



Dame Pattie Menzies Centre

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Jess Wilson at Taggerty store

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Billy Brownless visits Alexandra

SPORT



SQUAWK: Crowds braved the cold at Eildon Primary School on Tuesday, July 7, to launch Alister, a four-metre king parrot sculpture created by Longwood artists Tank and Tobin. The community-led project, driven by Eildon Events over nearly two years, was funded without any government or council money — a point praised by Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish, who cut the ribbon.
PHOTO: Anne Richey

Eildon parrot launches

THE launch of the Eildon king parrot sculpture was well-attended on Tuesday, July 7, despite the icy weather. The event was held at the sculpture location, just inside the school grounds, near the corner of Centre Avenue and Main Street.

The sculpture has been thoughtfully placed, providing easy access to passing pedestrians without needing to enter the actual school grounds.

The parrot was a com-

munity initiative, led by Eildon Events. While they initially hoped that the sculpture could be added to the grounds of the splash park or in the shopping square, council restrictions meant that this wasn't possible.

Instead, Eildon Primary School made a part of their school grounds available. It's a good fit as the Eildon Primary School uniform colours were inspired by the colours of a king parrot. Their new playgroup is also called The

Little Parrots.

The magnificent four-metre king parrot was created by Tank and Tobin, based in Longwood.

In launching the project, Karine Haslam said, "The Big Bird project began as a pie in the sky idea that Kerrie and I tossed around nearly two years ago. We dreamed of joining the Big Things trail and attracting more visitors to Eildon. The king parrot already draws plenty of attention from locals and visitors

alike, so it felt like a perfect fit.

"We were confident we could raise the funds, and thanks to a substantial contribution from Eildon Events, along with generous support from local businesses, community groups and organisations, we were able to get the project off the ground."

The key financial supporters of the project were Eildon Events, the Eildon Community Opportunity Shop, AGL and Edwards

Built Family Houseboats. Bob created the plaque and Ken worked on the garden. Mick and Jai did a terrific job with the landscaping.

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish also spoke at the event before cutting the ribbon. She said, "This is not just the highlight of the day for me, this could be the highlight of my month easily."

She praised the project as being a community-led project, focused on making

Eildon better.

She added, "This has been fabulous because there's been no government money, no council money. The guys have just done it from the ground up. And you can never be prouder of a community that has that heart and soul that just gets on and does things."

Eildon Primary School captain Hailie then read the plaque, officially naming the sculpture Alister.

Nutrien and FRRR partner to support community projects

NUTRIEN is partnering with FRRR (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal) to offer eligible not-for-profit groups (NFPs) a share in Nutrien's \$250,000 Community Grants Program.

The initiative, which is now in its sixth year, strengthens small rural and regional communities by offering up to \$5000 to groups who are carrying out meaningful activities in their region.

Nutrien Corporate Affairs Advisor, Madeleine Muirhead, said the program is designed to strengthen grassroots organisations and communities that have demonstrated a meaningful connection to the agricultural sector.

"At Nutrien, we have a long-standing commitment to Aus-

tralian farmers. For them to succeed, they must work alongside communities that are vibrant, resilient and thriving for the long term. This program reinforces that ongoing work," Ms Muirhead said.

"Over the last five years, we've supported more than 260 community projects. This translates to more than \$1.25 million in funding for important rural efforts, including programs to engage young Australians in meaningful career pathways, and important small infrastructure projects like maintaining local community hubs.

"Each year we see an incredible array of deserving causes, and in 2026, we expect this to be no different. If Nutrien's Community Grants Program sounds like something for you, we encourage organisations to read the guidelines on the FRRR website, before checking in with your local Nutrien branch manager to have your application endorsed."

FRRR's Head of Granting, Jill Karena, said the program will support a range of causes, reflecting the diversity of our regions.

"We know that no two communities are the same. That is why FRRR and Nutrien are casting the net wide to allow us to invest in the local priorities that really matter from region to region, whatever that may look like," Ms Karena said.

"From investing in local technology, to street art projects and supporting agricultural careers expos, these grants are making a real difference for the communities that depend on a strong, flourishing agricultural sector.

"Applications are now open and we can't wait to hear about some of the great ideas for the future, and the work that is already underway to strengthen agriculture across the country."

Additional information, including program FAQs, can be found on the FRRR website.

Applications for the 2026 Nutrien Community Grants Program close on Thursday, August 6, with the successful applicants announced in October.

Pet registration checks underway

COMMUNITY Safety Officers will be visiting towns across Murrindindi Shire over the coming weeks to follow up on pet registrations and promote responsible pet ownership.

Residents may notice council vehicles in their area, along with signs advising that officers are currently undertaking registration checks and community education activities.

Pet registration is a legal requirement and helps council reunite lost pets with their owners, respond effectively to animal-related concerns and support responsible pet ownership across the shire.

Council has recently contacted pet owners with outstanding registrations via text message and email. If you have received a reminder, now is a good time to ensure your pet's registration is up to date.

They also encourage all pet owners to check that their contact details are current, as accurate information helps officers quickly return lost pets to their families.

To find out more about pet registration, update your details or pay an outstanding registration, visit council's Pet registration and ownership page.

Rescue at Sugarloaf on the Cathedral Range

POLICE, ambulance, SES Alexandra and Marysville and CFA Monbulk and Wandin, along with a HEMS helicopter attended to an injured hiker on the morning of Wednesday, July 8. The walker had fallen and had multiple injuries requiring urgent assistance.

An initial SES team from Marysville climbed in to find the injured person, then a team of two Ambulance Wilderness Paramedics and one police member followed in to attend to the patient. A paramedic was winched in by HEMS nearby to the patient.

A further team of six steep and high angle members, two from Alexandra SES and four from Monbulk and Wandin CFA took rescue equipment in, as there was uncertainty about whether the HEMS helicopter could winch the patient out from where they were located.

Fortunately, the patient was able to be relocated and winched out by HEMS and taken to hospital in Melbourne.



RESCUE: Some of the SES and CFA rescue team.

Potential road rage incident near Alexandra Secondary College

A MOTOR vehicle incident in Alexandra last Friday afternoon was believed to be a road rage incident.

Emergency services, including Alexandra SES, Ambulance and Alexandra and Marysville Police, attended the scene in Downey Street, opposite the Alexandra Secondary College.

The incident involved two vehicles colliding, with one requiring towing away. The driver of one of the vehicles was taken away by police. There were no injuries.

Alexandra Police said that one of the drivers from the incident has been processed for an outstanding warrant. He is to be interviewed at a later date, but in regard to the other matters, he is inquiries pending at this point. He is a local to Murrindindi.

Victoria Police implore drivers to take it easy on the roads. If there is a disagreement between motorists, take a deep breath. If anyone observes collisions, don't attempt to pull over the other driver; report it to police and they can follow it up.

Police appeal for witnesses after erratic driving on highway

SEYMOUR Highway Patrol are appealing for public assistance following a traffic incident on Saturday, July 4.

Police are seeking information regarding several vehicles that were reportedly being driven erratically on the Goulburn Valley Highway between Yea and Seymour between approximately 4.30pm and 4.45pm.

Investigators are particularly interested in speaking with anyone who witnessed the vehicles involved or who has dash camera footage of the highway during this time.

If you have any information or footage that may assist investigators, please contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report online at crimestoppersvic.com.au



We are coming to Yea

A social and information evening for current and prospective families.

Join us for a relaxed and welcoming dinner to connect with local families, meet our team, and discover what makes Ballarat Grammar such a special community.



Event dates coming soon. Register your interest:



July
03 5338 0842
events@bgs.vic.edu.au

COMMUNITY DIARY

LOCAL RADIO FREQUENCY

- **UGFM 106.9** Alexandra / Lake Eildon
- **UGFM 98.5** Marysville / Lake Mountain
- **UGFM 88.9** Yea / Highlands
- **UGFM 98.9** Flowerdale / Hazeldene
- **UGFM 94.5** Kinglake Ranges

COMMUNITY GROUPS WEEKLY

- **Tue** Women's Walk @ 7am @Embassy of Ideas
- **Wed** Oasis Church, free coffee connection Ph 0408 123 581
- **Thu** Town Club, RSL Hall, 6-8pm. Ph 5797 2179
- **Fri** Man Walk @ 7am meet at RSL Hall
- **Fri** Communita 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas PH 0422 225 801
- **Sun** Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611
- **Sun** ALANON meeting; 5.30pm St Johns Hall. Ph 0402 428 086
- **Sun** AA meeting; 7pm St Johns Hall. Ph 1300 22 22 22.

MONTHLY

- **1st Mon** St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099
- **1st Wed** Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318
- **1st Thu** Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
- **1st Sun** Crop/Produce swap 10.30am--noon @ Embassy of Ideas
- **2nd Tue** Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285
- **2nd Wed** Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
- **2nd Wed** Murrindindi Men 6-8pm@ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
- **2nd Thu** Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
- **2nd Sat** Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
- **3rd Wed** Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318
- **3rd Thu** Alexandra Ladies Probus 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252
- **3rd Thu** Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas
- **3rd Sun** Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913
- **4th Wed** Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
- **4th Thu** Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517
- **4th Thu** Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0400 424 888
- **Last Fri** Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 0409 819 040

Contact Alexandra Standard and Yea Chronicle to add your event on 5772 1002 or email reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au. 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.

THUMBS UP
THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP

To the Women’s Health Mobile Clinic. Having the opportunity to sit down with a health professional for 45 minutes to discuss all things women’s health was empowering. The information given and the follow up care was outstanding.

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

The rationale behind selling The Mount

A SPECIAL meeting about the current state of the finances of the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre was held on the evening of Thursday, July 14. The meeting had been called by members at short notice to hear from secretary and treasurer David Beattie who announced the dire state of the organisation's finances on June 24 by email to members, along with the intention to place all three of the organisation's properties up for sale, being The Mount, the Nihill Street office, and the industrial land which has been on the market for the past two years.

After an introduction from meeting chair Damien Gallagher, there was a lovely speech from Ian, who was the first client at Menzies back in 1979 and is still using the service today. He outlined the activities provided through the years, and the importance of Menzies to clients. President and treasurer David Beattie then spoke. He said, “So we’ve run out of cash. As of Wednesday morning, we had \$30,000 in the bank. We have assets still, but we’ve run out of cash, so we had to make a decision.

“Last AGM, we told the membership that we had a couple of plans in place to resurrect the situation, which had been ongoing for a number of years, huge losses by anyone’s standard. They continued. We did get one plan across the line, but it took too long getting out of aged care [home services], which we believed was the reason for the majority of the losses. We’ve done that just in the last few days.

“At the time of the last AGM, I was hoping we’d be able to get that done and have enough money left to sponsor the organisation to a break-even trading situation. It took so long that we were pretty much down to the last \$100,000, and in transferring the business to Omnia, we incurred redundancies of \$100,000, which has put us in danger of shutting the doors.

“So, at the end of June, we had a committee meeting facing the situation that we didn’t want to and we had no alternative but to put The Mount on the market and we advised the members of that. So, that’s what we were putting off for a long time, to try and resurrect the business to keep it back to a break-even situation while we still paid cash.

“A year ago we had \$400,000 in the bank, so you can see why we didn’t do anything drastic then, but we got to that point now where there isn’t anything left to keep the organisation going. So we put it on the table, we made the decision, and you’ve all been advised of that. That’s what this meeting is for. To try and sponsor the declarations of the last AGM that if this was going to happen, the membership wanted to be consulted, and this is that.”

He added, “There has been some late-breaking news, and we’re not closing the doors. We’ve met a local family who are interested in buying the industrial land that’s been on sale for two years, and we’ve signed a

contract for sale of that.” This is still in the cooling off period. The sale was for \$350,000 even though the site was valued at \$800,000. He continued, “So that’s happened and we’re out of the water, but we’ve got a major problem because our debts and obligations far exceed that amount of money. In fact, down by about \$1.2 million to get back to trade, back to zero.”

His understanding is that The Mount is worth about \$2 million. If it sells, then the plan is to operate out of Nihil Street.

He said of the potential sale of The Mount, “In the same process, we’ll generate an investment fund that can keep running the business for a very long, long time... There’s no alternative, because nothing else will actually acquit us of those obligations.”

David was then asked by Damien to provide information on the balance sheet and summarise what are the assets and liabilities of the organisation.

David replied, “In the balance sheet, the non-current assets are \$3.5 million and current assets are virtually nil. We’ve got \$30,000 in the bank yesterday [Wednesday] and \$20,000 debtors and that’s it. And the liabilities, \$900,000 in the balance sheet. That excludes a potential liability or a tangible debt that hasn’t been fully exposed which is a quarter of a million dollars. And that’s a result of the last seven years’ trading that accumulated over that time. I don’t think I should elaborate on that. It’s contentious. Too many people having too much to say about that at the moment. The trouble is that that current assets includes an overdraft of \$200,000, so take the \$700,000 in current liabilities that we have, plus the contentious debt of quarter million, plus \$0.2 [million] overdraft, we’ve got \$1.2 million in liabilities, and 3.5 million of assets, which are all non-current, except for the one we just sold... So we’ve got \$1.2 [million] to cover.”

He added during question time that if they sell The Mount, they’ll keep the Nihil Street property and run the operation from there, later saying, “It’s possible we could buy a house that would be very similar to the farmhouse there.”

He said that The Mount is getting “very worn and tired. It’s probably hundreds of thousands of dollars to be spent on it just to bring it back up to a standard of safety.”

He said, “There isn’t any other way to save Menzies... We are in deep trouble.”

One of the questioners commented, “We’re a community that cares, and I’m sure if you had let us all know a couple of years ago, people would have come forward to help you.”

They also asked, “How did you lose that money?”

He replied, “It was \$1000 a day to do the services and pay the staff that we do and we bring in \$300 a day.”

When further questioned on this, he said, “When you trade for a \$30,000 to \$60,000 loss per



MENZIES: Acting CEO Kellie Fielder and chair David Beattie with member Gordon Simpson who called the meeting. PHOTO: Anne Richey

month, that adds up to \$1000 to \$2000 a day loss, because there are costs in running this business that were probably unforeseen, but the overheads of it, work care and the insurance is \$100,000 a year on a business this size, which is twice as big as disability, and everything changed in the business after we got into aged care. Everything got much more serious, and then after three years in it, our revenue started to drop from, I think at our height, we’re bringing in \$3 million a year in both, but down to about \$1.2 million, so it cost 30 per cent revenue in the last year.”

David explained that the CEO moved the organisation into aged care in mid-2022, which tripled the staff in one day and increased revenue by 30 per cent. After going into further detail, David said, “Disability is inherently much more profitable, and aged care is not.”

He added, “For the first three or four years, we were working with Nexus, who gave us a quota, and they decided that we had to pay them back for over-servicing our clients. The end result was they started withholding money from us, and that became the big issue for the committee. And we were pursuing that and understood that we were losing money, but we were actually worse than losing money because the reported losses weren’t showing the money we weren’t being paid. We were racking up a debt over here, which was equal to that loss. We managed to get that money back in the end, but it took us three years of putting up with it. And it was arduous and horrible and it was wasting so many people’s time chasing them for it. And in the end we got a lawyer around and he fixed it within a couple of months. But it left a bad taste there and then that organisation folded, and as it was folding, it was joining Sunbury Cobaw [Community Health], which was taking over from them because they were so useless at managing things. They found out we were chasing that money and they gave us the money. So that doesn’t explain why we lost money, except the quotes kept dropping down and down and down and they were giving our places to other areas.”

David was asked whether they’d had a choice about wheth-

er to take on aged care [services] or not. He replied, “The committee decided that they would do it... It didn’t have unanimous support, but it had enough support to get legs, so it got across and we ended up with it.

Asked what money the government gave the organisation to run it, David replied, “A lot of the things that they have to pay for in running an aged business are not funded. The only funding we get is just the hourly rate, I suppose. So, and travel, for instance, is not covered.”

He added, “In the sense that council had to pay there where it was under a certain award and we would pay them under a different award, we would pay them less. I didn’t see how anyone would go from one award to another any less. But that’s what it was sold as. I mean, I was there when they made this decision, but the treasurer gets one vote. We had nine people on the committee. And I think when they’re making financial decisions, the treasurer should get eight votes... So yes, you’re right. It was a horrible idea. I think there’s a lot of momentum behind it. And that’s why a lot of things happened.”

After a discussion about the current neglect of The Mount, another questioner asked about David’s earlier statement about \$300 dollars per day that was coming in. David replied, “No, I was using it as a demonstrative, this figure versus our costs... They’re not accurate figures.”

The questioner pointed out that the figures for NDIS are \$73 an hour and for remote it’s \$103 and very remote it’s \$110. David said, “I wasn’t pretending to actually have the exact figures on hand. I was trying to demonstrate the principle of bringing in less and paying out more.”

Peter Rice spoke from the floor about the history of Menzies and The Mount, and said, “I still can’t quite understand why action hasn’t been taken earlier when the finances started to go downhill,” and questioned whether the house at The Mount could be sold and the land around it sold off instead, along with the Nihil Street property.

David replied that subdividing the house from the surrounding land would be a two-year process.

■ Continued next page >



Four more Firefighters for the Triangle

AFTER five weeks of face-to-face theory training mixed with practical drills, four new operational firefighters completed their CFA General Firefighter course last Sunday, July 12. The new firefighters comprise a mix of three permanent residents and one recreational property owner who each volunteered after the Longwood Fire and are now qualified as CFA Bushfire Firefighters and able to respond to incidents to help protect their communities.

In somewhat damp conditions, the four members

from Taggerty and Buxton brigades completed a series of assessment evolutions designed to enable each trainee to demonstrate the practical skills required of a Bushfire Firefighter. Prior to the practical assessments, each trainee completed a series of online assessments for the theory component of the course.

CFA Volunteer Assessors Lieutenant Darren McGrath, from Eildon Fire Brigade, and Ex-Captain Paul Denham AFSM, from Buxton Fire Brigade, were assisted during

the practical assessments by members from Taggerty and Buxton. Each trainee was observed closely throughout the various evolutions, to ensure the requirements of the Public Safety Training Package were demonstrated by each firefighter.

After their session on Sunday, the new firefighters thanked all the members from Buxton, Eildon, Narbethong, and Taggerty brigades who had assisted with various components of the nationally recognised training course, along with the staff

from CFA District 12 who supported delivery of the course.

Brigades throughout the shire are always recruiting for new operational firefighters and support members. You don't have to live in a brigade area to join your local brigade, with recreational property owners and others reasonably available to participate in brigade activities welcome to become CFA members. Contact your local brigade for further information or visit cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteer

The evolution of NDIS

THE introduction to the NDIS began in 2013 however the rollout of the NDIS for clients in Murrindindi, specifically Alexandra and surrounds, transition began in 2019. This impacted local service providers with a significant change to the way they were funded.

Under the previous model, often referred to as 'block funding', service providers were aware of the amount of block funding they would receive and could set a 12-month budget accordingly. The NDIS, (aged care Commonwealth Home Support Program transitioned to this model in 2022), is based on a 'fee for service' model, this means that a service provider charges for the time they are with the client.

This hourly rate is inclusive of the support staff hourly rate, long service leave provision, annual and sick leave entitlements, their professional development, personal protective equipment (PPE), program costs and resources as well as the administration staff, operational overheads, registration and compliance costs.

The NDIS and Aged Care prices are worked out through sector consultation and are based on the Modified Monash Model (MMM). This model defines geographical locations as metropolitan, rural, remote and very remote. Murrindindi is classified as a 'MMM 5 small rural towns', and applies the

standard rate model, this means that the hourly rate for services provided in our region does not account for our challenging geographical placement.

Local service providers are not able to charge at a higher rate for service to account for the time and distance staff and clients are required to travel to access necessary services and programs, they can only charge the same rate as metropolitan services.

The rapid changes to the NDIS operating environment has impacted all service providers, but particularly rural and regional providers. The National Disability Service states in their 2025 State of the Disability Sector report that nearly half of all providers have reported financial losses and cannot continue to sustain their services.

Albury service provider Aspire announced last week they are closing their Aspire Support Services Lifestyle and Learning Service programs, including day programs and social and community participation, due to the upcoming changes to all NDIS plans in October.

The NDIS has stated that all NDIS plans will be reviewed from October 1 and budgets for social, civic, and community participation, and capacity building daily activities, will be progressively reduced by up to 50 per cent over the next five years.

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He also went into further detail about the potential sale of The Mount. "At an AGM, the rules of the company say that the members elect a committee. At that point, anyone's able to nominate to be on the committee, and that's where the power of running the company exists for that next year... The committee elected represents the membership. Last year, it was heavily remonstrated with the committee that The Mount should not be sold without consulting the membership. The way to get endorsement of that was to announce it prior to the meeting and say this resolution is to be voted on by the membership. So that was the way it should have been done and it wasn't done, so it doesn't hold validity. It is still able to be done by the membership. You can call a special general meeting, which this is not, because it hasn't had the required notice. You can get a quorum by having 10 per cent of the membership. You can pass a resolution given the correct amount of notice with the resolution in the notice for the meeting three weeks in advance. And you can pass that, that The Mount should not be sold. That's something that you can do. That's the way it's done. But without another ultimate injection of \$800,000, it wouldn't solve

the problem. It would actually force us into obligation."

A parent of a client said, "If The Mount stays, there's no service... There are ways of running a service through a shopfront, a large shopfront... What is more important, the program or The Mount?"

Another questioner asked about the hidden figure of \$250,000, not part of the profit and loss.

David replied, "I believe we could talk about that at a member's meeting, because I consider this a public meeting, and you as a member have the right to ask to see the records of the business, at this point, and I'd be happy to talk to you in the office at any time about that. But it's a contentious and not so contingent liability that it does exist in some way, shape or form or amount. It has been accounted for in the last set of annual accounts. So it's not made up."

David said that The Dame will remain operational while Menzies is operating.

Another questioner asked about selling the industrial land for \$350,000 and asked for the rates valuation on the land. It was noted that the committee met on Friday, July 3 and passed the sale. David said five or six people are on the committee, and it's possible to have nine.

In terms of the valuation of the land, David said he didn't

know but said it was recorded in the financial statements at \$800,000. He added, "So last week we got an offer which we accepted for significantly less than its value in accounts" and added, "the market changed in three years, we all know that." He said that no other offers had been communicated to them in the past two years.

The paid valuation on The Mount three years ago was \$2.4 million, and David said that he's now been advised that it's about \$2 million.

David said that the sale of the industrial land will keep the doors open for the rest of the year.

Another questioner asked why program and client expenses in the annual reports have gone from \$16,000 in 2023, to \$32,000 in 2024, to \$468,380 in 2025. David said that they were the result of grants, revenue matching expenditure.

David was then asked about whether the contract for the sale of the industrial land is binding, whether independent financial advice has been sought and whether consideration has been given to administration to support trading out of the situation?

David said that they received a report from a large firm three years ago which cost \$20,000 and "Told us nothing that we didn't already know, so we're not doing that again."

He added, "Voluntary administration was recommended by the big eight firm. They said, 'Well, we've looked at what you've done and we agree with you, so you'll have to make a plan or you could wind yourselves up'. And 66 per cent of the committee voted to wind it up on that day [David later stated that this was overturned at the following meeting]. So I recruited somebody, it was a bit unwieldy, but they kind of got sick of it, and they were worried about their own position, so they resigned. We've had some resignations on the committee. That's what happened. And subsequent to that, we were left with the option to make a plan, and the plan was, we're going to get out of aged care and we're going to try and get it all back The Mount, breaking even, working with good staff and doing good things, but getting out of aged care proved harder than you'd think because the remaining person wanted, insisted, we stay in aged care and started recruiting people who believed in that. I had a number of meetings who were telling me I wasn't doing a very good job and that I was missing opportunities in aged care. Anyway, that went on for a number of months and then we got a better committee the following year and they helped me get where I got, which is here. Well

it took so bloody long that we've run out of options."

He also stated that they're going to get an early release of the deposit (10 per cent) from the industrial land sale to enable them to continue trading. The balance is expected in a month.

He also said, "You may appoint an accountant to wind up their business if they can't see it trading out, but we can see it trading out, so we wouldn't do that. You could vote the president off the committee and put someone in who supports your idea, and the way to do that would be to call a Special General Meeting, this is a resolution, 'we want the President, Treasurer to resign... and you elect someone else. That's easy'."

He said, "We don't have an accountant doing our books, we pay outside people to look at our books."

In response to another question around community support and fundraising, he said, "I'd love the community to help. That would be great."

They are currently in the process of restructuring the organisation.

Gordon Simpon asked, "When you were in this trouble, did you have a balance sheet every month? Did you have a P&L (profit and loss) every month for Dame Patie Menzies?"

Acting CEO Kellie Fielder

replied, "Yes, we did, absolutely. From the accountants, as I said, as Dave said, we don't do them, we have an external accounting firm." She confirmed that they do their monthly P&L balance sheet.

Asked whether they would consider taking The Mount off the market, or consider holding off on selling The Mount for 28 days, or pause on any potential sale until members could provide instructions, David said, "Now it's too late. Without the money, we don't survive."

There was also a request from a member of the audience that members of the public not approach care workers to discuss the subject of Menzies financial position while they are working.

David said that if an offer is received on The Mount, "I'll have to come back to the membership. The answer will be we have to take it if it's the only one. If it's early, some people might say let's wait. I think it's worth more. If it's a lowball offer, that should be a possible way to handle it... But if it takes 12 months to sell, then we'll be in another world of pain by then, I reckon."

People were also strongly encouraged to become a member of Menzies. It only costs \$5 and forms are available from the Nihil Street office.

CHURCH SERVICES - ALEXANDRA
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
CHURCH SERVICES - YEA
ST PETER'S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH Cnr Bald Spur/Whittlesea Kinglake Rds, Sunday Services, 8.30am Communion. Minister: Rev. Ruwan Palapathwala 0458 113 099
ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA Sunday Service time 11am Prayerful Reflection - held each Tuesday, 10am to 11am - all welcome Father Mario Hendricks Ph: 0435 953 777
CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew 0459 402 547 St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm Immaculate Conception Parish Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am
CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE Fr Martin Ashe, Parish Priest Ph 9717 6482 St Mary's Kinglake: Sunday 8.30am
SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA Station Street Yea Sunday Service 10.30am Colin Whiteway Ph 0457 340 525
UNITING CHURCH 1st and 3rd Sundays 9am, 1050 Main Road, Kinglake West. 9716 2330

Murrindindi strengthens advocacy efforts at National General Assembly

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has returned from the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly 2026 having delivered one of its most significant advocacy programs in recent years, taking the experiences, challenges and aspirations of Murrindindi communities directly to national decision-makers and helping shape the national conversation on disaster recovery and resilience.

Mayor Damien Gallagher and Chief Executive Officer Livia Bonazzi represented the municipality in Canberra, meeting with senior Commonwealth representatives, participating in national policy discussions and working alongside neighbouring Strathbogie Shire Council to advocate for fairer recovery outcomes for regional communities affected by the January 2026 bushfires.

Council successfully presented two motions to the National General Assembly, with both receiving unanimous support from local governments across Australia. The motions focused on the growing impacts of disaster management fatigue on councils, volunteers and communities, and the need for more sustainable approaches to emergency recovery and resilience.

The delegation's advocacy focused on ensuring recovery support reflects the true scale of impact experienced by regional communities, improving telecommunications resilience, strengthening mental health support, addressing critical infrastructure challenges and securing long-term policy reform that reduces recovery burden on councils, volunteers and communities.

Mayor Gallagher said Murrindindi used every opportunity to advocate for the community and share the region's experiences following the devastating 2026 bushfires.

"In a crowded landscape of councils seeking support, Murrindindi ensured our community's story was heard at every opportunity," Cr Gallagher said.

"Our role was to ensure that the voices of affected residents, businesses, farmers and volunteers were heard by the people who influence national policy and funding decisions. We cannot expect our community's challenges to be understood if we are not prepared to take that story directly to Canberra."

During the conference, council representatives met with the offices of key Federal Ministers to discuss a range of issues affecting Murrindindi, including disaster recovery funding, telecommunications resilience, regional mental health support and infrastructure challenges.

Discussions highlighted the need for stronger and more resilient telecommunications networks, including redundant connections and improved backup power arrangements to support communities during emergencies.

Council also reinforced concerns regarding the pace and proportionality of bushfire recovery funding and advocated for additional mental health support for communities experiencing ongoing recovery impacts.

The delegation also met directly with Her Excellency the Honourable Ms. Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, to discuss the realities of recovery in Murrindindi and Strathbogie, the extraordinary contribution of local volunteers and the ongoing challenges facing communities six months after the fires. Following the meeting, council provided a formal recovery update and advocacy briefing to support continued engagement through relevant government channels.

A key theme of the visit was the strength of regional collaboration. Murrindindi and Strathbogie worked closely throughout the program, presenting a united case for communities affected by the January bushfires and demonstrating the value of neighbouring councils working together to advocate for shared regional priorities.

Cr Gallagher said the conference demonstrated the importance of building relationships and ensuring regional voices remain part of national conversations.

"Advocacy is most effective when it is built on strong relationships. Every interaction creates another opportunity to progress outcomes for our community," he said.

"While the formal sessions are important, the conversations between meetings are equally valuable. They allow us to learn from other councils, share our own experiences and better align our priorities with Commonwealth programs and initiatives."

Council also joined other local governments in supporting measures that would remove barriers to delivering key worker housing in regional communities, including calls to ensure councils are not disadvantaged through windfall gains taxation when rezoning land to address housing shortages.

Chief Executive Officer Livia Bonazzi said the visit highlighted the importance of local government having a strong and credible voice in national discussions.

"Good advocacy is about more than asking for funding. It is about building understanding, providing evidence and making sure the realities faced by rural communities are reflected in government policy and decision-making."

The National General Assembly provided an important platform to elevate Murrindindi's voice, build influential relationships and position the shire strongly for future funding, policy reform and investment opportunities. Council will continue pursuing the advocacy priorities raised during the visit and working with all levels of government to secure better outcomes for residents, businesses and communities across Murrindindi.

Citizens invited to participate in the Great Aussie Fungi Hunt this July

THE Great Aussie Fungi Hunt has begun thanks to iNaturalist. Running throughout the month of July, the hunt encourages citizens to take pictures of mushrooms and upload them to the iNaturalist website, where they can contribute to knowledge of fungi in Australia and have a chance to win prizes.

Whether it's a tiny splash of orange on a fallen log; a purple mushroom hiding beneath the leaves; or something so unusual it could even be a species never recorded before; iNaturalist wants to see it.

Grab your phone or camera and head outside. Whether you're exploring a national park, your local reserve, a backyard, farm or even a suburban footpath, fungi are waiting to be found.

Every photograph you upload helps scientists build a better picture of Australia's incredible fungal diversity. With so few mycologists across the country, your observations really do make a difference.

You don't need to know the names. Just look. Take three to four photographs. Upload to iNaturalist. Who knows, you might even make the next exciting discovery.

Last year more than 3500 Australians recorded 32,000 plus fungal observations, document-



FUNGI HUNT: Citizens are invited to take photos of fungi and help contribute to Australia's understanding of local fungi species. PHOTO: Bailey Dixon.

ing over 1300 species from every state and territory. As of July 10, there were over 19,000 observations recorded and over 1000 species identified in the challenge.

July can be dark under the forest canopy, so blurry photos are common, and difficult to identify. Take your time. Check your focus before you leave your fungal find. If it's blurry, simply take another shot. A sharp photo gives your observation the best chance of being identified.

The challenge runs from July 1 to July 31 anywhere in Australia. To view the status of the project, see what people are recording and submit your fungi photos, visit the iNaturalist website.

Eildon’s new landmark is a real feather in its cap



EILDON PARROT: Kerrie Malley and Karine Haslam from Eildon Events at the launch of Alister the king parrot. The sculpture project was generated by the community and created through community support and sponsorships. It will join the trail of ‘big things’ in Victoria.
PHOTOS: Anne Richey



EILDON PARROT: Project sponsors including representatives from Eildon Events, Eildon Opportunity Shop and AGL, along with one of the creators, Tank (fourth from left).



EILDON PARROT: The team from Edwards Built Family Houseboats.



EILDON PARROT: Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish speaking at the event.



EILDON PARROT: Eildon Primary School captain Hailie, with fellow students Shayla and Lily.

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Opposition leader visits Taggerty

OPPOSITION leader Jess Wilson stopped at the Taggerty Store on Wednesday, July 8, as part of her whistlestop tour, visiting every electorate in the state in 36 days. Last Wednesday was day 18.

Earlier on the same day, they drove from Wodonga to Mansfield and then on to Taggerty, before leaving for Healesville. She was accompanied on the local leg of her journey by Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish.

Jess added, "I've been to Yarck previously, of course, in the wake of the fires and around the Murrindindi Shire at that time. In Alexandra I saw the feed and the fodder depot that was set up there and just the amazing community spirit."

She said that the tour of electorates was "energising" and said, "We're just meeting such amazing people, people who are pretty angry and frustrated with this government, to be honest. The potholes, the danger on the roads, the cost of having to replace tyres, but looking to me to, as Victoria's alternative premier, to fix it."

When asked for her thoughts regarding our local area and what a Coalition government might invest in if they gained power, she said, "Roads will be a big focus. It's a massive issue in regional Victoria and so fixing our roads, maintaining our roads, upgrading and resealing is going to be a big focus and we'll have a lot more to say on that in the coming months."

"The other big part, I think that our commitment to 25 per cent of infrastructure funding will come to regional Victoria. At the moment, only 12 per cent of regional infrastructure funding comes to the regions under the Labor government. Over the course of our four years in government, we'll get that up to a minimum of 25 per cent."

"That means investment in health care, investment in schools, investment in our emergency services. We know that our CFA are under-resourced, and you've probably seen the news today about the CFA sort of being sanitised from being upfront about what they need and the resourcing that they need... The CFA was able to table the truth and then had to be re-dacted."

"We're really focused on how do we back in our emergency workers and our emergency services, and that'll be a big part of our election campaign as well."

She was also asked for her thoughts on forestry. She responded, "I think, and Cindy's been an absolute sort of champion for the local cause, we understand that the industry has been closed, and the closure was brought forward under this government."

"We're sort of realistic that it won't be what it was again, but we need to support the industry, we need to support the workers that were in there, the transition that didn't occur properly. And so we'll have a big focus on that transition and that going forward."

"But, we understand the need for timber in Victoria. We understand that right now we're importing it from other states and the Victorian taxpayer is also subsidising that and we're bringing it in from overseas as well. We're prepared to look at sustainable options, but unfortunately with the closure where it is, we're also being upfront that it won't come back the way it was before."

She was also asked about the Emergency Services Volunteers Fund tax. She said,

do so. And we'll scrap that tax, we'll return to the previous Fire Services Levy, and ensure that we prioritise our essential services, we'll end the corruption, we'll end the waste and make sure every single dollar of taxpayer money is respected in this state."

Asked whether there will be any increase to the Fire Services Property Levy, she responded, "We'll return to where it was and we'll look at that. Obviously the rates within that one, we'll need to look at that at the time, but we'll scrap the increases that have happened under this government and return to the previous model."



OPPOSITION VISIT: Sandice McAulay, Anne Sharrock, Geoff Sharrock, Opposition Leader Jess Wilson, Ray Goss and Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish. PHOTO: Anne Richey.



YEA ARTS: Acclaimed musician Sarah Belkner will be performing in Murrindindi Shire as part of her artist residency.

Acclaimed musician performing and delivering workshops in Murrindindi

ACCLAIMED Australian musician Sarah Belkner, whose career has included collaborations with artists such as Tim Minchin, Missy Higgins and Neil Finn, will spend a weekend in the district at the end of this month, leading workshops and presenting an intimate concert as part of a special artist residency hosted by Yea Arts Inc.

Pianist, singer, composer and musical director Sarah Belkner has built a reputation as one of Australia's most respected musical collaborators, combining an outstanding performing career with a passion for creativity, education and artistic connection.

The Saturday evening concert at Alexandra Shire Hall will be a highlight of the weekend, however Sarah's residency offers something that rarely comes to regional communities. Across three days, she will lead workshops for singers, musicians and songwriters, sharing her creative musical insights with theatrical, student and community participants.

"One of the great joys of presenting artists like Sarah is that the experience extends well beyond the concert," Yea Arts Inc President Adam Dennis said.

"Sarah has an extraordinary ability to encourage people to explore their own creativity. Whether you're an experienced performer or someone who simply loves music, spending time with an artist of her calibre is both inspiring and rewarding."

Belkner's career spans performance, composition, arranging and musical direction across theatre, concerts and recording projects. She is widely admired not only for her musicianship but also for the generosity and warmth she brings to her work with other artists. Additionally, her solo work has produced album and EP releases that have garnered positive reviews the world over.

Sarah's residency reflects Yea Arts Inc's commitment to bringing outstanding arts experiences to the Murrindindi region while creating meaningful opportunities for local people to learn directly from leading Australian artists.

The residency runs from July 31 to August 2, with workshops held throughout the weekend, and the concert at Alexandra Shire Hall on the evening of Saturday, August 1.

Book your concert tickets through YeaArtsInc.org/tickets

If you're a singer or musician who would like to attend a workshop with Sarah and possibly join her in performing some songs, contact Yea Arts Inc at YeaArtsInc@gmail.com.

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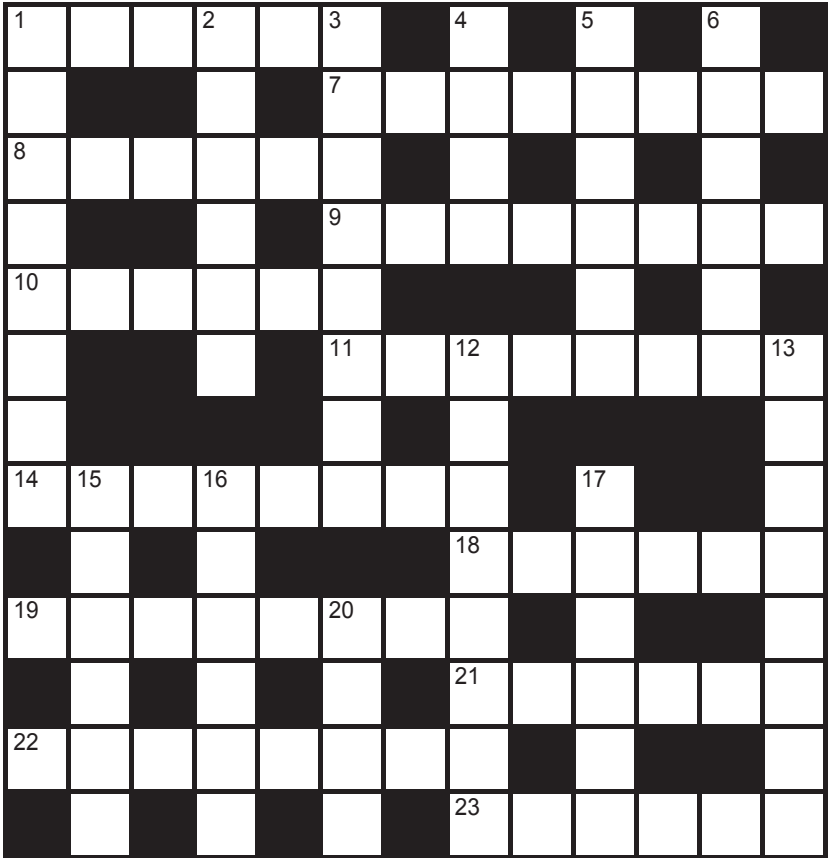


Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

1141

- ACROSS**
- 1 To be cat-like, is to be what (6)
 - 7 Who is devoted to luxury and pleasure (8)
 - 8 Name the former monetary unit of Portugal (6)
 - 9 In which place are public resources kept (8)
 - 10 To alter, is to do what (6)
 - 11 To reconsider, is to do what (8)
 - 14 What are tricky devices called (8)
 - 18 To drink, is to do what (6)
 - 19 Name the art of flying by mechanical means (8)
 - 21 What is a label or a tag (6)
 - 22 To make gradual inroads, is to do what (8)
 - 23 To have followed in order, is to have done what (6)



- DOWN**
- 1 To be swindling, is to be doing what (8)
 - 2 Name a large lizard of tropical America (6)
 - 3 To be private or confidential, is to be what (8)
 - 4 To be qualified means to be what (4)
 - 5 What is a decisive stage in the course of anything (6)
 - 6 What are violent outbreaks of thunder, lightning and strong winds (6)
 - 12 Name another term for wormwood (8)
 - 13 To have chosen, is to have done what (8)
 - 15 To devise something new, is to do what (6)
 - 16 To be deficient in quantity, is to be what (6)
 - 17 Name a contrivance for calculating (6)
 - 20 Which republic was formerly Persia (4)

MINI WORD FIND

441



Find the following words in the grid. They may be read in any direction, even diagonally. Some letters are used more than once.

- | | | | |
|------|--------|------|------|
| Act | Dot | Lid | Tell |
| Aim | Dung | Nine | Tin |
| All | During | Ran | Toll |
| Clam | Hand | Sink | |
| Cue | Leg | Tar | |

WHICH WORDS

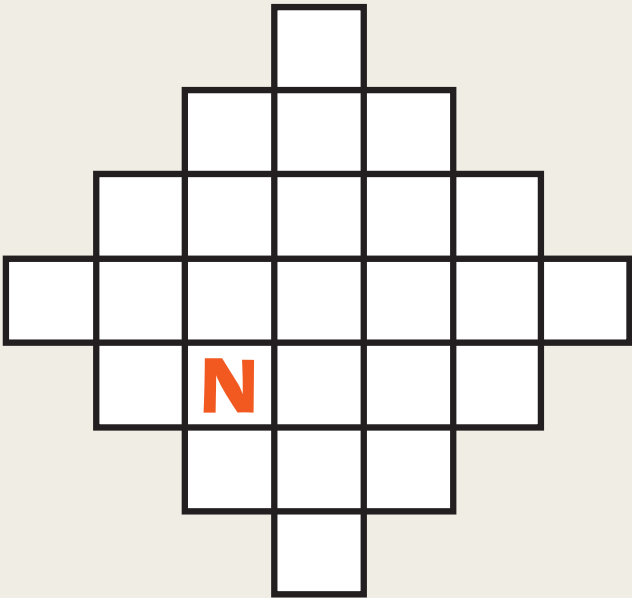
- 1 NADIR**
- (a) A birthmark
 - (b) The car of a balloon
 - (c) The lowest point
- 2 TRUCULENT**
- (a) Shortened by the cutting off of a part
 - (b) Aggressive
 - (c) Trustworthy

E-QUATIONS

451

Letters A to Z have a number value. Some are shown in the right-hand cells. Create remaining values using clues in centre cells.

D	O-W	6
E	Q-H	
H	Z×Z	
O	D+W	20
Q	O+D	
W	E×W	
Z	D-E	



BIYWORD

181

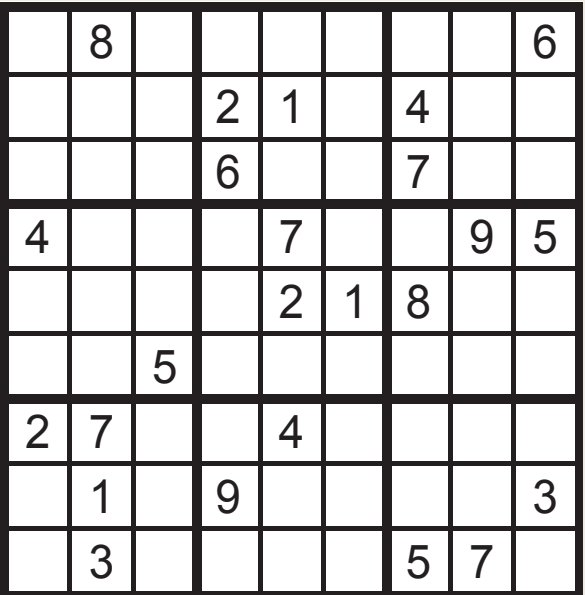
Build it yourself using the clues and each of the twenty-four letters once only to form ten words: five across and five down. A key word (bold clue) builds on the letter set in the grid.

- CLUES:**
- Anger (3)
 - Blather (7)
 - British sailor (3)
 - Bury (5)
 - Come in (5)
 - Funding (5)
 - Kipling hero: Mow... (3)
 - Of the glottis (7)
 - Presses (5)**
 - Single Lens Reflex (3)



SUDOKU

141

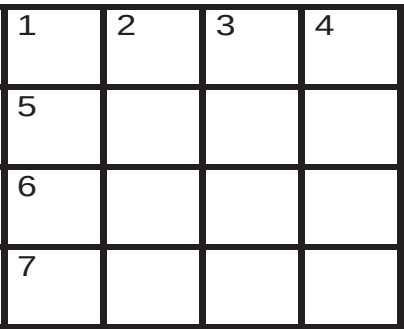


QUICK THINK

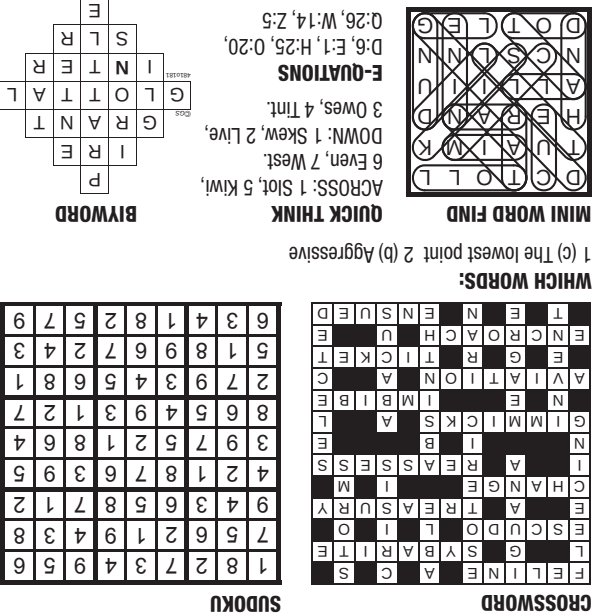
451

Solve the crossword. Each answer has four letters.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Opening | 1 Misrepresent |
| 5 New Zealand bird | 2 In play |
| 6 Uniform | 3 Has a mortgage |
| 7 Toward sunset | 4 Hair colourer |



SOLUTIONS



State Opposition accuses Labor of covering up CFA fire failures

THE Victorian opposition have accused the government of “deception and lack of transparency” after it was “discovered to be censoring evidence tendered to a parliamentary inquiry into last summer’s bushfires.”

The Upper House inquiry into the bushfires is understood to have been given a 33 page list of responses to questions taken on notice by the CFA, only for the government to attempt to withdraw it and replace it with “a sanitised 18-page response,” according to a press release from Nationals leader Danny O’Brien.

He stated, “The parliamentary committee was told the CFA’s answers had to be approved by a Cabinet sub-committee, the Victorian Government Solicitor and the Department of Justice and Community Safety before they could be provided to the committee.”

Danny O’Brien said the difference between the unfiltered 33-page response and the government censored 18-page version was stark.

“The original response provided to the parliamentary committee reveals a troubling tale of waste, mismanagement and staffing shortfalls that show the CFA was hampered in its ability to fight the summer fires,” Mr O’Brien said.

“CFA volunteers and the community will be disgusted to learn that the Labor Government is seeking to censor the CFA to cover its own backside.”

The original answers provided by the CFA state that nearly 20 per cent of CFA career staff positions were vacant at the start of the January bushfires, restricting support available to firefighters; more than half of CFA staff positions were vacant in districts covering the Longwood and Harcourt fires when they ignited; the cost of building CFA stations blew out by up to 365 per cent after the government took responsibility away from the CFA and created the new Community Safety Building Authority (CSBA); before the CSBA was established the CFA built 29 new stations per year on average, but since 2022 just two new stations were built each year; staffing shortages resulted in a ‘disrupted chain of command, lack of leadership continuity, reduced management capacity, operational capability, and inhibits CFA’s ability to adequately support brigades, members and stakeholders’, the CFA sought \$330 million in additional funding over three years but was granted just \$118 million by the government, and progressive funding cuts to DEECA have ‘constrained’ the statewide fuel reduction program and further cuts pose a ‘real risk to CFA fuel vegetation management activities.’

Mr O’Brien said, “These documents reveal the CFA is struggling through staff shortfalls, was dramatically undermanned during the fires and has been shortchanged by Labor bureaucracy that has cost taxpayers millions in excessive station building costs.”

The two responses submitted on June 4 and June 30 are publicly available at <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/2026firesinquiry/other-documents>

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish also expressed concerns, saying, “Labor has sunk to new lows, selectively editing and watering down the CFA’s damning report into the summer fires.

“The firefighting authority’s blunt assessment of a lack of funding for firetrucks, staff shortages and cost blowouts were removed from the final report to a parliamentary inquiry,” she said.

“Tellingly only two of the five senior operational staff in District 22, responsible for the Longwood area, were available in the week of the fires.”

In addition she said, “The original submission to the inquiry said progressive funding cuts to DEECA have ‘constrained’ the statewide fuel reduction program and further cuts pose a ‘real risk to CFA fuel vegetation management activities’.

“It also revealed that the CFA sought \$330 million in additional funding over three years but was granted just \$118 million by the Labor Government,” she said.

“They are not reducing the fuel load, they are not supplying the surge capacity of the CFA and they are not investing in new fire trucks.”

In response to the claims, a Victorian Government spokesperson said, “The CFA has not been censored and to say otherwise is wrong. The CFA itself made it clear their initial draft submissions didn’t meet public sector guidelines, were provided in error and should not be used as evidence.

“We have the best funded fire services in Australia and have increased the CFA’s funding year-on-year with a new truck rolling out at a rate of every four days and every CFA region receiving new infrastructure funding in the latest budget.

“The CFA receives funding over and above what is provided via the ordinary budget process including targeted funding that responds to emergencies.”

The following information was also provided.

They stated that the CFA’s budget has increased year on year since Fire Services Reform. This year’s budget also delivers \$100 million for new CFA tankers and pumpers, building on \$40 million in last year’s budget for CFA’s ongoing fleet replacement program.

Stations delivered by the CSBP respond to CFA’s own design requirements, are safer and of a higher quality, and done in consultation with local brigades so they have what they need.

The most recent report published by the Fire Services Implementation Monitor shows 92 per cent of firefighting positions filled, and continuing improvement across the past two quarters.

All public sector agencies must adhere to guidelines when participating in parliamentary inquiries. These guidelines apply to all emergency services agencies so that information provided to the Parliament is accurate, in the public interest and does not contain privileged content.

Comedy and Conversations at Yarck Hall

Sometimes the best medicine is a laugh; community events helping rebuild mental health after disaster

DISASTER recovery often focuses on rebuilding homes, fences and infrastructure, not the human spirit. On Sunday, July 5, the Yarck community gathered at the Yarck Hall for Comedy and Conversations, featuring comedians Dave O’Neil, Des Dowling and guest speaker Warren Davies, to bring some laughter and connection to the fire affected area.

Speaking after the event, mental health advocate and disaster recovery practitioner Warren Davies, known as The Unbreakable Farmer, said community gatherings that combine laughter, conversation, wholesome country hospitality and local health support can play a significant role in strengthening mental wellbeing.

“Disasters don’t just damage buildings,” Warren said. “They interrupt routines,

to breathe. It lowers barriers, starts conversations and reminds people they’re not carrying everything on their own.”

Research into disaster recovery continues to show that strong social connection and community participation are among the most important factors supporting long term recovery outcomes.

Warren said events like Comedy and Conversations demonstrate how local communities can strengthen mental health through simple, practical initiatives that encourage people to gather, talk and support one another.

“Sometimes the most powerful mental health initiative isn’t another meeting. It’s creating a welcoming space where people feel comfortable enough to have the conversations that really matter.”

Warren has published a new opinion article exploring why laughter, conversation and connection should be recognised as essential ingredients in disaster recovery. Read the full article on his website.



COMEDY FOR DISASTER RECOVERY: Comedian Dave O’Neil (bottom left) making the Yarck crowd laugh and comedian Des Dowling (left) entertaining residents at the Yarck Hall on Sunday, July 5. The Comedy and Conversations event, hosted by Alexandra Events, brought the fire-affected community together for laughter, food and support, with guest speaker Warren Davies reminding everyone that connection is a vital part of recovery.

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Authorised by C. McLeish MP, Shop 10, 38-40 Bell St, Yarra Glen VIC 3775

Murrindindi Shire Council stands with community six months on from January 2026 bushfire

SIX months after the January bushfires, Murrindindi Shire Council is standing with residents, families, farmers, businesses and communities still carrying the impact of one of the most devastating events in the shire's recent history.

The scale of damage was immense: one life lost, 217 homes destroyed, more than 500 sheds lost, 405 kilometres of roads damaged, thousands of livestock and animals killed, and private fencing losses estimated at more than \$120 million.

Murrindindi Shire Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said the six-month mark may be difficult for some people, and should be met with care, respect and continued support.

"For some people, six months on is not just a date on the calendar. It can bring back the shock of what happened, the grief of what was lost, and the reality of how much work still lies ahead," Cr Gallagher said.

"There is no right way to recover. People are rebuilding in different circumstances, at different stages and under different pressures.

"This stage of recovery can be exhausting. People may still be navigating insurance, rebuilding decisions, financial strain, loss of routine, farm losses, business disruption, environmental damage, or the emotional impact of what they have lived through.

"If you need support, please reach out. Whether it is prac-

tical help, financial guidance or someone to talk to, there are services available and people ready to help.

"We recently held some community recognition events to thank the extraordinary efforts of local volunteers, neighbours, community groups and informal leaders who stepped up when people needed them most," Cr Gallagher said.

"Our communities have shown extraordinary strength, teamwork and generosity through one of the toughest periods in our history.

"Council also recognises the many volunteers, community members and local leaders who have supported others in practical and meaningful ways.

"In Murrindindi, recovery has been carried in many small but powerful ways; a neighbour checking in, a farmer helping repair a fence, a local group sharing information, someone making a meal, opening a hall or simply making sure another person is not left on their own.

"Small acts of care can make a real difference, and staying connected as a community remains one of the most important parts of the recovery process."

Council officers have also been impacted, with many staff living in or closely connected to fire-affected communities while continuing to support response and recov-

ery efforts.

Council's Recovery Team is working with communities throughout recovery, helping people find information, connect with services and navigate rebuilding.

Council is also here to help residents with rebuilding information. At this stage, there are no delays to planning applications, and council continues to hold drop-in sessions across fire-impacted areas so people can speak directly with planning and building staff about permits, site considerations and next steps.

Community members can contact the Recovery Team at the Alexandra Customer Service Centre on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and the Yea Recovery Hub at Yea Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays both from 10am to 3pm.

Support is also available through the Emergency Recovery Support Program on 1800 560 760. Anyone needing urgent emotional support can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

A major focus for council is advocacy. Council continues to stand up for the community, including seeking extensions to recovery deadlines and working with other levels of government to encourage greater flexibility in eligibility criteria, so support can reach people, farmers and businesses who need it most.

Cr Gallagher said council's advocacy was focused on fair-



SIX MONTHS ON: Murrindindi Shire Council is continuing to support community six months after the Longwood fire. PHOTO: Bailey Dixon.

ness, flexibility and funding that reflects the real scale of the damage.

"Murrindindi does not want special treatment. We are asking for recovery support that matches the impact our communities have experienced," Cr Gallagher said.

"Our community was at the frontline of this disaster. It should not be at the back of the queue when it comes to recovery."

Council is also advocating for the repair of the rail trail, which is a major economic drawcard for the shire and an important part of the visitor economy that supports local towns and businesses.

Murrindindi Shire needs financial support to recover from this bushfire. Council is seeking funding that allows damaged infrastructure to be rebuilt better, not simply replaced like-for-like, so roads, bridges and community assets are stronger and better able to withstand future disasters.

Council is also seeking

greater support for environmental recovery, recognising the scale of damage to landscapes, waterways, habitat, roadside vegetation and private land across the fire-ground.

Farmers and businesses across the shire also need financial support to remain viable as they manage lost income, damaged infrastructure, increased costs and the long tail of recovery.

Council remains concerned about the limited mental health support available to the community. It has taken six months for local health teams in Murrindindi to secure more meaningful assistance, and there remain significant gaps for young people between school age and 25, particularly those who are not connected to school-based supports, including home-schooled young people.

Council has also raised concerns about funding equity. Murrindindi received eight per cent of the Council

Support Fund, despite experiencing 48 per cent of the damage from the January fires.

"Recovery is not finished because six months have passed," Cr Gallagher said.

"For many people, this is the point where the outside attention has moved on, but the hard work, the decisions and the emotional load are still very real. Council will continue to walk alongside our communities, keep listening, and keep pushing for the support Murrindindi needs."

Murrindindi Shire Council continues to work alongside local communities, recovery partners and government agencies to support relief and recovery efforts across the shire. Council's role includes helping connect residents with information, services and practical support, advocating for community needs, and supporting local recovery initiatives as communities continue to rebuild.

VFF calls for regional road reporting blitz

REGIONAL drivers are being urged to report every pothole and road hazard as part of a two week 'regional road reporting blitz'. The call follows new analysis by Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) showing a shock 75 per cent drop in Victoria's road repair target in just five years.

VFF President Ryan Milgate said every report would help demonstrate the scale of Victoria's regional road crisis.

"Victoria's country roads are the worst they have ever been, from the Murray River in the north to the coast in the south and west to the South Australia border. Many are literally falling apart and some are straight-up death traps," Mr Milgate said.

"It's a sobering fact that when driving on country roads, you're five times more likely to lose your life than when driving in the city. We have had over a generation of inaction on rural road infrastructure and that needs addressing urgently.

"Regional roads stakeholders met with the Roads Minister recently, and received a clear message that local reporting is critical to get repairs prioritised. That's why we're calling

for this 'regional road reporting blitz'. Every report helps demonstrate the shocking condition of our regional roads and sends a clear message that these roads cannot continue to be ignored.

"Our aim is to show how bad our roads have become. No longer are dangerous roads an isolated problem, it's a widespread issue and the more we report it, the louder our calls become to get them fixed," Mr Milgate said.

The reporting blitz comes after VFF analysis shows regional roads continue to be left behind for much-needed Victorian Government investment.

Victorian Budget figures reveal:

- Planned road resurfacing and rehabilitation works in regional Victoria have been cut dramatically over the past five years;
- Targets for regional road resurfacing and rehabilitation have fallen from 11,800 thousand square metres in 2021-22 to just 2859 thousand square metres in 2026-27, a reduction of more than 75 per cent.

"The government's own numbers show regional roads are being left behind. A more



• PHOTO: Adobe Stock

than 75 per cent reduction in planned resurfacing and rehabilitation works is unacceptable. Temporary patches are no substitute for rebuilding roads properly

and drivers, farmers and all of our rural communities are paying the price," Mr Milgate said.

Drivers can use VicRoads' online road issue reporting system, call 13 11 70 or upload their shots to Snap, Send, Solve to report hazards including potholes, damaged road surfaces, faded line markings and damaged signs.

Three arrested for thefts and criminal damage

ALEXANDRA Crime Investigation Unit detectives have charged three men in relation to recent burglaries, thefts and criminal damage incidents that occurred in Alexandra and Thornton.

Thousands of dollars' worth of power tools, equipment and copper has been recovered by detectives as a result of

executing search warrants in Alexandra, Kinglake West and Marysville.

A 36-year-old man from Alexandra was charged with burglary, theft, trespass and possess a prohibited weapon. He was bailed to appear at Mansfield Magistrate Court in August.

A 56-year-old man from Kinglake West was charged with handle sto-

len goods. He was bailed to appear at Ringwood Magistrates Court in September.

A 50-year-old man from Marysville was charged with burglary, theft, possess methylamphetamines and commit an indictable offence whilst on bail. He was bailed to appear at Ringwood Magistrates Court in September.

Equipment seized due to illegal spotlighting

THE Game Management Authority (GMA) has seized hunting equipment from two men caught in possession of firearms and spotlights within recognized deer habitat at night in the Cathedral Range State Park.

Officers intercepted the men in their 4WD vehicle and found two firearms (one unsecured and loaded), one thermal imaging scope, four spotlights and ammunition.

All the equipment was seized and both men received a 90-day suspension of their game licenses. Further charges are pending.

People caught hunting game at night, illegally spotlighting deer or failing to correctly store a spotlight, ammunition and firearm in recognized deer habitat during prohibited times may have their equipment seized and face fines of more than \$4000.

There are some forms of

legal spotlighting, including when landowners or their agents need to control pest animals or problem deer on private property.

It is illegal to use a thermal scope on public land at any time. Thermal monoculars are allowed, but only during daylight hours (30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset).

If you're concerned about illegal spotlighting in your area, report it to the GMA online or call 136 186.

Omid becomes part of Marysville family

OMID (Omidulla) Yousofi came from Afghanistan and arrived in Christmas Island by boat in December 2014 when he was 15. He was taken first to a detention centre in Tasmania and then transferred to the Broadmeadows centre in Victoria. While there he studied English and attended school at St Joseph's in North Melbourne for three years, completing Year 12.

Marysville residents Di and Ed Cherry met Omid when he got a job with the forestry commission in our area. Di and Ed are members of Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) Alexandra and met Omid several years ago. Omid is now a part of their family.

Omid currently lives in Melbourne and has a good job, and his long journey to citizenship has been realised. He became an Australian citizen on November 16, 2025.

If you would like to join Alexandra RAR please contact the convenor Paul on 0467 682 037 for more details.



PART OF THE FAMILY: Di Cherry, Omid Yousofi and Ed Cherry.

Rocky Road fundraiser for refugees

RURAL Australians for Refugees (RAR) Alexandra held a Rocky Road fundraiser on Saturday, July 4. It was a great success, with over \$1000 raised.

Locals were spoilt for choice with nine types of Rocky Road, decorated cookies, cakes and slices.

RAR Alexandra also used the event as an opportunity to thank locals for six years of generously responding to their fundraising efforts, initially buying RAR facemasks in 2020 when they raised \$10,000, and in the past five years when the organisation has raised \$30,000 by selling wood, doing street stalls, a concert and forums, as they continue to support Asef, Mariya, Mahdi and Shahri.

Since August 2021 when the Taliban took over in Afghanistan, Asef, Mariya, Mahdi and Shahri have been living in much danger. RAR have worked hard to find a



FAMILY: Asef, Mariya, Madhi and Shahri.

job opportunity for Asef, but many things have to occur before this will become a reality. In the meantime, Asef and his family's journey has definitely been a rocky road.

RAISING FUNDS: The Rocky Road fundraiser.



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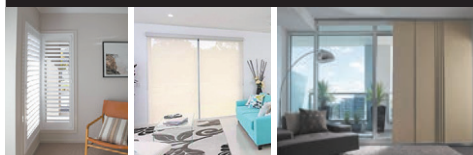
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PUBLIC NOTICES

U3A

Murrindindi East U3A

is holding their AGM on **Monday July 20, 2026 at 10.30am** at the Alexandra Bowling club in Alexandra.

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EMPLOYMENT



Hospitality Supervisor

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About the Role

This full-time leadership position presents the opportunity to be part of a close-knit, professional and high performing hospitality team within one of Australia's premier private clubs. Reporting into senior hospitality leadership, you will assist in overseeing the daily operation of clubhouse food and beverage services while leading by example on the floor and ensuring exceptional member experiences are consistently delivered. This is a hands-on role suited to someone who thrives in premium hospitality environments and enjoys mentoring teams, building culture and delivering personalised service.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead, motivate and support front-of-house team members during service
- Maintain exceptional service standards across all dining, bar and event operations
- Assist with rostering, service planning and daily operational coordination
- Ensure smooth day-to-day service delivery across the clubhouse
- Deliver warm, professional and highly personalised service to members and guests
- Support the coordination and execution of club events, functions and member experiences
- Assist with staff training, onboarding and development
- Maintain presentation, cleanliness and operational standards throughout the venue
- Handle guest requests and service recovery professionally and efficiently
- Work collaboratively with kitchen, golf operations and management teams
- Uphold Responsible Service of Alcohol and workplace safety standards

About You

To be successful in this role, you will ideally possess:

- Previous experience in a hospitality supervisory or leadership role
- A genuine passion for premium service and guest experience
- Strong leadership and communication skills
- A calm, professional and solutions-focused approach
- Excellent attention to detail and organisational skills
- A hands-on attitude and willingness to support all areas of the operation
- The ability to lead by example and foster positive team culture
- Flexibility to work weekends, evenings and public holidays
- A current RSA Certificate
- Experience within private clubs, premium restaurants, hotels or luxury hospitality environments will be highly regarded.

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- Competitive salary package, commensurate with experience
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EMPLOYMENT



Member Services Assistant

Cathedral Lodge and Golf Club | Thornton Victoria

Join Cathedral Lodge and Golf Club as a **Member Services Assistant**, where your passion for hospitality meets the elegance of our exclusive private club. As the first point of contact for Members and guests, you will play an important role in delivering exceptional experiences and creating lasting impressions.

In this front-facing position, you will provide warm, personalised service while ensuring every interaction reflects the high standards and exclusivity of our private club environment. This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to something truly special and help shape the Member and guest experience at one of Australia's most prestigious private golf clubs.

About the Role

As a **Member Services Assistant**, you will support the seamless day-to-day experience of Members and guests from pre arrival through to departure. Acting as the Club's central point of contact, you will coordinate reservations, enquiries, and services across golf, dining, and accommodation while ensuring exceptional attention to detail.

In this diverse and rewarding role, you will serve as a concierge, administrative support, and key liaison between departments to maintain smooth communication and efficient operations. Success in this role requires a professional approach, strong attention to detail, initiative, and a commitment to delivering exceptional service.

Key Responsibilities

- Provide a warm and professional welcome to Members and guests
- Manage reservations and coordinate services across departments
- Act as a concierge and key point of contact for Member enquiries and requests
- Support day-to-day operations through effective communication and organisation
- Deliver exceptional service while maintaining the Club's high standards of professionalism and discretion
- Anticipate Member needs and assist in resolving requests efficiently and thoughtfully

About You

We are looking for someone who is:

- Professional, polished, and service-oriented
- A confident communicator with strong interpersonal skills
- Highly organised with excellent attention to detail
- Proactive, adaptable, and able to work collaboratively within a team environment
- Passionate about creating memorable guest experiences

Preferred Experience

- Previous experience in hospitality, luxury service, tourism, or private club environments
- Experience in customer-facing or concierge-style roles
- Strong administration and coordination skills

While the qualifications and experience outlined above are preferred, we recognise that the right attitude, personality, and willingness to learn are equally important. If you are passionate about delivering the above role and responsibilities and believe you would be a great fit for this role, we encourage you to apply — even if your experience does not align with every listed requirement.

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EMPLOYMENT

Manufacturing Operator

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FUNERAL NOTICES

DARMODY

A Rosary Service for Stephen will be held Wednesday, July 15 at the St Mary's Catholic Church Alexandra at 4.30pm, all welcome.

The Funeral Service for Stephen will be held at St Mary's Catholic Church Alexandra on Thursday July 16, 2026 commencing at 1pm.

Please consider a donation to cancer research at Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. <https://www.wehi.edu.au/support-us>

Please refer to website for service livestream.



DEATH NOTICES

DARMODY,

Stephen Frederick.
24/12/1952 - 8/7/2026

Much loved and loving son of Fred and Nell Darmody (dec).

Fun loving, generous and loyal brother to Teresa, Bill, Genevieve, Louise and John, a great brother-in-law to Keith, Julie, Glenys Michael and Paul. Best Uncle ever to his many nieces and nephews and a much-loved Great-Uncle to their children.

Steve passed away after a brief illness surrounded by his loving extended family. He was one of a kind.

*'So fill to me the parting glass
And drink a health, what ere befall,
Then gently rise and softly call
Goodnight and joy be to you all.'*

WELTEN

The funeral service to celebrate the life of Henk Welten will be held at The Murrindindi Chapel, 21 Johnston Street, Alexandra, on Friday, July 17, 2026 commencing at 11am.

A private cremation will follow.



WELTEN, Henk.

23/2/1948 - 5/7/2026

Devoted husband to Rhonda.

Cherished father to Shane, Angela, Jay, Mark and Jaimi. Loving father-in-law to 'the Petes' and Rachael, and a loving Poppy.

Always in our hearts.

SPORT

Four ball best ball competition at Marysville Golf Club

By LESLEY RUNDLE

MEMBERS and friends of the Marysville Golf Club would like to send their condolences to the friends and family of Steve Darmody who died suddenly last week.

Steve was an avid golfer and a member of the Alexandra Golf Club.

Many of the Marysville golfers played with Steve in a number of club and Dalhousie events and most recently in the Foodworks Murrindindi Masters.

He was friendly and fun and often when giving the Alexandra Golf Report on UGFM he would fill in his time allowance with some of his famous 'jokes'.

The club's thoughts are with his family and the members of the Alexandra Golf Club.

The Thursday golfers played stroke on the front nine holes last week.

The winner was Richy Clark (7) with nett 33 followed by Lloyd Flaherty (9)

with nett 36 on a countback.

Mark Alexander had 11 putts and a nearest the pin on the ninth hole and Richy was closest to the pin on the fourth hole.

Also, last Thursday Glen Rattay and Keith Atwell played in a sudden death play off for the final of the Winter Aggregate.

Congratulations to Keith for winning the play off and the Winter Aggregate trophy.

Conditions were good for golf last Saturday when the players played a four ball best ball stableford round with partners being selected after the game.

Margaret Blair (36) with 32 points was the ladies daily winner followed by Gail Leigh (11) with 31 points.

Richy Clark (15) with 37 points won the men's daily competition with Colin Davies (28) runner up with 36 points.

The randomly selected winning four ball best ball team was Richy and Margaret with 69 points and Colin and

Adam Littlejohn were the runners-up with 68 points.

The nearest the pins were won by David Douthwaite, Richy Clark and Brian Worcester.

Brian's shot was also the shot of the day.

His tee shot on the 18th landed very close to but just past the pin.

The ball then spun backwards travelling close to the hole and missing the drop by just millimetres.

Good shot Brian.

Next Saturday all golfers will play a stableford round.

Members would like to thank the course volunteers who, under the recent challenging weather conditions, have maintained the greens and fairways so well.

Members are reminded to please sell the club raffle tickets and return them to Steve Coker as soon as possible.

A few more raffle books are still available.

The Club Committee will meet at 8am next Saturday.



YEA JUNIOR NETBALL: The 13 and Under Black award winners, Emily Wilsher and Belle Parnis.



YEA JUNIOR NETBALL: The 11 and Under award winners, Jake Alldrick and Lexi Turner.



YEA JUNIOR NETBALL: The 13 and Under Yellow award winners, Brooklyn Waghorn and Kailey Anderson.

YEA JUNIOR NETBALL AWARD WINNERS

ELEVEN AND UNDER

Award winners: Yarra Valley Gas Ignite Award, Jake Alldrick; Just Great Coffee Player of the Day, Lexi Turner.

THIRTEEN AND UNDER YELLOW

Award winners: Yarra Valley Gas Ignite

Award, Brooklyn Waghorn; Sprout Wellness Player of the Day, Kailey Anderson.

THIRTEEN AND UNDER BLACK

Award winners: Yarra Valley Gas Ignite Award, Emily Wilsher; Delux Rod Shop Player of the Day, Belle Parnis.

Personal Notices



Shadow and thick fog cast over golf club

By DAVE SILVERMAN

ONCE again this week, a pall has been cast over the Alexandra Golf Club community, with the sudden passing of Steve Darmody. He was a long standing, much valued and highly respected member of the club, and will be sorely missed. The club's thoughts are with his family and all his other friends at this time.

Tuesday competition nearly didn't happen last week, and there were a couple of reasons for that. Firstly, the course only re-opened last Monday morning after last week's rain, and second, the fog, so

much a feature of winter in Alexandra, hung around until well after the normal tee time of noon.

As a result of all the above, it was a very small group of five hardy (or foolhardy, perhaps) souls who teed off, in a group of five, at midday. And while the course condition was not as bad as feared, it was a very long, gruelling afternoon, with literally the only bright spot being that the sun came out for about 30 minutes around 2.30pm, before the fog re-asserted its dominance, and by the time we reached the 18th tee, the green was completely invisible.

So, after all that, the winner was Bill Wind with 30 points, second

was Nigel Waterhouse also with 30, and Frank Devries in third on 27. No nearest the pins went off, and I'm sure that we were all very glad to get home and put our feet up.

There was no competition last Wednesday, but Ruth and Sandra decided to go out for a social hit, which turned into 18 holes. That's the spirit, girls.

Last Saturday's stroke round was to decide the July Monthly Medal, and despite the threat of rain, 16 players lined up to vie for the prize. The game was preceded by a minute's silence for Steve, and a short but moving tribute from Captain Luke Heard.

In the end, the weather held until we were all safely in, and the course has firmed up just a tad, but there was still only one person who managed to play to his handicap, and that was Luke, whose 69 nett 70 was good enough for him to take home the medal. Congratulations, Heardy.

Second was James Kidd with a nett 71, Michael Bossonnet came in third with 74, Brad Kidd was fourth with a 75 and fifth went to Greg Ebinger with a 77.

Luke needed only 23 putts for the 18 holes and also took off nearest the pin on five. Brad claimed two and seven and 18 went to James.

Competition returns to Yea Golf Club after cold and wet spell

By ALAN PELL

AFTER a week of no golf due to wet conditions, it was good to see competitors return to Yea Golf Club last week.

Last Saturday's Monthly Medal at 'Royal' Yea Golf Club attracted just 11 players, while last Wednesday's smaller field contested a stroke and putting event.

Last Wednesday, Bob Glenister (10) continued his good form to win with an excellent nett 68, finishing two shots clear of Luke Gregory (9) on nett 70. Luke did, however, take out the putting competition with just 24 putts. There was no winner for the nearest the pin on the 11th, while Mick Sheather claimed the Club Award.

Last Saturday's Monthly Medal saw Anthony La Grutta (14) take the honours with a nett 73. Jeff Aurisch (24) was runner-up on nett 74, with Jim Redmond (23) third on nett 75. Once again there was no winner for the nearest the pin on the 11th, while Rob O'Halloran collected the Club Award.

In the Club Knockout, Peter Johnston defeated Rob O'Halloran to progress to the next round.

Roos show strength and resilience in NAIDOC Week clash

By SOPHIA WEAVER

IT was an emotional and high-spirited evening for the Thornton Eildon Roos as they took the field for Round 13 against Woori Yallock. The match held a deeper significance, celebrating NAIDOC Week with the team returning their specially designed Indigenous jumpers.

According to Coach Tash Hay, the pre-game atmosphere was filled with anticipation.

"The Roos were excited for another evening game and the opportunity to wear our Indigenous jumpers," Hay stated.

In her pre-game address, she highlighted the deep significance of the uniform, sharing that "they represent women, community, and empowerment, values that truly reflect who we are as a club."

The design served as a powerful reminder of the squad's core identity, focusing heavily on "strength and resilience."

The elements played a massive factor in the opening halves. A fresh atmosphere was overridden by an incredibly strong wind that heavily favoured one end of the ground. Woori Yallock won the coin toss and tactically chose to kick with the gale-force wind, using it to secure a solid lead early in the first quarter.

The Roos fought back valiantly when they received the wind advantage in the second quarter, successfully hitting the scoreboard for the first time. However, trailing at the main break, it was up to the leadership to spark a fire.

Coach Hay didn't mince words at the major break, demanding a lifted work rate and an adherence to their pre-match values.



STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE: Thornton Eildon gameday award winners **Rachelle, Rosie and Bec.**

STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE: The Thornton Eildon women's football team after taking on Woori Yallock.

"At half-time, I told the team that we were capable of having a much greater impact on the game," Coach Hay remarked.

"I challenged them to bring strength and resilience into the second half and they certainly did."

The response from the playing group was immediate and fierce.

"The Roos applied great pressure all over the ground and worked exceptionally well together," proving that they could match it with top-tier opposition. The defensive grid locked down beautifully, holding a dangerous Woori Yallock side to "just one goal and a few points in the third quarter, a significant improvement from the first half."

The relentless pressure carried directly into the final term. The Roos camped themselves inside their attacking 50, "locking the ball in our forward line and creating

multiple scoring opportunities."

While the final bounces didn't all go through the big sticks, adding two points to the total, it marked a historic milestone for the team's offensive entries. The effort yielded "the most scoring opportunities we have achieved this season." For Hay's squad, the emphasis remains on "always focusing on the little wins as a team."

Ultimately, Woori Yallock walked away with the victory, a result Coach Hay acknowledged gracefully.

"Woori deserved the win today and have been working hard each week themselves."

Despite the result on the scoreboard, the culture of the Roos shone brightly, earning ultimate respect from their opponents.

Following the final siren, Woori Yallock extended high praise to the team, stating: "Your team is so

friendly. They play hard but are a great team. Keep up the great work, keep working hard."

It is a culture and a performance that the entire club can build on as they look toward the remainder of the season.

Gameday award winners: Rachelle Chenhall, Club Voucher; Rosie Hornville, Dindi Kids; Rebecca Alexandrou, Valley Aged and Disability Home Care Support Services (VADHSS).

Next round is a special one, the Outer Eastern Football Netball's inaugural women's Gather Round on Saturday, July 18. All women's teams will be playing on the same day at the same place.

Get down to Rob Porter Recreation Ground in Officer from 10.20am to watch the day's action, especially for the TEDFNC crew to play Gembrook Cockatoo at 1.40pm.

Twelve players for four ball best ball competition at Eildon Golf Club

By PUTTAMATIC

HELLO everyone and welcome to the Eildon Golf Club weekly report. Last week 12 players compete in a par four ball best ball aggregate competition.

The weather and the course both were great for golf, and the course has dried out well, however still a few wet parts that the carts needed to be careful of. Overall, very good and the greens were surprisingly quick.

The winners last week were the team of Nick and Leigh Munro, returning to the club rooms with a plus one, followed by the team of Sandi and Michael McLear with minus two. Ball run going to team Kerry Power and Rod Taylor with minus five.

Nearest the pin winners, third Michael McLear, no winners on the fifth, 11th or 12th but Nick Munro was the closest on the 14th.

There were two birdies on the eighth birdie hole, winning drinks for their group Nick and Leigh Munro, there were no birdies on the 15th last week. Nick Munro also took out the super six; Peter McNair was the entry draw winner and Ken Collier had a spin at the swindle draw.

Next week will be a stableford round with the following week being the July Monthly Medal stroke round. Congratulation to all winners and the club look forward to seeing you soon. Until next time, take care and happy hitting.

Alexandra Football Netball Club volunteers recognised on the national stage

THE Alexandra Football Netball Club is proud to announce that Club President Kylie Cairns and Club Secretary Michelle Jack have both been nominated for the 2026 Toyota AFL National Volunteer of the Year Awards.

The nominations recognise the extraordinary commitment, passion and countless hours of volunteer work that both women contribute to the club and the wider Alexandra community.

As part of the nomination through the Goulburn Murray Junior League process, Kylie and Michelle have been recognised by the AFL Community Football Team for their dedication to the game and now go into consideration for the national award, which includes the opportunity to attend the 2026 Toyota AFL Grand Final and participate in the AFL Grand Final Parade.

While the nominations are a wonderful personal achievement, they

also highlight the strength of volunteerism that exists throughout the Alexandra Football Netball Club.

Like many country clubs, Alexandra relies on volunteers to make football and netball possible. From administration and fundraising to game day operations, coaching support, canteen duties and countless behind-the-scenes tasks, the club is built on the efforts of people who generously give their time for the benefit of others.

Both Kylie and Michelle have played significant roles in helping guide the club through a period of growth and stability. Their leadership, dedication and commitment have helped ensure the club remains a welcoming, inclusive and family-oriented environment for players, members and supporters.

The recognition comes at an exciting time for the Alexandra Football Netball Club. Participation remains strong across football and netball

programs, community support continues to grow, and the club remains committed to providing opportunities for people of all ages to be involved in local sport.

While Kylie and Michelle have been recognised nationally, the club acknowledges that this achievement also belongs to the many volunteers who contribute throughout the season.

The Alexandra Football Netball Club congratulates Kylie and Michelle on their well-deserved nominations and thanks every volunteer who helps make our club such an important part of the Alexandra community.

COMMUNITY SPORT VOLUNTEERS:
Alexandra Football Netball Club President Kylie Cairns and club Secretary Michelle Jack, who have both been nominated for the 2026 Toyota AFL National Volunteer of the Year awards.



Solid teamwork for Yea junior footballers

By KATE ADAMS and JESS ROBINSON

UNDER NINES

THE Under Nine Yea Tigers ran out in proper cold, wet and muddy winter football conditions, showing great effort across all four quarters. Despite the challenging weather, the players attacked the ball with determination and maintained pressure around the contest.

Yea's midfield worked hard to move the ball forward in slippery conditions, while the backline held firm and defended well under repeated entries. The forwards created contests and kept the ball inside the attacking third whenever possible, kicking some exciting goals.

The team displayed excellent teamwork, resilience and a positive attitude throughout the match. It was a tough day to play football, but the players adapted well and remained competitive from start to finish.

A huge congratulations to last week's award winners: Ryder, Just Great Coffee Encouragement Award; Caleb, Yarra Valley Gas Ignite Award; Chet, Progression and Physiotherapy Performance Best Player.

The Tigers showed they can compete in any conditions and never shy away from the challenge. Proud of their effort, teamwork, and willingness to get absolutely covered in mud.

The club says thank you to their supporters for braving the cold weather and cheering the team on.

First Nations Round for Yea Football Netball Club teams

THE Yea Football Netball Club teams competed at their home ground last week in the First Nations Round. The netballers had three out of four wins, while the Senior footballers beat Emerald, the Reserves lost, and the Senior women's team continued their winning streak, remaining undefeated so far this season.

- FOOTBALL**
- Seniors**
- Yea 62 defeated Emerald 48
- Reserves**
- Yea 40 defeated by Emerald 76
- Senior women's**
- Yea 49 defeated Emerald 12
- NETBALL**
- A Grade**
- Yea 45 defeated Emerald 44
- B Grade**
- Yea 48 defeated Emerald 28
- C Grade**
- Yea 37 defeated Emerald 36
- D Grade**
- Yea 20 defeated by Emerald 31

Next week the netball teams and male footballers head to Pakenham for matches against Pakenham Lions. The Senior women's team travel to Officer to take on Woori Yallock.



YEA SENIOR FOOTBALL: Attempting to outrun the Emerald opposition and get the ball away safely. PHOTOS: Savannah Gregory Photography



YEA SENIOR FOOTBALL: Flying high to try and grab a soaring ball.



YEA SENIOR NETBALL: Shooting for goal with Emerald defender trying to intercept.



YEA SENIOR NETBALL: A desperate intercept attempt to prevent Emerald scoring.

UNDER 10

The weather may have been overcast and cold, but the Yea Under 10 team was ready to play and enthusiasm was high.

They may not have had a full team but from the first siren the kids applied great consistency putting goals on the board with consistency each quarter, and playing strong to the final.

Last week's goal kickers: Archie, Ashton, Charlie, Elliott, Josh, Logan S, Nullah, Olivia and Jake.

Awards: Yarra Valley Gas Improvement, Archie; Delux Rods Tiger Spirit, Josh; Cathkin Coach's Award, Charlie.



ALEXANDRA JUNIOR NETBALL: The junior netballers taking on Broadford.



ALEXANDRA JUNIOR NETBALL: Getting ready to pass the ball while playing Broadford at home.



ALEXANDRA JUNIOR NETBALL: Strong offence and defence at the Alexandra netball courts despite foggy conditions.

Alexandra Rebels junior football and netball results

FOOTBALL Under 16 Alexandra 44 defeated by Seymour 55 Award winners: Reddrops Foodworks Award, Fletcher Van Lierop; Essence Coffee Lounge Award, Mav Burchall; Kazza's Diner, Jayd Bennett; Gilligan Plumbing Award, Logan Conway; Coaches Award, Riley Galloway. Under 14 Alexandra 27 defeated by Kyabram 82	Under 12 Alexandra 56 defeated Wandong 14 Award winners: Reddrops Foodworks Award, Max Bristow; Essence Coffee Lounge Award, Benjamin Cavill; Kazza's Diner Award, Nate Carter; Coaches Award, Zac	Under 10 Award winners: Kazza's Diner Award, Jedd Kelly; Canteen Voucher, Ollie Lynch; Footy Cards, River Lamaro and Roy Hedger. Under Nines Award winners: Essence Coffee Lounge Award, AJ Doyle; Sherrin Bounce Footy, Dallas Leary; Phil Savage Award, James Munro; Footy Cards, Ned Hedger and Jude Nardella-Morcom.	NETBALL Under 15 Alexandra Black 44 defeated Alexandra Red 27 Alexandra Black award winners: Zoe Collier, Bella Twitchett and Tilly Milkjovic. Alexandra Red award winners: Sam Fraser, Chloe Woehl. Under 13 Black Alexandra 14 defeated by St. Mary's 50 Award winners: Lila Friswell and Haley Coghill.	Under 11 Black Alexandra 10 defeated Broadford 9 Award winners: Isla Jenkins and Lalah Goodman. Under 11 Red Alexandra 7 drew with Nagambie 7 Award winners: Eva Nardella-Morcom and Matilda Kerr.
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ALEXANDRA JUNIOR FOOTBALL: Under 12s player Logan Heard booting the football.



ALEXANDRA JUNIOR FOOTBALL: Under 14s player Will Simpson getting solid contact with the ball despite a muddy ground.



ALEXANDRA JUNIOR FOOTBALL: Under 16s player Brock Hogan moving the ball despite intercepting opposition.

Young Rebels show grit on the road

THE Alexandra Football Netball Club Senior footballers and A, B and C Grade netballers enjoyed a well-earned bye last weekend, with the club's attention turning to their Under 18 footballers and Under 17 netballers, who were both on the road representing the Rebels, as well as the club's 2026 Patrons Day.

Under 18 Football

The Under 18 footballers travelled to Mt Evelyn for an early morning clash. Despite another determined performance and never giving up, the Rebels came up against a strong Mt Evelyn outfit, going down 18.18-126 to 2.2-14.

The boys continue to show great commitment each week and should be proud of the way they represent the club.

Award winners: Bowens Award, Heath Sutcliffe; Kia Chadstone Award, Harry Morely; AFNC Club Voucher, Connor Kaempkes; and Coaches Award, Xavier Cowell.

Under 17 Netball

The Under 17 Netballers travelled to Yea to take on Emerald and, with only seven players available, produced an outstanding effort.

The girls matched Emerald for much of the game and remained in the contest until the final quarter before Emerald pulled away to claim a 29 to 22 victory.

It was a fantastic display of determination and resilience from the team.

Award winners were Eva Twitchett and Taya Barkley.

This weekend the Rebels return home to Rebel Park, with the Senior Footballers and A, B and C Grade netball teams taking on Yarra Junction in what promises to be another great day of football and netball.

The Under 18 footballers will enjoy a well-earned bye, and the club encourage all supporters to get down to the club and cheer on the Rebels as they continue the second half of the season.



PATRONS DAY: Alexandra Football Netball Club President Kylie Cairns, special guest Billy Brownless, and club Secretary Michelle Jack.

Billy brings the house down

MORE than 80 patrons, sponsors and supporters helped make Alexandra Football Netball Club's 2026 Patrons Day one of its most successful fundraising events in recent years.

Guests were welcomed by Club President Kylie Cairns, with Murrindindi Shire Mayor Damien Gallagher among those in attendance. Before proceedings began, a moment was taken to acknowledge the tragic passing of young footballer Nathan Fitzgerald.

In a gesture reflecting the spirit of country football, the club announced that a portion of the day's raffle proceeds would be donated to Epping Football Club in support of Nathan's family.

From there, the afternoon took on a life of its own.

Billy Brownless delivered exactly what everyone had hoped for; plenty of laughs, great stories and the kind of down-to-earth humour that has

made him one of football's most popular personalities.

From tales of AFL life to behind-the-scenes moments in the media, he had the room laughing from the very first question and never really let up.

But some of the highlights came away from the spotlight.

Billy generously spent time chatting with guests, posing for photos, signing memorabilia and engaging with supporters throughout the afternoon.

When auction time arrived, he was in his element, working the room with ease, encouraging bids and creating an atmosphere that had everyone eager to join in.

The generosity in the room was nothing short of remarkable.

Combined with a hugely successful raffle, the auction exceeded expectations, helping make Patrons Day 2026 one of the club's most suc-

cessful fundraising events in recent years.

Just as importantly, the afternoon showcased everything that makes country sport so special.

Long-time supporters caught up with old friends, sponsors connected with volunteers, and familiar faces mixed with the next generation of local footballers.

There was a genuine sense of pride in the room and a shared appreciation for the role the club continues to play within the Alexandra community.

Events like these don't happen by chance.

They are the result of weeks of planning, generous sponsors, local businesses donating prizes, volunteers giving their time, and a committee committed to creating an afternoon that truly reflected what the Alexandra Football Netball Club is all about.

Last Saturday's success was a reflection of a community that continues to invest in its club, and a club that continues to bring its community together.

The Alexandra Football Netball Club extends its sincere thanks to Billy Brownless for making the trip to Alexandra and for giving so generously of his time.

Thank you also to the Patron Members, sponsors, local businesses, volunteers and everyone who attended and contributed to making the day such an outstanding success.

As guests lingered long after the formalities had finished, one theme kept emerging in conversation; what a terrific afternoon it had been.

The stories were memorable, the fundraising exceeded expectations, and the atmosphere captured everything that is great about country football.