

## INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Open gardens distribute funds



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St Mary's swimming sports



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## Beloved Eildon Kindergarten teacher steps back

WALKING into the Eildon Kindergarten classroom, there is a palpable feeling of excitement and joy. Children are smiling and engaged, and the two teachers move among them with familiarity and a steady guiding hand.

Megan Strongman, one of the two teachers in the colourful classroom, is retiring at the end of the year, after almost three decades of teaching kindergarten students in Eildon.

Megan sat down with the *Alexandra Standard* to discuss her experience on the job and her plans now that she is leaving.

"It has been very rewarding. I'm going to miss it. It's part of my identity. I said something the other day, and I thought to myself, oh my goodness, I just introduced myself as the Eildon kindergarten teacher," Megan said with a laugh. "That's going to be a big difference."

She began teaching kindergarten when her eldest son was eight months old, first at both Eildon and Marysville to make ends meet, and then just at Eildon. It was her dream to work with children ever since she was a teenager.

"I was the local country girl who babysat everyone's kids when I was 16, so I always knew that I wanted to work with children. I did think about nursing and stuff like that, but then I couldn't do it if the kids were sick. I always had my heart set on being a primary school teacher," Megan said.

"I'm actually qualified as a primary school teacher. The year we graduated there were no government jobs, and back then it was a three-year course. So you had to have experience to do your fourth year, but you couldn't actually get in to get that experience.

"I worked with portrait photo places, and took pictures of kids for



Jess Jamieson and Megan Strongman with the Eildon Kindergarten children. -AR

a little while, and just did emergency teaching. Had my first son, and then started when the kindergarten was originally in Eighth Street in Eildon.

"I always worked here, but before the 15 hours came in, and four-year olds were only funded for 10 hours, I taught for seven years at Marysville as well. I did Marysville and Eildon, both of the centres then. That was challenging because of the dynamics of the children, the dynamics of the group. I was also there when the fires went through. That was a big challenge too."

Speaking about her experiences, Megan laid out just how rewarding the job has been for her.

"Along the way I've worked with some amazing educators, and met some other amazing educators, and

quite a few of them have become lifelong friends, which is pretty special," she said.

"I've probably learnt as much from the kids as they have from me. They're just amazing, it's such a beautiful age. It is the kids that have kept me here for this long, not the paperwork and the changes. I find it a bit difficult now at times, because I feel like it's about bottom line. Whereas my duty of care and these guys have always been the priority for me.

"Working with the children is very rewarding. These guys are sometimes brutally honest, very funny, and I've been through some big changes, like I lost my mum while working with these little

people, and I often think that they're the ones who kept me on track."

With almost 30 years of teaching under her belt, Megan has seen many of the children she has taught grow up and embark on their own careers and start their own families.

"It was funny, because we had a dinner the other night, and I was like, oh wow. I've taught my friend's kids, I've taught my own children, I've taught children of the children I've taught," Megan said.

"I've had children that I taught come and do work experience with me. I actually worked for a little while with an educator who had just got her cert three, and she worked with me, but I had taught her. That's pretty crazy. And I was looking around the dinner the other day,

and I think there were only two or three families there whose children I hadn't taught.

"To me, it's just like it was yesterday when I see them again. Being a part of the school is great, because I walk up the corridor and the kids all yell out 'Megan' because I taught them all. And it's been with some families, I've taught all three siblings. So you really develop a strong connection with the family. When that last sibling leaves you feel a bit sad."

When asked about what is next, Megan said that she still wants to be active in the teaching industry, and that she will be helping a friend out at the Thornton Store too.

"I'm Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered in primary school and early childhood, so I'm maintaining my registrations. I think initially I'll just do a little bit of replacement teaching, just less responsibility than running the whole thing, the reporting and the paperwork.

"I couldn't do nothing because I would go crazy. I've been in this job for so long now, I've definitely got a little bit of ADHD going."

Megan concluded by talking about the community aspect of teaching kindergarten in Eildon.

"The other thing I was going to say is that being this small, we've really been community based. We have a really strong affiliation with the nursing home. The kids go there regularly, to the point that they're very familiar with the residents now. We pop up the street, and we go to the op shop, they all know us there. And that's been really special," she finished.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**  
**Thank you for your continued support**

**Our office will be closed from 1pm, December 18  
until 9am Wednesday, January 8, 2025.**

**Our first edition for 2025 will be available on  
Wednesday, January 15, 2025**



**Alexandra District Health**  
5772 0900

**Yea & District Memorial Hospital** 5736 0400

In an emergency dial **000**

**ELECTRICIAN**

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For all your electrical and communication requirements

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 **Letters to the Editor**

**IT'S NOT OKAY**

To yell at our staff.  
To swear at our staff.  
To be rude to our staff.  
To abuse our staff in anyway.  
To be disrespectful to our staff.  
To show threatening behaviour towards our staff.

If you do, we have the right to ask you to leave our office and we may contact the police, or we may disconnect your call.

If you have a problem or complaint, we are happy to listen if you discuss this with us politely, please don't take your anger out on us.



**COMMUNITY DIARY**

Local Radio Frequency


UGFM 106.9	Alexandra / Lake Eildon
UGFM 88.9	Yea / Highlands
UGFM 98.5	Marysville / Lake Mountain
UGFM 98.9	Flowerdale / Hazeldene
UGFM 94.5	Kinglake Ranges

**WEEKLY**

Tues	Art Group (Alex Tennis Rooms) 10am-3pm Ph 5773 2306
Tue	Seniors Carpet Bowls 1.15pm
Wed	Social Bowls 11am Alexandra Bowls Club Ph 5772 1150
Thu	Take off weight naturally 5.45pm 5773 2427
Fri	Seniors Social Club 1pm
Sun	AA 7pm Anglican Church, Alexandra Ph 0402 428 086
Sun	Alanon Recovery 5.30pm. Ph Sheila 0402 428 086
Sun	Alex & Dist Dog Obedience, training. Ph 0456 583 611
Thu	7.00-10pm SES, SES/CFA complex Ph 0418 576 666
Fri	Communita 10am-12pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801

**MONTHLY**

1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	Alexandra Lions dinner meet, Corner Hotel 0427 595 318
1 <sup>st</sup> Sat	Alexandra Quilters RSL Hall 10am-3pm Ph 0437 005 465
1 <sup>st</sup> Sun	Crop/Produce swap 10.30am-noon @ Embassy of Ideas
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tue	Alexandra District Garden Society Meeting Ph 5772 2285
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed	Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat	Alexandra Market - at Station Street Ph 0427 509 988
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat	Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat	Murrindindi Men 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	Alex Lions business meeting, rear RSL hall 0427 595 318
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thu	Alexandra Ladies Probos 10am RSL Ph 0428 976 252
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thu	Community Potluck dinner 6-8pm @ Embassy of Ideas
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sun	Alexandra RSL Ph 0409 950 913
4 <sup>th</sup> Tue	Yarck CWA Meeting, 10.30am Yarck Hall.
4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4 <sup>th</sup> Thu	Alexandra Redgate CWA Meeting 1pm, Ph 0402 804 517
Last Fri	Carers Group 10am. Free morning tea. 0418 402 455



For a \$5 annual fee for one line, your club or organisation's regular meeting dates will be listed each week. Not only is this a reminder to your regular members but also a good source of what groups are available in the community, when they meet and a contact phone number.

**Bus service 684**

BOTH Gabrielle Williams (Minister for Public and Active Transport) and Harriet Shing (Member for Eastern Victoria) have signed off on a press release which amounts to nothing but a conflation, put plainly propoganda.

'We', Murrindindi Shire residents, understand that Yarra Valley and the 684 bus services are literally and metaphorically a 'Range' apart which at the halfway point becomes Murrindindi. We live here.

There are no improved services to the 684 daily bus service from Eildon to Ringwood albeit there have been a couple of extra services between Alexandra and Eildon for those residents to use.

I regularly use the 684 bus service and it now robs me of a precious 90 to 120 minutes, to attend medical appointments, meet family and friends and volunteer for the RSL, before this 'efficiency' and 'better service' was forced on us. Regular bus users concur with this.

We now run the risk of missing the only (daily) connection between Healesville and Eildon and being stranded overnight in a bus shelter. There have been instances that regular users of 684 tell me of, near or actual misses.

During the 'SaveTheBus' negotiations for neigh on two years with the Department of Transport (DoT) and Public Transport Victoria (PTV), speaking with Daniel Andrews twice and personally handing him a portfolio of

our pleas, (at his annually hosted Anzac Invitational Veteran's luncheon) to retain the original Southern Cross termination point, there was no response, other than DoT's initial folly of terminating the service at Chirnside we are the casualties of this 'popular bus network'.

Remember the following contacts: PTV phone number is 1800 800 007. Contact local member Cindy McLeish at [Cindy.mcleish@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:Cindy.mcleish@parliament.vic.gov.au). Contact Gabrielle Williams at [gabrielle.williams@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:gabrielle.williams@parliament.vic.gov.au). Contact Harriet Shing at [harriet.shing@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:harriet.shing@parliament.vic.gov.au), and contact Murrindindi Shire Council at [murrindindi.vic.gov.au](mailto:murrindindi.vic.gov.au), attention to Damien Gallagher and your ward councillor.

If in exasperation you don't get anywhere, contact [savethebus@buxtonprogress.org.au](mailto:savethebus@buxtonprogress.org.au) with your best contact details and I will get back to you and then advocate on your behalf.

I challenge Gabrielle, Harriet, and similarly our now Deputy Premier Ben Carroll (previous Transport minister who not once answered any emails) to take a ride with me and experience my day to day reality to attend medical appointments, meet my family and friends and make it into Anzac House, which incidentally happens to be about 350 meters from Parliament House.

*Carmel Denham, Buxton*

*Continued Page 19*



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



**Weekly Weather**  
December 11-December 17, 2024

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra			Yea		
DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	8	23	Wednesday	9	24
Thursday	10	26	Thursday	10	26
Friday	12	24	Friday	12	25
Saturday	9	23	Saturday	10	24
Sunday	9	27	Sunday	9	27
Monday	11	30	Monday	11	32
Tuesday	11	29	Tuesday	14	28

having a celebration?  
**need invitations?**






**CALL NOW!**  
5772 1002  
or email us on  
[reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au](mailto:reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au)

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[reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au](mailto: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.

 Like us on Facebook

**RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT**

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	10.00am Mon	1.33	steady	below minor
Rubicon River at Rubicon	10.00am Mon	0.56	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	9.48am Mon	0.67	steady	below minor
Home Creek at Yarck	10.29am Mon	0.17	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.29am Mon	0.54	steady	below minor
Yea River at Yea GV Water PS	9.21am Mon	0.77	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	10.00am Mon	3.58	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	10.00am Mon	0.47	steady	below minor
King Parrot Ck at Kerrisdale	10.00am Mon	0.28	steady	
Goulburn River at Trawool	10.00am Mon	1.15	steady	below minor
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	10.00am Mon	0.34	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Seymour	10.00am Mon	1.43	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	10.06am Mon	1.17	steady	

**\*\*ISSUED AT 10.46AM ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024**

**DISTRICT RAINFALL**

Alexandra.....	30mm
Buxton.....	55mm
Eildon (AWS).....	27mm
Flowerdale.....	19mm
Jamieson.....	58mm
Kinglake.....	28mm
Lake Eildon.....	33mm
Mansfield.....	38mm
Taggerty.....	29mm
Yarck.....	29mm
Yea.....	18mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

**LAKE EILDON**

Height above sea level this week.....	284.98m
Capacity as at 9am Monday.....	.85%
Metres below full supply.....	3.92m
Daily inflow.....	2000ML
Release.....	2000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change).....	48.9%



**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](mailto:reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au)

We thank you for your continued support



# AWU statement on Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw leasing proposal

ALPINE Resorts Victoria (ARV) has announced its intention to attempt to lease Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw to a private operator. Such a lease could last for as long as 99 years, effectively privatising the operation.

Neither ARV nor the Victorian Government have consulted with the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) regarding this matter.

AWU members have expressed to the AWU feeling uncertain about their future after this announcement.

This announcement comes after redundancies have already been made at both Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw. The AWU's message to interested private operators is that it is impossible to achieve profitability at these resorts by cutting jobs.

Recent experience at these resorts has shown that when their attractions are invested into, visitorship grows. When investment is withdrawn, visitorship declines. Everyone knows you have to spend money to make

money, and that is the only pathway forward for Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw.

AWU Organiser James Newbold says it's time for the Victorian Government to consider all options.

"If no private operator steps up to run these resorts, then the Victorian Government needs to read the writing on the wall and stump up investment to secure the resorts more affordable power supplies and expand their winter and non-winter attractions," Mr Newbold said.

"The Victorian Government must cut to the chase and consider investing in these resorts now."

These investments can be funded by amending Schedule One of the Alpine Resorts (Management) Regulations 2020 to give ARV

more flexibility in determining entry fees to the resorts during the declared snow season. Consideration should be given to permitting ARV to discount entry fees on weekdays and increase entry fees on weekends to increase visitation and revenue.

In response to public commentary about the unusual timing of this announcement, the AWU notes that after a year of negotiations the AWU recently reached Agreement In Principle on a new Enterprise Agreement with ARV, to set new wages and working conditions for public servants across all Victorian resorts. This may have been a factor in delaying ARV's announcement, due to the associated wages costs of the Enterprise Agreement needing to be factored into the tender.

This attempt to lease Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw follows the Victorian Government outsourcing the jobs of AWU members in sectors such as road maintenance over the last several years.

"Prospective private operators are put on notice that AWU members will defend their local communities interests, as well as their hard-won wages and conditions, in the event a private operator attempts to put profits before people." Mr Newbold said.

Mr Newbold reaffirmed the Union's commitment to the region.

"The AWU is ready to work with any private operator who will support local communities and invest in growing Lake Mountain and Mount Baw Baw," he said.

## Alexandra Christmas Carnival and Carols

THE Alexandra Christmas Carnival and Carols is set for Friday, December 20. The event starts at 5pm, with Santa arriving at 7pm and the carols starting at 7.30pm.

The event has been running for around 20 years in different formats. This year, it's being run by Alexandra Events, Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism, the Alexandra Lions Club, the Alexandra Rotary Club and Murrindindi Shire.

There will be 10 to 15 market stalls at the event, which may be helpful to people looking to do some last minute Christmas shopping. The Turkish bread man will also be there, and he will be taking orders for Christmas.

At 6pm, the carnival will start, with free rides for the children, and a barbecue which will be free for children. Adults will have to pay. The meat is being sponsored by the Thornton Butchers. There will also be coffee and ice cream and other carnival food.

Santa will then make an appearance, followed by the carols. The guest singers include Tayla Arnett, Tahlee Chistie and Daniel Kriss. A professional harp player will also be performing.

The event is held free of charge. Bring along your own rugs. There will be some chairs there. UGFM will be broadcasting from the event. If anybody can't get to the event but wants to listen, they can tune in from home.

## Council on Local Government Sustainability Report

THE Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee recently released their report on Local Government Funding and Services in Victoria, following a Parliamentary Inquiry into the issue. Murrindindi Shire Council, being directly affected by the issue, released the following statement regarding the Local Government Sustainability Report.

"Murrindindi Shire Council welcomes the release of the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee's report following the Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services in Victoria.

"The report's findings and recommendations highlight the critical challenges facing rural councils like Murrindindi, particularly around financial sustainability, equitable grant allocation, and addressing cost shifting from other levels of government.

"We are pleased to see that our submission and advocacy have contributed significantly to the inquiry's recommendations. The recognition of unique challenges, such as maintaining services across dispersed communities, addressing the growing renewal gap for critical infrastructure, and the disproportionate impact of funding models, reflects the lived experience of our residents and council.

"Murrindindi has been impacted by successive years of underfunding on a per capita and overall basis as compared to peer councils, further compounding these challenges.

"The report's recommendations to review the financial assistance grant distribution model and address cost shifting are especially important for small rural councils. Our ratepayers are already heavy-lifting contributors to council revenue through above-average rates, so these recommendations acknowledge the pressing need for fairer and more equitable funding to support councils like Murrindindi.

"These measures can help ensure councils like ours have the resources needed to sustain essential services and plan for future growth, while addressing the inequities in the current funding system.

"As a council that has consistently raised concerns about the strain of underfunded responsibilities and inequitable grant allocations, we strongly support the committee's call for systemic change to ensure rural councils can effectively serve their communities.

"We look forward to collaborating with all levels of government to deliver these recommendations and create a fairer, more sustainable framework for local government funding.

"With thanks to the committee, we keenly await the Victorian Government's response to the report and anticipate the full implementation of its recommendations. Their adoption would represent a significant step towards ensuring that councils like Murrindindi can continue to deliver for their communities now and into the future."

## Redgate-Alexandra CWA report

ALL members would like to wish everyone in the community a very Happy Christmas and safe New Year. Thank you to all of the guest speakers who gave their time and expertise to share at the CWA monthly meetings.

Tuesday Craft Sessions will still be held during January 2025 and a copy of the 2025 CWA syllabus from January to May will be on the notice board for anyone to view. Thank you to everyone who has supported the CWA this year on a branch or group level.

## The earth moved

ON Wednesday, December 4, many people in the shire were startled by an earthquake which occurred at 6.25pm.

The quake was initially recorded by Geoscience Australia at magnitude three, but this was later revised to 2.9.

The epicentre of the earthquake was near the end of Cathedral Lane, behind the Cathedral Range in the Rubicon State Forest, at a depth of 1km.

By the following day, 36 people had provided 'felt reports' to the organisation, but plenty more reported feeling the earthquake on social media.

## Christmas Shopping Bonanza

THE Alexandra and district Christmas Shopping Bonanza is now well underway.

Tickets are available at all shops which are members of the Alexandra and District Traders and Tourism Association (ADTTA), including some new ones which have come on board.

When you're shopping locally, you'll get the chance to get your voucher. They're available at FoodWorks as well. All you have to do is fill it out and put it in the red marked bin outside the Alexandra Newsagency.

All of the prizes will be drawn on Christmas eve at 2pm. The first prize is a \$500 voucher to be spent back into any participating shop in the town, a \$250 voucher is the second prize, and the third prize is a family pass to the rodeo.

Andrew Embling from ADTTA said, "We encourage people to do their shopping locally because in the current climate, every dollar spent in this town helps to keep that shop open going into next year. With things being so tough, we want to just keep our town vibrant and by shopping locally, it all helps."

## Lake Mountain to exit mountain bike rental market

LAKE Mountain has announced further changes to its operations. They announced on Facebook last week that "due to our commitment to becoming economically sustainable, Lake Mountain will no longer be offering mountain bike and protective equipment rentals this summer season. This decision has not been made lightly but reflects our focus on ensuring the long-term viability of our operations.

The statement added, "Lake Mountain and the beloved Cascades trail network are proudly owned and operated by Alpine Resorts Victoria (ARV), a government entity responsible for managing all alpine resorts in Victoria. Our mission is to deliver exceptional services while adhering to a

sustainable business model. Unfortunately, the rental service does not currently align with these goals.

"Maintaining the 30km Cascades trail network is a significant undertaking, requiring a large team to clear fallen trees, branches, and debris immediately after winter, followed by dedicated staff throughout the summer to uphold the high standards you've come to expect.

"However, the costs of trail maintenance far exceed the revenue generated from shuttle tickets, which do not fully cover the costs of shuttle operations, let alone the upkeep of the trails themselves.

"To help us continue maintaining and improving these trails, we need your support. Donations, even as small as \$10, can make a significant difference in keeping this network open and thriving. You can donate at checkout when purchasing a ticket or via our online donation link.

"While the rental service will no longer be available, our mountain bike shuttle service will continue. Weekday shuttles will run in the mornings, with multiple sessions available on weekends. Full Cascades shuttles are now running.

"We appreciate your understanding and support as we work toward a sustainable future for Lake Mountain and the Cascades trail network."



ALEXANDRA

ROTARY PARK **20 DECEMBER 2024**  
*Christmas*  
*Carnival & Carols*

- ★ Carnival 5pm
- ★ Carols 7.30pm
- ★ Santa arrives 7pm
- ★ Coffee, ice-cream
- ★ Barbecue
- ★ BYO chairs/rugs/picnic

SHOP LOCALLY - FILL IN A VOUCHER IN PARTICIPATING STORES - FOR A CHANCE TO WIN PRIZES IN THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING BONANZA



# Church Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Out & About



THE items in Out and About are sourced from our advertising and news stories. *Out and About is not a free community listing diary.* Not all items can be included and are placed at the discretion of *Alexandra Newspapers.*

darlingford@dughn.com.au

Listen for the siren and make sure you go out and say hi to santa and get a bag of lollies. (This event may be cancelled if there is an emergency requiring CFA attendance.)

\*\*\*\*\*

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home AGM will be held at 1.30pm in the North Lounge room. Video conference available on request. All welcome, RSVP by December 10 to 5774 2711 or email

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

Alexandra Christmas Carnival and Carols will be at Rotary Park. Carnival 5pm, carols start 7.30pm. Santa arrives 7pm. There will be coffee, ice cream and a barbecue. BYO chairs, rug and picnic.

\*\*\*\*\*

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

Embassy of Ideas Community Christmas Day gathering. St Johns Hall, 39 Downey Street, Alexandra. Free community Christmas lunch, all food provided, everyone is welcome. Bookings essential by December 20. Call or text Sasha 0422 225 801 or email [embassyofideas@gmail.com](mailto:embassyofideas@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

Santa is dropping into Alexandra from approximately 9.15am with the Alexandra Fire Brigade.

# POLICE REPORT

ALEXANDRA police have advised that some items have been handed into the police station recently, and they are hoping to find the owners.

The items are a wakeboard found in Koriella, a gold coloured necklace found in the vicinity of Rotary Park, and a children's camera found at the Alexandra second hand book store.

The owners will need to either call or attend the station and describe the items to prove ownership.

## Meal on Wheels service to continue

THERE have been concerns raised in the community recently about whether the meal delivery service will continue in Murrindindi Shire.

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health (SCCH) have advised that Commonwealth Home Support Program clients will continue to receive their meal service.

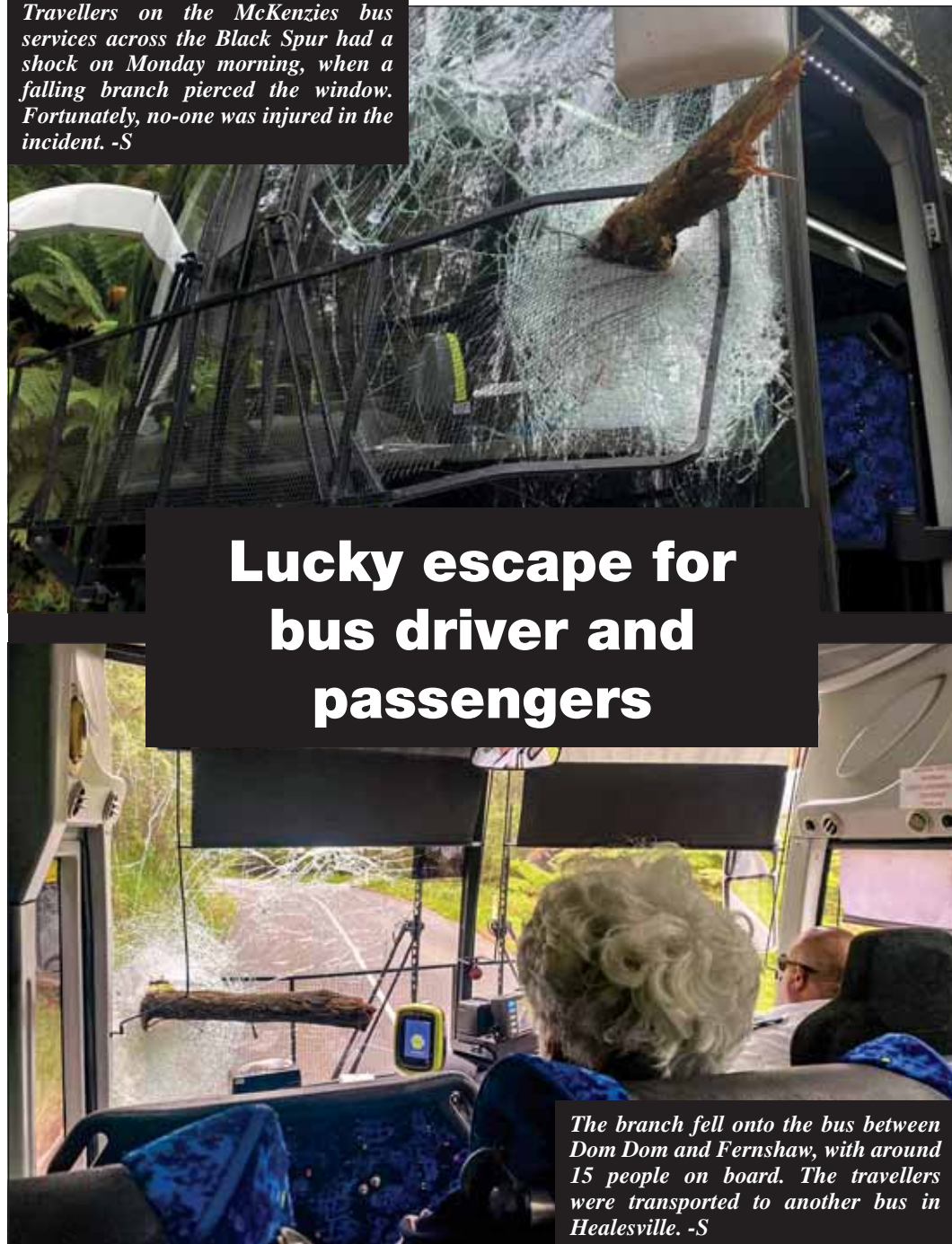
From Wednesday, January 1, 2025, SCCH will manage the Commonwealth Home Support Program service for the Mitchell, Strathbogie and Murrindindi local government areas.

SCCH will manage the meals service, which will be delivered by its contractors. Clients will continue to receive ready to eat healthy meals delivered to their door.

While Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health will manage the contract, Nexus Primary Health has been engaged to continue to deliver most Commonwealth Home Support Program services through a subcontract model.

As members of the Alliance of Rural and Regional Community Health, SCCH partners with Nexus on a number of projects.

*Travellers on the McKenzies bus services across the Black Spur had a shock on Monday morning, when a falling branch pierced the window. Fortunately, no-one was injured in the incident. -S*



## Lucky escape for bus driver and passengers

*The branch fell onto the bus between Dom Dom and Fernshaw, with around 15 people on board. The travellers were transported to another bus in Healesville. -S*



**THUMBS DOWN:** To council for the three day pop up hire of the Alexandra Shire Hall. What about the support for the local businesses, not the fly-by-nighters.

**THUMBS UP:** Thanks to the wonderful, honest lady who handed in lost money, and Graham from the Alexandra Newsagency who spent hours tracking me down.

**THUMBS UP:** To the Christmas tree committee. All the hard work that goes into the Alexandra Christmas Tree Festival and the beautiful decorations bought with the proceeds are not unnoticed. Thank you.

**THUMBS DOWN:** To council for lack of acknowledgement of the fact that Hume and Hovell passed through the area which is now our shire in the first week of December 1824. It is part of our history.

**THUMBS UP:** To the wonderful ladies and gents at Alexandra Bowling Club who provided the members of U3A Murrindindi East with superb Christmas lunch with all the trimmings on Friday.

**THUMBS UP:** Pleased to read that our new and re-elected shire councillors have embraced the concept of reporting on their portfolios and activities. Fingers crossed a written report will always be submitted in absentia at every council meeting.

**THUMBS UP:** To all the regular Letter to the Editor contributors. As regional residents we lack voice and are stifled by distance. Do yourself a favour and enrol in Engage Victoria. It is also a 'gateway' to having your opinion heard. Also there is another avenue, 'They work for you'. Take a look.

**THUMBS UP:** To all of the CFA brigades across our shire for their continuous efforts to ensure our safety and preparedness, with not only sacrificing their time (all voluntarily), to protect us during emergencies but also conducting property visits, and installing fire alarms for the vulnerable with their community engagement programs.

**THUMBS UP:** To the ecumenical carols service. The true meaning of Christmas. Thank you to all involved in organising this event.

**THUMBS UP:** To the ecumenical carols service. A little piece of heaven on earth. Thank you.

**THUMBS UP:** To Graeme at the newsagents. I bought a card for the wrong age group. He happily swapped it over. Thank you.

**THUMBS UP:** To The Standard. Just when I'm wondering about the Grant street planter boxes, Lake Mountain and Eildon camping over summer, it's there in print. Kudos to the editor.

**THUMBS UP:** To Fr Mario from St John's Church and the Roman Catholic Church. A huge thank you for the wonderful carols service on Friday night, December 6.

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](mailto: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

# Standard

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

## Available from these retail outlets

- Alexandra FoodWorks
- Alexandra Newsagency
- Alexandra Newspapers
- Buxton Shell
- Eildon Grocer
- Endeavour Alexandra
- Hazeldene Store
- Igloo Buxton
- Marysville Grocer
- Merton General Store
- Seymour Newsagency
- Simpsons Caltex
- Taggerty Store
- Thornton Store
- Thornton Shell
- Yea FoodWorks
- Yea Newsagency

Alexandra Newspapers are members of:



# Local NAPLAN results

THE National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results were announced on Wednesday, December 4. NAPLAN is a national assessment undertaken by all Australian children. It provides comparable data about student performance in literacy and numeracy nationally and over time.

Below is a summary of the local results and the best performing schools. To find out more about specific schools, visit [myschool.edu.au](http://myschool.edu.au)

## PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**Year three**  
Eildon Primary School received the best year three results within the primary schools in Murrindindi Shire in reading (445), writing (449) and spelling (446).

Yea Primary School received the best results in grammar (469) and Yea's Sacred Heart Primary School in numeracy (427).

## Year five

In the year five results, Eildon Primary received the best

results in reading (530) and Spelling (533), and Middle Kinglake Primary School received the best results in writing (528), grammar (521) and numeracy (519).

## Rankings

Eildon Primary School ranked 332 with a year five average of 516.8.

Middle Kinglake Primary School ranked 351 with a year five average of 515.8.

Kinglake Primary School ranked 943 with a year five average of 486.

St Mary's Primary School Alexandra ranked 993 with a year five average of 483.4.

Yea Primary School ranked 1184 with a year five average of 474.2.

Marysville Primary School ranked 1210 with a year five average of 472.

Kinglake West Primary School ranked 1244 with a year five average of 470.

Alexandra Primary School ranked 1402 with a year five average of 458.

Sacred Heart Primary School Yea ranked 1468 with a year five average of 451.2.

Buxton and Flowerdale Primary Schools weren't in the rankings due to their low populations.

## HIGH SCHOOLS

**Year seven**  
Yea High School scored higher than Alexandra Secondary College in all year seven categories.

For spelling, the results were Yea 516 to Alexandra 499; writing 519 to 500; spelling 497 to 480; grammar 506 to 486; and numeracy 512 to 499.

## Year nine

Alexandra Secondary College did better in the year nine category. They received higher results in reading (550) and writing (545) and numeracy (541), while Yea High School received higher scores in spelling (538) and grammar (535).

## Rankings

Alexandra Secondary College ranked 466 with a year nine average of 537.6.

Yea High School ranked 499 with a year nine average of 528.6.



Marysville Primary School presentation of donation. Committee members Melinda Jackson, Leanne McCready and Noel McIlwraith, with school captains, Leigh, Tarni and Flynn, and principal Sandra Bishop. -S

## Alexandra and District Open Gardens distribution of funds

THE 2024 Alexandra and District Open Gardens resulted in over 4000 visitors and \$22,000 raised through ticket sales and donations.

Following the success of the event, the committee are still working, distributing funds, and visiting potential gardens for next year.

Members of the committee recently visited Marysville Primary School's assembly to donate \$500 towards an instrumental music program for the students in 2025. The students were very excited about this announcement and are looking forward to participating in the program.

Other community groups that have been recently awarded a donation include \$500 to Little Sprouts, a junior garden project held at Embassy of Ideas; \$5000 to help with the fit-out of Alexandra CFA's new truck; \$500 to St Mary's Primary School, \$500 to Kellock Lodge; and \$2000 towards the Alexandra Scouts' visit to the Jamboree in Queensland.

In addition to the above allocation, community groups which were fundraising at an Open Garden in October collectively raised an additional \$3400.

There will be another exciting line-up of gardens to visit next year, on Saturday, October 25 and Sunday, October 26. Put the dates into your calendar now.

## Nominate a local business

THE Rotary Club of Alexandra is announcing a new version of the Rotary Business Excellence Award.

Vocational Services Director, Sharen Robinson, is inviting members of the public to select a local business to nominate.

Sharen said, "We have so many thriving, innovative businesses

around Alexandra and district, and we want to reward them for their enthusiasm. Shop locally, assess the service you receive and fill out a simple form."

Details of this award are in the advertisement on this page. The results will be announced at Dindi Daze on Saturday, March 1, 2025.



Sharen Robinson. -S

## Community lunch on Christmas Day

THE Embassy of Ideas will again be hosting a community lunch on Christmas Day. This event is open to everyone, singles, couples and families. Everyone is welcome.

This lunch is free and all food is provided, including cold meats, salads and dessert. If you are looking for some company and wanting to connect with others on Christmas Day, you are warmly invited to join in at St John Hall at 39 Downy Street, Alexandra from 11am to 2pm. Lunch is served at noon.

Booking is essential. RSVP required by December 20. Please contact Sasha to book and advise of any dietary requirements. Call 0422 225 801 or email [embassyofideas@gmail.com](mailto:embassyofideas@gmail.com)

This event does not happen without community contributions. If anyone would like to make a donation towards the lunch or volunteer to help out on the day, please get in touch.



Last year's Christmas dinner. -S

**ALEXANDRA FIRE BRIGADE SANTA RUN**  
Sunday December 22, 2024  
from approximately 9.15am  
Father Christmas will be travelling around Alexandra on a fire truck.  
Listen for the siren and come out to say hello and get a bag of lollies.  
(this event may be cancelled if there is an emergency requiring CFA attendance)

**Rotary**  
Alexandra

**Rotary Club of Alexandra Business Excellence Award 2024**

**Nominations now open, Promote a local business**  
Nominations close January 31, 2025

**Forms available at:**  
 Rotary Club of Alexandra  
[rotaryalexandra.org.au](http://rotaryalexandra.org.au)  
 the Alexandra Newsagency  
[helengibb1953@gmail.com](mailto:helengibb1953@gmail.com)

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EMBASSY OF IDEAS

**COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DAY GATHERING**  
25 DECEMBER | 11am -2pm  
Lunch served at 12pm

**ST JOHNS HALL - 39 DOWNEY ST, ALEXANDRA**

FREE Community Christmas Lunch. All food provided  
Everyone is welcome - singles, couples & families

**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**  
Booking require by 20th DEC for catering purposes



## Alexandra Primary School: Kael Robben

by Jan Twining

ALEXANDRA Primary School is proud to nominate Kael Robben as the Rotary



Kael Robben with Jan Twining. -S

Achievement Award recipient for 2024.

Kael is an outstanding role model and a respectful member of the school community. He consistently shows school values in the classroom, in the playground and in the community.

Kael is an outstanding student. He excels in every subject. He does not rest there, Kael works hard to further his knowledge by accepting every challenge offered to him.

Kael is willing to work collaboratively with anyone in the school. He has been a supportive and caring buddy, always willing to assist younger students in the playground. As a member of the Student Representative Council, Kael has shown enthusiasm and expertise.

We know that Kael is going to shine at Alexandra Secondary College.

## Marysville Primary School: Methmi Kasthuri Arachilage

by Sandra Bishop

METHMI Kasthuri Arachilage has been selected as the worthy recipient of this year's Rotary Encouragement Award from Marysville Primary School.

In late December 2023, Methmi arrived in Australia with her parents and brother. In early January, Methmi and her brother enrolled at Marysville Primary School. Methmi was placed in year six. At first, she struggled with her limited English and found it challenging to connect with her new peers, who had been together at school for many years. However, it wasn't long before Methmi made the personal decision to make the most of her time as a year six student.

During week two of term one, Methmi completed two weeks of intensive swimming lessons. Shortly after that, she participated in the Cluster Athletics carnival, where she placed third in discus and also tried her hand at shot put.

In term three, Methmi put on skis for the first time. Initially, she was tentative, but she gradually built her confidence to slide a short distance and to snow plough. When she fell, she quickly picked herself up and brushed off the snow, refusing to be beaten. Methmi demonstrated great resilience and worked hard to learn this new skill.

Methmi shared that she had never engaged in swimming lessons, shot put, discus, skiing, basketball and football in Sri Lanka, yet here she was in Australia, giving everything a try.

She embraced new challenges that pushed her out of her comfort zone. Methmi quickly became a role model for her peers. She valued the experience of trying new things, facing adversity, falling down, and getting back up again, continuing to persevere time after time.

Academically, she is making remarkable progress in her English and reading and writing skills. Methmi has read numerous books about cats, both fiction and non-fiction. Methmi is doing extremely well in mathematics, science, history and geography, she participates fully in all programs and thrives.

Throughout her journey, Methmi has shown her skill as an artist, creating beautiful paintings and drawings.

Methmi is courageous, creative, kind, hardworking, and intelligent. Furthermore, she continuously seeks personal development and inspires others to realise their potential.



Sandra Bishop and Methmi Kasthuri Arachilage. -S

## St Mary's Primary School: Zelda van Lierop

by Aleesha Kerr and Shannon Carnes

St Mary's Catholic Primary School's nominee is Zelda van Lierop, an enthusiastic and cheerful student who has worked diligently throughout all her school years at St Mary's.

Zelda has many outstanding qualities, and principal among them is her ability to treat all members of our school community with respect, tolerance and compassion. Her willingness to help others, to go out of her way to look after our younger students, or to check in with someone who is not looking happy, has been commendable.

Supporting her ongoing positive role model influence, this year, Zelda was voted Tenison House Captain by her peers. She undertook this role with pride and enthusiasm, attending to her leadership responsibilities with high expectations. She enjoyed leading assemblies, often volunteering to step up in the absence of other students. Zelda could also be relied upon to complete jobs around the school, ensuring they were done properly and responsibly.

Zelda's perseverance and commitment to improve in all areas of the curriculum has

## Alexandra Secondary College: Hattie Langley and Ethan Hodge

by Nigel Lyttle

*Hattie Langley*

HATTIE is a highly approachability person who has always represented the college values of respect, personal best and integrity, which made her an excellent choice as the 2024 Alexandra Secondary College (ASC) School Captain.

Hattie received the Principal's Award for most Personal Bests in her Year Level in 2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020.

She is a person who looked for opportunities beyond the classroom. She was a member of the college's and Rubicon Outdoor School's Year 11 Leadership Program last year and starred in three school productions. She also attended the state YLEAD conference last January with a group of ASC year 12s.

She was a year 12 committee member and a significant contributor in organising a very successful 2024 school social for all ASC students.

Hattie is also a community person who has volunteered at events like the Easter Art Show and the Murrindindi Shire 'Volunteer Awards'. Hattie is an outstanding person in all respects.

*Ethan Hodge*

Ethan is a great person with a genuine sense of community and volunteering.

As early as year seven and eight, he would frequently help the Eildon Primary School, his old primary school, planning events and helping to run them.

In the Eildon community, he helps at the twilight markets and with Eildon Lions Club.

He assists at the Eildon Op Shop. The Murrindindi Cycle Club also benefits from Ethan's giving spirit where he helps building and maintaining trails for the Eildon Mountain Bike Park.

He represented VCE student voice at the college Open Night this year and spoke eloquently, informing and encouraging the new students and families to the VCE pathway.

Ethan has strong leadership skills. He was a member of the college's year 11 Leadership Program that partners with Rubicon Outdoor School. He attended the state YLEAD conference last January and was accepted into the International YLead program in NZ.



Nigel Lyttle, Hattie Langley, and Mrs Hodge on behalf of Ethan. -S

## Buxton Primary School: Ella Fitzgerald

by Sarah Irving

ELLA joined Buxton Primary School in term four, 2019, in year one, after her family moved from Healesville to Buxton.

Ella is a talented sportsperson, and she excels in gymnastics and running. She has represented the school at Cathedral Cluster events, including cross country, swimming and athletics.

Ella loves music, bike riding, arts and crafts, computer games and her dog and cats. She is a strong reader and reads a variety of books, most recently graphic novels and manga. She enjoys drama and visual arts, bringing to life some great characters and wonderful artworks.

This year we have seen Ella step up her efforts in the classroom and put her more effort into her learning. In years past, Ella could be more focused on socialising than her schoolwork, and not see or believe in her own potential as a learner. She has matured this year and sees the benefits of working hard to achieve her best and prepare for secondary school.

Ella is an energetic, joyful person who is full of life, with just the right amount of mischief and a cheeky grin. She is a popular classmate and leader, caring for others and including students of all ages in the playground. It is not unusual to see Ella running full speed across the oval, Pied Piper style, with a trail of younger students chasing behind her laughing and calling her name. Ella has been very patient with them all, despite at times wishing for some breathing space and more older kids to play with.

We will miss Ella's smiling face, sense of humour and her energy next year, but we know that she will have a positive impact on her new teachers, classmates and friends at Alexandra Secondary College.



Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Irving. -S

## Eildon Primary School: Ella Banks

by Rebecca Mangelsdorf

ELLA Banks is this year's recipient of the Rotary Encouragement Award for Eildon Primary School (EPS). Ella is very deserving of this recognition for many reasons, including her incredible kindness, achievement and resilience.

Ella shows great kindness and thoughtfulness towards your peers. She help others willingly, always noticing the needs around her and being ready to lend a hand to any classmate. She shares her academic prowess with others, but also her social skills and other fun hobbies such as gymnastics.

From the time Ella arrived at EPS earlier this year until now, she has demonstrated a commitment to excellence in everything she does. This has been a great example of our school value, 'achievement'.

Whether it's tackling a maths problem, writing a creative narrative, or leading those around her, she approached every task with a level of focus and effort that is inspiring. I especially think of the times she shared her writing aloud in class or in assembly, the audience sitting silent and captivated by the way she shapes words into stories.

Just some of her accomplishments this year include participating in the Victorian High Achievers Program for English, progressing to Division Athletics for Triple Jump, excelling in singing lessons, and her role as Student Representative Council (SRC) Captain.



Ella Banks and Rebecca Mangelsdorf.



Shannon Carnes, Zelda van Lierop and Aleesha Kerr. -S



## ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

If you're having trouble with energy bills, you're not alone. You can get free help through the Victorian Government's Energy Assistance Program. It can help you to save energy at home, switch to a better energy deal, access eligible energy concessions, manage energy debt and contact your retailer.

To save on your energy bills call **1800 161 215** today and you'll be connected to Energy Assistance Program delivery partner Anglicare Victoria.



To find out more, scan the QR code to visit the [energy.vic.gov.au](https://energy.vic.gov.au) website.

## SHAPE THE ALEXANDRA EAST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Council has secured funding to create the Alexandra East Development Plan (AEDP), which will guide the future use and development of 71 hectares of land in Alexandra's major residential growth area.

Join the Community Reference Group and share your thoughts on how the Development Plan can best meet the needs of the Alexandra community. Submit your expression of interest to join the Group by 12 noon on Friday 20 December 2024.

For more information or to submit your EOI, visit [theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/aedp](https://theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/aedp) or call 5772 0333.



## PREPARE FOR FIRE SEASON

The CFA declared Fire Danger Period is now in effect. If you haven't already, now is the time to prepare your property. Council officers are inspecting properties across Murrindindi Shire for fire hazards.

If a fire hazard is identified, a Fire Prevention Notice will be issued detailing required actions. For information about Fire Prevention Notices, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/fireprevention](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/fireprevention)

For information on preparing your property, visit the CFA website at [cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare](https://cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare)

Council's Roadside Slashing Program is also underway across the Shire throughout November and December. Find more details at [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/slashing](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/slashing)

## HOLIDAY OPERATING HOURS 2024/25

### LIBRARIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE (INCLUDING THE MOBILE LIBRARY), MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRES:

- Tuesday 24 December 2024: 9.00 am - 3.00 pm
- Wednesday 25 December – Wednesday 1 January 2025: CLOSED
- Thursday 2 January 2025: Usual hours resume

### SWIMMING POOLS

- Monday 25 December 2024: CLOSED
- Wednesday 1 January 2025: Closed for morning swimming, open from 1.00 pm

Find out more at [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pools](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pools)

### KERBSIDE COLLECTION SERVICES

Kerbside bin collection will not occur on Wednesday 25 December 2024 (Christmas Day) or Wednesday 1 January 2025 (New Years Day).

During the weeks commencing 23 and 30 December, from Wednesday to Friday, collections will occur a day later, including Fridays, which will be collected on Saturday. For a full list of holiday collection dates visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayhours](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayhours)

### RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRES AND ALEXANDRA LANDFILL

All Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs) are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. RRCs are also closed on Total Fire Ban days.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- Maternal and Child Health Advice Line: 13 22 29
- Poisons Information Line (24 hours): 13 11 26
- Community Safety or Infrastructure Services - after hours emergency: 5772 0333 (for issues such as stock on roads, dog attacks, dangerous road conditions etc).

For more information about our holiday operating hours, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayhours](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/holidayhours)

## IMMUNISATION SCHEDULE 2025

We provide a comprehensive childhood immunisation service, free to children between 6 weeks and less than 5 years old. Sessions are conducted in Yea, Kinglake and Alexandra by appointment only.

Our nurses are available to discuss immunisation and give the required vaccines. For more information and the 2025 schedule, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/immunisation](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/immunisation)

### STAY INFORMED

To stay up to date with the latest Council news, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news](https://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news) or follow us on Facebook.

### GET IN TOUCH

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5772 0333



# Proudly supporting Student of the week

Community Bank · Yea & District and Alexandra



## ALEXANDRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Kristopher Ingle – 1/2A

Kristopher is showing our school values of respect and care by becoming involved in the composting program at Grant Street Grocer. Kris is joining Jodie twice a week to learn about composting, look after worms and helping things grow. Thanks for being here for the trees, Kristopher! We are proud to have you in our learning community. Kristopher, you are a star.



**Oakleigh** has been so brave at swimming and has improved every day. Congratulations Oakleigh.

## EILDON PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Ollie and Corbyn** displayed the school values of Achievement and Resilience this week. Well done.

## ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Lillian** is a valued member of our class, who will be missed when she moves to her new school next year. Lillian has been a supportive friend to everyone in our class, her feedback and encouragement helped so many of her classmates to present themselves at their best when they delivered their leadership speeches last week. Throughout the year Lillian has been a conscientious student, who sets a high standard for herself and always does her best work. She encourages and includes others and works well with a partner or a group. Lillian, you should be proud of all that you have accomplished at St Mary's school.

# Student of the Week

Proudly supported by Kinglake branch



# Alexandra District Health AGM

ALEXANDRA District Health held their annual general meeting on Thursday, December 5.

Chair Kim Flanagan delivered his report, stating that the service is now at "break even," and provided information about the Five Year Sustainability Plan.

He also spoke about the Health Services Plan and the requirement for the creation of local area health networks. He later said during questions, "Amalgamations are off the table. It's now about leveraging services."

He thanked Leanne Monro for her six years of work with the Community Advisory Committee, and spoke about the Chest Pain Pilot, the work experience program with Yea and District Memorial Hospital, and the high standard of cleaning and food at the hospital.

He also noted the challenges of finding and attracting staff to the region, and the challenges of finding staff accommodation.

Alan Studley, board member and chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, commented on the extraordinary job being done by staff, particularly management staff.

He spoke about attending the Auditor General's forums and the condition of the state's finances. He said that the long term financial sustainability of the hospital is a focus, along with risk management plans and public transparency.

CEO Jane Poxon thanked staff for their commitment and care, and introduced Chris Wasley and Sharyn Wedlock who made presentations to the audience.

Chris spoke about the upcoming changes to the provision of home-based services through My Aged Care, and Sharyn spoke about the costs for entering residential care.

During questions, it was noted that there was a negative \$3 million net result and a \$2.3 million reduction in funding.



Sharyn Wedlock. -AR



Chris Wasley. -AR



Board members Ashley Shea, Alan Studley, chair Kim Flanagan, CEO Jane Poxon, and board members Soulla Nicodimou and Melanie Telford. -AR





# Speed cameras can be anywhere.

If you speed, even a little over the limit, you can expect a minimum fine of \$247 and 1 demerit point. Police and speed cameras can be anywhere, so why take the risk? Chances are you will be caught.

Anywhere. Anytime. Anyone.





# Council to discuss Eildon key worker housing project at upcoming meeting

MURRINDINDI Shire Council's scheduled council meeting on December 11 will include discussion on a strategic initiative to support key worker housing in Eildon and secure funds for the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment (Eildon Splash Park).

Following extensive community engagement with the Eildon community about the splash park and the potential sale of two parcels of land to partially fund council's contribution to the \$7.5 million project, council accepted recommendations from an independent community panel to prepare the properties at 18 Twenty First Street, 10 Eighth Street, and 11 Seventh Street in Eildon for sale.

During the engagement process, the importance of key worker housing emerged as a significant issue, with the panel recommending that council consider offering rate rebates for properties developed on this land to support key worker accommodation.

As part of the Key Worker Housing Strategy developed in early 2024, council has been actively exploring ways to utilise this land in Eildon to address the housing needs of the local workforce.

With funding successfully secured through the Victorian Government's Regional Worker Accommodation Fund, council is proposing the construction of 33 bedrooms dedicated to key worker accommodation on these two sites, delaying their sale by at least five years. This initiative will provide much-needed affordable housing, ensuring that essential workers can live and thrive within our community.

At the upcoming council meeting, council will discuss accepting the grant funding from the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund and allocating \$400,000 from Infrastructure Reserves Funds to the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment project. This allocation is required to honour council's co-contribution to the Redevelopment. It is proposed that these funds will be reimbursed to the Infrastructure Reserve through the rental revenue generated and future sale of these assets. An allocation for borrowing \$1.4 million as a co-contribution towards the key worker accommodation project in Eildon was included in the 2024/25 Annual Budget.

With the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment nearing completion, the community can look forward to a grand opening early next year. The project features a brand-new splash park, with a variety of fun water activities including splash pads and water jets, designed to offer a cool and refreshing place for everyone during the warmer months. The development includes a range of new play spaces for families, a skate park, swings and a flying fox, new barbecue areas, and upgraded public toilet and change facilities, providing access for all abilities.

The Eildon Reserves Redevelopment has been made possible with \$6.1 million in funding from State Government's *Regional Tourism Investment Fund*, *Local Sport Infrastructure Fund* and *Changing Places Fund*, and the Federal Government's *Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund*.

For more information about the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment, visit [murrindindi.vic.gov.au/eildonreserves](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/eildonreserves) or to learn more about the Eildon key worker housing project, please give council a call on 5772 0333.

Murrindindi Shire Council's CEO Livia Bonazzi stated, "We are excited to discuss the key worker accommodation project in Eildon and how it can support the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment at our upcoming council meeting. These projects are the result of extensive community engagement and reflect our commitment to supporting the local workforce and enhancing community facilities. By providing affordable housing for essential workers and creating vibrant recreational spaces, we are investing in the future of Eildon and fostering a thriving, inclusive community for all."

# Fun in the sun at Marysville Market



Saturday was a glorious day for the Marysville Market. -MP



There was plenty to choose from at the market. -MP



By mid morning the market was in full swing. -MP



Gail and Neil from Marysville Lions Club selling Christmas cakes. -MP



Music was performed by Noel Pearson. -MP



Briony and Jarrod from Local Co Marysville selling their products. -MP



# Real Estate GUIDE

## Rental property safety overhaul

THE Victorian Government is protecting children in rentals and introducing a new heating standard.

Unsecured blind or curtain cords claim the lives of between one and two Australian children every year, which is why the state government will make it mandatory to secure blinds cords with either a cord guide or cleat installed against a wall or structure.

This will apply to all rental properties, with no exemptions, from December 1, 2025 and Victorians can order a free curtain and blind cord safety kit from Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The current Commonwealth Safety Standard mandates that all blinds or curtains installed from 2015 have cord safety anchors. This standard does not apply to blinds installed before 2015.

The new reform will ensure all Victorian rental properties meet this critical safety standard, no matter when the curtains or blinds were installed in the property.

This new standard follows the reforms announced on mandatory smoke alarm, gas and electrical safety checks for all residential rental properties.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams announced the new reforms requiring rental providers to conduct smoke alarm checks every 12 months, and gas and electrical safety checks every two years, for all rentals, no matter when the lease started.

The new reforms will also ensure that the residential rental provider or the provider's agent must immediately arrange for urgent repairs to be carried out on faulty smoke alarms.

The reforms also extend the requirements for rental providers to ensure gas and electrical safety checks are conducted every two years, by qualified tradespersons, to all residential rental properties regardless of the rental agreement start date.

The state government is also introducing a new standard requiring safe heating for residents in rooming houses, home to some of the most vulnerable Victorians.

Under the standard, rooming house operators must install an electric fixed heater in residents' rooms. By 2030, all heaters in residents' rooms must be fixed and electric, with a two star energy efficiency rating.

These improved standards in rentals and rooming houses are in addition to the nation leading rental reforms already announced by the Labor Government, including banning no fault evictions, scrapping fees on rent payments and capping the cost of breaking a lease.

Work is ongoing on minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals with almost 2500 survey responses and submissions made throughout the consultation process.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams said, "These new mandatory safety standards will make a big difference to the safety of rental properties. This will save lives."

"Everyone deserves to live in comfortable and safe housing, and our new minimum standards will improve safety for rooming house residents."

To learn more about rental minimum standards and safety checks visit [consumer.vic.gov.au/renting](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/renting)

## Beware of asbestos

MASTER Builders Australia joined industry calls for caution around ageing asbestos, particularly as the summer season approaches and more Australians undertake home renovation projects to save costs.

It's estimated that one in three Australian homes may still contain asbestos and tragically, around 4000 Australians die each year from asbestos-related diseases.

With the rise in renovations and simple additions like home security installations, homeowners could unwittingly put themselves at risk by drilling into asbestos eaves to install security cameras, CCTV systems, and sensor lights.

These actions can release asbestos fibres which, when not properly controlled, can lead to serious health issues, including mesothelioma and lung cancer.

Master Builders Chief Executive Denita Wawn has urged all Australians to take care when it comes to home renovations or repairs.

"If your home was built before 1990, there's a good chance it contains asbestos," said Ms Wawn.

"Asbestos was used in over 3000 building products, and it can show up inside and outside, in floors, walls, ceilings, eaves, pipes and roofs.

"Most of those products are 30 to 100 years old, and the older they become, the more likely they are to release harmful asbestos fibres into the air if disturbed.

"While it's tempting to do DIY projects to save money, the consequences can be deadly.

"You can't tell if a material contains asbestos just by looking at it. If you think a material might contain asbestos, you should err on the side of caution and call a professional to find out for sure.

"Before you start any DIY projects, contact your local Master Builders Association to find a builder or accredited asbestos removalist.

"The Australian Government's Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency has a whole suite of great resources available on their website," Ms Wawn said.

For more information, please visit [asbestossafety.gov.au](http://asbestossafety.gov.au)

## A decade before deposit: housing affordability struggle continues

THE ANZ CoreLogic Housing Affordability Report was released recently, providing a detailed breakdown of statistics around purchasing and renting a house in Australia.

The report states that the vast measure of housing affordability metrics have deteriorated in the year stretching from September 2023 to September 2024, due mostly to rising home values. It also states that rents continue to rise.

"Modelling for September 2024 shows only 10 per cent of the housing market would

be genuinely affordable (require less than 30 per cent of income to service a loan) for the median income household. This is well down on the 40 per cent of Australian homes that were affordable for the median income household in March 2022," the report reads.

According to the modelling conducted by CoreLogic, Australia's latest gross median household income level rose over the year, from \$98,500 in September 2023, to \$101,000 in September 2024. That is a rise of 2.8 per cent.

There was also an 8.5 per cent rise in median dwelling value over the year, and a 9.6 per cent increase in rents.

What this means is that say a person saves 15 per cent of their income per annum, working as a median income household, it would take them 10.6 years to save enough money to pay a 20 per cent deposit for a median value dwelling.

"Not all first home buyers have access to the bank of Mum and Dad, or some other means of wealth that can help them overcome the

deposit hurdle. Not all income earners can target a more affordable market or qualify for a low-deposit home loan," the report says.

"As a result, access to home ownership may continue to become more concentrated in high income, high wealth households, a pattern that has been evident in the past."

The full 10-page report can be found at [anz.com.au/newsroom](http://anz.com.au/newsroom)

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# ON THE LAND

Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture

## Last cattle sale for 2024 in Yea

LAST Friday, December 6 saw the last cattle sale at the Yea Saleyards for 2024. About 2200 cattle were yarded, with the average price per head increasing from last month's store sale.

The next sale in Yea is on January 10, with the Nutrien Yea Upper Goulburn Rivers Annual Classic weaner sale. This is followed by four more sales in January, for a total of five sales in the first month of the new year.

More information can be found on the Yea Saleyards Facebook page, or by visiting [yeasaleyards.com.au](http://yeasaleyards.com.au)

 <b>STOCK REPORT 6 DECEMBER 2024</b>				
6 December 2024 Store Sale (Elders/Nutrien)	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers	Cows & Calves
Number of head	2,130			63
Average \$ per head	\$1,732			
Average weight per head	359.4kg			
Top price per head		\$2,250	\$1,780	\$1,740
Top weight		797.5kg	645kg	
Turnover	\$2.49 million			

## Safety first on a ladder

AS the preparations begin around the home with Christmas decorations, and completing that never ending list of jobs the Victorian Governemnt is asking to put ladder safety on the top of the list.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas reminds Victorians to stay safe when climbing ladders, as data from the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit showed hospital admissions for ladder falls at home over the past decade have increased by 49 per cent among Victorians aged 55 years and over.

Most of those presenting at Victorian hospitals for ladder-related falls are male, and the large majority are aged between 50 and 79 years old.

Falling from a ladder can result in serious, and sometimes fatal injuries, including bone fractures and brain and head injuries, and those who are seriously injured can often struggle to fully recover from such physical trauma.

Lifelong injuries like these can affect basic everyday functions, such as walking and talking. This can have a massive impact on an individual's independence and quality of life and limit someone from taking public transport or driving.

During the festive season and upcoming summer, the rate of people turning up at emergency departments with injuries from jobs at home increases exponentially, but there are simple things we can all do to stay safe at home.

Those climbing a ladder should always take the necessary precautions including: Making sure the ladder is the right height for the job and in good working condition; placing the ladder on dry, firm, and level ground away from outward-opening doors or windows; staying in the centre of the ladder as they climb, and only climb as far as the second step from the top; working within their arm's reach and never lean too far from the ladder; always maintaining three points of contact with the ladder; using both feet and one hand when using a tool, avoid climbing in wet, windy, or hot weather, and ensuring someone else is home when climbing and ideally having someone to hold the ladder.

For more information please visit, [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthy/living/ladder-safety](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthy/living/ladder-safety)

## Strike before the flies do: managing flystrike

Dr Jeff Cave, Agriculture Victoria Senior Veterinary Officer

FLYSTRIKE costs the Australian sheep industry approximately \$173 million annually, due to lost production, treatment costs and deaths. Reducing the risk of flystrike has immense benefits to the health and wellbeing of the sheep and productivity.

The major fly responsible for flystrike in sheep is the green blowfly, *Lucilia cuprina*. *Lucilia cuprina* is thought to be responsible for 90 per cent of flystrike cases.

*Lucilia cuprina* begins to become active when temperatures are above 15 degrees and is most active when temperatures are between 26 and 36 degrees. It prefers calm conditions. Each female fly can have up to 300 viable offspring and, with a 21-day life cycle, when conditions are optimal, fly numbers can increase rapidly.

The fly has a small flight range, so most of the flies you see are probably produced on your own property. The fly is attracted to odour and moisture, so the risk of flystrike increases when there is regular, consistent rainfall that keeps the sheep's skin moist.

The sheep most susceptible to flystrike are those with breech wrinkles, long wool, dags, urine stain, fleece rot, dermatitis and/or wounds. Plus, sheep that have been previously fly-struck have a relatively higher likelihood of being re-struck.

The prevention of flystrike requires an integrated plan and includes the following: Selection of sheep and marking of lambs to produce a flock with a relatively low susceptibility to flystrike; shearing and crutching timed before the peak flystrike risk period; correct use of preventative chemicals timed to give protection during the peak flystrike risk period; worm control and dietary management to help reduce the prevalence of dags; selection of relatively open, windy, dry paddocks; removal of infective material and carcasses that may attract flies.

As conditions become more favourable to flystrike, sheep should be monitored more regularly for flystrike.

If a fly-struck sheep is found, the affected area should be immediately treated by clipping close to the skin, dressed to prevent a re-strike, and the sheep should be moved to a hospital paddock to reduce the risk to the rest of the flock. Any maggots should be collected and killed to help reduce the build-up of fly numbers.

For further advice please contact your local veterinarian or Agriculture Victoria veterinary or animal health officer, or visit websites [flyboss.com.au/](http://flyboss.com.au/) and [wool.com/sheep/welfare/breech-flystrike/](http://wool.com/sheep/welfare/breech-flystrike/)

## Keep your eyes open this hay season

AS hay season is underway, farmer fatigue is something that shouldn't be dismissed, as this busy period requires long hours, intense work and exposure to the various weather elements which contributes to fatigue.

According to Agriculture Victoria, farms make up 14 per cent of all workplace fatalities, despite employing only two per cent of working Victorians. On average two people are injured on Victorian farms every day with some of the key risk factors being unsafe or unfamiliar equipment use, animal handling, electrical safety, and working long hours and in isolation.

When it comes to working long hours, some signs of fatigue can include slower reaction times, poor concentration, making mistakes, poor coordination, lack of energy and irritability, feeling unwell with physical symptoms and nodding off or experiencing micro sleeps.

During the busy periods on the farm some strategies to take under your belt include: prioritising sleep, increasing water intake, eating a healthy diet, and limiting caffeine and

alcohol intake as this gives to the best chance to get through the long days and nights.

Some common risks at harvest time can include fatigue, working alone with heavy machinery, working near overhead powerlines and increased vehicle traffic. Having extra safety measures in place to ensure everyone is safe working on the farm will make it a smoother process for all.

Worksafe suggests during these times: Take adequate breaks after each day so you, contractors and workers have enough time to travel home, relax and get a proper amount of sleep; have a system in place to stay in contact with isolated workers on the farm; maintaining a safe distance from all powerlines and not storing, loading or unloading items near overhead powerlines; have appropriate guarding on all machinery that you use and making sure machinery is shut down before attempting to clear blockages; and making sure all contractors and seasonal workers that are employed have an induction to the property and the job and are consulted about safety issues, and all their machinery tickets are up to date and they are competent.

### The Trap

By Jed Dunstan



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# FFM fight for better wages and conditions

ON Thursday, November 28 the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) members working for Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) employed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) initiated protected industrial action. This started with a thirty-minute work stoppage and the introduction to some protected actions to get their point across about the poor wages and conditions that is seen across this much needed industry.

The AWU lodged a dispute with the Fair Work Commission in April, and they have been negotiating an enterprise agreement since June. Negotiations about wages have been stalled due to the Victorian Government's wage mandates increases no greater than three per cent per annum.

James Newbold, AWU Organiser for Northeast Victoria spoke to this masthead about the issues at hand among FFMV and other government staff.

"These FFMV workers are paid in the bottom five per cent of the Victorian Public Service according to our calculations. We have been clear, DEECA don't control the purse strings with wages and superannuation that's treasury, this is Tim Pallas we are talking about here," James said.

"DEECA have said we would love to give a pay rise but that's not our decision and we have told DEECA as the representatives of negotiations if we got the right wages outcome, our list of dozens of other issues we are looking to work on, that could all fall on to the wayside just to get this done. So many issues are created for our members around work life balance, the risk they are willing to take because they need every opportunity. They can get to make more income... Up to 800 people are taking part. Under this agreement we are not just talking about firefighters on the ground we are talking about vertebrae species

management officers who protect farmers and their livestock from predators, and fire tower lookout staff."

The actions that have been introduced recently, James said, " We took a 30 minute stoppage last Thursday (November 28) a lot of our members have taken photos of their crews and that is ammunition for us as a union on their behalf, to approach politicians and ask why these people are paid so little for such important work that's about protecting the public, protecting the environment and protecting landowners and things like that.

"Some of the big ones that will have most impact is refusing to fill in log books of vehicles, unless there is an emergency; it means the department is basically paying fringe benefits tax every time someone has to drive in a vehicle, that's my understanding; and another big one is to be taking meal breaks back at the work centre, that means if someone has to do a job that's two hours away and then the manager will usually figure out pretty quick they can send someone out and start the job they will get to the job and then they have to head back to the work centre for lunch.

"Usually these guys/girls are taking their lunch out in the middle of nowhere in their vehicles, no toilets, no heating facilities, maybe they have some stuff in some of the vehicles but it's a rough and ready operation in that way. They don't get paid for their lunch breaks despite that, so it does send a message for them to be taking their lunch back at the work centres in a suitable facility."

When James was asked if all this will make a difference to the conditions, he said, "We have talked to the members about expecting it to be a marathon rather than a sprint. A lot of these actions you won't really see the effect of them for a month or two....There will be a bunch of more actions coming soon as well, we

have started a list of more actions we will add some more in before Christmas for people to settle into and let those start taking effect over the break."

James added, "The key message though, to the community is, whenever there is an emergency event happening which means our members start getting paid an emergency support or emergency field allowance. ... we put a stop to those actions, so it means if there is a big fire, flood, lightning strike, we have put a carve out around those actions that have an operational impact. That's because our members want to put the community first."

According to the AWU, FFMV employees are the first workers on the ground when communities are threatened by bushfires. These workers are also Victoria's first line of defence when flood and storms strike. Their skills are invaluable in recovery and prevention. This workforce is also called upon when agricultural disease outbreaks occur such as the Avian Influenza outbreak in the West of Victoria this year, with FFMV employees sent to manage and contain the outbreak. FFMV employees were also deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic fulfilling various roles on behalf of the Victorian Government.

The wage increases the AWU and FFMV staff are fighting for will be applied to the base rate of pay. James said, "At the moment we have a situation where our members are incentivised to look forward to an emergency that has happened because that's when they get paid well, we don't want people to have to look forward to that, we don't want people to look forward to dangerous and risky work because they get paid more then, and yes they deserve to be paid more for that, but if they have a liveable base rate that means that the compensation they get through fire season is for the risk and it's not what they are relying on to pay their mortgage."

## Mental health support for emergency services

THE Victorian Government is making sure emergency services staff and volunteers have access to tailored mental health and wellbeing supports.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes announced a new \$1 million Mental Wellbeing Grant initiative to be shared across five agencies.

"Our emergency service workers and volunteers work hard every day to protect the community, that's why we're ensuring they're able to look after their mental health so they can continue their critical work," Ms Symes said.

The initiative is part of the government's Emergency Responders Health Program which aims to strengthen mental wellbeing supports and projects for emergency workers and volunteers.

Life Saving Victoria (LSV) has received a grant of \$200,000 to launch a cultural development initiative focused on inclusivity, respect, and psychological safety for volunteers and staff.

The project will include education and training across age groups, peer-support and enhanced mental health resources for lifesavers.

Volunteer Marine Search and Rescue units will also benefit from a grant of \$180,000 to develop a statewide Marine Search and Rescue mental health and wellbeing strategy. This long-term strategy will support the diverse organisations and volunteers who undertake this challenging and often traumatising work.

The grants will also fund projects to support emergency responders at Ambulance Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES).

Emergency Management Commissioner Rick Nugent said, "I look forward to continuing to support our first responders through the Mental Wellbeing Grant Initiative and extend my gratitude to all of our emergency services for the work they do day in, day out."

## UPCOMING FEATURES

### Work Local



Publishing: December 18

Deadline: December 12, 5pm

### Christmas Wishes



Publishing: December 18

Deadline: December 12, 5pm

**Last publication 2024 - December 18**

Deadline: December 12, 5pm

**First publication 2025 - January 15**

Deadline: January 9, 5pm

### Let's eat, it's our treat



Publishing: February 5

Deadline: January 30, 5pm

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- A journey of -

# 150 YEARS

from The Alexandra Times to The Alexandra Standard  
(A collection of articles)

Compiled and published by Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd 2020.





Some of the fabulous produce on display. -S



People lining up for an ice cream. -S



Cattle on display. -S



One of the roving dinosaurs. -S

# More fun at the Alexandra Show



Artwork from Alexandra Primary School students. -S



One of the billy goats gruff. -S



Doyathinkhesaurus Rex? -S



People enjoyed watching the dog obedience display. -S



Some of the artwork from Eildon Primary School students. -S



'Ewe can do it' from Buxton Primary School.



Posing for the camera. -S



One of the birds on display at the poultry shed. -S



Hobby horse racing winners. -S





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# Checking your breasts could save your life

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CANCER Council Victoria is urging Victorians to check their breasts, with data showing that breast cancer is the most common cancer among females, making up almost one third of all female cancer diagnoses.

Research from Cancer Council Victoria's *Victorian Cancer Registry* shows there were 4805 females diagnosed with breast cancer in Victoria in 2022, this accounts for 29 per cent of all new diagnoses among females.

In the years 2020-22 the number of breast cancers diagnosed in the state were significantly lower than expected, meaning there may have been hundreds of Victorians living with breast cancer without knowing it.

Head of Screening, Early Detection and Immunisation at Cancer Council Victoria, Kate Broun said that over the last few years people's behaviours around health checks have changed, which has included delays

in seeing a doctor when they notice new or concerning changes.

"Breast cancer is a common cancer, but it's also highly treatable when found early. That's why it's important that Victorians get to know the normal look and feel of their breasts, have a breast screen every two years if they are eligible, and see a doctor if they notice any changes," Ms Broun said.

Breast cancer risk increases with age, with 80 per cent of Victorians diagnosed when they are 50 or older, but it can affect people of any age. Ms Broun encouraged people of all ages, to reprioritise their breast health and take action to find any changes early.

"We want to make sure that all Victorians know what steps they can take to protect themselves against breast cancer and know that doctors are there and want to see them if they notice any changes," Ms Broun said.

**Here for You**

DECEMBER COMMUNITY UPDATE - GOULBURN VALLEY PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Stay Informed: Thunderstorm Asthma & Summer Heat Tips

GV PHU Goulburn Valley Public Health Unit

GVHealth

Thunderstorm asthma occurs when storms combine with high grass pollen levels, breaking the pollen into tiny particles that can be inhaled deeply, triggering intense asthma symptoms.

People with asthma or hay fever, especially those who wheeze or cough, are most at risk, with those having a history of respiratory conditions particularly vulnerable to more intense symptoms.

**Symptoms to Watch For:**

- Shortness of breath
  - Chest tightness
  - Wheezing
  - Persistent coughing
- 

Keep your asthma or hay fever plan up to date and carry your medication to reduce the risk of severe asthma attacks. Stay informed by following GV PHU socials and download the VicEmergency app for updates on Thunderstorm asthma and other health issues.

**Tips to stay cool this summer:**

- 1 Keep cool**  
 Use air conditioning or a fan, wear loose clothing, and keep skin cool with a damp sponge or cool showers.
- 2 Stay hydrated**  
 Drink water regularly, even before you feel thirsty, especially when outdoors or active.
- 3 Plan ahead**  
 Reschedule activities for cooler times and avoid outdoor exercise in the heat.
- 4 Check in**  
 Check in with family, friends, and neighbours, especially those at higher risk during extreme heat.
- 5 Stay updated**  
 Monitor the weather and Heatwave warnings via the Bureau of Meteorology website or app, and subscribe to Department of Health alerts.

**Stay Safe, Stay Protected!**

**BOLO DECEMBER REPORT (Be On the Look Out)**

**Gastro** remains persistent within our community, especially for young children and those at higher risk. Make sure to wash hands regularly with soap, keep sick children isolated for 48 hours, disinfect surfaces, and ensure they stay hydrated. If symptoms persist, seek medical advice.

With **COVID-19** still circulating, most cases can be managed at home, but if symptoms worsen, seek medical attention. Remember, it's important to avoid visiting vulnerable people if you or your family members are feeling unwell.

**Whooping cough** remains a risk, particularly for babies and young children. Ensure vaccinations are up to date, and seek early medical advice if a persistent cough develops.

For the latest updates, advice, or support, visit the Better Health website or contact the GV Public Health Unit at 1800 313 070.

Wishing all of our community and partners a safe and happy festive season.





# Eildon Community Charity Golf Day a great success

THE Eildon Community Charity Golf Day took place on Friday, November 22 at the Eildon Golf Club.

The event attracted approximately 80 participants which was fantastic, especially considering it was a very hot day. The day started with registrations, followed by an egg and bacon roll to ensure everyone was well fuelled for the day ahead, then the first nine holes of golf, lunch, another nine holes, a few nibbles, drinks, and lots of conversations.

To finish off the day, a light dinner and presentations took place. The club wishes to thank Councillor Carr for attending and assisting with the monster raffle.

Days like this do not just happen. Eildon Events, thank the Eildon Golf Club for the

invitation, and opportunity to co-host the Eildon Community Charity Golf Day. With brilliant sunshine and the greens looking amazing the scene was set for a wonderful day.

They also give a huge thank you to all sponsors, participants and volunteers for making the day a great success. A special thank you, to Kerrie Malley for all her efforts in coordinating sponsorship and donations.

It is wonderful when communities both, local and visiting, come together for events like this to help generate funds for community projects and improvements. Approximately \$8200 was raised.

Everyone is looking forward to many more Eildon Community Charity Golf Days.



Team Inferno. -S



Entering the green. -S



Cr Carr drawing the winner. -S



Slim. -S



At the start of the golf day. -S



Thornton Shining Stars. -S



Retired but not Expired. -S



Team Darlingford. -S



On Point. -S

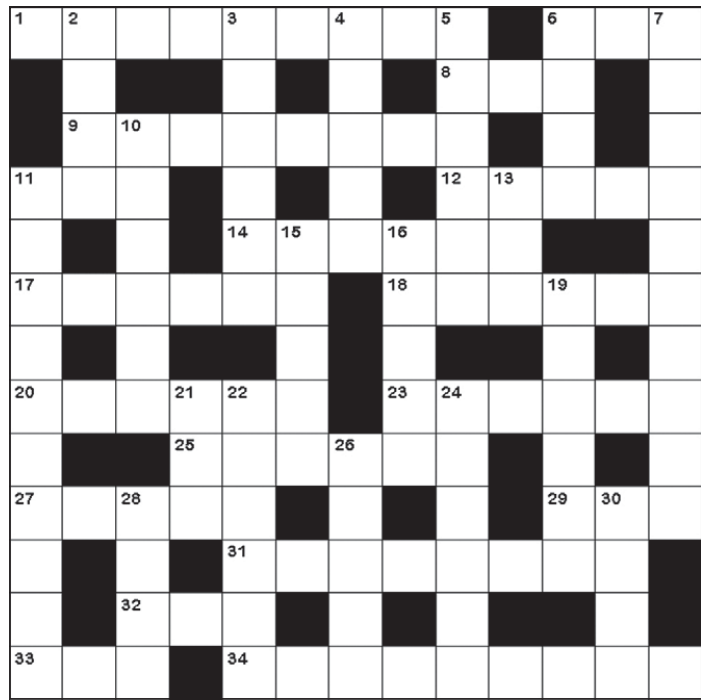


# PUZZLES

**SOLUTIONS**  
Page 19

## Crossword

- ACROSS**
- Psychologically painful.
  - Runners used for gliding over snow.
  - Make a long tear in.
  - Picture with gradually fading edges.
  - Adult female bird.
  - Person who makes a gift of an organ.
  - Stay behind after everyone has left.
  - An icon to represent yourself online.
  - Takes without the owner's consent.
  - Has beautiful natural scenery.
  - Make moist.
  - With laces undone.
  - Having a circular shape.
  - The colour of a ripe tomato.
  - Forced to leave a place.
  - Assume a reclining position.
  - Brightly coloured and showy.
  - Loathing and disliking intensely.



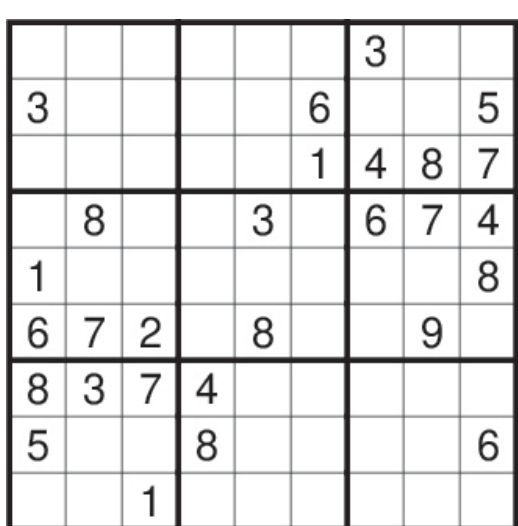
- DOWN**
- A dance party that lasts all night.
  - A commonly repeated word or phrase.
  - An object serving as a tribal emblem.
  - Money available for a client to borrow.
  - Go for a short drive in a car.
  - Kept in captivity.
  - Breath in deeply.
  - Self-willed and obstinate.
  - A single person or thing.
  - Upright in position.
  - An incidental remark.
  - Have an ambitious plan.
  - A woman religious.
  - An expression of surprise.
  - Fully developed and mature persons.
  - A contribution of information.
  - Deficient in beauty.
  - The garden of Adam and Eve.

## Word Search

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

- Fairytales Characters**
- |            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| ALADDIN    | PINOCCHIO      |
| BASHFUL    | RAPUNZEL       |
| CINDERELLA | REDRIDINGHOOD  |
| DOPEY      | SLEEPINGBEAUTY |
| GOLDILOCKS | SLEEPY         |
| HAPPY      | SNOWWHITE      |

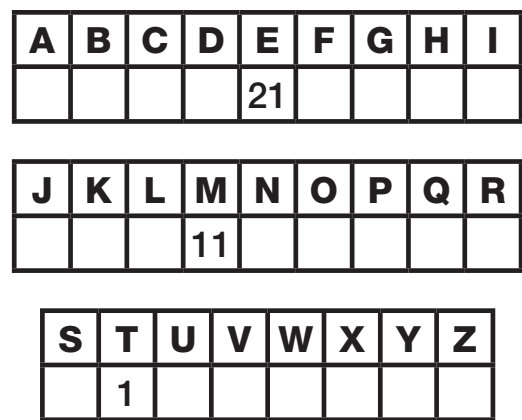
## Sudoku



**Difficulty: Hard**

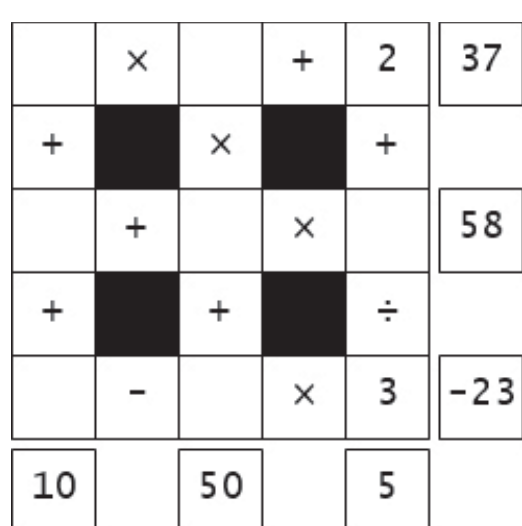
Fill in the boxes using the numbers 1 to 9. Every row and column and every group of 9 boxes inside the thicker lines must contain each number and letter only once.

## Cryptogram



$$\begin{array}{r} M \\ 11 \quad 25 \\ \hline 13 \quad 23 \quad 3 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} T \\ 1 \quad 14 \quad 11 \quad 21 \\ \hline 2 \quad 24 \quad 14 \quad 21 \quad 16 \end{array}$$

## 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.



Members participated in some carolling at the Murrindindi East U3A Christmas party. -S

# Murrindindi East U3A Christmas

LOTS of laughter and fun was heard from the Alexandra Bowling Club on Friday when Murrindindi East U3A celebrated Christmas.

In the spirit of the season, the club reduced their meal price from last year, in order to make the occasion more affordable. On offer was a delicious roast dinner of turkey and ham with all the usual Christmas trimmings.

The meal was swilled down with drinks available at (very reasonable) bar prices. Dessert was a buffet of creamy pavlova, mini cheesecakes and fresh fruit salad with cream, followed by tea and coffee for those who had any room left.

U3A President Deirdre Penhale, welcomed and thanked everybody for coming along. Then a brief presentation was made to long term U3A member Libby Longham. This was an award of tutor excellence from U3A Victoria in recognition of her work.

Libby has worked tirelessly for U3A Murrindindi East most recently as committee member and tutor for the writing and singing groups. What people may not know is the more invisible work Libby does to support

the group and the tutors. She encourages them to be their best and promotes the concept of learning for the love of it. Libby is a wonderful role model for building happy teams of people who enjoy life and make new friends in the process.

As well as having a happy day out U3A members were asked to bring along an item from their pantry for Foodshare as well as a small offering from their garden to share with others. So, after the lunch, Bill's station wagon was half filled with goodies and delivered around to Sasha at Foodshare. Not forgetting the U3A members who also got to go home with a small gift from another person's garden. This was an idea by Bronwyn which seems to have stuck each year.

U3A is a world-wide organisation that encourages people over 50 to stay mentally, physically and socially active in retirement. Enrolment forms for U3A 2025, are available from the Alexandra and Yea Libraries. Or you can enrol online at [murrindindieastu3a.org.au](http://murrindindieastu3a.org.au)

Most of the classes start in February 2025 and a lot of them are new.



Some other members dressed festively for the party. -S



Peter, Bill and Tony enjoying themselves at the U3A Christmas event. -S



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# BUSINESS & TRADES DIRECTORY



## Letters to the Editor

## Free camping across Victoria

THE Victorian Government is helping families and boosting regional tourism this summer by making camping free in every national park and state forest in Victoria.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos recently announced the start of free camping season across all of Park Victoria's 131 paid camping grounds.

Since the announcement, there has been an 115 percent increase in Parks Victoria campsite bookings, as Victorians take advantage of the chance to stay and explore some of the state's most iconic destinations from Wilsons Promontory to Lake Eildon.

Free camping will run from December 1, until June 30, 2025, with almost 100,000 nights of free camping already booked.

The government's \$9 million investment means free camping is now available at every national park and state forest, which is expected to attract new visitors to towns all over regional Victoria.

As part of free camping, the government has invested \$1.7 million for additional maintenance, repairs and operating costs to ensure campgrounds are kept clean and safe for every visitor.

More than 50 million people visit Victoria's iconic state forests and national parks every year, for camping, hiking, fishing and hunting, four-wheel driving, trail bike riding, horse riding, birdwatching and many more outdoor activities.

In addition to free camping, the government's \$106.6 million investment in Victoria's Great Outdoors has delivered 31 new and 60 upgraded campgrounds, as well as 155 upgraded four-wheel drive tracks and 16 walking tracks totalling 31 kilometres.

There are still plenty of free bookable campsites available in December and up to June 30, including popular campgrounds from Aire River West in the Great Otway National Park to Neds Gully in the Cathedral Ranges.

Minister for Environment Steve Dimopoulos said, "Busy families deserve a great holiday in our great outdoors, with 100,000 nights already booked we know Victorians will be making incredible memories in nature thanks to free camping.

"We're making camping accessible to every Victorian. It's great for families, great for regional towns, great for businesses and great for local jobs."

To book a free camping site visit [parks.vic.gov.au](http://parks.vic.gov.au)

Continued from Page 2

### CFA funding

I WANT to set the record straight on reports regarding the CFA's funding. I know it has caused some fear and anger in our regional communities. Reports of an almost \$70m cut from the CFA are wrong.

Every year, a certain amount of money within our emergency services' budgets is earmarked for specific projects and services, like funding for the rollout of 18,000 new Motorola radios to brigades.

Setting aside these funds isn't a cut. Every dollar of these quarantined amounts is spent on CFA, directly benefitting the CFA and their volunteers.

Government departments manage many of these projects and they pay the bill. It streamlines administration and takes the burden off emergency services so they can focus on what they do best, keeping Victorians safe.

This year, more than \$337 million in CFA base funding has been allocated, an increase of almost \$17 million on the comparable figure last year.

This doesn't include the money we invest on top of this on new trucks, uniforms and upgrading stations.

The Fire Services Property Levy funds almost 78 per cent of the CFA's total funding needs, not 25 per cent.

I know National Party members are out there with their negativity trying to spin a false narrative about cuts. They should support, not scare country communities and stick to the facts. Labor has delivered 80 new tankers since 2018, 22 are being built and 15 pumpers are on order. The Nationals didn't fund a single truck in their last few years in government, and they slashed \$66 million from the CFA budget whilst in office.

It's disappointing that I must correct this unhelpful misinformation, but it's a further opportunity to recognise and thank our amazing CFA brigades and all emergency services. I want you to know our Government will always give you what you need to continue keeping Victorians safe.

*Jaelyn Symes, Minister for Emergency Services*

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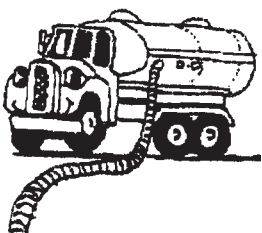
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## TRADES ADVERTISING DEADLINE NOON THURSDAY

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### DEATH NOTICES

**HISCOCK, Wendy Leah Anderson**  
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Late of 'Old Ghin Ghin' and Yea. Aunt, cousin, community member and friend of many. Daughter of Ossie (dec) and Leah (dec). Sister of Kerry (dec) and Julie.

*Someone who lived and loved to serve her community.*

### DEATH NOTICES

**HISCOCK, Wendy Leah Anderson**  
18/04/1940-29/11/2024  
Thank you Wendy for your huge commitment to the CFA in safeguarding our community through many fires and other emergency incidents over so many years. Your local knowledge and experience was unsurpassed. Dearly remembered and lifetime friend to Neil and Jan Beer. We will miss your regular phone calls.

### FUNERAL NOTICES

**HISCOCK.** The funeral service to celebrate the life of Wendy Hiscock will be held at the Yea Recreation Reserve, 20 Snodgrass Street Yea on Thursday December 12, 2024 commencing at 2pm. Following the service the funeral cortège will proceed to the Yea Cemetery.



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### BEREAVEMENT THANKS

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Thank you to everyone who attended David's Memorial Service and/or sent cards, condolences and flowers. Special thanks to the celebrant - Rhonda Edwards, Damien at N J Todd Funeral Directors and members of the Seymour Bowling Club for catering after the service. The support of friends, neighbours, ex clients and WATCO members has been deeply appreciated.

Zel Austin

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# Lithium-ion battery warning as Christmas approaches

VICTORIAN fire agencies are urging residents to be aware of the risks associated with lithium-ion battery products this festive season following a lithium-ion battery explosion on an e-bike.

As a result, a Langwarrin family lost their entire garage last month (November 14), with the near miss alerted to by their 21-year-old daughter just minutes before the whole structure went up in flames.

Property owner Jamie Universita said he was unaware of the dangers lithium-ion battery products could cause if damaged and was thankful his e-bike was stored in the garage away from living and sleeping areas.

"We are just so lucky our daughter and her friends were at home at that very moment to pack their car for a camping weekend, and were quick enough to take action," Jamie said.

"She initially heard crackling sounds and saw electrical sparks, and after ringing me to let me know, she removed my car from the garage and called the fire brigade who told her not to hose it down."

Jamie said once the bike exploded into a fireball, they lost everything in a matter of minutes.

"It could have been so much worse, we're just so grateful the firefighters were able to contain it before it stretched further to the house. Everything can be replaced," Jamie said.

"I had no idea products like my e-bike were capable of doing something like this. I really urge everyone to buy from a reputable brand and to pay close attention to them."

Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said incidents such as these are a strong reminder for residents to understand how they can prevent devices and batteries from catching fire.

"It's important Victorians are checking their devices for damage regularly before charging, and that they're only using a compatible charger that has been supplied with the device," Mr Heffernan said.

"Please only purchase and use equipment from reputable manufacturers and suppliers.

"We strongly recommend households install interconnected smoke alarms where devices such as these are charged, so residents and firefighters are alerted as soon as possible."

Ahead of Christmas gifting and school holiday activities, Fire Rescue Victoria Deputy Commissioner Community Safety Joshua Fischer said Victorians should learn about safely purchasing and handling lithium-ion battery-powered devices of all types.

"It's essential to only use devices from reliable manufacturers and to follow their instructions. Larger devices such as e-bikes or e-scooters should only ever be charged in areas such as garages or sheds that are away from living areas and exits," said Mr Fischer.

"Phones, computers, toys and power tools should never be left unattended while charging, or on soft flammable surfaces such as beds or pillows. They should also not be left in direct sunlight or in parked vehicles where they can quickly heat up."

"We want all Victorians to stay safe this season, so please be aware of the warning signs of lithium-ion battery fires such as strong odours, discolouration, bulging, and abnormal sounds. Fire safety is a shared responsibility, and we encourage you to familiarise yourself with the tips on our websites to better understand how to store and charge your device correctly."

Lithium-ion battery safety tips include: Only buy lithium-ion battery products from a reputable supplier and follow the manufacturer's instructions; only use the charger supplied with the device, or one that is compatible with the battery and meets Australian Standards; check e-scooters and e-bikes for damage before charging; do not charge a battery that is damaged, or a device containing a damaged battery; install interconnected smoke alarms where devices are often charged; for large devices such as e-bikes and e-scooters, only charge them in areas such as garages and sheds and away from exits and living areas; never charge your device on or near flammable surfaces, such as beds or pillows, as this can contribute to overheating and start a fire; do not overcharge your device; do not leave a charging device in direct sunlight; do not store lithium-ion batteries in areas where they are exposed to heat or moisture.

Find more information at [cfa.vic.gov.au/batterysafety](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/batterysafety) and [frv.vic.gov.au/battery-safety](http://frv.vic.gov.au/battery-safety)

## Beware of scams as Christmas approaches

THE Victorian Government is urging Victorians to be aware of online scams in the lead up to the festive season.

Boxing Day, New Year, Black Friday and Cyber Monday are massive retail events in Australia, with an estimated \$30 billion spent over the summer of 2023-24, and online scammers and cyber criminals can take advantage of more people shopping online.

Scamwatch reports that Australians lost \$7.1 million to online shopping scams in 2023, with \$1.65 million from within Victoria.

A common scam to look out for is notifications about parcel deliveries. Consumers may receive texts, emails or notifications asking them to click on a link, but should always try to validate these requests by going through the courier's official website or app.

While anyone can fall victim to a scam, there are some ways Victorians can protect themselves.

Spot a scam by looking out for red flags including: A product or service that sounds 'too good to be true'; a sense of urgency or pressure to act quickly; an unusual web address or web address that's different to

the usual webpage for a seller; an unusual or specific method of payment, for example, cryptocurrency or gift card payment.

It always pays to be extra cautious by checking the business' website, social media accounts or contacting the business independently to check whether a call or message is genuine.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams said, "Doing your shopping online can be cheap and convenient, but keep an eye out for deals that are too good to be true."

"If something doesn't look right, think before you click, and seek support from Consumer Affairs Victoria if you think you've been scammed online."

Service Victoria has launched a new Spot a Scam quiz to help Victorians improve their knowledge of scams. The quiz tests if consumers know how to recognise a scam, and then provides tailored practical advice and information.

Victorians can test their scam knowledge now on the Service Victoria app and website at [service.vic.gov.au/spotascam](http://service.vic.gov.au/spotascam)

Scams can be reported to Consumer Affairs Victoria at [consumer.vic.gov.au/contact-us](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/contact-us)



# A great celebration for Taggerty

ON Saturday, December 7 Taggerty residents held a successful Christmas party with Santa visiting and giving presents out. The wombat toss game provided competition and laughs for young and old. The new webpage [Taggerty.vic.au](http://Taggerty.vic.au) for all things Taggerty was launched at the event.



Even the man in red made an appearance at the party. -S



Lots of children got to enjoy the games on offer. -S



The Christmas party was a great community get together. -S



Pans of fire entertained the crowd. -S



Councillor McAulay was at the Taggerty Christmas party. -S

## Summer's not a silly season

An open letter from Chris Hardman, Chief Fire Officer, Forest Fire Management Victoria

LAST week you might have noticed a pick-up in news articles and broadcasts forecasting a hot, dry summer, and high potential for fire in some areas of the state. That news has come from the seasonal summer outlook distributed on Thursday, November 28 by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC), the national council for fire and emergency services in Australia and New Zealand.

The Seasonal Bushfire Outlook for Summer gives a picture of the likelihood of fire over the summer months, at both a state and national level. This year's outlook for Victoria predicts higher potential for fire for most of western Victoria, as well as southwest Gippsland, including Mornington Peninsula, greater Melbourne and north-east Victoria.

The potential has been assessed this way because of the dry conditions in those areas, the availability of vegetation (for example, grass, leaves, bark, shrubs and fallen branches) to 'fuel' fires, high temperatures and the continuing lack of rainfall to bring moisture to the landscape.

The fire potential elsewhere in Victoria has been assessed as 'normal', but hot, dry and windy weather can still pose a risk in areas dominated by forests, woodlands, or dense, low shrubs.

'Normal' is no reason to be complacent, but you should know that Victoria is prepared and that our land and fire agencies have worked all year to reduce our bushfire risk.

### We are prepared and ready to respond

On public land this year, FFMVic carried out risk reduction works across more

than 138,000 hectares, and because it isn't just about this summer or this season, I'm happy to tell you that we also carried out works on more than 90,000 hectares the year before. The impacts are cumulative.

Risk reduction works include planned burns, mowing, mulching, slashing and spraying. Collectively, we call these works 'fuel management'. They reduce the amount of vegetation (for example, grass, leaves, bark, shrubs and fallen branches) available to 'fuel' a fire, thereby reducing the likely speed or intensity of a bushfire.

These qualities can help fire crews to respond and put out fires while they are still small, before they can impact communities, assets, infrastructure and the environment. You can find out about planned burns happening near you at [plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au](http://plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au)

In November we saw some of the reward for those efforts, with a fire in the Great Otway National Park, the Chapple Vale-Colac Tree Road fire, showing reduced spread in the footprint of one of our planned burns back in August. Thankfully, the fire was able to be contained before hotter temperatures set in just days later. Our crews remain in the area to manage hot spots and reinforce those control lines.

Recent weeks have also shown how we work together with and alongside our emergency sector partners. On the frontline, FFMVic has close to 1800 personnel, including full-time and seasonal firefighters, fire lookout observers and fire support officers. In recent months, many of them have completed training and accreditation to make sure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to be safe and help keep communities safe this summer.

They are supported by hundreds of emergency and incident management staff, including surge staff who have a fire and emergency role in addition to their day job, as well as firefighting equipment. This includes tankers, earthmoving equipment and aircraft positioned across the state, as well as additional aircraft that can be called upon when needed.

You can find out more about our work at [ffm.vic.gov.au](http://ffm.vic.gov.au)

### What you can do

Summer is a festive time in Victoria. We often have opportunities to steal a bit of magic as the year comes to an end, to come together with loved ones, to get away, to get in a bit more sleep, and a few more late nights, and to reflect on the year gone by.

But opportunity is never without responsibility. Now is also the time to prepare yourself and your loved ones for the fire season. Here are some quick tips to help you get started.

### Five ways with fire

Visit [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au) to help you get started on a Bushfire Plan so you know what you will do in case of fire; download and get to know the VicEmergency app, then set up 'watch zones' and turn on notifications to be kept up to date wherever you are; get to know the Australian Fire Danger Ratings System, and work out what fire danger rating will trigger your Bushfire Plan; plan your travel. Head to [exploreoutdoors.vic.gov.au](http://exploreoutdoors.vic.gov.au) to help you stay safe when visiting state forests; never leave a campfire unattended, if they are cool to touch, they are safe to leave.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy festive season.

## Indi Volunteer Grants program opens for community organisations

MEMBER for Indi Helen Haines has launched Expressions of Interest for the 2024-25 Volunteer Grants program.

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

"Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities and there is always strong interest in these grants from a variety of hard-working, community focused organisations," Dr Haines said.

There are two streams of grant funding in the 2024-25 Volunteer Grants program.

Stream one funds the purchase of communication or insurance items that will benefit a community organisation's volunteers. Stream two funds the purchase of items or services, or running volunteer-led activities, with the main purpose for supporting the development of children under 18, or adults whose volunteering activities supports children's development and wellbeing.

"This year, the grant focuses on funding important but often expensive costs involved with volunteering, like insurance premiums, phone bills and technology purchases, which are becoming increasingly more expensive," Dr Haines said.

"There is also a strong focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of our young people.

"I am always inspired by the passion and hard work of volunteer groups that I meet with across Indi and they tell me that grants like this go a long way in supporting volunteers to continue their important work.

"I encourage not-for-profit community organisations across Indi to consider putting in an expression of interest. Applications will be assessed by a panel of community members, with successful applicants then invited to apply to the Department of Social Services for a grant.

"Volunteers support our communities in so many and varied ways and I pay tribute to them for their continued commitment and hard work."

Details on the eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found at [helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2024-25/](http://helenhaines.org/resources/grants/volunteer-grants-2024-25/)



## SPORT

## Alexandra Speedway secures funding for female-focused upgrades

WOMEN and girls in Alexandra will find it easier and more enjoyable to play sport and be active as a result of a \$74,666 grant to the Alexandra Speedway.

The Alexandra Speedway was selected to receive the funding under the Australian Government's \$200 million *Play Our Way* program. This program is designed to remove barriers, address discrimination and promote equality for women and girls to participate in sport and physical activity.

The project at Alexandra District Speedway will focus on constructing a dedicated, female-friendly amenities block, including changerooms, showers, and toilets. This funding will create a safer, more inclusive environment, addressing a significant barrier to engaging in local motorsport for women and girls.

Alexandra and District Speedway Secretary Karl Dingley spoke about how grateful the club is and what an opportunity it provides.

"We are very excited and fortunate on receiving the federal funding grant for the Play our Way program," Karl said.

"This will definitely help our female competitors, members and visitors by having the appropriate facilities, also this will benefit our club and the local township by facilitating and attracting more females into motorsport."

The Alexandra Speedway is one of the 166 groups around the nation selected to receive *Play Our Way* funding for new or modified facilities for women and girls across a range of sports. Funding will complement the \$55.6 million offered to 124 organisations under Stream Two: Participation and Equipment, and will be offered nationwide, with a focus on facilities for women and girls who face additional barriers to participation.

This includes women and girls who have a disability, are First Nations people or from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Minister for Sport Anika Wells said, "*Play Our Way* is all about creating greater opportunities for women and girls to have an equal chance to get the fun, satisfaction and health benefits sport offers."

"The huge response to the grants, and the range of great project ideas, show that Australian communities want to be more supportive of women and girls."

Senator Lisa Darmanin said, "Congratulations to the Alexandra Speedway for securing this grant. What a fantastic achievement."

"This project to build female-friendly facilities is such a positive step. It's going to make a real difference in helping women and girls feel welcome and included in motorsport. It's about breaking down barriers and creating a space where everyone belongs."

"Sport should be for everyone, no matter their level or how they want to participate. These new facilities will mean women and girls can enjoy motorsport just as much as anyone else, and that's something worth celebrating."

## Helping children to stay healthy and active

THE Victorian Government is helping more kids get active and fostering the talents of Victoria's future sports stars.

Minister for Education Ben Carroll congratulated the 100 schools that are the latest to receive a \$30,000 Active Schools Grant as part of the Active Schools initiative. The initiative aims to ensure all Victorian students have the skills, confidence and motivation to be active for life.

Eildon Primary School and Marysville Primary School have both been announced as recipients of the grant.

In previous years, schools have used their Active Schools Grants to upskill PE teachers, purchase sports equipment, build outdoor learning spaces, make upgrades to playgrounds, install sensory play areas and implement programs such as bicycle education or dance.

The grants provide schools with much needed support and resources to enable students to be more physically active, including a toolkit for school leaders and teachers, expert Physical Activity Advisors as part of the Active Schools Expert Support Service and funding for schools.

In addition to Active Schools Grants recipients, a further 300 Victorian government schools will receive a \$3000 Active Schools PE and Sport Funding Boost in 2025.

This will support them with the costs of physical education, sport and outdoor education. Also, 200 government secondary schools will receive a \$14,000 Extracurricular Boost to support them with the costs of providing extracurricular physical activity opportunities.

The Active Schools initiative focuses on finding opportunities to be active throughout the school day, whether in the classroom, at recess or lunch and getting to and from school.

## Local students take part in junior golfers program



More of the local children involved in the Alexandra Golf Club's Junior Golf Program. -S



Twenty-eight primary and secondary students from across Murrindindi Shire participated in Alexandra Golf Club's five-week Junior Golf Program. PGA Golf Professional and Alexandra local Matt Jager and Club Captain Luke Heard ran the program focused on introducing kids to golf and helping others to develop their existing skills. -S

## Round eight of term two for Alexandra Squash Club

by Kristelle Leary

### Monday Competition Kangaroos versus Wombats

JORDAN versus Lochlan: A great match. Both players took different approaches to the match. Lochlan had a big win in game three, but Jordan came out on top. 65 to 54.

Mick versus Chris: These two had some good rallies with beautiful deep shots. Despite Chris's efforts, Mick got the upper hand using drives along the side walls. Mick claimed the win. 67 to 44.

Justin versus Daniel W: A spectacle to behold, this is always an entertaining game to watch. There was only a point in it going into the final game and both players fought hard until the last second. When the timer stopped Justin landed on top for victory. 64 to 57.

### Platypus versus Koalas

Tyler versus Eric: It was a very one-sided match. Tyler was just too strong for his opponent and took home a commanding win. 82 to 38.

Sally versus Matt (fill in): What would have been a close match turned into a rout when Matt filled in for Lee. Matt's tennis pro style had the goods as he cruised to victory. 72 to 44.

Michael versus Simon: A close match with great rallies. Michael held the momentum at half-time but played complacently, allowing Simon to get on a roll and tie the match. 54 to 54.

John versus Daniel K: John played plenty of shots. Unfortunately, he was against an in-form Daniel and was sent as a steer to the abattoir. Daniel played shots from every angle to win all four games and the match. 69 to 49.

### Thursday Competition Tigers versus Cheetahs

Randy versus Jess: The server tended to hold the power in the game. Both had some good shots and Jess was playing strong. Randy had too many unforced errors, helping Jess in her win. 86 to 36.

Lucas versus Travis: Opponents were on even standing. Lucas's serve made the

difference and swung the match in his favour to take the win. 65 to 46.

James versus Jim: James came out firing and had Jim on the back foot. Jim mixed up the shots and clawed things back to a respectable score in the first game. Jim's choice of pace frustrated James and Jim won the next three games to take home a comfortable win. 59 to 47.

### Panthers versus Leopards

Reece versus Blake (fill in): Blake has recently had a shift in his game, he is reading the play better and seems more focused. Reece was not ready for this, and Blake got the better of him with some crafty shots to take the match. 71 to 40.

Sam versus Matt (fill in): A high intensity and hard-hitting match. Matt had more in the tank, outrunning and outplaying Sam. 75 to 56.

Phil versus Michael H: A very close match down to the nail-biting last few rallies. Phil just clawed back the points needed for a victory. 52 to 51.



Sam plays a backhand against Matt. -S



# Alexandra bowlers travel far and wide

by Marie Evans

IT was a long drive to Tallygaroopna for division four last Saturday but great to come away with a win. Division six played ladder leaders Violet Town at home and had a good winning rink. Midweek division four played Shepparton Park at home and despite losing the overall they also had a winning rink.

Club games are well underway, and Bob Mayfield has booked a place in round three of the men's singles after his defeat of David Nicklos in round two. Other round two games are Andy Tobias to play Larry Scott and Ben Gilchrist to play Rodd Petersen. Some round one games are yet to be completed.

Denice Chisholm had a win over Christine Mayfield in round one of the Women's Singles and will now play Coby Petersen. Lauren Gilchrist will play Pauline Gilmore in round one.

The men's pairs through to round two are Malcolm Gill and John Blamey who had a win over Bob Mayfield and Ben Gilchrist. Greg Gilmore and Larry Scott defeated Bob Benghamy and Ken Argent to move into the next round against Andy Tobias and Scott Ferrier.

The Midweek Pennant side played Shepparton Park and Bob Mayfield (Skip), John Blamey, Marty Manning and Christine Mayfield had a successful day defeating their opposition 19 to 17. Congratulations to Marty for his part in a great winning game. The rink won 12 ends and led for the entire game.

Doug Cooper (Skip), Malcolm Gill, Coby Petersen and Levi Ronalds were 10 down on end six and were four to 21 at the break. They won four out of the last six ends to reduce the margin 13 to 24. David Nicklos, Ben Gilchrist, Trevor Stewart and Lauren Gilchrist had a game to forget.

Shepparton Park won the overall and retained their position on top of the ladder. Alexandra plays away to Euroa next round who are second on the ladder.

Saturday division six played Violet Town who are second on the ladder. It was the only

game played in division six as Shepparton Park forfeited their game against Nagambie and the Euroa versus Dookie game was a wash out.

Ray Mathieson (Skip), John Blamey, Steve Kirby and Anne Gunton had a good win. They won 14 out of the 21 ends to finish 19 to 16.

Rodd Petersen (Skip), Karen Jackson, Janice Dunston and Warren Nelson lost their game. Mark Stone, (Skip), Trevor Stewart, Ian Franklin and Rob Roach also found their opposition too strong. Division six play away to Euroa in the last game before the Christmas break.

Division four played Tallygaroopna Bowls Club which is situated quite close to a Dairy farm and the flies were incredibly friendly. It was humid and hot conditions throughout the game. Alexandra won three out of the four rinks and the overall. They retain third

place on the ladder behind Euroa 100 points, Dookie 99 and Alexandra 96. Tatura Hilltop is fourth with 77 and will travel to Alexandra next week for the final game before the break.

The best winning rink was David Nicklos, Bob Mayfield, Scott Ferrier and Christine Mayfield who won 30 to 13. They trailed seven to nine on end nine but took the lead on end 10 and Tallygaroopna were only able to win three of the last 11 ends.

Greg Gilmore (Skip), Larry Scott, Marie Evans and Lauren Gilchrist won 13 ends and were 17 to three up on end 11. Tally came out after the break and won the next five ends and only trailed 12 to 17 on end 16. The Alexandra rink won the next four ends to win the game 23 to 13. Greg Gilmore is top of the players ladder along with Doug Cooper.

Tim Langmead (Skip), Bob Benghamy, Andy Tobias and Saxon Langmead began well and had their opposition six to zero on

end four. They were 15 to five up on 13. Tally came back after the break and were only three shots down on end 17. Alexandra won two out of the last four ends to win 18 to 16.

Doug Cooper (Skip), Ben Gilchrist, Ken Argent and Denice Chisholm had close game throughout. It was 10 to 14 at the break but Tallygaroopna were 16 to 10 up by end 15. Alexandra won the next five ends to lead 17 to 16. End 21 went to Tally by two shots and they won the game 18 to 17. A great game.

Alexandra went home with 16 points and an overall 88 to 60 shots.

The club has hosted a number of Christmas functions over the past few weeks and has some still to come. Many thanks to those organisations who have booked with the club. However, no new bookings will be taken at this stage.



Best Winning Rink Division 4 David Nicklos, Scott Ferrier, Bob Mayfield, and Christine Mayfield. -S

## Food and wild weather in Marysville

by Lesley Rundle

LAST Thursday the happy band of nine holers played stableford on the front nine holes. The winner was Richy Clark (5) with 21 stableford points. The runner-up on a three way countback was Gail Leigh (5) with 18 points.

Richy also won the nearest the pin on the fourth hole and Patrick Orwin was the closest to the pin on the ninth. Patrick's round also included the shot of the day when he chipped into the hole from about 50 metres away on the sixth to save par.

It appears that a food fest is held after play on Thursdays and following the pizzas provided last week golfers this week enjoyed sharing a delicious platter of food. On Thursday December 19 a barbecue will be served at 12pm before teeing off at 1pm. With golf followed by food no wonder the number of golfers playing nine holes on a Thursday is increasing.

The Saturday golfers yet again had to tolerate quite uncomfortable conditions with high temperatures, high humidity, rain, sun, and swarms of flies which tried to enter every facial orifice. The ladies managed to complete their 18 holes with dry clothing but a few of the men got drenched when a heavy storm hit Marysville as they were playing their last few holes.

The ladies played a stroke round for the December monthly medal and incorporated their stableford points for the Norman Trophy which had been postponed the previous week. The winner of both the medal and the trophy was Helen Howard (24) with nett 77 and 33 stableford points.

The runner-up was Sabrina Stow (22) with nett 79. Richy Clark (12) had a successful day winning the medal with nett 67, nearest the pin on the ninth hole and the Golden Shot. The runner up was Steve Coker (17) with nett 75 on a countback from Ken Whittingham and Peter Lilley who won the putting competition with 23 putts. The remaining nearest the pins were won by Mark Bambery, Brian Worcester and Alan Howard.

Next Saturday for those who have won a monthly medal it is the Medal of Medalists play off and all other golfers will play a stroke round.

For information about the upcoming golf clinics to be held at Marysville on Friday January 10 please refer to the Marysville Golf Club website. There are still places available in Clinic 3 for intermediate golfers who play on a semi regular basis.



The Scratch Pennant team pictured at the Summer Cup. -S



Club champion Ruth Worland, Medal of Medallists Barb Doyle, and Sue Greatorex. -S

## Year's achievers celebrated at Alexandra Golf Club

CHRISTMAS is getting close and Alexandra is looking very festive with its decorations and new flower pots.

This is also the time of year to recognise the clubs 2024 achievers, and a very enjoyable presentation night was held on Saturday to honour them.

On Tuesday the winner was Alan Kirkpatrick (26) with 35 points followed by Frank Devries (28) with 34 points and then Paul Martin (28) on 34 points.

Nearest the pin on the seventh went to Brad Newton and on the 17th to Leo Dynes. Ball run down: Graham Emmerson and Dave Silverman. Good to see Brad is back from his holiday with it is believed rather full suitcases.

With the end of the golfing year, it is back to the more relaxing stableford over summer for the ladies. Donna Meggitt (15) on 36 points was the winner last Wednesday but only on a countback from Barb Doyle (15) with 36 points.

Next came Rita Mitchell (34) on 34 points followed by Marg Fahey (24) with 33 points. Nearest the pin on the second went to Ruth Worland, on the fifth to Rita Mitchell and on the 18th to Barb Doyle. Bronwyn Howell and Ruth Worland tied for the nine-holes with 17 points.

Next Wednesday December 18 put on your festive gear for the ladies Christmas breakup.

It was the men's turn to play for their Medal of Medallists on Saturday as well as December's monthly medal. Daniel Burns is to be congratulated for winning both with a great score of 86 (19) 67. The day's runner-up was Len Jenkins 86 (18) 68 on a three-way countback from Matt Richards 72 (4) 68 and Corey Jack with 77 (9) 68.

Next came Shane McGorlick 80 (11) 69. Nearest the pin on the second went to Corey Jack, on the fifth and 18th to Mick Holohan and on the seventh and 12th to Matt Richards.

Jared Sloane had the fewest putts with 26. Raffle winner: Luke Heard. Saturday

December 14 is stableford. The Chicken Run is going strong on Thursday evenings at 5pm and don't forget the community Challenge Ambrose on Saturday December 28.



Club champion Matt Richards. -S



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## St Mary's house swimming sports

ON Wednesday, December 4 St Mary's Primary School held their House Swimming Sports at the Alexandra Swimming Pool.

Students dressed up in their house colours to represent their house and to encourage each other throughout the day.

The events included freestyle, noodle race, kickboard race, backstroke, breaststroke, run and wading race, and butterfly. There was something for everyone to enjoy no matter their swimming ability, just a fun day all round.



Grade five students looking pleased with their efforts. -S



It was a great day weather wise for the St Mary's house swimming sports to take place. -S



There were many happy faces throughout the day. -S



The students cheering for their houses as the races were on. -S



Some of the boys sitting together after their swim. -S



The Tenison house standing proud. -S



The MacKillop house looking bright and yellow. -S



Some happy students rugged up after their events. -S



There was a kickboard race as one of the days events. -S