

**INSIDE THIS  
WEEK'S  
EDITION**

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*Buxton Primary School principal Sarah Irving with students Layla, Elise and Jazmine on the day of Buxton Primary School's 150 birthday celebrations. More images on page 10 of this edition. -AR*

## Assurances on the future of ADH under a merger

ALEXANDRA District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH) were asked what assurances they could offer to the community if the merger went ahead.

In a joint statement, ADH CEO Jane Poxon and EH CEO David Plunkett said, "If a voluntary amalgamation were to proceed, our community can be assured that this will mean more health services, not fewer. The intent is to build on what already works well bringing more specialist care, enhanced infusion and x-ray services, and greater access to training and career pathways for local staff.

"Alexandra District Health would continue to operate with its name, staff and fundraising. Every dollar raised specifically for ADH would stay local to support care for our community. Core services such as urgent care, inpatient care and community health would remain unchanged. The Community Engagement Committee will also remain in place.

"If a voluntary amalgamation were to proceed, the Minister for Health would appoint a board for the new organisation. Although the decision about board members is a decision for the Minister, recent amalgamations in the Victorian system have resulted in each new board drawing on the expertise and local knowledge across the existing boards."

# The many opinions on the proposed merger

by Anne Richey, Editor, Alexandra Standard and Yea Chronicle

THE Alexandra District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH) exploration of a voluntary merger was announced on Thursday, November 6, with an engagement period of just 15 days, finishing on November 21. It was an unreasonably short period of time for the community to understand, digest and develop an informed opinion on the proposal.

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish commented, "When I received the call from Eastern Health, I was expecting they were going to tell me that they had dialysis up and running [at ADH] and I was not expecting that they were going to raise the issue of amalgamation."

On the day of the announcement, a survey was presented to the community by ADH. It was a tick-a-box for whether the community liked having different health services available at ADH, which of course we do, but there was nothing seeking opinions about the proposed merger. There was only a free-text box at the end of the survey, limited to 200 words, where people could write their thoughts. The word count was later expanded as a result of complaints. In the following days, Murrindindi Shire Council also put out a survey on the subject of the merger

exploration, asking more questions about the proposed merger.

On the ADH Facebook page, comments were switched off on all of the posts relating to the merger, so it's easy to wonder whether they were keen on community feedback at all.

Early in the engagement period, there was a flurry of meetings, with more meetings added during the engagement period due to complaints about the timing and lack of notice. To give credit where it's due, Alexandra District Health CEO Jane Poxon, Eastern Health CEO David Plunkett and board member Alan Studley appeared at most, if not all, of the meetings.

During the meetings, there were questions from the audience and responses from the stage. It felt like a sales game rather than a collaboration to solve a problem, allowing the public to potentially reach the same conclusion. At no point did the speakers seek the community's opinion on the proposal with a show of hands or similar. It felt like another check-box exercise, telling the community why they were right and why anyone opposing the proposed merger was wrong.

However, maybe they are right to explore the option of a merger between ADH and EH, potentially providing more services, more certainty of service and increased activity at the hospital. Should this occur, the district

is likely to benefit economically from the additional staffing required to support the metropolitan patients coming to Alexandra for services, utilising the available beds, and additional staff and patients spending money in the area. Local patients will also benefit.

There was little in the way of assurances during the Tea Talks, and local people appeared to be struggling with this. ADH CEO Jane Poxon and EH CEO David Plunkett were again asked about this via email in recent days. The joint statement said, "The intent is to build on what already works well bringing more specialist care, enhanced infusion and x-ray services, and greater access to training and career pathways for local staff." Their full response has been included separately in this edition.

Speaking on the phone before this assurance was provided, former ADH chair, Lorna Gelbert commented, "ADH's ability to continue to provide its current level of services is subject to continued funding at a level that will pay for them. If nothing were to change and funding were to remain static or reduce over time then, with the continued increase in the cost of providing health care, it would not be possible for ADH to sustain all of the services it currently provides."

When the question, "What will Eastern Health get out of the merger?" was asked at

the "Tea Talk" meeting on November 18, EH CEO David Plunkett responded by noting that the Eastern Health doctors are excited about the opportunity, and noted that ADH's new cancer clinic has been put in place due to the actions of senior medical staff. He also spoke about training in primary and general practice GP training, and research opportunities.

It should be noted that chemotherapy services which have been made available at ADH recently were done via a partnership with Eastern Health, and did not require a merger.

Jane Poxon commented after David on what EH would get out of the merger. "It's about utilising the beds at Alexandra much better. It means that if we can bring more patients after their very acute episode back to Alexandra, back closer to home, it frees up beds in an Eastern Health site. Now you might say, well, that's not very many, but one or two beds is many when you've got a full Emergency Department," she said.

It was also explained at the meeting that the business plan had not yet been finalised and would be considered by the board, and that the Clinical Services Plan would be developed after the agreement has been made, if the merger goes ahead.

*Continued Page 6*

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital

5736 0400

In an emergency dial 000

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

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In an emergency dial 000

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ALEXANDRA

NEWSPAPERS

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Independently owned and operated with no association

with any other media outlet in the Murrindindi Shire.

THUMBS UP

THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP: To the Centrelink services at Alexandra Community Hub. The assistance provided by Chris was superlative.

THUMBS DOWN: The purple glass bin pick up didn't happen in Webster Street, as per the council app roster, on Tuesday, November 18.

THUMBS DOWN: To the tri-cycle rider (three wheeler) holder up traffic along Grant Street with no consideration of other road users.

THUMBS DOWN: To the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association (ADTTA) for their scaremongering headlines and active attempts to block any sort of progress or advancing services at the Alexandra hospital through their voluntary amalgamation exploration with Eastern Health. The campaign has passed genuine enquiries and concern for community to outright scare tactics and alarmist misinformation.

THUMBS UP: A very big thank you to Alexandra District Health for exceptional service. The reception staff were just fantastic and so very helpful. A special thank you to Fiona for fantastic service.

THUMBS UP: To Glencoe Trusses for their decision to move their production from Dandenong to Alexandra.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down is a reader's contribution section of Alexandra Newspapers. Send your Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down to editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Contributions will be edited and/or published at the Editor's discretion. We request that this section not be used as a slander attack on persons, businesses or property

Letters to the Editor

Lake Eildon development

GOULBURN-Murray Water (GMW) is seeking expressions of interest for commercial development around Lake Eildon. GMW is pushing the line that Lake Eildon is one of Victoria's most visited recreational areas. No mention about blue green algae and the current deterioration in water quality caused by commercial development. GMW also acknowledges the Taungurung Land and Water Council to ensure development aligns with cultural heritage. Too late. All that heritage was drowned out when the dam was constructed.

Jim Wheelhouse, Eildon

Solar farm

TUMBLING Watters, such a lovely place for a picnic or take kids to paddle or just sit quietly and clear your head. The sound of the water a natural calming effect. Apparently it's under threat as solar panel power site is to be built. I'll come back to this. Last week I was reading on Facebook about virgin forest being felled to build wind turbines. I commented what a pity it was to impact the environment like this, to which another reader made the comment people like me would be in the ground by 2050. In other words younger generations would be living with any consequence of whatever was decided. At 71 years, I'm aware millennials will live with the consequences longer than my generation and inevitably influence the decisions of what will be built where. Apparently the science taught in the 60S is presented differently today.

Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

THE bridge players in action on Wednesday got our week underway before the well attended social meeting on Friday. Numbers for the Christmas lunch at the Rubicon Hotel on Friday, December 12 are looking good. It has been

decided not to have a Kris Kringle but instead have a Christmas raffle.

As usual Treasurer Dave had us smiling with his jokes in Comedy Corner and Ron spun the wheel for the Chocolate Raffle with Bev, June and Jack the winners. After the formalities we retired to the tearoom for

refreshments and a chat. A big thank you to the ladies who provide cake and sandwiches each week. Games of 500 and UNO completed the afternoon.

Come along and join us. You will be most welcome on a Friday in the Bayley Street clubroom.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

Non-emergency police assistance 131 444

EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon

UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain

MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS

WEEKLY

Tue Women's Walk @ 7am @Embassy of Ideas

Wed Oasis Church, free coffee connection Ph 0408 123 581

Fri Man Walk @ 7am meet at RSL Hall

Fri Communitea 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

Sun Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611

Sun AA meeting: 7pm St Johns Hall. Ph 1300 22 22 22.

MONTHLY

1<sup>st</sup> Wed Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318

1<sup>st</sup> Thur Murrindindi Men 6-8pm@ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

1<sup>st</sup> Sun Crop/Produce swap 10.30am-noon @ Embassy of Ideas

2<sup>nd</sup> Tue Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285

2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318

3<sup>rd</sup> Thu Alexandra Ladies Probus 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252

3<sup>rd</sup> Thu Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913

4<sup>th</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.

4<sup>th</sup> Thu Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517

Last Fri Carers Group 10am Grant Street Grocer. 0418 402 455

ALEXANDRA

NEWSPAPERS

For a \$10 annual fee for one line, your club or organisation's regular meeting dates will be listed each week. Not only is this a reminder to your regular members but also a good source of what groups are available in the community, when they meet and a contact phone number.

Weekly Weather

November 26 - December 2, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	10	19	Wednesday	11	20
Thursday	8	20	Thursday	8	21
Friday	11	22	Friday	11	22
Saturday	8	20	Saturday	8	20
Sunday	10	20	Sunday	10	21
Monday	8	17	Monday	8	18
Tuesday	8	16	Tuesday	8	17

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

ALEXANDRA

NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to

editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au or

reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

or by mail to Alexandra Newspapers

PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

Letters **must be 300 words or less**. We will not publish defamatory letters, or content which is offensive, threatening or containing personal attacks. Submitted letters may be edited before going to print.

All letters must contain writers name, address and contact number. (not necessarily for publication). Letters without these details supplied cannot not be published. Deadline for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.

Like us on Facebook

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT				
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	11.00AM Mon	1.70	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	10.00AM Mon	0.56	LGH	steady
Acheron River at Taggerty	10.00AM Mon	0.73	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	10.45AM Mon	0.16	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	10.45AM Mon	0.62	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	11.00AM Mon	0.36	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	11.00AM Mon	0.83	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	11.00AM Mon	3.77	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	11.00AM Mon	0.54	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Trawool	10.00AM Mon	1.41	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	10.00AM Mon	0.30	LGH	steadyl
Goulburn River at Seymour	10.00AM Mon	1.70	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	11.00AM Mon	1.11	LGH	steady
*ISSUED AT 11:13 AM AEDT MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2025				

DISTRICT RAINFALL	
Alexandra.....	10mm
Buxton.....	26mm
Eildon (AWS).....	14mm
Flowerdale.....	11mm
Jamieson.....	15mm
Kinglake.....	18mm
Lake Eildon.....	12mm
Mansfield.....	6mm
Taggerty .....	17mm
Yarck .....	9mm
Yea.....	15mm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday	
LAKE EILDON	
Height above sea level this week.....	275.77m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	55.9%
Metres below full supply.....	13.13m
Daily inflow .....	2000ML
Release.....	3100ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....	70%

Standard

DEADLINES

Real Estate	Thursday 5pm
Trades & Services	Thursday noon
Early General News	Thursday 5pm
Classifieds	Monday noon
Editorial	Monday 9am
Sports Editorial	Monday 10am
Letters to the Editor	Monday 9am
Thumbsup/down	Monday 10am

If you have any enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the office on

5772 1002 or

reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

# Latest ambulance response times for the Hume region

AMBULANCE Victoria (AV) paramedics faced a record-breaking winter with demand for critical emergency care surging as seasonal illness spread throughout the state.

AV Acting Executive Director Regional Operations Michael Georgiou said between July and September, demand for 'lights and sirens' ambulances across Victoria increased by 2.8 per cent compared with the previous quarter.

"Winter consistently brings the highest emergency call volumes, and this year was no exception. This was our busiest first quarter on record with 101,632 Code One emergencies in just three months, and overall, it was our second busiest quarter ever," Mr Georgiou said.

"This was another challenging winter; the entire health system was extremely busy with seasonal illness. We are incredibly proud of our highly skilled paramedics and first responders for the exceptional care they provide their communities all day, every day.

"We sincerely thank our people who worked tirelessly to meet record levels of demand this winter. Their dedication and commitment to consistently deliver best care and saving lives under pressure is remarkable.

"Despite this record demand, we continue to lead the way in pre-hospital patient care, including the best cardiac arrest survival

rates in Australia and third best anywhere in the world."

During the July to September quarter, AV crews responded to 64.1 per cent of Code One cases within the state-wide target of 15 minutes. The state-wide average response time to Code One emergencies was 15 minutes and 46 seconds.

In the Hume Region crews responded to 5781 Code One cases between July and September 2025, which is 4.96 per cent more than a year ago (5508) and five per cent more than three months ago (5503).

In Murrindindi Shire, crews responded to 266 Code One cases during the same period, with an average response time of 24 minutes and 39 seconds. Of those cases, 29.3 per cent were responded to in less than or equal to 15 minutes.

Compare this to quarter one of 2024-25, where there were 216 Code One cases (50 less than Q1 2025-26) and the average response time was 22 minutes and 21 seconds (two minutes and 18 seconds quicker), with 40.7 per cent of cases being responded to in less than or equal to 15 minutes.

Acting Hume Regional Director Paul James said the support of the community can also help save lives. If you need help but it's not life-threatening, you are encouraged to consider the most appropriate care for your situation.

"Our paramedics are focused on reaching the sickest patients first, but every day, about one in five calls to Triple Zero (000) do not need an emergency ambulance response," Mr James said.

"Getting the right care fast can make all the difference and means more paramedics are on the road for people who need our urgent lifesaving care the most.

"There are many options people can access when they need timely medical care and health advice, at any time of the night or day, but not an emergency ambulance or calling Triple Zero (000), including the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse-on-Call, GPs and pharmacists."

Mr Georgiou said AV is working closely with hospitals, emergency services and government partners to keep patients moving through the system as quickly as possible and get ambulances back on the road sooner.

"The Standards for Safe and Timely Ambulance and Emergency Care are already making a difference transferring patients into hospital care in a consistent, safe and timely way," Mr Georgiou said.

"As part of this work, our crews have made steady improvements to improve our hospital clearing times and return to the community faster. Every small improvement, from more efficient handovers to quicker clearing times, adds up to better care for all Victorians."

Mr Georgiou said AV's Triage Services team, staffed by nurses and paramedics, also plays a vital role by connecting people with the right care and freeing up ambulances for life-threatening emergencies.

"Between July and September alone, our Triage Services team redirected 49,353 non-urgent calls to Triple Zero (000) away from an emergency response," Mr Georgiou said.

"Since its launch in October 2020, we have also referred more than 85,000 patients to the VVED for appropriate online emergency care, and more than 673,000 patients have benefited overall from this free, 24/7 service.

"Services like the VVED are excellent for patients with non-life-threatening medical conditions, providing access to emergency care in the comfort of their own homes and helping to keep paramedics and first responders available for the sickest Victorians.

"Since June, 200 new graduate paramedics have joined the frontline across Victoria. And this year, 44 Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) intern paramedics hit the road, delivering a major boost to critical care statewide."

In a life-threatening emergency always call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

## Health funding types

SMALL rural health services are funded via 'block funding' from the state government, while larger urban services receive 'activity-based funding'. Questions have been asked about whether Alexandra District Health (ADH) will change to being activity funded if they merge with Eastern Health (EH). This appears likely if EH are keen to make use of the under-utilised beds at ADH. Where then does this leave ADH if an 'out clause' is triggered?

When asked about block funding, a government spokesperson said, "Small rural health services will continue to receive block funding in the coming financial years."

A Department of Health spokesperson added, "Small rural health services continue to be funded through block funding, and there are no imminent changes being proposed. Our focus remains on supporting our health services to deliver the frontline care their communities need, closer to home."

When Eastern Health was asked, 'Given that Alexandra District Health (ADH) is currently block funded, if the merger were to go ahead and given that EH is largely funded based on activity, would ADH become activity-funded too?'

EH responded, "Ultimately that would be a decision for the Minister for Health once all necessary factors have been considered."

In Yea and District Memorial Hospital's submission regarding the merger, it states, "Under amalgamation, ADH would lose access to block funding and shift to activity-based funding, a model that disadvantages small rural services and may worsen financial vulnerability. It would also lose eligibility for any alternative funding arrangements that might subsequently apply to small rural health services more generally."

## Alpine leasing policy under review

A PROPOSED new Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy (the Policy) is currently listed on the Engage Victoria website. It's "a whole of government policy that informs how alpine leasing is administered within the state's six alpine resorts of Falls Creek, Lake Mountain, Mt Baw Baw, Mt Buller, Mt Hotham and Mt Stirling."

Alpine Resorts Victoria has led the review and revision of the draft Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy, in partnership with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and a group of dedicated stakeholders. The draft policy, and its related procedures are now available for public consultation, and ARV invites all interested parties to provide their perspective by December 14.

They state that the reason for the new policy is that the previous one was written over 20 years ago "and to keep pace with government and sector objectives for Victoria's alpine resorts, has been under review since 2019."

More information can be found at [engage.vic.gov.au/alpine-resorts-leasing-policy](https://engage.vic.gov.au/alpine-resorts-leasing-policy)

In light of this announcement, Alpine Resorts Victoria were asked to provide updates regarding the Lake Mountain/Baw Baw EOI issued in December 2024, and in light of the new policy under review, they were also asked whether there will be a new EOI and whether it will have any impact on the EOI process.

Alpine Resorts Victoria responded, "The Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw Expression of Interest is still underway and no further information is available at this stage.

"The draft Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy is currently available for public consultation via the Engage Victoria platform, for which ARV will be considering feedback provided in early 2026 when finalising the policy.

"It is not expected that the Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy will have any impact on potential management arrangements of Lake Mountain or Mt Baw Baw."

## WARRANT ISSUED LUKE JAMES ILMER



Luke James Ilmer. -S

## Warrant issued over Alexandra break-ins

A WARRANT has been issued for the arrest of Luke James Ilmer in relation to two burglaries and thefts committed at businesses in Alexandra on November 10.

Ilmer is known to frequent the Ferntree Gully, Springvale, Narre Warren, Wantirna, Traralgon and Lara areas.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report at [crimestoppersvic.com.au](https://crimestoppersvic.com.au)



**Alexandra Museum**  
& Steam Train Rides  
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- Marysville Grocer
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- Seymour Newsagency
- Taggerty Store
- Thornton Store
- Yea FoodWorks
- Yea Newsagency

Alexandra Newspapers are  
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- ANGLICAN

St Johns Alexandra

9am Eucharist each Sunday

Children welcome.

Rev Mario Hendricks -

Rectory 0435 953 777
- CATHOLIC

Immaculate Conception Parish

Parish Administrator Fr Jose Mathew.

Presbytery 0468 810 871

St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm

Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am

Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am
- UNITING CHURCH In Australia

St Andrews, Downey Street,

Alexandra

Worshipping, Welcoming

Sharing the transforming love of

Jesus. Services 10am each Sunday

Contact 5772 2362
- OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Loving God, Loving People,

Loving Life

118 Grant Street, Alexandra

0408 123 581

Meeting every Sunday @ 10am
- MOUNT CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY

BAPTIST CHURCH

37 Grant Street , Alexandra

Pastor Daniel Kriss

Services 10am every Sunday

Phone 0400 282 536

mccbc.com.au
- THE VINE

A Christian community part of the Baptist

Union of Victoria

Sunday 4.30pm service

Kids program during school term

Meets at St Andrew's, 37 Downey Street,

Alexandra

Contact - 0438 642 559

Out&About

THE items in Out and About are sourced from our advertising and news stories. Out and About is not a free community listing diary. Not all items can be included and are placed at the discretion of Alexandra Newspapers.

\*\*\*\*\*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Murrindindi Shire Council invite residents to the Breakaway Bridge Community Briefing session. At the Alexandra Shire Hall from

5-6pm. This session will not be live streamed. Visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/breakawayupdate](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/breakawayupdate)

Darlingford Nursing Home are holding their AGM in the North Lounge Room at Darlingford. The meeting commences at 1.30pm. Applications for a position on the board of management are invited, please contact Darlingford on 5774 2711. Please RSVP for the AGM by November 24.

\*\*\*\*\*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28

You are invited to join council and Alexandra Rotary for the Walk for Respect at Rotary Park. For more information visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/walkforrespect](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/walkforrespect)

\*\*\*\*\*

Friends of Kellock AGM will be held at 9.30am in the board room. All welcome.

A busy weekend for Marysville SES

MARYSVILLE SES had three rescues in 24 hours over the weekend, each involving a combined response from all emergency services.

On Saturday evening, two of of their high angle members joined up with SES Alexandra Unit to respond to a call for a rope rescue on a 4WD drive track at Gaffneys Creek, between Woods Point and Kevington. They met up with SES Mansfield Unit, Fire Rescue Victoria Wangaratta, Mansfield Police and Ambulance Victoria at the track entrance. Woods Point CFA (Country Fire Authority) were quickly able to locate and access the patient, who was stuck in steep and heavily vegetated terrain following a medical incident. Paramedics were able to make their way to the location and help the man begin to walk out, joined along the way by members of the Marysville SES crew,

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), and Victoria Police. While the response crew was geared up with rope rescue equipment and gear to enable an overnight stay if needed, all were relieved to be able to walk the man out safely and quickly. The local crews returned home at around 2am.

On Sunday morning, they were required to attend a road rescue on Maroondah Highway at Narbethong. Victoria Police, CFA, and Ambulance Victoria (AV) all responded, with the first services on scene able to relay that occupants were safely out of the vehicle, letting the SES team head home before arriving on scene.

Not long after returning home, they received a call to another rescue event on Ackerman Track, located in the forest near Marysville. Marysville CFA and Buxton CFA members were able to access the track

quickly and confirmed a motorbike rider was injured on the track.

Marysville SES met up with Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police to convoy into the location. The skilled local AV team provided treatment to the patient, while the rest of the services provided support and readied extrication plans.

With resources ready for a stretcher carry and 4WD trip out, the patient's condition and extended timeframe to extricate warranted a call to HEMS. A MICA Flight Paramedic was lowered in, and crews readied the patient to be winched into the helicopter, before also helping with managing a tagline for the stretcher. After packing up, driving out, and restocking, they finally finished up and headed home just before 5pm.

They would like to wish all patients a speedy recovery.

Mayor and  
deputy  
mayor  
re-elected

MURRINDINDI Shire Council voted unanimously on Wednesday, November 19 to re-elect Cr Damien Gallagher and Cr Anita Carr as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively, for the 2025-2026 council year.

Cr Sandice McAulay acknowledged Cr Gallagher's outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to the shire and council of Murrindindi. She highlighted his integrity, clear vision and genuine care for the people he represents, noting that his steady guidance, proactive approach and willingness to listen have strengthened local communities and helped deliver positive outcomes across the region. Cr McAulay said his contribution has been invaluable and that he is exceptionally well-suited to lead the council as mayor.

Addressing the council chambers, Mayor Gallagher expressed his honour at continuing to serve the community as mayor.

"Our democratic system supports every person to be valued and every voice to be heard. Citizenship is our calling to uphold the values that democracy represents. Tonight, I honour my fellow councillors for their dedication to service, and I thank you most sincerely for supporting me to represent Murrindindi Shire Council once again as mayor. It is truly the honour of my life."

Reflecting on the past year and looking ahead, Mayor Gallagher highlighted council's priorities for the next 12 months.

"The year ahead will be a defining chapter for this council and for our community. Over the next 100 days, we will set a clear roadmap to achieve financial sustainability.

"We will sharpen our focus on efficiency and accountability, ensuring every dollar works harder for our residents. At the same time, we will engage deeply with our community to understand priorities for service delivery, so that what we provide truly reflects local needs. And we will continue to advocate strongly to the Victorian Government for fairer distribution of funding. Together, these steps will position us to meet challenges head-on and build a stronger future for all.



Mayor Damien Gallagher and Deputy Mayor Anita Carr. -S

"I recommit myself tonight to serve the entire Murrindindi community, inclusively, to the very best of my ability. Let's get to it," he said.

Deputy Mayor Carr expressed gratitude for the opportunity to continue in the role. "I am delighted to be re-elected as deputy mayor and to work alongside Mayor Gallagher and my fellow councillors. My focus will be on

strengthening community engagement and ensuring that the voices of all residents are heard in shaping the services and priorities that matter most."

Both Mayor Gallagher and Deputy Mayor Carr thanked councillors for their confidence and reaffirmed their commitment to inclusive leadership and strong advocacy for the community.



Roma Lond on her 100th birthday. -S



Remi Hill, Jordyn Poliness, Shelley Poliness, Gail Lond and Roma Lond at the front. -S

# Roma Lond celebrates 100 years

ROMA Lond recently celebrated her 100th birthday among friends and family at Darlingford and Upper Goulburn Nursing Home.

She spoke with this paper about some of the interesting things she has done in her life, her experiences, and becoming a great great grandmother.

Born in Alexandra, Roma moved to Molesworth when she was only a few years old.

"We moved to Molesworth. Where the road sign says Baines Road, it should have been Reynolds Road because we were there 10 years before him," Roma said.

"We had cows and pigs, and Dad tried to grow vegetables but at that time it was very hard. That bit floods and he'd just get his potatoes planted and the water would wash them all out. He'd start all over again.

"I had to start school when I was six and I wasn't allowed to ride my horse because the old bridge was there, and it was very long. On the road to school, we passed these great big turkeys at McAlpins. I was terrified of them. Great big ones with their tails out in a fan."

She was christened at the little white church in Molesworth, but her family moved back to Alexandra when they were flooded.

"Another big flood came and that was the end of it for Dad. He'd had enough. The flood was coming up and he tied the boat to the veranda post. We lifted up what we could, and we sat in the boat and he rowed us out to the railway line. We walked up to Cathkin, where he'd got the truck out a few days earlier," Roma said.

"We got on the railway trolley at Cathkin, and we went on to Koriella where he'd left the truck and got on the truck. And then we came on to Grandma's, who lived in Bond Street at that time, over near Kellock, just past there. We had a few days there and went home and packed up and we came back to Alexandra and Dad got a job anyway, and he was on the shire."

Roma started attending the school in Alexandra when she was 10.

"I went back a couple of years ago and we looked it up and there was my name in the book about 1935," she said.

She met her husband Graham, and they both worked at Wynne's Bakery.

"We young people, used to wander down the street Friday nights and so forth. I suppose I met him there, talking to him. I've known him from when he was about 15. He was an apprentice baker at Wynne's, and I eventually worked in the shop. So that was love in the dough," Roma said.

"And anyway, so then of course the war came along and was half over, I suppose, and we started to build our house. And so the years rolled on. I had a girl, Gail, was the first born. She was three, and Stephen was born in 1951, I think.

"Anyway, I've stayed in the same house locally, and my neighbours, the kids all grew up and they've run around with the local kids. The neighbours are there now, they're very nice and very helpful. It's been a nice quiet area."

Graham and Roma travelled extensively until he passed away in 1989, at the age of 63.

"I went to Caloundra every winter, fishing. I've been to Hervey Bay. I've been right around Australia, this way, that way. Up to Darwin. In a caravan. We'd done all that before my husband died," Roma said.

"We went up through Malaysia, up to Bangkok and then back to travel by car we did. Then we went by train up to Bangkok. Then we flew back to Darwin and down to Melbourne. That was that time. And we've been to New Zealand, of course, two or three times.

"We lost him [Graham] in 1989. He was just nearly 63. And now, 10 years ago, I lost my son at the same age and the same type of cancer. And he'd never smoked or anything. He had bowel cancer, and it had gone to the liver and all sorts of things. He was a policeman for more than 30 years."

Roma continued to travel with friends after Graham passed away.

"After a couple of years, I started towing my caravan back up there again. We had a 19-foot caravan and a four-on-the-floor turbo diesel. And then I met up with other friends. They came from Rosebud, Maldon, Banff, Cambia, and then we'd all go up to Caloundra, one behind the other, and spend the winter there," she said.

Roma moved to Darlingford and Upper Goulburn Nursing Home when her eyesight started to decline. At that point, she had held her driver's license for 81 years.

The 100th birthday celebration was a big affair at Darlingford.

"As for the birthday, they lent us the meeting room and there was family and, well, two of several friends, kids come down from Queensland and up from Melbourne and so forth," Roma said.

"Darlingford had all the decorations out, all these capes that's on the wall, on the door and tinsel and a hundred years. Gail bought these balloons and big balloons up there.

"But anyway, I had cards, as you know, from Camilla and Charlie and the Prime Minister, Albanese, the Governor General, and each member of the electorate, Helen Haines and all those people all sent a 100-year card and other people, I think there's about 27 or 28 altogether. We had the birthday cake and all that thing, and then Darlingford appeared with another birthday cake, a big chocolate one."

Asked what the secret to a long life, Roma attributed it simply to fresh country air.

"I've never smoked. I've always eaten plenty. Good fresh air around Alexandra.

I like the open air life. I used to do a lot of fishing with my husband. We started going to Queensland and around Australia, we fished all the way," she said.

"I've lived in the one house for 70 years and I think I'm pretty well known. My husband, he was on the shire for 30 odd years, and my son was in the police force for 30 odd years and then he started a car business and he's done Mustangs of Melbourne. I had a couple of trips to America and I've been here and there and went to Fiji and Norfolk Island."

Finally, Roma concluded by talking about having a great great grandchild and being part of a line stretching across five generations.

"We've got five generations living. Yeah, and little Remi's now two and nearly two and a half. She seems to me so forward compared to what our kids were at that age.

"I had seven grandchildren and about 13 or so great-grandchildren. When Remi was born, I became great great grandma. My daughter became great grandma. And her daughter became grandma. And her daughter became the mum," Roma concluded.



## ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY LEISURE CENTRE DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGNS

### Community consultation closing 7 December 2025

In partnership with Alexandra Secondary College, Council is inviting the community to share feedback on the draft concept designs for the Alexandra Community Leisure Centre.

This is your chance to help shape a modern, inclusive and sustainable facility that meets local needs.

View the draft designs, read the Findings Report and complete the feedback form on the Loop at [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/draftACLC](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/draftACLC) or scan the QR code to go straight there.

For more information or assistance, contact Council on **5772 0333**.

Murrindindi Shire Council is pleased to advise that funding for this project is made possible by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the Commonwealth - State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



SCAN ME



Continued from Page 1

The attendees were advised that there are similarities between ADH and Healesville Hospital, which merged with Eastern Health several decades ago. A member of the audience pointed out that maternity closed at that hospital.

Chair of Services for Healesville Hospital Action Group (SHHAG) commented via email, “SHHAG emerged in 2012 as a community response to EH’s draft ‘Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Community Health Clinical Services Plan’. The ‘Draft’ plan proposed significant reductions in services at the Healesville Hospital and this galvanised a huge public response to oppose the changes. SHHAG was able to work successfully with Eastern Health to maintain a fully functioning operating theatre, establish a new renal dialysis service and significantly expand on site specialist clinics, reducing the burden for health consumers of sitting for hours in queues at outpatient clinics within EH tertiary hospitals. Regrettably maternity services were closed, a massive loss to young women that remains today.”

It is heartening that many current and former healthcare workers appear to be strongly in support of the proposal, with four current staff members speaking at the meeting. This is particularly relevant as they have knowledge of the internal workings of the system. A merger would potentially also provide certainty of services to patients. If a specialist were to go on holidays or become ill, for example, under Eastern Health, there may be back-up staff enabling certainty of service. A merger may also provide more scope for additional specialist staff and services, and for additional training.

The challenges faced by dialysis patients in the area have been extensively covered across the past year. Around three months ago, there were rumours of an imminent announcement, and then everything suddenly went quiet.

## Mayor comments on proposed merger

SPEAKING at the ADTTA convened meeting, held immediately prior to the Alexandra District Health (ADH) Tea Talk on November 18, Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher said, “We are here because of an important development that affects our community deeply: The proposed voluntary amalgamation between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health. This is not a small matter. It touches on something that is at the heart of our community, our health services, our access to care, and the trust we place in local institutions.

“Let me acknowledge the feelings many of you may have right now: Uncertainty, concern, even frustration. These are valid. When changes of this scale are proposed, especially involving a smaller health service like Alexandra District Health, we need time to digest the information, formulate our questions and have those concerns addressed.”

He commended the ADH and Eastern Health (EH) representative on their time generosity regarding the public meetings held during the 15 day engagement period. He said, “The primary arguments in favour of amalgamation are service integration, financial viability, workforce development, and health service resilience,” but also noted the 2022 public health study by Mariani on the impact of hospital mergers, which found that “Evidence on quality improvement is mixed and often weak; Cost savings through efficiencies were occasionally overstated; Some studies show no significant improvement in patient outcomes while others report increased costs; and Some studies show a marked decline in health outcomes, mortality and hospital readmissions.”

He said, “Is amalgamation really the answer?”

He said that in 2024, ADH reported an operating deficit of \$1.5m and in the same year, EH reported a \$100m deficit, reduced to \$55m in 2025. He questioned how the merging of two organisations with deficits could create financial sustainability.

He recalled the Health Minister abandoning forced amalgamations, instead encouraging healthcare networks.

At the meeting, Marie Bristow asked, “If the amalgamation doesn’t go ahead, are we still going to get dialysis for these patients.” Jane Poxon responded, “What a voluntary amalgamation does, and I’m going to use the dialysis service for example, so we would be a satellite service and we need a larger organisation to be a clinical hub, otherwise we can’t provide this. The service needs to be safe, and Eastern Health can provide that model for us, so they can be the hub. We need to train our staff. They need to be capable and have the specialist skills in delivering the dialysis treatments.

“We can only do that by tapping into a larger organisation’s skills and the renal nursing skills and technicians who can deliver that. We can get that from Eastern Health. You’d ask, okay, well, what’s the difference then of delivering that service if we didn’t proceed with an amalgamation? The difference for me is that we would have a sustainable service. The continuity of care would be there. If it was in a partnership, and we’ve talked about that goodwill and the relationships, that could be fractured, and the continuity wouldn’t be there. Under an amalgamation, there would be a formal contract agreement to make sure that you’ve got that sustainable dialysis service, because we don’t want to, we’ve been delivering the dialysis for 12 months, and the hub has said, no, we can’t assist you anymore because of whatever aim. If we’ve got a formal arrangement, that doesn’t happen. So that’s the difference I see. So no, the service would still be delivered, and that’s our aim. It is such a priority for us.”

David Plunkett guaranteed that the dialysis donations would stay in Alexandra.

Caolon O’Connor from Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association (ADTTA) conducted some research into mergers around the world and found, per the Executive Summary of the report, *Mergers are not Magic: What an Alexandra-Eastern Health*

*Merger Requires to Succeed*, that “Hospital and health service mergers are frequently proposed as solutions to challenges such as financial instability, access issues, workforce shortages, and the desire for greater clinical integration. However, a growing body of research suggests that while structural consolidation can deliver some benefits, it does not reliably improve patient outcomes, access or workforce conditions, unless specific enabling conditions are present.”

The summary of the key recommendations in the report included, “Define and publish a clear case for change, with measurable baselines and targets for access, quality and workforce; Ensure binding service guarantees for Alexandra District Health, with defined thresholds for any relocation or downgrade of services; Establish governance arrangements that preserve meaningful local voice and decision-making power; Protect the rural workforce with employment guarantees, career pathways and monitoring of staffing ratios/workload; Require independent evaluation at set intervals (one, three, five years) and publicly report outcomes by site; and Implement transparent risk registers and ensure that if risks materialise, the merger plan has built-in mechanisms to pause or adjust.”

The ADH and EH representatives agreed to receive and respond to the report.

It has been suggested a number of times during discussions among the community that the Murrindindi Health Network could be expanded and redeveloped, with some suggesting that Alexandra, Yea, Mansfield and maybe Seymour health services/hospitals, as well as aged care and disability organisations, could combine beneath the one board, maintaining local control while amalgamating with others, as appears to be the intent of government. This may be a viable option, however would it work with no large hospital included in the mix?

Board member appointments are now centralised rather than the result of board members conducting interviews with prospective applicants and then recommendations made to the minister. There is no guarantee that the board members would be local, as the appointments are skills based, so the argument about local representation may be moot anyway. ADH are currently calling for skills-based board applications, so if local people are keen to participate, please note their advertisement in last week’s edition of this newspaper. Their tenure may be short however. The ADH Consumer Engagement Committee is also likely to have significant input into the future services at the hospital.

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish also commented, “I’m also concerned that in mergers like this, because Box Hill and Maroondah Hospital are big players, that it’s the smaller party that always misses out. I worry about local decision-making, decisions being made a long way away from Alexandra. And the funding is a huge concern because Eastern Health has financial difficulties and the Health Minister hasn’t got the money to bail them out. So it’s hard to comprehend that there’s going to be more services in Alexandra.”

ADH’s financial position appears to be the main reason for proposing the merger. ADH used to run annual fundraisers, but this came to a halt around a decade ago. Even if this were to have continued, would it be enough to counteract the financial impact of the nurse pay increase of 28.4 per cent over four years, awarded in June 2024? The cost of equipment and services for the hospital have also increased.

The people of the shire will now watch with interest to see what the board decides to do. If the merger does go ahead, then the community will need to work together to ensure that promises are kept and our much-loved hospital and valued staff are treated as the treasures they are.

## Yea hospital board’s submission on the merger

THE board of the Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) released their submission regarding the proposed merger between Alexandra District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH) on November 21, making it available on their website.

It asks a series of questions regarding the merger and raises their concerns, noting that the “Community concerns about the loss of local leadership were clearly expressed only 15 months ago.”

The questions are:

1. Is it appropriate to progress a structural change that excludes more than half of the Murrindindi health system before completing Local Healthcare Network planning and the Murrindindi health needs analysis?
2. Is metro-centric planning, led from inner-eastern Melbourne, in the best interests of a rural community?
3. Is the loss of local leadership, something strongly defended during the 2024 Health Service Plan process, in the best interests of the Murrindindi Community?
4. Can a large metropolitan service realistically understand and prioritise the needs of a small rural population?
5. Is amalgamation with a financially constrained metropolitan health service the

most sustainable solution for safeguarding the funding of services at Alexandra?

6. Given loss of local leadership and governance and centralisation of executive decision-making in metropolitan Melbourne, how can long term guarantees be made that ensure the continuation and enhancement of services within Murrindindi?
7. As the only rural campus in a large metropolitan health service, how would the ADH campus retain its rural mission and disaster-response capabilities under EH governance?
8. How will this type of rural-focused innovation continue when one partner becomes part of a large metropolitan health service?
9. How will EH work with key local partners to ensure that current initiatives are sustained and new initiatives created over the long term?
11. Why, in terms of whole of Murrindindi service planning and delivery, is amalgamation preferable to continuing collaborations within the existing local and East Metro and Murrindindi Health Service Network?
11. How can it be justified that the undertaken consultation process was appropriate and respectful given the long-term consequences?
12. How does this not undermine integrity of the voluntary amalgamation process?

Damien said, “On July 1, the East Metro and Murrindindi Local Health Service Network was launched, linking Alexandra District Health, Yea and District Memorial Health, Eastern Health, and St. Vincents Hospital. According to Eastern Health’s Website, “This new Network will strengthen collaboration, increase access, and improve health outcomes for our community, while providing that care as close to home as possible.”

He noted that the goals are familiar and almost identical to the argument for amalgamation.

He questioned why the health network has only been given 4.5 months to prove its worth, and wondered at the fate of the Yea hospital in the new scenario.

He sought assurances for the community that an “amalgamated entity will continue to take specialist services to the community.”

He spoke about the amalgamation of the snow recreations mountains in Victoria into Alpine Resorts Victoria, and said that the merger, “Yielded fewer days of operations and reduced investment at Lake Mountain. Amalgamation doesn’t tend to work out so well for the little guy.

“What assurances does the community have that healthcare services and standards won’t diminish? What reporting will be provided to demonstrate that our unfavourable health indicators around the likes of alcohol impacts and obesity rates are improving and not sliding further?

“These are some of the questions I’ve posed to the Health Minister recently. Council will

continue to advocate; we will remain engaged and reflect community concerns.”

He commended the ADH board on seeking financial sustainability, adding that complex decisions take time. “Build trust with the community; provide assurances that local health needs will be heard; explain how our health outcomes will improve, and how they’ll be reported to the community; and please, publish the 2025 ADH Annual Report as a key input into community engagement,” he said.

“And let’s be clear: Amalgamation is not the only option. There are other pathways to strengthen services and secure financial sustainability. We have an obligation to explore these alternatives thoroughly. This must not be rushed.”

# Top level players to appear at Cathedral Invitational

THE 2025 Cathedral Invitational is only two weeks away, on Wednesday, December 10. Packed with leading and emerging names in Australian golfing, the tournament is set to be a kicker.

Returning champion Adam Scott is set to defend his title. A professional golfer who plays on the PGA Tour, Scott is a former world number one in the Official World Golf Ranking, winning the 2013 Masters Tournament and overtaking Tiger Woods to reach number one.

Marc Leishman will give Scott a run for his money. Leishman was crowned Rookie of the Year in 2009, the first Australian to

win the award, and won six times on the PGA Tour, along with a number of other tournament wins in his professional career.

Geoff Ogilvy is another professional golfer through the PGA Tour. He claimed victory at the 2006 US Open before going on to win three World Golf Championships. Ogilvy has eight PGA Tour wins and is looking to add winning the Cathedral Invitational to his list of career highlights.

Up and coming young gun Elvis Smylie will challenge for the Cathedral Invitational crown, following his breakthrough Australian PGA Championship last year.

Harrison Crowe is also a young Australian looking for a win at the Cathedral Invitational, following wins at the New South Wales Open, the Asia Pacific Amateur Championship, and the National Tournament.

Todd Sinnott, a Victorian local, will also be competing, along with a host of other golfers of varying experience and expertise.

Cathedral Invitational Chairman, David Evans, spoke about how exciting it is to have various big names involved in the tournament.

"The event provides the opportunity for Australian and Victorian golf fans to get up close and personal with the big names that will take part in the Invitational; it's also the only day for the entire year that the general public can access the course," David said.

Tickets are on sale to the public for day two of the 2025 Cathedral Invitational, on December 10. Tickets are \$60 for adults, or \$30 for adults living within a 30 kilometre radius of the course, \$30 for concession, and children under 12 are free.

For more information, visit [cathedralinvitational.com](http://cathedralinvitational.com)



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ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Evie Hutt

Evie is a kind and friendly student who is always willing to help teachers and peers. She has a positive attitude that is contagious. Her resilience has grown markedly in the last year. We are proud to have you in our learning community, Evie. You are a star.

EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Shannon Mitchell

Shannon, you’ve been showing such wonderful focus and determination this week. Once you’re in the room and ready to learn, you switch on like a superstar. The effort you’re putting in is really shining through in your work



Mollie Jamieson

For showing the school value achievement by making great gains in subtraction and addition.

ST MARY’S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Blair

For being a creative and passionate learner who always thinks outside the box. Blair approaches her learning with care and curiosity. Blair interacts thoughtfully and respectfully with both her peers and teachers, showing kindness, care and consideration for those around her. She consistently engages positively in all classroom activities and is making excellent progress towards her learning goals. Blair is a wonderful role model in our Foundation class, and we are very proud of her efforts and achievements she has made this year.



Delilah V

Delilah has put herself forward to be an entertaining lead role of an ‘Alien’ in our school Production. She has shown persistence in learning her lines, gives encouragement and support to other students and it has been pleasing to see her shine. Her confidence and enthusiasm is not only evident in her acting but also in her approach to all her schooling. Well done.



Jack M

Jack has shown perseverance, consistently giving his best effort in every task. His positive attitude and willingness to help others have made a significant impact on the classroom environment. Jack’s enthusiasm for learning has set an example for others to follow. Well done, Jack.

Student of the Week

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Support for older people to find a home

SINCE expanding the Home at Last service to the north central Victoria region, Housing for the Aged Action Group is proud to have helped 100 older people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity to find safe, secure and affordable ‘forever homes’.

Housing for the Aged Action Group is a community organisation that runs the Home at Last Service, assisting older people to find housing they can afford. Supported by the Ian Rollo Currie Foundation, in 2021 they expanded their service to the Goulburn Valley-Hume region, providing information and advice on housing options, as well as practical support for older people at risk of homelessness. This includes Murrindindi Shire.

Locally based workers, working closely with other services in the region, raise awareness about the housing assistance that is available through regular sessions at neighbourhood houses across the Goulburn Valley region from Seymour up to Cobram. The service has now expanded and re-named to reflect its geographical spread across north central Victoria.

“With a regular local presence in so many communities, our small team of local women have made a huge difference in the lives of the over 100 people we have assisted to find housing they can afford, with hundreds more supported through the service with information and advice on housing options. Now, thanks to the generosity of the Ian Rollo Currie Foundation, we are have been able to expand our reach into Loddon-Campaspe, and employ another worker into the team,” Fiona York, Executive Officer, said.

Housing for the Aged Action group is calling for the service to be expanded state-wide.

“We’ve proved that the Home at Last service works in regional Victoria, as well as in metropolitan Melbourne. With thousands of older Victorians in rural areas struggling with rising house costs and housing insecurity, there has never been a better time to provide one-on-one support for older people to understand and access housing options,” Ms York said.

For more information, visit [oldertenants.org.au/home\\_at\\_last](http://oldertenants.org.au/home_at_last)



The new pipeline at Koala Cherries. -S

Koala Cherries pipeline project

FAMILY-owned cherry grower, Koala Cherries has unveiled a major regional infrastructure project with the completion of a new pipeline servicing its orchards in Yarck. The initiative marks a major investment in regional agribusiness, job creation and export growth in the Goulburn-Valley region of North-East Victoria.

A key piece of the project is an eight kilometre pipe that draws water from the Goulburn River to irrigate existing and newly developed cherry orchards in Yarck. The project commenced in 2017 and has proceeded with the support of the State Government, Department of Transport, Vicroads, Goulburn Murray Water, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, local land owners and the local Taungurung community.

The secure water supply will be used to underpin Koala Cherries’ expansion of their export sales. Discussing the business’s plans to double cherry production in Yarck over the next five years, Koala Cherries Managing Director Michael Rouget said “We’re going to use this water to feed our export markets”.

The Yarck Pipeline eliminates a major risk factor from the cherry growing operation. Michael explained that over the past three decades, around two-thirds of the seasons have been dry, with several major droughts severely impacting production.

“With a permanent crop like cherries, you simply can’t go without water for even a month. You have to keep the trees alive,” he

said. “The benefit of this pipeline is that it takes away this risk completely.”

After eight years in development, the project is set to boost the Goulburn Valley’s regional economy and strengthen local employment. “Our business is labour intensive, so it’ll create a lot of jobs in the area” Michael said, noting that the pipeline offers “a lot of benefits for our business but also the broader community.”

Koala Cherries currently employs more than 60 full-time staff, many with specialised skills from agronomy, packing technology operation, marketing, finance to logistics. This workforce increases to over 1000 seasonal workers each cherry season.

The new pipeline has been designed with future growth in mind so it will support further expansion across the orchards and packing facilities in Yarck, broadening job opportunities across all areas of the business.

“Additionally, we’ve modelled (the pipeline) so that we can provide water to the broader community as well,” Michael said, noting that the pipeline’s design allows nearby farms to link into the system, opening the door for local landowners to access the same secure and reliable water supply.

The completion of this project represents a proud milestone for the family business. Cousins and business partners Michael and Simon Rouget have dedicated more than eight years to bringing the idea to life, from its initial concept through to completion, showcasing their commitment and perseverance.

New state Liberal leader elected

ON Tuesday, November 18, a new state Liberal leader Jess Wilson was elected, replacing former leader Brad Battin.

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish commented on the appointment, “The election of Jess Wilson, the first female leader of the Victorian Liberals speaks volumes. I have received so many positive comments from people locally and across the state ready for this change.

“Jess is an amazing talent who has an incredible work ethic. Jess is smart, energetic, and enthusiastic. She understands the need for a clear vision so that the state can get ahead. She has a policy focus and a strong grasp of the miserable state of the Victoria’s economy. Complexity isn’t a deterrent, rather it’s a challenge. At the same time Jess has a young family and knows what it is like to juggle a career and motherhood.”



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Current students in UGFM's outside broadcast van being interviewed live on radio. -AR



New Buxton CFA members and recent arrivals in the area, Stacey and Matt Mallett. -AR



Bron and Jess, parents of current students, ran the cake stall. -AR



Former student Isaac Simms is now a rocket scientist. -AR

## Buxton Primary School celebrates 150 years

ON Saturday, November 22, Buxton Primary School celebrated its 150th birthday. Approximately 250 people attended, including former principals, teachers and students. There were reunion hugs, reminiscing about school days and lots of memories shared.

The school thanked current parents, grandparents and school community members who generously donated their time baking, assisting with the set up of displays, seating, running the cake stall and barbecue, and the most efficient pack up ever.

The staff went above and beyond and put in so many hours to bring the event together, and the Buxton Progress Association generously supported the event via a 3711 Community Fund donation.

Buxton CFA members were on-site all day with activities for children and adults, including the community information trailer, tanker demonstrations, and Little Pat who was a huge hit.

Peter Weeks, Nomes Booker and the team from UGFM shared the event via the outside broadcast van, interviewing current and former staff and students

The school also thanked the Rotary Club of Alexandra, who loaned their art show stands for the displays, and FoodWorks Alexandra which generously donated the sausages for the barbecue.

Various local representatives attended and/or shared messages of support, including Murrindindi Shire Council members, Councillor Sandice McAulay and Mayor Damien Gallagher, Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish and Member for Indi Helen Haines MP.

Last but definitely not least the students were fabulous. As the school said, "They are at the heart of what makes our school amazing."



Former student Kathryn Gramberg reading an old edition of the Alexandra Standard. -AR



Items from the Year 2000 time capsule on display. -AR



Former student Scott Ripper, former teacher Garry Vear, former student Brian Worcester and former president of the school council and father of Scott, Steve Ripper. -AR



Joy Burchall and Julia Foletta. Joy's father, Alfred George Burchall, was one of 12 siblings who attended Buxton Primary School. He was there in 1898. At the time, the school was run by teacher Jobe James, who worked between Buxton and Taggerty Primary Schools, two days per week and three days per week, alternating. -AR



Former students, Ron Menz, Colin Jones, Helen Goulding, Rex Goulding and Ken Carlton. -AR



## Shopping local benefits the region and you

CHOOSING to shop locally is not only a win for the Murrindindi economy but also has potential to make for extra special Christmas gifts. Therefore, it is worth considering as we enter into the season of giving.

Purchasing gifts from major chain stores is not as unique and special as items sourced locally. Thousands of people are likely to own a mug that is mass-produced, but perhaps only 10 people own a hand-painted mug created by a local artist from Murrindindi Shire.

Giving gifts that are sourced locally helps people feel pride in the shire they live in, or if you are giving to someone who lives far away, can help them connect to you and the area you live in.

There are also environmental benefits. Sustainability Victoria discusses a subject called shopping miles, which are “a measure of the energy and pollution associated with moving whatever it is you’re buying from its source to your retailer or home.”

They advocate for shopping locally to reduce your shopping miles, helping to decrease emissions that contribute to climate change as well as energy expenditure. This concept applies to more than the miles travelled in your car to buy gifts. It also applies to the miles travelled by planes or boats or trucks to bring internationally made products to Victorian stores, which contribute to climate change.

Sustainability Victoria warns about the associated effects of shopping online too.

“Online shopping is a convenient way to shop, but what about the shopping miles associated with it? Where did the raw materials come from? Where was the product assembled? Where is the warehouse that is sending it to you? And what about all of that packaging?” Sustainability Victoria said.

Choosing to shop local has the further effect of stimulating the Murrindindi economy. Buying from local stores keeps the money within the shire, meaning it can be circulated between local businesses and community groups. This is known as the boomerang effect.

Small businesses add to the charm of a community and help to create an image and identity, so by supporting them, we are helping to cultivate this image and keep the identity of Murrindindi Shire alive. It has the additional benefit of creating and sustaining local jobs and promotes connection between business owners and members of the community.

According to the Murrindindi Shire Council website, there are over 15,000 residents in the shire, with around 1800 businesses serving the area. If each resident spends just \$10 shopping locally in Murrindindi Shire, that is \$150,000 circulating in the shire economy. And who spends only \$10 on Christmas shopping?

Shopping locally has a much bigger impact than just saving time getting to the shops. It stimulates the local economy, promotes pride in our region, and makes Murrindindi Shire a great place to live and work.

## Put Murrindindi on Your Table This Christmas

by Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc

AS the festive season fast approaches, Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc (MFW Inc) is once again calling on our community to look closer to home for their celebrations. Our signature campaign, ‘Put Murrindindi on Your Table This Christmas’, has returned, and this year it is more visible than ever before.

What began in 2018 as a simple question posed on our social media channels, “Are you buying local this Christmas?” has blossomed into a shire-wide movement. Originally highlighting just six ways to support local producers, the initiative has evolved significantly. Following a major boost from state and local government funding in 2023, we expanded this concept into the multifaceted ‘Bauble Campaign’ you see today.

This year, we are sharing 12 joyful ways to celebrate locally. However, the campaign has grown well beyond the digital space. We are thrilled to announce expanded support from the Murrindindi Shire Council, taking the message to our streets and highways.

Residents and visitors will now be greeted by ‘Put Murrindindi on Your Table’ blade signs attached to township entrance signage, welcoming everyone to our region of producers.

Furthermore, the campaign is hitting the road, with our branding now featured on the council’s fleet of vehicles. Coupled with the window decals and counter cards available free to local businesses, the call to ‘support local’ is now woven into the fabric of our daily commute and shopping trips.

Rob Mitchell, President of MFW Inc, encapsulates the necessity of this increased visibility. “We have had challenging times over the last five years, and we all need to band together and support all things local,” he said. “With our popular support local campaign, we aim to do just that.”

Our website reveals all 12 festive ideas and a directory of local makers and business owners.

By choosing to spend locally, you aren’t just buying a gift; you are supporting the families, growers, small business owners, and vintners who make our region unique.

Visit [murrindindifoodandwine.org.au](http://murrindindifoodandwine.org.au) for more information.

## FOODWORKS CHRISTMAS STORE HOURS

WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER  
CHRISTMAS EVE

8am - 8pm

THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER  
CHRISTMAS DAY

CLOSED

FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER  
BOXING DAY

8am - 8pm

SATURDAY 27 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

MONDAY 29 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

TUESDAY 30 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

WEDNESDAY 31 DECEMBER  
NEW YEARS EVE

8am - 8pm

THURSDAY 1 JANUARY  
NEW YEARS DAY

8am - 8pm

FRIDAY 2 JANUARY

8am - 8pm

Alexandra & Yea



16

## DAYS OF ACTIVISM

## Global campaign

THE global campaign for the 2025 16 Days of Activism will focus squarely on the rising crisis of online abuse, with the United Nations announcing the theme: "Unite to end digital violence against all women and girls."

Advocates say the theme reflects mounting international concern over the rapid escalation of online harassment, misogyny, stalking, and technology-facilitated abuse impacting women and girls of all ages.

Digital violence, ranging from image-based abuse to cyberstalking and gendered hate speech, has surged alongside the widespread use of social media, gaming platforms, messaging apps, and AI-driven tools. According to UN agencies, these forms of violence not only cause profound psychological harm but also silence women's voices, limit participation in public discourse, and reinforce existing gender inequalities.

The 2025 campaign calls on governments, tech companies, educators, and community organisations to strengthen prevention strategies, implement stronger safeguards, and develop policies that hold perpetrators accountable. A major focus will be improving platform safety, enhancing digital literacy, and ensuring that young women and girls can participate in online spaces without fear of harm.

Across the world, organisations are preparing events, workshops, school programs, and advocacy campaigns aimed at raising awareness of technology-facilitated abuse. The UN is encouraging nations to invest in research, survivor support services, and legal reforms that better reflect the evolving digital landscape.

Local communities are also expected to play a critical role, with the campaign emphasising that cultural attitudes must shift to challenge the normalisation of online misogyny. By promoting respectful digital behaviour and empowering bystanders to call out abuse, the initiative hopes to foster safer online environments for future generations.

As the 16 Days campaign approaches, the UN's message is clear: ending gender-based violence must include addressing harms occurring behind screens, where millions of women and girls continue to face threats every day.



**SPEAK UP:** Members of the community are always urged to speak up if they see examples of family violence. -S

## Challenging discriminatory attitudes

ADVOCATES involved in 16 Days of Activism are urging communities to confront the cultural norms and discriminatory attitudes that allow violence against women and girls to persist.

Experts say discriminatory attitudes often begin with seemingly small behaviours, casual sexism, victim-blaming, or rigid beliefs about gender roles, but can escalate into environments where violence is excused, minimised or ignored. These entrenched norms, they argue, are among the most significant barriers to achieving genuine gender equality.

Local organisations participating in the 16-day campaign emphasise that cultural change must start with honest conversations. Community leaders, schools, workplaces and sporting clubs are being encouraged to challenge outdated ideas about masculinity, respect and power. This includes promoting equality in relationships, teaching young people about consent and respectful behaviour, and creating spaces where survivors feel supported.

Advocates also highlight the importance of recognising how discrimination intersects with culture, age, disability and economic status, often placing certain groups at even greater risk. Addressing violence, they say, requires acknowledging these layers and ensuring prevention strategies are inclusive and accessible.

Across the region, events, workshops and awareness initiatives are being rolled out to prompt reflection and drive action. Many organisations are using the campaign to reinforce that preventing gender-based violence is not solely the responsibility of governments or specialists, it requires sustained commitment from every member of the community.

As the 16 Days of Activism continues, campaigners hope renewed attention will spark long-term change. They say challenging discriminatory attitudes is one of the most powerful steps toward creating a future where women and girls can live free from violence, supported by a society that values equality, respect and safety for all.

## Step up in Murrindindi

STEPS in the right direction is the aim of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against gender-based violence rallies as it promotes gender equality and speaks out against disrespect.

Mitchell Shire Council (MSC), as part of the Lower Hume Collaborative Group, is partnering with Murrindindi Shire Council and more than 25 local organisations to make it clear that family violence is not tolerated or accepted within our communities.

Rallies are an ideal avenue to bring advocates together, and Rotary Alexandra and Murrindindi Shire Council are holding a 'Purple Weekend' to bring the community together.

On Thursday, November 27, there will be information available in Grant Street from 9am at FoodWorks.

On Friday, November 28, there will be a community walk around Rotary Park starting at 11am. T-shirts will be available and dogs are welcome on leads. This will be followed by a CFA barbecue.

On Saturday, November 29, enjoy free sausages at Yenckens Hardware from 9am and chat to the volunteers.

The Rotary Club is very grateful to the shire for the grant of \$2500 which provided the wonderful purple T-shirts. Together they are promoting safety, equality and respectful relationships in the shire.

Mitchell Shire Council and Goulburn River Trail Parkrun are facilitating a rally this weekend and everyone is welcome to join.

"We will walk, jog, run in Lions Park along the Goulburn River where you can complete the 2km (2000m) loop or the 5km (5000km) parkrun course," a council spokesperson said.

"People of all genders and all ages are welcome.

"Bring your friends, family and work mates. Dress in orange if you can, signs and banners are welcome.

To learn more about the event, please scan the QR Code on this page.

Participants are encouraged to stay and picnic in the park where there will be a community barbecue, coffee, entertainment and support service stalls.

Furthermore, bring a hat and a water bottle.

## How to track online safety

AUSTRALIA'S e-safety commissioner has released a guide on what to do about gender-based online violence, with this year's global campaign focusing on the theme of "UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls".

The focus on this year's campaign is to call on governments, global technology powerhouses, community organisations and individuals to call out harmful behaviour online, while also supporting survivors.

Recent studies have shown that the majority of women now deal with domestic violence online or through digital technology.

Often, this includes coercive control through technology, cyberstalking and

image-based abuse, which has also included more people being targeted through deepfake AI services.

The e-safety commissioner has released five tips to reduce the risk of technological abuse.

The first step is to know what to look for, with a list of common warning signs to help gain a better understanding of what constitutes digital abuse.

The second step is to create an online safety plan, which provides a resourceful guide on how to stay safe from abusers, including a checklist, advice and a list of steps.

The third step involves collecting evidence if there is abuse. Sometimes, collecting

evidence, such as taking a screenshot on Snapchat, can be communicated to the other party, highlighting and emphasising the need to stay safe when collecting evidence.

The fourth step is updating account security. This includes setting up two-step verification for passwords to ensure that your social media accounts won't be compromised, while also suggesting strong answers to security questions.

The final step is checking your location sharing. Apps can often give away your location, which includes Bluetooth technology. Location services can be disabled manually through your settings, while there is also the option of searching online for help using incognito mode on Internet apps.

16

## DAYS OF ACTIVISM

## Crimestoppers spotlight on coercive control

LAUREN Callaway is the Assistant Commissioner with Victoria Police and she leads the response against family violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

In April last year, Ms Callaway featured on a podcast titled *Coercive Control and the Changing Face of Family Violence* where she broadcast that family and domestic violence almost always includes coercive control and although some of its patterns are not a crime, it is an injustice.

“The term is used to describe a range of behaviours and tactics that are used by perpetrators of family violence,” she said.

“Its purpose is to undermine someone’s self-worth and to coerce them into doing things that the perpetrator wants.”

Its patterns can be recognised by behaviours including controlling household finances, dominating a family member by determining what they will wear, who they will visit and if and where they will work.

Along with instances of social and emotional abuse, at its worst are threats to bring harm to children and pets, put-downs, defamation, lies, and mood swings that destabilise their victims’ resilience.

#### Why do victims stay in an abusive relationship?

Research finds that coercive control behaviours may be learnt and it’s an indicator of family violence being present in early childhood. Likewise, its victims may have grown up ‘walking on eggshells’ and have notions that it is normal in intimate relationships.

“I think people stay in the relationship because the person committing [it] isn’t like that all the time,” Ms Callaway said.

“I also think that victims would be staying because of their own safety planning. It is not about their helplessness; they have made a calculated decision to manage the risk and sometimes that is easier to manage if the perp is in a close vicinity.”

At its worst, a perpetrator will set up many reasons why the victim cannot leave, including sabotaging social networks and access to large amounts of money.



Victorian Police Commander Lauren Callaway APM, Chair of Victoria Police Legacy. -S

#### Concerning trends in technology

In safe hands, social media and location apps create a 24/7-channel for its users to share locations, photographs, set up gatherings and acknowledge special occasions. However, in sinister hands technology is facilitating stalking behaviour.

“Stalking is made up of a pattern of behaviours that can comprise of things that would ordinarily be legal,” Ms Callaway said.

“I think in the past if you left someone and you moved into a different suburb or

social circle, you don’t see them anymore and that would be the end of the matter.

“We are starting to see perps being a little bit more subtle and a little bit more abusive in the background through the use of technology-facilitated abuse or surveillance techniques.”

Police know that one of the most commonly used Google searches during the COVID-19 pandemic was “How do I find out where my partner is?”

#### Why see family violence through a new lens?

Family violence leaves an emotional and financial scar on its victims and their families, and also society.

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework tool was developed as an outcome of the Royal Commission into Family Violence to help police undertake a more comprehensive risk assessment.

The framework is also used in hospitals and school settings, to name a few.

At its heart it promotes information sharing between organisations that manage vulnerable communities.

“Not all family violence matters present themselves as a woman as a victim, a man as a perpetrator,” Ms Callaway said.

“We know that at least 30 per cent of all our family violence incidents involve a different dynamic ... whether that be LGBTIQ couples, elder abuse, adolescent family violence, or abuse between a carer and a person with a disability.”

Police are encouraging all community members to attend rallies and events across the 16 Days of Activism campaign to bring an end to family violence.

“In Victoria, we have the broadest legislation that covers all definitions of family violence,” Ms Callaway said.

‘Coercive Control and the Changing Face of Family Violence’ is one of several Crimestoppers podcasts.

To listen, visit [crimestoppersvic.com.au](http://crimestoppersvic.com.au)

## A proud history in 16 Days

THE annual “16 Days of Activism” campaign has commenced, marking a worldwide call to end gender-based violence and strengthen the protection of women and girls. Running from November 25 to December 10 each year, the campaign begins on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and concludes on Human Rights Day, highlighting the link between gender equality and fundamental human rights.

Established in 1991 by participants of the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute, the campaign has grown into a prominent international movement supported by governments, community organisations, advocacy groups and individuals across more than 180 countries. Its signature colour, orange, is used globally to symbolise hope and a future free from violence, with landmarks and public buildings often illuminated to signal support.

The 16-day initiative draws attention to the many forms of gender-based violence, including domestic and family violence, sexual assault, harassment, coercive control, trafficking and child marriage. According to global advocacy groups, women and girls continue

to be disproportionately affected by these issues, prompting renewed calls for stronger prevention efforts, expanded support services and greater accountability for perpetrators.

Across the 16 days, communities worldwide host events such as vigils, awareness walks, workshops, school programs and public forums aimed at encouraging open conversation and challenging attitudes that enable violence to occur. Social media campaigns and educational outreach activities also play a significant role, particularly in engaging younger audiences and promoting messages about consent, respectful relationships and bystander action.

Organisations and service providers commonly use this period to highlight available resources for those experiencing violence, as well as to reinforce the importance of early intervention. Workplaces and government agencies often participate by holding training sessions, releasing policy updates, or announcing new initiatives aimed at improving safety and equality.

Advocacy remains a key focus of the campaign, with many groups urging national leaders to strengthen legislation and increase funding for frontline services. The 16-day period serves as a strategic opportunity for governments to review existing frameworks, identify emerging issues and commit to long-term strategies designed to prevent violence and support survivors.

While the campaign runs for just over two weeks, organisers emphasise that its message extends far beyond the set dates. They argue that meaningful progress requires ongoing action, cultural change and continuous investment in prevention programs, education and survivor support.

As communities around the world take part in this year’s 16 Days of Activism, the overarching message remains clear: violence against women and girls is preventable, and collective action is essential to creating safer and more equal societies. The campaign continues to serve as a reminder that eliminating gender-based violence is not only a matter of safety, but a fundamental human rights imperative.

# PUZZLES

**SOLUTIONS**  
**Page 18**

# KID'S PUZZLES

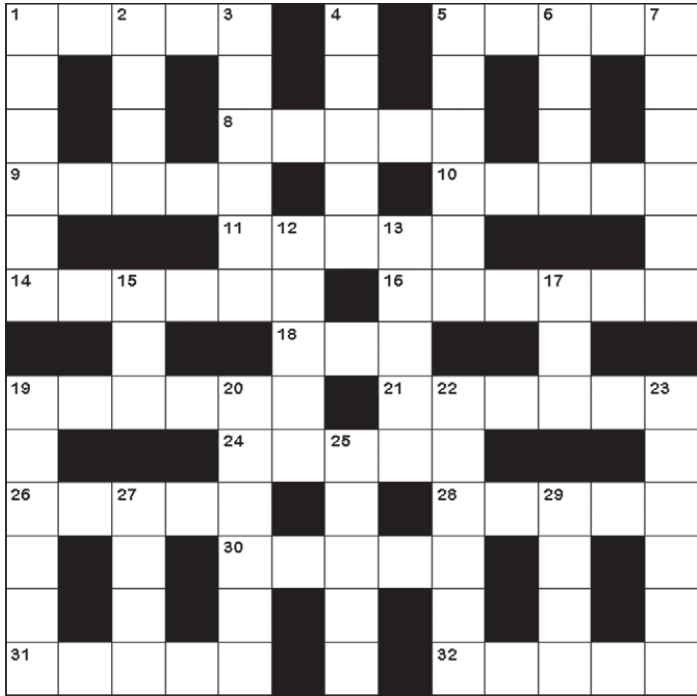
## Crossword

**ACROSS**

- 1. A small, ramshackle dwelling place.
- 5. Rides breaking waves on a board.
- 8. A jewelled headdress for formal occasions.
- 9. A chaplain in one of the military services.
- 10. The greatest or smallest amount permissible.
- 11. Cast a shadow over something.
- 14. Present as a gift to a fund or cause.
- 16. Food that is fit or suitable to be eaten.
- 18. Very common tiny, black, social insect.
- 19. Be in total agreement with.
- 21. A substance believed to cure all ills.
- 24. A supply kept in reserve for future use.
- 26. Syrup commonly used on pancakes.
- 28. An assumption that is taken for granted.
- 30. One who receives and sells stolen goods.
- 31. A trader's table or booth in a market.
- 32. Depressing in character and appearance.

**DOWN**

- 1. Assisted by sharing the burden.
- 2. An empty area or space.
- 3. The most recent or most up-to-date.



- 4. An intense work performed by actors.
- 5. Climbed up by means of a ladder.
- 6. Wander about without purpose or plan.
- 7. So slight as to be difficult to detect.
- 12. The central or innermost part of something.
- 13. Persuade someone not to do something.
- 15. A female member of a religious order.
- 17. A receptacle or container made of wood.
- 19. The grounds and buildings of a university.
- 20. Able to be used for several purposes.
- 22. A story about mythical beings or events.
- 23. A strip for planes to take off and land.
- 25. The legal possessor of an object.
- 27. A humble request for help.
- 29. A layer of ore between layers of rock.

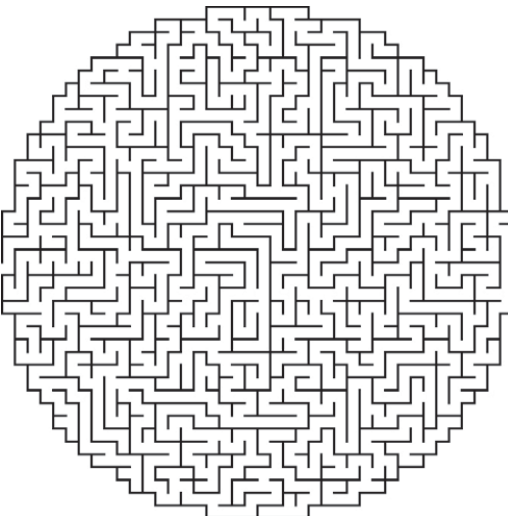
## Word Search

G L A D I A T O R W H S N V H  
C K C N Z Q P W E P S P Z S S  
N I M G A H N P S H C A F G G  
V G N J K S P H L F A C F O V  
N T A A C Q T D A P T E S O H  
R W P L T T C A I H C B D D L  
S N P V E I E F S A D A I F E  
N A M T A B T N S I Y L A E E  
B R A V E H E A R T A L M L E  
Y P L D H M B I R R C S S L H  
O O S W J L Y K C O R L E A Q  
I U Z Y A W Y N Y R G D D S H  
Q P U N C P J N E B O N I X Y  
I H C T D H O Y I A J W R N V  
L A J V Y E O N B O K T B Y F

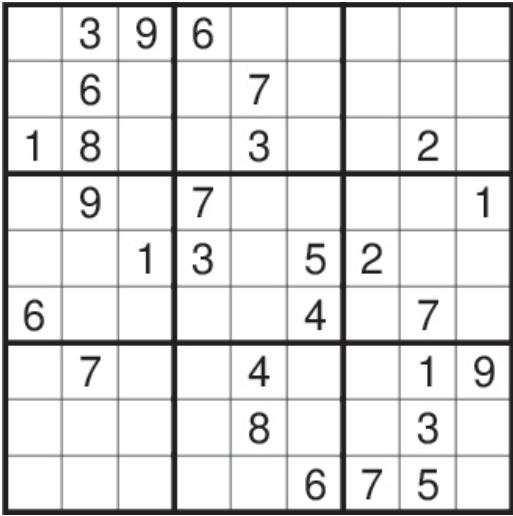
**Movies with one word titles**

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| ANASTASIA   | GOODFELLAS |
| BATMAN      | JAWS       |
| BRAVEHEART  | PSYCHO     |
| BRIDESMAIDS | ROCKY      |
| CASABLANCA  | SPACEBALLS |
| GLADIATOR   | TITANIC    |

## Maze



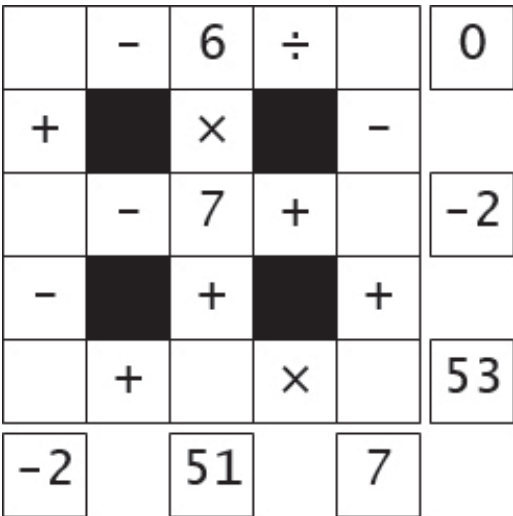
## Sudoku



**Difficulty: Hard**

Fill in the boxes using the numbers 1 to 9.  
Every row and column and every group of 9 boxes inside the thicker lines must contain each number and letter only once.

## Math Square



**Fill in the missing numbers.**

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9.  
Each number is only used once.  
Each row is a math equation.  
Each column is a math equation.  
Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.

## Colouring Page



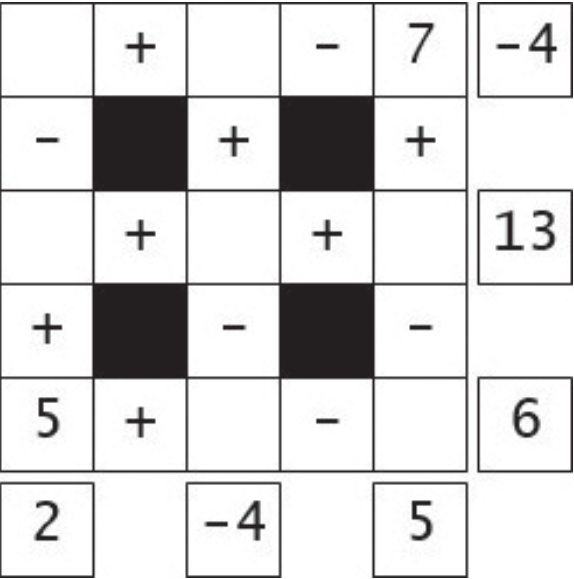
## Word Search

Y S W A N T L T U D N R D A J  
N N E L M P Q A J E Y I E L A  
A C U B T H Q B I B Q B W I D  
X R L U E A G L A U T I O K J  
A T B M Z Q A L A R M L L E C  
U L F E A Z M Y P U A A L U B  
A Y I L G E T E D L O R A O B  
C L E V N L S W L X J G P P J  
Y R B V E C A I O B L A C S M  
T P V A I Z G O N A D J A E C  
W W Z G T A M H V S P L Q D C  
H C C O T R P F F A A E Y K R  
X H H O X F O Q Q M V F G S A  
E Z R R J A G S W Y T Q D K R  
A L I G H T Z J S B P J G Z N

## Words starting with "AL"

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| ALARM     | ALIBI     |
| ALAS      | ALIEN     |
| ALBATROSS | ALIGHT    |
| ALBUM     | ALIKE     |
| ALERT     | ALIVE     |
| ALGAE     | ALLIGATOR |
| ALGEBRA   | ALLOWED   |

## Math Square



**Fill in the missing numbers.**

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9.  
Each number is only used once.  
Each row is a math equation.  
Each column is a math equation.  
Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.

## Jokes

- Knock knock.**  
**Who's there?**  
**Waddle.**  
**Waddle who?**  
**Waddle it take to get you to open the door?**
- Q: What do you call a dinosaur that crashes his car?**  
**A: Tyrannosaurus Wrecks**



## What can you do about an evaporating dam?

by Kerri Goschnick, Land Management Extension Officer

AS we head into the warmer months, it’s essential to monitor your water storage regularly. This helps you understand how much water stock is drinking and what you may be losing through evaporation or leakage.

See if you can identify which is having the greatest impact between water used through stock consumption or water lost through evaporation or leakage. Have you simply run out of water because there has not been sufficient rainfall to produce the required runoff?

To generate runoff into storages, rainfall events typically need to exceed 20mm. If your grass height is over 50mm, you may need 60mm or more per event. Many regions have not had these types of events for some time.

### Identifying and managing leakage

Leakage from dams often shows up as wet spots or clumps of green grass in a small area during the drier part of the year. This can occur when dry dams fill quickly but dam walls haven’t fully re-saturated. If you suspect leakage, consider using treatment products but choose carefully, as many are soil-type specific. You will get the best value when you take this into account.

If you treat your dam, ensure the dam is properly fenced to exclude all stock. Storage treatment products can range from \$1000 to \$10,000 and should only be used when you are certain that your storage is leaking.

Also, consider safety: add steps or structures to the inside batters to help animals or people exit safely without damaging the treated batter or liner.

### Understanding evaporation

Wind has the biggest effect on evaporation. Even in good seasons, you can lose up to 0.75m of water, often half the dam’s volume.

Shallow water (less than one metre deep) warms quickly, increasing evaporation. Dams deeper than three metres retain cooler water and lose less to evaporation.

There are a variety of materials that could be used to cover the dam surface area to minimise evaporation further. Powders, oils and polymers are all affected by wind blowing the product to one side, reducing effectiveness. Plastic sheets, discs and balls are options but also expensive and can cause small animal entrapment.

### Expanding or consolidating storage

Storage enlargement is not always an option due to factors such as soil types, contractor availability and seasonal timing for earthworks, a project which can run into the tens of thousands.

Measuring, calculating and adjusting your water use according to what you have available and stock needs is generally the cheapest option.

To work out how much water you currently have available, the ‘measuring the depth of your dam’ video on the Agriculture Victoria YouTube channel provides simple instructions.

This will give you a “right now” picture of your situation and allow you to plan for the near future.

The Farm Water calculator mentioned in the video will help you with your storage capacities potential when full.

Other considerations: Are your dams suitable for the current stock type; do you have a bore or tanks that could replace your required water supply for stock; could I combine low storages into one larger storage to minimise evaporation and maintain water quality. Moving water using poly pipe and a fire pump is a low-cost way to do this and it can work well with trough and pipeline systems too.

Explore further resources on water in the farm management section of the Agriculture Victoria website. For more information on available drought support, visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/drought) or call 136 186.

## Start of harvest brings fire warning

THE harvesting season has begun and is prompting warnings from CFA to ensure equipment is properly maintained, and precautions are taken to avoid harvester fires.

Harvester fires can start from a mechanical fault like faulty bearings, hydraulics or brakes, but the vast majority of header fires start in the engine bay where dust and debris are blown by cooling fans and ignite the hot exhaust.

While CFA is pleased to have seen a decline in harvester fires over recent summer seasons, and thanks farmers for their attention to detail, the current conditions serve as a reminder not to be complacent.

A fire starting in the header’s engine bay can spread to the surrounding crop before it is noticed by the machine operator, and in the minutes it usually takes to get water onto the fire, it could grow to several hectares. On days of high wind those same crop fires could grow up to 100 hectares within under an hour.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer District 20 Michael Sporton said “This season, with low rainfall and dry soil, headers will be taking on more dirt, meaning farmers need to clean their headers more frequently to prevent dust buildup.

“Fine dust from pulse crops like lentils and lupins can accumulate around the engine and exhaust system, and if it heats up, it can smoulder and potentially ignite spot fires, particularly in windrows.”

There have already been three harvesting related fires in CFA’s District 18, and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gavin Wright said the incident in Meatian burned 255 acres.

“The fire got out of a lentil paddock and into standing barley and was caused by the front belt on the header. It really does serve as a reminder of the consequences of crop fires,” Gavin said.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan stresses machinery safety should not only just be a

priority for farmers, but also to all Victorians, ensuring regular equipment maintenance and fire-safe practices.

“During the last Fire Danger Period, CFA responded to 146 vegetation fires caused by machinery and vehicles, including slashers, tractors, ride-on mowers, caravans, and trailers,” Jason said.

“Each incident posed a risk not only to those on the ground but also to neighbouring properties.

“By prioritising equipment maintenance and simple safety protocols, we can significantly cut down on these preventable fires.

“With everyone doing their part, we can help protect lives and property.”

### Crop and Farm Machinery Fire Safety

The most common cause of harvester fires is material collecting on hot engine components such as the manifold, exhaust and turbocharger. Make it part of your routine to check for straw or grass build-up, and hot bearings. Make sure your machinery is free of faults and mechanical defects and carrying a water fire extinguisher. Postpone paddock work during the highest fire-risk periods. On hot, dry days, exercise extreme caution before harvesting, grinding, welding, slashing or mowing. The key to avoiding harvester fires is diligence in maintenance such as clean-down and inspection. During paddock operations have the appropriate firefighting equipment in place. You’re required by law to have a nine litre water pressured extinguisher on hand. Avoid driving vehicles and motorbikes through dry grass or crop. The risk from the hot exhaust system is high.

More information can be found at [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/operating-farming-machinery-equipment-and-vehicles](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/operating-farming-machinery-equipment-and-vehicles)

## Rural Aid calls for support for drought affected farmers

RURAL Aid has recorded a 60 per cent increase in farmer registrations from South Australia and Victoria in the past financial year, as both regions endure one of the worst droughts on record. Farmers are turning to Rural Aid for essential hay and water provisions, and the surge in registrations also reflects a growing demand for mental health support.

Rural Aid Chief Executive Officer John Warlters said the sharp rise in registrations shows how significantly the drought is impacting farming families and highlights the urgent need for donations.

“The increase in farmers registering with us is a clear sign of how difficult conditions are. Every registration represents a family that is struggling to keep going in the face of extraordinary pressure,” Mr Warlters said.

“We need Australians to get behind our efforts and donate today. Their support is vital.”

Rural Aid provides practical and emotional assistance to primary producers, including hay and water deliveries, financial assistance, and counselling through its mental health and wellbeing program. These services are helping families stay on the land and cope with the emotional strain of prolonged dry conditions.

Farmers are sacrificing their own wellbeing to save their stock. Kaye Wicker, a sheep and cereal

crop farmer from Waitpinga, South Australian farmer described how desperate the situation has become.

“Some weeks I went without groceries, to buy feed for my lambs, so they could eat” she said.

“You just do what you have to. They come first.”

Ms Wicker said the support from Rural Aid made a significant difference.

“The support from Rural Aid... it just means so much,” she said.

“To be able to access a pre-paid visa or speak to a counsellor when there’s a lot of pressure on you, really, they just mean everything. And to receive that generous gift of hay... you never forget how grateful you were to receive it.”

Mr Warlters said farmers are reaching breaking point and that donations this Christmas can make a life changing difference.

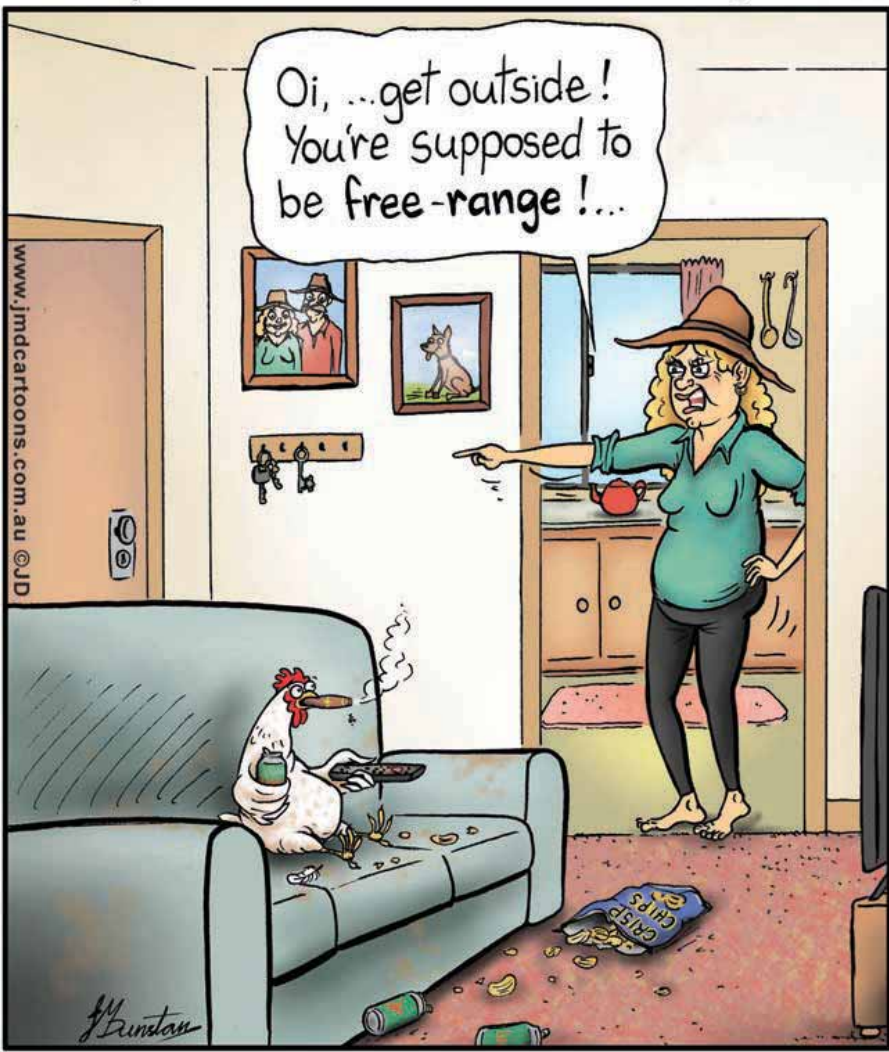
“We are calling on Australians to buy a bale or fill a tank. Every contribution helps to deliver hay, water and mental health support to farming families who are doing it incredibly tough,” Mr Warlters said.

“Your generosity ensures we can be there for the next family who needs us.”

To donate or learn more, visit [buyabale.ruralaid.org.au](http://buyabale.ruralaid.org.au)

### The Trap

By Jed Dunstan



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*Bioblitz in Kinglake. -S*



*A koala on Yea Road. -S*



*A lovely orchid found along the way. -S*



*Sacred kingfishers. -S*

## Nature lovers gather for Murrindindi Bioblitz

THE weekend of October 24 to 27 saw an event for nature lovers all over the shire called the Murrindindi Bioblitz.

The project was launched by the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network to see whether they could amass a large number of records for the Murrindindi Shire.

There were activities in Eildon, Kinglake, Molesworth, Toolangi, Kanumbra, Yea and Alexandra including spotlighting walks, bird surveys, fungi and wildflower walks.

The one condition was that observations had to be actual physical records, either an audio recording or a photograph, and uploaded to the iNaturalist database.

By the end of the bioblitz nature lovers had uploaded 3335 observations of 1035 different species, which included plants, insects, fungi, birds, frogs, reptiles, and mammals.

It was a huge effort and thanks are due to local ecologist Michael Cincotta for instigating the project, and especially to Upper Goulburn Landcare Network, our landcare groups and Taungurung LWC for the great effort delivering the project and its events.

More information about Murrindindi Bioblitz can be found at [inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/great-southern-bioblitz-2025-murrindindi-shire](http://inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/great-southern-bioblitz-2025-murrindindi-shire)



*Tiger snake. -S*



*Brush-tailed possum. -S*



*A swamp wallaby (Wallabia bicolor). -S*



*Toolangi Bioblitz. -S*



*Plains brown tree frog. -S*



*Bird walk on the rail trail. -S*



*A shining bronze cuckoo in Yea. -S*

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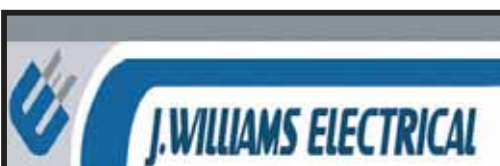
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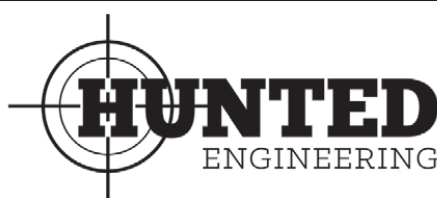


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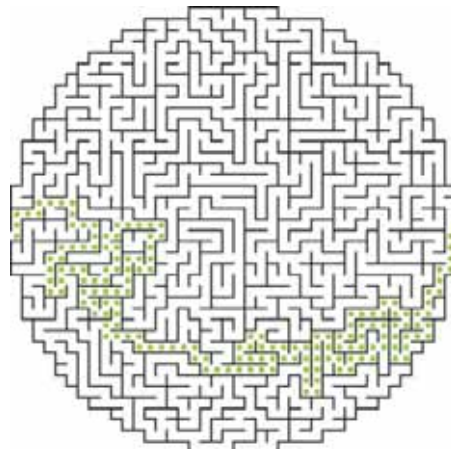
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8	1	3	2	9	6	7	5	4

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1	+	2	-	7	-4
-		+		+	
4	+	3	+	6	13
+		-		-	
5	+	9	-	8	6
2		-4		5	

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1	+	2	-	7	-4
-		+		+	
4	+	3	+	6	13
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2		-4		5	

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### MEETINGS



Registration No: A0018756R

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the **34th Annual General Meeting** of Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home Inc will be held on

**Thursday, November 27, 2025 commencing at 1.30pm in North Lounge Room.**

**Video conferencing available, please email request to [darlingford@dughn.com.au](mailto:darlingford@dughn.com.au)**

Business of the Meeting:

- to confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting
- to receive and consider:
  - (a) the annual report of the Committee on the activities of the Association during the preceding financial year
  - (b) the financial statements of the association for the preceding financial year
- to elect the members of the committee;
- Appointment of Auditor

**Applications for a position on the Board of Management are invited. Please contact Darlingford on 5774 2711.**

**ALL WELCOME**

**Please RSVP by November 24, 2025.**

### PUBLIC NOTICES



#### Planning and Environment Act 1987 MURRINDINDI PLANNING SCHEME Notice of Approval of Amendment Amendment C73muri

The Minister for Planning has approved Amendment C73muri to the Murrindindi Planning Scheme. The Amendment comes into operation on the date this notice is published in the Victoria Government Gazette. The Amendment implements the policy-neutral components of the Planning Scheme Review.

A copy of the Amendment can be inspected, free of charge, at the Department of Transport and Planning website at [www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection) or by contacting 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the Amendment. A copy of the Amendment can also be inspected, free of charge, during office hours, at the offices of the Murrindindi Shire Council, 28 Perkins Street, Alexandra and on the Council website at [murrindindi.vic.gov.au](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au)

#### STUART MENZIES

Executive Director, State Planning Policy  
Department of Transport and Planning

### IN MEMORIAM

#### TAYLOR, Dillon

November 30, 2015  
forever 29.

Dillon, 10 years without you. We miss you so much from our lives.

We treasure our beautiful memories, but miss making new ones. Forever loved, mum, dad, Shauna, Riley, Ivy and Mack.



### MEETINGS

#### FRIENDS of Kellock

Inc. AGM will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at Kellock Lodge, Bon Street, Alexandra at 9.30am in the Board Room. All welcome.

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## Haines blasts Coalition for denying regional Australia 'next gold rush'

MEMBER for Indi, Dr Helen Haines, has condemned the Coalition's push to abandon net zero, warning it would deny regional Australia the chance to seize a "once-in-a-generation economic gold rush" powered by renewable energy.

Speaking in Parliament, on Nationals MP Barnaby Joyce's Repeal Net Zero Bill, Dr Haines said the Bill would "completely unravel" Australia's emissions reduction framework with nothing to replace it.

"This bill would wipe out almost \$10 billion in projected payments to farmers, strip \$1.9 billion from community benefit programs for regional councils and undermine thousands of jobs expected from renewable projects," Dr Haines said.

"And there is no alternative proposal, just repeal, rescind, omit."

Dr Haines said that while the Coalition claims to stand up for regional Australia, its actions were not helping communities achieve the potential prosperity available from the energy transition.

Polling commissioned by Renew Australia for All shows strong support for renewable energy across regional Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, including in Mr Joyce's own electorate of New England.

"While the Member for New England says 'no' to net zero, the majority of his constituents are saying 'yes.'"

She highlighted communities already securing major benefits including Armidale Regional Council establishing a multi-million-dollar renewable future fund, a \$2 million fund over 30 years and mobile tower in Goorambat in Indi, and Hay Council negotiating \$26 million in community benefit.

Dr Haines said regional Australia is on the brink of a new gold rush, with \$12.7 billion invested in renewable energy in 2024 alone.

"Just like the gold rush shaped our towns, this transition can deliver long-lasting prosperity, better infrastructure, local jobs, new income streams for farmers and cheaper, more reliable power.

"But that prosperity isn't guaranteed. It depends on strong community benefit funds that return wealth to the towns hosting these projects.

She stressed that early, genuine community engagement is what turns renewable investment into "intergenerational benefits.

"Places like Dubbo and Armidale show what's possible, but they're still the exception. Developers can't just 'plug in and play'. Communities deserve to be at the negotiating table.

"If the transition fails regional Australians, the whole transition risks failing.

"But if communities share in the benefits, we can secure a new era of regional prosperity, our next gold rush," she said.

## Do you know how to FrogID?

MURRINDINDI Shire Council and the Australian Museum hosted a captivating online webinar for FrogID Week, with in-person screenings in Kinglake and Yea on Wednesday, November 5, to learn about the FrogID project and why frogs matter.

Nadiah Roslan, Project Coordinator of FrogID from the Australian Museum Research Institute, a biologist with extensive experience in climate biology and conservation, hosted the webinar.

The presentation included an introduction to the FrogID project, why frogs matter, the importance of citizen science projects, frog species that can be found in Murrindindi Shire, unique frog species and their calls, and how to get involved using the FrogID App for FrogID Week (November 7 to 16).

Following the webinar, Kinglake attendees explored local ponds and a creek in Kinglake West to discover local frogs.

To learn more about FrogID Week and download the app, visit [frogid.net.au](http://frogid.net.au)

Murrindindi Shire Council sustainability and assets portfolio Councillor Sue Carpenter enjoyed the event at the Yea Wetlands Discovery Centre.

"Partnering with the Australian Museum again this year has allowed us to bring this wonderful event back to Murrindindi. Frogs form an important part of our diverse ecosystem, with Murrindindi Shire home to a rich variety of species. By learning how to identify frogs by sound, you'll be empowered to take part in protecting these fascinating creatures," she said.

"Whether you're a nature enthusiast, student, or simply curious about frogs, this is your chance to get involved and enjoy the great outdoors in Murrindindi. Download the FrogID app, head outdoors for a frog discovery adventure, and take part in this national citizen science project.

"FrogID Week may end on Sunday, November 16, but you can search for frog sounds at any time of the year. For inspiration on where to explore, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/parks](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/parks) or [discoverdindi.com.au](http://discoverdindi.com.au)"

# Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria

THE Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria has handed down its findings. The chair's foreword states, "The injuring and killing of native animals as a result of collisions with motor vehicles, or wildlife roadstrike, is a crisis in Victoria that causes enormous suffering for the animals but also substantially increases the risk of death and injury to motorists... This report seeks to highlight the extent of the problem and suggest some solutions that may be able to reduce the carnage."

## Rendering assistance

The inquiry found that the laws and regulations governing wildlife do not address the issue of unintentional roadstrike and do not require motorists to render assistance or report roadstrike, except to the extent they are covered under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

They recommended that the Victorian Government consider amending the Road Safety Act 1986 (Vic) to require motorists to stop and render assistance to wildlife they have struck when safe to do so. Rendering assistance could mean simply reporting the collision to a wildlife rescue organisation, noting that this will require a matching state-wide notice and dispatch system agreed and adopted by all active stakeholders, including volunteer organisations.

They also recommended that the Victorian Government establish a single, statewide phone number for reporting wildlife-vehicle collisions, to ensure motorists can quickly access assistance and wildlife rescue services regardless of their location. This number should be widely promoted and integrated with existing emergency response and wildlife rescue systems to improve coordination, response times, and animal welfare outcomes.

## Voluntary rescuers

The report found that volunteers incur substantial costs when delivering voluntary rescue and shelter services, and that this is an enormous burden to be borne by the volunteer sector.

It was recommended that the Victorian Government adopts the option for Victorians to voluntarily contribute a nominal amount through yearly vehicle registration. The funds collected would go directly to supporting wildlife rescue and shelter in Victoria. The volunteer rescue community will first need to consult and collectively determine the framework under which they would operate under a state-wide system, and the level of governance and compliance they would accept under the system. Once formalised, the chosen governing entity could then suitably receive and distribute voluntary donations received through vehicle registration.

## Roadstrike response

Wildlife roadstrike response in Victoria relies almost entirely on volunteer wildlife rescuers, shelter operators and veterinarians. The current volunteer-based model is no longer sustainable.

The inquiry found that the management of wildlife roadstrike, like the regulatory framework, is fragmented and ill-defined, which makes responsibility for mitigation unclear and leaves an unreasonable burden on voluntary organisations and individuals who operate without sufficient support.

## Volunteer demographic

The report noted that the wildlife rescue and shelter sector is largely made up of an aging volunteer demographic. Without reform, the sector will lack the capacity to respond to the sheer volume of wildlife roadstrike incidents. Wildlife rescue is also highly skilled and dangerous work.

It was recommended that the Victorian Government, in close consultation with volunteers, consider providing recurrent funding and reimbursements to wildlife rescuers and carers to ensure timely and sustainable response to roadstrike incidents. That the Victorian Government consider the establishment of a program to professionalise and fund the volunteer wildlife rescue sector. That the Victorian Government, in consultation with key stakeholders, develop a Code of Practice for accredited agencies responding to wildlife roadstrike, including local councils, police, SES, carers and rescuers.

## Risks to volunteers

The inquiry found that the safety protocols and equipment available to volunteer wildlife rescuers is not sufficient to mitigate the dangerous risks they face when responding roadside. It was recommended that the Victorian Government consider implementing stronger safety protocols to protect volunteer wildlife rescuers when responding roadside.

## Data collection

Data collection on wildlife roadstrike was found to be fragmented and inconsistent with significant underreporting. They recommended that the government consider the establishment of a centralised, publicly accessible wildlife roadstrike data collection system database, in conjunction with and for adoption by all.

## Kangaroos

The inquiry found that while kangaroos are the victims of more roadstrike cases than any other individual species, all wildlife are at risk from motor vehicles and pose a risk to motorists. They found that the population of kangaroos is less convincing as an explanation for wildlife roadstrike than to urban expansion and planning limitations,

changes in climactic conditions and excessive speed and driver behaviour.

## Peri-urban areas

Victoria's rapid population growth, particularly in peri-urban regions, was found to be intensifying rates of wildlife roadstrike due to habitat destruction and landlocking of native wildlife. It was recommended that the Victorian Government embed mandatory wildlife-sensitive planning measures into all new housing, infrastructure projects and planning schemes.

It was recommended that the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* be amended so that planning schemes must include mechanisms for wildlife protection in all proposed developments. This includes strategies that ensure wildlife populations are not landlocked and have corridors that enable them to move without crossing major roads.

## Climate change

The report found that climate change is increasing the risk of wildlife roadstrike by destroying habitat due to drying conditions and increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters, particularly floods and bushfires. This leads to increased movement of wildlife which increases the risk of them crossing roads and being struck by vehicles.

It was recommended that the Fauna Sensitive Road Design Guidelines be reviewed and updated where necessary to ensure that they include all of the latest available technology and infrastructure to assist in wildlife protection from roadstrike. It should be mandatory for the guidelines to be included in all development documentation and that they be addressed in all development proposals.

## Speed

They found that travelling at slower speeds can reduce the severity of a collision.

## Deer

The report found that there is currently no official service in place for the emergency response and management of non-native wildlife such as deer.

## Virtual fencing

The evidence was overwhelmingly of the view that virtual fencing trials had failed in most cases. The more rigorous the study, the more these failures were evident. There was limited evidence that could justify further funding for virtual fencing on the basis of those technologies presented. The said further funding of virtual fencing should be tied to the emergence of new, more viable technologies only. They said it was unclear whether the noise and sound stimuli emitted by virtual fencing produces an appropriate response in Australian wildlife. Virtual fencing also requires ongoing maintenance to stay operational.



*The inquiry found that kangaroos are the victims of more roadstrike cases than any other individual species. -JJ Harrison*

## Wildlife crossing structures

Internationally, wildlife crossing structures and exclusion fencing have been shown to significantly reduce animal-vehicle collisions. The upfront costs of wildlife crossing structures and exclusion fencing are considerable. A cost-benefit analysis with data would be beneficial before proceeding in Victoria.

It was recommended that the Victorian Government consider a program of major wildlife crossings, beginning with pilot sites in high-risk corridors, with the long-term objective of network-wide rollout.

## Signage

According to data collected by AAMI, 40 per cent of drivers ignore standard static wildlife road signs. Intelligent signage is a promising wildlife roadstrike mitigation measure that has been successfully implemented in other Australian states and internationally. They remain underutilised in Victoria.

They recommended that the Victorian Government undertake research to trial innovative animal detection systems and explore how artificial intelligence and machine learning tools can improve the accuracy of these systems. Emerging in-vehicle animal detection system technologies also show significant potential to mitigate wildlife roadstrike.

## Dusk and dawn

They found that not driving to the conditions, particularly during dawn and dusk, increases the likelihood that wildlife will be struck by vehicles at faster speeds during these high-risk periods.

It was recommended that the Victorian Government examine the feasibility of variable speed limits, supported by cameras and enforcement, in known high-risk zones. These measures should be applied particularly at dawn and dusk when animal movement peaks.

## Education

They also recommended that the Victorian Government develop and deliver a public education campaign on wildlife roadstrike, including information on seasonal risks, safe driving practices and appropriate responses when encountering injured wildlife.

# Children's social media rapidly approaching

FROM December 1, children under the age of 16 will no longer be permitted to create or maintain accounts on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Kick, and others.

The responsibility will fall on social media companies to enforce the age restrictions and prevent underage users from accessing their platforms.

Act for Kids CEO Dr Katrina Lines said being disconnected from friends on social media could cause some children to experience anxiety and distress, so parents and carers should be prepared for this.

"Start having conversations with your children about the social media age restrictions as soon as possible and listen to any concerns they have," Dr Lines said.

"It's important to keep the lines of communication open in the lead up to and even long after these changes take effect.

"Reassure your kids that they can always come to you if they are worried about anything. One way of starting this conversation could be by asking them how they would like to stay connected to friends and family outside of social media."

An Act for Kids survey of more than 300 Australian children aged 10 to 16 found 41 per cent would rather connect with family in real life compared to only 15 per cent who preferred to spend time online.

Dr Lines noted this finding was important, given the national conversations currently happening about children spending too much time on devices, and the negative impacts social media can cause, including cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content.

"As a society, we need to listen to what children are saying and explore different ways to connect with them or connect them with their peers, whether that's in real life or by trying new things such as playing games together online. Research shows games are a great way for kids to feel connected," she said.

"The age restrictions are also a great opportunity to allow time to prepare children and young people for social media by teaching them about the risks associated with sharing your images and own content online. Parents can use the time before kids turn 16 to prepare and empower them to use it appropriately."

Start having conversations with your children about the restrictions as soon as possible and listen to any concerns they have. Ask them how they would like to stay connected to friends and family. Explore

alternative ways kids can remain connected to friends without social media, such as sport, hobbies, online games, organising in-person catch ups, volunteering or other community activities. Build family rituals, this can be as simple as gathering at the table for dinner each night or having a regular board game night. Family rituals can be a source of connection, stability, and positivity. Model good digital behaviour and lead by example, be present as much as possible, put your phone away at the dinner table and have a digital detox when necessary. Being disconnected from friends on social media may cause some kids to experience anxiety and distress, so be prepared for this.

If you or a child needs support, help is always available. Contact Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800 or Lifeline on 131 114.

## ATO calls on employers to prepare for Payday Super

THE Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is urging employers to get ready for the introduction of Payday Super.

The Payday Super legislation has now passed and will take effect from July 1, 2026, meaning employers will be required to pay employees' super at the same time as salary and wages.

Deputy Commissioner Emma Rosenzweig said this is a once in a generation change and wants employers to give themselves the best opportunity to be prepared for July 1, 2026.

"Simply put Payday Super is about paying super on payday. Don't wait until the last minute, we want employers to start planning for Payday Super now to ensure they are prepared for when the law takes effect," Ms Rosenzweig said.

"You don't have to wait to start paying super contributions more regularly. Many employers are already paying on pay day."

Payday Super will help employers meet their super guarantee (SG) obligations and help protect the retirement funds of millions of Australians.

"This is critical change in addressing unpaid super and deterring non-payment by employers while ensuring employees are fully compensated for any delays in receiving their super.

"Payday Super will provide the ATO with earlier visibility of under-payment or non-payment of super, allowing for a proactive approach to compliance to reduce unpaid super," Ms Rosenzweig said.

The ATO's proposed compliance approach for the first year of Payday Super will recognise that employers who try to do the right thing, and resolve any issues quickly, will not be the focus of ATO compliance action.

"We're working closely with industry groups, tax professionals, digital service providers and super funds to help prepare employers for the July 1 start date and we'll be finalising clear guidance on factors we will consider in our compliance approach," Ms Rosenzweig said.

Keep up to date with the progress of Payday Super at [ato.gov.au/paydaysuper](https://ato.gov.au/paydaysuper)

## Helping more children to learn to swim

WITH summer just around the corner, more Victorian children will get their chance to learn important water safety skills at an affordable price, thanks to the Victorian Government.

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes announced bookings have opened for the popular Aquatics and Recreation Victoria run VICSWIM Summer Kidz swim classes.

Since 1976, VICSWIM's learn-to-swim program has helped generations of youngsters aged four to 12 learn vital skills, including water safety and foundation swimming.

Five 30 minute lessons are provided over the course of a week in January for a subsidised cost of just \$43 total, helping more families afford lessons for their kids. The program has saved Victorian families millions of dollars.

Thousands of children take part each year at locations across the state including beach and inland water venues.

Venues within the region include Alexandra Swimming Pool, Eildon Swimming Pool and Yea Swimming Pool.

Many families have shared that their children would not have participated in swimming lessons, if not for this program.

Ms Symes said, "A big part of summer holidays in Victoria involves fun by the water. This program helps families by reducing the cost of lessons, which helps kids from all backgrounds be prepared and confident in and out of the water."

For more information and to book, visit [vicswim.com.au](https://vicswim.com.au)

# GBCMA highlights the importance of tree hollows

THE Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is highlighting the importance of tree hollows for wildlife in its 2025 Year of the Tree Hollow community awareness campaign.

This month features the fast and furious Yellow-footed Antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*), one of the Goulburn Broken catchment's smallest marsupials.

Goulburn Broken CMA Project Officer, Janice Mentiplay-Smith, said antechinus were members of the *dasyurid* family, whose relatives include the Tasmanian devil, brush-tailed phascogale, quoll and dunnart.

"Antechinus look very much like house mice but this is where the similarities stop," Ms Mentiplay-Smith said.

"The easiest way to differentiate between an antechinus and the pest house mouse is by looking at their face and head. An antechinus has a pointy, long and narrow snout, unlike a mouse, which has a round head and nose.

"Antechinus are also larger than a house mouse; its body length is up to 165 millimetres and its tail is about the

same length as its body. They also have a furry white ring around their eyes, large crinkly ears, yellowish legs and bellies and yellow feet."

Another tell-tale sign between a house mouse and an antechinus is its smell. Mice and rats create a musky smell, antechinus have no odour.

Male antechinus die soon after mating due to stress and lack of food and nutrients, a strategy thought to be nature's way of ensuring a continuously refreshed gene pool and sufficient resources available for the next generation.

Ms Mentiplay-Smith said the Yellow-footed Antechinus foraged during the day to feast on insects, spiders, cockroaches, lizards, small birds and eggs, the occasional flower and nectar and even a house-mouse.

"Antechinus forage furiously among the sticks, leaves, branches and logs that comprise a healthy ground storey," she said.

"Tree hollows are vital for the Yellow-footed Antechinus which need deep hollows with small entrances to hide from predators, for shelter and to rest. Large old

trees provide hollow habitat and regularly shed dead leaves, branches, twigs and bark.

"A study into the factors affecting the presence of the Yellow-footed Antechinus concluded that a messy ground layer of organic litter as well as the density of hollow-bearing trees and rock cover in a structurally complex forest system were the main habitat features affecting antechinus' ability to inhabit a region.

"Therefore, when timber is removed from roadsides, either to clean up or for firewood, this directly impacts the Yellow-footed Antechinus and other native fauna that rely upon this habitat."

Read more in the Goulburn Broken CMA's Mammal Book, a 58-page booklet featuring beautiful photographs, including the Yellow-footed Antechinus on the front cover, and informative text at [gbcma.vic.gov.au/our-region/land\\_and\\_biodiversity/resources\\_publications/the-mammal-book](https://gbcma.vic.gov.au/our-region/land_and_biodiversity/resources_publications/the-mammal-book)

The Year of the Tree Hollow is supported by the Victorian Government through the Our Catchments Our Communities stewardship program.



*The Yellow-footed Antechinus, which somewhat resembles a mouse. -S*



*The Yellow-footed Antechinus uses tree hollows for safety and security. -S*

## Calling out tax dodgers in record numbers

THE Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has hit a major milestone of over 300,000 tip-offs from the community about tax avoidance and other dishonest behaviours since July 1, 2019. In the 2024-25 financial year alone, almost 50,000 red flags were raised by the community who spotted something suspicious.

Most of the tip-offs received related to shadow economy activity, like demanding cash payment for work or incorrectly claiming business expenses. The ATO estimates the community is missing out on billions in stolen taxes every year from this behaviour, which weakens funding for essential services such as health, education, transport, infrastructure and disaster response.

ATO Assistant Commissioner Tony Goding said businesses who dodge their tax and super obligations are simply stealing from fellow Australians.

"When someone cheats the system, they're not just breaking the law, they're freeloading on honest businesses and the rest of the community.

"Paying tax is not optional. Sooner or later, and probably sooner, if you're operating in the shadow economy, the ATO will discover this, through our extensive data-matching through initiatives including the Taxable Payment Reporting System and the Sharing Economy Reporting Regime, our industry benchmarks or as a result of a tip-off from one of your workers, customers or competitors."

### Spotting the red flags

Tip-offs help level the playing field and protect honest businesses. This year, Australians reported businesses and individuals who didn't declare their income; demanded or paid for work in cash to avoid tax; lived lifestyles that didn't match their known income; or failed to report all sales.

But it's not just 'cash only' signs that should raise eyebrows. A luxury car parked outside a business that claims to be struggling? A café that's always busy but never seems to report profits or employees? Workers being paid in cash and not receiving payslips or super? These are the suspicions that Australians are flagging.

"People evading their tax and super obligations are directly harming honest businesses and putting an increased burden on other Australians. There really is no excuse."

"It's unfair competition and it's illegal. And when you're caught, you don't just have to cough up the tax. You'll also face significant penalties plus interest on unpaid taxes and possibly even criminal sanctions," Mr Goding said.

### Industries under the microscope

The top three industries seeing a surge in red flags this year are building and construction cafés and restaurants hairdressing and beauty services.

"With tip-offs often coming from customers, employees, other businesses, and even family and friends, the community is clearly fed up with dodgy behaviours and is stepping up to help us make things fairer," Mr Goding said.

### Raise the red flag

The ATO receives almost 1000 tip-offs every week from people who know or strongly suspect tax evasion.

These tip-offs can sometimes be the first sign that something isn't quite right.

"When we receive information through a tip-off, we cross-check the information and assess whether further action is required," Mr Goding said.

And the numbers speak for themselves, in 2024-25 around 85 per cent of tip-offs analysed were found to be suitable for further investigation.

This investigation is carried out by specialised teams within the ATO, who share information with our cross-agency partners including through the Shadow Economy Taskforce.

If you suspect someone is ripping off the tax and super system, raise the red flag and report it. It only takes a few minutes and you can remain anonymous. Visit [ato.gov.au/tipoff](https://ato.gov.au/tipoff) or call 1800 060 062.

## SPORT

# Marysville Golf Club ladies runners-up at Kilmore

by Lesley Rundle

AFTER hosting the recent fundraising event and men's tournament and last week playing at Alexandra the Saturday golfers were pleased to be back playing at Marysville Golf Club.

All the golfers played a stableford round and the ladies round included the Norman Trophy. Heather Jenkins (21) with 35 points won the trophy followed by Helen Howard (25) with 33 points.

Heather won the nearest the pins on the ninth and 11th holes and members congratulated her on her good form and consistently good play.

The men's winner was Brian Worcester (20) with 39 points followed by Peter Lilley (16) with 37 points. Adam Littlejohn won the nearest the pin on the 11th hole and Keith Atwell hit the best tee shot on the fourth and also won the Golden Shot.

It was a pleasure to welcome Fiona Wright to the ladies' competition and members will look forward to Fiona joining them in the regular Saturday competitions. Next Saturday a mixed four ball best ball will be played with partners drawn before play.

Last Thursday the penultimate ladies Dalhousie event for 2025 was

played at Kilmore. While Kilmore won their own Bowl with 104 points the three Marysville ladies were the runners up just two points behind. Congratulations to Bev Bellman, Heather Jenkins and Margaret Blair on this result.

The Marysville ladies, while a small cohort, have represented their club in numerous Dalhousie events during the year and their travels have taken them, sometimes twice, to Alexandra, Avenel, Seymour, Romsey, Lancefield, Yea, Strathbogie, Euroa, Kilmore and Mansfield. The members thank the ladies for travelling far and wide to represent the club.

The Thursday nine holers played a four ball best ball on the back nine with Keith Atwell (10) and Peter Doery (18) combining to gain 22 points just beating Ray Jones (11) and Gail Leigh (7) with 21 points. Gail won the nearest the pin on the 18th hole.

On Thursday, November 27, the Dalhousie Veterans will play at Marysville and the following day the Annual Golf and Cycling day will be held. Members are reminded that a working bee will be held at the club on Tuesday, December 9 from 8.30am.



Kilmore Bowl runners-up Bev Bellman, Heather Jenkins and Margaret Blair, all from Marysville Golf Club. -S

## Murrindindi under 15 boys shine at Northern Country Relay Championships

THE Northern Country Regional Relay Championships were held on Sunday, November 23, at the excellent athletic facilities in Albury. With an early start needed to make it in time for warm-ups, the Murrindindi Little Athletics Club's under 15 boys arrived ready to compete.

Representing the club were Levi Campbell, Declan Armstrong, Harish Balansag and Chase Hilder.

Facing strong competition from both the Northern Country team and Wodonga, the boys produced impressive results on the track. They claimed bronze medals in both the four by 200 metre and four by 100 metre relays, missing the silver in the four by 100 metres by just two-hundredths of a second.

Their biggest success of the day came in the Swedish Relay, a 1000 metre event made up of legs of 100 metres, 200 metres, 300 metres and 400 metres. Chase opened with the 100 metres, followed by Harish over 300 metres, Declan powering through the 200 metre, and Levi bringing it home in his favourite distance, the 400 metres. With each athlete giving their all, the team stormed to victory and claimed the gold medal.

Congratulations to the boys for doing their club proud and qualifying for the State Relay Championships in December. A big thank-you also goes to the parents and supporters for their early starts, travel and help with duties throughout the day. The boys are lucky to have such strong support behind them.



Murrindindi little athletes with their gold and two bronze medallions, Levi Campbell, Harish Balansag, Declan Armstrong, and Chase Hilder. -S

## Alexandra Squash Club round seven of term four pennant

by Kristelle Leary

### Monday competition

Blue vein versus Camembert

DANIEL K (fill in) versus Jordan: Jordan lacked an opponent, so Daniel stepped up to give him run around. Jordan had some good shots, and Daniel kept the play going, sending him to all sides of the court. Daniel won. 80 to 45.

Randy versus Liane: With a strong first game, Randy was oozing confidence. Liane brought him down a peg in the second game with a solid win. Randy picked up his feet to win the next two games and the match for a decent win. 74 to 56.

Jared versus Chris: Chris claimed the first game. Jared had a spectacular second game. Game three was a draw, but in the end, Jared won the final game and the match. 68 to 52.

John versus Derrick: Consistency is key. Derrick may have nabbed game one, however John doesn't let up. With his consistency and finesse John won three games for an overall victory. 62 to 47.

### Feta versus Gouda

Tyler versus Robbie: Putting up a good fight, Robbie did what he could to slow down Tyler. Being more experienced worked in Tyler's favour, winning him the match. 80 to 42.

Jess versus Laura: It was a good battle between these two. Starting favourably, Jess opened with a win. Laura quickly jumped to action to shut this down, not allowing her opponent any more wins. Laura was crowned victorious. 61 to 47.

Lucas versus (fill ins): It took three opponents to defeat Lucas. Lucas demonstrated adaptability, adjusting to different game styles. The subs took the win. 71 to 51.

Andrew versus Michael H: Michael went in warmed up and got the jump on Andrew. Andrew wrestled his way back. The game score showed two a piece, but Michael's scintillating start helped him with the points and his triumph. 63 to 56.

### Wednesday competition

Barracudas versus Orcas

Eric versus Matthew: Eric was playing well, and Matthew was keeping pace with him until game three where his energy waned. They continued and Eric continued his play to win all four games and the match. 66 to 42.

Blake versus Sam: Always a happy court with these two playing. Blake had some brilliant shots and tried to push back against Sam's skills, but his opponent gleefully claimed all four games for a solid win. 70 to 47.

Daniel K versus Michael M: Throwing himself at the walls, Michael always puts in maximum effort. Daniel was calm and

collected, making sure to put his opposition through the wringer before closing out the match triumphant. 65 to 40.

### Hammerheads versus Piranhas

Jessica versus Ben (fill in): A really evenly matched, close game. Both players played some excellent shots, but Ben was just too strong. 56 to 51.

Kristelle versus Mick: Mick was playing well while Kristelle was falling behind. Going into game three Mick had a 16-point lead. The last minute of game three saw Kristelle pull out an amazing run to reduce her overall deficit to six points. The final game was close, but Mick stayed ahead to take home the trophy. 68 to 59.

# Ladies play four ball best ball at Alexandra Golf Club

by Dave Silverman

ELEVEN players kicked off the week in golf at Alexandra Golf Club, competing in last Tuesday's stableford round.

Bill Wind returned the best score of the day, his 39 points giving him the win by just one point over Russell Haack, who also picked up nearest the pin on seven. Steve Darmody came in third with 37, and the other nearest the pins went to Len Jenkins on 17 and Brad Newton on 18.

Brad also got a rundown voucher, along with John Greatorrex and Paul Martin.

The ladies got the good weather last week, with a fine, mild day laid on for their four ball best ball competition last Wednesday. In the end, the two top teams needed a countback to decide the result, and it was Deb Richardson and Lyn Capp who were declared the winners over Ruth Worland and Sandra Morris, both teams having scored 41 points.

Only one nearest the pin was claimed, going to Donna Meggitt and Judy Pearson on seven.

Plenty of fun and games during last Thursday night's Chook Run, with Billy Baker taking another win with 22 net, well clear of second-placed Jared Sloane with 27, and a triple dead heat for third, with Noah and Dylan Jack and Luke Heard all on 30 net.

HG Turf were the sponsors for last week's Saturday stableford round, and 18 players teed off in fine, warm conditions. Corey Jack was the one who emerged at the top of the leaderboard at the end of the day with 38 points. Len Jenkins was second with 37, third went to James Kidd on 36, Perrin Gooding was fourth with 35 and 34 points put Bill Wind into fifth.

Nobody managed to hold a tee shot on either the second or the fifth, seven went to Dave Silverman, Mick Holohan took 12 and 18 went to Michael Bossonnet. Jimmy Kidd rounded out a good day by taking home the raffle.



Noah Jack on his way to a third spot in the Chook Run. -S

## It's all happening at Alexandra Bowls Club

by Marie Evans

IT'S not all pennant at this stage of the season. Club games at Alexandra Bowls Club are progressing well. Most recent games saw Greg Gilmore defeat Mark Stone and move into the next round of the singles. Roselyn Livy won her round of the President's Handicap. Christine Mayfield defeated Marie Evans in the women's singles and Lauren Gilchrist won her round of the singles.

Alexandra players Ian Harper and Graeme Matthews entered the Goulburn Valley section of the State Pairs, which was played at Shepparton Golf. They played in a section with a BYE. They lost their first game against the Tatura pair and then defeated the Mooroopna Pair 23 to seven. Mooroopna defeated Tatura 11 to 10.

With the three sides each winning a game Alexandra's percentage has them through to the finals. The finals will be played on November 30 at Shepparton Golf. The winning pair progress through to the Region Final in January, where they will play the Murray winners to determine the Goulburn Murray Region Champions.

It was not a good week for pennant but there were some excellent efforts by individual rinks. Midweek Division Four played away to Murchison. It was a close game with Murchison taking the honours. Saturday Division Three travelled to Mooroopna Golf and had mixed results. Mooroopna Golf won on the day. Division Five had a BYE.

The best rink for the midweek pennant side was Tim Langmead (Skip), Ken Argent, Craig

Parkinson and Denice Chisholm. They trailed nine to zero on end three but certainly showed that they had the line and length from then on and won nine out of the next 10 ends to lead 18 to 10. The next eight ends were four each but Alexandra won comfortably 26 to 18.

John Blamey (Skip), Bob Mayfield, Marty Manning and Christine Mayfield had a nail-biting game. Alexandra was losing seven to one on end four but with some excellent bowling won six out of the next eight ends to lead 12 to nine. Alexandra led 16 to 14 on end 20 but Murchison picked up three shots on the last end to win 17 to 16.

Graeme Matthews (Skip), Clive Murphy, Malcolm Gill and Peter Collyer won 10 out of 21 ends. However, their opposition won bigger numbers on the ends they won. The final score was Alexandra 13 to Murchison 27.

The overall score was Murchison 62 to Alexandra 55. Alexandra plays away next week to Violet Town who are ninth on the ladder.

Saturday Division Three travelled to Mooroopna Golf. Two rinks drew, one had a close loss and one rink had a game to forget. Greg Gilmore (Skip), Larry Scott, Graeme Matthews and Lauren Kirby won 11 ends out of 21. It was anyone's game, with four all on end five, 11 all on 12, 14 all on end 15, 17 all on end 18. Alexandra trailed 17 to 20 on end 20 but a fabulous three shot pick up on the last end resulted in a 20 all game.

Ian Harper (Skip), Tim Langmead, Ken Argent, Saxon Langmead were leading 11 to one on end seven. Mooroopna Golf had reduced that by end 13



The Division Four best winning rink of Tim Langmead, Denice Chisholm, Craig Parkinson and Ken Argent. -S

to be nine to 12 down. Alexandra won the next four ends and had a reasonable lead 17 to nine. However, on end 18 Mooroopna Golf picked up a five shot haul which put them within three shots. Alexandra still had the lead on end 20 18 to 15 but three shots to Mooroopna Golf on the last end and it was an 18 all draw.

David Nicklos (Skip), Scott Ferrier, Bob Mayfield and Christine Mayfield won 11 ends. They led five to three on end seven but trailed Mooroopna Golf eight to five by end eight. Mooroopna Golf opened up a good lead 12 to six by end 10. They maintained a lead for the remainder of the match but Alexandra did reduce that margin to lose 15 to 18.

Jim Wheelhouse (Skip), Doug Cooper, Andy Tobias and Ben Gilchrist won only seven ends. Mooroopna Golf led for the entire

game. Alexandra won three ends in a row to trail 12 to 19 on end 16 but lost the last five ends to lose 12 to 31.

Mooroopna Golf won the overall 87 to 65. They won 14 points and Alexandra won two. The ladder is Shepparton Park 82, Euroa 74, Rushworth 64, Mooroopna Golf 62, East Shepparton 47, Eildon 44, Alexandra 33 and Shepparton Golf 26. Alexandra play Euroa away next week who were defeated by Rushworth and will be looking to redress that defeat. Alexandra will be looking to do the same and to pick up a win.

Division Five had a Bye. They play Tatura Hilltop at home next week. Alexandra is sixth on the ladder and Hilltop is seventh. It should be a good game.

## Merton cricketers have first turf wicket game of season

MERTON cricketer's travelled to Greta for their first turf wicket game of the season.

Greta won the toss and sent Merton in to bat making 7/104. James Benton found some form in the latter overs top scoring with 23. Father Luke with 17 also batted well on a slow outfield and a pitch a bit unpredictable at times.

Greta's bowlers bowled to the conditions making scoring hard going. Greta started their innings well with opener Dave Allen top scoring with 30. After his dismissal things tightened up with the visitors having a good day in the field lead by Jarrod Mahoney and Murray Sutton both taking good catches in the middle overs.

Great bowling efforts from Henry Berriman 3/23 off eight overs and Sutton taking two wickets in consecutive balls saw Merton on top however a few stubborn partnerships lead by the experienced Michael Barnard 23 not out saw the home side to victory in the 35th over, Luke Benton and Harry Craddock the other wicket takers for Merton.

Bowling consistency particularly to experienced batsmen has proved costly to the Merton side and player unavailability early in the season puts Merton seventh on the b grade ladder with a very even competition emerging, close losses will definitely be a factor later in the season.

THE ALEXANDRA • EILDON • MARYSVILLE

# Standard Sport

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## Busy month for Alexandra and District Horse and Pony Club

IT'S been a busy and exciting few weeks for the Alexandra and District Horse and Pony Club, with members, families and the wider community coming together to support two major local events: the Alexandra Annual Spring Show and the inaugural Alexandra Equestrian Gear Market.

The pony club once again enjoyed a fantastic turnout at the Alexandra Annual Show on Saturday, November 8, with both the show jumping ring and Pony Club rings well supported throughout the day.

Members of all ages looked the part, dressed impeccably for the occasion and everyone participated with enthusiasm. It was especially encouraging to see so many junior riders stepping up to give show jumping rounds a go, their confidence and determination was impressive and the club

are very proud of each of their riders who participated on the day.

The club would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the judges and stewards who volunteered their time, expertise and encouragement. Their contributions ensured the rings ran smoothly and provided a welcoming environment for riders developing their skills, thank-you.

On Saturday, November 22 the equestrian community celebrated the launch of the first ever Alexandra Equestrian Gear Market. Running from 9am to 2pm, the event brought together a range of stalls offering quality gear, bargain buys and even a few very well-maintained horse floats. Riders of all disciplines found something to browse, with English, Stock and Western equipment all on offer.

A special acknowledgement goes to Anna Buick, whose vision and hard work brought the idea to life. Thanks also to the many stall holders and visitors who turned up to support the day, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

The pony club would like to especially thank the local businesses whose donations helped make the event such a success. Contributions from Thornton Butchers and Deli, Embling Rural, Dindi Country Clothing, Scott Russell from Cowboy Co-op and Hamish from HMW Designs were greatly appreciated. Proceeds from the raffle and barbecue will directly support the pony club, helping to strengthen opportunities for riders of all ages.

With two successful events now under their belts, the Alexandra and District Horse and Pony Club is now looking forward to their annual Christmas Rally and Lights

Ride, which will be held from 5pm on Sunday, December 21. Members and visitors are invited to come along for a festive dinner and walk or ride to see Alexandra's Christmas light displays. Please reach out to [alexandraponyclub@gmail.com](mailto:alexandraponyclub@gmail.com) for any queries.



Louis and Diamond. -S



Ella B and Annabelle at the Alexandra Show. -S



Isla, Annabelle and Summer at the Alexandra Show. -S



Ella H and Lennon at the Alexandra Show. -S



Isla and Tiffany. -S



Ella H and Sipsi giving show jumping a go. -S