

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, February 28, 2024 \$2.00 inc. GST

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murrindindibusiness.com.au

What happened to the phone towers?

DURING and following the storms which occurred on February 13, people in many parts of the shire lost connection to phones and internet, in addition to or following the loss of electricity.

In many townships, Triple Zero was unavailable through the SOS service on mobile phones for close to 24 hours, as all of the phone towers were offline.

Telstra

Telstra Regional General Manager Steve Tinker said, "The severe storms in Victoria knocked out power in a number of areas, which affected some of our services.

"Our network sites need power to run. We have power backup built into almost all our network sites and they kept services running in many places long after the storms swept through. They however can't last for extended power outages.

"Our hardworking teams on the ground worked around the clock to restore services,

and all our mobile sites in the state were back online by Sunday, delivering coverage to our customers.

"We know how important it is to stay in touch during times like this and we worked to get everything back to normal as quickly as possible."

In July, 2023, Telstra announced that they're working with Starlink to deliver LEO satellite connectivity to provide voice and fixed broadband services in remote and hard to reach places.

They also recently announced that during 2024, they will be working towards a trial of direct to handset (DTH) satellite service for basic connectivity (initially text only) when they are outside of our terrestrial mobile network coverage.

DTH lays the pathway for outdoor connectivity for basic mobile services, starting with text messages before eventually voice and low-rates of data, may

be possible from some of Australia's most remote locations.

For the most part consumers won't need to buy a specific compatible phone to send an SMS over DTH, as it will take advantage of technology already inside modern smartphones.

People with an Apple iPhone 14 or newer may have already experienced an emerging version of DTH connectivity with its Emergency SOS mode, which allows people to send text messages to an emergency responder through LEO satellites to request help.

There remain limitations to the technology to be aware of as it continues to be developed.

This technology will initially support text, and in the longer term, voice and low speed data to smartphones across Australia, albeit outdoors, and with a clear skyline.

Support for good quality voice and low speed data will require a next generation handset which supports the 3GPP NTN standard.

When contacted about the local phone and internet issues, the Australia Communications and Media Authority provided the following response:

"There are no regulatory obligations relating to the use of batteries and generators. Mobile network operators such as Telstra and Optus have no requirement to notify the ACMA regarding the installation of this equipment.

"However, the ACMA is aware that network operators undertake activities to improve network resilience, and this may include the use of batteries and generators. The network operators are best placed to provide information on the steps taken to manage a network outage and to improve network resilience.

"The Australian Government has taken active steps to increase the resilience of Australia's telecommunications networks, to help prevent, mitigate and manage outages during emergencies. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' website provides resources regarding the range of measures being undertaken to improve the resilience of communications networks. Visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/phone/improving-resilience-australias-telco-networks.

Importantly, it should be noted that mobile network operators such as Telstra and Optus have a range of regulatory obligations in relation to network outages and the handling of emergency calls.

Under the Telecommunications (Emergency Call Service) Determination 2019 (the Determination), network operators are required to notify the emergency call

person (Telstra) as soon as practicable after becoming aware of a significant network outage.

Under an associated registered Code, telcos are encouraged to make information available to the community on the status of their networks in instances where their networks have been seriously disrupted and there is a direct impact on the emergency call service.

Optus

OPTUS were also contacted about their phone tower outages. An Optus spokesperson said, "Due to a severe storm causing power outages across Melbourne and parts of Victoria, some customers in the Murrindindi Shire experienced service disruptions.

"Optus collaborated closely with local disaster management groups and strategically positioned generators and a SatCat across the state to bolster key mobile sites' operational activity.

"A number of our sites in the Murrindindi Shire area were impacted by the storm, however the mobile site at Kinglake stayed online due to battery back-up until the power was restored.

"Our dedicated field technicians worked in tandem with the electricity utility companies to prioritise the restoration of service.

"Despite the challenges, our field technicians accessed affected sites and restored service as soon as it was safe to do so.

They added, "The majority of our mobile sites have back-up power with batteries or fixed generators which come into action when power is lost to a community. They last several hours, however during a weather event such as in Victoria, the back-up power source can also run out.

"Optus has a suite of measures to both prepare and use in the aftermath of a major weather event. These include field teams trained in restoring power by deploying generators and setting up SatCats. Once power comes back on in one area, we move these resources to where they are needed next.

"Working closely with the government and local power companies is crucial during this period to determine where resources need to go next.

"In the instance of an emergency, customers should still attempt to dial Triple Zero. As is always the case, when there is no power, all networks are impacted and Triple Zero will not work on any network.

"We extend our sincere apologies to affected customers and express gratitude for their patience."

Like Telstra, Optus is also working with SpaceX to enhance connection, particularly in regional areas, using LEO satellites.

Some bright futures for young students

EARLIER in the month, Yea High School recognised their school based apprentices in honour of National Apprenticeship Week.

Jaxson has a school based apprenticeship in Agriculture with Les Hall at Glendaloch. Angus has a school based apprenticeship in Electrical Engineering with Chris Leatham at MILD Electrical. Tyson has a school based apprenticeship in Landscaping WITH Vin Anderson Landscapes. Sam has a school based apprenticeship in Plumbing with Armstrong Plumbing, and Jack has a school based apprenticeship in Carpentry with Chris Dune and Weldunne.



Pictured from left to right, Jaxson, Angus, Tyson, Sam, and Jack. -S



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Letters to the Editor

Cashless society

WHEN the tin rattlers are out on Good Friday, raising vitally needed money for the Children's Hospital, will they have an EFTPOS machine attached to their tins? Just asking.

Val Lethbridge, Alexandra

Excuses

IN last week's *Standard*, a great letter described the highly commendable actions

of our SES volunteers during and after the recent damaging storms. Sadly, in the last paragraph was the oft-repeated fossil fuel-funded media script of 'not our fault' and the cost of replacing fossil fuel energy. They are excuses for climate inaction wrapped in looking-glass culture war rhetoric. Australia is the world's 10th highest per capita CO2 emitter. You say, 'But Australia has such a small population (0.33 per cent of the world's population), our contribution is negligible.' Sadly, as a nation, we are the 19th highest (0.91 per cent) CO2 emitter of the UN's 193 member states.

In 1824 the French physicist Joseph Fourier hypothesised that gases in the atmosphere trapped heat and could be changed both by the earth's natural evolution and human activity. Now 200 years later we are witnessing the opening act of earth's natural forces unleashed due to our burning of fossil fuels. Climate change is not politics or a culture war but the unbending laws of physics. Ignore the physics and humanity will not see the encore.

Data source: ourworldindata.org

Ray Wynn, Devils River



THUMBS UP: To the amazing library staff who allowed us to charge our phones when we had a power outage. Also, we were able to enjoy a cuppa and site and chat in air conditioned comfort.

THUMBS UP: To Paul at the Snobs Creek Bar and Bistro in Eildon for the friendly and attentive customer services.

THUMBS UP: To Cathedral Landcare for the invitation to view the film 'Rachael's Farm', a thought-provoking semi-documentary that explores alternative thinking about farm practices.

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

Ausnet update regarding storms

A LARGE number of residents and businesses in Murrindindi Shire were impacted by power outages during and after the storms of February 13.

The outages coincided with load shedding as a result of damaged transmission lines.

Ausnet were asked whether Murrindindi Shire was impacted by load shedding, or whether all outages were the result of line damage.

A spokesperson from Ausnet advised that no load shedding occurred in Murrindindi Shire during the week of the storms.



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Weekly Weather
February 28 - March 5, 2024

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra			Yea		
DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	18	35	Wednesday	18	36
Thursday	14	29	Thursday	14	30
Friday	14	30	Friday	14	30
Saturday	10	24	Saturday	10	23
Sunday	10	24	Sunday	10	23
Monday	12	27	Monday	11	27
Tuesday	15	27	Tuesday	15	28

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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



RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	1.00pm Mon	1.62	steady	below minor
Acheron R at Taggerty	1.00pm Mon	0.55	steady	below minor
Home Ck at Yarck	10.21am Mon	0.15	steady	
Yea R at Devlins Bridge	8.24am Mon	0.52	steady	below minor
Rubicon R at Rubicon	1.00pm Mon	0.50	steady	
King Parrot Ck at Flowerdale	1.00pm Mon	0.47	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Trawool	1.00pm Mon	1.29	steady	below minor
Sunday Ck at Tallarook	1.00pm Mon	0.31	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Seymour	1.00pm Mon	1.60	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Ck at Seymour	11.02am Mon	1.16	steady	
Goulburn R at Ghin Ghin	1.00pm Mon	3.71	steady	

**ISSUED AT 1.15PM ON MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2024

DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	N/Amm
Buxton	1.5mm
Eildon (AWS)	0.4mm
Flowerdale	0mm
Jamieson	8mm
Kinglake	5mm
Lake Eildon	30mm
Mansfield	5mm
Taggerty	2mm
Yarck	2mm
Yea	2mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	287.87m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	95.9%
Metres below full supply	103cm
Daily inflow	750ML
Release	3000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change)	77%



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

Be dive smart on the water

GOULBURN Murray Water (GMW) staff have noted cases of people diving into the water from dangerous vantage points.

Their Water Smarts campaign highlights the risks and hazards that they regularly see on their water storages.

The most common risky behaviours on GMW'S lakes, dams and reservoirs are speeding, not wearing lifejackets, boating alone, not checking the conditions or water levels before launching boats, drinking too much alcohol, being unaware of hazards like submerged rocks, sandbars, trees, shallow water and debris, and diving from dam walls or ledges.

GMW seek to remind recreational users to ensure their safety and the safety of others in their care. For any information visit g-mwater.com.au

Where are all the tankers?

AS Victoria is in the midst for the potential of dangerous weather including the prospect of bushfires, the state government has failed to deliver on a key pledge to upgrade CFA heavy tankers to assist firefighting efforts, according to the Opposition.

In June 2020, the Victorian Government committed to deliver a new fleet of 48 heavy tankers to replace aging single cab tankers by late 2023.

These heavy tankers were described as "state of the art firefighting vehicles", outfitted with modern equipment including electronic monitors and electric rewind hose reels and would allow a full crew to sit within the cabin.

Despite its promise and warnings of a dangerous bushfire season, the government has admitted it has delivered only 20 of the 48 tankers to the CFA, with the rollout of the remaining 28 tankers not expected to be completed until later this year.

Leader of the Opposition, John Pesutto, said, "Once again the government has failed to deliver on its promises and this has left many communities across Victoria vulnerable."

"Last week we saw storms and blackouts impact hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses across the state and fires tear through communities... with devastating consequences."

"Labor ignored warnings that our energy network was vulnerable to such events and now it has broken a promise to ensure local communities are properly resourced to deal with the threat of bushfires," Mr Pesutto said.

Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, Richard Riordan, said, "Labor's broken promise affects communities right across the state including areas that were hard hit by last week's extreme weather."

"There is no excuse to be so ill prepared and once again Victorians are paying the price for Labor's mismanagement of our emergency services," Mr Riordan said.

Come down to enjoy some Music in the Park

THE Rotary Club of Alexandra is looking forward to presenting Music in the Park on Saturday, March 2, from 4 to 8pm at Rotary Park in Alexandra.

The event is free of charge and you can bring along your own picnic, or enjoy the sausage sizzle and drinks that will be available for purchase. Little River Wines and The Wandering Star Co Coffee Van will also be in attendance.

There will be a great line up of performers this year for everyone to enjoy, including Dave Beattie, Tayla Arnett, Tahlee Christie, *It Is What It Is*, and Alexis Farley.

Dave Beattie has lived in Alexandra for 10 years, and played in rural Victoria for a few years in his younger years. Dave has a keen interest in all things music and follows many talented artists playing the rural scene. Dave's mainstay is country rock, playing oldee gold tunes like Neil Diamond, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, *Crowded House*, and pop songs, too many to mention.

Dave is from a country background, from Shepparton originally, and Melbourne, where he took up music early in his life when *Countdown* was on a Sunday night on the black and white television. Now, he is happy to play a few tunes for us and

entertain a crowd, because he's not ready to give up the strings just yet.

Tayla Arnett found a love for music and singing at a very young age. She began singing lessons with her local music teacher at the age of nine and joined the music program that was offered to her in primary school. Growing up in a small town was the perfect backdrop for her to nurture her talent and create her own entertainment by learning every song on the radio.

Tayla started off by singing covers songs, but over the past has gotten into writing her own music inspired by life experiences, the people around her, and her favourite artists. Tayla takes on every musical opportunity she can and has done many performing gigs at different places such as markets, mini festivals, cafes, concerts and more. Ever since Tayla discovered her passion for singing she dreamt of making a career out of it and sharing her own music with others.

Tahlee Christie has always had a love for music and says it's a huge part of her life, and has been since before she could remember.

"I started learning piano when I entered high school and fell in love with it. Around two years ago I finally found the courage to sing out loud to others, I was very nervous at the start, but now I live and breathe it."

Wherever I go you'll find me singing or humming a little tune to myself," she said.

"Last year I took up guitar and taught myself the basics. I love country music and that is the genre that I enjoy singing. I have written a few songs and have some in the making at the moment. My biggest idols are Taylor Swift and Lainey Wilson, they really inspire me."

Local Taggerty band, *It Is What It Is*, have played everywhere from Marysville to Molesworth but mostly Taggerty. Playing a mix of songs from the last 50 years, plus a couple they've made up themselves, you will find yourself rocking along to the groove.

Artist Alexis Farley grew up in a household where music is a constant feature. Alexis can often be heard singing some of her favourites around the house. Recognising her ability to match the pitch and structure of multiple songs, she has been encouraged to channel those skills and recently commenced singing lessons with Gary Soloman, performing to a crowd for the first time at the end of year student concert in December.

There is a such a great lineup, come along and enjoy a relaxed musical night in the park.

Community grants

THE Dyson Group of Companies, incorporating the legendary Cobb & Co brand, is pleased to announce the launch of the next round of the Dysons Community Grants.

The program was been established to provide grants in support of the many sporting, educational, welfare and community groups around Victoria, and to date more than 80 grants have been distributed.

Program Manager, Grant Deacon, said the program aims to support a range of community-based organisations at grass roots level.

"The Dyson Group is very happy to be able to support so many community groups. We are pleased that our grants can make a difference to so many people who work and volunteer with these groups by helping them with their special projects."

There are two rounds of grants annually, each with \$10,000 available (maximum grant \$1000). Eligible organisations include pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, sporting clubs, not-for-profit groups, charities, welfare agencies, local societies and volunteer emergency services.

Grant said, "so many community groups rely on volunteers to deliver their services. We are so grateful for their work and excited to be able to support them. The applications we receive demonstrate the aims and achievements of so many hard-working people."

The next round of grants opens on March 1 and closes on March 31. Details can be found at dysongroup.com.au/about/community-grants

Keep cool and avoid chest pain

WITH high temperatures over summer, Ambulance Victoria (AV) paramedics are urging Victorians to stay cool to avoid heat related chest pains, and other related illnesses.

A recent study supported by AV found an increased risk of chest pain presentations with heat exposure, especially among younger patients and patients of lower socioeconomic status.

Researchers from AV, Monash University, The Alfred Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital and the Baker Institute assessed the impact of high and low temperatures on chest pain presentations.

AV Director Research and Evaluation Ziad Nehme said acute chest pain accounts for around one in 10 calls for an ambulance.

"We saw an increased risk of chest pain presentations for temperatures above 26.4 degrees Celsius," Mr Nehme said.

"We also saw that the relationship between temperature and chest pain presentations varies significantly by age, sex, socioeconomic status and location."

"We know that young patients between 18 and 49 years old, and patients of lower socioeconomic status are at greater risk for heat related chest pain presentations," added Mr Nehme. The study was based on more than 206,000 adult patients attended by AV for acute non traumatic chest pain within 100km of Melbourne between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2019.

AV Director Emergency Management Justin Dunlop said summer heat can be a major health risk and it can affect anybody, so paramedics are urging Victorians to stay sun smart.

"We're reminding Victorians to not become complacent and to do

what they can to keep cool and out of the heat, when possible," Mr Dunlop said.

"Remember to stay hydrated throughout the day and avoid being outside during the hottest time of the day if you can. Keep cool by staying indoors, reducing outdoor exercise, and using air conditioning and fans whenever possible."

"We don't want to see people fall victim to these heat related trends, so please take care of yourself and your loved ones this summer."

Remember, Triple Zero (000) is for emergencies and if you are feeling unwell, you can contact the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, visit a Priority Primary Care Centre, call NURSE ON CALL on 1300 606 024 or see your doctor or local pharmacist.

For more information visit ambulance.vic.gov.au/heat-health

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29

GOBUR – online clearing sale commencing at noon. Concludes March 4 at noon +2 min increments. Inspection on Tuesday, February 27. 9.30am-2.30pm. Contact Embling Rural for further information 0418 266 038.

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Alexandra Rotary Club presents Music in the Park, Rotary Park, Alexandra from 4-8pm. Sausage sizzle, drinks available, wine and coffee for sale or BYO picnic. Dave Beattie, Alexis Farley, Tayla Arnett and Tahlee Christie.

Alex Races Rocks. Music, racing, fun for young and old. Gates open at noon. countryracing.com/alexandra.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Alexandra District Netball Association AGM at 6pm at the Corner Hotel. Contact Stef 0423 233 423 for full details.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

Yarck Mechanics institute and Library Inc will hold a public meeting at The Yarck Hall from 7pm. The purpose of the meeting is to nominate the Committee of Management.

Finger food and drinks at 6pm prior to meeting. Contact Sharon 0407 879 612 for further details and enquiries.

TUESDAY, MARCH 19

Alexandra and District Open Gardens will hold their AGM at 4pm at the Embassy of Ideas, all welcome.

MONDAY, MARCH 25

Alexandra Community Hub AGM will be held at 5.15pm at the Historic Court House. To register email admin@alexhub.com.au or call Sue on 5772 1238 (Monday-Thursday).

Successful planned burns in the shire



ON Sunday and Monday, February 18 and 19, Forest Fire Management (FFM) completed fuel reduction burns in the Murrindindi Shire.

Weather and forecast conditions were suitable to ignite a 3.6 hectare fuel reduction burn at Mount Slide Road in Toolangi, a nine hectare fuel reduction burn at Paradise Plains Road in Marysville and a 6.3 hectare fuel reduction burn at Gilberts Gully Track in Marysville.

A FFM spokesperson said “All burns were successfully completed with the help of local CFA Brigades.

“Reducing forest fuels means fires are less intense and slower to spread, making it more likely that firefighters can contain bushfires before they impact people, property and the environment. Planned burning is part of

FFMVic’s year round program to reduce size, intensity and impact of future bushfires to communities and the environment.

“FFMVic works closely with the Bureau of Meteorology to assess weather conditions, such as humidity, temperature, and wind speed, and only carries out burns when the conditions are suitable, and it is safe to do so.

“Planned burns are ignited where they will achieve the greatest impact to reduce the risk of fires. FFMVic also undertakes mulching, mowing, slashing, and spraying, builds fuel breaks, and upgrades and maintains the public land road network to help keep communities safe,” the FFM spokesperson said.

Information on planned burns near you can be found at vic.gov.au/plannedburns

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

ST PETER'S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

Sunday Service time 11am 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

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Million Paws Walk at Eildon

RSPCA's Million Paws Walk will be back in Eildon on May 26 for the 30th anniversary of the first-ever Million Paws Walk.

Thousands of pups and their owners will hit the pavement across Australia to raise vital funds to help the RSPCA end animal cruelty, and the organisation is calling for residents and businesses to get involved in this year's event.

More than 6000 people and around 9000 dogs are expected to participate in Million Paws Walk events across Victoria.

RSPCA Victoria CEO Dr Liz Walker said the funds raised at every walk helped end animal cruelty, one step at a time.

“We’re very excited to see the amazing dogs at this year’s Million Paws Walk and can’t wait to meet their families and friends,” Dr Walker said.

“The money raised at these walks helps us care for the thousands of animals coming into RSPCA shelters every year, including those seized by our Inspectors.

“Eildon is in our Inspectorate’s South-East region, which received 1288 reports of animal cruelty while 269 animals were seized by or surrendered to our inspectors.

“The community support our Inspectors see every day keeps them going, so it’s wonderful to be celebrating these fantastic events like the Million Paws Walk.

“Communities like Eildon are vital to our mission to end cruelty to animals, and there’s no better way to help out than a fun and dog-friendly environment like your local Million Paws Walk.”

Locals interested in volunteering or businesses interested in running a vendor stall at this year’s Eildon Million Paws Walk can register at MPW@rspcavic.org.au or call 9224 2222.

Registrations for participants at the 30th Annual Million Paws Walk are now open, with a ‘barking-mad’ discount of 60 per cent available until March 27.

Head to millionpawswalk.com.au to register for your local walk and start fundraising.

The Eildon Million Paws Walk will be at the Eildon Pondage on Sunday, May 26. The event will start at 10am, with the walk itself commencing at approximately 10am. The event will finish at noon. Tickets are available at millionpawswalk.com.au/eildon

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The proof's in the weaner prices for Riddellvue

THERE are few better indicators of a producer's program than results at saleyards, where the top two pens of cattle sold at the Yea January weaner offerings were Riddellvue-blood, according to stud principal Ian Bates.

"We had one client whose steers averaged 360kg, which is pretty high for this time of year, so we are seeing good results," he said.

"Obviously everyone wants a bit more for their cattle, but it is heading in the right direction, so moving forward this year things should stabilise with better pricing."

By investing in Riddellvue Angus stud genetics producers can be confident they are on the right track, and when you team proven results with the improved market conditions and what Ian describes as an "unbelievably" good season, bull buyers should have plenty of confidence leading into Riddellvue's annual autumn sale.

The stud will offer 36 Angus bulls and 20 females on Thursday, March 14 at Markwood, Victoria.

The 2024 sale will feature three new sire lines, including Ellingson Three Rivers from the US.

"Ellingson ranch I follow quite strongly, it is a good genuine ranch in North Dakota breeding in tough conditions with an excellent female herd," Ian said.

"The Three Rivers bull carries a bit of birthweight but to me his progeny are true cattleman bulls, structured right, with plenty of volume and I think they will do really well."

Baldrige Alternative is the other prominent US sire in this drop of bulls.

"I've used a couple of different sires out of the Baldrige herd and the 'Alternative bull' goes back to Poss Easy Impact and Poss Total Impact which is another ranch in US that is doing really well with great progeny," Ian added.

"Baldrige Alternative has a good spread of numbers, a heifer bull through to a big 600 day weight and carries a bit of marbling and great eye muscle."

Local sire, Texas Topgun has also been utilised, with Ian describing the bull as having a good number-set and being well suited to his program.

"I never feed bulls up too much, so people are welcome to view them in their real skin by private inspection prior to sale."

"I like to grow them naturally and they'll come on a lot in the next couple of months."



The Riddellvue Angus top selling bull. -S

Riddellvue held its first female sale last May, selling 20 lots to a top of \$7000 and averaging \$3688.

They will now offer females at both of their annual on-property sales, including this March when nine mature three-in-one cow packages, pregnancy tested in calf and with calves at foot, and 14 PTIC heifers will go under the hammer.

"They've got similar genetics to the bulls so there are plenty of good opportunities there," Ian said.

"Moving forward we will introduce females in all bull sales - spring calving in autumn and autumn calving in spring."

"The herd is at a good balance and retention rates are high, so it gives us a chance to offer some quality females out into the industry."

Last year's autumn bull sale was the first offering from Riddellvue at their new King Valley location, having made the move from Alexandra early in 2023.

In March they sold 23 bulls to a top of \$15,000 and averaged \$7717, while in the spring 21 bulls averaged \$6675 and sold to \$12,000.

Ian said the move north has been positive for the stud, and the herd continues to improve, with the females coming through the herd being "quite exciting".

"I like to breed genuine bulls, it is nice to go through a season and not have anyone come through with breakdowns. I get great feedback throughout the year with phone calls of we love this bull, temperament is fantastic, calves are really good," he said.

"And if you buy the bull I'll get it to you, free delivery Australia wide, so don't be afraid to come and have a look."

Riddellvue's fourth annual autumn bull sale will be held on Thursday, March 14 on-property at 153 Markwood-Tarrawingee Road, Markwood, and integrated with AuctionsPlus, with the auction at 1pm.

For the latest news and sale updates, please visit riddellvue.com.au or Riddellvue Angus Facebook and Instagram Page.

WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW 2024

The Victorian Electoral Commission is conducting a review of Council's ward boundaries.



At the request of the Minister for Local Government, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is reviewing Murrindindi Shire Council's internal boundaries (wards).

These types of reviews happen when the number of voters per councillor is forecasted to be outside the legislated +/- 10% tolerance in one or more wards at the next local council election. This makes sure each voter is represented equally.

You're invited to have your say on the proposed ward boundaries, outlined in the VEC's preliminary report, and how well they represent your community.

You can share your views in writing and draw a map of your preferred ward boundaries. This is known as a submission.

Submissions are now open and close at 5.00 pm on 13 March.

For more information on the review and to have your say, visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au/murrindindi or you can scan the QR code below.



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Student of the Week

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Brewing up an economic buzz in Murrindindi Shire

ON Tuesday morning, bright and early in Alexandra, 60 local businesses and community leaders gathered for a vibrant morning of networking and discussion at the Coffee and Commerce event held at On Point Brewery. Organised by Murrindindi Food and Wine Inc (MFW) the event aimed to foster collaboration, share insights, and explore opportunities for economic growth within Murrindindi Shire.

The event kicked off with a warm welcome from Rob Mitchell, President of MFW, who set the tone for the morning's agenda. Attendees were treated to engaging presentations from key speakers, including Bess Nolan-Cook, CEO of Tourism North East, (TNE) who delved into the significance of tourism for the region.

Bess highlighted the newly unveiled 10 year Destination Management Plan for Victoria's High Country, emphasising its role in driving positive outcomes for the local visitor economy. The plan focuses on five product pillars, cycling; the Victorian Alps; nature; food, drink and produce; and arts, cultural heritage, and events. Bess noted that in 2022 there were five million visitors to the high country and that there were \$2.3 billion in expenditures by the domestic market. Murrindindi Shire itself received 1.2 million visitors.

Gina Elliot who is the Industry and Product Development Manager at TNE then spoke about the programs and work she does with operators to enhance their visitor experiences and flagged upcoming workshops that businesses may wish to be part of.

Following TNE's presentation, attendees received updates on the 2024 Business Resilience Project from MFW. The project, which focuses on recovery, networking, and capacity building, aims to support businesses across various sectors within Murrindindi Shire. Attendees were encouraged to contribute their ideas for future workshops and networking events, underscoring the collaborative spirit of the initiative. Upcoming initiatives, including a Jobs Expo in May and a 12 month support local campaign, aimed at further empowering the local business community.

Ben Harnwell, Manager of Economic Development at Murrindindi Shire Council, took the opportunity to discuss council's efforts in promoting economic development, including an update on the Shaping Murrindindi's Future project. Ben provided insights into the development of council's new Economic Development Strategy, designed to support existing and

new businesses while leveraging the unique strengths of the shire.

The five priority areas identified were visitor economy, agriculture and food production, business support, sustainable future, and prosperous communities. The draft Economic Development Strategy and two-year Action Plan will be made available for community input in April 2024.

In his closing remarks, Rob Mitchell, President of MFW, expressed gratitude to participants from across the region who attended, speakers, supporters, suppliers, and hosts for their contributions to the event's success. He thanked the Murrindindi Shire Council and the Victorian State Government for their support.

Emcee for the breakfast and the secretary of MFW, Sam Hicks, concluded, "In 2024, we are encouraging all businesses to be part of the three initiatives of the business resilience project and as we navigate the challenges of small business and seize the opportunities that lie ahead. We look forward to a year of growth, collaboration, and resilience."

For more information about upcoming events and initiatives, please visit murrindindifoodandwine.org.au or via social media.



Participants of the Coffee and Commerce event gather for a group photo, showcasing the spirit of collaboration and community engagement. -S

Review to examine February storms

THE Victorian Government has said that it will commission a supplementary independent review into the electricity distribution system response to the February 2024 storms, led by a panel of independent experts, not politicians.

The independent review will focus on the operational arrangements and preparedness of energy distribution companies to respond to these extreme weather events.

This will include the distribution businesses management of the incident as well as the timely and effective restoration of supply. It will also compare the operating models of energy network companies.

It will also investigate if there were any material opportunities that could have enabled a more rapid reconnection of customers, such as the availability of field crews and technical expertise through the use of mutual aid agreements and resource sharing within Victoria, or from interstate resources.

The panel will investigate communications with customers, the effectiveness of information platforms and services, such as outage trackers, and preparedness to administer relief to impacted communities.

The Victorian Government will also be seeking assistance from the Australian En-

ergy Regulator for information regarding the energy resilience requirements of energy infrastructure companies.

The final scope of the independent review will be given detailed consideration and it will build on the work of the Electricity Distribution Network Resilience Review that followed two storm events in 2021 and focused on the resilience of physical grid infrastructure.

On February 13, Victoria experienced a catastrophic storm event that damaged 12,000 kilometres of powerlines and poles across the state's electricity distribution businesses, causing power outages that impacted more than 500,000 homes and businesses.

As the climate changes catastrophic events and destructive weather patterns will become more frequent and more extreme and it is critical electricity distribution networks are able to mitigate, manage and recover quickly from these events.

This review will be undertaken in addition to investigations from Energy Safe Victoria into the tower collapse and the Australia Energy Market Operator into system response and security.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio said, "We want to get to the

bottom of exactly what has occurred, and an independent review will ensure that private distribution companies learn valuable lessons from what happened as climate change leads to more extreme and destructive weather events.

"This review will be conducted by experts, not politicians, and complement the work done following the 2021 storms to make sure our energy network can handle extreme weather events."

The announcement of the review came after lobbying from the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition, John Pesutto, said prior to the government's announcement, "We know that the government received a number of reports leading up to last week warning them about the fragility of our transmission network. We need to take whatever steps are required to avoid a repeat of these incidents."

Shadow Minister for Energy, Affordability and Security, David Davis, added, "Victorians have every right to expect secure, affordable and reliable power. What we saw last week is completely unacceptable and we need a reliable and robust transmission system that will withstand events including storms."

Keen expectation for Lake Eildon assessment around flooding

by Upper Goulburn
Catchment Association

FARMERS downstream of Lake Eildon are keenly awaiting the outcome of the Department of Environment Energy and Climate Action's assessment of the operating arrangements of Lake Eildon to reduce flooding downstream.

The assessment is due out in March 2024, after the release was delayed from December 2023, and is considering options to create more 'airspace' to buffer against intense rain events and mitigate flood risk.

The review was initiated after the devastating October 2022 floods when Lake Eildon spilled, causing a 'dam-release flood' of 38,000 megalitres per day on top of already swollen tributaries downstream.

It is hoped that changes will be made to Eildon operations on the grounds of economic, social, climate change and legal considerations.

Economic and social

The economic impact of flooding on farms, towns and community infrastructure from flooding is massive. The cost of the 2022 floods to the LGAs of Murrindindi, Moira, Strathbogie and Mitchell was calculated by Deloitte as \$610 million. The damage is immediate; and recovery is long and slow. The cost of this damage is born not by the dam manager but by those directly impacted, the rate payers in affected LGAs and the taxpayers of Victoria.

The psychological and physical toll on people living down the Goulburn Valley below Eildon is also very real. In 2023, there were a number of minor floods caused by the release of water from Eildon as the lake topped out again, exacerbating

stress levels. It's also a statement of the obvious, that floods kill people. Now, in the middle of summer (23/24), Eildon remains at over 96 per cent of capacity and threatens everyone's livelihoods and wellbeing again through the winter and spring of 2024.

Climate change

Climate change forecasts predict that Victoria can expect 'more intense downpours', the evidence of the last few years suggests this is becoming a reality. The Victorian Government has recommended that the community must adapt and build resilience in the face of these changes.

Dam operators (such as Goulburn Murray Water) and government agencies need to heed to this advice and alter dam operating policies to meet the changing climate challenges. Creating more 'airspace' or a 'flood compartment' seems a rational change to dam operations and will build community resilience in the face of more intense rainfall events. To not make a change to operating procedures in the face of climate change predictions would be negligent.

Legal

Section 122ZL of the Water Act - Functions of Storage Managers, states that water authorities "must have regard to developing and implementing strategies to mitigate flooding, where possible."

Aiming to have Eildon full on October 1 each year (just as the intense spring rains are expected) does not demonstrate compliance with this legal obligation. It is an action that creates floods rather than mitigates.

Water authorities have suggested that the "where possible" caveat discounts

Section 122ZL legal obligation. However, dams such as Eildon have endless possibility to mitigate flooding. GMW could, for instance, adopt the Wivenhoe Dam operating procedures and utilise 50 per cent of the dam's capacity as a 'flood compartment' to absorb flooding rains and protect downstream communities, not that landholders are calling for this. Farmers are hoping to see the 100 per cent full target on October 1 changed to 90 per cent on December 1. This would clearly demonstrate compliance with Section 122ZL of the Water Act.

Straw Man Argument

Water authorities often put up a 'straw man argument' claiming that we have a binary choice: flood protection or water security. They try to pitch irrigators against those seeking flood protection, a divide and conquer strategy. But we are one and the same. Those of us getting flooded are irrigators and customers of the same water authorities.

A change to operating procedures is only going to come into effect in wet years. By experience, the lake only fills in wet years or after a series of wet years, when water availability is high and water values are low. In these periods, there usually remains a strong inflow through December for further water harvesting.

We live on the river and utilize the water to grow food for all Victorians; but flooding us every few years is counterproductive. We strongly believe that with a more nuanced approach to dam operations, we, in the Goulburn Valley, and the wider Victorian community can be better protected from floods without compromising water security.

Haines introduces Bill to stop major party rorts

MEMBER for Indi Helen Haines has introduced a Private Members' Bill to Parliament to reform how Commonwealth funding is managed to increase fairness, transparency and accountability. The Accountability of Grants, Investment Mandates and Use of Public Resources Amendment (End Pork Barrelling) Bill 2024 seeks to end 'pork barrelling' by increasing transparency and accountability of Government spending of taxpayer money in grant programs.

Pork barrelling is the practice of directing government funds to projects in marginal electorates to win votes, without regard to evidence of the project's merit.

"Taxpayer money should be spent on the needs of communities not the wants of the major parties," Dr Haines said. "Funding decisions should be evidence-based, with grants awarded on merit and need.

"At election time, the major parties use taxpayer money to shore up votes in marginal seats. Rorting grants programs wastes money and destroys public trust in government processes."

Dr Haines has worked closely with the Centre for Public Integrity to draft the Bill, which would require all grants programs to have clear and publicly available selection criteria; ensure robust reporting to the parliament to increase accountability; and create a parliamentary committee with oversight of grant administration and guideline compliance.

"At its best, pork barrelling is maladministration, at its worst its corruption. The solutions I have put forward in this Bill are practical reporting measures that ensure that the parliament, and the public, know how funding decisions are made, and why grants are awarded," Dr Haines said.

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Cluster Swimming at the Yea Pool



One of the Sacred Heart Primary School students at the pool -S



Students from Sacred Heart Primary. -S



Yea Primary School award winners. -S



A Sacred Heart Primary School student in the pool. -S



A young medallist from Sacred Heart Primary. -S



Yea Primary School students taking a break between races. -S



St Mary's students keeping cool before their events start at cluster swimming. -S



Yea Primary School students in the shade. -S



Some of the cheerful Alexandra Primary School students at Cluster Swimming, held at the Yea Pool on Thursday, February 16. -S



Marysville Primary School students from left to right, Nate, Jasper, and Lucas came second in the freestyle relay. -S

ON THE LAND

Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture

More beef and lamb on Australian tables

THE Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has released its quarterly statistics on livestock slaughtered and meat production, highlighting record lamb and sheep production, as well as the highest slaughter of lambs ever at 24,909,600 lambs, up 16.38 per cent year on year (YoY).

The country has produced another record 599,461 tonnes of lamb in 2023, up 12.05 per cent from 2022. The last quarter of 2023 was the largest quarterly lamb slaughter on record at 6,674,500 lambs. 2023 cattle slaughter tipped 7 million at 7,028,900, up 20 per cent year on year.

According to Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), Australia produced the most lamb on record in the calendar year 2023. In all, 599,461 tonnes of lamb were produced in 2023, putting it 11.6 per cent higher than 2022, which was another record year.

Stephen Bignell, Manager of Market Information at MLA, noted that as predicted last year, lamb production hit yet another

record thanks to the significant flock rebuild since 2020.

“The biggest sheep flock for 15 years, including the greatest number of ewes and biggest number of lambs, has resulted in these record slaughter and production rates yet again this year,” Mr Bignell said.

“Despite anxieties into the capacity of processing facilities to cope with the backlog of lambs, these figures indicate that they were able to cope with the numbers supplied. This resulted in strong exports as well as plenty of lamb being available domestically, which was enjoyed by many Australians over the summer.

“Lamb carcase weights were down 3.64 per cent to 24.09kg. This is close to the ideal carcase weight for Australian domestically consumed lamb, which is around 24kg,” said Mr Bignell.

The fourth quarter of 2023 was the largest quarterly lamb slaughter on record at 6,674,500 lambs, which helped to break the yearly record.

It was also a record year for sheep and mutton production, with a 43 per cent increase in mutton production to 2,446,003 tonnes. This is the largest calendar year of mutton production since 2006.

Last year was also a large production year for beef, with production up 18 per cent YOY to 2,210,954 tonnes, which was the largest year since 2019.

“This was thanks to a large national herd and processors handling the increase,” Mr Bignell said.

“Cattle slaughter last year reached 7,028,900 head, up 20 per cent compared to 2022. The last quarter also showed a female slaughter ratio (FSR) of 46.87 per cent, bringing the annual FSR average to 46.58 per cent.

“A FSR rate of below 47 per cent indicates that the Australian cattle herd is in a marginal growth phase following two consecutive destocking periods as shown in the middle of 2022,” Mr Bignell said.

Anthrax vaccination program continues in Shepparton

AGRICULTURE Victoria is continuing to vaccinate livestock at properties in the Shepparton region, following the recent detection of anthrax on two farms.

Almost 6000 cattle and sheep have been vaccinated as part of the response so far, with private veterinarians working alongside members of Agriculture Victoria’s Animal Health team. No further cases of anthrax have been detected.

Victoria’s Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Graeme Cooke encouraged farmers in the region to continue to monitor the health of their livestock and report any sudden deaths.

“Early reporting ensures we can effectively respond to any suspected cases of anthrax and put measures in place to limit the risk of spread.

“You must report any cases of unexplained deaths where anthrax is suspected to the 24 hour Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888, to your local vet, or to Agriculture Victoria animal health staff on 136 186,” Dr Cooke said.

Dr Cooke also praised the efforts of landholders and vets for supporting the vaccination and surveillance efforts so far.

“Undertaking a vaccination program of this size requires a lot of co-operation and people on the ground working under careful biosecurity protocols.

“Vaccination is a crucial part of an effective response to anthrax, and Agriculture Victoria maintains a ready supply of vaccines for this purpose.

“Significant progress has been made so far and will continue until all quarantine controls have been lifted,” Dr Cooke said.

Anthrax occurs occasionally in northern Victoria, most often during the warmer months. If livestock on your property die suddenly, anthrax could potentially be the cause. It is critically important that the carcasses of cattle and sheep that die suddenly without an obvious cause are tested for anthrax by Agriculture Victoria or a private veterinarian before they are moved, to reduce the risk of disease spread and prevent a large-scale anthrax incident.

An anthrax factsheet on the Agriculture Victoria website is available answering frequently asked questions and providing more information.


SAVE THE DATE

March 1 - Yea Saleyards
Combined Agents – Store Sale
Hearing Australia - Free hearing checks


April 5 - Yea Saleyards
Combined Agents – Store Sale
Optair Eyecare - Free eye tests

May 3 - Yea Saleyards
Free flu vaccination


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 Recipe kindly submitted by CWA

Maria's Spaghetti Sauce

Ingredients:


- 1kg premium mince
- 3 x onions finely chopped
- 1 x teaspoon of hot chilli powder (optional)
- 1 x tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 x jar of Dolmio Spicy Pepper Sauce
- 1 x dessert spoon of minced garlic
- 1 x cup of heavy red wine
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Shaved parmesan for garnish

Herbs (fresh if you can - generous amounts)
Basil, Oregano, Parsley, Thyme.
If you only have dried use three teaspoons of each

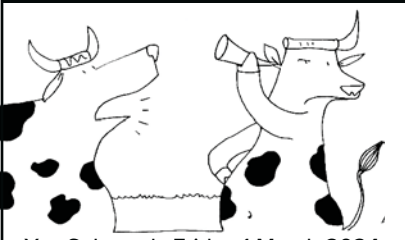
Method


- Sauté finely chopped onion and add mince and cook thoroughly
- Add spices, tomatoes, pepper sauce, red wine and cook.
- Serve with shaved parmesan.

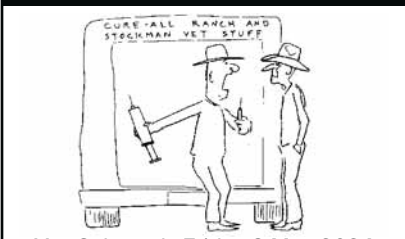
You may have left overs of spaghetti sauce and it's great on toast with shaved parmesan and chopped parsley.




FREE Health Checks
for the **FARMING COMMUNITY**

Hearing Australia – FREE hearing tests

Yea Saleyards Friday 1 March 2024

Optair Eyecare – FREE eye tests

Yea Saleyards Friday 5 April 2024

FREE Flu vaccinations

Yea Saleyards Friday 3 May 2024

Further information on Yea Saleyards website and Facebook page



MARCH PHOTO COMPETITION

For the month of March we are running our photo competition with the theme, 'Bulls'. 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* 43 Grant Street Alexandra. The winner will receive either a \$50 voucher from *Dindi Country Clothing* in Alexandra. Entries need to be received by March 31, 2024.

5772 1405
74 Grant Street
Alexandra



T&Cs - Photos must be taken by you 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.

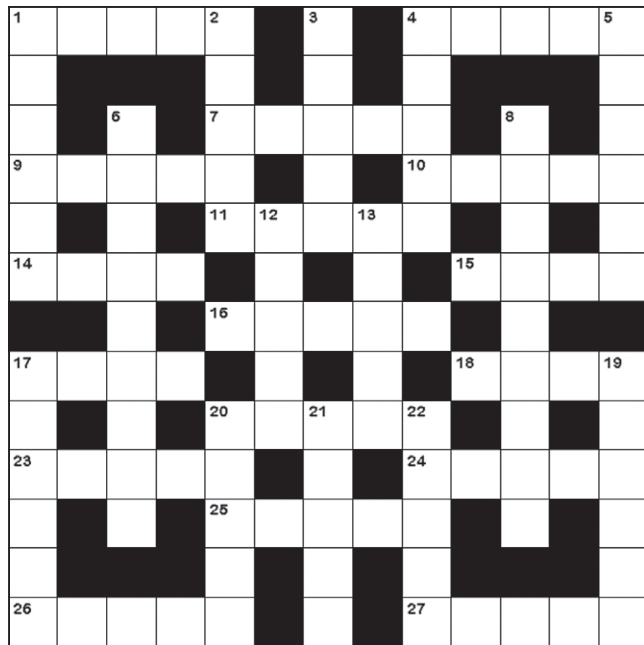
PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 11

Crossword

ACROSS

1. He lived in a whale.
4. Stay with as a guest.
7. Wash off the soap.
9. Take a life.
10. More intense.
11. Religious songs.
14. The abominable snowman.
15. Extinct bird.
16. Give a fright to.
17. A curve in the road.
18. Scottish Highlander's skirt.
20. A secret store.
23. Young owl.
24. Register as a competitor.
25. Extra room added on to a caravan.
26. Unmitigated cheek.
27. The first time in public.



DOWN

1. Employed to ride a race horse.
2. Extremely unkind.
3. Toxin from a snake.
4. Thoughts and ideas.
5. Evening dress for men.
6. In an obvious manner.
8. Criminals who set fires.

12. Cruising boat with sails.
13. People who study excessively.
17. Stopped functioning.
19. The goal to aim for.
20. Organise, and carry out an event.
21. Irritate and harass.
22. Was cursed.

Word Search

Fairy Tale Characters

- ALICE
- BELL
- CINDERELLA
- ELSA
- FIONA
- GEPPETTO
- MERIDA
- MULAN
- RAPUNZEL
- SHREK
- TINKERBELL
- URSULA

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

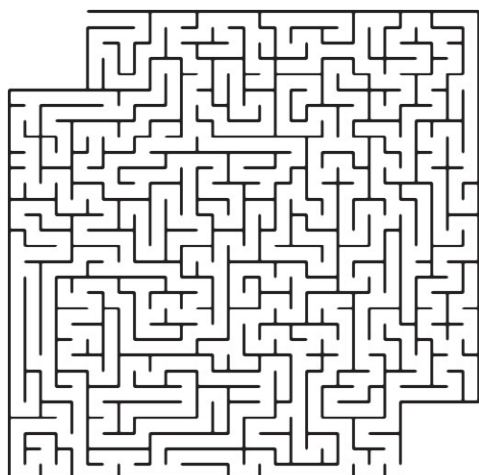
Double Puzzle

UMMERSS CAVTAINO BCHEA MIISGWNM
 []
 10 13 4 6 5 3 11

OGFL RUSAEQBEB IPMGACN
 []
 1 7 2

SHUNNIES
 []
 8 9 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Maze



Sudoku

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

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.

Why does a leap year have 366 days?

by Bhagya Subrayan, PhD Student in Physics and Astronomy, Purdue University, First published in *The Conversation*

YOU may be used to hearing that it takes the Earth 365 days to make a full lap, but that journey actually lasts about 365 and a quarter days. Leap years help to keep the 12 month calendar matched up with Earth's movement around the Sun.

After four years, those leftover hours add up to a whole day. In a leap year, we add this extra day to the month of February, making it 29 days long instead of the usual 28.

The idea of an annual catch-up dates back to ancient Rome, where people had a calendar with 355 days instead of 365 because it was based on cycles and phases of the Moon. They noticed that their calendar was getting out of sync with the seasons, so they began adding an extra month, which they called Mercedonius, every two years to catch up with the missing days.

In the year 45 BCE, Roman emperor Julius Caesar introduced a solar calendar, based on one developed in Egypt. Every four years, February received an extra day to keep the calendar in line with the Earth's journey around the Sun. In honour of Caesar, this system is still known as the Julian calendar.

But that wasn't the last tweak. As time went on, people realized that the Earth's journey wasn't exactly 365.25 days – it actually took 365.24219 days, which is about 11 minutes less. So adding a whole day every four years was actually a little more correction than was needed.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII signed an order that made a small adjustment. There would still be a leap year every four years, except in 'century' years, years divisible by 100, like 1700 or 2100, unless they were also divisible by 400. It might sound a bit like a puzzle, but this adjustment made the calendar even more accurate, and from that point on, it was known as the Gregorian calendar.

What if we didn't have leap years?

If the calendar didn't make that small correction every four years, it would gradually fall out of alignment with the

seasons. Over centuries, this could lead to the solstices and equinoxes occurring at different times than expected. Winter weather might develop in what the calendar showed as summer, and farmers could become confused about when to plant their seeds.

Other calendars around the world have their own ways of keeping time. The Jewish calendar, which is regulated by both the Moon and the Sun, is like a big puzzle with a 19 year cycle. Every now and then, it adds a leap month to make sure that special celebrations happen at just the right time.

The Islamic calendar is even more unique. It follows the phases of the Moon and doesn't add extra days. Since a lunar year is only about 355 days long, key dates on the Islamic calendar move 10 to 11 days earlier each year on the solar calendar.

For example, Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, falls in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. In 2024, it will run from March 11 to April 9; in 2025, it will occur from March 1-29; and in 2026, it will be celebrated from February 18 to March 19.

Learning from the planets

Astronomy originated as a way to make sense of our daily lives, linking the events around us to celestial phenomena. The concept of leap years exemplifies how, from early ages, humans found order in conditions that seemed chaotic.

Simple, unsophisticated but effective tools, born from creative ideas of ancient astronomers and visionaries, provided the first glimpses into understanding the nature that envelops us. Some ancient methods, such as astrometry and lists of astronomical objects, persist even today, revealing the timeless essence of our quest to understand nature.

People who do research in physics and astronomy, the field that I study, are inherently curious about the workings of the universe and our origins. This work is exciting, and also extremely humbling; it constantly shows that in the grand scheme, our lives occupy a mere second in the vast expanse of space and time, even in leap years when we add that extra day.

Time to put a ring on it

LADIES, get down on one knee, because history says Bachelor's Day is here. The Irish tradition, which is also known as Ladies Privilege, gives women permission to propose to men on the Leap Day, February 29.

The tradition is based on a legend of Saint Bridget and Saint Patrick. It stemmed from an agreement Saint Bridget had with Saint Patrick in the fifth century. The history books say that Bridget complained to Patrick that women had to wait too long to marry because men were slow to propose. Patrick offered for women be allowed to propose one day every seven years, but Bridget negotiated this down to every four years.

In Ireland, their custom allows women to initiate dances and propose marriage. However, if the man refused the proposal, he was expected to pay up by giving gifts such as gloves, gowns, and by the mid-20th century, you didn't miss out, you got a fur coat. For giggles, he may have also perform a juggling trick on Easter Day.

The tradition also has seen late February marriage proposals since it was seen to be undesirable to be unmarried during Lent.

In Scotland from 1288, monks made it into an actual law that women could in fact propose during leap years, however, they must sport a red petticoat while doing it, and if you refused, there would be a fine that could be a kiss or gifts. This law was supposedly created by Queen Margaret at the tender age of five.

In 1860, the United States got on board when American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson noted that his daughter spoke about a Leap Year dance where men sit around waiting to be invited by the women. In the early 20th century, cartoons were released that depicted women using aggressive measures such as the use of nets and guns to capture men in their traps.

These notions fizzled out in the 1980s when it was recognised that women were more equal in relationships.

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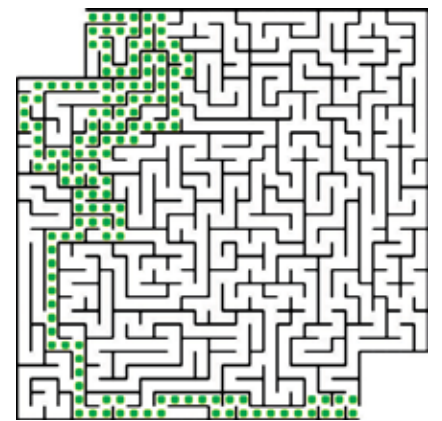
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DOUBLE PUZZLE

SUMMER, VACATION,
BEACH, SWIMMING, GOLF,
BARBEQUES, CAMPING,
SUNSHINE
LAST DAY OF SUMMER

MAZE



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Annabelle, Jess, Jess, Belinda and Elissa being briefed prior to their jumping lesson. -S

Yarck Adult Riding Club a hit with riders and spectators

THE Yarck Adult Riding Club (ARC) hosted its February Rally, drawing in riders and spectators alike for a day filled with equestrian excitement and camaraderie. Under the expert guidance of equestrian instructor Janelle Pitts, 13 riders took part in a series of engaging lessons tailored to enhance their skills in dressage and jumping disciplines.

The morning kicked off with three separate dressage lessons, providing participants with invaluable insights and techniques to refine their performance. Following this, riders had the opportunity to tackle poles and small jumps, honing their skills from the previous lesson. As the day progressed, the challenges escalated with a larger jumps lesson, pushing riders to new heights literally.

Adding to the charm of the day was the idyllic weather, boasting a pleasant 26-degree backdrop that perfectly complemented the activities. Amidst the lessons, riders and spectators alike enjoyed a cuppa and morning tea, courtesy of Miffy. A big thank you goes out to Heath Vine for organising the equipment trailer.

The Yarck ARC prides itself on being a small and welcoming club, offering a plethora of monthly activities ranging from dressage, poles, and jumping lessons to trail rides, games days, and social gatherings like dinners. For those interested in experiencing the benefits of riding within this supportive community, day insurance is available, making it easy for newcomers to join in on the fun. To learn more about upcoming events or to inquire about membership, individuals can contact the club secretary at 0488 079 038.

The success of the February Rally underscores the vibrant spirit and inclusive ethos of the Yarck Adult Riding Club, reaffirming its position as a hub for equestrian enthusiasts to come together, learn, and grow in their passion for riding.



Jo and Miffy enjoying time with their four legged friends at Yarck ARC rally last Saturday. -S

Benalla too good for Merton

by Rohan Berriman

Merton 9/108 defeated by Benalla 2/118

MERTON travelled to Benalla to take on the top side at the showgrounds turf wicket. Merton batted first making 9/108. Ross MacKinnon 39 and James Benton 13 the top scorers.

Benalla captain S McLeod 4/11 made scoring tough for the visitors on a lush outfield. Benalla opener Josh Hart 40 and Brett Pollard 30 hammered any loose bowling while Merton missed a few chances in the field. The undefeated home side cruised to victory in the 23rd over. MacKinnon and Henry Berriman the only wicket takers.

Thanks again for a few fill in players who helped out the Merton side. The season final match at Merton is this Saturday versus the inform Yarrawonga.

Hopefully Merton can scratch together a side for this match with the 2004 and 2012 premierships sides in attendance

celebrating their achievements in the Alexandra/Euroa leagues.

MERTON BATTERS: Ross MacKinnon b: Cooper Binion; 39. Rohan Berriman (c) c: Craig Williams b: Matthew Priest 11. James Benton c: Brett Pollard b: Stewart McLeod 13. Harry Craddock lbw: Dale Stratton 1. Fill-in run out: Craig Williams 0. Noah Whitta c: Leigh Pollard b: Stewart McLeod 1. Henry Berriman c: Craig Williams b: Stewart McLeod 7.

FILL-IN B: Leigh Pollard 1. Fill-in not out 9*. William Benton b: Stewart McLeod 2. Fill-in not out 2*. Extras 22 14WD 4NB 0LB 4B 0P. Total 9/108 (36 overs). Fall of Wickets 1-32 Rohan Berriman, 2-78 Ross MacKinnon, 3-81 Harry Craddock, 4-85 Player, 5-88 Noah Whitta, 6-93 James Benton, 7-99 Henry Berriman, 8-101 player, 9-108 William Benton.

Local sport clubs receives funding

THE Victorian Government has recently announced that 560 recipients are sharing more than \$694,000 in the latest round of *The Sporting Club Grants Program*. Murrindindi Shire recipients include Alexandra and District Speedway Inc, Kinglake Pickleball Club, Yea and District Adult Riding Club, and Yea Pony Club.

In this round, the program focus is on supporting, celebrating and building the capacity of sports volunteers in vital roles, from administration to coaching and umpiring.

The Program provides up to \$1000 for uniforms, equipment and resources that improve accessibility and engagement; up to \$2000 for projects to strengthen volunteering and officiating; up to \$4000 to deliver a new sport or recreation program, and up to \$750 to support athlete travel.

The Sporting Club Grants Program has provided more than \$16 million support to thousands of community sport and recreation clubs across the state since 2015.

By providing more opportunities for clubs and organisations to build their capacity, this program goes a long way towards future proofing grassroots sport and recreation and ensuring clubs have the skills they need to take their game to the next level.

A new round of *The Sporting Club Grants Program* is also set to open in the coming weeks. For more information on the grants and a full list of recipients visit sport.vic.gov.au

Alexandra squash round three results

by Kristelle Leary

Thursday competition

THE night nearly didn't happen for squash players. Halfway through, the power went out and everyone was ready to go home. The power soon came back on, and the night continued as planned.

Gelati v Pavlovas

AIDEN v Beth: Coming out strong Beth took the first game with a good lead. Aiden closed the gap, winning the second and third game, but Beth sealed the victory by winning game four 59 to 53.

Dean v Jodie: Dean put in a good effort, matching Jodie point for point in the third game. However, Jodie's experience earned her three games and the match 61 to 47.

John v Stuart: Always on top of things, John took it all in his stride and won the match with a solid lead, much to Stuarts disappointment 78 to 48.

Cheesecake v Trifle

ELI v Blake: Eli come into the competition on a high. Blake managed to draw the last game, but he couldn't stop Eli from taking the other three for a brilliant victory 71 to 55.

Kristelle v Rob: Kristelle couldn't get her head into it for game one, but she pulled it together to win game two. The power went out at the start of game three and the night was presumed finished... The power came back on in time for Rob to draw game three and dominate game four for the win 77 to 49.

James W (fill in) v Phil: Putting in a valiant effort, Phil kept his point deficit in each game low. However, James still won each game and the match 70 to 45.

Monday competition

Antipasto v Dumplings

OLI v Ruth: Ruth toyed with Oli to see how far he could run. Ruth was to good and outplayed Oli with her experience. 67 to 40.

Croquettes v Spring Rolls

MICK v James G: Mick jumped out of the blocks with a convincing first game. James clawed back the second game. Extending his lead, Mick took the last two games to win the match 71 to 49.

Jared v Simon: Played an excellent game. Simon was just too good for Jared, taking all games in a clean sweep. Simon was victorious 75 to 39.

Jim v Michael H: A seesawing start, Jim cruised through the first game, but Michael hit back in the second. From there on it was point for point, but Jim slowly edged ahead to win the match 55 to 46.

Assistance for sporting clubs available

THE Emergency Sporting Equipment grant program is available to assist sport and recreation clubs and organisations to replace or repair essential sporting and first aid equipment that has been lost or destroyed as of consequence of fire, flood, significant storms, theft, or criminal damage.

Grants of up to \$1000 are available towards the replacement or repair costs for lost or damaged equipment that is owned by the applicant organisation.

To be eligible you must be able to obtain a police report for involving theft or criminal damage, quotes which correspond to the equipment requested for funding. If already purchased, proof of payment including receipts, bank statements and invoices and evidence of the incident and the equipment that has been lost or destroyed.

Applications can be submitted up unit May 31, or until funding is exhausted. For more information visit sport.vic.gov.au

Alexandra, Yea and Mansfield Cricket teams 1948-1953

Supplied by Glen McMaster



Yea - Alexandra - Mansfield Country Week Team 1948
Back Row: R. Owen, A. Penrose, I. Byrne, J. Coonan (Vice Captain),
Front Row: W. Jeffery, W. Allen, Neil Garlick, C. Pollock (Captain),
Miss Judy Byrne (Scorer), T. Jeffery, G. Wilson, E. Greatorex.



Yea - Alexandra - Mansfield Team 1949
Back Row: R. Owen, J. Coonan, Miss Judy Byrne (Scorer), T. Jeffery, E. J. Smart (Manager), R. Luelf, B. Robinson,
Centre Row: I. Byrne, A. Penrose, G. Lewis (Vice Captain), G. Wilson,
Front Row: N. Purcell, W. Jeffery, C. Pollock (Captain), Neil Garlick, W. Allen.



Yea - Mansfield - Alexandra Cricket Team 1950
Back Row: J. Reardon, G. Wilson, W. Hennebery, I. Byrne, E. Smart Esq. (Manager), R McDonald, R. Luelf, R. Owen,
Centre Row: W. Jeffrey, Neil Garlick, Miss Judy Byrne (Scorer), C. Pollock (Captain), H. Docking, A. Redfern,
Sitting: G. Lewis (Vice Captain), A. Penrose.



Yea - Alexandra - Mansfield Country Week Team 1951
Back Row: B. Goodear, N. Phillips, R. Luelf, R. Owen, E. J. Smart (Manager), I. Byrne, W. Reardon, P. Russell, K. Oliver,
Front Row: Neil Garlick, C. Pollock, W. Hennebery, Miss Judy Byrne (Scorer), J. Stevenson (Captain),
G. Lewis (Vice Captain), W. Allen.



Yea - Mansfield - Alexandra Country Week Team 1952
Back Row: G. Deas (Umpire), B. Goodear, A. Cleeland, P. Patterson, K. D. Bryant (manager), W. Reardon (Umpire),
Front Row: C. G. Pollock, P. Russell, J. Stevenson, Neil Garlick, R. Owens, W. Jeffrey,
Sitting: G. Oliver, G. Lewis



Yea - Alexandra - Mansfield Country Week Team B Grade Premiers 1953
Back Row: P. Russell, K. D. Bryant (manager), W. Reardon, G. Oliver, G. Lewis, A. Penrose, L. Nicholas,
Front Row: J. Bradley, I. Byrne, Joan Byrne, C. G. Pollock, Pat Garlick (Scorer), Neil Garlick, J. Williams.



B Grade Country Week Premiers 1953 Celebrate
Left to right: Jim Bradley (Alexandra), Geo. Deas (Alexandra), Pat Russell (Yea),
Basil Goodear (Alexandra), Bill Jeffrey (Yea), and Neil Garlick (Yea).

SPORT

Little and big athletes smash records in season final

IN A whirlwind of cheers, laughter, and some seriously impressive athletic feats, the little athletes of Murrindindi brought the house down in their final Saturday session of the season. Under the backdrop of perfect weather, the morning kicked off with a warm-up, featuring a race walk focus, then sack races, egg-and-spoon relays over hurdles, the children showed off their agility and teamwork with gusto, leaving a trail of giggles in their wake that set the tone for the magical day ahead.

However, it wasn't just the kids stealing the show; parents were roped into the action too, encouraged by their pint-sized coaches to tackle events like shot put, javelin, and the ever-competitive 60m dash. A special nod goes to Renee Drysdale for orchestrating the parent events with flair, and the much-anticipated Murrindindi Little Aths 'gift race', which delivered its fair share of thrills.

Amid the fun and games, centre records were awarded to rising stars Kai Goonan under six for discus, Clay Hilder under 11 boys shotput, Ivy Duncan under 8 girls 700m, Tyler Cavil under 7 boys 500m, Shiloh Clancy under 7 girls 500m and Declan Baker for equalling the under 12 boys high jump, these athletes etching their names into the annals of little athletics history. Let's not forget the incredible efforts by Levi Campbell and Abi Caswell on obtaining 25 PBs in a season and also to Declan Baker for 20 PBs proving that with determination, anything is possible.

Credit must be given where it's due, and the grounds, meticulously prepared by Darren from the cricket club and adorned with perfectly painted lines courtesy of Louise Cummins, provided the ideal stage for the day's festivities. And, who could forget president Kim Williams, whose barbecue skills turned hungry athletes into satisfied champions with each sizzle and flip.

As the season draws to a close, the excitement shows no signs of waning, with Phil Campbell's training sessions set to continue for those heading to State Competition on the March long weekend, and mark your calendars for March 22, when the AGM and end-of-season presentation night promises to be a celebration to remember, honouring the remarkable achievements of all Murrindindi Little Athletes on and off the field.

In the world of Murrindindi Little Athletics, every Saturday is a triumph, but this final session was truly something special, a perfect blend of competition, camaraderie, and sheer joy that will be remembered long after the last race is run.



Awards recipients centre records Ivy, Tyler, Clay, Declan, Kai, Shilo. PB medals Maverick, Darcy, Ethan, Zoe, Jake, Cheyenne. 20 PB's Declan, 25 PBs Levi and Abi. -S



Friendships are the real gold at Murrindindi Little Aths, Levi Campbell, Declan Armstrong and Chase Hilder push each other all season but always celebrate each other's achievements. -S



Phil Caswell coming home strong in the parent and child 300m walk race. -S



One of the heats in the Murrindindi Little Aths 'gift' race. -S



Friends Cheyenne and Cate love starting the weekend with an athletics session. -S



The Parents 60m dash was won by Jim Anderson, second Stuart Collier, third Sharell, fourth Phil Campbell. -S

The Chronicle Sport



Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Successful St Pats Cup for Yea Race Club



All Too Creedy (inside), trained by Don Dwyer and ridden by Sean Cooper wins from last year's winner Willetts (outside), ridden by Rob Kirkpatrick. The middle horse, Popeye The Sailor, was a head away third. -S

by Denis Smith

THE weather at Yea for the Larkfield St Pats Cup was perfect on Sunday for picnic racing and a good crowd turned up for the traditional charity day at Yea, supporting the Sacred Heart canteen and bar and the local charity raffle.

Fashions on the Field again proved popular as well as the free children's activities and Chelsea's face painting. Between races on the day, the crowd under the trees were entertained by popular local musician Kane Vincent.

This season the club has alternated Kane and the Adam Dennis band Dusty Dogs at meetings to appeal to patrons who may not be hard core racing fans, and it seems to have worked.

Bookmakers reported good holds in the end, the racing provided all the highlights and stories. Yea Cup winning rider Dylan Dean rode his first career treble starting off with the first two races, the first on Wray The Grey, a striking looking horse trained at Seymour by Steve Noble. His second winner Jenni from Avalon, is owned and was strapped by the trainer Paul Worthingtons daughter Janelle. As she was struggling to buy the horse, her parents stepped in and brought it for her as a 30th birthday present.

Race three proved to be an all female affair, with Jody Thompson Racing from Kilmore sponsoring the event won by six year old mare Sky Warrior trained by Rebecca Weymouth and ridden by apprentice Sophie Clayfield.

Jockey Dylan Dean bounced back again in race four riding El Chilla for a very happy Colin Davies. Since 1984 Colin had trained many winners in town,

including group winners but he was very happy to come to Yea for the first time and win with El Chilla after the owner, Colin's wife had been trying to persuade him to move the horse on.

That race; the Frank Hargrave Memorial, was sponsored by Ruth Hargrave who also sponsored the final Larkfield St Pats Cup. The property, owned for many years by Frank and Ruth Hargrave, is now moving to a new management company Ultima.

The Larkfield St Pats Cup proved to be the race of the season with the first three horses over the line separated by less than a head.

A very brave ride by leading picnic rider Sean Cooper on All To Creedy saw him call on the Sister Olive handicap (3000 metres) winners stamina to make the race a true staying test and give Seymour trainer Don Dwyer his first St Pats Cup.

Last years' winner Willetts flashed home but failed by a short half head to catch the winner, with Popeye the Sailor making up a three way photo.

With his confidence up Sean Cooper made up for Strong Lady's unlucky fifth at Woolamai to give himself and Don Dwyer a double for the day. There was a lot of common ownership in both of Dwyers winners so the presentation stage was very busy.

After a disappointing start to the season with the controversial last minute stewards cancellation of the November meeting, Yea Racing is hopeful that the two wonderful cup events conducted in January and February will inspire locals and visitors to support these great local events.



Jockey Sophie Clayfield and Chilla, winner of the Frank Hargrave memorial race. -S



Janelle Worthington with Jenni of Avalon. -S



Janelle Worthington owner and strapper of Jenni of Avalon, winner of race two at the presentation and with horse. -S



Part of the crowd at the event. -S