

# WYNDHAM **Star Weekly**

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# Business of the year

## All Green Nursery & Garden Supplies

### WYNDHAM BUSINESS AWARDS 2024

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Kennedy Tax & Business Services is honoured to receive the Diversity and Inclusion Award, recognising our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. With over 100 years of collective expertise, our firm provides tax preparation, financial planning, and business consulting to individuals and SMEs.

Led by Director Kennedy Weldemariam, our team's multilingual capabilities and diverse backgrounds allow us to effectively serve our clients, 65% of whom are from migrant communities. We also provide opportunities for Year 10 students through internships, empowering the next generation.

Beyond our services, we contribute to local initiatives and offer free financial support to those facing barriers. This award reflects our dedication to diversity and inclusion as core values driving our success and community impact.

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# Williams Landing retail space fetches inner city prices

As Melbourne’s west and Wyndham continue to emerge as dynamic business hubs, Williams Landing is poised for significant growth with the introduction of Hudson Hub.

This latest office development by ASX-listed property developer Cedar Woods marks a pivotal moment in the area’s commercial landscape.

The 79-strata office building, which features five retail suites, is already making a substantial impact on the local real estate market.

With over 60 per cent of the suites already sold, Hudson Hub continues to demonstrate the growing demand for office and retail spaces in suburban areas.

Its recent retail campaign achieved over \$11,000 per square metre rate for one of its ground floor retail suites, a comparable price to Melbourne’s inner city suburbs.

Designed by architect Hames Sharley, Hudson Hub is tailored to meet the demands of the modern workplace, offering flexible spaces for both individual and collaborative work, a communal rooftop area, and outdoor terraces on the third level.

The office space also incorporates energy-efficient design, including rooftop solar panels and EV charging stations.

Hudson Hub’s central location within Williams Landing provides easy access to local amenities including Williams Landing Shopping Centre and train station.

Cedar Woods Victorian state manager, James Bovell, stated, “Hudson Hub represents our commitment to creating high-quality office spaces outside the CBD. The strong interest we’ve seen demonstrates that businesses value



Hudson Hub is tailored to meet the demands of the modern workplace. (Supplied)

well-designed suburban locations”.

Construction of Hudson Hub is scheduled to begin in October this year and is set to create more opportunities for businesses to join the Wyndham business community.

The success of Hudson Hub’s initial sales and its impending construction mark a significant step in Williams Landing’s commercial development signalling a shift in how businesses view suburban office

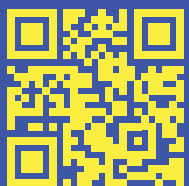
locations in Melbourne’s west.

**For more information on strata offices at Hudson Hub, please contact Sudha Williams on 0498 001 489**

# Hudson Hub

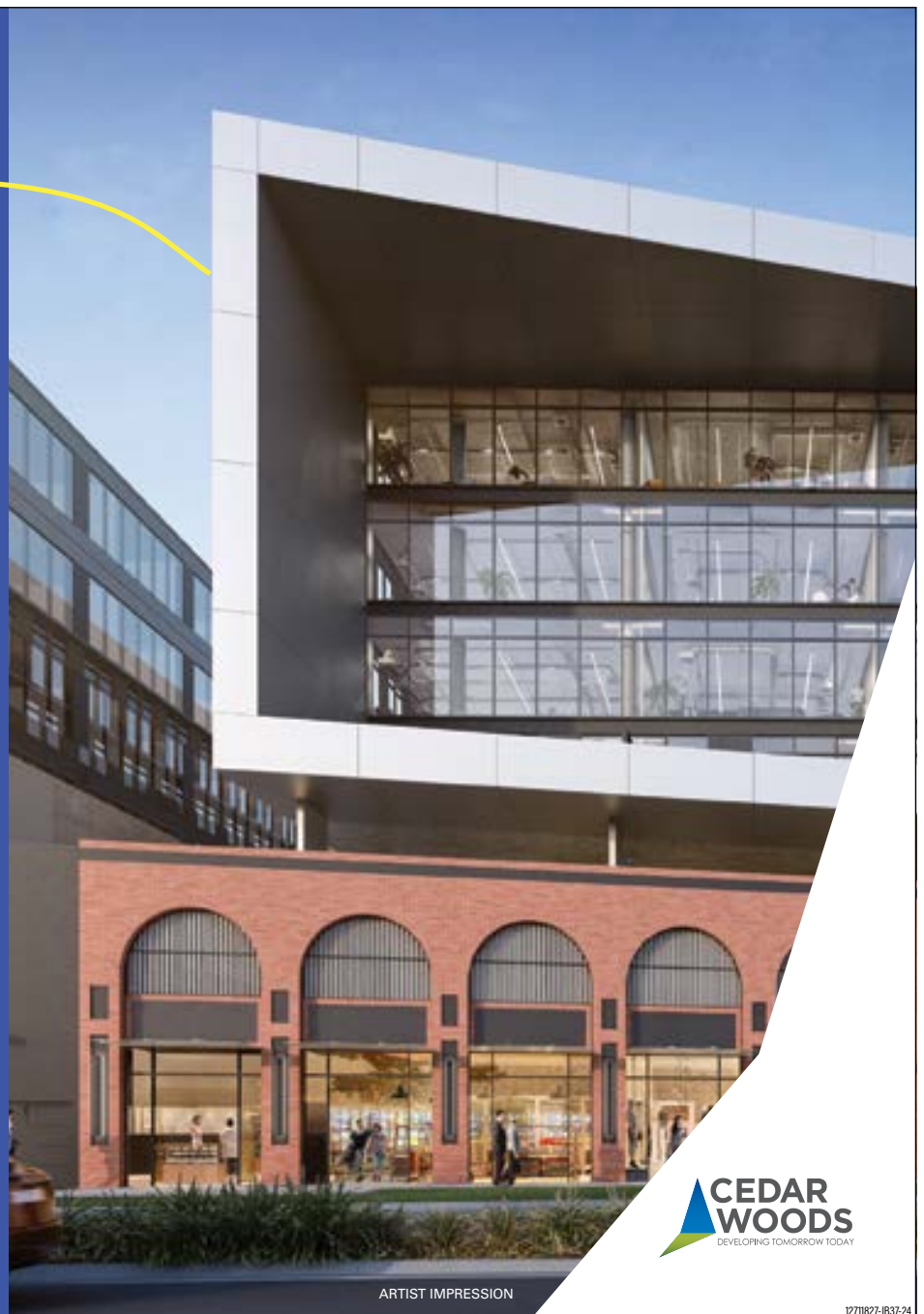
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# Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Wyndham City, I congratulate all entrants, finalists and winners of the annual 2024 Wyndham Business Awards.

Now in its 28th year, the Wyndham Business Awards are the respected business event in Wyndham that attracts high quality entrants.

Wyndham is home to more than 32,000 GST registered businesses of various sizes; from home-based sole operations to large multinationals and everything in between.

This year, 168 entries were received across 12 categories that recognise the diversity in our business community: from start-ups, social enterprises to medium/large employers and excellence in sustainability, diversity and inclusion, local community and innovation.

The top three award categories entered were Small Business, New & Emerging/Start Up and Micro Business.

The 2024 Wyndham Business Awards celebrate local business, entrepreneurs, business leaders, innovators and hard-working operators.

The awards highlight achievements and are an important and significant way to acknowledge and appreciate business excellence, accomplishments, and success.

They provide a unique opportunity for businesses across key industry sectors



of all sizes and types to showcase their successes and be recognised for their hard work, effort, dedication, and commitment to their customers and the community.

On behalf of Wyndham City, thank you for taking the time to enter the Wyndham Business Awards.

Congratulations to all finalists and winners of the Wyndham Business Awards.

It is certainly an outstanding achievement.

Mayor Jennie Barrera

# BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



All Green Nursery & Garden Supplies with sponsor, Williams Landing developed by Cedar Woods.

## ALL GREEN NURSERY & GARDEN SUPPLIES

From little things big things grow, indeed! All Green, which began as a small backyard operation in 1979, has become a major industry leader over the past 45 years.

Now in its third generation as a family-owned operation, All Green employs a friendly and knowledgeable team of over 80 people. Its diverse and ever-expanding range of products can cater to every landscaping project, from the smallest home garden to large-scale developments, and its customers include members of the general public, trade professionals, builders and commercial industries.

Alongside its business endeavours, All Green consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to the community via programs that provide career pathways to young people and others facing barriers to employment. It also runs a plant-propagation project at the local prison.

All Green's focus on sustainability has become even more pronounced lately, presenting opportunities for innovation and further expansion. For example, by repurposing landfill-bound materials into high-quality soil, All Green has not only improved its environmental impact but also secured major projects in the region.

This sustainable approach to soil production is poised to drive All Green to even bigger and better things in the years to come.

Finalists: Direct Vet Services, Rubber Recycling

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BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR



Shawn Read with award sponsor Findex Werribee. (Supplied)

SHAWN READ – SHAWN’S SWIM SCHOOL

Being rejected by Kmart might be the greatest thing to ever happen to Shawn Read. Because when his year 10 job application was turned down, he took a position teaching at a swim school instead, and never looked back.

By the time he completed his bachelor of commerce degree at Melbourne University in 1992, Shawn had well and truly found his passion.

At 23, with the backing of his parents, he built a 17m x 6m pool on a vacant block of an industrial estate in Hoppers Crossing, and in April 1994, opened Shawn’s Swim School with two staff and 40 students.

By the end of 1994, he had 12 staff and 750 students, and by 2004, his business had ballooned to 20 staff, 1300 students and a waitlist. So, Shawn built another 25m x 8m pool next door to the first one, and now has 45 staff and 2500 students – per week!

Shawn credits his enormous success to his amazing team and the collaborative culture within his business.

In an industry that often struggles with retention, he is proud to have several staff members who have been with him for between 12 and 28 years.

What the judges said...

“ Shawn takes great pride in his business and has made significant contributions to boards and advisory committees aimed at maintaining and improving standards within his industry. His school’s reputation has allowed it to thrive and grow. Shawn has created a long-lasting legacy, with his swim school looking well set-up for the future. ”

YOUNG BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR



Amol Kasaju with award sponsor Victoria University. (Supplied)

AMOL KASAJU – QUEST WERRIBEE

After arriving in Australia as a student in 2009, Amol Kasaju started working as a housekeeper, and soon fell in love with the hospitality industry. He was keen to learn and grow as much as he could, and dreamed of one day becoming a hotel receptionist in a smart-looking suit and tie. Unfortunately, Amol’s limited English and lack of confidence made it difficult for him to find such a position.

Not one to give up, he immersed himself in TV news and newspapers to improve his language skills. And, finally, his tenacity and hard work paid off when he was given the opportunity to train as a receptionist during the graveyard shift.

On February 20, 2018, Amol and his current business partner took over Quest Werribee, where they have implemented many strategic changes, such as delegating responsibilities based on individual strengths and weaknesses. This has significantly improved guest satisfaction, staff morale, and business performance.

Amol firmly believes that a high-performance team naturally emerges when passionate employees are provided with the right environment, support, and work-life balance. And the many rewards and recognition he and his business have notched up over the years make it hard to argue with his approach.

What the judges said...

“ A measured, intelligent business leader who demonstrates exceptional clarity and focus in his objectives, articulating his vision with strategic precision for both short- and long-term success. He is integral to many business associations and initiatives across Wyndham, and makes an effort to promote local restaurants and service providers. ”

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NEW & EMERGING/ START UP



Lygometryx.AI. (Supplied)

LYGOMETRYX.AI

Sifting through countless product listings, reviews, and comparison websites to try to find the best deals can overwhelm online shoppers, ultimately leading to “analysis paralysis” and delaying sales for retailers.

Into this no-win situation comes Lygometryx.AI, which uses the power of machine learning and AI to improve the online shopping process for both consumers and vendors.

Its B2C solution is the shopping assistant Kréta, which provides help with product discovery, research, comparisons, and finding the best ongoing deals and discounts.

On the B2B front, its customised shopping assistant seamlessly integrates with the IT systems of retailers, offering pre- and post-sales customer support to boost conversions. Retailers can also access advanced data science solutions focused on customer retention, churn, and sales predictions.

Lygometryx.AI has a growing waitlist for its beta launch next quarter, and has secured spots in notable programs such as the Startmate Launch Club and Catalysr Migrapraneurs, supporting its growth and providing vital resources. It also recently won second place in the 2024 WYNNovation Pitch competition.

What the judges said...

“ Lygometryx.AI has hit the ground running with an innovative business model that looks set to revolutionise the way we shop and sell online. It’s a potential game-changer for local businesses without large marketing budgets, which could ultimately assist with and support our region’s continued economic growth, even in these challenging times. ”

MICRO BUSINESS



STEM Birds with award sponsor Star Weekly. (Supplied)

STEM BIRDS

STEM Birds is a leading educational organisation dedicated to fostering a love of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics among young people.

It began in 2017 with founder and director Shalaka Ekbote’s vision to make STEM education accessible and engaging for all primary and secondary students, regardless of their background or location. Her passion for empowering children with essential 21st century skills has seen STEM Birds grow into a diverse range of programs and courses designed to inspire creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

STEM Birds now has 13 locations across Melbourne, including classes in two primary schools in the Wyndham area. It has also expanded to Adelaide, and offers online coding classes for students all over Australia.

What sets STEM Birds apart is its innovative approach to learning, which combines cutting-edge technology with experiential teaching methods. It prioritises hands-on activities, real-world projects, and collaborative learning experiences to ensure that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop vital skills that will serve them well in the future. STEM Birds is committed to empowering students to become confident, creative, and capable individuals.

What the judges said...

“ Shalaka’s passion for what she does is infectious. She’s extremely enthusiastic about educating the next generation of STEM workers, and in equipping as many five-to-15-year-olds as possible with the skills they’ll need to flourish and thrive in a wide range of industries in the future. ”

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SMALL BUSINESS



Direct Vet Services with award sponsor Wyndham Biznet. (Supplied)

DIRECT VET SERVICES

From just two staff when it first opened in 2010 to a team of 17 today, Direct Vet Services has built a thriving and resilient small business from humble beginnings. Under the leadership of owner and founder Dr Karen Davies, Direct Vet Services is dedicated to educating pet owners on how to provide the best care for their pets, fostering non-judgmental and supportive client relationships. It also actively supports the training of veterinary and nursing students, shaping the industry's future leaders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the clinic clearly demonstrated its unwavering commitment to animal welfare and the Wyndham community by continuing to serve both existing and new clients, even as other clinics closed their doors. To address staffing challenges, it created additional roles to support its veterinary team, ensuring uninterrupted local pet care throughout the crisis. The clinic's community engagement and constant striving for excellence has positioned it as a cornerstone of veterinary care in Wyndham, with ample room for continued growth and success, underpinned by its innovative thinking and adaptability.

**What the judges said...**  
 "Direct Vet Services is an impressive and long-established small business that has served and supported the Wyndham community for many years. From the moment you walk in, you are greeted by friendly pets, instantly putting you at ease. And each consulting room is thoughtfully equipped with images to clearly explain the pet conditions, showcasing the business' forward-thinking approach."

MEDIUM/LARGE BUSINESS



All Green Nursery & Garden Supplies with sponsor Megalines Insurance & Risk Advisers. (Supplied)

ALL GREEN NURSERY & GARDEN SUPPLIES

When husband and wife Sam and Gianna Fragapane founded All Green in 1979, it was just a humble backyard nursery run out of their garden shed. Since then, it has flourished into a robust family business that now employs a team of over 80 people, including horticulturists, trades specialists, delivery drivers and administration staff. Spanning a combined area of 35,000m2 across all its locations, All Green takes immense pride in offering an expansive selection of vibrant plants, premium landscaping materials, and unparalleled customer care to its local patrons. Its knowledgeable team is ready to assist you at every turn, ensuring a warm welcome and expert guidance as you embark on your next gardening or landscaping project. And its vast array of products and services well surpasses the offerings of standard hardware stores. All Green's commitment to quality, service and community runs deep, reflecting a dedication to enriching the lives of its customers and contributing to a thriving local ecosystem.

**What the judges said...**  
 "All Green's transformation from a family business into a more corporate structure is commendable. Over the past 12 months, it has strategically focused on enhancing its business operations with remarkable results. The prioritisation of people and culture has led to significant positive outcomes, and its exceptional processes, dedicated team, and strong relationships within the community are particularly impressive."

**FINDEX**

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Congratulations to Caring Lotus and to all winners and finalists.

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NOT FOR PROFIT OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



NatureWest with award sponsor Social Traders. (Supplied)

NATUREWEST

NatureWest is a not-for-profit environmental group that operates in Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melton and Wyndham.

Every year, NatureWest undertakes an extensive planting program, restoring weed-infested areas with 15,000 to 20,000 native plants.

The organisation actively participates in local events such as fairs, exhibitions, and expos to educate the community on the importance of native biodiversity. And it leads the Wyndham Litter Warriors, a litter clean-up initiative with sub-groups in seven suburban areas. NatureWest engages with schools through a popular program that includes both on and off-campus events, highlighting the significance of nature and the impact of suburban litter.

It advocates for the protection of local biodiversity by meeting with all levels of government, and is actively involved in numerous committees, working parties and strategy groups focused on environmental issues. NatureWest administers the local Landcare Facilitator program for the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, and provides support to about 10 Landcare and friends groups with a dedicated facilitator.

What the judges said...

“ NatureWest works tirelessly to design and deliver projects and programs that will raise awareness, preserve and enhance the natural biodiversity of our region. It does extensive on-ground work, including plantings for nature walks, the extension of habitat areas around homes, marine care, and plantings around waterways. ”

EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION



Rubber Recycling. (Supplied)

RUBBER RECYCLING

In 2023, Mark Emmins was on a rescue mission. He wanted to use his extensive knowledge of waste management, recycling, engineering and fabrication to tackle illegal tyre dumping. And he was determined to drive the development of innovative, environmentally responsible and efficient new disposal solutions to stop them ending up in landfill.

So, he started Rubber Recycling, a facility that collects and processes waste tyres from all around Australia and gives them new life as beautiful rubber products. For instance, by turning them into eco-friendly mulch, or soft, slip-proof rubber granules for playgrounds. Rubber Recycling’s customer base includes automotive dealerships, tyre retailers, waste management companies, and local councils looking for reliable and compliant tyre disposal services.

One of the many innovations that set this business apart is its weight-based collection system, which is the first of its kind for scrap tyre collections. Unlike traditional methods that charge per tyre, Rubber Recycling’s trucks are equipped with scales to measure tyre weight onsite. Customers are then billed based on the total weight of their scrap tyres, ensuring total transparency and accuracy.

What the judges said...

“ The level of innovation within Rubber Recycling is truly mind-blowing. Mark brings his years of experience to tackle any problem and develop a bespoke solution, either retrofitting existing solutions from other fields or designing new ones. This really is a stand-out company, with strong prospects for growth. ”



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EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Kennedy Tax & Business Services with award sponsor The Gordon. (Supplied)

KENNEDY TAX & BUSINESS SERVICES

Founded by a group of seasoned professionals with over 100 years of collective expertise, Kennedy Tax & Business Services is a distinguished financial service provider that caters to individuals and small to medium-sized businesses.

Its core services include tax preparation, financial planning, business consulting, and accounting, and it has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion from the top down. Director Kennedy Weldemariam leads by example in this department, frequently participating in community events, offering his expertise whenever possible, and acting as a positive role model for the entire team.

KTBS actively recruits and supports employees with diverse backgrounds, and its advisors are proficient in more than 10 languages. This enables them to communicate effectively with clients from various cultural backgrounds, and to provide a more inclusive service experience.

The firm routinely offers free financial services to individuals and small businesses that face significant barriers to accessing professional advice, contributing to greater inclusion and financial stability within the community. It also makes financial contributions to support local community projects and initiatives.

What the judges said...

“ Kennedy Tax & Business Services demonstrates a distinct approach to diversity and inclusion in both its own internal practices and its engagement with clients. KTBS also has a very strong commitment to supporting staff development and does extensive pro bono work within the community. ”

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Caring Lotus with award sponsor Holiday Inn Werribee. (Supplied)

CARING LOTUS

Established by Kerry Bolton in 2021, Caring Lotus is a dedicated NDIS provider that goes above and beyond to provide personalised, comprehensive support services to people with disabilities.

Knowing that its clients and support workers often experience isolation, Caring Lotus organises regular events to bring them together, creating a sense of community, inclusion and belonging.

As well as giving support workers thorough training to help them understand their clients' unique needs, preferences and goals, Caring Lotus embraces innovation through a number of initiatives designed to help it provide truly tailored care.

It also works closely with occupational therapists and other professionals to improve clients' overall wellbeing, and runs local business initiatives where clients can work alongside support staff to gain useful skills, earn an income, and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Perhaps most importantly, Caring Lotus champions autonomy by encouraging and empowering its clients to make decisions about their care and what it means to live their best lives.

What the judges said...

“ Caring Lotus provides exceptional customer service to the most vulnerable people in our society, giving them dignity and a sense of belonging. Through personalised care, social activities, and events, Kerry ensures each individual feels valued and connected. ”



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## EXCELLENCE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY



Direct Vet Services. (Supplied)

### DIRECT VET SERVICES

Direct Vet Services was started in 2010 by Dr Karen Davies, and has since become a powerhouse of community engagement and support.

The clinic, which is dedicated to providing comprehensive care for everything from “pocket pets” to exotic species, also does pro bono work for the Wyndham Pound and looks after injured wildlife.

It is a strong advocate for animal welfare within the community, and works hard to make a positive impact by prioritising eco-friendly practices and Australian-made products.

It also offers training and mentorship opportunities for young people interested in veterinary medicine, and actively promotes and sells products from local businesses and entrepreneurs.

This clinic’s proactive approach to social responsibility has earned it a lot of respect and admiration, reinforcing its position as a caring and compassionate business dedicated to making a positive difference within the community.

#### What the judges said...

“ Direct Vet services is a deserving winner of Excellence in Local Community Award. Outside of an already thriving business track record and plans for future growth, Dr Karen’s clinic champions other local businesses in its supply chain, and actively engages with, supports and employs local community members. ”

## EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABILITY



All Green Nursery & Garden Supplies with award sponsor Project Space. (Supplied)

### ALL GREEN NURSERY & GARDEN SUPPLIES

At All Green, sustainability is not just a goal – it’s a fundamental principle that shapes every business practice and decision.

The nursery and garden supplies store was started in 1979 by the Fragapane family, who consistently review and adapt their environmental practices as needed to minimise their footprint.

All Green’s innovative sustainability and community-based initiatives include programs that provide young people entering the workforce with valuable experience and exposure to the job application process. And by collaborating with local schools, it has successfully employed several young people through its Junior Maintenance Program, creating sustainable pathways for employment.

All Green also make significant investments to transform raw materials into premium landscaping soils for gardens and lawns, including by repurposing materials that would otherwise end up in landfill.

The Fragapanes understand that sustainability is essential for their business’ long-term success, and are dedicated to integrating sustainable initiatives into every aspect of their operations.

#### What the judges said...

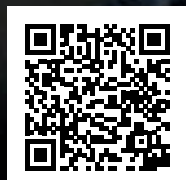
“ Not only do the Fragapanes demonstrate a significant commitment to emission reduction and environmental standards in their own operations, they also seek opportunities to work with partners to solve their waste problems and convert them into valuable assets. ”



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# WYNDHAM BUSINESS AWARDS

## Business of the year honour roll

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|--|--|---|
| <b>2024</b><br>All Green Nursery       | <b>2012</b><br>Plum Heating and Cooling    | <b>2002</b><br>The Mansion Hotel            |
| <b>2023</b><br>Fruit2Work              | <b>2011</b><br>Werribee Open Range Zoo     | <b>2001</b><br>Cowland North Architects     |
| <b>2022</b><br>Cake Creations by Kate  | <b>2010</b><br>Alex Fraser Group           | <b>2000</b><br>Claytons Kitchens Australia  |
| <b>2019</b><br>Aqua Tap Plumbing       | <b>2009</b><br>Essence Food Studio         | <b>1999</b><br>Redmond Repetition Engineers |
| <b>2018</b><br>Class Plastics          | <b>2008</b><br>Rodpak                      | <b>1998</b><br>Hudson's Drycleaning Group   |
| <b>2017</b><br>Hopper Motor Group      | <b>2007</b><br>Nufarm Australia            | <b>1997</b><br>Rick Wolany Toyota           |
| <b>2016</b><br>Encore Tissue           | <b>2006</b><br>Cat Logistics Services      | <b>1996</b><br>AB Oxford Cold Storage Co    |
| <b>2015</b><br>ebm-papst A&NZ          | <b>2005</b><br>Agfab Engineering           | <b>1995</b><br>Down Under Produce           |
| <b>2014</b><br>Mainstream Aquaculture  | <b>2004</b><br>Costa's Mitre 10            |   |
| <b>2013</b><br>Aus Lock & Safe Company | <b>2003</b><br>Claytons Kitchens Australia |   |

**Wyndham Star Weekly congratulate the winners and finalist of the Wyndham Business Excellence Awards for 2024**



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(Credit trade gothic 6.5pt)

## Diversity on the catwalk

Werribee model Mariamo Mitungi is testament to the fashion opportunities now available to women from Muslim and other diverse backgrounds.

Mariamo is set to stride the catwalk in November as part of a fashion show staged by Miss Diverse Australia.

“I’ve always loved fashion and wanted to do modelling and pageantry since I was a little girl but never thought I’d have the opportunity due to being a Muslim female, but as more culturally diverse opportunities have become available my passion to be an example to others to pursue their dreams through something that I am passionate about myself grew,” Mariamo said.

“It feels good to be a part of something that includes everyone and embraces individuality no matter the size, culture, skin colour, as we are all equal and treated as such. I hope to bring other Muslim girls with the same interests the opportunity to be involved in a company that doesn’t just focus on diversity and inclusivity but embraces self confidence.”

Story: Page 12

Werribee model Mariamo embraces her roots by wearing light pink African attire and hijab. (Picture: Mukasa Brothers Production)

# Rail terminal scrapped

By Adrian Black, AAP

A multinational freight giant has scrapped plans to build a rail hub at a controversial site after it was opposed by local community groups.

Pacific National has ditched plans to build the \$5 billion, 550 hectare logistics terminal at the Little River site on the western edge of Melbourne.

The project ran into opposition from the local community and environmental groups, who said the hub - and the two million containers it would have handled each year -

threatened local grasslands and wildlife.

The company has announced it will cease all environmental and planning processes related to the site.

“Pacific National has made this decision given the changed timelines for associated freight and infrastructure projects and economic factors which have impacted on the project business case,” it said in a statement.

“Pacific National will continue to consider potential alternative terminal site options as they emerge to support efficient freight transport connectivity.”

Little River Action Group president Adrian

Hamilton said he was delighted with the decision.

“The site has a rich ecosystem that is worth protecting,” he said in a statement.

“It must remain a green wedge and it abuts our small peaceful town.”

Little River has a population of 1400 but the action group secured more than 5000 signatures opposing the terminal at the site before a protest in August.

“It would have been a tragedy for Victoria to lose more stands of remnant native vegetation. Natural Temperate Grasslands are under serious threat,” Mr Hamilton said.

In Pacific National’s statement, the company thanked stakeholders, project partners and community members who engaged with the project and had their say.

The scrapped project came after the state government in May indefinitely shelved plans to build the Western Interstate Freight Terminal in Truganina in Melbourne’s west.

The project was first proposed in 2018 and was recommended as an urgent priority in 2021.

However, the former federal government’s preferred option, the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal in Melbourne’s north, was prioritised instead.

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# Amani pointes to a bright future

By Jaidyn Kennedy

Hoppers Crossing student Amani Ibrahim has been accepted as a full-time student at The Australian Ballet, the largest classical ballet company in Australia.

Amani, 14, has been training at DanceMax Studios in Hoppers Crossing for the past nine years, under the watchful eye of instructors Elly and Gabbie.

"Amani's potential was recognised very early in her training- not only did she have a great natural facility in her body, her passion and attention to detail perfecting her ballet technique was apparent," Elly said.

Extra training, direction and encouragement from her teachers over the last 18 months have helped Amani realise a long-held dream.

"Amani's strength is in her eagerness to learn. She's not one to miss classes, is always well presented and ready to work," Gabbie said.

Described by those around her as a bubbly and bright young lady who always sports a smile, Amani always finds the time to chat with and befriend the younger students who look up to her.

Compared to other styles of dance, ballet always fit Amani best.

"The style of classical ballet came a little more naturally to me than some other dance genres," she said.

Amani's inspiration has always gone beyond watching professional dancers and famous ballerinas, constantly finding inspiration in training alongside her peers and the lessons of her instructors.

While studying at The Australian Ballet is no small step, Amani is excited for the opportunity.

"I am so looking forward to the challenge of being in a full-time dance environment with like minded people, forming new friendships, learning and growing my skills in a state of the art facility," she said.

When asked about what people might know about the craft of ballet, Amani emphasised the dedication, focus and precision that the sport demands.

"Classical ballet may look effortless and graceful when danced by a professional artist but it takes many years of hard work and dedication to perfect this art.

"Training normally starts from the age of six or seven. It takes years of learning to refine technique and artistry and also to condition the body. You're not only a dancer but an athlete."

While it is a tremendous individual honour, Amani's success is an achievement felt by all of the DanceMax community.

"It's so wonderful watching our students' dance journey's and we're so privileged to watch them grow.

They truly do become part of our families, so when a student like Amani has been successful in securing a full-time position at the Australian Ballet School next year, there are no words to describe our pride and joy!" Gabbie said.

"This achievement is huge! Our hearts are so full and we will continue to support her journey. We have no doubt we'll see her on the big stage one day. We can't wait to watch, we'll be the ones in those front row seats!"



Amani Ibrahim has been accepted as a full-time student at The Australia Ballet. (Damjan Janevski) 428747\_01

# Doherty's Creek College kids get on their bikes

Doherty's Creek P-9 College launched its Ride2School program on Tuesday, September 3, with 175 students ushering in the program during a special assembly.

The assembly marked the unveiling of 12 bicycles provided by the RACV and helmets donated by Lazer.

Dr Cranky's Bicycle Hospital will provide onsite bike maintenance to ensure the bicycles remain safe and functional.

RACV mobility general manager Julia Hunter said Ride2School's Bike Ed is a Bicycle Network program that we're excited to support as it equips students with new, valuable life skills that makes riding a real commuting option for families," she said.

Bicycle Network chief executive Alison McCormack highlighted the potential benefits of using a different set of wheels to get to school.

"Riding to school helps children get their recommended daily physical activity needs and multiple studies have shown riding to school leads to better attendance, grades, cognitive performance and classroom behaviour," she said.

Physical Education teacher Neville Stephens recalled how the moment the school decided it was time to implement road safety programs.

"I'll never forget when I was on a playground duty on our sports field early in my time here and I saw quite a few kids involved in near accidents because of the traffic around.

"So I decided at that moment that we kind of need to do something about this."

Ride2School's Bike Ed program is aimed at grades three to six, focusing on teaching them riding skills, road safety awareness and helping them cultivate healthy, lifelong habits.

Ride2School is a partnership between RACV and Bicycle Network that aims to promote active lifestyles and road safety awareness among Victorian primary school students.

Details: [racv.com.au/education](http://racv.com.au/education)



Dohertys Creek P-9 College launch Ride2School with RACV and Bicycle Network



It was hi-fives all round at Dohertys Creek P-9 College.



Riding to school is fun.

Jaidyn Kennedy



# Call for councillor conduct panel

By Jaidyn Kennedy

Calls for a council conduct panel by Wyndham deputy mayor Josh Gilligan descended into a shouting match at council's last meeting on Wednesday, August 27.

Cr Gilligan made an application to the principal conduct registrar for a councillor conduct panel to be assembled to hear allegations of misconduct against Cr Jasmine Hill, Cr Marcel Mahfoud, Cr Robert Szatkowski and Cr Peter Maynard regarding the disclosure of information from a confidential meeting.

The contents of the meeting that was intended to be confidential surrounded the future of the Kelly Park Centre, which was destroyed by fire in 2022 and is the subject

of debate regarding its reconstruction or redesign.

While several councillors conceded that they had breached a condition of confidentiality, they criticised the timing of the proposed panel on account of it being close to October's council elections.

Crs Hill, Mahfoud, Szatkowski and Maynard were those listed as violating legislation that stipulated two or more breaches of confidentiality are punishable by a four-year disqualification from office.

The deputy mayor's motion included a note asking council to pay special consideration to the the behaviour of Cr Hill.

Cr Hill was suspended from her position for four months after a previous councillor conduct panel

found she engaged in serious misconduct by bullying two council officers during 2021 and 2022.

Cr Hill has maintained she did nothing wrong and appealed the decision at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal which granted her a stay until her appeal is heard.

Cr Hill criticised the intensity of Cr Gilligan's scrutiny of her case.

"He is obsessed with me and I think he should be obsessed with the community," she said.

Cr Mahfoud was also critical of the decision to call for a panel.

"It's a bit more of a witch hunt," he said.

The motion eventually lost in a vote.



Cr Josh Gilligan. (Supplied)



Bertie Sanday, Gini Merange, Fatima Hoblos and Yamama Shourbaji from Palestine advocacy groups across Melbourne's west. (Damjan Janevski) 428756\_01

## Dog spaces for Tarneit

Wyndham council will consider creating off-lead dog spaces in Tarneit, after a petition on the issue was presented to council.

Councillor Jasmine Hill backed the proposal, citing recent reports of Australia Post staff being attacked by unrestrained dogs while delivering mail across Melbourne.

"It is important to establish additional off-lead dog areas in Tarneit as a start," she said.

The petitioners emphasised that Tarneit's growth needs to be complimented by the installation of community amenities that support healthy lifestyles and are beneficial to the local environment.

There is only one off-leash area at Camelot Drive Reserve and the petitioners stated that there are insufficient waste disposal options along Davis Creek and other public spaces.

The petition requested that council identify and allocate a suitable area for an off-lead dog space near Davis Creek, enclose the location and equip it with amenities for pets and their owners, install rubbish bins and signage to ensure patrons are educated on the correct use of amenities.

The petition also stated that some residents had raised concerns about stray dogs in the area that may pose a threat to school children making their morning commutes.

## Soccer for solidarity this weekend

This weekend, communities from around Melbourne's west are coming together in Albion for the Solidarity Cup for Palestine.

This Saturday, September 14, Selwyn Park will play host to a seven-a-side tournament, with an under-10s and an open competition.

All funds raised will go to the Palestine Sports for Life (Gaza and the West Bank) and the Gazan Urban Women Agripreneurs Forum.

In partnership with Community Soccer Hub, a western bloc of solidarity groups for

Palestine, spanning Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Melton, have joined forces to organise the day.

Organiser Fatima Hoblos said it was a special opportunity to build solidarity across communities in the west.

"We recognise that football is a beloved sport in Palestine, connecting it to many cultures across the world. Let us make this connection visible on the field," she said.

The cup is a family-friendly day, with music and a variety of activities.

Attendees are encouraged to bring a picnic and a mat or camping chairs and enjoy a day out. On-street parking is available around the venue. It starts at 10am and will go through to 3pm.

Tickets are \$10 for spectators, or \$20 for a family or group of four. Alternatively, if you can't make it but still want to contribute, virtual solidarity tickets are available for \$5. Tickets: [events.humanitix.com/solidarity-cup-for-palestine](https://events.humanitix.com/solidarity-cup-for-palestine)

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Young Business Person of the Year Amol Kasaju. (Supplied)



Shawn Read, Business Person of the Year.

# Wyndham businesses honoured

Local business excellence and Wyndham’s thriving business community were celebrated at the annual Wyndham Business Awards gala on Friday night.

About 350 guests flocked to Encore Events Centre in Hoppers Crossing for Wyndham businesses’ night of nights.

Awards were handed out across 13 categories. A panel of 18 judges spent countless hours pouring over applications from Wyndham businesses big and small, established and new to decide who would take home honours this year.

All Green Nursery & Garden Supplies won the night’s most coveted award – Business of the Year.

All Green began as a small backyard operation in 1979 and has become a major

industry leader over the past 45 years.

It employs a team of over 80 people and offers a diverse and ever-expanding range of products that can cater to every landscaping project, from the smallest home garden to large-scale developments.

The judges were so impressed with All Green that the Business of the Year gong was not its only accolade for the night, with the business also winning the Excellence in Sustainability and Medium/Large Business Awards.

Shawn Read, of Shawn’s Swim School, was named Wyndham’s Business Person of the Year.

Mr Read opened his swim school in a Hoppers Crossing industrial estate in April 1994 with two staff members and 40 students.

These days, he operates two pools and his school welcomes 2500 students each week, who are taught by 45 staff.

“Shawn has already created a long-lasting legacy within the Wyndham community, with his swim school operating for over 30 years and looking well set-up for the future,” the judges said.

The award for Young Business Person of the Year went to Quest Werribee’s Amol Kasaju.

The judges described him as a measured and intelligent business leader.

“He is integral to many business associations and initiatives across Wyndham, and makes an effort to promote local restaurants and service providers,” they said.

“He’s involved in impressive environmental initiatives, and seems genuine about always

finding ways to contribute for the good of his business, staff, guests, and the broader Wyndham community.”

The New & Emerging or Start Up Award was won by Lygometryx.AI, the Micro Business Award went to STEM Birds and the Not for Profit or Social Enterprise Award was won by NatureWest.

The award for Excellence in Customer Experience went to Caring Lotus while Rubber Recycling won the award for Excellence in Innovation.

Direct Vets Services picked up the awards for Small Business and Excellence in Local Community, while the Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion Award went to Kennedy Tax & Business Services.

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# Isabella sews kindness

By Jaidyn Kennedy

Isabella Scott has been named Wyndham's Young Person of the Month for September.

The 15-year-old year 9 student is involved in various charitable activities that have made a difference in the lives of many.

She uses her sewing skills creatively to help others and is part of the Wyndham Patchworkers group that meets every second and fourth Saturday of the month to contribute to a range of community projects.

Those projects have included making quilts, blankets and other items for people facing housing insecurity to sewing pencil cases for the children that were involved in a school bus crash at Exford Primary School.

Parting ways with a labour of love can be a difficult thing to do, but knowing it is going to help someone makes it a little easier for Isabella.

"It feels really good and rewarding to know that I am making a difference to someone's life. After spending hours and hours working on a sewing project I do feel a little sad to see it go but knowing that it is helping someone less fortunate makes it all worthwhile- it is what inspires me to start my next charity project."

Isabella has also been making tote bags for Uniting Wyndham Winter Food Drive 2024, has raised more than \$2000 for the Kids with Cancer Foundation to support kids with cancer and their families by proactively approaching community organisations and initiating a container deposit event at her school to reach her fundraising goal.

Isabella's passion extends to the environment, and has seen her participate in tree planting days, rubbishing collections as well as applying her sewing skills to sustainable causes.



Wyndham mayor Jennie Barrera and Isabella Scott. (Damijan Janevski) 429925\_04

Her mission to help others started very close to home.

"My parents have always been great role models for me, they have always been very generous people and they have done volunteering with me from a young age as a fun and rewarding activity, and ever since I have just always done volunteering," she said.

"Going into the city has just made me even more passionate about helping the homeless seeing how many people don't have houses to live in, and there are thousands more that aren't seen."

While discussing her influences, she made special mention of her friend and sewing teacher Wendy Charles.

"She has inspired me to do far more than I would have done myself. For as long as I

have known her she has always gone above and beyond with helping everyone in the community

"She is a wonderful generous person always willing to lend a hand- she is truly inspirational."

When asked what she might spend her \$300 prize money on, Isabella's thoughtfulness shone through.

"I am not really sure what I am going to do with my prize money, I have been thinking of donating it to a charity or saving it for the future to buy a car or a house one day."

One Wyndham recipients are residents aged between 12 to 25 who positively contribute to the Wyndham community and are role models to other young people.

## Housing plan

Wyndham council has narrowly passed a motion that will result in an expression of interest process into providing short-term crisis accommodation in the area.

Forwarded by councillor Robert Szatkowski, the motion requested that council explore suitable suppliers and location for demountable housing.

"It's time to end the talk and take action," Cr Szatkowski said.

The motion did not move without opposition, as several councillors spoke out against the motion on account of it lacking adequate community consultation. In defence of the motion, Cr Szatkowski urged other members of council to consider those suffering insecure housing.

"I hope you get the opportunity to look people in the eye who are experiencing these issues and explain to them directly why you've chosen not to support this opportunity," he said.

Confidentiality concerns once again sparked debate within the chamber, as a dispute between the public's right to know took place.

Mayor Jennie Barerra supported keeping the location of the crisis accommodation sites confidential at the current stage of inquiry and planning. Cr Mia Shaw argued against keeping the documents private, claiming that it was unfair to the public and lacking basic transparency.

The use of land for residential purposes instead of reserving it for economic development in other non-housing sectors was also flagged as a concern.

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# Shining a light on PCOS



By Eddie Russell

Despite impacting one in 10 Australian women, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, or PCOS, is still a “mystery” to many.

That's why Dr Sneha Parghi says when it comes to addressing the condition, knowledge is power.

“Raising awareness is really important because there are probably a lot of women walking around with PCOS who don't even realise they have it,” she said.

“There's a lot of misunderstanding around it and the effects that it has ... that lack of education means people are confused because they don't know where to begin with seeking help.”

PCOS is a hormonal condition that is associated with an imbalance of male type hormones like insulin or androgen.

It affects women of reproductive age in a variety of ways and can cause anything from irregular periods and reduced fertility to acne and excessive hair growth.

It can also impact weight and mental health issues like anxiety or depression.

Dr Parghi is a consultant gynaecologist and obstetrician at Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, as well as private women's health clinic, The Maven Centre, in St Albans.

She said symptoms varied from patient to patient and could be anything from mild to more impactful.

“It's a spectrum in terms of severity – some people might have it but not be affected significantly, while others might be impacted more greatly.”

“Some women will report that they won't have a period for three months but then it comes and they have to stay home because it's like a tap has been turned on.”

In some cases, PCOS can lead to long-term health risks like type 2 diabetes, endometrial cancer, sleep apnoea, and cardiovascular disease.

The broad nature of the condition can make it difficult to correctly identify, so doctors lookout for three key signs.

“Essentially, there are three criteria but you only need to meet two to get a diagnosis,” Dr Parghi said.

“The first is really irregular periods, the second is a hormonal imbalance, and the third is the appearance of multiple cysts on the ovaries, which we can see on ultrasound.”

Dr Parghi said while these factors might not always be a direct relation to PCOS, they definitely point towards it.

“The cysts on ultrasound are not actually



Dr Sneha Parghi  
at the Maven  
Centre in St  
Albans. (Damjan  
Janevski) 427819\_06

“It's a spectrum in terms of severity – some people might have it but not be affected significantly, while others might be impacted more greatly” - Sneha Parghi

cysts, they are just immature eggs that haven't reached maturity and ovulated yet,” she said.

“But the reason that they appear on the ultrasound in the first place is because of a hormonal imbalance, so if you have two out of those three things we would say it looks like you have it.”

Young girls and teenagers aged 10-to-19-years-old are among a “small pocket” of patients who can often get misdiagnosed with PCOS, said Dr Parghi.

“We are apprehensive about making a diagnosis in that group of women ... where their hormonal messages and production are still maturing,” she said.

“When you are within your first eight years of having a period, you can have irregular periods at that time and it doesn't mean you have Polycystic Ovary Syndrome.”

However, a diagnosis is a lot easier to make among women in their twenties and thirties.

Dr Parghi said one setting where she sees the impact of PCOS is among those struggling to conceive.

“You might not necessarily know that [you have it], but it impacts the potential to fall pregnant,” she said.

“These hormonal imbalances may not manifest as irregular periods, but it may mean not being able to release an egg each cycle.”

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the average maternal age for first time mothers was 29.7 in 2021, and the highest proportion of mothers were aged between 30 and 34.

Dr Parghi said if these symptoms or issues sound familiar, it was important to check.

“I'd say talk to your GP about what you are experiencing and what you think might be going on.

“If they are unsure about making a diagnosis then it is worth getting the opinion of a gynaecologist.”

Treatment of PCOS is dependent on the type of symptoms a patient might have, but can include medications, cosmetics, and adopting healthy habits, as well as implementing treatment to reduce the risk of long term complications.

Aside from gynaecologists like Dr Parghi, other medical professionals who can provide care to help manage the condition are endocrinologists, dieticians, and fertility specialists.

## Midwives to prescribe medications

Midwives will be able to approve medication for commonly experienced pregnancy and labour conditions, the state government has announced.

The government has repealed an outdated existing list which limited prescribing by authorised midwives to a select group of medicines. In its place is a ministerial approval which enables authorised midwives to prescribe within the full scope of their practice.

This change will ensure women can get the care they need sooner and reduce the need to visit their GPs to get a prescription for conditions commonly experienced during pregnancy and labour, such as heartburn, acid reflux, bacterial vaginosis, as well as pain relief, the government said.

The government said the reform will also improve access to medical abortion by removing barriers to prescribing – making it safer and easier for women to access abortion services closer to home.

Authorised midwives must have at least three years of experience in full-time clinical practice and have undertaken graduate education and training to prescribe Schedule 2, 3, 4, and 8 medicines – such as over-the-counter medicines, local anaesthetics, antibiotics and strong analgesics.

The changes follow consultation with Safer Care Victoria, the Australian Nursing Midwifery Federation, the Australian College of Midwives and Australian College of Nursing, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas said midwives play a critical role in Victoria's health system, caring for women and their babies through pregnancy and labour.

“These changes recognise the skill and professionalism of our authorised midwives,” she said.

“These reforms are all about making it easier and safer for women to get the care they need – including access to medical abortion.”



# Victorian women speak up about living with pain

The significant impact pain conditions like endometriosis, pelvic pain and migraines are having on the lives of women and girls has been highlighted during the state government's inquiry into women's pain.

Earlier this year, the government conducted a women's health survey. More than 13,000 women, girls, carers, families and healthcare workers took part.

The government said the survey resulted highlighted the negative experience many women have had when seeking care.

Women and girls shared their experiences of sexism and misogyny, feeling ignored or dismissed by clinicians who attributed their pain to psychological and personality factors, as well as culturally unsafe care.

They also told the government about cases

of delayed diagnosis, the high cost of care and the impact pain can have on their quality of life, relationships with family and friends, and their careers.

The government said nurses made up the majority of healthcare workers who participated – observing that lack of knowledge about women's health of available clinicians was the biggest barrier to care for many of their patients.

The survey was offered in 10 community languages, including Arabic, Turkish, Vietnamese, Italian and Greek.

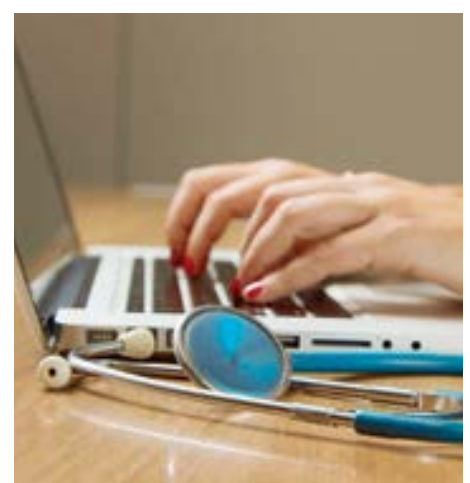
The stories and experiences shared by Victorian women and girls in the survey, via written submissions and forums over last few months will now form the development of recommendations to improve

the way women's healthcare is delivered in Victoria.

Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas said the survey results were an important step towards building a new system that is informed by the voices of women, girls, families, carers, the healthcare clinical workforce and researchers.

Inquiry into women's pain co-chair and Royal Women's Hospital chief executive, professor Sue Matthews, said the inquiry was excited to have an “open and honest” dialogue on how women and girls experience pain to ensure women are heard.

“After decades of seeing women feeling dismissed and unheard, we are delighted that so many Victorians have shared their personal stories with us,” she said.





# Peter's passion for postcards

By Cade Lucas

With the advent of smartphones and social media, the practice of sending postcards overseas has largely been consigned to a bygone era.

But for the past 18 months, Newport man Peter Ramadge has been staging a one man postcard revival, sending thousands overseas and helping many others do the same.

His motivation for bringing back this retro form of international correspondence? The war in Ukraine.

"When Putin invaded Ukraine, I thought he was just sabre rattling," said Mr Ramadge of his reaction to the Russian dictator's invasion launched in February 2022.

"And I don't know why, I've got no connection to Ukraine, but I was personally insulted by what he did, so I ordered a Ukrainian flag and put that on the front of the house and it will remain there until the war is over."

Not content with flying the Ukrainian flag, Mr Ramadge wanted to send personal messages of encouragement to soldiers defending their homeland too, but after his initial attempts went nowhere, it was a suggestion from his housemate that he try Postcrossing, an online postcard platform, that finally got things moving.

"I joined (Postcrossing) and in January 2023 I put up a post saying I wanted to send lots of cards to Ukrainians," Mr Ramadge recalled.

"I got a response from Tamara saying I run Postcards from the Front and this is what we do. I thought this is perfect."

Tamara is Tamara Levit, a Ukrainian woman Mr Ramadge has never met, but who has helped him funnel thousands of well-wishing postcards from Australia to Ukrainian defenders (he prefers defenders to soldiers as many are not professionally



Peter Ramadge with the Ukrainian postcards and dog Charlie (Ljubica Vrankovic) 429118\_04

trained troops but civilians who've taken up arms).

"Tamara gets them from where she is

and distributes them to the front line," Mr Ramadge said, adding that unsurprisingly, the correspondence was

mostly one way.

"We don't get a lot of feedback but we get occasional photos from Tamara," he said.

"The front lines are pretty damn dangerous and the guys who deliver the cards, I take my hat off to those blokes."

And despite the lack of response, Mr Ramadge is no doubt that the postcards are greatly appreciated by those who receive them.

"They make a huge difference. According to Tamara lots of defenders carry cards in their top pockets."

Now running Postcards from the Front Australia, Mr Ramadge has sent more than 14,000 postcards to Ukraine since March 2023, with an average of between 500 and 600 cards being sourced from across Australia each month.

However, despite with the war now being well into its third year, Mr Ramadge said demand was growing with a record 1250 postcards were sent to Ukraine in August.

"Recently they've gone beserk over cards," he said.

"Tamara recently had a demand for 3000 cards from a Ukrainian charity and a week after that someone else requested 800 cards from Tamara. She gets them mainly from locals and Europeans, but I'm doing my best as well."

To meet the demand, Mr Ramadge is calling on more locals to put pen to paper and send a postcard to the front.

"This is something everyone can do and we have evidence that these cards motivate the defenders," he said.

"There is no cost at all involved in this."

While there's no cost involved, the task of sourcing and sending the postcards to Ukraine does take up a lot of Mr Ramadge's time. Fortunately that's something he's got plenty of.

"I'm retired and I've become a bit obsessed with it."

To send a postcard to Ukraine, visit: <https://postcardstothefront.com.au/>

## West unit fire sparks e-bike battery warning

Victorians are being urged to charge and store their e-bikes and e-scooters outside their homes, after the occupants of a Footscray apartment narrowly escaped a fire caused by one last month.

The two occupants of the Macpherson Street property woke up at 6.48am on August 27 to the sounds of explosions issuing from their e-bike.

The bike was on charge near the door of the apartment, with the fire blocking the exit.

The pair were forced to escape the blaze by evacuating out of the first-floor

window, sustaining injuries in the process.

Both were then taken to hospital.

Fire crews arrived to find the apartment fully alight and without a working smoke alarm.

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) deputy commissioner community safety Joshua Fischer said the incident was an unfortunate reminder of the risks posed by rechargeable lithium-ion batteries.

"It is crucial that you never leave your rechargeable batteries in front of exits, which would prevent your escape should a

fire break out," he said.

"In this case, the e-bike was indeed blocking the exit, which is why the occupants evacuated out of the window."

Deputy commissioner Fischer also reminded Victorians to purchase products from a reputable supplier and never tamper with or modify a battery.

"Device repair, battery replacement or upgrades must be performed by a qualified professional," he said.

"Attempting to modify a battery yourself could lead to the incorrect power delivery being applied to the device, which can lead

to overheating and fires. It's also important that you only use the battery or charger originally supplied with the device, or one sold by the manufacturer."

Deputy commissioner Fischer said this incident was also a timely reminder of the importance of installing smoke alarms in all bedrooms, living areas and hallways.

"Install smoke alarms and test them regularly so you know they are working. They could save your life."

Details: [frv.vic.gov.au](http://frv.vic.gov.au)

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“I’ve learned not to be afraid of grief – it’s a ride that will take you through unbearable days, but it’s essential to remember who they were and to seek support when needed”

- Sarah Major



Sarah Major will walk 71 kilometres this month to raise awareness for pancreatic cancer. Inset: Purple ribbon for pancreatic cancer. (Pictures: Ljubica Vrankovic) 428979

# Striding strong for awareness

After receiving the call no one ever wants to receive last month, Sarah Major is walking through her grief this September to raise funds and awareness for a deadly silent disease, as Gerald Lynch discovers.

On Saturday, August 10, Sarah received a call from her grandmother Shirley that she’ll never forget.

“Grandad is unwell, he has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and has been given days to live,” she recalled.

“On August 13, I was holding on to grandad with my aunt and nan in the room as he gasped his final breath. He was 86.”

This September, Sarah is walking 71 kilometres, a representation of the 71 Australians who die from pancreatic cancer every week.

Sarah fondly remembers her grandfather as a “cheeky and mischievous” man who delighted in making people happy, even if it meant getting into trouble with her grandmother.

“My grandad, Terry McKinley, often went to the Melton Senior Citizens Hall to join in all things social, even when moving to Woodend my nan would still take him as he enjoyed the social interaction,” she said.

“He loved being a grandfather and cherished all 13 of us, no matter our mistakes,” adding that he was thrilled to become a great-grandfather nine times over.

When Sarah’s grandfather was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in August, the news shook the family.

“He was supposed to be invincible,” she recalled.

While he initially seemed his usual self, joking about digging holes and pirate ships, the disease quickly took its toll.

“We watched the life drain from him,” Sarah said, describing the emotional rollercoaster the family endured as they struggled with the impending loss.

“Seeing the ‘Queen’ of the family, my nan, break down when he took his final breath was one of the hardest moments, but our strong family bond got us through it.”



Sarah and her husband Seamus at their wedding with her grandparents. (Supplied)

The inspiration for Sarah’s 71-kilometre challenge came from a family group chat, during which one of her cousins suggested the idea.

After some hesitation due to her night shifts, Sarah decided to commit as a way to honour her grandfather and raise awareness for pancreatic cancer.

“Physically, the hardest part is fitting in a walk each day with my work schedule, but I’m pushing myself for my grandad,” she explained.

Emotionally, the challenge brings daily reminders of his absence.

“I’m sure he’s watching over me, especially on those days when I start walking in nice weather and it turns bad by the end – him still being the jokester.”

Sarah hopes her efforts will spark conversations about pancreatic cancer, a disease she calls a “silent killer” due to its often late diagnosis.

“Many don’t even know they have it until it’s too late,” she stressed.

Through fundraising and raising awareness,

Sarah dreams of a future where earlier detection or even a cure is possible.

Reflecting on the experience, Sarah shared that it has deepened her appreciation for time and the importance of being present with loved ones.

“I’ve learned not to be afraid of grief—it’s a ride that will take you through unbearable days, but it’s essential to remember who they were and to seek support when needed,” she said.

Looking forward, Sarah is committed to continuing her efforts to raise awareness for pancreatic cancer, whether through future walks or monthly contributions. Her advice to others supporting a loved one with the disease is simple: “Just be there for them. Let them know they’re loved and treasure all the good times.”

Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest cancers in Australia, ranking as the fourth biggest cancer killer. Its near symptomless early stages make it near undetectable until it’s too late, contributing to survival rates that are among the lowest of all cancers.

For those diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, the statistics are grim—only a 12.5 per cent chance of surviving for five years.

This stark reality underscores the urgent need for more research and awareness around the disease.

PanKind, The Australian Pancreatic Cancer Foundation, is the only charity in Australia solely dedicated to pancreatic cancer. With a mission to triple the survival rate by 2030 and significantly improve the quality of life for patients, PanKind has become a beacon of hope for those affected by the disease.

Since its inception, PanKind has invested over \$14 million in research grants, funding 66 high-calibre projects across top institutions

in Australia.

These projects support world-class researchers who are committed to finding breakthroughs that could change the future of pancreatic cancer treatment.

One of PanKind’s key fundraising initiatives is Remember September, a challenge-based event that allows participants to honour loved ones lost to pancreatic cancer while standing in solidarity with those currently battling the disease.

The initiative was co-founded by David and Ben Wilhelm as a tribute to their father and cousin, both of whom succumbed to pancreatic cancer.

For David, the challenge is deeply personal.

“I love the challenge because I get to think about my Dad every morning of September. That’s special,” he said.

Remember September is more than just a fundraising effort; it’s a chance for people to remember those they’ve lost and celebrate the memories they shared.

Funds raised during the event go directly towards PanKind’s cutting-edge medical research program, supporting advancements that could one day turn the tide against pancreatic cancer. With the support of communities across Australia, PanKind is determined to make a difference, driving research that could save lives and offering hope to those impacted by this devastating disease.

By participating in Remember September, Australians are not only commemorating their loved ones but also contributing to a future where pancreatic cancer is no longer a death sentence. Together, with PanKind’s leadership and the collective efforts of supporters, there is hope that the survival rate for pancreatic cancer will improve, offering patients and their families a brighter future.

Donate: [rememberseptember.org.au/fundraisers/sarahmajor](http://rememberseptember.org.au/fundraisers/sarahmajor)



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Keanen Theron\_(Ljubica Vrankovic)\_427791\_01

# Keanen keeps winning

Teenager Keanen Theron has been crowned the Juvenile Blue Belt Ultra-heavy weight champion for the second year running at The Australian Jiu-Jitsu National Championship.

The victory saw Keanen add to his growing list of accolades that include gold in a Grappling Industries tournament in February and silver at the Victoria Jiu-Jitsu Championships in May.

Keanen's schedule sees him regularly travel to Sydney and Brisbane to join training days and participate in competitions.

When not on the road, he trains and teaches at the Gracie Barra Academy in Hoppers Crossing.

The 17-year-old fighter is currently completing year 12 and has been training at the gym for eight years, seven of which he has focused on Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ).

When asked about what he most enjoys about BJJ, Keanen spoke of his enthusiasm for

the technical side of the sport.

"I like how technical it is and how there is always more to learn."

As for the future, Keanen hopes to fight internationally.

Roan Theron is an instructor at Gracie Barra and explained what makes Keanen such a strong competitor on the jiu jitsu circuit.

"Keanen's best quality as a fighter is his ability to remain calm both before and during the fight.

"He is gentle and well-mannered and loves teaching and engaging with people from the community, empowering them through teaching self-defense and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu."

The Australian Jiu-Jitsu National Championship, which is held annually at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, saw over 2000 athletes compete over August 17 and 18.

Jaidyn Kennedy

**Briefs**

**Swing brings swoop warning**

With spring upon us, people are again being warned to look out for swooping birds when outdoors. Native birds swoop in urban and rural areas, parks and gardens, along bike tracks or anywhere that birds are nesting. Species that may swoop commonly include magpies, masked lapwings and butcherbirds. Those seeking to avoid being swooped are advised to know their local swooping hotspots and avoid them; move quickly but don't run if near a swooping bird; wear protective head and eye coverings; don't harass or feed birds and don't destroy their nests.

**Teaching scholarships**

The state government is providing free degrees for student teachers to boost workforce numbers across Victoria, with round two of teaching scholarships now open. Scholarships covering the cost of degrees are available for all Victorians studying secondary school teaching degrees in 2024 and 2025, relieving cost-of-living pressures for students and giving them the best start in their career in education. Students who need support to return to their teaching study are also eligible, with scholarships available to those who may have started prior to 2022 and returned in 2024 or 2025.

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# Get a whiff of this walk!

By Jaidyn Kennedy

Wyndham Harbour hosted the area's first smell walk on Saturday, September 7.

Guests were given the opportunity to participate in a unique olfactory experience, scanning the area at their own pace armed with clipboards, a smell chart and their noses.

The 45-minute self-guided walk saw participants record smells they encountered, the location, intensity and if it was to their liking or not.

Smell Art founder and scent designer Erin Adams led the walk and shared what she loves about hosting smell walks.

"It is very rewarding to be able to facilitate what is, for almost everyone, their very first smell walk, and to hear about how much they enjoyed the experience- I also really love looking through everyone's smell notes and reading all the wild and wonderful scents that people found."

Ms Adams was more than satisfied with Wyndham's first smell adventure.

"The day exceeded my expectations. We had a wonderful group of people and the weather couldn't have been better."

The smell scavenger hunt was followed by afternoon tea that doubled as an introductory smell seminar.

Ms Adams began by explaining the science of smell, how our sense of smell fares compared to other species and enthusiastically debunked some misconceptions about the frequently forgotten sense.

She went on to discuss the long history of smell being stigmatised in Western civilisation as being animalistic and unreliable, reaching as far back as Plato and Aristotle over 2300 years ago in Greece.

Through Smell Art, Ms Adams is determined to get people thinking about smell, which according to some experts is



Smell Art founder Erin Adams leading the smell walk. (Wyndham City Council)



Smell walkers in action.

scientifically a 100 years behind other more studied senses, in a positive way.

Wyndham Harbour was selected for its



The smell survey.

coastal location on Port Phillip Bay and its unique blend of urban and agricultural scents. The next smell hotspot is yet to be confirmed.

## Stand for local election

Local government election nominations are open, with those looking to make a difference in their community encouraged to apply.

Candidates can nominate until 12pm on Tuesday, September 17.

Postal ballots will be sent to all Victorians on the electoral roll in early October and must be returned by close of voting on Friday, October 25.

Local government Minister Melissa Horne said that councils should reflect the communities they represent.

"I encourage local leaders to consider nominating in the upcoming local government elections," Ms Horne said.

All candidates are required to undertake the online Local Government Victoria candidate training to be eligible to nominate for council, as required by the Local Government Act 2020.

New additions to this training include understanding conflicts of interest, and available support for councillors to perform their role.

Councils will have a uniform councillor code of conduct to create consistent standards of behaviour and increase accountability.

A program of mandatory training will also be introduced for councillors and mayors, including annual professional development.

The reforms are aimed at introducing stronger sanctions for councillor misconduct and improved processes to resolve conduct matters earlier, including strengthened powers for the minister to address councillor conduct.



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Principal Leanne Gagatois and assistant principal Rebecca Sandlant, with students: Riya, Sliver, Kiara, Annabella, Franklin and Morrisham. (Damjan Janevski) 429696\_01

## College is a top sport

Wyndham Central College has been recognised for its sporting achievements, taking home multiple awards at the Victorian School Sports Awards.

The school was named the 2023 Victorian Sports School of the Year Secondary School winner, the 2023 Schools Sport Victoria Sport School of the Year Secondary School winner, the 2023 Volleyball School of the Year and 2023 ACHPER Innovative Program Award Secondary winner.

The school attributes a large part of its success to the relationships it has developed with local sporting clubs which provide opportunities for students to get involved in sport.

Assistant principal Bec Sandlant, who was also the recipient of multiple awards, was asked what the awards meant for the school.

"We are incredibly proud to receive these

awards and it means a great deal to the school. It's a recognition of the hard work and dedication from both students and staff. These awards reflect the collective effort of our school community, and we're grateful for these opportunities to celebrate our success," she said.

Ms Sandlant highlighted the importance of school sport, citing the physical, mental and social benefits it provides.

"Beyond the individual benefits, school sports provide a sense of belonging and school spirit, helping students build friendships and develop resilience through both victories and challenges," she said.

The school expanded into the all-abilities space this year and is recruiting for 10-pin bowling teams and downhill workshops to ensure all students can be involved in physical activities.



# Trek to vanquish the black dog

In an extraordinary effort to raise awareness and funds for mental health, runner Alex Cleary has set himself an epic challenge, to run 100kms a day for 10 days from Bondi Beach in Sydney to St Kilda Beach in Melbourne.

Alex, from Melbourne's west, is currently training hard in Melbourne to prepare for the monumental feat which will kick-off on September 12.

His mission is not only to cover over 1000 kilometres in 10 days but also to raise \$100,000 to support the Black Dog Institute's vital research, education programs, and mental health support services.

"When I was 19, I lost my sister to suicide. At the time, I didn't know anything about mental health, depression, or anxiety, and I had no idea my sister was struggling. I spent years feeling helpless, as if there was nothing I could do," Alex said.

"I've now realised there's actually a lot I can do. In 2023 I decided to take some action, challenge myself and do what I could to make a difference. I took a leap of faith and signed up for the Antarctic Ice Marathon. Then, over the next six months, I ran 100km from Geelong to Melbourne, completed a marathon a day for seven days, placed 4th in the marathon in Antarctica, and won the Magellan Strait Marathon in Chile and I raised \$28,000 dollars for the Black Dog Institute."

More recently Alex participated in UltraMan Australia, a three-day triathlon where athletes complete a 10km Swim, 421.1km Bike ride and 84.3km run. Alex not only completed the event but also won the 'Be Phenomenal' award in recognition that he had no previous swimming experience and only started riding in February.

"The goal of running 100km a day for 10 days to raise \$100,000 is by far the hardest challenge I've ever attempted but I'm more



**Main:** Alex Cleary completed the Antarctic Ice Marathon.  
**Above:** Alex is in training to run from Sydney to St Kilda.  
**Left:** Alex and his sister.  
(Pictures: Supplied)

determined than ever. I know a lot of people in the community are impacted by mental health. I want to give them the opportunity to make a difference whether it's through making a donation to Black Dog Institute, starting conversations to increase awareness of mental health or even being motivated to take positive

steps to improve their own wellbeing.

"My family should have never lost a member to suicide and neither should any family."

"Sadly, one in ten Australian's experience a mental health illness every year. I'm committed to doing what I can to improve this situation and hopefully can inspire others

along the way."

For more information on Alex's run from Sydney to Melbourne and to make a donation to the Black Dog Institute visit Team Black Dog - Alex Cleary's Fundraising Page.

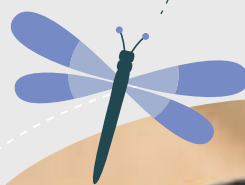
Keep up to date with Alex's journey on Instagram @clearlyruns

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# Models walk proud for diversity

By Afraa Kori

Models from a range of diverse backgrounds are getting training and the opportunity to join the fashion industry thanks to mentor Tina Mukasa.

Tina recently announced her beauty pageant and modelling academy, Miss Diverse Australia (MDA), will host a runway show in November.

Tina has received a flood of applications from aspiring models in Melbourne's west, including from young hopefuls in Werribee, Truganina, Tarneit and Point Cook.

"Thirty-plus models have been successfully selected to participate in the MDA runway show in 2024. All genders and cultures have applied for the runway, however there are more women who have applied. We have models who are enquiring about our service overseas, particularly New Zealand and Africa," Tina said.

As a qualified modelling, pageant and confidence coach, Tina understands that preparation is the foundation for success and is currently training models in Truganina.

"My passion for modelling and pageant motivates me to travel from Shepparton (where she lives) to Melbourne," she said.

"The training program is ongoing, however the frequency for the group training and workshops are once a month for now.

"I have helped models to build confidence by reminding them to keep embracing their individuality and letting go of the fear of judgement from other models brands, designers, photographers etc. In addition to this, I have assisted models to set some boundaries and encouraging them to speak up if something isn't right or feeling unsafe."

As part of the runway, Tina has joined forces with hairstylists, makeup artists, photographers and videographers across Melbourne.

It also features emerging, independent, and established fashion designers and brands, with an ongoing celebration of diverse cultures.

Fashion fans can look forward to a red carpet, performances, open bar, live music, 360 camera, scouting agency and judges.

Tina's childhood dream of making a mark in the fashion, modelling and pageant has now become a reality with MDA runway.

MDA was launched because of the setbacks and rejections she experienced in the industry, but Tina is grateful that her support system has never failed her.

"I was so blessed to have a supportive father and siblings who saw potential and believed in my vision. My journey has been rewarding, but most importantly creating more opportunities for models, small businesses, brands, designers, makeup artists and hairstylists to showcase their talents on the runway show on Sunday, November 24."

What sets Miss Diverse Australia apart is that it doesn't just preach representation, it



MDA founder Tina (centre) and featured models. (Credits Mukasa Brothers Production)

practises it.

"Models have the opportunity in the pageant runway to wear their cultural attire on the stage. At MDA we embrace all cultures, ages, size, height, gender and religion which makes us unique," Tina said.

"Representation is a must and matters in the modelling and pageant industry. It will impact models and the wider community to see a former refugee who faced all the setbacks and originated Miss Diverse Australia. A positive impact due to MDA inclusiveness and a culturally safe environment where models can be themselves, embrace their differences, build confidence and become more comfortable on the runway stage, training and workshops."

Werribee model, Mariamo Mitungi is a testament that opportunities are available for Muslim women.

"I've always loved fashion and wanted to do modelling and pageantry since a little girl but never thought I'd have the opportunity due to being a Muslim female but as more culturally diverse opportunities have become available my passion to be an example to others to pursue their dreams through something that I am passionate about myself grew. When meeting Tina through modelling and learning about Tina's coaching and what opportunities she is creating for others I knew it was something I wanted to be a part of and represent," Mariamo said.

"My goals in the modelling and pageant world is firstly to show myself that despite all the challenges life has brought, by staying true to me and my passions, I'm here doing what I've always wanted to do and with that, live out the goal to show other Muslim woman that you can be a pageantry model without disrespecting your beliefs and core values.

"It feels good to be a part of something that



Models get runway experience thanks to Tina.

includes everyone and embraces individuality no matter the size, culture, skin colour, as we are all equal and treated as such. I hope to bring other Muslim girls with the same interests the opportunity to be involved in a company that doesn't just focus on diversity and inclusivity but embraces self confidence.

"MDA advocates and focuses on 'being you' and puts actions to back this up by supporting and encouraging those to show/express

themselves in their own individual way."

MDA will take place on Sunday, November 24 in Melbourne. The venue and tickets will be released at the end of September.

MDA applications are still open and models are encouraged to apply, regardless of their age, size, height, gender, religion and culture.

Details: <https://missdiverseaustralia.com.au>



## Upcoming overnight CityLink inbound closures at Footscray Road

September and October 2024

CityLink inbound between Flemington Road and Footscray Road will be closed overnight from **11pm Saturday 21 to 7am Sunday 22 September** and from **11pm Saturday 5 to 7am Sunday 6 October**.

Detours will be in place, but please remember to check before you travel and allow extra travel time.

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# MY PLACE

Jaidyn Kennedy talks to Wyndham Central College assistant principal Rebecca Sandlant about living and working in Wyndham.

## Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do?

I've lived in Werribee since I was three, growing up and going to school in the area. Throughout my school years, I was actively involved in sports, which fostered a deep connection with the community. Today, I proudly work as an assistant principal, guiding the next generation of students. Beyond my professional role, I like to give back to the community that shaped me. I volunteer with several local sporting clubs, helping to nurture the same sense of belonging and support that I experienced growing up. Werribee has been, and continues to be, the heart of my life and work.

## What is your connection to Wyndham?

As I mentioned above, I have grown up in Werribee and am now raising my own family here. I live with my husband Tim and children Cooper and Peyton. My family has been involved in local football, netball, cricket, basketball, gymnastics and swimming clubs and we have always tried to do our part. We work, and the kids go to school in the local community.

## What do you like about where you live?

Werribee has changed so much over the 40 years I've lived here, evolving from a quiet town into a thriving, diverse community. Despite the growth and development, the strong sense of community and connection remains, which is what I love most about it. The balance between modern amenities and natural spaces, along with the welcoming atmosphere, makes Werribee a place I'm proud to call home.

## Where is your favourite place to spend time?

My favourite place to spend time in Werribee is the Werribee Mansion. I love the peaceful surroundings and the beautiful gardens. I often picnic with my family and have made great memories. There's something special about the history, nature and relaxation it brings



Rebecca Sandlant.

## Tell us something people would be surprised to know about you?

I have recently received some awards, a 2023 School Sport Victoria Recognition Award for services to school sport, 2023 Victorian Secondary School Sports Outstanding Teacher Award, 2023 Victorian Sport Award for

Innovative Project, and a 2023 finalist for Netball Victoria's Teacher of the Year, all that have all been an unexpected honour. I'm humbled by the recognition and grateful for the support of colleagues, sporting community members and students who made these achievements possible.

## What, if anything, would you change about where you live?

With Werribee's growing population, the roads haven't always kept up. If I could change one thing, it would be to reduce traffic congestion, making it easier and smoother for everyone to get around.





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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Lions Club

The Lions Club of Point Cook meets at the Featherbrook Community Centre on the third Monday of the month at 7.30 pm. The club is seeking to grow the Lions free vision screening in schools team. Volunteers needed to work with the region's schools in combating undiagnosed children's vision issues. You do not have to be a Lions member but must obtain a working with children check.

■ Robert Eyton, 0417 549 684 or [robeyton@bigpond.com](mailto:robeyton@bigpond.com)

## Werribee Jazz Club

Join the Werribee Jazz Club on the second Sunday of the month from 2pm to 5pm, for three hours of great music, dancing or relaxed listening. You can enjoy live bands featuring some of Australia's best jazz musicians playing traditional, dixieland, swing, R'n'B and mainstream jazz. BYO nibbles, drinks available at moderate bar prices with complimentary tea and coffee. We are located at the Werribee Bowls Club, Watton Street, Werribee. Entry: \$22.

■ Jenny, 0419 558 481

## Drumming classes

Community adult drumming class. If you ever wanted to try out your rhythmic skills, the first class is free and concessions apply for other classes. All hand drums supplied or BYO. No experience required, just bring an open heart and mind and enjoy making some great rhythms together. The class is friendly and welcoming to everyone. Thursdays, 7.30pm to 8.30pm, during school terms, at Saltwater Community Centre, 153 Saltwater Parade, Point Cook.

■ 0411 028 077 or [bfmusic15@gmail.com](mailto:bfmusic15@gmail.com)

## Wyndham Ladies Probus

Retired or semi-retired ladies are invited to join this very active social group. Enjoy impressive monthly guest speakers, interesting monthly outings and many lunches where the development of friendships is encouraged. The Ladies Probus Club of Wyndham meets on the first Wednesday of each month at Hotel 520, Sayers Road, Tarneit, at 10am.

■ Pat 0411 316 795

## Point Cook VIEW

The Point Cook Day VIEW Club (for ladies) meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Point Cook Library, 1-21 Cheetham Street, Point Cook. Members enjoy afternoon teas and outings. New members welcome. VIEW is part of the Smith Family.

■ Catherine, 0407 726 852.

## Watton Group

A support group providing a social space for carers to get together in a safe and compassionate environment. Gives carers an opportunity to connect, share their experiences and offers emotional and practical support. The group meets at the Eco-Living Centre at 10am, every fourth Tuesday of the month.

■ Patricia, 0434 487 360, or [wattongroup131@gmail.com](mailto:wattongroup131@gmail.com).

## All Abilities Netball

All Abilities Netball for 10-to-25-year-olds is run by Wyndham Netball Association every Saturday morning during school terms, from 10.30am, on outside court 14 at Eagle Stadium, Ballan Road, Werribee. Intellectual, physical and social disabilities are catered for in a fun and supported group. Come and try your first



This week's photographer's choice is of Melton RSL Sub-branch president Steve Cook, he has been making model navy ships as part of their miniature model mindfulness program. (Damjan Janevski) 428812\_01

session for free, with stadium entry \$2.

■ Phil, 0437 078 739

## Wyndham Rotary

Wyndham Rotary welcomes people interested in helping people in need in the community. Interested in finding out more, come to the Italian Sports Club each Wednesday at 6.30pm for a meal, to share ideas and to work for a common cause.

■ Julie, 0406 196 630

## With One Voice choir

With One Voice Wyndham Choir is a community choir open to all. The community choir welcomes all ages, abilities, faiths, cultures and genders and is directed by a very experienced and friendly professional conductor. Fun weekly rehearsals and amazing performance opportunities are provided. They sing for an hour and then have a cuppa. The first two visits are free; and then payment is by tax-deductible donation. Tuesday evenings, 7-8.30pm, at Wayaperri House, 106 Duncans Road, Werribee.

■ [wyndham@withonevoice.org.au](mailto:wyndham@withonevoice.org.au)

## Adult community garden group

The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month, 10-11.30am, at Iramoo Community Centre, 84 Honour Avenue, Wyndham Vale. Head down and join them as they maintain their rejuvenated community garden. Planting and harvesting produce that they grow.

■ 8742 3688

## Hoppers Crossing Ladies Probus

The friendly and vibrant group meet at Hotel 520 on the second Wednesday of each month from 10am. They have a guest speaker each month as well as social lunches, outings and theatre trips.

■ 0408 123 669

## U3A Werribee

The group is a not-for-profit community

organisation for semi-retired and retired Wyndham residents. They hold a variety of classes-activities specifically designed for seniors, including, light physical and mental wellbeing sessions, arts, games and craft, and general classes such as current affairs, history and lunch groups. Most classes-activities are held at Wyndham community centres.

■ Rick, 0402 299 220.

## Lions Club

Lions Club of Werribee meets at the RSL Club, 2a Synnot Street, Werribee on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6.30pm.

■ Jorge, 0433 566 575

## Bingo for all

The Werribee RSL hosts Bingo every Monday between 12.30-2.30pm.

■ 9741 5525

## Western Budgerigar Club

The Western Suburbs Budgerigar Club meets at 7.30pm on the third Thursday of each month at Masonic Hall, 223 Watton Street, Werribee. Meet other members who are also passionate about breeding Budgerigars.

■ Don, 0414 975 862

## Western Melbourne Men's Chorus

Do you like to sing? The Western Melbourne Men's Chorus wants you! Be part of a rewarding fraternity of fellow amateur musicians serving the community, sharing comradery and having fun. Rehearsals at 7:00PM Tuesday evenings at St. James Church, Hoppers Crossing.

■ Chris, 0400 414 215

## Dementia Carers Group

IPC Health Dementia Carers Group is held on the first Tuesday of the month, from 12.30-2.30pm. The group is for people who care for someone with dementia or a similar condition associated with memory loss. It empowers carers through

education, social connectedness and emotional support while socialising and meeting people in similar situations. Registration is essential.

■ Leah Hewitt or Joyce Chan, 1300 472 432 or <https://bit.ly/48QFwBa>

## Werribee River Association

New volunteers to support Landcare work along the Werribee River. A great way to give back, get outdoors and work at your own pace.

■ Lisa Field, 0433 559 530, [admin@werribeeriver.org.au](mailto:admin@werribeeriver.org.au), or [www.werribeeriver.org.au](http://www.werribeeriver.org.au)

## Seniors House of Fun

The Grange Community Centre invites seniors of Wyndham to its weekly Seniors House of Fun. This is a free program running every Friday, 11am-12.30pm, at The Grange Community Centre, 260-280 Hogans Road, Hoppers Crossing.

■ Vanessa, 8742 8000, or [enquires@grangecommunity.org.au](mailto:enquires@grangecommunity.org.au)

## Seniors club

The Werribee Senior Citizens Club meets at 80 Lonsdale Circuit, Hoppers Crossing. The group is open to all people 55-plus and it runs on Wednesdays, 10am-noon. Entry: \$2, includes morning tea.

■ 0403 041 499

## Diabetes Support Group

The Werribee Diabetes support provides an opportunity to hear from experts on how to manage your diabetes, to share information on diabetes and to engage with other diabetics. Meetings are at the old council shire buildings at 10am every second Friday of the month.

■ Bob, 0409 252872.



# Aussie acts headline for one day

Some of the biggest Aussies acts from across the past 30 years will take to the stage at Werribee Park in November for One Electric Day.

The iconic outdoor show has become one of Victoria's favourite one-day music festivals and promises to be a super day out for the family and deliver something for everyone.

The festival line-up includes Noiseworks, who provided the soundtrack to every big night in the 1980s, with rock anthems 'No Lies', 'Take Me Back', 'Hot Chilli Woman', 'Touch', and countless others. Original band members

Jon Stevens, Steve Balbi, and Kevin Nicol will deliver all their legendary hits, including those from their 2022 album 'Evolution'.

Joining Noiseworks will be Birds of Toyko. Formed in Perth in the early 2000's, Birds of Toyko have grown from independent roots to become one of Australia's most popular contemporary rock bands.

Wolfmother, led by vocalist-guitarist Andrew Stockdale, will also take to the stage at Werribee Park, alongside Baby Animals, Chocolate Starfish and Killing Heidi, which

celebrates 25 years since the release of its debut album 'Reflector' next year.

One Electric Day is at Werribee Park, K Road, Werribee South, on Sunday, November 17, and can be attended by all aged. Under-18s must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, and children under six years of age can enter for free.

Tickets: [www.ticketmaster.com.au](http://www.ticketmaster.com.au)

Noiseworks will perform at Werribee Park for One Electric Day. (Supplied)



Jake Currey from St Anne's Winery with the Sip & Bloom promotional artwork. (Damjan Janevski) 429915\_04

## Enjoy rosé and roses in Myrniong

Spring has sprung and Maddingley Botanical has teamed up with St Anne's Winery to deliver the "regional equivalent" to the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show.

From 10.30am to 4pm on Sunday, October 6, patrons can enjoy an extravaganza of lavish floral arrangements, live music, wine tasting, and more at Sip & Bloom.

Maddingley Botanical general manager Michael Sinclair said he wanted to "ignite tourism" in the area by enticing attendees from far and wide.

"People are coming from Wagga Wagga and the eastern suburbs so we are hoping ... to put Moorabool on the map," he said.

Mr Sinclair said the occasion also met the desires of residents.

"People are crying out for an event like this because there isn't one like it ... this side of Melbourne."

"They are looking for things to do coming out of winter with footy finishing that isn't going to cost them a million dollars."

Mr Sinclair said he hoped visitors would feel compelled to take up a pastime or develop a passion.

"We want to inspire a love of gardening and provide access to new things that might not have been there before," he said.

A 'handpicked' selection of native Australian and African plants like proteas and banksias will be available to purchase.

St Anne's Winery employee Jake Currey said he was excited about the variety of activities on

offer at the inaugural event.

"We will have different food offerings, workshops and demonstrations, and our usual wine tasting," he said.

Mr Currey said for wine lovers, it was the "perfect time" for a sauvignon blanc.

"We have a terrific vintage that is super fresh and fruity - it suits the whole vibe very well."

"You also can't go wrong with a sparkling. We have a white and a red both with a nice bit of bubble."

Parking is \$5 per vehicle and all proceeds go to the Country Fire Association, who will help organise and direct traffic.

Tickets: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1278081>

Eddie Russell

## Jazz festival heads west

The Melbourne International Jazz Festival will return this year, including to the west.

Footscray and Spotswood will host a series of gigs as part of the festival, which will feature more than 400 artists playing over 10 days.

From October 18 - 27, there will be 109 events for music lovers to go out and enjoy at 34 venues across the city.

From 1-10pm on Saturday October 26, locals can enjoy a free day of music for the Grazeland Takeover.

The outdoor dining venue, which has over 50 food and beverage vendors, will be blasting jazz, soul, funk, and swing.

Local Melbourne artists Rhea John (1-3pm), Matt Hoyne Trio (4-6pm), and Melbourne Tramways Big Band (7-9pm) will take to the stage, with Shio (12.30-5.30pm) and DJ Manchild (5.30-10pm) spinning tracks for attendees as well.

Jazz Westside: Footscray Sunday Sessions, which is also free, has three artists playing at venues one after another.

Mamma Chens, Misfits, and Moon Dog Wild West are all a stone's throw away from each other and will host Boubacar Gaye, Wild Gloriosa, and Collard Greens & Gravy respectively.

Those looking to soak up some spring sun and engage in the vibrant energy of Melbourne's west can mark their calendars for the Melbourne International Jazz Festival.

**Information:** <https://www.melbournejazz.com/>

## Fairground set to feature at fringe festival



Dramawerkz Youth Theatre chief executive Mia Boonen and cast members Amelia Barham, Angelina Army and Chloe prepare to perform Fairground at the Melbourne Fringe Festival next month. (Damjan Janevski) 428577\_01

A group of local teens and young adults are preparing to bring the Melbourne Fringe Festival to Hobsons Bay.

Altona based youth theatre group Dramawerkz will debut their original production Fairground at the festival, from October 17 to 20, at the Louis Joel Community and Arts Centre.

A play about a teenager running away to the circus, Fairground was co-written and will be performed by Dramawerkz students, who, unsurprisingly, are teenagers themselves.

"It's got big circus characters and a beautiful story about a teenager living life but also his big dreams and imagination," said Dramawerkz chief executive Mia Boonen of what audiences can expect from the production.

"It's got original music written by our teenagers and I guess for me it's a story about coming of age and if you are a teenager or you

know and love a teenager it's a really important one to tell."

A one-off performance of Fairground was held at the end of last year, but this will be their first time the students will be accompanied by a full band across multiple dates.

And while previous Dramawerkz productions have featured at the fringe and staff such as Boonen have performed at the festival numerous times, the thirteen cast members will be doing so for the first time.

"I think it's amazing for them to perform something they've written in front of an audience," said Boonen of what the students will get out of the experience. "And also being part of such a big festival with so many amazing artists will be great for them as well."

Details: <http://www.dramawerkz.com>

Cade Lucas







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## General Notices

**Public Notices and Event**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Packaged Liquor Licence Application**

Smallbird PTY LTD applied to the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation on 06/09/2024 for the application of a packaged liquor licence for Little River General Store at 2 McLean Road, Little River VIC 3211, opening hours Monday-Saturday 9am to 6pm, Sunday 10am to 6pm, excluding Good Friday and Anzac Day.

**Any person may object to the grant of this application on the grounds that:**

- it would detract from, or be detrimental to, the amenity of the area in which the premises are situated, and/or
- it would be conducive to or encourage the misuse or abuse of alcohol.

An objection must state the reasons for the objection.  
All objections are treated as public documents.  
Objections must be made in writing to:  
Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation  
GPO Box 1988  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Objections must be made no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

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## Announcements

**Funeral Services**

**JOHNSTON, Shirley May (nee Baulch)**

3 July 1935 - 31 August 2024

Wife, mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, Shirley was loved by all. An active member in the community, she was a Commissioner for the Werribee Guides and foundation member of the Werribee Women's Group.

She passed peacefully in the presence of family.

The family thanks all who have shared their stories of Shirley's love and life.

Private Cremation.

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# SPORTS QUIZ

- Which NRL club plays home games at Go Media Stadium?
- Which AFL club plays home games at Mars Stadium?
- Which 21-year-old cricketer has been named in the Australia T20 squad after playing only one game of first-class cricket?
- Name the four-time world heavyweight boxing champion who is nicknamed the Real Deal.



Carlos Alcaraz

- ACMA recently issued a warning to the Ten Network after a Socceros game for what reason?
- Zakia Khudadadi won the bronze medal in taekwondo at the Paris Paralympics, becoming the first ever medallist for which team?
- Who beat Carlos Alcaraz in the second round of the US Open?
- Who is the current head coach of the Socceros?
- Which nation has taken home the most Paralympic medals across all of the Games?
- A 23-year-old Carlton supporter was recently given a lifetime AFL ban after throwing what at an umpire?
- Which AFL coach made a citizen's arrest after an alleged thief ran off following a car crash in Melbourne?
- For which team will Australian F1 driver Jack Doohan race in 2025?

- Which Australian cricketer, who played one Test match in 2021, has been forced to retire due to recurrent concussions?
- Which Aussie tennis player scored an upset win over Greek star Stefanos Tsitsipas in the opening round of the US Open?
- Which Adelaide star won consecutive Norm Smith Medals in the 1997 and 1998 AFL Grand Finals?
- Which former manager of the England national soccer team died recently at the age of 76?
- Franco Colapinto has been recruited to drive for which F1 team for the rest of the season?
- Who was named captain of the AFL's All-Australian team for the 2024 season?
- Which batsman is currently the interim England cricket Test captain due to Ben Stokes' hamstring injury?
- How many holes are played at LIV Golf events?



Hayley Raso

- Alexei Popyrin defeated which tennis champion in the third round of the 2024 US Open?
- Hayley Raso recently signed to play for which Women's Super League team?
- Giants player Eilish O'Dowd broke what record on debut in Round 1 of the 2024 AFL season?
- The Round 2 AFLW clash between the Western Bulldogs and Port Adelaide was recently moved to which venue?
- Elliot Whitehead is the captain of which NRL team?
- Which nation won the 2024 Paralympic gold in wheelchair rugby?
- Italian rower Giacomo Perini was stripped of his Paralympic single sculls bronze medal for having what in his boat?
- True or false: women's sumo wrestling is a professional sport in Japan?
- Thomas Gallagher won gold at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games in which sport?
- Christian Petracca recently announced he would be playing for which AFL team in 2025?

1. New Zealand Warriors 2. Western Bulldogs 3. Cooper Connolly 4. Evander Holyfield 5. Unlawful gambling advertising 6. Refugee Paralympic Team 7. Botic van de Zandschulp 8. Graham Arnold 9. The US 10. A water bottle 11. Michael Voss 12. Alpine 13. Will Pucovski 14. Thanasi Kokkinakis 15. Andrew Mccleod 16. Sven-Göran Eriksson 17. Williams 18. Marcus Bontempelli 19. Ollie Pope 20. 54 21. Novak Djokovic 22. Tottenham Hotspur 23. Fastest goal in AFLW history 24. MCG Rugby 25. Canberra Raiders 26. Japan 27. Mobile phone 28. False 29. Swimming 30. Melbourne

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# PUZZLES

## SUDOKU

No. 202

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

easy

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

medium

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

hard

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

easymedium

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

hard

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

Puzzles and pagination © Pagemasters | pagemasters.com

## 5x5

P		L		Y
		L		T
N		V		L
		H		E
E		R		S

No 306

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

**NOTE:** more than one solution may be possible

E	A	R	L	S
C	H	E	P	
N	O	V	E	L
E	L	I	T	E
P	A	L	S	Y

## QUICK CROSSWORD

No. 202

### ACROSS

- 1 Eating place (4)
- 3 Exercises (10)
- 10 Princess Diana's maiden name (7)
- 11 A source of light (3,4)
- 12 Places to sleep (8)
- 13 Transparent (5)
- 14 Voice communication over the internet (1,1,1,1)
- 15 To continue indefinitely (10)
- 18 Relighting (10)
- 20 Sham (4)
- 21 Colony insect (3)
- 23 Ocean (8)
- 26 Town in France with a shrine to St Bernadette (7)
- 27 Furnish (7)
- 28 Someone who receives repeated access to a service (10)
- 29 Book ID (1,1,1,1)

### DOWN

- 1 Throw (4)
- 2 Prussian king, – the Great (1712–1786) (9)
- 4 Relating to the body (9)
- 5 False gods (5)
- 6 Unauthorised (7)
- 7 Laughable (5)
- 8 Take the place of (9)
- 9 Cicatrix (4)
- 14 Elements that can change (9)
- 16 Tropical fruit (9)
- 17 Professors (9)
- 19 Wandering (7)
- 22 Hand digit (5)
- 23 Japanese dish (5)
- 24 Perching on (4)
- 25 Uncharitable (4)

N	E	S	T	H	E	R	H	O	S								
V	O	G	L	I	W	E											
E	I	A	O	J	S	E	B	O	N	O							
H	E	L	O														
S	E	I															
S																	
E	S																
G	O	S															
S																	
S																	
N																	
E																	
S																	

## DECODER

No. 203

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

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

H	W	Z	M	Y	I	K	B	N	O	X	L	V	G
8													1

## 9-LETTER WORD

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

**Today's Aim:**  
**11 words: Good**  
**16 words: Very good**  
**22 words: Excellent**

			I					
		W		O		E		
T			O					
				N		V		

envo, into, note, open, optine, oven, ovine, veto, VIEWPOINT, vote, wont, pivot, poet, point, tone, tope, town, veto, VIEWPOINT, vote, wont, pivot, woven

## QUICK QUIZ



- 1 Rachel Brosnahan (pictured) stars as Miriam in which TV series?
- 2 In June 2022, the United Nations officially agreed to changed the spelling of which country's name?
- 3 The Palace of Castel Gandolfo was once the summer residence of who?
- 4 What are the two children in *Mary Poppins* called?
- 5 Who is the head of state of Monaco?
- 6 In which decade did Disneyland Paris open?
- 7 Gordon Ramsay's first documented TV role was in which documentary?
- 8 What is the main character's name in the musical *Funny Girl*?
- 9 Which actor played Michael Corleone in *The Godfather*?
- 10 Pete Sampras played which sport professionally?

**ANSWERS:** 1. *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*  
 2. Turkey (formerly Turkey) 3. The Pope  
 4. Jane and Michael 5. Prince Albert II  
 6. 1990s (1992) 7. *Boiling Point* (1999)  
 8. Fanny Brice 9. Al Pacino 10. Tennis



**RATINGS**

Looks: 9/10

Performance: 8/10

Safety: 8/10

Thirst: 7/10

Practicality: 8/10

Comfort: 9/10

Tech: 8/10

Value: 7/10



# The electric Genesis powers on

By **Alistair Kennedy, Marque Motoring**

GV60 is the first dedicated electric vehicle from Hyundai's luxury sub-brand Genesis.

Launched here in early 2022 it's the smallest of the three models in the Genesis SUV range behind the mid-sized GV70 and large GV80.

Each of the three models get different powertrain choices. Our test vehicle, The GV60 is fully-electric, the GV80 comes with turbo-petrol or diesel, as does the GV70 but with an EV option added. Our test vehicle, the GV60, is electric only.

Genesis GV60 sits on the same platform as the Hyundai Ioniq 5 and Kia EV6. With a starting price of just over \$100,000 the Genesis is significantly more expensive than the AWD versions of its two siblings.

Unlike the EV6 and Ioniq 5 which come with the option of single (2WD) or dual (AWD) motors, the GV60 is only AWD.

Two GV60 variants are available, Lux and Performance Lux priced at \$103,384 and \$113,384 respectively plus on-road costs.

## Styling

Although it's classed as an SUV, GV60 is very coupe-like in its appearance, streamlined from the bonnet to the chunky rear spoiler and with a short front overhang. A long wheelbase and large haunches make it look larger than its 4.5-metre length.

Unlike most EVs the GV60 comes with a grille. In this case it is a version of the Genesis family Crest Grille and is located in a lower position than in other GV models that have internal combustion engines. This is to make for the different cooling requirements specific to the dedicated high-performance EV platform.

GV60 features a Clamshell Hood that combines the bonnet and fenders for a sleek appearance.

The wide grille-less front is framed by the same double-stacked headlights that are common across the Genesis range.

The GV60 is available with 10 exterior colours, including two in a Matte finish that are only available in the Performance variant.

## Interior

Passengers in the rear seat have plenty of legroom although the floor is slightly higher

because the battery pack is under the floor. Also, the sloping rear window may make it a little tight for those travelling there.

There are lots of soft touch materials throughout with Nappa leather and suede seats.

To make the GV60 more sustainable, various parts are created with eco-friendly and recycled materials. The seats, door armrests, console armrests, and crash pads are made with plant-based leather.

There are plenty of storage spaces throughout including large bottle holders in all doors and in the floating centre console which can be accessed from both the front and rear.

The seat covers and door centre trims have fabrics made with yarns extracted from recycled PET bottles and fishnets.

Another clever feature is controls that allow the front passenger seat to be adjusted either by the driver or rear passengers.

## Powertrain

The GV60 Lux has combined power of 234 kW, 74 kW from the front motor and 160 kW from the rear together with 605 Nm of torque.

The GV60 Performance Lux steps up to 360 kW, 180W at both front and rear and 700 Nm of torque.

Both variants feature a 77.4kWh Lithium-ion battery which provide a driving range of 470km (WLTP) per charge for the base model and 466km (WLTP) per charge for the Performance variant.

Transmission in our GV60 Lux test car is to all four wheels through what you could call a single-speed automatic transmission.

## Safety

Standard safety features start with 10 airbags including a rollover-resistant curtain 'bags, advanced ABS brakes and Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go function.

Other features include Lane Keeping Assist, High Beam Assist, Driver Attention Warning, Automatic Collision Notification, Forward Collision Avoidance Assist, Blind-Spot Collision Avoidance Assist, Rear Cross Traffic Collision Avoidance Assist, Safe Exit Assist, Intelligent Speed Limit Assist, and Advanced Rear Occupant Alert.

## Infotainment

The GV60 is the first Genesis model to combine



The Genesis GV60 is stylish inside and out.

(Pictures: Supplied)

the instrument clusters and navigation into a panoramic display where the content is connected throughout in clusters, navigation and head up display.

Both the HD multimedia touch screen display and the digital instrument cluster are 12.3-inch units.

Audio is through a premium 17-speaker Bang & Olufsen system with a sound control interface to provide a choice of different sound mixes including Relax, Energetic, Bright and Warm.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are both wired.

## Driving

Entry into the GV60 is helped by a sensor within the key fob that automatically pops up the door handles when the driver approaches the vehicle.

In addition, the Genesis Face Connect feature allows the driver to lock or unlock the car without a key. Drivers only need to touch the door handle and show their face to the camera on the B-pillar. The feature can register two faces.

Fingerprint Authentication System allows

drivers to start and drive the car without a key.

The previous GV60 models didn't have traditional side mirrors but instead used cameras that transmitted images to small screens inside the doors. We've tested this in previous reviews and found it distracting at times because the screen on the driver's door was too close.

Fortunately, the MY2024 upgrade added the option of including normal side mirrors and these were fitted to our test vehicle. The screens are still there but we basically ignored them throughout our test.

Rear vision is poor with the raked window partially blocked by a large rear spoiler and rear seat headrests.

There are three drive modes to choose from, Eco, Normal and Sport. The Eco setting makes the GV60 accelerate relatively gently. The Normal mode is the one we used for most of our driving as we feel that's what most owners would do.

The Sport mode makes it go like a rocket and provides instant grunt to help you overtake in a short space when you see a chance to get past a slower car during country driving. Or you can simply use it just for the fun it provides.

The i-PEDAL regenerative braking mode enables a single-pedal driving strategy that allows acceleration, deceleration and stopping of the vehicle using only the accelerator

## Summing up

At \$100k-plus the Genesis GV60 is not cheap, especially from a relatively new brand, however it is a most impressive vehicle that's stylish inside and out, combining excellent performance with all the latest in technology.

Genesis provides an outstanding ownership program with a five-year unlimited distance warranty, plus in the GV60 an eight-year warranted for eight year/160,000km cover on the battery.

There's also five years of free roadside assistance as well as free servicing for the same period with service intervals of 12 months or 15,000 kilometres. The dealership will collect and return the car when it is to be serviced or provide a loan car. Roadside assistance extends to 10 years if the car is always serviced by a Genesis dealer.

EV buyers also get the option of a five-year Chargefox membership or a free homecharger.



# Premiership joy and heartbreak

The next lot of premiership heroes were crowned on Saturday while some others will now get their shots after locking up grand final spots. *Star Weekly* photographer Ljubica Vrankovic was out among the action on Saturday.



Caroline Springs' Jack Heron tackles Werribee Districts' Seth Clayton. 430075\_05



Sunbury Tigers' Teofilo Seigafo. 430082\_09



What might have been for Westmeadows. 430072\_47



Westmeadows supporters. 430072\_11



Truganina's Innocent Tuimavave-mau. 430082\_01



Taylors Lakes' Ethan Caffari. 430072\_06



Newport's Sohrob Ismail and Sunshine's Kahlan Williams. 430077\_05



Werribee Districts' Lachlan Rainbow. 430075\_14



Xavier Kardachi kicks goal. 430077\_09



Truganina's Lana Muamua. (Ljubica Vrankovic)\_430080\_20



Taylors Lakes players with their fans. 430072\_51



# Werribee Districts go through in extra time

Werribee Districts is the first team through to the Western Football League division 1 grand final, but only just.

Having had two draws during the season, the Tigers needed extra time on Saturday to get past Caroline Springs in a semi final.

Scores were locked at 8.7 (55) when the final siren went.

It meant five minutes of extra time each way. The Tigers scored twice in that time while keeping the Lakers scoreless to win, 9.8 (62)-8.7 (55).

Tigers coach Chris Gilham was a relieved man.

"We've had two draws and extra time in the last 10 weeks, the competition is so even," he said. "Everyone on their day can beat anyone."

"Credit to the boys in extra time. They were unbelievable and they now have the chance to play for another premiership."

Gilham said he wasn't sure if any of the playing group had been in a situation like that

before, with extra time in finals rare.

They got there after the Lakers came home late with the final five goals of regular time.

"We started really well with the scoring end," Gilham said. "We then defended well enough until half time."

"We kicked the first couple of goals in the third quarter and got the margin out to 30 points. I think we were one goal away from breaking them."

"Credit to them, they kicked three goals against the breeze. We defended well... We had a shot which we thought was a goal to get the win, but it was called a point and we went into extra time."

With the players unable to speak to the coaches before extra time, it was up to them to take the responsibility which they did.

It was Josh Mould that kicked the goal to put them in front.

"He's been out for 15 weeks with injury," Gilham said. "He had a couple of games in the

reserves on limited game time.

"He kicked three goals out of eight, he was a very handy inclusion."

Lachlan Rainbow also kicked three goals as he was busy early in the game.

Josh Kellett, Rainbow and Jack Fletcher were named their best.

The Tigers now have a week off before the grand final.

Gilham said they'd got used to a stop-start season this year.

"We'll get to training the next two weeks," he said. "We want to start sharp."

It was a good day for the Tigers with their reserves and under-18s also winning through to grand finals.

"That's three years in a row," Gilham said. "I'm not sure how often that has occurred."

Meanwhile in division 2, Sunshine will face Albion in the grand final.

Tara Murray



Josh Mould kicked three goals including the winner. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 430075\_16

# Six out of six for Hawks

By Tara Murray

No one at Glen Orden could have imagined the Western Netball League season the club would have, with all six teams making the grand final.

After only having a couple of teams the past few years in the lower grades, the Hawks entered a new era under Rebecca Hicks this season.

The star goal shooter joined the club as coach and set about changing things.

"It is amazing," she said. "It's crazy that we have done it."

"It was about building a good culture and helping them get a more of a reputation in the league."

"For so long people haven't known who they are."

"The main focus was getting six teams on the court, I could have only dreamed of this."

Hicks said when she first started the aim wasn't six teams, but when they had massive numbers at trials she pushed to make sure everyone got their chance.

"I pushed and pushed for players to come to Glen Orden," she said. "They've helped me get to this stage."

"To get six teams I was pretty happy with."

Four of the Hawks teams were in grand final action on Friday night.

The division 3 team beat the Lakers 3, 31-16, while the division 4 team lost to Point Cook Blue, 31-19.

In division 5, the Hawks beat Parkside 25-22 while in division 6 they beat Braybrook Cowell, 25-21.

Hicks said it was pretty exciting for those sides.

"A lot of the players in the lower divisions have not experienced finals before so it's exciting for them," she said.

"They were a little bit nervous but after two weeks they know what to expect. I'm proud of the girls, to get this far it's been a pretty challenging season with injuries and pregnancies."

The top two teams will play their grand finals this Friday.

The division 1 side will play Spotswood Gold, while the division 2 team will play Yarraville Seddon Gold.

Both Hawks sides have won 11 straight games after the grading rounds.

Hicks said both sides had come together so well.

"It's an odd feeling," she said. "I said to the players, 'do you want to come and play and they were keen'."

"I didn't expect to finish on top and undefeated all season."

"They are two really strong teams and a lot of players from different competitions that have come together and gelled."



Glen Orden has six teams in grand finals. (Western FNL)

"Hopefully we have a good outcome."

For Hicks, it continues a run of having played in every single division 1 grand final so far.

She previously played for Point Cook Centrals.

This year has been different for Hicks. One of the premier shooters in the competition, she

has spent plenty of time at the other end of the court.

"It's an odd feeling for me," she said. "I gave up the shooting position this season."

"I've enjoyed playing defence and there's less pressure on me. This year has been easier and a more fun."

## Sports shorts

### FV

West Point coach Tom Petreski has decided to end his time at the FV state league 4 west club. The club said on social media that Petreski would be pursuing other coaching opportunities. "Tom has been the club's longest serving senior men's coach... [and] guided the team to the clubs first ever promotion in 2023, winning FVs male coach of the year in the process," the club said. "West Point Soccer Club are disappointed to see Tom and [assistant] Ivan [Pavleka] go but would like to thank them for their commitment, vision and leadership and wish them all the best in their future coaching endeavours." West Point finished its season on Friday night with a 2-0 win against the Truganina Hornets.

### AFLW draft

Western Jets pair Sierra Grieves and Lou-Lou Fiel have been invited into the AFLW national draft combine. The three-day combine will be held in Melbourne from October 4-6. It will be held the same weekend as the boys national combine. Club interviews will be held at the MCG across Friday and Saturday before players take part in physical testing at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre on the Sunday. Testing will include the vertical jump, running vertical jump, 20-metre sprint, agility test and two kilometre time trial.

### A-League

Grace Maher will remain at Western United for the next two A-League women's seasons. Maher played every single minute of the 2023-24 campaign in her first season at the club and was superb, earning selection in the A-League all stars women squad that took on Arsenal. In addition to her outstanding performances on the pitch, Maher has made a significant impact on the squad and the club outside of the white lines as well, excelling as the team's vice-captain and being voted by staff as the club person of the season. Maher said she is exactly where she wants to be to get the best out of her game and to strive for winner's medals.

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# Warriors continue to believe in a premiership

Hoppers Crossing's stunning rise in the Western Football League division 1 competition has put the side into a preliminary final and dreaming of a grand final.

Last year's wooden spooners, the Warriors are now the form team of the competition.

They've now won two finals and are now just one win off a grand final.

Warriors president John Semertzidis said they could have never imagined this at the start of the season.

"In my heart of hearts I thought we had a list that was capable of doing it," he said. "To be fair though, after finishing bottom last year and winning two games, I thought it would take a bit longer than it has.

"To learn the style [coach] Jared [Polec] wanted us to play. We've connected at the right time of year and lots of teams are scared of us."

On Sunday, the Warriors faced Yarraville

Seddon in a knockout semi final.

The Warriors led at quarter time by 20 points before the Eagles reduced the margin to seven points at half time.

A six goal to nil third quarter broke open the game with the Warriors well and truly in control.

It would prove to be the difference with the Warriors winning 13.14 (92)-6.15 (51).

"They call the third quarter the premiership quarter and we stepped up," Semertzidis said. "We were able to kick away.

"A lot of our lesser known players really stepped up on Sunday. We had a few quieter games from some of our stars.

"Others stood up around them."

Mitchell Kunigiskis kicked five goals for the Warriors, while Jed Anderson and Riley Fisher kicked two goals each.

Semertzidis said Bailey Young, Harry Maguire and Kunigiskis were the three standouts in his eyes.

He said Ashlin Brown and Braden Ferrari

also had good games.

The Warriors will now face Caroline Springs in the preliminary final this Saturday at Skinner Reserve.

The Lakers lost their semi final in extra time to Werribee Districts on Saturday.

Werribee Districts awaits the winner in the grand final.

Semertzidis said they continue to not have any expectations and have confidence their best form can get the job done. The Lakers have won both matches between the teams this season.

"We definitely didn't have any expectations this season and it's a big thing for the playing group," Semertzidis said.

"They're enjoying their football without any pressure and give it their best.

"Everyone is smiling off the ground and everyone is believing. I think it'll be a good battle between us."

Tara Murray



Sam Clifford. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 416136\_14



Sierra Grieves in action for Vic Metro. (Brett Hemmings/AFL Photos)

## Grieves dares to dream

By Tara Murray

Western Jets' Sierra Grieves hard work is starting to pay off as she hopes to achieve her AFLW dreams.

Seen as one of Australia's top up and coming footballers having been part of the AFLW National Academy, Grieves has taken her game to another level this year.

While she's likely set for a big couple of months ahead of the AFLW draft, Grieves isn't thinking too much about it.

"It would honestly mean the world to me," she said. "I always wanted to be drafted and be in that professional environment feel like I can thrive off the professionalism and really get working and not take it for granted.

"I haven't really thought about it [the draft] in a way because if I think about it, then I'm just gonna overthink everything.

"I'm really excited for the draft and I can't wait until I get into that professional environment in a club."

Grieves started playing football when she was younger and quickly found it was the sport for her.

While she lives in Tarneit, she quickly found herself playing at Yarraville Seddon.

"My dad has played there... My nan, she has basically been there forever," Grieves said.

"Even now she's older, she goes to every game

of my brothers, mine, everything.

"She is a big influence at Yarraville."

After Covid, Grieves decided to take her football more seriously and decided that it was what she wanted to do.

She was part of the Western Jets premiership side that year, with several of those girls since being drafted.

"I trained heaps more and I knew that I had to work on my fitness in order to play in the midfield," she said.

"Playing with Montana Ham and Charlotte [Baskaran], I rotated with them when I was playing forward. I looked up to them, saw how they went about footy and they influenced me in a way with my footy.

"The premiership was probably the best experience I've ever had in footy."

Grieves continued her development and became part of the AFLW academy squad this season.

She said it's been an eye opening experience. "It's such a good experience being with the best girls in Australia," she said. "When you get to training everyone is training their best and everyone's skills are around where you are, it makes you want to do better.

"You want to try and prove yourself, it was a really cool experience."

Grieves was named the academy's best in a match against an all-stars team.

She said it was nice to be recognised for the hard work that she'd been doing.

It was the first of two big awards.

She was recently named the most valuable player at the under-18 Australian national championships while playing for Vic Metro.

Vic Metro also claimed the national championship.

"That one was definitely a better feeling," she said of the most valuable player award.

"That was a fun experience at metro. Just the training, we all got along the vibes were there and I felt when we were on the field we all just connected and it wasn't just one girl performing it was all of us. We got the reward for it."

Among her teammates was Lou Lou Field.

Like Grieves, Field plays for Yarraville Seddon and the Western Jets.

"We are close mates and practically done everything together," she said of Field. "I like having her there in a way. I'm quieter and having her there is always good for me.

"It was probably our last time playing together."

Grieves, who models her game on Monique Conti, is now focusing on the draft combine later this year.

"That is the next step working towards and I've got a plan leading up to the combine, and I've started training for it and want to be the best I can for it."

## Maher re-signs with United

Grace Maher will remain at Western United for the next two A-League women's seasons.

Maher played every single minute of the 2023-24 campaign in her first season at the club and was superb, earning selection in the A-League all stars women squad that took on Arsenal in May.

In addition to her outstanding performances on the pitch, Maher has made a significant impact on the squad and the club outside of the white lines as well, excelling as the team's vice-captain and being voted by staff as the club person of the season.

Maher said she is exactly where she wants to be to get the best out of her game and to strive for winner's medals.

"I felt like I could be myself from the first week being a Western United player, and that's a credit to the people behind this club," she said.

"I've loved being able to help add some A-League experience to this side and I believe we have a squad that can go all the way this season.

"I'm really looking forward to settling back into our home from day one. Last season we got a little taste of how it can be out in Tarneit, but I feel like this season is the start of something incredible."

United football general manager Mal Impiombato waxed lyrical about Maher's position as both a star player and pivotal leader for United.

"Grace was an extraordinary addition to our squad in her first season at the club and we are extremely pleased that she has committed to our vision for a further two years," he said.

"She is loved by her peers and club staff, adored by our supporters and recognised externally as one of the competition's leading players, so to have her remaining as a key pillar in our program is a significant boost.

"After one incredible season, we are looking forward to seeing Grace strive for the next step as one of our nation's best players and set ambitious goals for the future of her career."





Riley Bice. (Belinda Vitacca Photography)



Jack Henderson. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 428574\_02

## Six team of the year nominees

Werribee's strong season has been recognised with six players named in the initial Victorian Football League team of the year squad.

An initial squad of 40 has been named, with the final 24 to be announced at the VFL and VFLW awards night on September 16. A captain and coach will also be selected.

The minor premiers had the most representatives in the squad with six players selected.

It's a second straight year the Tigers have had the most players nominated for the squad.

Players must have played a minimum of nine home and away matches to be considered for selection.

Standout seasons from Riley Bice, Dom Brew, Nathan Cooper, Hudson Garoni, Jack Henderson and Jack Riding saw them named in the 40-man squad.

Of the six nominees, four are aiming for their first team of the year selection.

Brew was named after his sixth VFL season last year, in which he also claimed his first Bruce Montgomery Trophy, while Jack Henderson earned the honour after his second season in 2019.

Dom Brew, aiming for back-to-back team of the year honours on the back of a career-best season.

He led the VFL in both tackles and clearances, becoming the first player since Werribee's Jarrod Moore in 2013 to achieve this feat.

The inside midfielder also averaged a team-high 28.4 disposals and ranked in the top five for inside 50s across the league.

He has also captained the side in 11 games this year with Nick Coughlan out with injury.

Henderson took a step up this season villing the void left by the departures of Werribee's stalwarts Tom Gribble, Matt Hanson and Shaun Mannagh in the midfield.

He had an extremely consistent season, averaging 22.1 disposals, a career-high 5.6 clearances and regularly finding the goals for

a season tally of 12 majors.

Garoni, who earned his first team of the year nomination last season after a top-three finish in the 'Frosty' Miller Medal, secured another spot in the 40-man squad this year.

He finished third in the league goalkicking with a career-high 45 goals and was number eight in the competition for score involvements.

At the other end of the field is Nathan Cooper, who celebrated his 50th game for Werribee in round 10 against Collingwood.

Despite suffering an injury in round 14 against Sydney, Cooper met the nine-game minimum requirement for selection.

At the midway point of the season, he ranked second in the league for spoils and 15th for intercept marks.

First-year player Riley Bice has earned a spot in the squad following an outstanding season, having joined Werribee after winning Albury Tigers' best-and-fairest in 2023.

In his maiden VFL campaign, the half-back averaged 21.1 disposals and seven marks per game, while also ranking top five in the competition in effective kicks and running bounces.

Rounding out Werribee's six nominees is Jack Riding, who after playing four games in his debut season last year had a breakout year, playing 17 games this home-and-away campaign.

Initially starting the season in the backline, Riding moved to the forward line in round three and quickly made an impact, delivering standout performances in round five and six.

He showed no signs of slowing down up forward, leading the VFL in both goal-and score-assists at the midpoint of the season.

Werribee had the weekend off due to having already qualified for the preliminary final.

It will face the Brisbane Lions on Saturday at 11am at Avalon Airport Oval.



Dom Brew. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 428574\_06



Hudson Garoni. (Belinda Vitacca Photography)



Jack Riding. (Belinda Vitacca Photography)



Nathan Cooper. (Ljubica Vrankovic) 428574\_01





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