

The Yea Chronicle

92 High Street, Yea. PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

With which is incorporated The Yea Telegraph, The Yea Telephone and Upper Goulburn Advocate

Ph: (03) 5797 2468 or (03) 5772 1002; Fax: (03) 5797 2257; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, January 31, 2024 \$2.00 inc. GST

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The bagpipers on the balcony. -AR

Bagpipes and tartan at the Yea Art Show

by Glenda Woods

THE 38th annual Rotary Club of Yea Art Show opened with a flourish of bagpipes and tartan on Thursday evening with one of the best opening night crowds ever. It was wonderful to have so much support.

The bagpipes played by Rotarian Lachie Cooper, together with his brother Callam and his dad Jim, were an absolute hit especially when they played from the Yea Shire Hall balcony prior to the official opening. Lachie, Callam and Jim looked sensational in their full Scottish matching kit and sounded fantastic as well.

The show was opened by Juliet Risely, a past District Governor for District 9810. Juliet spoke of the importance of art shows to both the artists and to the communities who host them and of the pleasure that they bring to so many people.

Opening night attendees had the opportunity to enjoy a drink and finger

food, while being the first to purchase if they found something to their liking. Many did, as 20 paintings were sold, including Best Work on Paper, *Eucalyptus crenulata* by Helen Miles. A big plus to Helen as this prize earned her an extra \$1000.

This year's judge was Drew Gregory. Drew is widely recognised as an outstanding professional artist with over 40 years of experience, and a winner of many prestigious national awards. Drew has held over 60 solo shows and been involved in numerous group exhibitions and is well qualified to make the difficult decisions of judging art work.

Winners of all the categories are as follows: Best in Show - *Moorings* by Mary Hyde; Second Best in Show - *The Wanderers* by Sam Bruere; Work on Paper - *Eucalyptus crenulata* by Helen Miles; Hargrave Award - *Service Please* by Di King; Traditional Work - *Large Poppy* by Ann Neate; Contemporary Work - *Luna*

Park by Wendy Webster; Best Miniature - *Hanna Loves Reading* by It Hao Pheh; Local Work - *High Street - Shire Hall* by Nina Volk; Emerging Artist - *Travelling Light* by Doreen Backway; Portrait - *Margaret Ollie* by Yvonne de Valle; Nature - *Bovine* by Diane Harris; Junior Secondary - *Firing up Imagination* by Rhys Morden; Junior Primary - *Portraits* by Olivia Frazer; Most Popular - *The Homestead near Wilcannia* by Drew Gregory.

The art show is the result of a lot of dedicated work over many months by a hardworking committee, led by art show director Marj Hamilton, ably supported by artist Julian Bruere who again curated the show. As well as committee members, during show week, all Rotarians and Friends of Rotary are called upon to lend assistance in some way. Also, many thanks to the Yea Football Netball Club, who assisted with the setting up and packing up of the screens. It was a big job.

Sponsors play an enormous part in the overall success of the show, especially the Frank Hargrave Family Trust for the many years of support provided to the club. This support has ensured the continuing growth and development of the show.

The raffle was drawn at 3pm on Sunday and the prize winners were: First prize of a Julian Bruere painting - Kyla Dowling; second prize of \$100 voucher to the Royal Mail Hotel - Glenda Woods and third prize of a hamper of local goodies - Lily Gibson.

Attendances were steady over the course of the four days of the show. Due to everyone's generous support, with over 50 paintings being sold, the club has once again raised valuable funds to put toward both local and international projects.

Thanks to everyone for their support and a big thank you to all the artists who are so willing to exhibit, as without those talented artists, where would we be?

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Mayor's Chair

Cr Damien Gallagher, Mayor, Murrindindi Shire Council

MURRINDINDI Shire Council continues to recognise and celebrate Australia Day and all Australians. In 2024, as it has for many years, council awarded thousands of dollars in funding and in-kind assistance to community groups to deliver unique and engaging events of celebration across our rural setting of 3880 square kilometres.

I attended every event I was invited to as Mayor and I proudly participated in celebrations of our national day respectfully and in line with the wishes of the respective event organisers.

From Flowerdale to Yea, to Alexandra, Acheron and Taggerty, and to Thornton, Eildon, Toolangi, and Kinglake, I have enjoyed a stunning celebration of Australia right across the rugged ranges and river valleys of Murrindindi Shire this past long weekend. I met fellow councillors and council staff at events across the weekend. It continues to be our profound privilege to serve our community.

In the week leading to Australia Day, I celebrated first responders and inter-agency cooperation in the face of a recent local emergency. I've stressed the recent Murrindindi flood impacts to state and federal government representatives. After valued conversations with a Taungurung elder, and alongside representatives of local RSL and Rotary Club servants of our community, council staff, and Victorian members of parliament, I presided over the conferring of Australian citizenship upon six Murrindindi residents. The privilege of leading the four citizenship ceremonies scheduled across 2024 is one I will forever cherish.

For some pastoralists, tradies, professionals, volunteers, and councillors alike, there is unease about overt celebration annually on January 26. There are those

who'd welcome a change of date to enable a more complete and inclusive celebration of nationhood. This sentiment has manifested in decreasing numbers of people attending events and a lack of engagement, particularly on the part of younger generations, around January 26. For those reasons council has opted to celebrate the Murrindindi Community Awards during Volunteer Week in May, rather than announce the Murrindindi Citizens of the Year winners on Australia Day. Last year this resulted in the largest ever number of nominations of worthy community members and groups, and very well-attended events to celebrate the dedicated work of our volunteers and community groups.

In 2024, council continued to support community-led Australia Day events across Murrindindi Shire, all tailored for residents and visitors by generous local groups, and each as unique as our towns and villages, and as unique as each Murrindindi Australian.

Funding was awarded to every one of the community groups who sought financial support from council for Australia Day events. So, the use of the term 'shame' from a handful of divisive and misinformed voices, claiming a lack of support from council on Australia Day is a slur I cannot abide. It's an unacceptable slight on dedicated volunteers and council staff alike.

Conversely, I am thankful to the people who shared their perspectives with me personally. For reference, I'm contactable on 0419 017 801.

Australia is fortunate in a world of tension and bloodshed. Our freedom, our democracy, our equality before the law, and our shared commitment to a fair-go, make us Australian. I think that we could recognise more often, our shared commitment to these principles and invest less in exploiting differences of perspective to achieve division.



THUMBS UP: To Rotary for the lunch and entertainment to acknowledge Australia Day.

THUMBS DOWN: To our woke council, who quietly held a citizenship ceremony days before Australia Day, and had no input into the celebrations in the park, also left the flagpole locked and without an Australian Flag flying. Most disrespectful. Thank you to the mayor for putting in an appearance.

THUMBS UP: Once again Rotary has helped out. A wonderful occasion for Australia Day. A huge thank you.

THUMBS UP: A fantastic effort by the Rotary Club for getting the Australia Day celebrations together and providing us with an opportunity to come together and enjoy the day and be proud of who we are and what we stand for.

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

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

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RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	NA			
Acheron R at Taggerty	12.00pm Mon	0.69	steady	below minor
Home Ck at Yarck	10.22am Mon	0.25	steady	
Yea R at Devlins Bridge	11.24am Mon	0.63	steady	below minor
Rubicon R at Rubicon	12.00pm Mon	0.57	steady	
King Parrot Ck at Flowerdale	12.00pm Mon	0.62	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Trawool	12.00pm Mon	1.51	steady	below minor
Sunday Ck at Tallarook	12.00pm Mon	0.35	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Seymour	12.00pm Mon	1.83	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Ck at Seymour	10.52am Mon	1.24	steady	
Goulburn R at Ghin Ghin	12.00pm Mon	3.82	steady	

**ISSUED AT 12.16PM ON MONDAY, 29 JANUARY 2024



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

can be submitted via email to
editorial@alexandranewspapers.com.au or
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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.



Weekly Weather

January 31 - February 6, 2024

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	12	26	Wednesday	12	25
Thursday	14	27	Thursday	14	27
Friday	11	24	Friday	11	24
Saturday	14	30	Saturday	13	30
Sunday	17	34	Sunday	16	34
Monday	14	25	Monday	13	25
Tuesday	13	25	Tuesday	13	25



DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	N/Amm
Buxton	28.5mm
Eildon (AWS)	18mm
Flowerdale	23mm
Jamieson	36mm
Kinglake	20mm
Lake Eildon	32mm
Mansfield	26mm
Taggerty	31mm
Yarck	22mm
Yea	27mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	288.42m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	98.1%
Metres below full supply	48cm
Daily inflow	1500ML
Release	3000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change)	70%

The Yea Chronicle

DEADLINES

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

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

5772 1002 or

reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au

We thank you for your continued support

Australia Day honours

Ross Sullivan

CFA Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Ross Sullivan was recognised in the Australia Day Honours, receiving an Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) for his more than 45 years of dedicated service to CFA and his community.

Throughout his career Ross Sullivan AFSM has exemplified the values of CFA and is well regarded by volunteers and staff alike as an assured, knowledgeable, supportive, empathetic and humble leader.

He has held the role of DCO North East Region since 2018, overseeing 271 brigades and more than 14,000 volunteers within an area stretching from the eastern Melbourne suburb of Scoresby to the northern border of the state.

Ross began his career at Bolinda and Monegeetta brigade in the junior running team before officially joining as a volunteer in 1978 at the age of 16. By his early 20s he knew that firefighting was the career for him.

"Being a volunteer at a small rural fire brigade was about looking after friends and farms around the district," Ross said. "It meant a lot to be part of a service that made such a valued contribution to community. After I finished high school, the lure of working with machinery and equipment and the skills I learned operating vehicles led me to seek a career in the fire services."

"I never thought I would have been able to be a career firefighter with CFA and jumped at the opportunity when the course opened up."

Over the years Ross worked his way through the CFA ranks from a frontline firefighter to his current role as DCO of North East Region.

Ross has been on the frontline and led through many emergencies and large-scale fires and floods including the 2009 fires, the

2014 Hazelwood Mine fire, the 2019-20 fires and the October 2022 floods.

During the 2009 fires, Ross was deployed to Churchill where he was part of the team that led and managed the response in the chaotic first hours of the fire when impacts on life, communities and first responders were not known. After the fires, he supported volunteers and staff in the ongoing response to the fires and subsequent recovery.

His emergency management experience and leadership also extend to post-incident recovery and rehabilitation. During the 2019-20 fires Ross established a process for the rehabilitation and repair of areas damaged by firefighting activity. This received widespread positive community feedback and it is now used as the CFA standard. Ross also provided in-field and on-ground support to the relief and recovery effort after the 2019-20 Upper Murray fires and the 2022 floods.

Damien O'Toole

EILDON resident Damien O'Toole was the recipient of an Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM).

The awards announcement outlined how during his career of over 34 years, Damien O'Toole has demonstrated professionalism, leadership, tenacity, and passion for specialist knowledge and skills within fire and emergency services. He has been involved in executing his leadership, specialist knowledge, and skills throughout Melbourne and Victoria at complex fire, rescue, and emergency incidents including the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Mr O'Toole has recently concluded 10 years as a full-time fire investigator in the State Fire Investigation Unit (SFIU) at Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and has maintained his training to respond to emergencies. This longevity has been achieved by only a few dedicated fire investigators within the ranks

of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and FRV. Mr O'Toole's prolonged tenure in the SFIU represents a distinguished career as a professional firefighter encompassing many specialist roles which are inherently hazardous in their nature and execution.

During Mr O'Toole's service in SFIU he has worked tirelessly to provide accurate fire cause and origin determination in the pursuit of enhancing fire safety outcomes for the community. He has provided training and mentoring to many of FRV's current cohort of fire investigators and training to Victoria Police Detective Training School in fire investigation.

Mr O'Toole has endured not only hazardous environmental and emotionally distressing conditions during his many fire investigations but has also been subpoenaed to and represented the former MFB and FRV in several court arenas including the Coroners and County courts providing vital evidence from his investigations and in most cases years post-investigation.

Leon Costermans

LEON Costermans was awarded an OAM, and is known in the Alexandra area for his work as a math teacher at Alexandra Secondary College during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as for his publications on native flora, including around the north east part of Victoria.

He received the award for "service to conservation and the environment."

Leon is a botanist, geologist and author, and is a former Senior Lecturer in Science Education and the Outdoor Education Program at Monash University, and Senior Lecturer in Science at the State College of Victoria.

He is a founder and coordinator of the Friends of Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve, active in the organisation since 1988.

Council facing challenging financial times

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has said that they acknowledge the Victorian Government's recent announcement of the rate cap of 2.75 percent for 2024/25, a decrease from the last year's rate cap of 3.5 percent, under the Fair Go Rates system.

A spokesperson from council said, "The announcement of the rate cap is an important step in the process of developing council's Annual Budget for 2024/25, which will be released for community feedback in early April, with feedback considered by council in May. The Annual Budget outlines the funding required to deliver services and maintain community infrastructure."

"As a small rural council, funding sources are limited to rates revenue and government grants to fund operations and works, and like many councils in Victoria, Murrindindi is facing significant financial pressures."

"While council supports the government's efforts to ease cost of living pressures on households through the rate cap, Murrindindi will face considerable challenges in maintaining service standards and ensuring long-term financial sustainability."

"Recent cost increases, which have exceeded the rate cap, coupled with additional expenses stemming from natural disasters such as the floods in October 2022, October 2023, and January 2024, as well as challenges related to skills and labour shortages, have created financial strain."

"This situation is further compounded by the transfer of certain costs from the government to local councils. Consequently, council is facing the demanding task of providing more services each year to an expanding population, while simultaneously dealing with a decrease in real-term revenue."

"Unlike larger or metropolitan councils, Murrindindi has limited avenues to raise additional revenue, such as through car parking fees. We are actively exploring various internal efficiencies and opportunities for automation to reduce the impact of cost increases. In line with this, we are investing in a new information management system, developed in collaboration with three nearby councils. This initiative is aimed at improving our operational efficiency and service delivery."

"We are fully aware of the cost of living pressures faced by various sections of our community and are committed to managing our resources responsibly to address these challenges."

"We understand that any rate rises will have an impact on our community. In preparing our Annual Budget we will carefully consider the revenue needs of council to continue to provide the services needed by our community, and balance this with the cost pressures being experienced by all."

Great news for Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc.

MURRINDINDI Food and Wine Inc have announced that they have secured funding for a 12 month program of business support.

The Murrindindi Business Resilience Project focuses on collaboration, empowerment, and support for all businesses across Murrindindi Shire.

There will be a variety of online and in person events and activities held over the next 12 months, focusing on recovery, networking, and capacity building.

It has been funded via the Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants Program, which is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

President Rob Mitchell said, "There are three main projects, including an all year round, shire-wide *Buy Local* campaign, Put Murrindindi on your table all year and in

your Christmas stocking in the lead up to Christmas 2024.

"There will be networking, online training, and connection activities. The first networking activity will kick off on February 20, which is a business breakfast in Alexandra, the first in a series of shire wide business activities."

"The Murrindindi Jobs Expo, which will be held in early May. The project will deliver a program of business support and capacity building events and activities to support members and other businesses in Murrindindi Shire to reactivate, recover, and be more resilient. Our businesses are recovering from the impacts of the pandemic, flooding, and the cessation of native timber harvesting. This has a flow on effect on many businesses that are not directly impacted."

"The project will offer a variety of ways to connect, foster learning, and encourage collaboration. The proposed activities will encourage business skill development, networking, and resource sharing and encourage collaboration between businesses, groups, and organisations."

Rob said, "Connections are vital to building capacity and resilience by sharing ideas, connections, and understanding of the resources and opportunities available. Many times, businesses are working in isolation just to stay ahead, and collaboration will bring a sense of I am not in this alone, offer up new opportunities, and build those vital business connections. One thing our group does well and that is working collaboratively with other like minded groups and organisations."

Visit murrindindifoodandwine.org.au for more information.

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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*.

If you have been impacted by recent flooding and have waste to dispose of, including household and green waste, contact council's waste team on 5772 0333 or email customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

If you are paying your council rates in full, payment is due February 15. The third instalment is due February 29, 2024.

Nominations for council's 2024 Community

Awards are now open. Volunteer of the Year, Senior Volunteer of the Year, Young Volunteer of the Year and Community Group or Initiative of the Year. Nominations close Sunday, March 24. Visit theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/2024Awards

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

The Alexandra Football Netball ladies committee will hold their AGM at the club room at 6pm. Everyone is welcome. For any information contact Kath on 0438 520 382.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Alexandra Pastoral and Ag Association AGM will be held at 7pm at the showgrounds/caravan park office. All welcome, new

members encouraged. For more details contact the secretary pna.alexandra@gmail.com

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

The next meeting of the Alexandra RSL will be held at noon. This meeting is an Annual General Meeting, followed by the normal monthly meeting with light lunch.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Long Lazy Summer lunch at Holmesglen at Eildon. Noon - 4pm. Three course lunch featuring local produce, free flowing bubbles from Snobs Creek Estate. Spectacular views. Accommodation available. Bookings essential 5774 2631.

The wonderful St Luke's Community Op Shop awarded

by Julie Lynch

At the 2024 Australia Day Breakfast hosted by the Rotary Club of Yea, the St Luke's Community Op Shop was recognised and celebrated for making a difference to the lives of Yea residents and the local community.

Representing the op shop, Jenny Kindred and Jo Upton, accepted the Rotary Club of Yea Community Service Award.

The op shop will also receive a donation of \$1000 from Yea Rotary to assist them to continue to support those in need.

Altogether, there are 40 volunteers from right across the Yea Community who volunteer one or more shifts each month to staff the counter at the op shop.

The bulk of the sorting work is done by three co-coordinators and their back-room helpers who give up to two days a week to keep up a high standard of goods in the shop. In addition, there are volunteers who manage the display windows which creates a lot of interest especially from passing customers.

Goods are donated by the local community but there are also regular Melbourne clients who bring donations. All goods donated are recycled somewhere. Skips are forwarded to other op shops who pay for the donation of goods unable to be sold.

Over the past year, the St Luke's Community Op Shop made donations to Christmas hampers, Christmas lights for the town tree, food and fuel vouchers (there has been more than three times the demand for these this year), Limestone Fire Brigade, assistance for Rural Refugees, Sacred Heart Church, Scots Church, Shoebox Australia, Yea Men's Shed who are very generous with time and assistance, Yea Community House with both monthly financial support and goods in kind, Yea Pre School, and Yea Primary School.



Tony Jacobs, Jo Upton and Jenny Kindred. -S

In addition, the op shop has purchased a mobility scooter which is lent out free of charge (Three people have already benefitted from this). Wheelchairs, walkers and walking sticks are also provided free to people in the community.

In the past year all schools, fire brigades, emergency services, police, and the Yea Hospital have all been contacted so as many people as possible have an avenue through which to contact the op shop with names of people in need, so if possible, the op shop can meet those needs free of charge.

The op shop enables the volunteers (predominantly women) to fill a very definite need in the Yea Community. Sometimes the op shop meets the needs of any volunteers who may be experiencing a crisis in their own lives. Volunteering often helps in promoting wellbeing.

After accepting the award, Jenny Kindred spoke of the wonderful op shop volunteers and the ever increasing need for the op shop's services in the Yea community.

Jenny thanked Yea Rotary for recognising the op shop with its Community Service Award and its accompanying donation.

COMMUNITY DIARY

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands
UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale / Hazeldene
UGFM 94.5 Kinglake Ranges

WEEKLY

Thu Town Club, RSL Hall, 6-8pm. Ph 5797 2179
Sun AA Anglican Church, Alexandra 7pm PH 0402 428 086
Sun Alanon Recovery, start 5.30pm. Ph Sheila 0402 428 086

MONTHLY

1st Mon St Luke's Seniors, St Lukes Hall, Ph Jenny 0407 972 099
1st Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
2nd Sat Alex Repair Café 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
2nd Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
2nd Thu Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
4th Wed Molesworth Patchwork & Craft, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Thu Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0400 424 888
Last Fri Yea-Kinglake RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353



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.

Church Services

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

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

Sunday Service time 11am
Father Mario Hendricks
Ph: 0435 953 777

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew
0459 402 547

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

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

Fr Martin Ashe, Parish Priest
Ph 9717 6482
St Mary's Kinglake: Sunday 8.30am

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

Station Street Yea
Sunday Service 11.15am
Colin Whiteway
Ph 0457 340 525

UNITING CHURCH

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

Homewood Progressive Dinner is back

THE biennial Homewood Progressive Dinner returns for fun filled evening on Saturday, March 23. The evening event has been enjoyed by the Yea community for over 50 years, and Homewood is keen for everyone to return. The progressive dinner is the mainstay of the Homewood Community fundraising efforts for both the hall and the CFA.

The event is proudly supported by Homewood locals and still follows a "progressive dinner" format, with entree being served at a home in Homewood, followed by main course and dessert at the hall. Back at the hall after entree, music by Summer Rain, great food from JBL

catering and the traditional homemade desserts are not to be missed. The hall's magnificent setting along Homewood Road all contribute to a truly authentic and family orientated event.

Additionally, this year will include a CFA awards ceremony, recognising the dedicated contribution and effort of many of our longest serving Homewood members.

Some lucky person will win the raffle and go home with a magnificent trailer load of wood just in time for chilly winter nights.

Funds raised from this dinner have enabled the community to purchase Homewood's first captain's vehicle, in addition to vital CFA shed and equipment upgrades, and the ongoing maintenance of our historic hall. The funds raised this year will support the much needed replacement to the kitchen roof of our historic hall.

Purchase your tickets now to avoid disappointment and enjoy a festive night which pays homage to past traditions in beautiful Homewood.

For tickets please visit trybooking.com/COMIL or call Jo on 0458 367 753 or Brett on 0408 399 900.



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Australia Day celebrations in Yea

“WE should all be aware of what we believe are our inadequacies and work to improve not just our society but ourselves as citizens.” That was the message of Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley in his Australia Day to the Yea community address last Friday.

President of Rotary International in 2017/18, Ian Riseley and his wife Juliet were special guests of the Rotary Club of Yea for the 38th Yea Rotary Art Show opening on Thursday evening and at the club’s Australia Day breakfast the following morning.

Riseley is only the fifth Australian to lead the world’s oldest service organisation, of

1.4 million members around the world, in its 118 year history.

After a day and night of rain for the club’s annual Art Show opening, it was a pleasing crowd that gathered in the central plantation in Yea for the Aussie breakfast and the Australia Day formalities. Grace Lanigan led the crowd in the national anthem and later entertained the crowd with two songs which stopped the pedestrian crowd along the pavement.

Yea Rotary President, Tony Jacobs, announced St Luke’s Community Op Shop as the recipient of the club’s 2024 Community Service Award. More about

the op shop can be found on page 4 of this edition.

In his address, Past Rotary President Ian Riseley posed the question, “what is achieved by excessive patriotism?” when he hears political leaders from various nations, including Australia, promote their country as the greatest country on earth. “Australia is a great country,” he said, “but it is not a contest.”

He then identified several firsts and achievements by Australians which have been adopted and manufactured for the betterment of all. And, as a sports ‘nut’, he offered the opinion that no similar sized

country has had such a level of achievement in so many varied areas of competition.

Ian concluded, “This is a great country, very much admired, maybe even envied, around the world and we have a lot in which we can take a genuine shared pride.”

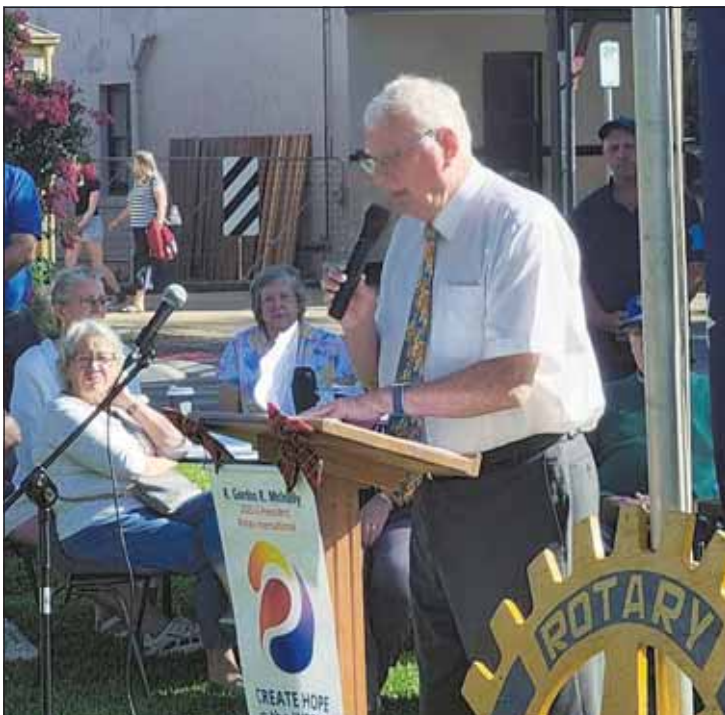
His visit marked the second visit to Yea by a Past Rotary International President in six months. In June 2023, the 2020/21 President, Holger Knaack, visited Yea.



David Anderson from Rotary presenting the event. -MP



A great catch up for Dennis, Jeff, Libby, Rick, Marie, Jan, Neil, Bert and Barb. -MP



Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley address at Australia Day in Yea. -S



Penny and Daryl from Rotary serving up Breakfast. -MP



Emery from Yea Fire Brigade raising the flag. -MP



Tony Jacobs presenting the Community Service Award to St Luke’s Community Op Shop. -MP

Australia Day celebrations in Yea



What a great way to start the day with breakfast in the sun at Yea. -MP



Geoff, Theresa, Stacey, Grace, Ivy and Bernie having a nice family outing. -MP



Tippy, Ken, Juliet, Ian and Sue. -S



Barbecue cooks, Darryl and Sam.

Final call for community participation in Innovation Workshops

WORKSHOPS are being held in Murrindindi Shire throughout February for community members to discuss several innovation opportunities for the region and local industries.

The workshops are being delivered as part of the Shaping Murrindindi's Future Project, which is focused on assisting communities who are directly affected by the transition away from native timber harvesting, particularly the areas of Marysville, Taggerty, Buxton and Alexandra, to identify and develop opportunities for economic diversification.

Since the project first launched in May 2023, Project Manager Allisha Milestone has facilitated events and conducted many one on one interviews with the local community about the local impact of the cessation of native timber harvesting, and to identify strengths and competitive advantages in the region that could support new jobs and an economic sustainable future. Following these discussions and meetings, a Regional Context Analysis has been developed to solidify innovation opportunities that can be worked on further. To read the Regional Context Analysis, visit shapingmurrindindifuture.com.au

Project Manager for Shaping Murrindindi's Future, Allisha Milestone, said, "The community interviews and desktop analysis data collected during stage one of the project have identified six innovation opportunities for the region, which have been recommended for further investigation.

"These opportunities will be reviewed in the upcoming workshops held in February, where we will look closer at the ideas and assess their viability. The ideas recommended for further investigation will then progress to the next stage of the project, which involves establishing working groups to further test the ideas and develop the project scope."

Community members are invited to participate in one or more of the upcoming full day workshops, where each day will focus on the following innovation areas, identified in the Regional Context Analysis. These areas include, Advanced Manufacturing Farm Forestry Renewable Energy and Circular Economy Health, Aged Care and Social Assistance Tourism Sustainable Agriculture, Aquaculture and Horticulture.

To learn more, or to register for the above workshops please contact Allisha Milestone on 0458 758 379 or by emailing amilestone@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

This project is made possible through funding from the State Government's Victorian Forestry Plan and is supported by Murrindindi Shire Council, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and RMIT University.



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ON THE LAND

Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture

Elders 37th Annual Blue Ribbon Weaner Sale

THE Elders Yea 37th Annual Blue Ribbon Weaner Sale, held on January 19 yarded 3912 cattle. It was a magnificent yarding of weaners, an absolute credit to the breeders who annually supply cattle in this sale.

Continued rain has increased re-stocker interest and this was seen in the sale driving the dearer trend across all weights and categories.

The sale saw strength from local purchasers, bullock fatteners in Gippsland, backgrounders in northern NSW and southern Queensland, and feedlots including Australian Food and Agriculture.

The top priced steers were A/C The Lily Pastoral, 407.5kg and made \$1580.

The top priced heifers were A/C SJ & GK Clifton, 349.8kg and made \$1590.

Yea's next Combined Agents Store Sale will be held on Friday, February 2.



The crowd at the Elders sale. -S




Local ladies Sue Spagnolo and Miranda Gill. -S



Peter Rollason (Elders Pakenham branch manager) and Bruce Elliott (Elders Yea Livestock branch manager). -S



Helen Hauser in front of their best presented pen of Charolais steers. -S



Recipe kindly submitted by the Yarck Branch of the CWA

LICORICE ALL SORTS SLICE

INGREDIENTS
 Melted butter, to grease
 125g butter, chopped
 160ml (2/3 cup) sweetened condensed milk
 1 tbsp golden syrup
 1 x 250g pkt plain sweet biscuits (such as Marie), crushed
 45g (1/2 cup) desiccated coconut
 1 x 375g pkt Licorice Allsorts, coarsely chopped
 200g dark cooking chocolate, chopped
 30g copha

METHOD
 Brush a 19 x 29cm lamington pan with melted butter to lightly grease. Line the base and sides with non-stick baking paper, allowing it to overhang slightly.
 Combine the butter, condensed milk and golden syrup in a medium saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until butter melts and mixture is smooth.
 Transfer to a large heatproof bowl. Add the biscuits, coconut and Licorice Allsorts and stir until just combined.
 Press the mixture into the base of the prepared pan and set aside for 30 minutes to set.
 Place the chocolate and copha in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan half-filled with simmering water (make sure the bowl doesn't touch the water). Use a metal spoon to stir over low heat until chocolate melts and mixture is smooth.
 Pour the chocolate mixture over the slice in the pan. Place in the fridge for 1 hour to set. Cut into squares to serve.

Yarck CWA meet on the fourth Monday of each month at the Yarck Hall at 2pm. Contact Margo on 0403 309 502.

SAVE THE DATE

February 2 - Yea Saleyards

Combined Agents – Store Sale
FREE Skin Checks

March 1 - Yea Saleyards

Combined Agents – Store Sale

April 5 - Yea Saleyards

Combined Agents – Store Sale

GET IN TOUCH

Phone 0419 722 570
saleyards@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

CATTLE SALES
 Auction start time 9.30am
Feb 2: Store sale
Mar 1: Store sale
April 5: Store sale



STOCK REPORT 19 JANUARY 2024			
Elders Yea 37th Annual Blue Ribbon Weaner Sale 19 January 2024	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers
Number of head	3,912	2,643	1,269
Average \$ per head	\$1,224		
Average weight per head	323kg		
Top price per head		\$1,580	\$1,590
Top weight		426.1kg	373.6kg
Turnover	\$4.78million		

PHOTO COMPETITION

with twice the prizes...

For the month of January we are running our photo competition with the theme, 'Alexandra Pro Rodeo'. To enter simply send in your name, address, phone number with your photo to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au (files cannot be smaller than 1mb or exceed 10mb and must be of printable quality), or PO Box 5 Alexandra Vic 3714 or you can drop it off at *Alexandra Newspapers* located 43 Grant Street Alexandra. Two winners will receive either a \$50 voucher from *Dindi Country Clothing* or a \$50 voucher from *Embling Rural* in Alexandra. Entries need to be received by January 31, 2024. Photos must be taken by you, taken in the last 12 months, unedited, and taken within the Murrindindi Shire area. No more than three entries per person and professional photographers, employees of *Alexandra Newspapers* and their family, are ineligible from entering.




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Nutrien's Upper Goulburn Rivers Annual Classic Weaner Sale

NUTRIEN Yea Livestock Agents pulled together the first Weaner sale for the year at the Yea Saleyards on Friday, January 5.

A large crowd witnessed quality weaners with a great run of both steers and heifers, averaging approximately 315kg across the yarding of 2764 head.

Representatives from Crime Watch were in attendance to answer questions any queries local producers may have regarding stock and equipment theft in the district.

Representatives from Agriculture Victoria (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action) were also in attendance to answer questions regarding recent flooding events and stock or property management.



Packed to the rails. -S



Best presented pen of heifers, 18 Angus sold by the Fern family in Highlands. -S



Judi and Ian Marshman with their pen of EU Hereford steers. -S



Tyson Bush from Nutrien Ag Solutions welcomes the large crowd and congratulates the vendors on the outstanding line-up of weaners. -S



Local police in attendance on Crime Watch stand, Leading Senior Constable Chris Cummins, Senior Constable Sam McCaffrey and Acting Sargeant Kat Mills. -S

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Keeping our youth busy in the shire

FLOWERDALE Community House has put on another fun filled youth group week over the school holidays. It started off with some water fun at Watermarc, with Flowerdale Op Shop supporting the program.

Day two included the paint up program with thanks to Murrindindi Shire and Yea Community house with 17 kids attending and getting creative with the help from Di Harris from Meander and Ramble Art Studio.

On day three, 18 children attended a Bounce centre where lots of climbing, and jumping resulted in a fun day for all. This program was also supported by the Flowerdale Op Shop.

On day four, paintball was attended by 19 children which included a paintball session, lunch, and a play at the park.

On the final day of the youth program, it was back to Watermarc for 21 children who enjoyed a whole day of waterplay.

The youth program has been very successful with at least 18 to 21 children attending each day, with the age ranges from 10 years old and onwards. The program needed two buses each day. The community house would like to say thank you for the use of the Kinglake West Variety Bus to help get the children to the various activities.

Youth group will continue in the April School holidays with six events to choose from. For more information, call 5780 2664 or email Flowerdale Community House on coordinator@fchadmin.com.au

Another program that started on Tuesday, January 23 was the Skittles Youth Drop In. This program is for young LGBTIQ+ residents to meet new friends and join in some youth-led fun. Last week's session included checking out the local library and

an op shop tour around Yea and Alexandra. It was held thanks to Yea Community House.

The next session will be held at Flowerdale Community House on Saturday, February 10, where people can make their own sushi or chicken rolls.



Emily getting creative at the Paint Up program. -S



The Paint Up Program was a huge success with beautiful artworks made by the participants. -S



The Youth Group enjoyed a paintball session on the program. -S

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 11

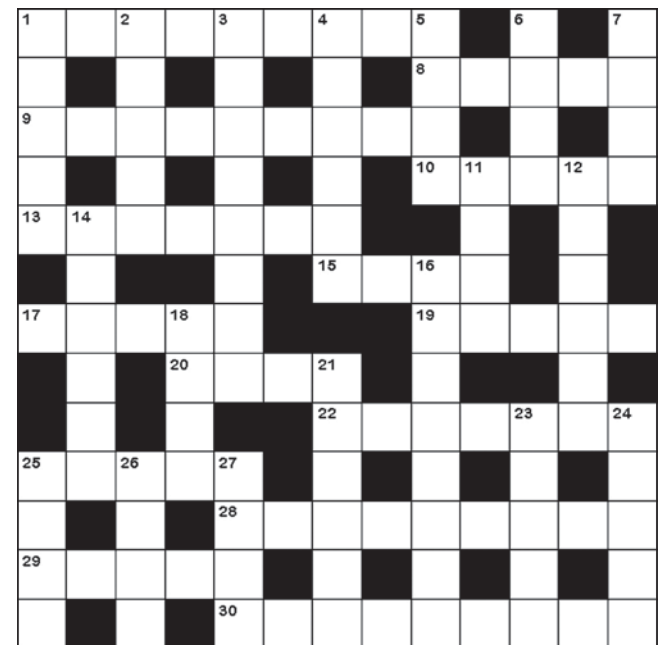
Crossword

ACROSS

- Season of peace and goodwill.
- Striped gemstone.
- Wildly excited with joy.
- A light yellowish-brown colour.
- Any woven cloth.
- Divided in two.
- Make up for.
- A thick sweet sticky liquid.
- The first man.
- Arrangement in a straight line.
- Surrenders possession of.
- Cuts off a limb.
- In the company of.
- Takes too many doses.

DOWN

- A military trainee.
- Become less tense.
- Twisted to cause swelling.
- Tied up a boat.
- Ribbon worn around the waist.
- Big band dance music.
- Meat from a calf.
- A friendly nation.
- Dig up a dead body.
- The whole lot.
- Gave help to.
- The central area of a church.



- Common black-and-white bird.
- Water soaked soil.
- Scribbled messages.
- An unpleasant fate.
- Schoolroom furniture.
- An old fashioned pudding.

Word Search

Puzzles Day January 29

- ANAGRAM
- CHES
- CROSSWORD
- CRYPTOGRAM
- JIGSAW
- KAKURO
- MAZE
- RIDDLES
- RUBIKSCUBE
- SCRABBLE
- SOLITAIRE
- SUDOKU

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

Double Puzzle

CEBALEETR

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RTDIGUATE

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PPEARICTEA

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12

TDETAIEM

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7

RXEESPS

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13

NDAOTE

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5

RPOTPUS

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6

F □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
8 9 10 11 12 13

F □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
8 9 10 11 12 13

Maths Squares

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.

□	+	□	÷	□	9
×	□	-	□	-	□
1	-	□	+	□	4
+	□	×	□	-	□
3	-	□	×	□	-25
8	□	-34	□	-11	□

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.

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

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

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MATHS SQUARES

5	+	8	÷	2	9
x		-		-	
1	-	6	+	9	4
+		x		-	
3	-	7	x	4	-25
8		-34		-11	

SUDOKU

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



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25/11/1938 -
22/01/2024
Loved and loving husband of Val for 64 years. Loved father of Karyn, Glenn and Rhonda (dec). Devoted pop to Luke (Mickey) and Louise (Minnie). Friend to Liam. Always there for us all. No more pain. Safe in the arms of Rhonda. Loved son of Alice and Keith (both dec). Brother to Ken (dec), Pat, Barry (dec), Faye (dec) and Dennis. We will always love and miss you pop. Sleep tight.
Private Cremation.

KISLER,
Stanley Peter.
3774660.
The President, Committee and Members of Yea-Kinglake RSL regret the passing of our respected member Stan on January 17, 2024. Condolences to the family.
Lest We Forget.

GARAGE SALES

YEA, First house, Racecourse Road. Neighbourly super clearance sale.
Saturday, February 3, 8am onwards. Cash only. Items include household, garden, camping, preserving jars, new bicycle helmets and carriers, furniture, brewing, tools, golfing, Australiana, irrigation. Come and join the treasure hunt.

IN MEMORIAM

SAVAGE, Laurie,
02/07/1948 –
03/02/1994.
Dad, little did we know that day God was going to call your name. In life we loved you dearly. In death we do the same. It broke our hearts to lose you but you didn't go alone. For part of us went with you the day God called you home. We're left with beautiful memories. Your love is still our guide, and though we cannot see you You are always at our side. Our family chain is broken and nothing seems the same, but as God calls us one by one the chain will link again. It's been 30 years and our hearts are still broken. Love and miss you. Laurinda and Lana xoxo

MEETINGS

The Alexandra Football Netball Club Ladies Committee AGM will be held at the Club rooms at 6pm on Tuesday, February 6, 2024. Everyone welcome. Any queries please contact Kath Hedger on 0438 520 382.

ALEXANDRA PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION. AGM.
Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 7pm at the Showgrounds/Caravan Park office, 17 William Street. All welcome and new members are encouraged. Enquiries to the secretary at pna.alexandra@gmail.com

Slow down, school is back

WITH school starting this week, it's a great reminder to slow down. New research has revealed a third of Australians have owned up to speeding through school zones, with some even excusing the reckless behaviour because they couldn't see any children at the time.

AAMI and Australian Road Safety Foundation (ARSF) say the statistics are shocking and are urging Australian drivers to slow down and pay attention to signage and lowered speed limits.

According to research, a third of drivers admit to speeding through a school zone because they didn't notice the signs.

A third (29 per cent) of Australian drivers have also admitted to being confused about school zones, including speed limits, times and signs and one in 10 have sped through a school zone because there were no children in sight.

Even though school speed signage is at all schools, 13 per cent say they don't even know what time school zone rules apply.

A further one in 20 drivers have been involved in a car accident or near miss around a school zone.

The research also reveals that 72 per cent of Australian drivers admit to exceeding the speed limit in general. And two thirds of Australian drivers say they admitted to speeding because they didn't notice the signs.

The excuses in the study as to why drivers speed in general include, 65 per cent of people don't notice the signs indicating a change in speed limit.

When asked why they adhered to the speed limit, almost half (48 per cent) of drivers fear getting caught by police and don't want to pay a fine or accrue demerit points and lose their license. Concerningly, only one in five fear injuring others on the road, which shows people are more concerned about paying a fine rather than putting others' lives at risk.

A pedestrian crossing the road has an 87 per cent chance of survival when hit by a vehicle travelling at 40km/h or less. This drops dramatically when the speed is higher.

School aged children, particularly those starting prep or under 10 years of age have limited road safety experience and can behave unpredictably. The onus is on us as adults to protect their lives and ensure they can get to and from school safely every day.

AAMI has analysed more than 350,000 motor insurance claims across the country in the past financial year and found Fridays were the worst day of the week for crashes, while afternoons between 1pm and 4.30pm during school pickup proved the most dangerous time.

Statistics released from the Australian Road Safety Foundation showed that in 2023, there were 1266 people killed on Australian roads (up 7.3 per cent from 2022).

Of those fatalities, nine per cent were children under the age of 18 years. 16 pedestrian children were killed on Australian roads last year.

School zones are in place to protect lives and prevent fatalities but are only effective when adhered to.

When it comes to Back to School Road Safety it always pays to expect the unexpected. Children have limited road safety awareness and experience and can behave unpredictably.

Always look out for children disembarking from buses or cars and if you're dropping off or picking up your children, follow your school's safety directives, and of course, avoid driving distracted and follow all road rules and signage.

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A trucking emergency for firefighters

THERE'S a big difference between roadworthy and safe when it comes to the vehicles used for fighting fires. Older vehicles don't have, for example, ABS brakes, hill start assist or air bags, and in some cases in the shire, firefighters are expected to sit on the back of trucks, in the open air, while travelling to fight fires.

We have all heard stories of fire trucks being overcome by flames in recent Australian fires. On Black Saturday, for example, 25 CFA tankers were caught in burn-overs. No-one was injured in the twin cab vehicles but four were injured on the 17 older style single cab trucks relying on a sprinkler system for safety. It is unreasonable to expect our volunteer firefighters to have such limited protection when travelling on the back of trucks to protect the community.

It is estimated that between 13 and 16 fire trucks in Murrindindi Shire are aged over 25. CFA trucks are meant to be replaced when they reach the age of 25.

There is also a trend within the CFA towards 'cascading'. An ageing vehicle, of, say, 30 years of age, might be replaced with a 20 year old truck from another station. The 30 year old truck might then go to another local station.

In 2006, the CFA had a 20 year replacement policy on vehicles. By 2014, 24 per cent of vehicles were over 20 years of age. This has now been eroded. In 2017, the oldest vehicles were 30 years of age. There are now 193 vehicles in the state which are older than 30.

There was also a feeling among volunteers that the CFA treats stations in smaller areas more poorly than those in larger towns.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) state councillor Paul Denham said, "The CFA fleet is too old, despite what the Chief Fire Officer might say. We shouldn't be driving vehicles without ABS, airbags, and with crews on the back of vehicles, especially given the state of the roads. We should be past that."

Fire Services Implementation Monitor

The Fire Services Implementation Monitor (FSIM) annual report for 2021/22, stated, "As outlined by the independent financial sustainability reviews, CFA's Asset Management Strategy and Fire Rescue Victoria's (FRV) Capital Planning, FSIM notes that the majority of CFA's and FRV's delivery assets are aged beyond useful life (specifically, stations, appliances and equipment). CFA and FRV have informed FSIM that the aged assets could pose significant risks to CFA's and FRV's future service delivery."

CFA annual report

In the CFA 2022/23 annual report, it states, "The delivery of 50 new crew cab tankers is well underway with 17 completed by June 2023. These vehicles are replacing single cab tankers which will eliminate the need for crew to be on the back while travelling to and from an incident. The remaining tankers should be completed by May 2024."

CFA response to questioning

The CFA was asked to confirm that all CFA tankers will be twin-cab by May 2024, as suggested above, or will some brigades still require crews to travel on the back of the tanker.

A CFA spokesperson responded, "In the last few years CFA has

prioritised the replacement of its single cab medium and heavy tankers because they are the oldest trucks in our fleet.

"There are still a number of single cab tankers in use and they will be replaced as funding becomes available and they come to the end of their life span.

"CFA no longer designs and builds appliances that have volunteers traveling to or from fires on the back of the tanker and in the last 16 years CFA has not procured any single-cab Medium or Heavy tankers. All new tankers acquired have seating capacity for a crew within the cabin."

It was added that from 2006 all new tankers have been manufactured with crew protection systems for protection during a burn-over situation. CFA has retrofitted all pre-2006 tankers with crew protection systems equal to the same performance standards as new tankers, designed to suit each vehicle. All new firefighters are trained in how to use the crew protection systems before they qualify to turn out to incidents and all firefighters responding are required to undertake retraining in utilising the crew protection systems annually.

Minister for Emergency Services

When asked about what had changed in the past three months since the CFA Annual Report was tabled, a Victorian Government spokesperson said, "Our CFA volunteers put their lives on the line every day to protect Victorians and we are incredibly grateful for the work they do.

"We have delivered record funding for the CFA since we came to government, including more than \$46 million recently for new tankers, trucks, equipment and station upgrades. This includes almost \$13 million in 29 brand new ultra-heavy tankers, which can carry 10,000 litres of water into rural areas, more than some water bombing aircraft.

"With more than 3,000 CFA vehicles and tens of thousands of volunteers ready to tackle this season, Victorians can be assured they'll be well protected no matter where they are."

The government said they provided \$126 million over five years to CFA to deliver volunteer leadership and capability, additional training, and new infrastructure. As part of this year's Victorian Emergency Service Equipment Program, CFA received more than \$10.8 million to support the purchase of modern operational equipment, vehicles and appliances and minor facility improvements to ensure Victoria's volunteer fire service is well-equipped to carry out its critical work.

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Richard Riordan said, "Unfortunately the Labor government has run out of money and there is simply not enough money to fund the required amount of new tankers, thus we have a fleet of increasingly old vehicles in excess of 20 and 30 years. Brigades across Victoria are expected to fight fires in vehicles over 30 years old. It is just not good enough.

"What I want is to ensure brigades have a believable and appropriate replacement plan that brings down the average age of tankers and provides the best

possible outcomes for firefighters and communities.

"We know that many of the 1941 tankers in Victoria are over 20 years old and despite repeated questions in Parliament to the Allen Labor Government I have, to date, been unable to get a complete breakdown of the age of all the vehicles in the CFA Fleet. Sometimes they give an 'average' age of the fleet but this also includes nearly 800 light vehicles which can skew the figures.

"I have two chief concerns: One is that CFA vehicles are the safest they can practicably be for our firefighters. The other is that they perform to the best standards possible to protect our community. This clearly isn't going to happen with 20 and 30 year old tankers."

VFBV

Adam Barnett, CEO of (VFBV) added, "Under-funding is handicapping Victoria's volunteer firefighters, with volunteers expected to use Australia's oldest fleet of front line fire trucks... Hundreds of these old trucks are without ABS, electronic stability control, emission controls, three point seatbelts, modern steering and suspension, ergonomic improvements and modern pumps and foam systems.

"On many of these trucks, half the crew of volunteer firefighters are expected to travel on fibreglass benches on the outside of the truck unprotected from toxic fumes and smoke. Volunteers are expected to use old trucks that paid firefighters refuse to use, simply because there are no other trucks available.

He also pointed out the increased maintenance requirements and reliability issues for older fire trucks and said, "Volunteers are putting their lives on the line to serve Victorian communities, they deserve to be equipped with safe and modern equipment. They should not have to beg, borrow and fundraise for the very equipment they need to keep Victorians safe.

"Successive Governments have sat back and watched CFA's emergency service fleet get older and older with no plan in sight. Every day the fleet gets older and there is no plan in place to arrest the decline.

"In 2014 VFBV called on all parties to guarantee a minimum investment of \$29 million a year to ensure the CFA fleet age did not get any older. Those calls have been ignored.

"For those that brush the ageing age of the fleet aside and state that these trucks are well maintained, consider that these are emergency service vehicles sent to the most extreme fire conditions in the country. Firefighters need these vehicles to operate reliably every single time. Would you want to trust a thirty year old truck with your life?

"VFBV calls out the hypocrisy of a policy that replaces public service government owned vehicles every three years on the basis of reliability and meeting emission and safety targets. Why do Victoria's volunteer firefighters deserve any different? We don't expect new trucks every three years, but we do expect a properly funded replacement program that progressively replaces aging fire trucks and gets these old trucks out of our service."

He added, "VFBV restates its call for CFA to be provided adequate base funding that will support volunteer firefighters with adequate capital funding for proper asset replacement and renewal."

Council road repairs following recent flood events

MURRINDINDI Shire Council have announced the start of road repairs following the October 2022 floods. They were asked whether there is a schedule or plan for the October 2023 and January 2024 flood road damage, or whether the council road damage following these flood events was limited.

A council spokesperson responded, "Works are underway to repair roads across Murrindindi Shire which were damaged during the October 2022 floods.

"Long-term repairs to flood-impacted roads were recently approved by state and federal governments, who are responsible for providing funds to councils, to assist with the costs associated with infrastructure repairs and reinstatement following declared disasters.

"Council experienced large-scale damage to its roads and infrastructure from the October 2022 floods, and it wouldn't be possible to fund these repairs from the existing budget, without support from state and federal governments.

"For the full list of roads being repaired under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/floodrepairs

"Further flooding in October 2023 did not see as much damage to council roads or infrastructure compared to the 2022 floods. The local farming communities were most impacted by flooding that inundated their pastures and crops, which many had only recently re-sown or re-seeded following the October 2022 floods.

"The January 2024 floods caused extensive damage to roads, bridges and culverts in the western areas of our shire, particularly in Yea, Strath Creek, Limestone, Murrindindi, Glenburn, Flowerdale and surrounds. Some of council's assets were damaged again after recently being repaired from the 2022 flood event and council is working with the Department of Transport and Planning to rectify these locations

as a priority, while still progressing the repair works related to 2022.

"Council is currently inspecting and assessing the damage to its road network, with support from neighbouring councils. It is expected this work will be completed in the next two to three weeks.

"When we have a more accurate understanding of the impacts, we will apply for further funding support via the DRFA to help our communities recover from this event and to support long term repairs to Council's roads and infrastructure damaged by the floods. Once funding is approved and received, repair works will be scheduled.

"Council's Operations staff have been primarily focused on emergency works, including clearing debris and temporary urgent repair works to our roads, however we continue to attend to community requests, and we are prioritising unsealed road maintenance such as grading and drainage repairs.

"In addition to responding to works requests, council is delivering its Sealed Roads Major Patching Program and Gravel Roads Resheeting Program, with works underway. We will also commence our Sealed Roads Resealing Program this summer."

For the latest information on council's annual road maintenance programs, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/projects

They added, "We thank the community for their understanding and for their patience, while we navigate our way through the aftermath of these flood events. Please allow us some additional time if your request has not yet been attended to. We are getting through the backlog of work and all requests are being scheduled for completion. If you'd like an update on timeframes for your request, we encourage you to give us a call in the first instance on 5772 0333 and ask to speak to someone in our Operations team."

Great numbers for Macquarie Perch to enhance recovery

IT'S all looking up for endangered Maquarie perch with nearly 80,000 fingerlings stocked into Victorian waters to re-establish wild populations across the state.

The Minister for Outdoor Recreation Steve Dimopoulos announced more than 78,000 Macquarie perch produced at the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) Snobs Creek hatchery near Eildon have been stocked into nine rivers and lakes to fast track the recovery of the once prominent native fish.

The production and release of the 'Macca' fingerlings has been supported by the Victorian Government's \$96 million Go Fishing and Boating Victoria plan and recreational fishing licence fees, and boosted by the VFA's record breaking fish stocking program which has its sights set on stocking 10 million fish for the second time in three years.

Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes said, "Rivers across the north east are already showing positive signs from recent years of stocking, the future looks bright for the Macquarie perch."

More than 20,000 Macquarie perch fingerlings have been stocked in the King River while the Goulburn River has been boosted with 13,100 fish.

Cudgewa Creek received 12,800 fingerlings, the Ovens and Buffalo rivers have each been stocked with 10,000 fish and Broken River welcomed 5000 fish. Dartmouth Dam was topped up with 3000, while Seven Creeks gained 2800, and 2000 went into Hughes Creek.

This year of production is the first to benefit from a three year, multi million dollar research project led by the federal and state governments to crack the code on breeding Macquarie perch.

With collaboration across community and educational organisations, catchment management authorities, research partners and recreational fishers, the project ensures we learn more about the best nutrition, hormones and breeding conditions for Macquarie perch to thrive in the hatchery environment.

The recovery of Macquarie perch is also supported by significant upgrades at the VFA's Snobs Creek and Arcadia fish hatcheries, with \$15 million invested in world class infrastructure. Snobs Creek now features a new captive breeding centre with leading aquaculture technology.

The VFA is also protecting wild populations of Macquarie perch with new rules for recreational fishers across Victoria. For more information visit vfa.vic.gov.au/recoveringmaccas

Bagpipes and tartan at the Yea Rotary Art Show



Attendees at the Yea Rotary Art Show, with the officials on the stage. -AR



The most popular painting in the show. -S



Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish with Paul Hildebrand. -AR



Juliet Risely. -AR



Mary Hyde was the winner of Best in Show with her piece, Moorings. -S



Glenda, Darryl and Julie. -S



Tony and Sonja. -S



Raffle winner Kyla Dowling. -S



Ian and Juliet Risley with Ando. -S



Drew Gregory. -AR



Lindsay Fields. -S

Australia Day at Strath Creek

THE Australia Day celebrations at Strath Creek changed this year, making it a less formal gathering.

There was an address on how *I Am Australian* by *The Seekers* best spells out the meaning of being Australian, and many Australian songs sung by Lindsay Fields from the *John Farnham Band* fame.

This was followed by a lovely brunch of egg and bacon rolls, and muffins.



A general crowd shot. The numbers were well down on other years -S



Diane, Riley, Parker and Brea all dressed up for Australia Day. -S

Health checks at Yea Saleyards



Blood pressure checks. -S



A farmer having a cholesterol check done at the Yea Saleyards. -S



The health check providers from the Yea and District Memorial Hospital. -S



Free health checks were provided to the attendees at the Yea Saleyards on January 19. There will also be free health checks available on Friday, February 2. -S

SPORT

Merton outplayed by Milawa

by Rohan Berriman

MERTON cricketers travelled to face second placed Milawa on Saturday, with the home side securing victory in a competitive match on a slow outfield.

Merton won the toss and batted first making 6/117 with Luke Benton again top scoring with 43, his son James 25 not out and Ross MacKinnon 16 were the top scorers.

Merton's batters have struggled all season finishing off an innings with the side lacking

some power hitters in the latter overs. It was good to see young Jack Lockhart play for Merton, being the third generation to play for the club; like his father Andrew and grandfather Red.

Merton struggled to take wickets early with both openers seeing off the young pace attack. The introduction of spin saw instant success with father and son combination Rohan and Henry Berriman, taking all five top order batsmen. Led by young Henry taking 4/24 off eight overs, saw Milawa a

little nervous at one point, however their experienced lower order batsmen got the job done, passing Merton's total in the 32nd over.

J Papworth and D Radeski, both with 45 the top scorers. Merton will really have their work cut out for them in the coming weeks due to unavailability and injury, If there is anyone, young or old, wanting to play, please come to training Thursday night at the MCG and have a game Saturday from 1.30pm versus Wangaratta Magpies.



-S

The Chronicle Sport



Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Perfect weather for little athletics

by Elissa Page

ON Saturday morning under gorgeous weather conditions Murrindindi's little athletes and their families gathered at the track for an exciting day of sports. The lineup included race walk events, 800m, 200m, and 100m sprints, high jump, and javelin, creating an atmosphere of energetic competition.

The morning kicked off with participants breaking into four groups for a lively warm-up session. Each group navigated through a circuit featuring race walk practice, skipping rope exercises, leg workouts in hoops, and crawling through tunnels. The final activity of the circuit was shot put practice using amusing toys, adding a playful twist to the warm up.

Celebrations echoed throughout the presentations as members acknowledged

recent achievements. A new discus record was set by Levi Campbell, and there were numerous gold and silver medals awarded for outstanding personal best performances this season and some the multievent day placing for earlier in the season.

The barbecue and juice boxes proved to be a hit yet again, offering a delightful refreshment post program. The event also welcomed back more participants from their holidays, visibly reinvigorated and ready for the challenges ahead.

A special mention goes out to those heading to regionals in a fortnight. They are encouraged to attend Thursday night training sessions at the track. The clubs community came together, making the day run smoothly, and a big shout-out is extended to all the parents who not only cheered on the young athletes but also contributed to the seamless execution of the event.



Abi enjoying throwing the javelin. -S



The athletes who received multi event awards or medallions, as well as Levi Campbell with a centre record in the under 13 discus. -S



Sienna giving it her all in the under 11 javelin. -S

Ladies take the lead in gender challenge

by Phil Armstrong, acting captain

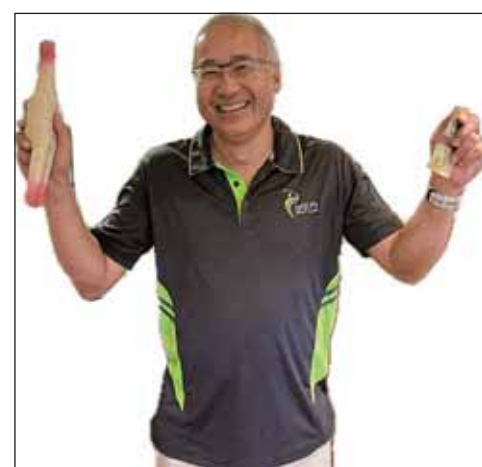
AFTER two weeks without golf due to the Yea races and wet weather, 33 members and guests battled it out in round six of the Summer Gender Challenge for the Yea golfers.

After the recent rain and the work of amazing volunteer grounds crew, the golf course was in excellent condition which were reflected in the scoring.

Anthony Coleman (five) with his first start back from his overseas trip, played excellent golf to record 39 points. Di Holdsworth (30) continued her great recent form with 38 points to be the leading lady. It won't be long before the handicapper takes a sharp knife to her handicap.

Michael Spagnolo (seven) 37 points and the ever improving Rob Gill (42) filled the minor placings for the men.

Sue Aurisch (36) and Cindy Armstrong (34) both recorded 36 points. Sue claiming second in the ladies on countback. Nearest the pin on the 18th went to Martin Lowe for



Martin cleaned up again in Chooklotto. -S

the men and Sue Aurisch for the ladies. Tom White was clear winner in the Club Award.

After round six of the Summer Gender Challenge the points table under the PES scoring system stands with ladies on 220 and men on 205 with two rounds to go.

4BBB brings out big numbers

FORTY members and guests competed in Saturdays Four ball best ball event. Despite the unprecedented January rain the course again presented in great condition and some excellent scores were recorded.



Yea Golf Club members enjoying lunch. -S

Seasoned veteran Bill Dredge teamed up with new member Jono Ness to post an outstanding 48 points taking top honours on the day. Margie and Sam Wright were next best with a credible 46 points. Third place was filled by the ever improving Rob Gill and another recent addition in Craig Blake with 43 points. Nearest the pin on the 18th went to John Phillips for the men and there was no ladies winner.

Club Award for the day went to stalwart Rob O'Halloran. Individual winners in the mens division were Jono Ness (25) with 41 points from Sam Wright (28) with 38 points.

For the ladies, Di Elliott ((28) led the way with 34 points nudging out Margie Wright (24) on 33 points.

It was another great day for the Royal Yea Golf Club with wonderful contributions from the amazing volunteers in the kitchen and behind the bar.

Wednesday golf this week is round seven of the Summer Gender Challenge with a stroke and putting event to be contested. The ladies currently have a slender lead with only two rounds left to play.