

# SUNBURY & MACEDON RANGES

# STARWEEKLY

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(Marco De Luca)

JAYLAH, SARAHZETTE, SOPHIE AND COOPER

## Sea change for school

Pupils at Diggers Rest Primary School will be heading under the sea for their first ever performance.

The pupils have spent the past six months preparing for the school's inaugural whole school production of *The Little Mermaid Junior* to be held on Thursday.

Arts co-ordinator Taryn Pattera said the musical has been a massive effort and was sold-out.

"The children have been dedicating six months of their time to this," she said.

"Diggers Rest Primary School has always been such a small school, which meant that something so spectacular as this has never been possible before. As our numbers are rapidly growing, we now have enough students and staff expertise to pull something like this all together."

Laura Michell

# Sunbury's state of decay

By Esther Lauaki

Patients are waiting for up to 36 months for general dental care as Sunbury Community Health struggles to keep up with demand in the area, new data shows.

Data from Dental Health Services Victoria, released under freedom of information to the state opposition, shows that patients in the public dental system face excessive wait times.

The figures showed that Sunbury Community Health had 1683 people on its waiting list at the end of May.

The average wait time in the 12 months to May for general dental care was 36 months

– more than twice the state average of 15.5 months.

Sunbury Community Health aged care and clinical services general manager Julie Landy told *Star Weekly* that rapid population growth in Sunbury had significantly increased demand on the dental service.

"With four state-funded dental chairs, we are unable to meet this demand, causing waiting times for general care to increase," she said.

"Based on population projections, Sunbury Community Health requires seven dental chairs to adequately service Sunbury and surrounds."

“ We are unable to meet this demand ”

- Julie Landy

Despite the shortfall, Ms Landy said that many emergency cases are seen within 24 hours and children do not wait for dental care.

"Sunbury Community Health provides a public dental service for children and adults, including emergency, general and denture care," Ms Landy said.

"People who are in pain are seen as emergency patients and do not wait for months

or even weeks.

"Children are not placed on a wait list but are offered the next available appointment."

In May this year Health Minister Jill Hennessy announced additional funding to 'blitz' waiting lists before the end of the financial year.

Ms Landy said the funding would enable Sunbury Community Health to offer care to more than 700 people currently on the dental waiting list.

Opposition MP Mary Wooldridge urged the health minister to publish waiting list numbers and times by clinic so the full extent of the problem is available for all.

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