

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE

Standard

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

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Lucky escape for fishermen



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75 years of Koriella Fire Brigade



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Last Eildon potluck dinner of 2025



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Weekend sport



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ADH AGM: Done and dusted in less than nine minutes

ALEXANDRA District Health (ADH) conducted their AGM on Thursday, December 5 at the Alexandra Football Netball Club rooms.

CEO Jane Poxon commenced by introducing guest speaker Professor Phillip Parente, Clinical Services Director Cancer Services at Eastern Health. He spoke about Eastern Health's cancer services and locations, and about the improvements in survival rates.

ADH board chair, Kim Flanagan, then opened the formal part of the meeting. His speech in full was, "This is the Annual General Meeting of Alexandra District Health for financial year 2025. Over the past year, Alexandra District Health has continued to deliver strong outcomes for our patients and communities, despite the broader challenges of the healthcare sector.

"Our organisation ended the financial year with a modest surplus. An important thing that reflects the discipline of financial management and dedication of staff, senior management and the board, we remain committed to providing safe, high quality care, supported by a clear, strategic financial stability plan and guided by strategies across the community, clinical, governance and risk.

"As always, ADH maintains a strong connection with the people we serve, supported by the valued contributions of our community engagement community. We remain focused on ensuring sustainable, accessible, high-quality healthcare for Alexandra and the wider district, and we thank our dedicated staff and community for this ongoing support. I'm not going to go through the annual general report. It's a long read, so you all have a copy and you can go through it."

Board member Alan Studley, chair of the Finance and Audit and Risk Committee, said, "Three years ago

we were looking at rolling deficits of about a \$1 million to \$1,400,000 each year on the operating side of the hospital. The hospital in a sense into two areas, one is the operating salaries and wages and all those goods and services that are required to deliver patient care and on the other side is to carry those monies that we receive that go to buying equipment.

"We set about proving to the Health Department that we did have control of our costs to the extent that we possibly could. By that I mean that there were some areas where we felt we were underfunded, significantly underfunded, over previous years.

"We ran that strategy for two years, advising the Health Department every quarter of what our budget looked like against the actual expenditure, and it paid dividends in June 2024 when the Health Department recognised that we were underfunded for our operating budget, and we were topped up to the tune of about \$1.4 million... The Health Department recognised that a Transition grant, and we retained that Transition grant for the year that has just finished, and that's why we were able to post a very modest profit of \$114,000."

He also spoke about the state of Victoria's finances and the work done by the Auditor General, with the emerging risks being a six per cent growth in salaries and wages and a 14 per cent growth in goods and services. This also applies to the hospital. He said, "There is no spare capacity within the budgeting of Alexandra District Health."

He also stated, "It's been a good year. It builds on three years of hard financial work by the staff, who have delivered on two sets of cost savings. One set we put in place ourselves, about three years ago, and that was \$300,000. And the second set is the cost of the requirement put in place by Treasury across all Victorian hospitals on a pro-rata basis. And ours



ADH CEO Jane Poxon, chair Kim Flanagan and board member Alan Studley. -AR

in the first year was about \$200,000. This year it's about \$280,000. Next year to the tune of about \$300,000. So there's not much slack anywhere in this system, but we are under control at the moment."

CEO Jane Poxon thanked the staff and consumers at the hospital. She said of the staff, "I'm forever getting so many compliments about the care that they give and I just want to say I'm so proud over the last 12 months and thank you to the staff."

The speeches of Kim Flanagan, Alan Studley and Jane Poxon combined went for less than nine minutes, which must be some kind of record, however under the circumstances, it was surprising that there was no mention of the proposed merger and there were no questions from the floor. There were also no staff awards, as there have been at previous hospital AGMs.



Professor Phillip Parente from Eastern Health with ADH CEO Jane Poxon. -AR

ADH CEO questioned on proposed merger

ON Friday, December 5, Alexandra District Health (ADH) CEO Jane Poxon was sent a series of questions. She was asked: What are the next stages for the exploration of the merger and what opportunities will there be (if any) for further community engagement? If the merger goes ahead and the operations of Eastern Health (EH) are not found to advantage the area, what scope is there to rescind the agreement? Given that the board will be disbanded, who could make this decision? If this happens and if ADH is activity funded under EH, would ADH become block funded again? What are the board's impressions of community sentiment around the proposed

merger? Have there been any preliminary discussions with the Health Department or Minister regarding the proposed merger?

Ms Poxon responded, "The community engagement program for the exploration of a voluntary amalgamation between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health ran from November 6 to 21, with strong participation across both health organisations' catchments. More than 150 stakeholders were directly engaged, 211 people completed either the digital or paper copy of the survey, close to 200 people attended the Tea Talk sessions and more than 1100 community members accessed the Connecting Care website.

"A summary of staff, community and stakeholder feedback will be available during the week commencing Monday, December 8. It will highlight the key themes that emerged from the engagement.

"No decisions have been made, and the boards of both health services are currently preparing a business case, which is provisionally targeted for completion this month. The business case will draw on feedback received during the engagement period, as well as financial, service and workforce analysis, to identify the best way to strengthen local health care for the long term.

"The decision about a voluntary amalgamation is made by the Minister for Health. If a voluntary amalgamation were to proceed, the Minister for Health would appoint a Board for the new amalgamated health service."

Within seven minutes of Ms Poxon providing her response, it was pointed out via email that she hadn't answered the questions. A further question was also asked, 'Will council's survey results be factored into the feedback to be considered?'

We hope to receive a response for next week's edition.

Alexandra District Health
5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital
5736 0400

In an emergency dial
000

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

The Yea Chronicle

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ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

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Letters to the Editor

More smoke and mirrors

LAST week, the Victorian Government released their 2025/26 Budget Update, which provides some additional smoke and mirrors around the Emergency Services Tax and increased funding to CFA. They also announced the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program grants to brigades across the state.

The Emergency Services Tax primary producer rate will be frozen at the existing rate

of 28.7c per \$1000 capital improved value which was the rate under the old fire services levy. While some government releases are quoting a further two-year freeze, the actual budget update has costed the freeze out over the budget estimates to 2028/29.

From next year, the cap for eligible volunteers claiming a rebate for their farm or single farm enterprise will rise from the current \$5m per \$1000 CIV (Capital improved value) to \$10m CIV, which will double the rebate for those members. However, volunteers that rent get no relief for the tax built into their rent and volunteers who live with a partner but their property is in the name of the partner remain ineligible to claim.

The increase to the fixed charge fee for residential properties will be delayed a further 12 months, which is welcome but doesn't help those who are ineligible.

As Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) has communicated before, the previous freeze in primary producer rates was only announced for one year, so this announcement addresses our strong feedback that farmers needed certainty, and the unknown was causing them great stress and anxiety.

While VFBV remains principally opposed to the Emergency Services Tax, we do welcome last week's announcements as small steps in the right direction and a sign that our concerns are being heard.

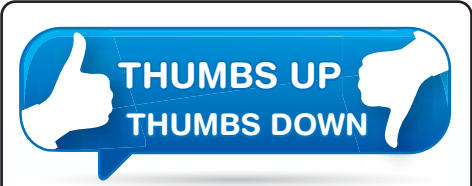
Regardless, it is important that the community understand that only 20 cents in every dollar collected goes to CFA (not brigades) and only five cents goes to SES. Government reaps 75 per cent of this tax to fund government departments that were previously funded through consolidated revenue.

Despite improvements across District 12's fleet with local brigades receiving vehicle upgrades (including my brigade), CFA still has over 700 single-cab fire trucks that are over 30 years old. Last week's VESEP announcement saw a number of District 12 Brigades benefit with vehicle upgrades and facility improvements but there is a long way to go. What is important to understand is that each brigade is required to provide their own community funds in order to qualify for a VESEP grant.

Of the \$26m announced last week, \$4m comes from donations to brigades or the fundraising done by brigades. Only \$18m is actually being funded by government. How much comes from the Emergency Services Tax is unclear.

Our volunteers desire better vehicles and better station facilities. While we welcome changes to volunteer rebates and grants to brigades, it is important that the community continue to financially support their local brigades when they can in these times of tight household budgets.

Paul Denham AFSM, State Councillor,
CFA District 12 Council



THUMBS DOWN: To UGFM for their broadcast on the evening of December 2 and the statement that the Breakaway bridge is on the road to nowhere and funds to replace the bridge could be better spent elsewhere.

THUMBS UP: To the Eildon Bowling Club for their support of the Eildon Potluck dinners and the fabulous team of volunteers who make this possible.

THUMBS UP: To the Eildon Breast Cancer fundraiser. It was a successful event due to the generosity of the Eildon Bowling Club, the Eildon Lions Club, the community, the businesses and the volunteers. Thank you all so much. We raised \$2150.80.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down is a reader's contribution section of Alexandra Newspapers. Send your Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down to editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Contributions will be edited and/or published at the Editor's discretion. We request that this section not be used as a slander attack on persons, businesses or property

Alexandra and District Senior Citizens Club report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

A WELL attended and enthusiastic bunch at this week's meeting looked forward to Christmas Lunch at the Rubicon Hotel next Friday. Jeanette has tickets ready for the raffle and members are requested to be at the clubroom at 11.30am for travel to Thornton.

Smiles appeared on the faces as Dave told the jokes and John R, Ian and Joan won the chocolate. Joan was a winner again with an

impressive score in the Christmas codebreaker competition conducted while the members enjoyed refreshments.

A big thank you to Dave for standing in for me writing this report last week as I attended yet another medical appointment. The club welcomes new members. Bring your singing voices for the last meeting of the year on Friday, December 19 when there will be carol singing. Meanwhile stay safe and keep smiling.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Alexandra District Health
5772 0900

Non-emergency police assistance
131 444

EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon

UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain

MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS

WEEKLY

Tue

Women's Walk @ 7am @Embassy of Ideas

Wed

Oasis Church, free coffee connection Ph 0408 123 581

Fri

Man Walk @ 7am meet at RSL Hall

Fri

Communita 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

Sun

Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611

Sun

AA meeting: 7pm St Johns Hall. Ph 1300 22 22 22.

MONTHLY

1st Wed

Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318

1st Thur

Murrindindi Men 6-8pm@ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

1st Sun

Crop/Produce swap 10.30am-noon @ Embassy of Ideas

2nd Tue

Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285

2nd Wed

Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.

3rd Wed

Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318

3rd Thu

Alexandra Ladies Probud 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252

3rd Thu

Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas

3rd Sun

Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913

4th Wed

Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.

4th Thu

Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517

Last Fri

Carers Group 10am Grant Street Grocer. 0418 402 455

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

For a \$10 annual fee for one line, your club or organisation's
regular meeting dates will be listed each week. Not only is this
a reminder to your regular members but also a good source of
what groups are available in the community, when they meet
and a contact phone number.

Weekly Weather

December 10 - December 16, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	9	23	Wednesday	8	22
Thursday	12	27	Thursday	12	26
Friday	16	28	Friday	17	30
Saturday	11	25	Saturday	11	26
Sunday	9	22	Sunday	10	22
Monday	8	19	Monday	9	20
Tuesday	10	24	Tuesday	10	24

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to
editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au
or by mail to Alexandra Newspapers
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Letters **must be 300 words or less.** We will
not publish defamatory letters, or content
which is offensive, threatening or containing
personal attacks. Submitted letters may be
edited before going to print.
All letters must contain writers name,
address and contact number. (not necessarily
for publication). Letters without these details
supplied cannot not be published. Deadline
for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.

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Facebook

Standard
The Yea Chronicle

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT				
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	12.00PM Mon	1.86	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	12.00PM Mon	0.53	LGH	steady
Acheron River at Taggerty	12.00PM Mon	0.68	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	11.51AM Mon	0.14	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	11.25AM Mon	0.59	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	10.00AM Mon	0.33	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	12.00PM Mon	0.90	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	12.00PM Mon	3.93	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	12.00PM Mon	0.49	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Trawool	12.00PM Mon	1.65	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	12.00PM Mon	0.31	LGH	steadyl
Goulburn River at Seymour	12.00PM Mon	1.89	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	12.00PM Mon	1.10	LGH	steady
*ISSUED AT 12:58 PM AEDT MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2025				

DISTRICT RAINFALL	
Alexandra	5mm
Buxton.....	19mm
Eildon (AWS).....	13mm
Flowerdale.....	13mm
Jamieson.....	15mm
Kinglake.....	19mm
Lake Eildon.....	12mm
Mansfield.....	4mm
Taggerty	19mm
Yarck	27mm
Yea.....	13mm
Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday	
LAKE EILDON	
Height above sea level this week.....	275.59m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	55.5%
Metres below full supply.....	13.31m
Daily inflow	2500ML
Release.....	4000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....	76%

ALEXANDRA
EILDON - MARYSVILLE

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DEADLINES

Real Estate	Thursday 5pm
Trades & Services	Thursday noon
Early General News	Thursday 5pm
Classifieds	Monday noon
Editorial	Monday 9am
Sports Editorial	Monday 10am
Letters to the Editor	Monday 9am
Thumbsup/down	Monday 10am

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

5772 1002 or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Bendigo Bank scholarship applications open for 2026

AS Year 12 students across Australia await the arrival of their ATAR results, Bendigo Bank's scholarship program is celebrating 19 years of providing life-changing education opportunities for students, with applications for the 2026 academic year now open.

The program consists of more than 70 Community Bank scholarships supporting local students, along with Bendigo Bank funded scholarships aimed at supporting rural, regional, agricultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In 2025, \$1.7 million in support was awarded to 348 first-year scholars and 141 continuing scholars.

Since 2006, Bendigo Bank and its Community Bank partners have assisted more than 2300 students with scholarships valued at over \$15 million dollars, supporting their academic, professional and personal growth. The program is overseen by the bank's

charitable arm, the Community Enterprise Foundation, with Bendigo Bank's Directors contributing a portion of the funding of the scholarships funded by the bank.

Bendigo Bank Chair Vicki Carter said the program was an important example of how the bank delivers on its purpose to feed into the prosperity of its customers and the community.

"Bendigo Bank is proud to continue supporting the scholarship program in conjunction with our Community Bank partners. We understand the challenges some students face in accessing further education, particularly those in our regions who may need to relocate to attend their chosen place of study," Ms Carter said.

"Bendigo Bank's scholarship program helps students overcome significant

barriers to further education such as travel, accommodation costs and the rising cost of living, which are among several important considerations for students planning the next stage of their education journey.

"Over the past 19 years, we have been pleased to contribute to the development of our next generation of leaders. The range of scholarships now on offer through our programs will assist students to undertake the courses of their choice and to realise their full potential."

The 2026 Bendigo Bank and Community Bank scholarships include:

Bendigo Bank Regional and Rural Scholarship: 15 university scholarships of \$6500 per student, each year for two years. Up to six TAFE scholarships of \$5000 per student per year for up to two years.

Bendigo Bank Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship: Four scholarships of \$6500 per student per year for two years for those studying at either university or TAFE.

Bendigo Bank Agribusiness Scholarship: Two university scholarships, \$6000 per student, per year for two years, and one TAFE scholarship, \$3000 per year for one year.

Robert Johanson Bendigo Bank Board Scholarship: \$8000 per year for two years.

Community Bank Scholarships: Around 70 Community Banks are participating in Bendigo Bank's scholarship program offering scholarships for university, agricultural colleges, TAFE, and secondary school study.

Applications close January 31, 2026. Find out more about the scholarship program at bendigobank.com.au/community/foundation/scholarships/

Shaping Murrindindi's Future strategy update

MURRINDINDI Shire Council's Local Development Strategy, Shaping Murrindindi's Future, is active and progressing through community groups and council.

The Local Development Strategy sets out six innovation opportunity areas. Each area has an Innovation Working Group and all groups welcome new members.

Updates

The Farm Forestry Futures group has secured funding to identify the best ways to expand farm forestry in the shire. It is also assessing the feasibility of an interpretive centre and a small scale timber processing facility.

Beyond the Black Spur are focusing on tourism branding and identity for the south east corridor of the shire. Current work includes farm gate food experiences, new tracks and trails around Marysville. A grant application has been submitted to progress the next stage.

The Circular Economy group is refining its focus on food waste. It is exploring opportunities created by council's kerbside collection of Food Organics Garden Organics.

Sustainable Agriculture, Aquaculture and Horticulture work continues with sector leaders and the Department of Agriculture to plan for the land surrounding the Yea Saleyards.

Under Advanced Manufacturing, council has applied for a grant to activate industrial zoned land across the shire. This will support expansion by current manufacturers and encourage new enterprises to establish locally.

Health, Aged Care and Social Assistance engagement is underway on a draft plan to address workforce challenges across the shire.

Visit council's website or contact council on 5772 0333 to get involved. All groups are active and open to new members.



The All Abilities group on International Day of People with Disability, December 3, celebrating with a barbecue at Rotary Park in Alexandra. -AR

Update on January's Glenburn fire

ON January 7, a fire occurred at a farm in Glenburn which has transmission lines running through it. Fortunately, the fire was spotted by the farmer and emergency services were quickly called in.

The fire was investigated by Energy Safe Victoria. After many enquiries about the fire, they provided the following update.

An Energy Safe Victoria spokesperson said, "The grass fire at Glenburn on January 7 appears to have been caused when transmission lines induced a hazardous voltage on a nearby deactivated electric farm fence. However, there is insufficient evidence to prove the exact circumstances of the incident.

"Energy Safe recognises that any fire in this region raises community concern, and we took this matter very seriously. While our enquiries found no evidence of any breach of the Electricity Safety Act, this incident reinforces the need for strong oversight, and we remain focused on holding energy network operators to their safety obligations to mitigate bushfire risks."

The following information was also provided. On January 7, Energy Safe was alerted by the CFA to a fire incident in

Glenburn, Victoria involving a transmission line owned and operated by AusNet Services.

Energy Safe's investigation into the incident did not find evidence of a breach of the Electricity Safety Act 1998.

Electromagnetic fields around high voltage transmission lines can induce voltages on nearby metallic structures, such as fences, where adequate earthing is not maintained.

Major electricity companies, including AusNet, must submit an Electricity Safety Management Scheme (ESMS) to Energy Safe for acceptance every five years. These plans are a legal requirement that outline how companies will mitigate safety and bushfire risks on their networks. Energy Safe monitors company compliance with ESMS.

As part of its ESMS, AusNet is responsible for engaging with landholders to ensure they are aware of these voltage hazards and understand their responsibilities regarding farm fences in transmission easements. These include seeking permission from the network operator to install metal fences within these zones, maintaining adequate earthing systems and adhering to conditions imposed by the network operator.

Molesworth collision accused pleads not guilty

A COMMITTAL hearing was conducted at the Shepparton Magistrates Court on Tuesday, December 2, regarding the collision on the Goulburn Valley Highway near Molesworth which resulted in the death of a 34 year old Sebastopol man.

Twenty-five year old Wonga Park man, Jackson Brownfield, pleaded not guilty to the charges relating to the crash and it will now proceed to trial.

A directions hearing will be held in January 2026. He will remain on bail until that time.

Guilty plea over Yarck death

DAVID Graham Berry, from Seymour, has pled guilty to a hit and run in Yarck which killed a 56 year old Alexandra motorcyclist in May 2024. He died at the scene.

He had been facing trial after pleading not guilty in February, but changed his plea to guilty on December 2 at the Shepparton Magistrates Court.

Mr Berry, 43, was driving a ute stolen from a Euroa hotel earlier that day. He travelled along the Maroonday Highway at Yarck and crashed into the motorcyclist.

He pleaded guilty to culpable driving causing death while under the influence of alcohol and drugs, failing to stop after an accident, and unlicensed driving.

Mr Berry was remanded in custody. There will be a pre-sentence hearing in April 2026.

ALEXANDRA RACE CLUB

SATURDAY
27 DECEMBER

2025



Alexandra Country & Western Meeting

Family Fun Day with Kelly Sports and heaps of other family activities, and much much more
• \$20pp or \$15pp for concession card holders • Children 15 and under FREE • Gates open at noon

Buses
available from
Eildon & Yarck
Book online

BUS TIMETABLE

Return Bus Ticket \$10 book online at country.racing.com/alexandra
Children 15 and under Free but must have a ticket. Patrons must have a ticket to catch the bus.

Route 1 Eildon Bus

11.00am Eildon Pondage Caravan Park
11.05am Eildon Town Bus Stop – Main St
11.15am Big 4 Holiday Park
11.20am Eildon Waters Holiday Park
11.30am Rubicon Hotel
11.45pm Alexandra Race Club

Book buses online

country.racing.com/alexandra

Route 2 Yarck Bus

11.00 Taggery 4 Seasons CP
11.10 Acheron Twin Rivers CP (gate)
11 35 Molesworth Pub
11.45 Yarck Pub

BOOKINGS: country.racing.com/alexandra





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
0408 123 581
Meeting every Sunday @ 10am

**MOUNT CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY
BAPTIST CHURCH**
37 Grant Street , Alexandra
Pastor Daniel Kriss
Services 10am every Sunday
Phone 0400 282 536
mccbc.com.au

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

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE
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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.

Congratulations to Peter Geldart, winner of the double pass for Cathedral Lodge and Golf Club Invitational day. Enjoy. Thanks to everyone who entered.

See this edition for all Murrindindi Shire Council closure dates over the holiday period.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

2025 Cathedral Invitational will be packed with leading and emerging names in Australian golfing, the tournament is set to be a kicker. Tickets are on sale to the public for day two. \$60 for adults, or \$30 for adults

living within a 30 kilometre radius of the course, \$30 for concession, and children under 12 are free. For more information, visit cathedralinvitational.com

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

You are invited to attend an Ecumenical Christmas Carol Celebration Service at 6pm at St Mary's Catholic Church, Alexandra. Refreshments will be served after the service. For further information contact Fr Mario Hendricks 0435 953 777 or email mdphen@yahoo.com

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25
- MERRY CHRISTMAS

Will you be alone for Christmas? Family out of town? No-one around to enjoy the day with? Embassy of Ideas is hosting a community Christmas lunch. Everyone is welcome. Singles, couples, families. St Johns Hall,

Alexandra. All food provided, cold meats, salads and desserts. Bookings are required for catering purposes. Text Sasha 0422 225 801 or email embassyofideas@gmail.com

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27

Alexandra Race Club will be holding the Alexandra Country and Western Meeting. Gates open at noon. Book the return bus for \$10, online at country.racing.com/alexandra.

Revised
construction
dates for the
Lake Eildon
Campground
upgrades

AFTER consultation with the community and stakeholders, Parks Victoria has revised the construction schedule to make sure that visitors can camp at Lake Eildon during the January school holidays.

Construction will start at Lakeside and Devil Cove Campgrounds after the January 26 long weekend 2026. Both will reopen before the Easter public holidays. Candlebark campground will remain open during this period.

Candlebark Campground will close for construction after the Easter holidays and will reopen in mid-2026.

Park Victoria started building a new toilet next to the main boat ramp in December. The existing toilet block at nearby Herb Fitzroy Day Visitor Area will remain open until the new toilet is finished.

Camping bookings at Lakeside and Devil Cove Campgrounds are open until January 26, with campers to check-out on January 27.

Bookings will reopen at Lakeside and Devil Cove Campgrounds in time for Easter.

Camping at Candlebark Campground remains available until after Easter.

This staged construction approach keeps as much camping as possible open to the public during the construction period.

Water supply issues caused by ageing infrastructure have limited the capacity of the Fraser Block campgrounds in recent times.

Much of the water supply infrastructure was built in the 1960s and has deteriorated beyond repair. Changing the water and wastewater management infrastructure in the park ensures that these systems meet today's environmental standards.

To address these issues, Parks Victoria are installing new accessible toilet blocks at Lakeside, Candlebark and Devil Cove Campgrounds.

Each new toilet block will feature a state-of-the-art dry-vault system, removing the need for water to be carted into the park. This provides an environmentally sustainable and cost-effective solution. Non-drinking water for hand washing will be provided by a gravity-fed rainwater tank.

The new facilities will not include showers and toilets will be non-flushing. Campers will need to bring their own drinking water.

These updates address the issues caused by ageing water and wastewater infrastructure. They meet today's environmental standards and ensure that camping at Lake Eildon National Park is sustainable.

The new facilities will enable more Victorians to go camping in the great outdoors. They are funded by a \$4.6 million investment from the Victorian Government's 'Victoria's Great Outdoors' program.

Draft Murrindindi Health Network
Plan released for comment

MURRINDINDI Shire Council, in conjunction with the community and local health services, has released the draft Murrindindi Health Network Plan. They began working on the project in Australia 2025, and are seeking to understand the gaps, opportunities and aspirations for a local health service.

The project was funded through the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's (DEEAC) Community Development Fund.

Alexandra District Health's announcement of a potential merger with Eastern Health came part way through the development of the plan, and this doesn't appear to have been factored in.

Council is asking that the community review the draft plan and provide feedback about whether the plan reflects people's values and priorities for the shire.

The report states, "Getting the right care, at the right time, close to home is getting harder. We know from the what

you've told us, and what we've uncovered through data, that mental health, physical health and social connection are key issues for our community and well below the state average on many indicators, sometimes from not having access to the services locally, and sometimes to lack of awareness and communication.

"At the same time, the people who care for us, nurses, doctors, aged care workers, disability support workers, allied health professionals and many others, are under pressure. It is getting harder to attract and keep staff in small rural towns.

"Our Goal: The Health and Aged Care Workforce Strategy brings together local hospitals, aged care, disability providers, community organisations and council to plan for the future, so that everyone in Murrindindi can access safe, local care as our population grows and ages."

Further information can be found at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/projects/healthcare

Shire's draft Guidelines for
Renewable Energy Development

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting the community to provide feedback on its draft Guidelines for Successful Renewable Energy, which are open for consultation until Sunday, February 8, 2026.

The draft guidelines have been developed in response to growing interest in large-scale renewable energy projects and transmission infrastructure in the shire. They represent a proactive approach to ensuring renewable energy development strengthens, rather than compromises, the shire's values and future. Early-stage proposals have already sparked community concern around landscape protection, farming viability, tourism impacts, amenity, and environmental stewardship.

Deputy Mayor Anita Carr said the draft guidelines reflect community input. "This is a significant step for Victoria, and for Murrindindi, in shaping how renewable energy projects are planned. We've heard loud and clear that our landscapes, farming, tourism, and community wellbeing must be protected as Victoria transitions to renewable energy. These guidelines set clear expectations for how large-scale projects must be planned and delivered in Murrindindi. Partnership, transparency, and tangible benefits for locals are non-negotiable," Cr Carr said.

The guidelines provide a framework for developers, government agencies, and decision-makers. They emphasise early and genuine engagement with the community, collaboration with council and Traditional

Owners, full transparency, environmental stewardship, and the protection of significant landscapes. Respect for Country is central, ensuring Traditional Owners are partners in planning, while clear criteria for project siting, community benefits, and responsible decommissioning are also considered.

Cr Carr said the guidelines are a crucial step in balancing the shire's clean-energy opportunities with the protection of its unique character. "The guidelines make it clear what our community expects and what will earn its support. They put our values first: our landscapes, our environment, our identity, and our future."

While the draft guidelines have been shaped by the voices of many community members so far, council emphasises that this is only the beginning of the conversation. Council is encouraging all residents, whether directly affected or simply interested in Murrindindi's future, to review the draft and share their views.

Your feedback will help ensure the final guidelines reflect the full breadth of perspectives across the shire. Council wants to hear from farmers, businesses, community groups, local residents, young people, and anyone who cares about how renewable energy projects are planned in Murrindindi.

The draft guidelines and opportunities to provide feedback are available on council's online engagement platform, The Loop, at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/renewable

Attendees enjoying a Christmas Day lunch in a previous year. -S



Lucky escape for fishermen

THREE fishermen had a lucky escape on December 1 after their tinny overturned in unseasonably cold conditions on the Goulburn River.

Just after 5pm, Alexandra SES volunteers were paged to an emergency call-out approximately seven kilometres downstream from Alexandra.

SES crews met police at the scene before launching the rescue boat in rainy, nine degree weather.

Once underway, the crew located the three fishermen downstream who had taken their tinny out on its maiden voyage in the hope of catching trout.

As the group attempted to head home for the day, the outboard motor stalled, leaving them to drift downstream.

Their tinny then collided with a tree and overturned, sending all three men into the freezing water.

Swimming across the river, the men managed to secure the boat on the riverbank before phoning emergency services.

Alexandra SES volunteers arrived on scene around 30 minutes later to rescue the three friends, all aged in their 20s.



SES members on the lookout for the tinny. -S



The tinny on the bank of the Goulburn River. -S

ARE you alone this Christmas? New to town? At a loose end on Christmas Day?

If you are looking for some company and wanting to connect with others on Christmas Day, you are warmly invited to join Embassy of Ideas for a Community Christmas Lunch at St Johns Hall at 39 Downy Street, Alexandra from 11am to 2pm, lunch is served at 12pm.

This lunch is free and all food is provided, cold meats, salads and dessert. This event is open to everyone, singles, couples and

families. Everyone is welcome. All kids get a Christmas present.

To book your place, please contact Sasha and provide any dietary requirements on 0422 225 801 or email embassyofideas@gmail.com

This event is hosted by the Embassy of Ideas. The event is made possible by the generosity of many individuals and organisations in our community. If you would like to contribute towards the lunch or volunteer to help out on the day, please get in touch.



Nicole Kelly's book, *Forever Sammy*, was launched at the Alexandra Library on Thursday, October 27. Nicole (centre) read and signed her beautifully illustrated picture book and donated a copy to Alexandra District Health. -S

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25 DECEMBER | 11am - 2pm
Lunch served at 12pm
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The Embassy of Ideas will again be hosting a FREE Christmas Lunch.
All food provided - cold meats, salads and desserts.
Everyone is welcome - Singles, Couples & Families
Booking require by for catering purposes
Call or Text Sasha 0422 225 801 or email embassyofideas@gmail.com

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Second Sunday of each month
Sunday, December 14
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ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stella Brewer

Stella consistently shows the school values. She has great integrity both in class and in the playground. She gives everything a red hot go. Stella can be relied upon to help out whenever asked. She is kind to everyone in the school. Stella has a positive attitude and takes on feedback to improve. We are proud to have you in our learning community, Stella. You are a star.

EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shayla Smith

For demonstrating the school value achievement by singing magnificently at the grade six graduation.



Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kingslake branch

Bendigo Bank



The book was illustrated with photos and with drawings created by students from Alexandra Primary School. -AR

A very special book presented to Kellock residents

ALEXANDRA Secondary College students, Zoe and Charlie, along with teacher Jackie Tossol, attended Kellock Lodge on Thursday, December 4, for a very special presentation. It was a book, Pages from the Past.

Four students participated in the creation of the book, but unfortunately Ava and Aiden were unable to attend.

The genesis for the project came when the four students attended a leadership camp, and were keen to develop a local project. They attended Kellock Lodge and interviewed some of the residents about their lives, then wrote up their stories.

These stories were read to Alexandra Primary School, where students from Prep, year one and year two were invited to draw pictures based on what they heard.

The stories, drawings and photos of the residents were then compiled into a beautiful book and presented to the delighted residents.



Zoe, teacher Jackie Tossol and Charlie, with their book, Pages from the Past. -AR



Residents were very keen to read the book. -AR



There was certainly a lot of interest in the drawings and stories. -AR



Zoe getting a hug from one of the residents. -AR

Opportunities available for retirees at Beolite Village

BEOLITE Village is a small not-for-profit retirement village situated just minutes from Mansfield's main street that offers secure housing and a welcoming community in a rural setting.

Stage eight construction is currently underway at the village, meaning there is an opportunity for people looking to downsize and switch to a more relaxed lifestyle.

Bek Lennon, the Village Manager, explained how the stage-by-stage construction works, and what is on offer at Beolite Village.

"We are a small not-for-profit retirement village and we just build in small amounts. Every year, we're aiming to do about eight

builds a year. From the inception of the village, we have built-in stages," Bek said.

"All it means is, because we're not a big developer, we just build a couple at a time and then we put people in those homes and then we build another couple of homes. At the moment we do have quite a high wait list for people coming into the village.

There are a range of amenities on offer at Beolite Village.

"We've got a range of common areas and they include our community centre which has a library, a very large billiards table, table tennis, we've got a croquet lawn, a pétanque

court, we have an on-site hairdressing salon and an allied health room," Bek said.

"We also have on the grounds a community garden which has vegetables that the residents run so they can grow their own and also have chickens and beehives. We've got a hobby shed, walking trails. We've got a putting green and an enclosed dog run. We're very, very pet friendly here. We love our animals.

"So there's a range of facilities here that they can access. Then there's things in the broader community. We're across the road from the Mansfield Golf Club. We're also very close to the hospital and Bindaree [Retirement Centre] and Buckland House [Nursing Home], which are the aged care facilities as well."

Beolite Village is an independent living retirement village, designed to offer less maintenance for people looking to spend more time doing the things they enjoy.

"We get a lot of people that come in off farms, where it is just too big to look after," Bek said.

"They really want to downsize, and they want to go somewhere where the vast majority of the maintenance is all done for them. They don't worry about it. So we're very popular with people downsizing off farms in this broader northeast region.

"And then we also get those that come in from town as well. Again, just wanting a bit more of a lock up and leave lifestyle so they can move in. A lot of them go away for months on end. And they know that they're home is secure here. That's been a big thing for people.

"What we find here is we get people that really want to get actively involved in everything that's happening around the village and others that we barely see because they're away travelling all the time and seeing their families, they're off playing golf, all those kind of things. So people can do what they want in that space and what suits them."

For more information about Beolite Village and what opportunities are currently available, visit their website at beolitevillage.org/



Beolite Village is located on the outskirts of Mansfield and offers low-maintenance living for retirees. -S



The housing options at Beolite Village are built in stages, meaning there are opportunities now and more in the future. -S

Local NAPLAN scores released

THE NAPLAN results for Victorian schools were released on the My School website on Wednesday, December 3, after students sat the test in March.

Locally, the highest ranking primary school was Middle Kinglake at 169th place in the list of Victorian primary schools. Their Year Five average was 532.6.

Eildon Primary School was in second place, ranked 362 with a Year Five average of 516.8. This put them in sixth place among all of the regional primary schools. Middle Kinglake didn't appear in the regional list and may therefore have been classified as metropolitan.

Marysville Primary School was next, ranking 608 with a Year Five average of 502. They were 16th on the regional list.

Kinglake Primary followed, ranking 701 with a Year Five average of 468.

Alexandra Primary School ranked 48th on the regional list, ranking at 942 on the overall list and achieving a Year Five average of 486.6.

Only slightly behind was Yea Primary School. They ranked 958 on the overall list, with a Year Five average of 486.

It was followed by Kinglake West Primary School, ranking 1198 with a Year Five average of 474.6.

St Marys Primary School ranked 1414 with a Year Five average of 460.

No data was available for Sacred Heart Primary School, Buxton Primary School and Flowerdale Primary School.

Among our local high schools, Yea High School wasn't far behind, achieving 378th place overall and a Year Nine average of 554.6.

Alexandra Secondary College came in at 414 on the overall list. Their Year Nine average was 549.6.

Ready to downsize without compromise?



RARE OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE INTO A BRAND-NEW HOME AT BEOLITE VILLAGE

Featuring a north-facing open-plan living area, spacious bathroom, double garage and an alfresco courtyard, this 7.6-star energy-rated home includes premium finishes, including a walk-in pantry and soft-close cabinetry. Enjoy low-maintenance living, with more time for doing what you love, surrounded by landscaped gardens and like-minded neighbours.



\$545,000

Visit our website for more details about this home and what it's like living at Beolite Village. Retirement Village rules apply including minimum entry age. Homes are on a lifetime lease basis and service and management fees apply.

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An Ecumenical Christmas Carol Celebration Service

We would like to cordially invite all the people of the district, to join us for a joyous Christmas Caroling get together.

Date: Friday, December 12, 2025 at 6pm

Venue: St Mary's Catholic Church Nihil St, Alexandra

Refreshments will be served after the service
For further information contact:
Fr Mario Hendricks
Mobile 0435 953 777
Email: mdphen@yahoo.com



Glencoe Group steps up Alexandra presence

GLENCOE Group, the leading Victorian truss and frame manufacturer, is stepping up its presence in Alexandra, with the site now set to become the company's key timber production hub.

Site Manager, Chris Piggott, explained that Glencoe currently operates across three locations: Timber in Alexandra, steel fabrication in Kilsyth, and a new Mornington office to support design and procurement as the business continues to grow.

After reviewing production costs, the team found that consolidating all timber truss manufacturing in Alexandra made strong long-term sense. Even with freight, the numbers pointed to regional manufacturing being more efficient and sustainable, a sign that major businesses can thrive in country towns. Glencoe acquired the Alexandra site nearly 15 years ago, and this latest initiative and investment confirms their commitment to the region.

"It's good for the locals," Chris said.

"We're growing again, getting back to the level of activity this site used to have. We've brought on six new people very quickly, and we're still looking to hire. It's not just about growing a business; it's about building up the community."

For Chris, the move has also brought a welcome change to his own routine. After years commuting to Thomastown, Glen Iris and Clayton, he's now working closer to his home in Buxton while staying in the industry he's built his career around.

Managing Director, Jake McArthur, said the company's renewed investment reflects a long-term commitment to Alexandra and the people who live here.

"For us, it's about more than expanding production, it's about creating secure, meaningful career paths for local people. This is an older site with a lot of potential, and while there's still plenty of work to do, every improvement supports not only our own growth but the growth of many

local trade businesses who work alongside us. We want to build a sustainable, generational business here, and that starts with investing in good local people who share our values," Jake said.

With high demand for timber trusses, frames and floor systems, the Alexandra site is set to stay busy well into the future. Glencoe currently employs 13 locals, supported by a small team from Melbourne, and they're actively looking for more people, from assembly line workers and forklift drivers to anyone confident with tools or machinery. Experience isn't essential, and opportunities for apprenticeships in prefabrication are also being explored.

The nearly 20-acre site is now being reviewed for further production opportunities, with Glencoe exploring ways to expand manufacturing and bring even more activity to the region. Transport operations are also under review, and the company is open to partnering with both permanent and contract-based logistics operators who want to work locally.

Glencoe continues to use mostly pine, along with hardwood and laminated veneer lumber (LVL), and is pleased to see timber supply back to normal after the challenges of the COVID period.

With steady investment and deeper ties to the region, Glencoe hopes to encourage more local builders and developers to support their community by sourcing prefabricated timber frames and structural steel products through Glencoe Group. The company has been part of Alexandra's landscape for almost 15 years, backing local clubs and initiatives along the way, and plans to remain a strong contributor to the town's growth.

As Chris summed it up, "Country people have great skills and take pride in what they do. It's good for bigger businesses to be part of country communities. It's good for the town."



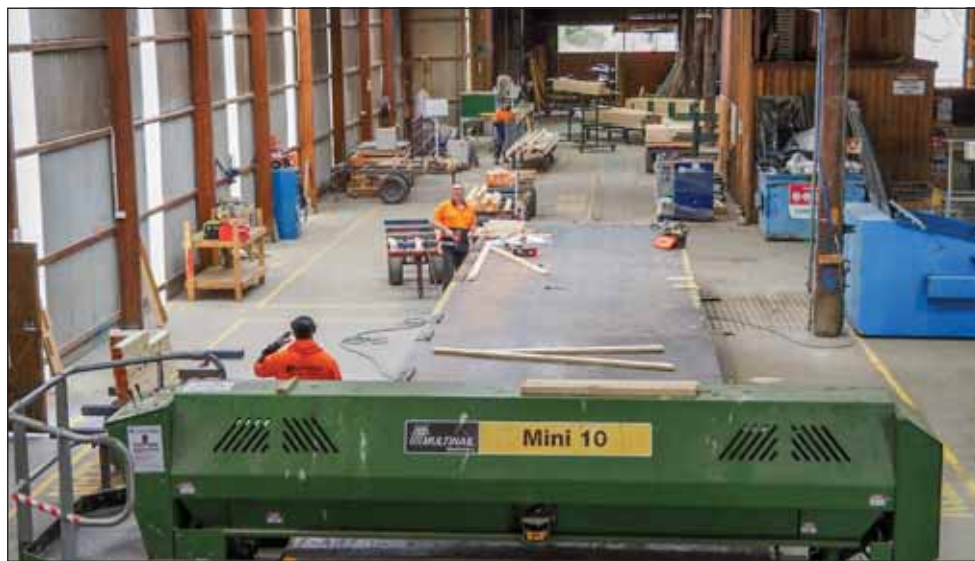
Site Manager Chris Piggott. -AR



Daniel Stoa cutting timber. -S



Frames being built. -AR



On the factory floor. -AR

More roadside drug tests and improved technology funded

VICTORIA Police will conduct an extra 25,000 roadside drug tests every year, expand the use of technology to catch unauthorised drivers and reduce paperwork so police spend more time on the road in a major safety boost.

The road policing uplift, funded by the Transport Accident Commission as part of Victoria's road safety partnership, includes five key projects valued at a combined \$21.1 million.

The projects will be progressively rolled out over the next five years, with some already underway.

The boost includes: An additional 25,000 roadside drug tests to be conducted each year, bringing the total number of roadside drug tests to 175,000 annually, valued at \$4.536 million; the delivery of a Roadside Impaired Driver Evidence (RIDE) application to reduce the manual paperwork required at the roadside for processing drug and alcohol data collection, valued at \$5.841 million; an additional 88 vehicles fitted with automatic numberplate recognition (ANPR) technology. These will be based at 24-hour police stations to assist with detecting dangerous and unauthorised drivers, valued at \$6.391 million; the replacement and upgrade of police in-car

video technology in 98 vehicles. This will be allocated to one-member stations in regional and remote locations, valued at \$2.842 million; and the replacement of 123 evidentiary breath testing instruments used to detect drink drivers and purchasing an additional 27 new instruments, valued at \$1.49 million.

The rollout of the additional roadside drug testing has already begun, with Victoria Police on track to conduct a record 175,000 roadside drug tests this financial year.

Drug driving is one of Victoria's leading causes of road trauma. There were 793 collisions recorded last financial year where the driver was drug impaired, and 8294 motorists detected for drug driving over the period.

To support the additional testing, a new application will be developed to automate administrative processes relating to alcohol and drug testing.

This will create significant efficiencies for police with more time dedicated to patrolling the roads.

The addition of 88 vehicles fitted with automatic numberplate recognition technology and allocated to all 24-hour stations across Victoria will ensure general duties officers have access to this capability

to detect and apprehend dangerous and unauthorised drivers and remove them from roads.

ANPR technology is already used in close to 250 police vehicles across Victoria.

Officers located at 98 one-member stations across the state will receive upgraded in-car video technology to assist with capturing visual records when conducting enforcement.

In-car video footage is used to capture unsafe driving and can be used to prosecute and remove dangerous drivers from the roads.

Police across the state will also benefit from the replacement of 123 older evidentiary breath testing instruments and the addition of 27 new instruments.

Evidentiary breath tests are a critical tool for alcohol impaired driving enforcement and used to obtain evidence after a driver returns a positive result on a preliminary breath test at the roadside.

All five projects are underway and will be completed by the 2029-30 financial year.

Victoria Police, along with the Transport Accident Commission, Department of Transport and Planning, Department of Justice and Community Safety, and the Department of Health, form the road safety

partnership responsible for delivering the Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

The strategy aims to halve road deaths by 2030 and eliminate deaths on Victorians roads by 2050.

Road Policing Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir said: "This is a massive investment from the Transport Accident Commission and there is no doubt it will save lives. We will be testing more drivers for drugs than ever before.

"The boost also allows us to enhance technology across the force to ensure our people have the tools they need to enforce effectively and make the roads safer. This includes targeting behaviours that contribute to road trauma like speed, impaired driving, high-risk driving and unauthorised driving.

"The development of new technology to automate administrative processes at the roadside also means police can spend less time on paperwork and more time patrolling the roads.

"We remain committed to working alongside our road safety partners to reduce the number of fatal and serious injuries on our roads."

For more information on how Victoria Police works to keep our roads safe, visit police.vic.gov.au/road-safety

Council News



December 2025

Holiday season closures

Council offices, Library and Customer Service Centre's will be closed from 3.00 pm on Wednesday 24 December to Thursday 1 January 2026, returning to our regular hours on Friday 2 January 2026.

For non-urgent requests or further information about changes to Council services during this period, please visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayhours

For urgent matters, such as stock on roads, dog attacks, or unsafe road conditions, including fallen trees blocking roads, please contact our After Hours Service on 5772 0333.

Keep safe on the road this summer

Long daylight hours make driving safer, but drought conditions can increase wildlife movement as they are forced to search further afield for food and water. Slow down and stay alert, especially at dawn and dusk.

If you spot animals near the road, slow down and keep an eye out. Let's keep our roads safe for everyone. Learn more on our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/wildlifeonroads

Have your say on Guidelines for Successful Renewable Energy in Murrindindi Shire

Renewable energy is part of our future, but needs to work for Murrindindi. We have listened to our community, and developed some draft Guidelines to help shape what is acceptable in our Shire.

Let us know if you have any suggestions or changes before feedback closes Sunday 8 February 2026. Visit our website at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/renewable

Survey results on proposed Alexandra District Health-Eastern Health amalgamation

Council has released results from its community survey on the proposed voluntary amalgamation between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health.

The 278 responses revealed a broad mix of views, with many expressing concern or uncertainty about impacts on local services and decision-making. Others noted potential benefits if strong safeguards are in place. Council has shared the findings with both health boards and will continue advocating for a transparent process.

Read the results by visiting our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/healthcaresurveyresults



Mayor and Deputy Mayor Re-Elected

Council is pleased to announce that at the Special Meeting of Council on 19 November, Cr Damien Gallagher and Cr Anita Carr were unanimously re-elected as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively, for the 2025-2026 Council year. Read more on our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/mayor2025

2026 Immunisations

Did you know, a comprehensive childhood immunisation service is provided throughout the Shire and offered free to all children aged between 6 weeks old and less than 5 years old? Our experienced nurses are available to discuss your child's immunisation program and give the required vaccines.

For more information or to book an appointment, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/vitavo or email immunisation@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Breastfeeding Support Program

Breastfeeding can be tough, but you don't have to do it alone. Qualified lactation consultants now offer free, personalised breastfeeding support at your local Maternal and Child Health centre or at home. For more information, email mch@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Shape the future of our Health and Care Services

Council, in partnership with Murrindindi Health Network, is pleased to share the draft Health and Care Services Action Plan with the community.

The draft Action Plan sets out a comprehensive vision for health and aged care services in Murrindindi, and we want your feedback. Have your say before 18 December 2025 at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/healthworkforcestrategy

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Koriella CFA Captain Scott Reeves, Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish, the brigade's newest life member Patrick McVeigh, life member Alan Parsons, and CFA District 12 Commander Justin Dally. -BD



The Koriella Fire Brigade had the marquee set up and the truck on display to celebrate 75 years of the brigade. -BD

Koriella Fire Brigade celebrates 75 years of operation

THE Koriella Fire Brigade celebrated 75 years of operation last Sunday, as well as presenting service awards to members of the brigade and a life membership to Patrick McVeigh, for his outstanding contributions to the brigade.

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish presented Captain Scott Reeves with a framed certificate recognising the Koriella Fire Brigade's 75 years of operation.

CFA District 12 Commander Justin Dally then presented brigade members with service awards, in the form of both certificates and medals, celebrating their contributions to the brigade.

Cinamon Cunningham received a five-year certificate of service, Alastair Gerrey received a five-year certificate of service, Tiffinie Reeves received a 20-year service medal, and Scott Reeves received a 20-year service medal.

Patrick McVeigh was presented with a life membership, recognising his years of service to the brigade, including his time as captain and various other important roles.

Also announced at the celebration was the successful VESEP grant application that Koriella Fire Brigade received to the amount of \$250,000, which will allow for the brigade to make a 40 square metre extension to incorporate a turnout room, w/c and multi-purpose room.



Recipients of service awards, as well as Koriella CFA's two life members in the middle. Pictured are Cinamon Cunningham, Tiffinie Reeves, Patrick McVeigh (life member), Alan Parsons (life member), Captain Scott Reeves and Alastair Gerrey.



The service award certificates and medals that were presented last Sunday. -BD



Members of the brigade, alongside family, friends and members of the public, celebrating 75 years of the brigade. -BD



Koriella CFA Captain Scott Reeves talking about the bright future that the brigade has ahead of it. -BD



Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish presenting Koriella Fire Brigade Captain Scott Reeves with the brigade's 75 year certificate. -BD

The Farmer's Ag News

Combined agents store sale closes 2025 at Yea Saleyards

THE final cattle sale at the Yea Saleyards took place last Friday, in the form of a Combined Agents Store Sale, with Alex Scott and Staff, Elders, Nutrien, and Victorian Livestock and Property (VLP) all auctioneering.

Around 2470 cattle were yarded, with the average price per head remaining above 500c/kg, at 515c/kg. Average price per head was \$1726, with the average weight per head sitting at 335.4 kilograms.

Steers had a top price per head of \$3500, with a top weight of 721.8 kilograms, equalling out to 485c/kg.

Heifers were only very slightly behind, with the top price per head at \$2340 and the top weight at 486.3 kilograms. Doing the maths shows heifers had a top price of 481c/kg, only four cents per kilogram behind their male counterparts.

The Yea Saleyards have a month-long hiatus now, until the VLP Inaugural Weaner Sale kicks off 2026 on January 7. This sale will be closely followed by the Nutrien Yea Upper Goulburn Rivers Annual Classic Weaner Sale on January 9, and the Elders Yea Annual Blue Ribbon Weaner Sale on January 16.



Andrew Hill from Elders Yea and Andrew Fulford, Yea Saleyards lane marshal. -S



The Alex Scott team in action. -S



The VLP team selling. -S



The crowd in the lane during selling. -S

Government pauses ESVF: VFF comments

THE Victorian Government announced that they would be pausing the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) during last Friday's Budget Update.

As part of the update, the state government announced changes to the ESVF, including no increase to the variable rate for Primary Production Land, an increase to the volunteer rebate cap for farmland from \$5 million of \$10 million of CIV and a delay to the change for investment properties by 12 months.

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed the Victorian Government's decision to freeze the ESVF for a further two years and increase the property value threshold for volunteer exemptions from \$5 million to \$10 million.

VFF President Brett Hosking said the move is a huge relief for farmers and comes after a huge backlash against the fundamentally wrong cash-grab.

"Farmers will be breathing a huge sigh of relief," Mr Hosking said.

"This tax was set to rip hundreds of millions out of the pockets of cash-strapped farmers in the middle of a record-breaking drought. Freezing the levy and increasing the exemption threshold acknowledges the massive pressure farmers have been under, particularly following years of drought and escalating operating costs.

"I would like to thank Premier Jacinta Allan, Treasurer Jacyn Symes and

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence for listening to farmers across Victoria.

"Victorian farmers told us the Emergency Services Volunteer Levy was their number one issue and we've been moving heaven and earth to get to today's decision. It's a step in the right direction, now we need real reform so we aren't staring down the barrel of the same tax in two years' time."

The VFF will now turn its attention to engaging with the Victorian Government over the next two years to engage in a serious and transparent discussion about how emergency services are funded in the long term.

"This cannot be the end of the conversation. A pause is great, but we need a permanent and fair and equitable funding model that reflects modern realities and doesn't continue to load disproportionate costs onto property owners," Mr Hosking said.

"It must be a sustainable system that moving emergency services funding back into consolidated revenue and doesn't push that burden onto farmers and landholders.

"Before next year's election, we need a firm commitment on what the process will look like to work in partnership with farmers to deliver a long-term funding solution, one that supports farmers, volunteers, strengthens emergency service capability, and treats all Victorians fairly."

Be patient on the road during harvest season

WITH harvest and silage season now in full swing across Victoria, the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on all road users to take extra care and show patience as heavy agricultural vehicles move between paddocks, silos and storage sites.

Across Victoria, farmers are entering the busiest time of year, with crops, hay and silage being harvested. This results in more headers, trucks, tractors and machinery on rural roads, often travelling slowly, carrying wide loads, or stopping frequently during busy harvest operations.

VFF Grains President Ryan Milgate said patience can make a major difference in keeping everyone safe during one of the busiest times of the year.

"We are asking everyone, including farmers to take it easy on the roads this harvest season. Patience and sharing the roads is key."

"Saving a few minutes by taking risks can lead to tragedy," Mr Milgate said.

VFF Livestock President Scott Young urged all drivers to make safety their number one priority.

"No matter how tempting it is to run the risk, coming home safely at the end of the day must always be our top priority."

"Every driver has a responsibility to look after those around them, and we can't forget that."

"As farmers we understand we're driving oversized vehicles on the road. Where possible, we'll make as much room as we can, we're just asking others to slow down so we can all stay safe," Mr Young said.

Drivers can help keep safe this harvest season by avoiding areas around grain receival sites where truck and machinery traffic is especially heavy; moving completely off the road when stopping, giving agricultural vehicles room to pass safely; staying off unsealed roads unless absolutely necessary, as these can be damaged or become hazardous under increased harvest traffic; being aware of farmers loading and unloading machinery or bales on roadsides, particularly during hay and silage cutting; remaining patient around oversized machinery, such as headers, balers and tractors towing wide implement, wait for a clear, safe opportunity before overtaking.

The VFF is urging all drivers to slow down and take in their surroundings. There's so much to see in regional Victoria, it's worth taking your time to stop, look around and take in the regions.

The VFF is also continuing to advocate for regional Victoria's road network to be fixed and maintained to ensure the safest possible conditions for drivers.

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 14

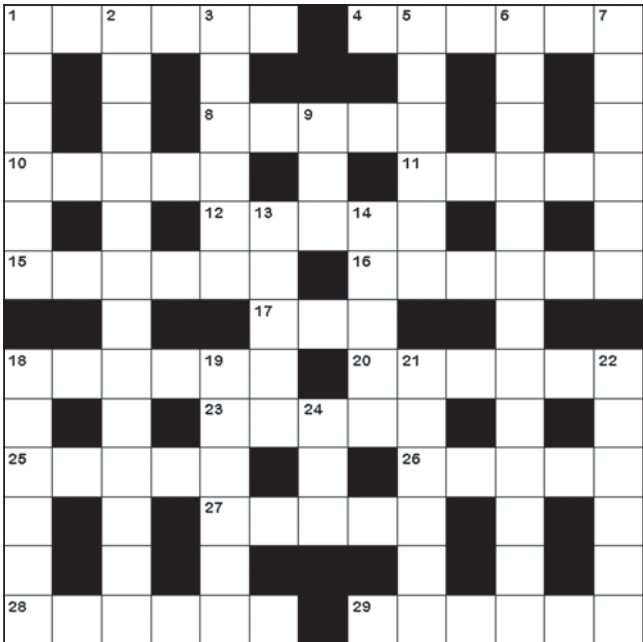
Crossword

ACROSS

1. Declares a truth under oath.
4. Large machine used to level or smooth roads.
8. Call on somebody socially.
10. A cause of annoyance or irritation.
11. Cruel or inhumane treatment.
12. Cook with dry heat in an oven.
15. A state of indecision and agitation.
16. A breakfast food made from grain.
17. A feeling of wonder and admiration.
18. A minister of the Roman Catholic church.
20. Much more tidy and methodical.
23. Relinquish possession or control over.
25. The speed at which music is to be played.
26. A joyous Christmas hymn.
27. Much more recently than others.
28. The froth produced by soap.
29. A few unexpected developments.

DOWN

1. Oozed slowly through small openings.
2. Diversions or amusements for guests.
3. Be in awe of and respect deeply.
5. Turn around on an axis or a center.
6. Programs presenting facts about an event.
7. Make information clear and visible.
9. A division of an ocean.
13. Speak in a formal, pompous manner.
14. A public display of passion or temper.
18. Fuel needed to drive motor vehicles.
19. A bracket fixed to a wall for holding candles.
21. Money held by solicitor till conditions are met.
22. Objects that have survived from the past.
24. Drops of water condensed on cool grass.



Word Search

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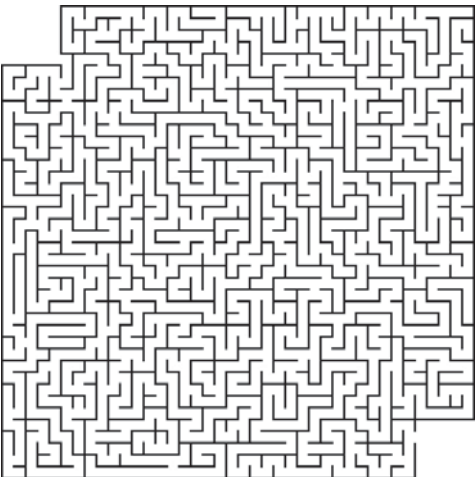
Sudoku

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

Songs with one word titles

- AFRICA
- ROXANNE
- HALLELUJAH
- SACRIFICE
- HELP
- SATISFACTION
- IMAGINE
- STAN
- LOLA
- VALERIE
- ROAR
- YESTERDAY

Maze



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.

Math Square

3	-		-		-5
+		x		-	
	÷		+		9
+		+		-	
9	+		-		13
20		13		-2	

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.

Vale Anthony (Tony)
Michael Coates

TONY Coates was born on September 4, 1965 at the Alexandra District Hospital, a son to John and Jocelyn Coates and brother to Roslyn and Murray. Tony's grandfather was Les Coates, shire councillor and twice Mayor of the Alexandra Shire. Coates Court was named in his honour.

The Coates family attended the local Methodist Church and Sunday School and his parents both loved and encouraged participation in sports. At four years old Tony attended Alexandra Kindergarten. He loved playing anything with a ball, and had excellent eye-hand-ball co-ordination.

Tony progressed to Alexandra Primary School where he spent six months in prep, six months in grade one and then started his second year in grade two. He was always a good student, and he loved sport.

He joined the Alexandra Swimming and Life Saving Club and was proficient in all strokes and achieved his Bronze Cross. During this time Tony also joined the local Scout Association as a cub and progressed to be a boy scout.

At 11 years old, Tony attended Alexandra High School. Always a diligent student and sports lover he was introduced to many new sports. Tony loved basketball, badminton, Aussie Rules football, golf, and clay pigeon shooting, and played for local competitions with great success. Finally, Tony was introduced to squash and was coached locally by Kevin Boote. It was a sport he continued to play well into his late 40s in Melbourne pennant competitions.

A very good family friend, Mr Hec Ingram, who had a close association with Scotch College, asked if Tony would be interested in finishing his schooling at Scotch. After carefully considering this opportunity Tony decided to spend his final three years of secondary school at Scotch College in Melbourne, where he was a day student and boarded with his aunt and uncle in Boxhill.

Sport continued to be a big part of his school life playing football, cricket, swam for his house, and joined the Cadet Unit. For work experience Tony was fortunate to spend two weeks on a hospital rotation, and discovered radiography, his future career.

After achieving good results in his VCE Tony was awarded a place at RMIT to study radiography. At the completion of his studies Tony's first appointment was a graduate



Tony Coates. -S

position at St Vincent's Hospital, where he was first introduced to an MRI machine.

Two years later he moved on to a Grade Three position at Box Hill Hospital and went on to specialize in angiography and worked as a valued member of the cardiac team. Twenty-one years later he was head hunted to work as a Grade Four Medical Imaging Technician at Epworth Eastern in Boxhill where he ran the Angiography Unit, until forced to retire with ill health in 2024.

In 2006 Tony married Kashmira and became a stepdad to Daniel. Tony was diagnosed with cancer in 2020 and passed away on November 4, 2025. His funeral service was held at Springvale Crematorium on Friday, November 14, conducted by Uniting Church Minister Rev Russell Croxford.

Eulogies were given by Kashmira, Jocelyn and three of Tony's work colleagues. Tony was much loved and cherished as a son, brother, husband and stepdad. He was always a quiet achiever, a very successful sportsman who led by example and always did his best.

Rest in peace Tony, as we celebrate your many achievements in a life well lived.



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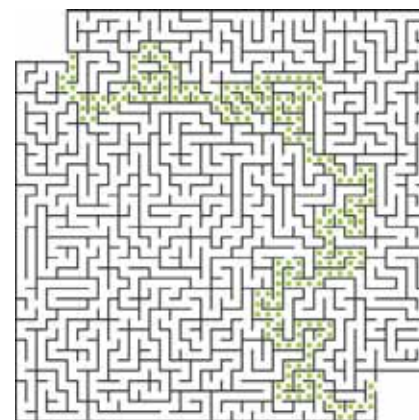
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SUDOKU

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MATH SQUARE

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8	÷	4	+	7	9
+		+		-	
9	+	5	-	1	13
20		13		-2	

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DEATH NOTICES

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08/06/1955 – 30/11/2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Malcolm Bett on November 30, 2025.

Born on June 8 1955, Malcolm was the beloved son of Jack and Ilma Bett, the cherished brother of Peter and Faye, and a treasured father to his daughter Adele. Malcolm was a great friend to many and a valued member of the community.

His kindness, humour, and generosity touched all who had the pleasure of knowing him. He will be remembered fondly and missed dearly.

Cluney, Rena

24/03/1936 - 22/11/2025

Loving wife to Michael. Loving mother to Karen and Wayne. Loving grandmother to Hayley and Timothy.

Always in our hearts.

CRAWLEY, Raymond George

30/11/1939- 03/12/2025

Raymond George Crawley of Northwood, Seymour passed away peacefully aged 86 on 03/12/2025.

Residing and working in the Seymour district for over 60 years Ray was well known throughout the regional community.

Much loved father and grandfather to Joanne, Travis and their families.

Funeral details to follow.



FUNERAL NOTICES

BETT, Malcolm

The funeral service to celebrate the life of Malcolm Bett will be held at the Yea Presbyterian Church in Station Street, Yea on Monday, December 15 commencing at 11am.

Following the service the funeral cortege will proceed to the Yea Cemetery.



Cluney, Rena

The funeral service to celebrate the wonderful life of Rena Cluney will be held at the Murrindindi Chapel on Saturday December 13, 2025 commencing at 11am.



MCCARTHY, Anthony Thomas

05/11/1929 - 04/12/2025

Anthony passed away peacefully early morning of Thursday, 4/12/2025 at Rosebank Aged Care, Yea.

Treasured husband of Carmel (dec). Loved, respected and admired father of Anthony, Kieran, Angela, Dominic (dec), Matthew and Joseph. Loved father in law of Janice, Maurie, Pina, Helen (dec) and Kath. Grandad of Cathryn, Louise, Isabel, Kyla, Kaedan, Kelsey, Jessica, Clare, Daniel, Alannah and Tess. Great grandfather of Asher and Sidney.

Forever in our hearts and minds.

Funeral planned for Tuesday December 16, 10.30 am, Sacred Heart Church, Yea



Japanese encephalitis protection for surrounding shires

MORE Victorians will have protection from the Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV), with the Victorian Government delivering free vaccines to at-risk regional Victorians this mosquito season.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas encouraged Victorians to understand the risks of mosquito-borne diseases and to take simple steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites while enjoying more time outside over the warmer summer months.

Through a \$2.3 million investment, the vaccine is now available to people in 24 regional local government areas, primarily inland riverine regions, where there is a higher risk of exposure to the virus.

Most people with JEV infection do not have symptoms or have only mild symptoms such as a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and muscle aches.

However, a small number, around one in every 250 people, can develop severe infection of the brain (encephalitis) or meningitis which can be fatal.

The free JEV vaccine is available for eligible people through GPs, Aboriginal health services, community pharmacies and some local councils.

Simple and practical steps that Victorians can undertake to reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes, include wearing long, loose and light-coloured clothing when outdoors, using mosquito repellents that contain active ingredients including Picaridin or DEET, spraying or rubbing repellent on children's clothes is recommended while avoiding their skin, limiting time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active such as at dawn and dusk, removing stagnant water where mosquitoes can breed around the home or a campsite, and making sure windows are fitted with mosquito netting or screens.

The Victorian Government's mosquito surveillance program is helping track the presence of diseases in mosquitoes across Victoria, providing an early warning system to protect the public.

The surveillance program helps to monitor the presence of JEV, Murray Valley encephalitis virus, Ross River virus, Barmah Forest virus and West Nile virus, informing public health advice so local communities, holidaymakers and livestock managers can be aware of the risks.

More information is available at betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/protect-yourself-mosquito-borne-disease.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas said, "Mosquitoes can carry serious diseases that pose a real risk to our health. As we head into the warmer months, we would urge all Victorians to take simple precautions to protect themselves and their families. We are again making the JEV vaccine available for those Victorians most at risk, keeping communities safe from this preventable mosquito-borne disease."

Murrindindi Shire is not among the high risk local government areas for mosquito-borne diseases where residents are eligible for the Japanese encephalitis vaccine, however residents in neighbouring Mitchell, Strathbogie and Mansfield are among the LGAs eligible.



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Thinking of Christmas

by Heather Robb

WHEN we think of Christmas we think of trees filled with glittering lights and shiny balls and presents under the tree. We may rejoice in the chaos Christmas offers as we trawl shops and wander down decorated festive streets.

Christmas is also about buying presents, cooking food, making sure everything is just right for the big day. Wrapping presents and writing cards, making sure your family and friends have what they want.

Then it's about what you can afford. Will people think what you bought for them is good enough? What if they don't like it? Christmas can also be a stress for many people.

Already ads are appearing for Christmas. Some shops are starting to add decorations and messages like "Get in early for Christmas!" Yesterday I received an email about ordering a Christmas pudding. Big business never rests, does it. Its always about the next dollar they can make to keep afloat.

With all this buzz seducing us to spend more money and reminding us of the joys of Christmas, those who cannot afford to spend much are ignored. The lonely are forgotten and so it goes on. It has become a time of stress for many people and its significance has been forgotten. I remember the story of the *Little Match Girl* by Hans Christian Anderson at Christmas who lit her last match to keep warm.

What do you think of Christmas? Do you ponder on its true meaning or like many are you swallowed up by the frenetic activity, advertisements and spending?

Last season I noticed that nothing was ever mentioned about the birth of Christ. It was all about celebrating food, parties and gifts. Once more no thought was given to those who had no money or friends. Whatever religion you were, you would be expected to celebrate Christmas with everyone else. Peer pressure was especially strong for children. "What is Santa bringing you?" they would ask each other. It was always about getting, not giving.

In the quiet spaces away from the Christmas activities we may stop and think about the star and a baby born in a manger. We may reflect on the meaning of Christ Mass and what it means to us. We may think about the story of the Christos and how it has impacted on our history, the good and the bad.

While the early church was more focused on power over the masses and less on the teachings of Christ, there were good people who followed the true teachings of Christ and studied the lessons in the old testament. Edgar Cayce once described the Old Testament as a metaphor for one life or one soul's journey through many lives. Each lesson there spoke of elements which lie within us all as we think about those lessons we can relate to them through our own experiences. These old stories are in us all.

In a dream, I remember standing under the cross at the time of the crucifixion. Jesus looked down on me and said, "Teach my words and not what man makes of them." Such a simple statement which holds such a depth of meaning. In another dream, I remember being a monk. I lived alone in a forest and people came to me for aid, food, marriage vows and baptism as well as burial. I remember how joyfully I lived life, I had little, my home was a crude hut. I grew vegetables and herbs and gave them away. It was a small medieval community where people supported each other and lived in peace. These dreams remind me of the true meaning of celebrating the teachings of Christ, and so, his birth.

Like everyone though, I get caught up with the Christmas spirit. I make all the Christmas goodies like plum pudding, cakes, and many sweetmeats needed to offer guests. I have fun buying present's for everyone and spend a lot of time thinking about what they would like. I scrub the house until it gleams and find a tree which reaches the ceiling and decorate it with lots of lights and decorations, some of them as old as I am, for they hold the memories of my childhood. I have pine and spruce oils burning which add fragrance to the house. These are all fun activities but even in these, I add my own Divinity. I get my family to stir love into the pudding and cakes. As I light my oils I remember the story of Saint Nicholas who

gave gifts to the poor children at Christmas and who was our first true Santa Klaus and I read these stories to our children.

I stand under the stars at night and think of the birth of Christ and quietly celebrate this time when a star shone so brightly in the sky and when three wise men travelled to the sacred child while shepherds watched in wonder at the star in the sky.

I remember the beautiful Christmas stories we read as children, like *The Littlest Angel*, one I loved. Charles Tarzwell's beautiful stories always sung to my heart as a child. My favourite as an adult was one called *The Little Crooked Christmas Tree* by Michael Cutting which always bought tears to my eyes and my children would say, "Can you read the story that makes you cry?" It never failed as I always had tears rolling down my cheeks as I read it. Look for it, it's a beautiful story. Both these reflected the spirit of giving and of shared love at Christmas time.

I love Christmas and I make it a time of joy and reflection. This came home to me one day when I was shopping for presents in a large department store here in Australia. I noticed people were looking at me strangely and realised I was humming Christmas carols. I was so wrapped up in my shopping I forgot. I would look at people and smile at them and hum. No wonder I got strange looks. Where I come from in the country, this is quite acceptable but the city is another place altogether. Perhaps that is why I prefer to shop locally.

Standing at a counter surrounded by irritable shoppers, my heart went out to the poor harassed shop assistants serving customers. I was having fun and while my time in the city was limited, I was determined to enjoy this time. It was Christmas after all, one of my favourite times of the year.

Yea hospital awards staff and manages another operating surplus

THE Yea and District Memorial Hospital annual general meeting was held on the evening of Monday, December 1 at the Yea Country Club Hotel. Board chair Ian Marshman began by acknowledging the sad passing of Malcolm Bett.

In the chair's report, he said that YDMH had a year of significant achievement, "a year of genuine success." He said that with 10 acute beds, the hospital has been living up to its clinical capacity with an average of five beds occupied.

They are also seeing around 1400 people in the urgent care facility, up 20 per cent on the year prior, and trailing a partnership with the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, where patients can be admitted without onsite medical practitioners.

The Rosebank Aged Care facility is fully subscribed and has been highly ranked in the star ratings.

YDMH is also achieving well in allied health, with Mr Marshman making particular note of the early childhood interventions, the mental health services through Murray PHN and led by YDMH, the eight community mental health nurses in Mitchell and Murrindindi, the Dementia Week activities, mouth mapping at the Yea Saleyards, Buds and Blossoms (which recently celebrated 20 years), and the health services van via the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism, including \$140,000 raised through the Alexandra Truck, Ute and Rod Show. Gerry Ryan from Jayco also made a significant contribution to the van.

He also spoke about the community engagement committee and the need for young people to gain allied health training locally.

The East Metro / Murrindindi health network has led to allied health placements and programs such as Hospital in the Home.

Portables have also been purchased from Eastern Health, which will be place at the

I made a point of looking at the woman serving me, I noted her name on her tag. "Hi Sue," I smiled. "I would like to buy this Lego please."

Sue looked surprised and smiled back. I waited patiently while she put the purchase though and when she handed me the package, I thanked her warmly and left.

Somehow the polite friendliness made a difference in the way she served me and she became a human with a name and someone who used eye contact and smiled at her.

While this was my reaction to the agitated shoppers, it made me realise the importance of always being polite and pleasant under any circumstance. Even today when I am served I use the person's name if they are wearing a name tag and if it's not busy have a brief chat or compliment them on something.

If we believe in the reason why we celebrate Christmas, it's important for me to make it a true time of contemplation and celebration. It is a time of shared love and giving. Whether you believe in the story of Christ's birth or not, it is a time of celebrating family and friends, of shared love and of giving as well as receiving. It is a time of gathering our loved ones closer while we remember how important they are to us.

If you think more of Santa Klaus and less of Christ's birth, remember that Saint Nicholas, our first Santa, collected and gifted presents to poor children to help them celebrate Christmas. So however you look at Christmas, it is a time of giving. While Christ's birth was to give to the world we can learn that we are also giving. We can choose to make it a chaotic frustrated time, or we can choose to take time to love this time of year and open our hearts to its truth.

corner of Mary and Station Street and act as community service hubs.

He spoke about the need for more GPs in the area, saying that the numbers are much lower than the optimal levels.

This year, YDMH again sees a small operating surplus.

He said that they were surprised by the proposed merger of Alexandra District Health (ADH) with Eastern Health, and that he didn't see it coming as there had been discussions between Darlingford and Upper Goulburn Nursing Home, ADH and YDMH around forming a single Murrindindi Health Service.

He expressed concern about the impact that a merger would have on the local health service network. "We've done a lot of work over the last couple of weeks. Two things that we've really tried to do is to try to understand what we think the issues might be for the whole of the Murrindindi community if ADH were to amalgamate with Eastern Health (EH)... Particularly from our perception, most of the benefits that are being ascribed to that amalgamation could in fact be achieved, and are intended to be achieved, through the local health services network.

"We've also been looking at what it means for YDMH and we've written to the boards of ADH and EH about that. We also continue to progress consideration of the formation of a Murrindindi Health Service."

He said that the chairs of YDMH, ADH and Darlingford met last week and have forwarded a proposal which "I hope will be considered by ADH board as an alternative to the amalgamation option."

He added, "We understand that these sort of announcements are not made without a lot of planning, so I'm sure that the development of the business case for the merger of ADH with EH is fairly well advanced, but we've really been encouraged by the level of community interest and the responses the community have made about their concern

I start Christmas early. I know I am old fashioned but I still send Christmas letters and cards to family and friends every year. It is my way of keeping in touch with the people I do not see enough. I begin in October and make all my own cards then I write a letter and post them close to Christmas. Of course I get fewer cards every year and more emails, but it doesn't matter to me. It's my way of keeping up with loved ones.

One year as I watered the garden Christmas eve, I heard singing. The radio and television were off. We lived on a farm surrounded by open paddocks. There was no one else close enough. For me to hear music, yet I was hearing the most beautiful singing I have ever heard. Had the wind carried the sound? But there was no wind on that still warm evening. Perhaps I was hearing the angels sing. Perhaps at Christmas the veils are open wider to heaven for the music to reach earth, but its haunting melody stayed with me. Every year after that, I would stand under the stars and open my heart wide to unite once more. Sometimes I imagined I heard that angelic choir, other times I would see the star or sense the presence of Jesus the baby and the potential of his birth. All leaves me with wonder and awareness of why we celebrate Christmas.

What does Christmas mean to you? How will you celebrate it this year? How can you make it a time of giving and love? Join me under the stars on Christmas eve, and with me, think about the true meaning of why we celebrate Christ's birth. Think about what that means to you and make Christmas even more special. Take a deep breath, pause and be. Open your heart and be with these blessed energies so close to earth at this time and for a time, wrap yourself in the peace it can bring you.

about the loss of the Alexandra board and CEO, and the staff there having to report to the city-based health service."

He said to the audience that if there is anything more they can do to make sure the views of the community are being properly communicated, to please let them know.

During the questions section, Mayor Damien Gallagher spoke about passionate and locally-focused board and staff, and the exceptional outcome and innovation they deliver. He also said that YDMH is a wonderful partner in the Murrindindi Health Network.

He asked the audience, "Can we have a show of hands for who appreciates that local support, local voice, local leadership in health." A sea of hands flew up.

In the awards section of the evening, Meg Heres was awarded a life governorship for her donation of one painting per year to the hospital across 50 years, enabling purchases and activities for residents and patients.

Honi Smith, Director of People and Culture at YDMH, presented the service awards. These went to Paula Antobus (10 years), Kayla Waack (10 years), Sharon Antrobus (15 years), Lorraine Harris (20 years), Shona Miljkovic (20 years) and Caroline Young (20 years).

The Star Award was presented by Andrea Steele. The award nominations are from staff and for staff. The individual award went to district nurse Carolin Pritchard, recognised for her kindness, commitment, empathy, respect, dependability and honesty.

The group award, presented by Naomi Macnamara, went to the Community Health team for their commitment, innovation and proactivity.

The board award, presented by Ian Marshman, went to Lorraine Harris, manager of hotel services, for her consistency and unwavering dedication.

The guest speaker for the evening was Warren Davies, The Unbreakable Farmer.

A joyous finale to the 2025 Eildon potluck season

WHAT a wonderful way to close out the year. With nearly 40 friends and neighbours gathered, the hall was alive with festive cheer. Familiar Christmas tunes floated through the air, tables glowed with seasonal decorations, and anticipation built as the evening unfolded.

A delicious baked ham, alongside an array of traditional specialties, set the stage for a feast to remember.

Conversations bubbled, laughter rang out, and the atmosphere was nothing short of magical.

Since beginning as a trial in May, the Eildon potluck dinners have quickly become a cherished tradition, and they're here to stay. Eildon Event's heartfelt thanks go to the Eildon Bowling Club for their generous support, and to the tireless volunteers

whose efforts make these gatherings possible. Most of all, thank you to the community for embracing this event with such enthusiasm.

As they look ahead to the new year, they're excited for many more evenings filled with good food, great company, and plenty of laughter. Truly, there is no better medicine.



A small part of the food available at the Eildon potluck dinner. -S



Members of the community having a chat at the Christmas-themed tables. -S



Plenty of people attend the potluck dinners in Eildon. -S



Attendees had time to chat and share a drink and a laugh. -S

Celebrations at U3A Murrindindi East

IT'S been a year full of many new activities and special events at U3A Murrindindi East with the introduction of Pickleball at Alexandra

and Thornton and the continuation of others classes, and who could possibly forget the Seniors Week 'Wedding of the Year' in October

celebrating all that's best about being a senior member in this wonderful community.

The Singing for Pleasure Group entertained residents at Kellock Lodge last Thursday with Christmas carols and are going to Darlingford in Eildon on Friday, December 12.

The two enrolment days in Alexandra and Marysville were successful and members are reminded that they can re-enrol on line through the website murrindindieastu3a.org.au

Finally, last Friday 76 members came together at the Rubicon Hotel to enjoy a delicious Christmas lunch and to catch up with friends.



Enrolment day in Alexandra with David and Sandra. -S



Singing for Pleasure group at Kellock Lodge. -S



Members enjoying Christmas lunch. -S



Christmas lunch at The Rubicon Hotel. -S

CFA calls for community volunteers to monitor grasslands

CFA is encouraging Victorians to become ‘citizen scientists’ and help strengthen critical information about the state’s fire risk.

Grassland curing is the annual drying out of grass and the drier the grass becomes, the higher the fire risk. At this time of year, curing data feeds directly into CFA’s fire danger calculations, making accurate figures essential for determining fire danger ratings.

The ground observations are combined with satellite imagery to produce weekly maps that show how dry the grass is across Victoria.

CFA Remote Sensing Analyst Dr Danielle Wright said boosting the number of trained observers will help fill gaps in the current data coverage.

“There are still a few areas of the state including the north-east, north-west and south-west parts of the state where we would really benefit from having more volunteers out on the ground,” Danielle said.

“In regions where on-ground observations are not occurring, we are solely relying on satellite data.

“The satellite model is extremely useful, but it can’t always pick up every detail.

“It can overestimate and underestimate curing. Cloud cover can block readings for weeks, grass under trees can be missed entirely and rainfall can impact readings.

“After rain new green shoots might appear, but they’re tiny and don’t affect fire behaviour. The satellite sees green and assumes the area is of lower risk.

“Having volunteers makes a huge difference. They’re the ones confirming what is actually happening on the ground and capturing the details the model often misses.”

John Taubman has been a ‘citizen scientist’ for nine years and said the role is a great way to serve the community and contribute to more accurate fire risk information.

“Being a grassland observer really sharpens your awareness of how the environment changes from day to day,” John said.

“You learn to read the landscape, from the wind and temperature to the humidity. You don’t always need instruments to tell it’s a bad fire day.

“The satisfaction comes from knowing we are providing a service to the community. The more data points we have on the map, the more accurate the data is.”

Danielle said becoming a grassland observer is a simple yet highly valuable way to support local fire safety.

“Everyone is welcome to participate, not just CFA volunteers. It’s a great way to support CFA without needing to be on the fireground,” Danielle said.

With summer approaching, regular grassland observations are more important than ever to help track fire risk across Victoria.

For more information, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/grass or email grassland@cfa.vic.gov.au

Beyond Blue is here for you this holiday season

by Georgie Harman AO, CEO of Beyond Blue

THE festive season can be a joyous time for many people, as they take a well-earned break from work and school and spend time with family and friends. It’s a time to rest and reset for the new year.

Yet for others, this time of year can be particularly difficult and distressing, and a time they hope will pass quickly.

It can bring additional financial pressures, strain relationships, and heighten feelings of loneliness. The festive season may also intensify isolation, particularly for those separated from family or grieving the loss of a loved one.

So, as we head into the holiday break, we want Australians to know that regardless of what they’re dealing with, they don’t have to face it alone.

The Beyond Blue Support Service is free, confidential, and available around the clock, including on Public Holidays. You can call 1300 224 636 or chat online at beyondblue.org.au/get-support

It’s common to put off seeking help because we can’t quite find the words to express our needs.

But when you contact Beyond Blue, you don’t have to know what to say. Skilled counsellors will meet you where you’re at and guide you towards where you need to be.

And finally, a big thank-you to everyone who has donated to Beyond Blue this year. Their support service is run purely on donations, so your kindness and generosity allow them to always be there when people need them the most.

Reduction in RDV grant funding

THE Victorian Government’s Regional Development Victoria (RDV) annual report has revealed grants have been cut by \$15 million, or 11 per cent, compared to the previous year, according to the Opposition.

Four years ago, RDV had a total grants pool of \$370 million to support development in the regions. Last year, it was just \$118 million, a 70 per cent drop.

Employee expenses in the last financial year totalled \$27.9 million, up 17 per cent from \$23 million the previous year.

The Opposition said that at RDV, regional Victorians are paying more for public servants, but getting less in return in development grants.

Leader of The Nationals and Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Liveability, Danny O’Brien, said “The great divide continues. Labor is leaving regional Victorians out in the cold.

“It is impossible to justify a 70 per cent cut in grants for regional development across the past four years.

“These grants are so important in supporting jobs, infrastructure and helping local economies flourish and thrive.”

Mr O’Brien also questioned the staffing cost blow-out. “If RDV is delivering less grants and programs, why is it spending more in wages? Clearly, there’s less work to do,” Mr O’Brien said.

The Victorian Government was contacted for comment.

Concerns over VFA-GMA merger

VICTORIAN recreational hunters and anglers must not suffer a reduction in services as the Victorian Government presses ahead with their proposed Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) and Game Management Authority (GMA) merger, Melina Bath, Shadow Minister for Outdoor Recreation with the Nationals said.

She said that while some peak bodies have acknowledged the potential merits of the merger, there remains deep concern within both the hunting and fishing communities about whether the new model can deliver on its promises without compromising frontline compliance, enforcement and service delivery.

Ms Bath commented that the merger may have merit on paper, but the Victorian Government’s track record gives little confidence that it will be properly supported.

“There must be a strong focus on training and education so compliance can be managed efficiently and effectively to protect the long-term sustainability of our fisheries and game resources,” Ms Bath said.

“A single compliance authority has worked in other jurisdictions, including New Zealand, where fish and game operate together successfully. However,

the key difference is that it has been properly supported and resourced by government.

“The proof is yet to be seen in Victoria. Only months ago, the Allan Labor Government slashed the Victorian Fisheries Authority’s budget by 44 per cent. That decision gutted frontline fisheries officers and significantly weakened enforcement capability. It is exactly this kind of under-investment that now casts serious doubt over this merger.”

Ms Bath also pointed to the ongoing politicisation of the duck hunting season as further evidence of the government’s lack of credibility when it comes to supporting the GMA and the broader hunting community.

“For this merger to succeed, the Allan Labor Government must guarantee no loss of compliance capacity, no reduction in regional service delivery, and comprehensive cross-training for all officers,” Ms Bath said.

“The Liberal and Nationals strongly support Victorian hunters and anglers. Enjoying the outdoors is part of our culture, vital for mental health and a major driver of regional economies. Any reform must strengthen, not weaken, the systems that protect these traditions and the communities that rely on them.”

Get Fire Ready drives increase in CFA recruitment

ALMOST 500 Victorians put their hands up to join CFA between October 3 and 29 on the back of the Get Fire Ready initiative.

The figure represents an 11 per cent increase in the number of new applicants during the same period last year.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said the lift in applications reflects the overall message of Get Fire Ready, which wrapped up on October 31.

“Get Fire Ready was all about informing Victorians about their local fire risk, encouraging people to prepare early and make informed decisions ahead of summer,” Jason said.

“To also see so many people wanting to take the next step and join their local brigade shows the strong sense of volunteerism that runs through this state.

“The more people who step up, the stronger CFA becomes, which can only benefit the communities we protect.”

Of the 499 new applicants, 61 per cent were men and 36 per cent were women,

around 66 per cent of applicants want to serve as firefighters while 33 per cent preferred non-operational roles.

Younger Victorians led the way, with around 38 per cent aged between 18 and 34 and 27 per cent aged 17 or under.

Jason said it was encouraging to see people of all ages signing up, but particularly the number of younger Victorians showing an interest in joining.

“It’s great to see so many young people wanting to get involved,” he said.

“They bring new energy, skills and perspectives that help strengthen CFA for the future.”

More than 530 CFA brigades across Victoria hosted Get Fire Ready events throughout October.

To learn more about volunteering with CFA visit cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteers

Residents in high-risk bushfire areas can still order a Get Fire Ready information pack by visiting cfa.vic.gov.au/getfireready

Making it easier to give the gift of life

THE Victorian Government is making it easier for Victorians to register as organ and tissue donors. Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas tabled the government’s response to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into increasing the number of registered organ and tissue donors*, outlining support for the report’s 41 recommendations.

The response outlines support for 17 of the Inquiry’s recommendations in full, with a further 24 supported either in principle or in part to boost Victoria’s registered donation numbers.

The government will take immediate action to expand donor registration pathways including updating Victoria’s driver licence system to prompt and direct people to sign up to the Australian Organ Donor Register.

Links to the registration website will also be added across several Service Victoria cards, including for those applying for a digital driver’s licence, by mid-2026. This is in addition to the recent launch of a dedicated information page on the Service Victoria app and website to connect users directly to DonateLife’s registration website.

The government will also boost community awareness in areas where there are low donor rates and support specialist staff to facilitate compassionate and culturally appropriate conversations with Victorians.

In Victoria, the number of deceased organ donors, and lives saved, was the highest in the nation in 2024, reflecting the generosity of Victorians and their families and the dedication of specialist staff who facilitate compassionate conversations to save and transform lives across the community.

However, in the past three years, the proportion of Victorians registered as donors has decreased, with the state’s registration rate on the Australian Organ Donor Registry now lower than the national average, reaffirming the need for urgent action to increase numbers.

The government’s response is part of ongoing work to improve donation and transplantation outcomes, which includes the *Organ and Tissue Authority Strategy 2022-27*.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas said, “Organ donation gives Victorians a second chance at life. That’s why we are taking immediate action to boost the number of donors across the state.

“Victoria has long been a leader in organ donation, saving and improving the lives of many Australians. This work will help us maintain that legacy and make a real difference to so many.”

Victorians can sign up to become an organ and tissue donor by visiting donatelife.gov.au/register-donor-today

Managing blackberries in our local area

BLACKBERRY is an infestation that has serious environmental threats associated with its spread. It serves as food and shelter for pest species, eliminates other vegetation by removing light, and can be a fire hazard.

September through to April is a good time to manage infestations of blackberry on your property, when considering the life cycle of the plant, but November is potentially best.

Blackberry flowers from November to January, seeds in November and January through to April, germinates from September to December, and has new growth virtually year-round, except for May, June and July.

Therefore, treating blackberry at this time of year helps to prevent flowering, seeding and germination, and has the added bonus

of removing a fire hazard just before bushfire season begins.

Upper Goulburn Landcare Network is currently working with members to manage blackberry infestation around Murrindindi Shire.

There are numerous different ways of managing blackberry bushes on your property, such as livestock, digging them out, or using chemicals.

Goats are a good way of getting rid of them, as they consume the blackberry leaves and green canes and crush blackberry seeds, preventing them from spreading the infestation. Their prehensile tongues, which can act like a limb and grasp the blackberry

stalks, makes them particularly suited to this sort of weed control.

Mechanical or manual digging is another non-chemical option for removing blackberry plants. The idea here is to dig up the roots, which both removes the initial bush and prevents another one growing back in its place. This option can prove difficult depending on the size of the blackberry infestation.

The most common way of dealing with larger infestations is using chemicals. Metsulphuron-methyl and triclopyr ester are the most popular chemicals used for this purpose, and a combination of glyphosate mixed with bowsaw herbicide.

Ideally you should spray only in the pre-flowering and green berry stage in order

to minimise the risk to insects and birds and reduce seed production. None of the chemicals should be sprayed directly into, or by drift, into waterways, as they can affect the local environment.

If you choose to hire someone to conduct chemical spraying on your property, check whether the contractor holds a commercial operators license and an agricultural chemical user permit (ACUP).

Technological development in the last four to five years has also allowed for the potential to use drones for blackberry spraying.

The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network has two Blackberry Action Groups (BAG), focused on managing the spread of blackberries through local projects and awareness programs, supported by the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce.

The Pheasant Creek BAG is in the Kinglake Ranges, and covers Kinglake, Kinglake West and Pheasant Creek, while the Triangle BAG covers Rubicon, Acheron, Taggerty, Buxton, Marysville and Narbethong.

The Blackberry Action Groups are working together with landowners in these areas to reduce the impact of blackberries in the region, with practical on ground solutions, education and community engagement.

The BAG project officers are now conducting free assessments for landowners to map and assess the extent of blackberry infestations on their property. With the assistance of project officers, landowners have the opportunity of developing a three-year management plan that will assist them to plan the control and management of blackberry infestations on their property.

The project officers can also provide technical advice and information on the control of blackberries and other assistance such as Landcare herbicide rebates, equipment hire and other incentives.

To get in touch with the Upper Goulburn Landcare Network and see how you can work with them to manage the spread of blackberries, visit ugln.net/contact



It's a good time of year to start managing blackberries. -David Hawgood

SPORT

Three singles championships in a row for Lauren Gilchrist

by Marie Evans

CLUB games are providing some excellent bowling and competitive matches. Alexandra Bowls Club women's singles final was completed last Friday and Lauren Gilchrist defeated Christine Mayfield. Christine led 18 to 17 after 20 ends but Lauren won the next five ends to win 26 to 18.

The game took 25 ends before Lauren clinched the win. It is three singles championships in a row for Lauren. A great effort. She will now go on to the GV Playing area Champion of Champions to be played on March 1 and the finals March 8.

Several matches have been completed in the men's singles. Ian Harper defeated Bob Mayfield. Greg Gilmore defeated Dave Nicklos in a close game. Ken Argent defeated Graeme Matthews in a game that lasted 27 ends. All winners now go through to the next round.

In other games Roselyn Livy won through to the next round of the President's Handicap when she defeated Peter Collyer. Ian Harper will contest the State Singles at East Shepparton on Sunday, December 14 and the club wish him good bowling

Meanwhile Pennant continued to produce challenges for all Alexandra sides. Midweek pennant travelled to Violet Town and were defeated across all rinks. Saturday Division Three pennant was a wash-out and the points were shared with Eildon. Division Five travelled to Euroa and despite winning two out of the three rinks they lost the overall.

Midweek was unable to back up their win from the previous week. They lost the overall to Violet Town 40 to 79. Tim Langmead (Skip), Ken Argent, Craig Parkinson and Denise Chisholm led seven to six on end 11 but lost the next five ends to trail seven to 14. They lost the game 10 to 22.

Doug Cooper (Skip) Malcolm Gill, Pauline Gilmore and Peter Collyer won nine ends and lost 18 to 31.

John Blamey (Skip), Bob Mayfield, Marty Manning and Christine Mayfield won eight ends and lost 12 to 26.

Alexandra play Merrigum at home in the next round. Merrigum are currently in fourth place on the ladder. This will be the first and only time the clubs meet as there are 10 sides in the 14-round fixture.

Division Five played away to Euroa and the best winning rink was Mark Stone (Skip), Denise Chisholm, Craig Parkinson and Rob Roach. They won 14 ends out of 21. They trailed Euroa eight to seven on end seven but won the next five ends to lead 13 to eight. It was 15 all on end 15 but Alexandra won four out of the last six ends to win 26 to 21.

Malcolm Gill (Skip), Steve Kirby, Warren Nelson and Anne Gunton began well and led their opposition nine to two on end seven and 12 to four on end 10. Euroa won the next four ends to trail 11 to 12. It was 15 all on end 19 but some great bowling had Alexandra 18 to 15 up on end 20. Euroa won two shots on the last end and Alexandra won 18 to 17 in what was a highly competitive game.



Women's singles champion Lauren Gilchrist with runner up Christine Mayfield. -S

Ray Mathieson (Skip), Pauline Gilmore, Marty Manning and Peter Collyer trailed one to 10 on end six. Euroa increased that lead to be 17 to three on end 10. Alexandra lost 14 to 26. The overall was Alexandra 58 to Euroa 64. Alexandra play Violet Town at home next round. Given there are 11 sides in this division this will be the only time these sides meet. It is the last round before the Christmas break with play resuming January 17.

Division Three play away to East next round. It was a drawn game when the teams met in round two. East is currently fifth on the ladder. This is the last game before the Christmas break. Play resumes January 17.

Congratulations to the organisers of the Christmas lunch it was a great success.

Merton cricketers beat Delatite in wet weather

LOCAL cricketing rivals Merton and Delatite played their local derby at the Lords reserve in Mansfield last Saturday under threatening skies. The match start was delayed by 40 minutes due to rain with Merton winning the toss and inviting the home side to bat.

Merton fielding one of strongest sides this season demolished the home side bowling Delatite out for 27 in the 17th over, Murray Sutton taking a fine 5/18 was supported well by Jai Lerch-McKinnon with 2/5 off six overs limited any scoring opportunities on a lively turf wicket.

Henry Berriman finishing Delatite's pain taking 3/2. Mitch Clarke top scoring with nine while six of his teammates failed to trouble the scorers. Merton's innings lasted four overs with the loss of one wicket with Joel Sanford 13 not out and Tyson Garlick four not out seeing their side to an easy victory. Sam Corden the wicket taker for Delatite.

Merton host Beechworth/Stanley next Saturday at the Merton Cricket Ground (MCG) while Delatite make the long road trip to face the in form Rutherglen.

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December monthly medal at Marysville Golf Club

by Lesley Rundle

LAST Saturday the December monthly medal round at Marysville Golf Club brought dogged competition between the small but hardy players in both the men's and women's fields, who endured dramatic and unforgiving weather that swept through the course.

The men's winner was Steve Coker (18) with a nett 73 with a steady performance on a day when conditions tested every part of the game. A tightly contested field saw Drew Kaempkes (13) and Brian Worchester (19) share

second place, both finishing with nett 76. The ladies winner was Gail Leigh (13) with a nett 76, navigating the challenging conditions with consistency and composure.

Persistent thunder and lightning forced many players to retire early for safety. Those who continued played through heavy rain and gusty conditions, finishing the round wet, tired, and admirably determined.

Members are reminded that the annual Medal of Medallists' competition will take place next week. This event recognises the

outstanding performers across the year's medal rounds.

In upcoming events, members are reminded that there will be a working bee at the club on Tuesday, December 9. The annual Presentation Day will be held on Saturday, December 20, with a shotgun start for a novelty game of golf starting at 8.30am, followed by lunch and presentation of the 2025 trophies.

Members, family and friends are encouraged to attend this celebration of the golfing year. As numbers are required for catering purposes, members are requested

to provide their RSVPs to Heather Jenkins at heatherjenkins2008@hotmail.com by no later than December 13.

Members would like to extend their condolences to the family and friends of Harry Whiteley. They were saddened to hear of the death of Harry who was a stalwart of the club and a major contributor to the development of the back nine holes. He and his wife Pat were great supporters of the Buxton and Marysville communities. Sympathies to Pat and the Whiteley family on the loss of Harry.



Gail Leigh, Margaret Blair and Sabrina Stow braving the wet conditions. -S

Lightning and golf clubs don't mix: Alexandra Golf Club

by Dave Silverman

THE week got off to a good start at Alexandra Golf Club, with 12 players entering last Tuesday's stableford round. Russell Haack was the winner with 37 points, and second went to Russell Purcell, also on 37.

Bill Wind came in third on 35, and the only nearest the pin to be claimed went to John Greatorex with his second shot on 17. Lennie Jenkins, Perrin Gooding and Gretto all picked up vouchers in the rundown.

Last Wednesday was stroke round for the ladies, as it was their Medal of Medallists' round.

The best score of the day was that of Ruth Worland, whose 91 net 73 gave her the win by

one stroke from Judy Pearson, with Marion Williamson a further stroke back in third.

Judy also claimed the nearest the pin on two, and five went to Deb Richardson.

Most importantly of all, though, was the fact that Barb Doyle's 94 net 76 was enough to see her win the Medal over all the other Monthly Medal winners, as well as having the best nine-hole score of 38 on the back.

Last Saturday was scheduled to be the men's Medal of Medallists' decider, and 21 players teed off, having the start delayed somewhat. Sadly, play was abandoned soon thereafter, as, in the immortal words of Shane McGorlick, "lightning and golf clubs don't mix". Shrewd call, young Shane.

At this stage, the Medal of Medallists will be played next Saturday, December 13.

Four ball best ball at Eildon Golf Club

by Puttomatic

SATURDAY, November 29 saw a four ball best ball stableford competition at Eildon Golf Club, kindly sponsored by Anchorage Houseboats of Eildon. Forty-eight players enjoyed a great day with plenty of prizes and raffles donated. A sausage in bread breakfast was supplied, and beef and onion roll after the game helped finish off a great day.

Winners for the day for nearest the pins were on the third Jack McDonald, fifth C Burgmann, 11th Dave Stirling, 12th Alan Mackwell and 14th Riley McDonald.

Team winners with a score of 45 points were Shane Berrands and Brody Gourlay. Second on a countback were Grant Walters and Kerry Power from Mick and Sandi McLearn on 42 points. On a countback for fourth and fifth were Tony Carr and Nick Wall and Ray Gourlay and Lyn Burgmann with 41 points.

There were many prizes won on the raffles, congratulations to all winners on a great day all very kindly donated by Phil and Amanda Gourlay. The Eildon Golf Club appreciates the work that these two put in for this day to happen.