

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE

Standard

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

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INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Darlingford Board members retire



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UGFM life memberships awarded



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The show must go on



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ASC Swimming Carnival



Page 21

New wind farm blows in

A NEW wind farm is being proposed for the Puzzle Range. The Puzzle Range is between the towns of Merton, Bonnie Doon and Fawcett.

The company behind the project is Tetris Energy. We spoke to their managing director, Frank Boland.

Mr Boland explained that Tetris Energy is Australian renewable energy developer. They're headquartered in Melbourne and have staff across Australia. He said that the Puzzle Range project was introduced to them by some local landowners.

He commented, "It's always a good way to initiate a project when it's sort of introduced

from a previous project. Some of our team developed the Cherry Tree Wind Farm near Seymour and after the success of that were introduced to some landowners in the Puzzle Range area which has the high voltage power lines that traverse that area, so they had the power lines that really supply Melbourne

from the Snowy Hydro system, so they're part of the main interconnection with NSW.

"For a new renewable energy project, it's really important having high quality power lines because that's the end of the game, to really be able to deliver the power as cheap as possible and as reliable as possible. They're a great asset to have there."

Asked how many turbines they will be looking to install for the project, Mr Boland said, "It's still evolving and we're still speaking to interested people who want to be involved, and also measuring the wind and doing different surveys, but at this stage would sort of aiming for around 350 megawatts, which for seven MW turbines is about 50 turbines, right across the quite a large area."

They haven't selected the height yet, but "the modern turbines these days range from 130 to 150 metres, and each turbine will be around one and half hectares area with tracks and cable, so it's a pretty small footprint, grazing right under, similar to Cherry Tree.

The project is still at early planning stage. Mr Boland said, "We're doing preliminary studies and still speaking to interested people who want to be involved. And as I said, it was sort of landowner led and introduced project. So it's evolved from that and we've added in neighbours who expressed interest. We're also doing preliminary studies on ecology, wind resource monitoring and connection as well, with Ausnet, to the power lines. There's lots of different pieces that will run concurrently at this stage."

He said that community consultations will be very extensive, and that it's already started through how the project originated. "We're going around meeting with different people, interested or not interested. We're really keen to get people's opinion and that's part of the success of the project is the community could

Continued Page 4



Dee Murphy, Dianne Goschnick, and Nola Evans have a combined service of 113 years at Alexandra District Health. Read their stories on page 14 and 15.

CLOSED LABOUR DAY - MONDAY, MARCH 10

EARLY DEADLINES APPLY

★ **EGN BOOKINGS AND ARTWORK** - NOON TUESDAY, MARCH 4

★ **TRADES** WILL REMAIN THE SAME - NOON THURSDAY, MARCH 6

★ **CLASSIFIEDS** - FOR SALE, MEETINGS ETC INC DEATH NOTICES -
2PM FRIDAY, MARCH 7

★ **EDITORIAL, SPORTS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** - 10AM MONDAY, MARCH 10

43 Grant Street, Alexandra Ph: 57721002
email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

The Yea Chronicle

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE
Standard

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

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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✉

Letters to the Editor

Response to Julian Browne

JULIAN Browne's letter to the editor on February 12, the response to Taungarung statement, may get a pass in a university assignment but in the real world it gets a fail. Basically Julian is saying despite denying it, 'if your white you inherit past atrocities'. Whatever they were, no one really knows.

I'm surprised a psychotherapist would suggest such an inheritance is possible as others in the same discipline have said it's unhealthy to take on a third party offence or accept guilt for other's actions.

The reality is this season of discontent is driven by overseas interests that destabilise countries by causing division. We've seen it in Venezuela, Syria and most African countries.

Alexandra is the best community I have ever lived in. The locals don't deserve this as an inheritance.

Tom Collins, Alexandra

Diary Creek Bridge closure

THE traffic light at Dairy Creek Bridge on the Goulburn Valley Highway will remain in place until mid April, according to Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish.

She said that the office of the Minister for Roads confirmed the Dairy Creek bridge railing is currently being fabricated off site and that works are scheduled to take place in mid-April at which point there would have been only one lane open for 12 months on the major highway. The Department of Transport last week advised this newspaper that works would start in March.

Ms McLeish said, "Last year the Victorian Government missed their own deadline, having originally anticipated works to replace the barrier on the bridge would occur in late 2024, with the road reopened for use by early 2025."

The delay in planned works now means the Melba Highway will be closed at the same time.

"I expect now the additional traffic directed onto the Goulburn Valley Highway due to the Melba Highway closure will quite quickly become banked up. This will include large trucks that will be faced with the Dairy Creek Bridge traffic management light.

"Locals are concerned about the prolonged detour travel time, influx of traffic and the risk it adds to bushfire escape routes.

"The Goulburn Valley Highway is a fairly busy commuter road and people have to suffer this every single day. It will only be made all the more difficult now with the closure of the Melba Highway," Ms McLeish concluded.

Alexandra and District Senior Citizens report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

THIS week's social meeting started in a sombre mood as we remembered Louie and Bev Dikman. Louie and Bev farmed at Buxton before moving to a Kellock Lodge unit and joining the club. They moved to a Whittlesea Aged Care facility last year before passing away within three days of each other at the beginning of this month.

The mood lightened as members enjoyed refreshments and a chat before playing the usual games of 500 and UNO. The committee are still gathering information from hotels, RSLs and cinema programs before arranging excursions. Meanwhile watch this space. The bridge players continue to meet up on Wednesday afternoons.

Be thankful that we have only had to contend with warm days and a bit of wind as we see other parts of the country contending with fire, flood and cyclones. Meanwhile stay safe and keep smiling.

THUMBS UP
THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS UP: To the Murrindindi Shire Council roadworks team for an excellent job improving the surface of Spring Creek Road past Fawcett. It makes it so much easier to go back and forth to work each day. Thanks to all.

THUMBS UP: To the Murrindindi Shire Council for having it in their budget to resurface Spring Creek Road in the next 12 months. Looking forward to seeing that improvement as well.

THUMBS DOWN: The tap root depth of a paulownia tree can reach depths of up to eight to nine metres, not up to 45 metres as stated in a Thumbs Down last week, designed to scare people. The wood of this tree is also fire retardant.

THUMBS UP: To Karine Haslam and her Eildon Events Inc volunteers for saving Saturday night's annual Opera @ Eildon Pondage outdoors concert from cancellation by having it transferred indoors to Pixies at the Billabong. Shocking weather but a fabulous outcome.

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

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

COMMUNITY DIARY

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon

UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands

UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain

UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale / Hazeldene

UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

WEEKLY

Tues Art Group (Alex Tennis Rooms) 10am-3pm Ph 5773 2306

Tue Seniors Carpet Bowls 1.15pm

Wed Social Bowls 11am Alexandra Bowls Club Ph 5772 1150

Thu Take off weight naturally 5.45pm 5773 2427

Fri Seniors Social Club 1pm

Sun AA 7pm Anglican Church, Alexandra Ph 0402 428 086

Sun Alanon Recovery 5.30pm. Ph Sheila 0402 428 086

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

Thu 7.00-10pm SES, SES/CFA complex Ph 0418 576 666

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

MONTHLY

1st Wed Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318

1st Sat Alexandra Quilters RSL Hall 10am-3pm Ph 0437 005 465

1st Sun Crop/Produce swap 10.30am-noon @ Embassy of Ideas

2nd Tue Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285

2nd Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.

2nd Sat Alexandra Market - at Station Street Ph 0427 509 988

2nd Sat Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

3rd Sat Murrindindi Men 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

3rd Wed Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318

3rd Thu Alexandra Ladies Probud 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252

3rd Thu Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas

3rd Sun Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913

4th Tue Yarcck CWA Meeting, 10.30am Yarcck Hall.

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

4th Thu Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517

Last Fri Carers Group 10am. Free morning tea. 0418 402 455

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

For a \$5 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.

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT					
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS	
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	9.00am Mon	2.20	steady	below minor	
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00am Mon	0.43	steady		
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.43am Mon	0.56	steady	below minor	
Home Creek at Yarcck	8.48am Mon	0.10	steady		
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.19am Mon	0.44	steady	below minor	
Yea River at Yea GV Water PS	9.21am Mon	0.24	steady	below minor	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00am Mon	4.10	steady		
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00am Mon	0.35	steady	below minor	
King Parrot Ck at Kerrisdale	9.00am Mon	0.09	steady		
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00am Mon	1.84	steady	below minor	
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00am Mon	-0.08	steady	below minor	
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00am Mon	2.05	steady	below minor	
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	7.01am Mon	0.79	steady		
**ISSUED AT 9.46AM ON MONDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2025					

Weekly Weather

February 19 - February 25, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY LOW HIGH DAY LOW HIGH

Wednesday 10 24 Wednesday 11 23

Thursday 11 26 Thursday 10 25

Friday 17 30 Friday 17 31

Saturday 19 31 Saturday 19 32

Sunday 18 30 Sunday 17 31

Monday 15 28 Monday 15 29

Tuesday 15 29 Tuesday 15 29

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra 7mm

Buxton..... 12mm

Eildon (AWS)..... 10mm

Flowerdale..... 12mm

Jamieson..... 6mm

Kinglake..... 18mm

Lake Eildon..... 10mm

Mansfield..... 3mm

Taggerty 4mm

Yarcck 11mm

Yea..... 11mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week.....282.05m

Capacity as at 9am Monday.....74.8%

Metres below full supply.....6.85m

Daily inflow500ML

Release..... 6000ML

Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....89%

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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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DEADLINES

Real Estate Thursday 5pm

Trades & Services Thursday noon

Early General News Thursday 5pm

Classifieds Monday noon

Editorial Monday 9am

Sports Editorial Monday 10am

Letters to the Editor Monday 9am

Thumbsup/down Monday 10am

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

5772 1002 or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Darlingford Board members retire

AN afternoon tea was held on January 30, to thank long standing Board Members Helen Findlay and Alison Dyson for their dedicated service to Darlingford Nursing Home.

Helen commenced her board membership in 1993, before the redevelopment and extension of the facility from 30 beds to 51. Helen's contributions have been extensive over 31 years, assisting the board to develop and diversify in an ever-changing industry.

Helen and Alison are avid gardeners and extended their skills into the garden environment, with many landscaping projects completed to create an inviting display for visitors, and colourful and safe areas for residents to enjoy with their family and friends.

Alison's board membership commenced in 2012, and has also been a valuable

contribution to the organisation through her previous experience in the disability sector and history with Berry Street in Alexandra.

The Board of Management thanks Helen and Alison for their dedicated service to Darlingford Nursing Home. "All board member participation is voluntary and we are so fortunate to have a caring community, willing to participate in such a valuable facility for our aged residents."

Darlingford Board now has vacancies available, and would love to hear from anyone who would like to make a very meaningful contribution to the local community of Eildon, to residents and local workforce. Please contact darlingford@dughn.com.au for further information regarding this role.



Alison Dyson, Kevin Boote - Board President and Helen Findlay -S

Better hearing for a fraction of the cost

IT'S vital to have your hearing checked and the pathway to better hearing just got cheaper. Dean Moore from Complete Hearing Solutions spoke about the Commonwealth Hearing Services Program (CHSP).

"This free program offers people on a pension, Department of Veterans Affairs and other disability pension services free hearing aids. They offer a range of digital free hearing aids and then depending on what the person wants to do, they can add to that and get something more advanced, or just the free hearing aids," Dean explained.

Dean said that hearing aids have changed enormously. "You can get them to talk to your mobile phone. Your phone rings and it can go into your hearing aid, apps on your phone and you can adjust them. The bluetooth technology is quite advanced," he said.

Hearing aids can start from around \$1500, so if you're eligible for the program, it's best to apply not only for your ears but for your hip pocket.

"More and more people are getting older and are unaware the program exists... It's a pretty good idea to get your hearing tested at least once a year, but usually we test every two years. You can get it done at any age but generally we see people from late 50s as this is when most people start identifying mild hearing issues. It's the age of 60 which is the key point where one in five people need assistance with their hearing," Dean explained.

To find out about the program visit health.gov.au/our-work/hearing-services-program

You can get your hearing assessed by calling Dean at his Eltham rooms on 9431 1244, or you can see him at Yea hospital as he visits monthly.

A bagpiping treat for people across Victoria



ON Wednesday, February 12, people in the vicinity of Rotary Park in Alexandra may have heard a bagpiper playing the theme songs from *Outlander* and *Star Wars*, as well as *Waltzing Matilda*, *Scotland the Brave* and other tunes. -AR



Bagpiper Damien Hort explained that he hadn't been practicing his bagpipes much after starting in his new job as a truck driver with DHL four years ago, so he started taking his bagpipes with him. Now he plays the bagpipes wherever he takes a break from driving. On Wednesday, it was at the Victorian Truck Drivers Memorial in Rotary Park. -S

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Church Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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New wind farm blows in

Continued from Page 1

“We’re really keen to get people’s opinion and that’s part of the success of the project is the community could be involved in shaping the design and also the benefits that come from the project. One of the legacies we want to have this project is, you know, local jobs and benefits flowing through. We’ve already had a young chap from your area who’s an electrician working up near Dubbo wants to move back there as an electrician on the project, as an example. It would be really good to create those sort of jobs.”

Asked about other benefits for the community, Mr Boland said, “We’d love to substantially provide discounted clean power to the region, and that’s a real aspiration for us. If we can deliver really cheap, really reliable power for the area that would be terrific. We like to let the community help inform what the community benefits package looks like.

“Some projects, it’s a royalty from the project, others it’s proximity payments, but given our project is not associated with just one town, there are towns around Bonnie Doon, Merton, Yarck, Fawcett, it would be great to have a structure that the benefits flow to all of those places.”

As Cherry Tree Wind Farm doesn’t appear to have run their Community Benefit Fund for local community groups in the past year, Mr Boland was asked about this. He responded, “I’m not across the operation of that anymore.

If people are keen to have their say on the Puzzle Range Wind Farm project, Mr Boland said they are keen to hear from everyone. “We’re out there all the time and as the project advances, it’s still very early days, but as it matures, we will be having sessions to meet with people and perhaps some drop in sessions, and we’ve met the councils already, but continue to have those discussions. We’ve got links on our website where people can send us an email or register their interest, get a copy of our regular newsletters and stuff.”

Asked whether there is government approval for the use of the location and whether it is in a Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), Mr Boland said, “It is in an appropriate zone and as I said at the beginning, it’s very appealing because of its proximity to the power line and utilising that a lot of the rest of Victoria doesn’t have sufficient power lines servicing it and you know, you read about that, powerlines having to be constructed to unlock those areas, whereas here, you’ve got two of them already, going straight through the site. It’s really good access as well, with the Maroondah Highway. You don’t need to construct a lot of roads or anything like that.”

They’re still a while away from applying for approvals for the project with it still in the early stages.

“We’ll just keep progressing it and the different approval streams. We’ll just keep working through those. We don’t have a set date, but we’re keen to progress it efficiently and hope to get it up and running as soon as possible,” Mr Boland said.

There have been safety concerns around wind farms lately, with fallen blades at a wind farm near Geelong earlier this month and the death of a worker due to a falling turbine blade at Golden Plains in western Victoria in October 2024.

Mr Boland responded, “I’m across but I can’t speak for those specific incidents, but you know, safety is absolutely paramount. Like in any project, whether you’re building a house and road building. I’ve visited some other factories in Denmark and stuff and I’m pretty comfortable with the high quality of manufacturing and scrutiny around that. We have really strict safety standards at our projects.”

He added, “We’re really excited. We’re working with the local communities and turning it into an opportunity for them. It’s really important to see there’s an opportunity for jobs and benefits and cleaner, cheaper power.”

Out & About

WHAT'S ON?

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*.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24
Attention Alexandra, Eildon, Marysville and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape the new council plan. Marysville Community Centre, noon-2pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan

Pop up information sessions to save energy and save money. You are invited to attend one of the pop up sessions and chat about solar energy, batteries, heat pumps and split systems. Learn how they work and more. Alexandra FoodWorks 11am-1pm and Eildon Grocer 2-4pm today. See below for further dates and times. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gmss for more details.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20
Attention Yea and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape the new council plan. Yea Council Chamber, 6-8pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Trawool, Drag Trivia. A more glamorous take on your traditional pub trivia. Grab your team mates and get to Trawool for this outrageous evening of run and trivia. Bookings essential 5792 1444 or trawoolstate.com.au

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23
Long Lazy Summer Lunch at Holmesglen at Eildon. Bookings essential. Noon to 4pm. Delight in a beautiful summer lunch, featuring fresh local produce, live music and free flowing bubbles. 5774 2631. eildon@holmesglen.edu.au

Alexandra and Eildon Gem and Lapidary Club Thornton Gem and Rock Exhibition from 8am onwards. Enquiries to 0492 876 595.

VicEmergency App training session at Alexandra Library from 11am-noon. EMV representatives will show you how easy it is to use the app to stay informed and safe during emergencies such as fires, floods, storms and earthquakes. Don’t miss this chance to learn and feel confident using this vital tool. RSVP essential visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/appsessions or phone council on 5772 0333 or drop into the library. You can also scan the QR code in this edition.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25
Attention Alexandra, Eildon, Marysville and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape the new council plan. Alexandra Shire Hall, noon-2pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26
Pop up information sessions to save energy and save money. You are invited to attend one of the pop up sessions and chat about solar energy, batteries, heat pumps and split systems. Learn how they work and more. Marysville Grocer 3-5pm. See below for further dates and times. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gmss for more details.

Alexandra P and A Ladies Committee AGM will be held at 2pm in the admin building at the show grounds caravan park, all welcome.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27
Pop up information sessions to save energy and save money. You are invited to attend one of the pop up sessions and chat about solar energy, batteries, heat pumps and split systems. Learn how they work and more. Yea FoodWorks 3-5pm. See below for further dates and times. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gmss for more details.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1
Dindi Daze at Rotary Park, Alexandra. A festival to celebrate all that is good in Murrindindi. Great food, kids activities, cocktails, live music, craft beer, face painting and much more. 10am-6pm.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5
Tarcombe Herefords 51st Annual Production Sale 1pm. Contact Tim Hayes on 0439 257 693 or email temagong@bigpond.com

THURSDAY, MARCH 6
Pop up information sessions to save energy and save money. You are invited to attend one of the pop up sessions and chat about solar energy, batteries, heat pumps and split systems. Learn how they work and more. Kinglake FoodWorks. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gmss for more details.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8
Notice of Tuangurung Native Title Meeting at Broadford Town Hall 10am-3pm to provide information about the process of making a native title determination application to the Federal Court under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth). Full details can be obtained by calling 0434 632 875 or by emailing Tobylee.Kirby@fnlrs.com.au RSVP by February 28.

Murrindindi businesses creating jobs

THE Victorian Government is helping small businesses in the Murrindindi Shire expand to create new jobs and growing the local economy.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced last week that a total of \$100,000 in funding has been awarded to a local childcare centre and a local boat servicing business from the Forestry Transition Fund, round one grants program.

Each wind farm needs to be assessed on its merits

DARRYL Otzen from the Strathbogies Responsible Renewables Community Group (SRRCG) was contacted about the Puzzle Range Wind Farm proposal, given their opposition to the Seymour Wind Farm by Fera, which includes Murrindindi Shire.

Mr Otzen noted that every project is different and that each needs to be assessed on its merits, and that the group isn't opposed to wind farms per se.

He also pointed out that the Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) are yet to be confirmed, with only study zones determined. The map also lacks enough detail to determine the priority tier.

The Puzzle Range Wind Farm may end up being in a REZ zone, but this doesn't appear to have been confirmed, with a statewide decision expected in coming months regarding the zones. Much will also depend on the benefits to wind farm developers for building within REZ zones, such as whether priority zoned wind farms will receive grid priority during a high energy output time. This may have an impact in terms of economic viability.

Daryl also noted that this is not the fight of SRRCG, however they're happy to provide advice to any groups which may seek input into the Puzzle Range project.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence said, "Both Forestry Transition Fund grants are providing important services to their local communities, while creating employment opportunities for workers and contributing to the local economy."

Dindi Daycare, located in Alexandra, is using a \$50,000 Forestry Transition Fund grant to build acoustic fencing at the childcare centre to provide a safe environment for children.

The business was established by Pagan McCarthy, following her firsthand experience

looking for long term childcare facilities in the Murrindindi Shire.

Dindi Daycare is expected to create up to 12 ongoing positions and offer traineeships within the childcare sector when the facility is operational. The availability of childcare will also enable local parents to more readily participate in employment opportunities as well as providing children with the best start in life.

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes said, "Our regional childcare centers are pivotal to supporting local families, giving more parents the peace of mind to return to

work. These projects will strengthen our community and benefit local business."

Inferno Marine at Eildon is using a \$50,000 Transition Fund grant to purchase a computer numerical control (CNC) machine, so it can manufacture components on site, reducing freight costs and wait times.

The addition of a CNC machine will enable the business, which was founded by Tim Ewert in 2016, to create additional fulltime work and expand services to local communities and businesses.

The funding will also assist Inferno Marine with the purchase of a portable building that will be used as an office.

Inferno Marine owner Tim Ewert said "We've been able to purchase the equipment we need, allowing us to save time and costs when it comes to sourcing parts. We can now provide a better service to our customers."

Round two of the Forestry Transition Fund is open now, looking for projects that create jobs and develop businesses in and around communities impacted by the end of native timber harvesting. A \$20,000 employment incentive payment for the employment of ex-native timber workers is also available.

Applications close on October 31, 2025. For more information visit deeca.vic.gov.au/forestry or call 1800 318 182.

Redgate Alexandra CWA report

THE Redgate Alexandra Country Women's Association (CWA) new year has started and with a shared lunch at their January meeting, where they were able to see friends again and catch up on their news.

The next monthly meeting will be on Thursday, February 27 at 1pm at the clubrooms on Perkins Street Alexandra. The theme is Valentine's Day and hostesses are Martine and Cynthia with competitions 'Flower of the Month' and 'Romantic Card'.

The guest speaker is Anthea Forbes from Murrindindi Carers Group at 2.30pm. Next coffee catch up will be Thursday, March 13 at 11am with venue to be advised.

Redgate Alexandra CWA are busy baking for a scone challenge and cake stall on Saturday, March 29 outside FoodWorks Alexandra starting at 9.30am. They look forward to saying hello to everyone who buys a cake or scone.

The CWA 2025 Determinations are "Sharing Knowledge for a Secure and Sustainable Future".

Product/resource is industrial hemp, country of study is Sri Lanka, social issues focus is advocating for change, thanksgiving fund is Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute and state project is video conferencing facilities for regional areas (continuing from 2024).

Craft Tuesday is becoming very popular and there is always room for one more person at the CWA club rooms on Perkins Street, Alexandra. Starts at 10am through to 2pm with tea and coffee provided and bring your own lunch. A small donation of \$2 to assist with electricity costs.

If you would like any further information, please call Sue Wynn on 0412 435 946 or Jane Laws on 0412 653 647.

House fire in Yea

POLICE have arrested a teen following an arson in Yea on Wednesday, February 12.

It is alleged the boy started the fire inside a residential property in Lyons Street just after 2am.

The blaze became out of control and caused significant damage to the premises.

The 14-year-old Yea boy was arrested at hospital shortly after where he was located seeking treatment for minor injuries. He has been released pending further inquiries.

SWIMMING IS FUN. BUT DROWNING ISN'T.

PACK YOUR SUMMER SMARTS

- ✓ BE AWARE OF STRONG CURRENTS AND SUBMERGED OBJECTS
- ✓ KNOW THE CONDITIONS AND KNOW YOUR LIMITS
- ✓ NEVER SWIM ALONE OR IF YOU'RE UNSURE

FIND OUT HOW TO STAY SAFE
BY THE WATER THIS SUMMER



Parks
VICTORIA

Putting
Safety
First

VICTORIA
State
Government

Pumped hydro project in planning for Molesworth

BE Power have announced the Big-S Pumped Hydro Energy Storage (PHES) Project in Molesworth. It's in the planning stages at present.

The renewable energy project has a planned generating capacity of 400 megawatts of hydroelectricity with 10 hours of storage duration at full output, with four GWh total storage.

The BE Power website stated, "The project is expected to commence construction in late 2028 and last for circa four years, delivering significant economic benefits to the local region."

It's to be a "compact closed-loop pumped storage system to substantially increase energy storage capabilities in Victoria. As one of the most cost-effective projects globally, it stands to significantly firm up local grid requirements, providing support to the region's growing renewable energy and Victorian grid.

"The project will deliver substantial economic benefits, both during its construction phase and throughout its operation, by stabilising power prices and contributing to the economic resilience of Victoria."

The project has completed the Concept Study and initial environmental assessment. Grid connection and water access investigations have been made, to ensure viable alternatives are available. The plan for initial geotechnical investigation and Bankable Feasibility Study is being developed.

It's stated that "The project utilises two valley dams to form the upper and lower reservoirs. At its core, the underground power station complex, equipped with two 200 MW fixed-speed reversible Francis pump-turbine units, aims for a 400 MW generation capacity.

"Water sustainability is a key focus, with the project's water requirements to be provided via the Goulburn River, which is directly alongside the lower storage. The water trading scheme on the river ensures a reliable and environmentally sustainable approach to its initial and then modest ongoing operational water needs.

"Grid connectivity is secured with several viable options to join the 330kV Ausnet network, demonstrating the project's integration into the existing energy grid. Shared infrastructure with other renewable projects is also a consideration."

Over 1100 illegal fires since 2019 in Victoria

DATA released by CFA and the Crime Statistics Agency has revealed a concerning number of fire-related offences across Victoria over the past five years.

Between 2019 and 2024, there were 1010 recorded instances of lighting a fire during the Fire Danger Period (FDP) and 187 cases of lighting a fire on a Total Fire Ban (TFB) day.

The Fire Danger Period is a designated time in each Victorian municipality when fire restrictions apply due to increased fire risk. A Total Fire Ban is declared on days of extreme conditions, prohibiting any fires in the open air.

Under the CFA Act, penalties for allowing an open-air fire to escape during a declared FDP can include fines of up to \$23,710, 12 months' imprisonment, or both. The penalties double if the escape occurs on a Total Fire Ban Day.

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said the stats are worrying.

"Lighting a fire during the Fire Danger Period and on days of Total Fire Ban puts lives, homes, and emergency responders at risk," he said.

"If you ignore fire restrictions, you could be facing serious legal repercussions and

more importantly, you could be responsible for devastating losses.

"Victoria is already one of the most fire-prone regions in the world, so we certainly don't need unnecessary challenges created by carelessness or deliberate acts."

A recent incident in Diamond Creek serves as a reminder of the serious consequences of ignoring FPD restrictions.

CFA was called to a property at around 6.28pm on Monday, January 20, where crews arrived to find smoke issuing from a pile of green tree branches approximately a metre high.

Victoria Police attended the scene and are now pursuing charges against the resident for lighting a fire during Nillumbik Shire Council's Fire Danger Period.

All Victorian municipalities are currently in the Fire Danger Period, you can find out more information on what you can and can't do during the FDP at cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions/can-i-or-cant-i

If you see illegal or suspicious fire activity, report it immediately by calling Triple Zero (000) or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Gobur and Terip Terip get prepared

A lively Community Fire Safety Meeting was held in Gobur on Saturday, February 15, conducted by the Yarck CFA.

Residents found lots of practical advice and shared their personal experiences, reinforcing the importance of being as well prepared as possible in the event of a bushfire. Mary Anne Egan's presentation was informative and entertaining as she shared her wealth of information.



The Community Safety Meeting. -S

POP-UP
INFORMATION
SESSIONS



SAVE ENERGY. SAVE MONEY.

Let's talk energy and saving money on bills. Get tips on how to save energy NOW and later!

Come and chat to our friendly team about solar energy, batteries, heat pumps and split systems and see if they are right for you. Learn how they work, how they can reduce energy bills, how they can make you more resilient to electricity outages, and about rebates that make them affordable. Come along to a session near you:

- **ALEXANDRA FOODWORKS**
Wednesday 19 February from 11.00 am to 1.00 pm
- **EILDON GROCER**
Wednesday 19 February from 2.00 to 4.00 pm
- **MARYSVILLE GROCER**
Wednesday 26 February from 3.00 to 5.00 pm
- **YEA FOODWORKS**
Thursday 27 February from 3.00 to 5.00 pm
- **KINGLAKE FOODWORKS**
Thursday 6 March from 2.00 to 4.00 pm

Learn more by scanning the QR code or visiting our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/gmss



**ROAD CLOSURES WILL
BE IN PLACE FROM
8:30AM - 5:00PM**

**MARYSVILLE-
WOODS POINT
ROAD FROM LADY
TALBOT DRIVE
TO CUMBERLAND
JUNCTION.**

NO RESORT ACCESS.

**SEE THE CARS IN
ACTION & EVENT
UPDATES:**



Seymour Show'n'Shine on the horizon

THE fifth annual Seymour Show'n'Shine held jointly by the Lions Club of Seymour Goulburn and the Seymour and District Car Club will take place on Labour Day this year, March 10.

With an 8am start and gold coin entry to Kings Park in Seymour, this event is set to provide entertainment for both car enthusiasts and the family unit. Just outside

of Murrindindi Shire, the show'n'shine is a great opportunity for a day out.

It is the major fundraiser for the Lions Club and a significant event on the car club's calendar.

Regina Young from the Seymour Lions Club told the *Alexandra Standard* that the event is designed to cater for everyone.

"We try to keep it as family friendly as we can. The focus is on the show cars, for the show car enthusiasts to have an opportunity to see them," she said.

"But we also want to do something for the community. The Lions Club used to hold their market on Labour Day down at Goulburn Park, and then that got cancelled a few years ago now, probably seven years ago, so we thought let's bring back something on Labour Day and let's make it bigger.

"It becomes quite a busy day for families, as there is children's entertainment and amusement, we have the SES in attendance, the CFA will be there, the police, the local historical society, the Mitchell Fixed Wing Aero Club with their model aeroplanes, and a petting zoo for the kids.

"Lots going on to keep the family in the park and keep people happy for a few hours."

All makes of cars are welcome at the show'n'shine, with the price of entry for display cars on the day being \$10, all occupants included, and no pre-booking

is required for either the cars or the swap meet. Based on previous years, there will be approximately 65 to 70 swap meet stalls.

"There is a wide range of vehicles. We have in excess of 450 cars on average every year, and there's judging and trophies awarded at the end," Regina added.

On top of the cars is the market, live music, food and coffee vans. On top of that, items donated by local businesses will be auctioned on the day, with a professional auctioneer heading along to sell them.

The Lions Club of Seymour will hold their barbecue and continue selling raffle tickets that they also sell on the street beforehand, with over \$3000 in prizes drawn on the day.

Money raised on the day will primarily be put towards supporting the community.

For enquiries relating to show cars, call Judi on 0407 562 003 or email: secretary@seymouranddistrictcarclub.com.au

For all other enquiries call Regina on 0417 329 981 or email: rbaallen@gmail.com



With an average of 450 cars, the event is sure to provide entertainment for all those who attend. -S



Some of the various show cars on display at last year's Seymour Show'n'Shine. -S



Any and all display cars are welcome, with an entry fee of only \$10. -S

Melba Highway landslip repair works

We're completing critical landslip repairs on the Melba Highway in Dixons Creek, between Healesville-Kinglake Road and north of Hunts Lane.

Melba Highway will be closed to traffic and detours will be in place from **17 February to late March**.

Labour Day long weekend

Melba Highway will open in both directions for the Labour Day long weekend from **Friday 7 March until Tuesday 11 March** with reduced speed limits.

Please support local businesses which remain open during works and are accessible by travelling via Yarra Glen.



Scan the QR code or find out more at transport.vic.gov.au/melbahighway



Department
of Transport
and Planning



Proudly supporting Student of the week

Community Bank · Yea & District and Alexandra
Bendigo Bank

ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Hannah Fegen

Hannah consistently shows the school values. She approaches every day with a positive attitude and a big smile. She is kind and is always up for fun. We are proud to have you in our learning community, Hannah. You are a star.

EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Scarlette for showing the school value Achievement in swimming a full lap of freestyle without stopping once at the Cluster Swimming.

Ellie-Mae displayed Resilience by remembering many sounds and using them to sound out words.

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Fletcher

Fletcher has started the year with a positive attitude. He has been engaged in class activities, putting one foot in front of the other to 'have a go' at 'all learning tasks. Fletcher is using his voice to problem solve any difficulties that may arise when learning or at play.

Congratulations Fletcher and keep moving forward.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kinglake branch

Bendigo Bank

Fishing facility upgrades across Victoria

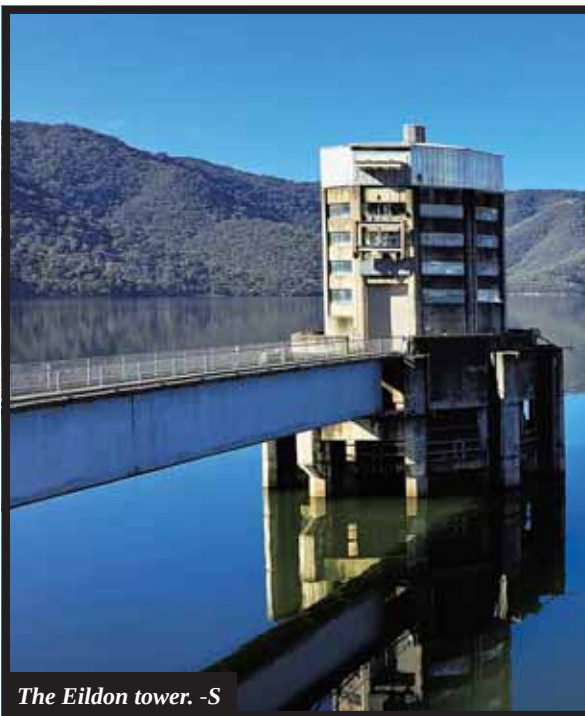
THE state government is working on 14 fishing projects that are set to share in close to \$1.1 million in grants.

Acting Minister for Outdoor Recreation Ros Spence announced the latest recipients of the Recreational Fishing Large Grants Program to improve facilities, create more fish habitats and support fishing research.

The fund is backed by Victoria's anglers through the reinvestment of their fishing license fees, which means this generation of fishing fans is making sure the next generation has the same great fishing they get to experience.

An additional \$300,000 will be allocated by the VFA to support a range of First Nations fishing projects over the next six months.

The 2024-25 Large Grants Program is currently open, with applications closing on Friday, February 28. For more information go to vfa.vic.gov.au/fishinggrants



The Eildon tower. -S

Blue-green algae warning removed for Lake Eildon

GOULBURN-Murray Water (GMW) has removed the blue-green algae warning at Lake Eildon following a significant decline in algae levels.

The warning for Lake Eildon was issued on December 9, 2024 and remained in place for 60 days.

GMW Water Quality Coordinator Bianca Atley said GMW would keep testing for further changes to blue-green algae levels.

"We will continue undertaking water quality monitoring and if blue-green algae reach levels deemed unsafe by national health

guidelines, a warning will be issued," she said.

People can stay up to date with current blue-green algae warnings on the GMW website: gmwater.com.au/news/bga

Information on current warnings can also be obtained by phoning 1800 013 357 and selecting the blue-green algae information option.

Customers are reminded that water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated. For more information, head to the GMW website at gmwater.com.au/water-quality

**SAFER DRIVING
STARTS WITH YOU**



**DON'T LET A CAR
CHANGE WHO YOU ARE**



Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.

Police are out there to keep you safe. If you still choose to take risks while driving and break the road rules, chances are you will be caught.

TAC

VICTORIA
State Government





Peter Weeks was awarded a life membership to UGFM Radio Murrindindi recently. -S



Ian Hewitt with his UGFM life membership award. -S

Ian Hewitt and Peter Weeks awarded UGFM life memberships

by Naomi Booker, Secretary UGFM

TWO deserving recipients have been awarded life memberships at UGFM Inc, Ian Hewitt and Peter Weeks OAM.

Peter Rice ASFM said in his speech to congratulate Ian during the presentation that “In the late 1990’s UGFM Committee of Management became aware that Ian Hewitt was interested in becoming a presenter at the station.

“Being heavily involved in station administration, at that time I volunteered

to undertake the training of Ian. He sat in with me on the Saturday afternoon ‘Country Collection’ programme nearly a quarter of a century and he is still there.

“Over the 24 years I have found Ian to be dedicated, trustworthy and reliable. In more recent times Ian has unfortunately had a few health issues but has battled on anyway. And a few times he has literally left a hospital bed to be on air on UGFM.

“I want to congratulate Ian on this award. It is well earned. Well done and Congratulations.”

There was also a few committee members and others that got together behind Peter Week’s back to rectify that he himself had not yet been awarded the same honour and on the night surprised him with life membership too.

Peter was an integral part of getting the station up and running along with Peter Rice and others. He has held the position of President for over 20 years and his technical expertise has been paramount in getting and keeping the station functioning.

Leading the team through a move in 2001 to the current location of the Alexandra studio,

and the expansion of studios to Marysville, Yea and Kinglake, overseeing broadcast during some of the biggest natural disasters the state has seen that directly impacted Murrindindi communities, culminated in UGFM becoming the first radio station outside of ABC to be qualified to do emergency broadcasting.

As the station are in their 30th year of broadcasting it is believed there will be many more years of service to come. If you see Ian or Peter in the street, please thank them for their years of dedicated service.

COMMUNITY AWARDS 2025

Nominate a community member, group or initiative!

Who inspires you? Do you know someone who’s made a significant contribution to our Shire? Would you like to recognise the efforts of a local community group or initiative?

Nominations are open for Council’s 2025 Murrindindi Shire Community Awards! The Awards celebrate the exceptional contributions of local volunteers who go above and beyond for their communities.

Nominations are open for the following Award categories:

- Volunteer of the Year (aged 26 - 64 years)
- Senior Volunteer of the Year (aged 65 years or older)
- Young Volunteer of the Year (aged 12 - 25 years)
- Community Group (or Community Initiative) of the Year

To nominate an individual or group, visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/2025Awards

You can also pick up a paper nomination form from our Library and Customer Service Centres in Alexandra, Kinglake or Yea, as well as the Mobile Library.

Nominations close on Sunday 16 March 2025.



VICEMERGENCY APP TRAINING SESSION AT ALEXANDRA LIBRARY

Monday 24 February 11.00 am - 12 noon

Curious about getting crucial emergency updates without being a tech expert? Council is partnering with Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) to bring VicEmergency App Training Sessions to Alexandra Library. EMV representatives will show you how easy it is to use the app to stay informed and safe during emergencies such as fires, floods, storms, and earthquakes. Don’t miss out on this chance to learn and feel confident using this vital tool.

RSVPs are essential as light refreshments will be provided. To RSVP and for more information or to request assistance:

- visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/appsessions
- scan the QR code
- call Council at 5772 0333
- drop-in to Alexandra Library

Scan to RSVP for a VicEmergency Training Session

We welcome people of all ages and tech-literacy, so please share this information someone who might benefit from these sessions.

Murrindindi Shire Council is pleased to advise that funding for these sessions is made possible by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



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Become a kinder teacher or educator.

Financial support of
up to \$34,000 available.

The Victorian Government is delivering Free Kinder.
And that means thousands of new jobs across the state.

Financial support to help you study and Free TAFE
courses are available.

Learn more at vic.gov.au/kinder





Holly Daze. -AR

NOTICE OF TAUNGURUNG NATIVE TITLE MEETING

Saturday 8 March 2025 - Broadford Town Hall

This notice is to advise that Taungurung Land and Waters Council (Aboriginal Corporation) (**TLaWC**) and First Nations Legal & Research Services (**FNLRS**) will be organising an important Taungurung meeting to be held on **8 March 2025**.

The Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to provide information about the process of making a native title determination application (**native title claim**) to the Federal Court under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) and to provide an opportunity for Taungurung People to discuss whether they wish to make a native title claim. This is not a decision-making meeting – it is an opportunity for Taungurung People to ask questions and provide feedback.

Who is invited to the meeting

All Taungurung People are invited to attend this important meeting.

Please update your contact details with FNLRS to be notified of all future native title meetings. If you would like further information about this meeting or are not able to attend this meeting in person and would like to meet at a different time, please contact FNLRS.

Meeting time and location

Date:	Saturday, 8 March 2025
Time:	10am – 3pm
Location:	Broadford Town Hall 20 Murchison Street, Broadford, Victoria
FNLRS Contact Person:	Toby-Lee Kirby (Senior Community Liaison Officer)
Phone number:	0434 632 875
Email address:	Tobylee.Kirby@fnlrs.com.au

Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available for this meeting. Travel assistance will be provided by FNLRS in accordance with the FNLRS Travel Assistance Policy: <https://www.fnlrs.com.au/policies>
Please contact Toby-Lee Kirby on the contact details above to confirm whether you will be attending the meeting, and to request any travel assistance by **28 February 2025**.

YEA local Murray Spencer said that his first memory of crossdressing would have been when he was aged just four or five years, trying on his sister’s tutu.

He attended the interview dressed as Murray rather than Holly. He said, “That was a long time ago. I’m 61 so I’ve hidden [for a long time]. I’ve only come out in the last 18 months, so it’s been a long time hidden and now I just don’t give a damn. I just do it. All through life, I’ve crossdressed but never publicly... Never like I do now. I do it more fully now. I try and do the make-up, the wig and everything. I just enjoy it. Years ago, I found that when I was stressed I did it more. It’s a stress relief. It enables me, and we’re all different, to shake off all that macho sh*t and just be who I want to be.”

“All through life, I don’t think I’ve ever told anyone until I came up here to Yea in 2001.” There were whispers on the wind however, and now that he’s come out, some people have told him that they already knew.

Asked how people have reacted, Murray said, “So far, it’s been very positive. It’s predominantly women, but there are some guys, who have said ‘Good on you. I admire you for doing it. A couple have said they respect me more now because I’ve actually come out and done it. But I heard second-hand that some people have said they have less respect for me now... but I haven’t had anything in my face. Nothing said to me, which has been really good at and now, as I said, I don’t give a damn and I’ll just go shopping. Now I come down the street here and I’m just in a skirt and a top and I don’t have any makeup or anything.”

When crossdressing, Murray’s name is Holly Daze. Holly has been shopping in Seymour and Melbourne, and holidayed in Mildura and Longreach. “That felt fantastic,” Murray said. “To be able to do that and everywhere I went, it’s mostly women, but they’re all very, you know, good on you.”

He said that they’re also “curious to know a lot more about me because of it.”

Murray said, “I don’t really have any plans to have a sex change. I still live as Murray, but I still dress everyday pretty much, except for today. I was working. I was tiling.”

Murray is a cabinetmaker by trade and is still employed by Ambulance Victoria. He was a paramedic in Alexandra for the last eight years, full time there, but has worked for Ambulance Victoria for 18 years. He said, “I’m on long service leave now and I’m not going back.”

He said, “I was a bit hesitant, reluctant to come out while I was still at work. Even though they can’t do anything about it nowadays, I was still a bit reluctant to.”

Asked about his preference regarding pronouns, Murray said, “If I’m wearing a dress, I prefer to be called Holly and ‘she’, I guess. But if I’m me now, Murray’s just, ‘hey mate’, whatever, ‘he’, ‘him.’”

He added, “Whatever. Ohh, I don’t worry about that sort of thing. There are some people

when I’m dressed up, will call me mate or Murray. It’s fine. I’m not going to get upset about it. And others call me Holly the whole time. So whatever.”

When asked what surprised him most about coming out as a crossdresser, Murray said, “Just how accommodating they’ve been, and gone good on you, well done.”

He said that some good friends, who already knew, “Said, about time he came out and did it and be true to yourself. And I think to myself now, we’re not here for a long time. This isn’t a dress rehearsal. This is real so get out there and do it. Really. I’ve loved it. It’s been fantastic.”

He said, “Now I’m just dressing differently more often and I go out there. I just enjoy doing it. It’s weird. I still love cars. I like model trains, and I’ve got guns, I’ve got a gun licence, I go shooting and stuff. We’re all different.”

Asked whether there were any precedents in Yea for people crossdressing, Murray said, “Not that I’m aware of. There are gay couples living in the town of course, and another crossdresser elsewhere in the shire.”

He added, “It’s funny... As just a bloke, it’s just Murray in the background. No one really noticed. When I’m Holly, all of a sudden, I feel like I’m a rock star, because people want to know you, they want to come and talk to you. You’re more in the front of things instead of blending into the background. I don’t know if it’s me changing or if it’s just others seeing that I’m different. I’m a bloke in a dress. And they just want to know more about it. It feels good.”

He was also asked whether he felt happier inside himself. He responded, “There’s combination of things that have happened, but I’m still the happiest I’ve ever been in my life, the last 18 months or so since I’ve come out. It’s a combination of things, financially, finishing work, etcetera, and plus that as well.”

One of Murray’s friends, an openly gay man in Yea, has given Murray a lot of support. “He helped me come out and be confident and do it all because he’s always been there,” Murray said.

“My friends have been fabulous. they’ve embraced it. I haven’t lost a single friend. They’re very supportive and often ask, is Holly coming instead of Murray? They’ve been terrific.”

When asked whether there was anything else that he would like people to know, Murray said, “Be true to yourself. It’s we’re not here for a long time, we’re only here once. It’s not a dress rehearsal, so just do it. I’m feeling a lot better within myself from doing it anyway. If I frock up and I feel comfortable with how look, I go out.

“I’d like to thank everyone for being so accommodating with it. Thank you to everyone,” Murray said.



Murray Spencer. -AR



Contention over duck hunting announcement

THERE is some contention over the announcement of the 2025 Victorian duck hunting season, with Wildlife Victoria positioning themselves in opposition to the Victorian Government.

A media release from the state government announced the plans for this year's duck hunting season.

"The Victorian Government is ensuring the duck hunting season in Victoria is sustainable, safe and backed by science.

"Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos recently announced the settings for the 2025 duck hunting season, determined by the science-based Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) model and the *Wounding Reduction Action Plan*.

"This year is the first season the Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) model will be used to guide the daily bag limit in Victoria, with the modelling tailored to Victoria's unique conditions, habitats and species.

"Duck hunting is a legitimate activity that matters to thousands of Victorians and we're making sure it can continue sustainably and responsibly, backed by science," Mr Dimopoulos said.

"Our wounding reduction action plan will improve animal welfare and is a significant step to make sure recreational hunting can continue sustainably in Victoria," he finished.

"From this season, all new hunters seeking a license are required to do mandatory online knowledge training and testing, including Aboriginal cultural awareness training, as part of the *Waterfowl Wounding Reduction Action Plan*. All hunters renewing their licence from 2026 will also be required to complete this training.

"The 2025 duck season will open on Wednesday, March 19 and close on Monday, June 9. The start time is 8am for the first five days of the season, after which hunting can start 30 minutes before sunrise.

"The 2025 daily bag limit is nine ducks, and seven duck game species can be hunted. The blue-winged shoveler cannot be hunted this season, and the use of lead shot for quail hunting is also banned.

"We're also giving hunters certainty about future seasons with the dates for the next three years set out in the *Wildlife (Game) Regulations*.

"The state government has invested \$11.6 million to ensure the proper compliance and

enforcement measures are in place so duck hunting remains safe and sustainable into the future.

"Further details about the 2025 season, including any wetland closures, will be regularly updated on the Game Management Authority (GMA) website."

CEO of Wildlife Victoria, Lisa Palma, responded with her own statement expressing her disappointment in the state government for allowing duck hunting to continue.

"We are incredibly disappointed in the announcement of the 2025 Victorian duck hunting season by the Victorian government. Wildlife Victoria adamantly opposes any activity that causes pain and suffering to native animals and advocates for the abolishment of duck hunting in Victoria," Ms Palma said.

"This has gone on for far too long. The ignoring of the recommendations of the 2023 inquiry is completely reckless and has ignored the overwhelming majority of Victorians who want to see this practice banned.

"We continue to work tirelessly to end this archaic practice that threatens the existence of our already fragile waterbird population. There is still a risk that H5N1 may hit Australian shores and that can have long term and unknown impact on native wildlife populations," Ms Palma concluded.



The opening of duck season this year comes with a new model for determining bag limits. -Nikolay Tchaouchev



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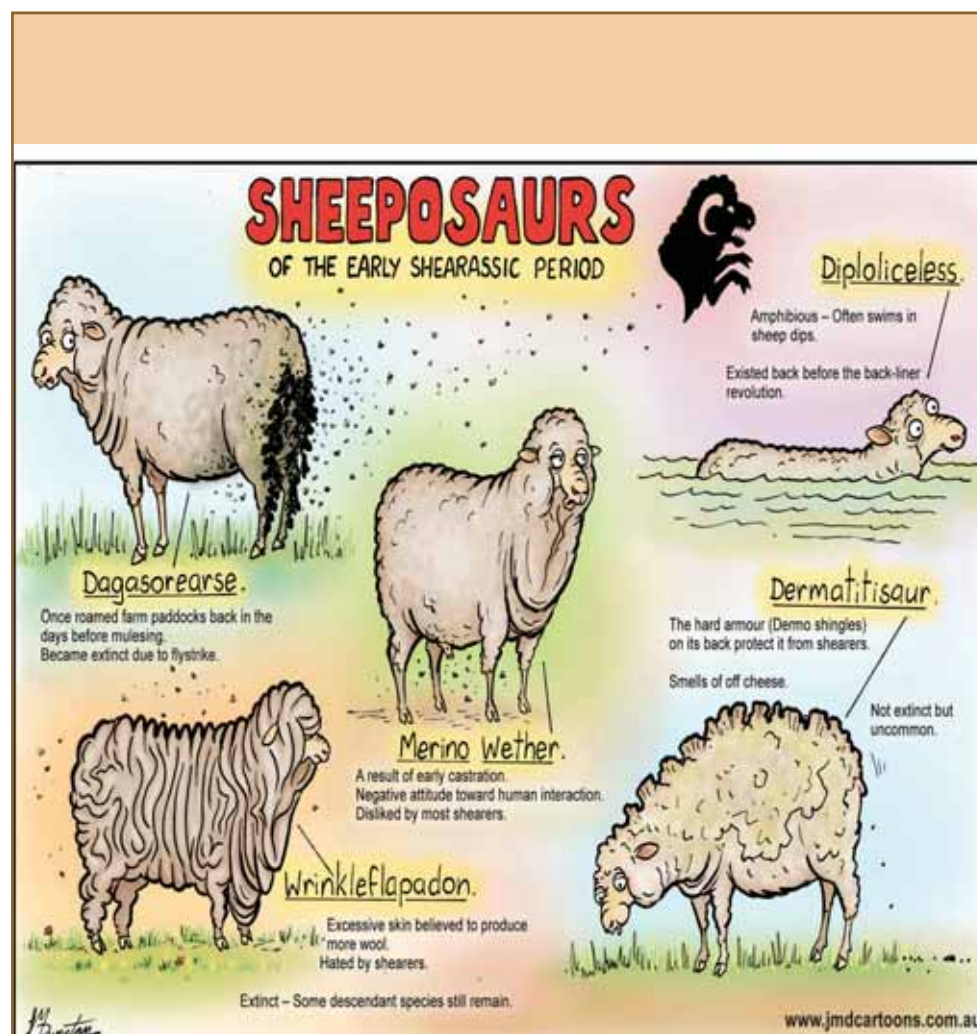




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T&C: Professional photographers are ineligible to enter. Staff or associated family members of Alexandra Newspapers are ineligible to enter. Photos must be taken within the Murrindindi Shire

Celebrating 113 years of combined service at Alexandra District Health

ON Tuesday, February 11 Alexandra District Health (ADH) hosted a high tea to celebrate 113 years of combined services of staff members Dianne Goschnick, Dee Murphy, and Nola Evans.

The presentations included a speech from ADH'S Chief Executive Officer Jane Poxon, and hampers given to Dianne, Dee, and Nola. Dianne read some poetry about her fellow retired team members, and had some kind words from Nurse Unit Manager Heather Shaw.

Dee Murphy

DEE Murphy has been at Alexandra District Health (ADH) since 2001. She said, "I had many different jobs before I became a ward clerk. Some jobs in Australia included the ANZ Bank, Franklin Mint, Elsternwick Magistrates Court and the Australian Tax Office.

"In London I worked for British Gas, as a nanny, a housekeeper, a carer, a cook, sold yacht ropes at the South Hampton Boat Show, worked as a volunteer on a kibbutz in Israel and worked in fish factories in Iceland for four and a half years.

"I think these experiences, along with extensive travel in Africa, Asia and Europe, helped to develop my desire to help people. Travelling in lots of third world countries reaffirmed to me just how lucky we are in Australia to have the necessities in life. Living in remote villages in Iceland also helped me choose to avoid city living again.

"I enjoyed the community feel. I was able to fulfill my wish by working as a ward clerk at the Avenue Hospital in Windsor for many years. I worked on orthopaedic and plastic surgery floors which included surgeries such as hips, face lifts, and gender reassignment. This made for some interesting work days," Dee said.

After more extensive travel overseas, Dee ended up living in Eildon and worked as a cook at Darlingford Nursing Home and then at Alexandra District Health, where she has been since 2001.

"I then approached our former CEO Heather Byrne regarding my desire to be a ward clerk again. This was a really good fit for me. I enjoyed being around the buzz of the nurse's station and the interactions with the patients.

"I remember my first week at ADH. One of the nurses, Margaret Arbuthnot, was showing photos of her calves around the tea table. I thought, 'this is weird, in Melbourne they show photos of their children, here they show photos of their cows.'

Working in a country hospital, Dee said it has a different feeling to the Melbourne ones she worked in.

"We all got to know each other's children over the years. So many patients wanted to transfer back to ADH from Melbourne because it felt like home. Allowing the palliative care patients' pets in was always a lovely thing. I guess a country hospital is far more personal. The patients feel safe, valued and prioritised. They are often frequent flyers. We get to know them well," Dee said.



Dee Murphy with her hamper from ADH. -MP

Dee will miss a lot leaving the medical profession, which includes mainly helping the patients and staff. Dee said, "It's important to be kind when patients are feeling unwell and vulnerable. Having a laugh with them or just listening at the appropriate time is really appreciated. Saying good morning countless times is also something I will miss."

Dee's retirement plans are well underway, with travel being on the agenda.

"Just taking a breath and not being ruled by the alarm clock after so many years. Catching up with friends, and being in the garden has also been enjoyable, also commencing some community work. I have to remind myself that I'm not under pressure anymore. I can take time to smell the roses," she said.

Dianne Goschnick

FROM humble beginnings to an extremely rewarding career in nursing spanning over five decades, Dianne Goschnick celebrated a milestone not known by many.

Dianne Goschnick started in 1969/1970 as a nurse in training after she successfully completed preliminary training at the Melbourne Nursing School in South Yarra. She then returned to Alexandra District Hospital to work.

She remembered some of the more senior staff back in those early days, bringing fond and loving memories. Some of the people included Alice Paul, Betty Carpenter, Norma Price, Pam Gillespie, Peggy Gilmore, Nancy Wilson, Joan Edgar and others.

Dianne says she is grateful for their encouragement, guidance and expertise helping her gain confidence when starting out as a young 18 year old.

Nursing back then was learning and gaining skills while in the workplace, doing exams regularly, then doing final exams and graduating at the different levels signed up for.

It was in the 1980s that nursing transitioned to higher education and university level studying for a career in nursing. Nowadays, with tertiary studies combined with workplace training, nurses can graduate with a diploma or a Bachelor of Nursing. Many then go on to further studies and upskilling in the many different areas nursing has to offer.

Dianne has enjoyed all aspects of her nursing career but stated she had a passion for palliative care, aged and dementia care, and especially enjoyed her involvement in workplace health and safety where she was very proactive as an occupational health and safety representative for over 20 years.

Many things have changed over the years such as working conditions, uniforms, wages, rostering and technology, as well as the name change for the hospital, becoming Alexandra District Health.

Dianne was elated when asked to represent Alexandra District Hospital as their candidate as the 3SR charity nurse. This was a special appeal to raise money for funds for much needed equipment and called on monetary donations. She formed a committee to help with the fundraising which raised more than \$3000 back in 1972.

Dianne says she was grateful to have had the good fortune to work in the new hospital, the state-of-the-art new building which finally came to realisation after many years of planning and building.

"The new hospital opening in November 2011 was a very exciting time with a smooth transition from the old former hospital (the red brick building on top of the hill). With wards with their own bathrooms giving patients more comfort and privacy, better facilities, upgraded communication system, new technology and equipment, it made the workplace an even better place for all concerned.

Dianne recalled that back in the 1970s when working night shift, the night shift staff had to refuel the ancient kitchen stove which was fueled with briquettes, twice overnight to ensure it kept going in readiness for cooking breakfast when the cook came in at 6am.

She also recalls how difficult it was without mobile phones. There was a time when a doctor on duty, then living out of town, 20 minutes away, was needed just after leaving the hospital. A system was put in place with

a nurse living in Acheron. When the doctor was needed, staff would call the off duty nurse who then rushed out to place a red flag on her letterbox which stood like a beacon. The doctor then knew to return immediately.

"This type of communication served the hospital well as it saved time, especially if the doctor on-call was not getting the message to return until he arrived home to receive a call on his landline. This system worked well, especially when that doctor was on call on weekends, saving valuable time and probably saving many lives," Dianne said.

During her time working at Alexandra Dianne also managed to work at the old Eildon Hospital and Darlingford Nursing Home, working at both the Alexandra Hospital and nursing home at the same time for over 20 years. She would sometimes work 12 shifts a fortnight. Of course she reached a point of burnout and was needing to spend more time with family and grandchildren, so she gave her second job away due to time and travel and just worked at Alexandra.

Dianne said she will be sad to leave Alexandra District Health and the very qualified and experienced staff, but retirement for her will give more time to finish off those unfinished projects, collate those previously written short stories and poems with plans to print, along with keeping her garden in order, and perhaps further travels with her husband Kerri when he eventually retires. Most importantly she wants to spend more time with her family and loved ones.

Dianne said "Retirement for me – to do what I want, when I want, if I want/if I can."



Dianne reading her personal poems about her time as a nurse and her workmates. -MP

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 18

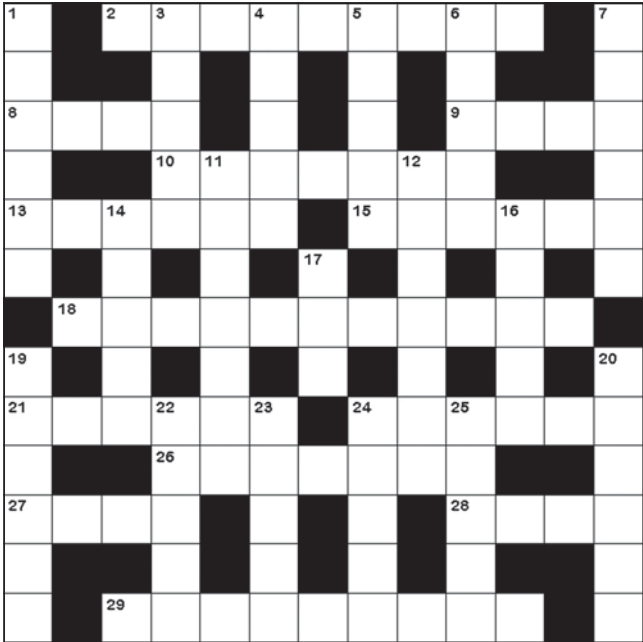
Crossword

ACROSS

2. Having a pleasant taste like that of sugar.
8. A group of three performers.
9. Very dark black.
10. Relating to the sense of touch.
13. The least number of items.
15. A toy to entertain a baby.
18. The father of your father or mother.
21. Stood waiting in a line.
24. At the back of a ship.
26. A machine that prints documents.
27. As Soon As Possible.
28. Using speech rather than writing.
29. Marched in a demonstration.

DOWN

1. Give information or notice to.
3. Communicated by letter.
4. A formal pronouncement.
5. The lowest point.
6. A mixture of rain and snow.
7. Light teasing repartee.
11. Widely separated into parts or pieces.
12. Sugar that occurs only in milk.
14. Not as well as yesterday.
16. The topic on which a person speaks.
17. Not turned on.
19. Sudden violent winds.
20. A bracelet worn around the ankle.
22. The part of a shoe above the sole.
23. A human finger or toe.
24. A collection of maps in book form.
25. A treasure found hidden.



Word Search

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

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BASSETHOUND	GREYHOUND		
BEAGLE	LABRADOR		
DACHSHUND	POMERANIAN		
DOBERMAN	POODLE		
FOXTERRIER	ROTTWEILER		
GREATDANE	WHIPPET		

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Very Hard

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

Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
				5				
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
					24			
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
	7							
T' E E T O O								
26 7 14 18 5 3 5 12 7 24 24								
T E T O E								
2 8 7 5 7 24 6 5								
T O T								
25 1 8 7 20 24 10 17 26 15 1 7								
E E E								
1 8 3 5 6 5 5 18								

Math Square

	-		-		-2
-		x		+	
	+	8	÷		11
-		+		x	
	-	1	x		1
-2		49		11	

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.



Nola Evans with her hamper. -MP

Nola Evans

NOLA Evans has now wound up her nursing career after an amazing 56 years in the field.

Nola started her training in 1968 as a mothercraft nurse at St Gabriel's Babies Home in Balwyn. It was an Anglican home for babies and children waiting for adoption and foster care. There is a complete change now as mothers are now able keep their babies if they're unmarried, but there were other reasons children were adopted too.

Nola also worked as a mothercraft nurse at Fraces Perry House, Bairnsdale Hospital, creches and private jobs. Nola noted the change in this profession where babies go in with their mothers now and go home earlier, whereas they previously spent time in the nursery and only went out to be fed.

Nola trained as an enrolled nurse at East Gippsland Hospital in Bairnsdale when she lived in Paynesville in the 1970s and has worked as an Endorsed Nurse ever since.

When reflecting on how nursing has changed over the years Nola said, "When I did mothercraft nursing we had to live on the premises, and we did a number of split shifts. It was quite a different life compared to today.

"Nursing involved a lot of lifting until the introduction of lifting machines and hoists in hospitals and nursing homes. Patients generally spent more time in bed after an operation. Nowadays, patients are encouraged to be more active with physiotherapy, etcetera and go home with services in place."

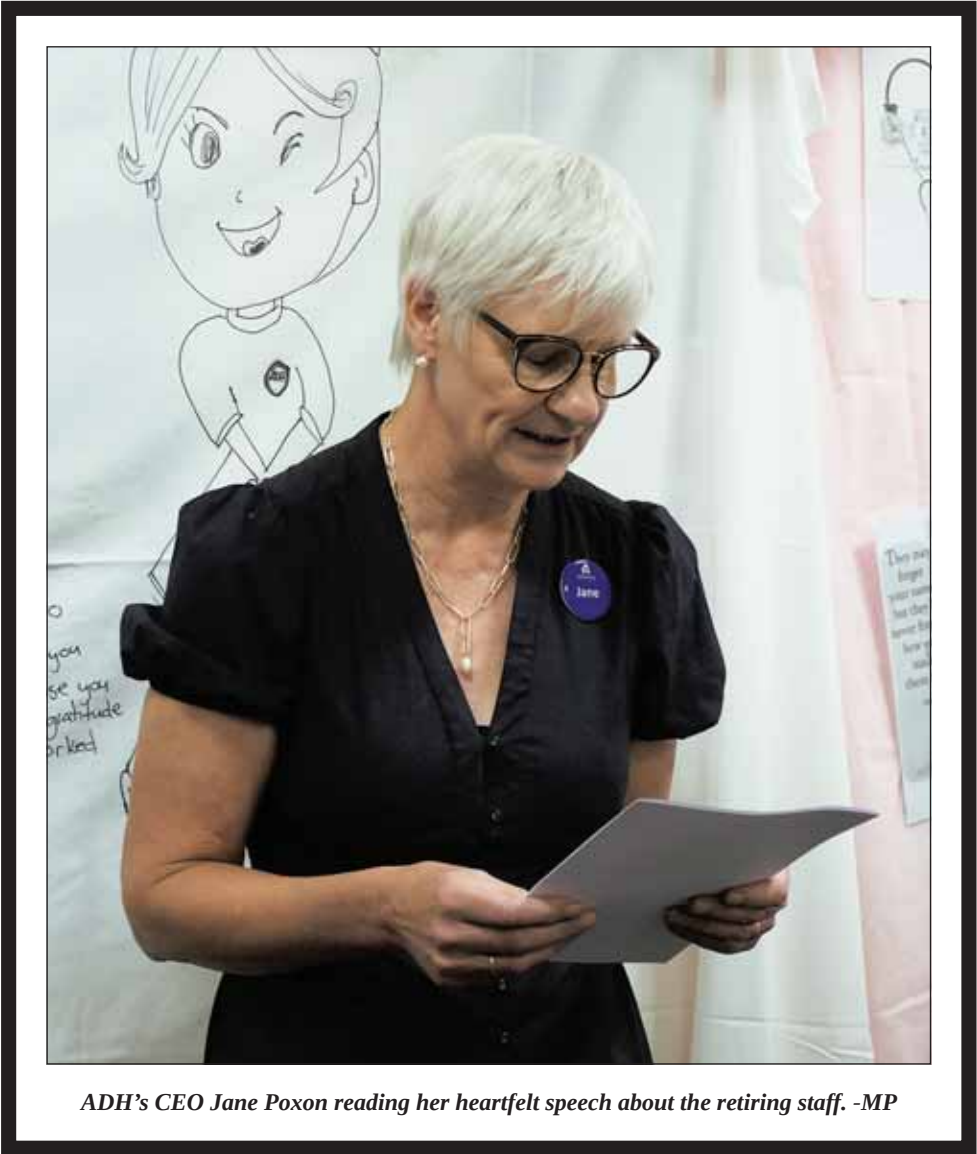
Another change Nola pointed out was, "back in the day the uniforms were quite archaic."

Nola has been at Alexandra District Health since February 1992. "A cleaner named June introduced herself. I said, 'I'm only doing a casual shift so I don't know if I will be here again.' June replied with a knowing laugh, 'Oh they all say that.' I certainly didn't think I would be there for 33 years."

When asking Nola the benefits of working in a small country town, she said, "I am a born and bred country person so it's a natural flow on I guess. People are generally more laid back and appreciative, and it's a smaller workplace.

"I always enjoyed nursing, met some good friends over the years, meeting and caring for people is quite a privilege in many ways. Of course, every occupation has its own downsides at times too."

Nola had many plans for her newly retired life. She has interests involving community, family and friends. Nola said "Believe me I am not short of things to do. I hope I keep healthy enough to do it."



ADH's CEO Jane Poxon reading her heartfelt speech about the retiring staff. -MP

The show must go on

by Karine Haslam, Eildon Events

OH my goodness, where do we start?

The big day was here at last, with months of preparation including the creation of a fantastic back drop and props by our very talented Kati Lansell, a local artist, to the design of the perfect sound system for the evening also the configuration and installation of the new stage lighting. Dry run set ups had taken place the week before to have everything perfect for the night many, many hours of work by dedicated volunteers.

The weather prediction for the day was a 25 per cent of rain, less than 1mm. The decision was made to go ahead as the odds appeared to be in our favour. A few bands of showers came through followed by blue sky and sunshine. The mood was optimistic, that was it and the rain was over.

Late in the afternoon, another shower was experienced but this time with strong winds. We decided to take down our artist marquee and only leave up the sound/lighting marquee with reinforced weights. Some of our props were also damaged which had to be removed. Once again this was followed by blue sky and sunshine. We thought, surely it is over now. Unfortunately, that was not the case and again a nasty weather band came through this time with rain, wind and a significant drop in temperature.

A very late decision was made at approximately 4.45pm to change location. The priority was for the safety and comfort of our artists and guests.

The contingency plan was to use the community centre, but at the time of day, this was not an option as it took days to set up the stage, lighting and sound system. As an alternative the event was moved to Pixies @ the Billabong, where there was already a stage and lighting available.

A call was made to UFGM to inform the public of the change as was a post on Facebook. Volunteers were at the gates to update the patrons and redirect them to Pixies once they had the opportunity to get their food and drink from the local vendors that were on site. A call for help went out to our volunteers and within minutes a very dedicated crew of helpers were there, even the artists were helping.

We were able to pull this off. Furniture removed from the main hall at Pixies to enable all the chairs to be set up and the event chairs all installed.

Obviously, this meant there were changes to the seating allocations and we thank all our guests for their understanding and adaption.

The show started approximately 15 minutes late. But what a show it was, from feedback received, many thought the performances were the best we have presented.

The Eildon Events committee would like to thank all the volunteers for their incredible support and efforts with the mammoth task to set up and relocate at very short notice under difficult conditions. We would also like to thank the food/beverage vendors for their support and understanding at the last minute decision. Pixie, for the last minute change of venue, the artists for their flexibility and encouragement to make the move and last but not least our guests for their adaptability, understanding and support of Opera @ Eildon Pondage.

It was all worth it in the end, the show was fantastic. From the props, to the sound, the lighting, and of course the performers.

A huge thank you to all involved.



Eildon Opera performers, Daniel Felton, Kathryn Radcliffe, Michael Petrucci, and Pheobe Briggs. Photo by Joanne Szwedyc



Karine Haslam thanked the team of volunteers and everyone's understanding, support and participation after the event location was changed due to weather events. -MP



Daniel Felton and Kathryn Radcliffe singing Pa-pa-ge-na, Pa pa ge no. -MP



Many opera fans supporting the food trucks at the pondage that were set up for the evening. -MP



Performer Kathryn Radcliffe. -MP



Steve Paix emceed the evening. -MP



Daniel Felton and Pheobe Briggs on stage together. -MP



Baritone Performer Daniel Felton. -Photo by Joanne Szwedyc.

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Avian influenza detected at second Euroa poultry farm

AGRICULTURE Victoria's tracing activities have confirmed the presence of H7N8 avian influenza (bird flu) at one new property in Euroa in northern Victoria.

Victoria's Acting Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Cameron Bell said this result was not unexpected and Agriculture Victoria undertakes testing to understand where disease is present in the region.

"There are known connections between the properties, which was how we identified high-priority testing sites early, even before disease was suspected," Dr Bell said.

Dr Bell thanked the impacted properties in the region for their cooperation. Agriculture Victoria is on the ground and supporting the impacted businesses.

"After we confirmed the first property last week, we implemented restricted and control areas immediately to mitigate risks of disease spread."

The control area spans east of the Goulburn Valley Highway for Strathbogie Shire, and includes townships Euroa, Violet Town, Longwood, Ruffy, Avenel and Strathbogie.

"If you are in the control or restricted areas, you cannot move birds, products (including eggs and manure) or equipment into, out of, or within the area without a permit.

"This includes selling or giving away eggs from your poultry, these must not leave your property."

With the confirmation of a second property, a housing requirement has been introduced for producers with more than 50 poultry in the restricted area. This is a smaller area than the control area and includes Euroa and extends approximately five kilometres from the affected properties in all directions.

"With Victoria's experience responding to H7 bird flu outbreaks, we know the greatest risk is to larger producers, who have more movement on and off their property.

"This H7 strain is different from the H5N1 bird flu strain spreading in other areas of the world and impacting wildlife. Victoria's poultry sector has experience with H7 bird flu from 2020 and 2024, and we remain grateful that Australia is free from H5 bird flu.

"This does not mean backyard poultry owners should be complacent. Whether you have a few chooks in your backyard or have a commercial poultry farm, here are some things you can do to improve your biosecurity practices and reduce the risk of your birds becoming infected: Restrict contact between pet birds, poultry and wild birds. Prevent access by wild birds to food and water sources for your birds. Keep equipment and yards or aviaries clean. Limit visitors to your birds. Bird owners should wash their hands before and after handling birds. Monitor your birds' health and report sudden death in your poultry.

"A strong biosecurity system relies on everyone playing their part. Immediate notification from properties when they notice their poultry are unwell is crucial to us getting on top of this outbreak," Dr Bell said.

Consumers should not be concerned about eggs and poultry products from the supermarkets, as they do not pose a risk and are safe to consume.

Community members can report suspect disease, sudden poultry death and ask questions by calling the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

For more information, including checking whether you're in the restricted area or control area, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/avianinfluenza

Hume region ambulance response times

PARAMEDICS and first responders across Victoria are continuing to respond to around 100,000 critical 'Code One' emergencies every three months.

Ambulance Victoria (AV) Executive Director Regional Operations Danielle North said demand on ambulance crews remains steadily high, with the last quarter of 2024 AV's fourth busiest on record.

"We have seen a 26.6 per cent increase in Code One cases since the COVID-19 pandemic began more than five years ago," Ms North said.

"October to December is commonly one of our busiest times, and last year was no exception as our crews were called to 99,799 Code One emergencies. This was also the third quarter in a row close to or above 100,000 cases.

"In the face of this sustained pressure, our highly skilled paramedics and first responders do a remarkable job providing best care to their communities, each and every day."

From October to December 2024, AV crews across Victoria responded to 64.9 per cent of Code One cases within the state wide target of 15 minutes. The state wide average response time to Code One emergencies was 15 minutes and 42 seconds.

In the Hume Region crews responded to 5837 Code One cases between October and December 2024. In the Hume Region, the biggest improvements were in the Mansfield and Wangaratta LGAs.

In the Mansfield LGA, paramedics attended 50.5 per cent of Code One patients within 15 minutes, up from 43.7 per cent a year earlier. Compared to a year earlier, Code One response times decreased by 37 seconds in the Wangaratta LGA. In the Wodonga

LGA, paramedics attended 77.7 per cent of Code One patients within 15 minutes, which was the third best result in the state.

In the Murrindindi Shire paramedics attended 31.1 per cent of Code One patients within 15 minutes, with the average response time being 25.45 minutes. There was a total of 241 first responses in this recent quarter.

Hume Regional Director Narelle Capp said, "We know there is more work to do. AV continues to work with hospitals to promptly transfer patients and ensure all Victorians receive the right care at the right time.

"More new paramedics have also hit the road to help meet demand. Since last November, we have welcomed 84 new graduate paramedics to our ranks and a further 15 new recruits will start soon including qualified paramedics from New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and New Zealand.

"Our people are our greatest assets. It is through them that we continue to lead the way in patient care including one of the best cardiac arrest survival rates in the world.

"We are also giving them the latest technology they need to do their job and get back on the road quicker.

"In 2025, we are rolling out new digital radios across regional Victoria and iPads to all our crews with a modern platform making it easier and faster to complete electronic patient care records."

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

"From October to December, 43,864 people across Victoria who did

not need an emergency ambulance were instead connected to more appropriate care by paramedics and nurses in Secondary Triage.

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

"And our Medium Acuity Transport Service (MATS) crews dedicated for less-urgent calls attended 8100 cases during the last quarter, freeing up more ambulances to respond to the most critically ill patients."

Ms Capp encouraged Victorians to do their part to ensure AV's highly skilled paramedics were available for patients most in need.

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

"This includes the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED), Urgent Care Clinics and other options such as your GP or pharmacist, or Nurse-On-Call on 1300 606 024."

Music festival grants are nearly open

THE state government is providing the music industry with new grants to support local live music festivals.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks announced a new round of the Victorian Government's Live Music Festivals Fund, which will provide grants to established Victorian festival organisers to expand much-loved music events and bring more festivals to music lovers statewide.

Delivered by Music Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government, Live Music Festivals Fund applications will open on Tuesday, February 25 and operators of festivals with more than 1000 attendees are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$50,000.

The first round of the Live Music Festivals Fund in 2024 awarded grants to 22 festivals, with almost two-thirds from regional Victoria.

At a time when the industry is facing a challenging operating environment, the grants will help organisers stage their events, creating local jobs for people on and off the stage, and attract music lovers to towns, suburbs and cities across Victoria.

Applications for the Live Music Festivals Fund open on Tuesday, February 25 at 10am and close on Tuesday, March 25 at 2pm. An online information session will be held on Tuesday, March 4 to help people with their applications.

To find out more about the Live Music Festivals Fund visit musicvictoria.com.au

For information on other Victorian Government support for the music industry, including Music Works and 10,000 Gigs: The Victorian Gig Fund, visit creative.vic.gov.au

Shire comments on Melba Highway closure

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is keen to reassure that the shire remains open for business, and local residents and visitors can still easily reach our towns, businesses and services while essential landslip repairs take place on the Melba Highway.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is repairing two landslips along the Melba Highway at Dixons Creek, between Healesville-Kinglake Road and north of Hunts Lane. Works begin on February 17 and are expected to finish by the end of March 2025, weather permitting.

While a section of the Melba Highway is temporarily closed, well-marked detours ensure uninterrupted access to all Murrindindi Shire businesses, services, and attractions.

Light vehicles, rigid trucks and buses can use the Healesville-Kinglake Road and Healesville-Yarra Glen Road detour (allow an extra 30 minutes). Heavy vehicles must follow alternative routes via the National Network Maps (maps.nhvr.gov.au/). Access remains open from Yarra Glen to businesses and properties south of Healesville-Kinglake Road.

For those traveling to or through Murrindindi Shire, there are multiple scenic alternative routes: These include Maroondah Highway via Healesville and the Black Spur, Hume Highway and Broadford/Flowerdale Exit, Maroondah Highway to Toolangi and Kinglake National Park, and Whittlesea-Yea Road via Kinglake West.

Murrindindi Shire Council is working closely with businesses and the community to ensure clear communication and minimise disruptions.

"We encourage everyone to plan ahead, allow for additional travel time, and continue supporting local businesses," Mayor Damien Gallagher said.

"Despite the temporary detours, our towns remain connected, and we look forward to welcoming visitors to explore everything that Murrindindi has to offer."

For the latest updates on the road closure and detour routes, visit: transport.vic.gov.au/News-and-resources/Projects/Melba-Highway-landslip-repairs

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BEREAVEMENT THANKS

BELLMAN, Ron. Thank you to our families, all staff at St Vincents Private Hospital and Epworth Private Rehab who assisted Ronnie, the local paramedics and police. Grant, Julie, Dean and Andy, Linda, Pat and Barry, Brian and Lisa, Mick, Bev, Nik for the use of her apartment. Brooke, The Thornton Pub, Sue, the people who have visited, text, messaged on facebook, called, dropped in flowers, sent cards and all who attended Ronnie's farewell. And in particular Lana who has been our rock throughout this whole journey and beyond, you are amazing. Laurinda and Jake Bellman.

DEATH NOTICES

WILLIAMS, Graham Edward

26/05/1943 - 10/02/2025

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MEETINGS

ALEXANDRA P AND A LADIES COMMITTEE AGM to be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 2pm. Admin Building, Alexandra Show Grounds, Caravan Park. All welcome.

ALEXANDRA AND EILDON GEM AND LAPIDARY CLUB. Thornton Gem and Rock Exhibition. Sunday, February 23, 2025 from 8am onwards. Ph 0492 876 595.

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National rental growth slows according to CoreLogic

THE pace of national rental growth continued to slow in 2024, with rents up 4.8 per cent over the year after surging 8.1 per cent in 2023, according to CoreLogic’s latest Quarterly Rental Review.

The result marked the smallest annual rental increase since the 12 months to March 2021 when rents rose 3.6 per cent.

This suggests that while still high relative to the pre-covid decade average (two per cent), the national rental market has well and truly passed the peak of the recent rental boom. This notion was further supported by the 0.4 per cent rise in rents in the December quarter, which was the smallest quarter four change in rents since 2018 (0.2 per cent).

CoreLogic economist, Kaytlin Ezzy, pointed to affordability as a key driver.

“Rental affordability continues to be a significant drag on rental growth.”

She said that since the onset of COVID, rents have increased by 36.1 per cent nationally, equivalent to a rise of \$171 per week, or \$8884 per year at the median level.

As of September 2024, assuming a median household income, renters were spending approximately 33 per cent of annual pre-tax income to service the median rent, the highest portion since CoreLogic started tracking rental affordability in 2006.

“The net result has potentially seen some prospective renters delay their decision to leave the family home, while others have looked to form larger share households as a way of distributing the additional rental burden, unwinding the previous shrinking in the average household size that was apparent through the early stages of COVID,” she said.

She pointed out that the move to larger households was also apparent across property types, with houses recording both stronger quarterly (0.6 per cent) and annual rent rises (5 per cent) compared to the unit sector (-0.2 per cent and 4.2 per cent, respectively).

Beyond affordability, Ms Ezzy pointed to changes in supply and demand as important factors contributing to easing rental growth.

“On the demand side, the easing in net overseas migration was also a factor contributing to softer rental demand, with net overseas migration levels expected to normalise around pre-Covid decade averages by the 2026-27 financial year.

“While on the supply side, the annual value of new investor lending increased by 26.3 per cent over the year to September 2024, increase in investor participation above levels, suggesting a potential net increase in rental stock.

“Together these factors have supported an easing in vacancy rates over the year, from a low of 1.4 per cent in November 2023 to 1.9 per cent at the end of 2024.”

A look across Australia

LOOKING across the country, the combined regions continued to deliver stronger rental growth compared to the capitals, up 1.2 per cent over the quarter and 6.2 per cent over the year. By comparison, the combined capitals recorded a milder 0.1 per cent quarterly increase and a 4.3 per cent rise over the 12 months to December.

Across the capitals, the majority of cities recorded a slowdown in rental growth over the year, led by Sydney and Melbourne, where the rolling annual trend eased from 9.9 per cent and 11 per cent over 2023 to just 3 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively in 2024.

The only capital cities to see increased momentum in rental growth were Hobart (6 per cent), and Canberra (2.6 per cent), off the back of falling rent values in 2023.

Despite the subtle quarterly decline in rents, Sydney maintained its position as the country’s most expensive rental capital, with a median weekly rental value of \$773. Stronger rent rises saw Perth take out the second spot at \$695 per week, overtaking Canberra at \$667 per week.

Hobart maintained its title as the country’s most affordable rental capital and was the only capital to record a median weekly rental value under the \$600 mark, at \$554 per week. Melbourne came in second with the typical dwelling renting for \$604 per week, followed by Adelaide at \$611 per week.

NBN equipment installation underway in Marysville

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is happy to share that a major boost is underway in Marysville as part of the Connecting Victoria Program.

Ventia, engaged by NBN Co, is leading the installation of nbn equipment to provide eligible local homes and businesses with faster, more reliable internet access through the advanced Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) technology.

A significant milestone has been reached with the installation of 21 kilometres of new optic fibre throughout the region.

The project has already seen 234 successful installations completed, with an additional 159 installations scheduled to follow.

The FTTP technology will allow eligible Marysville residents and businesses to access high-speed broadband services, facilitating everything from remote work to streaming, e-commerce, and education.

Ventia’s telecommunications team has been hard at work ensuring that the installation process runs smoothly.

The installation of both external and internal nbn equipment to homes and businesses in eligible areas is progressing efficiently, with the aim of completing the full rollout by the end of February 2025.

Make sure your child’s Asthma Action Plan is ready for school

AS the new school year is here Asthma Australia is urging parents to update their child’s *Asthma Action Plan*. Just like packing a school hat, this simple step helps ensure your child’s asthma is well-managed and helps teachers, coaches, and caregivers know exactly what to do if a flare-up occurs. The simple steps include booking an asthma review, updating your child’s Asthma Action Plan, checking and updating medicines, and connecting with the school.

Kate Miranda, CEO of Asthma Australia said, “Sending your child back to school without an updated written Asthma Action Plan is just like sending them to play in the sun without a hat on. They are exposed. It’s one of those small but important steps to keep them protected, whether it’s from the sun’s rays or unexpected asthma flare-ups.

“The asthma burden on kids is significant. Forty two per cent of Australians aged 0 to 14 years with asthma had to take time off school in 2014/15 due to their asthma. About 26,500 children under 15 visited an ED for asthma in 2021/22. Making sure that our kids start the school year on the front foot is clearly important.

“So, as you tick off the back to school checklist: hats, uniforms, lunchboxes; add an asthma refresh to the mix and book an appointment with your child’s doctor to update their Asthma Action Plan today,” Kate said.

An Asthma Action Plan is a personalised guide created by your doctor to manage your child’s asthma. It’s like an instruction manual for asthma that outlines how to handle flare-ups, monitor symptoms, and provide appropriate treatment. Regardless of how mild your child’s asthma may seem, everyone with asthma should have one.

“The goal of the Asthma Action Plan is to prevent and control asthma symptoms. Even if you know what to do when your child’s asthma flares up, it’s invaluable to have clear, written instructions from your doctor, especially in an emergency situation,” Kate explained.

The plan covers four key areas: How to look after your child’s asthma daily, instructions for everyday asthma management; what to do if asthma starts to flare up: steps to take if symptoms worsen; what to do if asthma becomes severe: emergency actions if the flare-up becomes serious and what to do in an asthma emergency: Instructions for life-threatening asthma attacks.

Asthma Australia offers both colour and black-and-white versions of the Asthma Action Plan, suitable for both children and adults, and accepted by schools and childcare facilities across Australia.

Visit Asthma Australia’s website to download an *Asthma Action Plan* template and access additional resources for managing asthma.

Growing the regional kinder workforce

The Victorian Government is strengthening the early childhood education workforce to support more kinder places for children and better support for working families.

Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn launched the latest round of the government’s Certificate III Upskill Support Program and announced an expanded partnership with Deakin University, to help train more early childhood teachers particularly in regional and rural areas.

Applications are now open for the Certificate III Upskill Support Program, which will provide 400 places for educators looking to upskill to a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care.

This includes \$7000 in financial support, that can be used for living expenses while studying and working. This year, half of the places are reserved for students in rural and regional Victoria, meaning students can study and work close to home. In 2024, 416 students accessed the upskilling payment.

Deakin University is also offering online courses for early childhood education students who want to study while working. As part of Victoria’s Early Childhood Tertiary Partnerships program, Deakin is one of several institutions providing tailored study options.

Scholarships of \$25,000 for bachelor’s students and \$12,000 for graduate diploma students are available through the Early Childhood Scholarships Program.

More than 200 places are available over two years, with priority access for applicants from selected rural and regional areas, including Ararat, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Southern Grampians, and Ballarat.

These initiatives will strengthen the early education workforce, meaning more kinder places for children and better support for working families.

Applications for the Certificate III Upskill Support Program close on June 13, for more information visit, vic.gov.au/financial-support-study-and-work-early-childhood#certificate-iii-upskill-support-program

Deakin is currently taking applications for its employment-based pathways, for more information visit, vic.gov.au/financial-support-study-and-work-early-childhood

Tips for packing school lunchboxes

WITH children now back at school, school lunchboxes are once again at the forefront of parents’ minds.

How to balance making the lunchbox nutritional and healthy while keeping children interested is a challenge.

The Victorian Government Department of Health recommends picking one option from each of the five core food groups to create a school lunchbox.

These five groups include: fruit; vegetables, legumes and beans; milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives; lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, legumes and beans; and grains.

They also stress making sure that children have access to water while at school.

To keep children interested, the Cancer Council have some further suggestions when choosing how to pack and what to pack in a school lunchbox.

It is suggested that parents add colour to the lunchbox, in order to grab children’s attention. This could include orange carrot sticks or bright green celery sticks.

Allowing your child to help choose what should go in their lunchbox can go a long way to keeping them excited about the foods they eat. It will also help alleviate stress, because as they get older, they can progress to packing their own lunch.

Leftovers are your friend and should be made use of. Cooking a little bit extra the night before school can make lunchboxes easier to pack.

The Cancer Council also have a bunch of simple recipes on their website that can help in preparing school lunchboxes. This can be found at healthymadetasty.com.au

It also pays to be mindful of pre-packaged snacks, which have the potential to include added sugars, artificial flavours and colours and preservatives. This can affect the nutritional and energy requirements of children.

Organisation is key, which means that if you can pack the school lunchbox the night before, you can save yourself time during the busy school morning. You can also prepare healthy snacks in bulk, if you are sure they won’t expire before they have the chance to be eaten.

A little bit of effort with the school lunchbox can go a long way to keeping children healthy and energetic.

Alexandra Secondary College's Swimming Carnival



Despite competition between houses, students still collaborated on their costumes. -BD



Competitors looked fluid in the water, moving with long strokes. -BD



Bold strokes in the morning heat last Friday. -BD



A very chicken-themed costume for the Alexandra Secondary College swimming event. See next week's edition for a full report on the event. -BD



Students dressed as Bananas in Pyjamas to represent their house at the event. -BD



Swimmers glided through the water. -BD



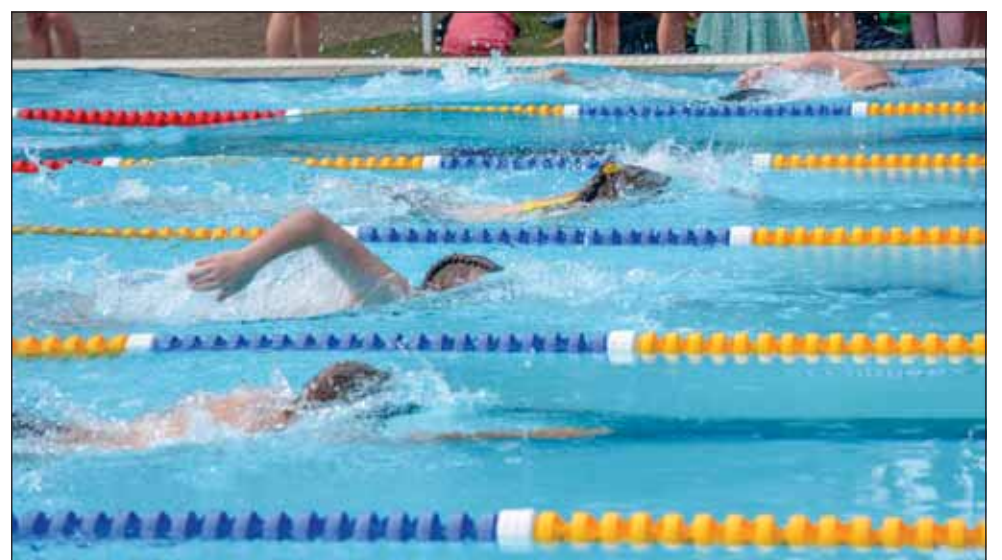
Students walked the UT Creek Pathway on their way to the Alexandra Swimming Pool. -BD



Feeling satisfied with a race well swum, recuperating on the guide rope. -BD



Alexandra Secondary College students leaving the school grounds for their walk to the Alexandra Swimming Pool. -BD



Students in competition in the water. -BD

SPORT

Wild weather disrupts A Grade match

by Michael Mawson

ALEXANDRA Cricket Club's B-Grade cricket side has achieved consecutive wins on the back of another outstanding performance by Levi Ronalds and some fine batting from Ben Geldart. The A-Grade side found a new way to be out of luck this season. At least this time they could claim three premierships points and a week's rest.

The sudden and intense rain squall on Friday evening would go on to cause the A-Grade match between Alexandra and Yea to be abandoned. Yea's groundsmen were caught unprepared by the sudden weather change and the uncovered pitch at Yea's ground was rendered unplayable.

Pyalong was unaffected by Friday's storm and their ground's artificial turf would stand up well to Saturday morning's intermittent light showers. The Redbacks made the long trip to Pyalong to play a match that would be important in shaping the order of the top four teams. Regular captain, Michael Mawson was absent and there were further line up changes with Tim Polson, Ben Geldart, Dusty Fitzpatrick, and Luke Wal all coming into the side.

Junior season set to launch February 23

THE Alexandra Football Netball Club are holding their season launch on Sunday, February 23, from 10am to noon.

Taking place at Rebel Park, 53 William Street, Alexandra, the event will include skill sessions run by the senior footballers.

There will be the opportunity to meet the junior football coaches, registration information will be available, club merchandise and food and drinks also available.

Children are encouraged by the club to wear appropriate training gear and footwear and take along a mouthguard and water bottle.

Any queries can be directed to alexandrafnc@outereastfn.com.au

Course in good condition at Eildon Golf Club

by Puttomatic

WITH the wind brisk and breaks of sunshine scattered between the odd sprinkles of rain and in much cooler conditions, Eildon Golf Club had 20 players compete for honours in a two-person ambrose event.

It was great to see so many players getting into the spirit of the day with plenty of banter, jokes and no shortage of sledging from the first tee shot. The course is in great condition for this time of the year and greens are running great

The course is still dry however the recent rain has softened it up just a bit.

The eventual winners were Phil Dally and Wayne Kupke with a nett 65, followed by Denis McDonald and Dwayne Cornelius nett 66.4. Ball run went to Kerry Power and Grant Walters with nett 69 and Michael Lynch and John Monteath nett 70.5.

Nearest the pin winners for the week, the 11th went to Denis McDonald, 12th to Ken Collier and the 14th Leigh Munro. There was no winner on the fifth for the week. Entry draw winners were Leith Munro and Nick Munro, swindle winner John Monteath and Denis McDonald tried his hand at the elusive Joker.

This Saturday is a stroke round and our February monthly medal as well as our medal of medallists for 2024. The club thanks their sponsors for sponsoring monthly medal and the medal of medallists, as well as their ongoing support for the club.

Pyalong's captain, Andrew Hiscock won the toss and elected to bat. Alexandra made an early breakthrough with Levi Ronalds catching out Peter Reynolds off the bowling of Ben Geldart. The other opener, Martin Leahy (14) and Pyalong's vice-captain Damien Zoch (32) took the score to 53 until Leahy was bowled by Levi Ronalds. The Pyalong innings then took a nosedive as Ronalds had a day out, amassing a total of four wickets and two catches.

Luke Wal and Thayananth Sathasivam chimed in with a wicket each. Hiscock batted

well for the home team by eking out 25 runs, but he ran out of batting partners as Pyalong's innings lurched to a small but defendable total of 110 runs. Will Ellis cleaned up the tail with three leg beofre wickets in a row.

The Redbacks began the run chase with Levi Ronalds and Tim Polson opening the innings. The early part of the innings ran similarly to Pyalong's batting when Polson was caught for five and then Ronalds departed for 24. This took the Alexandra score to 2 / 50. Ben Geldart and Jaidon Snyman then combined for a 48-run partnership until

Geldart was caught off the bowling of Mark Zoch for 42. This was the highest individual score of the day.

Robert "Yobbo" Andrews and Snyman remained not out at the end of the innings for 12 and 23 respectively when The Redbacks passed the Pyalong total. It took only 26 overs to achieve the seven-wicket win.

This win strengthens the B-Grade team's hold on second position in the SDCA ladder. Next week, The Redbacks play Yea in a home game at Rebel Park.

Second round of term one pennant for Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition Affogato versus Espresso

ERIC versus Tyler: Both opponents played well, but Tyler had the upper hand on the night to take the win. 74 to 39.

Lee versus James G: An interesting match. For the first three games it was point for point with only two points the difference. Lee had found her opponent's measure, taking the lead in the final game to win the match. 59 to 46.

Daniel W (fill in) versus Justin: Filling in down a level, Daniel may have expected an easy game, but Justin had other ideas and dominated early on. Daniel scrapped with Justin to take back the lead in the next three games with the final winning shot a

desperate between the legs backwards hit that saw Daniel win. 61 to 59.

Andrew (fill in) versus John: Andrew took some time to get into the swing of things. John started strong with accurate and difficult shots. Andrew scrambled to win the third game and draw the fourth. The damage was already done with John claiming victory. 63 to 51.

Cappuccino versus Mocha

JORDAN (fill in) versus Ethan: Ethan's serving has been improving markedly and his serve put Jordan under a lot of pressure. This gave Ethan the decisive advantage to cruise to an easy win. 79 to 45.

Sally versus Chris: Great hitting by both players. Sally has improved a lot and is hitting some great shots. But Chris's power

was just a bit too much for Sally and earned him the win. 59 to 56.

Michael M versus Matt (fill in): A very high energy game. Matt made a comeback in the third game, but Michael managed to hold on. 59 to 50.

Jack versus Michael H: Jack was in complete control and had the ball on a string. Michael had no answer and watched his opponent cruising to a convincing victory. 64 to 46.

Thursday competition Chai versus Earl Grey

RANDY versus Chris: Drawing the first game, it looked to be a close battle. Conversely, as the match progressed Chris amounted more and more points to take a commanding win making over double his opponent's score. 81 to 39.

Sam versus Travis: The match started with each opponent taking a game. Going into the last two games, it was anyone's' match. Sam pulled out some skilful shots to win the third and fourth game to claim the victory. 65 to 50.

Michael H (fill in) versus Daniel W: Opening with a tied game both opponents were in good form. Daniel put in a good effort, but Michael kept ahead in the last three games to win the match. 62 to 51.

Darjeeling versus Rooibos

BETH versus James S: James pulled out all the tricks to keep his lead in every game. Beth tried but James took home solid win. 71 to 50.

Rob versus Blake: Coming up a level, Blake is finding his feet and putting in the effort. Rob was too strong for the up-and-comer and dominated the match. 83 to 43.

Phil versus Stuart (fill in): Every game was a new adventure with points varying in each. Stuart fought tooth and nail in the final game to try and bring it back, but Phil kept his victory with one point to spare. 58 to 57.



Daniel reaches to return Justin's shot. -S

Maiden century sets up Merton win

MERTON and Delatite cricket clubs played in the local derby at the beautiful Lords Oval on a chilly Saturday afternoon in Mansfield.

Merton won the toss and batted looking to build a big total. The opening pair of Daryl King and Luke Berriman really set the game up for their side putting on 99 runs before King retired on 36. The visitors really pushed the scoring rate along lead by Berriman making a fine century 114 off 87 balls which included 14 fours and one six punishing any loose deliveries.

James Benton with 18 also batted well in the latter overs. Merton finished on 4/200 after a few delays in play due to some passing showers of rain. Josh Cook 1/17, Copper Martin 1/38 and Richie Jacob Phillips 1/50, Delatite's wicket takers.

The home side struggled early with the loss of the top order with Merton captain Jia Lerch-Mackinnon taking 3/9 off eight overs which really had Delatite well behind on run rate, Richie Jacob Phillips 45 in the middle order showed some fighting resistance however when he was well caught on the boundary by Noah Whittall off the bowling of Benton, Delatite struggled to be all out in the last over for 98.

Josh Cook batted well for 10 while Nick Taylor 13 the others to make double figures. Henry Berriman 2/27 and James Benton 2/12 Merton's other wicket takers.

It was good to see both sides fielding relatively young sides with a few experienced players in the mix to lead the way. Merton host City Colts in a must win game to stay in the top six while Delatite host the inform Rovers at Lords.



One of the Merton cricketers geared for the match. -S

SPORT



Midweek winning rink of David Nicklos, Denice Chisholm, Ian Franklin and Pauline Gilmore. -S



Division four best winning rink of Saxon Langmead, Bob Mayfield, David Nicklos, and Scott Ferrier. -S

Alexandra Bowls Club division four heading to finals

by Marie Evans

ALEXANDRA Bowls Club division four finished the season top of the ladder after defeating Euroa at Euroa 77 to 74. It was a close game throughout, with very few shots separating the sides.

The two will meet again next week in the finals which are to be played at Nagambie. Division six played Euroa at home and had a winning rink. Last Tuesday division four played at home and had one winning rink against ladder leaders Shepparton Park.

Club Champion Lauren Gilchrist played in the Women's Champion of Champions event at Shepparton Park last Sunday and had a great game against Kate Bush the Shepparton Park champion. The final result was Lauren 17 to Kate 25. The club congratulates Lauren who played a highly experienced bowler who

has won many previous Goulburn Valley state events.

Division four had two winning rinks. The best was David Nicklos (Skip), Bob Mayfield, Scott Ferrier and Saxon Langmead. They trailed three to six on end five but led seven to six by end eight. Euroa were 11 to seven up at the break but Alexandra won five shots on end 13 to lead 12 to 11.

Euroa won the next three ends and led 14 to 12. Alexandra was back in front by end 19, 19 to 14. Euroa took two shots on end 20 to be 16 to 19. They held sufficient shots on the last end which could have given them a draw on this game and Euroa the overall win.

Alexandra needed to win one shot to stop that occurring. With all the other rinks completed and players watching, David Nicklos with the last bowl of the game drew

inside the Euroa bowls for a one-shot win. They won 20 to 16. A great effort under pressure and one recognised by the cheering of all Alexandra bowlers.

Tim Langmead (Skip), Ian Harper, Ken Argent and Christine Mayfield also won. They began their game with a six-shot win and were nine to four up by end six. Euroa won the next four ends to tie up the game nine all. Alexandra trailed 11 to 13 on end 13 but won the next four ends to lead 16 to 13. It was two ends each over the last four but Alexandra won 20 to 17.

Greg Gilmore (Skip), Larry Scott, Marie Evans and Lauren Gilchrist won 12 ends but dropping seven shots on end four meant it was a game of catch up. It was 13 to 16 by end 14, but Euroa won the next two ends to lead 18 to 13. End 18 had Euroa 22 to 16. Alexandra won the last three ends but lost 20 to 22.

Doug Cooper (Skip), Ben Gilchrist, Andy Tobias and Denice Chisholm were seven all on end 10 but were seven to 12 down by end 13. They led 13 to 12 by end 16. Euroa won five shots on end 18 and had Alexandra 18 to 13. Despite Alexandra winning two of the last three ends they lost 17 to 19.

The season finished with Alexandra winning 10 out of 13 games, one washout and three losses and 174 points. Euroa was second with 159 points, Dookie 158 and Shepparton Park 134. Dookie could have had second spot but lost two rinks against Tatura Hilltop in their last game.

Division six played Euroa at home and lost the overall. There was one winning rink. Trevor Stewart (Skip), Mark Stone, Steve Kirby and Rob Roach. They won 12 ends out of 21 and led the game at end 10 nine to seven. It was 12 all on end 14 but Alexandra won five out of the last seven ends to win 20 to 16. A great way to finish the season.

Clive Murphy (Skip), Malcolm Gill, Craig Parkinson and Warren Nelson trailed four to 15 on end 10 but won the next two ends to reduce the margin, 10 to 15. It was 16 to 20 on end 17 but Euroa won the last four ends to win 16 to 24.

John Blamey (Skip), Ray Mathieson, Anne Gunton and Ian Franklin lost their game to stronger opposition.

With division six finished the season with seven of their players playing their first pennant season, there are some good signs for next year.

Midweek decided to mix up their sides as it was the last game of the season against ladder leaders Shepparton Park and some of those changes paid off. Denice Chisholm (Skip), Pauline Gilmore, David Nicklos and Ian Franklin won their game 17 to 16. They won 13 ends and led for the entire game. The club says well done Denice for her first time as Skip.

Mark Stone (Skip), Doug Cooper, Malcolm Gill and Marty Manning were six all on end 10 but despite winning five out of the last 11 ends they lost 11 to 19.

Chris Mayfield (Skip), Levi Ronalds, John Blamey and Bob Mayfield enjoyed the day. Midweek has had a difficult season with the previous year's players having other commitments and many players starting pennant and their bowling career for the first time. With a year's experience midweek is looking to improve on this season.



Division six winning rink of Mark Stone, Rob Roach, Trevor Stewart, and Steve Kirby. -S

More warm weather for Marysville golfers

by Lesley Rundle

IT was another warm day for the nine-holers at Marysville Golf Club, who last Thursday played stableford on the front nine.

The winner was Peter Doery (14) with 18 points on a countback from Gail Leigh. Peter was the closest to the pin on the fourth hole and Glen Rattay chipped in for a birdie on the ninth hole and was thus the winner of the nearest the pin on that hole.

Last Thursday Gail Leigh birdied the long 377 metre par five eighth hole and her excellent form continued in the Saturday competition. When playing stroke for the monthly medal and the first round of the Barton Shield Gail parred eight of the front nine holes and birdied the second hole.

This gave Gail (13) a nett 68 and she convincingly won the ladies competition. Margaret Blair (33) was the runner up with nett 79.

The men's monthly medal was won by Pat Orwin (33) with an excellent score of nett 64 and Pat was thrilled to get his first eagle, two under par on the seventh hole. Congratulations to Gail and Pat on some excellent golf.

The men's runner up was Ross Ansell (12) with nett 71 and Ross, Ray Jones, Brian Worcester and Alex Bullard won the nearest the pins with Alex winning the Golden Shot.

Adam Littlejohn won the putting competition with 36 putts.

Next Saturday all golfers will play a stableford round.

Preparations are well underway for the final round of the FoodWorks Murrindindi Masters at Marysville on March 1. Members are asked to please sign the list in the clubrooms if they wish to play in this event.

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Murrindindi Little Athletes shine at regional championships

MURRINDINDI'S young athletes did their community proud over the weekend, putting in a stellar performance at the Regional Track and Field Championships in Albury.

Despite cool and windy conditions, they warmed up quickly, both literally and figuratively, to bring home an impressive nine medals from the event.

Competing against top athletes from the Northern Country Region, the Murrindindi team made the most of the fantastic facilities and showcased incredible talent, determination, and sportsmanship.

The club offers a huge congratulations to the medal winners: Charlotte Boulton, Levi Campbell, Chase Hilder, Clay Hilder, Zoe Collier, and Declan Baker. An outstanding achievement.

Beyond the medals, almost every Murrindindi athlete achieved a personal best, which is the true essence of Little Athletics; striving for improvement and having fun along the way.

Notable performances and personal bests came from: Maverick Clacy in the 800 metres; Zoe Aldrick in the 100 metres, 400 metres, 80 metre hurdles, and long jump; Ryder in the 1500 metres and 800 metres; Zoe Collier in the 1500 metres, 200 metres and long jump; Ethan Boulton in discus and javelin; Declan Baker in 200 metre hurdles; Levi Campbell in 100 metres, 200 metres, 400 metres, long jump and triple jump; Declan Armstrong in 100 metres, 200 metres, high jump and long jump; Chase Hilder in 1500 metres, 200 metre hurdles and 90 metre hurdles; Clay Hilder in the 1500 metre race walk.

The club says a big thank you to the parents who volunteered their time as call room marshals, track umpires, and long jump pit officials. These events couldn't run without your support.

The club also extends special appreciation to dedicated Team Manager, Louise Cummins, for her leadership and organisation across the weekend. With so many personal bests, medals, and fantastic memories made, it was a weekend to remember for Murrindindi Little Athletes.

Murrindindi Little Athletes overall placings:

Female 14

Discus: Charlotte Boulton 16.65m (third); Javelin: Charlotte Boulton 16.80m (fourth);

Female 12

200m: Zoe Collier 34.78 (12th); 1500m: Zoe Collier 6:39.85 (seventh); Javelin: Zoe Collier 16.67m (second); Long Jump: Zoe Collier 3.14m (15th); Shot Put: Zoe Collier 7.18m (seventh);



Zoe Collier receiving her silver medal for javelin. -S



Declan Baker striding home to take bronze in the 200m hurdles. -S



Some of the athletes before racing last Sunday. Pictured are front Jake Aldrich, Zoe Aldrich, and Zoe Collier. Back are Declan Armstrong, Levi Campbell, Charlotte Boulton, Ethan Boulton, and Clay Hilder. -S

Female 11

100m: Zoe Aldrick 16.71 (sixth); 400m: Zoe Aldrick 84.64 (seventh); 80m Hurdles: Zoe Aldrick 17.53 (seventh); Long Jump: Zoe Aldrick 3.25m (ninth);

Male 14

100m: Levi Campbell 13.23 (fifth); Declan Armstrong 14.74 (12th); 200m: Levi Campbell 26.80 (third); Declan Armstrong 31.78 (eighth); 400m: Levi Campbell 58.36 (first); 1500m: Chase Hilder 5:47.59 (fourth); 90m Hurdles: Chase Hilder 17.84 (second); 200m Hurdles: Chase Hilder 37.49

(third); 1500m Walk: Chase Hilder 11:15.10 (first); High Jump: Declan Armstrong 1.40m (fifth); Javelin: Chase Hilder 17.54m (fourth); Long Jump: Levi Campbell 5.01m (fifth); Declan Armstrong 4.18m (11th); Triple Jump: Levi Campbell 10.49m (sixth);

Male 13

200m: Declan Baker 35.15 (ninth); 80m Hurdles: Declan Baker 15.75 (third); 200m Hurdles: Declan Baker 34.58 (fourth);

Male 12

1500m Walk: Clay Hilder 10:19.38 (second); Discus: Clay Hilder 13.25m (ninth);

Ethan Boulton 12.53m (11th); Javelin: Ethan Boulton 13.63m (ninth);

Male 11

800m: Ryder Clacy 2:52.48 (fifth); 1500m: Ryder Clacy 5:53.28 (fifth);

Male nine

100m: Jake Aldrick 18.52 (10th); 400m: Jake Aldrick 87.45 (eighth); 800m: Maverick Clacy 3:13.52 (fourth); 60m Hurdles: Jake Aldrick 13.76 (ninth).



Happy Hilder brothers Chase and Clay with their medals. -S



Declan Armstrong leaping to a personal best result in the long jump. -S