

New beach volleyball court at Alexandra Secondary College



Anne Nadj, George Nadj, Lachie Morrison, Allie Crouch and Darrell Hedger. -AR

ALEXANDRA Secondary College have a brand new beach volleyball court

Allie Crouch, sports coordinator and Physical Education (PE) teacher, explained that the school got some funding for school sports and Active Sports Victoria. Darrell Hedger, along with Lachie Morrison who developed the stands and cage for the umpiring, have designed and built the court.

George Nadj, Anne Nadj and Paul Francis have also helped with the build, ensuring that the dimensions are correct. As a result, the school now have a full size beach volleyball court.

Allie said that the students have been very proactive in developing their volleyball skills, and the teachers thought that having a beach volleyball court would help them to improve their skills a little bit more. It would also bring them outside and utilise the space better.

The children started using the court when school resumed this year. The court also allows students to have an active lunchtime and to mingle with students from other year groups.

Allie has found that students making the transition from primary to secondary education can be a little uncertain about what to do at lunchtime, and the court can give them a focus.

"It's really lifted our school grounds. It's a lovely thing to be able to drive past and see. It looks really professional and makes the children really proud of the facilities and what they have," Alli said.

They're planning to run inter-house competitions. They also have a large volleyball unit in term two, with all year sevens and eights playing beach volleyball for the term in PE.

Congratulations to Allie Crouch, Darrell Hedger, Lachie Morrison, Anne Nadj, George Nadj and Paul Francis for all of their hard work.

15th anniversary of the 2009 bushfires

FEBRUARY 7, 2024 marks the 15 year anniversary of the 2009 bushfires, one of the most devastating bushfire events in Australia's history.

Murrindindi Shire Council issued the following statement.

"The 15-year anniversary of the 2009 bushfires is a difficult time for many people in our communities, and across our country.

"On this day, council, like other members of our community, will commemorate the anniversary in a quiet and reverent way, reflecting our community's sentiment for continued recovery and growth.

"We will pause and remember the 100 people who tragically lost their lives in Murrindindi Shire, and the 173 lives lost across Victoria. We will reflect upon the devastating impact this natural disaster had on our community and environment, and

other fire-affected communities across the state.

"The anniversary is also an important time to remember the overwhelming level of support provided by so many during, and in the aftermath of this crisis, from the incredible efforts of emergency service volunteers and first responders to those supporting the recovery effort over the months and years that followed.

"It is a testimony to the resilience of our communities to see the renewal, growth and recovery that has occurred across our shire following 2009. So, it is also a time to acknowledge and celebrate all that has been achieved through the determination and collaborative efforts of individuals, community groups, organisations and agencies to overcome adversity and chart a new path forward.

"To mark the anniversary, council will be flying the flags, located at our Alexandra, Yea and Kinglake offices, at half-mast on Wednesday to show our respect as we remember those who lost their lives.

"Murrindindi Shire Councillors will also visit and lay wreaths at the six bushfire memorials in Flowerdale, Kinglake, Kinglake West, Marysville, Narbethong and Toolangi-Castella throughout the morning of February 7.

These memorials provide an opportunity to pay tribute to loved ones lost in the 2009 bushfires, as well as all those who lost homes, animals and property. They provide a space to reflect upon all the ways the community and landscape was affected by the events which began on February 7, 2009, and forever changed our lives.

"We encourage community members to recognise this significant day in whichever way feels right for you. Some community groups across our shire have organised local commemorative events, including Foundation Murrindindi and Kinglake West Fire Brigade. It is wonderful to see people coming together to support each other.

"If you or someone you know needs some extra support during this difficult time, there is help available. The 'Be Well in the Kinglake Ranges' program offers free confidential counselling and psychological support for those impacted across our shire. Visit kinglakeranges.com.au/be-well-in-the-ranges for more information. For crisis and mental health support services, you can contact Lifeline on 131 114 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636."

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UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon
UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands
UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain
UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale / Hazeldeane
UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges
WEEKLY
Tues Art Group Eildon(Alex Tennis Rooms) 10am-3pm
Ph 5773 2306
Tue Seniors Carpet Bowls 1.15pm
Wed Social Bowls 11am Alexandra Bowls Club Ph 5772 1150
Thu Take off weight naturally 5.45pm 5773 2427
Fri Seniors Social Club 1pm
Sun AA 7pm Anglican Church, Alexandra Ph 1300 222 222
Sun Alanon Recovery Phone 0402 428 086.
Sun Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 5772 1057
Thu 7.00-10pm SES, SES/CFA complex Ph 0418 576 666
Fri Communita 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
MONTHLY
1st Wed Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318
1st Sat Alexandra Quilters RSL Hall 10am-4pm Ph 5772 3257
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 Sat Alexandra Market - at Station Street Ph 0427 509 988
2nd Sat Alex Repair Cafe 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
3rd Sat Murrindindi Men 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
3rd Wed Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318
3rd Thu Alexandra Ladies Probud Club 10am RSL Ph 5772 2946
3rd Thu Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas
3rd Sun Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913
4th Tue Yarck CWA Meeting, 10.30am Yarck Hall.
4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Thu Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517
Last Fri Carers Group walk 9.45am @ Rotary Park. 0418 402 455

For a \$5 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.



Letters to the Editor

Wake up Australia

I'M 'woke' and proud of it. Most people don't understand what woke means. Google it. Understand the meaning and don't let a coven of old guys use it so it sounds dirty. It's not a dirty word. Google it. It was imported from the US by people who think Trump's lying, bullying, divisive negativity is the way forward. Woke is not that. It is quite the opposite. Google it.

Robyn Walsh, Yarck

Australia Day

I'M a 'boomer' too but I remember it a little differently to the people who wrote letters to this paper last week and, to this day, wouldn't want our young boys and girls to go to war for us. Remember how many died for us fighting two world wars for England and how disastrously that affected our economy, our lives, our families, our national growth? Remember how we treated the returned soldiers from Vietnam, people who went to war for patriotism but came back to be vilified and with PTSD that could not be resolved due to our national shame. Remember that we get caught up in 'policing' other countries skirmishes, like Korea, Iran, Afghanistan? Wars perpetuated for land or oil or simply power flexing? Let's, just, not do that anymore.

And the World War three as mentioned? It will be fought with much bigger armaments than our little country can afford, by children who grew up playing multi-player internet games, the like of which you cannot comprehend. So, no amount of verbiage and guilt shaming will get me to believe your patriotism is a thing. Just leave our children out of it, please.

As to Australia Day citizenship events, it's a public holiday. I'd say that was enough, but might have to spell it out for you. Open and staff the shire rooms, invite federal members, local party members, have staff on hand, pay for everything and everybody, and ask people to take time from their families on their first Australia Day as citizens to spend time with other people instead of at the start of a long weekend of barbecue back yard celebrations as a newly made citizen of Australia. On the other hand, you'd be the first to complain about the cost to the taxpayer in our shire. What could've been an expensive thing was covered, well, on a normal day, the Tuesday that week.

But more importantly, I remember going to an event in my youth on Australia Day where 'friends' demonstrated in front of the town hall against the powers that be, council, national and federal because they didn't like what was going on. It was horrendous. People who had worked hard to become citizens and wanted to be Australian nationals, their family and friends, their children, assaulted by this grossness of which they could never begin to understand the reason for. It ruined their day of joy. Took away from them their sense of belonging to, what they thought of as, our fair nation.

For these reasons, I'm happy to have no Australia Day citizen events please.

While calling out council can be of some use, it is not useful, or applicable in this case.

If you want to experience what it is to be on council and have to make executive decisions that are questioned by people who have not caught up with today's morés and expectations, by all means, go to it. But be

aware that your voice is not accepted by all. And be prepared for the fight.

Valerie Pallaoro, Alexandra

Australia Day

THE shire has quietly dumped the traditional Australia Day ambassadors (perhaps a state organisation) and speeches across our region on Australia Day. The Victorian Government axed the return of the annual parade after the COVID-19 pandemic, and RACV no longer has their extensive vehicle display in the Domain. The angst is that it marks the landing of the First Fleet and raising of the Union Jack (the Colony of NSW was not actually declared until February 7), which for all the vast merits also caused great suffering for the Aboriginal inhabitants in many decades to follow. The divisive non-event is in limbo and does nothing to foster national pride and progress through the year.

Changing the date to the last Friday of January is a great compromise and would give everyone a legitimate long weekend (rather than pulling a sickie if it falls on a Tuesday or Thursday). Those who party on can take it easy on Saturday. Indeed, January 26, 2025, falls on a Sunday, presumably with celebrations, but the national holiday is taken on the Monday. January 26, 2029, is on a Friday. Perhaps by then we can co-exist with the protests, maybe even have a combined parade.

Could the shire give us their view? Can they give us an alternative so we can get over this? Could they lobby the federal government for change, with a parliamentary enquiry?

Contact on Facebook to join the 'Make Australia Day Fair' group I've started.


Lachlan Fraser, Alexandra

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT					
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS	
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	1.00pm Mon	1.61	steady	below minor	
Acheron R at Taggerty	1.00pm Mon	0.62	steady	below minor	
Home Ck at Yarck	12.41pm Mon	0.19	falling		
Yea R at Devlins Bridge	11.24am Mon	0.58	steady	below minor	
Rubicon R at Rubicon	1.00pm Mon	0.50	falling		
King Parrot Ck at Flowerdale	1.00pm Mon	0.57	steady	below minor	
Goulburn R at Trawool	1.00pm Mon	1.42	steady	below minor	
Sunday Ck at Tallarook	1.00pm Mon	0.32	steady	below minor	
Goulburn R at Seymour	1.00pm Mon	1.72	steady	below minor	
Whiteheads Ck at Seymour	10.52am Mon	1.23	steady		
Goulburn R at Ghin Ghin	1.00pm Mon	3.79	steady		



**ISSUED AT 1.15PM ON MONDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2024


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for publication). Letters without these details
supplied cannot not be published. Deadline
for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.





Weekly Weather
February 7 - February 13, 2024
Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication
Alexandra

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	10	27	Wednesday	10	26
Thursday	13	29	Thursday	14	29
Friday	13	28	Friday	13	27
Saturday	14	29	Saturday	14	29
Sunday	16	29	Sunday	15	30
Monday	16	30	Monday	15	30
Tuesday	15	30	Tuesday	14	30

DISTRICT RAINFALL
Alexandra N/Amm
Buxton..... 0mm
Eildon(AWS)..... 0mm
Flowerdale..... 0mm
Jamieson..... N/Amm
Kinglake..... N/Amm
Lake Eildon..... 0mm
Mansfield..... N/Amm
Taggerty 0mm
Yarck 0mm
Yea..... N/Amm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday
LAKE EILDON
Height above sea level this week.....288.27m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....97.5%
Metres below full supply.....63cm
Daily inflow1000ML
Release..... 3250ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....93%


DEADLINES

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

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

5772 1002 or
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We thank you for your continued support

St Mary's fresh new uniform

ST MARY'S Primary School has started the new school year with a fresh design for their school uniform.

Last year, a parent survey was conducted and the development of a new t-shirt design took place with the school and the parents.

The t-shirt will replace the normal school uniform and the sport t-shirt that students wore once a week. A darker design for easier cleaning and one uniform for parents and students to remember.



St Mary's Primary School students showing off their new school uniforms. -S

Duck hunting to continue in Victoria

RECREATIONAL duck and quail hunting will continue in Victoria with the government adding some changes to ensure it "remains safe, sustainable and responsible." Not all are pleased however.

The Victorian Government announced its response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Victoria's recreational native bird hunting arrangements, confirming that its position has not changed, and recreational duck and quail hunting will continue with common-sense changes.

The government is accepting seven of the Select Committee's eight recommendations in full or in principle. While the committee did not reach consensus in its report, the views of more than 10,000 Victorians and organisations were heard in the biggest response to a parliamentary inquiry ever in Victoria.

The government found that recreational duck and quail hunting is a legitimate activity, and it matters to thousands of Victorians who love the great outdoors, but it needs to proceed safely and sustainably.

The changes to be introduced from 2025 include improving hunters' knowledge and skill by making education and training for hunters mandatory; stricter compliance levels, including further penalties for hunters breaking the rules; banning the use of lead shot for quail hunting; implementing the Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Plan, to reduce the risk of wounding; and greater recognition of Traditional Owners' knowledge of hunting and land management.

To guide the length and conditions of each duck season, the science-based Adaptive Harvest Management process will be implemented from 2025.

The press release stated that after record-high native bird breeding in recent years due to the significant rainfall Victoria has received, the Victorian game duck population increased by almost three-fold.

The 2024 duck season will commence on Wednesday, April 10 and ending on Wednesday, June 5, inclusive. Hunting start times will be delayed to 8am for the entire season. There will be a daily bag limit of six ducks per day. The Blue-winged Shoveler and Hardhead cannot be hunted for the 2024 season due to their threatened status. Determinations will be made as part of normal seasonal arrangements about sites where duck hunting will be prohibited.

Nationals Member for Northern Victoria Gaelle Broad said, "Fortunately, common sense has prevailed, and the State Government has recognised recreational shooting as a legitimate pursuit."

Jeff Bourman from the Shooters, Hunters and Fishers Party said, "The government has done well to fashion a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting said, "It is unacceptable that taxpayers have funded an inquiry process only to have the findings and the voice of the majority of Victorians ignored."

Dr Liz Walker, RSPCA Victoria CEO, said, "For more than 30 years RSPCA Victoria has been advocating for duck and quail hunting to be banned, and when the Government's own Select Committee recommended it be banned we were cautiously optimistic we might finally see some change. Yesterday we were devastated to hear the Allan Government has gone against the evidence and the views of most Victorians who support a ban."

This Way North comes back home

FOR their seventh year, *This Way North* is coming back to Fawcett Hall on Saturday, February 10 to showcase their pop indie music alongside their great mates, *The Tuckshop Ladies*, and special guest Sal Kimber.

Vocalist and guitarist, Leisha Jungalwalla, explained her love for performing at Fawcett Hall as it all started as a fun little show and became so much more for the group.

"The show became really special, it's a lovely way to honour where I am from, and it's a fun thing to do with our friends... It's just a beautiful night, most people have been there three or four times, it's a beautiful atmosphere. Generally, it's gorgeous weather and it's set up out the back and people have picnics. It's a relaxing night and just lots of fun," Leisha said.

This Way North have been working really hard over the years. Three years in the making, the album *Punching Underwater* is ready to be released. The first single, *My Love*, was released last October.

The single was filmed in Arctic Canada, and included Inuit throat singer, Chirstine Tootoo.

Leisha said, "It was an amazing opportunity, to go somewhere incredible and be able to record that."

A new film clip and single will be released in a couple of weeks times which the duo filmed at the Old Beechworth Gaol and pool.



This Way North coming to Fawcett Hall on Saturday, February 10. -S

"The album is named *Punching Underwater* and we set it up at the pool and filmed it there, and photographed our album cover there too," Leisha said.

This Way North will be performing at Fawcett Hall on Saturday, February 10. Doors open at 6pm and music starts at 7pm. BYO picnics, drinks, and lawn chairs. You can get tickets at trybooking.com/cnfks

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If you have been impacted by recent flooding and have waste to dispose of, including household and green waste, contact council's waste team on 5772 0333 or email customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Alexandra Senior Citizens report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

THIS week, the club got back to normal business with the bridge players in action on Monday and Wednesday and the committee met-up on Tuesday to plan the club activities.

The members assembled on Friday for a business meeting before the usual break for refreshments followed by 500 and UNO.

The club plans to have some excursions to places of interest and entertainment in the coming year but the cost of a coach is expensive if one has to pay for a driver for the coach. We would love to have a volunteer driver either as a member of the club or on an occasional basis to allow us more excursions so if you would like to help us out we would be pleased to hear from you. Either come along to our weekly Friday meeting in the Bayley Street clubroom on a Friday at 1pm or call Mike on 0456 456 263.

We are still missing two of our card players with Ron and Louie both thankfully recovering in hospital. Enjoy the summer weather, stay safe and keep smiling.

If you are paying your council rates in full, payment is due February 15. The third instalment is due February 29, 2024.

Nominations for council's 2024 Community Awards are now open. Volunteer of the Year, Senior Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer of the Year and Community Group or Initiative of the Year. Nominations close Sunday, March 24. Visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/2024Awards

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Alexandra Timber Tramway is running the Heritage Train rides. 10am-4pm. Station Street, Alexandra.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Alexandra Pastoral and Ag Association AGM will be held at 7pm at the showgrounds/caravan park office. All welcome, new members encouraged. For more details contact the secretary pna.alexandra@gmail.com

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The next meeting of the Alexandra RSL will be held at noon. This meeting is an Annual General Meeting, followed by the normal monthly meeting with light lunch.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Long Lazy Summer lunch at Holmesglen at Eildon. Noon - 4pm. Three course lunch featuring local produce, free flowing bubbles from Snobs Creek Estate. Spectacular views. Accommodation available. Bookings essential 5774 2631.

Water main replacement on Myrtle Street

A PROGRAM to replace an almost 80-year-old water main is nearing completion in Alexandra's Myrtle Street.

Works began in December to replace 411 metres of water main between Perkins and Nihil Streets, with the original mains constructed in 1940 and 1954.

Water mains are proactively identified as part of Goulburn Valley Water's annual replacement program when they experience an unusual number of bursts, or are being replaced as part of ageing infrastructure.

The process takes about four to six weeks depending on the complexity of the replacement works.

In the last week of January, contractors completed works to 'tie in' the new mains to the existing infrastructure, with final commissioning works to be completed in the next two weeks.

Goulburn Valley Water Managing Director Steve Capewell said the program was designed to improve efficiency and

continue providing safe and reliable services for customers.

"Our water main replacement program in 2023-24 will see about \$2m of water main replaced across our region," Dr Capewell said.

"The new HDPE pipeline has a lifespan of more than 100 years, so this ensures we can continue providing reliable services for years to come. We thank people for their patience while the upgrade works are being completed."

Goulburn Valley Water have not had any concerns from the community raised with them about water quality since works began on this upgrade.

If customers notice any significant changes to their water supply, they should call Goulburn Valley Water's 24/7 Customer Service Centre on 1800 454 500.

People can find more information on our water main replacement program at gvwater.vic.gov.au/projects/current-projects

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Council's Reconciliation Action Plan progresses

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is continuing to make progress towards reconciliation, with several key initiatives being achieved during the first six months of implementing its Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

A focus on improving cultural awareness and fostering cultural safety, council has completed a review of their workplace policies to ensure the organisation maintains a high standard of cultural safety for our employees and broader community.

Guidelines have been developed for engaging and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations. These guidelines support council in consulting and involving First Nations Peoples in decision making for key projects, leading to better outcomes for our communities.

Council has supported cultural training opportunities for councillors and staff to better connect with Country and First Nations Peoples, and strives to strengthen relationships with local Traditional Owner groups, including the Taungurung Land and Waters Council (TLaWC) and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Council employees recently participated in a wawa biik cultural tour in Nagambie. The wawa biik tours are delivered through the cultural experiences area of TLaWC and focus on connecting to Taungurung people and culture through 'On Country' experiences. Councillors and staff were moved by the inspiring personal stories the guides shared with them whilst having the opportunity to experience culturally significant sites, including Scar Trees and a boat tour of the Tahbilk Wetlands.

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) are strategic documents that empower organisations to progress their reconciliation journeys. Reconciliation Australia has designed RAPs with three underpinning pillars. These include relationships, respect, and opportunity to help pave the way to reconciliation in Australia. Council will continue to implement the RAP

over the next six months, as well as working with community to advance reconciliation in Murrindindi Shire.

To learn more about council's RAP, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au and search 'reconciliation'. To find out more about the wawa biik tours, head to wawabiik.com.au

Murrindindi Shire Council's Mayor Damien Gallagher said, "Strengthening meaningful relationships with Traditional Owner groups and local Aboriginal communities is a key focus in council's commitment to reconciliation. Thanks to the champions of council's Reconciliation Action Plan for supporting the pursuit for understanding and connection with our rich local heritage.

"I am immensely grateful to have enjoyed an immersive wawa biik experience and council is dedicated to progressing reconciliation through actions and initiatives from our Reflect RAP. We support councillors and staff to expand their cultural learning and experiences on the reconciliation journey and collectively, we look forward to deepening our cultural understanding."



Murrindindi Shire Mayor Damien Gallagher, Uncle Shane, and council's CEO Livia Bonazzi.
-S

MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL NEWS



FIRE PLANNER AND CAN I OR CAN'T I?

Victoria is one of the most fire prone areas in the world. All Victorians need to know how to plan for, and respond to fire. How you respond depends on your situation but by taking the time to prepare, you can reduce your risk and help keep your loved ones safe.

The online Fire Planner can help you get started in as little as 10 minutes, visit fireplanner.vic.gov.au

To find out what you can and can't do during the declared Fire Danger Period, and on days of Total Fire Ban, when fires in the open air are legally restricted, visit the CFA website and search "Can I".
cfa.vic.gov.au

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY

Council would like to inform residents that from now until mid-March, your household may receive a call from an independent market research agency, National Field Services.

They are conducting a survey on behalf of Council. Similar surveys will be undertaken across all Victorian councils. It is designed to assess the performance of Murrindindi Shire Council across a range of measures and to identify ways to provide improvement or more effective service delivery to residents.

We appreciate you taking the time to assist us with your valuable feedback. Please be assured that your details and individual responses are confidential and no identifying information is shared with Council.

National Field Services will:

- never ask for people by name
- always identify as National Field Services and introduce themselves by name
- always give an estimate of survey length
- always call from a landline, never a mobile number, usually beginning (03) 9977....



UPDATE ON ANNUAL ROAD PROGRAMS

Works are underway on a number of Council's Annual Road Programs including the Gravel Roads Resheeting and Sealed Roads Major Patching Programs.

For more information and the latest updates, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/projects

RATES REMINDER

Are you paying your Council rates in full? A friendly reminder that the due date for payment is 15 February. For those paying by instalment, the third instalment is due 29 February.

Council understands the impact rates can have. If you are experiencing financial difficulties that might prevent you from paying your rates on time, please get in touch with our Rates Team as soon as possible on 5772 0333 to discuss your situation, or for more information, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/rates

STAY INFORMED

To stay up to date with the latest Council news, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news or follow us on Facebook.

GET IN TOUCH

customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au
murrindindi.vic.gov.au/request
5772 0333

E-NEWSLETTER OPT-IN AND WIN!

Opt-in to receive the latest Council news direct to your inbox for free, each month.

Help us name our new e-newsletter and you could win one of four \$50 visa gift cards.

To opt-in and enter, visit our website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/enews

NOMINATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AWARDS OPEN UNTIL 24 MARCH!

Do you know someone who's made a significant contribution to Murrindindi Shire? Would you like to celebrate the work of a local group or initiative? Nominate them for a Community Award!

Criteria and nomination forms are available at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/2024Awards

You can also pick up a paper nomination form from any of our Library and Customer Service Centres and the Mobile Library.

The 2024 Award winners will be announced at a volunteer appreciation event held during National Volunteer Week (20 - 26 May 2024).

GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS PROGRAM

Are you interested in applying for a grant through Council's Grants and Sponsorships Program?

Grant applications for Round 4 have just opened, and close 30 April 2024. Quick Response Grants are available all year round.

For more information, call our Grants team on 5772 0333 or visit our website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/grants

Forced adoption redress scheme opens

THE Forced Adoption Redress Scheme opens today for Victorian mothers who had their babies taken through historical forced adoption practices.

The scheme includes a monetary payment of \$30,000, access to therapeutic services and a personal apology.

Eligibility extends to mothers who gave birth in Victoria, or were a Victorian resident but gave birth interstate, and were forcibly separated from their newborn baby prior to 1990.

ARMS Vic is the Association Representing Mothers Separated by adoption is a peer support organisation founded in 1982 supporting women living with the difficulties of having lost a child or children to adoption.

Jo Fraser, Secretary of ARMS Vic said, "The emotional toll of having our babies taken from us has been huge for so many women. Redress is not compensation: how can you compensate for the loss of a child? Rather, it is recognition of the harm done, and of our enormous loss. It goes a small way to ameliorating the shame and heartache and feelings of guilt that have been imposed on us for so long.

"\$30,000 is lower than other redress schemes. Many mothers are disappointed by this as it would suggest that our suffering is not as important as that of other groups. However, that is what is on offer, and it will definitely make a difference in some mothers' lives.

"This redress is acknowledgement by the government that what they did was wrong and we were the victims. We should not have been blamed and shamed. Their actions have affected our emotional, psychological and physical health throughout our lives.

"As well as the trauma of having our babies taken, we have missed out on the opportunity to raise our children, and they have missed out on the opportunity of being mothered by us.

"We look forward to the implementation of the rest of the Inquiry Committee's

recommendations, in particular amending the Statute of Limitations so that individuals can pursue civil claims."

VANISH (Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help) is a lived-experience not-for-profit established in 1989 and funded by the Victorian Government to assist adults affected by past and forced adoption practices.

Charlotte Smith, CEO of Vanish, said, "Vanish congratulates the Victorian Government for opening the first Forced Adoption Redress Scheme in the world. We welcome the government providing counselling and psychological support as this demonstrates recognition of the lifelong trauma and grief.

"Some mothers feel strongly about receiving a personal apology. They want the head of the institution involved to say 'I am truly sorry, it was wrong, the shame is ours not yours.'

"VANISH hopes that the Inquiry has brought to light the devastating impacts of forced adoption practices and as a result support services will be fully resourced going forward."

Mothers applying for the Forced Adoption Redress Scheme will be provided support by the Redress Team in the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

A redress scheme for adopted people was recommended by the Inquiry Committee and is under consideration.

A Parliamentary Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoption in Victoria recommended in 2021 that the Victorian Government introduce a redress scheme for mothers, and immediately amend the Limitations of Actions Act 1958 to pave the way for legal cases.

In March 2022, the government published a response to the report and the former Premier Dan Andrews announced a redress scheme for mothers would be established.

For more information on the application process visit vic.gov.au/redress-forced-adoptions



Dr Martin Lowe (right) with wife Vicky. -S

Dr Martin Lowe to leave clinic

DOCTOR Martin Lowe has announced that he will be leaving the Yea Medical Centre after 35 years. His final day will be on April 4.

Dr Lowe commented, "I must say it doesn't seem like 35 years. It's been a great place to work and the working environment is great. The people I work with are great, and it's always a pleasure to go to work.

"Part of what I have really enjoyed is when I started 35 years ago, I saw a generation go through, and I looked after a lot of young kids from families and now I see the next generation go through. I have seen them grown up and now I'm seeing their grandchildren. As you can imagine it makes me feel old. It is a real privilege to look after two generations in that way and getting to know the family."

Dr Lowe grew up in Sydney and attended Kingsgrove North High School, a large, multicultural public high school.

He said, "Like most kids and teenagers, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I did well at the HSC (Higher School Certificate) and medicine was an option, so I decided to go with that and I'm very glad I made that choice. It was certainly the right career choice. I didn't realise that at the time but later, when you start working in the field, you realise you have made the right choice.

He attended the University of New South Wales and worked at Westmead Hospital for a number of years, doing his internship and residency. He did surgical training and then decided to specialise in anaesthetics and intensive care, before making the decision to move to Yea.

Dr Lowe explained, "When I worked at Westmead, a good friend of mine was working in the emergency department at Westmead and his wife was working in the wards. They moved to Yea because their parents were living in Merrijig and they took over the [Yea] practice.

"They got busy very quickly, and they asked if I would like to come down and give them a hand. I was just about to go on an anaesthetic training scheme. I said to my friend I will come down and help you for 12 months and then I will go and finish my anaesthetic and intensive care training. And as you can see it never really happened. We just loved being in the community like Yea. My fiancé, well my wife now, we never spoke about going

back to Sydney. We just loved the life in Yea."

His plan is to take a couple of months off and look at what he wants to do. "There are a few things," he said. "One thing as you know, in regional general practice, it's always so busy and we are always understaffed. It's always hard to get time off because of lack of locums. One of the things I hope to do, perhaps, is provide some locum coverage to relieve some doctors in the area and give them a break. There is some logistics involved but this is something I would like to try and do. I still think I would like to give back to the profession as well, and I think this is the best way to help out. I still want to work with the community and the hospital, and the practice. I have spoken to doctors at clinic... and said, I'm happy to step in and help." This includes supporting doctors beyond the Yea area.

He added, "The community here is fantastic and, as I have said, it's why I have enjoyed my time working here. The support from the community has been fantastic, not just for myself, but for all the people who live in it.

"For example, I had a patient, an elderly lady who had a pet cat. I sent her to the sonographer for an ultrasound. It appeared she had acute appendicitis and she had to go to Melbourne to get operated on. She was quite upset because she knew no one to help look after her cat for her and, it only happens in the country, but the sonographer said, 'Don't worry I will look after your cat while your away and it really just helped to settle her anxiety about leaving her cat.'

"Little things like that are amazing. If someone is particularly sick in the community and they are having trouble getting back on their feet, people just drop in food, company, sometimes they don't even know them and help out any way they can. I guess this is one of the reasons we all like living in regional areas. It's those little things where you get to know people better and people look out for each other and there is a real genuine help that people get."

Dr Lowe plans to continue living in Yea, and is likely to become more involved in community projects.

The mystery sound

ON Tuesday evening, January 30, 10.30pm, many Alexandra residents were startled by a very loud 'bang' sound, with some later saying online that it shook their windows or shook their house.

Some residents said that it sounded like an explosion, or a shotgun amplified 100 times. A person reported seeing a 'shooting star' at the same time. A person also reported hearing the sound in Yea.

Council have a contractor working on the landfill at Alexandra. It was confirmed that this was not the cause.

Ausnet advised that there were no issues on the electricity network that night in the area, so this rules out another theory.

The Australian Defence Force has confirmed there was routine activity being conducted at Puckapunyal at around 10pm on Tuesday, January 30. However, noting the distance, they cannot be sure these are the loud noises heard from Alexandra. Due to the volume of the sound and the shaking of windows in Alexandra, these activities in Puckapunyal may not be the cause.

The Australian Space Agency advised that no space junk or meteors landed in the area on the night in question.

Do you know the cause of the sound? If you do, let us know.

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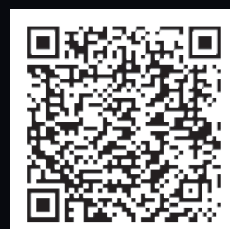
Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/enews or scan the QR code below.

Murrindindi Shire Council

A man with a beard is sitting in the driver's seat of a car at night. He is holding a yellow and orange breathalyzer device in his mouth and blowing into it. The device has a red screen and the number '99' and 'SYDNEY' on it. The car's interior is dimly lit, and the background is dark.

Stop kidding yourself. If you drink, don't drive.

Thinking about driving after a couple of drinks? Think again.
If you blow .05 or over, you could face serious penalties,
including fines, losing your licence, getting an interlock installed
in your car and having to blow zero for three years.



Proudly supporting
Student of the week

Community Bank · Yea & District and Alexandra

Bendigo Bank

BUXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Harlow has had a fabulous start to the school year, working hard and being a wonderful role model for the new prep students.

Keep up the great work Harlow

EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Mia and Scarlette displayed Resilience and Integrity in their attitudes this week.

Well done.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kinglake branch

Bendigo Bank

Eildon Twilight Market a great success

WITH perfect weather on Saturday, January 27, the Eildon Twilight Market attracted a good crowd of approximately 1700, both locals and visitors.

There were approximately 50 different stalls, so there was plenty for everyone, including lots of food and beverage options and a great variety of artisan stalls. There was everything from local honey and garlic to boutique bean bags.

The market is a wonderful opportunity for local youth to gain much needed experience, confidence and exposure. Music was provided by Paul Ray, Molly Rose and Maya

O'Loughlin, with thanks to support from Murrindindi Shire Council Youth Service, and the Victorian Government Engage and FreeZa programs. This was followed by Beverley and Leigh with percussionist Colin Shean, which was just a treat.

Many of the local community groups and organisations were on show. The Eildon CFA had a great display. The children loved being able to look over a fire truck and learning about being prepared.

The Lion's Club of Eildon were also present with their wood raffle, as was the

Eildon RSL cooking up the always popular sausage sizzle.

There are so many benefits from events like these. Not only does it substantially stimulate the local economy, but it provides a great opportunity for people to come together in a local, safe, friendly and beautiful environment on the banks of the Eildon Pondage. The overall social, physical and mental wellbeing is obvious with smiling faces, engaged conversations and interaction with all age groups.

The organisers would like to thank all the volunteers who make this possible. Without

volunteers, events like this would not take place. A good quote is, "It is not what you put into volunteering, it is what you get back out of it." If you're interested in becoming involved, get in touch at eildoneventsinc@gmail.com. No matter how much or how little time you have, there is always something to do.

The next market is on Saturday, February 17, from 4 to 8pm. Music will start with our Youth session, led by Paul Ray and vocalists. This will be followed by the Australian Navy Band, with both rock and acoustic music. Come along and check it out, all for a gold coin donation.



There was another great crowd at the Eildon Twilight Market. -S



The weather at the market was spectacular. -S

Terry Hubbard's remarkable contribution to Landcare

UPPER Goulburn Landcare Network would like to express their gratitude and acknowledge Terry Hubbard OAM, who is retiring from the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and Landcare Victoria Board, after many years of service.

Terry has been on the board since Landcare Victoria Inc formed in early 2017, from a merger of the Farm Tree and Landcare Association and Victorian Landcare Council.

Terry was heavily involved in the process of negotiating and seeing through this merger and leading the board through the redevelopment of Landcare Victorian Inc in 2020, to become a much more proactive and influential voice for the Victorian Landcare community.

Terry's impact with Landcare Victoria Inc has been enormous. He was elected chair of the newly formed organisation in April 2017 and has provided leadership in many different capacities since then.

Prior to the formation of Landcare Victoria, Terry served on the Victorian Landcare Council for many years as a committee member and president and is the past chair of the National Landcare Network.

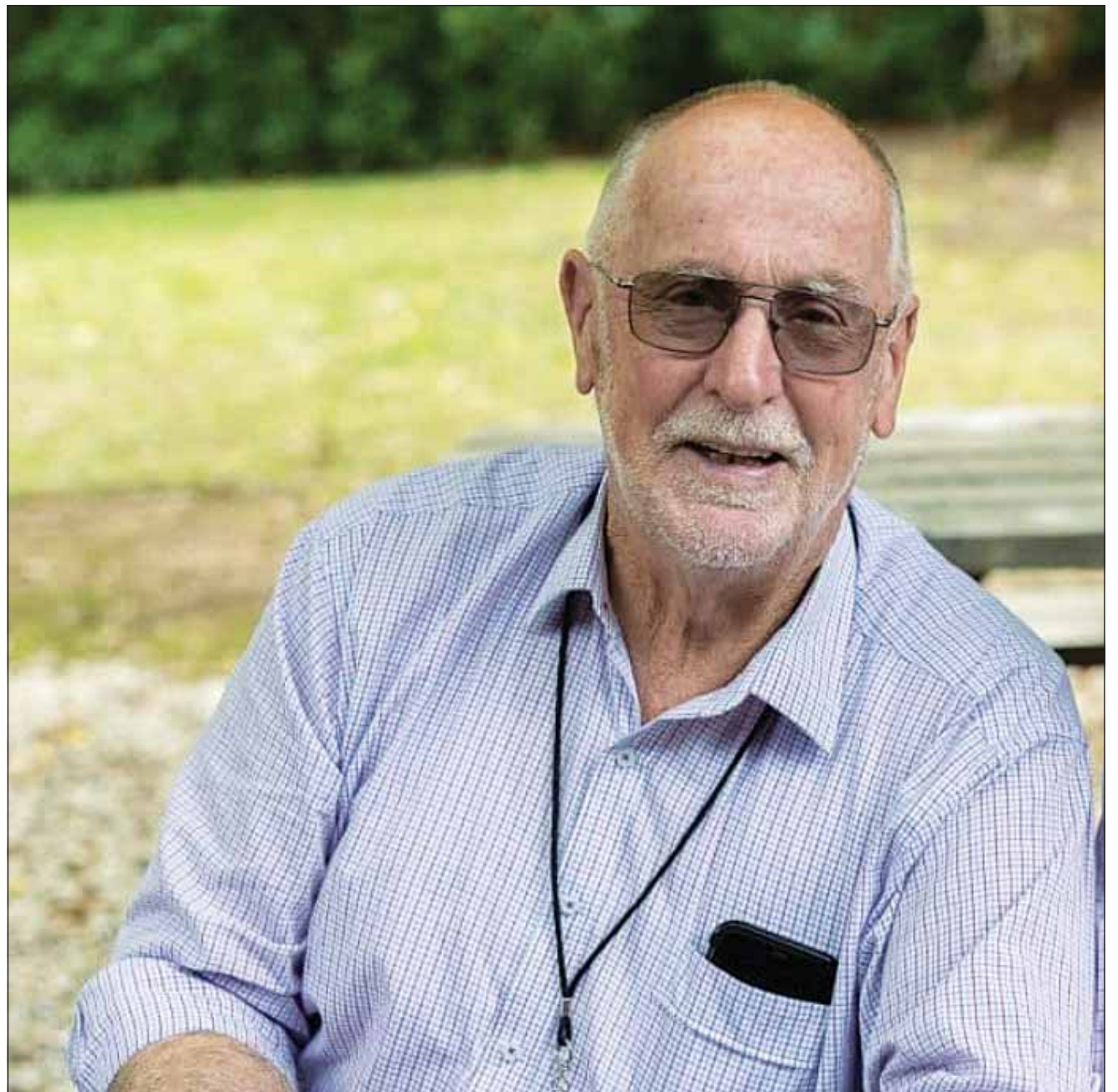
Terry has given long service as the past President of the Strath Creek Landcare Group, President of the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and has served on several advisory committees, including the Riparian Advisory Forum, the Landcare Community Reference Group and the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce.

Terry was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours list for services to conservation and the environment, and in 2017 was acknowledged with the prestigious Joan Kirner Award.

Terry's Landcare journey began in 1989 when he and his wife Janet purchased their property, 'The Three Sisters' in Flowerdale. Terry and Janet embarked on a long term and ongoing restoration plan that has seen the once cleared, eroded and weed infested property become a model of best practice sustainable farming.

Terry's Landcare ethic is built on three critical elements; recognising the threat of land clearing, pollution and global warming, the value of Landcare for social connectivity, and an understanding of the importance of community partnerships. He values the need for grassroots collaboration that brings real landscape changes. He is always willing to provide local Landcare leadership and demonstrate what consideration of biodiversity values within productive systems can bring to Victorian landscapes.

The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network would like to thank Terry for his dedication, leadership, and for the profound impact he has made on Landcare in Victoria.



Terry Hubbard. -S

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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FIRE?

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne



Nominations open for Murrindindi Shire Community Awards

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting nominations for its 2024 Community Awards (previously called Citizen of the Year Awards) to celebrate the outstanding contributions of volunteers who demonstrate exceptional community spirit and a willingness to help others.

Council is encouraging all shire residents to nominate an inspiring individual or community group for one of the four award categories: Volunteer of the Year, Senior Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer of the Year or Community Group or Initiative of the Year.

Community groups can be nominated for their valued contribution or for a special project or initiative they have delivered. This may include a group that was formed specifically to deliver a project, or campaign.

Tell us who inspires you, and how they make the shire a better place. Nominations close on Sunday, March 24. Entries will be judged from April 2, with winners of the awards announced and presented at a volunteer appreciation event during National Volunteer Week (May 20 to 26).

For more information on the awards, eligibility criteria, frequently asked questions, and to nominate an individual or community

group, visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/2024awards

You can also drop into council's Library and Customer Service Centres and complete a paper nomination form.

All nominations will be assessed by a judging panel made up of community members from across the shire. The panel

will select the award winners and present their recommendations to council.

Murrindindi Shire Council's Mayor Damien Gallagher said, "Council's Community Awards provide a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the work of local volunteers and groups."

"On behalf of council I encourage you to think about someone in your community who inspires you. They might be part of a community group or local initiative, or they might be a quiet achiever. Volunteering comes in all shapes and sizes, and we want to recognise those who make our shire a better place."



THUMBS UP: Well done to Shareen and Darren at Thornton Hotel for an excellent Australia Day celebration. There was a huge crowd in attendance and it was a great day for the town and surrounding areas to acknowledge our special day, we are fighting to keep. Many thanks.

THUMBS UP: FoodWorks for the wonderful, friendly service and the great prices for a small player, especially if you shop cleverly when items are on special. It's also a bonus buying local as you save time, fuel, wear and tear. It's safer than driving distances and keeps locals employed.

THUMBS UP: To the Alexandra Rotary Club for giving us the opportunity to celebrate a community event at Rotary Park on Australia Day. We are one.

THUMBS UP: Thanks to the Yea Saleyards skin and health check service. Especially nurse Shona. Sensitive and professional. Well done.

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



Eildon Primary School welcomed their new preps last week, Shannon and Lucy. Both have made a great start to school and enjoy meeting other students in their class and across the school. -S



Alexandra Primary School prep students with class teacher Miss Caroline Bett. -S

New prep students start their school journey



Some very excited prep students at Buxton Primary School. -S



The new prep students at St Mary's Primary School. -S

Tell me what is important to you

I want to hear from you.

What current challenges are impacting you and your family?
What are the key issues in your community that I need to know about?

Scan this QR code to answer my **Community Survey**.
I look forward to working with you on what is important to Indi in 2024.



Helen
Haines **MP**

Wangaratta / 117 Murphy Street
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Wodonga / 79 High Street
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Second round of skin checks and health checks done and dusted

ONCE again the Yea Saleyards hosted the collaboration of the Yea and District Memorial Hospital, Murrindindi Shire Council Flood Recovery Project, and the Southern Skin Cancer Clinic to conduct a further 56 skin checks and an additional 10 cholesterol and blood pressure checks.

Of the 56 skin checks on Friday, 12 incisions and sections were sent for

pathology. Over the two sales, approximately 152 people from the farming community participated in the free health services.

The farming community can look forward to other ancillary health services at the Yea Saleyards, including eye checks, hearing checks, and flu vaccinations to name a few, keep an eye on the website, yeasaleyards.com.au, and Facebook.

These events have been made possible through the contribution of the agencies listed above and funded jointly by the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



PHOTO COMPETITION

Each month we are running a photo competition with a theme. The theme for the month of February is 'your choice' - feel good February.

Simply send in your name, address and phone number with your photo to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au (files cannot be smaller than 1mb or exceed 10mb and must be of printable quality), or PO Box 5 Alexandra Vic 3714 or you can drop it off at *Alexandra Newspapers* located 43 Grant Street Alexandra. The winner will receive a \$50 voucher from Embling Rural in Alexandra. Entries need to be received by February 29, 2024.

Please do not submit photos that have been edited in any way, any photos that have not been taken by you, any photos not taken in the last 12 months or any more than 3 photos per month. *Professional photographers are ineligible from entering.*

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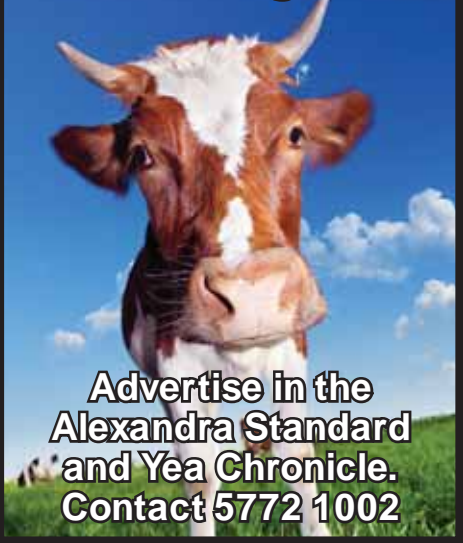


5772 1405
74 Grant Street Alexandra



Two of the practitioners from the Southern Skin Cancer Clinic, Dr Katrina White and Deanne Fitzpatrick. -S

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Advertise in the
**Alexandra Standard
and Yea Chronicle.**
Contact 5772 1002



Recipe kindly
submitted by
Redgate CWA
from Cookery the
Australian Way.

BAKED GOLDEN SYRUP DUMPLINGS

INGREDIENTS

1 cup self raising flour (4oz)
¾ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon shortening
1 egg
2-3 tablespoons milk

Syrup

1½ cups boiling water
½ cup 1A sugar (4oz)
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon golden syrup

METHOD

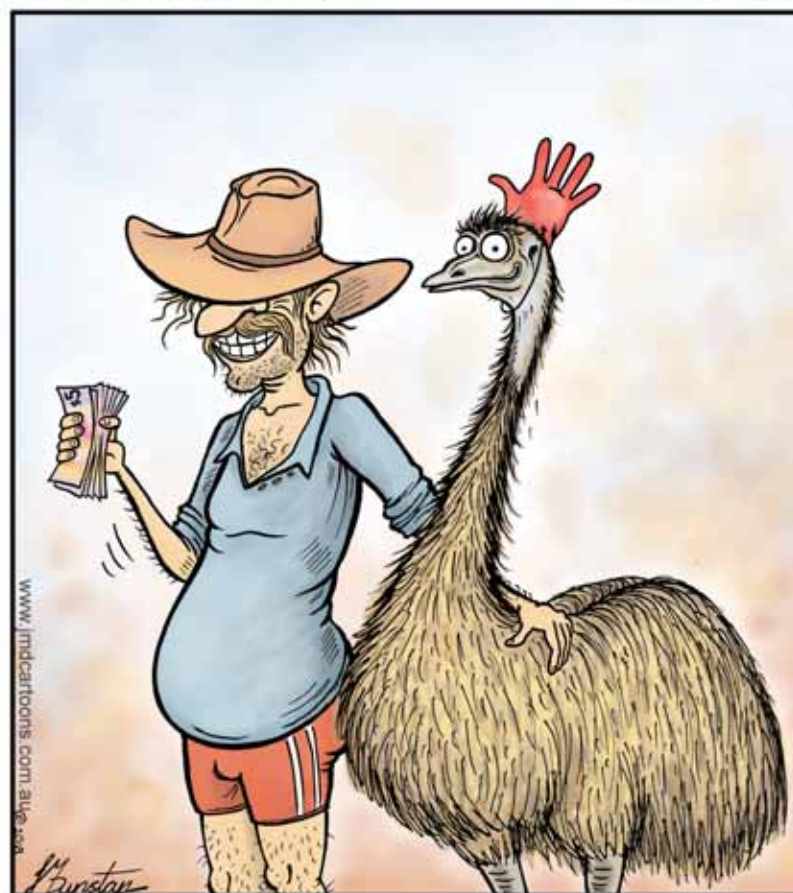
1. Collect ingredients.
2. Sift flour and salt; beat egg, add milk.
3. Rub butter into flour, add liquid and mix to a soft dough.
4. Place ingredients for syrup into a saucepan, stir until sugar is dissolved and bring to the boil.
5. Place dessertspoons of dough into pie dish.
6. Pour syrup over dumplings and bake.
7. Serve with custard sauce, cream or icecream.

Optional cooking method: Rather than cooking in the oven, add a bit more water and place the dessertspoons into the liquid in a saucepan and simmer until cooked.

Number of serves: 6.
Oven temperature 375°
Cooking time: 20-30 mins
Utensils: greased pie dish

The Rabbit Trap

By Jed Dunstan



Leslie and Roger were dominating the cockfighting circuit, until someone saw through the disguise.

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SAVE THE DATE

March 1 - Yea Saleyards

Combined Agents – Store Sale

April 5 - Yea Saleyards

Combined Agents – Store Sale

YEA SALEYARDS STOCK REPORT 2 February 2024			
Combined Agents Store Sale 2 February 2024	Total headings	Shears	Stallions
Number of head	2,893	1,343	809
Average 9 pen head	\$1,034		
Average weight per head	679kg		
Total price per head		\$9,235	\$1,399
Total weight		1,506kg	9,500kg
Headlines	83,400head		

CATTLE SALES

Auction start time 9.30am

Mar 1: Store sale

April 5: Store sale



RealEstate

GUIDE



Don't leave your spare key outside

A NEW report from home access experts Merlin has found that one in three Australians leave out a spare key making homes vulnerable.

Research has revealed just 20 per cent of Australians are using smart access technology to allow secure, keyless entry to their home when away.

The Merlin Summer Living Report surveyed over 1000 Australians to uncover how our nation accesses and secures their homes during the holiday season.

The report revealed that of the one in three respondents who leave out a spare key to their property, over a third leave the key in an unprotected place such as under a rock or in a plant pot, making home invasions easy for opportunistic intruders.

According to the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data, 194,100 of the nation's households experienced a break in during the 2021-22 reporting period, which equates to a 13 per cent year on year increase.

The report revealed that shockingly, one in 10 homeowners take no safety actions to secure their homes when away.

Tim Anderson, a director at Chamberlain Group, said, "With many properties unattended for weeks at a time during the warmer months, the need for Australians to enhance their home security is paramount.

"By adopting a range of safety behaviours and investing in smart, secure access technology, residents can reduce break in threats and enjoy the assurance that comes with knowing their property is protected," Tim said.

From the one in three surveyed who leave out a spare key, 36 per cent use a lockbox, 33 per cent place the key under a rock or in a plant pot, and 16 per cent store theirs in the garage.

The findings showed that keys are also being hidden in other unsafe spots, such as in the barbecue or around the garden.

"While technology dominates many parts of our daily lives, alarmingly, when it comes to the home, unsecure and obsolete methods of access are still being used by many. Leaving out a spare key in

an unprotected place, exposes the easiest entry points to the home," Tim said.

Overall, the two top safety measures Australians take when travelling are having family and friends check on the house (65 per cent) and relying on neighbours to move the bins and bring the mail in (51 per cent).

"Having a reliable personal network paired with solid security methods is a winning formula to keep your home safe when you're not there. Combining multiple deterrents, such as neighbours doing regular property checks along with investing in smart home technology and accessories is a strong approach to help prevent intruders," Tim said.

Given the reliance Australians place on their loved ones to maintain a secure home, providing safe access is crucial. 71 per cent of respondents with a garage access it via a remote, with a further 10 per cent supplying this remote to house sitters, guests, and neighbours when they are away.

"When left in a lockbox or handed over in person, remotes are a great tool for granting secure access to trusted visitors during the holidays."

Shared equity hits milestone

THE state government's Victorian Homebuyer Fund has reached \$1.1 billion in shared equity contribution fund to help thousands of people achieve the dream of owning their own home.

The \$2.1 billion Homebuyer Fund has been progressively boosted since it was launched around two years ago and has now supported more than 7300 Victorians to secure a home, with two thirds being first home buyers.

The most recent \$500 million injection was part of the Victorian Government's Housing Statement, with the aim of the strategy to expand housing supply and affordability across the state.

In the early 2000s, it took the typical Victorian household 3.6 years to save a deposit to buy a home, now it takes an average of 6.2 years. The Homebuyer Fund drastically shrinks up front costs for families and individuals who might otherwise struggle to get a foothold in the property market.

The fund contributes up to 25 per cent of a participant's home purchase price and reduces the required deposit to just 5 per cent, helping to avoid the need for buyers to pay costly premiums for lenders mortgage insurance.

Homebuyers backed by the scheme would pay only \$30,000 for a deposit on a \$600,000 property, while the fund would contribute equity of up to \$150,000. The median purchase price of Fund participants is \$615,000.

Homebuyer Fund participants can earn up to \$130,485 individually, or \$208,775 as a couple, while the maximum purchase price is \$950,000 in metropolitan Melbourne and Geelong, and \$600,000 elsewhere in regional Victoria.

The government delivers the scheme in partnership with four lenders, including the Commonwealth Bank, Bendigo Bank, Bank Australia and Indigenous Business Australia.

Scheme participants can buy back the government's share in their property over time through refinancing, using savings, or upon sale of the property, with proceeds recycled to support new participants.

Homebuyer Fund participants are eligible for Victorian first home buyer stamp duty exemptions and concessions and First Home Owner Grants of \$10,000, this separate support topped \$780 million last financial year.

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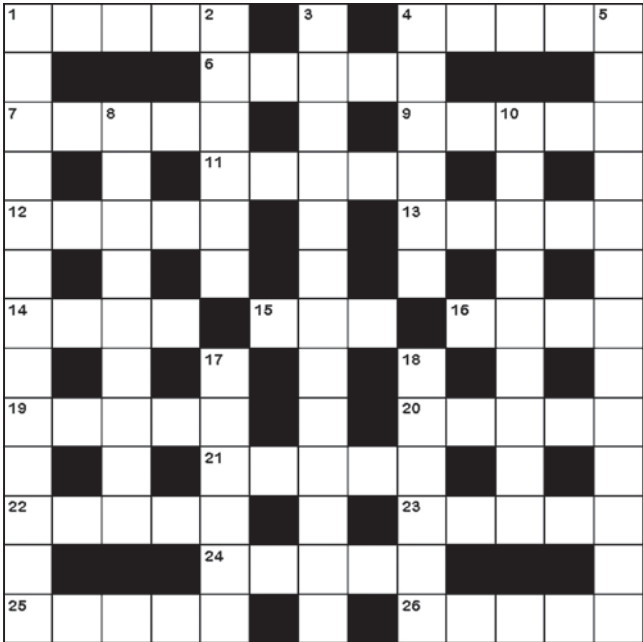
PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 17

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1. Bar of gold.
- 4. Make yourself neat and tidy.
- 6. First in order of importance.
- 7. Become anxious and fearful.
- 9. Contest of speed.
- 11. A small natural hill.
- 12. Country life.
- 13. Senseless and idiotic.
- 14. God of love.
- 15. The quality of a colour.
- 16. A nasty, negative remark.
- 19. Familiar and overused comment.
- 20. Your mother's sisters.
- 21. The devil.
- 22. A fertile patch in a desert.
- 23. The colour of growing grass.
- 24. Excessively fat.
- 25. Reject with contempt.
- 26. Protective coverings on houses.



DOWN

- 1. Faults or shortcomings.
- 2. Gear used in fishing.
- 3. Favourable chances.
- 4. Strong-smelling seasoning.
- 5. Gives a false account.
- 8. Strong pain killing drugs,
- 10. Demand a contest.
- 17. Something learned.
- 18. Source of harm.

Word Search

International
Pizza Day
February 9

- BASIL
- CHEESE
- FIREWOOD
- FLOUR
- ITALY
- MARGHERITA
- MOZZARELLA
- NAPLES
- OVEN
- PEPPERONI
- PIZZA
- TOMATO

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

Double Puzzle

EBSTEWI 7
PEGBAWE 4
EOSRRWB 5
ADTA 9 8 10
WKTNROE 2 3
LSKIN 1
RTFSOWAE
HIIPGHSN 6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 10 Y

Maths Squares

Fill in the missing numbers.

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

Maths Squares grid with numbers and symbols: ÷, ×, +, -, ×, 5, ×, 9, -, 35, -26, 4, 14, 14, 6

Sudoku

Difficulty: Easy

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

Sudoku grid with numbers: 6, 3, 2, 8, 9, 6, 3, 7, 1, 8, 9, 1, 4, 2, 1, 6, 3, 8, 7, 5, 3, 2, 7, 9, 1, 8, 9, 3, 2, 8, 4, 1, 8, 3



Another large crowd at the Yea Saleyards 1st Store Cattle Sale for the year -S

Yea Saleyards
market report

by Will Phillips from Elders Yea

THE Yea monthly store sale, the first for 2024, was held on February 2 and yarded 2020 cattle.

It saw a good quality run of grown feeder steers and feeder heifers. The market trend was dearer across all categories. Buying interest was shown from across Victoria and New South Wales by feedlots, bullock fatteners and backgrounders.

The top priced steers were A/C R & A May, 760kg and made \$2120.

The top priced Heifers were A/C Whanregarwen Pastoral Co., 423kg and made \$1390.

Cows and calves topped at \$1950 for 13x13 A/C Dysart Angus.

Yea Saleyards next monthly Combined Agents Store sales are March 1 and April 5.

STOCK REPORT 2 FEBRUARY 2024			
Combined Agents Store Sale 2 February 2024	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers
Number of head	2,062	1,143	809 (Cows & calves 110)
Average \$ per head	\$1,234		
Average weight per head	371kg		
Top price per head		\$2,120	\$1,390
Top weight		760kg	530kg
Turnover	\$2.48million		



Ian & Sue Wright and Hugh Homewood. -S

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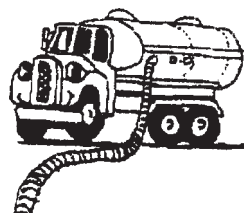
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1	2	6	3	9	8	7	4	5
3	5	4	2	6	7	9	8	1
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DEATH NOTICES

COLES, Joan May
13/10/1933 -
26/01/2024

Passed away peacefully after a short illness.
Wife of Ian (dec)
Loved mother of Andrew and David.
Grandmother of Sarah and Matthew.
Close to our hearts she will always stay, loved and remembered everyday.



COLES, Joan

The Yea and District Memorial Hospital Board and Staff and Yea Medical Centre Doctors and Staff send their sincere condolences to the family and friends of Joan Coles following her passing. Joan was a very influential part of our health services history and she will be greatly missed particularly within our community.

COLES, Joan. Forever in our hearts, so many happy memories of your laughter and smiles. Foundation member of the Naughty Nanas of Yea - Pat, Peg O, Pauline, Lilita, Peg L, Alma, Heather, Maureen, Kaye, Kerry, Helen D, Helen W, Shirley, Barb and Judy.

FUNERAL NOTICES

COLES, Joan May

A memorial service celebrating the life of Joan will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at Yea Golf/ Race club, commencing at 1pm.

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Ambulance response data shows improvements

RECENT data is showing Ambulance Victoria (AV) paramedics are reaching patients nearly two minutes faster than a year ago despite another record breaking quarter for emergency ambulance demand.

Executive Director Clinical Operations Anthony Carlyon said, "While there is more work ahead of us, it is encouraging our response to Code One emergencies improved a full minute and 46 seconds compared to a year ago.

"The Productivity Commission's recent report on government services shows Victoria has Australia's most trusted paramedics and leads the nation in cardiac arrest survival and pain management.

"Our dedicated paramedics and first responders are to be commended for the outstanding care they deliver to communities across the state."

The last quarter of 2023 was the busiest in AV's history with 154,267 emergency cases. This includes 99,833 Code One cases, the second most on record, and 54,434 Code Two cases.

Between October and December 2023, paramedics across Victoria responded to 67.3 per cent of Code One cases within the statewide target of 15 minutes, up from 66 per cent for the previous three months and 7.1 percentage points better than 60.2 per cent a year ago.

As a result, the statewide average response time to Code One emergencies dropped from 16 minutes and 44 seconds to 14 minutes and 58 seconds.

In the last three months of 2023, paramedics responded to 3239 more Code One cases than the previous quarter and only 405 fewer than a year ago when Code One demand exceeded 100,000 cases for the first time.

Performance against the 15-minute target for Code One cases improved in 74 of Victoria's 79 Local Government Areas (LGAs) compared to a year ago, with the biggest improvements in Melbourne's growing outer suburbs.

In the Murrindindi Shire, data showed for Code One cases, 33.7 per cent reached the target of under 15 minute response time compared to the previous quarter being 32.2 per cent.

The average response time for code one cases in Murrindindi Shire was 24.22 minutes, a little bit slower than the previous quarter being 23.41.

The total number of first responses has increased in the shire. This quarter was 261, and last quarter was 229 which is 32 more responses for our ambulance personnel to attend to.

Code Two cases for Murrindindi Shire have improved with this quarter, being 48.20 minutes and last quarter being 49.17 minutes.

The total numbers of responders have increased for Code Two cases as the total number was 199 and last quarter was 176.

Mr Carlyon said improved performance followed increased use of alternative and virtual care services for people in the community who did not require an ambulance.

"From October to December 2023, 38,695 people who did not need an emergency ambulance were instead connected to more appropriate care by paramedics and nurses in AV's Secondary Triage team," Mr Carlyon said.

"There are now so many options for people in the community to get timely, non urgent health advice and save Triple Zero (000) for emergencies.

"For non life threatening matters, you can connect directly with emergency doctors and nurses at the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) from anywhere in Victoria, at any time.

"Since October 2021, paramedics have referred more than 56,000 patients to the VVED, while a further 5400 have been referred to the VVED following assessment by our Secondary Triage team.

"Other options also include your local Priority Primary Care Centre, your GP or pharmacist, or Nurse On Call on 1300 606 024."

New citizens in the Murrindindi Shire



Murrindindi Shire Council CEO Livia Bonazzi, Henry Andrews and Robert Binghamy from Alexandra RSL, Gaelle Broad MP from The Nationals, conferees Clinton, Negin, Rajeshna, Alireza, Hector and Catherine, Mayor Damien Gallagher and Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell MP from One Nation. -S

MURRINDINDI Shire Council proudly celebrated six new Australian citizens on Tuesday, January 23 at an official Citizenship Ceremony held at the Alexandra Council Chamber.

Clinton, Negin, Rajeshna, Alireza, Hector, and Catherine, have pledged their loyalty to Australia, its people, and its democratic beliefs, and to uphold and obey the laws of Australia and respect the rights and liberties of its people.

In attendance were distinguished guests including Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher, CEO Livia Bonazzi, Cindy McLeish MP, Gaelle Broad MP, Rikkie Lee Tyrrell MP, Henry Andrews and Bob Binghamy from Alexandra RSL, and Sharon Fox from Rotary Club of Alexandra, who were pleased to congratulate the shire's newest Australians. An apology was received from Auntie Angela ten Buuren, a respected Taungurung Elder.

Murrindindi Shire Council extends its warmest congratulations to all the conferees, and wishes them all the best in their new journey as Australian citizens.

Council will proudly host a further three Citizenship Ceremonies throughout 2024.

To learn more about becoming an Australian citizen, please visit the Department of Home Affairs website immi.homeaffairs.gov.au or call the Citizenship

Information line on 131 880 during business hours.

Mayor Damien Gallagher said, "This ceremony is a significant event in the lives of the conferees, and it is a privilege for our community to welcome our newest citizens. We are here to acknowledge their commitment and to celebrate their new journey as Australians."

Online learning platform for small business owners

A NEW online learning platform offering free courses to help small business owners master their tax and superannuation obligations has just been launched by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

The *Essentials to strengthen your small business* website includes more than 20 short courses and a calendar of key lodgment due dates to support small businesses.

Deputy Commissioner Will Day said the new platform is designed for small business owners who want to enhance their knowledge of tax and super.

"Small business owners can now access short, free and flexible online courses to sharpen their knowledge of tax, super and the core aspects of effective small business management.

"The new platform supports a variety of learning styles with videos, case studies, audio content and written information, as well as the option to test your knowledge with quick quizzes, making it easier for all small businesses to learn about important components of running a business.

"It also includes tips on areas where we see small business owners make mistakes, like goods and services tax (GST) and business deductions.

"We know that a lot of small businesses don't have time to attend courses during business hours while they are busy running their business, so the beauty of our new platform is that you can do it at a time that suits you, save your progress, and then pick it up again later," said Mr Day.

The new platform is also a useful resource for tax practitioners, especially for those that are small businesses themselves, to share and use with their staff and clients.

The website was co created with small businesses and educational experts to deliver learning pathways that can be customised, depending on each stage of a business's life cycle, structure and industry.

Minister for Small Business Julie Collins said the Government is committed to reducing the time small businesses spend doing taxes and resources like this provide valuable practical assistance.

"I encourage small businesses to take up this great opportunity from the Australian Taxation Office with free courses specifically designed for the needs of small business," Minister Collins said.

"Our latest Budget included new measures to help small business with taxes including longer timeframes to amend tax returns and expanding access to advice through the tax clinic program."

Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Bruce Billson said this resource will be helpful to small businesses.

"Business know how and being able to benefit from the wisdom of others can be key to successfully turning an idea into an enterprise," Mr Billson said.

The new *Essentials to strengthen your small business* learning platform is now live at smallbusiness.taxsuperandyou.gov.au

The cost of Victoria's fire services

NEW data has been released by the Productivity Commission that the Opposition claims shows that Victoria continues to operate the nations most expensive fire services.

The cost of operating Victoria's fire services in 2022-23 was shown to have reached \$2.166 billion, 30.3 per cent greater than New South Wales and more than double the cost in Queensland.

Since 2014-15, Victoria's fire services expenditure has increased by \$687.9 million or 46.6 per cent.

The Opposition said that in 2022-23, the number of permanent paid United Firefighter Union (UFU) member firefighters increased to 5255, up by 223 since 2021-22, while the total Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer staff decreased by a further 998 across the same period.

Response times to statewide, major city, metro and inner regional structure fires all increased in 2022-23 when compared to 2020-21.

The data shows that the number of CFA volunteer firefighters has now fallen by 8038 or 21.8 per cent.

The most recent Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) annual report states that the agency recorded a \$132.5 million loss in 2021-22.

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Richard Riordan, said, "Under Labor, Victoria is broke and the Allan Government simply cannot manage money.

"With such dramatic cost increases year on year, it's clear Jacinta Allan has lost control of Victoria's fire services and every Victorian is being made to pay the price.

"More than one in five volunteer firefighters have now left the CFA, meaning local communities across the state are in a more vulnerable position.

"Victorians deserve value for money from their emergency services and the Victorian Government must explain why it costs so much more to run a fire services system here than anywhere else in the nation," Mr Riordan said.

Low traffic offences for Hume Region

OVER the Australia day long weekend, Police performed Operation Amity, a four day statewide road policing operation, in an effort to reduce the road trauma over the state.

Speeding drivers made up almost half of offences, police detected 2261 speeding offences, with three quarters of those detections for speeding between 10km/h and 25km/h over the speed limit.

A total of 5206 traffic offences were detected during Operation Amity, including, 2261 speeding offences, with 1742 of these for speeding between 10km/h and 25km/h over the limit.

There was 301 disqualified, suspended and unlicensed drivers, 154 drink driving offences from 77,058 preliminary breath tests, 121 drug driving offences from 2,142 roadside drug tests, 221 disobey signs/signals, 211

mobile phone offences, 79 seatbelt offences, 77 vehicle impoundments and 447 unregistered vehicles.

Positive, low numbers for Hume Region with the above results not contributing much to the area. Hume region police service area reported only two speeding offences and one unregistered vehicle.

Sadly, there were two lives lost on Victorian roads over the long weekend, including a 59 year old Wodonga resident who died following a motorcycle crash in Guys Forest on Saturday, January 27, and an 89 year old Wallan man who died when his car collided with a tree in Whittlesea on Sunday January 28.

The long weekend's fatalities bring Victoria's lives lost to 22, compared to 28 at the same time last year.

Operation Amity ran from 12:01am Thursday, January 25 to 11:59pm Sunday, January 28.

What are your thoughts on council?

FROM now until the end of March, you may receive a call from an independent market research agency, National Field Services. This agency has been commissioned to conduct a community satisfaction survey on behalf of Murrindindi Shire Council (and other councils across Victoria).

The survey has been designed to assess Victorian councils performance across a range of measures. This survey helps identify how we can improve and make our service delivery better for residents.

If you receive a call, it is legitimate. Please note that all your details and individual responses are confidential, and only the overall survey results are shared with council, not any of your personal data.

All Victorian councils are required to undertake a community satisfaction survey annually. You can find information on last year's survey at the Know Your Council website.

Get up to date with vaccinations if you're travelling

AS of last week three new cases of measles have been identified in Victoria in returned overseas travellers, who have attended several exposure sites while infectious.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can be spread from person to person and can lead to serious health complications and death. Measles can affect anyone but is most common in children.

Due to declining measles vaccination rates overseas the World Health Organisation have recently reported that there have been almost 45 times more cases in Europe in 2023 than the previous year.

With the resurgence of Victorians travelling overseas to countries where measles is a public health concern, there is an increased risk for under vaccinated and unvaccinated persons acquiring measles

during their travels. Families and individuals planning to travel overseas should ensure they have received their recommended travel vaccinations several weeks prior to departure.

The Measles vaccination includes two doses of the measles containing vaccine given at least four weeks apart to provide optimal protection is recommended.

The Measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is free in Victoria for children at 12 months of age as MMR vaccine, and at 18 months of age as MMRV (measles-mumps-rubella-varicella) vaccine as part of their routine National Immunisation Program (NIP) schedule.

Infants from six months to over 11 months of age prior to overseas travel need to get vaccinated especially if they are travelling

to countries where measles is endemic, or where measles outbreaks are occurring. If an infant receives an early dose of MMR vaccine, they are still required to receive their scheduled NIP 12 month (MMR) and 18 month (MMRV) doses.

All people born during or since 1966 who do not have documentation that they have received two doses of measles containing vaccines, Vaccination is recommended, and for any individuals who are unsure of their vaccination history.

Always check that there are no contraindications to receiving MMR vaccine prior to vaccine administration. Report all vaccines administered to the Australian Immunisation Register.

More free TAFE courses

THE Victorian Government's free TAFE initiative is introducing four new courses in hospitality, youth work, kitchen management and tourism to give more Victorians more opportunities to learn skills and develop their careers.

Minister for Skills and TAFE Gayle Tierney encouraged prospective students to look at courses on offer through Free TAFE, providing Victorians with more access to vocational training.

Since the program was introduced in 2019 it has grown to include more than 80 TAFE qualifications and short courses. This has helped more than 156,000 students who have saved almost \$423 million in tuition fees since the program began.

The program has seen thousands of Victorians embark on a new career pathway, including a quarter of all Free TAFE students based in regional Victoria, more than 44,500 from multicultural backgrounds and more than 90,000 women.

With enrolments now open, students can kickstart their careers or upskill to gain new experience or qualifications across a range of sectors like nursing, building and construction, community services and cyber security.

The Free TAFE program is helping Victorians get the skills they need for the job they want, including in growth areas like clean energy, building the state's future workforce as we transition to net zero.

The Victorian Government is also backing the development of new clean energy skills and courses through the \$50 million Clean Energy Fund, including projects at Federation TAFE in Ballarat, TAFE Gippsland in Morwell and South West TAFE in Warrnambool.

Free TAFE courses are available to all Victorians, regardless of their existing qualification level. The program allows thousands of students to enter an in demand career without the worry of the cost of tuition fees. Students can also enrol in more than one Free TAFE course provided it's within the same priority pathway.

The Victorian Budget 2023/24 invested more than \$543 million in TAFE to help more Victorians get the skills they need with more subsidised courses and improved facilities. Victoria's TAFE network is a vital part of our state's education system, helping students become job ready faster and providing the skills we need to grow our economy.

For the full list of Free TAFE courses visit: vic.gov.au/free-tafe

Authorities sick and tired of cleaning up

ENVIRONMENTAL authorities are urging Victorian households and businesses to spare the environment and dispose of their used tyres legally and responsibly after more than 2700 car and truck tyres were found dumped on public land last year.

The Conservation Regulator and Parks Victoria recorded at least 60 separate illegal dumping incidents involving personal or commercial quantities of tyres across Victorian public land in 2023, with the State's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) estimating that thousands more have been dumped, burned, or stockpiled.

Dumped car tyres can have serious impacts on human and environmental health. Old tyres also contain harmful chemicals that leach into the environment and groundwater as they break down, potentially poisoning plants and animals.

Discarded tyres also present a serious fire risk, as tyre fires are harder to control or extinguish than regular fires. As rubber burns hotter and more easily, tyres dumped in forests can fuel bushfires with devastating effects.

Legal disposal of old tyres reduces these environmental and safety risks, and recycled tyres can often be turned into other products, including roads and artificial playground turf.

Individual or small quantities of tyres can be responsibly disposed of at recycling centres, such as local council transfer stations, for a small fee so that they can be repurposed. Most tyre outlets will also accept old tyres as part of government recycling schemes, either for free if people have purchased new tyres from their shop, or for a small fee if brought from elsewhere.

When disposing tyres through one of the above options, people should check with their local council, recycling facility, or individual tyre seller to see if they accept them.

Victorian businesses also have legal obligations for safely storing and transporting large amounts of waste tyres. EPA Victoria produces guidance on managing these responsibilities, which can be found at epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/manage-industrial-waste/waste-tyres

In Victoria, it is an offence to dump litter or waste under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, with maximum penalties ranging between \$3,846 and \$230,772.

For more information on local council waste services, visit: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/recycling-and-reducing-waste/at-home/recycling-at-home/council-waste-and-recycling-services

The public can report illegal dumping on public land to 136 186 or to EPA Victoria on 1300 372 842.

Get in quick to nominate a young achiever

NOMINATIONS close soon for the 2024 Victorian 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards at midnight on Tuesday, February 13.

There is still time to nominate a young person 30 years of age and under, as of December 31, making a difference in your community.

Everybody knows an inspiring young individual, who we all wonder where they find the time to help others, paving the way for our future through innovative thinking and, who is a leader and role model for their peers.

We need to give thanks, and now you can by nominating them into one of the following categories. Thesen include, the Spirit Super Create Change Award, IKON Services Environmental Sustainability Award, Josh's Rainbow Eggs Ethical Business Award, Kangan Institute Inspirational TAFE Student Award, National Protective Services Safety and Wellbeing in the Workplace Award, Seward Dawson Community Service and Social Impact Award,

Strategic Alliance Network Small Business Award, The Victorian Government Group Achievement in the Community Award and the Yarn Strong Sista Indigenous Achievement Award.

Category winners will each receive a prize package worth more than \$2500, including six months of a one on one mentoring package thanks to The Impact Collective, plus a beautiful trophy.

One of the category winners will be chosen as the 2024 Victorian Young Achiever of the Year.

To submit a nomination, simply go to youngachieverawards.com and select "VIC" and then click the gold "Nominate Now" button. Alternatively, make the process that much easier by calling us on 9720 1638 and passing on their details and we will take it from there.

Nominations close Tuesday, February 13. For assistance, please feel free to call the Awards Office or email vicyaa@awardsaustralia.com

Farewell to long term Family Daycare educator

MURRINDINDI Shire Council's long term Family Day Care (FDC) educator, Lynne Barkley, has retired after almost 30 years of providing quality early childhood education and care for children in Alexandra and surrounds.

Lynne joined council as an educator in 1995 and has worked with hundreds of families in Murrindindi Shire during this time.

Lynne was often seen around town with children in tow, regularly offering the kids a fun outing to the park, the shops in the main street, storytime events at the Alexandra Library, and for a while attended the Buds and Blossoms intergenerational playgroup, giving the children a valuable experience that they all adored.

The children in Lynne's care were treated like family, and over the years Lynne has seen many of the children in her care grow up and have children of their own, placing them in Lynne's care too.

Council's Community Wellbeing and Economic Development Portfolio Councillor Sandice McAulay said, "Lynne has been a beacon of dedication and love in our community. Her commitment to providing quality early childhood education

and care for nearly three decades is truly commendable.

"Lynne's retirement marks the end of an era, but her impact on the lives of countless children and families in and around Alexandra will be felt for generations to come. On behalf of Murrindindi Shire Council, I want to express our deepest gratitude for her years of service and wish her all the best in her well deserved retirement.

"Becoming a Family Day Care Educator is an excellent option for people who want a rewarding and flexible career. There are a range of obvious benefits in becoming an Educator, including being your own boss, the ability to look after your own child while looking after other children, flexible work days and hours, 24/7 support from council, and opportunities for career development and training.

"Murrindindi Family Day Care is also offering an incentive package for anyone wanting to kick start their career as an educator. Up to \$2500 is available to assist with the purchase of resources like printers, stationary, toys, and first aid training."

"With the current shortage of educators across the state, it's clear we need more wonderful Educators like Lynne. That's why

we're encouraging people with experience in early childhood education, who might be thinking about trying something new, to consider a career as a Family Day Care Educator," Cr McAulay said.

For more information about council's Family Day Care services, please contact council's Customer Service team on 5772 0333, or visit our website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/childcare



Lynne Barkley. -S

Millennials spend big for love on Valentines Day

ACCORDING to recent research, Millennials are forking out double what the average couple spends for Valentine's Day, with the average adult Australian will spend \$162 on their significant other on Valentines Day. Millennials are paying double this, and are shelling out a whopping \$334.35 for their partners gift on Valentines Day.

This is followed by Gen Z (\$185) and Gen X (\$142). Meanwhile, Baby Boomers appear to show their love in other ways, with the average senior spending just \$20 on Valentine's Day.

The data also found that Victorians are likely to spend the most on Valentine's Day than other states, with the average price sitting at \$266.80.

Melbourne is renowned around the world for its restaurants and dining experiences, so it's highly likely that Victorians will wow their loved ones by wining and dining them.

However, if you're in South Australia, you may be at the short end of the stick. The data shows that the average South Australian will spend \$47.37 on Valentine's Day.

The results of the average spend on Valentines Day for each state have been released as the following, New South Wales \$106.27, Queensland \$145.79, South Australia \$47.37, Victoria \$266.80 and Western Australia \$128.34. Northern Territory, Tasmania and the ACT were excluded from the results due to low

sampling data in the Compare the Market report.

The good news with Valentine's Day is that there are so many ways you can celebrate your love for one another that doesn't cost any money. Some low cost but thoughtful options can include, cooking a social meal at home instead of an expensive restaurant, have a special movie night in, write a special note or card, bake something, make a play list on their music listening platforms (the modern day mix tape), or even just set some time aside out of your busy lives and spend some quality time together.

Valentine's Day is on February 14.

McLeish claims back to school shock for Victorian families

MEMBER for Eildon Cidy McLeish has commented on the return to school this year, saying, "No doubt there were some excited kids and families that turned up at schools for the first day last week, eager for what lies ahead and the opportunity to receive an education that sets them up for their future lives. I am sure for many of the mums and dads that excitement will quickly turn to horror when they take a close look at what the education is costing them and what they are getting for their money.

"According to recent Futurity report, the total cost of a government education in Melbourne will be over \$108,000 over 13 years for a child starting school in 2024. This is more than any other state in the country.

"Families are already doing it tough with mortgage payments, energy bills, grocery costs and health services stretching the hip pocket. What should be an exciting event in their families lives is instead being dreaded as an additional financial burden to overcome. Many simply cannot afford what we all recognise is an absolutely necessity for our kids.

"In Melbourne, it costs \$14,000 more than in Sydney to send your child to a public school. A 2024 Smith Family survey noted nearly nine out of 10 parents and carers (88.3 per cent) were worried about being able to afford the things their children would need for school. Of the respondents, 45.6 per cent said they feared their children were likely to miss out on basics like uniforms and shoes, up from 29.7 per cent in 2023.

"Despite paying more, students are not necessarily seeing this translate to a better education. International data shows that Victorian student performance has been in steady decline over the past two decades with outcomes in maths, science and reading at record lows. Statistics are also showing nearly one third of Victorian students are failing to meet NAPLAN standards.

"Victorians deserve an education system that meets their needs and is not failing them in the basics. The government needs to invest in something other than digging tunnels in this state if there is to be any kind of future for our kids," Ms McLeish said.

Are you ready for the new World's Greatest Shave?

THE World's Greatest Shave is arguably Australia's favourite fundraising campaign spanning 26 years, with more than two million Australians taking part by shaving, cutting, and colouring their hair, to raise vital funds for the Leukaemia Foundation and people living with blood cancer, in Australia.

The World's Greatest Shave, however, wasn't immune to the devastating impact of COVID-19, which created the most formidable challenge the campaign has faced in its 26 year history. With the World's Greatest Shave being the single biggest source of income for the Leukaemia Foundation, the organisation took a significant hit and saw fundraising figures drop dramatically.

The World's Greatest Shave had to pivot, and this year they farewell the beloved chins as they launch a new era of the campaign, with a vibrant, bold, contemporary, and more personal approach, to support the growing number of Australians impacted by blood cancer.

The new-look World's Greatest Shave celebrates the everyday heroes in our community doing 'bloody beautiful' acts of

shaving, cutting, colouring or donating. The new creative direction will feature real human participants and a catchy new slogan 'That's Bloody Beautiful', which will resonate more deeply with Australians.

There has never been a more important time for World's Greatest Shave to be back in force, with more Australians diagnosed with blood cancer now than ever before, underscoring the urgent need for increased support, additional resources, and more funds.

More than 140,000 Australians are currently living with blood cancer. Incidence of blood cancer has soared by 47 per cent in the past decade, making it a significant public health issue in Australia.

Funds raised through the World's Greatest Shave ensure that the Leukaemia Foundation can continue to provide vital support to blood cancer patients and their loved ones, and fund ground-breaking research, in the hopes of one day finding a cure.

The foundation is urging the Australian community to sign up to shave, cut or colour their hair for World's Greatest Shave by visiting worldsgreatestshave.com

Seeking better community engagement on renewables

MEMBER for Indi Helen Haines is urging the government to fund measures to improve engagement with regional communities affected by renewable energy infrastructure projects in the Federal Budget, after the government received a report mapping out potential fixes for current practices.

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner Andrew Dyer's final report on the independent Community Engagement Review for renewable energy infrastructure projects was published on Friday, making nine recommendations for reform.

"Australia's renewable energy rollout is happening in the regions, but the failure to properly consult with regional communities affected by large-scale renewable energy projects and transmission infrastructure risks delaying or derailing this transition and selling regional Australia short," Dr Haines said.

"This report is a roadmap for improving how people are consulted when energy projects are developed in their communities, and I welcome its delivery.

"The renewable energy transition is well underway in regional and rural Australia. The government have agreed to the recommendations in principle, but the implementation of this report is a matter of urgency.

"However, this report shows the complexity of implementing these significant and urgently needed reforms, due to the shared responsibility across the Commonwealth and the states and territories.

"If the government is serious about meeting its net-zero targets and gaining community support for the energy transition, they are going to have to work quickly and effectively with state and territory governments, energy developers and regional communities to get the transition right."

Dr Haines said she has identified measures which could be funded quickly, including setting up an

independent body to design and operate a developer rating scheme, and for the government to set up a communications program that provides local communities with details and timeframes for the energy transition.

Dr Haines said she recognised the damage being done to regional communities by poor consultation and bad behaviour by some developer cowboys.

"Farmers, landowners and concerned community members in my electorate of Indi, like many across the regional and rural Australia have been disappointed with the lack of information and inadequate consultation by some renewable energy companies. They deserve to be engaged early and meaningfully in the development of energy projects happening at their farmgate," Dr Haines said.

"There is a power and knowledge imbalance between renewable energy developers and local communities, and the Federal Government needs to step up to ensure regional Australians get the information they need to make good decisions, and that they properly benefit from the renewable energy rollout. It shouldn't be up to local communities to do this work alone."

This was reflected in the surveys undertaken in the Review, which found that 92 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with the extent to which project developers engaged the local community, and 93 per cent disagreed that they received a satisfactory resolution to the concern they raised with the project developer.

"The mapping of suitable land for renewables development and 'no-go' sites such as high-value agricultural land, is something that I called for in my submission to the review, yet the report doesn't address the protection of prime agricultural land, increases in insurance premiums and emergencies management considerations in the way I had hoped," Dr Haines said.

SPORT

Impressive performances at State Combined Events for athletes

IN a thrilling weekend at Lakeside Albert Park, rising athletes Zoe Collier and Eva Nardella-Morcom showcased their prowess at the state combined events.

Eva Nardella-Morcom, dazzled with an outstanding performance, securing four personal bests and accumulating an

impressive 387 points using the Alberta system. A phenomenal effort by Eva, deserving of congratulations.

Zoe Collier, equally determined, left her mark with three personal bests and exceeded her season average in the remaining two events. Finishing 34th out of

63 competitors, Zoe tallied a commendable 681 points. Notably, she claimed the 10th best throw in shot put, showcasing her all-around athletic skills. Congratulations, Zoe, on a remarkable achievement.

Last Saturday's Little Athletics morning session celebrated hardworking members

with well-deserved medallions for personal best achievements. The club extends best wishes to the 15 members competing at the Regional Championships in Shepparton this weekend. A friendly reminder to all other members that regular Saturday morning sessions will resume the week after the regionals.



Tahj, Hamish, Koa, Sonny, Zara and Sienna feeling proud after receiving personal best medallions. -S



Zoe Collier flying over a hurdle at State Combined event. -S



Zoe's big leap in the long jump at Lakeside Albert Park. -S

Bus to Alex Races Rock on March 2

COME on down for a day full of family fun and racing at the Alexandra Race Club's, Alex Races Rock.

In addition to the horses, great rock music, face painting and a magician, a bus service can take the hassle out of getting to and from the races. There will be a small charge of \$5 for a return trip however, children 15 and under are free. Bookings are essential. Please book via Trybooking on the link below.

If demand is strong enough we are prepared to run and early and

a later bus from each location. You need to book so we can offer you the best service.

On the day the buses will leave from the following places.

Bus one will start at the Eildon pondage caravan park then Eildon town centre, Thornton Hotel Motel, Big4 Breeze Holiday Park and Eildon Waters Holiday Park.

Bus two will start at the Yea Caravan Park information centre, then Molesworth Hotel and the Yarrack Hotel.

Bus Three starts at Marysville Central, then Marysville Caravan

Park, Buxton township, Taggerty Holiday Park and Breakaway Twin Rivers Caravan Park.

Early buses depart from 11.15am and the late buses will be from 12.30pm. Return trips will leave from the track from 5pm.

It's a bargain at only \$5 for a return ticket. Kids aged 16 and under are free, but remember to reserve their seat because they need a ticket too.

Reservations are essential so please reserve your seat now at trybooking.com/COPVA



Alex Races Rock is set for March 2 and you can catch a bus to and from the event. -S



Top scorer Harry Craddock. -S



Henry Berriman. -S

Good win to Merton cricketers

by Rohan Berriman

**B Grade
Merton 7/115 defeated
Wangaratta Magpies 10/102**

MERTON cricketers travelled to South Wangaratta Oval to take on the Wangaratta Magpies at the weekend, in hot conditions on a slow outfield.

Merton went into bat first making 7/115; a respectable total considering a sluggish start due to some tight bowling.

Merton's middle order played their shots lead by top scorer Harry Craddock 31 and some late power hitting from returning player Andrew Lockhart also with 31, saw the runs flow. Merton's bowlers really toiled well in the hot conditions and backed themselves up in the field taking their catches.

In form off spinner Henry Berriman again helped bowl his side to victory taking 5/25 off eight overs, his first five wicket haul. Pacemen James Benton and Noah Whittall both with 1/10 off five overs also got into the action. Skipper, Rohan Berriman with 2/21 rounded out a steady performance in the field. The Magpies really took the game up to the visitors needing 22 off the last four overs, however Merton stayed sharp in the field and managed to bowl the home side out in the final over for 102. Merton host Beechworth Wanderers next Saturday at the MCG.

MERTON: Fall of Wickets 1-10 Jai Lerch-MacKinnon, 2-19 James Benton, 3-34 Daryl King, 4-41

Noah Whittall, 5-71 Henry Berriman, 6-71 Player, 7-115 Player.

MERTON: BATTERS Daryl King c: Harry Gorman b: Andrew Dean 13. Jai Lerch-MacKinnon

c: Andrew Dean b: Ned Gorman 2. James Benton c: Luke Sims b: Ned Gorman 3. Noah Whittall c: Luke Sims b: Dylan Corcoran 10. Harry Craddock not out 31*. Henry Berriman run out: Rhys Delahunty, Andrew Dean 13. Fill-in c: Rhys Delahunty b: Chandan Kulkarni 0. Fill-in b: Chandan Kulkarni 31. William Benton not out 0*. Rohan Berriman (c) DNB. David Rankin DNB.

MAGPIES: Fall of Wickets 1-8 Ned Gorman, 2-26 Andrew Dean, 3-31 Mitchell Benton, 4-47 Lenny Sims, 5-49 Luke Sims, 6-66 Rhys Delahunty, 7-71 Oscar Edwards, 8-95 Dylan Corcoran, 9-101 Sam Reid, 10-102 Harry Gorman.



The best bowler was Henry Berriman, with five for 25. -S

Bowls finals closing in for Alexandra

by Marie Evans

WITH two rounds to go before the Pennant finals, Alexandra Bowls Club Saturday division four is looking to contest the knock out round. However, nothing is assured as third and fourth spot could change. Mid-week division three is out of contention as is Saturday division six.

Saturday division four pennant played at home this week and had a good win over Shepparton Park with all four rinks successful and the final score Alexandra 108 to Shepparton Park 75. The best winning rink was John Cujic (skip), Doug Cooper, Ben Gilchrist, and Janice Dunston. They won 15 ends out of 25. They led for the entire game after the first end. It was 21 to eight at the break and the game finished with Alexandra 34 to Shep Park 17. A great team effort by all players, set up by excellent leading from Janice Dunston.

David Nicklos (skip), Bob Mayfield, Andy Tobias, Christine Mayfield were seven/nil down on end four but won the next two ends to lead eight to seven. It was nine all on end eight, 13 all on end 14. Alexandra won the next four ends to lead 21 to 13. Shepparton Park only trailed by five shots by end 22, but Alexandra had a comfortable win 27 to 20. Alexandra won 13 out of the 25 ends.

Graeme Matthews (skip), Ken Argent, Bob Benghamy and Denice Chisholm led 15 to 10 on end 13. They had increased that lead 21 to 11 by end 19 and 23 to 12 on end

22. Shepparton Park won the last three ends but were kept to only four shots. Alexandra won 14 ends and the game 23 to 16.

Greg Gilmore (skip) Larry Scott, Marie Evans and Lauren Gilchrist had the closest game. It was six all on end seven, but Alexandra was 12 to six up on end 10 and 15 to nine up on end 12. By end 21 Alexandra had a 23 to 16 lead. However, only one shot separated the teams on end 24 with Alexandra 23 Shepparton Park 22. Shepparton Park were holding one shot on the last end and the game looked like a draw until Greg Gilmore with the last bowl of the game drew a perfect shot to win the game for Alexandra 24 to 22.

The ladder is, Eildon 179, Euroa 173, Alexandra 146, Dookie 139, Tallygaroopna 121, Seymour 106, Shepparton Park 105, East Shepparton 97, Tatura Hilltop 86. Next week's game is away to Dookie. A win would ensure Alexandra in third spot.

Saturday division six played away to Dookie and despite losing all rinks had close games. Ray Mathieson (skip), Trevor Stewart, Scott Ferrier and Rob Roach lost 22 to 18. Roselyn Livy (skip), Karen Jackson, Anne Gunton, Christine Murphy lost 25 to 19. John Blamey (skip), Clive Murphy, Mark Stone and Malcolm Gill also lost by six shots 20 to 14. Alexandra is at home next week and play Shepparton Golf.

Midweek division three played away to Numurkah and met some tough opposition. The three rinks were defeated David



Best winning rink in division four, Doug Cooper, Janice Dunston, Ben Gilchrist, John Cujic. -S

Nicklos (skip), Doug Cooper, Clive Murphy and Denice Chisholm lost 36 to 18. Bob Mayfield (skip), Ben Gilchrist, Coby Petersen and Christine Mayfield lost 34 to 12 and Ray Mathieson (skip), Roselyn Livy, Pauline Gilmore and Christine Murphy lost 36 to 11. They play Nagambie who are in sixth place next round. Alexandra will be looking for win as home games have seen much better results throughout the season.

The Goulburn Valley Playing area Champion of Champion Singles was

postponed due to a heat out. This is a knockout competition. Club Champions, Bob Mayfield and Lauren Gilchrist will now play at Shepparton Golf Sunday, February 11. In round one Bob is playing Brendan Challis (Seymour VRI) and Lauren is playing Angela Finn (Yea). We wish them good bowling.

The draws for the club mixed pairs and mixed triples are on the board and Alexandra Bowls Club page on Facebook.

Well deserved win to the Redbacks

by Michelle Christie

Under 13
Alexandra 8/136 defeated
Eastern Hill 8/105

ALEXANDRA under 13 cricketers hosted Eastern Hill at home at Rebel Park on Saturday, February 3, with a beautiful morning for cricket.

Eastern Hill won the toss and elected to bowl. Dusty Fitzpatrick and Logan Conway opened the batting for Alexandra with Dusty making two runs before being bowled. Lucas Crane joined Logan to put on a good partnership before Logan was dismissed LBW for eight. Harrison Christie joined Lucas at the crease to put on a strong partnership with Lucas retiring not out for 20. Charlie Broadway was next to bat and was unlucky to be run out for one. Jaidyn Dimech then joined Harrison for another strong partnership with Harrison retiring on 22 not out, followed by Jaidyn retiring, not out on 16.

Will Donohue, Aiden Campbell and Riley Cole all had a turn at batting before Lucas Crane and Harrison Christie returned to the crease. Lucas made an additional 10 runs before being bowled. Taking the total for his innings to 30. Jaidyn Dimech then returned to bat making another nine runs before being bowled, taking his total to 25 and Harrison Christie, another 16 to finish with 36 not out. A solid display of batting put Alexandra at a total of 136 runs.

Eastern Hill came into bat to some excellent bowling by the home side. Lucas Crane 1/14 off four overs, Aiden Campbell 2/22 off four overs, Harrison Christie 1/26 off three overs, Dusty Fitzpatrick 0/12 off two overs, Logan Conway 0/10 off

two overs, Will Donahue 0/3 off one over, Charlie Broadway 1/6 off one over, Jaidyn Dimech 2/11 off two overs to keep the visiting side to 105 runs.

It was a great team effort with everyone contributing well to bring home a well deserved win for the Redbacks. It is wonderful watching the boys progress each week.

The Alexandra Cricket Club would like to congratulate Justin and Laura Leary on the birth of their son, Oscar John Leary, on January 9.

ALEXANDRA BATTERS: Dusty Fitzpatrick b: Addison Stokes 2. Logan Conway lbw: Harvey Smith 8. Lucas Crane b: Addison Stokes 3. Harrison Christie retired not out 36. Charlie Broadway run out 1. Jaidyn Dimech b: Cooper D'Elia 25. William Donohue b: Sahibdil Sidhu 0. Aiden Campbell b: Harvey Smith 0. Riley Cole b: Cooper D'Elia 0. Nathan Webb --.

No luck for A graders

by Tim Polson

A Grade
Alexandra 10/74 defeated
by Tallarook 2/78

ON Saturday, February 3 Alexandra A Grade, took on Tallarook at Leckie Park.

Tallarook won the toss and elected to bowl. S Whitehead and W Ellis started off strong, but Tallarook were quick to claim the first wicket with W Ellis falling victim on two runs.

The wickets kept falling around S Whitehead who put on a strong 26 to steady the ship, but Tallarook were just too good with the ball.

A late surge from captain L Ronalds of 19 saw the home side be all out for 74 with C Winnel

the pick of bowlers for the away side claiming three for seven from 4.3 overs.

The change of innings saw J Meggit and B Geldart take the new ball which resulted in B Geldart claiming the first wicket with a great catch at cover from H Meggit.

J Meggit claimed the second wicket with a great in-swinging delivery that struck Tallarook's, A Dundon on the pads to be dismissed for eight.

With a small total from Alexandra, the away team were too good and chased it down taking the win in 13 overs.

ALEXANDRA: S Whitehead 26, L Ronalds 19, K Winnel 3/7, L Irving 3/24

TALLAROOK: L Watts 27no, S Topham 18 no.

ALEXANDRA: Fall of Wickets 1-17 Will Ellis, 2-28 Player, 3-37 Scott Whitehead, 4-37 Matthew Wal, 5-48 James Meggit, 6-59 Jordan Ferrier, 7-71 Levi Ronalds, 8-71 Joshua Crane, 9-71 Banjo Fitzpatrick, 10-73 Tim Polson.

Avenel v Yea
Avenel 9/86 defeated
by Yea 2/91

AVENEL: C Papi 21, D Lewis 15, D Thompson 5/22, A Ross 3/11.

YEA: J Lincoln 29, W Dalton 21 no

B Grade
Alexandra v bye

Tallarook v Yea
Tallarook 10/130
defeated by Yea 6/141

TALLAROOK: B O'Donnell 68, R Melville 17, T White 3/22, M Waghorn 2/4.

YEA: E Waghorn 46, J Cunningham 29no, T Dundon 2/33.

Marysville golf report



Winners Jody Doran and Lesley Rundle. Paul Martin was absent for the photo. -S

by Lesley Rundle

ON Saturday, the third round of the 2024 FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters was held at Alexandra Golf Club. In perfect conditions, 94 golfers from Marysville, Eildon, Yea and Alexandra played a stableford round.

The ladies Alexandra Mini Master was Sharon Grogan from Yea with 38 points and the men's Mini Master was Jared Sloane from Alexandra with an excellent 42 Points. Congratulations to Sharon and Jarrod.

Marysville winners were Jody Doran who was the A Grade runner up with 35 points, Lesley Rundle who won B Grade with 34 points and Paul Martin who won C grade with 41 points. At the presentation captain Brendan Smith, on behalf of all those present, thanked profusely, all the Alexandra members who

had contributed in some way to a successful event. He also introduced Cathie Harper to the group who was representing FoodWorks and who presented the winners with their trophies.

FoodWorks have been generously sponsoring the Murrindindi Masters for 15 years and the competition was instigated by Norm Reddrop, an Alexandra member, as a way of uniting golfers in the area after the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

The fourth and final round of this years competition will be held at Yea on Saturday, February 10, after which the 2024 Masters Champions will be announced.

The next competition at Marysville will be a stroke round on Saturday, February 17, for the February monthly medal. The ladies will also be playing the first round of the Barton Shield.

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FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters round three

by Elizabeth Goss

IT was a wonderful day on Saturday at Alexandra Golf Course, for the third round of the FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters. Perfect weather, the course in pristine condition, a sausage sizzle and a delicious salad roll. Congratulations to the winners of the Mini Masters trophies, Jared Sloane from Alexandra with (12) 42 points and Shanon Grogan from Yea with (30) 38 points.

Winners of the men's grades were; A grade: Mick Holohan, Alexandra (11) 41 points, runner up James Kidd, Alexandra (8) 38 points. B Grade: John Norfolk, Alexandra (16) 39 points, runner up John Steer, Alexandra (15) 39 points. C Grade: Paul Martin, Marysville (29) 41 points, runner up Steve Wersham (35) 40 points.

Winners of the women's grades were; A Grade: Barb Doyle Alex (19) 38 points, runner up Jody Doran, Marysville (11) 35 points. B Grade: Lesley Rundle Maryville (31) 34 points, runner up Sue Aurisch, Yea (38) 33 points. Nearest the pins on the fifth Todd Galloway, on the seventh Brad Newton, on the 12th Rod Taylor and on the 18th Russell Purcell.

Our four clubs will forever be thankful to the Reddrop family for supporting the Masters originally initiated by Norm Reddrop. They are important dates on the Murrindindi calendar. Once again a big thank you to all the volunteers from the ground crew to those organising the day and the volunteers on the day.

The final of the FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters will be played at Yea next Saturday, February 10. An exciting day.

It was a big day on Wednesday for the ladies who played the final round of the 2024 Summer Cup. Congratulations to Sue Greatorex for winning the cup with 112 points. Judy Pearson won the day's round with (26) 37 points. The runner up was Helen Findlay (26) 34 points. Next was Barb Doyle, (19) 33 points on a count back from Sue Greatorex with (21) 33 points. Ruth Worland won the back nine. Nearest the pin on the second and the seventh, went to Sue Greatorex and to Barb Doyle on the 18th.

Wednesday, February 21, is a 4BBB round. Note February start times will be 7.30am.

Our summer visitor, John McDonald keeps appearing in our winners list and he did it again on Tuesday with (19) 39 points, John Mosely was the runner up with (21) 35 points on a count back from David Silverman (10) 35 points. Russell Purcell was nearest the pin on the 7th and John McDonald on the 18th. Run down: Ross Thompson, Leo Dynes.



Sue Greatorex, the Summer Cup Winner. -S



Cathie Harper and Barb Doyle. -S



Cathie Harper and Jared Sloan. -S



Mick Holohan (right) with FoodWorks representative Cathie Harper. -S



A clear day for the big game. -S