

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

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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 placed at the 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 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.



The YDMH Staff Recognition Team Award went to the Community Health Team. Pictured are Kylie Alexander, Shona Miljkovic, Crissie Bryant, Sarah Austin, Kate Bysouth and Lynne Hiddle. The community health members not present are Nikko Shaw, Kerry Stevens, Angelique, Bethany Anderson, Sally Belford and Sarah Scott. More images on page 18. -S

Alexandra District Health

5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital

5736 0400

In an emergency dial 000

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

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ALEXANDRA

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Letters to the Editor

Carol services

I HAVE lived in Yea for 48 years, and in all that time the churches in our town have held Ecumenical Carol Services on the Sunday night before school finishes, and the Community Carols (run for many years by the Rotary Club), were held on a week night, usually the Friday before school finishes. The churches over the years readily supported the Community Carols, supplying people to sing in the choir and places for practices to occur.

At the start of November, St Lukes began advertising as usual, with flyers in the street, at the monthly meetings of many organisations, through our Op Shop, and at churches throughout the shire.

So it was with dismay that we learned that Yea Arts Inc has now changed years of

practice without any communication with the churches and advertised Community Carols for the Sunday night, December 14, the same night as the non traditional 7.30 service, being held this year at St Luke's.

In a town of our size we should work co-operatively and not competitively. St Luke's issues you all a warm welcome to our service and for a cup of Christmas cheer in the parish hall afterwards.

Jenny Kindred, Yea

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 (VFVB) 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 VFVB 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

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

PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

Letters must be 300 words or less. We will

not publish defamatory letters, or content

which is offensive, threatening or containing

personal attacks. Submitted letters may be

edited before going to print.

All letters must contain writers name,

address and contact number. (not necessarily

for publication). Letters without these details

supplied cannot not be published. Deadline

for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.

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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	steady
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%

The Yea Chronicle

DEADLINES

Real Estate Thursday 5pm

Trades & Services Thursday noon

Early General News Thursday 5pm

Classifieds Monday noon

Editorial Monday 9am

Sports Editorial Monday 10am

Letters to the Editor Monday 9am

Thumbs up/down Monday 10am

If you have any enquiries please do

not hesitate to contact the office on

5772 1002 or

reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

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

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/

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.

- 2
- 1
- 2

\$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.

LIFETIME LEASE

13-21 Kidston Parade,
Mansfield, Victoria



(03) 5775 1925
www.beolitevillage.org

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.

POLICE REPORT

YEA Police have advised that they will be stepping up roadside drug and alcohol testing in Murrindindi Shire in an effort to reduce the road toll. They will be particularly active as we head towards the festive season. All police units in the shire will be involved.

YEA police have had complaints about children riding e-bikes. Police will be looking into the matter, intercepting and holding to account if the riders do not have a licence if required to. The matter is an issue of public safety, and they don't want to see anyone get hurt.

If your e-bike has a motor that exceeds 250 watts for pedal-assist or 200 watts for throttle control, it is considered a motor vehicle and you need a motorbike licence and the bike must be registered to ride it legally in public. If you ride an e-bike which exceeds the power and speed limits without a licence and registration, you could be subject to a significant fine.

You must be at least 16 years old to ride a throttle-controlled e-bike, and all e-bike riders must wear a helmet. Keep to the left and give way to pedestrians on paths, do not ride across a pedestrian crossing unless there is a bicycle lane or a green bicycle light, have at least one working brake, have a bell, horn or other warning device, people 13 years and older cannot ride on the footpath unless accompanying someone younger than 13.

To report any issues, please contact Yea Police on 5797 2630.

Church Services

ST PETER'S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

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

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

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

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

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

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

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

UNITING CHURCH

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

Get in touch
5772 0333

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/request
customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Stay informed

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news
Follow us on Facebook @murrindindishirecouncil

Student of the Week

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



YEA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Congratulations to our Values Award winners this week.

Harper, Bridie, Sophie and Delilah

SACRED HEART SCHOOL



Matilda, Sophie and Judd were recognised for their commitment to outstanding actions that align with our school values of Respect, Resilience and Safety.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Kinglake branch



The Rotary Club of Yea School Bursary presentation evening

PROVIDING support to youth programs has been an important goal of the Rotary Club of Yea over many, many years. One major way the club does this is by awarding annual educational bursaries (each to the value of \$500) to the four local schools. Schools are asked to select a suitable candidate and then the student, together with a parent and school representative are invited to a club meeting to receive their award.

Rotarian Julie Lynch followed up on the work set in progress by Youth Chair Lily Cox to ensure the success of the recent bursary presentation evening.

The night was a wonderful occasion when Rotarians, students, parents and staff members came together to celebrate and acknowledge each of the bursary recipients. The bursary will assist each student with educational expenses.

President Darryl King and Youth Chair Lily Cox made the presentations to each recipient.

Flowerdale Primary School teacher Brooke McDonald spoke in glowing terms about Harry Noble and how much he has developed while at Flowerdale and is a thoughtful student willing to assist others.

The Yea Primary School student awardee was Elias Salloum and Principal Craig Irvine spoke of Elias as being a respectful, happy and responsible young man who epitomizes the values of Yea Primary School.

Patrick Kelly from Sacred Heart Primary School was introduced by Principal Amy Leahy. Amy noted that Patrick was always willing to assist in the community, is resilient and respectful and a great role model to his peers.

The Yea High School student was Lacie Luckman-Harrod, who was introduced by her teacher Amanda Hard. Lacie has just

completed year nine and is doing incredibly well at high school. A testament to Lacie's hard work is that she had previously received a bursary when in grade six at Yea Primary School.

Congratulations to Lacie and all four students for demonstrating kindness, hard work and a willingness to assist others.

All the students spoke individually, thanking the club for its support. The club congratulates all the recipients and wishes them well as they continue their educational journeys in 2026.



Flowerdale Primary School teacher Brooke McDonald, Narelle Harris, Harry Noble, Youth Chair Lily Cox and Rotary President Darryl King. -S



Sacred Heart Principal Amy Leahy, Patrick Kelly, Youth Chair Lily Cox and President Darryl King. -S



Yea High School teacher Amanda Hard, Lacie Luckman-Harrod, Youth Chair Lily Cox and President Darryl King. -S



Yea Primary School Principal Craig Irvine, Elias Salloum, Youth Chair Lily Cox and President Darryl King. -S

HAD YOUR



DAMAGED?

HAD YOUR



GO MISSING?

HAD YOUR



STOLEN?

HAD YOUR



BURGLER?

REGISTER YOUR



AND STAY SAFE

KEEP YOUR



WHILE AWAY



report online

ANYTIME



**UPLOAD
YOUR
EVIDENCE
NOW**





-photos by Dale McKeon, Plymouth Dale Photos



Yea celebrates the start of the festive season

YEA celebrated the lighting of the living Christmas tree on the evening of Thursday, December 4, following the postponement of the event from the Sunday prior due to inclement weather.

Fortunately, Thursday evening was sunny and warm, with many people turning out for the event, bringing picnic dinners.

There were performances from the Yea Carols band and Yea Primary School students, as well as other live music.

There was also a special visit from Santa, arriving on the CFA truck, delighting the children.





Metro Tunnel ***now open***

To celebrate, enjoy free public transport across Victoria every weekend in December and January.

With more services arriving in February, you can use the new Metro Tunnel this Summer.

more ways to move

Find out how you can try the Metro Tunnel at **bigbuild.vic.gov.au**





Sheep producer confidence surges as flock expansion plans accelerate

THE latest Sheep Producers Intentions Survey (SPIS), conducted by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), reveals a sharp rise in producer confidence and strong intentions to grow flocks in 2026, driven by buoyant prices and optimism for improved seasonal conditions.

The October 2025 survey captured feedback from 1819 sheep producers nationwide, showing overall sentiment for the sheepmeat sector has jumped 36 points to +78, up from +42 in 2024. This marks the highest sentiment score since the survey redesign in 2022.

MLA's Market Information Manager, Erin Lukey said the results highlight a significant shift in the national flock's outlook.

"Producers are feeling positive about the next 12 months, with strong lamb prices and expectations of better weather underpinning confidence," Ms Lukey said.

"Over half of respondents, 52 per cent compared to 40 per cent last year, plan to increase their flock size in 2026, while only 28 per cent expect to reduce numbers.

"This is a clear signal of recovery and growth following challenging seasonal conditions in 2025."

The main reasons for expansion include expectations of better lambing results next

year, retaining more ewes, expanding sheep operations and anticipating good conditions over the next 12 months.

Meat breeds continue to grow, now representing 40 per cent of lambs, while Merinos have remained at 34 per cent. Poor seasonal conditions impacted 2025 marking rates, with Merinos at 74 per cent (down from 81 per cent in 2024), compared to prime lamb at 115 per cent and shedding breeds at 101 per cent.

South Australia stands out as one of the most optimistic states in the October 2025 survey.

Sentiment surged 50 points to +81, making SA one of the highest confidence regions nationally.

Sixty per cent of SA producers plan to increase their flock size in 2026, compared to just 24 per cent expecting a decrease.

The state's positive outlook is underpinned by expectations of improved lambing results, with 56 per cent of SA respondents citing this as a key factor, and operational expansion.

Based off intentions SA's lamb flock is forecast to grow by 19 per cent, from 4.10 million in 2025 to 4.88 million in 2026, outpacing the national average increase of 11 per cent.

"South Australian producers are leading the charge in confidence and growth intentions. Their outlook reflects strong resilience and readiness to capitalise on better seasonal conditions and market opportunities," Ms Lukey said.

"Producers and industry stakeholders can explore these findings with the MLA Market Information team in detail at MLA Updates in Adelaide on November 20."

Confidence in the wool industry has also improved significantly, with sentiment rising 38 points to +19. While wool production remains low, prices have strengthened, with the Eastern Market Indicator reaching levels not seen since mid-2022.

Producers are cautiously optimistic, with 36 per cent reporting a positive outlook compared to 17 per cent negative. This improvement is expected to influence decisions around flock composition and breeding strategies.

AWI's Head of Domestic Operations, Scott Carmody says the survey results are heartening and reflect positive feedback the company has received from growers.

"The latest survey shows woolgrower sentiment has turned around off the back of stronger prices paid in the auction room over the last six months," Mr Carmody said.

The 38-point improvement in sentiment in a year is welcome news.

Confidence is key not just now but into the future that's reflected in the fact 42 per cent of growers surveyed believe price rises will continue in the year ahead.

The current positive sentiment is being felt right along the wool supply chain, with increasing demand for the Northern Hemisphere winter season".

The SPIS is used to help industry determine wool and lamb production forecasts and to understand the breed composition of the Australian flock on a national, state and regional basis. It is used by processors for budgeting purposes and allows import markets to ascertain short-term supply estimates.

To view the full report, visit tinyurl.com/3jxy9w8k

Landmark year for Aussie agriculture forecasted by ABARES

AUSTRALIA'S combined agriculture, fisheries and forestry production is on track to reach a record-breaking \$106.4 billion in 2025-26, according to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) December quarter reports.

ABARES Executive Director Dr Jared Greenville said agricultural production alone was expected to total \$99.5 billion, the highest on record.

"These record production values are being driven by strong livestock markets and steady national crop value," Dr Greenville said.

"Livestock prices continue to strengthen on the back of firm global and domestic restocker demand, lifting the value of livestock and livestock product output even as turnoff of sheep, lambs and cattle moderates.

"Combined agriculture, fisheries and forestry export value is forecast to rise to \$83.9 billion in 2025-26, setting another record. Farm export value alone is projected to reach \$78.9 billion.

"Farm profitability is also expected to improve, with average broadacre farm cash income forecast to reach \$227,000 per farm in 2025-26.

"Australia's national winter crop outlook remains robust, with production on track to reach 66.3 million tonnes, the second-largest winter crop on record.

"Harvest is now well underway across all states, with significantly above-average yields reported in northern New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. However, some parts of south-east Australia received a dry spring which adversely impacted yields in those areas.

"These latest forecasts highlight the continued strength, resilience and global competitiveness of Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors as they head into 2026."

The December 2025 ABARES Agricultural Commodities Report and Australian Crop Report is available at agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/agricultural-outlook

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."

Rural Aid calls for support for drought affected farmers

RURAL Aid has recorded a 60 per cent increase in farmer registrations from South Australia and Victoria in the past financial year, as both regions endure one of the worst droughts on record. Farmers are turning to Rural Aid for essential hay and water provisions, and the surge in registrations also reflects a growing demand for mental health support.

Rural Aid Chief Executive Officer John Warlters said the sharp rise in registrations shows how significantly the drought is impacting farming families and highlights the urgent need for donations.

"The increase in farmers registering with us is a clear sign of how difficult conditions are. Every registration represents a family that is struggling to keep going in the face of extraordinary pressure," Mr Warlters said.

"We need Australians to get behind our efforts and donate today. Their support is vital."

Rural Aid provides practical and emotional assistance to primary producers, including hay and water deliveries, financial assistance, and counselling through its mental health and wellbeing program. These services are helping families stay on the land and cope with the emotional strain of prolonged dry conditions.

Farmers are sacrificing their own wellbeing to save their stock. Kaye Wicker, a sheep and cereal crop farmer from Waitpinga, South Australian farmer described how desperate the situation has become.

"Some weeks I went without groceries, to buy feed for my lambs, so they could eat" she said.

"You just do what you have to. They come first."

Ms Wicker said the support from Rural Aid made a significant difference.

"The support from Rural Aid... it just means so much," she said.

"To be able to access a pre-paid visa or speak to a counsellor when there's a lot of pressure on you, really, they just mean everything. And to receive that generous gift of hay... you never forget how grateful you were to receive it."

Mr Warlters said farmers are reaching breaking point and that donations this Christmas can make a life changing difference.

"We are calling on Australians to buy a bale or fill a tank. Every contribution helps to deliver hay, water and mental health support to farming families who are doing it incredibly tough," Mr Warlters said.

"Your generosity ensures we can be there for the next family who needs us."

To donate or learn more, visit buyabale.ruralaid.org.au

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 crowd in the lane during selling. -S



The Alex Scott team in action. -S



The VLP team selling. -S

Global appetite drives Australian beef and goatmeat exports

AUSTRALIA has officially broken the record for the highest volume of beef exported in a calendar year, with year-to-date exports reaching 1.398 million tonnes, up 15 per cent year-on-year.

This milestone reflects broad-based global demand for high-quality Australian red meat and the strength of the industry's domestic productive capacity.

The United States remains Australia's largest beef export destination, with 412,068 tonnes shipped so far this year, up 17 per cent year-on-year.

This growth is particularly significant given the implementation of a 10 per cent tariff on Australian exports including beef, which has since been removed.

While the tariff was in place, Australian beef exports remained strong and resilient due to exceptionally strong US demand and exacerbated by historically low domestic beef production.

This demonstrates the premium positioning of Australian beef and the willingness of US buyers to pay for quality.

Japan and Korea continued to deliver steady demand, up two per cent and 10 per cent year-on-year respectively, while other markets across Asia and the Middle East also contributed to the record-breaking year.

Grainfed beef exports also hit a record, totalling 403,860 tonnes, an increase of 19 per cent year-on-year, underscoring the premium positioning of Australian grainfed beef internationally.

Goatmeat exports reach new heights

In addition to beef, goatmeat exports have set a new all-time record, with 54,699 tonnes shipped year-to-date, up 16 per cent. November 2025 was the biggest month ever for goatmeat exports, with 5923 tonnes exported globally.

Goatmeat plays an increasingly important role in Australia's red meat portfolio, particularly in meeting the needs of diverse consumer bases across North America, Asia, and the Middle East.

Its versatility and alignment with cultural preferences make it a key growth category,

helping Australian producers tap into expanding global protein demand.

According to Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA) General Manager for International Markets, Andrew Cox, the record-breaking results highlight the competitiveness of Australian red meat on the global stage.

"These results reflect the strength of Australia's production systems and the commitment of our producers," Mr Cox said.

"Australian red meat continues to be trusted and valued across a wide range of international markets, and we're well positioned to build on this momentum."

While beef and goatmeat exports have soared, lamb and mutton exports softened slightly compared to last year, though lamb performed marginally better than expected thanks to a strong spring flush and robust demand.

Lamb exports reached 316,065 tonnes year-to-date, down five per cent, while mutton totalled 193,641 tonnes, down 16 per cent.

November lamb exports were 26,337 tonnes, slightly below last year, with strong

growth into North America where shipments rose 15 per cent year-on-year to 8730 tonnes, including 7732 tonnes to the US.

Greater China also recorded solid lamb demand, with November exports up 11 per cent year-on-year to 5204 tonnes, and year-to-date volumes up 19 per cent to 61,053 tonnes.

In contrast, lamb exports to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) fell sharply, down 27 per cent year-to-date to 62,847 tonnes, while mutton exports to MENA bucked the trend, rising three per cent year-to-date to 60,256 tonnes, driven by strong demand from Saudi Arabia and the UAE in November.

MLA's international marketing programs play an important role in building awareness and preference for Australian red meat across major markets, including the US, China, Japan, and Korea.

"Global demand for beef is surging, and Australia is perfectly positioned to meet this momentum into 2026 thanks to record production levels and our reputation for integrity and quality," Mr Cox said.

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



Attendees at the Alexandra District Health AGM. -AR

about \$1.4 million... The Health Department called 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 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 Jane Poxon, chair Kim Flanagan and board member Alan Studley. -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

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 14

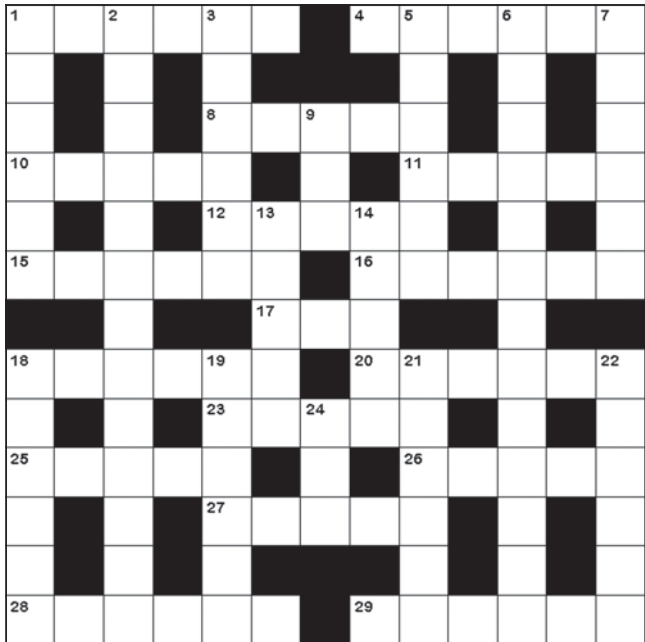
Crossword

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.

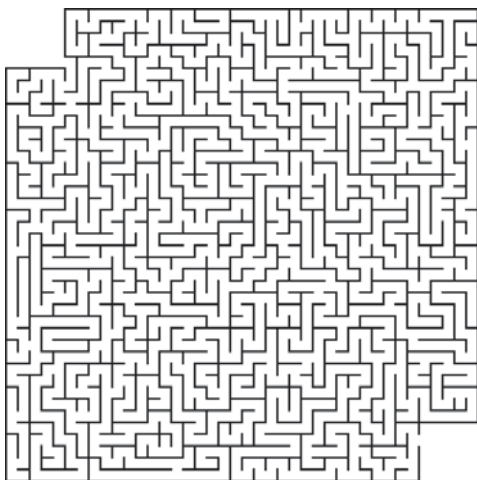
Word Search

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

Songs with one word titles

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

Maze



Sudoku

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

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.



Kirk Mercuri speaking about his book. -S

Kirk launches book on life with autism

KINGLAKE'S own local legend Kirk Mercuri is once again proving that the way he sees the world is one of his greatest strengths.

The passionate volunteer has just released his first book, *Step By Step: Living with Autism*, an honest, insightful look at life on the autism spectrum, the challenges he works through, and the simple joys that give him purpose.

It's yet another achievement for the 24 year old and a powerful reminder that disability should never stand in the way of pursuing your goals.

As part of International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD), Intereach is celebrating Kirk and the contributions people with disability make to their communities every day.

"Everyone deserves the chance to strive to achieve the very best that their ability allows," Kirk said.

"People do better when they are accepted, supported, and encouraged."

Kirk's five-year writing journey culminated in a community book launch on Sunday, November 30, which was a fitting tribute to the town that has supported him from the start.

Dozens of Kinglake residents turned out to cheer

him on, including local author and publisher Kath Stewart.

"I was a little bit nervous but also super excited," Kirk said.

"I'm really happy with how the book turned out. It gives people the chance to learn more about me, who I am, and what life is like living with autism."

What started as a personal project during the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic has grown into a 134 page story of resilience, reflection and hope.

The book offers a rare window into Kirk's world, blending raw thoughts, observations and emotions with photos of the moments that have shaped him.

Of the 400 printed copies, more than 300 have already sold, many to local Rotary, football and basketball clubs who have benefitted from Kirk's generosity over the years. Kirk's warm presence and passion for helping others can be seen everywhere as he regularly volunteers at basketball and football games, the Kinglake Ranges Opportunity Shop, the library, BMX group, and Neighbourhood House.

That generosity of spirit earned him the title of Murrindindi Shire Council's joint Young Citizen of the Year in 2023.

The Kinglake Basketball Association put it best in a recent tribute:

"Kirk is a familiar and much-loved face at every Kinglake Basketball Association game. His consistent presence, quiet leadership and genuine enthusiasm lift our stadium every week.

"He also generously sponsors our Player Token awards, recognising effort, teamwork, respect and community spirit, values he demonstrates every day. As a community, we would love to show Kirk how much we appreciate him and the positive influence he brings to all of us. Let's get behind him, celebrate this incredible milestone, and cheer him on as he launches his book."

Kirk hopes *Step By Step* helps people better understand autism and the many ways neurodivergent people experience the world.

His journey hasn't always been easy. Diagnosed with autism at age two, Kirk's early years included many challenges. But with strong advocacy from his mother, Maryanne, and the right supports in place, he grew up with the opportunity to thrive.

After accessing the NDIS in 2019 and later connecting with Intereach, Kirk was linked with skill-building programs, local supports and a support worker. His NDIS funding enables him to participate in community, social and recreational activities, develop new skills and work with allied health professionals and receive support that helps him stay active, independent and deeply connected to the community he loves.

And now that community gets to share in his story, one page at a time.

Copies of *Step By Step: Living with Autism* are available for \$15 at the Murrindindi Shire Council Library, Kinglake Rotary Club and Kinglake Community FoodWorks.



Kirk signing copies of his book. -S

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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.

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MATH SQUARE

3	-	2	-	6	-5
+		x		-	
8	÷	4	+	7	9
+		+		-	
9	+	5	-	1	13
20		13		-2	

SUDOKU

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

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DEATH NOTICES

BETT, Malcolm

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

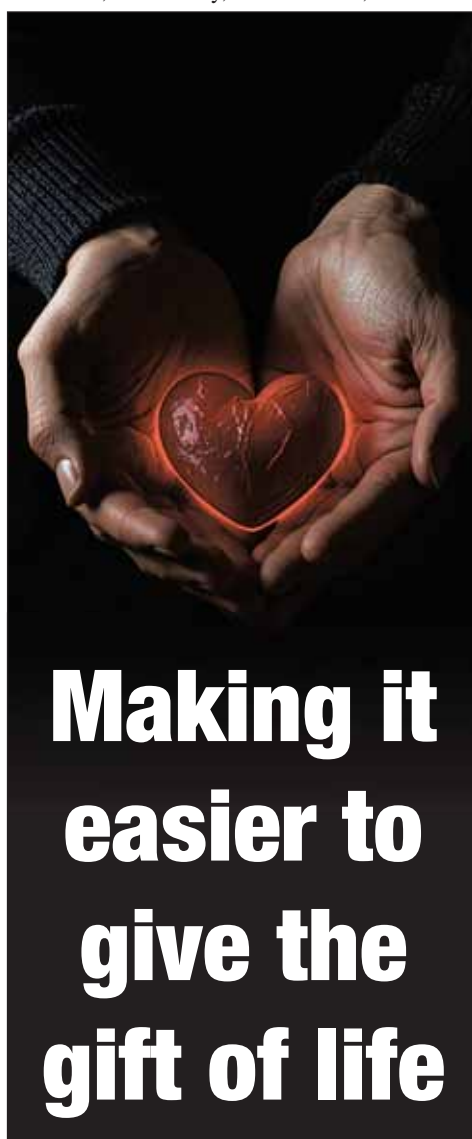
05/11/1929 - 04/12/2025

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, Kylah, 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



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

having a celebration? need invitations?



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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.

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.

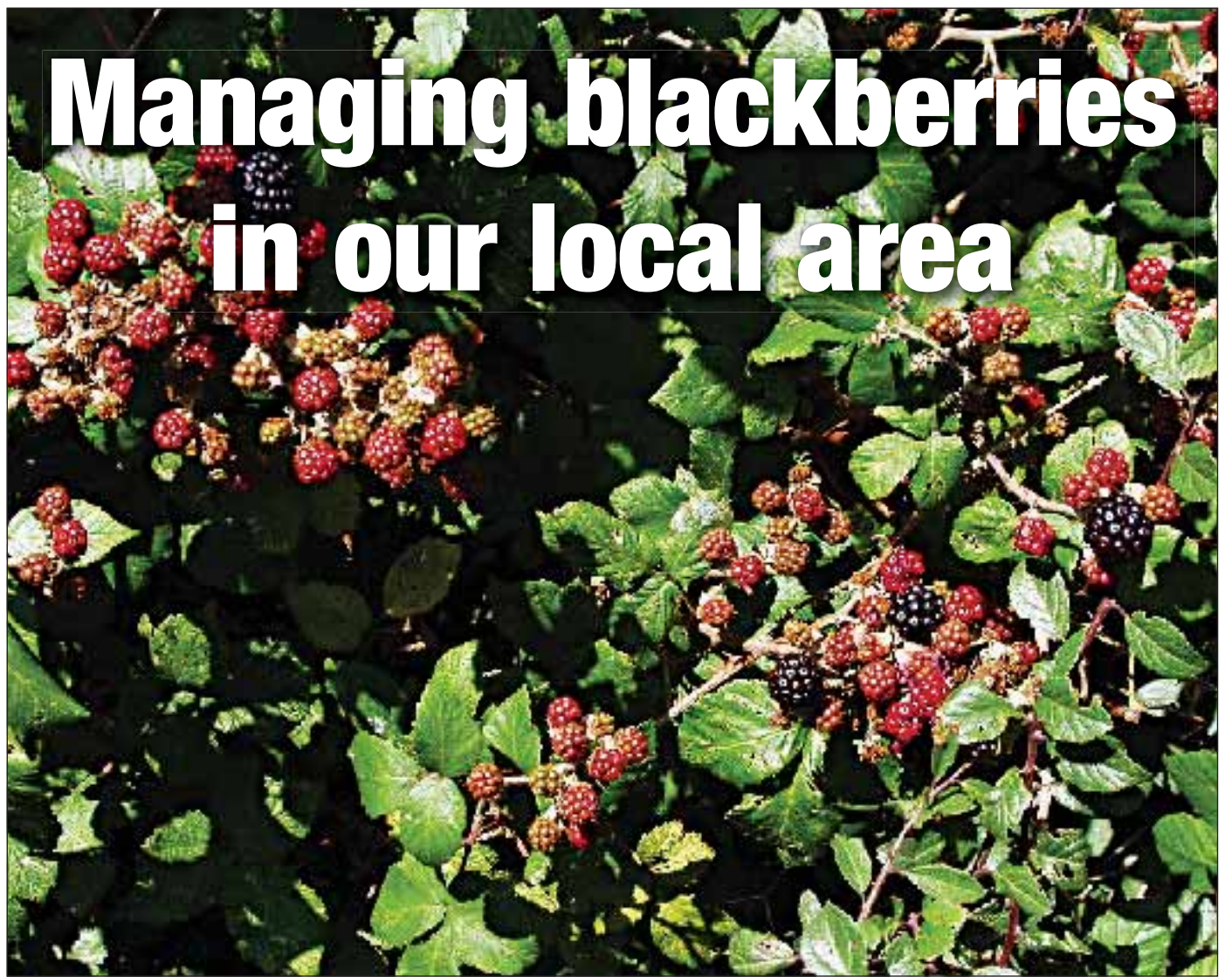
The report states, "Getting the right care, at the right time, close to home is getting harder. We know from the what you've told us, and what we've uncovered through data, that mental health, physical health and social connection are key issues for our community and well below the state average on many 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

Managing blackberries in our local area



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

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

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."



President Darryl King as the slim Santa. -S



The Yea Primary School choir led by Lou Filmore. -S



Rob O'Halloran, Lyndal Tait and Cheryl O'Halloran. -S

Seniors celebrate in style at the annual Christmas dinner

THE annual Seniors Christmas dinner was a great success and it was lovely to see so many familiar faces and lots of new ones too. Held on Friday, December the 5 at the Yea Shire Hall with just over 100 in attendance, it may have been the biggest number ever. It was a chance for everyone to catch up, have some fun, enjoy a drink in the Christmas spirit and just relax and enjoy a social outing.

The club also received support from the a variety of local sponsors and suppliers, including Sedona wines, Limestone Pork, Flowerdale Farm, Ruth Hargrave, and with David Ralph and Rosemary Simons providing

the beautiful table decorations. Rotary couldn't do it without you.

Chef Craig Birchall did a wonderful meal again, for the third year, with help from Rotarians Bobbie Dewar and Darryl King. The meal included an entrée, a delicious hot main course (roasted Limestone pork loin), with Lyndal Tait and her mum Cheryl O'Hallaran providing the desserts (individual plum puddings, pavlovas and warm chocolate brownies).

They were assisted by a fleet of Yea Primary School students, staff and parents who assisted with the serving and clearing

of the tables, all done with smiling faces. They were an absolute hit and were both careful and enthusiastic while waiting on tables under the guidance of Al Tait. The special touch of homemade shortbread was greatly appreciated. Thanks Yea Primary School. Great job.

Preceding the meal were the entertaining Yea Primary School Choir led by Lou Filmore. They were a hit as they sang a bracket of carols and got everyone smiling and joining in. Santa made a guest appearance too and was of course, very popular, as he gave out lots of chocolate treats.

The event has a long history, having first started 40 years ago by the Lions Club of Yea. It was passed on to the Rotary Club of Yea about 15 years ago and both Rotarians and guests really enjoy this annual tradition and get together. Most Rotary members and Friends of Yea Rotary were on hand to set up the hall, prepare and help plate the meal, serve, entertain, clear tables, wash dishes and pack up. A big night for everyone with so many of the community involved.

Rotary feels the senior members of our town deserve some recognition for the service they have given to the district over many years. These are the people who have made the community what it is today and have started many of the organisations that to this day, continue to serve our wonderful community.

Merry Christmas to all our senior members of the community from the Rotary family of Yea.



One of the many tables. -S



Kaye Baynes, Joy Anderson and Barb Guttridge. -S



Judy Henwood with Lilita Tunnis. -S



Elaine Gillson, who won a lucky draw cake. -S



Darby Tait serving entrée to Annette Hexter. -S



Jenny Purvis with a table decoration. -S



Margaret Mahon. -S

SPORT

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.



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



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

Staff awards at the Yea hospital AGM



Attendees listening intently at the Yea and District Memorial Hospital AGM. -AR



The Staff Recognition Award recipient was Carolin Pritchard. She is pictured here with her daughter, CEO Elizabeth Sinclair and Director of Clinical Services Andrea Steele. -AR



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



The Long Service Recipients were Paula Antrobus (10 years), Lorraine Harris (20 years), Shona Miljkovic (20 years). Recipients not present were Carolyn Young (20 years), Kayla Waack (10 years) and Sharon Antrobus (15 years). -AR

Yea down Seymour in a thriller



Drying the green after some heavy rain. -S

by Maurie Finn

PRIOR to the start of play, a tribute was given to Yea Bowls Club life member Anthony McCarthy, who passed away last Thursday. Thunder, lightning and steady rain then set in to delay the start of play, but the rain cleared and rink became playable.

In a thrilling finish, Yea defeated Seymour by three shots overall.

Rink by rink: Rob Marks with Doug Shirrefs, Brett Reece and Viv Cavanagh dominated play early, leading 18 to six after 12 ends. However, Seymour worked their way back in the game and scores were Yea 21 to 20 on the 20th end. Rob's team were up to the task and scored seven on the last end to take an eight-shot victory.

Wayne Martin with Rodney Pitt-Wood, Darren Sherman and bustling Mick Barrott, were down seven shots after 12 ends. They got within two shots on the 16th end, but Seymour was too strong and finished up 11 shots up.

Maurie Finn with Leonard Sheehan, Kevin Smith and Angela Finn, were in front from start to finish to have a convincing 11 shot win. The highlight was Leonard Sheehan bowling in career best form.

Neil Rieschick, Judy Elenius, Maureen Marks and Barry Moore, led by one shot after 10 ends. Seymour got on top scoring eight shots over the next four ends. Although it was very even over the last five ends, Seymour held on to have a five-shot victory.

This week it's off to Dookie, who are another top four side so Yea will be hoping to come home with another win.

This Thursday the regions 60 and overs will play at Yea with all rinks already booked out for a great day of bowls.

Social Bowls

Progressive Physio Monday Triples winners were Rodney Pitwood, Jeff Green and Terry Muller.

Good numbers attended the Thursday event again Maree Brennan and Fiona Tanner showed they'll be very good bowlers in the future.



Progressive Physio Monday Triples winners were Jeff Green, Rodney Pitwood and Terry Muller. -S

Yea Golf Club report

by Alan Pell

LAST Wednesday's men's golf results saw Brian Priestley (24) not only take the captain's \$2 but had 35 points to win from Phil Armstrong (20) with 34 countback and Peter Johnston (17) third.

Taris Dunne (33) was fourth with 33 countback from dad Chris (6) in fifth. Bill Dredge was nearest the pin on the second and the grumpy lucky club award \$10 went to Michael Sheather.

Despite the threat of frequent showers, thunder and some lightning, 10 brave souls (others may describe them

differently) competed in last Saturday's stableford event.

Hitting off early Josh Cunningham (16) set the leaderboard alight with 39 points. But another of our ever improving juniors Tarris Dunne (32) found the conditions to his liking, posting an incredible 44 points, taking out top honours and relegating Josh to second.

Phil Armstrong (19) continued his recent run of good form to finish third with 36 points.

There were no winners of nearest the pin on the second hole and Paul Heyen collected the club award.

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

The Chronicle Sport

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Yea Golf Club wins Dalhousie District Golf Club of the Year



Yea members at the presentations at Lancefield, where Yea Golf Club won the Dalhousie District Golf Association 2025 Club of the Year award.

by Alan Pell

YEA Golf Club has achieved outstanding recognition at the Dalhousie District Golf Associations (DDGA) 2025 Awards, taking home both the esteemed '2025 Golf Club of the Year' and '2025 Volunteer of the Year' accolades.

The awards were presented at the association's annual tournament last Sunday, celebrating excellence among the region's 20 member and associate clubs, which span from Trentham and Euroa to Cathedral, Healesville, and Hidden Valley Golf Club.

Accepting the 'Golf Club of the Year' award, Yea Golf Club Captain, Alan Pell credited the dedication of the club's volunteers for this achievement.

"Our club's success has been due to the commitment of its member volunteers who drive the maintenance of the course, catering for events, advertising the club and raising funds. This enthusiasm has in turn generated a high level of member engagement and pride in the club, the course and the facilities," Alan added.

Club volunteers play a vital role in promoting golf throughout the community by maintaining the club's website, advertising events and social activities via WhatsApp groups, organizing 'Crazy Golf' deals, securing sponsorship for the men's pennant team, contributing articles to the local newspaper, and hosting "introduction days" such as the highly successful 2024 Melbourne Cup Golf Day event.

In a bid to foster future talent, the club offers free memberships to juniors, encouraging them to build their skills and confidence in the sport.

"This has significantly boosted the number of junior members at Yea, which should bolster our adult member numbers in future years," Alan said.

Volunteers also generously provide training for new golfers, covering essential skills, rules, and etiquette in a welcoming, social atmosphere aimed at sharing knowledge and fostering a love of the game.

The club has seen significant growth, with more than 1200 green fee rounds played last year, an increase of 400 rounds. Yea Golf Club continues to enhance its sporting facilities for both residents and visitors from Melbourne and beyond, contributing to the vibrancy of the local community.

"These visitors often stay in one of the town's accommodation options, have meals at the many local cafes and restaurants, and enjoy other tourist attractions, bringing important economic outcomes for the shire and upper Goulburn region," Alan noted.

Phil Armstrong receives DDGA '2025 Volunteer of the Year' Award

Phil Armstrong was recognised for his contribution to the club in the form of the '2025 Volunteer of the Year' award. His leadership drives innovation and community engagement at the Yea Golf Club.

The association's award highlights the exceptional contributions of Phil, whose dedication and initiative have been instrumental in Yea Golf Club's growth over the past year. As an active committee member, Phil spearheaded the acquisition of a secure container for storing club and members' carts, improving both convenience and safety for all.

Phil's commitment extends to assisting with club cart hire for the public, making Yea's facilities accessible and welcoming. He has also organised a major raffle featuring golf clubs, expected to raise important funds to further support club activities and improvements.

Serving as Yea's greens manager, Phil has played an important role with significant upgrades at the club, including the installation of a new putting green and enhancements to the seventh green. He regularly interacts with green fee players, encouraging them to join as members and fostering a sense of community.

Phil's creativity shines through the introduction of monthly Friday night Socials at the clubrooms, which bring together members and guests for an evening of golf, games and dinner. As head chef and entertainment director, he ensures these events are memorable and inclusive. He was also instrumental in signing up the club to the popular 'Crazy Golf' Deals.

In addition, Phil is an integral member of Yea's Match Committee, stepping in seamlessly for Captain, Alan Pell on competition days when required. His leadership, enthusiasm and commitment have made a lasting impact, and the DDGA recognises Phil as a driving force behind Yea Golf Club's continued success.



Phil Armstrong, winner of Dalhousie District Golf Association Volunteer of the Year for 2025. -S

Phil has been central to the golf club's growth and development over the last year.

Phil says, "While it's great to be acknowledged, I'm just one of the wonderful team of volunteers, both men and ladies at Yea Golf Club who do so much to make 'Royal' Yea Golf Club a welcoming, fun and socially enjoyable place to enjoy the game of golf."