

LOCAL NEWS

It's time to pump it up

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Saturday

9.00am: Marine Environment talks at the yacht club.

1.00pm to 5.00pm: Waves and Whales — local surf films and whale documentaries presented by the Portland Film Society.

4.00pm: Relay for Life Duck Derby at the marina.

6.00pm: '50s guitar surf rock band Johnnie and the Johnnie Johnnies at The Shelf.

6.30pm: Whale Dreaming Exhibition opening night at Tea Tree Gallery, Percy Street.
All day: Art installation. Five Blue Whales in different art mediums at Henty Beach; Mission to Seafarers open house and art exhibition by Bob Stone; Upwelling Exhibition, Portland Bay Press, 21 Julia St; Crochet Coral Exhibition by Trevor Smith, Lifeline Op Shop, 57 Bentinck St; Rotary Art Show and Sale, Civic Hall.



LEFT: Artist Mark Cuthbertson from Inverleigh, holding a blue whale model, in front of the very large inflatable whale which is under construction in a Portland warehouse. ABOVE: Portland artist Trevor Smith with his marine inspired crochet creations.

091023GW60, 091023GW66
 Pictures: GLEN WATSON

An upwelling of nautical celebration

By ALEX SINNOTT

HIGH inflation will guarantee Portland has a whale of a time this weekend when the inaugural Upwelling Festival kicks off in the seaside city.

A 24-metre long, five-metre high inflatable whale will be one of five sea mammal replicas to adorn the Portland foreshore as part of the Five Whales Project — a centrepiece of the festival.

Project co-ordinator Jo Grant said a full-sized panel van will be driven inside the whale on Saturday to keep the light weight maritime feature from blowing away.

"This is what the whale looks like when it's half inflated, we can't fully inflate it until we've got it outside," she said.

"Huge is the only way you can describe this project. We will have four other whales down on the beach on the day made out of different types of material. One will be made out of aluminium, another out of foam, fishing gear and the last one is a sand sculpture which will take a week to complete."

Ms Grant said all five whales will be near-life size

at 24 metres long, the same size as the blue whales that pass by the city during the Bonney Upwelling, a natural ocean phenomenon which happens off the south-west coast each spring.

Another artistic display, on a smaller scale, will be local crochet work from district artists at the town's Lifeline Shop. Portland artist Trevor Smith said he took up crocheting earlier this year and has been busy preparing for this year's exhibit.

Mr Smith said it took up to a week to create the detailed crochet pieces which include a crochet lobster and multi-coloured reef.

"I used to do a bit of crochet work as a kid but it was all pretty functional stuff," he said. "The crocheting I do

now is for art's sake, but it does take patience because it's far more intricate work.

"It takes about 40 hours all up to finish one piece, but I'm pretty obsessive about it and once I've started a project I like to get it done as soon as possible."

A traditional 'Blessing of the Fishing Fleet' will kick start proceedings on Saturday followed by a marine environment-themed street parade at 10 am.

Melbourne-based surf rock band Johnnie and the Johnnie Johnnies will be the evening's main act allowing festival-goers to bob along to the sounds of Hawaii and Malibu.

South-west musicians will also have the chance for their moment in the limelight during the festival with two

stages set up to showcase the best of the local music scene.

Musicians Celeste Bolte, Lachie Hol and Sally Jensen will all perform original tunes, mostly inspired by the local coastal environment. Ms Jensen said the event was a great opportunity to showcase the city's best up-and-coming talent.

"Portland has an extraordinary number of talented musicians," Ms Jensen said.

"I don't think people are fully aware of some of the great original work that's coming out of the district, especially from younger performers that are just starting out like Celeste and Lachie."

Another well-known Portland group, the Lost Royals, will join other local musicians on the foreshore stage. Drummer Cary Hemphill said he and fellow band members Aaron Francis, Cameron Kenney and Joel Colliver had been fine-tuning in preparation for the day.

"It used to be the Portland Bay Festival, but I think the change this year to the Upwelling Festival will be for the better and there seems to be a lot of enthusiasm to have local bands perform," Mr Hemphill said.



Left: Portland musicians, guitarist, Cameron Kenney and drummer, Cary Hemphill. RIGHT: Sally Jensen and her 14-month-old son Lachlan, with guitarist Lachie Hol, 17, and singer Celeste Bolte, 16. 091023GW70, 091023GW69