

South Gippsland

VOICES

FREE

August 2nd, 2021

THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER COVERING SOUTH GIPPSLAND

Eleanor jumping for gold



Eleanor Patterson will represent Australia in high jump during the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. Photo: World Athletics

Leongatha's Eleanor Patterson has a special exemption to leave Australian shores as she guns for gold in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. The star athlete has had a remarkable high jumping career to date, having broken the 31-year-old Australian women's high jump record with a clearance of 1.99 metres at a track and field meet in Wellington, New Zealand last year. She won gold at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow as an 18-year-old and finished eighth at the world championships in Beijing 12 months later. Patterson was an outside medal prospect at the 2016 Rio Olympics but did not prog-

ress from the qualifying rounds. Then, after failing to make the Australian squad for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, she stopped training altogether.

One year and a move interstate later, and Patterson returned to her passion and linked up with renowned high jump coach Alex Stewart.

In late 2019, Patterson cleared a promising 1.90m but missed selection for the 2019 World Championships. During summer 2020, she leapt an impressive 1.96m, 1.96m and 1.94m, ahead of breaking the Australian record with a clearance of 1.99m in Wel-



Patterson after breaking the 31-year-old Australian women's high jump record

lington New Zealand. But, after an injury setback, she made a late start to her 2021 campaign, clearing 1.87m in her season debut in March. Later in June, she was back in business, leaping 1.93m, 1.94m and 1.96m.

The Tokyo games will be the second Olympic Games Eleanor will compete in, representing Australia in high jump.

The qualifying round for the women's high jump will be held on Thursday, August 5 with the final on Saturday, August 7.

Merv Lincoln-a Famous Leongathian

Merv Lincoln was born in Leongatha, Victoria and raised in Wodonga, where for many years in his honour there has been a Lincoln Causeway adjacent to the Hume Freeway.

He qualified for the 1500 metres final at the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne, finishing 12th. He was tipped as a potential successor to the retiring John Landy as Australia's leading miler; however, newcomer Herb Elliott defeated him at the 1957 national championships.

Lincoln ran his first four-minute mile on 23 March 1957, the eleventh man in the world and the third Australian to accomplish that feat. His time of 3:58.9 was less than a second short of Landy's world record of 3:58.0.

Despite his loss to Elliott at the Australian championships he did also win a national championship mile that year, winning the United States championship race as an outside competitor.

Track & Field News ranked him #7 in the world for 1957, one place below his Australian rival Elliott.

Lincoln reached his peak in 1958 but was overshadowed by the rapidly improving Elliott. The Australian team of Elliott, Lincoln, and Albie Thomas swept the medals in the mile at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff, Lincoln running 4:01.80 for silver. He set his personal mile best of 3:55.9 in Dublin on 6 August 1958, finishing more than a second under Derek Ibbotson's world record of 3:57.2 yet still only being the runner-up as Elliott won in a new record time of 3:54.5. Track & Field News ranked Lincoln as second in the world that year; however, that proved to be the last time he was ranked among the world's top ten, and at the 1960 Olympics in Rome he failed to qualify from the heats.

He was coached by the Austrian-born Franz Stampfl, a bitter rival of Elliott's coach Percy Cerutti. Stampfl stated Lincoln only trained one hour a day, in contrast to the harder training of Elliott. He died on 1 May 2016, aged 82

Read about more Olympians from South Gippsland on page 2



Merv Lincoln at the 1956 Olympics
Photo credit: Melbourne University Athletics Club

South Gippsland Olympians in our community

-Olivia Skillern



Drew Ginn OAM: Rowing holding one of his Olympic medals

Belinda Snell: Basketball – Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012

Hailing from the town of Mirboo North, Belinda Snell is a popular local Olympic identity. Representing Australia at three Olympics as a member of the Opals, the Australian Women's Basketball team, Belinda is arguably the local area's most successful female athlete to date.

Making her Olympic debut at the 2004 Athens Olympics Belinda also competed at the Beijing 2008 and London 2012 games.

In 2004 the Opals won the silver medal going

Wilson.

Other highlights of Belinda's career were winning gold at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and the World Championships in Brazil.

George Jelbart, of the Leongatha South dairy farming family, is another past Scotch College student to have been successful at rowing and compete at an Olympic Games. George competed in the Lightweight Double Sculls at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games where he, and fellow rower Cameron Wurf, came in 16th place.

Kaila McKnight (Hutchinson): Athletics – 1500 metres – London 2012

Born in 1986 Kaila McKnight was raised in Stony Creek attending St Laurence's Catholic Primary School and Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College.

After successful showings in the IAAF Diamond League, Kaila made her Olympic debut at the 2012 London Olympics. At these Olympics Kaila made the semi-final but was unfortunately eliminated at this stage.

Since the Olympics Kaila competed in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow where she made the final.

Kaila is now married and living in Leongatha having completed an Accounting degree from

Mike McKay and Nicholas Green, claimed the Gold Medal and became cult heroes.

The chance to return to the Olympic winning list at his home Olympics in Sydney in 2000 was hampered when a back injury forced Drew to withdraw. Bouncing back, Drew returned at the 2004 Athens Olympics claiming Gold once again in the Men's Coxless Pairs with James Tomkins. In Beijing, 2008, Drew again competed in the Men's Coxless Pairs, this time with Duncan Free. He was again successful in retaining his Olympic title taking home Gold once again.

Drew brought the curtain down on his illustrious rowing career at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London where he was again part of the Men's Coxless Four. Despite a gallant effort the team went down by just over a second to Great Britain to take home the Silver medal.

Drew's other honours include his 1997 Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for 'service to sport as a gold medalist at the Atlanta Olympic Games 1996'.

Despite not competing Drew will be heading to the Rio Olympics, this time as a member of the Channel Seven commentary team.

Cameron McKenzie-McHarg: Rowing - Beijing 2008 and London 2012

Following in Drew Ginn's Oarsome Four-some footsteps Leongatha's Cameron McKenzie-McHarg represented Australia in rowing at two Olympic Games in 2008 and 2012.

Cameron was born in Leongatha in 1980 attending St Laurence's Catholic Primary School and Mary MacKillop Regional College before, like Ginn, going on to complete his schooling at Scotch College and being part of their rowing team.

Cameron's Olympic debut was at the Beijing Summer Olympics in 2008 where he was a part of the Silver medal winning Men's Coxless Four. Despite Australia leading the race at the 500 metre mark, the favoured team of Great Britain made their move and took the lead with 200 metres to go.

At the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, Cameron was a member of Australia's Men's Eight team. The final was an extremely close affair with Australia finishing in sixth place, just one seventieth of a second behind the third placed British team.

Rowing was not the only sporting endeavour for Cameron. In the 1999 AFL preseason draft he was drafted to the Western Bulldogs Football Club at pick 10 but did not play a game.



Kaila McKnight (Hutchinson): Athletics – 1500 metres – London 2012

Kevin Brislin: Cycling – Tokyo 1964

Mt Eccles local Kevin Brislin competed in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics in the cycling team pursuit. The team, consisting of four cyclists, were successful in making it to the Bronze medal ride after going down to the Italian team in the semi final. Despite having beaten the Dutch team in their heat the Australian team was defeated by them this time around, missing out on a medal. Of the six cycling events Australia competed in this was the second fourth place with no medals. Kevin now has a farm in Mt Eccles and throughout the years has continued to be interested in cycling providing valuable insight about top level cycling to the Leongatha Cycling Club.

In 2000, Kevin participated in the Olympic Torch Relay when it visited Leongatha on its way to Sydney in honour of his past efforts at the Olympic Games.



From left to right: Matt Ryan, James Marburg, Cameron McKenzie-McHarg, and Francis Hegerty

down to the USA in a hard fought match. Again at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, despite holding the World Championship at the time and a strong lead up to the final, the Opals went down to the USA in the gold medal game taking home their third straight silver medal, Belinda's second.

Belinda's final Olympics was at the 2012 games in London. Belinda created the highlight of these games during the preliminary round against France when she nailed a half court shot on the buzzer forcing the game to extra time. Unfortunately, the Opals went down in the game and played off for the bronze medal. They were successful and Belinda took home her third Olympic medal.

Despite still playing at a high level and hoping for a fourth Olympics in Rio, Belinda was unfortunately left out of the Olympic team after being part of the extended squad. She shared this disappointment with fellow South Gippslander Kelly

Deakin University.

Drew Ginn OAM: Rowing – Atlanta 1996, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012

Drew Ginn OAM is one of Australia's greatest Olympians holding the title of Australia's most successful Olympic rower with three gold medals and one silver pipping James Tompkins with three gold and one bronze. Throughout his career he also saw success holding five World Championships.

Born in South Gippsland in 1974 Drew Ginn grew up in Inverloch before undertaking his schooling at Scotch College in Melbourne where he developed his impressive rowing skills.

Drew made his Olympic debut in 1996 at the Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta where he was a part of the Men's Coxless Four team affectionately known as the 'Oarsome Foursome'. The team, which also featured James Tomkins,



Kevin Brislin: Cycling – Tokyo 1964 seen here carrying the torch through Leongatha during the 2000 Olympic Torch Relay

Tick tock: time to speak up over Korumburra hub location

KORUMBURRA COMMUNITY

voted for the railway precinct to be the preferred site for the Community Hub

With detailed architectural plans drawn up, this significant development was all ready to go—

- Presented to the community
- Approved by the community
- Approved by VicTrack and Council
- Approved by The STATE GOVERNMENT

The positioning of the Hub is paramount—designed as an integral part of the main street with a physical connection to the business centre and with easy access for community and visitors.



The Hub and 'Town Square' would be a unifying feature of our town

"Small businesses are the backbone of our local community"—unique and charming with loads of character, we must do everything in our power to support them.

This "State of the Art" building should connect the town—NOT DIVIDE IT. Korumburra has waited many, many years for improvements to the Main Street. Landscaping and beautifying the CBD must take priority over that of a service area!

Why shove the Hub out the back?

The proposed site for the Hub in Little Commercial Street is not practical—

- Too small for all community stakeholder groups
- No opportunity for the Hub to expand as Korumburra grows...
- Huge costs associated with excavating etc.
- Narrowing of Little Commercial Street will be dangerous, create problems for trucks etc.
- Unattractive aspect – looks out on parking and service area, rubbish bins and backs of shops.

We appeal to the Korumburra Business Association and the Korumburra Round Table to speak on behalf of the community to fully realise the potential of this town centre/railway precinct.

COMPILED BY A GROUP OF CONCERNED MEMBERS OF THE KORUMBURRA COMMUNITY

A group of concerned Korumburra residents are pleading with the rest of the community to voice their concerns over the ill-positioned Korumburra community hub before it's too late.

One member of the alarmed community group, who wished to remain anonymous, told The Voices newspaper in an exclusive interview that the "silent majority" are "unhappy to put the hub in the proposed position." South Gippsland Shire Council has advised that construction of the hub is anticipated to commence in late 2021 at the former kindergarten site, 4 Victoria Street (with parking and access from Little Commercial Street).

"People are frightened to say anything," the concerned Korumburra resident said.

"I think they feel they don't have any control over what council decide to do, and I think there is a general apathy that has set in Korumburra.

"But this needs to be addressed now; it's at the eleventh hour. We need to give it a go – we can't stay silent."

A poster created by the group of concerned residents, calling the community to speak up, was recently shown to businesses in the town. It states that the Korumburra community originally voted for the railway precinct as their preferred site for the state-of-the-art

community hub.

"The railway precinct is the jewel in South Gippsland's crown," one resident said.

"If the hub is there, it will be a wonderful community square."

The group of residents said that, with detailed architectural plans drawn up, significant development was ready to go and had been presented to and approved by the Korumburra community. Subsequently, plans were then put forward and approved by VicTrack, South Gippsland Shire Council, and the state government.

"The positioning of the hub is paramount - designed as an integral part of the main street with a physical connection to the business centre and with easy access for community and visitors," the poster reads.

"The hub and 'town square' would be a unifying feature of our town. This state-of-the-art building should connect the town - not divide it.

"The proposed site for the hub in Little Commercial Street is not practical. It's too small for all community stakeholder groups; [there are] no opportunity for the hub to expand as Korumburra grows; [there are] huge costs associated with excavating, etc; narrowing of Little Commercial Street will be dangerous, create problems for trucks etc.; [and there's an] unattractive aspect: it will look out on parking and service areas, rubbish bins and the backs of shops.

"We appeal to the Korumburra Business Association and the Korumburra Round Table to speak on behalf of the community to fully realise the potential of this town centre/railway precinct."

One individual who assisted with the poster said that, while the railway precinct wasn't necessarily their personal preference, it was about listening to

the voice of the wider community.

"It would be fantastic, first and foremost, because the community chose it, and because it will connect the town as well," they said.

"It's not too late to change it. Nobody has got the tender to build it yet, so of course, it can be changed. But it's at the eleventh hour."

The passionate locals said the hub needs to be a reflection of what is best for the community and its local businesses.

"If we don't have those businesses, the town dies," they said.

"We saw how many people came out over the bank; they came out in great force, and good on them. And the people really supported it.

"That needs to happen for the hub. There needs to be a community meeting."

STOP PRESS HUB CONTRACT AWARDED

The community hub in Korumburra is now one step closer after a contract for construction was awarded following approval at last week's Council Meeting.

The contract was awarded to 2Construct Pty Ltd for the lump sum amount of \$5,643,816 (excluding GST). It covers construction of the hub including all on-site civil works and surrounding landscape works as well as the engagement and supervision of all sub-contractors. The hub was a 2020/21 priority project for Council and will provide a centrally-located home for the library, Milpara Community House, the Korumburra and District Historical Society and the Korumburra Senior Citizens. Streetscape works in Little Commercial Street - which are expected to commence early next year - will complement the development and realign parking in the community hub precinct. The awarding of the contract is a key milestone in the project, which is expected to be completed by December 2022. The hub is being funded through grant funding including \$5M from the State Government's Community Infrastructure Loan Scheme and \$750K through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Fund. The project is an outcome of the Korumburra Town Centre Framework Plan.

No, this is not the underpass at Roughhead Street



Recently snapped by our (literally) roving reporter, Bart Ruyter, on one of his daily sojourns through the South Gippsland wilds. The underpass for Gippsland Southern Rail Trail (GSRT) at the Koonwarra end of Black Spur roadworks is progressing quickly and should speed up his daily walks.

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Need reliable people
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One to Two hours per week

Contact Don Hill 0407 231 478
editor@southgippslandvoices.com

Graeme's paintings will be on display at the Fish Creek Hotel dining room from July 2nd for two months. Come along and view the gallery of his oil paintings which will be available for purchase.



The Way Home-oil painting by Graeme Myrteza

Check out Graeme's website for more of his incredible work at:
<https://www.myrteza.com/>

Award winning Elvis Forever to rock Gippsland

It takes a lot more than imitating Elvis's trademark croon and slipping into a white jumpsuit to pull off a convincing impersonation of The King of Rock and Roll. In an exclusive interview with The Voices, award-winning Elvis Presley tribute artist Damian Mullin/Elvis Forever let us in on what it really takes to bring The King back to life.

"As soon as a microphone goes into my hand, I'm no longer Australian, I'm American," he said.

But before that point, Damian confides it takes up to two hours of theatre magic before he's ready for the spotlight.

"I've learnt to highlight the features of Elvis with stage makeup; his cheekbones, larger lips – there's a lot that goes into it that people don't see," he said.

Human hair wigs imported from the UK to precisely match Elvis' hairline and iconic sideburns are part of the preparation process too. Then, Damian selects one of his 15 replica jumpsuits, made by the very US company responsible for tailoring Elvis'.

"There are about 40 different looks that I do," Damian said.

"About half my room is taken over with Elvis clothes and props.

"My wife says I'm like a woman," he laughed.

When he's snug in one of his jumpsuits, and he slips into an American drawl, Damian leaves all his own defining characteristics behind, adopting the character of a "modern-day Elvis."

"A lot of people think because you are out on stage that you are outgoing and extremely confident," he said.

"If you go back to the days of Kiss, they weren't going on stage as themselves; they had heavy makeup and costumes.

"For me, it's a character. I can kiss ladies in the room and get away with anything, but then when I come off, I'm me again."

If you catch Damian Mullin in everyday life, you might find him a little reluctant to bust out a dance move or pelt out a tune. But when he's Elvis, he's unstoppable, and his transformation is truly remarkable.

"I always liken it to a policeman going off to work; he puts on his uniform and gun and he's the police officer for the day, and when he comes home and takes it off, and he's the dad or husband," he said.

While he's mastered Elvis' signature moves and mannerisms, Damian said he doesn't shy away from interacting with the audience and mixing his shows up with improvisation, keeping his performances fresh, fun, and a little flirtatious.

"There are different types of Elvis impersonators; there's the reenactment type, so reenacting every bit of footage with absolute precision," he said.

"I'm not that Elvis. I certainly do a lot of his mannerisms and moves in certain songs, but I like the freedom and I tend to have a lot more fun with my shows.

"When it's reenactment it's very stale; it's only what he did on stage.

"I'm a modern Elvis; if people yell things out in the crowd, I'll have a bit of fun back."

Damian said for most audiences, seeing a perfect imitation isn't the goal either; it's about having a good time and being entertained and amused by



Damian Mullin has been an Elvis impersonator for over a decade



Damian Mullin as Elvis Forever will play two shows in Fish Creek this August

South Gippsland Voices Newspaper-August 2nd, 2021

the flair that each impersonator inevitably brings to the act.

"People go crazy, but it's important to realise what you are doing; you are tapping into people's memories of what Elvis meant for them," he said.

"They aren't necessarily clapping for me; I'm taking people back in their life, so they feel young again."

Each show is the perfect balance of traditional and new too: Damian brings authentic Elvis attributes for those who grew up listening to him, and sprinkles in a bit of humour for the younger generations to connect with.

"I feel really grateful to have fallen into it really, it's so rewarding. I've played at Crown, on cruises, I'm doing corporate functions, travelling, meeting people, doing private birthdays...a birthday party I did 10 years ago, those people still come and see me."

Before becoming a full-time Elvis tribute artist 11 years ago, Damian had been working full time in sales and donning the Elvis act on weekends. In 2012, he won the highest accolade for Elvis impersonators in Australia; an Elvis Presley endorsed contest.

"I won the opportunity to represent Australia over in Memphis. The prize money and recognition helped my career," he said.

"[My love of Elvis] stemmed from my mum, who played tapes and records of Elvis back then, and I just loved his voice.

"When I was about six, I watched one of his live concerts, and was amazed at how hysterical the audience was; they seemed to be all females that were screaming. It blew my mind people would react like that."

While Damian admittedly can't play the guitar - despite owning four Elvis replicas - he possessed a natural aptitude for singing from a young age. Later, this attracted the attention of an Elvis impersonator agency.

"They asked me in, and I started off doing smaller jobs. Now it's big theatre shows with 400 people, live bands, and cruise ships," he said.

When asked what the highlights of his career have been to date, Damian said he's had the pleasure of meeting Elvis' drummer, his lead guitarist, bodyguard, past girlfriend, and a number of passionate Elvis fans who shared their experiences of seeing him live in concert.

"I got to perform on a beautiful seven-day cruise on Mekong River in Vietnam," he said.

"And annually at the Parkes Elvis Festival in New South Wales, where 20,000 people converge on that town. It's a highlight each year to perform there.

"But even though I do the live shows with big bands, I find the shows in rural towns very rewarding; it's up close and personal. You are literally a metre away from someone. There is nowhere to hide, so it's very raw and real."

Damian Mullin/Elvis Forever will soon perform a collection of Elvis' sing-along hits for a South Gippsland audience, set to play two shows at the Fish Creek Hotel. Thursday, August 19 session tickets have already sold out, but a few tickets remain for the Wednesday night session, August 18. But act quickly; a staggering 30 tickets sold overnight as restrictions lifted. Tickets are just \$30 for adult, \$25 for concession.

To book your ticket, head to <https://www.trybooking.com/book/sessions?eid=787894>

POLICE NEWS

Disqualified driver hits the road

A 59-year-old Toora female has been nabbed behind the wheel of a car while holding a disqualified driver's license. Police intercepted the woman on July 21, at approximately 3.30 pm. Subsequently, her vehicle was impounded for 30 days at a cost of \$1275. She will receive a summons at a later date to attend the Korumburra Magistrates Court.

Leongatha ring located in bank

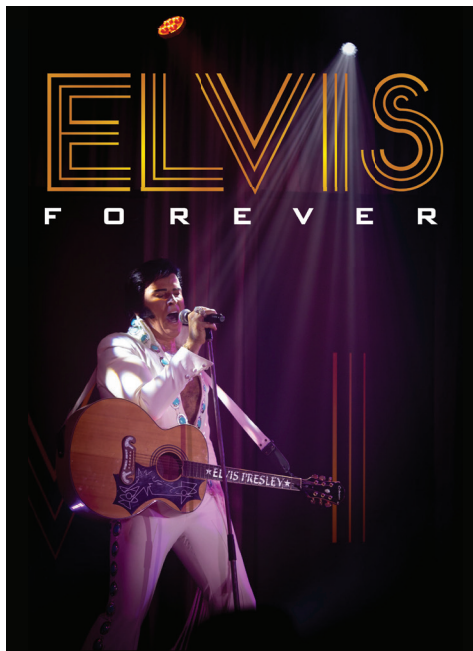
Police are trying to locate the owner of a ring that was found at a local bank by staff sometime in the previous three months. The ring is silver in colour and has a number of stones embedded. If you believe the ring may be yours or you know the owner, please contact Leongatha Police on 5662 2285.

Hot on the heels of offenders

In just three days, a total of 33 infringement notices were slapped on South Gippsland and Bass Coast drivers. The Bass Coast Highway Patrol unit said the large number of fines, which varied in severity, were handed out from Saturday, July 24 to Monday, July 26. Among the more serious offences was one individual caught drink and drug driving in Wonthaggi, and another drug-driver intercepted in Korumburra. Both offenders will receive a summons at a later date to attend the Korumburra Magistrates Court.

Drug driver nabbed in Korumburra

A Leongatha man has been caught driving while under the influence of illicit drugs. Police intercepted the offender in Korumburra on Sunday, July 25, at around 2 pm after spotting his defective vehicle. Bass Coast Highway patrol issued him with a defect notice for a cracked windscreen and balding tires before requesting a roadside drug test which returned a positive result. Police said once test results from an independent laboratory are returned, confirming his positive drug result, the Leongatha man will then receive a summons to attend the Korumburra Magistrates Court where he will be subsequently charged.



**Wednesday
18th August
7:45 PM**



**The Fishy Pub
(03) 5683 2404**

Locals seal-ebrate wildlife

Venus Bay's Jane and Greg Wiggill have had a wildlife encounter they won't forget anytime soon. While taking a stroll between Venus Bay's number three and four beaches on Sunday, July 25, Jane spotted something out of the ordinary.

"Initially, I thought the shape was a person enjoying the view but upon closer inspection, I noticed it was a beautiful seal," she said.

"As I approached, the seal did not appear afraid, but curious. He was calm and when he'd had enough of looking at me decided to make his way back into the water.

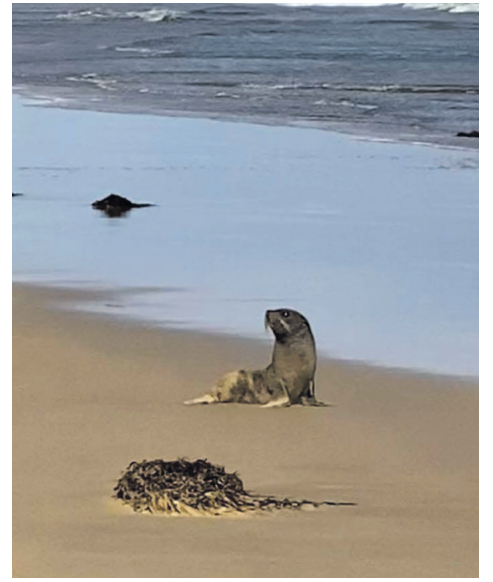
"Such a magnificent treasure to find on a chilly winter's day!"

While seals prefer rocky islands, boulders, pebble beaches and rocky ledges, they will lie on beaches to rest or to moult. If you are lucky enough to spot one on land, be aware they often present injured when they are perfectly fine!

For instance, seals secrete a watery substance from their eyes which is often mistaken for crying or an injury, but it is a natural mechanism to protect their eyes.

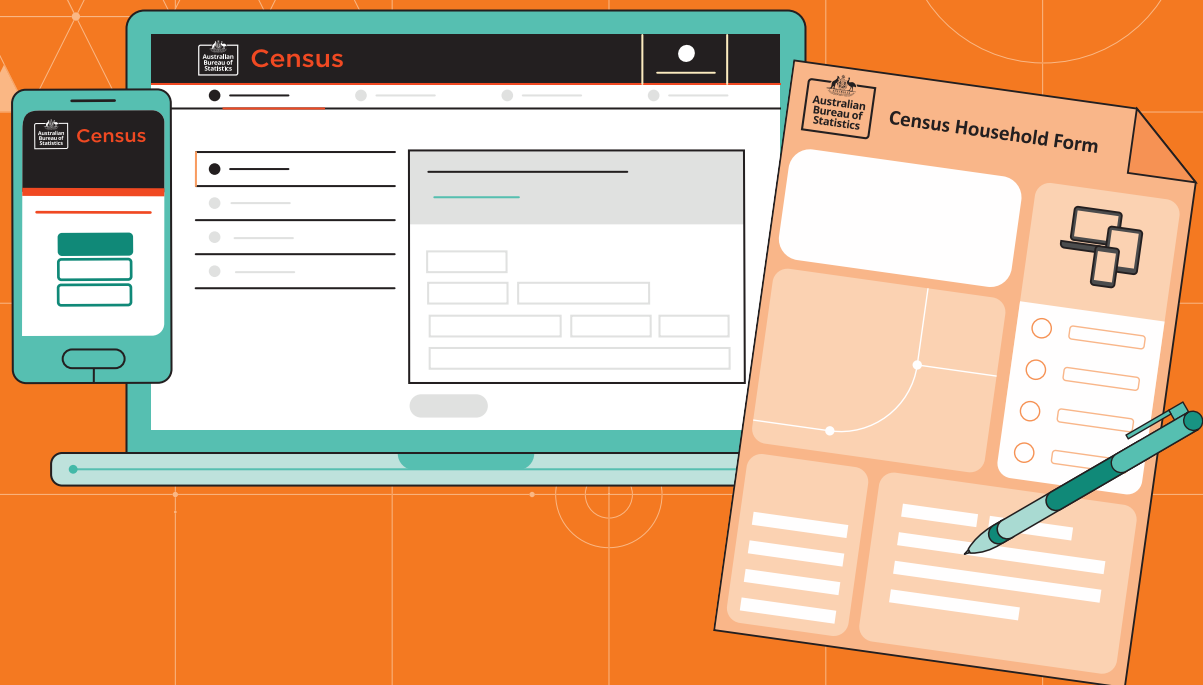
Should you spot one on your next beach walk, remember to admire from a distance, and if you have a dog, experts advise to stay at least 50 meters away as the two animals don't mix.

Injured seals should be reported to the Marine Response Unit, 1300 245 678.



Census

It's time to complete your Census.



This year, you can start as soon as you receive instructions, if you know where you'll be on **Census night – Tuesday 10 August**.

Complete online, by paper or with help from us.

Every stat tells a story.



Scan or visit
census.abs.gov.au

Authorised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

Administrators fail to improve Council's performance and perception after 2 years in the job and A MILLION dollars in wages

This year's Community Satisfaction Results were conducted by the Victorian Government's provider JWS Research. The survey sample involved 400 local residents of which 53 per cent had contacted Council within the last twelve months. Further, the previous Councillor group used an independent private research company to do the research for the years 2017-2019 and those reports went into far greater detail in the survey and the resultant data was more meaningful.

Council's media release makes claims by comparisons to the 2020 result being the first complete year that the administrators had been in charge. Those results in 2020 were the lowest results by far when compared to all results in the previous 10 years received by sitting Councillors so it was not hard to improve from those numbers.

This analysis will draw from the JWS report and comparisons to the previous historical data up to 2017 being the last year that JWS had been employed to do the research.

The following is taken directly from the JWS report.

Overview.

Perceptions of Council's overall performance remain relatively unchanged since last being evaluated in 2017 when ratings reached a series low point. Council's performance in most individual service areas continues to be rated quite poorly despite declines only being observed in the minority. There are encouraging signs in some service areas where perceptions have improved since 2017.

Focus Areas.

Consultation and engagement ratings are at their lowest level to date and is the only service area aside from customer service to have declined since 2017. That said, Council performance in the areas of sealed local roads, lobbying and community decisions still requires attention as they continue to be poorly rated by constituents.

Comparison to State and Large Rural Councils.

Council performs significantly lower than the Large Rural group and State-wide average ratings for councils across all areas evaluated. With regard to Large Rural group comparisons specifically, ratings gaps are largest on customer service, overall performance, and consultation and engagement.

Reverse declining trend.

Council should look to build upon its improved performance on sealed local roads which has shown encouraging signs in recent years. There is still work to be done here as it is Council's most poorly rated service area and the most cited area in need of attention. Concurrently, Council needs to reverse the declining trend apparent in consultation and engagement, by ensuring it makes a concerted effort to reach out to residents about local community issues and its decision making.

Overall Performance.

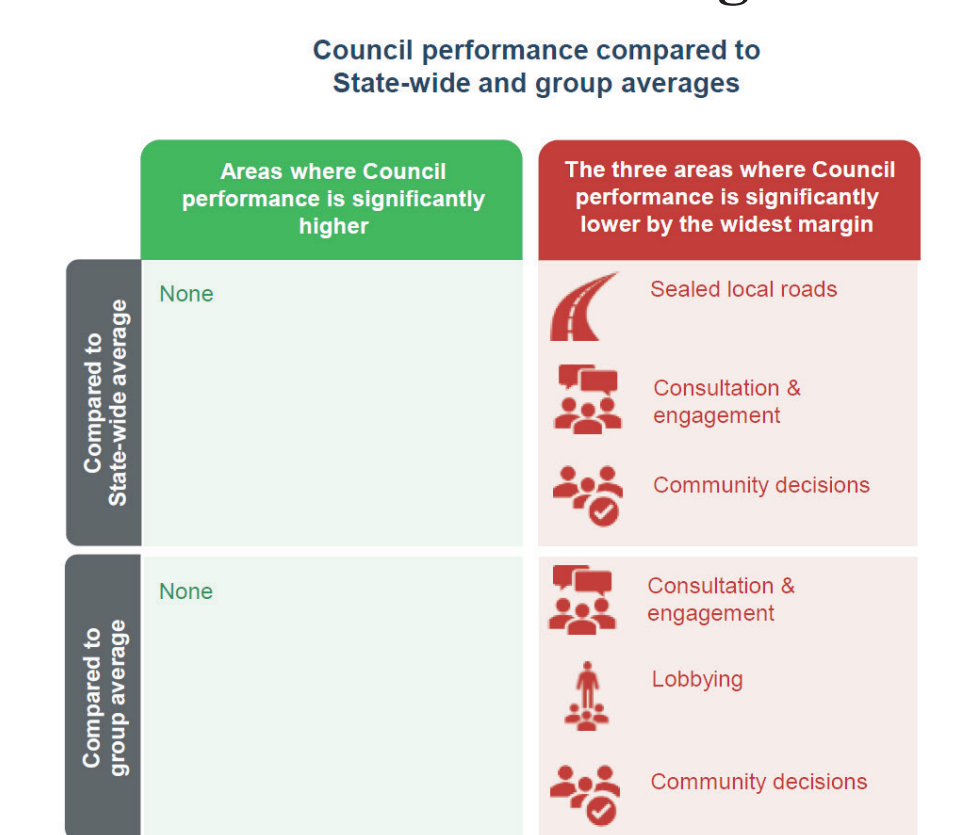
The overall performance index score of 47 for South Gippsland Shire Council is similar to past results. When last evaluated in 2017, Council's overall performance rating had reached a low point after consecutive years of small declines. It is now just rated one-point higher years later.

Almost two in five residents (39%) rate the value for money they receive from Council in infrastructure and services as 'average'. A similar proportion (37%) rate it as 'poor' or 'very poor', while only 20% rate the value for money received as 'very good' or 'good'.

Top performing service areas

Council performs best by far in the area of waste management (index score of 61) compared to other service areas evaluated.

Council performs significantly lower than the Large Rural group and State-wide averages (in-



Source JWS Research report

dex scores of 66 and 69 respectively) in the area of waste management.

Low performing service areas

Council is poorly rated in the areas of sealed local roads (index score of 43), consultation and engagement (44), lobbying (46) and community decisions (46).

Council rates significantly lower than the Large Rural group and State-wide averages for all of the aforementioned areas.

Consultation and engagement are the only area in which perceptions have declined since last being evaluated in 2017 (down three points).

It is also the second most commonly cited area in need on improvement.

Contact with council and customer service

Council's customer service index of 56 is five points lower than results achieved in 2017. This means results for customer service are now at their lowest point to date.

Council direction

Over the last 12 months, 54% of residents believe the direction of Council's overall performance has remained the same compared to 15% who believe it has improved and 25% who believe it has deteriorated.

While Council's rating (index score of 45) on the perceived direction of overall performance is six points lower than when it was last evaluated, it has not dropped to levels previously seen in 2013 and 2014

Leongatha to Nyora Great Southern Rail Trail development

There is a significant project underway in South Gippsland, one that has the potential to boost the regions already impressive liveability, tourism credentials and amenity but it's a bit hidden away.

A walk along the undeveloped sections of the Great Southern Rail Trail from Bena to Nyora recently shows the potential of a developed trail is perhaps under appreciated. It's time to get excited about this facility so we researched how the project is going, and what it will mean for locals and visitors.

Walking the old rail line today is not ideal with the rocky rail "ballast" not the easiest surface with bridges at points like Alsopps Creek still to be developed. It's certainly not possible for a cyclist or someone wheel chair bound to travel the trail but that is about to change as it has for the section from Leongatha to Port Welshpool.

For the Leongatha to Nyora section, rail and sleeper removal was completed in 2020. Along the route contractors utilise depots from which graders, excavators, dump trucks and rollers are building the trail. This is by Council standards a pretty big development. Some 36 kilometres of geotextile fabric will be laid over the existing rock base. Council engineering advise that the fabric stops the road base from breaking through the top layer of granitic sand. The trail will be shaped and renewed for drainage and fencing added where needed. Trucks will bring in 30,000 tonnes of granitic sand to cover the base and textile layers before the total package is compacted.

Council engineering report that the trail component of the project is making good progress. In all 8 bridges are needed to connect the trail – 2 new ones over existing driveways and 6 bridge restorations. The bridges will comprise a concrete deck and attached barriers – all in all a very significant piece of civil engineering funded by Council with support from a grant of \$800,000 through the State Government's Local Sport Infrastructure Fund.

It hasn't all been easy sailing with the June storm event dropping some big trees across the trail. Development in the vicinity of the Korumburra Railway Yard was impacted by heritage protections which seem to have been overcome. Areas close to the Gippsland Giant Earthworm habitat are getting special treatment. Fencing and railing is being installed in areas with very steep embankments close to the trail to protect trail users.

All in all, the project appears to be on track for the trail itself with the bridges behind schedule. Looking to the future the complete trail is expanding the amenity and tourism potential of South Gippsland. The uncertainties of interstate travel during the COVID challenge means that more tourists are visiting South Gippsland. The expansion of the trail is well timed to capitalise on this and has added a new and vital element - connection Treasurer of the Loch Community Development Association and local winemaker Mark Heath identifies better access to Hilda Falls as a key outcome making Loch an even more attractive destination. I understand that the Loch Community Development Association is seeking



bike racks for Loch Village to support bicycle tourism to Loch.

Council and ratepayers are to be commended on this project that should benefit local businesses as they respond to the opportunities the trail brings.

Eco-tourism, gourmet tourism operators, restaurants, cafes, wineries, and provedores should all see the potential of the trail. This needs to be backed by State and local government if the trail is not to remain a "hidden gem". Today if you Google "South Gippsland tourist attractions", Google provides lots of attractions east of South Gippsland. Trip advisor shows two South Gippsland listings – "Food & Wine Tour of South Gippsland from Melbourne and South Gippsland Tourist Railway which is something. Lonely Planet has an extensive list of local attractions

including the Loch Brewery (number 1 rated) but the trail isn't listed. Council should have an economic development plan for the trail. That plan might involve communication to local business about the opportunities, support for local progress associations and development of a stronger social media and internet presence promoting the trail. The State Government's brochures, web sites and advisories need to be properly updated when the trail is finished.

There should be a significant return on investment to the community when the trail is completed and used by locals and visitors to the area. Economic development isn't the only end but sustainable development such as the trail that brings both local amenity and vitality to our communities is to be prized.

Andrew McLorinan

Should we move Tasmanian Devils back to the mainland?



This Tasmanian Devil needs a holiday. How about the mainland?
Vassil, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

In almost all parts of the world our environment is under siege and we are losing the battle to save many species from extinction. The most common threats behind this unfolding catastrophe are habitat loss and modification, invasive species, and

climate change. What can we do? Usually we focus on treating the symptoms — planting trees or shooting pest animals — but these treatments often fail. Perhaps we need radical new solutions for fixing broken ecosystems.

One such solution could be introducing (or reintroducing) species to ecosystems. There is now a serious and broad-based proposal to release Tasmanian Devils into the wild at Wilsons Promontory in Victoria, saving devils from extinction in Tasmania, and restoring damaged ecosystems on the mainland.

What is rewilding?

We can look at the Tasmanian Devil proposal in terms of an ecological concept known as rewilding. In essence, rewilding seeks to restore ecological function to habitats by introducing or reintroducing species that could perform vital roles. Perhaps the best example comes from Yellowstone National Park in the US, where wolves were returned after a 70-year absence. Wolves are crucial to Yellowstone's ecosystems. Without them herbivores like deer and moose flourish, and prevent trees from producing saplings. In Australia, the Tasmanian Devil is an ideal candidate for reintroduction to the mainland.

Saving devils

Tasmanian Devils used to inhabit

mainland Australia. When exactly they went extinct on the mainland is uncertain, with dates ranging from 5,000 to as recent as 500 years ago. But in 1881 Frederick McCoy, the first director of the National Museum, noted that Tasmanian Devils (or perhaps that should be "mainland" devils) are very common in the most recent cave deposits in Victoria. These fossils are identical to living devils in Tasmania. Why they became extinct is more mysterious. Various theories have attributed blame to climate change, over-hunting by Aboriginal Australians, and dingoes. But whatever the cause, current conditions at Wilson's Promontory closely resemble those in Tasmania, and have likely remained unchanged for thousands of years, with no dingoes and plenty of prey. So we can be sure that the devils would fit in. But why move them now? One excellent reason is that there is a genuine risk that devils could become extinct in the wild by 2025, as a result of devil facial tumour disease (DFTD). A mainland population would act as a large, wild insurance population, outside of Tasmania where DFTD is present.

How would the mainland benefit?

So we know Tasmanian Devils have been on the mainland before, and that moving them might help save the species from extinction. But what could devils offer the mainland? One of the biggest benefits devils could offer is in the control of the red foxes, feral cats and overabundant herbivores (such as wombats, rabbits and wallabies). Evidence for this comes from Tasmania. Following the decline of devils due to DFTD, species such as the feral cat have been increasing. This in turn is associated with a halving in population size of a smaller, native predator, the Eastern Quoll (once present, but now extinct in Victoria). Some have also suggested that the reason foxes have only recently established themselves in Tasmania is not solely due to humans introducing them, but because devils declined around the same time. Prior to DFTD, devils may have been acting as a first line of defence against foxes

by killing their cubs.

Currently we spend a lot of money managing foxes on mainland Australia through baiting programs. But are we going to do this forever? Devils may provide a 24-7 predator control service, free of charge.

Focusing on foxes also ignores the fact that there is no effective control of probably Australia's most damaging feral animal, cats. As noted above, devils are capable of limiting cats too.

Another issue at Wilson's promontory is an over-abundance of herbivores including wombats, swamp wallabies, rabbits, kangaroos and hog deer. All of these increased rapidly following the removal of dingoes in the 1940s.

In high numbers these herbivores can radically alter habitats, making them unsuitable for other species. We can shoot herbivores to keep them down, or we could introduce a natural predator such as Tasmanian Devils.

What's next?

Parks Victoria and an ambitious multi-institutional research hub, the Wildlife Biodiversity Co-operative Research Centre are behind the new proposal to move devils to Wilson's Promontory. Planning is underway for a comprehensive proposal to the Victorian and Tasmanian governments, and thorough consultation with the public.

With this in mind I urge our leaders to be bold and act now. There are always risks with moving species, but not taking calculated risks to conserve our wildlife is perhaps even worse. A devil reintroduction should be viewed as a positive and strategic national decision, and one for which future generations will thank us. It is not often we can achieve win-wins in conservation, but helping prevent the extinction of the Tasmanian devil by re-establishing a mainland population, and restoring desperately needed ecosystem function to habitats, may just be the best conservation win-win waiting to happen.

Euan Ritchie, Deakin University
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Less than 15,000 years ago Wilsons Promontory and Tasmania were connected by land. Is now the time to help bring back devils to the Prom? Steve Bennett/Wikimedia Commons



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Choosing your senior school subjects doesn't have to be scary

Here are 6 things to keep in mind



From about August each year, young people in year 10 go through a round of interviews to close in on their subject selections for years 11 and 12. They're given a portfolio full of reading materials. They may also attend vibrant careers markets to get helpful information. The principal and heads of the year give presentations, and occasionally a VIP guest speaker will arrive.

Somewhere at this point, my sobbing daughter had cried: "I'm growing up too quickly!" She'd been told a complex story about ATARs, prerequisites and options for her career path, all with the solemn authority about the importance of making wise decisions. Studies have shown students experience anxiety around choosing subjects that relate to their desired career path. Nothing as serious as this will have happened in most children's lives before now.

What if they don't know what they want to do? Or worse, what if they make a mistake in their subject choices?

The good news is, there is not much need to worry. Choices you make now about your subjects don't need to have a severe impact on your future.

There are some myths about senior schooling all kids and parents need to know. Here are six of them.

Myth 1: you need an ATAR to go to university

There are several pathways to university — an ATAR is only one of them.

The federal education department reports there are significant intakes for courses that don't require an ATAR. A 2020 report says the share of university offers for applicants with no ATAR or who were non-year 12 applicants was 60.5% in 2020. This was up from 60.1% in 2019.

Some courses, like engineering, normally require an ATAR of somewhere around the mid 80s. But you could also get in through having done a VET certificate or diploma. RMIT, for instance, offers up to two years of credit to transfer from TAFE into an undergraduate degree.

There are many alternative pathways described by most institutions on their websites. Curtin University has a helpful journey finder for students without a competitive ATAR.

A year 12 student, expecting not to gain an ATAR, who is not studying English or doesn't expect to gain a 50 scaled rank for English, has at least three pathways into Curtin — sitting the Special Tertiary Admissions Test, doing a course at Curtin College, and using a portfolio for assessment.

Curtin also has a UniReady Enabling Program. This is a short course of 17 weeks. Completing the course means you will fulfil Curtin's minimum admission criteria of a 70 ATAR. Many universities have similar types of preparatory pathways.

Myth 2: your senior subjects majorly influence your career

With all the disruption we're experiencing, technical and social, we actually don't have any idea what

types of careers will be available in the future. Industry advice bodies, like the National Skills Commission, recommend students choose subjects that suit their interest and skill set, rather than to prepare for a specific future career.

Reports show today's 15-year-olds will likely change employers 17 times and have five different careers through their working life. Many of their career may have very little, if any, connection to the senior subjects they took at school.

But these losses are offset by an older person's access to a rich base of experience which can inform their understanding of things and their actions. Also the older a person is, the better developed their self-regulation and motivation.

Our abilities are shaped and reshaped by experience across our lifespan.

Myth 5: year 12 will be demanding and stressful

Year 12 can be demanding and stressful, but it doesn't have to be.



The ability to work in a team will be an important skills for future employers

A 2018 report by industry body Deloitte Access Economics showed 72% of employers "demanded" communication skills when hiring and that transferable skills, such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, innovation and emotional judgement, "have become widely acknowledged as important in driving business success".

This can include subjects like music, dance, debating and theatre will teach the exact skills employers value the most.

Myth 3: you should do 'hard' subjects to get a high ATAR

All subjects are hard if you lack interest or ability. Students are unlikely to do well if they are unhappy and unmotivated.

Research shows being motivated will improve how well you do in something. But academic performance is better associated with internal motivation (such as liking something) than external (like the drive for an ATAR).

So, if a student only values a subject for what it might get them, like a high ATAR, they'll do better than if there was no purpose at all. But they won't do as well as if they are internally motivated by it.

Myth 4: your ATAR will stand as the measure of your ability into the future

The ATAR is simply a profile of achievement on a limited number of tasks over a defined period. A person at the end of school, aged 17 or 18, hasn't reached the end of their development.

Studies show there is an interaction between gains in knowledge and expertise, and losses in the speed of cognitive processing as we age (meaning we learn less as we get older, to some extent).

The most common source of distress in the senior years comes from anxiety, specifically test anxiety, and the pressures that come from selecting subjects for reasons not driven by interest and ability.

These years should not be devoted to self-flagellation for a high ATAR. Students with a range of subjects types will have variety in their day and week. They are likely to have the best experience in their senior years. Research suggests a balanced life underscores success and general achievement, and setting the tone is vital during these formative years.

Myth 6: taking a VET subject in year 11 or 12 will affect your ATAR

Taking a VET subject reduces the opportunity to take another ATAR subject. It could be argued this puts greater pressure on achievement in the remaining ATAR subjects. But taking a VET subject also reduces the ATAR subjects on your dance card, so they may well be easier to manage.

Including a VET subject is also likely to provide a balanced education in senior years, which may actually improve a student's chances for a high ATAR.

So here's what you should think about when making your subject choices:

- what do you like?
- what comes easily to you?
- will the selection give you variety in your day?
- in which subjects will you have the most fun?

Nan Bahr, Southern Cross University

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Time to get COVID ready

If you haven't made your COVID vaccination appointment yet, now is the time to do so. Gippsland Southern Health Service are offering appointments now until the end of September. The Leongatha Community Clinic has also now been added to the online portal, allowing you can make your appointments hassle free and quickly online at <https://portal.cvms.vic.gov.au/> Alternatively, you can make your appointment via the COVID hotline on 1800 675 398.

For more COVID information at GSHS visit www.gshs.com.au/covid.



Local Covid Vaccination team, Joanne Cole and Michelle Best

Council approves CEO expenditure of \$17,320,164 on disaster works

At the last Council Meeting the Chief Executive Officer was given delegation to approve expenditure up to \$17,320,164 excluding GST for the program of reconstruction works related to the June storm event.

It is important to note this value is for the total program of remediation works, which will be made up of numerous individual projects.

The South Gippsland region was significantly impacted during the storm with over 160 roads impacted by multiple fallen trees and other roads subject to flooding or landslips.

The cost of the repairs is reimbursable through the Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) however the works first need to be paid for by Council.

The delegation gives the CEO authority to approve a program of immediate reconstructive works - up to the estimated figure in total - until 30 June 2022 or until the works are deemed complete.

The works will be coordinated in partnership with Regional Roads Victoria through its Alliance arrangement with local contractors engaged as needed.



There are several pathways into university

No Festa fun next year for Mirboo North



The Mirboo North Italian Festa committee at a recent planning meeting



We will need to wait until post Covid for the next Italian Festa in Mirboo North



The Mirboo North Italian Festa committee were all smiles during a recent planning meeting – until a spate of coronavirus cases broke out and ensuing lockdowns were enforced.

They announced online that, due to recurring snap lockdowns and Covidsafe guidelines, the committee has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2022 Festa.

“After examining the 34-page Victorian Government Covidsafe public events guidelines, the mood changed and we have made the heart-wrenching deci-

sion to cancel the Mirboo North Italian Festa for the second year,” a committee member wrote.

“It’s not what we hoped for or wanted, but the stringent guidelines for large events outlined in this document would be almost impossible for our small committee of volunteers to attain and manage within our limited resources and the facilities of our small town and community.

“Of course, since then, Victoria has also been plunged into our fifth lockdown. “These sudden and unpredictable lock-

downs as we are experiencing right now add another level of insecurity; our 2021 event scheduled for the 14th of February earlier this year would have been cancelled due to a five-day lockdown called on the 12th of February.

“In addition, the risk and liability involved in staging a tier-one event for thousands of attendees within the current conditions would rest solely on us as a not-for-profit organisation.

“Unfortunately, with the continuing unpredictability of snap lockdowns, restrictions on movement, requirements

for social distancing, cleaning, contact tracing, electronic record keeping and many other logistical regulations, it is not a risk our committee is willing to undertake.”

The committee assured that there will be another Festa in future but in more certain and predictable times.

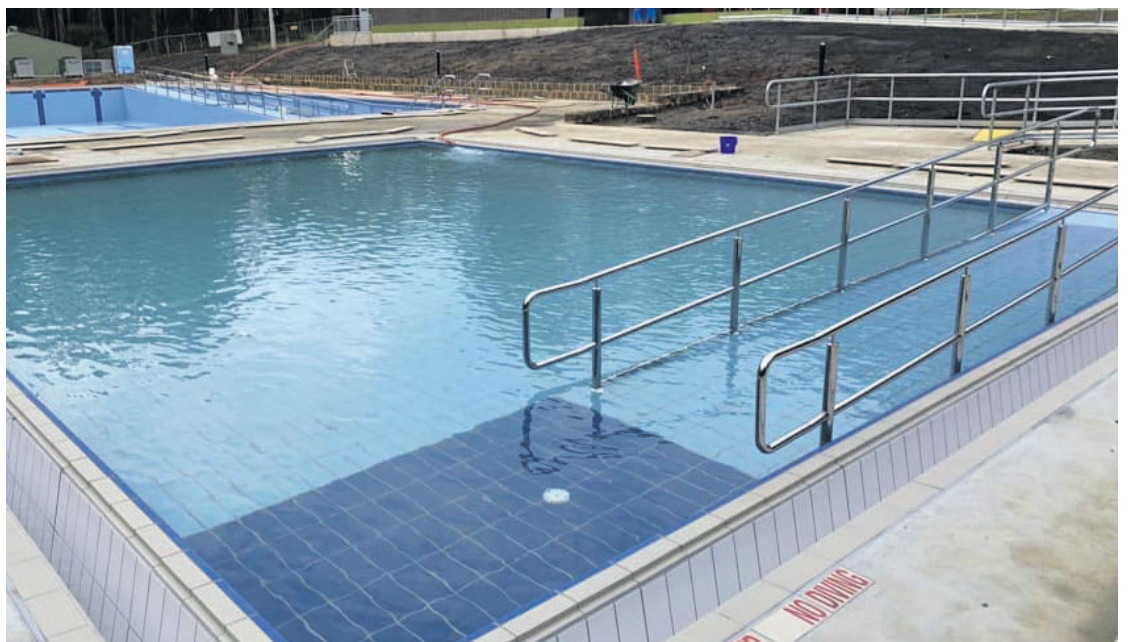
“We will continue to plan and prepare for another spectacular celebration of all things Italian when conditions and guidelines are more achievable and we can ‘party’ again!”

Pool progress, a Mirboo North milestone



Pool tiles complete and pool filling in process

It’s been a long process – one inevitably slowed by coronavirus restrictions – but the Mirboo North Pool’s major reconstructions are inching closer to completion. As of Friday, July 23, the new pools were filled with water; a milestone achievement following years of hard work by the pool’s volunteer committee. “Before we know it, we’ll be cutting laps,” a shire representative said. Langden Constructions are the contractors behind the works, and have been kind enough to take photos of the pool’s progress to share with the community. It’s been a pick-me-up for many households during Victoria’s fifth lockdown, with many locals saying they can’t wait for the warmer months to arrive. Joy Martyn said; “It is going to be such a wonderful summer for locals to be able to come to such a beautiful place due to the hard work of the committee who are all volunteers.”



Pool filled and awaiting an opening ceremony and some warmer weather

State Govt to give grants for renewable hydrogen development

The Victorian Government is helping businesses to switch to renewable hydrogen, with \$7.2 million in funding to deliver trials, pilots and feasibility studies that will enable them to take the first steps in transitioning to this clean energy alternative, as Victoria works to halve its emissions by 2030.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio announced two new grants programs that will support the industrial sector to prepare for renewable hydrogen by funding a variety of projects – from using hydrogen to decarbonising transport to creating new clean manufacturing opportunities.

Renewable hydrogen offers enormous potential as a clean and reliable alternative to natural gas, transport fuels and some industrial feedstocks. It can be used in a growing range of industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, commercial users, water corporations and gas producers and distributors.

To support capital works projects for hydrogen pilots, trials and demonstration the Government will invest \$6.2 million through the Renewable Hydrogen Commercialisation Pathways Fund, and an additional \$1 million to assist businesses to develop business plans to use hydrogen through the Renewable Hydrogen Business Ready Fund.

The grants are funded through the \$10 million Accelerating Victoria's Hydrogen Industry package and are part of a range

of activities identified in the Renewable Hydrogen Industry Development Plan. The plan sets out a blueprint for how the Victorian Government will establish a thriving renewable hydrogen sector.

Victoria's ambitions for a renewable hydrogen sector will also create long-term jobs through new career pathways and skills clusters, enable the export of renewable energy, drive innovation, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across our industrial, energy and transport sectors.

Applications for grants under both programs close on 27 August. To apply, and find out more about the Renewable Hydrogen Industry Plan, visit energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-hydrogen.

\$10,000 in prizes for Gippsland writers

Entries are open for the 2021 Bass Coast Prize for Non-Fiction, one of the richest competitions for non-fiction in Australia, with a total of \$10,000 in prize money.

The prize is open to writers living, working or studying in Gippsland, or who have a strong connection with the Gippsland region.

Entries can be in the form of prose or poetry but must pertain to the Gippsland region, issues or people. The required length is 4000-10,000 words.

The three judges are Bsss Coast writers and editors Geoff Ellis, Anne Heath Menne II and Karen Bateman.

The prize was founded in 2019 by Phillip

Island writer Phyllis Papps to encourage and support local writers of non-fiction. Ms Papps sponsored the prize in 2019 and 2020.

This year's prize is sponsored by the Bass Coast Shire Council, the West Gippsland Regional Library and ArtSpace Wonthaggi, which also auspices the prize.

The first prize winner will receive \$5000, second \$3000 and third \$2000.

Judge Geoff Ellis said that while the generous prize money was important, most important to many writers was a deadline and a guarantee that their work will be read.

The two first years of the competition attracted 85 entries from throughout Gippsland,

ranging from personal memoir and true adventure through to biography, natural history and local history.

An anthology of prize-winning and commended entries from the 2019 and 2020 prizes was launched last month at ArtSpace Wonthaggi. The book, which includes matching works by Gippsland artists, is on sale for \$25 at ArtSpace or can be ordered at editor@basscoastpost.com.

Entries for this year's competition close on September 14, 2021 and prize winners will be announced in November 2021.

The winning entries will be published in the Bass Coast Post and may be republished as an e-book or hard copy following consultation with the writers.

For more information and entry criteria, visit Bass Coast Prize for Non Fiction at <https://basscoastprizefornonfiction.weebly.com/>

Email entries to Catherine Watson at editor@basscoastpost.com.



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Large Air Tanker For Bushfires To Be Shared With Qld

The Victorian and Queensland Governments have secured a deal to share a Large Air Tanker to support aerial firefighting capacity in both states during their respective bushfire seasons.

The Bombardier Dash-8 Q400AT aircraft will operate in Queensland from September to December to cover their bushfire season and will operate in Victoria for the height of summer from December to February.

Sharing aerial firefighting resources provides both states with better value for money while ensuring the aircraft is available to support firefighting efforts on the ground when and where it is needed most.

The agreement covers the 2021 to 2024 bushfire seasons and the Large Air Tanker will remain in Victoria between bushfire seasons.

The Q400AT has a 10,000 litre tank for water or fire retardant and replaces the larger C130 previously used by Victoria.

The Q400AT has some significant advantages for use in aerial firefighting including that it is 50 knots faster, uses half the amount of fuel, improved low speed handling for dropping retardant and faster turnaround time from engine start to take-off.

This particular Large Air Tanker also requires less room for take-off and landing, potentially opening several regional airports for operations that have not been able to be used previously.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements in 2020 recommended cost sharing for aviation resources.

The 2021/22 Victorian Budget included record funding to expand Victoria's firefighting capacity, strengthen communication systems during emergencies and deliver reforms recommended by the Inspector-General for Emergency Management.



The Q400AT aircraft-photo RJ85 and Q400 Airtankers Australia facebook page

Media Watch put Council news "Spin" in context

A recent media watch segment by Paul Barry informed us of how many Local Govts have sophisticated digital operations pumping out PR, and local good news. Dubbo Council in NSW even has its own slick tv bulletin on media. It is real news from real journalists but only if it fits the Council agenda. A Deakin University professor told ABC in May, "So many local Councils now, they have two to five media relations officers who are all producing their own publications for the community, but those publications are not being scrutinised. They're not the types of publications that are putting a spotlight on a Council budget or looking at a pecuniary interest register. There needs to be independent journalism, and the lack of independent journalism is hurting local communities."

The University of Canberra issued a report into Local News Consumers and found that: "62% of those who were aware of mergers and closures of newspapers said it had a negative impact on their local community. Of most concern, almost half (46%) of those news consumers said it had led to a reduction in the amount of local information available; and around one quarter (23%) said it had reduced their sense of belonging to their community."

It's a reminder of why local news really matters.

How does South Gippsland stack up compared to the comments on media watch?

South Gippsland Council has over recent years increased the number of staff employed in the "media team" or communications team as they call themselves and they currently employ 3 staff in this area. Council said:

"The Communications Team currently comprises three staff members. The team create content such as media releases, the In the Know newsletter and maintain Council's website and Facebook page. They also undertake most of the design work for the or-

ganisation (adverts, strategies, brochures etc) and provide internal staff communication. Additionally, the team also help out with projects and community engagement, assisting other teams as required." Council used to have one full time media officer and a part time assistant. Nowadays they not only have a higher staffing level and associated costs to produce news material for the local newspapers, but they promote their material through supporting advertising into a narrow select area within the Shire-Foster area and a small area around Mirboo North. Oh, they also advertise in the Bass Coast newspaper which is also sold in South Gippsland.

Probably best for the community if they had less staff doing the work of the local newspaper journalists and spent some of that money in "advertising" with those local newspapers which would have the effect of employing journalists to cover news in South Gippsland and some like South Gippsland Voices would even hold council to account and not just print the media department "issued spin". Council also has a policy to support local by spending ratepayer dollars on local business wherever possible but appears to be another policy in name only.

Council annual report informs us that: "The media team are contained within the Community Information Department which plays a role in raising community awareness of Council services and strategic directions. It creates a working interface between Council, Council Departments and the community through customer services, media management, publishing material, social media, website management and internal liaison.

It also indicates the cost of this service is around \$830,000 per year. A department that used to be managed by one full time and one part time staff member for a fraction of that cost.

South Gippsland Voices Newspaper-August 2nd, 2021

Nina is in town



Joanne, Nina's radiographer

A few weeks ago I received an email from BreastScreen Victoria stating I was due for my biannual routine check-up. It never ceases to amaze me how quickly these appointments come around! Feeling uninspired, but knowing it was in my best interests, I promptly booked

As I sanitised my hands, Trish proceeded to confirm my personal details, after which I signed the form to be true and correct. Suddenly a lady from the adjoining room appeared and introduced herself as Joanne, the mammographer. She had been thoroughly cleaning, sanitising and preparing the radiography room and machine after the previous client, in preparation for me.

Joanne was lovely as she kindly showed me into the area I've always facetiously named the 'pancake' room. The state of the art, digital radiography machine was typically familiar and confronting, but I was thankful for the room's toasty-warm temperature.

Joanne clearly communicated directives showing incredible compassion and consideration to my mental, physical and emotional needs. Her competency and collective dedication toward her important role was obvious. I couldn't help admiring her in fact, I can't speak highly enough of both Joanna and Trish, who significantly eased a usually unpleasant, vulnerable experience.

Joanne expressed the BreastScreen van named 'Nina', is offering free screens until the 20th August and is targeting women between the ages of fifty and seventy-four. Having a breast screen every two years is the best way to detect breast cancer early, before any symptoms arise and when treatment is most likely to be successful. You don't need a doctor's referral or even your Medicare card. The van is diligently operating with Covid-19 safety measures in place to protect both the community and staff. Appointments are appropriately spaced out to ensure physical distancing.

BreastScreen Victoria CEO Terri Smith claims, "Nina is one of our two mobile screening vans, which travel the state throughout the year. This visit to Leongatha is organised to ensure women of South Gippsland have access to potentially life-saving mammograms."

Statistics reveal one in seven women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, most without evidence of family history. Ageing is the biggest risk factor for developing the disease, hence why breast screens are so important.

The pink van is presently situated at Gippsland Southern Health Service, 66 Koonwarra Road, Leongatha (beside Koorooman House) until Friday 20th August. Appointments can be booked online at breastscreen.org.au or by calling 13 20 50.

Breast screening is a choice, however, one well worth contemplating. Taking only ten minutes of your time, this procedure could ultimately save your life.

Camilla Hullick



The distinguishable pink BreastScreen Victoria van

wishing to have the procedure done and dusted. Three days prior to my appointment I received a reminder text insisting I not forget to bring a mask. I doubted I would, as face masks were permanent fixtures across the board. Victoria was in yet another lockdown.

The day of the screen arrived and for the first time in months, I annoyingly slept in. Usually an early riser, I booked an 8.20am appointment to have the uncomfortable experience quickly completed to tackle the remainder of the day. I rushed to get myself ready around sorting my gorgeous, but demanding fluff balls, who were irritatingly dancing around my feet. Soon I was off to Leongatha, mask glued to my schnozz.

During the drive my thoughts gravitated to breast screens of the past. I remembered the clinicians were typically focused and thorough with a practical attitude. This day I expected no different as I turned into Gippsland Southern Health Services car park and spotted the distinguishable pink, mobile van. It was a bitter-cold winter's day and the thought of shedding my many layers made me shiver.

Arriving at the foot of the bus stairs, I checked in with the contact tracing app conveniently placed on a table outside the entrance. Preparing myself for what lay ahead, I entered the vehicle as the door automatically opened and summoned me inside. Standing in the modest reception area, I was instantly greeted by smiling, welcoming eyes glowing from above a face mask. This friendly soul introduced herself as Trish and immediately made me feel at ease.



Letters to the Editor - name and address must be supplied

Send to editor@southgippslandvoices.com

First anniversary approaching

Well it was August 20th last year when SouthGippsland Voices launched its first hardcopy newspaper. Fortnightly and only 8 pages at A4 size initially delivered to three townships only-Leongatha, Korumburra, and Mirboo North. We quickly added to that 4000 circulation and now cover the whole Shire townships and 5200 circulation. In our anniversary issue in a couple of weeks we will write of our plans for the next 12 months. **Editor**



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Council says they have heard the community

Council is aware of community concerns regarding the proposed Great Southern Rail Trail crossing over the South Gippsland Highway in Leongatha and is working on both short and long-term solutions.

In most situations when a rail trail and a road intersect at the same elevation, installing a crossing is relatively straight forward. In the Leongatha location however, it is problematic due to high traffic volumes and short sight distances.

Council has been investigating options for this crossing with specialist consultants and has had discussions with Regional Roads Victoria. A detailed options analysis was undertaken that determined the only feasible short-term option was using the nearby existing footpath network.

To improve the existing footpaths and to better cater for all Great Southern Rail Trail users, Council has obtained approval to construct a new crossing point – with a centre refuge island – near the Leongatha Police Station. Whilst Council acknowledges the proposed route is somewhat inconvenient, it is the safest and most practical short-term option.

Council's preferred long-term solution is to use a signalised crossing at the Roughead/Long/Hughes Street intersection when Stage 2 of the Leongatha Alternate Route along Hughes Street is developed.

Council has been advocating for this project with Regional Roads Victoria and has recently adopted the route as a priority project for 2021/22.

Construction of Stage 2 of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route has many community benefits and would result in a safe and convenient crossing for rail trail users.

Other short-term arrangements

for the crossing were considered including an underpass arrangement but these have not progressed due to the expected high construction costs - relative to the cost of the rest of the rail trail and footpath network – and the disruption that would be caused to freight and other road users during construction. Technical issues such as accessibility, safety barriers and drainage issues were also considered as well as potential public safety and vandalism concerns. It was not deemed prudent for Council resources to be committed further into investigating this arrangement in light of the significant costs and limitations.

The South Gippsland Shire Council CEO, Kerryn Ellis said:

“We understand and acknowledge our community’s concerns in relation to the proposed Great Southern Rail Trail highway crossing in Leongatha. Our short and long-term approaches were only developed after careful consideration of all possible options and alternatives. Although the short-term solution is not perfect, it is the most logical way forward considering Stage 2 of the Leongatha Alternative Route is planned for and is included as a priority project of Council.”

Media Team South Gippsland Council

GSRT-Council has already levied rates to pay for underpass

South Gippsland Shire Council has already charged enough rates in the Capital Works Budget to construct the Great Southern Rail Trail Underpass.

Following recent discussion on the issue of the gap in the Great Southern Rail Trail at Roughead St Leongatha, I have checked the contracts let for the works and the amount Council allocated in the Annual Budget for the works. Ratepayers and users of the rail trail – we have already been levied enough to pay for the underpass! Why is Council procrastinating on giving us the safest outcome?

Let's look at the data. The current works – Leongatha to Nyora (36km), has been contracted out for the sum of around \$3.6 million. That works out at about \$1 million per 10km of rail trail construction. We note that some works like the link from the Leongatha Station to Bair St has still to be undertaken along with a new Pedestrian crossing of the South Gippsland Highway. (These works were budgeted at \$895,000). Let's allow \$1 Million for these works in Leongatha still to be done.

Planned Extension Works – Welshpool to Hedley (Wellington Shire covers the Hedley to Alberton connection to complete the line). This section is just 5.5km long with only one bridge crossing. Using a consistent costing rate this should cost \$550,000 for this new section. So if we allow \$700,000 that should be adequate to cover the works.

Totalling the \$3.6 million, \$1 million and \$700,000, we get an expenditure of \$5.3 Million required for current and proposed works on the Great Southern Rail Trail – not including an underpass at Roughead St.

Let's look at what the 2020 Budget and the 2021 Budget have done with levying ratepayers for the work.

2020 Budget \$2.895 Million (Leongatha to Korumburra)
2021 Budget \$2.375 Million (Korumburra to Nyora)
2021 Budget \$1.9 Million (Welshpool to Hedley)
Total \$7.17 Million

That leaves a balance of \$1.87 million from what Council has levied ratepayers which should go close to paying for the underpass at Roughead St.

Council – I call upon you to provide the safest outcomes for users of the Great Southern Rail Trail – that is an underpass at Roughead St. Even the updated Landscape Plan for the Leongatha station precinct presented to Council in March 2021 showed the trail having an underpass at Roughead St. The independent risk analysis of the proposals show the underpass is the safest. Council, please engage with the Community on this project.

Lindsay Love
Engineer - Leongatha

Walkers challenged at Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve

On July 1, along with four other walkers, I visited the Grantville Nature Conservation Reserve adjacent to a sand extraction site.

In December 2019, 18 years after the current mining company commenced operations, the reserve's decades-old entrance at the north-west corner of the reserve was blocked by a 'buffer zone' fence. We entered via the gap between this fence and the Bass Highway to access "any of the existing reserve tracks".

On our return, the Quarry Manager and a police van were waiting outside the buffer fence. The QM said we were on "his" land held under a Work Authority. I told him the local ranger said walkers could use any tracks in the reserve. He said ERR was the body in charge of the area, not the Parks

Vic ranger. The police in the van took no action.

On re-reading the email giving access permission, I found a rider: ... if you require information around any of the extraction sites ... you'll need to contact Earth Resources Victoria.

When asked for clarification, the Earth Resources Regulator advised: The Work Authority area is greater than the extraction area and the area in between the two is commonly termed the buffer zone. Access into the Work Authority area is typically controlled by the Work Authority holder. Access into the work authority area should only be with prior approval of the Work Authority holder.

Again a rider: Note access under the lease agreement with DELWP may have other conditions or controls that I am not aware of. These may or may not cover access and trails in the area.

Crown Land is owned by the people. With the COVID-19 Pandemic, more than ever walkers need to enjoy the Grantville NCR with its grass trees, other plants and wildflowers and experience the uplift of spirit when close to Nature. If visitors, by the stroke of a bureaucratic pen, have been cut off from land they have traditionally walked for generations, something needs to be done to right this wrong.

With good will, a dilemma the authorities through negotiation and conciliation should be able to resolve.

Meryl Tobin
Grantville

Response to seeing the light

Dear Camilla
Hallelujah!!! I am 79 years old and have suffered shame, humiliation a sense of worthlessness. slyly watching other people opening their bags, trying to find out their techniques. I consider myself quite intelligent and well read, how have I missed this amazing gem of information. I can't wait to get to the shops and look for the slight overlap, thanks Camilla you made my day.

Ever grateful Jean Upton

Hi Camilla,
I laughed and so related to your bag article!
I have to tell you I tried your trick and it worked a treat!
Thanks for the tip. It certainly saved a lot of grief!
Take care and stay safe and warm,

Marg



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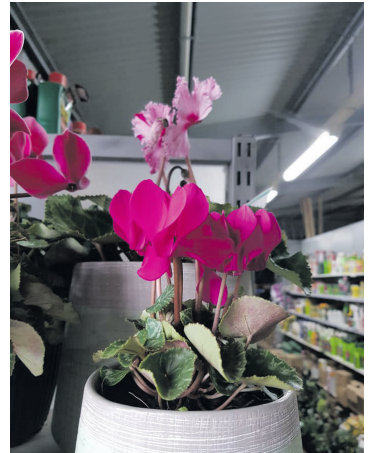
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Newspaper is available from the following outlets: Leongatha IGA, Korumburra IGA, Meeniyana IGA, Tarwin Lower IGA, Mirboo North IGA, Poowong IGA, Toora Newsagency, Foster IGA, Foster Library, Fish Creek Newsagency, Fish Creek Hotel, The Wolf and Bird Café Tarwin Lower, Venus Bay General Store, Loch Servo, Nyora Newsagency, Meeniyana Hotel, Foster Exchange Hotel., Leongatha Rural Supplies, BrownWigg Meeniyana, Korumburra Newsagency, Riverview Hotel Tarwin Lower.

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Spring is around the corner

Spring is just around the corner and there are loads of plants budding and in flower. Looking good are the flowering apricots, flowering plums like the blierana and fruiting almonds, not only looking good but will be productive as well.

Last chance for bare root Fruit trees from \$27.00, Ornamental trees from \$4.00, Plus grapes, lilacs & weeping trees

Perfumed shrubs like daphne are putting on a show as are daffodils and hellebores. The most popular daphne is daphne odora. Famed for its intense rose-citrus perfume, Daphne odora flowers in winter and early spring and fills the air with its delightful fragrance. The waxy star shaped flowers bloom in tight clusters amid leathery dark green leaves. Daphne belongs to a genus of around 50 species of shrubs, but it is Daphne odora that is well known for its perfume. Daphne odora is available with pink or white flowers. The white flowers are renowned to have a

lemon scent. Daphne grows best in fertile, slightly acid, peaty, well drained soil. A newer introduction is Daphne Perfume Princess. There have been mixed reviews about this plant, but I have found it fantastic in my garden both as a potted plant and planted. Daphne Perfume Princess will tolerate full sun, it is a cross between daphne odora and daphne bholua resulting in a hardier plant with larger flowers. It's the earliest and longest flowering of all daphnes, with one of the sweetest fragrances, and is prized for its profusion of large blush pink (softly fading to white) sweet, perfumed flowers.

One of my favourite shrubs/ small trees flowering now would be the witchhazel. The flowers appear clustered along the bare stems and their dainty "ribbon like" flowers are sweetly scented. Witch hazel originates from China and there are a few varieties in this family, but the prettiest and most fragrant is Hamamelis mollis. These stunning small trees are smothered in flowers and come in yellow, orange or red. Varieties that are available include Pallida with bright sulphur yellow flowers and broad oval leaves turning yellow in autumn, Diane has red flowers and large leaves that colour a rich red in autumn. Arnold promise has bright yellow flowers and blooms later than the others. Sunburst has

clusters of lemon-yellow spider like flowers with yellow-orange autumn colour and Jelena flowers are large, forming in dense clusters and are yellow suffused with a rich coppery red, so as to appear orange, foliage turns orange, red and scarlet in autumn.

There is nothing better than home

Large selection of azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons and mollis azaleas

grown and raspberries are one of the easiest, most rewarding and most productive fruits to grow. Raspberries are available as bare root canes in winter or as container grown plants the rest of the year. Berries are a long term crop and it is worth preparing the soil well and removing all weeds before planting. Add plenty of well rotted manure and compost to create a rich, well drained acidic soil. If you have a heavy clay soil, build the beds up or add gypsum prior to planting - the site needs damp in summer, dry in winter so mulch well to keep roots cool and moist and to suppress weeds. Plant raspberries in rows that run north to south so they are exposed to sun during the day. Once the ground is prepared then the next step is to choose which variety. Raspberries come in two categories: summer bearing and autumn bearing). Summer varieties will produce a large crop on two year old canes. The two year old canes are called floricanes and the new season canes are called primocanes. It is important to determine which variety of rasp-

berry, you are growing as the two types are pruned differently. Autumn fruiting raspberries wake up from their winter slumber, form canes over spring and summer, then flower and set fruit during autumn. Once the cane finish fruiting, they die. This means that pruning is a simple matter of cutting all the canes back to ground level in winter. Summer fruiting raspberries wake from their winter slumber, form the primocanes over the warmer months then go dormant again in the following winter and set masses of luscious fruit over the warmer months then go dormant again in the following winter. To prune summer raspberries remove floricanes that produced fruit and tie the new seasons primocanes to a wire trellis. In other words keep the new growth and remove all the existing older growth. So for an extended harvest plant both types and now. All raspberries are self pollinating.

AUTUMN VARIETIES

AUTUMN BLISS: An early ripening raspberry with large, highly flavoured fruit, It ripens 10 to 14 days before Heritage, It produces short canes with few spines. The fruit is dark red and darkens with storage and is fairly soft.

HERITAGE: Heritage was the first red raspberry to ripen in autumn with quality and firmness good enough for shipping and wholesale markets and sufficient yields to be commercially viable. Heritage is resistant to most if not all major raspberry diseases.

SUMMER VARIETIES

CHILLIWACK: Heavy cropping with good quality fruit, Generally start ripening in December for 4 week and a small crop later in early Autumn. It is almost thornless.

CHILCOTIN: A high yielding variety that ripens mid season over a 4 week period. The berries are borne on long laterals that can grow very tall. Some canes may need to be thinned out at ground level.

NOOTKA: Another high yielding mid season variety of raspberry producing a medium sized berry. The fruit comes away from the bush readily; making harvesting easy. This variety has a high resistance to fruit rot.

WILLIAMETTE: Large berry easily detached with good flavour. It is hardy with some virus resistance. Fruits early to mid season.

There are many other varieties but these are the ones that are readily available. Raspberries grow 1.5 to 2 metres tall. It is not necessary to trellis them as long as you have room for the canes to arch slightly as the fruit ripens. A small bed is fine for a freestanding raspberry

Herbaceous peonies from \$10.99

Fresh native flowers bunches locally grown only \$10

patch, If you want to grow a row or two or you prefer a tidier look in the garden, install a wire fence with two or three vertical wires attached to T-bar posts at the ends of the rows so the canes grow up supported by wire on either side.

Finally pick the fruit as it colours up. Raspberries ripen over a 4-6 week period from summer into autumn. Feed in spring with a complete fertilizer and water well twice a week in the growing and fruiting period from October to march. Replace plants every 8 to 10 years.

Last but not least another reminder to spray stone fruit with copper or lime sulphur to prevent leaf curl and after pruning roses give them a spray with lime sulphur. Happy gardening.



Witchhazel flowers cluster along the stems of the plant

Itching to travel? Explore Gippsland's camping and caravanning sites

Sure, we can't travel overseas or even interstate right now, and further COVID lockdowns have many of us climbing the walls, but there are a host of cheap or free camping and caravanning opportunities across beautiful Gippsland. A recently launched Facebook Page, 'Caravanning in Gippsland', lets people in on the best spots and must-knows for the area. And despite its name, you don't need to own a caravan to join the group or camp at any of the sites – many of the locations are tent friendly.

Below we've listed three spots that are within South Gippsland, or nearby, to give you inspiration for a cost-effective weekend getaway that will get you and your disgruntled family out of the home and into nature.

1. Meeniyon Sports Oval

This donation camp is a short walk from Meeniyon shops and the town community gardens, and while it's an unpowered site,



The Meeniyon Sports Oval allows camping for a donation.
Photo: Maureen Douglas.

it does offer toilets and drinking water. It's also a practical base to explore the area as the oval backs onto the South Gippsland Rail Trail, making it perfect to access the town via foot or take a stroll through nature. A picturesque area surrounded by bush, this local location is well worth considering for a few nights away.

2. Walkerville Foreshore Camping Reserve



Immerse yourself in nature at Powlett River Caravan Park.
Photo: Belinda Tiziani.

The Walkerville Foreshore Camping Reserve is situated right on the foreshore overlooking the beach, a quiet and peaceful location for families and friends. Look out across the water to the mountainous peaks of Wilsons Promontory, while behind you thick native bush rises up into the foothills. The camping reserve stretches one kilometre along the western edge of Waratah Bay at Walkerville North. It has 128 sites, powered and unpowered, suitable for tents, caravans and campervans. During the off-peak season (start of June to end of August, excluding public holidays) a powered site will set you back \$41 a night, or an unpowered site just \$36.

3. Powlett River Caravan Park



Warm up by the fire at Powlett River Caravan Park

This is a fantastic spot to relax, enjoy walks along the river, explore the dense tea-tree forest or search for the hidden lake. Warm-up with a fire in the cooler months or throw a line in the river, and ocean fishing is within walking distance. You can also bring your bike – or hike – along the nearby Wonthaggi Rail Trail to the popular Kilcunda General Store and famous trestle bridge. This park boasts 23 large, grassed power campsites and also welcomes dogs. It's approximately \$30 for an unpowered site, and around \$40 for a powered one (subject to the number of people staying).

To see more of Gippsland's hidden, must-visit caravanning and camping spots, search for 'Caravanning in Gippsland' on Facebook.

Spinners achieve a first and third prize at Australian Sheep and Wool Show

The Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Bendigo, was scheduled for the weekend of 16th/18th July but had to be cancelled due to the lockdown but fortunately not before all the judging of entrants had been completed. The show brings together wool crafters from all over Victoria and further afield who enter their wool crafts and hope to take home a prize from this prestigious event.

The South Gippsland Spinners & Fibre Arts Group entered two teams in the Team/Family Collection, which required 5 articles, showcasing a minimum of 3 different crafts e.g., knitting, weaving, felted, crochet, embroidery using

the excitement was hard to contain and has put the group in the spotlight with an interview of the President on ABC Gippsland Radio breakfast show. Following on from this interview the group received a large number of subscriptions to its web site: www.timeonyourhandscrafters.com.

Anyone wishing to view all the entries to the show, which is an experience in itself, can visit the group's site and read the blog post gaining access to the YouTube video put out by Woolcraft Sheep & Wool Show. Unfortunately, this video isn't listed on YouTube but nevertheless can be viewed on:



First prize Woolcraft section at Australian Sheep and Wool Show



a minimum of 60% natural wool. Members worked tirelessly prior to the show to ensure the group's entries were of the highest possible standard and complied with the strict rules of the show. Each entry was required to include samples of materials used. The colours in each collection were carefully matched to produce a Spring and Autumn theme.

When the news came through that the group had achieved a 1st and 3rd prize,

<https://youtu.be/RVPvh2MvQNA>

During the various lock downs the group has continued to meet via Zoom when unable to meet in person. These meetings are lively and enjoyable, members sharing their work and ideas and showcasing crafts in progress. In fact, during this time 4 new members have signed up making the total membership of the group 31. When the group has been able to meet tutorials and hands-on in dyeing with food colouring and beading have taken place, the next planned tutorial being a wet felted hat or beret and who knows a hat parade to show off the results.

Anyone wishing to receive more information about the group can chat with Janice on 0490954915



Third prize at Australian Sheep and Wool Show

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Michael's Straightforward Moroccan Chicken -Andrew McEwen

Sometimes it's just lovely having someone else to cook for you. Somebody that puts as much love and care into the recipe. Michael has been a great friend and colleague for now over 35 years. In his early 70s Michael is unique among most men of that age about being an impressive cook. He loves cooking and exploring different types of food. I asked him how he got engaged in cooking and he said it that when he separated from his first wife he used to look after the two young boys for a week about. That started his long career in cooking. This meal was simple, affordable, and delicious.

Ingredients

500 grams of chicken fillet diced into two-centimetre pieces
3 tbsp of flour with salt and pepper
3 tbsp olive oil

2 onions diced
2 tsp of ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp of ground cloves
2 tsp of sumac
3 tbsp of sultanas
50 grams of toasted pine nuts
3 tbsp of chopped fresh coriander
500 mls of chicken stock
To serve with couscous, Greek yoghurt and Lebanese bread.

Method

Roll the chicken pieces in the flour and salt and pepper mix. Heat the 2 tbsp oil in a large fry pan over high heat until halt. Cook the chicken in batches until golden and set aside.
Heat the remaining oil in the pan adding the onions and reducing heat to medium and cook for 10 minutes. Stir occasionally until golden and softened.



Return the chicken to pan. Add the spices, sultanas, and stock. Reduce the heat to a low and cook for five minutes until heated through and thickened slightly. Stir in the pine nuts, coriander, and lemon juice.

Serve with couscous a tablespoon yoghurt, Lebanese bread, and lemon.

Cost \$12 Serves 4 Cost per serve \$3

A Day Talking About 'Dirt'

A Soil Workshop for Russell Broadbent MP

Did you know that soil health and soil biology play a pivotal part in the survival of our species - and all other species - on this planet? No soil biology, no life.

In Australia and globally, we lose more topsoil

than we generate, roughly by the factor of 10. So, if we keep doing what we are doing, we will destroy the very asset our survival depends upon - soil biology.

Tie from Hallston Valley Farms guided us through a visual soil assessment (VSA). VSA is a science-based process developed by Graham Shepherd, an NZ soil scientist. It is a tool to measure and benchmark soil's key diagnostic indicators of soil biology and plant performance - soil's KPIs. The VSA allows us to assess soil health, our successes or lack of progress by a low-cost process right in our paddocks.



Braving the wintry conditions in the name of soil - left to right - Gary Tie, Gerhard Grasser, Stefanie Hildmann, Russell Broadbent, Bev & Ron Smith

We had a look through the microscope at the soil samples we had taken and checked out the vast spectrum of the wonderful life under the surface.

During lunch, Ron + Bev Smith from Orana demonstrated the difference in nutrient content, taste and look of fruit from their own orchard with healthy soil biology versus store-bought fruit.

We then had to answer the question - How do we get there? We shared our regenerative farming experiences and data gathered on our properties. We discussed various ways to rebuild soil organic matter in topsoil, its scalability and viability.

We demonstrated that we do not need to spend more money but crucially need to change our



If you want to know about soil, you need to dig a hole. Gerhard Grasser guiding the group through a Visual Soil Assessment

mindset to prioritising soil biology in our farming processes. And how we move from a predominantly input-driven farming style to a management-driven improvement of soil biology.

We need a widespread, concerted effort to start conserving and regenerating Soil Organic Matter, soil biology's habitat in our topsoil, to ensure our survival.

Russell Broadbent had requested a day talking about 'dirt' for a while now, and true to his word, he spent almost six hours with a handful of soil warriors to learn about soil.

The day kicked off with a soil presentation that demonstrated the vital role healthy soil biology plays in biodiversity, food nutrient content and food security, soil integrity, water holding capacity, as well as public health and climate change.

It showed how all these aspects are interwoven and interdependent; all others are affected by interfering with one. It also explained thoroughly how carbon sequestration works.

Matsuo Basho said: If you want to know about the pine, go and have a look at the pine. So if you want to know about soil, you need to go and have a look at the soil.

Gerhard Grasser from AgriSolutions and Gary

We all appreciated Russell's enthusiasm for soil, his curiosity and his talent to ask challenging questions. And we certainly value his and his assistant Stephanie Medjeri's willingness to brave the wintry Gippsland conditions.

If you would like to learn more about any of those presentations, please get in touch with hello@stefaniehildmann.com.

Stefanie Hildmann

Child care services get a boost

Federal Member for Monash Russell Broadbent today welcomed the allocation of an additional \$1.6 million to support vital child care services in the region and help meet the needs of local families.

Mr Broadbent said 11 services will receive funding through the Liberal National Government's Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) which helps improve access to child care and increase workforce participation in remote, regional and disadvantaged communities.

"This funding will help local child care services improve access to quality care, particularly in more rural and remote parts of Monash," Mr Broadbent said.

"It will be good for our local kids, good for our hard-working families and ultimately for our community. It will also have a positive economic benefit by allowing more local parents to get back into work or to take on additional hours if they chose.

"The funds will support services to keep operating, or to fund capital projects to improve services and increase the number of places available."

Minister for Education and Youth Alan Tudge said more than 640 child care services around Australia would share in more than \$100 million through the program.

"We are committed to giving every Australian family access to quality child care, regardless of where they live or their circumstances," Minister Tudge said.

"In some remote areas, there may only be one or two child care services operating and it is critical we keep these open and help improve and expand facilities so more kids can attend.

"This program also helps services to run initiatives that reduce barriers which may otherwise prevent local kids from accessing care.

Minister for Regional Education Bridget McKenzie, ("sports rort Bridget"), said the CCCF would help ensure child care continued to be available for many families in Monash.

"These grants will have tangible benefits for child care providers that will flow to local children and their families," Minister McKenzie said.

"It means more families in Monash can take advantage of our Child Care Subsidy if they choose to work, learn or volunteer."

More information on the Community Child Care Fund can be found on the Department of Education, Skills and Employment website.

Services in South Gippsland include:

Mirboo North: \$350,000 - Mirboo North Early Learning Centre (St Andrews)

Foster: \$197,000 - Prom Coast Centres for Children

SuPAWt Guide dogs this August

It's tempting to withdraw into the warmth of your home during a South Gippsland winter, but Guide Dogs and puppies-in-training - as well as your faithful pooch - need you to brave the cold this August.

It's simple; walk your pooch for 30 minutes a day for 30 days during August to help raise money for Guide Dogs Australia's annual 'Pawgust' event. That's roughly two kilometres per day. Not only will you raise vital funds for Guide Dogs, but you'll also help to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of yourself and your dog - and your buddies too, if they'd like to tag along.

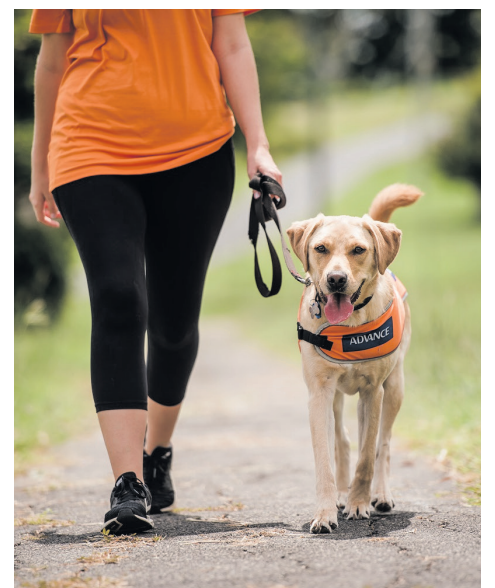
If you don't have a dog, don't worry! You can still get involved in Pawgust by walking 30 minutes per day on your own or with your human best mate.

By asking your family and friends for donations on your journey, you will be directly impacting the lives of Guide Dog puppies in training. The funds you raise during Pawgust will go towards helping breed, raise and train Guide Dogs. It costs in excess of \$50,000 to breed, raise and train just one Guide Dog puppy and with hundreds being trained each year, every dollar raised throughout Pawgust counts. Already, 9,304 participants across the nation have signed up for the 2021 Pawgust challenge.

You can sign up to the challenge as a lone wolf (walk as an individual), a pack member (search for a preexisting team to join) or be the alpha dog (start your own team).

To register or donate, www.pawgust.com.au/event/pawgust/

Together, we can make a difference to people who are blind or vision impaired.



Walk your dog to raise money for Guide Dog training


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<p>TILES</p> <p>Renovating ... easy as ...</p> <p>Abundant choice Ring your plans Customer friendly service</p> <p>allaway tile - slate - stone</p>  <p>5655 1095 South Gippsland Highway Korumburra</p>	<p>WATER TANK CLEANING</p> <p>The Watertank Cleaning Company (THE WATER DOCTOR)</p> <p>- Minimal water loss - - Tanks can be FULL or low on water - Lid / Liner Installation</p> <p>Ph: 0428 594 565 www.watertankcleaning.com.au Cleaning & Repairing Since 1996</p>	<p>MAILBOX DELIVERIES</p> <p>ADVERTISING DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR CUSTOMER!</p> <p>Mailbox deliveries of all kinds...</p> <p>Catalogues, Menus, Event flyers, Cards, Magnets etc.</p> <p>Dane Herbert: 0417 058858</p> <p>Call for great rates for Leongatha, Korumburra, Inverloch, Cape Patterson, Wonthaggi, Cowes, San Remo, New Haven.</p>	<p>ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL</p> <p>omicron automation</p> <p>-Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Services -PLC Programming -Machining -3D Printing -Custom Automated Equipment & Control Systems</p> <p>james@omicronautomation.com.au 0410912007</p>
<p>CARPENTRY</p> <p>CARPENTRY John 0423 305 956</p> <p>Renovations Extensions Restorations Window Replacement Fix Outs Door Replacements</p> <p>Cabinetry Furniture Fit Outs Joinery Stairs Windows</p> <p>Korumburra and Surrounds firedoors1@yahoo.com.ph</p>	<p>CARPENTRY</p> <p>Renovating your bathroom? We specialise in bathroom renovations and general carpentry.</p> <p>David Cowan Qualified Carpenter</p> <p>COWAN + CARPENTRY BATHROOMS</p> <p>0425 811 443</p>	<p>SEA HORSE RIDES</p> <p>Sea Horse Ride</p> <p>To book either a 1 hour riding lesson or 2 hour beach ride</p>  <p>Call Peter on 0417 330 517 www.seahorseride.com</p>	<p>EXHAUSTS</p> <p>"AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER EXHAUST GROUP"</p> <p>KORUMBURRA EXHAUST</p> <p>Aaron Fiedler A: 6 Sanders St, Korumburra 3950 P.O. Box 31, Korumburra 3950 ABN: 66 128 355 902</p> <p>P: (03) 5655 2202 F: (03) 5655 2380 E: korex@bigpond.com W: www.a1exhausts.com.au</p>

TRADE & SERVICES ADVERTISING RATES

*from July 1st 2021

BEST VALUE: Ongoing Rate of \$20 per week for a 12-month contract (50 issues)
CASUAL RATE: Minimum 10 issues at \$30 per week
Artwork supplied or we can design your advert for \$100



South Gippsland Voices

MPS MANDERS
PLUMBING & GAS FITTING

Tel: 0415 905 152
mandersplumbing@gmail.com

- New Homes
- Maintenance
- Roofing
- Drainage
- Gas Fitting
- Water
- Blockages
- CCTV inspections

JOIN THE FIGHT TO STOP OVERDEVELOPMENT!

Sustainable Australia Party

#STOPoverdevelopment #STOPoverpopulation

Want better planning to STOP overdevelopment? We will fight to:

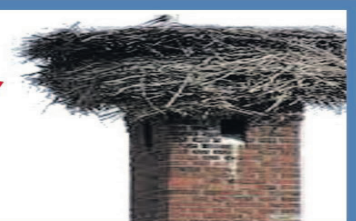
- Return real planning power to local communities (including via citizen juries)
- Deliver new community infrastructure before more housing
- Reduce population growth pressures by lowering immigration from a record 200,000+ p.a. back to the long term average of 70,000 p.a.

SAP is an independent community party from the sensible centre. We have a comprehensive policy platform including:

- Sustainable Environment and development
- Better Planning for our communities
- Affordable Housing for first home buyers and renters
- Secure Jobs via a more diverse economy

Join the fight! Sign up to our eNewsletter.
Visit: SustainableAustralia.org.au

Not all chimney hazards are visible



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Plus free quotes for gutter cleaning

KeepMeTidee
CHIMNEY SWEEP

Hans 0413 310 423
ABN and insurance

D.A. AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS
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- Brakes - Machining & Grinding Parts ABS
- Welding - Trailer & Horses Float Repairs
- Steering - Tyres and Suspension
- Tyres - Cars & 4wds
- Parts - Large range

RACE CAR PREPARATION
Ph: (03) 5655 1003 Prop. DAVID AMOR

One stop shop that will do the lot

Rates from July 1st, 2021
Larger adverts ongoing rate of \$40 per week for 12 months
Casual rate: Minimum 10 issues at \$60 per week

BOOST YOUR BUSINESS
Advertise with South Gippsland Voices

- ★ Best value for money and highest circulation across all demographics in South Gippsland.
- ★ Be seen in an uncluttered, presentable and well-read publication.

