

# The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Email: [reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au](mailto:reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au) Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, December 17, 2025 \$2.00 inc. GST

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Yea Arts and Yea Rotary presented Yea Community Christmas Carols in the Yea Shire Hall on Sunday, December 14. There were special guest performances, including from the Yea Primary School Choir, and some classic songs to sing along to. More images on page 8 of this edition. -Dale McKeon, Plymouth Dale Photography



St Luke's church in Yea hosted an evening of Christmas carols on Sunday, December 14 at 7.30pm. People were invited to bring a friend, listen to the Christmas story and sing some Christmas carol favourites. It is hoped that next year the community carols are scheduled for a different night. -Dale McKeon, Plymouth Dale Photography

## Ruth Konig Memorial Scholarship presentation

AT the recent Yea High School presentation afternoon, the Rotary Club of Yea was delighted to present Ruth Konig Memorial Scholarships to two very worthy recipients, year 12 Yea High School students Matilda Underhill and Ashlee Francombe.

With a small bequest from Ruth and supplemented by club funds, the club some years ago, inaugurated a memorial scholarship in Ruth's memory to assist year 12 students at Yea High School with the cost of tertiary education, vocational training or other further education.

Ruth passionately advocated supporting hard working, high achieving and aspirational individuals who may have experienced, at times, challenging circumstances.

This year the club was delighted to accept a very generous donation from the Yea-Kinglake RSL branch which resulted in the club being able to offer two scholarships.

Yea Rotary President Darryl King spoke of Ruth's wonderful enduring legacy as a humanitarian, teacher and Rotarian, both in Yea and district and the wider international community.

This year's recipients Matilda and Ashlee were selected after application and interview. The panel was most impressed by their outstanding leadership qualities, community involvement, aspirations, and resilience.

The scholarships, \$2000 each year for three years per student, will assist with study-

related expenses, always an extra financial burden facing rural students.

Matilda, who was presented with a certificate of recognition by Rotary President Darryl King, has already accepted an early offer to undertake a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood and Primary Teaching) at La Trobe University and Ashlee is planning to undertake a Bachelor of Nursing at RMIT in Bundoora. Ashlee was presented with her certificate by Jeff Swain (Yea-Kinglake RSL).

Yea Rotary and the Yea-Kinglake RSL congratulate both Matilda and Ashlee and wish them all the best in the pursuit of their tertiary goals.



Jeff Swain from Yea-Kinglake RSL, Ashlee Francombe, Matilda Underhill and Yea Rotary President Darryl King. -S

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Thank you for your continued support

Our office will be closed from 1pm, December 24 until 9am Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Our first edition for 2026 will be available on Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

**Alexandra District Health**  
**5772 0900**  
**Yea & District Memorial Hospital**  
**5736 0400**

**In an emergency dial**  
**000**

**Standard**

**The Yea Chronicle**

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**ALEXANDRA**  
**NEWSPAPERS**

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# The Yea Chronicle

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# Letters to the Editor

### Let's give the Murrindindi Health Service a go

WE write respectively as chair and member of the Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home (DUGNH) Board.

DUGNH is a publicly funded residential care facility. Because of its distinct governance structure it is not part of the East Metro and Murrindindi Health Service Network.

When the proposed merger of Alexandra District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH) was announced, DUGNH was in high level discussion with ADH and Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) about the possible formation of a single Murrindindi Health Service.

Since that time, those discussions have continued. We are of the view that a Murrindindi Health Service would strengthen planning and delivery of services. It would also ensure the Murrindindi community continues to have a strong voice in leading and advocating for health services.

Importantly, the Murrindindi Health Service proposal provides scope for a significant uplift in revenue and expenditure savings that can be retained and re-invested within Murrindindi. It complements the hugely significant Murrindindi Health Services Plan exercise recently initiated by Murrindindi Shire Council. It ensures that fit for purpose health services continue to be delivered to a community that is fundamentally regional and rural in focus. It retains local leadership and governance, an outcome that the Alexandra and Yea communities continue to champion.

Crucially, the proposal does not forestall the additional services currently being canvassed for ADH through amalgamation with Eastern Health. The key purpose of the formation of health service networks was to deliver improved services through network collaboration.

In the interests of our community, the Murrindindi Health Service proposal warrants serious consideration.

*Kevin Boote, chair, DUGNH Board*

*Tony Jacobs, board member*

### The ADH-Eastern Health merger proposal

THE proposed merger of Alexandra District Health (ADH) with Eastern Health (EH) has proven to be one of the most significant events affecting our community in 2025.

It has been gratifying to observe the *Alexandra Standard* and *Yea Chronicle* reporting comprehensively and responsibly both on the proposal and the wide-ranging community reaction.

Despite vague promises of additional services, it seems that concerns about financial sustainability are central to the ADH Board's proposal for amalgamation. If that is the case, it stretches credibility that amalgamation is being proposed with a metro health service that regularly reports large operating deficits.

For the community the major concern is with the loss of a local board, a local CEO and an effective local voice in future planning and delivery of health services. Once that local presence has gone, there will be no turning back.

Research undertaken by the Alexandra Traders Association indicates that when amalgamations occur it is the communities at the periphery who tend to lose services.

The consultation process has had serious shortcomings: inadequate information; questionable surveys; no open discussion at the ADH annual meeting.

What has been particularly disappointing has been the absence from the discussion of the ADH Board Chair and the apparent silence of our local member Cindy McLeish MP. If ever there is an occasion for local member engagement, this must be it.

This contrasts starkly with the active engagement on the part of council. The Mayor and CEO have made important contributions on behalf of the whole of Murrindindi.

The apparent disengagement of the ADH Board from its community is highlighted by the fact that the proposed merger has coincided with publication of the final draft of the Murrindindi Health Services Plan. The plan indicates significant health deficiencies common to all of Murrindindi and makes a strong case for increased formal collaboration between council and all health providers in Murrindindi. This will prove much harder should the ADH merger proceed.

According to reporting in the local media, Murrindindi's three publicly funded health services, ADH, Darlingford and YDMH have been in discussion about formation of a Murrindindi Health Service.

This proposal makes good sense. It also ensures retention of strong local leadership and representation within Murrindindi.

Doesn't this proposal now warrant immediate and equal consideration?

*Name and address supplied but withheld by request*

### Queensland fruit fly

IT is that time of year, weather warming up. Have you put in place the protection you need to safeguard your fruit trees and vegie patch? I refer to Queensland fruit fly. It is becoming more prevalent than ever. It is no longer tropical, now found in South Australia. There are a number of control items to use. Just check what the nursery has in stock. It breeds at a fast rate from eggs to hatch to complete the cycle it is only approximately four weeks. For more detail on this pest, dial it up on Google.

*Chris Petersen, Alexandra*

*Continued Page 14*

**ALEXANDRA**  
**NEWSPAPERS**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to  
*editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au* or  
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 PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

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

Like us on Facebook

Standard  
 The Yea Chronicle

### RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	11.00AM Mon	1.76	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	11.00AM Mon	0.50	LGH	steady
Acheron River at Taggerty	11.00AM Mon	0.61	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	10.44AM Mon	0.13	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	08.25AM Mon	0.56	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	11.00AM Mon	0.30	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	11.00AM Mon	0.73	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	11.00AM Mon	3.78	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	11.00AM Mon	0.45	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Trawool	11.00AM Mon	1.44	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	11.00AM Mon	0.29	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Seymour	11.00AM Mon	1.72	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	11.00AM Mon	1.04	LGH	steady

\*ISSUED AT 11:24 AM AEDT MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025



### Weekly Weather

December 17 - December 23, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

**Alexandra**

DAY	LOW	HIGH		DAY	LOW	HIGH	
Wednesday	18	33		Wednesday	17	34	
Thursday	19	37		Thursday	19	38	
Friday	18	33		Friday	18	30	
Saturday	15	28		Saturday	15	29	
Sunday	11	23		Sunday	11	23	
Monday	12	25		Monday	12	25	
Tuesday	9	22		Tuesday	10	22	

**Standard**

**The Yea Chronicle**

### DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	0mm
Buxton	1mm
Eildon (AWS)	0mm
Flowerdale	4mm
Jamieson	N/Amm
Kinglake	2mm
Lake Eildon	0mm
Mansfield	N/Amm
Taggerty	0.6mm
Yarck	0.2mm
Yea	0.5mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

### LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	275.42m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	55%
Metres below full supply	13.40m
Daily inflow	1500ML
Release	3500ML
Eildon Pongage (may be subject to rapid change)	70%

# The Yea Chronicle

### DEADLINES

Real Estate	Thursday 5pm
Trades & Services	Thursday noon
Early General News	Thursday 5pm
Classifieds	Monday noon
Editorial</	

# Staying fire safe during the summer holidays

MANY of the places Victorians love to enjoy on their summer holidays are in a heightened fire risk area so before hitting the roads this festive season, firefighters are urging Victorians to be aware of conditions to safeguard their families.

While we want holiday-goers to enjoy themselves and the incredible places Victoria has to offer, those travelling close to parks, reserves and open grasslands or paddocks need to be alert and stay informed.

While there has been above-average rainfall in parts of the state across October and November, the bureau outlook for hotter and drier conditions can quickly dry out the fuels with significant fires a real possibility towards the end of December and into January 2026.

## Finding the festive balance

THE festive season is well and truly upon us. Shopping centres are decking their halls, supermarkets are lining their shelves, and homeowners are readying their Christmas lights. Between the tinsel and the trimmings, the baubles and the bells, it can be hard to find a moment of peace and quiet.

The cacophony of Christmas propels us toward a single day in December. But the days following can seem very quiet.

The conversations we put off, the decisions we delayed, and the health issues we left for another day, are suddenly waiting for us. And the challenge of managing the highs and lows can feel overwhelming.

Interreach's Rob Phillips has worked with families throughout his career, supporting children and adults to tackle life's challenges, build their personal resilience, and manage their mental health.

"After the excitement of the festive season, many people feel the weight of the world descend on their shoulders," he said.

"The realities of work, bills, and other responsibilities come back into focus.

"For many people, it feels overwhelming. But there are steps we can all take now to

## The toys on the naughty list this Christmas

DOCTORS at The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) are warning parents to steer clear of e-scooters and toys containing magnets and button batteries for Christmas.

While they may seem like great gifts, trauma surgeons say they can pose a serious safety risk in the hands of little ones.

No parent wants to spend Christmas Day in the Emergency Department, but not everyone knows just how dangerous these 'toys' can be.

On the naughty list this Christmas are button batteries, which are often found in small toys or car keys, and are easily swallowed.

Dr Warwick Teague, Director of Trauma at the RCH says they can cause serious harm in as little as two hours.

"A button battery creates a chemical reaction and electrical charge between the walls of a child's oesophagus or swallowing tube, which can fry that tube, causing serious bleeding," Dr Teague explained.

"When you're a surgeon having to remove something that's fizzing away in a child's throat, it's a highly stressful moment."

Other small items such as magnetic balls, often found in construction or sensory toys, can also be easily swallowed.

"Unfortunately, they're the perfect size and shape for a little one to put in their mouth. If swallowed, sometimes the magnets in these balls stick together inside children, twisting and causing holes or tears in the bowel," Dr Teague said.

"They can make children dangerously sick and they're really difficult to remove."

The third item doctors don't want under the Christmas tree are e-scooters.

"Every Christmas our teams brace for a spike in serious injuries from children who should not be riding e-scooters," Dr Teague explained.

Whether you are spending Christmas in the Mornington Peninsula, celebrating New Years in Eildon, or visiting family in the Yarra Ranges, it is important to be aware of your risk.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan encourages Victorians to prepare before enjoying a much-needed break or festive getaway to see their friends and family.

"You may be travelling to an unfamiliar area and it's important to understand the fire risk of your holiday location. Now is not the time to become complacent," Jason said.

"Grassfires can move at speeds of up to 25km per hour, faster than you can run, and they can jump highways in the right conditions."

manage the ups and downs for a smoother and safer transition into the New Year," he said.

Take time to look after yourself. Do the things that bring you joy and comfort.

Rest and relax. Prioritise the actions that help you to maintain your health.

Be mindful. Plan for the days and weeks after Christmas.

Manage your money. It can be tempting to overspend, but this brings added pressures when the credit card bill arrives. Set limits and do your best to stick to them.

Pick your people. Surround yourself with the people who support and encourage you.

If you are feeling lonely, reach out to someone you trust or call a support line.

Get active. Movement can boost your mood and enable you to take the next steps to support your health and wellbeing.

Return to your routine. After the rush of festivities, the days can feel a little quiet. Establish a routine, set goals and work toward them.

Be guided by your GP. If you need extra support to help you through, be pro-active and reach out for support.

"Visitors should learn about the area they are travelling to and monitor the Fire Danger Ratings every day throughout summer."

After a flurry of activity to start the fire season with large grass and bushfires breaking out particularly in the north west and north east of the state, it's important to remember fire safety is a shared responsibility.

"We have already seen some large grassfires this season, Victorians must stay vigilant, have a fire plan in place and be ready to act," Jason said.

"Bushfires and rural grassfires do impact built up areas, so it really is everyone's responsibility to be fire ready."

"Recent growth across pastures, woodlands and roadside reserves has created unbroken stretches of dried grass along many roadsides, increasing the chance of roadside fires."

"It is also important not to drive if you can see smoke or fire. Thick smoke will make it hard to see and make accidents more likely," Jason said.

Victorians are urged to download the VicEmergency app and set up watch zones for the location they're visiting.

Reconsider your travel on days of Extreme Fire Danger Rating and do not travel to bushfire risk areas on days of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating, your life may depend on the decisions you make during a Catastrophic day.

### Traveler safety tips

Download the VicEmergency app for real-time updates about emergencies across Victoria or visit [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)

Check the fire danger ratings every day. Keep roads clear for emergency services.

Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas on 'Extreme' days and do not travel to bushfire risk areas on days of a 'Catastrophic' Fire Danger Rating. For all travel safety tips, visit [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire/leave-early/staying-safe-when-you-travel](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/before-and-during-a-fire/leave-early/staying-safe-when-you-travel)

## Safe driver behaviour this holiday season

A NEW campaign launched by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and Victoria Police highlights the risks of speeding and drink driving, and the critical role police play in deterring these dangerous behaviours.

Two new hard-hitting television ads are central to the campaign, one with a family in a drink-driving scenario and another with a young group of friends in a speeding scenario.

In both ads, the driver is about to make a life-altering choice when they arrive at a crossroad. One path reveals the harsh reality of being caught by police, while the other shows the aftermath of a devastating crash.

Each ad closes with a powerful reminder: "How your holiday ends is your choice".

The campaign, which is targeted at holiday season travel, comes as 272 people have lost their lives on Victorian roads in 2025, compared with 274 lives lost at the same time last year.

Victoria Police will increase traffic enforcement operations over the Christmas and holiday period, targeting dangerous behaviours including speed, distractions, and drink and drug driving.

The state government last week announced a \$21 million boost to road policing operations that will see increased drug testing and expanded use of technology to catch unauthorised drivers.

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne said, "Speeding and drink driving have devastating consequences, and this new road safety partnership campaign shows how simply making the right choice can avoid these outcomes.

"We want every trip to end safely this holiday season, it's our choices behind the wheel that will keep our roads safe."

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Goulburn Chapel - 82 Anzac Ave, Seymour 24 / 7 phone: 5756 3740 [www.finalembracefunerals.com.au](http://www.finalembracefunerals.com.au)



## Help shape our Financial Sustainability Roadmap

Council is inviting the community to share their priorities for facilities and services in Murrindindi Shire. This will help Council make informed decisions and develop a Financial Sustainability Roadmap.

Expressions of Interest are now open to join the Facilities Review Advisory Group (FRAG), and a Community Priorities Survey is open to gather feedback on what matters most before detailed reviews begin in 2026.

To learn more, scan the QR code or visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/facilitiesreview](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/facilitiesreview)

Together, we can secure a sustainable future for Murrindindi.



SCAN ME

# 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

Christmas at Yarck Market, Devonshire tea, toasties, plants, soap, preserves and much more. Pick up that last minute Christmas present.

\*\*\*\*\*

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](mailto: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](http://country.racing.com/alexandra)

## COMMUNITY DIARY

Yea District Hospital  
5736 0400

Non-emergency police assistance  
131 444

EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency  
UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands  
UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale/Hazeldene  
UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

## MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS

1<sup>st</sup> Mon St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099  
1<sup>st</sup> Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm, Ph 5797 3057  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
4<sup>th</sup> Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.  
Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353

**ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS**

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

## 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

## Ed Davies awarded

Yea-Kinglake RSL member Ed Davies recently received his certificate for 50 years of service to the RSL from RSL State Senior Vice-President Des Callaghan of Broadford.

Ed Davies was called up for National Service and entered the army on July 27, 1968.

He completed Infantry training then joined 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment for operational service South Vietnam 1969-70 where he was badly wounded in action and evacuated to Australia.

After recovering from his wounds, Ed completed his National Service, transferred to the Regular Army and retired as 'Sarge' in January 1985.

Ed joined the RSL on July 22, 1975 and was a member of various sub-branches before moving in 1985 to Yea, where he has since completed two terms as president of the Yea-Kinglake Sub-Branch.



Bill Wearne, Ed Davies, Des Callaghan and Jeffrey Swain.

## Help shape Murrindindi's Financial Sustainability Roadmap

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting community members to take part in the Financial Sustainability Roadmap engagement by sharing their priorities for facilities and services.

This is the first step in understanding community priorities for facilities and services so council can make informed, sustainable decisions. Your feedback will help guide how we balance community needs with financial realities, now and into the next budget cycle.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now open to join the Facilities Review Advisory Group (FRAG), and a Community Priorities Survey is open to gather feedback on what matters most before detailed reviews begin in 2026.

The FRAG is a new panel that will bring together approximately 25 community members, selected to reflect the diversity of Murrindindi Shire, to help develop principles and recommendations for managing community facilities in a fair and sustainable way. Panel members will work with council and independent facilitators to consider options for facilities consolidation, possible divestment and partnerships, ensuring decisions reflect the needs and values of our community. The panel will meet over five sessions from late February to May 2026. All in-person events will be accessible, and panel members' names will remain confidential.

Council has also launched a broader community survey to understand priorities for both facilities and services, including libraries, pools, public halls, playgrounds, sporting venues, and public facilities managed by other entities. Council manages hundreds of facilities and thousands of assets valued at more than \$640 million and maintaining buildings alone costs over \$1.2 million each year. With rising costs and limited revenue growth, it's critical that we manage our assets and services sustainably while continuing to meet community needs.

Mayor Damien Gallagher said, "This is about planning together for a sustainable future. Managing our facilities and services means making tough choices and balancing limited resources with community priorities. By inviting feedback now, we can make informed decisions that respond to today's challenges and set a strong foundation for the years ahead.

"Together, we can ensure Murrindindi remains a place where people feel connected, supported, and proud to call home."

Expressions of Interest to join the FRAG close on Sunday, February 8, 2026, and successful applicants will be notified by February 13.

To learn more, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/facilitiesreview](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/facilitiesreview) or contact council by phone on (03) 5772 0333 or email [engagement@murrindindi.vic.gov.au](mailto:engagement@murrindindi.vic.gov.au)

## Don't fly drones near firegrounds

WITH the announcement of Victoria's aerial firefighting fleet for 2025, it is even more important that drone users understand the rules and regulations around operating these machines, especially around firegrounds.

You should never fly drones around or into bushfires, given that it is standard policy to ground all aerial firefighting aircraft in the event of an unknown entity occupying fireground airspace.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) website outlines the rules for using drones. This includes, "you must not fly your drone over or near areas affecting public safety or where emergency operations are underway. This includes ambulance, police, search and rescue, or firefighting efforts."

Pip Spence, CASA CEO, addressed aerial interference with firegrounds.

"If you're in the air, firefighting aircraft can't do their job. By steering clear of bushfires, we can let aerial firefighters get on with the job of containing the fire and keeping communities safe," Ms Spence said.

"For drone operators, this includes keeping your drone on the ground. Drones are small and hard to see and pose a risk to aircraft and helicopters. Always remember to check the rules before you fly, and tune into your local fire authority for the latest updates on active bushfires in your area."

To view the full rules and regulations around drone operation, visit [casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/drone-rules](http://casa.gov.au/knowyourdrone/drone-rules)



Yea and District Memorial Hospital CEO Elizabeth Sinclair. -S

## Hospital CEO addresses RSL

Yea and District Memorial Hospital CEO, Elizabeth Sinclair, recently addressed Yea RSL members at a meeting in the RSL Hall in Yea.

Elizabeth spoke engagingly, bringing members up to date on a range of hospital initiatives, both within the hospital itself, and in outreach to the wider community.

Some of the health statistics relating to Murrindindi Shire were significant and drew a number of questions from those present.

Elizabeth's briefing was very much appreciated, especially given the current proposed amalgamation between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health with its uncertain impact on local Yea health services.

RSL member Sam Murauer presented Elizabeth with a flowering pot plant in appreciation.

# Alexandra hospital: engagement results released

ALEXANDRA District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH) has released the outcomes of their community engagement regarding the exploration of a voluntary amalgamation between the organisations.

They said that across the engagement period, "more than 150 stakeholders were directly engaged, 211 people completed either the digital or paper copy of the survey, more than 200 people attended the Tea Talk / community engagement sessions and more than 1100 community members accessed the Connecting Care website."

They also stated, "The purpose of this engagement was to understand community views about how Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health could best meet future health needs of the communities they serve."

## Staff engagement

ADH/EH said regarding staff engagement, "Staff feedback from both health services was mostly positive of both boards' decision to explore voluntary amalgamation. Alexandra District Health staff understood the potential benefits, and many were advocates for change during community discussions and local Tea Talk sessions. Eastern Health staff were largely indifferent and interested in understanding the benefits of voluntary amalgamation to Eastern Health."

Among the staff of both EH and ADH, "More than 55 per cent rated service expansion and improved access to specialist care as extremely important."

Sixty per cent identified urgent care, medical imaging and outpatient clinics as vital services. Sixty-seven per cent identified continuous improvement as a high priority.

Among ADH staff, there was "Strong support for expanding local services. Eighty-seven per cent rated service expansion and attracting skilled professionals as extremely important." There was also strong support for medical imaging, urgent care and specialist services.

The ADH staff summary said, "The importance of community-informed decision-making was critical. Ninety per cent prioritised support for local jobs and ensuring the needs of the community drove service planning / provision. Open-ended feedback sought further information on whether benefits could be achieved through stronger collaboration. The main concerns were job security and maintaining Alexandra District Health's local identity."

Among EH staff, "Key concerns included the capacity of Alexandra District Health to support increased demand, significant travel distances for Eastern Health staff and uncertainty about what the benefits to Eastern Health would be."

## Community engagement

In the community survey, not surprisingly local people were keen to have service expansion, access to specialist care, local decision-making, urgent care, medical imaging and outpatient services, etcetera, however this should not and does not create a mandate

for the amalgamation to go ahead, however it is spun by the health services. If it was pointed out that these services would only be accessible under a merger, then the results may have been different, and may then have been more representative of community sentiment. This did not happen. There was no mention whatsoever of the merger "exploration" in the survey.

According to ADH/EH, on the free-text section of the survey, it states that among people who had used ADH in the past year, there was, "Strong interest in more local services and treatments, visiting specialists, a larger workforce and the long-term sustainability of Alexandra District Health. Key concerns focused on losing local autonomy, the length of the community engagement period, and the need for guarantees that services at Alexandra District Health would not be reduced."

Among people who had used EH services in the past year, "Key concerns included how Alexandra District Health would be governed, whether funding commitments would be sustained over time, and the risk of resources being diverted away from Alexandra and its surrounding areas to Melbourne."

Among people who had used neither service in the past year, "Key concerns about how a possible voluntary amalgamation would be funded, how specialist expertise currently available at Alexandra District Health would be maintained and improved, and whether the long-standing contributions of visiting medical officers would be protected."

Acting CEO Claire Palmer was asked whether a list of anonymised free-text feedback could be provided. She responded, "We cannot provide the survey comments due to confidentiality."

## Key themes from Tea Talks

The report also provided a summary of the key themes explored at the various 'Tea Talk' community engagement sessions, including concerns around potential wait times, provision of dialysis services, how underfunded services such as mental health might be impacted, questions around why an amalgamation is needed when expanded services are already offered through the Local Health Services Network, whether there was scope for inclusion of all four local health services in the network, perceived benefits for Eastern Health, local leadership structure, questions around funding allocations, the desire for a whole-of-Murrindindi model, whether donations and resources would stay with ADH, why voluntary amalgamation is needed, how new services might be funded, concerns over the length of the community engagement period, clarity on how additional doctors, staff and students from Eastern Health could be accommodated, the implications for nearby health services, availability of specialists and allied health professionals, funding implications for ADH, the impact on First Nationals communities, the naming of the health service, concerns that Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) could be overlooked or disadvantaged by an amalgamation, questions about whether "past

community meetings opposing amalgamation were considered," and the raising of significant doubts about whether the boards will genuinely consider community feedback.

## Additional engagement

ADH/EH stated that the Connecting Care website received 1100 visitors during the engagement period, however there is no mention of how many unique visitors there were. ADH staff and leaders also attended the Alexandra Show on November 8, and there were 13 emails received via Connecting Care, eight of which were RSVPs.

They noted their meeting with the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism (ADTTA) on November 11, and that ADTTA hosted a meeting immediately prior to the 'Tea Talk' on November 18 which they did not attend. The latter was also broadcast on UGFM radio.

On November 12, Murrindindi Shire Council launch their own survey about the potential merger, open until November 28. The ADH report states, "ADH and EH received the survey results from council on December 1, which both boards are considering."

## Submissions

Submissions were also received from ADTTA, Murrindindi Shire Council and two submissions from YDMH.

The ADTTA submission was summarised by ADH/EH. "ADTTA also submitted its report, *Mergers are not Magic*, which analysed community concerns and international/local research to guide boards in protecting local priorities. This submission was a review of global, Australian and Victorian evidence on hospital amalgamations and how it applies to this proposed voluntary amalgamation. The report indicated that while an ADH and EH voluntary amalgamation could deliver benefits such as improved clinical governance, specialist access and workforce development, these are not guaranteed and are counterbalanced by risks including metro-centric decision-making, financial pressure, service drift to larger sites, and potential loss of community trust."

The Murrindindi Shire Council submission was summarised by ADH/EH. It said MSC

CEO "strongly urged ADH to defer any decision on a voluntary amalgamation with EH until the Murrindindi Health and Aged Care Workforce Strategy Network Plan (the strategy) is completed and its options fully assessed. The council acknowledged and commended the proactive efforts of ADH and EH to improve healthcare, but argued that the strategy provided a more robust, locally tailored pathway to address these challenges."

The first of YDMH's submissions was from the perspective of the Murrindindi community. According to the ADH/EH summary, YDMH argued, "that the proposed Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health amalgamation carries significant risks for rural Murrindindi and should not proceed until major regional planning work is completed."

The second YDMH submission related to the implications for YDMH if the merger goes ahead. The ADH/EH summary states, "This submission outlined the specific risks YDMH anticipates if the ADH and EH amalgamation proceeds such as impacts to the Local Health Service Network, reduction in rural access and autonomy, and create a significant competitive disadvantage for YDMH."

## Business case

The boards of both health services are currently preparing a business case, provisionally targeted for completion at the end of December.

The summary states, "Staff, stakeholder and community feedback help inform the boards' understanding of local priorities and expectations. The boards have a responsibility to consider all evidence, qualitative and quantitative, and to make decisions based on what will deliver the strongest, most sustainable health outcomes for the communities they serve."

"The business case will bring together a range of inputs, including service and financial analysis; workforce and infrastructure needs; community and staff feedback; and costs, benefits and risks of each option."

"The business case includes detailed and sensitive (commercial in confidence) information and will not be made publicly available."

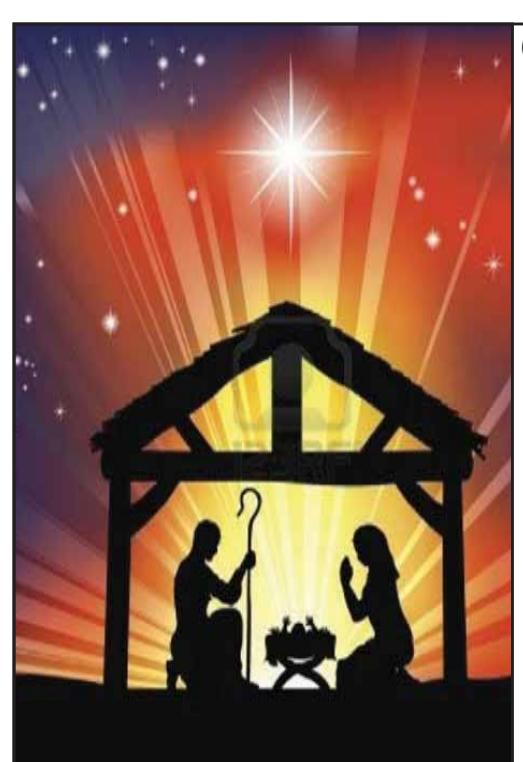
# McLeish speaks on merger exploration

MEMBER for Eildon Cindy McLeish was contacted for comment regarding the merger exploration between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health.

She said, "Both Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH) and Darlingford and Upper Goulburn Nursing Home (DUGNH) were working on this bigger plan in good faith, and it seemed as though Alexandra

had two plans being worked on at the same time. That's exceptionally disappointing."

Asked about her hopes for the situation moving forward, she said, "I'd like to see the Murrindindi Health Network look after local services and delivered locally. Alexandra has a good list of consulting specialists and that needs to continue."



**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**  
The Anglican Parishes of  
Alexandra, Yea, Marysville and  
Buxton

**Christmas Eve:** Wednesday,  
December 24.  
6pm, **Marysville:** Family Eucharist

**Christmas Day:** Thursday,  
December 25.  
9am, **Buxton:** Christmas Eucharist  
9am, **Alexandra:** Christmas Eucharist  
11am, **Yea:** Christmas Eucharist

For further information contact:  
Fr Mario 0435 953 777 or  
Fr John 5774 7655

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**Cindy McLEISH MP**  
STATE MEMBER FOR EILDON

**CindyMcLeish.com.au**

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

Authorised by Cindy McLeish MP, Shop 10, 38-40 Bell Street, Yarra Glen



# Student of the Week

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



## SACRED HEART SCHOOL

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

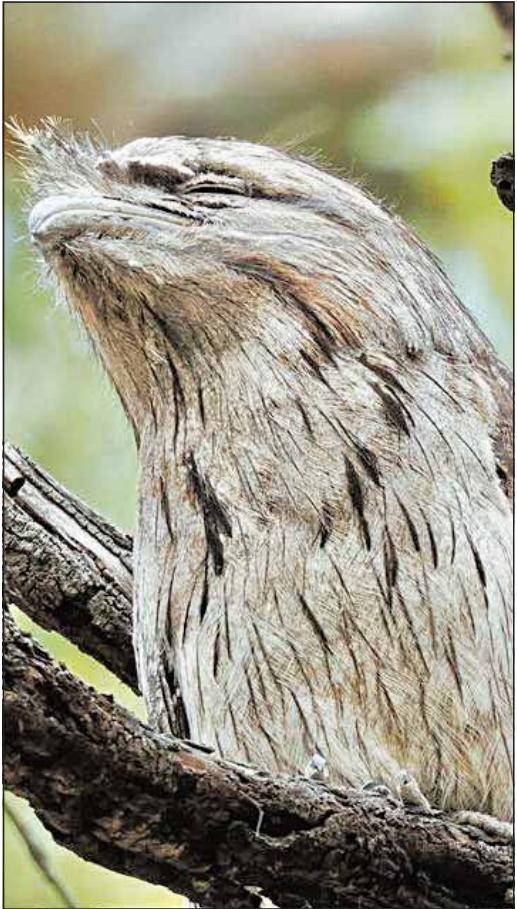


# Student of the Week

Proudly supported by  
Kinglake branch



A kookaburra seen on the bird count walk. -S



A Tawny Frogmouth. -S



A Willie Wagtail. -S



A Rufous Whistler. -S

## UGLN annual nature walk and bird count

THE Upper Goulburn Landcare Network (UGLN) recently hosted their annual nature walk and bird count, with many local landcarers walking the rail trail starting at the Cheviot Tunnel in Limestone, paying attention to the various birds found along the way.

A total of 41 different species of woodland birds were recorded by the landcarers, including the black-faced cuckoo-shrike, rufous whistler, white-throated gerygone, rufous songlark, and sacred kingfisher, along with a family of tawny frogmouths.

The nesting boxes that the Yea High School students installed in the area were

checked, and ringtail possums were found to be using the boxes.

UGLN says thank you to Eliza Lamb from BirdLife Australia for helping to lead the walk and for sharing her extensive knowledge of birds with them. The activity was funded by VicTrack.



Upper Goulburn Landcare Network hosted landcarers for a walk along the rail trail, beginning at Cheviot Tunnel, viewing and recording whatever birds could be found. -S

# Chemist Care Now



**Get it at the chemist  
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Chemist Care Now**

Chemists are now treating more conditions without the need for a visit to the GP. From UTI's to the contraceptive pill refill and more, save time and get it at the chemist.



To find participating chemists  
and available treatments go to  
**chemistcarenow.vic.gov.au**





## Community carols in the shire hall



## Carols at St Luke's Church





# West Gate Tunnel **now open**

The West Gate Tunnel offers a vital alternative to the West Gate Bridge. Drivers have more choices with new connections linking the West Gate Freeway to CityLink and Melbourne's CBD.

It will ease congestion on the West Gate Freeway and West Gate Bridge, so you can enjoy more of what Melbourne has to offer.

**more ways to move**

Find out how your journey could change at [bigbuild.vic.gov.au](http://bigbuild.vic.gov.au)

**VICTORIA'S  
BIG BUILD**

**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government

# Christmas Wishes

## 2025

### Merry Christmas

and Happy New Year

The management and staff at Alexandra Newspapers would like to thank our community, readers and clients for their continued support throughout 2025 and we look forward to working with you again in 2026.

Our final paper for 2025 will be December 24. The office will be closed from 1pm and reopen 9am, January 14, 2026.

Our first edition for 2026 will be January 21.

**Standard**

**ALEXANDRA**  
NEWSPAPERS

The Yea Chronicle

### Navy Blue Planning

Urban and Regional Planning Specialists



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

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

From the team at  
Navy Blue Planning

✉ admin@navyblueplanning.com.au  
📍 66 Grant Street, Alexandra  
🌐 navyblueplanning.com.au  
☎ 0419 006 014



Wishing everyone a  
Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year

Steve 0427 577 839

**Alexandra**  
Windscreens &  
Glass Services

*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year*

**Alex Scott and staff would like to thank everyone for all their support over 2025 and look forward to continued success and new opportunities in 2026**

**ALEX SCOTT  
AND STAFF**

rma network. Accredited Member

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

**ADVERTISEMENT**

*Merry Christmas*

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

**Cindy McLEISH MP**

STATE MEMBER FOR EILDON

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✉ CindyMcLeishMP ✉ cindy.mcleish@parliament.vic.gov.au

**CindyMcLeish.com.au**

Authorised by Cindy McLeish MP, Shop 10, 38-40 Bell Street, Yarra Glen



# MERRY CHRISTMAS

Thank you to all our local businesses and community for your support.

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

We are closing for Christmas break from Tuesday, December 23, 2025. Opening 9am Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

## ALEXANDRA MOTORCYCLES & MACHINERY

📍 65 Downey Street, Alexandra ☎ 5772 1045  
 🌐 AlexandraMotorcyclesMachinery



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

Alexandra  
 Newsagency & Lotto

# MERRY *Christmas*

& HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WE ARE CLOSED FROM THE 24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, AND BACK ON THE 29<sup>TH</sup> & 30<sup>TH</sup> FROM 9AM-5PM.

WE WILL THEN BE CLOSED FROM THE 31<sup>ST</sup> THROUGH TO THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY. WE WILL RETURN BACK ON THE 5<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY 2026.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU SOON.

# Christmas Wishes

## 2025



**HEDGER CONSTRUCTIONS**  
Building with Distinction

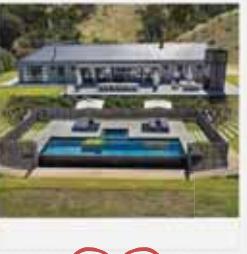
## Merry Christmas

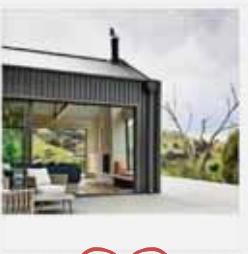
Wishing our wonderful community a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year!

Thank you for your ongoing support and trust throughout the year. It has been our privilege to help build the places you call home.

From our family to yours, have a festive and restful holiday.

We will be closed from the 18<sup>th</sup> of December and re-opening on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January.





41 Grant Street, Alexandra  
1300 291 101

**Merry Christmas**  
and a Happy New Year  
from the team at

**E-TEC**  
Electrical Technology

0418 543 310  
info@e-tec.net.au



# The Farmer's Ag News

## MLA unveils top 10 market information industry trends for 2025

AUSTRALIA'S red meat industry is demonstrating resilience, productivity gains and strong global demand in 2025, with record production, high prices and export performance forecast across beef, sheepmeat and goat sectors, according to Meat and Livestock Australia's (MLA's) latest Top 10 trends of 2025 report.

MLA analysis shows Australia is on track to achieve record beef production of 20.79 million tonnes in 2025, produced from fewer cattle than previous peaks, highlighting long-term efficiency gains across genetics, feeding systems and on-farm productivity.

According to MLA's Senior Market Information Analyst, Emiliano Diaz, the results underline the strength of Australia's red meat supply chain in a challenging global environment.

"What we're seeing in 2025 is a highly efficient, market-responsive industry that continues to add value from fewer animals," Mr Diaz said.

"Larger average carcase weights and better productivity are allowing Australia to deliver record volumes of high-quality beef to global markets, even amid significant trade and weather volatility."

The report highlights international trade uncertainty as a defining backdrop for 2025, with US tariffs, shifting global trade flows and increased South American competition. However, Australia's trade diversification and reputation for safety, reliability and quality continue to underpin demand and support prices.

"Global supply shortages, particularly in the United States, are reshaping protein trade flows," Mr Diaz said.

"Australia is well placed to capitalise on this environment, not only through strong access into key markets like Japan and Korea, but also through growing demand for lamb and goat meat in a broader range of destinations."

Across the sheep sector, lamb prices reached record highs in 2025, despite production remaining relatively robust, while structural changes in flock composition continue as producers prioritise meat breeds over wool.

The report also identifies record goat production, with slaughter numbers likely to surpass last year's high, supported by growing demand from markets including South Korea, China and Canada.

"The diversification of export markets for goat meat is particularly significant," Mr Diaz said.

"It reduces reliance on a single destination and reflects growing global recognition of Australia's capability to supply consistent, high-quality product."

Weather patterns remain a critical influence, with favourable conditions in northern Australia supporting herd rebuilding, while drought conditions in southern regions continue to shape supply and pricing dynamics.

"Producers have shown remarkable adaptability in responding to highly variable seasonal conditions," Mr Diaz said.

"That flexibility, combined with ongoing investment across the supply chain, is key to maintaining competitiveness into the future."

The Top 10 trends of 2025 report provides a forward-looking snapshot of the forces shaping Australia's red meat industry and its continued role as a reliable supplier to global markets.

Find the full Top 10 Market Information Industry Trends for 2025 list at [tinyurl.com/yrjv48jd](http://tinyurl.com/yrjv48jd)

## Fire safety reminder for farm machinery

### Header fire a good reminder

CFA is urging farmers to be fire safe when using machinery following a paddock fire this week which burnt around 40 hectares.

On Tuesday, December 9, CFA crews responded to a grass fire on McPhersons Road in Lilliput around 2pm.

On arrival crews discovered 800 meters of running fire in a paddock. Due to the size of the fire, 22 CFA units responded to the incident along with water aircraft. Victoria Police was also on scene for traffic control.

CFA's response was also greatly supported by Fire Rescue Victoria and NSW Rural Fire Service crews.

Crews also undertook asset protection for nearby structures, luckily thanks to the good work of crews there were no reported losses.

The cause of the fire was determined as the mechanical header working in the paddock.

The incident was declared under control at 3.37pm and safe at 6.18pm.

Deputy Chief Officer for the North East Region, Gavin Thompson, said this incident serves as a good reminder to make machinery safety a priority.

"This season, with low rainfall and dry soil, headers will be taking on more dirt, meaning farmers need to clean their headers more frequently to prevent dust buildup," he said.

Fine dust from pulse crops like lentils and lupins can accumulate around the engine and exhaust system, and if it heats up, it can smoulder and potentially ignite spot fires, particularly in windrows.

A fire starting in the header's engine bay can spread to the surrounding crop before it is noticed by the machine operator, and in the minutes it usually takes to get water onto the fire, it could grow to several hectares.

"On days of high wind those same crop fires could grow up to 100 hectares within under an hour."

### Crop and farm machinery fire safety

The most common cause of harvester fires is material collecting on hot engine components such as the manifold, exhaust and turbocharger. Make it part of your routine to check for straw or grass build-up, and hot bearings.

Make sure your machinery is free of faults and mechanical defects and carrying a water fire extinguisher. Postpone paddock work during the highest fire-risk periods. On hot, dry days, exercise extreme caution before harvesting, grinding, welding, slashing or mowing. The key to avoiding harvester fires is diligence in maintenance such as clean-down and inspection.

During paddock operations have the appropriate firefighting equipment in place. You're required by law to have a nine litre water pressured extinguisher on hand. Avoid driving vehicles and motorbikes through dry grass or crop, as the risk from the hot exhaust system is high.

More information can be found at [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/operating-farming-machinery-equipment-and-vehicles](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/operating-farming-machinery-equipment-and-vehicles)

## Wet and humid conditions may increase health risks for dairy cattle

by Bec Cameron, Dairy Industry Development Officer, Ellinbank

DAIRY farmers are encouraged to take proactive steps to protect herd health as humid, wet conditions increase disease, affect growth rates of young cattle and decrease productivity.

### Infectious diseases

The risk of infectious diseases increases in wetter conditions. The risk of mastitis rises when cows lie in muddy environments, allowing bacteria to enter the udder. Leptospirosis, a zoonotic disease, can spread through contaminated water, posing risks to both cattle and humans. Clostridial diseases such as blackleg and pulpy kidney may also emerge after flooding or soil disturbance.

Pinkeye in cattle is a common summer and autumn issue in Victoria, mainly caused by bacteria and spread by flies, dust and grass seeds. It leads to tearing, squinting, swollen eyelids and cloudy corneas that can progress to ulcers and blindness, reducing weight gain and milk production.

Treatment includes antibiotic eye ointments or injections and veterinarians can help identify the bacterial strain affecting the animal.

Controlling flies, slashing pastures to reduce seed heads, providing shade, vaccinating before fly season and maintaining good nutrition (vitamin A, copper and selenium) can help reduce the risk. Early detection and isolating affected animals help limit spread and protect herd productivity.

### Facial eczema and liver disease

Facial eczema is prevalent in humid weather conditions, alongside the liver disease caused by cattle ingesting spores. The spores thrive in dead pasture during warm, humid conditions. The toxin damages the liver and can lead to photosensitisation, reduced milk yield and weight loss. Subclinical cases may go unnoticed but still affect productivity.

Prevention is essential and includes monitoring spore counts through your vet, supplementing with zinc in consultation with your nutritionist or feed company and managing grazing to reduce exposure.

### Hoof health

Lameness caused by softened hooves from prolonged exposure to moisture can increase.

Wet laneways and paddocks increase the risk of bruising, footrot and white-line injury. These conditions reduce mobility, feed intake and milk production, which can lead to early culling.

Preventative measures include maintaining dry walking surfaces, regular hoof checks and prompt treatment of injuries.

### Parasites

Parasite burdens can increase during humid conditions, as worm larvae survive longer on pasture. Calves are especially vulnerable to gastrointestinal parasites like coccidia and cryptosporidium, which cause scours and dehydration. Flystrike may also affect cattle with open wounds or irritated skin.

Regular faecal egg counts, strategic drenching and fly control are key management tools.

### Water quality

Water quality may also decline due to contamination from floods, increasing the risk of algal blooms, meaning regular water testing and access to clean water are vital.

Proactive management of troughs and water sources helps protect herd health and maintain productivity during challenging weather.

### Nutrition

Wet conditions can reduce pasture quality through waterlogging and lower dry matter, affecting cattle nutrition, especially the energy and protein needed for milk production. Supplementing with silage or concentrates helps maintain dietary balance. Moisture also increases disease spread between farms, so limiting movement of animals and equipment is important.

Regular monitoring and record-keeping, including tracking hoof health, parasite treatments and water quality supports early intervention and protects herd productivity.

Find more information about managing animals in wet conditions can be found on the Agriculture Victoria website at [agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au)

## ALEX SCOTT & STAFF

Now Operating at the Monthly  
Yea Combined Agent Store Sale  
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Tim Gibson 0420 306 599

Glen Barwick 0408 975 476

Morgan Croucher 0457 001 877

# PUZZLES

**SOLUTIONS**  
Page 15

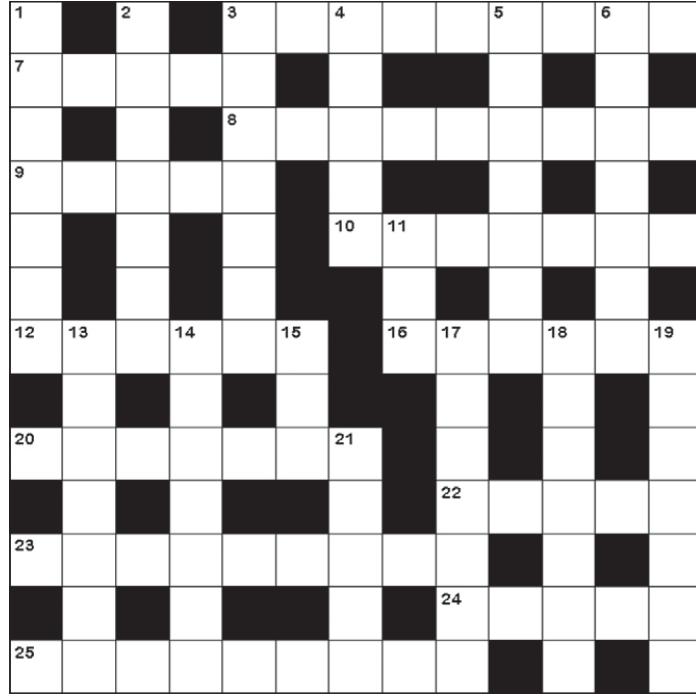
## Crossword

### ACROSS

- Make up something artificial or untrue.
- Above average in size, number or quantity.
- Assumed responsibility for.
- An unusual feat done to gain attention.
- The time between sunrise and sunset.
- Leak or ooze through small openings.
- Thinks moodily and often about something.
- Softens in attitude or temper.
- Packed very closely and firmly together.
- A procession of people on horseback.
- Collect funds for a specific purpose.
- Stand still with a formal military alertness.

### DOWN

- Turns red, as if in embarrassment.
- A state of misfortune or danger.
- The feeling characteristic of a holiday.



4. Very large in expanse or scope.  
5. A snorting, joyful laugh or chuckle.  
6. Rising current of warm air.  
11. Used to connect words or sentences.  
13. Suggesting taste, ease, and wealth.  
14. Put oneself or things in readiness.  
15. A very, very small circular shape.  
17. A film or novel about cowboys.  
18. Lacking energy or vitality.  
19. Spread very thickly or lavishly.  
21. A Hindu religious teacher.

## Word Search

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

## Sudoku

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

### Big things

AIRPLANES      MOUNTAINS

CRUISESHIP      OCEANS

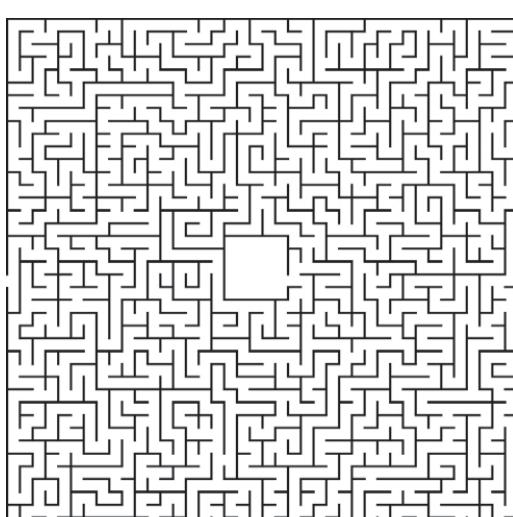
DINOSAUR      PYRAMID

ELEPHANT      SKYSCRAPER

GIANTS      TRAIN

GRANDCANYON      TRUCKS

## Maze



## Math Square

	+		+		9
+		÷		+	
9	÷		-	5	-2
-		+		×	
	+		+		19
3		9		21	

### 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.



## Letters to the Editor

*Continued from Page 2*

### Lake Eildon camping

OPEN letter to The Hon Steve Dimopoulos MP Minister Environment regarding Fraser Visitor Node – Lake Eildon.

I am writing to express our appreciation for your assistance regarding the proposed closure of the Fraser Picnic Area during the peak summer visitation period. Such a closure would have had considerable economic consequences for the region.

On November 13, I contacted your office on behalf of local businesses that would have been substantially affected by Parks Victoria's proposal to close this important community asset during the busiest visitor season.

While we recognise that renewal works are essential for the long-term health of the local economy, the initial timing and approach presented considerable challenges.

The update provided by Parks Victoria on December 5 was greatly welcome. The revised plan for phased facility upgrades scheduled outside the peak visitation period will allow hundreds of visitors to continue enjoying access to this much-loved site on the shores of Lake Eildon.

This decision supports ongoing family traditions and strengthens community connections throughout summer and the holiday season. Thank you for your consideration and responsiveness regarding this matter.

It truly feels like a wonderful Christmas gift for our visitors and local businesses, to be able to enjoy this treasured location over summer while looking forward to renewed and refreshed facilities in the years ahead.

We would be delighted to assist in promoting any media release issued by your office or Parks Victoria to ensure the community is aware that this valued precinct remains open and is undergoing renewal.

In addition, we would warmly welcome the opportunity to host you at the Fraser campgrounds this summer to experience first-hand the vibrancy of the region and the importance of this site to our community.

*Damien Gallagher, Mayor, Murrindindi Shire Council*

### Melba Highway

Open Thank-You Letter to Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Melissa Horne, regarding the completion of safety works on the Melba Highway.

On behalf of the Murrindindi Shire Council, I would like to extend our appreciation for your timely response to council's concerns regarding the Melba Highway detours required by safety works, earlier this year.

We also congratulate the Department of Transport and Planning for completing the works well within the planned closure period and ahead of the busy Christmas visitation season.

The effective traffic management and clear communication throughout the planning process were instrumental in achieving this outcome. The meeting forums provided valuable opportunities for council officers to raise concerns directly and demonstrated a genuine commitment to addressing local issues.

Importantly, the approach taken to the works resulted in minimal disruption for road users, allowing the community and visitors to travel safely and conveniently during the construction period.

We invite you to make the most of the improved section of road this summer and enjoy Murrindindi's natural beauty, local produce, and vibrant events.

*Damien Gallagher, Mayor, Murrindindi Shire Council*



*The Murrindindi Carer's Support Group enjoying their Christmas party at the Corner Hotel. -BD*

## Christmas lunch for Murrindindi Carer's Support Group

THE Murrindindi Carer's Support Group had their Christmas party last Friday in the Goldfield's Room of the Corner Hotel, Alexandra. Some 16 carers attended, sharing a meal, swapping gifts and enjoying supportive conversation.

The group has members from all around Murrindindi Shire, including Molesworth, Eildon, Buxton, etcetera. Any carer is welcome, whether that is caring for a partner, child, friend, family, or more.

Monthly meetings held by the group are a place for carers to meet new friends, make connections and share ideas. They take place at 10am on the last Friday of the month. It's about being a person as well as being a carer.

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



*Carers were able to share gifts and conversation and company. -BD*

For more information or to get in touch with the group, contact Anthea on 0418 402 455.

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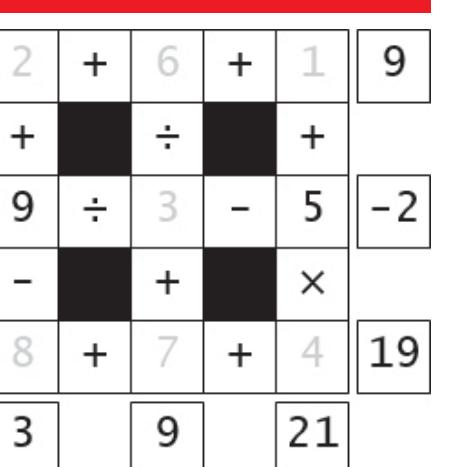
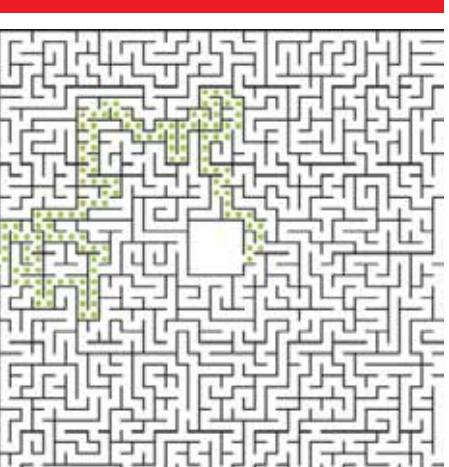
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**PUZZLES SOLUTIONS****CROSSWORD****SUDOKU****MATH SQUARE****MAZE****Aerial firefighting fleet ready for high-risk fire season**

VICTORIA'S aerial firefighting fleet is ready to take to the skies and support our hardworking ground crews ahead of another high-risk fire season this summer.

Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward unveiled the fleet at Avalon Airport last Wednesday, alongside Emergency Management Commissioner Tim Wiebusch and emergency services personnel.

"We've already seen how important aircraft is in supporting emergency services to fight fires, and the remainder of the fleet will play an important role in supporting communities across the state over the coming months," Mr Wiebusch said.

"Our emergency services will continue to do everything they can to support our communities but it's important to have a fire plan and listen to warnings and advice. If you haven't downloaded or practiced using the VicEmergency app, now is the time to do so."

This year's fleet features 54 aircraft and includes two new fixed wing aircraft with infrared capabilities which can capture higher quality images than ever before, enabling better decision making and more accurate mapping.

Two Large Air Tankers will be based at Avalon Airport, and two high-volume Aircranes with the capacity to carry 10,000 litres of water will be positioned at Essendon and Moorabbin.

A dedicated Super Puma helicopter has returned to the skies to fight fires at night through firebombing, supported by an Air Attack Supervision aircraft that provides critical fire detection and observation at night.

This fleet unveiling follows the launch of 15 regional aircraft which started their service period early last month.

There are 10 bases in the east of the state, with multiple aircraft pre-positioned at each. Aircraft locations will change day to day according to risk.

A call when needed fleet of more than 100 aircraft is also available including Black Hawk Helicopters, and Victoria can request additional aircraft from the National Fleet.

The latest Australian Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for summer indicates south-west and western Victoria, including north central, east central and south-west Gippsland are at an increased fire risk due to underlying dryness.

This includes the northern slopes of the Otways, Mt Buangor State Park, Wombat State Forest and Central Highlands, parts of Mornington Peninsula, the Kinglake and Yarra Ranges and parts of Eildon. The remaining parts of the state are forecast to have normal fire risk this summer.

Aircraft can be moved across the state according to risk and have already responded to several fires since starting their service period in October, a month earlier than usual due to increased fire risk.

Aircraft play a key role in supporting emergency services workers on the ground, which includes thousands of dedicated emergency services workers from across the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) and other agencies.

Victorians are urged to make sure they have a fire plan for their home and anywhere they're travelling this summer.

For more information on how you can prepare for fires and other emergencies, download the VicEmergency app or visit [emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)

People can also create a fire plan online customised to their needs and sharable with family and friends via [fireplanner.vic.gov.au](http://fireplanner.vic.gov.au)





# A Christmassy Yea Cruise Night



## SPORT

# Big finish to the year for Murrindindi Little Athletics

MURRINDINDI Little Athletics wrapped up the year in style with a massive final weekend of competition, celebration and festive fun.

The club's final meet for the year featured a Christmas-themed warm-up that brought plenty of smiles, including a bauble-and-spoon race, a Santa hat relay complete with obstacles, and a crowd-favourite present unwrapping relay. The fun atmosphere set the tone for a memorable day both on and off the track.

Presentations were a highlight of the weekend, with bronze medals awarded to personal best achievers, with a major presentation held for last week's multi-event competition, showcasing the dedication and improvement of athletes throughout the season so far.

A standout moment of the presentations was the recognition of Harish Balansag, who was presented with an incredible seven club records, while Logan Steiner also celebrated the achievement of setting one new record. The applause from teammates, families and supporters reflected the pride felt across the club.

While most members will now enjoy a well-earned break over the festive season before returning to competition on Saturday, January 17.

Four Murrindindi athletes backed up their big weekend by competing at the State Relay

Championships at Lakeside Stadium in Albert Park. The under 15 boys' 4 x 200m relay team of Levi Campbell, Declan Armstrong, Chase Hilder and Harish Balansag lined up in their first race of the championships and finished a respectable 14th. Reflecting on that performance, the team regrouped, focused on warming up effectively, discussed baton changeovers and committed to their race plan.

The improvements paid off, with the boys racing exceptionally well in their next event, the 4 x 100m to finish 10th overall, just 0.2 seconds behind Wodonga, the only other rural team to place ahead of them. With one race remaining, the Swedish 1000m relay, featuring legs of 100m, 200m, 300m and 400m, the team rested, prepared and gave it everything they had.

Their efforts were rewarded with a strong ninth-place finish, doing both their club and region proud on the state stage.

It was a fitting way to close out a successful year for Murrindindi Little Athletics, highlighting not only strong performances, but also teamwork, sportsmanship and community spirit. The club wish its members and all its sponsors a very safe and Merry Christmas.



The state relay team of Chase Hilder, Levi Campbell, Harish Balansag and Declan Armstrong. -S



Record breakers Harish Balansag and Logan Steiner. -S



Place getters in the multi event. -S



Bronze medal best recipients. -S

## Standpipe Cup golf celebrates recycled water partnerships

GOULBURN Valley Water celebrated its recycled water partnership with five regional golf clubs last month when the inaugural Community Standpipe Cup golf event was staged at Marysville Golf Club.

The event raises awareness about the use of recycled water and recognises two decades of cooperation between Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) and the five clubs, being Seymour, Euroa, Yea, Mansfield and Marysville, who all enjoy the benefits of recycled-water agreements.

All five clubs rely on recycled water to irrigate greens and fairways and Goulburn Valley Water Managing Director Dr Steve Capewell said the event showcased the mutual benefits of recycled water reuse across the region.

"This event recognises how recycled water reuse helps maintain important community assets, while ensuring treated wastewater is reused sustainably and responsibly," Dr Capewell said.

"This is more than a water-supply agreement. It's an example of innovation and community spirit, and we're proud to work with these clubs."

Recycled water used to water regional golf courses has undergone extensive biological and chemical treatment over many months to produce high-quality irrigation water.

Goulburn Valley Water works closely with clubs and other recycled water users to monitor irrigation systems, protect the

environment and ensure sustainable reuse that avoids groundwater impacts, and salinity or rising water tables issues.

At Marysville, where the GVW Wastewater Management Facility sits across the road from the golf course, the partnership started when a gravity-fed pipeline was installed in 2005 and now supplies around 70 megalitres of recycled water annually.

Club President Steve Coker said the support had been "critical to the club's continued operation".

"We couldn't have kept going without the recycled water," Mr Coker said.

"The relationship with GVW, our volunteers and our past greenskeeper Kellan Fiske has shaped the modern club. It's been absolutely essential."

Mansfield Golf Club, which will host next year's Standpipe Cup, has also benefited significantly from recycled water since 2002.

Club representative Tony Cookson said the transition to recycled water, particularly during a period of severe water restrictions, had transformed the course and the club.

"Getting reclaimed water at Mansfield was the best thing we have ever done," Mr Cookson said.

"The quality is excellent, the turf flourishes, and it simply wouldn't make sense to irrigate with drinking water. Our course usage explodes in the warmer months, and having reliable recycled water underpins that."



Inaugural Goulburn Valley Water Community Standpipe Cup winners, Marysville Golf Club's Colin Davies, Steve Coker, Fiona Wright and Alison Leydin, accept the trophy from GVW's Communications Officer Rohan Aldous (left). -S

At Yea Golf Club, representative Gary Pollard said recycled water first arrived around 20 years ago and now provides about 40 megalitres each year.

"The recycled water is much more convenient than what we used previously, and it allows us to run a fully automatic system," Mr Pollard said.

"Financially we're better off, participation is up, and we're keen to expand the use of recycled water as the town grows."

GVW also use their recycled water network to support farming, with surplus flows returned to rivers and creeks when required. Winter storage lagoons built at all wastewater management facilities now enable full reuse of recycled water at most sites.

Fittingly, the hosts, Marysville Golf Club, claimed the first title and will defend the trophy next year when the tournament moves to Mansfield Golf Club.

# Over 60s game played at Yea Bowls Club

by Viv Cavanagh

SIXTEEN teams of four came to the Yea Bowls Club last Thursday to compete in the Over 60s Challenge, which is a game provided to those members who are over 60 years old.

Teams that participated this year included Alexandra, Broadford, Kilmore, Seymour, Wallan, Whittlesea and Yea.

Two games of eight ends were played in very pleasant weather, before a lunch break was taken.

Sandwiches and sponge cakes were served by the club volunteers before another eight ends were played.

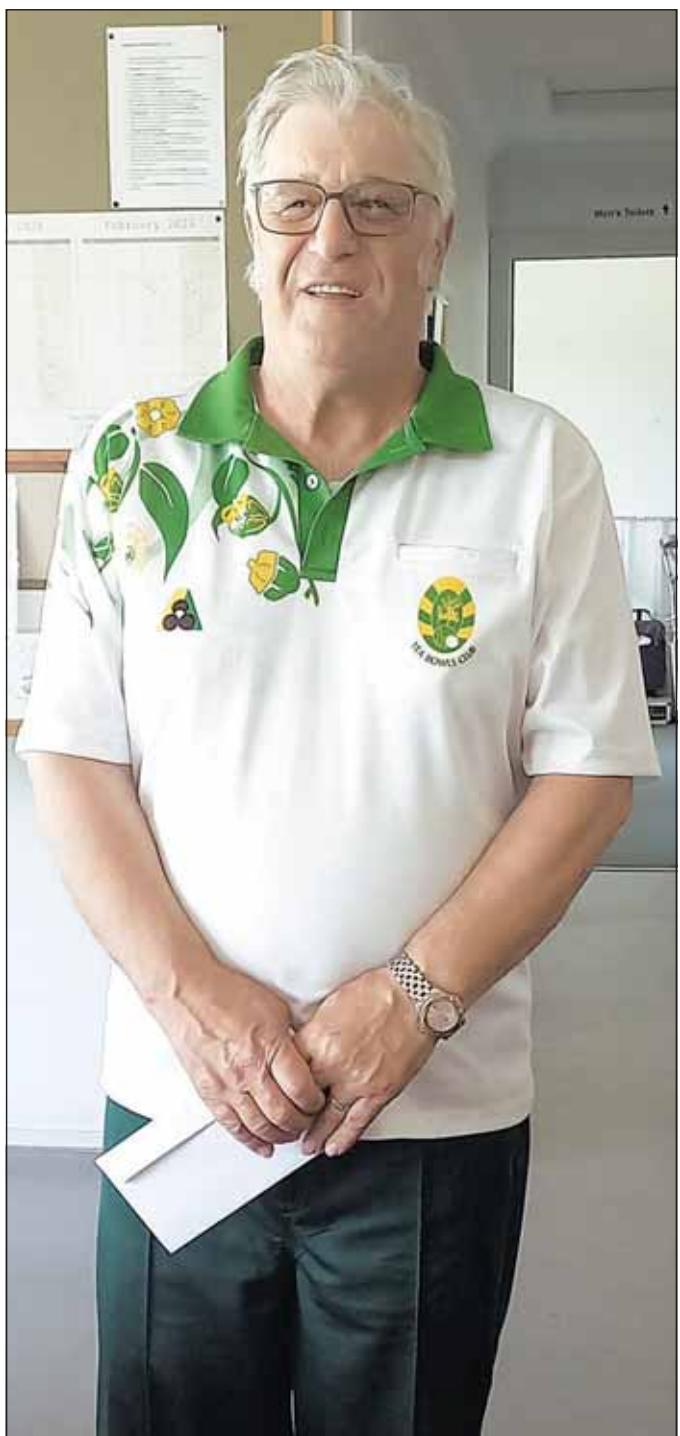
The over 60s games are played at various clubs in the district, and this year Barb Tanner took over the responsibility of organizing the day in Yea. This involved contacting all the teams, compiling the draw and overseeing the progress of the day, which she did very capably.

Winners of the day were a team from Seymour and the best last game winner was a team from Yea. The raffle was well supported, and Howard won the first prize of a meat tray.

Barb would like to thank all those who helped during the day with special mention to Barry, Fiona, Wayne and Leonard who had to form a team following a last-minute cancellation of another team.



Elliot representing the winning team from Seymour with over 60s organiser Barb. -S



Rodney accepting the best last game winning team from Yea. -S



Some of the bowlers enjoying the day. -S

## Merton cricketers win against Beechworth/Stanley

MERTON cricketers hosted Beechworth/Stanley at the Merton Cricket Ground (MCG) in perfect conditions last Saturday.

Merton won the toss and batted making 9/188, Luke Benton again top scoring with a fine 57 on a slow outfield, fellow opener Luke Berriman 35 also helping his side to a quick start.

Ross Mackinnon controversially caught out on the boundary for 30 with the fielder appearing to step over the boundary after taking the catch. Son Jai with 16 the other top scorer. Justin Laria 5/11 the leading wicket taker for the visitors.

Merton's opening bowlers really gave the opposition nothing with good support in the field saw Beechworth only 27 runs after 12 overs. Chris Nuck 27 the top scorer showed a bit of fight however Merton's first change bowlers in Henry Berriman 5/19 and Harry Craddock 4/18 ran through the visitors dismissing them for 97 all out, Ross Mackinnon the other wicket taker.

Merton travel to Milawa next Saturday hoping to stay on the winner's list before the Christmas break.



Luke Berriman. -S



Jarrod Mahoney. -S

## Yea Bowls Club go down to Dookie

by Angela Finn

ALTHOUGH holding a slender lead overall with only a few ends to go, Yea were finally defeated by just eight shots by Dookie, a top four side.

Terry Muller with Mick Barrott, Dick Dashwood and Darren Sherman, started slowly and were down by five shots early in the game but then took over winning nine of the next 10 ends to go to a 12 shot lead. Dookie then came back and won the next five ends, with Yea hanging on to win by just one shot.

Wayne Martin, Judy Elenius, Maree Brennan and Barry Moore, started well and did not relinquish the lead for the entire game. Although scores were level after nine ends, they steadied and held a comfortable lead for the rest of the game to win 24 to 19 in a very strong performance.

Maurie Finn, Leonard Sheahan, Brett Reece and Angela Finn, held a six to four lead after five ends, but found it hard going from then on. Down eight to 16 after 15 ends, they fought back to get within four shots but were defeated by seven shots.

On the fourth rink, Doug Shirrefs, with Kevin Smith, Rod Cavanagh and Viv Cavanagh were in trouble early, down by 12 shots after the 12th end, but then with a determined effort, won four of the last five ends to go down by just seven shots.

There is now a break in the pennant season until it resumes in mid-January. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### Social Bowls

Winners of the Monday Triples were Doug Shirrefs, Wayne Tanner and John Tanner. Runners up were Fiona Tanner, Viv Cavanagh and Darren Sherman.

### Club Championship News

In the Men's Singles Championship, Jeff Green defeated Rob Marks in a marathon game, to go into the final for the fourth time. He will play either Wayne Martin or Darren Sherman who are still to play the other semi-final.

# The Chronicle Sport

Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

## Brian Simmons takes victory at Yea Golf Club

by Alan Pell

BRIAN Simmons took out the Monthly Medal and the yearly Gold Medal with an outstanding 75 (11) nett 64 last Saturday. There were 27 men and four ladies on the course which looked like it would receive some rain but it held off til later in the day.

Brian was in a hot group with three of them Martin Lowe and John Philips and Brian all birding the 14th. Second on the day with also an excellent score was Jonathon Fisher (15) with 80 nett 65. Third was Martin Lowe (17) with nett 66 from fourth on countback with nett 67 Steve Rumney (24) from fifth Kevin Coghlan (20).

The putting was shared with 25 putts each from Paul Clayton, Martin Lowe and Gary Pollard. There was no nearest the pin on the 11th and Tony Rule was the grumpy Club Award winner.

The Gold Medal is the best score from a Medallist in the previous 12 months. Brian won his monthly medal last December as well. So Brian won the Gold Medal with 64 by three strokes from next best Medallist Kevin Coghlan with 67.

Many thanks to Chris Dunne and his boys Kobe and Cody for replacing the pin positions during the week. They did an excellent job and again show what volunteers can do for the club.

During the week the men had their Christmas outing to Yering Meadows Golf Course last Tuesday. Twenty members played both stableford and four ball best ball with Jeff Moss taking out the stableford with 36 points and also the four ball best ball with John Renehan with the impressive score of 49 points.

Last Wednesday saw the second round of the Gender Competition with Alan Pell nett 65 winning from Miranda Gill 67, Peter Johnston 67, Penny Britton 68 and Sharon Grogan 68.

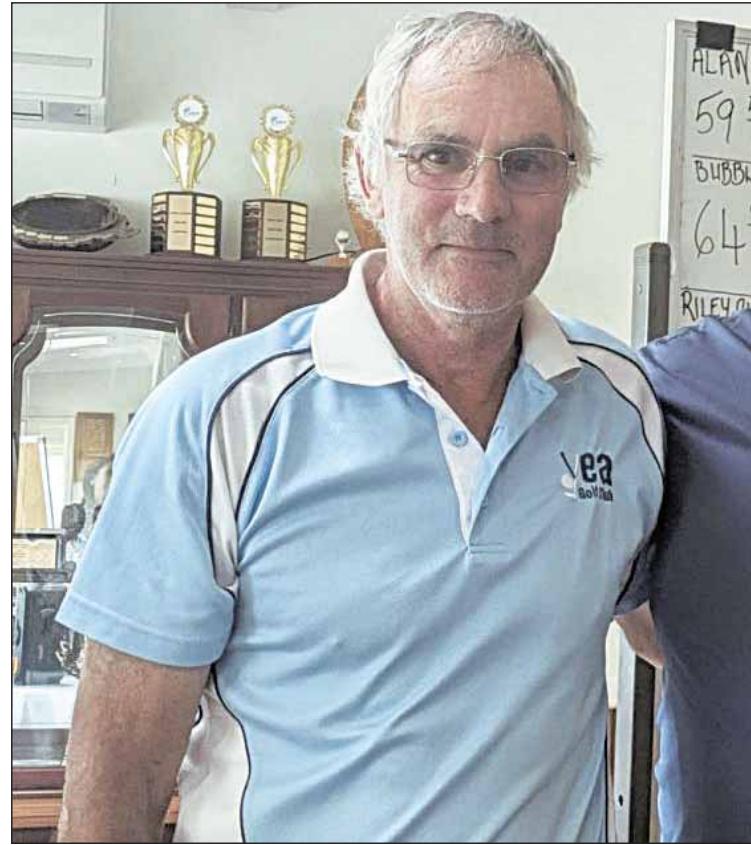
The ladies won the team average and 45 of the 85 points available. Totals after two rounds: Men 100 Ladies 70. But after one of the men pointed out, the ladies play a par 72 to the Men 70 so it would be fair to deduct two strokes from the ladies scores.

Hence the revised results are Miranda 65 first, Alan 65 second, Penny 66 third, Sharon 66 fourth and Peter 67 fifth. Total Gender points, Men 85, Ladies 85. Putting on the day went to Alan 26 and Miranda with 28 putts. Nearest the pin on the 11th went to Peter Johnston and Jan Wealands.

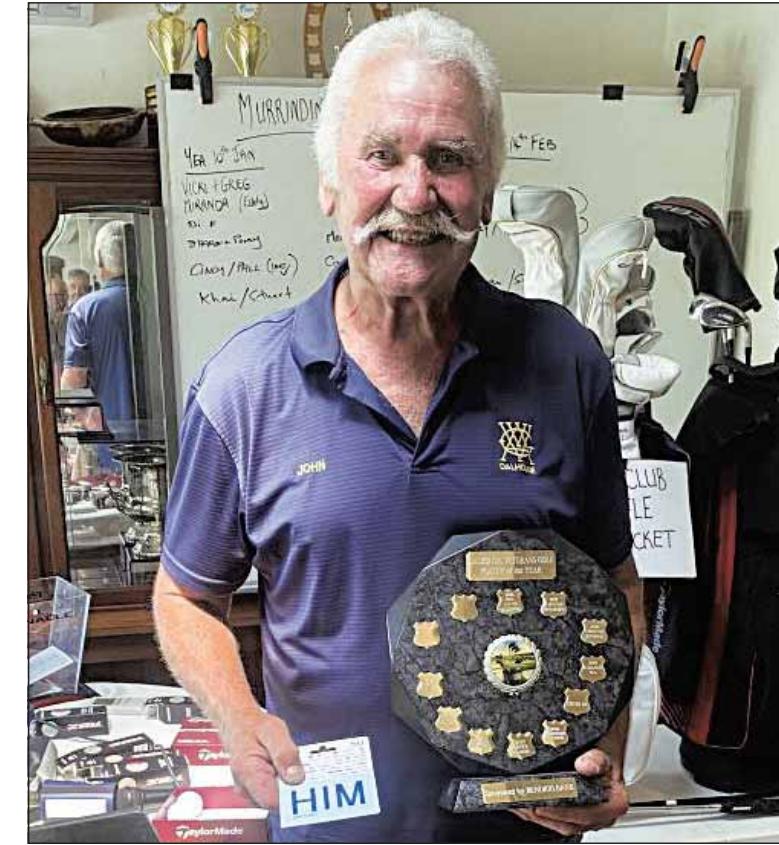
Last Thursday and the club hosted the Dalhousie Vets Christmas Four Person Ambrose/lunch with 87 players in attendance. Many praises were taken about the course and the lunch (which was fabulous).

Winners from Seymour were John Muscovich, Bill Keating, Paul Niebling and Kevin Summers with 69 nett 56 3/8. Yea's A team of Phil Armstrong, Anthony La Grutta, John Renehan and Steve Rumney also had 69 but came equal second due to less handicap with nett 57.25.

John Boruch from Seymour was named Dalhousie Vet of the Year for his steady performances in 2025.



Brian Simmons, winner of the yearly Gold Medal. -S



John Boruch, the Dalhousie Vet of the Year. -S



Paul, Kevin, John and Bill from Seymour. -S

## Wins for Alexandra and Yea cricketers in SDCA

THE Seymour District Cricket Association (SDCA) matches took place around the Mitchell, Murrindindi and Strathbogie shires. Yea and Alexandra both field teams in this league.

### A Grade Yea versus Pyalong

Yea took on Pyalong at home with a spot in the top four up for grabs. Pyalong batted first and found itself in some early trouble at 6/34 as Thomas White (4/29) and Jack Christie (3/19) ran through Pyalong's top and middle order.

It was skipper Matt Pratt and Coach James Hadjiloukas who offered some lower order resistance, allowing Pyalong to add a measure of respectability to its total.

The run chase was made simple by Cam Armstrong who played a dominant innings of 51 not out, with no other player making it to double figures. The win sees Yea jump to third while Pyalong slips out of the top four for the first time this season.

Yea Tigers 4/80 (C Armstrong 51 not out, S Mitchell 2/13) defeated Pyalong (M Pratt 22, J Hadjiloukas 18, T White 4/29, J Christie 3/19).

### Alexandra versus Puckapunyal

Alexandra continued its run of good form with a comfortable four wicket win over Puckapunyal.

Puckapunyal looked to be in a solid position for most of its innings with the

bat as James Voogt and Ciaran Fountain played important supporting roles. It was Charles Davies who once again led from the front finishing on 53 not out.

It was a lower order collapse of 6/10 that left Puckapunyal with not enough runs on the board. Josh Crane led the way with 3/23, with both Nathan Waugh and Justin Leary chipping in with two wickets each.

The successful run chase for Alexandra was led by young gun Matthew Wal, who steadied the shop with a well-crafted 53 to get the Redbacks over the line in the 33rd over.

Alexandra 6/131 (M Wal 53, J Fulton 19, L Deeble 2/18) defeated Puckapunyal 130

(C Davies 53 not out, J Voogt 23, J Crane 3/23, N Waugh 2/8).

### B Grade

Pyalong 7/174 (M Leahy 41 not out, D Zoch 28 not out, M Singh 2/23) defeated Yea Tigers 55 (L McAlpin 14, P Reynolds 3/5, A Pratt 3/12).

Puckapunyal 136 (J Nipperess 51, R Kuttikadan 4/30, L Crane 2/22) defeated Alexandra 117 (A Wood 37, T Ward 35, V Agnew 5/33, M Dunn 2/14).

### GMCU Under 16s

Pyalong 7/178 (N Wilkins 37, T Caddie 33) defeated Yea Tigers 31 (J McNicholas 3/3, J Wilkins 3/11).