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**WEATHER**  
Inside SmartDaily

**TODAY**  
MIN 8  
MAX 19

Partly cloudy, patchy frost and chance of morning fog in outer east/southeast

**TOMORROW**  
MAX 20

Rain, windy

**WEDNESDAY**  
MAX 15

Shower or two

**THURSDAY**  
MAX 15

Showers

**Tatts**

**SATURDAY LOTTO**  
Draw 4157:

23, 9, 27, 7, 13, 6. Supps: 1, 33. Div 1: \$409,991.02; Div 2: \$4600.30; Div 3: \$418.70; Div 4: \$15.80; Div 5: \$10.65; Div 6: \$6.25.

**SUPER 66**  
6, 1, 0, 5, 8, 8. Total prize pool: \$531,231.86.  
Full results: thelott.com

**WORD PUZZLE**

A word puzzle grid with letters: R, A, C, I, Y, C, N, H, E.

In making a word each letter may be used only once, and the centre letter must be included. No slang, hyphens, apostrophes or plurals ending in 's'. Minimum four letters.  
Good 12, Very good 15, Excellent 25

anew awake awaken AWAKENING  
awaking awing awning gawk gnaw  
gnawn kawa knew wage waka wake  
waken wakening waking wane  
waning wanna weak wean weaning  
weka wine wing wink

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# Tell me how my little boy died

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**OLIVIA JENKINS**

A DISTRAUGHT mother is desperately waiting for answers about how her "beautiful little boy" drowned at a school camp on Friday.

Cooper Onyett, 8, drowned in a pool at Belfast Aquatics in Port Fairy just before 11am, while on his first overnight camp with Merrivale Primary School's grade 2 class.

His mother Skye Meinen told the Herald Sun she spent the weekend by the phone, waiting for details about her son's tragic death.

"I've got no answers," Ms Meinen said.

"I don't know what happened. I don't have any information about the accident from the school. Nobody has actually told me what happened.

"All I know is that I had an excited little boy going on his first ever sleepover school camp.

"I dropped him off on Thursday and gave him a great big hug goodbye and said, 'I'll see you on Friday'."

Ms Meinen said Cooper was "the life of the party" who loved being with his friends and family.

"He lived every single day of his life with a smile and tried to make everyone around him happy and tried to get them to appreciate everything around them," Ms Meinen said.

"He brightened up everything.

"Cooper loved anything that involved lots of people."

The "beautiful and social" boy had just celebrated his eighth birthday on May 9.

Cooper's death is not the first tragedy to rock the young family.

Ms Meinen said the death of her boy came after losing Cooper's twin, Ethan, before the pair were born.

"I'm distraught. This is like Groundhog Day after losing Ethan," Ms Meinen, of Dennington, said.

"I've been here before, sadly. I don't think a parent should have to go through this once, let alone twice.

"I am really vacant."

Cooper's older brother, Jett, has been shattered by the death of his "best mate".

"When we first arrived at the hospital, the first thing Jett screamed was, 'He's my only friend!'" Ms Meinen said.

"It was just really terrible."

Ms Meinen said Cooper most loved going to school.

"Having a day off school was like torture. He needed his friends," she said.

"He always got in trouble at school because he's just like me, a little socialite."

Cooper's aunt Tara Meinen told the Herald Sun her family had been shattered by the boy's death.



Cooper Onyett (top), 8, who drowned on school camp; (above, centre) with brother Jett and mum Skye Meinen.



Natalie Russell.

## Fight to keep killer locked up

**SUZAN DELIBASIC**

FAMILY and friends of murdered Frankston schoolgirl Natalie Russell are launching a campaign to keep her evil serial killer Paul Denyer behind bars.

The Herald Sun revealed last year Denyer was two years away from being eligible to seek parole over the murder of Ms Russell, who was 17 at the time, and two others, student Elizabeth Anne-Marie Stevens, 18, and young mother Debbie Fream, 22.

Denyer, 49, killed the three in the Frankston area in the space of three terrifying weeks in 1993.

By June 10, 2023, he will be eligible to be considered for early release by the Adult Parole Board, but there is no guarantee it will be granted.

Family and friends on Monday will gather at 11am outside Victoria's Parliament House to launch a campaign to keep Denyer locked up.

It's understood Natalie's family and closest friends will attend.

A change.org petition, created in January calls to keep Denyer "locked up for the remainder of his life" and has gathered more than 13,000 signatures.

"He has never shown any remorse for these senseless murders and even stated that it was something he had wanted to do for many years," the petition said.

Ms Russell's father Brian previously told the Herald Sun Denyer would never be cured and was a clear-cut candidate for indefinite detention.

"He's still fairly young. He'd be killing young women again," Mr Russell said.

## Custody cop fights sack

A GEELONG custody officer fired after allegedly using excessive force on a prisoner inside the city's police station is claiming he was unfairly dismissed.

Michael Varker is taking Victoria Police to the Fair Work Commission after he was sacked from his senior role as a supervising police custody officer.

Mr Varker was let go in February following an investigation into an allegation that he used excessive force towards a person in custody at Geelong police station on August 25, 2020.

## A QUIET GOODBYE



## Townsville ready for Origin duty

PETER BADEL

TOWNSVILLE will host State of Origin I if the Covid-19 crisis forces the series opener to be moved from the MCG.

The Queensland Rugby League has booked out The Ville resort for June 9 – the night of Origin I – and pencilled in several functions for Townsville in the strongest sign yet that the code's show-piece will make its debut at the \$290 million Queensland Country Bank Stadium.

ARL Commission chairman Peter V'landys insists no definitive call has been made at this stage, with rugby league bosses in delicate contractual discussions with the Victorian government over the series opener at the MCG on Wednesday week.

The Covid-19 lockdown in Victoria has forced the Storm to remain on the Sunshine Coast and has left the Origin opener in jeopardy, with Canberra and Newcastle also raised as possible contingency sites for Game One.

But Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk is continuing with plans to provide a Plan B option in the event of an MCG Origin move.

The NRL has advised the Cowboys that Origin I will be played in Townsville if it cannot be held in Melbourne.

The QRL has made a series of bookings for Queensland Origin starts to stay at one of Townsville's leading hotels just 3km from Queensland Country Bank Stadium.

The QRL has also made Origin function bookings with local Townsville restaurants.

## QR tech is a hire power

**LOCAL pub group Australian Venue Company is hiring more young Aussies than ever thanks to new QR code mobile ordering and payment technology.**

**Australia's hospitality sector has battled to hire international and experienced staff due to border closures.**

**But Australian Venue Company chief executive Paul Waterson said his company has been able to employ people with little or no experience due to the implementation of Mr Yum, a mobile ordering and payment system.**

**With Mr Yum, patrons scan a QR code at their table to order and pay for food and drinks, which can be delivered and cleared by new staff, leaving experienced staff to focus on what they did best.**

**These beginners receive pre-job training to learn skills as pre-service bar and dining room set up, tray carrying, beer pouring and till training.**

**Australian Venue Company has hired more than 200 young and local staff and 300 apprentices this year.**



Cooper Onyett, 8 (centre), with mum Skye Meinen and brother Jett.

# Coops' sad farewell

SIMON CAMERON  
OLIVIA JENKINS

## Boy's funeral exemption denied

THE family of a boy who drowned at Port Fairy has held a small funeral after they were denied an exemption from lockdown restrictions.

Cooper Onyett's mother Skye Meinen lashed out on social media over the decision that prevented the family holding a larger funeral for their eight-year-old son, who drowned at Belfast Aquatics on May 21, while on a school camp with Merrivale Primary School.

"Our hearts are absolutely shattered that we cannot continue with a celebration for

Coops," Ms Meinen said before the funeral that was held on Friday.

"Once this bulls--t dies down, we will be able to have the celebration for Cooper that we have dreamt up the last couple of days.

"I understand you'll all be as disappointed and as angered as us, but, we cannot do anything, so, please, don't put (anyone) at risk of fines or litigation. We will get our day when the time's right."

Ms Meinen said only Cooper's immediate family attended his funeral. "We had a

beautiful funeral to celebrate Cooper's short eight years with immediate family," Ms Meinen said.

The state's chief health officer, Brett Sutton, said it was a difficult decision.

"The exemptions team did speak to the family, and did assess the request. I wasn't personally involved, the chief health officer doesn't have a role, appropriately, and I understand that the request was declined," Prof Sutton said.

"These are the most difficult decisions for the exemp-

tions team to make and it will be weighing extremely heavily on them, but our thoughts are with the family at such an extraordinarily difficult time."

Cooper's aunt, Tennielle Onyett, said "no words can describe how we are all feeling today".

"We couldn't ever imagine we would be doing this so soon and in this way," she said. "Cooper Jack, you were an amazing soul. So full of life and outgoing and happy. You beat to your own drum and didn't have a care in the world."

"You spent your days brightening our lives with your larger than life smile and infectious laugh.

"May you now rest peacefully reunited with your twin brother Ethan."

South West Coast MP Roma Britnell said the family had been prepared to do everything possible to work within the regulations, having organised a large-screen projector to allow socially distanced mourners outside with only 10 people indoors.

"As a community member, I'm just so distraught for the family as everyone in our community is," she said.

simon.cameron@news.com.au

## Tourism has hit 'breaking point' Woolies rolls out limits

VICTORIA'S struggling tourism sector is on the brink of collapse, with intrastate trips cancelled up to six months in advance as travel confidence sinks to a new low.

Victorian Tourism Industry Council chief Felicia Mariani said the lockdown was a "body blow" to the state's beleaguered visitor economy.

"These ongoing lockdowns have delivered death by a

thousand cuts for operators in Victoria and indeed across all of Australia," Ms Mariani said.

"The resilience of business is at breaking point and if we do not find some workable solution, the future of Australia's \$150bn tourism industry will be at risk by the time we get to the other side of this pandemic."

Ms Mariani said current systems weren't coping and a

national approach was needed to shield vulnerable industries.

Tour Local owner Joanne Staindl said she was forced to cancel all coming trips.

"There's that immediate loss, but within an hour, we were getting people cancelling tours for November," she said.

"People just don't have the confidence any more to keep booking and cancelling. For some, it's the final straw."

THE nation's supermarkets have returned to the co-ordination of supply to prevent panic buying.

Woolworths quickly followed Coles on Friday morning to impose buying limits on toilet paper as Victoria started its first day of statewide lockdown.

The volume of toilet paper shipped to Woolworths supermarkets in Victoria from

its central warehouse rocketed 300 per cent in the past week. Coles and Woolworths have imposed a limit of two packs of toilet paper per person.

"We're reinstating limits on toilet paper in Victoria to help ensure more customers have fair access to the product," a Woolworths spokesman said.

"We'll continue to closely monitor demand."

## Alcohol triggered sex fiend

ASHLEY ARGOON

A BOOZED-up sex offender stalked a woman at her work for two days, leaving her so terrified that she locked herself in a store room.

Robert Harper, 41, was charged with stalking, assault and failing to answer bail, leading police on a manhunt from Ballarat to Melbourne in February.

Court documents reveal the Cabbage Tree man turned up to the woman's Parkville work, racially vilifying her and saying he wanted to have sex with her. When she locked herself in the store room, he proceeded to knock on the door.

Melbourne Magistrates Court heard the registered sex offender didn't know why he acted the way he did, "but I do know it's because of alcohol".

Magistrate Tara Hartnett said his behaviour, "no doubt linked to your drinking" was "completely inappropriate".

Police put out a community alert after Harper was a no-show in court, breaching bail and failing to meet his sex offender reporting obligations. He was arrested in Pakenham.

Harper has served 100 days in prison, with the court hearing it helped him "dry out".

He was convicted and fined \$1000 and given a 12-month community corrections order.

## Tai chi belly fat buster

**THERE is good news for those who loathe the gym but still want to reduce stubborn belly fat. Tai chi, also known as "meditation in motion", could be the answer.**

**Academics in China found tai chi was as effective as conventional exercises in reducing waistlines.**

**Researchers randomly selected hundreds of obese adults over 50 and tasked them with completing one hour of tai chi three times a week, walking and strength activities, or no exercise over three months. They found tai chi and conventional exercise reduced waist circumference.**

## Maryam was last seen in April with boyfriend



Maryam Hamka has vanished. Her boyfriend is facing charges of violence against her.

# Where is she now?

EXCLUSIVE  
BRIANNA TRAVERS

THE family of a suspected homicide victim who vanished without a trace say Australia is "too soft" on domestic violence and claim the system has failed their loved one.

Maryam Hamka, 36, has not been seen since April 10 when she left her family's Brunswick home with boyfriend Toby Loughnane, despite her mother begging her not to go with him due to her fears for her safety.

Mr Loughnane, from Brighton, is under investigation by the homicide squad.

While he has not been charged with any offence related to her disappearance, he is remanded in custody over alleged "acts of violence" against her in December last year.

Her sister, Amel Hamka, is one of the many both grieving over the disappearance of Maryam and struggling to cope with a lack of answers.

"Six weeks ago she left us with that scumbag monster Toby Loughnane without a word since," Amel said, adding that the system had "failed" Maryam.

"Australia is too soft on domestic violence," she said.

Maryam Hamka was last captured on CCTV footage about 5.30pm on April 10 at the Albert St Woolworths in Brunswick. Her phone and bank accounts have not been used since.

Amel said her tight-knit



Toby Loughnane

family were devastated. "We are getting closer to finding out what happened to Maryam, we will find out and we will get justice," Ms Hamka said.

"Hopefully one day soon we will get to see you again, even if it's just to lay you to rest."

She has begged anyone with information to come forward. "I know someone out there knows something and I'm pleading with you to contact police or contact me," she said.

"You cannot hold on to something like this, it will haunt you.

"Please come forward, not only for my sister's sake but do it for your own sister, mother or daughter. Do it for all the women in your life."

Mr Loughnane will remain behind bars until his case returns to court on June 4.

He is charged with intentionally causing injury, recklessly causing injury, aggravated assault on a female and committing an indictable offence while on bail.

The investigation continues. [brianna.travers@news.com.au](mailto:brianna.travers@news.com.au)

## Memorial guests cut but mum 'at peace'

THE mother of a young boy who drowned on a school camp in Port Fairy says she is now "at peace" with the government's 11th-hour refusal to grant her family an exemption to hold his memorial.

Eight-year-old Cooper Onyett's mother Skye Meinen told the Herald Sun the family will hold a larger service in Warrnambool when restrictions ease after the number of people allowed to attend the service was slashed to just 10 guests.

"Although others may be angered about their decision, we are at peace with it and

Cooper is laid to rest," Ms Meinen said.

"We look forward to planning the celebration of Cooper's life with family and friends when Covid restrictions ease enough to allow the capacity we wish to incorporate."

Ms Meinen last week lashed the government for refusing Cooper's larger memorial.

"It seems to me that no one has the balls to call me and tell me that the exemption has not been granted even after publicly saying that it will be considered," Ms Meinen said.

"We will get our day when the time's right."

## Climate deaths link

**ABOUT four in 10 heat-related deaths around the world can be attributed to human-induced climate change, according to new Australian and international research.**

**Using data from 732 locations, including Australia, researchers from Monash University, Queensland University of Technology and the University of Bern in Switzerland found 37 per cent of warm-season heat-related deaths could be linked to anthropogenic climate change. For Australia, the researchers said the figure was in line with the global average - about four in 10.**

## Murder guilty plea change bid

GENEVIEVE ALISON

A man who admitted shooting dead his childhood friend has made a drastic attempt to change his plea, weeks before he was due to be sentenced.

Paguir Pan pleaded guilty earlier this year to the shooting murder of Winis Apet in Springvale in March 2019 and was formally arraigned in the Supreme Court in January.

But less than three weeks before he was due to face a presentence hearing, Pan told the court he "didn't make the right decision" and now wanted to fight the charge.

Pan, who represented himself, claimed he had not been given the right advice by his



Winis Apet

previous lawyers and was in the process of obtaining new solicitors.

It will be his third legal team since being charged with murder days after Mr Apet's death.

"The reason I've done this is I didn't have access to all the

evidence," Pan told the court on Tuesday. "From what I've seen, I didn't have the right advice and I didn't make the right decision."

Mr Apet, then 20, died from a single gunshot wound to the chest. He was found in a pool of blood in the early hours of March 10 after leaving a shisha bar on Springvale Rd and died at the scene. It is understood the young men had known each other for many years.

Justice Lesley Taylor said there would need to be significant evidence to allow Pan to change his plea.

An application to decide whether or not Pan is granted leave to change his plea will be heard on June 21.