

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

With which is incorporated The Yea Telegraph, The Yea Telephone and Upper Goulburn Advocate

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Cash and Waylon enjoyed the petting zoo at the Yea Show. More images on page 14 and 15 of this edition. -BD

Assurances on the future of ADH under a merger

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

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

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

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

Yea hospital board's submission on the merger

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

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

The questions are:

1. Is it appropriate to progress a structural change that excludes more than half of the Murrindindi health system before completing Local Healthcare Network planning and the Murrindindi health needs analysis?

2. Is metro-centric planning, led from inner-eastern Melbourne, in the best interests of a rural community?

3. Is the loss of local leadership, something strongly defended during the 2024 Health Service Plan process, in the best interests of the Murrindindi Community?

4. Can a large metropolitan service realistically understand and prioritise the needs of a small rural population?

5. Is amalgamation with a financially constrained metropolitan health service the most sustainable solution for safeguarding the funding of services at Alexandra?

6. Given loss of local leadership and governance and centralisation of executive decision-making in metropolitan Melbourne, how can long term guarantees be made that ensure the continuation and enhancement of services within Murrindindi?

7. As the only rural campus in a large metropolitan health service, how would the ADH campus retain its rural mission and disaster-response capabilities under EH governance?

8. How will this type of rural-focused innovation continue when one partner becomes part of a large metropolitan health service?

9. How will EH work with key local partners to ensure that current initiatives

are sustained and new initiatives created over the long term?

11. Why, in terms of whole of Murrindindi service planning and delivery, is amalgamation preferable to continuing collaborations within the existing local and East Metro and Murrindindi Health Service Network?

11. How can it be justified that the undertaken consultation process was appropriate and respectful given the long-term consequences?

12. How does this not undermine integrity of the voluntary amalgamation process?

The conclusion states, "The proposed ADH-EH amalgamation carries significant and far-reaching implications for the Murrindindi community. Publicly available information does not substantiate promised benefits or provide clarity on how delivery is to occur.

"ADH and EH differ substantially in mission, scale, and context.

"The amalgamation would remove local governance. Key leadership roles

would become redundant. Capacity for a meaningful local community voice would be either substantially diminished or removed altogether.

"Both services face financial challenges, raising doubts about the feasibility of promised expansions.

"Existing healthcare network structures already support collaboration and service improvement without loss of autonomy. Each of the service enhancements proposed through amalgamation can be and are expected to be delivered through the recently established health service network.

Given these concerns, further assessment, including exploration of alternative integration models, is necessary to determine whether amalgamation aligns with community interests and supports sustainable, locally responsive health service delivery across Murrindindi."

Top level players to appear at Cathedral Invitational

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

Returning champion Adam Scott is set to defend his title. A professional golfer who

plays on the PGA Tour, Scott is a former world number one in the Official World Golf Ranking, winning the 2013 Masters Tournament and overtaking Tiger Woods to reach number one.

Marc Leishman will give Scott a run for his money. Leishman was crowned Rookie of the

Year in 2009, the first Australian to win the award, and won six times on the PGA Tour, along with a number of other tournament wins in his professional career.

Geoff Ogilvy is another professional golfer through the PGA Tour. He claimed victory at the 2006 US Open before going on to win

three World Golf Championships. Ogilvy has eight PGA Tour wins and is looking to add winning the Cathedral Invitational to his list of career highlights.

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

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

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

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

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

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

For more information, visit cathedralinvitational.com





Alexandra Museum
& Steam Train Rides
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[/alexandramuseum](https://www.facebook.com/alexandramuseum)
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Latest ambulance response times for the Hume region

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

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

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

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

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

“Despite this record demand, we continue to lead the way in pre-hospital patient care, including the best cardiac arrest survival rates in Australia and third best anywhere in the world.”

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

In the Hume Region crews responded to 5781 Code One cases between July and

September 2025, which is 4.96 per cent more than a year ago (5508) and five per cent more than three months ago (5503).

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

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

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

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

“Getting the right care fast can make all the difference and means more paramedics are

on the road for people who need our urgent lifesaving care the most.

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

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

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

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

Mr Georgiou said AV’s Triage Services team, staffed by nurses and paramedics, also plays a vital role by connecting people with

the right care and freeing up ambulances for life-threatening emergencies.

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

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

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

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

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

Australia Post warns customers of Christmas scammers

AUSTRALIA Post is warning customers to be on high alert as scammers accelerate fake delivery messages and emails in the lead-up to Christmas.

Scammers are taking advantage of the festive rush, targeting groups such as Facebook Marketplace users. They often pose as interested buyers and send links or QR codes via Messenger to fake ‘Australia Post courier service’ websites.

These sites claim that payment will be processed online and that a courier will collect the item once payment is made when, in reality, these fraudulent sites are designed to steal personal and financial information.

This trend reflects a broader national issue with research from Australia Post showing more than 90 per cent of Australians have received a scam text or call, and nearly three-quarters reporting that scams most commonly impersonate shipping and parcel delivery services.

Adam Cartwright, Australia Post Chief Information Security Officer advised customers to track parcels through the official AusPost app and ignore any message requesting personal or payment information.

“As the pre-Christmas sales ramp up and more Aussies are expecting deliveries, scammers are exploiting that

anticipation and urgency to trick people into clicking fake links or handing over personal information,” Mr Cartwright said.

“If you receive a message asking for personal or payment details, you can be confident it’s not from us. In fact, the safest way to track your item is through the official AusPost app.”

Key advice for customers

Download the official AusPost app and enable push notifications for parcel tracking. This is the most secure and reliable way to receive genuine delivery updates. Australia Post will never ask for personal or financial details via phone, text or email-including passwords, credit card, or bank details. Don’t click on suspicious links in text message or emails.

Australia Post is also seeing a resurgence of sophisticated phishing ahead of Christmas, including the global ‘Darcula’ operation, which rents scam toolkits to criminals that mimic trusted delivery brands. By sending messages via end-to-end encrypted channels such as iMessage and Rich Communication Services (RCS), Darcula can bypass traditional filters, making these scams harder to detect and block.

To sign up for a free MyPost account either visit auspost.com.au/receiving/



[mypost](https://auspost.com.au/mypost) or download the AusPost app from the Apple Store or Google Play.

For more tips on how to navigate parcel and delivery scams visit the Australia Post website at auspost.com.au/ScamAlerts

It’s always best to buy locally whenever possible. It helps our local economy and helps spread the Christmas cheer in our towns and regions.

Children’s social media rapidly approaching

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

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

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

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

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

“Reassure your kids that they can always come to you if they are worried about anything. One way of starting this conversation could be by asking them how they would like to

stay connected to friends and family outside of social media.”

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

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

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

“The age restrictions are also a great opportunity to allow time to prepare children and young people for social media by teaching them about the risks associated with sharing your images and own content online. Parents

can use the time before kids turn 16 to prepare and empower them to use it appropriately.”

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

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

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SACRED HEART SCHOOL



Scarlett, Josh, Ashton and Kaden were recognised for their commitment to outstanding actions that align with our school values of Respect, Resilience and Safety.

Student of the Week

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The many opinions on the proposed merger

by Anne Richey, Editor, Alexandra Standard and Yea Chronicle

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, maybe they are right to explore the option of a merger between ADH and EH, potentially providing more services, more certainty of service and increased activity at the hospital. Should this occur, the district is likely to benefit economically from the additional staffing required to support the metropolitan patients coming to Alexandra for services, utilising the available beds, and additional staff and patients spending money in the area. Local patients will also benefit.

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

and career pathways for local staff.” Their full response has been included separately in this edition.

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

When the question, ‘What will Eastern Health get out of the merger?’ was asked at the ‘Tea Talk’ meeting on November 18, EH CEO David Plunkett responded by noting that the Eastern Health doctors are excited about the opportunity, and noted that ADH’s new cancer clinic has been put in place due to the actions of senior medical staff. He also spoke about training in primary and general practice GP training, and research opportunities.

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

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

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

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

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

It is heartening that many current and former healthcare workers appear to be strongly in support of the proposal, with four current staff members speaking at the meeting. This is particularly relevant as they have knowledge of

the internal workings of the system. A merger would potentially also provide certainty of services to patients. If a specialist were to go on holidays or become ill, for example, under Eastern Health, there may be back-up staff enabling certainty of service. A merger may also provide more scope for additional specialist staff and services, and for additional training.

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

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

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

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

Caolon O’Connor from Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association (ADTTA) conducted some research into mergers around the world and found, per the Executive Summary of the report, *Mergers are not Magic: What an Alexandra-Eastern Health Merger Requires to Succeed*, that “Hospital and health service mergers are frequently proposed as solutions to challenges such as financial instability, access issues, workforce shortages, and the desire for greater clinical integration. However, a growing body of research suggests that while structural consolidation can deliver some benefits, it does not reliably improve patient outcomes, access or workforce conditions, unless specific enabling conditions are present.”

The summary of the key recommendations in the report included, “Define and publish a clear case for change, with measurable baselines and targets for access, quality and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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What can you do about an evaporating dam?

by Kerri Goschnick, Land Management Extension Officer

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

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

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

Identifying and managing leakage

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

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

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

Start of harvest brings fire warning

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

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

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

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

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

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

Understanding evaporation

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

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

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

Expanding or consolidating storage

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Australian beef industry sets global benchmark in sustainability

THE Australian beef industry has released its 2025 Annual Update under the Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF), showcasing record-breaking environmental achievements, strengthened market access, and a clear roadmap for future sustainability leadership.

Since 2005, the industry has reduced net CO2-e emissions by 70.1 per cent, largely driven by carbon sequestration in the landscape on grazing land.

Beef production reached an all-time high of 2.75 million tonnes, achieved with improved efficiency and reduced waste.

Solid waste to landfill in the processing sector fell by 71.6 per cent between 2022 and 2024, and 98 per cent of cattle were processed through independently accredited animal welfare facilities.

On the trade front, the industry alleviated \$109 million in non-tariff barriers, while exports to the United States surged by more than 30 per cent.

Patrick Hutchinson, Chair of the ABSF Steering Group, said the update reflects the industry’s commitment to transparency, resilience, and continuous improvement.

“This year’s update is more than a report card. It is a declaration of intent. We are not just meeting expectations; we are setting them. From animal welfare to climate resilience, the Australian beef industry is proving that sustainability is not a cost. It is a competitive advantage,” Mr Hutchinson said.

“We have shown the world that beef production can coexist with biodiversity, that emissions can be reduced without compromising profitability, and that our self-funded sector can lead global conversations on fair and credible sustainability metrics.”

The report acknowledges challenges ahead. New mandatory climate-related financial disclosure rules will require large supply chains to report Scope Three emissions, necessitating further focus on carbon accounting by the industry.

Workforce shortages across the supply chain continue to impact productivity and innovation, while inconsistent global sustainability standards highlight the need for Australia’s leadership in defining credible metrics.

Looking forward, the ABSF has identified three priorities to guide future investment and reporting: feed sourcing, improved traceability across the value chain, and partnerships that foster innovation through cross-sector collaboration.

“The future of beef sustainability lies in collaboration and credibility,” Mr Hutchinson added.

“Retailers and investors want assurance, not anecdotes. That is why we are investing in traceability, science-based emissions reduction, and data-driven reporting. We are building a beef industry that is not only sustainable but investable.”

The ABSF continues to align with global standards including the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) Global Goals, ensuring Australian beef remains a trusted, high-value protein in international markets.

For retailers, investors, and supply chain partners, the 2025 Annual Update sends a clear signal: Australian beef is leading the way in sustainable protein production with the evidence to back it up.

To view the ABSF Annual Report 2025 in its entirety, please visit: info.mla.com.au/c/AQjrtA0Q1M0oGOzhlqoBIOLDtw0BAfF-YS6Mjf6m6NpdEWsbZCNMtSHbCpcYiob0GLI5aqQ

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

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

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan stresses machinery safety should not only just be a priority for farmers, but also to all Victorians, ensuring regular equipment maintenance and fire-safe practices.

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

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

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

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

Crop and Farm Machinery Fire Safety

The most common cause of harvester fires is material collecting on hot engine components such as the manifold, exhaust and turbocharger. Make it part of your routine to check for straw or grass build-up, and hot

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

More information can be found at cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/operating-farming-machinery-equipment-and-vehicles



Shopping local benefits the region and you

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Put Murrindindi on Your Table This Christmas

by Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visit murrindindifoodandwine.org.au for more information.

FOODWORKS

CHRISTMAS STORE HOURS

WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS EVE

8am - 8pm

THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS DAY

CLOSED

FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER
BOXING DAY

8am - 8pm

SATURDAY 27 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

MONDAY 29 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

TUESDAY 30 DECEMBER

8am - 8pm

WEDNESDAY 31 DECEMBER
NEW YEARS EVE

8am - 8pm

THURSDAY 1 JANUARY
NEW YEARS DAY

8am - 8pm

FRIDAY 2 JANUARY

8am - 8pm

Alexandra & Yea



16

DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Global campaign

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Challenging discriminatory attitudes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Step up in Murrindindi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"People of all genders and all ages are welcome.

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

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

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

Furthermore, bring a hat and a water bottle.

How to track online safety

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

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

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

Often, this includes coercive control through technology, cyberstalking and image-based abuse, which has also

included more people being targeted through deepfake AI services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

16

DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Crimestoppers spotlight on coercive control

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why do victims stay in an abusive relationship?

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

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

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

At its worst, a perpetrator will set up many reasons why the victim cannot leave,



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

including sabotaging social networks and access to large amounts of money.

Concerning trends in technology

In safe hands, social media and location apps create a 24/7-channel for its users to share locations, photographs, set up gatherings and acknowledge

special occasions. However, in sinister hands technology is facilitating stalking behaviour.

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

“I think in the past if you left someone and you moved into a different suburb or social circle, you don’t see them anymore and that would be the end of the matter.

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

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

Why see family violence through a new lens?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To listen, visit crimestoppersvic.com.au

A proud history in 16 Days

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An outstanding

THE annual Yea Show last Saturday was an unqualified success with the Cattle Show being the undisputed 'jewel in the crown' but other attractions such as the Championship Woodchop, Dog High Jump, Sheep Dog Trials and the Celebrity Dunking Tank drawing huge crowds.

The show committee made the conscious decision this year to focus on agriculture and farm pursuits, both from the paddock and the farm homestead, and the response from the community was overwhelmingly positive with one of the biggest attendances for many years.

The Yea CWA ladies provided the Devonshire teas and luncheon in the Pavilion Café and were kept very busy all day. They also organise the local School's Exhibit under the grandstand which was an excellent display of all the students have been achieving during their school year.

Over 100 head of cattle were on the showgrounds giving an outstanding display of prime beef cattle and judges made the comment that they had an almost impossible task in choosing the winners. The Cattle Show opened as usual with the prestigious Heifer Challenge on Friday evening. The high reputation of the Yea Cattle Show draws stud breeders from all over Victoria and Southern New South Wales. The Cattle Committee are very pleased to see Finlay High School Agricultural students returning each year, this year with 10 students and a truck load of cattle.

The Mooronga Black Angus Stud scooped the pool, winning the Supreme Cow, the Supreme Bull, the Interbreed Group of three and the Pair of Heifers. The Pair of Bulls was won by Roly Park Stud (shorthorns). There were 30 vealers entered in the Hoof and Hook competition with awards going to: Class One, first and second place to Peter Lennox and Alison Burgess, and third place won by Lyn and Barry Johnson. In Class Two, first place went to Max Martin, and second and third to Robert Wood. The On Hook awards will be announced at the Cattlemen's Dinner on Friday evening.

The Northern Region Sheep Yard Dog Trials also drew entrants from all over Victoria and New South Wales. After the winner is announced at Yea, the winners of trials held at the Seymour, Euroa, Alexandra and Yea Show compete for the Yea Cup, and the Champion Handler this year was Roland Pell from Undera.

One of the biggest crowd-pleasers each year is the Dog High Jump. The historic grandstand is always full of spectators to witness these devoted dogs perform miracles for their loved owners. The winner of the Medium Height Dog was 'Missy' owned by Jarryed. Missy jumped an incredible 2.09 metres, a record at Yea Show. Katie's dog, 'Kozzie', was second with 1.7 metres, and 'Nova' owned by Greg was the winner of the small dog section, jumping 1.14 metres. Chase and Marshall from *Paw Patrol* wound up the crowd with their antics at trying the Dog High Jump themselves.

The Celebrity Dunking Tank, sponsored by Yea and District Memorial Hospital Outreach team, drew an enthusiastic line-up of people vying to hit the big red button to see the celebrity 'dunked'. Unfortunately the target seemed too easy as the 'celebrities' took the plunge dozens of times. The early celebs, Peter Armstrong (Yea Football/Netball Club president), Damien Gallagher Mayor Shire of Murrindindi and local Headmaster Craig were nearly blue with cold after their many early morning dunkings. Congratulations to all for their bravery and great community spirit in agreeing to take up the challenge.

The Royal Horticultural Society judges in the Horticultural Pavilion travelled from Bendigo to judge at Yea and said they had

never seen a bigger showing or higher quality of junior entries. They especially commended the winner of the Junior Best Exhibit, Hayley Krickic, saying she had the flair to make floristry her career. The judges, Marion Shaw and David Richards, were both very impressed with the extraordinary quality and number of entries in the Rose section and the overall high standard of the floral art.

The Poultry Show had an excellent showing of beautiful fowls and the week-old chickens were a hit with the children. The Best Junior Bird was won by five year old Monty Sherman. Isla Anstey won the Best Standard Heavy Male and Roly and Lee Holmes owned the Best Bird in Show.

The Sheep Shearing demonstrations by Stuart McLeish were watched with great interest all day, many not having seen this time-honoured sheep farming activity up close before. The alpaca display, also displayed by the McLeish family was also a great hit with the crowd.

The crafts and photography filled the main pavilion and is always a popular part of the Yea Show. This year a 'Decorate a Bra' competition was introduced to raise money for Breast Cancer and this was very well supported with many novel entries and certainly provoked plenty of comment. The Men's Celebrity Chocolate Cake Bake was well contested in the Cookery section with Murrindindi Shire Mayor, Damien Gallagher, the winner. Kimm Noonan won the prestigious VAS Fruit Cake. The winner of this section now competes at regional level and could go on to compete at the Royal Melbourne Show.

The Colonial Clydesdale wagon rides were popular all day. There were plenty of food options, an excellent variety of trade stalls provided lots of interest, children's rides and entertainment and the antics of Chase and Marshall from *Paw Patrol* were a hit with plenty of high fives and photo opportunities. Viv Gregory must be commended on her excellent Children's Pet Show. Very well run and the children were very proud to show off their pets.

Excellent displays by the Yarra Valley Historic Engine Preservation Society and the Yea Men's Shed drew lots of interest throughout the day and added greatly to the variety of activities to see throughout the showgrounds.



Newly re-elected Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher braving the dunk tank at the Yea Show. -BD



Wood chopping is a difficult sport. -BD



Spectators were able to watch the excellent dressage from stands on the side of the oval. -BD



Floral arrangements were on display and judged at the show too. -BD



There were a variety of stalls, show bags and goodies to peruse. -BD

2025 Yea Show



Dressage performances were constantly on display in the centre oval. -BD



There were sheepdog trials at the show. -BD



Members of the Yea Men's Shed were displaying some of their work at the show. -BD



The axe-chopping competition at the Yea Show. -BD



People viewing the artwork submitted by children and adults for judging at the show. -BD



Cattle were paraded and judged, a big part of Yea's agricultural charm. -BD



Yea Primary School Principal Craig Irvine had a long line of students waiting for a chance to dunk him, making for fun all round. -BD



Old wagon rides were available at the show. -BD



Durani Hart with her horse, Vanaheim the Imp. -BD



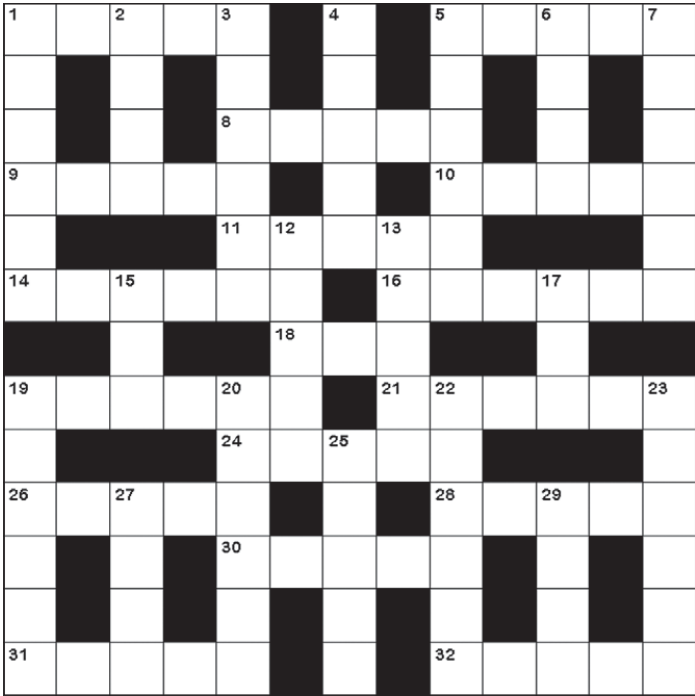
The crowd gathered to watch the dunk tank. -BD

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 27

Crossword

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



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

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

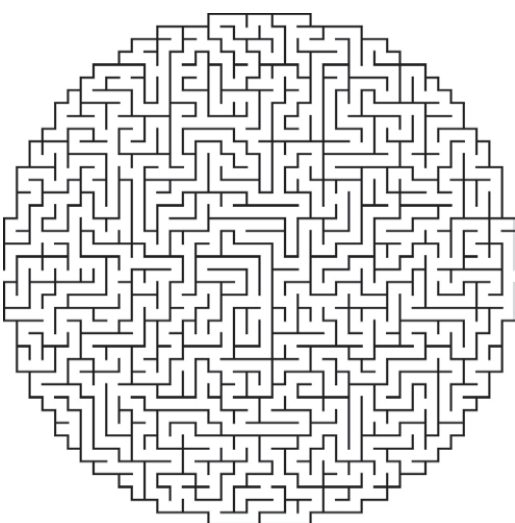
Word Search

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

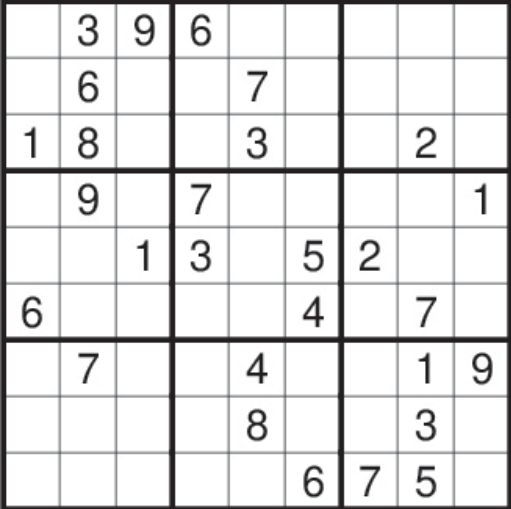
Movies with one word titles

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

Maze



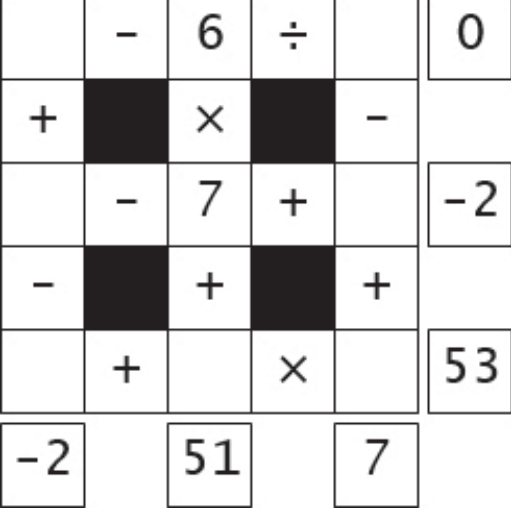
Sudoku



Difficulty: Hard

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

Math Square



Fill in the missing numbers.

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

KID'S PUZZLES

Colouring Page



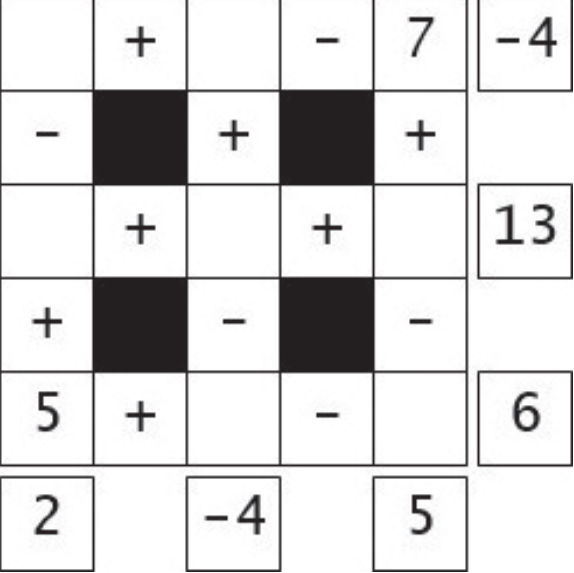
Word Search

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

Words starting with "AL"

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

Math Square



Fill in the missing numbers.

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

Jokes

Knock knock.
Who's there?
Waddle.
Waddle who?
Waddle it take to get you to open the door?

Q: What do you call a dinosaur that crashes his car?
A: Tyrannosaurus Wrecks

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D	O	N	A	T	E	E	D	I	B	L
	U		A	N	T	O				
C	O	N	C	U	R	E	L	I	X	I
A			S	T	O	R	E			U
M	A	P	L	E	W	G	I	V	E	N
P	U	E	U	E	N	I	A			
S	T	A	L	L	R	D	I	N	G	Y

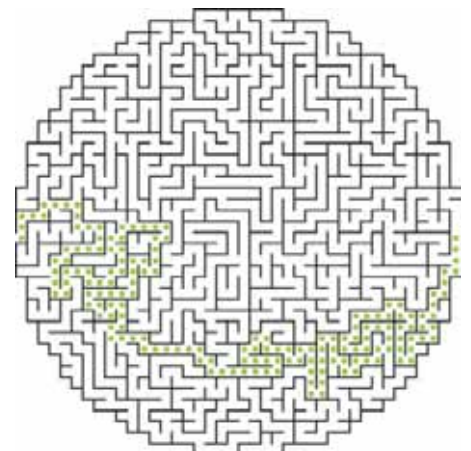
SUDOKU

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

MATH SQUARE

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

MAZE



KIDS MATH SQUARES

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

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MEETINGS



Registration No: A0018756R

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

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

Video conferencing available, please email request to darlingford@dughn.com.au

Business of the Meeting:

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

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

ALL WELCOME

Please RSVP by November 24, 2025.

IN MEMORIAM

TAYLOR, Dillon

November 30, 2015
forever 29.

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

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



MEETINGS

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

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PUBLIC NOTICES



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

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

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

STUART MENZIES

Executive Director, State Planning Policy
Department of Transport and Planning

Concerns over invitation-only federal grants

THE Local and Major Community Infrastructure Program is a \$560 million dollar federal fund, and it seems to only be open to councils and community organisations which have been invited. It appears that the funds relate to election promises in hand-picked seats.

Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines said, "After contact from local organisations, I asked the Minister in Question Time how communities in Indi could secure an invitation to the \$560 million [Local and Major Community Infrastructure] program. The answer confirmed my concerns, this program appears to be yet another case of pork-barrelling.

"The Local and Major Community Infrastructure Program is set up to fund hand-picked Labor election commitments. They were selected during the election, and now a program is set up to tick off funding.

"When public money isn't allocated fairly and transparently, we see waste, cost blowouts and communities missing out on the infrastructure they actually need.

"Political parties have, for too long, treated taxpayer money like an election fund, trading grants for votes instead of funding projects on merit. I'll be holding the government to account for how this fund is distributed, because pork barrelling must end."

When contacted about the program, the media representative from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts said, "The Australian Government is delivering on its community infrastructure commitments from the 2025 Federal election and 2025-26 Budget and Pre-Election Fiscal Outlook through a one-off funding round of the Major and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

"This is a common process whereby governments deliver on their election commitments. For example, the Priority Community Infrastructure Program and Investing in Our Communities Program delivered Labor's 2022 election commitments. The Community Development Grants program delivered the former government's commitments.

"Organisations with eligible commitments have been invited to submit an application for funding consistent with the requirements in the program guidelines. Applications are then assessed against eligibility and assessment criteria to determine value for money. This process is consistent with best-practice grant administration."

A National Anti-Corruption Commission spokesperson said, "The Commission has provided general advice in relation to grants schemes through several corruption prevention and education resources, for example, our open letter on corruption risks and vulnerabilities in the context of an election, and our guide to the NACC for MPs and their staff.

"Corruption risks can arise in relation to grants if they are designed and delivered to targeted voters or electorates for predominantly personal or partisan political purposes, rather than the public benefit. Approving and announcing grants for such purposes could involve a breach of public trust or an abuse of public office, which may be corrupt conduct under the NACC Act.

"All government grants must comply with the requirements of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014, with a particular focus on the proper use and management of public resources, and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024. If they do not, this could involve the unauthorised expenditure of public funds for a purpose for which they are not given, which may also be corrupt conduct under the NACC Act.

"Department officials should clearly communicate any risk that a proposed grant may be non-compliant with the proper use and management of public resources to the relevant minister.

"It is inappropriate for the Commission to comment on any particular grant scheme, and the above comments should not be understood as directed to the schemes mentioned in your inquiry."

Vehicle anti-theft measures recommended

POLICE are urging car owners to install anti-theft measures after several cars were stolen in Shepparton last week using electronic devices.

It's believed the devices, which program or mimic car keys, were used to break in and steal at least three Holden Commodores from the area.

Two were stolen from public carparks in the Shepparton area, while the third was stolen from a residential driveway. Two vehicles, while extensively damaged, were recovered by police in under two days.

Holden Commodores, as well as certain make and models with electronic push start technology are currently being stolen two to three times more often than the five-year average.

Statewide police intelligence conservatively estimates as many as one in five of all cars are disappearing despite their owners retaining the keys.

While these devices are not illegal to own, Victoria Police has seized more than 800 across the state in the past year from individuals arrested for stealing cars.

Car owners are being encouraged by police to install anti-theft measures such as on-board diagnostic port locks, while officers continue to engage with impacted manufacturers and insurers to help turn the tide.

Simple measures such as parking your vehicle off the street and always ensuring your vehicle is locked, even when at home, are also worth their weight in gold.

Japanese encephalitis protection for surrounding shires

MORE Victorians will have protection from the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV), with the Victorian Government delivering free vaccines to at-risk regional Victorians this mosquito season.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas encouraged Victorians to understand the risks of mosquito-borne diseases and to take simple steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites while enjoying more time outside over the warmer summer months.

Through a \$2.3 million investment, the vaccine is now available to people in 24 regional local government areas, primarily inland riverine regions, where there is a higher risk of exposure to the virus.

Most people with JEV infection do not have symptoms or have only mild symptoms such as a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and muscle aches.

However, a small number, around one in every 250 people, can develop severe infection of the brain (encephalitis) or meningitis which can be fatal.

The free JEV vaccine is available for eligible people through GPs, Aboriginal health services, community pharmacies and some local councils.

Simple and practical steps that Victorians can undertake to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, include wearing long, loose and light-coloured clothing when outdoors, using mosquito repellents that contain active ingredients including Picaridin or DEET, spraying or rubbing repellent on children's clothes is recommended while avoiding their skin, limiting time spent outdoors when

mosquitoes are most active such as at dawn and dusk, removing stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed around the home or a campsite, and making sure windows are fitted with mosquito netting or screens.

The Victorian Government's mosquito surveillance program is helping track the presence of diseases in mosquitoes across Victoria, providing an early warning system to protect the public.

The surveillance program helps to monitor the presence of JEV, Murray Valley encephalitis virus, Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus and West Nile virus, informing public health advice so local communities, holidaymakers and livestock managers can be aware of the risks.

More information is available at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/protect-yourself-mosquito-borne-disease.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas said, "“Mosquitoes can carry serious diseases that pose a real risk to our health. As we head into the warmer months, we would urge all Victorians to take simple precautions to protect themselves and their families. We are again making the JEV vaccine available for those Victorians most at risk, keeping communities safe from this preventable mosquito-borne disease.”"

Murrindindi Shire is not among the high risk local government areas for mosquito-borne diseases where residents are eligible for the Japanese encephalitis vaccine, however residents in neighbouring Mitchell, Strathbogie and Mansfield are among the LGAs eligible.



Avoid mosquitoes this season. -Alvesgaspar

Mayor comments on proposed merger

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

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

He commended the ADH and Eastern Health (EH) representative on their time generosity regarding the public meetings held during the 15 day engagement period. He said, "The primary arguments in favour

of amalgamation are service integration, financial viability, workforce development, and health service resilience," but also noted the 2022 public health study by Mariani on the impact of hospital mergers, which found that "Evidence on quality improvement is mixed and often weak; Cost savings through efficiencies were occasionally overstated; Some studies show no significant improvement in patient outcomes while others report increased costs; and Some studies show a marked decline in health outcomes, mortality and hospital readmissions."

He said, "Is amalgamation really the answer?"

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

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

Damien said, "On July 1, the East Metro and Murrindindi Local Health Service Network

was launched, linking Alexandra District Health, Yea and District Memorial Health, Eastern Health, and St. Vincents Hospital. According to Eastern Health's Website, "This new Network will strengthen collaboration, increase access, and improve health outcomes for our community, while providing that care as close to home as possible."

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

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

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

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

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

"These are some of the questions I've posed to the Health Minister recently. Council will continue to advocate; we will remain engaged and reflect community concerns."

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

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

Support for older people to find a home

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

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

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

"With a regular local presence in so many communities, our small team of local women have made a huge difference in the lives of the over 100 people we have assisted to find housing they can afford, with hundreds more supported through the service with Information and advice on housing options. Now, thanks to the generosity of the Ian Rollo

Currie Foundation, we have been able to expand our reach Into Loddon-Campaspe, and employ another worker into the team," said Fiona York, Executive Officer.

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

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

For more information, visit oldertenants.org.au/home_at_last

Health funding types

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

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

A Department of Health spokesperson added, "Small rural health services continue to be funded through block funding, and there are no imminent changes being proposed. Our focus remains on supporting our health services

to deliver the frontline care their communities need, closer to home."

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

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

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



Bioblitz in Kinglake. -S



A koala on Yea Road. -S



A lovely orchid found along the way. -S



Sacred kingfishers. -S

Nature lovers gather for Murrindindi Bioblitz

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

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

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

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

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

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

More information about Murrindindi Bioblitz can be found at inaturalist.ala.org.au/projects/great-southern-bioblitz-2025-murrindindi-shire



Tiger snake. -S



Brush-tailed possum. -S



A swamp wallaby (Wallabia bicolor). -S



Toolangi Bioblitz. -S



Plains brown tree frog. -S



Bird walk on the rail trail. -S



A shining bronze cuckoo in Yea. -S

Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria

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

Rendering assistance

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

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

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

Voluntary rescuers

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

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

Roadstrike response

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

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

Volunteer demographic

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

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

Risks to volunteers

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

Data collection

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

Kangaroos

The inquiry found that while kangaroos are the victims of more roadstrike cases than any other individual species, all wildlife are at risk from motor vehicles and pose a risk to

motorists. They found that the population of kangaroos is less convincing as an explanation for wildlife roadstrike than to urban expansion and planning limitations, changes in climactic conditions and excessive speed and driver behaviour.

Peri-urban areas

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

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

Climate change

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

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

Speed

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

Deer

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

Virtual fencing

The evidence was overwhelmingly of the view that virtual fencing trials had failed in most cases. The more rigorous the study, the more these failures were evident. There was limited evidence that could justify further funding for virtual fencing on the basis of those technologies presented. The said

further funding of virtual fencing should be tied to the emergence of new, more viable technologies only. They said it was unclear whether the noise and sound stimuli emitted by virtual fencing produces an appropriate response in Australian wildlife. Virtual fencing also requires ongoing maintenance to stay operational.

Wildlife crossing structures

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

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

Signage

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

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

Dusk and dawn

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

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

Education

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

Koala Cherries pipeline project

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

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

The secure water supply will be used to underpin Koala Cherries'

expansion of their export sales. Discussing the business's plans to double cherry production in Yarck over the next five years, Koala Cherries Managing Director Michael Rouget said "We're going to use this water to feed our export markets".

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

"With a permanent crop like cherries, you simply can't go without water for even a month. You have to keep the trees alive," he said. "The benefit of this pipeline is that it takes away this risk completely."

After eight years in development, the project is set to boost the Goulburn Valley's



The new pipeline at Koala Cherries. -S

regional economy and strengthen local employment. "Our business is labour intensive, so it'll create a lot of jobs in the area" Michael said, noting that the pipeline offers "a lot of benefits for our business but also the broader community".

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

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

"Additionally, we've modelled (the pipeline) so that we can provide water to the broader community as well," Michael said, noting that the pipeline's design allows nearby farms to link into the system, opening the door for local landowners to

access the same secure and reliable water supply.

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

Calling out tax dodgers in record numbers

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

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

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

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

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

Spotting the red flags

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

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

‘People evading their tax and super obligations are directly harming honest

businesses and putting an increased burden on other Australians. There really is no excuse.’

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

Industries under the microscope

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

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

Raise the red flag

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

suspect tax evasion.

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

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

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

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

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

Plan ahead for fire season

WITH fire danger season arriving, Yarra Valley Water is urging customers in grass fire and bushfire-prone areas to include a water supply in their emergency plan.

Even with recent rain, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) has stated this year’s fire season could be the most dangerous since the 2009 Black Saturday fires. This is part of a trend of fire seasons starting earlier and lasting longer due to changing weather patterns.

The fire danger period comes into effect in some local government areas across the Yarra Valley Water service area from November 17 and could continue through to May 2026.

High-risk fire areas in Yarra Valley Water’s service area include the shires of Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, Cardinia, Mitchell, and Murrindindi, and the cities of Hume, Whittlesea, Banyule, Manningham, and Maroondah.

Bridie Fennessy, General Manager Asset Services, said a reliable water supply cannot be guaranteed during a fire and preparation is crucial.

“We all know grass fires and bushfires can happen at any time, with the potential to devastate properties and damage water pipes and tanks,” Ms Fennessy said.

“During a fire, our customers could experience low water pressure, loss of supply or reduced water quality. This could be due to equipment damage due to heat or fire, high demand for water from firefighters, or power outages” she said.

Yarra Valley Water works with other agencies to prepare for the fire season and Ms Fennessy said the water corporation wants everyone in its service area to be ready too.

“We urge everyone to include drinking water in their emergency kit. And if you intend to defend your property, you need an independent water supply because you won’t be able to rely on mains water during a fire,” Ms Fennessy said,

The Country Fire Authority and Fire Rescue Victoria recommend you have an independent water supply of at least 10,000 litres and a non mains reliant pump if you are intending to stay and fight a fire.

Ms Fennessy said it is also important for customers to update their contact details with a mobile phone number for SMS updates during an emergency that affects water supplies.

“If a fire affects our service area, we’ll work with emergency services and communities to share information about accessing alternative drinking water supplies. If we have your mobile number, we can keep you updated with issues affecting your water supply,” she said.

Yarra Valley Water customers can update their details at yvw.com.au/mydetails

For more information about preparing for fires and your water supply, including quick links to CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria Fire Ready and Fire Survival guides, visit yvw.com.au/bushfireinfo

Helping more children to learn to swim

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

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

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

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

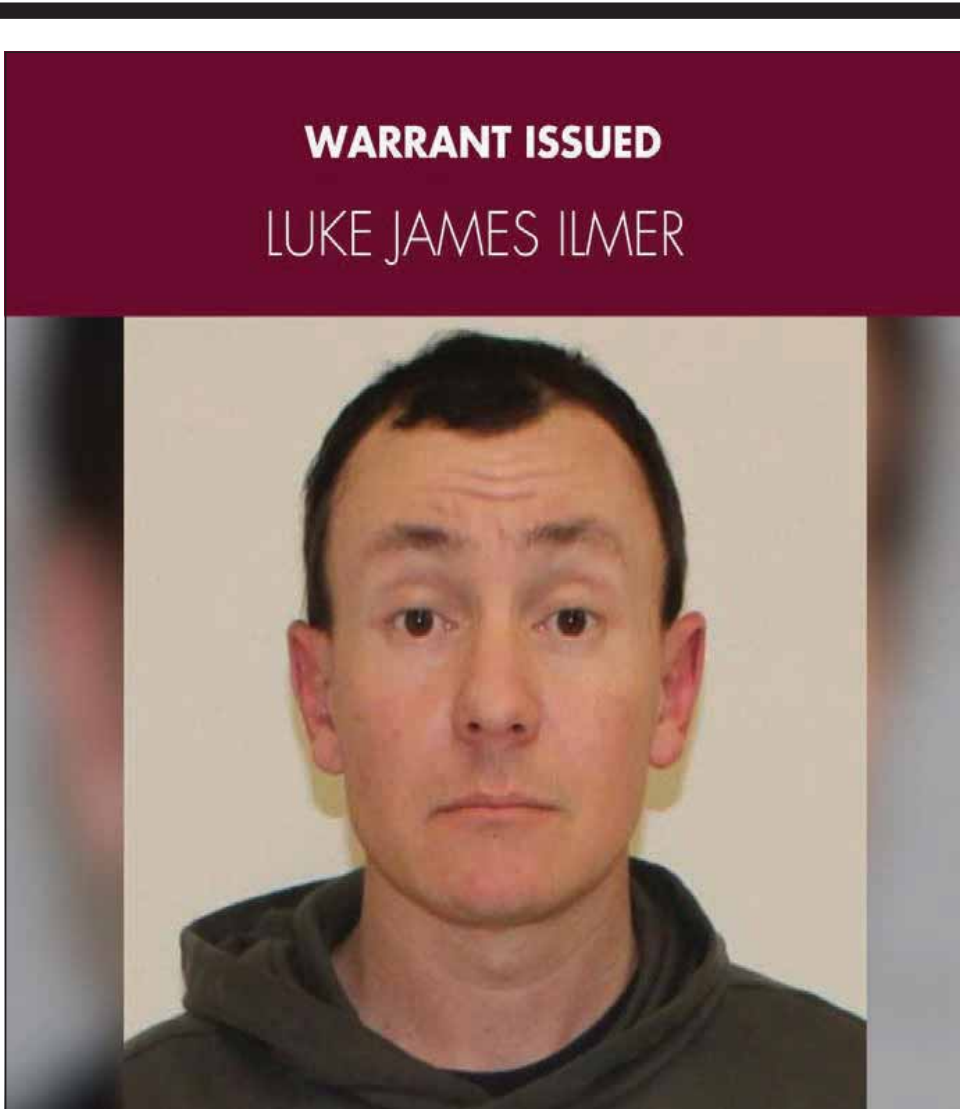
Thousands of children take part each year at locations across the state including beach and inland water venues.

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

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

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

For more information and to book, visit vicswim.com.au



Luke James Ilmer. -S

Warrant issued over Alexandra break-ins

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

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

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report at crimestoppersvic.com.au

ATO calls on employers to prepare for Payday Super

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

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

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

“Simply put Payday Super is about paying super on payday. Don’t wait until the last minute, we want employers to start planning for Payday Super now to ensure they are

prepared for when the law takes effect,” Ms Rosenzweig said.

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

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

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

“Payday Super will provide the ATO with earlier visibility of under-payment or non-

payment of super, allowing for a proactive approach to compliance to reduce unpaid super,” Ms Rosenzweig said.

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

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

Keep up to date with the progress of Payday Super at ato.gov.au/paydaysuper



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

Murrindindi under 15 boys shine at Northern Country Relay Championships

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

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

Facing strong competition from both the Northern Country team and Wodonga, the boys produced impressive results on the track. They claimed bronze medals in both the four by 200 metre and four by

100 metre relays, missing the silver in the four by 100 metres by just two-hundredths of a second.

Their biggest success of the day came in the Swedish Relay, a 1000 metre event made up of legs of 100 metres, 200 metres, 300 metres and 400 metres. Chase opened with the 100 metres, followed by Harish over

300 metres, Declan powering through the 200 metre, and Levi bringing it home in his favourite distance, the 400 metres. With each athlete giving their all, the team stormed to victory and claimed the gold medal.

Congratulations to the boys for doing their club proud and

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

Alexandra Squash Club round seven of term four pennant

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition

Blue vein versus Camembert

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

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

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

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

Feta versus Gouda

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

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

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

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

Wednesday competition

Barracudas versus Orcas

Eric versus Matthew: Eric was playing well, and Matthew was keeping pace with him until game three where his energy

waned. They continued and Eric continued his play to win all four games and the match. 66 to 42.

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

Daniel K versus Michael M: Throwing himself at the walls, Michael always puts in maximum effort. Daniel was calm and collected, making sure to put his opposition through the wringer before closing out the match triumphant. 65 to 40.

Hammerheads versus Piranhas

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

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

Merton cricketers have first turf wicket game of season

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

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

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

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

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

The Chronicle Sport



Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Monthly medal and Sichlau Trophy at Yea Golf Club

by Alan Pell

YEA Golf Club enjoyed a terrific turnout last Saturday, with 30 men and seven ladies hitting the course as the new seventh green, under the careful supervision of Bob Glenister, continues to take shape and impress.

The men competed for the Monthly Medal alongside the sixth round of the Sichlau Trophy (best four rounds to count).

Anthony La Grutta (18) claimed the medal with an excellent 65 nett, winning on

countback from Jack Kenney (24). Young gun Jobe Dunne (22) continued his rise, finishing third with 66 nett, while Brian Simmons (12) and Martin Lowe (18) shared fourth on 67 nett.

Other highlights included: Nearest the pin on the 19th for Neil Peterson; putting saw Darcy Pell with an impressive 24 putts; and the club award went to Steve Rumney.

In the overall Sichlau Trophy, consistency paid off for Alan Pell, taking the title with a

total of 282, edging out joint runners-up Brian Simmons and Neil Peterson on 283. Kevin Coghlan (284) and John Phillips (286) rounded out the top contenders.

Ladies' stroke event

A superb round from Sharon Grogan (24) saw her dominate the ladies' field, firing 90 off the stick for a nett 66 to win comfortably. Penny Britton (31) claimed second with nett 73, while Meryl Connell took nearest the pin on the 18th.

This Wednesday marks the first Gender Competition of the summer, a stableford event starting with a 9am arrival for a 9.30am shotgun start.

Last Wednesday, 25 men competed in a par event. Jack Kenney (30) won with plus six, edging out Jobe Dunne (24), also on plus six. Tony Rule took third at plus five with a personal best of 81. Zach Pell (15) and Phil Armstrong (20) both finished at plus one. Zach was nearest the pin on the 14th, and Trevor Connell claimed the club award.



The new seventh green at Yea Golf Club. -S

Yea Bowls top side over

by Maurie Finn

WITH continued improvement in recent weeks, Yea Bowls Club proved they can match it with the top sides by defeating Shepparton Park by 13 shots, 84 shots to 71 overall.

Wayne Martin's rink, with Terry Muller, Darren Sherman, and Mick Barrott, dominated from the start, leading 18 to four at the break, and continued their good form throughout with the final score 29 to 14.

Neil Rieschieck with Judy Elenius, Kevin Smith, and Barry (Mr Consistent) Moore, had a real battle early, winning only three of the first 12 ends. They were down seven shots to 16 at the break, however, with a

gritty performance, they won six of the last eight ends to draw the game 18 all. An excellent effort.

Maurie Finn, Leonard Sheahan, Brett Reece and Angela Finn had a topsy turvy game. Starting slowly, down six shots to one after three ends, they were level on six all after five ends. The game continued in that format with scores 19 all on the 18th end. Then Shepparton picked up a six on the 20th end to win by that margin, 20 shots to 26.

Young Terry McInnes, Rob Marks, Maureen Marks and Rodney Pitwood, started slowly, but levelled the score on eight all by the 12th end. Scores were 13

all after 19 ends, and then they went on to win 17 to 13 in a good performance.

Next week Yea are keen to get another win when they take on Tallygaroopna away.

Social Bowls

Jess Kennedy from Progression Physiotherapy and Performance, spoke briefly at lunch time at Monday Triples, highlighting the importance of movement and exercise and outlined some of the services they offer. Winners were Barry Moore [again], Mick Barrott and first year bowler Maree Brennan.

There was another good turnout for Thursday Social Bowls with new member Wayne Tanner, bowling impressively.



Maureen Edwards with Jess Kennedy from Progression Physiotherapy and Performance. -S