

# Standard

INCORPORATING THE ALEXANDRA TIMES - THE YARCK, GOBUR, TAGGERTY, THORNTON, AND ACHERON EXPRESS

P.O. Box 5, Alexandra, 3714. Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Fax: (03) 5772 1603; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Wednesday, May 20, 2026 \$2.50 inc. GST

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murrindindibusiness.com.au

## INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Interview with ADH Interim CEO



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Alexandra Community Wood Auction



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Plants donated to fire-affected



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Weekend sport



Pages 21-24



There were smiles all round at the Alexandra Primary School Emergency Services Day. More on page 10. -AR

## Financial boost for fire recovery

THE Australian and Victorian Governments are continuing to support communities recovering from the January 2026 bushfires.

Nearly \$33 million will provide more than 100 temporary modular homes for people without adequate insurance whose home was significantly damaged or destroyed.

Navigating insurance and housing issues can also be complicated, so \$4 million will fund more legal services for families, small businesses and primary producers.

Support will be delivered by Disaster Legal Help Victoria and other existing legal centres.

The Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS) will also receive an \$880,000 boost to employ more financial and wellbeing counsellors. The services will provide free, confidential support to farmers as they work through the financial impacts of the bushfires. This includes analysing their business position, negotiating with lenders and accessing government support. The wellbeing counsellors will support the mental health of their clients. The Rural Financial Counselling Service can be accessed by calling 1300 771 741.

This funding brings the total recovery assistance provided for the January 2026 bushfires to more than \$420 million including cost-sharing under the DRFA.

For more information on the DRFA packages and supports provided, visit [vic.gov.au/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements](http://vic.gov.au/disaster-recovery-funding-arrangements)

Federal Minister for Emergency Management Kristy McBain said, "We will continue to work together with the Victorian Government to make sure that effective assistance gets to where it's needed and communities are able to move onto the next stages of recovery."

Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan said, "We were there from day one and we'll continue to stand with the impacted communities to deliver the practical help they need to rebuild and recover."

The state government was asked how many of the modular units would be placed within Murrindindi Shire. The answer will be provided in an upcoming edition.

## A huge thank you to all of the volunteers

NATIONAL Volunteer Week runs this week, from May 18 to 24, with the theme of 'Your year to volunteer'. It highlights how Australians are continuing to support their communities in ways that are more flexible, informal and responsive to everyday life.

In our area, the efforts of local volunteers have been particularly relevant with January's Longwood bushfire. CFA volunteers put in a tremendous effort to combat the initial fire, and then communities rallied to provide support in the aftermath, especially volunteer-run community hubs like Yarck Hall, Highlands Community Hub, Fawcett Hall, etcetera.

Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher said that the recent crisis demonstrates the resilience of the people of Murrindindi Shire.

"Murrindindi is indeed privileged to have so many dedicated people supporting others, and we have certainly seen that in action following the January 2026 bushfires," Cr Gallagher said.

"During and after the fires, volunteers and community members worked in difficult conditions, including isolation, damaged infrastructure and limited communications. They adapted quickly to changing conditions, using local knowledge, skills and teamwork to support their communities, and, for many, that work continues today."

Council would normally hold its annual Community Awards presentation during National Volunteer Week, but this year that has changed. Cr Gallagher spoke to the reasoning.

"It would not feel right to single out a small number of individuals when, this year, the strength of the bushfire response came from so many across the community," Cr Gallagher said.

"Instead, we are focusing on acknowledging the collective contribution of everyone who has volunteered, supported neighbours, stepped into leadership roles, or simply shown up for their community when it mattered the most."

The challenges of the Australian economy are having an impact on volunteering, however. Rising rent, fuel costs and time pressures are changing how people engage. Australians are doing their best to volunteer in ways that fit around their lives, and National Volunteer Week acknowledges their hard work.

CEO of Volunteering Australia, Mark Pearce, emphasised the importance of removing structural and financial barriers to participation and ensuring volunteering remains accessible, flexible, and inclusive for all Australians.

"The National Strategy for Volunteering is about making it easier for people to get involved. We know there is a strong willingness to contribute across the community, but

systems, structures, and expectations haven't always kept pace with how people live today. By reducing friction and improving access, we can unlock even more participation," Mr Pearce said.

"At a time when Australians are under increasing pressure, what stands out is not that volunteering is declining, but that it is adapting. We're still seeing people show up for their communities, but they are doing it in different ways, in more flexible ways, and often in ways they don't even recognise as volunteering."

Cr Gallagher added that volunteering plays an important role in building strong, connected and resilient communities, and encouraged anyone considering volunteering to explore opportunities across the shire.

"There are so many ways people can get involved and make a difference in their local community," he said.

"If you have ever thought about volunteering, this is a great opportunity to take that first step. Whether you can contribute a few hours or take on a regular role, every contribution matters."

To learn more about some of the volunteering opportunities or to register your organisation to have it listed across Murrindindi Shire, visit: [theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/projects/volunteerhub](http://theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/projects/volunteerhub)



# Letters to the Editor

**Alexandra District Health**  
**5772 0900**  
**Yea & District Memorial Hospital**  
**5736 0400**  
**In an emergency dial 000**

**Standard** **The Yea Chronicle**

**CONTACT DETAILS**

**CLASSIFIEDS AND COMMERCIAL PRINTING**  
 reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

**MANAGER AND ACCOUNTS** Karen Morrison  
 manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au  
 accounts@alexandranewspapers.com.au

**ADVERTISING**  
 1sales@alexandranewspapers.com.au

**TRADES and ONLINE DIRECTORY - Mary**  
 trades@alexandranewspapers.com.au

**EDITOR** Anne Richey  
 editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au  
 (Bailey) journalist@alexandranewspapers.com.au

**SPORTS**  
 sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

43 Grant Street - PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714  
 Telephone: 5772 1002 Fax: 5772 1603  
 Hours: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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**The Green Dream**

IF you did happen to watch *Spotlight: The Green Dream* on 7+, as implored to by Ken Coller, I recommend you follow this up by watching *Media Watch*, screened on ABC on Monday, April 27.

I'm looking forward to continuing discussions, based on factual information, about renewable energy alternatives.

*Diane Gaylard, Buxton*

**Rubicon solar farm**

IT is of no concern to left wing Australians

**THUMBS UP THUMBS DOWN**

**THUMBS UP:** To Steve at Yenckens for his patience. Back on the road again.

**THUMBS UP:** I recently went into Yenckens searching for a small battery screwdriver to use while assembling a flat pack desk. They weren't able to supply one but the lady assistant in the store offered, at no cost, to help me assemble the desk and hutch. She came to my house after work and the desk is now standing tall in my study. Many thanks for such great service and kindness.

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

whether it be Uyghurs slaves or little Congolese children overseas, they don't care. They are not the only ones having their lives destroyed, whether we believe the media or not. The ABC don't have a good track record of getting it right either.

So I can tell you, there are people having their lives devastated in our local area, and beyond. Anyone forced to contemplate living next to a solar/battery factory, whether it be here in this shire at Rubicon Valley, Meadow Creek in the King Valley, Boree in NSW and now Dookie near Shepparton, all

projects planned to go on good grazing and agricultural land.

No one cares, we are saving the planet. Do you really believe that, do you believe our power prices will come down, do you really believe our climate will change for the better?

We know the climate at Rubicon will change, we know we will be subjected to noise pollution and toxic runoff into our creeks and into the river, it may not be cobalt, but there are a lot of toxins in PV solar panels, lead being the main one. Do we really want our rivers being polluted?

But the main issue is the proximity to our forest and the bushfire risk. It was only due to a wind change during the Longwood fire that saved the forest from devastation this time, only a kilometre away.

We as a community are faced with that truth every catastrophic fire day, and in fact all year, we will always be looking over our shoulders in case one of the proposed batteries catches on fire, one out of 200. Yes think about that, 200 shipping containers, plus 150,000 solar panels, what are the chances?

Please sign our petitions, we need your help to save our farmers.

*Concerned Rubicon Residents*

## Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club report

*by honorary secretary Mike Jennings*

TWO tables of Bridge opened the week for the Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club on Wednesday before the social meeting on Friday, where the main topic was the next luncheon which has been pencilled in for Friday, July 10.

Members are looking forward to the trip to Healesville RSL for the *Morning Melodies*. The coach is now full.

Comedy Corner, narrated by Treasurer Dave, had us smiling and Mary, Chris and I went home with the chocolate bars. The usual games of 500 and UNO followed the refreshments with new members Chris and Colin receiving instruction about 500. Come along and join us. You will be most welcome. Meanwhile, stay safe and keep smiling

## COMMUNITY DIARY

**Alexandra District Health**  
**5772 0900**  
**Non-emergency police assistance**  
**131 444**  
**EMERGENCY 000**

**Local Radio Frequency**  
 UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon  
 UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain

**MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS**

**WEEKLY**

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

**MONTHLY**

1<sup>st</sup> Wed Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318  
 1<sup>st</sup> Thur Murrindindi Men 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sun Crop/Produce swap 10.30am-noon @ Embassy of Ideas  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Thu Alexandra Ladies Probus 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Thu Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913  
 4<sup>th</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Thu Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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

## RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	9.00AM Mon	0.91	steady	below flood level
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00AM Mon	0.66	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.00AM Mon	0.74	steady	below flood level
Home Creek at Yarck	7.31AM Mon	0.19	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	7.27AM Mon	0.59	steady	below flood level
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	9.00AM Mon	0.46	steady	
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	9.00AM Mon	0.55	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00AM Mon	3.16	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00AM Mon	0.62	steady	below flood level
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00AM Mon	0.64	steady	below flood level
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00AM Mon	0.32	steady	below flood level
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00AM Mon	0.94	steady	below flood level
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.00AM Mon	0.79	steady	below flood level

**\*ISSUED AT 9.24 AM AEDT MONDAY 18 MAY 2026**

## DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	13mm
Buxton	58mm
Eildon (AWS)	11mm
Flowerdale	47mm
Jamieson	14mm
Kinglake	5mm
Lake Eildon	14mm
Mansfield	N/Amm
Taggerty	25mm
Yarck	18mm
Yea	4mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

## LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	269.45m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	40.5%
Metres below full supply	19.45m
Daily inflow	1800ML
Release	400ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change)	60%

## Correction

AN eagle-eyed reader noticed that there were two incorrect dates in the article about Berhard Smith and the Pre-Raphaelite, published in the May 13 edition. Berhard had exhibited 19 works at the Royal Academy by 1851 (not 1951) and he became assistant commissioner for the Westport District in 1854 (not 1954). Our apologies for the errors.

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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

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

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**Standard**  
 The Yea Chronicle

**Weekly Weather**  
**May 20 - May 26, 2026**  
 Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

**Alexandra** **Yea**

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	6	15	Wednesday	7	16
Thursday	4	16	Thursday	4	16
Friday	6	16	Friday	5	16
Saturday	8	16	Saturday	8	16
Sunday	7	14	Sunday	6	14
Monday	5	14	Monday	6	14
Tuesday	6	15	Tuesday	6	15

**Standard** **The Yea Chronicle**

**THE ALEXANDRA - EILDON - MARYSVILLE**  
**Standard**  
INCORPORATING THE ALEXANDRA TIMES - THE YARCK, DOBEE, TAGGERTY, THORNTON, AND ACHERON EXPRESS

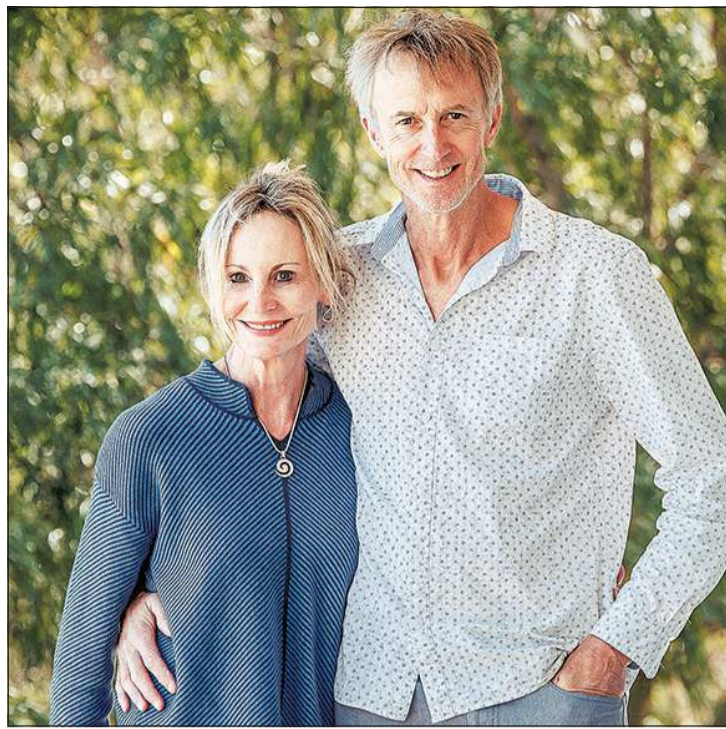
**DEADLINES**

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

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We thank you for your continued support



Sonja Herges and Paul Evans from Sedona Estate. -S

# Sedona wins gold in London

TUCKED into the rolling landscapes of Murrindindi, just ten minutes from Yea, Sedona Estate is quietly building a reputation that stretches far beyond the region. Blessed with a unique microclimate, the boutique vineyard has garnered national and international acclaim for over two decades.

Most recently, Sedona Estate was recognised on the global stage at the 2026 London Wine Competition, taking home Gold for its 2021 Reserve Merlot and Silver for the 2022 Reserve Shiraz, further proof that exceptional wines are being crafted in this hidden wine region of Victoria.

Behind each bottle is the experience and passion of owners Paul and Sonja, whose 30 years as vigneronns have

taught them exactly which parcels of their vineyard yield the finest fruit.

“Concentrated and plush, our Reserve Merlot reveals layers of dark fruit, chocolate, vanilla and spice, with the promise of graceful ageing for those willing to wait,” winemaker Paul Evans said.

The 2022 Reserve Shiraz continues to be a standout among Sedona Estate’s offerings, particularly favoured by locals and many loyal wine friends. Since 2015, this Sedona Reserve Shiraz has consistently demonstrated its quality on the international stage, now adding another prestigious Silver award to its growing list of accolades.

This winter, Sonja and Paul are inviting guests to experience the first intimate fine dining event at the cellar door. Acclaimed Yarra Valley chef Ryan Frost has crafted

a four course seasonal feast, thoughtfully paired with the estate’s award-winning wines.

Frosty’s Winter Feast will be held on Saturday, June 13, at the Sedona Estate cellar door, an evening designed to be savoured slowly, by the fire, with good company and excellent food and wine. With just 24 seats available, this is a rare opportunity to experience Sedona Estate at its most personal.

Bookings are essential and it is expected to fill quickly. Contact Sonja at [wine@sedonaestate.com.au](mailto:wine@sedonaestate.com.au) or call 0432 435 180 to book. Sedona Estate is located at 182 Shannons Rd, Murrindindi.

The Sedona Estate Award-winning Reserve wines are available at many local eateries and bottle shops across the Murrindindi Shire.

## Extension of free fire waste disposal program

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has welcomed the extension of the free bushfire recovery waste disposal program until June 30, providing much needed relief and continued support for residents cleaning up after the January 2026 fires.

The six week extension will be of great assistance to those who are still working through rebuilding their lives. While this extra time is welcomed, council believes a full six-month extension will be needed to meet the needs of the many residents who are continuing to recover from the disaster.

Mayor of Murrindindi Shire, Cr Damien Gallagher, said the extension was a positive step and reflected the impact of council’s continued advocacy on behalf of fire-affected communities.

“This is a positive step, and we’re pleased that our fire-impacted residents were listened to,” Cr Gallagher said.

“Murrindindi has continued to share the lived experience of our community and advocate strongly for recovery support that reflects the scale of impact experienced here.

“We’re aware that many people in our shire are not yet able to properly begin clean-up and recovery.”

More than 280 Murrindindi property owners registered for the Victorian Government’s on-site clean-up program, however, to May 14, only seven have seen any activity on their property.

Some residents have reportedly now given up waiting for the Victorian Government program and have withdrawn from the process, while many others have been deemed ineligible.

The free bushfire recovery waste disposal program at council facilities has been highly regarded and appreciated, and council encourages the community to make use of this free service prior to June 30, if possible.

However, with 133 properties either deemed ineligible or having withdrawn, and a further

62 still waiting to learn whether they will receive a Victorian Government clean-up service, closing this option in June will again place pressure on those least able to absorb it.

Reports indicate that many residents are only now beginning the difficult process of clearing fire-damaged properties, as the need to secure temporary accommodation ahead of winter becomes increasingly urgent.

Delays to clean-up can also have a compounding impact on mental health and wellbeing, with residents continuing to confront the extent of damage to their properties.

Cr Damien Gallagher, said many residents were still only at the beginning of what would be a long recovery process.

“Some residents are only now gaining safe access to their properties, while others waited in good faith for state programs that continue to progress slowly. While we welcome this extension, we expect to again call on the state government in coming weeks to extend the program for the full additional six months needed to continue supporting our residents,” Cr Gallagher said.

Of all councils and municipalities affected by the January 2026 bushfires, Murrindindi experienced the greatest impact, accounting for approximately 48 per cent of the state’s structural losses.

While all impacted councils and municipalities have received recovery funding, Murrindindi has received only around eight per cent of the total funding provided. Council continues to advocate for recovery support that is equitable and proportionate to need, as this level of funding is clearly not aligned with the 48 per cent of impact experienced by Murrindindi.

“Support needs to keep pace with the level of impact and be delivered fairly, providing the same level of service that communities across Australia receive after a disaster. Right now, it is not, and that needs to change quickly,” Cr Gallagher said.

## Update on investigation into Longwood fire cause

POLICE media were asked whether there has been any police progress on determining the official cause of the Longwood Fire, as it’s now been almost four and a half months since the event. They were also asked to provide information on the delay, the actions that Victoria Police are undertaking to determine the cause, and for an estimation on when the information will become formally available.

Around one third of the Murrindindi Shire area burnt in the blaze, and the shire suffered around 48 per cent of the total structures lost in the Longwood fire.

Police media stated, “Victoria Police continue to work with its partner agencies

following the fires across the state, including the Longwood blaze.

“The investigation into the cause of the Longwood fire and the associated death is being led by the Arson and Explosives Squad.

“Such investigations are complex and when we are in a position to provide confirmed information about the cause of any fire, we will do so.

“The body of a person located deceased in the fire has been formally identified as a 78 year old Terip Terip man. Police will prepare a brief for the coroner.”



## JOIN GOULBURN VALLEY WATER'S CUSTOMER PANEL

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# Grant Street safety upgrades move into design phase

PLANNING and design work is progressing for a series of pedestrian safety improvements along Grant Street in Alexandra, focused on the section between the rotunda precinct and the Nihil Street roundabout.

The works relate to two raised priority pedestrian crossing projects currently in development, a raised priority pedestrian crossing near the rotunda on Grant Street, and raised priority pedestrian crossings at the Grant Street and Nihil Street roundabout. Both projects are expected to be delivered by mid-2027. Council has also recently secured funding for a third raised priority pedestrian crossing project at the Webster Street school crossing.

These projects form part of Council's *Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan* and the broader *Alexandra Movement and Place Project*.

Community members may have recently noticed contractors undertaking survey and marking works along footpaths and road edges throughout the precinct. Council has taken the opportunity to survey the broader Grant Street area, including underground services and height levels, to support both the current projects and future planning.

The investigations will also help inform planning for a future Grant Street streetscape upgrade, including accessibility, parking and placemaking improvements. Funding for the broader streetscape component has not yet been secured. Community engagement on the wider *Alexandra Movement and Place Project* is expected to begin later this year.

Raised priority pedestrian crossings, commonly known as 'wombat crossings', are recognised as an effective road safety treatment because they slow vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian visibility. Research shows these treatments can significantly reduce crash severity.

The planned improvements are also expected to make the area easier and safer to move through for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids and prams, while helping clarify parking and improve movement through the town centre.

Mayor Damien Gallagher said the current survey works were an important early step in ensuring future plans are accurate and informed. "The contractors currently on site are collecting detailed survey information and identifying underground services to support the design process," he said.

Council confirmed the recent survey activity does not relate to the Maroondah Highway intersection.

"While the Maroondah Highway is managed by the Victorian Government, council has recently met with the Department of Transport and Planning following the

tragic pedestrian fatality in Alexandra, with a shared focus on improving safety in both the short and longer term," Cr Gallagher said.

"The department has committed to working closely with council and the Alexandra community to explore potential safety improvements, including pedestrian treatments, intersection improvements and speed environment reviews."

"Longer term opportunities will also be explored, including future options to reduce heavy vehicle movements through Alexandra's town centre, however no decisions will be made without community involvement."

The Grant Street and Nihil Street roundabout project is funded through the Australian Government's *Black Spot Program 2025/26*, with a grant of \$439,000, secured for the project.

The raised priority pedestrian crossing near the rotunda is funded through the Transport Accident Commission's Local Government *Infrastructure Grant Program 2025*. The project has a total value of \$267,000, including \$100,000 in TAC funding, with council contributing the remaining \$167,000.

## Out & About



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

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### WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

Yea Water Tigers Amateur Swimming Club AGM will be held at Yea Community House from 6-7pm. General meeting will follow. Enquiries to [yeawatertigerscommittee@gmail.com](mailto:yeawatertigerscommittee@gmail.com). New members welcome.

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### SUNDAY, MAY 31

Clearing sale Maroondah Highway Yarck. Farm machinery, farm sundries, general tools and hardware, cattle showing gear and more. Contact Embling Rural for more details 0418 266 038.

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Whanregarwen Fire Brigade will hold its AGM at 9am at the fire station. All welcome.

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Eildon Bowling Club AGM will be held at 11am at the bowling club.

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### THURSDAY, MAY 21

Free heart health checks at Alexandra Pharmacy 10am-noon.

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### FRIDAY, MAY 22

Bruce Watson is coming to Alexandra on Friday and Saturday. Ukulele Heaven and the Murrindindi Beanie Festival present a music workshop with Bruce. Take your ukulele, voice and other instruments to lift your spirits. Workshops 5-6.30pm on Friday and 10-11.30am on Saturday.

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### SUNDAY, MAY 24

Alexandra Bowling Club AGM will be held at noon at the clubrooms. Presentation and barbecue to follow. All welcome.

## Redgate Alexandra CWA report

by Jane Laws

THANK you to the community who have supported the Redgate Alexandra CWA branch this month. The next monthly meeting will be on Thursday, May 28 at 1pm at the clubrooms on Perkins Street, Alexandra. The hostesses are Gail and Jane, and as Canada is the current country of study, they hope to provide a Canadian inspired afternoon tea. The competitions are flower of the month and decorated coat hanger.

During the Beanie and Fibre Festival on Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, May 24, at the Alexandra Shire Hall, the Redgate Alexandra branch will be offering Devonshire Tea at the clubrooms from 10am to 2pm. For only \$5, you get a beautiful scone and a hot drink of your choice in the warm and cosy atmosphere.

The CWA State Conference will be held in Melbourne on May 30 and 31.

On Sunday, June 13, the Redgate Alexandra branch will have the usual Soup and Slice Kitchen at the clubrooms during the Alexandra Truck, Ute and Rod Show. Visit and say hello and purchase a pea and ham, pumpkin, chicken and vegetable, or vegetable soup for the best CWA value.

For more information, please contact Martine Sloan (president) on 0411 287 763.

Every Tuesday at the clubrooms, there are CWA craft sessions from 10am to 2pm. Tea and coffee are provided. Bring your own lunch. To help with costs a \$3 donation is requested.

For more craft information, please contact Sue Wynn (vice president) on 0412 435 946.

**McCORMACK FUNERALS**  
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## Church Services

**ANGLICAN**  
**St Johns Alexandra**  
 9am Eucharist each Sunday  
 Children welcome.  
 Rev Mario Hendricks -  
 Rectory 0435 953 777

**CATHOLIC**  
 Immaculate Conception Parish  
 Parish Administrator Fr Jose Mathew.  
 Presbytery 0468 810 871  
 St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm  
 Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am  
 Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am

**UNITING CHURCH In Australia**  
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 Phone 0400 282 536  
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 Union of Victoria  
 Sunday 4.30pm service  
 Kids program during school term  
 Meets at St Andrew's, 37 Downey Street,  
 Alexandra  
 Contact - 0438 642 559

## Man charged with the murder of Alexandra man

VICTORIA Police have advised that Homicide Squad detectives have charged a man with murder following the death of a man in Dandenong in March 2025.

A 50 year old Dandenong man was arrested on Thursday, May 14, and he has since been charged with one count of murder.

The man appeared at Melbourne Magistrates' Court today where he was further remanded to August 21.

The charge follows an incident where a 52 year old Alexandra man was found by a passerby on Fifth Avenue in Dandenong around 6.55am on Friday, February 28, 2025.

He was conveyed to hospital to be treated for serious head injuries where he later died on Saturday, March 1.

Police do not believe the parties involved were known to each other.

The investigation remains ongoing.

## Council outlines Breakaway Bridge options and timelines

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has updated the community on the current status and options for replacing Breakaway Bridge in Acheron, while continuing to advocate for a safe, resilient and financially responsible long-term solution for the Acheron and Alexandra communities.

At a community information session held on May 7, council shared project updates, including design options currently being worked through with the Victorian Government and the requirements of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Breakaway Bridge was catastrophically damaged during the October 2022 floods and is classified as an essential asset, making it eligible for joint state and commonwealth disaster recovery funding.

The current DRFA funding offer would support a single lane bridge approximately 105 metres in length, controlled by traffic signals at each end. While this option would restore vehicle access, it does not include dedicated pedestrian or cycle access and would require council to fund ongoing traffic signal operation and maintenance, resulting in additional ongoing costs.

Council advised the community that this option does not fully meet its goal for a safer, more resilient and financially sustainable outcome.

Instead, council is advocating for a two-lane bridge built to contemporary standards, to improve safety, support emergency access and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Council officers outlined that ongoing work is focused on aligning project requirements as closely as possible with the available grant guidelines, while continuing negotiations with funding bodies.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said, "Our community has been very clear that if Breakaway Bridge is rebuilt, it must be safe, resilient and fit for purpose, not a short-term fix. While an offer has been received, council will continue to advocate to state and commonwealth governments for a two-lane bridge that meets modern standards and serves the Acheron community now and into the future."

Council also reaffirmed its commitment to ongoing community engagement throughout the project. While the overall bridge form

and funding envelope are governed by the DRFA program, council is seeking community input on project elements that can be influenced locally, including landscaping and revegetation, river access, parking arrangements, signage, and opportunities to reuse timber from the original bridge where feasible. A dedicated pedestrian walkway, while desirable, is not included within current funding limits.

Council's goal is to deliver a safe and durable bridge without passing additional costs on to ratepayers. They confirmed it has appointed experienced contractor NELMAC, based in Yackandandah, following a competitive tender process. Construction will use methods designed to minimise impacts on the river environment and protect fish and aquatic habitat during works.

Survey works are complete and construction equipment is ready to mobilise once river levels allow. Subject to final funding confirmation, regulatory approvals and site conditions, works are expected to begin this winter, with most construction planned during lower river levels.

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# VICTORIAN Education Week

May 18 to May 22

## BUXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Buxton's Students of the week are **Hendrix, Ryder and Willow** for working well in a team with others to make our school a great place.

## ST MARYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Jet J

Jet is a kind and respectful student who consistently demonstrates outstanding character. He shows genuine empathy towards others and is a positive role model within the classroom. In spite of challenges, he never gives up or becomes discouraged, always approaching his learning with determination and resilience. Jet's sense of humour helps create a warm and inclusive environment, making him highly deserving of this Principal's award.



### Grade 3/4 Camp

Year 3/4 Sovereign Hill camp - Our Year 3/4 students recently enjoyed an exciting camp experience at Sovereign Hill in Ballarat. Throughout the fun activities of gold panning, souvenir shopping, candle making, education demonstrations, Aura night show, and Mine tours, the students participated enthusiastically. Students showed fabulous manners and behavior (with other school staff and Camp staff making comments of this) as well as showing great resilience, independence and cooperation. Well done students.



## Student of the Week

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### St Mary's Catholic Primary School



St Mary's Catholic Primary School welcomes enrolments for Foundation 2027

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**We aim to develop the whole child spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.**

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**Phone call: 5772 1500**

**Email: [reception@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:reception@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au)**

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**or emailing the school at [reception@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:reception@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au)**

**If you would like to register your interest and to make an appointment for an enrolment tour please call reception to book a time.**

10 Myrtle St (PO Box 151) Alexandra Vic 3714

Phone: 03 5772 1500

E-mail: [principal@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@smalexandra.catholic.edu.au)

Web: [www.smalexandra.catholic.edu.au](http://www.smalexandra.catholic.edu.au)

#### OUR VISION STATEMENT

At St Mary's school we encourage an inclusive, learning community that values safety, love and faith.

## Thornton local James Gilmore recipient of Francis Gregory Scholarship

THORNTON local James Gilmore has been awarded a Francis Gregory Scholarship. James is the son of well-known local farmers, Stuart and Kelly Gilmore. James attended Alexandra Secondary College and has now commenced a Bachelor of Science at Monash University.

The philanthropic group, Francis Gregory Foundation, met at University College on Sunday, May 3 to celebrate with James and his family. On the day, scholarships were also presented to Ava Brown, to study a Bachelor of Arts (The Australian National University) and to Lucas Murphy, to study a Bachelor of Science (University of Melbourne).

The Francis Gregory Foundation was established by June Harvey, granddaughter of the late Francis Gregory, a pioneer of Lardner. Scholarships bequeathed by the Foundation provide assistance to children of farming families seeking to pursue university education, particularly students who may not have this opportunity without financial support.

The Foundation's funds were derived from the sale of the Gregory farm at Lardner, as selected by Francis in 1875. June herself would not have been able to attend university if not for the Secondary Studentship Scheme, which was in operation when she was young. Like many other farmers, her parents had assets in their farm, however money was not readily available to meet the costs of a university education, especially when this entailed living away from home. June's wish is to provide scholarships to Year 12 students from families engaged in primary production who may not otherwise be able to continue on to tertiary education.

Francis Gregory Foundation formed in 2012 and has been providing scholarships to Victorian students from primary production families, since 2014. Scholarships are valued at \$6000 per year for the term of the student's undergraduate studies. To date, 18 scholarships have been awarded to students. Students have come from across Victoria and studies to date have included Agriculture, Pharmacy, Engineering, Communication, Audiology and Radiography.



June Harvey and James Gilmore. -S



# THREATENING CROSSES THE LINE

Aggression and violence against workers causes harm.  
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# Interim CEO Claire Palmer speaks about services and plans for Alexandra hospital

CLAIRE Palmer took on the interim CEO role at Alexandra District Health (ADH) on April 20 and was asked about her plans for the hospital.

She explained that the board made the decision to make the role an interim as the decision about the voluntary amalgamation of ADH and Eastern Health is still sitting with the Minister for Health.

Claire said, "I'm certainly committed for as long as that takes and as long as they need me in the role to do that. I think future for ADH is really bright and it's an exciting time."

Claire has been on the staff at Alexandra District Health for almost 20 years now, so she is well known by both staff and members of the community.

She said, "I think that in a rural setting from a leadership perspective that leadership has to be personal. I think that you have to have people, our staff and our community, need to see me and know who I am and to trust me to deliver on the things that are priorities to them. And for me, that's around making sure that we've got care that's closer to home and that it is high quality and that we're delivering it in a really safe way."

Asked about her plans for the hospital moving forward, she said, "I suppose there is an element of business as usual for us, but at the same time, we want to continue to make sure that we're delivering and continuing to be really innovative in our approach because at times workforce for us can be a bit of an issue and we've recognised that in terms of our workforce and attracting really skilled clinicians into the area at times can be difficult."

## Oncology

Claire said, "Being part of the Local Health Services Network (LHSN), we've been able to expand already on our day oncology service... We have demonstrated that demand and we have now gone to a second day. Molly and Wayne come up on a Monday now as well as a Thursday. From that we've also seen that it's not just around their chemotherapy that potentially we're delivering in that day oncology section, but it's all the adjunct therapies that people are requiring. We're also seeing that we are being asked to complete more day infusions as well. We are currently in the process of looking at a business case with day medical infusion clinic as well, which will be staffed by our own staff. That would also save people having to travel down the line to get their infusions. For example, they might need iron infusions, blood transfusions and those other type of medications that are not necessarily their oncology."

"With the expansion of the service with day oncology, it's also meant that we're now at a point where we're able to train and educate our own staff to deliver that service. That was always going to be the plan. We want this to be sustainable and to have Molly coming up every week is starting to become a bit tiring for her in terms of she's getting a bit tired actually to do the drive. We're just in the process of doing our education package and that will be some theory work that the staff will be doing but also there'll be an opportunity where they'll do a clinical-type placement, most likely down at Healesville to save the travel for our staff. That's certainly where we're looking to getting to."

## Discharge cardiology

"We also have launched our discharge cardiology clinic, of which we're really proud. That's where patients that attend our Urgent Care Centre and are seen to have had a cardiac type event and required an admission down at Box Hill. Instead of them having to then travel back down the line in eight weeks' time to have their follow-up appointments, they can attend at ADH and have that. It's a telehealth service, but it's supported by Zoe, our cardiology respiratory nurse who sits alongside the patient and their family when they come in. They're therefore seeing the team down at Box Hill while here at ADH."

"We launched that last Wednesday, and already the feedback that we had of our four patients that attended that day was that they came here for a five or seven minutes for the appointment, and then they were able to then go home and they didn't have to worry about parking and the two hour drive down and the two hour drive home," Claire said.

## Allied health

She said of allied health services, "We're obviously trying to build that workforce. We've been able to participate in what they're calling a reliever pool position. So part of our wider plans will be to work in conjunction with Eastern Health for our allied health graduate program. In the meantime, we've developed a reliever pool position where, for the likes of Reece and Michelle in physio, for them to be able to have some holidays, we can then backfill with the physiotherapist that would then come from a pool of staff that's then available to both Yea, ourselves, St Vincent's and Eastern Health. That's one of the initiatives with LHSN."

## Dialysis

Access to dialysis has caused significant challenges to many of our local patients. Claire said, "It's such a priority for our community and it's certainly something that we're committed to and we're working really closely with Eastern Health in the background to get that up and going. I've had lots of meetings with Marie and Joy and certainly understand that this is definitely something that we need to get moving with, because our patients are certainly really vulnerable with the driving that they're having to do. At the moment, rightly or wrongly, it does take time with these types of new services. That's due to lots of different factors, mainly around our infrastructure, our equipment, and again around that piece of the puzzle around workforce and educating our workforce to be able to deliver it so that it is sustainable. But certainly, it's one of my priorities as well. As soon as we're up and ready to be able to make an announcement, it certainly will be communicated to our staff as well as our community."

When asked whether this would be going ahead regardless of the outcome of the potential merger, Claire said, "Yes, we are committed to making sure that this is definitely a priority."

Initially, they were planning to fundraise in the community for the dialysis project, but are now looking at alternative funding due to the impact of the Longwood fire on the area. Claire said, "The bushfire event has been so significant for our shire, and we feel that to go out there to ask for money just didn't sit right

with ourselves or the board. We're looking at alternative ways in how we can fund it."

## Urgent Care

Claire explained, "We obviously have our 24 hour a day urgent care centre. We are really proud of the fact that, unlike other small rural health services, we do have medical staff. It's staffed with a doctor, a GP ruralist, specialised in their field, and it's staffed from nine to five throughout every day of the week, and then we flip to the Victorian Virtual ED system which comes out of the Northern Hospital so patients can present at any point in time and receive first-line care there, from paediatrics right through."

## Paediatrics

"We are committed with our paediatric program in terms of making sure that if we were in a situation where we were requiring fairly intensive care for paediatrics that we're in a position to be able to manage that. The board has committed to another two places this year for the staff to go off to do their advanced paediatric life support, as well as the LHSN has also funded us for a further two positions."

"Last year we supported all of our medical staff and three nursing staff to go through that course. It's a fairly intense three-day on-site practical, plus a lot of theory that goes on in the background. Then we'll also be continuing to work with the Children's Hospital, with Paediatric Infant Perinatal Emergency Retrieval (PIPER), which is around non-life-threatening care, and then partnering with those health services to ensure that if they did require ongoing care, that pathway is a bit more seamless for them to go through that way," Claire said.

## Inpatient and Perioperative

"We also have our inpatient medical unit that patients, if they're requiring overnight stays, etcetera, they can go and utilise that. We have our perioperative services, a range of different procedures that we do within our capability here at ADH. That includes endoscopy and ophthalmology. We also have our general surgeon, Dr Binh, who is also available for anything that's required, from an excision of lumps and bumps from skin, etcetera. We also have the orthopaedic surgery and gynaecological surgery with Dr Tony Lawrence, so that's all continuing."

## Primary Health

"We have our primary health services, so our dietetics. At the moment, one of our positions in terms of speech, we're working on currently, that's part of the allied health reliever pool. We're looking at ways that we can have some permanent staff in that area. That's been quite difficult for us to recruit to. We have a range of counselling services, social work, and our district nurses who do a fantastic job especially on these foggy mornings, going out and seeing the people."

"One of the other programs is our Hospital in the Home that we've strengthened with Eastern Health, getting people back into the area and back into home with care that could be delivered at home and that then gets contracted to our district nurses, Simone and Robyn and Lisa, and our casual staff that work in that space."

"Our wonderful physios as well, so if there's anything that people



Claire Palmer. -S

require with that, we've still got our classes that they run in terms of our Stall the Fall and our strength classes. We also have our diabetes education, cardiac and respiratory program as well in primary health."

## Counselling

Given how much the people of Murrindindi Shire have been through recently, Claire was asked for further information on whether they have counselling capacity and whether there is a waiting list.

Claire said, "We've committed to our counselling services, because we recognise that that's obviously a need. As predicted, now is the time in which we're starting to see that need increase. Certainly, given the season that we're about to head into as well, in terms of no rain and the drought (that's not technically declared yet as a drought). We are really conscious of the help that's required out there. Working in conjunction with Murrindindi Shire and some additional funding that's currently just been announced, which was an additional \$1.6 million, we're partnering with Wellways, which is the [organisation] that are going to be delivering it, and that's going to allow us to be able to supply an additional one EFT, so one full-time mental health and counselling clinician, and that's funding right through until July 2027."

"We're definitely looking at how we can get out there. I met with representatives from the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association yesterday, Andrew and Caolan, and having a conversation with them as to how we can best utilise our resources, as well as utilising the Murrindindi Health Bus and getting us out there to the areas which are in the greatest need. It's often that it's not necessarily farmers particularly that are wanting to volunteer information around their mental health. So how else can we influence those conversations that people feel

comfortable to then come and access our service. Certainly we welcome people reaching out to us as they need to," Claire said.

Some in the shire may be less willing to attend in person for counselling appointments, so online and phone appointments are also available, if the patient has the technology available.

She added, "One of the priorities is around being able to utilise the Murrindindi Health Bus, which is a fantastic asset for the shire and the community, how can we utilise that better and take the healthcare to where it's needed. We'll be at the truck show. We certainly are looking forward to setting up there and to then help initiate those conversations as well. But looking at the townships of Eildon and Marysville and how we can reach out there as well."

## About Claire

Claire lives on a farm in Yea with her husband and their two boys. Claire was born and raised in Violet Town where her parents are sheep farmers on about 3000 acres. Her parents also had a superphosphate business in Violet Town. Palmer is her maiden name and now her professional name. She attended Violet Town Primary School and Euroa High School before going to Melbourne for her nurse training in 1995.

She said, "I never thought that I'd stay in Melbourne when I went down to do my nursing," but spent 11 years there in a metropolitan health service before she met her husband and moved back to Yea.

In closing, she said, "I'm really looking forward to getting out there. I think some of my priorities are about supporting our staff, and that stability that's required, and then the connection back into the community, and working with our colleagues and collaborating is something that I'm certainly looking forward to."

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Some of the emergency vehicles in attendance. -AR



Two students just having fun in the sun. -AR

# Alexandra Primary School raises funds for emergency services

STUDENTS at Alexandra Primary School were delighted to have some special visitors to their school on Thursday, May 14. These guests included Alexandra Fire Brigade, Alexandra SES and DEECA.

Students were able to take a look inside the emergency vehicles on the oval, and could even try to lift some of the heavy tools. Representatives from these agencies were also on hand to answer any questions that the students had.

The students also used the visit as a fundraising opportunity. They made a donation for casual clothes day and the day before the visit, they sold Zooper Doopers.

They raised a grand total of \$300 to give to the emergency services.

Well done to all students who took part.



A student attempting to lift one of the heavy SES items. -AR



The students could pretend to drive the vehicle. -AR



Students were very happy to be able to look inside the vehicles. -AR



The students were able to wear branded hard hats at the event. -AR



A young lady ready to take on the lifting challenge. -AR



An array of items were on display in the trucks. -AR

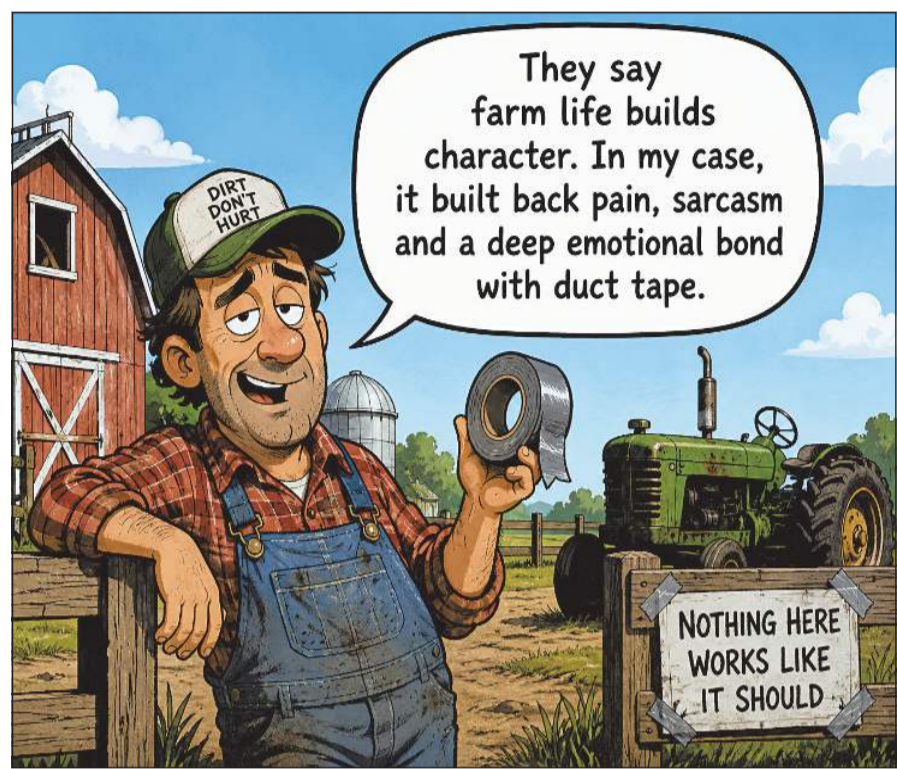
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# The Farmer's Ag News



## VFF says regional Victoria left wanting in Victorian Budget

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says regional Victoria has been left wanting after the *Victorian Budget 2026-27* largely ignored much-needed critical funding and left unanswered questions for the state's multi-billion dollar agriculture industry.

VFF Acting President Peter Star said many in the regions would be disappointed at the lack of clarity surrounding key regional issues.

"For many this budget will be seen to kick the can down the road during an election year," Mr Star said.

"Farmers and regional Victorians have been extremely vocal in their opposition to the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy changes. They've been left in the dark as to its future and we'll be continuing to call for it to be scrapped entirely.

"The much-hyped \$1.04 billion for road repairs and resurfacing is a step in the right direction, but fails to deliver the level of investment required to fix Victoria's deteriorating road network.

"The budget has been sold as Victoria's vision for the future, but is lacking when it comes to detail for regional Victoria.

"The agriculture industry contributes more than \$22 billion annually to the Victorian economy. The government's \$84 million investment to support farmers and agricultural industries must be dramatically increased and we need a roadmap to grow and build for the future," Mr Star finished.

The VFF welcomes: \$5.9 million for farmer and rural mental health support, wellbeing and safety; \$7.6 million biosecurity investment; \$4.9 million agricultural sector electrification and emissions reductions; \$12.7 million to build more CFA fire stations; \$75 million for the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund; \$127 million to improve the flow of regional freight rail.

"Victorian farmers and regional Victorians are doing it extremely tough in the face of sustained drought and exploding cost pressures with ongoing overseas tensions. During this election year we're expecting to see much more support in the months ahead," Mr Star said.

"Help at the farm gate eventually flows to consumers and it's a win-win during a cost-of-living crisis to get the support to primary producers who are being forced to pass on these huge price increases."

## Rabobank outlook: Strong global demand paints positive picture for Australian beef

AUSTRALIA'S beef industry is set to remain on a firm footing through 2026 despite record production levels, supported by strong global demand and resilient export markets, Rabobank says in its newly-released *Australian Beef Seasonal Outlook 2026*.

The annual report, by the agribusiness banking specialist's RaboResearch division, says while record supply levels, with high cattle inventories and peak slaughter volumes, present risks, particularly if seasonal conditions deteriorate, continued demand from international markets, led by the United States, is providing an important support for prices.

Report author, RaboResearch senior animal proteins analyst Angus Gidley-Baird said successive years of favourable seasonal conditions have allowed the Australian cattle industry to rebuild inventory levels to what RaboResearch believes to be the next cyclical peak.

"This will generate record cattle slaughter and production volumes in 2026," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"Despite these record volumes, a strong global market is supporting record export prices and, in turn, historically-high cattle prices, particularly for finished cattle."

RaboResearch projects this strong export market will continue through 2026 and into 2027, driven largely by import demand from the US market.

However, the report says inflationary pressures of the Iran war and the impact on consumer sentiment will need to be watched.

"The strong export market is expected to provide support for the Australian domestic cattle market, and we believe should hold prices around levels seen through Q1," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

A deterioration of seasonal conditions would be the largest risk in the system, he said.

"With high cattle inventory, dry seasonal conditions, like those conditions being experienced in parts of New South Wales, could force producers to sell stock rapidly into a market flush with cattle," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"Slaughter volumes are already at historically high levels, adding an additional 10 per cent to these levels as we have seen in previous drought conditions would test the capacity of the system."

### High inventory

"High cattle inventory, and subsequently record slaughter volumes, means Australia is operating close to our maximum processing capacity," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

The report says current weekly slaughter numbers (of around 160,000 head) are getting close to the historical highs of 2014, of approximately 178,000 head.

"Currently these volumes are being accommodated but if seasonal conditions were to force an additional 10 to 15 per cent of cattle on to the market, as the sector saw in 2013 and 2018, it would place serious pressure on the system to keep up."

### Chinese import quotas

Mr Gidley-Baird said the new Chinese import quota for Australian beef for 2026 (205,000 tonnes) will have some timing impacts.

Based on current export volumes, RaboResearch believes Australia will reach the quota limit in May or June. This may

affect processor-buying activity around that time as they look to pivot to other markets.

"China is Australia's second-largest market for grainfed beef behind the domestic market," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"The commencement of a new quota year in January 2027 may provide an opportunity for increased grainfed beef exports to China in Q1 2027 which in turn may mean an uplift in demand for feeder cattle in September/October 2026."

### Middle East conflict

While the Middle East is only a small market for Australian beef exports and a relatively small player in global beef markets, Mr Gidley-Baird said the current conflict in the region does have the potential to increase costs and cause disruption in beef supply chains.

"Higher fuel and freight costs may impact sourcing strategies for livestock buyers," he said.

"Inflationary pressures may also impact consumer-spending patterns in export markets. Asian markets are possibly more exposed, given their higher reliance on Middle East oil supplies."

### Cattle price outlook

Mr Gidley-Baird said finished cattle prices are expected to hold steady, at the high end of the 10-year range.

RaboResearch modelling indicates heavy steer prices should remain close to early 2026 prices through the remainder of the year and into 2027, around \$4.50/kg lwt (live weight). Weaner cattle prices are expected to hold steady at around the five-year average in 2026.

"Strong export markets and demand for finished cattle should help support demand for weaner cattle and store stock," Mr Gidley-Baird said.

"But high cattle inventory and seasonal conditions are likely to mean there is little upside movement and prices are expected to hover around the five-year average, about AUD \$4 to \$4.50/kg lwt, with potential for downside movement."

### Financial health

Mr Gidley-Baird said the ongoing high cattle turnoff and good cattle prices are leading to expectations of higher incomes for many beef producers, which are anticipated to offset an increase in costs, resulting in a positive financial outlook for 2026.

"Conflict in the Middle East is expected to add costs to budgets, in particular through increased fuel, fertiliser and freight costs," he said.

"However, these costs only account for about 10 to 15 per cent of total beef cattle farm operating costs and therefore are expected to have only a limited impact on farm budgets. Rising interest rates (accounting for about an average 10 per cent of costs) will also add to the increasing costs."

Mr Gidley-Baird said results from the Q1 national Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey indicate Australian beef producers largely expect incomes to stay the same in 2026.

"The Q1 2026 Rabobank Rural Confidence Survey, conducted in February, prior to the Iran war, indicated that 54 per cent of Australian beef producers expect incomes to be the same, with 31 per cent expecting incomes to be higher and 12 per cent expecting incomes to be lower," he said.

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VICTORIA POLICE



# Over \$8000 raised from Alexandra Community Wood Auction

THE Alexandra Community Wood Auction took place last Saturday outside the Embassy of Ideas in Alexandra in sunny autumn conditions.

There were 20 lots of varying split firewood up for auction from the Alexandra Poultry Club, Alexandra Primary School, Alexandra Kindergarten, Alexandra and Eildon Lapidary Club, Upper Goulburn Branch of the Australian Deer Association, and Acheron Fire Brigade.

A total of \$8040 was raised from the bidding, with the highest lot being Alexandra Kindergarten, donated by Matt Sullivan for \$740.

Andrew Embling acted as auctioneer for the sale and said it was a good turnout and continues to be a great community charity event.

“It was a good attendance. We registered 42 people. And, you know, it’s just great money going back into the community,” Andrew said.

“As one of the groups said, they got just over \$2000 and they said this is a lot easier than baking cakes for a cake stall.

“Thanks once again to everybody who participated. It was just a great community event once again.”



Andrew Embling auctioneered the wood auction. -BD



Nick, who bought one of the Upper Goulburn Branch of Australian Deer Association firewood trailers, alongside members Derek, Paul and Mario. -BD



One of the Alexandra Primary School trailer loads of firewood. -BD



The trailers were filled with different types of split firewood, including redgum and apple box. -BD



Forty-two people were registered for the auction, but plenty of community members turned out to watch. -BD

# Major marina overhaul at Jerusalem Creek

A MAJOR transformation is underway at Jerusalem Creek Marina and Holiday Park, with a three year marina replacement program set to modernise one of the region’s key boating destinations. The upgrade will deliver larger, stronger, and safer marina facilities designed to meet the demands of today’s houseboats, which have outgrown the decades-old infrastructure currently in place.

“This is about future-proofing the marina,” Bruce Vance, General Manager of the Jerusalem Creek Marina and Holiday Park said.

“Boats are bigger, expectations are higher, and safety standards have evolved. This investment ensures we keep pace.”

The new marina will introduce significantly larger berths aligned with modern houseboat categories. There will be 25ft pens for

Category one to three vessels, and 27ft and 30ft pens for larger category four to five vessels. The expanded sizing marks a step-change in capacity and usability, giving boat owners more room, flexibility, and security.

Construction begins in May 2026, with staged delivery through to 2029. Stage one will be 52 new pens and 10 walkways. Stage two will be 40 new pens and 10 walkways. Stage three will be 38 new pens and six walkways.

The older infrastructure will be progressively removed, with reusable materials repurposed into a protective breakwater system, boosting resilience while reducing waste.

The new marina will feature a suite of upgrades, including heavy-duty construction and anti-slip walkways, longer marina

ingers for improved vessel stability, advanced mooring systems with 50 per cent greater strength, modern fender systems replacing outdated tyres, and enhanced tie-off flexibility and safety features.

In a move that sets it apart from industry trends, Jerusalem Creek Marina confirmed that no special levies will be used to fund the project and there will be no major upfront price hikes.

The fees for 2026–27 will increase only in line with CPI and operating costs, with future pricing adjusted gradually as each stage is delivered.

“We’re investing in the marina without placing unnecessary pressure on our berth holders,” Bruce said.

Once complete, the redevelopment will position Jerusalem Creek Marina and Holiday Park as a modern, high-quality destination built for the next generation of boating, delivering significant improvements in safety, capacity, and overall user experience.

Beyond the marina itself, the precinct offers a comprehensive range of on-site facilities, including a bar and bistro, mini supermarket, fuel outlet, and a fully stocked fishing and outdoor tackle store.

Together, these amenities create a complete, all-in-one boating and holiday destination, setting Jerusalem Creek apart in the market.

With its breadth of features and customer offering, Jerusalem Creek Marina and Holiday Park stands as the premier place to stay, berth, and experience the water.

# Truckloads of plants donated to fire-affected communities

TIM Drewitt and the team from Red Earth Bulbs in Silvan have done it again. After successfully running bulb potting workshops and handing out blooming sunflowers at the Yarck Colour Run in February and facilitating a display at the Melbourne Flower Show 2026 themed around the Longwood bushfires to raise awareness, they brought two truckloads of plants and flowers to Yarck last Friday to give to the fire-affected local communities.

The event was held at the Yarck CFA Station and in partnership with Bunnings Australia, with Channel Nine reporting on the day.

Tim and his team arrived in Yarck around 6am and found people waiting for them. The Yarck main street from the Yarck Hall to the CFA station was buzzing with eager people for hours.

Tim said that there were over 17,000 plants and bulbs that they were donating free to the fire-affected communities, with a value of around \$200,000. It took 12 Red Earth Bulbs staff three days to prepare all the plants.

Bunnings chipped in with transport for the plants, to get them from Silvan to Yarck, and cooked bacon and egg rolls at the event.

Attendees were invited to peruse the broad array of different flowers, plants, shrubs, etcetera, and take whatever they needed for their gardens post-bushfire.

Tim and the team also presented the Yarck CFA with a smaller version of the banner they displayed at the Melbourne Flower Show, created with Yarck's truck name on the top, for the brigade to keep.

It's understood that plants were also taken to some of the other community halls, including Terip Terip and Fawcett, where they were very well received.



Tim Drewitt from Red Earth Bulbs. He organised the Longwood fire flower display at the Melbourne Flower Show and the delivery of the morning's plants to Yarck, and has been supporting our communities since just after the bushfires. -BD



Karen and Marty Shaw from the Yarck CFA. The Yarck Fire Brigade hosted the event at their station, spreading the plants around the driveway and yard. -BD



Choosing the right plants for new gardens post-bushfire. -BD



The plants arranged on the Yarck CFA station lawn, and people collecting them. -BD



The event was held at the Yarck CFA station and the truck was on display. -BD



Quite a crowd gathered early last Friday morning to collect a share of the donated plants. -BD

## Council calls on Federal Government for reforms to rural funding system

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has urged the Australian Government to act decisively to reform a local government funding system it says is no longer fit for purpose for rural communities.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher and Chief Executive Officer Livia Bonazzi appeared before the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability last week, outlining the lived reality facing small rural councils and warning that the current system is placing essential local services and long-term community resilience at risk.

Council told the Inquiry that existing funding models fail to reflect the real costs, risks and responsibilities faced by rural municipalities, while relying heavily on revenue sources outside local government control.

Speaking to the Inquiry, Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said councils like Murrindindi are being forced into increasingly difficult decisions.

"We're asking for a system that recognises what it actually costs to keep a place like Murrindindi running. We are talking about the basics: roads people can drive on and services communities rely on," Cr Gallagher said.

"Local options have been exhausted. What we are facing now are not efficiencies, they are heartbreaking compromises."

Council said these pressures are already being reflected in difficult budget decisions, including reduced investment in services and infrastructure renewal programs despite existing constraints and growing community need.

Residents are increasingly feeling the impact through higher rates, lower levels of service, and the consequences of deferred renewal of critical infrastructure.

CEO Livia Bonazzi said the challenges facing Murrindindi were not isolated, but the predictable outcome of longstanding structural issues in local government funding.

"This is not an anomaly. It is the inevitable result of a system that no longer matches the reality it is meant to fund," Ms Bonazzi said.

"Right now, rural councils are not just underfunded, they are structurally set up to fail."

Council also highlighted the inequity of current disaster recovery funding arrangements, pointing to the January 2026 bushfires as clear evidence of systemic failure.

Murrindindi Shire experienced approximately 48 per cent of the state's structural losses during the fires yet received only around eight per cent of municipal recovery funding.

"We were on the frontline of this disaster, but we have been at the back of the queue for support," Ms Bonazzi said.

"When a funding system cannot respond proportionately to disaster impact, it is not fit for purpose."

"The shortfall does not disappear, it falls directly onto councils and communities."

The Inquiry heard that existing funding mechanisms actively disadvantage small rural councils, including: Financial Assistance Grants declining in real terms and not being distributed according to need; the Minimum Grant principle prioritising population over fiscal capacity,

geographic scale and disaster exposure; competitive grant programs requiring co-investment and resources many small councils simply do not have.

Murrindindi Shire Council is calling on the Commonwealth Government to: Restore untied Financial Assistance Grants to one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue; reform funding distribution models to better reflect need, risk and cost; increase untied funding support for small rural councils; reform grant programs so funding follows need, not advocacy capacity or available cash reserves.

Mayor Cr Gallagher said rural communities continue to step up and support one another but warned volunteer effort cannot continue to compensate for systemic underfunding.

"Across communities like Murrindindi, people are stepping up every day to support each other, often without funding," Cr Gallagher said.

"But resilience should not depend on volunteer effort filling systemic gaps left by government funding models."

Council warned that without meaningful reform, financial pressures on rural councils will continue to escalate, placing essential infrastructure, local services and long-term recovery at risk.

You can read Murrindindi Shire Council's 2026 submission to the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability, including council's 2024 submission, at [aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Regional\\_Development/Infrastructure\\_and\\_Transport/LocalGovernmentFunding/Submissions](http://aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Regional_Development/Infrastructure_and_Transport/LocalGovernmentFunding/Submissions)

# KID'S PUZZLES PUZZLES

## Colouring Page



## Word Search - Words starting with "P"

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

- |          |         |             |          |
|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| PAINTING | PEAR    | PLANETS     | PRINCESS |
| PAIR     | PENCIL  | PLANT       | PUMPKIN  |
| PAPER    | PENGUIN | PLAYSTATION |          |
| PARROT   | PICTURE | PLEASE      |          |

## Math Square

### Fill in the missing numbers.

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

	-		-		-16
-		+		-	
	-		-		-8
+		-		-	
	+	5	-	3	9
6		9		2	

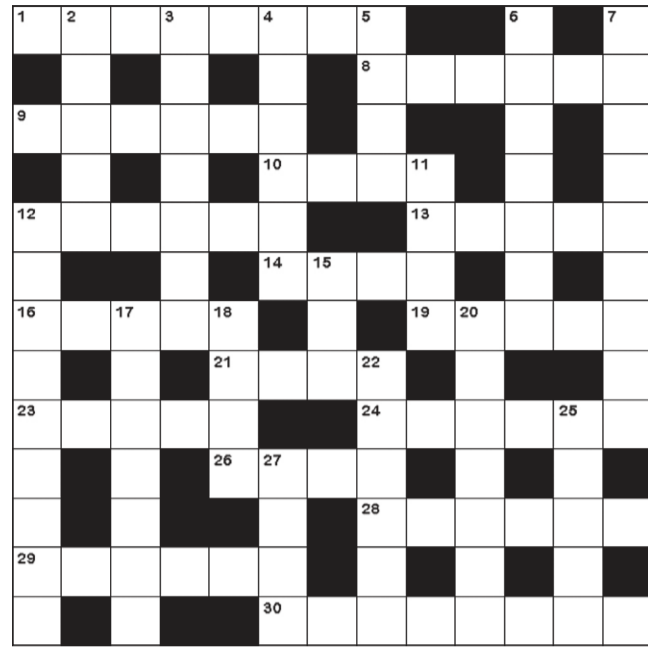
## Crossword

### ACROSS

- A motley assortment of bits and pieces.
- Ornamental sunken panel in a ceiling or dome.
- Payment for the return of a captured person.
- Cattle that are reared for their meat.
- To grow vigorously and flourish.
- The smouldering coal or ash of a dying fire.
- White bird that is the symbol of peace.
- A drink from the fermented juice of apples.
- A glossy surface given to textiles.
- The sense organs we use for hearing.
- Give a false appearance of something.
- Become invisible or unnoticeable.
- Unswervingly faithful and loyal to friends.
- Water cut off from the sea by a reef of sand.
- Gave a sneering, or suggestive and sly look.
- A seemingly endless time interval.

### DOWN

- The event that terminates a life.
- A weapon that is thrown or projected.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 4. To deprive of the power to feel or move.     | 17. A wanderer who has no home or job.              |
| 5. A small, sour dark purple plumlike fruit.    | 18. Regular payments by a tenant to a landlord.     |
| 6. Find fault or criticise for petty reasons.   | 20. Small easily carried firearm, such as a pistol. |
| 7. Complex system of paths or tunnels.          | 22. Graceful, slender and moving with ease.         |
| 11. Fixed charges for professional services.    | 25. A young piglet just after weaning.              |
| 12. Handle a delicate situation with diplomacy. | 27. Socially incorrect, impolite and offensive.     |
| 15. An implement used to propel a canoe.        |   |

## Word Search

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

### Boys names

- |         |        |
|---------|--------|
| ANDREW  | JOHN   |
| ANTHONY | PAUL   |
| CRAIG   | PETER  |
| DAVID   | PHILIP |
| EWAN    | ROSS   |
| JAMES   | WALTER |

## Sudoku

4			3	5	
8					
	5	7	6	1	2
1	5		7	4	6
		3	2	1	5
	1	6		8	4
					5
3		1			8

### 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.

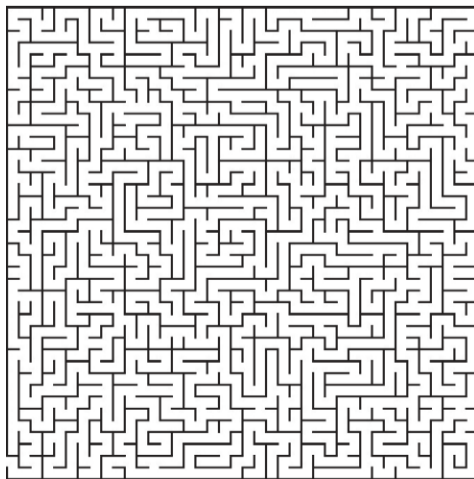
## Math Square

	×	7	-		39
-		-		-	
	-		+		0
-		+		÷	
	-	5	+		1
3		3		1	

### 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.

## Maze



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Bernard Moss with the Stawell Gift Committee. Pictured are Heather Seaman from the Stawell Quilters, Ian Seaman, Bernard, President of Stawell Athletics Club Robert McIntosh, and Wendy Hopwood. -AR

## A Stawell Gift to Highlands local post-bushfires

OVER 50 years ago, Highlands local Bernard (Bernie) Moss claimed victory in the 1973 Stawell Gift running race, for which he received a sash and medal and recognition. Following the loss of his home and subsequently his commemorative memorabilia in the Longwood fire, the Stawell Gift Committee made a special trip to Yea to present him with a new sash and medal.

Held in the Maranatha Hall at Sacred Heart Primary School in Yea, the event was attended by members of Bernard's family and friends from the Highlands community, the Stawell Gift Committee, and Murrindindi Shire Council staff and councillors.

Bernard's friend Larry Taylor, also from Highlands, contacted the Stawell Gift Committee about a replacement sash and medal and spoke at the event.

"I was fortunate enough to be with Bernard when he received a phone call from Wendy [at the Stawell Gift Committee]," Larry said.

"Losing his memorabilia was certainly tough. He didn't seem to want to worry about it too much. He said it was all part of history.

"But he's part of an elite amount of people, to go and get where he got, and win a Stawell Gift. I thought, this man deserves all the accolades he can get."

Attendees were treated with a presentation of the 1973 Stawell Gift that Bernie Moss claimed victory in, which is available for viewing on YouTube. Visit [youtube.com/watch?v=IA4Lpf9sGiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA4Lpf9sGiQ)

The 1973 carnival was the first run under the new metric system, with Bernie's event changing from 130 yards to 120 metres. The new VAL qualifying system was also introduced whereby runners were required to have recorded a win beforehand, otherwise they were automatically handicapped on the novice mark of six metres.

On April 24, 1973, *The Canberra Times* ran an article headlined 'Moss just wins gift after lunge at tape'. It describes Bernie's experience of the event.

"Bernie Moss, the 10/1 on favourite narrowly won the final of the professional footraining classic, the Stawell Gift, this afternoon," the article reads.

"Moss won by inches with a desperate lunge at the finishing tape. Only half a metre separated the first four placegetters.

"Third place went to St Kilda policeman Kelvin Peart, Peter Boase of Pascoe Vale was fourth, and Les Ralph of Ararat was fifth.

"Moss clocked 0:12.1, 0.2 seconds slower than his winning time in the gift semi-final earlier this afternoon.

"He said after the race that he thought he had lost with 40m to go.

"With Peart and Thomas up with me, I thought I was a goner,' he said. 'I just had to grit my teeth and try to get the extra bit to win.'

"Moss and Peart, both pitched forward to the track, overbalancing when driving for the finish and both skidded along the grass into the arena fence, but were not injured."

Robert McIntosh, President of the Stawell Athletics Club, spoke about Bernard's connection to the Stawell Gift family.

"In athletics, I've been involved in the Stawell Athletics Club for 26 years. I go around to other meetings, starting events and things. We say, being in that is like a big family, and Bernie, you are part of our family," Robert said.

"When we hear of somebody that loses everything or does things, we like to do what we can for members of our family. That's why we're here today."

Robert presented Bernard with a new sash, medal and framed victory photo. Because of the changed formatting of the 1973 race from imperial to metric, Bernard's original sash was still inscribed with 130 yards as the race distance instead of 120 metres. The new one that he was presented with last Wednesday maintained the 130 yard race distance inscription, in a subtle nod to history.

Heather Seaman, wife of Stawell Athletics Club Treasurer Ian Seaman and member of the Stawell Quilters, also presented Bernard with a colourful quilt that the group made for him, to help him on his post-fire recovery journey.

Bernard was overcome with emotion thanking the Stawell Gift Committee for their presentation and the attendees for their support. He posed for photos with his family and the Stawell Gift Committee wearing his new sash and medal.

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

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## DEATH NOTICES



### McColm, Jill.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Jill, a long serving secretary of the Whanregarwen Fire Brigade. She will be fondly remembered as an efficient and hard working member and her homemade morning teas are unsurpassed. Our sincere condolences to Jill's family and friends.

## FUNERAL NOTICES

### Mussett, Francis 'Frank'

The funeral service to celebrate the life of Francis 'Frank' Mussett will be held at St Luke's Anglican Church, Yea on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 commencing at 1pm



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## MEETINGS



### AGM 2026

The Whanregarwen Fire Brigade will hold its AGM on Sunday May 31, 2026, commencing at 9am at the fire station. All welcome.

**ALEXANDRA Bowling Club** Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 24 at noon in the clubrooms. Presentations and barbecue to follow. All welcome.

**EILDON BOWLING CLUB** Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 31 at 11am at the club, Sixth Street, Eildon.

**YEA Water Tigers Amateur Swimming Club** AGM. Meeting will be held at Yea Community House. Wednesday, May 27th from 6-7pm. All positions declared vacant, three year cycle. General meeting will follow. Enquiries to the secretary [yeawaterigerscommittee@gmail.com](mailto:yeawaterigerscommittee@gmail.com). New members are always welcome.

## BARGAINS UNDER \$100

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Firefighters tackling the blaze at the Yea laundromat with bystanders watching on. -Dale McKean, Plymouth Dale Photos

# Fire at Yea laundromat

THE Yea laundromat on High Street in Yea caught fire in the late afternoon on Monday, May 11. Yea Fire Brigade Captain Emery McCarthy said that at approximately 4.45pm, the brigade was paged to a structure fire. Emery said, "On the way to the station, it was quite visible that it was fully involved. Smoke was issuing from the building. "We responded the Yea tanker and Yea pumper. As soon as we responded, we escalated to 'make tankers five' so we had more brigades coming to support, as well as the Alexandra pumper with additional breathing apparatus operators.

"Once on scene, the front of the laundromat was fully involved with flames issuing out the front windows, and then upon closer inspection had

progressed into the property at the rear of the building.

"It took approximately 45 minutes to bring it under control, and then we were on scene for another three hours to do overhaul and ventilation," he said.

The Yea brigade was supported in their efforts by Molesworth, Limestone, Glenburn, Homewood and Alexandra Fire Brigades. Emery explained that this was more for "crew power, additional water, and Alexandra for their assistance as a urban brigade with internal structure firefighters."

He added, "All persons were accounted for. No injuries were sustained. Unfortunately, by the looks of it, there will be a complete loss of both the laundromat and the residence

at the rear, but we're still waiting for the Murrindindi building inspector to make that call."

The fire brigade certainly did a great job in ensuring that the fire didn't spread any further.

Emery said that the fire "started in the dryer area of the laundromat," but as yet, no official definitive cause has been determined. He said that there have been three shop fires in Yea in the last three years.

Emery added separately, "People need to ensure that they are cleaning their lint filters out regularly, and try not to put oily tea towels in the dryer."

Building owner Russell said, "I'd like to sincerely thank the Yea Fire Brigade and the supporting brigades, and everyone helped at the scene."

## Emergency services remind people to register their burn-off

WITH the fire season behind us, emergency services are urging landowners to register their burn-offs to avoid unnecessary callouts.

The quickest and easiest way to register your burn-off is by using the Fire Permits Victoria website at [firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify](http://firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify)

CFA is also urging people to ensure they are picking appropriate conditions to conduct a burn-off to minimise the risk of burns escaping.

CFA Acting Chief Officer Garry Cook said with unusually warm weather this autumn people should take care.

"We have had some rainfall however people shouldn't become complacent, burning off still needs to be done with care," Garry said.

"We know burn-offs can flare up several days afterwards, so it's important residents monitor wind conditions before and after burning off and notify their neighbours to be mindful of smoke.

"If you light a fire to burn off, you own it. Please don't leave your burn-off unattended and always make sure it is fully extinguished properly with water."

An online registration will always be fast and easy. Unregistered burn-offs can cause a spike in calls to Triple Zero (000) and unnecessary callouts for firefighters.

Triple Zero Victoria's Chief Operations Officer, Paul Santamaria, encourages the community to take the very simple step of planning ahead and registering their burn-off online.

"We are still seeing high registrations by phone in some areas including Lara, Yarrowonga, Healesville, Olinda, Kyneton, Woodend and Mount Evelyn, and we encourage these communities to register online," Paul said.

"When everyone does their bit and registers a burn-off online it reduces unnecessary calls, and helps our Triple Zero Emergency Communications Officers to focus on emergencies.

"If you are planning to burn-off more than two hours from now, registering online will always be the fastest and simplest option."

If for any reason you are unable to plan ahead and need to start your burn-off immediately (within two hours), you can register by calling 1800 668 511, however early planning, and online registration is preferred.

For more information about burning off safely, visit [cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff)

Before you notify, make sure you: Follow regulations or laws by CFA and local council; notify your neighbours if the burn will generate fire and smoke; check the weather forecast for the day of the activity and a few days afterward; postpone your activity if high fire risk conditions develop; establish a gap in vegetation or fire break of no less than three metres cleared of all flammable material; have enough people to monitor, contain and extinguish the burn safely and effectively; never leave a burn-off unattended.

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# Pay and conditions boost for public school and early childhood staff

THE Australian Education Union (AEU) Victorian Branch has reached in-principle agreements with the state government on pay and conditions for public school staff and endorsed an offer for early childhood staff.

Under the in-principle schools agreement, pay for school teachers, assistant principals and principals would increase by between 28.3 per cent and 32.4 per cent over four years.

This means an experienced teacher's pay will increase from the current \$118,063 to \$151,419 by 2029, including a \$15,393 boost this year to take them ahead of NSW teachers. An early career teacher would have a pay increase of \$12,343 by October 2026, bringing them into line with their counterparts in NSW, with further increases in subsequent years.

Range two education support staff in schools, which includes classroom support, administrative staff, and those supporting students with disability, would receive a minimum pay increase of 29.8 per cent over four years. Range three education support staff will receive a minimum of 29.29 per cent over the same period.

The in-principle schools agreement also includes four professional practice days for teachers and education support staff so that important planning and preparation can be undertaken to further support student learning and wellbeing.

Early childhood teachers will receive the same percentage salary outcomes as school teachers.

Pay for early childhood educators will increase by 39.1 per cent on average over four years.

Both agreements also include important measures to address workloads and ensure teachers, education support staff, early childhood educators, principals and other education leaders have more time to complete their work.

AEU Victorian Branch President Justin Mullaly said the in-principle agreements reflect the immense value of the work of AEU members.

"These are really significant improvements in the pay and conditions of public school and kindergarten staff, won through the campaigning of AEU members," Mr Mullaly said.

"Our members are working hard every day in Victorian public schools and kindergartens.

Everyone knows what a difference well-supported school and kindergarten staff can make in the lives of children and young people, and conversely, how education can suffer when staff aren't supported.

"This is a win for teachers, educators, principals and education support staff, but it's also a win for all Victorians. Nationally competitive pay and measures to tackle overwork and burnout will help keep experienced educators in the sector and attract the next generation."

AEU Victoria Vice President Early Childhood, Cara Nightingale, said, "Bringing kindergarten teachers' pay into line with that of school teachers', who have done the same

years of study, recognises the value of their work and will help attract the workforce needed to make Victoria's free kindergarten ambition a reality.

"The near-40 per cent pay increase for early childhood educators is also an historic achievement for a female-dominated profession that has been undervalued for too long."

The school and early childhood agreements were endorsed in-principle by elected councils of 120 school staff and 40 early childhood teachers and educators, respectively. They will now go to the wider AEU membership for their consideration.

## Haines claims budget wins but says regions still left wanting

THE Federal Budget delivers on some of Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines's key priorities, but she says it still falls short on delivering for the basic needs and long-term prosperity of regional Australia.

A centrepiece of housing investment in the 2026 Federal Budget includes a \$2 billion Local Infrastructure Fund to build enabling infrastructure, with a guarantee that 25 per cent of funding will go to regional Australia, an initiative led by Dr Haines and announced by the government over the weekend.

"Land isn't the handbrake on housing supply in the regions, it's the critical enabling infrastructure, the pipes, power and roads, that unlock more supply," Dr Haines said.

"I'm very pleased to see this commitment in the budget, with Treasury forecasting this funding will literally pave the way for tens of thousands of new homes to be built around Australia. This a major win."

When outlining her priorities with the Treasurer ahead of the budget, Dr Haines had urged the government to deliver meaningful tax reforms, which she welcomed.

"These capital gains tax and negative gearing reforms are substantive changes that will help younger Australians enter the housing market, and I congratulate the government on taking a bold decision."

Dr Haines welcomed further funding allocated to the Growing Regions infrastructure program, however she said the Federal Government's fifth budget once again fails to deliver for regional Australia's long-term future.

"There is no money tree, and the government needed to find savings somewhere, but that should not come at the expense of regional Australians," she said.

"Every line in this budget was a choice. And this was clearly a restrained budget.

"But while the government has made some welcome reforms, it has yet again fundamentally failed to invest in the communities that power and feed the nation.

"In the regions, we don't ask for special treatment, just the same opportunities as those in the cities and a fair go."



Judy, one of the stallholders at the Yarck Market. -BD



Attendees perused the variety of goods on offer. -BD

# Yarck Market offers variety of stalls and goods

THE Yarck Country Market was held at the Yarck Hall last Saturday, with a wide variety of goods for sale.

These included plants, soap, preserves and jams, jewellery, knitted items, furniture, etcetera. Attendees were invited to partake in devonshire teas and toasties in the hall also.

The Yarck Country Market runs on the third Saturday of each month from 9am to 1pm. For any questions or further information, contact Sharon Fox on 0407 879 612.



The Yarck Hall provides a perfect staging ground for the market. -BD



Inside the hall was knitted wear and jewellery and more. -BD

Dr Haines said the government left regional Australia wanting, and heavily criticised the government's Regional Ministerial Budget Statement, saying it could have been a post it note.

She said the government had failed to substantially invest in telecommunications and targeted regional health.

"These are basic services that city people take for granted, while we battle for

connectivity, drive on dangerous roads and have poorer health outcomes.

"Regional Australians are too often last to get, and the first to lose, and the Federal Government has not done enough to address pain and frustration rural and regional people are feeling."

Though the government committed funding to the Growing Regions Program to fund community infrastructure projects, the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program,

which funded projects such as the \$7.7 million for the Mansfield Station Precinct, was not extended with it set to expire next year.

Dr Haines said the government's decision not to tax Australia's gas exports was a missed opportunity to boost Australia's revenue and invest in the regions.

"A key pillar of this budget is intergenerational equity. We need to see this same ambition applied to regional Australia," Dr Haines finished.

# Merton Cricket Club celebrates premiership at presentation night in Mansfield

MERTON Cricket Club recently celebrated their premiership winning season at their presentation night, held at the Commercial Hotel Mansfield.

Club champion and the bowling award went to 17 year old Henry Berriman with 37 wickets at 9.5. This award complemented the league b grade award for best bowling. Henry was also a handy lower order batsmen making 50 runs in six innings without losing his wicket.

Open batting went to Luke Benton with 320 runs at an average of 37. James Benton won the under 21 batting, most improved and the captain's award. Luke Berriman won the wicket keeping award, player of the finals and runner up club champion.

Harry Craddock won the Munro/Glass duck award, Jarrod Mahoney won the fielding award while Murray Sutton and Henry Berriman were presented the match balls after taking five wickets in an innings.

Club president Burnie Cummins was made life member after 30 years and six premierships in his time at the top job showing great commitment to the role as president. Trudy Berriman won the Tom Jones best club person for her off field work over 25 years.

The Merton committee would like to thank their sponsors and supporters in the premiership winning year and hoping to continue as one of the top sides in the Wangaratta and District Cricket Association.

## Euroa and District Ladies Winter Tennis: Round three

by Deb Mims

**Moglonemby versus Wappan 2-4 27-45**  
MANSFIELD'S Wappan journeyed across to Euroa to play against Moglonemby. Playing on Euroa's grass courts was a first for Kimberley Marsden and Mary Reilly, who also had another first on the day. It was her first time playing in the Euroa and District Ladies Winter Tennis Association (EDLWTA) competition and by the sounds of things, not her last.

Combined with regulars, Anna Speirs and Rhonda Carpenter, Marsden and Reilly helped Wappan take the major points with winning four of the six sets. Moglonemby's, Sue Vaughan, Kylie Ross, Lisa Krepp and Lyn Johnson fought hard with some close sets including a tie breaker, but had to settle for runners up last week.

### Creightons Creek versus Euroa 0-6 32-48

Being the home court for both Creightons Creek and Euroa it was just a matter of who was going to supply afternoon tea, and the tennis balls of course.

Euroa's regular players, Faye Mollison, Julie Harrington, and Mary Dewis were ably supported by fill-in Judy Sands, and were greedy taking all six sets off Creightons Creek team, Lyndall Bigland, Ros Doxey, Lyn Pierce and Kerry Hewlett.

Once again, a tie breaker was played and a couple of close sets that unfortunately didn't go Creightons Creek's way. Creightons Creek was the home team serving up a superb feast that was enjoyed by everyone.

### Benalla versus Mansfield 6-0 48-20

Mansfield's Sophie Yencken jumped ship for the day and played for Benalla against Mansfield. Peta Kelly, Claire Sharp, Maureen Jewell welcomed Sophie on board taking all six sets against Karyn Fraser, Cathie Anderson, Carolyn Murray, Deb McCormack and Loretta Armitage.

Played on Benalla's superb grass courts, a glorious day, delicious afternoon tea and lots of chatter, despite not taking a set, was enjoyed by the Mansfield ladies. And again a tie breaker was thrown in there among the scores.

Terip Terip had a bye.



Harry Craddock, Luke Benton, Bernie Cummins, Will Benton, James Benton, Henry Berriman, Trudy Berriman and Luke Berriman. -S



Harry Craddock, Jarrod Mahoney, Luke Benton, Will Benton, James Benton, Henry Berriman and Luke Berriman. -S



James Benton with his awards. -S



Henry Berriman with his awards. -S



Luke Berriman with his awards. -S

## Alexandra Squash Club: Round four of term two pennant

by Kristelle Leary

### Monday competition

Red Backs versus White Tails

MATTHEW versus Ethan: The game started quite close. It looked as if it was going to stay that way, but Matt just had too much class and pulled away. A great match to watch. 70 to 49.

Jessica (fill in) versus Liane: A very close contest until the third game when Liane put it all together to create a match winning the lead. 68 to 53.

Mick versus Travis: A great contest for three games as the momentum swung between the players depending on who was in control of the points. Mick lost his timing in the final game, and the wheels fell off while Travis capitalised on his opportunities to surge ahead. 66 to 54

Jim versus Andrew: Four evenly matched games as neither player could take control

of the contest. Both players dug deep into their book of tricks. Andrew caught Jim off guard several times using a tactical boast while Jim mixed up deep lobbs and a short game to keep Andrew guessing. In the end Jim was on top by two-points. 52 to 50.

### Funnel Webs versus Trapdoors

Daniel W (coach) versus Tyler: Tyler was kept on the run to push him. Daniel made Tyler work for his win. Tyler finished the match with more points. 53 to 42.

Randy versus Laura: Randy fought hard, but Laura had the upper hand until the last round. There were lots of good rallies throughout. 70 to 46.

Sam versus Rob: Good running from both players. Sam took control with this serves and beautiful depth with his shots, combined with reading his opponents shots he claimed the match with a commanding lead. 80 to 47.

John versus Daniel W: The points were square after the first game. John then took control in games two and three to claim the match for victory. 63 to 50.

### Wednesday competition

Bees versus Sand Flies

Marty versus Ben H: Ben was switched on early and got the early jump on his young adversary. Marty kept his error count low in the second game and the contest came in. Ben employed a combination of harder shots and sheer luck to jump to an imposing lead in the third. With economical shots Ben continued to dominate and took home a 15 point win. 66 to 51.

Lucas versus Jess: Starting as a close contest the match slowly drifted to favour Lucas as time went on. Increasing his margin with every game Lucas closed out the match with the victory. 68 to 45

Justin versus Phil: This match resembled a charging bull being subdued by an eastern

philosopher. Phil's ability to arrest the momentum of the ball and manipulate it around the court had Justin struggling to find court position and timing. Justin was hitting the ball with depth and angles, however Phil could intercept and place the ball short. Justin wore away at Phil's system but could not get enough points as Phil cruised to an imposing win. 66 to 48.

### Mosquitos versus Wasps

Jordan versus Beth: Jordan is improving quicker in the higher level. He kept the pressure on Beth to take game three. Beth still had some tricks and experience to draw on in order to defeat Jordan and claim the win. 68 to 65.

Ben F (fill in) versus Michael M: There were some beautiful drives and great rallies. Ben had some awesome backhand control and changes of serve that helped push him forward to victory. 63 to 37.

# SPORT



Under 16 player Aiden Campbell. -S



Kicking the ball in the under 12 competition. -S



Under nines football competition. -S



Under 14 player Will Simpson. -S



Under 11 netball competition. -S

## Alexandra junior football netball results

### Football

#### Under 16

**Alexandra 5.1-31 defeated by Moama 9.10-64**

AWARDS: Reddrops FoodWorks, Jaidyn Dimech; Essence Coffee Lounge Award, Aiden Campbell; Kazza's Diner, Harrison Christie; Gilligan Plumbing, Fletcher Van Lierop; Coaches Award, Max Kaiser.

#### Under 14

**Alexandra 4.3-27 defeated by Echuca Bombers 8.14-62**

Awards: Reddrops FoodWorks, Eli Van Lierop; Essence Coffee Lounge, Harrish Balansag; Kazza's Diner, Riley Kirley; Coaches Award, Nate Simms.

#### Under 12

**Alexandra 7.1-43 defeated Nagambie 3.12-30**

Awards: Reddrops FoodWorks, Kayden Andrews; Essence Coffee Lounge, Jasper Coster; Kazza's Diner, Lincon Dehn; Phil Savage Award, Vander Kaiser; Coaches Award, Max Bristow.

#### Under 10

Awards: Kazza's Diner, Corybn Hayes-Moyonihan; Canteen Voucher, Harvey Hill; Footy Cards, River Lamaro and Zac Gleeson.

#### Under Nines

Awards: Essence Coffee Lounge, Hannah Carter; Sherrin Bounce Footy, Lochie Wood; Phil Savage Award, Byron Pitts; Footy Cards, Jude and Kason.

### Netball

#### Eleven and Under Red

**Alexandra 3 defeated by Nagambie 18**

Awards: Reegan Martyn and Eva Nardella-Morcum.

#### Eleven and Under Black

**Alexandra 4 drew with Yea Tigers 4**

Awards: Oakley Bishop and Olivia Bruce.

#### Thirteen and Under Red

**Alexandra 19 defeated Broadford 13**

Awards: Charli Stephens and Kaliya Stewart.

#### Thirteen and Under Black

**Alexandra 20 defeated St Marys 16**

Awards: Bella Lamaro and Liesse Hogan.

#### Fifteen and Under Black

**Alexandra 52 defeated St Marys 18**

Awards: Indi Hoornweg, Zoe Coller and Asha Vine.

Fifteen and Under Red had the bye.



Under 16 player Fletcher Van Lierop. -S



The under 14 football competition. -S



Applying pressure in the under 12 competition. -S



Under 11 netball playing in wet conditions. -S

# Big wins for Alexandra football Seniors and Reserves, netball A Grade and B Grade



Reserves player Harry Correa. -S



Reserves player Josh Crane. -S



Seniors player Bradley Johnson. -S



Seniors player Ted Watkin. -S

THE Rebels made the long journey to Powelltown returning with big wins. Both teams, Seniors and Reserves, now sit second on the ladder.

## Football

### Reserves

#### **Powelltown 5.4-34 defeated by Alexandra 19.21-135**

The Rebels won their fourth consecutive game with an impressive four quarter performance resulting in a 101-point win over Powelltown.

Continuing to display team orientated football and with key team members to return as the club play other serious finals contenders in the coming weeks.

Midfielder Connor Heaslip with four goals continued his excellent form with a best on ground performance. Jesse Ellks in his first game for the Rebels was most impressive with three goals.

Ben Wallis, Scott Hill (four Goals) Nathaniel Kerle and Hayden Gillmore (three goals) took full advantage of the ball spending large periods of time in the forward line.

Awards: Shannon Group Award, Conor Heaslip; Future Fit Finance, Jesse Ellks; Ruoak Hotel Award, Ben Wallis; Buxton Hotel Award, Scott Hill.

### Seniors

#### **Powelltown 4.2-26 defeated by Alexandra 39.20-254**

The Rebel's seniors continued their red hot form with a massive 39.20-254 to 4.2-26 win over bottom of the ladder Powelltown at Powelltown in a complete domination. The Rebel's lethal forward line coming off scoring 26,24,31 goals in their previous three games continued their impressive form with the Rebel's half back line of Tom Boots, Tom Wynne and Harry Aikman impassable continually driving the ball into attack.

A Rebels potent forward line took full advantage with Will Stewart (12 goals) in a best on ground performance, Sam Critchley (six goals) Ted Watkins and Josh Edward's both with four goals.

Awards: Kervale Award, Will Stewart; O'Briens Real Estate, Tom Wynne; Ruoak Hotel Award, Sam Boots; Buxton Hotel Award, Riley Frankcombe.

### Under 18

#### **Alexandra 3.6-24 defeated by Wandin 26.14-170**

Bowens Award, Fletcher Van Lierop; Kia Chadstone, Heath Sutcliffe; ANFC Club Voucher, Tom Clark; Coaches Award, Max Young.

## Netball

### A Grade

Powelltown 38 defeated by Alexandra 44  
Awards: Incentive, Claire Jungfier; Corner Hotel Award, Mia Rouget.

### B Grade

**Powelltown 23 defeated by Alexandra 39**  
Awards: Incentive, Ash Peers; Corner Hotel Award, Emily Irwin.

### C Grade

**Powelltown 29 drew Alexandra 29**  
Awards: RUOAK Hotel, Lizzie Butcher; Corner Hotel Award, Kelsey Purcell.

### Under 17

**Alexandra 34 defeated by Seville 34**  
Awards: Koala Cherries Award, Hannah Weeks; Corner Hotel Award, Asher Kaiser.

This Saturday at Rebel Park, the Alexandra Rebels will host Yarra Glen Football Netball Club in a big day of football and netball action, with the Seniors, Reserves, Under 18s and A, B and C Grade netball teams all taking the court and field at home. The club's Under 17 netballers will enjoy the bye this weekend.

The club will also be celebrating Past Players and Life Members Day on Saturday, May 23, and they encourage all past players and life members to head along, catch up with familiar faces and show their support for the current generation of Rebels.



C Grade player Ash Creighton. -S



A Grade player Ellie Hedger. -S

THE ALEXANDRA • EILDON • MARYSVILLE

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# Standard Sport

SPORTS EDITORIAL - sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au



## Fourteen players for Alexandra Golf Club stableford round

by Dave Silverman

FOR what might turn out to be the last balmy, pleasant Tuesday for a while, 14 eager beavers put their names down to play in the usual stableford round at the Alexandra Golf Club.

Leo Dynes continued his run of good form, taking the win with a very impressive 40 points, and was unlucky not to get his name on the hole in one board, with his tee shot on the 12th finishing about 300mm from the pin. Bill Wind was second with 38, and Steve Pearson came in third, also on 38.

Steve also took the nearest the pin on 17, with both seven and 18 going to Brad Newton. Rundown vouchers went to Paul Martin, Brad and yours truly.

Last Saturday saw the annual playing of the Men's Foursomes Championship, which was sponsored by Alexandra Bricklayers, and attracted a field of 16, playing in teams of two.

The winners of the day's net score event were Nigel Waterhouse and John Steer, with a score of 82 net 69, and in second place, the team of Jarrod Williamson and Len Jenkins, who carded a 84 net 72.5. The scratch winners, and the pair that get their names on the Honour Board, consisted of Brad and James Kidd, with a score of 80 strokes.

Only three nearest the pins were claimed of a possible five, with two going to Leo Dynes, seven to Wooly and 12 to Steery.

## Adam Kupke claims hole in one at Yarrowonga tournament for Eildon Golf Club

by Puttamatic

AFTER a big week at the annual May Tournament at Yarrowonga, a handful of Eildon Golf Club members returned to join some visitors from Broadford to challenge themselves in a par round last Saturday and there were 11 players enjoying the fine conditions.

Congratulations Ken Collier who returned with plus two and two clear of runner-up Adam Kupke zero. Two shots further back was Denis McDonald, another shot back Dennis Seamer and Ian Lakeland.

Ken Collier was nearest the pin on the fifth, Zac Scales the 12th and Peter McNair took the prize on the 14th. The third and 11th went unclaimed as did the two birdie holes on offer. Dennis Seamer was the entry draw winner with Colin Long the swindle recipient. Ken Collier was also the winner in the secret six competition this week.

As mentioned, a large contingent of Eildon members had a great week away at Yarrowonga but none better than Adam Kupke who was successful with a hole in one on the second, par three, on the Murray Course. Congratulations Adam, a wonderful achievement.

The club says congratulation to all winners and they look forward to seeing you at the club soon. Until next time, take care and happy hitting.

## Roos celebrate historic first point in Pride Round clash

by Sophia Weaver

THE scoreboard at Thornton Oval may have read 99 to one in favor of a polished Seville side last Saturday, but for the Thornton-Eildon Football Netball Club (TEDFNC), that single point felt like a premiership victory.

It was a historic day for the club, marking their very first score of the season during a vibrant and high-spirited Pride Round celebration at Boner Park.

Spirits were understandably high before the bounce, with TEDFNC players taking to the field bedazzled in rainbow face paint, courtesy of player Lottie. While Seville's experience and slick ball movement were on full display as they

came hard and fast, the Roos refused to be intimidated. Thornton's defense put up a fierce resistance, forcing Seville to work double-time for every single score.

The defining moment of the match came after a series of close calls in Thornton's forward half. Pushing through the exhaustion, the team mounted a relentless attack that allowed newcomer Alice Fitzgerald to snap a brilliant behind from active play.

The breakthrough sparked immediate, roaring celebrations from the players on the field and the loyal supporters on the sidelines.

"The Thornton Roos are learning fast, working hard, and building every week," Coach Tash Hay said after the match.

"Now that they've had a taste of scoring, I can't wait to see what they bring next."

Gameday awards: Alice Fitzgerald, \$25 Club Voucher; Lottie Weisse, \$20 gift card from Valley Aged and Disability Home Care Support Services; Aisha Hendriks, \$20 cash gift from Dindi Kids. The Thornton Butcher meat raffle was won by Brad Weisse

Volunteer of the week is Bechet Cousens, as the club said: "From helping behind the scenes to always supporting our players and community, Bechet gives so much of her time to make our club the best it can be."

Next week TEDFNC is playing Emerald at Chandler Reserve, Emerald, at 10.50am.



Vice Captain Bechet Cousens. -TEDDY Photography



Thornton Eildon's gameday award winners, Alice, Lottie and Aisha. -S

## Marysville Golf Club thanks volunteers

by Lesley Rundle

THIS week is National Volunteer Week with the theme 'Your Year to Volunteer'. It is appropriate to acknowledge all volunteers who contribute so much to our nation and our shire. Marysville Golf Club members would like to thank all the volunteers in the district who contribute so much to making the Murrindindi Shire such a great place to live.

The Marysville Golf Club would not exist without volunteers. Whether it be maintaining the course, gardens and carts, governing and marketing the club, fundraising, coordinating competitions and events and many other roles. All are greatly appreciated by members and visitors.

Last Saturday both the men and ladies played a stableford round with the men's round including the second round of the Barton Cup and the ladies' the Norman Trophy.

The winner of the Norman Trophy was Gail Leigh (10) with 32 points on a countback from

Heather Jenkins and Fiona Wright. Heather was the runner up.

The men's winner with an excellent 41 points was Paul Martin (29) followed by Drew Kaempkes (12) with 40 points. The Barton Cup qualifiers from this round were Paul Martin, Drew Kaempkes, Ray Jones and Adam Littlejohn. The nearest the pins were won by Richy Clark, Peter Lilley, Brian Worcester and Ray Jones who also won the golden shot.

Next Saturday a mixed four ball best ball game will be played. This week the ladies will travel to Strathbogie to play in their ladies' bowl.

Just as all clubs rely on volunteers, funds have to be raised to enhance the operation of clubs. The fundraising efforts of the Marysville golf club are underway.

On the Saturday and Sunday of the King's Birthday weekend, June 6 and 7, there will be a fundraising Hole in One Competition. It will

be held each day on the practice fairway and green from 10am to 4pm. The cost is \$5 for one ball and \$20 for five balls. No bookings are required and a golf club will be supplied if needed. The prize for the first hole in one is \$1000 and other prizes will be offered. All local and visiting golfers and non-golfers are encouraged to call into the club on one or both of those days and 'have a go'.

The annual club raffle is also now being held and members each have a book of raffle tickets to sell. The draw will take place on September 12 and the prizes are \$1000 cash, a dozen bottles of premium wine, a \$200 Bunnings voucher and a trailer load of firewood. Tickets can be purchased from a club member or from the club shop.

The club is also selling firewood for \$120 a trailer load with free delivery within the Triangle area. Contact the club on 5963 3241 to organise a delivery.