

Connecting

# Sebastopol

# Community News

Awarded  
Best Sports  
Reporting  
2025

Awarded  
Best Victorian  
Community  
Newspaper  
2024

MARCH 2026 - ISSUE 13



Community members and volunteers enjoy a cuppa and conversation at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre's new Chatty Cafe

## Everyone welcome at Chatty Cafes

Chatty Cafes are popping up in Sebastopol, offering a friendly space for conversation and social connection. A new weekly Chatty Cafe at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre offers community members a place to have a chat, meet new people and enjoy morning tea prepared by volunteers. Chatty Cafes are free to attend and welcome community members of all ages and backgrounds, simply drop in and join a table to have a chat. Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre runs a Chatty Cafe in Sebastopol every Friday from 10:30am to 12:00pm at their Centre at 11 Tuppen Drive, as well as every Thursday from 10:30am to 11:30am at Delacombe Community Hub, 18 Nandiriog Drive. Sebastopol Library also offers a Chatty Cafe on the third Thursday of every month from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, upcoming dates are 16 April and 21 May. Chatty Cafes are part of a national scheme aimed at increasing social interactions and connecting communities. Find out more at [chattycafeaustralia.org.au](http://chattycafeaustralia.org.au) or call Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre on 5329 3273.

### Inside this issue:

- Community News
- Historically Speaking
- School Report
- Pets & Puzzles
- What's On

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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](http://www.ballaratnc.org.au)  
[reception@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:reception@ballaratnc.org.au)  
(03) 5329 3273

11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre welcomes all LGBTQIA+ communities



Scan QR code to visit the Connecting Sebastopol website and subscribe to the e-newsletter



### Upcoming Issues

This newsletter is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The next issue will be published in June 2026, submissions due by **Friday 29 May 2026** via email to [community@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto: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 us at:

[community@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto: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 copies of each issue are distributed around the Burra.

### 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](mailto: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
- Coles Sebastopol

# Connecting Sebastopol Community Meetup



Attendees at our first meetup for 2026 enjoyed pizza and a chat at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre. Photo by Will Lay.

Our first Sebastopol Community Meetup for 2026 was held on 6 March at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre and it was great to see a combination of new and 'old' faces. We were lucky to have Stewart Cullen from McCallum Enterprises as a guest speaker. Stewart provided us with some interesting insights into the work that goes on at their packing facility located in Walker Street, Sebastopol.

The group reminisced about the Sebastopol Community Showcase in November last year and what a great event it was for the Burra. A number of groups including the Sebastopol Senior Citizens Club and the Country Women's Association have reported gaining new members thanks to connections made on the day. The group discussed other things they would like to see happening in Sebastopol, including one suggestion of developing a 'welcome pack' for new residents to help inform them of groups and services in the Sebastopol area.

Emily Macdonald, who has led the Connecting Sebastopol initiatives since 2023, announced that she will be leaving this position to move into full-time employment after finishing study. Chrissy Austin will be taking over the position, joining the group with a wealth of experience in community engagement at Creswick Neighbourhood House. The group also enjoyed free pizza thanks to Dominos Sebastopol, and we would once again like to extend our thanks to store manager Corey, for being so passionate about supporting our group and our local community.

**NEXT COMMUNITY MEET-UP**  
**Friday 1 May, 10:30am – 12pm**  
**Club Wyndham**  
**220 Grant Street, Sebastopol**  
Join us for a cuppa and chat  
RSVP to: 5329 3273  
[community@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:community@ballaratnc.org.au)

## Did you know?

McCallum Enterprises, formally known as Ballarat Regional Industries (BRI) is the not-for-profit Social Enterprise division of McCallum Disability Services. Around 80 participants are employed at the Walker Street site in Sebastopol, which is a food accredited, Halal certified, food packaging facility. Products from some of your favourite local suppliers are packed at the site including Mars, Grounded Pleasures and Dads



Photo by Will Lay.

Oats. The Walker Street site has been operating since 1985, offering employment for people with a disability. McCallum Enterprises provides more than a wage – these jobs are a doorway to engagement in community life, enhanced feelings of self-worth and the promotion of citizenship.

## 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.



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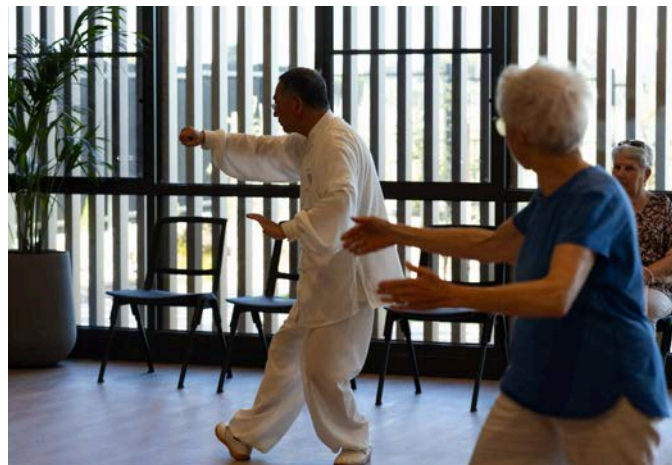
**Address** 97 Hertford Street Sebastopol

**Phone** 03 4343 1986

**Email** [admin@elementshhealthfitness.com.au](mailto:admin@elementshhealthfitness.com.au)

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

## Vickers Street Hub welcomes community



*A Tai Chi demonstration at the Vickers Street Hub Welcome Day. Photo supplied by City of Ballarat.*

On Saturday 21 February the brand-new Vickers Street Community Hub in Sebastopol opened its doors to the community for a Welcome Day. The event drew a strong turnout, with 183 community members attending from 10am-1pm. Forty families were able to tour the new kindergarten while receiving information about enrolments. Several referrals were also made to Supported Playgroups and community playgroups. Visitors enjoyed a range of fun social connection activities delivered by the Ageing Well team, including demonstrations of Tai Chi and Strength for Seniors.

Community feedback was overwhelmingly positive! Some of the community comments are below:

- "A venue like this is what Sebastopol needed."
- "This building has a really nice feel to it. The neutral colours and the landscaping with the existing trees makes you feel connected."

The Welcome Day marked an exciting start for the Vickers Street Community Hub. The Community Hubs team look forward to seeing it continue as a vibrant gathering place for all ages!

Contact the Hub on:

Email: [communityhubs@ballarat.vic.gov.au](mailto:communityhubs@ballarat.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 5329 1620

Or follow the Community Hubs on Humanitix:

<https://events.humanitix.com/host/city-of-ballarat-community-hubs>

# Soup Bus service arriving in Sebastopol in 2026

By Pru Saimoun



**The Ballarat Soup Bus, *Gertie*, is getting a mate, *Jono*, which means there will soon be an extra Soup Bus to be sited in Sebastopol at the new Vickers Street Community Hub.**

Original bus *Gertie* recently had a face lift and returned to service the CBD site at Cameron's on Doveton Street. *Jono*, the second bus, is currently having some mechanical work done. Once complete, *Jono* will take over from *Gertie* at Cameron's and *Gertie* will be making her debut in Sebastopol.

The Ballarat Soup Bus, run by Ontrack Foundation Inc and founded by Craig Schepis who is the foundation's president, has been offering meals to people who are homeless or in need, for 18 years. The site at Cameron's on Doveton Street is open Monday - Thursday 7.30pm to 9pm, Sundays 5.30pm - 7.30pm.

Ontrack foundation vice-president Carol, said a need for a service in the Sebastopol area was identified and Ontrack is planning to fill that need. The need for services such as Ontrack provides has expanded exponentially in the past two years, stretching the capacity of volunteers and supporters to exhaustion level. Carol said this had slowed a bit in the past six months but they were seeing people who had never asked for help before, who were just able to pay rent and bills, but were falling short on food.

One of the fastest growing groups in need was women over 50, and a lot of people can't afford rent

on Centrelink payments, Carol said. Carol has nothing but praise for the amazing volunteers who cook, serve, drive the buses and donate food and time 52 weeks a year. Volunteers also make gloves, blankets and hats and give out coats when the weather turns in winter. At the old Wendouree Community Hub in Violet Grove, the soup bus serves a sit-down meal to people who are experiencing homelessness or are in need, twice a week. The Soup Bus works closely with the Wendouree Community Hub, St Vinnies and Soul Food. "We all

collaborate and share resources," Carol said. "Together we make a difference to this community." There is also a top-up pantry for people to take fruit and vegetables, some frozen food, snacks and milk. This is all donated by businesses such as Shepp Cannery, Hip Pocket, Beechworth Bakery, Food Bank and Spring Hill, to name a few of the many generous supporters, who give week after week.

Meals are precooked at commercial kitchens in Ballarat, then heated on the bus and served from the bus. There is usually a choice of two casseroles and a dessert, plus top-up tins for later, and snacks to take away.

"We are extremely fortunate," Carol said. "If I put a call out for something we need, people respond. I just have to say, 'I really need this,' and at some stage it appears. There is lots of support across the community." She said however, that supporting people in need through the Soup Bus and sit-down meals, while vital, was basically crisis management. Which is why Ontrack also offers scholarships and support to make it easier for people who might otherwise have to leave school, to stay on.

Ontrack's mission is to support people in acute need, but to also encourage development of individual, family and community growth and connection.

**Keep an eye on 'The SoupBus' on Facebook for updates or contact the foundation on 0419 394 406 / [info@ontrackfoundation.org.au](mailto:info@ontrackfoundation.org.au)**

## The 1<sup>st</sup> Sebastopol Girl Guides



*The Girl Guides took part in Clean Up Australia Day.*

The 1st Sebastopol Girl Guides are excited to have found a new home at the Ballarat South Community Hub. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Carmel Welsh Presbyterian Church for kindly hosting us over the past two years, and to the team at the Hub for helping arrange our new meeting space.

We finished 2025 with a festive Christmas-themed camp, where the girls enjoyed a variety of outdoor challenges and activities. The Guides then provided service to the community by assisting at the Bunnings Family Christmas event, helping children decorate pots and plant seedlings.

Term 1 has already been busy and full of fun. On the warmer evenings, the girls enjoyed outdoor water activities, and practiced constructing ballistas in preparation for a friendly challenge with the local

Scouts. On February 22nd, the Guides and Scouts celebrated World Thinking Day and Founders Day, marking the joint birthdays of the World Chief Scout and World Chief Guide, Robert and Olave Baden-Powell. In an activity the Founders would surely have approved of, the Scouts and Guides used poles, ropes and their knotting skills to build devices to launch water balloons at each other across the field. The Guides proudly claimed the first direct hit.

'National Tell-a-Fairy-Tale Day' gave the Guides a chance to dive into the world of classic stories through a series of imaginative challenges.

The girls worked together to build Jack a new beanstalk, followed Hansel and Gretel's breadcrumb trail to the Gingerbread Cottage where they decorated biscuits, rescued a dragon by deciphering ancient runes, and helped Little Red Riding Hood find a safe path through the forest to Grandma's house.

The Guides recently made a positive contribution to the Sebastopol community by taking part in Clean Up Australia Day, an activity they support each year. The girls spent time collecting bags of rubbish and recyclables from the grounds of Phoenix Community College.

The 1st Sebastopol Girl Guides welcome girls from Grade 5 and above to join us on Thursday evenings at Ballarat South Community Hub, Tuppen Drive. For more information, contact Mrs Fischer - 0417 535 714.



### Delivering for our community!

- Cheaper healthcare with more bulk billing
- 5 per cent deposits for first homebuyers
- Cutting student debt by 20 per cent
- Cheaper PBS medicines
- More tax cuts for every taxpayer (from 1 July 2026)



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

**Catherine King MP** FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BALLARAT

**Standing up for our community!**

## Fundraising efforts by local 10 year old, Ava



Ava with Sue Pitman from Country Women's Association.

Sebastopol members of Country Women's Association were delighted to have a visit from 10 year old Ava, granddaughter of a member at their last meeting. Ava wrote in a letter that she had witnessed the good work of the local Branch.

"I am aware that you are a non for profit organisation, you mainly fundraise all your funds through members. With these funds you spread across multiple other non for profit organizations throughout our local community. You do not think of yourselves but always helping out, growing others locally. Knowing all this above I decided to do my own little fundraiser, raising funds for CWA Sebastopol so you can distribute to those other local organisations in need. Please accept my donation of \$107 for these purposes." Ava we appreciate your hard work and will use the funds to help local disadvantaged children. The future is in good hands with girls like Ava.



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## Children's play sessions offer family connection



The Relationships Australia team shared news about Family Link at the Sebastopol Community Showcase.

The Relationships Australia team were thrilled to meet so many amazing Sebastopol community members at the Sebastopol Community Showcase in November, now our Family Link program is live at the Vickers Street Community Hub. The Family Link is about helping community members feel more connected and part of the Sebastopol Community.

We have teamed up with Parent Place to host free drop-in play sessions every Wednesday during school terms. Our Social Connector Emily is at the Hub from 9am- 4pm and is looking forward to hearing your ideas about what Sebastopol needs so pop in and say hi. The Family Link creates a safe, inclusive space to connect with other families while your children play.

To keep the fun going during the school holidays, we will have a free activity on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> of April 9.30am - 11.30am at the Vickers Street Community Hub. To find out more, please contact Emily

Email: [emurphy@rav.org.au](mailto:emurphy@rav.org.au)

Phone: 0418 232 332

Website: [www.rav.org.au/the-family-link](http://www.rav.org.au/the-family-link)

## Reading and Growing at the Sebas Men's Shed



The Street Library is located at 201 Vickers St, Sebastopol.

Since our last newsletter, the new Community Street Library has been installed and appears to be working well. It is fantastic to see that many community members are already making use of the wide range of books available. The operating etiquette is simple:

### Street Library Operating Etiquette

1. Take a Book, Leave a Book if/when you can.
2. Return a book when read, as able.
3. No Strings Attached.
4. Please respect the process.
5. Happy reading! (And please make sure that both doors are closed.)

Many from the community attend our Men's Shed Saturday markets, as advertised on our Facebook page, and buy plants from the hundreds on sale that we have grown. To assist the Shed in this major area of our work, we have purchased and installed two Green Houses and Shelving over recent months. We were assisted in this purchase by a grant from the Australian Men's Shed



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

Association, but the majority of the funds came from our own income raised through markets. The greenhouses have covers to reduce heat from summer sun, and also include louvre openings and a fan outlet. The shelving is a marvellous addition, meaning that we can now stack and display flower pots more efficiently. We look forward to showing them to the community, so we hope to see you at a market one Saturday morning. You are most welcome. Upcoming markets are from 10am to 12 noon on March 28, April 11 & 25, May 16 & 30.

Each column we write includes a brief mention of our garden machinery service and sales, as it has become a major focus for a community benefit. If you want your mower or whipper snipper serviced cheaply, this is the place to come! Also, we restore old mowers and sell them very cheaply to locals. This comes about through donations of unused mowers from people, so if you have any unwanted mowers at home, please give them a second chance at the Shed! Thank you.

## BALLARAT ROCK N ROLL FESTIVAL 2026

BALLARAT HIGH SCHOOL 1726 STURT STREET, BALLARAT  
APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup> TO 12<sup>TH</sup> 2026

**Friday the 10<sup>th</sup> of April- night event:**  
The Stompin 88's  
Doors open at 7pm. Band performing from 7.30-11pm  
BYO drinks and nibbles. Raffle draw.  
Tickets via TryBooking or at the door on the night. \$25 per person.



**Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of April:**  
11am-1pm: The Vigilantes  
1-1.45pm: Partner line dancing with Diane and Kevin McCann  
2-4pm: Phoenix  
1.50-2.10pm: Dance demonstration by the Creswick Cloggers



**Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of April- night event:**  
A Band Called Twang and Jukebox Rock  
Doors open at 6pm. Bands performing from 6.30-11.30pm.  
BYO drinks and nibbles. Raffle draw.  
Tickets via TryBooking or at the door on the night. \$30 per person.



**Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of April:**  
11am-1pm: Rockin Daddys  
1-1.45pm: Dance demonstration by Renegades Line dancing  
2-4pm: Cobra 45s  
1.50-2.10pm: Dance demonstration by Aust. Irish Dance Company

**Information:**  
Food vendors and merchandise stalls over both days, a static car display on Sunday and a Lana-Rose Fashion best dressed competition on Sunday from 1-2pm in the school auditorium. Entry to the day events, including the fashion parade, is \$10 per person per day. Pay at the door. Children under 16yrs free entry. No dogs permitted on school grounds.

# The quiet achievers of the Open-Door Op Shop

By Cathy Sutherland



Volunteer John is an asset to the Open Door Op Shop.

If you have visited the Sebastopol Open Door Op Shop lately, you will have noticed, it is getting busy. More familiar faces, more new ones, more smiles at the door. Sebastopol is showing up, and that is something to be proud of. But behind every great find and every warm welcome is a story most shoppers never see. Head out the back and you will find a team quietly getting on with it, the work that makes everything up front possible. The sorting room is the engine room. Donations roll in every week in every condition you can imagine, and this team goes through every single piece. They sort, assess and label, making sure only the right things hit the shop floor at the right time. Nothing gets missed. It is steady, unglamorous work, and they do it without complaint. The shed plays its own quiet role too, holding seasonal stock safely when displays change, keeping the whole shop ticking over no matter what comes through the door.

They take care of each other too. Lifting limits respected, walkways clear, storage done properly. Not because someone told them to, because that is just how they roll. And then there is John. While everyone else sorts and labels, John loads the rubbish onto his trailer and makes regular trips to the tip, keeping the shed clear and ready for whatever is next. Hard work. Dirty work. Done without fuss, every single time. John, we see you. Cheers, mate.

Open Door Op Shop is currently open 9am to 2pm, Tuesday - Thursday at 106 Albert St, Sebastopol. From Friday 10 April, we will also open Fridays 9am to 2pm.

# Mum's Supper Club

Local mums recently gathered at the Vickers Street Community Hub for the first Ballarat Mums Supper Club, an evening designed to bring mothers together for connection, conversation and a shared meal. The relaxed gathering gave mums the opportunity to meet others in the community while their children played nearby. The Ballarat Mums Supper Club is a new initiative by Tiny Fork, a for-purpose organisation focused on creating meaningful connections for families through food and shared experiences.

Founder Anna Kingston said the idea came from recognising that many mums can feel isolated, especially in the early years of parenting. "I started the Ballarat Mums Supper Club because I wanted to create a simple space where mums could come together over dinner, talk and feel supported," she said. "The first evening was warm, welcoming and full of genuine conversation, which showed just how much spaces like this are needed."



Anna Kingston and daughter Indiana at the Vickers St Hub.

The evening brought together mums and their kids from across Ballarat, with many sharing stories, laughter and new friendships around the dinner table. The next Ballarat Mums Supper Club will take place this coming May. To learn more about Ballarat Mums Supper Club and other Tiny Fork community initiatives, join the mailing list at [www.tinyfork.com.au](http://www.tinyfork.com.au).

Need it near?  
Find it here!

Ballarat  
Community Directory

CITY OF  
BALLARAT

My Community  
Directory+Diary

## Volunteering dynamic duo Vicki and Lucy



*Vicki and her support dog Lucy love to help others.*

There is a woman in our community who is constantly thinking about people less fortunate, those who have fallen through the social safety net. Vicki Mallett spends most of her days helping others. Some days you will find Vicki at Orange Sky, where she volunteers as team leader at the free laundry service.

She supports people across the community experiencing homelessness and hardship. Giving people dignity through basics such as clean clothes and bedding and non-judgmental conversation.

Vicki has a secret weapon of cuteness to assist her, a support dog named Lucy. Lucy is an energetic, attentive miniature Labradoodle. She goes everywhere with Vicki and interacts with everyone. "People love her visits" said Vicki, "Lucy makes their day".

Vicki and Lucy check in on families living in tent communities in and around Ballarat to see what they may need. Vicki helps people to access and navigate community services, Centrelink, housing, charities and food banks and goes about her work with a wealth of previous experience in nursing, drugs and alcohol, disability, aged care and homelessness services. She knows her way around the systems, and she aims to facilitate people's needs. Vicki does everything off her own bat and does not profit from any of the amazing volunteer work she does. Thank you Vicki and Lucy, for your contribution to our community.

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# 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 2 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

Become a Barista / Cafe Skills

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Skills for study  
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## Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre

03 5329 3273 [reception@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:reception@ballaratnc.org.au)

11 Tuppen Drive, Sebastopol [www.ballaratnc.org.au](http://www.ballaratnc.org.au)



## TRAINERS WANTED

Are you interested in helping people to learn a new skill? We are looking for Trainers / Tutors / staff for our **Learn Local** courses in the following areas:

- Garden, Horticulture and Landscaping
- Chef or experienced Cook
- Hospitality
- Family Learning Playgroup
- Digital Literacy



Ideally you would have a teaching degree or other qualification, or be an industry expert in your field. You will have experience working with people from all walks of life including those with low literacy, disabilities, multicultural backgrounds and other intersectional barriers.

### The Contract Trainer role involves:

- Delivery of a weekly Adult Education class between 2.5 to 5 hours duration, courses vary in length from 1 to 8 weeks.
- Resources and session plans are developed for every course. You will have input into these tools and can personalise the content.
- Classes are small generally between 6-8 people. There are no exams or tests, learners receive a competency based assessment.
- The contract rate is approximately \$43 per hour, plus superannuation where eligible.
- Days and times vary and can be personalised to the trainers availability.

Please send a resume to **Catriona** on [reception@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:reception@ballaratnc.org.au) if you are interested in finding out more about these roles.

## An update from the Sebastopol Lions Club

By Narelle Dare



*Friendly members of the Sebastopol Lions Club.*

We have been busy with our BBQ's and voluntary work over the Christmas / New Year period and would like to thank our supporters. After the devastating fires that have rocked our neighbouring communities we voted at our last meeting to donate \$7,000 to the fire recovery services in the Streatham / Carranballac / Skipton area and \$5,000 to those in the Harcourt

area. An additional donation going to the Australian Lions Foundation which distributes to disaster areas in urgent need. These donations would not have been possible without the support of the Sebastopol and wider Ballarat community that support us with our cake sales, mints, and BBQ's.

A Lions BBQ is held at the Ballarat Farmers Market in the North Gardens on the second and fourth Saturdays every month. A BBQ was provided for the Clean Up Australia crew working around the Yarrowee catchment area and another was provided at the Welcome Day at the new Vickers Street Community Hub in Sebastopol.

We volunteer our time and effort to support the needs of our local area. If you think you would like to join us in giving back to your community, please don't hesitate to make contact for further information.

Sebastopol & District Lions Club Contact:  
Chris Glare - 0418 124 834.

# Supporting Sebas

As your local State Member of Parliament, I'm on your side and delivering for the Sebastopol community.



## Juliana Addison MP

State Labor Member for Wendouree

📍 211 Dana Street, Ballarat 3350

☎ 5331 1003

✉ [juliana.addison@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:juliana.addison@parliament.vic.gov.au)

🌐 [julianaaddison.com.au](http://julianaaddison.com.au)



## Fashion upcycling

By Pru Saimoun

**Have you ever found a gorgeous item of clothing at the op shop but had to reluctantly put it back because it's just not the right fit for you?**

The answer is in Sebastopol and it will not only have you confident in buying anything at the op shop that begs for a new home, it provides huge satisfaction, contributes to the environment and develops your sewing skills. It is the popular four-week Op Shop Upcycling course run at Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre in Tuppen Drive.

The course is designed to give anyone, from beginners to more advanced sewers, the skills to transform a piece of op shop clothing into a smart or fun addition to the wardrobe that could be worn to an interview or work.



*Karen leads the upcycling classes.*

Led by Karen for the past two years, students have created a variety of projects such as stylish jackets from jeans, a skirt from men's dress ties, and cutting a dress to fit it as a skirt and top, to name a few. Karen said there were three main options in upcycling to change or make a garment. These were to change the size or fit, to mend and add decorations such as pockets, buttons, patches or embroidery, or to use the fabric from garments to create a new one. "It's amazing what a difference just changing buttons can have, or adding a decorative panel," she said.

Upcycling garments and material from op shops is not just about saving money (which it does). It also has a positive impact on how much landfill and water is saved through less waste, and less need for new material to be produced. Although there is some textile recycling happening, one of the big problems is mixed textiles such as poly/cotton, which usually ends up in landfill because it's too hard to separate the synthetic out.

It is estimated that by extending the lifespan of clothes by nine months it could cut waste by 22 per cent. Learn more at [oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/upcycling-clothes/](https://oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/upcycling-clothes/)

To go deeper into sustainable clothing visit <https://fashion.sustainability-directory.com/question/how-does-upcycling-directly-reduce-textile-waste-in-landfills/>

Upcycling garments is also a fun way to express your creative individuality and learn skills that could lead you to a new interest, new friends, new outfits, or even a new job.

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre also offers beginner and intermediate sewing classes for anyone keen to start, learn more or continue classes after the upcycling course. Numbers are limited, so it is wise to get your name down early.

To find out how you could contribute to sustainable fashion, while having fun and learning new skills, contact Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre on 5329 3273 or email [reception@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:reception@ballaratnc.org.au)

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# Local theatre company to bring *Frozen* to life



*Ballarat performers Zenaye McKee and Amalee Eden will take to the stage in the musical Frozen in May 2026.*

**Get ready, Ballarat, for a Frozen adventure! From May 21 to 31, BLOC Music Theatre will be freezing over Her Majesty's Ballarat with its 2026 production of Disney's Frozen!**

Meet the two powerhouse young performers Zenaye McKee, who plays Elsa, and Amalee Eden, who plays Anna. Zenaye is Ballarat born and raised and has been performing since the age of 3. She grew up surrounded by the arts, and performed with BLOC Music Theatre, Ballarat Lyric Theatre, BallaRat Pack, CentreStage Geelong, Opera Australia, Loreto College and performing arts schools. Currently Zenaye trains with Kelly Aykers Full Time Dance and with Sarah Landy at Ballarat Vocal Studios, and in her spare time she teaches dance at Soraya McKee Dance Society, Ballarat. "Getting to play the beloved role of Elsa is a dream come true and I cannot wait to bring the magic to the Stage".

Amalee also from Ballarat, has been immersed in the arts throughout her life, taking to the stage in '25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee' at Damascus College and in BLOCs 'RENT'. Amalee is learning with Sarah Landy at Ballarat Vocal Studio. "I've been singing along to the songs from Frozen from an early age and adored Anna so much that I almost believed I was her, making the chance to step into Anna's shoes a dream come true".

"The cast is brimming with the best of Ballarat's local talent," said Elise Heenan, Director. "This show is

going to be really special. A powerful story of sisterhood, with beautiful moments of strength and love between the characters. It's truly one not to miss".

When asked what she was looking forward to most, Elise said, "I think seeing the audience's reaction. There is so much magic, it's going to be a real feast for the senses. There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing hard work pay off with a laugh in the right spot, or better yet, a gasp when magic happens right before your eyes. Every small detail has been painstakingly considered, there is rarely a moment when there isn't a giant list of elements happening at once that contribute to a full experience. From snow to reindeer, castles to icy mountains, this show goes from strength to strength. I hope everyone walks away with a real sense of wonder, we can't wait to welcome you into Arendelle."

"There is up to two hundred people involved in the show at any time" said Jordan Sullivan Executive Producer for Frozen. "It's a truly local production with everyone being from Ballarat or surrounds. Everyone volunteers their time putting in thousands of hours, creating costumes, collecting set pieces or props, it's a volunteer army of people putting this together."

Disney's Frozen is the beloved story that follows sisters Anna and Elsa, who embark on a breathtaking adventure filled with courage, friendship, self-discovery, and love. When Elsa's magical powers are revealed, she flees Arendelle, plunging the kingdom into an eternal winter. Joined by Kristoff, Sven, and the lovable Olaf, Anna sets out to bring her sister home and restore warmth to their world in this heartwarming tale of family, self-acceptance, true love, and, of course, a sprinkle of Disney magic. This isn't just one for the kids! With spectacular costumes, fantastic dancing and true theatre magic - this is one not to miss!

**BLOCs Production of Frozen will be playing at the iconic Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat, from May 21 to 31 for a strictly limited run.**

**Tickets and more information are available at [www.frozenballarat.com](http://www.frozenballarat.com) or by calling Her Maj Ballarat on 5333 5888.**

## Community gardening

By Pru Saimoun & Alyssa Duggan



*Tending to the community garden in Tuppen Drive.*

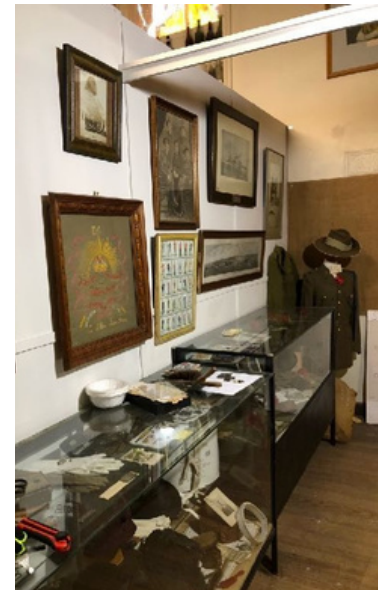
Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre's community garden program is back, and its big sister garden on the other side of Phoenix College, is taking shape. Volunteers and Urban Farming 101 students have worked hard in hot conditions to rejuvenate the raised beds in the 'small garden' off Tuppen Drive after the summer break. They have removed dead and seeding plants, topped up beds with compost and nutrients, planted seedlings and mulched with sugarcane mulch. Apricots left by the birds have been harvested, grass has been mowed and weeding is under control.

In the big garden along Spencer Street, you may have noticed two huge tarps laid over grassy areas of the proposed garden. These are solarising the weeds and seeds, to kill them off. Once removed in March, the areas will be covered in cardboard, straw and compost material, to allow planting and more balanced soil ecology. The fruity trees along the street fence are growing well. Another shipping container and a greenhouse are in the pipeline, which will see a fenced, dedicated area for potting and growing seeds and cuttings.

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre are seeking volunteers who can spare a few hours a week to help prepare garden beds, plant seedlings, and assist with general maintenance. No gardening experience is required, just a willingness to participate and be part of a positive community initiative. Local businesses are warmly invited to contribute in any way they can, whether that's donating products or sharing professional expertise. Every contribution, big or small, will make a real difference in helping us create garden spaces that everyone in the community can enjoy and feel proud of. Contact us on 5329 3273.

## News from Sebastopol Historical Society

The Sebastopol Historical Society is participating again in the annual Ballarat Heritage Festival. There have been some changes made to the program and staging of the festival this year. Instead of being spread out at many locations around Ballarat, events in the 2026 festival will be taking place in the city precinct, from the Ballarat Town Hall in Sturt Street and around in Lydiard Street.



*There is a wide array of items on display at the museum.*

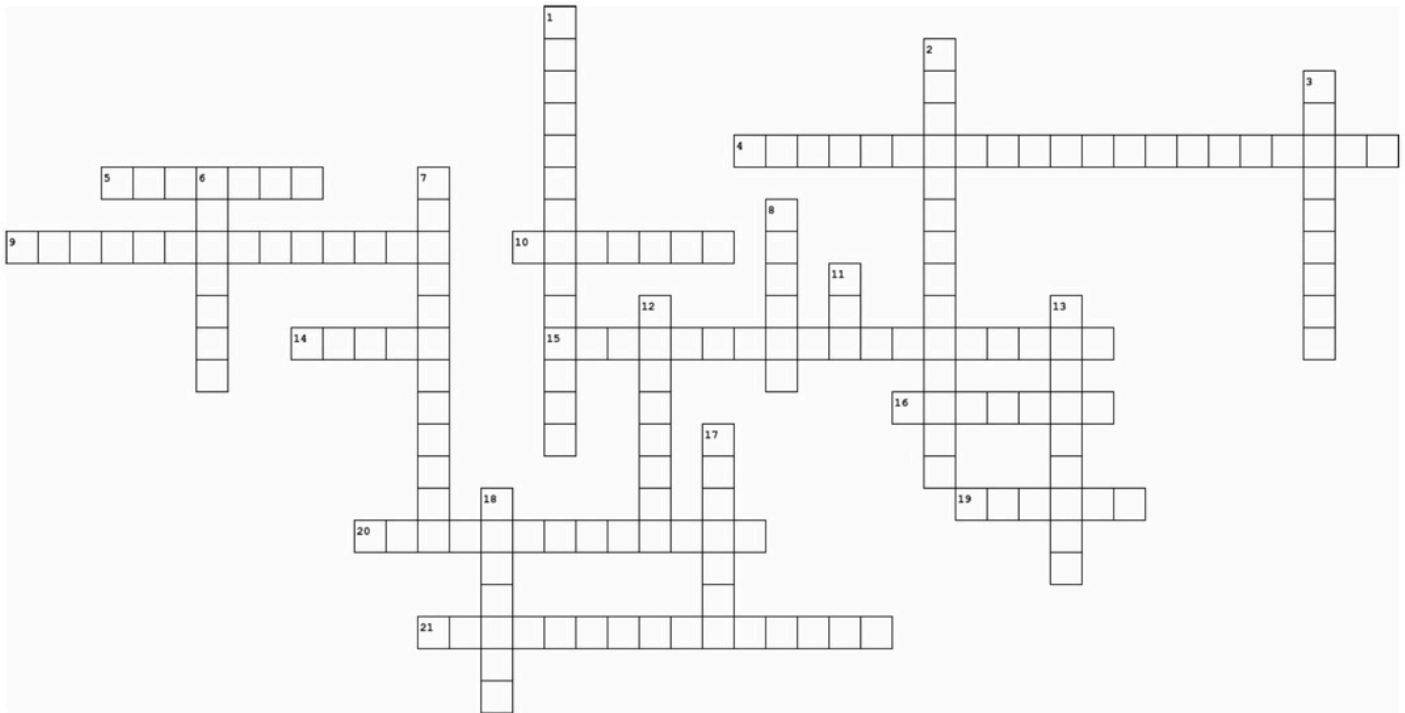
The Sebastopol Historical Society will be joining many other organisations and history groups with displays in the Town Hall on Saturday May 23 from 10am - 4pm and Sunday May 24 from 10am - 3pm. Our society will have many interesting objects on display that help to tell some of the 'hidden history' of our Borough.

We are also hoping to have the museum at the old Sebastopol State School Building in Yarrowee Street open for evening visitors on Friday May 22. We will be working hard in the weeks until then making some changes to the arrangement of our displays in the museum. We are hoping the changes make it easier to view the numerous exhibits we have. Come and join us for a 'night at the museum' to learn about the history of the 'Beautiful Borough'.

The Sebastopol Historical Society Museum is also open to visitors on the first Sunday of the month from 1-4pm, at 185 Yarrowee Street, Sebastopol (except for April when the open day will be on Sunday 12 April.)

## Sebastopol History Crossword No.2

Prepared by Sebastopol Historical Society



### Across

4. The Sebastopol Mechanics Institute built in 1864 once stood on the land owned by this sporting club in Albert Street. (10,7,4)
5. A name for profitable ground during the goldrushes. (3,4)
9. The name of the venue built by the Polish Community in Orion Street (which is named for a Polish astronomer). (10,4)
10. This Sebastopol school opened in 1956. (2,5)
14. A Sebastopol street named for a constellation.
15. Prior to 2011 Phoenix College junior school was known as what? (5,7,6)
16. Sebastopol is named for the site of a siege from this 1850s war.
19. A hard rock found on the Sebastopol plateau that miners drilled and blasted through to reach the gutters of gold below.
20. Current federal member of parliament for the Ballarat Electorate. (9,4)
21. These assist children to cross busy roads on the way to and from school. Sebastopol had the first supervised ones in Victoria. (6,9)

### Down

1. Birdwood Avenue was once known by this name. (8,6)
2. A skate park can be found here. (1,1,5,7)
3. A cycling facility located at Marty Busch Reserve.
6. What sort of cinema was found on the corner of Smythes Road and Tait Street from 1961 to 1991? (5,2)
7. A local drive through bakery (6,6)
8. A nearby district named after a bird.
11. Known for their delicious scones, which women's group has had a branch at Sebastopol for more than 70 years? (1,1,1)
12. A Wadawurrung name for the Yarrowee River.
13. This hotel is located at the former Sebastopol tram terminal. (The trams ceased operating in 1971.) (5,4)
17. The southwest corner of Hertford and Albert Streets was once known as whose corner?
18. A name for a new arrival on the goldfields during the 1850s goldrush. (3,4)

## A popular new sport at Phoenix College



*Phoenix students have achieved success at a national level in eSports.*

Phoenix eSports is one of the fastest-growing programs at Phoenix P-12 Community College, bringing together students from across all year levels who share a passion for gaming, teamwork, and competition. eSports, short for electronic sports, is a form of competition using video games. eSports often takes the form of organised, multiplayer video game competitions, particularly between professional players, played individually or as teams. It operates similarly to traditional sports, featuring leagues, tournaments, sponsorships, and is sometimes live-streamed to audiences.

What makes Phoenix eSports special isn't just the games – it's the connections and community built through them. Students from all backgrounds come together, form friendships, develop teamwork skills, and become part of something bigger than themselves. At Phoenix, we pride ourselves on creating meaningful connections with our students, and the eSports program has quickly become one of the most exciting ways we do this.

Our competitive teams are also achieving incredible success. Phoenix is currently ranked #1 in the nation in two Australian eSports competitions, with our teams also earning medal placements in another national competition. These achievements place Phoenix firmly at the forefront of school eSports in regional Victoria and across Australia. Behind these results is a culture of dedication, teamwork, and passion. Our students train together, support one another, celebrate victories, and learn resilience through competition. Whether they are competing on

the national stage or simply enjoying a casual game with friends after school, every student in the program is part of the same Phoenix team. At Phoenix, we are incredibly proud of what our students have already achieved and this is only the beginning. Phoenix eSports isn't just a program. It's a community, a team, and a program leading the way in school eSports across Australia.

## A new year at kinder

The children at Sebastopol South Kindergarten have had a fantastic start to the year. It has been so lovely getting to know all of our new children and families and beginning to build strong connections together. We have been learning our kindergarten routines, including sitting on the mat during group times, washing our hands before morning tea and lunch, and practising sharing and taking turns with our friends. The children are doing a wonderful job as they settle into these new routines.



*Children are enjoying their new kinder activities.*

We have been enjoying reading stories together, singing songs, and dancing. There is always some kind of construction happening in the room, whether it's building with Duplo, creating with magnetic shapes, or designing exciting train tracks. Our huge yard has also been a favourite space. The children love climbing, playing in the sandpit, swinging, and using the cubbyhouse for imaginative play. It has been a joy to see their confidence and friendships growing.

# Pets and Puzzles

## Meet a Local

**Name:** Finn

**Bio:** Finn is a beautiful blue grey whippet whose favourite thing is to meet his friends at Power Park each morning for a catch up and walk. He is not so happy about living with two cats. Despite being the oldest pet in the family he has to follow their orders.

## Send us your pet pics!

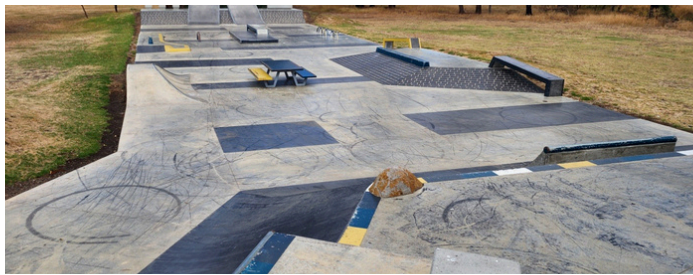
Want to see your furry friend on this page? All kinds of pets are welcome. Send a photo and bio to: [community@ballaratnc.org.au](mailto:community@ballaratnc.org.au)



## Guess where?

Can you guess what these structures are and where they are located in Sebastopol?

The answer is upside down at the bottom of this page



Photos by Will Lay

## Sebastopol Historical Society Crossword No 2. Answers

Don't peek at these answers until you've attempted the crossword on page 16!

5 P A Y D I R T										7 G	4 S E B A S T O P O L B O W L I N G C L U B										3 V
9 C O P E R N I C U S H A L L										R	10 T J A M E S										E
V										D	W										O
E										E	R										D
I										E	P										R
N										16 R I O N	E										O
N										U	12 E D A N P R I M A R Y S C H O O L										M
G										G	E										R
E										18	13										A
A T H E R I N E K I N G										14	14 R I M E A N										15
W										15	V										L
C										16	E										M
Y										17	17 A S A L T										I
20										18	L										L
21 C H O O L C R O S S I N G S										U											
M																					

Guess where: Skate park and basketball court at MR Power Park in Grant Street, Sebastopol

Stick me on your fridge

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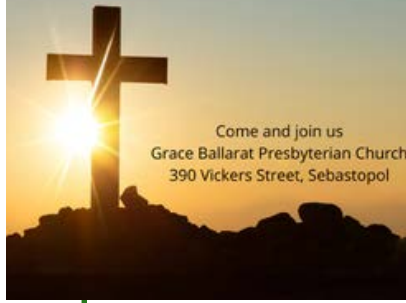
Supporting our work in the Philippines

## What's On - March, April, May

### Good Friday Service

3rd April, 2026 @ 10 AM

The Cross: A Place of Suffering, Love, and Victory



Come and join us  
Grace Ballarat Presbyterian Church  
390 Vickers Street, Sebastopol

### HE IS RISEN

Jesus is the Resurrection and Life

5<sup>th</sup> April @ 10 am

Come and Celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus

Grace Ballarat Presbyterian Church  
390 Vickers Street, Sebastopol

### Sebastopol Historical Society Museum Open Days

1pm - 4pm, Sunday 12 April & Sunday 3 May

185 Yarrowee Street, Sebastopol

### Ballarat Rock N Roll Festival 10th - 12th April, Ballarat High School

### FROZEN - BLOC MUSIC THEATRE 21 - 31 MAY, HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE

### SEBASTOPOL MENS SHED MARKETS

10am - 12 noon on March 28, April 11 & 25, May 16 & 30

201 Vickers Street, Sebastopol

### Sebastopol Library

181 Albert St, Sebastopol. Ph: 5335 7985

#### Friday Book Chats

Share your latest reads, get great recommendations, and explore the library collection with fellow book lovers.

When: 17 April and 15 May from 2.30-3.30pm



#### Be Creative

Be Creative with other crafters. Bring along a project and meet new people at this casual catch up.

When: 9 April and 14 May from 1-3pm



#### Tech Hub

We host a range of programs to help you with the technology in your life including Tech Talks, Tech Cafe, AI Club and iClub. Contact us for more information.



A free cuppa and chat!

Every Friday,

10:30am-12pm

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, 11 Tuppen Drive

Every Thursday,

10:30-11:30am

Delacombe Community Hub, 18 Nandiriog Drive.

16 April and 21 May,

1:00-3:00pm

Sebastopol Library



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