

ADVERTORIAL

Having a chat with



Hoody

Ben Hood MLC
Member for the Legaslative Council

Say no to domestic and family violence

Domestic violence campaigner Simone O'Brien is joined by the 16% of Australian women who the Australian Bureau of Statistics say have experienced partner violence in their lifetime.

I was fortunate enough to meet and hear from Simone at the "Say No to Domestic and Family Violence dinner" sponsored by the Combined Rotary Clubs of Mount Gambier a fortnight ago.

Simone's journey began 11 years ago when she was subjected to a horrifying intimate partner domestic violence attack by a perpetrator who couldn't take "no" for an answer.

We also know that domestic violence is not isolated to female victims.

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that 1 in 3 victims of Domestic Assault from January 2021 to December 2022 were male and 1 in 8 men will experience violence from an intimate partner or family member in their lifetime.

The One in Three Campaign notes that men are 2 to 3 times more likely than women to have never told anybody about their experience with current or previous partner domestic violence incidents. They are also 50% more likely than women to have never sought advice or support.

Domestic violence is a black mark on our society and we should do all we can to stamp it out.

However, the trend does not appear to be heading in the right direction. The data shows a steady increase in Domestic Violence Orders over the past few years, with the ABS finding a 13% increase in family and domestic violence, and sexual assaults.

Through the advocacy and work of Simone O'Brien and campaigns such as Rotary's "Say No to Domestic Violence" and the One in Three Campaign for male victims of family violence, I am hopeful that this trend will see a change in trajectories.



FIGHTING FOR
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BEN HOOD MLC

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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Young firies put

Cadets challenged at championships

Local Country Fire Service cadets recently took part in a regional challenge designed to test their firefighting skills.

Nine teams of cadets from throughout Region 5 gath-

ered in Naracoorte to compete in the first Regional Cadet Championships in over 20 years.

More than 40 cadets competed in four firefighting skill-based drills and communication skills throughout the day to determine the champion team for 2023.

The event results were determined on the time taken to com-

plete the drill plus any penalties added for not meeting the set criteria of the drill.

The skill level displayed by the cadets throughout the events took many by surprise with the judges having nothing but praise for the efforts shown by the cadets.

Team 1 from the Naracoorte brigade proved to be the domi-

nant team on the day, placing in every event to be crowned the championship winners and the first ever winner of the 'Jason Druwitt Trophy'.

The trophy has been named in honour of Regional Commander Jason Druwitt and was selected by the cadets and cadet leaders as an acknowledgement of the support that Mr Druwitt



New wave of support revitalises Bay festival

Volunteers step forward to keep long-running coastal event alive

A dedicated group of volunteers have saved a vital event in a local coastal community with a history spanning over 30 years.

After a three-year hiatus caused by the combined impact of COVID-19 and dwindling volunteer support, the Bay Escape Festival was in dire need of assistance to make its return next year.

An annual general meeting held last week seeking committee members received an overwhelming response with over half the 20 attendees putting their hand up to volunteer.

The revitalised committee will be made up of 13 people, most of whom are either a Port MacDonnell or Allendale resident or have ties to the seaside township.

Bay Escape Festival event coordinator Ryan Donovan said the response by volunteers was fantastic stating they did not want to see the end of the beloved event.

"I think that was what drove the attendance of the AGM, people were concerned that it might not be able to continue so there was a lot of excitement from the people at the AGM," he said.

"A lot take pride in the event and people wanted to make sure that it goes forward, it can continue to evolve and grow and make sure it is suitable for what the community is looking for.

"There are some new faces and some new ideas and some people with some great experience in different areas, it will bring new skill sets to the committee which will be fantastic.

"We will catch up again in a couple of weeks, get down a few different things and work out what are the critical things we need to get started on to make sure that we are in a position to put the event on in 2024."

As one of the Limestone Coast's longest-running festivals, the Bay Escape has been held annually at Port MacDonnell, serving as an all-ages street party featuring the best food, wine, vendors, and live music from renowned musicians in the region.

Previously known as the Bayside Festival, the Bay Escape underwent a major rebranding in 2019 based on valuable community feedback and was relaunched with a focus on food, wine, and coastal themes which resulted in overwhelming success.

The last time the event took place was in 2020 with this year's festival cancelled due to a lack of momentum and support

which meant organisers did not have the resources available to put the event on.

Mr Donovan said he hopes to keep the event to a similar format as the last Bay Escape Festival with the potential for new aspects to be explored by the group.

"I think a lot of people enjoyed the nature of the event when we last held it so I think it will be a similar theme to

that and just try and build on that and make some slight changes where necessary," he said.

"In response to the numbers that we did get, a lot of people seemed to be happy the event would be going ahead, there was a lot of positive engagement on Facebook and things like that.

"We want to thank the community support we had and those people for taking the time to be at the AGM but also then committing to be on the committee and to those that have taken executive roles as well.

"It can be a thankless task at times, so we are very grateful for that and look forward to putting on a great event."

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Ryan Donovan