

ROLLING THROUGH THE ROCKIES

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Picture by Kate Healy

The Courier

WEEKEND EST 1867

Court's verdict: Marie is a star

To sum up Marie Davey in one word, it'd be dedicated. The 80-year-old former teacher may have retired, but she still gives back twice a week at the Ballarat Law Courts. Now, the humble volunteer has been honoured for her selflessness. "We can always rely on her to be there," Court Network team leader Meghan O'Connor says. **Story - page 2**

Breaking new ground

Michelle Smith

BALLARAT naturopath Jacqui Fernandez is at the forefront of Australia's booming medicinal cannabis industry.

She is one of the first nine students from across the nation who have started Federation TAFE's Certificate III in Medicinal Cannabis Cultivation and Production.

Until starting the course, Ms Fernandez had never seen a cannabis plant - now she's learning in the greenhouse growing them.

The medical herbalist and naturopath has worked in Ballarat for 25 years, and been exposed to medicinal cannabis use while working in local clinics, and wants to fully understand the industry.

The course combines

online study and hands-on training with licensed medicinal cannabis producer Cannai, based in the Yarra Valley.

"It's a dynamo little plant and every part of it is debated," Ms Fernandez said.

"At the end of the day it's about patient safety, but it's also about us utilising this herb properly and fully."

About 80 per cent of medicinal cannabis prod-

ucts supplied to Australian patients are imported.

Modelling of the Victorian industry estimated demand will grow to almost 242,000 medicinal cannabis patients by 2028, and Victoria is expected to supply 30 to 50 per cent of medicinal cannabis products nationally.

Ms Fernandez said she had seen results in some of her patients who have used medicinal cannabis.

"...The results are quite good. So what we're seeing from a practical point of view, we're doing to see bigger use of this herb for its safety profile, how it's dispensed, how it's produced."

So Ms Fernandez was keen to apply when she learned about the course, expecting the industry to grow significantly in the near future.

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LMCT 860

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0.09% P.A.

Comparison rate for a 36 month term*

Ordered and delivered by 31 Oct 2026

*T&C's apply

Marie honoured for making a difference



Gwen Liu

AT 80, Marie Davey is volunteering at Ballarat Law Courts, helping people navigate some of the hardest moments of their lives.

For the past seven years, the former teacher has dedicated two days a week to a free community support service Court Network after retiring from education.

"I thought I still had a bit of life in me. I wanted to do something working with people," she said. "I had been looking at something to do with courts. I didn't know a lot about courts; I hadn't even been to court."

But starting from scratch in an unfamiliar field did not deter her after learning how Court Network founder Carmel Benjamin saw a need to support people facing the often intimidating experience of going to court.

Ms Davey became one of the organisation's eight volunteers in Ballarat in 2019.



Marie Davey, 80, started volunteering at Ballarat court seven years ago. Picture by Kate Healy

And, seven years later, has earned the Court Network's inaugural Carmel Benjamin Award for Excellence, which recognises excellence in practice and the values volunteers bring to their work.

Ms Davey said her role was not about providing legal advice, but helping people feel more comfortable and understand what to expect when they arrived at court.

"If there are people who

haven't been to court before, just knowing what they're walking into can help," she said.

"I'll offer to show them inside the court before court gets going, if they

would like that, and that seems to diminish some of their anxiety."

Ms Davey said she often did not know whether the person she was helping was a victim, an accused person

or someone else involved in the matter.

"We don't have to know why they're there. We treat everyone with the respect that they deserve," she said.

While Ms Davey described her role as relatively straightforward, Court Network team leader Meghan O'Connor said she was being "her usual humble self".

Ms O'Connor said the work could be highly complex, requiring volunteers to support people who may be emotionally overwhelmed while also helping them navigate a justice system that could be confusing even for those familiar with it.

She said Ms Davey stood out for her dedication, reliability and non-judgemental approach.

"It requires a lot of local knowledge and a lot of skill in terms of building trust and rapport for people to open up about what their particular challenges are. She is so dedicated. Two days a week, we can always rely on her to be there, to give her best practice, her best support to every single person she comes across."

Man's nose broken during unprovoked, broad daylight attack



Bryan Hoadley

A DEFENCE lawyer says their client had been having a "terrible day" when he punched a stranger in the face in an unprovoked attack during broad daylight.

Clinton Walker, 42, faced the Ballarat Magistrates' Court on Thursday, where he pleaded guilty to a charge of recklessly causing injury.

The court heard that on April 8, the victim saw Walker yelling and hitting the bonnet of a car on High Street at Beaufort.

Later that day, the victim saw Walker behind the wheel of a red Holden Commodore and began filming him on his phone as he drove along Leichardt Street.

In response, Walker turned sharply onto the nature strip, exited his car and approached the victim.

He then said, "What are you doing c---?" and grabbed the victim by the shirt, before

punching him in the face with a closed fist.

When later arrested in relation to the incident, the court heard that Walker admitted to the assault and said he was a "bit disappointed" with how he had acted.

This week, the court heard that the victim did not know Walker and that he had sustained displaced nose fractures and a deviated septum in the attack.

While a defence lawyer conceded their client had a "pretty heavy" criminal history, they argued that Walker

had turned his life around after being sober for several years.

They also told the court that Walker was employed in the construction industry, but at the time of the incident, had hurt his back and could not work.

"My client is fully aware that it's not an excuse, it's an explanation," the lawyer said.

"He should not have acted that way, he was very stressed, the bills were piling up and no money was coming in.

"It was a terrible day and he didn't act like a normal emotionally regulated adult should have."

When sentencing Walker, magistrate Mike Wardell noted the attack was unprovoked and had occurred during broad daylight.

"The community is fed up with people who are having a bad day but seem to take it out on others," he said.

However, Mr Wardell also said that Walker had done an "incredibly good job" of turning his life around and noted his remorse for the attack.

Walker was convicted and sentenced to a one-year community corrections order. Under the order, he must complete 50 hours of unpaid community work.

Powerball

Draw 1585. Winning numbers: 16, 3, 10, 24, 2, 11, 6. Powerball: 14. Division 1: Jackpot; division 2: \$73,060.70; division 3: \$11,585.20; division 4: \$517.60; division 5: \$207.45; division 6: \$88.85; division 7: \$50.75; division 8: \$23.70; division 9: \$14.35.

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