

Frankston – What you probably didn't know about Victoria's famous suburb

FRANKSTON – whether you love it or loathe it, the south-eastern suburb is famous (or infamous) for a number of reasons. Here's why you should visit.

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It's constantly the butt-end of jokes (Franghanistan), visited by Sam Newman every few weeks for *The Footy Show's* Street Talk and is the home of controversial MP Geoff Shaw.

But have you ever actually travelled south down the Nepean Highway to check out "Franga" for yourself? Are you aware that the seaside mecca is actually a beautiful destination to take the family to relax or experience arts and culture?

For the most part, Frankston's reputation precedes itself, with most people preferring to lock their car doors and keep on driving swiftly through "Funkytown" on their way down the peninsula to Mornington or Portsea.

But if you stop sometime to smell the roses, you may discover that this thriving suburb has many striking sights that will make you want to come back and visit again and again.

EVENTS AND PLACES TO SEE IN FRANKSTON

News_Image_File: Competitors in the water at IronMan Frankston. Picture: David Waring. Source: Supplied.

International Ironman Asia-Pacific Championship

Frankston plays host to arguably one of the biggest events on the international sporting calendar, when the annual Asia-Pacific ironman championship begins at Frankston beach.

The 2014 event will have more than 2500 competitors, 50.7% of whom come from outside Victoria, and it sold out in a world-record time of less than five minutes.

Frankston Council estimates that 10,000 people come to watch the event and stay in Frankston before and after it's been run, with the global television audience giving Frankston invaluable exposure.

News_Image_File: It can take hours to sculpt some of the masterpieces at the Frankston Sand Sculpture exhibition, but they are worth it! Picture: HWT image library.

The Arts Centre

Did you know that Frankston is home to the largest stage in Victoria outside Melbourne's CBD?

Opened in 1995 by then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, the Frankston Arts Centre has an 800-seat theatre, two exhibition galleries and a 192-seat black box theatre.

The Arts Centre has played host to a number of big musical acts, international comedians and circus shows.

News_Image_File: A life-size bronze sculpture of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch sits at the Frankston Arts Centre. Dame Elisabeth's daughters Janet Calvert-Jones and Anne Kantor are pictured her at the unveiling of the sculpture. Photo David Caird

Cruden Farm

Originally a wedding present from her husband and newspaper executive Keith Murdoch in 1928, this small farm in Langwarrin was love at first sight for Elisabeth Murdoch. More than 80 years in the making, the garden at Cruden Farm is a small piece of country set amid suburbia. It has been an icon of the Frankston region for decades, and has been well preserved so it will continue to be for years to come. News_Image_File: The beautiful Picking Garden at Cruden Farm. Picture: Leader Newspapers.

Location location location!

With the improvement of roads and public transport around Victoria, Frankston is now only a 45-minute drive from Melbourne's CBD, but still manages to maintain a quiet and peaceful atmosphere if you want to escape the hustle and bustle of city life. You can walk from your house to the beach and get striking views of Port Phillip Bay, a luxury for which many people pay a pretty penny. News_Image_File: Frankston pier at sunset. Source: Supplied

Frankston TV

Not many suburbs can say they've got their own TV show! Frankston TV originally began as Australia's first community driven YouTube network in 2011 and has evolved into a big success, with more than 250 videos uploaded. It was so successful, that it was turned into a weekly television show on Channel 31 on Sundays.

News_Image_File: Thousands turn out to see the spectacular fireworks at the Frankston Christmas Festival of Lights.

Source: Supplied.

Frankston's Christmas Festival of Lights

Every year the Norfolk pine tree outside Frankston's civic centre is adorned with more than 4000 globes as families turn out for one of the great events on Frankston's calendar.

The festival is always a kids' paradise with activities, live entertainment, rides and, of course, Santa is there to listen to their Christmas wishes.

News_Image_File: Try your luck at windsurfing at Frankston Beach. Source: HWT Image Library.

The beach and Frankston foreshore

When you think of Victoria's great beaches, you think of St Kilda or Torquay, but **Frankston is actually home to the most popular beach**. And not only that, it took out the title in 2011 and 2012 for Victoria's cleanest beach in the Keep Australia Beautiful Awards.

The foreshore and pier is under redevelopment and a new boat ramp is almost finished construction, which makes the area an ideal destination to spend your summer at one of their many foreshore festivals.

News_Image_File: Frankston Beach has twice been named Victoria's best beach! Friends Jacob (5) and Lucy (5) enjoy the sun by going for a run along Frankston beach. Picture: HWT Image Library

McClelland Gallery

Tucked away on 16 hectares of land 4km east of Frankston, McClelland Sculpture Park & Gallery is set on landscaped gardens and bush trails in Langwarrin. Any art lover will discover a real treasure trove of exhibitions and public lectures, and the unique Sculpture Park plays showcase to over 60 works by major artists.

Famous Frankston faces

The words "Frankston" and "bogan" are often used in the same sentence, but you might not be aware that there are quite a few notable faces that have called the south east suburb home.

-Gold medallist **Debbie Flintoff King**

-Philanthropist **Dame Elisabeth Murdoch**

-St Kilda champion **Robert Harvey**

-Channel 7 newsreader **Peter Mitchell**

-The late great **Graham Kennedy**

-World-renowned British **DJ Carl Cox** resides on Olivers Hill while in living Australia.

-Veteran Channel 10 news presenter **Mal Walden**

-Comedian and TV/radio personality **Mick Molloy** (hails from Mt Eliza - which is just south of Frankston)

News_Image_File: Robert Harvey is inducted into the Frankston City Hall of Fame. Picture: Ian Cook.

Former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett used to spend his childhood summers swimming at Frankston beach, and still rates it as one of the state's best districts.

"I sold cold cordials on a hot day outside our home to raise some pocket money and it was in Frankston that Graham Kennedy bought his first house, next door to us, and we became neighbours," Mr Kennett said.

"It is the major community on the Mornington Peninsula and not only has a big public hospital and many supporting private health professionals, but also has an extensive range of excellent sporting facilities."