

Local news by and for local people, serving the communities of Warrandyte, North Warrandyte, South Warrandyte, Park Orchards, Research, Wonga Park, Eltham, Donvale, Doncaster, Templestowe, Lower Templestowe, Kangaroo Ground, Hurstbridge, Bulleen, and the broader municipalities.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT MANNINGHAM & NILLUMBIK BULLETIN IS MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026

THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE PRINTED ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026

Strike up the band

There was a party atmosphere in Diamond Creek at the beginning of September as the town celebrated the 53rd Rotary Diamond Creek Town Fair. Check out all the action on Pages 13–15. Also in this edition, we get set for the next big community event, the Nillumbik Pet Expo, where you and your furry, feathered, or scaly friends can find the best in comfort and care. See our preview on Pages 22–23.



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ISSN: (print) 2653-3847 (digital) 2653-3855**POSTAL ADDRESS:** P.O. Box 209, Warrantyte 3113**ADVERTISING:** Tegan DeClark 9844 0555 (Mondays & Fridays)advertising@warrantydiary.com.au**DIARY OFFICE:** Community Centre, 168–178 Yarra Street, Warrantyte**GENERAL ENQUIRIES:** info@warrantydiary.com.au**WEBSITE:** warrantydiary.com.au/bulletin**DESIGN AND LAYOUT:** 42K Media, hello@42kmedia.com.au**PRINTING:** Newsprinters, 1 McKoy Street, West Wodonga, VIC 3690**ABOUT THE M&N BULLETIN**

The *Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin* (*M&N Bulletin*) has a print run of 3,000 and is distributed throughout Manningham and Nillumbik and available digitally via our website. Published about the 3rd/4th Monday of the month, it aims to keep the residents of Manningham and Nillumbik engaged and informed about art, culture, community sport, and important issues. It also exists to give the communities of Manningham and Nillumbik a voice so that they have a space to celebrate their achievements and to stand their ground when internal and external forces challenge their identity or local amenity. *M&N Bulletin* also serves as a contribution to the historical record, so that in the decades that follow, our children and our grandchildren will be able to look back and see what was happening now, and what your community did about it. Published by Warrantyte Diary Pty Ltd, *M&N Bulletin* draws on the same passion as its sister publication to tell the story of the communities it serves. Financed through advertising from local businesses and organisations, *M&N Bulletin* is proud to be non-profit, non-commercial, and a reliable source of local news. With a strong, independent voice, the *M&N Bulletin* supports the communities of Warrantyte, North Warrantyte, South Warrantyte, Park Orchards, Wonga Park, Christmas Hills, Waranwood, North Ringwood, Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill, St Andrews, Wattle Glen, Diamond Creek, Research, Eltham, Donvale, Doncaster, East Doncaster, Lower Templestowe, Templestowe, Hurstbridge, Bulleen, and any suburb, group, or community within our municipalities that needs a voice.

OUR PLACE

Manningham and Nillumbik form the gateway to the Yarra Valley, and is a place where city meets country. The Birrarung and its tributaries sustained a thriving culture for aeons, until the gold rush of the 1850s saw settlement stretch across the region. The area soon became home to miners, orchardists and tradespeople, as well as the artists who founded the Australian nationalist arts tradition. Now the outer edge of Melbourne, each township has developed its own character, but has much in common with its neighbours. We all love the beauty of our natural environment, our rich cultural life, and the achievements of our community members. *M&N Bulletin* is an expression of these values and the quest to uphold them.

ON WURUNDJERI LAND

In the spirit of reconciliation, the *M&N Bulletin* acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to their Elders — past and present — and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today. We acknowledge the important role First Nations people continue to play in our community.

ADVERTISING RATES

Advertising supports the publication by covering printing and production costs and associated expenses. The rates listed below are for the *M&N Bulletin* only, for the *Warrantyte Diary* contact info@warrantydiary.com.au or see our website.

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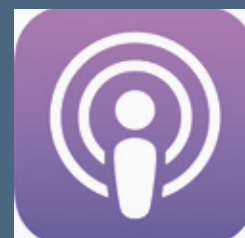
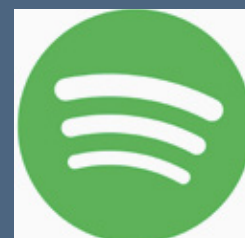
Pages 2–5, the back page, and preferred placement carries an additional loading.

Note: The Editors make every effort to ensure that all editorial content appearing in the *Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin*, on its website, and on the podcast is not made with Generative AI.

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Listen to the *M&N Bulletin Podcast*

**SOUNDCLOUD**

The Editorial team at the *Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin* are always looking for innovative ways to get local news content on the platforms you use.

For local news on the go, or if you prefer to watch and listen instead of read, check out our latest podcast offerings.

Check out the NewsPod
warrantydiary.com.au/podcast
community media solutions

- Video
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**42K Media**42kmedia.com.auvimeo.com/42kmediahello@42kmedia.com.au

Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin is a member publication of Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV). CNAV is the peak body for community, not-for-profit newspapers in Victoria.

What is BESS for the Green Wedge?

BY JAMES POYNER

AN ENERGY project in Doreen has nearby residents concerned.

The Middle Hut Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) proposal is for a 290-megawatt battery energy storage site across 14 hectares on Middle Hut Road, Doreen, which is part of the Nillumbik Green Wedge and in a designated bushfire-prone area.

Nillumbik residents opposing the project have been voicing their concerns on social media and encouraged residents to attend a community drop-in session at the end of August, facilitated by engagement consultancy firm Cogency.

A community representative told *MN Bulletin* that many who attended were disappointed and disenfranchised as there was no chance to voice concerns about the project.

"They refused to provide any spoken presentations and would only speak one-on-one or in a 'small group' to the attendees.

The materials provided were very rough and rudimentary (such as the 'concept' that failed to acknowledge or address the slope, as if it simply did not exist.

Many people had different answers from different members of the Cogency team, and those who did speak with the representatives came away with many unanswered questions.

A planning engagement expert who attended the consultation referred to it as the 'dad model' — decide, announce, defend."

The Community Representative said one of their biggest concerns is the increased bushfire risk.

"I am concerned about the interactions between the BESS facility and the fire prone landscape, which could go in either direction.

"There is no doubt that Lithium batteries are highly flammable which means that the BESS would act as a source of ignition within this fire-prone, green wedge landscape.

"This community is still scarred by Black Saturday.

"However, bushfire is not merely a historical issue but one that we deal with and feel deeply in advance of every fire season and especially the extreme or catastrophic risk days.

"The relaxed attitude towards the major threat of bushfire was a huge concern on the day."

Nillumbik Council has also released a statement.

"This proposal will not be assessed through a Nillumbik planning permit application.

Instead, it is expected to be considered by the Minister for

Planning under the Significant Economic Development provisions (Clause 53.22 of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme).

As part of that process, the application will likely be referred to Council for comment.

The proposal will need to be publicly advertised, giving residents and other interested parties an opportunity to make a submission or object.

Those submissions will be considered as part of the Minister's assessment.

The final decision will be made by the Minister for Planning.

There are no third-party appeal rights for either Council or the community in relation to the Minister's decision under this process.

Council has not formed a position on the proposal at this stage.

Any submission from Council would be based on an assessment of the application and supporting technical reports once they are formally referred to Council."

Energy industry experts have stated that with the inevitable closure of the Yallourn coal-fired power station and increasing demands on electrical energy, Victoria's energy resilience is reliant on the planned construction of new renewable energy projects.

Part of this is a network of battery storage systems.

Tennant Reed, Director of Climate Change and Energy at the Australian Industry Group, explained why battery storage systems are important and the work being done to mitigate fire risk.

"Batteries of all scales are currently fundamentally transforming the electricity market.

They are having a really important effect, both from the quadrupling of large-scale battery dispatch over the past year and the enormous growth in small-scale household batteries under the Federal Government's incentive program.

These are pushing gas peakers out of the evening peak support role, so they are lowering evening electricity prices, and they are upping demand and, very slightly, prices in the middle of the day when we've got this huge amount of rooftop solar and large-scale solar transforming the system.

So, all up, they are becoming really important to reliability, and they are smoothing out prices at a lower overall level."

Mr Reed went on to say that while there is a perceived risk of fire with lithium batteries, new chemistries are being developed here and overseas which provide better

energy storage and are less flammable, such as sodium-ion batteries which are gaining popularity in China.

"I would not say there is zero risk with battery facilities. "Every energy asset needs careful management for safety."

In terms of existing energy resilience, Nillumbik Council has the following assets:

- Hurstbridge Community Hub
- Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre
- Hurstbridge Football and Cricket Pavilion

Council also has an emergency resilience battery at the Diamond Creek Community Bank Stadium that can back up power supply when it's operating as an emergency relief centre.

The Doreen community representative said they were unsure that BESSs are the right way forward.

"Australian's have been world leaders in their uptake of home solar — and now batteries — but as reward for their early investment the payback seems to be to take the benefit and control out of household's hands and budgets, and to deliver it into the control of private operators. There are still a lot of questions around BESSs.

It may be that they form part of the solution, but this should be decided through scientific consensus and planning strategy, and not by the lobbyist and developer led 'investment'.

I wonder if we can get at least part of the way to an all-electric transition by the use of household and business batteries linked into the grid."

The planning application for the Middle Hut BESS is expected to be lodged in September with the Planning Minister.

It is understood the planning application will go out for public exhibition, where formal submissions for and against the project can be made.

With the next State Election in November, it is also expected that energy resilience will be a major campaign issue for major and minor parties.

What do you think?

The advantages and disadvantages of this project impact us all.

Energy resilience, environmental protection, the role of the Green Wedge, and bushfire risk are all impacted by the outcomes of this project, so we want to know what you think.

Send us your thoughts to bulletin@warrantydiary.com.au.

Active transport link from Montmorency to Eltham

BY SANDI MILLER

A NEW SHARED use path connection for bike riders and pedestrians between Montmorency and Eltham is being planned by Transport Victoria and they are looking for community input.

A new shared use path will connect to over 600 kilometres of biking and walking routes across Melbourne, directly linking to Greensborough via Montmorency and to the Diamond Creek Trail in Eltham.

In 2025, a new shared use path was built from Greensborough Station to Montmorency Station, as part of the Hurstbridge Line Duplication.

These works will extend the shared use path connection from Montmorency Station to Alistair Knox Park, Eltham.

Once completed, the new shared use path connection will improve safety for bike riders and pedestrians, support and encourage more people to choose active transportation, and improve access to local amenities, parks, and businesses in Greensborough, Montmorency, and Eltham.

Construction is expected to commence in 2027, and will be delivered in two sections:

- Section 1: Montmorency Station to Petrie Park
- Section 2: Petrie Park to Alistair Knox Park

A statement from transport Victoria said building a shared use path within this area is complex due to:

- the proximity to the Hurstbridge rail corridor and infrastructure

- environmentally sensitive areas
- multiple road crossings
- steep grades
- the presence of both underground and overhead services.

To minimise any impacts, the new shared use path will be located along the southern side of the Hurstbridge rail line and behind property boundary fences.

About the project

Section 1: Montmorency Station to Petrie Park

Plans for the initial stage are to widen the existing footpath on the northern side of Binns Street to a shared use path, build a crossing for bike riders and pedestrians on Mountain View Road, and build a shared use path in Petrie Park.

Further investigations are underway to determine the route of the shared use path through Petrie Park.

Section 2: Petrie Park to Alistair Knox Park

The proposed route of the shared use path from Petrie Park to Alistair Knox Park in Eltham will be along the southern side of the rail line behind property boundary fences.

The path will follow the southern side of the rail line from Petrie Park to Stephens Street.

From there, it will connect to Sherbourne Road via a dedicated crossing point and a shared use path along a section of Stephens Street.

Environmental impact

A Transport Victoria statement said retaining trees and vegetation was a priority and there are strict environmental requirements in place.

"We value the importance the community places on the environment, and particularly its endemic local trees and wildlife, including protected species such as the Matted Flax-lily and Eltham Copper Butterfly.

In planning the project, we are carefully considering safety, the environment — including the local flora and fauna, accessibility, cultural heritage, and site conditions in all our planning.

Early assessments have identified tree removal will be required along the 2.5km shared use path alignment including Petrie Park, Stephens Street, and Alistair Knox Park.

To help minimise environmental impacts, we have identified trees and areas of environmental significance, and we are exploring design and construction approaches to retain as much vegetation as possible.

Native vegetation impacted as part of the project will be offset in accordance with relevant approvals.

We are assessing around 150 trees that may need to be removed across the alignment."

Have your say

Transport Victoria is seeking the community to have its say on parts of the design by Thursday, October 1.

Find out more and complete the survey at engage.vic.gov.au/montmorency-to-eltham-shared-use-path.

More accessible voting options



AT THE 2026 STATE election in November, Victorians can expect a range of voting options to suit their needs.

The VEC Electoral Commissioner Sven Bluemmel has highlighted a range of accessible options to ensure every Victorian can cast their vote, including in-person voting on the day or during the early voting period.

"Accessible voting services are a critical part of achieving our vision for all Victorians to actively participate in their democracy.

"We have integrated a number of accessibility measures to improve the voting experience, and this remains a priority for us at every election.

"We must work together to identify and eliminate the remaining barriers that prevent electors from voting.

"Some actions will require legislative change, and these will be matters for Parliament to consider," he said.

The VEC's final service plan for the State Election was

published in August, following more than 18-months of planning.

Every election venue is audited for accessibility, with the aim of having at least one fully accessible voting centre in each district.

Location details and accessibility information will be available on the VEC website from Wednesday, November 4.

Voters at voting centres can also access accessible voting screens, magnifying sheets, and large, tactile pencils.

Voters can also access voting information in 29 languages.

VEC staff will also be ready to help voters who need help to complete their vote.

Postal voting is open to all voters with a simple application available from early November through the VEC website or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

More than 400 mobile voting services will reach people in aged-care facilities, hospitals, homeless shelters, and prisons.

Following trials at recent state by-elections, the VEC

is also expanding its low sensory voting option to all 88 districts for carers and people with low sensory needs on Tuesday, November 17.

These venues include dimmed lighting and reduced noise.

Voters who are blind, have low vision, or live with a motor impairment can also register for the VEC's telephone-assisted voting service.

Mr Bluemmel said this service is a scalable voting option for those who need it, and the VEC has recommended that it should be available to more voters than Victoria's electoral laws currently allow.

He said the VEC will continue to advocate for this change.

"The VEC's accessibility approach has been developed over many years, with input from the community, including our Electoral Access Advisory Group, which provides us with independent advice, feedback, and community perspectives on accessible and inclusive election participation," he said.

For more information about accessible voting services, visit vec.vic.gov.au or call 131 832.

Airport plan to share the decibels

BY SANDI MILLER

MELBOURNE'S Tullamarine Airport is in the planning stages for a third runway.

As part of the development, Australia Pacific Airports (Melbourne) (APAM), which manages Melbourne Airport, is considering the effects that noise will have on surrounding communities.

APAM were required by the federal government to engage independent consultants to prepare a Noise Sharing Plan as part of the approval conditions for the third runway.

With no curfew in place, Melbourne Airport operates 24 hours per day, so many communities are impacted around the clock by intrusive aircraft noise.

The new runway will mean several new flight paths will track over the eastern and northern suburbs, so it may increase aircraft traffic above Manningham and Nillumbik communities.

For instance, Kangaroo Ground currently has about 25 flights per day overhead (with peaks of 79 flights per day), with arrivals at an altitude of around 1,250 metres, which would register 63 decibels at ground level.

By 2047, APAM says this will increase to 59 flights per day (with peaks of up to 119); however, they will be flying at a higher altitude, around 1,900m, and therefore registering at less than 60dB from the ground.

APAM has released a draft *Noise Sharing and Airspace*



Concept Plan for community feedback, with consultation closing on October 2.

The plan explains how runways and flight paths will be used once construction associated with the Third Runway project and Eastern Extension project is complete.

It will be implemented only after all construction work is finished.

The *Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan* will not eliminate aircraft noise; instead, APAM says it aims to provide predictability and fairness by rotating runway use and flight paths when conditions allow, so no single area continually experiences noise from Melbourne Airport.

The plan aims to vary flight paths to give respite to communities heavily impacted by aircraft noise, with

several modes of operation that shift priority of runway use depending on weather, safety, and noise sharing.

Once finalised, the *Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan* explains how runways and flight paths will be used once the three runways are operating.

Outside of peak periods, it sets out how aircraft movements can be managed so noise is shared across communities, while always keeping safety as the top priority.

Have your say

Feedback is now being invited by the Australian Federal Government on the draft *Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan*.

Visit participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/noise-sharing-plan to learn more and to have your say.

Gabriel Ng MP

Federal Member for Menzies

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

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MAYORAL REPORT

**CR NAOMI JOINER**

SPRING HAS arrived, and with the beautiful weather comes plenty of community events.

There is much to look forward to over the coming months — mark these dates in your calendar for family fun in the Shire.

Seniors Festival in Nillumbik

This year sees another jam-packed event schedule for the Victorian Seniors Festival, which will run throughout October.

The festival is a joyful expression of Council's commitment to supporting older residents to live well and enjoy a strong sense of belonging.

Highlights of this year's festival include:

- NillumBUG Come 'n Try ride on Thursday, October 1
- Seniors Festival Lunch on Thursday, October 8
- Eltham Men's Shed open day on Saturday, October 10
- Nilli-Billi Bushdance on Tuesday, October 13
- Wok and Roll Disco high tea on Tuesday, October 20
- Spring Fling Seniors Lunch on Thursday, October 29

There are also workshops on a range of topics, including retirement and sustainability, plus karaoke, a museum open day, a trip to the Victorian Pride Centre, and much more.

There is truly something for everyone, and I encourage you to explore the program.

More information and a detailed guide to the events can be found at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/seniors-festival.

Photo: SUPPLIED



Mayor Naomi Joiner addresses the gathering at the RAP launch

Bushfire and Community Expo

Another family-friendly event coming up in October is the Bushfire and Community Safety Expo.

Head to Alistair Knox Park in Eltham on Sunday, October 18, from 10am to 2pm, for a free event that will help you prepare for emergencies and stay informed.

You will be able to access practical information, connect with emergency services and local organisations, discover resources that support safer communities, and learn more about local risks (including bushfire, severe weather, and road safety).

Find out more at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/bushfire-expo.

Creative Industries event

We are supporting our local creatives with a workshop run in partnership with Banyule City Council.

HOW MUCH? is an interactive workshop that will help provide creatives with knowledge, tools, and confidence around negotiating fees and saying no.

The event will be beneficial for any locals working within creative industries who are interested in confidently communicating their value.

HOW MUCH? will be held at Hurstbridge Community Hub from 9:45am to 1:30pm on Saturday, October 24. Please pre-register as numbers are limited.

There is a \$10 booking fee that is refundable after attending the workshop.

Read more about the event and register at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/creative-industries.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan

We celebrated Council's "Reflect" Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in early September during a special event at Eltham North Adventure Playground.

A RAP is a formal commitment to support First Nations people's rights, culture, heritage, needs, and aspirations.

It outlines the shared approach Council will take to progress reconciliation and work alongside all Aboriginal people in Council's services.

The event brought together representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Heritage Corporation, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders Aunty Gail Smith and Aunty Julianne Axford, Mobjobs representative Uncle Joel Wright, members of the Reconciliation in Nillumbik RAP Working Group, Nillumbik Reconciliation Group (NRG), Catholic Ladies College, Eltham North Primary School, Eltham High School, Eltham East Primary School, and Council officers.

Information about Council's RAP can be viewed at nillumbik.vic.gov.au/RAP.

Have your say on the draft site plan for Alan Marshall Reserve, Eltham



COMMUNITY members are invited to provide feedback on the proposed site plan for Alan Marshall Reserve, Eltham.

The draft site plan has been shaped by feedback during earlier community engagement.

Community members said they wanted more seating and picnic areas, improved playground facilities, toilets, an additional recreation space, and increased shade throughout the space. In response, the proposed site plan includes:

- renewal of existing playground and playground expansion
- improved path network
- shelter for weather protection
- accessible seating and picnic tables
- additional trees and landscaping to improve shade
- toilets
- water play

Mayor Naomi Joiner said community feedback had played an important role in developing the plan.

"We heard clearly from our community that they value spaces where people of all ages can play, exercise, connect with nature and spend time together.



Photo: SUPPLIED

"This draft site plan reflects those priorities and creates a more welcoming and accessible space for everyone."

Councillor Kate McKay noted that the site plan is currently a long-term concept.

"Community feedback will help shape Council's upcoming investment in Alan Marshall Reserve, refine the plan, and strengthen future funding opportunities and advocacy efforts.

"Delivery of some of these aspects will be dependent on securing additional funding.

"We encourage everyone to take a look at the plan and let us know what they think."

To view the site plan and provide feedback, visit participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/alan-marshall-reserve.

Feedback closes on Sunday, September 27.

MAYORAL REPORT



CR JIM GRIVAS

Have your say on the future of recreation in Manningham

MANNINGHAM is home to some of Melbourne's best walking and cycling trails, sporting clubs, and recreation facilities, but being active looks different for everyone, and it's harder for some residents to make happen than others.

That's why we're developing a new *10-year Recreation Strategy*, and why I'm asking you to help shape it.

This strategy will guide how we invest in recreation spaces, infrastructure, and programs across the municipality over the next decade.

It's about making sure that whether you're into organised sport, a casual walk around the block, catching up with friends over a game of lawn bowls, or want somewhere safe for the kids to kick a ball, Manningham has the facilities and opportunities to support you.

To get this right, we need to hear from as many of you as possible — not just the people who are already active, but those who aren't, and who can tell us why.

Some of you walk, run, or cycle regularly.

Some play team sports, attend fitness classes, swim, or make the most of our parks, trails, and open spaces.

And some of you aren't currently active at all, for a whole range of reasons.

Photo: SANDI MILLER



All of these perspectives matter to us equally.

We're particularly interested in understanding the barriers that get in the way.

It might be lack of time, or not having reliable transport to get to a facility.

For others it's a health or mobility challenge, a safety concern, caring responsibilities that leave little room for anything else, or simply not knowing what's available locally.

These barriers aren't always obvious from the outside, which is exactly why we need to hear them directly from the community, rather than assume we already know the answers.

We're also working hard to make sure this consultation reaches people who don't always get a say in these processes, including young people, older residents, people with disability, women, and members of our multicultural communities.

If that's you, I'd especially encourage you to have your say.

Your feedback will directly inform where and how we invest; from upgrading existing facilities to planning new ones, and from expanding programs that are already working well to filling in the gaps where they aren't.

The survey is open now and takes just a few minutes to complete.

It closes at 4pm on Monday, October 19, so I'd encourage you not to leave it until the last minute.

We'll also be out and about across Manningham over the coming weeks — at libraries, markets, and community events — so keep an eye out for our team and say hello.

Being active builds a genuine sense of belonging in our community as well as being good for our physical health.

I'd love for as many residents as possible to be part of shaping what an active Manningham looks like for the next generation.

Visit yoursay.manningham.vic.gov.au/recreation-strategy to complete the survey and find out more.

Manningham Council News

Help shape our Recreation Strategy

Do you play sport, walk, cycle or simply enjoy being active? We'd love to hear from you. Share your experiences and tell us how we can make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to stay active.

Your feedback will shape a new Recreation Strategy that will guide future outdoor spaces across Manningham. Complete our survey by Monday 19 October:

🔗 yoursay.manningham.vic.gov.au/recreation-strategy

Don't miss Birrarung Riverfest

We are proud to support Birrarung Riverfest, which continues until Sunday 18 October. With more than 70 free events across Melbourne, the festival offers opportunities to explore local waterways through nature walks, wildlife experiences, educational talks, art, music and community tree planting activities. Find out more at:

🔗 riverfest.org.au

Riverbank recovery works

We're partnering with Melbourne Water to rehabilitate a section of the Birrarung (Yarra River) in Warrandyte from February to April 2027.

We're replanting with around 10,000 native plants so the riverbank can stabilise, recover and stay healthy for the community and wildlife for generations to come.

Celebrate Seniors Month

Explore more than 60 fun and affordable events and activities across Manningham as part of Seniors Month.

Pick up your copy of our Local Activity Guide at community venues, or explore our online calendar of events.

🔗 manningham.vic.gov.au/seniors-month



Scan to subscribe



Want to stay up to date on Manningham's latest news and events? Sign up to our eNews! 📞 9840 9333 🔗 manningham.vic.gov.au



Image credit: Sally M Nangala Mulda and Marlene Rubuntja. Courtesy Tangentyere Artists. Photo: Bec Capp.

A celebration of friendship and resilience

Two Girls from Amoonguna, an ACMI touring exhibition, is coming soon to the Manningham Art Gallery! This exhibition explores the intertwining stories of friendship and resilience through video, sculptures and paintings.

Arrkutja Tharra, Kungka Kutjara, Two Girls is the third Artbank + ACMI Commission, proudly supported and made in collaboration with Ludo Studio. See the exhibition from Saturday 26 September to Saturday 19 December.

🔗 manningham.vic.gov.au/two-girls



Connect, create, and celebrate Seniors Month

BY SUSAN FOREMAN

THERE IS MUCH to enjoy across both Manningham and Nillumbik during Seniors Month.

Celebrate positive ageing and take part in events and activities close to home, or get out and about and get involved in events right across the state.

Victorian Seniors Card holders can enjoy nine days of free public transport across Victoria from October 3 to 11.

This includes:

- all metropolitan public transport services
- V/Line train and coach services
- selected regional bus services outside the myki area.

You can do Tai Chi on Lake Wendouree, join the Big Sing in Nunawading, a drumming circle in Blackburn, take a walk with wildlife on the Great Ocean Road, or stay close to home and find one of the plethora of activities happening across Manningham and Nillumbik.

This year's theme is "Connect, Create, and Celebrate", and there are literally hundreds of ways to do just that.

See the full program at seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festival.

Connect, create, and celebrate with the 2026 Victorian Seniors Festival.

In Nillumbik

Nillumbik is hosting over 30 local events.

This year, there are many opportunities for over 50s in Nillumbik to get active at their own pace, with weekly sessions at Nillumbik leisure venues, Walking Basketball, scenic bike rides (e-bikes welcome), and even a Wok and Roll Disco.

Most Seniors Festival events are free, including all Council-run events — such as the new Nilli-Billi Bushdance, and the ever-popular Seniors Festival lunch.

Council has also funded six events in the program

through its Seniors Festival Grants.

Mayor Naomi Joiner invites older adults to explore all the events on offer.

"In Nillumbik, we are committed to supporting older residents to live well and feel a strong sense of belonging, as reflected in the priorities of our Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan," said Cr Joiner.

"The Seniors Festival is a joyful expression of this commitment, with many opportunities to learn something new, meet people, get creative, and get moving."

View the program and book your tickets at: nillumbik.vic.gov.au/seniors-festival.

In Manningham

There will be more than 60 free and low-cost events and activities across Manningham, and Council has produced a *Seniors Month Local Activity Guide* to help older people, care partners, and family members find fun and affordable events and activities to stay active, learn something new, and connect with others in the community.

Deputy Mayor, Deirdre Diamante, said the annual program, including the popular Seniors Morning Tea, was a highlight for many residents.

"Manningham Council is proud to support the diverse range of activities hosted by local clubs, groups and service organisations that are designed to promote healthy ageing, wellbeing, and connection," Cr Diamante said.

"Seniors Month provides opportunities to meet new people, discover new interests, stay active and enjoy everything our vibrant and diverse community has to offer."

"Thank you to all the organisations who have helped to create such an engaging program."

The Doncaster Dolphins Masters Swimming Club is

Photo: SUPPLIED



Rod Clarke, Doncaster Dolphins

one of the groups to get involved, hosting a series of come-and-try sessions.

Assistant coach Rod Clarke is a passionate advocate for staying active later in life.

He recently broke the state and national record for the 50m backstroke short course at the Australian Masters Nationals in Brisbane.

"It's never too late," Rod said.

"We've got members ranging from their 20s to their 90s."

"Some are swimming for fitness, some compete, and some just enjoy being part of the community."

Copies of the *Seniors Month Local Activity Guide* are available to pick up from community venues including the Civic Centre, local libraries, and leisure centre.

Explore the full calendar online at Manningham Council's website: manningham.vic.gov.au/seniors-month.

Nillumbik Shire Council News

Pet Expo

Come along for displays and demonstrations, nutritional and grooming advice, obedience training, education, and much more.

**Saturday
11 October,
10am to 4pm
Marngrook Oval,
Diamond Creek**

Find out more:

nillumbik.vic.gov.au/pet-expo

FREE
family
event

Bring your
furry family
members!



Book now for Term 4

Try something new this spring at Living & Learning Nillumbik. Our brand-new activities include Indonesian for beginners in Diamond Creek and Yoga at Panton Hill. Bookings are now open!

livinglearningnillumbik.vic.gov.au

Nilli-Billi Bushdance

Come and enjoy a great Aussie pasttime at the Nilli-Billi Bushdance, part of the Seniors Festival program.

Tuesday 13 October, 1pm to 4pm

Slovenian Club,
82 Ingrams Road, Research

Book your tickets:

events.humanitix.com/nilli-billi-bushdance

Children's Week

Plenty of fun for all ages.

Wednesday 28 October, 10am to 2pm

Edendale Community Environment Farm

For more information:

nillumbik.vic.gov.au/childrens-week



FREE ENTRY

Bushfire & Community Safety Expo

Get practical advice and resources, while enjoying a day out, with children's activities and food stalls.

From bushfire preparedness and severe weather to e-bike safety, bird flu information, emergency planning and community wellbeing.

Sunday 18 October, 10am to 2pm

Alistair Knox Park,
829 Main Road, Eltham

Find out more:

nillumbik.vic.gov.au/bushfire-expo

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latest news
straight to
your inbox



Nillumbik
The Green Wedge Shire

Community groups share \$2.8M in Council grants



LOCAL COMMUNITY organisations have received more than \$2.8 million through Manningham Council's Community Grants Program.

Recipients of Council's Community Partnership Grants and Annual Community Grants categories were recognised at the Annual Grants Celebration earlier this month, following Council's endorsement of the successful applicants.

Manningham Deputy Mayor, Deirdre Diamante, said the funding recognised the important role local organisations play in supporting residents and building a connected community.

"Through their commitment and generosity, they deliver programs, services, events, and opportunities that make a real difference to those who live, work, and visit Manningham," Cr Diamante said.

"Research shows that for every dollar given in support of community organisations such as these, more than three times that amount is returned to the community through social and economic benefits."

Community Partnership Grants 2026-30

Eighteen organisations will share in \$2,565,476 over four years through the Community Partnership Grants category, supporting long-term community development initiatives and events that celebrate and strengthen Manningham's diverse community.

Funded projects focus on disability inclusion, food relief, community legal services, positive ageing, and cultural celebration and support.

Successful initiatives include the extension of the Manningham Resident Free Entry Program at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Pick Me Up! Vision Loss Pickleball

Photo: SUPPLIED



Cr Deirdre Diamante with the Chinese Senior Citizens Club of Manningham

for All delivered by Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria, and Doncare's Champions for Seniors project, focusing on preventing and reducing harm from elder abuse.

Funding will also support a range of community events including the Warrandyte Festival, Persian Fire Festival, Manningham Chinese New Year Festival, Jazz in the Park, and the Pottery Expo.

Annual Community Grants

Seventeen organisations will share \$252,334 over the next 12 months for community development, arts, community events and healthy ageing initiatives.

Projects include food relief and education, support for volunteers, older adults and carers, community gardens, local history projects, public art, documentary making and more.

Other grant opportunities

Applications are now open year-round for our Small Grants category, with the next round of assessment closing on September 30.

Cr Diamante thanked all Community Grants Program recipients.

"Thank you for the care, energy and dedication you bring to your work."

"We look forward to seeing your projects take shape and the positive impact they will have across Manningham in the years ahead," Cr Diamante said.

For full details of the grants and recipients, please visit Council's website at manningham.vic.gov.au/community-grants.

Bridging the Gap to better mental health support

doncare

TWO COMMUNITY fundraising events to be held at Templestowe Bowling Club in October will contribute to the seed funding of Doncare's new Bridging the Gap mental health service.

The service is being established in response to a growing number of people seeking support for challenges such as anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, family violence, and financial stress, but finding themselves unable to access appropriate care.

Many do not qualify for government-funded specialist mental health programs, while private psychological

support remains out of reach financially.

Clinical psychology can cost from \$230-\$350 a session. Doncare's Bridging the Gap program will address this gap by providing affordable, trauma-informed psychological support linked with practical community services and recovery supports.

The fundraising events, titled I Am Woman, will be held on October 9 at 10 am and 15 at 7pm, coinciding with World Menopause Day.

The events will feature women's health educator and Martin & Pleasance Health Ambassador Susan Gianevsky, who has spent more than three decades working in women's health education and wellbeing.

Susan will speak about maintaining health and balance through different stages of life, covering topics including hormones, sleep, skin health, and weight management.

The events are designed as an opportunity for women to come together, share experiences and learn practical approaches to wellbeing.

Funds raised will contribute to the establishment of Doncare's new service, which aims to provide coordinated care for people whose circumstances are often too complex for existing support pathways.

Doncare is seeking to raise \$300,000 to bring the service to life and has already received significant backing from community organisations and donors.

The event has been made possible through the support of Templestowe Bowling Club, which has donated the venue, allowing all donations to be directed to Doncare. Visit trybooking.com/DPDWX to book tickets.

See Page 16 for more detailed event information.

Finalists announced for new Manningham Business Awards

BY SUSAN FOREMAN

TWENTY-FOUR outstanding local businesses have been named as finalists for the new Manningham Business Awards.

The awards are held in partnership with Rotary Manningham City for 2026, celebrate excellence and innovation across the municipality's business community.

The finalists in each category are:

Community Contribution

- Bramleigh Estate
- Jackson Court Traders Association
- Warrandyte Riverside Market

Emerging Business

- Farm Services Pty Ltd
- First Gateway Pty Ltd
- Wonderboy Pty Ltd

Everyday Services

- Cuddly Bear Templestowe Early Learning Centre
- Face Your Brows
- Retreat Hair by Natalie Varrasso

Health and Fitness

- Launch Collective
- Little Birds Allied Health
- Onemda Disability Services

Home-based Business

- Azara Recycling Pty Ltd
- Coffee At Nola
- Gourmet Guru Catering Pty Ltd

Hospitality and Retail

- Mr. Tunstall and Co.
- Pitstop Pita
- Regretless - Low Carb Pleasure

Professional Services

- Darling Daughters
- Lower Templestowe Dental Excellence
- Madison Sloan Lawyers

Trades

- ArNik Design and Build
- Doncaster Garage & Gate
- Esjay Landscapes + Pools

Tickets are now on sale for the awards ceremony to be held on Thursday, October 22 at the Manningham Function Centre.

Tickets cost \$45-\$60.

Visit manningham.vic.gov.au/business-awards for more information on the award finalists and to book ceremony tickets.



Nicole Werner MP
Member for Warrandyte

FIGHTING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

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☎ (03) 9841 5166
🌐 www.nicolewerner.com.au



OAKS DAY
— AT FONDATA —

5 NOVEMBER 2026 | 12:30PM

Oaks day ladies lunch at Fondata!

Celebrate Oaks Day in style with a delicious lunch, Aperol spritz on arrival, drinks package, live entertainment by Joel Quinn and prizes for 'Fashions on the Field' and 'Best Headwear' all the race-day fun without the crowds!

FONDATA
AT WILKERS
1872

Tickets available through trybooking via QR, our website or call our reservations team:
📞 fondata1872.com ☎ 9712 0742 📞 [fondata1872](https://fondata1872.com)
📍 150 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd, Kangaroo Ground



Hurstbridge Hub's resilient future



THE HURSTBRIDGE Community Hub will soon be equipped with a modern, sustainable energy system as the Hurstbridge Hub Energy Resilience Project nears completion.

The project, supported by a \$265,000 grant through AusNet's Energy Resilience Community Fund Major Grants, will upgrade the Hub's electrical infrastructure, including:

- installation of additional rooftop solar
- battery storage
- a back-up generator
- public electric vehicle charging facilities
- replacing gas with all-electric appliances
- a new main switchboard arrangement.

The Hub's new energy system will help maintain essential services during power outages, increase the use of renewable energy, support future growth and provide public EV charging infrastructure for the community.

Mayor Naomi Joiner said the project was a significant investment in community resilience and sustainability.

"The Hurstbridge Community Hub is an important gathering place for our community, so it's essential that it can continue operating during power disruptions and meet the needs of the future," Cr Joiner said.

"These upgrades strengthen the Hub's energy security while reducing emissions and increasing our use of renewable energy.

"These additions demonstrate Council's commitment to practical climate action while delivering lasting benefits for the Hurstbridge community."

The project supports Council's broader commitment to reducing emissions, improving energy resilience, and preparing community facilities for a low-carbon future.

Once complete, the Hurstbridge Community Hub will serve as a Nillumbik community energy resilience centre, along with Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre and the Hurstbridge Football and Cricket Pavillion.



We also have an emergency resilience battery at the Diamond Creek Community Bank Stadium that can back up power supply when it's operating as an emergency relief centre.

Energy resilience in Nillumbik

The Hurstbridge Community Hub is the latest facility in Nillumbik to be equipped for energy resilience.

Thanks to a project completed in June this year, Hurstbridge Football and Cricket Pavillion has a new solar and battery system that can provide up to 48 hours of back-up power.

Since 2019, a solar and battery system at Community Bank Stadium in Diamond Creek, part-funded by Council, has been powering community resilience, enabling the facility to act as an emergency relief centre

in the event of grid failure or disconnection.

In 2020, this project won a national climate innovation award.

In 2024, Council facilitated the delivery of an energy resilience project at Wadambuk St Andrews Community Centre, funded by DEECA and designed by AusNet.

It includes additional solar, battery storage and back-up generator that enable the facility to operate during grid outages.

In 2025, Council upgraded the battery storage for the off-grid power system at Peter Avola Pavilion in Strathewen to improve energy security for local users of the pavilion.

Council has also successfully piloted using its fleet of electric vehicles to supply remote power, and is exploring ways to roll this program out more widely.

Get fire ready, register burn-offs online



AS VICTORIAN residents begin making the most of the warmer conditions to prepare their property for the fire season, emergency services are encouraging landowners to register their burn-offs online.

The quickest and easiest way to register your burn-off is by using the Fire Permits Victoria website at firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify.

While spring is an opportune time for landowners and residents to take advantage of the favourable weather to undertake burning-off activities, more than 62 per cent of burn-off registrations in Victoria are still coming through via phone.

This can lead to longer wait times for residents seeking to notify their burn-offs, as Triple Zero Victoria call takers focus on higher priority calls.

Triple Zero Victoria's Chief Operations Officer, Paul Santamaria, encourages the community to take the very simple step of planning ahead and registering their burn-off online during spring.

"We are still seeing high notification by phone in some areas including Wonga Park, Lara, Olinda, Healesville, Mt Evelyn, Monbulk, Langwarrin, and Yackandandah, and we encourage these communities to register online," COO Santamaria said.

"When everyone does their bit and registers a burn-off online, it reduces unnecessary calls and helps our Triple Zero Emergency call takers to remain available to focus on emergencies and high-priority calls.

Those wishing to burn-off at a time that is more than two hours away are encouraged to register it online.

"Registering online will always be the fastest and

simplest option."

If you need to start your burn-off immediately (within two hours), you can still register by calling 1800 668 511.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said that registering your burn-off means the CFA and emergency services can manage the fire risk more effectively, but that those burning off need to make sure they have the right equipment and enough people to keep their burn-off under control.

"Receiving notification allows us to manage the fire risk effectively and avoid placing unnecessary strain on local brigades and Triple Zero (000) call takers," said CO Heffernan.

"So far this year, CFA crews have responded to more than 200 escaped burn-offs — so we ask landowners to have enough people and water on hand to monitor, contain, and extinguish their burn-off safely at all times and only burn-off when conditions are favourable."

For more information about burning off safely, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff.

Before burning off, make sure you:

- Check and follow regulations or laws by your local council.
- Notify your neighbours if the burn will generate fire and smoke.
- Check the weather forecast for the day of the activity and a few days afterward.
- Postpone your activity if high fire risk conditions develop.
- Establish a gap in vegetation or fire break of no less than three metres cleared of all flammable material.
- Have enough people to monitor, contain, and extinguish the burn safely and effectively.
- Never leave a burn-off unattended.

Get Fire Ready

With hot and dry conditions expected across much of Victoria this spring, now is the time to prepare.

CO Heffernan said the best way to prepare now is to attend a Get Fire Ready event this October, speak with your local brigade, understand your risk, and make sure your plan is ready before a fire starts.

"Last year, we saw 537 brigades directly engage more than 40,000 people about fire safety at Get Fire Ready events.

"This year we're hoping to increase that number."

For more information about Get Fire Ready, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/getfireready.

Local brigades will be holding Get Fire Ready events in the lead up to Summer.

As we go to print these events have been announced:

- **North Warrandyte Fire Brigade** will be holding an Open Day on Saturday, October 3, 10am–1pm
184 Research–Warrandyte Road,
North Warrandyte.
- **St Andrews Fire Brigade** will hold an Open Day on October 11, 11am–2pm
67 Caledonia Street,
St Andrews.
- **Christmas Hills CFA** will be holding an Open Evening on October 16, 5pm–9pm
720 Ridge Road,
Christmas Hills.
- **Warrandyte CFA** will be holding their Get Fire Ready event on Saturday, October 18, 10am–3pm.
2 Harris Gully Road,
Warrandyte.

Come along with the family to get bushfire safety advice, arrange a property advice visit, see inside a real fire truck, watch bushfire behaviour demonstrations, and even squirt a hose.

Investments keeping native animals and infrastructure safe

BY JAMES POYNER

FOR MANY living in Melbourne's bushy fringes, wildlife encounters are almost a daily occurrence.

While often this can be through a happy encounter with a platypus in the river, or seeing kangaroos and wombats in the State Park, modern life is pockmarked with incidents where wildlife does not interface well with humanity.

Animals injured or killed by vehicles on the road or power outages caused by animals on powerlines are an ongoing concern for communities, local councils, and government bodies, but new technologies have been developed to reduce the number of occurrences.

Possum power

As tree-climbing, tree-living marsupials, using powerlines and the roofs as highways and homes in our urban environments makes sense, but possums using powerlines can also result in power outages and wildlife deaths.

AusNet have reported that more than 10 per cent of outages across the network are caused by animals.

In 2019 and 2020, Warrandyte and surrounds suffered a spate of power outages; many at the time were attributed to possums.

A story, *Warrandyte power failures explained*, in the March 2020 *Warrandyte Diary* (Page 4) included a statement from AusNet about the success of possum guards to reduce outages caused by possums.

"From January 2019 to July 2019 there were 20 faults and following the installation of possum discs in July/August, this decreased to three faults from July 2019 to December 2019."

In 2026, AusNet has just announced the completion of a \$1.8 million wildlife protection program.

The program has delivered animal-proofing upgrades at 260 sites across Belgrave, Montrose, Warrandyte, Nilma, and Upwey, targeting one of the leading causes of electricity outages on AusNet's network.

AusNet Head of Fault Delivery, Michael Walton, said the sites were identified through analysis of areas experiencing higher-than-average levels of animal-related faults.

"By targeting these high-impact locations, we're improving reliability and reducing outages for customers in communities most affected by animal-related faults.

"These incidents can damage equipment and often require extensive repairs before power can be safely restored," said Mr Walton.

The program included:

- Protective plastic guards to prevent animals accessing powerlines.
- Rotating spinners that stop animals gaining a foothold on powerlines.
- New transformer equipment designed to discourage possums from nesting.

"This activity highlighted how smart infrastructure investments can benefit customers and create a safer environment for one of Victoria's most recognisable native species," he said.

AusNet has said it will continue monitoring network performance to measure the long-term impact of the upgrades on reliability and wildlife safety.

Mitigating road strikes

Wildlife road strikes can be devastating for both road users and animals.

As part of their submission to the *Inquiry into wildlife road strikes in Victoria*, Wildlife Victoria estimated that over 10 million native animals die on Australia's roads each year, and that between 2018 and 2023, Wildlife Victoria responded to 50,000 reports of wildlife being injured or killed on Victorian roads.

Virtual fencing was seen as a possible solution to this issue, but the results have been mixed.

Wildlife volunteers conducting a trial in Anglesea, along a 12.4-kilometre stretch of road, reported that 250 kangaroos and wallabies were killed each year on the roads near Anglesea and that the trial halved that

Photo: AUSNET



Possum on a wire

number, but a three-year trial on Phillip Island between 2019 and 2022 was reported to have had no significant impact.

As part of the Jumping Creek Road upgrade, Manningham Council installed virtual fencing between Nelson Drive and the entrance to Jumping Creek Reserve.

A Council spokesperson told *MN Bulletin*:

"During the Jumping Creek Road upgrade, we've installed 20 virtual fences and six wildlife crossings.

"These help animals move safely through the area and reduce the risk of wildlife collisions.

"Every wildlife collision prevented is a better outcome for both our native animals and the people travelling on Jumping Creek Road," they said.

Manningham Council provided data to *MN Bulletin* about the number of wildlife collisions reported on Jumping Creek Road since 2016.

Since 2016, the number of collisions has been generally increasing year-on-year, peaking at 31 in 2025.

But in 2026, year to date, there have only been eight reported wildlife collisions.

While roadworks connected to the Jumping Creek Road upgrade may have impacted traffic volume, the significant reduction in collisions is promising.

Across the river, Sugarloaf Ward Councillor Kim Cope has also been advocating for virtual fencing on Nillumbik's roads.

While Manningham's data may support the effectiveness of this technology, the recommendations from a State Government Inquiry say otherwise.

Inquiry recommendations

The final report from the *Inquiry into wildlife road strikes in Victoria* was tabled in November 2025 with 18 recommendations which included:

- Making reporting of wildlife road strikes mandatory and having a single, state-wide phone number.
- A nominal voluntary contribution — via vehicle registration payments — to support wildlife volunteers.
- Better support for wildlife volunteers through funding/reimbursement, training, and a Code of Practice.

- Roadside safety protocols.
- Centralised, publicly accessible database for wildlife road strike information.
- Better planning controls to protect wildlife habitats and corridors.
- A program of major wildlife crossings.
- The State Government to develop a Wildlife Roadstrike Strategy.
- Research and trials of innovative animal detection systems, including the use of machine learning and AI tools.
- Investigate variable speed zones in known high-risk areas.
- A public education campaign on wildlife road strikes and behaviours to reduce the risk.

Of note was the recommendation not to continue the virtual fencing program — or that it be tied to the emergence of "new, more viable technologies".

Leading wildlife rescue organisations like Wildlife Victoria, RSPCA Victoria, and the Invasive Species Council welcome the recommendations of mandatory reporting of wildlife road strikes.

The RSPCA in a statement released in July 2026 said:

"Under Victoria's Road Safety Act 1986, motorists are required to stop and render assistance to owned animals including domestic pets and agricultural livestock, but the legislation does not extend to native wildlife or invasive animal species."

Mandatory reporting of wildlife road strikes would significantly improve outcomes for injured animals, reduce preventable wildlife deaths, provide a clearer picture of where interventions are needed, and help track and manage the impact of invasive animal species like deer on road users."

Comprehensive data collection from reporting would also support road safety outcomes for all users by helping government agencies and road managers identify high-risk locations and invest in targeted solutions that protect both wildlife and motorists."

The data could also be used to identify invasive species hotspots and help state and local governments and other land managers reduce their impact."

The State Government has not yet responded to the Inquiry's recommendations.

New laws making it flipping difficult

SENIORS MATTER

BY CATHY OLIVER

D'YOU RECALL the children's song, *There's a hole in my bucket?*

My life at the Retirement Village for over 55s has been rather like that over the past few months.

It's been my fault; well, partially.

You see, before coming here, I liked to flip houses.

So, I thought it could be a fun idea to try the same here.

It would be a win-win situation, as the Village would see a unit or two renovated, and I would have a creative interest and make a modest income from a small profit for my labour.

But recently, it has become far more complicated than I could ever have imagined, thanks to two lots of new government legislation, necessary passages of time, a death, consequential probate, indecisions, and ever-dwindling funds!

How did it start?

No doubt that I could improve on my lot, both figuratively and literally.

With tradies' help, around this time last year I did up a nice unit with a lovely outlook onto the lawn, trees, pond, and fountain.

Nothing wrong with it that a little TLC and imagination wouldn't fix.

All good, ticks all around.

Come mid-Autumn, I thought to sell it and move on to another.

That was where the "There's a hole in my bucket" mantra began.

Because on April 14, Parliament passed new Housing legislation that would come into effect from May 1.

Photo: PIXABAY.COM



This required new Management Agreements in Retirement Villages to be drawn up for future sales.

It would add time, maybe months.

How to fix it?

The minimum time for such Agreements is 21 days before signing is allowed, plus a seven-day cooling-off period, and then settlement.

Plus, of course, standard lawyers' turnarounds.

The straw to fix the hole was too long!

So, I rethought, and rethought again, ever my downfall. I had done such a pleasing job on my little place that I resold it to myself and took it off the market.

That had to be the axe that cut the straw.

Oh Liza, what a suggestion!

Then, quite quickly, an affordable unit became available as a resident went into Care.

My renovating ambitions grew strong again.

I expressed interest and listed my place once more.

It's now mid-Winter: I didn't expect much reaction.

But happily, my earlier purchaser returned!

However, once again new legislation would come into effect on September 1, meaning new Management Agreements, and with them new waiting periods of 21 days and seven days' cooling-off before any settlements could be thought of.

That blunted the axe somewhat.

My buyer too wanted a quick result.

How could I sharpen the axe to make it happen for him without committing to anywhere myself?

It might just be possible.

But then timelines meant the whetstone I considered was rather too dry!

Poor Henry!

But then calamity!

The poor person who owned the unit I was interested in passed away.

These things do happen in Retirement Villages, but I was stunned.

The estate went into probate.

So now I needed water to whet the stone rather urgently.

I had little choice but to look at another unit which is, to be honest, a little dear for me.

Or take an extended open-ended holiday while I wait for Probate to clear.

Me and my smart plans!

How confusing it has been for everyone.

Anyone looking on might easily see I still have a huge hole in my bucket!

ABOUT CATHY

Cathy moved into retirement living in 2024.

Each month, she documents the ups and downs of life in her community.

The views expressed in this column are those of the writer and may not reflect the position of the editorial team.

Homeopathy: did it ever really go away?

WELLNESS

BY MAREE ZIMNY

HAVE YOU EVER wondered how often things come full circle?

I do.

Something can fall out of favour, sit quietly in the background for years, and then another generation starts looking at it again with fresh eyes.

Homeopathy seems to be one of those things.

You may already use it, have a few little remedies tucked away at home, or perhaps you have heard the word and assumed it was herbal medicine.

What surprised me when I looked more closely was how much of its history, we seem to have forgotten.

Homeopathy is more than 200 years old.

At one time there were homeopathic doctors, pharmacies, medical colleges, and hospitals.

Its story begins with German doctor Samuel Hahnemann in the late 1700s, when medicine looked rather different.

Bloodletting, purging and substances we would consider highly toxic today were accepted treatments.

Hahnemann questioned some of those practices and developed an approach around "like cures like".

And no, homeopathy is not simply herbs.

Remedies can begin with plants, minerals, and other substances, then undergo repeated dilution and shaking, traditionally called succussion.

At higher potencies, the dilution can become so great that molecules of the original substance are no longer expected to remain.

Which raises the obvious question: how could that possibly work?

Science does not currently have an accepted mechanism explaining how highly diluted homeopathic preparations could produce specific effects.

Australia's most recent government review found little to no benefit over placebo for most of the outcomes it

assessed, with evidence ranging from moderate to very low certainty.

Yet homeopathy never completely disappeared, and the buildings themselves tell part of the story.

Liverpool's Hahnemann Hospital and Dispensary opened in 1887, and the building still stands today.

In Washington, the Library of Congress holds an early twentieth-century photograph catalogued simply as "Homeopathic hospital".

Here in Melbourne, a Homeopathic Hospital was opened on St Kilda Road in 1885 and operated under that name until 1934, when it became Prince Henry's Hospital.

These were not simply little back-room practices.

Homeopathy once had institutions.

Then medicine changed dramatically.

Anaesthesia, antibiotics, imaging, laboratory medicine and increasingly sophisticated surgery transformed healthcare and saved countless lives.

I would not want to be without them for the times when natural approaches aren't enough.

But homeopathy moved largely outside mainstream hospitals and medical education, while families and practitioners continued using it.

It is still practised and taught in Australia today.

I use it on myself when I feel it is appropriate, and my pets see an integrative vet who specialises in homeopathy, acupuncture and other modalities.

And I certainly do not see it as replacing everything modern medicine offers.

If I break my leg, please take me for an X-ray and put the bone back where it belongs.

What interests me is why homeopathy has remained meaningful to people for more than two centuries, even as conventional evidence reviews remain unconvinced.

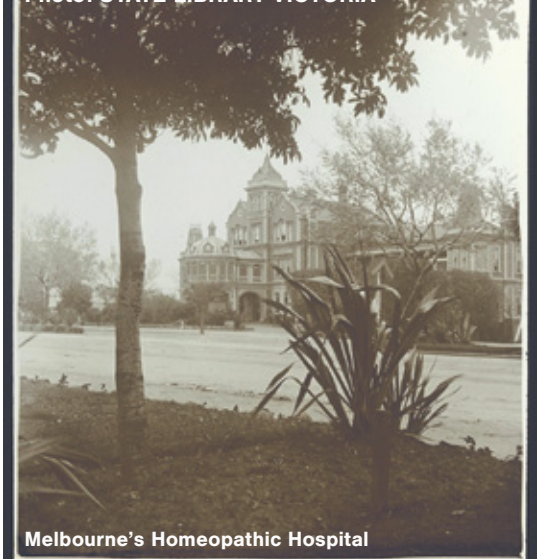
There may not be one answer.

Some people believe the remedies themselves have helped them.

Natural recovery, expectations, feeling heard, family tradition, and simply wanting another possibility may also play a part.

Age itself is neither evidence for something nor

Photo: STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA



Melbourne's Homeopathic Hospital

evidence against it.

Each approach deserves examination on its own merits.

Not blind belief.

Not automatic dismissal.

Sometimes it is worth looking again at what we left behind, and deciding for ourselves what, if anything, still belongs.

ABOUT MAREE

Maree runs The Relief Clinic to provide online coaching and mentoring for stress, anxiety and burnout, which is almost standard in today's busy world. Find her at facebook.com/thereliefcliniconline.

The views expressed in this column are those of the writer and may not reflect the position of the editorial team.

Lights, camera... Thank you!



Photo: ROGER KNIGHT



WITH glorious sunshine and perfect conditions, the Diamond Creek Rotary Town Fair was a marked success.

Our theme for the Grand Parade was "Lights, Camera, Action" and our community brought some of this cinematic magic, dressing up as some of their favourite characters from film and TV.

With music, local stalls, and other entertainment and activities on offer, the 2026 festival was a fantastic example of what makes Diamond Creek a great place to live.

To the people of Diamond Creek, we thank you!

You showed up.

You joined in.

You made it memorable.

A big shout out too to our volunteers, stallholders, performers, supports, and major sponsors — these things do not happen without you!

From all of us at the Rotary Club of Diamond Creek — thank you for being part of the show!

A selection of photos from the day have been printed on pages 14 and 15, do you recognise yourself in any of them?

What was your favourite memory from the day?

ABOUT DIAMOND CREEK ROTARY

Diamond Creek Rotary is a vibrant community organisation dedicated to making a positive impact locally and globally.

Through service projects, local events, and community initiatives, we strive to support those in need and foster goodwill and friendship.

These projects aim to enrich the local community.

Its members are passionate, motivated people from all walks of life, united by a common goal: to create lasting change in our community and beyond. Join us as we work together to make a difference!

To learn more, visit diamondcreekrotary.org.au.

Diamond Creek
Rotary
Town Fair

THANK YOU TO OUR
MAJOR SPONSORS

Photo: ROGER KNIGHT

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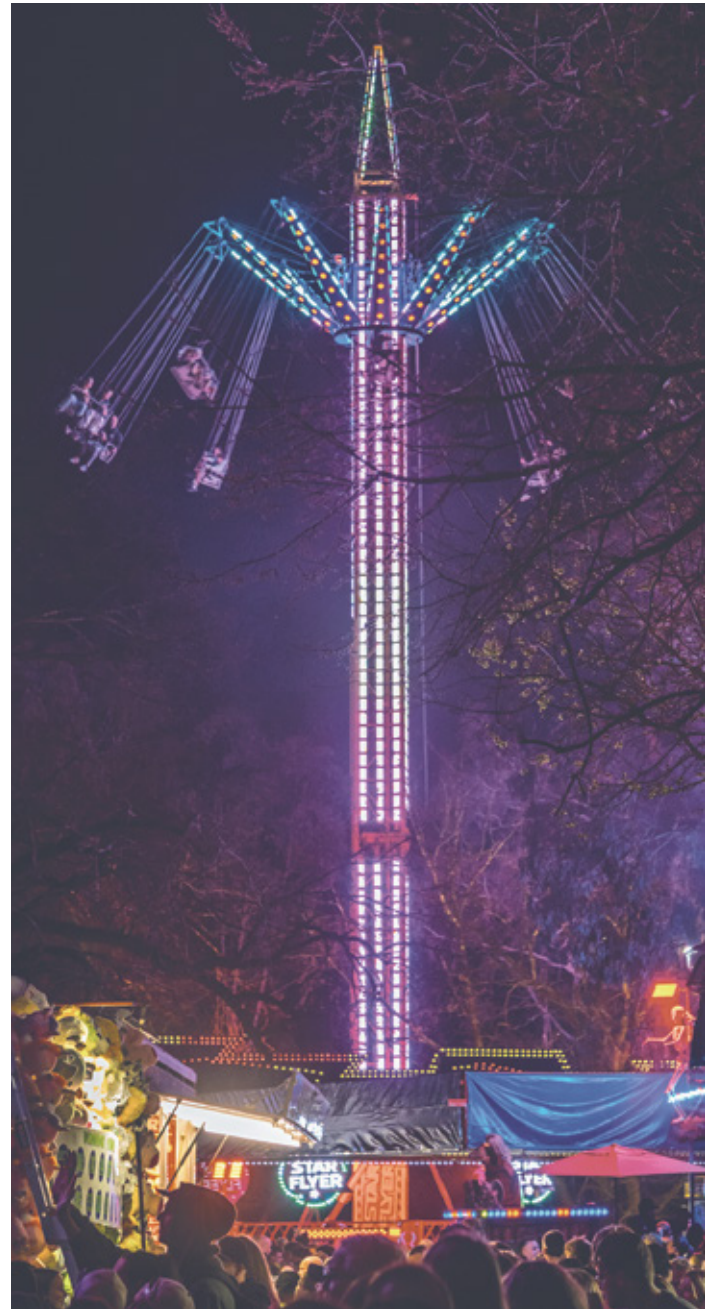
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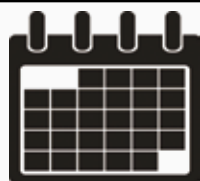
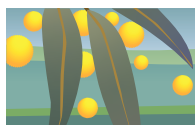


All the fun of the Fair!



Photos: ROGER KNIGHT





Want to see your event in Out & About?

The *M&N Bulletin* Out & About Guide is your chance to tell our readers about your community event or celebration. Scan the QR code or visit warrandytediary.com.au/submit-a-story to get your event in our next edition.

All entries appearing in this guide are subject to approval by the *M&N Bulletin* team and submission of an event does not guarantee publication. Entries appearing in this edition are correct at time of publication and may be subject to change. Always confirm details with the event host before booking/attendance.



Brain training

Tuesday, September 22, 11am–12pm

Warrandyte Library

168 Yarra Street

Warrandyte

Whether you want to sharpen your cognitive skills, learn a new language or simply play games online, we'll show you a variety of online sites and apps you can use free of charge to train your brain. Free event, register online at wml.vic.gov.au.

Warrandyte Historical Society 2026 Annual General Meeting

Sunday, October 4, 2pm–4pm

Warrandyte Cricket Club

Taroona Avenue

Warrandyte

The AGM will be followed by a presentation about the history of the Warrandyte Cricket Club, by Steve Pascoe and John Chapman. Established in 1855, WCC is one of the oldest cricket clubs in Australia, so you are sure of a fascinating talk. Please obtain a FREE TICKET via trybooking.com/DOYBB.

Supporting Community through Different Stages of Life — Grief & Loss

Monday, October 5, 11:30am–1pm

Warrandyte Neighbourhood House

1/168 Yarra Street

Warrandyte

Grief is a natural response to change, not only the loss of a person, but also the loss of roles, routines, health, independence, or identity. In later life, people often face several transitions at once, and it can feel overwhelming. Explore how grief shows up, adjusting to a new phase of life and staying connected. Registration costs \$5, visit wnh.org.au.

Elder Abuse Community Education Forum

Tuesday, October 6, 10am–12pm

Manningham Uniting Church

109 Wood Street

Templestowe

Learn to recognise different forms of abuse, identify the warning signs. Connect with the right supports including Doncare's new Champions for Seniors Elder Abuse Program. Presented by Doncare, with support from Eastern Community Legal Centre. Register now: call 9856 1536 or email SSP@Doncare.org.au.

I am Woman — Celebrating World Menopause Day Fundraiser

Friday, October 9, 10am,

and Thursday, October 15, 7pm

Templestowe Bowling Club

1 Swilk Street

Templestowe

Be motivated by Susan Gianevsky. This practical talk will inspire you to feel healthy, focused, strong and beautiful. Learn ways to restore your skin, hormones, weight, and sleep. This event is a donation directly to Doncare. To book your seat visit trybooking.com/DPDWX. Walk-ins welcome.

Try Bowls

Sunday, October 11, 2pm–4pm

Monday, October 19, 2pm–4pm

Donvale Bowls Club

Corner Reynolds and Springvale Roads

Donvale

Bowls is a game for all community members regardless of your ability. At Donvale you will meet other like minded community members who are embracing the opportunity to make new friends and enjoy the club's surroundings in Mullum Mullum Reserve.

Climate Cafe: Talking to Children About Climate Change

Thursday, September 24, 7:30pm–9pm

Platform 3095

965 Main Road

Eltham

Come and hear local psychologist Dr Aimee Maxwell explore how children understand climate change at different developmental stages and what helps them process difficult information. Learn about ways of talking with children and young people that are truthful, emotionally containing and age-appropriate. Further details at nillumbikclimateactionteam.org/ncat-climate-cafe.

Bella & Rami book launch

Saturday, September 26, 5pm–6:30pm

Elthambookshop

10 Arthur Street

Eltham

Join local author Isobel de Border with former Miss Universe Australia, Beverley Pinder OAM, for the launch of *Bella & Rami*: an epic romance based on a true story. Entry \$35 includes the book (or voucher), warm chai, Indian treats, and henna artist at the event. To book call Elthambookshop: 03 9439 8700

Come and Try Pickleball

Sunday, October 18 and Sunday, October 25,

1pm–5pm

Panton Hill Tennis & Pickleball Club

20 Bishops Road

Panton Hill

Want to try the fastest-growing sport in the world? You can get started in pickleball without any previous experience! Social tennis is also available. Come and have a hit of tennis, pickleball, or both! Pickleball equipment is supplied. Light refreshments will be available. We are an inclusive, social club and welcome all new players and members! Contact Janice: 0458 910 396

ConnectiviTea

Wednesdays, Weekly, 10am–1pm

2 Flodden Way

Briar Hill

Salvation Army Welfare Program. Company, free toastie, and hot cuppa. Free Food Bank.

Run for the Furies

Sunday, October 25, from 7am

Eltham North Adventure Playground Reserve

Wattletree Road

Eltham North

By signing up to Run For The Furies, every step supports those who protect our community. This is a chance to show up for the people who show up for us — in fires, emergencies, and the moments no one else can step into. Funds raised help support equipment, training, and vital resources for our local Research and Kangaroo Ground CFA firefighters. Registrations open at: runforthefuries.com.au. Get involved, get moving, and help us make a real difference.

Shaun Tan book launch

Sunday October 26, 3pm–4:30pm

Elthambookshop

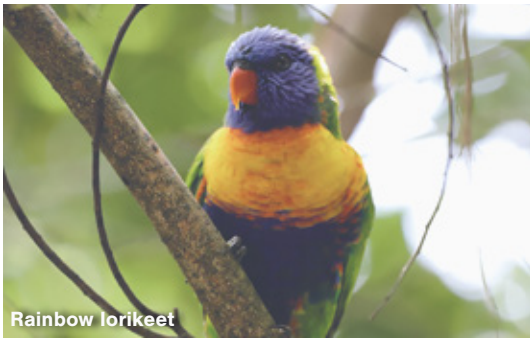
10 Arthur Street

Eltham

Masterly writer, thinker, illustrator Shaun Tan celebrates his new book *Hometown*, a graphic novel about a girl trying to find her place in the world (not just this one). Early bookings are essential: Call 03 9430 8700 or visit elthambookshop.com.au/c/our-author-events to book online.

Turn your eyes to the skies

Get your binoculars out for the Aussie Bird Count



Rainbow lorikeet



Pied Currawong



Superb Fairy-wren

WORDS AND PICTURES BY SANDI MILLER

THE AUSSIE BIRD Count is back for 2026, BirdLife Australia's national snapshot of how our feathered friends are faring across the country.

Last year, 64,000 people counted more than five million birds — now it's time to do it again.

BirdLife Australia want your help to make this year's Count the biggest yet.

From October 19 to 25, you can spend 20 minutes watching, counting, and enjoying the birds in your favourite outdoor spot.

Manningham and Nillumbik have some great spots to birdwatch, from the banks of the Yarra River, the slopes of Mt Lofty, Westerfolds, Alistar Knox Park, Bunjil Reserve, or Ruffey Lake, along the Diamond Creek Trail, to school grounds, backyards, balconies, and pocket parks.

Sean Dooley, BirdLife Australia's self-proclaimed Chief

Bird Nerd, said it's a great way to discover your local birds, connect with nature, and feel great knowing your sightings are contributing to citizen science.

Register today and start getting ready to count!

Spend some time getting to know the birds in your area and invite your friends and family to join in so you have more eyes (and ears) helping you spot birds during Count week.

"You don't need to be a bird expert to join the Count — it's fun, easy, and for everyone!" said Sean.

The Aussie Bird Count App provides an easy way to register your sightings, and even has a built-in bird identification guide.

"Our free app will guide you every step of the way, so all you need is 20 minutes and a little curiosity.

"You'll discover the birds around you, connect with nature and feel great knowing your sightings are

contributing to citizen science," he said.

Sean said this year's Count is occurring at a challenging time for Australia's birds as many face the new threat of H5 bird flu.

"Our birds need a bird-loving community now more than ever.

"We need them too, because watching birds brings us joy and gives us hope, which we all need right now.

"We can all play our part by being mindful of the signs of H5 bird flu, especially in waterbirds, seabirds and birds of prey."

If you do find a sick bird, make sure to avoid any contact, record the location and details, and report what you've seen to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Head to aussiebirdcount.org.au to download the app and get some birdwatching tips.



Join us...

As we celebrate 80 years of Sunday School at Warrandyte Gospel Chapel, now Warrandyte Community Church

Sunday 4th October, 2026 at 10am



Do you recognise any of these Sunday School kids from 1976?
If so, please email bulletin@warrandytediary.com.au

CHRISTMAS

THROUGHOUT DECEMBER AT FONDATA 1872

NOW TAKING BOOKINGS FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS FUNCTIONS THROUGHOUT DECEMBER AT FONDATA 1872

To book visit our website or call our reservations team

fondata1872.com 9712 0742 fondata1872
 150 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd, Kangaroo Ground

Wayne's dingo pack just got bigger

WORDS AND PICTURES BY BILL McAULEY

WAYNE O'DONOVAN is a keen E-board rider; he's been whizzing around bushy tracks near Melbourne since he took up the sport last year.

Unfortunately, about three months ago, the 68-year-old warrior took a spill from his E-board and badly broke his hip.

After nine weeks in hospital and rehab, he returned to his Christmas Hills self-built mud brick house that has been his home for over 40 years mud brick home where he keeps his five dingos.

"I was introduced to Dingos when I roamed on a spiritual quest through Arnhem Land way back in the 80s," says Wayne.

"I want to breed Dingos so I can help maintain the purity of the species."

Breeding dingos is a passion with Wayne, but this year he had no breeding program in place.

It was a wonderful surprise when he returned home, went out to his dingo enclosure, and discovered that three brand-new dingo puppies had been born in his absence.

"It was a totally inexplicable shock," said Wayne, "the trouble was, they were so damned cute I had to totally embrace them."

"The pups will be totally socialised by the time they are ready for a new loving home," said Wayne.

"Dingo owners need to be fully committed, and I'm hoping to find them excellent homes."

"Otherwise, I'll just keep them!"



On being grateful for the old shady tree

VIEW FROM THE 'BRIDGE'

WORDS AND PICTURES BY STEVEN KATSINERIS

"Take life day by day and be grateful for the little things. Don't get stressed over what you can't control." — Anon.

IT WAS A HOT summer's morning as I arrived early for my appointment time at the medical centre knowing it's often a very busy place.

I'd hoped to get a parking spot under a shady tree and wait in the car and quietly read some of my book before my doctor called me in.

When I got there the car park was full, except for one spot under a large Gum Tree.

Unluckily for me the space was on the sunny side of the tree leaving my car in the heat of the sun.

Still, I thought I'll make the best of that situation and manage okay.

I put down the car's sun visors and opened all the windows as there was a light cool breeze blowing.

Just as I picked up my book and settled comfortably in my seat to read, the man in the car next to mine started the engine of his huge ute.

This was obviously to run the air-conditioning in his car.

Any chance of peace and calm was shattered by the very loud noise of this car, which sounded like I'd parked beside a big truck.

Not only was it deafening, but the diesel fumes from the vehicle had me gasping for fresh air, so I had to quickly wind up all the windows.

I sat for a moment wondering what to do now, as it would soon be getting hot in my car.

I didn't want to put on my air conditioner due to the fumes from car next door to me.

And there would still be the deafening engine racket.

I looked around for another place I might fit in to park my car.

But there were still no empty spaces.

I also thought of asking the man parked near me to turn off his engine.

But on such a hot day I didn't think that he'd want to do that.

Fortunately, at that moment a lady walked out of the medical centre to her car that was positioned under a

big, old tree.

I was a bit surprised at this and hesitated for a minute as if I couldn't believe my luck.

I thought maybe she's just going to wait in her car or collect something from it.

But she did indeed get into her car and leave.

I quickly started my car and moved to the shaded spot under the big tree.

As I stopped my car, I felt a sense of relief for that old tree being there.

It was a cool and beautiful spot with the tree surrounded by several other bushes and grasses.

I was able to put my windows down again and had the light fresh breeze blowing through the car.

The lush green view in front of me added to the serenity and calm.

So I was able to sit and read a couple of the Ernest Hemingway short stories in peace and shade.

There were many people waiting outside the medical centre, so it was a long time before I got to see my doctor.

This made me very appreciative for that large, shady tree being there, so I was able to stay sheltered and cool out of the heat of the sun.

It also made me reflect that I should be more thankful for these seeming small and simple, but important things in life that really help us get through our days.

It is often these sorts of little things that we overlook and take for granted, yet they make our daily lives easier and more pleasant.

And that's something to be very grateful for.

I know this shady tree made a difference to my day.

These events are particularly welcome when we are struggling to cope with things in life.

ABOUT STEVEN

Steven is a resident in Hurstbridge with an interest in establishing an equilibrium between the humans and the animals living in the bushy hills and valleys of the Nillumbik Green Wedge.

Each month, he offers us whimsical insights and life experiences about his interactions with local flora and fauna.

The views expressed in this column are those of the writers and may not reflect the position of the Editorial team.



Strength in numbers

WEDGE TALK



BY KARL JUST AND VICKY SHUKUROGLOU

DURING THE Cretaceous Period — over 100 million years ago — the ancestors of modern ants evolved and diversified with the explosive rise of flowering plants.

Terrestrial ecosystems were transformed, new food sources and habitats developed, and, in turn, new opportunities emerged for the animals and plants that depended on them.

Today, ants occur on every continent except Antarctica. More than 14,000 species have been described worldwide, but the true number is likely considerably higher.

Their success is extraordinary: a 2022 global estimate suggested that there may be 20 quadrillion ants alive at any one time, with a combined dry biomass greater than that of all wild birds and mammals combined.

For animals so small, their ecological influence is immense.

Australia has an exceptional diversity.

More than 1,300 species have been formally described, while several thousand more are thought to remain unnamed.

The continent supports more than 100 genera, ranging from familiar meat ants and bull ants to tiny species that spend most of their lives hidden in soil, litter, or rotting timber.

The wet tropics of northern and north-eastern Australia host the greatest diversity of ant genera, yet the highest concentration of individual species is often found in the arid and semi-arid interior.

In some places, well over 100 species co-exist within a single hectare.

Compared to almost any plant community, this concentration of diversity is astonishing — and very few other Australian animal groups can match it on such a small scale.

So many closely related species can coexist because they specialise in remarkably different aspects of the environment.

Some forage on the ground, some in trees and others below the soil surface.

They eat different foods, use different nesting sites and are active at different times.

Some prefer the cool of the morning, while heat specialists take over during the hottest part of the day, and nocturnal species emerge after sunset.

By partitioning space, food, and time, a great many species can coexist within the same landscape.

From alpine areas blanketed by winter snow to the continent's sun-baked deserts, ants cycle nutrients, disperse seeds, turn and aerate the soil, consume dead organisms and provide food for many other animals.

Their nests transform soil structure and chemistry, creating localised patches with distinct moisture and nutrient conditions.

These tiny creatures are profound and finely-tuned ecosystem engineers.

Much of their success, particularly in Australia's dry and unpredictable environments, comes from their complex social organisation.

A mature colony typically contains one or more reproductive queens and a vast population of female workers.

Males are usually produced for mating rather than retained as permanent members of the colony.

Depending on the species, a colony may contain a few dozen ants or many thousands, and in some cases far more.

It's the workers we most often encounter: searching for food, maintaining the nest, tending larvae, and defending the colony.

Take a walk through almost any patch of Australian

Photos: VICKY SHUKUROGLOU



Tawny-legged Jack Jumper ant



Imperial hairstreak butterfly and larvae and ants on wattle

bushland and before long you are likely to find one moving purposefully across the ground.

Collectively, these workers process enormous quantities of organic material, including dead insects, animal remains, fruit, and seeds.

Many Australian wattles and other plants have recruited ants into their life cycles.

Their seeds carry a small, nutrient-rich structure known as an elaiosome, which is highly attractive to ants.

Workers carry the seed back to the nest, remove and eat the elaiosome, and discard the intact seed underground or in nearby refuse chambers.

This process, known as myrmecochory, benefits the plant in several ways.

The seed is moved away from the parent plant, is hidden from many seed predators, and placed in soil where it may be better protected from extreme conditions.

Burial can also position the seed favourably for later germination, including after fire.

For the ant, the reward is a convenient package of fats and other nutrients.

It is a beautifully simple exchange, repeated millions of times across the landscape.

Ants are a foundational energy source for Australian wildlife.

In arid and semi-arid areas, the iconic Thorny Devil feeds almost exclusively on them, devouring thousands of small ants a day.

Similarly, the short-beaked echidna uses its specialised snout to excavate nests, leaving behind tell-tale diggings that remind us a colony is never an isolated community — it is a concentrated powerhouse of energy supporting animals vastly larger than itself.

Beyond predators, ants form intricate partnerships with

butterflies (a phenomenon known as myrmecophily).

Several native species depend so tightly on specific ants that they could not survive without them.

A well-known example is the Eltham Copper Butterfly, which lays its eggs near the nests of *Notoncus* ants.

While the butterfly larvae feed on sweet bursaria plants by night, the ants guard them from predators.

In return, the ants feed on the caterpillar's sugary, nutrient-rich secretion.

During the day, the caterpillars rest safely within the ant nest.

Other local specialists include the Large Ant-blue sheltered by aromatic Coconut Ants, and the Stencilled Hairstreak attended by Meat Ants.

These intimate bonds occur across the continent, and reveal how losing a single, inconspicuous ant species can trigger a collapse for the butterflies that depend on them.

As ants respond to changes in weather, vegetation, fire, grazing, and soil disturbance, they help us read ecological conditions.

Next time you see a worker ant crossing a track or disappearing into a nest, pause for a closer look.

That individual is part of a highly organised society and a network of ecological relationships reaching far beyond the nest.

Our bushland would be profoundly different without them.

ABOUT KARL AND VICKY

Karl Just And Vicky Shukuroglou are members of Nillumbio, a community organisation advocating for indigenous biodiversity.

The views expressed in this column are those of the writers and may not reflect the position of the Editorial team.

Are ballooning PC component costs leading to the death of the casual gamer?



BY SAM BROWN

I THOUGHT it was a joke.

A popular online PC business that specialises in gaming rigs is asking \$25,000 for the latest prebuilt gaming machine with all the bells and whistles.

\$25,000!

You could buy a brand-new car for that.

And I knew then we were in the midst of something very strange that threatens the entire viability of a hobby that millions of casual gamers around the globe enjoy daily.

To be sure, the prebuilt beast sported the most powerful graphics card currently available, 64GB of fast RAM and a state-of-the-art motherboard.

It was no doubt one of the best of its kind available.

And you will need such a machine if you plan to game stutter-free in the latest aviation or graphics-intensive titles.

But the thing that really got me was that a similar or even higher-spec machine — maxed out in every way to satiate the appetite of the gaming gods — just a couple of years ago would have set you back around \$7,000.

So I thought: “How did it come to this?”

I know the root cause is the explosion of AI centres hoovering up all the available computer memory and chips they can get their hands on — leaving precious little for other sectors.

Hence a severe shortage of components needed to make graphics cards, memory, and other PC components.

If you're a casual gamer, next time you ask your favourite AI buddy to do something, think about that — quite apart from all the other social, environmental, and infrastructure implications that come with AI centres.



At the very least, you'll get a harsh lesson in real-world consequences when you come to upgrade because your three-year-old machine no longer cuts it in the latest racing title.

But it was when I checked individual component parts that I was truly stunned.

The latest graphics card, if you can get your hands on it, will currently cost you over \$8,000 — and prices for all graphics cards are almost certainly on the rise.

RAM, which is essential for graphics-intensive games, is equally stunning: around \$5,000 will get you a moderate amount without going over the top.

Right there is a large part of the reason that PC online businesses are asking for so much money.

Make no mistake: these are stupid, offensive prices — akin more to scalping than reflecting honest supply chain costs.

Even if you could afford these prices — and many can't — it becomes a matter of principle to reject such naked profiteering.

To protest by keeping your wallet firmly shut.

For the only thing profiteering companies and their enablers understand is the language of falling sales.

But the true irony is that, at the same time, software studios — particularly those simulating aviation, such as DCS and Microsoft — are releasing titles that increasingly demand the latest technology, and the ability of casual gamers to afford said technology is in steep decline.

Unless something changes, the AI bubble bursts, or some breakthrough technology suddenly emerges to break the stranglehold, I fear we are witnessing the eclipse of the casual gamer.

ABOUT SAM

Sam Brown is a Warrandyte writer with journalism, military and Commonwealth agency experience.

He loves history and has been playing computer simulations for more than 20 years.

The views expressed in this column are those of the writers and may not reflect the position of the Editorial team.

Local early learning centre is top of the class

BY SUSAN FOREMAN

AN EARLY LEARNING centre in Doncaster has achieved an Exceeding rating across the board, following assessment by the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority.

Inspire Early Learning Journey Doncaster was assessed in seven quality areas, as outlined by the National Quality Standard.

The standard is part of the National Quality Framework, which provides a national approach to regulation, assessment, and quality improvement for early childhood education and care and out-of-school care services across Australia.

Brian Hammett, Director of Compliance and Business Support at Inspire Early Learning Journey, said the rating means Inspire Doncaster is one of approximately 323 active long day care services, out of the 1,700 across Greater Melbourne, that have achieved the rating.

Doncaster Campus Director Liya Li said the result recognised the commitment shown by the entire Inspire Early Learning Journey Doncaster team and the strong relationships developed with children and families.

“While the rating is a wonderful recognition, what makes us most proud is the care, consistency, and genuine relationships our team brings to children and families every day,” Ms Li said.

“This achievement belongs to every member of our Doncaster team and reflects the shared effort taking place throughout the service, in every room and in every role.

“We would also like to thank our families for their ongoing trust, feedback and support throughout this journey, because their partnership remains an important part of everything we do.”

The achievement recognises the collective contribution of the educators, teachers, campus leadership, and

support team at Inspire Early Learning Journey Doncaster, who work together to provide children with a safe, welcoming and meaningful early learning experience.

Inspire Early Learning Journey noted the assessment outcome was an important milestone, but its focus would remain on continuous improvement and maintaining high-quality practice beyond the assessment and rating visit.

The Doncaster team will now build upon the strengths recognised through the assessment while continuing to listen to children, families, educators and the wider community.

For the team, the Exceeding rating is both a celebration of what has been achieved and a commitment to continue delivering high-quality education and care for Doncaster families.

New study examining lifestyle and gut health

BY SUSAN FOREMAN

RESEARCHERS at RMIT are exploring the relationship between diet, lifestyle, and the gut microbiome, and they are looking for Australian-born adults aged 65 to 75 to participate.

The research is being conducted by PhD candidate Prasani Wickrama, under the supervision of RMIT researcher and dietitian Dr Sharayah Carter.

The study aims to better understand how diet and lifestyle are associated with the gut microbiome.

Dr Carter told *MN Bulletin* about the purpose of the study.

“The gut microbiome has become an important area of

research because of its associations with many aspects of health.

“However, our understanding of how factors such as diet, lifestyle, and where we have lived throughout our lives may shape the gut microbiome is still developing,” says Dr Carter.

While the finished study will have comparisons of adults from different backgrounds living in Melbourne, the research team is currently focused on finding Australian-born 65-75-year-olds to ensure the group is well represented.

Participation can largely be completed from home.

Participants complete a small number of surveys about their diet and lifestyle, provide a stool sample using a

collection kit supplied by the research team, and have a blood test at a local pathology collection centre.

As part of the study, participants receive an individual assessment of their diet, lifestyle and gut microbiome.

Participants also receive a \$30 gift voucher in recognition of their time.

“Community participation makes research like this possible,” says Dr Carter.

“We would love to hear from Melburnians aged 65 to 75 who are interested in learning more about the study and potentially taking part.”

Those interested can contact the RMIT research team via s4146270@student.rmit.edu.au

Who's your favourite brew?

Photos: PIXABAY.COM



BY JAMES POYNER AND SANDI MILLER

THE *MANNINGHAM & Nillumbik Bulletin* love supporting local business and so have launched our Community Choice Awards.

Each month we will ask our readers to nominate their favourite local places: restaurants, gift shops, function venues, hairdressers, and more.

This month we want to know about your favourite café.

This is your chance to give them some love in the *MN Bulletin* Community Choice Awards.

Nominate a coffee shop in Manningham or Nillumbik as your bean outlet of choice, and the café with the most votes will be named the Bulletin's Community Choice Café for 2026.

Voting is simple, head to the website below and tell us who is the best barista in the area, and why you love their brew.

Or is it something else about it you love, is it the views, the food, the vibe?

Tell us all about it, and give your barista bragging rights, and the chance to win a free half-page ad in a future

edition of the *MN Bulletin*.

Voting closes at 5pm on Monday October 5, 2026.

One verified vote is permitted per person, and nominated cafés must have a physical location within Manningham or Nillumbik.

The café receiving the highest number of valid votes will be named the *MN Bulletin* Community Choice Café.

For café owners, the more votes you get, the better your chance to win!

Cut out our ad (below) and stick it in your window.

Entry is free.



MANNINGHAM & NILLUMBIK

bulletin

Community Choice

CAFÉ



Nominate your favourite Café in the Manningham & Nillumbik Council Areas
for the Community Choice Awards

The winner will be **announced and featured** in the next edition of the M&N
Bulletin and will receive a **free half-page advertisement!**

Visit warrandytediary.com.au/communitychoice or scan the QR code to vote

Voting closes 5pm Monday October 5, 2026



Family fun at the Nillumbik Pet Expo



COUNCIL'S longest running event, the Nillumbik Pet Expo, returns in October.

Highlights include displays and demonstrations; barking dog advice; nutrition and grooming tips; obedience training, and cat enrichment ideas.

Children are well catered for with face painting, entertainment, reptile education (snake safety), plus pony rides.

Animal rescue groups will also be on-site so you might meet a new family member on the day!

Bring your pets on leads along to the expo to socialise

and get plenty of pats.

A dog agility area will provide an outlet for energetic pups.

Expect a wide range of food vendors and retail stalls, and of course our popular competitions return — with some new categories this year.

Your pet can be entered to win:

- Best trick
- Best dressed
- Pet/owner lookalike
- Most unique pet and
- Crowd favourite

Some great prizes will be on offer for the winners.

Mayor Naomi Joiner said the expo is ideal for both cat and dog owners.

"We now have 24/7 cat confinement in Nillumbik, and if you're seeking advice on creating a catio, using a cat carrier or harness, or anything else related to the transition, you can chat with our friendly Community Safety team at the expo," Cr Joiner said.

Ellis Ward Councillor Peter Perkins said the Nillumbik Pet Expo has been a much-loved community event for 28 years.

"The expo has information about responsible pet ownership to help educate residents about their obligations as pet owners.

"It's also packed with activities for kids and is a great local day out for people across the Shire," Cr Perkins said.

The Nillumbik Pet Expo will be held at Marngrook Oval in Diamond Creek from 10am-4pm on Sunday, October 11.

Meet our publishing pets!

THE TEAM AT *Manningham & Nillumbik Bulletin* are not only passionate about reporting local news, they are love their animals too!

Meet Missy, our tripawd greyhound cross who has a nose for news, loves to chase a footy, but is equally chilled lounging on the sofa all day.

The *MN Bulletin's* advertising manager/administrator, shares her life with her two cats Pirate and Penny Lane.

Do you own a cat, dog, rabbit, dingo, or keep birds or fish — or perhaps all of the above?

Send in a pic of your pet and tell us about them, and we may feature them in the next edition.



Keeping your pets safe in the summer months

BY JAMES POYNER

SPENDING time outdoors in the summer months is something that both us humans and our pets enjoy.

But summer heat and bushfire — especially in the Green Edge areas of Manningham and Nillumbik — can have adverse impacts on our pets' health and the emotional wellbeing of the whole family.

A disaster plan that includes your pets

Extreme weather means we are, generally, at greater risk of being impacted by floods, storms, and bushfires.

It is becoming increasingly important for families to have some sort of bushfire or disaster plan so that the whole family knows what to do and is able to increase their chances of being safe during an emergency.

Often when we think about an emergency plan, our pets are at the bottom of the list of priorities — or their needs/restrictions are not considered.

RSPCA Victoria has information on its website about things you should consider for your household pets when preparing for an emergency and even has a printable *Emergency Action Plan* for pet owners to download and fill in.

They also provide this general advice when considering your pet's needs when emergency planning:

- Check that your pet's microchip details are current.
Go to petaddress.com.au to find which database your pet's microchip is registered to.
- Have identification tags with clear contact information ready to put on your pet.
- Have evidence of ownership, and take photos of it so you have it available on your phone — this can include adoption records, council registration and/or a photo of you and your pet together.

- Collect details about you, your pet, their vet and your emergency contact.
- Ensure you have printed and digital copies of your pet's vaccination certificates from your vet.

They also recommend you have the following items in your emergency go bag.

- A waterproof bag with your important documents and pet info, including proof of vaccinations, should they require boarding.
- Cages, crates, or containers to transport your pet.
- One week's supply of your pet's medication.
- Non-perishable food and water for several days.
- Bowls, a tin opener and spoons.
- Collar with tag.
- Treats or toys to keep them calm.
- Familiar, dry and warm bedding or blankets.
- Toileting supplies, such as a litter box, litter and scoop, poop bags, puppy pads and cleaning supplies.

They also recommend you nominate guardians who can evacuate your pet for you if needed, and to make sure they know your emergency plan.

Accommodation may also be an issue; you may not be able to take your cat or dog to the shopping centre, or to a hotel/motel.

The RSPCA recommend making sure you have a list of friends, relatives, or animal carers who will be able to accommodate your pets.

Aside from a traditional animal shelter, boutique pet carer services, such as Camp Paws — who are based in Diamond Creek — may also be able to help.

In the lead-up to the summer months, MN Bulletin spoke to Camp Paws founder Gill DeCis about the best way to care for your dog in the summer months. For many dogs, their daily highlight is "walkies".

Gill shared these tips to maximise their time outside when the mercury starts to climb.

- Walk your dog during the coolest parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening, to protect them from heat and burned paws.
- Check the pavement: Use the seven-second touch test.
Press the back of your hand or palm on the asphalt for seven seconds.
If it is too hot for your hand, it is too hot for your dog's paws.
- Bring water: Always carry a portable water bottle and a collapsible bowl.
Offer your dog frequent water breaks.
- Choose shaded paths: Stick to grassy parks, dirt trails, or tree-lined routes instead of baking concrete.
- Keep it short and slow: Reduce your walk length on hot days.
Do not force your dog to run or play fetch in high temperatures.
- Protect vulnerable skin: Apply pet-safe sunscreen to light-coloured noses, ear tips, and thin-furred areas.
- Know the warning signs: Watch out for excessive panting, heavy drooling, bright red gums, and lethargy.
Stop walking immediately if you see these signs.

While Camp Paws is based in Diamond Creek, they offer dog walking, pet sitting, and even pet hosting at locations across Melbourne; visit camppaws.com.au for more information.

Camp Paws is one of the many animal-focused businesses at the Nillumbik Pet Expo.

Camp Paws will be running the
**Camp Paws Agility
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A season for the history books

STATE MEMBER UPDATE

BY NICOLE WERNER MP,
MEMBER FOR WARRANDYTE

WHAT AN incredible season it has been for all our clubs that play in the Eastern Football and Netball League!

Across the electorate of Warrandyte, we are home to the Donvale Football and Netball Club, Park Orchards Sharks, North Ringwood Saints, Warrandyte Bloods, and Chirnside Park Panthers.

It has been an outstanding season for all of our clubs — with many teams within our local clubs taking home their premiership!

I want to use this space to properly celebrate every player, coach, volunteer, and family member who made it happen.

Let me begin where a promise was made.

Park Orchards

Earlier this year, I told the Park Orchards Football Club's Senior Women's team that if they won their third consecutive Premiership, I would give them a shoutout in Parliament.

These women have now made eight consecutive finals and claimed three premierships at the highest level of their competition.

I was proud to rise in the Victorian Parliament and place that achievement on the parliamentary record.

What made this victory a little sweeter is that every coach on the Senior Women's team is a father to one of the players.

The image of Dave Boell, Siv Panza, Wayne Taylor, Simon McAuliffe, and Greg Heymanson, running around the boundary with pride as both coaches and "girl dads" will be a standout moment for me from this season.

Congratulations are also in order for homegrown Park Orchards talent, Jorja Livingstone, who has been drafted to the Melbourne Demons — and was recently announced as a member of the VFLW Team of the Year.

The Sharks' Division 1 Reserve Men also deserve a mention following a successful Grand Final against Mitcham.

It was a close game, but the Sharks pulled ahead in the third quarter to go on and claim back-to-back premierships.

The flags are flying at Warrandyte

Warrandyte Football Club has been chasing a dream for over a decade — the triple premiership.

And in 2026, they achieved it — with all three Men's teams winning their Grand Finals.

If that was not enough, the Women's EFNL Warrandyte Red netball team and Warrandyte's YJFL Under-18 Girls also won their respective Grand Finals.

The Warrandyte Senior Women's football team also

Photo: SUPPLIED



Nicole celebrates the Warrandyte Reserve's win

made their Grand Final.

The Warrandyte community should be incredibly proud of their local footy club.

As club president for the Junior Football Club, Duncan Loydell, put it: We should have called a public holiday in town on Monday.

For a suburb of 4,200 people, that kind of achievement is nothing short of remarkable.

Donvale

The celebrations continued at Donvale, where the football club claimed the premiership against The Basin in a wonderful finish to a season that also saw their Reserves win a fourth consecutive flag.

A huge congratulations to President John Giles and his entire leadership team.

The Donvale women's netball team added to the joy by winning the Division 1 Premiership.

I know this club will be even better placed for the seasons ahead with our commitment to deliver \$350,000 in infrastructure upgrades, including \$250,000 to convert the floodlights to modern LED lighting and \$100,000 for a brand-new scoreboard.

North Ringwood

The growth of the women's program to three teams at North Ringwood Football Club is itself a landmark achievement, and the Division 3 women's team capped the season by taking home the premiership flag.

Then, it made for a brilliant sunny Sunday when both the Under-19s Men and Division 1 Seniors won the Premiership in the morning and the late afternoon.

What a brilliant day in local sport!

I am proud that a future Wilson Liberal and Nationals Government has committed \$2 million to upgrade the Quambee Reserve Pavilion in Ringwood North, delivering female-friendly change rooms, improved canteen facilities, upgraded social spaces, and additional storage for North Ringwood Football Club, the Warranwood Cricket Club, and the broader community.

These clubs have advocated for these facilities for years, and I look forward to seeing the project being delivered.

Proud to represent

I had the privilege of raising all of these achievements in a speech in the Victorian Parliament — to celebrate the incredible sportsmanship and victories across the electorate.

As the Shadow Minister for Youth, I see every day what sport does for young people in our community.

It teaches them how to win with grace and lose with dignity.

It builds the friendships that last a lifetime.

It gives a teenager somewhere to belong on a Saturday morning.

Our local sports clubs are the heart of this region, and the families, coaches, and volunteers who keep them running are the people who make Warrandyte, Park Orchards, Donvale, Ringwood North, Wonga Park, and all the suburbs in between such a wonderful place to call home.

To every player who took part this season, to every coach who gave up their weekends, and to every volunteer who made it possible: thank you.

Our electorate is so very lucky to have you.

ABOUT NICOLE

Nicole Werner is the Member for Warrandyte in the Victorian Legislative Assembly.

She can be contacted at nicolewerner.com.au.

The views in this column are those of the author and may not reflect the views or position of the editorial team.



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Pickleball among the gum trees

WORDS AND PICTURES BY SANDI MILLER

PANTON HILL Tennis and Pickleball Club has recently reopened its newly refurbished courts and is inviting the community to come and have a look.

Club Vice President and Secretary Janice Crosswhite said that two years ago, Nillumbik Council declared its playing surface to be unsafe, so the club investigated a refurbishment.

"We decided we wanted to be more multipurpose and bring in pickleball and to give the club a lift with a new opportunity for everyone — and it's been a great success."

She said prior to the refurbishment, they were losing members because of the safety concerns, but that the refurbishment has revitalised the membership.

"From about 12 members, we've now got over 70 in a space of six months, and pickleball helped a lot," she said.

The club also has many players joining from Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club as their courts have also been deemed unsafe.

Janice said the club received support from both Council and the State Government to get the funding to put in acrylic courts, with the refurbishment costing around \$600,000.

Club member Joy Cousins said she took up pickleball after injuring her ankle, as it is a much gentler way to exercise, and she admits she is addicted to the sport.

"I'm here all the time — I practically live on the courts."

"Pickleball is definitely a really fun game to play — you're not running across the court as much."

"It's a smaller court — it's so much more fun," Joy said.

The club runs casual pickleball sessions on Tuesday mornings from 9am to 11am, as well as Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons, from 3:30pm to 6pm.

And outside of those times, the courts are available for casual hire, and with the lighting system installed, the courts are also available later in the evening.

Janice said the uptake of pickleball has been great.

"Particularly with women, some of them are home with kids, or retired like me, older women, because it's a game that is easy to play."

"You don't need to have done a lot of sports in your background to pick up the small bat."

"The court is, you know, a quarter of the size of a tennis court, so you're not running and jumping."

"You're moving — you're moving forwards and backwards and sideways — but that's the good thing about it."

"Probably the hardest thing is just working out the scoring," she said.

Janice said that the club will be holding two Come-and-Try days in October.

"All equipment will be provided, as well as some light refreshments, and people can come and try tennis, or pickleball, or do both."

"Just join in, have a go, and find out what it's all about."

You can find out more at the Pantan Hill Tennis and Pickleball Club website or contact the club for more information at play.tennis.com.au/pantonhilltennisandpickleballclub

"We're in such a great spot here amongst the gum trees, we've got the birds singing, you can see the Dandenongs in the distance — it's a very comfortable and serene spot to be out exercising," Janice said.

Panton Hill Tennis and Pickleball Club will host a Come-and-Try Day on Sunday, October 18, 1pm-5pm, and Sunday, October 25, 1pm-5pm.

The club is located at 20 Bishops Road, Pantan Hill — just behind the main oval.

There is parking available but limited at the Tennis and Pickleball Club.

This article is adapted from video interviews by the *MN Bulletin* team, watch it at warrantydiary.com.au/manningham-nillumbik-bulletin-newspod.

Help get Kangaroo Ground back on court

BY SANDI MILLER

THE KANGAROO Ground Tennis club courts were condemned by Nillumbik Council in June.

Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club President Tim Miller told the *MN Bulletin* they have managed to return two courts to play.

"We needed to keep some courts open to keep the club alive," he said.

He said they were waiting on a State Government grant to help them to make the necessary renovations to the other courts, which Tim hopes will come through in the next few months.

"Our club is now faced with the enormous task of raising funds to resurface and restore the courts so our community can once again enjoy playing tennis in a safe environment," he said.

MN Bulletin asked Nillumbik Council for an update on the future of the Kangaroo Ground courts, and they issued the following response.

"Nillumbik Shire Council has been working with Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club and Tennis Victoria regarding the condition of the tennis courts. Court use has been guided by technical assessments of the courts. Two courts have recently reopened."

The club has set up a Go Fund Me page set up to raise \$55,000 to assist with the refurbishment.

Visit gofundme.com/f/wkgt-reconstruct-tennis-courts to make a donation.

Panton Hill pickleball players



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Local cricket giants unite

Donvale and Box Hill North Super Kings announce historic partnership

Photo: SANDI MILLER



John Gunn and Jamie Phillips celebrate the merger

BY PATRICK McALARY

IN A BOLD, proactive move set to reshape the eastern suburbs' sporting landscape, Donvale Cricket Club and Box Hill North Super Kings Cricket Club are joining forces.

This historic partnership bridges the gap between grassroots community cricket and elite turf competition, securing a thriving, sustainable future for local players of all generations.

Donvale's apple orchard roots

The Donvale Cricket Club was formed in 1964 when apple orchards were sold for housing development throughout the Donvale area.

The Donvale ground was part of Noonan's apple orchard and when the local council purchased it for community space in the late 1960s, two turf wickets were constructed.

This enabled the club to enter four teams in the Eastern Suburbs Cricket Association.

Since 2019 the club has played in the Victorian Sub-District Cricket Association.

Last season Donvale fielded four Saturday teams, three Sunday teams, and seven Junior sides including a team in the premier Under-15 turf competition JG Craig Shield.

Box Hill North's century of success

For more than 100 years Box Hill North has continued to evolve into a successful local cricket club and since merging with the Melbourne Super Kings in 2013, Box Hill North Super Kings has been a dominant force in Box Hill Reporter District Cricket Association (BHRDCA).

Their record over the last five years in all grades has been exceptional, culminating in winning both the McIntosh Shield and Wilson Shield's last season.

Their 2022/2023 season where all four Senior teams won premierships was a reflection of the professionalism required for success.

Being able to attract international players and coaches such as Russel Arnold, Kaushal Lokurachchi and Kaushal Silva over the years highlights their strength.

Current coach Kaushalya Weeraratne and 1st XI team member Michael Vandort have had extensive international experience and along with several other first class cricketers they are set for another big year.

Historic alliance

The strategic amalgamation combines Donvale's

established high-performance turf infrastructure and junior system with Box Hill North's fiercely loyal and passionate senior group, winning standards, rich competitive history, and vibrant multicultural community spirit.

Leaders from both clubs, John Gunn and Jamie Phillips have been very supportive of the opportunity.

Both shared the view it gives players opportunities to play at a strong level of competitive cricket, as well as getting experience from playing on turn, and getting support from more experienced players.

Both leaders believe the decision to join forces is the best for everyone, and after some strong pre-season training session, have high aspirations for the season ahead.

Club executives emphasise that the decision was made from a position of organisational strength, designed to systematically tackle the long-term challenges facing modern community sports.

By uniting under one single banner, the combined club directly addresses two critical pillars of modern cricket survival: securing elite pathways for ambitious players and building a sustainable pipeline of incoming junior talent.

Cost of living issues continue to push families further away from the inner eastern regions so acting to secure a local cricketing future within the Whitehorse and Manningham area was seen as a priority.

The club also aims to create a social environment that adds to the enjoyment of being aligned with a successful community culture.

This partnership explicitly solves one of the biggest challenges in local sport: retention and progression.

By combining forces, the clubs are offering a comprehensive cricket curriculum tailored to every stage of a cricketer's career:

- **Junior development:** Highly engaging introductory programs designed to build confidence, coordination, and a genuine love for the game.
- **Competitive Youth and Senior teams:** Clear, structured pathways flowing seamlessly from junior grades directly into senior turf and synthetic competitions.
- **Social and Veterans formats:** Dedicated, low-

pressure weekend options ensuring that cricket remains an accessible, lifelong sport for mature players.

- **A diverse community:** Merging Donvale's deep local roots with Box Hill North's rich, multicultural player base to foster an incredibly welcoming family environment.

The alliance is a massive win for local sports lovers.

By pooling their resources, expert coaching staff, and premier facilities, the clubs are breaking down barriers to participation.

Whether you are a parent looking to register a child for their very first hit, a casual weekend player seeking a social match, or an elite cricketer chasing high-level turf selection, this united entity guarantees an unbroken path forward.

The historic partnership will take full effect in the upcoming summer seasons, offering the local community an unmatched, comprehensive cricket ecosystem.

Beyond the boundary ropes, this union is about future-proofing community infrastructure.

Representatives from both clubs emphasise that the shared model will deliver enhanced training facilities, top-tier coaching resources, and a lively, family-friendly social calendar.

Come and play

For families looking for a community-first club that still offers an elite pathway, the timing could not be better.

Pre-season training is officially underway, and registrations are now open for all Junior and Senior grades.

The club is also looking to establish a strong women's presence both on and off the field so if anyone is interested in playing or supporting, they would love to hear from you.

A lot of work is going on behind the scenes from all to get a Women's team up and running.

Head down, meet the coaches, and be a part of local sporting history.

Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday Turf and Synthetic options are available.

The club is looking for players of all ages and abilities, contact the committee via bhnsccc@gmail.com or donvalesecretary@gmail.com if you would like any further information.

Rovers return to form!



Women

BY JAMES POYNER
DONCASTER Rovers Soccer Club has had a transformative year at Anderson Park.

After a strong season, both the Men and Women have secured promotion in 2027, and the U16c Girls have taken the premiership flag.

Men

The Rovers had been experiencing an average run in State League (SL) 2, which snowballed into a dismal 2025, where the Men finished bottom of the ladder after losing 16 of the 22 games and were relegated to SL3.

But in a resurgent 2026 season, they won 14 games and finished second on the ladder, securing promotion back up to SL2 for 2027.

Coach Loui Spiridis said the season has been “incredibly special” for everyone at the club.

“To achieve promotion back to SL2 is a reflection of the commitment, resilience, and belief shown by our players, coaching staff, volunteers, and everyone behind the scenes.

For me personally, promotion means so much because it represents the progress we have made together.

We set out with a clear vision, worked extremely hard, and never lost sight of where we wanted to take the senior men's program.

I'm incredibly proud of the players and how they have embraced the standards, expectations, and culture we have worked hard to create.

I would also like to sincerely thank Manningham City Council for supporting us and allowing us to play our Friday night home games.

Those nights became something really special for our club.

They brought our players, families, supporters, and wider community together and played a big part in creating the strong culture and connection that has been such an important part of our season.

A huge thank you also goes to all of our sponsors and supporters who have continued to believe in the club and support our players and senior program.

Their contribution is incredibly important, and we are genuinely grateful for everything they do for Doncaster Rovers.

Looking ahead to 2027, we know the challenge will be even greater, but that's exactly what excites us.

We want to build on what we have achieved, keep developing our players, and create a senior program the club, our supporters, sponsors, and the wider Doncaster community can be genuinely proud of.

This is only the beginning.”

Women

The development of the Women's and Girls' programs at Doncaster Rovers over the past three years has been kinetic.

In an interview with Football Victoria in 2025, Andrea Jamieson, Junior and Women's Co-ordinator, spoke about the club's return to having a Girls and Senior Women's program.



Men



Under 16c Girls

“Through our inclusive environment for Women and Girls, by season's end, we had a squad of 23 players.

“We persevered through challenges and concerns around recruitment.

“Word spread that Doncaster Rovers were building something special.”

Back in 2023, the club had just seven female players across MiniRoos and Juniors.

By 2025, Doncaster Rovers had grown to U8s, U11s, U15s, Senior Women, and Masters Women's teams.

“This isn't just a team — it's a whole-of-club culture shift,” said Jamieson.

“It's about visibility, opportunity, and creating a welcoming space for women and girls at every level of the game.”

By the time the club presented the 2026 Women's team to its members and sponsors, at a presentation night during Female Football Week, the Women were already 5-0 and sitting at the top of Women's SL5.

By season's end they were second on the ladder, winning 16 of their 18 games, a complete turnaround from 2025.

Women's Coach Elise Kyrgio said the season has been a “wonderful journey.”

The team was a combination of the youth girls who had been playing since 2023 with an influx of new players.

“The girls came together and created a family, full of love, laughter and passion for the game,” she said.

“We achieved the highest of highs and only a few lows, but ultimately this made the team so much stronger and brought everyone together in the best way possible.

It was truly an inspirational season, filled with commitment and a desire not only to win, but to be together as a community.

That's ultimately what Rovers has meant to the team, and the promotion has only added the icing on the cake.

The women look forward to continuing their journey next year, knowing that there will be challenges, but with the group that we have and the family we have created, there is no doubt this team will continue to strive and achieve success.

We all look forward to our next chapter, as there is nothing that this team can't achieve.”

Juniors

A lot of Doncaster's strength has come through an influx of passionate volunteers and the expansion of its MiniRoos, Juniors, and Girls programs.

MN Bulletin recently interviewed Andrea Jamieson and Nick Ansell about the club's junior programs; the interview can be found on the Manningham & Nillumbik NewsPod.

Jamieson told MN Bulletin the club had 14 kids' teams in 2026, all with waitlists, which was really positive for the future of the club.

With almost every team with a dedicated Coach and Assistant Coach, and Ansell providing mentorship to the coaching volunteers, the quality of soccer in the junior program is on the rise.

Jamieson said the U16c win is a testament to the commitment of players, coaches, and the club in general.

“We are so incredibly proud of this group of players, their success and the journey they have taken.

There have been changes along the way, but many of the girls who played in and won the State Final came from our original Junior Girls team, which started in February 2024 with only five players.

To witness this mixed-aged group of girls develop into a championship team, with some having never kicked a ball before, is an awesome achievement.

A huge credit to Coach Peter, who has led the team for the past two seasons, welcoming and teaching any girl who wanted to play along the way.

To the 17 Girls who played in our U16s team in Season 2026, let's do it all again next year!

Bigger and better.”

To watch the interview with Andrea Jamieson and Nick Ansell, visit warrandytediary.com.au/manningham-nillumbik-bulletin-news-pod.

Parents with kids who may be interested in the Rovers MiniRoos, Junior or High Performance programs can register their interest at doncasterrovers.org/trials-and-registration.



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