

The Yea Chronicle

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au

alexandranewspapers.com.au

\$2.50 inc GST



**Homewood
Landcare's
annual Bush
Dance** Page 8



**Naidoc
Week Yea
Wetlands** Page 9



**Pippa
invited to
trial for Vic** Sport

McLeish: Bushfire appeal money needed now

SIX months after Victoria's devastating summer bushfires, some people are still living in sheds and tents, stock fences remain unrepaired and yet more than one-third of the money donated to the 2026 Victorian Bushfire Appeal remains unspent, according to Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish.

Ms McLeish first raised the issue with the Minister for Natural Disaster and Recovery in March, when donations to the appeal stood at \$666,000.

Since then, donations have grown to \$892,166, yet only \$550,000 has been distributed, leaving more than \$340,000 still to reach bushfire-affected communities.

She has called for the urgent release of bushfire appeal funds and greater transparency in how the remaining money will be distributed.

"People donated this money because they wanted to help communities recover, not to see it sitting in a bank account," Ms McLeish said.

"More than six months after these devastating fires, some families are still living in suboptimal accommodation, fences remain unrepaired, farmers are still trying to restore their properties and winter has now arrived.

"Every day these funds sit idle is another day people who have already endured so much are left waiting."

Ms McLeish said the Victorian Emergency Relief and Recovery Foundation's own website states donations may be used to provide immediate assistance, relief and services to support affected individuals and communities.

"No-one is questioning the generosity of Victorians who dug deep to support the appeal, the question is why that generosity is still sitting there," she said.

"We are a long way past immediate assistance."

Ms McLeish said greater transparency was needed around how funding decisions were being made and when the remaining funds would be distributed.

"Communities deserve to know what the plan is for the remaining money and when it will reach the people it was intended to help," she said.



RIVER RISE: With all the recent rainfall, the Yea River is very high.

PHOTO: Bailey Dixon.

Yea Caravan Park evacuated due to rain

By BAILEY DIXON

THE considerable rainfall last week led to a busy time for emergency services across Murrindindi Shire. In the west of the shire, the Yea River rose significantly, the Yea Caravan Park was evacuated, and there was some flooding on Webster Street.

Peter Weeks from the Alexandra SES provided a rundown on the situation across the shire.

The Yea River continued to rise last Friday. The Yea Caravan Park was evacuated mid last week. The Yea River did drop about 30cm and then came back up towards the end of the week. As of last Friday at 2pm, it was at

a height of 3.3m on the marker at the Yea Caravan Park. There was some flooding on Webster Street in Yea.

Flood warnings went out for the Goulburn River and the Acheron River with stream rises. There was around 60mm of rain until last Thursday around Murrindindi Shire that caused stream rises on most of the Yea, King Parrot and Acheron Rivers and the Rubicon River and Snobs Creek flowing into the Goulburn. The Goulburn was running quite high as of last Friday.

Considerable flooding occurred on Thornton-Taggerty Road last Thursday night, with SES crews attending

two locations.

The fire affected areas from the Longwood fire had issues as well. Spring Creek Road, where the temporary ford was put in place across Stoney Creek post-fires, and another ford on Spring Creek Road near the UK Gap had flooding.

There was also water across the road on Coles Road, which is a continuation of Spring Creek Road which isolated around 20 people for a couple of days while the water was up.

Council were quick off the mark and had the temporary ford and the two other fords assessed on Spring Creek Road, with the verdict that they were

still able to be crossed, but water went up and down causing further issues for a couple of days mid-week.

There was a landslide on Skyline Road near the Taylor Bay turn off last Thursday. A large boulder rolled down as part of the landslide. Council attended that incident along with police and SES.

A number of trees went down across Murrindindi Shire with the Alexandra, Marysville and Kinglake SES attending to those incidents throughout last week, especially with the strong winds.

Peter estimated the three SES units attended around 30 jobs last week up until 2pm on Friday.

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE

Standard

The Xea Chronicle

NEM

NORTH EAST MEDIA

LOCAL NEWS AND MEDIA

WEATHER

TEMPERATURES: Alexandra Yea

Wednesday	2 - 14	2 - 13
Thursday	2 - 13	1 - 14
Friday	4 - 14	3 - 14
Saturday	9 - 13	8 - 13
Sunday	7 - 11	7 - 11
Monday	8 - 11	7 - 12
Tuesday	6 - 12	6 - 13

RAINFALL: 7 days from 9am Monday

Alexandra	67mm
Buxton	51mm
Eildon (AWS)	63mm
Flowerdale	90mm
Jamieson	92mm
Kinglake	110mm
Lake Eildon	74mm
Mansfield	44mm
Taggerty	89mm
Yarck	87mm
Yea	51mm

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level	272.15m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	46.7%
Metres below full supply	16.75m
Daily inflow	15,000ML
Release	130ML
Eildon Pondage	76%

DEADLINES

Advertising	Wednesday 5pm
Classifieds	Monday 12noon
Editorial	Monday 9am

CONTACT

CLASSIFIEDS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Submitted via email to

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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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Minimum wage increase

THE Fair Work Ombudsman says employers must ensure eligible employees receive the correct minimum wage increase from the first full pay period starting on or after July 1.

The National Minimum Wage is now \$1004.90 per week (based on a 38-hour week for a full-time employee), or \$26.44 per hour.

Casual employees entitled to the National Minimum Wage must receive at least \$33.05 per hour, which includes the 25 per cent casual loading.

Employees covered by an award must receive a 4.75 per cent increase to their minimum wages, provided that: the lowest rate in any award that applies to ongoing employment must be at least \$1004.90 per week or \$26.44 per hour; and any entry-level rate that applies to the first six months (or less) of employment must be at least \$978.10 per week or \$25.74 per hour.

Most employees in Australia are covered by an award, which sets minimum pay rates and conditions of employment in an industry or occupation.

The FWO has updated its Pay Calculator to help employers and employees calculate the new pay rates. Information is also available on the annual wage review webpage.

The National Minimum Wage is the minimum rate for adult employees in the national system who are not covered by an award or enterprise agreement. It is set each year by the Fair Work Commission (a different agency to the Fair Work Ombudsman), as part of its annual wage review.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fera wind farm

FERA is back and it could not be a more convenient time.

The communities have been devastated by the recent horrific bushfires and are still grappling with the loss of home, farms, livestock, and our unique habitat.

Now, to add into the mix the challenges of opposing the Seymour Wind Farm. I note that Andrew Lawson (Director Fera Australia) has begun regular social media updates. Is that so he doesn't have to face the angry locals? According to Fera's Strathbogie Ranges Communications, their last public meeting was in July 2024 in Alexandra, not the regular three-monthly meeting that was supposed to happen.

I am glad Mr Lawson was able to quote the number of people who are happy about wind and solar farms. Perhaps he forgot to check on the well over 100 community action groups across the coun-

try. He could check with Australian Communities Against Industrial Renewables or the National Rational Energy Network.

He could also recall his meetings with local communities, where most of the audience indicated a very negative response to the project.

As he mentions, the vegetation is slowly sprouting and fauna is returning. The last thing we need is this large-scale industrial project scouring the fragile landscape.

I also note that there is the sweetener of providing power to Euroa and surrounds, which hasn't been mentioned before. Perhaps Mr Lawson is hoping that the local communities are too absorbed with the aftermath of the bushfires to have the energy to protest, but he will be wrong.

Although the local communities are still traumatised, it is important that we keep resisting the pressure from Fera and save our unique landscape.

Jenny Strong, Dropmore

Still no formal response on Longwood fire cause

THE Longwood fire, which impacted Murrindindi Shire so badly in early January, started at a location on the Hume Highway near Longwood.

The rumours about how the fire started bear a striking resemblance to each other, however there is still no official word on the cause of the fire.

Victoria Police were contacted again last week for an update on the cause of the fire, six months after the event.

A Victoria Police spokesperson responded, "Victoria Police continues to work with its partner agencies

Victoria Police are still investigating the cause of the Longwood fire in January. PHOTO: Bailey Dixon.

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

"The investigation into the cause of the Longwood fire and the associated death is being led by the Ar-

son and Explosives Squad.

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

What happened to funds from Bushfire Appeal

THE Victorian Government launched the January 2026 Bushfire Appeal on January 12. The appeal raised \$892,166. The Victorian Emergency Relief and Recovery Foundation (VERRF) was activated to administer funds raised through the appeal.

When asked for an update, they said, "To date, the VERRF has provided money to Murrindindi Shire through different means and therefore it is difficult to quantify the exact total that was provided. In January 2026, shortly after the devastation of the fires, the VERRF Board provided GIVIT with \$250,000 to support the immediate needs of those impacted across Victoria. There was a significant uptake in services available through agencies that work with GIVIT to ensure the funding reached those most in need.

"On March 19, the VERRF commenced seeking applications from households who lost their primary place of residence and their home is considered uninhabitable. A grant of \$1000 has been paid to all eligible applicants. The application closed June 30. Murrindindi Shire accounted for our largest cohort of applicants, with over 140 approved to receive the grant.

"Overall the VERRF has disbursed \$550,000. The VERRF will finalise the disbursement of the remaining funds once all applications received to date have been processed. As we did not know how many individual applications would be received, the board considered it appropriate to stage funding deci-

sions as more information became available about the level of demand.

"This approach ensured that people affected by the disaster were not disadvantaged if applications exceeded initial expectations and reflected the Board's responsibility to manage public donations carefully and in the best interests of the impacted communities.

"We are keeping the VERRF webpage up to date should you wish to check any of the numbers at any stage."

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

Station Name	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	10.00AM Mon	0.67	steady	below flood level
Rubicon River at Rubicon	10.00AM Mon	0.78	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	10.00AM Mon	1.31	steady	below flood level
Home Creek at Yarck	10.29AM Mon	0.52	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.43AM Mon	0.82	steady	below flood level
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	10.00AM Mon	N/A	steady	
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	10.00AM Mon	2.42	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	10.00AM Mon	4.11	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	10.00AM Mon	0.86	steady	below flood level
Goulburn River at Trawool	10.00AM Mon	2.25	steady	below flood level
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	10.00AM Mon	0.51	steady	below flood level
Goulburn River at Seymour	10.00AM Mon	2.59	steady	below flood level
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	10.00AM Mon	1.57	steady	

*ISSUED AT 10.39 AM AEDT MONDAY 6 JULY 2026

Purchase a Picket Appeal

FOUNDATION Murrindindi has launched a Purchase a Picket Appeal, giving people an opportunity to make a practical contribution to the recovery of Murrindindi Shire's farming families affected by the January 2026 Longwood Bushfires.

The fires had a devastating impact, destroying homes, livestock, fencing and vital farm infrastructure. While the immediate emergency has passed, many farming families are still facing the

long journey of recovery. In Murrindindi Shire alone, over 4800km of fencing has been lost or damaged at an estimated cost of more than \$120 million dollars.

The Purchase a Picket Appeal offers a simple way for people to contribute to the fire recovery efforts.

A donation of \$10 symbolically purchases one star picket and helps support the rebuilding of fences on fire-affected properties in Murrindindi Shire.

Foundation Murrindindi

Executive Officer Robyn Hill said the campaign is less about the cost of an individual picket and more about the collective impact that community support can have.

"For many farming families, rebuilding fences is one of the biggest and most immediate tasks they face. The Purchase a Picket Appeal is a simple way for all of us to show our support. Every star picket purchased is a small but meaningful step towards restoring farms, se-

curing livestock, and helping our community recover and rebuild stronger together." Robyn said.

To maximise the impact of community generosity, Foundation Murrindindi will match every donation dollar-for-dollar, up to \$20,000, through its Murrindindi Disaster Fund.

Funds raised through the Purchase A Picket appeal will be provided to BlazeAid, a trusted and respected charitable organisation, who are already on

the ground working alongside local landholders and volunteers to help rebuild lost fences in Murrindindi Shire.

BlazeAid will purchase star pickets for fire-affected landholders who require additional support in their recovery. BlazeAid will assess local needs and individual circumstances to determine how assistance is allocated.

The Purchase a Picket Appeal launches on July 1 and will run until August.

With Foundation Murrindindi matching donations dollar-for-dollar, every \$10 donated becomes \$20 of rebuilding support. Help them reach the \$20,000 matched donation goal and support fire-affected landholders in Murrindindi Shire.

To donate online, visit foundationmurrindindi.org.au or contact Robyn Hill, Executive Officer Foundation Murrindindi 0488 007 688, robyn@foundationmurrindindi.org.au

Special General Meeting called by Menzies members

MEMBERS of Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Incorporated (DPMC), wrote on Thursday, July 2 to board chair David Beattie to formally request that the committee convene a Special General Meeting of members in accordance with Rule 31 of the Rules of Association.

They are requesting that the committee convene the meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday, July 9 at the Alexandra RSL Hall, and invite all members and their guests to attend.

The email from Gordon Simpson added, “We note this is sooner than the 14 days notice prescribed in Rule 32, however given the urgency of the current financial position we kindly request that this notice period is waived.”

The email stated, "Given the current financial circumstances facing the organisation, and the reported consideration of the sale or disposal of certain association assets, including parcels of land that are of significant interest to many members and the broader community, we believe it is important that members have an opportunity to receive information, ask questions and discuss these matters."

The proposed business of the Special General Meeting is to (1) Receive an update

from the committee regarding the current financial position of Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Incorporated, (2) Receive information regarding any proposed sale, transfer or disposal of Association assets, including land holdings, (3) Provide members with an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the future direction and management of Association assets, and (4) Consider any resolutions properly put before the meeting in relation to these matters.

The members further stated, “We make this request in the spirit of ensuring transparency, good governance and meaningful engagement with the membership during what we recognise is a challenging period for the organisation. We further note that members resolved at the most recent Annual General Meeting that any proposed sale of association land assets would require the approval of members, and we suggest that this meeting provide an opportunity for members to consider and exercise that role.”

It's understood that David Beattie has sent the request to the members of DPMC, and stated that he will be attending on behalf of the committee, along with other committee members who are available on short notice.

Intense rain leads to extreme water levels across Murrindindi Shire



The Yea Caravan Park water level gauge peaked at 3.3m at 1pm last Friday.



High water levels affected the roads.



What was a picnic area became part of the river.



High water levels affected the roads.



WILD WEST

MURDER MYSTERY

Saturday 25th July

6.00pm \$99pp
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Alexandra & Yea

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Eldon – Yarck – Toolangi – Highlands



To book scan the QR code or call **03 9675 0050** or visit breastscreen.org.au/whmc



Hearing or speech difficulties TTY 13 36 77



Interpreter support 13 14 50



THUMBS UP

THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS DOWN

To Victoria Police for its greatly reduced station hours and visual presence in Yea, and the lack of information for the community, either in print or on the front door, as to the hours when the station is actually manned.

THUMBS DOWN

To Victoria Police for leaving the Australian flag hoisted 24/7 and the illuminated 'Police' sign on out front when the station is closed. Coincidentally, crime figures in the local area have reportedly risen.

THUMBS DOWN

Shame on Murrindindi Council for not using local Murrindindi businesses for the tree clearing and wood collection points in our shire. There are local businesses that are already paying dearly with our current economic issues and native logging being shutdown in the region, then include the January fire, and then non-Murrindindi businesses come in and clean up? How is that right?

THUMBS UP

To the Alexandra Show Committee for circulating the agenda for the November show. It is already out, and has been for some time. Great idea, thank you from us

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

LOCAL RADIO FREQUENCY

- **UGFM 106.9** Alexandra / Lake Eildon
- **UGFM 98.5** Marysville / Lake Mountain
- **UGFM 88.9** Yea / Highlands
- **UGFM 98.9** Flowerdale / Hazeldene
- **UGFM 94.5** Kinglake Ranges

COMMUNITY GROUPS WEEKLY

- **Tue** Women's Walk @ 7am @Embassy of Ideas
- **Wed** Oasis Church, free coffee connection Ph 0408 123 581
- **Thu** Town Club, RSL Hall, 6-8pm. Ph 5797 2179
- **Fri** Man Walk @ 7am meet at RSL Hall
- **Fri** Communita 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas PH 0422 225 801
- **Sun** Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611
- **Sun** ALANON meeting; 5.30pm St Johns Hall. Ph 0402 428 086
- **Sun** AA meeting; 7pm St Johns Hall. Ph 1300 22 22 22.

MONTHLY

- **1st Mon** St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099
- **1st Wed** Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318
- **1st Thu** Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
- **1st Sun** Crop/Produce swap 10.30am--noon @ Embassy of Ideas
- **2nd Tue** Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285
- **2nd Wed** Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
- **2nd Wed** Murrindindi Men 6-8pm@ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
- **2nd Thu** Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
- **2nd Sat** Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
- **3rd Wed** Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318
- **3rd Thu** Alexandra Ladies Probus 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252
- **3rd Thu** Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas
- **3rd Sun** Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913
- **4th Wed** Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
- **4th Thu** Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517
- **4th Thu** Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0400 424 888
- **Last Fri** Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 0409 819 040

Contact Alexandra Standard and Yea Chronicle to add your event on 5772 1002 or [email reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au](mailto:reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au). 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.

Recycled water release from GVW's Yea Wastewater Management Facility

GOULBURN Valley Water (GVW) will release fully treated recycled water from its Yea Wastewater Management Facility into the Yea River over the coming weeks.

The Yea Wastewater Management Facility is nearing capacity. Irrigation infrastructure upgrades at GVW's Yea farm delayed the start of irrigation at the site, meaning not all available recycled water could be used during the season.

With onsite storages at the Yea Wastewater Management Facility nearing capacity, a controlled release of 0.5 to 1 megalitre per day of EPA Class C recycled water will be released into the Yea River.

The release began in late June 2026 and is expected to continue until October 2026.

GVW's Wastewater and Recycling Coordinator, Stuart Harris, said the controlled releases will prevent uncontrolled overflows and protect critical infrastructure.

"The releases will continue until lagoon levels are returned to a safe and manageable level."

The water being released has undergone full treatment and meets EPA Class C recycled water standards. GVW has notified the EPA of the releases and will work closely with them to monitor for any potential environmental impacts.

For more information, contact GVW's 24/7 Customer Service Centre on 1800 454 500.

Upcoming Geoscience aerial survey across Victoria

GEOSCIENCE Australia and the Geological Survey of Victoria will be carrying out an Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) survey north and west of Melbourne this year to improve understanding of Victoria's geology.

The survey is being carried out to obtain data that will enhance understanding of geology and natural resources of the region. This information will support future informed decision making for resource management.

During the survey and aeroplane, towing equipment designed to map variations in the natural electrical conductivity of the ground to a depth of several hundred metres, will fly at approximately 120 metres above the ground, along flight lines 2.5km and 10km apart.

A signal will be transmitted from the aircraft into the ground. The signal passes quickly as the aircraft moves and is similar to that produced by an electric fence. Towed antennae detect the returned signals that are analysed to map variations in the electrical conductivity of the ground caused by the presence of groundwater and some minerals.

The AEM technique is completely safe for plants and animals. Due to the speed the aircraft passes, livestock rarely even look up before the plane has gone. Flying near concentrations of stock such as feedlots is avoided.

Given the signal has a similar output to electric power lines or a mobile phone, it is too weak to disrupt any electrical appliances, electrical systems, plants, animals, humans or the internet.

The airborne survey is expected to be carried out between July and November 2026, across areas of New South Wales and Victoria. Murrindindi Shire falls into the survey area alongside prominent locations Bendigo and Shepparton.

Precompetitive data acquired by Geoscience Australia will be publicly available after quality control and assurance checks have been performed. Public release of this information may contain explicit spatial location information, such as specific deployment locations and/or areas which may be interpreted as containing groundwater and resource potential.

Geoscience Australia is conducting a national program for airborne electromagnetic (AEM) surveys where one or more survey is planned each year. The program started in 2017 and is projected to be completed by 2032. The last time this program conducted an AEM survey in Victoria was in 2022 and previously in 2021.

Small scale surveys are conducted sporadically by state government agencies such as the Geological Survey of Victoria who are co contributors to the current survey. Other types of airborne geophysical surveys such as gravity, magnetic and radiometric surveys are also techniques used regularly by governments and private industry to learn more about the earth below our feet.

For further information about AEM surveys, visit the Geoscience Australia website.



An AEM system in action. PHOTO: Geoscience Australia.

FUNDRAISER APPEAL

PURCHASE A PICKET

Helping Rebuild Fences After the Longwood Fires in Murrindindi Shire

\$10 = 1 STAR PICKET

A \$10 donation purchases one star picket, directly supporting the rebuilding of fences for fire-affected properties in Murrindindi Shire. Donate at: www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au

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Victorian Access Regime impact on the planned solar farm

THERE are no Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) in Murrindindi Shire, however there is a significant Samsung solar farm in the planning stages in Rubicon in Murrindindi Shire.

A new Victorian Access Regime has been announced for renewable energy projects, so VicGrid was asked about the impact that the changes may have on the planning for the solar farm.

VicGrid Chief Executive Alistair Parker replied, "The Victorian Access Regime will help us coordinate renewable energy development and ensure developers meet government expectations on community engagement and benefit sharing."

"This new regime will encourage development in renewable energy zones over time and ultimately give communities more certainty about what development is likely to occur in their region."

"Whenever there is a big change like this there needs to be a period of transition, so there will be a period until the new regime comes into effect where you will see well-advanced projects going ahead outside zones."

VicGrid also provided the following information. Renewable energy zones are a key part of a long-term approach to improve the way renewable energy projects are planned, developed and connect to Victoria's power grid.

Ageing coal-fired power stations are closing over the next 10 years. New wind, solar and battery projects, supported by transmission upgrades, are needed to ensure all Victorian homes, businesses, farms and essential services have access to reliable power.

Renewable energy zones are areas identified as the best places to host wind and solar projects and will play a key role as Victoria transitions from coal to renewable energy.

Renewable energy zones will help coordinate renewable energy projects and reduce the need for unnecessary transmission infrastructure; enable VicGrid to set clearer rules for how projects gain access to the grid, including expectations for how developers engage with communities; provide more certainty about how and where renewable energy projects are developed; and unlock new economic benefits for regional communities and Traditional Owners.

New rules for how projects gain access to the grid, known as the Victorian Access Regime, will be in place in July 2027.

Under this new regime all projects, whether they are inside or outside a renewable energy zone, will need to demonstrate how they meet government expectations for community engagement and deliver social and economic benefits, before they can secure access to the grid.

Before the access regime comes into effect, VicGrid will ask projects seeking to connect to the grid to ensure their engagement is consistent with these expectations.

All projects, both inside and outside renewable energy zones, will still be subject to Victorian planning approvals processes that consider environmental, land use and social impacts.

It's important to have a clear period of transition to the new access regime to ensure VicGrid don't inadvertently impact well-advanced projects that have been developed over many years under the existing rules.

Once the new rules are in place, projects can still be developed outside renewable energy zones, but they will face additional steps as part of a new assessment process.

This is part of a more coordinated approach to renewable energy development, helping to avoid too many projects connecting in the same area and reducing pressure on the electricity network.

Over time, this will lead to more projects seeking to develop inside zones, which are considered the best locations based on a range of factors.

Residents express concern about proposed Rubicon solar farm

SAMSUNG'S proposed Rubicon Solar Farm has been the subject of debate and confusion since it was first announced last year. The Stop Rubicon Solar Facebook page currently has over 450 followers and the petition opposed to the solar farm, presented in the Victorian Parliament by Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish in May, had 1509 signatures.

So what are the main concerns?

Among the neighbours to the proposed solar farm are Sue and John Horn who have a property along Blue Range Road in Rubicon. They have a 100 acre block and recently purchased the block next door, before news of the proposed solar farm broke. A potential reduction of the value of their property is just one of their concerns.

Many people would be familiar with the large Eildon power station near the dam wall. John said that the terminal station for the Rubicon solar farm is projected to be around the same size.

The family will have a one kilometre boundary with the solar farm on one side of their property and an 800 metre boundary on another side.

Their son Marcus also joined the conversation. He commented that the Rubicon project will be larger than the Winton solar farm, along the Hume Highway.

"This is 100 acres more," John said. "They say it'll power 53,000 homes, when the sun shines in the middle of the day."

Unfortunately, it's not always the middle of the day and the sun isn't always shining.

John pointed out that the Rubicon Valley is known to be a very fertile valley, ideal for farming, unlike some of the flatter and drier land further to the north and west of the state.

Marcus added that he is concerned about the potential for run-off into the Rubicon River which joins the Goulburn River shortly afterwards. He is concerned that if a fire occurs and rain afterwards, there is a potential for the debris to flow into the two creeks then the river and then downstream.

He said, "They're talking a 200 metre buffer between [the solar farm] and the state forest. We've all seen fires and how quickly they can spread."

He said, "There are batteries, there are transformers, there's all the other grid infrastructure, as well as the solar panels and all those potential leakages into the into the aquifer underneath."

The fog is another issue in the valley. Marcus questioned, "How can a business look at this one and then look at other ones they're doing and not see this one as a dud."

While the government requires site rehabilitation once the project has reached end-of-life, Marcus said that there have been some incidents where this hasn't occurred.

It is not yet known whether Samsung intends to build and operate the solar farm for the life of the infrastructure, or whether they are developing to planning approval or full solar farm to sell, as often happens.

The Victorian Farmer's Federation on June 17 said of the VicGrid Guidelines, "...The guidelines are long on expectations and short on obligations. At this stage there is no clear enforcement mechanism, no compliance framework and no meaningful consequences for developers who fail to meet these expectations."

Samsung will be on a leasing arrangement at the site, so people with solar panels potentially on all three sides of their property are unlikely to be offered the option to sell at market rates. They may instead see a significant reduction in their property value.

John, Sue and Marcus have seen the visual impact studies provided by Samsung. While there is expected to be little impact on the main house, their son has a house on the same property which will overlook a significant area of solar panels. John was also planning to build a new house on the farm which would also be impacted.

John said that the visual impact study was conducted from "All the way down the paddock and they did all this stuff and all we got was a photo." The second house on the property couldn't be seen.

John and Sue are also deeply concerned about fire. John said, "Our property is a direct vegetation link [from the Rubicon State Forest]," adding that the batteries and 200,000 solar cells would each have two connections, creating a fire risk.

John said, "One of the questions I posed to Samsung and fire risk consultants was on a catastrophic fire day, I said, do you plan to shut the plant down, turn the solar cells and the batteries off, so there's no danger? And there's no chance, because on that day, Melbourne will be sweltering."

The solar panels are on a single track axis, and there will be associated noise when they move as they are motor-driven. Reflections may also be an issue for some properties at a certain point in the day.

The family are also concerned that locals may not fully understand the size of the project and the potential impact on tourism.



SOLAR FARM CONCERNS: Marcus, Sue and John Horn.
PHOTO: Anne Richey



We are coming to Yea

A social and information evening for current and prospective families.

Join us for a relaxed and welcoming dinner to connect with local families, meet our team, and discover what makes Ballarat Grammar such a special community.

Event dates coming soon. Register your interest:

July
03 5338 0842
events@bgs.vic.edu.au

CHURCH SERVICES
- ALEXANDRA

ANGLICAN

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

CATHOLIC

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

UNITING CHURCH In Australia

St Andrews, Downey Street,
Alexandra
Worshipping, Welcoming
Sharing the transforming love of
Jesus. Services 10am each Sunday
Contact 5772 2362

OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Loving God, Loving People,
Loving Life
118 Grant Street, Alexandra
0408 123 581
Meeting every Sunday @ 10am

MOUNT CATHEDRAL
COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

37 Grant Street , Alexandra
Pastor Daniel Kriss
Services 10am every Sunday
Phone 0400 282 536
mccbc.com.au

THE VINE

A Christian community part of the Baptist
Union of Victoria
Sunday 4.30pm service
Kids program during school term
Meets at St Andrew's, 37 Downey Street,
Alexandra
Contact - 0438 642 559

CHURCH SERVICES
- YEA

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

Murrindindi continues push for fair bushfire recovery support

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has stated their disappointment that fire-impacted residents will now need to pay gate fees to dispose of bushfire debris at council Resource Recovery Centres, following the end of the free waste disposal program.

While the Victorian Government has waived the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) levy for eligible bushfire waste, residents will now be required to pay a gate fee, which covers council's costs to operate the service, including staffing, handling, transport and disposal.

A Domestic Bushfire Waste Gate Fee of \$47.32 per cubic metre will now apply from July 1 for general bushfire waste taken to the Resource and Recovery Centres by affected residents. Loads of bushfire waste exceeding three metres cubed and loads of building rubble (containing bricks, concrete, soil) will continue to be directed to the Alexandra Landfill where the appropriate fees will apply and the EPA levy will be removed.

Council has been advocating for the free waste disposal program to be extended until June 30, 2027, to give residents more time to safely clear homes, sheds, fallen trees and fire-damaged vegetation.

Mayor of Murrindindi Shire, Cr Damien Gallagher, said council welcome the EPA levy waiver but remained concerned that residents will still face out-of-pocket costs during recovery.

"Waiving the EPA levy is a positive step, but it does not make waste disposal free for our residents," Cr Gallagher said.

"People who have lost homes, sheds, fences, trees and vegetation are now being asked to pay gate fees to continue cleaning up after a disaster they did not ask for.

"Six months is simply not long enough for many residents to complete this work, particularly when clean-up involves not only homes, but sheds, outbuildings, fallen trees and large amounts of fire-damaged vegetation."

The free bushfire recovery waste disposal program at council facilities has provided important practical support for fire-impacted residents as they work through the long and difficult process of clearing their properties.

Council says many residents are still only beginning, or are yet to begin, the full clean-up process because of access issues, insurance processes, safety concerns, housing pressures and delays in broader recovery programs.

More than 280 Murrindindi property owners registered for the Victorian Government's on-site clean-up program, however, almost two thirds are ineligible and have had to make their own arrangements, placing greater pressure on council facilities and on households already carrying significant recovery costs.

Cr Gallagher said Murrindindi residents deserved the same level of post-disaster support provided to other Victorian communities.

"We will continue to advocate for our residents to receive fair and practical support that reflects the scale of what has happened here," Cr Gallagher said.

"For many families, recovery is still underway. The clean-up effort did not end on June 30, and neither should the support that helps make that recovery possible.

"Communities affected by disaster should be able to access support for as long as it is genuinely needed, particularly where recovery timeframes are beyond residents' control."

By the end of June 2026, council expects to have received about 14,000 tonnes of bushfire debris at its landfill, equivalent to around seven years' worth of landfill in just a few months, placing significant and unplanned pressure on local infrastructure and resources.

Spirit of the Bush photography competition

AUSTRALIA'S much-loved photography showcase, the Spirit of the Bush competition, is back for 2026, inviting people from across the country to capture the stories, landscapes and spirit of rural and regional Australia.

Hosted by Rural Aid, the competition is now open and closes at 5pm on Friday, July 31.

This year, photographers are encouraged to share images that reflect the challenges, determination, people and natural beauty of rural and regional Australia, helping to bring the country to the city through the power of photography.

The competition is open to all Australians, regardless of photography experience.

Twelve winning photographs will be selected by a panel of judges, with each winner receiving a \$250 prepaid Visa card.

Entries can be submitted at ruralaid.org.au/spirit-of-the-bush



Rural Aid is looking for photographs that capture the Spirit of the Bush. PHOTO: Bailey Dixon.

Murrindindi Business Month

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is celebrating the success of the inaugural Murrindindi Business Month, a program of learning, networking and practical support designed to strengthen local businesses and build long-term economic resilience across the shire.

Held throughout June, the program brought together business owners, operators and entrepreneurs from across Murrindindi to build skills, share ideas and explore opportunities for growth. A series of free workshops, networking events and information sessions focused on practical topics including marketing, digital capability, artificial intelligence, business efficiency and future planning.

Participants accessed tailored support at different stages of business development. Sessions were designed to provide practical tools and insights that businesses could apply immediately.

Events were delivered across multiple towns and communities throughout the shire as well as online options for added flexibility.

Over 100 people attended 10 events held across the shire during June, as well as multiple one-on-one mentoring sessions with industry experts in marketing and business growth.

Cr Sandice McAulay, portfolio Councillor for Economic Development, Local Jobs, and Skills, said, "Murrindindi Business Month proved to be more than just events. It strengthened capability, built confidence, and created valuable connection across our business community. The strong response demonstrates a clear appetite for practical support that helps businesses navigate change and plan for the future."

Council's Community Capacity Building Officer, Bill Bate, helped launch the program and was proud to see the positive results.

"Murrindindi Business Month showcased the value of bringing businesses together to learn from experts and each other. The positive feedback we received reinforced the importance of creating opportunities for local businesses to connect, share experiences and access practical knowledge that support growth, resilience and long-term success."

Council will continue to champion a strong and resilient local economy through skills development, business networking opportunities and initiatives that help local enterprises grow, adapt and succeed.

For more information about how we can support your business, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/business, sign up for the monthly Murrindindi Business eNewsletter or call council's Business Support team on 5772 0333.

Funding for the program was provided by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Community Development Fund.

Lovell concerned about dangerous regional roads

MEMBER for Northern Victoria Region, Wendy Lovell, submitted an open letter to Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Ros Spence, regarding the dangerous conditions of Victoria's regional roads.

It calls for more road maintenance and further funding to restore regional roads.

"I write to you regarding the critically dangerous condition of Victoria's regional roads. This situation has become so dire that it demands you act urgently to significantly increase investment in the road repair program, and ensure Victorians have the smooth and safe regional roads they deserve," Ms Lovell said.

"Blowing out a tyre or swerving to avoid a damaged road surface can cause accidents, and the dangerous state of Victoria's roads is putting lives at risk.

"Recent wet weather has exposed the extent of deterioration on our roads. High rainfall has filled many deep potholes with water and hidden them from unsuspecting drivers, while heavy fog has reduced road visibility, leaving motorists unable to see and avoid hazards ahead.

"Even our major highways in northern Victoria, including the Hume, Calder, Midland, Maroon-dah, Murray Valley and Goulburn Valley Highways, have fallen into a state of dangerous disrepair. Many other state arterial roads also suffer from a lack of maintenance, and are in desperate need of repair and full rehabilitation of the worst sections."

Local travel expert brings personalised service

WITH thousands of websites, endless reviews, constantly changing airline rules and an increase in travel scams and online fraud, many people are discovering that booking online isn't always as straightforward as it seems.

That's where Amanda Simpson, who runs Ferguson's Travel - Alexandra, is helping local travellers rediscover the value of personalised service. Backed by the trusted team at Ferguson's Travel -Mansfield, owned by Gemma Ferguson, Amanda combines the strength and experience of an established local travel business with a flexible approach designed around the needs of today's travellers.

"We don't have a traditional shopfront because we believe travel advice should come to you," Amanda said.

"Whether it's in your home, over a coffee at your favourite café or after work when the kids are finally settled, I make the process easy. Holidays should be exciting from the very beginning, and that starts with making the planning as convenient and personal as possible."

As both a mother and an active member of the local community, Amanda understands that planning a holiday often becomes another task on an already full list.

"My role is to make travel easy. Whether you're planning the holiday of a lifetime, a family getaway, a cruise or simply need someone to organise the details, I take the time to listen first. Every itinerary is tailored to the people travelling.

"For many busy families, it's not about finding the cheapest flight online. It's about having someone take care of everything. I handle the planning, bookings and administration so my clients can simply pack their bags, turn up and enjoy making memories together," she said.

Amanda brings more than a decade of experience in the travel industry, having previously owned her own travel agency before the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the industry. An avid traveller herself, she understands that no two holidays, or travellers, are the same.

While online booking platforms have made travel more accessible than ever, Amanda believes they can't replace local knowledge, expert advice and genuine support.

"When something changes, you don't want to spend hours trying to find the right phone number or speaking to someone who doesn't know your booking. Having a local travel advisor means you have someone in your corner before, during and after your holiday."

Community has also become a key part of the Ferguson's Travel - Alexandra story. Through the business's Community Group Support Program, 10 per cent of profits are reinvested into local community groups, helping support the clubs and organisations that make the district such a special place to live.

"I'm proud to be part of this community, and giving back through local groups is just one way I can support the place that's sup-



Is it time for a holiday?

Trivia and Mystery Auction to support Rosebank salon

THE Yea Hospital and Rosebank Auxiliary held a Trivia and Mystery Auction event on Friday afternoon on June 26, at Yea RSL.

The event was to raise funds for a hairdressing salon at Rosebank. It was a very successful event, extremely well supported by the community and all enjoyed competition, conversation and a delicious lunch.

Generously supported by Yea Winery, Cidery and Brewery, who provided the prizes for the quiz winning

table, and mystery auction donations from the community meant nearly \$1400 was raised for the hairdressing salon.

Thanks also to Gary Tuck, emcee and auctioneer extraordinaire and Greg Mason, The Quiz Master. Both very generously volunteered their time and expertise, greatly contributing to the fun and success of the event.

The auxiliary are very grateful to the Yea community for the generosity given to support this event.



Attendees enjoying the event in support of Rosebank.

The Census is coming this August.

EVERY
ANSWER
MATTERS

Help us understand what Australia needs now and into the future.
Census night - Tuesday 11 August

 census.abs.gov.au



Census



Councillor Paul Hildebrand, Andrea Bauer and Kate McAlpin.

Highlands volunteer event

THE Highlands community gathered at the Habbies Howe Shearing Shed on Saturday, June 27, for a lunch and afternoon get together to recognise the incredible efforts of volunteers across the Highlands, both during and after the January fires.

The event was organised by Murrindindi Shire Council, and a community recognition plaque was presented by Cr Paul Hildebrand to the Highlands community.

Nominations open for standout community landcarers

ACROSS Australia, thousands of landcarers are out in paddocks, parks, coastlines, classrooms, creeks and community spaces doing the work that protects the places and productive landscapes we all rely on.

Most never ask for recognition. With just one month remaining until nominations close for the 2026 state and territory Landcare Awards, Landcare Australia is calling on communities to shine a light on the local people and groups making a real difference to the health of our land, water and environment.

Who in your community deserves recognition? From farmers improving soil health and productivity, to volunteers restoring native vegetation, Traditional Owners caring for Country and young people leading environmental projects, these are the kinds of everyday efforts that often happen quietly but make a lasting difference to communities and the environment.

Many landcarers do this work quietly and consistently, often over many years, so a nomination is a simple but powerful way to say their work matters. The awards celebrate the people helping create a more resilient future for Australia.

Anyone can put forward a nomination, whether it's for yourself, someone you know, or a group doing great things in your community. Nominations close Friday, July 31, 2026. The state and territory Landcare Awards are often the first step towards national recognition, with winners progressing to the 2027 National Landcare Awards.

But for many nominees, the greatest reward is knowing their efforts have been seen and valued by the communities they serve.

Dr Shane Norrish, CEO Landcare Australia said that the awards give recognition for community efforts.

"Every community has people who turn up, get their hands dirty and keep going because they care deeply about the environment around them. All it takes is one nomination for someone to be recognised for their efforts," Dr Norrish said.

"This isn't just about saying thank you, a Landcare Award can help elevate people's voices, strengthen their mission and open doors to new opportunities. Nominating is quick, free and incredibly impactful."

For more information or to nominate please go to the Landcare website.

Homewood Landcare's annual Bush Dance a blast

LAST year, the inaugural Homewood Landcare Bush Dance with the multi-instrumental BlackBerry Jam Bush Band, was such an acclaimed evening that the organisers decided to run it as an annual event.

With the benefit of experience, organisation went like clockwork. Seventy people booked, more than twice last year's numbers. Congratulations to Bec Bowles and her team of volunteers.

On Saturday night, June 27, the fog was as thick as soup but the Homewood Hall was resplendent, with lanterns and fairy lights shining brightly. This year the hall had been entirely dedicated to dancing while the adjacent fire brigade was converted into food preparation and refreshments area.

By 7pm the three braziers were finally kicking out some heat, nothing which a dash of Kero couldn't fix.

As two of the trio of musicians were busy connecting their sound system, Ray, who doubles as a whip cracker got ready to entertain the crowd in the fog. He cracked his first whip, a thundering crack, and everything went pitch black due to a power failure.

They checked the switchboard and all was normal. They checked the power line, but no roasted possum was hanging from the drop-out high voltage fuse. Maybe a car had crashed into a power pole in the fog? But neighbouring farms had power. At that point, everyone ran of ideas, so Ausnet was called meaning a three hour delay.



Dancers enjoying the evening at the Homewood Landcare event.

Some people got creative. If you can't beat it, you've got to join it. A car was brought right to the door of the hall, headlights blazing, the band went all acoustic, and people started dancing in the semi-darkness, which was a lot of fun.

But what of the food which needed warming? Fortunately, Homewood is a tightly knit community and it didn't take long to find a friendly kitchen to open its doors. The drink waitresses used the light of mobile phones to read wine labels and

guesstimate liquid levels, and to rummage through the cash box to find change. And the rest of us huddled around the three braziers, kept warm and chatted.

It was a fantastic night, not precisely what had been anticipated, but a good, friendly night.

The food arrived, a bit late but delicious and, importantly, warm, ferried in by a small convoy of cars.

AUSNET also finally arrived within the three hours

as promised. They provided extra entertainment while they worked high up the power pole. The culprit was the mains connection box. It had been overloaded and had blown. Nothing to do with to do with Ray's whip cracking after all.

At 10pm, all lights suddenly blazed again and dancing resumed in earnest. Amazingly, most people were still there, hardly anyone had given up. The Best Hat prize went to John Agostinelli.

Debbie Skinner becomes new Alexandra Rotary president

WELL-known local, Debbie Skinner has taken on the presidency of the Rotary Club of Alexandra. While she admitted that "it is a big move," she has spent a long time as a member of the club and is looking forward to the challenge.

She explained that she became the first female member of Alexandra Rotary around the year 2000. Since that time, "I have always maintained a connection and rejoined again a number of years ago and worked with international projects."

Speaking about her plans for the year, Debbie said, "Because of the bushfires, things did change enormously and that has to be the priority, bushfire recovery. As we know, particularly for those who were in the 2009 fires, things happen in a survival mode initially. Lots of people move on, other people remain displaced, and it takes a long time.

"People might make decisions and change those decisions about where they live, how they're supported, what they can do, what they can't do, up to 10 years later.

"We've certainly been very active. Rotarians have worked very hard since the bushfires in January. Just under \$100,000 has been allocated to the com-

munity via a voucher system, using that within local businesses and also through other projects."

The Rotary International theme for the year is 'Creating lasting impact.'

Debbie said, "That is really about sustainable change. Everything we need to do in planning, like we do with many of our projects, is looking at what can we do now, what do we need to do now, what is actually happening in the community and how can we support that? How does it become sustainable and what can we do about that?"

Rotary has a variety of different committees, with people concentrating on different areas and things they enjoy. Debbie said, "It's a massive organisation with enormous opportunities."

She has been to many Rotary Clubs around the world as she found these visits to be fascinating, including the type of local projects they were working on and "how they differed so dramatically."

There were also so many different kinds of people participating. In Hong Kong for example, the Rotarians were people who owned race courses and hotels, while in Cairo the Rotarians were often generals from

the armed forces, protecting artefacts.

She said, "Every Rotary and every situation is unique, but there's a commonality. There are many common goals... We work through community services, youth services, international services where we do projects and give funds to help people in disadvantaged countries, and we have vocational services where we support the kids at school in fostering relationships and also in the secondary college with mentoring in terms of interviews, helping them get ready for the workforce by doing mock interviews."

In addition to the many exciting things to do in the local Rotary Club, the club is also part of the district grouping. These groups might hold get-togethers and work on joint projects. There may also be financial support from different clubs when a specific Rotary area is facing a challenge.

Debbie works as a nurse consultant at the Alexandra Medical Centre, with a lot of her work involving chronic conditions including diabetes and wound management.

She said, "I guess my particular love, and what I always knew I was born to be, was someone who cared for other

people. From probably about three-years-old, I knew that I was on this earth to care for others and that's what I've done my whole career. That's taken me to many places, post-graduate degrees and probably 15 years in the Navy Reserve as well."

When she first moved to Murrindindi Shire, she was pregnant with her third son. He is now aged 30. She said, "I feel like the 30 years that I've had here would equal any amount of time in Melbourne. It's just been so jam-packed with things to do, things that we've explored, the amount we've worked in the community. It's just been an enormous, enormous ride, enormous chapters in this community and somewhere I'd never leave, to the point where my sister now lives here and my parents were both at Kellock Lodge.

"I'd never go anywhere else because when I was growing up, I was really a surfy chick, a surfy girl, and it was all about the beaches and the water and lots of other things. As an adult, give me a cold river, some mountains, lots of green, and I don't think I could work in a healthcare environment unless I had these mountains around me because it's what keeps my feet grounded."

NAIDOC Week celebrated in the Yea Wetlands

A LOVELY Welcome to Country was held at the Yea Wetlands on Sunday, July 6, conducted by Aunty Angela Ten Buuren. The event was well attended and the event was held on a clear but cold day, vastly different to the inclement weather of the preceding week.

The event was originally planned to also include a walk along the John Franklin Track at the wetlands, however flooding made this impossible.

The Welcome to Country was the first event at the Yea Wetlands to coincide with this year's NAIDOC Week.

NAIDOC Week celebrates and recognises the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It provides an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous liv-

ing cultures on earth.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week, with Aunty Angela speaking about her family's history in the Yea area, and about the artwork on the poster created for this year's event. She also clarified 'deadly' in the Indigenous tradition refers to something or someone being "excellent, brilliant, amazing or awesome" and that it's not a threat. She compared it to the words 'wicked' or 'sick' in English.

Mayor Damien Gallagher thanked Aunty Angela for her speech and said, "It frustrates me when I hear people say that they don't need to be welcomed to their own country, because the traditional owner notion of Country, Aunty Angela's notion of Country, is not like a contemporary sense of ownership. It's about a connection between people and place. Just like my connection to a Murrindindi

sunset, or yours to your back paddock."

He also stated that Murrindindi Shire Council is proud to sponsor the week of engaging NAIDOC events.

He said, "This year's NAIDOC theme reminds us of the strength, resilience, and contributions of First Nations peoples, and of the importance of listening, learning, and walking together with respect and understanding. NAIDOC Week is not only a celebration, it's an invitation to deepen our understanding, to honour truth-telling, and to build stronger relationships with our communities."

The attendees also keenly participated in a smoking ceremony, and listened to some of the audio description usually played on the walk. On Friday, July 10, there will also be an Indigenous Arts and Crafts activity for both children and adults.



NAIDOC WEEK: Aunty Angela during the Welcome to Country. PHOTOS: Anne Richey



NAIDOC WEEK: One of the children participating in the Smoking Ceremony.



NAIDOC WEEK: Cr Sue Carpenter participating in the Smoking Ceremony.

Marysville children help launch NAIDOC Week at Alexandra District Health

ALEXANDRA District Health (ADH) officially kicked off its NAIDOC Week celebrations with a special visit from the children and educators of Marysville and District Kindergarten, who helped launch the hospital's Hands Together, Hearts Together community display.

The morning was filled with learning, creativity and cultural sharing. ADH Support Services team member Cindy delighted the children with a colourful fruit echidna, while everyone learnt that the Taungurung word for echidna is Gawarn.

The children shared their own knowledge by teaching staff words in Taungurung language and performing a song in language. They also proudly brought along Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Taungurung flags they had created before decorating hand cut-outs for the hospital's community Sea of Hands display.

As the first contributors to the display, the children helped create the foundation of an artwork that will continue to grow throughout NAIDOC Week as staff, patients, visitors and community members add their own decorated hands.

Each child also received a handmade echidna, generously crafted and do-



NAIDOC WEEK: The Marysville children outside the hospital.

nated by Melissa Rigg. The thoughtful gifts proved to be a highlight of the visit and were warmly received by the children.

Katie Gelbert, Director of Marysville and District Kindergarten, said the visit was a wonderful example of community learning in action. "What an amazing experience for our daycare family to have been involved with," she said. "Alexandra District Health went out of their way to welcome us, and it was thoroughly enjoyed by both the children and the educators. Getting out into the community for engaging learning experi-

ences is what Marysville and District Kindergarten is all about. We thank all the staff at ADH for involving us in this special excursion."

Alexandra District Health extends its sincere thanks to the children, educators and families from Marysville and District Kindergarten, along with the staff who made the morning such a meaningful start to NAIDOC Week.

Community members are encouraged to visit ADH throughout NAIDOC Week to decorate a hand and contribute to the growing Sea of Hands display, celebrating culture, connection and reconciliation.



NAIDOC WEEK: Some of the attendees at the event.



NAIDOC WEEK: Mayor Damien Gallagher.

Goulburn Valley Water

Notice of fees and charges: 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027

Goulburn Valley Water would like to advise all customers of new tariffs, which have been approved by GVW's Board and the Essential Services Commission. These are applicable to all customers in GVW's serviced areas, unless alternate special fees apply.

Water service fees (daily)	\$
Standard residential (20mm)	0.5471
Vacant land - unconnected	0.2735

Water usage fees (per kilolitre, based on meter readings)	\$
Potable water (drinking)	1.3746
Non-potable water	0.9618
Raw water	0.6868

Trade waste (daily)	\$
Category 1 and 2	0.7563

Sewerage fees and charges	\$
Residential (daily)	1.4211
Vacant land - unconnected (daily)	0.7104
Non-residential (daily)	1.4211
Wastewater volume usage (per kilolitre)	1.8736
Non-residential (yearly charge per cistern where volumetric charges cannot be applied)	518.71

Bills are issued three times a year. Properties with fire services are charged a fee equivalent to 10 per cent of service fees.

If you are having difficulties paying your bill, support is available. We offer flexible payment options, concessions and access to government grants and programs - call us to ask about available options to suit you.

For a full list of all other fees and charges for 2026-27, please visit our website or call 1300 360 007.

gvwater.vic.gov.au



Forest Fire Management now recruiting

FOREST Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) is recruiting entry-level forest firefighter positions across Victoria for the upcoming bushfire season. Both ongoing and seasonal roles are available.

FFMVic Chief Fire Officer, Chris Hardman, said seasonal firefighters boost Victoria's firefighting ca-

capacity in the lead-up to summer and during the peak fire season.

"New recruits train and work alongside our permanent firefighters, responding to bushfires to keep communities safer this summer."

"They will be part of a team of close to 1800 frontline personnel and 1200

accredited incident management staff this bushfire season.

"These are fantastic jobs doing practical work, right at the frontline of protecting communities and the environment."

FFMVic firefighters responded to more than 900 bushfires across the state last summer and delivered

priority planned burns.

Mr Hardman said seasonal firefighter roles provide rewarding career opportunities for those with a passion for the outdoors, learning new skills and making a difference.

"In addition to responding to bushfires and helping to deliver planned burns, seasonal firefighters

also undertake pest and weed control works, and maintain recreational reserves, fuel breaks and forest roads.

"We want a diverse pool of people applying for our jobs... Most importantly, we're looking for recruits with a 'can do' attitude who can work as part of a team." Some roles are designated

for First Nations employment.

Applications close on July 26. Seasonal employment occurs between October and May, with some variations on start and end dates depending on seasonal requirements.

For information visit jobs.careers.vic.gov.au/sf-foo or call 136 186.

Changes to paraquat chemical usage for agriculture

THE Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) announced recently their review decision on the agricultural chemicals paraquat and diquat after concerns were raised linking them to Parkinson's disease. The chemicals will remain available for use in Australia but new restrictions on application rates and equipment will apply.

Paraquat and diquat are non-selective contact herbicides used to support the production of grains, cotton, horticulture, sugarcane, rice, wine and various pastures. They provide cost-effective protection against crop yield losses.

APVMA CEO Scott Hansen said the reviews applied contemporary risk manage-

ment frameworks to rigorous scientific investigation of the impacts of paraquat and diquat on human health and the environment.

"Both chemicals remain available for use with significant new restrictions on application rates and permitted uses," Mr Hansen said.

"To protect users from acute exposure, new restrictions will phase out backpack sprayers and require enclosed mixing and loading systems for all uses, and enhanced personal protection equipment."

The maximum application rate for paraquat will be reduced from 1150g per hectare to 231g per hectare for broadacre use, with a higher rate for technology-assisted optical spot spray-

ing.

New conditions will require enclosed mixing and loading systems, the phasing out of backpack sprayers and mandated enhanced personal protective equipment.

During the review, APVMA received 171 submissions from scientists, doctors, the agricultural industry and other interested parties. Submissions on paraquat and diquat included a range of concerns including human health impact, farming viability and environmental impact.

APVMA found the weight of evidence does not show that paraquat exposure through approved uses increases the risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's Australia

disagreed with the APVMA decision, stating that the herbicide is dangerous and banned in more than 70 countries, and campaigned for banning it locally.

Parkinson's Australia CEO Olivia Nassaris said that the incidence of Parkinson's is going to accelerate in the future.

"This is going to be an absolute epidemic and we have to be doing something now if we are to stop it," Ms Nassaris said.

"While we welcome the controls, including increasing PPE requirements and getting rid of backpack sprayers in favour of enclosed cabs, they simply don't go far enough."

"The APVMA has failed not only farmers who use paraquat but all the other

Australians exposed to it. In the 30 years they've been reviewing this chemical, 70 countries around the world have banned it, yet we've still got Aussie farmers using it every day. We're the last to act here, and we've failed."

The National Farmer's Federation (NFF) acknowledges the APVMA final decision and will now take the time to carefully consider the detail of the decision and its implications for farmers and Australia's food and fibre production.

NFF President Hamish McIntyre said farmers take their responsibility to protect people and the environment seriously.

"Without healthy people and a healthy environment, there is no food and fibre

production. That's a fundamental reality for every farm business," Mr McIntyre said.

"We acknowledge the community concern around paraquat, and it is absolutely critical that the products farmers use are safe for both people and the environment."

"Today, agriculture operates under stringent regulations, including strict restrictions on application systems, mandatory personal protective equipment, and training on certification requirements for chemical use."

"These are science-based safeguards designed to protect farmers, their workers, and the environment."

View the full APVMA review report.

Winter weather sets in at Yea monthly cattle sale

THE July Combined Agents Store Sale took place last Friday at the Yea Saleyards, with over 2000 head of cattle yarded and prices stretching above 490 cents per kilogram (c/kg).

Included in the yardings were various breeds, including Red Angus, Black Angus, Herefords and Charolais. The average price per head stood at \$1810, with the average weight per head at 322kg, equalling out to an average sale price of 562c/kg.

The top steer pen weighed 635kg maximum and sold for \$3160, equalling out to 498c/kg. The top heifer pen had a top weight of 549kg and sold for \$2680, equalling out to 488c/kg. Cows and calves reached a top price per head of \$3650.

Andrew Hill from Elders Yea provided a summary of the sale.

"The agents yarded a total of 2100 cattle, which is pretty good for this time of year. We thought the numbers might have been down a little bit, but obviously the buoyant market's dragged them out of the cupboard," Andrew said.

"The feeder steer market is very strong at the moment. There's a lot of interest in those 300kg cattle. They broke the \$6 barrier at times through the sale."

"You come down to those

410kg cattle, they made \$2490, and 380kg cattle came out at \$2350, which is around that \$6 bracket and a very good result."

"There was a pretty good run of heifers. Top weight was 470kg, they came back at \$2450."

"Overall, the cattle sales the last three weeks have been pretty strong all around the state. Ours was on par with everything everywhere else, in positive territory. There were buyers from Swan Hill and feedlots from around the country."

The next cattle sale at the Yea Saleyards will be on August 7, with combined agents.



It was beanie weather at the July store sale in Yea.



Elise, Millie, Cooper, and Neil Kermeen from Bonnie Doon. PHOTOS: Bailey Dixon.



Alan Beckett and Malcolm White.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

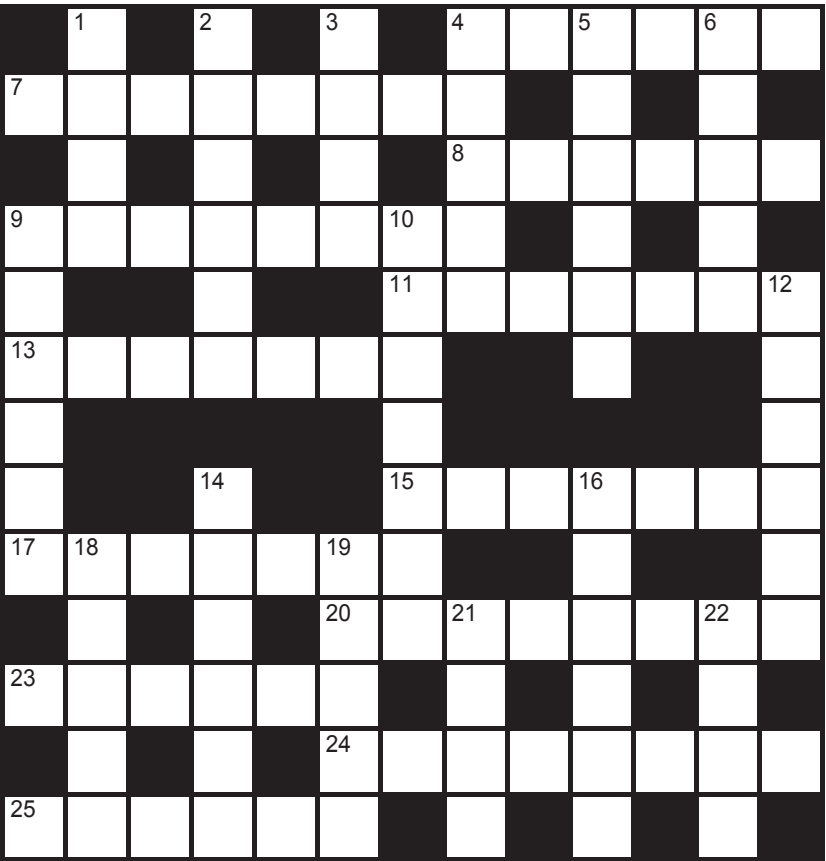
1140

ACROSS

- 4 Name the cavity at the upper end of the human windpipe (6)
- 7 What is a clinging crustacean (8)
- 8 Name a paroxysmal respiratory disorder (6)
- 9 What is the brow known as (8)
- 11 Which tracts of land are completely surrounded by water (7)
- 13 To be more skilful, is to be what (7)
- 15 Name a tapering, four-sided shaft of stone (7)
- 17 What is something that establishes the result of something (7)
- 20 Which fellow tends cattle (8)
- 23 What are children's playing marbles (6)
- 24 To be free from restriction, is to be what (8)
- 25 To be wandering, is to be what (6)

DOWN

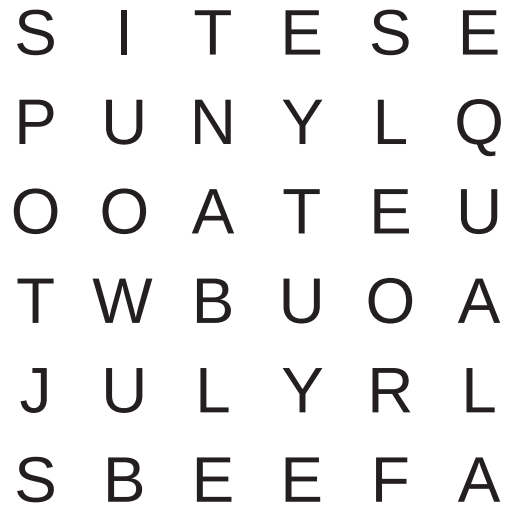
- 1 What is a corona (4)
- 2 To which kingdom does a butterfly belong (6)
- 3 Which land measurement is equal to 160 perches (4)
- 4 Name some heavy weights (5)
- 5 What is a system of religious rites (6)



- 6 To be mentioned, is to be what (5)
- 9 To have abstained from all food, is to have done what (6)
- 10 What is a large airfield called (7)
- 12 Name the past participle of "speak" (6)
- 14 Who has vanquished an adversary (6)
- 16 Which term means "probably" (6)
- 18 When one moves gradually, one does what (5)
- 19 What is a short literary composition (5)
- 21 To eject, is to do what (4)
- 22 What are skills or knacks (4)

MINI WORD FIND

440



Find the following words in the grid. They may be read in any direction, even diagonally. Some letters are used more than once.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| Able | Equal | Owl | Tone |
| Ate | Era | Puny | Ways |
| Aura | Into | Site | You |
| Beef | July | Spot | |
| Blue | Out | Subtle | |

WHICH WORDS

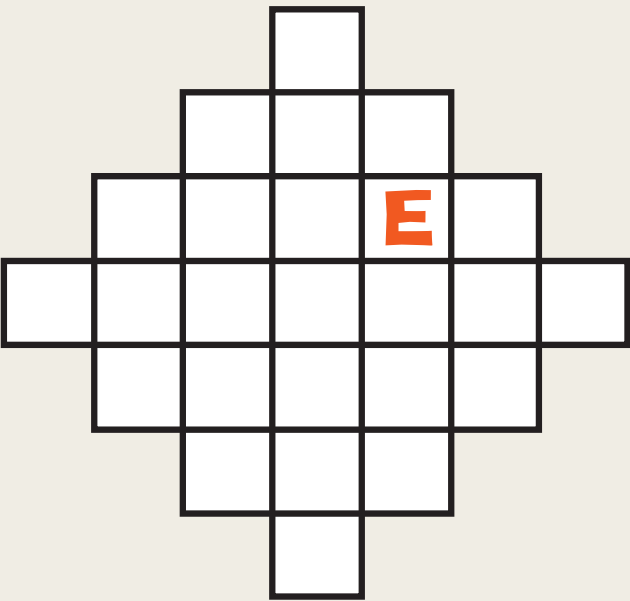
- 1 **JAMBOREE**
(a) A spiced dish of the French Creoles of the American south
(b) A large gathering of Scouts
(c) A vertical piece forming the side of a doorway
- 2 **LUX**
(a) A unit of illumination
(b) A solution resulting from leaching
(c) Refinement of living

E-EQUATIONS

450

Letters A to Z have a number value. Some are shown in the right-hand cells. Create remaining values using clues in centre cells.

B	G+Z	
G	W×W	
L	V÷V	
O	B+L	23
V	W+O	
W	G÷W	
Z	V-Z	13



BIYWORD

180

Build it yourself using the clues and each of the twenty-four letters once only to form ten words: five across and five down. A key word (bold clue) builds on the letter set in the grid.

- CLUES:**
- Articulate (3)
 - Citizen of Mexico (7)
 - Greek letter (3)
 - Large sheds (5)
 - Relative (5)
 - Strained (5)
 - Television (coll)** (5)
 - Tint (3)
 - US Actor: ... Monroe (7)
 - Wager (3)

A	E	M	T
A	E	N	T
A	I	N	U
B	L	N	X
C	L	R	Y
D	M	S	Y

SUDOKU

140

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

QUICK THINK

450

Solve the crossword. Each answer has four letters.

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Hole-making tools | 1 Declare |
| 5 Medicine bottle | 2 Fermented juice |
| 6 Knowing about | 3 Running behind |
| 7 Break down | 4 Unappetising food |

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

SOLUTIONS

QUICK THINK

1 (a) A large gathering of Scouts 2 (a) A unit of illumination

WHICH WORDS:

1 (b) A large gathering of Scouts 2 (a) A unit of illumination

SUDOKU

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

Special event highlights the impact of diabetes

A SPECIAL function at Parliament House recently has highlighted the serious impact of diabetes in community and the need for further support for people living with the disease.

Co-convenor of the Parliamentary Friends of People Affected by Diabetes Gaelle Broad said the event brought together MPs and key stakeholders from the diabetes sector.

"This event was held in conjunction with Diabetes Victoria and was a chance to shine a spotlight on diabetes in the lead up to National Diabetes Week this month," Ms Broad said.

Ms Broad said diabetes was at least twice as common among people living in regional or remote areas of Victoria compared to those living in the metropolitan areas.

"Diabetes is one of the most significant health challenges facing my electorate of Northern Victoria, with thousands of people living with either Type One, Type Two or gestational diabetes."

Ms Broad said Northern Victoria contains some of the state's hotspots for diabetes.

"The Victorian Population Health Survey of 2023 found that the prevalence of Type Two diabetes is significantly higher in adults who live in the local government areas of Murrundindi, Wodonga, Loddon, Mitchell and Yarriambiack," she said.

"For many regional Victorians, managing diabetes is made more difficult by distance and limited access to healthcare services. Patients often have to travel long distances to see endocrinologists, diabetes educators, podiatrists and other specialists. Longer wait times and workforce shortages in regional health services can delay diagnosis and treatment."

Ms Broad said complications of diabetes could include heart disease, kidney disease, vision loss and limb amputations. The event at Parliament was a unique opportunity to bring together experts in diabetes, Members of Parliament and most importantly, people living with diabetes.

National Diabetes Week runs from July 13 to July 18, 2026. For further information, resources and peer support programs, visit Diabetes Victoria.

Made in Marysville exhibition

THE inaugural exhibition of Made in Marysville and Surrounds was launched at MiRa in Marysville on Saturday, July 5.

Organiser Mel Ritchie explained that she used to have a shop in Murchison Street which had the same name. It was a collective of local artists and crafters.

Unfortunately, she had to close after a few years and was invited to volunteer at MiRa. She said, "It is the most amazing place, surrounded by all this beautiful stuff... Steve, my husband, encouraged me to have an exhibition, as I had so much stuff in boxes from my shop."

The exhibition includes the work of Melanie Cousins-Ritchie, Claire Sunderland, Elena Jenkin, Monique Tobias, Rachael Binnie, Trevor Renison and the late Alistair Whyte. It includes a diverse range of mediums including textiles, pottery, glasswork, and more.

Alistair's daughters, Mariko and Tomoko, performed on the handpans and with silk ribbons at the event.

The launch was well attended, with the audience delighted with the beautiful items on display.



SWIRL: Ribbons outside MiRa.



MADE IN MARYSVILLE: Attendees at the event. PHOTO: Anne Richey



MADE IN MARYSVILLE: Bev and Leigh Fraser performing. PHOTO: Anne Richey



MADE IN MARYSVILLE: Mel Ritchie, Claire Sunderland, Monique Tobias, Mariko, Rachael Binnie, Tomoko and Trevor Renison, PHOTO: Anne Richey



Big Bucks bingo winners

THE Rubicon Hotel's fundraiser for Eildon Golf Club has seen some fabulous prizes won lately. In the last five weeks, there were two \$500 winners, one \$1000 winner and now a \$5000 winner.

Concerns over road safety in Glenburn

SOME of the residents of West Bridge Road and Old Glenburn/Kinglake Road in Glenburn are calling for immediate action from Murrindindi Shire Council after more than two years of reporting serious safety concerns related to the current 80 km/h and 100 km/h speed limits through a rural residential area and Kinglake National Park.

The road borders the national park and is used daily by families, school children walking to the bus stop, farmers in slow-moving vehicles, and residents who have no footpaths or safe shoulder, forcing them to walk directly on the road. The area also experiences heavy wildlife movement, resulting in frequent roadkill and dangerous driver evasions.

The road has become a popular route for car clubs and motorbike groups, with many vehicles travelling well above the posted limit and overtaking dangerously on blind bends, forcing residents and wildlife to react quickly.

The residents are now calling on Murrindindi Shire Council to immediately support a speed limit reduction before a serious injury or fatality occurs.

They have submitted three images to council as evidence of their concerns. These images include a dead kangaroo directly under a School Bus Turning sign, highlighting the collision risk for wildlife and the danger posed to children walking to the bus stop; an 80 km/h speed limit sign is placed on a sharp bend where drivers have limited visibility of pedestrians, animals, and slow-moving vehicles; and local residents, including children and dogs, are shown walking on the road due to the complete absence of footpaths or safe verges while vehicles legally travel at 80 km/h.

Residents have undertaken significant efforts to have the matter addressed across the past two years, including contacting Murrindindi Shire councillors, conducting a community survey of 100 households, reporting weekly wildlife fatalities and near misses, documenting high-speed car and motorcycle activity, including harassment of residents, receiving confirmation that council approval is the only barrier to lowering the speed limit, presenting at a council meeting via Zoom, and responding to a council-run survey, the results of which have not been released to the community.



One of the images provided to council to highlight resident concerns.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

U3A

Murrindindi East U3A

is holding their AGM on **Monday July 20, 2026 at 10.30am** at the Alexandra Race Club in Alexandra.

Annual General Meeting

of the Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club will be held on Friday July 17, 2026, commencing at 1pm in the Bayley Street Clubroom.

PUBLIC NOTICES

YEA RACING CLUB AGM

Will be held at the Yea Racecourse in the Club House at 6pm on Wednesday, August 26.

We would like to invite nominations for election to Committee and invite to members to submit business for consideration.

All members and interested supporters are invited to attend.

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An update from Samsung on the Rubicon solar farm

STEPHEN Mitchell, Development Manager at Samsung C&T Renewable Energy Australia (SREA), was contacted for an update on the progress of the planned Rubicon solar farm.

He stated, "I can confirm the project remains active within our development pipeline. Project investigations have continued this year alongside ongoing government agency and stakeholder engagement."

"At this stage we are working through internal processes that are part of the normal project development lifecycle. We do not have any material updates, however remain committed to engaging with stakeholders when we have information to share and engage further on. Our timeline is to submit a planning permit application within the year."

They were also asked about the challenges of fog in the valley and the impact on solar output, how they will mitigate fire risk, how they will protect local waterways, how the amenity of neighbouring properties will be protected, how neighbouring property owners will be compensated for any reduction in property values, how the grass beneath the solar panels will be kept low, whether the project will be sold at planning approval stage or early in the active stage, and for assurances that the infrastructure will be removed at end-of-life under all circumstances.

Their responses to the questions will be published in an upcoming edition.

Planting more trees on farms

LANDHOLDERS across Victoria are being supported to integrate more trees into their farming systems, following an extension of the Victorian Trees on Farms (VToF) Program.

The program and Professional Service Provider Register has been extended to November 1, giving eligible landholders more time to apply for grants to establish trees on their properties.

Through the Victorian Trees on Farms Program, landholders can access grants of up to \$40,000 to deliver on-ground works such as shelterbelts, riparian planting and revegetation projects.

The program supports farmers to improve productivity and build resilience, while delivering environmental benefits including better soil health, reduced erosion, increased carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity.

Agriculture Victoria Acting Executive Director Forestry and Fibre Industry Liam Costello said the extension would support more landholders to take part in the program.

The VToF program builds on the Victorian Government's broader investment in plantation development and farm forestry, helping landholders diversify income and make the most of their land.

For more information about the program, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/vtof

New bond option for renters

RENTERS have until now been forced to pay thousands of dollars for a new bond before receiving the refund from their previous rental home, but from today eligible renters can choose to move their existing bond to their new home.

Tenants Victoria CEO Jennifer Beveridge said the scheme makes a massive difference for renters navigating a tough housing market.

"Moving is stressful enough without having to find thousands of extra dollars to pay a new bond. At the same time people are scraping together rent in advance, facing moving costs and often still paying rent on the property they're leaving. This can amount to thousands of dollars in one hit," Ms Beveridge said.

"This reform makes that process fairer. It means renters have access to their own money at a time when they really need it and won't be left out of pocket waiting for a refund. For the state's approximately 657,000 rental households, this is a massive relief given the heavy financial burden and administrative hassle of moving."

Under the scheme, eligible renters can opt in to move their existing bond to a new rental property. The Victorian Government guarantees the existing bond amount to the rental provider until any claim is finalised.

The government will cover any claims against the old bond, and the renter will then pay the government, not the rental provider.

Seeds of Renewal program to support regional communities

ANZ has opened applications for its 2026 Seeds of Renewal program, committing \$250,000 in funding to help strengthen and sustain remote, rural and regional communities across Australia. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for eligible not-for-profit and community organisations.

Delivered in partnership with FRRR (Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal), the program is marking its 24th year in 2026 and continues to back grassroots initiatives that respond to local challenges and unlock long-term community benefit.

This year, funding will focus on four key priority areas.

Financial wellbeing initiatives that improve economic participation, particularly for under-represented and disadvantaged people in the community. For example, building financial literacy and vocational skills and providing access to meaningful work.

Housing access initiatives and programs that support those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, or that provide housing support for people living with disability.

Environmental sustainability initiatives that restore and conserve the natural environment or contribute to lower carbon emissions, water stewardship and waste minimisation.

Assisting local communities to thrive, which includes projects that either enable vibrant communities, where everyone can participate and build a better life, or create sustainable communities that help deliver demonstrable medium to long-term economic sustainability.

Applications for the Seeds of Renewal program opened July 1 and close at 5pm on July 30. For more information, visit frrr.org.au/funding/anz-seeds-of-renewal

Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club report

By Honorary Secretary Mike Jennings

THE Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club week opened with the Bridge players in action on Wednesday before the business meeting on Friday. This was followed by a very informative and thought-provoking presentation by Jeanie Hurrey from Alexandra District Health on Advanced Care Planning. While most of us oldies have a will there is so much more to be done. If you are unwell and not able to communicate your preferences for care to others, who would you want to speak for you? What would you want them to say? For more information, visit advancecareplanning.org.au

A big thank you to Jeanie for getting us thinking. The usual refreshments followed before the card games and the members added chess to the itinerary.

The club AGM will be held in the Bayley Street clubroom on Friday, July 17 commencing at 1pm and the Christmas in July lunch will be at the Rubicon Hotel at Thornton on July 24. Come along and join in. Meanwhile stay safe and keep smiling.

Take action for family fire safety this winter

VICTORIA'S fire services are urging residents to ensure they have working smoke alarms and a home fire escape plan, as new figures show an increase in the number of preventable fire fatalities last year.

Across Victoria, figures compiled by CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) show there were 21 preventable residential fire fatalities in 2025.

This compares with 18 equivalent fatalities in 2024, with the highest number of deaths recorded during winter.

The majority of fatal fires in 2025, 85 per cent, started in bedrooms or living rooms.

Now, with many families on school holidays, CFA and FRV are calling on all Victorians to take action to help reduce the number of preventable fire fatalities by ensuring their homes are fitted with working smoke alarms and that all occupants have a practised home fire escape plan.

FRV Acting Deputy Commissioner Community Safety and Operational Training Mark Carter AFSM said simple measures could significantly reduce the risks posed by house fires.

"When a fire breaks out, it spreads extremely quickly, meaning you, your family and other people you live with could have just seconds to escape," he said.

"These school holidays we're asking families to check their smoke alarms, replace those that are not working or are more than 10 years old, and practise their home fire escape plan.

"It is important to involve children who live in the home.

"Research shows that children aged up to four years are at increased risk in the event of a fire, so a home fire escape plan supported by working smoke alarms could save lives."

Acting Deputy Commissioner Carter said a home fire escape plan should be tailored to the living environment and the abilities of everyone in the home, including young children, older people and those with mobility issues.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan AFSM said an effective home fire escape plan starts with having working smoke alarms fitted throughout the home.

"Most fire fatalities are preventable. If you think you are going to wake up during a house fire, think again.

"There are gases in the room putting you further to sleep, so a smoke alarm is really the only thing that will ensure you are alerted when a fire occurs and give you the opportunity to escape," Chief Officer Heffernan said.

"We recommend intercon-



ected smoke alarms, so that when one goes off, all smoke alarms will sound across the home.

"If you have battery-operated smoke alarms, remember to check and test them regularly and replace their batteries yearly."

Whoooo knew? Owls are raptors too

The Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) and the Australian Boobook (*Ninox boobook*) are featured this month in the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority's 2026 Year of the Raptor community awareness campaign.

Goulburn Broken CMA project officer, Janice Mentiplay-Smith, said it could be surprising to learn owls are raptors, carnivorous birds of prey that hunt and feed on live prey including rabbits, rodents, fish, lizards and other birds.

"With their flat, feathery faces known as facial discs, large forward-facing eyes, upright stance and circles of feathers under their eyes, they don't look much like a traditional raptor, such as a Wedge-tailed Eagle," Ms Mentiplay-Smith said.

"However, their sharp talons, curved beak and ability to 'fly silent' paired with their exceptional vision and hearing, put them firmly in the raptor category."

Ms Mentiplay-Smith said owls have some very useful hunting skills.

"Unlike other raptors, owls can turn their head up to 270 degrees to help them locate prey. They also have asymmetrical ears, so any noise made by potential prey reaches each ear at slightly different times which helps

them to precisely pinpoint the location of the next meal.

"As well, their sound absorbing feathers reduce the noise of their flapping wings."

Owls, like other raptors, regurgitate the non-nutritious parts of their prey. Several hours after eating they produce a pellet of 'leftovers'. Once rid of the unnecessary bits and pieces, they are ready to hunt and eat again.

Australia is home to 11 owl species. Those that call the Goulburn Broken catchment home vary greatly in size between species: the smallest is the Australian Boobook which weighs around 300 grams and measures around 30 centimetres. The largest is the Powerful Owl which can have a wingspan up to 1.4 metres and weigh approximately 1.4 kilograms.

"As Australia's largest owl, the Powerful Owl lives in large tracts of forest where it can access territory, nesting hollows and food," Ms Mentiplay-Smith said.

"A menu favourite is the Brushtail Possum, which also relies on tree hollows, emphasising the importance of retaining large old trees which has this important habitat. Tree hollow loss is one of the challenges faced by the Powerful Owl."

Powerful Owls have a

slow, double-note 'whoohoo' call that can be heard across one or more kilometres. In comparison, Australia's smallest owl, the Australian Boobook has a distinctive two-toned call that sounds like 'mopoke' or 'morepork'; a word that is often used as its common name.

Like all owls, the Australian Boobook has excellent night-time vision, however, possibly as an evolutionary trade off, it does not perceive colour very well. Its wingspan is between 60 to 80 centimetres and it can weigh up to 300 grams.

The Australian Boobook feeds on insects and small mammals, including microbats, which it catches mid-air. Ground dwelling prey is pounced upon once spotted from a tall perch.

Tuesday, August 4 is International Owl Awareness Day where you can celebrate and learn about owls from around the world.

Bush Heritage features interesting stories about owls of Australia and BirdLife Australia's citizen science Powerful Owl Project. The BirdLife website provides interesting reading on how everyday people are assisting the survival of the Powerful Owl in the challenging urban environments of South-east Queensland and



An Australian boobook:

PHOTO: Bob Jenkins

Greater Sydney.

Bird watching is an enjoyable way to see the Goulburn Broken catchment's beautiful birdlife, including its amazing raptors. Local birding group Murray Goulburn BirdLife meet monthly to conduct outings and enjoy the local environment. The

next outing is scheduled for Saturday, July 18 for a Mangalore and Seymour River walk. For more information, contact: robertsdon680@gmail.com

Learning more about a species and its requirements is a positive first step in helping it and the environment it

relies on. BirdLife Australia's Raptor Group promotes the conservation, management and study of Australia's birds of prey and fosters communication and cooperation among raptor enthusiasts across Australasia. For more information visit <https://ausraptorgroup.org>

Don't forget your flu vaccination this winter season

VICTORIANS are being urged to prepare for the upcoming surge in seasonal respiratory illnesses. Public health experts warn that lower case numbers earlier in the season means Victoria will see a late winter spike.

It's not too late to get a flu or COVID-19 vaccination to protect yourself and your loved ones, and to reduce the severity of symptoms. Victorians are being encouraged to save EDs and Triple Zero for the sickest

patients.

Urgent Care Clinics

Open late seven days a week, Victoria's 38 Urgent Care Clinics also offer care for free, without a Medicare card.

Staffed by GPs and nurses, they treat a range of cases such as sprains, broken bones, cuts, and mild infections.

Chemist Care Now

As well as vaccinations, Victorians can also access care at one of 900 pharmacies participating in the

Chemist Care Now program.

It helps people avoid a trip to the GP for conditions like uncomplicated UTIs or musculoskeletal pain, as well as a prescription for the oral contraceptive pill.

Since launching, highly trained pharmacists across the state have delivered almost 100,000 services, the majority to women.

Virtual Emergency Department

The Victorian Government's Virtual Emergency Department connects Vic-

torians with emergency doctors and nurses via video call, 24/7.

This free service provides fast and convenient access to advice from clinicians without any need to leave home.

Since launching in 2020, the Virtual ED has delivered more than 900,000 consultations. In the past year, around 83 per cent of patients who used the service avoided an unnecessary trip to hospital.

Nurse-on-call

Nurse-on-call also offers 24/7 care, with registered nurses providing immediate, expert advice.

Victorians should call Triple Zero in emergencies, but non-urgent cases may be directed to alternative care options.

Information on Victoria's urgent care services and immunisations can be found at betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services Harriet Shing said, "It's easier than ever to get your

flu shot, and with a later flu season this year we're urging people to get a vaccination to reduce the risks and symptoms, particularly if you're in a higher risk group.

"Wherever you live, Victorians have more care accessible and convenient options than ever before, like the Virtual ED and Chemist Care Now.

"We're urging Victorians to prepare now and to help keep our EDs and ambulance lights and sirens for life-threatening cases."

Yea Pony Club visit Locksley for July rally



THE Yea Pony Club travelled to Tri Star Quarter Horse Stud in Locksley for their July rally, where they were hosted by Martin and Leanne and were able to ride their ponies undercover.



PONY CLUB: Riding undercover in Locksley.

Tigers tamed by Rebels: Alexandra Football Netball Club

THE Alexandra Rebels travelled to Yea with wins to both sides essential to secure/maintain their finals campaign in a task not made easy given the clubs continued long list of injured/unavailable players.

Reserves
Yea 5.7-37 defeated by Alexandra 6.11-47

The fifth placed Rebels with four members from last year's premiership team faced a danger game against sixth placed Yea. In a hard-fought low scoring game it was the Rebels' three goal second quarter that broke the game open holding on throughout the second half for a 10 point victory. Luke James and Jesse Ellks made welcome returns from injury with strong performances.

Lachlan Collard in defence and on ballers Cooper Phillips were again prime movers. Young players Josh Crane as well as Will Clarke continue to improve each week.

Goal kickers: Will Clarke two, Shannon Galloway one, Luke James one, Cooper Phillips one, Tim Polson one.

Awards: Shannon Group Award, Luke James; Future Fit Finance Award, Josh Crane; RUOAK Hotel Award, Cooper Phillips; Buxton Hotel Award, Lachlan Collard.

Seniors
Yea 6.9-45 defeated by Alexandra 19.9-123

The inclusion of Ben Cooper and Will Goyder was offset by the loss of Josh Edward's and Cameron Bishop. The boys took to the heavy Yea Recreation Reserve and despite a heavy injury list

turned in a four-quarter domination over their opponents in one of their best performances of the year.

Listing best players seems a little unfair given the commitment and contribution of all selected however it would be unfair not to mention Sam Critchley with five goals in a best on ground performance. Nick Meehan with his dash out of defence turning defence into attack.

Young ruckman Brad Johnson continues to impress with another strong performance, Connor Heaslip, Harry Aikman and Johnathon Grimwade as well as Peter Cairns were again serious contributors.

Goal kickers: Sam Critchley five, Ben Jack, Peter Cairns, Brad Johnson and Will Goyder two each, Lachlan Nankervis, Harry Correa, Ryan Lucas, Ben Cooper, Steve Steiner and Cal Howell with one each.

Awards: Kervale Award, Nick Meehan; O'Briens Real Estate, Brad Johnson; RUOAK Hotel Award, Sam Critchley; Buxton Hotel Award, Conor Heaslip.

The importance and timing of next week's bye cannot be more crucial in reducing the list of injured players with the finals only six weeks away.

Under 18
Healesville 15.9-99 defeated Alexandra 1.2-8

The Alexandra Under 18s made the early trip to Healesville last Saturday morning with just 18 players following four late unavailability's. Despite the long day and



Seniors player Ryan Lucas making a muddy dash with the football.

PHOTO: Submitted.

the challenge of being undermanned, the boys never stopped competing and showed great determination from start to finish. Healesville proved too strong on the day, running out comfortable winners, with Sam Harris kicking Alexandra's lone goal.

Awards: Bowens Award, Matt Wal; Kia Chadstone Award, Ryder Brady; AFNC Club Voucher, Max Young; Coaches Award, Jayd Bennet.

Netball results

A Grade
Yea 63 defeated Alexandra 35

Incentive Award, Darcy Doyle; Corner Hotel Award, Ava Krijt.

B Grade

Yea 58 defeated Alexandra 34

Incentive Award, Rachel Cooper; Corner Hotel Award, Caeley Palmer.

C Grade
Yea 37 defeated Alexandra 26

RUOAK Hotel Award, Lizzie Butcher; Corner Hotel Award, Kate Broadway.

Under 17s
Alexandra 38 defeated Seville White 14

Koala Cherries Award, Cassie Kidd; Corner Hotel Award, Asher Kaiser.

This weekend will be a quieter one for the senior football and netball programs, with the Seniors, Reserves and A, B and C Grade

netball teams all enjoying a well-earned bye.

The Under 18 footballers will make the trip to Mt Evelyn on Saturday looking to put in another strong performance, while the Under 17 netballers head back to Yea, this time to take on Emerald.

Saturday also marks one of the biggest social events on the club calendar, with the Alexandra Football Netball Club hosting its annual Sponsors and Patrons Day. This year's special guest speaker is Geelong great and Triple M personality Billy Brownless, who is sure to provide an afternoon full of laughs and entertainment.

Tickets are still available, and anyone wishing to attend can contact Kylie Cairns on 0409 932 761 to

secure their place.

The junior football and netball competitions return this weekend following the school holiday break. At home, the Under Nine, Under 10 and Under 12 football teams will take on Wandong, while the Under 14s host Kyabram and the Under 16s face Seymour.

The junior netballers begin the round on Friday night, with the Under 11 Red team travelling to Nagambie. On Sunday, Under 11 Black take on Broadford, Under 15 Black meet Alexandra Red in a club derby, Under 13 Black face St Mary's Yellow, while Under 13 Red have the bye.

The club wish all the teams the very best of luck and encourage everyone to

All-abilities sport grants now open, up to \$25,000

APPLICATIONS are now open for the third round of the Regional All Abilities Participation Grants. Grants of up to \$25,000

are available across three categories: Equipment and Travel, Inclusion Workforce and Disability-led Initiatives.

Grants can be used to purchase equipment such as sports wheelchairs, sensory balls, throwing frames, modified bats and racquets,

helping to ensure safe and inclusive participation. Grants can also create more volunteer opportunities for people with disability to

become coaches, administrators, and sports leaders. Funding will also help cover travel costs to competitions and festivals, or support or-

ganisations to develop their own all-abilities programs. For more information and to apply, visit sport.vic.gov.au/funding

Sporting grants for two Murrindindi Shire clubs announced

NINE grassroots sport organisations in the Eildon district, including two in Murrindindi Shire, are set to bolster their volunteer skills, score uniforms and equipment or deliver a new sport program, thanks to the Victorian Government.

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes an-

nounced the successful applicants of the latest round of the state government's Sporting Club Grants Program.

"The Sporting Club Grants Program is giving grassroots sports clubs in Northern Victoria the support they need to grow their ranks and help more

people play the sports they love," Ms Symes said.

In Murrindindi Shire, Yea Bowls Club Inc and Lake Eildon Rowing Club were successful applicants.

The program provides grants of up to \$1000 for uniforms and equipment; up to \$1500 for resources that improve govern-

ance 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.

By providing more opportunities for clubs and organisations to build on

their capabilities, this program future proofs grassroots sport and recreation by ensuring clubs have the skills they need to take their game to the next level.

The program is backed by the Regional Community Sport Development Fund that is delivering infrastructure upgrades and

other programs including the Regional Community Sport Infrastructure Fund to help more regional Victorians get active and be part of their local sporting club.

For more information about the fund and the latest recipients visit sport.vic.gov.au

Eildon Golf Club match report

By PUTTAMATIC

HELLO everyone and welcome to the Eildon Golf Club weekly report. On a cool day and with the weather being a bit threatening, 11 brave souls took part in a two person Am-

brose competition.

There were a few light showers throughout the day with the odd smattering of sunshine, but the day was a lot of fun. It cleared beautifully well after the competition was over. The course was a bit damp and

all cart drivers had to be careful to pick their paths through, but it was very playable. A couple of wet greens but the course is holding up well considering the rain.

The winners last week were Grant Walters and

Kerry Power nett 65. Runner-up was Shane Barrand and Brett Lyon nett 67.75 and ball run Phil Gourlay and Brett Lyon on a countback with nett 67.75. Nearest the pin winners, no winners on the fifth or 11th, Phil Gourlay was the

closest on the 12th and the 14th. Entry draw winner Nick Munro and Nick also won the swindle draw.

Next week the club have a par two person four ball best ball BYO partner competition, this is always an interesting and chal-

lenging day. The weather is looking encouraging for Saturday so make the effort it should be a great day.

Congratulation to all winners and look forward to seeing you at the club soon.

Muddy ground doesn't dampen Roos' spirits

by Sophia Weaver

LAST Saturday afternoon, the Thornton-Eildon District Football Netball Club faced off against Yea at the Tigers' home ground. A tough 106 to zero loss did not muddy the waters for the Roos, who kept their spirits high despite the challenging conditions.

With Yea being the closest club to Thornton and the game scheduled for a late 4.45pm start, it felt like the entire day had passed before the players finally stepped onto the ground. In fact, a few dedicated players arrived at the Yea oval very early just to watch TEDFNC runner Jimmy play for the Alexandra Reserves team in their clash against the Tigers.

Two games had already been played on the oval before it was time for the ball up in the women's game. The ground was a complete mess of thick mud. This mud necessitated abandoning the center circle, moving play to a space off to the side that was much less slippery and safer for the rucks. Thornton certainly did not make any play easy for Yea. They worked incredibly hard in defense and got very muddy in the process.

As Coach Tash Hay said in her post-game statement, "What continues to blow my mind week after week is the fight this team shows every single game. It doesn't matter whether we're playing the team at the top of the ladder or one in the middle of the pack, we always go out and give absolutely everything we have."

"The scoreboard may not always reflect the effort the Roos put in, but anyone watching can see the determination and strength this group brings every week. Honestly, I wish there was a scoreboard for effort, because I think we'd be sitting at the top of the ladder."

When the game finished, instead of walking off the ground with heads held low, the losing side gleefully seized their coach. They slid her right into the mud before lots of players lined up, ran, and slid on their bellies into the muck. With laughter, glee, and mud everywhere, the day ended with smiles from ear to ear, leaving Coach Tash regretting her offer to wash everyone's jerseys.

Gameday award winners: Ella Dean, Alice Fitzgerald, Anita Cabric.

Next week is another late game at Woori Yallock, 4.45pm.



Bechet, after a dive into a puddle to stop a goal. PHOTO: Teddy Photography.



Play in the mud between Yea and Thornton Eildon. PHOTO: Teddy Photography.



The team after the match. PHOTO: Teddy Photography.

Severe lack of golf for Alexandra Golf Club due to wet weather

by Dave Silverman

UNFORTUNATELY the rain came, and came and came some more, and the net result for the Alexandra Golf Club was that there was no competition held last week.

In fact, the course has been closed since last Thursday. At the time of writing, it had just been announced that the course would re-

open from Monday, July 6, but carts will not be permitted on the course until further notice.

The other good news is that the club's main dam, which has looked like a moonscape for many months, is now chock-a-block full.

So, with no golf to talk about, a couple of timely notices. Firstly, a reminder to all members that your 2026/27 fees are now due

and payable. If you haven't received your renewal notice yet, please let Sharyn Petrzela know, and she will sort you out.

Secondly, if you are a business, or even an individual, who would like to become a sponsor of the golf club, they'd love to hear from you, and you also should contact Sharyn for details, by emailing her at sharyn.petrzela@gmail.com

Nothing much to report at Marysville Golf Club

by Lesley Rundle

THIS report should perhaps be titled 'Marysville Golf Club nothing much to report' as the week of heavy rain and strong winds kept golfers at home rather than on the golf course. Last Thursday was a particularly wild day and no one ventured out to play in the usual nine-hole competition.

The course while wet in patches remained open and golfers played a stroke round for the July month-

ly medal and the second round of the Winter Aggregate. The ladies winner of the medal was the ever stoic and consistent Gail Leigh (12) with nett 75 and Michele Mansfield (26), who recently returned from a memorable holiday overseas, was the runner up with nett 81. Gail also won the Winter Aggregate with nett 146.

Peter Lilley (16) with nett 73 won the men's medal followed by Steve Coker (19) with nett 75. Glen Rattay and Keith Atwell will

play in a play-off for the men's Winter Aggregate next week having each finished with nett 152. The nearest the pins were won by Gail Leigh, Brett Mansfield and Glen Rattay who also won the Golden Shot. Peter Lilley won the putting with 26 putts.

Next Saturday golfers will each play four ball best ball 'with a twist' whereby two stableford scores are combined when names are randomly drawn after play. The winning combination win the day.



Pippa invited to state trial

NETBALL Victoria conducts Talent Identification (TID) at pathway competitions and tournaments, where talent scouts assess athletes for invitation to trial for the Netball Victoria Talent Academy and the Victorian 17 and Under and 19 and Under state programs.

Following her outstanding

performances at the 2026 Association Championships, Yea junior netballer Pippa has been identified and invited to trial for the 2027 Talent Academy and Victorian State Team programs.

The Yea Junior Football Netball Club are incredibly proud of Pippa and wish her every success at taking this exciting next

step in her netball journey.

At Yea Junior Football Netball Club, they are proud to provide junior players with opportunities to trial for and participate in the Association Championships (Interleague), helping them develop their skills and pursue pathway opportunities at the highest level.

‘Wobbly Wriders’ fire recovery generosity

THE annual Yea Rotary Cycle Dindi event, planned for mid-March, was sadly cancelled this year because of the significant bushfire damage to much of the infrastructure along the Great Victorian Rail Trail (GVRT) in Murrindindi Shire.

Since January, the GVRT has been closed from the Cheviot Tunnel to Merton and Cathkin to Alexandra, the principal riding locations for Cycle Dindi.

A group of cyclists from the Warragul area who participated in the ride last year, and had planned to participate again this year, were most disappointed when they heard the news about the trail closure. The group just loved the unique rural hospitality provided by the Sinclair family, of morning tea at the Nutfield shearing shed in Molesworth and lunch at Cremona in Cathkin, both exceptionally popular features of past events.

Under the enthusiastic planning and direction of Carolyn Haynes from Warragul, an assorted group of cyclists, dog walkers, craft enthusiasts and friends (The Wobbly Wriders) decided that they would conduct their own fund-raising event, in lieu of Cycle Dindi 2026, to support the bushfire recovery efforts in Murrindindi Shire.

To coincide with the Tea Cosy Festival being held at Fish Creek the friends rode along the Great Southern Rail Trail from Koonwarra to Fish Creek.

This week, a donation of \$650 was accepted with gratitude by the Rotary Club of Yea and the funds will be directed to bushfire recovery.

‘The Wobbly Wriders’ are a wonderful example of community members helping other community members to rebuild their lives.

The Yea Rotary thanks Carolyn and her friends for their generosity.



The Wobbly Wriders set off along the Great Southern Rail Trail from Koonwarra to Fish Creek, riding in support of bushfire recovery efforts in Murrindindi Shire.



Organised by Carolyn Haynes of Warragul, the group of cyclists, dog walkers and friends raised \$650 for the Rotary Club of Yea’s bushfire recovery appeal.