



LOCAL BAND'S EPIC OUTCOME

Editor: Naomi Sherrington

editor@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Manager: Theresa Lee - 0427 472 729

manager@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Sales: Jodie Longmire - 0414 086 904

jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Graphic, Pagination and Artwork:

Jodie Longmire jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Sports: jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Proof Reader: Madi Byfield

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Please contact Jodie Longmire at email:

jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au if you would like to be included in distribution within the Shire of Northam.



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Editorial

There are times when the stories in a newspaper seem to speak to one another.

This edition contains several stories that, on the surface, have little in common: a Northam teacher receiving a national fellowship; a Western Australian author talking to TAFE students about persistence; regional students and trainers recognised at the WA Training Awards; and local footballers competing for premierships.

Together, though, they say something about knowledge, opportunity and community - and about what happens when people choose to pass something on.

That feels particularly worth reflecting on after the resurfacing of Pauline Hanson's comments describing Indigenous Australians as the "most primitive race on Earth", followed by a qualified apology in which she said she regretted the terminology and would apologise "if people had been offended."

The controversy again raised questions about how we understand First Nations history and its place in Australia's national story - questions explored in greater depth in this edition's Regional Lens.

Knowledge is not a finite resource. Learning somebody else's history does not erase our own. Understanding another culture does not require us to surrender ours.

Here in the Wheatbelt, we live on Ballardong Noongar boodja, within a cultural landscape understood, named, travelled and cared for long before the roads, farms and towns familiar to us today existed.

And throughout this edition are stories about people doing what humans have always done at our best: learning something, developing it and passing it on.

Northam Primary School teacher Eloise Boyd has received a national Teaching Fellowship for work supporting students' emotional regulation and readiness to learn. Importantly, the fellowship gives her the opportunity to learn from effective practice elsewhere, bring that knowledge back to Northam and share it more widely across the Wheatbelt.

At Central Regional TAFE's Northam campus, author and illustrator Katie Stewart recently spoke to students about persistence and lifelong learning after years of rejection before her first traditionally published book appeared when she was 60.

Across Central Regional TAFE, students and educators have also been recognised at the WA Training Awards - another reminder of the achievements being produced through regional education and training.

Knowledge moves. So does culture.

Watching the local football grand final, I was struck by another, more ordinary example. First Nations and non-Indigenous players were simply there together - competing, celebrating and representing their clubs and communities.

Perhaps that is the thread running through this edition.

A teacher learns and brings the knowledge home. An author passes the lessons of a lifetime to students. Trainers build skills that strengthen communities. Culture survives because one generation teaches the next.

What we inherit matters. What we choose to learn from it - and what we pass on - matters just as much.

Taken together, these stories offer a pretty good picture of community at its best.



NORTHAM POLICE
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Our Cover



Our cover this month features local band, Sorry Molly. The band have recently released their first EP "The Outcome"; read all about their journey on page 4.

Thank you to Angie Roe from Angie Roe Photography for capturing this image for us.



**Missed out on seeing your business in this issue?
Book in time for the next issue and be seen by locals!**



Media Kit

For advertising contact:

jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

For editorial contact:

editor@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au
before 15 October.

Scan the QR code to view our Media Kit.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Northam Advertiser acknowledges and pays respect to; the Ballardong Traditional Custodians and Elders - past, present and future; the Nyoongar Nation and the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

Aboriginal People should be aware that this publication contains images or names of people who have passed away.

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BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Join the Northam Chamber of Commerce for our October Business After Hours hosted by Lachlan Hunter MP.

When:
29th October 5.30-7.30pm

Where:
Office of Lachlan Hunter
185 Fitzgerald St, Northam

Bookings:

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Local band Sorry Molly launch brand new EP “The Outcome”



by Madi Byfield

Undeterred by the cold weather, the Jennacubbine Tavern’s outdoor stage was packed with fans and music lovers on the night of the 28th of August, as they gathered to celebrate local band Sorry Molly’s big news - the release of “The Outcome”, their first EP.

Sorry Molly features Brittney Davidson on vocals, Chris Sharples on lead guitar, Rhys Byfield on bass and backing vocals, and Kitt Byfield on drums. An indie alt-rock outfit, the band’s members are all familiar faces to the local music scene, and describe themselves as “the unlikely musical fusion of a hairdresser, music teacher, farmer and public servant”. Likewise, they are all parents, community members, and have sprouted a handful of grey hairs between them, which is reflected in their mature, contemplative sound and in the themes of

their songs. In their lyrics you’ll find everyday subjects like working the grind, letting go of toxic friendships, and rediscovering life in your 30s - “though, Chris,” Britt joked while introducing the track, “you might need to write a new one about rediscovering life in your 40s”.

The band, now in its seventh year, hasn’t been in a rush to complicate things. “A big part of Sorry Molly is that we genuinely just love hanging out,” vocalist Britt told me later, “having a yarn, playing music and seeing what comes out of it.” They’ve spent most of those seven years jamming, playing local gigs, and building out their repertoire of original songs, sometimes taking breaks while each of them expanded their families. All this naturally led the band towards their recent EP - or “mini album”, as they call it - especially after recording a few singles in 2022 proved to ignite their creativity.

There’s no secret story behind the band’s name, though, or at least not one they can recall. “Sorry, but none of us is Molly,” Britt had said drily after their first song of the night, having clearly heard that question at least once or twice. The band do remember that Blood Orange was the other front-runner for their choice of name, but ultimately lost out to the mysterious Molly, whoever she may be.

Their big night saw an equally big turnout, with the band very grateful to see so many people eager for original music. They shared the stage with cover bands the Les Marfields and the Paddock Surfers - and it wasn’t only the stage they shared, as Rhys, Sorry Molly’s bass player, also played bass with every other act that night. Members of each band were often seen darting to the soundboard during each other’s sets, helping balance the sound for the eager listeners.

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LACHLAN HUNTER MP

MEMBER FOR CENTRAL WHEATBELT

Authorised by L. Hunter, 185 Fitzgerald St, Northam WA 6401.

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Let's walk together in solidarity with the many who have been impacted, and in memory of lives lost to family and domestic violence.

Our march through Northam and alongside the Avon River will finish at The Village Green where we will observe a **moment of silence**, before sharing **light refreshments**.



16 Days in WA

25 November – 10 December

**Stopping Family
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These interconnecting bonds form a common theme for the band and those in its orbit, going right back to its origins. Kitt and Rhys are cousins close in age who grew up in the valley playing music together, and later met Perth boy Chris in 2005 through a mutual friend. They came to form three quarters of the band The Killer Grapes, which released its own self-titled EP in 2008. Things were rekindled in 2019 for the trio, with Chris moving to the Avon Valley himself, and having felt that there had been “a lot of unfinished material” left in the band’s earlier incarnation.

Britt is hardly a stranger, either, having co-starred with Rhys in musicals at the Link Theater, where she has recently directed her first show and now serves as committee vice president. She was invited by Rhys to add her voice to the band as they were “having a general yarn and, casually slipped in amongst everything else, was a message asking if I’d come and play a few songs with them”. Those ‘few’ songs would soon grow into many more, and the intervening seven years as a quartet have been, it seems unanimously, a blast.

The theme of intermingled connections continued to be felt with their gig on the opening night of the Arcadia Crop Circles art event later in the month. The lineup featured all four of the band’s members in different permutations (as Kitt’s solo act, Britt and Chris as Maple Row Duo, the titular Sorry Molly, and the Paddock Surfers).

Perhaps the biggest example is the story of the band itself. One of the songs on their brand new record, Diamonds, was originally written fifteen years earlier for The Killer Grapes. This history is not something the band are eager to hide, either; Britt cheerfully relayed Diamonds’ history during their set and called it a personal favourite, and the song is proudly displayed front and center on their Triple



J Unearthed page. While the tune may be distinctly recognisable to fans (it was to yours truly!), it takes on a completely new colour with the addition of Britt’s voice, a new face cut into its jewel.

I asked the band about what the process was like of tying together so much history, musical and otherwise. In Britt’s view, it’s actually a big part of what they love about working together and what makes the band work as a unit. “I think the common thread is that we’re all open-minded and have a real respect for music in all its forms. We’re all very different, but we’re there for the same reason, to have a good time, connect with each other and make music,” she said.

It reflects on the music itself, too - Chris, who writes most of the songs, notes that his rough demos tend to end up evolving into a blend of everyone’s styles, and that a lot of the band’s quirks end up coloring the eventual sound. There’s no separate rhythm guitar part when they play live, for instance, which leads to Rhys’s bass playing a bigger role in filling the melodic space. Kitt’s unique approach (being the only band member with formal music training) helps define the structure

and sound, and also keep everyone in line. Converting a vocal melody from Chris’s rough demo into Britt’s range can also make things challenging, and the demo usually sounds completely different from the end result, “but in a good way!” he insists.

“I think that’s the beauty of music,” Britt says. “You don’t always have to have lived the exact story to get something from it.”

As for what’s next for Sorry Molly, you’ll find them gigging at the Riverside in November, and there might be some new music in the works, as recording the mini album has definitely given them the itch to do more. Their newest offering, though, is actually a CD and vinyl physical sale of “The Outcome”, one copy of which has been recently raffled off on their socials to anyone with a fond memory of watching them live that they wanted to share - yet more interlocking bonds tying them out into the community.

You can find Sorry Molly’s EP “The Outcome” on all music streaming platforms, and for information about CDs and vinyl, and what they’ll be up to next, visit the band’s Instagram page (@sorrymollyband).

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Author's Journey Inspires Students



Photo: Western Australian author and illustrator Katie Stewart presenting to CR TAFE CGEA & GATE Students at Book Week presentation

More than 50 Central Regional TAFE students were inspired to believe in their potential and pursue their goals after hearing from acclaimed Western Australian author and illustrator Katie Stewart at the Northam campus on 25 August 2026.

Students from the Certificate in General Education for Adults (CGEA), Gaining Access to Employment (GATE) and Leadership programs attended the special Book Week presentation, where Katie shared her remarkable journey from aspiring writer to published author. Her story demonstrated how perseverance, lifelong learning and a commitment to personal growth can create opportunities at any stage of life.

Best known for her picture books *What Colour is the Sea?*, *Wombat Can't Sing* and *Quokka Finds a Friend*, Katie spoke candidly about the challenges she faced while pursuing her dream of becoming a published author.

For years, she submitted manuscripts, self-published her work and faced repeated rejection from publishers. Despite being told she was too old to succeed in the industry, Katie remained focused on improving her skills, refining her craft and continuing to pursue her goal.

Katie's persistence eventually paid off at the age of 60

when Fremantle Press published her first book, *What Colour is the Sea?*.

CR TAFE Managing Director Jo Payne said Katie's story reflected many of the qualities students demonstrate throughout their own learning journey.

"Many of our students come to Central Regional TAFE looking for a fresh start, a new career direction or the opportunity to build their confidence through training," Ms Payne said.

"Katie's journey shows that success does not always follow a traditional path. Through determination, continuous learning and a willingness to keep moving forward, she transformed ambition into achievement.

"At CR TAFE, we see those same qualities in our students every day as they develop skills, build confidence and create opportunities for their future."

During the session, Katie shared a childhood lesson that shaped both her life and career. Rather than simply copying what others were doing, she was encouraged to closely observe the world around her, think independently and develop her own perspective.

That philosophy became the foundation of her work and inspired the themes within *What Colour is the Sea?*, a story about a curious koala who discovers that different perspectives can all hold value.

CGEA Literacy Lecturer Fiona McDougall said the message resonated strongly with students.

"Many of our students have overcome challenges to return to study, strengthen their skills or work towards new opportunities," Ms McDougall said.

"Katie's story showed them that setbacks do not define the future. Her journey reinforced the importance of resilience, curiosity and believing in yourself, qualities that help students succeed both during their studies and beyond."

Countdown to the Toodyay Agricultural Show

With only a couple of weeks to go, the Toodyay Agricultural Show is shaping up to be a highlight of the spring calendar, and there's still time to get your entries in across the many sections.

Enter now – entries close soon

If you've been meaning to showcase your best produce, crafts, photography, or other talents, don't miss your chance. Head to toodyayagshow.com.au and either enter and pay through Show day Online, or download the entry forms and post or email them in. Entries close at midday on Saturday 3rd October and, as always, no late entries will be accepted.

A day of family fun and local flair

This year's program promises something for everyone, with entertainment running throughout the day and activities spanning everything from delicate butterfly displays to impressive farm machinery and much more in between, as well of course Side Show Alley! For the full line up, visit the website and download the program so you can plan your day and make sure you don't miss your favourites.

Food, stalls, and standout exhibits

Come hungry – there will be lots of yummy food trucks onsite, plus fabulous stalls offering plenty of items for your viewing and purchasing pleasure. Inside, the Lee Steere Pavilion and Toodyay Youth Hall will be bursting with fabulous entries, from preserves and baking to floral art, handicrafts, and youth exhibits that reflect the creativity and skill of our local community.

Fireworks finale to end the day

And of course, the popular Bendigo Bank fireworks will return for another year, providing a spectacular finale to the day. Gather your family and friends, pack a picnic or plan to enjoy the food on offer, and make a day of it at the Toodyay Agricultural Show on Saturday 10th October.



TOODYAY AG SHOW 2026

Toodyay Showgrounds

SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER



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National fellowship to extend Northam teacher's work across Wheatbelt

A Northam Primary School teacher recognised among some of Australia's leading educators will use a \$20,000 national fellowship to build on work supporting student wellbeing — with the potential for the lessons learned to reach schools across the Wheatbelt.

Eloise Boyd was recognised at the 2026 Schools Plus Teaching Awards, held at Parliament House in Canberra on September 15, for her work developing emotional regulation strategies to help students engage with learning.

Mrs Boyd, along with East Kalgoorlie Primary School teacher Olivia Watson, was one of two Western Australian educators to receive a 12-month teaching fellowship.

But the award is intended to do more than recognise work already undertaken.

Valued at \$20,000, the fellowship includes \$10,000 for Northam Primary School to plan and undertake a "high impact school visit" program, allowing Mrs Boyd to learn directly from effective practice at other schools or education sites and bring those lessons back to her own school.

Schools Plus will assist Fellows to identify suitable schools through its national network of previous award recipients.

The 12-month program also includes masterclasses, networking and a face-to-face collaboration workshop, with Fellows expected to develop their school-visit plans for implementation in 2027.

For Mrs Boyd, the potential reach extends beyond Northam Primary School.

She has already played a role in developing a network of behaviour coordinators across the Wheatbelt and intends to use the fellowship to explore evidence-informed approaches to student wellbeing, emotional regulation and relationships.

"I am particularly excited to expand my leadership capability and share this learning with colleagues, families and schools across the Wheatbelt," she said.

Mrs Boyd was recognised for work aimed at helping students feel safe, connected and ready to learn.

After training in the Berry Street Education Model, she introduced strategies at Northam Primary including structured routines, morning circles and regulation check-ins.

The model takes a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to education, based on the principle that a student's ability to regulate stress, build relationships

and feel secure at school can have a direct effect on their capacity to engage with learning.

Rather than separating wellbeing from academic achievement, the approach provides teachers with practical classroom strategies designed to improve self-regulation, relationships, engagement and learning.

The model has a growing footprint in Northam.

Avonvale Primary School began implementing the Berry Street Education Model in 2022 and now uses it as part of a whole-school approach to student wellbeing and learning.

Its strategies include predictable routines, individual "Ready to Learn" plans and opportunities for students who are struggling to regulate to pause, reset and return to learning.

West Northam Primary School has also commenced whole-school training in the model alongside its existing Positive Behaviour Support framework.

That local uptake gives Mrs Boyd's fellowship an added regional dimension, with Northam schools already developing experience in approaches which place regulation, relationships and readiness to learn at the centre of classroom practice.

The Schools Plus fellowship is expressly designed to encourage that kind of knowledge-sharing.

In addition to the funded school visit, Fellows join a national alumni network of more than 130 teachers and school leaders, giving them access to educators and practices from schools around Australia.

The school-visit component is intended to provide practical, on-the-ground learning which can then contribute to school improvement and student outcomes at the Fellow's home school.

Mrs Boyd said receiving the national recognition was "incredibly humbling", and credited the colleagues, students, families and school leaders around her for the work being recognised.

Her focus during the fellowship will now turn to how the approaches being developed in Northam can be strengthened, informed by practice elsewhere and shared more widely.

For a regional education system in which schools can be separated by considerable distances, that ability to build networks and spread successful approaches may prove just as important as the award itself.

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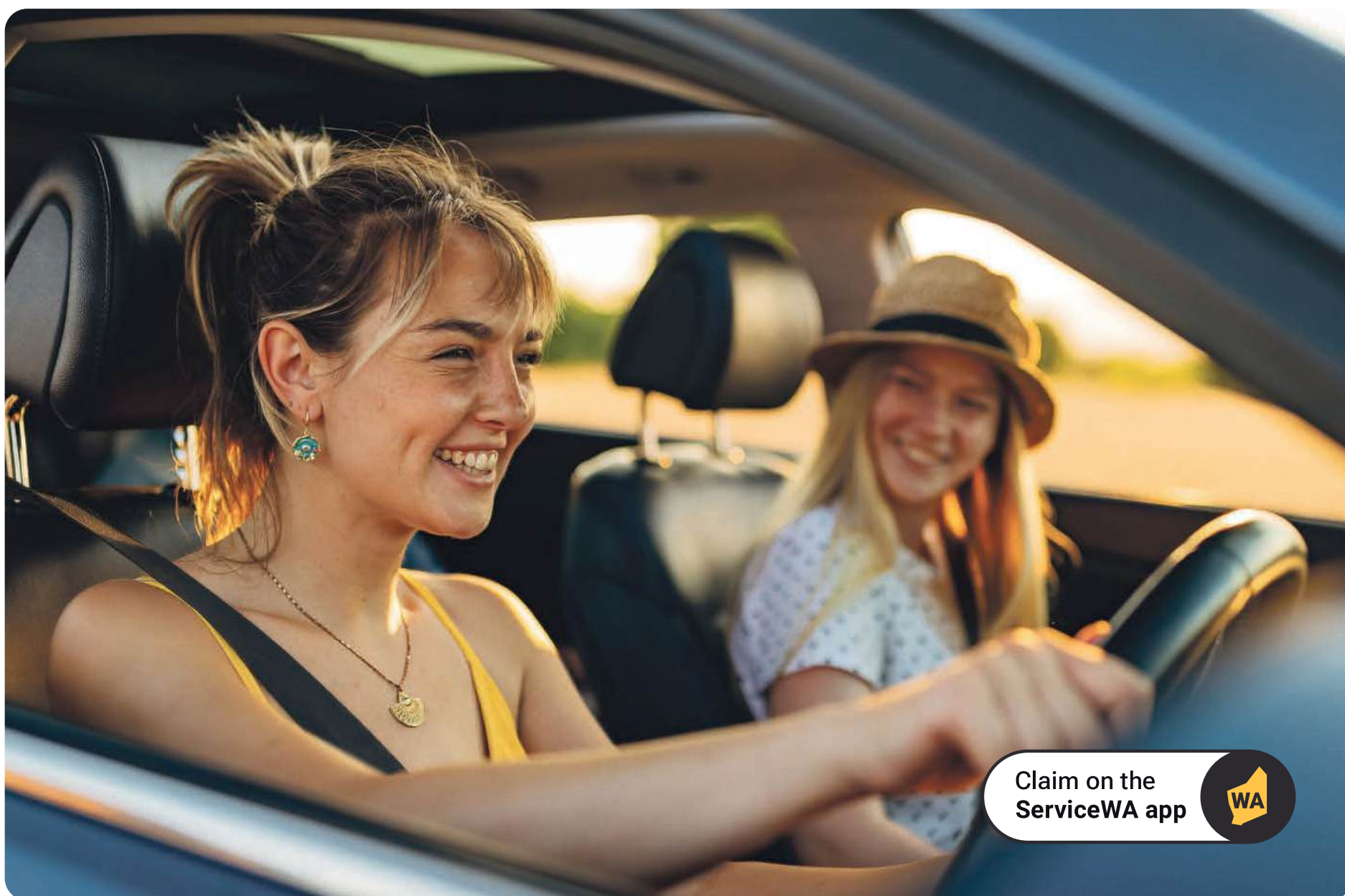
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Your next seasonal worker may already be in your shearing team



Photo: Shearing Contractor Tony Sutton

Across the regions, skilled workers in shearing teams are travelling from farm to farm, working hard through the wool harvest and looking for more opportunities to remain employed between shearing seasons.

Beyond the Shed, an initiative of the WA Shearing Industry Association, is helping shearing workers transfer their practical experience and hard work ethic into other agricultural roles.

Wheatbelt-based shearing contractor Tony Sutton said the program addressed a long-standing challenge in the

industry, "Keeping a good team together outside the main shearing season has always been difficult," Mr Sutton said.

"The training through Beyond the Shed is giving my crew options to stay working locally, which means I'm not starting from scratch every season."

Forty shearing contractors are now registered with the program across the state, with 132 workers completing 374 days of training across 47 courses from Geraldton to Albany, with more to come. Training has included harvest and seeding operations, fencing, chainsaw use, heavy vehicle operations, basic welding, forklifts and first aid.

For producers and regional businesses, this provides an experienced local workforce that understands agriculture, livestock, machinery, early starts and the realities of hard work.

Employing shearing workers outside the wool harvest also benefits the wider industry and your local community. More consistent employment helps keep experienced people living and working in regional communities and available when shearing demand increases again.

Beyond the Shed is now calling on growers, contractors and agricultural businesses to employ locally through their shearing teams for harvest or other seasonal work.

Members of a local shearing team can be taken on for casual, short term and seasonal work. Speak with a local shearing contractor or visit www.wasia.com.au to find a shearing contractor in your area and keep people in your local community.

Backpackers come and go, we want our shearing teams to stay.

Northam Betta named WA Retailer of the Year



Northam Betta has been named WA Retailer of the Year at the recent BSR Conference on the Sunshine Coast, an achievement the local business says is particularly significant in its first year of operation.

The award recognises the efforts of the Northam Betta team, who were thanked for their hard work, commitment and dedication to building the store and serving the local community.

The business also acknowledged the support of Northam customers, with owner and staff expressing their gratitude to everyone who has chosen to shop locally, recommended the store to others or simply stopped in for a chat.

Northam Betta said the community's support had played an important role in its first year and that the award was a reflection of what the team and customers had achieved together.

The business celebrated the recognition as an exciting milestone, while looking ahead to continuing to provide local service and country hospitality to the Northam community.

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Street Name Origins



Hutt Street is found off Newcastle Road in the Avonvale area, running towards the TAFE and Avonvale School. Its namesake may reach back to the early days of Western Australia’s colonial history.

The street is believed to have been named after John Hutt, who served as the second Governor of Western Australia from 1839 until 1846. Hutt was an important figure during a formative period of the colony, when Northam was developing as one of the principal settlements beyond Perth.

The connection is strengthened by the fact that a Hutt Street was established in Perth in the 1840s and was specifically named in honour of Governor Hutt. That street was eventually absorbed into William Street.

While no surviving Northam record located so far definitively confirms that its Hutt Street was named for the Governor, the timing and colonial naming tradition make John Hutt the most likely namesake.

Wrestling stars set to take over Northam



Northam is set for an action-packed Halloween celebration when Southern Territory Wrestling (STW) brings a night of professional wrestling and family entertainment to town.

Headlining the event will be world-renowned wrestling veteran and former WWE Cruiserweight and WWE World Tag Team Champion Paul London, who will travel to Northam to compete.

London has performed for major wrestling promotions

around the world, including WWE, Ring of Honor and Lucha Underground, and fans will have a rare opportunity to meet the international star before the action begins.

A pre-match Meet & Greet will give fans the chance to meet London and members of the STW roster, with opportunities for photographs and autographs.

The Halloween-themed event has been designed as a safe, all-ages community celebration, with plenty on offer for families from Northam and across the Avon Valley.

Children can enjoy free professional face painting, indoor trick-or-treat stations and wrestler meet and greets, while fans of all ages are encouraged to dress in their best Halloween costumes for the event’s costume competition.

Prizes will be awarded for the best costumes, adding an extra element of fun to the evening.

Alongside London, the wrestling card will feature some of Western Australia’s top regional wrestling talent, including Ambition Wrestling Global Champion Chris Target, Felix Young and Rogan Karguis, among others.

The event promises a mix of high-flying athleticism, hard-hitting slams and theatrical entertainment, offering something for both wrestling fans and families looking for a different night out.

The event is supported by returning local community sponsors, including Cash for Containers Avon Valley.

Family-friendly ticket prices start from \$18 for children under 13, with tickets available online through Humanitix.

For event details and updates, follow the Southern Territory Wrestling Facebook page.

AVON VALLEY COMMUNITY SPECIAL

NORTHAM RECREATION CENTRE • HALLOWEEN NIGHT 2026

SOUTHERN TERRITORY WRESTLING PRESENTS

DATE

SAT OCT 31

HALLOWEEN 2026

DOORS: 6:00 PM

BELL: 7:00 PM

NORTHAM REC CENTRE

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HORRORWEEN HAVOC!

THE BIGGEST ALL-AGES HALLOWEEN SPECTACULAR IN WA

WORLD-CLASS PRO WRESTLING

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12

OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR STORIES

Northam Multicultural Food Festival

Saturday 24 October
Bernard Park, Northam | 3pm to 8pm

Taste the World

Enjoy a range of food from across the globe while soaking up the community vibes.

Music, Dance & Market Delights

Experience traditional performances and tunes at the Sound Shell, then browse market stalls filled with treasures.

Seating will be available, or bring your camp chairs or picnic blankets.



Info: (08) 6608 0310
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www.northam.wa.gov.au

lotterywest



Free Family Event!

Northam, it's nearly time to Pink Up!

After seven incredible years and more than \$100,000 raised, Pink Up Northam is back this October to support McGrath Cancer Care Nurses — including our local nurse at Northam Hospital.

And this year, we want to see Northam businesses really get into it!

Turn your shop window pink. Update your business logo for October. Decorate your office. Dress your whole team in pink. Hold a pink morning tea — or, if one isn't enough, have two... or three! Get competitive with the business next door and see who can come up with the best pink display.

And don't forget to tag @pinkupnortham in your photos and posts. We'll be watching, sharing and making sure our Pink Up businesses get some extra love and promotion along the way!

It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A few balloons, some pink paper, a splash of pink in your window or a team photo can make a difference. Every splash of pink helps show people affected by cancer that our community cares and that they're not alone.

October is also a great reminder to make time for those important health checks that can be easy to put off when life gets busy.

Keep an eye out for Lucy's Tearooms' raffle, Lucy's Cupcake Day with pink Avon Bakery cupcakes, and the Northam Town Team Halloween Walkthrough.

Wear it. Bake it. Decorate it. Drink it. Donate it. Pink it!

Come on Northam — let's go!

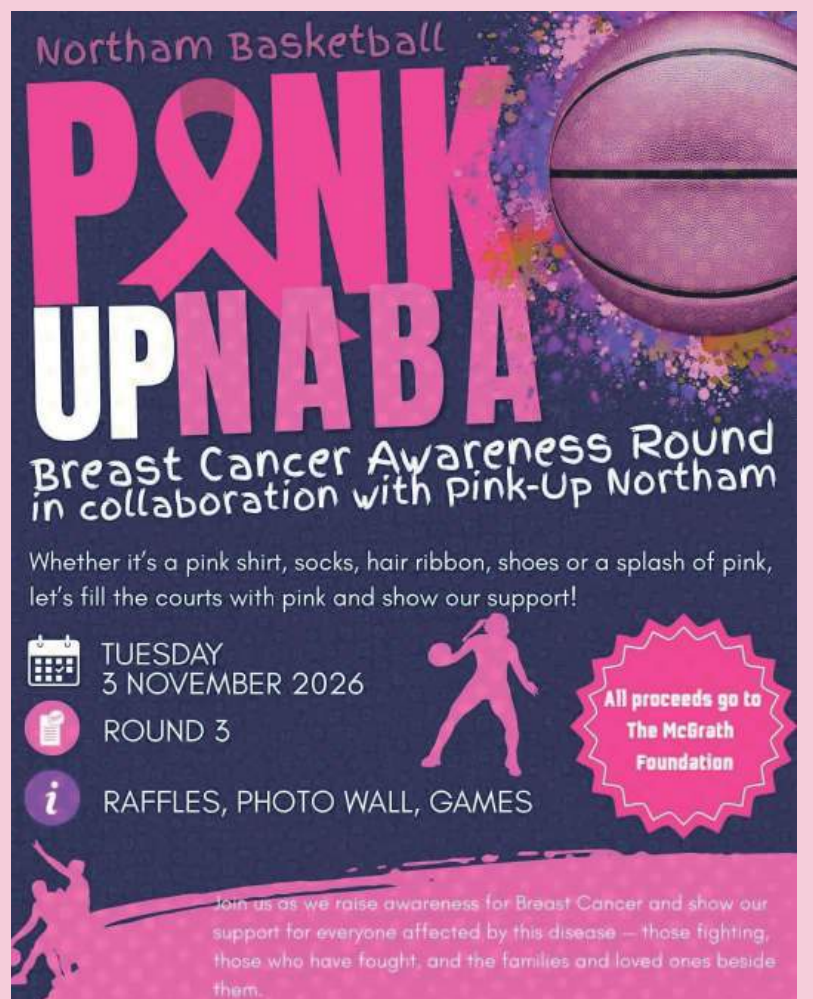
NABA turns Pink

In November each year Northam Basketball (NABA) turns basketball PINK - in support of Pink Up NABA! Members & Teams are encouraged to wear pink during games and support the fun, fundraising for a worthy cause - The McGrath Foundation.

This is Northam Basketball's 7th year fundraising for the McGrath Foundation, and last year we tipped over the \$20k total.

Join the fun on game night, Tuesday 3rd November 2026 at the Northam Rec Centre from 4:30pm.

PinkUpNABA gives thanks and huge appreciation to the NABA committee, our supporters, and our NABA members who support this cause every year with their time & efforts and donations. Much respect to families in the care of McGrath Foundation, Northam Basketball has their arms around you.



Northam Basketball
PINK UP NABA
Breast Cancer Awareness Round
in collaboration with pink-Up Northam

Whether it's a pink shirt, socks, hair ribbon, shoes or a splash of pink, let's fill the courts with pink and show our support!

**TUESDAY
3 NOVEMBER 2026**

ROUND 3

RAFFLES, PHOTO WALL, GAMES

**All proceeds go to
The McGrath
Foundation**

Join us as we raise awareness for Breast Cancer and show our support for everyone affected by this disease — those fighting, those who have fought, and the families and loved ones beside them.

Lucy's Pink Cupcake Day

The amazing team from Lucy's Tearooms are once again holding their Pink Cupcake Day in 2026.

The cupcake day will be held on Friday 30th of October this year.

Get your orders in directly to the team at Lucy's Tearooms.

This year marks 10 years that Lucy's Tearooms have been holding their Pink Cupcake Day. Enjoy the fluffiest cupcakes whilst supporting a great cause.



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FATHER'S DAY DEALS FOR DAD!

Behind the Ban:

What Retail Barring Orders could mean for Northam

by Naomi Sherrington

Concerns about retail crime are hardly confined to Northam, but in a regional town they are particularly visible.

When the same businesses, workers, customers and sometimes the same alleged offenders encounter one another repeatedly, an incident does not always end when somebody walks out the door. For retailers, the more difficult question can be what happens when that person comes back tomorrow — or next week.

That was one of the issues discussed at a recent meeting between Northam police and local business representatives, attended by the Northam Advertiser, looking at retail offending, community safety and the options presently available to businesses.

It also provides a timely local lens through which to examine legislation currently before State Parliament: the Retail Barring Orders Bill 2025.

At the time of writing, the Bill has passed the Legislative Assembly and, on 15 September, its second reading was agreed to in the Legislative Council. It has not yet completed the parliamentary process and is therefore not yet law.

If enacted, however, it would introduce something substantially different from the banning notices retailers can already use.

A Retail Barring Order, or RBO, would not be triggered merely because somebody had stolen from a shop.

The Bill defines “retail violence” as conduct on retail premises involving physical or sexual violence or abuse, threatening behaviour, stalking, or harassing, intimidating or offensive behaviour. A person who procures somebody else to engage in that conduct can also be treated as having committed retail violence.

The legislation is therefore aimed principally at protecting workers, businesses and customers from violence, intimidation and repeated harmful behaviour, rather than creating another punishment for theft itself.

An RBO would instead provide a preventative mechanism: a court order intended to stop somebody who has already engaged in retail violence from returning and doing it again.

What could an order do?

An RBO could prevent somebody from entering particular premises or approaching within a certain distance of them. It could also restrict contact with retail workers or specified conduct on the premises.

For adults, an RBO could operate for up to two years; for children, up to one year.

Breaching an RBO without reasonable excuse would itself be an offence carrying a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment and a \$36,000 fine. More serious or persistent breaches could attract penalties of up to five years imprisonment.

An RBO could also exist alongside criminal proceedings arising from the original incident — but would operate independently of any criminal prosecution arising from the original incident. RBO proceedings are civil, with questions of fact determined on the balance of probabilities rather than beyond reasonable doubt. The distinction is an important one. An acquittal means the prosecution did not establish criminal guilt beyond reasonable doubt; it does not necessarily mean a court could not be satisfied, on the lower civil standard, that the conduct occurred. This means a criminal acquittal would not, of itself, appear to prevent a court from making an RBO on the same underlying conduct.



How would it work?

An application could be made within 12 months of the alleged retail violence by an employer, a sole trader where there is no employer, an eligible union or, in a shopping centre, the centre owner or authorised manager.

The court would need to be satisfied that the person had committed retail violence at the premises and was likely either to do so again or to stalk or harass a worker from that business. An RBO must also be appropriate in the circumstances.

The Bill requires courts to consider not only the protection of workers and businesses, but also hardship caused by an order and whether it might interfere with access to essential goods or services.

That may be particularly important in a regional community.

Being excluded from one supermarket among dozens in metropolitan Perth is one thing. In a smaller town, being barred from a major retail centre could affect practical access to groceries, a pharmacy or other essential services.

The proposed scheme recognises that an absolute ban may sometimes create its own problems. A court must consider whether an RBO would interfere with access to essential goods and services, and gives courts considerable flexibility to tailor an RBO and allows restrictions to be imposed on terms the court considers appropriate, including the requirement the person be allowed to enter only while accompanied by a “responsible adult”. That raises a practical question which may matter particularly in a community such as Northam: who is that person?

The Bill does not establish a separate process for assessing or approving the person who accompanies someone subject to an RBO. In some circumstances, an accompanying relative or associate could themselves be involved in previous incidents, support the offending behaviour or simply make an already intimidating situation more difficult for retail staff.

That leaves a useful question for government as the Bill continues through Parliament: should the legislation, regulations or court rules provide clearer guidance about who may act as an accompanying person?

Options that could be considered include allowing an order to identify a particular accompanying person, providing a mechanism to exclude someone whose involvement would undermine the protective purpose of the RBO, or expressly allowing the affected retailer to raise safety concerns about a proposed arrangement. Alternatives such as delivery of essential goods or access during nominated times might also reduce the need for supervised entry in some cases.

Any safeguard would need to strike the same balance the Bill itself attempts to achieve: protecting retail workers without unnecessarily preventing people — particularly children and vulnerable people — from obtaining essential goods and services.

What can retailers do now?

The absence of an RBO scheme does not mean retailers must simply allow somebody to return indefinitely.

A business can withdraw permission for a person to enter or remain on its premises. At the Northam meeting, police explained that banning notices can be used to make that withdrawal clear. If a person subsequently enters or refuses to leave, existing trespass or other criminal laws may apply depending on the circumstances.

Retailers are encouraged to report offending, preserve useful CCTV footage and maintain communication with police. Businesses also discussed the value of identifying recurring hotspots and improving CCTV coverage around Northam’s retail areas.

Visible policing matters too. Police at the meeting spoke about officers walking through retail areas and encouraged businesses to make contact if they felt they were not seeing police around the precinct.

These measures serve another purpose: good reporting creates better information about where and how offending is occurring. That, in turn, makes it easier to distinguish persistent patterns from individual incidents and to direct resources accordingly.

The problem behind the problem

Perhaps the most important discussion at the Northam meeting went beyond cameras, banning notices and prosecution.

There was also recognition that responding after an offence occurs is only one part of community safety — particularly where children and young people become repeatedly involved in offending.

Accountability does not necessarily require criminal prosecution to be the only response in every case. Early intervention, support for families and effective wrap-around services can operate alongside policing and the criminal justice system, particularly before offending becomes entrenched.

The proposed Retail Barring Orders legislation does not attempt to solve those broader causes.

If enacted, they would add another tool to those already available to retailers and police. Their practical usefulness will depend on matters such as how accessible the application process is, how quickly orders can be obtained, what evidence retailers need to preserve and whether businesses know when an RBO is an appropriate option.

For Northam, the question is probably not whether RBOs will “fix” retail crime. No single law could realistically carry that burden.

A court order can draw a boundary around a shop. The harder work is creating a community in which fewer people reach the point where one is needed.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

APPROVED MANAGERS COURSE MLPCA001

20 Oct 2026 | 9.30AM-5.00PM

VENUE: NORTHAM (TBC)

- > \$50 PER PERSON INC GST
(VALUED AT OVER \$300!)
- > ATTENDEES MUST BE AGED 18+

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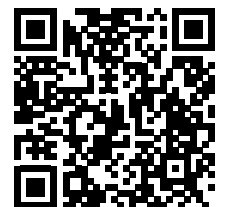


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Cunderdin Ag College showcases student talent at Open Day

Cunderdin Agricultural College welcomed hundreds of visitors through its gates on Friday, September 4, for one of the biggest Open Days the College has recently held.

With approximately 700 to 900 people attending throughout the day, the event provided prospective students and their families with the opportunity to explore the college, meet staff and students, and discover what life is like at Cunderdin Ag.

It also gave current families the chance to see first-hand the work students have been completing throughout the year.

The College's practical trade programs were a highlight, with students showcasing projects they had designed and built as part of their studies.

In construction, students displayed cubby houses they had built, which will be open for tender shortly. The furniture area featured an impressive range of student-made items, including tables, coffee tables, bookshelves and other projects.

The displays provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate the practical skills, creativity and attention to detail they have developed during their time at the College.

Agriculture was a major focus of the day, with visitors able to watch shearing demonstrations and explore the farm facilities.

The agriculture area also featured a range of industry exhibitors, allowing students and families to speak directly with businesses and organisations involved in the agricultural sector.

Boekemans Machinery, John Deere, New Holland, Elders, Women in Farming, CSBP, Moylan Silos, McIntosh & Sons, Case IH, Eurofins and Combined Tyres were among those represented.

Education and career opportunities beyond school were also represented, with Murdoch University, Curtin



University, Central Regional TAFE and the Australian Defence Force among the exhibitors.

For the current students, being able to speak directly with universities, training providers and potential employers provided valuable information about the choices available after leaving school.

Throughout the day, visitors could explore classroom displays showcasing student learning across different subjects, as well as take part in farm and dorm tours.

The Open Day showcased the breadth of opportunities available to students, from agriculture and shearing through to construction, furniture making and other trades.

It was also an opportunity for the college community to celebrate the achievements of its students and recognise the commitment of staff who support them throughout their studies.

The strong turnout demonstrated the interest in the college from families across the region and beyond, with visitors able to see the facilities, meet the people who make up the college community and experience the atmosphere of Cunderdin Ag for themselves.

Young Stars Shine at Weekend Theatre Workshop



Twenty-two enthusiastic primary school-aged children took to the stage recently for a fun-filled weekend of musical theatre, hosted by the Northam Theatre Group (NTG).

Led by NTG's President Rhonda Oliver and five dedicated Theatre Group volunteers, the workshop introduced participants to the fundamentals of theatre through a variety of engaging theatre skills, games and activities. The children explored acting, singing, movement and choreography while developing confidence, teamwork and creativity.

The young performers rehearsed three one-act plays, each accompanied by a choreographed song. The weekend provided a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn new skills, make friends and discover the excitement of performing on stage.

The workshop culminated in a special showcase performance for family and friends. The children proudly presented their three plays and performed their choreographed songs, giving their families the chance to see just how much they had achieved in one action-packed weekend.

The NTG congratulates all 22 young performers on their enthusiasm, hard work and fantastic performances.



Northam Theatre Group

by arrangement with ORiGiN™ Theatrical on behalf of Concord Theatricals

presents



CALENDAR GIRLS THE MUSICAL

BY GARY BARLOW AND TIM FIRTH

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Sat 21st Nov - 8pm
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Sat 28th Nov - 2pm
Sun 29th Nov - 2pm

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membership information

Northam's quiet achiever: Aviation



Photo: Lukas Walker (15) a student in Kent Street High School's Aviation Program and qualifying for his recreational pilot's licence through Northam Aero Club's training with Northam Aero Club's Chief Flying Instructor, Kevin Lathbury

by Mike Whittington

These are some of the quiet achievers who contribute to the success story that is Northam airfield. The airfield has recently undergone a major apron upgrade budgeted at about \$715,000, and at the June meeting of the Shire of Northam, long-term airfield managers Northam Aero Club again had their management agreement renewed.

Many individuals and organisations make this success a reality. Pictured is Northam Aero Club flying instructor Kevin Lathbury with 15-year-old trainee Lukas Walker, of Cunderdin, who is working towards his recreational pilot licence – potentially a year before he is old enough to drive on P-plates. The aircraft is owned by Northam Aero Club, airfield manager and a provider of extensive flight training.

The Club is one of the many commercial and government enterprises that rely on Northam airfield as a base for often much wider operations. In addition to flight training, these operators include aircraft maintenance, emergency medical transport, agricultural aerial spraying, firefighting water-bombers, geophysical survey, private and recreational aircraft operators and – not least – two balloon companies.

The airfield plays an important role in tourism activity and broader regional economic development. This wide array of activities shares a common focus on the airfield's 1,248-metre sealed runway, designated 14/32 and aligned roughly north to south.

As owner of the airfield, the Shire of Northam has recently undertaken a major upgrade to support its role in the State's aviation industry. The project was budgeted at about \$715,000, with \$357,553 provided through the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program.

Extending and sealing the apron provides additional capacity for future development in line with the Shire's Airfield Master Plan. At its June meeting, the Shire also approved advertising a proposed lease of six new hangar sites to helicopter operator Helispecs Aviation. Further development of the site is contemplated under the Master Plan.

The Shire maintains a balance between the costs of maintaining community infrastructure and the need to derive income from commercial users. There are plenty of both. The Shire last year budgeted more than \$170,000 for airfield operations and received about \$115,000 in airfield-related revenue.

The airfield also generates income from leased hangar sites

and other commercial users. The Shire's published fees calculate hangar-site rents according to the size and type of site, with property rates also applying where relevant.

In addition to the various individuals and organisations that choose to keep their aircraft under cover in a hangar, there are those who park in the open and pay daily, weekly or monthly fees. Currently, there is demand from a variety of users, and hangar development is one area in which future growth is expected.

The recent apron upgrade opens up additional space for tenants, who can lease land and construct hangars to suit their particular requirements, from simple aircraft storage to workshops and other aviation services.

Northam's airfield is an attractive prospect because of its location: well positioned for regional and Perth Hills commercial operations dependent on air movements, as well as for residents who wish to learn to fly.

Located about 90 kilometres east of the Perth metropolitan area, the airfield is also outside controlled airspace, an advantage for flight training and a range of general aviation operations. Its position east of the Darling Scarp can also make Northam an alternative for smaller aircraft when weather conditions on the Swan Coastal Plain are unfavourable.

The airfield is the only public aerodrome within the Shire of Northam. It is classified as an Aeroplane Landing Area (ALA) and is not a Civil Aviation Safety Authority-certified aerodrome. There are no landing fees.

The sealed 1,248-metre runway has a landing distance of 975 metres, with mains-powered, pilot-activated edge lighting for night operations and night flight training. Alongside is a full-length taxiway and extensive apron.

Twenty-four-hour AVGAS is available through a credit-card bowser. Jet A1 is not available, while emergency services maintain their own private fuel supplies. Newly installed toilets add to the public facilities.

The airfield is managed by the Club under an agreement worth \$12,618.80 in its first year. The management agreement includes operational responsibilities, inspection requirements, incident reporting and liaison functions; the Shire retains ownership, capital works and strategic planning functions.

In renewing the agreement, the Shire cited the "clear and cost-effective model for on-site operational management" together with the Club's "direct airfield knowledge and a long history in the establishment, development and operation of the facility".

The Club also provides flight training under the Royal Aero Club of Western Australia's Air Operator's Certificate. The Club's aircraft, VH-PGL, is a four-seater Cessna 172P with long-range tanks, capable of about 100 knots and suitable for day and night navigation training and private hire. The Club can provide training in other aircraft where suitable, and its Cessna is also available for hire.

Among the other commercial occupants is Northam Air Services, a statewide aircraft maintenance provider. NAS provides services for local operators and also collects, services and returns aircraft for regional commercial and agricultural operators. The available land at the airfield provides scope for additional aviation businesses and services to establish at Northam.

There are two commercial ballooning companies: Windward Ballooning and Liberty Balloon Flights. Both operate seasonally, attracting tourists and locals for flights over the surrounding farmland, Avon River and town.

The airfield also supports significant Royal Flying Doctor Service and other aeromedical traffic, involving both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.

Another national operator with a regional presence is Thomson Airborne Geophysical. Based in Griffith, NSW, the company operates nationally and overseas and maintains a hangar at Northam for a Cessna 210 and equipment used to perform calibration work on its survey systems.

The airfield is also a vital seasonal water-bomber base, and other emergency-service aircraft are positioned on site when fire conditions require their presence. Helicopters used for power-line maintenance also base there during operations.

Members of the Northam Aero Club were among the chief instigators of the development of a permanent aerodrome for the district. The present site was approved for aviation use in 1969 and formally opened on 14 November 1971, with the Aero Club playing a central role in the airfield's subsequent development and management.

More than half a century later, the airfield continues to support recreational, commercial and emergency-service aviation – and to grow alongside Northam.



Photo: A geophysical survey technician undertakes calibration work on Thomson Airborne's Cessna 210M at Northam airfield



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A Sad Decline - Volunteering

by Peter Weatherly of the Avon Valley Environmental Society inc

Last weekend we were visited by seven young adults from the Curtin Volunteers who arrived to help the Avon Valley Environmental Society and Clean-up Northam volunteers improve the quality of their walking tracks. They were highly productive - having placed woodchips on the surface of about 2km of the track. It was constant physical work. They have been making annual visits for several years now. Without exception, they have been willing, adaptable, intelligent, capable workers; friendly, cheerful and bonding with each other and their hosts. It was uplifting to hear the laughter and chatter. I always feel more optimistic for the future of our country after interacting with them.

But... While the above story is compelling and a showpiece of what can be achieved by the community there is an element of worry in the overall picture.

Formal volunteering has declined significantly. ABS figures show that 23 per cent of Australians volunteered through an organisation in 2025, down from 30 per cent in 2019. This has coincided with a decline from 61 to 50 percent in the number of people who believe most people can be trusted.

Writing recently for the Menzies Research Centre, David Hughes argued that the growth of government-funded welfare has shifted some of the work once undertaken by families, neighbours, congregations and community groups into professional services. He points to the scale of Australia's charity sector: according to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, 53,641 registered charities generated \$239 billion in revenue in 2024, with almost half coming from government. The ACNC also reports that just 0.6 per cent of charities receive 57 per cent of the sector's

revenue. His broader question is whether, as formal services have expanded, some of the space once occupied by local voluntary effort has contracted.

Government can deliver many things but is incapable of creating the personal bonds that lead to a happy, healthy community. What we value in a society is personal relationships, a sense of belonging and the compassion of our communities.

Community organisations can nevertheless demonstrate the value of strong relationships, local expertise and intensive support. Sacred Heart Mission's Journey to Social Inclusion program in Melbourne provides one example. In a randomised trial involving people experiencing chronic homelessness, 62.2 per cent of participants receiving the program's intensive support were housed at the final survey, compared with 28.3 per cent of a comparison group receiving existing services. The evaluation also estimated that every dollar invested in the program returned \$1.84 in health and justice savings compared with the control group.

Later phases of the program have themselves involved government funding and partnership, however, making it an example not simply of community replacing government, but of what community organisations can achieve when their expertise is supported by public investment.

Government cannot manufacture volunteers but it can clear the ground on which volunteering thrives and stop taxing, regulating and crowding it out of existence. Germany's social welfare laws incorporate a principle of subsidiarity in some areas, giving independent welfare organisations priority in providing services where suitable provision already exists.

So, let's get back to our wonderful Curtin Volunteers. The group was strikingly diverse, something we have increasingly noticed among the young volunteers who visit



Photo: Our volunteers 'hard at it'.

us. Whatever their backgrounds, their willingness to give their time to a Wheatbelt community was heartening.

So, my fellow citizens – think about joining volunteer groups. Research has associated volunteering with greater wellbeing and even lower mortality — another reason to consider giving some of your time to a community group.

Correction and Clarification

The September edition of the Northam Advertiser published an environmental column, The End is not Nigh – False Alarms, which contained a number of claims about historical climate predictions.

Following a post-publication editorial review, we identified a number of claims that did not accurately represent the sources or statements referenced or omitted important context necessary to understand them. For example:

1. The article's polar-bear example conflated an estimate of the existing population with projections of future losses. The research cited at the time projected substantial losses in polar-bear populations by 2050 as Arctic Sea ice declined; the continued existence of polar bears in 2023 therefore does not, by itself, establish that the projection failed.
2. The article stated that The Independent reported in 2016 that "The Great Barrier Reef is dead". The report instead concerned approximately half the reef being "dead or dying". The AIMS coral-cover data subsequently cited in the column also carried important qualifications: most surveys contributing to the 2024 figures occurred before the full effects of that year's mass-bleaching event could be determined, and bleached coral was still recorded as live coral. AIMS subsequently recorded substantial declines in coral cover following that event.
3. The article attributed the statement "we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos" to both US Secretary

of State John Kerry and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. The statement was made by Fabius. The surrounding remarks concerned international cooperation and the need to achieve progress on climate change; presenting the passage simply as a prediction that "climate chaos" would occur 500 days later omits that context.

4. António Guterres's description of an "era of global boiling" was rhetorical language concerning record temperatures, not a scientific prediction that temperatures would literally reach the boiling point of water. Guterres was discussing data showing July 2023 was set to be the hottest month then recorded, including record three-week and three-day periods and ocean temperatures. Immediately after saying "the era of global boiling has arrived", he discussed limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

The Advertiser welcomes a diversity of opinions, including views with which its editorial team or other contributors may disagree. Opinion, however, is distinct from factual assertion. Factual claims published in opinion and contributed material remain subject to our standards of accuracy.

The article had not been provided to the editor for review prior to publication. Once the editor became aware of its contents, a review of the factual claims was commenced, and the Advertiser determined that any material inaccuracies should be corrected in the following edition.

The Advertiser has since strengthened its procedures to ensure contributed material is reviewed before publication. We apologise to our readers for the inaccuracies and lack of context in the original article.

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Living well *in the Avon*

Your Guide to Living Well in the Avon Valley

Pilates vs. Yoga: The Differences and What's Right for You

by Natasha Freutel

Yoga and Pilates are two types of low impact workouts that use your body weight as resistance. There are benefits to both. Here is a comparison to help you choose which may help you reach your fitness goals.

Pilates

Pilates was developed by Joseph Pilates at the end of World War I. It was primarily used as rehabilitation for wounded soldiers.

Pilates may:

- increase muscle strength and endurance
- improve flexibility and posture
- lead to better balance
- result in decreased joint pain

Pilates focuses on small movements that require the use of important stabilizing muscles of the back and core. There is a strong emphasis on starting each exercise with a controlled breath that initiates a contraction of the core muscles. Pilates can be done on a mat or on specialized equipment. The equipment is unique as it only uses springs, levers, and your own body weight to provide resistance.

Evidence suggests that Pilates may be beneficial for those with the following conditions: arthritis, urinary incontinence, respiratory conditions, joint injuries and back pain.

Yoga

Yoga originated in India over five thousand years ago, first mentioned in ancient Hindu scriptures known as the Vedas. It's centered around the five beliefs of:

- proper relaxation

- exercise
- breathing
- diet
- positive thinking and meditation

Mindfulness and deep breathing are key features in a yoga practice. Although there are many different types of yoga, holding various poses and flowing through different series of movements is standard in most classes. Yoga can be seen as a form of mind-body fitness. It combines physical activity and mindful focus. This brings increased awareness to the breath and energy.

The benefits of yoga have been studied extensively. In addition to physical and mental benefits, yoga is also known to have positive effects on medical issues, including: anxiety, depression, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, respiratory conditions, high blood pressure, chronic pain and type 2 diabetes.

Yoga vs. Pilates: Which is better?

Yoga and Pilates are both great workouts. If you have a health condition, you may want to consult an instructor to determine what's best for you.

Many forms of yoga require substantial flexibility and mobility of the joints, especially the spine, hips, and wrists. Although most poses can be modified, a person with severe limitations or pain may find it challenging to follow along in more advanced classes.

There are many different styles of yoga, including restorative yoga, acro yoga, and chair yoga. Finding what works best for your body is key.

Pilates can be a great exercise for older adults or those recovering from an injury due to its low impact exercises and subtle movements. There are many forms of Pilates.

The main difference between them is the type of equipment used.

Equipment-based workouts use many of the same movements as in a mat class but with added resistance. Mat Pilates is great for many people, but it can be more challenging for those with decreased mobility or poor core strength.

Pilates can be expensive, and access to equipment is mandatory for some forms of Pilates. As with yoga, Pilates can be modified, but proper teaching and performance of the exercises is crucial to avoid injury.

Warnings

Modify your workouts if you experience back or neck pain or have respiratory problems. Talk with your doctor before trying Pilates or yoga if you're pregnant or have other physical restrictions.

Always consult your doctor and a certified instructor before starting any exercise program. You may want to think about taking private lessons before jumping into a class or following a workout video. Incorrect form or pushing yourself past your limits may cause injury.

Next steps

Yoga and Pilates are both great additions to your weekly exercise routine. These workouts will help you reach your goals if you're looking to build long, lean muscles, increase your flexibility, gain mental clarity or improve your core stability.

Yoga can help deepen your meditation practice, improve your flexibility, and help with balance. Pilates may be better for recovering after an injury and improving posture and core strength.

Article taken from: <https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/pilates-vs-yoga>

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OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR STORIES

Tallow Traditions: Bringing Skincare Back to Basics



As more people look for simpler ways to care for their skin, one Wheatbelt business is finding inspiration in an ingredient used for generations.

Based in Toodyay, family-owned Wyld Hyde creates handcrafted skincare using beef tallow — a traditional, natural ingredient enjoying a modern revival.

Rich in bio-compatible fatty acids, tallow creates a nourishing, protective layer that helps soften the skin, reduce moisture loss and support its natural barrier, making it especially appealing for dry and sensitive skin.

But for Wyld Hyde, tallow is about more than skincare. It's also about making better use of a by-product of the beef industry.

Rather than letting that resource go to waste, the tallow is carefully rendered and transformed into small-batch products, giving an age-old ingredient new purpose.

It's a philosophy that fits naturally with country life: use what you have, waste less and keep things simple.

The Wyld Hyde range includes face balms, whipped tallow, handcrafted soaps, deodorants, lip balms and haircare, all made here in the Wheatbelt.

That local connection remains important as Wyld Hyde grows. The range can be found at Uniquely Toodyay, Zax & Co in Northam, The Good Life Store in York, Dowerin Post Office and Maggie's Nest in Cunderdin, alongside stockists across Western Australia.

At a time of complicated skincare routines and ever-changing trends, Wyld Hyde is looking back to traditional ingredients for modern everyday life.

Because living well isn't always about finding something new. Sometimes, it's about rediscovering the value in what was already there.

Making Mental Health Support More Accessible

Poor mental health affects many of us at different times in our lives. It can range from feelings of overwhelm, anxiety and low mood to more complex conditions. Historically, it has been difficult to access timely counselling in the Wheatbelt and, as a nurse, Tracy has always been aware of this need in our local community.

Having lived in Northam and surrounds for over 20 years and raised four children here, Tracy has built her career around helping people. With her nursing background, she brings a strong foundation of compassion, empathy and understanding to her work as a counsellor. Tracy understands the importance of having accessible, local support when life becomes difficult.

Wattle Tree Counselling was established in Northam two years ago and offers counselling to couples, individuals and employees of local businesses through an Employee Assistance Program.

Wattle Tree Counselling can help you clarify your goals, untangle your thoughts, manage your emotions and find a clearer pathway forward. Appointments are available in person, from a private, comfortable space on Wellington Street in Northam or via telehealth for those living outside of town or unable to attend in person.

Tracy offers affordable counselling rates, including concession rates for pension or health care card holders. She also works with small to medium local businesses to develop tailored counselling and wellbeing programs to suit their individual needs.

If you have been thinking about talking to someone and are unsure where to begin, reach out to Wattle Tree Counselling and have a chat. Tracy is approachable, caring and trauma-informed. No problem is too small or trivial. Your wellbeing matters.



Photo: Tracy Smith, Registered Counsellor



Tracy Smith
Registered Counsellor

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Festival of Healing Comes to Northam for the First Time



After successful Festival of Healing events across Western Australia, the Perth Festival of Healing is heading to Northam for the very first time, with the 25th Festival of Healing taking place on Saturday 21 November 2026 at the Northam Sports and Recreation Centre.

For festival producer Michele Castle, bringing the event to Northam is about more than simply adding another location to the calendar. It is about taking the festival beyond Perth and creating opportunities for regional communities to experience a diverse range of wellbeing, holistic and spiritual services together in one welcoming space.

Over the years, the Festival of Healing has grown into a community event that brings together healers, therapists, psychic and intuitive readers, wellness practitioners, speakers, authors, makers, and small businesses. After successful festivals in metropolitan Perth and regional centres including Jurien Bay and Dunsborough, Northam felt like a natural next step.

“I love taking the festival into country communities,” Michele says. “There is something very special about the atmosphere. People come along curious, they talk to the exhibitors, sit in on a speaker session, try something they may never have experienced before and often stay far longer than they expected.”

The Northam Festival of Healing will offer visitors the opportunity to explore mind, body and spirit in whatever way feels right for them. There will be psychic and intuitive readings, healing and natural therapies, crystals, spiritual and wellbeing products, gifts and an interesting mix of exhibitors to discover throughout the day.

A program of speakers will also run during the festival, giving visitors the chance to sit down, listen and learn about different approaches to wellbeing, personal development, spirituality and living a more balanced life.

Importantly, there is no expectation that visitors need to know anything about holistic wellbeing before they arrive.

“You don’t have to be spiritual, and you certainly don’t have to believe in everything you see,” Michele explains. “Come curious. Have a wander, meet people, ask questions and see what interests you. The festival has always been about education, connection and giving people the opportunity to discover something new.”

The Northam event also provides a platform for local practitioners and businesses to introduce themselves to the community, while established Festival of Healing exhibitors will travel from Perth to participate.

Reaching the milestone of 25 festivals makes the inaugural Northam event particularly meaningful.

“What started as an idea to bring like-minded people and businesses together has grown into a wonderful community,” Michele says. “Twenty-five festivals later, we are still evolving, still meeting new people and now bringing that experience to Northam. I’m really looking forward to seeing what Northam brings to the festival too.”

The 1st Northam Festival of Healing will be held on Saturday 21 November 2026 at the Northam Sports and Recreation Centre, with a full day of exhibitors, readers, therapists, products, speakers and plenty to explore.

Entry is free, and everyone is welcome.



Wellness Trends: What Australians are actually doing to feel better

1. Cold therapy is going mainstream

What started as a niche obsession for ultra-athletes and Wim Hof followers has officially crossed into everyday Australian culture. Cold plunges, ice baths, and contrast therapy (alternating between heat and cold) are popping up in wellness studios, gyms, and backyards.

So what’s the appeal? When your body hits cold water, it triggers a stress response that releases a rush of noradrenaline, dopamine, and endorphins hormones linked to improved mood, alertness, and energy. Regular cold exposure has been linked to reduced inflammation, faster muscle recovery, and better stress resilience. When paired with sauna sessions, the contrast between heat and cold is thought to support cardiovascular health and nervous system regulation.

If you’re not ready to commit to a full plunge, cold showers are a solid starting point and the benefits follow a similar mechanism, just at a gentler scale.

Try it: Many wellness studios now offer introductory contrast therapy sessions. Start with 30–60 seconds of cold exposure and build gradually.

2. Gut health gets more sophisticated

Gut health has been a buzzword for years. Australians are moving well beyond “just take a probiotic” and into a much deeper understanding of how the gut microbiome affects literally everything, energy, immunity, mood, hormones, skin health, and even cognitive function.

The shift is away from isolated supplements and toward building an environment where a healthy gut can thrive. That means fibre diversity (eating a wide range of plant foods), fermented foods like kefir, kimchi, and kombucha, polyphenol-rich ingredients, and reducing ultra-processed foods. The trend known as “fibermaxxing” actively seeking to increase fibre across every meal and is gaining real traction in Australia, with searches for gut-health snacks and prebiotic foods rising sharply.

The gut-brain axis is a key piece of this puzzle. What you eat directly influences your mood, stress levels, sleep quality, and inflammation, which is why gut health is

increasingly being treated as mental health.

Try it: Aim for 30 different plant foods per week, it sounds like a lot, but herbs, spices, nuts, and seeds all count.

3. Nervous system regulation replaces hustle culture

The days of celebrating burnout as a badge of honour are fading fast. One of the most significant wellness shifts in Australia right now is the growing awareness of the nervous system and why keeping it chronically stuck in fight-or-flight mode quietly wrecks your health.

Practices like breathwork, somatic therapy, and vagal nerve stimulation are moving from alternative wellness circles into the mainstream. Breathwork in particular has exploded in popularity, with group sessions, apps, and facilitators appearing across every major Australian city. The appeal is practical: a few minutes of coherent breathing genuinely shifts the body out of a stress state, lowers cortisol, and improves heart rate variability all measurable outcomes, not just vibes.

This trend also shows up in how people think about recovery. Sleep is no longer seen as something you fit in around everything else and it’s being treated as a non-negotiable performance tool. Circadian lighting, screen-free evening rituals, and magnesium supplementation have all become part of mainstream sleep culture.

Importantly, this isn’t about eliminating stress, it’s about building resilience and recovering from it faster. The nervous system is your body’s primary signalling network, linking the brain to hormones, metabolism, immunity, and digestion. Taking care of it is foundational, not optional.

Try it: A five-minute box breathing practice before bed - inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4 - is one of the most evidence-backed ways to activate the parasympathetic nervous system.

4. Social wellness replaces solo self-care

After years of solo journalling, solo meditation apps, and solo skincare rituals, Australians are craving something more – and they’re finding it together. Social wellness is one of the biggest emerging trends of 2026, driven in

part by growing awareness of the loneliness epidemic and what it does to physical health.

Group cold plunges, bathhouse socials, run clubs, and morning movement sessions are replacing nights at the bar for a growing segment of Australians. These aren’t just fitness activities — they’re community rituals. And the science backs it up: shared experiences lower cortisol, support immunity, improve digestion, and help regulate the nervous system.

Try it: Search for a local run club, outdoor yoga group, or social sauna session in your area. The accountability and the connection makes everything stick better.

5. Longevity thinking filters down to everyday Australians

For everyday Australians, this looks like a renewed interest in strength training (muscle mass is now widely understood as one of the strongest predictors of long-term independence), bone density, metabolic health, and preventive care. Wearables like the Oura Ring and continuous glucose monitors are helping people understand how their sleep, stress, and food choices affect their biology in real time and crucially, using that data to build better habits rather than obsess over numbers.

Red light therapy, once a niche dermatology treatment, has also gone consumer. Affordable at-home devices are now being used to support cellular repair, inflammation reduction, and collagen production. Meanwhile, Australia’s first longevity-focused residential community, Elysium Fields, is planning to offer on-site MRIs, brain scans, and anti-ageing clinics as part of everyday living.

Try it: Book an annual blood panel to establish baseline biomarkers for inflammation, vitamin D, iron, and metabolic health. Having a starting point makes everything else more meaningful.

The bigger picture

What unites all five of these trends is a rejection of extremes. Wellness is getting quieter, more communal, and a lot more honest. And honestly? That’s the most exciting shift of all.

Article taken from: mbsfestival.com.au/blog/wellness-trends-2026

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Specsavers Northam: City technology, Country service

Upon entering Specsavers Northam, before you even see the optometrist, you'll be greeted by one of our highly trained clinical assistants who will conduct some diagnostic tests.

The first test uses a piece of equipment called an OCT (Optical Coherence Tomography) taking a series of advanced 3D scans of the back of your eye.

The second set of tests uses a piece of equipment called a Tonoref, which measures the internal pressure of your eyes, generates an approximate measure of your vision, and measures the curvature and thickness of the front surface of your eye.



Photo: Optical Assistant Chloe Gibson and Optometrist Arin Regi with the OCT machine

These tests allow your optometrist to identify any potential abnormalities, assess your risk of developing glaucoma and help to determine how long or short-sighted you might be. These pre health checks are FREE and exclusive to Specsavers.

Once your diagnostic tests are completed, you're ready to see the optometrist.

You may ask yourself who needs an eye test? The answer is everyone should look at making an eye test part of their health routine. You should have an eye examination every two years or more regularly if advised by your optometrist.

Even if you're happy with your vision it's worth having a regular check-up. Eyes can be affected by a number of conditions which may be picked up early through a sight test, giving it less chance of affecting your vision.

Our optometrists also have access to a Visual Fields Machine. A Specsavers visual field test measures your peripheral and all-around vision to detect blind spots and monitor eye health, including suitability for driving. The results are plotted on a visual field map, which helps optometrists detect diffuse defects (general sensitivity loss, often due to cataracts) and localized defects (specific blind spots, which may indicate glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, stroke, or brain tumors).

New Advanced Dry Eye Therapy

Dry, itchy or watery eyes? October last year saw our

newest addition to Specsavers Northam. Advanced dry eye treatment.

Low Level Light Therapy (LLLT) and intense Pulsed Light (IPL) treatment are safe, painless, in-office procedures that effectively treat the cause of Dry Eye Disease, with studies demonstrating symptoms improving up to 96%.

During IPL gentle pulses of light are delivered to heat the skin around the meibomian glands to melt any obstructions present in the glands. This stimulates the natural flow of oil into the tears, which stabilizes the tear film.

Similarly, LLLT uses low-level light to stimulate cellular activity and improve the function of the meibomian glands, enhancing tear production and quality.

While artificial tears (eye drops), warm compresses and eyelid scrubs can help soothe dry eyes they only provide short term relief, whereas IPL and LLLT treat the underlying cause to ensure long-lasting relief from dry eye symptoms.

Either treatment can be incredibly beneficial for dry eye symptoms and your optometrist will work with you to recommend combination or individual treatments.

Specsavers Northam are open 6 days a week, with optometrists available daily, or phone us on 08 96703666 for your next health check.

Step in Spring: Discover the Avon Valley on Foot

Spring is one of the best times of year to explore the Avon Valley, with warmer days, green countryside and native wildflowers bringing the region's bushland and reserves to life.

From gentle riverside walks to challenging bush tracks and scenic lookouts, there are plenty of ways to enjoy the Avon Valley on foot – and you don't have to travel far to find a trail.

The region is particularly special between August and November, when wildflowers begin appearing across the landscape. Everlastings, orchids, blue leschenaultia, fringed lilies and other native species can be spotted along trails and in bush reserves.

Walk Along the Avon

For those who enjoy being close to the water, the Bilya Walk Track in Toodyay is a great spring option.

The 6.5-kilometre trail follows the Avon River from the Toodyay Caravan Park towards Nardie Cemetery, passing through bushland and river environments along the way. Birdlife, native vegetation and seasonal wildflowers add plenty of interest to the walk.

Allow at least 2 hours one way. Conditions may vary according to the season.

Wildflowers and Wide Views

For wildflower enthusiasts, Dawn Atwell Nature Reserve, near Toodyay, is well worth exploring.

The 85-hectare reserve features an easy five-kilometre perimeter walk through a variety of native vegetation, including banksia woodland, marri and powderbark wandoo. Spring brings an impressive display of wildflowers, with the reserve also providing habitat

for a wide range of bird species.

For something shorter, Majestic Heights Reserve offers a two-kilometre walk with a rewarding outlook across the Avon Valley. In spring, pink everlastings can create a colourful carpet near the parking area.

Walk with a View

Pelham Reserve, overlooking Toodyay, combines bushland, history and spectacular views.

With around six kilometres of walking tracks, visitors can explore a number of routes through the reserve, including the Everlastings Loop and tracks leading to historic sites. Some sections are steep, so suitable footwear and a reasonable level of fitness are recommended.

Back towards Northam, Clackline Reserve and nearby reserves provide further opportunities to explore the region's natural landscape, with spring wildflowers adding colour to the bush.

The Northam area is home to species including everlastings, orchids, fringed lilies, blue leschenaultia, dampiera and kangaroo paws.

The Dorntj Koorliny Track in Northam is a 17.5km loop that follows the Avon River. For those not wanting to do the entire loop, walkers can enjoy shorter sections of the trail which features parklands and bridges. The trail is most scenic in the wet months, but is subject to flooding.

Explore York's Bush

Heading south, York also offers some beautiful spring walking opportunities.

The York Bushland Garden showcases more than 300

species of Western Australian flora, with September to November considered one of the best times to visit.

The nearby Golf Links Walk at Oswald Sergeant Reserve is a four-kilometre track featuring acacias, wildflowers and native bushland. Orchids and everlastings can be found during wildflower season, while walkers may also spot wallabies and echidnas.

Take Your Time

One of the joys of walking in the Avon Valley during spring is that the destination is as much about the journey as the trail itself.

Take a camera, slow down and look closely at the bushland floor. What might first appear to be an ordinary patch of bush can reveal tiny orchids, colourful everlastings and delicate native flowers.

Remember to stay on designated tracks and avoid picking or trampling wildflowers.

Whether it is a short morning stroll, a riverside wander or a longer bush adventure, spring provides the perfect excuse to get outside and discover the natural beauty right on the Avon Valley's doorstep.

So lace up your walking shoes, pack some water and head out to see what is blooming.

Plan Ahead

These and more trails of the Avon Valley can be found on the Trails WA website: trailwa.com.au. Maps, photos, trail length and estimated times are all available for you to plan your outdoor hike in advance. You can also download their free Trails WA app.

Helping Women Find Their Balance Again

For more than 30 years, Kylie Anderson has been helping women reconnect with their bodies, restore balance and create a greater sense of wellbeing through massage, Reiki and energy healing.

Kylie is the woman behind Little White Lotus Energy Healing & Massage, a women-focused practice based in Northam. With a background in therapeutic, Swedish and remedial massage dating back to 1992, and as a reiki practitioner since 1996, she brings decades of experience, compassion and lived wisdom to her work.

Her approach is holistic — recognising that sometimes we need more than simply relief from physical tension. Stress, emotional overwhelm and the demands of everyday life can leave us feeling disconnected from ourselves. Kylie creates a safe, nurturing space where women can slow down, breathe, feel supported and come back to themselves.

Her sessions include holistic hot stone massage, reiki treatments and angelic energy healing, with combination treatments available for those wanting both physical relaxation and energetic support.

“I believe my role is to help women find their own sense of equilibrium and confidence again,” Kylie says. “It’s about helping you feel seen and heard, reconnect with your own inner wisdom and remember the strength and beauty that is uniquely yours.”

Based in Northam, Kylie works by appointment and welcomes women who are ready to pause, refill their cup and make their own wellbeing a priority.

Time to spill the beans - Aussies not eating enough legumes

Cancer Council WA’s LiveLighter program has launched a new digital campaign, Start Small, following new data showing the average adult is eating just 130 grams of legumes per week, less than a third of the 400 grams recommended for preventing chronic disease.

Cancer Council WA Food and Movement Manager, Ainslie Sartori, said poor diet remains the third biggest contributor to disease in Australia, with low legume intake singled out as the leading dietary risk factor.

“Legumes are one of the cheapest, healthiest and most sustainable foods around—but most of us are barely eating a serve a week,” Ms Sartori said.

“They are high in plant-based protein and contain essential nutrients and fibre, which can help lower your risk of heart disease and bowel cancer.

“Adding legumes to your meals a few times a week could make a big difference to your health.”

Ms Sartori said adding legumes does not have to be hard.

“Legumes include beans, peas and lentils, but peanuts, peanut butter, hummus, baked beans, frozen peas, sugar snap peas and green beans are also included in the legume count,” she said.

“Throw a can of beans into a curry or soup, mash some chickpeas through your sandwich filling, swap out half the mince in a spaghetti bolognese for lentils or sneak some peanut butter into your breakfast smoothie. Just start small—it all adds up.”

Article taken from livelighter.com.au/news/time-to-spill-the-beans-aussies-not-eating-enough-legumes

How Jigsaw Puzzles Boost Cognitive Health at Every Age

Jigsaw puzzles are more than just a fun way to pass the time, they’re a powerful tool for boosting brain health and building connections.

Why Are Puzzles So Good for the Brain?

When you work on a jigsaw puzzle, your brain is busy:

- Improving memory: Searching for pieces and remembering shapes, colours, and patterns strengthens short-term memory.
- Sharpening problem-solving skills: Each puzzle is a challenge in logic and strategy, encouraging flexible thinking and perseverance.
- Enhancing visual-spatial reasoning: Fitting pieces together helps the brain recognise patterns and understand how parts relate to a whole.
- Promoting mindfulness: Puzzling encourages focus, patience, and a calming sense of flow, which can reduce stress and anxiety.

Puzzles for Every Age

Children: Puzzles help kids develop hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and patience. They’re also a great way to build confidence and celebrate small victories.

Adults: For busy adults, puzzles offer a screen-free escape that’s both relaxing and mentally stimulating. They’re perfect for winding down after a long day or enjoying quality time with family and friends.

Older Adults: Jigsaw puzzles are a gentle yet effective way to support cognitive health in later years. They can help slow cognitive decline, boost mood, and even encourage social connection especially when completed together.

Article taken from: <https://www.mindconnectaustralia.com.au/blogs/news/the-power-of-puzzles-how-jigsaw-puzzles-boost-cognitive-health-at-every-age>



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40 Years of Chiropractic Care: Helping People Move and Feel Better



Dr Scott Lieschke (Chiropractor) has helped thousands of people of all ages from babies to 100-year-olds with neck pain, back pain, headaches, migraines, pinched nerves, sciatica, and sports injuries for over 40 years. "When your spine is moving freely without restriction, you feel better and your body functions better! Chiropractic helps people live healthier lives!" Dr Scott said.

Dr Scott joined the team at Northam Chiropractic in 2024. He also works at KEY Chiropractic in Midland. He completed 5 years of university training to become qualified as a chiropractor. His studies included anatomy, neuroanatomy, physiology, pathology, radiography, radiology, biomechanics, and chiropractic technique and science. Dr Scott is registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

and a member of the Australian Chiropractors Association. His membership and registration require him to undertake continuing education every year to stay current.

Dr Scott has installed the latest Zenith Chiropractic tables that have the ability to take patients from the standing position to lying down when they are in pain or age makes the process of climbing on the table difficult.

With over 40 years of experience, Dr Scott is skilled in a wide variety of chiropractic techniques - from the more traditional 'old school' methods to low force techniques that don't include any 'cracking' sounds. "People only have to ask if they prefer some of the 'non-cracking' approaches."

Northam Chiropractic is one of the oldest chiropractic clinics in country W.A. and services Northam and surrounding towns, the Avon Valley and Wheatbelt.

Scott grew up on a farm in the Riverina (NSW) but laughs when asked if he knows about farming. "Yes, but from a vastly different era and size of farms!" Dr Scott welcomes new patients and is available for consultation by appointment by calling Northam Chiropractic on 9622 5312.

NRG - Your Community Gym



No more dark, cold mornings mean no more excuses. It is time to get to the gym and there is no space more welcoming, safe and inclusive than NRG - Northam Regional Gym.

Are you a beginner or returning after a break? Are you advanced and chasing gains? NRG caters to all ages and abilities in small group classes supervised and guided by qualified, passionate instructors.

Tired of the corporates? NRG is a locally run, not-for-profit community organisation aiming to help you build functional strength and fitness and social connection.

Gyms can be intimidating and lonely. Not NRG, where a family of gym buddies will keep you accountable with a friendly and encouraging "See you tomorrow" as you leave with a sweat and a smile.

Classes run from 6am Monday to Friday in the Squash Courts @ the Northam Country Club, 15 Wood Drive, Northam. For more information contact Rhonda on 0458 228 246 or email northamnrg@gmail.com.

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TUESDAY TO FRIDAY (BY APPOINTMENT)

Death Café Returns to Northam After Warm First Gathering

Northam's first Death Café brought together seven people for more than two hours of conversation, reflection and, perhaps surprisingly, plenty of laughter.

The gathering, held at Zax & Co on Thursday 3 September, was facilitated by local End-of-Life Doula Caroline Neeling, founder of Walking Beside You — Wheatbelt End-of-Life Support.

A Death Café is an informal gathering where people can talk openly about death and dying over coffee or tea. It is not grief counselling or a support group, and there is no set agenda. Instead, participants are invited to bring their own questions, thoughts and experiences to the conversation.

"The thing that struck me most about our first gathering was how naturally the conversation flowed, especially as everyone there met at least one new person on the day," Caroline said.

"We talked about some serious and deeply personal things, but we also laughed - a lot. I think that is important. Talking about death does not have to be sombre or frightening. It can simply be part of talking honestly about life."

Death Cafés are based on a simple idea: that creating space to talk about death can help make a subject that is often avoided feel less isolating and less difficult to approach.

Caroline said the first Northam gathering reinforced her belief that people are often more willing to have these conversations than we might assume.

"There was no pressure to speak and no expectation that anyone had to arrive with a particular story or question," she said.

The next Northam Death Café will be held at Zax & Co, 148 Fitzgerald Street Northam on Thursday 1 October at 10am.

Attendance is free, with participants purchasing their own drinks or refreshments from the café.

No previous attendance is necessary and newcomers are warmly welcome.

For further information about the Northam Death Café or Walking Beside You — Wheatbelt End-of-Life Support, contact Caroline Neeling on 0427 425 065.

Fit4Life celebrates 20 years of helping Northam stay strong

For two decades, a local clinical exercise program has been helping people across Northam stay active, strong and independent.

In Balance Physiotherapy & Fitness is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Fit4Life, formerly known as Living Longer Living Stronger.

The milestone marks 20 years of supporting members to improve their strength, balance, mobility and overall wellbeing through structured, supervised exercise.

Fit4Life is a small-group strength and balance program run by qualified fitness professionals and tailored to the needs of adults, particularly those aged 50 and over.

The program focuses on practical strength and endurance, helping participants maintain the physical ability to continue doing the things they enjoy.

Regular sessions also work on balance and mobility, helping participants feel more confident and steady while supporting their independence.

Beyond the physical benefits, Fit4Life provides an opportunity for members to connect with others and enjoy the social benefits of exercising together.

Sessions are held three times a week in a safe and supportive environment at In Balance Physiotherapy & Fitness in Northam.

The program does not require a GP referral and is not claimable through Medicare. It can also be used alongside a physiotherapy program.

To celebrate the significant milestone, In Balance is inviting current and former members, supporters and the wider community to join them for a special 20th anniversary celebration.

The celebration will be held on Wednesday, October 7, from 10am to 12pm at In Balance Physiotherapy & Fitness, 306 Fitzgerald Street, Northam.

Morning tea will be provided, with the event offering an opportunity for members to reconnect, celebrate the program's history and share in the Fit4Life community.

Infertility

Many couples looking to start a family, find themselves unable to conceive. This is, in part, because they have waited until they are in their thirties or even 40s to start trying. By this time their bodies have accumulated so much toxic waste through poor choices in diet and lifestyle. There may be deeper pathologies that are affecting balanced reproductive functions. Western medicine will offer you IVF treatment. Ayurveda will offer you natural, healthy options to achieve a healthy pregnancy and baby.

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- Eating a lot of raw, dry and cold food and coffee without adequate fat will impact the egg causing a hardened outer membrane which is impossible for the sperm to penetrate.
- Eating too much smoothies, bananas, burgers, ice-cream, will result in too much mucus forming, which, in the cervical canal, will make it impossible for the sperm to swim through.
- Emotional imbalances such as resentment, anger, anxiety, fear, jealousy, hatred will affect one's ability to conceive.
- Eating dead food, that is canned and frozen food stale food which has lost its prana (life force) is not right to welcome a new life. The quality of the egg and sperm and the bed in which the new life will grow (uterus wall) should be in good healthy condition.

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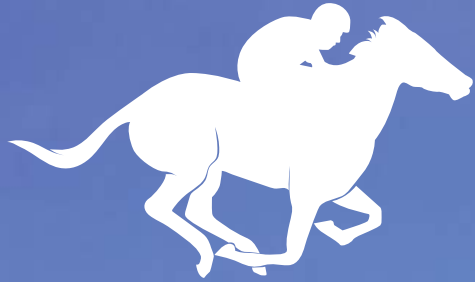


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October in York

I wouldn't mind a dollar for every time a retired person has been heard to say, "I have never been busier, can't believe I ever had time to work!" Well, the reality is that once you retire you have the time to do all the things you wanted to do when you worked but you never had the time, it's that simple. And, if you are retired and want to be really busy, you should be enjoying life in the beautiful Avon Valley and you will never have a dull moment. There is always just so much to do and so many ways to get involved.

York is now full bore into one of our best times of year and the events just roll one into another over the next few weeks. We had amazing record breaking turn out recently for the Hill Climb, the Motor Show, the Antique Fair, Peace Park markets and the amazing York Agricultural Show that was bigger and better than ever this year.

So, as we settle into spring what better way to kick it off than with the York Garden Club's Annual Open Garden Day, this year held on Sunday 4th October with a magnificent selection of gardens open from 10am-3pm with stalls and plenty of tempting food on offer. Just a note to remember to have some cash on hand or you may well go hungry and not win the magnificent raffle. Details at the Visitor Centre.

The weekend of 16th-18th October sees the second year of the York Festival's fantastic presentation 'TWANG' a weekend of music showcasing the guitar in all its forms. There are still day tickets available for a chance to see Lucky Oceans, Dave Hole, Nathan Cavaleri, Kerry Ryan and many other talented musicians. Sunday looks like being a real family day with a lot of free stuff scattered throughout the historic town of York including



Photo: Kerry Ryan at Twang

Arty Brellas, paint an umbrella in your own style, the Twang music trail visiting the Bushland Gardens, RSL, The Environmental Centre and the CWA. Learn Bush skills or join in the Junkadelic kids' workshop and learn how to make your own junk based musical instrument (just check with mum before you recycle her baking tins or saucepans!). And to see what's possible watch and listen to the Junkadelic Band parade. Need a break? Grab some lunch at the Castle and enjoy Triple Engine, our very own local rock group, playing from 11am-2pm for free, just your lunch needs to be paid for!

And if the kids still need something to do get the details of our gorgeous Tiny Doors trail from the Visitor Centre at the Town Hall, that will keep them busy for a while.

If you have a bit of time on your hands why not drive the short distance to York Olive Oil on Ashford Road just off Great Southern Highway. They have a fantastic children's playground, olive oil a-plenty in different flavours, great gift lines and the best home-made on-site ice cream, well worth the short detour. Open 10am-5pm.

Did you know York has a very active Old Time Dance Group? They meet every Wednesday in the Lesser Hall behind the main Town Hall and enjoy a range of Old Time Dances with great accompanying music guaranteed to get the feet tapping. They start each session at 7pm with instruction for any newcomers and then it is full steam ahead for a couple of hours. Why not come over, join in and meet some new folk with a common love of music and dance, you will be very welcome.

The York Heritage Weekend short story competition is now open, and plans are underway for a story writing workshop a bit later in the year but it is never too early to start putting your ideas together. Wouldn't be great to see your story in print in a book that is commemorating our York Bicentenary in 2031? Follow the York Heritage Weekend Facebook page for details of the competition

and to keep up to date with what is planned as the programme develops.

The WAHCC are locked in for the Parade of Penny Farthings and the bigger and better selection each year of incredible old pedal powered machines that always get everyone's interest. If you have a vintage 'treadly' why not bring it along, you have until April to get it cleaned up and in good running order! The weekend will have lots of music with a family concert including Bush Poetry on the Saturday. Anzac Day commemorations on Sunday 25th organised by the York RSL include a Dawn service, gunfire breakfast and a service with wreath laying. It is never too early to remind family and friends in Perth that this is a perfect weekend to come to York and leave the city hustle, bustle and parking problems behind.

Speaking of never too early, from the 1st October there are just 85 days to December 25th and I am sure by then the shops will be full of mince pies, Christmas puds and amazing Christmas decorations in all colours of the rainbow if they are not already! So, whenever you are thinking of starting the shopping just make sure you check out your local shops first before you rush to frantically order it all online and hope it arrives, on time, in one piece and the right size and colour. Most local shops have a lot more to offer than you think especially if you haven't visited them for a while. This way you are supporting local jobs and often a family run organisation that works hard to service you and your needs all through the year and really need your support. Please give it some thought before you part with your hard earned and remember cheaper is rarely better and usually not money well spent!

See you in York soon, spring in the Avon Valley is just perfect.

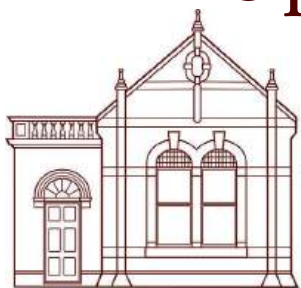
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to be spent with over 1,200
Western Australian businesses

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Investing in community

\$22.3m

committed to community
investment

Chalice is investing in community to support schools and education, community organisations, sports clubs, Traditional Owner partnerships, local events, training and skills, and health and wellbeing initiatives.



Supporting local councils

\$8.3m

paid to Local Governments

Helping councils invest in community infrastructure, local roads, and essential services in the regions.



Investing in the Wheatbelt

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expected expenditure
in the Wheatbelt

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Long-term investment in WA

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contribution to Western
Australia's economy

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Working Together

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*Note: There will be 419 ongoing residential jobs during operations. Construction workforce will peak at 525.
All data sourced from Lawrence Consulting, Economic Impact Study of the Gonneville Project completed June 2026 and WA Treasury.

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They came... they saw... they honoured



Photo: Flashback to post-war migrants at Holden Camp in Northam, circa 1950

There are links in history that take generations to understand. Australia's modern-day success in building a multicultural country can be traced, in part, to the enormous upheavals created by the Second World War and the Allied victory in Europe.

That history — and the vastly different lives that might have followed had Nazi Germany not been defeated — formed part of the reflections shared at Northam Army Camp last month, when 400 descendants of post-war migrants came together for the first time for a storytelling event named Memory, Place and Belonging.

The Army Camp was one of several Northam locations where thousands of displaced persons from war-torn Europe took their first steps towards a new life in the middle of last century.

Last month, there were only a handful of “originals” among the crowds escorted onto Commonwealth ground for a day of remembrance and storytelling. The rest were descendants: children of the pioneers, grandchildren and the many relatives who can claim an “original” in their extended family, now spread across Western Australia and beyond.

So, for a day, Northam Army Camp became something it had not been for more than seventy years — a place where the voices of Europe's displaced survivors were heard once again.

The day brought together descendants from Dutch, Polish, Ukrainian, Latvian, Slovak and Czech families whose wartime experiences included forced labour, displacement, refugee camps and migration to Australia. And, for the first time in one place, historians,



Photo: The Minister for Multicultural Interests, Hon. Jessica Stojkowski, opening the event, Memory, Place and Belonging

researchers and military specialists put those personal experiences into a broader historical context.

The children and grandchildren of the pioneers told their stories publicly for the first time. There were tears and moments of joy as the gathering gave them a rare opportunity to hear living history from those who inherited it.

In officially opening the event, the Minister for Multicultural Interests, Hon. Jessica Stojkowski, said it was important to ensure stories such as these — which “demonstrated incredible sacrifice, determination and resilience” — were passed down and preserved for generations to come. “It fosters awareness and encourages reflection,” she added. “It's remarkable to consider that thousands of migrants and displaced peoples' Western Australian stories started in the area where we are standing today.”

Her sense of reflection was echoed by the first presenter, author and former journalist Joseph Popczerzny, who recalled his Polish parents' forced labour experiences and reflected on the debt later generations owed to the Allied victory that made their families' subsequent lives in Australia possible. “We wouldn't be here without them,” he said.

The event was an initiative of the Department of Defence and organised by Northam Army Camp Heritage Association Inc (NACHA), in collaboration with the Department of Defence, Shire of Northam and the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP) at Curtin University.

Other presenters included NACHA chair Genny Budas,



Photo: Part of the large crowd during a break in the event Memory, Place and Belonging

JCIPP Research Fellow Nonja Peters, actor Matt Dyktynski, retired archivist Marjorie Bly, researcher Amanda Lovitt, historian Ernie Polis, military historian Stephen Sinclair, educator Benjamin Errington and Ukrainian researcher Dr Lesa Melnychuk Morgan.

The event was summed up by Dr Peters, who believes the stories belong to all Australians. “Migration did not begin at the wharf,” she said. “It began in places like Northam. These stories remind us that behind every migrant family is a history of courage, loss and resilience that has helped shape modern Australia.”

THE huge gathering of descendants of Northam's original post-war migrants and Displaced Persons held in August at Northam Army Camp was so successful the organisers plan to repeat the event.

Initiated by the Department of Defence, the “story-telling event” named Memory, Place and Belonging, attracted more than 400 people – some “originals”, others the children and grand-children of the thousands who were processed through the camps in the 1950s.

The event was a sell-out, and some had to be turned away. It was organised by Northam Army Camp Heritage Association (NACHA) in collaboration with Department of Defence, the Shire of Northam and John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP) at Curtin University.

Organisers held a post-event review recently, and the feedback indicated the inaugural event had such widespread support that it should be held again. The chair of NACHA, Genny Budas, said that Department of Defence and the original sponsors had indicated they were positive about a repeat.

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IN THE garden this month

by Naomi Sherrington

October in the Avon Valley is when spring starts giving way to the first hints of summer. The garden is growing quickly, the days are getting warmer and the soil is beginning to dry out much faster. It is still a reasonably good time to plant, but from here on, new plants will need a little more help to establish before the real Wheatbelt heat arrives.

October Checklist:

1. Check irrigation systems and drippers before the hot weather arrives.
2. Water new plants deeply to encourage roots to grow down into cooler soil.
3. Refresh mulch where needed, keeping it clear of trunks and stems.
4. Deadhead spring-flowering annuals if you want to extend flowering.
5. Check tender new growth for aphids, caterpillars and other pests — but look for beneficial insects before reaching for a spray.
6. Check dense shrubs for nests before pruning. Many birds are still breeding or feeding young at this time of year.

In Bloom / To Harvest:

Spring-flowering natives are still putting on a show, including grevilleas, melaleucas, kangaroo paws and many hakeas.

Vegetable gardens may be producing peas, broad beans and leafy greens, while strawberries and early summer crops are beginning to pick up as temperatures rise.

What to Plant:

There is still time to plant hardy natives, particularly if you can keep water up to them through their first summer.

Warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, capsicums, cucumbers, zucchini and beans can also go in now.

For wildlife-friendly gardens, consider flowering natives that will provide nectar through the warmer months and dense shrubs that offer birds somewhere to shelter.

Getting the Garden Ready for Summer

October is a useful reminder that being drought-tolerant and being drought-proof are not the same thing.

Established WA natives can survive extraordinarily tough conditions, but newly planted specimens still have small root systems and can dry out very quickly. Deep watering is preferable to frequent light watering, as it encourages roots to move down through the soil rather than remaining near the surface.

Mulch is one of the simplest ways to protect plants through a Wheatbelt summer. It reduces evaporation, buffers the soil against extreme temperature changes and helps suppress weeds competing for water.

Now is also the time to test irrigation. A blocked dripper is much easier to discover on a pleasant October morning than during the first 40-degree day of summer.

Make Some Room for Wildlife

Spring can make gardeners want to tidy everything at once, but a slightly untidy garden is often a much better habitat.

Leaf litter shelters insects and lizards. Seed heads provide food for birds. Dense shrubs offer nesting sites and refuge from predators, while rocks and fallen branches create cool hiding places as temperatures rise.

A shallow source of water can also become increasingly important. Place it somewhere shaded and, if it is deep enough for small animals to fall into, add stones or a branch so they can climb out.

And before pruning shrubs, have a good look first. At this time of year, what appears to be an overgrown grevillea may also be somebody's nursery.

The perfect garden need not be perfectly tidy. Sometimes a little mess is exactly what the wildlife ordered.



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Local artist selected for inaugural Perth Sky Sculpture Park by Lindsay Newland, AVAS

Northam artist, Tom de Munk-Kerkmeier will be among sculptors from Australia and around the world exhibiting in the inaugural Perth Sky Sculpture Park, opening at the historic Perth Observatory in Bickley on 1 November. The major new outdoor sculpture exhibition will transform the Observatory grounds into a 1.2 kilometre bushland art trail, bringing together 60 contemporary sculptures, nature and the site's connection with astronomy and the night sky.

For Tom, whose practice has increasingly focused on large-scale outdoor sculpture, the new exhibition provides another opportunity to explore ideas that have become recurring themes throughout his work: technology, consumption, the environment and our relationship with the resources around us.

His sculpture, Broadband Dopamine Spike, examines the increasingly addictive relationship people have with information technology. The work continues ideas explored in an earlier sculpture, Broadband Cool Drink Tribe, exhibited at this year's Sculpture by the Sea, which drew a comparison between sugar and information technology and the way both can provide an addictive "buzz". In Broadband Dopamine Spike, the idea is taken further, exploring technology and its impact on people, the environment and our connection with the natural world. Its brightly painted geometric forms represent megapixels and digital information, while its upward-reaching form connects naturally with the Observatory setting and its focus on looking beyond our immediate surroundings. Words and smaller details incorporated into the sculpture reveal more of its story. "Extraction", written at the top of the tree trunk base, accompanies elements representing resources being drawn from the earth and feeding into the dopamine spike above. At the bottom, where the trunk has visibly broken away, the words "Earth Disconnected" reflect the growing disconnect between information technology

and virtual reality, and the physical reality of the Earth from which its resources ultimately come.

Like much of Tom's work, Broadband Dopamine Spike has been created predominantly from recycled materials. His approach to recycling extends beyond sourcing discarded materials, with existing sculptures often dismantled, transformed and incorporated into new works. This allows his sculptures to evolve rather than continually creating new large-scale pieces from scratch. The approach is both practical and closely connected to the environmental ideas underpinning much of his practice, while also addressing one of the challenges faced by sculptors working on a large scale – what to do with the work once an exhibition ends.

Tom has been exhibiting with Sculpture by the Sea since 2011, with works shown at both Cottesloe and Bondi, and has increasingly specialised in outdoor exhibitions. His selection for Perth Sky places his work alongside artists from Western Australia, across Australia and internationally, including Japan, China, the United States, United Kingdom, Poland and Serbia. The inaugural Perth Sky Sculpture Park has been developed over the past two-and-a-half years through the volunteer efforts of artists, arts professionals, the Perth Observatory community and project supporters. The opening season will also include a 20-day indoor Small Works exhibition featuring more than 40 works.

Perth Sky Sculpture Park opens to the public on Sunday, 1 November, with further information available at perthskysculpture.com.au.



Photo: Tom with his sculpture 'Broadband Dopamine Spike'

UPCOMING at AVAS

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Tuesdays 3.30pm

Inspired by Nature: an eight-week program facilitated by artist Elly Cook

Cost: Casual classes \$25, or \$20 per session when booking for the remainder of the term.

Trybooking/DQBAU

Mosaic Morning

Saturday 24th October, 10am - 12pm

Bring along a surface to mosaic at our monthly mosaic morning. No bookings necessary.

Cost: Members \$10 Non-members \$15

FORM Creative Learning W/shop

Wednesday 28th October, 5.30pm - 7.30pm

FORM will deliver a free two-hour professional learning workshop for regional artists interested in developing Creative Learning projects with local schools.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 01

DEATH CAFE

Death Cafe Northam is presented at Zax & Co cafe on the first Thursday of the month commencing at 10am with Caroline Neeling, 0427 425 065

OCT 03

PERTH GLORY V ADELAIDE UNITED

Perth Glory A-League Men's team plays Adelaide United in Northam as part of the club's 2026 Regional Tour. Henry Street Oval kick-off 2pm. Tickets through Perth Glory website.

OCT 04

RETRO RACEDAY

Retro Race day - Come dressed in your favourite retro outfit to win on the spot prizes. Claudia Tripp playing throughout the day. Gates open at 12pm.

OCT 09

FIRST AID TRAINING

Gain practical, life-saving skills, build your confidence, and be prepared when it matters most. Spots are limited - register today! <https://tinyurl.com/23bvxe73>

OCT 10&11

LIFEGUARD TRAINING

At the Northam Recreation Centre. Gain practical, life-saving skills, build your confidence, and be prepared when it matters most. Spots are limited - register today! <https://tinyurl.com/2p8xr2be>

OCT 22

NWIB AGM

The Northam Women in Business will be holding their AGM at the Northam Country Club from 5.45pm. See details of the event on their Facebook page.

OCT 28

SUPPORT WORKER INFORMATION SESSION

A FREE information and networking session to support the Support Workers of NDIS and/or My Aged Care recipient. Free event. Tickets through Humanitix.

OCT 31

LIVE WRESTLING EVENT

Get ready for a night of live wrestling action, featuring some awesome wrestling talent from 6pm-10pm. Tickets through Humanitix.

OCT 31

KIDS MONSTER MAZE

Monster Maze walk through for Halloween at the Northam Town Hall from 4pm.

OCT 31

HALLOWEEN HORROR STORY

Includes an adult only interactive walk through with themed pockets of terror opening into a hostile environment with blood themed cocktail bar & music. Northam Town Hall from 8pm. Tickets through Humanitix.

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2026

Total Prize pool: \$14,000

Enter Online

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 Entries due: Friday 30th October
 Opening Night: 13th November, 6 pm
 Exhibition open: 14 - 22nd November
 10am to 4 pm

Prizes include:
 \$5000 Northam Art Prize
 \$1000 Local Artist Award
 \$1000 RSM Landscape Award
 \$1000 Indigenous Artist Award
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www.avonvalleyartsociety.org.au
 Email: avas1@wn.com.au

Supported by:

TURN UP IN BLUE DAY
 MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

FREE EVENT

LOCATION: Bernard Park, Northam

DATE: Thursday, 8th October

TIME: 10.00am - 2.00pm

Welcome to Country by Deborah Moody |
 Performance by Jamie Garlett | Free BBQ Lunch |
 Coffee Van | Paint Storm Graffiti Art
 Performance | Interactive Drumming Circles |
 Interactive activities by 30+ stallholders |
 Resources | Quiet Space | Ice Cream Van |
 Photo Booth | + much more!

1.30PM - Join us for a COLOUR RUN!

This event is proudly funded and supported by:

This event is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the Primary Health Networks Program and coordinated by NH Primary Health Networks.

SAT OCT 31 2026, 4PM - 6PM

FREE MONSTER MAZE

NORTHAM TOWN TEAM

SHIRE OF NORTHAM

SEE EVENT ON

NORTHAM TOWN HALL

NORTHAM Rotary

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Celebrating
 80 Years of Rotary Service in Northam
 and
 60 Years of Hosting Rotary Youth Exchange

Rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances to Sunday 1st November 11:30am

Hospitality Room, Northam Recreation Centre

Join us for an evening of fellowship, shared history, and recognition of the people and programs that have shaped our community.

Dress: Formal preferred

Cost: \$75 per person

Includes a drink on arrival

Please book through Humanitix using the QR code provided.

Contact: Andrea Pepall
 Phone: 0427 235 013
 Email: northamrotarywa@gmail.com

NORTHAM SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

Celebrate turning 75 in 2026 – born in 1951

A reunion has been organised for ex-students who attended NSHS - 1st year 1964 intake - through to final 5th year in 1968 - regardless of how many years you attended during this period.

This is being held from **11.00am on Thursday 15 October 2026** at the Herdsman Lake Tavern, 33 Herdsman Parade, Herdsman. Food and drinks will be available for purchase at the venue.

Partners welcome.
 RSVP to exnshs1951@gmail.com

ADAMSON HOUSE AND ST CHRISTOPHERS HOUSE - REUNION

If you boarded at either of these two hostels in the 1964-1968 group while attending Northam Senior High School, a reunion has been organised to celebrate 60 years since the 'Old' girls' hut (Old York Road) moved to the 'new' girls' hut (Inkpen Street) – closer to the 'boys'!

This is being held from **11.30am on Friday 16 October 2026** at the Herdsman Lake Tavern, 33 Herdsman Parade, Herdsman. Food and drinks will be available for purchase at the venue.

Partners welcome.
 RSVP to adamsonhouse1966@gmail.com

Halloween Horrorstory

DRESSUP EVENT
SCARY WALKTHROUGH
BAR - DJ

STRICTLY 18+ | TICKETED EVENT
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NORTHAM TOWN HALL

Nothing? The country beneath our feet tells a different story

by Naomi Sherrington

Pauline Hanson’s resurfaced comments about First Nations Australians deserve more than outrage. They deserve scrutiny, because beneath them sits an idea about human progress that is itself worth examining.

In a podcast interview recorded last year, the One Nation leader described Aboriginal Australians as the “most primitive race on Earth”, asked what they had achieved over some 60,000 years, and pointed to the fact that they had “never invented the wheel”.

There are plenty of factual answers to that question. But before we get to them, there is something more fundamental to address.

Human beings do not have to earn their equality by passing a civilisation test devised around somebody else’s history.

A culture is not inferior because it did not develop along the same technological path as Europe. Different societies developed technologies, knowledge systems and ways of living suited to the environments in which they existed.

We cannot sensibly measure the success of a civilisation by asking how closely it came to becoming us.

We cannot define progress according to an Anglo-European yardstick, calibrated to our own history and achievements, and then treat other civilisations as failures because they do not measure up. It is like judging a sailboat by how well it travels down a highway.

The wheel is a particularly revealing example.

A technology is valuable because it solves a problem in the circumstances in which people live. The absence of one particular invention tells us almost nothing about the intelligence, sophistication or adaptability of the people who did not need, use or develop it.

A society does not become more “advanced” merely by accumulating the same technologies another society happened to produce.

Human history is not a computer game in which every civilisation moves through the same technological levels until it reaches industrial Europe.

And nowhere is the claim that Aboriginal Australians achieved “nothing” harder to reconcile with the evidence than on the Australian continent itself.

Archaeological evidence from Madjedbebe in northern Australia indicates human occupation around 65,000 years ago. The site contains evidence of grinding technologies, plant processing, pigments and ground-edge axes. Research into its grinding stones has identified extraordinarily early evidence of seed grinding and intensive plant use.

At Cuddie Springs in New South Wales, grinding stones dating back around 30,000 years provide evidence of Aboriginal people processing seeds into flour for cooking.

The Gunditjmara people, meanwhile, engineered an extensive system of channels, weirs and dams at Budj Bim (in what is now Victoria) to trap, store and harvest kooyang, or short-finned eel. UNESCO describes it as one of the world’s oldest and most extensive aquaculture systems, supporting Gunditjmara society for millennia.

First Nations peoples also developed detailed systems of ecological knowledge encompassing plants, animals, water, weather, seasons and fire — knowledge built through observation and transmitted across generations.

We know the value of some of that knowledge because modern Australia is now using it.

In 2026, the Australian Government introduced new savanna fire-management methods that explicitly recognise traditional First Nations burning practices and draw upon First Nations knowledge alongside modern scientific research. Those methods now underpin registered projects covering 34.9 million hectares.

Apparently, after tens of thousands of years of contributing “nothing”, Aboriginal knowledge is useful enough to help us manage the continent.

Then there is another contribution worth considering.

More than 1,000 Indigenous Australians served in the First World War, with thousands more serving during the Second. They volunteered to defend Australia at a time when the Australia they were defending did not treat them as equals, and those who returned, returned to a country that did not afford them the rights enjoyed by the men beside whom they had fought.

“Nothing” seems an extraordinarily ugly word for that sacrifice.

Here in the Wheatbelt, this is not some remote philosophical argument.

Northam stands on Ballardong Noongar boodja. Long before anyone surveyed a townsite, built a railway or planted a wheat crop, people knew this country — its rivers, water sources, plants, animals and seasons. The Ballardong region encompasses Northam, York and much of the surrounding Wheatbelt.

That history did not disappear simply because Australian history books once chose to begin their story with European settlement.

None of this requires romanticising Aboriginal Australia.

First Nations societies, like all human societies, were neither perfect nor uniform. Indigenous policy should be open to scrutiny. Governments should be accountable for whether programs work. Difficult social problems should be discussed honestly, and disagreement about policy is not in itself hostility towards Indigenous Australians.

But there is a vast distance between scrutinising contemporary policy and declaring an entire people historically worthless.

Calling a people the most “primitive race on Earth” and reducing tens of thousands of years of human culture to “nothing” crosses that distinction spectacularly.

There is also a peculiar circularity to the argument.

Colonial governments dispossessed Aboriginal people of land, excluded them from institutions, restricted their rights, removed children from families and attempted to suppress language and culture. Then, having spent generations preventing Aboriginal people from participating equally in the institutions of the new nation, their supposed absence from those institutions is sometimes offered as evidence that they contributed little to it.

That is quite a trick.

And still, even listing Indigenous achievements concedes too much to Hanson’s premise.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians do not need to produce a ledger of inventions, military service, scientific knowledge or cultural accomplishments to establish their entitlement to respect.

No people should.

The better question is why, in 2026, we are still tempted by an account of human civilisation that arranges cultures on a ladder, with those most resembling modern Europe at the top and everybody else placed somewhere beneath them.

What have First Nations people contributed to Australia?

The question has it backwards.

They were here for tens of thousands of years before there was a country called Australia.

Their history, knowledge, culture and descendants are not peripheral contributions to the Australian story.

They are — and will always remain — the very foundation of what Australia is, and what it can become.

Point of View

In this new column, Denis Beresford and Mike Whittington take a provocative, sometimes humorous look at the issues shaping life across the Wheatbelt, and ask: what do you think?

by Mike Whittington

**The “grievance industry”:
Who’s complaining? Who cares?
You’ve just been ripped off!**

Whether an internet scam, a business deal gone wrong, a fraudulent transaction – it doesn’t matter. Someone took advantage of you, and now you’re out of pocket. Emotions conflict: outrage... embarrassment... panic... anger... revenge. But it’s no use complaining, unless you’re talking to someone who can do something about it. Who?

Grizzling to the check-out operator won’t change fake discounts; a robust exchange with your local member of parliament won’t restore the warranty on that dodgy item you got from an overseas website; and you might as well bin that wrong replacement part you got on-line – sending it back just asks for more pain. You want to see something happen.

Country people sometimes feel their interests come second to our city cousins. Or that we are naïve and too trusting. The reality is we’re all vulnerable, and the government knows it. That’s why there’s an agency to do something about it. It’s called Consumer Protection, and one of its stated aims is “empowering regional communities”. There are limits, of course: Consumer Protection can provide information, receive and conciliate complaints and take regulatory action, but it cannot act as your lawyer or advocate, or award compensation in an individual dispute.

That’s us! At last they are going to address the endless array of rip-off grievances we hear about all the time. According to the Consumer Justice Strategy 2025-26: “Senior regional officers work directly with regionally based consumers across the State, delivering education and conciliation services, and conducting proactive inspections”. I want to meet one.

But what about the range and variety of abuse? It’s not just an on-line purchase gone wrong, a sudden rent hike, or a disagreement with a government agency; there’s the biggies like a cruise that goes pear-shaped, or defaulting fly-buys. Who is responsible? Where to turn for help?

Consumer Protection says teams work with vulnerable members of the community, providing services to meet their needs. For matters outside its jurisdiction, they help connect consumers with other agencies and organizations who can assist them. “Consumer Protection empowers Western Australians with the tools to stand up for themselves,” says the responsible minister, Hon. Tony Buti, Minister for Commerce. Yay! Tony’s got our backs!

To be fair, this must be a shared responsibility. We can’t just go shopping willy-nilly and not expect blow-back. We need to change. Under the strategy of Empowering our Community, Consumer Protection aims to increase public awareness through events such as Seniors Connect and Community Connect; sessions on scams, consumer law and tenancy rights; and workshops and practical resources for traders and businesses.

In the regions, we need more of this kind of support. We thrive in a market-driven economy, where competition isn’t always fair or equal. But we’re not naïve: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is, and we should beware.

Given many scammers and deceptive suppliers operate far beyond our borders, can local agencies really protect us? Consumer Protection says it works collaboratively with partner divisions, interstate co-regulators, the ACCC and ASIC to ensure timely and appropriate regulatory responses to emerging issues.

That’s a promise we need to ensure is kept. We should be up for it in our own interests.

What do you think?

GUESS WHAT!

Where am I? Buildings of Northam



Who am I? Prominent Identities



Win a Coffee voucher

Send your guess to jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Last month's answers:

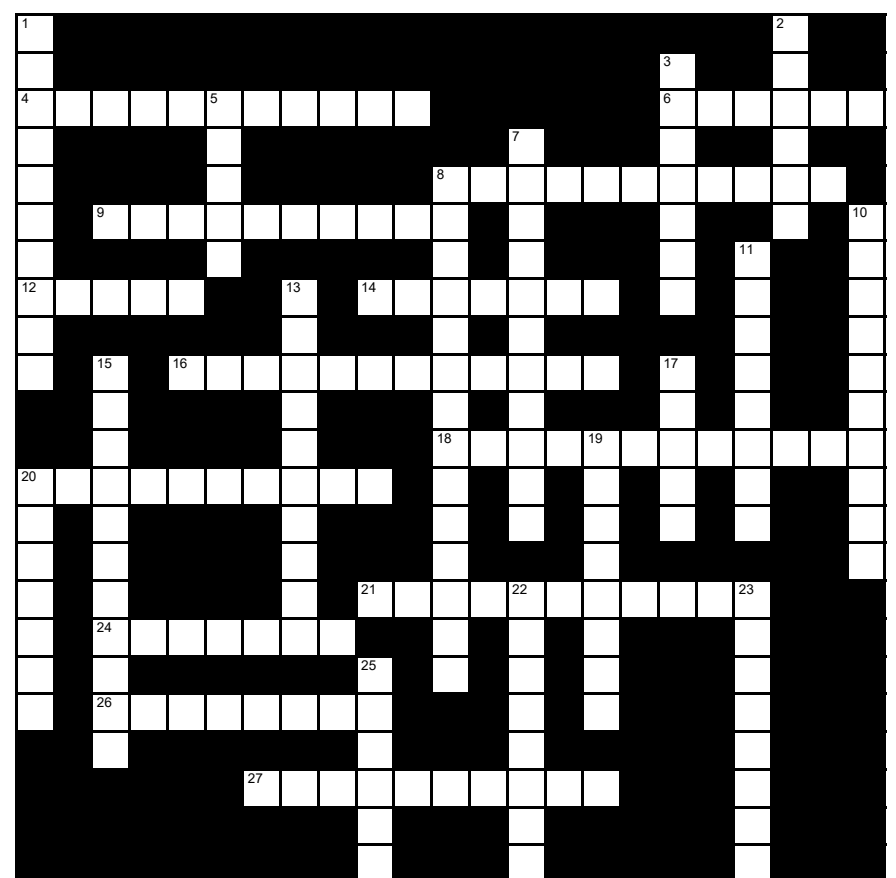
Where am I? Old York Mill
Winner: Luke Brennan

Who am I? Pat Knight
Winner: No winner

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CROSSWORD



Across

- 4 Coin collector (11)
- 6 Shallow water body separated from the sea by a reef (6)
- 8 Relating to twilight (11)
- 9 Hundred-year milestone (10)
- 12 Darkest part of a shadow (5)
- 14 Day when daylight and darkness are nearly equal (7)
- 16 Equally skilled with both hands (12)
- 18 Word that imitates a sound, like "buzz" (12)
- 20 Phrase reading the same backwards (10)
- 21 Destruction of books (11)
- 24 Word formed from initial letters (7)
- 26 Prolonged spell of hot weather (8)
- 27 Point in orbit closest to the sun (10)

Down

- 1 Strong desire to travel (10)
- 2 Line on a weather map joining points of equal pressure (6)
- 3 Inactive substance used in trials (7)
- 5 Short guiding phrase (5)
- 7 Study of flags (11)
- 8 Fear of confined spaces (14)
- 10 Boundary between light and dark on a planet (10)
- 11 Term borrowed from another language (8)
- 13 Study of earthquakes (10)
- 15 Art of decorative handwriting (11)
- 17 Boundary between air masses (5)
- 19 Warmth of the sun in winter (8)
- 20 Statement that seems to contradict itself (7)
- 22 Deceptive appearance (8)
- 23 Study of fungi (8)
- 25 Highest point reached (6)



Where Am I? September issue – The Old York Mill

Among the historic buildings of York is the Old York Mill, a reminder of the important role wheat and grain once played in the area's prosperity.

Built in 1892, the mill was established during a period when York was becoming a major centre for the production and export of Western Australia's wheat. Its tall brick walls and substantial machinery reflected the growing importance of the Wheatbelt and the development of the railway, which provided a vital link between country growers and markets beyond the district.

For more than 50 years the York Mill operated as a roller flour mill, processing locally grown wheat into flour and other products. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, changing technology and the increasing centralisation of flour production made it increasingly difficult for smaller country mills to remain competitive.

Production at York eventually ceased in 1967, bringing an end to an important chapter in the town's industrial history.

Today the Old York Mill draws visitors for quite different reasons. Its historic buildings now house shops, galleries, homewares and the popular York Mill Café.

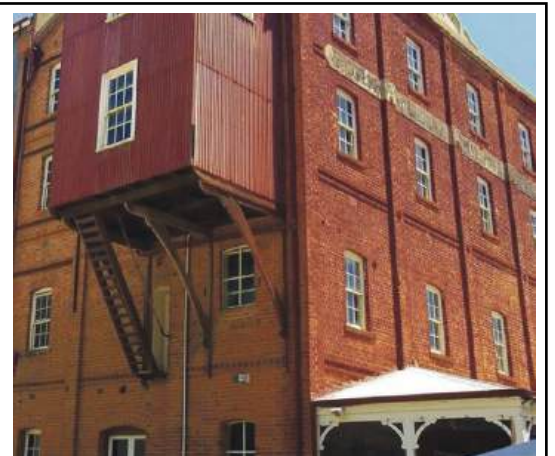




Photo: Les at his work bench

For 45 years, Les Ballantyne has been a familiar face behind the counter and at the workbench of his Northam jewellery business. These days, some of the customers who walked through his doors in the early years return with their children and grandchildren.

On 24 August 1981, Les opened Ballantyne Jewellers and made Northam his home. The business continues today as Ballantyne Boulevard Fine Jewellery, with the return of the Ballantyne name making its history clearer to customers.

45 Years of Jewellery, Memories and Craftsmanship

"It is the same business, with a history stretching back to 1981," Les says.

His career began well before the Northam shop. After a six-year apprenticeship, Les qualified in 1977 at the Melbourne Institute of Technology. He then moved to Perth, working as a watchmaker servicing watches for the trade, before establishing his own business.

Many locals will remember the famous red carpet inside the original Ballantyne Jewellers. Behind the shop partition was a large workshop, where watch repairs, custom-made jewellery and specialist work were completed on the premises.

Then there were the trophies.

"We made what felt like a million trophies over the years. Some were taller than me and pretty grand affairs—although I suspect a few are now winning prizes for collecting dust!"

Les also made and sold around 500 Aquasport watches for men. Thirty years later, many are still finding their way back to his counter for little more than a replacement battery.

"Wonderful for the customers, although perhaps not my most brilliant business plan!" he says.

His working life has extended beyond Northam, with jewellery stores elsewhere in regional Western Australia and Perth. Les recalls that his Maddington store was the first in WA to stock Pandora, before that side of the business moved to larger premises at Carousel and expanded further.

Outside the business, his involvement in Northam's Lions and Aero Club has been an important part of his life in the town. Asked whether he would make the same decision to

open a shop in Northam, his answer is clear: he would.

His practical skills also extend well beyond the jewellery workbench. Les's boatbuilding experience ranges from steel boats to fibreglass yachts, giving him the opportunity to make things on a considerably larger scale.

A keen sailor, he enjoys time on the water aboard Olive Marie. Wednesdays are his day away from work, allowing time for a passion that includes both building boats and sailing them.

Looking back over the years brings memories of customers and colleagues alike. Vicki, Laura, Glenys and Lorna are among the many people Les remembers warmly from their time working alongside him.

Those connections continue through his custom jewellery work, particularly the remodelling of older pieces with sentimental value. Jewellery that is no longer worn can become something its owner enjoys again, or a new piece to pass on to a child or grandchild.

The store also continues to offer Citizen and Australian Adina watches, supported by Les's experience in watchmaking and servicing.

Over his years in the trade, he has seen independent jewellery stores with their own workshop expertise become less common across regional Western Australia. As experienced tradespeople retire, he is keen to help preserve the practical knowledge involved, particularly in the mechanics of watch servicing.

"I want to pass on that knowledge and help ensure these skills remain available in Northam and the wider region," he says.

"At my age, I don't look too far ahead! For now, let's enjoy this 45th year, catching up with old customers and welcoming new faces."

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CEO UPDATE by Theresa Lee

It's been another busy month for the Northam Chamber of Commerce, with much of our focus centred on supporting our local businesses and community through some of the challenges currently affecting our town.

Retail security has been a key priority, with the Chamber working alongside local police, the Shire, community agencies, businesses and members of the community to explore broader solutions to retail theft and anti-social behaviour. The conversations have been far-reaching and, importantly, encouraging. There is a genuine willingness across our community to work together, and we look forward to continuing to advocate, connect and collaborate with everyone who has a role to play in creating safer communities across the Shire. An information pack is available from the Chamber, including actions being taken by the various stakeholders and practical advice on minimising risk and accessing support — please reach out to me if you would like a copy of this.

Our advocacy has also extended beyond the local level, with the Chamber joining a nationwide petition opposing proposed changes to working holiday visa arrangements. These workers make a significant contribution to tourism and agriculture, particularly across regional communities, and changes to the program could have a substantial impact on our local

workforce. We will continue to make sure the voice of regional business is heard.

Closer to home, we celebrated the completion of the inaugural Northam & Surrounds Business & Community Directory with a Business After Hours event hosted by outgoing Shire CEO Debbie Terelinck in the Council Chambers. Debbie shared reflections from her three-year tenure in Northam, ending a long and distinguished career in local government. We sincerely thank Debbie for her support of our business and community during her time in Northam and wish her every happiness for the next chapter.

Northam Chamber also hosted the quarterly Bullwinkel Business Alliance meeting, showcasing the Bilya Koort Boodja Cultural Centre to special guests including Federal Member Trish Cook MP and development stakeholders from across the Shire's industrial, tourism and aged care sectors. It was fantastic to see collaboration spark between people who are often busy simply getting on with the job. These small moments of connection can be some of the most valuable.

As AGM season unfolds, a huge thank you goes to the volunteers who continue to keep our communities vibrant. Congratulations to everyone involved in delivering the Northam Agriculture Show and Wundowie Iron Festival across September — a massive job well done!



Photo: Northam Chamber of Commerce business after hours event at the Northam Council chambers

And finally, keep watching this space!

We'll soon launch the 2026 Northam Shop Local This Christmas Competition, with thousands of Northam Dollars up for grabs just in time for Christmas shopping. Let's continue supporting the wonderful local businesses that support our communities every day.



northamchamber.com.au

Ph:0427 472 729

Family Business, Communication and the Assumption Apes

by Dr Catherine Bowen, Family Business Consultant

An activity I often introduce at a Family Business Succession workshop, asks participants to select one word that, based on previous negative experiences, they assume will always trigger a negative reaction from one or more family members. The 'succession' word is frequently cited as a typical trigger and people admit to side-stepping the topic, assuming it will result in arguments and trouble. But in a Family Business (FB), if our preconceived assumptions consistently act to stall or block communication, how can the family or the business progress?

Assumptions: What are they and why can they be so disruptive?

This is where the Assumption APEs are introduced – the troublemaking puppet masters pulling the assumption strings, subtly shaping our communication habits and dictating how and when the family interacts. Fortunately, their power lies within our own determination. We can neutralise them!!

Assume. Presume. Expect. APE.

A: we Assume how someone will react to a specific trigger – guessing, without proof, based on past behaviours.

P: we Presume how someone will respond – an informed guess, a likelihood, usually based on past conduct.

E: we Expect a specific response from a specific trigger – expecting a specific reaction based on past experience.

Neutralising the APEs

Building supportive communication structures, tailored to the type of business and the number of family members involved will work to disempower these subtle disruptors. The most productive and least threatening structures are FB meetings.

Four important meetings types for your FB:

1. Towards end of week – casual-but-important meeting: Plans for the coming week are clarified, other family and business commitments flagged. Priorities sorted, equipment ordered, people prepared.
2. Monday morning: short gathering. The following week's work schedules are clarified. Important issues flagged.
3. A quarterly structured Family Meeting (Roles of Chair and Secretary are rotated – ensuring FB members learn both the skills and associated responsibilities). Formal structure; a prepared and circulated Agenda; necessary facts or figures prepared. Minutes are kept. Commitments for the coming months tabled.
4. AGM: One of the quarterly meetings. Best held at a neutral venue at the start of the working year. If appropriate, non-family members can be invited to this and included in a pre-circulated agenda. The AGM is a formal meeting. It provides opportunity for those difficult conversations or family decisions. Wills, budgets and major family or business expenditures for the coming year are discussed. Sometimes, an external voice – accountant or advisor – is useful.

You will find that the APEs will still attend – but the more we practise and nurture our communication skills and 'business-like' behaviours, the sooner they will lose their power.

And always remember, that as humans – listening is our biggest communication weakness!!

Dr Catherine Bowen – Generation to Generation : The People Factor. Family Business Consultant.

gentogen.com.au | mydesk801@gmail.com

Don't leave WA's Harvest waiting for a visa

WAFarmers is calling on the Albanese Government to immediately reverse its slowdown in Working Holiday Maker visa processing, warning the decision could leave Western Australian farmers and regional businesses short of workers as another major grain harvest approaches.

WAFarmers President Steve McGuire said deliberately slowing backpacker visas was the wrong response to the Federal Government's failure to bring Australia's broader migration system under control.

"If Canberra wants to get migration under control, it needs to address the parts of the migration system causing the problem; Not choke off the backpackers heading into regional Australia to work," Mr McGuire said.

"We are approaching another major WA grain harvest and growers will soon need thousands of seasonal workers."

Mr McGuire said Working Holiday Makers were particularly valuable because many arrived with farming, machinery and mechanical experience and were willing to travel to regional areas for relatively short periods of work.

"A grain grower might need two or three additional skilled workers for eight or ten weeks. That is exactly the sort of seasonal labour demand the Working Holiday Maker program is good at filling."

Mr McGuire said the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme was important but was not a substitute for the flexibility provided by backpackers.

These young people earn money in regional Australia and then spend it here. They buy fuel, food and beer, stay in caravan parks and pubs and travel around the State.

Mr McGuire said WAFarmers supported a properly managed migration program but questioned why the Government was targeting temporary workers who filled genuine labour shortages and overwhelmingly returned home.

Capital gains tax reform and the return of indexation: Who wins and who loses?

by Thomas Skeffington, RSM Partner

Australia’s capital gains tax rules are changing from 1 July 2027, with the 50% CGT discount being replaced by cost base indexation. A minimum 30% tax rate will also apply to relevant capital gains.

But will the return of CGT indexation leave taxpayers better or worse off?

We modelled several property growth and inflation scenarios to compare the new indexation method with the existing 50% CGT discount.

Most seasoned accountants will remember using the indexation method to calculate capital gain tax (CGT), back in the day.

Now that we’re switching back to the indexation method we originally had, the same disgruntled sentiments are rising.

Which may go to show, change is the real challenge.

Many of us were unhappy with the switch to the 50% discount method on 1 October 1999, believing that our clients would be worse off.

Happily, we can use mathematics as a means to test the validity of those sentiments. So, we conducted an analysis to compare taxpayer outcomes when using the different systems for calculating CGT. Would our clients be better off or worse off? We also wanted to study the difference between an individual owning property versus a company owning it.

For the purposes of this study, our model makes the following assumptions:

- We ignore the small business CGT discounts.
- The individual taxpayer is already in the top marginal tax bracket.
- If a company owns the property, an individual owns the shares in the company and receives the proceeds from the sale as a dividend, resulting in the individual paying tax at 47%. This allows us to compare individual and company ownership on an equivalent basis.

What are the capital gains tax changes from 1 July 2027?

- The 50% CGT discount will generally be replaced by cost base indexation for eligible Australian resident individuals and trusts.
- The indexed cost base will adjust for inflation, so CGT is broadly calculated on gains above inflation.
- A minimum 30% tax will apply to relevant capital gains.
- Transitional rules apply to assets already held at 30 June 2027.

- Special rules apply to eligible new residential property and some other assets.

How will CGT be calculated under the new indexation method?

Calculating CGT under the discount method is straightforward: work out the gain by subtracting the original cost from the selling price, then halve the result if the owner held the property for more than 12 months.

The indexation method is different, as the cost base of the property moves up or down with inflation. Under indexation, we calculate the gain by taking the selling price and subtracting the cost, adjusted for inflation.

The scenario below shows the tax that individual A would pay over a 20-year period under both the indexed method and the discounting method. The last two columns show the amount of tax payable where an individual owns shares in a company which makes a capital gain, and pays that gain to the individual as a dividend, with the individual paying tax at 47%.

Base scenario assumptions:

- The property is held for at least 12 months.
- The CPI factor = (1 + inflation rate %).
- For the indexation formula, where the selling price is less than the (original cost x CPI factor), no capital gains arise.
- Initial property cost in 2027: \$1m

Property			New CGT method (Indexed)		Old 50% CGT discount				Company CGT	
Year of sale	Property sale price	Property indexed cost	Gain on sale A	A's tax @ 47%	Gain on sale	Less 50% discount	Taxable gain	A's tax @ 47%	Gain for company	Tax for A @ 47%
2027	1,000,000	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2028	1,030,000	1,030,000	0	0	30,000	(15,000)	15,000	7,050	30,000	14,100
2029	1,060,900	1,060,900	0	0	60,900	(30,450)	30,450	14,312	60,900	28,623
2030	1,092,727	1,092,727	0	0	92,727	(46,364)	46,364	21,791	92,727	43,582
2031	1,125,509	1,125,509	0	0	125,509	(62,754)	62,754	29,495	125,509	58,989
2032	1,159,274	1,159,274	0	0	159,274	(79,637)	79,637	37,429	159,274	74,859
2033	1,194,052	1,194,052	0	0	194,052	(97,026)	97,026	45,602	194,052	91,205
2034	1,229,874	1,229,874	0	0	229,874	(114,937)	114,937	54,020	229,874	108,041
2035	1,266,770	1,266,770	0	0	266,770	(133,385)	133,385	62,691	266,770	125,382
2036	1,304,773	1,304,773	0	0	304,773	(152,387)	152,387	71,622	304,773	143,243
2037	1,343,916	1,343,916	0	0	343,916	(171,958)	171,958	80,820	343,916	161,641
2038	1,384,234	1,384,234	0	0	384,234	(192,117)	192,117	90,295	384,234	180,590
2039	1,425,761	1,425,761	0	0	425,761	(212,880)	212,880	100,054	425,761	200,108
2040	1,468,534	1,468,534	0	0	468,534	(234,267)	234,267	110,105	468,534	220,211
2041	1,512,590	1,512,590	0	0	512,590	(256,295)	256,295	120,459	512,590	240,917
2042	1,557,967	1,557,967	0	0	557,967	(278,984)	278,984	131,122	557,967	262,245
2043	1,604,706	1,604,706	0	0	604,706	(302,353)	302,353	142,106	604,706	284,212
2044	1,652,848	1,652,848	0	0	652,848	(326,424)	326,424	153,419	652,848	306,838
2045	1,702,433	1,702,433	0	0	702,433	(351,217)	351,217	165,072	702,433	330,144
2046	1,753,506	1,753,506	0	0	753,506	(376,753)	376,753	177,074	753,506	354,148
2047	1,806,111	1,806,111	0	0	806,111	(403,056)	403,056	189,436	806,111	378,872

Caveats and key takeaways

These models are of course simplifications of the real world, in which inflation and market prices vary from year to year.

They do highlight, however, that the indexation method does not always produce a higher tax bill for the taxpayer when compared to the discount method.

In Summary:

1. For a property market rising at least twice as fast as inflation, the discount method is preferable.
2. For a property market rising faster than inflation, but less than twice as fast, the lower tax outcome is somewhere between the two methods
3. For a property market rising slower than inflation, the indexation method produces the lower tax outcome.
4. Holding a property in a company and paying a dividend always results in a higher tax amount. There are of course other reasons as to why holding property in a company may be preferable.

With the new rules taking effect from 1 July 2027, individuals, investors and business owners should consider how the changes may affect existing assets, future investment decisions and longer-term succession or exit plans.

For more information contact your local RSM adviser.

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OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR STORIES

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Real Estate Matters



Things people forget to do before selling their home

1. Hide the garden hose and move wheelbarrows, buckets, tools, and any gardening equipment out of sight.
2. Clean the front door, it's the first thing buyers physically touch. Wipe down the door and handle, remove cobwebs, and make sure the doorbell works.
3. Check every light globe and replace any blown or mismatched ones. A dim room can make the home feel smaller.
4. Wipe down light switches and power points. Finger marks and grime become surprisingly obvious once the home is professionally photographed.
5. Put away all bins, including bathroom bins and recycling bins, as they often sneak into listing photos.
6. Clear the fridge door, remove magnets, paperwork, children's artwork, calendars, takeaway menus, and anything that creates visual clutter. The fridge often appears in kitchen photos.
7. Hide cords wherever possible. TV cables, phone chargers, and extension leads create unnecessary visual distraction.
8. Look up and check ceilings, cornices, light fittings, ceiling fans, and air-conditioning vents for dust and cobwebs. Buyers naturally scan these areas during inspections.
9. Check for any underlying odours rather than masking them with air freshener. Inspect bins, drains, carpets, curtains, pet areas, and any damp spots to identify the source.
10. Clean the rangehood filters, people often clean the stovetop but forget what's underneath the rangehood.

Meet Chloe

Chloe has recently re-entered the real estate industry after taking time away to raise her family. With previous experience in the field, she is excited to be back and looks forward to supporting our team and assisting our valued clients.

Working behind the scenes, Chloe plays an important role in the day-to-day management of our property portfolio, helping us maintain the high standard of service you expect.

Chloe's bubbly personality and strong attention to detail make her a wonderful asset to our office
Welcome Chloe!



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House prices under pressure

by Patrick Commins

The prospect of the steepest property market downturn in history will not stop the Reserve Bank from delivering a fourth interest rate hike as it battles to bring inflation back under control, economists say.

New data from Cotality revealed house prices are now falling in more than 90% of Australian suburbs, amid a perfect storm of higher borrowing costs, a weak economy, and a once-in-a-generation change in the tax treatment of property investors.

Shane Oliver, AMP’s chief economist, said average home values would continue falling for the next six to nine months, by which time property prices nationally would be about 10% down from their recent peak.

“That would be the worst in the postwar period,” Oliver said, although the figure is not hugely out of line with previous property market corrections in the order of 8% – most recently in 2022-23.

Prices nationally have dropped by less than 4% since their most recent peak – but are still about 3% higher than a year ago – while values in Sydney and Melbourne have experienced the biggest retreat of about 7% from their highs.

In response to the evidence of a more rapid and wider decline, CBA analysts predicted an eventual 12-13% drop in Sydney and Melbourne property prices alongside 8% falls in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

“The adjustment over the past three months has been larger and faster than we anticipated,” CBA economists said.

Even then, the losses will not put a dent in Australia’s chronically unaffordable housing, Oliver said.

Property downturn deepens			
Change in home price values			
	Quarterly	Annual	From peak
Sydney	-4.7%	-4.6%	-7.1%
Melbourne	-3.9%	-4.7%	-6.8%
Brisbane	-2.7%	10.8%	-2.7%
Adelaide	-1.6%	8.6%	-1.6%
Perth	-3.2%	15.5%	-3.2%
Hobart	-0.2%	8.1%	-1.1%
Darwin	0.9%	14.6%	0%
Canberra	-2.8%	-0.4%	-5.2%
Combined capitals	-3.7%	1.1%	-4.6%
Combined regional	-1.2%	7.7%	-1.2%
National	-3.1%	2.7%	-3.6%

Image from theguardian.com

“In some ways this just takes us back to where we were a year ago for many cities across the country. And we were complaining about housing affordability then, so not much will change.”

Michele Bullock, the Reserve Bank’s governor, told reporters at her post-meeting press conference on 11 August that the housing market downturn was “not the main game” when it came to rate decisions, and noted that property prices were still 50% higher than they were in 2020.

Oliver said it was clear it would be a discussion point at upcoming RBA board meetings at the end of this month and in November.

“I think they will think twice but they’ll continue to hike for the simple reason that the bigger problem right here, right now is inflation – and house prices have only just flicked off the top,” Oliver said.

Jonathan Kearns, the chief economist at Challenger, agreed that the weakness in the property market would not be enough to prevent another interest rate hike, which, like Oliver, he believed would come at the meeting in early November.

Kearns, a former senior RBA official, said while the property market correction was coming harder and faster than anticipated, “it’s not large enough for them to say we don’t need to hike”.

Even as inflation remains too high for comfort, some experts warned that national accounts figures on Thursday morning could show the economy barely grew through the three months to June.

Belinda Allen, CBA’s head of Australian economics, said she expected GDP to have expanded by just 0.1% in the most recent quarter, in what would be the weakest growth in two-and-a-half years.

“If these numbers print as expected tomorrow [Thursday] it does show that the Australian economy has slowed, but inflation has not,” Allen said.

“Rolling supply shocks, more Australians spending money domestically than offshore and weaker productivity growth are acting to keep inflation high and the RBA has more work to do.”

Article taken from: theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/sep/02/property-house-prices-drop-sydney-melbourne-brisbane-perth-adelaide-interest-rates



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OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR STORIES

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Update from Chris Antonio, Shire of Northam President

Both the recent Northam Farmer's Show and the Wundowie Iron Festival were not only successful, but an example of great community spirit and organisation. Well done and a big thank you to all the volunteers and community members involved. Community-led events such as these are what make living in the Shire of Northam so unique.

Thank you also to the 4 people who nominated for the recent extraordinary local government election for the East Ward in the Shire of Northam. Congratulations to the successful candidate. I, and the rest of Council, look forward to working with you over the next 12 months, as this position is for a term of 12 months until the next general Shire of Northam Council election due in October 2027.

Following the announcement of the retirement of our CEO, Debbie Terelinck, the Shire of Northam Council has started the process for the recruitment of a new CEO. Following the advertising period, initial screening of candidates will occur before interviews are conducted. We will keep the community informed of the outcome in due course.

If you want to keep up to date with recent events, follow me on Instagram @shire_of_northam_president.



Restricted Burning Season is Coming

Spring Restricted Burning Season is on its way to the Shire of Northam and permits will be required for all burns.

On October 1, the Shire of Northam will implement the Restricted Burning Period.

Important Guidelines for when the Restriction comes into effect:

- If you plan to burn on your property, you must obtain a permit. Permits are required until the Prohibited Burning Period starts at the beginning of December.
- During the Spring Restricted Period, properties over 2000m² may burn a single pile (up to 1m³) of garden refuse (dry leaves, small branches, offcuts, etc.) between 6 PM and 11 PM. as per the Bush Fire Act 154 Section 24F
- Campfires are not permitted during this time without a permit.
- No burning is permitted when the Fire Danger Rating is "HIGH" or above.
- Register your burn information.

Let's work together to keep our community safe this fire season!

For more information and to apply for a permit, visit the Shire of Northam website.

To apply for a permit to burn, head to northam.wa.gov.au/permit. The Shire of Northam will advise when permit applications open via social media and our website.

Snap Send Solve Surveys

Alongside your regular reports, you will spot quick, 30-second surveys on everyday Shire projects, from deciding how we manage carnival rides at our community events to pinpointing streets in need of safety grants.

If you haven't already, download Snap Send Solve for free on the App Store or Google Play, test out the new survey feature, and help shape local decisions with a single tap.

You may also follow the link to test our new surveys and tell us what matters most for local events, streets, and facilities: www.northam.wa.gov.au/snap

Did you know you can do more with Snap Send Solve than just report potholes and broken streetlights?

While it remains the fastest way to flag local issues with our outdoor crew, the Shire is currently trialling a new in-app community feedback tool over the next three months to make having your say completely effortless.

Community Citizen of the Year Awards 2027

Nominations for the 2027 'Citizen of the Year Awards' are now open!

These awards are about celebrating the spirit of community and the extraordinary efforts of individuals who go above and beyond.

Nominations close 30 October 2026: www.northam.wa.gov.au/citizenoftheyear

Northam Aquatic Facility Season Opening

We'll be ready to welcome you at the Northam Aquatic Facility from Tuesday 22nd September, with opening hours of:

Early morning swim session: 6:00am–8:00am
General opening: 9:00am–6:00pm

Please note that this information relates to the Northam Aquatic Facility only. The Wundowie Swimming Pool will be opening later in the season and we will share updates on this in the coming weeks.

Focus on Farming

by Chris Antonio

Fuel supply, followed by security of fuel, are a couple of the bigger issues being considered by the agricultural sector presently. The conflict in the Middle East, along with damage to supply chains, continues. There is no other way than to clearly state – the agricultural industry requires diesel, both at reasonable prices, and guaranteed supply and distribution chains. Noting this, many businesses have increased on site diesel storage following the shortages experienced during seeding.

Although the sector has experienced a drier than normal winter and early spring, with harvest due to start this month in October, yields are expected to be on average, in part due to some key rainfall events in late August and mid to late September. Hay production has been well underway for a couple of weeks now.

Grain markets have been stagnant for want of a better phrase for some time now. There are supply chain issues due to conflict in both the Black Sea region and the Middle East. There are also dry conditions being experienced in Europe. Most buying markets are purchasing “hand to mouth”, with world production to use stock ratios at relatively low levels, countries are not willing to pay more than what is currently on offer. This is despite rising futures markets, particularly on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT).

The other factor affecting grain prices are world tariffs. There remain tariff tensions between both the United States and China and also between the United States and Canada as examples.

More Than the Paddock: The \$44 Billion Powerhouse Behind WA

Western Australia’s agricultural industry is worth far more than what leaves the farm gate, with a new report revealing the sector generates an estimated \$44.2 billion across the State’s economy.

The Beyond the Paddock report found WA’s agriculture, forestry and fishing value chains supported close to 194,000 jobs in 2023–24, highlighting the important role the sector plays in regional communities and the wider economy.

Only around a quarter of this economic value comes directly from primary production. The remainder is generated beyond the farm gate through transport, processing, storage, freight, trade, professional services and distribution.

The Wheatbelt connection

For Wheatbelt communities, the figures underline how closely farming is connected to the broader regional economy.

WA’s grain supply chain alone generates more than \$5.9 billion for the State economy on a five-year average – equivalent to more than \$16 million every day.

That value is spread across a vast network, including seed breeding, fertiliser and chemical suppliers, machinery, finance, agronomy, grain storage and receival facilities, road and rail freight, ports, export marketing and domestic processing.

The report estimates that for every \$1 of farm-gate grain value, another \$3.30 is generated beyond the farm gate.

Getting more from every hectare

While farming remains exposed to changing seasons and

rising costs, productivity has improved significantly.

In the Wheatbelt, the 10-year average wheat yield increased from 1.86 tonnes per hectare between 2006–15 to 2.61 tonnes between 2016–25 – an increase of about 40 per cent.

Technology is increasingly helping farmers make better use of land, water and resources. Farm management software, satellite guidance, precision agriculture, drones and remote sensors are among the tools being adopted across the industry.

However, farmers continue to face challenges, including input costs, freight pressures, labour availability, biosecurity, trade uncertainty and seasonal variability.

A global industry from regional WA

WA agricultural products reach more than 120 international markets, making agriculture one of the State’s most export-oriented industries.

Wheat, canola, barley, meat, wool and livestock produced across regional WA contribute to food, fuel and fibre supply chains around the world.

The report also emphasises that agriculture’s success depends on much more than technology and production. People, infrastructure, regional services and reliable supply chains are all essential to keeping the industry moving.

For communities across the Wheatbelt, that means agriculture’s impact extends well beyond the paddock – supporting businesses, jobs, transport networks and services while connecting regional WA to markets around the world.



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Life-saving safety tech to become law in 2029

by Byron Mathioudakis

New cars will have to be fitted with expanded autonomous safety technology from 1 March 2028, in a bid to address a major cause of crashes and fatalities.

Recently announced federal legislation will mandate almost every new car on Australian roads be equipped with lane keep assist technology as well as advanced autonomous emergency braking capabilities.

The lane keep assist technology will be required to be able to automatically steer a vehicle back within the chosen lane if it detects the vehicle is moving out of its lane unintentionally.

Autonomous emergency braking (AEB) systems on new vehicles will also be required to detect and brake for cyclists. This requirement will be introduced at the same time.

Research from Melbourne's Monash University Accident Research Centre has found 42 per cent of road crashes and 55 per cent of all resulting fatalities, surveyed between 2013 and 2019, were the result of collisions caused by drivers unintentionally straying from their lane.

The changes, introduced after more than a year of public consultation, will apply to every new vehicle model being introduced on the Australian market from 1 March 2028.

From March 1, 2029, the rules will also apply to new sales of existing models.

The new laws will apply to passenger cars, SUVs, utes and vans with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) below 3.5 tonnes.

That's almost every new road-going vehicle sold in Australia from March 1, 2029, including a Toyota HiLux and Ford Ranger.

A diagram showing a car approaching on a road, with lines to indicate how lane keeping technology would help steer it around a vehicle parked on the road shoulder.

The updated requirements for both lane keeping and cyclist detections were formulated with the help of the Monash University data, are in line with the United Nations stipulations on AEB and emergency lane-keeping regulations.

Since the Monash data was collected, lane-keeping systems have become increasingly common, but are not yet fitted as standard in cheaper new vehicles.

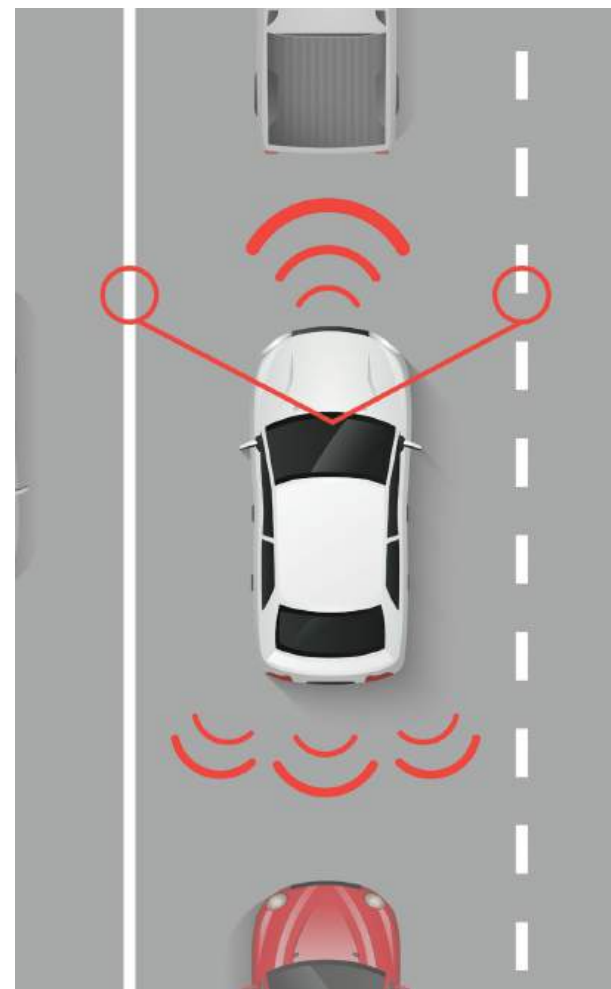
Meeting the new rules should be relatively straightforward for vehicle manufacturers and importers in Australia, given they align with laws already in force in Europe and elsewhere.

Euro NCAP's stipulation that all ADAS-related tech must operate without undue distraction or complication bodes well for Australians who are concerned they may be saddled with poorly developed, intrusive variations of these technologies.

In other words, annoying warning sounds and disruptive steering-wheel tugs often associated with ADAS systems not tuned for European or Australian roads, as found in almost all current vehicles from China, must also function within those set parameters introduced this year.

It's worth noting that when laws requiring the standard fitting of autonomous emergency braking functions were introduced at the beginning of 2025, it did force some older yet popular vehicles to be discontinued, including the original Mitsubishi ASX.

Whether either of the new rules end up doing the same remains to be seen.



Read full article at: rac.com.au/horizons/drive/life-saving-safety-tech-to-become-law-in-2029

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* T&C's apply. Awards are from drive.com.au and are for the categories listed. Fuel consumption ratings are sourced from Australian Design Rule 81/02 static laboratory combined average city and highway cycle test. Real world fuel consumption will vary depending on a combination of driving habits, the condition of the vehicle, and other factors such as road, traffic and weather conditions. ADR 81/02 test results are meant for comparison purposes only. Stock availability will vary depending on upon model, line & trim variants.

One RAV4. Three Ways to Drive: The Perfect Fit for the Wheatbelt

For Wheatbelt drivers, choosing a vehicle isn't always as simple as choosing between petrol, hybrid or electric.

Our roads are longer, towns are further apart and a trip can easily mean hundreds of kilometres behind the wheel. That's why Toyota's new RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid could be the perfect fit for regional drivers. Combining electric driving, hybrid efficiency and petrol capability in one versatile SUV.

Toyota's first RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid gives drivers the flexibility to use electric power for everyday driving, while retaining the reassurance of a petrol engine for longer journeys.

For many Wheatbelt households, that flexibility could make the move towards electrified driving easier than ever. The RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid offers the potential to complete many everyday journeys using electric power alone. From the school run and trips into town to appointments, shopping and daily errands, drivers can plug in at home and enjoy the benefits of electric driving.

Electric driving means a smooth and quiet experience, while also helping to reduce petrol use.

If you need to drive further, that's when the RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid really comes into its own.

Once the available electric charge has been used, the vehicle can automatically continue operating as a hybrid, combining petrol and electric power to help deliver efficient performance so you're not reliant on finding a charging station or arranging your journey around charging stations.

For regional drivers, that means less range anxiety and more flexibility.

The RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid is a practical option for



Photo: RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid

those who like the idea of electric driving but aren't quite ready to rely entirely on a battery-electric vehicle. You can enjoy the benefits of plugging in and driving on electric power for shorter trips, while knowing a petrol engine is ready when the journey takes you further.

It's one vehicle designed to suit different journeys and different lifestyles.

The new Toyota RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid is now available

at Avon Valley Toyota, with pricing from \$66,000 Drive Away.

Visit the team at Avon Valley Toyota in Northam to discover whether the new RAV4 Plug-in Hybrid could be the perfect fit for your Wheatbelt lifestyle.

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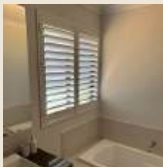
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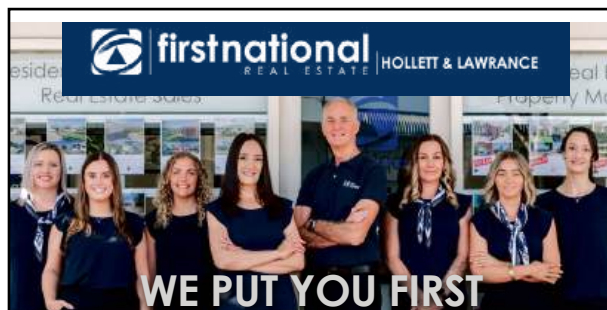
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Condolences

Benjamin Retallack

Avon Valley Toyota are saddened by the passing of our valued colleague, Benjamin Retallack.

Ben was a respected and valued member of our team, and his presence, kindness and contribution will be deeply missed.

We extend our condolences to Ben's family and loved ones during this difficult time.

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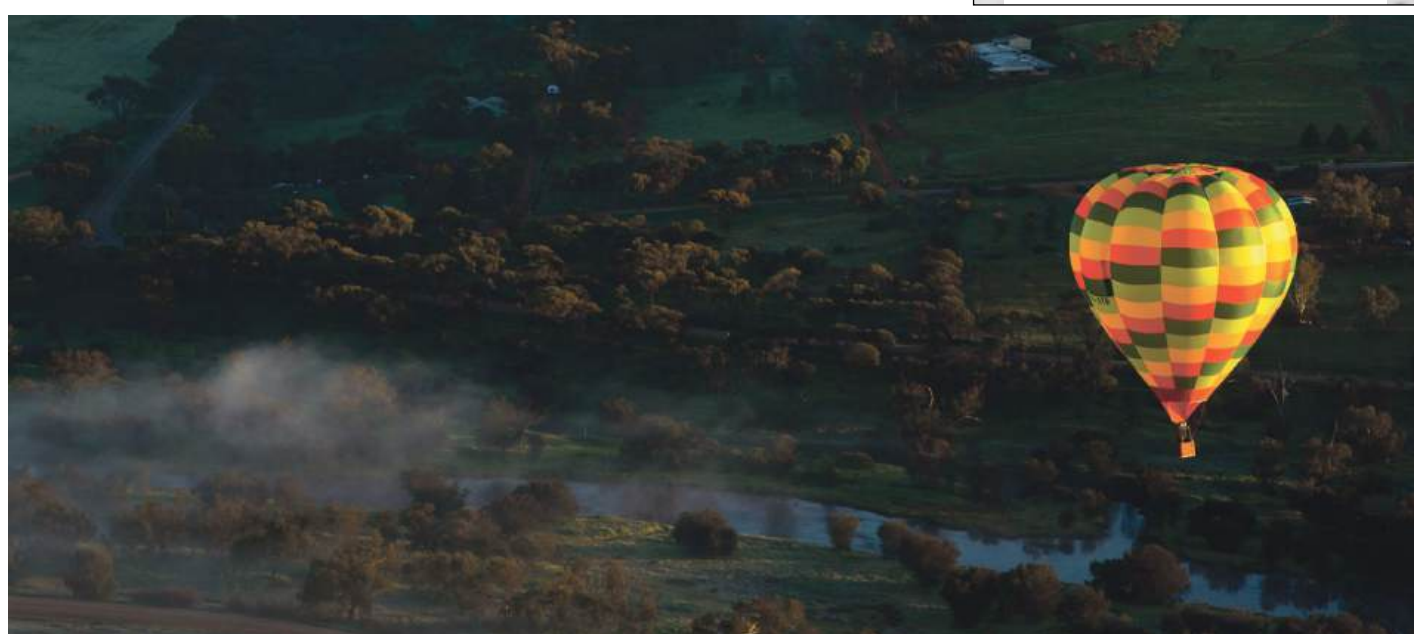
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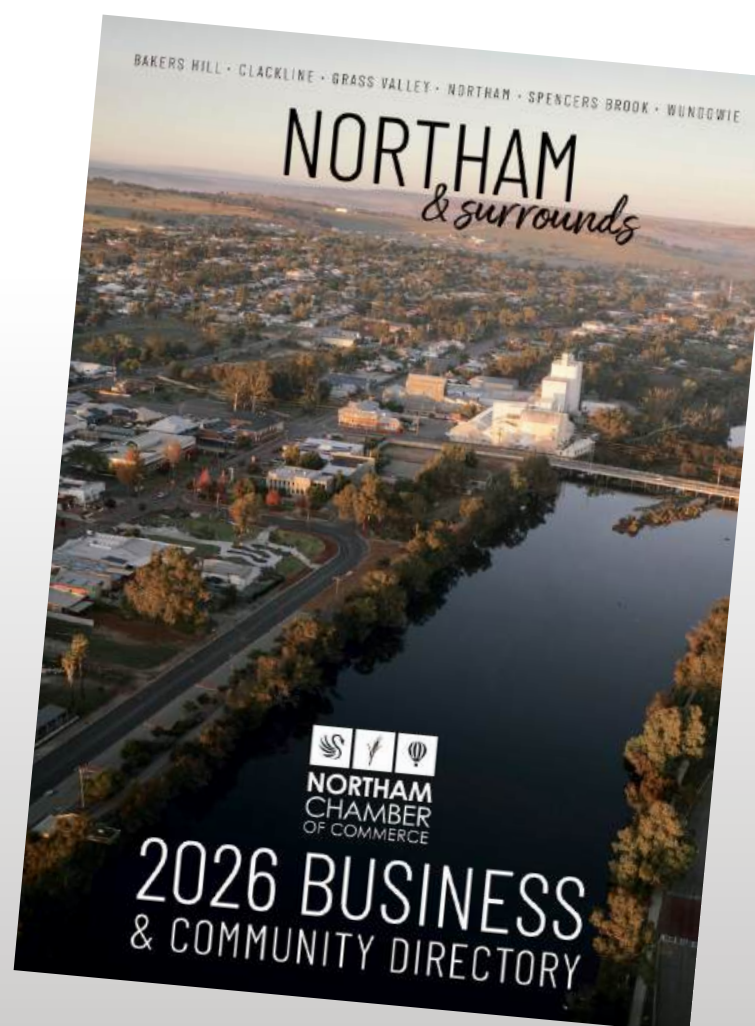
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The secret life of a floor walker



Photo: Jami at work in K-Hub on "Wear orange to Work" day in May

You might have encountered Jami in the busy isles of K-Hub in her day job as assistant manager, or perhaps shopping with her active two-year-old Rose at the supermarket. Just another busy mum doing what working mums do.

But there's another side to Jami. Like many in the community she is a volunteer. But a volunteer with a difference – because Jami's other job is with an elite group of emergency workers known as SES.

After nine years with the State Emergency Service, she is a Deputy Unit Manager. She has been a member of the SES in Australind, Karratha, Mundaring and now Northam, and served on callouts as diverse as coastal searches to a dramatic "cliff rescue" in rugged Karijini National Park.

"The SES is much more than learning new equipment and new techniques – you get to use them in real-life situations in a team environment," she tells The

Advertiser. "And learning about managing small groups under pressure can help you in your day job too."

Local SES Units are unique among the state's emergency services, as members of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, they are all volunteers – from the local unit manager down to the newest recruit. If they wear orange, they are a volunteer. No one in the SES is paid. This contrasts with the make-up of some other emergency services.

Northam is one of 64 SES Units operating across W.A. with a statewide volunteer membership of more than 2000 and ages ranging from 16 to over 80. The state is served by a tight-knit regional network that brings together the many volunteers and agencies with management professionals, in a coordinated structure. Under this structure, Northam and Districts SES works with DFES, often under direction from the Regional Operations Centre, and also with other agencies such as the Shire of Northam's Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. They also support local Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, provide ground support for water bomber reloading at Northam Airfield, and provide assistance wherever required for natural disasters. Finally and not least, volunteers may be deployed to assist with disasters anywhere within the state of WA, or even interstate if required.



Photo: Jami and her SES team execute a complicated cliff rescue in the rugged Karijini National Park.

DFES, using ESL funding, provides the hardware, and continue to update the many types of equipment now in operation – from search and rescue to flood and storm recovery, earthquake and frontline response, and also many support services.

But it takes people to make it succeed. And the right people learn special skills to fully utilise the magnificent array of equipment available. Jami was raised on a farm, but had never used a chainsaw. Now she can strip and re-assemble a chainsaw as quickly as a soldier strips a rifle. It has proved useful on occasion.

Learning special skills often provides people with a new purpose. There are many roles from driving and operating communications equipment to complicated recovery equipment and working at heights. Recruits often prefer to learn something that compliments their existing ability in a particular area – others want to branch out and master new skills altogether.

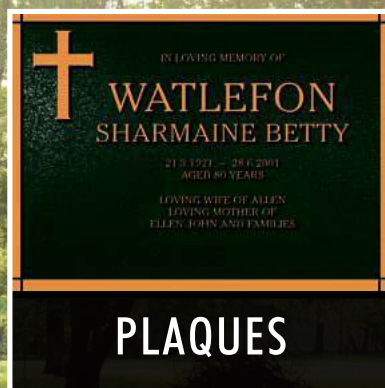
But it takes motivation and dedication to learn, to practice to a high level of competence and to be there when your skills are most needed. As Jami says "You really get to know someone when you work closely with them and they have the same training. You can rely on them, and know the job gets done." She adds with a knowing smile, "And when the callout is finished, and we can relax, there's a brilliant sense of camaraderie in the knowledge you are part of a team keeping your community safe."

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THU 1 OCT On Country Day 9am - 3pm 12-17yrs Meet at PCYC FREE	5 & 6 OCT Basketball Skills Under 12: 9am - 10.30am Under 14: 11am - 12.30pm Under 16: 1pm - 2.30pm Northam Rec Centre FREE	Create @ Wundowie 1.30pm - 3pm Wundowie Library All Ages FREE	
FRI 2 OCT Painting of our Seasons 10am - 3pm Under old Visitors Centre 12-17yrs FREE		Cricket Blast & Emerging Leaders 9am - 1pm Bert Hawke 5-17yrs FREE Girls Only	
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Lace Up for Summer: Northam & Districts Little Athletics Season Opens October 10th



Are you looking for an engaging summer sport for your child? Or perhaps your child recently enjoyed their school sports carnival and is eager to build their skills, gain confidence, and experience more track and field action? Northam & Districts Little Athletics Centre (NDLAC) is excited to announce that registrations for the upcoming season are officially open!

Round 1 kicks off on Saturday, 10th October at Henry Street Oval in Northam. The action starts early, with warm-ups commencing at 8:55 AM sharp. Each week, athletes participate in a rotating schedule of events designed to build fundamental athletic skills in a fun, supportive environment.

What Events Are Offered?

NDLAC offers a comprehensive range of track and field disciplines for athletes to develop physical fitness, strength, and technique:

- Track Events: Sprints, Hurdles, Race Walks and Distance races (up to 1500m)
- Jumps: Long Jump, Triple Jump, and High Jump
- Throws: Shotput, Javelin, and Discus

Not Sure? Come & Try Day!

If you or your child are on the fence about signing up, Saturday, 10th October is also our designated Come &

Try Day. Bring your child along to Henry Street Oval to experience the atmosphere, try out the events, and see what Little Athletics is all about before committing for the season.

NDLAC is a true community-focused, family club. Parent involvement is at the heart of what we do, and we warmly welcome and encourage parents to join in, help out, and participate in running the events alongside their young athletes.

Season Details & Membership Options

The season runs throughout the warmer months, typically spanning from October through April. Membership tiers for the season are structured by birth year:

- Tiny Tots (Born 2022 & 2023): \$85
- Little Athlete (Born 2016 – 2021): \$190
- Junior Standard – LA Program (Born 2010 – 2015): \$200

Note: We are a proud KidSport Club, which provides significant discounts on registration fees and uniform purchases for eligible families!

How to Register & Get in Touch

Ready to jump in or want more information? Head to our Facebook page (Northam & Districts Little Athletics) and click the Revolutionise registration link! Please make sure to read through the registration page carefully and follow the instructions—especially if you are claiming KidSport vouchers.

If you have any questions or need assistance, you can contact the club via email at ndlac.northam@outlook.com or send us a message directly through our Facebook page (Northam & Districts Little Athletics). You can also follow us on Instagram (@ndlac_).

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Hockey Grand Finals Cap Off Fantastic Season

The hockey season came to a fitting conclusion on Saturday, 29 August, with the grand finals held at the Northern Hockey Club turf.

Hosted by Northern Hockey Club under the auspices of the Avon Hockey Association, the grand final day showcased some outstanding hockey, with players across all grades producing competitive, hard-fought and entertaining matches.

In the 5/6 Grade, the Northam Warriors faced the York Redbacks in a closely fought contest. Neither side was prepared to give an inch, with the match requiring extra time to separate the two teams. In the end, the Northern Warriors held their nerve to come away with the grand final victory.

The 7/8/9 Grade saw Northam Chopperroos take on the York Falcons. It was another fantastic contest, with both teams battling hard throughout the game. The Chopperroos eventually came up with the goods, securing the win and claiming their grand final title.

In the 10/11/12 Grade, Northam Ace Takers met Northam Jenna Towns in what was a particularly interesting contest, with both teams representing the one club. The match was hard-fought, tenacious and unrelenting, providing plenty for spectators to enjoy. Northam Jenna Towns eventually secured the victory after a tremendous effort from both sides.

The Senior Men's Grand Final featured Northam Towns against the Wongan Drifters. It was a brilliant all-round game of hockey, played in a competitive spirit with plenty of skill and determination on display. There was also a strong sense of mutual respect between the two teams throughout the contest, with Northam Towns eventually emerging as grand final victors.

The Women's Grand Final saw Northam Jenna take on the York Scorchers. The two sides had been closely matched throughout the season, with their games regularly producing a genuine battle and plenty of excitement. The grand final was no different, with Northam Jenna eventually taking the chocolates and



finishing the season as women's premiers.

Overall, it was a fantastic way to finish what has been a very positive season for Northam Hockey Club and the wider Avon Hockey Association competition.

A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes to make a hockey season possible, and Northam Hockey Club would like to extend its sincere thanks to everyone who contributed throughout the year — players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, committee members, supporters, families and everyone else who helped keep the competition running.

The success of the season is a reflection of the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone involved, and Saturday's grand



finals were a fitting celebration of that effort.

Congratulations to all grand final winners and, equally importantly, to every team that took the field throughout the season. The quality of competition, sportsmanship and camaraderie made for a memorable year of hockey.

Premiership Cup Brings Footy Fever to Northam

More than 200 football fans, families and locals flocked to Avon Valley Toyota recently for a rare opportunity to get up close with the 2026 Toyota AFL Premiership Cup.

Avon Valley Toyota was selected as the only dealership in Western Australia to host the prestigious cup as part of its national tour, which it also kicked off from. The dealership was one of just three recommended across the state by Toyota WA, before Toyota Australia and the AFL made the final selection.

Avon Valley Toyota was chosen in recognition of its strong customer service scores and ongoing commitment to supporting the local community.

Dealer Principal Leonie Knipe said the opportunity was a wonderful recognition of the dealership's hard work and connection with the Wheatbelt.

"We're incredibly proud to be selected to host the Premiership Cup, particularly as the only dealership in WA. We've always believed that being part of our community is about more than selling and servicing vehicles. It's about supporting the people, businesses, clubs and organisations that make the Wheatbelt such a great place to live."

The event gave locals the chance to hold and have their photo taken with the iconic Premiership Cup, enjoy a free barbecue and soak up the footy finals atmosphere.

A major highlight was the appearance of two-time AFL premiership player Lewis Jetta, who spent time meeting fans, signing autographs and chatting with attendees.

Avon Valley Toyota also used the occasion to showcase its connection with local football, with the team wearing Avon Football Association jumpers for the event. The dealership proudly sponsors the association, making the



Photo: Avon Valley Toyota team with the AFL Cup

jumpers a fitting way to show its support for the club and the broader football community.

The visit was more than simply an opportunity to see one of Australian sport's most recognisable trophies. It was a celebration of community, football and the relationships Avon Valley Toyota has built across the Wheatbelt while providing Northam with a little taste of AFL premiership excitement.

Avon Valley Toyota thanks everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success, as well as their customers for their continued support and everyone who came along to share in the occasion.



Photo: Local kids enjoying their time with the the AFL Cup

2026 Season Wrap-Up for Northam Netball



Photo: Senior A Division winner - Renegades

Northam Netball Association has wrapped up a fantastic 2026 season, celebrating the achievements of our players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, clubs and supporters at our Annual Seniors Awards Night and Grand Final Day.

ANNUAL SENIOR AWARDS

The Annual Seniors Awards recognised outstanding performances, sportsmanship and contributions throughout the season.

Senior A

Fairest & Best: Jasmin Watson (Renegades NC)
Runner-Up: Paige Turner (Tigers NC)
Sportsmanship: Jaeda Loo (Tigers NC)

Senior B

Fairest & Best: Samantha Smart (Railways NC)
Runner-Up: Tayla Grigg (Renegades NC) & Baylee Lincoln (Sharks NC)
Sportsmanship: Eliza Clare & Peta Norrish (Renegades NC)
Jennifer Jones Player Scholarship: Mattia McPherson (Tigers NC)
Adele Simmons Coaching Scholarship: Katie Leeder (Sharks NC)
Jan Ireland Umpiring Scholarship: Macey French (Tigers NC)

Yvette Wooltorton Outstanding Dedication Award: Kymmy Natkanski (Sharks NC)
Rookie of the Year: Temilly Daddow (Cunderdin NC)
Club of the Year: Renegades NC

Seniors All Stars: Jessica Bishop, Kayah Bishop, Darcy Kerr, Sarah Lynch, Mattia McPherson, Felicity Oliver, Paige Turner, Jasmin Watson & Mia Wherrett.

Coach: Katie Leeder

ANNUAL JUNIOR AWARDS

Junior A

Fairest & Best: Jake Chitty (York NC)
Runner-Up: Macey French (Tigers NC)
Sportsmanship: Georgia Greenfield (Sharks NC) & Mia Hall (Renegades NC)

Junior B

Fairest & Best: Margaret Olsson (York NC)
Runner-Up: Charlotte Nielsen (Renegades NC)
Sportsmanship: Islah Mainard (Renegades NC)

Junior C

Fairest & Best: Imogen Smith (Renegades NC)
Runner-Up: Tia Bunce (Renegades NC)
Sportsmanship: Grace Sheen & Ahana Rao (Renegades NC)
Junior All Stars: Jake Chitty, Indiah de Blecourt, Mikayla Dymnicki, Macey French, Mia Hall, Trinity Jakubow, Tess McLean, Sophie Morris, Karis Rous, Phoebe Wherrett.

Coach: Asha O'Driscoll

GRAND FINAL DAY

Grand Final Day brought our junior and senior competitions together, with a fantastic crowd enjoying some close and competitive netball.

Junior C: Renegades Raiders 25 def. Renegades Rabbits 22

Fairest & Best: Aariah de Blecourt | Sportsmanship: Blayne Naughton

Junior B: Renegades Rockstars 33 def. York Storm 21

Fairest & Best: Sophie Street | Sportsmanship: Ada Chatfield

Junior A: York Thunder 52 def. Renegades Aces 37

Fairest & Best: Phoebe Wherrett | Sportsmanship: Annabelle Springbett

Senior B: Tigers 40 def. Renegades Relics 37

Fairest & Best: Shelley McLean | Sportsmanship: Katelyn Lawrence

Senior A: Renegades 54 def. Railways Tarts 23

Fairest & Best: Darcy Kerr | Sportsmanship: Emmi Romasz

Congratulations to all grand finalists on their commitment and sportsmanship, with special congratulations to our five premiership teams!

A huge thank you to our Life Members, clubs, coaches, umpires, scorers, volunteers, parents and supporters for helping make 2026 such a successful season.

We also sincerely thank our 2026 sponsors: Elders Finance, Aviso WA Insurance Brokers, In Balance Physiotherapy & Fitness, AFGRI Equipment, Nutrien Agmart, RM Smith & Sons, Wheatbelt Health Pharmacy, Smith & Daughters 3, Bellmuggin Farms, Yvette's Cakes & Catering and Mt Noddy Farms.

Your support helps NNA provide opportunities for players of all ages and continue growing netball across Northam and the wider Wheatbelt.

Congratulations to everyone involved in a wonderful 2026 season, we look forward to seeing you back next year!



Photo: Senior B Division winner - Tigers



Photo: Junior A Division winner - York Thunder



Photo: Junior B Division winner - Renegades Rockstars



Photo: Junior C Division winner - Renegades Hurricanes

Northam Golf Club



by Andrew Quin

With the season fast coming to an end August has been a very busy month at the Northam Golf Club.

The month started on Wednesday, 5 August with a three person Ambrose sponsored by Avon Valley Toyota and Holyoke Northam highlighting men's suicide and men's mental health. Over 60 players enjoyed the day and especially the presentation and light meal after the game.

August was also the accumulation of our Championships for both Men's and Women's, played over three rounds for the men. The final came down to the final last shots on the day to crown this year's winner. Congratulations to Jim Finn on back-to-back championships for the A grade defeating Declan Bell with the last shot of the day. B grade winner was Kevin Smith who played a consistent three rounds of golf over the month with the runner-up Brian Gogan. C grade again came down to the last hole on the last day and congratulations to Matt Dolton Smith claiming his first championship win with the runner-up last year's winner Robbie Davis.

The Juniors competition was exciting for three rounds, with the lead changing a few times over the last nine holes. On the final day Xavier Sibley proved too strong in the end to win by one stroke from Nate O'Driscoll. Congratulations go to Angie Leeson who was our Ladies Club Champion again this year after winning last year's championship.

Following the golf, a fantastic night was had by all celebrating our club presentation awards and also our 125th year dinner birthday celebration. It was great to see so many players and partners turning up on the night. A highlight of the night was club member Phil Becker being awarded Life Membership. Phil's commitment to the club over his 46 years cannot be under estimated and a well-deserved honour. The end of the night was celebrated by our current real life members cutting a beautiful birthday cake enjoyed by all the crowd.

Thanks to all our local sponsors that have contributed



Photo: Chadd Hunt with Bruce Smart cutting the 125 years celebration cake. Image by Maureen Allert

Photo: RSM 4BBB winners. Image by Maureen Allert

and supported our club over the season, without your support our club would not be able to organise and run our weekly fixtures. We appreciate all your support, thank you.

The clubs major event the Kennedy Cup weekend was a fantastic three days of golf with over 180 golfers playing over the weekend. It was great to see so many players from different clubs travelling to Northam to enjoy the weather and our hospitality that was put on by the people of Northam. Friday the two person AFGRI Ambrose had over 60 players competing on the day in fine weather, congratulations to our young gun golfers Xavier Sibley and Liam Leeson on winning the day.

Saturdays RSM 4BBB saw a bit of mixed weather with another 70 players playing on the day and congratulations go to Peter Flint and Wendy Richards cleaning up the field with a great winning score of +12.

Sundays major day the AVISO Kennedy Cup 27 holes of Stableford saw 55 players playing in ideal conditions. Congratulations to popular Northam player Cam Stewart for a great 27 holes to win his first Kennedy Cup major.

A big thanks to everyone that helped in the club and on



Photo: RSM 4BBB winners. Image by Maureen Allert

the course to make the weekend a great success. I would like to also thank Karen and Glen O'Driscoll for hosting another successful and entertaining night at the races on the Saturday night a fun night enjoyed by everyone with lots of laughs.

Thanks to all players that have been travelling to support other clubs in the last few weeks of the season. It's important that we repay the favour to these clubs that also come and play in our open days. It helps to build a great relationship with the players and with the clubs.

This year being the 125th year has seen the club celebrate this fantastic milestone along with the York Golf Club two of the oldest golf clubs in WA, a fantastic achievement. With our Junior program in full swing we look forward to many more years as a club to come.

A highlight of the year will be in early October as the York Golf club have challenged the Northam Golf Club to re-enact the first inter club game ever played and recorded between two clubs back in 1901. This should be an exciting day with a few laughs and a bit of refreshment afterwards.

Our club's AGM will be held on Monday, 5 October at 6pm at the Country Club and I urge members to attend this important night as it will set the direction for the club for 2027.

I take this opportunity to again thank all our local businesses for their support that they have given our golf club throughout the year and without your support, we would not have a golf club or competition.



Nominate

A junior from your club

Want to recognise a junior within your club? Nominate them as the Junior Club Champ. Send us a photo and 25 words why you nominated them.

Our Junior Club Champ of the month gets a Shop Northam \$25 Eftpos Card thanks to Hon Steve Martin MLC

Send your nomination to Jodie Longmire at jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au



HON STEVE MARTIN MLC
MEMBER FOR AGRICULTURAL REGION



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A-League action coming to Northam

Northam will host top-level Australian football next month when Perth Glory takes on Adelaide United at Henry Street Oval as part of the club's 2026 Regional Tour.

The A-League Men sides will meet on Saturday, October 3, with kick-off at 2pm, bringing professional football to the Wheatbelt just two weeks before Perth Glory begins its 2026-27 league campaign.

The Northam fixture is the second of two regional pre-season matches between the clubs, following a meeting at Hay Park in Bunbury on Sunday, September 27.

For Northam football supporters, the opposition should make the fixture particularly attractive. Adelaide United finished second on the A-League Men ladder last season and progressed to the semi-finals, while striker Luka Jovanović shared the competition's Golden Boot.

The Reds are also competing in Asian competition this season, adding further quality to what is officially a pre-season fixture.

Perth Glory CEO Ben Leaver said regional touring had become an important part of the club's calendar.

"The Regional Tour has become a great annual tradition which underpins our commitment to engaging with local communities throughout WA," he said.

"It is also very exciting to be visiting Northam whose Shire Council have been similarly supportive.

"We know our Members and fans in regional WA will really get around these events as they always do and we look forward to connecting with them."

That community involvement will extend beyond the match itself.

On the morning of the game, Perth Glory will hold a free community football clinic for children aged six to 12 at Bert Hawke Reserve from 10.30am to noon.

The clinic will include football activities and small-sided games, as well as an appearance by club mascot George the Gorilla. Participation is free, although children need to be registered beforehand.

Glory has already begun building links with the town ahead of the fixture. Club representatives recently visited Northam, taking in Bilya Koort Boodja, the Northam Aquatic Facility, the town murals and CBH grain silos, while also visiting local primary schools and meeting students.

Shire of Northam President Chris Antonio said hosting the A-League club would give local families and junior players an opportunity rarely available outside metropolitan areas.

"Hosting Perth Glory in Northam is a fantastic opportunity for local families, young players and football supporters to experience elite-level football close to home," he said.

"Events like this not only create memorable experiences for our community, but also encourage participation in sport, support local businesses and highlight the Shire of Northam as a destination capable of hosting major sporting events."

The Northam game will also be one of Glory's final major hit-outs before the new A-League season. Perth begins its campaign away against Macarthur FC on October 17, before returning to WA to host Adelaide United again at HBF Park on November 1.

Adelaide United CEO Nathan Kosmina said the regional matches would form an important part of his club's preparations.

"We're also looking forward to engaging with the football community in Bunbury and Northam and spending time with supporters across regional Western



Australia," he said.

Tickets for the Henry Street Oval match are \$25 for adults, \$20 concession, \$10 for juniors and \$60 for families, with discounted prices available to Perth Glory members.

Perth Glory v Adelaide United

Saturday, October 3 — Henry Street Oval, Northam

Kick-off: 2pm

Tickets are available through Perth Glory: [membership.perthglory.com.au/products/ticketing/pre-season-northam-1603](https://perthglory.com.au/products/ticketing/pre-season-northam-1603)



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Long Live Local

Experience tells as Cunderdin denies young Railways



by Naomi Sherrington

Cunderdin's remarkable run at the top of the Avon Football Association continued on Saturday, with the Magpies claiming their fifth premiership in six years after defeating Railways by 28 points in the League grand final.

The final scoreboard — Cunderdin 10.7 (67) to Railways 5.9 (39) — reflected a Magpies side that was cleaner and more clinical when its opportunities came.

But it did not tell the whole story.

Railways entered the decider with an average age of just 22.8 years, and against a Cunderdin outfit hardened by years of finals football, the contrast between emerging talent and accumulated experience became one of the defining features of the afternoon.

Railways showed plenty of endeavour and were prepared to take the game on, but at times struggled to turn possession further upfield into dangerous opportunities in attack.

Getting the ball cleanly inside forward 50 proved difficult, with Cunderdin organised behind the play and rarely allowing Railways easy access to goal.

And when the Bombers did find a way through, too often the reward wasn't the full six points.

The final scoring figures were revealing.

Cunderdin registered 17 scoring shots to Railways' 14 — a difference of only three across the entire match — yet the Magpies finished with twice as many goals.

Cunderdin converted 10 of its 17 scoring shots into goals — 58.8 per cent — while Railways managed five from 14, or 35.7 per cent.

Had Railways converted its opportunities at approximately the same rate as Cunderdin, its 14 scoring shots would have produced roughly eight goals and six behinds — around 54 points.

Instead of a 28-point defeat, the margin would have been

closer to two goals.

It is only a hypothetical, of course, and scoring-shot conversion alone cannot capture everything that happened around the ground. But the numbers nevertheless underline one of the clearest differences between the two sides: when Cunderdin created a chance, it was much more likely to make it count. That is the sort of composure that comes with experience — experience this young Railways side is still accumulating.

For a Cunderdin side that has become accustomed to playing high-pressure finals football, there was a calmness in the way the Magpies absorbed pressure, set up defensively and then punished Railways when opportunities opened up.

They did not need to dominate every passage of play.

They simply made more of the moments that mattered.

Railways, by comparison, were playing with one of the youngest sides in the competition.

The Magpies arrived at the grand final as a side that already knew how to win one.

Railways had already shown across the season that youth was no barrier to success, finishing among the competition's benchmark sides despite an average age of just 22.8. But finals football presented a different test, and after a stumble earlier in the finals series, the Bombers had to fight their way back to the decider.

What Cunderdin possessed was not simply greater ability, but years of experience in precisely these moments — the pressure, the reduced space and the need to make limited opportunities count.

The Bombers had the run and enthusiasm to trouble Cunderdin and generated enough scoring opportunities to remain in the contest, but the final step — clean entry inside 50 followed by composed finishing — proved harder to find.

Cunderdin's experience showed in precisely those moments.

Best-on-ground honours went to Corey Morris, whose performance typified the composure of a Magpies side containing no shortage of seasoned footballers.

Railways captain Bailey O'Driscoll was generous in defeat, giving full credit to the premiers after the final siren. It was, he said, "easy to see why they had won five flags in six years".

It was an observation that perhaps summed up the

match better than the final margin alone.

Railways were not simply blown away. They finished only three scoring shots behind Cunderdin and created enough opportunities to suggest the gulf between the sides was considerably narrower than the scoreboard might initially imply.

The difference was what happened once those opportunities arrived.

Cunderdin converted. Railways, too often, did not.

Cunderdin captain Will Michell and coach Kaidyn Fullgrabe were also quick to acknowledge the quality of the opposition after the match, noting the bright future ahead of the young Railways side.

There was plenty on Saturday to support that assessment.

For Railways, the loss will sting. Grand final defeats always do. But a team with an average age below 23 does not reach a League grand final by accident.

Cunderdin showed what can happen when that experience accumulates. For Railways, the challenge now is to turn Saturday's disappointment into experience of its own.

Reserves

Kellerberrin-Tammin 10.9 (69) def Federals 7.6 (48)

Best on Ground: Declan McNee (Kellerberrin-Tammin)

Kellerberrin-Tammin claimed the Reserves premiership with a 21-point win over Federals, but the final margin did not reflect how close the contest remained for much of the match.

Federals stayed within striking distance and looked capable of snatching the game almost until the end, before Kellerberrin-Tammin found another gear late and kicked away to seal a 10.9 (69) to 7.6 (48) victory.

Declan McNee was named best on ground for Kellerberrin-Tammin.

Netball

York 47 def Quairading 40

Best on Ground: Tilly Johnston (York)

York completed its grand final campaign with a seven-goal victory over Quairading, prevailing 47-40 to claim the netball premiership.

Tilly Johnston capped the win with a standout performance, earning best-on-ground honours for York.

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