

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE

Standard

INCORPORATING THE ALEXANDRA TIMES - THE YARCK, GOBUR, TAGGERTY, THORNTON, AND ACHERON EXPRESS

P.O Box 5, Alexandra, 3714. Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Fax: (03) 5772 1603; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Wednesday, December 18, 2024 \$2.00 inc. GST

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Public Holidays 2025

New Year's Day
Australia Day
Labour Day
Good Friday
Easter Sunday
Easter Monday

Monday, 1 January
Friday, 27 January
Monday, 10 March
Friday, 18 April
Sunday, 20 April
Monday, 21 April

ANZAC Day
King's Birthday
AFL Grand Final

Melbourne Cup
Christmas Day
Boxing Day

Thursday, 25 April
Monday, 9 June
Friday, 26 September
(Subject to AFL schedule)
Tuesday, 4 November
Wednesday, 25 December
Thursday, 26 December

Victorian School Holidays 2025

Term 1
School Holidays
Term 2
School Holidays
Term 3
School Holidays
Term 4
School Holidays

January 28 - April 4
April 5 - April 21
April 22 - July 4
July 5 - July 20
July 21 - September 19
September 20 - October 5
October 6 - December 19
December 20 - January 26, 2026

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INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Alpine Resorts leasing policy



Page 5

Local dancers perform



Page 7

Alexandra Secondary high achievers

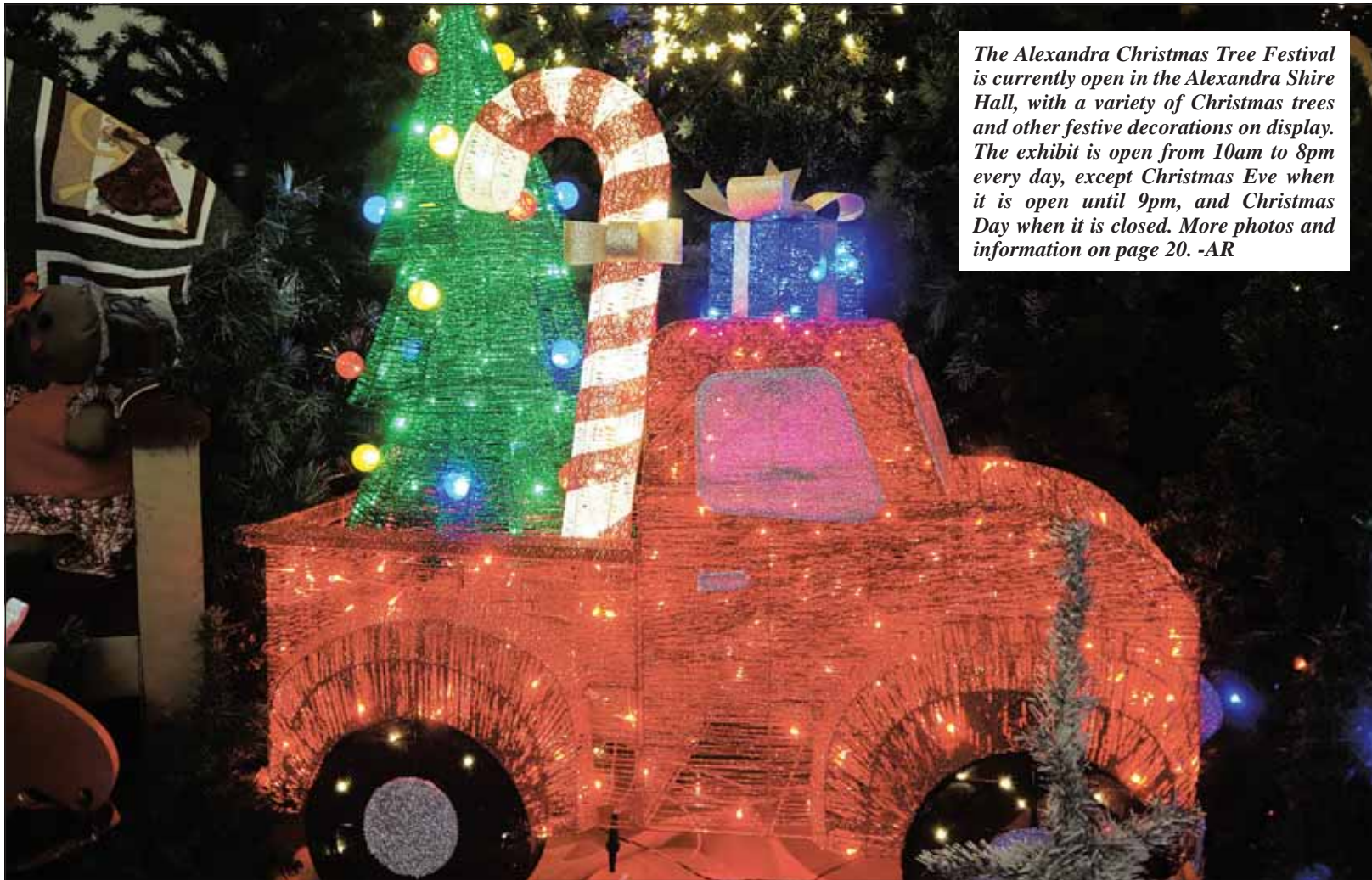


Page 10

Christmas lunch for carer's group



Page 23



The Alexandra Christmas Tree Festival is currently open in the Alexandra Shire Hall, with a variety of Christmas trees and other festive decorations on display. The exhibit is open from 10am to 8pm every day, except Christmas Eve when it is open until 9pm, and Christmas Day when it is closed. More photos and information on page 20. -AR

Red Cross vehicle to be removed from Alexandra

THE Australian Red Cross' Alexandra based patient transport fleet car was removed on December 13.

The Alexandra community will continue to have access to Australian Red Cross Patient Transport services through the volunteers and fleet based in Mansfield. The Red Cross said that there will be no patient impacts from this change.

They said that the decision to remove the vehicle was based on increasing operating costs and an analysis of the demand for transport services.

They added that their goal is to maintain the service across as many regions as possible to continue supporting people who rely on this service.

They said that they understand the importance of timely access to medical treatments, and their commitment to providing transport for non-emergency medical appointments remains unwavering.

They have reached out to the referring agencies, volunteers and the Victorian Department of Health to confirm that our service will continue in the area, and have opened a dedicated phone line for referring agencies to streamline the referral process. The number is 8327 7868.

Road maintenance FOI: Missing in inaction

ON August 15, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request was submitted to the Department of Transport by this newspaper, seeking to find out "The total annual spend on road repairs and maintenance in Murrindindi Shire across each of the past 10 financial (or calendar) years."

A response was due to be received by October 14, however an extension was requested on the due date as

"further time is required for the Executive Briefing and Ministerial Noting process."

We enquired again about the progress of the FOI on November 13, and were advised, "We are currently in the process of briefing the decision for Executive and Ministerial Noting. Once the above is completed, the decision will be released to you." The Minister for

Transport and Infrastructure is Danny Pearson.

A timeline was sought on the same day, and we were advised that they were hoping to make the information available in the next few weeks.

A phone call was made to the Department of Transport's FOI contact on Thursday, December 12 and they were going to look into it.

The response to the FOI was still not received by the time this newspaper went to print.

So far, it's been 125 days (17 weeks and six days).

FOI's are meant to be granted within two months.

We're curious to find out what the data may reveal, and we suspect you may be too.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
Thank you for your continued support

**Our office will be closed from 1pm, December 18
until 9am Wednesday, January 8, 2025.**

**Our first edition for 2025 will be available on
Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

Blue-green algae warning for Lake Eildon

GOULBURN-Murray Water (GMW) is warning people to avoid direct contact with water in Lake Eildon after monitoring detected high levels of blue-green algae.

Warning signs will be positioned at formal recreational areas around the lake and will remain in place while high levels of blue-green algae are present.

Lake Eildon will remain open to the public for any activities that do not involve direct contact with the water while the warning is in place.

GMW Water Quality coordinator Bianca Atley asked people to take care around the water.



Lake Eildon has a blue green algae warning in place. -S

“Blue-green algae occurs naturally in waterbodies but contain toxins harmful to humans and animals,” she said.

“Contact with it can cause rashes; sore eyes, ears, and nose; or if swallowed, nausea or vomiting. It is therefore important people

boating or enjoying activities near the water take extra precautions.”

GMW recommends that people and pets avoid contact with the water; those who come into contact with affected water should wash affected skin immediately in clean cold water; seeking an alternative water supply for stock and pets where possible; not using affected water for cooking, drinking, washing or showering. Boiling the affected water will not make it safe for these purposes.

It is not possible to predict how long the algae will remain at high levels. People can stay up-to-date with blue-green algae warnings by phoning 1800 013 357 and selecting the option for blue-green algae information, or by visiting the GMW website at g-mwater.com.au/news/bga

Water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated. Human consumption includes showering, bathing, washing, cooking, ice-making, and drinking.

For more information about blue-green algae and your health, phone Nurse On-Call on 1300 606 024 or visit the Department of Health’s website at health.vic.gov.au

Fire Services Property Levy to double and stretch

ON Friday, December 13, Treasurer Tim Pallas announced that the Fire Services Property Levy will be replaced by a new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) from July 1 next year.

Minister Jaclyn Symes said that the new levy would help to support more emergency services, including VICSES, Triple Zero Victoria, the State Control Centre, Emergency Management Victoria, Emergency Recovery Victoria and Forest Fire Management Victoria, as well as the CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria.

She said that there had been a 100 per cent increase in the natural disaster actions of the SES in just 12 months.

The press release said, “Every single dollar raised by this new fund will support our emergency and disaster recovery services, helping them to keep communities safe 365 days a year.

“Because our emergency services volunteers give our state so much, active CFA and VICSES volunteers and life members will be eligible for an exemption from paying the ESVF on their primary place of residence such as a house or farm, providing even more incentive for Victorians to consider volunteering in our emergency services.”

According to the Victorian budget, the new levy, which will still be included on rates notices, will result in \$6.27 billion over the next five years. The new levy will need parliamentary approval.

On the same day, a funding boost for new trucks, equipment and technology was announced for the state’s CFA and SES services.

\$250 million will support CFA and VICSES volunteers across the state.

\$70 million will establish a rolling fleet replacement program for VICSES and the CFA, “ensuring volunteers right across Victoria will get new and upgraded trucks, tankers and pumpers to keep doing what they do best.”

The Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) will be doubled, with more than \$62 million to ensure more volunteers have new or upgraded vehicles, equipment and better station facilities.

\$53 million will be invested in a modernised VicEmergency app and the central database for emergency services, EM-COP.

\$30 million to deliver training and support programs to the SES.

Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club report

*by honorary secretary
Mike Jennings*

LAST Friday, members enjoyed a tour of Koala Cherries at Yarck, and the club thanks John R for arranging it. This week members enjoyed their Christmas lunch at the Rubicon Hotel at Thornton where the staff looked after them very well.

This Friday will be the final meeting for the year

so bring your singing voices and sing some carols. The year has passed quickly again as it does when you are having fun, enjoying the friendship of the fellow members.

The bridge players plan to get back in action from Monday, January 13, with learners on Mondays under the watchfully eye of Margo and coordinated with U3A by Dennis. The

serious players play on Wednesday afternoons.

The committee meet up on Friday, February 7 at 10.30am and the first business meeting will follow at 1.30pm that day.

As always, the club welcomes new members, fresh ideas and the return of the smiling faces from last year. Have a wonderful Christmas and see you in 2025. Meanwhile stay safe and keep smiling.



Alexandra Secondary College Principal Nigel Lyttle with the 2024 dux, James Gilmore, who achieved an ATAR of 88.8. More of the Alexandra Secondary College high achievers can be found on page 10. -BD



Volunteers from the Alexandra Visitor Information Centre hosted volunteers from other information centres in the area at a morning tea on Friday, December 13, followed by a visit to the Alexandra Christmas Tree Festival. -AR

Market @ Yarck
including CWA Christmas cakes and puddings.
Saturday, December 21 from 9am
Plants, soap, preserves and jams, knitwear, jewellery and much more
Sharon Fox 0407 879 612

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Over 25 years of clinical experience.
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EMBASSY OF IDEAS
COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DAY GATHERING
25 DECEMBER | 11am - 2pm
Lunch served at 12pm
ST JOHNS HALL - 39 DOWNEY ST, ALEXANDRA
FREE Community Christmas Lunch. All food provided
Everyone is welcome - singles, couples & families
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
Booking require by 20th DEC for catering purposes
Call or Text Sasha 0422 225 801 or email embassyofideas@gmail.com

Church Services

ANGLICAN

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

CATHOLIC

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

UNITING CHURCH In Australia

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

OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Loving God, Loving People,
Loving Life
118 Grant Street, Alexandra
Contact: Ps Steven Turner
Ph: 0413 127 283
Meeting every Sunday @ 10am

MOUNT CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY

BAPTIST CHURCH

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

THE VINE

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

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*.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

Alexandra Christmas Carnival and Carols will be at Rotary Park. Carnival 5pm, carols start 7.30pm. Santa arrives 7pm. There will be coffee, ice cream and a barbecue. BYO chairs, rug and picnic.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

Santa is dropping into Alexandra from approximately 9.15am with the Alexandra Fire Brigade. Listen for the siren and make sure you go out and say hi to santa and get a bag of lollies. (This event may be cancelled if there is an emergency requiring CFA attendance.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

Embassy of Ideas Community Christmas Day gathering. St Johns Hall, 39 Downey Street, Alexandra. Free community Christmas lunch, all food provided, everyone is welcome. Bookings essential by December 20. Call or text Sasha 0422 225 801 or email embassyofideas@gmail.com

Tree clearing in wire rope barriers

MEMBER for Eildon, Cindy McLeish, said she has secured the clearing of hazardous trees and overgrown vegetation sprouting amongst wire rope barriers in the middle of the Goulburn Valley Highway.

In November, Ms McLeish called on the Victorian Government to arrange for the urgent removal of the trees and shrubs taken root among the 10 kilometre stretch of barriers between Yea and Molesworth.

Speaking in Parliament, Ms McLeish said, "There are too many trees and bushes to count, including gum trees. Many are a metre high and almost as wide. It has become a hazard impacting driver's view."

The Minister has since confirmed that, "In December, Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) will target the repair of safety barriers and

vegetation clearing in sections with edge-line and centre-line barriers on the Goulburn Valley Highway, including the section between Yea and Molesworth."

Ms McLeish said, "We know that roads across the electorate are in a dire state, overrun with potholes, crumbling surfaces and unsealed shoulders.

"It is a danger for road users to contend with the thick shrubs, bushes and trees that block their vision and obscure the barriers.

"Roads users are rightly concerned that the vegetation's root system will undermine the road surface as it spreads out of control. People are also worried about the barriers as it allows water to seep under the road at anchored points."

While not holding her breath, Ms McLeish said, "The Allan Labor Government needs to step up and take action to better our roads for all drivers."

Eildon's beautiful Christmas tree



The annual Christmas tree has been installed in the grounds of the Eildon Primary School this year because of work being carried out at the splash park. The knitted and crocheted squares was prepared by women from the district during COVID-19. It has stood the test of time and weather, as has the steel and mesh structure supporting it, which was prepared by Bob Dare. All these were generously donated. Thank you to all involved. -S

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Seymour Newsagency
Simpsons Caltex
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Thornton Store
Thornton Shell
Yea FoodWorks
Yea Newsagency

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ANOTHER successful Holmesglen at Eildon stall was held on Tuesday, November 19. The students are studying retail and they successfully set up their stall in the Main Street of Alexandra, outside FoodWorks. -S

Aerial firefighting fleet ready to take to the skies

VICTORIA'S aerial firefighting fleet is ready to respond to what is forecast to be one of the most high-risk fire seasons in recent years for much of the state this summer.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes unveiled the fleet at Avalon Airport alongside Emergency Management Commissioner Rick Nugent and emergency services personnel.

This year's core fleet features 54 dedicated aircraft strategically positioned across the state to support firefighting efforts on the ground and gather crucial intelligence from the air to help faster tactical decision making.

Returning this year are two Large Air Tankers based at Avalon which can also be deployed from smaller regional airports, making them more agile to move around the state.

The fleet also includes a Black Hawk, other Type One helicopters, and a Super

Puma which has a capacity of 4000 litres. The Super Puma is supported by an Air Attack Supervision aircraft for detection and observation at night.

An important addition to the fleet this year is a Bell 214ST helicopter, which has the ability to pick up salt water, giving responders more options to help put fires out faster.

As occurred last year, two Aircrews will join the fleet after their service period ends in North America. Victoria will have three additional aircraft on short-term contracts until the Aircrews arrive, bringing the total contracted aircraft this summer to 57.

Victoria can also access a 'call when needed' fleet of more than 100 aircraft and can request extra aircraft from the national fleet.

The Australasian Fire And Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) summer outlook which was released last month made it clear that large parts of Victoria are facing

their highest fire risk since the summer of 2019/20.

It indicates most of western Victoria, as well as south-west Gippsland, Mornington Peninsula, greater Melbourne and north-east Victoria are at an increased risk of fire activity. The risk for the rest of the state is forecast to be normal for summer, which means fires are still possible and everyone must do their part to be prepared.

For more information on how to prepare for emergencies, download the VicEmergency app. People can also create a fire plan online customised to their needs and sharable with family and friends via fireplanner.vic.gov.au

Minister Symes said, "With hardworking crews on the ground and a strong aerial fleet, we are ready for the season. I'm excited to see the return of two Large Air Tankers to Victoria this year. From its base in Avalon it can reach Mildura in the north to Horsham in the west or Benambra in the north east."

Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy

THE Alpine Resorts Leasing Policy, written at times in Comic Sans font, states, “Crown land is public land and held in trust by government for public use, enjoyment and benefit. Because Crown land is a community asset, a range of factors applies to leasing on Crown land that does not apply to leasing in the private property market. Primary amongst these is that the lease proposals shall provide clear benefits to the community from a social and economic perspective while ensuring that the public land values are not diminished.

“The alpine bioregion exhibits a range of unique values in terms of biodiversity, water quality and dramatic aesthetic qualities. Consistent with state and federal government policies, the public benefit, economic and recreational benefits of the resorts need to be maintained and developed while protecting the sensitive alpine environments.”

Lake Mountain is located on Crown Land.

Furthermore, the same policy states, that prior to the granting of a lease, the public is to be given the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Details of the submissions and details of how the public interest has been addressed need to be provided to the minister prior to the granting of the lease.

The only way that a lease of over 51 years can be granted at an alpine resort is if the value of the current development on site plus capital outlay for refurbishment / redevelopment is in excess of \$8 million, development to an optimal level, detailed business case and financial evaluation required, exceptional circumstances must exist, public notification process, and the consideration of past performance of lessee / Standards of Occupancy.

Given that the lease is to be for 99 years, Environment Minister Steve Dimopolous’s media team were contacted with the following questions: What are the exceptional

circumstances? Is the capital outlay spread across both mountains, if there is a lease of the two mountains combined? Was there any commercial interest which led to the decision to put out the EOIs? How and when will/were community be consulted over the planned lease of the Crown land site? Are you able to outline the benefit to the local community? What will happen to the mountains if no leasee is found? What will happen to the funds raised from the sale of the lease?

A government spokesperson responded two weeks later, “Mt Baw Baw and Lake Mountain are not for sale, they will remain government owned. We want to make sure as many Victorians as possible can enjoy our great outdoors, and our natural assets are meeting the needs of Victorians and those who come from across the globe to visit them.”

They provided the following information as background: Alpine Resorts Victoria is undertaking an Expression of Interest for the long-term lease arrangement of operations, not the sale of either or both resorts. Victoria’s six alpine resorts collectively generate \$2.14 billion in economic output annually, with \$1.33 billion coming directly from visitor expenditure. They also contribute to the 12,130 full-time equivalent jobs in Victoria’s alpine sector, and over \$133 million in benefits to businesses and workers. Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw contribute a significant amount to these figures. Since assuming management of Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw two years ago, Alpine Resorts Victoria has made operational changes to enhance the profitability of the resorts and is now seeking commercial operators who want to further the tourism offerings of these destinations.

It was pointed out to the spokesperson on Wednesday, December 11 that the questions



Visitors at Lake Mountain in 2023. -S

hadn’t been answered. A response was received on Friday, December 13, providing more background information but no response to the questions.

The background stated, “Alpine Resorts Victoria has released an Expression of Interest inviting fresh ideas to help reimagine and revitalise the much-loved Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw resorts, ensuring they remain thriving and sustainable holiday destinations for years to come. ARV welcomes the vision of innovative and experienced commercial operators that can reimagine the resorts and position the Mt Baw Baw and Lake Mountain resorts for success into the future. Since assuming management of Lake Mountain and Mt Baw Baw two years ago, Alpine Resorts Victoria has made operational changes to enhance the profitability of the resorts and is now seeking a commercial operator that wants to further the tourism offerings of these destinations. The goal of this process

is to explore new ways to enhance the visitor experience and secure a strong future for the resorts. ARV recognises there are opportunities for others to bring fresh ideas to support year-round efficient operations and drive investment in the region. The EOI will be available on the Buying for Victoria in early December and until early February and is open to qualified entities to submit management proposals for one or both resorts in their entirety, including the operation of commercial and essential resort services. The tender is now live on *tenders.vic.gov.au*. The Allan Labor Government will retain ownership of the Mt Baw Baw and Lake Mountain resorts. This Expression of Interest opportunity is for the long-term lease arrangement of operations, not the sale of either or both resorts.”

There were no answers to the questions asked, and it doesn’t appear that any will be forthcoming.

Preparation today can save lives tomorrow

THE weather never takes a holiday. Will you have your plan ready in the event of a flood, fire or storm? The best way to protect yourself, your loved ones and your property is to have a plan in place.

Murrindindi Shire Council is encouraging all residents to be proactive in their emergency preparedness by developing a clear emergency plan, having a contact list and staying informed through reliable local channels.

Spending 10 minutes today to create a plan can help you act quickly and effectively during an emergency. Talk to the people in your household about potential emergency scenarios and outline clear instructions for everyone to follow.

Make sure to include where you will go, how you will contact each other, and essential items such as medications, important documents and an emergency kit.

In the event of an emergency, knowing the right authority to contact is crucial to accessing appropriate and timely help. Research your area and keep a list of agencies in an easy to access place. Some useful contacts include emergency services, such as Police, Fire and Ambulance on 000, State Emergency Service (SES) for floods, storms and earthquakes on 132 500, and VicEmergency Hotline for bushfire information on 1800 226 226.

Emergencies can happen at any time, and being prepared includes knowing where to go for accurate information. Local broadcasters play a key role in providing accurate and timely emergency advice and warnings. Make sure you have access to a battery or car powered radio to listen to UGFM and ABC Radio. You can follow both of these sources

on Facebook. Find a list of local emergency contacts and broadcasters at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/EmergencyContacts

You can download the VicEmergency app on your mobile or tablet device for updates on conditions in your area. For more information and how to download the app, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/prepareforfireseason

Council is also encouraging residents to stay connected with their local Emergency Service Agencies like SES and CFA, which offer support and information tailored to the specific needs of local communities. You can find state agency and local branch pages on most social media platforms. Find your local SES branch by visiting ses.vic.gov.au and your local CFA branch by visiting cfa.vic.gov.au

For more information about safety and emergencies visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/safetyandemergencies

Mayor Damien Gallagher said, “Emergencies can escalate quickly and having a plan is essential. Being prepared helps protect you, your loved ones, and your property while also easing the burden on emergency responders who are volunteers,

many of whom are our own neighbours and community members. Take the time to create a plan and discuss with your household how to access reliable alerts and information, and who to contact. Staying informed saves lives.”

UGFM President, Station Manager and Radio Host and Alexandra SES Unit Controller Peter Weeks commented, “Understanding how to plan and stay safe during emergencies benefits everyone, including emergency service responders. In an emergency, our services often face overwhelming demand, requiring us to prioritise while ensuring our own safety in challenging conditions. We urge everyone to have a plan to protect themselves and their loved ones, as there may be times when we are delayed depending on the number of jobs and their priorities. Time is your greatest asset.”

“To prepare, have an emergency kit that includes essentials like food, water, medications, and first aid supplies. Know where any items are that you might need to take if you need to leave quickly. Maintain a water supply to ensure you and your pets stay hydrated. If you have a backup generator,

store spare fuel in a safe location away from buildings and your house.

“Identifying your communication channels and knowing how to receive emergency warnings and monitor weather conditions is critical. In a life-threatening event, call 000. For flood or storm assistance, call SES at 132 500.

“Consider getting a battery-powered or solar-powered radio and test it every couple of months. If you prefer not to buy a radio, you can stream most radio stations from your phone if a connection is available, or preset one of your car’s radio stations to your local designated broadcaster, such as UGFM and ABC Radio. If possible, have a charged CB radio or satellite phone on hand, as it can be very useful if mobile communications are lost. For more information on emergency preparedness, assistance in creating a plan, and more, visit ses.vic.gov.au

“Check in with your neighbours and friends, share this information, and encourage them to do the same. Together, we can build safer communities.”



**ALEXANDRA FIRE BRIGADE
SANTA RUN**

Sunday December 22, 2024
from approximately 9.15am

**Father Christmas will be travelling
around Alexandra on a fire truck.**

Listen for the siren and come out to
say hello and get a bag of lollies.

(this event may be cancelled if there is an
emergency requiring CFA attendance)



**Darren
Gilbert**
open studio

An open art studio of organic metal sculptures
and pen & ink artworks of Australian animals.

Sat. 4 and Sun. 5 January
10.00am to 4.00pm each day
5 Giffard Street, Yea. VIC. 3717
or arrange another time 0421 378 451

Open the first weekend of every month.
Up to date Open Studio days & times on
www.monkeytaildesign.com



Rotary
Alexandra

**Rotary Club of Alexandra
Business Excellence
Award 2024**

**Nominations now open,
Promote a local business**

Nominations close January 31, 2025

Forms available at:

- Rotary Club of Alexandra
- rotaryalexandra.org.au
- the Alexandra Newsagency
- helengibb1953@gmail.com



**Marysville
Market**

Sunday, January 12 from 9am to 1pm

All your favourite stalls along
with home made cakes, local
honey, plants, jewellery and
handcrafts. Community sausage
sizzle.

Email marysvillemarketinc@gmail.com
to book a stall

Proposed Taungurung name for splash park

THE Eildon Reserves Redevelopment is nearing completion, with a grand opening planned for early 2025. A key highlight of this project is the proposal to name the new splash park and playground area Baanh ba Djila, which means ‘Water and Play’ in the Taungurung language.

The naming proposal is a meaningful step in acknowledging and celebrating the Taungurung people, the Traditional Owners of this land. By incorporating Taungurung language, the proposed name offers an opportunity to engage with the cultural heritage and stories of the Taungurung peoples.

Importantly, the existing names of the Walter Moore and Thomas Marr Reserves will remain unchanged. Baanh ba Djila will specifically refer to the splash park and playground asset within the redevelopment. These layers of meaning encourage reflection and connection with First Nations culture among residents and visitors.

The name Baanh ba Djila reflects the purpose and use of the splash park while connecting to the interpretive elements of the project, such as signage that highlights the cultural and environmental significance of water in Taungurung traditions.

The Eildon Reserves Redevelopment includes a range of upgrades to Walter Moore and Thomas Marr Reserves, featuring a brand-new splash park with various fun water activities, a new skate park, swings, a flying fox, new barbecue areas, and upgraded public toilet and change facilities, ensuring accessibility for all abilities.

Community input is an essential part of this process, and council encourages everyone to learn more about the Taungurung heritage and culture in Murrindindi Shire. Resources are available in our local libraries in Alexandra, Yea, and Kinglake, and you can also visit the Taungurung Land and Waters Council website at taungurung.com.au

For more information on how places are named in the shire, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/namingplaces

Community members can find out more about the proposed name and make a verbal or written submission by February 9, 2025, by emailing assets@murrindindi.vic.gov.au or calling council on 5772 0333.

The Eildon Reserves Redevelopment is made possible with \$6.1 million in funding from state and federal governments.

Murrindindi Shire Council’s Economic Development Portfolio Councillor Sandice McAulay said, “It’s wonderful to see Taungurung language being featured in the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment. The Taungurung people have a deep, ongoing connection to this land, spanning thousands of years. Through the use of their language and stories, we can help keep their rich history and culture of our First Nations alive.

“The Eildon Splash Park will be a great place for residents and visitors to cool off during the hot months. We can’t wait to celebrate this project with a grand opening event.”



By November, the bike racks were installed, along with the barbecue area. -S



The works being undertaken in September. -S



The Eildon Reserves Redevelopment in September. -S

Alexandra District Health 2024-2025 Christmas and New Year Services



**On behalf of the Board of Directors,
Executive and Staff of ADH we wish you a
Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2025**

**Below is the list of services which we will be providing between
Monday 23rd December 2024 and Friday 3rd January 2025**

The last theatre session for 2024 is Tuesday 17th December.

The contact number for the Health Service is
5772 0900, every day, 24 hours a day.

	URGENT CARE	ACUTE WARD	RECEPTION	PRIMARY HEALTH	DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES
Mon 23rd December	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Tue 24th December CHRISTMAS DAY	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Wed 25th December CHRISTMAS DAY	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Thu 26th December BOXING DAY	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Fri 27th December	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Sat 28th December	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Sun 29th December	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Mon 30th December	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Tue 31st December NEW YEARS EVE	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Wed 1st Jan 2025 NEW YEARS DAY	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Thu 2nd Jan 2025	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Fri 3rd Jan 2025	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗



The concrete steps, with workers in the distance. -S



Work on the redevelopment is progressing well. -S

Local dancers perform in Mulan

STUDENTS from LSSDance recently danced in a fantastic performance of *Mulan*, the story of a young Chinese girl who against all odds saves China from invasion from the evil Hun.

Alexandra students Amy Irving starred as Mulan, Paige Light as Mulan’s father and Larissa Patek as Mulan’s mother. It was an incredibly wet Saturday but many families from Alexandra made the trip to Mansfield to dance and to support all the dancers at the Mansfield Performing Arts Centre.

It has been described as the best performance the school has done in its 30 plus year history. Both the dancing and the acting were outstanding and all students are to be congratulated.

Lyn has held dance classes in Alexandra for over 24 years and in that time trained some amazing dancers. The classical side of the school is closing in Alexandra and students will now travel to Mansfield to continue their classical training.

LSSDance has decided to continue the very popular Dance Fusion classes in Alexandra giving children aged seven to 14 years the opportunity to be able to dance and be involved in next years production, *The Little Mermaid*.

Dance Fusion is based on a jazz ballet syllabus but incorporates different genres such as Cheerleading, Musical Theatre, Bollywood, Hip Hop, etcetera. All of the classes are taken by qualified, experienced teachers, making dance a fun and safe activity for children to participate in. There are also some fun holiday workshops coming up in January so keep watch for more information.

Brook and Lyn would like to thank the Alexandra community for their friendship and support over the last 24 years. It has been an absolute pleasure teaching such enthusiastic and lovely children.



Ashleigh Francis, Abi Caswell, Lillian Savage and Bella Lamaro. -S



Maggie Griffin (grandmother), Amy Irving (Mulan), Paige Light (father) and Larissa Patek (mother). -S



Amy Irving (Mulan), and army trainees at the front, Freya Irving, Lillian Savage, Bella Lamaro and Harriet Brady. -S

YOU CAN'T CONTROL FIRE. BUT YOU CAN CONTROL WHEN YOU LEAVE.

When the Fire Danger Rating is Extreme or Catastrophic, leaving early is your safest option. Download the Vic Emergency app or go to emergency.vic.gov.au

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FIRE?

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

Proudly supporting
Student of the week

Community Bank · Yea & District and Alexandra

Bendigo Bank

BUXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Nell has worked hard
in her own time to
learn her lines for
the school play and
performs confidently.
Congratulations Nell

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Presley is a wonderful role model and leader. Her academic and social achievements have been exceptional. Presley is a quiet achiever, an inquisitive and hard-working student, who strives to always do her best. She is committed to improving and readily takes on feedback for even better results. Presley will ask questions for clarification and about topics of interests. She respectfully participates and interacts with her classmates. Her sensitivity is reflected in the positive manner she supports and encourages for peers in class and out at play. Presley's optimistic attitude is infectious. She never falters in spreading kindness with her big smile or her thoughtful words and actions. Thank you for being the remarkable you. Congratulations Presley you certainly are deserving of this honour of receiving this week's Principal Award.



Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kinglake branch

Bendigo Bank

Alexandra Pro Rodeo

THE eighth annual Alexandra Pro Rodeo will be held on Saturday, January 11.

The contractors for the event have changed this year. Instead of McPhees, they will be working with Gill Bros Rodeo and Destiny Downs Cattle Company, both from NSW.

They're looking to have a record number of participants, as the season includes the southern area now, and they stay on afterwards.

Tickets are available through Ticketebo online tickets now, and Ticketebo will run the gate to streamline people coming in.

At 3.45pm, there will be 50 minutes of an up-tempo country-rock performance from Paul Costa.

Tayla Arnett will sing the Australian National Anthem, a capella.

Organiser Andrew Embling said, "You can hear a pin drop around that ground."

Right on 5pm, the rodeo will start. Gill's bull are used in a lot of the PBR rodeos and the extreme broncs and bulls. There are going be two bucking horses of the year, so the saddle broncs and the open horses, and they've got some really good bulls.

"We feel that by changing over, we've certainly stepped up two rungs with the rodeo stock," Andrew said.

The committee have seen fit to award trophy buckles, valued at \$550, for all contestants, regardless of their category.

If anyone would like to take part in the local steer ride this year, contact Andrew Embling on 0418 266 038. In addition to the buckle, there is also a \$200 prize on offer.

Straight after the last bull bucks out, the Danny Phegan country-rock performance will begin.

Once again, there will be merchandise at the event. There will be a new style of Alexandra Pro Rodeo hats, and t-shirts with the rodeo on them, along with some Ariat shirts and other rodeo clothing.

There will be plenty of food and drinks, including from local community groups and the Alexandra Football Netball Club will be looking after the bar. There will also be rides for the children.

There will be tickets available from Embling Rural and Dindi Country Clothing, for anyone who wants to buy tickets locally and don't want to go online.

Update on Breakaway Bridge

BREAKAWAY Bridge is of particular significance for the Acheron community, and council said that they recognise the importance of keeping residents informed as they work towards a well-considered plan.

Council stated, "Funding for disaster repairs is made available through

the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). This is a cost-sharing arrangement between the states/territories and the Commonwealth.

"In the wake of multiple severe natural disasters over the past two years, council is focused on advocating for *improvement* of damaged infrastructure

rather than accepting a simple *repair*, which is the standard DRFA position. Our approach prioritises long-term resilience and functionality, ensuring infrastructure can better withstand future floods. While this process is more complex and takes time, it reflects our commitment to responsible and sustainable infrastructure management.

"We are currently working closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to meet the requirements of funding and regulatory agencies. These processes are detailed, intricate and evolving, particularly in light of the unprecedented natural disasters which have affected communities across the state and the country. Through this process, council must provide strong reasoning for additional funding to build back better and more resilient assets. The high volume of submissions to the DRFA from numerous councils has placed pressure on resources at all levels of government, leading to extended timelines.

"In some cases, further damage caused by repeated natural disasters has required reassessment of some submissions. For Breakaway Bridge, additional considerations and funding are needed to ensure upgrades meet modern safety and structural standards, adding to the complexity of the process.

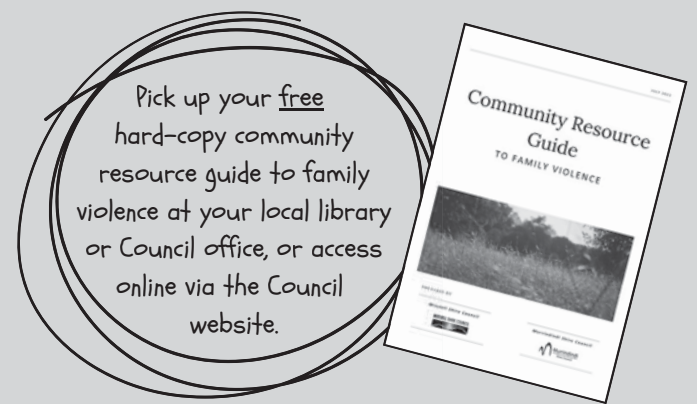
"We aim to communicate with transparency and appreciate the community's patience as we navigate these challenges. While specific timelines or outcomes are difficult to predict, we will continue to advocate for the best possible result and provide updates as new information becomes available. Thank you for your understanding as we work towards a solution that supports the long-term needs of the community."



Alexandra resident Elva (Elvie) Thompson was surprised to find that her hydrangea had both pink and white flowers this year. The beautiful plant has certainly been catching the attention of passers-by. -AR

A Little Respect

Creating space for conversations in our community about important topics related to relationships, gender equality and family violence prevention.



Lee is the Free From Violence Project Officer at Murrindindi Shire Council. She is passionate about raising awareness about important issues in the local community, particularly related to gender equality and family violence prevention. Lee operates with curiosity over conflict and believes we all have something to learn from one another. Lee's work aligns with her studies in law and criminology, but mostly with her lived experience as Victim-Survivor. She has presented at state-wide Government Forums alongside other well-known advocates, and facilitated community forums focused on mental health, gender equality and family violence.

Would you like your own deck of Free From Violence Activity Cards?

Scan the QR code below to register your interest and we will get in touch make sure you don't miss out on this great conversational and icebreaker tool!



Topic of the month: And so this is Christmas...

It's officially the festive season! It's a joyful time for many, even with the added stress Christmas can bring. But, for others, this season is more than stressful – it's dangerous. Christmas and New Year is correlated to a spike in reported (and unreported) family violence incidents. With this in mind, it is important to equip ourselves so we can support our community to stay safe. Help is always available, even over Christmas.

Family violence and the festive season

No to Violence (NTV) is a peak body working with men to stop family violence. NTV has collated statistics which tell us "significantly more family and domestic violence incidents [are] reported to police forces across Australia throughout the Christmas and New Year period". Sometimes we can fall into the habit of speaking about family violence as if it is a 'thing' that 'just happens'. But the truth is, family violence is a choice made by the person who uses it. And there is no excuse. Not stress, not finances, not kids being home, not tricky family visits, not alcohol, nothing. While these things can exacerbate or increase the likelihood of family violence, they do not cause it. Family violence is heavily gendered. University of Melbourne academic Kristin Diemer emphasises this, saying the focus must be 'on addressing the attitudes and systems that drive violence against women and children, [and] intervening early'. At Christmas time, we may find ourselves falling into gender roles or feel more pressure to conform to them. The expectations we place on ourselves, our partners and our families over the festive season can be serious pressure points. Even though we may be busier than usual, it is vital to check in on the people we care about at this time of year. Reaching out could even support someone who may be using violence to seek support to change their behaviour. A good friend is honest, even when it's uncomfortable. If it is safe, pull up your friends on their behaviour and language. It could literally save lives. We must all stay curious and work together.

Reminder: the signs of family violence

Safe+Equal have compiled the following (non-exhaustive) list about what signs of family violence could look like:

- *Someone appears afraid of or anxious to please their partner.*
- *Someone's partner often orders them around or makes all the decisions.*
- *Someone doesn't have access to an ATM card, or they have a restricted financial allowance.*
- *Someone seems anxious, depressed, avoids eye contact or has lost confidence.*
- *Someone has physical injuries, often with unlikely explanations.*
- *Someone regularly cancels appointments.*
- *Someone gets constant calls or texts from a current or ex-partner.*

Anger is a secondary emotion. It is a response to a deeper emotion or feeling. When we feel out of control, anxious or fearful – anger can follow. This is normal. But how we choose to express that anger that matters. There is never an excuse for violence, and everybody deserves to feel safe at home. Asking simple questions can make all the difference this Christmas. If you feel comfortable, try out some of the suggested questions this season.

Ask meaningful questions this Christmas

Ask your partner:

- "How can I best support you over the festive season?"
- "What have I done in the past that was or wasn't helpful?"
- "I know (*insert name*) has been difficult at family gatherings in the past. Is there a way I can interrupt that behaviour that feels good for you?"
- "Last year, I felt like I/you took on more of the mental load around Christmas. Could we talk about splitting up the work more equally between us this year?"
- "When we think about our favourite Christmas memories, what were we doing? What were we not doing? Is there a way to incorporate these things this year?"

Ask your friends/neighbours/colleagues:

- "Are you looking forward to Christmas this year? Why/Why not?"
- "How are you planning on taking care of yourself this Christmas? I notice you often prioritise looking after everyone else, but you deserve to be cared for too."
- "I know this time of year can be overwhelming. What are you going to experiment with saying 'no' to this Christmas?"

If you are concerned a friend is using violence:

- "I've noticed the way you speak to (*insert name*) is a bit aggressive/judgemental. I'm worried about both of you. There are services specifically to support men to get help in dealing with their anger. Would you like me to share these with you?"
- "As your friend, I have concerns about the way I've seen you behave towards (*insert name*). I care about you, and I know you're better than that. Is there anything else going that I can support you with? There's no shame in seeking help."

In an emergency...

Always call 000 in an emergency. Your safety comes first. You are not expected to put yourself in an unsafe situation or behave as if you are an expert on family violence. You are the best judge about what feels safe for you. Consider calling 1800 RESPECT for advice on how to navigate a situation you aren't sure about.

Thank you for supporting 'A Little Respect' in 2024. Wishing you all a very merry and safe Christmas!

Getting support

Call 000 in an emergency or if you are/someone else is in immediate danger.

- 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 7 32
- NTV men's referral service: 1800 766 491
- Orange Door Goulburn: 1800 634 245
- Nexus Primary Health: 1300 773 352
- Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre: 1800 015 188
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Rainbow Door: A free specialist helpline for LGBTQIA+ Victorians. Phone: 1800 729 367 or visit rainbowdoor.org.au
- Djirra Aboriginal Women Support Service: 1800 959 563
- Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978
- 'Are You Safe at Home?' areyousafeathome.org.au

High achievers at Alexandra Secondary College



Amy Morrow received the Long Tan award. -S

Amy Morrow: Long Tan award

AMY Morrow was the recipient of the Long Tan award. She said, "I really wasn't expecting it, but I am very grateful. The award is community leadership based. When I was applying for the awards, I had to write down a list of the things in the community that I do. I included the planning of a couple of free concerts because I do music. I've been a part of helping out with the local girl guides. I've also done athletics stuff at the school. Pretty much when opportunity comes up, I usually take them up."

Amy spent a brief time in year seven where she went to school in Korea, but the rest of her high school education was at Alexandra Secondary College.

She said, "The fondest memory for me is meeting all my friends. A trip I

enjoyed was the school camp in year nine. It was supposed to be year eight, but it got postponed due to COVID-19. It was really great. We went to Anglesea surf camp, it was so much fun.

Of her studies, she said, "I guess I have always been interested in school. I like learning new things. It's hard during exam period you must really lock in. There is no one big secret. I just feel like some people it suits and some people it doesn't. Usually, I like to work on my own, I like being in a group too."

Amy is hoping to get into Melbourne University, and eventually wants to do a doctorate in Veterinary Medicine. She has applied for Bachelor of Science.

Jess Newman: Vocational Major Student of the Year

JESS Newman said of receiving Vocational Major Student of the Year, "I'm happy I got it. I wasn't expecting it but I'm very happy."

Jess has been at Alexandra Secondary College from year seven to 12. Her fondest memory was going on the Central Australia trip in year 10, due to the experiences and what the students were able to see.

Jess said, "If it wasn't for the camp, I would probably have never gone up that way. It makes you want to go up and explore more that way."

She said that her secret to success was to "Keep up to date with my work and make sure I have a placement organised for each term. The industry I worked in was the baking industry. I want to be a baker or patisserie chef."

Jess is planning a gap year next year to work and earn some money. After that, she will attend TAFE and likely do an apprenticeship.



Jess Newman received Vocational Major Student of the year. -S

Matt Thompson: Caltex All Rounder award

MATT Thompson received the Caltex All Rounder award. He said, "It's just nice to have some recognition for a good school year. It was an honour to receive the award."

Matt has been a student at Alexandra Secondary College since year seven.

His fondest memory over his school years was the Central Australia school trip that he did in year 10. He said, "That was definitely the biggest highlight of my time in school."

His secret to study success was to "Just to try and keep a balance all round. A good lifestyle is important. I kept my sport through all of year 12, and I think that definitely helped keep my perspective."

Matt is hoping to go to university to study Agriculture, hopefully at Melbourne University.



Matt Thompson received the Caltex All Rounder award. -S

Ruby Russell: The Eildon Electorate Award

RUBY Russell, winner of the Eildon Electorate Award, said, "I feel very proud I was awarded the award. I think the award was for my participation for the community as well, and being good in school."

"Growing up I was always a part of Cubs and Scouts, and was involved in that. Last year I did some volunteer hours as a swimming teacher. I had a leadership role as house captain and recently I went on a trip to Cambodia where I volunteered at a school. That was partly through the high school because at the start of the year, a few of us went to a leadership conference and through that they have alternative schoolies options. That's what I choose to do. I just got back from it. It was an eight day trip. I learnt a lot about optimism and the people. They have so much to teach you and in the worst circumstances they always find a way to keep getting through with a smile and love in their hearts."

Ruby has attended Alexandra Secondary College since year seven. She said that her fondest memory of school "would be the community in our year level. We are very connected as a group and especially when we went to Central Australia when I was in year 10 that trip was just amazing. It was a memorable trip."

She said of the secret to her success, "I think for me is having a strong network of friends and strong support system. Year 12 can be very overwhelming and for me, having those people you can come to and not have to think about things and be able to relax with is really important. Finding that balance is important. I didn't really have many study groups, and I did choose to do a lot of it by myself. In class being able to work together is also very important."

Ruby is hoping to get into a double degree of Arts and Teaching. She's aiming to get into Australian Catholic University, Deakin or Latrobe.



Ruby Russell received the Eildon Electorate award. -S

Paige Light: VCE student of the Year

PAIGE Light was the winner of the VCE Student of the Year. She said, "I'm very happy with the award. It's the one I wanted. I didn't think I was going to get it. I thought there were other people who would. I'm very happy I did get it. It means a lot to me."

Paige has attended Alexandra Secondary College for all of her high school years. She said that all of the camps were good, and commented, "I have really enjoyed especially this year having conversations with the teachers, especially in your senior year. They are friendly and know who you are. I've some good conversation with Mrs Mullins. We can have a good dig at each other. I really enjoyed the Central Australia trip and the trip to Japan, that was amazing."

She said that her secret to success was "To not put too much pressure on yourself. If you go into every test and think you've done all you can, and it is enough. For exam preparation, I found it really good to work with other people. I don't usually like working with other people but it helps if there is a question you don't know. Someone else will probably know the answer, but I do often choose to work by myself and listen to music while doing it and I can get a lot of work done. There were days I had to block out school study, such as a Tuesday when I had dance, but I found I studied the best when I got home from work. If I go straight into study, I was in a productive mindset. It was my best study time."



Page Light received VCE Student of the year. -S

Paige is planning to go to university and study the Bachelor of Biomedicine, with her preferences being Deakin at Geelong or Burwood, or Melbourne University.

Real Estate GUIDE



Housing prices continue to rise and the government is still working on the Housing Reform Bill. -Pixabay

Median house and rental prices continue to rise

THE September 2024 edition of the Real Estate Market Facts (REMF) report, published by the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA), showed the national median prices for houses and other dwellings rose during the quarter.

Nationally, the median price for houses increased by 0.2 per cent over the quarter and 6.2 per cent over the year to \$1,050,370.

REIA President Ms Leanne Pilkington said this edition of the report sees a change in dynamics across the capital city markets with movements being far from uniform.

“Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth experienced increases, ranging from 0.1 per cent in Melbourne to 0.9 per cent in Perth. We’re expecting a slow down, particularly in Sydney where clearance rates have started to drop,” Ms Pilkington said.

“The national median price for other dwellings, which include units and apartments, also rose by 0.9 per cent over the quarter and 5.5 per cent over the year to \$686,459. Median prices increased in most capitals, with Perth seeing the strongest growth at 4.1 per cent.

“Median rents for three-bedroom houses rose nationally by two per cent during the September quarter and by 9.2 per cent over the year to \$623 per week.”

Ms Pilkington highlighted Sydney’s quarterly increase of 4.3 per cent as a standout, reflecting ongoing demand in the market. Meanwhile, rents for two-bedroom dwellings saw a modest national increase of 0.5 per cent during the quarter and 7.3 per cent over the year.

“Vacancy rates showed a slight increase nationally, rising by 0.1 percentage points over the quarter

to a weighted average of 1.7 per cent. The range across capital cities was significant, from 0.7 per cent in Adelaide to 4.2 per cent in Darwin,” she said.

Ms Pilkington said that the inverse relationship between vacancy rates and rents continues to play out, with tight markets in cities like Adelaide driving higher rental prices.

“Household investor finance increased by 1.9 per cent in the September quarter, but owner occupier finance decreased by 0.6 per cent. The proportion of lending to households for investment in housing is 38.7 per cent,” she said.

“These figures demonstrate the evolving nature of Australia’s property market, where both opportunities and challenges emerge depending on the location and asset type,” Ms Pilkington concluded.

Summary breakdown of the 2024 Housing Reform Bill

THE Victorian Government’s *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Bill 2024* is an expansive piece of legislation that touches all parts of the real estate sector. It has been predominantly developed based on the objectives outlined in the Housing Statement.

The Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) has split the bill into understandable sections based on its impacts on the rental market, the direct changes in obligations for real estate professionals, and adjustments to planning and development regimes.

For the rental market

There will be stricter criteria when rent increase reviews are undertaken by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). Notices of rent increases and notices to vacate will be extended from 60 to 90 days.

Rental properties will have to meet minimum rental standards before being advertised. There will be restrictions on unnecessary or excessive data collection for rental applications.

New provisions will increase data protections and the mandatory destruction and de-identification of renters’ personal information.

Rental application fees and rent payment fees will be prohibited. No cause eviction notices will be removed and evictions will now require valid and justifiable reasons.

There will be prohibitions on accepting or soliciting rental bids above the listed price. This will include where prospective renters approach agents with increased offers.

Measures will be introduced to reduce hearing times and manage frivolous claims. Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria (RDRV) will be established as an embedded body within VCAT to facilitate early and alternative resolutions for simple residential tenancy disputes.

For real estate professionals

All real estate professionals must now complete a Certificate IV in Real Estate Practice. This includes education and registration requirements being extended to owners corporation managers.

Continuing professional development (CPD) is now mandatory. Real estate professionals will have to meet new eligibility requirements before registration. Increased fines will be introduced for underquoting and misrepresentation during property sales.

For planning and development

New pathways will be introduced for low-impact amendments with reduced panel referrals. Extended default planning permit expiry times will be introduced for complex developments to facilitate completion.

There will be a grouping of objections and streamlined hearings at VCAT to reduce delays.



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03 5772 1774

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What do you do if someone has an asthma attack

IT'S grass pollen season in Victoria, so you might notice more asthma and hay fever symptoms popping up. This also brings a chance of thunderstorm asthma. It's a good idea to know what to do if an asthma attack happens, and when asthma first aid might be needed.

Step One: Sit yourself or the person upright.

Step Two: Using a blue or grey reliever puffer (and a spacer, if you have one), shake the puffer, put one puff into the spacer, take four breaths. Repeat four times. Remember: Shake, one puff, four breaths.

Step Three: Wait four minutes

If there is no improvement, take four more separate puffs of blue or grey reliever.

Step Four: If there is still no improvement, dial triple zero (000) for an ambulance. Take four separate puffs every four minutes until emergency assistance arrives.

Call triple zero (000) immediately if you can't breathe, your asthma suddenly becomes worse, or you are having an asthma attack and there's no blue or grey reliever available.

For more detailed information or if you use other asthma medications such as Bricanyl, Symbicort or others, follow asthma first aid specific for them. Visit go.vic.gov.au/3NDJC6N

Fun in the sun at the Eildon Twilight Market



Visitors took the opportunity to grab a bite to eat from one of the food stalls. -AR



People browsing the stalls. -AR

New aged and home care provider set to begin operating in Murrindindi

MURRINDINDI Aged and Home-Care Service Providers (MAHSP) will begin operating fully in January 2025, though they are currently registered and establishing themselves within Murrindindi Shire.

Owner and CEO Jevitha Jeevakumer, a registered nurse from Singapore with a family background in hospital ownership and business, spoke with this masthead about MAHSP's operations and what the future holds for the organisation.

"It is called Murrindindi Aged and Home-Care Service Providers. So we provide meals on wheels, and we just got approved today for providing meals on wheels for Alexandra," Jevitha said.

"Our business has actually been registered, so right now we are just setting up the office and building up our client base, building up the reputation and everything. We'll be officially commencing our service soon [January 2025], going on the field, and running our service.

"We do Murrindindi Shire, Mitchell Shire, so Seymour and so on, and Mansfield Shire. We cover all the areas in this shire range."

MAHSP provide meals on wheels, personal care assistance, domestic assistance, pain management assistance, respite care, garden and home maintenance, etcetera. They are looking for staff at the moment.

"We are looking into employing people, because we recently got in touch with the Murrindindi Health Network, so the Murrindindi Health Network are going to be assisting employees with the necessary training, so pulmonary and CPR training, which is really important for my support workers to gain the necessary qualifications," Jevitha said.

"I'm also experienced in coaching and training, because I studied all around the world, I studied in Berlin and so on. So I'll be providing training for my support workers to gain high stature in aged care.

"We have sub-contractors that will be providing gardening and maintenance and taking rubbish to the tip."

Jevitha finished by talking about MAHSP's partnership with Country Tech.

"We have joined in with Country Tech, so all our approved clients will have discounted prices on personal care products like wheelchairs, etcetera, so anything they need for aged care they get at half price," Jevitha said.

"We, Murrindindi Health Network Service Providers, will be paying for the other half. And we have after hours phone call services, after hours emergency services, like a patient response team," she concluded.

To get in touch with Murrindindi Aged and Home-Care Service Providers, call them on 0406 862 731 or email Reception@mahsp-alexandra.org



Jevitha Jeevakumer. -S



Danielle. -S



Client intakes open now

Murrindindi Aged and Home-care provides services which includes:

- Personal care assistance
- Domestic assistance
- Shower assessment
- Risk assessment
- Home assessment
- Behaviour Support plan management
- After hours phone support
- Home maintenance
- Transportation
- Pain management
- Respite care
- Social gatherings
- Meals on wheels

Our service offers a variety of package bonuses.



Please contact us for more information:



0406 862 731



reception@mahsp-alexandra.org



67 Grant Street Alexandra

Located within the Alexandra Post Office



Murrindindi aged and home care service providers

Patients can now access better integrated care across the Hume region

ALEXANDRA District Health and Hume Rural Health Alliance (HRHA) are proud to announce they now have a fully consolidated Patient Administration System across the 14 member health services in the Hume region.

Building a single, integrated Patient Administration System across 14 health services is a giant leap forward in their digital health journey to achieve their vision of better connected patient care.

The new system introduces a region-wide patient identifier to improve the continuity of care. This has been one of the most complex implementations of the iPM Patient Administration System ever undertaken.

As Alexandra District Health Chief Executive Officer Jane Poxon says, "It has been a collaborative and well-coordinated approach for the implementation of the patient administration system across the whole of the Hume region.

"The staff at Alexandra District Health were very excited on the Go Live day, with feedback that the planning for implementation was well worth it. It is really good for the health service that we have an updated system, which will benefit all our patients."

Hume Rural Health Alliance Chief Information Officer, Neelu Kaur says, "HRHA is pleased that we could deliver a connected Patient Administration System for the first time in the region's history. This is a great achievement which has been earned through collaboration.

"We thank all the health services' teams for their support for this major transition, and the activity in the years leading up to this. As always, we are looking towards the future investments in digital health to bridge the healthcare gaps in our regional communities."

Hume Rural Health Alliance has trained approximately 2500

staff across a 40,000 square kilometre region to prepare for the introduction of the new Patient Administration System.

The following health services have been involved: Albury Wodonga Health, Alexandra District Health, Alpine Health, Beechworth Health Service, Benalla Health, Corryong Health, Goulburn Valley Health, Mansfield District Hospital, NCN Health, Northeast Health Wangaratta, Seymour Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Yarrawonga Health and Yea and District Memorial Hospital.

The broad scope of HRHA's Hume PAS Connect initiative brings together multiple digital health projects to enable health services in the Hume region to connect to state and national eHealth initiatives, to support patient safety and the flow of clinical information both in our region and more widely.



Jane Poxon, CEO of Alexandra District Health, with Administration Coordinator Fiona Edwards and Administration Officer Chantell Roylance, at the Go Live of the new Patient Administration System. -S

CFA urges safety first as Christmas approaches

IT'S that time of year again when Victorians string up their Christmas lights and set up their Christmas trees to celebrate the holiday season, but with the fun and festivities comes the potential for serious fire hazards.

Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) are urging Victorians to check their Christmas lights before use to ensure they bring nothing but cheer this Christmas.

Using damaged lights alongside tinsel and paper on Christmas trees can present a fire risk.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan urged everyone using Christmas lights to thoroughly inspect them for damage before hanging them on their trees and homes.

"Christmas lights are a wonderful way to brighten up Christmas but use year after year can result in frayed wires, damaged bulbs, and other wear and tear that makes them unsafe for the tree or your home," Jason said.

"Turn your lights off before you go to sleep or leave the house to ensure they don't overheat and consider using battery operated or solar lights that don't require electricity."

Fire Rescue Victoria Deputy Commissioner Community Safety Joshua Fischer said it was also important to closely check and monitor any decorations containing a lithium-ion battery.

"Lithium-ion battery powered decorations and appliances have become increasingly popular, and we just want to ensure everyone is using them as safely as possible," Joshua said.

"Only buy products from reputable suppliers, use the charging cords supplied with the device and only charge items outdoors or in rooms with a smoke alarm."

Christmas fire safety tips include: When buying Christmas lights, make sure they have the Regulatory Compliance Mark tick of approval; consider using battery-operated LED or solar lights which don't require electricity; inspect your Christmas lights for any sign of damage or wear and tear; make sure there's no exposed wiring and that there are no missing globes; don't overload power boards; use no more than three sets of lights per power board, even if there are four or more outlets on it, and avoid using double adaptors; place your tree as far as possible from any heat source, curtains or furnishings.

Find more information at cfa.vic.gov.au/batterysafety and frv.vic.gov.au/battery-safety

Native birds and fishing line

THERE have been various incidents in recent years of Australian wood ducks, swans, cockatoos, magpies and tawny frogmouths getting caught in fishing line and requiring rescue, from members of the public and wildlife rescuers.

One rescuer alone estimated that they have rescued 20 to 30 birds caught in fishing line just in the last five years. Many of the birds died as a result of their injuries.

Murrindindi Shire Council was asked whether they have considered installing Seal the Loop bins at key locations, including the Eildon Pondage and Marysville lake, so that people can safely discard old fishing line and cause no harm to wildlife. They were also asked whether council has considered installing signage asking fisherpeople to be careful of birds when fishing, to ensure that fishing lines are not discarded, and perhaps also some phone numbers of local wildlife people.

Council responded, "Thank you for raising this important issue about the impact of discarded fishing line on wildlife. Council acknowledges the harm this causes and supports efforts to minimise risks to animals in our region.

"The Seal the Loop program, operated by Zoos Victoria and the Victorian Fisheries Authority, provides an excellent initiative for safe fishing line disposal. While the program is primarily implemented in coastal areas, it is not restricted to them. Community groups, councils and other organisations can apply to become 'custodians' of the bins, which includes installation and ongoing maintenance.

"Council is currently investigating whether maintaining these bins is something that council could incorporate

into its existing duties, considering budgetary constraints.

"If council can accommodate the extra costs involved in maintaining these bins and decides this is the best approach for certain areas, council will work together with the appropriate agencies and groups to have them installed. For the Gallipoli Park Lake in Marysville, council would engage the Gallipoli Park Precinct Community Asset Committee, which manages this area. For the Eildon Pondage, this would be Goulburn Murray Water, which is the land manager responsible for most areas around the waterway.

"It's important to note that council already maintains three bins positioned around Gallipoli Park Lake and 21 bins along the Eildon Pondage. Providing additional bins is unlikely to have a significant positive impact. When council have provided additional bins in areas experiencing high rates of littering, council has found in some instances, they were misused.

"Council supports the use of education programs to encourage individuals to take responsibility for cleaning up after themselves and disposing of rubbish correctly. Council welcomes the opportunity to raise awareness of this issue and strongly encourage community members and visitors to do the right thing. Our environment depends on it, and keeping parks and waterways clean is everyone's responsibility.

For non-urgent situations involving wildlife, please contact the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action by calling 136 186. If you need assistance with an animal emergency, or injured wildlife, you can find a list of local wildlife rescue organisations at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/wildlife



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Development Opportunity - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Eildon, Victoria

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) is Australia's largest rural water corporation. We manage, store and deliver water through approximately 10,000 km of delivery and drainage infrastructure to more than 25,000 active customers in northern Victoria.

We are currently seeking Expressions of Interests (EOIs) from the open market for the lease of a part parcel of land for renewable energy opportunities, specifically targeting battery storage.

The site, known as Observation Point, is located at the corner of Sugarloaf Road and Alliance Drive in Eildon, within the upper pondage of Lake Eildon.

GMW encourages proposals that demonstrate:

- long term viability
- sustainability
- environmental sensitivity, and
- community engagement.

Expressions of interest including a detailed development proposal must be received by GMW no later than 5pm Friday 31 January 2025.

For further information:

visit our website: www.g-mwater.com.au/news-updates/notices
or email EOI@gmwater.com.au

Murrindindi Shire Council’s final meeting for 2024

ON Wednesday, December 11 Murrindindi Shire Council held the scheduled meeting at the Alexandra Chambers. Councillor Adams was absent.

A petition was received about the road closure on Utah Place by Cleveland Aitken, asking to keep Utah Place open, as opposed to the temporary closures due the Eildon Redevelopment Project rollout. The petition was signed by 25 people. It was referred to the Director of Assets and Environment for consideration, a response and a report.

In Public Participation, Sam Watts presented to council about his planning permit on his property in Ghin Ghin. He wanted to reiterate he is running a business at the location breeding cattle and been doing so for some years. He spoke of having a house on this land and how the farm will be more accessible to him when needed. There were objections to the planning permit and his understanding is these people live a number of kilometres away from the property and that those living in close proximity didn’t have any objection at all. He spoke of the flood damage to his irrigation system and said if he lived on his property he’d be more available to do his jobs around the farm and be onsite all the time.

Mike Dalmau spoke about the Key Worker Accommodation project in Eildon. He was speaking on behalf of the Lake Eildon Houseboat Industry Association and other groups. He was support of the officer’s recommendation and encouraged councillors to support that recommendation. He spoke of the struggles and the limitations of accommodation available and the impacts of social capital in the town such as the schools.

Written submissions about this came from Caitlin Williams and Robyn Archer. Caitlyn spoke of how grateful and supportive for extra accommodation in the area. She has two local businesses, and they struggle to find accommodation for their workers. Robyn Archer stated support for the project. It was also noted the wider Eildon community continue to be involved in the consultation process.

212 Ghin Ghin Road, Ghin Ghin

The planning application for 212 Ghin Ghin Road, Ghin Ghin, proposes to use and develop the land for a dwelling. Three objections were received by council. The application was being presented to council with an officer recommendation for refusal. Councillors moved the motion takes place and said that they hope Mr Watts come back and proceeds with the application in the future.

2618 Maroondah Highway, Taggerty

Planning Application for 2618 Maroondah Highway, Taggerty, proposes to use and develop the land for a dwelling. No objections were received. The applicant did not provide further information requested by the CFA and the Environmental Health Unit. In the absence of this information, council officers said they cannot be satisfied that the proposal meets the objectives, policy, and decision guidelines of the Murrindindi Planning Scheme. The officer recommendation was to refuse to grant a permit. Cr McAulay asked if more time can be allowed and moved for an extension and against the officers motion so the applicant can provide adequate information by March 1. Motion was moved by all councillors.

11 The Ridge, Kinglake

The application proposes to amend planning permit 2020/225, which allows development of the land for the purpose of a single dwelling, to allow an outbuilding, a shed, and amend the plans endorsed as part of the permit. The applicant has not provided further information requested by council to address environmental health concerns in relation to treatment of wastewater. In the absence of this, council officers said they cannot be satisfied that the proposal meets the objectives, policy, and decision guidelines of the Murrindindi Planning Scheme. The officer recommendation was to refuse an amendment to a permit. Councillors moved the motion to refuse amendment.

Eildon Key Worker Housing Project

Council identified recreational land in Eildon surplus to need. Following consultation with the Eildon community, including a deliberative engagement forum specifically convened to consider the future of this land, council resolved in support of the community to sell these locations to support housing development, and to use the proceeds of sale to fund the contribution for the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment. The sites were subsequently identified as tier one locations suitable for council to develop in council’s Key Worker Housing Strategy. The Regional Worker Accommodation Fund will require council to make a cash contribution of \$1.4 million, provide the land and project management support for the project. The cash contribution will require borrowing or contribution from council’s cash reserves. The 10 year operational budget of the project includes an allocation to cover all costs, including borrowings if required. Furthermore, an allocation of \$400,000 is needed to fund the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment, which

was to be funded through the sale of the land in Eildon. While it is proposed that council allocate these funds initially from its Infrastructure Reserve, this allocation can be repaid through the Eildon Key Worker Housing Project, through operational income and future sale of assets. All councillors endorsed this motion.

Eildon Splash Park - Traditional Owner naming

Council is looking to name the Eildon reserves splash parks. The name ‘Baanh ba Djila’ as the proposed feature name. The project covers two open space parcels known locally as the Thomas Marr Reserve (skate park and swimming pool) and the Walter Moore Reserve (public toilets and splash park), and it was verified that the new naming will not take anything away of the recognition of these places.

Assets and environment group

The operating licence issued for the Alexandra Landfill includes conditions relating to the management of leachate for the protection of surface and ground water. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requires that council maintain a contract to enable the carting and disposal of leachate as needed when outflow exceeds the rate of evaporation in the dam. Excess leachate must be transported to the Melbourne metropolitan area to a licensed facility to be processed by Melbourne Water as Goulburn Valley Water will not accept this contaminated water locally. This limits the options to one contractor who holds the necessary licensing in Melbourne, exposing council to cost pressures from variations in cartage and treatment costs.

To meet EPA licencing requirements, it was recommended that contract be extended on a month-by-month basis with a maximum end date of June 30 to allow enough time for a new contract to be tendered and awarded. The motion was moved.

Flood Recovery: Murrindindi Bridges

The scope of the works is to undertake various repair works on six bridges on Murrindindi Road. Based on the evaluation, it is recommended that tenderer one be awarded the contract if funding is approved by the Department of Transport under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements program.

Councillor and CEO Reports

An apology was received from Cr Adams.

Cr Carpenter wished everyone a merry Christmas.

Cr McAulay spoke of her portfolio and spoke of upcoming business breakfast in Kinglake on Tuesday, February 18, and spoke about the annual Alexandra Christmas Bonanza which has commenced, and encouraged people to shop locally and put Murrindindi on your table.

Councillor Hildebrand spoke of being busy with the induction program he has participated in and is enjoying the challenge.

Cr Lording spoke of roads portfolio and getting back into the swing of things in his area.

Councillor Carr spoke of many exciting events in the lead up to Christmas and over the summer holidays and get out there and see what is on offer.

Mayor Report

Mayor Gallagher spoke of school children finishing school for the year and wishing grade sixes and year 12 all the best with their next chapter.

Yea Saleyards is celebrating a successful first half of the financial year, the committee is turning attention to budgets and capital works agenda.

The growth of Helico Australia is welcomed with the announcement on November 29 from the Hon Jaclyn Symes receiving funds from the Victorian forestry transition fund. Round two is now open for expressions of interest.

He met with Helen Haines MP and raised the request for federal grant funding to support Yea, Alexandra and Thornton town structure planning and the activating Lake Eildon Master Plan.

He also spoke of shopping locally, carols in Rotary Park and visiting the Christmas Tree Festival.

CEO report

CEO report was read by Mr Chesworth.

Through the federal Play Our Way program significant funding has been secured in the shire to upgrade community facilities and promote female participation in sports. Thornton district sports hall is receiving a \$705,482 to upgrade its outdated infrastructure. Alexandra speedway has been awarded \$74,666 to construct female friendly amenities block.

The 2024/2025 volunteer grants is open for expression of interest and supports local community organisations. Grants range from \$1000 to \$5000 and can assist eligible not for profit organisations for supporting their volunteers. Expressions of interest must be submitted by 5pm Friday, January 17. Please see Helen Haines’s website for details.

Know your rights with stray animals

WHAT would you do if you found a stray dog or cat, either on your property or wandering along the road? Is it your responsibility to deal with the animal or do you just let them go about their day?

According to Agriculture Victoria it is a legal requirement as soon as reasonable possible after finding a lost or stray animal that you must take the animal to the local council in which it was found or allow a council authorised officer to collect the pet from you; they will instruct you on what to do next, whether they will collect the animal, whether you need to bring it into the pound, or whether it needs to be trapped.

Council will check the animal for identification, either a collar and registration tag, or a microchip. If identified, council will be able to reunite the animal with its owner.

If council cannot identify the owner, it keeps the animal for a period to give the owner a chance to reclaim it.

The animals can also be taken to a local vet that agrees to accept lost pets, it is recommended you call prior to see if they accept lost pets for reunification; this is

also the first point of contact if the animals is injured and needs medical intervention.

The animal can also be taken to a registered animal shelter; or a person or business that has an 84Y agreement with council where the pet was found.

If you wish to provide a home for the animal you may go down as the Interested Party, which means that if the animal passes all health and temperament checks you may adopt it.

Interestingly, if you reunite a dog or cat directly with its owner rather than following the legislative requirements, you may be fined.

Under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 if you see a dog or cat on your private property without permission, more than once without the permission of the owner or occupier of the property, the owner occupier or authorised officer may seize the dog or cat while on the property.

In the Murrindindi Shire if you come across a stray animal you generally have services to help you.

Natalie Stewart, Murrindindi Shire’s Acting Director Community and Development said, “Council uses an after-hours ranger service to handle animal management issues reported outside of business hours (Monday to Friday from 8.15 am to 5.00 pm), including weekends and public holidays. This service handles reports of livestock on Council-managed roads, dog attacks, and pets that are found wandering. If the matter is urgent or it’s an emergency situation, our after-hours service will attend outside our regular business hours.

“If a community member finds a wandering animal over the weekend and can contain it, either with a leash (for dogs or cats) or within their property, and report it to Council, our after-hours service will attend to pick up the animal as soon as possible. If the animal is wearing a registration tag, it can be reunited with its owner more quickly. However, due to the large area the rangers cover and other calls they may be attending, they can’t always respond immediately. We advise community members to safely contain wandering animals until rangers arrive.

We cannot force community members to keep lost animals contained.

“The *Domestic Animals Act* requires pet owners to keep their animals securely contained at all times. We promote responsible pet ownership through education. Keeping our community safe is a shared responsibility. Pet owners must ensure their pets are securely contained for the safety of everyone and their pets. It’s also important for Dogs and cats over the age of three months must be microchipped and registered with Council. This helps us reunite lost pets with their owners. For more information and to register your pet, or renew your pet registration, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pets

At the end of the day, responsible pet ownership is the core issue. Having a pet takes long term commitment, this includes providing fresh water and proper nutrition, a sheltered area and a place to roam free in a contained area, microchipping and registration, time and attention, grooming and veterinary care and mental and physical stimulation.



Nutrien Harcourts
Alexandra

MERRY Christmas

As we wrap up for the holiday period, we reflect on what a gift it's been having your support.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas, and the happiest of New Years.

We are closed from December 24th and re-opening January 6th.

58 Grant Street, Alexandra
(03) 5772 3444

Alexandra Bakery & Cafe

Mathew, Tania and staff would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Open this Sunday
December 22 from 7am to 2pm

We will be closed
December 25 and 26, 2024
and January 1 to 6, 2025

70 Grant Street Alexandra
5772 2272

Debbie, Andrew
and staff at

Goody's Discounts

wish their customers
a Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

Craig and the team at

EILDON BAIT AND TACKLE

would like to
wish all their customers and
community a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year filled with blessings,
prosperity, and abundance.

And fishing.

Closed Christmas Day

5774 2712
13 Main Street Eildon
goldentroutcod@gmail.com
Eildon Bait and Tackle

Wishing you and
your family a very
Merry Christmas
and a **Happy New Year**

From the Team at

dmk
TAXATION & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Best wishes for a
joyous Christmas
filled with love,
happiness and
prosperity.

From the team at

Elders

Alexandra and Yea.

Navy Blue Planning
Urban and Regional Planning Specialists

*Thank you to our clients for
your partnership this year.*

*We wish you a joyful Christmas
and a prosperous new year.*

From the team at
Navy Blue Planning

admin@navyblueplanning.com.au
66 Grant Street, Alexandra
navyblueplanning.com.au
0419 006 014

*Karla and the team at
Cafe Alex would like
to thank thier customers
for all their support and
friendship over the year,
and wish everyone
all the blessings
and joys of
Christmas
and a
bright year ahead*

Jenny, Graeme and staff
would like to wish their
valued customers a
Merry Christmas and a
safe and happy New Year

Closed Christmas Day only

**Alexandra
Newsagency & Lotto**

Chris's TV
The Television Reception Specialist

Chris's TV wishes everybody
a very Merry Christmas and
a safe New Year.

Thank you for your support
throughout 2024.

Phone 0405 554 915

Wishing everyone a
Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year

Steve 0427 577 839

Alexandra
Windscreens &
Glass Services

ALEXANDRA
Tyrepower

Matt, Pam and staff would like
to thank our customers for their
support during 2024. We wish
you all a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year.

We will be closed December 25
to 28, 2024 and January 1, 2025



Williams Hunt & Bett
LAWYERS & CONVEYANCERS

The Partners & Staff would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and advise that we will be closed from 12 noon 20th December 2024 and return 9am 6th January 2025.

Alexandra Office (03) 5772 1493 81A Grant Street Alexandra VIC 3714 alexlawyers@williamshuntbett.com.au	Mansfield Office (03) 5775 2334 24A Highett Street Mansfield VIC 3722 lawyers@williamshuntbett.com.au	Yea Office (03) 5797 2601 82 High Street Yea VIC 3717 yealawyers@williamshuntbett.com.au
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WILLIAMSHUNTBETT.COM.AU

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Thank you to all our local businesses and community. Your support to our family and staff after Trevor's sudden death has been overwhelming. We are truly blessed and thank you one and all.

– Roslyn, Stephanie and Josh, Chris and Roshelle, our wonderful staff Dot, Kim and Darren, Dick and Sylvia

We are closing for Christmas break noon Saturday December 21, 2024. Opening 9am Monday January 6, 2025.

ALEXANDRA MOTORCYCLES & MACHINERY

📍 65 Downey Street, Alexandra ☎ 5772 1045

📘 AlexandraMotorcyclesMachinery

MERRY CHRISTMAS
And A
VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

To all of our valued clients, colleagues and friends, thanks for all of your generous support over 2024.

Our offices will be closing on Monay 23rd of December and reopening on Monday 30th December.

We wish yourself, your family and your staff a safe and very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2025.

We look forward to working with all you in 2025.

the eildon real estate team

eildon real estate

FINEBLADE CIVIL

Paul, Lou & Fineblade Civil Staff

Would like to thank all our clients for your support during 2024

We wish all community members a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year

Christmas & New Year Closure
19th December 2024 - 6th January 2025

For any urgent / emergency works please call
Paul: 0427 823 045
Lou: 0430 134 935



Christmas Wishes 2025



All the staff at Alexandra Community Pharmacy wishes everyone a joyous and blessed Christmas.

We will be closed:
Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years day

☎ 5772 2153 📍 101 Grant Street Alexandra 🌐 alexandrapharmacy.com.au
✉ alexandra.pharmacy@yahoo.com.au 📱 Alexandra Community Pharmacy



Alexandra Automotive

Boz, Fran & Ben would like to wish all of our customers a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

We will be closed from December 20 and will reopen Monday, January 13.



Merry Christmas to all our customers, wishing you and your loved ones a season of joy and a happy new year
From the HNB Electrical Team

HEDGER CONSTRUCTIONS

Building with Distinction

Thank you to all our wonderful staff and clients for your support this year.

We wish you a safe and happy Christmas and advise that we will be closed from 20th December 2024, returning 13th January 2025.

1300 291 101
hedgerconstructions.com.au

Wishing all our customers, friends and family a very Merry Christmas.

We would like to thank you for your support this year and wish you all the best for the new year.

– From the team at
Keath's Excavations



We will be closed December 25 – 26, 2024 and January 1, 2025.

KEATH'S EXCAVATIONS PTY LTD 📍 6562 Maroondah Highway, Yarck VIC 3719

☎ 5773 4242 📞 0428 577 951 ✉ admin@keaths.com.au 📱 keaths_excavations



Wishing our patients and the community a very Merry Christmas and happy and safe 2025



COFFEE
BOTTLE SHOP
TOOBORAC PIES
COLD DRINKS
ESSENTIALS
PUB

General Store Open 7 days, from 7am

www.themolesworth.com.au

Hotel open 7 days . Meals available Thursday
Lunch to Sunday night



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Alex Scott and staff would like to thank everyone for all their support over 2024 and look forward to continued success and new opportunities in 2025

ALEX SCOTT & STAFF WEANER SALE

Friday 31 January 2024
Yea Saleyards,
commencing at 9:30am
Additional Entries Welcomed



rma network. Accredited Member

David Setches
0409 443 473
Tim Gibson
0420 306 599
Glenn Barwick
0408 975 476
Neil Darby
0418 595 265

Merry Christmas

Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year

Cindy McLEISH MP
STATE MEMBER FOR EILDON

Shop 10, 38 - 40 Bell Street, Yarra Glen ☎ 03 9730 1066
f CindyMcLeishMP ✉ cindy.mcleish@parliament.vic.gov.au

CindyMcLeish.com.au
Authorised by Cindy McLeish MP, Shop 10, 38-40 Bell Street, Yarra Glen

Wishing everyone a **Merry Christmas**.
Thank you for all your support this year.

From the team at

REDGATE ELECTRICAL

Travis 0455 317 553

We would like to thank you for your support during 2024, and wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New year.

From the team at Chookies.

Chookies
Furniture Warehouse & Bi-Rite Discount Electricals

1 Hall Street Alexandra Vic 3714
chookies@flooringxtra.com.au
5772 2235
Chookies Flooring Xtra

Season's Greetings
and Best Wishes for the New Year

JACLYN SYMES MP
LABOR MEMBER FOR NORTHERN VICTORIA

5783 2000
jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au
jaclyn.symes
jaclynsymes.com.au

Authorised by J Symes, Unit 1/87 Sydney Street Kilmore

ALEXANDRA PHYSIOTHERAPY
wishes you a
Merry Christmas and safe New Year.

Closed December 25 & 26, 2024
and January 1 to 3, 2025

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We will be closed
December 25 & 26, 2024 and
January 1, 2025.



CFA warning after haystack fires destroy 1700 bales

THE Country Fire Authority (CFA) is reminding farmers about the risks of improper hay storage after two devastating haystack fires destroyed at least 1700 hay bales in separate parts of the state recently.

A fire in Coonooer West on Tuesday December 10 claimed 1200 bales, a hayshed, and several pieces of machinery, while just

recently a fire in Naring saw another 500 bales destroyed.

Haystack fires are often caused by spontaneous combustion when hay is baled with excess moisture. High moisture levels, combined with the compact nature of hay bales, can create internal heat, leading to ignition.

Between June 30, 2023, and July 1, 2024, CFA responded to 121 haystack fires in regional areas.

CFA District 16 Assistant Chief Fire Officer Stephen Alcock said the incidents served as a reminder for farmers to closely monitor their haystacks.

"These fires demonstrate the devastating impact haystack fires can have," Stephen said.

"Once a fire starts, it spreads rapidly through the bales, making it extremely challenging to contain.

"High moisture levels in hay, often from baling too early in the day when it's dewy or after rain, are a major contributor to spontaneous combustion."

He also stressed the dangers of storing machinery with hay bales.

"Storing machinery with hay bales is a recipe for disaster," he said.

"If a fire starts in the haystack, it can quickly spread to nearby machinery, which can halt important farming operations until new equipment arrives."

"The safest option is to store hay in a separate area well away from equipment and other buildings.

"Haystack fires don't just affect individual properties; they can spread to neighbouring farms and require extensive emergency services resources.

"Regular monitoring and proper storage can turn what might have been a major issue into something manageable."

For more information, visit CFA's website or contact your local CFA brigade for advice on haystack safety.

The CFA also offers tips for managing your haystack. These include: Ensure hay is well cured before baling; know the history of the hay you purchase; keep haystacks to a limited size and separate your haystacks; monitor moisture and temperature of your hay regularly; watch for unusual odours such as pipe tobacco, caramel, burning or musty smells; store hay in separate stacks or sheds away from farm equipment and other buildings; keep your hay dry; protect it from rain, leaking rooves or spouts, and runoff; cover stacks with tarps or hay caps; don't stack hay right to the top of a hay shed; allow some air to circulate at the top, as this helps to carry away moisture.

In terms of temperature, use a thermometer in a probe or insert a crowbar into the middle of the stack for two hours.

If it's less than 50 degrees, you should be able to handle the crowbar without discomfort. Check temperature daily. If it's 50 to 60 degrees, you can only handle the crowbar for a short time. Check temperatures twice daily. If it's 60 to 70 degrees, you can only touch the bar briefly. Check temperature every two to four hours. Move the hay to improve air flow. If it's over 70 degrees, then the bar should be too hot to hold. This is where there is a potential for fire. Call 000 immediately. Avoid walking on haystack. At this stage, pulling apart the hay may provide the oxygen it needs to ignite.



A hay shed in flames. -S

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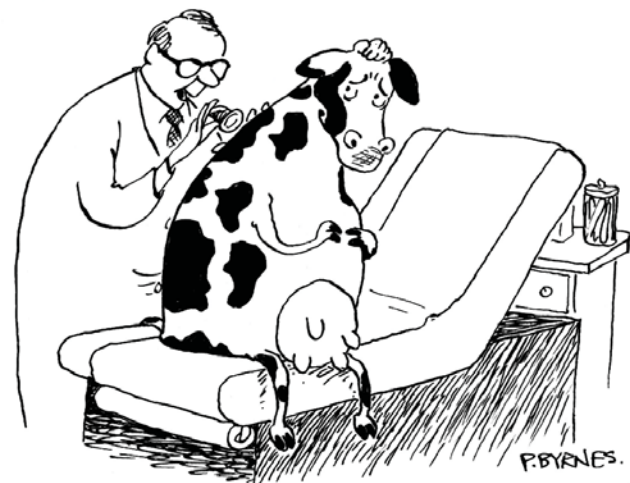
- ☒ Check
- ☒ Freeze
- ☒ Incisions
- ☒ Pathology

Yea Saleyards

Friday 17 January 2025

Friday 7 February 2025

Further information on Yea Saleyards website and Facebook page



The Trap

By Jed Dunstan



Death discovers activewear.

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Taylah and Clea were staffing the front desk for the first shift of the Christmas tree display in the Alexandra Shire Hall. -AR



Icy pole sticks decorated with stickers and craft gems made these stars for the Christmas tree. -AR



The Alexandra Tennis Club's Christmas tree decorated with tennis balls and a racquet. -AR



Bells and Santa hats alongside other red and green themed Christmas trees. -AR

UPCOMING FEATURES

Work Local

Publishing: January 15

Deadline: January 9, 5pm

Let's eat,
it's our treat

Publishing: February 5

Deadline: January 30, 5pm

Live Well, Feel Good

Publishing: February 12

Deadline: February 4, 5pm

Work Local

Publishing: February 19

Deadline: February 13, 5pm

Colourful crafted stars adorning one of the trees. -AR

A sequined bee decoration on one of the Christmas trees on display. -AR

A white tree with varied baubles and hanging decorations. -AR

The Alexandra and District Kindergarten Christmas tree all decorated. -AR

A shiny angel sitting on silver tinsel. -AR

Gold, white and blue were a very varied palette for Christmas tree decorations. -AR

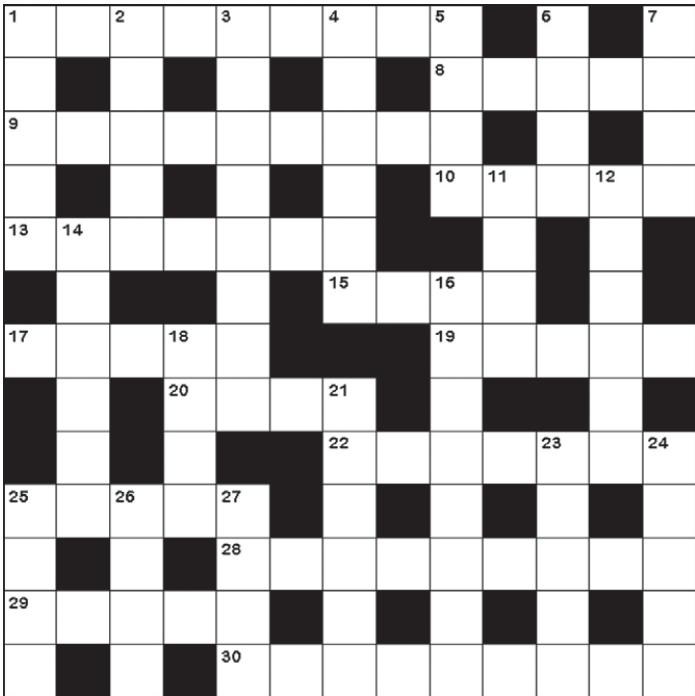
PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 23

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1. In a careless and slapdash manner.
 - 8. Deeper more secret area.
 - 9. Joining metals by melting them together.
 - 10. Pay out money for purchases.
 - 13. Show a lively interest.
 - 15. A short knitted covering for the foot.
 - 17. A formal proclamation.
 - 19. A left-handed person.
 - 20. Steering mechanism for a ship.
 - 22. Adjusted to new conditions.
 - 25. Becomes soft and then liquid.
 - 28. Name all items one by one.
 - 29. Mother-of-pearl from mollusc shells.
 - 30. Tokens of sentimental value.

- DOWN**
- 1. Overly eager speed.
 - 2. The one who flies the plane.
 - 3. Just enough to do the job.
 - 4. Gets up and out of bed.
 - 5. Breaks up dirt with a shovel.
 - 6. A single time only.
 - 7. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
 - 11. A long spear formerly used by infantry.



- 12. A hairy stinging prickly plant.
- 14. A small rounded lump on a plant.
- 16. People employed to remove dirt from floors.
- 18. A short informal conversation.
- 21. Become ripe and developed.
- 23. Go after with the intent to catch.
- 24. A one-piece garment for a woman.
- 25. A promiscuous woman.
- 26. A strand or curl of hair.
- 27. Try to find by searching.

Word Search

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

- Christmas**
- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| CAROLS | REINDEER |
| CHRISTMASTREE | SANTACLAUS |
| GINGERBREADMAN | SNOWMAN |
| JINGLEBELLS | STOCKING |
| PLUMPUDDING | WRAPPINGPAPER |
| PRESENT | CHRISTMASLIGHTS |

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Medium

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.

Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
7				23				

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
8							

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{E} \\ \hline 2 \quad 23 \quad 18 \quad 18 \quad 15 \end{array}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{S} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{S} \\ \hline 19 \quad 24 \quad 18 \quad 22 \quad 8 \quad 9 \quad 2 \quad 7 \quad 8 \end{array}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{E} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{E} \\ \hline 23 \quad 21 \quad 23 \quad 18 \quad 15 \quad 26 \quad 4 \quad 23 \end{array}$$

Math Square

6	×		-		39
-		+		+	
	÷		-		-7
-		÷		+	
	×		+	5	7
-3		9		17	

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.

Haines welcomes adoption of regional housing funding target

MEMBER for Indi Helen Haines has welcomed the Coalition’s adoption of her target for 30 per cent of funding for critical housing infrastructure to go to regional communities.

Dr Haines has been pushing for at least 30 per cent of housing funding to be guaranteed to regional areas, through introduction of her own legislation in September 2023 and again in November 2024.

The Coalition responded with its own announcement that 30 per cent of its proposed Housing Infrastructure Fund would be quarantined for regional, rural and remote Australia.

The opposition’s \$5 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund would build critical enabling infrastructure that unlocks new housing and means both the major parties now have positions that resemble the policies she has pushed for more than two years.

“The cost of housing is causing significant stress on households in Indi, whether they are paying their mortgage or rent, and part of the reason for that is that we don’t have enough housing,” Dr Haines said.

“A major barrier to opening up new land for housing in regional areas is the enabling infrastructure and amenities such as sewerage and water connections, roads and footpaths, and electricity poles. It’s not shiny, but it’s critically important.

“I’m glad that the Coalition have now picked up what I’ve been talking about for over two years, and that’s the need for 30 per cent of housing funds to be put aside for regional communities.

“In September 2023, and again in November 2024, I introduced legislation to guarantee 30

per cent of housing funding is dedicated to the regions.

“I met with Housing Minister Clare O’Neil just last week, and we had a productive discussion about securing a fair share of funding for the regions.

Dr Haines said she would continue to push the government to commit to dedicated housing funding for regional and rural Australia ahead of the election.

“I’ve been really loud about this issue and have worked across the parliament to advocate for a focus on regional Australia. We need the major parties to understand that regional areas experience issues differently to metropolitan areas. It’s why I put forward solutions forward that will benefit regional Australia.

“It is clear that as an Independent, listening to the needs in our region here in Indi and coming up with solutions, that we can influence the policies of both the major parties and secure better outcomes for regional communities.

“So far, I have been pleased to secure some enabling infrastructure funding for Wodonga and Alexandra but much more investment is needed across the region.

“I’m always there to work with members of parliament to get what’s best for rural and regional Australia, for what is fair and what we need.”

Dr Haines’ *Fair Share for Regional Housing Bill 2024* is found at aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r7273 and Dr Haines’ work on regional housing can be found at helenhaines.org/issues/regional-housing/

Have you made your farm fire ready?

by Dr Jeff Cave, Agriculture Victoria Senior Veterinary Officer

VICTORIAN producers are more aware than most of the importance of being prepared and having a plan in place for livestock during a fire.

With the fire season almost upon us, now is the time for livestock owners to get prepared and have a clear strategy to apply in the possibility of a fire emergency on their farm.

A key factor in minimising the threat to livestock during a bushfire or on extreme fire danger days, is to identify safer areas on farm where livestock can be moved to.

The area you choose will depend on the type of livestock and their expected behaviour during a fire.

To reduce potential injury and death to livestock you should consider relocating stock to designated low risk areas during days of high fire danger and Total Fire Bans.

Low risk areas include; bare areas such as ploughed paddocks, and areas cultivated and kept free of combustible vegetation bared-out paddocks, provided they are well defended by fire breaks irrigated paddocks or paddocks containing green summer crops stockyards that can be wet in advance. However, the yards must be well defended as the fire front passes. Dams and swamps are another possible option.

All low-risk areas should have sufficient drinking water to enable stock to remain in the area for extended periods of high fire risk and high temperatures.

Stockyards have been known to successfully hold stock during a fire if protected by a firebreak. If this is your preferred option, consider using a sprinkler system since stock being held together on a hot day can suffer heat stress.

Horses should not be locked up in small areas or stables but moved to an open paddock with minimal vegetation, so they can move freely. Horses and cattle are adept at avoiding a fire moving themselves to safe open areas and usually suffer minimal burns if left to do so.

If equipment such as rugs, halters and flyveils remain on horses, the plastic may melt, and metal buckles can burn the animal. Therefore, consider using rope halters for easier handling and management.

It’s crucial not to open gates that may allow stock access to public roadways, as any animals will be a hazard to traffic in smoky conditions.

On days of extreme fire danger or on the day before, stock should be moved into lower risk areas on-farm, or to a safer property.

Agriculture Victoria advises livestock owners to act early and do not get caught trying to move stock as a fire approaches. Listen to weather forecasts and observe your own environment to help you decide when to put your plan into action.

For further assistance on preparing a farm and livestock bushfire plan contact the Agriculture Victoria Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

ABC runs segment on Yea Saleyards

LAST Thursday the ABC’s 7.30 Report ran a segment on the work of Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) in providing free health checks at the Yea Saleyards.

The segment ran for almost five minutes and featured local people such as YDMH CEO Elizabeth Sinclair, YDMH staffer Sarah Austin, Jan Beer from the Yea Saleyards Committee, and locals Michael Purcell and Libby Pink.

It focused on the importance of providing healthcare to farmers in the environment they are comfortable in, which is the saleyards. This allows for health checks without the potential stress and intimidation of the clinical hospital environment.

Scenes were filmed for the segment around the Yea Saleyards and Yea itself, including the hospital.

The YDMH free health checks have concluded for this year, but will return in 2025. The first one is a skin cancer check on January 17 at the Elders Yea Annual Blue Ribbon Weaner Sale.

For more information about upcoming cattle sales and the work of the Yea Saleyards visit yeasaleyards.com.au

For more information about YDMH and their free health checks program visit yeahospital.org.au

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The Murrindindi Carer's Group had their Christmas lunch last Friday at the Corner Hotel in Alexandra. -BD

Christmas lunch for Murrindindi Carer's Group

THE Murrindindi Carer's Group had their Christmas party last Friday at the Corner Hotel in Alexandra, to celebrate another year of monthly carer's support meetings.

The group has members from all around Murrindindi Shire, with any carer welcome, whether that is caring for a partner, child, friend, family, etcetera.

Monthly meetings held by the group are a place for carers to meet new friends, make

connections and share ideas. It's about being a person as well as being a carer.

Murrindindi Carer's Group partnered with Villa Maria Catholic Homes' care engagement team, who provide lots of support to the group and help organise meetings.

For more information or to talk to someone from the group, contact Anthea on 0418 402 455.



The Murrindindi Carer's Group chatting and enjoying companionship at their Christmas lunch. -BD

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

CRYPTOGRAM

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE

SUDOKU

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

CROSSWORD

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

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8	÷	4	-	9	-7
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1	×	2	+	5	7
-3		9		17	

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IN MEMORIAM

RIDD, Jadwiga Teresa
01/10/1946-16/12/2021
Mum, how we miss your smile, laughter and love, your words of wisdom and guidance. It has been three years since your passing and we miss you so much every day. Forever in our hearts and thoughts. Your loving family.

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Free to good home
Wertheim piano,
manufactured in
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1920s. Ph Theresa



BEREAVEMENT THANKS

Julie Schachner and families would like to thank the Alexandra Hospital for their exceptional care. Dale Young and John's DEECA family. Catering and bar at Alexandra Football/Netball Club. Andrew of McCormacks. Those who attended John's service, visited, sent cards and flowers. Thank you all.

PETS & LIVESTOCK

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PUBLIC NOTICE CROWN LAND (RESERVES) ACT 1978

Notice is hereby given that Amplitel Pty Ltd has applied to lease, pursuant to Section 17D of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, for a term of twenty-one (21) years, Crown land being part of Crown Allotment 2007, Parish of Billian containing 166 square metres (more or less) as a site for "Permitted Use means inspecting, installing, constructing, operating and maintaining a telecommunications network and service as permitted under the Telecommunications Act."

SITUATION VACANT



Yenckens Steel has a full time position available

Looking for physically fit person to work in their steel shed. Must have fork lift licence, be able to interpret drawings and read measurements.

Be able to work in a fast paced environment.

The position involves heavy lifting. Must be available to work Saturdays.

Please send resumes to alexsteel@yenckens.com.au

SITUATIONS VACANT



Alexandra Showgrounds Caravan Park is looking for a weekday manager to start at the end of January 2025. 20 hours per week (4 hours per day). involves cleaning, grounds maintenance, customer service, bookings, and financial management. Good communication skills required. Would suit retiree or working in around school hours. For more information contact Kat at pna.alexandra@gmail.com

PRODUCTION Horticulture Supervisor
Gobur location for Sonnus Pty Ltd
Full time with salary being between \$65,000 to \$74,000. Email resumé to: welcom@danoi.com.au



Pool entry is free this season. -Adrian Pingstone

The health benefits of swimming

THE heat of summer is already here, and the water is a good option for Murrindindi Shire residents to cool off, especially with free pool entry for the 2024/25 season.

Swimming is not just a fun activity, but also has a number of health benefits that are often not talked about.

The exercise of swimming keeps your heart rate up but reduces the impact stress on your body when compared with regular exercise. It also builds stamina, muscle strength, and cardiovascular fitness. When you are swimming, your whole body is working, meaning that it builds all the muscles and provides a full-body workout as well.

The motions of swimming can also be incredibly relaxing, helping to alleviate stress and improving coordination and flexibility.

Just be sure that when swimming, you don't overwork your body. If you haven't done it in a while, start slowly, and no matter what experience level you are, always warm up and drink plenty of water.

Local pools with free entry include Yea, Alexandra, Marysville, and Eildon.

Quick response times reported by Ambulance Victoria

PARAMEDICS and first responders across Victoria responded to close to 100,000 Code One patients between July and September this year.

Ambulance Victoria (AV) Executive Director Regional Operations, Danielle North, said this was a 2.7 per cent drop in demand compared to the previous three months, which was the busiest quarter on record for Code One cases.

As a result, ambulance response times to the most time-critical patients was 16 seconds faster on average across Victoria.

"Our dedicated paramedics and first responders do an incredible job working under pressure to provide the best care to communities across the state every day," Ms North said.

"Between July and September, we attended over 3000 more 'lights and sirens' cases compared to a year ago and 27.6 per cent extra Code One cases than before the pandemic five years ago."

From July to September 2024, AV crews across Victoria responded to 65.4 per cent of Code One cases within the state-wide target of 15 minutes, an improvement from 64.2 per cent in the previous quarter. The state-wide average response time to Code One emergencies was 15 minutes and 21 seconds.

Performance against the 15-minute target for Code One cases improved in 59 of Victoria's 79 Local Government Areas (LGAs) compared with the previous quarter.

Locally in Murrindindi Shire, 40.7 per cent of responses took less than 15 minutes. The average response time across 216 Code One responses was 22 minutes and 21 seconds. This is a decrease

of one minute and 34 seconds from the previous quarter.

Hume Regional Director, Peter Jenkins, said they know there is more work to do. Ambulance Victoria continues to work with hospitals to transfer patients as quickly as possible and ensure all Victorians receive the right care at the right time.

"Our expert Secondary Triage team of nurses and paramedics also make a real difference by connecting patients with the care they need while helping free up crews for patients in time-critical emergencies," Mr Jenkins said.

"From July to September, 41,142 people who did not need an emergency ambulance were instead connected to more appropriate care by paramedics and nurses in Secondary Triage.

"In 2023/24, paramedics referred nearly 43,000 patients to the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), with over three quarters cared for without transport to a physical ED."

Mr Jenkins said it is also important that everyone does their part, if your matter is not an emergency, consider using alternative care options and keep the highly skilled paramedics available for patients most in need.

"In less urgent cases, there are many options people can access when they need timely medical care and health advice all day every day, but not an emergency ambulance or calling Triple Zero (000)," Mr Jenkins said.

"This includes the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), Urgent Care Clinics and other options such as your GP or pharmacist, or Nurse-On-Call on 1300 60 60 24."

Outdoor Education Group celebrates 40th birthday

THE Outdoor Education Group (OEG) celebrated its 40th birthday on Saturday, December 14, with current and former staff coming from far and wide to join in the celebration.

The event was held at the original OAG location, Camp Eildon on Back Road in Eildon. Around 300 guests attended the party.

Despite the warm weather, there was plenty of shade. People enjoyed catching up, with many having not seen each other for years.

There were a variety of guest speakers at the event, including founder Tony Pammer and current CEO Pete Griffiths.



Uncle Shane Monk welcoming people to the land where the gathering took place. -AR



Around 300 people attended the OEG 40th birthday celebration. -AR



New CEO Pete Griffiths. -AR



Tony Pammer. -AR



A representative from St Michael's Grammar. -AR



Former head of the teaching team from 2020, PJ. -AR

Police warning for bushfire season

AS the weather warms up and the risk of fire increases, Victoria Police is urging people to ensure they are aware of their personal responsibility and accountability when it comes to fires this summer.

With people now dusting off the barbecue, heading out to a campsite or using machinery during warm weather, there is potential for reckless fire behaviour to have catastrophic consequences.

During the fire season Victoria Police implements Operation Safeguard, so that police are ready to respond to the threat of fire.

Operation Safeguard aims to prevent or reduce the impact of intentional and recklessly lit fires across Victoria, and involves preparedness arrangements and deployment plans for periods of heightened risk during the fire season.

Detectives from the Arson and Explosives Squad work closely with the 277 Arson and Explosive Liaison Officers (AELOs) across Victoria, all of whom use their local knowledge to prevent, detect and respond to fires.

This year, police are particularly reminding the community that they need to be aware of their personal responsibility when it comes to fires and the ramifications of reckless behaviour.

A fire started through reckless behaviour can have the same outcomes as a deliberately lit fire including significant loss of life, serious injury, property damage and more.

Traditionally only a small number of overall fire-related offences each summer are arson however recklessly lit fires continues to be a concerning issue across Victoria.

Last bushfire season (year end June 2024), there were 45 offences relating to causing a bushfire, 21 of these were due to reckless behaviour.

The most common causes of recklessly lit fires are disobeying restrictions relating to Total Fire Bans or fire danger periods, burning off, leaving campfires unattended, car exhausts and machinery, use of tools such as angle grinders and welding equipment out in the open, bonfires and flares, and farming machinery such as slashers and harvesters.

Police will investigate and take action to catch those responsible when a fire is deemed suspicious, whether it was a deliberate or reckless action.

Anyone found guilty of recklessly or intentionally causing a bushfire faces a penalty of up to 15 years imprisonment.

Lighting a fire on a total fire ban day can attract a fine of up to \$46,000 or up to two years in jail.

The community also plays an incredibly important role in the prevention of bushfires and remains key in reporting reckless or suspicious behaviour.

Police are keen to speak to anyone who witnesses concerning behaviour in relation to fires, or anyone who has been told about this behaviour taking place. This information could prove crucial in preventing a bushfire.

Operation Safeguard will run until March 2025. Further information about bushfire arson and reckless fires is also available on the Victoria Police website 'Bushfire arson' (police.vic.gov.au)

Anyone who witnesses suspicious or reckless behaviour as it is occurring should call Triple Zero (000) and anyone with other information should contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or crimestoppers.com.au

Detective Inspector Chris Murray, Arson and Explosives Squad said, "Victoria is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world and we have a long, tragic history with bushfires.

"There are so many things that the community can do to ensure the risk of bushfire is reduced this summer and the key one for us is taking personal responsibility for any fires you light or activities you undertake that could lead to a fire starting.

"Complacency or ignorance could quite literally kill you and lead to significant loss of life and property.

"I know that to many people, things like leaving a campfire unattended or operating machinery on a total fire ban day, don't seem like a big deal.

"However we, along with our emergency services partners, see the devastating consequences when these actions go wrong. It may seem like this behaviour is accidental, but it is actually criminal.

"The message from us is clear, you light it, you own it. We will be holding every single person to account for recklessly lighting fires.

"If you are going to be lighting a fire or engaging in any activities that could lead to a fire starting, then you need to be aware of your responsibilities.

"Check the rules and the forecast in your local area and adjust your behaviour accordingly. Once a fire starts it can be impossible to control or suppress, and can get away from you very, very quickly.

"I urge everyone this fire season to be aware of their responsibilities and work with us to stop any further tragedies occurring."

SPORT

Medal of Medallists at Marysville Golf Club

by Lesley Rundle

IT was a sunny afternoon for the Thursday nine holers who played stableford on the back nine holes. Mark Alexander (5) won the competition with 18 points beating Lloyd Flaherty (14) on a countback. The nearest the pins were won by Glen Rattay on the 11th and Ken Whittingham on the 18th. A reminder is that this Thursday, December 19 there will be a barbecue at noon for the Christmas break up and tee off will be at 1pm. All local and visiting golfers are invited to attend.

The main competition on Saturday was the Medal of Medallists involving a play off for all those who had won a monthly medal during the year. The finalists played a stroke round as did those who were not in contention. The ladies 2024 Medal of medallist is Sabrina Stow (22) with nett 72 and to keep it in the family her husband Travers (17) won the men's event with nett 71.

Congratulations to the Stows who will be presented with their trophies this coming Saturday. Sabrina was also the daily winner on a countback from Heather Jenkins (17). Ming Kuan (19) with nett 69 won the men's daily competition with Pat Orwin (33) the

runner up with nett 71 on a countback from Travers Stow. Mark Bambery, Andy O'Shea, Travers Stow and Heather Jenkins won the nearest the pins and Heather also won the Golden Shot. Keith Atwell with 25 won the putting competition. During the presentation members tucked into some delicious mince pies kindly made by Pat Whittingham. Members welcomed Beverley Bellman back, who was unable to play during the year and it was good to see her out on the course again.

Members are reminded that Saturday, December 21 is the annual presentation day and break up. With an 8am for an 8.30 shotgun start partners will be drawn randomly for a four-ball best ball game with players using just three clubs and a putter. After play, lunch and the presentation of the 2024 trophies will be held.

At the end of a very busy year all those members who volunteer their time for the

benefit of the club are thanked profusely for their contributions. Members thank especially the management committee who work tirelessly behind the scenes to manage and govern the club and who oversee every aspect of Marysville Golf Club.

All members wish local golfers, visitors and Murrindindi residents a Happy Christmas and a safe and healthy 2025.



Winners of the 2024 Medal of Medallists Travers and Sabrina Stow. -S

Merton cricketers back on the field

MERTON cricketers finally played a game of cricket after a bye and two washouts. Merton hosted Ovens Valley United on a slow lush Merton Cricket Ground (MCG) outfield. The visitors won the toss and batted making 80 all out in the 27th over with G. Zach 17 and L. McManus 16 the top scorers. Merton's bowlers all did the job for their captain lead by Henry Berriman 3/24, father Rohan 2/8 Harry Craddock 2/11, and Luke Benton 2/14 the wicket takers. The home side was good in the field lead by James Benton with two catches. Merton made short work of the 81 run target with a fired up Ross Mackinnon smashing an unbeaten 52 off 56 balls including three huge sixes. Fellow opener Daryl King turned the strike over with 12 not out helping his side to a comfortable victory in the 16th over. Merton host Beechworth Wanderers in the final game next Saturday before the Christmas break.

Echidnas squash competition

by Kristelle Leary

Wombats versus Koalas

LOCHLAN versus Jordan (fill in): Both players had some really great shots. Lochan had the upper hand with his superb serve. Lochlan for the win. 66 to 55.

Chris versus Mick (fill in): The first game started off evenly matched, but Mick slowly pulled away and stayed well ahead until game three. The third game saw Chris evening out the score until he eventually won the last game. It was too late, as Mick had already done enough damage to take home the win. 59 to 48.

Daniel W versus Simon: Simon played a game of careful shot placement, but Daniel had the pace to run down the ball. The third game was a point for point tussle. In the final

game Daniel got a run on his serve and blew the match open for a comfortable win. 69 to 55

Derrick versus Daniel K: Derrick opened by taking the first game and drawing the second. Daniel was easing himself into the game and got serious in the second half to win the match with a 10 point lead. 57 to 47.

Echidnas versus Platypus

ETHAN versus Tyler: A great game. Ethan had some hard shots to return, and Tyler had great placement. Ethan came out on top in the end. 68 to 47.

Matt versus Sally: Matt was running down every ball, barely giving Sally a chance to catch her breath. With his magical ability to appear by the ball, Matt won the match. 81 to 50.

Jared versus Michael M: Some excellent rallies and good shots interspersed with

mistakes on both sides. Jared had the goods and claimed the win. 59 to 48.

James versus Jack (fill in): Starting off strong, Jack won the first game. As James warmed up, he progressively got better with each game and the points showed it. James was victorious. 61 to 52.

Lions versus Cheetahs

BLAKE versus Beth (fill in): Beth had some great looping serves, but she was outmatched. Blakes beautiful shots down the walls showed his skill and helped him in his victory. 66 to 53.

Jodie versus Travis: With her strength and determination, Jodie started with a strong lead. Tenacious Travis made a comeback in game three but lost it again in the final game to see Jodie take home a comfortable win. 56 to 41.

Stuart versus Jim: Stuart kept Jim running and even had him sitting on the floor. As tired as he was, Jim was unphased and put in a consistent game to win with a sizeable point margin. 73 to 42.

Tigers versus Panthers

RANDY versus Reece: A tight game of surprises. Randy was on fire in the first half and looked to have the match in hand. Turning the tables, Reece made a comeback in the second half with two outstanding games to win the match. 64 to 60.

Lucas versus Sam: Sam started every game strong, but Lucas always chased him down. Lucas kept up the good work to take a big lead in the last game and win the match. 66 to 49.

James versus Phil: Taking off early, James never gave Phil a chance. James was excessively triumphant. 80 to 29.



The recent Thursday night winning team, Cheetahs: Jim, Travis and Jess (absent). -S



One of the recent Monday nights winning team, the Echidnas: James, Jared, Ethan and Matt. -S

Great effort for Alexandra cricketers

by Michael Mawson

THE Alexandra B-Grade team played in a thriller against Pyalong. For all of the Redbacks' team efforts and some individual excellence from a few players, they fell short by a single run against the visitors.

Playing at Rebel Park, due to the A-grade being scheduled on the turf wicket at Leckie Park, the B-Grade team finally welcomed Jack Savenye into the team as a late replacement for an injured Tim Polson.

Damien Zoch, the Pyalong captain won the toss and had no hesitation in choosing to bat first on the artificial pitch.

Opening bowlers Will Ellis and Ben Geldart did a commendable job in keeping the highly rated Pyalong opening batters quiet. Geldart was in particularly good form and hit the leg stump twice.

Pyalong grabbed the momentum in the middle of their innings when Patrick Ryan took advantage of several dropped catches and hit the boundary several times on the way to a total of 83.

Ryan's knock could have been described as a "whirlwind" innings, then an actual whirlwind appeared with a small willy-willy appearing in the ground's carpark.

Ryan was finally dismissed when he clouted a full-toss from Banjo Fitzpatrick only for Logan Conway

to take a sharp catch at cover. This left Pyalong at four-123.

What was looking like a big score for the visitors was restricted to 154 when Will Ellis and Ben Geldart resumed bowling and sent the remaining batsmen out cheaply. This included three ducks. Jack Savenye claimed his first wicket for The Redbacks during a tidy four over spell. Geldart was the pick of the bowlers with excellent figures of four-16.

The umpire called time after 40 overs rather than the full 45 because over rates were slow.

Alexandra's batting openers started the run chase in style with Michael Mawson and Levi Ronalds finding it easy to score until Mawson played a bewildering off glance that saw him bowled for 21. Ronalds was the beneficiary of a Pyalong player dropping the easiest of chances early in his innings and he went on to nonchalantly plunder runs off the Pyalong bowlers until he had to leave for work when his score was 58 not out.

The Alexandra middle order didn't find the going as easy when Will Ellis and Harrison Christie were upended by Will Wylie's pace. Logan Conway and Jordan Ferrier were cheaply dismissed off the bowling of Damien Zoch. This left the home team in a parlous state with the score at six-88.

After good innings with the ball, Ben Geldart and Luke Wal had to rescue the Redbacks with the bat. The pair added 32 runs until Geldart hit a catch to Pyalong's James Wilkins. The young player dropped the catch but was able to run Luke Wal out when the incident caused a running mix-up. Jack Savenye came in and looked comfortable until he was out, Leg before wicket for four.

This brought the youngest player, under 13 Dusty Fitzpatrick to the crease, with 21 more runs required for a win. The Pyalong fielders thought victory was moments away until they saw Dusty blocking out every ball with a resolute defence. This gave Ben Geldart the chance to work at achieving the victory target. Geldart hit several runs of Pyalong's leg spinner and took his score to 40. This also took Alexandra's total to 151. Damien Zoch brought himself back into the attack. This turned out to be a match-winning move when he found the edge of Geldart's bat with the score on 153. The keeper did the rest.

Pyalong were thrilled with the one run victory. They also were thanking their lucky stars that Levi Ronalds had to leave early.

The young Alexandra players deserve commendation for their developing perseverance, teamwork and calmness that almost won them a remarkable victory.

Last rounds before Christmas break at Alexandra Golf Club

by Elizabeth Goss

THE excitement of Christmas is growing with Christmas parties, the carols on Friday and of course, all the shopping to get the right presents and food.

Last Tuesday the winner was Brad Newton, back in form with a great score of (12) 41 points. The runner-up was Russell Purcell on (19) 35 points followed by Frank Devries on (27) 34 points.

Nearest the pin on the seventh and 18th went to Russell Purcell and on the 17th to John Greatorex. Ball run down: Bill Wind and Leo Dynes.

The last two Wednesdays before Christmas are full of fun for the ladies. On Wednesday December 11 they played the team game of puttos and this Wednesday is the Christmas party.

The winners of puttos were Judy Pearson, Donna Meggitt, Marie Stace and Barb Doyle with 54 points. The runners-up were Ruth Worland, Bronwyn Howell, Sue Greatorex and Helen Findlay with 56 points followed by Marg Fahey, Mor Gale and Sandra Morris on 57 points.

A break from golf over the Christmas season and then the serious business of the Summer Cup.

Daniel Burns continued his good form on Saturday winning the day with (19) 41 points. The days' runner-up was Luke Heard (2) with 39 points on a countback from Sharyn Petrzela with (20) 39 points. Next came Michael Bossonnet (12) on 38 points and then Jared Sloane (9) on 37 points.

Nearest the pin on the second went to Shane McGorlick, on the fifth to Brad Kidd, on the seventh to Brendan Smith, on the 12th to Greg Millard and on the 18th to Jared Williamson. Raffle winner: Brendan Smith.

Don't forget the Community Challenge Ambros on Saturday December 28. No handicap needed. Another important date is Saturday, January 11 when Alexandra will host the second round of the FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters.

THE ALEXANDRA • EILDON • MARYSVILLE

Standard Sport

SPORTS EDITORIAL - sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

ISSN 2200-6478



Division Four winners Bob Mayfield, Christine Mayfield, David Nicklos and Scott Ferrier. -S



Division Four winners Ian Harper, Bob Benghamy, Andy Tobias and Tim Langmead. -S

Big win for Alexandra Bowls Club Division Four

by Marie Evans

ALEXANDRA Bowls Club Division Four had a huge win over Tatura Hilltop in the last game before the Christmas break. Division six travelled to Euroa and came away with some good signs for the future. Midweek played away to Euroa in the penultimate game before the break.

Tatura Hilltop travelled to Alexandra. With an early start of 11am players missed the worst of the heat. There were three exceptional wins for Alexandra and a good win on the fourth rink.

David Nicklos (Skip), Bob Mayfield, Scott Ferrier and Christine Mayfield won 16 ends out of 21 and led for the entire game. They won 31 to six.

Doug Cooper (Skip), Ben Gilchrist, Ken Argent and Denice Chisholm led 17 to seven at the break. They won five out of the last eight ends to win 31 to 10. This included a five-shot

win on end 16. A convincing win of 14 ends out of 21.

Tim Langmead (Skip), Bob Benghamy, Andy Tobias and Ian Harper had an equally brilliant game. It was four all on end three, after which the Alexandra rink won 13 out of the next 18 ends. This included a five-shot win on end 16. They ran out easy winners 34 to 14.

Greg Gilmore (Skip), Larry Scott, Marie Evans and Lauren Gilchrist began well and had their opposition 14 to six at the break. They had increased this to 17 to six at end 15. However, Tatura Hilltop won the next four ends and reduced the deficit to 17 to 12 on end 19. Alexandra won the last two ends to win 21 to 12 in the closest match of the day.

The overall win and 18 points went to Alexandra for a 117 to 42 victory. This keeps Alexandra in second place on the ladder as Euroa won their game. Euroa 116 points, Alexandra 114, Dookie 113 and Shepparton

Park on 80. The next round is January 18 and is away to Dookie.

Division six played away to Euroa and despite losing the three rinks there were some good signs and improved play. John Blamey (Skip), Craig Parkinson, Christine Murphy and Rob Roach led nine to five on end eight but Euroa won the next three ends to lead 12 to nine. They had increased that lead to 17 to 11 on end 15 but Alexandra won the next two ends to trail by only three shots 14 to 17. Euroa eventually ran out winners 24 to 16.

Mal Gill (Skip), Ian Franklin, Marty Manning and Warren Nelson won eight ends. They won four out of the last eight ends to lose 15 to 29. A good sign for the future as they matched their opposition in the last ends played.

Ray Mathieson, Anne Gunton, Clive Murphy and Steve Kirby found the opposition relentless and were defeated. Euroa won the overall and are third on the ladder 97 points and Violet

Town are 98 and Nagambie 100. Alexandra plays at home to Dookie on January 18.

Mid-week played away to Euroa. Doug Cooper (Skip), Mal Gill, Coby Petersen and Mark Stone had the closest game. They were defeated 28 to 20. Bob Mayfield, John Blamey, Marty Manning and Christine Mayfield lost 33 to five and David Nicklos (Skip), Denice Chisholm and Tony Murphy were one player short and lost 34 to seven.

Mid-week has a game against Murchison at home before the Christmas break. Their season will resume on January 14 in an away game against East Shepparton.

Competitors are reminded that Singles and Pairs Club games need to be played as soon as possible.

The Alexandra Bowls Club wishes, players, their families and all readers of the Standard a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Murrindindi Little Athletics wraps up 2024 season.

THE Murrindindi Little Athletics club recently wrapped up an eventful couple of weekends of competition and camaraderie, with athletes braving everything from drizzle to heat as they pushed themselves to do their best.

On Saturday, December 7, despite the rain, teams gathered for a scavenger hunt

to kick things off, an energetic and fun warm-up. Laughter filled the air during a round of "laughing yoga," followed by stretching to get everyone ready for the action ahead. There were plenty of personal achievements on the day, including a standout performance from Kai Goonan, who set a new centre record. Additional

medals were handed out, including several bronze, and a well-deserved silver for a personal best (PB).

The main event was the 2024 Multi-Event, which went ahead despite the drizzle. While the weather was far from ideal, it wasn't enough to dampen the spirits of the athletes or their supporters. The barbecue

was a popular spot, with club members rewarded with a free snag for their bravery in showing up and competing in the rain.

The following Saturday, December 14 brought a completely different weather scenario, a hot morning that had everyone working hard to finish out the season strong. Athletes continued to give their across various events, wrapping up the last meet before the New Year.

A highlight of the day was the raffle draw, with all proceeds going to support Levi Campbell. Levi will be heading to New Zealand during the summer break to compete in the prestigious Colgate Games, and we all wish him the best of luck. We look forward to hearing how he fares.

As we head into the holiday season, the Murrindindi Little Athletics Club would like to extend a big thank you to all our members and supporters in the community. We can't wait to see everyone back next year. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year.



Bronze and Silver personal best medallion recipients. -S



Another Club record for Kai Goonan. -S



A Christmas Poem by the Philosopher Elf

Another year, done and dusted,
Time for plum pudding and custard,
Pour the gravy, spread the mustard,
Trousers tight, belts adjusted.

Watch the cricket, watch the yachts,
Wash the dishes, scrub the pots,
Playing with the tiny tots,
Jigsaw puzzles, joining dots.

Time to close another door,
Soon this year will be no more,
So, how will you remember your
Two thousand and twenty-four?

Would you crown it Best Year Yet?
Adventures had? Someone you met?
Or was it filled with some regret?
A year you can't wait to forget?

New arrivals, hugs goodbye,
Win and lose, laugh and cry,
Hit rock bottom, flying high,
Back again for another try.

Treasure all that you hold dear,
Leave what's done to disappear,
Moving on - tomorrow's here!
Merry Christmas. Happy New Year.

STEVE PAIX

