

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, August 27, 2025 \$2.00 inc. GST

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Tree planting across the shire



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Mouth mapping at the Yea Saleyards

YEA and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) is set to improve health services at the Yea Saleyards, thanks to a new partnership with the Rotary Club of Yea.

For a couple of years now, YDMH has run a monthly health clinic at the saleyards, but staff have been forced to work out of temporary and unsuitable spaces, including the cafeteria area or even a borrowed council library bus. These limitations have restricted both the quality and the growth of services.

To address this, YDMH and Rotary Yea successfully applied for an Elders Community Giving grant, securing \$20,000 in funding. The funds will go towards purchasing and installing a relocatable building at the saleyards, creating a dedicated space for health checks and clinics.

In addition, Rotary is supporting the hospital in purchasing new oral cancer screening technology for YDMH's innovative 'mouth mapping' program.

This collaboration marks a significant step in supporting the health and wellbeing of the local community, with a strong focus on those working in agriculture.

Dr Jennifer Keast, the Rural Health Academic Network (RHAN) co-ordinator at YDMH, was interviewed about mouth mapping and the opportunity provided by these developments.

"Mouth mapping is a fairly new initiative and doesn't differ that much from mole mapping of our skin. What people probably don't realise is that we have skin on the inside of our mouths as well as on the outside of our bodies. That skin is just as susceptible to developing cancer lesions as our external skin," Dr Keast said.

"But often they're not tested early because we don't tend to look inside our mouths, and if we are not going to the dentist very often, then these lesions can develop and be picked up quite late. If they are picked up late, they have a very high chance of poor outcome."

Running a mouth mapping program through YDMH to monitor for oral cancer in the local community is relatively simple.

"The beauty of this program is that the school of dental science at Melbourne University, through Dr Tami Yap, have developed a very cost-effective and quite straightforward program, where they can train up people, just for four hours, in medical photography," Dr Keast said.

"That enables then those people that are trained to take a series of about 20 photographs of the inside of a patient's mouth, and that's just using simple cheek retractors that the dentists would use for inspecting a mouth, and then this range of photographs.

"The people who are trained up in this medical photography don't need to be clinicians, they can be volunteers, or anyone that is interested in doing it. So through that model, we're not adding a clinical burden to overworked clinicians.

"The camera that is used costs about \$6000, and then there's some money also on

an almost hairdresser-like chair for patients to sit in. Not much of an outlay for the equipment. Then the photographs are taken and through a website are downloaded to an oral medicine specialist, who can then look at those photos, review them and write a report on what they're seeing.

"That report, if there is something to report on like a lesion in the mouth, that report gets sent to the patient, the patient's GP and the patient's dentist. The simplicity of this program means that we'll be able to deliver at the Yea Saleyards through our free farmer health checks at no cost to farmers or anyone else who attend."

Dr Keast spoke about how the program will take place in Yea, and how it could potentially expand.

"For the pilot that will be kicking off as soon as we have the building out there, we have trained up two nurses from the Yea hospital, because they were available and interested, and are already attending the cattle sales in another capacity," she said.

"They've got time and they are there to be taking the photographs. Once they've honed their skills it will probably take 10 to 15 minutes per patient. They did some training, the dental school people came up to the Yea hospital and did some training. They've been trained up.

"Beyond that, what we are hoping is that the program is not just confined to the saleyards. We see this as a really important public health initiative. We're hoping through the procurement of a bus, that we'll be able to take this at least across our region. There's no reason why this can't eventually be Australia-wide.

"It might be that it starts off being very popular and we can't fit everyone in on a particular day, but we'll keep going back as often as we can until we feel like a critical mass has been scanned. We are hoping that by January we'll be up and running at the saleyards, but that's not definite. It depends on a whole lot of stuff, like the building being erected in time. But you can probably say within six months we're hoping to hold our first clinic at the saleyards."

Dr Keast finished by stressing the importance of the program, stating that the normal rate of mouth lesions is one in 20 people for men over 75 in the general population, and that a test study in the Wimmera showed a rate of one in five for male farmers over the age of 75.

"It's looking like farmers have four times the rate of oral lesions, which may be pre-cancerous or cancerous, than the general population. That is a real concern," Dr Keast said.

"If they're picked up late, which they generally are, the outcomes for and the surgery required to resect them is really extensive and not pleasant to go through."

Where and when the oral cancer clinics are taking place will be advertised on the YDMH website once the program begins.



Dr Tami Yap, Oral Medicine Specialist, Yea nurses Sally Belford and Shona Miljkovic and simulated patient Barry Phillips. -S

Rotary partners with YDMH to build on hospital initiatives

THE Rotary Club of Yea is pleased to announce that it has entered a partnership with the Yea and District Memorial hospital (YDMH) to build on the initiative of the hospital whereby allied health services such as skin and cardio checks and mental health support are offered to the local farming and agricultural community at the Yea Saleyard's monthly cattle sales.

The partnership will include the setting up and management of a permanent home for these services at the saleyards and a new additional service to be offered for

the early detection of oral cancers. The services themselves will continue to be provided by YDMH staff.

Yea Rotary President Darryl King said that this is a new initiative for the Rotary Club of Yea and part of its commitment of service to others and of its focus on mental health. The club has always worked closely with YDMH and welcomes and looks forward to continuing this very important relationship in this and other future arrangements.

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital

5736 0400

In an emergency dial 000

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

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ALEXANDRA

NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHERS

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THUMBS UP

THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP:

On Thursday I found myself going to a VicRoads info presentation on the Melba Highway when a low radiator warning came up on the dash. On pulling over I found the radiator cap loose and most of the expensive fluids on the road. To my surprise, a gentleman in a red car pulled over on the other side of the road and offered help. He then provided a container of water to get me to the nearest tap. He then followed me to ensure I made it. I was then able to get home. A real thumbs up to him, and with many thanks from me. Great to know that good people are out there in our shire.

THUMBS DOWN:

To Bendigo Bank who lie about being 'community focused'. Yes they have returned over \$350 million to the community since inception which is why they are closing so many branches to reap back those lost funds.

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

Cindy McLeish. -S

McLeish accuses government of letting weeds and pests run free

MEMBER for Eildon Cindy McLeish is concerned that invasive weeds and pests will go unchecked across Victoria, as the Victorian Government sacks Agriculture Victoria's pest and weed team.

From December 2025, Victoria will be the only state in Australia with no plan, no rules and no resources to deal with destructive pests like blackberries, rabbits and gorse.

Ms McLeish said this reckless decision by the state government will impact each shire in the electorate.

"Blackberries are already running rampant along roadsides, strangling our local rivers and streams and plaguing our bushland and farms.

"I receive regular complaints and concerns from constituents about blackberry growth,

as well as damage to crops, and properties caused by rabbits, foxes and feral pigs.

"I see a fox at least once a day. Everyone in regional Victoria understands the problem with rabbits, foxes and noxious weeds.

"The Agriculture Victoria Pests and Weeds Teams did what they could, but it was a challenge when they didn't receive the government support. Now with one of our only lines of defence gone, the weeds and pests will grow out of control, particularly as we come into spring," she said.

Labor has only budgeted \$537.2 million for Agriculture Victoria in 2025/26, down from \$614.8 million in 2024/25, which Ms McLeish sees as a direct attack on regional Victorians, who will feel the pinch the hardest.

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

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Association of Australia

abc

Weekly Weather

August 27 - September 2, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	6	11	Wednesday	6	12
Thursday	6	10	Thursday	6	11
Friday	4	9	Friday	4	10
Saturday	4	9	Saturday	4	10
Sunday	5	12	Sunday	5	14
Monday	4	14	Monday	4	14
Tuesday	4	15	Tuesday	4	15

Standard

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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	1.55	steady	Below Flood Level
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00am Mon	0.50	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.00am Mon	0.56	steady	Below Flood Level
Home Creek at Yarck	6.50am Mon	0.18	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	7.23am Mon	0.49	steady	Below Flood Level
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	9.00am Mon	0.27	steady	
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	9.00am Mon	0.61	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00am Mon	3.67	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00am Mon	0.49	steady	Below Flood Level
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00am Mon	1.31	steady	Below Flood Level
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00am Mon	0.31	steady	Below Flood Level
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00am Mon	1.62	steady	Below Flood Level
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.00am Mon	1.15	steady	

*ISSUED AT 09:55 AM AEST MONDAY 25 AUGUST 2025

DISTRICT RAINFALL	
Alexandra	0.6mm
Buxton.....	0mm
Eildon (AWS).....	0.2mm
Flowerdale.....	0.4mm
Jamieson.....	N/Amm
Kinglake.....	0.4mm
Lake Eildon.....	0mm
Mansfield.....	N/Amm
Taggerty	2mm
Yarck	0.6mm
Yea.....	0.1mm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday	
LAKE EILDON	
Height above sea level this week.....	275.63m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	55.5%
Metres below full supply.....	13.27m
Daily inflow	1000ML
Release.....	2000ML
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

Nabbed on the Melba Highway

MEMBERS of Seymour Highway Patrol were left shaking their heads after the shift on Sunday, August 17. Twenty infringements were issued to 17 drivers in an eight hour shift. Most of these were for drivers exceeding the speed limit despite the terrible weather conditions.

A notable intercept was for two drivers travelling together on the Melba Highway at Yea in heavy rain. The first vehicle was travelling at 126km/h in a 100 zone, and the second vehicle was travelling at 117km/h in a 100 zone.

Both vehicles then tried to hide from police by driving up a farmer's private driveway.

It just got worse for both drivers from there. Police found that one driver wasn't displaying his P plates when required and his vehicle was unregistered.

The other driver, an international licence holder, was not carrying his licence card when required.

Both drivers were also issued speeding infringements.

Operation *Get To The Snow* is actively targeting poor driver behaviour of people using the roads in the Murrindindi Shire area on their way to the snow.



Highway Patrol has been busy in the Yea area. -S

Rotary Club of Yea exchange student Julie Shulin

THE Rotary Club of Yea has recently welcomed a second exchange student, Julie Shulin from Taiwan. Julie is 17 and arrived in mid-July, attending Yea High School and is staying with her host family, Cheyenne and Nakaiah Kerr. Nakaiah stayed with Julie for three months in Taiwan when on a short term exchange in late 2024 and early 2025.

Julie is in Year 11 at Yea High School and has really settled in very well. Her English is exceptionally good, having started learning the language while in kindergarten. Back home, Julie's school has about 2000 students so being in Yea does feel a little different for her. Julie has an older brother and a younger sister back home, and three cats that she adores.

As part of the Rotary short term exchange program, Julie has already had a trip to the Great Barrier Reef, with 16 other inbounds, many of whom were from Germany. Unlike Cucky, from Chile, who will be in Yea for 12 months, Julie's visit is just three months and so for that entire time, she will be with Cheyenne and Nakaiah. You will see Julie out and about, so say hi and help make her stay in Yea a memorable one.



Three exchange students, Julie Shulin from Taiwan, local Nakaiah Kerr (returnee from Taiwan) and Cucky Mella Ruiz from Chile. -S



Julie with her host family, Cheyenne and Nakaiah Kerr. -S

Machete ban disposal information

THE ban on the sale and possession of machetes will be in effect from September 1.

After that date, owning, carrying, using, buying, or selling a machete without a valid exemption or approval will be a criminal offence.

More than 40 safe disposal bins will be available 24/7 at police stations across Victoria to allow people to safely dispose of machetes during the amnesty period, which will run from September 1 to November 30.

None of the safe disposal bins are located in Murrindindi Shire. The nearest locations are in Seymour, Wallan or Lilydale Police Stations.

If people do not surrender their machetes during the amnesty, they face up to two years imprisonment or a fine of more than \$47,000.

Agricultural workers who use machetes as part of their job and machetes that are used in a traditional, historical, or cultural capacity are exempted. Anyone covered by an exemption must comply with strict conditions and be able to demonstrate eligibility if asked by police.

An interim ban on the sale of machetes was announced in May. This led to Amazon removing them from sale across the country. Since then Consumer Affairs Victoria inspected more than 470 retailers to enforce the ban, with only seven stores and one market vendor found to be breaking the law.

While there have been reports that the government spent \$13 million on the 40 machete disposal bins (around \$325,000 per bin), the government disputed this. They stated that the \$13 million covers the rollout of the the entire machete amnesty project, not just the building of the bin. The costs include the public awareness and retailer education campaign, managing exemptions for the ban, and manufacturing and installing the safe disposal bins, as well as the secure collection and destruction of items that are handed in.

It's understood that each bin costs approximately \$2400.

Further details about the program are available at vic.gov.au/machete-amnesty

Why spring puts an extra spring in your step

THE fog is lifting, the frost is melting and its nearly time to get out and about again. As winter is a time to stay indoors, the first peak of spring emerging suddenly gives you a little extra spring in your step.

Spring can bring on feelings of improved mood and a sudden increase in energy levels as temperature increases and change of sunlight can boost serotonin levels which helps regulate your mood and gives you the energy to tackle the outdoors after being cooped up all winter. This feel good hormone is also responsible for levels of depression and anxiety. if you experience symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) the longer days with increased light can help diminish feelings of the winter blues and naturally boost your mood which

is a welcoming feeling if you have been suffering in the winter months.

When you get outdoors there are plenty of areas to explore in your own backyard. Murrindindi Shire has many wonderful walking trails and parks where you can get more physical activity in which can also increase your social interactions with others when you're out and about. Both exercising and socialising can increase endorphins which creates feelings of happiness.

Being outdoors also increases your vitamin d production. This hormone affects mood and influences your sleep patterns as it regulates serotonin and melatonin.

Even the change in environment can affect your mood as the season changes. Locally we are lucky to have an abundant amount of spring colour pop up, whether it

be the new leaves forming on the trees or bulbs sprouting in and around where you live. This new growth can give a feeling of new beginnings and better days are around the corner.

If you find your mood and energy levels don't improve into the spring months after a dark and dreary winter there are some great mental health services that can help you, these can include Beyond Blue and Lifeline, and locally, on the Murrindindi Shire Council website, there is a great list of support resources available. There is also the new mental health service that launched on July 29 in Yea, the Lower Hume Primary Mental Health service bringing local supports and removing barriers to access mental health support with clinicians based in Yea, Alexandra, Seymour, and Kilmore.

Ausnet vegetation works

AUSNET will be carrying out vegetation management in Caveat, Buxton, Dropmore, Eildon, Ghin Ghin, Highlands, Howes Creek, Marysville, Narbethong, Rubicon, Ruffy, Taggerty, Terip Terip, Thornton and Yarrack from late August through September 2025.

The works include pruning around powerlines and, where necessary, vegetation removal.

For more details, visit Ausnet's website or call 1300 360 795.

Ausnet said that patience and cooperation is appreciated while this essential safety work is completed.



Local guitarists in rehearsal, getting ready for the concert. -S

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

Connecting guitarists through High Voltage

GUITARISTS across Murrindindi Shire and surrounds gathered over several workshops from Friday, August 22 to Sunday, August 24 in Yea and Alexandra to kick off rehearsals for the High Voltage concert.

Local producer, Cynthia Lim said, "There were 19 attendees for the first weekend of workshops and more guitarists will be joining in for the following weekend including students from local high schools. We're thrilled to have attendees ranging in ages from 14 to 80 years old."

Further workshops will be held on August 30 and 31 and September 4 and 5 to get all the guitarists ready to perform for the final show. Anyone considering taking part is welcome to register and get involved.

"It is not too late to learn the show stopper songs and I'm happy to discuss the process with anyone interested," Ms Lim said. "The skills of the guitarists that attended the first weekend ranged from those who play actively in bands, those who pick up a guitar every now and then to those who haven't played anything for decades. All are invited to participate."

Internationally acclaimed artist and musician, Joseph O'Farrell (JOF) and guitar educator Chris Green spent the weekend in the region helping the guitarists shape their musical skills. Joining the performance will be students from Dindi Dance and other local performers will also be involved. The event is all ages and all skill levels.

The big concert takes place on Sunday, September 7 at 4pm at the Yea Shire Hall.

Entry to the event is free and everyone across the region is invited to enjoy the final performance and support the rock stars. No tickets are required. Make it a Fathers' day activity.

Guitarist registrations are welcome. Complete the form which is available via the Yea Arts Inc website, yeaartsinc.org/high-voltage

High Voltage project is led by Yea Arts Inc and proudly supported by Murrindindi Shire Council to make it a shire-wide celebration, bringing local talent together for one High Voltage concert to remember.

For further details contact the Local Producer Cynthia Lim at eventsyeaarts@gmail.com or call 0403 831 520.

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.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28
Menzi's Support Services Community Meeting from 5pm onwards at 49 Nihil St, Alexandra. They are calling for committee members.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
Darren Gilbert open studio Saturday and Sunday from 10am-4pm. 5 Giffard Street, Yea or other times by appointment 0421 378 451.

Goulburn Fishing Festival 2025 is a free event at Eildon. 9am-2pm. Vic Fish Kids clinics at the pondage, Snobs Creek Hatchery guided tours, live music, market stalls and much more. Fireworks at 7pm. vfa.vic.gov.au/goulburnfishfest

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Alexandra Opportunity Shop AGM will be held on Monday, September 8, at 10am in the RSL Hall.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association will hold their AGM at 6pm All businesses are invited to attend. For more details visit alexandratourism.com/agm

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
There will be a public meeting taking place at the Molesworth Public Hall on September 10, starting at 7.30pm. The purpose of the meeting is to nominate new committee members for the Committee of Management for the Molesworth Public Hall Reserve.

Digitisation to make planning and building information easier to access

MURRINDINDI Shire Council improve how the community accesses planning and building information.

Through ongoing digitisation of historical permit files, they're streamlining processes, reducing delays and making it easier for residents, businesses, builders, and planners to access the information they need.

This work builds on a recent digitisation project, supported by the Victorian Government through the Regulatory Reform Incentive Fund (RRIF) (now Business Acceleration Fund), which converted nearly 6500 hard copy Planning and Building permit files into a fully digital system.

This projects complements council's other digital initiatives, like the Planning and Building Portal, which gives residents, builders, and planners a convenient way to lodge and track applications online.

For more information, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Services/Planning-and-Building/Planning-and-Development

Going on a Bear Hunt in Flowerdale

ON Wednesday, August 20, the Flowerdale Playgroup through Flowerdale Community House discovered *Going on a Bear Hunt*. The children and parents really enjoyed this sensory play activity, experiencing the book in a whole new way.

Jess does such a wonderful job creating the activities and programs each week, with lots of messy play opportunities for little people.



Immediate action planned for child safety

THE Victorian Government has announced a child safety overhaul following the recent abuse allegations in childcare centres.

They will take immediate action to strengthen the Working With Children Check and child safety in early childhood education and care settings with a \$42 million boost to the sector, by accepting and implementing all 22 recommendations of the independent Rapid Child Safety Review, bringing legislation to sitting to allow for the immediate suspension of individual Working with Children Checks (WWCC).

The government will establish a new, nation-leading regulator that will more than double the frequency of compliance checks and beef up the Social Services Regulator (SSR) by bringing the WWCC, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards under the one roof by the end of the year, giving it new powers, removing silos and weeding out predators.

They are introducing mandatory child safety training and expanding professional support programs, including through changes to the National Law, to build a greater culture of speaking up, and calling on the Federal Government to prioritise quality and safety in the national childcare system.

The work has already started and will continue in the coming weeks and months to restore trust in the sector.

Rapid Child Safety Review

The review was commissioned by the state government following serious allegations of child sexual abuse in early childhood education and care (ECEC). Led by Mr Jay Weatherill AO and Ms Pam White PSM, the review was delivered to the government on August 15, 2025.

The report makes 22 recommendations to improve child safety.

Of these: Six recommendations are directed at strengthening the Victorian ECEC regulator and their functions; three recommendations include improvements to training, professional development and education for those working in the ECEC sector and families; two recommendations go to reforms to governance and regulatory functions, including WWCC and the RCS. Eleven recommendations propose advocacy to the Commonwealth or advocacy in national forums.

The report sets out clear actions to reinforce Victoria's regulatory framework, strengthen awareness about identifying and raising child safety concerns, and advocate for urgent action to occur at the national level.

By accepting all recommendations, the government is ensuring stronger safeguards are in place to protect Victorian children

and support families to have confidence in the Working With Children Check and the safety of early childhood education and care.

New early childhood education and care regulator

The early childhood education and care sector has expanded with rapid growth and the government need to not only catch up but stay ahead of these changes to address future risks.

The state government will establish an independent, strengthened authority to regulate early childhood services under the National Law, and will more than double the frequency of compliance checks.

The independent regulator will be established by the end of this year. This nation-leading body will also be responsible for the Early Childhood Workforce Register introduced in July.

This strengthened regulator will provide families with confidence that children are safe and supported.

Beefed up Social Services Regulator

For too long too many pieces of information about an individual have been left and gone unchecked.

A better understanding of child safety to protect all children is needed, including those at risk due to disability, neglect, family violence and other forms of abuse.

That's why we're taking action to strengthen the safety net around children, bringing the Working with Children Check (WWCC), Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards into the Social Services Regulator (SSR) by the end of this year.

Child safeguarding schemes will also be overhauled to ensure predators can be quickly detected, excluded and never allowed to work with children again.

This includes providing the beefed up SSR with powers to consider unsubstantiated allegations and intelligence in deciding whether to grant clearances and proactively share this information with other regulators.

The government will also introduce legislation into Parliament to make some immediate changes to Working with Children Check, including to immediately suspend clearances while reassessments are finalised.

All people applying for a working with children clearance will also be required to undertake mandatory online training and testing, with review rights removed from VCAT for those who have had their clearance refused, revoked or suspended.

Giving workers and parents the

confidence to raise safety concerns

Those who are best placed to respond to and report child safety concerns must be equipped with the tools and confidence to raise them.

That's why the government is taking action to introduce the national mandatory child safety training for all early childhood education and care workers and expanding the professional support program, including through proposed changes to national law, to build a greater culture of speaking up.

Government will also work with experts to provide parents and carers with evidence-based advice and online training on prevention awareness, signs of grooming and how to raise concerns.

Anyone with concerns about the safety of children in early childhood services should call the Regulatory Authority on 1300 307 415. Reports can be made anonymously. All notifications are taken seriously and investigated.

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VICTORIA
State Government

3861 native trees, shrubs and grasses planted

MURRINDINDI Shire's 2025 National Tree Day (NTD) celebrations have been a huge success, despite some rain delays, with 3861 native trees, shrubs, and grasses planted across 10 sites between July 19 and August 24.

While the official Day fell on Sunday, July 27, local activities were spread out over several weeks to accommodate school calendars, volunteer availability and the weather. NTD for schools took place on Friday, July 25, with students rolling up their sleeves to plant alongside teachers, Landcare members and council staff.

This year's planting began at Thornton Recreation Reserve on July 19 and continued across the shire in Alexandra, Buxton, Eildon, Flowerdale, Yea and Yarck. Across all the events, more than 200 students, teachers, community volunteers and Landcare members contributed their time and energy to improve biodiversity, stabilise soil and provide essential habitat for wildlife. Students demonstrated impressive teamwork and dedication, gaining valuable hands-on experience and will be able to watch on with pride as their plants grow.

Murrindindi Shire Council would like to thank all community members who took part, Upper Goulburn Landcare Network, Cathedral Landcare, Flowerdale Landcare, Home Creek Spring Creek Landcare, Leckie Park/UT Creek Landcare, Yea Primary School, Yea Sacred Heart Primary School, Alexandra Primary School, St Mary's Primary School and Yea High School for their efforts and dedication.

Special thanks go to Chris Coburn from Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and their Youth Programs' Zanni Waldstein and Leigh Redding for coordinating with schools, and to Alex Jones, Cam Patterson and Andrew Storie for site preparation and planting support.

Murrindindi Shire Council Sustainability and Assets Portfolio Cr Sue Carpenter said, "National Tree Day is a wonderful example of how small actions, taken together, can make a big impact. These efforts benefit our environment, foster goodwill and provide invaluable educational experiences for our young leaders of tomorrow. We are grateful to the numerous volunteers whose dedication makes our landscapes healthier for generations to come."



Planting at UT Creek in Alexandra with St Mary's Primary School and Alexandra Primary School. -S



Planting at UT Creek with UT Creek Leckie Park Landcare Group. -S



Planting at Thornton Recreation Reserve. -S



Planting at South Cathedral Lane with Cathedral Landcare Group. -S



The planting event at Old Josephine Cutting in Alexandra. -S



Planting at Boundary Creek Boulevard with students and staff from Sacred Heart and Yea Primary Schools. -S



Planting at Boundary Creek with Yea High School. -S



The planting event at Eildon Pondage with Eildon Landcare Group. -S

Volunteers at National Tree Day events and council's *Nominate Your Favourite Street Tree* were part of a random draw on August 18, with three winners from across Murrindindi each receiving a \$40 voucher for a local supermarket. Winners included a National Tree Day Talk attendee in Yea, and volunteers from tree planting events in Alexandra and Thornton.

More images on page 16.

Menzies clients and guests celebrate Brewability

GUESTS were treated to an amazing array of food, and of course hot drinks, impeccably served, at the completion celebration for the Menzies Support Services Brewability course.

Acting Menzies Support Services CEO Kellie Fielder welcomed the guests at the event. She explained that at the start of the year, some of the staff and clients were working on vision boards and Jenna suggested working in a café. As a result, they started looking at how this could happen and how they could develop tangible skills in the area, such as learning to be a barista. With all of the clients on board, "We went on a mission to make it happen," Kellie said.

They were able to access support via the Workforce Training Innovation Fund on behalf of the Murrindindi Health Network and they were able to access bespoke training and funding to support the request.

Brewability is about building skills "one cup at a time" and through it, a new partnership evolved with Ciri Services.

She said, "Over the last three weeks, we've seen our clients gain new skills, burst with pride and have a level of engagement that has not been seen or rivalled for some time."

The afternoon tea, held during week four, celebrated the completion of Brewability, and provided a chance for clients to show off their new skills and take pride in their achievements.

To the people who completed the course, Kellie said, "It's been a pleasure to see you gain confidence, pride yourself on a new skill, and walk a little bit taller. Unusual as it may be, I have never had a cup of coffee in my life, but today might just be the first."



Staff with participants in the Brewability course, holding their certificates. -AR



A magnificent array of food was on offer. -AR



Val, Margaret and Simone. -AR



Pam, Dierdre, Ron and Norma. -AR



Beautifully decorated cupcakes created by the participants. -AR



Stephen, Corrie and Lani. -AR

Darren Gilbert

open studio

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Student of the Week

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Student of the Week

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Students start new garden project

ON Wednesday, August 20, grade five and six students at Sacred Heart Primary School in Yea began work on their next garden project, constructing steps leading up to the seating circle.

The task required careful planning, calculations, and precise measurement, with most of the first level now complete.

At the same time, another group focused on compost building and mulching materials for the compost bays, ensuring the garden systems continue to thrive.



The Farmer's Ag News

Historic highs for Australian beef, lamb and mutton production

THE Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has released the latest statistics on livestock slaughtered and red meat production, which according to Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) has confirmed a historic period for the red meat sector.

Financial year 2024-2025 has seen beef production reach an all-time high, lamb slaughter maintained near-record levels, and mutton throughput surging to its highest volume since 2007.

The results reflect the strength, resilience, and strategic adaptability of Australian producers across diverse seasonal conditions, according to MLA's Acting Market Information Manager, Erin Lukey.

"These results show that continued adoption of new technology and innovation on-farm, along with investments in supply chain efficiency, are continuing to pay dividends across the supply chain," Ms Lukey said.

"Despite seasonal challenges in some parts of Australia, the industry has delivered record beef production and maintained strong lamb and mutton throughput."

Cattle sector surges to historic highs

Australia processed 8.88 million head of cattle in financial year 2024-25, which is the third-largest annual slaughter since 1978 and the highest since the drought-driven peak in 2015.

The June quarter saw 2.3 million head processed, which is an eight per cent increase on the previous quarter and 10 per cent higher than the same period last year.

Queensland led the charge, lifting throughput by 13 per cent to over one million head, while New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania all recorded their strongest quarters in over a decade.

Beef production hit an all-time high of 2.75 million tonnes for the financial year, surpassing the previous record set in 2015.

The June quarter alone produced 717,891 tonnes, the largest quarterly output on record, driven by improved productivity and record feedlot turnoff.

Despite the surge in production, national carcass weights dipped to 307 kilograms, reflecting seasonal trends and a higher proportion of female cattle in the processing mix.

The female slaughter rate (FSR) rose to 54 per cent, with New South Wales and Victoria posting record rates, sitting 14 per cent and 17 per cent above their long-term averages respectively.

Lamb sector holds strong despite seasonal challenges

Lamb slaughter totalled 26.06 million head in financial year 2024-25, marking the second-largest financial year on record. The latest quarter saw a slight two per cent decline quarter-on-quarter, the full-year figures demonstrate sustained strength across most states.

New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania all recorded quarterly increases, with Tasmania up 18 per cent to its highest kill since June 2016. Victoria saw an eight per cent decline, attributed to earlier turnoff decisions and dry seasonal conditions.

"The lamb sector continues to show strength despite seasonal variability," Ms Lukey said.

"Producers are adapting to dry conditions and making strategic decisions around turnoff timing."

Financial year 2024-25 lamb production reached 624,549 tonnes, down four per cent

on 2023-24, but still the second-largest annual output. Heavier carcass weights, averaging 24.8 kilograms, helped offset lower slaughter volumes.

"We're seeing heavier lambs being processed as producers respond to pasture limitations by finishing animals on grain earlier," Ms Lukey said.

"This has helped maintain production levels even as slaughter numbers eased."

Mutton sector reflects southern destocking trends

Financial year 2024-25 saw 11.7 million head of sheep processed, the highest volume since 2006-07, with Victoria's 4.4 million head marking its largest annual turnoff since 1981. Western Australia also posted its highest annual kill since 2008, despite a sharp slowdown in the June quarter.

"The mutton data reflects significant destocking pressure, particularly in southern regions," Ms Lukey said.

Mutton production for the year rose 12 per cent year-on-year to 294,757 tonnes, with New South Wales and Victoria accounting for 73 per cent of national output. Quarter two production fell 20 per cent, continuing a downward trend from the quarter four 2024 peak.

Average sheep carcass weights declined to 23.9 kilograms, the lightest since quarter one 2019, with New South Wales averaging 26.2 kilograms and Victoria 21.5 kilograms.

"While production has eased, the overall financial year figures show how producers have managed through challenging conditions," Ms Lukey said.

"It's a reflection of the industry's resilience and forward planning."

A rough winter coat on young cattle could be telling

by Dr Jeff Cave, Senior Veterinary Officer, Northern Region

IF your young cattle's coats are looking a bit rough, it could be due to lice or ringworm, which both thrive under similar circumstances.

Both lice and ringworm are typically a greater problem in young cattle in either poor nutrition or with a compromised immune system. Neither are a significant problem to cattle in good health.

Lice are small sucking or biting insects found mostly around the head, neck and shoulder area, and along the back to the tail.

The irritation they cause lead to a rough scruffy appearance, and areas of skin rubbed raw particularly around the neck and shoulder. The main effect of lice is skin damage as well as reduced grazing.

Cattle are infested through animal-to-animal contact with other cattle from which the population of lice can build up rapidly. Cattle lice do not infest other animals.

The cattle's denser winter coat along with cooler weather favours the lice's survival.

Without treatment the problem will remain until spring, when increasing temperatures and day lengths along with improved nutrition naturally reduce lice numbers.

Ringworm is a transmissible infectious skin disease caused by a spore forming fungi. It too is spread by direct contact and can spread rapidly through a group of cattle, particularly in poorly growing young animals with underlying poor health or nutrition.

It causes grey-white areas of slightly raised skin with an ash-like surface. It can become extensive being seen predominantly around the eyes, ears and along the back of calves, also the chest and legs of adult cattle.

It causes little permanent damage or economic loss; however, it can be transmitted to humans.

Ringworm usually clears up within one to two months without any treatment particularly when conditions improve.

For further information please contact your local veterinarian or Agriculture Victoria animal health or extension staff.

NFF underwhelmed by intergovernmental biosecurity review

THE National Farmers' Federation (NFF) is disappointed in the recent release of the 2024 Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) Review Report and the accompanying joint government response, describing the outcome as underwhelming and a missed opportunity to secure Australia's biosecurity future.

The IGAB defines the roles and responsibilities of governments and sets priority areas for collaboration to minimise the impact of pests and diseases on Australia's economy, environment and communities.

It remains a vital framework for ensuring cooperative effort across jurisdictions to protect our national biosecurity system.

NFF President David Jochinke said the report and response had fallen short of expectations.

"The scope of this review was substantially narrower than previous IGAB reviews, and that's reflected in the recommendations. At a time when biosecurity risks are increasing, farmers were looking for ambitious reform and certainty, instead, we've been left with a missed opportunity," Mr Jochinke said.

The review found serious challenges in Australia's biosecurity arrangements, including: A lack of transparency and public reporting from the National Biosecurity Committee; unlike the Commonwealth, no state or territory jurisdiction has long-term, predictable funding for all biosecurity functions; an acknowledgement that the IGAB cannot be effective without consistent implementation across governments.

"While we note governments' agreement to the majority of recommendations, there is already a mounting pile of biosecurity reviews and reports gathering dust from past IGAB reviews to findings of the Inspector-General of Biosecurity," Mr Jochinke said.

"What farmers need now is for governments and industry to work together and get on with the job, starting with urgent action to address outstanding biosecurity review recommendations, and expedited implementation of the National Biosecurity Strategy.

"The cost of failure to safeguard our biosecurity system is simply too high."

The NFF and its members remain ready to work with the Commonwealth, states and

territories to ensure Australia's biosecurity system is transparent, sustainably funded, and implemented consistently across jurisdictions.

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

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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.

PUZZLES

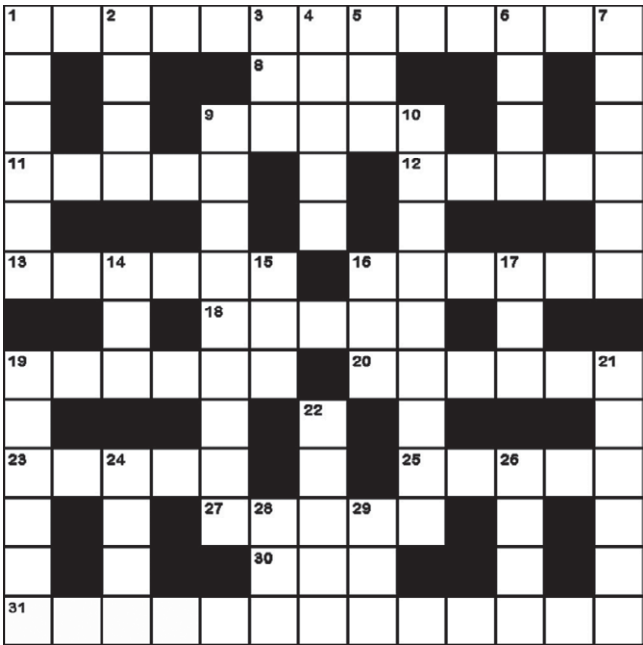
SOLUTIONS
Page 11

KID'S PUZZLES

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1. Established as the genuine article.
- 8. Make a mistake.
- 9. Neither salty, sour or bitter.
- 11. The fur of a rabbit.
- 12. Black hornless beef cattle.
- 13. Devastate and destroy.
- 16. Tiny reptile with two pair of legs.
- 18. Looked at steadily and intently.
- 19. Vehicle equipped for camping.
- 20. A great shortage.
- 23. Long barrelled firearm.
- 25. Garden tool for cutting grass.
- 27. Lace placed under a dish or bowl.
- 30. Unidentified Flying Object.
- 31. Crumbled into tiny fragments.



DOWN

- 1. A fisherman who uses a hook and line.
- 2. A device for capturing.
- 3. Never been used.
- 4. Hikes through mountainous areas.
- 5. Strong angry feelings.
- 6. A small thin branch.
- 7. Wet thoroughly.
- 9. Laughed quietly and secretly.
- 10. The art of stuffing and mounting animals.
- 14. Exuberant vigour and energy.
- 15. The organ of hearing.
- 16. Guided the way.
- 17. A distinctive quality.
- 19. Cured in brine.
- 21. A person who announces important news.
- 22. A cutting blade.
- 24. A petty quarrel.
- 26. Where the sun sets.
- 28. Not at home.
- 29. A written record of events.

Colouring Page



Word Search

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

Snack foods

- APPLES
- BANANA
- CARROTS
- CHEESE
- CHIPS
- COOKIES
- CRACKERS
- DOUGHNUT
- ICECREAM
- ORANGES
- PRINGLES
- YOGHURT

Math Square

	x		+	1	64
+		+		x	
	+	5	x		34
+		-		÷	
	-		÷		-1
16		4		3	

Fill in the missing numbers.

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

Cryptogram

Snack foods

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
				15				

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
					16			

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	21						

O E O
16 25 4 15 1 16 2

 O , O
13 16 13 1 16 2

 , T T O
4 26 25 21 19 21 16 13

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Hard

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

Word Search

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

Words starting with "S"

- SALAD
- STOCKING
- SCHOOL
- SUBJECT
- SISTER
- SUMMER
- SLEEPY
- SUZANNE
- SNOWWHITE
- SOLUTION
- SWIMMING

Math Square

	+	5	-		9
+		-		-	
1	+		-		-4
+		-		+	
	+		+		18
15		-6		0	

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: What do lions like to eat?
A: Roarr meat

Knock knock
Who's there?
Lettuce
Lettuce who?
Lettuce in, it's cold out here

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Inspiring a lifetime of learning for young readers

THE Victorian Government is supporting children and young people to become active and voracious readers through the *Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund* which supports our public libraries to purchase books for kids to read and enjoy.

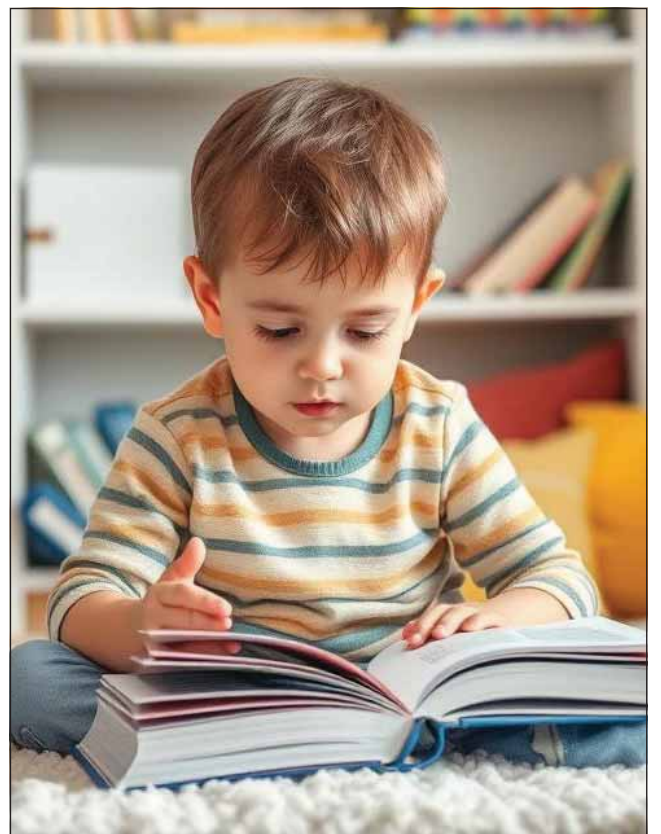
Minister for Local Government Nick Staikos and Member for Footscray Katie Hall recently visited West Footscray Library to announce \$1.1 million will be invested to help libraries purchase books, as 80th Children's Book Week celebrations took place across the state.

"Reading not only supports a lifelong love of learning, but helps kids build important literacy skills that will remain with them for life," Mr Staikos said.

"Every year, the Premiers' Reading Challenge publishes a book list of recommended titles. This crucial funding allows Victorian libraries to meet the demand for these books among young readers."

The annual Premiers' Reading Challenge encourages children and young people to read a set number of books and record their efforts online. Since the challenge began in 2005, more than 4.75 million children and young people have turned the pages of more than 65 million books.

Each year, a book list is published as part of the challenge, containing a range of books suited to different reading levels and the fund



enables Victoria's public libraries to purchase many of these books, which are in significant demand.

The fund also leaves a longer-term legacy of replenishing the stock of books in public libraries for children and young people on an annual basis.

Funding will be provided to councils, regional library corporations, Connected Libraries Ltd, Myli My Community Library Ltd, Your Library Ltd, and Vision Australia to buy books and

materials to support the challenge.

More information about the Premiers' Reading Challenge is available from Department of Education at: vic.gov.au/premiers-reading-challenge

Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll said, "The Premier's Reading Challenge has been building Victorian children's love of reading for 20 years now, helping students from toddlers to teenagers build essential literacy skills through a diverse range of books."

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

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

MATH SQUARES

9	x	7	+	1	64
+		+		x	
4	+	5	x	6	34
+		-		÷	
3	-	8	÷	2	-1
16		4		3	

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
26 18 4 5 15 17 14 11 6 3 22 10 9 25 16 13 24 20 19 21 2 23 7 8 1 12

ONCE YOU POP, YOU CAN'T STOP

SUDOKU

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

KIDS - MATH SQUARES

8	+	5	-	4	9
+		-		-	
1	+	2	-	7	-4
+		-		+	
6	+	9	+	3	18
15		-6		0	

Cyber series: Cyberbullying

by Melinda Pullen

EARLIER in the year the eSafety commissioner reported that cyber bullying reports to their organisation have surged more than 450 per cent in the past five years.

The report stated, "In 2024, eSafety received 2978 valid cyberbullying complaints, a 25 per cent increase compared to the previous year. Of those reports, 1385 (46 per cent) were in relation to children 13 years-old and younger. Children aged 12 and 13 accounted for 35 per cent of reports in 2024.

"Valid cyberbullying reports to eSafety increased from 536 in 2019 to 2978 in 2024, a 455 per cent increase over the five-year period."

These shocking statistics clearly asks the question what more can we do? The use of electronic devices is starting as young as two and education on being respectful online needs to begin from the beginning.

What is cyber bullying?

CYBERBULLYING is defined as when someone is mean to a child or young person under the age of 18 years old resulting of the feeling bad and upset.

It can happen on many online platforms including social media, applications, games, and many other online or electronic service or platform. A child may experience cyberbullying in the following ways: Receiving hurtful and threatening messages; someone sharing embarrassing photos and videos of them including sexual content which may also be generated using artificial intelligence; videos shared of them including abuse, harassment and violence; hurtful and nasty gossip getting spread about to them to message groups and other platforms; leaving them out in group chats and interactive gaming; creating fake accounts in their name; and tricking them to thinking you are someone else and getting the child to say something that will cause repercussions.

Cyberbullying can be very harmful to one's wellbeing which may bring on emotions such as fear, anxiety, depression, despair and anger. Cyberbullying can also lead to dangerous situations such as criminal activity, violence and stalking.

What parents and caregivers need to watch out for

CHILDREN may not be so forth coming when it comes to letting their parents and care givers know they are experiencing cyberbullying as a fear maybe their parents and caregivers may approach the bullies and make it worse, or even a fear of having their devices and internet access taken away from them. Taking devices away may make the parents and caregivers feel better that their child is safer without them but doing this may make isolation even worse for the child.

Signs to watch out for that may mean your child is experiencing cyberbullying

A CHANGE in mood after using their devices; becoming withdrawn, anxious, depressed, and distressed; a noticeable change in friendship groups and your child hasn't spoken to you about the reasons; school results declining, avoiding school or out of school activities that they would normally be happy to participate in; a change in sleep habits; decline in their health; and not being open with their online activities and seeming suddenly secretive.

Steps to take if you find out cyberbullying is taking place

IF you find out your child is experience cyberbullying, first and foremost you need to determine if they are in immediate danger as in being threatened or indicating a wish to harm themselves. If so, don't delay and get help straight away by going to the police. Counselling and support services such as the kid's helpline is available by calling 1800 551 800. This service is for people up to 25 years of age. To contact Lifeline call 131 114.

Depending on the platform that your child experiences the bullying, you can check their guidelines and report the issue to them. If it goes against their guidelines, they will remove the post and possibly ban the offender from using the platform.

Once your child opens up to you about cyberbullying stay calm and open, don't show your child that you're panicking. The eSafety commission advises parents and caregivers to listen, think and pause; try and understand the problem, don't rush to a solution, consider the type of support needed, and collect evidence of the cyberbullying that's taken place so far.

Collecting evidence by taking screenshots, taking note of dates and times, and details of the account used while the cyberbullying took place.

One important thing to remember when collecting evidence is don't incriminate yourself during the process. Don't save nudes or sexual images of anyone under 18, a better way to capture the evidence is record the urls and profile names as evidence instead.

Prevent your child to have any further contact with the cyber bully, this means online and in person. Empower your child to take a stance by teaching them how to use in app functions to ignore, mute and block the cyberbullies. Once its all out in the open keep a close

eye on your child and check in with them to see how they are tracking emotionally.

Empowering our children to make a stance

Setting good habits early with children as young as under five years old is a great starting point to learn respectful behaviour online in an age-appropriate manner. Teaching the lesson of respectful communication online is just as important than offline.

Educating children on cyberbullying before it happens and provide some strategies if it occurs is a great protective measure.

Some educational programs can be provided by external organisations or teaching staff may be trained in delivering programs. There are some great online resources available for parents and carers surrounding online safety and cyberbullying. These can include alannahandmadeline.org.au and esafety.gov.au

A program linked to the Australian Curriculum led by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) called ThinkUKnow is an evidence-based education program incorporating up-to-date research, real case studies and examples from reports made to the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Topics include online grooming, self-generated child abuse material, sexual extortion and importantly, where to seek help and support.

The ThinkUKnow program includes presentations, teacher resources, family resources, guides and advice for parents and carers.

At the start of May Alexandra Primary School Students were fortunate enough to have Leading Senior Constable Chris Di Ciero and Leading Senior Constable Lisa Atkinson present to the students the ThinUKnow program to grade three to six students. It also coincided on Do it for Dolly Day so it was a great opportunity for students to focus on kindness in person and online. A session was also held at Alexandra Primary School earlier in the year to inform and support parents of the issue of online safety.

Yea Primary School have just recently held the ThinUKnow program at their school in July for parents, carers and teachers to learn more about young people and the online environment and how to be safe online.

Sacred Heart Primary in Yea will be engaging with Digii Social and their Digii@School evidence based program. Linked to the Victorian Curriculum, children learn the skills that empower them to be safe online, strategies to use in the digital world, including what to do if they experience bullying online.

St Mary's Primary School in Alexandra have also been busy covering topics with their Inform and Empower Cyber Safety incursions in term one and term two. The online incursion sessions give the students skills to tackle Cyber Bullying when it happens in an age appropriate way. For example, the Year 1/2s looked at recognising when we feel unsafe or uncomfortable online and speaking with Trusted Adults to get help, the Year 3/4s explored the rights and responsibilities of Digital Citizens (such as everyone having the right to feel safe online), and the Years 5/6s have also explored the rights and responsibilities of Digital Citizens and looked at how online laws are there to protect us and keep us safe. They also looked at what their responsibilities are to ensure others rights are upheld.



Power saving bonus for those in need

THE Victorian Government is helping Victorians cut the cost of living by providing real energy bill relief to Victorians in need, with another Power Saving Bonus available from last Monday.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio opened applications for \$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible concession card households, providing real and immediate help for vulnerable families.

The new \$100 Power Saving Bonus will ease cost-of-living pressures, make everyday expenses more manageable and support financial security for families and individuals across the state.

Eligible Victorian households can apply for the Power Saving Bonus through the Victorian Energy Compare (VEC) website.

When applying, eligible households need a recent residential electricity bill and must hold a health care, pensioner concession, veterans' affairs pensioner concession or veterans' affairs gold card.

The \$100 Power Saving Bonus is in addition to the \$150 Energy Bill Relief Fund all households will automatically receive from the Commonwealth Government.

Any Victorian who is struggling with their energy bills can also access the Energy Assistance Program, a free over-the-phone or in-person support service delivered in partnership with Anglicare Victoria and cohealth for Victorians who are having trouble paying their energy bills.

All Victorians are encouraged to check they're on the best deal possible by using the free and independent Energy Compare website to shop around for a lower price. Last year, users typically saved \$240 per year on their energy bills by switching providers.

Since the first round of the Power Saving Bonus was launched in 2018, more than 4.5 million applications have been paid across four rounds of the program, totalling over \$1 billion in energy bill relief to Victorian households.

For more information or to apply for the Power Saving bonus, visit compare.energy.vic.gov.au or call 1800 000 832. The Energy Assistance Program is available on 1800 161 215.

Nominations open for First Nations Honour Roll

THE state government is celebrating First Nations people whose leadership and achievements have made a lasting contribution to Victoria with the opening of nominations for the 2025 *Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll*.

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins opened nominations last week, calling for nominations from people whose advocacy, determination and work have shaped a better and fairer Victoria.

Since it was established in 2011, the *Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll* has recognised 158 First Nations people for their work across education, health, justice, sports, the arts and community advocacy.

The Honour Roll is on display in the Victorian Parliament, telling the stories of these remarkable individuals from every corner of Victoria, from early champions like Australia's first Aboriginal international cricket stars to today's trailblazers walking the path to Truth and Treaty.

Nominations close on Thursday, October 3 and more information is available at firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/VAHR

Always fence your pool and spa

SAFETY always comes first if you're a pool or spa owner. Even though summer is now over, your pool needs to follow barrier requirements to prevent any accidents from occurring with you or your loved ones throughout the year.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) states all swimming pools and spas capable of containing water to a depth greater than 30 centimetres must have a compliant safety barrier to restrict access by young children under the age of five. These rules apply regardless of whether young children live at the property or visit the property.

Barriers are used for in ground pools and spas, above ground pools and spas, these even include any pools that require assembly and inflatable pools that can hold over 30 centimetres of water.

Even indoor pools and spas need a barrier and any bathing or wading pools that can hold more than 30 centimetres of water.

Different standards apply for your pool or spa depending on how old they are. You can see the checklist requirements for these on the VBA website.

If you have a pool or spa they must be registered with the local council. This came into effect in Victoria in 2019 when new laws to improve pool and spa safety were introduced. This includes new registration, inspections and certification requirements for property owners.

You can register your pool or spa on Murrindindi Shire's websites' new online building portal. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au

A day on the train for the fur babies

ON Saturday, August 23 Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum held a event for dogs and their owners to explore the tramway museum and have a ride or two on a heritage train.

There were market stalls and a variety of food available. The museum rooms were open and the heritage machinery were also on display for people to explore.

The pups (and their owners) all had a great time exploring and meeting friends, new and old.



There was an array of market stalls for everything your dog needs and wants. -MP



The event was well attended with families, dogs and their owners. -MP



Ron and Ann with their dogs Modra and Maggie. -MP



Mirjana and her dog Mimi at the markets stalls. -MP



Maria and Malcom Price selling their dog treats at the event. -MP



The dogs got to take in the scenery on their train rides. -MP



Some dogs had to wait their turn for a great train ride. -MP



The train rides were very popular. -MP



Time to hop off the train for this furry friend. -MP



Issy with her owner ready for a train ride. -MP



No dog was too big to participate in the train ride as Cricket the Great Dane travelled with owner Janine. -MP



Tramway committee members Peter and Paula cooking on the barbecue. -MP

Victorians buckle up and ditch devices behind the wheel

MORE Victorians are keeping their eyes on the road, with a drop in the number of people caught by distracted driver and seatbelt cameras rolled out by the Victorian Government.

The latest road safety camera statistics show that more Victorians are getting the message to stay focused on driving, with a 36 per cent decrease in the number of infringements issued by the cameras from January to March this year compared to the same period last year.

In quarter three 2024-25 there were 19,063 infringements issued for not wearing a seatbelt properly or for using a device while driving, while during the same time last year there were 29,832 infringements issued.

This reduction is even more impressive given that in this period, distracted driver and seatbelt cameras were deployed for more hours and assessed more cars than ever before.

Distracted driver and seatbelt cameras are deployed across the state to catch those posing a risk to themselves and others by engaging in dangerous driving habits, such as using a mobile phone while driving, or when the driver or front seat passenger of a car is not wearing a seatbelt.

The penalty for using a mobile phone while driving is \$611 and four demerit points and the penalty for driving without a seatbelt is \$407 and three demerit points.

There are currently nine distracted driver and seatbelt camera trailers operating in Victoria that can be deployed anywhere at any time, including in regional areas.

Every dollar received from road safety cameras goes to the Better Roads Victoria Trust where it is spent on road projects such as roads restoration, road surface replacement, bridge strengthening and other road safety improvements.

Minster for Police Anthony Carbines warned people that the cameras are watching.

"I'm glad more Victorians are getting the message on road safety and doing the right thing, keeping themselves and others safer on the road," Mr Carbines said.

"We can't count this as job done, however. To those who are doing the wrong thing, these cameras are still watching and will catch you."

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne said, "We all have a role to play to make sure everyone gets home safely, so plan ahead, drive to the conditions, take regular breaks and follow the road rules so that everyone gets home safely to their loved ones."

The latest Road Safety Camera Statistics are available at vic.gov.au/cameras-save-lives

Faster internet for regional Victoria

THE Victorian Government's Connecting Victoria program is helping regional Victorians across the state benefit from improved broadband coverage delivered through the construction of new nbn towers.

Minister for Government Services Natalie Hutchins said the latest upgrades ensured that Victorians could continue accessing faster broadband coverage when they need it, offering residents and businesses access to download speeds of up to 100 Megabits per second through their chosen internet provider.

"Connecting Victoria will benefit over 1.8 million homes and businesses across the state, keeping Victoria the best-connected state in the country and helping communities thrive through stronger digital access," Ms Hutchins said.

The broadband towers are the first to be completed as part of Connecting Victoria's Satellite to Fixed Wireless upgrades and provide the nbn Fixed Wireless service to more than 1700 premises. The new towers are also designed to allow for faster download speeds in future.

The towers have been delivered in partnership with NBN Co and are located in Merino, Casterton, Maryborough East and West, Skipton and Lexton. The Connecting Victoria program aims

to deliver more than 1300 mobile and broadband projects across the state, with over 900 of these in regional areas.

More than 130 high-speed broadband projects have been completed so far, with further Fixed Wireless projects expected to be completed this year in further areas, including Clunes, Castella, Warne, Cann River and Bright. Tower works are also underway at Daisy Hill, Talbot and Waterloo, with completion expected in 2026.

Connecting Victoria is the single largest investment in mobile and broadband infrastructure made by any state.

The state government is fast-tracking telecommunications infrastructure and working with the Commonwealth to address connectivity issues across the state. Improved mobile and nbn internet connectivity has an important role to play in helping to keep people, businesses and communities connected during emergencies.

Victorians can check if they're eligible for a Fixed Wireless service via the 'check your address' function at the nbn website. Find out more about the Connecting Victoria program at vic.gov.au/connecting-victoria

SPORT

Dominant matches for Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition Australorps versus Isa browns

JORDAN versus Tyler: Both players continue to improve. Jordan's serve and power were the difference. 76 to 57.

Laura versus Randy (fill in): It was an interesting match with the first game a draw. Randy dominated the second game to lead by 14 points going into game three. Making back some ground Laura fought hard but couldn't quite steal the win. 64 to 61.

Chris versus Travis (fill in): Chris showed his skills keeping a consistent lead throughout the match. Travis vied for the win but couldn't pull it off. 72 to 52.

John versus Andrew: It started with a close game that John took by two points. Andrew claimed the second match before John turned the tables to win the final two games and the match. 62 to 54.

Leghorns versus Silkies

ERIC D versus Jordan (fill in): Great improvement by Eric, but Jordan had the powerful shots to beat Eric in the end. 99 to 55.

Sally versus Kristelle (fill in): A closer match than the score suggests. Kristelle won a lot of points with strong serving. Sally won many with drop shots. In the end Kristelle took home a solid win. 71 to 56.

Ben versus Justin: It was a fast-paced, big hitting game. It was close all the way through with Ben pulling away at the end to claim the victory. 68 to 64.

Derrick versus Michael H: Derrick played hard but Michael played calm and collected to hold out for the win. 56 to 50.

Thursday competition Whippets versus Labradors

BEN H versus Eric F: An even competition created a close game. Eric pipped it, but only just taking three games and the match. 61 to 57.

Beth versus Sally (fill in): A great game play by both opponents. Sally was too strong and unpredictable for Beth, taking all four games with ease. Sally was crowned victorious. 74 to 43



Sally powers through returning Beth's shot with her double-handed back-hand. -S

Travis versus Sam: Travis started strong by claiming the first game. Sam used game one as a warm up, lifting his skills in game two and keeping a consistent play through to the end of three, winning his match.

Phil versus Michael M: After a close start Phil took control and kept Michael running, tired and cussing. Phil had all the shots tonight, rising up to triumph. 60 to 49.

Golden Retrievers versus Dachshunds

MATTHEW versus Randy: A great match. Matthew was fuelled with sugar and put up

a fight against Randy. With more experience and adaptability Randy had the match fixed, claiming the win. 76 to 50.

Kristelle versus Blake: Both players were delightfully hectic in character making for an entertaining and joyful match. Blake floundered trying to return Kristelle's precise serves. He pulled out some great shots, but Kristelle nabbed each game and the match. 86 to 51.

Mick versus Lucas: Each player tried for finesse and placement in the first part of the match. Neither could claim ascendancy until

Lucas pinpointed the back corners taking an eight-point lead at half-time. Mick's change to a power hitting game helped a little. However, Lucas ran away with the match off the back of tight serving. 64 to 48.

Daniel K versus Daniel W: With a fire in his eyes Daniel W was on a mission. Fire is useful but it was greatly outweighed by Daniel K's skills and experience. Daniel K claimed the victory. 65 to 33

The Chronicle Sport

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Tight tennis at the pointy end

by Rhonda Carpenter

DELATITE and Wappan set off for their matches in Euroa in thick fog and bitter cold. Mansfield welcomed Creighton's Creek and by the time everyone was on court the sun had burst through.

Moglonemby versus Wappan

Moglonemby's Judy Sands, Marlene Hanrahan, Danielle Scottis, and Robyn Johnson put on a masterclass against Wappan with strategic hitting as both teams vied for a top four finish.

Wappan's Liza Karras, Rhonda Carpenter, Carol Watts and Agnes Kay fought hard in the icy chill, celebrating games and sometimes points in the tough contest.

Judy's power serving and audacious chase down skills, complemented Marlene's precision placement to outmanoeuvre opponents, while Danielle and Robyn both found form during the match on their welcome return to the team.

At one to five down Liza and Carol mounted a comeback, determination palpable from both sides of the net, but Wappan won the tiebreak set seven to three. It would be their only set for the day. Moglonemby won 5/47 to 1/25 to leapfrog Wappan into second spot on the ladder, pushing them to fourth.

Delatite versus Seven Creeks

Delatite's Karyn Fraser, Carolyn Murray, Jo O'Brien, Deb Mims and Loretta Armitage put

in a strong performance against Seven Creeks, winning two sets eight to six, and eight to two.

Seven Creeks Ro Ellis, Nicola Enright, Carmel Linehan and Mary Kelly took the others to win 4/40 to 2/30.

Mansfield versus Creighton's Creek

Mansfield's Michelle Pigdon, Sophie Yencken, Clare Beecham and Kass Thomas enjoyed a tough match against Creighton's Creek sharing the sets three all.

Chris Ellis, Ros Doxey, Kerry Hewlett, and Lyn Johnston fell short by three games at the end of the long day.

Mansfield won 3/42 to 3/39.

Euroa versus Benalla

The closest contest of the day was the battle between Euroa and Benalla. Euroa's Lyndall Bigland, Ruth Nolan, Julie Harrington and Mary Dewis combined superbly with both teams displaying excellent ball striking and cunning court craft.

Benalla's Kate Campbell, Claire Sharp, Maureen Jewell and Deb Siggers took it right up to the ladder leaders, ultimately unlucky to lose a tiebreaker and the match by one game.

Euroa won 4/36 to 2/35.

Terip had the bye.

Ladder: Euroa 101.5, Moglonemby 85.5, Terip 84, Wappan 78, Benalla 63.5, Mansfield 62, Creighton's Creek 46.5, Seven Creeks 35, Delatite 29.



Deb and Rowena in Euroa. -S



Danielle and Carol play in sunshine. -S



Mog, Marlene, Danielle and Judy. -S



Competitors share a moment on the court. -S