

'A privilege' to serve Overington steps down

By Kim Quinlan

THIS week is Karen Overington's final few days in the political arena.

After a stellar career spanning almost 30 years — 16 years in local government and 11 years as MLA for Ballarat West — Ms Overington will be saying goodbye to her political life.

As the state government prepares to go into caretaker mode next week in readiness for the November election, Ms Overington will officially retire as an MP after earlier this year admitting that serious illness had taken its toll and she was forced to step down.

In recent months Ms Overington has been too ill to attend parliamentary sittings, and has even asked Premier John Brumby to read her final speech to Parliament.

The death of her husband Brian in October last year and her own ill-health contributed to reduced public appearances and comments about issues in the months leading up to her retirement announcement at the end of April.

In deciding to retire, Ms Overington, 58, told Premier Brumby that she did not have the strength to fight another election, adding it was one of the most awful decisions she had to make in her life.

Ms Overington began her state political career in 1999 after serving 16 years in local government, first in the former Sebastopol Borough, including a term as mayor, and then a



Karen Overington

three-year term as a Ballarat City councillor.

In 1999, she became the first woman to serve the Ballarat West electorate after defeating Liberal party candidate Judy Verlin by a one per cent margin. Ms Overington increased her margin in the 2002 election by a massive nine per cent and she also won the 2006 election by a margin of 6.5 per cent.

Ms Overington said it was a privilege to represent her Ballarat West electorate during the past 10 years, adding that one of her greatest achievements was the establishment of the Wendouree West Community Renewal Program.

She will now be supporting the Labor Party's candidate for Ballarat West, Lifeline Ballarat manager Sharon Knight, in her bid to win the seat in the November election.

"I have known Sharon for a long time. She is very dedicated to social justice issues and will make a wonderful member," Ms Overington said.



POISE: Monique Moore performs her Scottish barn dance yesterday. Picture: Daniel Hartley-Allen

A fun fling in the spotlight

By Anthony Cini

THE calisthenics competition is in full swing at Royal South Street.

Yesterday, competitors from Sunbury performed a Scottish barn dance.

Monique Moore, 9, from Glenroy, has been dancing for

two years and shows no signs of stopping.

"I think my dance was really fun, and my favourite part was at the end when I got to do a pose," Monique said.

The competition covers disciplines of voice, music and movement, among others.

The society began in 1879,

and is a non-profit organisation run by volunteers.

Its mission is to conduct Australia's foremost eisteddfod by promoting and encouraging participation and interest in the performing arts.

The competition runs until October 30.

Wood stove suspected as cause of Navigators house fire

A WOOD stove in the kitchen is believed to have been the cause of a house fire in Navigators on Sunday.

The fire started in the kitchen at the rear of the house near the

corner of Butlers Road and Lyons Road.

CFA crews arrived at the scene just after 2pm.

The home was completely engulfed by flames, causing struc-

tural damage to the entire property.

It took emergency services 45 minutes to contain the blaze.

A CFA spokeswoman said the wood stove had been the focus of

investigations into the cause of the fire.

She said it was not treated as suspicious.

The weatherboard property had

been home to Navigators resident Mick Butler for 55 years.

It had been moved from Grant Street to Butlers Road in 1955.

Mr Butler was not home when the fire started.

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