



Kardinia Playgroups co-ordinator Amelia Weir, right, with Eliana Weir, 1, after she was named Playgroup Victoria's 'playgroup champion'. Picture by Kate Healy

Amelia's passion is noticed

BY ERIN WILLIAMS

IN AMELIA Weir's own words, playgroup is a place for community.

The Kardinia Playgroups co-ordinator was named "playgroup champion" following a statewide vote held during National Playgroup Week in March.

Ms Weir voluntarily runs three out of seven playgroup sessions each week at the Sebastopol playgroup.

"For me, a playgroup is a place for community. It's a chance to connect with other parents and give them encouragement and also to educate about children's development," Ms Weir said.

Playgroup Victoria chief executive officer Danny Schwarz presented Ms Weir with a prize and certificate on Thursday. The school teacher said she was humbled to be named playgroup champion.

"It's not about me. We have an incredible team of over 20 volunteers and parents," Ms Weir said.

"We do it together. It's a place where everyone can come. It's an awareness to reflect the culture we have as a team."

Ram raiders target club

BY GABRIELLE HODSON

DETECTIVES are on the hunt for drivers of a car that smashed through the Ballarat Golf Club's main doors in an attempt to steal the ATM.

Police said the occupants of the silver Subaru Forester drove the station wagon through the main glass airlock of the Sturt Street venue at 1.45am on Wednesday.

Officers said two masked men attached a tow rope to an automatic teller machine near the pokies area, but were unable to open it.

"It is believed the offenders did not make off with anything before they were last seen heading westbound on Sturt Street towards Lucas," a police spokesperson said.

"The vehicle will have damage to the rear taillights and the rear hatch."

The car was later found burnt out on Binks Road, Colbrook - north of Ballan.



Wednesday morning's ram raid was captured on CCTV. Picture supplied

Investigators are now sifting through significant CCTV material at the gaming venue.

Tradespeople spent the morning repairing the damage on Thursday.

Meanwhile, all operations at the Ballarat Golf Club - including the bistro - have continued as normal.

OUR REGION'S RAM RAIDS

2019-2023

- 2023, May 14 - Sebastopol, Albert Street, theft of alcohol from Premix King.
- 2023, April 16 - Ballarat, Ararat Street, theft of tools from Lawrence & Hanson electrical shop.
- 2022, October - Mt Clear, Geelong Road, theft of sunglasses from newsagency.
- 2021, January - Lexton general store and hotel.
- 2019, December - Skipton, cigarettes stolen from roadhouse.
- 2019, April-November - Ballan, Lake Bolac, Clunes, Beaufort, theft and attempted theft of money from ATMs. One man was sentenced to seven years' jail and ordered to pay \$313,680 to the Bendigo Bank to make up for stolen cash and insurance costs.

Customers have been asked to use the side entrance near the Golf Pro shop while the repairs are carried out. Anyone who may have witnessed the incident or has footage is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or file a confidential report online at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au

The ram raid is Ballarat's second in 10 days - after a brazen attack on the Sebastopol Premix King store at 3.25am on Sunday May 14.

The force of that crash left most of the 2004 Ford Territory inside the store - and footage shows bumbling thieves dropping alcohol.

Again, the front glass doors were targeted.

CCTV showed the car was missing its bonnet at the time of the ram raid.

It was found burnt out on the Sebastopol-Smythesdale Road on Smythes Creek at 2.20am on Wednesday last week.

Police said the Ford had been stolen from Sutton Street, Delacombe, on April 21.

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