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## Thumbs up for best dad

A stunning spectacle of 100 trucks in convoy paid tribute to popular colleague and family man Stuart Baker, 59, on Wednesday 11 May.

His son Aaron, pictured, proudly drove his Dad's beloved Kenworth T900 at the head of the procession from Hallam to Bunurong Memorial Park.

More on page 6

Picture: GARY SISSONS

# Critical shortage

By Jonty Ralphsmith

There are concerns of a critical staff shortage at Dandenong Hospital.

Rowville MP Kim Wells addressed the matter in parliament on Monday 3 May, asking: "When will the government fund enough nursing staff at Dandenong Hospital to open up hospital beds and stop ambulance delays?"

Mr Wells also referenced a Rowville constituent who waited 23 hours in the emergency department and was then transferred to a room with two close contacts of a confirmed Covid-19 case, who both also came back positive, making Mr Wells a close contact.

The constituent, Shane from Rowville, spoke further about the matter to Star News, saying that after the initial incident, he was nearly put in a similar situation.

A decision was made to put him in a room with others awaiting PCR results - if they were positive, he would again have been a close contact.

Shane made a formal objection which prevented the process from possibly repeating itself.

The ordeal, which also resulted in him initially being in the gastro ward to get him out of the emergency department, convinced Shane there was a staffing and bedding shortage.

Those beliefs were confirmed to him via conversations with the nursing staff.

"I said 'there appears to be a problem with Covid-19 patients' and I was told they simply don't have enough beds.

"They were struggling and I was told by a nurse that they've got a 26 bed ward there that's closed purely because they don't have enough staff to open it."

Shane also witnessed some nurses getting "short with each other", which he attributed to their stress.

"I spoke to quite a few of them and I heard not one positive about the State Government," he said.

"They hold the state government directly accountable for the situation - bed and staff shortage - they find themselves in."

Shane was sent to Dandenong Hospital on Saturday 19 March with a lung infection that kept him hospitalised for six days - while he still has follow-ups scheduled, Shane is now on the mend and back at work.

Mr Wells' facts that underpinned his question came from the constituent, Shane from Rowville.

But the Department of Health claims that Mr Wells' statement regarding the staffing shortages is wrong.

Continued page 4

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# Bold ‘hero’ finds refuge

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

An academic threatened by his Prime Minister is among the first intake of Cambodian refugees into Australia for decades.

Dr Sary Seng, now settled in Noble Park, went into hiding after Prime Minister Hun Sen publicly declared he'd send someone to kill him, he says.

In March, Dr Seng, a Buddhist monk Sovannady Sim and two families linked to the Cambodian-based media outlet Radio Free Asia were each offered refuge by Australia.

They received an offshore Emergency Rescue refugee visa while at the Cambodian-Thai border.

That particular visa type is rarely offered by Australia, says Dandenong-based migration agent Thay Horn Yim who assisted their cause.

"It has been more than a few decades since Australia has accepted Cambodian refugees from Cambodia or from Thailand."

Dr Seng's exile was sparked by a media interview in which he was asked to detail the political forces required to change the Government.

He says he was not overtly calling for the Government's removal, but he was then linked to the Opposition's "counter revolution".

"The Prime Minister announced they'll send someone to kill me or arrest me."

Three hours later, four uninvited men visited his apartment in Thailand – fortunately while Dr Seng had gone out for dinner.

He then went into hiding at friend's homes. Soldiers still regularly harassed his wife at their family home in Cambodia about his whereabouts.

"Even though Hun Sen later said he was happy to take it back, the damage was done.

"If I returned to Cambodia, I don't know if



Cambodian refugee and academic Dr Sary Seng and migration agent Thay Horn Yim.

I'll be arrested or not. With this Government, there are no guarantees."

Mr Yim said Dr Seng had been "brave", and "not scared to tell the truth" about the regime's land-grabs from farmers and people being marginalised for not aligning with the regime.

"I was worried about his arrest and I communicated with him.

"Once the PM made that announcement, I thought his supporters would find and kill him. They're not concerned about civil rights.

"They behave not like a democracy, but a dictatorship. They control media, they don't want people to challenge how they operate."

The Prime Minister "walked back" Dr Seng's case only because of embarrassment. His remarks had sparked outrage, including censure from the US and Australian ambassadors, Mr Yim said.

Dr Seng has worked as a researcher in Cambodia and Thailand for about 20 years.

His study fields include the exploitation of about 2 million Cambodian illegal immigrants

in Thailand, HIV-Aids outbreaks and displacement of locals in tourist precincts.

"At first, the Government wasn't worried about my research. They just cared about maintaining the power," he says.

"I personally liked to do that research. It's not just a job but I can learn something."

After the politically-motivated assassination of activist Kem Ley in 2016, Dr Seng became more outspoken and attracted media attention.

In 2019, the Cambodian People's Party government regarded him as a "problem maker". His Cambodian university job was "terminated".

After two years, the unemployed researcher took up an academic research post in Thailand to support his family. And continued to criticise the Cambodian regime's

Dr Seng is now hopeful of soon having his wife and four daughters settle with him in Australia.

"I feel OK about their physical safety but mentally, my wife is not really happy. She's really disturbed by these people."

He opted to be close to the long-established Cambodian community in the Springvale region.

He's become an adviser for the community's Buddhist Monk Council, to help heal political divisions reflected in his homeland.

He's also been accepted as an unpaid honorary research fellow at Melbourne University. He hopes to get other work to help support his family overseas.

"I do feel the way I contribute to the community here is welcomed and worthwhile.

"They try to assist me in my resettlement here. I feel appreciated."

But Mr Yim says Dr Seng is being "a bit humble".

"We feel like he's a hero."

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Dom Boccari says the Dandenong air monitoring station is too far from the offensive industry zone two kilometres away. 280666 Picture: ROB CAREW

# ‘Offensive’ industry zone is on the nose

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Greater Dandenong Council and residents are calling for greater monitoring of the putrid air reportedly wafting from the ‘offensive industry’ zone (IZ2) in Dandenong South.

Currently, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) has a fixed air-monitoring station in Greaves Reserve, Dandenong, which provides real-time air quality data on a public website.

It’s about two kilometres north of the IZ2 – too far away to effectively warn households and schools in Dandenong South and Keysborough that surround the zone, say residents.

“There’s a lot of homes and a state government school between that station and the industrial 2 zone,” says Keysborough resident Dom Boccari.

The current air-testing regime gave “no comfort” to residents in Keysborough who are plagued by lingering, identified “organic” odours from the zone several times a month.

“Why don’t we know what it is? It’s not getting tested and we don’t know what it is.”

Mr Boccari wants extra air monitoring stations closer to the zone, testing for “harmful toxins” and providing real-time data.

He suggests stations at the Lyndhurst toxic waste dump, the IZ2 in Dandenong South, and the CALM mound at the corner of Eastlink and Greens Road as well as the Eastern Treatment plant in Bangholme.

The IZ2 is one of just three in Victoria – a zone reserved for heavy and offensive industries

which require extensive buffer zones.

The council is also pressing the EPA for more monitoring stations closer to the zone and nearby residential areas.

Greater Dandenong mayor Jim Memeti, who lives near the northern edge of the industry 2 zone, said the move would “make the community feel safer”.

At the moment, there was a need to find out what was causing the regular stench that causes “everyone closes their doors and windows”.

“There’s smells many, many times over the years. And it can be very strong sometimes.”

“It might not be hazardous, but it also might be.”

“That’s what the residents are complaining about – they’re concerned about their health, their family and their children. It might have effects long-term and years down the track.”

Cr Memeti said he would lobby political parties ahead of the November state election to rezone the hazardous industry 2 zone.

He proposes to allow existing uses but to ban any further toxic industries due to the rising population in the Keysborough and Dandenong South surrounds.

“That’s the only way to slowly clean up the area over time.”

According to its recent quarterly performance report, the council requested EPA air monitoring in the “west/north west of Ordish Road” area due to “several complaints of ‘organic’ waste” odours. smell” emanating

from the zone.

Greater Dandenong city planning acting director James Thorley told a council meeting that extra air monitoring would be raised with the EPA on 20 May.

“As to their specific locations and the reporting technology that comes out of that, we will be working through those details as part of that meeting coming up in the future.”

It was also exploring a taskforce with the EPA on air emissions and “many other areas”.

“We believe that good progress has been made in working increasingly with the (EPA) on the emissions issue.”

In a recent letter to Mr Boccari, the EPA stated there were “no current plans” for installing stations at the four sites.

An EPA spokesperson said its air monitoring network included the fixed station in Dandenong with “increased capacity for mobile, incident air monitoring”.

“Given the various industries inside the (industrial) precinct, it is expected that there will be variations in air quality depending on where you are inside the precinct.”

Air pollution’s health risks were evaluated using the AirWatch monitoring program, emergency incident response and targeted programs, the spokesperson said.

“EPA will continue to review its network to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Victorian community and that it attains the State’s Environmental Reference Standards and those required for the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality).”

**Pre-polling in Greater Dandenong**

There are three early voting centres open in Greater Dandenong and surrounds as the early voting period started on Monday 9 May.

Locations nearby include Dandenong Stadium in Dandenong North, Moodemere Scout Hall, Noble Park and Nine Miles Street, Mulgrave.

Dandenong Stadium and the Scout Hall are open from 8am-8pm on every weekday until Thursday 19 May and on Saturday 14 May it is open from 9am-4pm. It is open from 8am-6pm on Friday 20 May and Saturday 21 May.

Nine Miles Street is open 8.30am-5.30pm on weekdays until Thursday 19 May and on Saturday 14 May it is open 9am-4pm. On Friday 19 May it is open from 8.30am-6pm.

All facilities are closed on Sunday 15 May.

- People are encouraged to vote on Election day unless they:**
- are outside the electorate where you are enrolled to vote
  - are more than 8km from a polling place
  - are travelling
  - are unable to leave your workplace to vote
  - are seriously ill, infirm, or due to give birth shortly (or caring for someone who is)
  - are a patient in hospital and can’t vote at the hospital
  - have religious beliefs that prevent you from attending a polling place
  - are in prison serving a sentence of less than three years or otherwise detained
  - are a silent elector
  - have a reasonable fear for your safety.

AEC staff will be wearing masks and other protective equipment as required and will be regularly sanitising surfaces and pencils at all AEC early voting centres. People who will be overseas during the federal election are being recommended to apply for a postal vote as early as possible. Completed postal votes can be delivered in person or at Australian embassies and consulates. overseas listed on the AEC website. The Federal Election will be held on Saturday 21 May. Voting is compulsory for Australian citizens aged 18 years and older.

## Teens arrested in allegedly stolen car

Six teenagers were arrested in Hallam in an allegedly stolen car on Wednesday 11 May.

Police first sighted the allegedly stolen Jeep Cherokee at an oval on Frawley Road around 9.20am.

The teens then attempted to flee the area before police deployed stop sticks on Frawley Road. The driver of the Jeep appears to have lost control before the vehicle, hit a parked police car and tree and came to rest on the footpath, before he teens fled the stolen car, police say. The teens were arrested not far from where they left the vehicle, in a team effort by Southern Metro Crime Team detectives, canine units, local police and the Air Wing.

Police say two 15-year-old Hallam boys, a 16-year-old Narre Warren girl, a 15-year-old Cranbourne South girl, a 16-year-old Bayswater North girl and a 14-year-old Springvale boy are currently assisting them with their enquiries. The car was allegedly stolen from an aggravated burglary in Beaumaris on Friday, 6 May.

Anyone with information or dashcam footage is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or visit [crimestoppersvic.com.au](http://crimestoppersvic.com.au)

# Drug drivers have ‘nowhere to hide’

More than two dozen drug drivers have been detected in a roadside testing trial in Melbourne’s South East.

Frontline Tactical Unit police have been conducting roadside drug tests in Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia Shire since 1 February.

It’s the first time police outside of Highway Patrol units and booze and drug bus operations have conducted driver drug testing.

So far, 27 drug drivers have been detected.

“This trial means there is nowhere to hide if you think it’s acceptable to drive on drugs,” says Senior Sergeant Luke Holmes

of the Southern Metro Region Division 3 Frontline Tactical Unit.

“Some people think they can spot the police cars that do this type of testing. Now, any police car in their rearview mirror could be the one that catches you.”

According to Victoria Police, drug driving is a rising factor in the road toll. It contributes to about 30 per cent of deaths on the road.

Methamphetamine is the most common substance detected in roadside drug tests.

In 2021, 33 lives were lost on South East roads – more than four times higher than the nine deaths in the previous year. Drugs were

a factor in several of the fatal crashes.

So far in 2022, seven people have died on South East roads.

Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir said: “Make no mistake. Drugs are a killer on Victoria’s roads.”

“This initiative is just one way we’re detecting and deterring impaired drivers who think it’s OK to get behind the wheel and put the safety of others at risk.”

The trial will continue until the end of the month.

Victoria Police will then consider whether to expand its drug driver testing regime of about 150,000 tests a year.



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# Market chief resigns

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Dandenong Market's trailblazing general manager Jennifer Hibbs has announced her resignation.

The market's founding general manager since 2013 said the time was "right" to step down.

"For the past nine years, I have had the privilege of watching the Market go from strength to strength.

"Despite all the challenges, particularly over the past two years, I do consider myself fortunate to have been able to contribute to the market and the wider Dandenong community.

"Whilst it is the right time for me to step down, I also believe that it is the right time for

a new leader to build on the foundations now in place and steer the delivery of our vision for the market."

Dandenong Market chair Donna McMaster said Ms Hibbs's leadership was "central to improving this jewel in Dandenong's crown".

"Jennifer has established a first-class events and festivals program.

"She has developed our street food culture, making Dandenong Market an authentic foodie destination. Importantly, she has created an opportunity for many new traders.

"Jennifer has also set the wheels in motion for an exciting new Strategic and Retail Plan for the Market. We have a fantastic vision for the future."

Ms McMaster also paid tribute to Ms Hibbs's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, "protect-

ing our people, community and organisation during one of the most challenging periods in the Market's history".

Last year, the market's owner Greater Dandenong Council reported a near \$3 million hit in rent waivers and foregone revenue from the market due to Covid-19.

In 2021, the council also leased the adjoining Aldi supermarket site to Dandenong Market Pty Ltd for a peppercorn \$1 annual fee until mid-2031.

Income from the King Street site is shared 50-50 by the council and DMPL. Its earnings were to fund capital improvements, repairs and equipment at the market.

Ms Hibbs will step down as of 8 July. She will remain as the market's company secretary.

## Covid 'not to blame'

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A "national emergency" in hospitals is not as a result of Covid-19, according to the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine.

President Clare Skinner says systemic problems like emergency department overcrowding and ambulance ramping had been "building for many years".

Covid-19 only "exposed and worsened" the problems.

"Members all over Australia report to the College that these are the worst conditions they've experienced in their careers."

She said parts of the health system were "seeing almost double the amount of people they were designed for".

It was "impossible" for clinicians to provide the level of care needed.

"People are deteriorating, and in some tragic cases people are dying, due to a lack of appropriate, timely, affordable healthcare.

"This avoidable patient harm will continue to occur and worsen until the health-system is properly designed and resourced."

Dr Skinner said the State Budget's focus on up to 7000 new health workers and \$12 billion on health care was welcome, but more was needed to retain burnt out staff.

"As recently publicised, senior staff are leaving the healthcare workforce, often due to burnout and despair at working in a broken system that renders them unable to deliver top-quality care."

Federally, a nationally-coordinated, long-term, whole-of-system approach was needed, she said.

Better health care in residential aged-care and better services under the NDIS would reduce demand in the "struggling" health systems.

## MP: Families unable to cover GP costs

By Eleanor Wilson

Bruce MP Julian Hill took aim at the Federal Government over the rising hospital crisis, claiming out of pocket costs to see a GP in Bruce have gone up by 50 per cent.

"Families are already struggling to access emergency care and are under pressure from rising out of pocket costs to see a GP which only contributes to the strain on household budgets," Mr Hill said.

He said a Labor Government will alleviate pressure on the over-burdened hospital system, through the party's proposal to establish Medicare urgent care clinics across the nation.

"Medicare Urgent Care Clinics will take the pressure off hospital emergency departments by providing an alternative option for families needing urgent care from a doctor or nurse," Mr Hill said.

The clinics would treat urgent but non life threatening injuries including sprains and broken bones, cuts, wounds, insect bites, minor ear and eye problems and minor burns.

Mr Hill said Labor plans to invest over \$135 million across four years to establish a trial of 50 Medicare urgent care clinics, including one in the La Trobe area to ease pressure on the Casey hospital emergency department.

Recent estimations indicate that between January and March this year, 40.4 per cent of patients at Casey Hospital's were treated in the recommended time.

The number of patients who spent over 24 hours in the Casey Hospital emergency department increased from three in January-March 2021, to 46 in the same time period this year.

Greens candidate for Holt Sujit Mathew says while the responsibility for running hospital services ultimately falls with the states, the problem is fuelled by a poor al-



Bruce MP Julian Hill said families are struggling to pay out-of-pocket GP costs dealt by the Morrison Government. Picture: SUPPLIED

location of federal funding into the health department.

"Coalition has ripped money out of hospitals by giving billions to private health insurance rebates.

"Four big corporations control 70 per cent of the subsidised private health market and are making huge profits at the expense of your health.

A Greens government will invest an extra \$8 billion by legislating equal funding of hospitals between the Commonwealth and states, Mr Mathew said.

"This can be done by reinvesting the bil-

lions paid in private health insurance rebates back into the public system, slashing out of pocket costs.

"I aim to ensure that everyone can get the care they need, when they need it, by funding our hospitals sufficiently and that way clearing public hospital surgery waiting lists, hiring more trained staff and buying modern medical equipment.

"This in return will help hospitals come out of the current unprecedented hospital crisis."

Candidates from the Liberal and other political parties in Bruce and Holt did not respond by deadline.

## Critical shortage at Dandenong Hospital

From page 1

"The pandemic continues to put enormous pressure on our healthcare workers, who have been going above and beyond for two years to care for Victorians," a Department of Health spokesperson said.

"That's why we've announced a \$12 billion pandemic repair plan which will recruit and train 7000 extra healthcare workers including 5000 nurses and support programs including Better at Home, the state-wide rollout of virtual EDs and the Covid Positive Pathways program - to take pressure off our busy hospitals and treat more Victorians in the community.

"The plan will also see Victoria recruit up to 2000 ex-pat and international healthcare workers, with the funding to provide financial incentives as well as to support health services with their international recruitment efforts."

A staff member from Mr Wells office confirmed that the Rowville MP's facts came from Shane.

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) Secretary Lisa Fitzpatrick referenced Victoria's minimum nurse/midwife to patient ratios but conveyed the stress the industry was under.

As of Monday 11 May, there are 533 patients very ill with Covid-19 and over 1500 staff - mostly nurses - have been granted a leave of absence and are unable to work.

Working short staffed or without the right skill mix or level of experience increases the burden on nurses and midwives compounding existing fatigue. They understandably respond by further reducing their hours. "Constantly working overtime or double shifts should only be used as short-term measures and not become business as usual," Ms Fitzpatrick said.

She added that the ANMF is in discussions with the state government about further financial assistance to recognise and incentivise nurses and midwives to stay in the workforce.

"This is an issue across Victoria and across the country particularly those states most im-

pacted by pandemic and the Omicron outbreak. You can't have more than 1000 nurses unable to work and believe it is business as usual."

While the Ms Fitzpatrick said the ANMF need the additional funding a 50-50 agreement with the Federal Government would bring, she said "Victorian health services are funded to meet the nursing and midwifery staffing requirements of the Safe Patient Care Act".

Speaking specifically about Dandenong Hospital, Ms Fitzpatrick said: "ANMF is in discussions with Monash Health to understand where the shortages are - which wards and which shifts. If they can't meet the Safe Patient Care Act staffing levels, then they must reach a local agreement with the ANMF for alternative staffing that must have the approval of our members."

Monash Health, which runs Dandenong Hospital, has so far yet to respond for comment

## ED statistics prove grim

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Hospital emergency departments in the South East are among the most stretched in metro Melbourne, according to official stats.

Between January and March, there were a staggering 46 patients staying longer than 24 hours in Casey Hospital ED, 43 at Dandenong Hospital and 56 at Monash Medical Centre in Clayton. This compares with just 10 between the three hospitals a year earlier. At the same time, just 40 per cent of emergency patients are being treated in the recommended time at Casey Hospital, 53 per cent at Dandenong Hospital and 36 per cent at Monash Medical Centre.

Emergency patients triaged as category 2 and in need of urgent care are recommended to be treated within 10 minutes. Only 20 per cent of Casey Hospital category 2 emergency patients were seen within the benchmark, 34 per cent at Dandenong Hospital and 17.5 per cent at Monash Medical Centre. Across these categories, the three hospitals rank among the lowest performing in Melbourne. As recently as Saturday 14 May, Monash Medical Centre's ED announced it was diverting patients due to "currently experiencing high demand and long wait times for both adults and children".

The social media post by Monash Health stated: "The most seriously sick or injured will always be cared for first.

"The Department of Health and Ambulance Victoria are assisting to divert less urgent care where possible. All our Emergency Departments, including Monash Medical Centre, remain open for urgent medical emergencies."

In the 2022 State Budget, the Government announced \$235 million to expand Casey Hospital's emergency department.





A moderate number of voters turned up at Dandenong Stadium to vote on Wednesday 11 May. Picture: JONTY RALPHSMITH

# Pre-pollers sceptical of the major parties

By Jonty Ralphsmith

Disillusionment with major parties drove a sway towards minor parties and independents at an early voting centre in Dandenong North. Star Journal spoke to people after they cast their votes at Dandenong Stadium in the seat of Bruce on Wednesday 11 May. Labor have held the seat since 1996 - current MP Julian Hill has served the area since 2016. But there was a clear cynicism about whether the Labor and Liberal Parties had voters best interests at heart. "It wasn't about who I voted for, it was about who I voted against: I didn't want to vote for the big parties," said one voter, summing up the frustrations being felt by those surveyed. Several voters cited political corruption as turning them away from major parties. Members of the ALP, Liberal Party, Greens, and United Australia Party were congenially handing out how-to-vote cards as moderate

crowds cast their votes. UAP lower house candidate Matt Babet and upper house candidate, brother Ralph Babet were in attendance, and Ralph summed up the Star Journal's observations. "People are saying they are sick of the Labor and Liberal duopoly and they want a real third option," Ralph said. "We are the real third option giving people choice - we're all about choice because let's face it, Labor and Liberal are the same on the big core issues." A previous survey by Star News found there was apathy towards the political processes and issues, a sentiment present after people voted. Multiple voters questioned why Australia implemented compulsory voting, while voters were vague in giving the issues that shaped their vote. There were still a number of loyal voters from each side who stuck with the party they have long supported.

Anti Scott Morrison sentiment was also present among some. One said: "We'd be in trouble if Morrison got another term - the states should be happy they had Premiers which kept us apart [during the pandemic] because when the chips are down, Morrison's never there." About half of those spoken to said their reason for voting early was to miss the crowds on election day, while another "didn't want to deal with all the crap that's going to happen in the next week". There were also several people who said they would be away from their electorate, working or overseas on election day. There was a sign promoting Liberal Democrats candidate Christine Skrobo but no-one handing out 'how-to-vote cards' while there was no promotion of One Nation candidate Hayley Deans at the venue. The Federal Election will be held on Saturday 21 May.

## 'People are struggling to make ends meet'

By Cam Lucadou-Wells and Eleanor Wilson

Cost of living pressures are mounting ahead of the 21 May federal election, says the head of a Dandenong-based charity. Cornerstone chief executive Naomi Paterson says a rising number of up to 500 people were desperately seeking food parcels, fresh fruit and veg, clothes and other emergency relief. About 70 were visiting the centre for hot meals. "A lot of people are struggling to make ends meet." Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic two years ago, there has remained a "massive" demand for emergency aid, including from asylum-seeker families without income or welfare support. But rising petrol prices - sometimes topping \$2 a litre for unleaded - have added to the strain. As a result, many clients were forced to stay home for a week because they couldn't afford to fill the tank. "Things would have to change significantly to make a major difference to the situation. Federal candidates had differing proposals to cut the cost of living. Bruce MP Julian Hill said Labor's Economic Plan to deliver cheaper childcare, cheaper power bills and more secure, well-paid jobs would tackle the economic challenges "created on Scott Morrison's watch". "After almost a decade of the Liberals, the costs of essentials are out of control, real wages are falling, and now interest rates are rising," Mr Hill said. "[Labor's economic plan] will reinforce Labor's Budget Strategy, which will make room for smart, targeted investments that expand



Cornerstone CEO Naomi Paterson, right, with Rotary Club member Kam Pow, at a meals service in 2020. 218837 Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

the capacity of the economy and improve the quality of spending, ending Scott Morrison's waste, rorts and corruption." Greens candidate Matthew Kirwan agreed cheaper social services were key in controlling skyrocketing living costs, but added harsher taxes for big corporations was another crucial element to lessening the financial stress. "Right now, one in three big corporations pay no tax," Mr Kirwan said. "Billionaires like Gina Rinehart and Clive Palmer more than doubled their wealth during the pandemic. "While they make huge profits, the rest of us are struggling to cope with the rising costs of living." Free dental, education and childcare along with increases to minimum wages and income support payments were also fundamental policies for the Greens. "As people struggle to pay their mortgages and rental bills, they are hit with unaffordable education, health and childcare expenses," Mr Kirwan said.

"We'll provide the services everyone needs to live a better life. And we'll tax billionaires and corporations to pay for it." Bruce candidate for the Liberal Democrats, Christine Skrobo argued lowering taxes was the answer to addressing the cost of living issues. "We are proposing a \$40,000 tax-free threshold and a flat-rate of 20 per cent above that, which will see Australians keep more of their hard earned money," Ms Skrobo said. She said the high inflation rate was a result of excessive government spending. "The Liberal Democrats will bring back fiscal responsibility and prioritise repaying the national debt." Liberal candidate for Bruce James Moody was contacted for comment, but did not respond by deadline. In response to high cost of living, the incumbent Liberal government has introduced multiple one-off payments for low and middle income earners, cut the fuel excise in half and increased childcare subsidies for second and subsequent children.

## ALP pledges \$15m for newsprint

Federal Labor has announced a \$15 million pledge, if elected to Government, to support media publishers hit by steeping newsprint costs. The rescue package was swiftly matched by the Federal Government, sealing bipartisan support for independent outer-suburban publishers such as Star News Group. On 13 May, Labor opposition communications spokesperson Michelle Rowland said the ALP would support local media diversity and public-interest journalism with a "principles-based, evidence-informed and sustainable" approach. "Regional and local newspaper publishers remain exposed to external shocks, such as newsprint price increases which threaten to wipe out local newspaper titles for good," Ms Rowland said. "Labor raised the alarm on the newsprint crisis last month and extended bipartisan support for the formulation of a crisis response during the pre-election caretaker period. "If Scott Morrison had done his job properly by supporting public interest journalism with measures that were recommended well before Covid-19 and the war in Ukraine, the sector would have been on a more sustainable footing to absorb this price increase." The package includes a \$10 million fund for regional publishers, and \$5 million for independent suburban, First Nations and multicultural newspaper publishers. Ms Rowland also announced a \$12 million fund for community broadcasting, and would keep community TV station Channel 31 on air. She said regional, local and community media faced "challenges and uncertainty" because of "Scott Morrison's failure to provide policy coherence or a stable set of support measures to help sustain the local media that millions of Australians rely on". "It is unacceptable that the Liberal National government has distributed tens of millions in grants without a clear plan." Days earlier, the Coalition offered \$10 million support to regional newspapers only. It caused an outcry from snubbed outer-suburban publishers such as Star News Group. After the ALP promise, Communications Minister Paul Fletcher swiftly matched the extra \$5 million for independent suburban, First Nations and multicultural publishers. "The Coalition Government recognises the important role our local newspaper publishers play in keeping Australia's communities informed," Mr Fletcher said. "We also understand they are under pressure due to the dramatically rising costs of newsprint driven by ongoing volatility overseas. "We will move urgently to deliver the funding, with payments expected to be made early in the new financial year." Mr Fletcher said the Coalition remained concerned about the impact of "Labor's safeguard mechanism" on increasing costs for paper manufacturing in Australia and the "flow-on impacts that will have for the future of our local newspapers". According to the Government, newsprint costs are expected to rise by up to 80 per cent from 1 July due to multiple worldwide factors. They include international demand, Covid, the war in Ukraine, rising input costs in Europe, oil prices and global shipping issues. Star News Group publishes newspapers in the South East, including Pakenham-Berwick Gazette, Berwick Star News, Cranbourne Star News and Dandenong Star Journal.







# IBAC backs witness welfare

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

IBAC Commissioner Robert Redlich has hit back at “much misinformation” being spread about witness welfare at the anti-corruption body’s inquiries.

Mr Redlich told a Parliamentary inquiry on 9 May that any suggestion that IBAC had failed to address any known witness welfare issue was “simply wrong”.

“I do not have an example of where matters came to the attention of the Commission which ought to have led to a particular witness being treated in a more sympathetic and compassionate way.”

The inquiry was launched after the death of former Casey mayor Amanda Stapledon, who had been publicly grilled during IBAC’s Operation Sandon inquiry in early 2020.

She died days after reportedly receiving a draft Operation Sandon report, which investigated dealings involving Casey councillors, Labor MPs and property developers.

It sparked an outcry against IBAC’s conduct from Ms Stapledon’s friends and supporters.

Ms Stapledon’s specific case was ruled out of bounds by inquiry chair and Labor MP Harriet Shing, who repeatedly warned the inquiry could not “prejudice” ongoing inquiries.

This was despite Mr Redlich saying he was “anxious” to explore the issue.

When asked if IBAC took any responsibility for witnesses committing suicide, Mr Redlich said he was keen to show that the case being referred to “should give the committee no



IBAC Commissioner Robert Redlich was anxious to show there was “no cause for concern” over its management of witness welfare.

cause for concern”.

He knew of “no circumstance” in which a witness with known mental health issues, including suicidal ideation, was not protected, he said.

Every witness, prior to public examination, is first assessed as to whether they would suffer “unreasonable damage” to their reputation

and wellbeing, he told the inquiry.

“Precedence” was given to witness welfare over IBAC’s “statutory obligation”.

Mr Redlich said in both Operation Sandon and Operation Watts – which is investigating alleged ALP branch-stacking – there were “persons of interest” with “highly relevant evidence” who were examined in private.

The public examination of a “critical” “person of interest” in an ongoing inquiry was held off for nine months due to the witness’s “medical state”, he said.

Ms Shing shut down the inquiry’s video feed when Liberal MP Kim Wells raised Premier Daniel Andrews’s reportedly being questioned by IBAC in private.

Mr Wells attempted to ask Mr Redlich if it was in order to protect Mr Andrews’s reputation.

Earlier during the hearing, Mr Redlich said there was a “profound misunderstanding” in the public domain that IBAC could act like a Royal Commission.

But the IBAC Act was quite “prescriptive and different”, he said.

According to the Act, examinations are to be generally held in private.

Inquiries are only held in public if IBAC is reasonably satisfied of all of the following criteria:

- That there are exceptional circumstances
- It’s in the public interest
- That there won’t be “unreasonable damage” to a witness’s reputation, safety or wellbeing
- That there is serious corrupt conduct or police misconduct

Mr Redlich said witnesses were examined in private if one or more of the mandatory criteria couldn’t be satisfied.

He said he doubted the validity of the “exceptional circumstances” requirement, but backed the unreasonable damage provision as “beneficial to all concerned”.

## Young parents program praised by Faculty of Education

By Marcus Uhe

A recent report into the Research and Evaluation of the Young Parents Education Program (YPEP) between 2019 and 2021 by the Faculty of Education at Monash University has made a number of findings and recommendations endorsing the importance of the program.

YPEP Learning Hubs at Hallam Senior Secondary College and the Foundation Learning Centre in Narre Warren provide pregnant and parenting young people aged between 15 and 21 the opportunity to complete their education by studying the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning in a supportive learning environment.

Parents bring their babies to their classes until they are either 12 months old or have begun walking, with a Parent Support Worker on deck at all times to lend assistance with feeding, changing and settling.

It seeks to break the cycle of disadvantage for young parents by re-engaging them with education until completion, the report says.

The executive summary of the report states Melbourne’s South East Region, profiled as encompassing the Local Government Areas of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia, have recorded low rates of year 12 completion compared to Greater Melbourne, and is home to 1100 young parents aged between 15 and 21-years-old, according to the 2016 Census.

A Call to Action was held at Hallam Senior Secondary College on Wednesday 4 May, attended by Minister for Women and State Member for Dandenong, Gabrielle Williams, Pearl Subban from Monash University, former Hallam Senior Secondary College Principal Greg McMahon, former YPEP teacher Kate Silvagni, YPEP graduate Nivea Perenise and Young Parents Program Manager, Mary Tresize-Brown.

“It was about bringing together the stakeholders to join a regional round table on young parents education in the region,” Ms Tresize-Brown said.

“The call to action seeks to action the findings and recommendations of the report and shine a light on sustainability of the program.”

Included in the findings was that small class sizes in a “dynamic” and “nurturing” learning environment, with flexibility and more understanding of the individual students’ requirements was “fundamental”, as was the ability for students to relate to each



L-R Greg McMahon, Andrew Simmons (CEO Sellen), Mary Tresize-Brown, Gabrielle Williams, Pearl Subban and Nivea Perenise. 279401  
Picture: GARY SISSONS

other and build camaraderie and commonality.

“Important to student needs is that the Programs starts with them, rather than a structured curriculum, yet balancing the requirements to complete the qualification,” the report said. “Additionally, the young parents straddle different roles, that of parent and student simultaneously – the Program had to be cognisant of both these roles.

“As such, the Program had to wrap around student needs, being more accommodating and adjusting the learning and teaching schedule to suit individual learners.”

Additionally, the location of the facility and the accessibility of onsite assistance, including an on-site Early Parenting Support worker were all considered important factors.

One student in the report noted the ability to have their child with them or near them during their time in the classroom provided a security factor and comfort.

“It’s good that you can bring your baby to school with you,” the student said.

These findings formed the basis of many of the recommendations, along with access to services such as counselling, financial management and first aid included in the educational package.

Another was the adoption of a “team-teaching” approach to reduce the toll on the educator.

Ms Tresize-Brown said a key outcome of the program to provide equitable access for young parents when they attempt to enter the workforce.

It also aims to reinforce the importance of schooling, she said.

“Life outcomes are significantly improved because they have completed year 12. It means the student can compete in further education or employment opportunities.

“It impact parents and children; it places value on education, which means the young parent places value on education for their young child.”

Ms Williams endorsed the program and the opportunities that it provides for young women in particular.

“We know that education is one of the most effective social equalisers - and keeping young women engaged in education supports more equal outcomes across their lifetime,” she said.

“The Young Parents Education Program is changing the lives of young parents so that they can continue their education journey and thrive beyond school. That’s why this program is so important.

“All women and girls deserve to have the best possible education - this program provides young parents the opportunity to learn in a supportive and inclusive environment, and that’s why we are so proud to support it.”

YPEP hubs are located at Hallam Senior Secondary College and the Foundation Learning Centre in Narre Warren, with a third in the South East starting at Cranbourne Secondary College later in the year.

For more information on the program head to [sellen.org.au/ypep/](https://sellen.org.au/ypep/)

To read the report go to [sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/YPEP-evaluation-March-2022.pdf](https://sellen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/YPEP-evaluation-March-2022.pdf)



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Bevan Warner (left) and Richard Wynne (right).



Dr Catherine Brown OAM, CEO Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation poses for a photo with Bevan Warner, CEO of Launch Housing.



The Friday family were thanked for their contribution.

# Housing facility opens

By Jonty Ralphsmith

An Australian-first project offering permanent housing for women and children fleeing family violence is preparing to open in Dandenong.

Viv's Place includes 60 dual key apartments and has the capacity to hold more than 60 women and 140 children.

Stability and security provides an environment where women can rebuild their lives, and a healthy family environment for children breaks the cycle of generational violence.

Wrap around services that may be difficult to access for those fleeing family violence, such as childcare, mental health services and financial services are among the wrap around services that support the housing

State Planning Minister Richard Wynne, local member and Minister for Women and local member Gabrielle Williams, shadow federal

housing minister Jason Clare and mayor Jim Memeti were among those in attendance.

It is based on a model in New York which has created supportive communities in such apartment blocks for more than 30 years.

In an address, Ms Williams said there was a great need for such facilities and that the permanence of the housing was key to recovery.

"It will change lives, it will save lives," Ms Williams said.

"It will give women and children the opportunity to breathe, take the time and space they need to recover and rebuild and to break cycles of violence that are intergenerational."

Its location in Dandenong is also important – Ms Williams told Star Journal that family violence service, Orange Door, had indicated to her that it were fielding calls to help 300 women per week, making it the busiest facility in the state.

Mr Clare highlighted the increasing trend of homelessness across Australia and given that the primary cause of homelessness among women and children is fleeing family violence, the facility addresses the root of the issue.

"Refuges are not enough," Mr Clare said.

"We need long term housing otherwise refuges are overflowing and people are going back to where the violence happened - that's why this is such a good idea and we need more of it."

Whereas refuges are designed to be temporary places to stay, people are residing in them for months; these facilities offer children more stability.

Initially anchored by significant donations from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation and the Shine On Foundation, the proj-

ect subsequently received generous support from the Gandel Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation and many passionate and generous individuals and families, including the Friday family of Melbourne – to make this dream a reality.

Members of the Friday family made a sizeable profit when they sold their house in Box Hill and donated that to the project – Mr Wynne said he had "never heard a story like this before" in his time in public service.

The project has been supported by the Victorian Government and philanthropic, community and individual donors.

It is recognised as an innovative and holistic approach to addressing two of the biggest issues facing Australian society.

The total cost of the Launch Housing project is \$30 million, of which the Victorian Government contributed 40 per cent.

# MP, candidate clash over cemetery site

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

State MP Gabrielle Williams and federal Greens candidate Matthew Kirwan have clashed over the likelihood of a controversial proposal for a cemetery on Dandenong's wetlands.

It follows heated public opposition by residents and Greater Dandenong Council against a Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) proposal for burial grounds south of 1564 Heatherton Road.

Mr Kirwan, who is running in the seat of Bruce, reacted against the Government's 2022 State Budget listing of \$71 million towards a "new memorial cemetery (Dandenong)".

He posted on Instagram that the funding for a "cemetery on the Dandenong Creek floodplains is outrageous".

"The proposal needs to be stopped by the State Government now to prevent flooding like what has happened recently in NSW and Queensland.

"Flood risks to Dandenong residents and the local environment are already increasing due to climate change already without this crazy idea."

Ms Williams, the MP for Dandenong, replied: "This proposal is by no means a done deal, and your description of it is deliberately misleading and politically motivated.

"I understand it's election time, but you should be judged on your honesty as well as your values."

The funding was "not attached to a specific site", Ms Williams wrote.

It was funding "allocated over 4 years for a new cemetery in the Dandenong region, based on the identification of a regional need".



Matthew Kirwan campaigning against a cemetery proposal on Heatherton Road wetlands.

Ms Williams stated the wetlands site was "one of the potential sites" identified by the SMCT.

It would require a planning scheme amendment, "strict" environmental assessments and a flood risk assessment as well as community consultation.

"I share the environmental/flood risk concerns which is why I'm eager for a full, detailed and proper analysis of any proposal and community consultation," Ms Williams stated.

Mr Kirwan, a former Greater Dandenong councillor, told Star Journal that the wetlands proposal was the only one "publicly on the table" and "still bizarrely not yet been hit on the head by the State Government".

He noted that the SMCT's website refers to a Heatherton Road Working Group headed by one of the trust's members.

"If there are other sites being considered, where are they?

"When is (Ms Williams) going to go beyond sharing concerns and stand up for Dandenong

residents and publicly oppose this irresponsible proposal?"

Greater Dandenong chief executive John Bennie, after the council contacted Ms Williams, told a council meeting on 9 May that he did not believe the Budget money was allocated to the "specific project". "We are seeking from the Department of Health a more detailed clarification of whether this is a more general allocation and not a specific one.

"There is no evidence at all that the allocation relates to the sensitive site that has been the subject of much public consideration.

"Ms Williams acknowledges the sensitivity of this particular proposal and has indicated to me that she shares many of the concerns that this Council, Councillors and the community hold in relation to that particular proposal."

SMCT has been searching for a further site to add to its nine cemeteries in the South East.

Three of its current cemeteries – Springvale, Dandenong and Bunurong – are in Greater Dandenong.

# Funding for SEMVAC if Labor wins

Hotham MP Clare O'Neil has announced that Labor will commit funding to the Southeastern Melbourne Vietnamese Associations Council (SEMVAC).

The funding will support the purchase of computers and equipment for the SEMVAC office in Burden Park, Springvale South. The funding will also be used to build a verandah at the front of the SEMVAC office to shelter clients.

SEMVAC officially opened its new office in Burden Park in April 2021.

The council has no paid staff and all activities are carried out by volunteers. These frontline volunteers assist around 1,000 disadvantaged people each year.

SEMVAC helps many sectors of the community including seniors, children, disadvantaged women, and culturally and linguistically diverse residents.

"I am thrilled to be able to support this wonderful organisation that helps so many people in my Hotham electorate," Ms O'Neil said.

"The hard work of this volunteer team is contributing to the wellbeing of local residents."



# Koala arts to the rescue

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A monumental art project featuring 23 giant koalas has raised more than \$18,000 to help protect Australia's increasingly threatened koala populations.

About 100 students and staff across Haileybury College's campuses – including Berwick and Keysborough – as well as seven famous artists got behind the cause.

Each uniquely decorated their own six-kilo-gram koala fibreglass sculpture.

And after two Covid-interrupted years, the works were put up for an online fundraiser auction.

The aim of the Haileybury Koala Project is to raise funds for the Australian Koala Foundation to conserve koalas and their habitat after the devastating Black Summer bushfires in 2019-'20.

Renowned public artist Pamela Irving, Academy Award winner and former Haileybury student Adam Elliot, and artists Joan Blond, Di Crawford, Ian Wood and George Manioudakis donated their talents.

Ms Irving said it was a "joyous event" to see all of the varied koalas together.

"It was quite beautiful. And it was fantastic to see all of the kids' works."

Ms Irving, who has closely observed koalas in the wild, "blissed out" in the trees at her brother's farm in Colac, didn't hesitate to help the cause.

"They're just so happy, very lovely animals.

"Then the images of those poor animals as a result of the fires with their paws burnt – I found it so sad. The pain must have been unimaginable."

She covered her sculpture in a deep lapis lazuli blue and her renowned animal and character forms – such as Larry La Trobe the bronzed dog that features in front of Melbourne Town Hall.

"I wanted to make something bright and



Pamela Irving with her creation for the Haileybury College fundraiser.

happy, after the fires – which were such a sad thing that happened to our beautiful koalas."

During Covid lockdowns, she worked on her koala in her Bentleigh studio – which was fortunately within five kilometres of home.

Sitting in her studio window, the koala became a beacon for the cause.

People spontaneously started to drop off

mitten and blankets for koalas, which were duly passed onto wildlife charities.

Haileybury art teacher and Koala Project coordinator Bambi Johnson said the project launched just at the start of the Covid pandemic.

And got bigger and "more formidable" over the ensuing two years.



Berwick Junior School's decorated koala.



Newlands Early Years' koala artwork.

"The koalas exemplified the hope and resilience of the local community (during Covid).

"The heart of the project was how we've been able to stay on board with it.

"We had to be creative in how to support it and make it work."

One of the koalas will stay at Haileybury College as a lasting reminder of the effort.

## Winter is a gift and a time to reflect on the past

By Vicki Russell and Fr Brian Collins

Over recent months, our faith communities have shared many significant traditional ceremonies and seasons.

For many of us, as we now enter into a quieter time in our rituals and practices, the coming winter season can provide an opportunity to utilise our time to slow down and be a time of reflection.

Winter gives us all an opportunity to reflect on the important and treasured aspects of our lives.

Winter can be a time to reflect on the past and envision the future. Normality as we know it largely stops.

It can be a gift to take the opportunity to reflect on our relationship with our faith, our family, friends and the wider world.

The change in weather enables us to take the opportunity to delve into our inner life.

As we spend less time outdoors in the warmth and sunshine, in the winter stillness



we are given opportunities of intimacy and reflection, to spend more time inside and reflect on our faith tradition and values, the important things in our life.

In addition, winter is a time when the whole family take time for themselves and each other.

Winter is a time for home, for comfort, for good food and warmth, creative pastimes, for reading, for winter sports, for connection with those we love and care about and a time to deepen our connection with the source of all life.

Winter provides an opportunity to allow a



Fr Brian Collins.

spiritual "fallow" time.

Most people would associate the term with a farming process.

Fallow (of farmland) describes the land ploughed and harrowed but left for a period without being sown in order to restore its fertility or to avoid surplus production.

Land is left idle for a season after ploughing and harrowing, so that weeds and insects are killed while the soil regains its fertility.

Our spiritual fallow time is when we take a break from the busy-ness, from doing, from rushing and make time for stillness and the restoration of our inner being.

The season of winter provides a perfect platform for this to occur.

Let us together take the opportunity of the winter season to renew our beliefs and priorities with the new insights and beginnings that this experience offers us.

\* By Vicki Russell and Fr Brian Collins are from Resurrection Parish, Keysborough and St Anthony's Parish, Noble Park.

## LOOKING BACK

Compiled by Dandenong and District Historical Society

100 years ago

18 May 1922

Market Gardeners grievances

At the meeting of the Dandenong Branch of the Victorian Farmers Union on the 6th May, Mr W Cochrane drew attention to the decision of the Victoria Market authorities that no market gardeners would be allowed to sell before 5am and would also have to clean up everything in their stalls before leaving. He thought some action should be taken in regard to this matter, as they could not catch some of the early trains if they are not allowed to sell before 5am. They were paying 30/- a quarter and they considered they were entitled to have their stalls cleaned up for that. Mr G Andrews said the idea of fixing the selling hour at 5 o'clock was to al-

low officials to stay in bed an hour longer. "His lorry left for the market at 4pm, got into town about 11pm and then they would have to wait until 5am to sell their stuff."

50 years ago

16 May 1972

Ex-Rock King special guest

Australia's King of rock 'n' roll in the 1950's, Johnny O'Keefe, is the special guest artist at Kortum Sandown Park Hotel tonight. O'Keefe will also appear on Friday and Saturday nights at the Southern Aurora Hotel Motel. Local comedian Ray Gilson will entertain patrons at Sandown Park Hotel on Friday night. Ray is a newcomer to the entertainment field, but he is fast developing into a first-class entertainer. The Stamford Hotel is running a talent quest on Sunday night. It

will be compered by guest artist Des Kelly a county and western specialist.

20 years ago

20 May 2002

A Refugee for life

A Hallam father of eight went back to his homeland of Afghanistan to fight for freedom in the war against the Taliban and to rediscover himself as an Afghan. But he has returned as neither an Afghan nor an Australian and sees himself only as a "refugee of the world."

Hashmatullah Moslih spent seven months working as an advisor and political analyst for the interim Afghan President. Mr Moslih said he returned to Afghanistan to help in its hour of need. Mr Moslih said, he came here as a refugee and "calls Australia

home". "However due to racism that I faced here, I began to realise that this could never turn out to be my home. Going back to Afghanistan, I realised I don't belong there either. People like me who lost their homeland during their youth, are refugees for life."

5 years ago

15 May 2017

Dandy film makes it big

A Dandenong filmmaker made it onto the small screen during a trip to Los Angeles. Matthew Victor Pastor, 28 hit the red carpet at the Los Angeles, Asian Pacific Film Festival on 28 April to promote his silent film "I am Jupiter I am Biggest Planet." "LA went really, really well," Mr Pastor said. "We didn't win, unfortunately, but the amount of love and support the film got was amazing."

dandenong.starcommunity.com.au





Akuol and Nyibil Amum talk about their son Oyiti at the tribute service. 278849



Pictures: ROB CAREW Friends of Oyiti Amum address the large gathering. 278849

# Father’s inspiring tribute

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

After walking 1000 kilometres, an inspiring Cranbourne father stood still with a hall of family and friends to pay respects to his late son.

It was about “opening up” for Nyibil Amum and wife Akuol Amum and 500 supporters that packed St Anthony’s Catholic Church in Noble Park on 7 May.

They spoke about youth suicide and mental health challenges, and the need to seek help from parents, friends and professionals.

It was just over a year since Mr Amum’s son Oyiti, a supremely talented basketballer and young leader, took his own life.

Mr Amum, a Dandenong-based mental health worker, spoke about knowing the “early warning signs” that your child suffers a mental health issue and to seek early intervention.

“Families must know what to do if they cannot handle their young one.

“Suggest to them to talk to someone who knows young people, encourage them to seek professional help.

“There are people who can help.”

Oyiti’s young friends and peers addressed the event, spelling the “reality of what’s happening in our community”.

Mr Amum felt the mutual support and grief in the room.

“It gave me encouragement to be strong, that I was not alone. I saw others have suffered. “It’s not easy losing your child.”

Recently, Mr Amum embarked on a ‘walk of hope’ from Melbourne to Canberra and Sydney to tackle the tragic scourge of youth suicide.

Along the way, he raised \$10,000 to launch Oyiti Foundation for Multicultural Youth as a



Candles lit in front of a portrait of Oyiti Amum. 278849

“voice for the voiceless”.

And he met with David Coleman, who is Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

The next step is to seek funding to train people in mental health and counselling, so to start providing services within Culturally and

Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

The foundation has teamed up with Red Roo Basketball to stage sports groups on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

“This is a collective effort,” Mr Amum said.

“We need to involve local councils, the local communities to solve this together.”



Singers at the one-year anniversary tribute. 278849



Nyibil Amum addresses the gathering. 278849

In Australia, about 3000 people take their own lives a year – about eight a day. And one in five Australians have a mental health condition.

**Details:** facebook.com/OFFMCY

If you need help, call Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14 or beyond blue on 1300 22 4636.

# Alarming find about pregnant doctors and infertility

By Jonty Ralphsmith

Infertility among doctors has been identified as a major issue by a study carried out in 2021.

The study found that one in three female doctors will have a miscarriage and 50 per cent of the 1099 doctors surveyed indicated they had a miscarriage.

Long working hours are associated with poor pregnancy outcomes and the study also found that 75 per cent of all medical mothers work more than 80 hours per week in their third trimester

Noble Park Secondary College alumni Jasmina Kevric, 2021 Australian Medical Association doctor of the year was co-author of the study and indicated surgeons were particularly affected.

Ms Kevric believes the process of becoming a surgeon needs to be addressed.



Concerning finds about female doctors have been revealed. Picture: SUPPLIED

She said it takes 10-15 years to become a surgeon due to a limited number of positions for a large number of applicants.

A bottleneck then ensues with doctors

left in limbo, the study finding 60 per cent of doctors delay having a family because of their careers.

The average age of a woman when she has her first baby is 29 years old, but among those surveyed it was 32.4, and it was 35 among surgeons.

“The problem with that is from the age of 35 onwards, infertility rates skyrocket,” she said.

“So the more they delay, the higher the risk of infertility.”

Ms Kevric said staffing issues put “a lot of pressure to continue your career while being pregnant”.

“It is very difficult to find someone to cover you when you need to go to a neonatal appointment and the pressure is then on your colleagues to pick up our work.

“There is guilt associated with leaving colleagues and the resentment colleagues may

feel towards the pregnant.”

Ms Kevric proposed two potential solutions to the issues identified.

To streamline the process, Ms Kevric suggested that people can go straight from medical school to the training program, rather than require an additional Bachelor’s Degree, as is currently the case.

What she suggests is similar to the American system, which she highlights is beneficial because it provides people with expertise and training from surgeons earlier.

“Another option,” she said, “is a flexible training program.

“It allows them to work one week on week off which is and provides better work life balance.

“It has been shown there is no change in clinical experience and outcomes – doctors are still competent – but they receive the benefit of having the work/life balance.”



# A city of dreams

By Elle Cecil

Located approximately 35 kilometres to the south east of Melbourne, the City of Greater Dandenong encompasses Bangholme, Dandenong, Dandenong North, Dandenong South, Keysborough, Lyndhurst, Noble Park, Noble Park South, Springvale and Springvale South.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), over 168,000 people called Greater Dandenong home in 2020.

As the most culturally diverse region in the country, over half of Greater Dandenong's residents were born overseas at 87,609 people. This has resulted in a rich combination of cultures in the region, with more than two thirds of residents speaking a language other than English at home. The broad variety of foods, practices, traditions and customs means that Greater Dandenong is full of wholesome and interesting experiences.

Of the 17,661 businesses operating in the Greater Dandenong region, the majority industry is transport, postal and warehousing at 3,487 businesses, construction at 2,816, rental, hiring and real estate services at 1,604 and manufacturing at 1,423.

As of 2016, industries with the highest proportions of the 60,306 employees in the Greater Dandenong region are manufacturing at 15.8 per cent, health care and social assistance at 11.2 per cent, retail trade at 10.4 per cent and construction at 7.3 per cent.

The ABS showed that the total number of occupied private dwellings, or homes, in the region is 48,566. The 2020 land area of the Greater Dandenong region is 12,954.7 hectares, according to the ABS.

Showcasing the best of Greater Dandenong, this feature includes things to see and do, places to eat and drink, sport and recreational



Lonsdale Street, Dandenong. 280956

Picture: GREATER DANDENONG CITY COUNCIL

activities as well as retail and entertainment must-sees.

### Arts and Entertainment

With venues such as the Drum Theatre and Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre providing rich cultural and creative experiences to the Greater Dandenong region, it's no wonder that thousands of patrons attend exhibitions, shows and workshops in the area each year.

The Walker Street Gallery and Arts Centre is funded by the City of Greater Dandenong, and features a band room, performing arts centre and gallery space. The Drum Theatre features a performing arts centre that seats over 520

people inside the former Dandenong Town Hall's historic heritage facade.

### Environment and Sustainability

The thriving variety of environments found in the Greater Dandenong region provide a rich and beautiful home for wildlife to live and for residents and visitors to enjoy. Wetland and bush reserves are managed by council, which aims to create a strongly biodiverse environment for all.

Whether you cycle or walk through a variety of beautiful and weaving trails, share a picnic or barbecue with friends and family, take the kids to the playground or go bird and animal

spotting, Greater Dandenong offers an endless variety of spaces to explore on your weekends or days off!

With four community gardens and over 20 school community gardens, throughout the region, many Greater Dandenong residents share an interest in gardening and community integration, where members can tend to plants to grow and share food, as well as donate it. It is a great learning opportunity as well as keeping people active and healthy outdoors.

### Sport and Recreation


With a total of 30 sporting reserves, the City of Greater Dandenong facilitates more than 100 sporting organizations including AFL, netball, cricket, soccer and rugby.

Get down to Rowley Allan Reserve in Keysborough where you can spend some time in the cricket nets, kicking the footy, playing lawn bowls, trawling the playground or shooting hoops on the netball court. A few of the other sites in the region include Hemmings Park in Dandenong, which has barbecue and picnic facilities, a basketball court, walking or biking trails and a skate park, and Alex Nelson Reserve in Springvale South, which also features a great playground, soccer field and tennis courts.

Have a swim or complete a gym or group fitness session at the Noble Park Aquatic Centre or Dandenong Oasis, the latter of which also features squash courts.

Parks and sporting facilities in the area also feature dog off-leash areas, pavilions, athletics tracks, fitness equipment, table tennis tables, volleyball courts, a baseball diamond and rugby and hockey fields.

A variety of upgrades to facilities include an all abilities extension to the playground at Ross Reserve, new lighting being installed at Tattersson Park Oval, and the redevelopment of the WJ Crow Pavilion at Thomas Carroll Reserve.



### Enjoy Luminosity

Until 29 May, the City of Greater Dandenong is turning the night lights on.

Visit your favourite restaurant for dinner and then take a stroll through streets known and unfamiliar to explore *Luminosity*, light-based art installations and projections across Springvale, Noble Park and Dandenong.

Springvale Multicultural Place will become a glowing, alien landscape with works and workshops from **The Indirect Object**.

Dandenong's Thomas Street and surrounds will feature installations curated by the Centre for Projection Art, showcasing **Atong Atem**, **Steven Rhall**, Hazara Community work developed by **Andrew Garton** and **Yandell Walton**, **Lilah Benetti** and **Roshan Ramesh**.

Noble Park will be lit up by internationally renowned projection artist **Nick Azidis** and local artists with Connection Arts Space.

*Luminosity* is a component of the *In Situ* events program funded by the Victorian Government's Outdoor Economy Package.

For more information visit [greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/in-situ](http://greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/in-situ)




Photo credit: *In Situ Luminosity*, Springvale: **The Indirect Object**, Oasis, a synthetic garden made from recycled and reclaimed materials.

12550045-DL20-22



### Visit your local library

Greater Dandenong Libraries has a wide range of free and exciting regular programs for the whole community to enjoy.

- **Peer2Peer Homework Club**, every Monday, 4pm-6pm, during school terms, Dandenong Library
- **Conversation Circle**, every Thursday, 6pm-7.30pm, during school terms, Dandenong Library
- **Reading Circle**, first Wednesday of the month, 11am-12pm, Dandenong Library

To find out about more programs visit [greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/libraries](http://greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/libraries) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram @greaterdandenonglibraries.



12550044-DL20-22



# Have you been to the Drum?

Remember the buzz of the box office as you grab your tickets? The anticipation as you hear those bells chime and the hush as lights go down?

A beautiful historic building, teeming with quality programming, The Drum Theatre is a place for people to meet, connect, create and be inspired. May 21, strap yourself in for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow. A night of stand-up, sketch, satire, silliness and song in this rip-roaring road trip designed to satisfy all your comedy cravings. Featuring Brett Blake (MC), Blake Freeman <<https://www.comedyfestival.com.au/2022/shows/blake-freeman>>, Jay Wymarra, Prue Blake (winner 2021 Raw Comedy National Grand Final) and Takashi Wakasugi (Japan) you won't be disappointed!

The Drum supports emerging local talent. You can too at Our Beat, a free monthly open stage night that brings together musicians, artists, actors, comedians, dancers, and the community. A chance to connect with like-minded people. Join in or simply marvel at our local talent. Lift your theatre experience to the next level and become a Drum Member. For only \$25 (including \$20 credit towards a performance at the Drum Theatre), get discounted tickets for selected theatre programs and no-fee refunds, with exchanges up to 48 hours before a show. Enjoy invitations to Season Launches and exclusive offers and pre-sale booking opportunities. Need more? Experience benefits at our partner businesses with ten per cent off the cost of pre-show meals at the Beletti Restaurant Cafe Bar, or Ettamo Eatery and ten per cent off the cost of accommodation at Dandenong City Edge Apartment Hotels. Try this charming theatre for the first time or come back to a familiar favourite. The program will delight with something for everyone at prices that will surprise. Visit [drum.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au](http://drum.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au) or call 03 8571 1666, 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday.



The Drum Theatre, Dandenong. 280962

## DRUM THEATRE



**Tamil Puththaandu Vivha 2022 and Kalai Vizha**  
Sunday 8 May, 5pm  
COMMUNITY EVENT



**Paradise Lots**  
Thursday 12 May, 7pm  
Friday 13 May, 7pm  
Saturday 14 May, 7pm  
CARPARK PERFORMANCE



**Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow**  
Saturday 21 May, 7.30pm  
COMEDY



**The Sapphires**  
Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm  
DRAMA AND MUSIC



**Brass Monkeys - school holiday circus**  
Saturday 2 July, 2pm  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY



**Circling Time - Kutcha Edwards**  
Friday 8 July, 7.30pm  
SONG AND STORIES



**Opera Australia - The Barber of Seville**  
Friday 15 July, 7.30pm  
Saturday 16 July, 7.30pm  
DRAMA AND MUSIC



**Victorian State Ballet - The Little Mermaid**  
Saturday 20 August, 7.30pm  
Sunday 21 August, 2.30pm  
DANCE

Drum Theatre Corner Lonsdale & Walker streets, Dandenong | 8571 1666  
[DRUM.GREATERDANDENONG.VIC.GOV.AU](http://DRUM.GREATERDANDENONG.VIC.GOV.AU)





# Lukazade nears \$60k

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Team Lukazade is nearing a staggering \$60,000 donations target for Monash Children's Hospital.

The team was formed in support of Greater Dandenong councillor Lana Formoso's nine-year-old son Luka, who was diagnosed with leukaemia during Easter.

Since then, Luka hasn't left hospital. He's endured several blood transfusions and chemotherapy while missing what would have been his first school camp, Cr Formoso said.

She dedicated special thanks to Luka's oncologist Dr Peter Downie and his "entire incredible team", and to staff at the Reef and Canopy Ward.

"These people are angels on earth!

"We have been overwhelmed with the amount of attention Luka has received to support this outstanding hospital in such a short period of time.

Having people that have never even met Luka that have sent donations and well wishes is just heart warming.

"As devastating and debilitating as this diagnosis has been on our family, just knowing that there are services at MCH helping the children and their families as well as saving children's lives every day has given us great comfort and hope."

Cr Formoso also urged people to donate blood, with stocks plummeting to dire levels across Australia since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As of 13 May, the team had surpassed \$49,000.

It was well on its way to reaching its \$60,000 target for the Walk for Monash Children's Hospital fundraiser in Jells Park on 22 May.

Cr Formoso's councillor colleagues are believed to be organizing T-shirts and joining the fundraising walk.



Luka with his parents Daniel and Lana Formoso are backing an annual Monash Children's Hospital fundraiser.

"Luka has a long road ahead and we know we have the best support every step of the way from all of the staff at MCH, our wonderful friends, family, his school and all the sporting

clubs Luka has been involved in," Cr Formoso said.

"We will be forever grateful. We really hope to see everyone at the walk on Sunday to not

only get some fresh air and exercise, but to show support for this incredible hospital."

Funds raised will boost the hospital's Music and Child Life Therapy program, which uses a range of song, instruments, toys, play and arts to "actively support" the young patients.

"Music and art offer an accessible way for people to connect, communicate, express themselves and maintain their identity amongst so much change and uncertainty," program head Amy Thomas says.

"When people feel unwell, it can be a significant part of a person's healthcare."

Among her highlights at the hospital is the Moose Imagination Tree.

"This is a beautiful play space for our patients and families.

"I love walking past seeing kids enjoying this area and feeling more comfortable coming to hospital."

Ms Thomas said the funds would go towards "much-needed resources" for clinical care.

"Since the pandemic many of our resources stay with our patients according to infection prevention procedures, and therefore we are requiring additional resources to support our patients during procedures and clinical sessions."

It would also help create extra programs where there were "gaps in services", and to help meet the "changing needs of our patients and the community".

The annual walk has raised \$1.2 million for the hospital in the past decade. As of 13 May, it was nearly a third towards its \$300,000 target for this year.

The Walk for Monash Children's Hospital is at Jells Park, Wheelers Hill on 22 May. It features a kids 1km walk, a 5km walk and a 10km walk from 9.45am.

Details: <https://monash.grassrootz.com/walk-for-monash-children-s-hospital-2022/team-lukazade?tab=donations>

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Welcome to ESG. 276553

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Reception girls, Jasmine, Cinzia, Jo and Janet. 276553

So come along with your family, and enjoy having all your dental needs met with our wellegequipped team at Endeavour Smiles Group.

## Health tips for women

Health experts agree that women over 65 should make self-checking a part of their regular routine. Things they can check at home include:

- **SKIN:** Monitor freckles, moles and skin blemishes for changes in size, shape or colour or anything unusual such as pain or itch. See your doctor if you notice anything unusual.
- **Women at high risk of skin cancer** need regular examination by their doctor or dermatologist.
- **DENTAL CARE:** You can reduce your risk of tooth decay, gum disease and tooth loss if you clean your teeth regularly, drink fluoridated water, eat a low-sugar diet, and visit the dentist at least once a year.
- **DIET:** You can improve your general health by eating a variety of nutritious healthy foods, and having regular meals and a healthy eating plan.
- **WEIGHT:** Maintaining a healthy weight can prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes and arthritis.
- **ALCOHOL:** 'Low risk' drinking is defined

as no more than two standard drinks (for example, 100 ml of wine) on any day and at least two alcohol-free days per week.

- **SMOKING:** Increases your risk of many diseases including heart disease, stroke, lung disease and osteoporosis (loss of bone strength). If you smoke, try to quit. There is no safe smoking level.
- **EXERCISE:** Regular exercise can prevent diseases developing, as well as being good for your emotional health. At least 2.5 hours of exercise per week is recommended.
- **MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH:** If you are experiencing symptoms such as intense sadness, irritability, fatigue, anxiety, or have had changes to your eating or sleeping habits, see your doctor to discuss these symptoms.
- **OF NOTE:** Intimate partner violence is one of the biggest impacts on women's health. If you are experiencing family violence and don't have someone to talk to, call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).

Source: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au).



Health professionals encourage women over 65 to carry out regular health checks.

Picture: ISTOCK



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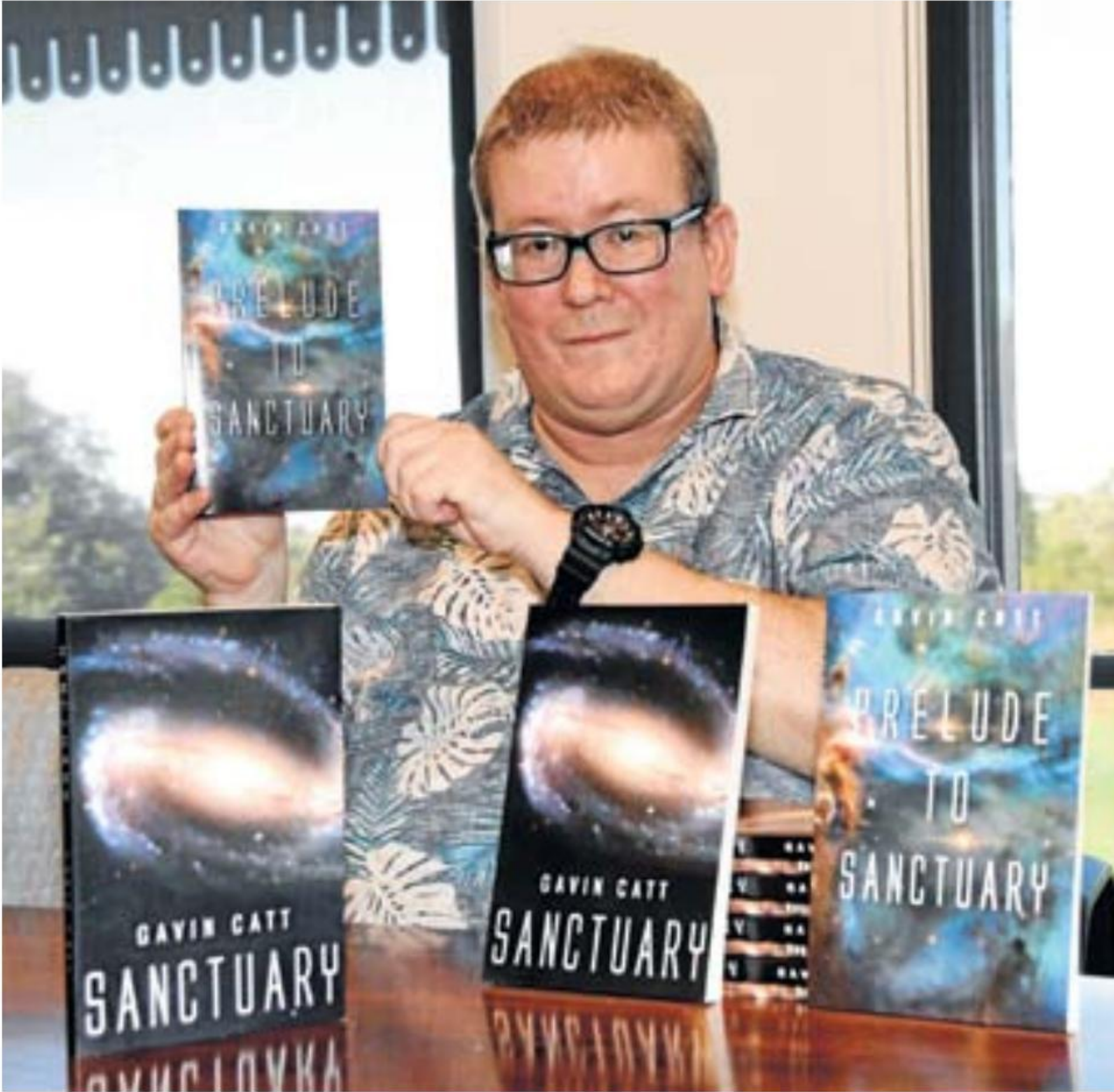
- **Dandenong** Coles Express 61-65 Cheltenham Road
- **Dandenong** United Service Station (Pie Face) 100 Cheltenham Road
- **Dandenong** Dandy Mart 17 Cleeland Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Market 40 Cleeland Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong RSL 44-50 Clow Street
- **Dandenong** India Bazaar 77 Foster Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Oasis Heatherton Road & Cleeland Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong IGA 78-84 Hemmings Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Neighbourhood House 34 King Street
- **Dandenong** Well Springs for Women 79 Langhorne Street
- **Dandenong** Remax Real Estate Shop 14, 30-32 Langhorne Street
- **Dandenong** Bestway Supermarket 200-208 Lonsdale Street
- **Dandenong** City of Greater Dandenong 225 Lonsdale Street
- **Dandenong** Creston Real Estate 264 Lonsdale Street
- **Dandenong** Hall & Partners First National 254 Lonsdale Street
- **Dandenong** Drum Theatre Lonsdale Street & Walker Street
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Plaza 23-55 McCrae Street
- **Dandenong** Coles Supermarket 23-55 McCrae Street (Dandenong Plaza)
- **Dandenong** Rockyz Mini Mart 10 Princes Highway
- **Dandenong** LH Fresh Supermarket 169 Princes Highway
- **Dandenong** Caltex Dandenong 154-156 Princes Highway
- **Dandenong** Coles Supermarket Dandenong 23-26 Princes Highway
- **Dandenong** Genesis Fitness Club Dandenong 63 Scott Street
- **Dandenong** Valley Village Mews 112 Stud Road
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Basketball Stadium 270 Stud Road
- **Dandenong** Caltex Star Mart Stud Road & Heatherton Road
- **Dandenong** Dandenong Lotto 308 Thomas Street
- **Dandenong** Gulistan Supermarket 187-189 Thomas Street
- **Dandenong** Quest Hotel 2-Oct Walker Street
- **Dandenong** McLennan Real Estate First floor, 126 Walker Street
- **Dandenong** North Foodworks Dandenong North 42-44 Brady Road
- **Dandenong** North Dunearn Pharmacy 11a Dunearn Road
- **Dandenong** North Coles Express 166 Heatherton Road & Stud Road
- **Dandenong** North BP Service Station Heatherton Road & Stud Road
- **Dandenong** North Dandenong North Senior Citizens Club 41a Latham Crescent
- **Dandenong** North FoodWorks Menzies Cellars 52 Menzies Avenue
- **Dandenong** North Menzies Milkbar 64 Menzies Avenue
- **Dandenong** North IGA Friendly 54 Outlook drive
- **Dandenong** North Liberty Fuel 182 Stud Road
- **Dandenong** South Georges Lunch Box 22a Amberley Crescent
- **Dandenong** South BP Service Station 175-187 Greens Road
- **Dandenong** South Lunchmaster 3/491 Hammond Road
- **Dandenong** South Kirkham Road Milk Bar 102 Kirkham Road
- **Dandenong** South Woolworths Supermarket 81-125 Princes Highway
- **Dandenong** South Shell Service Station 50 South Gippsland Highway
- **Dandenong** South United Petroleum 314 South Gippsland Highway
- **Dandenong** South Caltex Service Station 275-295 South Gippsland Highway
- **Dingley Village** Dingley Village Newsagency Shop 2/79 Centre Dandenong Road
- **Doveton** Doveton News and Lotto 7 Autumn Place
- **Doveton** Bottle O 2-Apr Linden Place
- **Doveton** Shell Service Station 48 Princes Highway
- **Endeavour Hills** Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre Cnr Heatherton Road & Matthews Flinders Avenue
- **Endeavour Hills** Woolworths Service Station Cnr Heatherton Road & Matthews Flinders Avenue (Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre)
- **Endeavour Hills** O'Brien Real Estate Shop PS 5A Cnr Heatherton Road & Matthews Flinders Avenue (Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre)
- **Endeavour Hills** Coles Supermarket Cnr Heatherton Road & Matthew Flinders Avenue (Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre)
- **Endeavour Hills** Woolworths Supermarket Cnr Heatherton Road & Matthew Flinders Avenue (Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre)
- **Endeavour Hills** 7 Eleven Endeavour Hills Cnr Heatherton Road & Power Road
- **Endeavour Hills** Endeavour Hills Milk Bar 13 Gleneagles Drive
- **Endeavour Hills** Endeavour Hills Medical Centre 61 Heatherton Road
- **Endeavour Hills** Liberty Service Station 13-17 Heatherton Road
- **Endeavour Hills** Ocean Blue Milk Bar 90/92 John Fawker Drive
- **Endeavour Hills** Nicholls Gledhill Real Estate 2 Raymond McMahon Boulevard
- **Eumemmerring** Atura Hotel May-17 Doveton Avenue
- **Eumemmerring** Caltex Woolworths Service Station 40/44 Princes Highway
- **Eumemmerring** BP Service Station 60-64 Princes Highway
- **Hampton Park** Hampton Park Library 26 Stuart Avenue
- **Keysborough** Caltex Keysborough 248 Cheltenham Road
- **Keysborough** Parkmore Shopping Centre 317 Cheltenham Road
- **Keysborough** Barry Plant Real Estate Shop 1,320 Cheltenham Road
- **Keysborough** 7 Eleven Keysborough 309 Cheltenham Road & Cnr Kingsclere Road
- **Keysborough** Woolworths Supermarket 317 Cheltenham Road (Parkmore Shopping Centre)
- **Keysborough** Coles Supermarket 317 Cheltenham Road (Parkmore Shopping Centre)
- **Keysborough** O'Briens Real Estate Shop 6, 317 Cheltenham Road (Parkmore Shopping Centre)
- **Keysborough** City of Greater Dandenong Shop A07, 317 Cheltenham Road (Parkmore Shopping Centre)
- **Keysborough** Michaels IGA 466 Cheltenham Road
- **Keysborough** Keysborough Learning Centre 402 Corrigan Road
- **Keysborough** Foodworks Keysborough 285-289 Corrigan Road
- **Mulgrave** Waverley Gardens Shopping Centre 271 Police Road
- **Noble Park** Sandown Park Hotel Corrigan Road
- **Noble Park** Coles Supermarket 1 Douglas Street
- **Noble Park** Noble Park Newsagency 22 Douglas Street
- **Noble Park** Harvey Real Estate 26 Douglas Street
- **Noble Park** Century 21 Real Estate 38 Douglas Street
- **Noble Park** Ray White Real Estate 42 Douglas Street
- **Noble Park** Caltex Woolworths Heatherton Rd & Chandler Highway
- **Noble Park** Noble Park RSL 1128 Heatherton Road
- **Noble Park** Lucky Star Lotto 1268 Heatherton Road
- **Noble Park** Cellarbrations 3 Leonard Ave
- **Noble Park** Noble Park Aquatic Centre 9 Memorial Drive
- **Noble Park** Noble Park Community Centre Memorial Drive (Ross Reserve)
- **Noble Park** Noble Park Bowls Club 56 Moodemere Street
- **Noble Park** Barry Plant Real Estate 390 Princes Highway
- **Noble Park** Harrisfield Milkbar 519 Princes Highway
- **Noble Park** North Halton Road Milk Bar 65 Coolavin Road
- **Noble Park** North Jan Wilson Community Centre Halton Road (Barry J Powell Reserve)
- **Noble Park** North Jacksons Road Service Station 139 Jacksons Road
- **Springvale** Century 21 Real Estate Shop 5-6/64 Buckingham Avenue
- **Springvale** Springvale Shopping Centre 46-58 Buckingham Avenue
- **Springvale** KFL Supermarket 46-58 Buckingham Avenue (Springvale Shopping Centre)
- **Springvale** Springvale Learning & Activities Centre 1 Osborne Avenue
- **Springvale** Springvale RSL 23 Osborne Avenue
- **Springvale** Caltex Woolworths Springvale 102 Police Road
- **Springvale** Aobao Milk Bar 106 Police Road
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- **Springvale** Springvale Library 411 Springvale Road
- **Springvale** City of Greater Dandenong Customer Service Centre 397-405 Springvale Road
- **Springvale** South Southvale Newsagency 565 Springvale Road
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Gavin Catt is a sci-fi buff. 277957

# Author's coup

By Jonty Ralphsmith

A Hallam-based author has had two books published with UK-based publisher, Olympia and says many more are on the way.

Gavin Catt is a sci-fi buff with a love of storytelling, harnessing his creative spark to work on a series of novels.

In January 2020, Gavin planned his year so he could dedicate lots of time to his writing - The lockdowns resulted in Gavin being asked to take leave from his role as a clerical officer, giving him more time to write the book, therefore speeding up the process of publishing.

Focussing on concepts of peace, escapism and humankind, Gavin's books log the adventures of the characters on an inter-galactic adventure, inspired by an episode of Star Trek.

The stories, which are handwritten twice before he types and submits them to sift out errors, are available on sale on Amazon and Kindle, at Walmart in USA and more.

It took until the book was sent to the sixth publisher for it to finally be accepted, but Gavin was unfazed and knows it can take up to five years before prospective readers catch

wind of its availability so is remaining patient and ambitious.

Gavin, now middle-aged, enjoyed writing short stories during his youth and has spent time on community radio, piecing together essays and writing songs in the intervening years.

Through his stories, Gavin hopes to express humankind's need to evolve.

While it is set 400 years in to the future and outside the Milky Way, he has retained references to everyday life as people in 2022 so that it remains relatable for his readers.

"I want to show that irrespective of political orientation or personal characteristics, people are just people, he said.

"It doesn't matter who or what you are and, if you don't treat other people with respect, what hope is there.

Humans' war-like nature has helped us to evolve but we need to evolve past that and make a physical conscious effort to evolve.

The advent of the pandemic influenced the narrative, as seeing Melbourne "look like a country town on a Sunday afternoon" helped Gavin visualise what an alternate reality in another galaxy could look like.

## WHAT'S ON

### The Social Knitwork

If you enjoy knitting and spending time with like minded people, join our Social Knitwork at Dandenong Library each Wednesday morning. Come along and make new friends while building on skills, sharing patterns, stories and good times.

- Sessions held every Wednesday 10am-12.30pm.
- Location: Dandenong Library.

### Stretching workshop at The Open Door:

Join us for a 20-minute stretching workshop where we combine breathing exercises and gentle stretches to music. Stretching is a great way to nourish our bodies and muscles and prep ourselves for meditation. All are welcome.

- When: Monday 23 May 2pm-2.20pm (followed by Awareness Meditation at 2.30pm)
- Where: The Open Door, 110 Ann St, Dandenong A gold coin donation is welcome.
- Please contact Jo/Tayla on 97918664 or email theopendoor@ssjg.org.au to book in or for more info!

### A Floral Muse Exhibition:

An opportunity to admire the beauty of the dec-

# Probus club hits 30 years

For 30 years, Combined Probus Club of Sandown has been a hub of fun, friendship and learning. It marked the birthday in style at a luncheon at Club Noble Bistro on Wednesday 27 April.

Hosting the lunch was the club's president Geoffrey Pritchard, wife Jean and members of the anniversary committee. Diners had the chance to reminisce over the club's early photos.

In a speech at the lunch, Greater Dandenong mayor Jim Memeti said the celebration epitomised the core strength of Probus Clubs. They provided a valuable service by hosting a range of intellectual, cultural and recreational activities, he said.

Noble Park/Dingley Rotary Club past president Ron Damon, who first chartered Sandown Probus Club 30 years ago, presented current president Mr Pritchard with a commemorative certificate.

Mr Carter, another Rotary past president, as well as Sandown Probus Club's life member and foundation member Pauline Collins reminisced on their long involvement.

Guests included Noble Park Probus Club president Lesley Jarutis and activities officer Beverley Hargreaves. The club's speaker organiser Ruth Baum said Grace, and life member and long-time special functions organiser Shirley Constantine cut the 30th anniversary cake. Natalie Jay provided entertainment.



Mayor Jim Memeti, Combined Probus Club of Sandown president Geoffrey Pritchard and wife Jean Pritchard.



The special commemorative cake.



Shirley Constantine cuts the club's 30th anniversary cake.



A draw your pet art series will be held at Springvale Library on Tuesday 17 May. Picture: SUPPLIED

### Art series-draw your pets-Springvale

Be guided to capture your pets personality on paper. Professional artist Samantha Thompson will show you how to use dry pastels, colour and shape to create a contemporary art piece to capture a beloved pet. Bring a collection of images of your pet on the day as reference images.

- When: Tuesday 17 May 2022, 6:30pm -8:00pm.
- Where: Springvale Library - 5 Hillcrest Grove, Springvale

- Location: Benga, Heritage Hill Museum and Historic Gardens - 66 McCrae St, Dandenong.

### Luminosity - Springvale

Pull on your favourite autumn coat and take a stroll through streets known and unfamiliar. Visit your favourite restaurant for dinner and explore

the luminous art works and light-based art installations and projections.

- When: Tuesday 17 May - Sunday 29 May, 6pm-11pm.
- Where: Multicultural Place, Buckingham Avenue, Springvale.

### Luminosity - Noble Park

Noble Park Public Hall will be lit up by internationally renowned projection artist Nick Azidis.

- Where: Noble Park Public Hall. When: 35 Buckley's Lane, Noble Park Friday 13 May - Sunday 29 May, 6pm-11pm

### Always love the music

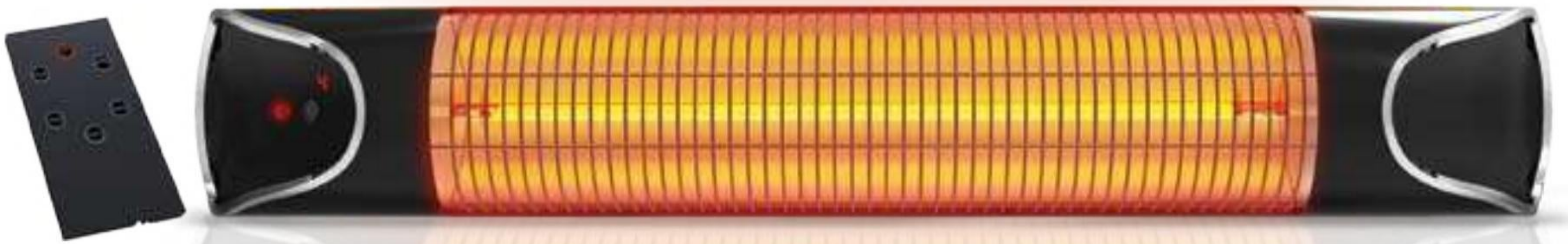
Roy Theaker, a former concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and his band present a dynamic and energetic show of a range of musical genres that will excite, delight and amuse. Prepare to be charmed, entertained and enthralled. Includes complimentary morning tea and a parking voucher

- Duration: 75 minutes.
- Location: Drum Theatre, Dandenong.
- Time: Thursday 19 May at 10.30am.
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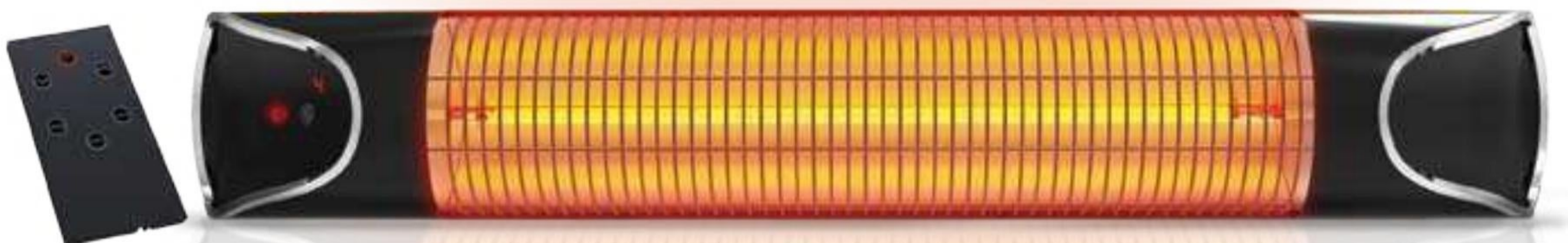


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# A book inspired by nature

By Eleanor Wilson

Ninety-year-old Nina Collins smiled as she opened an old, red leather hymn book to reveal pages peppered with pressed bird feathers.

“Two of her favourite things, her church hymn book and the feathers she puts in them,” her daughter Marlene Laporte said.

As they sat in the living room of Mrs Laporte’s Lynbrook home surrounded by copies of her debut children’s book, Heather Treasures Feathers, there is no doubt where the book’s inspiration came from.

“My mum loves nature and she loves collecting all kinds of things from the park, mostly feathers,” Mrs Laporte said.

“I just thought to myself it would be a nice thing to get a book out and dedicate this book to mum in particular, to acknowledge her love for nature and the things she’s actually taught us through nature and how to appreciate the little things that people take for granted.”

Growing up in Hyderabad in India’s south, Mrs Laporte attests life was hard for the family.

“My mum has been a great inspiration to us, I lost my dad at a young age and she brought us all up,” she said through teary eyes.

“She did a marvellous job and you can see how well she’s looked after herself.”

Working full time as a stenographer while raising six children on her own, Mrs Laporte recalled her mother didn’t have time to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, like going for a leisurely stroll in the park to admire her surroundings.

“My husband died on 4 September and our last baby was born 10 days later,” Mrs Collins said.

“She was like a mum and dad to us. Life was very hard,” Mrs Laporte added.

“It taught us a lot back then and we’ve learned to appreciate being in Australia. It’s a



Lynbrook local Marlene Laporte has dedicated her debut children’s book to mum Nina, just in time for Mother’s Day. 278624  
Pictures: STEWART CHAMBERS

wonderful country I must say.”

The family migrated to Melbourne’s south east in the early 2000s and said they had received “so many blessings” since then.

“There’s never been a moment we cannot be thankful for being in Australia, you know I never would have dreamt about writing a book,” Mrs Laporte said

An aged care worker, Mrs Laporte came up with the idea to write a children’s book while in isolation with Covid in January.

“I was isolating with Covid at home, feeling

very bored and I started typing up some stories and Heather Treasures Feathers crossed my mind,” she said.

Despite being approached by a publishing house from the UK, Mrs Laporte decided to tackle the task of self-publishing, with the aim to present the book to her mum for Mother’s Day.

Remarking the book as awesome, Mrs Collins has already taken a liking to her copy of Heather Treasures Feathers.

“I put my name on my book, its a beautiful book...any young child who reads it will love



Mrs Collins enjoys going on long drives with daughter Marlene and her husband Carlyle Laporte. 278624



Mrs Collins developed a love for nature, particularly feathers, in her retirement. 278624

it,” she beamed.

Mrs Laporte said proceeds from the sales of Heather Treasures Feathers would be split between three charities dear to her heart, including Save the Children, Kids With Cancer Foundation and a Children’s orphanage in Cambodia.

Heather Treasures Feathers is available for order as an e-book on Amazon at amzn.to/39D9dvB

To purchase a hard copy of the book, Mrs Laporte welcomes contact at tales.marlenelaporte@gmail.com

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# Culley showcases class

By Jonty Ralphsmith

That's what you call a statement game.

Dandenong Stingrays midfielder Jai Culley was too big and strong in the Colgate Young Guns v Vic Metro game at Avalon Airport Oval on Saturday 7 May.

Culley's 17 and 18-year-old opponents couldn't lay a hand on him.

Eligible for the mid-season draft on Wednesday 1 June, 13 clubs nominated to watch Culley as the game provided scouts with an opportunity to assess the best young talent pitted against each other.

The 19-year-old vindicated the hype with contested marks and excellent disposal by hand and foot in a first-half masterclass.

That's before you mention his four goals.

The best of that quartet saw him use his trademark raking kick to receive a handball and convert on the run from 55.

"He's certainly the best 19-year-old in the NAB League – there's no doubt about that," Rays coach Nick Cox said, admitting his bias.

He did all that with no competitive footy under his belt since Dandenong's round two clash on Sunday 10 April due to a minor shoulder injury.

He fell away in the second half after receiving a heavy hit midway through the match - and probably owing to a lack of match-fitness after his time on the sidelines - but by then there was no way back for Vic Metro.

"He was super clean, used his size and strength well in contests, he was physical and he just executed really well and made things look very smooth and very easy," Young Guns coach Matt O'Connor said.

"He was clearly at the level if not setting a standard for the level."

While Culley's hardness and bodywork were eye-catching, his work-rate has been equally pleasing for Cox this season.

In 2021, he averaged 11 disposals and a goal



Jai Culley is attracting plenty of attention after a strong few games to start the season. 280519  
Picture: JAZZ BENNETT

from his nine games, playing as a medium forward but lacked the conditioning to reach his potential in the midfield.

This year Culley has the tank to play as a grunt inside midfielder and has turned his size into muscle after a vigorous off-season with Dandenong Strength and Conditioning coach Ben Benson.

That work has translated into more opportunities for possession, greater cleanliness and more balanced running patterns.

"From where he has come from to where he

is now – he has just learnt to train like an elite player and credit to him for the stuff he has done away from us," Cox said.

"If he can't impact a contest he's getting into a position defensively or offensively to be involved in the next chain of possession."

The Rays have known what Culley has been capable of for a little while.

He didn't have the linear journey through the Dandenong ranks, missing the cut for the under 16s squad, but then Dandenong talent manager Darren Flanigan and Cox found their man on a wet night in 2019.

Culley's game in an interleague bout at Lloyd Park in Langwarrin was a microcosm of the traits that have given him a supreme reputation in the NAB League.

He retains his laid-back spark, but now with greater perspective and professionalism, Culley would fit right in on an AFL list according to Cox.

The coach believes he is a consummate teammate, a perspective shared by fellow Stingrays midfielder Nick Collier.

"At training, Jai drives the standard with his hard work and competitive nature and is very mature in the way he conducts himself," Collier said.

"At the same time, [he is] always up for a chat and is a great person to talk to as he seems legitimately interested in what you do and where you are from.

"He is looked up to by the group because of his large presence – when the game is tough, everyone knows Jai will be up for the challenge."

On the field, performances like Saturday reinforce why he has recruiters' tongues wagging.

"He's 192 (centimetres), strong, kicks it well, marks it strongly overhead and is really aggressive around the footy," Cox said.

"He really is the prototype of what midfielders look like at the AFL level now."

## Redlegs regain bounce with strong win over Kangaroos

By Lachlan Mitchell

Redemption was at front of mind for Dandenong when it faced the Moorabbin Kangaroos on home soil.

Dandenong suffered a gruelling 72-point loss to Lyndhurst last round and were looking to re-write the script coming into the clash.

A fired-up Redlegs were out for blood in the first quarter leaping out to a quarter time lead.

Philip Muscat and Louis Nichols made their impact felt on the scoreboard to give their side an eight-point quarter time lead.

The game continued to sway Dandenong's way, with a five goal to four behind second quarter giving the home-side a 35-point lead going into the main break.

The second-half was where the Kangaroos fired up through Aaron Robins and Zdenek Hostalek who combined to hit the scoreboard.

The Redlegs had to rally to keep the Kangaroos at bay to maintain the advantage going into the final break.

Lawrence Webb continued to impact the scoreboard and steady the Dandenong ship to give his side a very handy 49-point three-quarter time advantage.

In the last-quarter Dandenong began to spread it's wings kicking six majors to run out 75-point victors.

Philip Muscat finishing the day with five majors while Louis Nichols and Bailey Friend booted three goals each.

The Redlegs would be happy with the share of goals with nine players firing home majors in the 19.8 122 to 6.11 47 win.

The win see's Dandenong move into fifth place with an even 3-3 start to season 2022.

Frankston had a thumping win over the Doveton Eagles at Overport Park.

The Dolphins piled on 37-goals to four in the 227-point win.



Dandenong even the ledger at 3-3 in season 2022. 281145  
Picture: DRFC FACEBOOK

Richard Mathers had the ball on a string with 12 goals in the comprehensive victory.

Hallam also had a day to remember cruising over Hampton by 109-point at home.

The Hawks kept Hampton goal-less in the first half putting on 17-goals to three-quarter time.

Hallam's Jack Sharlassian kicked eight goals in his sides win, keeping his side second on the ladder.

Lyndhurst had its tail up when it inflicted another loss to the struggling Cerberus.

Jarryd McGrath continued his good form booting seven goals in his side's 141-point win.

The Lightnings defence was at its best keeping the winless Cerberus to one-goal to half-time.

Lyndhurst kicked into second gear kicking 10.10 in the last quarter to hammer home the advantage.

South Mornington played out a thriller with Lyndale getting over the line by 10 points. An inaccurate Tigers outfit held off a fast-finishing Lyndale outfit to hold on.

**SOUTHERN DIVISION 4 RESULTS- ROUND 6**  
South Mornington 12.23 95 v Lyndale 12.12 84,Dandenong 19.8 122 v Moorabin Kanga-

roos 6.11 47, Hallam 20.12 132 v Hampton 3.5 23,Lyndhurst 25.23 173 v Cerberus 5.2 32, Frankston Dolphins 37.32 254 v Doveton Eagles 4.3 27

**LADDER**  
Frankston Dolphins 24, Hallam 20, Lyndhurst 16, South Mornington 16, Dandenong 12, Lyndale 8, Moorabbin Kangaroos 8, Hampton 8, Doveton Eagles, Cerberus 0

**FIXTURE – ROUND 7**  
Lyndale v Hallam, Lyndhurst v South Mornington, Hampton v Frankston Dolphins, Doveton Eagles v Dandenong, Moorabbin Kangaroos v Cerberus.





Wow She's Fast...history is being made at Sandown. 281128

Picture: SUPPLIED

# Million Dollar Baby

By Peter Quilty

'Wonder Woman' Wow She's Fast is well on the way to joining the sport's exclusive 'millionaires' club.

Victoria's sprinting queen will attempt to reign supreme in next week's \$100,000 to-the-winner Group 1 Sapphire Crown (515m) – and if the crown fits, wear it!

She was simply sensational at Sandown Park on Thursday with a stunning 29.19sec heat win – around four lengths off her incredible 28.93sec personal best, which is the fourth fastest ever at the Lightwood Road venue.

But as the race caller so descriptively commented: "There were a few heart flutters... she gave everyone palpitations."

Prepared at Pearcedale by Jacqui Greenough, Wow She's Fast (\$1.20F) was last early and had some work to do. But in the style of a true champion, she picked herself up from the canvas to land her 10th win from 15 starts including eight from 10 over this track/distance.

Wow She's Fast – winner of the inaugural TAB Phoenix and G3 Launching Pad – will spiral her earnings to a staggering \$1,047,370 if she wins the final.

She was the \$3.00 'All In' favourite prior to

commencement of the Sapphire Crown series.

But she is sure to have a serious battle on her hands after her kennel-mate Levitation (\$6.10), clocked a scintillating 29.06sec best of the night heat win.

'Team Greenough' has an 'embarrassment of riches in the final. Levitation – which finished seventh to Wow She's Fast in the Launching Pad – brought up her sixth win (all at Sandown Park) from 20 starts.

She was \$21.00 in nominal betting.

Greenough's husband, Kel, won the 2009 Sapphire Crown with Cindeen Shelby.

## Ray utility Harbour City bound

By Tyler Lewis

Jaide Anthony is the first cab off the rank in a stupendous class of Dandenong Stingrays.

When it's all said and done, the 2022 Rays Girls program will go down in the club's history as one of the most impressive groups of talent.

Anthony was selected by new AFLW club – the Sydney Swans – and will embark on a career at the top level later this year.

The utility has been on the cusp of AFLW honours for quite some time now, after impressing in the NAB AFLW Carnival last season.

Anthony kicked a goal in six of her seven matches with the Rays this season, kicking multiple goals on three occasions.

The exciting talent had the opportunity to really fill her boots in round 2 against Gippsland Power, kicking 1.5 to go with her 26 disposals.

In a statement made by the Sydney Swans, Anthony revealed her excitement – and disbelief – of the news she was heading to the Harbour City.

"I'm so excited to be with the Swans and am so keen to get started," she said.

"When my manager told me I was joining the club I didn't believe him, I got quite emotional.

"It's been quite a journey, a lot of ups and downs. It was obviously disappointing not to get drafted last year but I put in the hard yards to get here and am just so grateful to get this opportunity."

Anthony is one of many expected draftees for the Stingrays this season, others include potential top five selection Amber Clarke, steady defender Mac Eardley and exciting mature-ager Sarah Hosking.



It has been a long time coming for Jaide Anthony 229039.

Picture: STEWART CHAMBERS

# McArdle Medal win proves Wilson is premium Panther

By Tyler Lewis

Talented all-rounder Matt Wilson has collected Dandenong Cricket Club's ultimate individual honour.

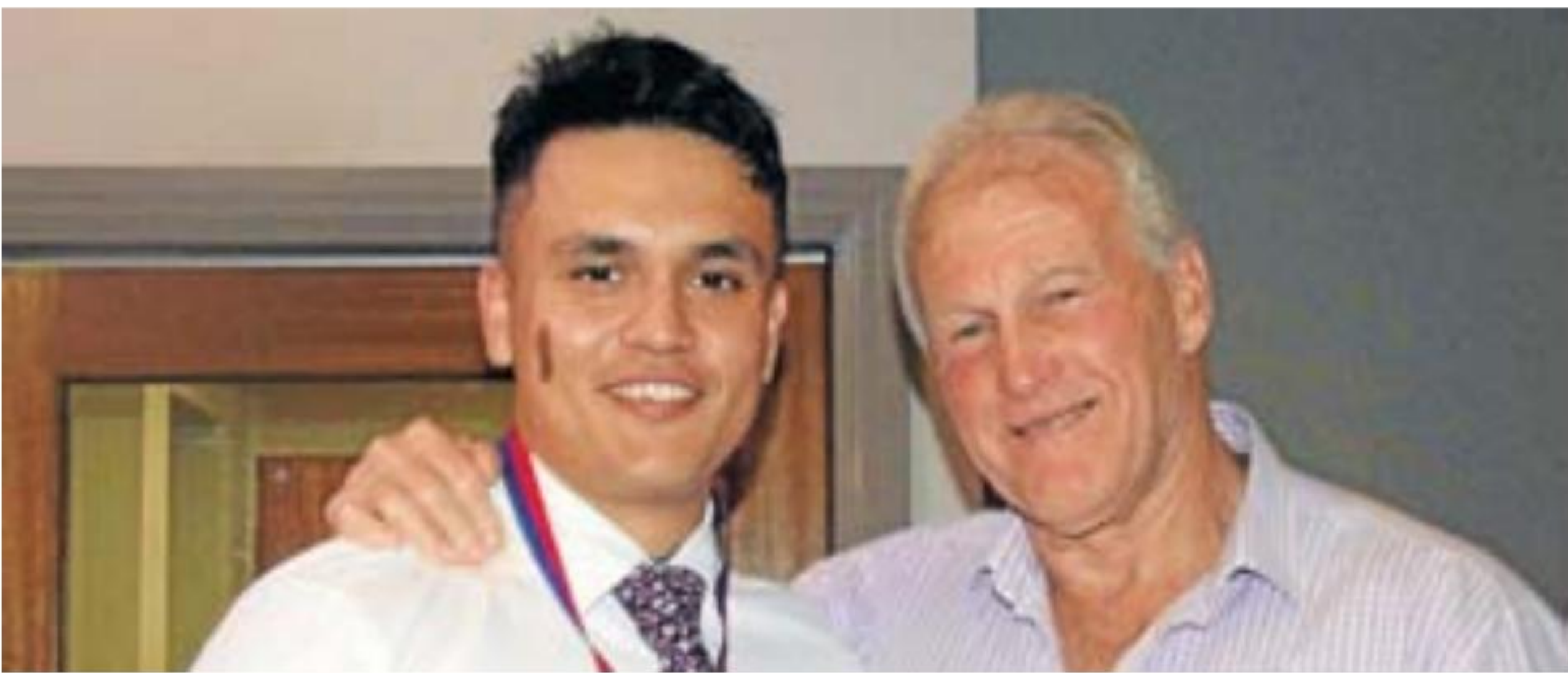
In his first season at the club after playing 48 First XI matches for Carlton, Wilson has claimed the prestigious McArdle Medal, a peer voted valuable player award.

The award is in honour of Dandenong – and Vic Premier Cricket – legend Brendan McArdle, who compiled a whopping 9281 runs and took 271 wickets across his 380-match career.

Wilson won the award off the back of 29 wickets @ 20.59 and 276 runs @ 23.

In the middle of a coming-of-age season Wilson spoke to the Journal, revealing the opportunity, responsibility as vice-captain and chance to lead an attack all brought the best out of him.

"I guess coming down to Dandenong, we



It was a season to remember for Matt Wilson. 280927

Picture: DCC SOCIALS

were obviously lacking bowlers, given how many we'd lost from last year's first's team," he said in January.

"I guess I am taking on a bit more responsibility down at Dandenong, being more of a frontline bowler.

"I am one player with a bit more experience down at the Club, so I feel I need to put a bit more of a foot forward for the team and take more responsibility.

"The leadership was a bit of a surprise, but it is something to look forward to that I could potentially become a future captain of the club in years to come.

"Like any player in the First XI, they all want to play higher honours.

"The goal has always been there to reach my potential as high as possible and with the opportunity now (at Dandenong), it is only my fault if I can't grab that opportunity.

"I can't blame opportunity; the opportunity is there... it is all me now."

Wilson joins modern greats James Nanopoulos, Tom Donnell, Brett Forsyth and Warren Ayres as a winner of the McArdle Medal.





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