

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, March 19, 2025 \$2.00 inc. GST

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A drone shot of the Yea township. -S

Have your say on the future of Yea

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting the community to participate in shaping the future of Yea through the development of a township structure plan, an initiative that will guide the future use and development of land in Yea and support sustainable growth.

Through two community events, residents, businesses, and local groups will have the opportunity to share their ideas about what Yea should look like and how it should grow, while preserving the area's unique character.

Murrindindi Shire Council's Cheviot Ward Councillor Sue Carpenter encouraged the local community to come along to the community events.

"Yea has the potential to welcome more residents, businesses and services to our wonderful shire as our population grows and we need

to ensure that there is enough land in the right locations to meet future demand for houses, businesses and essential services," Cr Carpenter said.

"The Yea Structure Plan will help us grow sustainably by providing direction for development and infrastructure.

"We want to make sure the development of the Structure Plan includes input from the local community. So, we're asking for your opinions on issues like diversity of housing, community connectedness, accessibility, open space and recreation areas, managing flood and fire risks, how we can protect our environment and productive farming land, and how we can best support local businesses and employment."

A facilitated workshop is being held at the Yea Council Chamber (next to the Yea Library) on March 31

from 6.30 to 8pm. To register for this workshop, visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan

At the same location on April 1, council is hosting a community drop-in session between 3 and 5pm. Residents are encouraged to come and learn more about the project, view draft options for the Structure Plan and provide valuable local knowledge. No registration is required for this session.

This project is supported by funding and project management from the state government through the Department of Transport and Planning's Regional Partnerships Program, which assists flood-affected councils.

For more information about the Yea Structure Plan, visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan

A short history of Yea Primary School

THE Public Records Office of Victoria have published a short history of the Yea Primary School.

The school opened as a tent school in 1859 and the first head teacher was Thomas Prosser Savell.

The Church of England took over responsibility for the school in 1860.

Thirty-nine students were enrolled in 1861 when Molyneux was head teacher.

The school became a state school at some stage between 1873 and 1878.

The school building was abandoned in 1875 when more than 30 children died of diphtheria.

Classes were held in the old Presbyterian Chapel until a new school building was completed in 1877.

The new railway line ran through part of the school

ground so it was expanded on the east side.

In 1885 the number of students enrolled increased to 84. By 1892, enrolment had nearly doubled to 164.

The school building from the closed Boundary Creek State School (No. 1482) was moved to the school. In 1900, the school buildings were extended when enrolment reached 192.

Yea became a Higher Elementary School in 1923. This meant that classes for older students were added, like years seven and eight in secondary schools today.

By 1960, enrolment has increased to 250. Secondary classes moved to the new Yea High School.

In 1970, the school was renamed Yea Primary School. Yea Primary School is, of course, still in operation.

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital

5736 0400

In an emergency dial 000

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

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ALEXANDRA

NEWSPAPERS

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The Yea Chronicle

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THUMBS UP
THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP: To the amazing 'angel' who rescued me from an impossible situation at the supermarket. You can be sure I will 'pass it on'. Thank you.

THUMBS UP: To Murrindindi Shire Council for the wonderful service and free entry to our swimming pools this season, from a grateful lap swimmer.

THUMBS UP: In last week's paper, Ruth Selover outlined what she was able to do to keep her house cool but the bit she said on her power bill seems a bit too good to be true. She quotes her service charge at \$34.12 as the service per day is \$1.33. Does Ruth get a monthly bill? If quarterly, could she please let everyone know what company she is with so we can all enjoy these great rates?

THUMBS DOWN: Can anyone make sense of what the CEO of fisheries is proposing to do? Dismissing all 73 fisheries officers in the state of Victoria and replacing them with 36 engagement officers focussed on community education. All five fisheries stations will close, leaving just nine staff to cover all of greater Melbourne. We do not have enough officers on the ground now. What will happen with our fisheries as they already have trouble protecting it. Illegal fishing will be open slather. I ask you to write to the Minister for Fisheries to stop this before it gets started. If he gets this though what will be next? Downgrading the hatcheries to liberate less fish into the waterways?

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

Letters to the Editor

ANZAC Day

REGARDING Valerie Pallaoro's comparison between ANZACs at Gallipoli and the treatment of Aboriginals, I fail to understand how she draws this comparison. I recommend she investigate war records and those about European colonisation. In my opinion modern society is losing touch with reality and her comments along with those of Robyn Walsh are symptoms of this.

LJ (Jim) Wheelhouse, Eildon

Don't shoot the messenger

WHEN I say it's not your fault, I mean it's really not your fault. Everything that has happened to you, around you, in you, everything you have seen, felt, been a part of willingly or unwillingly, every trauma you have faced. All the joyful moments, the circumstances and situations that are part of your journey thus far has all led you to this moment, here and now.

Your own personal journey is the most valuable lesson in self-discovery and your soul's evolution. Embrace it. Treasure it. Gain wisdom from it. The process can be long and arduous. It cultivates inner strength and resilience. Patience is not passive but active.

This is my letter to you. I want you to step into your very powerful self. Do you even know how powerful you are? If only you let yourself go and surrender to the fact that you are your own superhero. By that I mean that you have everything inside of you that is needed to kick some serious butt in this game of life.

Name and address provided but withheld by request

Fruit fly

THERE would seem to be a lack of knowledge regarding the fruit fly problem in this shire, as I have seen fruit that has been donated lately and shown it to those distributing it. If council is unable to arrange an information gathering to explain this problem, then arrange someone to talk on the problem, as there are several fruit producers in this shire fighting to keep their produce clean but backyard gardeners are just breeding them.

If you ask your search engine, it will give you all that you need to know on how to help get on top of this pest. There is both insecticide and organic products to do the job. It's never too late to start.

Chris Petersen, Alexandra

Have you donated a red handbag

A RED handbag was handed into the St Lukes Opportunity Shop in Yea on February 7. The handbag contained a large sum of money.

To claim ownership of the bag, the claimer will need to know the correct amount of money found, the denomination of notes, and where it would have been located in the bag.

All enquires to the Yea Police Station, phone 5797 2630.

Weekly Weather

March 19 - March 25, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

DAY

LOW

HIGH

Wednesday

18

30

Thursday

16

29

Friday

14

25

Saturday

13

27

Sunday

13

27

Monday

16

28

Tuesday

17

28

Yea

DAY

LOW

HIGH

Wednesday

18

31

Thursday

16

29

Friday

14

25

Saturday

13

27

Sunday

13

26

Monday

16

28

Tuesday

17

28

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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

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

Like us on Facebook

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT				
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	10.00am Mon	2.62	steady	below minor
Rubicon River at Rubicon	10.00am Mon	0.49	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	7.25am Mon	0.61	steady	below minor
Home Creek at Yarek	8.47am Mon	0.10	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.19am Mon	0.49	steady	below minor
Yea River at Yea GV Water PS	9.20am Mon	0.19	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	10.00am Mon	4.52	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	10.00am Mon	0.41	steady	below minor
King Parrot Ck at Kerrisdale	3.00am Mon	-0.10	steady	
Goulburn River at Trawool	10.00am Mon	2.40	steady	below minor
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	10.00am Mon	-0.08	falling	below minor
Goulburn River at Seymour	10.00am Mon	2.49	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.59am Mon	0.79	steady	
**ISSUED AT 10.16AM ON MONDAY, 17 MARCH 2025				

DISTRICT RAINFALL	
Alexandra	10mm
Buxton.....	48mm
Eildon (AWS).....	8mm
Flowerdale.....	16mm
Jamieson.....	16mm
Kinglake.....	39mm
Lake Eildon.....	20mm
Mansfield.....	3mm
Taggerty	18mm
Yarek	10mm
Yea.....	10mm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday	
LAKE EILDON	
Height above sea level this week.....	280.12m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	68.6%
Metres below full supply.....	8.78m
Daily inflow	500ML
Release.....	9300ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....	85%

The Yea Chronicle

DEADLINES

Real Estate

Thursday 5pm

Trades & Services

Thursday noon

Early General News

Thursday 5pm

Classifieds

Monday noon

Editorial

Monday 9am

Sports Editorial

Monday 10am

Letters to the Editor

Monday 9am

Thumbs up/down

Monday 10am

If you have any enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the office on

5772 1002 or

reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Foundation Murrindindi launches Volunteer Grant Program

FOUNDATION Murrindindi proudly announces the launch of its new grant program initiative aimed at supporting the operations of volunteer driven, grass roots community organisations within the Murrindindi Shire.

The Volunteer Grant program will support projects to engage volunteers, broaden the volunteer base, and strengthen volunteering in local communities within Murrindindi Shire. Volunteer Grants support the work of local community organisations by reducing barrier for volunteers, increasing participation in volunteering and increases community capacity.

Robyn Hill, Executive Officer said, "We understand that volunteers are the heart and soul of our rural communities. Without the many dedicated and passionate volunteers who so generously give their time and talent, many community groups, events and even essential community services like the SES and the CFA would not be possible.

This grant program is designed to support these community organisations that rely on volunteers to operate. Investing in our volunteers means we see and value their ongoing contribution in creating the vibrant and thriving communities in which we live."

Grant funds can be used for activities such as (but not limited to): Training and upskilling of volunteers such as first aid, governance, mental health courses; purchasing of equipment to support volunteer engagement, items including computers, tablets, and radios; subscription fees for products to enhance volunteer organisational capacity such as cloud based online accounting, Canva Pro, and Dropbox; the purchase of electronic payment devices/equipment, costs associated with managing volunteers including software programs, databases, and uniforms; advertising and communication material such as banners and brochures to promote and support volunteer recruitment,

and undertaking background screening checks for volunteers.

Grants of up to \$1500 are available to eligible community organisations.

Grant applications open on Monday, March 31 and close on Wednesday, April 30. To find out more about this grant opportunity please visit foundationmurrindindi.org.au

We strongly encourage all applicants to contact Foundation Murrindindi's Executive Officer Robyn Hill at robyn@foundationmurrindindi.org.au or 0488 007 688 to discuss your project proposal prior to submitting your application.

Flood markers in Molesworth

FLOOD depth indicator signs are placed in areas prone to flooding to show water levels at various locations. They are typically installed along roads, pathways or near water bodies to warn people of potential flood risks. Transport Victoria is responsible for the placement of these markers on roadsides they manage.

Murrindindi Shire Council welcomes the installation by Transport Victoria of 'Road Subject to Flooding' signs and 'Depth of Water' markers on the Goulburn Valley Highway near Cathkin, following long-standing advocacy to improve road safety in flood-prone areas.

These markers will help improve road safety by giving motorists and emergency services a clear indication of flood levels on the Highway. Road safety remains a priority for council and we're glad to see this outcome.

The placement of additional flood markers on the bridge crossing the Goulburn River towards Molesworth was determined by Transport Victoria, based on their assessments.

Council will continue to advocate for further flood markers for high-risk areas.



The man seen on CCTV walking in Dandenong. -S

Alexandra man dies in Dandenong

HOMICIDE Squad detectives have released CCTV and are appealing for information to establish the circumstances which led to the death of a man in Dandenong last week.

The 52 year old Alexandra man had been staying at a motel in Dandenong with his partner, a 50 year old woman from Mordialloc.

In the first clip, he can be seen leaving the motel at 6.57pm on Thursday, February 27 to go for a walk, which was usual for him, returning around 7.43pm.

He walked with a noticeable limp and suffered from leg cramping, and often went for walks to alleviate the pain.

At around 2.03am on Friday, February 28, he left the motel for another walk, but did not return.

The man was found by a passerby on Fifth Avenue around 6.55am. He was conveyed to hospital to be treated for his injuries where he later died on Saturday, March 1.

His partner reported him missing upon realising he had not returned.

Investigators have established that he died as a result of head injuries, but at this stage, have been unable to ascertain how he sustained those injuries.

Police have obtained CCTV which depicts the vast majority of the man's walk, and he

is last captured on CCTV at 2.11am alive and well.

At this stage, detectives have not located CCTV which captures the man's final movements and the circumstances which led to his death.

They are particularly keen to hear from anyone who was in the area at the time and saw anything, or who might have CCTV, ringcam or dashcam footage and is yet to speak to police.

There were also a number of passersby captured on CCTV around the 2am mark and who may have walked past the man. They are particularly keen for those witnesses to come forward.

Anyone who witnessed anything, has CCTV, dashcam footage or any other information that could assist investigators is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report online at crimestoppersvic.com.au

Detective Inspector Rob Nazaretian, Homicide Squad said, "At this point in time investigators have been unable to definitively establish the circumstances which led to this man's death not discounting the possibility of a physical assault or some other cause."

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Matthews
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YEA TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE PLAN

Residents encouraged to attend upcoming community workshop and drop-in session



Join us in developing a township structure plan to guide Yea's growth and preserve its unique character.

Community Events:

Workshop: Monday 31 March, 6.30 - 8.00 pm at Yea Council Chamber (next to the Yea Library and Customer Service Centre). Register at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan

Drop-in Session: Visit us at Yea Council Chamber on Tuesday 1 April between 3.00 - 5.00 pm to learn more and provide input.

Visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan or give us a call on 5772 0333 for more information and to get involved.

This project is supported by the State Government through Department of Transport and Planning's Regional Partnerships Program.



Foundation Murrindindi
For a community-led future

VOLUNTEER Grant Program

Grants are available to community organisations and groups for projects that engage volunteers, broaden the volunteer base and strengthen volunteering in our local communities within Murrindindi Shire. These grants will assist local community organisations to support the efforts of their volunteers by improving volunteer capability and capacity within an organisation. Individual projects up to \$1,500 per organisation will be considered.

Opens **31 March**
Closes **30 April**

For more information about the program visit our website at www.foundationmurrindindi.org.au
Or contact Foundation Murrindindi's Executive Officer, Robyn Hill at robyn@foundationmurrindindi.org.au or by telephone on 0488 007 688.

Bitumen scam doing the rounds

THERE has been a report of a group of people, recently seen in Gobur and Yarck, which locals suspect to be conducting a bitumen scam.

The scam involves approaching rural private properties and claiming to have just finished a job nearby and have excess hotmix bitumen that they need to get rid of so they can clean the truck and head home. They offer to lay it on your property.

Once the resident agrees the rest of the team turn up almost immediately and lay the bitumen. Then they either give you a huge invoice or demand money on the spot. Some reports say they refuse to leave until you pay something, and sometimes they threaten to come back later.

If you are approached by someone in this way, please contact the police.

Local police advised that they have not received any reports from local people having been scammed in this way, but that’s not to say that the scammers haven’t been trying.

Police would like to reminded people to give them a call to report any suspicious behaviour, either by contacting local police or via CrimeStoppers.

If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Out&About

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Anything goes auction at Alexandra Show Grounds. Farm machinery, farm sundries, antiques, feeders and much more. Full list will be published at emblingrural.com.au

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Murrindindi Little Aths AGM and presentation night will be held at 5.30pm at Rotary Park in the barbecue area.

MONDAY, MARCH 31

Alexandra Community Hub AGM will be held at 6pm at the Historic Court House at 38A Downey Street Alexandra.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Alexandra Ladies Probus AGM will be held at 10.30am at the RSL hall.

SATURDAY, MARCH 22

Alexandra Speedway is on again. Racing starts at 4pm.

You are invited to join Murrindindi Shire in developing a township structure plan to guide Yea’s growth and preserve its unique character. Workshop will be held between 6.30-8pm at Yea Council Chamber. Register at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan. For more information or to get involved phone 5772 0333 or visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

You are invited to join Murrindindi Shire in developing a township structure plan to guide Yea’s growth and preserve its unique character. A drop in session will held between 3-5pm at Yea Library. For more information or to get involved phone 5772 0333 or visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/yea-structure-plan.

Draft infrastructure strategy for Victoria released: Open for feedback

VICTORIA’S *draft 30-year infrastructure strategy 2025-2055* was released recently by Infrastructure Victoria and provides a number of draft recommendations.

According to the Infrastructure Victoria website, “Victoria’s 30-year infrastructure strategy provides a practical plan for the policies, reforms and projects that can deliver many benefits to Victoria’s communities, economy and the environment over the coming decades.”

The plan makes 43 draft recommendations in the areas of housing, energy, transport, health, social infrastructure and

the environment, and provides seven future options for consideration.

Some of the recommendations could affect regional areas like Murrindindi Shire, especially in the energy section. However, none of the recommendations are concrete, and they are not designated to a select area in the plan, some are just marked as regional.

In the housing and transport sections, key recommendations that could affect the Murrindindi Shire area include building more social housing, investing in kindergarten infrastructure and running more bus and coach services in regional Victoria.

There is also a recommendation to lower the speed limit on streets that children frequent in the strategy.

“Make local streets safer for children and communities. Reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets, starting in places that children often visit including around schools, playgrounds, childcare centres and kindergartens,” the strategy reads.

In the energy portion of the plan, draft recommendations include reducing greenhouse gas emissions from infrastructure, better preparing infrastructure for climate change, using new flood maps to revise planning schemes, improving environmental assessments and site selection for energy projects and developing regional energy plans, guiding transition from fossil gas and maintaining reliable gas supply.

The strategy lists a future option of “charging people fairly to use roads.

“Introduce road charges that help manage congestion and improve productivity. Consider options such as car parking levies, off-peak freeway tolls, congestion pricing trials, or road user charging for all motorists with lowered fixed road charges. Work with the Australian Government on road pricing options,” the plan reads.

The six objectives that guided and structured the draft strategy include: Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities; Victorians are healthy and safe; Victoria has a thriving natural environment; Aboriginal people have self-determination and equal outcomes to other Victorians; Victoria is resilient to climate change and other future risks; and Victoria has a high productivity and circular economy.

This 30-year infrastructure strategy is updated every three to five years by Infrastructure Victoria, and the final strategy will be tabled in Victorian Parliament in late 2025.

In the meantime, Victorians can share their views on the draft recommendations and options by visiting the Engage Victoria website at engage.vic.gov.au/victorias30yearinfrastructurestrategy

The strategy is open for feedback until Monday, April 28.

The full strategy can be found at infrastructurevictoria.com.au/resources/draft-30-year-strategy



Infrastructure Victoria’s draft 30-year infrastructure strategy proposes a number of recommendations and is currently open for feedback. -Mingyang Liu

Church Services

ST PETER’S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH
Cnr Bald Spur/Whittlesea Kinglake Rds,
Sunday Services, 8.30am Communion.
Minister: Rev. Ruwan Palapathwala
0458 113 099

ST LUKE’S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA
Sunday Service time 11am
Prayerful Reflection - held each Tuesday,
10am to 11am - all welcome
Father Mario Hendricks
Ph: 0435 953 777

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

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE
Fr Martin Ashe, Parish Priest
Ph 9717 6482
St Mary’s Kinglake: Sunday 8.30am

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA
Station Street Yea
Sunday Service 11.15am
Colin Whiteway
Ph 0457 340 525

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

COMMUNITY DIARY

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

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

MONTHLY
1st Mon St Luke’s Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099
1st Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
2nd Sat Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
2nd Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
2nd Thu Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Thu Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0400 424 888
Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

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

Murrindindi Shire's lack of emergency housing

FAMILY Violence is a widespread issue that impacts individuals, families, and the community. Just because you don't see it firsthand doesn't mean it's not happening under your nose in the community. You don't really know what a person is going through unless you are told.

According to the Crime Statistics Agency, from 2023 to 2024 in the Murrindindi Shire, there were 187 cases of family violence recorded by Victoria Police, with 73 family violence cases involving children. Family violence happens mainly behind closed doors, with 12 of the cases occurring outside of the home and 175 in the home during 2023-4.

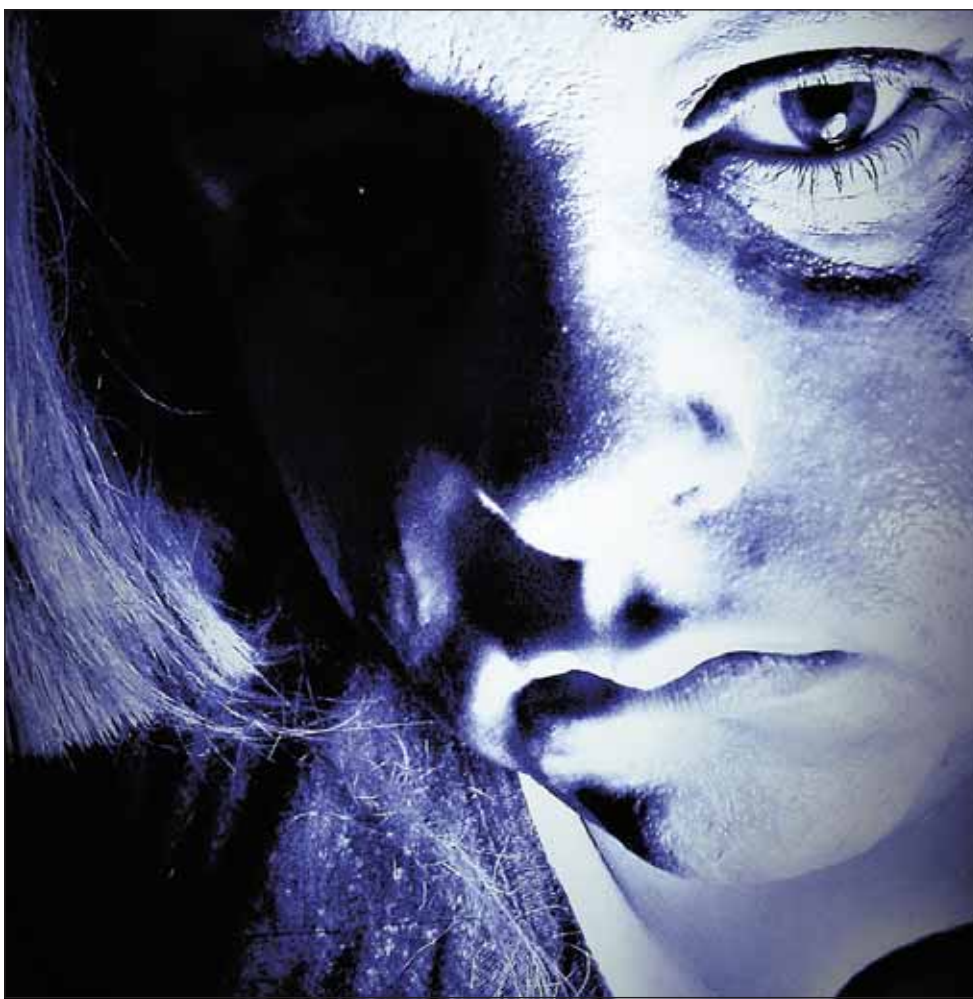
So where do you go in the Murrindindi Shire if you have to flee from a family violence situation?

Recently Alexandra Newspapers sat down with Geoff Proctor, Alexandra's Rotary Club president, to find out about the issue of lack of emergency housing in the shire and his vision of repurposing the old Alexandra Hospital into emergency housing.

"People don't know how many people, and predominantly women, who are living out of cars. We've got an issue, but nobody sees it you know, we've arranged now with the Alexandra Community Hub that we have access to some money to help people out in an emergency where they didn't have the funds...

"With domestic violence, one of the issues that came up at a meeting we had at the Hub was if police need to put somebody in another accommodation, there is nothing. The only way they can do it now is if the person has got access to some money, they can put them into a motel. That's overnight or a couple of nights, but if not, then they have to them in a cell. They have nowhere else to put them.

"So how do we deal with it?... The issue is that you've got a building that sits there (the old Alexandra Hospital) that does nothing. People tell me, 'Oh, it's got asbestos you



More services need to be available for victims fleeing domestic violence in the Murrindindi Shire. -S

can't do this, you can't do that.' I said, 'It's got an en-suite, yeah? All you need to do is put a lock on the door. You don't have to do anything. Don't have to touch it. They need a bed, and they need access to a toilet and a shower. You put a lock on the door.'

Nearly two years ago Alexandra Newspapers reported on a meeting held at

the Alexandra Community Hub with the providers of homeless support in Murrindindi Shire. The meeting focused on homelessness due to many factors such as the rental crisis, the impact of the building industry collapse, the topic of emergency accommodation.

Sergeant Andrew Walker from the Alexandra Police said there is a need to have

short term accommodation available in the shire, such as for when people have missed a bus or in situations of domestic violence.

"They work to find accommodation at locations such as caravan parks or at local hotels, however this can be challenging if it is required late at night. In cases of family violence, the police have at times needed to transport people very long distances, such as to Wangaratta, and police may spend their whole shift on this task. Unfortunately, no funds are available to book a taxi for the people. He said that this can occur around once per month, as in family violence situations, people can often have family or friends who are able to help," Sergeant Walker said.

An option currently available for Murrindindi Shire residents who are experiencing family violence is reaching out to the Orange Door Network. This service helps people access family violence support.

The Orange Door works with local providers and services across Goulburn to support placements in emergency accommodation, as well as providing specialist family violence case management to ensure access to a range of legal, financial, and emotional supports.

While The Orange Door is available during business hours, access to crisis accommodation statewide is also available 24 hours, seven days a week via Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre.

Goulburn Orange Door has a primary site in Shepparton, and an access point at Wallan responding to families and individuals based in Murrindindi Shire, Mitchell Shire, Strathbogie Shire, City of Greater Shepparton, and Moira Shire.

Goulburn Orange Door can be reached on 1800 634 245, Safe steps Family violence Response centre can be reached on 1800 015 188, and Beyond Housing can be reached at 1800 825 955.

If you are in immediate danger, call Victoria Police on 000.



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Student of the Week

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Fun facts about giant insects

DID you think the insects were bad this year? Were you bitten by one too many mosquitoes? Well frankly, you should be grateful, because the situation used to be worse. Much worse.

In the days before the dinosaurs, in the Paleozoic Era (541 to 252 million years ago), insects were far bigger than they are now.

For starters, there were griffinflies, closely resembling the dragonflies of today. They had a wing span of up to 71 centimetres. Nothing much has

changed about them. They've just become smaller.

It's possible that they became large due to the higher oxygen levels in the atmosphere at the time. There were also fewer aerial predators. They were relatively safe until some dinosaurs developed into birds. The smaller the griffinfly, the better the chance of escape.

There were also giant millipedes, with one variety growing up to two and half metres in length. It's believed to be the largest invertebrate in the history of the earth, and some were also poisonous.

And in news to make you shudder, one of the early scorpions grew to around 70 centimetres in length.

Cockroaches were the size of a house cat and they had the ability to fly.

Mosquitoes appeared during the Cretaceous period, co-existing with dinosaurs, but have not changed much.

Termites have been on the planet for about 130,000,000 years. Recent studies have found that they evolved from cockroaches.

If the giant insects don't worry you, how about a giant rodent? The *Josephoartigasia monesi* was five feet high, 10 feet long and had foot-long incisors. Certainly a rodent of unusual size.

Sweet dreams.



Dragonflies used to have a wingspan of 71cm. -R A Nonenmacher

Local hatchery rears olive perchlets

A NATIVE fish once thought to be extinct is thriving after being released back in Victorian waterways due to a successful breeding program at the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snob's Creek Conservation Hatchery.

The small-bodied olive perchlet was declared extinct in 1988 and apart from one sighting of a single fish in 2022 near Mildura, the species was last recorded in the wild in Victoria in 1929.

A conservation effort to bring olive perchlet back from extinction has seen 200 healthy adults released back into the wild to help repopulation efforts.

Olive perchlets reared at the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Snob's Creek Conservation Hatchery were released into Cameron's Creek in the Gunbower National Park last month, the first ever wild release of the species in Victoria.

The success of this program is contributed to the Victorian Government's Nature Fund program which invested \$315,000 into the \$1 million project. The Nature Fund supports conservation projects to threatened species and their habitats.

The release is part of a long-term plan to repopulate the species into restored floodplain habitats throughout the Murray corridor.

The olive perchlet is a small fish that grows up to five to six centimetres long and plays an important role in maintaining waterway health by preying on tiny aquatic species, such as water insects, beetles and larvae.

The North Central CMA has also been breeding surrogate populations of olive perchlet in private dams around Bendigo, with more wild releases planned for the future.

The olive perchlet release follows the release of previously extinct southern purple spotted gudgeon into northern Victorian waterways in 2020, as well as releases and habitat restoration of threatened southern pygmy perch, flat-headed galaxias, and Murray hardyhead.

Team effort to save native fish from dry conditions



Flathead galaxias, known as the 'ghost fish'. -S

THE Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) is part of a team effort to save native fish at risk of dying due to drying up waterways across the catchment.

The critically endangered Flathead Galaxias, affectionately known as the 'Ghost Fish', in the Molesworth billabongs and endangered Macquarie perch in the Hollands Creek near Benalla are the focus of current efforts.

GBCMA is working closely with Arthur Rylah Institute, Victorian Fisheries Authority, Taungurung Land and Waters, Parks Victoria and North Central Catchment Management Authority on the fish rescue work.

GBCMA Environmental Water and Wetlands Manager, Simon Casanelia, said approximately 100 Ghost Fish were collected from several drying-up billabongs in Molesworth.

"Saving these Ghost Fish is a priority due to the rarity of the species," Mr Casanelia said.

"Of the 100 collected, the majority went to two private dams with secure water levels and suitable habitat and some went to the Victorian Fisheries Authority Snobs Creek Conservation Hatchery for captive breeding that will also assist with the species' recovery.

"A landholder, participating in the GBCMA's Fish in Farm Dams Project was able to take the Ghost Fish at short notice

and they will stay in those two dams until conditions improve at Molesworth.

"While it's impossible to save all native fish and aquatic species impacted by the ongoing hot, dry conditions impacting the catchment's rivers, creeks and wetlands, it's so valuable we can take these actions."

Mr Casanelia said the effects of long spells of hot dry weather were being felt most in unregulated streams, or waterways without weirs and dams that rely on rain and natural run-off for flows.

This is a fantastic example of the community and local authorities working together to protect native fish in challenging, dry conditions.

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Rise in on-farm fatalities leads to calls for action around farm safety

THE latest data released by AgriFutures Australia and collated by the team at AgHealth Australia has revealed a sharp and deeply concerning rise in on-farm fatalities and serious injuries, with 72 fatalities lost and 133 serious injuries recorded in 2024.

Farmsafe Australia, the national peak body for farm safety, is calling for urgent action, declaring that it is time to draw a line in the sand and make farm safety a non-negotiable priority.

"This is not just a wake-up call, it's an emergency," Felicity Richards, Chair of Farmsafe Australia, said.

"We cannot continue to accept farm fatalities and serious injuries as just part of life on the land. The data is clear: we need to change the culture around safety, and we need to do it now."

The 2024 figures more than double those recorded in 2023, with side by sides (14 deaths), quad bikes (10 deaths), and tractors (8 deaths) continuing to be leading causes of fatalities. Queensland alone saw an alarming jump in serious injuries, increasing from 11 to 61 cases. These statistics are not just numbers; they represent real people, farmers, workers, and family members, whose lives are forever changed.

AgriFutures Australia Senior Manager, Rural Futures, Ulicia Raufers emphasised the importance of data in identifying and addressing emerging safety risks.

"We cannot allow the rising trend of on-farm fatalities and serious injuries to persist," Ms. Raufers said.

"Every person who lives, works, or visits a farm has a role to play in prioritising safety and reversing these troubling figures."

AgHealth Australia's Farm Safety Research Manager, Kerri-Lynn Peachey, who monitors and collates the incidents each year, called the latest statistics a stark reminder to prioritise farm safety.

"With deaths and injuries more than doubling since 2023, we can't ignore the warning. While some fluctuation is expected, 72 fatalities far exceed the five-year average of 53," she said.

"We must stop treating these incidents as unfortunate accidents and start treating them as preventable tragedies," Ms Richards said.

"Farm safety isn't about red tape; it's about keeping people alive. If we don't act now, we will be having the same conversation in another 12 months, only with more names added to the toll."

Farmsafe Australia is calling on industry, government, and corporate partners to step up and take responsibility by working with

the organisation. Collaboration is key, and this moment must be seized to align policy, investment, and action towards a safer future for Australian farms.

"Farm safety isn't just the responsibility of individual farmers, it's a collective effort," she said.

"We must bring together industry leaders, researchers, and policymakers to ensure that awareness of evidence-based solutions is consistently raised and that life saving habits are put into practice. Every farm, every worker, every family deserves better."

Farmsafe Australia is urging government and corporate partners to work alongside them and invest in long-term safety

initiatives, including training programs, awareness campaigns, and technology-driven solutions. By leveraging data and insights from initiatives like the Ag Safety Data Net, the industry can make informed decisions that drive real change.

"We have the knowledge. We have the tools. Now, we need the commitment," Ms Richards said.

"This is our line in the sand. We cannot afford to let these numbers continue climbing, we must act, and we must act together."

More information about Farmsafe Australia can be found at their website, farmsafe.org.au

The value of keeping backyard chooks

Dr Jeff Cave, Senior Veterinary Officer, Northern Region

CHICKENS can be a great addition to your home, filling various roles such as producing eggs, fertilising gardens, eating your food scraps, plus being a pet and providing companionship for the family.

The most trouble-free chickens to purchase are vaccinated hens at the point of lay (16 to 18 weeks) from a reliable commercial source. You will need at least two as chickens are social animals.

Chickens need a well-drained and well-ventilated pen, with enough space to ensure they don't fight, and is functional and easy to clean.

A chicken house should give shade from direct sunlight plus water-proofing from rain, particularly where the chickens roost and lay. It works well if the chicken house is located under a tree for shade.

The chicken house should be north facing with an eave about a metre long to protect from the summer sun but let the light in during winter. Make sure the house is tall enough to stand up in. Cover the floor with sawdust to form a deep litter for the chicken's droppings.

Make sure the chicken house is fox proof and unless the sides are attached to a wooden or concrete floor, dig them into the soil to a depth of at least a half a metre.

Make sure there are no gaps that predators could get in, there are secured catches and locks, and consider using a fox light.

For chickens that are not allowed to roam outside their pen clip one wing, not both, to prevent them from flying. Always secure your chickens in the chicken house before the end of the day.

Nesting boxes need to be off the ground, be deep and fairly dark for seclusion, and regularly add fresh straw. Ideally build the house with outside access to the nesting boxes.

Perches for roosting need to be wide enough for the chickens to comfortably stand on, at a jumping height and the right thickness for their feet.

Chickens are naturally omnivores, so they eat a variety of foods. Pellets are a satisfactory food source but can be supplemented with food scraps.

Don't feed more scraps than the chickens can consume or else the leftovers will attract vermin and create odours, don't give food scraps that are mouldy or have gone off otherwise you chickens may become sick. Give a source of calcium such as shell grit to help form their eggs.

Commercially available feeders and water dispensers work well, have them off



Chickens make for easy backyard animals and have many benefits, but there are some rules and guidelines that should be followed to make sure they are well cared for. -Pixabay

the ground to keep them clean. A round feeder is good for the pecking order as the weaker chicken can be on the other side of the circle and not beside the dominant chicken.

Provide enough pellets for no more than one week to prevent them from becoming stale. Chickens also need continual access to clean, fresh water as they drink a lot.

Monitor your chickens daily for their health, egg production, and food and water availability, and collect their eggs daily. Regularly clean your chicken coop including feeders, drinkers and equipment, and frequently replace nesting materials.

Always wash your hands with warm water and soap after handling birds, eggs or other materials in the coop.

Agriculture Victoria is currently responding to an outbreak of H7N8 avian influenza (bird flu) on four Victorian poultry farms. A housing requirement is now in place only for properties with 50 or more birds in the restricted area.

This disease detection serves as a reminder for all bird owners to routinely monitor the health of their birds. If you suspect your birds are sick, contact your local vet or call the all-hours Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

To avoid this happening to your flock avoid contact between poultry and wild

birds, keep feed and water in a protected place where wild birds can't access, and keep your poultry away from water sources frequented by wild birds such as streams, dams, ponds and even puddles. Limit visitors to your birds and use clean footwear.

If you are planning to have more than 50 chickens, you are required to have a Property Identification Code, and either be in a quality assurance program or complete and follow Agriculture Victoria's food safety management statement.

Also, check your local government requirements, as many have by-laws on flock size and housing, as well as prohibiting keeping roosters in metropolitan areas.

Chickens are an easy and enjoyable animal to keep. So, if you are thinking about it give it a go. For further information regarding keeping backyard poultry visit go.vic.gov.au/3FrSzz9

Avian influenza is a notifiable disease. If you suspect infection in your own poultry or wild birds you must notify Agriculture Victoria on the all-hours Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888. For further information regarding Avian Influenza visit go.vic.gov.au/3FrSoDZ

More funding for Livestock Biosecurity

THE Victorian Government is supporting new projects that better control pests and disease that impact livestock. Recently the 2025 *Livestock Biosecurity Funds* program opened and eligible organisations are urged to apply.

The grants can be used by organisations to adopt emerging technologies and to respond to unsolved livestock biosecurity issues, encourage collaboration where possible, and provide measurable benefits to livestock and beekeeping industries.

Victoria will continue to face new and emerging biosecurity risks, driven by climate change and increasing trade and travel, so innovative solutions will be essential to help protect Victoria's agriculture industry.

Agriculture Victoria and the state's livestock advisory committees set up the grants program which is funded through duties generated by the sale of cattle, sheep, goat and pigs and their carcasses in Victoria, and beekeeper registration fees.

Last year the Cattle Compensation Fund awarded \$1.5 million to Veterinary Support Services to run the *Victorian Livestock Veterinary Scholarship* program, supporting eight early career veterinarians across regional Victoria, providing one-to-one clinical supervision and training from an experienced large animal veterinarian

To apply visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestockbiosecurityfunds Applications close on April 14.



Monitoring and managing water

WATER is a precious commodity and with the current dry seasonal conditions it's a critical farm asset to manage and monitor.

Agriculture Victoria Livestock Industry Development Officer Christopher Blore said having the right quality of stock, domestic and commercial water, where you need it, when you need it and, in the quantity you need, is critical for all farm businesses.

"There are some simple tools that you can use to monitor water supplies in dams and tanks across your farm," Mr Blore said.

"Tools can be as simple as a couple of floats and a bit of bar to give you an indication of the water left in your tank, or a DAMDEEP tool.

"A video of how to make a DAMDEEP measuring tool can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website.

"More advanced options such as ultrasonic or hydrostatic sensors to measure the depth of tanks or dams or flow meters to measure water flow rates from pumps and tanks, can be set up to send automatic alerts like when a tank or dam is low.

"If you are looking to compare options, visit agtechfinder.com as this website has



Water is precious commodity. -José Manuel Suárez

a large range of available AgTech solutions for water monitoring. Just search the term 'water' to browse a range of options," he said.

"Chat with your local rural store about options and the ongoing support available at a local level."

For further information on calculating livestock water needs and how much water

you have on farm, refer to the Stock Water Resources page on the Feeding Livestock website or contact Chris at christopher.blore@agriculture.vic.gov.au

For more information about drought and dry seasonal conditions support visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons or call 136 186.

Victorian Landcare Grants now open

THE Victorian Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos recently announced the opening of the 2025 *Victorian Landcare Grants*, with \$3.55 million available to support volunteers in caring for the state's landscapes and biodiversity. This means volunteer groups and networks protecting and restoring the environment in the Goulburn Broken region can now apply for funding.

The grants are open to environmental volunteer groups and networks, including Landcare groups and networks, Friends groups, Conservation Management Networks, Committees of Management and Aboriginal groups.

Project grants of up to \$20,000 are available for on-ground works and community education projects focused on enhancing the natural environment, including native vegetation and wildlife, waterways and soils. Support grants of up to \$500 are available to assist with administrative and operational expenses of groups and networks.

Goulburn Broken CMA Regional Landcare Coordinator, Kerstie Lee, said last year the Victorian Landcare Grants funded 19 projects in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

"This included a project in Merton, where the Victorian Landcare Grants supported raising awareness about Koalas and restoring their habitat to help create connectivity through the landscape for Koalas to move safely.

"I encourage our local environmental volunteer groups and networks to put in an application for this year's funding and look forward to a wide range of projects being considered," Ms Lee said.

Since 2000, the Victorian Government has invested \$80.7 million through the Victorian Landcare Grants program to support conservation efforts and empower Victorians to help protect the state's landscapes, waterways and wildlife.

The grants will help achieve targets set in Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037, the Victorian Government's 20-year plan to protect the environment and native species.

Visit gbcma.vic.gov.au/projects/funding-opportunities/funding_landholder-grants/victorian-landcare-grants/ for more information and application links. Grants close on Wednesday, April 16.

Duck hunters plan ahead

WITH duck hunting season approaching, people are being encouraged to familiarise themselves with the rules for hunting at Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) lakes, dams and reservoirs.

The Victorian Government has announced the 2025 duck hunting season will run from March 19 to June 9.

Duck hunting is permitted at the following GMW storages: Cairn Curran Reservoir, Hume Reservoir (Victorian lakebed areas), Tullaroop Reservoir, Lake Eppalock, Laanecoorie Reservoir, Greens Lake, Lake Eildon, Lake Buffalo, Waranga Basin, Lake Charm, Kangaroo Lake, Racecourse, Lake Nillahcootie, and Lake Nagambie.

GMW Water Storage Services general manager Leonie Bourke said people visiting GMW storages during this time should be aware of where they can and can't hunt.

"Duck hunting is permitted at several of our lakes, dams and reservoirs, but there are still parts of these storages where hunting is prohibited," Ms Bourke said.

"It is important people learn which areas hunting is allowed in before they visit, as some of these areas have changed since previous seasons.

"Hunters will also need to get landholder consent to hunt or pass through private property that adjoins GMW land, waterways, and storages."

Duck hunters visiting GMW-managed storages must follow the arrangements laid out by the Victorian Government. This includes bag limits, what hours of the day hunting can occur, which species can be hunted and wetland management actions.

"We ask everyone who visits our storages makes safety a priority, and respects both the environment and other members of the public," Ms Bourke said.

"If people have any questions about where they can hunt at our storages can phone us to get clarification."

Information on duck hunting at GMW storages, including maps specifying where

duck hunting is permitted, can be found on the GMW website gmwater.com.au/duckhunting

Recreational game bird hunting is also prohibited in the Avian influenza control and restricted areas currently in place in Strathbogie Shire. This includes duck, stubble quail and introduced game bird hunting.

Moving game bird carcasses and any equipment associated with game bird hunting into or out of the restricted and control areas is prohibited unless under a movement permit.

Details on the arrangements for the 2025 duck hunting season can be found on the Game Management Authority website at gma.vic.gov.au/hunting/duck/duck-seasonarrangements

Hunters are reminded to regularly check the GMA website for updates on wetland management actions, including any wetlands that may be closed to hunting to protect significant concentrations of rare or threatened species. People with further questions on where they can hunt at GMW storages can phone 1800 013 357.

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CFA members during a high angle rescue. -S



A training exercise in Trawool. -S



Yea brigade conducting a community engagement event. -S



A road rescue near Molesworth. -S

When the pager goes off: A day in the life of a CFA volunteer

Jude McGill, Volunteer Sustainability
Northeast Region, CFA

YOUR local community relies on local community people to protect you from fires, assist with rescues and attend motor vehicle accidents as well as providing non-operational support to your brigades.

The role of a volunteer with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) can be very rewarding and the time commitment can be as little or as much as you would like to contribute, as long as you meet the minimum requirements of CFA and your brigade.

Let's have a look at a day in the life of a CFA member.

Operational Firefighters

A day in the life of a CFA volunteer responding to a fire is fast paced, demanding, and filled with moments of intense teamwork and focus. Here's an overview of what such a day might look like.

Many CFA volunteers have regular jobs, so they might be at work. In the event of a fire, volunteers will receive a pager alert or message via the Supplementary Alerting Service (SAS). This could be anything from a grass fire to a large-scale bushfire, motor vehicle accident, house fire or rescue and the team must be ready to move at a moment's notice. The fire station will quickly fill with the sounds of sirens and voices as volunteers quickly gear up.

Responding to a Call: Once they arrive at the scene, there's little time to waste. Volunteers assess the fire or incident and surrounding area, determine if there are any

immediate threats to life or property, and begin executing a coordinated response. This might involve setting up hoses, fighting the fire directly, or protecting nearby properties, while also providing information back to Firecom (000). This information allows Firecom and CFA to understand the size of the fire and the resources required. CFA will often work in partnership with Victoria Police, Ambulance Victoria, DEECA and the SES.

Team Coordination: Communication is key. Volunteers work closely with each other, other firefighting teams, and emergency services. They might operate in shifts, rotating duties like manning hoses, providing support to those on the front lines, preparing additional equipment, traffic control and clean up.

Ongoing Operations: As the sun sets, the firefight may continue, especially if the conditions are difficult (ie. high winds or large areas affected). CFA volunteers might need to clear out trees (this is done by specialist trained tree assessors and fellers, often from Forest Fire Management Victoria) or other obstacles that are obstructing their efforts, while others continue to put out hot spots to prevent the fire from reigniting.

Cleanup and Reporting: After the fire is contained, the crew might assist in mopping up residual embers or checking for hidden flames. They also prepare reports to ensure that all actions are documented, which is essential for safety audits and future operational planning.

Returning to Station: If the fire is under control, volunteers head back to the station. They ensure the equipment is cleaned,

refuelled, and checked before storing it away. Volunteers return to their regular lives, but some may stay at the fire for the night, or another crew will come in to relieve them. They may come from within the same area or from further afield.

Reflection and Bonding: After a long day, some might take time to debrief with the team. Whether it's sharing what went well or discussing what could be improved, this is a crucial part of the process. Volunteers also rely on each other for emotional support, as firefighting can sometimes be overwhelming, especially after large or tragic fires. Firefighters also rely on the support from their District Office and the Wellbeing Team of peers and counsellors. District 12 headquarters covers both Mitchell and Murrindindi shires.

Dealing with Fatigue: Firefighting can be physically and mentally exhausting, so volunteers rely on one another for support. Hydration and rest breaks are essential to avoid burnout. District 12 CFA have a Rehabilitation Unit with trained staff who attend fires to monitor and ensure firefighters are rested and fit to be on the fire ground.

Routine Maintenance: When there isn't an emergency call, volunteers might perform routine checks on equipment or clean and restock the trucks. Volunteers regularly check their gear and make sure their firefighting equipment is ready to go. This could include protective clothing, boots, breathing apparatus, and ensuring the fire truck is well-maintained with enough water and supplies.

Training days: These sessions keep everyone up-to-date and ensure that volunteers know

exactly what to do in emergencies. Busier brigades will train weekly and quieter brigades will train less often, but always ensure their operational members are up to date with the annual training requirements required to be operational.

Standby Mode: Even during the night, volunteers may need to respond to fires or emergencies. As the community sleeps, CFA volunteers remain vigilant, always prepared to leap into action should another call come in.

Throughout the day, volunteers may face long hours, unpredictable conditions, and intense pressure. Yet, their commitment to protecting their communities and supporting each other through the challenges is what makes them such a vital part of the firefighting effort and members develop strong bonds with their fellow members.

Operational members can also be called upon to be deployed to other parts of the state or interstate to support firefighters further at events afield.

Non-Operational members

Non-operational members are vital to the success of a brigade. There are many roles within a brigade that non-operational members can take on. These range from secretary, treasurer, station maintenance, community engagement, social media, wellbeing coordinator, social coordinator, fundraising, equipment checks, supporting re-stocking of appliances and cleaning appliances, preparing or providing meals for the crews on return to the station, cleaning the station, lawn mowing and the list goes on, depending on the needs of each brigade.

A scorcher for the 2025 Alexandra Cup



Passing the post in race four. -Alexandra Race Club



The race club's favourite group comes from Carrum Downs every year to play golf and go to the races. -Alexandra Race Club



The third race saw Rob Kirkpatrick streak ahead of the field for his second win for the day, this time on Rocket Launcher, trained by Andrew Dale. -Alexandra Race Club



Jodie-Lee Riddle's birthday party at the races. -Wendy McCarthy



Children enjoying pony rides. -Alexandra Race Club



The children who got their hats signed by Sophie Clayfield, pictured with jockey Sophie. -Wendy McCarthy



Wendy Brunson, Wendy McCarthy, Geoff Brunson, Robbo and Bernie. -Alex Race Club



The vets at the Alexandra Cup on Saturday. -Alexandra Race Club

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MAZE

Campfire warning: Almost 250 campfire incidents since July 2024

SINCE July 1, 2024, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) and Country Fire Authority (CFA) have responded to almost 250 incidents involving campfires, including a bushfire that burnt through 14 hectares of land, left around 100 campers stranded and forced dozens more to evacuate a popular Cape Otway camp site in January.

FFMVic Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman urged people to be careful when it comes to campfires, as gusty winds can easily carry embers from a campfire into the bush, posing a serious fire risk.

“Campfires that escape are a big problem in Victoria. Always fully extinguish campfires with water, not soil and make sure it’s cool to touch before leaving,” Mr Hardman said.

“We want people to enjoy the bush safely. By knowing and following the rules for building and maintaining campfires, we can help keep the bush healthy and safe for everyone.”

Parks Victoria Executive Director Operations Kylie Trott said campfires are only allowed in dedicated fireplaces in most parks in Victoria.

“Not all parks or campgrounds allow campfires. There are some limited areas where campfires are permitted outside of constructed fireplaces, but you need to check before you go,” Ms Trott said.

“Remember to always have someone in attendance while a campfire is going and properly extinguish the fire with water before you leave. The consequences can be devastating if you don’t.”

Chief Conservation Regulator Kate Gavens said given the extreme fire hazard posed by unattended campfires, the Conservation Regulator takes a zero-tolerance approach to those found breaking the law when it comes to campfire safety.

“Unattended and unsafe campfires can result in devastating consequences. The risk is real, and all campers have a responsibility to know and abide by campfire rules,” Ms Gavens said.

“It just takes one ember to cause a destructive bushfire, and this is why there are significant fines for those who leave campfires unattended.

“Our forest and wildlife officers will be out over the weekend to remind campers about the importance of campfire safety.”

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan reminded campers it is their responsibility to check if the area they’re visiting is under a Total Fire Ban.

“It was concerning to see several illegal campfires, including a bonfire, during the recent Total Fire Bans on February 22 and 23,” Mr Heffernan said.

“This kind of activity increases risk for our forests, communities, and our firefighters.”

Before hitting the road, people should download the VicEmergency app and be familiar with local campfire regulations and safety measures to help protect the environment and local communities, learn more cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions/can-i-or-cant-i

People who breach campfire regulations on public land face a maximum penalty of \$19,759 if the matter is prosecuted in court. The maximum penalty for lighting or maintaining a fire during a day of Total Fire Ban is \$47,421.60 and/or two years in jail.

Report unattended campfires to 136 186 or call 000 to report a bushfire.

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MEETINGS

AGM for the Alexandra Ladies Probus Club will be held at 10.30am on Thursday, March 20, 2025 at Alexandra RSL Hall.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

RAR wood raffle drawn March 15 at 2025 Alexandra Cup meeting, Nanette, Yarck, Blue C42.

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- Wednesday 26th March - 2.30pm
- Tuesday 1st April - 9am
- Wednesday 2nd April - 12pm

Amy Leahy - Principal
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principal@shyea.catholic.edu.au

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Various Positions

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St Mary's is seeking motivated and dedicated applicants for the listed positions commencing Term 2, 2025. Graduates are welcome to apply.

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Primary Teaching Position, Ongoing
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Primary Teaching Position, Fixed Term
- Primary Classroom Teacher (Full-time - Maternity Leave Replacement, Term 2, 2025)

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Any combination of the following subjects:
- English - Science
- Humanities - VCE Psychology
- Physical Education Units 3 and 4

Learning Support Officers, Ongoing
The positions are ongoing, part time (8.45am to 3.15pm, Monday to Friday)

Please refer to <https://www.smseymour.catholic.edu.au/welcome/employment-opportunities/> for the role description and application requirements.
Applications close 3.00pm Tuesday, 1st April, 2025.
Applications will be reviewed at the time of submission.
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Monash study maps the relation between media use and civic values

PEOPLE who rely on social media as the main source of news score lower on a measure of civic values than people who rely on newspapers and non-commercial media for news and information, according to a study by researchers at Monash University.

The study was led by Professor Mark Andrejevic and Associate Professor Zala Volcic, both in Media Studies at Monash University's Faculty of Arts.

"It has become something of a truism that social media is not great for democracy," Professor Andrejevic said.

"But no one has really systematically tested that until now."

The study of more than 2000 Australians asked people a range of questions about their belief in democratic institutions and practices as well as their openness to considering perspectives that challenge their own.

It also asked whether they thought there was such a thing as a shared public interest and how important they thought it was for Australians to inform themselves about political issues and for schools to teach civics.

Almost 60 per cent of respondents who said their main source of information about news and current events is social media fell in the bottom half of the scale. By contrast, the majority of people who relied on newspapers, non-commercial broadcasting (such as the ABC), and online news aggregators were in the top half of the scale.

Interestingly, people who relied on commercial TV scored even lower than those who rely on social media; 63 per cent were in the bottom half of the scale. Those who scored highest relied primarily on non-commercial radio (67 per cent in the top half of the scale).

When it came to average scores, people who relied on non-commercial radio scored 11 per cent higher on the civic disposition index than those who said they mainly rely on social media.

There were similar results when the researchers looked at people's pattern of media use: those who were heavy users (more than three hours a day) of commercial broadcast and social media had the lowest scores, whereas heavy users of non-commercial media, hard copy newspapers, and online news aggregators had the highest.

"We also found that people who use a wider range of media sources tend to score higher on the civic values scale," Professor Andrejevic said.

He and Associate Professor Volcic collaborated on the study with Research Fellow Isabel Mahoney, and Research Assistant Fae Gehren (all from Monash's School of Media, Film, and Journalism).

The study does not indicate whether platforms foster lower civic values or simply cater to them. It does, however, raise concerns about social media becoming an increasingly important source of political information in democratic societies like Australia, especially given the renewed emphasis on political posts by Facebook.

The study also sheds new light on the ongoing discussion about media echo chambers and filter bubbles. Professor Andrejevic said the results highlight the importance of understanding not just what information people receive, but their attitude toward it.

"If platforms cater to people who aren't willing to test their opinions and arguments out, providing them with more accurate information might not be enough," he said.

Moreover, it raises questions about the decision by social media moguls to increasingly crowdsource fact checking to users, rather than doing it in-house.

For such an approach to work, both citizen journalists and their readers need to value the role of good-faith deliberation in civic life.

"Overall, the online space might not be the best one to rely on if you're looking for these values," Professor Andrejevic said.

The study was designed in collaboration with Essential Research, who conduct one of Australia's leading and most respected social and political polls. This report is part of a Discovery Project for the Australian Research Council.

The survey's top-line findings can be found at drive.google.com/file/d/1oNEbuV-cgtj-u8GIg5Cs7V4mKuovp1TV/view

Operation Arid catches harmful drivers in the region

POLICE have detected close to 5000 traffic offences during a major road safety blitz over the Labour Day long weekend in Victoria.

Operation Arid saw police targeting high-risk driving behaviour across the state over four days, in an effort to drive down road trauma.

Speeding offences made up almost half of all detections, with 75 per cent of drivers caught speeding between 10km/h and 25km/h over the speed limit.

Police conducted 69,166 preliminary breath tests, with one in every 455 motorists tested caught drink driving.

A further 197 drivers returned a positive roadside drug test, with 4266 roadside drug tests conducted.

Over 300 drivers who shouldn't be on the road because they were either unlicensed, disqualified or suspended from driving were caught over the four days.

Police also issued 227 infringements to motorists for disobeying traffic signs or signals, 145 for mobile offences, and 99 for seatbelt noncompliance.

In the Benalla Police Service Area, which includes the Murrindindi Shire, infringements were given to the following offences, three

drink drivers, two drug drivers, one combined drink/drug, one disqualified drivers, three unlicensed drivers, 30 speeding offences, one disobey signs/signals, no seatbelt offences, no mobile phone offences, nine unregistered vehicles, one impoundments, and no cyclist offences.

A total 61 lives have been lost on Victorian roads this year, up from 58 at the same time last year.

Police are reminding motorists they will continue to be out enforcing anywhere, anytime across the state's roads this month,

with March considered the most dangerous period on Victorian roads.

Injury collisions in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria have historically peaked during March, with 30 fatalities recorded during March 2024, the highest since 34 were recorded in 2011.

Operation Arid ran from 00:01 hours on Friday, March 7 until 23:59 hours on Monday, March 10.

SPORT

Variety at Saturday's upcoming speedway event

by Dean Thompson

LADIES Standard Saloon competitors will be a highlight among a show packed with variety this Saturday at Alexandra Speedway with the Ladies Standard Saloon state title being one of a number of important features.

Dirt Modifieds with their 360ci engines, Compact Speedcars with their mostly 1000cc engines, Wingless Sprints with V6 engines. Junior Sedans, Standard Saloons and Junior Standard Saloons make for a packed program for race fans.

Competitors in the Ladies Standard Saloon title vying for the Victoria one roof plate include Alexandra club members Sarah Meakins, Courtney Meakins, and Maddy Capon. Sarah has won the state title numerous times and is once again amongst the favourites.

Visiting drivers with eyes on the title prize include Bree Walker and Caroline Allen the top two drivers in the state series currently part way through their season, two-time former champion Ally Morrison, former champion Jaimi Barber and the likes of Katie Meyer, Zoe Young, Kath George, Stacey Sheedy and Lea Judd.

Wingless Sprint entrants include Brad Warren who competes for Alexandra member Steve Garlick. Warren and Garlick have won the Victorian title together for Wingless this season and this weekend are looking for victory in a series round with \$1000 to win on offer.

Jordan Pegg grew up as a Junior racer at Alexandra and is looking for a strong showing while the likes of Ricky Mills, Jarrod Payne, Scott Irons, Jordyn Sinni, Jake Warren, Jack Regan, Ben Hodge, Evan O'Bryan, and Esther Thomson are others in the mix.

Australian Compact Speedcar champion Justin Paull from Montrose leads competitors into this weekend's Compact Speedcar club round. Aston Rodriguez the Victorian champion, and Mitch Whiting the former Australian champion are all competitors to watch in the class.

Dirt Modified competitors should put on a terrific show at Alexandra. Dirt Modifieds are making their debut at the track and are capable of getting around the venue quicker than any class has. All eyes will be on the clocks this weekend with competitors like Daryl Hickson, Michael Ardley, Matt and Marcus Reddecliffe, and Shane Ardley come



Matt Reddecliffe in a dirt modified. -S

to Alexandra to compete for the first time in these big powerful machines.

Supporting all the feature action will be a strong line up of Junior Sedan competitors, Sports Sedan drivers fresh from their state title this past weekend, Standard Saloon Open Competitors and Junior Standard Saloon competitors.

This Saturday racing begins from 4pm on Gordon Street Alexandra with a planned 10.30pm finish, gates open to the public at 9.30am. Enquiries can be communicated via Facebook messages to the club to race day up until 9.30pm.

Entrance will cost \$60 for a family of two adults and three kids aged 10 to 16. An adult ticket is \$25, Aged, and Invalid and children aged 10 to 16 is \$10 with all children under the age of 10, free.



Mitch Whiting in a compact speedcar. -S

Merton cricketers play Rovers in Wangaratta

MERTON cricketers travelled to Wangaratta to take on Rovers Bruck United in a qualifying final on a perfect outfield in hot conditions.

Rovers won the toss and batted making 6/175. Jeremy Aykroyd with a fine 70 and Vance Curran 25 the top scorers, Noah Whittall 2/18 off eight overs really stood up along with Harry Craddock 2/37 bowling well.

Luke Berriman and Jai Lerch-Mackinnon the other wicket takers. Merton's top order struggled for the first time with a steady fall of wickets and a rising run rate putting

the pressure on. The middle order started finding the boundaries lead by top scorer Jarrod Mahoney 31 and some late runs from Harry Craddock 23 not out saw Merton unable to chase the runs down finishing 8/133 off 36 overs.

Luke Berriman and Daryl King both with 17 the other contributors for Merton. J Haddock 3/17 the top wicket taker for Rovers. With other results going Merton's way the side gets a second chance with a road trip to Mulwala to take on Yarrawonga for a place in the grand final with Rovers playing Benalla at the Rose Gardens oval.



Merton cricketers played in Wangaratta. -S

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
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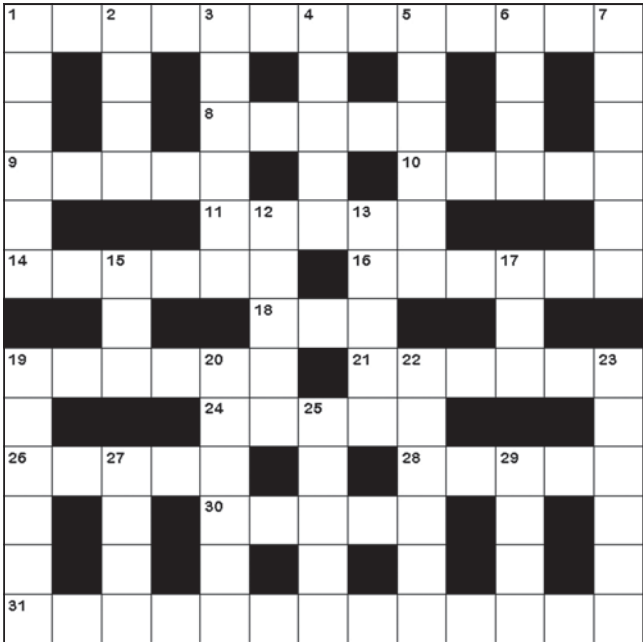
Crossword

ACROSS

- 1. Capable of being moved from one place to another.
- 8. Where sports events take place.
- 9. Juice pressed from apples.
- 10. Bring out an official document.
- 11. The rear part of a ship.
- 14. A way of acting or behaving.
- 16. A participant in a date.
- 18. A receptacle for the ashes of the dead.
- 19. Having beautiful views.
- 21. An even dozen.
- 24. In a state of physical or nervous tension.
- 26. Macaroni, spaghetti, ravioli, noodles, etc.
- 28. A small map set within a larger one.
- 30. Not telling the truth.
- 31. Diligent and scrupulous.

DOWN

- 1. Powder used after a bath.
- 2. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
- 3. Occurring at widely spaced intervals.
- 4. Grossly overweight.
- 5. Prepares for a sport.
- 6. The one in charge.
- 7. Person who has specialised knowledge.
- 12. An agreement to stop fighting.
- 13. Hires out for an agreed fee.
- 15. Indicates the born or maiden name.
- 17. Nocturnal bird with large eyes.
- 19. Contaminated and festering.
- 20. Printing with the letters slanting to the right.
- 22. A measure of the heaviness of things.
- 23. A minor actor in crowd scenes.
- 25. Sound of any kind.
- 27. Deliberately avoid.
- 29. A musical composition for one performer.



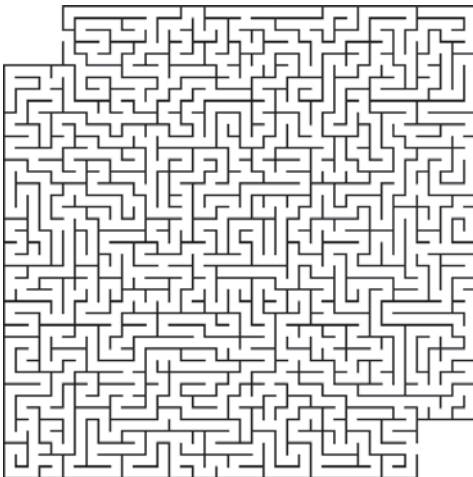
Word Search

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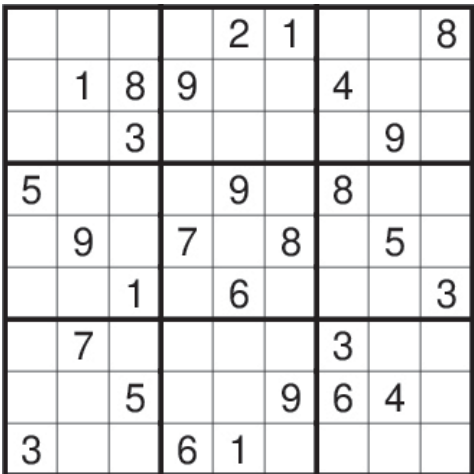
Australian Native Flowers

- BOTTLEBRUSH KANGAROO PAW
- DESERTFLAME LILLYPILLY
- EUCALYPTUS STURTSDESERTPEA
- GREVILLEA WARATAH
- HIBISCUS WATTLE
- HONEYSUCKLE YELLOWBUTTONS

Maze



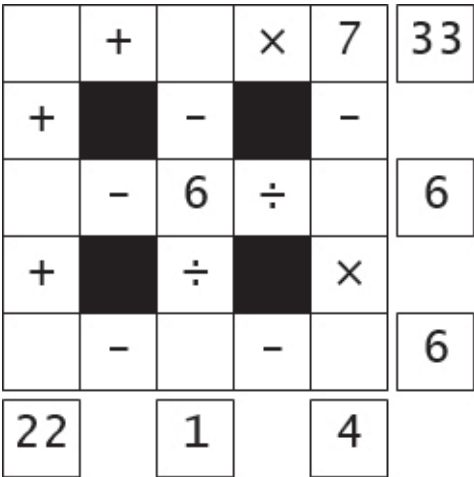
Sudoku



Difficulty: Very Hard

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

Math Square



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

SPORT

A scorcher for the 2025 Alexandra Cup

by Robyn Walsh

DESPITE a debilitating, scorching, Indian Summer that goes on and on and on, the 2025 Alexandra Cup was very well attended. The meeting certainly provided some distraction from the heat. Patrons were treated to a great event, a great ladies' day and great demonstration of how, even a picnic race meeting, can run well in spite of the weather and stuff happening.

Cathedral Golf Club sponsored the Alexandra Cup. Alexandra Race Club is extremely grateful for this wonderful support and embraced golf for the day. Cathedral and Alexandra Golf Club members attended as guests and mini golf was a huge hit with the younger set.

The 2025 Alexandra Cup was won by Rushford carrying the heavy weight of 71 kg. Trained in Wangaratta by Andrew Dale the horse was ridden to perfection by one of picnic racing's stars, Shaun Cooper. Cooper rode a double, winning the last on *Laststrikeyourout* trained by Nicole Dickson.

Four winners were trained by women, Smith, Walker and Dickson. Trainer Ashleigh Smith and rider Rob Kirkpatrick teamed up for a delightful double. They won the first, the Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum 1830m with *Besson* and the third, the Rubicon Hotel Motel Thornton Maiden 1300m, with *Rocket Launcher*.

Our Dawny trained by Dani Walker, ridden by Sophie Clayfield won the EB Hadfield Contracting 1300m. Troy Kilgower brought a string of horses and won with *Sweet Swagger* ridden by top jock, Leigh Taylor in the Darlingford Boat Club Open 1300m.

All racing, even picnic racing, is overseen by Racing Victoria (RV) and the protocols

were never more on show than on Saturday. The welfare of horses and riders is paramount.

Strict equine protocols are in force at every race meeting and are overseen by RV appointed vets. On Saturday, hot weather protocols were in place to protect the horses. More ice was sent to the horse stalls than went to the bar and the provision of water and hoses was a priority.

There is a doctor and private ambulances on course to follow each race in case of falls. Consequently, when a rider was hurt at the barrier, prior to the start of race three, and had to be transferred to hospital, there was a one hour delay till a replacement ambulance arrived. Patrons were very understanding and concerned for the welfare of the young rider.

On Sunday the head steward said the rider has some facial injuries but no broken bones and was discharged from hospital on Saturday night. The stewards quickly made up time by running the remainder of the program like a greyhound meeting with rapid fire, 20 minute race intervals. There was no early mark for patrons but, thanks to the work of stewards, no one went home after dark.

It's been a very long season for the grounds men. They have done an exceptional job of keeping water up to the track and public areas to keep them spectacularly lush and green. Gardeners, farmers and track staff are all hanging out for the autumn break, let's hope it comes soon.

The final meeting of the season is on Saturday April 5. Come dressed in your Yee Ha Best for the Alexandra Country and Western Meeting. Please do yourselves a favour, and take the bus. Buses from Eildon and Marysville and will pick up at lots of stops. Book your entry and bus tickets online at country.racing.com/Alexandra and join in the fun.

Round six for 2025 at Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition
Espresso versus Latte

TYLER versus Collective: Everyone in Tyler's level was unavailable. Tyler played each game against a different opponent for some good practice.

James G versus Mick: James kept it close in the first half of the match. Stepping it up a notch in the second half, Mick showed no mercy to triumph with a 33 point lead. 74 to 41.

Justin versus Matt: A fabulous game to watch. Both players pulled out some powerful shots to heat the night up even more. Justin took an early lead and stayed ahead to win the match 78 to 50.

John versus Andrew: It was a slow start for Andrew, with John covering the court well. Andrew tried for a late comeback in the third game, but John was too strong across the court and claimed the victory. 68 to 47.

Affogato versus Cappuccino

LEE versus Sally: An excellent game by both players. Lee won points early in each game with Sally bringing it home strong to keep the scores almost even. A well round game but Lee just edged ahead in the end to win the match. 53 to 51.

Jared versus Michael M: Michael was lost in space during the first game allowing Jared to take a 17-point lead. In an attempt to reduce the deficit Michael drew the second game and won the third, however his efforts were unsuccessful, and Jared continued to reign supreme and claimed his victory. 61 to 53.

Thursday competition

Chai versus Darjeeling

RANDY versus Beth: Busting out some tricks Randy took a 16-point lead in the first game. Beth pulled it together to keep the next two games close and won the final game by 11 points. It was a good effort, but Randy was still victorious. 71 to 62.

Sam versus Jodie (fill in): It was a close match, and both players were running around so much you could see the heat waves coming off them. Jodie has not lost her touch with continually amazing serves. She held out and didn't let Sam get a look in. 54 to 47.

Michael H (fill in) versus Phil: An entertaining match to watch. Phil lost his groove in game two, letting Micheal get further ahead. The tables turned in the third game and Phil claimed back most of the points he'd just lost. Michael still had enough of a lead to win the match. 62 to 52.

Earl Grey versus Oolong

CHRIS versus Jess: Jess looked good in the first game, but Chris was able to get his eye in and held a decent lead until the end to triumph. 67 to 41.

Travis versus Kristelle: At halftime it was one game each. Neither player was enjoying the sweltering heat on the court. Travis struggle with Kristelle's killer serves. With increased levels of frustration Travis couldn't return the serves and Kristelle served her way to victory. 71 to 55.

Daniel W versus Stuart: Both opponents took home two games. With neither willing to give in it was anyone's match. When the final buzzer went off Stuart was crowned the winner by only three points. 61 to 58.

The Chronicle Sport

Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au



Yea Golf four stick and Barry Moore Trophy

by Alan Pell

WEDNESDAY saw 17 men play a stableford round at Yea Golf Club using only four sticks for the round. Scores were pretty good for this event which makes you think the other 10 clubs in your bag are not really required.

Winner with 40 points was Robert Gill (30) who won't have to worry about losing strokes on his handicap as the event isn't sent to golfink. Second was Steve Rumney (25) with 38 points from third Brian Priestley (27), fourth Gary Pollard (12) and fifth Alan Pell (13) all with 37 points. Nearest the pin on the 11th was Chris Keogh and Rob O'Halloran won the Club Award.

Saturday saw the first of two rounds in the Barry Moore Trophy. Most players teed off early in order to beat the heat of the day. Winner of the day was Michael Sheather (24) with 38 points on countback from Allan Coates (8) and Jono Ness (15).

Fourth was Brendan Chenhall (15) from Kevin Coghlan (20) fifth and Andrew Bohn (8) all on 37 points. There was no nearest the pin on the 14th and Bill Dredge won the Club Award. Judi Newman (38) with 38 points won the Ladies' Stableford.

Friday night saw a full house attend the monthly social event at Yea Golf Club, celebrating St Patricks Day, with live music with Reece and Rowan, Irish stews and cocktails plus some novelty golf. It was another outstanding evening conducted by club entrepreneur Phil Armstrong.



Vicki Lowe, Gary and Carol Pollard and Martin Lowe working the bar. -S

Community challenges for Yea Bowls

by Angela Finn

THE Nutrien Harcourt Community challenge continued on Thursday evening on March 13. After enjoying a drink and a sausage or two in bread, eight teams again took to the rinks to play two games of five ends.

Following the first game, a Spider event took place for a bottle of wine.

In this event every person takes one bowl and spreads around the entire playing area and then bowls to the kitty which is placed in the middle of the green. After being knocked to and fro, the kitty ended up closest to John Tanner's bowl.

The winners of the night were the Team XXX, with Chris, Ken and Dave.

The Runners up were A Team with Maree and two ring ins, Brian and Jeff.

The games were played in beautiful conditions, still and warm, with a magnificent almost full moon overhead.

Two more weeks are left for the Community Challenge. If you want to put a team in, or just your own name, please ring Maurie Finn on 0417 228 649.

Subway is the Monday Triples sponsor for the month of March. In the first week of the month the winners were Barb Tanner, Maurie Finn, and Jeff Green.

Monday, March 10 was 'Mad Monday' with bowlers enjoying a lovely lunch provided by the club in recognition of the efforts of our Pennant Team throughout the season. The winners were Neil Rieschick, Rodney Pitt-Wood, and Cliff Sinclair.



Community Challenge Under lights yea bowls. -S



Community Challenge Winners from week two at Yea Bowls Club. -S



Subway Monday Triples competition on March 10 at Yea Bowls Club. -S