

The Yea Chronicle

PO Box 5, Alexandra Vic. 3714

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

Ph: (03) 5772 1002; Email: reception@alexandranewspapers.com.au Your community newspaper since 1885 Wednesday, November 6, 2024 \$2.00 inc. GST

Most trusted news source in the Murrindindi Shire since 1890

murrindindibusiness.com.au

INSIDE THIS WEEK'S EDITION

Students put post to the test



Page 5

Seniors lunch in Yea



Page 8

Your chance to win a \$50 meal voucher



Page 13

Weekend sport coverage



Page 19 and 20

Government announces road upgrades

MINISTER for Roads and Road Safety, Melissa Horne, last week announced that works funded through the \$210 million *Safer Local Roads and Streets Program* had begun. The program is helping councils to identify, plan and deliver projects that keep drivers, cyclists and pedestrians safe.

"Working alongside Victoria's councils, we're delivering important upgrades on local roads today, so our communities are safer into the future," Ms Horne said.

The state government is allocating up to \$2 million each to 79 councils across the state and will provide a wide range of safety improvements until June 30, 2027, with projects set to deliver new raised crossings, upgrades to kerbs, intersections, roundabouts and pedestrian islands.

Locally, upgrades to the Melba Highway are on the cards, though details are vague at the moment.

"We're rebuilding, repairing and resurfacing hundreds of kilometres of roads right across Victoria, including the Melba Highway, thanks to our largest single-year investment in road maintenance in the state's history," a Department of Transport and Planning spokesperson said.

The Department of Transport and Planning provided background to say that they are investing \$964 million towards maintaining Victoria's road assets between now and mid-2025, the equivalent of \$2.6 million every single day.

They also said that they'll keep the community informed about where and when they can expect to see these works starting, along with any associated disruptions.

Local government authorities own and operate 87 per cent of Victoria's roads, and every year about 40 per cent of road trauma occurs on council-managed roads.

Head of Road Safety Victoria, Marcelo Vidales, said, "As part of Victoria's Road Safety Strategy, we're partnering with local government and communities to reduce trauma on Victorian roads and streets including those around our homes, schools and workplaces."

The Safer Local Roads and Streets Program is backed by the government's 2030 Road Safety Strategy targets, which aims to halve road deaths, reduce serious injury and ultimately achieve zero trauma by 2050.

Transport Accident Commission CEO, Tracey Slatter, added, "This program represents a collaborative approach to addressing road safety concerns across our state. Working together towards a safe environment for all road users."



Yea Primary School students outside the post office. More on page 5 of this edition. -S

Man charged over fatal collision in Molesworth

A COLLISION occurred near Molesworth on the Goulburn Valley Highway, close to the corner of Molesworth-Dropmore Road, on Thursday, October 31.

Emergency services were called to reports that a white Nissan Navara utility collided with a white Isuzu utility. The Isuzu left the road and crashed into a tree.

The male driver, and sole occupant, of the Isuzu utility was airlifted to the Alfred Hospital with life-threatening injuries but later died in hospital. Police later advised that the man was a 34 year old from Sabastopol.

The driver of the Nissan Navara utility, a 25 year old Wonga Park man, was taken to hospital with minor-injuries and placed under police guard.

Police later charged the Wonga Park man with dangerous driving causing death, failure to stop, failing to render assistance, destruction of evidence and possession of cannabis. He appeared in Shepparton Magistrates Court on Friday, November 1.

Detective Sergeant Stephen Hill from the Major Collision Investigation Unit prepared a summary of the allegations for the court. He stated that the man was seen on CCTV at the BP in Mansfield. The man was then observed by a witness who was



Emergency services, including the HEMS helicopter, near the location of the collision in Molesworth. -S

travelling on the Goulburn Valley Highway towards Molesworth. The witness said they were travelling at 100km per hour and said they were overtaken by the accused on double white lines.

It's alleged that the accused then reached an Isuzu ute following a bus and attempted to overtake. A witness travelling in the opposite direction flashed their lights as there wasn't enough room for the accused to do so. It's alleged that the accused pulled back into the left hand lane and collided with the Isuzu ute, sending the vehicle off the road and into a tree.

The police further allege that the accused continued driving with damage to his vehicle,

travelling through Molesworth. A witness captured the accused on dashcam on the other side of Molesworth with a damaged vehicle. It's alleged that the accused pulled over and someone stopped to ask if they were okay. The witness stated that they saw the accused throwing something into the bushes, and later advised police of this. Two number plates were found at the location.

The accused is then alleged to have travelled further along the road and pulled over again, where he was located by police. It's alleged that he told police that the damage to his car occurred at Goughs Bay. The accused was arrested and searched, and a

quantity of cannabis was located by police. A blood sample from the accused was taken within three hours of the incident, and he was interviewed at 9am the following morning after being discharged from hospital.

The man was granted bail on \$5000 surety from his father. The conditions imposed by the magistrate are that he lives at a static address, not contact witnesses, surrender his passport and not apply for a new one, attend no points of international departure, not leave Victoria, and not drive a motor vehicle. A committal hearing will be held on April 16 next year.

The collision was investigated by Victoria Police's Major Collision Investigation Unit. Local emergency services were also in attendance, with Alexandra SES providing lights and a marquee.

The Goulburn Valley Highway was closed for around seven hours following the collision and traffic was diverted via Whanregarwen Road.

Investigations remain ongoing. Anyone who witnessed the incident or who has footage, is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or visit crimestoppersvic.com.au

Our sympathies to the deceased man's family and friends.

Alexandra District Health
5772 0900

Yea & District Memorial
Hospital 5736 0400

In an emergency dial
000

IT'S NOT OKAY

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

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

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



Council celebrates new citizens

MURRINDINDI Shire Council celebrated two new Australian Citizens on Tuesday, October 22 at an official Citizenship Ceremony held at the Alexandra Council Chamber.

Gason and Riya have pledged their loyalty to Australia, its people, and its democratic beliefs, and to uphold and obey the laws of Australia and respect the rights and liberties of its people.

In attendance were distinguished guests including former Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor Damien Gallagher, CEO Livia Bonazzi, Member for Indi Helen Haines, Pamela Thompson, Janene Simpson, Gordon Simpson, Julie Steyger and Ray Steyger, who were pleased to congratulate our newest Australians.

Council extends its warm congratulations to the conferees and wishes them all the best as Australian citizens.

Council will host more Citizenship Ceremonies in 2025.

To learn more about becoming an Australian citizen, please visit the Department of Home Affairs website immi.homeaffairs.gov.au or call the Citizenship Information line on 131 880 during business hours.



THUMBS DOWN: Can I please ask that the persons who sing our National Anthem at Thunderwolves and Border Cats games, sing the word 'Canada' as opposed to 'Canida'. Not sure where Canida is located, but i am absolutely proud to live in the beautiful country of Canada. The mispronunciation of Canada is very disrespectful and irritating. Anywhere else is Canada, our name is pronounced correctly. [Our newspaper is on the world wide web, but we weren't expecting this. Now remember y'all, it's Canada not Canida. -Ed]

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



Murrindindi Shire Council CEO Livia Bonazzi, Member for Indi Dr Helen Haines, Janene Simpson, Gordon Simpson, conferee's Gason and Riya, family and friends, Ray Steyger, Julie Steyger, and former Mayor Damien Gallagher. -S

The Yea Chronicle Standard

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RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	9.00am Mon	1.61	steady	below minor
Rubicon River at Rubicon	9.00am Mon	0.55	steady	
Acheron River at Taggerty	6.50am Mon	0.67	steady	below minor
Home Creek at Yarck	8.06am Mon	0.17	steady	
Yea River at Devlins Bridge	8.29am Mon	0.59	steady	below minor
Yea River at Yea GV Water PS	6.22am Mon	0.77	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Ghin Ghin	9.00am Mon	3.67	steady	
King Parrot Creek at Flowerdale	9.00am Mon	0.57	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Trawool	9.00am Mon	1.26	steady	below minor
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00am Mon	0.31	steady	below minor
Goulburn River at Seymour	9.00am Mon	1.57	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Creek at Seymour	7.08am Mon	1.16	steady	

**ISSUED AT 9.15AM ON MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER, 2024



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.



Weekly Weather

November 6 - November 12, 2024

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra

Yea

DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	11	30	Wednesday	12	31
Thursday	12	22	Thursday	11	22
Friday	8	20	Friday	7	20
Saturday	5	20	Saturday	5	20
Sunday	6	23	Sunday	7	22
Monday	8	23	Monday	7	24
Tuesday	11	25	Tuesday	11	25



DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	0mm
Buxton	0mm
Eildon (AWS)	0mm
Flowerdale	0mm
Jamieson	0mm
Kinglake	2mm
Lake Eildon	0mm
Mansfield	0mm
Taggerty	0mm
Yarck	0mm
Yea	0mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	285.18m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	85.7%
Metres below full supply	3.72m
Daily inflow	500ML
Release	3000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change)	59%

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

McLeish questions minister over patient transport ceases for dialysis

PATIENTS in the Murrindindi Shire receiving kidney dialysis treatment have been abandoned as the Victorian Government cancels patient transport to Seymour Hospital, according to Member for Eildon Cindy McLeish.

Speaking in Parliament, Ms McLeish, called on the Minister for Health to find a proper and enduring solution to address the shambles patient transport has become.

Ms McLeish said, "The minister needs to sort out this mess for those patients living in and around Alexandra who require dialysis in Seymour, almost an hour away."

On the September 24, patients were notified by Seymour Health that their transport funded by Ambulance Victoria would cease, with an extended end date of October 8. Patients were advised that if they could not find their own way there, their treatment would be discontinued.

"This is exceptionally distressing as dialysis is a life-saving treatment," she said.

"I do want to commend the staff at the Seymour hospital, who have shown care, dedication and compassion trying to help patients find a solution to the matter. It was a real scramble to find a solution in the short term."

National Patient Transport has been deployed in recent weeks to accommodate the change however patients have found it unreliable. Alternatively, the use of ambulances leaves the rest of the community with reduced services, while the cost of a private taxi between Alexandra and Seymour is \$183 each way.

"I understand that the state is broke, and Ambulance Victoria have had their fair share of issues," Ms McLeish said.

"I suggest the government undertake a cost-benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of having dialysis chairs in Alexandra. There are currently 10 patients in the Murrindindi shire requiring dialysis, and I also understand that the transport situation is the same for cancer patients requiring treatment.

"There are solutions, and I urge the minister to intervene to make sure that they are implemented on a permanent basis," Ms McLeish said.

Have you seen this ute?

POLICE are investigating the circumstances surrounding the theft of a ute from the Yea Rail Trail carpark, Goulburn Valley Highway on Tuesday, October 29.

It is believed unknown offender/s attended the car park about 12pm and stole a white 2018 Mitsubishi Triton. The vehicle has a white custom made tray with an LED light bar fitted to the front of the vehicle.

Investigators have released an image of the ute in the hope someone may be able to assist with their enquiries.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or submit a confidential report at crimestoppersvic.com.au



Have you seen this ute?

Put Murrindindi on your Table this Christmas

MURRINDINDI Food and Wine Inc (MFW Inc) is promoting the *Put Murrindindi on your Table this Christmas* buy local campaign.

In a collaborative effort to showcase the local business community during this holiday season, MFW Inc are again delighted to announce their partnership with three tiers of government in driving the *Put Murrindindi on your table this Christmas* campaign.

This campaign, now in its second year, aims to celebrate and support all incredible local businesses from any sector that make this region truly special. This campaign is the last activity of the Murrindindi Business Resilience Project that has focused on collaboration, empowerment, and support for all businesses across Murrindindi Shire.

Rob Mitchell, president of MFW Inc, said, "The funding has been from the Business Groups Flood Recovery Grants Program which is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and supported by Murrindindi Shire Council."

As part of the funding the MFW Inc group has facilitated online and in-person events and activities held over the last 12 months focussing on recovery, networking, and capacity building. Many may have seen the year-long support local campaign and now in the lead up to Christmas, the bauble is back.

Rob expressed his enthusiasm for the buy local Christmas campaign, stating, "We have had challenging times over the last four years. It's not getting any easier, and we all need to band together and support all things local. We are presented with countless opportunities through this campaign to support our local businesses in meaningful ways whether it's a purchase, a referral, attendance at a local event, or an appreciation post on social media."

As we enter the festive season, this campaign will be prominently featured through print

media, social media, township entry signs and UGFM Community Radio ensuring that it stays top of mind for everyone in our community during the last part of the year. There is a dedicated website page that will be the main call to action with a demonstration of how we can all *Put Murrindindi on your Table this Christmas*.

"Look for our Christmas bauble shire-wide," Rob said.

All businesses, shire-wide from all sectors, are invited and encouraged to actively participate in the campaign by utilising free campaign assets that will be available including posters, counter cards, shop window decals, and social media tiles.

There will be numerous avenues for local businesses to get involved and become an

integral part of *Put Murrindindi on Your Table This Christmas*. From showcasing their products and services online with the hashtag #PutMurrindindiOnYourTable to offering special holiday promotions, local businesses can come together in this heartwarming celebration of community and commerce.

"By embracing this campaign, we not only invigorate our local economy but also strengthen the bonds of unity and resilience within our Murrindindi community," Rob said.

So, consider how you can 'Put Murrindindi on your table' this year. For more information about the campaign and to access campaign assets, visit murrindindifoodandwine.org.au or follow them on social media.

RESTORING OUR RIVERS 2024

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST - NOW OPEN

REF: ATM_2024_2750

The Australian Government, represented by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) to sell water from water rights owners the Southern Connected Murray-Darling Basin who were not eligible for the [Restoring Our Rivers: 2024 Selected Catchments Open Tender](#). This includes water right owners from within Irrigation Infrastructure Operator areas.

Owners of eligible water rights in the catchments listed below, including unregulated entitlements and section 51 licences, are invited to express their interest stating the proposed volume and price at which they want to sell their permanent water rights to the department

LIST OF CATCHMENTS:

NEW SOUTH WALES	
Murray River	
Murrumbidgee	
Lower Darling	
VICTORIA	
Broken	Kiewa
Goulburn	Mitta Mitta
Campaspe	Loddon
Ovens & King	Victorian Murray
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	
South Australian Murray	

The decision to participate is completely voluntary. You must submit an EOI through this process if you want to be considered for any subsequent water purchasing in 2025 To read the Request for Expression of Interest and register your interest, please visit AusTender www.tenders.gov.au - and search for Restoring our Rivers.

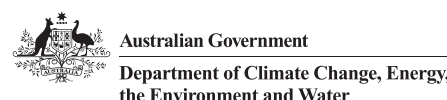
MORE INFORMATION: For more information on voluntary water purchasing, visit www.dcceew.gov.au/watertender

ASSISTANCE: For help with using AusTender, visit help.tenders.gov.au If you can't access AusTender or have questions about the expression of interest process, please email watertenders@dcceew.gov.au

HOW TO REGISTER:

Opened: 30 September 2024
Closing date: 12 noon AEDT, 27 Nov 2024

- Visit www.tenders.gov.au/atm and search for Restoring our Rivers
- Download and read the [Request for Expression of Interest](#) documents
- Login or Register as a new user
- Complete the expression of interest response form and submit your response.



BAILEY'S FUNERAL SERVICES PT. LTD.
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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.

The Yea Chronicle

Available from these retail outlets

- Alexandra FoodWorks
- Alexandra Newsagency
- Alexandra Newspapers
- Endeavour Yea
- Hazeldene Store
- Merton General Store
- Seymour Newsagency
- Shell Thornton
- Yea FoodWorks
- Yea Newsagency

Alexandra Newspapers are members of:



Church Services

ST PETER'S MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH

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

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

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

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew
 0459 402 547
 St Matthews Eildon, Saturday 5pm
 Immaculate Conception Parish
 Alexandra, Sunday 8.45am
 Sacred Heart Yea, Sunday 10.45am

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

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

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

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

UNITING CHURCH

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

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.*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Alexandra show is on again. 9am-3pm. Entertainment, live music, petting zoo, gold panning, dingo display and much more. Enter our competition for your chance to win one of two family passes.

Emergency alert

IT'S not uncommon to block a number after an unwanted text or call all, but if you see +61 444 444 444 pop up on your phone, it is important you do not block this one.

This phone number is linked to Emergency Alert, a national telephone warning system used by emergency services across the country to send voice messages to landlines and text messages to mobiles within a specific area to warn people about current emergencies.

Emergency Alert is not used in all situations, so it's important to rely on more than just one source of emergency information.

Stay informed and download the VicEmergency app.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Thornton Community Garage Sale, various driveway sales throughout the town. Preloved clothes, homewares, furniture, tools and more.

Marysville Market 9am-1pm. Distillers, cakes, sewing notions, live music, sausage sizzle and plenty more of your favourite stalls.

Thornton CFA open day. Meet your local volunteers, tour the station and fire trucks, face painting, sausage sizzles and kids activities and more. 9.30am-1.30pm.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Fincham's Burando Southdowns Fifth annual sale. 60 top quality rams. Yea Showgrounds sheep pavilion. For full details contact Elders Yea, Jamie 0419 894 232.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Online clearing sale - Multi vendor. Concludes Monday, November 18 at noon. See ad in this edition for full details or contact Andrew Embling 0418 266 038.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Murrindindi Harvest Celebration Yea Railway Park 11am-4pm.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

Mansfield Clearing sale 10.30am. Inspection day Saturday, November 16, 10am-2pm. Contact Andrew Embling for full details 0418 266 038 or visit clearingsales@emblings.com.au

Acheron Hall AGM will be held at 11.30am. All welcome. Contact 0419 871 483 for further details.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23

The Yea show is on again. Cookery, crafts, Classic cars, line dancing, Royal Australian Navy Band, roaming comic character, show bags and plenty more to fill in the day.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

Grand Italian Feast at Holmesglen. Noon to 4pm. Enjoy a lazy afternoon of feasting with traditional Italian fare. Bookings essential 5774 2631.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28

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

A colourful tree in Yea

On Saturday, October 2 the Goulburn Valley Suicide Awareness Group chose and organised an old tree to represent the Blue Tree Project.

The group, who were all volunteers, started at 7am in the morning to get the job done. The tree is located on the Melba Highway in Yea where the twin trail bridges are closest.

If you want to find out more about the blue tree project visit bluetreeproject.com.au



The finished project. -S



The tree at the start of the morning. -S

Yea Primary School students put post to the test

YEA Primary School's preps and grade ones have been looking at technology and how it has changed or remained the same over time. They have been talking about ways people can communicate.

On Wednesday, they took a lovely stroll to the post office to post a letter they had written earlier in the week to the teachers. The students wondered how long it would

take for the letter to reach Mrs Cronk's home and Mrs Turner's home. Would they take the same amount of time or different times? The students have predicted that Mrs Cronk will receive hers first.

The students purchased a stamp from Jenn and Anthony for each of the letters and they popped the letters with some other mail to go out.



The students leaving school, bound for the post office. -S



Students purchasing stamps. -S



Posting a letter. -S

YOU CAN'T CONTROL FIRE, BUT YOU CAN PREPARE FOR IT.

The best way to keep you and your loved ones safe this fire season, is to make sure you have a fire plan.



Go to fireplanner.vic.gov.au to create your personalised fire plan now.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FIRE?

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne



Children's Week blossomed at local libraries

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has announced that this year's Children's Week Storytime programs at the local libraries were a blossoming success, with numerous children and their families joining in to celebrate children's rights to a safe and clean environment.

During Children's Week (19 to 27 October), the libraries utilised storytelling and reading to educate our youngest residents about the importance of trees and plants. Through Storytime, crafts and games, groups explored how trees benefit the environment, provide homes for wildlife, and supply us with food and clean air.

Council extend their thanks to all the families who participated and made this week enjoyable. They look forward to continuing to create opportunities at the libraries for children to learn and grow.

Council offers a variety of library events and programs suitable for children and young people, including weekly Storytime, Music Time and educational sessions. For more information and to get involved, visit

murrindindi.vic.gov.au/libraries or drop in to the Alexandra, Yea or Kinglake Library.

For details about upcoming events, please visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/events or contact council on 5772 0333.

Murrindindi Shire Council CEO Livia Bonazzi said, "We are privileged to live in such an environmentally unique part of the world, supported by a community that actively engages in learning about the preservation and enhancement of its health. We hope this program inspires our young people to take an active role in caring for the planet while reminding us all of the future we are striving to create together. I commend the vital role our local libraries play in this effort by bringing young families together and providing valuable resources for learning and connection.

"Upcoming events that may interest local families include our FrogID Week talks in Alexandra, Kinglake and Yea Wetlands. These involve a 45 minute webinar and a walking excursion in your local area, be it along UT Creek or the Yea Wetlands, to find frogs and record them on the FrogID app."



Children worked together to create this pond and the surrounds at the Yea Library. -S

Council supporting 16 Days of Activism

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is proud to again support the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign as part of the ongoing commitment to creating a safer and more respectful community.

This year's campaign encourages all Victorians to work together to prevent violence against women and girls. This annual international campaign kicks off on Monday, November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until Human Rights Day on Tuesday, December 10.

Anyone can experience or commit violence, however the data tells us that women are overwhelmingly the victims of family or intimate partner violence and face a much higher risk of being killed by a current or former partner than men. All experiences of violence are unique and valid, and council respectfully acknowledge this.

In Murrindindi Shire, council is partnering with and supporting local community groups and businesses, to engage with this important campaign. To support the 16 Days of Activism campaign, community members are encouraged to get involved in the following local events:

Latte with a Lawyer. Enjoy a free hot drink and chat with lawyers from Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre on Wednesday, November 27, from 10am to 1pm at the Grant Street Grocer in Alexandra

Call It In! A free workshop for men to talk about mental health on Saturday,

November 30, from 9.30 to 11.30am at the Embassy of Ideas in Alexandra.

Mitchell Shire Council Steps Towards Change Walk. Thursday, December 5, from 10am at Hadfield Park in Wallan.

This year, with funding from Safe + Equal, council has offered to gift three new books from the Respect Victoria book list to all Early Childhood services, primary and secondary schools. This is one way to recognise the importance of educating future generations on the fundamental right to feel safe and respected.

If you would like to attend an event, organise your own, partner with council, engage in the campaign, or find helpful resources and support services, please visit the website murrindindi.vic.gov.au/16days or contact council by calling 5772 0333 or emailing communitydevelopment@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Murrindindi Shire Council's CEO Livia Bonazzi said, "More than one in three women have experienced men's violence. On average, a woman is killed by a man she knows every week. The situation has worsened in recent years, with 75 women killed in the 2022-2023 financial year. Safety for women is not a given in any community, and neither is respect."

"I am heartened by our local community's commitment to driving meaningful change. I encourage everyone to engage in the events, organise their own initiatives, or explore the valuable resources available. Together we can foster communities rooted in kindness and respect, paving the way for a safer and more equitable future for all."

Council endorses annual report and celebrates key achievements

MURRINDINDI Shire Council has endorsed its 2023/24 Annual Report at the Scheduled Meeting of Council on October 23, highlighting the significant progress made on the priorities set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025.

This year, council invested over \$15.95 million into the Capital Works Program, progressing the Eildon Reserves Redevelopment and delivering extensive road and drainage upgrades across the shire. The new Road Safety Strategy helped council secure nearly \$2 million for essential road safety improvements. In addition, the formation and dedication of the Community Road Advisory Group have strengthened advocacy for funding and practices that align road management with resident expectations.

In line with the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2035, as per the adopted Climate Change Action Plan, council replaced older diesel and petrol vehicles with hybrid and electric vehicles for their fleet, initiated a tree-planting project to offset emissions, and developed the Kerbside Collection Services Policy to support a four-bin recycling system, reflecting council's vision for a sustainable future.

Supporting and encouraging inclusive, resilient and active communities remained a focus during the past year. Through the Grants and Sponsorships Program, they provided funding for 124 local projects and events to the value of \$198,259; celebrated volunteers during National Volunteer Week and through the Community Awards, and supported local communities to prepare local emergency action plans through the

LEAPing Into Resilience Project. They hosted a community discussion in Yea on men's health, partnered, progressed work to improve participation for women and girls in sport and partnered with Mitchell Shire Council to develop a community guide on family violence.

Council has significantly ramped up advocacy efforts, focusing on securing support and resources to address key community priorities. They have championed increased funding for roads and essential infrastructure, advocated for improved healthcare services, especially in rural areas, and pushed for initiatives that support local businesses and agricultural resilience. They sought to create more opportunities that directly benefit the shire and meet the evolving needs of the communities.

To read the 2023/24 Annual Report, please visit council's website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/annualreport or pick up a hard copy from council's Library and Customer Service Centres.

Murrindindi Shire Council CEO Livia Bonazzi said, "As we look to the future, we are proud of the progress made over the past year and the strong foundation built for ongoing success. The initiatives we've undertaken, from infrastructure improvements to health advocacy and economic development, are key steps toward realising our shared vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous Murrindindi Shire. We couldn't have achieved this without collaboration with our neighbouring councils, as well as the state and federal governments, and thank all partners for their continued support."

My work on regional housing unlocks critical infrastructure for new homes

Read my statement



Helen Haines MP

INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MEMBER FOR INDI

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helehaines.org

MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL NEWS



PURRFECT CARE PROGRAM

Council is running a program for valid Pensioner Concession Card holders in our community who care for any cat, whether owned or stray. The program includes free desexing, microchipping, worming, vaccination and registration services.

We encourage eligible Pensioner Concession Card holders to apply before 6 December 2024 by calling 5772 0333 or visiting murrindindi.vic.gov.au/catcareprogram



JOIN US IN MARYSVILLE!

Get ready for an exciting November, with three big events coming to town:

- **Marysville Marathon:** Saturday 9 to Sunday 10 November
- **Giro della Donna cycling event:** Friday 22 to Sunday 24 November
- **Great Victorian Bike Ride:** Saturday 30 November to Sunday 1 December

There will be road closures and detours, so make sure to check the details and plan ahead.

For more information on road closures, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/marysville-events

POOLS TO OPEN SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER

It's almost swimming pool season, and we are pleased to announce that entry will again be FREE this year!

All our pools open on Saturday 16 November and we're looking forward to welcoming everyone for a great season of swimming.

Head to our website for opening hours and upcoming events at your local pool. Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/pools

FIRE DANGER PERIOD AND WARNINGS

The CFA declares a Fire Danger Period for each municipality in the lead up to fire season, to restrict the use of fire in the community and help prevent fires from starting.

There are four levels of fire danger in the system:

- Moderate - Plan and prepare
- High - Be ready to act
- Extreme - Take action now to protect your life and property
- Catastrophic - For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

To see the Fire Danger Rating forecast for your area, visit cfa.vic.gov.au/home/local-information and download the VicEmergency app to get timely information and emergency warnings.

COUNCIL SUPPORTS 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Council is proud to again actively support this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, that runs from 25 November to 10 December, encouraging individuals and organisations to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

There are a few local events, including:

- **Latte with a Lawyer:** Enjoy a free hot drink and chat with lawyers from Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre on Wednesday 27 November, from 10.00 am – 1.00 pm at the Grant Street Grocer in Alexandra
- **Call It In!** A free workshop for men to talk about mental health on Saturday 30 November, from 9.30 – 11.30 am at the Embassy of Ideas in Alexandra
- **Mitchell Shire Council Steps Towards Change Walk:** Thursday 5 December, from 10.00 am at Hadfield Park in Wallan.

This year, with funding from Safe + Equal, Council has offered to gift three new books from the Respect Victoria book list to all our Early Childhood services, Primary and Secondary Schools. This is one way we hope to recognise the importance of educating future generations on the fundamental right to feel safe and respected.

To find out more about the events, the campaign, access helpful resources and local support services, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/16days or contact the Free From Violence Team via email at communitydevelopment@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

BUXTON MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE

Our Mobile Library service in Buxton has changed. We will now be in Buxton from 9.45 to 11.30 am, every Tuesday.

Don't miss out! Visit us during the new hours at the Buxton Memorial Hall, 2206 Maroondah Highway, Buxton, for all your favourite books, resources and more.

See you there! For more information about Council's library services, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/libraries

FREE GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL

Council is offering free green waste disposal at our Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs) in the lead-up to the fire season, during October and November. This is a great way to remove your unwanted green waste and fuel loads on your property without having to burn off.

Unsure what is accepted at our RRCs? Visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/rrc

For more information on preparing for fire, visit the CFA website at cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare

STAY INFORMED

To stay up to date with the latest Council news, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/news or follow us on Facebook.

GET IN TOUCH

customer@murrindindi.vic.gov.au
murrindindi.vic.gov.au/request
5772 0333

More energy savings for Victorian families

VICTORIANS can now fully electrify their home through the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program, helping families slash their energy bills.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio announced that eligible households can receive up to \$140 off the cost of a new induction cooktop or freestanding induction stove if they choose to replace their gas cooktop.

The discounts for cooktops will be available through VEU accredited providers either at the point of sale at participating retailers or through a cash back later.

The VEU program offers discounts on a wide range of energy-efficient products, helping Victorians upgrade their homes and businesses with modern, electric appliances that use less energy, making them cheaper to run.

Households that replace a gas ducted heating system with an electric one can receive a discount of up to \$3600 on the system and save around \$600 every year on their energy bills. An electric heat pump hot water system can save households \$250 per year compared with a gas unit.

Converting an existing home from gas to all-electric will save the average family \$1700 per year and if they add rooftop solar, they could save \$2700 per year.

Since the program went all electric for households in 2023, the VEU has delivered rebates for 19,000 reverse cycle air conditioners, and 39,000 hot water systems, saving 28 million tonnes of emissions by 2025. By supporting energy efficiency, the VEU lowers demand for energy which reduces wholesale electricity costs for all Victorians.

New homes should be built for the future, which is why new homes that require a planning permit are required to be all-electric and energy efficient, making cheaper to run. Currently, there are no restrictions on household gas for existing homes.

Minister D'Ambrosio said, "We're making it more affordable for Victorians to switch to energy-efficient electric appliances, helping them slash the installation costs of these new energy efficient products but also save money on their power bills every year after."

"We have helped millions of households and businesses slash their power bills through our nation-leading Victorian Energy Upgrades program, subsidising energy-efficient products and creating jobs as we reach net zero by 2045."

For more information, visit energy.vic.gov.au/victorian-energy-upgrades/products/induction-cooktop-discounts



Seniors listened to Sue Hendy talk about the challenges that seniors face in society. -BD

Seniors enjoy lunch in Yea

AROUND 100 seniors attended a Murrindindi Shire Council lunch at the Country Club Hotel in Yea, to celebrate Seniors Week across the shire. The lunch was the third out of four lunches held across Murrindindi Shire.

Over the four events approximately 330 Seniors joined the festivities in Alexandra, Yea, Kinglake, and Marysville.

Andrew Langley, Access and Inclusion Officer, opened the event and seniors advocate

Sue Hendy spoke to the audience about ageing and agism. This can involve being treated badly and ignored, including rationing of health services because of one's age.

Sue gave some great advice. She said that when you age, you don't lose capacity. That is a myth and you can improve with age and learn new skills. Sue also spoke of the importance of pulling apart age and capacity, as they simply aren't related.

Another topic Sue touched on was memory. It's not just the elderly who forget things, even school children do it. Several things can impact memory such as lack of sleep, medication, brain injury and drinking alcohol.

The people at the well attended lunch also enjoyed music from local musician, Steve Paix. It was a great event for the local seniors to socialise and learn about some of the challenges faced in society.



Andrew Langley introduced the event, while the seniors enjoyed themselves. -BD

UPCOMING FEATURES

To book your spot in any of the upcoming features call Jo 5772 1002

Standard

The Yea Chronicle



Publication date: November 13
Deadline date: November 7, 5pm



Publication date: November 20
Deadline date: November 14, 5pm



Deadline date: November 27, 5pm



Andrew Paxton, Murrindindi Shire Council's Director of Community and Development, spoke briefly at the event. -BD

FFMVic urges campfire awareness

VICTORIA'S fire and land management agencies are urging campers and holidaymakers to prioritise campfire safety.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) responded to more than 580 unattended or abandoned campfires across the state.

In the same period, CFA responded to over 530 incidents involving campfires, many of which could have been avoided with proper precautions.

FFMVic Acting Chief Fire Officer, Aaron Kennedy, urged people to be careful when it comes to campfires, as gusty winds can easily carry embers from a campfire into the bush, posing a serious fire risk.

"Always fully extinguish campfires with water, not soil and make sure it's cool to touch before leaving," Mr Kennedy said.

"We want people to enjoy the bush safely. By knowing and following the rules for building and maintaining campfires, we can help keep the bush healthy and safe for all."

CFA Chief Officer, Jason Heffernan, reminded campers it is their responsibility to check if the area they're visiting is in the Fire Danger Period.

"Fire restrictions are already in force in parts of the west and northwest of the state so it's important to know what you can and can't do in those areas," Mr Heffernan said.

Parks Victoria Senior Manager Enforcement and Regulatory Services, Mark Breguet, said in most parks in Victoria, you are only permitted to light campfires in the fireplaces provided.

"There are some limited areas where campfires are permitted outside of constructed fireplaces, but you need to check before you go. Fines of up to \$3846 or infringements of \$988 apply," Mr Breguet said.

"Remember to always have someone in attendance while a campfire is going and properly extinguish the fire with water before you leave. The consequences can be devastating."

Conservation Regulator Chief Conservation Regulator, Kate Gavens, said campfires are the biggest cause of avoidable bushfires in Victoria, so we want campers to make sure they know the rules about campfires and how to build a safe campfire.

"We want people to enjoy their time in state forests, but to ensure they make campfire safety a priority by knowing what they can and can't do," Ms Gavens said.

"Our forest and wildlife officers will be out there over the weekend to remind campers about the importance of campfire safety."

With some parts of the state already entering the Fire Danger Period, it's crucial for campers to follow safety guidelines to help prevent flare-ups and protect people, critical infrastructure and the environment.

Before hitting the road, people should be familiar with local campfire regulations and safety measures to help protect the environment and local communities, learn more at cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions/can-i-or-cant-i

Watch your head, magpies are here

AUSTRALIANS know all too well the experience of the dreaded swoop during magpie season.

Though swooping can be an unsettling experience, Senior Wildlife Projects Officer at the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) Simon Ruff said it was important to remember that the behaviour is more of a defence mechanism than an attack.

"Every spring, some native birds swoop to defend their eggs and chicks for a short time while their young are most vulnerable," Simon said.

"While swooping is unsettling, it's normal behaviour for a range of native birds, warning people and animals not to come near their young. It's rare for birds to make contact."

To protect yourself and the native birds, DEECA recommends the following; Know your local swooping hotspots and avoid the area, move quickly but do not run, wear protective head and eye coverings, and do not harass the bird or its nest.

A live bird swooping map has been made available on the DEECA website. To see a swooping hotspot, or to add one to the public map, visit wildlife.vic.gov.au/managing-wildlife/swooping-birds and follow the prompts.

All native wildlife is protected by law. Harassing, harming or disturbing native birds and other wildlife is illegal in Victoria and penalties apply. To report wildlife crime, call Crime Stoppers Victoria on 1800 333 000.



Campers are being urged to make sure they follow the rules around campfire safety. -S

Save your cash go camping

FROM Sunday, December 1 until June 30, 2025, all of the state's 131 Parks Victoria paid camping grounds will have their prices suspended. Entry will be free.

It is estimated that the fee elimination will save families a collective \$7.3 million in booking fees.

The state government will bear the cost of the free entry, and invest \$1.7 million towards additional maintenance, repairs, and operating costs to ensure campgrounds are kept clean and safe for all to enjoy.

Families who have already booked and paid to go camping during the promotional period will be refunded.

To book a spot at one of Parks Victoria's camping grounds, visit parks.vic.gov.au

Small acts make a big impact.

Putting batteries in your bins poses fire risks to your property and to the people who collect your recycling and waste.

Take used batteries to your local drop-off location to keep harmful materials out of your bins and the environment.

Visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/batteries



Murrindindi Shire Council



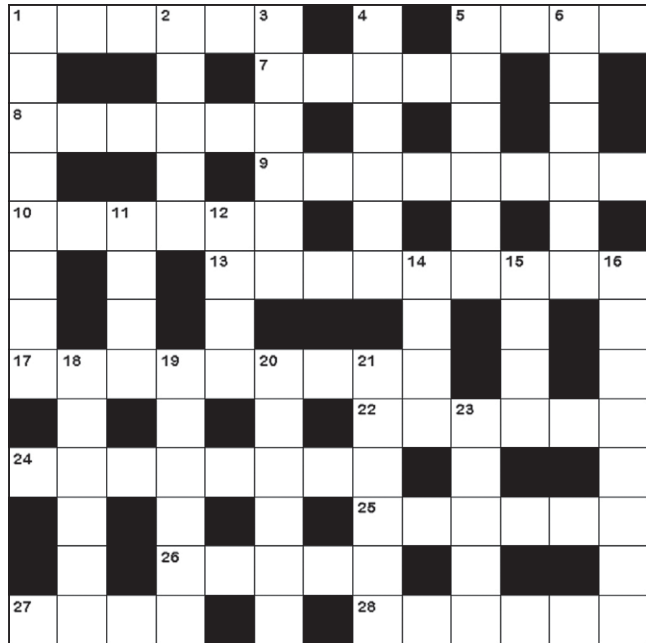
PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 14

Crossword

ACROSS

1. Tried the flavour.
5. Bars and wire for confining animals.
7. Determine how heavy something is.
8. Sullen and bad tempered.
9. Grant freedom to.
10. A horizontal beam over a door or window.
13. Makes by putting pieces together.
17. Not genuine or natural.
22. The state of being male or female.
24. A surgical cut.
25. A narcotic drug that contains opium.
26. Utter obscenities or profanities.
27. Be visibly worried or distressed.
28. Free from an obligation.



DOWN

1. Not affected by the passage of time.
2. A freshwater game and food fish.
3. Lives as a permanent resident.
4. Bite off a very small piece.
5. An angel portrayed as a winged child.
6. Having a kindly or tender nature.
11. The middle of the day.
12. Every one considered individually.
14. Small rodents that eat your cheese.
15. Assumed a reclining position.
16. Not as tall as the others.
18. Distant but within sight.
19. The need to have a drink.
20. Expelled from a country.
21. Take no notice of.
23. Lacking experience of life.

Word Search

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

Colours

- | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| BLACK | INDIGO | RED |
| BLUE | ORANGE | VIOLET |
| GREEN | PINK | WHITE |
| GREY | PURPLE | YELLOW |

Sudoku

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

Difficulty: Medium

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

Cryptogram

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
18				22				3

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
					11			

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
		8					

$$\frac{A}{21} \frac{O}{18} \frac{9}{11} \frac{12}{17} \frac{A}{18} :$$

$$\frac{A}{18} \frac{E}{6} \frac{A}{23} \frac{U}{18} \frac{I}{8} \frac{U}{21} \frac{3}{26} \frac{8}{5}$$

$$\frac{I}{2} \frac{E}{3} \frac{23}{15}$$

Math Square

	+		-	1	4
+		+		-	
	-		+	9	7
×		-		-	
	+		×		52
23		3		-16	

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.

Seniors can go digital

SINCE the launch of the the digital seniors card on the Service Victoria app, so far 80,000 downloads have taken place.

Last week the Minister for Government Services Gabrielle Williams encouraged Victorian seniors to download the free digital Seniors Card to their Service Victoria app, the card is free and takes less than five minutes to add.

The card is a digital version of the physical Seniors Card and can be stored securely, privately, and easily on the Service Victoria digital wallet on a mobile device. Seniors can access all the same discounts and benefits as the physical card with the digital version.

The card supports seniors to keep active and engaged with the community. It includes benefits such as discounts on shopping and dining, travel and attractions, health, home, auto, and more. Other benefits include e-gift and gift card offers for groceries, petrol and hardware.

Senior Victorians have been using their digital Seniors Card for the Victorian Seniors Festival, an iconic festival that runs for the month of October every year, with free and low cost events across the state including free public transport.

The Service Victoria digital wallet now includes a range of tokens such as the Veterans Card Victoria, Seniors Card, Digital Driver Licence, Working with Children Check, and others.

Victorians can leave their wallet at home and securely store and access their identification and entitlement cards all within their mobile device, reducing the risk of loss or theft.

Through the Service Victoria app, Victorians can easily access more than 130 government services online.

Victorians can apply for a Senior's Card at seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/seniors-card

Grants to enhance local waterways

THE Victorian Government is enhancing Victoria's local waterways with projects to protect the environment and create more green open spaces for the community to enjoy the great outdoors.

Minister for Water Harriet Shing recently opened the second round of the *Green Links Grant Program*, with \$2 million to be invested across projects that help to restore and improve local waterways all over Victoria.

Under round two, eligibility has been extended to also include projects delivered by schools, giving young people more opportunities to get involved in restoring and safeguarding the state's precious rivers and creeks.

Community groups, water and land managers, Traditional Owners, local councils and now schools are encouraged to

apply for project funding between \$20,000 and \$350,000.

Victoria's waterways are home to more than 1800 species of native plants and 600 species of native animals and revegetation projects are essential for the health of our waterways and their parkland corridors.

Projects funded through the *Green Links Grants* are creating more environmental corridors and helping native plants flourish.

The \$10 million *Green Links Grant Program* builds on the Victorian Government's \$262 million investment in maintaining the health and resilience of waterways and catchments across regional Victoria and Melbourne.

For more information on the *Green Links Grants Program* and future funding opportunities, visit water.vic.gov.au/grants/green-links-grants

Getting children interested in books

YOUNG Victorians are encouraged to pick up a book this year and take part of the *Premiers' Reading Challenge*.

Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne announced last week more than \$1 million to support our public libraries across Victoria as part of the Victorian Government's *Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund*.

Each year, the much loved *Premiers' Reading Challenge* encourages children and young people across Victoria to read a set number of books, with a published list of new and exciting titles suited to different reading levels.

This support will help libraries purchase copies of the books listed, and update and grow their collections for the community to enjoy.

Public libraries play an important role during the challenge, with many young readers visiting their local library to access the books included on that year's list.

The *Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund* supports local councils, regional library corporations, My Community Library (Myli), and Vision Australia.

For more information on the *Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund* visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au/funding-programs

Seasonal roads now open

FROM last Thursday, October 31 seasonal roads are back open. If you're planning a trip into Victoria's forests keep the following tips in mind; stick to formed tracks and roads, check the weather forecast as high winds and storms are common in the high country. Expect fallen trees and drive with caution.

It's always best to travel in a group, if this isn't possible inform someone of your plans. Expect rough and difficult terrain. Some of these roads have radio communication only in many areas.

When it comes to camping near waterways, camp high and dry, at least 20 metres away from the bank or waterway.

Sensitive alpine areas can suffer severe damage from 4WD activity, especially when wet.

If you notice any illegal activity or damage to forest areas, please report it to DEECA on 136 186.

VCE exams are now on

VCE exams began last week with 45,000 students sitting the English exam and another 2400 sitting English as an Additional Language exam.

Taking place at over 560 examination centres across the state, students sitting exams are part of the 89,000 VCE students who will complete at least one examination in 2024 including written, oral presentation, and performance exams.

VCE Vocational Major students are also completing their final end of year assessments

for 2024 as they prepare to complete their VCE studies.

There are 111 VCE subjects with a written exam, 47 VCE languages being examined, and 566 examination centres.

The final exam will take place on Wednesday, November 20, with students receiving their VCE results on Thursday, December 12.

For more information on the VCE Examinations and End of Year refer to the VCAA website vcaa.vic.edu.au



Yea Saleyards committee of management report

by Jan Beer, chair Yea Saleyards committee of management

JUST when we thought we had accomplished most of our long term Capital Projects for the Saleyards Complex, and we could enter a phase of consolidation and mainly maintenance, circumstances changed significantly with the announcement in December 2023 that the Pakenham Saleyards would close in June 2024.

The committee understood that this would consequently mean increased numbers of cattle coming from the Yarra Valley and surrounding areas north of Pakenham, to the Yea Saleyards as we are in a prime central location to receive these cattle. During the intervening first six months of 2024 we have seen the monthly store cattle sale numbers increase to consistently be at full yard capacity.

Throughput for 2023-2024 was 37,204. Nutrien Ag and Elders now have booked extra sales to cope with the increased volume of cattle for the 2024-2025 year, holding three sales in November, three sales in January, and three sales in May, including the regular store sale per month.

In December 2023, Alex Scott and Staff who operated out of Pakenham met with the Committee of Management to request that they be able to participate in the existing monthly Store cattle sales run by Nutrien Ag and Elders. As store sale numbers we knew were already reaching yard capacity, Alex Scott and Staff were informed that they were welcome to sell in Yea on any other day but not those days already booked by the local agents.

Alex Scott and Staff have decided to book stand alone store sales on the second Friday of the month, commencing on September 13, 2024.

The committee is ever mindful of the need to provide a safe, efficient working environment for all employees and sale attendees and provide a superior venue that facilitates the safe transaction and exchange of livestock, while also maintaining a viable business. This means continually being flexible and proactive in quickly upgrading and expanding to meet future trends.

This is clearly illustrated in the major projects the committee has just completed or are currently ongoing.

The front fence of the saleyards has now been completed, giving a much improved appearance and greater security. A black cyclone fence with two B-Double gates,

double exit gates and a front gate with laser cut Yea Saleyards name panel has been fabricated and installed. Apart from increased security, this project has lifted the appearance of the yards.

A successful grant application was gained through AgVic for an in ramp NLIS reader on the Angle ramp with a data box and touchscreen. This allows full traceability of all cattle coming through our yards which is an extremely important bio-security measure, as the yards are used on a daily basis for cattle in transit.

A truckwash at Yea is another facility which is very important for maintaining bio-security, however the cost, siting and ongoing maintenance of this is challenging, and a project which the Committee would like to see advancing. This project will require a large funding grant. It is very much a necessity with the closure of Pakenham meaning there is no available truckwash anywhere between Yea and Melbourne.

In February, the committee accepted a Truckwash Final Report from CAF Consulting and advised council that the preferred location was at the Yea Water Management Facility, just north of Yea on the Goulburn Valley Highway. The Murrindindi Shire Council CEO has requested a more detailed financial analysis to gauge feasibility.

During the first six months of 2024, it quickly became obvious with our yards at capacity, we were not coping with the large number of volume buyers post sale needing to put together B-Double loads for transport, either immediately after sale or to be held overnight awaiting transport.

With the increase in cattle throughput and all store sales currently being at full capacity the committee has had to be flexible and adapt to the changed conditions acknowledging the need for large capacity holding pens.

These pens provide an area to feed large numbers of cattle pre and post sale. The holding pens will also eliminate the need to feed cattle in selling pens resulting in less maintenance of soft flooring in these pens. Other benefits include addressing animal welfare and OH&S concerns, eg ease of moving stock to loading ramps when often only a single operator is working. It is hoped these pens will be constructed and operational by November.

These six large capacity holding pens will be constructed on the western side of the yards on the site of the current car park adjacent to the yards.

Drainage work will allow water that flows across the front of the B-Double ramp to be diverted to ponds at south of yards. There will be a re-siting of carpark to truck parking area with minimal gravel surface work required and clear division from truck parking area.

There will also be investigation into the provision of two offices for the stock agents and ongoing Allied Health Services. Currently these services are being provided in the canteen area which long term is not satisfactory. The agents have never had an office base at the yards and with cattle numbers increasing it is seen as necessary.

Governance

Governance of the committee of management has changed significantly, brought about initially by changes to legislation put in place by the Andrews Government. The Yea Saleyards committee is now a Section 65 Community Asset Committee of Management.

The chair thanked the local agents, Chris Pollard, Rick Wills and Jamie Quinlan for their many years of voluntary work on the committee and their valuable input in that agents have been major drivers in getting the saleyards to where they are today. Chris and Rick have both been voluntary committee members for over 30 years each and have always prioritised the welfare and advancement of the Yea Saleyards.

The last six months has seen two committee members resign, Jo-Anne Jackson and Trevor Sergeant, and we thank those members for their time, valued input and support over a number of years.

Ian Marshman and Ross Armstrong joined the committee.

The Yea Saleyards Healthcare program has been a joint project between the Yea and District Memorial Hospital (YDMH), Murrindindi Shire Council and the Yea Saleyards Committee to provide allied health services at the saleyards to the farming and broader community. It has been a huge success with sale attendees having access to skin, hearing and eyesight checks, cardiac health assessments, diabetes education, flu vaccinations, and mental health and drug and alcohol support program. These services are provided one Friday per month at the cattle sale. A member of the local farming community described the value of the program, "We think we're bulletproof and only see a doctor if we're really crook, but you are right here under our noses at the sale. It's a wonderful service." The initial funding

was jointly provided by the Victorian and the Australian Governments.

The continued high level of engagement by farmers has led to a study by Melbourne University to examine the reasons why it is so successful and to potentially secure ongoing funding.

The program has exceeded expectations, prompting Yea and District Memorial Hospital to seek and gain funding to expand services at the saleyards.

The Violet Vines Marshman Centre for Rural Health Research Centre has provided a \$50,000 grant to directly improve the health or well-being of people living in rural and remote locations.

The grant will also fund additional specialist and allied health services as part of the existing program and support a comprehensive evaluation through YDMH's partnership with the University of Melbourne Rural Health Academic Network (RHAN), which will help develop a transferable healthcare model. Additionally, the grant will enable two trial programs within the local area and support the expansion of the program into other communities.

Jan and Lisa attended the annual two day Australian Livestock Saleyards Association conference held in Melbourne, which was very enlightening. Most saleyards have the same concerns, these being compliance, truck effluent, funding sources, financial viability, throughput, secure fencing, cameras for monitoring, skilled staff, bureaucracy, up to date website, importance of social media.

Points of interest from the conference were: 40 million head of animals are transported annually throughout Australia. Seventy-seven per cent stock go through saleyards. Nine per cent stock go to processor. Five per cent of cattle are sold online.

Increased Maintenance

Due to increased throughput numbers and increase in numbers of larger grown cattle, a decision was made to increase the height of selling pens in lane one to maintain safety of both stock and humans.

Ongoing maintenance at the yards has seen replacement or upgrade of water troughs, replacement of the air compressor required for increased dependability of weighing scales, as previous compressor had failed on several occasions.

The ongoing aim of the committee is to continue to operate a financially self sustainable facility that requires no additional financial support from shire ratepayers.

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 8, Yea Saleyards
Store Sale
NOVEMBER 22, Yea Saleyards
Weaner Sale
NOVEMBER 29, Yea Saleyards
Weaner Sale
DECEMBER 6, Yea Saleyards
Store Sale
DECEMBER 13, Yea Saleyards
Store Sale
JANUARY 10, 2025 Yea Saleyards
Weaner Sale
JANUARY 15, 2025 Yea Saleyards
Weaner Sale
JANUARY 17, 2025 Yea Saleyards
Weaner Sale

SAVE THE DATE

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A/C Multi Vendor

Commencing: Thursday 14/11/2024 noon
Concluding: Monday 18/11/2024 noon
Inspection Day: Wednesday 13/11/2024
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THE Fincham family have been breeding Southdowns since 1955.

The breeding program is very commercially orientated. With a focus on a balanced, strong constitution, unassisted, live easy born lambs on the ground, with a high percentage of twinning. The rams produced are fast growing, heavy carcasses and solid hindquarters, using balanced Lambplan figures as a guide. With good fat cover and high IMF (intra muscular fat) essential for eating quality.

The Fincham's invite all interested parties to the fifth annual sale of 60 top quality stud and flock Southdown rams. The ram sale will be held on Tuesday, November 12 at 1pm at the Yea showgrounds sheep pavilion in Yea.

This year's sale rams are an outstanding group; with many in the top five per cent to 20 per cent for all terminal sheep breeds for birth weight, fat and also top 10 per cent for IMF marbling, essential for eating quality.

The Fincham's want their Southdowns when crossed with any type of maternal ewe to grow quickly, finishing at three to four

months with a tight Down's type skin, that have good fat cover, as sappy suckers, to obtain premium prices. This will enable clients to reap the rewards of trade lambs between 22-26 kilogram carcass weight or have the ability to go out to export lambs at the 27-30 kilogram carcass weight.

The modern Southdown has the ability to do this and more, as so many ram breeders are selling half bred Southdown rams to put the real meat sheep back into their programs. The Southdown has the unique factor of tender juicy meat with a naturally finer intramuscular

fat (marbling) required for the best eating lamb experience.

They have a core ewe flock of 250 mature Southdown ewes. Over the years the Finchams have consistently lambed down, tagged and marked around 178 per cent of live lambs.

Their breeding ewes were founded in 1955 on Badcock's "Fairbank" ewes (Tasmania). During the 1970's, they selected and imported ewes from the Punchbowl Dispersal (New Zealand). These sheep had very high lambing percentages, which most of their flock go back to now.

Over the years the Finchams have bought the best rams from leading Australian and New Zealand bloodlines and have spared no expense to get the right rams for their breeding program, the aim is to breed the best possible Southdown rams for their Prime Lamb clients to MEAT the future with premium prices.

They are a closed flock; Ovine Brucellosis Accredited free and have been continuously accredited free of Brucellosis since 1975. They are an OJD third generation approved, fully (V) vaccinated flock since 2004. All of their flock are footrot and lice free.

For the upcoming ram sale any enquiries phone Tim and Jodie on 0427 871 294 or your local Elders agent. You can also find them on Facebook at Finchams Burando Southdowns.



A group of the sale rams. -S

STOCK REPORT 1 NOVEMBER 2024				
1 November 2024 Store Sale (Elders/Nutrien)	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers	Cows & Calves
Number of head	3,309			185
Average \$ per head	\$1,393			
Average weight per head	351.1kg			
Top price per head		\$2,480	\$1,650	\$2,100
Top weight		703.8kg	497.1kg	
Turnover	\$4.4 million			



Fincham's Burando Southdowns

Since 1955

5th Annual Sale - 60 Top Quality Rams

Tuesday 12th November 1.00pm

At Yea Showgrounds Sheep Pavillion, Yea Victoria



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60 SOUTHDOWN RAMS

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Find us at Fincham's Burando Southdowns



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Bruce Elliott (Yea) - 0409 699 937
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Jamie Quinlan (Yea) - 0419 894 232
Will Phillips (Yea) - 0418 112 968

NOVEMBER PHOTO COMPETITION

Submit your photo competition entry for November, for your chance to win a \$50 voucher from *Dindi Country Clothing* in Alexandra. The November theme is 'local food'.

Sponsored by



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Email your photo and contact details to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au by noon November 27, 2024

T&C: Professional photographers are ineligible to enter. Staff or associated family members of Alexandra Newspapers are ineligible to enter. Photos must be taken within the Murrindindi Shire



Let's eat, it's our treat

Graze and gaze at Sedona Estate

WITH 2024 drawing to its end, it's time sit back and enjoy the good things in life.

Just in time for the holiday summer season, the new Sedona Estate white wines are ready to be enjoyed. When it comes to sipping a dry white wine in the warmer months, sauvignon blanc is still a winner. Sedona Estate's 2024 release is no exception. Packed with floral aromatics and a crisp palate of kiwi and grapefruits, this new sauvignon blanc is the perfect summer drink.

First launched in 2021 and after two successful vintages, the new 2024 Sedona Estate rosé is hard to resist.

"Like any good wine, our new rosé has started its winemaking journey in our estate vineyard. It is well balanced with a crisp dry finish and pairs well with local trout dishes, mild curries and salmon; all trialled and approved in our home kitchen," owner and winemaker Paul Evans said.

In recent years, Paul and Sonja's dedication and passion for their land and wine business have reached new levels. This year three of the winery's reds were awarded Silver Medals at the 2024 London Wine Competition. Paul and Sonja are immensely proud that their vineyard in Murrindindi produces fruit that competes on the world stage.



Graze on Sedona's popular artisan platters this holiday season. -S

"The most important seal of approval though comes from our loyal wine friends who trust the product and enjoy the experience of drinking a great wine grown and made in our pristine region," Sonja said.

Drop by the winery's cellar door at 182 Shannons Road, Murrindindi to taste these new wines or buy them at a local outlet. On weekends, delicious artisan cheese platters and charcuterie and salumi boards to share are offered at the cellar door.

It's a great excuse to stay and admire the amazing views from the estate.

Congratulations Angelina

THE winner of our \$50 Let's Eat voucher was Angelina Bell from Alexandra. Angelina has chosen to use her voucher at Trawool Estate.

Be sure to get your entry form from this edition for your chance to win a \$50 meal at one of our advertised venues.



Let's eat, it's our treat

Your chance to WIN a \$50 meal voucher

Name.....
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**Photocopies will not be accepted.
One entry per household.**

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

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Regional smokers prefer cigarettes over vapes

A RECENT report from the Cancer Council Victoria's Centre for Behavioural Research (CBRC) shows a concerning prevalence of smoking and vaping across the Victorian community, broken down by local government areas (LGAs) and local public health units (LPHUs).

Of the 79 LGAs in Victoria, 31 are in metropolitan Melbourne and 48 are classified as regional/rural. Broadly, the survey showed higher vaping rates in inner metropolitan Melbourne, and higher smoking rates in regional areas and on Melbourne's urban fringe, in areas such as Hume with 17 per cent currently smoke, and in the metro area Greater Dandenong have 16.8 per cent currently smoke. There is also considerable variation in smoking and vaping prevalence across LPHU catchments.

This data serves as a reminder of the need to address smoking and vaping simultaneously, or areas with high current vaping rates risk becoming smoking rates. Continued education, funding for campaigns and appropriate cessation support is essential.

Head of CBRC, Professor Sarah Durkin commented on the trends in the population representative study.

"Higher smoking in Victoria's urban fringe, regional and rural areas is a concern. We know people from these areas are equally likely to try to quit, so the higher smoking prevalence is probably due to socioeconomic and cultural factors which make starting smoking easier and staying quit more difficult. In contrast, the metropolitan areas with lower smoking rates seem to have higher vaping rates. The greater presence of a younger demographic in these metro areas, the target of vaping influencers and a lot of other promotions for vapes, combined with easy accessibility at the time of the survey, likely explains the higher vaping prevalence in metropolitan Melbourne," Professor Durkin said.

Since the 2022 survey, significant progress has been made in vaping legislation to restrict access to and promotion of harmful, addictive vaping products not used for therapeutic purposes. From October this year, vapes can only be sold at a pharmacy from behind the counter following a consultation with a pharmacist. When this research was conducted, vape shops were still popping up, despite it being illegal to sell nicotine vapes to someone without a prescription.

Quit Director, Rachael Andersen spoke about her hopes for the future taking into consideration the new vaping laws.

"We know nicotine is such a powerfully addictive drug, and that addiction is hard to break. And we also know that the industry will continue trying to create products to addict young customers to nicotine. Getting vapes out of conventional retail settings, coupled with the right enforcement, ensuring they are only sold to people for therapeutic purposes, is the right thing to do."

Ms Andersen concluded by flagging the need for public health efforts and campaigns which address both smoking and vaping, considering the gateway effect between the two behaviours.

"A recent study of Australian teens showed people who vape but have never smoked are at least five times as likely to take up smoking. So, while much of the media narrative of the past years has focused on vaping, if we stop educating the community on the harms of smoking and if we reduce support for quit smoking attempts, we risk seeing the areas with high vaping rate areas becoming high smoking rate areas in the future. And if we don't address the stubbornly high smoking rates in outer Melbourne and regional areas, we risk seeing health inequities continue to widen," Ms Andersen concluded.

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TRADES ADVERTISING DEADLINE NOON THURSDAY

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Department of Health



Board director opportunities Yea and District Memorial Hospital

The Minister for Health, the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP, is pleased to invite applications for part time board director positions at Yea and District Memorial Hospital. The positions start on July 1, 2025 and appointments are for up to three years.

These positions provide an exciting opportunity for Victorians to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Applicants are selected for their capabilities, including personal and professional experience, knowledge, and skills that contribute to the strategic leadership and oversight of health care for the Victorian community.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that government boards reflect the rich diversity of the Victorian community. This includes diverse leadership of the health system that represents the variety of backgrounds and cultures of Victorian communities to enable the vision of achieving the best health, wellbeing and safety for everyone.

To build an empowered and engaged leadership across the health system, our priority areas are people of all ages, First Nations people, people who live with a disability, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people who identify as LGBTIAQ+, the promotion of gender equality and upholding human rights.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate the capabilities identified in their applications.

Applications close at **midnight Sunday, November 24, 2024.**

Further information about Victorian health service boards and how to apply can be found at www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications



Department of Health



Board director opportunities at Alexandra District Health

The Minister for Health, the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP, is pleased to invite applications for part time board director positions at **Alexandra District Health**. The positions start on July 1, 2025 and appointments are for up to three years.

These positions provide an exciting opportunity for Victorians to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Applicants are selected for their capabilities, including personal and professional experience, knowledge, and skills that contribute to the strategic leadership and oversight of health care for the Victorian community.

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Further information about Victorian health service boards and how to apply can be found at www.health.vic.gov.au/board-applications or call Executive Assistant, Jennifer Creed on 5772 0924.



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DEATH NOTICES

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Thank you to the wider community for your support and care.

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FUNERAL NOTICES

McFADYEN Jeffery
A memorial service celebrating the life of Jeffery will be held on Monday November 11, at Willowbank 310 Whanregarwen Road commencing at 1.30pm



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MEETINGS

ACHERON HALL AGM will be held on November 17 at 11.30am. All welcome. For more information phone 0419 871 483.

ALEXANDRA Historical Society AGM at 2pm on November 28, 2024 at Dove Cottage.

Haines concern for support at home packages for regional participants

FEDERAL Independent Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines is wanting a stronger regional focus to address key issues in aged care, as a recent debate in Federal Parliament marked another step in the overhaul of the aged care system.

Speaking to the bill in parliament, Dr Haines expressed concern that the new *Support at Home* packages will not be large enough for regional participants, who face additional costs due to higher transportation costs and workforce shortages.

“It is important our aged care system is sustainable, now and well into the future, and this is the policy equivalent of knocking the house down and starting again,” Dr Haines said.

“For people in Indi, we have a much higher proportion of older people compared to the national average, and many people move to our beautiful towns to retire. This reform is crucial to their quality of life.”

“Across Indi, I hear from older people who do not receive the full benefit from their existing home care packages, because the cost of travel chews up their budgets too quickly.”

Dr Haines continued her push for attention on regional transport issues during Question Time, asking the Minister for Aged Care how the government will ensure regional and rural Australians won't be disadvantaged by travel costs in delivering *Support at Home* care.

“The Minister, in responding to my question, said the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority will advise the government on services and pricing, particularly with respect to transport. I will

be looking at this closely to see if this delivers better outcomes for regional people.”

The aged care reforms have been developed by the government, with consultation with the Coalition and other stakeholders before legislation was introduced to parliament.

The new Act will commence on July 1, 2025 with the government saying the ‘no worse off’ principle will provide certainty to people already in or assessed as needing home care or already in residential care that

they won't make a greater contribution to their care than they have already planned for.

Dr Haines supported expanded regulatory powers for the Aged Care and Quality and Safety Commission and the establishment of a new independent statutory complaints commissioner but said there was room to strengthen older persons' rights and whistleblower protections.

“These were key recommendations, after shocking stories of abuse, neglect and violence were shared during the Royal Commission

and in the years since. Unscrupulous providers and workers must be held accountable.

“I share concerns of some older peoples' advocacy groups that not all rights will be enforceable and pathways for reviewing any decisions of the complaints commissioner will be limited.

“If an older person does not feel that the response to their complaint is sufficient, they should have fulsome review rights. We need an end to the fragmented, overlapping and inconsistent whistleblowing regime and the creation of a whistleblower protection authority,” Dr Haines said.

The reforms are yet to pass the House of Representatives before moving to the Senate, and could face amendments in both Houses of Parliament.

Dr Haines said she will be paying close attention to implementation of the new aged care system and taking concerns to the government as they emerge.

“I speak regularly with people using aged care services, as well as workers and providers, and this will continue as the new system come into effect.”

New building watchdog to have teeth

THE Victorian Government is delivering more protections for homebuyers, giving them peace of mind whether they're building, buying or renovating a home.

Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny announced an overhaul of the building regulator, replacing the Victorian Building Authority with a new more powerful watchdog, the Building and Plumbing Commission, to oversee building and plumbing industries across the state.

For the first time, the regulator will bring together all aspects of building quality control, regulation, insurance and dispute resolution, into a single agency.

The watchdog will also be given tough new powers to protect Victorian families and their homes.

Currently, the regulator can only direct builders to fix substandard work before occupants move in. Under new rules the Building and Plumbing Commission will be able to direct to fix work not just before move-in day, but beyond. The government will work with industry to define the eligible time period.

New powers will also enable the watchdog to stop apartments with serious defects from being sold, as well as increased reporting requirements before occupancy certificates are signed off on new builds.

While most builders do the right thing, some dodgy operators continue to cut corners and break rules. It's why the watchdog will be resourced with new boots on the ground, with a 50 per cent increase in auditors and frontline inspectors, as part of a \$63.3 million investment in this year's budget.

The watchdog will also be tasked with leading an inspection blitz, including a crackdown on unregistered building and plumbing work.

Victorians will have better access to insurance if things go wrong, eliminating the need for complex and costly legal claims against builders who do the wrong thing.

Apartment buyers will also have stronger financial protection, with developers required to provide a bond to cover the cost of fixing poor work for buildings over three storeys. The new bond will be the first step towards introducing a new 10 year insurance product for apartment buildings, with next steps to be developed in consultation with an industry working group.

Further changes will be made to dispute resolution processes as part of the transition to the Building and Plumbing Commission, creating more certainty for Victorians and industry, and more streamlined pathways to resolve disputes.

The government is also working with industry and consumer groups on reforms to ensure the rules around domestic building contracts are clear and fair, with legislative change expected in 2025.

The Victorian Building Authority's CEO Anna Cronin has been leading a major transformation of the Victorian Building Authority's performance and culture since her appointment in July 2023.

Earlier this year, Ms Cronin commissioned an independent review into concerns raised by consumers about historical practices by the VBA, which has been released today. That report confirms what many already knew, that significant changes are needed to better protect Victorians building or renovating a home. That's what the government is doing.

Consultation with industry and consumer groups will continue to guide the implementation of these reforms.

Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny said, “For most of us, building a home will be the biggest investment we ever make, and Victorians rightly expect to get what they pay for, a properly built home.

“For those building, renovating or buying a home, the new regulator will mean peace of mind. For those found doing the wrong thing, it'll mean consequences.”

Pill testing now legalised

LEGISLATION to enshrine pill testing, which is also known as drug checking, into law has now passed the Victorian Parliament, paving the way for the state government to trial pill testing this summer.

The *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Pill Testing) Bill 2024* means Victoria is the first jurisdiction in the country to have dedicated legislation to support pill testing.

This legislation allows both fixed and mobile pill testing services to operate in Victoria, meaning nobody is breaking the law by operating or using these services.

Pill testing is about saving lives and changing people's behaviour by giving them access to the information they are asking for, and in an increasingly volatile and unpredictable drug market this has never been more important.

The state government has worked closely with Victoria Police on the drafting of the Bill, ensuring the right balance between holding drug dealers to account, while not deterring people from using the service.

The mobile service will begin during this summer's festival season and will attend up to 10 music festivals and events throughout the implementation trial period.

A fixed site will also open in mid 2025, delivered in partnership with a community or tertiary health provider, operating with targeted hours, and located in an inner Melbourne area close to nightlife and transport.

The drug checking technology available at these services will be able to test the make-up of most pills, capsules, powders, crystals, or liquids and identify harmful chemicals that can lead to death.

Trained peer workers and technical experts will also provide personalised and confidential health information to help people make better, safer and more informed decisions when visiting the service.

This is an implementation trial to see what model works best in Victoria because there's plenty of evidence that pill testing saves lives and data obtained through the trial will help better inform public health responses and campaigns.

The new legislation also supports increased access to naloxone, the overdose reversal medicine, through 20 vending machines across Victoria by mid 2025.

Government starts driving high: can they avoid the pot-hole?

THE first drive has taken place on the Victorian Government's closed-circuit trial to investigate whether individuals who use medicinal cannabis can drive safely.

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne this week announced the world first trial kicked off at METEC Driver Training in Bayswater.

“In a world first trial, we have kicked off the first drive to gain a greater understanding on the effects of medicinal cannabis on driving in Victoria,” Ms Horne said.

Backed by a \$4.9 million investment by the government, the 18-month trial conducted by Swinburne University of Technology, will assist in understanding how THC in medicinal cannabis impacts driving performance and

how this translates into risk on the road, with a regional trial track set to also begin in Anglesea.

“We've made significant strides in the articulation of our research vehicles, which are specifically designed to assess driving performance in real-world conditions,” Swinburne University of Technology Lead Researcher Drugs and Driving Research Unit, Professor Luke Downey, said.

Researchers will review participants' ability to manage distractions and assess their driving performance including steering, braking and speed control.

The drivers will also be closely monitored throughout the trial and strict protections

will be in place to make sure people at the track keep safe.

A qualified driving instructor will be present in the vehicle at all phases of the driving assessments, with access to dual controls to intervene promptly if needed.

The private driving course mirrors real-world conditions and is away from public roads.

To qualify, participants must have been prescribed medicinal cannabis for a sleep disorder, chronic pain, or a mental health condition for at least six months. The trial will include pre and post-drive drug impairment screenings.

To learn more about the track trial, visit swinburne.edu.au/research

Haines questions invitation-only grants

MEMBER for Indi Helen Haines is asking the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) to investigate election commitments made by the Labor Party in 2022, amounting to \$1.35 billion through two invitation-only grant funds.

Dr Haines said that during the last election campaign, the Australian Labor Party made 435 commitments to fund projects, with 86.8 percent of seats that Labor won or held at the election receiving a grant through the programs. Only 51.7 per cent of non-Labor seats received a grant.

She said that once Labor formed government, it directed the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to set up two grant programs, *Investing in Our Communities Program* and the *Priority Community Infrastructure Program*, allocating almost \$1.35 billion to these programs in their October 2022 budget.

Freedom of Information requests show the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government asked the department to undertake a desktop review for project merits after coming to government, long after the spending commitments were made.

Dr Haines pointed to the program guidelines as a point of concern, noting they were "one-off, closed, non-competitive programs," with the eligibility restricted to those "invited to deliver a project identified by the Australian Government."

"The government had an 'invite-only' list of organisations that could apply through these two programs, mostly projects that were already promised by Labor as election commitments," Dr Haines said.

"When you put all of the information together, who received a grant, the application process, and the assessment process, we have to ask, does the process for determining recipients under these programs seem rigorous, objective, fair, equitable and responsible? Or is this just another example of pork barrelling?"

Dr Haines said she had met with the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Catherine King to lay out

her concerns in a meeting in October, advising the minister she would be making a referral to the audit office.

"I met with the minister to outline my concerns and personally advise her that I would be writing to the ANAO to ask them to investigate the programs and the actions and decisions of the government."

"The ANAO is the auditor for public spending. It makes sure that when the government spends taxpayer money, it stacks up. And I want to know if these election commitment programs stack up."

Dr Haines said that any assertion by the government that 'the election is the selection' goes to the heart of the problem of pork barrelling and called on the parliament to take firm action to end the practice.

"Whether a sports rort, a carpark rort, or an invitation-only infrastructure grant, both major parties continue to use public funds to target electors for partisan political purposes," Dr Haines said.

"The spending of taxpayer money should always be done fairly and transparently, with proper guidelines and selection criteria and awarded to recipients who objectively demonstrate merit."

According to the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption, the allocation of public funds and resources to targeted electors for partisan political purposes constitutes pork barrelling.

According to the Australia Institute, more than 80 per cent of Australians view pork barrelling as a form of corruption.

"This is a flaw of Australian democracy and needs to change," Dr Haines said.

"What makes the practices under these two programs even more galling is the contrast when looking at the only two regional infrastructure grant programs available for the rest of Australia to apply for, the *Growing Regions Program* and the regional *Partnership and Precincts Program*, which share in \$1 billion in funding.

"It is more than two years since they were budgeted and we are only just now seeing money getting out the door for these two programs."

Reusing the panel after solar

THE issue of solar panel disposal at the end of their lifespan is a problem that looms large over Australia, but there are recycling techniques currently being refined that could change the entire industry.

Over three million Australian homes have solar panels, with a life expectancy of 25 to 30 years. Many of them are being changed at the 10-to-12-year mark though, creating massive amounts of strain on landfill.

At the beginning of 2024, the University of New South Wales estimated that up to 90 per cent of solar panels could end up in landfill, still holding toxic materials such as cadmium and lead inside them.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government, Victorian Government, and South Australian Government, have all banned solar panels from entering the tip. Instead, they must be taken to e-waste drop-off points. Studies have shown that up to 95 per cent of the materials in a solar panel can be recycled.

Until this point, recycling solar panels has been a costly and difficult process. It still is, except work is being done to refine the process and turn recycling solar panels into a viable option rather than sending them to landfill.

The Pan Pacific Recycling plant in Queensland is recycling solar panels to the point that so far, since their opening at the beginning of October, there has been no waste.

They are taking photovoltaic panels that can no longer produce electricity and removing the aluminium and wires before the rest of the panel is ground up and refined into plastic, glass, silicon, silver and copper.

They then find markets for all the recovered materials. However, recycling the solar panels still costs the plant between \$10 and \$15 per panel. The Pan Pacific pilot facility is part of the Smart Energy Council's solar stewardship program and are supported by funding from the Queensland Government. This helps them cover the cost of recycling solar panels.

As it stands, the Pan Pacific Recycling plant is aiming to recycle 240,000 solar panels per year. There were an estimated 100 million solar panels in Australia at the end of 2022. That number has surely grown since then, meaning that current recycling efforts are seriously inadequate for dealing with Australia's expired solar panels.

The Smart Energy Council (SEC) is calling for a mandatory national stewardship scheme to help make recycling solar panels more viable as the issue of end-of-life looms larger.

Darren Johannesen, the Smart Energy Council Manager Product Stewardship, provided details to this masthead about the work that the SEC has been doing over many years.

"The Smart Energy Council has spent many years working on a stewardship system for solar panels once they reach end-of-life," Mr Johannesen said.

"We're currently running a pilot program with the Queensland Government to determine the most efficient way to recover, reuse and recycle solar modules. This pilot is a blueprint for solar recycling in other states and territories, but the most effective leadership in this area must come from the federal government.

"Solar panels contain critically important materials like polysilicon, silver, copper, aluminium, glass and plastics that can be fully recycled and used again in manufacturing. International demand for resources like copper and silver is outstripping supply, it's vital that we recapture and reuse these finite materials.

"One in three Australian homes having solar on their roofs, that figure is tipped to reach one in two in the next decade or so. Millions of solar panels are reaching end-of-life each year in Australia, safely recovering, reusing or recycling them is a must.

"The Smart Energy Council stands ready to work with solar installers, manufacturers, recyclers and government to build a sustainable national stewardship scheme," Mr Johannesen concluded.

Road safety film competition for young Victorians

THE Victorian Government and Transport Accident Commission (TAC) are offering young Victorians the chance to use their creative skills to help save lives on our roads.

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Melissa Horne joined the TAC to launch the 2024 Split Second Competition, which invites Victorian creatives aged 18 to 30 to submit their attention-grabbing concepts for road safety campaigns aimed at young drivers.

This year the competition is open to both filmmakers and content creators and will now include two winning entries who will each be awarded a \$5000 cash prize and \$35,000 production budget, along with mentoring from Truce Films and creative agency Taboo.

Filmmakers and content creators are eligible to enter the competition, and they are asked to focus on one of two risky road safety behaviours, fatigue or not wearing a seatbelt.

One of the competition winners will be selected from a culturally and linguistically diverse community to ensure critical road safety messages are being tailored to engage as many young road users as possible across our multicultural state.

Sadly, young drivers continue to be involved in more crashes resulting in death and serious injury than any other group of drivers, and one of the most critical factors in those incidents is fatigue.

Further, research shows that, people aged 18 to 25 are most likely to have travelled as a driver and passenger without wearing a seatbelt, which are crucial to preventing fatalities and serious injury.

Minister Horne said, "Fatigue and not wearing a seatbelt continue to be significant contributors to road trauma in Victoria, and it only takes a split second for a life to be changed forever.

"By engaging young filmmakers and content creators, the Split Second competition aims to bring fresh, impactful perspectives on how these risks can be prevented."

TAC CEO Tracey Slatter added, "Split Second has shown us over the years that, through the power of creativity, young Victorians can influence attitudes and behaviours among their peers.

"To encourage and celebrate as many new and diverse voices as possible, we're adding a brand new prize for young people with a multicultural background."

The 2023 Split Second competition winner Sati Ocal commented, "Not only has the TAC's Split Second Competition allowed me to produce really meaningful content, but it has also created a number of opportunities as I complete my study and look to take the leap into the creative industry."

Entries are open until November 24. For more information, visit tac.vic.gov.au/road-safety/split-second

What do you do if someone has an asthma attack

IT'S grass pollen season in Victoria, so you might notice more asthma and hay fever symptoms popping up. This also brings a chance of thunderstorm asthma. It's a good idea to know what to do if an asthma attack happens, and when asthma first aid might be needed.

Step 1: Sit yourself or the person upright.

Step 2: Using a blue or grey reliever puffer (and a spacer, if you have one), shake the puffer, put one puff into the spacer, take four breaths. Repeat four times. Remember: Shake, one puff, four breaths.

Step 3: Wait four minutes

If there is no improvement, take four more separate puffs of blue or grey reliever.

Step 4: If there is still no improvement, dial triple zero (000) for an ambulance. Take four separate puffs every four minutes until emergency assistance arrives.

Call triple zero (000) immediately if you can't breathe, your asthma suddenly becomes worse, or you are having an asthma attack and there's no blue or grey reliever available.

For more detailed information or if you use other asthma medications such as Bricanyl, Symbicort or others, follow asthma first aid specific for them. Visit go.vic.gov.au/3NDJC6N

Report your wombats

AN online tool used to report wombat and burrow sightings and assist in the aid of mange treatment is now available.

Australia's wombats are under threat from roadkill and a highly contagious skin disease, sarcoptic mange, which if left untreated, can result in a horrible death.

Biologist from Western Sydney University, Associate Professor, and Chief Scientist of WomSAT Julie Oldwhich developed the tool to understand wombats and their habits better.

With the assistance of citizen scientists across Australia, this online tool also helps to understand and combat the threats wombats face by providing an up to date, broader picture of what is occurring among wombat populations.

Through WomSAT, citizen scientists can log their wombat sightings to ensure conservation of the species.

To find out more about WomSAT, visit womsat.org.au/womsat

SPORT

Yea High School farewells year 12 students



The house captains with their Murrindindi Shire Recognition Awards. -S



The student leaders with their Murrindindi Shire Recognition Awards. -S



The bus captains were recipients of Murrindindi Shire Recognition Awards. -S



The NAPLAN high achievers. -S



Cross country award winners. -S



The athletics award winners. -S

Perfect Day for Little Athletics

UNDER a blue sky filled with sunshine and smiles, the Little Athletics community came together for what was truly a perfect day. The day kicked off with the usual warm up, but with a twist, older athletes teamed up with the littler ones for a series of fun movements, a game of "steal the tails," and a solid stretching session to get everyone limbered up.

Excitement grew as the presentation of Centre Records began. Records set were Hazel Dalton under seven 500m, Kai Goonan under seven 500m, Shiloh Clacy under eight 700m, Viyan Solanki under nine 700m, Clay Hilder under 12 1100m race walk, Declan Baker under 13 200m hurdles, Charlotte Boulton under 14 200m hurdles, Chase Hilder under 14 Javelin, Cate Caswell under 15 200m hurdles, and Levi Campbell under 14 Shot Put, 200m hurdles, triple jump. With so many records already shattered so early in the season, we're gearing up for even more success at the Regional Level later this year.

In other exciting news, Murrindindi's very own Levi Campbell has earned a place on the Victorian development tour team heading to New Zealand from January 8 to 15. Levi will compete over three days at the North Island Colgate Games, the biggest annual athletic event for juniors aged seven to 14. Levi will represent Victoria in the 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, and long jump, making his club and community proud. Fundraising efforts are underway to support Levi's journey, and we can't wait to see him showcase his talent on the international stage.

To top off the day, athletes wrapped up with a fantastic relay training session, practicing their baton changes. This year, the club is sending its largest team in years to the Regional Relay Event in Shepparton on Sunday, November 17.



Juniors taking off in the 100 metre race. -S



New records set this season Levi, Shiloh, Clay, Hazel, Chase, Kai, Charlotte, and Viyan. -S



Alisha about to let the shot put fly. -S



Levi Campbell clearing 152cm in the high jump. -S

The Chronicle Sport



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AH Smith Trophy played at Yea

by Alan Pell

Foursomes

ALTHOUGH frustrating at times 18 men in nine teams play Wednesday on a fantastic day of weather and the course in superb shape. Winners with 86 off the stick nett 73 were Bob Glenister and Gary Pollard.

Second with 95 nett 75 were Russell Wealands and Alan Pell from third Rob Gill and Peter Johnston with 103 nett 75.5. There was no nearest the pin on the 10th for two and Brendon Chenhall and Brian Priestley took out the club award.

AH Smith Trophy

Saturday saw 40 people on the course with the men playing first round stableford of the AH Smith Trophy. The course is excellent at the moment and scores reflected this.

Winner of the day and leader of the Smith Trophy was Neil Peterson (18) with 82 off the stick 42 stableford points. Second on countback with 40 points was Alan Pell (14) from Sam Wright (29) third. John Tanner (25) was fourth with 39 from fifth Peter Johnston (18) 38. Bill Dredge was nearest the pin on the second and Tom White took out the club trophy.

There were 14 ladies playing a stroke round on Saturday with Christine Simmons (26)



Tom White took out the Club Trophy. -S



Winner of the AH Smith Trophy was Neil Peterson. -S

the best with nett 68. Second was Di Elliott (30) on countback from Judi Newman (42) with 70 nett. Meryl Connell was nearest the pin on the second. Tom because he has been playing cricket, also received his Sichlau Trophy he won earlier this month. He had the

best nett scores over four of the five monthly medal rounds.

Men's Wednesday competitions are now starting at 8pm for 8.30 hit offs.

Monday Triples Bowls

by Angela Finn

ON Monday, October 21 the winning team of the Yea Machinery Monday Triples comprised of Rodney Pitt-Wood, Greg Newland and Howard Geldard.

Mick Barrott, Leonard Sheahan, and Jeff Green finished as runners up.

On Monday, October 28, one team stood out by winning all three games by large margins. They finished up with a shot difference of +54 shots.

The members of this winning team, who were in such fine form for the whole day were, Maurie Finn, Mick Barrott, and Rob Marks.

The runners up, also with three wins from three games, with a shot difference of +8 were, Bob Hentschel, Kym Cooper, and Jeff Green.

The Yea Bowls Club would once again like to thank Yea Machinery for sponsoring the Monday Triples for the month of October.



The winning team of the Yea Machinery Monday Triples on Monday, October 21 was Greg Newland and Rodney Pitt-Wood. Howard Geldard was absent for the photograph. -S

Welcome to the jungle: Alexandra squash

by Kristelle Leary

Monday Competition Kangaroos versus Wombats

Jordan versus Lochlan: Great rallying with good winners hit by both players. A hard fight to the end with Jordan getting the upper hand in the end. 62 to 59.

Mick versus Kelly (fill in): With games changing hands it was anyone's match. Kelly lifted her game in the middle of the match while Mick showed great strength at the beginning and end. Mick had a good win in the final game to take the match. 57 to 44.

Justin versus Daniel W: Started strong, Daniel gave himself a solid lead for his opponent to chase. Justin won the next two games but barely scratched the surface of Daniels' lead. Daniel was victorious. 66 to 57.

Jack versus James (fill in): Both players came out firing. James would streak ahead only for Jack to reel him in. The first two games were tied-up. Jack's placement in the third and fourth games delighted the crowd and edged him ahead by five points for a dramatic win. 56 to 51.

Platypus versus Koalas

Tyler versus Eric: Great second half of the match. After mastering Ethan's big serves, Tyler played some skilful squash. Ethan still had the win with points and took the match. 56 to 46.

Matt (fill in) versus Lee: An entertaining and even match. Some beautiful placement from Lee and extraordinary court coverage from Matt. Coming down to the wire, Lee won out. 57 to 54.

Michael M versus Simon: Very tight second game followed by Michael coming out swinging in the third. Sensational swan diving in the final game saw Michael take the last set and match. 54 to 46.

John versus Daniel K: A steady start gave John confidence that he had a chance. Daniel shattered John's hope by dealing a merciless beating in games two and three. John rallied in the fourth game to stop his point deficit from growing. Daniel went home with the trophy. 73 to 45.

Thursday competition Tigers versus Lions

Randy versus Blake: Blake came out strong to give himself a solid lead. Randy did a good job of keeping the game a bit closer in the middle two games but had to concede defeat to his opponent who went home with a commanding win. 79 to 42.

James versus Stuart: Keeping the second game a draw, Stuart was excelling at keeping James from getting too far ahead. James took it up a notch in the last half of the match to take home a good victory. 79 to 50.

Leopards versus Cheetahs:

Beth versus Jess: Rallying in the third game, Beth got the jump on Jess. Unphased by that development, Jess continued to keep up her good form to outplay her opponent and win the match. 61 to 51.

Kristelle versus Travis: Travis won the first game. Kristelle pulled herself together long enough to take the second game but lost her touch after that. Travis's court coverage and serving won him the match. 68 to 52.