

Connecting

Sebastopol

Community News

Awarded
Best Sports
Reporting
2025

Awarded
Best Victorian
Community
Newspaper
2024

DECEMBER 2025 - ISSUE 12



Filipino 'tinikling' performers Lucas, Johann, Dion, Jann and Jana. Photo by Will Lay

Sebastopol Community Showcase success!

By Pru Saimoun

More please, was the resounding cry from the crowds who attended Sebastopol Community Showcase on November 22 at the Marty Busch Reserve. Even the sun showed up, making the day even better for the 900 people who participated and volunteered at the free, day-for-all. Member of the Sebastopol Community Meetup group, Eileen Phan, who originally floated the Showcase idea, said it was a great success. "It successfully achieved the outcome to connect with the community and highlight Sebastopol community groups and businesses," she said. Several people mentioned to her that they felt socially isolated and not sure of being welcomed in the community or at community groups. "Due to attending the event and chatting to a variety of people, this has encouraged them to try and connect," Eileen said. She heard plenty of praise for the planning, welcoming atmosphere of stallholders and volunteers and the feeling of being safe, connected and valued as a community member. *Continued on page 4.*

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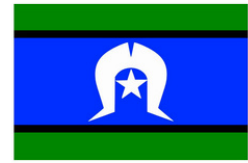
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colour





Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung People, and recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

About the Newsletter

Connecting Sebastopol Community News is a project of the Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre. This publication is compiled, edited and designed by volunteers, community contributors and Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre staff.

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre is committed to creating opportunities for people to connect, learn and participate in their community. We offer adult education, one-on-one coaching for people looking for work, community activities, a community garden, volunteer opportunities and much more! www.ballaratnc.org.au
reception@ballaratnc.org.au

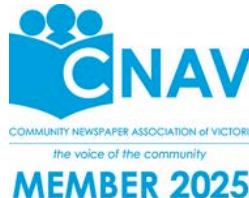
(03) 5329 3273

11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre welcomes all LGBTQIA+ communities



Scan this QR code to subscribe to the e-newsletter or share a story with us



Upcoming Issues

This newsletter is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The next issue will be published in late March 2026, with content submissions due by **Friday 7 March 2026** via email to community@ballaratnc.org.au or in hard copy to Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, 11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol.

Advertise with us!

Printing of this newsletter relies on advertising revenue and donations. Promote your business and support this valuable community initiative.

Advertising rates per edition are:
\$500 + GST: Half page
\$250 + GST: Banner or quarter page
\$150+ GST: Advertorial + Ad*
\$50 + GST: Business Card

*Advertorial available for community groups & small businesses only

Contact Emily Macdonald

community@ballaratnc.org.au

(03) 5329 3273

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

We are very grateful for the growing number of volunteers helping to deliver this newsletter. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers, over 4000 issues of the September newsletter were distributed!

Volunteer With Us

We are seeking volunteers to help us expand delivery to the whole of Sebastopol. Delivery takes about one hour per volunteer, four times a year.

If you are interested, please get in touch:

5329 3273 / community@ballaratnc.org.au

If your home is not yet covered by a delivery volunteer, you can drop into the following Sebastopol organisations to pick up a copy of the newsletter:

- Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
- Open Door & Op Shop
- Sebastopol Library
- Sebastopol Mens Shed
- Salvos Sebastopol
- Carmel Welsh Church & Op Shop
- G Gay & Co Mitre 10
- Coles Sebastopol

Connecting *Sebastopol* Community Meet-Up



The friendly group of attendees at our September Community Meetup at Open Door Op Shop. Photo by Will Lay

Over 40 people attended recent Sebastopol Community Meetups. It was fantastic to see so many Sebastopol residents, organisations and businesses keen to connect and collaborate.

In September, we met at Open Door Op Shop and heard from two guest speakers. Jane Grimwood, Garden Engagement Officer at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, spoke to the group about the Sebastopol 'Big' Garden under development in Spencer Street on the grounds of Phoenix College. Infrastructure has been built including an indoor work space, kitchenette and toilet along with a covered deck. Grants have been received for a fruit orchard and greenhouse. The aim is to have as many community groups involved as possible and for the garden to become a space for learning about horticulture, creating community connections and providing fresh produce to locals. We also heard from Natalie Grero, City of Ballarat Community Development Officer. Natalie shared details of the City of Ballarat Community Directory and Diary, an online site offering free listings for community groups to promote their groups and activities.

Our October gathering was hosted by Sebastopol Library during their Thursday evening extended open hours (you can visit up to 8pm on Thursdays!) Team Leader Eloise Brown led a library tour and informed the group about the many wonderful free services and activities on offer. The group enjoyed delicious free pizza thanks to the generosity of Dominos Sebastopol. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to these lovely gatherings. Meetups will re-commence in 2026. To find out more, get in touch with Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre on community@ballaratnc.org.au / 5329 3273

We need you! Volunteer with Connecting Sebastopol

Over the last few years, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre has established a range of Connecting Sebastopol initiatives and we need your help to continue them. Are you good at fundraising or sales? You could volunteer as an advertising or fundraising officer with the newsletter. Do you enjoy planning and organising? Why not help arrange Sebastopol Meetups or coordinate volunteers? Are you a social media wiz? Use your skills to help maintain the Connecting Sebastopol facebook page or website. Contact Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre to find out more or submit your expression of interest: community@ballaratnc.org.au / 5329 3273. We are on a break over the holiday period, but will get back to any inquiries when projects recommence in 2026.

One burger = One vote of support

During December, *Connecting Sebastopol Community News* is one of the community organisations being supported by the Grill'd Local Matters initiative. Local Matters gives back to the communities Grill'd is part of, right around Australia. Every month, each restaurant splits \$500 between three groups doing amazing work in the community — and that's where YOUR vote counts. Here's how it works.

Order at Grill'd in-restaurant or online and you'll get a token to vote for the cause closest to your heart. 1 burger = 1 vote. Put your vote in the '*Connecting Sebastopol*' jar. At the end of the month, the jar with the most tokens gets \$300, and the other two each get \$100. Our jar is registered with Grill'd at 37 Sturt Street, Ballarat. We thank you for your support!

Community

A community day for all



Kellie Phillips and Shannen Mennen led the Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony. Photo by Will Lay

From page 1. The opening of the Showcase saw a Welcome to Country by mother and daughter, Kellie Phillips and Shannen Mennen from Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Shannen gave a detailed explanation of the ceremony, including the type of leaves used, and then invited people to come forward to be cleansed by the smoke and accepted on to Country. City of Ballarat Mayor Tracey Hargreaves gave a short speech and MC Sue Parker announced the rest of the activities.



BMX riders hit the track. Photo by Will Lay

Activities as diverse as South Indian and Filipino dancing, 'come and try' football, BMX and meditation, biscuit decorating, balloon bending, fire truck and ambulance explorations and lots of information and conversations at the many stalls, filled the afternoon. A free sausage sizzle, snacks, fruit, sandwiches and drinks, thanks to Sebastopol Men's Shed, Ballarat Sikh Community and new Sebastopol cafe / restaurant Rust n Gold were enjoyed by all. The Phoenix College Band kicked off entertainment, and the U3A Ukelele Minstrels kept the crowds bopping well into the afternoon, with their fun songs and instruments.

Ballarat Aboriginal and District Cooperative Connected Beginnings coordinator, Ashleigh Moore, said the Showcase was valuable to be able to connect with people who might not know what they offered, because they had only been in their building for just over a year. "Conversation was sparked about what we do, it gave us time to have a yarn to parents/carers while their children painted a magnet," she said. "We were able to encourage new people to attend our service."



Zeke, Finn, Degan & Jack enjoyed playing instruments at the Journey Early Learning van. Photo by Will Lay

Many people commented that they appreciated having free access to the event, activities and food and found it a great way to learn more about services in the community. Ballarat's Rainbow Rack & TGD Swap Shop founder, Renea Johnson, said that attending the Showcase was vital for them to let people know what they offer as Ballarat's first (and only) LGBTQIA+ op-shop. Interest in their services and activities was generated plus a greater understanding of what the op shop is about.



Rhonda and Alex from CWA Ballarat. Photo by Will Lay

Filipino Australian Association of Ballarat President, Dionesia Abante, said that being part of the day was important because it gave them a sense of belonging to the diverse community.

Community



Left: South Indian dancing by St Severios Syrian Jacobite Church. Top right: Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre staff and volunteers. Lower right: The Ballarat Sikh Community gave out free fruit and drinks to attendees. Photos by Will Lay

Dionesia said it was a chance to show what the Filipino community and culture had to offer and to encourage young participants to continue some of their cultures and traditions. "To be part of the wider community is of great value to us, it helps us connect and keep those connections going. It helps us learn about other cultures and most importantly, the way of living here in Australia". She said the performers enjoyed the day and being able to demonstrate Filipino dancing. There was also much fun and laughter with audience members joining in tinikling, a traditional Filipino dance with bamboo poles.



'Tinikling' by young Filipino dancers. Photo by Will Lay

Country Women's Association (CWA) Sebastopol branch president Marion Parker reiterated comments from other groups, saying that the day would possibly result in some new members. She said that although the CWA didn't need much advertising, its members were aging and it was important to recruit new younger members to keep

it going. "We feel that it was an excellent day and look forward to it being an annual event."

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre Community Engagement Officer, Emily Macdonald, worked with volunteer event committee Sue Parker, Eileen Phan and Allison Stewart, to create the successful day. "This event showcased a fantastic range of community groups and services that are available to everyone in Sebastopol," she said. "We know that the high cost of living and social isolation are issues that impact many people and Sebastopol is often given a negative reputation. This Showcase was an opportunity to share and celebrate the wonderful, diverse and supportive community that we are proud to have in the Burra." Attendees commented on the lovely atmosphere, while many were surprised that everything was free. Emily said many people asked if it could happen again.

"We successfully applied for a City of Ballarat Community Impact Grant to stage the event this year. To consider running it again, we would need funding and a dedicated team of volunteers to organise it," she said. "While we don't know what 2026 will bring, we are very proud of what we have achieved and want to thank everyone who contributed to make it happen."

Did you attend Sebastopol Community Showcase? We would love to hear your feedback! Scan the QR code or email community@ballaratnc.org.au

Community



Sebastopol COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

Thank you for your support and contribution . . .

- 1st Sebastopol Girl Guides
- Ambulance Victoria
- Arabella Hair Design
- Ballarat And District Aboriginal Co-operative
- Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
- Ballarat Sebastopol Cycling Club - BMX
- Ballarat Sikh Community
- Ballarat's Rainbow Rack
- City of Ballarat - Early Years Partnerships
- Country Women's Association (CWA) Sebastopol
- Elements Health and Fitness
- Filipino Australian Association of Ballarat Inc. (FAABI)
- Golden Nugget Bakery
- Grace Presbyterian Church
- Grampians Early Parenting Centre
- Journey Early Learning
- Open Door Op Shop
- Parent Pathways - Djerriwarrh
- Phoenix P-12 Community College
- Relationships Australia, Victoria
- Ringins Butchery
- Rust n Gold Cafe and Restaurant
- Sebastopol & District Lions Club
- Sebastopol Bowls Club
- Sebastopol Dental
- Sebastopol Fire Brigade - CFA
- Sebastopol Football Netball Club
- Sebastopol Historical Society
- Sebastopol Men's Shed
- Sebastopol Senior Citizens Club
- Showbiz Cinemas
- Springhill Farm
- St Severios Syrian Jacobite Church
- U3A Ukulele Minstrels
- Our wonderful volunteers
- And to everyone who attended - we thank you!

Merry Christmas Sebas!

Christmas has come early this year for the Sebastopol community with the opening of the Vickers Street Community Hub.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a safe and happy 2026.

And thank you to those who are working across the holiday season.

Best wishes, *Juliana Addison*

Juliana Addison MP
State Labor Member for Wendouree

📍 211 Dana Street, Ballarat 3350
☎ 5331 1003
✉ juliana.addison@parliament.vic.gov.au
🌐 julianaaddison.com.au



Community

Vickers Street Community Hub – Opening Soon

The countdown is on for Sebastopol’s transformational Vickers Street Community Hub, set to open its doors in 2026. The hub will become a vibrant space for community connection and services and will be the new home for the Sebastopol Senior Citizens Club, who will resume activities at the Vickers Street site in January 2026. We look forward to welcoming users of the old facility and new groups.



Bookings Now Open for 2026

Community groups and organisations can now book spaces for 2026. Find out more by contacting: communityhubs@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Spaces available for hire:

- Main Hall – accommodates up to 150 people.
- Meeting Rooms – 30 and 40 people respectively or combined for 70 people.
- Art & Craft Room – accommodates up to 20 people (vinyl flooring).

New Programs and Services Coming in 2026

- **Kindergarten** – Free program, enrol now via <https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au>
- **Playgroup** – Commences Term 1, 2026. For more information contact ballaratplaygroups@ballarat.vic.gov.au
- **Maternal & Child Health** – Bookings for appointments will open January 2026
- **Ageing Well Services** – Will commence weekly social activities for 55+ from 2 February 2026.

The Ageing Well Program will include:

- Strength for Seniors – Mondays, 2:00pm
- Tai Chi – Tuesdays, 1:30pm
- Cost: \$5 per session
- Bookings: Call 5320 5500 (ask for Ageing Well team) or email ageingwell@ballarat.vic.gov.au
- Visit: <https://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/ageing-well-ballarat>

Community Welcome Day

In early 2026 a community celebration will be held at Vickers Street Community Hub. Sign up to the City of Ballarat’s Community Hubs newsletter to be kept up to date as details are confirmed for this event.

The project is supported by \$4.5 million from the Federal Government’s Investing in Our Communities program and \$4.5 million from the State Government’s Building Blocks Capacity program. An official opening with key stakeholders will be held in December.

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Community

'Sinkhole' at Marty Busch



On 20 November, the City of Ballarat reported that a sinkhole had developed at the northern entrance to Marty Busch Reserve. It was reported to be a historic mine about 18 metres deep and was fenced off while a plan to safely treat it is developed. Ben Wright, President of Sebastopol Historical Society commented, "Sebastopol's mining history has a funny way of raising its head from time to time, reminding us of its ever present but often hidden nature. It also reminds us that the perils of an open mine shaft are the same, even 175 odd years later. For the history buffs, this shaft marks the site of the Equitable Company mine - which was sunk upon the Frenchman's lead in 1855. It is notable for being the location where steam engines were first used at Sebastopol, when mine manager James Cuthbertson installed a beam engine to power lifting equipment at the claim in 1856."

Sebastopol Lions update

Well Christmas is fast approaching and that means we are busy selling Christmas Cakes and Puddings, along with our Raffle. You can find us in the foyer of Coles Sebastopol most days. Cakes start at \$16 each and Puddings from \$10 each.

Thanks to our supporters the following prizes have been obtained for the raffle this year:

First Prize - \$1500 Holiday Voucher for Moama Riverside Holiday & Tourist Park

Second Prize - \$500 Holiday Voucher for Moama Riverside Holiday & Tourist Park

Third Prize - \$450 Holiday Voucher for 2 nights stay at Murray River Resort

Fourth Prize - \$100 Patchwork Quilt

Fifth Prize - \$50 Bunnings

Tickets are \$2. The raffle will be drawn 22/12/2025.

Funds raised from our cake sales and raffle goes towards the work we do in our community including but not limited to the scholarships we provide during December for graduates from the following schools: Magpie Primary School, Delacombe Primary School, Sebastopol Primary School, Phoenix P-12 Community College. To all graduating students we wish you the best in your future endeavours.

Always fighting for Sebastopol!



Joe McCRACKEN MP
MEMBER FOR WESTERN VICTORIA



17 Lydiard St North, Ballarat VIC 3350



www.joemccracken.com.au



joe.mccracken@parliament.vic.gov.au



03 5332 2405

Community

Sports Award for Connecting Sebastopol Community News

We are excited to announce that *Connecting Sebastopol Community News* has taken home an award for Best Sports Reporting at the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV) 2025 Awards. The award was received for an article in Issue 10 - June 2025, titled "Sebastopol Football Netball Club celebrates Indigenous Round" written by Janine, Chenay and John from Sebastopol Football Netball Club. Judge Lisa Dennis, Editor of the Castlemaine Mail, stated that this year's award was once again very difficult to judge.



Emily Macdonald (left) editor of *Connecting Sebastopol Community News* accepts the award.

Lisa's comments reflect why she ultimately chose this article as the winner. "This article draws you in with a fantastic front page image. The editorial is clear and concise and touches on a number of interesting topics including the club's recent 1975 premiership reunion, the Indigenous Round, junior involvement in the special event, and also club efforts to raise funds for MND keeping the reader interested and engaged. The story spills to inside with a fantastic supporting image of one of the junior players who participated in the Indigenous Round and wraps with a great pointer encouraging readers to follow the local club for updates with a fun Burra graphic. A great story and overall design." The awards were held on 11 October at Mecure Ballarat during the 20th Annual CNAV Conference. The win follows a successful year at the 2024 CNAV Awards where *Connecting Sebastopol Community News* was awarded Best Newspaper in our first year as a member. A full list of award winners can be found on the CNAV website: <https://cnav.org.au/>

Empowering the community one signature at a time

Wayne B Jones JP 14143, Ballarat Region



Since his appointment as a Justice of the Peace (JP) on 19 August 2021, Wayne has exemplified what it means to serve with integrity and compassion. His contributions include

1,138 personal attendances at community centres, offering vital witnessing services, including support for documents such as Certified Copies, Affidavits, Statutory Declarations and many others.

Wayne is the JP Coordinator at three Document Signing Stations in Ballarat:

- Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, Sebastopol
- Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre, Wendouree
- Inter Club Drop-In Centre, Ballarat Central

He formerly served at Bacchus Marsh Police Station, Creswick, and Delacombe Neighbourhood Centre.

Wayne's presence at these centres has created a trusted and accessible environment for individuals navigating important life decisions. His not only celebrates his service but also highlights the vital role Justices of the Peace play in strengthening community trust and legal accessibility.

Wayne's other notable achievements include being the recipient of numerous awards including the *Above and Beyond Award* in 2010 and 2008, a recognition from then Prime Minister / Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard for exceptional dedication to community service.

To access JP services in Sebastopol, drop into Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, 11 Tuppen Dr.

No appointments needed. JP services are available during school terms as follows:

Monday: 10:00am - 3:00pm

Tuesday: 10:00am - 12:30pm

Wednesday: 9:30am - 11:30am

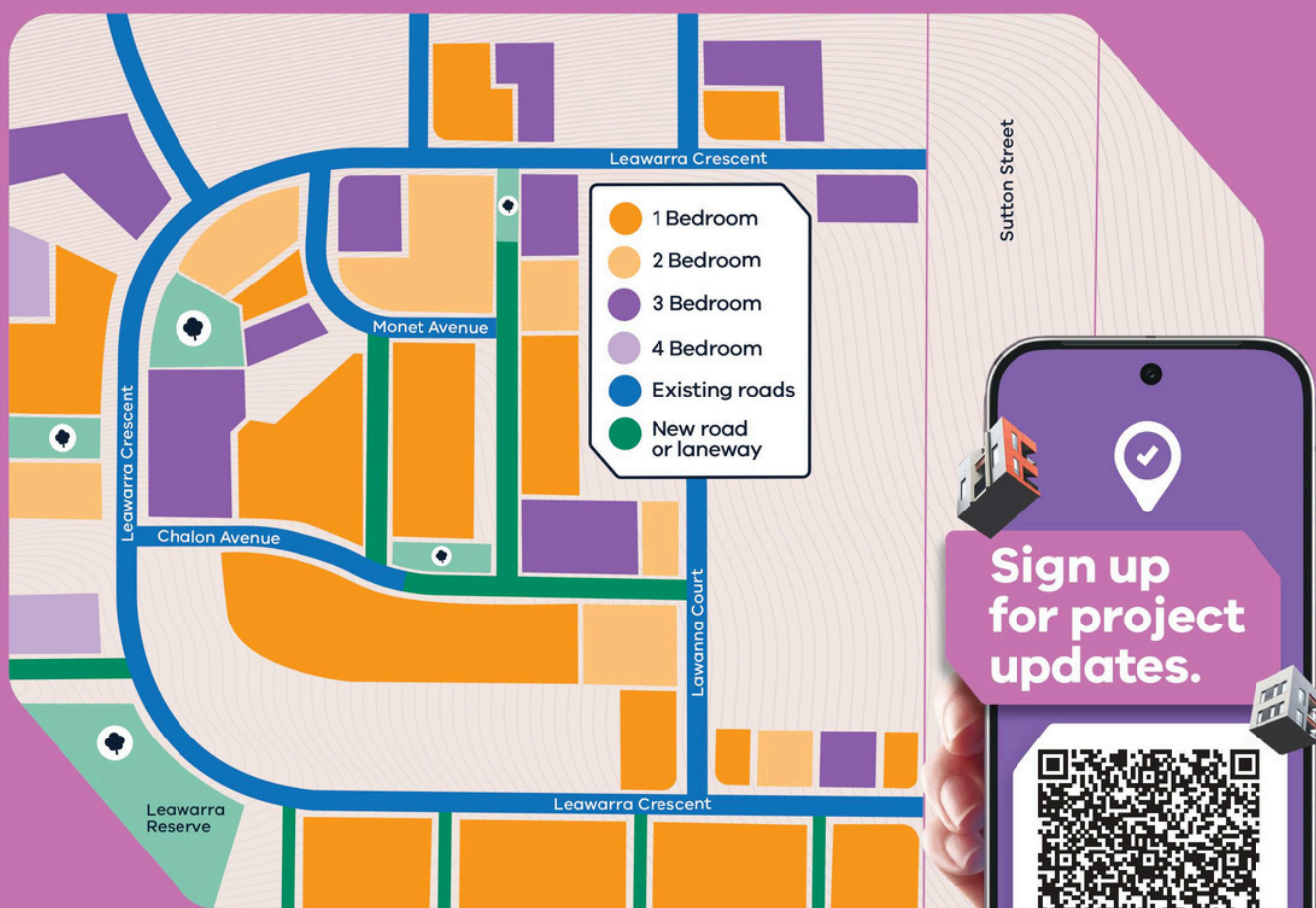
Thursday: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Friday: 10:00am - 2:00pm

181 new homes for Delacombe.

Work is underway to deliver new social and affordable homes in Delacombe for the people who need them most. Homes that are modern, comfortable and energy-efficient. There'll be a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom homes, with at least 5% fully accessible for Victorians living with disabilities. With new streets and upgraded open spaces for the community.

Q BIG HOUSING BUILD



Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre is a place for you to connect with your community. From social gatherings to volunteer opportunities and a wide range of short courses, we have something for everyone!

Short Courses - Enrol now for Term 1 2026!

There are over 50 free or low-cost short courses on offer to help build your skills and knowledge. Our Adult Education courses are designed to help you find employment or work towards continuing your education.

Some of the many courses available include:



GARDENING

Urban Farming

COMPUTERS

Basic & Intermediate Computers
 Business Administration Skills
 Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)
 Excel Basics & Beyond
 Xero / MYOB



HOSPITALITY

Commercial Kitchen Skills
 Cafe Skills / Become a Barista
 Front of House
 Basic Cooking Skills for Men



Skills for study
work and life

ART & CRAFT

Beginners & Intermediate Sewing
 Knit & Crotchet for Beginners
 Op Shop Upcycling
 Art, Create & Learn



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 Prepare for IELTS
 Reading & Writing Basics
 Baking with Language



Contact us to find out more . . .

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

☎ 03 5329 3273 ✉ reception@ballaratnc.org.au

📍 11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol 🌐 www.ballaratnc.org.au



KEEP OUR DOORS OPEN



Strong communities start in shared spaces and shared moments. Neighbourhood Houses are essential for fostering those moments and connections. Every week, 185,000 people access 400+ Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria, including 4 in Ballarat, for resilience, friendship, wellbeing, learning, inclusion, and connection.

Neighbourhood Houses have faced rising costs, increasing community need and an erosion of core funding. Our funding no longer covers staff wages, let alone operational costs. Around half of all Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria are running at a loss. This cannot continue.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria is asking the government to increase funding for Neighbourhood Houses by 25%.

Show your support by signing a postcard at any Neighbourhood House in Ballarat or filling out an online postcard online at: www.nhvic.org.au/2026-campaign

Thank you for your support

Community

New Community Street Library in Vickers Street

Calling all Sebas book lovers! Here's a new supply of happy reading for all locals! As a new part of its community service to Sebastopol, the Men's Shed is in the process of setting up a weather-proof Street Library, for use by the public.

How does it work? The Street Library Box will be set up at the front of the Shed at 201 Vickers Street, and people are welcome to place a book of their own into the library, when they take any book out to take home to read. This principle of book exchange should keep the stock constantly turning over, but we will have a Shed member keeping an eye on the library, so that there are always books in stock. We will try to stock a range of books, and to cater for all ages, including children. Shed members are building a secure box for the purpose, and are about to put signage on it before mounting it near our front door footpath. Here's a shot of it during construction; before the installation of Perspex doors and signage.



The success of the street library, of course, will depend on the honesty of users, and hopefully an absence of pilfering! We hope that our faith in human nature is well founded. So next time you might be in the area, grab a book you don't want from home and drop it into the Community Street Library when you choose a book for yourself. We hope that readers will use this service. By the way, if anyone wishes to get rid of surplus books from home, you are welcome to drop them in to the shed, and we can use them as back-up stock if/as needed. Thank you to everyone from Sebastopol for your support of our new community project. We hope that you enjoy it.

A note from the Men's Shed

The final Sebastopol Men's Shed Market this year will be held on Sat 13 December from 10 am till 12 noon. PS: Remember that the Shed would love to have any of your old mowers, no matter what condition, so that we can repair them and provide cheap mowers to the community. Thank you!

PPS: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone! The Shed will be closed from Sat 19 Dec. till Mon 5 Jan.



Sebastopol Mens Shed Inc.
 Strength thru Fellowship
 201 Vickers Street, Sebastopol
 Open: Mon - Fri, 9am - 2pm
 03 5379 9256 / office@sebasmenshed.org
www.sebasmenshed.org

Catherine KING MP
 FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BALLARAT



Wishing everyone a safe and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Standing up for our community!

 (03) 5338 8123
 Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au
 www.catherineking.com.au

Authorised by Catherine King MP, 5 Lydiard St Nth, VIC Ballarat 3550

Community

Elements Health & Fitness

Elements Health and Fitness is where health, fitness, mindfulness, and community seamlessly blend. Located at 97 Hertford Street Sebastopol, we take a holistic approach to health and wellness, offering a variety of group fitness classes, personal training, and healing sessions tailored to your unique journey.



Since our start as Elements Mind Body Studio in 2017 and our move to Hertford Street in 2020, we've remained dedicated to integrating exercise with mindfulness. As a locally owned and operated gym, we're proud to offer a comprehensive range of Life Fitness and Hammer Strength equipment.

Members have unlimited access (24/7) to our large gym floor!

Our diverse group classes include Element Barre, Sprint, Yin Yoga, Pilates, Yoga, Boxing, Circuits, Pilates Reformer and Strength Training. Beyond standard fitness offerings, we also provide personal training, sound healings, meditation and yoga programs, all designed to foster balance and serenity for both body and mind.



Contact us to book a FREE two-week trial when you mention this article!

Address 97 Hertford Street Sebastopol

Phone 03 4343 1986

Email admin@elementshhealthfitness.com.au

Website <https://elementshhealthfitness.com.au>

Connect with Family Link at Vickers Street Hub

Early in 2026, Relationships Australia Victoria will launch the Family Link at the Vickers Street Community Hub in Sebastopol. The Family Link aims to make it easier for families to connect with each other, join in community life, and find the right support when they need it. The focus is on everyday relationships that help families feel supported, understood, and able to support others in turn.

At the centre of the initiative is the Social Connector, a dedicated worker based at the hub who will:

- encourage friendships and informal connections between families
- help groups stay in touch after a program or event finishes
- make local supports more visible and accessible
- notice where families may be missing out and help bridge the gap.

The Social Connector role is being trialled in Sebastopol and will grow in response to local needs and feedback. RAV would love your ideas on what 'The Family Link' should look like.

Please complete the short online survey by scanning the QR code here or visiting forms.office.com/r/5yLL4t7NZt



To find out more contact:

Emily - Social Connector

Email: emurphy@rav.org.au Phone: 0418 232 332
<https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/>

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ABORIGINAL ART ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Community

The Heart Behind the Open Door Op Shop

By Cathy Sim Jayco - Sutherland

Spring's finally here, or so they say. In Ballarat, you can start the day in sunshine, end up in a wind tunnel, and still wonder if you should've brought a jacket and sunscreen. But no matter what the weather's doing, there's always warmth (and a good laugh) waiting inside Sebastopol's Open-Door Op Shop at 106 Albert St. If you've ever popped in for a bargain, a chat, or just to duck in for a moment, you've probably been greeted by one of our friendly volunteers. And if you stayed long enough, you've likely left with more than you planned: a story, a smile, maybe even a cuppa. Because here's the thing, it's not really about the clothes or the shelves. It's about the people. The volunteers who keep the place running are the real treasure. They show up rain, shine, or sideways wind, always ready with a smile, a story, and a cuppa. I had a chat with a few of them recently and asked two simple questions.

What would you say to someone about volunteering here? What made you come and volunteer? Here's what they told me, straight from the heart.



Barb "The Op Shop is just fabulous! It's the camaraderie and everything that comes with it. You've got to be a team player and it's all about working together and getting along. My husband passed away, and my sister-in-law invited me to join. Best thing I could've done; it gave me an outlet. You meet people, you chat, and you feel part of something that matters."

Leanne "It's a great place to volunteer. You can learn how a shop works, meet people, and learn new skills. Everyone's welcome, no experience needed! Back in 2016, I was in hospital and told I'd never work again. They even tried to give me a walking frame, but I wouldn't accept it. I didn't give up, and now, here I am, doing what they said I couldn't."



Jane "I'd tell them to come and join us! It's the people that make it special. We have jokes, we laugh, and I'm not lonely anymore. I love, love, love and love them. I just wanted to help and give something back to the community. Seeing people find a bargain, having a chat, and being part of something that makes others happy, I love it. And yes, I still spot a few treasures myself!"

Heather "I'd say, come and be part of something good! It's not just about sorting clothes, it's the laughter, the chats, and the friendships. Anne and I make the sandwiches on Wednesdays, and we love hearing people say how good they are. It's simple, but it brings people together. I came here for the cause, supporting the Op Shop and what it stands for. Helping the community, offering good-quality things at affordable prices and making sure nothing goes to waste. I love being part of that...and the food's pretty good too!" (laugh)



So next time you're in Sebas, drop by Open-Door Op Shop. Whether you're after a bargain, a friendly chat, or just passing through, you'll always find a warm welcome, and maybe a few surprises too.

Central Highlands

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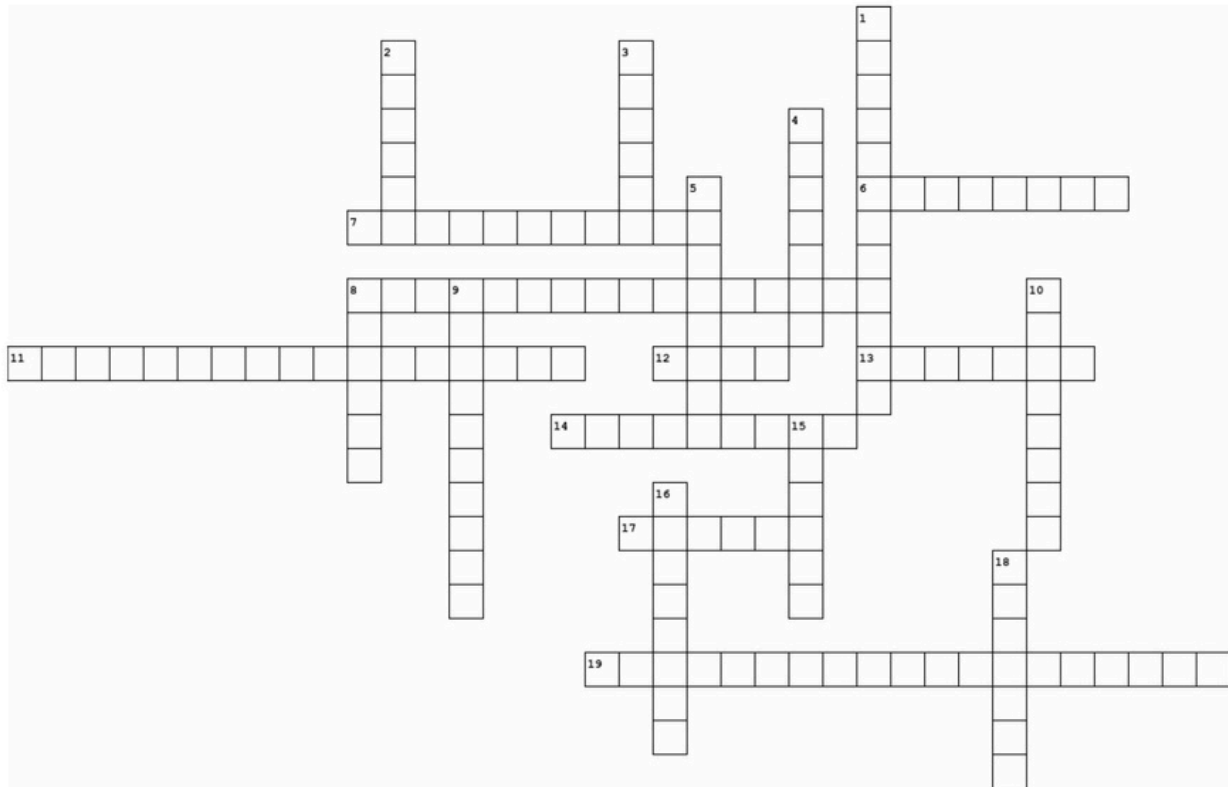


Historically Speaking

For something a bit different this issue, **Sebastopol Historical Society** member Margaret Phyland has cleverly created a crossword to challenge reader's knowledge of Sebastopol's history. Enjoy!

Sebastopol History Crossword No. 1

Prepared by Sebastopol Historical Society



Across

6. An old district name for the southern end of Sebastopol that has fallen out of use. (Also, the plural of a name for a shoe repairer.)
7. Name of the church in Albert Street where services were conducted in Welsh in the 1860s. (6,5)
8. The mansion in Grant Street originally built by the Leckie family and which later became the St Joseph's Boys' Home. (10,6)
11. The Sebastopol Football Netball Club have their club rooms here. (5,5,7)
12. The precious metal found in quartz rock deep beneath Sebastopol.
13. A shoe factory on the southwest corner of Yarrowee & Vickers Streets, that was later taken over by Rivers.
14. Some mullock heaps were removed from Sebastopol to form the walls of which Ballarat reservoir? (5,4)
17. Name of first European settler in this district. A reserve adjoining the Yarrowee Creek is named for him.
19. The gold mine that once occupied the site of the current day Coles Supermarket. (6,3,6,4)

Down

1. Large piles of waste dirt excavated during mining activity. Some remain in Crown Street. (7,5)
2. A former valve factory in Sebastopol which shares the name of the 1854 gold miner's rebellion.
3. The Dreamtime creator of Wadawurrung Country.
4. Well known butchery near the corner of Albert and Victoria Streets, Sebastopol.
5. Hotel once located on the northwest corner of Rubicon and Skipton Streets. (3,5)
8. This river meets the sea near Ocean Grove. The Yarrowee River is one of its tributaries.
9. Sebastopol Women's Soccer Team. (3,7)
10. Nickname for Sebastopol. (3,5)
15. The main street in Sebastopol and named for Queen Victoria's consort (husband).
16. A famous biscuit factory once located in Victoria St. Ballarat East.
18. Surname of the First Mayor of Sebastopol. A local street is named in honour of him.

Answers are on page 18.

Sports Score

Building for the future on and off the field



Sebastopol Football Netball Club senior netballers

Sebastopol Football Netball Club (SFNC) is celebrating a year of growth and achievement both on and off the field, with significant infrastructure upgrades and community programs strengthening its place as one of Ballarat's leading sporting clubs.

Earlier this season, the Burras unveiled their second netball court, giving the club the capacity to host dual gate games and expand opportunities for players and supporters. The installation of a new electronic scoreboard on Oval No. 2 has also enhanced the game-day experience. Together with two of the region's best ovals and now two top-quality netball courts, Sebastopol can proudly boast some of the finest facilities in country sport.

Looking ahead, a tender will be released in the new year for construction of new clubrooms at Dick Fleming Oval (Oval No. 2), with construction scheduled to commence April/May 2026.

The project will deliver modern changerooms, a function space and canteen facilities—an investment

that will secure Sebastopol's position at Marty Busch Reserve as a premier community hub. The club has also flagged upgrading the Oval No. 1 scoreboard to a state-of-the-art electronic system as its next priority and is looking for a major sponsor to help fund the project for naming rights. Chenay Wilkinson (President) can be contacted on 042893044 if you know of any business happy to jump on board this great opportunity to support grassroots sport.

Off the field, the club has been equally active. Netball coaches have completed Year 2 of the Lisa Alexander Coaching Program, under the guidance of the former Australian Diamonds coach. The junior football program has partnered with Collingwood Football Club to launch an Indigenous Pathway Program, fostering opportunities for young players.

The return of the Auskick program in 2025 has provided a vital foundation for future junior participation. Meanwhile, Sebastopol's involvement in the Delacombe Primary School Boys Program saw 40 families welcomed to Marty Busch for a fun and engaging training session.



2026 Season - UNDER 16 FOOTBALLERS WANTED

We are looking for players to join our Under 16 football program for the 2026 season.

Senior Pre Season Football Training

Training has commenced with great numbers and enthusiasm. New players are always welcome.

Tuesdays & Thursdays – from 5.30pm

Contact John Lyon – 0407 051 449

Senior Netball Pre-Season

Thursday nights at 6pm.

Contact Kiya – 0428 008 203

Keep an eye on our socials for announcements regarding junior training for 2026:

Facebook: [Sebastopol Football Netball Club](#)

Instagram: [sebastopolfnc](#)

Crowley's Lawn Mowing

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Phone Daryl

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School Report

Ballarat Christian College & Sebastopol Primary School musical collaboration



Our Primary Choir, under the direction of Performing Arts teacher, Mrs Sarah Rodwell, in Term 3 had the pleasure of welcoming the choir from Sebastopol Primary School, accompanied by their Music teacher, Miss Kellie Battiston. The visit was filled with joy and musical exchange, as both choirs performed for one another and later came together for a spontaneous and fun rendition of the song 'Lollipop'. The students thoroughly enjoyed the collaboration and shared experience. It was a fantastic opportunity for both schools to connect, foster musical friendships, and strengthen ties within our local school community.

Mitch Tambo at Magpie PS



Magpie Primary School had the pleasure of hosting Mitch Tambo for a special performance! Mitch Tambo is a proud Gamilaraay man and award-winning First Nations artist known for blending traditional language and sounds with contemporary music. He rose to fame on Australia's Got Talent with his powerful bilingual version of "You're the Voice." Mitch shares his culture through music, storytelling and performance, inspiring pride, unity and joy wherever he goes. Magpie Primary School were

joined by students from other local schools to share in the experience. The energy was incredible - students were up on their feet, singing and dancing along, with big smiles all around. It was an unforgettable celebration of music, culture and joy!

A message of thanks from Sebastopol Primary School

The Sebastopol Primary School community would like to thank all of our amazing supporters for your past and continued support for 2025. All of your generous donations and contributions towards our fundraising efforts have helped us greatly over the past few years to improve our school and provide opportunities for all of our children. Some of the initiatives that Sebastopol Primary School has implemented include:

- Expanding our school's library of decodable readers for children in the early learning stage and chapter books for more advanced readers.
- Supporting the set up of our school's wellbeing hub that was added last year and which is used daily to support the wellbeing of students.
- An interactive science incursion for the whole school to encourage a love of science and hands on learning within our students.
- Much needed new choir shirts for our choir students to wear when attending competitions or events such as the opening of the Kmart wishing tree.
- Sporting equipment for the children to use both at play times and for structured PE classes.
- New bags and hats for all incoming prep students to help make the transition to school more affordable for families.

This would not have been possible without you all. Thank you, from the Fundraising Committee, Sebastopol Primary School

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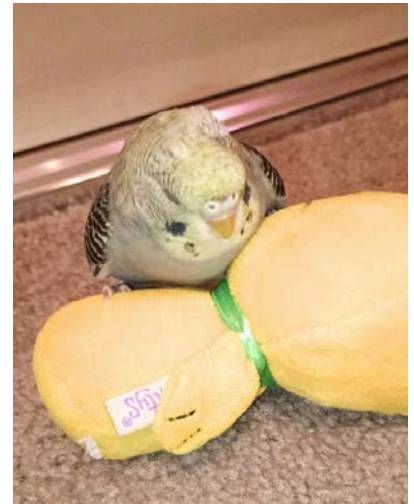
Call us Today: 03 5317 9229

Pets & Puzzles

Meet a Local!

Name: Rio

Bio: Rio is a 6-month-old budgie, named after the cartoon bird Rio. Angel rescued Rio as his parents had rejected him. Rio took to Angel straight away. He had lost his feathers from stress, but they have now grown back. Rio is healthy and happy in his new home.



Send us your pet pics!

Want to see your furry friend on this page? All kinds of pets are welcome.

Send a photo and bio to: community@ballaratnc.org.au

Guess where?

Can you guess what this building is and where it is located in Sebastopol?

Hint: It has recently changed its name and is Western Victoria's largest Social Enterprise employing people with disability.

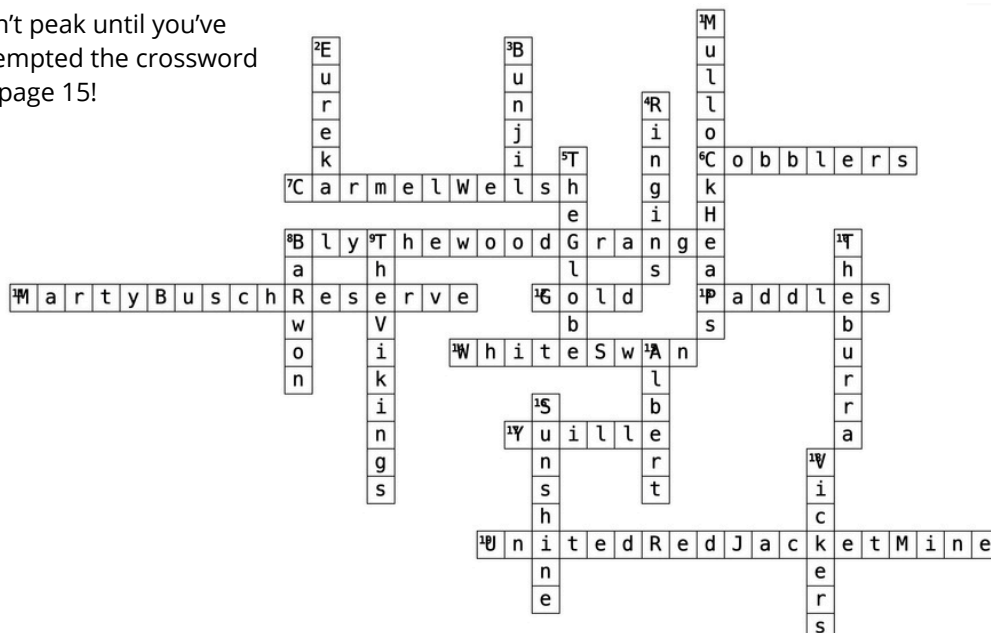
The answer is upside down at the bottom of this page

Photo by Will Lay



Sebastopol Historical Society Crossword No 1. Answers

Don't peek until you've attempted the crossword on page 15!



WHAT'S ON

December, January, February

Stick me on your fridge



CHRISTMAS
Carols Evening

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER | 5 PM
390 VICKERS STREET, SEBASTOPOL

LIGHT MEAL PROVIDED. BYO CUSHIONS, PILLOWS, BEANBAGS ETC. TO GET COSY WITH! CHAIRS AVAILABLE.

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FORAGERS FAIR

Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church
263 Albert Street, Sebastopol.

Saturday 6th December 2025 & 7th February 2026

9.00am—2.00pm



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- DEVONSHIRE TEAS
- CAKES & SLICES
- FILIPINO FOOD
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STEM Maker Project





A free 3-session STEM program for young people aged 12-18 in the Ballarat region.

- Session 1: Virtual Reality & 3D Game Design
- Session 2: Computer-Aided 3D Architecture
- Session 3: STEM Solutions for Local Issues

For more information, enquire online at thebrinary.com.au





Family History Drop-In

Whether you are just starting your family history research or have hit a wall on your journey, the Ballarat and District Genealogical Society can support your research and help analyse genealogical DNA results at this drop-in session.

When: Thursday 26 February from 1.30-3.30pm
Where: Sebastopol Library, 181 Albert St
This session is free. Bookings are not required.

Weaving with Donna Blackall

Join Taungurung/Yorta Yorta artist Donna Blackall for a hands-on weaving workshop using traditional coil basket techniques. Learn the fundamentals of weaving using local natural fibres while gaining an understanding of the cultural significance of the practice, its strong symbolism and storytelling abilities.

When: Sunday 8 February from 1.30-3.30pm
Where: Ballarat Library, 178 Doveton St North

This workshop is free but bookings are required. <https://events.humanitix.com/weaving-with-donna-blackall-summer-2025-26-ballarat-library>



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