

# The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, March 4, 2026 \$2.00 inc. GST

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Neighbourhood House advocacy



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Fire affected farmers: Craig Martin



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Warning: Snakes still around



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Weekend sport



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The new prep students at Yea Primary School. -S

## Council to prioritise managed firewood access for fire-affected reside

FIRE-affected households across Murrindindi Shire will continue to be supported with access to firewood this winter through a council-managed supply, following the January 2026 Longwood bushfires.

This year, for safety and environmental reasons, personal roadside firewood collection will not be permitted within fire-affected areas until September 2026.

Each year, council permits residents to collect firewood from designated council-managed roadsides between March 1 to June 30 and September 1 to November 30, with several 'No Collection Roads' identified to protect sensitive environments. This arrangement will continue to apply outside the fire-affected footprint.

This year, however, the scale and severity of roadside impacts within the fire-affected areas mean council must take a different approach.

Council understands that many fire-affected residents traditionally rely on roadside firewood collection. Council's priority is to ensure fire-impacted communities have fair and safe access to firewood while protecting fragile environments that are still recovering.

Continued Page 2

**CLOSED LABOUR DAY - MONDAY, MARCH 9**  
**EARLY DEADLINES APPLY**

**CLASSIFIEDS - FOR SALE, MEETINGS ETC INC DEATH NOTICES - 2PM FRIDAY, MARCH 6**  
ALL OTHER DEADLINES REMAIN THE SAME

THE ALEXANDRIA, KILNOB, MARYSVILLE  
**Standard**

The Yea Chronicle

## Help end placement poverty

Unpaid placements are pushing allied health and medical students into placement poverty.

Sign the petition calling on the Government to expand the Commonwealth Paid Prac Placement Scheme.



**Helen Haines MP**

Wangaratta: 117 Murphy Street, Wangaratta | 03 5721 7077  
Wodonga: 79 High Street, Wodonga | 02 6024 6284  
helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au | helenhaines.org

Authorised by Helen Haines, 117 Murphy St, Wangaratta VIC 3677.



# Council to prioritise managed firewood access for fire-affected reside

Continued from Page 1

The pause applies to personal roadside collection in unsafe, recovering areas, not to access to firewood itself.

Currently, some roads in the fire-affected area remain completely closed, while others are restricted to authorised access only to allow essential works and ensure community

safety. These closures and restrictions mean roadside firewood collection cannot safely occur in these locations.

The burnt roadsides across the fire-affected region are also extremely vulnerable. Soil conditions are fragile, natural regeneration of plants and trees has only just begun, and many roadsides are still structurally unsafe.

Unrestricted public access and disturbance in these areas could slow recovery, increase erosion, and damage important habitat.

To support residents during recovery, council is processing fire-affected trees into usable timber and split firewood. Once ready, the split firewood will be available for eligible community members to collect through a managed process.

As a result, council will not permit personal collection of firewood from any roadsides within the fire-affected areas until September 2026.

Existing 'No Collection Roads' will remain in place, and all additional roads within the bushfire footprint will be temporarily added

to this list with a review to take place later in 2026.

Council recognises the importance of firewood for many households across the shire and will continue to support impacted residents through a safer, managed supply and clear information as the recovery process continues.

Further details about collection points, timing, and eligibility will be provided in the coming weeks.

To find out more and apply for a permit, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Community/Environment/Firewood-Collection](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Community/Environment/Firewood-Collection)

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

**Standard The Yea Chronicle**

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**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

**PUBLISHERS**

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## Council sets expectations on proposed hospital amalgamation

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has considered the proposed amalgamation of Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health and has reaffirmed its clear position, saying that any reform must demonstrably improve health outcomes, service access and equity for the Murrindindi community.

Council is not a decision-maker in the proposed amalgamation, which has been referred to the Minister for Health. However, council said they have a responsibility to advocate for the health, wellbeing and service access needs of local residents, particularly in a rural and geographically dispersed municipality.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said structural change alone would not address the significant health challenges facing the shire.

"Murrindindi Shire continues to experience poorer health outcomes than the Victorian average. For our community, the measure of any reform is simple, will it deliver better, more accessible and locally responsive healthcare?"

Council has made clear that it does not support any changes that reduce access to local services, weakens local accountability or decision-making, exacerbates workforce shortages, or worsens health outcomes for residents.

"As this proposal is considered by the Minister for Health, council expects clear assurances that local services will be

protected and strengthened, not diluted," Cr Gallagher said at the Scheduled Meeting of Council on Wednesday, February 25.

Council also emphasised that rural communities require healthcare models designed for rural realities, including distance, workforce constraints, ageing populations and limited transport options, rather than metropolitan approaches applied by default.

Well before the proposed amalgamation was announced, council had been leading the Victorian Government-funded Murrindindi Health Network Plan project, working with local providers to strengthen workforce capacity, improve service coordination and support preventative, community-based care.

This work reflects council's long-standing position that locally informed, integrated and preventative care is essential to improving long-term health outcomes in rural communities," Cr Gallagher said.

Council will continue to advocate to the Victorian Government for healthcare arrangements that reflect rural needs, values local voices, and delivers tangible improvements in community health and wellbeing.

Council will provide factual updates to the community as information becomes available and ensure local feedback informs its ongoing advocacy.

**THUMBS UP THUMBS DOWN**

**THUMBS UP:** To the amazing Rapid Relief Team at Ruffly, who supplied farmers with fencing wire (plus food supplies), to help rebuild our fences after the fires. They also showed us great compassion and kindness. A big thank you from us all.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down is a reader's contribution section of Alexandra Newspapers. Send your Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down to editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Contributions will be edited and/or published at the Editor's discretion. We request that this section not be used as a slander attack on persons, businesses or property

**COMMUNITY DIARY**

**Yea District Hospital**  
 5736 0400  
**Non-emergency police assistance**  
 131 444  
**EMERGENCY 000**

**Local Radio Frequency**  
 UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands  
 UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale/Hazeldene  
 UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

**MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS**

1<sup>st</sup> Mon St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099  
 1<sup>st</sup> Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
 4<sup>th</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
 Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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

**Weekly Weather**  
 March 4 - March 10, 2026

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

**Alexandra** **Yea**

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	15	25	Wednesday	14	24
Thursday	14	27	Thursday	15	27
Friday	14	25	Friday	14	24
Saturday	12	27	Saturday	12	27
Sunday	15	28	Sunday	14	28
Monday	15	26	Monday	15	26
Tuesday	13	26	Tuesday	13	26

**Standard The Yea Chronicle**

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
 can be submitted via email to  
 editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au or  
 reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au  
 or by mail to Alexandra Newspapers  
 PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

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

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

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**RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT**

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	9.00AM Mon	1.77	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00AM Mon	0.73	LGH	rising
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.00AM Mon	0.55	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	9.00AM Mon	-0.03	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.26AM Mon	0.45	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	9.00AM Mon	0.26	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	9.00AM Mon	0.54	LGH	rising
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00AM Mon	3.73	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00AM Mon	0.46	LGH	rising
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00AM Mon	1.39	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00AM Mon	0.35	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00AM Mon	1.70	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.00AM Mon	0.79	LGH	steady

**\*ISSUED AT 9:24 AM AEDT MONDAY 2 MARCH 2026**

**DISTRICT RAINFALL**

Alexandra.....	56mm
Buxton.....	91mm
Eildon (AWS).....	39mm
Flowerdale.....	91mm
Jamieson.....	55mm
Kinglake.....	75mm
Lake Eildon.....	47mm
Mansfield.....	54mm
Taggerty.....	67mm
Yarck.....	61mm
Yea.....	49mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

**LAKE EILDON**

Height above sea level this week.....	272.00m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	46.3%
Metres below full supply.....	16.1m
Daily inflow.....	4000ML
Release.....	1500ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....	50%

**The Yea Chronicle**

**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](mailto:reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au)

We thank you for your continued support

## Firewood collection opens

VICTORIANS can now collect free firewood for personal use from designated state forest firewood collection areas across the Hume region, with the season starting on March 1. Collectors have been urged to use their chainsaws carefully due to fire risk.

The autumn firewood season ends on June 30, but collectors are reminded individual collection areas may close earlier if there is no more firewood available.

Forest Fire Management Victoria's website has published maps showing available collection areas. Maps are updated throughout the season as collection areas open or close due to availability or access. An interactive map includes details about vehicle access, while pdf maps include safety and other practical information.

Forest Fire Management Victoria Director Forest and Fire Operations Hume region Aaron Kennedy urged collectors to be aware of the fire risk created by chainsaws.

"We understand collectors will use chainsaws but we urge them to do responsibly. One spark from your chainsaw can start a fire, putting yourself and others at risk.

"It is also essential that you bring additional items such as water or a means to extinguish a fire quickly."

Mr Kennedy said this included not using the chainsaw on a Total Fire Ban Day and making sure the chainsaw had an effective exhaust and spark arrester.

"Check weather conditions before you go and make sure you understand forest conditions before you start collecting firewood," he said.

Mr Kennedy encouraged collectors to wear protective gear and to only use equipment they're trained in, including chainsaws.

"Be aware of the environment around you for the safety of yourself and others," he said.

"Trees can fall or drop limbs without warning."

Mr Kennedy said firewood collection areas in fire-affected areas would be opened progressively as crews worked to clear tree hazards.

Mr Kennedy urged Victorians to check road closures before travelling to collection areas, and only to drive on formed roads.

"Within designated collection areas, collectors can collect and cut wood that is on the ground due to natural fall or forest and fire management works. Heavy penalties apply to anyone who cuts down a tree, living or dead.

Mr Kennedy said wood would be of varying sizes and may not be the same quality as the firewood sold by a commercial cutter.

Mr Kennedy said people could only collect a limit of two cubic metres per person per day and a maximum of 16 cubic metres per household per financial year.

"Most people do the right thing, collect wood that is already on the ground, take only what they need, and stick to limits and rules," he said.

Authorised Officers patrol state forests and can issue fines of more than \$814 to those caught breaking the firewood collection rules. If prosecuted in court more serious offending can result in maximum penalties of \$10,175 and/or 12 months in prison. Authorised Officers can also seize chainsaws, trailers, vehicles, and equipment that's used in the commission of offending.

Information and updates, including maps of collection areas, are available on [ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood](http://ffm.vic.gov.au/firewood)

Maps are now available online, except for the Murray Goldfields District whose maps will be published on April 1.

Community members can find out more about collecting firewood by calling 136 186. Suspected illegal firewood collection can be reported to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

## Autumn bushfire outlook

THE Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Seasonal Bushfire Outlook (the Outlook) for autumn 2026 identifies a heightened risk of fire for regions in southern, central, and eastern New South Wales (NSW), large parts of Victoria and into parts of southeast South Australia (SA). An increased risk of fire is forecast for the southern Jarrah Forest and Warren and parts of the Esperance Plains-Mallee bioregions in Western Australia (WA).

For many parts of southern Australia, autumn sees the gradual reduction in fire risk and opportunities for prescribed burning can increase. These programs may be delayed in some areas because of the underlying conditions.

The increased bushfire risk potential is driven in part by long-term drought throughout Victoria and SA, along with increased dryness in NSW and persistent soil moisture deficits in parts of WA, the south-east mainland and Tasmania.

Long-term rainfall deficiencies persist across Victoria, parts of NSW, and agricultural areas in SA.

Soil moisture is above average to very much above average in much of northern and central Australia extending into northern SA and north-western NSW, as well as parts of western and southern WA. Below average to very much below average soil moisture is present across north-eastern NSW and parts of south-east Australia.

Sea surface temperatures have been cooler in recent months, with waters to Australia's north and south-east mostly cooler than average. Warmer than average waters persist off parts of the WA coastline.

March to May is likely to experience above average daytime and overnight temperatures for most of Australia. Rainfall is likely to be below average for most of the southern half of Australia.

### Victoria

Summary: Long-term drought, as well as a dry and warm summer and autumn will reinforce

severe dryness across Victoria. Increased bushfire risk is forecast across all of Victoria except for East Gippsland and the Mallee in autumn. Fire authorities will continue to monitor conditions for any changes in fire risk.

While spring rainfall was generally average to above-average, particularly across southern Victoria, it was very much below average across Victoria through summer. Victoria is now experiencing a multi-year severe rainfall deficit across all of Victoria, except East Gippsland. This contributed to the significant fires experienced across the breadth of Victoria this summer.

Recent rainfall patterns have continued the long-term drying trend, with January rainfall totals ranging from 25 to 100mm across Gippsland and isolated areas of the Otway coast, to less than 10mm in the far west. Some parts of northern and far western Victoria experienced no rain in January.

The autumn outlook has a higher chance of warmer maximum temperatures combined with a drier than normal rainfall outlook. As a result, an extended drying pattern will continue post-summer and will translate to continued increases in fuel availability across most of the state.

Without significant rainfall, the flammability of fuels in forests, woodlands and heathlands will remain high with elevated potential for fires to start and spread into autumn. As a result, most of Victoria is identified as facing increased risk of fire during the autumn outlook period.

The Mallee region around Mildura and Kerang has experienced reduced fuel loads. Conversely, East Gippsland, including Bairnsdale and Orbost, has seen consistent rainfall throughout spring and summer, resulting in a normal bushfire risk for the autumn season.

The extreme level of forest flammability across Victoria will mean a delayed start to planned burning is likely in most areas, except for perhaps East Gippsland. There may, however, be opportunities through April-May to target areas that are not usually available for burning under autumn conditions.



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# Neighbourhood House fight taken to the steps of Parliament

NEIGHBOURHOOD Houses Victoria took their campaign to the Victorian Parliament, with around 200 sector staff, participants, and supporters flooding the steps of Victorian Parliament on February 18, with some travelling up to six hours from all over the state.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria CEO Keir Paterson said the erosion of funding over

many years had left the sector vulnerable, with 200 neighbourhood houses across the state running at a loss for two years or more.

“With social cohesion such a high priority it makes no sense to leave neighbourhood houses so vulnerable, with many reducing hours and services or at risk of closing completely,” Mr Paterson said.

Each week, more than 185,000 Victorians access community support and local services through the more than 400 neighbourhood houses in the state.

“We know more than 90 per cent of community members say their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing has

improved as a result of participating in the neighbourhood house.

“Eighty percent said it has strengthened their sense of belonging.

“Neighbourhood Houses are the ‘quiet achievers’ of social cohesion and community connection.”

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria’s analysis shows that additional funding of \$11.7 million per year is needed to ensure the sustainability of the sector and continue delivering for Victorians.

“Our data shows that for every \$1 of ongoing neighbourhood house funding received from the state government, communities benefit to

the tune of \$21.94. We calculate the overall benefits to the Victoria community at \$922 million per year.

“We are saving the government money, now it’s time to save our sector and keep our doors open.”

Their campaign is calling on the state government to urgently increase core funding for neighbourhood houses in the 2026 Victorian Budget by 25 per cent to keep doors, programs, and services open.

The state peak body is also calling on the state government to fund 25 currently unfunded neighbourhood houses, and commit to 20 new neighbourhood houses in Victoria’s outer metro and regional growth areas.

## 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



The Neighbourhood Houses protest on the steps of Parliament. -S



## Business Breakfast Alexandra Thursday 12 March 2026 from 7.30 am at On Point Brewery, 9 Downey Street

Be part of the first Murrindindi Business Network event for 2026 in Alexandra. Free and open to all businesses across the Shire, this networking event supports recovery following the January 2026 fire.

Hear updates from Council and learn about support available through agencies, including Business Victoria, Community Business Connect, Tourism North East and AgBiz Assist.

Gain practical insights from industry professionals, learn about funding and recovery assistance, and access tools to help businesses rebuild, adapt and grow.

### Registrations now open.

This event is supported with funding from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Community Development Fund



murrindindi.vic.gov.au/businessbreakfast 5772 0333



Representatives from Community Houses, including Yea and Flowerdale, with Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish on the steps of Parliament, seeking funding to ‘Keep our Doors Open’. -S

## Out & About



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

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### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

Look after yourself and others after the fires. Tonight, 6.30pm at the Alexandra Shire Hall. Council are hosting a recovery session to support those affected by the recent bushfires. Dr Rob Gordon will talk about common emotional responses and share practical strategies to support your wellbeing and those around you. A light supper and chat time will follow the session.

\*\*\*\*\*

### SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Caribbean Cruise Murder Mystery at Trawool. Three course dinner, game and

entertainment. \$99 per person, bookings essential [trawoolstate.com.au](http://trawoolstate.com.au) or phone 5792 1444.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Murrindindi Shire Council presents Business Breakfast Alexandra from 7.30am at On Point Brewery, Alexandra. Registrations open. Scan the QR code in this edition for full details.

\*\*\*\*\*

### SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Alexandra Race Club Cathedral Golf Club 2026 Alexandra Cup. Music, food, racing, big screen and more. Book the bus. [country.racing.com/alexandra](http://country.racing.com/alexandra)

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# THE PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE BIT

Head for the hills and discover Victoria's regional events. Try your hands (and feet) at various things you've never done before. You could find yourself cider quaffing, tulip sniffing, star gazing, maybe even grape stomping.

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# Rapid Relief Team visits Ruffy

THE Rapid Relief Team (RRT) has praised the Victorian community of Ruffy for its resilience after a bushfire tore through the township. RRT has donated 215 kilometres of fencing wire to assist rebuilding efforts on Wednesday and Thursday, February 25 and 26.

RRT volunteers loaded up six semi-trailers with 115 tonnes of galvanised fencing wire and travelled up to 700km to Ruffy ahead of last Thursday's Farmers Community Connect event.

RRT General Manager Mick Dunn said more than 230 farmers attended the FCC event at Ruffy Hall, enjoying a free barbecue with their families and friends before heading home with a share of the donated wire.

"It was an emotional journey into Ruffy for our volunteers before this event. The Longwood bushfire in January destroyed so much and there is a long road to recovery ahead," Mick said.

"RRT was here cooking up meals for firefighters and the community during the fire emergency, and we knew we wanted to come back and do what we could to help them rebuild.

"The RRT is in awe of the fighting spirit of Ruffy residents, and the event hopefully helped boost their morale, share a laugh or a smile during a rough time, and remind them they aren't alone."

Farmers were able to connect with rural support services on site, and local state and federal politicians were in attendance.

Volunteers served more than 500 meals, including bacon and egg rolls and Signature Burgers, barista-brewed coffee, and Krispy Kreme donuts, and also handed out RRT Food Boxes for farmers to take home, full of non-perishable food items.

Member for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland MP said it was amazing to see the community come together. "When the chips are down, we've got each other's back which is really nice. Australian farmers are some of the most resilient and they rarely ask for help," she said.

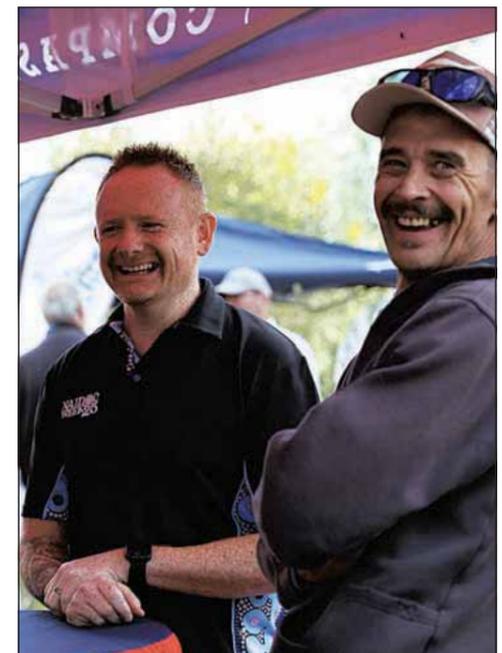
Colleen Furlanetto OAM from the Ruffy Recovery Committee said the Longwood bushfire has had a significant impact around the Tablelands districts.

"Homes, farm infrastructure and significant parts of public infrastructure have been lost. For small communities, the scale of the damage has been deeply felt, and recovery will take quite some time," Colleen said.

Since 2018 RRT has held 35 FCC events supporting around 5800 Aussie farmers impacted by fire, flood or drought.

As the charitable arm of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, RRT supports frontline workers and emergency services by providing food, donations and other resources, as well as hosting events for the community.

Established in 2013 to assist emergency services in times of disaster and crisis by providing meals and other support, it's expanded to more than 16,500 volunteers and provides support to the community through charitable donations and events. For more information on RRT, visit [rrtglobal.org](http://rrtglobal.org)



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# Bus rolled immediately into action after launch

THE Murrindindi Mobile Health bus came online on the Wednesday prior to the bushfires, so the timing could not have been better.

Yea and District Memorial Hospital CEO Elizabeth Sinclair said, "It's really been utilised pretty flat out since then, not just by the Yea and District Memorial Hospital but also Alexandra District Health and some community groups."

The bus has been parked in various parts of the shire since the fires, with practitioners operating out of it, giving local people access to healthcare providers, mental health support and advice, at a time when travel and access to care was limited.

Elizabeth said, "It's meant that we can get into those smaller communities where hubs have been set up and just go out there and take a variety of practitioners with us to try to meet those healthcare needs."

She also said that there are many hidden health impacts which emerge after disasters, particularly in the mental health space. She said, "We're just starting to see the mental health impact as people's adrenaline dies down and they begin to assess the damage and what's ahead of them... We need to be out and about and accessing you know those communities and making ourselves available. I think one of the things that really is important is that we actually go out to the communities and are proactive in our engagement of the communities, not sit back and wait for them to come to us because I think particularly the farming community is so busy doing things and trying to keep stock alive and access agistments and access hay and fix fences and organise insurance and all of those sorts of things. They're not really prioritising their own health needs. So if we can be handy to them, then that's really useful, and the bus has been amazing for that."

"We've taken it to a number of events and we've been invited by communities to their hubs for particular events where there's been barbecues and that enables us to take practitioners with us, but it also enables us to have a private space where people can seek assistance from us either regarding their mental health needs or regarding physical health needs."

She added, "I think that also, generally, as a community, people think that their health needs are less important than other people's health needs, and so stress and the anxiety and delayed treatment of coexisting issues often actually come to light when people are really put under pressure. Things that they've been kind of tolerating for a long time suddenly come to the forefront."

She also wanted to strongly acknowledge the contribution of Gerry Ryan in getting the bus up and running. The mobile health clinic means that the practitioners have a clean, airconditioned space where they can wash their hands between patients, and it's also highly accessible to people who may not otherwise prioritise things like skin checks. It's a "quick, accessible, free, private, non-threatening environment," she said. "People say, I wouldn't mind having a look inside and they hop inside and they sit down and then they start talking and it's those incidental conversations that actually often reveal bigger health issues in there."

People are often worried about going to the doctor for something that they think might be nothing. Elizabeth commented that "When you attend a GP clinic, you are in their world... [With the bus] We're going into their space and they choose when they come to see us, and they choose how they engage with that health service."

At the most recent Yea Saleyards event, mental health practitioners on the bus meaningfully connected with 22 locals, and practitioners also conducted 41 skin checks and 21 procedures were performed. Of those 17 basal cell carcinomas and two squamous cell carcinomas were identified.

The bus is collaborating with Rotary, seeking funding to expand the skin clinic program into the hub areas. Elizabeth said, "It also has the effect of bringing people together as a group, even if they're just coming together as a group to stand and wait for their turn to have the skin check. The spin-off effect is that they actually are standing together and they get chatting. And

I think those reasons for coming together are really important at the moment because those incidental conversations are really very important to health and wellbeing." As an added benefit, they can also share sun smart messaging.

She finished by saying that the bus is "an incredible community resource and we are so lucky to have it, and so grateful to the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Traders Association and also Jayco. Gerry Ryan's generosity has really brought something that has been a dream of a number of us to fruition and the timing of launch could not have been more perfect."

Gerry Ryan AO OAM Founder of Jayco was asked about what got him across

the line when deciding to support the project. He responded, "When you spend time in regional communities, you see first-hand how distance and access can limit something as basic as healthcare. This wasn't about a vehicle, it was about removing barriers. Once we understood the impact it could have, supporting it felt like the right thing to do. Jayco has been in business for 50 years, and one thing I've learned is that you don't go the distance alone. You do it with the support of great teams and the communities that back you. If we're in a position to help, the only real question should be how."

He said of the impact of having the bus on the road in time to support the community post-fire, "After the fires, communities need

more than rebuilding infrastructure. They need support that comes to them. Having the van on the road quickly meant services could reach people when they needed it most, rather than expecting them to travel further during an already difficult time. In regional areas, timing matters. Being able to step in and help when it counts is something we're proud to be part of."

He added, "My hope is that it becomes a trusted and practical part of the region. If it helps people access care earlier, reduces pressure on local services and makes healthcare easier to reach across the region, then it's doing exactly what it was built to do. For us, it's about backing communities in a meaningful way. This is one practical way to do that."

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# February meeting of Murrindindi Shire Council

Cr Adams was an apology, and requested personal leave until June 30.

## Community recognition

Council recognised Geoff Penny, Gordon Simpson and Graeme Robb, who were recognised in the Australia Day honours, receiving OAMs for their services to their communities.

## Public participation

Murray Ross spoke on the matter of Breakaway Bridge, stating that the community does not want a double-lane bridge, as it will encourage more high-speed through traffic, decreasing safety. It will also incur higher costs. He stated council is not thoroughly engaging with community, and not exploring all the potential options for the bridge.

Nigel Lyttle, in his capacity as Principal of Alexandra Secondary College, requested council endorse the final draft report for the Alexandra Community Leisure and Relief Centre, saying that the centre is important for sport and relief efforts in Alexandra.

## Haines launches 2026 Indi Volunteer Grants program

EXPRESSIONS of Interest have been opened for the 2025-26 Indi Volunteer Grants program, Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines has announced.

Grants between \$1000 and \$5000 are available to support the work of local community organisations to increase participation in volunteering and enable the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

“Volunteer organisations do incredible work every day, and there is always strong interest in these grants from a variety of hard-working, community focused organisations,” Dr Haines said.

Two streams of grant funding are available in the 2025-26 Volunteer Grants program.

Stream one funds the purchase of communication or insurance items that will benefit a community organisation’s volunteers.

Stream two funds the items of the running volunteer-led activities that support the development (including volunteering) of groups such as children, First Nations People, veterans, new arrived migrants, people with disability, and women at risk of experiencing gender-based violence or isolation.

“Volunteer grants can help take the pressure off costs such as phone bills, insurance and training, which are becoming increasingly more expensive.” Dr Haines said.

“There is also a strong focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of groups experiencing barriers to participation in the community.

“Every year, I’m inspired by the passion and hard work of volunteer groups that I meet with across Indi and they tell me that grants like this go a long way in supporting volunteers to continue their important work.

“I encourage not-for-profit community organisations across Indi to consider putting in an expression of interest.”

Applications will be assessed by a panel of community members, with successful applicants then invited to apply to the Department of Social Services for a grant.

“Volunteers support our communities in so many and varied ways, and I pay tribute to them for their continued commitment and hard work.”

Details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found at: [helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2026/](https://www.murrindindibusiness.com.au/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2026/)

## Grants and sponsorships quarterly allocations

Applications presented between November 2025 and January 2026 were submitted to council for noting and approval.

These included: \$750 for Strath Creek Progress Association community carols; \$2500 for Yea Primary School celebration and awards; \$1900 for Flowerdale Community Hall’s community christmas; \$2500 to Alexandra Amateur Swimming and Lifeguarding Club for 2025/26 swimming season fee support; \$1950 to Eildon Lions Club for boiling water for rotunda; \$2500 to Yea High School for alcohol and drug education goggles; another \$700 to Yea High School to get St Johns party ready; \$2500 to Yea Men’s Shed for a storage container; \$2500 to the Rotary Club of Alexandra for their 56th Easter Art Show; \$2500 to the Alexandra Community Hub to respond to community needs; and \$2500 to Flowerdale Primary School for their school fair.

Council were also recommended by the Grants and Sponsorship Assessment Panel to endorse funding for the following applications, including: \$2000 for the Alexandra Football Netball Club to celebrate service and community (Cr Gallagher was absent for this decision due to his conflict of interest, being a member of the club); \$20,000 for the Liquid Drag Boat Nationals for a Drag Boat Festival Eildon 2026; and \$20,000 to the Triangle Arts Group for a Marysville Music Weekend.

Council noted and approved the grants.

## Alexandra Relief and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Plan

The current Alexandra Relief and Leisure Centre facility is near end-of-life, and is no longer fit for purpose. Therefore a redevelopment plan has been created, and was presented to council for endorsement at this meeting. The plan proposes a new facility be created below the current building, towards the creek, and that once it is complete, the old facility become a carpark. This allows for continuous operations. Part of the recommendation also is that council advocate for this redevelopment during the 2026 state election, seeking both state and Commonwealth funding, due to an estimated total project cost of over \$21 million.

Council endorsed the redevelopment plan.

## Council Priority Action Plan 2025/26 December Quarter Progress Report

The report outlines progress on the 70 actions for the second quarter, ending December 31, 2025. Seven actions were due for completion in the quarter, with three completed and four remaining in progress. As of December 31, 2025, eight actions were completed, three were delayed but in progress, and 59 are on track for completion within the financial year.

Due to required responses to the impacts of the January bushfires, council’s focus has shifted to providing immediate relief and longer-term recovery for affected communities. This means that it may be necessary for them to postpone or defer work on some actions in the Priority Action Plan.

Council noted the progress report for their Priority Action Plan.

## Report on the Exercise of CEO Financial Delegations

On October 22, 2025, council resolved to increase the CEO’s financial delegation to \$500,000 with a requirement to report procurements above \$300,000, to support timely emergency response. On January 21, 2026, council further increased this to \$3 million until May 30, 2026, specifically for bushfire response and recovery expenditure. This is subject to monthly reporting.

Between October 22, 2025, and January 18, 2026, the CEO, Livia Bonazzi, exercised her delegation once within the \$300,000 to \$500,000 range: North Central Construction, Sealed Roads Rehabilitation Program 2025-26 (Break O’Day Road, Glenburn) for \$319,361.

No expenditure above \$500,000 has been incurred under the temporary bushfire response and recovery delegation.

Council noted the report.

## Endorsement of motions for ALGA National General Assembly 2026

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) represents 538 councils around Australia, and will hold its 2026 National General Assembly in Canberra from June 24 to June 27. This provides a national platform for councils to influence federal policy, debate emerging issues and contribute to ALGA’s strategic priorities.

Two motions for submission to the National General Assembly were put forward for council’s endorsement. Motion one calls for meaningful federal reform to address the unsustainable financial pressures facing local governments, informed by the findings of the ongoing national inquiry. Motion two calls for a nationally consistent legislative and data governance framework to create a harmonised, privacy-protected system for sharing disaster impact information across all levels of government.

Council endorsed the motions.

## Audit and Risk Committee confirmation of minutes

Council voted to note the minutes for the December 11, 2025, Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

## Audit and Risk Committee Biannual Report July to December 2025

Steve Schinck, Audit and Risk Committee Chair, presented the report. At the final meeting of the year, the committee endorsed a three-year audit plan, with four audits scheduled for 2026. One of those will focus on council’s management of its privacy obligations, one on financial controls, one on tree management compliance, and one on contract management.

Council noted the report.

## Breakaway Bridge Acheron replacement design and construct 2025-2027

A report recommending the appointment of a contractor for the reconstruction of Breakaway Bridge in Acheron was brought before council. Awarding of this contract is conditional on the successful negotiation of funding and scope with the state government under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), given the bridge was damaged in flooding.

For background, Breakaway Bridge is located near the Breakaway Twin Rivers Caravan Park on Breakaway Road, some 1.8 kilometres north of the Maroondah Highway. It provides a cut through for local residents to travel between Acheron and Alexandra. During the October 2022 floods, 30 metres of the embankment north of the bridge was washed away, creating a new channel in the river. Lateral pressure on the bridge caused by a very large amount of timber debris compromised the steel reinforcing elements that had been installed in 2013.

Several options were considered for the reinstatement of the bridge following a detailed review by Murrindindi Shire Council bridge engineers. These were: 1. Demolish the existing bridge and build a new one; 2. build a new bridge on a new alignment and retain the existing bridge (with an extension) for pedestrian use; 3. construct additional spans, repair and extend the existing bridge; 4. fill in the northern approach, build a new wall and reconstruct the northern bank.

Council officers, with the assistance of an independent bridge designer, reviewed all four options. Option four was not supported by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and was therefore rejected. Option three was also rejected as it would not meet modern design standards and would pose an unacceptable community risk during future flood events. Option two was estimated to cost more than \$8 million.

Option one, of demolishing the existing bridge and building a new one, was assessed as the most economical solution with an estimated cost of approximately \$5 million.

Concept plans were developed for two options to span the now 100-metre river width. These include a single lane bridge as recommended by the Department of Transport, incorporating traffic signals to manage traffic conflicts during night-time and foggy conditions, and a dual lane concrete bridge which would not require traffic signals. Both bridges are designed to provide unlimited load capacity.

The DRFA approved funding of \$5,204,229 to replace the existing single lane timber and steel bridge with a longer single lane concrete bridge. The dual lane bridge option is still to be reviewed further by the DRFA on a value for money consideration. The lifetime costs for maintaining and supporting traffic signals are to be considered as part of the value proposition. It should be noted that the signals associated with the single lane option would be the only traffic signals in Murrindindi Shire.

The request for tender was advertised on the e-tendering portal from October 16, 2025. Due to the complex nature of the tender and subsequent requests from tenderers, the closing date for submissions was extended from November 20, 2025 to December 11, 2025 at 3pm.

Councillors posed questions about the report to Peter Bain, Sustainability and Assets Manager, during the meeting.

He stated that in terms of community engagement, there’s been a number of community meetings and surveys conducted, and that in the beginning opinions were split, but that in recent times people are more in favour of replacing the bridge. There will be opportunities for the community to have input into how the bridge is reconstructed, such as placement and river access, etcetera. The Department of Transport has already pre-approved an 80km/h speed limit for the area.

The report brought to council recommended that council: Award Contract CONT25/26 Breakaway Bridge Reconstruction to tender one for a total contract value of \$5,485,350 (ex GST) for a two-lane bridge, which includes provisional sums, subject to funding approval from the Department of Transport and Planning through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFFA); approve the total allocation of \$520,000 as a contingency amount to support the delivery of this contract as outlined in this report; and release the name of the preferred tenderer into the minutes of the February 25, 2026, scheduled meeting of council.

Council voted to accept the report and its recommendations.

## Councillor reports

Cr Carpenter attended the Alexandra Community Hub to see the presentation of letters of support for better funding of neighbourhood and community houses to Cindy McLeish to give to Minister Ros Spence. The Renewable Energy Guidelines are open for consultation until March 8.

Cr Lording reported that major patching works on Break O’Day Road, Glenburn have commenced and are nearing completion. Gravel road resheeting works are anticipated to be completed by the end of March, and include Cathedral Lane and Acacia Lane in Taggerty. He reminded people not to access closed roads.

Cr Gallagher stated that council has considered the proposed amalgamation of Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health, and has reaffirmed their clear position: Any reform must demonstrably improve health outcomes, service access, and equity for the Murrindindi community.

## CEO report

Ms Bonazzi stated that council’s secondary impact assessments are underway, with teams systematically visiting all properties in the bushfire footprint. Council are already issuing permits for temporary dwellings and sheds to support people to remain or return to their properties as quickly as possible.

She stated that council recognises that many residents have lost firewood stacks in the bushfires, adding to the pressure households are facing this winter. Fire-affected households across Murrindindi Shire will be supported with access to firewood through a council-managed supply. While council’s usual roadside firewood collection arrangements will continue to operate outside the fire-affected footprint, personal roadside collection within fire-impacted areas will not be permitted until September 2026 due to road closures, safety risks and the fragile condition of recovering roadsides and vegetation.

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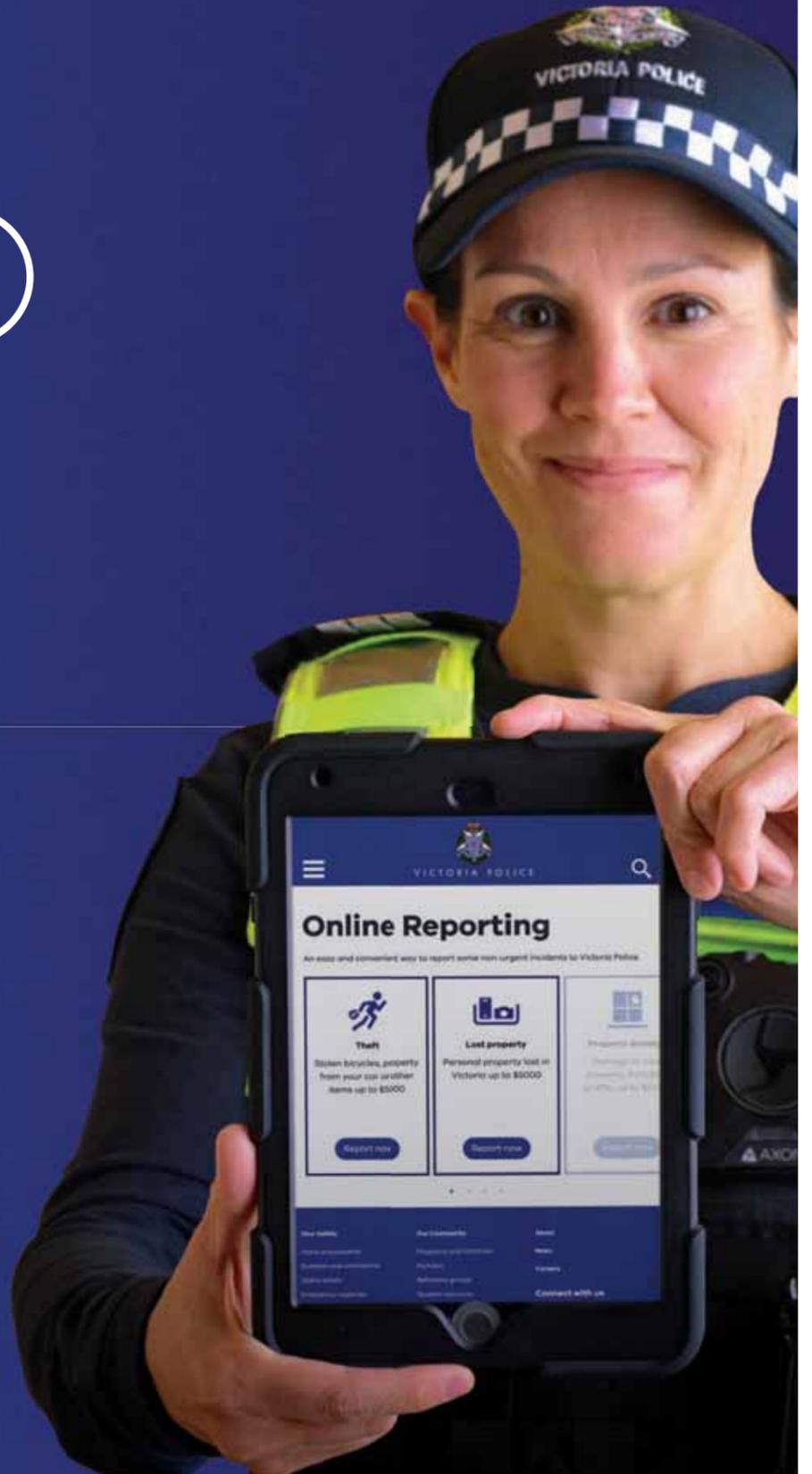


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# Fire affected farmers: Craig Martin

CRAIG Martin from Mill Spring Farm in Ruffy lost the farm's main house, sheds and machinery, fencing, and tools in the Longwood bushfires. His biodynamic orchard, which covers 15 acres of the 184-acre property and comprises some 4000 fruit trees, has suffered heavy damage from the fire and the heat.

Craig took time out of his busy recovery process to speak with this paper about the fire and its effects on his farming operations.

He started at the beginning, detailing fighting for the farm as the fire was approaching and then tearing through Ruffy on Thursday, January 8.

"On the day, in the morning, I plugged the fire cart into my sprinkler system and ran two tanks of water through that while I had coffee," Craig said.

"Things started getting more serious. We could see the smoke. I put another few carts of water around, so in total I put five full water carts on, 800 litres each, on the last one, I was down towards my house and I couldn't fit between the fire and my house."

He made the decision to fall back to the shed where he packs his fruit and find his partner Sue, who had gone ahead to get into the market ute with air-conditioning.

"I came up here and the fire was nearly as quick as I was. The red ute was in the shed with my partner in it. And she was meant to move out of that shed when she saw flames," Craig said.

"I basically realized Sue hadn't got out here quick enough. I've dropped the hose with it still running, gone in there, got in the passenger seat. She drove out and I stopped her here. In the relative shelter outside the shed.

"Grabbed the hose, put the flames on the back of the red ute out, ran around, and got in the driver's seat.

"From this position, I had to get past say 10 trees that are on fire and get down through that gap. I just thought to myself, this is it; it's just like going home. I know the timing, I drive from here, and I change gears there. I put the brakes on there. I drive down the paddock," Craig explained.

"And I just did that, with all of that invisible with the smoke. I didn't know if I was going to be able to see anything. But I knew that if I kept looking, I'd have enough landmarks to triangulate and I could see my way through the gate. So I got down there 100 metres, stopped and basically sat and shook."

The asphalt of his driveway had liquidated from the heat, and tyre tread prints where he escaped in the ute can be seen over a month later. The flames from the burning gum trees that line his driveway were higher than the shed.

"It was pretty much on the limit of what you can do, but you have to do it because if you don't do it, you don't get to survive," Craig said. In the shed that Craig and Sue drove out of there were three freezers running off generators, one of which had 400 kilograms of beef inside, some 22 pallets of boxes ready for the fruit, and other packaging materials.

"I was set up. I had everything ready for the season and I had basically the best season that I could foresee," Craig said.

"This was going to be the one season in seven years that I made it. I got the cherries. The cherries are in the market. And I was about to pick peaches. We've watered peaches on the Wednesday morning, to keep them happy.

"And now it's gone from a potentially good looking year. Everything is dry and crispy. The only thing you see is suckers, green grass, just coming back, you're not seeing leaves on trees that give me any thought that I'll get anything back from this position."

Eleven out of Craig's 13 tractors perished in the fire, and he has lined up for cleanup companies to remove the sheds. He is focused on achievable progress.

"We can see each person who is entering this has their own recovery process. So for me, I've lost a heap of potential and I've got to have somewhere to start to progress forward and I want to be happy about something," Craig said.

"My first choice was to start restoring one tractor, because I restore tractors and clean them up for shows and farm with them and



Craig Martin in his fire-damaged biodynamic orchard. -BD

that means that I've now got something that's clean, it's not black, it's not fire damaged."

He took this paper for a walk around his orchard, showing the devastation, but also pointing out the new growth and the trees that he thinks will recover. Some trees look almost completely dead, their leaves withered and branches cracking, but on some trees small green shoots are appearing to give hope for the future.

In his orchard, Craig grows cherries, peaches, plums, apples, boysenberries, figs and quinces.

"I've still got to do the pruning. I've got to do work on trees and I don't know whether they're going to come back," he explained.

Looking at one of his apple trees, there were fresh green shoots on multiple branches. There was no greenery shooting below the graft, almost a foot up from the base of the tree. This growth looks like a tree that will live.

"Now, I've got to come back to Biodynamics here. This here is an apple tree. That apple tree got pretty much trashed. I'm saying I'm going to make something out of that within two years," Craig said.

"The thing is, if they don't start shooting below the graft, it means whatever energy they've got is going up into the top of the tree."

Just prior to the interview, Ruffy received around 50ml of rain over the course of three days, bringing a degree of greenery back to the burnt landscape. Craig attributed a lot of the greenery to this weather.

"Have a look how green it is. That's what we're seeing here too. This is only from the rain and the fact that this biodynamic ground really didn't run water off it. Now this has got nothing to stop the water and you can tell, like a miniature river, it's flowed on some tracks. But really, once it gets in the hollow, it hasn't really run hard down there," he explained.

"We've had that rain in not many hours. This ground's ready to take the water in. It's really benefited. The second lot of rain hardly ran, but where there's a little like levee bank (from ash and debris), they all filled up as little pools, but they didn't run. The water stayed there and soaked in."

Looking to the future of Mill Spring Farm, Craig was optimistic. It will take a long time for the farm to return to the state it was in before the fires swept through, or

perhaps never, but there is room for growth and change.

"The orchard is not going to be as big as it was if I can get it back. I'm going to have to cull out. I'm very close to deciding on culling out everything that was less than three years old as being too small to survive. But I better give it another couple of months just in case," Craig said.

"I also have a lot of potential with specific varieties where I can put focus, I'll be able to grow that variety and there's orchard stuff that I've got to be able to keep on with.

"What I'm thinking here, in very loose terms, is if you were a cattle person, that's had a fire. You would ship the cattle away, and let the pastures recover. Then bring the cattle back.

"I can't ship the trees away, but for the next while, I've got nothing to feed them on. There's not the grass, so that'll have to grow again. And then when I can, I'll get the trees back into being looked after properly and farm them again.

"And maybe next year or the year after, that will be the amount of stock I'm running. If you think of the trees as the stock, I'll have that much stock to make money with. The thing is you can't move trees out of the way like Animals."

Asked about what percentage of the orchard perished, Craig was able to give a rough overview of what he thinks will recover and what has to be written off.

"If I get 50 per cent harvestable in two years time, I'd say that would be doing a good thing. The thing is, a couple of days I went to the site there was nothing. There were only dead trees," he said.

"That's my plum tree here. I knew this one wasn't bad because next to the track it wasn't as hot. There are green leaves on that one. There's a couple there. There's a potential of trees to come back.

"I've got 900 little trees that I figure are just going to have to go. That's two years of shoveling, digging them in. And all the work that it takes. And then I think these might be the next on the list. It wouldn't surprise me if the peaches, that variety and the next variety growing near the gum trees along the driveway will not be worth saving. But the decisions are a little bit in the future.

"My short date is two years."

Craig has received a lot of bushfire recovery support, as have many in the fire zone, and is extremely grateful for all of it. He's taking note of how important people consider the orchard, when people come and help, I consider them to be some of the most important people in my life," he said.

I've had a lot of people contact me and say they're aware that I'm in trouble here.

"For example the head of Biodynamic Marketing come up himself personally to actually do a day's work and to see that I was okay, to talk to me, to check out what they could do. And then he delegated to his people to look after us as well."

Craig finished by talking about his biodynamic farming, and the fact that he is now a test case for how biodynamic practices compare to traditional farming practices after a fire.

"I'm also a bit of a test case for biodynamics. If you have a fire through a biodynamic farm, how does it go? How does it compare," he said.

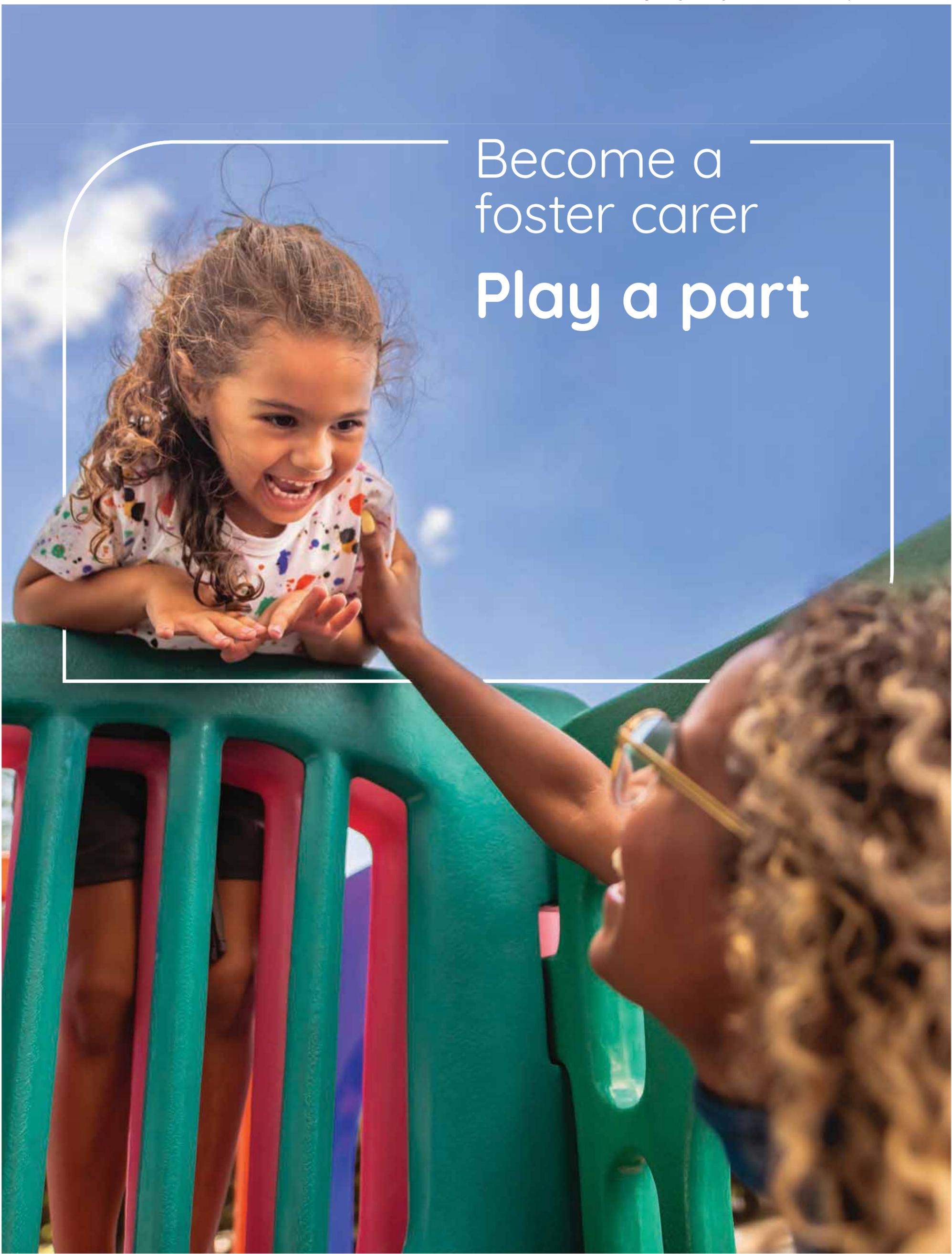
"As in, how does it compare to my friend who's got a few fruit trees that have had heat, but they're not biodynamic? So I'm doing a little bit of photo record keeping.

"The biggest thing about biodynamics is what we don't use. We would actually qualify for every organic certification anyway on the way past to getting a biodynamic certification. We use none of the stuff that is even allowable by organic people.

"We have some things we can use, like if I wanted to use straw in this emergency, we can use biodynamic straw and have a paper trail for it. There are a few hoops to jump through."

It was Craig's father that started farming biodynamically, with Craig taking up the mantle later on.

"Basically, Dad was really looking for a way of farming without chemicals because of the danger of the unknown substances that we were told were okay, but didn't seem to be okay in the long run. It was definitely to avoid using chemicals and avoid marketing fruit that had chemical taints in it," he finished.



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# Rob Gordon provides fire recovery advice

SINCE the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983, Doctor Rob Gordon OAM has dedicated his career to helping traumatised communities and emergency service workers recover after disasters. He has recently spoken at public events in Yarck and Ruffly, and his insights are invaluable.

He was interviewed for his thoughts on how people can help their recovery from the Longwood bushfire in early January.

## *The current stage of recovery*

He was asked about the current stage of people's recovery, and what people might expect of this time period if they were impacted. He responded, "I think they're often saying it hasn't really quite hit them yet because they are very active in dealing with a lot of immediate problems. But certainly, they're starting to get very tired. We know that if people can get involved in community meetings and come to the meals and the gatherings that are being offered, that this is very helpful to help them come to grips with it. Otherwise, they tend to become very isolated and totally immersed in their own situation. The shared experience would make a big difference.

Asked how they might find a path forward, Dr Gordon replied, "I think people have got lots of immediate problems, but as soon as people can get a stable arrangement, somewhere to live if they lost the house, do the immediate urgent stuff for their farms and then try to settle into a bit of a routine where they start to give themselves some time out and some rest. Because there is a tendency when you're in that sort of emergency situation to be in this adrenaline state where you want to just get on and try to fix everything as quickly as possible. The reality is, of course, it can't be fixed so quickly and people will tend to exhaust themselves. When they exhaust themselves physically, it's very hard to manage emotions and that's when I think people feel overwhelmed, possibly unable to see how they're going to get through it and so on. One of the best protections against that is to start taking care of themselves now, do it a little bit slower and steadier. Maintain social contacts and other activities."

When asked what stages people tend to go through from this point, Dr Gordon replied, "People are usually very active in the early stages when they get as much done as they can, particularly on farms. And then there's often a period when they have to wait for insurance companies to do their thing, wait for various government activities to get going, and most importantly, to start thinking about whatever they need to do to replace their losses. And so really that's the point where I think it's most important for people to understand that it is going to be a slow, steady process. It will happen, but it won't happen as fast as we want. Of course, the degree of frustration we feel is determined by our expectations. If we think the insurance companies should get back to us quickly, we're going to get very frustrated if they don't. I think people can protect themselves from that by trying to make realistic judgments, and that's where I think it's very, very valuable for them to make contact with Emergency Recovery Victoria on 1800 560 760 and register for a case support worker who can help them, first of all to negotiate all the different government processes and that will help them be more realistic about how fast they can expect this to happen. I think it's quite hard for people to sit around on calls, pressing buttons and waiting and so on. If they've got someone who can tell them exactly what they can get and how they can get it, it's very helpful for people."

He added, "I would think another thing to do is try to put time into planning how they're going to do it. Because often when there are so many things to do, people have trouble being strategic and working out what's important and what order they should do things, and they just end up doing what they can do rather than the most important things. So again, that's when having a case support worker.

"One man told me he'd actually ask various family members to do things for him. Ask one to get a ute and another to see if he could source a second-hand tractor and somebody else was handling the insurance claims. If you've got friends and relatives who want to help, giving them tasks is a really helpful thing to do.



*Dr Rob Gordon. -S*

"But those who haven't got that help, then they can use the system and I think even just talking with your community members will help you work out what they're doing and what you should do. Just trying to think outside your own head because your own head gets pulled up and you don't know which way to turn."

It can be quite immobilising if there's so many tasks ahead of someone, so Dr Gordon suggested, "Make plans, forward plans, prioritise things and to set a program about doing them one at a time. It requires a clear head, and that's where I think it's very important for people to just put it all aside and maybe take the evening off or go and visit friends or go to a community meeting and just hang out with people, and then come back the next day and sit down and have a planning session or maybe talk it through with somebody who can help you think through how to do it. Maybe another farmer who's not in the area who understands the business, but is not in the same state as you. Because that sort of planning, I've had farmers tell me that they work their fingers to the bone for six months doing all sorts of things, and a couple of years later they realised it wasn't properly planned and they had to end up redoing a lot of it. That can be avoided by just being a little bit slow and thoughtful, steady."

## *The importance of having case workers*

Given that Black Saturday badly impacted Murrindindi Shire in 2009, a number of survivors of that blaze are now case workers for the Longwood fire.

Dr Gordon commented, "I think there's no doubt to have had some experience of what it's like is going to make people much more sensitive. But ultimately, if they [case workers] are well briefed and well trained, they should be able to really help people. Most people don't have a great deal to do with government systems normally, and these are often very new systems and they have trouble even remembering all the names. Someone who's really been briefed on the whole system and all the things available can be very helpful."

He added, "The message we need to get through to people is there is going to be a lot of help. It will take time. But we know that a few years down the track, people have gone through massive losses, but have got up and got running again. And it's the optimism of being able to just get through that difficult time those few years to get into that new position."

He also said, "For some people, of course, if you're a farmer and you've got your farm and you're happy on your farm and so on, and it's been burnt or damaged or whatever, of course, you just want to get it all going again as soon as you can. And that's straightforward. But for a number of people, it might end up being a life-changing event. Some people will say, particularly if they didn't have good insurance or whatever, that they're not going to be able to quite get back into the situation they were in. I think for those people, or maybe older people who just don't feel they've

quite got the energy to do it all again, I think it's really important to give yourselves time and stabilise things. Get your temporary accommodation, put the focus in getting a sort of lifestyle that is manageable now, give yourself some time and then decide.

"I tell the story of a Gippsland couple who I talked to about this sort of thing. They went away from the meeting after Black Summer. They'd lost everything on their property, which I think had a bit of a nursery and plantation and so on. The only thing that survived was a railway carriage, an old railway unit. So they put their grant money into renovating the railway carriage and they said, well, we'll live here for two years and then we'll decide what to do. And at the end of two years, they said, we actually feel a bit too tired and we're a bit too old to redevelop this entirely. So what they eventually decided to do was to bring forward their retirement plan by about 10 years, which was to buy a house in the neighbouring town where there were good medical services and supports, and they said 'we are thoroughly enjoying renovating this house and joining the community in the town and we'll probably still do something with our property but it won't be the same'. So in a way, this has been a creative opportunity and so if people are just focused on what they've lost and maybe they can recoup it or maybe they can't, think of this as an opportunity to say okay, where will I go now? What's important? What can be a good life goal? And to do that you've got to allow some time, settle down, stabilise things and just give yourself time."

His advice was similar to the advice of Black Saturday survivors, recently included in this newspaper: Don't make snap decisions.

## *Children*

There are particular challenges for children, and parents of children, in the fire-impacted areas. Dr Gordon said, "I think what's important for children is we know that their resilience is very much associated with their parents and how the parents can set up a good, stable lifestyle with enjoyment and time. Now, if the parents are worried and sad, that's difficult, but you can do it, with a bit of thought. Just make sure that you don't have all the long, complicated conversations about 'what are we going to do about this, that or the other', in front of the children.

"You might keep them informed. Particularly if they're teenagers, they will know what's going on. Keep them informed, but try and shield them a bit from the raw uncertainties the adults feel."

He said that children could form the view that they might end up living under a bridge. "That's the sort of conclusions that young kids draw," Dr Gordon said. "Reassure them, we'll get through this. It'll be okay... We're going to work it out. In the meantime, what would you like to do on the weekend?"

"Maintaining contact with their friends and peers, if possible, particularly if they move away, is very valuable... Trying to pay attention to the natural stages of their

development and what they need to be doing next."

He said that children might not ask for things like going riding on their bike or visiting friends if they can see the family's tense and worried. "I think it's so important for them to continue," Dr Gordon said. "By all means, get them to help out, but also make sure that they can actually get on with their own development. Otherwise, that causes problems later if they haven't done those stages."

## *Those who help others*

Many people have been helping others in the community, so Dr Gordon was asked if he has any advice for them.

Dr Gordon said, "One of the first things I'd say is disasters affect everybody, but in their own unique way. You don't have to have material loss to be severely affected. It can be severely affected because, you've got some other issues in your life and you've been used to getting the support of neighbours and friends, but they're all unavailable now.

"I can think of that example from an earlier fire. I worked with a young mother, a single mother with, some challenging kids, and she had a bunch of good friends in the area that helped her and supported her, but they were all now busy with their fire recovery and so she was suddenly felt kind of alone and overwhelmed with their problems. I think it's very important that people don't judge other people's need in the community and realise that everyone is involved in different ways.

"Often people who may feel a bit of survival guilt you know, my house didn't burn, I should help out, will be very strongly motivated to help out. But I would say this, that as soon as possible over the next few weeks, people should try and organise their lifestyle so that they can continue that voluntary work. It's incredibly valuable and it's wonderful to see the, the emerging groups and supports that are happening. That's going to be the most important value for the communities.

"But I can tell you that those helpers often get into strife in the second year, where they become exhausted. I can think of examples of people who didn't actually pay attention to what was going on with their children at that time, and then they suddenly find they've got problems with their kids at school or something. Or people will work hard and then their health suffers. So I'd say over the next little while, the next month or so, try and actually think about how you can get things organised so you can continue that valuable work, but also keep track of your own responsibilities and take time out, because again, it's a long-term process. Very often what comes out of it is a much stronger, more cohesive community.

"But people need to be cautious about the tendency that we all have when we're in a high-stress state of being judgmental, having simplistic ideas. I don't know what you're complaining about, you didn't get burnt, or this, that or the other. Try and just think of it as the whole community, we're all affected, we've all got entitled to feel sad, even if we're just sad at the loss of nature. We can all support each other if we can open our hearts to each other. And because sometimes just the misunderstandings and tensions and conflicts and then people withdraw and so on. I'd say really holding together the whole community, acknowledging everybody's got a right to come to these events and to use the services. And then for the volunteers to really start building their own self-care into the whole process."

He added, "I'd like to say that I think these communities I've seen are in very good hands. I'm very optimistic that people will get through this and that these communities will come out with something positive. It's just a matter of making sure that they take care of themselves on the journey. I think it'll take time for the state government and the shires to do all their assessments and get the funding flowing, but when that happens, I think people probably feel there's a bit more support in the system."

*Dr Gordon will be speaking at the Alexandra Shire Hall on Wednesday, March 4 at 6.30pm. Details can be found in the advertisement on page 7 of this edition.*



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## The benefits of biodynamic food and farming

BIODYNAMIC (BD) farming, and by extension, the food produced using this method, has many health benefits. This food is reported to have superior nutrient density, higher antioxidant levels, and is most notably free from pesticide and chemical residues.

An article titled, 'Biodynamic food for optimum health' on *biodynamic.com.au* describes many of the health effects of biodynamic food.

"Sought-after Geelong naturopath/homeopath, osteopath and acupuncturist, Kevin Ryan, recommends that his patients seek organic food to reduce exposure to chemical residues, and whenever they have a choice, to buy Biodynamic produce in preference, for optimum health," the article reads.

"Iridology signs indicate that most patients present with impaired liver function. Kidney and gut function are frequently compromised as well. This is contributed to by pesticide residue in foods.

"Organic food will provide the same freedom from chemical residues, but will not provide the same stimulus to vitality that BD food does.

"BD food is well known for its exceptional keeping quality. This reflects the enhanced vitality of the food. Food with lowered vitality wilts and breaks down more quickly."

For those who do not understand what biodynamic food is, it is a way of farming that aims to remain as natural as possible. Various organisations around the world oversee the practice, and rigorous paperwork and certification has to be completed before a farmer can start farming biodynamically.

The process offers many benefits, including no artificial fertilisers or pesticides, soil that is regenerated and improved, less risk of flooding, drought and fire hazards, food full of vitality and nutrients with no GMOs or chemicals, and relatively low-cost farming.

According to the website *kisstheground.com*, a "biodynamic farmer sees their farm as its own ecosystem, supporting the wellbeing of the whole: soil and shrubs, flowers and meadows, forests and wetlands, cultivated land, animals, and people.

"At its core, biodynamics creates habitats for plants and animals to thrive, which produces food that is full of vitality and nutrients. Biodynamics never uses Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) because it's aimed at preserving our environment and biodiversity.

"Soil fertility is of critical importance on Biodynamic farms. Healthy soil not only improves the content and flavour of biodynamic food, it is also the foundation for healthy ecosystems."

In an article published in *Wellbeing Journal*, Tharlya Crompton writes, "Biodynamics is an all-encompassing approach to farming and uses the sun, moon, stars and planets of Earth to bring about balance and healing, treating the farm as a living organism. One that's self-contained and self-sustainable."

The concepts of biodynamic farming were introduced by Rudolph Steiner all the way back in 1924. The process has come a long way since then, and more and more studies of the health benefits have been conducted over time.

In a paper titled 'A comprehensive analysis of organic food: Evaluating nutritional value and impact on human health', the authors scientifically listed the potential health benefits of eating organic. Biodynamic food is a step up from that.

"The goal of organic farming practices is to maintain soil health, sustain ecological systems, maintain fairness in its relationship with the environment and protect the environment in its entirety," the authors write.

"Various health benefits have been associated with higher consumption of organic foods. This review identified some of these health benefits, including a reduction in obesity and body mass index (BMI), improvements in blood nutrient composition as well as reductions in maternal obesity and pregnancy-associated preeclampsia risks.

"Furthermore, organic food consumption can reduce the development of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) and colorectal cancers. Upon reviewing the existing literature regarding the nutritional value of organic foods, it was found that organic food contained higher levels of iron, magnesium and vitamin C."



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Let's eat; it's our treat



The banner of the Hume Goulburn CWA group. -BD



Some of the CWA goods on display. -BD

# CWA Hume Goulburn Group half-yearly meeting at Molesworth Hall



Each of the CWA branches had the opportunity to talk about their activities for the later half of 2025 into 2026. -BD



A number of different CWA branches from across the group were in attendance, including Alexandra, Euroa, Mansfield and more. The meeting was held in the Molesworth Hall. -BD

# Indi Volunteer Grants

EXPRESSIONS of Interest have been opened for the 2025-26 Indi Volunteer Grants program, Independent Federal Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines has announced.

Grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 are available to support the work of local community organisations to increase participation in volunteering and enable the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

“Volunteer organisations do incredible work every day, and there is always strong interest in these grants from a variety of hard-working, community focused organisations,” Dr Haines said.

Two streams of grant funding are available in the 2024-25 Volunteer Grants program.

Stream 1 funds the purchase of communication or insurance items that will benefit a community organisation’s volunteers.

Stream 2 funds the items of the running volunteer-led activities that support the development (including volunteering) of groups such as children, First Nations People, veterans, new arrived migrants, people with disability, and women at risk of experiencing gender-based violence or isolation.

Dr Haines said, “Volunteer grants can help take the pressure off costs such as phone bills, insurance and training, which are becoming increasingly more expensive.

“There is also a strong focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of groups experiencing barriers to participation in the community.

“Every year, I’m inspired by the passion and hard work of volunteer groups that I meet with across Indi and they tell me that grants like this go a long way in supporting volunteers to continue their important work.

“I encourage not-for-profit community organisations across Indi to consider putting in an expression of interest.”

Applications will be assessed by a panel of community members, with successful applicants then invited to apply to the Department of Social Services for a grant.

“Volunteers support our communities in so many and varied ways, and I pay tribute to them for their continued commitment and hard work,” Dr Haines added.

Details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found at [helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2026](https://helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2026)

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# The Farmer's Ag News

## MLA secures grant to strengthen Australia-China cattle and red meat industry cooperation

MEAT and Livestock Australia (MLA) in partnership with industry peak bodies, has secured a grant from the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations to deliver a major new initiative designed to deepen engagement between Australian and Chinese cattle and red meat industry stakeholders.

The funding will support two major exchanges: an inbound delegation of emerging and established Chinese red meat industry leaders to Australia, followed by an outbound visit by Australian peak industry bodies to China.

Activities will culminate in the inaugural Australia China Livestock and Red Meat Industry Cooperation Forum, which will lay the groundwork for a potential industry-to-industry Memorandum of Understanding on issues of mutual benefit.

The project is supported by the National Foundation for Australia China Relations and aligns with the Foundation's mission to

strengthen engagement between Australia and China in support of Australia's national interests.

MLA Managing Director Michael Crowley said the grant represents a significant opportunity to build on the long standing and successful trade relationship between Australia and China, and to further strengthen cooperation across the red meat and livestock sectors.

"China remains one of Australia's most important markets for red meat, and this grant enables MLA and our industry partners

to strengthen the relationships and technical dialogue that underpin long term market access and commercial opportunity," Mr Crowley said.

"This support from the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations is vital in helping MLA build capability, deepen cooperation and foster a more resilient, trusted and collaborative cattle and red meat industry relationship."

CEO of the National Foundation for Australia-China Relations, Gary Cowan,

welcomed the project's contribution to strengthening bilateral industry engagement.

"Greater cooperation in the red meat industry will help strengthen the foundations of an important trade market and forge lasting connections. The Foundation is pleased to support high quality programs that bring together emerging and established leaders from Australia and China, which will help build more confident engagement with China and advance Australia's economic resilience," Mr Cowan said.

"The initiative will bring together peak bodies, researchers, producers and government linked technical agencies across both countries, creating structured industry dialogue on areas such as biosecurity, meat standards, genetics, feed systems and supply chain optimisation."

The National Foundation for Australia-China Relations is an Australian Government initiative that promotes and coordinates enhanced cooperation between Australia and China in support of Australia's national interests.

Its work includes strengthening risk informed engagement with China, engaging Chinese Australian communities, and supporting key Australian sectors including agriculture to engage effectively in China.

### New WorkSafe campaign to promote farm safety

EVERY farmer deserves to come home safely at the end of the day, and a safer farm is a stronger business.

A new WorkSafe campaign is encouraging Victorian farmers to see safety as an investment that protects lives, improves productivity and strengthens long-term success.

Deputy Premier Ben Carroll launched the *Safety – it does more than keep you safe* campaign, which highlights how simple safety improvements can make farms safer, more efficient and more sustainable.

"It's tragic to see farmers continuing to be overrepresented in workplace fatalities," Mr Carroll said.

"This campaign is about sharing the tangible benefits of simple safety improvements. I encourage those in the industry to look out for each other and share safety advice, knowledge and learnings, because it can make a difference."

The \$2.8 million campaign runs across television, radio, print, outdoor, digital and social media. It features real Victorian farmers sharing their own experiences.

Fifth-generation farmer Rob Abbott, who runs Mount William Station at Willaura, is one of them.

After upgrading his cattle yards, Mr Abbott found processing cattle became safer, quicker and less stressful for his animals, improving both safety and productivity.

Agriculture workers continue to be over-represented in workplace fatalities, accounting for around 10 per cent of annual workplace deaths despite making up just two per cent of Victoria's workforce.

Farm vehicles such as tractors, quad bikes and trucks account for almost half of those deaths. Livestock incidents remain another leading cause.

WorkSafe provides practical, industry-designed guidance to help farmers identify risks and make meaningful improvements on their properties.

Farmers are encouraged to talk with others in the industry about what works, share lessons learned and take simple steps that can prevent tragedy while improving the way they operate.

For more information visit [worksafe.vic.gov.au/agriculture](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au/agriculture)



## First virtual fencing product approved for use

THE Victorian Government is making it easier and safer for farmers to raise cattle with the first approved virtual fencing technology.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced that the Halter's P5 electronic collar system is the first to be approved in Victoria for virtual fencing.

"We're making it easier for farmers to care for their herds and to deliver high quality beef and dairy produce to Victorian families," Ms Spence said.

"This approval makes sure Victorian farmers have access to the latest innovative technology."

This technology will help farmers to save on the cost of building and maintaining cattle fencing through smart, real-time technology.

The government have heard from many farmers using various forms of virtual fencing, and it was clear that the technology made a significant difference to the health of their stock, their pastures and their workloads.

Halter's P5 system features a collar connected to an app, allowing farmers to virtually fence, move and monitor wellbeing of their cows while receiving real-time insights into animal health and pasture conditions.

CEO and founder of Halter, Craig Piggott, expressed his excitement about the announcement.

"This is an exciting day for Victorian farmers, who can now access world-leading

virtual fencing and herding technology for dairy and beef," Mr Piggott said.

"We're really grateful to Minister Spence and the Victorian Government. This is obviously an exciting change, and I think this shows their support of agriculture and the sector, so we're excited to get going."

Farmers can virtually fence around waterways and sensitive land or vegetation, while still allowing native animals to access them, promoting faster pasture recovery, healthier riparian zones and reduced reliance on fertiliser.

The technology has been approved following rigorous animal welfare testing at the Ellinbank SmartFarm.

This will create over 70 new jobs, working directly with cattle farmers to install this technology.

Approvals are reliant on accurate record keeping and reporting, use of approved technology, training provided by the manufacturer, maintaining physical boundary fences or barriers and ensuring collars are checked regularly.

This technology is now available for purchase, with other Victorian manufacturers encouraged to apply so that more virtual fencing technology can be approved. A second application is currently being considered.

Electronic collars for livestock species other than cattle can only be used when a scientific licence has been granted under the POCTA Act, and the use is approved by an Animal Ethics Committees.

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**MATH SQUARES**

6	+	4	x	7	34
-		+		+	
9	-	1	-	8	0
x		-		-	
5	+	2	+	3	10
-39		3		12	

**SUDOKU**

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

**KIDS - MATH SQUARES**

6	+	4	-	7	3
+		+		-	
8	-	1	-	2	5
-		-		-	
3	+	5	+	9	17
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## MEETINGS

**YEA Saleyards committee of management.**  
Notice of annual general meeting.  
Tuesday, March 10, 2026.  
The Yea Saleyards Community Asset Committee of Management (\$65) will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, 5pm at the Yea Saleyards canteen.  
Enquiries can be directed to Coordinator Saleyard Operations, Lisa Elward 0419 722 570.

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## BIRTHDAYS

To celebrate the 100th birthday of Norma Tobias on March 16, 2026. An afternoon tea is being provided at Rosebank Aged Care Yea between 2 and 4pm. RSVP to Lorraine on 5736 0410 by March 6.

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CREDITORS, next-of-kin and others having claims in respect of the estate of the deceased who died at Peter McCallum Cancer Institute, Melbourne Victoria on 18 July 2025, are required by Steven Agostino Peluso, the executor and trustee of the estate of the said named deceased, to send particulars of their claims to him, care of the undermentioned solicitors by Thursday 7 May 2026, after which date he may convey or distribute the assets having regard only to the claims of which he then has notice.  
MAHONS with Yuncken & Yuncken Solicitors, 101/177 Surrey Road, Blackburn, VIC 3130  
TMM:2251259"

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**TRADES ADVERTISING DEADLINE NOON THURSDAY**

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Karynn Tucknott with Ambulance Victoria paramedic Claire Duke who responded to her case in January 2025. -S

## Warning: Snakes are still around

AMBULANCE Victoria (AV) paramedics and first responders have been called to 171 suspected snakebites since November, and urge Victorians to stay vigilant for the slippery nope ropes if heading outdoors.

From November 1, 2025 to February 21, 2026, AV paramedics and first responders attended 48 incidents in Hume, 20 in Loddon Mallee, 25 in Barwon Southwest, 37 in Metro, 20 in Gippsland and 17 in Grampians (with another four cases not having a specified region).

AV Manager Emergency Management Rebecca Hirsch said of these cases, 165 people were transported to hospital.

"We've had some significant periods of hot weather this summer, and the long-range forecast for the Labour Day long weekend is looking like the perfect weather to be out and about... but that includes snakes," she said.

"Most snakes in Victoria are venomous, and a bite can be life-threatening.

"Bites can often be avoided simply by being observant in areas that are likely to attract snakes, such as near rivers, long grass or sheds."

"Victorians can also take preventative measures around their home by keeping their property clear of rocks, logs and building materials, and keeping grass short.

"If someone is suspected to have suffered a snake bite, even if you're not sure, you should call Triple Zero (000) immediately."

### A local case

Karynn Tucknott, a surgical administrator from Alexandra, was cooling off in a local river on a scorching 44 degree day in January last year, when a leisurely dip turned into a life-threatening emergency.

Standing in the shallows with her niece, Karynn recalls shifting a submerged log when, to her shock, a snake swam around her.

"I didn't realise I'd been bitten at the time," she said. "It wasn't until I got home and jumped in the shower that I noticed a bite mark on the back of my leg."

After discovering the bite, Karynn called Triple Zero (000). "The ambulance arrived within minutes. By then, my vision was blurry, and I felt extremely unwell. I honestly thought I was going to die."

Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedics stabilised Karynn and transported her to the Northern Hospital under lights and sirens.

"I'm so grateful for the quick response and care I received. The paramedics were incredibly reassuring and helped to keep me calm," she said.

Karynn now hopes her experience will raise awareness and save lives.

"I want to encourage everyone to be snake-aware this summer. If you think you've been bitten, stay still and call for help," she said.

### Snake bite first aid

Snake bites may cause pain and swelling around the puncture wound, or there may be very few signs left on the skin. Symptoms that snake venom has entered your body may include dizziness, blurred vision, breathing difficulties, nausea, muscle weakness or paralysis.

Rebecca said there are some basic first aid steps people can take while waiting for an ambulance if they're with someone who suffers a bite.

"If a snake bite victim is unresponsive and not breathing normally, you should begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)," she said.

"If the patient is conscious, it is important to keep them still and reassured while waiting for help. Only move them if it is too unsafe to stay put.

"Snake bites commonly occur on hands, feet or limbs, so applying a pressure immobilisation bandage to the affected limb can also make a big difference to the treatment and outcome of a snake bite incident."

The Australian Resuscitation Council recommends applying a pressure immobilisation bandage (snakebite bandage) starting at the fingers or toes and working up the arm or leg as far as possible, ensuring that the bite site is covered. If a bandage has already been applied to the bite, or if the bite is covered with clothing, the pressure immobilisation bandage should be applied over this.

If you don't have a pressure immobilisation bandage, use a firmly applied regular bandage or an item of clothing at least 10 to 15cm wide.

Keep the patient as still as possible and, if able, use a splint of some kind to prevent movement of the affected limb. Do not remove the pressure immobilisation bandage until the patient gets to hospital.

People should not wash the site of the bite, as venom left on the skin can be used to help identify the type of snake and the anti-venom required.

### Snake bite prevention and tips

Victoria's snake season is typically between September and April. Always give snakes a wide berth and allow them the opportunity to flee. All snake bites should be considered a medical emergency. Most (but not all) Victorian snakes are venomous. Do not attempt to catch or kill a snake yourself. Bite marks may not be obvious. Seek help immediately and call Triple Zero (000) if you suspect you have been bitten

### If you or someone you're with is bitten

Remember DRSABC (Dangers? Responsive? Send for help. Open airway. Check for breathing. Start CPR if required).

Call Triple Zero (000). Keep the patient still and reassure them. Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage. Splint the limb to prevent movement. Wait with the patient until help arrives.

Heat health resources are available in multiple languages at [ambulance.vic.gov.au/translated-resources](http://ambulance.vic.gov.au/translated-resources)

# Grants available to back community-led digital initiatives

FOUNDATION for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and Telstra are inviting remote, rural and regional community groups to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 through round four of Telstra's *Connected Communities Grant Program*, which opened last Tuesday.

With \$200,000 available, the program will support locally-led initiatives that strengthen digital inclusion, enhance community connection and resilience, and build sustainability and liveability of rural Australia.

Now in its fourth year, the program has already enabled almost 70 not-for-profit organisations nationwide to upgrade digital infrastructure, deliver digital skills training, support disaster readiness and improve service delivery. This has led to more resilient communities, greater digital equity, sustained social connection, more empowered volunteers and staff, as well as environmental and cultural benefits.

Jill Karena, FRRR's Head of Granting, said previous rounds show communities are not just wanting access to technology, they are seeking the capability, confidence and infrastructure to sustain and strengthen their community.

"Digital access is fundamental to community wellbeing and opportunity, whether you're running a local service, volunteering, learning, caring for Country

or staying connected in times of crisis," Ms Karena said.

"Rural communities are using digital tools in incredibly creative and practical ways: from First Nations organisations developing digital platforms to share language and culture, to volunteer groups strengthening emergency communication, through to Neighbourhood Centres delivering cyber safety workshops and digital mentoring.

"Grants that support projects like these help bridge the digital divide by enabling community groups to embed technology into local solutions, build long-term capability and ensure no one is left behind."

Telstra's *Connected Communities Grant Program* attracts strong interest from groups seeking to modernise operations, improve cyber security, develop digital learning programs, support remote participation or equip local hubs with accessible digital resources. There is also increasing demand for technology that enhances disaster preparedness and strengthens social connections, especially for older people, young people and isolated residents.

Loretta Willaton, Telstra's Regional Australia Executive, said Telstra is proud to back grassroots organisations that are using technology to strengthen the fabric of their communities.

"The organisations applying to this program are tackling very real challenges:

Distance, limited connectivity, workforce pressures, ageing populations and more," Ms Willaton explained.

"What stands out year after year is how communities are able to innovate when they have the right tools. They are improving emergency response systems, creating safe and inclusive digital learning spaces, preserving environmental and cultural knowledge, and ensuring people can stay connected, informed and supported, no matter where they live.

"Telstra is proud to work with FRRR to support these local solutions and help build a more digitally capable and resilient rural Australia."

## Grantseeker Webinar

To learn more about eligibility criteria and what's required in the application, go to [frrr.org.au/funding/telstra-connected-communities-program/](http://frrr.org.au/funding/telstra-connected-communities-program/)

Applications opened at 9am on Tuesday, February 24 and close at 5pm on Thursday, March 26. Applicants will be notified of outcomes by the end of June 2026.

## What communities have achieved so far

Insights from the first three rounds confirm that community-led digital projects are creating practical, lasting change across rural Australia.

Projects have had significant impacts, including increased: Digital literacy and

inclusion: skills training for seniors, CALD communities, young people and people with disability, as well as First Nations communities, supporting language, Culture and education programs.

Community resilience: upgraded emergency communications, mobile boosters, satellite equipment and digital alert systems, as well as easier access to training and enhanced operational capacity for volunteers.

Education and youth engagement: infrastructure provision and upgrades, including tablets and conferencing equipment, digital learning kits, creative media programs and enhanced online learning environments.

Social connection: training and new technology to enable remote access to activities, upgraded community hubs as digital anchors, online programs and community learning spaces.

Environmental and cultural innovation: digital storytelling projects, environmental monitoring tools and First Nations-led cultural projects.

Organisational capability: modernised systems, improved websites, cloud-based tools and volunteer management software.

Together, these impacts demonstrate how technology, when placed in local hands, helps build communities that are more resilient, equitable and connected.

## Paramedics back on the road faster in the Hume region

AMBULANCE Victoria (AV) paramedics and first responders are getting back on the road faster and improving response times thanks to a significant drop in clearing times in the Hume Region.

Hospital clearing times are the duration between an ambulance crew completing their patient handover and being available to attend another case.

Introduced last year, the Standards for Safe and Timely Ambulance and Emergency Care (the standards) are improving handover times across the state.

Hume Regional Director Narelle Capp said in the Hume Region, the average hospital clearing times dropped by more than five minutes last year.

"Every small improvement, from more efficient hospital handovers to quicker clearing times, adds up to better care for all Victorians," Ms Capp said.

"We are extremely proud of our paramedic and first responder crews who through dedication and teamwork have made remarkable improvements to hospital clearing times and are returning to the community faster."

The Hume Region average clearing time has dropped from 29.7 minutes between January and March 2025 to 24.4 minutes between October and December 2025.

The latest ambulance performance data for October to December 2025 has shown improvements statewide and in 49 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

During the October to December quarter across Victoria, AV crews responded to 65.1 per cent of Code One cases within the state-wide target of 15 minutes, up from 64.1 per cent in the previous quarter. The state-wide average response time to Code One emergencies was 15 minutes and 40 seconds, six seconds faster than the previous quarter.

AV responded to 100,292 Code One emergencies across Victoria during the October to December quarter, slightly down on the previous quarter but still the third highest on record.

"Despite this 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," Ms Capp said.

In the Hume Region, paramedics and first responders responded to 5791 Code One cases between October and December 2025.

AV Acting Executive Director Regional Operations Michael 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.

"Reducing clearing times is just one way we are striving to achieve the standards, with work also underway to complete more efficient patient transfers and using other care options such as the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) when safe and appropriate," Mr Georgiou said.

## Murrindindi Historic Vehicle Register club visits Marysville

ON Wednesday, March 18, 26 members of the local Murrindindi Historic Vehicle Register club arrived at The Pavilion, Bar and Grill at Marysville for a lunch.

This restaurant is located at Marysville Golf Course and provides a wonderful view out onto the lush green landscape with their watering systems working, instead of the dry desert everywhere else.

Some people met at Rotary Park in Alexandra, while others who live closer made the choice to meet at Marysville. No morning tea for this run and probably just as well as the meals were plentiful.

There were many choices and everyone seemed to be very happy with their meal, although there were some that had 'meal envy' when the meals started coming out and started to rethink their meal choice.

After lunch, committee member Sandra ran the raffle to replenish the kitty, as money raised through previous member raffles in 2025 had been donated to local charities. One major contribution was \$700 donation for the bushfire relief efforts via Foundation Murrindindi and an annual donation to Alexandra Secondary College of \$250.

Well done to the small team at The Pavilion Bar and Grill for accommodating the group. The meals were great, prompt to the table and the service was fantastic.

Congratulations to committee members Sandra and president Phil for recognising that local businesses are doing it tough due to the devastating fires in the area and organising to support local businesses with the 2026 car run calendar.



Members of the Murrindindi Historic Vehicle Register at lunch. -S

"By leaving hospitals faster, we can get to the patients who need our lifesaving care the most, and that means better patient outcomes."

Mr Georgiou said the support of the community can also help save lives.

"If you need help but it's not life-threatening, we encourage you to consider the most appropriate care for your situation," Mr Georgiou said.

"AV paramedics and first responders 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.

"Getting the right care at the right time can make a big difference. There are many options people can access when they need timely medical care and health advice, but

not an emergency ambulance, including the VVED and Nurse-on-Call which are available at any time of the night or day. Local Urgent Care Clinics, GPs and pharmacists are also great options."

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.

"From October to December, 49,737 people who did not need an emergency ambulance were instead connected to more appropriate care by paramedics and nurses in Triage Services," Mr Georgiou said.

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

# Yea High School's House Swimming Sports day



ON February 13, Yea High School held their annual House Swimming Sports day. Fantastic sportsmanship and behaviour was displayed by the students. Thank you to all staff who assisted in allowing the day to run so smoothly.

Congratulations to Clarke house for taking out the overall win for the day.

Congratulations to the students who took out the age champion honours. They all swam multiple times throughout the day.

### House results

Clarke 271	Casey 205
Burnet 212	Dennis 175

### Age champions

- 12 year old female: Hayley Krickic
- 13 year old female: Isla Ansty
- 13 year old male: Will Mullis
- 14 year old female: Lexi Harris
- 14 year old male: Blake Krickic
- 15 year old female: Kyla Dowling
- 15 year old male: Flynn Roberts
- 16 year old female: Lily Nelson
- 17 year old female: Lily Delulio
- 17 year old male: Jai Hay
- 18 year old female: Dayna Kelly
- 18 year old male: Jasper Bastion

No awards were presented for 12 and 16 year old males.



## SPORT

# SDCA cricket reports

## A Grade

YEA Tigers 6/103 (J Christie 43, B Hardinge 22, L Deeble 3/9, C Crabbe 2/19) defeated Puckapunyal 9/101 (J Baker 17, C Crabbe 15, C Blake 2/6, A Butterworth 2/11).

Puckapunyal batted first at Yea and got off to a solid start before Andrew Butterworth claimed the key wicket of Charles Davies.

Across a tight spell of 2/11 off eight overs Butterworth slowed Puckapunyal down with both Ethan and Craig Blake also taking multiple wickets.

Joel Baker with 17 and Christopher Crabbe with 15 were the pick of Puckapunyal's batters.

In Yea's run chase it was Jack Christie who stole the show, smashing 43 off 33 balls with seven fours and one six.

Biron Hardinge also got the runs ticking over before Lachlan Deeble (3/9) caused some temporary chaos.

Yea was still able to get over the line with four wickets left in the shed in the 18th over.

Alexandra 99 (S Whitehead 21, W Ashton 21, K Winnell 4/12, T Dundon 3/18) defeated Tallarook 8/96 (L Watts 37, J Rudge 23, J Leary 3/14, W Ashton 2/19).

Alexandra batted first after a delayed start with Scott Whitehead commencing the innings with positivity.

Kal Winnell (4/12) and Tarkyn Dundon (3/18) continued their strong seasons with Will Ashton and Matthew Wal putting together a critical lower order partnership to get Alexandra to a score of 99.

Both Josh Rudge (23) and Lachlan Watts (37) put together solid innings for Tallarook but it was not enough as Alexandra caused an upset.

Justin Leary picked up three key wickets while Will Ashton claimed a couple as Tallarook fell three runs short.

Alexandra now sits in the top four and can remain there if they beat Seymour in the final round.

## B Grade

Tallarook 5/117 (K Minter 44, S Manchester 31, J Ferrier 3/15) defeated Alexandra 115 (L Ronalds 46, F Melville 4/22, B O'Donnell 2/15).

Yea Tigers 45 (P Clue 17, B Kingston 4/15, P Brennan 3/30) defeated by Puckapunyal (P Brennan 33, S Chisholm 15, Z Mills 4/16, R Daniel 2/29).

## Junior Finals

Under 13s on Saturday, March 7 at 8.30am. Alexandra versus Yea at Alexandra.

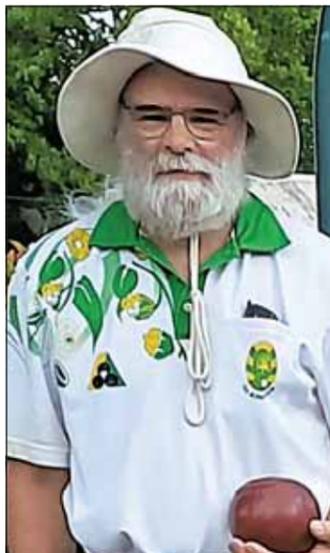
Under 16s on Sunday, March 8 at 9.30am. Seymour versus Yea at Seymour.



Students from several schools competed in the round robin. -S



Women's singles club champion 2025-26, Angela Finn. -S



Men's singles club champion 2025-26, Jeff Green. -S



Women's pairs club champions 2025-26, Viv Cavanagh and Judy Elenius. -S



Men's pairs club champions 2025-26, Mick Barrott and Wayne Martin. -S

## Yea Bowls Club news

by Maurie Finn

### Regional Secondary Schools Event

SECONDARY Schools from around the region held their annual competition last Tuesday. With coaching from Yea Bowls Club members, 70 students learnt the basics of lawn bowling: the bias of the bowl, placing the mat, rolling the jack and how to score.

It was amazing how much improvement there was throughout the day.

The overall winners were St. Mary's College Seymour +18, from Seymour Secondary College +14, and Steiner School, Mansfield +12. Other schools that competed were from Euroa, Mansfield and FCJ Benalla.

### Barefoot Bowls

Barefoot Bowls was cancelled again due to inclement weather conditions.

### Community Challenge

Yea Bowls Club's Community Challenge commences this Thursday evening at 6pm.

Now is the opportunity to get your own team of three players together or just put your name in and be placed in a team. The Community Challenge will run for four weeks in March, with prize money up for grabs. Head along and join in the challenge.

### Monday Triples

Sponsored by GV Plumbing for the month of February, a large number of players competed in near perfect conditions. Overall winners were: Ian (Tiny), Kym Cooper, and Howard Geldard. Runners up Jeff Green, Darren Sherman, Jeff Edwards.

### Social Bowls

Social Bowls of a Thursday morning at 10am is proving to be popular. And a new initiate has begun of a casual rollup at 11am on Saturdays. If you would like to head along and give bowls a try, club members will be only too pleased to teach the basics of bowling.



Monday Triples winners Ian (Tiny), Kym and Howard. -S

### Champion of Champions

Mick Barrott and Doug Shirrefs in the men's pairs, Judy Elenius and Viv Cavanagh in the women's pairs, Jeff Green in the men's Singles and Angela Finn in the women's Singles, all represented the club well in the Champion of Champions regional event, but none were able to go through to the second round.

## YFNC receives sporting club grant

THE Victorian Government is kicking off 2026 with a fresh round of sporting grants to energise local clubs and make it easier for players, coaches, volunteers and officials to get involved in the sports they love.

Minister Spence last Wednesday announced clubs across Victoria will share in 672 grants through the *Sporting Club Grants Program*, with a new round also now open for applications.

"We're making it easier for more Victorians to get involved in local sports, which keeps people healthy

and connected with their community," Ms Spence said.

"We're proud to provide this boost that opens up a range of opportunities on and off the field."

The program provides grants of up to \$1000 for uniforms and equipment; up to \$1500 for resources that improve governance and engagement; up to \$5000 for projects to strengthen volunteering and officiating; up to \$5000 to deliver a new sport or recreation program and up to \$750 to support athlete travel.

Yea Football Netball Club Inc received a grant for football and netball uniforms or equipment.

The Sporting Club Grants Program has injected more than \$19.5 million in support to thousands of community sport and recreation clubs across the state over the past decade.

Applications for the new round of the *Sporting Club Grants* opened last Wednesday and will close on April 7, 2026. For more information about the program, latest recipients and how to apply visit [sport.vic.gov.au](http://sport.vic.gov.au)

## Merton cricketers are into the WDCA finals

MERTON cricketers have finished top of the Wangaratta and District Cricket Association (WDCA) b grade ladder with the finals starting next Saturday.

Merton will host sixth placed Yarrowonga after Ovens Valley United forfeited to Merton last Saturday.

The top six going into finals week is. Merton 75 points; City Colts 66; Rovers Bruck United 66; Ovens Valley 66; Greta 63; Yarrowonga 60. Finals are all 36 over one day matches starting at 1.30pm.

## Murrindindi Masters at Yea Golf Club

by Alan Pell

A STRONG field of 90 players competed in the final round of the 2026 Murrindindi Masters, held at the Yea Golf Club. Following bushfires in early January that forced the postponement of the scheduled Yea round, the series progressed through Alexandra, Marysville and Eildon before returning to Yea for the finale.

Despite the dry conditions across the district, the course was presented in very good condition and provided an excellent setting for the concluding round.

A sincere thank you to FoodWorks for their continued sponsorship of this annual event. Initial organiser Norm Reddrop would have been delighted with the strong participation from all clubs. Although currently in care and unable to attend, his representative Kathy was present on behalf of the sponsor.

This year also marked the inaugural presentation of the "Normie" Shield, awarded to the visiting club with the best ten scores combined. The inaugural winners were Yea Golf Club, finishing ahead of Marysville Golf Club.

### Saturday results

Ladies Mini Master Sharon Grogan (Yea), 40 pts; Ladies A Grade Winner: Jody Doran (Marysville), 33 pts; Runner-Up: Sabrina Stow (Marysville), 32 pts; Ladies B Grade Winner: Naomi Gist (Marysville), 40 pts; Runner-Up: Penny Britton (Yea), 38 pts; Men's Mini Master Tony Rule (Yea), 39 pts; Men's A Grade Winner: Shane Culpin (Broadford), 39 pts; Runner-Up: Luke Gregory (Yea), 39 pts; Men's B Grade Winner: Peter Lilley (Marysville), 36 pts; Runner-Up: Keith Atwell (Marysville), 35 pts; Men's C Grade Winner: Trevor Connell (Yea), 38 pts; Runner-Up: Jacob Heyen (Yea), 38 pts.

Nearest the pin (NTPs): second, Wayne Kupke (Eildon); 11th, Michael McLear (Eildon); 14th, Keith Atwell (Marysville); 18th, Adam Littlejohn (Marysville).

Overall Champions Men's Murrindindi Master 2026: Allan Mackwell (Eildon), 115 pts. Ladies Murrindindi Master 2026: Sandi McLear (Eildon), 112 pts.

Normie Shield: Yea Golf Club with 1045 points.

A successful conclusion to the 2026 Murrindindi Masters

series, highlighting the strength and camaraderie of golf across the district.

### Gender luncheon

After nine rounds of golf across the summer, it was finally time for the winners to enjoy their well-earned spoils. Having clearly outplayed the men in this year's competition, the ladies were hosted to a celebratory luncheon by the fellas.

A number of the men teed off early last Wednesday to warm up ahead of the festivities. Leading the field was Phil Armstrong (20) with an impressive 36 points, finishing ahead of Anthony La Grutta (16) on 35 and John Renehan (47) with 33 on countback. Phil also claimed nearest the pin on the 18th, while Steve Rumney took home the Club Award.

The ladies' competition was equally spirited. Penny Britton (31) secured victory with 31 points, followed closely by Meryl Connell (25) on 30 (countback), with Di Holdsworth (31) finishing third.

The luncheon was further highlighted by the presence of two special guests, Norma Tobias and Peter Keast, both past members whose contributions over



The ladies being treated to a celebratory luncheon, to celebrate their victory in the gender challenge. -S



The men hard at work in the kitchen preparing the lunch. -S

many years have played an important role in the club's development.

In the kitchen, Head Chef Gary Pollard, assisted by apprentices Bob Glenister and Martin Lowe, delivered a memorable feast. Guests were treated to paella for entrée, followed by chicken with lemon sauce served with potatoes, broccoli and an array of sumptuous salads, before indulging in a generous selection of desserts.

Catering for more than 50 people, the men contributed not only the food but also waitering, cooking and bar service. It was a once-in-a-decade effort, and if their determination is anything to go by, they're planning not to lose again for quite some time.



The luncheon was good fun for all involved. -S



Daniel reaches out to flick up Sam's low shot. -S

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

by Kristelle Leary

### Monday competition Magpies versus Cockatoos

JUSTIN (fill in) versus Jordan: Jordan came late and had Justin fill-in against him, with the request that his opponent does not hold back. Jordan had some good returns to Justin's skill and held out, but Justin had the upper hand throughout. 113 to 31.

Ethan versus Randy (fill in): With his opponent running late Ethan had Randy fill in against him. Ethan had some good shots, but Randy was all over the court to take the match. 56 to 53.

Randy versus Liane: Great game. Liane made some technical adjustments against Randy's serve that made the difference. Liane claimed the win. 74 to 48.

Matt versus Ben F: It was a brilliant match to witness. Matt was running the court like the jackrabbit he is, but Ben was on a

hot streak that couldn't be broken, playing some beautiful squash to claim a well earned victory. 55 to 46.

John versus Phil: With time comes experience and John put his to good use. Phil made a good play for each game but only managed to win the final game. John's expertise helped him in his triumph. 63 to 45.

### Pelicans versus Eagles

Tyler versus Eric: There were some great rallies. Tyler opened by nabbing the first game by a single point. From there he only increased his margin from there, taking all four games and the match. 65 to 46.

Ben F (fill in) versus Justin: In a continuation of his brilliant form, Ben was on fire. Justin put in 110 per cent but couldn't best Ben. With a second match under his belt for the night, Ben was the winner. 64 to 50.

Michael H versus Daniel W: Michael started strong. Daniel came home winning three games using shots deep to the back of the court. Daniel was the winner. 59 to 52.

### Wednesday competition Freightliners versus Western Stars

Nicole versus Jessica: With strong serves, Jessica shot out of the blocks only to be reeled back as Nicole levelled the first game. Jessica regained her momentum with deeper serves and good use of angles. Nicole doggedly ran the ball down and made the game close again. Jessica took the last game and the win. 51 to 44.

Sam versus Daniel L: With Sam running late, Kristelle filled-in for the first two games which did not go her way. She struggled with Daniel's cracking and powerful serves. Sam turned up and made Daniel adjust his game. With good returns and placement, Sam won the match. 62 to 60.

Michael M versus Ben F: In a high-intensity match, Michael gave away big leads in each of the first three games. Ben was able to play with a few centimetres more accuracy and variety. This was enough to keep his opponents' late attacks at bay and deliver a well-earned victory. 56 to 49

### Kenworths versus Scantias

Kristelle versus Travis: Travis was doing well and took the first two without too many issues from Kristelle. Going into the second half Travis had a 14-point lead. Kristelle started closing the gap, starting with three-point in the third followed by a further 10 points in the last game. Her streak came too late and Travis one by a single point. 68 to 67.

Daniel K versus Justin: Daniel had his shots cracking off the wall. It was closer in the first half with an 11-point difference, but Daniel raised the bar continually to dominate. 75 to 35.

# The Chronicle Sport



Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

## Murrindindi Little Athletics finish season on a high

MURRINDINDI Little Athletics wrapped up its final local competition day last Saturday, marking the end of another successful and energetic season. A fantastic turnout of enthusiastic athletes arrived ready to give their best efforts one last time, all eager to improve on their personal performances before the season's close.

Despite steady rain throughout much of the morning, spirits remained high across the track and field. The challenging weather did little to slow competitors, with many athletes achieving impressive personal best results, a

testament to their determination, resilience and commitment throughout the season.

The club is now excited to be sending a strong group of athletes to represent Murrindindi at the upcoming State Track and Field Championships in Melbourne. The community looks forward to following their achievements, with stories, results and photos to be shared in the coming weeks.

Murrindindi Little Athletics would like to sincerely thank its dedicated committee members, parents and volunteers whose ongoing support and countless hours of work behind the scenes and particularly on

Saturdays make the season possible. Their contribution continues to create a positive and encouraging environment for all young athletes in the club.

The club now looks ahead to celebrating the season at its Presentation Night, to be held on Friday, March 20 at Rotary Park. Members and families are warmly invited to come together to recognise the efforts and achievements of all athletes and volunteers.

A wonderful season has come to a close, highlighting once again the strong community spirit and passion for sport within Murrindindi.



Cate Caswell in the under 16 javelin. -S



Jo and Donna running the all important electronic timing. -S



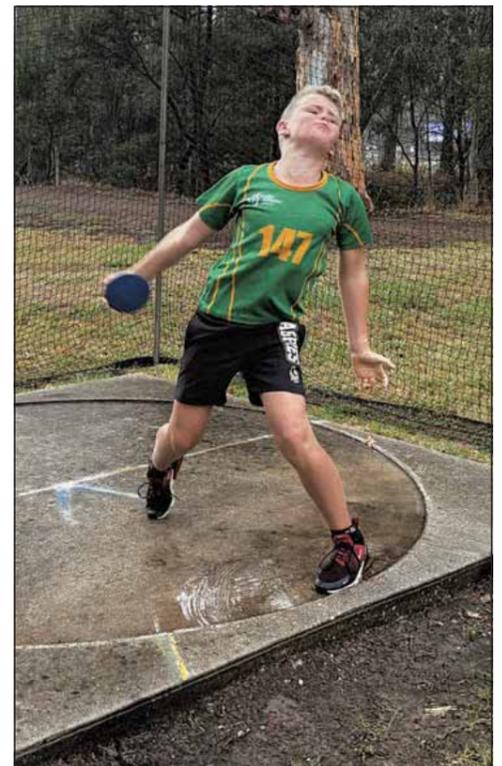
Personal best medallion recipients. -S



PJ Smith focussing while her group looks on. -S



Club records went to Levi Campbell in 1500m and Clay Hilder in shot put. -S



Logan giving it everything during his shot put on Saturday in preparation for state the following weekend. -S