

MEDIA RELEASE

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Three local organisations prepare to take the stage at SharkPitch 2026

Three Glenelg Shire organisations will take to the stage at SharkPitch 2026, sharing their vision for a stronger, safer and more inclusive community.

Glenelg and Southern Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network (GSGLLEN), Portland Citizens Brass Band and Seaview House Residential Care have been selected to pitch their projects to a live audience on Tuesday 6 October.

Coordinated by United Way Glenelg, SharkPitch is a live community crowdfunding event that gives local organisations an opportunity to tell their stories, build community support and raise funds for projects with lasting local impact.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr said the three organisations represented very different parts of the community but shared a commitment to improving local lives.

"From creating employment opportunities for young people, to preserving an important community asset and improving safety for older residents, each project responds to a genuine local need," Ms Carr said.

"SharkPitch gives community members the opportunity to hear directly from the people behind these projects and decide where they would like to make a difference.

"One of the best things about the event is that every contribution matters. A pledge does not need to be large to help move a project closer to its goal."

Beyond Bank Community Development Manager Grant Howland said SharkPitch demonstrated what could be achieved when local organisations, businesses and community members worked together.

"SharkPitch puts the community at the centre of giving, allowing people to hear directly from the organisations and understand exactly what their support can achieve," Mr Howland said.

"Each of this year's projects responds to a clear local need and has the potential to create benefits well beyond the people directly involved. Beyond Bank is proud to support an event that brings people together and turns community generosity into practical, lasting outcomes."

GSGLLEN – Passport 2 Employment

GSGLLEN wish to deliver Passport 2 Employment, an eight-week program supporting young people aged 15 to 18 who have a disability or face multiple barriers to employment, further education and independent living.

The program will provide 15 students from local secondary schools with practical learning in employability, communication, presentation, financial literacy and life skills. Participants

will also take part in workplace tours, shopping activities, exercise and cooking classes, and a graduation luncheon.

Approximately 100 local students have completed Passport 2 Employment to date. Nearly 50 have progressed to work placements, with many going on to secure ongoing employment.

GSGLLEN Executive Officer Tiana Richardson said the transition from school could be particularly challenging for young people who had limited access to workplace experience and employment pathways.

"Passport 2 Employment helps young people recognise their strengths, build confidence and develop the practical skills they need to take their next step," Ms Richardson said.

"We want every participant to leave the program with a stronger belief in what they can achieve, along with meaningful connections to local employers, training providers and community services."

Portland Citizens Brass Band – A Sound Investment

Portland Citizens Brass Band will pitch its project, *A Sound Investment* towards replacing the deteriorating roof of its historic Julia Street band hall.

Built as a bond store in 1840, the 186-year-old building has been the band's rehearsal home since 1931. The ageing roof is vulnerable to leaks, placing the building, instruments, uniforms, equipment and decades of local history at risk.

The complete roof replacement is expected to cost approximately \$55,000. The band is seeking additional grants and will contribute funds raised through donations and community fundraising.

Portland Citizens Brass Band President Kristyn Cram said the project was about protecting much more than a building.

"Our band hall is where people come together to learn, rehearse, form friendships and share their love of music," Ms Cram said.

"Our members range from 10 years of age through to their 80s, and the hall supports wonderful mentoring and connection across generations.

"Replacing the roof will preserve an important part of Portland's history and ensure the band can continue being part of the soundtrack of our community for many years to come."

Established in 1859, Portland Citizens Brass Band is one of Australia's oldest community brass bands. Its members perform at commemorative services, festivals, schools, aged care facilities, civic occasions and community celebrations throughout the region.

Seaview House – Call for Care

Seaview House Residential Care seeking to replace its outdated resident call bell system.

Seaview House provides supported accommodation for older people who can live with a level of independence but benefit from additional assistance. Its current call bell system is more than 20 years old and can no longer be upgraded because replacement parts and compatible technology are unavailable.

A temporary system is currently being used while Seaview House raises funds for a reliable, modern replacement.

Seaview House Manager Lisa Hashfield said the system was essential to the safety and wellbeing of its residents.

"Our residents need to know that if they fall, become unwell or require assistance, they can call for help and receive a prompt response," Ms Hashfield said.

"A reliable call bell provides more than a practical safety measure, it gives residents and their families reassurance and peace of mind.

"This project will support up to 58 residents at any one time and will continue benefiting older members of our community well into the future."

The proposed system will also provide useful information about call frequency and staff response times, helping Seaview House monitor its performance and continue improving resident care.

The community decides what happens next

The three finalists were selected from expressions of interest by an independent volunteer community panel consisting of representatives from Beyond Bank, Powerhouse Productions, Glenelg Libraries and Glenelg Shire Council.

At the live event, each organisation will present its project and answer questions before community advocates lead the pledging.

"SharkPitch is not a traditional grant program where decisions are made behind closed doors," Ms Carr said.

"The community is in the room, hearing the stories, asking questions and helping turn these projects into reality. It is always an energetic and genuinely uplifting evening."

In 2025, the SharkPitch community raised \$59,588 for Days for Girls, Rotary Club of Portland and Tyrendarra Sporting Clubs, including \$18,000 in matching support from Beyond Bank.

SharkPitch 2026 will be held on Tuesday 6 October. Doors will open at 4.45 PM, with the event beginning at 5 PM and concluding by 7 PM
<https://2026sharkpitch.eventbrite.com.au>

Community members, businesses and organisations are encouraged to attend, support the pitchers and make a pledge of any size.

Photo: Kristyn Cram, Tiana Richardson and Lisa Hashfield

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