

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**DATE Wednesday 30 September 2026**

**Community called to get behind SharkPitch 2026**

The pitches are being polished, the nerves are building and three local organisations are preparing to step onto the SharkPitch stage and now United Way Glenelg is asking the community to do one simple thing: turn up and get behind them.

SharkPitch 2026 will be held on Tuesday 6 October from 5.00pm to 7.00pm at South West Community Church, Portland, bringing together three very different projects under this year's theme:

Three pitches. One community.

Since launching in 2019, SharkPitch has given local organisations the opportunity to tell their stories, build new supporters and raise funds to turn community ideas into reality.

Over the years, those pitches have helped bring some significant projects to life.

Young Portland BMX Club members Jack Thorp and Stella Middleton took to the SharkPitch stage in 2023 to help secure support for new clubrooms and a canteen, facilities that have since been completed and are now being enjoyed by the club community.

In 2024, the Merino Digby Lions Club secured \$20,000 through SharkPitch to support free children's vision screening across Glenelg Shire.

Last year's event raised more than \$54,000 for Days for Girls Portland, Rotary Club of Portland and Tyrendarra Sporting Club.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr said the history of SharkPitch showed what could happen when local people rallied behind a good idea.

"SharkPitch has never just been about the money raised on the night," Ms Carr said.

"It is about giving local organisations a platform, helping them tell their story and putting them in front of a community that has the ability to help."

"This year we have three completely different projects, but each one is responding to a genuine need in our community."

Taking to the stage in 2026 will be Glenelg and Southern Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network (GSGLLEN), Portland Citizens Brass Band and Seaview House Residential Care.

GSGLLEN will pitch its Passport to Employment project, designed to help young people build the practical skills, confidence and experience they need to make the transition from school into employment.

Portland Citizens Brass Band will pitch for support to replace the roof of its band hall, protecting an important community facility and helping ensure the band has a secure home where musicians can rehearse, learn and come together for years to come.

Seaview House Residential Care will pitch for funding to install a new call system, replacing ageing equipment and giving residents a reliable way to call for assistance when they need it. The upgrade will improve safety for residents and give greater reassurance to families and staff.

Each organisation has nominated a pitcher who has undertaken intensive pitch training with Debra Crespan, developed and redeveloped their six-minute pitch, rehearsed their story and prepared to stand in front of a live audience and ask the community to back their idea.

Ms Carr said attending SharkPitch was just as important as making a financial pledge.

"We know not everyone is in a position to donate, and that's absolutely fine. There is no obligation to pledge," she said.

"But you can still make a difference simply by being in the room."

"These pitchers have put in an enormous amount of work. Come along, listen to their stories, cheer them on and show them that their community is behind them."

For those who do choose to give, donations will have even greater impact thanks to SharkPitch partner Beyond Bank, with eligible pledges matched, effectively doubling the value of community support.

Long-term partner Powerhouse Productions has also worked with the organisations to capture their stories on film, helping the projects reach audiences well beyond the SharkPitch stage.

Ms Carr said the event had demonstrated year after year that people did not need to make large donations to be part of something significant.

"SharkPitch is community crowdfunding in its simplest form. Lots of people doing what they can, and collectively creating something much bigger," she said.

"You might pledge \$20, you might offer a service or some in-kind support, you might introduce an organisation to someone who can help or you might simply stand up and clap at the end of a pitch."

"It all matters."

"On 6 October, we want to fill the room and show these three organisations what community support looks like."

Three pitches. One community. Let's get behind them.

Tuesday 6 October 2026

5.00pm–7.00pm (Doors open 4.45pm)

South West Community Church (Formally the Star cinema), 40 Julia Street, Portland

To reserve your FREE ticket <https://2026sharkpitch.eventbrite.com.au>

*Photo: Emcees for the night Paul Drew and Susie Lyons.*

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