



The 'Knitwits' which include Koondrook's Karen Connell, Michelle Edgar of Cohuna and Kerang's Karen Kennett enjoyed showcasing their wares at the Kerang Community Market. **Picture: ANDREW PALOCZI**

# Market success

**ANDREW PALOCZI**

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KERANG Community Market thrived during Friday's grand final eve public holiday, despite having to start winding down a little early as the wind increased its intensity.

The market normally operates on the fourth Saturday each month.

Market secretary Carol Caldwell said the market continues to evolve.

She said when the new committee took over in July, the average number of stalls was around 15, but that number doubled this month with 32 stalls.

"Every time we've had a market, it's increased in size," Ms Caldwell said.

"Friday went off really well, until the wind."

It started to pick up around 12.30pm, worsening over the next 30 minutes.

"There were gazebos flying," Ms Caldwell said.

She said she was happy for stallholders to pack up early, rather than putting anyone

at risk or suffering damage to their goods.

"We got quite a lot of people attending early in the day," Ms Caldwell said.

"It was something different for Kerang and it worked."

Market organisers also encourage a community organisation to attend the market each month.

On Friday, the Kerang SES Unit set up a stall.

Kerang SES controller, Glyndia (Joyce) Gee, explained the value of the organisation taking part in the market.

"We're down here doing public relations for SES, showing what we've got in the truck, for people to get a feel of what we've got here and see our big flood assistance boat," Ms Gee said.

SES volunteers provided important community safety information throughout the day, while also raising much-needed funds for the organisation.

The next Kerang Community Market takes place on Saturday, October 26 and new stall holders are encouraged.

# Housing profits exceed expectations

**GEMMA ROWLEY**

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IF you're living in The Mallee, then you're in luck.

The region has recently ranked fifth as the "happiest" place in Australia, and it's all because of housing profits.

Research by RateMyAgent – Australia's number one reviews, ratings and rankings website for real estate agents – revealed on Monday that Aussies in The Mallee, Victoria are achieving the fifth highest rate of above-expectation property sale prices, making them 49 per cent happier than the national average.

With more than 17,000 Australian respondents, RateMyAgent's newest Price Expectation Report is the largest home seller survey conducted in Australia.

The survey asked successful vendors if the sale price achieved was above, below or in-line with their expectations – and results showed an increase nationally in overall sale price satisfaction, starting at 26 per cent in April and rising to 31 per cent in June.

Commenting on the report, Victorian real estate expert and Leading Real Estate agent Adam Sacco said the report's findings match-up with the current state of play in Victoria.

"The data shows Victoria has had the most consistent increase in vendor happiness nationally in 2019," he said.

"Vendors should feel confident that the market is going from strength to strength, with buyers confidently out-and-about in numbers hunting for their perfect home or investment property."

However, local Graeme Hayes Real Estate agent Nathan Hipworth told *The Gannawarra Times* that house prices in the shire were recovering from a previous housing downturn.

"We are currently doing very well coming out of winter for residential sale numbers and we have been busy since after the election," Mr Hipworth said.

"But prices in our area have suffered due to downturn in the southern part of the state

and we are just starting to see prices recover back to what they were 18 months ago."

Principal sales consultant at Golden Rivers Real Estate in Barham, Lauren Polkinghorne, also believes the market has increased to "a certain extent".

"Our residential and building market has experienced a few very strong years which has been absolutely fantastic," she said.

"There are some significant markets that have driven this confidence, for example retirees are looking for a quiet, low crime rate area that supports a relaxed lifestyle, and young families are also returning to the districts where they grew up, now with children of their own wanting to give their children the best life they can in supportive and connected communities."

She said compared to house prices in Melbourne and many areas across Victoria, the Gannawarra property market was also "considered very affordable".

"The people that now make up our communities come here for all the right reasons and enjoy all that our beautiful little towns have to offer," Ms Polkinghorne said.

She does however also believe that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, from a property point of view, makes it harder for those reliant on their land to provide for their families.

"Our rural market however, is slightly struggling due to the restrictions imposed by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan," she said.

"This then has a flow-on effect to our shops and industries in our local towns, but everyone is trying their absolute best to survive and stay, so hearing that the Mallee is the fifth happiest place to be in Australia, I believe that."

Happiest areas in Australia:

1. Hobart, Tasmania (56 per cent net above)
2. South-East Tasmania (53 per cent net above)
3. Central Tasmania (51 per cent net above)
4. Outer North Melbourne (50 per cent net above)
5. The Mallee, Victoria (49 per cent net above)



The smash up derby is a crowd favourite.

# It's showtime

**JENNY DENTON**

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LUKE Boyd from Bael Bael will spend this weekend building a car he can crash on Monday night.

Crowned last year's Kerang show smash up derby winner, Boyd has "run out of cars" that are fit for purpose and is putting together an old HQ station wagon for this year's event.

It'll be around the seventh time the 25-year-old has competed in the derby.

"It's an adrenaline rush," he said.

"I thoroughly enjoy it.

"You do actually hit hard but the blood's pumping when you get out."

When it comes to winning, Boyd said his secret weapon was pure luck.

"That's all it comes down to."

Boyd's brother-in-law, Rodney Sitters, agreed. Sitters came second, last year after his car caught fire.

"I could see it was on fire but I was pretty close to winning, so I didn't want to stop to look," Sitters said.

This year he will compete in the same Falcon ute, which he has driven in the derby several times.

"You buy them as a normal car and strip them right back and fit the roll bars," he said.

"They usually last a few years."

The 27-year-old has been driving in the derby

since he was 16.

His father was one of the first to ever take part in it.

Boyd and Sitters are among five drivers who have entered the highlight event.

The drivers will compete for a \$2000 prize, with winnings of some kind on offer to all entrants.

In the past the smash up derby has drawn crowds of up to 1200, and organisers are anticipating a good turnout on Monday night.

They are also hoping for more entrants.

Despite his narrow loss last year, Sitters is encouraging more competition.

"If there are young car enthusiasts around who are interested, they should give it a go," he said.

"People think when you crash it hurts, but it doesn't really.

"It's quite an adrenaline rush.

"And it helps to keep the show going."

Organisers say preparations are on track for the 135th annual Kerang show, with 90 volunteers standing by for the event and entries continuing to roll in.

Show committee president John Poole appealed for more entries in the show's inaugural brewing competition.

Gates open at the Kerang showgrounds at 8.30am on Monday morning.

The smash up derby will start at 8.30pm on Monday night.

# Melbourne Cup

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**\$350**  
Cash Prize

*Lady of the Day*

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Cash Prize

*Runner-up*

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\$30

per person

No refunds on tickets apply unless event cancelled by cluBarham. Tickets may be transferred.

## 12pm Tuesday 5th November

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