

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: Thursday 7 October 2026

SharkPitch generosity continues well beyond the night

The pitches may be over, but the generosity sparked by SharkPitch 2026 is continuing, with donations and offers of in-kind support still flowing to this year's three participating organisations.

Held on Tuesday 6 October, SharkPitch brought the community together to hear directly from Glenelg & Southern Grampians Local Learning Employment Network (GSGLLEN), Portland Citizens Brass Band, and Seaview House.

United Way Glenelg Executive Officer Nicole Carr said one of the most rewarding aspects of SharkPitch was watching the community respond immediately to the stories they heard.

"There is something quite special about being in the room at SharkPitch," Ms Carr said.

"When each pitcher takes to the stage, the room becomes completely still. People are genuinely spellbound by the stories being shared and the passion of the people telling them."

Three pitches. Three powerful stories.

Tiana Richardson, pitching for GSGLLEN's Passport to Employment, spoke about the difference the program can make for young people who face disability or other barriers to employment.

Passport to Employment provides young people with practical experiences, workplace skills and connections with local employers, while helping them recognise their strengths and build the confidence to take their next step.

The program has already supported more than 100 young people, with almost 50 progressing to work placements or ongoing employment.

"For some young people, getting that first opportunity can be incredibly difficult," Ms Carr said.

"Tiana showed us what can happen when a young person has someone believe in them, helps them recognise what they have to offer and connects them with an employer willing to give them an opportunity."

Kristyn Cram from Portland Citizens Brass Band began her pitch by asking the audience to imagine ANZAC Day without the Last Post – by playing a snippet of the last post, a parade without a band or a festival without music.

It was a simple reminder of just how much the band has been woven into Portland's community life for generations.

The band has been making music since 1859, but its historic Julia Street home urgently needs a new roof. Kristyn's pitch, A Sound Investment, was about much more than repairing a building, it was about protecting the instruments, history and people underneath it.

"The band hall is more than just a building. It is a place where generations come together to learn, rehearse, make friends and belong," Ms Carr said.

"Kristyn reminded us that by investing in the roof, we're helping make sure the music continues for another generation."

The final pitch of the evening came from Lisa Hashfield from Seaview House, whose Call for Care pitch painted a confronting picture of an older resident falling during the night and being unable to immediately summon help.

Seaview House's existing call system is more than 20 years old and needs to be replaced with a modern digital system incorporating room and bathroom call buttons and wearable pendants.

The project is about more than technology, it is about giving residents safety, dignity and independence, while providing reassurance to families and staff that assistance is within reach when it is needed.

"Lisa's pitch made us think about something most of us probably take for granted, being able to call for help when we need it," Ms Carr said.

"You could feel the room connect with that message. A new system can't prevent every fall, but it can make sure someone isn't left frightened and alone waiting for assistance."

One of the strengths of SharkPitch is that support doesn't have to come with a dollar sign attached. Each organisation also came to the event with a wish list of practical, in-kind support that could help turn their pitch into reality.

For GSGLLEN's Passport to Employment, in-kind needs include transport for students to attend industry tours and program activities; a fitness trainer and healthy eating guidance for its Healthy and Wealthy Week; venue hire for program sessions and activities; and catering for weekly sessions or its graduation celebration for around 50 people.

For Portland Citizens Brass Band, the community can assist with building and roofing materials; qualified tradespeople and donated labour; equipment hire, including access to a boom lift or scaffolding; and transport and delivery of materials and equipment as the band works towards replacing the roof of its historic band hall.

For Seaview House, support is very much about people and community connection. The organisation is seeking volunteers to help with activities such as a walking club, knitting, arts and crafts; volunteers to assist with fundraising events including sausage sizzles and selling raffle tickets; and donations of prizes, vouchers, products or services that can be used for raffles and fundraising.

Ms Carr said it was particularly encouraging to see people approaching the pitchers after the event with offers to help.

"Sometimes the thing an organisation needs isn't necessarily another dollar, it might be equipment, transport, professional expertise, materials, labour, volunteer time or simply an introduction to the right person," she said.

"What we saw after SharkPitch was people going directly to our pitchers and saying, 'I can help with that.' That is community giving at its best.

"In-kind support also means the money raised can go further. Every service, piece of equipment or hour of expertise that is donated is something the organisation may not have to purchase.

"That is one of the real strengths of SharkPitch. We bring organisations with a need into the same room as people with resources, skills and connections and then we watch those connections happen."

The generosity has also continued beyond the event itself.

In the hours and days following SharkPitch, further donations have arrived as people who attended shared the stories with friends, family, colleagues and their wider networks.

"We're thrilled that SharkPitch is attracting generous donors, but equally important is the type of community event it has become," Ms Carr said.

"It is positive, uplifting and completely focused on what can be achieved when a community gets behind a good idea.

"You can feel the goodwill in the room. People want the pitchers to succeed, and they want to be part of making that happen."

Major sponsor Beyond Bank once again strengthened the impact of community giving by providing matching funds of up to \$6,000 for each of the three organisations, while Powerhouse Productions produced the films that helped bring each organisation's story to life.

United Way Glenelg also acknowledged pitch trainer Deb Crespan, Nicole Cleary Photography, MCs Susie Lyons and Paul Drew, South West Community Church, Tania Luckin and the United Way Glenelg Board for their contribution to the event.

At the time of writing, the SharkPitch tally for each organisation is as follows;

GSGLLEN \$14,174

Portland citizens Brass Band \$15,105

Seaview House \$16,778

Donations remain open until the end of October, giving people who were unable to attend, or those inspired to give a little more, the opportunity to support their favourite pitch.

"SharkPitch demonstrates that generosity isn't just about a dollar figure," Ms Carr said.

"It's about people, connections and a community saying, 'We believe in what you're trying to achieve, and we want to help.'

"The event may be finished, but the impact is still growing."

Donations remain open until 31 October:

GSGLLEN – Passport to Employment
<https://www.givenow.com.au/gsgllen>

Portland Citizens Brass Band – A Sound Investment
<https://www.givenow.com.au/portlandbrassband>

Seaview House – Call for Care
<https://www.givenow.com.au/seaviewhouse>

United Way Glenelg is now collating the in-kind pledges received on the night and connecting those offers with each organisation. Anyone who was unable to attend SharkPitch but can help with any of these in-kind needs is also encouraged to get in touch by contact Ms Carr on 0410 513 305.

Photo L-R: Lisa Hashfield (Seaview house, Kristyn Cram (Portland Citizens' Brass Band) and Tiana Richardson (GSGLLEN)

-END-

Nicole Carr, United Way Glenelg Executive Officer
Phone: 0410 513 305 Email: mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au