



PENINSULA VOICE

News

**Welcome to the
Peninsula Voice
Newsletter.**

Learning • Conversation • Engagement

Peninsula Voice works to help build a more resilient community on the Mornington Peninsula. We shine a light on the issues that impact us, bring together experts to share evidence, knowledge and lived experiences, and we support conversations that promote positive, community-led solutions.



Homelessness on the Peninsula

The Mornington Peninsula now has the highest rate of homelessness in Victoria. As of June this year, 110 people were without a home. Most were sleeping in tents, cars, or on the foreshore. Over the past year, nearly 950 people asked for help from local homeless services.

Some progress is being made. A new project called Ranch 2 is being set up to provide seven units for people in need. Volunteers are working hard on renovations, and two units are already in use. But this is still fewer beds than the old Ranch site, which has now closed.

Local groups are stepping in **Mornington Peninsula Zero** is working with council and housing services to reduce rough sleeping. **Fusion Family Support** is helping young families at risk. Community centres in Mornington and Rosebud are on the front line, offering what they can with very limited resources.

The truth is simple: there are not enough homes. We need more funding for housing, and we need it urgently. Until government support improves, community donations and help from local philanthropists will make the biggest difference.

Homelessness affects us all. Together, we can push for change and support our neighbours in need.

If you would like to help, consider volunteering, donating, or joining local forums to add your voice. Every action makes a difference.

Joint Media Release – 29 May, 2025

Ranch 2.0 Launches: A New Chapter for Crisis Accommodation on the Mornington Peninsula

For the past four years, Mornington Community Support Centre (MCSC) and Southern Peninsula Community Support (SPCS) have partnered to provide emergency accommodation at The Ranch Motel in Mornington.

Amid rising homelessness, the temporary tenure of The Ranch, and a severe shortage of crisis housing on the Mornington Peninsula, the need for long-term solutions has never been greater.

After extensive consultation and advocacy with local service providers, Payton Foundation and Upotipotpon Foundation have purchased a new property and leased it to MCSC for five years. The site, dubbed Ranch 2.0, includes seven units that will be used for crisis accommodation, supported by wraparound services in collaboration with SPCS and other local agencies.

“With more and more people sleeping rough, it’s partnerships like this that bring hope,” says Ben Smith, CEO of MCSC. “Our model at The Ranch has achieved a 60% success rate—more than double the national average. When local organisations work together to create solutions like this, our whole community benefits.”

Jason Pater of the Payton Foundation adds, “This is about more than housing. It’s about restoring dignity, strengthening communities, and building sustainable responses to complex housing needs. It shows what’s possible when funders and frontline organisations act with urgency and shared purpose.”

SPCS CEO Jeremy Maxwell, whose team delivers assertive outreach across the southern peninsula, calls the new property “a vital addition.” He notes, “With demand increasing and The Ranch’s future uncertain, this new site offers much-needed stability for our most vulnerable residents. The generosity shown by the Payton and Upotipotpon Foundations sets a new benchmark for impactful philanthropy.”





Media release

Annual census of homeless children and young people sparks call to “get young Victorians out of emergency departments and back into classrooms” (VIC)

Melbourne City Mission and Social Ventures Australia have released their second annual Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot at Victorian Parliament. The 2025 results reveal that most young Victorians are losing their homes due to family violence (83%), and many before the age of 16 (31%). They are being cut off from school and employment pathways (66%) and instead ending up in emergency departments (54%) and at risk of self-harm and suicide (65%). **Read more here.**



Grounding activities for children

Grounding exercises work by encouraging children to focus on the environment around them, rather than on the thoughts and feelings that are distressing them.

Grounding exercises can help adults too, so you could do a grounding exercise together with your child.

After a traumatic, frightening or upsetting experience, a grounding exercise can help children and teenagers calm down and manage emotions like anxiety and fear.

Calming down helps your child cope in the moment and recover over time. With practice and your help, your child can learn to calm down by themselves. You and your child can do a grounding exercise anywhere and anytime.

To find out more about how to do grounding exercises, click **here**.



What is the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme?

The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme supports volunteer visits to provide friendship and companionship to older people.

Visits are available to anyone who:

- receives government-subsidised residential aged care or Home Care Packages, including care recipients approved, or on, the National Priority System for residential or home care packages.
- is socially isolated.

Regular visits from volunteers can help to improve quality of life and help older people feel less isolated.

The scheme has been running for over 30 years. It was previously known as the Community Visitors Scheme (CVS).

Older people can refer themselves or can be referred by a family member or friend.

You can request a volunteer visitor by clicking **here**.

Community recycling in action

The Shire are trialling exchange baskets on public bins to capture more drink containers for recycling through Victoria’s Container Deposit Scheme.

It’s a give-or-take system: leave eligible drink containers or collect some and return them for a 10c refund. Win-win! **Read more here.**



Introduction to Violet

When people are caring for loved ones through the last stages of life, they can often feel lost, stressed and unprepared.

Violet can help carers to prepare for and manage the last stage of life and the loss that follows with empathy and compassion.

Violet is a national, non-profit organisation that delivers support, practical guidance and personalised planning, and facilitates important conversations that honour individual values and preferences.

Violet's Guided Support Program offers three 45-minute phone sessions with a skilled Violet Guide who has lived experience of being a carer. These sessions provide practical and emotional support to carers and the bereaved as they navigate the last stage of life and the grief and loss that can follow.

How can Violet Guides help?

- Planning for future care needs.
- Advocating for your loved one in care settings.
- Sensitive conversations about the last chapter of life, death and dying.
- Managing emotions and family tension.
- Self-care strategies and resources.
- Support through grief, loss and bereavement.

Alfred Health Carer Services can support you to connect with a Violet Guide and give you access to their online Violet Plan. These Violet services are designed to help you plan for the care and support that is needed moving forward.

For referrals to Violet, please phone our team and ask for more details about Violet on 1800 512 121

A good news story!

Homelessness is multi-faceted and is not confined to those sleeping rough, so The Good Box co-founders needed to establish relationships with homeless charities to provide boxes to those that aren't easily reached.

Fast forward four years since the idea was first conceived and now The Good Box help thousands of Australians experiencing homelessness to receive beautiful boxes with first hand quality items.

The boxes are a vehicle to an important conversation which can help some of the most isolated people in our society to be more likely to seek and accept assistance.

The Good Box also provide school and corporate engagement programs to educate staff and students on the important social issue of homelessness to empower others to help those in the homeless community

<https://thegoodbox.com.au>





We Got A Van

The demand for the Fresh Food Program at the Mornington Community Support Centre continues to rise each week, reflecting the growing needs of our local community.

MCSC rescues food that would have otherwise ended up in landfill from local supermarkets, bakeries, and producers, distributing it to over 100 families each week. In addition, this rescued food is used to prepare meals served in the Centre’s meeting room café, which provides approximately 800 plates of food from Monday to Thursday.

Until now, staff and volunteers have generously used their personal vehicles to support the program’s logistics. However, with increased demand driven by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, the need for a dedicated food transport vehicle became critical.

Recognising the importance of this initiative, Mornington Rotary committed to funding a dedicated van. “This is such an essential program for our community, and the Club was proud to support it,” said Mornington Rotary President Pam Hall.

Following discussions with Gary Sanford from Community Bank Mount Martha, a joint funding arrangement was established. “This is exactly the type of community initiative our bank is proud to support, made possible by the continued growth of our customer base,” Mr. Sanford explained.

Mornington Toyota, through General Manager Michael McLnerney, identified the Toyota HiAce as the ideal vehicle to meet the Centre’s needs and supplied the van. Mornington Toyota has also generously committed to ongoing service and maintenance of the vehicle.

Last month, Mr. McLnerney officially handed over the keys to Shelley Dewerson-Bogue, Coordinator of the Fresh Food Program. The Centre also extends heartfelt thanks to Progress Signs for providing custom signwriting for the van.

“This van is a tremendous asset to our Fresh Food Program and the dedicated volunteers who run it,” said Shelley. “We are truly grateful to Mornington Rotary, Community Bank Mount Martha, and Mornington Toyota for their support in helping us meet the growing needs of our community.”

One Positive Action

Send a “Thank You” Text

We live in a world of constant rushing, where most interactions feel transactional and forgettable. But scattered throughout your life are people who’ve made small differences - **the friend who always listens, the coworker who covers for you, the family member who remembers what matters to you.** These people rarely hear how much their quiet consistency means.

A thank you text is beautifully simple - **think of someone who’s been there for you in some way, then send them a specific message explaining exactly what they did and why it mattered.**

Not a generic *“thanks for everything”* but something that shows you’ve actually been paying attention to their kindness. *“Thanks for always asking how my mum’s doing - it means more than you know”* or *“I was thinking about how you stayed late to help me with that project last month. You saved me and I never properly thanked you.”*

The magic happens on both ends. When someone receives a message like this out of nowhere, it validates that their efforts matter and are seen. For you, the act of remembering and acknowledging goodness shifts your focus from what’s lacking to what’s abundant in your relationships. You start noticing the web of support around you instead of feeling isolated.

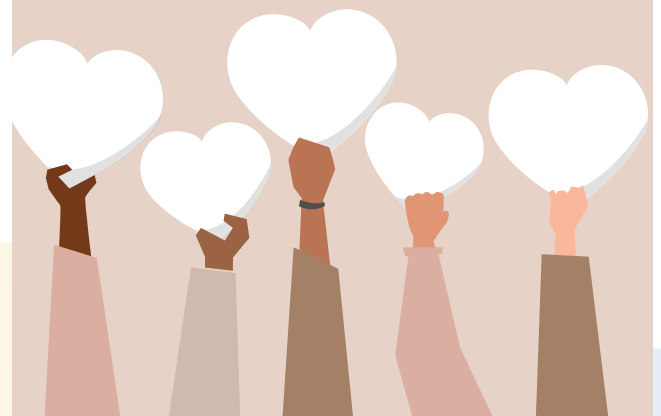
Think of one person who’s shown up for you recently - maybe in a small way, maybe in a big way. **Send them a text right now** explaining specifically what they did and how it helped you. Don’t overthink it, don’t wait for the perfect moment. Just reach out and let them know their kindness landed.

Watch how naming gratitude out loud changes both your day and theirs.

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Community is the spirit, the guiding light, whereby people come together to fulfill a purpose, to help others fulfill their purpose, and to take care of one another.

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