

Brown Hill Community Newsletter

Edition 43, Autumn 2025

A project of the Brown Hill Progress Association supported by the Brown Hill Community Partnership.

We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.



Brendan, Abbie and Stella, Chris, Ian and Deb, after Ian completed his 250th parkrun.
Photographer: Sarah Greenwood-Smith

Ian catches his community and achieves a parkrun milestone

What a bumper couple of months it's been in the parkrun community. It's been delightful to see so many people at parkrun over the autumn months with lots of people training for the Ballarat Marathon festival, lots of visitors, plenty of walkers and many people coming to get outside and enjoy a jog with friends and family. Well done to all those who participated in events at the Ballarat Marathon, whether it was running in an event, volunteering or being there to cheer on the runners. Seeing so many familiar faces from parkrun made it feel like a real community event and it was terrific to see everyone supporting each other.

Brown Hill local, Ian Fullerton, recently celebrated his 250th parkrun with friends.

He says, "I started parkrun towards the end of 2018. I had been doing a program called '0 to 5 km' with the Athlete's Foot Run Club. Then I took up the challenge to run a five-kilometres Charity event (Run for a Cause). I started doing parkrun at Victoria Park which was, at the time, the only parkrun site in Ballarat. After getting to 99 events there, parkrun was moved diagonally across Sturt Street to Prince of Wales Park. By then a second parkrun had been created right here in Brown Hill. I've been a regular

ever since.

I find doing parkrun great most weekends and an excellent way to stay active. It is a good opportunity to meet people from the area and develop new friendships by both running or doing one of the many volunteer jobs that make parkrun happen every week.

I also enjoy encouraging other people to keep going. The only thing I find hard is hills and the fact I'm getting slower (I even walk some weeks), but as my friends keep saying when I get down on myself

...continued, p.3



We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people and their ancestors who have been custodians of the Ballarat area for thousands of years performing age-old cultural ceremonies, celebrations and traditions. We acknowledge the Ballarat Aboriginal community, many of whom were forcibly removed from their families during the Stolen Generations decades and brought to Ballarat. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

About the Brown Hill Community Newsletter

This publication is a community project of the Brown Hill Progress Association. It is published quarterly.

Our volunteer team:

Editor: Sarah Greenwood-Smith

Editorial Advisory Committee: Brian Green, Brendan Stevens, Geoff Dickson and Hazen Cleary.

Editorial Support: Anne Rowland, John O'Brien and Peter Morton.

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Over 20 wonderful local volunteers distribute the newsletter across Brown Hill with additional copies available at local businesses and community hubs. Electronic copies are available on the Brown Hill Online Community Hub:

brownhill.vic.au/newsletter or you can subscribe online or by emailing us: newsletter@brownhill.vic.au.

Contributions are welcome from the Brown Hill community. Articles can be emailed to:

newsletter@brownhill.vic.au

or delivered in hard copy to the reception desk at Caledonian Primary School, Thompson Street, Brown Hill during school term and school hours.

Edition 44 (Winter) articles are due by **Friday 8 August 2025**. Please read the editorial policy regarding contributions before submitting an article or advertising: brownhill.vic.au/newsletter.

The views expressed or information provided in this publication are not necessarily those of the Brown Hill Community Newsletter Committee or the Brown Hill Progress Association, including any officers, members, agents or contractors.

Occasionally, some content included in our newsletters may be upsetting for some readers. If you need support, contact numbers are

available online:

brownhill.vic.au/new-to-brown-hill/need-some-support

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Brown Hill Progress Association meet at the Brown Hill Cricket Club on the second Wednesday every second month at 7.00 pm. In 2025, meetings will be on Wednesdays 11 June, 13 August, 8 October (AGM) and 10 December. All welcome.

bhpa@brownhill.vic.au

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Welcome to Edition 43

I rocked up to parkrun the other week thinking that I would be walking solo as my usual chatting partners were not available or running that day. Turns out, Ian (p.1) who recently achieved 250 parkruns (amazing!) and usually runs, was up for a brisk walk and a chat. We had a whale of a time catching up and encouraging the runners and walkers going the other way. What an awesome free, community event right here in Brown Hill.

In May, the Brown Hill Progress Association will celebrate National Volunteer Week (NVW) with an afternoon tea for volunteers. NVW is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering, highlighting the important role of volunteers in our community.

In this edition, you will see the range of ways people in the Brown Hill community volunteer their time. From Brendan (Secretary) and John (President) who do a wonderful job leading the Brown Hill Progress Association (p.4) to Louise (Secretary) who does fantastic work with the Ballarat North United Soccer Club at Russell Square (p.21). There are also volunteers stepping into new Committee roles, such as Amanda (President) and Bernadette (Treasurer) at the Ballarat Society of Artists (p.20) and Woodmans Hill Secondary College Youth Ambassadors, Ruby and Saskia (p.12). What great community spirit!

After many years of campaigning for improved road safety around our local schools, it is fantastic to see the State Government's recent budget commitment to flashing lights at Water Street (see advertisement below). Let's hope this helps keep local kids, crossing supervisor, Barry (pictured) and road users safer.

*Sarah Greenwood-Smith,
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Brown Hill Community Newsletter
and Directory Committee
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brownhill.vic.au/newsletter*

parkrun

...continued from p.1

about that, "You're up, you're doing it and now it's finished more than if you stayed in bed."

He encourages others to give it a try, "It is something that anybody can take part in. Some people run flat out and some complete the course simply walking at their best pace. It may be called 'parkrun' but it is really 'come and try at your own pace'!

I will catch my community of Brown Hill next Saturday at Wallaby Track parkrun just behind the Brownhill Hotel for an 8.00 am start. You can only try it out."

At Wallaby Track parkrun it's been busy with lots of people, including

Ian, celebrating milestone runs, first timers to parkrun, record numbers and many tourists coming to check out our lovely city.

During the Marathon weekend, there were two parkruns in the whole of Australia that broke their all-time attendance record, Wallaby Track and Prince of Wales (also in Ballarat) parkrun! Obviously, the event brought lots of visitors to town and lots of those visitors came and participated in our events.

One of the great things about parkrun is that you are part of the parkrun community everywhere you go and when you visit another parkrun you instantly feel like part of their community.

We love welcoming new runners and walkers to our event. If you've ever thought of coming but not sure if it's for you, why not come and give it a try. Remember it's free, it's every Saturday at 8.00 am and it starts on the Wallaby Track behind the Brown Hill Reserve. If you'd like to take part in parkrun, register at **parkrun.com.au**, then join us at the Wallaby Track. If you'd prefer to volunteer, email us at **wallabytrack@parkrun.com** or message us via our Facebook page.

*Aaron and Laurinda Coulter
Co-Event Directors
Wallaby Track parkrun
wallabytrack@parkrun.com
parkrun.com.au/wallabytrack*

WIN FOR BROWN HILL

FLASHING LIGHTS FOR CALEDONIAN PRIMARY

The school community told me they needed better road safety. We will introduce flashing lights for the school crossing on Water Street to make kids and families safer.

Michaela Settle MP
Member for Eureka

michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au 5331 7722 [/MichaelaSettleMP](https://www.facebook.com/MichaelaSettleMP)

Brown Hill Progress Association

From the Secretary's Desk

What a beautiful Autumn we have had. I know we need the rain, and it will come I'm sure, but the autumn colours are just glowing in our parks, gardens and along the tree-lined streets. We really do live in a fantastic suburb, in a beautiful town.

Congratulations to a few people.

Firstly, the Parkrun group whose numbers continue to grow. Almost 200 participants turned up on the weekend of the Ballarat Marathon, and visitors came from all over Australia, along with a few international travellers. Walking, running, young and old, with dogs and prams, wearing kilts and tutus. This cross-section of the community enjoying their hour of exercise every Saturday morning is great to see. The Brown Hill Progress Association (BHPA) supports and works cooperatively with the parkrun team and looks forward to helping them celebrate their 250th event coming up early next year.

Big shout out to the organizers of the Auskick program at the Brown Hill Cricket Club on each Friday night over this school term. Over 60 boys and girls turn up, burning up energy and learning skills. The group of adults and young lads



coaching the kids do a great job and Phil, John and their BHPA team turn on the sausage sizzle to fill the bellies afterwards.

Some great news on the Post Office as well. Sharon and Mick Angwin have taken on a five-year contract with Australia Post at the Water Street site. People will know Sharon well as she has been the smiling face behind the desk since not long after the opening of the branch. A big welcome to her husband Mick who is learning quickly about everything Australia Post and banking. Congratulations to them both for taking the plunge. This really consolidates the business in Brown Hill for the future. It really has become a busy hub that sees cars and people stopping all day. So, we wish all the best for the future to the Angwins.

At the other end of the scale, our committee members walk past the pile of dirt that should be a Playground and Splashpark and get very despondent. We have heard about power supply issues, contractor troubles and more. Let's hope we see some progress over the winter.

Here is the latest update from the City of Ballarat:

"We're pleased to report good progress on the Brown Hill Splash Park with the redesign of the underground elements due to latent ground conditions now completed. The construction documentation has also been finalised and passed on to the building contractor. We should see some site activities this week with a land surveyor on-site to complete the site set-out for the new design. The principal contractor will look to restart earthworks in the coming weeks while the building permit application for prefabricated structures is processed. We'll continue to keep you updated as we move forward. Thank you for your continued patience."

The Brown Hill Progress Association meetings in 2025 will be from 7.00 pm on Wednesdays at the Brown Hill Cricket Club, Reid Court: 11 June, 13 August, 8 October (AGM) and 10 December. All welcome.

Keep warm.

Cheers, Brendan.

*Brendan Stevens, Secretary,
Brown Hill Progress Association
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bhpa@brownhill.vic.au*

Catherine King MP
Federal Member for Ballarat

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catherine.king.mp@aph.gov.au
CatherinekingMP
catherine_kingmp
www.catherineking.com.au

**Thank you
Ballarat and district
community!**

*I'm looking forward to standing up for
you for the next 3 years*

A portrait of Catherine King MP, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red blazer over a white top, smiling. The background of the banner is a scenic view of Ballarat.

Authorised by Catherine King MP, 5 Lydiard St North, Ballarat VIC 3350

Glen Park Fire Brigade



Our volunteers have had a busy start to the year responding to 48 local calls so far. We have also had many other deployments to campaign fires in places such as the Grampians and Little Desert. Our volunteers have also been very busy assisting with fuel reduction burns for Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) and members of our community. Our Brigade is slowly but surely growing and we currently have several members going through the General Firefighters Training Course.

We are always looking for new members to join our brigade and there are many roles that can be undertaken both operational and non-operational. We train every Sunday morning at 0900hrs at the station on the corner of Longs Hill and Ralstons Road, Glen Park (opposite the Primary School).

Everyone is welcome to call in and say hi and have a chat. You can also call the station on 5334 5524 with any questions or visit cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteers-careers for more information.

Now that the weather is starting to cool down it is great time to clean up around your property. Before you decide to light a fire make sure you are following regulations or laws both from CFA and your local council and you register your burn with Triple Zero Victoria on the Burn Line **1800 668 511** or online through the CFA website.

*Tracey Webber, Captain
Glen Park Fire Brigade*

5334 5524

tracey.webber@members.cfa.vic.gov.au

Let's Chat Brown Hill

All community members are invited to join the City of Ballarat for their *Let's Chat Councillor Roadshow*.

When: Brown Hill Ward Councillor, Cr Ted Lapkin, will be hosting an in-person drop-in session on Thursday 3 July from 4.00 pm - 7.00 pm at the Brown Hill Community Hall.

What to expect: The sessions will provide an opportunity for ratepayers and residents to give ward-specific feedback to their Councillor and help shape the future direction of the City of Ballarat.

To find out more, visit: ballarat.vic.gov.au/letschat

Find out about Cr Lapkin on the City of Ballarat website: ballarat.vic.gov.au/crtedlapkin, including:

Cr Ted Lapkin has lived in Ballarat for two years and loves the architecture, vibrant cultural and intellectual life along with the informal friendliness of residents.

Cr Lapkin's focus for the 2024-2028 Council term is on restoring public faith in Council by being more responsive to community concerns. He intends to focus on fiscal restraint to enable rate relief for residents and a renewed focus on the fundamental services that are within the realm of local government.



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Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group



Eighty hands make light work....

What a great community effort! On a too-hot, too-dry Sunday morning more than forty intrepid planters turned up to Ditchfield Reserve to start revegetation work on the gully near Hearn Road. In just under two hours, we had almost 500 plants in the ground and then stood back to admire our work and enjoy a sizzling hot sausage.

If you missed out but wish you'd been part of this fabulous day, don't despair, there are more planting opportunities on the horizon

because our work in the gully has only just begun. Book in to be part of the next planting days on Sundays 29 June and 27 July (National Tree Day). See:

trybooking.com/CZDAG



Our Ditchfield Reserve plantings are some of many that will be happening throughout Ballarat over the next 12 months - keep an eye on

the Urban Ripple Project page if you'd like to know about others:

<https://sites.google.com/view/urbanripple/home>

To receive the Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group Newsletter to hear about other local projects, send us an email to wfplcg@gmail.com.

You may even like to book your team of family and friends in to one of these other events:

Wattle Flat Planting:

Sunday 1 June

trybooking.com/DBNPS

Winter Bird Survey

Sunday 3 August

trybooking.com/CWBOY

Please book rather than just show up - it helps a lot with our planning and means we can contact you if circumstances change. Whatever you choose, we hope to see you at some Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group event soon.

Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group
wfplcg@gmail.com



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Big News!
Victoria's New
Battery Rebate
Launches 1 July

Warrenheip Primary School



conclude with an open day on Sunday 7 December from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm.

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information on upcoming events.

Jo Reyntjes, Principal
Warrenheip Primary School
5334 7294
warrenheip.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Happy Birthday Warrenheip Primary School

Warrenheip Primary School is 150 years old this year!

Established in 1875 as a school to cater for the Irish farming community, it has been a stable part

of the landscape since it began. This year we are excited to celebrate our school's rich history with current students and members of our school community from the past.

We recently began our celebrations with a trivia night and will

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Little Bendigo Primary School



Our students are excited to be involved in many activities and learning opportunities this term. As part of our science program, students will visit Ecolinc in Darley to learn about sustainability and how to look after our natural environment. EarthEd are also visiting so our students can participate in an Earth Science and space program.

Currently our swimming lesson program is taking place at the BALC and students have recently participated in the Wathaurung

Cluster athletics, cross country and winter sports competitions. I take this opportunity to congratulate our students who participated in the Sovereign Division Cross Country competition recently at Ballarat High School!

We are excited that our Basketball Court redevelopment will commence later this year. This will see our court resurfaced with a new acrylic surface and roof over the entire court. This will make it more usable in winter (and summer) and a more inclusive space.

Our Foundation students have settled into their first year of school wonderfully and are enjoying learning and playing in our natural bushland setting.

Enrolments are currently open for Foundation students for the 2026 school year. Please contact me at the school on **5331 6317** to arrange a tour.

*Anthony Tait, Principal,
Little Bendigo Primary School*

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St Mary's Primary School - Clarkes Hill

Brown Hill Kindergarten Visits St Mary's School, Clarkes Hill

St Mary's School, Clarkes Hill, was delighted to welcome four groups of children from Brown Hill Kindergarten this month, giving our youngest visitors a taste of our vibrant and caring school community. The visits were filled with smiles, laughter, and new friendships, as the kindergarten children explored our beautiful rural campus and joined in a range of engaging activities alongside our students and staff.

During their time at St Mary's, the children enjoyed sharing stories, craft, playing games and spending time outdoors in our spacious grounds. Our students took great pride in welcoming the kindergarten visitors, introducing themselves warmly and helping everyone feel at home. Teachers from Brown Hill Kindergarten commented on the wonderful interactions and the genuine care shown by the St Mary's students, highlighting the positive and inclusive atmosphere that defines our school.

The visits were not only a chance for the kindergarten children to experience a day in the life of St Mary's, but also an opportunity for our students to reconnect with familiar faces with some of our students seeing their past Kindergarten teachers. As one of our students, Adelaide, shared, "My favourite part of the day was



playing with the kinder kids. I was surprised to meet another person with the same name as me!"

St Mary's School, located just 10 minutes from Brown Hill, offers a unique learning environment in a picturesque rural setting. With small class sizes, dedicated staff and a strong sense of community, every child is given the opportunity to shine and reach their full potential. Enrolments are now open for Foundation in 2026, and we are excited to offer a **\$500 scholarship to all new students in their first year**. We warmly invite families seeking a nurturing and inclusive education to visit St Mary's and discover what makes our school so special.

If you're interested in learning more about St Mary's School, please don't hesitate to reach out. **Enrolments are open at all year levels**. We welcome new families and look forward to sharing our school spirit with you.

Contact Information:

- Email: cscanlon@smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au
- Phone: **5334 5280**
- Website: smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au

*Clare Scanlon, Principal, St Mary's Primary School
131 Powells Road, Clarkes Hill*

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Caledonian Primary School

From the Principal's Desk

To the Brown Hill community,

I never really understood why people got involved with sports until I spent time as a Principal in Avoca, a little town about 45 minutes from Ballarat with a fabulous wine industry and lots of farming. I never understood as I was never into team sports, or even Physical Education (PE) at school...

In Avoca people got right into sports, not just to win, but to be healthy and connect with community and it wasn't just the traditional country town netball and football. There was Bocce, Tai Chi, the Schools' Energy Breakthrough, cycling and running clubs, hockey, basketball and swimming.

At Caledonian we have been fully embracing sports with new enthusiasm and I am quite surprised by my own growing interest! Health and community are important to us all and sports can provide a wonderful link.

We have kids in our school competing at state level BMX, swimming and athletics and many of our students are involved in basketball, netball, soccer, football, futsal, hockey, martial arts and, I dare to include, dance sports!

Our school netball team started in the schools' competition recently and it was a pleasure to see the children giving something new a red-hot go, for most it was their first time playing and they played with incredible positivity and enthusiasm. May not have scored a goal in the first game but did in their second, 100% improvement!

On the oval at playtime we have tag, football and soccer. In the basketball court we have skateboarding and ball games, on the play equipment a version of gymnastics, four-square and handball as well (no computers or phones in the yard)! We have also started an afternoon wheels club with one of our ES who is 'bike ed' trained!

The PE program has so far this year included orienteering, athletics, cross country, gymnastics, zone levels sports like soccer, skills development and minor games and there will be more as the year goes on.

At Caledonian we don't approach sports as something we have to win. Like the township out at Avoca we aim to connect our students to our school community and their peers, encourage good health and exercise and in my view learn to fall over and get back up! Most importantly we hope our students feel, like our new

netball team, that they can give something a red hot go and be encouraged to do so!

It was a nice surprise to hear that we are to get additional safety features on Water Street to keep our kids safe. We should see some action soon on new flashing signs! Thanks to our school council who have lobbied for many years to raise awareness of student safety on Water Street and who have met several times with Michaela Settle MP to advocate for our school!

Around the grounds we have works being completed to update our ramps. This has included some demolition of three older ramps and they will hopefully all be replaced within weeks. Added to that we have our new Junior Playground shade sail to be installed this winter and we are exploring options for making our front entrance more accessible.

On the inside our kids are learning in what may be the calmest setting I've experienced. The Caledonian students seem so incredibly settled that I barely know what to do with myself. Each learning session I do my walkthroughs and I see children engaged with their learning, their peers and their teacher. If I am honest, I am probably the biggest disruption in the classrooms...

...continued p.11



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Caledonian Primary School



Caledonian Primary School Grade Six Students, Jack (L) and Antanas (R) are regular riders and enjoyed Ride2School Day. Image supplied.

...continued from p.10

I find it so affirming that our school is a wonderful place when I see how excited about the day the children are as they come in the gate every morning, even on Fridays!

Thank you Brown Hill for letting us teach and take care of your children!

*Ben Moody, Principal,
Caledonian Primary School*

5332 6955

caledonian.ps@education.vic.gov.au
caledonianps.vic.edu.au

Ride2School Day

On 21 March 2025, Caledonian Primary School proudly took part in Ride2School Day, joining thousands of students across the country in promoting active travel.

The event saw an enthusiastic turnout, with students, families and staff riding, scooting and walking to school together. The initiative aimed to encourage healthy habits, reduce traffic congestion and support sustainability.

The school community embraced the day with great energy. Two Grade Six students, Jack and Antanas, regularly ride to school. Both enjoyed Ride2School day, Antanas saying, "Riding to school is doing something fun with my mates. I love all bikes, so getting to ride to school every day is rad."

Jack said, "The last couple of years I have given myself the challenge of riding every single day of the school year. Riding to school is great

because it helps me to burn off a lot of energy before entering the classroom to work. I also get to talk to my mates while riding to school."

We would like to thank the Victorian Department of Transport for supporting our Active Transport project through a Community Road Safety Grant. With this funding, we were able to engage the ReCranked team from The Y Ballarat to service and repair students' bikes on Ride2School Day. It was a fun and inspiring experience for all involved.

*Suzanne O'Brien,
Assistant Principal,
Caledonian Primary School,*

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Woodmans Hill Secondary College

Youth Ambassadors

On 29 April we, the City of Ballarat Youth Ambassadors, launched our Impact Project at a forum held at the Eureka Centre. Each year, under the guidance of Ballarat Youth Services, we work to deliver a project to help tackle an issue facing youth in Ballarat.

At this project pitch event, we presented our idea - #TakeBackTheBuses #TBTB.

Take Back the Buses is a series of interconnected strategies to improve public transport patronage and safety, helping our fellow youth connect to services, work, school and each other.

Following the presentation, we sat down with community leaders including the Member for Wendouree, Juliana Addison MP, City of Ballarat Councillors, Mayor Cr Tracey Hargreaves, Deputy Mayor Cr Ben Taylor, Cr Samantha McIntosh and key stakeholders to discuss their ideas and invite further engagement and support.

We have highlighted two focus points to look at in the near future. They are how do parents feel about the bus system and why don't community members tap on. In the near future we will be focusing on broadening our chances for community engagement, so keep an eye out for opportunities to have a



Youth Ambassadors, Ruby (L) and Saskia (R). Image supplied.

chat and provide feedback about our issue. We'd love to hear from you!

So if you have any questions about our project or program please reach out at youth@ballarat.vic.gov.au, and keep in the loop on our [ballaratyouthservices](#) Instagram page.

*Ruth and Saskia
Woodmans Hill Secondary College*

Capital Works Building Program

Woodmans Hill Secondary College is thrilled to announce the commencement of our much-anticipated Capital Works building program. This exciting development marks a significant step forward in enhancing our learning environment and supporting the

needs of our growing school community.

The works, led by builders H. Troon, will include the construction of a brand-new, purpose-built Year 7 Centre comprising six modern classrooms. This new facility will be designed specifically to support the transition of students from primary to secondary school, helping our youngest learners to settle into secondary education in a welcoming and supportive environment. The new Centre will allow us to tailor learning spaces to meet the developmental and educational needs of Year 7 students and ensure a smooth and positive start to their secondary schooling.

In addition to the Year 7 Centre, the project also includes an extension to our existing Senior Centre, providing a dedicated senior Study space with small group tutorial break out rooms. Toilet upgrades within the senior school building will also be appreciated by our VCE students.

This expansion will create more space and flexibility across the school. As our enrolments continue to grow (over 600 now), these additional learning spaces will provide greater freedom to deliver targeted support for students, including expanded intervention programs and tier 2 wellbeing

...continued, p.13



7 Sawmill Close
Brown Hill
0434 522 477

Woodmans Hill Secondary College



Proposed Year 7 Centre - External View (artist's impression). Image supplied

...continued from p.12

initiatives. This will allow us to better respond to individual student needs and ensure that everyone feels supported both academically and emotionally.

The College would like to thank Michaela Settle MP for her strong advocacy and support in helping us secure this funding through the Victorian Government. Her efforts have played a vital role in bringing this vision to life.

This is a transformative moment for Woodmans Hill, and we are excited to see our school evolve to meet the needs of our students, staff and families—now and into the future.

Shannon Ross, Principal
Woodmans Hill Secondary College

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woodmans.hill.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au
woodmanshill.net.au



Proposed Year 7 Centre - Internal View (artist's impression). Image supplied



Proposed Senior Centre - Internal View (artist's impression). Image supplied

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Ballarat East Neighbourhood House



New activities at the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House

We are excited to be hosting three new activities this term:

- **Tanzpro (6-12 yo)**
(4.00 pm - 5.30 pm Tuesdays)
- **Feldenkrais**
(2.00 pm - 3.00 pm Wednesdays)
- **Qigong (booked out for Term 2)**
(11.00 am - 12.00 pm Thursdays)

Please contact us if you are keen!

Tanzpro (Dance of Life for Children) (6-12 yo) with Liz

Calling Ballarat children who love to move and dance, to be creative and share stories! This program involves dance, story sharing, art, imaginary play and movements with music, curated for children.

Tanzpro is an evidence-based program that supports children developmentally with emotional regulation, empathy, relaxation, self esteem and increased skills in communication and confidence, in a fun and engaging way.

Contact us to find out about our free "come and try" sessions.

Qigong with Klyti

Experience the Inner Flow of Qi

In traditional Chinese philosophy and medicine, "qi" (pronounced "chee") refers to the vital life force or energy that flows through everything in the universe, including the human body. Qigong

uses gentle movement, breathwork and guided meditation to stimulate and regulate the flow of energy and blood around the body. These practices allow areas of stagnation within the body, mind and spirit to be revitalised and refreshed.

The form of Qigong Klyti practices is suitable for all bodies and capabilities. Its gentle and informative nature make it an incredibly inclusive activity.

Feldenkrais with Lynden

Feldenkrais involves following simple instructions to move in unusual movement patterns that promote self-awareness and mobility.

In this class, movement habits and holding patterns are revealed and the movements presented offer alternative, more efficient choices. Classes will be performed either lying on the floor, sitting in a chair or standing. Be prepared for all three positions. These classes will encourage a fine inner-focus of yourself.

New activities coming in Term 3

We are also proposing three new activities for Term 3. Please contact us to find out more and express your interest in these activities. Days and times to be confirmed.

- **Beginner's Mat Pilates** with Nadine
- **Unlock your Creativity** with Genèvre
- **Tanzpro (Dance of Life for Children) (3-6 yo)** with Liz

See the full Activities Calendar online:

ballarateastnh.org.au/classes/activities or drop in to see us at Barkly Square for the latest copy.

Our new opening hours are 9.00 am - 3.00 pm Mondays to Fridays (+ open until 5.00 pm Tuesdays) during school term.

Free Training for Community Groups in Ballarat

The Community Governance Project funded by the City of Ballarat is working to provide support to local community groups. The multi-year project, finishing in June 2025, has been extremely successful, helping over 210 community groups across Ballarat.

Don't miss out on this final opportunity to attend one or more of the free Community Group Workshops.

Conflict Resolution

- **Session 1:** Friday 30 May, 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm, Barkly Square
- **Session 2:** Saturday 31 May, 10.00 am - 1.00 pm, Barkly Square

Conflict can seem as if it brings only roadblocks, but the challenges of conflict can also bring insight, learning and growth if we approach it in the right way. How do we work through the issues that may emerge to work together in community with people who hold different views, needs and communication practices? How do we address tensions before they get too bad? Or if it went bad, how do we start cleaning up the mess?

In this workshop, we will unpack what conflict is and when it arises and provide some concrete tools and practice skills that come in handy when dealing with conflict.

Volunteers – Inducting, managing and retaining

How do you get volunteers interested in your community group? Then, how do you keep them engaged?

If these are questions that you have asked, come along to a free

...continued on p.15

...continued from p.14

workshop for community groups and hear from two local experts.

- **Session 1:** Thursday 5 June 10.00 am – 11.30 am, Training Room 101, Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street, Ballarat East
- **Session 2:** Wednesday 18 June 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm Online via Zoom (a repeat of Session 1)

This workshop will explore the challenges of inducting, managing and retaining volunteers for your community group. Sue Jakob has worked in many roles managing volunteers for over 15 years. At the same time she has been a volunteer and been part of committees running volunteer community groups across Ballarat. Come along and hear some practical ways to engage and energise your volunteers so that they remain active within your group.

Feedback from previous participants:
“Engaging and informative.”

“Good ideas in supporting volunteers.”

“Provided motivation to improve our practices.”

Marketing and promotion for community groups

Do you struggle with getting your story out as a not-for-profit or community group? Find it hard to pitch to your target audience for donations, volunteer recruitment, stakeholder engagement and PR?

- **Session 1:** Wednesday 11 June 10.00 am – 11.30 am Training Room 101, Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street, Ballarat East
- **Session 2:** Thursday 12 June 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm, Online via Zoom (a repeat of Session 1)

As a publicist with over 30 years' experience, Lou has also been running a successful local not-for-profit for over 10 years, Food Is Free Inc. and is an expert in multiple forms of promotion from traditional PR to online and digital communications and strategy.

In this marketing and promotion workshop, Lou will simplify how to get your good news stories out, how to attract the differing sectors of your audience to hear your successes and impact and how to make your organisation stand out from the crowd.

Feedback from previous participants:

“Love, love, loved it. Best 1 ½ hr spent ever.”

“Very useful content. Lots of food for thought. Thank you.”

We look forward to seeing you at one of these workshops. For more, call or text us on 0422 612 052, drop in to Barkly Square or visit:

ballarateastnh.org.au/community-governance/community-groups

*Sarah Greenwood-Smith, Manager
Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street,
Ballarat East,
0422 612 052
reception@ballarateastnh.org.au
facebook.com/BallaratEastNH/
ballarateastnh.org.au*

Ballarat Society of Artists



*Past President, John Canham, handing over his badge to new President, Amanda Western.
Image supplied.*

Our busy year has begun with a hive of activity, involvement at the Begonia Festival, our 42nd Annual Art Show over Easter and at Lake Wendouree Museum. We will return to the museum from July 2025 until March 2026.

A big change is our new Committee, voted in at our May AGM, with Amanda Western and Bernadette Wilson taking on the roles of President and Treasurer.

We continue to have Saturday Painting in the Brown Hill Uniting Church Hall over Winter and those members attending enjoy the camaraderie and sharing skills. We meet at the Brown Hill Uniting Church on the first Saturday of the month at 10.30 am.

Ballarat Society of Artists (BSA) is keen to be involved with the local art community. Contact us with any questions or ideas: **events.bsainc@gmail.com** and visit: **facebook.com/bsa.ballarat**. For membership information, contact: **membership.bsainc@gmail.com**.

Susan Clarke, Assistant Secretary, Ballarat Society of Artists Inc.

Ballarat Wholefoods Collective

Prepare to refresh your wardrobe! Ballarat Preloved Fashion is holding their winter sale event on Saturday 14 June between 12.00 noon – 4.00 pm at Barkly Square, Barkly Street in Ballarat East.

This indoor event is hosted by the not-for-profit Ballarat Wholefoods Collective as part of the Collective's philosophy of reducing waste and encouraging sustainable fashion. Clothing waste is a significant problem globally so shopping preloved keeps clothes in circulation and out of landfill by giving preloved pieces a second life.

The sale on 14 June offers shoppers an opportunity to explore over fifty stalls filled with women's, men's and children's clothing as well as shoes, handbags, scarves, belts, hats and jewellery. With an eclectic mix of quality preloved clothing that ranges from current through to vintage styles, you'll be sure to find your style at affordable prices.



Ballarat Preloved Fashion. Image supplied

In keeping with the sustainability theme, Ballarat Repair Café has partnered with the event to offer shoppers a same day mending and minor alteration service for a small fee (\$5 - \$15). Repairing and altering much loved garments can also

Mark your calendar and come along to browse, buy, mingle and enjoy.

For further information and future event dates follow Ballarat Preloved Fashion on Facebook and Instagram.

Enquiries can also be directed to **ballaratwholefoodscollective@gmail.com**.

Get in touch

For further details about our collective, membership, pre-loved fashion sale or workshops, pop in and see us on the lower level of Barkly Square or online: **ballaratwholefoodscollective.com**

*Sally Cameron, Committee Member
Ballarat Wholefoods Collective &
Ballarat Preloved Fashion*

*ballaratwholefoodscollective@gmail.com
facebook.com/ballaratwholefoodscollective
ballaratwholefoodscollective.org
Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street,
Ballarat East*



Ballarat Preloved Fashion.
Image supplied

breathe new life and style into your wardrobe. Hems, minor repairs, buttons and simple seams can be attended to by the experienced volunteer seamstresses available on site between 12.00 noon – 4.00 pm.

This free community event will have food and coffee on site, ample parking, fresh food hamper raffle and a friendly vibe.



Brown Hill Seniors

Brown Hill Seniors weekly meetings are held every Monday from 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm.

An Easter raffle was won by Norm James, Dianne Eden and June Glasson.

On 12 May, we had a club-subsidised pie and slice lunch which was well attended. A Christmas in July lunch will be held at the Brown Hill Hotel.

Indoor bowls, euchre, hoi, board games continue to be held.

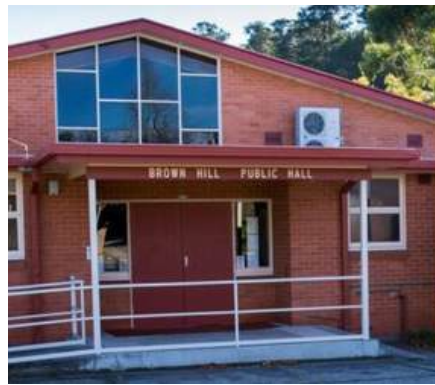
The Brown Hill Seniors Club has been meeting in Brown Hill for over fifty years. New members (55 years old and over) are most welcome to join in.

Dianne Eden, President
0428 379 979

Help us to put
together the Brown
Hill Community
Newsletter

Contact Sarah:
newsletter@brownhill.vic.au

Brown Hill Community Hall



We are very happy to announce that the installation of Audio Visual (AV) equipment into our meeting rooms is underway. This feature is one that many potential user groups request.

The installation of projectors, screens and audio speakers will enhance these meeting spaces and allow for the use of technology by a variety of new user groups for the hall.

Hopefully by the circulation of the next newsletter we will have photographs to show.

Merrilyn Harlock
Secretary Brown Hill Community
Hall Advisory Committee
hall@brownhill.vic.au
hall.brownhill.vic.au

Salubrity Health Group



Salubrity Health Group (SHG) - Promoting Health and Wellbeing
Our walking club has taken a break for the cooler months. We will look at returning in September/ October at Russell Square.

This winter we have started a coffee club. All who live in the Ballarat area and surrounds that may be looking for a new way to connect with others, come and join us at Golden City Hotel (GC's) and make new friends. Email Sue to confirm the date for this month's catch up: susanharrisonsghg@outlook.com.au.
Sue Harrison,
Coffee Club Coordinator
Salubrity Health Group

BECOME A
FOSTER
CARER

Brighter futures **start with you!**





Anglicare
Victoria

www.anglicarevic.org.au

There is a strong need for more local foster carers who can provide nurturing and supportive homes for children not able to live safely in their own family homes and there are a range of ways people can support children and young people as carers. Perhaps this could be you and your household? We encourage anyone interested to be in touch and find out more – we look forward to hearing from you! anglicarevic.org.au/our-services/foster-care/fostering/

Brown Hill Uniting Church



Discussion Group

Rev David Carter will lead a six-week discussion group on Sally Douglas' book *The Church Triumphant as Salt* (2021). Sally's book is a hopeful analysis about the future of the church. She challenges the assumption that the church is dying, she sees that churches are not only being redefined but aligning more with the vision held in the teaching of Jesus.

Would you like to participate?

The sessions will be an hour long followed by a cuppa in the Brown Hill Uniting Church. The dates and times will be determined in conversation with those who show interest. Places in the group will be limited to 10 and David will run a second group and/or evening group if there is enough interest. A copy of the book will be provided for the sessions.

If you would like to attend, please provide your name and contact number, or email, to Jane Measday on **0459 819 982** or email jane.measday@gmail.com.

Men's Breakfast

At the Men's Breakfast held on 15 March, Melissa Watts from Ballarat East Neighbourhood House, gave two road safety presentations called *Walk with Care* and *Safer Driver*. The men (and ladies attending the talk) were reminded that there is always something to learn to help



Geoff and Colin at the March Men's Breakfast. Image supplied..

make our roads and paths a safer place for everyone.

The next Men's Breakfast is on 24 May, from 8.30 am in the church hall. \$5.00 for a full cooked breakfast.

The speaker is a representative from the Ballarat Health Services Ballarat Prostate Cancer Support Group. Ladies are welcome for a cuppa and the talk from 9.15 am.

The Men's Breakfast team consists of volunteers from the community's groups and the church. We welcome anyone interested, to come and join us.

Wednesday Communion at 1.30 pm in the church hall for those who like a midweek opportunity for informal worship and sharing the sacraments if you choose. There is an opportunity to share a short time of fellowship over afternoon tea afterwards.

Craft, Cuppa and Chat is meeting on the first and third Thursdays each month at 1.30 pm in the church hall. Come along if you're interested in doing any sort of craft or just come for a chat if you're not!

The **Op Shop** is open on Thursdays and Fridays, 9.30 am - 12.30 pm, providing our community with very good quality clothing and bric-a-brac at very affordable prices. We now have an EFTPOS facility.

Thank you to members of the community for your generous support of our **Annual Church Fair** held on 22 March. Over \$2,500 was raised which will be proudly used to support community events and programs such as the Men's Breakfasts and towards lighting for AusKick at the Brown Hill Reserve.

170th Anniversary of Brown Hill Church

In November this year, the church will celebrate 170 years of worship, mission and witness in the community. It is hoped that the sharing of memories and a promising future will combine to provide a celebration for all.

For more information, please contact Louise Wright **0407 893 468** or email louisejw63@yahoo.com.

Louise Wright, Brown Hill Uniting Church

Discover what's on at the Ballarat Libraries



Exhibition: All that Glitters | 100 Years of Entertainment in Ballarat

There's still time to catch this Ballarat Heritage Festival exhibition, showcasing treasures from Ballarat Libraries' own collections. Step back in time to the era of opulence, Balls, soirees and recitals. You might even know someone featured in a photograph!

Ballarat Library, during opening hours, closes 26 May.

National Simultaneous Storytime is back for 2025!

Libraries across Australia will share a reading of *The Truck Cat* by Deborah Frenkel, in a special celebration of books and reading. Suitable for family audiences and particularly pre-schoolers.

Wednesday 21 May, 12.00 noon, at all library branches.

Refugee Week: Finding Freedom with Sidiqa

Ballarat Library will welcome Refugee Ambassador of Australia and Vice-President of Refugee Education Australia, Sidiqa. Sidiqa will share her inspiring journey from her homeland to Australia. At this event, reflect, connect and

celebrate the contributions of refugees in shaping diverse communities.

*Wednesday 18 June,
5.30 pm - 7.00 pm, Ballarat Library.*

Business Boost: Build your Brand on a Budget

Grow your business or passion project with free, practical workshops by Ellen from Jelly Things. Free! Perfect for small business owners, startups and creatives.

Workshop topics include marketing, social media, branding and leveraging LinkedIn.

Bring your device for hands-on learning.

Each Saturday in June, 2.00 pm - 3.00 pm at Ballarat Library. Bookings required.

Check the website for full descriptions of each workshop.

To find more programs and events at the Ballarat Libraries, visit libraries.ballarat.vic.gov.au/whats-on/all-events or phone **5338 6850**.

Brainary's Regional Youth STEM Project

The Brainary® is collaborating with City of Ballarat to offer free three-session programs for under 18's across Victoria's Ballarat Region in 2025.

The Brainary's Regional Youth STEM Project, funded by the Australian Government, aims to support 12-18 year olds with their development of STEM skills by providing a hands-on learning opportunity with the latest technology. The project has a strong focus on inclusivity and diversity within the field of STEM, aiming to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and inspired to pursue STEM in their future studies and careers.

Session 1: Virtual Reality and 3D

Game Design: Meet and work with STEM experts to explore the exciting world of Virtual Reality within ClassVR®, even create your own 3D interactive gaming environment in Co-Spaces® (now Delightex.com).

Session 2: Computer-aided 3D Architecture and the Arkit Building System:

Design a 3D sustainable house of the future with TinkerCAD®, then bring it into reality with the Arkit® building studio.

Session 3: Make Digital Systems Work to Solve Problems and Review Industry 5.0 Careers:

Identify local sustainability issues, construct and program your solution with the Climate Action Kit® and the Micro:BIT®! Introduction to Industry 5.0 Career Pathways.

June - November, Ballarat Libraries, enquire now:
thebrainary.com/stem-maker-project-2025/

Ballarat Mental Health Collective

Ballarat Mental Health Collective 2025 Online Auction

National Mental Health Month runs through October with World Mental Health Day on 10 October. Ballarat Mental Health Collective runs community events in Mental Health Month to destigmatise mental health conditions, increase awareness and promote positive mental health in our community and beyond. This online auction to raise funds goes live on 3 August 2025 at 8.00 am. It finishes at 8.00 pm on Monday 11 August 2025. Listings may be updated or further listings added until we go live. Please browse until the live date on 3 August 2025.

Ballarat Mental Health Collective is a consortium of consumers, carers and organisations that support people in the Ballarat community and surrounds with their mental health. Ballarat Mental Health Collective receives some grant funding but relies heavily on community donations and support to run Ballarat Mental Health Month events.

Paul Hartwood,
Ballarat Mental Health Collective
[facebook.com/BallaratMHCollective/](https://www.facebook.com/BallaratMHCollective/)

BALLARAT MENTAL HEALTH COLLECTIVE

Online Auction Annual Fundraiser 2025



Fundraising for events destigmatising mental health conditions, and promoting positive mental health and awareness in Ballarat and beyond.

03 August - 11 August

Auction closes promptly at
8:00pm on the 11th August.

**Online Auction
Link**



Link: <https://airauctioneer.com/ballarat-mental-health-collective-2025-online-auction>

Featured Prizes:

- Vouchers from businesses
- Hospitality treats
- Family fun days
- Kids activities



<https://www.facebook.com/BallaratMHCollective/>

Grampians Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect

Your mental health, your way:

Eating disorder education

close to home in the Grampians.

Join a **community info session** to learn about eating disorders and what help is available.

Supporting someone with an eating disorder? Build confidence, boundaries, agency and your support network in a **carer skills workshop**.

Ballarat | 15 Dawson St North

Info session: 28 May, 4:30–5:30pm

Skills workshop: 29 May, 9:30am–1pm

eating disorders
victoria

Grampians
Health



Learn more and book for free:



Ballarat North United Soccer Club



Ballarat North United Soccer Club (BNUSC) Division 1 Women's Team.
Image supplied.

Celebrating Female Football Week at BNUSC

Ballarat North United Soccer Club (BNUSC) almost withdrew their Division 1 Women's team due to low numbers. But these young women weren't taking "no" for an answer.

With 24 hours to cut off, they rallied 20 players! Most had never played soccer and the first defeats were significant, but the roar of the Panthers crowd was louder and more excited than any opponent! In round 4 the women scored their first two goals in front of a packed house, on the first day of Female Football Week.

This year sees three all-female junior teams in U10, 12 and 14, strong numbers in Division 1 Women, and all four teams coached by women. So, whatever the outcome of the season, Female Football is the real winner.

Jacinta Ryan, a committee member and partner of a senior men's coach was among the players to join the

team, and she shares her insights with us:

"This season, I took on a challenge I never imagined I would, joining the Ballarat North United Women's soccer team without ever having played a game of soccer in my life! Coming from a background in swimming and rowing, I was no stranger to sport, but stepping onto the pitch was an entirely new experience. What motivated me most was the chance to be part of something bigger, helping to keep our women's team going, especially for the younger girls coming through who deserve to see women represented in football.

It's been a steep learning curve, and I won't pretend it's been easy. Learning to control the ball with my feet after years of relying on my arms has been a real challenge! But I've been blown away by the support from my teammates, many of whom are also playing soccer for the first time. There's a strong sense of camaraderie among us and we're

learning and growing together every week.

One of the encouraging factors has been the support we've received from the senior men's teams. Their willingness to volunteer their time, share their skills and offer constant words of encouragement has made a real difference. It's not just about helping us improve technically, it's about building a club culture where everyone, regardless of gender, feels supported and empowered to succeed.

As we celebrate Women's Football Week, I'm proud to be part of this movement. Women and girls belong in football—not just on the field, but in coaching, officiating and every corner of the game. The incredible contributions of women at all levels deserves recognition and I hope that, by taking this leap, I can play a small part in helping to promote these opportunities."

Please get in touch if you would like more information about our club:

bnusc.org.au
facebook.com/bnusc

Louise Jones
Secretary
Ballarat North United Soccer Club
0409 943 862
secretary.bnusc@gmail.com

Celebrating 50 Years of BNUSC!



Victoria Bowling Club

The 2024/25 summer bowls season has concluded in the Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region. Victoria Bowling Club (BC) had another very successful season with premierships in the the Saturday competition in Division One and Four and a premiership in the Tuesday competition in Division One. Other divisions were runners up and made finals and competed to a high standard against great competition.

Victoria BC was again invited by Bowls Victoria to host the Region Sides Event in January. This was a weekend competition for the best teams from every bowls region throughout the State and we were privileged to host women's and men's games over two days on our top condition bowling greens.

We held our Presentation Night last month to celebrate the successes of all our teams plus the winners and runners up of all the club championship events for singles and pairs for women and men. This was a catered event held in our large function room and was a great time for members and partners.

There were two new awards made this year worthy of special note; they highlight the importance we place on junior bowlers and volunteers.

The first recognised our 'best junior bowler' who was Micah Oswin, with a trophy sponsored by our treasurer



*Region Sides Event at the Victoria Bowling Club in January 2025.
Image supplied.*

and member Chris Carmody. Micah played in our winning Saturday Division One side and also had success in various other bowls events throughout the season.

The second was an award for 'the best club person' as voted by members. Our life member, Robert Chapman, received the inaugural Val Wilckens Award which was sponsored by the family of the late Val Wilckens, who was a passionate and active member of our club. The award recognises outstanding effort and contribution in all aspects of the life of our club. Robert is deserving of this award as a tireless volunteer.

Currently we have members playing in three divisions in the Ballarat Indoor Bias Bowls Association (BIBBA). This is a Tuesday evening indoor carpet bowls competition,

played throughout the Ballarat area and enjoyed by up to 30 bowlers of all ages.

We have excellent licenced facilities available to hire for weddings, birthdays etc.. Capacity of up to 200.

Social/barefoot bowls is also available for corporate or family groups. Come and give it a go, we are a family-friendly club.

Anyone interested in playing indoor bowls or summer bowls next season can contact the Victoria BC at: **victoriabowlsclub@gmail.com**
Phone: **5332 6242**
Address: **231 Victoria St Ballarat East**

*Peter Elshaug, Assistant Secretary
Victoria Bowling Club
victoriabowlingclub.com.au*



**Come and enjoy our user-friendly
Golf Course, our new game - Disc
Golf and the Bowling Green.
We are open to people of all ages,
backgrounds and abilities.**

PH: 03 5331 3691
Email: mtxaviergolfclub@bigpond.com
118 Fortune Street, Ballarat VIC 3350

**New
Members
Welcome**

Find us on 

Victoria Bowling Club

Morning Melodies

Bringing the best performers to the Victoria Bowling Club stage

Morning Melodies is a series of concerts, featuring the best local and travelling performers, right here in Ballarat. Shows start at 10.30 am. Entertainment and meal for only \$20. How could you pass up that value for money!

For more information about Morning Melodies, and to book your tickets, please contact: **Lindsay Johnston on**

0488 788 218



Morning Melodies



Duo Delux

Friday June 6, 2025

**\$20
Meal &
Show**

A very popular duo.

Be prepared for an enjoyable performance from this duo from Geelong.

Kinta and Jamie perform a wide range of music – country, rock and roll, through to modern pop.

For more information about Morning Melodies, and to book your tickets, please contact Lindsay Johnston - 0488 788 218

Shows start
at 10:30 AM

231 Victoria Street, Ballarat East VIC 3350



Morning Melodies



Gavin Chatelier

Friday October 3, 2025

**\$20
Meal &
Show**

Singer Songwriter Guitarist.

Gavin has a wide taste and influence in music from gospel and classical to folk and country rock.

For more information about Morning Melodies, and to book your tickets, please contact Lindsay Johnston - 0488 788 218

Shows start
at 10:30 AM

231 Victoria Street, Ballarat East VIC 3350

**When to call VICSES for a landslide**

Call VICSES 132 500

**000**
EMERGENCY
If life threatening call triple zero 000

**✓ Landslide is blocking the road**

**✓ Landslide is impacting your home**

**✓ A sink hole has opened near roads or buildings**



The AFL Store Ballarat

Shop 50, Central Square
Armstrong Street South
Ballarat Vic 3350
(03) 5332 3400

aflstoreballarat@bigpond.com

YOUR TEAM YOUR STORE

Bush Kinder Adventures at Y Learn and Swim



A child from the Y Learn and Swim kindergarten ventures out to their local Bush Kinder. Image supplied.

Once a week, the kindergarten children at Y Learn and Swim venture out to their local Bush Kinder site for a time of exploration, play and collaboration. There's not a toy or piece of equipment in sight - Nature becomes their teacher for this session.

The joy and enthusiasm of the children is obvious, as they gleefully run up and down a steep hill for the tenth - or maybe even the eleventh time. It's not just about the hill, but about the shared experience: running together in the fresh air, increasing confidence, building strength, balance and coordination.

They slide down dusty embankments, challenging themselves to climb back up and instinctively reach out to help one another. They pause to pick up a fallen hat, observe an interesting plant or spot a bug beneath a rock, gently replacing its protective cover.

"We love Bush Kinder and taking the children to our local site," says Nikkita, Y Learn and Swim's Kindergarten teacher. "It gives them the opportunity to explore and engage with the natural environment. We've noticed the children play more collaboratively and inclusively while we are out in nature."

Sticks and branches become tools and building blocks, creating cubbies or imaginary cafés, shops and fantasy lands.

Bush Kinder encourages a closer connection with Country and deeper respect and understanding of the environment. The kinder children watch the activities of ants, "roley polies" (slaters), birds and other wildlife, learning to observe gently and respectfully. There's also a sense of curiosity and care and the wonder of discovery.

The program is popular with children and families alike. "Bush Kinder has really developed my child's passion and knowledge of the natural environment," says Caitlin, mother of a 4-year-old at the centre. "She really loves exploring in the trees, sitting on the grass and sharing stories."

The children enjoy the sessions so much that they always want to stay longer in their bush playground. However, on return to the centre they are calmer, refreshed and with a growing connection to the land around them.

At Y Learn and Swim, Bush Kinder isn't just a weekly outing—it's a vital, joyful part of learning. For more information about free sessional kindergarten at Y Learn and Swim or to book a tour see ylearnandswim.org.au or call **4320 0850**.