

# Firefighter assists with special roadside delivery

Gisborne CFA firefighter Luke Hammond's journey to work on Wednesday morning was no ordinary drive.

Mr Hammond said he was heading to work when he "saw a car pulled over the side of the road".

The trained firefighter is used to stressful situations but said a baby's birth was the last thing he was expecting.

"I was on my way in to work about 7.30am and I was heading on Dalrymple Road, heading on to the freeway," Mr Hammond said. "I could

see a person who was bent over ... with another person who appeared to be helping. So I slowed down just to check.

"I could hear screaming ... I pulled over and approached the people and said: 'I'm a firefighter, can I help?'"

Mr Hammond spoke with paramedics via phone while baby Hope was brought in to the world with the help of her nan.

"The baby came quite quickly - the little girl's head was already out when I got there," he said. "The rest of it happened really quickly ... I

assisted the baby with breathing."

Mr Hammond praised the efforts of Hope's mother and nan before he arrived at the scene.

"They were doing really well," Mr Hammond said. "They were understandably a bit stressed, but they had it under control.

"They were doing what they needed to do. They stopped instead of rushing to the hospital."

Mr Hammond said his only concern was the wellbeing of Hope and her mother.

"I felt good to help and it felt even better to

hear that mum and the little girl Hope were doing well," he said.

Gisborne CFA officer in charge Sam Strang said the brigade was proud of Luke's effort.

"We are trained to remain calm in stressful environments, but ... to be faced with the particular situation would have been very confronting," Captain Strang said.

"Luke displayed true professionalism in remaining calm and offering assistance."

Jessica Micallef

# Living the volunteer life

By Jessica Micallef

Sunbury resident Mary Wicks has been made an officer of the Order of Australia for her community service.

Ms Wicks, 84, told *Star Weekly* she did not expect to be recognised at a high level for her work.

"I got a real pleasant surprise ... I thought, 'Oh goodness gracious me,'" Ms Wicks said. "I'm very grateful to the people who thought I was worthy of it."

Ms Wicks said she had been a member of the Australian Red Cross since 1997.

"I always had a regard for the Red Cross and we did have a branch here in Sunbury and I was associated with that," Ms Wicks said.

"Then that closed down and I joined Darraweit Guim, their branch there ... I was chairman there for three years.

"I firmly believe in what the Red Cross represents.

"Every time you have a look at the news, they're often in war-torn areas and they do an enormous amount of work. They're there whenever needed."

Ms Wicks also volunteered with Sunbury Community Health.

"I worked there as a volunteer after I finished work," she said.

"I looked around into various organisations and thought, 'Where can I be the most useful'.

"So I went there and I worked as a volunteer with the community health nurse."

The Sunbury resident is a member of the U3A Sunbury, an organisation for retired or semi-retired people aged above 50.

She has been a steward at the Sunbury Agricultural Show for 20 years, was a member of the Country Women's Association in Sunbury and has been involved with the Sunbury Widows Club since 2014.

Ms Wicks said volunteering was a great way to "appreciate the needs of people".

"I think it helps you develop a feel for the people in the community," she said.

"If there's a need, you put your mind to it and do something about it.



Mary Wicks was made an officer of the Order of Australia. (Marco De Luca)

"That's the way a community grows, of course."

Ms Wicks said she was appreciative of being recognised through an Order of Australia.

"You don't do it for that - you do it because there's a need there and you get out and do it,"

she said. "All I would like to do is encourage people to get out because you do meet some very nice people.

"[I] made some good friends over the years, and whilst you move on to other organisations, the friendships still last."

## Kyneton Treehouse extends reach

Kyneton's Treehouse program will soon offer longer operating hours.

The Treehouse provides a supportive and safe setting for people with a palliative condition, dementia or any chronic illness that contributes to them feeling isolated or lonely.

The program will open four days a week, Monday to Thursday, up from two, after receiving a \$20,000 grant from Carer Support Services in Bendigo.

Treehouse co-ordinator Kathy Kirby said the program was a great way for patients to indulge in what they enjoy.

"We do what the clients are interested in ... we go with the flow," Ms Kirby said.

Since the program started in 2017, the Treehouse has experienced a steady increase in demand for its services, which are provided at Kyneton District Health hospital.

Ms Kirby applied for the grant in November to help meet demand for ongoing referrals and inquiries about the program.

"We're thrilled and very grateful that Carer Support Services approved our funding application," she said.

"The Treehouse is now able to support more clients and their families in the Macedon Ranges, meaning better outcomes for everyone involved. And there is no wait list ... the staff are really happy to expand."

Ms Kirby will have an "office day" with the new hours and can spend one day a week in a case management role, helping carers access and navigate systems related to patient care.

The Treehouse's new hours will come in to effect from February 4.

Details: Kathy Kirby, 5422 9987

Jessica Micallef

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