

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

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murrindindibusiness.com.au

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Yea Primary School foundation students celebrate 100 days of school. More images on page five of this edition. -S

New postal service at Flowerdale Community House

WITH the closure of the Hazeldene General Store and its Australia Post Service, Flowerdale Community House has taken over the reins, so the community won't miss out from this important service.

It's been quite a challenge for the Flowerdale Community House team to get the service up and running on August 1.

Rebekah Grant, Flowerdale Community House Coordinator said, "It's been a bit of a whirlwind. I haven't had time to breathe."

She explained the process of getting the postal service to Flowerdale Community House.

"Hazeldene store shut down and we wanted to save the service of the post office for the community so we tried to figure out if we could sustainably do it and then we put a call out for volunteers to see if they could potentially manage it that way. We had a really great response from the community with that, and we were able to decide yes, this is viable," she said.

"So, we made arrangements with Auspost and talked to Sue from the Hazeldene store and made sure we could make it happen. It's all been very busy since August 1 and even before that to make it all happen. Now we have a limited service, we are a CPA we are not an LPO.

A CPA is a community postal agent, it's smaller than an LPO which is a local post office. A CPA doesn't do banking and bill payments; you need to go to an LPO for that. The community house collects parcels and mail for the local people, and you can come in and get your parcels and your mail. They also sell stamps and pre-paid envelopes.

Rebekah said, "We have 16 volunteers who have put their hands up so it's an incredible response. We do have to go through a bit of a process at the moment. We are holding the fort as we are getting the volunteers ready.

"Australia post is doing all the police checks etcetera and training everyone up. So, at this stage my committee and I are holding the fort at the post office but when all the volunteers are signed up then it will be all systems go.

"At this stage, we have Monday 10am to 12pm, Tuesday 2.30 to 4.30pm, Wednesday 10am to 12pm, Thursday 2.30 to 4.30pm, Friday 10am to 12pm. We will help people outside these hours if our staff has capacity to do so but days like Thursdays are crazy so try and get in those times. If we do have capacity, we will try and open longer in time but not at the moment.

"Anyone who had a post office box at Hazeldene store we have their mail box. Anyone who didn't have roadside delivery who collected mail at the counter at the store previously and all the parcels that don't fit in the letter boxes come here but basically if you collected something from the store in the past you collect it from here that's the only thing that's changed.

"Come to the house grab your mail. We will look after you," she said.

Council calls on Bendigo Bank to reconsider agency closures

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has said that they are deeply concerned by the Bendigo Bank Corporate decision to close its Alexandra and Marysville agencies from October.

They said, "This move represents yet another blow in the ongoing withdrawal of essential services from regional Victoria.

"Communities like ours are being asked to accept reduced accessibility, diminished convenience, and less support, while still being expected to adapt to metro-centric solutions that do not reflect our realities.

"These closures follow the retreat of the 'Big Four' banks, which have already removed in-person services across Murrindindi. For many, Bendigo Bank was seen as the last bank still standing. That is no longer the case in Alexandra or Marysville.

"We know these decisions disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, older residents, people with disabilities, those with limited digital literacy, and those without reliable access to technology, who rely on face-to-face banking. For these individuals, the shift to digital-only services risks deepening exclusion and financial insecurity. It's not that internet banking is impossible, it's that it's inaccessible for those who need personal support. The notion that everyone can simply 'go online' is not only flawed, but also discriminatory.

"In small towns like Marysville and Alexandra, the local bank is more than just a place to do your banking. It's a trusted service, a point of connection, and a critical part of local economic activity. When that service disappears, so too does foot traffic, community confidence, and financial inclusion.

"We acknowledge that the Yea Community Bank branch will remain operational, and we thank the local team for their ongoing commitment to our community. But one branch cannot service an entire region.

"Council maintains that banking is essential infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where alternatives are limited without travelling great distances.

"We strongly urge Bendigo Bank to reconsider these closures or, at a minimum, engage directly with local councils and communities to co-design sustainable alternatives.

"We call on state and federal governments to step up, not just with words of concern, but with real action. It is time to regulate where market forces have failed and to treat equitable access to banking as a national obligation, not a commercial afterthought.

"The 2023 Senate Inquiry into Regional Banking Services made it clear: banks should be required to engage meaningfully with

affected communities before withdrawing services. It also recommended strengthening the role of Australia Post and Bank@Post as part of a national access strategy and called for a mandatory minimum service standard in regional areas.

"These are not radical ideas, they are fair and necessary protections for rural communities. We urge all levels of government to implement the Inquiry's recommendations without delay. Without policy change and stronger regulation, communities like ours will continue to pay the price for decisions made far from the realities we face every day."

Cr Sandice McAulay, Portfolio Councillor for Economic Development, said, "The closure of local banking services is not just a financial inconvenience, it's an economic and social setback for our towns. Banks play a crucial role in supporting local businesses, enabling tourism, and building community confidence. These closures put that all at risk, and we expect better for regional Victoria."

Council continued, "This is not just about Alexandra or Marysville. This is about the future of regional Australia and the basic right to access essential services, no matter where you live. We will continue to stand up for our communities, and we will not accept silence as a substitute for support."

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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THUMBS UP

THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS DOWN:

So many people are wearing black and dark colours. Put them to the back of your wardrobe and get some rainbow colours and brighten up your lives and others.

THUMBS DOWN:

People, make way for others walking down the street, especially for those who aren't as agile.

THUMBS UP:

A huge thankyou to the Yea Chronicle and Pixies at the Billabong in Eildon for the free double pass to see Ross Wilson in concert. He was fantastic and the whole show was fabulous. Thankyou again.

THUMBS UP:

To the wonderful Centrelink staff at the Hub. Such a great resource for our community and much more convenient than travelling to Seymour.

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

Bendigo Bank

THE recent decision by Bendigo Bank to close 28 agencies across Australia, including in Alexandra and Marysville, is of great disappointment.

I understand the changing nature of banking in regional Australia and the reduced use of in-person banking. However, too often the withdrawal of in-person services has negative effects on small business, community organisations, older persons and those with limited mobility, or limited digital skills or connectivity.

I have written to the CEO of Bendigo Bank to express these concerns and ask what, if any, ongoing services will be available to customers in Alexandra and Marysville and surrounds.

While banking services increasingly move online, I do not accept that it should be at the expense of people who rely on face-to-face contact for services as important as banking.

Regional Australians often feel like they are the last to get and the first to lose when it comes to services, and banking is no exception. More than a year after the Senate reported on its inquiry into *Bank Closures in Regional Australia*, there has been no government response on key recommendations such as expanding banking service at Australia Post outlets or establishing community bank branches in regional towns.

It's time the government responds to the regional banking inquiry and gives assurance to regional communities about the future of regional banking services.

Dr Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi

Treaty letter response

THE High Court of Australia's Mabo decision rejected the notion that Australia was terra nullius at the time of British settlement, as a legal fiction not compatible with Australian common law. The Mabo decision was the first step in a process of reconciling the inequality in our society that terra nullius created.

An Aboriginal treaty is a logical step in establishing indigenous equality and rights with the rest of the Australian population. It would also serve as recognition of past injustices.

The letter makes several other claims that deserve review. Firstly, that Australia's uranium exports could make Australia richer than all the OPEC countries combined. Australia only exports depleted uranium not the valuable enriched uranium used to fuel nuclear reactors. Secondly, global revenue for uranium is 1/600th of current global oil and gas revenues.

Australia is the world's top exporter of coal, yet Australia is winding down coal fired generation. Not because of ideology over common sense but hard economic private investment reality. The economic risk of coal fired generation in Australia, a country with abundant cheap renewable generation potential, is not a good investment and risks stranded assets in a net-zero carbon world.

Trump's pro-oil, anti-renewables and climate scepticism may play well to the MAGA base. Yet, the growth of renewable energy generation in the US, notably in oil rich Texas, continues apace, now exceeding coal generation and soon to pass nuclear generation. Yet, despite this, the US lags well behind China that long ago saw the renewable energy market as the path to global manufacturing dominance.

Australia's dependence on fossil fuel export revenue leaves us highly exposed to global action on climate change. We risk being badly caught out unless we develop new sustainable export revenue streams.

Ray Wynn, Devils River

The Yea Chronicle

Available from these retail outlets

Alexandra FoodWorks

Alexandra Newsagency

Alexandra Newspapers

Endeavour Yea

Hazeldene Store

Merton General Store

Seymour Newsagency

Shell Thornton

Yea FoodWorks

Yea Newsagency

Alexandra Newspapers are members of:

regional media connect

Country Press AUSTRALIA

Audited Media Association of Australia

abc

Weekly Weather

August 13 - August 19, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	2	14	Wednesday	3	15
Thursday	6	16	Thursday	6	17
Friday	3	13	Friday	3	14
Saturday	3	10	Saturday	3	11
Sunday	2	13	Sunday	3	11
Monday	2	14	Monday	2	13
Tuesday	4	15	Tuesday	1	15

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 (TW)	9.00am Mon	1.64	steady	Below Flood Level
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00am Mon	0.53	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.00am Mon	0.61	steady	Below Flood Level
Home Creek at Yarek	9.41am Mon	0.21	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	7.23am Mon	0.52	steady	Below Flood Level
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	9.00am Mon	0.28	steady	
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	9.00am Mon	0.69	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00am Mon	3.63	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00am Mon	0.55	steady	Below Flood Level
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00am Mon	1.84	steady	Below Flood Level
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00am Mon	1.21	steady	Below Flood Level
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00am Mon	1.53	steady	Below Flood Level
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.00am Mon	1.16	steady	

*ISSUED AT 09:54 AM AEST MONDAY 11 AUGUST 2025

DISTRICT RAINFALL	
Alexandra	3mm
Buxton.....	6mm
Eildon (AWS).....	5mm
Flowerdale.....	6mm
Jamieson.....	13mm
Kinglake.....	10mm
Lake Eildon.....	5mm
Mansfield.....	4mm
Taggerty	5mm
Yarek	7mm
Yea.....	5mm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday	
LAKE EILDON	
Height above sea level this week.....	276.14m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	56.9%
Metres below full supply.....	12.76m
Daily inflow	2000ML
Release.....	4400ML
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

Deer destruction

by Michael Halley

JOHANNES Wenzel, chair of the Victorian Deer Control Community Network was engaged by the Combined Probus Club of Whittlesea to make a presentation about feral deer and the impact on the environment, farming, and the public in general.

Plenty Valley Produce farms in Flowerdale suffered a total loss of organic vegetables when feral deer invaded the property. Over just three nights, deer ventured from public land onto the farm, stripping paddocks of valuable crops to the value of \$100,000.

Feral deer are emerging as one of Australia's most serious environmental and agricultural threats and Victoria has possibly the largest deer population in Australia, estimated at more than a million animals.

The deer population is expanding rapidly and invading new areas. With a lack of predators, occurrence in vast and remote areas and great habitat flexibility, deer are set to become one of Victoria's, and ultimately Australia's, most damaging pest animal invaders.

The Victorian Deer Control Community Network (VDCCN) was established in 2021 to provide a platform for state-wide collaboration of all groups and individuals over matters related to reducing the impact of feral deer. The VDCCN encourages people and organisations to join and contribute to the network,

and the only prerequisite is being interested in reducing the impact of feral deer.

The presentation was enlightening, yet concerning. Mr Wenzel who lives at Belgrave South said that in 2010 he noted a small deer in one of his paddocks which in the next five years became a herd. He had developed a large espalier fruit fence to go with his vegetables and his wife's rose garden. This was deer manna from heaven and soon the garden was stripped.

Neighbours and residents in the adjoining localities were also under attack and in 2020 formed Cardinia Deer Management Coalition to address the several issues arising. The 1983 bushfires wiped out all helmeted honeyeater colonies in Upper Beaconsfield and surrounds destroying the dense riparian vegetation (vegetation along waterways) that the helmeted honeyeater relies on for food and shelter. Unfortunately feral deer contributed with the habitat degradation so that the helmeted honeyeaters did not recover. Melbourne Water's Cardinia Reservoir was found to be a refuge for deer as the surrounding land is fenced and not accessible to the general public.

Local councils became aware of the environmental impact that feral deer were and would have in the future and joined the coalition. Melbourne Water independently became aware of the impact and risk to water contamination of feral deer. The management policy was changed to eradication. The reservoir was re-fenced and over the next two years professional deer controllers removed 675 feral deer from the 13 square kilometres around the reservoir.

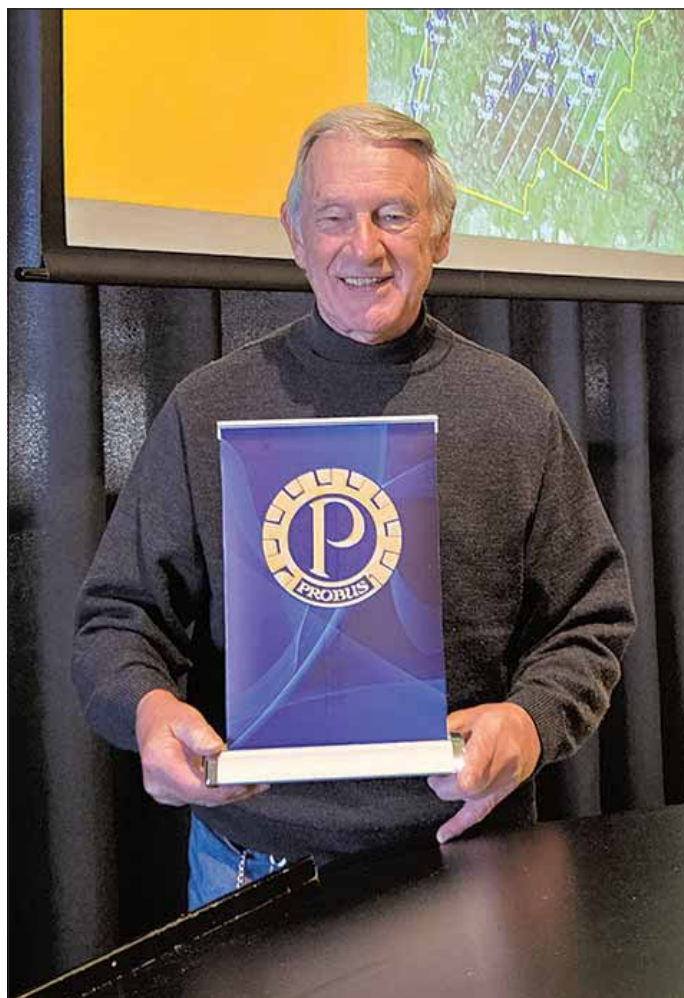
The Victorian Government's Deer Control Strategy was announced in 2020 as a co-ordinated approach to reducing deer numbers in Victoria. It is Victoria's plan to reduce the impact of deer on the environment, agriculture, Aboriginal cultural heritage and public safety. The strategy is being delivered under *Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037* and is also a commitment under the Sustainable Hunting Action Plan.

The attendees learnt about modern methods of feral deer control including helicopter and drone thermal imaging, licensed shooters and some legislation that gives landowners approval to cull deer. An approved shooter must in one shot hit a target 100 meters distance.

Estimates are that by 2051 the costs of loss and damage attributable to feral deer will rise to \$2.1billion. For example, pine plantations incur high costs due to deer destroying young saplings. Forty per cent of new plantings get destroyed.

The introduction of deer is an example of early settlers wanting to Briticise Australia and the result being devastating. The first imports were in 1860 and until 1900 they were protected and allowed to expand uncontrolled. In the 1940s deer were allowed to be hunted and in 1975 became a 'game species'. Another failed 'get rich quick' scheme was deer farming which resulted in farmers releasing herds into the public lands.

A number of the members attending had personal involvement with feral deer and contributed to the discussion. Mr Wenzel encouraged members to join the Victorian Deer Control Community Network to get expert advice as how best to minimise loss and damage and to report any deer sightings on the Deer Scan app, visit deerscan.org.au or download the Feral Scan App (free download from Apple and Android).



Johannes Wenzel. -S

Grants to honour Victorian Veterans

THE state government has opened up application for two grant programs that honour veterans, support their welfare, and strengthen community recognition of their contribution.

The *ANZAC Day Proceeds Fund* offers grants of up to \$150,000 to organisations delivering welfare support to veterans across the state, and grants of up to \$50,000 to organisations delivering initiatives for veterans in a specific region or area.

This year's funding priorities include initiatives that support female, First Nations and LGBTIQ+ veterans, veterans living with disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Other priorities include support for veterans who served in post-1990 Australian Defence Force operations, and collaborative projects delivered by multiple ex-service organisations.

Applications are also open for the *Victoria Remembers Grant Program*, offering grants of up to \$30,000 for projects that commemorate veterans and deepen public understanding of their service, including new memorials, significant anniversary events, and public education campaigns.

Applications for both grant programs close on Monday, September 15. For more information about both grant programs or to apply, visit vic.gov.au/anzac-day-proceeds-fund or vic.gov.au/victoria-remembers-grant-program

Victorian students top of NAPLAN

VICTORIAN students have achieved their strongest NAPLAN results and are leading the nation.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll announced last week that Victorian students are top of the class, ranking first or second in 18 of 20 measures and significantly improving on our 2024 results.

Victorian students are smashing records with an average of 70 per cent falling in the 'strong' or 'exceeding' bands while our primary students ranked first or second in all 10 domains.

Thanks to hardworking teachers and education support staff, the 2025 results also show that fewer students are needing additional support, with less students in the bottom band than in 2024 on 16 of 20 measures.



The winners of Sacred Heart Primary School's Positive Behaviour Learning Awards this week, Ella Toulson, Patrick Kelly and Shaelee Kelly. -S

New energy-saving products for Goulburn Murray Solar Savers

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is helping local residents and businesses access reliable, money-saving solar systems, batteries, and other energy-efficient products. As a partner in the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers initiative, council supports a program that gets products and suppliers to provide access to quotes from trusted companies.

The program has carefully selected a panel of leading, accredited providers known for exceptional service, quality products and great value, making it a smart, sustainable choice for a brighter future.

Goulburn Murray Solar Savers is also running a series of free webinars to help people learn more about the products on offer and how to choose what's right for their needs. You can register for a session on the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers website.

Goulburn Murray Solar Savers now offers quotes from trusted providers for: PV solar systems, battery storage systems, hot water heat pumps, efficient heating and cooling

systems, EV chargers, induction cooktops, insulation, draught proofing, and home energy assessments.

To learn more about the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers program, or to request a quote from one or more of the approved suppliers, visit the Goulburn Murray Solar Savers website.

Reg Hickey, Business Development Manager of well-known local regional business Watters Electrical said, "Our ability to partner with councils in the Goulburn Murray region is great for us as a regional business and more importantly it's fantastic to have a trustworthy option for residents and businesses as well. Although door knocking and cold calling is illegal in Victoria, Watters still sees the aftermath of unethical operators selling systems and products that fail, and who won't answer calls for help. As a 65-year-old local business, we are proud to be part of this council managed program with trusted products and service, warranties and back up support."

Murrindindi ambulance response time increases from a year ago

AMBULANCE Victoria (AV) is applauding Victorians for saving ambulances for the state’s sickest people, with new data showing paramedics are responding 10 seconds faster to the most critically ill.

AV Acting Executive Director Regional Operations Michael Georgiou said demand for ‘lights and sirens’ ambulances fell by 3.5 per cent between April and June, compared with the same time last year, coinciding with an AV community information campaign to save paramedics for emergencies.

“April to June last year was AV’s busiest three months on record, with 102,419 Code One emergencies,” Mr Georgiou said.

“Across the same period this year, we’ve responded to 98,874 Code One cases.

“I thank our highly skilled paramedics and first responders who do a remarkable job providing best care to their communities, each and every day.

“We’re grateful to Victorians who are choosing to use alternative care for non-urgent issues. It means ambulances are available

faster for emergencies. That community effort is helping us save lives.

“From April to June 2025, the state-wide average response time to Code One emergencies was 15 minutes and 27 seconds, down from 15 minutes and 37 seconds a year ago.

“There has also been an improvement in the percentage of Code One cases responded to within 15 minutes.”

During this quarter, AV crews across Victoria responded to 65.3 per cent of Code One cases within the state-wide target of 15 minutes, up from 64.2 per cent a year ago.

In the Hume Region crews responded to 5503 Code One cases between April and June 2025, down from 5623 last year, but up from 5451 three months ago.

Compared with the same time last year, performance improved in 53 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The biggest improvements in the Hume Region were in the Moira, Mansfield, Strathbogie and Greater Shepparton LGAs and the major population centre of Kilmore.

In the Murrindindi LGA, paramedics attended 33.3 per cent of Code One patients within 15 minutes. Compared with a year ago, Code One response times in Murrindindi increased from 23 minutes and 55 seconds, to 24 minutes and 15 seconds.

AV is urging people not to be complacent, with demand for emergency ambulances climbing again as winter illnesses spread through the community.

“We’ve already seen a 3.7 per cent jump in Code One demand since the first three months of 2025,” Hume Regional Director Narelle Capp said.

“Winter is always our busiest time. Our paramedics are focused on reaching the sickest patients first, but every day, more than 500 calls to Triple Zero (000) don’t need an emergency ambulance.

“There are many options people can access when they need timely medical care and health advice but don’t need an emergency ambulance, including the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department and Urgent Care Clinics.

“Our expert Secondary Triage team, made up of nurses and paramedics, plays a vital role by connecting people with the right care and freeing up ambulances for life-threatening emergencies. Between April and June alone, they redirected 46,015 non-urgent cases away from an emergency response.”

Ambulance Victoria is working closely with hospitals, emergency services and government partners to keep ambulances on the road and patients moving through the system.

“The new Standards for Safe and Timely Ambulance and Emergency Care are already making a difference, improving patient flow in hospitals and helping our crews get back on the road sooner,” Ms Capp said.

“We’re grateful to our hospital partners for their efforts. It’s helping us reach more patients, faster.

“Since June, 117 new graduate paramedics have joined the frontline across Victoria. And earlier this year, the largest-ever single intake of 30 Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) intern paramedics hit the road, delivering a major boost to critical care statewide.”

Bail Further Amendment Bill 2025 introduced

PREMIER Jacinta Allan, Attorney-General Sonya Kilkenny and Minister Police Anthony Carbines introduced the *Bail Further Amendment Bill 2025* into Parliament on Tuesday, July 29.

This is to set out a new bail test for people accused of repeat, serious offending to protect Victorian families and deal with repeat, high-harm offending, and create a new second strike rule for people already on bail who are accused of further offending, making it harder for them to get bail. This builds on the changes made earlier this year, which are already working. The number of bail revocations and people on remand has increased.

“We are making it crystal clear, if you are charged with a serious offence while on bail for another serious offence, you will be subject to the toughest test in the country.

The tough new test will apply to those on bail for and charged again with any of the following offences: Aggravated home invasion, aggravated carjacking, armed robbery, aggravated burglary, home invasion, and carjacking.

Subjecting people accused of repeat, serious offending to a new, tougher bail test increases the likelihood that bail will be refused and prevents re-offending.

Bail must be refused unless the decision maker is satisfied there is a high degree of probability the person will not commit one of these offences if bail is granted.

This test goes further than similar laws in New South Wales because it will apply to all ages and is permanent.

New second strike rule

These six serious offences are not the only crimes causing harm in our community. That’s why a second strike rule will be introduced.

In March, the stand-alone offence of ‘committing an indictable offence on bail’ was introduced. This Bill builds on that work by uplifting the bail test for people accused of repeat indictable offending.

‘Uplift’ is where the bail test for a person accused of repeat offending is stricter than it would be for a person accused of an offence for the first time.

The offences that will be subject to the new uplift provisions include: Burglary Motor vehicle theft, Assaults, Robbery, Riot and affray, Firearms and controlled weapons offences, Sex offences, Serious drug offence, Theft (\$2500), Criminal damage (above \$5000, or where damage is caused by fire).

These reforms are subject to key safeguards to mitigate any disproportionate impact on vulnerable people.

Certain lower harm offences committed while on bail like low-level drug possession will not be subject to uplift, to avoid remanding vulnerable people unnecessarily.

This second Bill builds on the bail laws passed earlier this year that put community safety first in all bail decisions, introduced bail offences, removed the principle of remand as a ‘last resort’ for young people and elevated certain high-harm offences like knife crime into a tougher bail test.

This will result in a further increase in the number of adult and youth offenders on remand, for which the system must be ready. That’s why we’re hiring hundreds of new prison staff and bringing more prison beds online.

In total, almost 1000 additional adult prison beds will open across the system, and a further 88 beds will open at Cherry Creek and Parkville youth justice facilities.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Yea District Hospital
5736 0400

Non-emergency police assistance
131 444
EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency

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

MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS

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 Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353



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.

Church Services

ST PETER’S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

ST LUKE’S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

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

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew
0459 402 547

St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm
Immaculate Conception Parish
Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am
Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

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

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

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

UNITING CHURCH

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

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.

at the Eildon Tennis Clubrooms, Eildon road, Eildon. New members welcome. Nomination forms for committee member positions available from the secretary at eildoneventsinc@gmail.com

Homewood Hall at 4pm. For further details and tickets yeaartsinc.org/tickets

MONDAY, AUGUST 18

UGFM Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30pm via Zoom. For a meeting link or to nominate for committee contact via email at secretary@ugfm.org

THURSDAY, AUGUST 14

Eildon Events Inc Annual General Meeting at 5.30pm

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16

Yea Arts Inc presents Dave Arden; playing at

How to lower the risk of blue-green algae on your property

MANY lakes and waterways have become enriched with algae food, being nitrogen and phosphorus. This can occur naturally or as a result of human activities.

When there is high levels of algae food, there is a greater chance of algae growing in large numbers.

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) storages generally experience high levels of blue-green algae in late summer and early autumn, as algae thrive when there is plenty of sunlight, little wind and when temperatures are warm.

The algae bloom problem in South Australia is not related to Lake Eildon waters. GMW Water Quality Coordinator Bianca Atley said “The algae problem in South Australia is not due to blue-green algae.

“Blue-green algae are phytoplankton that are bacteria. The species causing the

problems in South Australia is *Karenia mikimotoi*, a marine plant species, not a freshwater species.”

To reduce the potential for blue-green algae on your property, Farmers can help by using best practice land management including appropriate use of fertilisers, animal effluent management, keeping stock away from waterways and drainage lines, in particular by fencing and the revegetation of riparian zones. Farmers can contact their local Landcare group or Catchment Management Authority for more advice.

If farmers suspect they have blue-green algae in their farm dam advice on the management of blue-green algae blooms may be obtained from Agriculture Victoria by phoning 136 186 or visiting their website.

Celebrating 100 days of school



The foundation students from Middle Kinglake Primary School. -S



Foundation students from Kinglake West Primary School. -S

Protect yourself from burns this winter

As people seek relief from the winter chill, Ambulance Victoria (AV) is educating the community about burn prevention and correct treatment.

AV Hume Director Regional and Clinical Operations Narelle Capp said burn prevention should be at the forefront of everyone's minds.

"When the temperature drops, we often reach for products to help ease the cold, whether that be warm food or drink, heaters or hot water bottles and heat packs," she said.

"While these are all common household items, they can be dangerous if used incorrectly or by unsupervised children.

"There are a few simple steps that can significantly reduce the risk of burn injuries in high-risk places such as kitchens, bathrooms, around heaters and campsites."

Burn prevention tips

Always supervise children in the kitchen and keep hot items out of reach, such as the kettle or coffee mugs, and turn pot handles so they can't be pulled down.

Always test bath temperatures before letting your child enter.

Remain vigilant around open flames, keep them out of reach of children and away from flammable materials. Make sure safety guards are around

fireplaces and always use water to fully extinguish campfires.

Treatment

All burns can be serious and it's important to know how to treat them properly and when to call for emergency assistance.

Treatment is the same for all burn injuries and should begin with holding the burnt area under cool running water for 20 minutes. Clothing or jewellery that is not stuck to the burn should be removed.

Do not apply ice or food products, such as butter, to the burn as these can make the injury worse.

For minor burns, the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) is a great resource available 24/7 via video link.

"VVED is a convenient, free service that virtually connects you with doctors and nurses from the comfort of your home with no need to attend an emergency department," Narelle said.

"It can be used from anywhere in Victoria, all you need is a device with internet and video connection."

For serious burns or emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

Translated resources for non-emergency care can be found on the Ambulance Victoria website.



SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

**Wednesday 13 August from 5.30 pm
at Alexandra Council Chambers**

Council is meeting to consider items related to the Eildon Key Worker Housing Project including:

- project background,
- planning applications for 18 Twenty First Street and 10 Eighth Street,
- awarding the tender for housing construction.

The meeting is open to the public, and can also be watched live on Facebook or Council's website.

To view the agenda, reports, attachments and livestream, scan the QR code or visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

scan
ME



Student of the Week

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



YEA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Congratulations to our Values Award winners. Excellent job Ashton, Jagger, Maverick, Ava, Vince, Haylee, Logan and Emily. What excellent role models you are.

SACRED HEART SCHOOL



Luke, Toby, Ainslie and Ryder were recognised for their commitment to outstanding actions that align with our school values of Respect, Resilience and Safety.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Kinglake branch



What happened to Warren Meyer?

AT Easter in 2008, Warren Meyer disappeared from the Dom Dom Saddle area of the Black Spur.

Over the years, there have been a huge number of theories around his disappearance, including that he may have stumbled across an illegal marijuana plantation, encountered criminals or illegal shooters (or all of the above) or an escaped psychiatric patient known to have been in the area at the time. It's possible that no-one will ever know the answer, but the goal is to bring Warren home for a dignified funeral.

Zee Meyer and husband Warren were married for 31 years. Their first meeting was in Kathmandu, travelling on the back of an old converted army truck. Zee said, "We had an adventurous spirit right from the moment that we met, and hiking and camping was a huge part of our life."

Warren was Canadian, but Zee "dragged him back" to Australia, although he was happy to be here as the Canadian winters were so long.

They settled in Melbourne and had two children together. Zee said Warren enjoyed Australia because "If it's cold, you can still get out and about."

The couple developed a core group of friends, and they would all go away together each Easter to stay somewhere in the state. In 2008, they chose Healesville, the 10 of them staying in three cabins.

Warren would always build a hike into their trips, usually on the Sunday and generally around 10km, and it was the same that year. A special Easter lunch extravaganza had been booked months in advance at the RACV Country Club, so Warren left for his walk early so he would be back in time. He chose to walk from Mt Dom Dom.

It was a sunny, warm day. Warren had prepared food and had water. He had a fully kitted out backpack that he always had with him, a GPS, and a fully charged phone. In addition to hiking for 30 years, he was also a member of the Bayside Bushwalking Club. He had an understanding of the bush and was a very fit and athletic 57 year old. He also played basketball and tennis at competition level.

Zee said of the day that Warren vanished, "I was with my friends. We had breakfast together and we just were laughing and carrying on. Warren wasn't back by 12 and he did say if I'm a little bit late, just go on and I'll catch you up, so we went into the restaurant and I kept looking up, waiting for Warren to walk past the window, because everyone was coming into the restaurant and he just wasn't turning up and we all started to worry and everyone was talking about, well, where's Warren. There was an empty chair at the end of the table and it sort of became a bit haunting, that there wasn't anyone there to take up that space."

"I suppose it would be 1pm we started phoning. He had my phone because my phone was fully charged and we kept phoning, and there was just this disconnected sound. You couldn't even leave a message. We thought, this is really weird. Really weird. So because we were caught in this situation, this very extensive lunch, we went through those formalities. I thought... maybe he's lost his keys. The panic had started setting, I'd say at 3pm. We all got up left and half of the group went to Dom Dom Saddle. Half stayed behind in case he did arrive back."

Zee was among the group who went to Dom Dom Saddle. As the Black Spur is very windy, she began to wonder whether Warren might have gone off the road, however she was relieved to find Warren's vehicle in the Dom Dom carpark. Unfortunately, the relief was short-lived. Warren wasn't at the car and neither was his backpack. The car was locked.

The group headed towards Road 8, calling his name, and started to panic. They called the police at about 3.45pm. The police soon arrived, along with a police helicopter. They were able to signal to it from the picnic tables near the car park.

The police were concerned that Warren may have become lost in the bush. Zee later found out that Warren was the only person who went missing in the bush in 2008 who wasn't found.

Two young officers appeared not long after the helicopter left. They had four-wheel drive and they said they'd search all the known tracks in the area. Zee still thought that Warren would be found, maybe with a twisted ankle or something. The police officers searched until about 2.30am but were unable to find him.

Zee stayed overnight in the car, still expecting Warren to walk out of the forest in the full moon light. She started becoming very stressed and couldn't sleep. She also hadn't eaten since the lunch and was down to the last of her water.

The search recommenced at 8am, with Zee called into the control room. She contacted her son, who was at home, and asked him to go onto his computer and see what maps Warren had downloaded, and which of Warren's six maps was missing. The map was sent through to the control room.

Warren had told her he was going to Dom Dom. She thought this meant Mount Dom Dom instead of Dom Dom Saddle carpark. As a result, the searches were around the Mount Dom Dom area, where there are no walking tracks, instead of the walks emanating from Dom Dom Saddle.

She said, "Warren wouldn't have gone there" if there was no track. She is therefore concerned that the search was conducted in the wrong place.

It is documented that he went along Road 8 and Morley Track with his bushwalking group. He was also interested in Road 9 or Monda Track, part of the Bicentennial Trail. People can also hike in the water catchment area, closed to vehicular traffic.

Warren wasn't wearing gaiters when bushwalking. He was wearing shorts and long socks with boots, and because of this, Zee doesn't believe that he would have left established tracks. "He wasn't a bush basher. He wasn't unhealthy and had a heart attack," Zee said. "All these things have been said to me. Had an aneurysm."

When the possibility of a snake bite was raised, Zee said, "Those tracks, you can drive a car on them... I mean it's really easy to get around, really easy."

A five day search was conducted by police, "Which was really just scratching the surface, I think," Zee said. The police received a statement from a doctor at one of the hospitals, saying that it was highly unlikely that he would have survived, "so they packed up and left."

Zee was surprised by this as there's plenty of water around that area, and people can survive for weeks without food.

Family and friends continued to search every week for the first year, but to no avail, and the police investigation found no results.

The case remains in the hands of the Missing Persons Squad.

A number of leads were uncovered further down the track when she engaged a private investigator, Valentine Smith. He was encountered by accident in a restaurant and worked for them pro bono.

Through the investigator, she found out that there was an error with the time frames to do with an absconder from a mental hospital, in the area at the time.

Zee went on *A Current Affair* in October 2008, and as a result, they heard from people living at the closest house to where Warren went missing. On the day, the family heard out of control shooting in the area when their family was out looking for Easter eggs. They ushered the children inside. They were not believed to be deer hunters, "because the bush was blown apart," Zee said, adding that it's unlawful to shoot on the Black Spur as it's a National Park.

Easter is well known as being a busy time in the area, with many additional tourists.

"You're really sitting on the doorstep of a huge city, a city of going into 6,000,000 soon, I think. At Easter, we could see it at the place was just booming with people. There was a flood of people through the area. It was very, very busy. So you get a certain element heading out there, an unsavoury element perhaps. Camping and drinking and shooting up the place. And I really think that seems to be what's happened here."

She explained that Meni Caroutas was producing a podcast about Warren in 2024. He had previously worked with Julie Cohen and Search and Rescue Dogs Australia (SARDA) on a case in NSW. He got in touch with Zee and said that he wanted to bring a human remains dog in. Zee said that she would like them to run the dog along the track where the shooting was heard.

The dog was walked five or six kilometres and went through an area of water. On the way back, the dog 'alerted' in the area where the shooting location had been indicated following the information received in 2008. She said that it was unambiguous, a clear indication that there were human remains.

They were unable to track the scent due to the nature of the heavily-wooded bushland, and it may have been the result of water run-off from the surrounding hills. A couple of weeks later, they got the same result.

Zee and the team again returned to the Dom Dom Saddle area, this time with two dogs. Both dogs again 'alerted'. It was after rain, and water was draining off the hill. They followed the water past a pipe and first one dog then the other dog set off a huge alert.

Afterwards, Zee got in touch with the now-former Police Commissioner Shane Patton and told him what had happened. He responded very quickly and got it down to the Missing Person's Squad.

On July 15, the Missing Person's Squad sought to see replicated results, however the ground was fairly dry. Those present included Search and Rescue, the Missing Person's Squad,

SARDA Valentine Smith, an anthropologist, Warren's son, and Zee.

When the dogs alerted, the anthropologist looked up the hill a bit and look at lush ferns as an indicator they had been fertilised. Zee noted that the same method had been used to successfully locate the body of Matthew Leveson.

It was also noted that her nephew had noticed a bad smell in the same area as the dog had 'alerted' when they were searching in the months after Warren's disappearance. The location also fitted with the 9.01am phone 'ping' and the time indicated for the end of the shooting.

Given the time that's passed, and the lack of dash cams and roadside cameras at the time, it's unlikely that anyone associated with the death will ever be found, if this was the case. Zee would just like to have her much-loved husband buried with honour and dignity.

She said, "We actually had a celebration of his life a month after he went missing because we knew he was deceased. But to be discarded in the bush like that is, I don't even have a word for it. It's so disgraceful that that has happened. But I also believe if we can't extract him from there, I probably believe 95 per cent that he is in that area. But because we can't locate a particular grave because the density of the bush, it makes it really hard. If we were to bring in a bobcat into a National Park that's going to set off a whole different saga."

She said, "I want it understood what the capabilities of these dogs are. I want some sort of academic approach to the dogs so that when the next person comes along, you don't have a debate about, 'do these dogs have these skills that they're claimed to have?'"

"The police are going to go away and do an assessment. We're doing an assessment, and already experts in the field have been contacted in Scotland and in the United States, because these dogs are being used all around the world and I want some sort of understanding of their capabilities so that it will help the next person."

"If I can't get my husband back, I want to make some sort of change or developing an understanding of the capabilities of these dogs, because we're only in the infancy of using them in Australia."

She noted that special canine skills are required to pick up the scent of human remains, and that their skills are different to police dogs.

Asked what she would like to say to the people of Murrindindi Shire, Zee responded, "I know there are a lot of people in the areas that searched for Warren. I've always tried to communicate just how appreciative we were of them, and the time they put in and dealing with that difficult bush, often in difficult circumstances and they were always kind if we were around and we didn't feel so alone as a family doing this when we saw the community to come together like this. So that's the first thing."

"The other is if anyone has knowledge of anything in relation to not only Easter 2008 but knowledge of the goings on in an area that they live in. Especially in relation to shooting, we would be very interested in that as well."

Warren now has four grandchildren he's never met, and his family just want to lay him to rest with dignity. Please call Triple Zero or contact Crime Stoppers on 131 444 if you know anything about the case.

National Missing Persons Week runs from August 3 to 9.



The operation lasted for two days in Yarck. -S



Highway Patrol and the Alexandra Criminal Investigation Unit attended. -S



Members of the dog squad attended the Yarck road operation. -S



Police were checking for a variety of offences. -S

Road safety operation in Yarck

VARIOUS Victoria Police units came together recently to conduct a two-day road safety operation in Yarck.

Murrindindi officers, the Alexandra Crime Investigation Unit, Mansfield Highway Patrol, dog squad members and members from the Sheriff's Office Victoria attended.

As part of the operation, police performed vehicle inspections, roadside breath testing, and educated motorists on ensuring their vehicle is alpine ready on the Maroonah

Highway, a popular route during the snow season.

Some 926 motorists were tested for drug or alcohol, and all but one driver returned a negative result.

The one driver who allegedly returned a positive preliminary oral fluid test will be summonsed to appear in court.

Four people were arrested after they were detected to be in possession of drugs of dependence.

More than \$35,000 in outstanding fines was also recovered.

Rural road users are four times more likely to be killed than road users in metropolitan Melbourne. That is why police are committed to road safety operations like this one.

Victoria Police would like to thank motorists for their patience during any delays while on their way to their destinations.

Special Meeting of Council

MURRINDINDI Shire Council will hold a Special Meeting of council on Wednesday, August 13 at 5.30pm at the Alexandra Council Chambers.

The meeting will focus on key items related to the Eildon Key Worker Housing Project, including its background, planning applications for 18 Twenty First Street and 10 Eighth Street, and the construction tender.

Community members are welcome to attend or watch the meeting via Facebook Live. You can find out more on council's Council Meetings page.

2030Yea: How to reduce your energy bill Q and A session

JOIN Ron Litjens and Ian Tobin for a Q and A session, to find out how the energy market works and how you can make it work for you, or even make you money.

They will also be discussing how understanding your energy usage can dramatically reduce your electricity bill and how there are many energy retailers offering different rates and peak times for electricity usage.

How do you compare to save?

Energy retailers purchase at wholesale prices and on-sell it to the consumer (you and me). Consumers can also buy directly

from the wholesale market through providers such as Amber.

Head along to the Q and A with your questions.

This is a free 2030Yea community event, funded by a Murrindindi Shire Council Quick Response grant.

The how to reduce your energy bill Q and A will take place on Thursday, August 21, from 6.30 to 7.30pm at the Yea Butter Factory.

For enquiries and bookings, text or call 0428 969 366, email 2030yea@gmail.com or follow 2030Yea on Facebook.



Become a member of 2030 Yea Community Energy now. Go to our webpage at 2030yea.com.au and follow the prompts.

How to Reduce Your Energy Bill with Q & A

Ron Litjens and Ian Tobin

Thursday August 21, 6.30 to 7.30pm, Yea Butter Factory

My EV and other electric battery powered equipment with Q & A

Ron Litjens, Ian Tobin and Alister Huth

Thursday, September 18, 6.30 to 7.30pm Yea Butter Factory

How to electrify a Classic Car

Stall and Classic Car display

Saturday, October 11, 5pm until dark Yea Cruise night on the median strip

Enquiries and bookings, text or call 0428 969 366 2030yea.com.au

2030yea@gmail.com

2030Yea

@YeaCommunityEnergy



Latest MLA survey shows beef producers holding firm despite market pressures

AUSTRALIAN beef producers are showing resilience and strategic patience in the face of market and seasonal challenges, according to the latest Beef Producer Intentions Survey from Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

The pulse survey, conducted between July 1 and 17, 2025, provides a mid-year update to the full survey conducted in April and captures producer sentiment and actual outcomes across herd management, calving, and cattle sales.

The survey received responses from 1295 grassfed beef producers nationwide and found that 84 per cent of producers indicated their intentions have remained the same since April 2025. Only 16 per cent reported a change from the last survey, with six per cent now planning to reduce their herd, seven per cent

opting to maintain herd size, and three per cent intending to increase.

MLA's Market Information Analyst, Emily Tan, said the level of consistency in herd planning reflected a cautious but deliberate approach from producers.

"Producers are watching the market closely and making decisions that position them well given the market conditions," Ms Tan said.

Autumn calving outcomes slightly exceeded expectations, with producers reporting 2.43 million calves delivered. This was up from the April forecast of 2.39 million calves.

While 38 per cent of producers delivered fewer calves than expected, 32 per cent delivered more, and 29 per cent met their forecast.

However, cattle sales in the first half of 2025 fell short of expectations. Actual sales totalled 4.03 million head, down from the April forecast of 4.82 million. Nearly half of producers (46 per cent) sold fewer cattle than planned.

"Many producers are holding cattle back, either because they didn't meet weight targets or because they're anticipating stronger prices later in the year," Ms Tan said.

"This aligns with broader industry sentiment that suggests producers are waiting for the right moment to re-enter the market."

Among those who sold fewer cattle than expected, 42 per cent cited weight issues and 21 per cent pointed to price forecasts as key reasons.

Conversely, producers who sold more than expected were driven by stronger-than-anticipated prices (33 per cent), the need for cash flow (29 per cent), and efforts to reduce feeding costs (25 per cent).

"These results show producers are being tactical," Ms Tan said.

"They're balancing short-term pressures with long-term opportunities, and that's a sign of confidence in the future."

The Beef Producer Intentions Survey was designed by MLA to support the industry with reliable data and is used by MLA and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). It is one of the inputs into the MLA beef industry forecasting models.

To view the full results please visit tinyurl.com/3ykyxv9x



Energy transition must not trample farmers' rights

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has reacted with concern following recent comments from Victorian Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio, warning that the state government's energy transition risks alienating the very communities it needs most.

While the VFF supports the shift to renewable energy, VFF President Brett Hosking said the transition is being derailed by poor planning, worrying rhetoric, and alarming legislative proposals including the VicGrid Bill Amendment, which would allow police-enforced access to farms and fines of up to \$12,100 for landholders who resist.

"Farmers are not opposed to renewable energy. We know the world is changing and we're part of that change, but we won't cop being steamrolled in the process."

"The VicGrid amendments are deeply troubling. Allowing police to enforce access and slapping hard working farmers with fines for simply wanting to protect their land is not how you build trust, it's indicative of how trust has been lost," Mr Hosking said.

Mr Hosking said the government's determination to press ahead with major transmission projects without genuine community consultation including the Western Renewables Link (WRL) and VNI West is undermining both public confidence and the project's viability.

"The WRL and VNI West are both failed projects and they should be scrapped entirely. Both have been mismanaged from the start, and communities have made it clear they won't accept it being forced through their paddocks."

"These projects are too important to get wrong and the Victorian Government is risking a smooth renewable energy transmission by attempting to ram these projects through. Acknowledging the mistakes and starting again is the only way to deliver a smooth transition."

"The VFF has directly expressed our concerns with Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan and written to all MPs, urging them to vote down the VicGrid Reform Bill," Mr Hosking said.

The VFF is alarmed by the Minister's comments that "transmission lines will be built" regardless of community concerns. It's approaches such as this that foster opposition in our rural communities which only serves to delay meaningful emissions reduction.

"We've had enough of being treated like obstacles, instead of partners."

"Good policy isn't made in a Spring Street bubble or podcast studio, or by using threats of fines and jail or coercion, rather it is done through genuine consultation with those that live and work on the land."

The VFF is calling for the Victorian Government to withdraw or significantly amend the VicGrid Bill to remove coercive powers, scrap the Western Renewables Link (WRL), take VNI West back to the planning table and start fresh with genuine consultation, commit to respectful, transparent consultation with landholders and local communities, and recognise and protect agriculture as a vital land use in energy planning.

"The transition to renewables can and should be a win for everyone, but that means doing it right."

"The government needs to drop the heavy hand and start partnering. Otherwise, they risk doing lasting damage to rural communities and undermining public confidence in the whole transition," Mr Hosking concluded.

Risk of red imported fire ant in fodder imported from interstate

AGRICULTURE Victoria is urging farmers to be mindful of import requirements and to keep watch for red imported fire ants (RIFA) when sourcing fodder from interstate.

Agriculture Victoria Acting Chief Plant Health Officer Stephen Dibley said RIFA or *Solenopsis invicta*, is one of the worst invasive ant species in Australia.

Native to South America, it was first detected in Brisbane in 2001 and while still largely localised to Greater Brisbane, it has also recently been detected in two separate zones in New South Wales.

"RIFA is not present in Victoria, and we hope collective efforts continue to ensure that this situation remains unchanged," Dr Dibley said.

"If RIFA made it into Victoria, it could severely affect the state's economy, agriculture, the environment and the wellbeing of people and livestock."

"RIFA is mostly spread when it hitchhikes on material that is transported out of an infested area."

He said with drought forcing farmers to source hay and fodder from interstate suppliers there was a real risk they may inadvertently import RIFA.

"We know current conditions mean farmers are dealing with unfamiliar fodder sellers, but we still want to protect our agricultural industry from biosecurity threats."

"Hay and straw are ideal host materials for RIFA, providing shelter, temperature regulation and a food source," he said.

Dr Dibley said farmers should be aware that hay or straw purchased from anywhere outside of Victoria must come from a location with an accepted RIFA area freedom certificate.

Fodder purchased from the infested zones, must meet inspection and treatment requirements and be certified by an officer responsible for agriculture in the state or territory of origin.

When coming from these zones, your purchase must also include one of the following types of certificates: a Plant Health Certificate (PHC); a Plant Health Assurance Certificate (PHAC); a Biosecure HACCP Biosecurity Certificate (BHBC); a Plant Health Declaration (PHD).

To further protect Victoria, if you suspect that you have found RIFA, report them immediately via the Agriculture Victoria Public Online Reporting Form at agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/pest-insects-and-mites/report-an-unusual-plant-insect-pest-or-disease or by calling the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

Find more information about interstate movement of hay and fodder at agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/drought-support/moving-hay-and-fodder-across-states

AUGUST PHOTO COMPETITION

Submit your photo competition entry for AUGUST, for your chance to win a \$50 voucher from *Dindi Country Clothing* in Alexandra. The AUGUST theme is '**SUNSHINE**'.



Email your photo and contact details to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au by noon Wednesday, August 27, 2025

5772 1405

79 Grant Street Alexandra
Dindicountryclothing@gmail.com
facebook.com/DindiCountryClothing/

T&C: Professional photographers are ineligible to enter. Staff or associated family members of Alexandra Newspapers are ineligible to enter. One photo per entry. Photos must be taken within the Murrindindi Shire.



Jack McMaster, the man behind Wire-Lok. -S



Using Wire-Lok is simple and easy, and doesn't require additional lengths of wire. -S

Wire-Lok the new fencing solution

JACK McMaster is the man behind Wire-Lok, an innovative simplified and efficient way to join fencing wire for farmers.

According to Jack, traditional fencing methods were prone to constant repairs due to old, ruined or newly broken fences.

The Wire-Lok offers a reliable and long-lasting solution, reducing the time and effort spent on fence maintenance.

"It's like a gripper, the same sort of deal except there's no moving parts, there's no plastic in it. It's a fool-proof way of joining wire. With a gripper there's a lot of things that can go wrong. They always let go," Jack said.

"I wanted a product that was good peace of mind and that would work for a long time.

"I think the main purpose of Wire Lok is to have old wire that has slackened over time from constant kangaroo activity or a tree

branch that hasn't broken the wire, but has stretched it, and you don't have enough wire to tie a new knot, the Wire Lok is perfect for that. You can retighten them."

Jack grew up on a beef cattle farm in the Highlands and has a background in metal fabrication and engineering.

He said that Wire-Lok has been well-received since it was released around a month ago.

"It's been out for a month. It's going a lot better than I thought it would. I've already had sales over in the USA. I've had a few in South Australia, a lot in New South Wales, and then a fair few in Victoria. Lots of hand sales as well," Jack said.

People looking to purchase Wire-Lok can email connect@wire-lok.com.au or visit wire-lok.com.au



The Wire-Lok. -S

Farmers express voice on state of the state

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is urging farmers and regional Victorians to have their say on the biggest issues and opportunities facing their communities through the first ever *State of the State: Farmer Priorities Survey*.

VFF President Brett Hosking said the VFF-led survey comes at a time when frustration in farming communities is reaching boiling point.

"We know that our members are coping it from all sides, whether it's the drought, conflict over land use, or new taxes. The feedback from communities I visit is that they're not being heard.

"We know we have a big task ahead to cut through with decision makers. This survey is about getting the data to support our advocacy for the next 12 months as we head towards a state election.

"We want the facts and figures to demonstrate where there's widespread concern to help us focus the minds of decision makers. We also want to make sure our advocacy is on-target and delivering maximum impact for members," Mr Hosking said.

Mr Hosking urged people across regional Victoria to take a moment to share their thoughts and share the survey through their networks.

"Five minutes is all it takes to share your thoughts on issues that could well and truly shape our industry for decades to come," Mr Hosking said.

The survey is open until August 14. The survey can be accessed by visiting the VFF website.

Wire-Lok, Why Knot?

Australian Made and Australian Owned

The Wire-Lok is a simplified and efficient way to join fencing wire.

The Wire-Lok a reliable and long lasting solution, made of stainless steel and rust resistant.

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SCAN ME

PUZZLES

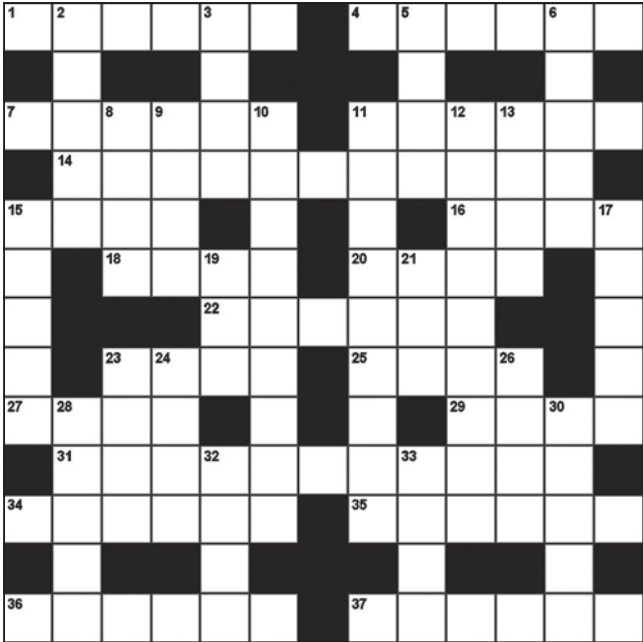
SOLUTIONS
Page 11

KID'S PUZZLES

Crossword

ACROSS

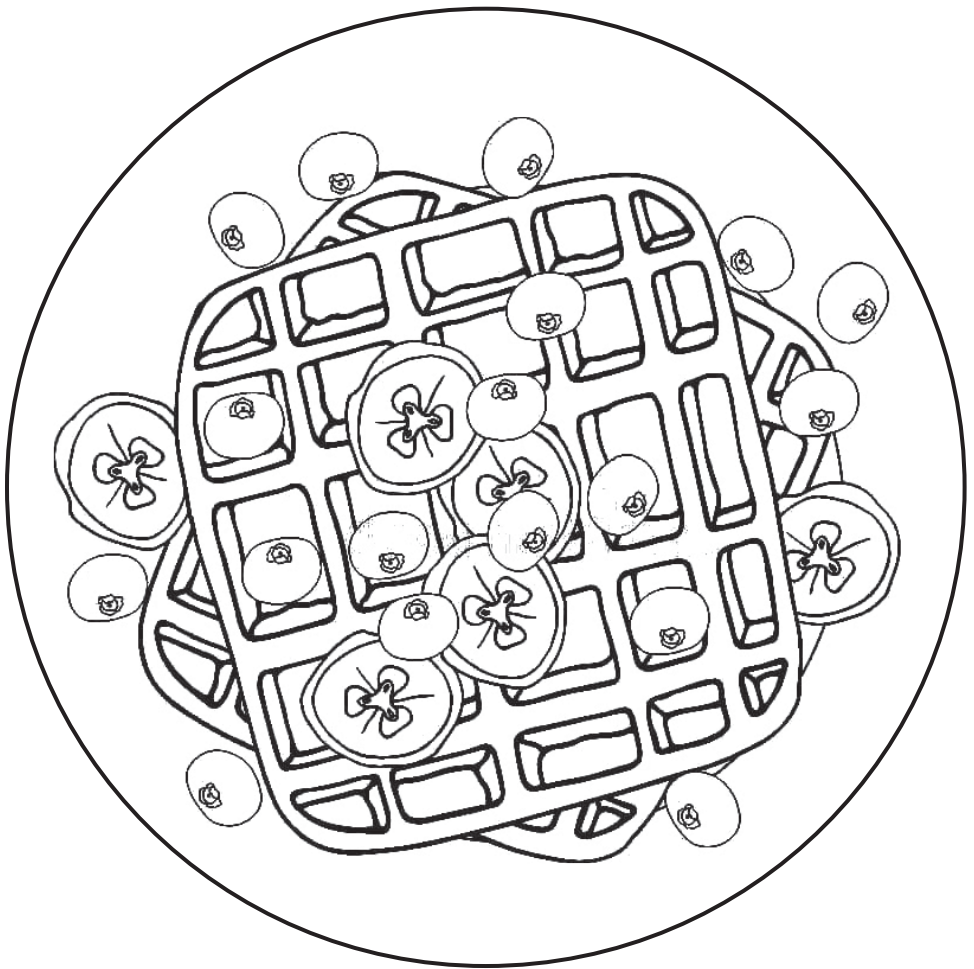
- 1. Of very little importance.
- 4. Serving no useful purpose.
- 7. Afloat and off course.
- 11. Not arrogant or prideful.
- 14. Successive generations of kin.
- 15. Kept closely confined.
- 16. Adult male red deer.
- 18. Willingly received something offered.
- 20. An impudent or insolent response.
- 22. The most uncommon event.
- 23. The amount that is owed.
- 25. Used to form a question.
- 27. The highest point.
- 29. A specific piece of work.
- 31. Not done with deliberate intention.
- 34. A situation of a hindering obstruction.
- 35. Small light anchors.
- 36. Became hardened against.
- 37. Crosspiece between the legs of a chair.



DOWN

- 2. A long narrow range of hills.
- 3. State of existence.
- 5. An aggressive criminal.
- 6. Spicy Mexican sauce.
- 8. A regular payment by a tenant.
- 9. Hooked on and preoccupied with.
- 10. Quite chatty and outgoing.
- 11. Cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing.
- 12. Expressed something incorrectly.
- 13. Makes a wager.
- 15. Small rainforest wallaby.
- 17. A native or inhabitant of Greece.
- 19. Ornamental sphere.
- 21. Light silvery grey.
- 23. Refuse to accept.
- 24. A set of questions evaluating a skill.
- 26. A distinctively sharp taste.
- 28. Metal spike for mountaineering.
- 30. Ancient upright stone slab.
- 32. Fraught with extreme danger.
- 33. The printed word.

Colouring Page



Word Search

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

Puzzle fun

- CHESS
- CROSSWORDS
- CRYPTOGRAM
- JIGSAW
- MAZE
- MONOPOLY
- RUBIKSCUBE
- SCRABBLE
- SUDOKU
- TICTACTOE
- WARSHIPS
- YAHTZEE

Math Square

	+	3	+		15
x		-		-	
	x		+		12
+		+		x	
6	÷		+		12
26		4		-65	

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.

Cryptogram

Spring

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
19				26				

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
					16			

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	25						

A								
18	19	4	10	9	23	18	20	1
A O						T E		
19	24	16	20	1	6	25	8	26

					E				T A				E
5	20	11	11	9	26	25	19	3	9	26			

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Easy

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.

Word Search

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

Words starting with "Q"

- QUADRUPLE
- QUAIL
- QUALITY
- QUARTER
- QUEEN
- QUENCH
- QUENTON
- QUESTION
- QUICKLY
- QUIET
- QUILT
- QUINCE
- QUIZ
- QUOTE

Math Square

	+		-		-1
+		+		-	
9	+		-		3
+		-		+	
3	-		+		1
17		-3		5	

Fill in the missing numbers.

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

Jokes

- Q: Why don't ants catch the flu?
A: Because they have little anti-bodies
- Q: What's blue and smells like red paint?
A: Blue paint

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 **ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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Neither a king nor a lake

by Michael Halley

THE first thing you might notice about Kinglake is the lack of a lake. It is in a watershed toward downstream storages with Masons Falls at 600 metres above sea level as the powerhouse. The town was named after British historian Alexander William Kinglake. No royal visit has included Kinglake. Perhaps King Charles on his way to Timbertop School may have passed by.

Enough proffering, at the August meeting of the Combined Probus Club of Whittlesea, Deidre Hawkins of the Kinglake Historical Society had volunteered to give members an overview of Kinglake and its history.

But on the morning of the meeting, Deidre was taken ill. A local saviour in the form of Jeanette Caffyn, a friend of Deidre and Probus Member, made the round trip from Whittlesea to collect the prepared presentation. On arrival, Jeanette hopped right into the task at hand and gave a professional resume of the prepared document and slide show.

Gold was discovered in 1861 on Mount Slide to the east of the locality at an area which became known as Mountain Rush. A Mountain Rush Post Office opened on May 7, 1862, but closed in January 1863 as the miners moved to other locations. Kinglake township was established in 1879 and the Post Office opened on May 14, 1883. There were actually several other post offices in the district.

The Kinglake district now stretches for about 16 kilometres along the ridge from west to east which necessitates three schools, churches and post offices having being established since the early settlers took up residence. Attendees heard about the history of these establishments and the often pitiful conditions the early settlers endured.

One councillor rode his horse to Eltham Council meetings at Kangaroo Ground (Later Yea Council assumed responsibility). Many photographs of early settlers home and properties were shown reinforcing the 'pioneering spirit' of the gold miners,

raspberry growers, timber cutters, and later potato farmers.

Timber was hauled on privately built timber railroad down the mountain to Whittlesea railhead. These timber railroads were common and necessary to allow transport of heavy loads throughout the state as populations increased and building increased. The motive power was a horse or bullock team.

It was not until 1929 that the location had a sealed main road, which coincided with the establishment of Kinglake National Park which was started at 14,000 acres but today is 57,000 (23,210 hectares). The aforementioned Masons Falls is a favourite picnic area with falls and natural flora. Layered sediment forms the valley, containing fossils from when the area was once covered by the sea.

Natural fauna includes wallaby, kangaroo, wombat, possum and echidna. It also includes varieties of birds including cockatoos (sulphur-crested, black and red-headed), king parrots, the rosella and the lyrebird.

Historical societies often have 'skeletons in the cupboard' and Kinglake has one real and one imagined. In 1931 the mail plane Southern Cloud failed to arrive at Essendon. A search along the route including the Kinglake ranges, failed to locate the wreck. Its wreck was finally found in the Southern Alps some 27 years later by a worker on the Snowy Mountains Hydro Scheme. The real one was in 1937 when an abandoned truck was located and the body of the driver found buried nearby. An unsolved cold case.

A developing new industry is rewriting history. Fires have been a major part of Kinglake History but the recent history is still a sensitive subject and will not be elaborated upon except to mention.

The Kinglake Historical Society welcomes inquiries and visitors to the Heritage Centre, contact kinglakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

The members applauded Jeanette Caffyn for her excellent substitution at short notice.

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

MATH SQUARES

5	+	3	+	7	15
x		-		-	
4	x	1	+	8	12
+		+		x	
6	÷	2	+	9	12
26		4		-65	

CRYPTOGRAM

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
19 3 13 6 26 18 15 8 10 17 21 9 4 1 16 5 2 24 7 25 20 14 12 22 23 11

FAMILY FUN AROUND THE PUZZLE TABLE

SUDOKU

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

KIDS - MATH SQUARES

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

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TRADES ADVERTISING DEADLINE NOON THURSDAY

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DEATH NOTICES



LAWSON, Don.

Council extends its sincere condolences to the family and friends of Don Lawson, who died August 2, 2025.

Mr Lawson was a respected community leader and a long-standing, passionate advocate for the district. From 1988 to 1991, he served as a Councillor for the former Yea Shire Council, where he actively contributed to matters of community concern.

In 1969, after purchasing a farm with his father in Yea, Mr Lawson founded the Ythanbrae Angus Stud. The stud achieved national prominence for producing balanced, functional cattle with strong build traits and high reliability for commercial producers. A pioneer of performance-recorded livestock breeding, he dedicated more than six decades to advancing the Australian beef industry.

Mr Lawson was a passionate champion of agricultural education and a tireless advocate for science-based policy and producer welfare. His expertise and commitment helped shape industry standards and improve outcomes for farmers across the country.

Remembered as a friendly gentleman always ready for a conversation, Mr Lawson leaves a legacy of generosity, leadership and innovation. He will be dearly missed.

DEATH NOTICES



GANGE,
Philip John.

10/02/1950 -
02/08/2025.

Cherished husband of Linda.

Adored dad of Chelsea and Melissa. Father in law of Glen. Dearly loved Pipi of Tenielle and Oscar, Bailey (dec) and Jaime. Adored Pipi the Great of his little mate, Ethan.

GOSCHNICK, Eric
George (Peter). Formerly of Alexandra. Passed away peacefully aged 98, Crows Nest, Queensland. Husband of May (dec). Father of Kerri, Greg, Steven, Peter and David. Always remembered.

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MEETINGS



Eildon Events Inc.
Annual General Meeting, Thursday, August 14, 2025, 5.30pm at Eildon Tennis Clubrooms, Eildon Road, Eildon.

New members welcome. Nomination forms for committee member positions available from the secretary: eildoneventsinc@gmail.com

For more information please call 0409 050 494. A normal committee meeting will follow the AGM.

MEETINGS



Upper Goulburn Community Radio

Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, August 18 at 7.30pm via Zoom. For a meeting link or to nominate for committee contact via email secretary@ugfm.org or PO Box 270, Alexandra, Vic, 3714 or call 5772 2722.

MEETINGS



General meeting for the Alexandra RSL will be held on Sunday, August 17, at noon, followed by a light luncheon.

YEA and ST PATS RACING CLUB AGM will be held at the Yea Racecourse in the club house at 6pm on Tuesday, August 26. All members and interested supporters are invited to attend. Sarah, secretary.

SITUATION VACANT



WORK WITH US SEASONAL FIRE CREW

Alexandra, Benalla, Myrtleford & Shelley

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- Please scan the QR code for the **Skills Summary Form** to upload as a cover letter.
- For general enquires please contact Nikki Armstrong - 0447 244 030
- Applications close: **31st August 2025**



SITUATION VACANT



Expression of Interest – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

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The CEO will be responsible for guiding the organisation through its next phase of development, ensuring the delivery of inclusive, person-centred care aligned with our mission and values and strategic direction.

Key Responsibilities:

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To express your interest or gain further information please contact
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Standard The Yea Chronicle

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What's behind the urban-regional political divide?

IN democracies around the world, a political phenomenon appears to be increasing, but is it the fault of voters or politicians?

The urban-rural political divide has been observed in countries including (but not confined to) Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Thailand, Turkey, the USA, the United Kingdom and Australia, as well as on a state level, including Victoria.

The division sees urban voters veering to left and regional voters veering to the right. The phenomenon can be clearly seen in maps of election results, whether state or federal, and regardless of the country being explored.

The phenomenon is believed to have intensified around the world since the recession from late 2007 to mid-2009.

The phenomenon does not appear to have been explored in any significant detail in Australia, aside from the fact that it happens, so a series of questions on the subject were posed for six former Victorian Premiers (three Labor and three Liberal), as well as the current Premier and the Opposition Leader, and Federal Independent Member for Indi Helen Haines.

They were asked, 'What do you believe is the cause of the division? How can it be countered within the existing party system? Is the distribution of wealth and infrastructure a factor? Is the cost of provision of services a factor? Are cultural factors at play? Are political philosophy factors at play? How can politicians ensure that the needs of both regional and urban Victorians are adequately met? Should all politicians ensure that voters in both the city and regional areas are considered in decision-making?'

One former premier (who we have chosen not to identify) responded quickly, referring us to the Minister for Agriculture, which highlights the issue. In regional areas, agricultural issues are certainly pertinent, but so are issues around housing, health, education, connectivity, disability, ageing, creative activities, policing, climate, environment, recreation, roads, planning, economic growth, employment, mental health, public transport, and a multitude of other issues.

Jeff Kennett

Former Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett was keen to comment however, saying "In short, it has probably never been greater." He said that it is particularly highlighted in the areas of health services, potholes, urban infrastructure in Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

He noted that most people in Melbourne know someone who lives in regional Victoria, and that "Where government fails is understanding the way in which metropolitan people understand their plight." He believes that this is particularly being felt as a result of droughts and floods, road maintenance, and the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) levy and other issues around the CFA.

He said, "Victoria always has been fairly well balanced in terms of its delivery of services, etcetera, but never before has there been such a massive program of borrowing that's only affected one small sector of the community. For instance, the Suburban Rail Link will never ever be used by anyone who lives outside of Cheltenham and Box Hill, but country folks are going to pay for it."

He expressed concern that this will be through the accumulated debt and reductions in "basic services the government should provide."

When asked about the tyranny of distance in the provision of services, Mr Kennett responded, "Where do we see the evidence that government is trying to through its priorities to incentivise rural Victoria, through utilisation of science and technology. It's just not there. There's no commitment, no recognition that if you want to grow any area of endeavour, you've got to invest in it. You've got to provide for it, and there's no provision at all."

Asked about the underlying cause of right wing politicians getting seats in regional Victoria and left in urban, Mr Kennett said,

"I think it's fundamentally a basis of values. Those who have traditionally lived in rural Victoria are men and women pioneers, farmers, shopkeepers. They work hard. They work from morning until night. In metropolitan areas there are an increasing number of people who are employed by governments directly or indirectly, whether they're public servants or whether they're any of these people working on the infrastructure projects are all being funded by government borrowing, and they're making huge salaries, absolutely huge salaries. So that is buying them into that sort of cohort of Labor views and supporting Labor."

He's noticed that many young adults tend to leave regional areas for employment, and increasingly there's also been a growth in the level of entitlement in urban areas.

He added, "So it makes it more difficult for conservative parties, per se, to win government because then you find in metropolitan areas more than anywhere else you have these smaller parties or independent parties that are arguing issues like climate change alone or they're standing on a local issue and they're getting elected to Parliament federally and state, which does not provide a disciplined focus on governing the electorate in the way it should. You want people who are there, who are disciplined, who are focused, who've got experience. Particularly in Victoria, where you're going to manage this debt for the next at least two generations."

When asked, do you see a way that the city country divide politically can be addressed by both political parties, Mr Kennett responded, "Yeah, I think it can. It can be addressed by better governments, by the government body itself. Secondly, it can be done by the government of the day, recognising the value and potential growth value of rural Victoria, in this case, though. It does need a mindset."

There appears to be a heavy demographic basis to the political preferences that are targeted. Mr Kennett responded, "I think right now we're in a very fluid situation, and if the conservative side cannot offer themselves to the electorate with a vision and with unity, then it is possible that Labor will continue simply because of the growth in the number of people who are reliant upon government for their employment and occupation. On the other hand, if the conservative sides together can develop a range of policies that will rebalance the scales, that will excite the youth of the day, then we've got a chance, but more of the same, and certainly in my opinion political parties not simply offering more to buy votes, is unacceptable."

He commented that in recent election, "both political parties simply went out there and said we'll spend more money. That's almost immoral. I don't mind spending more money if you've earned it first. But this concept that you can just buy your way into government has huge risks associated with it."

He also believes that when promises are made, the politicians need to have the courage to see these things through.

Asked whether there is a degree of traditionalism in the policies of both the left and right that haven't necessarily shifted with the times, Mr Kennett responded, "I don't think, as a generalisation, governments as we see them at the moment, are fit for purpose."

He particularly cited the dangers of borrowing rather than earning, adding that some manageable debt is fine, adding, "In order to get that government into thing, you've got to convince the electorate you're going to have to make some understandable, tough decisions in order to get to a better place."

He also commented, "I would say on that one of my greatest regrets is that we have never had a federal government that has given agriculture and water to priorities they deserve because we should have set ourselves a target 20 years ago to feed a billion people to our north by just collecting and distributing water, so that those who have their properties now can be secure with their water supply. And if we distribute the water better, we can provide water to some of the arid lands.

But agricultural water has never been a top priority of a federal government, regardless of its policy."

Asked what he would do if he were to land back in power right now, Mr Kennett responded, "I would establish water collection, distribution, pricing and agriculture as the primary priority. You hear everyone talking about defence and AUKUS and you hear about these submarines we've ordered. The best defence policy is to become a major supplier of food to the four billion people who live immediately to our north so that would be my first major policy initiative. My first economic policy issue would be to stabilise the debt, and thirdly, my priority would be to somehow, through policy setting, encourage people to believe that they can achieve here in Victoria whatever they follow and be rewarded for it without necessarily being ripped asunder by the failures of government that remove incentives."

Helen Haines

When asked about the urban-rural political divide, Independent Member for Indi Helen Haines said, "I would say that the electorate of Indi, it's not like that at all. In fact, what we've seen in the electorate of Indi is a move away from the extreme right political movement and much more of a centrist approach. And I think that the fact that the people of Indi have overwhelmingly, in just in the last election, voted for an independent for the fifth time in a row indicate that Indi doesn't meet this kind of criteria of being different to some of the metropolitan areas in terms of voting patterns."

In response to a question about whether political philosophies are behind the voting pattern, or whether it all boils down to access to services, Ms Haines responded, "I think access to services is the number one issue when it comes to an electorate such as mine, and I'm consistently advocating to the federal government about this, and while I'm not a member of the state Parliament, I'm not shy about advocating to the state government either. We've still got in rural and regional areas and our area is no exception, where your health for example, is dictated by your post code. For every kilometre that you are away from a metropolitan centre, the less likely you are to have really good health, and in fact we're still seeing in rural and regional Australia and of course most particularly in remote areas, that rural and regional Australians die younger, they're more likely to have a higher incidence of chronic disease or cardiovascular diseases or diabetes. Your chances of having those chronic diseases are higher if you live in the country. Certainly in the six and a bit years that I've been a Member of Parliament that's the most consistent issue that people come to me about is access to healthcare."

She added, "I think that rural and regional Australians are smart enough to know that you're not going to have the same level of services in a small country town as you will in a big city. Of course you're not. But while you may not be able to access neurosurgery, you should be able to access the transport to get you there to a major hospital to get immediate care. For example, if you have a heart attack, there should be no delay for an ambulance to get you to the help that you need as fast as you possibly can, and I think it's those other areas of service that we still have to fight for funding to ensure that we do get timely care."

She also said that with healthcare, it's not just the provision of a hospital, "It really comes down to... how long is the surgical waiting list. Do you have to wait longer if you are in a rural and regional area to get an operation?"

Asked about other factors underlying the situation, Ms Haines said, It's workforce. It remains very, very difficult to recruit and retain the health workforce that we need in regional areas compared to a metropolitan area. We have real issues in having the numbers of people we need to deliver services under the NDIS, under aged care, in acute

health, in all the Allied health professions and this has been a problem for a very long time and we haven't moved the dial very much on that.

"So workforce is a critical issue and related to workforce, is that even in some of our smaller towns where health services or schools or police or whatever it might be have been able to recruit a person, there's no home for them to live in. We've got a housing shortage. That's a problem right across Australia. There's a problem in rural areas as well. Unless we've got the housing for people to live in, they're not going to come and take up those positions that are available," she said.

Asked whether there's any way to countering the urban rural divide, Ms Haines responded, "Yes. I think that for every policy that a government puts forward, and I've been a champion of this and in fact, I've had some success in shining a light on this, is that there needs to be a rural, regional and remote lens put over that policy to say, how will this play out in a rural, regional or remote setting? Because it's not a cookie cutter, same size fits all approach to public policy. What might work in Collingwood may not work in Alexandra. So that question needs to be asked on every single policy.

"For example, in the federal sphere, the minister responsible for infrastructure needs to report each year on the how, how it plays out in rural and regional Australia, so every budget has a rural and regional remote impact statement... I think that's important to shine a light on it and then to draw the attention of the government to say, for example, in housing. There's been huge investments from the Commonwealth into housing and I've been arguing very strongly to say you need to guarantee that 30 per cent of that funding actually makes it out into rural and regional Australia, where 30 per cent of the people live," she said.

On encouraging private investment in rural and regional areas, Ms Haines said, "Investment in business in rural and regional Australia can only be enhanced if we have the infrastructure, the public infrastructure that would support, for example, if you look at housing and housing developers coming and building the homes that we needed in, for example, a town like Alexandra. I argued very strongly and was subsequently successful in the Commonwealth setting up a housing support fund which provides funding to local councils for the enabling infrastructure. The pipes, the power, the poles, the pavement, that underground works, that enables the houses to get out of the ground in the first place. Things like telecommunications, having really good digital access, mobile phone access, is where the Commonwealth can play a role and it makes a rural area more attractive for a business to come and set up in. I think it is about that enabling infrastructure, making sure that there's adequate road funding, that there's public transport, that our railway lines are well funded."

She added, "I meet very regularly with all our local councils and I meet regularly with Chambers of Commerce and various businesses of all stripes, and they're not looking for a handout for government to run their business because the moment you get a handout, you have to deliver something for government as a result of that. It can be constraining. But what they do want is to make sure that when they want to pick up a mobile phone that works... and that our roads won't be absolutely covered in potholes, and that when they want to recruit workforce somewhere to live, and that in each town, there's going to be access to a GP and there'll be some functional schools, all those things are the areas where government are involved in. I guess I think ultimately, what would attract private business to come and set up."

[Representatives from the Australian Labor Party were also contacted for comment, but no response was received by the time this article went to print. If a response is received, it will be including in an upcoming edition. -Ed]

SPORT

Tiebreaker tussles in windy tennis

by Rhonda Carpenter

WILD winds met players on the plateau for the top of the table clash between Terip and Euroa. Thanks go to the many fill ins on the day.

In Mansfield snatches of sunshine broke through to warm players as the wind picked up. Mansfield met rivals Wappan in a ding-dong battle, while Delatite met Creighton's Creek beside them. Seven Creeks hosted Benalla in Euroa.

At Terip, Euroa's Lyndall Bigland, Ruth Nolan, Mary Dewis and Robyn Johnson won two tiebreakers, but Terip took all the other sets in a blustery contest.

Terip won 4/46 to 2/30 edging closer to the ladder leader.

Seven Creeks were up against Benalla's Kate Campbell, Claire Sharp Maureen Jewell and Deb Siggers. Rowena Ellis, Nicola Enright, Carmel Linehan and Mary Kelly came close in two sets, losing a tiebreaker, but Benalla had all the answers and took all the sets 6/48 to 0/19.

Creighton's Creek found themselves again in Mansfield, this week to play Delatite. Deb Seach, Chris Ellis, Ros Doxey, and Kerry Hewlett were feeling familiar and comfortably took both openers.

Delatite's Karyn Fraser combined superbly with Jo O'Brien and then with Deb Mims to win both sets in tiebreakers. The Creeks won the others in an entertaining day of tennis.

Creighton's Creek won 4/46 to 2/24.

Mansfield hosted local rival Wappan and brought their competitive edge to the contest from the outset. Michelle Pigdon, Keira McDonagh, Clare Beecham and Sophie Yencken won both opening sets in tiebreakers seven to one and 11 to nine.

Wappan's Anna Speirs, Liza Karras Rhonda Carpenter and Carol Watts would need to lift. Anna's classy ball striking, Carol's chase down skills, and Liza's tenacity to overturn a deficit, gave the team control. The pairs found form to take both second sets eight to three, the sets were tied at two all.

Michelle and Sophie won yet another tiebreaker seven to two but Liza and Rhonda were determined and at 0 to three down had to dig deep. Keira and Clare owned the net with power volleys and deft touch, but Wappan caught them, going game for game, then pulled away as Liza served strongly to clinch the set eight to six.



Carol, Anna, Sophie and Michelle showing good sportsmanship. -S



Carol and Sophie faced off all day. -S

Wappan defeated Mansfield on games to win 3/45 to 3/36 in a fabulously even contest.

Moglonemby had the bye and picked up five points.

Round 12 Ladder: Euroa 86.5, Terip 76, Moglonemby 73.5, Wappan 68, Benalla 51.5, Mansfield 50, Creighton's Creek 36.5, Delatite 27, Seven Creeks 26.



Sophie and Michelle up 7-2 in breaker. -S

Round three of term three at Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition Australorps versus Silkies

JORDAN versus Lochlan: Jordan had his serves landing perfectly in the back corners and won many points that way. Lochlan fought back to win the final game but lost the match. Jordan was victorious. 77 to 54.

Laura versus Liane: Liane started off strong taking the first two games with a 17-point lead. The second half was much closer with Laura making a stand. Experience won out and Liane took home the win. 61 to 41.

Chris versus Justin: Some good running from both players. Justin had the upper hand with deep shots and court coverage for a convincing win. 89 to 47.

John versus Michael H: Keeping Michael running, John was in top form. Michael kept it close in games two and three, but John had done too much damage in games one and four, claiming the match. 64 to 47.

Leghorns versus Isa Browns

ERIC D versus Tyler: Great games with some long rallies and a few laughs. Eric finished strong, but Tyler came through with the win in the end. 68 to 52.

Sally versus Ethan: Sally has the skills. Ethan almost clinched game three but Sally was too good taking a clean sweep of the game to close out the match. 72 to 45.

Derrick versus Andrew: The game had lots of long rallies and skilful shots. It was anyone's match. Derrick made up some lost ground in the final game, taking the game and the match. 58 to 56.

Thursday competition Whippets versus Dachshunds

MATTHEW J (fill in) versus Randy: Putting up a good fight Matthew claimed the first game. Randy made waves after game one, collecting points like it was his mission in life. Randy went home with a substantial win. 76 to 51.

Beth versus Blake: Beth had some good finishers, but Blake's serve was a killer and gained him a mass of points. Blake was the victor. 69 to 49.

Travis versus Lucas: It was two games each with each player dominating a half. Travis opened by taking the first two games. Lucas had to put in some effort to make back his deficit, and he almost made it. Travis claimed the match 60 to 56.

Phil versus Daniel W: Phil was on-form from the start. Daniel was on the run and had a hot streak in the third game, but Phil put him on the back foot, winning all four games and the match. 62 to 46.

Golden Retrievers versus Labradors

MATTHEW J versus Eric F: Matthew had a great match which translated to points gained. Eric managed to draw the final game, but



Travis waits at the 'T' for Lucas to make his shot. -S

Matthew won in the end. 65 to 50.

Kristelle versus Jess: A tight match was expected and the first game delivered with Jess taking an early lead, only to be reeled in at the end. The rest of the match was all Kristelle's as her accurate serves proved too much for Jess. Kristelle powering through to win. 78 to 42.

Mick versus Sam: Sam started strong and didn't let up. Mick showed good form with flat shots that proved difficult, but Sam was up to the challenge, taking it on headfirst to claim triumph. 58 to 49.

Daniel K versus Michael M: Daniel played it cool as Michael gave it his all. Cool, calm and collected, Daniel held the upper hand throughout to claim the match with a commanding lead. 74 to 32.

Under 11 Yea Tigers roar to victory

by Jo Madden

THE under 11 Yea Tigers travelled to Rebel Park to take on the Alexandra Rebels for their final home-and-away match of the season. It was a slightly slow start for the Tigers, but once they found their rhythm, there was no stopping them.

With some wonderful intercepts in defence and sharp, confident leads from the mid-court, the team kept the ball moving forward beautifully. The attacking players took full advantage, driving hard into the goal circle and converting with skill, resulting in a strong 10 goal win.

This victory wraps up the home-and-away season for the Tigers, who now head into a well-earned bye before finals. Undefeated and sitting comfortably on top of the ladder, they've set themselves up perfectly for an exciting finals series.

Awards

Madden Plaster Player of the Day: Zoe Alldrick; Yarra Valley Coaches Choice Award: Evie McKay



Under 11 award winners Zoe Alldrick and Evie McKay. -S

Under 11 Development Squad full of beans

by Jo Madden

IT was a cold and foggy morning in Alexandra for the second-last game of the season, but our littlest Tigers weren't bothered one bit. They came bouncing onto the court full of energy and big smiles.

Taking on the Rebels, they ran, they chased, they passed, and they laughed their way through the game. Everyone worked together, cheering each other on and celebrating every little win. There were more goals scored today than in any game this season, and every one of them was met with huge cheers from the sidelines.

All players were driving forward for the ball, excellent intercepts and fabulous footwork. It was a tough choice for Coach Maya today to choose for the awards.

It was such a joy to watch, and we can't wait to see them play the Rebels again in Yea next week.

Awards

Just Great Coffee 'Red Hot Go' Award: Sky Helder; Yarra Valley Gas Coaches Award: Lilly Ryan



Under 11 Developmental Squad award Lilly Ryan and Sky Helder. -S

Under 13 netballers put in a determined performance

Netball

Under 13

THE Yea Tigers under 13 side put in a determined performance against the Alexandra Rebels over the last weekend.

Under the guidance of coach Lauren Cronk, the Tigers fought hard through all four quarters, showing strong defensive pressure

and some slick passing in attack. Despite their efforts, the Rebels proved too strong on the day, taking the win 35 to 26.

The Tigers can take plenty of positives from the match, with promising signs for the last game of the season.

Congratulations to Isla Anstey and Izzy White for receiving last week's awards for their tenacity towards the ball.



Under 15 award winners Zara Marini and Lily Neilson. -S

50 games for Yea Tiger Charlie Grant

by Lyndal Tait

Alexandra 7.3-45 defeated Yea 6.7-43

THE Yea Tigers travelled to Alexandra to take on the Rebels last weekend. Charlie Grant celebrated his 50th game for Yea as captain for the day.

It was a fabulous game to watch, with the tigers showing great skill and determination. Alexandra got off to a great start, kicking well ahead in the first quarter, but the Tigers stood tall applying pressure and attacking strongly.

The third quarter saw the Tigers keep Alexandra to just a single point, and the final quarter was a cracker. The Tigers piled on five goals in a remarkable and hard earned come back, only narrowly losing by two points.

It was a great game watched by a super supportive crowd. We send out our hugest thanks to our valued sponsors, and to our match day volunteers James Frankcombe for umpiring, Cam Grant and Sarah Arbuthnot for running water, Rya Roberts for being runner, Claire Geeson for time keeping, Andrew Bohn for goal umpiring and Mel Roberts for the oranges.

We have one game left for the season. We look forward to seeing everyone at Tigerland next Sunday when we take on Wandong.

Awards

Duncan's Paint and Panel 'Red Hot Go - Player of the Day' award: Ollie Skilling; Sprout Wellness 'Being your Best' award: Hudson Roberts; Yarra Valley Gas 'Coaches Award': Sienna Duncan and Darby Tait.



Under 12 award winners Tait, Duncan, Skilling, and Roberts. -S

Outer East Football and Netball League Ladders

Football – Reserves

	Percentage	Wins
Seville	538.56	14
Pakenham	419.03	14
Alexandra	155.57	10
Warburton Millgrove	169.79	9
Belgrave	215.17	9
Yea	88.50	5
Powelltown	28.09	4
Yarra Glen	23.78	1
Yarra Junction	14.86	1

Netball – A Grade

	Percentage	Wins
Seville	217.81	14
Pakenham	215.27	13
Warburton Millgrove	202.63	13
Yarra Glen	132.53	10
Yarra Junction	91.38	7
Alexandra	76.28	6
Belgrave	66.04	4
Powelltown	32.79	1
Yea	52.22	0

Football – Seniors

Pakenham	242.06	13
Warburton Millgrove	225.82	12
Seville	205.82	12
Alexandra	127.13	9
Belgrave	116.21	9
Yarra Glen	89.49	7
Yea	80.99	3
Powelltown	39.82	2
Yarra Junction	25.10	0

Netball – B Grade

Seville	342.14	15
Pakenham	254.47	14
Warburton Millgrove	159.67	11
Yarra Glen	117.34	10
Belgrave	85.10	7
Yarra Junction	68.25	6
Alexandra	53.25	3
Yea	55.65	2
Powelltown	38.07	0

Football – Senior Women

Warburton-Wesburn	100.00	14
Wandin	78.57	11
Emerald	60.71	8
Yea	50.00	7
Thornton Eildon	34.61	4
Officer	14.28	2
Seville	7.69	1

Netball – C Grade

Seville	328.63	15
Pakenham	215.52	14
Warburton Millgrove	171.31	11
Yarra Glen	103.24	8
Yarra Junction	83.33	7
Belgrave	77.66	6
Alexandra	81.18	5
Yea	46.21	1
Powelltown	28.73	0

Netball – 17 and under

Seville	456.76	14
Pakenham Lions Gold	232.67	12
Warburton Millgrove	81.51	6
Alexandra	48.35	4
Pakenham Lions Maroon	51.35	3
Powelltown	48.75	4

Netball – D Grade

Seville	391.02	14
Pakenham	309.19	14
Warburton Millgrove	191.87	12
Yarra Glen	86.30	6
Alexandra	75.70	7
Belgrave	68.31	5
Yea	51.90	4
Yarra Junction	53.14	2
Powelltown	28.10	0

Football – Under 18

Pakenham	1093.37	14
Seville	351.93	11
Alexandra	46.84	6
Warburton Millgrove	41.69	6
Yarra Glen	35.29	3
Yea	36.73	2

Yea golfers get stuck into golfing competitions

by Alan Pell

LAST Wednesday 17 members assembled to contest a Stroke and Putting event. Conditions were quite good considering the rain earlier in the week, and this was reflected in the scores posted.

Johnathon Fisher (17) came out trumps in the men's event posting a fine 68 nett. Playing partner Greg Clements (18) provided

strong competition to finish second with 71 nett. Billy Dredge (25) rounded out the top three with very neat 72 nett. Johnathon also took out the putting competition with a very impressive 23 putts. Sam Wright won a tight tussle with Neil Peterson to take home the club award.

Vicki Clements (24), fresh from overseas travel led the way in the ladies event posting an impressive 75 nett to collect the chocolates. Ladies Captain Jan Wealands (27) continued her recent run of good form with 81 nett to finish second. Cindy Armstrong (27) and Di Holdsworth (28) tied for tied place on 83 nett. There were no winners in nearest the pins for men's or ladies as the second green proved very elusive.

This time in winter, the fog and cold is being changed around noon to sunny and ideal afternoon conditions for golf. That was the case last Saturday as 17 men and seven ladies ventured out on Royal Yea. Par was the event for men with Peter Johnston (16) showing excellent form to win with +one. Second was Russ Wealands (23) with Square on countback from third Paul Clayton (9) and fourth Jono Ness (13) on -1. Jono was also nearest the pin on the 11th and Bill Dredge took out the club award. Jan Wealands (27) with 35 points won the Ladies Stableford Event from Cindy Armstrong (27) and Margie Wright (23) both on 33 points.

Progress points in the 54 Hole Event with one round to go are: Jono Nes 14, Russ Wealands 13, Mic Spagnolo 12, Brian Simmons 11, Peter Johnston 10, Zach Pell nine, Paul Clayton eight, Jonathon Fisher six, Oakley Ness and Trevor Connell three, Greg Clements one.



The fog is lifting and golfing conditions are on the improve for Yea golfers. -S