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George with some of the pupils. (Supplied)

Pup Zooms in on love

One of St Albans Meadows Primary School's most popular figures has celebrated his first birthday.

George the wellbeing dog, who has been a welcome addition to the school, marked the milestone without his beloved friends – the pupils.

Assistant principal Allison Kim said all the children, particularly those with special needs, had embraced what George has to offer.

"One of the components of our pet program is teaching students about empathy and how it impacts their behaviour and learning outcomes," she said.

"Teaching students empathy in the classroom helps build a positive culture, improves connections, and develops lifelong social and emotional skills.

"George provides emotional support (often joining Zooms), the opportunity for connection and can help with stress and anxiety this has been detrimental in the current climate.

"The children are missing George terribly and will not be at school to celebrate his first birthday. George has captured so many hearts."

Tara Murray

Rent arrears hotspot

By Tara Murray

Many Brimbank residents are struggling to pay their rent each month and the number of people falling into rent arrears is tipped to soar as COVID-19 lockdowns continue to impact finances.

A survey by Tenants Victoria found a high number of Brimbank residents experienced rental stress during Victoria's fifth lockdown in July.

Rental stress is defined as spending more than 30 per cent of a household's gross income on rent.

According to the survey, Brimbank was identified as a rental stress hotspot, with 55 per cent of respondents reporting problems making rent payments.

The municipality was listed as the seventh-highest local government area for rental stress.

Great Dandenong took out the top spot, with 67 per cent of respondents reporting rental stress.

Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre, which is part of CommUnity Plus Services, has seen an increase in people seeking help with rent payments.

The centre provides free legal services to people who live, work or study in the Brimbank and Melton local government areas and experience disadvantage and financial hardship.

Tenancy and generalist lead lawyer Cameron Bloye said many clients were already struggling with their rent before the pandemic.

"Across the first 12 months of COVID-19 there were significant government safety nets, including rent subsidies, a ban on evictions, and supplementary Centrelink income support," he said. "These supports and protections have now ceased."

"Many of our clients at Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre were already experiencing financial stress which has been exacerbated by the consecutive lockdowns – a high number of our tenancy clients are in rental arrears.

"Since the start of COVID-19, 82 per cent of our clients seeking tenancy assistance have reported experiencing financial hardship.

"Given these trends and the repeated lockdowns and lockdown extensions, it is likely that we will see more instances of rental arrears and eviction notices pop up."

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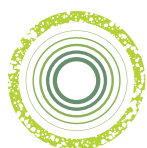


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Year 12 vaccine plan welcomed

By Tara Murray

An education advocacy group has welcomed priority vaccine access for VCE students but is calling for more certainty surrounding exams.

The #VCEWhatsThePlanDan group, which is made up for teachers, students and parents, has been vocal in recent weeks calling for certainty for VCE students in regards to vaccines and exams.

The state government announced on Wednesday that every year 12 student would

“ Exams must go ahead – we owe this to the students ” - Caroline Dowling

be offered a priority Pfizer vaccine in the coming days.

Associate professor Caroline Dowling, who is part of the group, said they wanted the state government to go a step further and make sure students can get their second

vaccination within a month of their first.

She said students also needed guarantees around exam dates, with nothing announced beyond the GAT on October 5.

“We welcome the announcement of priority vaccination in this regard, something we have been requesting for two weeks,” she said.

“Time is now of the essence.

“Our objective is to make sure, first and foremost, that VCE students get to sit their exams, with as many vaccinated as possible as safely as possible.

“Exams must go ahead – we owe this to the students who have placed their faith in the education system and continued with their studies despite the remarkable challenges.

“If we do not return to COVID-zero by exam time – and we all know that is looking unlikely – what measures is the government planning in order to address risks and allow these students to finish their schooling?

“Students in the north and west of Melbourne, like others around the state, are dealing with enormous stress. It’s no surprise they want to know ‘what’s the plan Dan.’”

Business grows from small idea

A small idea to create functional and stylish products for those with chronic illnesses has won an Australian Achiever Award.

The Spoonie Society was formed in November last year by Dominique Ribeiro Da Silva and Helene Hill and has quickly expanded, with 10 people now working for them.

The Keilor East company creates diaries to help people track their symptoms, while they have also designed a heat pack that can be worn while going about your daily activities.

A dollar from each sale is donated to charity, with a different charity selected each month.

Ms Ribeiro Da Silva, who is an endometriosis, PCOS and infertility awareness advocate, said it has been a wild ride since they started the business.

The pair received the Australian Achiever Award for Victoria for the specialised supplies eCommerce wholesale sub category, based on reviewers from their customers.

“Helene and I only met in March last year,” Ms Ribeiro Da Silva said.

“We shared our stories over social media and we decided to go for a walk when we were allowed.

“We talked about how there was nothing for us to track our symptoms. You could track your periods and menstrual cycle, but nothing that pulls it all together.

“You can start to recognise trends and take it to doctors and health professionals.

“Helene has a background in fashion, so we thought what if we make heat packs that are wearable.

The pair has also set up an online community for “Spoonies”. Spoonies, including both women, are people who suffer from chronic illness or disability.

Each week community members share their stories with other members.

Tara Murray



Dominique Ribeiro Da Silva and Helene Hill. (Supplied)

Doors stay shut

Brimbank businesses suffered a major setback last week, with many set to remain shut indefinitely.

The state government last week announced a range of restrictions that could ease when 70 per cent of eligible people were vaccinated, but there was no time frame for businesses to reopen.

AB Health & Fitness in Keilor Park is one business that remains shut.

Aaron Nauta said it was very disappointing that there was no opening date in sight.

“It was our hope to at least have some sort of map to open,” he said.

“We were hoping to be able to open in October or at least be able to run outdoor classes.

“We’re pretty much now waiting for 70 to 80 per cent of people to be fully vaccinated, which means another two months we’re shut for.

“Gyms are normally one of the last things to open as well.”

Mr Nauta said for many people, went to the gym for their mental health and they were part of a little community.

He said that the gym has taken its whole program online in each of the lockdowns.

“We have 30 classes a week,” he said.

“We’ve got this massive space that is empty.

“We’ve had some people not renew their memberships, which has cost us money and it’s hard enough to get people into the gym to start with.”

Mr Nauta paid tribute to the members who had helped keep all staff on board during the lockdowns.

He admits though that if the lockdowns continue that could change.

“The government support is just enough to pay wages,” he said

“We still have to pay rent and the landlord hasn’t given us any leniency with that.”

It comes as there were 246 cases announced on Monday, the highest during this outbreak.

Tara Murray

Brimbank vaccine rate lags behind the rest of the state

Less than half of all eligible Brimbank residents have received their first COVID-19 vaccination dose, according to new data.

Data released by the federal government data shows that as of August 27, just 45.4 per cent of Brimbank residents over the age of 16 had received their first dose.

At the same date, 25.1 per cent of eligible residents in Brimbank had received their second dose.

Both of these were among the lowest in the state, with Greater Dandenong and Hume the only municipalities with lower rates for both doses.

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network chief executive Chris Carter previously said there were a number of reasons for the low vaccine rate in Melbourne’s north-west.

He highlighted the younger age demographic and the nature of the workforce which comprises essential service workers with jobs that involve long hours.

Brimbank mayor Ranka Rasic said council

continues to support and promote the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out and ongoing testing for COVID-19.

“Council is working with the Department of Health and IPC Health to ensure that residents have access to vaccination and testing sites,” she said. “Council is also working on a range of other local vaccination and testing initiatives. Brimbank will continue to offer support to ensure an effective roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination program.”

Council is supporting IPC Health to

reach people in social and public housing with vaccination pop ups, and supporting IPC Health bilingual workers to provide information in their communities about vaccination and testing.

Cr Rasic said the council would this month mail out vaccine information to about 80,000 properties, while the council is also participating in the West Metro Vaccination Plan Working Committee.

Tara Murray



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Health worker's plea to vaccinate

By Goya Dmytryshchak

A Western Health worker on the COVID-19 frontline has spoken of colleagues' fears of returning to a situation like last year and pleaded with people to get vaccinated.

Kylie Fisher said Western Health, which operates hospitals at Sunshine, Footscray, Williamstown and Sunbury, had more than 400 patients hospitalised with the coronavirus in 2020.

“ I saw tears. I saw exhaustion. I saw nurses consoling nurses ”

- Kylie Fisher

“I'm privileged to be able to work with a group of nurses called the critical care outreach team, the ICU liaison nurses at Western Health,” Ms Fisher said. “Last year they helped prevent hundreds of admissions to our intensive care units by acting as an extension of the ICUs.

“They helped support our ward nurses to support our patients and our communities.

“They would often come to me overwhelmed, sometimes in tears.

“They were worried. They would come to work worried.

“They were worried about their colleagues.

“They were worried about how they would support their colleagues on the wards, looking after overwhelming numbers of acutely unwell patients – patients that we usually don't see admitted to the wards.”

Ms Fisher said staff were worried about their families when not at work.

“They would go home after 12-hour shifts, long shifts,” she said. “They would have showers before they would leave work.



Kylie Fisher (front left) with members of her team on the COVID-19 frontline at Western Health. (Supplied)

“They'd drive home, get out of their cars, get changed out of their scrubs in their garages, have a shower again, before they would go in and speak [to] or hug their families and their loved ones.

“I saw tears. I saw exhaustion. I saw nurses consoling nurses.

“I saw blood across the ridges of their noses and their ears from wearing PPE for 12 hours at a time.

“Long shifts on their feet.

“Kilometres and kilometres of k's they'd clock up responding to emergency calls and calls for assistance on the ward.”

She said staff would come to her and say the situation was like nothing they'd ever seen.

“These patients are young, they're fit ... they're well and then the next minute we're taking them to ICU,” Ms Fisher said.

... As their manager, I'm worried I'm going to have to ask them to stand up and do it again – and they will.

“These are senior ICU nurses who have seen it all before, they've done it all before, and I have to probably have to ask them to do it all again.

“They will but they shouldn't have to.

“So, I'm asking – we're lucky, we've got science, we've got a vaccine – please, if you haven't already, get yourself vaccinated.

“Make that appointment.

“Keep yourselves safe, keep your family and your loved ones safe, keep the community safe.”

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MMPStar

Published by MMP Star Pty Ltd ACN 168 220 399
Head Office Corner Thomsons Road and Keilor Park Drive, Keilor Park, 3042
Publisher/Managing Director, Paul Thomas
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Responsibility for election comment is accepted by Paul Thomas.
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Briefs

Have your say

Brimbank council is seeking feedback on how it can continue to improve the management of cats and dogs across the municipality as it updates the domestic animal management plan (DAMP). The DAMP seeks to balance the needs of pet owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Feedback is being sought across a four-week period, with everyone – whether they have pets or not – encouraged to submit their views. A draft plan will be released for community feedback later this year. Details: yoursay.brimbank.vic.gov.au

Solar boost

A major power upgrade has delivered a boost for solar customers in several locations including Sunshine. Since March, Powercor crews have completed more than 500 different network alterations and other activities across nine key regions identified as having high levels of rooftop solar. These areas include Ballarat, Bendigo, Bacchus Marsh, Point Cook, Sunshine, Portland, Maryborough, Hoppers Crossing and Melton. These areas were among the most constrained parts of the network, but the works have improved export capacity for customers and also reduced the tripping of existing solar systems.

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RSPCA has launched an animal welfare education program. (Supplied)

Lockdown pet lessons

Children can learn about all creatures great and small during lockdown as part of an online education program.

The RSPCA's Victorian education team has created a free online animal wellbeing: awareness, responsibility and education (AWARE) program, to help fill in some time during lockdown.

RSPCA Victoria's education and training manager Belinda Marchbank said AWARE provides simple yet effective tools to help educate children about animal welfare.

She said while many children have pets at home, a significant number of children don't have regular interaction with animals, so animal welfare education plays an integral

role in creating a kinder future for all animals.

"We know that teachers, parents and children need support with activities and resources while the COVID-19 restrictions keep Victorian children in remote learning," she said.

"While Victorian children are having to adapt to a new type of learning, RSPCA is supporting parents and teachers alike by providing additional tools that create entertaining learning pathways.

"AWARE provides engaging lesson plans and information that will assist in educating the next generation about what good animal welfare includes."

Details: www.rspcavic.org/aware

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Friday 17 September to Monday 18 October

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Crackdown on serious crime

By Tara Murray

Nearly 50 people were arrested across Brimbank, Wyndham and Melton as part of a police operation targeting serious and violent criminal offending in the western suburbs.

Uniformed and specialist police, detectives from Brimbank and Melton, the Brimbank offender management team and gang crime squad officers hit the streets late last month as part of Operation Alliance.

They patrolled known high-volume crime areas and conducted compliance checks.

The operation was the result of a number of

aggravated burglaries committed at homes in the Wyndham area, according to police.

Police said 11 young people and seven individuals with affiliations to youth gangs were arrested during the five-day operation.

Between August 24 and August 28, police arrested and charged 46 people for a range of offences including breach of bail, attempted robbery, aggravated burglaries and weapons offences.

Twelve of those people were remanded to appear in court at a later day.

As part of the operation there were 17 search warrants executed across the suburbs including

Werribee and Burnside.

There were 70 bail compliance checks, with 18 breaches detected.

Police intercepted and checked 237 vehicles, impounding six.

Thirty-nine fines were issued for breaches for chief health officer directions.

Among those arrested was a 21-year-old man from Deer Park who allegedly contravened a bail condition.

A 23-year-old man from Brookfield was observed allegedly robbing a victim of their bicycle and other personal belongings.

He was charged with attempted robbery.

A 34-year-old Burnside man and a 31-year-old Werribee man were both charged in relation to a range of offences, including theft of motor vehicle and aggravated burglary after warrants were executed.

North West Metro Division three – Brimbank and Melton – Superintendent David Jones said police will continue to monitor persons of interest.

“We know operations such as these significantly improve community safety,” he said.

Nomination excitement

A Burnside mum of two said winning an AusMumpreneur award would be one of the biggest highlights of her career.

Mary Maksemos from Maksemos Group has been nominated for five awards, which celebrate and recognise Australian mums in business.

She has been nominated for the creative entrepreneur, business excellence, service business, AusMumpreneur of the year and business pivot awards.

Ms Maksemos said she was shocked to have been named as a finalist.

“I’m pretty excited,” she said. “I’ve worked my butt off the last two years.

“I didn’t even know about the awards, I’m always working and I hadn’t stopped to put my name forward. I’m the only designer in the building and construction field nominated, there aren’t many women in my field.

“Personally it would mean more than any

design award, it meant I was being recognised as a businesswoman.”

Ms Maksemos stumbled into the industry many years ago and mass produced many kitchen designs for major companies.

She then decided to set up her own company and help people’s house dreams come true that way.

“I’d just brought into a franchise when COVID hit and I thought what am I going to do now? That is when I realised going online was the answer.

“The online virtual store happened along with an augmented reality app which makes it easier for people to look at the kitchen in their house.”

Ms Maksemos said it was pretty special to be a role model for her two children and she was a proud mum.

The award winners will be announced this month.



Mary Maksemos with one of the kitchens she has designed. (Supplied)

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Call to save heritage buildings

By Tara Murray

Residents and Brimbank council are calling for heritage buildings at the old Sunshine Secondary College sites in Sunshine to be saved.

As reported by *Star Weekly*, the state government has issued an advanced tender notice for demolition in relation to the former Sunshine Secondary School sites due to vandalism and anti-social behaviour on the sites.

The decision has angered residents and the council, who want the heritage buildings at the

site on 111 and 129 Derby Road saved.

Trevor Cunningham said some of the buildings, which were designed by renowned architect Percy Everett, were linked to the history of Sunshine.

“The technical school was the idea of H V McKay and he donated the land upon which the school was constructed,” he said.

“He also donated a sizable portion of the cost to build the school.

“[In] my view the school was integral to the success of the manufacturing enterprise after which the suburb was eventually named.

“My contention is that the Everett-designed

buildings at the school site are intrinsically linked to the local, state and national history even, apart from their architectural merit.

“To allow them to be demolished would remove forever one of the pillars of the history of Sunshine.”

Brimbank city development director Kelvin Walsh said council had already been in touch with the state government seeking assurances that the heritage buildings would be saved.

He said the two sites sit within heritage overlays.

“Brimbank City Council has a responsibility to protect Brimbank’s heritage through

legislation available to us,” he said.

“Landowners also have a responsibility to conserve, protect and maintain their heritage places.

“Council recently became aware of an advanced tender notice for demolition in relation to the former Sunshine Secondary School by the department of education.

“The buildings are very important from a built form and cultural perspective.

“Council expects these buildings to be retained and is seeking assurances from the state government that the heritage buildings are retained and protected.”

School design lauded

It’s not just students who are loving the facilities at The Hester Hornbrook Academy’s Sunshine campus.

Australian architecture and design practice Gray Puksand, which designed the school, has been shortlisted in the Australian Interior Design Awards’ workplace design category for showing how specialist-designed schools can embody design excellence to create an uplifting learning environment for all students.

The school was completed earlier this year, creating a contemporary learning space engaging students through an important sense of place and purpose, while embracing the academy’s values of community and belonging.

The campus features a series of adjoining communal study spaces, facilitating meetings, creativity, dining and staff-student collaboration.

Gray Puksand partner Mark Freeman said they aimed to create a sense of openness and

freedom at the academy, where the students could feel safe and inspired to truly be themselves.

Academy principal Sally Lasslett said many students had said the academy really feels like home.

“It’s certainly not your standard flexi-school with all the boring, standard finishes. It’s a beautiful space that our staff and students look forward to interacting with,” she said.

“We’ve noticed our attendance levels are higher than they’ve ever been before on any of our campuses since the building opened. A big part of that is the building itself, and also the programs we can run inside it.”

The design also celebrates the Sunshine community.

One of the new spaces at the Hester Hornbrook College finished earlier this year. (Supplied)





Richard and Donna are moving on to much bigger things.

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Vision for silos' future unveiled

A vision for the Sunshine Silos and surrounding area is slowly coming together.

The owners of the site, John and Adam Newton, along with their architects, held an online community forum last week to discuss their plans for 2 Wright Street, Sunshine.

The group is hoping to put out a masterplan for the public to view and discuss later this year.

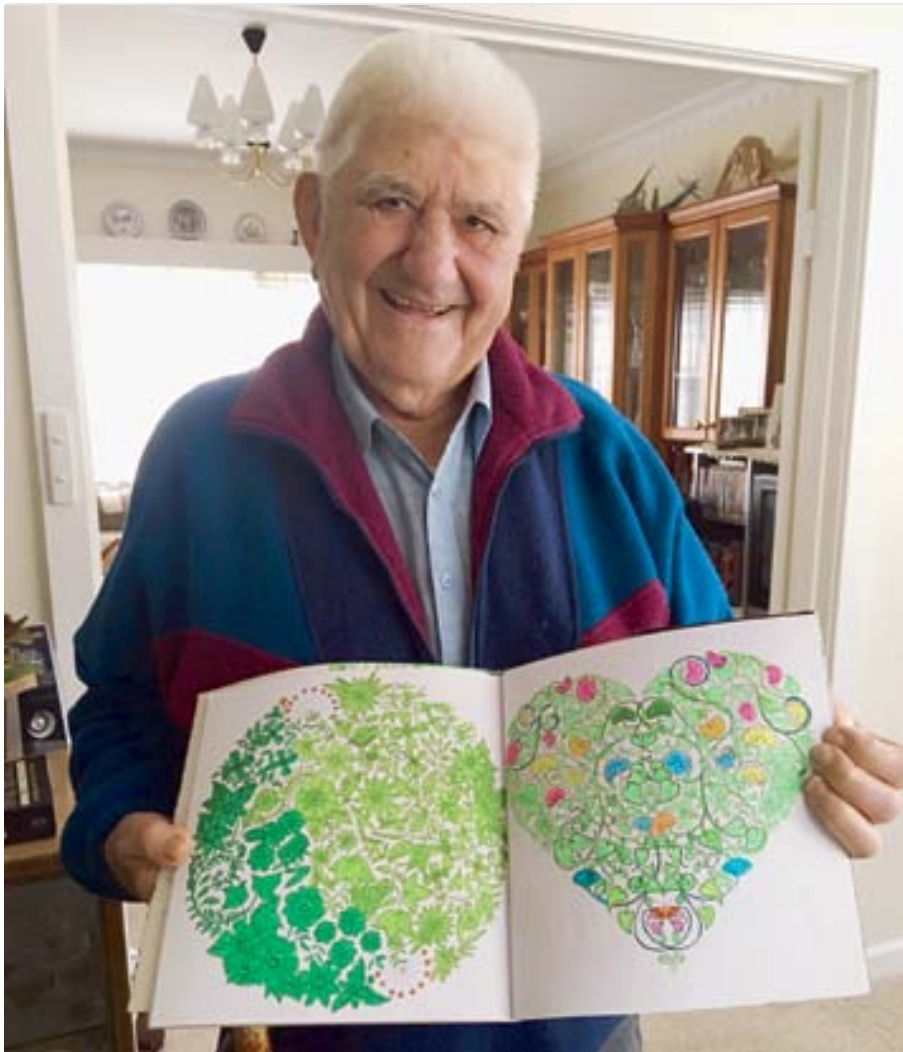
MGS Architects senior urban designer William Priestley said this was the first stage of a longer conversation about trying to understand what the location's future role could be in Sunshine.

The group has eight key principles it will focus on in the design of the masterplan. They are: enhancing the site's role as the southern gateway to Sunshine, improving connections with Sunshine, delivering social, environmental and economic dividends for the suburb, looking at council's housing plan and the JR Parsons Reserve masterplan, honouring the history and stories of the site, creating an integrated vision for the precinct, enhancing the value of the natural environment, exploring transport possibilities and delivering a mixture of uses.

John and Adam told *Star Weekly* that whatever the end result, the area must feel like it belongs in Sunshine.

"We know that sharing initial research and engaging community in 'project vision' so early on is a pretty unusual step for a developer," they said. "We feel it's important to have open and genuine conversations so that community and council perspective can inform the very principles on which the master plan will be based," he said.

"We want our eventual plans to deliver a place we are all proud of, informed by local perspective which connects to and enhances the surrounds for many to enjoy."



George Rousou with some of his artwork. (Supplied)

Finding a new artistic love

George Rousou has become quite the artist throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Having never picked up pencils and textas before, the 94-year-old Sunshine North resident now spends much of his time colouring and drawing.

His daughter Yvonne said they had seen a new side of her father in the last year, with the artwork bringing him immense joy.

"During COVID he was introduced to it by my sister who is a graphic artist by trade," she said. "He tried pastels and was drawing bottle brushes. He is so proud of his work and shows everyone. Everyone now buys him textas and crayons and he's really got into it in a big way."

Yvonne said her father put his art work up around the house and said they had mentioned about having an exhibition for the family when lockdowns ease.

She said the paintings made things less stressful for him and helped them gauge the mood he was in.

"If he had taken this up a while ago, he would have been quite good at it."

Mr Rousou has been sharing his love of his artwork with carers from the Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS) team that visit him every week. He receives health services and weekly support worker visits to vacuum, mop and dust, and maintain his garden. AMCS has looked at different ways to connect with clients and make sure they're safe during the pandemic.

MAYORAL CHARITY FUND

Melton City Council is inviting local, not for profit community groups, clubs and organisations to apply for a donation of up to \$1500, under the Mayoral Charity Fund, which has been established by the Mayor, Cr Kathy Majdlik.

For full eligibility criteria and to apply visit melton.vic.gov.au/charityfund

Applications close 5pm, Monday 27 September 2021.



Melton City Council
MAYORAL CHARITY FUND





DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Council is seeking expressions of interest from a community representative to fulfill a vacancy on the Melton Disability Advisory Committee.

Expressions of interest are open to a person with a disability.

The Committee advises Council on issues relating to access and inclusion for people with disabilities living, working, studying or visiting the City of Melton.

A thriving community where everyone belongs



 9747 7200  melton.vic.gov.au  [cityofmelton](https://www.facebook.com/cityofmelton)

Interchange takes step forward

By **Tara Murray**

Upgrades to the Calder Park Drive interchange are a step closer, with a planning study under way.

The state government’s Major Roads Projects Victoria (MRPV) Authority has begun investigations and planning to inform a business case for the Calder Freeway and Calder Park Drive interchange.

The planning is centred around the construction of a new freeway interchange at

Calder Park Drive over the Calder Freeway, including relocating existing entrance points in the area and improvements to the road network to improve traffic flow and safety in the area.

The study includes traffic modeling and environmental investigations, along with speaking with the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LCRA) about the recently announced level crossing removal at Calder Park Drive.

Timelines and milestones are expected to be determined through this planning work and

the business case is being developed for future funding consideration.

The state and federal governments have both committed \$50 million for upgrades on the Calder Freeway between Gap Road in Sunbury and the M80 Ring Road.

Brimbank mayor Ranka Rasic welcomed the planning work.

“Council welcomes the steps taken by the state government’s Major Roads Projects Victoria (MRPV) to start preliminary planning and develop a business case for the Calder

Freeway-Calder Park Drive interchange,” Cr Rasic said. “While this doesn’t mean the interchange works are funded, it is excellent to get the business case under way.

“Actions like these bring us one step closer to being able to deliver safer road connections for everyone travelling on the Calder.”

Earlier this year, the council launched its ‘Fix the Calder’ campaign, calling for the freeway to be upgraded with additional lanes, a full diamond interchange at Calder Park Drive and the duplication of Calder Park Drive.



One of the current proposal designs for the garden.(Supplied)

Vision grows for community garden

A group of local residents are coming together to create a community garden in the Caroline Springs area.

A Facebook post from Hang Van back in February set the wheels in motion to create the CS Community Garden.

CS Community Garden committee chair Sarah Jarman said interest in the garden had grown.

“Within the first two months, of setting up Facebook we already had 140 people interested.

The last week and a half another 130-odd people joined us,” she said.

Ms Jarman said the committee has lodged a planning permit with Melton council to enable it to create the garden on Boronia Park Drive, Hillside.

Ms Jarman said they wanted to create a garden with a difference.

“We wanted something between a working farm, a community garden and a botanical garden,” she said.

“We want more of a modern feel to our garden, we want to be inviting and inclusive and we want anybody and everybody involved.

“We’re looking for something you can learn from.”

The group is hoping to secure grants and donations to turn its ideas into reality.

Details: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/csgcommunitygarden/>

Tara Murray

Black Dog study into COVID stress

The Black Dog Institute is calling for participants in a trial for a positive mood program to manage stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Black Dog Institute is an Australian medical research institute that investigates mental health, with the goal of creating a mentally healthier world.

The positive mood program aims to provide resources to help manage COVID-19 related stress, as Victoria once again finds itself in the grips of another lockdown to contain the virus.

The Black Dog Institute said the need for this kind of program has increased.

“There is an urgent need for publicly available strategies to reduce COVID-19 related distress,” the institute said.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the number of Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) mental health services accessed by Australians has increased. The latest data revealed that in the week beginning April 19, 2021, there were 286,194 services accessed, compared to 244,657 in the week beginning April 20, 2020.

This is an increase of 41,537 services.

The trial is open to anyone 18 years or over who can communicate in conversational English, and who has experienced stress related to the pandemic.

There will be two trial conditions, and participants will be reimbursed \$100 after completing all of the study components.

Details: <https://bit.ly/3kuDONS>

Michaela Meade

Students face COVID learning challenges

Like many year 12 students, Tanner O’Mara has gone through a range of emotions over the last two years.

With the pandemic adding to an already stressful period for VCE students, many have started to look at things a different way.

Tanner said the last two years had been disruptive.

“It’s been quite hard to be having face-to-face learning one day and online another,” he said.

“It has a mental effect and it’s quite disruptive motivation wise. Saying that my school and a lot of the other education institutions have been quite good in adapting the education to suit the students.”

A Swinburne University study to coincide with the launch of its virtual open day tool, Swintopia, found that almost half of year 12 students said the pandemic has changed their views on enrolling in university in various ways.

Tanner is one of them, planning to head straight to univeristy instead of taking a gap year.

“Before the pandemic I was quite keen looking at the humanities side of things ... I still am, however knowing a lot of the jobs



Tanner O'Mara is a year 12 student affected by the pandemic.(Damjan Janevski) 248146_01

I was looking at might not even be there in a post-COVID environment, my thinking is pushing me to think about doing something more practical.”

Tanner said that the universities had provided plenty of different ways for students to check them out without attending open days.

He said Swintopia, which is a virtual, immersive and gamified experience, was something he enjoyed.

“It feels like a computer game you played when you were a kid.”

Tara Murray

Sheds are a vital wellbeing tool

The coronavirus pandemic may have kept Victoria’s Men’s Sheds locked up for lengthy periods, but the strong bonds that have been formed have held firm throughout. Benjamin Millar looks at the important role the sheds continue to play across Melbourne’s northern and western suburbs.

For Melton’s Joe Doyle, the local Men’s Shed is a home away from home. Along with his wife Carole, Mr Doyle was instrumental in the Melton Men’s Shed’s formation a little over a decade ago.

As a team leader, the Vietnam veteran was a familiar face at the shed week in, week out, until the COVID-19 lockdown hit.

Mr Doyle, 76, is just one of thousands of men around the country who find the sheds a welcoming place to ply their craft or simply have a chat, staying connected with their communities during a stage of life many men otherwise find themselves adrift.

“My wife Carole had an idea about starting up a Men’s Shed in Melton like so many other suburbs were doing,” he said.

“I’ve got PTSD, I was a Vietnam veteran, so it’s been a great place to go and meet other people and to get out of the house.

“I used to be isolated at home and didn’t want to go out or anything, it gave me an out, somewhere to go and look forward to it.”

“It’s a place for likeminded people to come and have a coffee or a chat”
- Joe Doyle

Over the past 10 years the shed has gone from strength to strength, attracting men of all ages to join activities throughout the week, from woodwork and cooking to cycling and games.

Describing himself as “a bit of a handyman” who likes working with his hands, prior to lockdown Mr Doyle could often be found tinkering on his own projects, helping other people with repairs or training up others in the use of the machinery.

While the practical side is certainly part of the attraction, it’s the camaraderie that Mr Doyle has grown to cherish.

“It’s a place for likeminded people to come and have a coffee or a chat, we don’t discriminate against people, we take people as they are,” he said.

“I’m 76, but it’s all different ages, you don’t have to be an old bugger like me.”

That welcoming attitude can be found across the growing number of Men’s Sheds scattered across Melbourne’s northern and western suburbs.

John Owen from the Taylors Hill Men’s Shed was in a similar boat to Mr Doyle, looking around for something to keep his hands and mind occupied after retirement.

“I’ve always been a very busy person and very practical, so when the Men’s Shed started here about at about four years ago I thought I would give it a go,” he said.

“It provides a good community, you are able to chat with the guys and talk about your issues and problems without judgment and that’s great.

“A lot of the guys that are there are lonely, perhaps they’re widowed and they find it good to be able to go somewhere and be able to talk.”

Mr Owen, 80, said one of the things he is proudest of is the mentoring program the shed runs for children who are struggling a little bit at school.

“We spend two hours a week for six weeks with them and during that time we get them to do a little project like a pencil case or a small table with legs that fold out that they can give to their mum,” he said.

“There was one boy who was struggling to go school, after he started with the program with us he totally changed, his mother came around one day and said they couldn’t believe the difference.”

More than 1200 Men’s, Women’s and Community Sheds have now popped up



Joe Doyle has been part of Melton Men's Shed since it started a decade ago. (Damjan Janevski) 249607_01



1/ John Owen from the Taylor’s Hill Men’s Shed. 2/ Whittlesea Men’s Shed president Phil Berchdolt. 3/ Romsey Men’s Shed president Steve Goodman, vice president Douglas Tozer and members Laurie Bellingham and Stevan Janusko at the shed’s opening earlier this year. 4/ Rod Jackson working in the Hume Men’s Shed Sunbury workshop. 5/ Barry Burbridge tending the Hume Men’s Shed Sunbury vegie gardens before lockdown. (Pictures: Damjan Janevski and supplied)

across the country, providing meaningful connections that help stop people fall through the gaps in their later years.

Speaking during Men’s Shed Week (August 30 to September 5), Australian Men’s Shed Association chairman Paul Sladdin said the fundamentals of Men’s Sheds are connection, community and camaraderie.

He said while the lengthy lockdown has made it difficult for people to meet in person, participants have found ways to stay connected throughout.

“The pandemic has certainly got in the way of Sheddies getting together in person as much as they’d like to over the last 18 months,” he said.

“But like us, Men’s Sheds around the country have found ways to stay in touch and to support their mates by other means and that’s what we’re celebrating this year.”

Mr Doyle said even though nobody has been able to head down to the Melton shed sessions, the men have still kept in touch and regularly check in on each other.

“The telephone is our go-between, we’re not allowed out so we can’t go visit, so we keep in contact on the telephone,” he said.

He’s nevertheless looking forward to returning to the shed once restrictions ease and thinks the men aren’t the only ones looking forward to the day.

“When I first started a lot of the wives told their husbands to ‘get down to that Men’s Shed and give me peace,’” he said.

“It gets the men out of the house so the women can have some peace.”

MY PLACE

Afrodhite Sovolos has been keeping Brimbank residents moving during the COVID-19 pandemic. She speaks with Tara Murray about living in Brimbank and her passion for dancing and teaching.

What is your connection to Brimbank?
I have spent the last 25 years in Brimbank after my family and I moved to this area from Coburg. I did spend some years overseas for travel and work and upon return, decided to stay in this area with my husband and children. Brimbank has a lot to offer with a convenience distance from the airport, says one who loves to travel. I have always loved its greenery, convenient nearby shopping centres like Watergardens and Keilor Central and great open spaces.

What is your favourite thing about Brimbank?
They say the most beautiful things are explored by foot. I have always been a runner and tested some great trails and paths around Keilor, Taylors Lakes and Brimbank Park. Brimbank is truly blessed with some well-established tracks that lead to some great lake views. On each run, I am still captivated by the beautiful nature that surrounds our homes and absolutely adore the café at Brimbank Park. My family and I often bike-ride down to park and stop for a drink and snack. The buzz in this area creates a great culture and feeds not only your tummy, but your soul!

What is your favourite place to eat in Brimbank?
Had to really think about this one as it has been a while since we have gone out to eat but I am really missing a catch up at Theo's Greek Cakes in Keilor Park. Offering some Greek music on premises, you literally sit back and relax whilst enjoying something to eat and drink. I can't wait to be able to do that again! I was thinking of recommending a favourite sweet from this



great place but struggle to think of one because I love everything they have.

How did you get involved in running fitness

and dance classes?
Four years ago, a very good friend of mine, Misha, encouraged me to attend a Greek dance fitness class. Being brought up with

Greek music my whole life with Greek dancing included at every occasion, I discovered how much I enjoyed attending these classes. It was like a party every week and a great way to reconnect with my upbringing. It brought out the best in me and I couldn't believe I was getting a workout at the same time. Sharing my joy with friends and family about these classes, I was supported and encouraged to run my own class in Brimbank and did so soon after. I am proud to say that classes are still running weekly in Keilor Downs and Brunswick. I am very grateful and thank my participants for their ongoing support and love. We are like a family and always embrace and welcome new people with smiles and encouragement.

Tell us about what is different in the classes that you run? How have you had to change them for the pandemic?
DanceGR is founded by two incredible ladies who have given their heart and soul into dance, Sophia Petras and Chrissi Kalos. DanceGR is unique because it's driven to provide results by offering the best dance routines that targets specific areas of the body that increases your cardio, strength and overall performance. We are proud to share that our participants find our classes to have helped their health and wellbeing and increased morale. Since the pandemic, I have more of a reason to be more positive than ever and encourage my participants to believe in themselves. Of course, it has been tough and naturally you may lose that slight motivation but as an instructor, I focus on positive energy and always strive to ensure my participants come along on my journey, called 'ours'. It goes without saying, great things never came from comfort zones.

Tips to lighten the mental load

Adjunct Associate Professor
Christopher Carter
Ceo North Western Melbourne
Primary Health Network

Construction workers, including tradespeople, are twice as likely to die by suicide as their peers, and have twice the rate of anxiety and depression.

This might come as a surprise if you buy in to the 'tradie' stereotype. That is, a 'she'll be right' bloke with an easy job and few cares in the world, beyond keeping the knock-off beers ice-cold.

Yet this kind of thinking has allowed us to overlook the significant contributions and sacrifices tradespeople make, and the pressures they face.

Here's one scenario. You're self-employed, with two young children at home. Money is tight, and cashflow erratic. You're working long physically demanding hours onsite, often by yourself, or with responsibility for others less experienced, and still need to come home at night and manage the business – including sustaining a pipeline of work so you can keep paying the rent.

The industry tells us that scenarios like this are common. Job security, financial pressures and the nature of solo work, as well as other life stresses, affect male and female tradespeople of all ages. Stigma about mental health, and alcohol and drug dependence, are also common issues.

On top of this, sole-traders and their families often don't have access to the support that medium and large businesses, unions or trade organisations can provide. And Melbourne tradies have faced increased pressures due to issues created by COVID-19, such as having to limit work to emergency or vacant premises during lockdown.



A new mental health campaign aimed at tradies features Nathan, Zane and Jacob showing that sharing the load helps everyone. (Supplied)

As anyone on a worksite knows, if you need to carry something heavy, you get help. Sadly, this logic is not applied when we are carrying heavy emotional loads, with tradies much less likely to seek help early than the general population.

That's why we've created the 'Lighten the Load' campaign, and enhanced our HeadtoHelp service to better meet the needs of

tradies. Check out [Headtohelp.org.au/tradies](https://headtohelp.org.au/tradies). Staff at HeadtoHelp – a free, 100 per cent confidential service – are now trained to support tradies, their mates or their families.

All you need to do is make a free call to 1800 595 212. You'll talk to a professional, who'll listen carefully to understand what's going on, and give you advice or connect you to what you need. This might be mental health support

including counselling at one of the HeadtoHelp hubs, which is also free.

As a tradie in one of our 'Lighten the Load' videos says: 'The longer you carry stuff, the heavier it gets ... So talk to someone who can help, before it really weighs you down.'

Details: HeadtoHelp 1800 595 212 (free call), 8.30am – 5pm weekdays (excluding public holidays). Call triple-0 in an emergency.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Book week

Young readers are being encouraged to be book critics as part of the CBCA Book of the Year awards. Readers can download the Beanstack app and earn badges for writing a review of the one of six shortlisted titles in the '2021 CBCA Book of the Year Awards: Younger Readers' category. Entries go into the draw to win a \$30 book voucher. The challenge runs until September 30.
■ <https://www.beanstack.com/>

Deer Park probus

The Deer Park Combined Probus Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month at The Deer Park Club, 780 Ballarat Road, from 10am. New members and visitors are welcome.
■ Don, 0409 191 580

Adult learning month

Brimbank council is running a range of different online sessions throughout September as part of adult learning month. The sessions include money skills and staying safe online, managing your money, practicing your English online and getting started with e-resources.
■ www.brimbank.vic.gov.au/events

Unpacking the Man Box

Join Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health week for an online presentation by The Men's Project at Jesuit Social Services. Through their 'Unpacking the Man Box' workshop they will explore the findings of a survey aimed at improving the wellbeing of men and boys as well as the people in their lives. Monday, September 13, 6.30-8.30pm.
■ <https://bit.ly/3rUMNLq>, Kathryn.chai@scch.org.au or 5421 1666.

Don Watson in conversation

Political insider, speechwriter, screenwriter, satirist, traveller and author, Don Watson, appearing as a guest of Macedon Ranges Rural Australians for Refugees. Saturday, September 11, 2021 from 4-6pm at 15 Buckland Street Woodend. Cost \$25.
■ 0457 857 377

Customer loyalty workshop

Over three interactive workshops hosted by Hume council, learn about the three key phases of the client experience to help you improve customer experiences in your business. These online webinars will be held on three successive Wednesdays from 10-11am, starting Wednesday, September 10.
■ startnorth@hume.vic.gov.au

Singing group

Join the Melton South Community Singers at the Melton South Community Centre on the first and third Tuesday of each month.
■ Sue, 0400 082 413

Melton South Knit & Natter

All welcome to join this social crafting group, running at the Melton South Community Centre each Monday from 10am-noon. Bring along any knitting or crochet projects and work on them while sharing tips, learning skills and catching up over a cuppa.
■ 9747 8576

Zonta club meets

The Zonta Club of Melton meets on the first Monday of each month at Melton Country Club, Reserve Road, Melton.
■ Suzanne, 0417 512 420

Mahjong group

Interested in learning to play Mahjong? U3A Melton has a group who play on Tuesdays at 10am.
■ u3amelton.com or 0419 563 016



Through the lens

This canola field near Truganina caught the eye of photographer Damjan Janevski. (248986_01)

First aid courses

Melton South Community Centre offers a number of first aid courses for people wanting to learn or renew these valuable skills. One-day classes are held on Saturdays throughout the year.
■ 9747 8576

Melton Probus Club

The Melton Probus Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at the Melton Dart Club, 63A Reserve Road, from 9.45am. New members and visitors are most welcome.
■ 9746 0271

Sewing group

The Sunbury Neighborhood House Social Sewing Group meets on the first Saturday of each month to chat, share ideas and sew. Beginners through experienced welcome. Sunbury Neighbourhood House, 531 Elizabeth Drive, Sunbury 12.30-3.30pm.
■ Cheryl, 9744 1663

Garden club

The Sunbury Garden Club meets on the first Tuesday of every month. There is a guest speaker at each meeting, which starts at 7.30pm at the Sunbury Football Club.
■ Cheryl, 9744 1663

Senior citizens club

Senior citizens are welcome to visit the Sunbury Senior Citizens' Club on Mondays and Fridays, from 10am-3pm at 8 O'Shannassy Street. A variety of activities offered – carpet bowls, cards, snooker, darts, board games or just a cup of coffee and a chat. Lunch subsidised. If you're over 55 years of age and would like to meet new people, come along.
■ Frank, 0423 392 884

Fibro/CFS Support

Expressions of interest to start a Fibromyalgia and CFS Support Group in Manor Lakes and surrounding areas. Connect with real people and share information, experiences, problems and solutions.

■ wyndham.fibrogroup@gmail.com

MS volunteers

The Multiple Sclerosis Community Visitors Scheme is seeking female Maltese and Italian volunteers to make a weekly visit to aged care residents in Altona Meadows and Point Cook.
■ Sue, 9845 2744 or volunteer@ms.org.au

Drawing fun

Learn how to draw a Koi fish pond with oil pastels online Tuesday, September 14 at 10am. Join Madhubani for a virtual art class where she demonstrates how to create your own Koi fish pond drawing using oil pastels. This is a free workshop offered through the Iramoo Community Centre.
■ admin@iramoooc.com.au

Bee-keeping session

Wanting to learn more about bee keeping? Join Carmel from CMG Honeybee as she chats to you in an online session about starting your own beehive on Wednesday, September 15 at 10am. All participants who book in will receive their own packet of bee friendly plant seeds. This is a free workshop offered through the Iramoo Community Centre.
■ admin@iramoooc.com.au

Writing competition

Iramoo Community Centre in Wyndham Vale is running a writing competition open to children and adults. In 25 words or less, write about who has influenced or supported you through the lockdown or write about what you are most looking forward to doing once you are out of lockdown. Five boxes of chocolates will be given to the most creative pieces. The centre will collate all the applications into a book, which it will display. Application close on Friday, September 10.
■ admin@iramoooc.com.au

Goal setting for seniors

EdConnect Australia, with support from Wyndham council, will run a free lunch and goal setting strategies workshop

for seniors, which will cover using open-ended questions to elicit goals from young people or students and other topics, on Wednesday, October 20 from 10am-1.30pm at The Grange Community Centre, 260-280 Hogans Road, Hoppers Crossing.
■ <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/lunch-and-learn-about-goal-setting-strategies-tickets-164272773287>

Additional needs support

MyTime at Tweddle Newport is a peer support group for parents and carers of children with additional needs. The group meets each Friday at 10am during term three in the community room at Newport Gardens Early Years Centre, 51 Maddox Road, Newport.
■ kim.mace@tweddle.org.au

Diabetes support group

The Westgate diabetes support group meets on the first Tuesday of every month at the Altona Bowling Club at 10am.
■ Elaine, 0415 030 996

Free computer workshops

Williamstown Community and Education Centre is running free computer workshops on internet banking (October 6) and setting up a MyGov account (November 7). Workshops are at Joan Kirner House, 14 Thompson Street, Williamstown.
■ Renee, 9397 6168

Hobsons Bay band

Do you play trumpet, flute or lower brass instruments? The Hobsons Bay City Band is seeking musicians to join the community band. Rehearsals are held every Monday evening from 7.30pm at Newport Lakes Primary School, Elizabeth Street, Newport.
■ Roger Lewis, hbcityband@gmail.com

Altona North combined probus

The Altona North combined probus club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Altona Sports Club. Includes a speaker, organised trips and outings, and a friendly atmosphere.
■ Lesley, 9369 1785

PUZZLES

SUDOKU

No. 045

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

easy

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

medium

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

hard

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

easy medium hard

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

Puzzles and pagination © Pagemasters | pagemasters.com

5x5

Y		A		S
	N		A	
C		A		E
	O		E	
A		E		T

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

NOTE: more than one solution may be possible

T	R	E	L	A
N	E	Z	O	C
E	R	A	Z	C
P	N	M	A	P
S	E	A	R	S

QUICK CROSSWORD

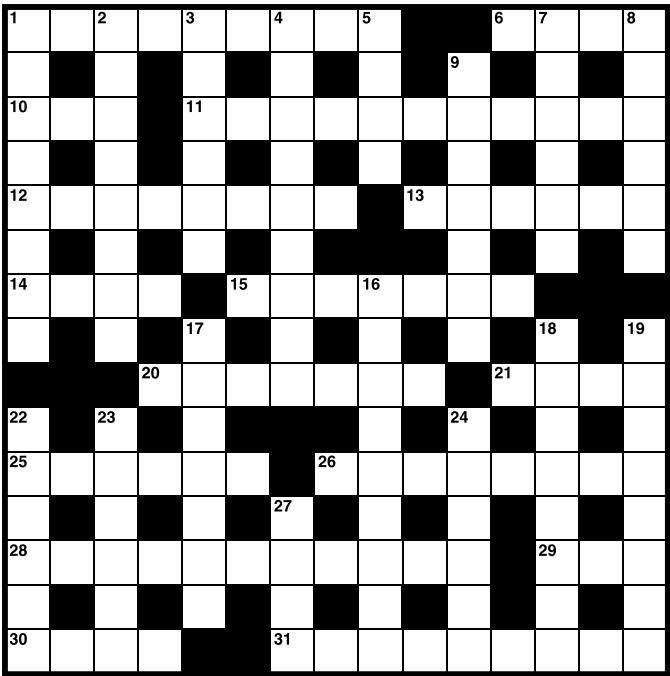
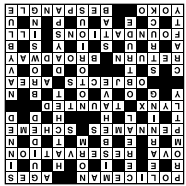
No. 045

ACROSS

- 1 Constable (9)
- 6 Matures (4)
- 10 Eggs (3)
- 11 Booking (11)
- 12 Pseudonyms (3-5)
- 13 Project (6)
- 14 Wildcat (4)
- 15 Teased (7)
- 20 Expresses disapproval (7)
- 21 Tract (4)
- 25 Come back (6)
- 26 NY theatre district (8)
- 28 Bases (11)
- 29 Bedridden (3)
- 30 Artist, — Ono (4)
- 31 Adorn with glitter (9)

DOWN

- 1 Punctually (8)
- 2 Studying (8)
- 3 Grain (6)
- 4 Be naughty (9)
- 5 Benchmark (4)
- 7 Ushered (6)
- 8 Did wrong (6)
- 9 Axe (7)
- 16 Infamous (9)
- 17 Gatecrash (7)
- 18 Surfing (the web) (8)
- 19 Colour (4,4)
- 22 Sly (6)
- 23 Hit (6)
- 24 R & R spot (3,3)
- 27 Wound with a knife (4)



DECODER

No. 045

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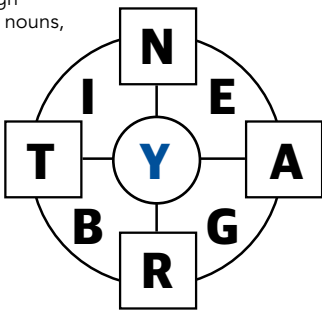
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J	Q	U	S	Z	L	F	V	M	A	O	P	D	I
H	X	G	N	K	B	E	W	R	C	K	N	R	G

9-LETTER WORD

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

Today's Aim:
20 words: **Good**
30 words: **Very good**
40 words: **Excellent**



airy, angry, bayling, betray, BETRAYING, binary, brainy, bray, braying, bry, byre, byte, entry, evying, galety, gantty, gayey, gentty, grayly, grey, gyrate, gyre, nary, nearby, rainy, rayting, revying, tangy, teary, tiny, tray, trey, trying, tyng, tyre, yarm, year, yean, yearn, yeti

WORDFIT

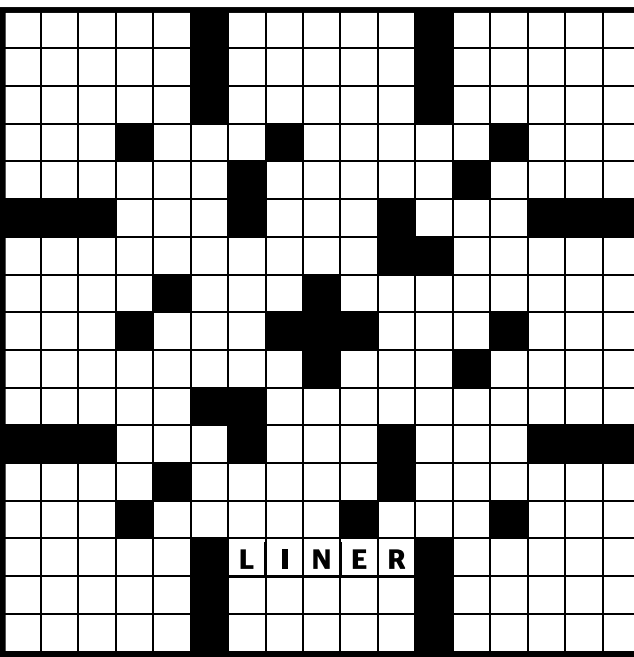
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3 LETTERS

- ACE
- ADO
- ADS
- AGE
- ALE
- ARE
- ATE
- AXE
- BOA
- COO
- DIE
- DOE
- EEL
- ERA
- EWE
- HER
- NIP
- ODE
- OLD
- RAM
- RUM
- SAC
- SAT
- TEE
- TEN
- VIP

4 LETTERS

- ARTS
- BABE
- CAPE
- DYES
- FAME
- GATE
- HERO
- INNS
- LADS
- ONCE
- ONES
- RIDE
- ROOK
- SARI
- SECT



- SOME
- TALC
- VAST

- IDIOM
- IDLER
- INLET
- LADEN
- LINER
- MANOR
- METRE
- MULTI
- NAMES
- NOSED
- PLIED
- PLODS
- POLIO
- RADIO
- SAVER
- SEEMS
- SLIDE
- SMITE
- SOLAR
- SORRY
- STEAL

- STONE
- TEASE
- TERSE
- TILDE
- VEILS
- VILLA
- YESES

- FALSITY
- LATTICE
- ORDERED
- TYPESET

8 LETTERS

- CHASTISE
- DIABETIC
- STOCKADE
- TIRELESS

6 LETTERS

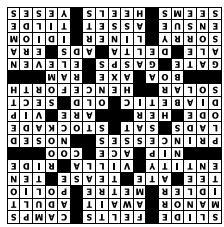
- ELEVEN
- ENTITY

10 LETTERS

- HENCEFORTH
- PRINCESSES

7 LETTERS

- ERRATIC
- EXPANSE



QUICK QUIZ



- 1 'Two houses, both alike in dignity' is the opening to what play?
- 2 For approximately how many hours per day do sloths sleep?
- 3 In what year was the first Stella Prize awarded?
- 4 Which social media platform was founded first: Twitter, Tumblr or Instagram?
- 5 To what continent is the succulent vine string-of-pearls native?
- 6 With which medium does street artist Chinagirl Tile predominately work?
- 7 Approximately how many points (pts) are there in a millimetre: 1.83, 2.83 or 3.83?
- 8 Which 2020 film directed by Spike Lee stars Detroy Lindo, Clarke Peters and Chadwick Boseman (pictured)?
- 9 Who won the 2020 Hugo Award for Best Novel?
- 10 Suzy Wilson is the founder of which Australian charity?

ANSWERS: 1. Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare 2. 15 3. 2013 4. Twitter 5. Africa 6. Ceramics 7. 2.83 8. Da 5 Bloods 9. Arkady Martine, for A Memory Called Empire 10. Indigenous Literacy Foundation



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We NQR Pty Ltd. applied to the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation on August 03, 2021 for a new packaged liquor licence at Unit 24, 20 Mt Derrimut Road, Derrimut 3026.
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Objections must be made no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

vodafone OPTUS
PROPOSALS TO UPGRADE EXISTING VODAFONE & OPTUS MOBILE PHONE BASE STATIONS (INCLUDING 5G)
1. **Monopole at Water Reservoir off Allenby Road, Taylors Hill VIC 3037 (RFNSA ID. 3037017):**
The proposed upgrade to the existing facility includes:
• Installation of new 5G panel antennas comprising three new Vodafone and six new for Optus (9 in total)
• Replace three (3) existing panel antennas for three (3) new panel antennas for Vodafone
• Replacement of existing headframe for a new triangle shaped headframe
• Installation and reconfiguration of existing ancillary equipment including GPS antennas, RRUs, steelwork and cables
• Installation and reconfiguration of equipment within existing equipment shelters.
2. **Rooftop of Hotel Mercure at 234 Caroline Springs Boulevard, Caroline Springs VIC 3023 (RFNSA ID. 3023017):**
The proposed upgrade to the existing facility includes:
• Installation of new 5G panel antennas comprising three (3) new Vodafone and six (6) new for Optus (9 in total) on new mounts
• Replacement of existing panel antennas for three (3) new panel antennas for both Vodafone and Optus (six (6) in total)
• Installation and reconfiguration of existing ancillary equipment including GPS antennas, RRUs, steelwork and cables
• Installation and reconfiguration of equipment within existing equipment shelters.
3. **Vodafone & Optus** regards the proposed installations as a Low-impact Facility under the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018 ("The Determination") based on the descriptions above.
4. In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposals. Further information and/or comments should be directed to: Daniel Hay at NokiaSolutions&Networks.on.0420.310.857 or at communityrelations.vha@groups.nokia.com by **Thursday 23 September 2021**. Further information may be obtained from the RFNSA website at www.rfnsa.com.au/ (reference ID's noted above).

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Kids have had their sport seasons disrupted over the past two years. (Jamie Morey Photography)



Kids drop the ball in lockdown

By Tara Murray

“For a lot of them life stopped.”

That was the stark reality Jessica Suraci has come across through her role with Sports Chaplaincy Australia.

As Victorians suffer through a second year of lockdowns and isolation, sport has been among the biggest casualties.

Suraci is a chaplain with Taylors Lakes Football Club, but has also assisted at other clubs the last few years.

She said this year’s lockdowns were harder than those we had last year.

“Their support networks were taken away,” she said. “It takes away freedom.

“We saw a lot of kids come this season, looking very different from where they were playing at the beginning of last year.

“Not necessarily physically, but mentally as it took a really big toll on the mental health. When you’re a teenager, school is the worst.

“Being at home this time round, [with] no other choice of being at home and seeing people on the internet, was really detrimental to so many people.”

Suraci said being locked down and away from their mates meant many players just kept to themselves and hid how they were really feeling.

She said she had implemented a system which encouraged people to get in touch, even just to start a conversation.

“I can reach out and it’s easy for kids to say ‘yep all good’. If I can’t see them, I can’t see what is going on through their eyes, I don’t know.

“I implemented an emoji system. It’s hard for kids to open up sometimes and they don’t want to talk about what is going on, they just need to know someone is there to help them.

“They send me an emoji when they need someone to talk to, they don’t necessarily want to talk about it, they want a conversation starter.”

Suraci said community sport played an important role. She said clubs were more than teams; they were families.

“Sometimes it’s a kid’s only outlet,” she said.

“If all we have besides sport is sitting at home playing games, it’s taking away the most important aspect in their lives.

“It affects everyone differently. It’s about letting these players know they do have a support network.

“It’s just a shame they’ve had to miss out on potentially building healthy relationships and building relationships with sport and the outdoors.

“It’s just my hope that these kids all know there is someone to talk to.”

Grant McMillan last week had to inform his under-14 girls’ Victorian Junior Basketball League team that their season had come to an end.

The Bacchus Marsh team was sitting second on the ladder and full of confidence having knocked off the top team by 30 points.

“It’s a real lifestyle change for them to be able to get their heads around,” McMillan said of



The EDFL interleague side was one impacted by the lockdowns. (Jamie Morey Photography)

not being able to play.

“I obviously try to keep in contact with the kids as much as you can to see how they’re going and give them some activities to do while they’re at home.

“I’ve got a Zoom catch up with my rep basketball team next week for all their efforts, to just give the season some closure for them more than anything else.”

McMillan, who is a football development manager for AFL Victoria in the Riddell District Football League region, said for children ,sport is more than a game.

“They’re used to having that regular interaction with people through the season, they haven’t been able to do that regularly the last couple of years.

“When that is taken away from you it’s like the saying ‘you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone’.

“Hopefully the kids are resilient enough to bounce back.”

The impact of two interrupted seasons hasn’t just impacted the players, with many coaches and volunteers hitting breaking point.

McMillan was part of a football coaching seminar with 35 coaches last week.

“Some of them are cooked,” he said. “I asked the guys ... ‘how have you guys handled your mental health during this?’

“Jason Williams, who is the interim coach of the Calder Cannons, said he had been open about saying he has been seeing a psychiatrist



A football clinic mid-year was one of highlights for some footballers. (Jamie Morey Photography)

and that he had done so for some time.

“[Coburg coach] Andrew Sturgess was open about the things he does to manage his mental health.

“They’ve [coaches] really taken on a role that is more than just about being a coach. Even at the best of times being a coach is also being a

psychologist and psychiatrist and even more so the last two years.

“One thing we don’t have a lot of visibility over in these times. We see them in their capability as coaches and volunteers, but we don’t know how their personal circumstances have changed though this time.”

Lockdown ends football, basketball seasons

Premiership and championship dreams came tumbling down for many local sports players of all ages last week.

The extension of the COVID-19 lockdown to beyond September 23 has left many of the winter sporting competitions with no option but to bring their seasons to a close.

It's a bitter blow for many, after most players didn't get to play at all in 2020.

Basketball Victoria issued a statement saying that the Victorian Junior Basketball League, Big V and National Basketball League 1 south competitions would be cancelled.

No champions will be declared in those competitions.

In the Big V competition, Keilor Thunder men and Altona Gators women were the minor premiers in their respective divisions.

Whittlesea Pacers, Craigieburn Eagles, Sunbury Jets and Hume City Broncos all had senior teams set for finals.

Basketball Victoria's under-12 skills days and

identification camp have been postponed.

The eight metropolitan football leagues issued a joint statement on Thursday announcing the leagues had mutually decided to cancel all competitions for the 2021 season.

Among the leagues are the Essendon District and Western Region football leagues, the Northern and Riddell District football netball leagues and the Victorian Amateur Football Association.

The netball competitions for the relevant competitions have also been cancelled.

"All leagues have been working diligently in the hope of enabling the remaining games in the 2021 season to be played," the statement said.

"However, it is now apparent this will not be possible in the current environment.

"All leagues are committed to working closely with their member clubs, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria to manage the associated issues related to the cancellation of all 2021

competitions and working towards a return to play next season."

The statement said operation aspects of the decision, like possibly awarding premierships or promotion and relegation, will be provided by the respective leagues.

The Ballarat Football Netball League has also cancelled its season, saying no premierships would be awarded. The Sunbury Lions and Melton were due to play in the senior football finals.

On Wednesday, Football Victoria said the board of directors would meet and consider the impacts for all soccer and futsal stakeholders.

"This will be communicated as quickly as possible to provide a roadmap for our community on the remainder of the season for each competition."

The extended lockdown is also set to impact the summer sports, with many seasons set to start in early October.

Tara Murray



The Essendon District Football League season has been cancelled. (Damjan Janevski) 243420_01



Josh Risdon at Western United training. (Supplied)

Risdon sets new goals

By Tara Murray

After a forgettable season, Western United defender Josh Risdon is hoping to return to his best and put his name back in front of national selectors.

Risdon played just three games last season, with two major injuries leaving him on the sidelines for most of the year.

He admits it was a frustrating season.

"It was pretty tough for me last season, obviously being injured for most of it," he said.

"I had two bad injuries. The first one kept me out for six to seven months which was the most frustrating thing.

"I obviously wanted to play games and sitting on the sidelines was not very fun. I got myself back fit from that initial injury and feeling really good to get my second one third game back wasn't ideal.

"We tapered off towards the end of the season and it was hard to watch not being able to help to get the team into finals."

Risdon said he had worked hard to get his

body right and he had been fully fit from the start of pre-season.

He said things were going along nicely under new coach John Aloisi.

"I think we're six or seven weeks in now," he said. "The body is holding up good and I'm staying injury free which is nice.

"There's a lot of new faces, new players and staff. Aloisi being the new coach and he wasn't here from the start as he had to quarantine.

"Once he came in he brought in Hayden Foxe as well and they are really driving the sessions and it's been great.

"I know a lot of the guys are impressed with the sessions that we're doing and the intensity. It's a long pre-season but they're keeping it enjoyable for us."

Risdon, who became a father for the first time this year, said his first aim this season was to play consistent soccer.

"That's my first and foremost goal," he said.

"I want to do more than that, I want to stand out a big part of helping this team do well.

:"I think we've got a really good squad

this year and we can challenge for a trophy. Being part of that and now being one of the experienced boys in the team, now I've got to help out the younger boys and be a leader at the club."

Risdon also has his eyes set on a recall to the Socceroos squad. He was part of the Socceroos team at the last World Cup.

"A big goal of mine when I came to Western United was to get back into the Socceroos squad," he said. "I got into a camp last year, but obviously things were out of our hands with COVID-19 situation.

"Towards the back of end of last year they started to play some more games and then being injured wasn't ideal as I hadn't played enough games. It's definitely a goal of mine to get back fit and get my name in and among the national team again.

"We have the World Cup next year and going to that last one has made me hungrier to go to another one. Hopefully I can stay injury free and put out some good performances and get to go again."

Thunder eyes spot in top competition

Keilor Thunder could be on the move from the Big V competition to the National Basketball League 1 South competition next year.

The Thunder has put in an application to join the NBL1 south competition, which is the top competition in Victoria.

Currently there are 18 teams in the men's and women's competition from Victoria, Tasmania and border clubs Albury-Wodonga Bandits and Mt Gambier Pioneers.

There are no teams from Melbourne's west in the competition despite at least one club making an application when the competition was formed.

Thunder director of coaching Liam Glascott confirmed that the association had put in an application to make the switch.

"We have put in an application," he said. "We didn't do it a couple of years ago [when the competition was formed] as we had only been in championship division for 12 months.

"We wanted more time to develop and give guys more opportunities."

Glascott said they had looked to recruit players last year before the COVID-19 lockdown that would help them make that next step.

With border restrictions not easing this year, he said they had relied on their core group of local players who had stepped up.

"The club is hoping to make sure we are in the right spot," he said. "There's still a lot of steps to make this leap.

"Hopefully the club and the league can come to some agreement."

The men's side finished on top of the ladder this season in championship division.

The women's side made the championship division grand final series in 2019, losing to the Werribee Devils.

Basketball Victoria spokesman said they wouldn't be making any comments on the process at this point.

Tara Murray



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