

THE FLAME NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 12



President's Report

After an action-packed winter, LETR Victoria is now gearing up for what promises to be one of the biggest, busiest and most significant periods in our recent history.

In the months following the June newsletter, our committee and volunteers have delivered strongly for the athletes of Special Olympics Australia while building on LETR Victoria's position as a strong and vibrant volunteer-led organisation.

The Victorian Polar Plunges 2026 were an extraordinary success, raising just over \$164,000 for our athletes and over \$705,000 nationally. With the Melbourne Plunge serving as the flagship event, the regional plunges that followed helped build strong local connections between Victoria Police, Special Olympics clubs, athletes, families and supporters. These events are more than fundraisers; they demonstrate inclusion, community connection and the positive role LETR plays across Victoria.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to planning, promoting, participating or plunging.

Our recent focus has been on the National Games and the 2026 Final Leg Torch Run. The Final Leg will see teams carry the Flame of Hope across Australia before coming together in Melbourne for the Opening Ceremony. LETR Victoria has been coordinating member participation, community engagement, logistics and approvals for Victoria Police employees selected to take part.

The National Games are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate athletes from across the country. You can get involved by volunteering, attending events and supporting athletes.

Planning for the 2026 LETR Gala Ball is well advanced. The Gala Ball remains one of our signature events and we look forward to seeing you on October 17, wearing a touch of gold. Thank you to the Gala Ball team and sponsors for their continued support.

Behind the scenes, the LETR Committee has been busy focusing on governance, planning and financial sustainability. Our August planning day considered priorities for 2026–27, including athlete leadership, club engagement, volunteer support, event delivery, fundraising, sponsorship, financial controls and succession planning. This work provides a strong foundation to enable LETR to pursue its ambitions while remaining responsible, sustainable and focused on delivering for Special Olympics athletes.

We continue to provide financial support to Special Olympics Victoria and local clubs, including assistance linked to the National Games and athlete participation. We aim to ensure our funds have maximum impact while maintaining a sustainable base of workplace giving, sponsorship, events and community support.

I also acknowledge the appointment of Matt Volk as Special Olympics Australia LETR Partnership Director. Matt has already been working closely with programs nationally and will be an important partner as we navigate the busy months ahead.

Thank you to our volunteers, committee members, supporters and Victoria Police members who continue to give time, energy and goodwill to this movement. The months ahead will be demanding, but will also offer a unique opportunity to showcase what LETR Victoria can achieve.



Andrew Beattie

**LETR (Torch Run)
President/Director**

Dates for the fridge

OCT '26

Final Leg

[Register](#)

17 OCT

Gala Ball

[Buy Tickets](#)

OCT '26

*National Games 19 - 23
October 2026*

[Buy Opening Ceremony
Tickets](#)

4-7 NOV

*LETR
International
Conference
Michigan, USA*

2 DEC

*Police Academy Torch Run
(IDOPWD)*

4 DEC

*CBD Torch Run
(IDOPWD)*

[Register](#)

Meet the Team

Andrew Beattie

President/Director & Treasurer

Rank

Director, Corporate Finance

Work Location

Financial Services



How long have you been with LETR

2,892 days (nearly 8 years)

What is your favourite LETR event/s

Gippsland Regional Engagement and Awareness Tour (GREAT) 2019, Tasmania Final Leg and Launceston Special Olympics National Games 2022

What would you tell someone who might want to join?

A fantastic way to make a meaningful local contribution and to be part of a global police-aligned movement



Dean Earp

Secretary

Rank

Sergeant

Work Location

Melbourne East

How long have you been with LETR

Since 2022

What is your favourite LETR event

Multiclass - Snow Sports

What would you tell someone who might want to join?

Give it a go! You meet the most amazing people. Working with the athletes and their families is heaps of fun and its also very rewarding.



LETR VIC Guardian Award

The **LETR VIC Guardian Award** recognises one outstanding LETR Volunteer that exemplifies the true meaning of the LETR mission and have responsibly guarded the Flame of Hope and all it represents.

Criteria

Nominated volunteer must be involved with the Law Enforcement Torch Run program in Victoria.

The volunteer should embrace their responsibilities as a Guardian of the Flame, spread the LETR message, further awareness of the LETR mission and embrace athlete inclusion in all their efforts.

The nomination must be completed on the nomination form and the nomination must receive endorsement from a member of the LETR Committee or Special Olympics Victoria Committee

Nominate a LETR Volunteer for the Guardian Award Here

LETR VIC Flame Award

The **LETR VIC Flame Award** recognises an outstanding Special Olympics Victoria Athlete who has contributed to the success of the Law Enforcement Torch Run Victoria on a local, state or national level. This award is not limited to athlete leaders but all athletes across the state.

Criteria

Nominated athletes must be involved with the Law Enforcement Torch Run program in Victoria.

Nominated athletes should be an active Special Olympics Athlete who contributes to Torch Run and Special Olympics in spirit, dedication and enthusiasm in an effective fashion.

The nomination must be completed on the nomination form and the nomination must receive endorsement from a member of the LETR Committee or Special Olympics Victoria Committee

Nominate an Athlete for the Flame Award Here

Thank you WPG and Volunteers

For your time and commitment. We can't achieve greatness without you.



Freezin' For a Reason Across Victoria



Melbourne certainly turned on the weather for the 3rd Melbourne Polar Plunge at Port Phillip Bay — a brisk 14 degrees, with the rain thankfully staying away. A total of 259 participants braved the icy water, many dressed in colourful and creative costumes including Penguins, Mermaids, Ten Pin Bowls, Christmas characters, Wizard of Oz, Cars, Vikings, Bogan and even our own Tina Turner. Together, they raised over \$94,000, a new record.

This year also marked a first: the Chief Commissioner took the plunge. CCP Bush and athlete leader Sam Bradfield jumped off the police boat before Sam courageously returned for a second plunge with her team, the “Westie Bogan.” An incredible effort from Sam. A big thank you also to LETR ambassador Assistant Commissioner Chris Gilbert, who led the Torch Run and braved the bay for the third year running with his team, the Southern Sharks.

A huge thank you to our dedicated volunteers and the Polar Plunge committee, who begin planning five months ahead of the event. Our gratitude goes to the South Melbourne Life Saving Club for being outstanding hosts, providing lifesavers, jet skis, and entering a team for the first time. Thank you to Bank Vic for your generous sponsorship, for taking the plunge, and for supplying the Arch that welcomed participants to the event.

And finally, our brilliant MC Shaun — with us for three years and already committed to returning in 2027 — deserves special recognition. A round of applause as well for athlete leader Lachlan Wadsworth, a valued member of the Polar Plunge committee, who gave Shaun a run for his money with his impressive MC skills on the day.

The cold didn't stop there — our regional communities embraced the challenge too. Ovens and Murray, Ballarat, Echuca and Frankston all took the plunge, raising an impressive \$70,000 collectively. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who supported both the Melbourne event and our regional Polar Plunges.

Planning for 2027 is already underway, and we're excited to make next year's season bigger, bolder and even colder. See you in 2027.



The Chief's Challenge is Back



Keeping the Competition Alive

Despite wrapping up some of our biggest annual events this quarter, our local clubs haven't slowed down one bit — the energy is still buzzing as everyone trains and competes in the lead-up to the National Games.

We've loved seeing LETR Victoria out and about, cheering on athletes at club competitions right across the state. From fast-paced basketball matchups to glowing 'Glow in the Dark' Bocce nights, trivia battles and more, our clubs have been keeping the fun rolling.

There's always something happening — and you're invited to be part of it. Visit our events page to see what's coming up next and join in the excitement.

The Chief's Challenge is a Torch Run initiative designed to raise awareness for Special Olympics Victoria, supporting people living with an intellectual disability and/or autism. Held in the lead-up to and in December each year, the Challenge aligns with International Day of People With a Disability and encourages all areas of Victoria Police to host an activity or event that strengthens relationships with those living with an intellectual disability and/or autism.

Together, these efforts build trust, deepen meaningful connections, and contribute to safer, more inclusive communities across Victoria. Participating in a Chief's Challenge guarantees lots of fun and enjoyment for all involved. Registration for 2026 is now Open!

Register your event by emailing :
secretary@torchrun.org.au



Proud to be a true Partner

We might be the bank for police, but we see ourselves as so much more.

If it matters to you, it matters to us. Whether it's the Torch Run, Polar Plunge, Gala Ball or any of the police causes and events we support, we're proud to show up, and stand beside you whenever you need us.

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Three Days of Growth, Determination and Achievement at Mt Buller



A memorable week unfolded at Mt Buller for Multiclass Snowsports athletes, their families, coaches, guides and supporters in August 2026.

Multiclass Snowsports provides athletes with disabilities the opportunity to develop their skills and compete in alpine skiing. Each year, the Mt Buller program brings together two days of specialised development clinics delivered by Disabled Wintersport Australia and Mt Buller Ski School instructors, followed by a Giant Slalom race that showcases everything the athletes have worked towards.

The first two days on the mountain set the tone for the week. Under clear skies and excellent snow conditions, athletes took part in intensive clinics focused on improving technique, building confidence and preparing for competition. Guided by experienced DWA volunteers and instructors, they spent hours refining their skills, challenging themselves on the slopes and enjoying the camaraderie that makes the Multiclass community so unique. LETR Victoria members were proud to be on the hill throughout, offering encouragement and celebrating each milestone.

That sense of connection continued off the slopes at the Multiclass Dinner and Bib Presentation. Athletes, families, volunteers and supporters gathered to reflect on the progress made, hear from special guests and receive race bibs ahead of competition day. The evening reinforced that the event is about far more than racing—it's about belonging, shared achievement and the inclusive spirit that defines the program.

Wednesday's Giant Slalom brought a shift in conditions, with strong winds and low visibility threatening to disrupt the event. Despite the challenges, athletes remained focused and determined, putting their newly developed skills to the test. Their resilience and sportsmanship were evident in every run and reflected the hard work invested during the clinics.

The dedication of DWA guides and volunteers was central to the week's success. Their expertise, patience and commitment ensured athletes could train, compete and enjoy the experience safely.

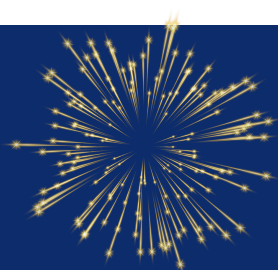
The event concluded with medal presentations, where local police members—including an Inspector, Senior Sergeant, Sergeant and others—had the privilege of presenting medals to the athletes. Recognising their perseverance and celebrating their achievements strengthened the connection between LETR Victoria and the communities it proudly supports.

LETR Victoria is honoured to stand alongside these athletes, their families and support teams. Whether assisting on the slopes, cheering from the sidelines or helping behind the scenes, our members remain committed to supporting opportunities that promote inclusion, participation and community connection.

How do I get involved?

We advertise events regularly via social media and our website. Connect with us and register to attend an event. From here, you might consider joining our General Committee or Executive Committee if you're interested when positions are available.

vic.torchrun.org.au/volunteering-with-letr-vic





Lighting the way to the 2026 Special Olympics Australia National Games

As a cornerstone of every National Games, the Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg will amplify awareness and carry the message of Special Olympics across Australia. Law Enforcement Officers and Special Olympics athletes, united as the Final Leg Team, will serve as true Guardians of the Flame—championing inclusion, acceptance, and ability throughout their journey in support of the 2026 Special Olympics Australia National Games.

The 2026 National Games will be held in Melbourne, Victoria, from 19–23 October. In the lead-up to the Opening Ceremony at Margaret Court Arena on 19 October, the LETR Final Leg Team will run through numerous cities, towns, and communities, including many Victorian Special Olympics Club locations, sharing the spirit and purpose of the Games with Australians nationwide.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in and watch a unified Final Leg and proudly represent both our Special Olympics and LETR programs—as well as the broader global movement—while raising awareness and support for the 2026 National Games.

Victorian Final Leg Schedule

Mildura – Wednesday 14th October 2026 @ 2.00pm
Swan Hill – Thursday 15th October 2026 @ 10.45 am
Echuca – Thursday 15th October 2026 @ 2.45 pm
Bendigo – Friday 16th October 2026 @ 10.00 am
Albury – Friday 16th October 2026 @ 10.00 am
Wodonga – Friday 16th October 2026 @ 10.45 am
Ballarat – Friday 16th October 2026 @ 2.00pm
Geelong – Saturday 17th October @ 10.00 am
Melbourne – Sunday 18th October 2026 @ 3.30 pm (TBC)



Join A Final Leg Torch Run

All Final Leg Torch Runs across Victoria will be available on the LETR Vic Website within the next week for you to sign up! Don't miss out on being part of something Special!

GOING FOR GOLD



Gala Ball — 2026 —

Dress with a Touch of *Gold*

HELP US CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF
INCLUSION IN AUSTRALIA



Saturday 17 October 2026



Zinc at Federation Square,
Melbourne



◆ **TICKETS ON SALE** ◆



SOA Update: The excitement is building for National Games!

The countdown is on to the 2026 Special Olympics Australia National Games, and with less than 50 days to go, the excitement is building across the country.

More than 850 athletes with intellectual disability and autism are putting in the hard work, training with their teams and getting ready to take on one of Australia's biggest inclusive sporting events in Melbourne from 19–23 October.

From athletics and swimming to basketball, football and golf, teams are preparing to compete across 13 sports in some of Melbourne's best sporting venues.

And the Opening Ceremony is set to be the hottest ticket in town. Taking place at Margaret Court Arena on Monday 19 October, the celebration will officially kick off the week-long event.

Tickets for the Opening Ceremony are available now through AXS, while all sporting events are free to attend.

Listen out for us on SEN!

The National Games excitement is making its way onto the airwaves, with Special Olympics Australia and National Games set to be heard across SEN in the lead-up to October.

So, listen closely. You might just hear one of our National Games ads during your next drive, workout or coffee run.

Take a look inside MSAC with Athan

Want to see where some of the action will unfold?

Athlete Leader and Team VIC swimmer Athan takes us inside the MSAC pool, giving us a sneak peek at one of the venues where athletes will compete at National Games. [Watch Athan's MSAC pool tour](#)

Get ready, Melbourne. The National Games are almost here...

The Special Olympics Australia National Games are proudly supported by the Victorian Government's Significant Sporting Events Program and the Community Support Fund.



NATIONAL GAMES
MELBOURNE
2026

Special
Olympics
Australia



Special Olympics Victoria Clubs

Ballarat: Basketball, gymnastics, swimming.

Email: ballarat.chair@specialolympics.com.au

Barwon: Athletics, basketball, golf, gymnastics, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling.

Email: barwon.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Bendigo: Swimming, tenpin bowling.

Email: bendigo.chair@specialolympics.com.au

Dandenong Casey: Basketball, bocce, gymnastics, swimming, tenpin bowling.

Email: dandenongcasey.sport@specialolympics.com.au

Echuca: Basketball, bocce, golf, netball, swimming, tenpin bowling.

Email: echuca.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Melbourne Eastern Ranges: Basketball, bocce, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling.

Email: melbournееasternranges.membership@specialolympics.com.au

Melbourne Inner East: Athletics, basketball, bocce, cricket, equestrian, football (soccer), gymnastics, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling, winter sports.

Email: melbourneinnereast@specialolympics.com.au

Melbourne North: Bocce, tenpin bowling.

Email: melbournenorth.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Melbourne Southern: Basketball, bocce, football (soccer), swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling.

Email: melbournesouthern.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Melbourne West: Athletics, basketball, bocce, gymnastics, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling.

Email: melbournewest.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Ovens & Murray: Athletics, basketball, bocce, gymnastics, powerlifting, swimming, table tennis, tenpin bowling.

Email: ovensmurray.sport@specialolympics.com.au

Westernport: Athletics, basketball, golf, swimming, tennis, tenpin bowling.

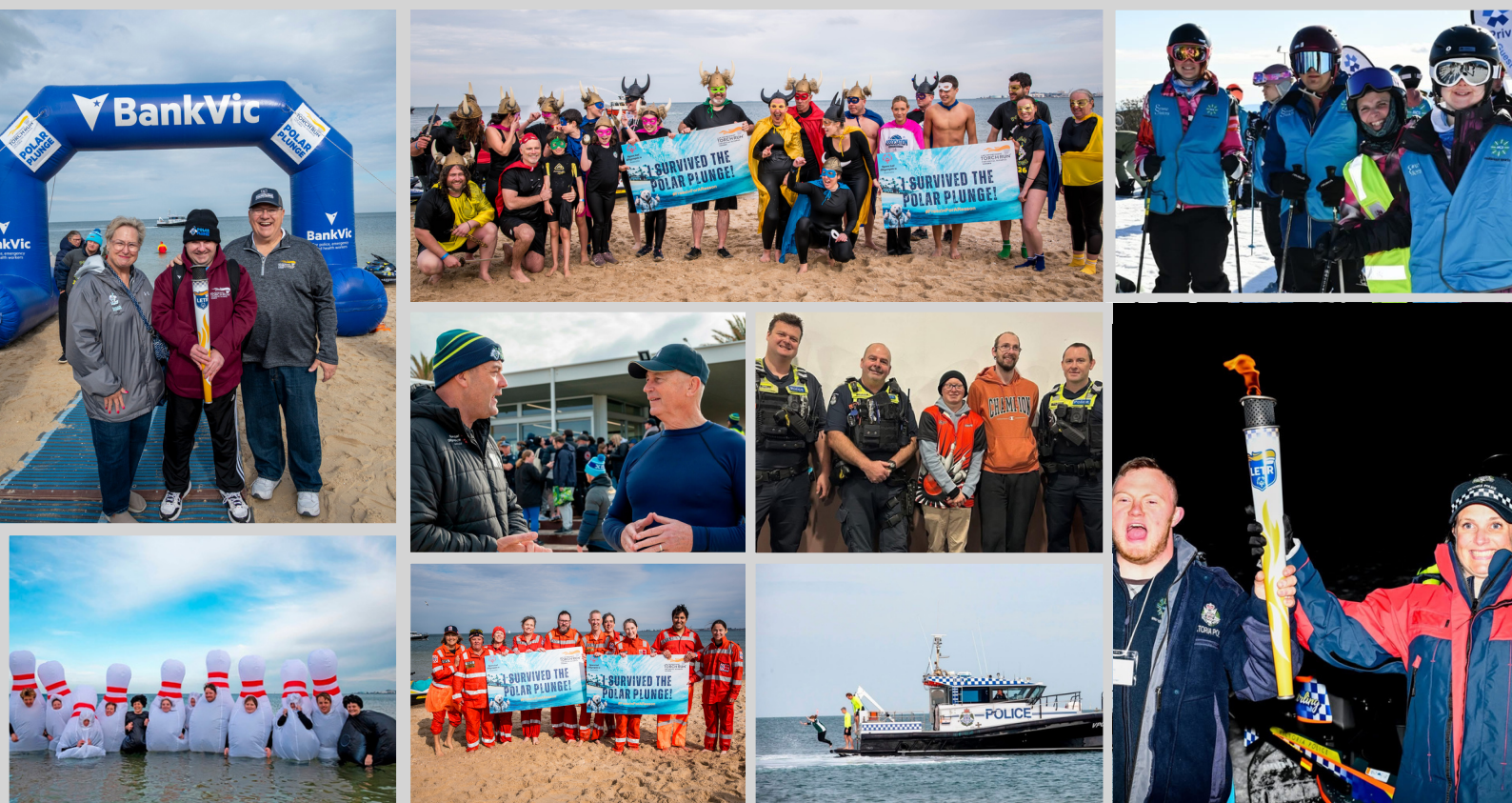
Email: westernport.secretary@specialolympics.com.au

Special Olympics
Victoria



Special Olympics Victoria can be contacted
via: info.vic@specialolympics.com.au





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