

INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

School staff in stop work action



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CFA Appreciation Dinner



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Buxton Fun Day



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Weekend sport plus rodeo



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The 2026 Deb Ball was held at the Marysville Recreation Centre on Saturday, March 28, and the participants all looked fabulous in their gowns and suits. Back row: Hudson Hall, Sam Harris, Ashley Johnston, Cameron Clark, Owen Forden, Harry Fletcher and Blake Layfield. Row four: Saxon MacDonald, Jayd Bennett, Kayden Armstrong, Blake Homan, Toby Hall, Heath Sutcliffe, Fletcher Van Lierop and Mathew Wal. Row three: Chelsea Webb, Madison Ware, Harry Johnson, Ryder Brady, Jesse Winch, Archie Gibson, Piper Rooney and Jamie Nash. Row two: Lucy Whitehead (dance instructor), Erica Hodge, Brianna Golland, Marli Coller, Eva Twitchett, Asher Kaiser, Amiley Toll-Botheras, Ruby Wall and Jen Brady (dance instructor). Front row: Abbey Miljkovic, Aylah Hoornweg, Alex Williams, Ashlyn Newman, Ashlee Collett, Anna Jordan, Laylah Seamer and Ella Dean. -John from The Occasion Studio, Wangaratta

Minister responds to McLeish concerns over ADH merger

MEMBER for Eildon Cindy McLeish stated that the Victorian Government must come clean on who is in charge and where the Alexandra District Health-Eastern Health merger is heading. She said she was backing concerns raised by Shadow Minister for Health Georgie Crozier in the Victorian Parliament last week, and stated that the Alexandra community is being left in limbo.

"This is a small, close-knit community that relies on its local health service, and right now, people simply don't know what the future looks like," she said.

"First, the merger proposal came as a shock to many. Now, with both CEOs retiring, there are real questions about who is steering this process."

Ms McLeish said many residents remain concerned the merger could see local decision-making diluted within a much larger metropolitan system.

"People here are not opposed to better services, but they want guarantees that Alexandra won't lose its identity or its voice," she said. "This is about maintaining accessible, local care for Murrindindi residents."

Continued Page 4

ALEXANDRA ROTARY 56TH EASTER ART SHOW

Art Show

Rotary



2026

ALEXANDRA SHIRE HALL, 55 GRANT STREET
www.alexandraartshow.com

Book for opening
night online by
scanning code or
pay at the door



GALA OPENING NIGHT

Friday 3 April 6.30pm

\$25pp includes drinks and finger food

Saturday 4 April 10am-5pm

Sunday 5 April 10am-5pm

Monday 6 April 9am-12noon

Entry Saturday, Sunday & Monday \$5pp
Kids under 16 free

DEMANDING FUEL SECURITY FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

There are real concerns about fuel supply and prices - and regional communities feel it most. Fuel isn't optional for us. I've urged the Government to work with industry and step in to prioritise supply for regional communities.

**Helen
Haines MP**

Wangaratta: 117 Murphy Street, Wangaratta | 03 5721 7077
Wodonga: 79 High Street, Wodonga | 02 6024 6284
helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au | helenhaines.org

Authorised by Helen Haines, 117 Murphy St, Wangaratta VIC 3677.



Alexandra District Health
5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial Hospital
5736 0400

In an emergency dial
000

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

CONTACT DETAILS

CLASSIFIEDS AND COMMERCIAL PRINTING
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

MANAGER AND ACCOUNTS Karen Morrison
manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au
accounts@alexandranewspapers.com.au

ADVERTISING
1sales@alexandranewspapers.com.au

TRADES and ONLINE DIRECTORY - Mary
trades@alexandranewspapers.com.au

EDITOR Anne Richey
editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au
(Bailey) journalist@alexandranewspapers.com.au

SPORTS
sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

43 Grant Street - PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714
Telephone: 5772 1002 Fax: 5772 1603
Hours: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

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Independantly owned and operated with no association
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Price rise
due to
increased
costs

THE cover price of the Alexandra Standard and Yea Chronicle will increase to \$2.50 next week. The price increase is necessary due to increased costs including petrol prices. Unfortunately, we are not immune to the cost increases across the economy over recent years, including across the past month. This is the first price rise in four years. We hope that you will continue to support our publication.

THUMBS UP
THUMBS DOWN

THUMBS DOWN: There is no fuel shortage.

THUMBS UP: Special request. People with tractors, post hole diggers and rammers are needed by fire impacted communities. If you are keen to help, contact the community hubs in Fawcett, Ruffy, Highlands or Yarck.

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

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

56th Annual
Rotary Easter
Art Show this
weekend

THE 56th Annual Rotary Easter Art Show is returning to the Alexandra Shire Hall at 55 Grant Street this year.

The event opening is on Friday, April 3 at 7pm with a special preview evening featuring finger food, wine, beer and bubbles. Tickets are \$25 at the door or online.

This year's opening night has a purple theme supporting Rotary's campaign against domestic violence. After the official opening of the show, judge Drew Gregory will be announcing award winners.

Visitors can view and purchase artworks from talented artists throughout the weekend. Weekend entry is \$5. A raffle featuring artwork by Max Wilks and other prizes will support local community projects. The raffle will be drawn Monday at 1pm.

Liquid Drag Boat
Nationals postponed

THE Liquid Drag Boat Nationals has announced on their Facebook page that the Eildon Drag Boat Festival has been postponed due to concerns around fuel prices. A new date will be announced once confirmed. They said, "We understand this is disappointing and appreciate your understanding and support. If you have any questions, concerns or issues, please reach out to us directly."

Correction

IN last week's edition, an article about Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish featured an incorrect headline. In the article titled, *McLeish expresses concern over fire data*, it should have read, *McLeish expresses concern over crime data*. Apologies for the error.

Alexandra
and District
Senior Citizens
Club report

by honorary secretary Mike Jennings

MEMBERS enjoyed a splendid lunch in the clubroom on Friday, prepared by Jeanette and her team in the clubroom kitchen. A big thank you to them, and also to the shire team who cleaned the cooker that has not been used since formal seniors' lunches ended a few years ago.

A social meeting was held prior to the lunch and the customary games of 500 and UNO followed. On Wednesday afternoon we again had two tables of enthusiastic players testing their skills. Members are reminded that as Friday is Good Friday there will be no meeting this week.

There are still a couple of seats on the coach for the trip to Lilydale International on Wednesday, April 8. Please let the committee know if you would like to join the crew.

On Friday, April 10 a committee meeting will be held at 10.30am and a business meeting will be held at 1pm.

If there are any more Bridge players out there interested in joining the club, please come along on a Wednesday afternoon. We also welcome senior citizens to join us on Friday afternoons for a chat, a cuppa and a game of cards in the Bayley Street clubroom. Meanwhile, stay safe and keep smiling.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Alexandra District Health
5772 0900

Non-emergency police assistance
131 444

EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency
UGFM 106.9 Alexandra / Lake Eildon
UGFM 98.5 Marysville / Lake Mountain

MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS
WEEKLY

Tue Women's Walk @ 7am @Embassy of Ideas
Wed Oasis Church, free coffee connection Ph 0408 123 581
Fri Man Walk @ 7am meet at RSL Hall
Fri Communithea 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
Sun Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611
Sun AA meeting; 7pm St Johns Hall. Ph 1300 22 22 22.

MONTHLY

1st Wed Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318
1st Thur Murrindindi Men 6-8pm@ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
1st Sun Crop/Produce swap 10.30am--noon @ Embassy of Ideas
2nd Tue Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285
2nd Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
3rd Wed Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318
3rd Thu Alexandra Ladies Probus 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252
3rd Thu Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas
3rd Sun Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913
4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Thu Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517
Last Fri Carers Group 10am Grant Street Grocer. 0418 402 455

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

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

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT				
STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	9.00AM Mon	1.62	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00AM Mon	0.42	LGH	steady
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.00AM Mon	0.52	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	8.34AM Mon	0.15	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.26AM Mon	0.48	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	9.00AM Mon	N/A	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	9.00AM Mon	0.61	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00AM Mon	3.62	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00AM Mon	0.37	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00AM Mon	1.25	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00AM Mon	0.36	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Seymour	9:15AM Mon	1.58	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	9.00AM Mon	0.89	LGH	steady
*ISSUED AT 09:39 AM AEDT MONDAY 30 MARCH 2026				

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to
editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au
or by mail to Alexandra Newspapers
PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

Letters **must be 300 words or less**. We will not publish defamatory letters, or content which is offensive, threatening or containing personal attacks. Submitted letters may be edited before going to print.

All letters must contain writers name, address and contact number. (not necessarily for publication). Letters without these details supplied cannot not be published. Deadline for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.

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Facebook

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

Weekly Weather

April 1 - April 7, 2026

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH		DAY	LOW	HIGH	
Wednesday	13	26		Wednesday	12	26	
Thursday	12	26		Thursday	13	26	
Friday	9	21		Friday	9	20	
Saturday	9	22		Saturday	9	21	
Sunday	11	23		Sunday	11	23	
Monday	12	22		Monday	12	23	
Tuesday	13	23		Tuesday	12	23	

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra..... 10mm
Buxton..... N/Amm
Eildon (AWS)..... 10mm
Flowerdale..... 49mm
Jamieson..... 17mm
Kinglake 58mm
Lake Eildon 27mm
Mansfield..... 8mm
Taggerty 18mm
Yarck 17mm
Yea 13mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week.....270.44m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....42.7%
Metres below full supply.....18.46m
Daily inflow600ML
Release..... 2800ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....77%

THE ALEXANDRA · EILDON · MARYSVILLE

Standard

INCORPORATING THE ALEXANDRA TIMES · THE YARCK, GORUR, TAGGERTY, THORNTON, AND ACHERON EXPRESS

DEADLINES

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

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

5772 1002 or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Local school staff involved in stop work action

ON Tuesday, March 24, teachers from across Victoria, including many in Murrindindi Shire, went on strike as a result of a pay dispute with the state government.

At Alexandra Secondary College, principal Nigel Lyttle said on the day, "We have got a good collection of year 12 students studying at school and attending the year 12 classes that have got their normal teachers here. It's only four classes."

There were only four junior students at the school on the day, so the school ran an alternate program for them.

Nigel said, "We have seven teachers in the school today and we have 17 out on strike. There's always going to be a couple of people away on approved leave as well."

When asked whether plans were being put in place for additional strike actions, "I guess we're hopeful that things will be resolved quickly and there'll be no further interruptions needed to the school and community. I guess that's in the hands of the people negotiating the agreement."

In terms of some of the local primary schools, Buxton Primary School was operating as usual, at Yea Primary School

nine staff members participated in the industrial action, Marysville Primary School had one staff member attend the industrial action but the school operated as normal, and at Flowerdale Primary School one staff members undertook the industrial action and only three students attended school on the day.

The stop work action was the first such action in 13 years. Victorian Branch President Justin Mullaly said there are significant and ongoing staffing shortages affecting schools across the state, as Victorian public school staff continue to be the lowest paid in the country and increasingly overworked.

According to the Australian Education Union, this is occurring at the same time as Victorian public schools are the lowest funded in Australia, with schools funded in 2026 to the same level they received in 2023, as well as missing out on \$2.4 billion through to 2031 as a result of Premier Allan's decision to delay a full funding deal with the federal government.

"Victorian public schools have a serious workforce shortage because excessive workloads and uncompetitive pay are driving experienced staff out of the profession

and making it difficult to attract the next generation." Mr Mullaly said.

"This should be completely unacceptable in any state or territory, let alone for a Labor state government which prides itself on calling Victoria the 'education state'."

It's understood that school staff have waited more than nine months for a reasonable offer from the Victorian Government and rejecting a "completely unacceptable" deal last week. They say that it did not do enough to properly and fairly deliver pay increases and address excessive workloads.

"Victorian teachers, principals, and support staff would much rather be in the classroom teaching Victorian students today, but because of the disrespect from the Allan Government, they are having to stop work for 24 hours," Mr Mullaly said.

"If the Allan Labor Government really values the work of Victorian teachers, principals, and education support staff, they must come forward with an offer that addresses their real concerns."

A recent survey showed only 30 per cent of staff plan to stay working in public schools long-term, while more than 80 per cent say their workloads have increased due to inadequate support.

By October 2026 experienced teachers will be earning as much as \$15,359 a year (\$295 per week) less than their NSW counterparts, a classroom-based education support employee starting out would be 10.5 per cent behind, and a Victorian school principal new to the role would start \$27,841 or 18 per cent behind a similar principal in NSW.

"The Premier and the Education Minister need to act immediately on this, and on delivering full funding through an agreement with the federal government which lifts Victoria off the bottom of the funding pile and delivers the resources in full, like other states and territories," Mr Mullaly said.

Following this stop work, the Australian Education Union members are ready to escalate their industrial campaign if it is necessary to ensure that a fair and decent offer is made by the Victorian Government.



Ged Skinner, John Allcock and Jo Brewer. -S

New members inducted to Alexandra Rotary

AT the most recent meeting of Alexandra Rotary, two new members were inducted into the club.

The club is busily finalising preparations for the 56th Annual Easter Art Show, April 3 to 6 at Alexandra Shire Hall, 55 Grant St Alexandra.

Opening Night, Good Friday evening from 6.30pm features savoury nibbles and drinks, and music by Steve Paix. Entry is \$25 per head and visitors have the first opportunity to purchase works on display. Visitors over the remainder of the weekend pay \$5 each, children free.

The bushfire recovery voucher program continues, and can be accessed by contacting the Alexandra Community Hub, or John Cannon on 0423 972 022.



The industrial action in Melbourne on Tuesday. -S

Bank closure a serious setback to bushfire recovery

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has expressed deep concern about the decision to close the Community Bank Kinglake branch, warning it risks undermining bushfire recovery and will leave the community without a critical local service.

The branch will close on Friday, June 5, forcing residents to travel around 25 kilometres to access the nearest full-service bank in Hurstbridge.

Portfolio Councillor for Economic Development, Local Jobs and Skills Cr Sandice McAulay said the closure comes at the worst possible time, as communities continue to rebuild following the January 2026 bushfires.

"This decision lands right in the middle of recovery," Cr McAulay said.

"We are working with residents rebuilding their homes, farmers restoring their properties, and small businesses trying to stay afloat. Access to local banking is part of that recovery."

Cr McAulay said banks had seen firsthand the need for local presence after the fires. "In the days following the bushfires, banks came into our communities to provide support. They saw the importance of face-to-face services during times of crisis. But recovery does not end after the first few weeks. Our communities need ongoing support," she said.

Cr McAulay said the closure will leave large parts of the shire without access to a bank. "Kinglake will now be left without a bank. Alexandra does not have one. The only full-service bank branch remaining in the shire is

the Bendigo Bank in Yea. That is a significant gap in essential services."

Cr McAulay said removing a bank from a recovering community creates immediate pressure.

"People are dealing with insurance claims, grants, loans and day to day finances after disaster. To lose a local branch now adds another layer of difficulty."

She said the shift toward digital banking does not reflect the reality in rural communities. "We still have connectivity gaps, vulnerable residents who rely on face-to-face services, and businesses that depend on cash handling. Digital first does not work everywhere."

Council acknowledged Bank@Post services remain available, but said they are not a substitute for a full-service branch.

"A post office cannot replace a bank. This is a reduction in service," she said.

Council is calling on state and federal governments to act.

"We cannot rely on market forces alone to deliver essential services in rural communities. We need stronger expectations to ensure communities are not left behind, especially during recovery. Our community has been through fires, floods and is now facing the loss of essential services at a time we should be rebuilding. Regional communities cannot continue to lose the services they rely on."

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Children's, Adult's, large print etc

Money that is raised will go towards
starting an Eildon Community Gym
• Supported by Eildon Opp Shop,
Goulburn River Books and Eildon Action Inc.

EPIC BOOK SALE

EILDON

At the Eildon Community Centre

Saturday 4th 9-6pm
Sunday 5th of April 9am-2pm

Book donations accepted!
Contact for more information:
0400 087 411 or 0404 814 142

FREE ENTRY

Minister responds to McLeish concerns over ADH merger

Continued from Page 1

Ms McLeish said the uncertainty is being felt at every level of the community, from patients and families through to staff. “After a difficult period for this region, including the Longwood fires, the last thing this community needs is more uncertainty,” she said.

“The government must be upfront with people. Who is leading this merger, what it means for services on the ground, and how local needs will be protected.”

Ms McLeish said she will continue to advocate for transparency and for the interests of residents and health workers.

In response, Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas said, “We won’t be taking lectures from Jess Wilson’s Liberals who are yet to tell Victorians if Alexandra District Health is one of the hospitals they plan to close to fill their \$11.5 billion budget blackhole.

“Voluntary merger decisions are made by health services and are a matter for their boards. We will always listen to them to understand how we can improve local care.

“I want to thank Jane Poxon for her incredible leadership, particularly during the recent bushfires, and look forward to welcoming Claire Palmer as the Interim CEO from April 17,” she said.

Eastern Health has just announced Associate Professor Helen Cooper as their new CEO. She is highly experienced and respected across Victoria’s health system.

The minister’s office provided the following as background, “Collaboration between Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health is already delivering significant benefits to locals.”

Water sports on the Pondage

WHILE locals generally know that water sports are not permitted on the Eildon Pondage, many tourists do not. Two tourists recently put canoes in for a paddle around the Pondage and were reported to the authorities.

Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) was asked to provide information on why canoeing is not permitted on the Pondage, and to detail the signage to advise tourists against canoeing (and other water sports) on the Pondage.

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) General Manager Water Storage Services Jon McKeown said, “All water vessels including canoes are prohibited within Eildon Pondage for the public’s safety. Safety risks at the pondage include impacts of cold water, rapid water level changes and potential fast flowing water. Other risks include steep banks on one side of the pondage and shallow muddy banks on

the other, and difficulty for users to get back into overturned canoes/kayaks.

“There are 24 signs around the pondage advising visitors that boating is prohibited at the pondage.”

While water vessel use at Eildon Pondage is prohibited, Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) is able to seek exemptions for events if certain safety standards are met. To obtain an exemption, organisers need to submit an event permit to GMW.

Permits must show how the organisers have planned to ensure safety of participants and spectators. This includes detailing their rescue and recovery procedures, and their cancellation policy if the weather is not suitable on the day. If GMW deems an application for exemption to be appropriate, it is then sent to Safe Transport Victoria for final endorsement. An approved event will have dedicated rescue vessels and first aid personnel on site as well as approved management plans. Power boat events are also conditional to water levels.

For more information, you can view GMW’s Recreational Area Management Plan (RAMP) on their website.

Out&About

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.

SEE THIS EDITION FOR EASTER CHURCH SERVICES ACROSS THE SHIRE

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

Alexandra Rotary Easter Artshow is on again at the Alexandra Shire Hall. Gala opening night 6.30pm \$25 per person including drinks and finger food.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Epic book sale Eildon is on at the Eildon Community Centre, Saturday 9am-6pm and Sunday 9am-2pm. Free entry. Fiction, non-fiction, and much more.

Alexandra Rotary Easter Artshow continues Saturday, 10am-5pm; Sunday 10am-5pm and Monday 9am – noon. \$5 entry, kids under 16 free.

SUNDAY, APRIL 5

Alexandra Easter Fair is on at Rotary Park 10am-3pm. Local food, wine tasting, live music, market stalls, face painting, children’s amusements and much more.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

Friends of Library Alexandra AGM will be held at 6pm at the Alexandra Library. New members welcome, full details from proctor@virtual.net.au

FRIDAY, APRIL 10

Free health checks at Yea Sale Yards; cardiac and diabetes checks.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Murrindindi Shire Council invites you to LEAP first 72 hours workshop at Community Hub @ Taggerty. 10am-noon. Visitmurrindindi.vic.gov.au/72hourstaggerty or call council 5772 0333 to book.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

Eildon RSL sub-branch AGM will be held at 5pm at the Eildon Visitor Information Centre. Nominations for office bearers and five general committee members closes at 5pm, April 15. Nomination forms can be obtained from the secretary, Sue McLaurin, susanmclaurin55@gmail.com or phone 0409 050 494.

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

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OASIS COMMUNITY CHURCH
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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

Easter Services Notice 2026

St John's Anglican Church - 39 Downey Street, Alexandra



Good Friday Service, 3 April
9am: at The Oasis Church, Grant Street, Alexandra
A combined service for churches in Alexandra and district will be held at The Oasis Church.

The Alexandra churches will gather for an Ecumenical Good Friday Service themed 'Mary's Lament, reflecting on the suffering of Christ through the eyes of his mother. In the wake of the recent fires, the service will also acknowledge the grief and loss experienced in our community, inviting people to bring their own laments to the cross. All are welcome to join this time of reflection, prayer, and shared hope.

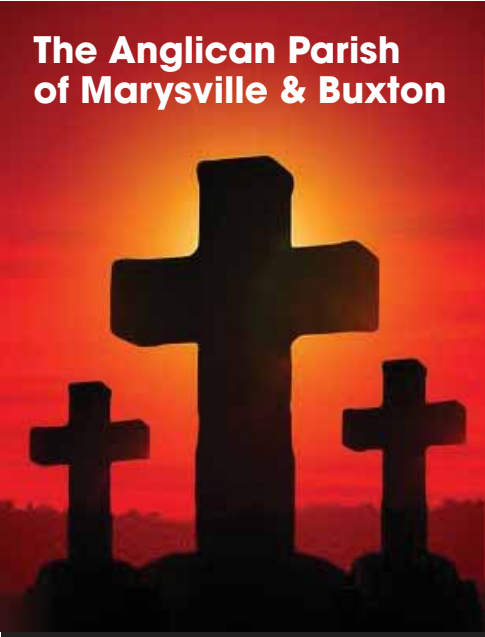
Easter Day, 5 April
9am Family and Ecumenical Service at St John's Anglican Church, Downey Street

On behalf of the organising churches of Alexandra, we warmly invite you to join us for an Ecumenical Easter Day Eucharist Service to be held in our community this Easter.

The theme of this year's gathering is: 'Easter – Life Wins.' This theme has special meaning for us this year. In the months following the recent fires that affected our district, we have witnessed both the pain of loss and the remarkable resilience of our community. We would be honoured by the presence as we celebrate the joy of Easter together.

May this Easter season renew our shared faith and strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship among our churches.

The Anglican Parish of Marysville & Buxton



Holy Week & Easter

At Christ Church, Marysville

THURSDAY 2ND APRIL:
Maundy Thursday
7.00pm: Commemoration of the Last Supper

FRIDAY 3RD APRIL: Good Friday
12noon: Good Friday Liturgy

SUNDAY 5TH APRIL: Easter Day
10.30am: Easter Family Eucharist

At St Thomas's, Buxton

SUNDAY 5TH APRIL: Easter Day
8.30am: Easter Holy Communion

All are welcome to these services

For more information, please contact The Rev'd John Jessop. Tel: 5774 7655

Holy Week and Easter

by John Jessop, The Anglican Parish of Marysville and Buxton

FOR many people Easter simply represents the opportunity for an extra-long weekend with kind autumn weather before the onset of winter. Yet Holy Week and Easter is the most important period in the Christian year.

Easter is the major festival of celebration in the church’s year for it demonstrates the enduring love of God. But when we look at some of the dreadful things, both natural and man-made, that are happening in the world, particularly in Ukraine, the Holy Land, Iran and parts of Africa, we might reasonably ask, “How could a loving God allow such atrocities? How can God allow such evil?”

The fact is that true love has to be freely given, and received. Human beings, created in the image of God to be in a relationship of love, are free to reject that love; in rejecting that love they seek their own power which almost invariably leads to inflicting harm on others. This is the nature of evil.

We see this in the ‘trial’, torture and crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was a threat to the religious hierarchy who plotted his death. As a consequence, Jesus is betrayed by one of his chosen followers, denied by one of his closest friends, Peter, lied about, suffered gross injustice at the hand of Pilate, torture and finally suffocated and died in agony on a Roman cross. In other words, Jesus endured all the evil that human beings can inflict on other human beings. At any point he could have avoided his ordeal but he chose not to. Why? He did this to show that no amount of evil, not even death, can extinguish or deflect God’s love.

This might seem ridiculous, but the truth of it is seen in the Resurrection. Without the Resurrection, the crucifixion would be just another Roman statistic. As it is, the Resurrection shows that nothing can extinguish God’s love. Aspects of the Resurrection are bound to remain a mystery but one thing is certain: the disciples were convinced that they had seen, conversed with and eaten with the risen Lord. As a consequence, their lives were transformed from fearful, grieving men and women, to bold courageous apostles and leaders of the Church who were determined to proclaim the Good News of God’s love in the risen Christ Jesus. For me, the best example of this is Peter, who had denied his Lord but who, in the Resurrection, was the bold leader of the persecuted church.

The symbols of Easter tend towards new life and it is the constant renewal of life that we celebrate at Easter. Resurrection is not something that might happen some time after we have died, it is for the here and now. Human beings have the capacity to forgive and be forgiven, they have the capacity to begin again after loss or disaster. The human spirit cannot be crushed by evil. Jesus demonstrated this for all time and for all humanity. This is why I can say, Happy Easter!

Blue-green algae warning for Lake Eildon

GOULBURN-Murray Water (GMW) is warning people to avoid direct contact with water in Lake Eildon after monitoring detected high levels of blue-green algae.

Warning signs will be positioned at formal recreational areas around the lake and remain in place while high levels of blue-green algae are present.

Lake Eildon will remain open to the public for any activities that do not involve direct contact with the water while the warning is in place.

GMW Water Quality Coordinator Bianca Atley asked people to take care around the water.

“Blue-green algae occur naturally in waterbodies but contain toxins harmful to humans and animals,” she said.

“Contact with it can cause rashes; sore eyes, ears, and nose; or, if swallowed, nausea or vomiting. It is therefore important for people boating or enjoying activities near the water to take extra precautions.”

GMW recommends that people and pets avoid contact with the water. Those who come into contact with affected water should wash affected skin immediately in clean cold water. Seek an alternative water supply for stock and pets where possible. Don't use affected water for cooking, drinking, washing or showering. Boiling the affected water will not make it safe for these purposes.

It is not possible to predict how long the algae will remain at high levels.

Ms Atley said this latest blue-green algae warning at Lake Eildon was the 10th warning issued at the site since records began in 2004.

“This warning has been issued after GMW storage staff observed significant increases in blue-green algae levels across Lake Eildon,” she said.

“It's important to keep in mind that blue-green algae are natural, unpredictable and their levels can change very quickly.

“There is no one factor that GMW can pinpoint as the cause of high levels of blue-green algae at one of its storages or waterways including Lake Eildon.

“Staff will continue to monitor blue-green algae levels at Lake Eildon and will remove the warning when it is safe to do so.”

People can stay up-to-date with blue-green algae warnings by phoning 1800 013 357 and selecting the option for blue-green algae information, or by visiting the GMW website, gmwater.com.au/news/bga

Water supplied by GMW is not suitable for human consumption without first being properly treated. Human consumption includes showering, bathing, washing, cooking, ice-making, and drinking.

For more information about blue-green algae and your health, phone NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 606 024 or visit the Department of Health's website, health.vic.gov.au

Separately, as of March 25, Lake Eildon was at 43.1 per cent capacity.

Murrindindi invites visitors to experience autumn and support local recovery

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting visitors to experience the region this autumn, with a strong line-up of new experiences, events and campaigns showcasing the best of 'Dindi' following the January 2026 bushfires.

Autumn is one of the most spectacular times to explore Murrindindi, with vibrant landscapes, local experiences and welcoming townships all within a short drive from Melbourne.

Council is working closely with Tourism North East to support visitation and local businesses, encouraging people to plan a visit that offers a relaxing escape, while enjoying everything the region has to offer.

Cr Sandice McAulay, Portfolio Councillor Economic Development, Local Jobs and Skills, said autumn was the perfect time to experience Murrindindi.

“Our region has always offered incredible natural beauty, unique local experiences and a genuine country welcome, and that remains as strong as ever,” Cr McAulay said.

“This autumn is a chance to slow down, explore our towns and enjoy everything that makes Murrindindi special.”

Whether it's attending a local event, exploring our trails or enjoying the food, wine and hospitality across our towns, visitors can experience the best of Murrindindi while supporting local businesses and jobs.

New trails invite visitors to experience 'Dindi' differently

A key focus of current tourism promotion is the launch of six new curated trails, designed to help visitors experience the region through a range of lenses, from arts and culture to family-friendly adventure and scenic touring.

The trails are Arts, Culture and History Trail; Family Fun Trail; Scenic Drives Lookouts Trail; Pub and Tipple Trail; Wondrous Waterfalls Trail; and Furry Friends Trail.

These trails are complemented by additional itineraries available via council's Discover Dindi platform, offering visitors an easy, inspiring way to plan immersive day trips or multi-day stays.

Events and experiences driving visitation

Murrindindi is also promoting a strong calendar of upcoming events and activities, including the inaugural Eildon Drag Boat Festival on April 11 and 12, as well as a range of local markets, festivals and Easter events across the shire

These events are expected to attract visitors into the region and deliver a welcome boost to local businesses.

Campaigns and collaborations amplifying the message

Council and regional partners are delivering coordinated campaigns to showcase Murrindindi to new audiences.

This includes a campaign with One Hour Out highlighting the new trail experiences; ongoing

promotion through Discover Dindi digital channels, including six new town-based videos; social media influencer collaborations focusing on theme-based trails and destinations; and Tourism North East's *It's my High Country thing* campaign which invites local tourism operators to share their stories via video guides designed to assist visitors holiday like a local in our beautiful part of the world.

Travel with confidence

The campaigns align with broader regional messaging that travel across Victoria remains accessible, with fuel supply stable and no disruption expected for visitors planning trips to the region.

Visitors are encouraged to plan ahead, take their time and consider longer stays to fully experience what the region has to offer.

Cr Sandice McAulay said Murrindindi offers an easy and rewarding escape for visitors looking to recharge while supporting local communities.

“Whether you're coming for a weekend or staying longer, there are so many ways to experience Murrindindi, from scenic drives and walking trails to arts, culture and local events,” Cr McAulay said. “Just a short drive from Melbourne, it's an easy escape that offers something genuinely different, and every visit helps support our communities as they continue their recovery.”

Visitors can explore trails, events and itineraries via discoverdindi.com.au/trails

For local recovery information and updates, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au



LEAP First 72 hours workshop

Saturday 11 April 2026 from 10.00 am to 12 noon

Community Hub @ Taggerty, 19 Taggerty-Thornton Rd

In this session you will:

- learn how to prepare for the first 72 hours after an emergency.
- explore how, together as a community, you can build knowledge and reduce vulnerabilities.
- get to take home your very own emergency dry-bag.
- light lunch provided

To book the free workshop:

- scan the QR code
- visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/72hourstaggerty
- call Council on 5772 0333
- email leap@murrindindi.vic.gov.au



This community workshop is part of the *LEAPing into Resilience Project*, a joint initiative between Mansfield and Murrindindi Shire Councils and is funded by Safer Together/DEECA and Flood Recovery.

ALEXANDRA ROTARY PARK

Easter Fair

10AM-3PM

EASTER SUNDAY

5 APRIL 2026

• LOCAL FOOD

• WINE TASTING

• LIVE MUSIC

• MARKET STALLS

• FACE PAINTING

• CHILDREN'S AMUSEMENTS

\$2 GOLD COIN ENTRY

Contact: Caolan O'Connor alexandraeventsLtd@gmail.com / Gordon Simpson 0409 577 212

CFA Appreciation Dinner a great success

THE CFA Appreciation Dinner was held at the Alexandra Football Netball Club on the evening of Saturday, March 28. The rooms were beautifully decorated for the evening, and all in attendance had a great time celebrating the efforts of the CFA and raising funds on their behalf.

Organiser Jamie Duggan said, “It was a really good night. Everyone’s feedback has been really positive.”

The only challenge that was faced was the reduced internet speed due to the number of people in town for the rodeo, held on the same night, but the issue was soon fixed after Jamie went home and got his Starlink device.

Jamie added, “The food was great. Everything was set up really well. The football club were amazing. Kylie and the football club are just the best people. I’m surprised I haven’t met them before. They are such hospitable people. They were so good to deal with. Everything we wanted or needed, they helped with. It just made it really easy to be in a venue that was so easy to deal with.”

There were 164 diners at the event, although 180 had booked. “We didn’t lose too many,” Jamie said.

At the start of the event, guests were invited to mingle before being seated. Dinner was at 7pm, with the speakers including Mayor

Damien Gallagher and The Unbreakable Farmer Warren Davies.

Jamie commented, “It actually came together really well, better than I actually imagined in my head.”

The final amount raised for the local CFA units is yet to be determined, but it’s likely to be upwards of \$45,000.

“It was definitely worth it,” Jamie said. “I’d do it again 100 per cent. I’d do it in a heartbeat for the CFA. I’d do anything for the CFA people.”



Shaping Murrindindi’s Future project receives \$140,000 grant

LAST week, Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced more than \$390,000 for projects that create jobs in forestry areas. The *Shaping Murrindindi’s Future* project received \$140,000 to improve visitor experiences through three key projects, Beyond the Black Spur, Ride Marysville and the Triangle Food Network pilot.

Minister Spence said, “We’re putting regional communities first, driving job creation, strengthening local businesses, and ensuring opportunities stay where people live and work. This investment will support community-led projects and bring more visitors to regional Victoria.”

Murrindindi Shire Council led the state-sponsored local development strategy, *Shaping Murrindindi’s Future*, funded through the forestry transition program. The strategy was developed in close partnership with the community to identify new and emerging industries and opportunities to replace the lost economic output and multiplier from forestry.

Through extensive consultation in developing *Shaping Murrindindi’s Future*, tourism was identified as a focus area. Since the strategy was completed, community representatives have continued working with council to progress practical, place-based

initiatives that support local jobs, businesses and long-term economic resilience.

Council is progressing a coordinated suite of tourism and visitor economy projects with community representatives. The \$140,000 funding is supporting a coordinated suite of visitor economy projects, collectively known as the *Beyond the Black Spur* initiative.

The program focuses on strengthening the south-eastern corridor of the shire including Narbethong, Marysville, Buxton, Taggerty, Thornton, Rubicon and Eildon by encouraging longer stays, supporting local businesses and developing new, sustainable visitor experiences.

The initiative includes three interconnected projects.

Beyond the Black Spur - Tourism Systems and Business Development

This project is underway and brings together local businesses, land managers and industry experts to better understand the region’s tourism identity and opportunities. It will inform new visitor experiences and support the development of future collaboration through a business-led tourism collective to strengthen year-round visitation.

Mountain Bike Destination - Marysville to Eildon Corridor (Ride Marysville)

Also underway, this project is exploring opportunities to expand and connect mountain bike and shared use trails between Marysville, Lake Mountain, Eildon and Buxton. The current phase focuses on feasibility, stakeholder engagement and business planning, for extending mountain bike trails around Marysville. This builds on strong community advocacy and demand for cycling experiences.

Triangle Food Network - Agritourism and Local Food Systems

Currently in development, this initiative is working toward establishing a cooperative or social enterprise model that connects local growers, producers and tourism operators. The focus is on creating agritourism experiences such as farm tours, workshops and farm stays, adding depth to the region’s visitor offering while supporting local producers.

Together, these projects are designed to strengthen the local visitor economy by supporting local businesses, enhancing the region’s identity and creating reasons for visitors to stay longer and return.

Mayor Damien Gallagher said the initiative was an important step for the shire at a time when communities are focused on recovery

and rebuilding following the January 2026 bushfires.

“Our community has been through an incredibly challenging period, and supporting local businesses and rebuilding our visitor economy is a key part of recovery,” Cr Gallagher said.

“By investing in projects that build on our natural environment, local food and outdoor experiences, we’re strengthening the visitor economy in a way that supports recovery and long-term resilience.”

Portfolio Councillor for Economic Development, Local Jobs and Skills, Cr Sandice McAulay said the program reflects strong collaboration between council, community and industry.

“What’s really positive about this work is that it’s being shaped by the people who know the region best, our local businesses and community groups,” Cr McAulay said.

“By investing in experiences like nature-based tourism, cycling and local food, we are building a more diverse and resilient visitor economy that supports jobs and local enterprise.”

Council will continue working with partners and the community as the projects progress.

Three hours of (free) power

VICTORIANS will soon be able to access three hours of free power in the middle of the day, every day. This could save families up to \$300 per year off their energy bills, and up to \$1070 if they have solar panels and batteries.

Victoria's Midday Power Saver offer will be available from October 1. It will benefit households who can shift their electricity use to the middle of the day. That includes people who work from home.

The overall benefit to Victoria is reduced peak demand, which is good for reliability and security. Under the plan, retailers will be required to offer a discounted tariff to households during the day.

About 2.6 million Victorian households will be eligible for the Midday Power Saver offer and can opt into the program with their energy provider. More details, including the time periods and prices for the offer across the state, will be released in May.

Due to renewable energy, the state produces more electricity than is needed during the day. More than 850,000 Victorians already generate solar power and enjoy cheap or free electricity during the day. The scheme shares the benefits to give even more Victorians cheaper power. Victoria has around 100 renewable energy projects in operation.

Council calls on government to prioritise access to fuel and fertiliser for bushfire impacted shires

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has formally requested the state and federal governments to take immediate action to safeguard access to fuel and fertiliser, warning that supply pressures and increased costs risk slowing bushfire recovery across the region.

Murrindindi Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said reliable access to diesel is essential for on-the-ground recovery activities including fencing, clean-up, freight and farm operations, following the catastrophic January 2026 bushfires across Murrindindi Shire.

"Fuel is not optional in a recovery like this. It underpins every part of getting people back on their feet," Cr Gallagher said.

"Any disruption to supply or sharp increases in cost place additional pressure on producers who are already dealing with significant losses."

Council has also raised growing concerns about fertiliser prices and availability, particularly nitrogen inputs, which are vital for restoring pasture and stabilising fire-affected land.

"For many of our producers, this is a narrow window to act. Without access to fertiliser at the right time, recovery is delayed and productivity is impacted well into the future," he said.

The January bushfires caused widespread damage across Murrindindi Shire, including livestock losses, destroyed pasture and extensive fencing impacts, with fencing replacement costs alone estimated to exceed \$120 million.

Council is advocating for immediate, practical measures to support fire-affected regions, including priority access to fuel for primary producers, recovery contractors and regional supply chains; targeted, time-limited financial support to offset extreme fuel costs and secure fertiliser supply; and active intervention to stabilise fertiliser supply pathways, particularly nitrogen inputs.

Cr Gallagher said the issue is not about convenience, but about ensuring recovery can continue at pace.

"This is about maintaining the capacity of our community to recover, keep producing and remain viable through a period of compounding disruption," he said.

"Murrindindi was the hardest hit areas in the January fires, and our recovery depends on being able to act quickly, not absorb further shocks."

Council has offered to work closely with government to support local coordination, including identifying priority users and assisting with distribution and communication on the ground.

Changes to Recovery Hub locations and days

MURRINDINDI Shire Council will be changing the Alexandra Recovery Hub location and removing Saturday from the Yea Recovery Hub schedule from early April.

In Alexandra, Recovery Hub support will move from the Alexandra Library to council's Customer Service Centre at 28 Perkins Street from Wednesday, April 8. Recovery support officers will continue to be available Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 10am and 3pm.

In Yea, Recovery Hub support will no longer be available on Saturday mornings. The final Saturday session was held on 28 March 28, with recovery support continuing Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 3pm.

These changes reflect current demand and will operate as a trial, with a review planned for May.

Recovery Hubs continue to provide information, referrals and recovery support for people impacted by the January bushfires.

For assistance or to check availability, contact council on 5772 0333.



Recovery Hub Update

From Wednesday 8 April, Recovery Hub support will move from Alexandra Library to Council's Customer Service Centre at 28 Perkins Street.

Recovery support officers will continue to be available:

- **Monday, Wednesday and Friday**
- **10.00 am to 3.00 pm**

If you've been affected by the January bushfires, you're welcome to drop in for information, referrals and recovery support.

New location: Murrindindi Shire Council Customer Service Centre, 28 Perkins Street, Alexandra

If you're unsure when to attend or need assistance, please call Council on 5772 0333.



murrindindi.vic.gov.au/hubchanges



NOTICE OF AN APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMIT

The land affected by the application is located at:	5016 Maroondah Highway ALEXANDRA VIC 3714
The application is for a permit to:	Development of land for thirty-three (33) cabins and native vegetation removal
Planning scheme clause and matter for which a permit is required:	32.03-4 -buildings and works associated with a Section 2 use (Camping and Caravan Park) 52.17 Native Vegetation Removal
The applicant for the permit is:	Parklife Alexandra Pty Ltd
The application reference number is:	P037.2025-1
View the application and any supporting documents online at:	murrindindi.vic.gov.au/p037-2025

You can also scan the QR code to access the website.

Any person who may be affected by the granting of the permit may object or make other submissions to the responsible authority.

An objection must be made to the responsible authority in writing, include the reasons for the objection and state how the objector would be affected.

The responsible authority must make a copy of every objection available for any person to inspect free of charge until the end of the period during which an application may be made for review of a decision on the application.



The responsible authority will not decide on the application before:	15 April 2026
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If you object, the responsible authority will tell you its decision.

The Planning Unit can be contacted on (03) 5772 0333 or by emailing planning@murrindindi.vic.gov.au



Standard

EASTER OFFICE HOURS AND DEADLINES

EARLY DEADLINES APPLY FOR APRIL 8 EDITION
NOON, THURSDAY, APRIL 2 ★DISPLAY ADS - BOOKING AND ARTWORK
★CLASSIFIEDS INC DEATH NOTICES ★TRADES.

10AM MONDAY, APRIL 6 ★EDITORIAL, SPORTS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
CLOSED GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3 AND MONDAY, APRIL 6
REOPENING 9AM, TUESDAY, APRIL 7

The Yea Chronicle



Proudly supporting
Student of the week

Community Bank · Yea & District and Alexandra
Bendigo Bank

ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Will Keith



Will shows our school values each day. He has a positive attitude to learning, particularly in Mathematics. During games in the classroom, Will joins in with absolute passion. In the playground, Will is a keen sportsman who loves getting involved and involving others. We are proud to have you in our learning community, Will.
You are a star.



ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Matilda M

This award recognises Matilda for being kind, caring, and a true role model within our school community. She consistently lives out our school values, showing empathy, compassion, and respect to everyone she meets. Matilda is always ready to offer support, encouragement, and a helping hand to her classmates. Her positive attitude and thoughtful actions make our classroom a happier and more inclusive place. She should be incredibly proud of the beautiful example she sets for others each day

BUXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Betty, Alex S and Emmett

Betty, Alex S and Emmett for taking pride in their work and putting in a great effort.



EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Seniors: Miguel Cardenas

For demonstrating the school value Cooperation by encouraging others to peruse their goals and dreams.
Very impressive, Miguel.



Juniors: Shannon Mitchell

For demonstrating the school value Cooperation and Achievement by helping others to do the right thing and consistently excelling in your spelling and maths. You are a learning machine, Shannon.



Student of the Week

Proudly supported by
Kinglake branch

Bendigo Bank

New manager at Holmesglen at Eildon

COREY Dewhurst has been announced as the new manager of Holmesglen at Eildon.
Corey has worked with the organisation for the past 15 years, starting off as a casual before becoming food supervisor and then assistant manager. He's been in the acting manager's position for the past 10 months, and was successful in gaining the role permanently in recent weeks.
Holmesglen at Eildon was very busy at the start of this year as they opened during the fires, providing

access for DEECA and the CFA to use the facilities for the first time.
Moving forward, Corey plans for the organisation to focus on student, internal corporate and external groups, but also being community-minded as well. "We're looking forward to being a lot more accessible for community conferences and group gatherings and that kind of thing," Corey said.
He added, "The long-term plan is to be more accessible for weekend accommodation in the area. That's a new thing that we haven't done before. We'll be working with

events that are on in the area, being accessible and open to general public for accommodation. Unfortunately we will no longer be doing our seasonal functions. We were doing four functions a year. There will be a change of direction with the business with that kind of thing, and focus more on opening for accommodation."
They'll still provide meals for both internal and external functions and events with over 20 people.
Corey also expressed an interest in being more community focused. He explained, "My intention is that for small group meetings, where there's availability, working with community groups, having access to use the facility if they'd like to book the facility."
Holmesglen at Eildon can sleep 100 people in total, with 38 corporate rooms and 18 four-share standard rooms. They can also sleep eight in the Homestead and another eight in the extension, both of which can be rented out on Air B and B on weekends.
Corey said, "I'm really looking forward to leading the team into the future. We've got a great local team of staff. There are also extra job opportunities opening up for local staff as well, doing the weekend accommodation and that kind of thing. We have a workforce of 16 local staff at the moment, so potentially we'll be looking to increase that by another 10 local staff members."
Corey added, "I'm looking forward to working closer with the community. We're here and we're community-minded and we are open to help people out with anything that we have available that we could possibly help out with. We have a strong connection with local suppliers and business and looking forward to adding and supporting more local businesses in the future."



Holmesglen at Eildon manager Corey Dewhurst. -S

MDBA urges locals to shape the future of our rivers

THE Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) is urging everyday people across the Basin to speak up as public consultation for the Basin Plan Review reaches its halfway mark.
Hundreds of conversations have already taken place in towns and communities across the Basin, and councils, community groups and industry bodies are well underway with their submissions.
MDBA Chief Executive Andrew McConville said now is the time for individual community members to add their perspectives. "Local voices matter. Whether you live on a farm, in a regional town or city, or anywhere along the rivers, your experience helps us understand what's really happening on the ground. Your local knowledge is incredibly valuable, often more than you realise," he said.
More than 2.4 million people live within the Murray–Darling Basin, and the MDBA wants to hear from as many of those people as possible.
Mr McConville said a healthy Basin means resilient ecosystems, stronger industries, thriving communities and opportunities for future generations.
"That's why a plan for the Basin matters. It's how we protect what we value and ensure rivers remain healthy, for generations to come."
Mr McConville said people often think their view will not make a difference, but every submission contributes to building a clearer picture of community perspectives.
He said submissions don't need to be long, technical or cover every issue raised in the Discussion Paper which was released on February 5.
"You don't need to be an expert to make a submission. You can simply tell us what's important to you, your family or your community. If there's just one aspect you care about, you can focus on that. Your feedback will assist the Authority in making recommendations on how the Basin Plan and Basin water management can be improved."
People can find information on how to make a submission via the MDBA website at 2026 Basin Plan Review: Have Your Say - MDBA. Community members who would like assistance can also call the MDBA consultation hotline on 1800 230 067.
Submissions for the 2026 Basin Plan Review close on May 1.



Seatbelts save lives.

Driving unbuckled? If you or your passengers drive without a fastened seatbelt, you could each receive a \$407 fine. The driver will also face 3 demerit points.

If you take risks while driving, chances are you will be caught.

Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.

TAC

VICTORIA
State
Government



Fire affected councils receive hub funding

THE Federal and Victorian Governments are helping bushfire-affected Victorians to rebuild and recover by funding 27 new Community Recovery Officers and investing in local Recovery Hubs.

Community Recovery Officers work with eligible councils to ensure community needs are understood.

Fifteen councils will share \$15 million, jointly funded under the Commonwealth-State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Murrindindi Shire is among the 15 local government areas to receive funding. Councils will manage staffing appointments and exact Recovery Hub locations.



Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner, Relief and Recovery, Mariela Diaz. -AR

This summer Victorians have experienced the devastating impacts of bushfires. More than 430,000 hectares have burnt, and more than 1500 structures have been damaged or destroyed.

This investment is part of \$370 million in relief and recovery support the governments have committed under the DRFA.

Victorians can find out more about available recovery support on the Emergency Recovery Victoria website at vic.gov.au/january-2026-victorian-bushfires

They can also call the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 to access support through the Emergency Recovery Support Program.

Federal Minister for Emergency Management Kristy McBain said, “The Albanese Government stands with Victorians in the aftermath of what has been a devastating event.

“I want to thank our first responders, emergency services and volunteers that were courageous in risking themselves to protect and save their community.

“Recovery has a long tail, and it will be some time before our bushfire affected regions are fully back on their feet, but the Albanese Government will be there every step of the way.”

Victorian Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery Vicki Ward added, “Recovery works best when it’s shaped by locals. We’re giving councils the people and places they need to support their communities through the long road ahead.

“We’ll always stand with Victorians as they get back on their feet after disaster.”

Ms Ward along with Deputy Emergency Management Commissioner, Relief and Recovery, Mariela Diaz attended the Yea Hub on Friday, March 27, along with

representatives from council and other special guests.

Among the guests was Larry, who lost his home in the bushfire in January. He shared his 77th birthday celebrations with the attendees, including the birthday cake.

Following the event, Ms Ward was asked for her thoughts on the current state of recovery and what’s going on in the Murrindindi Shire at the moment. She responded, “Murrindindi Shire are doing great work. I mean, they’ve been there from the start. We had Department of Families and Housing with them at the start. We’ve had Emergency Recovery Victoria with them at the start. Their ability to draw on those already strong relationships they’ve got with communities and to be able to work through ways of helping people and the work with setting up hubs in a variety of communities is so important. We’re so glad that they’ve done it and of course we are supporting that.”

She also commented on the Mobile Health Bus, travelling around to check in on people in the smaller communities. “To be able to have someone come to you where possible is important because it’s those incremental steps of re-engaging with community.”

She was also asked whether there are likely to be further supports offered to the fire impacted communities.

She said, “As we heard earlier, it’s about being led by community. There’s the whole menu of supports that have been put out that people are starting to engage with, and they’re engaging at different speeds. There’s the Emergency Relief Housing Support, there’s the housing support, there’s the support that’s there to help clean up for those who are underinsured or uninsured. There’s re-establishment grants that are there for people in similar circumstances. There’s been the grants for farmers, there’s

been the fodder. There’s a whole variety of things and we’ll continue to work with communities around what is needed in the future as recovery continues.”

She was also asked about the lack of support for underinsured or uninsured people who don’t reach the \$75,000 threshold for primary farm income. Further information on this is likely to be forthcoming.

She added, “Being able to have the hubs and now the workers be able to be here permanently for the next two years is really important because it’s not just being able to have access to people and services. It’s about that established relationship of trust and knowing it’s going to be there for a while.”



Minister Ward. -AR



Larry about to cut his birthday cake as Minister Ward watches on. -AR



Yea Rotary President Darryl King with Minister Ward and Larry. -AR

Shows Group Final

ON Sunday, March 29, the Central and Upper Goulburn Show Societies held their Group Final in Kyneton. The Alexandra area had 12 people who had won at Alexandra Show last November and were representing the area across 15 categories and against nine other show societies. The results were great with seven wins.

Awards

VAS Hand Embroidery - 1st Paul Dalzell, who will go on to compete at Royal Melbourne later in the year.

An Item of Woodwork
- 1st Matt Sullivan

Under 14 years Handmade Card - 1st Olivia Laverty

Open Handmade Card -

2nd Martine Sloan

A Piece of Hand Beading
- 2nd Pam Kingston

Knitted Headwear - 2nd Sue Wynn

A Page of Scrapbooking -
2nd Dianne Goschnick

VAS Junior Photography - Cate Caswell

VAS Open Photography and Victorian Agicultural Shows (VAS) Sewing - Dianne Goschnick

VAS Rich Fruit Cake and VAS Cross Stitch - Helen Godfrey

VAS Carrot Cake - Emma Taylor

Decorated Teddy Bear Biscuit - Logan Robins



Pam Kingston's entry. -S



Matt Sullivan's entry. -S

Plain Sandwich Sponge - Fiona Mackey

Creative Writing - Jacob from Alexandra Primary School

Thank you to everyone that not only entered the Group Final but supported our

local show. Show schedules for the Pavilion will be circulating soon and it’s never too early to start putting your entries together for the show in November.

Food, friends and a few dance moves at U3A Murrindindi East

ROTARY Park was the place to be last Friday evening, as more than 50 members of U3A Murrindindi East gathered for a relaxed and cheerful catch-up to welcome both new and returning faces.

The committee served up a simple but much-loved meal of roast beef rolls, giving everyone the perfect excuse to mingle, reconnect with friends, and meet tutors and committee members in an informal setting. Laughter and conversation flowed easily as the community came together.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, local musician Dave Beattie provided a soundtrack of lively, foot-tapping tunes. Before long, the music proved too tempting to resist, and an impromptu group of U3A line dancers got into the swing of things, delighting onlookers and adding an extra spark to the evening.

The night was a wonderful reminder of what makes U3A Murrindindi East so special: Good company, shared experiences, and plenty of fun along the way.



Let's eat, it's our treat

EASTER FEAST WITH FROSTY'S KITCHEN



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RESERVE YOUR TABLE FOR EASTER

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Small bites \$15 Big bites \$20 Dessert \$12



Enjoy an Easter feast at Sedona Estate

March Let's Eat voucher winner

THE winner of our March Let's Eat \$50 voucher was Ann Anstey from Limestone. Ann will be having a \$50 feed on us at Sedona Estate. Be sure to get your entry form from this edition for your chance to win a \$50 meal at the venue advertised in this edition of Let's Eat; It's our treat. Remember to circle your venue of choice.



Let's eat; it's our treat

Your chance to WIN a \$50 meal voucher

Name.....
Address.....
Phone.....
Venue of your choice (circle your venue of choice)
SEDONA ESTATE

**ONE ENTRY PER HOUSEHOLD
PHOTOCOPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

Return this form by noon, Wednesday, April 22 for your chance to win. Alexandra Newspapers 43 Grant Street, or PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic 3714.

Winner will be notified by phone and published in the first edition of the month.
T&C: Only venues advertised in this feature are eligible to be chosen. Voucher is not redeemable for cash. To be used for one purchase only. Multiple vouchers cannot be saved and used together. Staff or family of Alexandra Newspapers are ineligible to enter. Original form must be returned. If you do not circle your choice of venue, your entry is invalid.

IN Taggerty, a small group of local artists are piecing together a simple but powerful response to the recent fires that touched communities across the shire.

The mosaic group, fondly known as the Mossies, have been meeting regularly since before COVID-19 and continue to welcome new participants.

The latest project, *Take Heart*, grew from a desire to support others as they recover. Many in the group have been through the

2009 fires and have again been affected by the recent fires. The unintended outcome is that group members are helping their own recovery through the reciprocity enabled by this arty random act of kindness.

Working with glass, ceramic tiles, broken crockery and found shards, the Mossies have been creating 200mm square pavers, with a heart included somewhere in the design. The completed pavers will be gifted freely as a symbol of support from the local community. Extensive research has shown that there are

many different types and levels of loss felt by communities and individuals in and around fire zones. The pavers are a small reminder that people care and that we're all connected through this valley of the Goulburn and all the way to Merton, Yarck, Yea, Ruffy and the Highlands.

At the upcoming Alexandra Rotary Easter Art Show a variety of the colourful heart pavers completed by the Mossies will be on display. The mosaiced pavers will be made available at the completion of the project.

The Mossies would like to acknowledge the generous donations from Bunnings Chirside Park, Lilydale Tiles, CH@T for supporting the Take Heart project, and the Rotary Club of Alexandra for exhibition space.

For inquiries about the Take Heart Project or about joining in to the Friday mosaics in the portable at the Community Hub at Taggerty, leave a message with Glenys Hazelman on 5774 7297.



The Take Heart Mosaic Paver Project. -S



Two of the creators hard at work. -S

March meeting of Murrindindi Shire Council

COUNCILLOR Adams is away on planned leave.

Urgent business

Urgent matter regarding the appointment of building contractors for the Eildon Key Worker Housing, cannot wait until next council meeting due to the rapid timeframe of the project. CONT24/24 Eildon Key Worker Housing. Recommendation is that council note that negotiations are proceeding, and delegate negotiating power to the mayor and the CEO. There have been difficulties finalising design and pricing.

Guidelines for successful renewable energy in Murrindindi Shire

Report to guide council’s engagement with renewable energy proposals. The report was finalised following community consultation, with 49 responders to the survey. Murrindindi Shire is not within a designated renewable energy zone, but there is still lots of interest in renewables. This report guides the response to that interest. Council don’t hold the power to approve renewable energy projects, that is a state government decision, but they have an opportunity to have a say.

“Our community craves early, regular and authentic engagement, and doing away with secret non-disclosure arrangements and clandestine deals with landholders,” Mayor Gallagher said.

Council accepted the report.

Murrindindi Health Network Plan 2026-36

The report has been developed collaboratively by local healthcare and community partners, setting out a 10-year approach to declining health outcomes, workforce shortages, and service fragmentation across Murrindindi Shire. The network plan proposes a community-centred alliance model, bringing together local hospitals, community health’s, aged care, disability services, council and key regional partners, to operate as one coordinated local system while retaining their individual governance and identities. The focus is on early wins for residents, navigation, transport, prevention and mental health access, followed by longer term workforce, training and digital solutions. The proposed amalgamation of Alexandra District Health and Eastern Health is not expected to have any impact on the health network or the health network plan. Council was told that Alexandra District

Health would participate in the health network in its future form.

Council endorsed the Murrindindi Health Network Plan 2026-36.

Quarterly financial report

This report covers the period to December 31, 2025, and includes budget adjustments. The December end of year forecast is used as the basis for preparing the annual budget for the 2026-27 financial year. Forecast revenue has risen by \$13.36 million, while forecast expenditure has increased by \$10.7 million. The increase in revenue is driven by an increase in operating grants of \$10.2 million, primarily relating to fire funding, and \$3.6 million in capital grants. With all of the adjustments, the operating surplus is projected to rise from \$1.25 million to \$3.96 million. The underlying result, which excludes capital grants, shows an underlying deficit of \$5.8 million, reflecting a further erosion of \$1.3 million since the September review.

Council voted to receive the report and note the required budget adjustments.

Draft motions to MAV State Council

This report outlines the process for submitting motions to the May 2026 Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) State Council, which enables councils to influence sector-wide advocacy and priorities. The briefing proposes two motions: The first is MAV advocacy for a state-funded, shared pool of specialist resources to support councils in emergency response, relief and recovery; and the second calls on the Victorian and Australian Governments, to develop a nationally consistent disaster impact data sharing framework, creating a single source of truth to improve coordination, reduce duplication, support humane service delivery, and ensure strong privacy protections.

Council endorsed the proposed motions.

Changes to the Annual Priority Action Plan

The Priority Action Plan contains key council actions to be undertaken during the 2025-26 financial year. It requires changing due to the impacts of the January 2026 bushfires. Of the 70 actions planned for the 2025-26 financial year, eight have been completed, and it is recommended that 42 continue unchanged, four continue with minor alterations, six continue with extended delivery timelines,

and 10 have been paused and deferred to the 2026-27 year, or will be rescheduled to a date yet to be determined.

Council endorsed the changes to the Priority Action Plan.

Capital Works Program 2025-26 Mid Year Report

The report covers the progress of council’s capital works from July 1, 2025, until December 31, 2025. Key highlights for this period include: Commencement of the Eildon Key Worker Housing Project, with offsite manufacturing underway; commencement of the Riverside Crescent, Flowerdale, drainage upgrade; commencement of the Road Major Patching Program; awarding of the Kinglake Memorial Reserve Oval reconstruction; tendering for the Breakaway Bridge replacement in Acheron; tendering of the Flowerdale closed landfill capping rehabilitation works; and commencement of the Mid Goulburn Valley, King Parrot Creek and Yea River flood studies. Various other projects have been completed in this period.

Council voted to note the report, the reallocation of funds between existing projects and the re-phasing of some projects.

Councillor reports

Cr Carpenter said that council is continuing to advocate for state support to waive statutory fees for planning, building and health.

Cr Hildebrand said that Snobs Creek Road widening has commenced and is on track to be completed by early April. Frog Ponds Bridge has been manufactured, just needs installing. Pathway renewal works are underway. Tender for Thornton Football Oval lighting will be advertised shortly.

Cr Lording said one of council’s priorities after the January fires is clearing and making safe the 450 kilometres of impacted roads as quickly as possible. Approximately 100 people are working on the roads currently. All bridge, tree and road inspections have been completed. Across the road network, there are nine bridges destroyed and non-trafficable, 73 other bridges impacted, and 35 major culverts. Parts of the Great Victorian Rail Trail remain closed, and roads across the fire area remain with restrictions.

Cr Carr said that the team is working on council’s draft budget, which should be presented at the April meeting of council. She was pleased to visit Snobs Creek Hatchery

Candidate information sessions

REGISTERED political parties and prospective candidates for the 2026 state election are being urged to familiarise themselves with the regulatory requirements and avoid costly mistakes by registering for a series of new information sessions hosted by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC).

The VEC will deliver a comprehensive program of online sessions designed to prepare both party-endorsed and independent candidates for the November state election.

The sessions will cover key topics, including political finance, nomination procedures, how-to-vote card registration, campaign obligations and election operations.

The program will be delivered in three rounds across the year, with six targeted sessions in each round. Sessions are offered at a range of times, including weekdays and weekends.

Prospective candidates will be provided with practical guidance, learn how election processes work on the ground, and have the chance to speak directly with experts about the election processes that involve them.

Having a clear understanding of the rules well before the election timeline can help candidates avoid unnecessary errors and compliance issues.

Further details, including session dates, times and topics covered are available on the registration page at vec.vic.gov.au/se26-info-sessions

with Minister Dimopoulos on February 26 for the opening of the Macquarie Perch Recovery Centre. She congratulated Eildon Pondage Parkrun on their achievement of running for one year.

Cr Gallagher spoke about hosting the Victorian Governor at Highlands and Fawcett and showing the impacts of the January 2026 bushfires.

CEO report

Ms Bonazzi thanked council staff for their efforts in bushfire recovery and reminded people that submissions to the Inquiry into the January 2026 bushfires are due by April 19. The CFA has advised that fire restrictions for Murrindindi Shire will be lifted at 1am on Monday, March 30.

The Farmer's Ag News

Frustration over free trade agreement with EU

THE Federal Government last week concluded negotiations with the European Union (EU) over a free trade deal. The seeming lack of meaningful agricultural market access gains has left Australian farmers disappointed and frustrated.

National Farmers' Federation President Hamish McIntyre said that the deal was disappointing, and that it benefits the EU more than Aussie farmers.

"What the Australian Government has accepted today appears to offer no material change for key agricultural commodities as what the government rightly rejected in October 2023," Mr McIntyre said.

"For decades, our sector has been guided by a clear principle of wanting more two-way trade with the EU, not less.

"A deal with a market of this size offered an opportunity to help ease the pressure on farmers who are grappling with the impacts from the conflict in the Middle East, China's beef tariffs, and United States trade volatility, which are creating global trade headwinds.

"While we acknowledge some progress on issues such as geographical indicators, preserving the use of names like prosecco and parmesan, farmers will rightly be concerned this deal hasn't delivered commercially meaningful access for Australian agricultural exports."

The Victorian Farmers' Federation President Brett Hosking outlined what the free trade agreement means specifically for Australian farm industries.

"Australian agriculture is a net-exporter and the market access numbers simply don't stack up. Beef access is a third of what industry was seeking and for sheep meat, New Zealand got five times more. This puts us at the back of the pack going forward and at a disadvantage," Mr Hosking said.

"For our dairy farmers, it's largely a one-way deal. The EU already exports \$980 million of dairy into Australia, with only \$29 million going back. It's a hard pill to swallow for the country's largest dairy producing state.

"Consumers could also be set to pay more at the checkout for dairy. This move slugs Aussie brands with harmful geographical indicators, that will confuse Australian shoppers and cost them more."

The Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) has worked with the Federal Government over many years to pursue a fair outcome for Aussie red meat producers.

The new free trade agreement delivers only 30,600 tonnes cwt of beef access, far less than the minimum of 50,000 tonnes cwt needed to match EU terms for Australia's competitors. Sheepmeat and goatmeat is similar, with just 25,000 tonnes cwt granted, short of the 67,000 tonnes sought.

Independent Chair of RMAC John McKillop spoke on the matter.

"The red meat industry expresses disappointment over the deal announced, noting the sector's priorities have not been met. This is the worst Free Trade Agreement for the Australian red meat industry to date," Mr McKillop said.

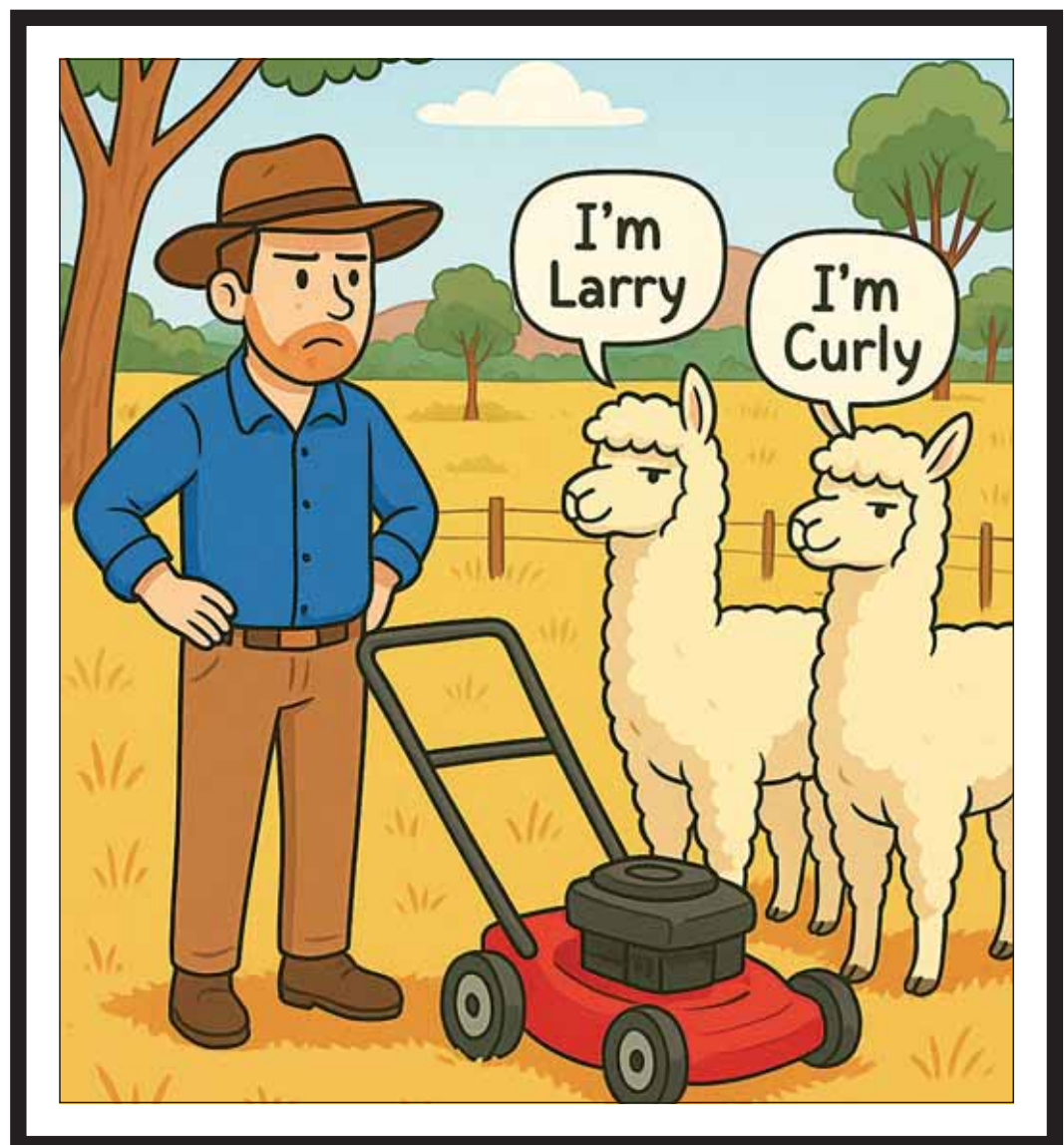
Leader of the Nationals, Senator Matt Canavan, criticised the Federal Government's free trade agreement.

"As the National Farmers' Federation has said, this deal provides no 'commercially meaningful agricultural market access gains since Australia last walked away from negotiations,'" Mr Canavan said.

"What is worse is that the Labor Government is trying to pull the wool over farmers' eyes and hide the dud nature of this deal. While the government has trumpeted the access of up to 35,000 tonnes of beef over time, this is measured in carcase weight terms.

"Until 2019, Australian beef producers had access to a global EU quota of 67,000 tonnes in carcase weight tonnes terms. Australia would often fill the lion's share of this quota.

"But in 2019, the EU did a 'ring-fencing' side deal with the first Trump administration that reduced Australia's access to below 5000 tonnes carcase weight. Now Labor wants applause for lifting this to 35,000 tonnes



(over time) which is not far from what we had before the EU's side deal with Trump.

"The government has also sold-out Australia's national interest by not making it clear that the EU has no right to impose decarbonisation or deforestation initiatives on Australians.

"Today, the Australian Parliament celebrated the shared democratic values of Australia and Europe. But the EU's attempt to regulate our forests and our energy policy is not democratic because no one in Australia voted for the European Parliament."

Watch out for parthenium weed in interstate fodder

FARMERS importing or receiving donated fodder from interstate due to drought or after the recent Victorian bushfires are reminded to watch out for weeds growing from seeds contained in hay, particularly the state prohibited weed parthenium weed.

Agriculture Victoria Biosecurity Manager Angela Constantine said biosecurity threats like parthenium weed or Parthenium hysterophorus can add pressure to already stressed systems.

"Parthenium is one of the world's most aggressive weeds and a continuing threat to Victoria, it isn't currently found in Victoria, but is present in New South Wales and Queensland, so the potential for it to invade Victoria is real," Ms Constantine said.

"Parthenium weed has several undesirable characteristics, not only is it difficult to control due to the large number of seeds produced by the plant's fast reproductive cycle, but it's also toxic to livestock, inhibits other plant growth and can cause severe allergic reactions in humans.

"Farmers are asked to look out for the weed germinating in areas where imported fodder has been used.

"It can grow up to two metres tall, has deeply lobed leaves in a rosette and on the stem, with small white flowers up to one centimetre wide at the end of each branching stem. It can turn woody with age.

"Where possible feeding livestock in a contained area is an effective biosecurity practice to reduce the spread of weed seed across a property, but you should also monitor this area regularly.

"We encourage farmers to be particularly mindful when importing fodder from NSW and Queensland.

"Areas of Victoria along the Murray River, from Corowa, Cobram, Echuca to Swan Hill, are particularly at risk of invasion," Ms Constantine finished.

Parthenium weed is most commonly spread by vehicles and farm machinery, so roadsides and farmland are at risk of invasion.

More information about identifying and reporting parthenium weed is available on the Agriculture Victoria website at go.vic.gov.au/455DEUs

If you think you have seen parthenium weed email weed.spotters@agriculture.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre



Parthenium weed with flowers. -Ethel Aardvark

on 136 186. Agriculture Victoria will remove all plants, for free.

A permit to import interstate fodder is required for fodder sourced from all states and territories (excluding Northern Territory and Tasmania). Entry conditions are available on the Agriculture Victoria website at go.vic.gov.au/4bUbK2I or contact market.access@agriculture.vic.gov.au if you need assistance.

Find more information about support for drought or fire recovery at agriculture.vic.gov.au or call 136 186.

FREE Health Checks for the FARMING COMMUNITY

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Friday 10 April 2026

MouthMapping Oral Cancer Screen



Friday 1 May 2026

Influenza Vaccinations



Friday 1 May 2026

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The Hex Chronicle



A fantastic Fun Day in Buxton

IDEAL autumn weather enticed families to join the festivities at Buxton's 2026 Community Fun Day on Saturday, March 21. Judging by the numbers of smiling faces throughout the day, the event was a resounding success.

Talented local musician, Tayla Arnett, entertained the crowd with her singing which was very easy to listen to. This was made possible thanks to generous financial support

from the Murrindindi Shire Council's Youth Services team.

Youth and Community Development Officer, Ben Waters, said it was a pleasure to support local artists to perform at events like the Buxton Community Fun Day. His team is looking at creating further opportunities for groups to access youth funding for similar events.

Another hit on the day was local face painter, Lottie. She was kept busy all day painting faces of children, parents, and grandparents. Her enthusiasm was infectious and her designs brightened people's faces and added to the occasion.

A wide range of activities kept everyone entertained. Petrice Bibby, under the Buxton Primary School gazebo, encouraged people to have a go at rock-painting. The resulting painted rocks and pebbles were amazing.

Both children and adults embraced a range of table games and other fun activities, including Lucky Chuck, Three Legged Races, Egg and Spoon Race and the Pin the Fish on the Trout Farmer game, as well as a range of other activities. It was a joy to watch the crowd entering into the spirit of the day and being actively involved.

The prominent presence of Buxton Fire Brigade's main appliance provided an apt

backdrop to the Little Fire Truck races, with Lieutenant Graham Sims and Firefighter Rob Buvari in charge. Between Little Fire Truck events, Graham and Rob showed off the vehicle and answered a range of questions about the brigade and fire safety. Throughout the day, the BPA solicited support for its current project, raising funds to help the brigade to purchase additional breathing apparatus for the new Light Tanker.

Buxton Community Celebration Committee chair, Andy Cowan, expressed his appreciation for the fantastic team effort put in by the committee leading up to the event and the many other people who helped on the day.

"We are very fortunate to have people like Rachael Binnie and Leanne McCready (new to the committee this year) who managed the overall event and ensured the smooth implementation of the day, along with Marj Harvey and Allan Tonkin who provided ongoing input and support throughout the planning process," Andy said.

The committee is grateful for the help provided by members of the Buxton Fire Brigade, Buxton Progress Association, Marysville Lions, Cathedral Landcare, Triangle Arts Group, and The Buxton Hotel, all of whom assisted with the event or made generous donations.

Like many local community events in the Triangle, wonderful local volunteers with a strong sense of community got involved on the day, spontaneously stepping forward to help make sure everything flowed. Mayor Damien Gallagher, spoke about the benefits events like the Fun Day and people getting involved brings to the shire. Damien also acknowledged the efforts of communities, like Buxton, during and after the recent fire emergency.

The opportunity to bring the local community together, to chat and have fun, would not have been possible without the financial support of the Buxton 3711 Community Fund and Murrindindi Shire Council. In addition, the efforts of council staff to ensure the Buxton Recreation Reserve was well prepared for the event is to be commended.

The day would not have been such a success without the generous support of local businesses.

"Local events like this are only possible if we continue to support our local business community," Andy said.

Congratulations to all involved. What a great result. It was a Fantastic Fun Day at Buxton last Saturday.



PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 19

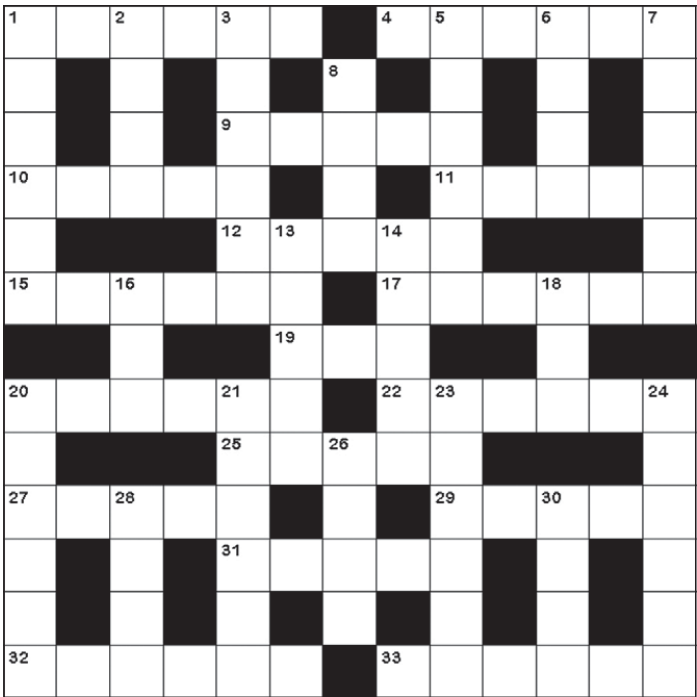
Crossword

ACROSS

1. An apparatus for taking photographs.
4. Cause to wither or parch from exposure to heat.
9. The loop at the end of the hangman's rope.
10. Word with the same sound as another.
11. Pretentious and luxurious country residence.
12. A socially awkward or tactless act.
15. A projectile that is fired from a gun.
17. Land capable of being farmed productively.
19. Any object with a spherical shape.
20. A body of people under a single government.
22. Throw or hit a ball in a high arc.
25. A rise in the temperature of the body.
27. Intense sorrow caused by loss of a loved one.
29. A tasty mixture to be spread on bread.
31. The Celtic language of Ireland.
32. Interfere unwantedly in other people's affairs.
33. Turn inside out or upside down.

DOWN

1. An angel portrayed as a winged child.
2. A large and indefinite number.



3. Go back on one's promise or obligation.
5. Showing inventiveness and skill.
6. Not synthetic or spurious, genuine.
7. Showing moral and intellectual advancement.
8. A shaped mass of baked bread.
13. Turn away from sin and do penitence.
14. A deliberately false or improbable account.
16. A parcel of land having fixed boundaries.
18. A napkin tied under the chin a child.
20. A solid lump of a precious metal.
21. A room for clerical or administrative work.
24. Having experienced while sleeping.
26. A garment that covers the head and face.
28. An individual unit included in a list.
30. How big a thing is.

Word Search

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

Easter

CELEBRATION	EASTEREGGS	HOLIDAY
CHOCOLATE	EGGHUNT	HOTCROSSBUNS
COMMUNITY	FAMILY	PARADE
EASTERBUNNY	GOODFRIDAY	TRADITION

Math Square

3	-		+		-5
-		-		+	
	+		+		18
+		+		+	
	÷		÷	2	1
4		7		8	

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.

Cryptogram

Easter

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
			16	18				
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
6								
E	S	E		E	S			
18	3	6	23	18	10	18	26	26
E								
3	10	18						
E								
23	7	18						
D	S							
1	21	16	6					

Sudoku

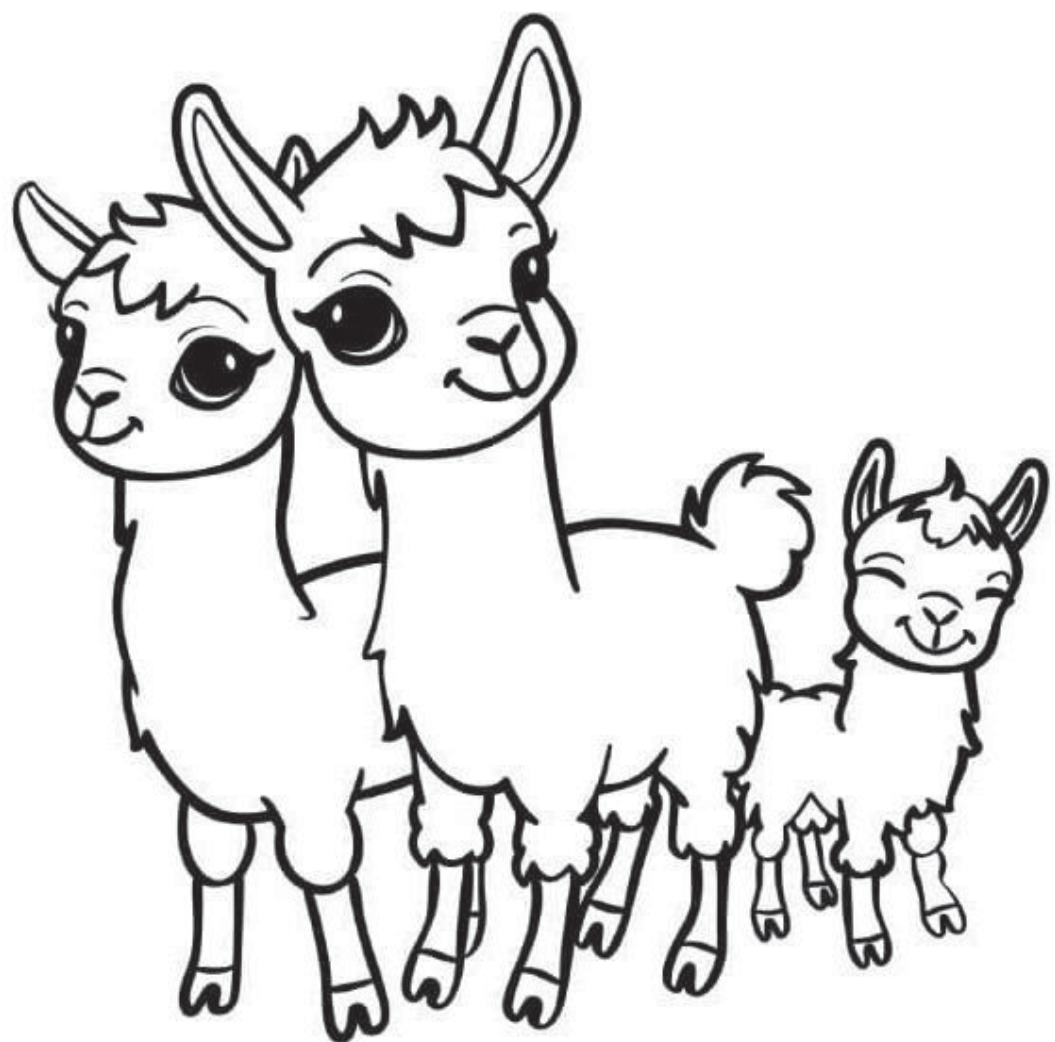
	8			1		5	9
5	7	6					
		3		5	7		4
1						8	
4			8				3
	5						6
6		5	9			8	
						4	9
8	9		4				2

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.

KID'S PUZZLES

Colouring Page



Word Search - Words starting with "I"

ICEBERG
ICECREAM
IDEA
IGLOO
IMAGINE
INCH
INFANT
INK
INSECTS
INSIDE
INVITE
ISLAND
ISSUE
ITEM

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

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.

	+		+	6	18
-		-		+	
	-		-	5	-4
+		+		+	
	-		+		13
13		6		20	

Jokes

Q: What did Batman say to Robin before they got in the car?

A: Get in the car, Robin.

Q: Why didn't the teddy bear eat dessert?

A: Because it was stuffed.

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AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

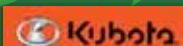


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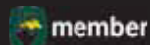
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 Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 5pm
 Eildon Visitor Information Centre, Main
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Election of General Committee Members
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 Presentation of reports.

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Standard



Local jobs powering bushfire recovery across Murrindindi

MURRINDINDI Shire Council’s bushfire response and recovery works are supporting a significant local workforce, with contracted tree works being undertaken by businesses based in Murrindindi, Mansfield, Yarra Ranges and Mitchell shires.

Over 100 people are now involved across multiple crews from 15 businesses delivering tree safety, clean-up and firewood processing works as part of the recovery effort. These local operators have employed new local staff to scale up well beyond their pre-fire operations to meet the urgent and ongoing demand for tree works following the January fires.

Council has deliberately prioritised local contractors wherever possible, ensuring recovery funding stays in the region while supporting businesses, workers and communities who were themselves impacted by the fires. Locals are more likely to spend locally, further improving the economic spend and the success of other local businesses impacted by the fires.

Council’s Economic Development, Local Jobs, and Skills Portfolio Councillor Sandice McAulay said the approach recognised that recovery is about people as much as infrastructure.

“These works are about keeping our roads and communities safe, but they’re also about helping local businesses stand back up, expand their crews and keep people working at a time of real disruption,” Cr McAulay said.

“Many of our contractors live here, employ local people and understand the landscape. That local knowledge is invaluable in recovery, and it means the benefits of this work flows straight back into our communities.”

Tree works are being delivered by a range of local operators, with several businesses moving from occasional or part-time council work, to running multiple full-time crews, including additional roles focused on firewood processing and material reuse.

The scale of the task reflects the severity of fire damage across the shire. One large tree removed from a fire-affected roadway

measured over three metres in diameter, requiring a 20-tonne excavator to safely move it.

Sustainability and Assets Portfolio Councillor Paul Hildebrand said the complexity of the work highlights why experienced local contractors are critical.

“These are not routine jobs. Many trees are unstable, fire-damaged and located along narrow or high-risk roads,” Cr Hildebrand said.

“Local crews are working long hours in challenging conditions to make roads safe and reduce ongoing risks, while also employing people locally and supporting recovery in their own towns.”

Local contractors say the recovery works have allowed them to support their communities in practical and meaningful ways.

Ben, from local contractor Murrindindi Tree Services, said the work goes beyond a standard contract.

“We live and work here, so this isn’t just another contract for us,” Ben said.

“We’ve been able to bring on local people, keep crews working full-time and do something practical to help the community recover. Working alongside council, everyone’s focused on getting the job done safely and properly.”

Aaron, from Unlimbited Trees based in Yea, said the recovery works had created opportunities for both employment and using local knowledge.

“Before the fires we were doing occasional work with council, but now we’ve got multiple crews on the ground and local people employed full-time,” Aaron said.

“It’s tough work, but it’s good to know the effort is helping make roads safer and keeping local jobs going when they’re really needed.”

Dylan, from Leaf and Limb in Healesville, said his team is processing fire-damaged trees to be made available to affected residents for firewood in the coming weeks.

“We’ve been able to turn a difficult situation into something positive by employing locals and providing firewood and mulch back to the community,” Dylan said.

“That’s what recovery looks like at a local level.”

Insurance and Centrelink post-fire

Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish said on Wednesday, “I was advised yesterday that there were issues with people who receive a lump sum insurance payout having an impact on their pension.

“It doesn’t seem fair to me. The reason you’re getting a payout is because you’ve suffered a loss and you’re insured. So, if you’ve lost your house and you’ve received a payout, presumably to rebuild, it’s not something that you should be penalised for through Centrelink.”

She added, “I guess what’s important is the Federal Government understand that the circumstances for these people have altered dramatically. They’ve suffered loss, they’re traumatised, and this just adds to the trauma, not just for them, but for also the community who hear these stories and think it’s wrong.”

Ms McLeish said that she has contacted Senator Jane Hume about the issue, and she plans to send through the names and addresses of people who have been impacted.

She also plans to alert the Premier’s office if it’s an issue.

She said, “The circumstances have changed for these people dramatically and for the worst. They haven’t just won Tattsлото and they’ve got money to play around with, that’s just not the case. But we are actioning it. So as soon as I heard yesterday, we were straight on the ball here to get it moving.”

She asked that people contact her office if they are having similar issues around Centrelink payments.

Tree safety and clean-up works will continue in the coming months as part of council’s broader bushfire recovery program.

Residents are reminded that tree works are prioritised based on safety risk and accessibility, and that not all damaged trees can be removed immediately.

Services Australia’s media team provided the following response when questioned. “Insurance payments to compensate for the loss of, or damage to, a person’s assets, including their principal home, are not counted as income or an assessable asset for Centrelink payments. This exemption is applied for up to an initial 12 months after the payment is received. In some cases, this exemption can be extended for an additional 12 months, or potentially longer, where there are exceptional circumstances.

“If the insurance payment is invested, money earned on the investment is not deemed under the income test while its asset value is not counted. Once the asset that the payment was for has been replaced or repaired, the exemption ceases and any remaining funds are assessable under normal income and asset test rules.

“If the payment is not invested, but spent for another purpose, it may become immediately assessable under the income and assets tests.

“It’s important to let Centrelink know of any changes to income and assets, including if you receive a insurance payment.

“We encourage people to take advantage of the free Financial Information Service. This is a team of specialists with expert understanding of payments, and they can help people make informed decisions about their finances.”

To speak with a member of the Financial Information Service, call 132 000 and say the words ‘Financial Information Service’ when asked for the reason for your call.

Murrindindi Shire Mayor appointed to State Mayoral Advisory Panel

MURRINDINDI Shire Council Mayor, Cr Damien Gallagher, has been appointed to the Victorian Government’s Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel (LGMAP) for 2026, providing the Murrindindi community with a direct voice in key state-level discussions about the future of local government.

This marks the second time Cr Gallagher has been appointed to the panel, having previously served in 2024.

Chaired by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Nick Staikos MP, the panel brings together mayors from across Victoria to provide high-level advice on legislative, regulatory, strategic and policy matters affecting the local government sector.

The panel is established under the *Local Government Act 2020* and meets several times each year to share insights and experiences from across the sector.

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said he was honoured to once again represent regional communities such as Murrindindi at the state level.

“This appointment provides an important opportunity to ensure the perspectives of rural and regional communities are heard when decisions are being considered that affect local government,” Cr Gallagher said.

“I’m proud to represent Murrindindi and to share our experiences, particularly the challenges and opportunities facing smaller rural councils.”

The 2026 Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel includes representation from councils across Victoria, including Melbourne City Council, Frankston City Council, Hepburn Shire Council, Whittlesea City Council, Darebin City Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Casey City Council, Stonnington City Council and Baw Baw Shire Council.

Cr Gallagher said the appointment also comes at a significant time for the region as communities continue recovering from the January 2026 bushfires.

“Our communities are continuing to recover from the impacts of the recent bushfires, and that experience brings an important perspective to statewide conversations about disaster recovery, resilience and the role local government plays in supporting communities through these events,” he said.

Cr Gallagher said his previous experience on the panel in 2024 provided valuable insight into how the state government works with councils on reform and sector improvement.

“In 2024 the panel discussed key issues including governance reforms, councillor training, and planning and housing policy. Being part of those discussions reinforced how important it is that rural voices are included when policy is being developed,” Cr Gallagher said.

“I look forward to contributing again in 2026 and ensuring the needs of communities like ours are part of those conversations.”

The Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel includes mayors representing metropolitan, regional city, interface and rural councils across Victoria to ensure broad representation of the sector.

Meetings of the panel are typically held between March and October each year.

Murrindindi Shire Council Chief Executive Officer Livia Bonazzi congratulated Cr Gallagher on the appointment.

“This is an important opportunity for Murrindindi to contribute to statewide discussions on local government policy and reform,” Ms Bonazzi said.

“Having our Mayor at the table ensures the experiences of rural communities and small shire councils are part of shaping the future of the sector.”

For more information about the Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel visit the Victorian Government website at localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-partnerships/local-government-mayoral-advisory-panel

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MATH SQUARES

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8	9	1	4	5	3	6	2	7

KIDS - MATH SQUARES

8	+	4	+	6	18
-		-		+	
2	-	1	-	5	-4
+		+		+	
7	-	3	+	9	13
13		6		20	

Farmers left wanting after National Cabinet fuel response

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says Monday's National Cabinet outcomes fall short of delivering the certainty farmers need, warning that more must be done to give farmers confidence.

VFF President Brett Hosking said while the federal government's temporary fuel excise cut may provide some relief for consumers, it does little to address the unique and massive impacts being felt at the farm gate.

"Farmers are among the hardest hit by fuel and fertiliser price spikes, yet today's announcements contain no clarity on how fuel will be prioritised if the crisis deepens.

"Farmers are telling me they are facing a real make or break moment. They can't keep absorbing skyrocketing input costs without a plan to at least break even in months ahead.

"This decision might help consumers in the short-term, but it leaves farmers out in the cold on price relief. Eventually, the pain felt by farmers now will hurt consumers at the supermarket checkout," Mr Hosking said.

The VFF expressed concern that, despite ongoing calls from industry, National Cabinet failed to commit to a clear framework that prioritises fuel access for critical industries such as agriculture, particularly in regional and rural communities already experiencing supply disruptions.

"We've consistently called for a system that recognises agriculture as an essential service in times of shortage. That means guaranteed access to fuel so farmers can plant, harvest and transport food and fibre.

"We're seeing patchy shortages and growing uncertainty. Without explicit prioritisation, farmers risk being left at the back of the queue and many will be forced to look after their bottom line," Mr Hosking said.

While efforts to stabilise national fuel supply are welcome, the VFF says they must be matched with practical, on-the-ground measures that support those most exposed to volatility.

"Ensuring fuel imports and supply chains are functioning is important but it's only part of the solution. Farmers need certainty that when they need fuel, it will be available.

"Farmers are helping to keep food on the table and are underpinning our regional economies. In a crisis like this, they cannot be an afterthought," Mr Hosking said.

How talking helps boys resist bad influencers

REGULAR, real-world conversations with boys and young men are key to helping them handle extreme, potentially harmful messages they may be encountering online from a network of popular spaces and personalities known as the 'manosphere'.

To help parents and carers understand the appeal and impact of the manosphere, eSafety has published an Online Safety Advisory explaining what it is and what families need to know.

Louis Theroux's new Netflix documentary, *Inside the Manosphere*, is generating renewed focus on harmful stereotypes promoted in some online forums, including rigid stereotypes about what it is to be a 'real man'.

"What makes the manosphere so appealing is it promises a formula for 'guaranteed' success, physically, sexually and financially. This is a very potent and alluring promise, especially when someone is dealing with the ordinary turbulence and insecurities of adolescence," eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant said.



Georgina and Emma (Vasey RSL Care Veteran Services staff), Jeff (new Bundoora resident), Bob (President, Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia) Chris (Vasey RSL Care Executive General Manager Veteran Services) and superstar pup Geordie. -S

Veteran solidarity shines after bushfire devastation

WHEN Vietnam War veteran Jeff Swain lost his home to the Victorian bushfires earlier this year, it was the veteran community that helped him find stability and a new place to call home.

Jeff's home in Highlands was destroyed by fire on January 9, 2026, leaving Jeff and his loyal dog Geordie homeless in the blink of an eye. When Vasey RSL Care became aware of his situation, the organisation moved quickly, offering Jeff a permanent home at its newly completed Ex-Service Accommodation site in Bundoora.

Completed in late December 2025, the Bundoora development includes 20 new single-storey affordable housing units designed to meet growing demand for secure, long-term housing for veterans. Jeff and Geordie have now settled into one of those homes, marking a fresh start after an incredibly challenging beginning to the year.

For Jeff, the loss was confronting and brought back memories of earlier bushfire threats. During the 2006 Victorian bushfires, his Highlands home narrowly escaped destruction, an experience that never left him.

"Bushfires remind you how quickly everything can change," Mr Swain said.

"One moment you're at home, the next you're starting again. What makes the difference is knowing there are people and organisations who step in and help."

Despite losing his home, Jeff remains grounded and optimistic.

"At the end of the day, they're just possessions," he said.

"Geordie and I are safe, and now we have a secure place to live again. Having stability makes it easier to stay positive and move forward."

Vasey RSL Care Chief Executive Officer Janna Voloshin said providing safe and secure housing in times of crisis is central to the organisation's mission.

"At Vasey RSL Care, we exist to serve those who served," Ms Voloshin said.

"When veterans experience hardship, whether through bushfires, housing stress or other crises, our focus is on offering practical support that helps them recover and rebuild.

"Secure housing is fundamental to recovery and wellbeing. We are proud to provide Jeff with a permanent home after such a significant loss, and to ensure he and Geordie have not just a roof over their heads, but a supportive community around them."

Jeff also acknowledged the broader support he received in the immediate aftermath of the fires, with the Highlands Caravan Park providing emergency accommodation, and assistance flowing in from Middle Kinglake Primary School, the Vietnam Veterans Association (Goulburn Valley and Diamond Valley), the Defence Force Welfare Association, RSL Victoria, Seymour RSL, Frankston RSL, Seaford RSL, Box Hill RSL, Kilmore RSL and his own RSL Sub-Branch, Yea-Kinglake.

Now settled into his new home, Jeff says the experience has reinforced his belief in the importance of community and the value of organisations that step up when it matters most.

Vasey RSL Care's Ex-Service Accommodation program provides affordable, secure, long-term housing to veterans and their families across Victoria.

"These influencers thrive on notoriety and clicks, and their advice is often overlaid with provocative and harmful gender tropes, including that women are manipulative, irrational or less deserving of respect. They also advocate for very rigid ways to be, look and act as a man, including suppressing any emotion that might be perceived as 'feminine', a message that can be disastrous for any young man grappling with low self-esteem or mental health challenges."

eSafety wants parents, carers and extended families to appreciate they can provide influential and positive alternatives to rigid stereotypes of how to be a young man in today's complex world.

"We want parents and carers to be aware, informed and engaged, not alarmed. Overwhelmingly, boys and young men are critical, savvy and resilient online users, but these negative gendered narratives are seeping into mainstream platforms and conversations.

"As highlighted throughout eSafety's Young Men Online research series, we need

to keep providing boys and young men with lots of healthy and diverse role models to look up to, whether that be in the extended family, school, sports clubs or community groups.

"Actively cultivating critical thinking is also a must. The most lauded of these influencers are financially exploiting the vulnerabilities of some young men, either through advertising revenue or product placements on their well-subscribed platforms. We need to support boys to spot exploitative patterns, while also educating them how algorithms and recommender systems are usually designed to promote controversy and outrage, a term I refer to as, 'outragement'."

Ms Inman Grant said parents and carers should not underestimate the power of being positively and actively engaged in their children's online lives.

"You don't need to understand every meme, acronym or emoji. What's more important is being actively engaged in how boys are navigating the online world from their first digital interactions.

"eSafety research shows a positive relationship between parental engagement and young people's willingness to talk about negative online experiences. We found that 95 per cent of children who said their parents regularly encourage open conversations about online safety would speak to them if something online made them feel upset, uncomfortable or ashamed."

The advisory encourages parents and carers to ask open questions rather than shutting conversations down, take an interest in where their children spend time online, encourage them to question and critically assess online content talk early and often about respectful relationships including consent, encourage positive role models in their children's offline lives, and reassure boys and young men that seeking help and talking about mental health is a sign of strength.

To further support families, eSafety is hosting a series of webinars at esafety.gov.au/parents/webinars to help parents and carers navigate these issues and better support the boys and young men in their lives.

A quick refresh on duck hunting responsibly

THE duck hunting season opened recently, on Wednesday, March 18, and is set to run until 30 minutes after sunset on Monday, June 8. Any hunters participating in the season are reminded to harvest the game ducks as ethically as possible, and respect the rules laid out by the Game Management Authority (GMA).

The bag limit for ducks in 2026 is nine game ducks, with permitted species including Pacific black duck, mountain duck, chestnut teal, grey teal, pink-eared duck, wood duck and hardhead. The blue-winged shoveler cannot be hunted.

Duck hunting can occur from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset until the season ends, and “hunters must make all reasonable efforts to immediately retrieve all downed game ducks and to salvage at least the breast meat from all harvested ducks,” the GMA website says.

The Wildlife (Game) Regulations were remade in September of 2024, and with these came the allowance for two new gundog breeds that are permitted to duck hunt, these being the wirehaired Slovakian pointer and Murray River retriever.

Any new and renewing Victorian gamebird licence applicants must complete an online education program, courtesy of GMA. Duck hunters must complete: The ‘Hunting essentials’ online education module, the

‘Duck hunting basics’ online education module, and the ‘Waterfowl Identification Test’ and online education module (for new applicants only).

Duck hunters must also hold a valid Game Licence and Firearms Licence.

Something else to keep in mind this duck hunting season is the GMA’s new research, in partnership with Deakin University, into the movements and behaviour of Victoria’s game ducks.

According to the GMA website, “the research involves attaching small solar-powered satellite tracking devices to over 400 individual game ducks from four game duck species over three years. Duck species to be fitted with the trackers are Pacific black duck, Australian wood duck, grey teal and chestnut teal.

“The lightweight tracking devices capture information about the duck’s location, movement, breeding, feeding and resting patterns 24 hours a day and will send the information to GMA and Deakin University researchers via mobile phone network.”

It is entirely possible that you might find a tracker attached to a harvested duck. Even if the tracker is damaged, it can still provide information to GMA about the duck’s movements. In that scenario, GMA asks that hunters contact research@gma.vic.gov.au

GMA Research Principal Dr Jason Flesch spoke about this new study of game duck movements.

“This project aims to identify the drivers of game duck movement in relation to fluctuating environmental conditions, including water availability, in the Australian landscape. It will also record how long game ducks survive,” Dr Flesch said.

“This vital knowledge will be used with other research to inform Adaptive Harvest Management of game ducks in Victoria, which is being implemented to ensure duck hunting in Victoria remains sustainable.”

Those ducks fitted with a tracker, and many more, have also been banded with an aluminium ring around one of their legs. Hunters are allowed to keep the leg band, but are still encouraged to report the details to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) at dcceew.gov.au/science-research/bird-bat-banding/get-involved/report-band-sightings#How_to_report

Hunters can upload a photo of the band as part of their report, and the ABBBS will process the information and provide the hunter with a recovery report including when and where the bird was banded, its age at banding, the time since banding and the distance between banding location and recovery.

There is also continuous discussion around the sport of duck hunting, with many opposed to the concept. Wildlife Victoria had their say on the matter, stating how they were opposed, but also many Victorian citizens were also opposed to duck hunting.

“Wetlands across Victoria will once again ring out with gunfire as the state’s duck hunting season begins, placing native species protected under the *Wildlife Act* one day, the target of hunters the next,” Wildlife Victoria says.

“Despite a 2023 Parliamentary Inquiry into Native Bird Hunting recommending a complete ban, the state government ultimately allowed the practice to continue.

“The Inquiry received the highest number of submissions in Victorian parliamentary history, with the overwhelming majority calling for duck hunting to end.

“Had the Victorian Government adopted the Inquiry’s recommendation in full, Victoria would have become the fourth Australian state to ban duck hunting, joining Western Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland, which banned the practice in 1990, 1995, and 2005 respectively.

“Wildlife Victoria recently joined other leading wildlife care organisations, RSPCA Queensland, Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Group WA, and Wildlife Recovery Australia, in a federal pre-budget submission calling for a National Framework for wildlife protection, rescue, treatment and rehabilitation.

“The organisations warned that fragmented wildlife laws across Australia create gaps in protection and called on the Federal Government to consult with wildlife welfare groups to improve national coordination, particularly for threatened and endangered species.”

Wildlife Victoria CEO Lisa Palma added her thoughts on the subject of duck hunting.

“Time and time again hunters have been unable to discern between ‘game’ and ‘non-game’ species,” Ms Palma said.

“Threatened ducks such as the blue-winged shoveler and freckled duck are inevitably caught in the crossfire. It is unacceptable.

“We will continue to advocate for this cruel and unnecessary practice to end and for wildlife policy to reflect both community expectations and the growing pressures facing our native species.”

The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) outlined what duck hunting contributes to Victoria.

“Recreational duck hunting is a valued activity for almost 22,000 Victorians and their families. It contributes around \$65 million to the Victorian economy each year, supports 587 jobs, and importantly, around 69 per cent of that economic activity occurs in regional Victoria,” SSAA says.

“Duck hunting in Victoria has also undergone significant reform over recent decades. The season length and bag limit are now set through an adaptive harvest management framework that uses robust data and an objective scientific process, with sustainability at its core.

“In addition, new and renewing game licence holders are required to complete updated education modules covering their responsibilities to animal welfare, cultural heritage and the broader community.

“Out on the wetlands yesterday, we saw generations of families hunting together and enjoying time in nature, cultural traditions and the satisfaction of bringing home healthy, sustainable wild game meat for the table.

“Government research also shows that recreational hunters report higher levels of general wellbeing than the broader population.

“The simple reason SSAA Victoria supports recreational duck hunting is that it is a safe, responsible, sustainable and legitimate use of public land and natural resources. The fact that some people oppose duck hunting is not, in itself, a good reason to deny tens of thousands of responsible, law-abiding Victorians the opportunity to participate in an activity that delivers social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits,” SSAA finishes.

Alexandra Squash Club: Round eight of term one pennant

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition Magpies versus Eagles

TYLER (fill in) versus Eric: It was a one-sided match. Eric put in a good effort but Tyler was too good for him and claimed the match with a good lead. 68 to 43.

Randy versus Sally: Sally had the situational awareness and played with pinpoint accuracy and some low shots that gave Randy no chance. Randy’s serve gave Sally problems, but he lacked consistency, serving too many faults to be able to apply pressure on Sally. It was a win for Sally. 78 to 61.

Kristelle (fill in) versus Justin: Great effort by Kristelle to make it close in the second game. Lots of uncalled lets made it an entertaining match. Justin was just too strong in the end and won with a landslide. 100 to 39.

John versus Daniel W: John had to much class. Daniel pulled his game together to win eight of the last nine points to take the final game and show us what he is capable of, but he needs to be more consistent throughout the whole match if he’s going to take the win away from John. 60 to 51.

Crows versus Cockatoos

Tyler (fill in) versus Jordan: Some good long rallies. Jordan was more consistent throughout, winning the match. 57 to 47.

Laura versus Liane: Liane had a better game, but Laura put up a good contest and made her work for it. Liane claimed the win. 70 to 51.

Chris versus Ben: Chris found himself out played for much of the match, but he



Ben lines up to smash the ball down the wall behind Chris. -S

has a knack of hanging in the rally and won’t give up making his opponent work hard to earn each point. Two games all but Ben accumulated more points. 61 to 48.

Jim versus Phil: Great game to watch. Jim just had the upper hand with his placement, making Phil cover some ground around the court. Great rallies were played and Jim came out on top. 52 to 42.

Wednesday competition Freightliners versus Western Stars

Nicole versus Beth: Nicole got off to a flying start only for Beth to find her range in the second game. From the on Beth disposed of any balls that Nicole hit within range. A comfortable win to the more experienced player. 60 to 46.

Sam versus Daniel: Sam made great last-minute comebacks to level the first two games. Daniel had a very strong serve, and the match came down to a tiebreaker, pushing the match Daniel’s way for a one-point win. 62 to 61.

Michael M versus Andrew: Michael was error prone early and Andrew capitalised to get a big early lead in the first game. From then on Michael picked-off Andrews serves, and it became a tight contest in the middle. In the final game, Andrew had the poise and Michael’s short game lost impact. Andrew winning comfortably. 67 to 48.

Kenworths versus Scanias

Matthew versus Ben H: Both players were consistent and played well. Matthew kept trying, but Ben stayed on top to triumph. 74 to 43.

Daniel W (fill in) versus Justin: Daniel capitalised on some of Justin’s errors to take an early lead in each of the first two games, albeit with late charges by Justin. Subtlety went out the window as each combatant spanked the ball around as they tried to claim position. Justin swung the match to go into the last game with a lead. Daniel had the calm and fortune to win back the lead and the match. 59 to 56.

SDCA celebrates season at presentation night

THE Seymour District Cricket Association (SDCA) has celebrated the achievements of its players at its 2025/26 Presentation Night, recognising outstanding performances across senior and junior competitions.

The evening brought together players and clubs from across the competition to acknowledge individual excellence following a strong and competitive season.

Awards were presented across batting, bowling and all-rounder categories, as well as major association medals, reflecting the depth of talent and high standard of cricket across the SDCA.

SDCA President Mitch Itter said the night was an important opportunity to recognise the performances that defined the season.

“The presentation night is a great opportunity to acknowledge the performances of players across all grades,” Itter said.

“We’ve seen a really strong standard of cricket this season, and the award winners should be proud of their efforts and consistency.

“It’s particularly pleasing to see the performances coming through our junior ranks, which highlights the strength and future of cricket within the SDCA.”

A highlight of the evening was the awarding of Life Membership to Jason Tarran, recognising both his outstanding playing career and long-standing service to the association.

Tarran’s on-field achievements place him among the most accomplished players in SDCA history, having claimed the A Grade bowling average on nine occasions, the A Grade batting average once, and being named A Grade Champion Player.

Off the field, Tarran has also made a significant contribution to the SDCA, serving as Treasurer for more than a decade.

Itter said Tarran’s Life Membership was a fitting recognition of his impact on the competition.

“Jason’s record speaks for itself. His achievements as a player are exceptional and place him among the very best to have played in the SDCA,” Itter said.

“To win the A Grade bowling average nine times is remarkable, and to add a batting average and Champion Player award highlights just how complete a cricketer he has been.

“Beyond his playing career, Jason has given more than 10 years of service as Treasurer, playing a key role in supporting the administration and stability of the association.

March monthly medal at Eildon Golf Club

by Puttomatic

WELCOME back to the Eildon Golf Club match report. Last Saturday was the March monthly medal day at Eildon Golf Club, with a side competition of counting your putts.

The March medal winner for the week was Ken Collier with a net 69, second John Beale with net 70 ball run winners Colin Long net 70, Denis McDonald net 71, Rod Taylor net 71, Mark Mackwell net 72 and Grant Walters net 72.

Nearest the pin winners were Kerry Power on the third, Denis McDonald fifth, no winner on the 11th, Allison Southwell on the 12th and Rod Taylor on the 14th and Rhys Southwell won drinks for his group with a birdie on the eighth.

Other winners John Beale won the super six; Rod Taylor won the putting for the day with 23 putts; John Beale won the entry draw, Rod Taylor had a go at the swindle and Colin Long tried his hand with the joker.

Happy and safe Easter to all from the Eildon Golf Club and members.

“Life Membership is the highest honour we can bestow, and Jason is an incredibly deserving recipient.”

The SDCA congratulates all award winners on their achievements.

2025/26 SDCA Award Winners

A Grade

Batting Award: Cameron Armstrong (294 runs at 98); Bowling Award: Kalon Winnell (21 wickets at 6.52); All Rounder: Lachlan Watts (870 points); Frank Zanelli Medal: Lachlan Watts.

B Grade

Batting Award: Jared Smith (354 runs at 70.8); Bowling Award: Jacob Nipperess (21 wickets at 7.14); All Rounder: Levi Ronalds (606

points); John Gadd Medal: Levi Ronalds.

Under 16s

Batting Award: Hamish Melville (340 runs at 113.33); Bowling Award: Finn Melville (18 wickets at 10.83); All Rounder: Hamish Melville (575 points); Ken Hall Medal: Hamish Melville.

Under 13s

Batting Award: Braxton Tucker (393 runs at 196.5); Bowling Award: Blake Winnell (10 wickets at 3.9); All Rounder: Braxton Tucker (653 points); Sam Watts Medal: Braxton Tucker.

Junior Country Week Player of the Week

Under 13s: Archie Armstrong, Brock Inness; Under 15s: Tyler Caddie; Under 17s:

Thomas White.

Life Membership

Jason Tarran.

SDCA Team of the Year

Charles Davies, 571 runs at 51.91; Josh Rudge (wk), 348 runs at 34.8; Lachlan Watts, 620 runs at 88.57; Travis Stefanos, 371 runs at 41.22; Cameron Evans, 335 runs at 47.86; Cameron Armstrong, 294 runs at 98; Lachlan Drummond, 257 runs at 23.26 and 21 wickets at 11.67; Will Ashton, 24 wickets at 11.25; Kal Winnell (c), 21 wickets at 6.52; Matt Archibald, 21 wickets at 10.48; Joshua Crane, 20 wickets at 9.3.

Final round of Foursomes Championship at Alexandra Golf Club

by Dave Silverman

THE forecast was for 30 degrees last Tuesday at Alexandra Golf Club, and Brad was dragged kicking and screaming to an early tee-off. In the end, it did get to 28, and most of the six players agreed that it was a good decision.

With the greens still highly unpredictable due to the scarifying, the scores were not quite what you might expect. Leo Dynes made the best of the conditions, and won the day with 33 points, with Bill Wind second on 32 and John Mosley in third with 30.



Ladies foursomes winners Judy Pearson and Donna Meggitt. -S

Lennie Jenkins won the nearest the pin on seven, and 17 went to John Greatorex, with 18 unclaimed. Gretto also got a voucher in the rundown, as did yours truly.

The eight ladies who teed off in the second and final round of their Foursomes Championship did so in cool, foggy conditions for the first time this year. The winners on the day were Judy Pearson and Donna Meggitt with a score of 89 net 70.5, with Lyn Capp and Sue Greatorex in second with 106 net 77.5

Marg Fahey and Barb Doyle claimed nearest the pin on 18, and seven went to Judy and Donna.

As well as winning the day, Judy and Donna, with a cumulative score of 147, took out the Foursomes Championship for 2026. Congratulations, ladies, well done.

Saturday dawned fine, warm and clear, and a field of 14 faced the starter for a stableford round, which was sponsored by FoodWorks, and despite the greens still proving to be something of a challenge, there were some good scores posted.

Corey Jack was at the top of the heap with 39 points, two clear of second placed Simon Rouget and Bruce Flanders in third. Todd Galloway came in fourth with 36.

Todd also took off the nearest the pin on 18, with two going to Jarrod Williamson, seven to John Norfolk, and Michael Bossonnet taking 12.

Corey capped off a great day by winning the raffle.

Big weekend for Alexandra Football Netball Club volunteers

THE Rebels had a huge weekend, with plenty happening both on and off the field, but what truly stood out was the incredible effort of the Alexandra Football Netball Club (AFNC) volunteers.

Last Saturday, the senior footballers came together for training followed by an intra-club match, setting a strong tone for the season ahead. Behind the scenes, however, an army of dedicated Rebels were hard at work preparing and running the club’s food tent at the Alexandra Pro Rodeo, while also supplying volunteers to operate both bars throughout the night.

From early set-up, stocking the bars, cooking, serving, and working shifts right across the evening, the volunteers were nothing short of outstanding. With such a busy weekend around town, many stepped up without hesitation, staying on for multiple shifts and doing whatever was needed to get the job done.

The club also extend a big thank you to those who assisted with bar service at the CFA fundraiser held at AFNC’s clubrooms,

again showing the strength of the club and its willingness to support the wider community.

These fundraising efforts play a vital role in keeping AFNC running, but more importantly, they highlight what makes the Rebels so special: People who are always willing to roll up their sleeves and support one another.

To every single volunteer who helped out over the weekend, thank you. Your time, energy and commitment do not go unnoticed, and the club is incredibly grateful for your support.

There’s plenty to look forward to as we build into the season. The clubrooms will be open again this coming Thursday night, as the club edge closer to Round One for their senior sides on Saturday, April 11, where the Alexandra footballers travel to Seville to kick off the season.

AFNC’s Senior Club Jumper Presentation Night will be held on Thursday, April 9, always a great night on the calendar, with team announcements, the Thursday night

raffle, and the presentation of jumpers to footballers.

Junior teams will begin their season on Sunday, April 19, with fixtures set to be released in the coming week, an exciting time for the young Rebels as they get ready to take the field and courts.

The club’s first home game will be on Saturday, April 18 against Emerald, and it promises to be a big day at the club. The Golf Ball Drop will take place at half time of the senior game, and the club are thrilled to have former AFL player Tom Mitchell pulling on the Rebels colours for the day.

After the game, supporters will have the chance to hear from Tom during a Q and A session, one not to be missed.

The club is also currently seeking game day volunteers to assist with roles such as gate attendants and timekeeping. These roles are vital in ensuring match days run smoothly and are a great way to get involved around the club.

If you’re able to lend a hand, please contact President Kylie Cairns on 0409 932 761.



Revamped rodeo raises funds for bushfire relief

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The people recognised during the Alexandra Pro Rodeo Grand Parade for their magnificent work during and after the January fires. -photos by AR

Revamped rodeo raises funds for bushfire relief

THE Alexandra Pro Rodeo, postponed from its usual January date due to the fires, took place on Saturday, March 28, before a crowd of around 4400 people. The event was held as a fundraiser to support people impacted by the blaze.

It was run in a different format this year, with the rodeo interspersed with live music performances.

There were four rodeo sessions, including first and second division bareback, open and second division saddle bronc, open and

second division bulls, as well as steer riding, ladies' bronc and barrel racing.

There were 85 competitors across the afternoon and evening.

March 28 was a busy evening, with events including the CFA Appreciation Dinner and the Deb Ball, so some locals were unable to attend the rodeo this time around.

There was a large screen set up so that people could sit on the hill and watch the live music, as well as all the action of the rodeo.

Organiser Andrew Embling said that the Grand Parade was very emotional, with CFA

members, other first responders, and people involved in the recovery invited into the arena. The audience were certainly keen to thank them for all they have done.

The Australian National Anthem was sung beautifully by Tayla Arnett as the audience stood.

Many people camped at the showgrounds for the event, and Andrew said that everyone was very well behaved and that there have been no negative reports. Police also said that the crowd was well behaved.

The funds raised through ticket sales and direct donations will be dispersed to Alexandra Rotary Club, Alexandra Lions Club, Farm Angels and Rural Aid. The final amount raised has not yet been calculated.

"All in all, a very successful rodeo. It was just a great day and everybody was happy," Andrew said.

This weekend will be another busy one in Murrindindi Shire, with one of the highlights being the Easter Fair in Rotary Park on Sunday.



Tayla Arnett (left) singing the Australian National Anthem.