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Alexandra Relief and Leisure Centre Redevelopment to become a priority

MURRINDINDI Shire Council officially endorsed the *Alexandra Community Relief and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Plan* at its scheduled meeting on Wednesday, February 25, confirming the project as a priority for advocacy ahead of the 2026 Victorian Election.

The current Alexandra Community Leisure Centre has served the community since 1978 and plays an important role as both a recreation facility and a designated Emergency Relief Centre. However, the ageing building no longer meets contemporary accessibility, safety and emergency management standards.

Planning for the proposed redevelopment has been undertaken in partnership with Alexandra Secondary College, a key project partner that also co-funded the planning phase and would be a major user of the facility

through school sport, health and wellbeing programs.

Portfolio Councillor for Economic Development, Local Jobs and Skills, Cr Sandice McAulay, said council's endorsement strengthens advocacy efforts to secure investment in the facility.

"This endorsement sends a clear message that the Alexandra community and surrounding district need a modern, safe and accessible facility that can support everyday health and wellbeing and operate effectively as an Emergency Relief Centre when emergencies occur," Cr McAulay said.

"Murrindindi Shire has experienced significant fires and floods in recent years, including the devastating January 2026 bushfires. We need infrastructure that is built for today's challenges and ready for the future."

The redevelopment plan outlines a facility that would support both

community use and emergency response, and could include a full-sized indoor court that can double as an emergency shelter, flexible program rooms for community activities and emergency use, a commercial kitchen to support relief centre operations, expanded gym and wellness areas, accessible and inclusive change rooms and amenities, improved parking, lighting and site access, and sustainable design features to improve long-term resilience.

The estimated cost of the redevelopment is \$21.84 million.

Cr McAulay said the project would also deliver broader benefits for local jobs and the regional economy.

"A project of this scale supports employment during construction and strengthens our local economy through events, recreation and increased community activity," she said.

"It brings together education, health, emergency response and economic outcomes in one place,

making it a strong candidate for government investment."

With council's endorsement in place, advocacy will now focus on securing state and commonwealth funding to progress the project beyond the planning stage.

The full *Alexandra Community Relief and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Plan* is available on council's engagement platform theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/draftACLC

Arrests following series of burglaries

POLICE have advised that the Alexandra Crime Investigation Unit and Yarra Ranges Crime Investigation Unit detectives have charged five men following a series of burglaries, thefts and criminal damage incidents in the Eastern region of Victoria from November 15, 2025 to January 12.

It is alleged thousands of dollars of equipment and property were damaged and stolen.

The burglaries took place in Narbethong, Buxton, Marysville, Taggerty, Devils River, Rubicon, Kinglake and Maintongoon, Chirnside Park, Healesville, Woori Yallock, and Launching Place.

One theft of particular note was of a \$20,000 generator at Mount Gordon, near Marysville, which ensures that local radio can transmit emergency information during power outages.

This theft occurred just days before the fire in Longwood.

Alexandra and Yarra Ranges Crime Investigation Unit

detectives arrested five men between December 3, 2025 and February 10 after executing several search warrants.

A 24 year old Yellingbo man was charged with 35 offences including burglary, theft, handling stolen goods and trafficking a commercial quantity methylamphetamine. He was bailed to appear at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on March 26.

A 35 year old Seville man and a 32 year old man from Launching Place were both charged with burglary, theft and drug offences in January and were remanded into custody.

A 37 year old Narbethong man was charged with handling stolen goods, possessing drug of dependence and theft. He was bailed to appear at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court on April 30.

A 29 year old Healesville man was charged with possessing methylamphetamine, possessing a prohibited weapon, criminal

damage and theft. He was bailed to appear at the Mansfield Magistrates' Court on April 1.

Various items of property, estimated at approximately \$250,000, have been recovered and returned to their rightful owners. The generator is one of the recovered items.

Detective Sergeant Flynn Loughlin said, "This is a good example of the results of information sharing among detectives at two local Crime Investigation Units, being Alexandra and Yarra Ranges.

"The investigation remains ongoing with multiple items of property that remain outstanding."

Anyone with information or anyone who may have witnessed any suspicious activity in the area, with dashcam/CCTV footage is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report online at crimestoppersvic.com.au



Alexandra Community Relief and Leisure Centre Redevelopment Plan. -S

ALEXANDRA RACE CLUB

SATURDAY
14 MARCH 2026



Cathedral Golf Club
2026 ALEXANDRA CUP

• Music • Food • Horse Racing • The TAB Tote Van • Big Screen • Bookies Services

\$25 General Admission, \$20 Concession, Children under 15 free, SPECIAL bring your friends offer: 4 x General Admission for \$50

• BYO Alcohol NOT PERMITTED ~ Our bar is reasonably priced • BYO food, water and soft drinks

Buses
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BUS TIMETABLE

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

Route 1 Eildon Bus

11.15am Eildon Pondage Caravan Park
11.20am Eildon Town Bus Stop – Main St
11.25am Big 4 Holiday Park
11.30am Eildon Waters Holiday Park
11.35am Rubicon Hotel
11.45am Alexandra Race Club

Route 2 Yarck Bus

11.00am Taggerty 4 Seasons CP
11.10am Breakaway Twin Rivers CP (gate)
11.35am Molesworth Pub
11.45am Yarck Pub
Book buses online
country.racing.com/alexandra

BOOKINGS: country.racing.com/alexandra



Governor of Victoria visits fire-impacted communities across Murrindindi Shire

MURRINDINDI Shire Council was honoured to host Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner, Governor of Victoria, for a two-day visit across fire-impacted communities in Murrindindi Shire.

Over Thursday, February 26 and Friday, February 27, the Governor visited Highlands, Yarck and Fawcett, meeting with residents, volunteers, emergency services representatives and council leaders to hear firsthand about the impacts of the January 2026 fires and the ongoing recovery effort.

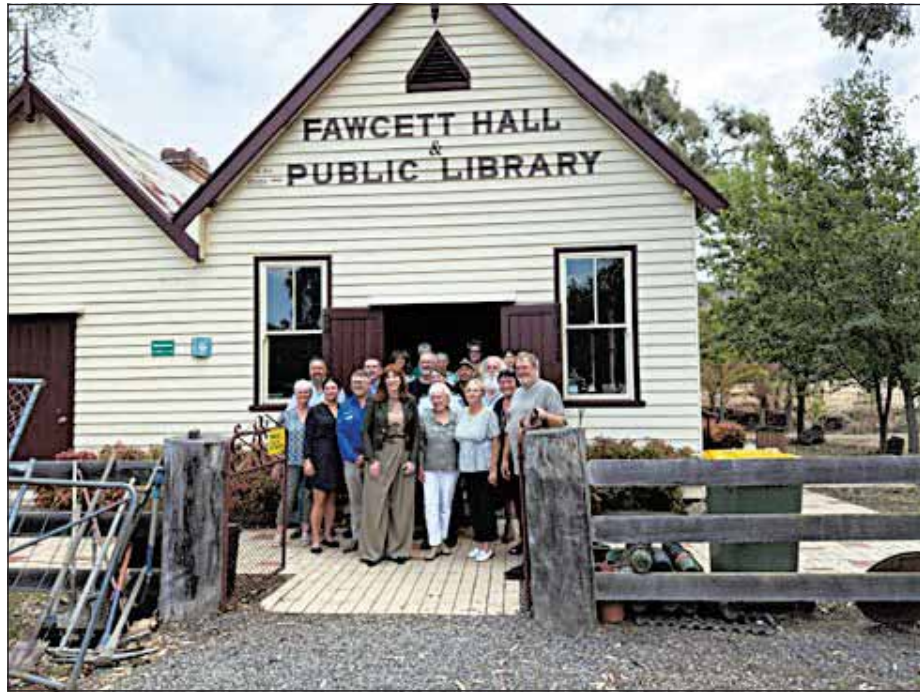
Murrindindi was the hardest hit community in Victoria in the January 2026 fires. Approximately 144,000 hectares burned in the Longwood fire, with more than 190 homes destroyed within Murrindindi Shire alone, alongside widespread disruption to daily life, livelihoods and wellbeing for many residents who remain deeply affected, on top of the lasting impacts of the 2009 bushfires and 2022 floods.

The consequences span people, economy and infrastructure. Approximately 450 kilometres of roads and dozens of bridges and culverts were impacted, major tourism assets were lost, and there has been significant agricultural and wildlife harm. For many in our community, recovery is about far more than rebuilding property, it is about restoring connection, security and a sense of place.

During her time in Murrindindi, the Governor visited Highlands Community Hall, Yarck Hall and Fawcett Hall, where she listened to residents share their lived experiences and the challenges of recovery, and met with volunteers leading community-led relief hubs. Conversations highlighted the strength of grassroots coordination, the care being shown to neighbours in times of need, and both the resilience of these small communities and the ongoing support still required.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said the opportunity for residents to speak directly with the Governor was highly valued.

“This visit was about our community, about listening to people who have experienced profound loss and



Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner, Governor of Victoria, Cr Paul Hildebrand, Cr Sue Carpenter, CEO Livia Bonazzi, with Fawcett community members and Murrindindi Shire Council staff. -S

disruption and recognising the extraordinary volunteers who have stepped forward to support others,” Cr Gallagher said.

“The scale, complexity and cumulative nature of these impacts exceed local capacity. Our community cannot recover alone. Strong, coordinated and sustained partnerships with the State and Federal Governments are essential to meet immediate recovery needs and to build long term protection against increasing climate-driven risks.”

During the visit, Mayor Cr Gallagher provided the Governor with council’s January 2026 Bushfire Advocacy Priorities, outlining key community needs, recovery pathways and policy reforms required to restore critical infrastructure, support local economies, improve emergency management and secure a resilient future for our shire.

The Governor was also accompanied by Emergency Management Victoria Commissioner Tim Wiebusch on Thursday and Deputy Commissioner Therese Fitzgerald on Friday. Council thanked Commissioner Wiebusch for

his direct support during the emergency response and confirmed that council’s Bushfire Advocacy Priorities were provided to the Commissioner and Emergency Recovery Victoria to help shape coordinated recovery planning and implementation.

Council extends its sincere thanks to Her Excellency for her compassion, respect and commitment to hearing directly from our communities. The visit also provided an opportunity to reflect on the strong collaboration between Murrindindi, neighbouring councils and key partners, highlighting a coordinated and collective approach to response and recovery.

Council further acknowledges the extraordinary efforts of local volunteers whose care, leadership and community spirit continue to play a vital role in strengthening communities as recovery progresses.

More information on council’s advocacy priorities is available at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Council/Advocacy-and-Partnerships/January-2026-Bushfire-Advocacy-Priorities

Alexandra Lions Club contributions to the Longwood fire recovery

THE Lions Tool Depot on Lamont Street was established by John Beale and the Alexandra Lions Club, with help from the Marysville and Kinglake Lions. After being evacuated, John and wife Mary returned to the fire area on the Saturday after the fires, convincing police at road blocks of their purpose with a Lion’s badge and recovery needs.

On the Sunday, John quickly surveyed the fire-damaged area and coordinated relief supplies like clothes and food from various organisations. As donations were plentiful, he next arranged tools needed for cleanup and rebuilding.

Contributions began with Marysville Lions Neil Guscott and Norm Fiske, followed by Kinglake Lion Ken Aitken, who provided more tools and a container delivered to Alexandra by Frank Mercurie and Craig Peachment. Norm and Neil also transported two truckloads of used posts from Healesville to Alexandra for BlazeAid, responding to John’s request.

Donations of tools, including shovels, rakes, drills, saws, drop saws, and leaf blowers, arrived from across the state. All electrical items were tested and tagged by a Kinglake electrician. Battery-powered tools with chargers and batteries were also added. The Tool Depot now has chainsaws, generators, and a wide range of other equipment. Most will be given to those affected, except for battery-operated tools, generators, and chainsaws. This diverse collection should serve as an excellent supply source.

Stock feed was urgently needed, and ongoing coordination with Need for Feed and hay runners made it possible to secure large supplies of hay. Graham Cotterell from Need for Feed organised 70 trucks that delivered hay to the Alexandra Hay Depot in Station Street. There, Lions members and volunteers provided meals for the truck drivers at lunchtime and again with a barbecue that evening.

Hay runners later joined in, enjoying a meal from Yea Rotarians before continuing to Highlands. Both groups’ efforts were greatly valued, as they gave farmers extra time before needing to agist or sell their livestock.

The Lions in Alexandra and Alexandra Rotary have provided substantial financial support through vouchers enabling residents to make purchases at local businesses. Additionally, they have distributed donated equipment such as new work gear, gloves, boots, goggles, hydration tubes, and sunscreen.

John extends his appreciation to all who contributed to the community’s recovery efforts following the major fire. The remarkable solidarity demonstrated by the community is expected to lead to a much-needed period of recuperation. Distribution of supplies to the hubs in the area has assisted outlying areas to be looked after and those hubs operated in a fantastic manner, serving community members with almost all their needs.



The new year seven cohort at Alexandra Secondary College. -S

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Fires inquiry submission deadline extended

A PARLIAMENTARY inquiry into the 2026 summer fires across Victoria has extended the deadline for submissions from the public to Sunday, April 19.

The Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee received feedback from communities and councils still dealing with the impacts of the blazes around the state.

“We’ve listened to members of the community who told us the deadline should be extended,” Committee Chair Ryan Batchelor said.

“Hopefully this extra time means those directly affected by the fires, and those with knowledge of this topic can better share their experiences and insights with us.”

The inquiry is looking at a number of matters related to the fires, including preparation and planning by government, emergency services and community; the causes and circumstances of the bushfires, such as climate change; resourcing of fire agencies, and support for volunteers; the emergency response to the fires; resilience of critical services and infrastructure; recovery efforts in affected communities; and the impact of the fires on the environment.

“We have an extensive Terms of Reference for our inquiry on our website, and I would encourage all submitters to take a look at them as they prepare their submission,” Mr Batchelor said.

The committee intends on holding public hearings once the submission phase ends and is due to provide a report to parliament with findings and recommendations by mid-to-late 2026.

The extension follows requests from fire-affected communities, and Murrindindi Shire Council, highlighting the ongoing recovery challenges faced by communities after the January 2026 bushfires.

Council advocated that the time frame was not reasonable given many residents were still dealing with the immediate issues of seeking relief, shelter and commencing their clean up. The extension will allow more time for

councils, communities and organisations to prepare meaningful contributions.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said the extension is an important outcome for communities still dealing with the immediate impacts of the fires.

“This is a positive step that recognises the reality our communities are facing. People are still recovering, rebuilding and supporting one another,” Cr Gallagher said.

“Extending the timeline gives Murrindindi residents, businesses and community groups a fair opportunity to share their experiences and help shape recommendations that improve how Victoria prepares for and responds to bushfires.”

Cr Gallagher said the January fires had a profound impact across Murrindindi, reinforcing the importance of ensuring regional voices are heard.

“Our communities experienced the worst of the fires this summer, and reportedly the worst bushfire on private property in Victoria’s recent history. Their insights and lived experience are critical to informing the inquiry.”

“Murrindindi Shire Council will continue working with residents, emergency services and government agencies to

ensure our community’s experience is clearly represented.”

People who have been impacted by the fires, have been involved in response or recovery, or have insights to contribute are encouraged to make a submission to the inquiry.

You can make a submission to the inquiry via the committee’s website, *parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-the-2026-summer-fires-across-victoria/submissions*

For local recovery information and support, visit *murrindindi.vic.gov.au/longwoodfire* or contact council on 5772 0333.

Bank representative meeting with locals

RENEE Leslie, branch manager at the National Australia Bank in Mansfield has been spending time in Alexandra lately, meeting with people at the library.

Alexandra is currently without a bank branch, and Renee is seeking to re-establish a NAB presence in the town, although this is unlikely to be a branch. Alexandra’s NAB branch was previously run out of Mansfield, but Renee has only been at the branch for about a year.

Renee noted the impact of the branch closures on the town, creating challenges for businesses, charities and individuals.

She said that while she had heard about the challenges Alexandra faced when she first started, her immediate focus was on getting the Mansfield branch open full time and to get a business banker. These have now been achieved, so the focus is turning back to Alexandra.

Her aim for the visits, last week and over three coming Thursdays, is to “Engage with the community and find out exactly where are the biggest pain points, and let’s find a way to fix it. Short term solutions, long term solutions as well. Having that community feedback allows me to be your voice as such in the higher levels of NAB and hoping we can create change. My big motto is squeaky wheel gets the oil. I’m very squeaky.”

She added, “It’s been so lovely chatting to customers, chatting not necessarily always NAB customers. Anyone that loves to have a chat and gives feedback and talk about the pain points.”

She has been hearing in particular about the lack of access to cash change and the challenges of storing cash, as well as how the push towards digital doesn’t suit everyone, whether due to skills, access to technology or access to the internet. Travelling to a bank takes valuable time, although Bank@ Post offers some services.

Peta, the new business manager at Mansfield will also be joining Renee next week.

Renee has also been speaking to local real estate agents to find out what buildings are available in Grant Street, as well as what’s happening in farming and residential.



Renee Leslie. -S

She added, “I was saying to another customer that I was chatting to that change is really hard. It’s risky as well, but it takes one little player to move and hopefully that can affect a change.”

She commented, “I’ve said to the girls in Mansfield, book up my calendar, book up appointments. While I’m here, we can do chats, feedback sessions, if you need any help, banking reviews, account reviews, while I’m here, utilise that time. The busier I am, the more time I get down here. And I guess that also kind of increases the chance of getting something. If I can show that there is demand for it, there’s more backing for me to say, let’s get this, to make a more permanent thing. My motto is that we’ve got mobile home lenders, we’ve got mobile business bankers. We need to have mobile retail bankers as well in order to help these remote communities that can’t get to where they need to go.”

Church Services

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

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

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

OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH
Loving God, Loving People,
Loving Life
118 Grant Street, Alexandra
0408 123 581
Meeting every Sunday @ 10am

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

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

Out&About

WHAT'S ON?

SUNDAY, MARCH 15
Alexandra RSL AGM will be held on Sunday, March 15, beginning at noon and followed by a light luncheon.

TUESDAY, MARCH 17
Alexandra and District Open Gardens AGM, starting at 5pm at the Embassy of Ideas in Alexandra. New members are welcome, contact Melinda Jackson on 0418 378 806.

MONDAY, MARCH 23
Alexandra Community Hub AGM at 38A Downey Street, Alexandra, beginning at 6pm. New board members are welcome, the position is voluntary. Email *admin@alexhub.com.au* to register interest, or call Sue on 5772 1238 for more information.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14
Alexandra Race Club Cathedral Golf Club 2026 Alexandra Cup. Music, food, racing, big screen and more. Book the bus. *country.racing.com/alexandra*

SATURDAY, MARCH 7
Caribbean Cruise Murder Mystery at Trawool. Three

THURSDAY, MARCH 12
Murrindindi Shire Council presents Business Breakfast Alexandra from 7.30am at On Point Brewery, Alexandra. Registrations open. Scan the QR code in this edition for full details.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4
Look after yourself and others after the fires. Tonight, 6.30pm at the Alexandra Shire Hall. Council are hosting a recovery session to support those affected by the recent bushfires. Dr Rob Gordon will talk about common emotional responses and share practical strategies to support your wellbeing and those around you. A light supper and chat time will follow the session.

THE items in Out and About are sourced from our current advertising. 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.

Alexandra and District District Senior Citizens Club report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

IT was another busy week for members of the Alexandra and District District Senior Citizens Club with two tables of bridge players in action on Wednesday, and in a good turnout, two tables of 500 players as well as the usual Friday business meeting.

A reminder that the club will be holding a lunch in the clubroom before the social meeting on Friday, March 27. Please put your name on the list and pay your money as soon as possible to allow planning.

The club will also be having a coach trip to Lilydale International Morning Melodies on Wednesday, April 8. The members will lunch at the Lilydale International then visit Lilydale Marketplace for shopping before heading home to Alexandra. If you plan to come please put you name on the list on the front desk.

After the formalities, members enjoyed refreshments then two tables of 500 and the usual game of UNO. If you would like to join in, please head along to the Bayley Street clubroom on a Friday afternoon. Meanwhile stay safe and keep smiling.

First delivery of Eildon key worker housing for MSC

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has received its first delivery of modular housing at 18 Twenty-First Street, Eildon, marking an important milestone in strengthening local workforce capacity and the broader local economy.

The Eildon Key Worker Housing Project is being delivered with funding support from the Victorian Government's Regional Worker Accommodation Fund (RWAf). The program supports housing for essential workers in regional communities where limited accommodation can constrain the delivery of critical services.

Council welcomed the opportunity to work with the Victorian Government on housing opportunities for key workers to help drive economic and population growth in towns like Eildon.

Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher said the project plays an important role in maintaining essential services for the community.

"Access to health care, childcare, education and skilled trades depends on people being able to live close to where they work," Cr Gallagher said.

"This purpose-built accommodation will help reduce pressure on the private rental

market by providing dedicated housing for key workers who might otherwise compete for limited rental properties. That supports local businesses, sustains essential services and strengthens our local economy."

Cr Gallagher said that, in addition to the Eildon RWAf project, council is continuing to work with the Victorian State Government and recovery partners to address bushfire impacts across the shire, alongside longer-term efforts to increase housing supply and support rebuilding.

"Bushfire recovery and workforce housing address different but complementary

needs, and council is progressing both," Cr Gallagher said.

"Ensuring key workers can live locally helps our communities remain resilient and sustainable. This project is about securing workforce capacity for Murrindindi now and into the future."

The project is expected to be completed in stages in 2026, with the accommodation available at 18 Twenty-First Street from mid-2026, and at 10 Eighth Street from December 2026.

Further information is available at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/ekwh



The first of the houses arriving. -AR



One of the homes about to be put in place. -AR

Alexandra Cup 2026 happening this Saturday

THE 2026 Alexandra Cup this coming Saturday celebrates community. After several weeks of deep soaking rain, soot has turned to green bringing hope and renewal to local fire affected communities. Following a terrible bushfire that devastated half the shire, the Victorian racing community invites the local community to the Alexandra Cup to wind down and relax.

Racing Victoria (RV) has offered volunteers from various first responder groups like SES, UGFM, CFA, Blazeaid, health care workers and other organisations, free entry, a marquee, and food and drink vouchers at the cup as a way to thank them for their important community work. Also attending will be a group of sportswomen who were invited to the cup in December to celebrate women in sport including racing stars, Michelle Payne OAM and Jamie Melham.

You can take advantage of RV's promotion called a "Mates Bundle" that offers four entry tickets for only \$50. Normal entry tickets are \$25 full or \$20 concession, children 15 and

under are free. Tickets can be purchased online or at the gate on the day.

Alexandra race track was fire affected. Railing and turf were burnt. Within days of the fire, RV sent experts, material, seed, fertiliser and equipment to ensure the Alexandra Cup would run.

Last Friday, Country Racing Victoria volunteers from nearby professional country and picnic clubs, joined local club members in a working bee to ensure the inside rail was re-sited and all was in readiness for the cup. The track looks fabulous thanks to wonderful support from the racing community.

If you know nothing about horse racing don't fret. You can come and just soak up the atmosphere or you can try a punt with Sam our Man. Sam will run the Punters' Club. For a small outlay Sam will use his expertise to place bets for the Punters' Club.

He will bet locally and elsewhere to try to turn a little into a lot. Look for Sam near the Judge's Tower. Be early as Punters' Club tickets sell fast. For keen punters, there is a strong bookies ring, Tote Van and Big

Screen covering local, Melbourne and interstate races.

Cathedral Golf Club is a very supportive, long-standing cup sponsor. Marysville Golf Club is also sponsoring a race so, in keeping with that golf theme, Mini Golf will be provided for old and young alike. There are also pony rides and face painting for the kiddies.

The wild boys from Kinglake, "Stoked", will provide rock music. On Point Brewery will run a booth so you can try the local drop and they and others like Twisty Potatoes and Alexandra Lions will offer a range of foods.

Community support in the form of race sponsorship by Reddrops Supermarkets, Darlingford Waters Boat Club, Ernie Hadfield Contacting, Barry Smith's Family and Friends, has been wonderful. Many other sponsors support the club with race book advertising and the Purvis Family support the Riders Award.

TAC will be present. If you plan to drink, TAC encourage you to use the Eildon and Yarck buses to get to and from the races.



Racing Victoria made sure repairs were made to the Alexandra track in time for the Alexandra Cup this Saturday. -S

Please book bus tickets online at country.racing.com/Alexandra

Gates open from 11am, the first local race will be run just after 1pm.

Why was the key worker housing project delayed?

THE first of the homes in the Eildon Key Worker Housing project were transported to the Twenty-First Street site on Wednesday, February 18. The second site, located at Eighth Street remains empty at present.

Initially, construction was expected to be completed on the project by June 2026, but this has now been adjusted to December 2026.

Murrindindi Shire Council was asked about the reasons behind the delay.

Council responded, "Murrindindi Shire Council is delivering the Eildon Key Worker Housing Project across two sites in Eildon, with funding support from the Victorian Government.

"The six houses at Twenty-First Street remain on track for completion in line with the original June 2026 program.

"The eight houses at Eighth Street were subject to a statutory planning objection process through VCAT, which paused the

issuing of the planning permit and delayed council's ability to finalise contracts and commence construction with certainty.

"During this period, council continued progressing all preparatory work within its control and worked through the required planning and grant funding arrangements. With the objection process now resolved, council has moved forward and a revised construction program is in place, with completion scheduled for December 2026.

"While objection processes are an important part of the planning system, they can have unavoidable impacts on delivery timelines.

"The demand for key worker housing remains strong, and all houses are planned for completion within the 2026 calendar year.

"We remain focused on delivering high-quality accommodation that supports essential workers living in Eildon and working in the region."

New Pathology Service in Alexandra

ALL PATHOLOGY TESTS COLLECTED



Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)

Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT)

Urea Breath Test – c14

Electrocardiogram (ECG)

24hr Blood Pressure Monitoring

24hr Holter Monitoring

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Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 12:00pm

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ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Macy Williams

Macy is always kind and respectful. She does her personal best in class and that means trying a bit harder when things are tricky. She is a great friend in the yard and is always inclusive. We are proud to have you in our learning community, Macy.
You are a Star.



BUXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hendrix, Xander and Max

Hendrix, Xander and Max for participating in class discussions respectfully



Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kinglake branch



Community heritage grant applications now open for 2026

THE Australian Government is offering up to \$20,000 for eligible community organisations to protect Australia's cultural and historical heritage.

Applications are now open for the 2026 Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program. The CHG program offers cash grants of up to \$20,000 to community organisations, supporting them to preserve and manage collections that have Australian cultural and historical significance.

Since 1994, the CHG program has provided a total of \$9.7 million in funding to more than 1750 projects nationally.

CHG program coordinator at the National Library of Australia Fiona Clarke said, "Collections that tell our national story don't just live in national cultural institutions, but in the cupboards and cabinets of community groups and organisations.

"We're excited to continue working with the Office for the Arts and fellow national cultural institutions to support the CHG program, empowering the staff and volunteers of community groups to learn more about their collections and how to preserve them."

Last year, \$421,479 was awarded to 50 different groups, including the Adelaide Repertory Theatre, Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre, the See Yup Society, the Cloncurry and District Historical and Museum Society, the Royal Society of Tasmania, and many others.

Historical societies, regional museums, archives and galleries are invited to apply, including Indigenous and multicultural organisations. The grants enable groups to work with consultants to undertake significance assessments and preservation needs assessments and, based on these reports, deliver preservation and conservation, collection management, and digitisation activities. Funding is also available for training workshops.

"The CHG program is a staged one with many organisations working their way through the collection management journey. For those just starting out, we encourage you to learn more about the long-term benefits of the program and what it could offer your organisation," Fiona added.

Applications from new applicants close on Thursday, May 7. Previous CHG recipients and proposals for training projects have an extended deadline, with applications closing on Tuesday, June 2.

To find out more and apply, visit: library.gov.au/services/grants/community-heritage-grants

The Community Heritage Grants program is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts; National Library of Australia; National Archives of Australia; National Film and Sound Archive; and National Museum of Australia.

VEAC: report presented, government seeks to abolish

THE Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) quietly released their report, Assessment of the values of state forests in the Central Highlands on January 16 with no fanfare and, it seems, no press release. Their consultation was famed for their 'sticky note' process, upsetting many in the community.

It should be borne in mind that a government spokesperson said in July 2025, "We've been very clear that the Great Forest National Park is not and never has been a government policy. Recreational fishing, boating and game hunting supports tens of thousands of jobs across the state, especially in regional Victoria."

With reference to the accompanying image, the new VEAC report states, "A large protected area such as a national park is commensurate with the outstanding natural values of units one, three and four depicted and would link the existing Yarra Ranges, Kinglake, Lake Eildon and Baw Baw national parks and the Bunyip, Cathedral Range and Moondarra state parks. There are relatively few uses that would conflict with the national park designation...

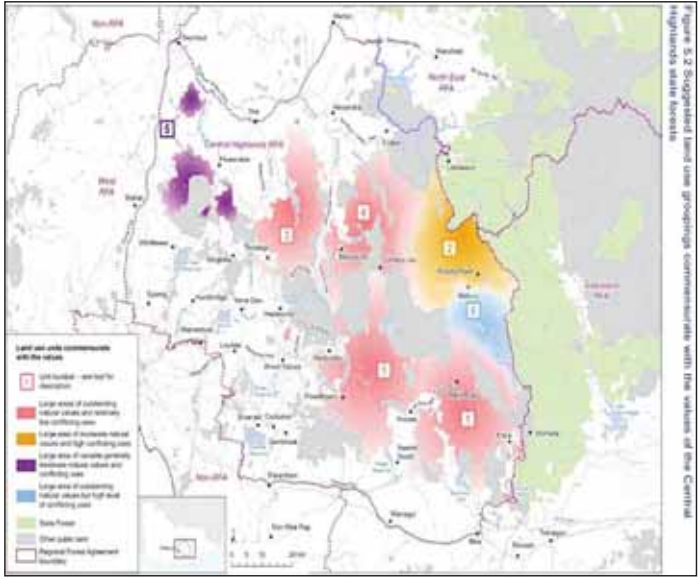
"Unit six is also a sizeable area of outstanding natural values commensurate with a national park designation and provides an additional opportunity to link to the Yarra Ranges National

Park to the west. More detailed consideration is required however due to the potentially high value for uses that would conflict with protected area status such as mineral extraction...

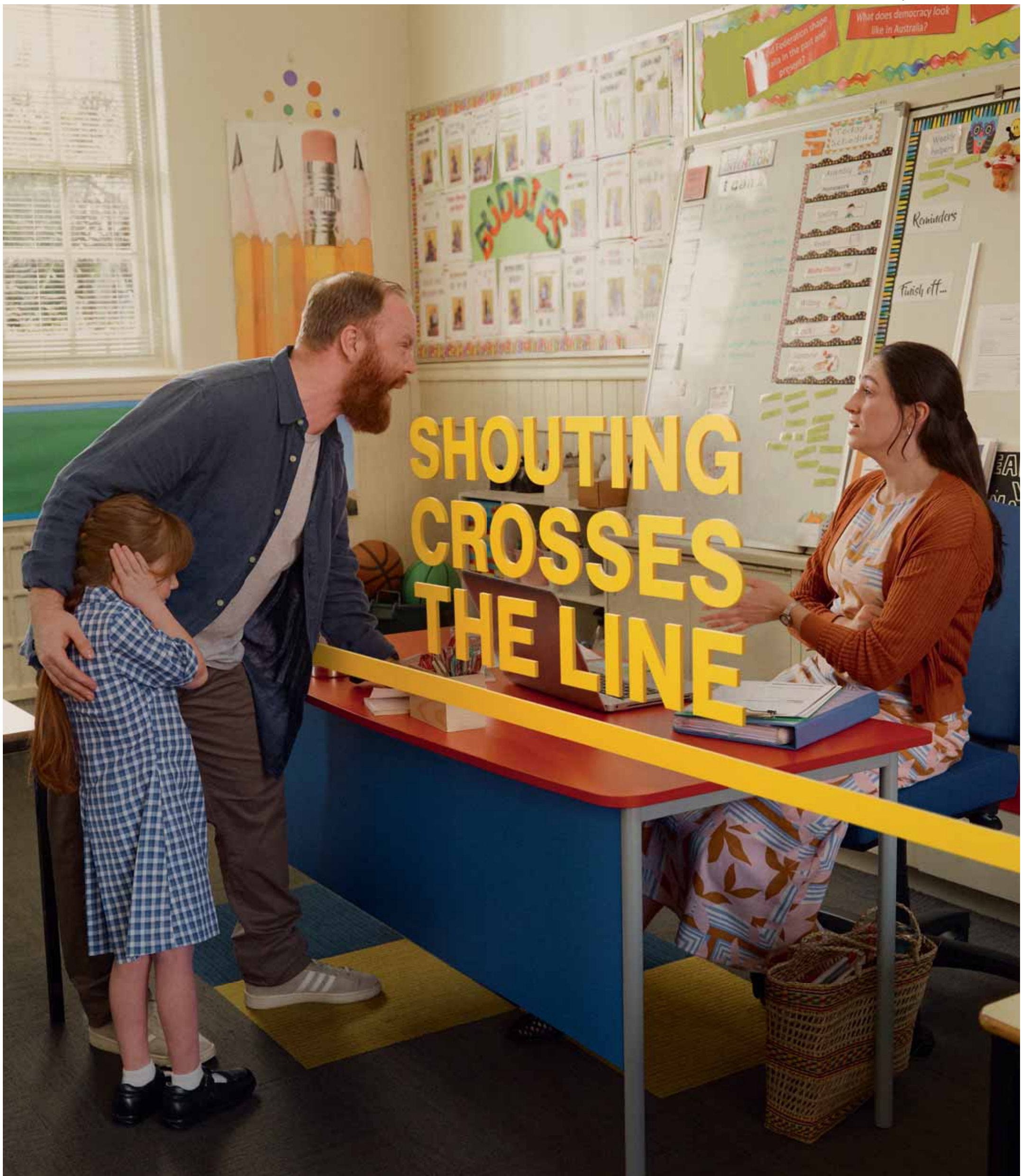
"Unit 2 in the northeast of the Central Highlands assessment area has moderate natural values and, while it could provide an opportunity to link the Yarra Ranges and Lake Eildon national parks, the area has a high level of uses not generally compatible with national park status such as hunting, and high values for incompatible uses such as minerals extraction. A public land category such as forest park or regional park would be commensurate with the values and allow for these uses...

"For Unit 5 in the west of the area north of the Kinglake National Park, there are several public land categories commensurate with the broadly lower natural values and lower level and variety of uses that would conflict with protected area designations. More detailed information, including information from community engagement, is required for this unit."

The *Entities Legislation Amendment (Consolidation and Other Matters) Bill 2025*, is currently making its way through parliament, part of which abolishes the VEAC in its entirety.



The units referred to in the VEAC report are outlined in this map. -S



Aggression and violence against workers causes harm.
Don't cross the line.



Scan to learn more





All of the four vendors in Yea were present at the March sales, with prices holding the course. -BD

Yea Saleyards: March cattle sale report

THE March Combined Agents Store Sale took place at the Yea Saleyards last Friday, with some 2187 head yarded and a turnover of \$3.39 million.

Average price per head on the day was \$1568, with an average weight of 324.2 kilograms, equalling out to an average price of 484c/kg.

The top heifer pen led the way, with a top price per head of \$2300 and a top weight of 508.3 kilograms, equalling 452c/kg.

Top steers reached \$2850, with a top weight of 635.6 kilograms, equalling 448c/kg.

The next sale at the Yea Saleyards will be the Combined Agents Store Sale on Friday, April 10.

YEA SALEYARDS STOCK REPORT 6 MARCH 2026				
Combined Agents Store Sale	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers	Cows & Calves
Number of head	2,187			
Average \$ per head	\$1,568			
Average weight per head	324.2kg			
Top price per head		\$2,850	\$2,300	\$2,800
Top weight		635.6kg	508.3kg	
Turnover	\$3.39 million			

Three year prison term for burglaries

DETECTIVES from the Alexandra Crime Investigation Unit investigated a series of 12 reported burglaries and thefts at small businesses and sporting clubs that occurred across Murrindindi Shire between November 11 and 25, 2025.

A 41 year old man from Ferntree Gully was arrested and interviewed on November 25, where he was subsequently remanded in custody. The man was re-interviewed on December 17, 2025, before being sentenced in relation to 49 charges including burglaries and thefts.

On March 3 at the Ringwood Magistrates’ Court, the man was ordered to serve a three year term of imprisonment.

Alexandra Crime Investigation Unit detectives would like to thank members of the community that assisted police with their investigation.



Anne Leadbeater OAM. -S

Anne Leadbeater OAM joins council as strategic advisor

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is pleased to welcome Anne Leadbeater OAM to council. Anne is working in the role of Strategic Advisor Bushfire Recovery, to support community recovery following the January 2026 fires.

Anne is a nationally recognised leader in disaster recovery and community resilience. She is known for her work following Victoria’s 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, where she helped coordinate recovery for the Kinglake Ranges communities.

That work was later recognised as best practice in the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, and in 2014 Anne was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her service to disaster affected communities.

With more than two decades’ experience across local and state government and the community sector, Anne has supported communities recovering from fire, flood, drought and other disasters across Australia and New Zealand.

Her belief in community led recovery and understanding of local government make her a valuable addition to council’s recovery team as they continue supporting communities through the long recovery journey.

Indi Volunteer Grants

EXPRESSIONS of Interest have been opened for the 2025-26 Indi Volunteer Grants program, Independent Federal Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines has announced.

Grants of between \$1000 and \$5000 are available to support the work of local community organisations to increase participation in volunteering and enable the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

“Volunteer organisations do incredible work every day, and there is always strong interest in these grants from a variety of hard-working, community focused organisations,” Dr Haines said.

Two streams of grant funding are available in the 2024-25 Volunteer Grants program.

Stream one funds the purchase of communication or insurance items that will benefit a community organisation’s volunteers.

Stream two funds the items of the running volunteer-led activities that support the development (including volunteering) of groups such as children, First Nations People, veterans, new arrived migrants, people with disability, and women at risk of experiencing gender-based violence or isolation.

Dr Haines said, “Volunteer grants can help take the pressure off costs such as phone bills, insurance and training, which are becoming increasingly more expensive.

“There is also a strong focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of groups experiencing barriers to participation in the community.

“Every year, I’m inspired by the passion and hard work of volunteer groups that I meet with across Indi and they tell me that grants like this go a long way in supporting volunteers to continue their important work.

“I encourage not-for-profit community organisations across Indi to consider putting in an expression of interest.”

Applications will be assessed by a panel of community members, with successful applicants then invited to apply to the Department of Social Services for a grant.

“Volunteers support our communities in so many and varied ways, and I pay tribute to them for their continued commitment and hard work,” Dr Haines added.

Details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found at helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2026

Raised pedestrian safety crossing on Grant Street

THE Victorian Government has announced the latest recipients of the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Local Government Grant Program (LGGP) with a further \$2.4 million to help councils make local roads safer.

One of the recipients is Murrindindi Shire Council, which will upgrade a crossing in Grant Street, Alexandra with a raised pedestrian crossing to improve safety, visibility and accessibility in the town centre. Further information was sought on the exact location, but it was unavailable by the time this newspaper went to print.

All funded projects have adopted one of the four focus areas of the ‘Safe System’ approach to road safety: safe roads and roadsides, vehicle safety, safe travel speeds and safe road users.

The LGGP provides funding to projects that support the goals of the Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 and help prevent death and injuries on local roads, particularly among pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrians and cyclists remain Victoria’s most vulnerable road users. In 2025, 52 pedestrians and nine cyclists lost their lives on the state’s roads. In 2024-25, 583 pedestrians and 391 cyclists were hospitalised as the result of a crash.



The Eildon Lions Club now has a new instant hot water unit. -S

Eildon Lions thanks Murrindindi Shire Council

THE Eildon Lions Club would like to extend their sincere thanks to the Murrindindi Shire Council for their support through a Quick Response Grant of \$1950. This funding has enabled the installation of a new instant hot water unit in the kitchen at the Lions Leisure Park Rotunda kitchenette. The previous gas unit had ceased working, and this upgrade was much needed. The rotunda is a well-used space, enjoyed by both locals and visitors, and this improvement will make a real difference to everyone who uses the facility. No doubt many cuppas will be brewed and shared in the near future thanks to this generous support.

Intrepid Landcare collaborates with Eildon Landcare

MEMBERS of Intrepid Landcare joined Eildon Landcare last Sunday for a productive day of environmental work and collaboration. The group shared a barbecue lunch before planting gum trees propagated by John from locally sourced seed.

They also inspected nesting boxes, although the only occupants spotted on the day were a swarm of bees and a few spiders. The visit concluded with the group assisting Wendy to rake debris from pathways prior to heading home.

Intrepid Landcare is a national network of local groups and young creatives operating across Australia. The organisation provides leadership training and tailored youth engagement services, supporting young people to become involved in Landcare, natural resource management, sustainability and climate action initiatives.

Landcare grants to boost the outstanding work of volunteers

LANDCARE groups and environmental volunteers are receiving more support to care for nature.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is inviting applications for the Victorian Government Landcare Grants totaling \$3.55 million to fund projects making a difference to enhance and protect Victoria's great outdoors.

Landcare and environmental volunteer groups can apply for grants of up to \$20,000 for projects, and \$500 for support, from now until April 23, 2026.

Last year 509 Landcare and environmental groups across the state shared in \$3.56 million in grants, helping fund on-ground works, community education and engagement activities, group development and small grants supporting administrative functions including insurance, incorporation and operational costs.

Grants are available to all Victorian Landcare and environmental volunteer groups, including Landcare and Friends groups, Conservation Management Networks, Committees of Management, Coastcare groups and Traditional Owner or Aboriginal groups and organisations working on Country.

For more information, visit environment.vic.gov.au/grants/victorian-landcare-grants

DEECA Director of Environmental Investment and Programs, Lorna Mathieson, said, "It is so important that we support the significant contribution that Landcare and environmental volunteer groups make to our communities managing projects that restore and enhance our parks, coastlines, nature reserves and waterways.

"These grants continue to be of incredible value to Victoria and we're proud to support the work of Landcare and environmental volunteers to protect our environment for generations to come."



Members of Intrepid Landcare joined members from Eildon Landcare for a day of work and fun. -S



Members of Intrepid Landcare. -S



Australian Government

The Help to Buy Scheme is now here

With the new **Help to Buy Scheme**, the Australian Government can contribute up to 40% of the purchase price of a home.

So you can buy with a smaller deposit and lower mortgage repayments.

It's a pathway to home ownership backed by Government.

To see if you're eligible visit
firsthomebuyers.gov.au



Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra



The building is a \$5 million investment. -S

New Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre opens at Snobs Creek Hatchery

MINISTER Dimopoulos recently announced the Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre at the Snobs Creek Hatchery is now complete, with the brand-new \$5 million centre set to give the endangered fish species a massive boost.

“This new Recovery Centre is a game-changer for Victoria’s endangered native fish, ensuring our great fishing traditions continue for generations to come,” Mr Dimopoulos said.

“Labor backs fishing because it gives Victorians more ways to get outside, make memories, and connect with their communities.”

This will increase local capability, safeguard supply, and ensure that recreational fishing continues to thrive across the state.

The project is backed by the state government’s \$96 million *Go Fishing and Boating Victoria Plan*.

Construction of the centre took over a year to complete and supported 20 local jobs during construction. The centre is equipped with world-class technology, including a series of recirculating aquaculture systems which carefully control light, water temperature and dissolved oxygen. This optimises conditions to breed these important and iconic native species.

Some 131,770 Macquarie perch have been released this year to continue the species recovery.

This includes 10,755 into the Broken River, 3000 into Dartmouth Dam, 32,495 into the Goulburn River, 22,440 into the King River, 40,550 into the Kiewa River and 22,530 into the Ovens River.

The new centre aims to produce up to 500,000 Macquarie perch and 500,000 trout cod every year, which represents a nearly four-fold increase compared to current production capacity.

This is in addition to the Arcadia Fish Hatchery which can produce 6 million Murray cod and golden perch every year.

This centre represents a big milestone in the conservation of endangered fish species in Australia.

Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) CEO Travis Dowling spoke with excitement about the new centre, given VFA manages the Snobs Creek Hatchery.

“This is just a massive thing for north east Victoria,” Mr Dowling said.

“It used to be that all the rivers in north east Victoria, particularly around Yea, Alexandra, Eildon, they were full of Macquarie Perch. People used to live on Macquarie Perch and rabbits and the rivers would run black with Macquarie Perch at spawning time.

“They’re a beautiful eating fish, they’re a large body fish, they get as big as a yellow belly or a silver perch, a big redfin. But they’re critically endangered and they’re on the brink of extinction.

“They’re like where Tasmanian tigers were about five years before they went extinct. And there’s a lot of reasons for that, new pest species like carp being introduced and redfin and then you’ve got the dam walls being built and all the rest of it.

“But we think we can bring them back. And so we’ve just spent \$5 million at Snobs Creek building something that is not, there’s nothing like it anywhere in the world. It is



The new Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre at Snobs Creek Hatchery. -S



Macquarie perch used to be plentiful, but are now facing extinction. -S

the only dedicated Macquarie perch hatchery anywhere in the world.

“And we want to be breeding 500,000 or a million of them every year to repopulate all of our rivers, the Yea River, the Delatite River, the Stevenson River, the Acheron, the Rubicon, the Upper Goulburn, the Howqua, like all of our rivers, repopulate them with Macquarie Perch. They live fine with trout. That’s the aim.

“We’ve put a lot of money into it and the Victorian government have been incredible about putting a heap of money in to making this happen. It’s a \$5 million investment. It was a local construction company out of Mansfield who did all the work and they did a brilliant job. But we’re really excited by it.

“And the people of north east Victoria and Yea and surrounds, should be so excited about it because what we’re doing could change how our rivers look for future generations and that’s pretty exciting and pretty special.

“And I’ll just tell you, the thing that we’re going to do, which we started doing in the 70s and 80s with Murray Cod, is we’re going

to be able to breed Macquarie Perch using fish that we have on site, not having to go back to the wild all the time and take more fish out of the wild and strip their eggs and then use them, we’ll be able to captive breed Macquarie perch, like we do with cod, like we do with trout and others. And that’s going to be the key to recovering the species. And we wouldn’t have been able to do it without this hatchery. So we’re very excited.

“We’re really proud of Snobs Creek Hatchery. It’s actually an integral part of the north east. We’ve spent a lot of money over the last sort of 10 years, you know, almost rebuilding the entire facility.

“It’s a wonderful trout hatchery, but now, we also have a conservation hatchery there that’s bringing back 10 critically endangered small-bodied galaxied and gudgeon and mussels and crayfish. We’ve now got a \$5 million Macquarie perch hatchery there that’s going to recover that species. We’ve got Arcadia Hatchery over at Shepparton, that’s a \$20 million hatchery, the biggest in Australasia. So we’re pretty pumped about where fishing’s at in Victoria,” Mr Dowling finished.

New government amendment allowing seizure of farmers’ land for transmission lines

THE Victorian Government last week in State Parliament introduced an amendment that would green-light power companies to compulsorily acquire farmers’ land for transmission lines before environmental and planning approvals are even finished.

The proposed amendment to the *Energy and Other Legislation Amendment (Resilience Reforms and Other Matters) Bill 2026* creates a direct bypass around the state’s environmental protection laws. It explicitly allows the government to force through transmission easements while an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is still underway.

The amendment was introduced last Thursday, March 5, and was passed on Friday, March 6.

Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) President Brett Hosking was gutted by the announcement, after VFF called for Members of the Legislative Council to oppose the amendment and stand up for basic fairness.

“The Victorian Farmers Federation is gutted that Parliament has backed laws allowing farmers’ land to be taken for transmission lines before the environmental assessment is even finished,” Mr Hosking said.

“This will pour fuel on the anxiety and uncertainty already gripping communities at the heart of the energy transition.

“Families now face the shadow of compulsory acquisition hanging over them while they are still trying to understand what a project means for their homes and livelihoods, as well as provide comprehensive information to the EES process.

“It tells us that those in charge don’t genuinely understand the sentiment on the ground. It sends a clear and devastating message to regional Victoria that getting towers in the ground matters more than delivering a robust Environment Effects Statement and treating people with dignity.

“We thank the members of Parliament who questioned and opposed this change on behalf of regional communities.

“Make no mistake, this is about fast-tracking intimidation of landholders. It gives proponents the power to walk onto a farm and say, ‘sign this substandard agreement today, or the government will just take your land tomorrow’, before landholders have even seen the details of a project, let alone an approval,” he said.

Leader of the Nationals, Danny O’Brien, spoke strongly against the amendment.

“They’re not even pretending to care about consultation, process, or a fair go now. The government is just going to try and ride roughshod over people’s lives and farms and force their projects through,” Mr O’Brien said.

“We opposed this legislation in the parliament strongly, and we will repeal it if elected to government.

“These amendments are a slap in the face to regional people and cannot be tolerated.”

Shadow Minister for Energy, David Davis, said the government continues to try and bludgeon regional Victorians into submission.

“To bring these laws in at the last minute shows Labor will do anything to force through its flawed energy policies,” Mr Davis said.

“This is undemocratic, flies in the face of good planning and environmental process, and should send a shudder down the spine of every landholder in the state, because it says Labor doesn’t care about your property rights, listening to your concerns, or treating you with respect.

“We opposed these amendments, just as we opposed Labor’s VicGrid reforms threatening farmers with fines for defending their own properties.”

Council News



March 2026

Changes to Council services over Easter

During the Easter long weekend (3-6 April), there will be some changes to Council services:

Kerbside Collection: This service will continue as usual over the Easter long weekend.

Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs): Our RRCs will be open as usual, except on Good Friday (3 April) they will be closed.

The Alexandra Landfill will be closed to the public on both Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/RRC for more details.

Library and Customer Service Centres: Our Library and Customer Service Centres in Alexandra, Yea and Kinglake, and our Mobile Service, will be closed from Good Friday and will reopen on Tuesday 7 April.

Urgent Matters: For urgent issues like stock on roads, dog attacks, or unsafe road conditions (including fallen trees), please call 5772 0333 at any time.

Non-Urgent Requests: We will be back to assist you from Tuesday 7 April. You can also lodge a request online at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/request

Sign up for the Fire Recovery e-Newsletter

You don't have to navigate recovery alone. The Fire Recovery Newsletter keeps our community connected with the latest support, resources and local updates following the January 2026 fires.



Register by scanning the QR code or visiting our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recovery-news

Come along to a fire recovery event

There are upcoming events to support our communities who have been impacted by the January 2026 fires:

- **11 March** at 6.30 pm: Looking after yourself and others with Dr Rob Gordon - Fawcett
- **12 March** at 7.30 am: Business Breakfast Alexandra
- **13 March** from 1.00 to 4.00 pm: Fawcett Hall - Council planning, building and environmental health officers
- **18 March** at 5.30 pm: Community Dinner - Highlands
- **19 March** at 7.00 pm: Looking after yourself and others with Dr Rob Gordon - Terip Terip
- **20 March** from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm: Highlands - Council planning building and environmental health officers.

We will be hosting and promoting many more of these types of events on the road to recovery. To find out about these and other events, visit our website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/events



Eildon Key Worker Housing Update

In February, Council received its first delivery of modular homes in Eildon, an important step toward supporting local businesses and essential services.

Funded through the Victorian Government's Regional Worker Accommodation Fund, the project will provide dedicated housing for essential workers who help keep our community running.

The houses at 18 Twenty-First Street, Eildon, constructed by local builder MillBuilt, will be available from mid-2026, with additional housing at 10 Eighth Street, Eildon, ready by the end of 2026.

Learn more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/ekwh

Advocacy for bushfire recovery

Council continues to push for the support our communities need following the January bushfires.

Recent advocacy has focused on urgent local mental health services, stronger recovery funding, an extension to the 2026 summer fires inquiry deadline, and new data highlighting the need for investment in jobs, farms and tourism.

You can explore Council's current advocacy priorities on our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/bushfire-advocacy

Road access and closures

Road conditions in fire-affected areas remain hazardous. Council has introduced a classification system for local roads impacted by the fires to enable residents to access their property.

For full list of road closures, classifications, authorised access details and updates, visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/fireimpactedroads

Get in touch
5772 0333

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

Stay informed

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



The butterfly enclosure at the Melbourne Zoo. -S



A brave effort. -S



The butterfly enclosure. -S



A group photo at the zoo. -S

Alexandra Primary School's grade five and six students on camp

ALEXANDRA Primary School students attended a camp in Melbourne in late February. The grade five and six students had a memorable and rewarding experience.

Over three days, they challenged themselves by navigating public transport, exploring Melbourne, and participating in experiences at Scienceworks, the Melbourne Museum, the Australian Sports Museum and Melbourne Zoo.



Taking a break. -S



A student with a butterfly on their hand. -S



Some students found that they were very good at climbing. -S



A students having fun with climbing. -S



Students were able to test themselves at the climbing wall. -S



Students at the Melbourne Museum. -S



A climbing wall. -S



The students on the bus home. -S



Bubbles. -S



Students with a gorilla sculpture. -S

A weekend of fun and activity in Eildon

EILDON was buzzing over the long weekend, helped along by Mother Nature putting on her very best. With sunshine and perfect temperatures from start to finish, the conditions couldn't have been better for the full program of community events.

Saturday night's Eildon Twilight Market drew an impressive crowd, with around 2000 visitors from near and far. The market offered a vibrant mix of food and beverage stalls, crafts, artisan products, and local makers, something for every taste and interest.

Live music set the tone beautifully. The afternoon opened with the Paul Ray Music Group, featuring talented young performers Ashleigh Davon, Georgia Flynn, and Clayton Hunter. Their energy and skill were followed by crowd favourites Gary Solomon and Tayla Arnett, keeping the atmosphere lively well into the evening. The whole event had a wonderful, relaxed vibe that showcased the best of our community spirit.

Sunday's Free Community Pool Party was another great success, welcoming nearly 400 attendees. Thornton General Store did a fantastic job with the catering, with fresh wraps, fruit platters and icy poles eagerly enjoyed by all.

Once again, the Paul Ray Music Group brought the magic with live music throughout the afternoon. Thank you goes to the Murrindindi Shire Council for supporting youth and helping create opportunities for young artists to gain confidence, experience and exposure.

To round out the weekend, the Community Potluck Dinner on Sunday evening brought nearly 50 locals together for a warm and welcoming evening. Guests were spoilt for choice with a delicious spread of mains and sweets, generously contributed by the community.

It was especially lovely to see so many new faces. These dinners are a perfect way to meet others, share a meal, and build connections. Thanks go to the Eildon Bowling Club for hosting the event every second Sunday of the month from 6 to 8pm.

Eildon Events would like to take this opportunity to thank their tireless volunteers. Events like these simply would not happen without the dedication, generosity, and hard work of these helpers. They are the heart of every market, dinner and community celebration.

If you're interested in getting involved with a vibrant, friendly community organisation, they would love to hear from you. You can reach them at eildoneventsinc@gmail.com. The executive committee will be stepping down later



Live music at the event, courtesy of the Paul Ray Music Group. -BD



Cr Anita Carr with her daughter Ava. -BD



Busy shoppers at the Eildon Twilight Market on Saturday, March 7. -S

this year, so there is a real opportunity to join this great team and help shape the future of community events in Eildon.

Eildon was certainly the place to be this long weekend, offering something for everyone and celebrating the strength, warmth and creativity of our community.



The team from Eildon Events with Cr Anita Carr from Murrindindi Shire Council (right). -BD



The Eildon pool was buzzing with people. -BD



The lads enjoying an icy pole after a swim on a warm day. -BD



Handing out wraps to hungry pool party attendees. -BD



Inferno showing their wares at the Pondage. -S

KID'S PUZZLES PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 16

Colouring Page



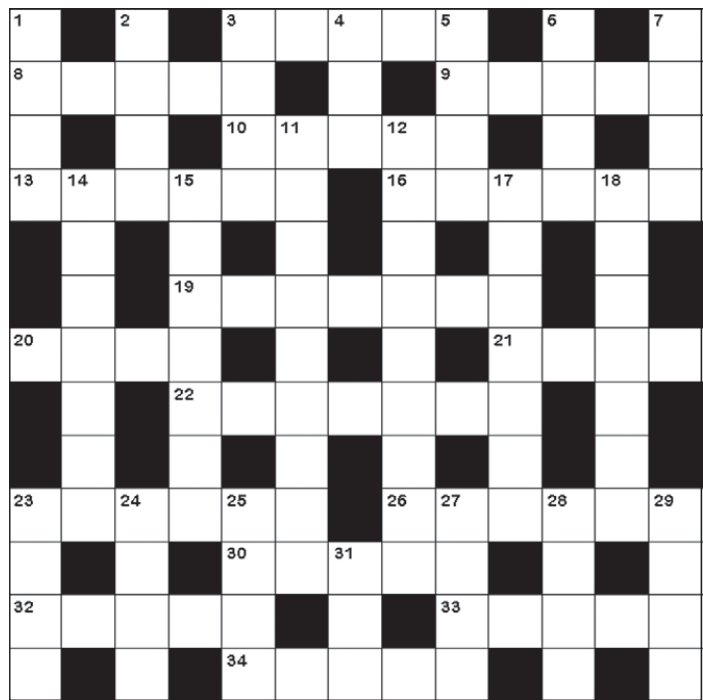
Crossword

ACROSS

- 3. Civilian clothes worn by a military person.
- 8. Japanese verse form of three short lines.
- 9. A woman's crown-like jewelled headdress.
- 10. Sound practical judgment or intelligence.
- 13. A physiological need to drink.
- 16. Compensate for loss, injury or insult.
- 19. Used by a monarch in royal speeches.
- 20. The colored portion of our eye.
- 21. An examination conducted by word of mouth.
- 22. A short filmed advertisement for a movie.
- 23. The fuel that drives your car.
- 26. Move unsteadily, with a rocking motion.
- 30. Special glassware used in cooking.
- 32. Find the solution to a problem.
- 33. Cause to move forward with force.
- 34. The period between sunset and sunrise.

DOWN

- 1. A short informal, light conversation.
- 2. Nocturnal flightless bird of New Zealand.
- 3. A state of confusion and disorderliness.
- 4. Activities that are enjoyable or amusing.



- 5. A separate or distinct piece of information.
- 6. A symptom of some physical hurt.
- 7. An adult male singer with the lowest voice.
- 11. Going on forever without interruption.
- 12. A man-made object that orbits the earth.
- 14. Add water to restore fluid balance.
- 15. An adult male domestic fowl.
- 17. Ensure observance of laws and rules.
- 18. A sudden disastrous collapse or defeat.
- 23. The time that has elapsed.
- 24. A story of real or imaginary events.
- 25. Receptive to new ideas.
- 27. A door by which to leave a building.
- 28. A typographical error in printed matter.
- 29. The normal state of things.
- 31. A floor covering, smaller than a carpet.

Word Search - Words starting with "F"

FAMILY	Z	U	U	F	F	M	Y	R	L	U	P	P	U	Y	V
FANTASY	D	R	G	U	R	L	Y	S	A	T	N	A	F	U	O
FATHER	G	F	N	N	G	I	F	R	O	S	T	B	I	T	E
FIFTEEN	X	N	I	X	I	F	S	G	W	R	U	I	R	A	V
FILLING	Y	D	M	N	M	L	Q	B	E	N	M	G	O	R	F
FILM	T	B	O	A	I	I	L	H	E	E	Z	T	P	Y	I
FINISH	D	H	G	D	R	S	T	I	K	E	V	B	F	S	N
FLYING	R	X	P	L	N	A	H	Y	F	T	X	U	R	H	J
FORTY	U	L	D	P	F	E	C	G	I	F	F	L	V	Q	K
FRIEND	F	A	M	I	L	Y	I	B	V	I	L	C	Q	G	R
FRISBEE	N	J	D	X	B	P	O	R	N	F	Y	E	U	K	Y
FROG	Y	Y	M	L	K	B	X	W	F	D	I	W	P	T	W
FROSTBITE	S	A	I	N	X	C	U	I	V	T	N	K	R	I	L
FUNNY	Q	Y	O	D	H	H	P	O	S	N	G	O	S	S	U
	A	Q	T	J	I	G	E	Y	W	Q	F	A	F	A	J

Math Square

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.

7	+		+		17
+		-		+	
	+		+		18
-		-		+	
5	+		+		10
8		-8		15	

Jokes

- Q: Why did the mobile phone get glasses?**

A: Because it lost all of it's contacts.
- Q: Why is a leopard not good at hide and seek?**

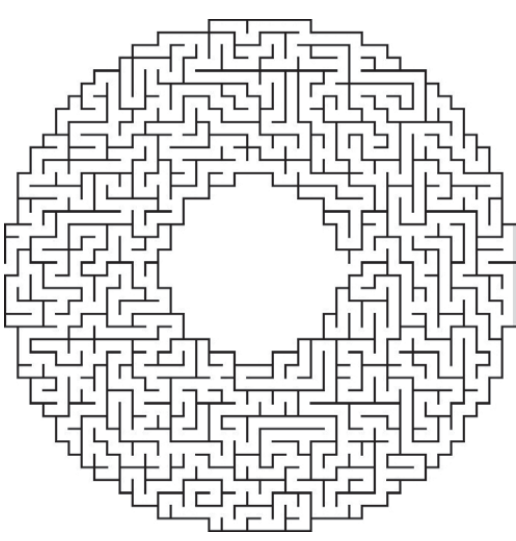
A: Because he is always spotted.

Word Search

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

Colours	
BLACK	PINK
BLUE	PURPLE
BURGUNDY	TERRACOTTA
GREEN	TURQUOISE
MAGENTA	WHITE
ORANGE	YELLOW

Maze



Sudoku

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

Difficulty: 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.

Math Square

	-	5	x		-2
+		x		+	
	+		x		7
x		-		+	
	+	7	+		22
35		-2		12	

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.

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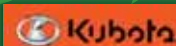
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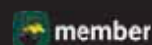
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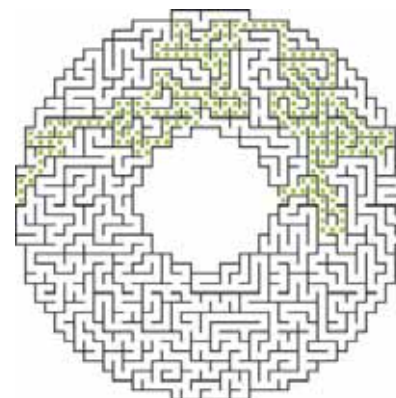
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SUDOKU

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

MATH SQUARE

8	-	5	×	2	-2
+		×		+	
3	+	1	×	4	7
×		-		+	
9	+	7	+	6	22
35		-2		12	

MAZE**KIDS - MATH SQUARE**

7	+	2	+	8	17
+		-		+	
6	+	9	+	3	18
-		-		+	
5	+	1	+	4	10
8		-8		15	

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MEETINGS



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- We invite you to provide your feedback or request further information by contacting us at: Lia Drivas - Ventia, +61 2 8248 6496, lia.drivas@ventia.com, and level 1, 10 Browning St, West End QLD 4101. We will accept submissions until **5pm on 24th March 2026**.
- For more information, please visit www.rfnsa.com.au/3779005.

DEATH NOTICES

PURCELL, Harry Joseph

In loving memory of Harry Purcell, who passed away peacefully at Dianella Lodge, Kilmore on March 1, 2026, aged 91 years. Beloved Husband of Mary. Devoted Father to Kieran, Louise, Brendan and Paul. A loving Father-in-law and Grandfather to their families. A cherished and cheeky brother and uncle who will be much missed. Harry was a long-serving and dedicated member of the MFB, SES (Alexandra, Marysville) and Kilmore Men's Shed. The family would like to thank the staff, volunteers and residents at Dianella for all of their amazing care and support throughout his time there. We would also like to thank and acknowledge the wonderful staff of Stepping Stones Medical Centre, especially Drs Callum Lawford, Louise Jarvie and Sue Waygood for their ongoing care as well as the Northern Health staff in more recent times. Rest in Peace.
Livestream Link:
vividstream.com.au/live/harry-purcell

Murrindindi East U3A report

PLENTY has been happening at U3A over the past week.

The Galloping Gourmet Lunch Group ventured to the Yarck Hotel, where 40 members gathered alongside locals, tradies and holiday makers for a delicious lunch and a relaxed catch-up.

Members also travelled to Marysville for the final Take It Outside, Music in the Park. Some enjoyed pizza while others bought a picnic, all entertained by singer-musician Tahlee Christie.

The Ukes for Fun group had a jam session at St John's on Tuesday afternoon and by the smiles I'd say they had a great time. Also on Tuesday at 5pm Helen and Ruth provided expert tuition at the first Intro to Golf session, held at the Alexandra Golf Club.



The Galloping Gourmet Lunch Group at the Yarck Hotel. -S

A busy weekend for emergency services

THE long weekend meant increased visitation in our area, and it certainly kept our emergency services busy.

On Saturday afternoon Marysville SES were called to assist Ambulance Victoria (AV) with an injured rider on a mountain bike track at Lake Mountain Resort. They were able to carefully gain vehicle access to the summit before walking in to the young patient's location, where paramedics provided treatment before the patient was able to be moved back to the vehicles. Thank you to the Lake Mountain crew for ensuring they had vehicle access to these walking tracks when needed.

On Sunday, emergency services were called out around 3.30pm after a hiker became injured near Sugarloaf Peak in the Cathedral Range State Park Nanadhong. Marysville SES sent a crew out quickly to meet with AV and Victoria Police. An SES crew started the steep climb in to assess the scene while AV arranged for a helicopter to attend. Fortunately the helicopter was able to winch a flight paramedic to the patient, and the first crew met them on the cliff face shortly after. Additional Wilderness Paramedics and high angle rescue partners from SES Alexandra Unit, Monbulk Fire and Rescue (CFA) and Wandin Fire Brigade were on standby at the staging area in case the patient was unable to be winched. Alexandra Fire Brigade also attended for staging area support. Thankfully the helicopter was able to complete the job, and the crew could then ensure the rest of the hiking party completed the rock climb safely before returning to the carpark, hiking out around an hour later.

Shortly after returning home, the same SES crew were called back to the Cathedral Ranges to assist Ambulance Victoria with another hiker requiring medical assistance in a different area of the park. Again luck was on their side and a helicopter was available to attend and winch the hiker out to safety just on dusk. While the patient was transported out by air, SES skills were still needed and the crew made the long hike in to assist other members of the group with lighting and a guide out. They finished up around 10.30pm. Wishing all three patients a very speedy recovery.

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Alexandra Timber Tramway President Peter Aumann operating the train. -BD



People were enjoying riding the train with their dogs. -BD

Dog Days in autumn for Alexandra Timber Tramway



The Latimer family from Melbourne with their Burmese Mountain dog Max at the Timber Tramway. -BD



Attendees enjoying riding the train. -BD



There were plenty of people with their dogs wandering around the tramway last Sunday. -BD



The truck with the items to be auctioned at the event. -BD

Bushfire relief concert well attended in Yarck



The truck with the stage set up in the middle of the oval, with attendees milling around. -BD



Musical talent for the concert, playing country and blues music. -BD

THE Rise from the Ashes Bushfire Relief Concert took place at the Yarck Recreation Reserve last Saturday, drawing a large crowd and raising funds for bushfire relief.

There was live music, food and drink, and raffles and auctions with fabulous prizes for the attendees to enjoy.

Tickets were \$20, and organiser Chris set the goal of raising \$100,000 from the event. With some 1200 people attending, both from inside Murrindindi Shire and out, it looks likely they will reach that goal.

The money raised will be going back into the community.



Just a handful of the raffle prizes available at the event. -BD



Yarck was packed to the brim with people attending the concert. -BD



The crowd finding shade around the Yarck Recreation Reserve to stay out of the sweltering sun. -BD

Alexandra Squash Club: Round five of term one pennant

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition Crows versus Pelicans

ROBBIE versus Tyler: Great game. Tyler had a better serve and didn't stop running, getting every return. As a result, Robbie was flat footed and often out of position as a result. Tyler claimed the win. 74 to 49.

Laura versus Jess: Laura won the first game though Jess started reading the play and was able to position the ball away from Laura. Jess claimed the match. 57 to 36.

Alexandra Golf Club report

by Dave Silverman

STILL pretty warm as we head into the first week of autumn, and the recent rain has already produced more than a hint of green. There were eight players entered for last Tuesday's competition, and once again it was Nigel Waterhouse, who is on a hot streak at the moment, coming out on top with 36 points. Leo Dynes came in second with 35, and third went to Russell Purcell with 34.

Greg Millard picked up nearest the pin on seven, and 17 went to Leo while 18 went begging. Russell Haack and Greg both got a rundown voucher.

It was a little cooler for the ladies last Wednesday, as they still think it's a good idea to tee off early. The nine players were vying for the March Monthly Medal, and it was Barb Doyle who emerged from the pack to take the win, and the medal, with a 90 net 72. Judy Pearson was second with a net 74, and Marie Stace took third with a net 75.

Barb claimed nearest the pins on two and 18, with five going to Marie. Marion Williamson was the nine hole winner with a net 37.5 on the back, and Marg Fahey had the fewest putts.

Last Saturday's round, which was sponsored by Mawson's Concrete, incorporated the March Monthly Medal, as well as Round Two of both the Summer Cup and the Golden Putter.

A field of 22 greeted the starter, and, after a couple of close seconds, it was Shane McGorlick who won the day, and took home the medal, with a 78 net 67. Jarrod Williamson was second with a net 68, third was Brad Kidd with a 69, fourth, also with 69 was Corey Jack, and Matt Richards came home in fifth with a 70.

Kiddy was helped on his way to third with a great eagle on 17, and also picked up nearest the pins on seven and 18, well done Brad. Other nearest the pins went to Corey on two, Greg Ebinger on five and Nigel Waterhouse on 12.

Matt Richards had the fewest putts with 28, and Hardy was the raffle winner.

Chris versus Mark: Lots of great rallies, it was some high-quality squash. Mark was too clever and out played Chris. 65 to 49.

Jim versus Michael H: A tight contest but Michael managed to get ahead in the second game to split the difference. This pushed Michael ahead for the victory. 53 to 47.

Cockatoos versus Eagles

Jordan versus Eric: These gents had some good rallies. Eric put in some good work but Jordan was too good, taking home a substantial win. 85 to 44.

Liane versus Sally: A good contest with competitive but friendly banter between the players. Both played well with many tight shots. Sally took home the spoils. 62 to 58.

Ben versus Justin: Ben rushed his shots in the first game and Justin took advantage to claim a solid lead. Flicking his switch to focus, Ben fought back and steadied to take back control, the game and the match by four-points. 55 to 51.

John (fill in) versus Daniel W: A seesawing match where Daniel finished on top by playing good drives combined with great court coverage. John was overrun by the young up and comer. Daniel was victorious. 56 to 48.

Wednesday competition Scanias versus Western Stars

Ben H versus Beth: Ben shot forward to win the first game and followed it with a draw in game two. Beth pushed hard to take the last

two games and the match. 57 to 40.

Travis versus Daniel L: A reasonably close match. Travis ran down the ball and took Daniel powerful shots head on. Paired with nice placement, Travis claimed the win. 63 to 51.

Justin versus Ben F: Closing out the first game with an 11-point lead, Ben was firing on all cylinders. Justin fought back with a drawn second game followed by winning games three and four. In the final minute, Ben let loose increase his points and hold onto his lead, winning the match. 56 to 53.

Macks versus Freightliners

Jessica versus Nicole: Jessica shot to an early lead with her extra experience manifesting as better decision making. Both players were up a level in the second game with Nicole working her way back into the game. The contest was even from then on with each winning two games. Jess's deeper serves and lower error count delivered her the victory. 52 to 45.

Kristelle versus Sam: What is normally a close watch was quite one-sided this time. Sam's ability to fake out his shots kept Kristelle guessing. Many unforced errors from Kristelle, boosted Sams lead and by the final game she had run out of steam. Sam went home with a solid win. 75 to 49.

Daniel W versus Michael M: This match was a battle. Michael made some good plays, but Daniel was unrelenting, hitting deep and keeping the rallies going. Daniel won the match. 63 to 43.

Marysville Golf Club report

by Lesley Rundle

LAST Saturday morning a full car park, the smell of egg and bacon rolls and some unfamiliar faces were the order of the day at the Marysville Golf Club.

The members welcomed players from Lakeside Golf Club who each year vacate their club for the Formula 1 Grand Prix and travel to Marysville for the interclub challenge. In perfect conditions 50 golfers played a stableford round.



Lesley Rundle, winner of the ladies' section with Ricky Clark, Marysville men's captain. -S

The ladies winner was Lesley Rundle (38) with 35 stableford points followed by Lakeside member Sally Disirio (27) with 34 points. The winner of the men's section was Marysville member Ming Kuan (16) with an excellent 39 points beating Richy Clark (14) on a countback.

Ming's score was the best of the day and he was the winner of the Don Read Trophy. The trophy is named after the Lakeside member who instigated and has generously coordinated



Ming Kuan receiving the Don Read Trophy. -S

the fundraising event for 15 years.

The nearest the pins were won by Keith Atwell, David Douthwaite, Jeff Lovell and David Peach. The winners of the 2026 Lakeside versus Marysville Challenge trophy was Marysville with an average score of 30.2. Lakeside were not far behind with 28.3.

At the presentation all those who contributed to this successful event were thanked and the importance of the friendly challenge was acknowledged by all those who spoke. Special thanks were given to Michael Button from the House of Golf for his ongoing sponsorship.

Next Saturday the Marysville golfers will play a stableford round with all competition fees and donations given to the Marysville Lions Need for Feed programme and the Foundation Murrindindi Food Share initiative.

Merton cricketers beat Yarrawonga in qualifying final

MERTON cricketers played in a qualifying final last Saturday at Wangaratta on Barr Reserve two ground on a turf wicket. Top side Merton playing sixth side Yarrawonga with the two sides not playing each other all season due to the leagues heat policy.

Yarrawonga won the toss and sent Merton in on a wicket that slightly favoured the bowlers. Merton started well although scoring was difficult early with a slow run rate in the first 12 overs.

Luke Benton and Ross Mackinnon doing the job seeing of the opening bowlers. At the 18 over halfway point with wickets in hand Merton stated to fire, Mackinnon making his way to 41 while Jarrod Mahoney 21 and Luke Berriman 33 really got things moving seeing Merton finish on 8/135 after 36 overs.

Ben Pickering 3/24 Yarrawonga's best bowler. Yarrawonga's opening partnership of 42 with Hargreaves 23 and Josh Vagg 23 setting the foundations for their side however Merton's bowling and fielding really showing why they are the top side making scoring difficult and building pressure with an increasing run rate.

Luke Berriman 1/12 brother Henry 1/13 off eight overs and Harry Craddock 2/19 really put the screams on any scoring opportunities. Jia Learch- Mackinnon 1/26 and Rohan Berriman 2/26 all contributed to a hard fought Merton victory thus ending Yarrawonga's finals hopes finishing on 8/97.

Merton now play for a place in the Grand final versus Ovens Valley United next Saturday at a venue to be announced, either at Wangaratta or Benalla.



The Merton cricketers played against Yarrawonga and won. -S

Alexandra Redbacks into the finals

by Michael Mawson

Alexandra 3/91 defeated Seymour 9/87

FOR the final round of the Seymour District Cricket Association (SDCA) regular season, the Alexandra Redbacks broke a losing streak and assured themselves of a place in the finals with a comfortable win over an undermanned Seymour side.

Thanks to some seriously busy preparation work from Scott Whitehead and Ben Wallis, the Leckie Park pitch was firm and even. The curators were so proud of their work that they were threatening repercussions for any Redbacks batsman who did not make runs.

Last Saturday also brought mild and sunny weather that made it an ideal day for cricket. Seymour's captain won the toss and elected to bat.

The visitors' hopes that Seymour could make a high-scoring start were dashed by the Redback's left arm combination of Will Ellis and Jordan Ferrier. Both bowlers were accurate and moved the ball off the pitch. This made it difficult for Seymour's Jack Glen and Peter Taylor to play shots. Ferrier had the impressive economy rate of three runs in four overs and Ellis claimed the wickets of both openers.

Harvey Smith provided some impetus for the Seymour innings by hitting fours off the bowling of Levi Ronalds. However, his batting partners were not so influential. Lucas Crane entered the attack and his prodigious in-swingers bowled two batsmen for few runs. Smith was dismissed by Crane for 21 by being bowled when playing over a rather ordinary full-toss.

Thaya Sathasivam combined his leg spin with Reigan Kuttikadan's off-spin for a few overs. Kuttikadan, in particular, had the Seymour middle and lower order all at sea and he claimed three wickets with Harrison Christie, Luke Wal and Thaya Sathasivam all taking impressive catches. Luke Wal added to his fielding heroics by bowling out Thomas Eccles and ending the Seymour innings for a below-par 87.

The Redbacks began the run-chase with Tim Polson and Michael Mawson taking to the crease. Mawson had three ducks from his last three innings and was hoping to put a score on the board. The moment that he hit his first ball, he took off for a fast single that momentarily caught Polson off guard. Polson looked to be settling in well against the bowling of the youthful Harvey Smith until a mis-timed pull shot was caught at mid-wicket.

Polson's dismissal brought Levi Ronalds to the middle and, as he is inclined to do, he very quickly took the game away from Alexandra's opponents. He clouted a six on the way to a score of 18 off 14 balls. Ronalds looked set for a big score when he was caught in the covers off the bowling of Smith.

Mawson, in the meantime, was finding the Seymour bowling to be non-threatening. He survived a few over-enthusiastic mis-hits, hit four boundaries and combined with Harrison Christie for a 30-run partnership. Mawson was dismissed for 29 after being caught at long-on off the bowling of Janak Abeywardane. By this time, the score was 70 and the target of 88 was within reach.

With some support from Lucas Crane, Harrison Christie worked the ball around the field and compiled a well-made 22. The Redbacks passed the Seymour score in the 17th over and achieved seven-wicket victory.

The victory has the Alexandra B Grade team finishing the regular season in third place. This will have the Redbacks travelling to Puckapunyal to play on a semi-final. The A-Grade have come in from nowhere to storm into fourth and will travel to Tallarook to take on the ladder leaders. The under 13s have also had a successful run and are also going to Tallarook to play in the grand final on Saturday. Good luck to all teams.

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Clay Hilder shredding down Kosciuszko Flow during the Fox Flow Race. -S



Hudson Hall sending it in the Specialised All Mountain event where he placed 17th. -S



Jayden Valentine getting some air time on Cannonball on the final few jumps in the Rockshox Downhill. -S

Alexandra students compete at National MTB Interschools

THREE students from Alexandra Secondary College recently represented their school at the prestigious Boost Mobile Australian MTB Interschools, one of the largest school mountain biking competitions in the country.

Year Seven rider Clay Hilder and Year 11 students Hudson Hall and Jayden Valentine travelled to the alpine village of Thredbo to compete in the 2026 event, held from March 2 to 6 at the renowned Thredbo Mountain Bike Park. The national competition attracts hundreds of young riders from schools across Australia, offering a week of racing, skill development and team competition in a supportive yet highly competitive environment.

Around 1200 riders from more than 300 schools competed in the 2026 championships, highlighting the continued growth and popularity of mountain biking in schools across Australia.

The Alexandra riders were proudly supported by local bike shop Yarra Valley Cycles, who provided the team with matching mountain bike jerseys featuring the school logo.

Riders competed across several events during the competition. In Division One Boys (Years 11 to 12) there were 136 competitors, while Division Three Boys (Years Seven to Eight) featured a huge field of 240 riders.

In the Specialized All-Mountain event, a demanding enduro-style race featuring climbs, switchbacks and rocky features, Clay finished 32nd, Hudson 17th and Jayden 77th.

The Fox Flow event took riders down the famous Kosciuszko Flow Trail, a high-speed downhill run testing riders' control and confidence. Clay placed 42nd, Hudson 25th and Jayden 87th.

The Maxxis Pump Track Challenge, a tight and fast-paced course designed to test bike control and technique, saw Clay finish 72nd and Jayden 51st, while Hudson unfortunately received a disqualification after missing a course feature.

The final and most iconic event of the week was the RockShox Downhill, raced on the steep and technical Cannonball Downhill Track. Clay finished 74th, Hudson 44th and Jayden 76th.

Riders who complete all four events earn an overall King of the Mountain ranking for their division. Clay finished 42nd overall in Division Three, while Jayden placed 35th in Division One. Hudson's earlier disqualification unfortunately prevented him from securing what would have been an impressive 20th place overall.

Hudson said the Cannonball downhill track provided the biggest challenge during the week.

"The big rock drops and tight rocky corners on Cannonball made it very technical," he said.

He explained that careful preparation was key to performing well during the races.

"Using my practice runs before the race helped me hone my line choices and know which features I could use to jump over rocks, roots and other technical terrain."

For Clay, preparation before the event involved riding regularly on local trails.

"I rode mostly on the Eildon cross-country and gravity trails," he said.

"I also raced in the Eildon Joyride Downhill Cup for race practice and used the Lake Mountain Cascades trail to build fitness."

Clay said competing against riders from across Australia felt familiar after attending the event previously.

"It was fine as I did it last year and I've made plenty of friends."

Jayden also enjoyed the experience of racing at Thredbo, despite the strong competition.

"It was pretty good. There was lots of competition though," he said.

"Cannonball was pretty tricky, but I also learned how to do some of the massive jumps at the bottom."

Events such as the Australian MTB Interschools play an important role in developing the next generation of Australian mountain bikers, giving students the chance to experience national-level competition while building confidence, resilience and teamwork through sport.

Alexandra Football Netball Club launches junior season

A FORTNIGHT ago, the Alexandra Football Netball Club (AFNC) officially launched its Junior Football and Netball season in front of a huge community turnout. With the final siren of the senior camp barely faded, the club shifted seamlessly into junior mode, and what a sight it was.

More than 200 young footballers and netballers charged onto the oval and courts, boots laced and smiles wide, while families lined the boundary and filled the sidelines in a show of unmistakable community pride.

The club's senior footballers moved straight from camp into leading skills and drills, building powerful connections with the next generation of players who look up to them every Saturday. On the



The launch of the junior season at AFNC. -S

netball courts, senior coaches and players delivered fast-paced, high-energy sessions that had the courts buzzing with laughter and enthusiasm. The atmosphere was everything Alexandra represents inclusive, supportive and proudly community-driven.

As Club President, Kylie Cairns couldn't be prouder of what the day represented.

"This club has always been about more than what happens on game day," Kylie said.

"It's about creating a place where young people feel inspired, supported and proud to wear the Alexandra colours. Seeing

our seniors invest in our juniors like this shows exactly what our culture stands for connection, leadership and community."

The club says a huge thank you to Junior Coordinator Ben van Lierop for driving the day in partnership with their senior executives, and to Sam Kidd for delivering a dynamic warm-up that set the tone from the very first whistle.

If the launch is anything to go by, 2026 is shaping up to be a remarkable season at AFNC.



The senior players working with the junior players in training. -S