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Health merger: community concern, confusion and scepticism

A MAJOR community survey conducted by Murrindindi Shire Council across Alexandra, Yea, and surrounding towns has revealed a range of views, with a majority expressing concern, confusion and scepticism about the proposed voluntary amalgamation between Alexandra District Health (ADH) and Eastern Health (EH). Conducted over 16 days and attracting 278 responses, the survey provides a statistically significant snapshot of community sentiment.

Responses came from across the shire, with the largest number from Alexandra (55 per cent) and Yea (43 per cent). Across all questions and themes, 64 to 67 per cent of respondents were opposed or strongly opposed to the amalgamation, expressing concerns about the potential loss of local services, leadership, and community identity.

Common concerns included fears that the amalgamation would become a "backdoor forced takeover," the potential loss of the ADH CEO and board, decisions being shifted to Melbourne, closures or downgrading of services, how this impacts Yea and District Memorial Hospital and its future, loss of local autonomy, and poor communication with no clear plan. Many respondents also referred to past negative experiences, such as the Healesville downgrade and issues within Grampians Health.

Around 20 to 25 per cent of respondents were unsure or confused about what the amalgamation's implications, with many stating they did not understand the difference between amalgamation and a partnership, felt they had not received enough information, the consultation period was too short, and could not form an opinion without a detailed plan.

A smaller group (12 to 14 per cent) indicated conditional support, contingent on guarantees such as service protection, local representation, and evidence of actual improvement. Only a minority, 10 to 12 per cent, strongly supported amalgamation, citing potential benefits including increased

sustainability, access to specialists, workforce development, and trust in the ADH Board's judgment. Even among supporters, most emphasised the need for safeguards and transparency.

Residents were clear about the conditions they want to see in place. Approximately 55 to 60 per cent demanded strong local representation, and 50 to 55 per cent called for guaranteed protection of existing services. Around 35 to 40 per cent insisted that local autonomy and management structures be maintained, while 25 to 30 per cent emphasised that services should be expanded and not reduced. Many also highlighted the importance of transparency, accountability and ongoing community consultation.

While some respondents saw possible advantages, such as more specialist services, a more stable workforce, shared staffing and training, better financial sustainability, economies of scale, and expanded services, these benefits would only be acceptable with concrete guarantees in place.

Overall, the survey reveals a community that is protective of its rural health services, cautious about metropolitan governance, seeking better consultation, and willing to consider change only with firm protections. A minority sees potential benefits, but the dominant sentiment remains concern, confusion, and mistrust, largely due to a lack of clear, detailed information and the rushed nature of the process.

The survey indicates a need to rebuild community trust through transparency, detailed planning, genuine engagement, and strong local governance safeguards.

To read the entire report on this survey, please visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/healthcaresurveyresults or collect a hard copy at either the Alexandra or Yea Council offices.

[If people are keen to express their concerns about the proposed merger to the Alexandra District Health CEO, they will need to contact acting CEO Claire Palmer as Jane Poxon will be on long service leave until March 2026. -Ed]

Yea Rotary conducted a barbecue in Yea on Saturday in support of the cause, Say No to Domestic Family Violence. 200 sausages given away at the event. More images of events in the shire in support of the cause can be found on page 17. Pictured are Penny Paxman, Jill Heath, Darryl King and Glen Millican. -S



Disaster roaming could save lives this bushfire season.

Disaster roaming is a simple, life-saving reform. With bushfire season here, the National Farmers' Federation is supporting my plan. Regional Australians deserve a telecommunications system that works when it matters most.



Helen Haines MP

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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

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

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ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

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Murrindindi says

THE Murrindindi Walk for Respect was held during 16 Days of Activism in conjunction with Rotary’s ‘Say No to Family Violence’ message.

The event was held in Rotary Park on Friday, November 28, in sunny and warm conditions, drawing people from all parts of the shire. Many wore purple t-shirts, available for purchase at the event, supporting the message.

There were various stalls, with organisations providing information and advice on a variety of topics.

Mayor Damien Gallagher emceed the event. He said, “Your presence here today means something. It shows that in Murrindindi, we do not turn away from difficult issues. We face them together.”

He added, “Today we walk with purpose. We walk to stand against domestic and family violence. We walk for equality, for safety, and for the simple but powerful idea that respect must underpin every relationship, every home, every club, every workplace, and every community. This is not easy work, but real change rarely is. It takes time, compassion, and a community willing to stand side by side, and that is exactly what we’re doing today.

“Respect is more than just a slogan. It’s a way we choose to live every day. It looks like building healthy, equal relationships, practicing enthusiastic consent, ensuring fairness in our workplaces, clubs and homes, speaking up when something isn’t right, and role modelling the behaviours we want our kids to grow up with. Everyone, absolutely everyone, deserves to feel safe, valued and respected.”

He stated that in the year ending March 2025, 208 family violence incidents were reported across Murrindindi Shire, a 14.3 per cent increase on the year before. He commented, “Every one of those numbers

represents a person, a family and a life impacted. That’s why this walk matters. Every step today honours those who have been harmed, it supports those who are still navigating their way through it and it signals the future we’re determined to build.

“Creating safer communities is something we do together. We listen to lived experience, we pay attention to the data and we work alongside local services who show extraordinary dedication day in and day out. To those who shared their stories, thank you for your courage. You’ve reminded us that family violence does not fit a stereotype. It does not discriminate by postcode, income, education or status.”

He also reminded people that judgement has no place in the conversation, and said that everyone can help through challenging assumptions and focusing on creating environments where people are believed, supported and informed about their options.

“Every one of us can help,” he said, “By listening without judgment, sharing information about support services, and promoting respect in our homes, workplaces, and communities.”

Ian Smith from Rotary Alexandra said, “Rotary are united nationally and internationally campaign for this particular cause.”

He said, “It’s inspiring to see so many community groups here today. Individuals come together for this important cause, because events like this remind us that real change happens when we all stand united and work together.”

He thanked the Alexandra Fire Brigade for the barbecue, Redgate Alexandra CWA for the providing morning tea and powerful craft decorations that carry a message of hope, and U3A East Murrindindi, promoting active retirement through social connection

Alison from Vincentcare also spoke about family violence systems, the gendered nature of family violence, how rigid gender roles and stereotypes contribute to harm, and the important role we all play in prevention.

She noted that *The National Community Attitude Survey* tells us that 82 per cent of people will not go to the police about family violence, so the 208 incidents can be multiplied by five for a more accurate figure. In a small community like Murrindindi, that’s a huge number.

She also spoke to various stallholders. U3A outlined their activities for older people. Alexandra District Health explained they have generalist counselling and social work services and they educate their staff to identify family violence and link people in with the right services, including Vincentcare or Orange Door. Familycare have a worker based in Alexandra, and like Alexandra District Health, they’re not as specialised family violence service but do also work in that space of identification and a lot of work in the recovery phase of victim survivors. They also have men’s counselling. Anglicare are fairly new to the southern Goulburn area and have been offering family violence specialist services for about six months now. They also offer services for people who use violence, such as the Men’s Behaviour Change program, which is a 20 week program that they’re currently running online, and they work with victim survivors of family violence not in the crisis stage. Vincentcare work with people in the crisis stage.

Following the speeches, the attendees took a walk to reflect and connect, followed by a lovely barbecue lunch.

River Heights for the Goulburn Catchment				
Station Name	Time	Height	Tendency	Flood Class
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon (TW)	09.00AM Mon	1.67	LGH	steady
Rubicon River at Rubicon	09.00AM Mon	0.64	LGH	steady
Acheron River at Taggerty	09.00AM Mon	0.79	LGH	steady
Home Creek at Yarck	04.45AM Mon	0.16	LGH	steady
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	08.25AM Mon	0.60	LGH	steady
Murrindindi River Above Colwells	10.00PM Sun	0.36	LGH	steady
Yea R at Old Killingworth Rd	09.00AM Mon	0.98	steady	
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	09.00AM Mon	3.77	LGH	steady
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	09.00AM Mon	0.54	LGH	steady
Goulburn River at Trawool	09.00AM Mon	1.41	LGH	steady
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	09.00AM Mon	0.30	LGH	steadyl
Goulburn River at Seymour	09.00AM Mon	1.68	LGH	steady
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	09.00AM Mon	1.14	LGH	steady
*ISSUED AT 09:27 AM AEDT MONDAY 1 DECEMBER 2025				

ALEXANDRA
NEWSPAPERS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to
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or by mail to Alexandra Newspapers
PO Box 5, Alexandra 3714.

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

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Standard

The Yea Chronicle

Weekly Weather

December 3 - December 9, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY

LOW

HIGH

DAY

LOW

HIGH

Wednesday

14

26

Wednesday

14

27

Thursday

14

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Thursday

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Sunday

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Monday

13

25

Monday

13

26

Tuesday

13

28

Tuesday

13

28

Standard

The Yea Chronicle

DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra..... 28mm
Buxton..... 48mm
Eildon (AWS)..... 24mm
Flowerdale..... 31mm
Jamieson..... 44mm
Kinglake..... 39mm
Lake Eildon..... 33mm
Mansfield..... N/Amm
Taggerty 36mm
Yarck 29mm
Yea..... 24mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week.....275.73m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....55.8%
Metres below full supply.....13.17m
Daily inflow3000ML
Release..... 3300ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....58%

The Yea Chronicle

DEADLINES

Real Estate

Thursday 5pm

Trades & Services

Thursday noon

Early General News

Thursday 5pm

Classifieds

Monday noon

Editorial

Monday 9am

Sports Editorial

Monday 10am

Letters to the Editor

Monday 9am

Thumbs up/down

Monday 10am

If you have any enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the office on
5772 1002 or
reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au
We thank you for your continued support

no to family violence



Walkers crossing the swing bridge over UT Creek. -AR



Chris Lynch and Samuel Fawke, both from Alexandra Fire Brigade, Chris di Ciero from Benalla Police, Stephen Keating from CFA District 12, and Steve Lynch. -AR



Amanda and Amanda from Anglicare and Emily from Familycare. -AR



Purple shirts were available to support the cause. -AR



Rotarians promoting the 'Say No to Family Violence' message outside Alexandra FoodWorks on Thursday, September 27. -AR



Lucy with Alison and Mel from Vincentcare. -AR



Chris Wasley and Jess Jensen from Alexandra District Health. -AR



Shannon, Rob and Marie from The Bridge Youth and Family Services. -AR



The Alexandra Fire Brigade provided the barbecue at the event. Pictured are Gail Kneeshaw, David Kneeshaw, Mick Van Heuzen and John Sier. -AR



Deputy Mayor Anita Carr, Cr Paul Hildebrand, Mayor Damien Gallagher and Rotarian Ian Smith at the 'Say No to Family Violence' event, held in Rotary Park on Friday, November 28. More images and information on page 6 of this edition. -AR

FINAL EMBRACE FUNERALS
SEYMOUR & WHITTLESEA

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Funeral Packages from \$5,500

Traditional Burial
Funeral Packages from \$6,995
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Proudly serving our community with
dignity, grace and respect.

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



One of the Ausnet helicopters. -S

COMMUNITY DIARY

Yea District Hospital
5736 0400

Non-emergency police assistance
131 444

EMERGENCY 000

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands

UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale/Hazeldene

UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

MONTHLY COMMUNITY GROUPS

1st Mon St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099

1st Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057

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

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

Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

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

Church Services

ST PETER'S MEMORIAL
ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
OF YEA

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

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF
ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew
0459 402 547

St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm
Immaculate Conception Parish
Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am
Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am

CATHOLIC PARISH OF
KINGLAKE

Fr Martin Ashe, Parish Priest
Ph 9717 6482

St Mary's Kinglake: Sunday 8.30am

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH, YEA

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

UNITING CHURCH

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

Out&About

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Darren Gilbert Open Studio Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm each day. 5 Giffard Street Yea. Other times arranged by appointment 0421 378 451.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

2025 Cathedral Invitational will be packed with leading and emerging names in Australian golfing, the tournament is set to be a kicker. Tickets are on sale to the public for day two. \$60 for adults, or \$30 for adults living within a 30 kilometre radius of the course, \$30 for concession, and children under 12 are free. For more information, visit cathedralinvitational.com

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Alexandra Historical Society AGM will be held at Dove Cottage at 2pm.

Alexandra Speedway revs up again. Sport sedans, modified sedans, junior sedans and more. Racing starts at 4pm. alexandraspeedway.org.au

Parvovirus detected in Mansfield Shire

PARVOVIRUS is a dangerous and contagious virus that affects dogs and has recently been detected in nearby Mansfield Shire.

If you have a dog, please be alert to any potential symptoms, which can include severe vomiting, bloody and foul-smelling diarrhea, lethargy, loss of appetite and dehydration. The disease is highly contagious between dogs but does not infect humans.

If your dog has these symptoms, isolate your dog and contact your vet for further advice. Ensuring your dog receives its recommended vaccinations is the best defence against parvovirus. Speak to your vet if you're unsure.

Has your dog been vaccinated for parvovirus? -BD

Funding for new mobile library truck

THE Victorian Government has announced the latest round of the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program, investing in 18 libraries across the state, including Murrindindi Shire.

The funds aim to help deliver high quality library infrastructure projects to support the changing needs of Victorian communities.

Murrindindi Shire Council received \$767,592 to replace Murrindindi's current mobile library truck with a new, more agile vehicle, expanding access to library services from eight to 10 locations. This upgrade will improve service reliability, reach more remote communities, and deliver more programs, supporting education, social connection, and wellbeing for all ages across Murrindindi Shire.

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes said, "This funding will strengthen Murrindindi's ability to provide safe spaces and essential learning resources, creating real benefits for our community."

For more information on the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/living-libraries-infrastructure-program

Yea Community Bank records a profit

JAMES Osborne, chair of Murrindindi Community Enterprises (MCEL) which operates the Yea Community Bank, was pleased to report an operating profit of \$204,000 for the last financial year at the annual general meeting held on Tuesday, November 25.

He said that the operating profit resulted in the full recovery of shareholders' equity, and at the same time the board has achieved a position where it is feasible to consider declaring a further dividend, adding to the dividends paid in the last two years.

The operating profit is 30 per cent lower than last year, with Mr Osborne saying, "Fundamentally the decrease is due to the decrease in interest rates and to a much lesser extent the costs associated with the share buyback program. We were also forced to change our opening days to four rather than three due to Armaguard changing its cash pick-up and delivery schedule to Tuesday. Consequently, we had to increase the hours of the staff therefore incurring increased salary costs.

"We are anticipating any continuing decline in interest rates could adversely impact our financial results during the foreseeable future. However, we have initiatives in progress designed to maintain the growth in shareholder equity and the payment of an annual dividend. MCEL is profitable and has a positive future. For the first time in the 15 year history of the bank we are coming to an AGM with a positive equity balance sheet with zero debts and having a further five year franchise agreement."

The Yea Community Bank is the only bank within the entire Murrindindi Shire. Mr Osbone noted that by limiting the opening days, they have been able to retain a cap on branch operating costs while still maintaining the opportunity for customers to enjoy reliable and expert face-to-face banking services.

He said, "During the year our community bank staff have again performed at an outstanding level. We received many encouraging compliments regarding the quality of service and the pleasure of being able to have staff attend to one's banking needs in a friendly and helpful manner.

"Staffing is always a challenge bearing in mind MCEL cannot provide five-day, full-time positions. We were delighted to make additional appointments during the financial year, which resulted in the branch now being fully staffed. Training for new staff is always demanding and places a huge demand on branch operations. However, the core team has done an outstanding job in ensuring the branch continues operational. The MCEL Board acknowledges the outstanding contribution our branch manager makes in ensuring high levels of customer service and making the branch a great place to work and for customers to visit."

He added, "Having restored shareholder equity to its initial level and secured a relatively stable financial outlook, the board reviewed the MCEL shareholding structure. Over the last 15 years several initial shareholders have passed, and their shareholding distributed to beneficiaries. This has resulted in a MCEL share register with a significant number of shareholders holding what is effectively an unmarketable number of shares. The board instigated a share buyback program that enabled small shareholders to divest their holdings. To be fair to all shareholders the share buyback program was available to all shareholders not just those with a small shareholding. The buyback offer enabled all shareholders to cash in up to 500 shares.

"Following the share buyback we have proceeded to finalise a transition from our manual paper and spreadsheet system to a professional group called Registry Direct who specialise in maintaining share registers. Sometime during the next six weeks, shareholders will receive an email from Registry Direct. Please do not ignore this email. It will contain important instructions on how you can log in and access your shareholder information. Through the portal, shareholders can update contact and bank details for the payment of dividends, view your shareholding information, access your transactional history, and download copies of your share certificate and any related documents. All future communications to shareholders will also come to you directly from Registry Direct being the official share register for our community bank. In early 2026 further information will be provided to shareholders outlining the process for buying, selling or transferring shares."

Mr Osborne added, "Establishing this facility is the final part of the jigsaw to completing all the legal steps we have had to undertake in

bringing MCEL to proper legal status. It has been a long and difficult task."

He pointed out that just because the bank knows contact details, it doesn't mean that the board does. The board does not have access to any of the bank records that the branch holds. Those details are private between each customer and the bank and would be a serious privacy breach if the board had access.

MCEL operates under a franchise agreement with the Bendigo Bank, and the franchise agreement was due for renewal during the year. The agreement has been renegotiated and as a result the franchise agreement has been extended for a further five years. They have also signed a new five year tenancy lease agreement for the bank premises.

Mr Osborne said, "After the end of the financial year, the MCEL Board received advice that the Bendigo Bank had decided to close its community bank agency network. Consequently, the Agency at Alexandra and the ATM in Eildon were closed in October. MCEL was not consulted regarding the decision or consideration given to the impact on MCEL or our customers in Alexandra or Eildon. The closures are part of a Bendigo Bank decision to close its entire agency network and involved the closure of 28 agencies across Australia. While disappointed with the decision, the main challenge now for the MCEL board is to minimise the impact on the banking service for our loyal Alexandra and Eildon customers. From a shareholder perspective the adverse impact on MCEL profits of the agency and ATM withdrawal of services, is projected not to be significant."

He noted the changes in the industry recently, including the impact of mortgage brokers on the banking industry, with around eight out of 10 loans now negotiated via a mortgage broker.

Mr Osborne provided the following summary of the bank's financial year. "We are profitable with positive equity and are debt free. We have a new five year franchise agreement and a new five year lease of our bank building. A continuing decline in interest rates is anticipated and we have plans to manage our operating costs accordingly. The global financial market uncertainty is a concern particularly the way excessive tariffs are being randomly imposed and/or changed by the major economies. Retaining and building on the level of business we have in the Yea/Alexandra and surrounding communities is vital. We have a good team in place to manage the daily business and grow the business."

He concluded by encouraging shareholders to encourage others to join and use the bank, adding, "The only way the community can keep a banking facility in Yea and Murrindindi Shire is by using it. If the Yea and shire community do not support the branch it will not survive. Have no doubt all the banks are closing regional branches given the opportunity. The Alexandra and Eildon closures are our own examples. Using our community bank is our best and only way to deny the banks the opportunity."



John Agostinelli, endorsed by the board to lead Murrindindi Community Enterprises in 2026, with former chair Jim Osborne. -S

Emergency services grants awarded

EMERGENCY services volunteers across the Murrindindi region will receive more trucks, equipment and modern facilities to help keep communities safe thanks to the Victorian Government's Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP).

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes congratulated the recipients of this year's VESEP grants, which will deliver new vehicles, equipment and facility upgrades across Victoria.

VESEP is an annual grants program that helps Victorian emergency services volunteer groups purchase essential equipment or make facility improvements so they can strengthen and support their vital work.

Volunteer groups can apply for grants of up to \$250,000, an increase of \$100,000 from the previous maximum, with the government contributing \$2 for every \$1 raised by the local volunteer group.

This year's round delivers more than \$30 million in grants, the largest ever, across the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES), Life Saving Victoria, Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue, and other emergency service organisations.

Funding for this round includes almost \$20 million for more than 40 vehicles, more than \$5 million to update 15

facilities and more than \$1 million for operational equipment across the state.

Locally, the grants include Terip Terip Fire Brigade (\$250,000 for a station upgrade), Koriella Fire Brigade (\$240,000 for station extension), Strath Creek/Reedy Creek Fire Brigade (\$101,500 for a field command vehicle), Limestone Fire Brigade (\$88,750 for a field command vehicle) Alexandra Fire Brigade (\$69,334 for a BA support vehicle), Molesworth Fire Brigade (\$4500 for station upgrades), Kinglake SES (\$235,767 for a MRT 4x4 replacement) and Alexandra SES (\$31,863 for building works).

The press release states, "Thanks to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, VESEP funding will double over the next four years, with an additional \$62 million invested to support volunteers. Every dollar raised through the fund goes directly to emergency and disaster recovery services.

Minister for Emergency Services Vicki Ward said, "These grants are incredibly popular every year, and we'll keep backing our volunteers, helping them focus on what they do best, protecting lives and property.

"With more funding on offer than ever before, almost double, we're showing our determination to support our hardworking emergency services volunteers."

Concern over increased pressure on the Goulburn River

Carl Walters, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) Chief Executive Officer, came out in opposition to the Australia Government's announcement to expand the non-strategic water buyback program in the Southern Murray Darling Basin.

He said, "The Federal Government's announcement to increase the volume of water that may be purchased in the southern connected basin by an additional 130 GL is of particular concern for our catchment due to the increased pressure on the Goulburn River and the challenges of the narrows of the Murray River and Barmah.

"The Goulburn Broken CMA has previously raised concerns about the inability to deliver the current volumes of water for the environment, through the Goulburn

River in particular, without causing damage to the natural environment of the waterway.

"The assumption that the Goulburn River can be used as a "channel" to meet the demands of the downstream system is flawed. As those responsible for representing the river and ensuring it continues to improve over time, we are extremely concerned.

"We cannot accept that the environment of the Goulburn River can be sacrificed to meet outcomes further downstream. This has been our consistent message for more than 12 months but seems to have not been heard outside Victoria.

"There is already enough water recovered from the Goulburn to meet local environmental objectives. More water purchase here will only increase pressure on this system.

"The Goulburn Broken CMA is committed to ensuring the health of the Goulburn River and to protecting for future generations the prosperity of our regional community that depends on it."

When contacted about the concerns, a spokesperson from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water said, "Water purchases by the Australian Government are based on a value for money assessment which considers the environmental benefits that water offered for sale can deliver.

"Advice from both the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder supports buying water rights from the Goulburn catchment to help meet Basin Plan objectives both locally and regionally, especially as constraints are addressed over time."

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Yea & District Community Bank® Branch

 **Bendigo Bank**



YEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Congratulations to our Values Award winners this week.

Madeline, Ellie, Matilda, Tanya, Belle and Eden have been showing all our school values and just being all round legends. Congratulations to you all.

Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Kinglake branch

 **Bendigo Bank**

Haines calls for faster implementation of disaster roaming

MEMBER for Indi, Dr Helen Haines, has renewed her call for faster implementation of disaster roaming, and welcomed support from the National Farmers’ Federation as the bushfire season approaches.

Dr Haines said disaster roaming remains a critical missing piece in Australia’s telecommunications infrastructure.

“I’ve long called for the rollout of disaster roaming because it’s a common-sense reform that will save lives during natural disasters,” Dr Haines said.

“When bushfires, floods or storms hit, Australians should be able to roam onto any available mobile network to make emergency calls or receive warnings. Safety should not depend on which telco you’re with.”

Dr Haines noted that the Senate’s *Connecting the Country* report, the ACCC’s *Regional Mobile Infrastructure Inquiry*, and the *Bean Review* have all recommended the reform, yet it remains undelivered.

“I called on the government in my 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review submission to roll out this capability before the next fire season. It’s now late 2025, and regional Australians still do not have it.”

Despite saying it would consider disaster roaming more than two years ago, the government has provided no public update since.

National Farmers’ Federation President Hamish McIntyre said disaster roaming was essential to protecting regional communities.

“When natural disasters hit, people shouldn’t lose the ability to communicate just because one mobile network goes down. This can leave entire communities cut off,” Mr McIntyre said.

“Farmers are often on the frontline of fires, floods and storms and they are critical to local emergency response. Communication is key to a fast and effective response.

“We’ve seen the Triple Zero fallback fail in recent outages. Strengthening that system is important, but communities also need to reach neighbours, family, and local responders.

“Temporary disaster roaming is a straightforward fix that lets people stay connected when it matters most.”

Dr Haines said the support from the NFF underscores the urgency for federal action.

“Regional Australians deserve nothing less than a telecommunications system that works when they need it most,” she said.

November meeting of Murrindindi Shire Council

CR Adams was an apology, as was Cr McAulay for a minor hospital procedure.

Public participation

Stuart Herron from Cathedral Range Winery spoke to item 4.3 on the agenda, a planning application for 125 Knafl Road, Taggerty, for the “use and development of land for a winery”. He presented a positive case for Cathedral Range Winery.

Angelina Bell from Bell Legal and Planning spoke in favour of item 4.2 on the agenda, a planning application for 95 Falls Road in Marysville to perform a three lot subdivision.

Ester Mass, speaking for the residents of the area, voiced her opposition to the proposed subdivision at 95 Falls Road in Marysville, arguing that the move goes against an established covenant to not further subdivide the block.

Murrindindi Shire Council CEO, Livia Bonazzi, read six letters submitted to council by members of the public during this segment.

Michael Kowalik wrote a letter opposing the planning application for 1735 Healesville-Kinglake Road in Toolangi, which is proposed for a “two lot subdivision, use of land for a store and creation of access to a road in the transport zone two”. He suggested the planning application goes against the small-town nature of Toolangi.

Rachael and Michael Cavill, Julie Palmer and Nicholas Deane all wrote letters opposing the planning application for 95 Falls Road in Marysville.

Robert Utter and Chloe Heron both wrote letters throwing their support behind the planning application for 125 Knafl Road in Taggerty, for the establishment of the Cathedral Range Winery cellar door.

Item four: Community and Development Group reports

The planning application for 1735 Healesville-Kinglake Road in Toolangi was considered, which is a two lot subdivision that will be used for a domestic store, not associated with any commercial operation, and the creation of access to a road in the transport zone two. Council voted to approve the application.

The application for a three-lot subdivision at 95 Falls Road in Marysville was considered. No development of the proposed lots is proposed as part of the application, and the application requests an amendment by council to Section 173 Agreement to remove a prohibition on further subdivision for the subject land. Objections were raised by the community. Council voted to approve the application.

An application to use and develop a winery on the land at 125 Knafl Road, Taggerty, was considered by council. Objections were raised by the community, including bushfire risk. CFA gave their consent to the application. Council voted to approve the application.

An application was submitted asking council to amend the development plan for Binns-McCraes Road in Alexandra to include industrial land on the northern side of the road. Council voted to approve the amended development plan.

The Molesworth and District Community Plan was developed during the 2024-25 period, with a meeting held in February at the Molesworth Hall to discuss priorities. The final plan has now been developed, and council noted the Molesworth and District Community Plan.

Council discussed the quarterly allocations of the grants and sponsorship program, noting the various quick response grants and individual sponsorship grants and endorsing one local event grant of \$4500 for the Rotary Club of Alexandra’s Dindi Daze event. The full list of grants and sponsorships for the quarter can be found in the November council meeting minutes at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-Meetings/Agendas-and-Minutes

Draft guidelines for successful renewable energy projects were developed by council officers, designed to guide how large-scale renewable energy projects can be delivered in a way that benefits Murrindindi Shire communities. Council voted to endorse the draft guidelines.

Item five: People and Corporate Performance Group reports

A progress report for the September quarter of council’s Priority Action Plan 2025-26 was presented. Highlights from the quarter include the commencement of the four-bin kerbside collection, 23 community grants being awarded, and the completion of the Alexandra Movement and Place Study. Council noted the report.

The annual assigning of portfolios to councillors took place at the meeting, with a slight reshuffling from last year. The councillor portfolio appointments are: Cr McAulay to Economic Development, Local Jobs and Skills; Cr Carpenter to Sustainable Population Growth and Land Use Planning; Cr Lording to Amenity and Road Care; Cr Hildebrand to Sustainability and Assets; Cr Adams to Community Wellbeing; and Cr Carr to Integrity, Finance and Engagement.

Councillor representative appointments were presented during the meeting, with the councillors appointed as representatives to various internal committees and external bodies, allowing for open communication with local community groups and local government organisations. The full list of representative appointments can be found on the meeting minutes, at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-Meetings/Agendas-and-Minutes

The timetable of council meetings for 2026 was discussed, with the same arrangements as this year being continued. Monthly council meetings will be alternated between Yea and Alexandra on the fourth Wednesday of the month commencing at 6pm, with the December meeting scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month. There is also the potential option being explored of holding one or more council meetings in Kinglake in 2026. Council adopted the timetable of scheduled meetings.

Item six: Assets and Environment Group reports

CONT25/2 Panel Contract Flooring Maintenance Services for Infrastructure Assets (three years with possible two-year extension, \$650,000 total) was awarded to: C4 National Flooring Services Pty Ltd; Blended Services Group Pty Ltd; Chookies Flooring Xtra Pty Ltd; Melbourne Master Painting and Maintenance Pty Ltd; and Flooring Future Pty Ltd.

CONT25/3 Panel Contract Plumbing Maintenance Services for Infrastructure Assets (three years with possible two-year extension, \$3,000,000 total) was awarded to: A and C Wood Plumbing Pty Ltd; Kinglake Plumbing and Drainage Pty Ltd; The Trustee for KPC Plumbing and Drainage Pty Ltd; The Trustee for Gilligan Family Trust; Travis Capp Plumbing Pty Ltd; EJ’s Total Services Pty Ltd.

CONT25/4 Panel Contract Electrical Maintenance Services for Infrastructure Assets (three years with possible two-year extension, \$3,000,000 total) was awarded to: Allround Electrical Pty Ltd; Book Electrical Pty Ltd; E-Tec Pty Ltd; HNB Electrical Pty Ltd; Tollec Electrical Services Pty Ltd; J Williams Electrical Pty Ltd; and Vivid Energy Solutions Pty Ltd.

CONT25/5 Panel Contract Painting Maintenance Services for Infrastructure Assets (three years with possible two-year extension, \$650,000 total) was awarded to: Argyle Maintenance Services Pty Ltd; Blended Services Group Pty Ltd; Higgins Coatings Pty Ltd; Melbourne Master Painters Pty Ltd; and I Paint Melbourne Pty Ltd.

CONT25/24 Kinglake Memorial Reserve Oval Reconstruction was awarded to Victorian Sports Group Pty Ltd for a total contract value of \$968,050.50, with a contingency amount of \$120,00.

The Urban Tree Strategy 2025-2035 was presented to council for adoption, following public consultation from September 18 to October 13, 2025. The strategy aims to improve the multiple community benefits to be gained from careful planning and improvement of the urban tree forest in various townships, and includes an action plan of short, medium and long-term actions over the 10-year period. Council voted to adopt the strategy.



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Sylvia Brooks received the Legend of the Year for Most Hours on Air, totalling 637 hours. -S



Peter Weeks with Peter Rice who was awarded Best All Round Programs for the past 30 years. -S



Michael Mawson won the Community Involvement Award. Pictured with Peter Weeks. -S

The 2025 UGFM Presenter Awards

ON Sunday, November 16, the UGFM Radio Murrindindi 2025 Presenter Awards acknowledged broadcasters for their dedication to volunteering on local community radio.

All presenters were acknowledged for their time on air by vice president Michael Mawson at a recent Christmas and awards get together at the Alexandra Bowling Club.

Sylvia Brooks received the award for 637 hours on air and Legend of the Year. In total, the 40 presenters and committee gave nearly 7000 hours of volunteer time broadcasting last year in studios, outside broadcasts and behind the scenes work.

The President's Awards went to Nomes Booker for Best Female All Rounder, Brian Sillett for Best Male All Rounder, Peter Rice for Best Programs over 30 Years, Gerry Laws for 20 Years Assisting in Sponsorship Production, and Encouragement Awards to Deirdre Penhale and Sarah Hopkins. The Hard Yakka Award went to Mike Dalmau, Best Rock Program to Andrew Wareham and Marco Ciente, and Community Involvement Award to Michael Mawson.

Appreciation certificates were also awarded to 20 volunteers who have been involved with UGFM as correspondents providing local news and sport for the past 31 years, including Elaine White for over 25 years as Yea correspondent and Colin Long as Eildon Golf Club correspondent for over 20 years and Mark Jones for managing the Marysville Studio and interview work.



Mayor Damien Gallagher and Cr Sandice McAulay enjoying lunch with some of the UGFM volunteers. -S



Another table of volunteers. -S



Sarah Hopkins received an Encouragement Award. -S



Gilly on the barbecue. -S



UGFM President Peter Weeks with Brian Sillett won Best Male All Rounder. -S



Peter Weeks awarding Gerry Laws for his involvement in Sponsorship Production past 20 years. -S



Peter Weeks with Deirdre Penhale who received an Encouragement Award. -S



Peter Weeks with Mike Dalmau who received a Hard Yakka for 'Good Morning Murrindindi'. -S



Volunteers enjoying lunch at the Alexandra Bowls Club.



Let's eat, it's our treat

Wound healing bee-nefits

WHILE there are any number of modern medicinal remedies available to treat injuries, people previously used honey to prompt wound healing. In fact, people have been using honey as a remedy for thousands of years, dating all the way back to ancient Egypt.

Honey has antibacterial properties and a unique pH balance that promotes oxygen and healing compounds in a wound, making it useful for natural healing.

According to a literature review published in the journal, *Wounds* and quoted on *Healthline's* website, honey offers many healing benefits.

"Acidic pH promotes healing. Honey has an acidic pH of between 3.2 and 4.5. When applied to wounds, the acidic pH encourages the blood to release oxygen, which is important to wound healing. An acidic pH also reduces the presence of substances called proteases that impair the wound healing process," the review says.

"Sugar has an osmotic effect. The sugar naturally present in honey has the effect of drawing water out of damaged tissues (known as an osmotic effect). This reduces swelling and encourages the flow of lymph to



Honey was used in ancient times to treat wounds. -Wilfredor

heal the wound. Sugar also draws water out of bacterial cells, which can help keep them from multiplying.

"Antibacterial effect. Honey has been shown to have an antibacterial effect on bacteria commonly present in wounds, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and vancomycin-resistant *Enterococci* (VRE). Part of this resistance may be through its osmotic effects."

If choosing to apply honey to wounds, such as burns and ulcers, it is important to keep everything clean and sterile. Apply the honey to a dressing first, then to the injury. The ideal type of honey is Manuka honey, but other forms sold for healing include Gelam, Tualang, and MediHoney.

It's best to consult with a doctor or nurse before attempting this method of healing, as there is a possibility of an allergic reaction to the bee pollen in the honey, or the honey itself.

Let's Eat November winner

THE winner of our November Let's Eat \$50 voucher was Don Hendrickson from Koriella. Don 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. Get in early with your entries for our last Let's Eat for 2025. 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.....

Email.....

Eligible venues this month: (Circle your preferred choice below)

- Kinglake Pub - Philip Lobley Wines
- Sedona Estate - The Corner Hotel Alexandra

For your chance to win a \$50 voucher, return this entry by noon, **Wednesday, December 17.**

Alexandra Newspapers,
43 Grant Street or
PO Box 5, Alexandra, 3714

Photocopies will not be accepted.

One entry per household

Winner will be notified by phone and published in the first edition of the month.
T&C: **Only venues listed above in this edition 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 members of Alexandra Newspapers are ineligible to enter. Original form must be returned. If you do not circle your choice, your entry is invalid.

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SATURDAY - SUNDAY

11.30am - 5.00pm

Dogs are welcome

OPEN: 27 - 31 December





Let's eat, it's our treat

How to pair wine with food

YOU don't have to be a connoisseur of fine wines to know how to complement a meal with a good wine pairing. There are just a few simple tips and tricks to remember, that will lead to getting the most out of a bottle of wine.

To begin with, you can either select a wine to complement a dish, called a complementary pairing, or you can choose a wine that enhances the dish, known as a congruent pairing.

Different types of wine have different acidity levels, meaning that they can either match the delicious meal you are eating, or they can contrast.

Traditionally, matching the weight of food and wine is a safe technique. For lighter food, typically lower in fat, you might choose a lighter wine, and for heavier and richer food, you would choose a heavier wine. An example of this would be light foods like chicken and fish pairing well with a lighter white wine like a sauvignon blanc, or prawns and chardonnay working well together because they are both medium-weight and rich in flavour.



White wines can pair well with lighter foods, while reds pair with heavier and richer foods. -Stefan Johnson

You can also match flavours between dishes and wines. If you were having a spicy pepper steak, you could pair it nicely with a spicy and strong shiraz.

When it comes to the acidity of wines, it gets slightly more complicated. High-acid wines can be used to cleanse your palate when eating oily foods. Alternatively, drier wines,

like a pinot grigio, pair well with food that is strongly acidic, like a salad with vinegar dressing.

A general rule is to serve wine that is at least as sweet as the food being served. Serving a dry wine with sweet food can make the wine seem over-acidic and bitter.



White wine pairs well with fruits, given they are a light food. -Robert Gombos

Furthermore, pairing a sweet wine with spicy food can offer relief when your mouth starts tingling.

As with anything however, food and wine is subjective, so play around and experiment. A traditional pairing might not be to your liking, and that's okay. Match food and wine to what you enjoy, not what people recommend.



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Kinglake Pub





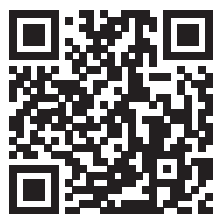
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People enjoying the children's activities area last year. -BD



Some of the market stalls set up for last year's Dindi Daze. -BD

Dindi Daze returns for second year

DINDI Daze, now in its second year, is a fun-filled, family-focused celebration of everything that makes Murrindindi great. Held in Rotary Park, this year's event builds on the success of its inaugural year and has evolved to place even greater emphasis on families, community members doing it tough, and our younger residents.

The day will feature a range of children's activities, including free face painting, games, and competitions. A highlight will be the mobile animal farm, home to 35 to 40 baby farm animals. Children will have the opportunity to enter the pen in small groups to pat, feed and hold the animals.

A variety of local young and more established performers will provide entertainment throughout the event, creating a lively and inclusive atmosphere. Visitors can enjoy food vans and pop-ups, local craft beers, wines, and spirits, as well as arts and crafts stalls, an historic vehicle procession and display, and even steam train rides.

A range of community-based stalls and displays will also be available, including Victoria Police, CFA, Woodies (Alexandra Community Shed Inc / Eildon & District Woodworkers), Embassy of Ideas and Food Share, Lions Club and Rotary. The event team is also seeking to include stalls focused on mental health, healthy ageing, and support for victims of family violence, further strengthening Dindi Daze's and Rotary's commitment to community wellbeing.

The focus of Dindi Daze is to bring the Murrindindi community together to celebrate everything that makes our region special and, of course, to have some fun. The event also aims to attract visitors and tourists, providing an opportunity to showcase local talent, including our region's art, crafts, food, wine and beer.

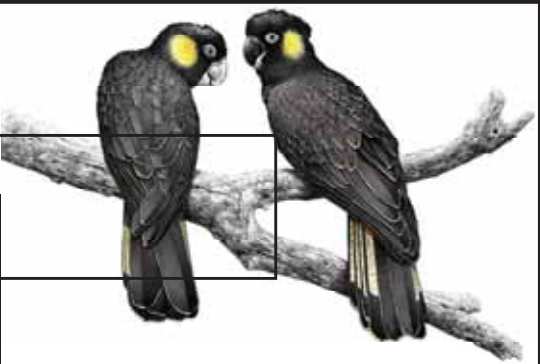
Dindi Daze is run by Alexandra Rotary and will be held in Rotary Park, Alexandra on Saturday, February 28 from 9am to 3pm.

Darren Gilbert open studio

An open art studio of organic metal sculptures and pen & ink artworks of Australian animals.

Sat 6 to Sun 7 December
Sat 20 to Sun 21 December
Sat 3 to Sun 4 January
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POWERED BY ALEXANDRA ROTARY

28 FEB 2026

9AM TO 3PM

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GREAT FOOD KIDS ACTIVITIES
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HISTORIC CAR SHOW PETTING ZOO ARTS & CRAFTS

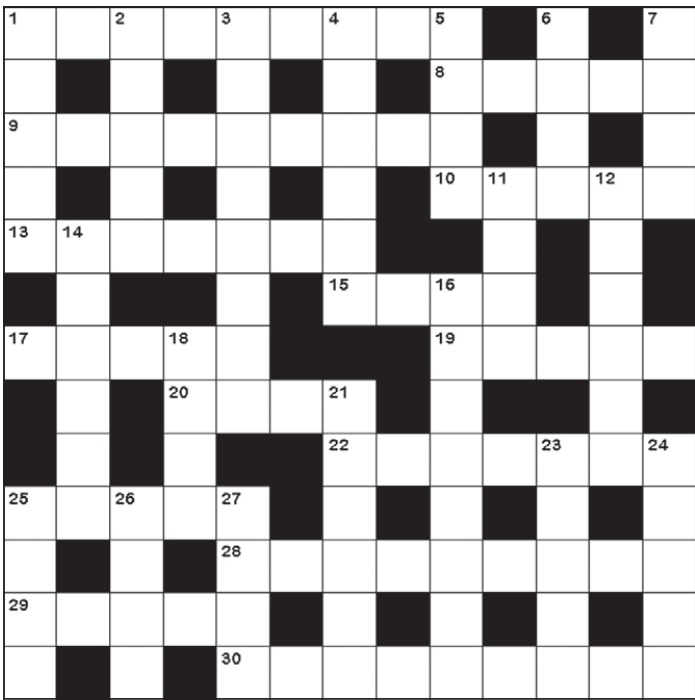
Alexandra Rotary Club Murrindindi Shire Council

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 15

Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1. With no effort to conceal their impudence.
 - 8. An exhibition of cowboy skills.
 - 9. Fortune telling from the study of the stars.
 - 10. Low land that is seasonally flooded.
 - 13. An event causing distress or anxiety.
 - 15. Long strip of marked metal used to measure.
 - 17. Joyful religious song celebrating Christmas.
 - 19. Relating to or resembling the eye.
 - 20. Emit a steady even light without flames.
 - 22. Attracting the attention of a taxi in the street.
 - 25. Someone who has never been married.
 - 28. Compliance with a law or a command.
 - 29. A lottery with an accumulating jackpot.
 - 30. A whirlpool of extraordinary size or violence.



- DOWN**
- 1. An animal other than a human being.
 - 2. The relative sizes of two quantities.
 - 3. A game that is known as Aussie Rules.
 - 4. A small cabinet used for storage.
 - 5. Removes all the moisture from.
 - 6. The main thing you are thinking about.
 - 7. The basic pattern of the human fingerprint.
 - 11. Shed tears because of sadness or pain.
 - 12. A fawning, compliant follower.
 - 14. A justification for something happening.
 - 16. The art and science of government.
 - 18. Mythical giant who likes to eat human beings.
 - 21. Breathe with a husky or whistling sound.
 - 23. Confined to an exclusive group.
 - 24. Shine with a faint or irregular brightness.
 - 25. Repulsive or offensive.
 - 26. Soaks thoroughly with a liquid.
 - 27. A grim fate or destiny.

Word Search

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

Actors by Surname

CLOONEY	HEMSWORTH	ROBERTS
CUMBERBATCH	JACKMAN	SMITH
DAMON	JACKSON	SPACEY
FREEMAN	PITT	WASHINGTON

Math Square

	+		+		19
-		+		+	
1	+		-		-4
+		+		+	
4	+		+		16
9		10		24	

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

Actors

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
				25				
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
					5			
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
	8							

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{O} \quad \text{T} \\ 23 \quad 5 \quad 16 \quad 9 \end{array}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{E T E} \quad \text{T O} \\ 26 \quad 1 \quad 25 \quad 9 \quad 25 \quad 16 \quad 23 \quad 8 \quad 5 \end{array}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{E} \quad \text{O} \quad \text{O} \\ 11 \quad 25 \quad 6 \quad 24 \quad 5 \quad 10 \quad 5 \quad 12 \end{array}$$
$$\begin{array}{r} \text{E} \quad \text{O T} \\ 17 \quad 1 \quad 25 \quad 16 \quad 5 \quad 8 \end{array}$$

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Very Hard

Fill in the boxes using the numbers 1 to 9.

Every row and column and every group of 9 boxes inside the thicker lines must contain each number and letter only once.

KID’S PUZZLES

Colouring Page



Word Search

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

Words starting with “AM”

AMASS	AMENDS
AMATEUR	AMERICA
AMAZED	AMIALE
AMBER	AMMUNITION
AMBLE	AMONGST
AMBULANCE	AMOUNT
AMBUSH	AMPLIFY

Math Square

	+		+		14
+		-		-	
	+		-		2
-		-		+	
6	+		+	1	11
2		-10		-1	

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.

Jokes

Q: What’s the best thing about Switzerland?
A: I don’t know, but the flag is a big plus.

Q: Why did the tree take up a hobby?
A: It wanted to branch out.



A decent crowd for Nutrien’s Autumn Weaner Drop sale at Yea last Friday. -BD

Penultimate cattle sale at Yea for 2025

NUTRIEN Yea’s Autumn Weaner Drop sale took place last Friday at the Yea Saleyards, with prices continuing their trend of staying high.

Some 1778 cattle were yarded, with a mixture of weaner steers and heifers for sale. Average price per head was \$1605, with the average weight per head sitting at 282 kilograms, equalling out to an average for the day of 569c/kg.

Steers sold well, reaching a top price per head of \$2200 and top weight of 368.6 kilograms, equalling to 597c/kg.

Heifers continued their regular trend of selling lower than their steer counterparts, reaching a top price per head of \$1670 and top weight of 357.8 kilograms. Doing the maths shows the top heifers made 467c/kg.

The final cattle sale for the year at Yea is the Combined Agents Store Sale on Friday, December 5, before a break is had until sales in January.

STOCK REPORT 28 NOVEMBER 2025			
YEA SALEYARDS			
Nutrien Weaner Sale	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers
Number of head	1,778		
Average \$ per head	\$1,605		
Average weight per head	282 kg		
Top price per head		\$2,200	\$1,670
Top weight		368.6 kg	357.8 kg
Turnover	\$2.8 million		

VFF launches petition to protect farmland

THE Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on Victorians to pledge their support to grow and protect the state’s prime farmland by signing a new petition as part of the new ‘Help protect Victorian farmland’ campaign.

VFF President Brett Hosking said Victoria’s farmland represents a huge asset that needs protecting.

“Our farmland is an economic powerhouse that underpins more than 150,000 jobs and contributes in excess of \$20 billion to the Victorian economy each year,” he said.

“Victoria is Australia’s food bowl and our farmland is a national treasure, producing almost a quarter of the nation’s food, from just three per cent of arable Australian land.

“Our farmers protect and conserve our state’s incredible biodiversity, as well as being industry leaders in the emissions reduction our planet needs so urgently.

“Farmers and the soil they farm are irreplaceable and I’m urging everyone to back our farmers. We must send this message loud and clear to governments right across the nation.”

Across Victoria, productive agricultural land is facing challenges for competing land use, such as housing estates, mining approvals, transmission corridors and large-scale energy projects. The rate of our prime farmland loss is staggering. We’ve lost well in excess of 100,000 hectares to housing alone in the past 10 years, that’s 6500 times the area of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The petition is designed to remind governments and decision makers that farmers and the rural communities they support are vital to our state’s success.

The VFF is calling for a change in how land use decisions are made, with a particular focus on food security, local communities, and long-term sustainability.

The VFF is urging the Victorian Government to develop a statewide strategy that: Protects high-value agricultural land from fragmentation; ensures real consultation with local communities; provides fair compensation for landholders and communities; and guarantees shared benefits for regional areas impacted by development.

Be patient on the road during harvest season

WITH harvest and silage season now in full swing across Victoria, the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on all road users to take extra care and show patience as heavy agricultural vehicles move between paddocks, silos and storage sites.

Across Victoria, farmers are entering the busiest time of year, with crops, hay and silage being harvested. This results in more headers, trucks, tractors and machinery on rural roads, often travelling slowly, carrying wide loads, or stopping frequently during busy harvest operations.

VFF Grains President Ryan Milgate said patience can make a major difference in keeping everyone safe during one of the busiest times of the year.

“We are asking everyone, including farmers to take it easy on the roads this harvest season. Patience and sharing the roads is key.”

“Saving a few minutes by taking risks can lead to tragedy,” Mr Milgate said.

VFF Livestock President Scott Young urged all drivers to make safety their number one priority.

“No matter how tempting it is to run the risk, coming home safely at the end of the day must always be our top priority.”

“Every driver has a responsibility to look after those around them, and we can’t forget that.”

“As farmers we understand we’re driving oversized vehicles on the road. Where possible, we’ll make as much room as we can, we’re just asking others to slow down so we can all stay safe,” Mr Young said.

Drivers can help keep safe this harvest season by avoiding areas around grain receival sites where truck and machinery traffic is especially heavy; moving completely off the road when stopping, giving agricultural vehicles room to pass safely; staying off unsealed roads unless absolutely necessary, as these can be damaged or become hazardous under increased harvest traffic; being aware of farmers loading and unloading machinery or bales on roadsides, particularly during hay and silage cutting; remaining patient around oversized machinery, such as headers, balers and tractors towing wide implement, wait for a clear, safe opportunity before overtaking.

The VFF is urging all drivers to slow down and take in their surroundings. There’s so much to see in regional Victoria, it’s worth taking your time to stop, look around and take in the regions.

The VFF is also continuing to advocate for regional Victoria’s road network to be fixed and maintained to ensure the safest possible conditions for drivers.

“We’re not asking for development to stop. We’re asking for it to be planned with intelligence, respect and an eye to the future.”

“It’s time we looked at our Victorian farmers and rural communities as an icon to be celebrated for all they provide to our economy, community and environment. I’m asking you to join us and help celebrate them with me,” Mr Hosking said.

Victorians can support the campaign and sign the petition at vff.org.au/help-protect-victorian-farmland/

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Beware of electricity lines when gardening

VICTORIAN turning their attention to garden maintenance delayed by a wet spring are being reminded to prioritise safety and check trees are well clear of any electricity lines connecting to their homes, as the state's energy safety regulator reveals dozens of avoidable pruning-related power incidents in 2024 and 2025.

Energy Safe Victoria is urging caution as households tackle overgrown gardens after recording more than 40 safety incidents involving vegetation and service lines to houses in the last two years, many of which could have been prevented with proper checks and planning.

The recent rainfall has also encouraged fast growth, meaning branches that were a safe distance from wires in winter may now be edging dangerously close. Even a small branch touching a live wire can cause a fire, power outage or serious injury, and these risks only increase as Victoria moves into the summer bushfire season.

Energy Safe CEO Leanne Hughson said looking up and considering safety should be part of every garden project, especially with significant spring growth and warmer weather ahead.

"Spring's wet weather has meant many people are only just getting back into their gardens, but it also means vegetation has had months to grow unchecked," she said.

"Before you prune, take a moment to check that vegetation is clear of power and service lines, and think ahead before planting anything new so it doesn't grow into a hazard later on, particularly as we head into the fire season."

Households should prioritise safety by checking that existing trees and branches on their property are a safe distance from powerlines and the home service line, especially after recent spring growth, only planting low-growing species where powerlines are overhead, watching out for the home service line, staying well clear of powerlines when trimming trees and consider engaging a qualified professional to prune or remove trees near the service line, and by contacting their local electricity distributor if they're unsure or need advice on safe clearance distances before undertaking garden work.

"We want people to enjoy refreshing their gardens, but to also stay safe while doing it," Ms Hughson said.

"If a tree is too close to an electrical line, don't take the risk. Get a professional. A simple check now can prevent injuries, fires and power disruptions as the weather heats up."

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MATH SQUARES

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SUDOKU

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KIDS - MATH SQUARES

5	+	2	+	7	14
+		-		-	
3	+	8	-	9	2
-		-		+	
6	+	4	+	1	11
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MEETINGS

ALEXANDRA Historical Society AGM at 2pm on December 4, 2025 at Dove Cottage.

FRIENDS of Kellock Inc. AGM will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at Kellock Lodge, Bon Street, Alexandra at 9.30am in the Board Room. All welcome.

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DEATH NOTICES

PUMPA,
Peter John.
1945 - 2025

Peter passed November 20, 2025.

He was a very special person in the lives of Sue, and family. Therefore, he was a very special part, for many years, in the Folley family. Another chapter closes.

PUMPA, Peter John.
25/11/1945 - 20/11/2025.
79 years young. Passed away peacefully. Beloved father of Jason, Barrie and step father to Jeremy, father in law to Trish, Marion, Gabby and families. A wake and celebration of his life will be at The Royal Mail Hotel in Yea on Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 2pm. All Peters friends are very welcome to join.

WHITELEY,
Henry William.
'Harry'

Aged 93 years.
Dearly loved husband of Pat for 67 years. Loving father of Meryll and Gaye Father in law to Brian and Tom.

Wonderful 'grumpy' to four grandchildren, five great grandchildren 'Holding hands forever'.

Private family burial, 11.30am Friday, December 5, 2025, Marysville Cemetery followed by Memorial Service at 1pm at Marysville Golf Club, all welcome.



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CFA calls for community volunteers to monitor grasslands

CFA is encouraging Victorians to become 'citizen scientists' and help strengthen critical information about the state's fire risk.

Grassland curing is the annual drying out of grass and the drier the grass becomes, the higher the fire risk. At this time of year, curing data feeds directly into CFA's fire danger calculations, making accurate figures essential for determining fire danger ratings.

The ground observations are combined with satellite imagery to produce weekly maps that show how dry the grass is across Victoria.

CFA Remote Sensing Analyst Dr Danielle Wright said boosting the number of trained observers will help fill gaps in the current data coverage.

"There are still a few areas of the state including the north-east, north-west and south-west parts of the state where we would really benefit from having more volunteers out on the ground," Danielle said.

"In regions where on-ground observations are not occurring, we are solely relying on satellite data.

"The satellite model is extremely useful, but it can't always pick up every detail.

"It can overestimate and underestimate curing. Cloud cover can block readings for weeks, grass under trees can be missed entirely and rainfall can impact readings.

"After rain new green shoots might appear, but they're tiny and don't affect fire behaviour. The satellite sees green and assumes the area is of lower risk.

"Having volunteers makes a huge difference. They're the ones confirming what is actually happening on the ground and capturing the details the model often misses."

John Taubman has been a 'citizen scientist' for nine years and said the role is a great way to serve the community and contribute to more accurate fire risk information.

"Being a grassland observer really sharpens your awareness of how the environment changes from day to day," John said.

"You learn to read the landscape, from the wind and temperature to the humidity. You don't always need instruments to tell it's a bad fire day.

"The satisfaction comes from knowing we are providing a service to the community. The more data points we have on the map, the more accurate the data is."

Danielle said becoming a grassland observer is a simple yet highly valuable way to support local fire safety.

"Everyone is welcome to participate, not just CFA volunteers. It's a great way to support CFA without needing to be on the fireground," Danielle said.

With summer approaching, regular grassland observations are more important than ever to help track fire risk across Victoria.

For more information, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/grass or email grassland@cfa.vic.gov.au

Improvements for tenants

RENTAL reforms are now in effect with major improvements for Victorian renters.

Tenants Victoria has welcomed the rental law reforms as crucial steps for nearly 2,000,000 Victorian renters, delivering long-awaited protections against arbitrary evictions and exploitative practices.

Tenants Victoria CEO Jennifer Beveridge said the reforms, including a complete ban on 'no-fault' evictions and rental bidding, represent a significant strengthening of renter rights.

"This marks a major shift for Victoria's almost 2,000,000 renters. These reforms recognise that renters deserve security and stability in their homes," Ms Beveridge said.

"The complete ban on 'no-fault' evictions means renters can finally assert their rights, like asking for repairs or challenging unfair practices, without fear of being thrown out for no reason."

Reforms taking effect today include a complete ban on 'no-fault' evictions at the end of fixed-term leases; prohibition on accepting rental bids above advertised prices; a ban on requesting more than one month's rent in advance (except for properties over \$900 per week); extended notice periods from 60 to 90 days for rent increases and most evictions; mandatory annual

smoke alarm checks; and stronger protections for renters' personal information.

Ms Beveridge said the ban on rental bidding would end one of the most exploitative practices.

"No more will desperate renters be forced into bidding wars they can't afford just to secure a home. Landlords and agents who accept bids above the advertised price now face real penalties," she said.

"It's hard enough trying to find somewhere to live without turning the rental market into an auction house.

"The extended notice periods for rent increases and evictions would provide critical breathing room for renters facing changes," Ms Beveridge said.

"Ninety days' notice gives renters real time to plan, budget, and if necessary, find alternative accommodation. In this tight rental market, that extra month can make the difference between finding a new home and facing homelessness."

Ms Beveridge said while the reforms were significant, more work remained to address the housing crisis.

"These protections are essential, but we still need action on rental affordability. Tenants Victoria is calling for a rent increase fairness formula to protect renters from arbitrary price shocks that are forcing families out of their communities," she said.

Yea High School graduates celebrate



ON November 21, 2025 graduates, along with their families and staff, enjoyed a beautiful evening at Flowerdale Estate celebrating the end of their educational journey with Yea High School. -S





Some vehicle owners took the chance to have some fun. -AR



Peter Allan from The Butchers Shop. -AR

Molesworth's Rev and Rummage

THE Molesworth Rev and Rummage was held in overcast and rainy conditions on Saturday, November 29, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the attendees and stallholders.

The event was held at the Molesworth Recreation Reserve, showcasing vintage finds, local makers, classic cars and food trucks. It was a weekend of good vibes in Molesworth.



One of the lovely historic vehicles on display at the Molesworth Rev and Rummage. -AR



Kim Derbyshire from Acacia Lane. -AR



Mark at one of the stalls. -AR



Kaiden was a keen vendor on the day. -AR



Amanda and Rob from Sassy Sister Liqueur. -AR

Remain vigilant on asbestos safety

“NATIONAL Asbestos Awareness Week provides an important reminder as we head into end of year, when people may be looking to undertake renovation or DIY work on older properties and the need to be vigilant in managing safety on site,” Jocelyn Martin, HIA Managing Director, said.

“If you’re working on homes built before 1990, you need to assume asbestos could be present in elements such as cladding, eave sheets, electrical switchboards, internal linings and even in pipework, roofing and floor underlays.

“It is vital to engage a licensed assessor for inspection and testing, and if asbestos is found, ensure it’s removed by a licensed professional.

“The progress in asbestos awareness and management across Australia has been very good. With comprehensive legislation, dedicated removal programs, and increased

industry awareness, we’ve significantly reduced the risks associated with asbestos.

“However, everyone undertaking work on existing homes needs to remain vigilant to prevent complacency and protect the next generation of workers and homeowners.

“HIA encourages the industry and those looking to undertake renovation and DIY projects to use this year’s Asbestos Awareness Week to take time to review their safe work practices and ensure all workers coming on home building sites are adequately trained and communicated to openly about potential risks.

“HIA has an extensive range of safety resources and dedicated information on working safely around asbestos and about identification, removal and safety obligations visit hia.com.au or contact your local state or territory work safety authority,” Ms Martin said.

Good news for anglers

VICTORIA’S Murray cod fisheries are in strong shape ahead of the annual season opening, according to a monitoring program funded in part by recreational fishing licence fees.

Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) CEO Travis Dowling said the Native Fish Report Cards, developed in partnership with Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action’s Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI), delivered insights into cod populations in four key waterways.

“Cod season opens Monday, December 1 and there’s good news for anglers planning summer trips to the Goulburn, Ovens and Lindsay rivers and Gunbower Creek,” he said.

“The report cards paint a picture of how these fisheries are travelling and feature insights such as the percentage of legal-size fish and whether recent breeding has occurred.”

The annual report cards are informed by ARI survey work, using electrofishing and fyke nets to assess populations of Murray cod and other native species in 10 systems statewide.

The Goulburn recorded a slight increase on 2024 survey numbers with evidence of recent recruitment meaning breeding is occurring naturally within the system.

“The data helps fisheries managers assess which waters may benefit from our record-breaking fish stocking program and where natural recruitment is occurring,” Mr Dowling said.

“A combination of factors including stocking millions of Murray cod into Victorian waters each year, more fish habitat, better handling by anglers and effective bag and size limits are playing a part in improving cod fishing for everyone right across the state.”

Catch limit information for Murray cod can be accessed via the free *VicFishing* app.

SPORT

Round eight of term four pennant: Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

Monday competition

Blue vein versus Feta

ETHAN versus Tyler: They don’t get any closer than this. Ethan won the first two games, but Tyler won the next two games to level the points resulting in a draw. 55 to 55.

Randy versus Laura (fill in): Close all the way. Two tied games and two games separated by a mere point Laura won extra points to win the match by two. 61 to 59.

Jared versus Lucas: A great match with good long rallies. Jared stayed in control of the ‘T’ to take home all four games and the match. 66 to 50.

John versus Michael H (fill in): John showed why he is the top ranked player in this level, with consistent play, bringing Michael’s unbeaten run for the season to an end. 63 to 50.

Camembert versus Mozzarella

Jordan/Robbie versus Eric: Good rallies. Eric has improved a lot. Jordan and Robbie are also getting good. Eric couldn’t keep up with his opponents and conceded defeat. 72 to 50.

Liane versus Sally: A good start by Sally, showing great court dominance with some lovely shots. Liane came back in the third with great serves. A great match to the end. Sally’s fast start was too much for Liane to overturn. 60 to 56.

Chris versus Matt: Another close match. Matt jumped to an early lead but the many miss hits in game two gave Chris the lead. Matt regained his composure in game three to take the lead back. Both players tried all their tricks in the final game, but Matt held the margin to win by two-points. 58 to 56.

Derrick versus Jim: Close game the whole way through. Derrick’s high serves gave Jim problems, but Jim took control early

in the final game with smart lower risk shots that stuck Derrick in the back corner. Derrick found a way to claw his way back and sealed the win with a loopy serve to split the difference. 51 to 50.

Wednesday competition

Barracudas versus Stingrays

Matthew versus Beth: It was a see-sawing match with both players taking two games. Matthew put in some good work but couldn’t make up the point deficit. Beth was the winner. 63 to 48.

Blake versus Mick: Mick held the game with strong serves that left Blake searching for answers. Mick claimed the win. 75 to 40.

Daniel K versus James (fill in): Returning to the Alexandra courts with a much-improved squash game, James filled in giving Daniel a good run around. It was a brilliant competition and James’s positioning on the courts was

good, but Daniel’s skills still reign supreme. 54 to 44.

Hammerheads versus Piranhas

Jessica versus Nicole: It was a close game with minimal points the difference in each game. Jessica had a good win in game three, increasing her margin and assisting in her victory. 53 to 44.

Kristelle versus Travis: Both players put everything on the line to win each point. There were some nice lobs, drops and drives. Kristelle miraculously aided in her own demise with numerous faulty serves. Travis was playing well and the addition of extra drives to his game made a big difference. 68 to 55.

Daniel W versus Justin: Great rallies and all the shots were really close. Daniel was just too consistent with his play and claimed the victory. 64 to 52.

Merton cricketers host tight match with City Colts

MERTON cricketers hosted City Colts on a slow lush outfeild at the Merton Cricket Ground (MCG) last Saturday.

Merton batting first made 5/158 with a fine 118 run partnership between father and son Luke and James Benton, Luke top scoring for his side with 71 while young James making his first half century contributing 53. Luke Berriman was the only other batsmen to make double figures with 17.

Thanish Gadela with 3/42 the leading wicket taker for the Colts. Merton possibly left a few runs short in the latter overs with wickets in hand, however a solid total on a slow outfeild would be a challenging task for the young City Colts side.

After the impressive tea break with thanks to the Merton players and partners City Colts went to work on chasing down the 159 victory target. Colts young guns Mich Feldtmann and Gus Marek both 62 played an excellent innings to set up victory for the visitors playing their shots and keeping the run rate required in check.

After their departure things started to get tight in the last six overs however the damage had been done and the Merton bowlers struggled to build enough pressure with too many loose balls enabling Colts to score the required runs five wickets down in the 35th over.

Luke Berriman 2/24, Murray Sutton and James Benton the other wicket takers for Merton. This is the third close loss this season coming down to the last overs, with the small moments throughout the game costly to the Merton side. Delatite will host the Merton side in the local derby at Lords next Saturday.



Merton cricketer sending the ball. -S

Yea Golf Club Corporate Day

by Alan Pell

LAST Friday saw over 100 golfers at Royal Yea for the Annual Corporate Three Person Ambrose Event which included a fabulous sit down luncheon.

The winning team was Scott Christie Irrigation Two with 55 1/6 from second Inductabend with 56 1/3. In the mixed event Yea Pharmacy with 60 2/3 won from Miranda and Rob Gill, Karen Saunders with 64 2/3.

Of course such a big day requires plenty of workers and the club thanks all the members and personnel who gave their time.

Last Wednesday's golf saw the first of nine rounds of the Gender Challenge. First round was a stableford event with Gavin Houldcroft (37) with 42 points taking the win. Second was Miranda Gill (19) with 39 points from third Jim Redmond (25) 37 on countback from Sam Gregory (21) and Chris Dunne (7). Due to the men having 10 more players the handicap was that the first three men's results didn't count in the Gender Competition.

The Gender Points were: Ladies, Miranda Gill 39 with 25 points. Men, Chris Dunne 37 with 20 points, Jobe Dunne 37 with 15, Jack Kenney (34) with 10, and Glenn Walsh (33 countback) with five.

The mens' team average was 29.8, while the ladies' team average was 29.4, giving 10 points to men. In total, men 60 and ladies 25.

Last Saturday's Stableford saw 22 men compete with Jobe Dunne (20) continuing his excellent form with 43 points to win from Brian Simmons (11) with 39 second. Rick Wills (10) 38 was third, Chris Dunne (6) with 37 fourth and Paul Heyen (27) with 36 countback was fifth.



The crowd at Yea Golf Club's annual corporate event. -S



The Yea Pharmacy team of Brian and Christine Simmons and David Ngo. -S