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Upcoming Council Meetings

- 17 October 2023, 7.30pm
 Galada Community Centre,
 10A Forum Way, Epping
 (Community forum from 6.15pm)
- 21 November 2023, 6.30pm
 Council Chamber, Council Offices,
 25 Ferres Boulevard,
 South Morang
- 19 December 2023, 6.30pm Council Chamber, Council Offices, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

Meetings can be viewed live on the City of Whittlesea YouTube channel.

For the latest information about Council Meetings, including dates and how you can get involved, visit www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

Contact us

- Customer Service
 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang
- Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5pm
- Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC VIC 3083
- 9217 2170 (including after hours emergencies)
- National Relay Service: 133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)
- info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
- www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Free telephone interpreter service 131 450

Panel of Administrators



Lydia WilsonChair of Administrators



Peita Duncan Administrator



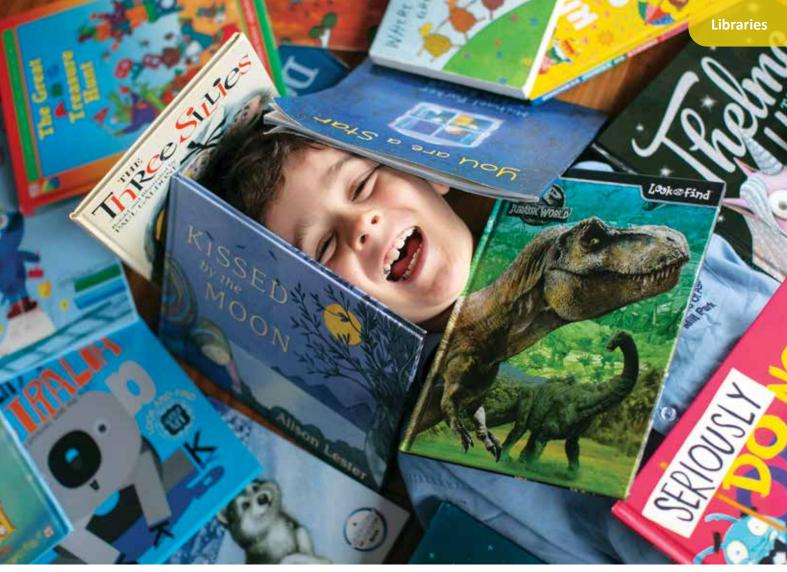
Christian Zahra AMAdministrator

Contact the City of Whittlesea Administrators via email panel@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or phone 9217 2170.

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

Arabic خدمة الترجمة الشفهية المجانية المجانية Chinese Simplified 免费电话传译服务 Chinese Traditional 免費電話傳譯服務 Greek Δωρεάν τηλεφωνική υπηρεσία διερμηνέων Italian Servizio di interpretariato telefonico gratuito

Macedonian Бесплатна телефонска услуга за преведување Persian/Farsi خدمات مترجم شفاهی تلفنی رایگان Punjabi ਮੁਫ਼ਤ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੇਨ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਆ ਸੇਵਾ Turkish Ücretsiz telefonla tercümanlık servisi Vietnamese Dịch vụ thông dịch qua điện thoại miễn phí



Book worm Sebastian is looking forward to the Mernda Library opening so he can indulge his love of books.

A new chapter for Mernda

Mernda Town Centre will be the location of the City of Whittlesea's newest library set to open later this month.

The library, located in the shopping centre next to Mernda Station, will include a varied collection of books and other resources, public computers, free wi-fi and self-checkout.

Yarra Plenty Regional Library staff will be on-site to assist and the library will also offer seating, reading and group study areas for people of all ages.

Sasha, of Mernda, is the mother of avid young readers Sebastian, 6, and

"Being located in Mernda, it just makes it a lot easier for us to get to."

– Sasha, Mernda

Amelia, 3. She said the new library was a fantastic initiative.

"With the Mernda Library just five minutes down the road and located among a group of shops it means you can tick a lot of things off at once," she said.

City of Whittlesea Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson said Council was committed to providing free, safe and accessible library services for residents across the municipality.

"Libraries are such wonderful spaces for our community to connect with each other and to spend time reading and enjoying so many free resources," she said.

The Mernda Library will join a network that includes branch libraries at Lalor, Mill Park. Thomastown and Whittlesea. in addition to a library hub at Galada Community Centre in Epping and

a new library hub to open in the Kirrip Community Centre in Wollert in the coming months.

Scan the QR code and sign up to become a member of Yarra Plenty Regional Library.



Opening hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Friday: 9.30am to 5.30pm

Thursday: 9.30am to 8.30pm

Saturday: 10am to 5pm

Sunday and public holidays:

Closed

Grants offer a helping hand

Are you organising a community activity, event or program? You may be eligible for a funding boost through the City of Whittlesea's new Community Grants program.

The new grant program, which launched in August, comes with a simpler and more inclusive application process with grants open all year and assessed monthly and quarterly.

City of Whittlesea Administrator Christian Zahra AM said the new program also included an increase in funds.

"We have this year endorsed a 33 per cent increase in total community grants funding in response to community need," he said.

"We want to support the efforts of groups and individuals delivering programs, activities and events that enrich our local community."

"We're looking forward to seeing the projects funded through community grants coming to life."

The new program offers six grant categories - small, medium, large, individual, unincorporated groups and emergency grants.

When applying for an individual grant, applicants are asked to categorise their event or program into one of four themes: arts and culture, sport and recreation, community leadership or sustainable environment.

Applicants for the small, medium, large grants are asked to demonstrate how their project or event aligns to the Whittlesea 2040 Goals.

"We want to support the efforts of groups and individuals delivering programs, activities and events that enrich our local community."

- City of Whittlesea **Administrator Christian Zahra AM** Individual grants are up to \$1000, small grants up to \$3000, medium grants up to \$20,000, large grants up to \$40,000 and unincorporated groups may be eligible for up to \$1000.

Christian said the new grant program aimed to be more simple and inclusive to ensure people in the City of Whittlesea can easily access financial support for their event, program or activity.

"The process has been simplified and our team is ready to support people to apply if they need assistance," he said.

You can find details about the program, eligibility and how to apply at

www.whittlesea. vic.gov.au/grants or email community. grants@whittlesea. vic.gov.au.





This community activity at Whittlesea Community Garden is one of many to benefit from community grants.

Examples of eligible items:

- Festival and events
- Community-run programs
- Arts and cultural performances
- Sustainable environment initiatives.













Clockwise from top left: Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson at the Epping Services Hub; Administrator Peita Duncan joined the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group's 21st anniversary celebrations; the panel of Administrators joined R U OK? Day in September and a Q&A forum; Chair Administrator Wilson at Coffee with Council.

Out and about with our Administrators

We were delighted to attend the official opening of the much-anticipated Whittlesea Service Hub recently. As you can read about on page 9, the hub brings Council services much closer to home for people in the north of our municipality. This hub is just one of the ways we are making it easier for our community to interact with Council.

Another special event we attended recently was the 21st anniversary of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). The anniversary celebrations highlighted the WRG's significant achievements, including advocating for improved Aboriginal employment, programs and services.

The WRG has a legacy of advocating for reconciliation and self-determination and has been a driving force behind the creation of an Aboriginal Gathering Place. Work on the Gathering Place is expected to begin in coming months. It will be located in the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland and will be a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space. It will provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with access to programs and services that

strengthen culture, enhance wellbeing and provide opportunities for the whole community to learn about and celebrate Aboriginal culture.

Recently, we were delighted to join with a number of key health agencies that operate out of the Epping Services Hub to celebrate a Local Government Professionals Award for Excellence in the Community Partnership category. Currently there are 13 organisations who actively partner at the hub to support health outcomes for the City of Whittlesea community.

We have continued to meet with people right across the City of Whittlesea for our monthly Coffee with Council. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to drop in and chat

with us about your concerns, interests and ideas.

Last month was R U OK? Day, a day where we are reminded of the importance of meaningfully connecting with the people around us. Here at the City of Whittlesea, we pride ourselves on being there for our community in good times and in bad.

Council has a number of financial wellbeing resources and advice on our website to help you manage if you are being impacted by cost-of-living pressures. You will find more details on page 8.

If you have any matters you would like to discuss at any time, you can reach the Administrators at panel@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Netballing sisters Tara and Shanae, of Whittlesea, are excited at what the new sports courts at Mernda will do for grassroots sport.

Dreams take shape for future sports hub

Whether you dream of representing Australia or just want to keep fit while having fun, the Regional Sports Centre at Mernda will have you covered.

This much-anticipated project reached a major milestone recently when architects were appointed to design the second and third stages of the state-of-the-art facility.

Stage two includes the design and construction of eight outdoor sports courts, six indoor sports and indoor seating comprising fixed and retractable seats.

When complete, the suite of multipurpose courts will help meet the growing demand across the northern suburbs for netball, basketball and other court-based sports facilities.

Whittlesea netballer Shanae, 22, said she thought the centre would inspire not only more people to take up sport, but to continue playing beyond their teenage years.

"Having those facilities is just so important to help players build their skills, and with it being close to home, that's just fantastic," she said.

"We didn't have something like that here when I was growing up, so I think this is really going to encourage young people to get involved."

City of Whittlesea Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson said the Regional Sports Centre would help bolster physical and mental health across the region.

"We know the important role that exercise plays in promoting healthy lifestyles, but this centre will also provide the added benefits of facilitating social interactions and community connections," she said.

The Victorian Government has committed \$20 million to support the delivery of the project's second stage.

Stage two works are expected to begin in the 2024–25 financial year. The first stage of the project is underway and features the construction of the intersection at Everton Drive and Plenty Road in Mernda.

"To think that a little girl's dream could come true with those courts is really cool."

- Shanae, Whittlesea



A regional parkland for the people

If you've ever taken a stroll through Quarry Hills Regional Parkland in South Morang, you'll know just how special the area is.

With spectacular views, stunning landscapes and a rich, cultural history, Quarry Hills Regional Parkland, located between South Morang and Mernda, is not only a wonderful source of open space in our growing municipality but will also soon be home to exciting new community spaces, such as the Granite Hills Major Community Park and an Aboriginal Gathering Place.

City of Whittlesea Administrator Peita Duncan said the new Future Directions Plan, developed in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, will help protect the significant ecological and cultural significance of the parklands.

"The parkland will ultimately cover approximately 1100 hectares and this plan will guide the future development," she said.

Some of the key actions outlined in the plan:

- Working with the Wurundjeri
 Woi-wurrung people to establish a
 Caring for Country Management Plan
- Providing facilities, welcoming gateways and entry points, connected pathways, toilets and signage
- Protecting the plants, animals and their habitats within the parklands, in particular any threatened species
- Maintaining the parklands as a free and accessible space for the community to explore and learn about traditional practices and the environment.

Find out more about the Quarry Hills Future Directions Plan at www.whittlesea. vic.gov.au/plans or scan the QR code.



Sign up today!

Keep up to date on all the City of Whittlesea news and events that matter to you with our range of free e-newsletters:

- Accessibility
- Arts and events
- Business news
- Grants and training
- Rural news
- Sustainability
- Local Scoop digital

Scan the QR code to find out more.



Active families embrace shared paths

Two-year-old Aahrin's love of riding means he is likely to become a regular fixture on the region's shared path network for years to come.

And that network of cycling and pedestrian paths is only going to grow as the City of Whittlesea invests in ensuring residents of all ages and abilities have access to walking and cycling paths.

Aahrin's parents, Vidish and Uma, of Doreen, like the convenience of the municipality's shared paths, especially those located near parks and playgrounds.

"I think it's nice to have these paths, which provide a dedicated activity for the kids to do," Uma said.

The City of Whittlesea is significantly expanding its shared path network through the Hendersons Creek Trail, Yan Yean Pipe Track and Mill Park Reserve Connecting Shared Trail projects.

The Hendersons Creek Trail and Yan Yean Pipe Track projects were made possible by funding from Council and two \$1 million grants from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's Northern Metropolitan Trails Program.

The Mill Park Reserve trail project, which will be completed early next year, was funded by Council and a \$475,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund.

"They're a great part of our community as they're accessible and family-friendly."

– Uma, Doreen



Aanrin takes his tricycle for a spin with parents Uma and Vidish on the Hendersons Creek Trail shared path in Epping.



Financial wellbeing

With cost-of-living pressures affecting an increasing number of people, it's good to know where you can find support.

Council have a number of Financial

Wellbeing resources and advice on our website to help you manage your money. Scan the QR code to learn more.



There are also a number of community service agencies and organisations that offer assistance with financial hardship, food and material aid, legal matters and other support services in the municipality.

You can read more about these services at www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/support

Whittlesea Service Hub now open

Council's new customer service hub in Whittlesea township is helping residents in the north to access Council services more easily.

Drop in to talk to Council's customer service staff from 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Customer service staff accept cashless payments and assist residents and businesses with a range of services.

Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson said the hub was an important part of the commitment to make interacting with Council easier and more convenient for the community.

"We recognise that some people like to visit us in person and, for many in the north of our municipality, driving to South Morang for customer service is a challenge," she said.

Specialist Council staff are available on a roster throughout the week from 9.30am until 4pm:

Monday: Rates

Tuesday: Business concierge

Wednesday: Building services

Thursday: Planning services

Monday, Tuesday and Friday:

Virtual planning booth.

Pop-in and say hello to our friendly team at the Whittlesea Service Hub, located at 63 Church Street, Whittlesea.





staff face-to-face in Whittlesea.

Left: Administrator Peita Duncan and Chair Administrator Lydia Wilson cut the ribbon to officially open the Whittlesea Service Hub.

New braille bin stickers now available

A simple sticker offers a solution to residents with vision impairment.

In an effort to help residents with vision impairment or low vision, braille bin identification stickers are now available, making it easier to know which bin is which.

The braille bin lid stickers are part of our commitment to ensuring the City of Whittlesea's services are accessible and inclusive for all.

Labels are available for all four Council-issued kerbside bins rubbish, recycling, food and garden waste, and glass - and will make separating waste into the right bin easier.

If you or someone you know would like to order these free labels. call 9217 2170.





Dylan, from Thomastown, with the new member of their family, adopted cat Elliot.

Paws and reflect on pet adoption

Elliott the cat is enjoying life in his new home after being adopted by Thomastown residents Dylan and Isabelle.

The idea of adopting a cat was first suggested by Isabelle, and Dylan spotted Elliot's adoption profile on the wat djerring Animal Facility's Facebook page.

During their visit to the Animal Facility, they had a few questions about how Elliot would fit in with their other animals. They spoke to the staff who reassured them that Elliot was in good health and would thrive in the company of fellow felines.

Dylan was well informed about the recent changes to cat regulations, and confinement wasn't an issue as their cats are mostly indoors.

"I first learned about the new laws at the Whittlesea Show last November. Since then, I have received text message alerts and emails and seen the adverts on Facebook and some signage around the community," said Dylan.

"We do regular evening play time with our cats. We get them all wired up with toys to keep them physically active and mentally stimulated – feathers on a cord are a big hit," he said. "We also have cat harnesses which we occasionally use to take the cats out into our little garden."

For those considering adoption, visit our Pet Adoption web page and begin your journey of companionship today, at www. whittlesea.vic.gov.au/animalfacility or by scanning the QR code.

Visit **www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/cats** to learn more about the new cat regulations that were introduced on 1 August 2023 and how they aim to create a better environment for cats, the community, and local wildlife.





Chloe, second child from the left, loved performing in last year's choir.

Jingle all the way and join the choir

Add a sprinkle of melody to the end of 2023 by taking part in our cheerful Carols Community Choir.

You're invited to enjoy the spotlight at the City of Whittlesea's Carols, just like Chloe, who stole the show last year. The spirited 9-year-old from South Morang told us she had so much fun practising and performing.

"It was so fun singing Here Comes Santa Claus with my new friends, Fia and Alexa," Chloe said.

City of Whittlesea's Carols Community Choir assembles every year and loves welcoming new members.

So, whether you sing in the shower or are a seasoned vocalist, our choir welcomes and supports carollers at all levels.

Join friendly faces who share your passion at weekly rehearsals from Wednesday 11 October, 7-9pm at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang.

Register by scanning the QR code or visiting

www.arts.whittlesea. vic.gov.au





Pack your Santa hats, picnic, bring your family and friends and join us for an evening filled with festive fun and sing-alongs.



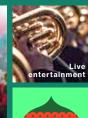
CIVIC CENTRE LAWNS, SOUTH MORANG

















www.arts.whittlesea.vic.gov.au





A prescribed fuel reduction burn at Quarry Hills.

Working together for a safer summer

Residents in the City of Whittlesea should start preparing for the upcoming fire season.

Even though the landscape looks green right now, it is important to understand your fire risk and know what to do in an emergency.

Many suburbs in the City of Whittlesea are surrounded by grassland, which means an increased fire risk over summer. If you live in areas like Wollert, Mernda, Doreen, and Donnybrook, it is important to know what to do if a grassfire or bushfire starts nearby.

For the past three years, we have had a La Niña weather system that brought rain, which has resulted in a lot of vegetation growth across Melbourne. This may lead to a busy fire season in coming years with hotter and drier conditions forecasted.

Council's fire prevention officers will commence fire hazard inspections of properties around the municipality from this month and continue right through until April 2024.

They will be making sure long grass, including on nature strips and vacant blocks, is maintained. Any property that is deemed to pose a fire risk (grass longer than 10cm) may be issued with a notice or infringement to address that risk.

This fire season, make sure you know your risks, have a plan, prepare an emergency kit and get to know your neighbours and how you can help each other.

Get prepared

Watch the warnings – visit **emergency.vic.gov.au** or download the app for emergency alerts.

- Clean up slash or mow grass around the home and outbuildings to 10cm or less
- Keep gutters and roofs clear of leaf litter, twigs and debris
- Maintain at least a 20-metrewide firebreak around your home if you live in a rural area
- Clear around trees and remove dead branches, prune lower limbs and cut back branches overhanging the roof.

Learn more about what to do in an emergency at www. whittlesea.vic.gov.au/emergency

Strengthening community through the Business Network

Samantha, from Whittlesea Physiotherapy and Clinical Pilates, tells us why she joined the Business Network.

Whittlesea Physiotherapy and Clinical Pilates has been a part of the community for 18 years and Samantha has been a member of the City of Whittlesea Business Network since the network first started. She says she finds it to be a valuable way to connect with fellow local business owners.

The municipality is experiencing significant growth, both commercially and residentially. The Business Network can help local businesses by giving them opportunities to connect, collaborate and learn from other local businesses.

Whittlesea Physiotherapy and Clinical Pilates has formed strong connections with community groups and residents in Whittlesea township, which is a source of joy for the team. Samantha takes pride in helping the community and in witnessing the positive outcomes their business brings to the local area.

Business Network membership is open to businesses operating within the City of Whittlesea with a valid ABN. Scan the QR code to sign up.





Samantha and Michael from Whittlesea Physiotherapy and Clinical Pilates.

Support for business benefits shoppers

As part of its continued support for local business, Council recently ran a Shopfront Improvement Pilot Program, which saw grants of up to \$2000 awarded to more than 30 local retail business applicants across the municipality.

The grants assisted these small retail businesses in upgrading their shopfronts and customers are noticing.

The grants contributed to businesses repainting, replacing tired or broken signage, installing new under-verandah light boxes, and improving exterior lighting.

"Customers are very happy and say they feel much safer visiting the store after dark with the new, brighter lighting installed," said Amy from Foodworks, Thomastown.

Susan at Alexander Avenue is excited about their new light box under the veranda.

"These upgrades are as a result of the recent shopfront improvement grants and have greatly enhanced lighting at the strip, which was an issue for traders and community prior," she said.

The program aimed to deliver better economic outcomes for the community by improving the places where people work, live and play, and promoting the benefit of supporting local businesses.



Benefits seen from the Shopfront Improvement Pilot Program:

- Attracting and retaining customers
- Making streetscapes look and feel inviting
- Increasing the level of community safety.

Have your say and make a difference today

Did you know that Council consults the community on a wide range of projects and plans? Here are just some of the projects we're keen to hear your views on this month.

Planning for our future

Help guide Council's key activities over the next 10 years

Following background research and community consultation, Council has drafted the Connected Communities Strategy, Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy and the Long-term Community Infrastructure Plan. These key strategies and plans collectively support the Whittlesea 2040 community vision of A Place for All.

A community focus group was established to delve deeper into community needs and desires. These valuable insights, along with feedback from more than 530 people captured online and at community-based pop-ups, has helped shape the draft strategies. We encourage you to share your thoughts on the drafts during this final phase of community consultation.

Scan the QR code or visit engage.whittlesea.vic. gov.au/ipf to share your feedback by 29 October.



Council Budget and Community Plan Action Plan

Each year when Council prepares its Budget and Community Plan Action Plan, we ask the community for their input. For this year's budget we received a record 71 formal budget submissions.

We've been asking for your top priorities and now we'd like to hear what you love about where you live and what you'd like to see more of. This feedback will help us shape these key documents that guide Council's program of work each year.

We'll be out and about in the community capturing feedback until 29 October or you can scan the QR

code or visit engage. whittlesea.vic.gov.au/communitypriorities











What's on

These events may be subject to change - please check www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events for the latest information.



Victorian Annual Seniors Festival

Various dates throughout October

Throughout October we are celebrating and recognising the inspiring contribution of older Victorians, with events and activities in the City of Whittlesea and right across Victoria. For events happening around the state, please visit www.seniorsonline.vic.gov. au/SeniorsFest23

We also invite you to participate in the wide variety of local Seniors Festival events that can be found in our events calendar at www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events

Northern Diwali

Saturday 28 October, 12–9pm Civic Centre lawns, 25 Ferres Blvd, South Morang

Celebrate Diwali at this free, all-ages family event. There will be Bollywood dancing, a DJ, rides, food stalls and an evening fireworks display. This event is proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural

Commission and organised by Mission Smile Inc.

Scan the QR code for more information.





Whittlesea Show

Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 November Whittlesea Showgrounds, Whittlesea—Yea Rd, Whittlesea

Head to the Whittlesea Show for a family day out that's great value for money. Visitors can look forward to a true agricultural show, with free activities and entertainment, animals, fun and games. Visit the animal nursery, watch a circus, sample local fare, join the boot throwing competition or sit back and enjoy the grand parade —

Scan the QR code to book tickets online.

everyone.

there's something for



Pride in the North Summit

Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre (PRACC), 25 Ferres Blvd, South Morang

Join the Pride in the North collective this November as they bring together dedicated keynote speakers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and community members to consider how to make positive impacts on local LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing.

Scan the QR code for tickets and further details.







Annual art exhibition: The webs we weave

Friday 17 November to Friday 15 December Great Hall, Council Offices, 25 Ferres Blvd, South Morang

Each year Council holds an art exhibition to showcase and celebrate the work of artists who live, work or are connected to the City of Whittlesea. The theme for the 2023 exhibition is *The webs we weave*, with artists invited to reflect on connections in our lives and our communities from local through to personal, from cultural to global, and the way those connections find form.

Scan the QR code for more information.

Artwork: Detail from *Spectrum*, by Lucy Cleary.

National Recycling Week second-hand clothing market

Saturday 18 November

Painted Hills Community Pavilion, 160W Painted Hills Rd, Doreen

Pick up a bargain and help reduce textile waste this National Recycling Week at our second-hand clothing market. Lots of stalls, workshops and activities on offer!

Visit www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/ events for details or to register your interest in having a stall.





THE WHITTLESEA SHOW IS BACK FOR 2023! Enjoy a weekend of family fun at one of

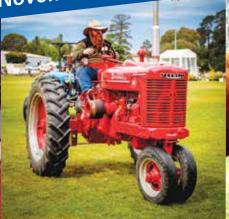




Victoria's largest shows. There's something for everyone with events, competitions, market stalls and attractions.

Whittlesea Showgrounds • 4-5 November 2023 • www.whittleseashow.org.au









6TH YEAR RUNNING

Celebrate Diwali with live music, dancing, food stalls and more with Mission Smile Inc's 6th annual Northern Diwali event.

28 OCTOBER 2023, 12-9pm

City of Whittlesea Terrace Lawns, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



