

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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Longwood bushfire flower display



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Yea Show 2025 Junior Ambassdor Jess Andrews. -S

Show winners at regional finals

THE annual Victorian Regional Show Societies Luncheon and Prize Announcements was held last Sunday at Kyneton Showgrounds with Yea taking out the two major awards for 2025.

The winners of over 20 sections at local show level go on to compete at the Regional Awards and winners of the Regional Awards will then compete at the Royal Melbourne Show in September for the State Awards. The winner at state level will compete for the Australian title at the Sydney Royal next Easter.

The VAS Junior Ambassador for the Upper Goulburn Region of Show Societies was Yea winner, Jess Andrews. Jess is very much a farm girl. She works as a Jillaroo on a large mixed cattle sheep property in Mansfield and was Head Steward in the Horse Arena at the Mansfield Show in 2025. The judges for the Rural Ambassador Awards look for a

strong agricultural and volunteer basis in the entrants who must be aged between 16 and 19 years of age.

The VAS Rich Fruit Cake competition at the Yea Show is always a highly competitive competition with many winners from Yea competing at the Regional Award over the years. Kimm Noonan took out this prestigious prize at the Regional Awards this year and will now have to bake another cake to compete at the Melbourne Royal. Entrants must follow a strict recipe and square tin size and use 100 per cent Australian grown produce.

Megan McAlpin also won the VAS Knitted Baby Garment at the regional level and Isabella Murphy came second in the Carrot and Sultana Muffins. An excellent day for Yea Show Winners and Megan must now keep her knitted baby garment for the Royal Show in September.



VAS Rich Fruit Cake winner Kimm Noonan. -S

Federal Government halves fuel excise for three months

FOLLOWING a meeting of the National Cabinet recently convened by the Prime Minister, the Australian Government will halve the fuel excise on petrol and diesel for three months.

The halving of the fuel excise will reduce the cost of fuel by 26.3 cents per litre. This will reduce the cost of a 65L tank of fuel by nearly \$19.

The spike in fuel prices as a result of the war in the Middle East is hurting Australians and causing financial stress. This will help to provide some relief.

The halving of the fuel excise commenced on April 1 and runs to June 30.

Further, the Federal Government will reduce the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge

to zero for three months to help truckies continue their vital work for our nation. The government will also defer the next scheduled increase in the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge by six months.

Australians are encouraged to use public transport wherever possible to help conserve fuel for the regions, with the Victorian Government moving to cut the costs of public transport.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) will continue to monitor fuel prices to help ensure that the lower excise rate is fully passed on at the bowser.

While Australia's fuel supply outlook remains secure in the near term because of the actions the Federal Government has

taken, the longer this war goes the worse the impacts will be.

Since the conflict commenced four weeks ago the Federal Government has taken action on fuel. They have passed new laws to double penalties for petrol companies for price gouging; appointed a national Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator and Taskforce; released 20 per cent of Australia's petrol and diesel fuel reserves, targeted at regional areas; changed fuel standards to get more fuel flowing; changed diesel standards so Australia's refineries can supply more diesel; tasked the ACCC to ramp up fuel price monitoring and issue on-the-spot fines; engaged with international partners to keep supply flowing, including securing a supply agreement with Singapore; introduced laws

to make sure companies pay truckies fairly when fuel prices spike; and introduced legislation to underwrite the purchase of fuel by the private sector.

National Leaders also agreed and released a National Fuel Security Plan.

The Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister Bowen continue to engage key international counterparts to help ensure the continued flow of fuel and diesel shipments to Australia from trade partners. The ACCC will continue to keep Australians updated on these discussions and developments.

The Australian Government will be announcing more measures to prepare the nation for supply chain challenges over coming days and weeks.

VFF states new analysis shows basin water buybacks sending Victoria backwards

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's (MDBA) own analysis shows further water buybacks are unlikely to deliver significant improvements in environmental objectives across the basin and zero improvements in any Victorian river systems including the Victorian Murray.

VFF Water Council Chair Andrew Leahy says the findings add further weight

for an immediate halt to Commonwealth water buybacks in the face of devastating farming consequences.

"The MDBA's own analysis shows there is very little upside to water buybacks from an environmental point of view. At the same time, we know buybacks absolutely devastate farming regions," Mr Leahy said.

"This 'just add water approach' is a recipe for disaster.

"Buybacks cause irreversible damage to irrigation, food processing and regional jobs. There is no possible justification for the Commonwealth sacrificing regional communities for no environmental benefits, and the MDBA should come clean."

The MDBA's own analysis in the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper shows that there

would be no or only marginal improvements in achieving environmental objectives by buying back the remainder required for full implementation of the Basin Plan, which could be around 550GL for the environment and no improvement for Victorian rivers.

Across the basin, the MDBA assessed 115 environmental indicators, only 13 or 11 per cent show any marginal improvement if additional water is recovered.

"The government is spending billions of dollars of taxpayer's money and for what? All they have to show is they are taking a sledgehammer to regional farming communities masked under the disguise of environmental benefits," Mr Leahy said.

"They should be reallocating funds to targeted environmental works and complementary measures such as habitat restoration, fish

passage improvements, revegetation and erosion control to maximise the environmental benefits of water already recovered.

"The MDBA's findings highlight the need for a new phase of basin reform focused on delivering stronger environmental outcomes with complementary works and measures, rather than simply buying more water.

"Healthy rivers and strong regional communities must go hand in hand. The focus now must be on practical solutions that deliver real environmental outcomes while supporting food production and regional jobs," Mr Leahy finished.

The VFF believes the Basin Plan Review represents a critical opportunity to refocus policy on achieving meaningful environmental outcomes while maintaining long-term regional resilience and national food security.

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

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ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

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NFF welcomes fertiliser decisions and export cost recovery deferral

THE National Farmers' Federation (NFF) welcomes the Federal Government's decision to establish a fertiliser taskforce, commit to fertiliser underwriting, and defer the phased transition to full cost recovery for export regulatory services until July 1, 2027.

The phased transition was originally due to begin on July 1, 2026.

NFF President Hamish McIntyre said the package of measures provides welcome breathing space for farmers and exporters facing sustained input cost pressures and market uncertainty.

"These are practical decisions we've called for that will deliver more certainty for farmers and exporters at a time when margins are under real pressure," Mr McIntyre said.

"It reflects the realities facing agriculture right now, including the difficulties in securing critical inputs like fertiliser, which are needed for food production."

Mr McIntyre said the NFF had been strongly advocating on these issues as part of a broader push to reduce cost pressures across the supply chain caused by the conflict in the Middle East and the disappointing European Union trade deal.

"We have been clear that additional cost burdens, such as the full cost recovery plan, risk undermining competitiveness and confidence right across the agricultural sector. This decision is a direct response to those concerns."

He said the recent announcement would provide relief to most exporting industries, particularly those with tight export margins.

The NFF said it will continue to engage with government on long-term cost recovery settings to ensure they remain fair, transparent and do not undermine agricultural competitiveness.

"The establishment of a fertiliser taskforce is an important step forward, and we look forward to being actively engaged as a taskforce member.

"We will continue to work with government on measures to address the impacts the conflict in the Middle East is having on farmers and food production. This includes reiterating our calls for an agriculture-specific plan."

NFF statement on National Cabinet fuel meeting

THE National Farmers' Federation (NFF) notes National Cabinet's agreement to a National Fuel Security Plan as a first step in coordinating the response to ongoing fuel pressures, but significantly more action is required to shore up fuel supplies for food production.

"National coordination is critical in a situation like this, and we welcome efforts to bring governments together to respond," NFF President Hamish McIntyre said.

"However, immediate work needs to occur outlining how the government intends to secure fuel supply for Australian farmers.

"There is rising angst among farmers about supply and cost at a critical time as the sector readies for the winter sowing period."

The NFF met with its members following National Cabinet to discuss the new national plan.

"While the national coordination was welcomed, our members found the lack of detail in the plan concerning," Mr McIntyre said.

"Halving the fuel excise will provide relief for consumers, but it does little directly for farmers and we hold concerns that as to the impact this policy may have on overall fuel demand."

Mr McIntyre said the announcement reinforced the need for NFF's key asks on fuel supply: An agriculture-specific plan to secure fuel supply for farmers and fishers, including clear 'trigger points' for government action to safeguard food production in both the short and medium term.

The plan must drive sector coordination across all jurisdictions and all commodities. The inclusion of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as critical industries/service under the *Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984*. Targeted small business support for those across the supply chain facing acute financial pressures.

"Now we have the beginnings of a national framework, farmers and fishers need a clear, agriculture-specific plan so they can make informed decisions about planting, harvesting and keeping food moving across the country."

The NFF also welcomed the government's commitment to underwriting the imports of fuel supplies.

Mr McIntyre highlighted the importance that any new measures are carefully monitored. "It is important costs aren't passed onto farmers and regional communities or that they create unintended consequences in an already volatile environment."

Correction

In the article, Insurance and Centrelink post-fire, we were provided with an incorrect phone number for Centrelink's Financial Information Service. It should read 132 300.

Information wanted about Terip Terip CFA break in

THE Terip Terip CFA Station was broken into sometime during Friday, Saturday or Sunday morning of the Easter long weekend, and vital equipment was stolen.

This includes one Stihl MS391 FarmBoss chainsaw, two donated chainsaws, two Honda quickfill pumps, a Stihl pressure washer, two new GME UHF handheld radios, and jerry cans of fuel.

CFA District 12 said that it is deeply disheartening to see this happen to a community that recently faced the devastating Longwood fire and is still working hard to rebuild and recover. Much of the equipment taken was gifted to the Terip Fire Brigade to help rebuild capacity after the fires.

If anyone has seen or has information about suspicious people or vehicles loitering around the Terip Recreation Reserve or CFA station, please report it to Crime Stoppers Victoria on 1800 333 000 or online.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands
 UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale / Hazeldene
 UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

WEEKLY

Thu Town Club, RSL Hall, 6-8pm. Ph 5797 2179
 Sun AA Anglican Church, Alexandra 7pm PH 0402 428 086
 Sun Alanon Recovery, start 5.30pm. Ph Sheila 0402 428 086

MONTHLY

1st Mon St Luke's Seniors, St Luke's Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099
 1st Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
 2nd Sat Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
 2nd Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
 2nd Thu Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
 4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
 4th Thu Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0400 424 888
 Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 0409 819 040

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

For a \$5 annual fee for one line, your club or organisation's regular meeting dates will be listed each week. Not only is this a reminder to your regular members but also a good source of what groups are available in the community, when they meet and a contact phone number.

Weekly Weather
 April 8 - April 14, 2026

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra **Yea**

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	14	23	Wednesday	14	23
Thursday	14	26	Thursday	14	26
Friday	11	22	Friday	11	23
Saturday	9	18	Saturday	10	18
Sunday	9	19	Sunday	9	19
Monday	10	21	Monday	10	21
Tuesday	9	20	Tuesday	10	20

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

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DEADLINES

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

If you have any enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the office on 5772 1002 or reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Council adopts renewable energy guidelines for Murrindindi

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has adopted the *Guidelines for Successful Renewable Energy in Murrindindi Shire*, providing a clear framework to guide how renewable energy projects are planned, assessed and supported across the municipality.

While council is not the planning authority for large-scale renewable energy projects, the guidelines clearly set out the standards and expectations that will shape council's position on any proposal brought forward in Murrindindi.

The guidelines establish council's position on renewable energy development and will inform future advocacy, referrals and engagement with project proponents and government.

Portfolio Councillor for Sustainability and Assets, Cr Paul Hildebrand said the adoption of the guidelines responds to increasing interest in renewable energy proposals within the shire, while making it clear that council's priority is protecting Murrindindi's farmland, livelihoods and long-term economic base, despite Murrindindi not being located within a designated Renewable Energy Zone.

"We've already seen a number of renewable energy proposals come forward from wind, solar and pumped hydro, and it's important we have a clear, consistent framework to guide how these are considered," Cr Hildebrand said.

"These guidelines set out what council expects if renewable energy proposals are brought forward in Murrindindi, ensuring projects are well planned, appropriately located and that our farming land, landscapes and local economy are properly protected, while delivering tangible and enduring benefits for our community."

The guidelines have been informed by community consultation, with feedback showing strong support for the intent of the framework, alongside a desire for clear expectations and stronger weighting in how projects are assessed and determined.

Cr Hildebrand said the guidelines will form the basis of council's submissions on future proposals.

"They give us a clear and consistent basis to represent community expectations and to be upfront about where development may be suitable, where it is not, and the standards that must be met to protect what matters most to Murrindindi," he said.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said the guidelines are an important step in ensuring Murrindindi is prepared for future change.

"Renewable energy is a key part of the state's future, and regional communities like ours will play a role in that transition," Cr Gallagher said.

"Our role is to make sure that happens in a way that respects our landscapes, supports our communities and delivers lasting local benefit."

Cr Gallagher said the guidelines also strengthen council's ability to engage with government and industry.

"They send a clear signal to proponents about the level of planning, engagement and local benefit that will be expected if a project is to gain council and broader community support," he said.

The guidelines will now guide council's engagement with developers and government on renewable energy proposals across the shire.

To learn more and view the guidelines, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Council/Corporate-Documents/Strategies-and-Plans/Guidelines-for-Successful-Renewable-Energy-in-Murrindindi-Shire

Man charged with theft of generator and other items

A FORMER Murrindindi Shire local appeared on Wednesday, April 1 at the Mansfield Magistrate's Court regarding alleged offences in Murrindindi and beyond. The case was held over to May 27.

2026

Police are charging that on January 5, the accused at Marysville stole a Khola brand generator, valued at \$20,000, belonging to UGFM Radio.

On the same date, the accused is charged with intentionally and without lawful excuse damaging property (fencing) belonging to DEECA, valued at \$200.

The man has also been charged with possession of a drug of dependence (methamphetamines) and possession of a prohibited weapon (knuckle dusters) on February 10 in Marysville.

2025

The accused is charged with entering a building on Marysville-Buxton Road in Marysville on February 9, 2025, with intent to steal.

Also on February 9, the man is accused of stealing from the Outdoor Education Group (OEG) in Marysville five Husqvarna chainsaws, two circular saws, an angle grinder, Kinesis hiking boots, a set of keys and various other tools and outdoor equipment, with the value totalling \$12,066.

Related, the accused is charged with dishonestly undertaking in the retention of goods, knowing the goods, a key to the OEG buildings to be stolen goods.

The man is also accused of entering as a trespasser a building, or part of a building, known as the DEECA depot on Lyell Street in Marysville with intent to steal on February 21.

He's accused of stealing from DEECA on February 21 nine Stihl chainsaws, a portable pump, various power tools and batteries, valued at \$30,000.

On the same day, he is accused of stealing power tools and equipment belonging to DEECA, valued at \$5000.

The accused is charged with trespassing into a building known as the Taungurung Land and Waters Council Depot in Alexandra on July 5 with intent to steal. He is also charged with the theft of five chainsaws, a hedge trimmer, a Stihl blower, a Makita tool bag, chainsaw accessories, and various other tools and equipment, valued at \$15,000.

2024

In addition, he was charged with driving a motor vehicle in Coldstream while methylamphetamine was present in his oral fluid and driving an unregistered vehicle on November 10, 2024.

Easter Colouring Competition winners

THANK you to everyone who entered our Easter colouring competition.

We had some great entries and it was really hard to decide who the winner was, so we decided to give away two Easter hampers.

Our winners are Leo from Eildon and Scarlett from Alexandra.



Leo. -BD



Scarlett. -AR



Open Community Meeting From 5.00 pm on Wednesday 29 April at Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House

Would you like to speak to Council about topics or issues that affect you and your community?

We are hosting an Open Community Meeting in Kinglake from 5.00 - 7.00 pm on Wednesday 29 April 2026 at the Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House, 6 McMahon's Road, Kinglake.

You will have five minutes allocated to talk directly with Murrindindi Shire Councillors about issues or ideas that are important to you and your community, and you may be speaking in front of members of the public, as well as Council officers.

If you, or your community group, would like to speak to Council, you are invited to attend the meeting. Prior registration if not required, we'll greet you and collect your details on the evening.

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Government announces no more phones in non-government schools from 2027

THE Victorian Government is leading the nation by ensuring every student can learn free from distraction.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll last week announced new legislation to extend the ban on devices to non-government schools.

“Less screen time. More learning time. For every Victorian student,” Premier Allan said.

“The evidence shows it worked and now we’re going further, so every Victorian student, in every Victorian school, can put their phone away and focus on learning,” Mr Carroll added.

The legislation will also cover wearable devices like smart watches and wireless earbuds.

Victoria led the nation by banning mobile phones in public school classrooms in 2020. This change will extend the ban to every student in every Victorian school, from January 28, 2027.

An independent evaluation found students were more focused in class and more social during breaks. Schools also reported fewer critical incidents involving phones.

Expanding the ban to wearable and personal audio devices further limits distraction in classrooms and keeps students safe.

Wearable devices that capture photos, video or audio can pose risks to students and staff. Victoria will be the first state to legislate these restrictions on wearable technology in schools. They will work closely with schools to ensure the level of restriction is practical.

Under the legislation: Mobile phones must be switched off and stored away from first to final bell; wearable devices must have notifications, cellular connection and recording functions switched off; personal audio devices must not be used during school hours.

Rolling out a state-wide policy will provide consistency and certainty for parents, students and school communities.

Exceptions apply for students that require devices to monitor health conditions.

Out & About

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Free health checks at Yea Sale Yards; cardiac and diabetes checks.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Murrindindi Shire Council invites you to LEAP first 72 hours workshop at Community Hub @ Taggerty. 10am-noon. Visit

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/72hourstaggerty or call council 5772 0333 to book.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19

The Cathkin (Molesworth) Cemetery Trust will be holding their AGM at 10.30am at the Molesworth Hall. All are welcome, with the trust seeking new volunteer trust members. For more information or to register your interest, email secretarycathkinccemetery@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

Eildon RSL sub-branch AGM will be held at 5pm at the Eildon Visitor Information

Centre. Nominations for office bearers and five general committee members closes at 5pm, April 15. Nomination forms can be obtained from the secretary, Sue McLaurin, susanmclaurin55@gmail.com or phone 0409 050 494.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

An open community meeting will take place from 5pm at the Kinglake Ranges Neighbourhood House, hosted by Murrindindi Shire Council. This is an opportunity to speak to council about topics or issues that affect you and your community. Prior registration is not required.



The new recruits for the Molesworth Fire Brigade. -S

New recruits bolster January response at Molesworth CFA

NEW recruits in Molesworth Fire Brigade have already put their training to use, jumping on trucks to assist with the January fires just months after their training was finalised.

Six fresh new faces were part of the brigade’s response this fire season where they had the chance to put their training into action and defend not only their own homes but those of the broader community.

The group wrapped up their training at the end of November 2025 and brigade Captain, Nicholas Fisher, said it was great to see them already making a difference as firefighters.

“It is wonderful to have some new young blood in the mix alongside our existing group,” Nicholas said.

“Through jumping on the trucks for the Longwood fire they essentially got 10 years’ worth of experience in just a few weeks.”

Kelly Timms was one of the members who joined the brigade and said it was a whirlwind to finish the training and be thrust into one of the most major fire seasons in the state’s recent history.

“My partner has been involved with the brigade for over 30 years and I always thought I didn’t have the time, but I wanted to do more for the community so I decided CFA was a way I could do that while also doing something with my partner,” Kelly said.

“The only time I had seen a fire truck was when I would pick him up from the station or when they would come down to the kinder.

“We had training nights down at the station where we went through a lot of theory and they really prepared us for our General Firefighter Training.”

Kelly said her confidence grew 10-fold after training and she was able to lean on that to protect her own property.

“I was really nervous, I hadn’t even been to a little grass fire down the road, but our trainers, John Morris and Shannon Roach, had always said to me ‘trust in your training,’” Kelly said.

“And it was because of that training my partner and I were not only able to save our home and our business, but help other people in the community.

“It wasn’t all just about firefighting though, one day we met some friends of ours at the roadblocks who delivered us some sandwiches, and we just drove them around to all the smaller brigades in the area who didn’t have access to a big town with supermarkets or lots of catering services.”

Kelly said she was able to polish and refine her skills in the weeks after the fire also.

“There was a lot of mopping up to do so I spent so much time on the truck, I really knew it inside out,” Kelly said.

“All those hours on the truck cemented my knowledge and will help if something

like this ever happens again or even when I am attending a small grass fire up the road, it was such valuable experience.”

For those who are unsure if they should sign up or think they might not have the time, Kelly said they should at least visit a station, talk to the volunteers, and see what it is all about.

“There are so many things you can do that don’t involve fighting the fire,” Kelly said.

“Brigades always need help sweeping the floors or washing the trucks.

“You’re also a volunteer so you can work it around your life. More people in a brigade means the workload can be shared which then means the more flexible it can be.”

Kelly also said the experience of becoming a volunteer opened her eyes to what people can do to help the CFA even if they aren’t members.

“This fire season in particular has stressed the importance of being properly prepared,” Kelly said.

“Ensure you do things like trim back trees, make sure a fire truck could fit in your driveway, have the proper tank fittings for your hoses. All these things help us out without you ever signing up.”

If you’re interested in joining CFA or learning more about volunteering, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteer

Church Services

ST PETER’S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH

Cnr Bald Spur/Whittlesea Kinglake Rds, Sunday Services, 8.30am Communion. Minister: Rev. Ruwan Palapathwala 0458 113 099

ST LUKE’S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

Sunday Service time 11am Prayerful Reflection - held each Tuesday, 10am to 11am - all welcome Father Mario Hendricks Ph: 0435 953 777

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew 0459 402 547 St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm Immaculate Conception Parish Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

Fr Martin Ashe, Parish Priest Ph 9717 6482 St Mary’s Kinglake Sunday 8.30am

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

Station Street Yea Sunday Service 10.30am Colin Whiteway Ph 0457 340 525

UNITING CHURCH

1st and 3rd Sundays 9am, 1050 Main Road, Kinglake West. 9716 2330

Autumn planned burns: Why do I see or smell smoke?

WITH calm autumn conditions across much of the state, communities can expect to see smoke in the air as a mix of planned burns, private burns under CFA's permit system and agricultural burns take place over the

coming weeks.

While current conditions are ideal for burning, weather patterns may cause smoke to linger over parts of the state overnight and through to early morning on some days.



A heritage house renovated in Albert Park by Buckner Built. -S



An example of Buckner Built's heritage home renovations. -S

Opportunities with Buckner Built construction company

BUCKNER Built construction company has over 25 years of experience in the construction industry, ranging from commercial and residential works, to fit-outs and renovations.

Founder and director Scott Buckner spoke about the company's willingness to work with the locals to rebuild after the January bushfires.

"In a nutshell, I've owned property in Eildon for 25 years and I own a vineyard at Snobs Creek," Scott said.

"All the insurance work is getting the locals telling me, look Scott, builders are booked out for five years. We can't get our houses rebuilt after the fires or whatever else. So I think that if you've got time and resources, you should do some of that work."

Buckner Built is based in Williamstown, but they do work all around Melbourne.

"I live in Williamstown during the week, and then on the weekends and some other days I live up at Eildon, it just depends what it is. I've been a ratepayer up there for 25 years, I think," Scott said.

"And that's how come I'm getting this feedback from people saying that builders are saying no, there's a five-year wait, which is unusual. So I've got to try and solve the problem with subcontractors from Melbourne, because Melbourne's a little bit quiet at the moment.

"My subcontractors can go up and make, I've got a couple of houses at the vineyards that they can stay at if they need to. I like to try and use local tradies, but if they're flat out, then I'll have to source them elsewhere."

There is a range of different jobs that Buckner Built undertakes, all the way up to eight storey apartments. They

hold commercial and domestic builder's licences.

"Our company, we build up to eight stories in apartments and so forth. That's sort of like the maximum height. And then the smallest project we'll do is a period renovation in Williamstown, Newport and Yarra, all around that sort of area," Scott said.

"We do one-off homes as well. We do townhouses like dual locks and commercial work. So if anyone needs fit-outs or if anyone needs you know, commercial property built, we do that as well.

"We've done a lot of volume in Melbourne as well. So we know how to keep prices down if that's what the client needs. We've also done a lot of period work in heritage overlay areas and we've done a lot of difficult renovations on period homes that are 100, 120 plus years old.

"There's numerous examples of us doing heritage work where heritage listed homes, like they're actually listed heritage homes. And we've done a lot of those under the guidance of the heritage people at the local council.

"We're commercial builders unlimited and domestic builders unlimited. And the commercial builder unlimited is the hardest license to get in Australia. It took 10 years for me to get a commercial unlimited license and university and all that sort of jazz."

Scott concluded with what he believes is the most important part of what Buckner Built can offer.

"What I think is important is we have availability to get going on your project almost immediately once the documents are prepared, etcetera," he finished.

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman said it is crucial fire agencies take advantage of favourable conditions when they present.

"Planned burning on public land is one of the tools FFMVic uses to keep Victoria safer from bushfires," Mr Hardman said.

"Our climate is changing and that means finding the right days for safe and effective planned burning is becoming more challenging. Autumn typically provides our crews more opportunities to conduct planned burns, as the weather is more stable, and fire behaviour tends to be manageable and predictable.

"With the current favourable weather and forest conditions, we are delivering as much planned burning as we can.

"Reducing dry vegetation such as grass, leaves, bark, shrubs and small fallen branches means fires are less intense and slower to spread, making it more likely that firefighters can keep bushfires small and contained before they pose a risk to communities.

"We work closely with CFA, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and Bureau of Meteorology to keep the smoke impact from planned burns as low as possible. We make every effort to make sure favourable weather conditions reduce smoke drift into communities."

Victorians can register to receive notifications of upcoming planned burns at the Planned Burns Victoria website at plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au

CFA Acting Chief Officer Alen Slijepcevic said while fire restrictions are beginning to lift in some areas and landholders are starting to burn-off on their properties, Victorians should remain vigilant before igniting their burn and ensure conditions are safe to do so.

"We are now seeing Fire Danger Periods end in some parts of the state, and we have been issuing a small number of agricultural permits for some farmers where restrictions still remain," Mr Slijepcevic said.

"You may see a large amount of smoke in areas where these activities take place, so we ask farmers to let their neighbours know who may be sensitive to smoke so they can take necessary precaution.

"Any burning activity must always have someone in attendance, with enough water resources to monitor, contain and extinguish the burn safely and effectively.

"For greater awareness for emergency services and community members, burn-offs should be registered on the fire permits website or if you wish to start your burn-off immediately, register your burn-off by calling 1800 668 511."

Victoria's Chief Environmental Scientist Jen Martin said EPA understands smoke from any source, including planned burns and private burn-offs can cause health concerns.

"Be prepared by watching for FFMVic planned burn notifications and by checking the air quality in your area on EPA's website," Dr Martin said.

"Your nose is also an excellent smoke detector. If you can smell smoke, take the necessary precautions to protect your health."

The Planned Burns Victoria website has details of all planned burns currently on the three-year Joint Fuel Management Program, visit plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au/

To find out what can and can't be done during fire danger period, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions/can-i-or-cant-i

Check fire restrictions and register private burns at firepermits.vic.gov.au or call 1800 668 511.

Detailed information about current air quality throughout Victoria can be found on EPA's website.

Visit the EPA website for tips about looking after health when there is smoke at epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/air-quality/smoke/smoke-your-health or epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/airwatch



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Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Yea & District **Community Bank®** Branch



SACRED HEART SCHOOL

Congratulations to Shaelee for her commitment to living our school values of Respect, Resilience and Safety.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Kinglake branch



Longwood bushfire flower display at Melbourne Flower Show

RED Earth Bulbs put together a reflective display centred around the Longwood bushfires of January at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in March, to remind people about the devastating effects of the fires.

Tim Drewitt is the owner of Red Earth Bulbs, and the organiser of the display. He spoke about how it came to fruition.

“We’re long-term exhibitors there [the Melbourne Flower Show]. It was our 18th year and each year we try and highlight either something in the community or an event that has happened last year,” Tim said.

“We thought that it was a good opportunity to bring the Longwood bushfire, or I guess all of the Victorian bushfires back, front and centre to the roughly 110,000 people that attend the show over five days.”

Tim had a banner produced that contained an image of the Alexandra Fire Station, and a

truck leaving the station, as well as the names of all the towns impacted by the Longwood fire.

“That was all on one side of the banner and on the other side we had the statistics for the day. So the temperature, the wind, the number of properties that were impacted, the houses that were deemed unlivable, and the ones that were saved,” Tim said.

“The entire display was done as an example from the fires, the flowers and plantings that we used was, very hot colours, bright red and orange and yellows, that represented the fire coming through.

“Then on to a section of whites and muted tones of plants and flowers, which represented the ash that remained after the fire had been through, still with some glowing embers and that sort of thing around. And then through to the transition of the landscape regenerating and full color display. So it was a quite a large display. It was about 100 square meters.

“We utilized logs from a CFA member in Alexandra that they brought down to us and trees that were actually from their front garden. as well as tin and materials that were from their chook shed that was lost in the fires as well. Also our tin went from the burnt tin through to the banner through to brand new tin, signifying the change as the fire went through and as the recovery proceeds.”

A lot of effort went into planning and executing the display, since the plan was changed last minute after Tim saw the affected communities first-hand when visiting Yarck just after the Longwood fire.

“The actual idea of doing this for the Flower Garden Show probably came out of Yarck when we actually attended the colour run at Yarck,” Tim said.

“The hardest part was getting our banner right and doing that sort of thing. So the banner itself took about two weeks of work. We were already growing plants in advance,

we just had to pivot on the colors and the scheme that we’re going to use. The plants were in production six months beforehand. We just didn’t know that they were going to be used for this display.”

Tim also spoke about what he hoped the impact of the display was.

“We sell bulbs, but that part of our site was purely for people to reflect, to bring attention and thoughts back to the communities that have been impacted,” he said.

“It’s not an area that we ever make money out of. So it costs us probably nothing short of about \$10,000 to install a display like that. We installed lights all through it as well. The night lights basically were a combination of reds and oranges and yellows to pop the fire around the stumps to highlight that.”



The Longwood bushfires flower display at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show all lit up, representing the devastation of the fire through to the period of recovery. -S



The display starts out with the reds and oranges of the fire, then changes to the white of the ash, and finally the vibrant colours of recovery. -S



Burnt logs were donated to the display by a local CFA member. -S



The section of the display designed to represent the vibrancy of recovery and support. -S



Some more of the lights in the flower display. -S

Seventy-five years of CFA support for the Good Friday Appeal

COUNTRY Fire Authority's (CFA) long and proud history of involvement with the Good Friday Appeal will reach a remarkable 75 years this year, while the appeal will mark an impressive 95 years of fundraising.

Raising vital funds for the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) has been a long-standing tradition for CFA members and only further reinforces their commitment, generosity and community spirit.

Over the past 75 years, CFA members have raised more than \$41 million for the iconic Victorian cause, with hopes this year to raise more than last year's \$1.88 million.

On Thursday, February 19, Gisborne Fire Brigade members and CFA Deputy Chief Officer Trevor Weston joined in on the festivities at the RCH to officially launch the 2026 Good Friday Appeal.

Members formed a Guard of Honour to announce the Faces of the Appeal, with three-year-old Alissa and six-year-old Oliver both having received life-saving care from the RCH.

Gisborne Good Friday Appeal Area Manager and CFA brigade member Mark Carter has been organising and fundraising

for 20 years as a passionate ambassador and is extremely proud of the work the brigade does.

"For us, it is a special tradition, and some of our members have been involved for up to 50 years," Mark said.

"We get the local Scouts and Cubs involved and we usually get two or three minibuses and take them around town. They get a real buzz out of it for such a good cause.

"We still do the old-style door knock and fundraise at local shops throughout the year.

"Seeing what comes through at the end of the day and knowing it goes to such a fantastic place is so rewarding."

Last year the brigade raised \$74,107, bringing their cumulative total to \$399,584, and are now set to celebrate an impressive \$400,000 in their milestone 50th year.

"Donald Fire Brigade [one of the first brigades to fundraise] used to come down in their old T Model Ford vehicle and collect from towns along the way. As one of those towns, our involvement evolved very quickly from there," Mark said.

"The work they do in the RCH is so important. I had two premature babies myself, and I'm thankful they didn't need to go there, but I always knew the support was there if needed.

"The technology and expertise they get from RCH is well worth it, because the kids are worth it."

Almost 150 CFA brigades are involved in tin rattling, door knocking and fundraising efforts each year, and CFA Deputy Chief Officer Trevor Weston has been among those as a member.

"I've been involved through my time at Wyndham Vale and Werribee Fire Brigades and our involvement as an organisation is something we are really proud to be a part of," Trevor said.

"We were fortunate enough to witness just two examples of the great work that the RCH and the appeal do alongside the support of the Victorian community at the launch.

"To get out in the community to promote the message of the appeal and the work they do at the RCH is incredibly important.

"Many of our members have unfortunately required the services of the RCH, so I absolutely encourage the community to give wherever and whatever they can, whether that is to our CFA volunteers who will be out on Good Friday collecting, or online and through other avenues."

Make this Friday a Good Friday. Give what you can, in person or donate online at fundraise.goodfridayappeal.com.au/find-a-fundraiser

CFA Good Friday Appeal: Over \$10,000 raised in west of Murrindindi Shire

IN CFA's 75th year supporting the Good Friday Appeal, the generosity of Victorians right across the state has exceeded expectations, helping CFA raise an incredible \$2,150,000 for The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH).

Once again, CFA volunteers were out in force on April 3, both on their fire trucks and on foot, making their way around local streets rattling tins all morning to raise vital funds in their communities for a much-loved and well-respected cause.

In the west of Murrindindi Shire, Kinglake CFA, Kinglake West Fire Brigade, SES Kinglake Unit and Kinglake CERT, joined forces to raise \$10,825 for the Good Friday Appeal.

Funds were raised through roadside collections, door knocking, online donations, a visit from combined motorcycle clubs, and generous local business donations.

As a major fundraiser for the appeal, and one that hits close to home, CFA has

now raised more than \$43 million over an impressive 75 years.

It was also a milestone night for the appeal as they marked an astonishing 95 years of fundraising, with a record-breaking final tally of \$25,268,485.

Acting CFA Chief Officer Alen Slijepcevic AFSM presented the new customised cheque for the momentous year with the total amount CFA contributed to The Royal Children's Hospital alongside Gisborne Fire Brigade members Mark Carter and Sandra Barotta last Friday night.

"As an organisation, we are incredibly proud of our CFA members' efforts each year who lend their time to fundraise alongside the Victorian community for such a worthwhile cause," Alen said.

"Thank you to all participating brigades across Victoria for your contribution to this year's Appeal and for the work you do in your local towns not only to protect them but to also help save young lives.

"Many of our members have required the services of the RCH, and it is an absolute privilege to be a part of raising such important funds and to see direct results of that fundraising that the brigades do put toward technology and research to help our Victorian children."

Viewers at home took a trip down memory lane through a collection of photos and videos showcasing CFA volunteers out in their synonymous yellows interacting with communities.

While, a 3D balloon fire truck was a hit with the kids during the day and those in the phone room at night, as was a special visit from Eynesbury Fire Brigade members to the Royal Children's Hospital on their way to the counting room.

The money raised for The Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal will be used to ensure kids are provided with the best possible treatment and care.

It's time to get vaccinated

WITH 24,800 flu cases already reported at the end of March 2026 and following the worst flu year on record, the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) has called on patients to roll up their sleeves and visit their GPs to receive an annual flu shot.

There were 502,972 lab-confirmed flu cases in 2025, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics recording 1738 deaths involving influenza.

In each month from August 2025-January 2026, more deaths were associated with influenza than COVID-19.

Meanwhile, flu vaccination coverage remained low. By the end of August 2025, just 25.7 per cent of children aged six months to five years, 14.5 per cent of five to 15 year olds, and 60.5 per cent of over-65s were immunised.

RACGP President Dr Michael Wright said the high flu numbers likely contributed to overwhelmed hospitals and ambulance ramping.

"Last year was a horror flu year. That likely contributed to the surge in demand on our hospitals we saw in 2025, and unacceptable ambulance ramping when hospitals couldn't cope as a result," he said.

"No one wants to see that again. Not parents, and not the state and territory governments which run our public hospitals.

"Practices have been receiving their 2026 flu vaccinations, and many will be running flu clinics to make it quick and easy to reduce your risk of serious illness. So, book your flu vaccine with your GP today."

With needle-free intranasal flu vaccines becoming available at no cost for young children in several states, Dr Wright said it has never been easier for families to prevent a severe flu infection.

"Annual flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your family this winter, and your general practice is the best placed to get vaccinated," he said.



"Your GP understands your medical history and can provide personalised vaccination advice.

"More than 2700 of the flu cases Australia has recorded this year were among babies and children under five, who are at a higher risk of hospitalisation and complications, whether or not they have pre-existing medical conditions.

"All adults should get a flu vaccine each year, but for those young children, it's essential.

"GPs in New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia will be able to offer needle-free vaccinations for children aged two to five, and Western Australia for children aged two to 12.

"Needles are a big barrier to vaccination. About six in 10 parents feel distressed at the thought of vaccinating their child, and that's understandable. Two thirds of kids and about a quarter of adults have strong fears around needles.

"Intranasal vaccines provide the same protection as current vaccinations, but replace a needle with a painless spray. It's a smart way to keep kids safe from severe infections, which can have long-term health consequences.

"All states should be making flu vaccinations free for everyone, and needle-free vaccinations for our youngest patients is the smart way to prevent stressful hospitalisations for them and their parents."

We're currently doing planned burning to keep Victoria safer from bushfires.

To learn more about planned burning, or to receive notifications of upcoming planned burns via email or text.

Register at www.plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au





UGLN building nesting boxes post-fire

THE Upper Goulburn Landcare Network ran a nesting box building workshop last Friday with students from Sacred Heart Primary School in Yea, to support the fire affected local wildlife community.

The small group of children, including a couple from directly fire-impacted families, built eight nesting boxes designed for small marsupials and birds.

These will be installed by Landcare Intrepid groups, being the category of teenage to young adult Landcarers, throughout the region of the Black Range, Yarck, Molesworth, etcetera, on public and private land, to help provide habitat for animals that lost their homes over the summer.

The workshop was run by facilitators Leigh Redding and Zanni Waldstein, and supported with some funding from Bendigo Bank.

“It’s a practical, tangible, helpful response that the kids can be involved in, because I think they feel particularly empowered to do something helpful for something that’s impacted them so much,” Zanni said.

“That’s particularly for a couple of the kids who were fire affected directly. And so for them, it’s really good to see everyone chipping in and working with them to do something for the wildlife around them. They were really into it, they really got it.

“They went through a bit of an education workshop into the different styles of nesting box that you can build, like ones for microbats, and ones for birds and small marsupials and things like that. Then up to the larger ones for brushtails and other things.

“And how to stop them being taken over by bees and insects. They got a pretty thorough

rundown on different mods on the boxes to make them appropriate and accessible for different animals.”

There are more nesting box workshops planned for the future, and Zanni spoke about the importance of these nesting boxes to the fire affected area.

“We’ve got some other ones planned. Next term we’ll be doing some with Alexandra Primary School. And hopefully, probably others in the region too,” she said.

“There’s so much habitat that’s been lost, so it’s going to areas that, there are no more hollow logs and hollow trees and those are the things for animals to invest in as a home in an appropriate place.”

To find out more about Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and the work that they do, or to get involved, visit ugln.net/



Council News



April 2025

State Mayoral Advisory Panel

Mayor, Cr Damien Gallagher, has been appointed to the Victorian Government's Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel (LGMAP) for 2026, providing the Murrindindi community with a direct voice in key state-level discussions about the future of local government.

Cr Gallagher said he was honoured to once again represent regional communities such as Murrindindi at the state level.

For details, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/SMAP

Autumn in Murrindindi

Council is inviting visitors to explore the region this autumn and support local recovery after the January 2026 bushfires.

Council is working with Tourism North East to support local businesses and encourage people to plan a relaxing visit and enjoy what the region has to offer.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/autumn for details.

Community Capacity Building Program

Council's Community Capacity Building Program supports businesses, volunteers and community members across Murrindindi Shire with training and development.

Some events were postponed earlier this year and will restart in April, with more added regularly.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/ccbp to stay up to date.

Changes to Recovery Hubs

Reflecting current demand, Council is updating its Recovery Hub locations and hours.

In Alexandra, the Hub will move from the library to the Customer Service Centre at 28 Perkins Street opening Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.

In Yea, Saturday sessions ended on 28 March. Support will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/hubs for details.

Calling to prioritise fuel and fertiliser

Council is calling on State and Federal Governments to protect access to fuel and fertiliser, warning that shortages and rising costs could slow bushfire recovery.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said reliable diesel supply is critical for recovery work, including fencing, clean-up, freight and farm operations, following the January 2026 bushfires.

Learn more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/fuel



Great Victorian Rail Trail remains closed

Council is reminding the community that while some closed sections of the Great Victorian Rail Trail may appear safe, significant risks remain. Residents and visitors are urged to respect closure signage and safety barriers.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gvrtclosure for details.

Local jobs powering bushfire recovery

Council's bushfire recovery is supporting local jobs, with tree works carried out by businesses across the region. More than 100 people from 15 businesses are working on clean-up, safety and firewood processing, with many hiring local staff.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recoveryjobs for details.

Highlands Community Lunch

Council is working with local hall committees to bring people together after the fires, to share a meal, reconnect and support each other. Come along Saturday 11 April from 12 noon at Highlands Community Hall, 1603 Ghin Ghin Road, Highlands.

Anne Leadbeater will be there to support the conversation with more than 30 years' experience helping communities recover after disasters. Learn more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recoverylunch

Remember to register your pet

Registering your cat or dog helps keep pets safe and supports responsible pet ownership across Murrindindi Shire.

All cats and dogs over three months of age must be registered with Council and registrations are renewed in April each year.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pets for details.

School Crossing Supervisor - Yea

Casual school term role, helping children, families and pedestrians cross roads safely and making a real difference in the community.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/jobs for details.

Get in touch

5772 0333

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KID'S PUZZLES PUZZLES

Colouring Page



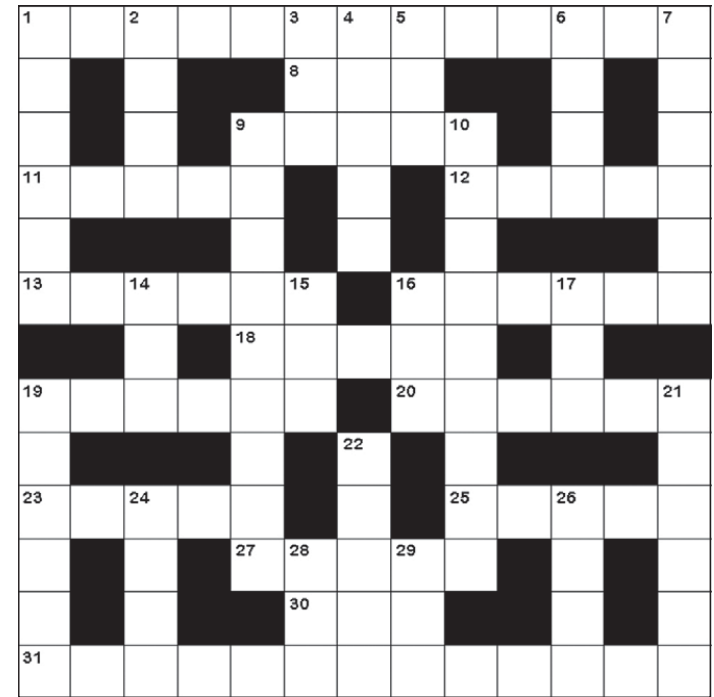
Crossword

ACROSS

- Established as the genuine article.
- Make a mistake.
- Having the taste of sugar or honey.
- The fur of a rabbit.
- Black hornless beef cattle.
- Devastate and destroy everything.
- Small reptile with two pairs of legs.
- Looked at with fixed eyes.
- Vehicle equipped for a camping holiday.
- A great and widespread shortage.
- A long barrelled firearm.
- Garden tool used for cutting grass.
- A piece of lace placed under a dish or bowl.
- Unidentified Flying Object.
- Broken into extremely tiny fragments.

DOWN

- A fisherman who uses a hook and line.
- A device for capturing animals.
- Never been used before.
- Hikes through mountainous areas.
- Strong feelings of rage and anger.
- A small thin branch.



- Used a divining rod to search for water.
- Laughed quietly and secretly.
- The art of stuffing and mounting animals.
- Exuberant vigour and energy.
- The organ of hearing.
- Went in first in front of the of others.
- A distinctive quality.
- Sprinkled or preserved with salt or brine.
- A person who announces important news.
- A metal blade used as a cutting tool.
- Worry unnecessarily of excessively.
- The direction in which the sun sets.
- Knocked unconscious by a heavy blow.
- A written record of events.

Word Search

Sudoku

Word Search - Words starting with "J"

JACKET	J	Y	Z	U	J	H	R	J	X	Q	R	T	S	Y	L
JAIL	W	U	P	X	O	Q	S	A	E	V	E	J	K	O	F
JELLYFISH	A	W	I	M	G	G	X	I	F	E	K	S	N	J	J
JET	S	Z	P	C	U	Z	A	E	F	T	O	O	I	U	V
JIGSAW	G	N	M	U	E	J	L	L	L	Y	J	E	M	N	N
JOG	I	E	R	Z	R	G	L	O	W	G	L	P	X	I	Y
JOIN	J	U	D	S	N	M	J	Z	O	V	I	L	U	O	G
JOKER	Y	B	Y	U	H	X	I	T	M	N	J	M	E	R	A
JOLT	P	G	J	L	N	J	R	Z	G	Z	M	E	V	J	U
JUICE	J	A	C	K	E	T	U	B	O	O	K	X	T	T	X
JUMPING	M	Q	D	R	X	H	Z	A	T	C	O	L	F	K	N
JUMPY	J	B	E	G	P	L	F	O	L	D	M	S	P	D	V
JUNGLE	L	I	A	J	Y	Y	N	X	R	Y	W	Z	J	Y	D
JUNIOR	J	O	I	N	T	A	M	N	P	P	Z	S	K	C	K
	O	M	S	U	Q	A	I	I	X	M	L	X	E	X	A

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

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

Space

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| ASTEROID | GALAXY |
| ASTRONAUT | LUNAR |
| ASTRONOMY | SATELLITE |
| COMET | SOLAR |
| CONSTELLATION | STARS |
| ECLIPSE | UNIVERS |

Difficulty: Medium

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.

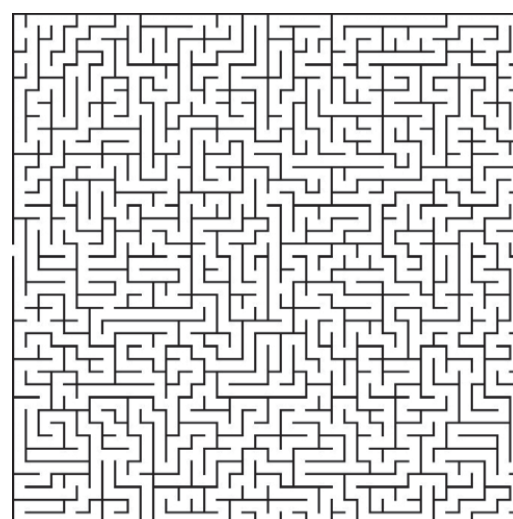
Math Square

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.

	-		+		0
-		-		+	
	+		-		9
-		-		-	
	+	9	-	8	4
-5		-8		-2	

Maze



Math Square

	+		÷		10
+		×		×	
	×	5	-	4	31
-		+		-	
	×		+		11
13		31		3	

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.

National sheep flock expected to decline in 2026: MLA Sheep Industry Projections

AUSTRALIA'S sheep industry is entering a lower supply phase in 2026, with Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) latest Australian Sheep Industry Projections forecasting a further decline in flock numbers after several years of elevated turnoff and challenging seasonal conditions.

The national sheep flock is estimated to fall 2.7 per cent to 67.1 million head by June 30, 2026, reflecting the cumulative impact of below average rainfall across key southern production regions including Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and southern New South Wales. While some late summer rainfall has provided short term relief, soil moisture and pasture conditions remain under pressure in many areas.

MLA Senior Market Information Analyst Emiliano Diaz said three consecutive years of difficult seasonal conditions have weighed heavily on the flock.

"Producers have been managing through sustained seasonal pressure, and the high

levels of turnoff over recent years have reduced flock size and constrained the potential for a rebuild if the seasonal outlook improves," Mr Diaz said.

Lamb and mutton availability is expected to tighten further in 2026 as producers retain more breeding stock where possible.

Production and slaughter

Lamb slaughter is forecast to decline 11 per cent in 2026 to 21.86 million head, following an estimated 6.9 per cent fall in 2025, as the effects of several years of heavy turnoff continue to flow through the system.

Mutton slaughter is expected to contract more sharply, falling 30 per cent to 7.13 million head, reflecting the tighter supply dynamic.

Despite lower slaughter volumes, productivity gains and heavier carcass weights are continuing to support output. Average lamb carcass weights are forecast to lift to 24.6kg, supported by ongoing genetic

improvement, grain feeding and processor demand for heavier stock.

As a result, lamb production is expected to decline 10 per cent in 2026 to around 537,000 tonnes carcass weight, which would still rank among the stronger production years on record.

Mr Diaz said the figures highlight how productivity gains are underpinning supply even as numbers tighten.

"While lamb turnoff is forecast to be lower in 2026, improvements in genetics, feeding systems and carcass weights mean production remains relatively resilient by historical standards," Mr Diaz said.

Mutton production is forecast to fall 29 per cent as the effects of earlier heavy ewe and wether turnoff further reduced supply.

Exports and global demand

Export conditions for Australian sheepmeat remain mixed in 2026. Tighter supply is expected to limit exportable volumes,

although reduced global availability continues to support underlying demand, particularly as New Zealand's flock remains constrained.

Australia continues to benefit from its reputation as a reliable supplier of high quality sheepmeat into global markets.

"Global sheepmeat supply remains tight and Australian product continues to be well regarded across key export markets. However, higher livestock prices, freight costs and currency movements are expected to influence competitiveness and trade flows through the year," Mr Diaz said.

Live sheep exports also face ongoing uncertainty. Volumes declined in 2025 due to lower supply, vessel availability and high domestic prices, and trade conditions remain influenced by shipping disruptions and geopolitical instability in the Middle East.

Despite this, demand for Australian sheep persists across the region, reflecting Australia's strong animal health and quality reputation.

Looking ahead

Price forecasts point to relatively stable conditions across sheep indicators through 2026, with prices remaining well above long term averages despite some mixed movements.

The National Heavy Lamb Indicator is forecast to lift one per cent, the Trade Lamb Indicator to rise 0.5 per cent, while the Restocker Lamb Indicator is forecast to ease four per cent by June 30, 2026.

"Lower flock numbers and reduced turnoff are expected to support prices, but conditions remain finely balanced. The pace of any potential flock rebuild in the future will depend heavily on seasonal improvement and producer confidence," Mr Diaz said.

While slaughter and production are expected to stabilise over the medium term, MLA expects 2026 to be a year of adjustment rather than expansion for the sheep industry, as producers manage through constrained supply, ongoing cost pressures and variable seasonal conditions.

To view the full report, visit: tinyurl.com/24aj3h3y

Improved testing for Anthrax

by Dr Jeff Cave, Senior Veterinary Officer

ANTHRAX has been a cause of sudden death of livestock in Australia for the past 150 years. Once an animal has died from Anthrax, the Anthrax spores can survive in the soil for decades, waiting for the right set of environmental conditions to infect another animal.

Most districts in Victoria have experienced livestock deaths due to Anthrax. Anthrax-related livestock deaths mostly occur in the warmer months, although history has shown that they can occur at any time of year.

Therefore, Anthrax should be considered whenever there is any sudden death of livestock, particularly if blood is seen around the animal's nose, mouth, and anus.

At one time, veterinarians had to carry a microscope and examine a smear of specially stained blood to rapidly diagnose Anthrax.

This all changed with the development of pen-side ICT (immunochromatographic test) kits, which provide a quick, safe, and accurate means of diagnosing or excluding Anthrax when investigating cases of sudden death of livestock. All private veterinarians who deal with livestock have free access to ICT kits and can investigate sudden deaths through subsidised disease investigations.

There are several reasons why it is advantageous to know whether an animal has died from Anthrax.

First, the best way of stopping further losses due to Anthrax is through early diagnosis, and the subsidised vaccination of everyone who has come into contact with the affected livestock.

Secondly, the carcass of an animal that has died of Anthrax will remain a source of infection for future outbreaks if it isn't disposed of correctly through incineration and the decontamination of its death site.

And finally, Anthrax is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can potentially infect humans. The exclusion of Anthrax will bring peace of mind both for yourself and your veterinarian when trying to find the real cause of the animal's death.

Exclusion testing should be carried out within 48 hours of an animal's death. If you suspect a case of Anthrax, please contact your local veterinarian, or Agriculture Victoria Veterinary or Animal Health Officer, or call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

A look back at the postcode system

THE postcode system was introduced to Australia on July 1, 1967, some 58 years ago. They were developed with four digits, same as they are today, to be used with electronic mail handling equipment at the former Redfern Mail Exchange in Sydney.

According to the Australia Post website, "at the time, addresses on letters were read by skilled mail sorters equipped with a detailed knowledge of geographical localities. But with about 8000 delivery offices, it required at least two or three stages of sorting to get letters to their destinations.

"Postcodes simplified the sorting process. Coding operators pressed keys corresponding to the postcode, which enabled the letters to be sorted electronically and despatched to their delivery offices."

When postcodes were introduced in 1967, almost 5000 postcodes were allocated across Australia. The postcode listing, as of 2017, featured 15,000 place names.

Postcode allocation followed a geographical pattern, designed to make sorting easier.

"Postcode numbers for capital city suburbs began in the west and moved to the north, east and south; a similar pattern being followed for country areas," the Australia Post website reads.

"The first digit corresponded to radio station call signs: two for New South Wales, three for Victoria, four for Queensland, five for South Australia, six for Western Australia, and seven for Tasmania."

Australia Post, when postcodes were introduced, created the Postcode Booklet, which was distributed free by mail to every Australian household and business address. A grand total of 4.5 million booklets were distributed.

Origins of the postcode

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, a forerunner to postcodes was introduced in London as early as 1857.

The brainchild of Sir Rowland Hill, the city was divided into 10 districts and each

assigned a compass point, such as NW, N, NE, etcetera, as well as a corresponding post office. People addressing mail were asked to add the receiving person's compass points to the end of the address.

In 1917, this was developed and refined into subdistricts, which were each given a serial number after the district initials, such as SW6.

Ukraine was the first country to implement a system of modern-day postcodes in 1932, with an indexing system. All cities, villages, towns, and railways were assigned a number-letter-number series, which were collected in a reference book. People could find the postcode for the recipient's area and add it to their mail.

Germany were next, developing their own system of postcodes during World War Two, in 1941.

A mail boom in post-war America led to their development of zip codes, which were implemented in 1963, just four years before postcodes were introduced in Australia.

An Encyclopedia Britannica article on postal codes says, "Robert Moon, a postal inspector in Philadelphia, first suggested using a system of codes to refer to general regions in the country in 1944. His idea was accepted and expanded upon by a committee at the USPS, which included additional digits in order to pinpoint specific geographic locales.

"Zoning Improvement Plan (ZIP) codes were implemented in 1963. The five-digit system used the first number to point to a national area, the next two numbers to pinpoint a population centre or large city, and the final two numbers to designate a specific delivery area.

"Zip codes did not follow state or city boundaries but instead were tied to delivery routes, mail sorting facilities, and post office hubs. In 1983 the zip code system was extended to include an additional four digits that indicated a more precise location. These four digits were used most often for large businesses, office complexes, or particularly dense areas with a high volume of mail."



PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE TREATY AUTHORITY

Throughout the treaty process, the Treaty Authority will make public notifications to ensure the public is aware of important milestones and events.

The Treaty Authority gives notice under clause 9.4(a) of the Treaty Negotiation Framework that it has entered the following Traditional Owner Group onto the Negotiations Database (known as the Negotiations Register) for the purposes of Traditional Owner treaty negotiations with the State of Victoria:

Traditional Owner Group Taungurung

Country: Taungurung Country is bounded by the Great Dividing Range to the east and south, the Campaspe River to the west and by the Ovens River and a series of flats and wetlands in the north. Our Country incorporates spectacular high Country and Warring (Goulbourn) River flats, tall Mountain Ash forests, rugged snow gum mountain tops and sweeping grassy woodlands, billabongs, creeks and rivers. Our Country includes places of cultural, historic and contemporary importance including the Cathedral Range, the Strathbogie Ranges, Mt Buffalo and Mt Bulla, the Warring (Goulburn River), Reedy Lake and the Corop wetlands.

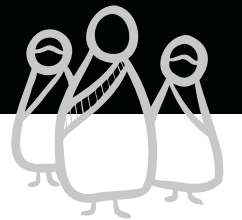
The Treaty Authority gives notice under clause 10.2(d)(ii) of the Treaty Negotiation Framework that:

1. Taungurung has notified the Treaty Authority of their intention to form a Delegation for a treaty in respect of certain land & waters described below; and
2. the process of self-determined collective agreement-making to form a Delegation outlined in clause 10.3 of the Treaty Negotiation Framework will begin no earlier than **27 April 2026**.

The relevant area of land and waters over which a treaty may be negotiated is the Country described above.

The Treaty Authority encourages First Peoples whose Country includes some or all of the land and waters described above to contact the Treaty Authority for information about the treaty process. You can contact the Treaty Authority on 1300 133 033 or email us at info@treatyauthority.au.

For more information, including access to the Treaty Authority's full Public Notice, please visit treatyauthority.au/public-notifications/.



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Reminder to change smoke alarm batteries

VICTORIA'S fire agencies are encouraging residents to test their smoke alarms after winding their clocks back last Sunday, as data shows more than half of serious house fires start in the bedroom or living room.

Smoke alarms provide a vital early warning if a fire breaks out, but only when they are installed and working properly.

On average, 18 people die in preventable house fires in Victoria each year, with two in every three fatalities occurring in a bedroom or living area.

Preventable fatalities are those that could have been avoided through safer practices, maintenance or education.

CFA Acting Chief Officer Alen Slijepcevic AFSM said the figures are a timely reminder that in the event of a fire, every second counts.

"Using the end of daylight saving is a simple way to remember to check your smoke alarms are in working order as we head into the cooler months," Alen said.

"Smoke alarms save lives and provide you and your family the opportunity to escape danger. Fires can engulf an entire room in just minutes, and smoke will not wake you up."

Alen said it was important not only to install smoke alarms in all bedrooms, living areas and hallways, but to test them regularly.

"To test your smoke alarm, simply press the 'test' button for about three seconds. If you don't hear three beeps, it's a clear sign the battery or the unit itself needs replacing," Alen said.

"All smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years, and those with replaceable batteries should be changed annually."

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) Deputy Commissioner Community Safety and Operational Training Joshua Fischer said that testing your smoke alarm should be part of your annual Easter Sunday activities.

"Only working smoke alarms save lives, so taking a moment to crack open your Easter long-weekend by cleaning and testing your smoke alarm could be the most 'egg-cellent' fire safety step you take for your home," he said.

"There are plenty of smoke alarms available to suit every budget and living arrangement, and interconnected smoke alarms are a good option to ensure everyone in your home is alerted if a fire takes hold.

"It's essential to have working smoke alarms installed in your home, but it's just as important to give them a test regularly to make sure they continue to protect you, your loved ones, and your home. Make no 'egg-scuses'."

When checking, installing, or replacing your smoke alarms, CFA and FRV recommend.

Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom and living area. Smoke alarms must be located between each bedroom area and the rest of the house. Install a smoke alarm on each level of the house. Recommend the use of smoke alarms powered by a 10-year long-life battery. All smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years.

Smoke alarms should be interconnected, so that when any alarm activates, all smoke alarms will sound. Smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling at least 30cm from the wall. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly. Press the test button until the alarm sounds. Smoke alarms should be cleaned with a vacuum cleaner at least once a year.

Replaceable batteries in a smoke alarm need to be changed yearly.

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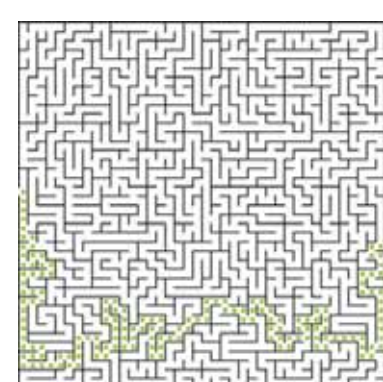
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8	2	3	6	5	1	9	4	7
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MATH SQUARE

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MAZE



KIDS - MATH SQUARE

2	-	7	+	5	0
-		-		+	
4	+	6	-	1	9
-		-		-	
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Yea High School's Good Friday Appeal fundraiser



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MEETINGS



Annual General Meeting
Friends of the Library
Alexandra & District Inc.
Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 6pm.
Alexandra Library, Grant Street, Alexandra.
New members welcome
Nomination forms for committee positions available
from the Secretary: proctor@virtual.net.au



Notice of 2026 Annual General Meeting,
Eildon RSL Sub-Branch
In accordance with By-Law 10C (11) (a), The Eildon RSL Sub-Branch 2026 Annual General Meeting will be held on:
Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 5pm
Eildon Visitor Information Centre, Main Street, Eildon, Victoria 3713
Business:
Election of General Committee Members and Office Bearers.
Presentation of reports.
All financial service, affiliate and life members can nominate. Nominations for Office Bearers and five general committee members open on Wednesday, March 31, and close at 5pm on April 15, 2026.
Nomination forms can be obtained from the Secretary, Sue McLaurin
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Yea High School's Good Friday Appeal fundraiser

YEA High School's students leaders have really outdone themselves. They managed to raise a Yea High School record of \$952 with the bake sale and Mega raffle on Monday, March 30.

Thank you to the families, staff and local community businesses for their support with the school's fundraising for The Good Friday Appeal.



HIA says interest rate rise risks worsening housing shortage

THE Housing Industry Association's (HIA) Chief Economist, Tim Reardon, said the Reserve Bank of Australia's (RBA) latest decision to increase interest rates reflects the ongoing challenge of bringing inflation under control, but warned that higher rates will further restrict the supply of new homes.

"Monetary policy has an important role in managing inflation, and the RBA's actions reflect the persistence of price pressures across the economy," Mr Reardon said.

"However, higher interest rates also increase the cost of delivering new homes and make it more difficult to finance new housing projects."

"As a result, this decision is likely to reduce the number of new homes commencing construction at precisely the time Australia needs more housing supply."

Mr Reardon said the impact of higher interest rates on housing supply risks intensifying the structural shortage of homes, placing further upward pressure on both rents and house prices.

"Constraining the supply of new homes does not reduce housing costs, it does the opposite. When fewer homes are built, competition for existing housing increases, pushing prices and rents higher and adding to housing inflation."

Mr Reardon said policy settings across all levels of government will now become even more important in determining whether Australia can address its housing shortage.

"If governments are serious about improving housing affordability, they must focus on increasing the supply of new homes," he said.

"The only sustainable way to reduce housing costs is to lower the cost of delivering a new home. This means reducing the taxes, charges and regulatory barriers that add to the cost of new housing."

Mr Reardon warned that proposals currently being discussed to increase taxes on property investors would move policy in the wrong direction.

"At a time when higher interest rates are already restricting housing supply, increasing taxes on investors would further discourage

the investment needed to finance new housing projects," he said.

"Policies that reduce investment in housing will inevitably reduce supply and push housing costs higher. The logic that increasing taxes on investment in the established market will see more investment in new home building is flawed.

"Taxing used cars does not lead to new cars becoming more affordable. The same logic applies to housing. Investors know that they incur the new tax in the future and take that into consideration in making the decisions."

Mr Reardon said the focus should instead be on policies that encourage the construction of new homes.

"The solution to Australia's housing shortage is straightforward: lower the cost of building new homes and encourage investment in new housing supply," he said.

"Reducing taxes and charges on new housing, speeding up planning approvals and lowering regulatory costs would do far more to improve affordability than policies that further restrict housing investment."

Council monitoring fuel situation

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is continuing to closely monitor the evolving fuel situation and its potential impact on service delivery.

At this stage, council has not received any notification from its kerbside collection contractor indicating that fuel cost increases will be passed on, and bin collections are continuing as scheduled. However, council recognises that sustained fuel price volatility creates ongoing risk and this position may change if current pressures persist.

Council is closely monitoring potential impacts to other services as the higher fuel prices start to take effect. Road maintenance and other operational services are continuing as normal, with increases to fuel costs currently being managed within existing project and maintenance budgets, which are already very tight. Council does not have capacity to absorb ongoing cost escalations without making offsets elsewhere. If higher fuel costs are sustained, this would reduce the scope of works and, over time, may affect service levels.

Council's kerbside collection contract includes provisions for fuel cost adjustments. Should these provisions be triggered, there would be a direct budget impact for council. These costs cannot be passed on to ratepayers within the current financial year, as fees and charges have already been set. Any longer-term financial impacts would be managed through future budget decisions, including reprioritisation of expenditure.

A special levy to offset fuel costs is not being considered at this stage.

Free public transport, but how does it help us in regional areas?

VICTORIA'S month of free public transport has begun. It means free trains, trams and buses, metro and regional, every day until the end of April, for everyone. This is a temporary measure to help all Victorians now.

The Victorian Government said that free public transport for a month benefits everyone, because it takes pressure off the pump.

Victorian Farmers Federation has welcomed the decision, saying "With fuel still under pressure, free public transport is one of the few practical levers available to help Victorians conserve fuel and save money."

Free public transport helps people save on public transport costs and it gets more cars off the road. This won't solve every problem, but it is an immediate step to help Victorians right now. The government plans to monitor the

situation over the month and keep working on new solutions to help with cost of living.

Under the system, passengers won't have to touch on with their myki and all myki gates will be open. Myki passes (such as a yearly) will automatically be paused, to resume after April. You will not need a ticket to travel on V/Line trains however, you will need to book a free ticket to secure your seat on V/Line coaches.

The network operators have put their plans in place to manage demand.

Premier Jacinta Allan said, "With fuel prices rising, free PT for a month takes pressure off the pump." "This won't solve every problem, but it is an immediate step to help Victorians right now."

Given that city users are likely to save around \$228 during the month, what about people who

live in regional areas? People in Murrindindi Shire have extremely limited public transport, so this isn't an option. Regional people are paying a lot more while urban dwellers are paying a whole lot less. The government was asked how this inequality will be addressed.

A Victorian Government spokesperson responded, "Free public transport for a month benefits everyone, because it takes pressure off the pump... Free PT helps people save on public transport and it gets more cars off the road for people who have to drive."

V/Line provides a daily weekday coach service between Alexandra and Seymour and return where passengers are able to board a train to Southern Cross Station or catch a coach to Alexandra.

SPORT

Yea Easter Tennis Tournament hits off

THE Yea Easter Tennis Tournament took place across the Easter long weekend, to the delight of local tennis players and fans.

There was a slight rain delay which slowed things down on Monday morning, but the courts were soon back in action, with everything running smoothly again.

There will be a full report on all of the action in next week's edition.



The trophy. -S



Some of the junior Yea Tennis Club members. -S



A big serve under a threatening sky. -S



Tournament Director Matt Noonan, Cindy McLeish MP and club president Teresa Smith. -S

Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Andrew Bohn wins Barry Moore Trophy

by Alan Pell

Saturday golf

SUNSHINE and a gentle breeze made last Saturday nearly the perfect weather for golf at Yea Golf Club. With the course in excellent condition, 20 men lined up to contest the second round of the annual Barry Moore Trophy.

The winner of the daily event was Greg Clements (18) with a great round of 38 points. John Phillips (18) continued his recent run of good form to post 35 points and claim second place on countback from Bob Glenister (10)

also with 35 points. Nearest the pin on the second hole went to Andrew Bohn and Gareth Antrobus took out the club award.

Greg's 38 points made him the early clubhouse leader in the Barry Moore Trophy with a combined total of 72 points, but round one leader Andrew Bohn shot 32 points to claim the award with a total of 74 points. Congratulations Andrew. Greg finished in second place and Rick Wills third with 69 points.

Nine ladies took advantage of the beautiful weather also playing stableford. Cindy Armstrong (29) was back to her best posting 36 points to claim first place. Di Holdsworth

(31) also had a fine round with 35 points to finish second. In third place was Sharon Grogan (20) with 33 points. Congratulations to all winners.

Wednesday golf

There were 21 Men playing a stableford round with John Phillips (18) showing an excellent short game compiling 38 points to win from Broadford visitor Laurie Dobson (23) with 35 points. Best of the 33s on countback were Tony Rule (16) from Chris Keogh (29) and Brian Simmons (11). Chris won the nearest the pin on the second and Steve Rumney took out the club award.

Kenda Rally cancelled

WITH great sadness and disappointment the Alexandra and District Motorcycle Club advised on Facebook that they have made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the 2026 Rubicon rally.

The post said, "Like all major decisions regarding the 2026 Rubicon rally, the decision to cancel this years event, due to uncertainty surrounding fuel cost and availability, while incredibly difficult, takes into account our punters best interests.

"We fully understand the planning, excitement and anticipation our riders have when they lock in their entries and prepare their rides for a great weekend in Victoria's legendary high country.

"We hope to reschedule the rally to a date later in 2026, dependent on the fuel situation improving... We apologise for any inconvenience. Over the coming weeks all entrants will receive a full refund via PayPal."

Kinglake Basketball Association wraps up the term

THE last round of the term for Kinglake Basketball Association was held last week and the players sure have earned their term break so far this season.

Matches captured the spirit of the competition perfectly with plenty of frenetic cheering by parents and friends, high fives and coaches encouraging from the bench. Every team has come far since the beginning of the season, with many of them playing together for the first time.

In under eights, the Nuggets 4 defeated Wizards 0. Under 10s, Magic 31 defeated Aces 12 and Thunder 22 defeated Sparks 15.

Under 12s, Mavericks 56 defeated Hornets 25 and the Cavaliers and Nets played a blinder of a game with a 26 all draw in a game they both deserved to win.

Raptors and Pistons fought it out in the under 14s with the Raptors coming out on top of the 42 to 35 scoreline.

As the club take their term break, and give everyone a chance to relax and enjoy their holidays, they would like to send a huge shout out to all the parents and friends who bring players along each week, volunteers who spend many hours keeping the games running each week and the coaches who give their all for their teams each week, helping, encouraging and teaching players at every level. All of you are so appreciated.

Thank you also to the referees who are there every game, keeping it sharp and fair. Nobody takes the court without the refs.

To all of the players, at every level, you should be proud of everything you give each week. Enjoy the break and the association will see you after the holidays.



Andrew Bohn receives the Barry Moore Trophy from Acting Captain Phil Armstrong. -S