturday Pennant team that reached the grand final against Mirboo North but unfortunately was outplayed.

Thursday, March 12, will see social bowls happening with four games of five ends.

The club has tried this before, and it was very successful.

Inverloch Bowling Club's annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 29, at 7pm.

A number of positions will be vacant, for which the club needs you the members to step up and fill.

KORUMBURRA

MEMBERS of the club travelled to Newborough on Saturday to watch Shane O'Loughlin represent the club in the Champion of Champions competition.

Shane played Steve Davy from Boolarra and came out the victor.

He now moves on to the regional finals in Bendigo – well done, Shane.

In the club mixed pairs, Katrina Evans and Garry Dorling played Vera and Robert Sund with Katrina and Garry coming out winners.

LEONGATHA

IT was another big day at the Leongatha Bowls Club.

The club hosted the Tuesday grand finals in near perfect weather.

The kitchen was abuzz of laughter and hard work until the dishwasher decided to cark itself, but the legend in the club came up trumps and fixed it and saved the day – thanks heaps.

Can't believe footy fever is back. The tipping competition is up and running.

If you have missed out or forgotten, there's time to put your name down or ring Mary.

A date to put on your calendar is March 21.

Jeff has organised an in-house day at the club for all tradies, players, new bowlers and not so new.

It's a great idea and a lot of fun. The teams will have a mix of players – that will be interesting to see.

The sponsor for the day will be Vivid Coats.

Put your names down early so as not to miss out.

Kitty tea next month will be the last for the year and a different date due to Easter – keep an eye on the board.

There was no Wednesday social bowls due to bad weather but Saturday social bowls was just the best day.

There was a lot of laughter, and everyone was in good spirits.

Third prize went to Allan and Ryan, second went to Ken and Anne, and the winners were Rosa and Jannette.

The raffle was won by outsiders from Loch and Korumburra.

They looked like they enjoyed the day.

Well done, that's all folks.

MIDWEEK

WHAT a great day. Fifty-two players were signed in by John and Bev as Vern worked hard to arrange the teams.

A big thank you to Neville Kitchen for setting up and John Williams for packing up, as well as Marianne and Colin for running the bar and Laurie Bell for cleaning up the kitchen.

Continued page 47



Sylvia Mattock and Betty Huitema were the Tuesday winners at Wonthaggi Senior Indoor Bowls.



Friday's winners at Wonthaggi Senior Indoor Bowls were Judy Sweetman, Jeannie Slocombe and Betty Huitema.



Wonthaggi Bowls Club's Turkey Triples winners were Brett, Keith and Arthur from Inverloch.

From page 46

Once the bowlers started playing, it became evident that they were in for a lovely day that would make bowling very pleasurable.

There was a huge amount of banter and laughter across the green, and this did not distract from the quality of the bowls or friendly competitiveness.

A few charitable bowlers happily assisted the Royal Children's Hospital with some wrong bias bowls.

The winners on 38 points were Mark Hanrahan (S), John Williams (3) and Ron Hughes (L).

Runners-up on a score of 32 were John Nicholson (S), Gillian Harper (3) Steve Banks (2) and Maggie Prosser (L).

Best one game winners on 21 points were Michael Dady (S), Brenda Moloney (3), Aggie Gratton (2) and Diane Kessen (L).

Next week, the bowlers will be meeting at Loch Bowling Club to once again fight it out for team of the week.

Please be on site by 10am to allow time to prepare the teams.

Unfortunately, with numbers generally reaching capacity, the club will have to be strict on a 10am cut off time.

Meanwhile till then, have fun and stay safe.

WONTHAGGI

IT was another busy week.

Tuesday saw Division 3 venture to Leongatha for the grand final.

After a good year, the club was looking to claim another flag.

After a close match on the scoreboard all day, Wonthaggi

was just short at the end.

The final scores: Wonthaggi 59, San Remo 63.

Wednesday saw a fine day for the Turkey Triples.

The standard was very high, with five teams being four-game winners.

The winners were a team from Inverloch — Brett, Keith and Arthur — with a score of four wins and plus 48 shots.

Runners-up was a team from Wonthaggi — Kyal, Denise and John — with a score of four wins and plus 37 shots.

The best game went to the Wayne Mattock team from Wonthaggi with a score of plus 14 shots.

The much sought-after NABA award was a battle between teams from Phillip Island, Korumburra and San Remo, with the winner being the Robyn Dennis team from San Remo.

Thursday morning social bowls saw a good number of bowlers enjoy good weather, two games of bowls and a light lunch.

There were no social bowls at 1pm.

Friday night was a success, with a very good number of members. The members draw didn't go off, with the jackpot being \$70 next week.

Alan Bolding was the happy winner of the meat tray, while Paul Hill took the chicken tray home.

Trevor and Deidre each won a brekky pack.

Other winners were Charlie, Roger and Michael.

Saturday saw a fine sunny day greet 30 bowlers.

The order of the day was three-bowl triples.

There were two teams that were two-game winners, with the winners being Dave Harrison, Frank Cimino and Ken Gage with a score of two wins and 32 points.

The runners-up were Peter McBain, Syd Gostling and Norm Evans with a score of two wins and 31 points.

Saturday was also a fantastic day for Wonthaggi, with Caroline Donohue and Jan Jeeves winning the Strzelecki Ladies Pairs at Newborough.

After a slow start, the girls were able to gather themselves and have a good win, 21-15.

They now play in the State Championships at Bendigo in April.

Bowls this week: Thursday: Social bowls at 9.30am and at 1pm.

Friday: Coaching at 10am.

Saturday: Social bowls at 1pm.

WONTHAGGI INDOOR

THE club welcomed another new member this week.

The club is growing steadily. It has a total of 58.

If you wish to meet new people and be part of a really friendly club, please get in touch.

Tuesday's winners on plus 13 were Sylvia Mattock, Betty Huitema and Carol Thorpe winning on a countback from Maggi Scapin, Judy Sweetnam, Astrid Marshall and Theo Scholey also on plus 13.

Friday's winners on plus 23 were Judy Sweetnam, Betty Huitema and Jeannie Slocombe.

Runners-up on plus nine were Lia Smith, Jo McIntyre, Pam Russell and Gaye Garry – well done, ladies.



The Strzelecki Champion of Champions runner-up from Boolarra Steve Davy and winner Shane O'Loughlin from Korumburra.



Jon Justin, Peter Gentsch and John Cook were recent social bowls winners at Inverloch Bowling Club.

Attention to detail is critical as Midweek Pennant finals are decided



Wayne Barr sends one down for Phillip Island during its tight victory over Foster in the Midweek Pennant Grand Final in Leongatha. A26_1026



Ray Prain bowls for Foster during its exciting Grand Final contest against Phillip Island in Midweek Pennant competition in Leongatha. A27_1026



Ash Alibone bowls during Phillip Island's Division 1 Premiership in Midweek Pennant competition against Foster. A25_1026



Bev Tyers of Foster sends down the final bowl of the Grand Final against Phillip Island in Division 1 Midweek Pennant. A35_1026



Carol Waters of Inverloch sends one down during the side's Division 2 Premiership victory in Midweek Pennant. A33_1026



Bronwyn Williams competes for Fish Creek, the eventual runner-up in Division 2 Midweek Pennant action, the Grand Final held in Leongatha. A29_1026

Midweek Pennant champions crowned



Phillip Island celebrates its Division 1 flag in the Strzelecki Bowls Region Midweek Pennant competition. Back row: Brian Arnold (Manager) Gary Johnson, Alf Jones, Ash Alibone, Greg Dixon (Selector/Coach) Front row: Alan Beddows, Stuart Cunningham, Wayne Barr, Chris Fricke, Larry Fricker, Marilyn Forrest, Lyn Rogerson, Mark Hone, Lindsay Meredith and Julie Pora (Emergency). A01_1026



Inverloch is the Division 2 Midweek Pennant Premiers, with Pat Mackay, Bill Brown, Mean Price, Jill Kennedy, George Scott, Craig Selby, Bill Massier, Jenny Haydon, John Duthie, Marg Griffin, Joyce Arnold, Laurel Lee, Carol Waters and Chris O'Donnell. A02_1026



San Remo claimed the Midweek Pennant Division 3 Premiership in the Strzelecki Bowls Region, with: Back Row: Paul Dickson, Steve Jones, Vern Elliott, Peter Taylor, Peter Gratton, Tony McKiernan, John Nicholson. 2nd Row: Bobby Arnold, Jaye Allen-Dayle, Bev Elliott, Lou Capsalis, John Morgan. Front: James Martin and Jacka. A03_1026



Toora won Division 4 of Strzelecki Bowls Region Midweek Pennant with Bart Ruyter, Bart Zaffarese, Ray Lecher, Wil Low, Pam Maskell, Terry Corcoran, Beth Curram, Ian Rogers, Lyn Hewson and John Ryan. A04_1026

KORUMBURRA

RESULTS: Tuesday, March 3.
Stableford: 33 players.
A Grade winner: Jaarl Enbom (11) 36 C/B.
B Grade winner: Chris Clements (19) 35 Pts.
NTPs: first Ross Besley, seventh Robert Litchfield, 10th Barry Kerr and 13th Mark Marotti.
Thursday, March 5:
Stableford: 22 players.
A Grade winner: Steve Duffield (12) 38 pts. B Grade winner: Don Olden (21) 36 pts. NTPs: first Barry Kerr, seventh Steve McNamara, 10th Noel Ladgrove and 13th Chris McConnell.
Saturday, March 7:
Sponsor: Ross Dowell.
Monthly Medal: 47 players.
Monthly Medal winner: Chris Clements (18) 69 C/B.
A Grade winner: Mat Wrigley (0) 73 C/B. B Grade winner: Chris Clements (18) 69 C/B.
Scratch winner: Mat Wrigley (0) 73. NTPs: seventh Greg Shuttlesworth, 10th Darryl Brain and 13th Billie Wrigley.

Ladies

THE women's March Monthly Medal was played recently, kindly sponsored by Tiny Teapot Café.
Congratulations to the Medallist and B Grade winner Chris Rickard, winning on a countback with a handy 102(31)71 net.
A Grade winner was Trudi Mantell 97(24)73 net.
Runner-up was Heather Grist (22) with a 74 net on c/b.
B Grade winner was Chris, and runner-up was Kim Enbom (27) with a 71 net.
BDTL went to Barb Twite and Deb Wrigley 74 net and Jenny Blackmore 75 net.
Best scratch score was Merrissa Cosson with 86.
NTPs were first Gail Beer (Kellys Bakery) and 10th Shelley Snooks (\$2 Discount Store).
Thursday Twilight:
Winners were Anne and John Kerr with 23 pts.
NTPs went to Pauline Kerr and Tyler Dole on the 10th.
Last Friday, two players attended Mirboo North.

Congratulations to Deb Wrigley and Chris Rickard coming runners-up with 41 pts.
On Saturday, eight played the March RB Medal day kindly sponsored by Luscious Cafe.
Congratulations to the Medal and Grade winner Trudi Mantell (24) with a nice score of 70 net.
R-up with 74 net and also best scratch score of 87, Kerri Besley.
BDTL went to Gail Beer with 75 net.
NTP on the 10th went to Aliesha Wrigley.
Good luck to all players this week, playing the RB 4BBB Scratch and Handicap event.

LEONGATHA

RESULTS: Thursday, March 5.
Competition: 4BBB. Entrants: 74.
Winners: Malcolm Legge and Trevor Steer 43 Pts c/b; Dave Brownnet and Malcolm Gin 43 Pts c/b; Lianne Adamson and Karen de Groot 43 pts c/b.
Nearest the pin: 14th Allan Johnson and 16th Malcolm Legge.
Friday, March 6:
Competition: Ambrose. Entrants: 99. Winners: Paul Kennedy, Michael Rowe, Rebecca Brown and Andy Bassett 55.25; Michael O'Raffery, Alan Starkey, Chad Clasby and Jeremy de Silva 55.75; Russell Williams, Dean Kellett, Kent Hams and Barry Attwood 56.00.
Eagles nest: Anthony Sparkes and Michael Rowe.

Nearest the pins: 14th Don Smith 600cm, and 16th Mark Burns 370cm.
Saturday, March 7:
Competition: Stableford.
Entrants: 94.
Overall winner: Alison Lancaster (24) (Catalina CC) 40 pts.
A Grade: Steven Piasente (13) 38 pts; Jason Dennerley (13) 37 pts.
B Grade: Nick Shaw (17) 38 Pts; Gordon Morrison (14) 37 pts c/b.
C Grade: Bryan Roylance (18) 36 pts c/b; David Chugg (20) 36 pts.
D Grade: Alison Lancaster (24) 40 Pts; Michelle Roberts (24) 39 pts.
Eagles nest: Colin Moyle.
Nearest the pin: 14th Nick Shaw and 16th Mel Miles.
Sunday, March 8:
Competition: Two Person Gentsomes.
Entrants: 66.
Winners: Callum Farman and Bryn Davies 55 pts; Rebecca Brown and Leanne Adamson 49 pts; Don Smith and Neil Gray 48 c/b.
Eagles nest: Phillip Browne.
Nearest the pin: 14th Phillip Browne and 16th Stephen Lancaster.

Ladies

ROBIN Smith built on her excellent performance from two weeks ago, winning her first Monthly Medal with a score of 109/34/75 net.
Sue Bowler and Colleen Touzel tied for the runners-up spot, each finishing with a 76 net.
Michelle Roberts won the Stableford event with an impressive 42 pts, followed by Karen Bear in second place with 35 pts.
Nearest the pin prizes went to Leanne Costello on the 16th, Michelle Roberts on the 14th, and Sue Bowler on the fifth.
In the nine-hole competition, Jill Moor took top honours with 21 Pts.

MIRBOO NORTH

TUESDAY, March 3: Stableford.
A Grade: J. Winters (12) 42 pts.
B Grade: J. Hughes (17) 36 pts c/b.
DTL: B. Vella 37, and A. McCarthy, M. Heiberg, M Payne and A. Hayse 36.
NTP: fourth S. Griffiths, sixth M Answerth, 13th S. Beitz and 16th M. Heiberg.
Birdies: fourth M. Payne, and sixth S. Hill-Smith, D. Fletcher and B. Vella.
Friday, March 6: 4BBB.
Sponsor: Craig Young Butcher and Gunn family.
Ladies' winner: L. Vuillerman and D. Christie 44 Pts.
R-up: C. Rickard and D. Wrigley 41 pts.
Men's winner: N. Whichello and R. Thompson 47 pts.
R-up: S. Beitz and G. Renwick 44 pts.
DTL: S. Woodall and J. Woodall, and T. Sheater and C. Moody 42 Pts c/b, and R. Evans and A. Wood, M. Dear and W. Gervasi 40 pts.
NTP: fourth M. Payne, sixth S. Caldwell, 13th R. Thompson and 16th M. Dear.
Saturday, March 7: Stroke.
A Grade: J. Woodall (10) 67 net.
B Grade and Medal: D. Taylor (23) 67 net c/b.
DTL: T Bradshaw 68, W. Roberts and S. McInnes 69, and S. Hill-Smith 70 c/b.
NTP: fourth (Mirboo North Pub voucher) S. McInnes, sixth J. McFarlane, 13th N. Whichello, and 16th (Boolarra Pub voucher) S. McInnes.
Birdies: fourth Tom Traill and J. Woodall, sixth J. McFarlane, and 16th J. Robbins, S. McInnes and S. Woodall.
Lowest putts: S. McKenzie 25 c/b.

WONTHAGGI

RESULT: March 5, SR. 71.
Competition: Stableford 18-hole.
Overall winner: Ashley Chetland 46.
A Grade: Glenn Hewlett 38.
R-up: Rod McBride 37.
B Grade: Ashley Chetland 46.
R-up: Tim Skate 40.
Place getters: Frank Huber 39, Jamie Davidson 38, Graeme Woodbridge 36, Paul Brusamarello 36, Roger Kilpatrick 36, Jonathon Wade 35 and Gino Hennequin 35.
Eagle: Ashley Chetland first.
NTPs: Gino Hennequin second, Andrew Hooton-Shandley fourth, Kevin Loughran eighth, Paul Brusamarello 13th and Rod McBride 17th.
Results: March 5, SR. 36.
Competition: Stableford nine-hole 10 to 18.
Winner: Bill Howard 24.
Place getters: Bob Cornelis 18, John Davies 17 and Mark Nicholson 17.
NTP: Bill Howard 17th.
Results: March 7.
Competition: Stroke Monthly Medal and putting.
Overall winner: Peter Dell 66.
A Grade: Peter Dell 66.
R-up: Scott Williams 69.
B Grade: Mark Nicholson 67.
R-up: Paul Brusamarello 71.
C Grade: Phillip Studham 67
R-up: Frank Loughran 68.
Place getters: Bill Howard 68, Inoke Baudromo 68, Steve Brann 69, Graeme Crawford 70, Ian Baker 70, Ross Lovett 70, Alan Cubbon 70, David Hynes 70 and Steve Smith 70.
NTPs: Peter Dell second, not claimed fourth, Steve Brann propin eighth, Mick Bourke 13th and Ross Lovett money hole 17th.
Putting: Norm Burne 26 putts.

Ladies

WEDNESDAY was the March Monthly Medal, Stroke and putting with 29 players.
The day was overcast with misty drizzle all day.
There were a couple of great scores vying for the medal, both in A Grade, but the medal and grade prize was won by Merryn Dear with 88(21)67 net from Kaylene Hodgetts with 90(21)69 net.
B Grade was a four-way countback with Irene Walsh 97(24)73 net getting the nod from Marg Ryan, Pam Hanley and Donna Brosnan.
C Grade was another countback with Kathy Geyer 107(35)72 net from Wendy Cross.
Placegetters: Kaylene Hodgetts 69, Wendy Cross 72, Marg Ryan 73, Pam Hanley 73 and Donna Brosnan 73.
NTP: second and fourth Merryn Dear, eighth Andrea Grenville and 13th Jenny McRae.
Birdies on the day: Merryn Dear fourth, Marg Johnson fifth and Catherine Bolding 17th.
Scratch: Marg Johnson 87.
Putting: Robyn Wilkinson 28 putts -including two handy chip ins.

WOORAYL

THE March Monthly Medal and Ken Grist Qualifying round was sponsored with thanks by Lyn Rose Boutique.
Twelve ladies competed in drizzle that didn't let up.
A Grade winner and March Medallist was Elly Berryman 14 - 85 - 71.
B Grade winner was Michele Dwyer 27 - 104 - 77.
BDL: Jean Hayes 83 and Tracey Ryan 84.
NTP: eighth Heather Sullivan. 11th Tracey Ryan and 17th Elly Berryman.
Putting was won by Elly Berryman 32 putts.



Stableford event winner and March Monthly Medal winner Michelle Roberts and Robin Smith at the Leongatha Golf Club.



Korumburra's March Monthly Medal winner Chris Rickard.



Korumburra's A Grade winner Mat Wrigley and Monthly Medal winner Chris Clements with his prize donated by Ross Dowell.



Woorayl Golf Club's B Grade winner Michele Dwyer (left), and A Grade winner and Monthly Medallist Elly Berryman (right), with sponsor Tracey Ryan (centre).



Irene Walsh, Merryn Dear and Kathy Geyer were the grade winners at Wonthaggi Golf Club this week. Merryn was also the Monthly Medal winner.



A properly fitted mouthguard is the first line of defence against dental injuries in contact sport.

Mouthguard reminder as footy season approaches

WITH South Gippsland footy seasons kicking off in April dentists are urging local parents and junior players to check their mouthguards before the first bounce.

New data from Bupa Dental shows collisions and falls account for 66 per cent of sports injury hospitalisations nationally, with AFL recording more than double the hospitalisation rate of most other recreational sports.

Despite the risk, only 36 per cent of Australians wear a mouthguard during contact sport.

Even fewer wear one at training - the moment when many preventable injuries occur.

Dr Mark Dohlad, Principal Dental Officer at Bupa Dental, said the start of the junior season was a critical window for parents.

"Kids' mouths grow and change quickly, which means a mouthguard that fitted last season may not offer the protection parents assume it does," Dr Dohlad said.

"Too often dentists see preventable injuries occur early in the season or at training, when mouthguards are forgotten or a poorly fitting one shifts on impact, leaving teeth, jaws and soft tissue exposed."

The Gippsland League and West Gippsland competition seasons both get underway in April, with clubs right across Bass Coast and South Gippsland involved.

The Southern Gippsland Junior Football Competition is also set to get underway in mid-April, putting hundreds of local children on the field within weeks.

Dr Dohlad said over-the-counter boil-and-bite mouthguards offered some protection but fell short of what a professionally fitted guard could provide.

"While over-the-counter 'boil and bite' mouthguards are better than nothing, they simply don't provide the same level of coverage or stability," Dr Dohlad said.

"They're more likely to loosen or fall out during play, particularly in fast-moving sports like football, rugby or basketball."

A custom-fitted mouthguard is made from a scan or impression taken by a dentist and is designed around a player's individual bite, helping it stay in place during both games and training.

"Professionally fitted mouthguards are designed around a player's individual bite by a dentist, helping them stay firmly in place during both games and training," Dr Dohlad said.

"That fit and quality makes a real difference to confidence on the field and gives parents peace of mind knowing their child has appropriate protection, not just something that looks like protection."

The latest government data puts the rate of sport-related injury at 19 per cent of participants.

Fractured teeth, broken jaws and lacerations to the tongue or cheek are among the most common injuries linked to inadequate mouth protection in contact sport.

The fitting process itself is straightforward - a short visit for a scan or impression, followed by a second appointment to ensure the guard fits correctly.

Players can choose their team colours. Bupa Health Insurance members with eligible Extras cover who attend participating Members First Ultimate clinics can receive 100 per cent back on standard fitted mouthguards across Bupa's national network of practices.

Williams wins inaugural Motton memorial trophy at Outtrim

CLIVE Williams has won the inaugural Ralph Motton Memorial Three Match Service Aggregate Trophy at Outtrim Pistol Club near Korumburra.

Mr Williams shot 2333 points out of a possible 2450 to take out the perpetual trophy during an Open Day that attracted members from many other Victorian pistol clubs.

The trophy was awarded in memory of Ralph Motton who passed away in July 2025 after years of dedicated service to the club.

Mr Motton was a highly respected member who was always willing to offer advice to fellow shooters.

He worked tirelessly to make improvements at the club and regularly mentored and supported new and old members.

Ralph's widow Gianna, daughters Danielle and Tania and son-in-law Shane attended the Open Day to congratulate Mr Williams.

Gianna was presented with a replica of the trophy to keep in honour of Ralph's significant contribution to the club.

The Three Match Service Aggregate combines scores from three separate pistol disciplines testing accuracy across different distances and shooting positions.

It is considered one of the more demanding competition



Danielle, Gianna, Clive and Tania at the Ralph Motton Memorial Trophy presentation at Outtrim Pistol Club.

formats in club-level pistol shooting requiring consistency under sustained pressure.

The Open Day provided an opportunity for visiting shooters to experience the Outtrim club's facilities and compete alongside local members in a range of disciplines.

The Outtrim and District Pistol Club was established in 1983 and has about 50

members.

The club is located at 45 Outtrim-Inverloch Road and provides competitions each Saturday at distances of 10, 25 and 50 metres across four outdoor shooting ranges and an indoor air pistol range.

The club is affiliated with the Victorian Amateur Pistol Association, Pistol Australia and the International Sports

Shooting Federation.

New members and visitors are welcome to attend the club on competition days with introductory courses available for those interested in taking up the sport.

Mr Motton is remembered fondly by club members and stories about his antics on and off the pistol range are regularly shared among his friends.

LGC coaches recognised at Gymnastics Victoria awards

LEONGATHA Gymnastics Club coaches Lily Akers and Bella Houston have been recognised as two of the best in the state after taking out the GymStar coaching team of the year award at the Gymnastics Victoria annual awards ceremony.

Ms Akers also claimed the competitive coach of the year award for women's artistic gymnastics -- a remarkable double for the South Gippsland club.

The GymStar stream is a Gymnastics Victoria program designed for members of all ages, genders and abilities, with an emphasis on participation and fun.

Athletes train between two and six hours per week and compete across six apparatus -- floor, beam, uneven bars, vault, rings and parallel bars -- in competitions structured to be positive and supportive rather than results-focused.

Ms Akers said the program at Leongatha currently has approximately 40 athletes, all of whom have the opportunity to represent the club in competitions across Victoria.

The women's artistic gymnastics program runs alongside GymStar as a more serious competitive stream, requiring higher training hours.

Ms Akers introduced the team last year with athletes training 12 hours per week.

"They performed better than we ever could have imagined," she said.

"Throughout the season, consistently podium placing and finally winning the south-east regional championships,



Coaches Lily Akers and Bella Houston represented Leongatha Gymnastics Club at the Gymnastics Victoria annual awards ceremony.

where they qualified for the state championships.

"At the states, they placed fourth on uneven bars and sixth on beam.

"Because of the incredible success of this team, we have now quadrupled the program, running four teams from level two to level five."

The awards cap a strong year for the club, which has been operating in Leongatha and surrounding areas since 1993, delivering programs from toddlers through to adults across recreational, competitive and

fitness streams.

LGC is affiliated with Gymnastics Victoria and runs multiple accredited programs, including PlayGym, Kinder Gym, Recreational Gymnastics, Ninja Gym and competitive streams.

The club has been navigating a venue challenge in recent times, with the search for a permanent home an ongoing priority heading into 2026.

Ms Akers and the team at LGC thanked the community for its support throughout 2025.

"The continuation of the club was truly dependent on our incredible coaches, committee, families and wider community," she said.

"While 2026 is likely to bring continued challenges in securing a permanent venue, these awards are a powerful reminder that our club is strong, united and committed to providing opportunities for local athletes.

"With continued community support, we are confident we will overcome the road ahead."



The Southern Gippsland Under 13s celebrate after edging Latrobe Valley in the 2025 Dahlsens Gippsland All Stars Grand Final.

Local kids to shine as Wonthaggi hosts All Stars day

LOCAL junior footballers and netballers will get their chance at regional glory when Wonthaggi hosts the Dahlsens Gippsland All Stars Round 3 double-header on Monday June 8.

The King's Birthday fixture at Wonthaggi Recreation Reserve will be the biggest day of the 2026 season for the regional representative program, which gives boys and girls aged 13 to 15 the chance to pull on a regional guernsey and test themselves against the best young players from across Gippsland.

It will bring all four regions together in one place, with Southern Gippsland hosting rivals from Eastern Gippsland, Latrobe Valley and Western Gippsland across football and netball.

For the Southern Gippsland region the event doubles as a home ground advantage, with players drawn from clubs across Bass Coast and South Gippsland shires including Wonthaggi, Inverloch-Kongwak, Kilcunda Bass, Phillip Island, Nyora, Leongatha, Korumburra-Bena, Mirboo North, Meeniyang Dumbalk United, Poowong, Tarwin, Stony Creek, Dalyston, Fish Creek and Corner Inlet.

The region enters the 2026 season as reigning premiers in both the Under 13s and Under 15s football, having claimed two of the five Grand Finals contested in 2025.

The Under 13s victory was as tight as they come, with Southern Gippsland holding off Latrobe Valley by a single point in a tense decider, while the Under 15s accounted for Western Gippsland more comfortably to round out a strong season for the region.

Southern Gippsland's football coaching panel for 2026 includes 13s coach Bianca Hellmuth-Pask, 14s coach Steve Lock, 15s coach Luke Short and girls coach Kathy Zacharopoulos, with Riley Pirotta coordinating the region.

The June 8 event will also be a netball double-header, with both Round 2 and Round 3 combined into a single day after organisers identified a clash between the original Round 2 date of Sunday May 17 and the Sale Netball Association Tournament.

The change means netball players will not have to choose between representative and club commitments, with all participants guaranteed their full

allocation of game time across the long weekend.

The All Stars program was founded in 2021 as a football-only competition before adding netball in 2025, and is run in partnership with the Gippsland League.

It is backed by naming rights partner Dahlsens, with Gippsland Power as the football pathway partner, the Gippsland Stars as the netball pathway partner and the Hawthorn Academy as a further football development partner.

That network of Gippsland-based organisations is central to what makes the program tick.

The best performers do not just walk away with a premiership medal; they step into a clear pipeline that runs from the All Stars through to the V/Line Cup and Gippsland Power's Coates Talent League program, with the Hawthorn Academy providing an additional development stream for players identified along the way.

The netball side mirrors that structure, with the Gippsland Stars providing a direct pathway for the region's best young netballers into higher-level competition.

For many players across Bass Coast and South Gippsland it is their first experience of representative sport above club level, but the program has already produced some of the country's top draft prospects.

Two Southern Gippsland alumni were drafted to the AFL in 2025, with Willem Duursma selected by the West Coast Eagles with the number one pick in the national draft and Zac Walker taken by the Western Bulldogs with pick 12 in the mid-season draft.

Xavier Lindsay, another Southern Gippsland product, was drafted by Melbourne in 2024.

Players trial for their regional squad in February and March, train fortnightly once selected, then compete across three rounds before the Grand Final in July.

The full 2026 season opened with Round 1 in Traralgon on Friday April 3 and continues with Round 2 in Bairnsdale on Sunday May 17, before Wonthaggi closes out the regular season on June 8.

The Grand Final is scheduled for Sunday July 5.

More information is available at gippslandallstars.com.au.

All abilities sports grants announced

REGIONAL All Abilities Participation Grants providing up to \$25,000 have been announced to boost access and inclusion in sports programs across the region.

The grants are designed to help sports clubs and organisations create accessible opportunities for Victorians of all abilities to get involved in sport as instructors, coaches, volunteers and administrators.

South Gippsland Bass Swimming Club has received \$21,614 to purchase underwater cameras to support swimmers with physical and hidden impairments in their Multi-Class squad.

The club's Multi-Class squad has grown in recent years with swimmers competing at district, state and national level including representation at the Australian Age, Multi-Class and Open National Championships.

The underwater cameras will allow coaches to analyse stroke technique and provide real-time visual feedback to swimmers who may have difficulty communicating or understanding verbal instructions on the pool deck.

"This equipment will help our club continue to remove key barriers to participation, enhance skill development, and strengthen pathways to regional, state and national competition," South Gippsland Bass Swimming Club vice president Hanna Lofgren said.

Ms Lofgren said the cameras would be particularly valuable for swimmers with physical and hidden impairments who benefit from visual learning tools.

Wonthaggi Life Saving Club received \$19,000 to support an All Abilities Beach Safety and Inclusion School Program.

The program will deliver beach safety education to students with disabilities across Bass Coast and South Gippsland schools giving them the confidence and skills to enjoy the coastline safely.

The grants are part of a broader initiative to help build welcoming environments where people can learn, contribute and grow their confidence in a variety of roles within sports they enjoy.

Clubs can use the funding for equipment, facility modifications, training for coaches and volunteers or to develop new programs tailored to people with disabilities.

"We're pleased to support more programs that create accessible opportunities for Victorians of all abilities to get involved in sport," Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale said.

"This initiative helps build welcoming environments where people can learn, contribute and grow their confidence in a variety of roles within the sports they enjoy."

More information about the Regional All Abilities Participation Grants is available through Sport and Recreation Victoria.

\$200 sports vouchers open for Bass Coast and South Gippsland families

FAMILIES across Bass Coast and South Gippsland can apply for vouchers of up to \$200 per child to cover the cost of community sport with the latest round of the state government's Get Active Kids program now open.

Round 10 of the program runs until April 2 or until the budget is exhausted.

Funds can be used to cover club memberships, registration fees, uniforms and safety equipment.

Statewide data shows nearly 50 per cent of families using the program say their children would not have been able to participate in organised sport without the financial assistance.

More than 40,000 vouchers are available across Victoria in this round.

To be eligible a child must be aged 18 or under, living in Victoria and named on a valid Commonwealth Health Care

Card or Pensioner Concession Card and a Medicare Card.

A special consideration stream is available for children in care, temporary or provisional visa holders, undocumented migrants and international students.

More than 2,300 registered providers across more than 70 sporting and recreational codes are part of the program including football, netball,

swimming, gymnastics and Scouts.

Families can apply upfront or claim a reimbursement for eligible activities already paid for between January 1, 2026 and the date of submission.

Vouchers are allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

Applications and a full list of registered local providers are available at getactive.vic.gov.au/vouchers.



Sophie Hale, Lily Bovrowski and Lacey Rees wore their house colours at Bass Coast College's recent swimming carnival. Tk01_1026



Bass Coast College students Charlie Moule and Nash Gibson participated in the recent swimming carnival. Tk02_1026

Swimming success for Bass Coast College

BASS Coast College launched into the new school year with its annual swimming carnival recently. Held at the Korumburra outdoor pool, the carnival inspired excellent participation levels from students across all age groups.

Student engagement principal Ross Bramley said the swimming carnival is a valued part of the curriculum and the school is encouraged by the number of students willing to give it a go.

"Being willing to participate is an important element in life and the students got a lot of positives out of being involved in the swimming events," he said.

"As usual, the carnival was very successful with strong participation.

We have many students who are involved with their local swimming clubs and view swimming as their number one sport, as well as students who have interest in surfing and other water-based activities."

Those who shared success on the day have been selected to represent Bass Coast College at the next level, which will see the South Gippsland schools competing.

Bass Coast College will be entering a full team with students competing across most of the events.

"We'd like to thank the staff who get involved with the organising of the swimming carnival and making sure it all comes together on the day.

The work they put in is wonderful for giving students the opportunity to compete in these events," Mr Bramley said.



Dal Tayler, Will Coyne, Euan Horsburgh, Zoe Diesner and Kierra Spinks got into the spirit of the swimming carnival for Bass Coast College. Tk03_1026



Young players in the Wonthaggi Basketball Association U8 mixed competition celebrate receiving their medals at the end of the junior summer season.

Junior hoops wraps up summer season in Wonthaggi

WONTHAGGI'S junior basketball summer season recently wrapped up on a positive note, with the association seeing strong participation in multiple different age groups.

Encouragement awards were given out in both the U10 boys division and the U10 girls division, with Austin Dowd and Luka Platkowski receiving the awards respectively. Medals were also presented to the U8 mixed players to mark the end of their season.

Committee member Alyce Wylie said the summer season had done a great job of introducing younger players to the sport.

"The junior summer season is really well run. They play a game every week, but before the game the umpire takes them for the first 15 or 20 minutes and teaches them skills, and then they play."

Eight teams competed in the U10 boys competition with about 42 players involved, while the U10 girls competition

featured four teams made up of 24 players.

Ms Wylie said participation had been very strong, especially among boys, although the association would love to see further growth and participation in other age groups.

"We're seeing a lot of interest in our U10 boys section. We're still trying to build up our Under 8 level, and our under-10 girls can be a bit tricky because a lot of girls at that age are still doing things like ballet or gymnastics that

fall on the same night."

Junior competitions run throughout the week, with the U10 girls playing on Monday afternoons from 4.30pm, the U10 boys playing on Tuesdays from 4.30pm, and the U8 mixed competition playing on Wednesdays from 4.30pm.

The association is strongly encouraging anyone interested to sign up.

"Newcomers are definitely welcome," Wylie said. "We're trying to get as many numbers as possible."

Wildcats young guns shine at Traralgon tournament

By Trent Westaway

IT was a feline frenzy in Traralgon over the Labour Day weekend, as the Korumburra Wildcats enjoyed a very strong showing, with three teams reaching the grand final and one bringing home the championship trophy.

The club sent seven teams to the tournament, with the U14 girls leading the charge, emerging victorious after an impressive undefeated campaign.

The girls finished the weekend with a perfect 6-0 record, including a semi-final win over hometown team Traralgon, before eclipsing Southern Peninsula in the grand final 28-17.

Margot Gornall and Mylah Angwin stood out as strong scoring options, finishing with seven points each.

The U14 boys also had a strong campaign, going unbeaten in pool play and defeating Moe in the semi-final by 11 points.

Jaxon Eddy and Alex Moxon led the scoring in that match with 11 points apiece.

They went on to face a strong Dandenong Rangers outfit in the grand final.

Despite yet another stand-out performance from Moxon, who scored 17 points, they ultimately fell just short, with the final score reading 42-29.

The Wildcats U16 boys reached the championship



The Korumburra U14 girls team capped off their undefeated campaign at the Traralgon tournament with a 28-17 grand final win over Southern Peninsula.

game as well, following an impressive weekend.

They opened the tournament with a narrow five-point loss to Bairnsdale, before defeating every other team placed before them and earning themselves a rematch in the grand final.

However, Bairnsdale again proved difficult to overcome, defeating Korumburra 61-53 in another competitive contest.

Karlroy Daming led the Wildcats in that match with 19 points, while Raidyn Harrison

added 11 of his own.

With three teams advancing to grand finals and a trophy for the U14 girls, the Wildcats' strong presence in the later stages of the tournament highlights the club's continued focus on junior development.

Country cups king Station One wins the Stony Creek Cup

By Bruce Wardley

TAKING home his 10th country cup the Liam Howley-trained seven-year-old Station One blitzed the field in the 2026 Stony Creek Cup taking an outside run down the home straight to win by a clear margin thrilling racegoers.

Having already amassed more than half a million dollars in prize money Station One's \$85,000 Stony Creek Cup prize purse would have been more than welcomed by the large syndicate of owners including trainer Liam Howley who is a part-owner himself.

Known for leading or racing close to the pace particularly over middle-to-long distances Station One ridden by jockey Jason Maskiell was well placed around the first turn to lead from the outside in a breathtaking run home.

After a standout season of summer racing Stony Creek Racing Club celebrated a day of excitement and community spirit for Stony Creek Cup Day.

One of the premier events on the Victorian racing calendar the day delivered unforgettable moments both on and off the track.

The highlight of the day was the \$85,000 Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup (2100m) with Station One trained by Liam Howley and ridden by jockey Jason Maskiell delivering a strong performance.

Stony Creek Racing Club CEO Jason Benbow said Cup Day was always a highlight on the calendar for the club and the wider South Gippsland community.

"It is fantastic to see so many people come together to celebrate country racing and enjoy a great day out.

We have had a great racing season in 2025/26 with industry



Owners of Trak Chiller winner of Race 4 at Stony Creek the Dr Michael Bourke OAM Sprint, Colin Butler, Nicola and Ken McCarthy, Bill McCarthy, R. R. Darlison and Tony Harrison father of the trainer Michael Harrison. B58_1026

participants including trainers, jockeys and owners unanimous in their praise of the Stony Creek track conditions," he said.

"The surface has provided every horse with an equal opportunity with winners emerging from all parts of the track.

It was incredibly pleasing and a real credit to our Track Manager Michael Templeton and all the work that goes into preparing the track."

"With more than 1,500 racegoers passing through the gate on Cup Day it's exceeded all our expectations.

We have seen record crowds all season," said Mr Benbow.

Mr Benbow said programming changes from Racing Victoria had helped.

Mr Benbow said the whole season had been really country focused and the club would now dissect the season to prepare for next year.

"I believe there's room for improvement."

Hospitality and infrastructure will be looked at with Mr Benbow admitting some areas were a bit outdated and needed a modern touch.

A permanent marquee will be erected for next season for general racegoers.

Another area Mr Benbow said he was excited about was a synthetic crossing to replace the current sand base to improve the safety of jockeys and horses.

Stony Creek Racing Club continued its tradition of crowning the "King and Queen of the Creek" titles recognising the leading male and female jockeys of the day.

Jackie Beriman was crowned Queen of the Creek and Bailey Kinninmont was crowned King of the Creek after an outstanding performance at the track this season.

"Last year we introduced our new 'King and Queen of the Creek' perpetual trophies and we are honoured to continue this tradition today by crowning Jackie and Bailey," Jason said.

"This is set to become a lasting tradition for our Club."

Mr Benbow said the club was now looking forward to the 40th anniversary of the Triple Dead Heat meeting at Stony Creek.

"It's part of Australia's racing

history."

Cup Day was also a day to remember for Jason Maskiell who finished with a treble winning Race 6 on Baffleck Race 7 The Stony Creek Cup on Station One and Race 8 the Danny O'Brien Handicap on Hey Bella trained by Luke Oliver.

The winning time for the Stony Creek Cup was 2.14.47.

Race Results

Race 1: Mayeki - Melina Bath MP Maiden Plate (2100m)

Race 2: Sensational Ruler - Meeniyah Hotel After Party Maiden Plate (1600m)

Race 3: SnakeInTheGrass - Meeniyah IGA Maiden Plate (1100m)

Race 4: Trak Chiller - SEN Dr Michael Bourke OAM Sprint (1100m)

Race 5: Stewart - Mary Aldred MP 0-56 Handicap (1000m)

Race 6: Baffleck - TAC Rob Meyer 0-56 Handicap (1612m)

Race 7 (Stony Creek Cup): Station One - Ladbrokes Stony Creek Cup (2100m)

Race 8: Hey Bella - Danny O'Brien MP 0-56 Handicap (1600m)



Kyneton trainer Liam Howley with Station One winner of the 2026 Stony Creek Cup.



Cranbourne jockey Jackie Beriman riding Trak Chiller winner of Race 4 at Stony Creek was crowned Queen of the Creek. B57_1026



Station One returns to the mounting yard after winning the Stony Creek Cup with jockey Jason Maskiell taking his second win for the day. B63_1026

Something old, something new, something borrowed

By Bruce Wardley

THE TRADITION of a bride wearing something borrowed, something old and something new for good luck seems to have crossed over to fashions on the field.

Cup Day at Stony Creek was no exception with a big field of men, women and families dressed up in their finest racing attire sourced not only from local fashion boutiques but from Op Shops, family friends and the back of the wardrobe.

Racegoers were complimented by judges on their fashion choices.

Prizes and bouquets were awarded in a number of categories including Lady of the Day, Gentleman of the Day, Millinery of the Day and Best Dressed Teens, Littlies, Family, Group, Local Lady and Local Gentleman.

Fashions on the Field is always a highlight of Cup Day MC Casey Bruce said.

The 2026 judges included Judy Stone owner of Influence Clothing in Leongatha, Karlie Owen and Wendy Bezina all fashion experts with extensive experience in the



Local Ladies accepting their sashes for Fashions on the Field at the Stony Creek Cup. B56_1026

fashion industry.

Outfits were evaluated on style and originality with the judges looking for a unique and cohesive look in attire that was suitable for a daytime country racing event as well as the contestant's confidence and poise.

"It's always a wonderful event," said Ms Bruce.

"I was very happy to see the quality of the fashions.

High necks for the girls were popular along with a lot of good

deep colours such as purple, deep green and maroon.

For men three-piece suits were a winner with a neat clean-cut shirt and hat.

"We're still looking for hats on men," said Ms Bruce.

For youngsters the judges were looking for age appropriate clothing that was neat, clean and tidy and looked kid friendly.

"It's a way of giving back to the local community that has

shown such great support for the Stony Creek Racing Club," said Ms Bruce.

"It's all about unique style, originality, and meticulous attention to detail."

Karlie Owen has been a passionate racegoer and Fashions on the Field enthusiast for many years earning accolades such as Best Dressed Woman at the 2019 Caulfield Cup and runner-up at the 2022 Launceston Cup.

Karlie has also secured multiple Fashions on the Field sashes locally and interstate.

As the founder of Jettah and Till Design Karlie has created custom and ready-to-wear headwear across Australia and internationally.

Entering Fashions on the Field at Stony Creek for the first time it was a big day for the Carmichael family from Buffalo winning Best Dressed Girl Under 14, Best Dressed Boy Under 14, Local Gentleman of the Day, Local Lady of the Day and Runner Up for Best Dressed Local Family.

Congratulations and well done to everyone who entered Fashions on the Field at Stony Creek for 2026.



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JUNIOR NETBALL

17U NETBALL
SAMANTHA DYKE 0439 523 757
TRAINING THURSDAYS 5-6PM

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4

PETER LIDDLE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 4



Plaza Arcade, Wonthaggi
140 Graham Street
5672 1421

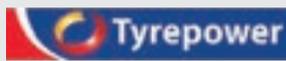


3

KRIS BAKER

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



78-80 Watt Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 5760



3

BRETT JACOBS

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Adelaide
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



28 Inverloch Road,
Wonthaggi
5672 4770



3

JUSTIN CAPORALE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



41 McCartin Street,
Leongatha
5662 2529



2

DARRYL MCGANNON

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



1 Roughead Street,
Leongatha
5662 2327



3

PETER FORT

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



47 Station Street,
Korumburra
0417 332 141



4

SALV CRIVELLI

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- GWS
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 4



Leongatha Toyota
7-13 Hughes Street,
Leongatha
5662 2302



2

BEN FISHER

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Adelaide
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



81 Commercial Street,
Korumburra
5655 1024



2

DAVID ENGLAND

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



3/45-61 McKenzie St,
Wonthaggi
5644 2080



3

SAFFIE LINDSAY

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



145 Graham Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 1137



3

BJ & CARLY WYLIE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
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LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



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Peter Liddle	4
Phil Hardy	4
Salv Crivelli	4
BJ & Carly Wylie	3
Brett Jacobs	3
Justin Caporale	3
Kris Baker	3
Liam Sawyer	3
Peter Fort	3
Saffie Lindsay	3
Adam Ware	2
Ben Fisher	2
Brandon Bull	2
Darryl McGannon	2
David England	2
Glenn Rigby	2
Hayden Poppe	2
Keith & Eddie	2
Leigh Donohue	2
Ryan Shane	2



2

RYAN SHANE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



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346 Bass Highway,
Wonthaggi
5632 3503



4

PHIL HARDY

- Richmond
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Adelaide
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 4



Bass Coast **LIGHT ENGINES**
317 White Road,
Wonthaggi
5672 4017



4

DYLAN CLARK

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 4



1 A'Beckett Street
Inverloch
5674 1432



2

HAYDEN POPPE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Fremantle
- Brisbane
- Adelaide
- North Melbourne
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



6/6 Cyclone Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 2543



2

LEIGH DONOHUE

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- GWS
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- Melbourne
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



Wonthaggi
0400 001 465



4

MICHAEL LINDSAY

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 4



3 Murray Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 5590



3

LIAM SAWYER

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Adelaide
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 3



16 McBride Avenue,
Wonthaggi
5672 1007



2

GLENN RIGBY

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Brisbane
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- Melbourne
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



24 Inverloch Road,
Wonthaggi
5672 5906



2

KEITH KELLY **EDDIE CHANDLER**

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Fremantle
- Brisbane
- Adelaide
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



54 Graham Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 1311



2

BRANDON BULL

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Fremantle
- Sydney
- Collingwood
- Port Adelaide
- St Kilda
- Gold Coast Suns

LAST WEEK'S TIPS 2



150 Graham Street,
Wonthaggi
5672 1181



5

BRAD EGAN

- Carlton
- Hawthorn
- Western Bulldogs
- Geelong
- Sydney
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LAST WEEK'S TIPS 5



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LIGHT ENGINES



From page 58

NYORA

IN a top of the table clash, it is still anyone's game after Nyora bowled out Kilcunda Bass for 110 in A2.

Reece Cordeux was the pick of Nyora's bowlers, taking four wickets.

Trent Breen and Aaron Thompson took two each.

However, Nyora is already down four wickets, replying with 62 runs before stumps.

"This is a good test for us before finals.

The winner of this game will finish on top of the ladder," Nyora's Adam White said.

B Grade put in a solid team effort and will be chasing Glen Alvie's score of 177 this Saturday.

With the ball, Daniel Blackney performed well, taking 3/31.

Tully Bernaldo and Jaylen Waixel each took two wickets.

Michael Lynch also put on his best bowling performance for the year.

Nyora is expecting a good challenge from Glen Alvie and is looking forward to heading into finals.

C Grade forfeited its game due to low numbers.

"The kids have really propped up our C Grade side this season and they've all put in a really good effort," White said.

C Grade will play its last game of the season against OMK.

KOONWARRA L/RSL

KOONWARRA L/RSL made a defendable 269 against Korumburra in A2.

Playing at the Leongatha Recreation Reserve, the Cougars won the toss and chose to bat.

Jason Kennedy was the star of the show, making 70*.

He was supported by Isuru Darshana and Azhar Mehmood who made 43 and 41 runs respectively.

With the ball, Korumburra's vice captain Jacob Whiteside was the standout with three wickets.

Korumburra will have its opportunity to reply this weekend.

This is the last round of the season and Koonwarra/LRSL is sitting firmly in third position on the ladder.

The Cougars will be awaiting the result between Nyora and Kilcunda Bass to determine who they will face in the semi-final.

KILCUNDA BASS

KILCUNDA Bass and Nyora are wrestling for the top of the ladder in A2 with Saturday set to be the decider.

In an interesting first day, Kilcunda Bass won the toss and chose to bat.

The Sharks didn't get off to a good start, losing Cameron Davidson early.

Jayden Tregear put his head down and batted well, but Nyora's strong bowling form so Kilcunda Bass bowled out for 110.

Tregear made 22 runs and captain Matthew Grayson made 31.

In a turn of events though, Kilcunda Bass claimed four of Nyora's wickets before stumps.

Nyora still needs make 50 runs to win the game and Kilcunda Bass needs six wickets, so it could still go to anyone.

"It is a massive game in the context of the finals.

The top of the ladder is on a knife's edge and whoever wins this will be at an advantage,"



Korumburra president Glen Barrett congratulated Noah Belvedere and Hudson Jefferis for receiving their first A Grade two-day caps. Photos: Jodie Arnup.

Kilcunda Bass president Ash Larcombe said.

B Grade got off to a slow start against MDU.

The Sharks made 164 and with Peter Miller top scoring with 39 runs.

B Grade's finals campaign hinges on Glen Alvie's result against Nyora.

Glen Alvie is sitting just behind Kilcunda Bass in the fifth spot on the ladder.

In C Grade, Kilcunda Bass was defeated by OMK.

The Sharks were bowled out for 70 and OMK passed the score without losing a wicket.

Daniel and Hunter Bettles were best with the bat for Kilcunda Bass, each making 14 runs.

INVERLOCH

INVERLOCH is tasked with defending 197 against Nerrena in B1 this Saturday.

Playing at the Nerrena Recreation Reserve, Inverloch won the toss and chose to bat.

The Stingrays started strong with opening batsmen Jack Butcher and Walter Taberner making 40 and 32 runs respectively.

The top score came from Brett Debono with 45 runs.

With the ball, Damien Symmons was the pick of the bowlers as he took four wickets.

Inverloch will be looking to bring its strong bowling form back to the game this weekend.

This is the last game of the home and away season, and Inverloch has secured its place in the B1 finals at fourth on the ladder.

THE IMPERIALS

THE Imperials will be chasing 212 against Koonwarra/LRSL in B2 this weekend.

Playing at the Koonwarra Recreation Reserve, the Imperials won the toss and sent Koonwarra/LRSL into bat first.

The Cougars had a number of good batsmen of their side including Ben Davison with 40 runs and captain Brad Anderson with 55 runs, which gave them a solid start.

Jim Jeffery tilted the scales back in the Imps' favour by claiming 5/38.

The Imps' bowlers bowled well on the day, which opened the game right up.

"It all comes down to how we bat this week.

We have a good side in, so there's no reason why we couldn't

end our season on a win," Imps president Kristian Gray said.

GLEN ALVIE

ONE of the highlights of Glen Alvie's weekend was Jack Brown's performance in B2.

Brown opened the batting against Nyora and made 94 runs – his highest score for the club.

"Jack batted nearly all day, which was a great effort," Glen Alvie president David Hynes said.

Jay Tiziani also had a good day out in C Grade, making 82 runs.

The bowling was a team effort and C2 managed to defeat OMK by 29 runs.

The club congratulated its U15s on a premiership win.

Glen Alvie's B2 side is sitting fifth on the ladder, but if it manages to move up one more rung, all Glen Alvie's senior, women's and junior sides will have made finals this season.

"It's a really good effort.

We don't base our success on winning, but it's great to see our teams are competitive," Hynes said.

"We've had a lot of young people step up this season and they've developed into wonderful players."

MDU

MDU is chasing 164 against Kilcunda Bass this Saturday in B2.

Playing at the Meeniyan Recreation Reserve, MDU won the toss and sent Kilcunda Bass in first.

Some handy bowling from captain Scott Browne dismissed Kilcunda Bass' middle order batsmen.

Browne took 4/44.

Jake Palmer claimed two wickets and singles were taken by Andrew Richardson, Alexander Battersby and Kurt Sinclair.

With the bat, Peter Miller was best for Kilcunda Bass with 39 runs.

MDU is sitting second on the B2 ladder, behind Nyora and a game clear of Koonwarra/LRSL, and will be heading into finals following the end of this round.

KORUMBURRA

IT was a big weekend for the Cobras as they celebrated some incredible personal milestones and recognised one of the great servants of the club.

Congratulations to Adam Balfour on reaching his 200th club game – an outstanding achievement.



Koonwarra/LRSL's Kane Boswell celebrated after getting his first cricket wicket ever.

Adam played his first game for the Cobras back in the 1997 season and has been a tremendous servant to the club ever since.

An inspiring spin bowler in his early days, Adam later took up the gloves with great success while also proving himself as an outstanding opening batsman.

With club games record holder Darren Scott hanging up the cricket boots at the end of the season, Sunday's match was the final chance for "Chop" to take to the field at Summerfield Oval.

A true stalwart of the club, Darren first played in 1988 and has served the Cobras with distinction both on and off the field.

Congratulations Darren and thank you for everything you've given the club.

From the veterans to the future of the club, we were also proud to present young Cobras Noah Belvedere and Hudson Jefferis with their first A Grade two-day caps.

Two outstanding and developing young cricketers who will no doubt make a strong impact at the club for many years to come.

Well done to all four Cobras – a fantastic weekend for the club.

Taking the field and bowling first in C Grade, Tom Sorrell set the tone for the day by claiming the prized wicket of Jason O'Reilly with the very first ball, and the Cobras were away.

An outstanding team bowling performance kept the opposition on the back foot throughout the innings and never allowed them to play their usual aggressive attacking game with the bat.

Leading the attack as he has done all season, Sorrell finished with 3/14 from five overs.

He was well supported by Kyle Dorman (2/17 from 6 overs) and Patrick Beadel (2/23 from 5 overs), while Dale Whyhoon and Darren Scott chipped in with a wicket each to round out a strong bowling effort.

With the bat, the Cobras produced a composed run chase, with Kyle Dorman and Trevor Allan methodically guiding the side to victory.

Allan played the supporting role with a patient 13 from 51 balls (one four) before losing his wicket with just one run required for victory.

Dorman was the aggressor, bringing up his half-century with 51 from 56 balls, including 9 fours, to steer the Cobras home.

A strong win for the Cobras that sets the tone for a big finals campaign ahead.

A special shout out to the Wonthaggi Club C Grade side for accommodating the schedule change and playing the match on Sunday at Summerfield Oval on turf.

There is always great camaraderie between the sides, and we greatly appreciate the flexibility in making the change and joining in the celebrations.

Thank you, Club.

The Cobras lost the toss and were sent into the field in A Grade, with the opposition electing to bat first.

Opportunities were hard to come by early, but the Cobras worked tirelessly throughout the day and took their chances when they arose.

Jacob Whiteside was the pick of the bowlers, finishing with 3/50 from 18 overs, while Harry McNeill provided excellent support with 2/45 from 10 overs.

It was also a special moment for young Cobra George Edward, who claimed his first A Grade wicket, while Tom Crocker also chipped in with a wicket to round out the bowling effort.

The Cobras will look to build on the day's work when play resumes.

LEONGATHA TOWN

IT was a tough day at the office for the C Grade side this week, falling short against Koonwarra-Leongatha RSL at the Velodrome.

Batting first, the Scorpions posted 7/132, built around a well-crafted 56 from Raymond "Razor" Edwards.

His composed 66-ball knock included four boundaries and a six and proved the backbone of the innings, with Ryan Jorgensen (23) the next best contributor.

In reply, Koony chased down the target, finishing 3/135.

There were still some strong performances with the ball.

Nijo Devassy (1/9) and Lucy Carter (1/9) both struck in tidy spells, while Poly Joseph Kallookaran was particularly economical with 1/14 from five overs.

It was also great to see three of the women's team lining up for C Grade, with Lucy Carter, Alyssa Edwards and Kate Oates all contributing on the day.

Carter also celebrated a milestone moment, claiming her first senior wicket.



Inverloch LDCA U17 Premiers 2026. Back row (left-right) Brett Debono (Coach), Aedan Parker, Kian Atyeo-Peters, Marc Laubscher, Lola Denver, Harry Foster, Jackie Newman (Team Manager). Front row (left-right) Isaac Richardson, Jay Mottram-Carter, Cooper Newman (C), Ty Debono (C), Max Johnston, Jack Wells, Noah McMillan.

Inverloch LDCA U17 Premiers

A FANTASTIC day of cricket at Scorpion Park saw Inverloch battle Leongatha Combined Clubs for the coveted U17 trophy.

For many of the players it was a memorable last game at junior level.

An incredible achievement for both clubs it was Inverloch's sixth U17 grand final in a row.

Leongatha Clubs Combined won the toss and elected to bat.

An early wicket to fall for Leongatha was Max Carter caught behind by Jay Mottram-Carter off the bowling of

By Bruce Wardley

Ty Debono.

Leongatha settled into the match, but the loss of Louis Read in the seventh over caught by Ty Debono followed by the loss of Eamon Berryman next ball bowled by Max Johnston had Leongatha on the back foot.

Steadying again, Leongatha put on 60 more runs before Frazer Livingstone was caught by Max Johnston.

Charlie Bickerton was run out by Noah McMillan with the scoreboard on 126 and Lance Moon was caught by Aedan

Parker just three runs later.

Ryan Jorgensen was Leongatha's next wicket to fall caught by Cooper Newman on 136, Cohen Harrison was caught by Ty Debono with Leongatha in trouble on 143 and Raidyn Harrison caught by Harry Foster saw Leongatha teetering on 143.

Noah McLennan made a single before Tyson Lund was run out by Cooper Newman leaving Leongatha with 150 on the scoreboard.

Inverloch started well with the run chase well and truly on until in the third over it was payback time when Max

Carter was dismissed caught by Jay Mottram-Carter.

Undeterred Inverloch piled on the runs until Ty Debono was caught by Ryan Jorgensen in the 21st over with Inverloch sitting comfortably on 105.

Max Johnston was caught by Charlie Bickerton in the 26th over with Inverloch sitting on 3/127.

Noah McMillan was run out by Lance Moon with Inverloch on 134.

Wrapping up the game without any further loss of wickets Inverloch reached their target of 151 with six wickets to spare.



A strong performance at the crease by Frazer Livingstone saw him reach 41 before he was caught by Max Johnston. B73_1026



Brayden Pentland from Wonthaggi Club/Glen Alvie was the U15s premiership man-of-the-match.



The U17s premiership man-of-the-match was Ty Debono from Inverloch.



Inverloch skipper Ty Debono scored 67 including 11 boundaries and took an early wicket for Inverloch on the first ball of the game. B74_1026



Wonthaggi Club/Glen Alvie's U15s team won the 2025/26 premiership on Sunday.

Premiership glory for Wonthaggi Club/Glen Alvie

WONTHAGGI Club/Glen Alvie's U15s side rounded off a dominant season with an impressive premiership win on Sunday.

Coming up against Koonwarra LRSL/Leongatha Town - which also had a successful season, having finished second on the ladder - at the Outtrim Recreation Reserve, KLRSL won the toss and chose to bowl.

The Club combined team

was tasked with setting the tone of the match.

Heath Crump and Brayden Pentland opened and made 26 and 42 runs respectively.

Pentland's efforts turned out to be the top score, which would later go towards earning him man-of-the-match.

Blake Ton added 31 runs to the tally and Archie Dynes finished it off with 29*.

They amassed a total of 7/202 off the 40 overs.

KLRSL's Joshua Allen was the best with the ball, taking two wickets.

Single wickets were taken by Shem Hickey, Callum Smith and Wade Arnup.

KLRSL then took to the crease with Ryder Pedlow opening with Callum Smith.

Pedlow made the top score of 20 runs and 11 runs were later added by Dihen Yuthmika.

However, Club combined's

captain Jed Caddy stepped up his bowling form to help lead his team to victory.

Caddy claimed four wickets including a few ducks.

Two wickets were taken by Cooper Maurizio and single wickets were taken by co-captain Nate Luff, Grace Luff, Pentland and Harry Piasente.

KLRSL was bowled out for 54 and Wonthaggi Club/Glen Alvie celebrated its premiership win.



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LEONGATHA & DISTRICT CRICKET ASSOCIATION

- A1: Rory Gilliatte (Town) **91** ; Heath Womersley (P-Island) **4/57**
- A2: Jason Kennedy (Koon L/RSL) **70*** ; Reece Cordeux (Nyora) **4/25**
- B1: Justin Greenwood (OMK) **76** ; Damien Symmons (Nerrena) **4/39**
- B2: Jack Brown (Glen Alvie) **94** ; James Jeffery (Imperials) **5/38**
- C1: Kyle Dorman (Korumburra) **51*** ; Dale Robinson (P-Island) **3/7**
- C2: J Tiziani (Glen Alvie) **82** ; M Gheller, S Paterson (Koon L/RSL) **2/19**

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Off-spinner Korumburra skipper Patrick Beadel ended the day with **2/23**. B78_1026



Korumburra's Darren Scott lines up with the Cobras for his final home game. (Back Row L-R) Paul Dixon, Trevor Allen, Charlie Carew, Dale Whyhoon, Kyle Dorman, Tom Sorrell, James Dunn, Tom Jenkins (Front Row) Tim Morrison, Patrick Beadel, Darren Scott, Adam Balfour. B76_1026

LADDERS			RD 20		
Team	Points	%	Team	Points	%
C GRADE, Division 1			C GRADE, Division 2		
OMK	156	1.927	Club	162	2.458
Club	138	1.264	Inverloch	156	1.644
Phillip Island	120	1.001	Koonwarra L/RSL	132	1.295
Korumburra	102	1.307	Glen Alvie	132	1.025
Nerrena	90	0.849	Nyora	60	0.513
Kilcunda Bass	60	0.707	Town	48	0.554
MDU	54	0.512	OMK	30	0.612

NEXT WEEKEND'S GAMES & UMPIRE APPOINTMENTS

ROUND 14 - SATURDAY, MARCH 14 (DAY 2)

A GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

Phillip Island v OMK	Cowes	Ken Scrimshaw
Club v Nerrena	Wonthaggi Turf	Shane Moore
Town v Imperials	Scorpion Pk 1	Ashleigh Stride
Inverloch - BYE		

A Grade, Division 2 - 1PM START

Koon L/RSL v K'burra	Leongtha Turf	Ian Salmon
K-Bass v Nyora	Bass 1	Michael Thomas
Foster v MDU	Foster CG	Les White
Glen Alvie - BYE		

B GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

Korumburra v Club	Korumburra	Graham Wightman
OMK v Phillip Island	Outtrim	John Schelling
Nerrena v Inverloch	Nerrena	Geoff Birnie
Town - BYE		

B GRADE, Division 2 - 1PM START

Koon L/RSL v Imperials	Koonwarra	Tyson Tootel
MDU v K-Bass	Meenyan	TBA
Glen Alvie v Nyora	Glen Alvie	TBA

ROUND 21 - SATURDAY, MARCH 14

C GRADE, Division 1 - 1PM START

OMK v Korumburra	Digger Park	TBA
Club v MDU	McMahon	TBA
P-Island v Nerrena	Rhyll	TBA
Kilcunda Bass - BYE		

C GRADE, Division 2 - 1PM START

Town v Club	Scorpion Pk 2	TBA
Nyora v OMK	Poowong	TBA
Glen Alvie v Inverloch	Dalyston	TBA
Koonwarra L/RSL - BYE		

Subject to Confirmation.

Any prospective umpires can contact

Ash Stride 0432 350 944 or Ken Scrimshaw 0433 297 421

Korumburra win for Darren Scott's final home game

By Bruce Wardley

THE final match of the season for the Cobras at Summerfield Oval saw the final home game for true Cobras legend and Club Life Member Darren Scott.

Known as Chop, Scott has played more than 300 games for the Korumburra Cricket Club across a career spanning four decades making him the club's all-time games record holder.

A right-handed batsman and medium pace bowler Scott was also club president for six or seven years and was recognised for his significant

contribution to the club on Past Players Day earlier this season.

Cranbourne South based, Scott has travelled to represent Korumburra for much of his career driven by a love for South Gippsland and the lifelong friendships he has made through the club.

The day also celebrated a major milestone for Adam Balfour who played his 200th club game.

A loyal servant of the Cobras Balfour began in Korumburra's junior ranks

and worked his way through to senior cricket.

A promising young spin bowler who later took up the wicketkeeping gloves Balfour has also been a strong opening bat including 81 A Grade appearances among his 200 games.

With the loss of only one wicket Korumburra finished the day with 1/75 defeating Wonthaggi Club 10/74.

With the finals now in sight Korumburra's big win against Wonthaggi Club has secured the Cobras a place in the top four on the C Grade Division 1 ladder.

AROUND THE GROUNDS...

OMK

A GRADE is in a good position after making 240 runs against Phillip Island on Saturday.

Captain Koby Brann led the way with 54 runs and Pawan Thind played a consistent innings to hit 49*.

"They got themselves off to a good start and 240 is definitely defendable, so they are feeling good going into day two," OMK's Jordan Myers said.

B Grade also played Phillip Island and put itself in a good position with 281 runs.

Captain Justin Greenwood hit a very handy 76 off 75 balls and was backed up by Alex Rose with 66 runs and Noel Creed with 51 runs.

"It's good to see these guys coming into form and batting very consistently in the lead up to finals," Myers said.

C1 bowled Kilcunda Bass out for 70 off 31 overs and passed the score without losing a wicket.

This team has now gone two weeks

without losing a wicket.

Mitchell Sawyers made 15* and Barry Wyatt made 48*.

"It was good to see two different batsmen out there and still get through without losing a wicket," Myers said.

With the ball, Wyatt took 3/14 off seven overs, Myers took 2/7 off five overs and Adam Fisher took 2/7 off five overs.

C2 was beaten by Glen Alvie at Digger Park.

OMK bowled first and Glen Alvie pushed its score out to 156 runs, which OMK was unable to chase.

Daniel Wylie made 41 runs and Matt Whiteside made 29*, but OMK pulled up 29 runs short.

The pick of the bowlers was captain Michael Whiteside with two wickets.

"We have a lot of kids on this team and it's good to see Mick Whiteside out there giving them a go.

They are getting good experience learning how to open the batting

and the bowling, and hopefully it's setting them up well for the future," Myers said.

PHILLIP ISLAND

PHILLIP Island is chasing 240 in the final A1 match of the home and away season against OMK.

OMK won the toss and chose to bat first at the Cowes Recreation Reserve.

Phillip Island bowler Heath Womersley put the pressure on the Diggers as he claimed four wickets.

Two wickets were taken by Thomas Niven and a single wicket was claimed by Jobe Williams.

OMK captain Koby Brann was the stand out with the bat, making 54 runs.

Phillip Island will reply this weekend.

As the season draws to a close, Phillip Island has ended up just outside the top four.

Continued page 56

Chasing top spot in the lead-up to the finals

WITH Club and Nerrena both looking for the top spot leading into the finals the final round match at Wonthaggi Turf was always going to be competitive.

Inverloch with the Round 14 bye currently sits on top of the ladder with Wonthaggi Club and Nerrena in second and third place separated only by percentage.

Wonthaggi Club won the toss and elected to bat.

After a slow start with Club fiercely holding onto its wickets Mitch Thomas was caught by Mitch Croatto bowled by Josh Trease in the 13th over.

Fellow opener Alex Geyer was joined at the crease by Stewart Beaumont and the pair batted positively to build the score. Geyer was dismissed in the 48th over after crafting an innings of 75 runs.

Wickets began to tumble in the 63rd when Ryan Thomas was stumped by Thomas Cameron bowled Timothy Wightman. Then after passing his half century, Stewart Beaumont was caught by Thomas Cameron bowled Shem Murphy with Lochlan Mclean falling shortly after, caught by Mitchell Clark again off the bowling of Murphy.

Sulakshan Mendisque was bowled by Jarrod Hoy in the 70th over.

With Club looking for inspiration a volley of four sixes from skipper Joel Brann off the



Stewart Beaumont scored five boundaries before he was caught by Thomas Cameron off the bowling of Shem Murphy on 54. B67_1026

bowling of Timothy Wightman had Nerrena a little worried before Brann, having struck a swash-buckling 39, was caught by Jarrod Hoy.

Three balls later Fraser West lost his wicket snared by Wightman's wily spin.

Best bowlers for Nerrena were Timothy Wightman with 3/72, Shem Murphy 2/20 and Jarrod Hoy finishing with 2/74.

Club finished with 8/235 after 75 overs with the second day's play scheduled this Saturday.



Mitchell Clark worked hard all day conceding just 17 runs off eight overs. B68_1026

Kookaburras secure convincing win on Korumburra turf

MORNINGTON/CANTERBURY Over 70s visited the South Gippsland Kookaburras at the Korumburra turf oval on a cloudy humid day last Tuesday March 3.

Stand-in Kookaburras captain Peter Little won the toss and his team batted on a dry pitch surrounded by a damp grassy oval.

After 16 of their 40 overs the batters had lost only one wicket with others retiring after their allocated 30 balls faced at a run rate of four per over.

Three wickets fell for 19 runs in the next five overs with several LBW appeals given on turf where steady straight balls occasionally kept low.

Nevertheless Pieter Loos pushed the score along hitting six fours and a six on his way



Peter Little presents Trevor Burt a prize for being Mornington's best player accompanied by Kookaburras' best Brian Mitchell.

to making 42 runs.

The final score was 5/157 and the other batters who contributed substantially were Peter Little (22) Neil White (22) and Keith Houghton (18).

The only wicket takers were T. Stancombe (2/19) and C. Morris (3/22).

After another excellent hot and cold lunch supplied by the home team the Mornington

team was soon in trouble facing swing bowling of Brian Mitchell and accurate spin of Geoff Birnie.

After five overs each Brian had 3/10 and Geoff had 1/14.

At over 16 the visitors were 5/43.

Brian went on to take 4/17 all bowled a testament to his accuracy despite being called for eight wides earlier.

Other Kookaburra bowlers sharing the 10 wickets were Neil White (2/8) Pieter Loos (2/15) and a little cameo appearance from Brendon Thomas (1/3) along with a steady catch at mid-off from a Neil White full toss.

The visitors' batters who performed well were L. Hosking (34) and T. Burt (36).

After 38 overs they were all out with a score of 10/106.

Goannas unable to chase victory in season-ending clash

IT was sunny with a cool easterly breeze as the Gippsland Goannas Over-70 cricket team arrived at Moorleigh Reserve in East Bentleigh to play the Australian Cricket Society Over-70s on Sunday.

Winning the toss and batting first the Goannas were soon in trouble as the first four batsmen all failed to make double figures.

In fact at the 20 over drinks break the score was 5/68, 7/72 soon after and the innings eventually finished at 9/119 from the 40 overs.

Chris Bowen retired then

came back to be out for 27, Andrew Smith was 23 not out and Barrie Nunn 11 retired were the only batsmen to make double figures.

Deidre Hunter was able to bat for 29 balls late in the innings to be three not out at the end.

After the lunch break Gordon Cowling and Nunn opened the bowling and the Australian Cricket Society's (ACS) score was 0/29 after 10 overs.

Bowen, Smith, Bob Penrose and Les Pollard bowled the next 10 overs and the score mounted to 96 runs at drinks.

Cowling and Smith bowled

two more overs each then Gary Rose and Peter Uren had an over as the ACS batsmen took the score to 123 after 26 overs.

Four batsmen retired and two were not out.

The Goannas dropped two catches and did not take any wickets in a disappointing end to the season.

Eighty-six-year-old Bob Hopkins opening bowler for ACS was awarded the Blue Gables man-of-the-match for the ACS team while Bowen earned the Goannas best player award.

The Goannas had several 'underage' players help make

up teams especially in the last few matches and the following are thanked for this - Bob Penrose, Andy Slevin, Barrie Nunn, Derek Morris, Deidre Hunter, Les Pollard and Peter Uren - while 10 'guest players' from other clubs also helped make up playing numbers at various times throughout the season.

A group of the Goannas Over-60s will travel to Echuca for the annual tournament beginning on March 16.

A summary of these matches will be provided towards the end of the week.

LDCA - MARCH 7 HIGHLIGHTS

A GRADE, DIVISION 1

OMK 7/240 v Phillip Island
OMK Batting: K Brann 54, P Thind 49*, J Singh 36, P Fermanis 35, T Wyatt 18, R Williams 15*
P-Island Bowling: H Womersley 4/57, T Niven 2/56, J Williams 1/33

Club 8/235 v Nerrena
Club Batting: A Geyer 75, S Beaumont 54, J Brann 39, R Thomas 21, J Thomas 15*
Nerrena Bowling: T Wightman 3/72, S Murphy 2/20, J Hoy 2/74, J Trease 1/40

Town 272 v Imperials 0/33
Town Batting: R Gilliatte 91, M Madusanka 60, J Giardina 37, P Yayasinghe 22, J Hume 14
Imperials Bowling: J Ginnane 3/59, I Bolge 2/26, K McGrath 2/35, A Williams 2/85, L Wright 1/47

Inverloch - BYE

A GRADE, DIVISION 2

Koonwarra L/RSL 269 v Korumburra
Koon L/RSL Batting: J Kennedy 70*, I Darshana 43, A Mehmood 41, T Namalge 38, C Buckland 21
Korumburra Bowling: J Whiteside 3/50, H McNeil 2/45, G Edwards 1/16, T Crocker 1/35

Kilcunda Bass 110 v Nyora 4/62
K-Bass Batting: M Grayson 31, J Tregear 22
K-Bass Bowling: C Davidson 2/23, R Brown 1/2
Nyora Batting: M Cordeux 33, Jy Hull 25
Nyora Bowling: R Cordeux 4/25, A Thompson 2/10

Foster v MDU
No results available at time of printing.

Glen Alvie - BYE

B GRADE, DIVISION 1

Korumburra v Club
No results available at time of printing.

OMK 8/281 v Phillip Island
OMK Batting: J Greenwood 76, A Rose 66, N Creed 51, T Nicholas 30, D Jefferies 17*
Phillip Island Bowling: A Williams 4/56, S Angelo 2/33, H Arceo 1/62, D Holmes 1/65

Inverloch 197 v Nerrena
Inverloch Batting: B Debono 45, J Butcher 40, W Taberner 32, J Stickland 20, J Dugard 17
Nerrena Bowling: D Symmons 4/39, J Renden 2/26, C Baudinette 1/5, W Croatto 1/44

Town - BYE

B GRADE, DIVISION 2

Koonwarra L/RSL 212 v Imperials
Koon L/RSL Batting: B Anderson 55, B Davison 40, K Thorne 18, R Pedlow 18, S Kaneshathasan 17
Imperials Bowling: J Jeffrey 5/38, K Gray 2/6, C Bruce 2/48, N McLennan 1/30

Kilcunda Bass 9/164 v MDU
K-Bass Batting: P Miller 39, A McBride 33, B Joseph 18, A Bedford 15*, V Kumar Gopal 14
MDU Bowling: S Browne 4/44, J Palmer 2/22, K Sinclair 1/10, A Battersby 1/20, A Richardson 1/39

Glen Alvie 177 v Nyora
Glen Alvie Batting: J Brown 94, L McRae 20, Z Scholz 18, S Smith 5, L Ton 4, V Peiris 4
Nyora Bowling: D Blackney 3/31, J Waixel 2/22, T Bernaldo 2/32, M Lynch 1/9, R White 1/29

C GRADE, DIVISION 1

Phillip Island 6/180 d MDU 7/56
P-Island Batting: D Ivey 50, D Fusinato 40*
P-Island Bowling: D Robinson 3/7, M Cleary 1/4
MDU Batting: R Prosser 18*, T McGrath 29*
MDU Bowling: C Hooper 2/30, L Webb 1/18

Korumburra 1/75 d Club 74
Club Batting: C Fraser 12, C Adams 10
Club Bowling: MAM Nizar 0/10, S Liddle 0/15
K'burra Batting: K Dorman 51*, TM Allen 13
K'burra Bowling: T Sorrell 3/14, K Dorman 2/17

OMK 0/71 d Kilcunda Bass 70
K-Bass Batting: D Bettles 14, H Bettles 14
K-Bass Bowling: B Wyatt 48*, M Sawyers 15*
OMK Batting: H Bettles 0/25, A Blackney 0/22
OMK Bowling: B Wyatt 3/15, A Fisher 2/6

Nerrena - BYE

C GRADE, DIVISION 2

OMK 7/127 It Glen Alvie 4/156
Glen Alvie Batting: J Tiziani 82, P Roberts 30
Glen Alvie Bowling: C Anderson 2/29, P Loos 1/3
OMK Batting: D Wylie 41, M Whiteside 29*
OMK Bowling: M Whiteside 2/29, D Wylie 1/24

Koonwarra L/RSL 3/135 d Town 7/132
Town Batting: R Edwards 56*, R Jorgensen 23
Town Bowling: N Devassy 1/9, L Carter 1/9
Koon L/RSL Batting: G Matthies 64, A Boxall 35*
Koon L/RSL Bowling: M Gheller 2/19, S Paterson 2/19

Club d Nyora
Club won by forfeit

Inverloch - BYE



Craig Hooper celebrates his 500th game with family members who travelled from across Victoria and interstate for the milestone match. Photos: Bec Casey Sports Photography

Hooper notches 500 not out for MDU

MEENIYAN Dumbalk United legend Craig Hooper has reached 500 games for the club he has called home since he was 15 years old.

Hooper played his milestone match on Saturday at Meeniyan Recreation Reserve, where Phillip Island opponents lined up to give him a guard of honour as he walked out to bat.

What happened next sums up cricket.

Second ball, leading edge, gone for a duck.

"That's just cricket," Hooper said.

"You can never get ahead of yourself in this game. It's a great leveller."

The 58-year-old all-rounder first pulled on the whites for MDU in the 1982-83 season when Meeniyan and Dumbalk

By Rick Koenig

merged their cricket operations to form the club.

He played his first A-grade game that year at just 15 and took home the B-grade batting trophy in his debut season.

"Not in my wildest dreams when I first started," Hooper said when asked if he ever imagined reaching 500 games.

The numbers back up a remarkable career.

Hooper has scored an estimated 12,000 runs at an average of approximately 30, with three centuries and around 70 half-centuries.

His best bowling figures of 9/52 came against Nerrena.

He has won 29 batting awards across all grades, 15 club champion awards, 11 bowling awards

and six best and fairest trophies.

He represented Victoria in the over 50s cricket carnival in Adelaide and has taken two A-grade hat-tricks.

Off the field Hooper has served as club president for four years, treasurer for five and sat on the committee for more than 25 years.

He also coached under 16s and coordinated Milo Cricket programs.

The only significant break in his MDU career came when work took him to Sale and Traralgon, where he played three seasons at Rosedale-Kilmany in the Sale-Maffra Cricket Association and two at Glengarry in the Traralgon and District Cricket Association.

He even played on his wedding day.

"She made me wear a helmet, which was uncommon at the time" Hooper said of his wife Sharon's one condition.

Hooper credited regular physio visits for keeping him on the park well into his late 50s.

"I go to the physio probably once every six or eight weeks, and I've done that for a long time just to keep it serviced," he said.

"Even if it's not hurting, I always say you've got to look after the body like a car."

Hooper's son Mitchell made the trip from Lara near Geelong to play alongside his father in the milestone match.

"It was special," Hooper said.

About 40 people turned out for the game with around 70 packing the clubrooms on Saturday night for a celebration that included a Q&A and roasting from long-time

teammate Mark Le Page.

Hooper won his first senior cricket premiership last season when MDU claimed the C-grade title in the Leongatha and District Cricket Association.

Now playing C-grade 35-over cricket after stepping back from A-grade, Hooper said he had no plans to retire but would scale back his commitment.

"Cricket's not gonna be number one all the time now," he said.

"I think the wife deserves that. To be still married after 500 games is a good effort I reckon."

MDU continues to field three senior sides and Hooper said the club remained in good shape despite the challenge of retaining younger players.

"It's a great family club," he said.

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