

August 2025

Community Update

Last year, we proudly opened the dedicated Children's Emergency Department at University Hospital Geelong. This purpose-built facility features a paediatric triage system, assessment and waiting areas, and treatment rooms designed specifically for children and their families. Located just 100 metres from the main Emergency Department entrance, it's a vital addition to our local healthcare services.

In the recently announced 2025/26 State Budget, further investments have been made to expand and strengthen urgent care services across Victoria. It was a great honour to officially hand over the keys to the new boat, RESCUE 203, to Coast Guard Queenscliff last month. Co-designed by Coast Guard volunteers, this advanced vessel features cutting-edge technology and enhanced safety measures. It represents a significant investment in our region's marine safety and supports the vital work of our Coast Guard volunteers in search and rescue operations.

The waters beyond the bay, through the Rip and into Bass Strait, are notoriously treacherous. With its improved capabilities, this new vessel will equip the crew to respond effectively in challenging conditions. A heartfelt thank you to all Coast Guard volunteers, past and present, for every hour served, every rescue conducted, and every life saved. You do an extraordinary job, and I am proud to support your work.

I also recently had the pleasure of attending the Leopold Fire Brigade's Award Dinner. It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with the incredible CFA volunteers and thank them for their unwavering dedication to our community. This April marked 80 years since the CFA was officially established in Victoria, eight decades of service from members past and present who have worked tirelessly to protect our communities. I am deeply grateful.

In June, I joined the Leopold Lions Club for their Changeover Dinner, an inspiring evening that celebrated community spirit and welcomed the new board, including Rita Hocking as the incoming President. Thank you to every member of the Lions Club of Leopold. Your ongoing commitment and service are a shining example of what can be achieved through unity and a shared purpose.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest thanks to the hundreds of volunteers across the Bellarine. Whether in emergency services, service clubs, or community organisations, your time, dedication, and kindness make a lasting impact. You help strengthen our communities and enrich the lives of everyone around you.

Free Pad and Tampon Vending Machines in Bellarine

Access to essential health items should never be a barrier to participation, education, or wellbeing.

That's why free pad and tampon vending machines are now being installed across Victoria, an important step in supporting period dignity and ensuring everyone can access sanitary products whenever they need them.

Here in the Bellarine, I'm proud to share that the first machines have already been installed and are now available at:

- Leopold Library
- Drysdale Boronggook Library
- Queenscliff Library

When the rollout is complete, 1,500 vending machines will be available at up to 700 public locations across the state.

