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FUTURE STARS: Hannah Crompton, Olivia McKenzie, Dana Reynolds and Lucy Walters will travel to the US next year for the chance to become a star. Picture: Dylan Burns

Training for a shot at fame

A year of intensive training awaits these four talented performers from Ballarat College of Music and the Arts before they head for the bright lights of Los Angeles. The girls, who dream of becoming stars, won places in the prestigious five-day ARTS audition event in LA next December after impressing entertainment scouts during local auditions in Ballarat. Story, page 6

HOON RAGE

Drivers do illegal burnouts on memorial to Ballarat's war dead

BY DERRICK KRUSCHE

HOONS have held illegal burnout sessions on the Avenue of Honour in recent days, leaving multiple skid marks on the road dedicated to Ballarat's war dead.

Many residents were shocked to learn reckless

drivers had defaced the tree-lined avenue at the Western Highway overpass in Burrumbeet, with blackened lines stretching for more than 50 metres.

Avenue of Honour Committee member Paul Jenkins, who is a respected former Ballarat politician, slammed

the actions of the offenders, saying those responsible should be forced to clean the surface by hand.

"The whole avenue is a living memorial, including the overpass precinct, and it deserves every respect to those who served our country 100 years ago and should not be

desecrated by an unthinking few," he said.

"If they are caught they should be made to scrub their burnout rubber from this special road surface by hand.

"Their effort would not be a fraction of the energy and suffering contributed by

those who served our country those many years ago."

It comes close to the end of a year that has seen hoon driving thrust back under the microscope in Ballarat, with top police officers urging residents to dial triple-0 if they witness dangerous driving.

Inspector Dan Davison

called on anyone with information about recent hooning on the Avenue of Honour to come forward and either contact police or Crime Stoppers.

"It is mindless behaviour and it will not be tolerated," he said yesterday.

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NEWS: RAIL TRAINING CENTRE COMES TO TOWN. P5

NEWS



BRIGHT LIGHTS: BCMA performers Lucy Walters, 14, Olivia McKenzie, 11, Dana Reynolds, 8, and Hannah Crompton, 13, will train hard during 2018 before travelling to the US to audition for casting agents. **Picture:** Dylan Burns

Girls with stars and fame in their eyes

FOUR Ballarat performers who dream of making it big in the entertainment industry will take the trip of a lifetime next year and audition for roles in Los Angeles.

Dana Reynolds, 8, Lucy Walters, 14, Hannah Crompton, 13, and Olivia McKenzie, 11, will head to the US next

December after completing a year of specialised training at Ballarat Centre of Music and the Arts, and with instructors from Ozlink Talent who teach in LA and Australia.

The talented quartet attended local auditions in November, impressing ARTS audition scout Amanda

O'Brien who has invited them to attend the ARTS audition event in LA next year.

Throughout 2018 they will undertake intensive training including preparing vocal presentations, monologues, modelling, public speaking and wardrobe selection before they present to cast-

ing agents.

Throughout the five day LA event the girls will attend seminars, workshops, interviews and perform on stage.

BCMA director Paula Heenan said the girls had taken dance, drama and music classes at BCMA for years.

—MICHELLE SMITH

Hepburn tourism market expands

BY ROCHELLE KIRKHAM

DOMESTIC tourism continues to make up the largest proportion of visitors to Daylesford and Hepburn Shire, but international visitation is showing signs of growth.

Business Victoria statistics show international day visitation to the Goldfields region dropped 7.7 per cent in the last 12 months to September 2017, but there has been a jump in overnight stays.

Visitors are deciding to stay longer and spend more money in the region, as overnight stays rose 13.8 per cent in the same period. Chinese visitors are spending more than double any other nationality visiting the state.

Tourism Research Australia statistics show 28 per cent of Chinese visitors went to Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges for an overnight trip without their hosts. But it remains a challenge to attract Chinese tourists as they increasingly travel independently rather than with large organised groups.

Daylesford is included in the Great Southern Touring Route, a marketing campaign to attract tourists to the Great Ocean Road, the Grampians, Ballarat and Daylesford.

Daylesford Macedon Ranges Tourism general manager Judith Isherwood said despite the organisation's primary focus in

attracting the Melbourne market, a large proportion of tourism product on the Hepburn Shire side of the region was internationally ready.

"Some of the businesses that work very well with the Great Southern Touring Route and are doing great things with attracting an international market include Creswick Woollen Mills, Hepburn Bathhouse and Spa, Grange Bellinzona and The Lake House," Ms Isherwood said.

"Our focus is about trying to increase awareness among international visitors about what this region has to offer. At the moment we are looking at how we can promote what we have here to international tourists and we are targeting international media."

Creswick Woollen Mills has seen success in attracting Chinese tourists with bus loads of tourists often arriving at the mills each day. Owner Boaz Herszfeld said the number of Chinese visitors increased after hiring Chinese speaking staff and building close connections bus tourist bus operators.

"In past 12 months, we have had over 130,000 visitors and approximately 30,000 have been Chinese speaking visitors," Mr Herszfeld said. "It's about being friendly to those that may not speak good English and being welcoming."

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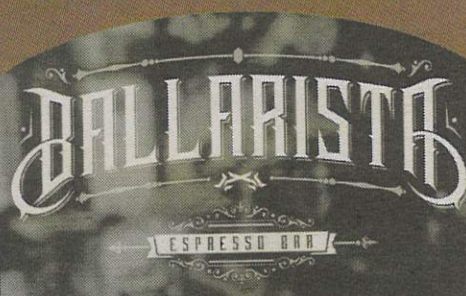
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