

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, January 29, 2025 \$2.00 inc. GST

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Rotarian Glenda Woods serving canapes at the Yea Rotary Art Show. More photos on page 6. -AR

Roads causing potholes in the family budget

LOCAL motorists are well aware of the current pothole situation on our roads, but how much are motorists needing to fork out due to damage caused by potholes?

Owner of the Yea Auto and Stihl Shop, Andrew Seamer, said, "Through the Yea Auto and Stihl Shop we would have anywhere between six to 10 tyre repairs per week that could be directly linked back to the drivers hitting a pothole upon the Melba Highway (Glenburn to Yea) or indeed the Goulburn Valley Highway between Homewood to Yea and Yea through to Catkin. These two highways are the significant contributor to the tyre and rim damage that occurs. So that is 300 to 500 repairs per annum, just through our sole workshop.

"At Yea Auto and Stihl Shop we provide the local RACV roadside assist service out from Yea through to Glenburn, Flowerdale, Strath Creek, Highlands, Molesworth, Cathkin, Limestone, Murrindindi and as such we see firsthand the damage caused to the tyres, rims and vehicles as a result of hitting the potholes.

"European cars like Mercedes, BMW, Audi, any such car with low profile tyres is at greater risk when striking a pothole at speed. Ordinarily such vehicles only have a run flat tyre or indeed no spare at all which results in vehicles being towed back to dealerships in Melbourne as replacement tyres are not always readily available. Cracked aluminium rims is not uncommon nor is a bent steel rim. Such damage can render the rims unserviceable and replacement rims are not always available in Melbourne or indeed throughout Australia depending upon the make, model and age of the vehicle.

"Equally, caravans, boat trailers, horse floats, campers and trailers all incur the same problems from potholes as drivers attempt to avoid these potholes. The consequence can be a simple puncture, buckled rims, shredded or blown tyres, bent or and broken axles, broken tyre wheel studs. The minimum impact is a couple hour delay, an unscheduled stay at the Yea Caravan Park or overnight stay at one of the local hotels through to cancelled holidays with vehicles and or trailers towed back home for repair and very, very upset families.

"As an absolute, all road users should have some form of roadside assist when travelling through rural Victoria to insure against the likely problem of a puncture, blown tyre, crack rims or worse and the consequential costs incurred in repairing, replacing and getting back home or back on the road as quick as possible.

"Our roads are not going to be repaired anytime soon... and as such we need to be prepared for the worst when travelling on Victoria's pot holed highways."

Andrew has owned the business for the past seven years and said that in his early days, there was nowhere near as much pothole damage. He said, "If I had to put a number, I'd say it's probably doubled our business as in when it comes to tyre repairs replacements and that sort of work.

"We've also had the RACV call out for that period of time and that's a bigger part of what we do, which is either repair those tyres if we can or organise for people to be towed back home, which is more the outcome again for European cars, but really any car that has an

alloy rim. A simple run flat just doesn't do it. There can be damage done to the studs. You think it's a simple thing, but it's not. And even some of the cars today don't even have a run flat. So, uh yeah, they just don't provide for such events."

If damage to a vehicle arises due to the condition of a freeway or arterial road, motorists are able to make a claim through VicRoads, however the first \$1640 must be paid by the vehicle owner or through insurance.

Steve Donnelly, manager of the Yea Auto and Stihl Shop, agreed that the pothole situation has certainly become more severe for motorists. "I definitely know they're getting really bad," he said, adding that he was also concerned about the quality of the repairs.

He said that obtaining accurate data on damage due to potholes was difficult as the damage could be due to nails on the road, for example, but he estimated that he would get around two customers per week with sidewall damage on their wheels.

Alexandra District Health
5772 0900
 Yea & District Memorial Hospital
5736 0400
In an emergency dial 000

Standard The Yea Chronicle

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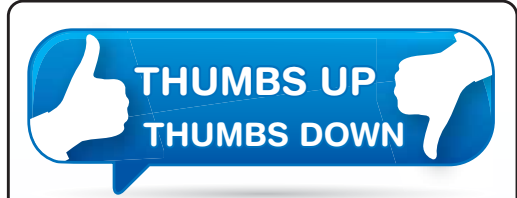
PUBLISHERS

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Kylie Cairns, Deputy Mayor Anita Carr, Mayor Damien Gallagher, conferees Sammy, Karin, Ruth, Harmandip, Donna, Peli, Severin, Nigel, Lenie, Thayananth, Hamrish and Dilhan, and Naomie Booker. -S



THUMBS DOWN: To Murrindindi Shire Council for putting up the rental charged to the Murrindindi Film Society for their monthly film nights, forcing them to find a new venue. The group is a small community service that showcases old film classics to an enthusiastic, dedicated group, supported by volunteers who pay a small fee, enjoy a film, discuss and cast a vote before enjoying a light supper provided by members. It's a great community group for film buffs that is now without a suitable venue.

THUMBS DOWN: To Reddrops. What happened to the Australia Day decorations that they had up at the supermarket?

THUMBS UP: It is delightful to see dogs cared for by their owners in sharing a meal with them. Any, and many, I have come across, big or small, are well restrained and friendly. It is good that restaurants provide water for them also. Animals are part of the family. Definitely areas should be left clean after walks.

THUMBS UP: To all those who displayed the Australian flag to celebrate Australia day, at the risk of offending the woke brigade.

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

New citizens in Murrindindi Shire

MURRINDINDI Shire Council celebrated 13 new Australian citizens on Thursday, January 23 at an official Citizenship Ceremony held at the Alexandra Council Chambers.

Sammy, Karin, Ruth, Harmandip, Donna, Peli, Severin, Nigel, Lenie, Thayananth, Hamrish and Dilhan 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 guests including Murrindindi Shire Council Mayor

Damien Gallagher, Deputy Mayor Anita Carr, Council CEO Livia Bonazzi, Rita Keating from the Australian Electoral Office, Kylie Cairns from Alexandra Football and Netball Club, and Naomi Booker from UGFM Radio and Menzies Support Services, who were pleased to congratulate our newest Australians.

Murrindindi Shire Council extends its warmest congratulations to all the conferees and wishes them all the best in their new journey as Australian Citizens.

Council will proudly host a further three Citizenship Ceremonies throughout 2025.

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

Mayor Damien Gallagher said, "I am proud to welcome our first new citizens for 2025. Becoming a citizen is a significant event in the lives of the conferees, and it is a privilege for our community to officially welcome our newest citizens. We are here to acknowledge their commitment and to celebrate their new journey as Australians."

Letters to the Editor

Flowerdale on Australia Day

ONCE again, Flowerdale community and visitors were offered an opportunity over January 25 and 26 to reflect on our country, share thoughts and food and raise flags. Facts are, attendance to raise the Australian Flag and join in the Oath of Allegiance have continued to fall over the last four years, while the gathering on January 25 has remained strong. By contrast, the local hotel was overflowing with people at the same time as two people were standing to attention as the flag was raised 200 meters away across the road. Does that tell us anything about what people think is important about January 26.

Leave no-one behind. Change the date so all can be included. Many thanks to the shire for providing the food and venue for the events on January 25 and 26.

Steve Joblin, Flowerdale
 Descendant of Thomas Massey (Third Fleet), a one time neighbour of John Batman (murderer of Tasmanian aborigines) and participant with Batman in the 'Black Line'.

The Yea Chronicle

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Weekly Weather

January 29 - February 4, 2025

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra			Yea		
DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	12	27	Wednesday	12	26
Thursday	13	27	Thursday	13	27
Friday	13	28	Friday	13	27
Saturday	15	32	Saturday	14	31
Sunday	19	34	Sunday	19	34
Monday	20	34	Monday	20	35
Tuesday	18	33	Tuesday	18	33

Standard The Yea Chronicle

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS Pty. Ltd.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Letters **must be 300 words or less**. We will not publish defamatory letters, or content which is offensive, threatening or containing personal attacks. Submitted letters may be edited before going to print.

All letters must contain writers name, address and contact number. (not necessarily for publication). Letters without these details supplied cannot not be published. Deadline for Letters to the Editor is 9am Monday.

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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

Nominations open for Murrindindi Shire Community Awards

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is delighted to invite nominations for the 2025 Murrindindi Shire Community Awards, celebrating the exceptional contributions of local volunteers who go above and beyond for their communities.

Residents are encouraged to nominate local individuals or community groups for one of the four award categories: Volunteer of the Year (aged 26 to 64 years); Senior Volunteer of the Year (aged 65 years or older); Young Volunteer of the Year (aged 12 to 25 years); Community Group (or Community Initiative) of the Year.

Nominations close on Sunday, March 16, 2025, with nominees to be recognised during National Volunteer Week (May 19 to 25, 2025). Winners will be chosen by a panel of community members, and announced at

the Murrindindi Shire Community Awards Ceremony, a special event celebrating the invaluable efforts of volunteers and community groups whose contributions enrich our shire.

The process to nominate is simple: share in your own words who inspires you, and how they make Murrindindi Shire a better place. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the people who embody the heart and spirit of the community.

Join council in recognising their dedication and encourage others to contribute to our vibrant community. Being nominated is a great honour, shining a spotlight on the volunteers who shape and strengthen our shire.

Nominations can be submitted online using council's online engagement platform The Loop.

Nomination forms are available at Library and Customer Service Centres in Alexandra, Kinglake, and Yea, as well as the Mobile Library. If assistance is needed, council's team is ready to help.

Murrindindi Shire Council's Mayor Damien Gallagher highlighted the importance of volunteers, stating "The Murrindindi Shire Community Awards provide a chance to recognise the incredible contributions of our local volunteers. With volunteering participation in our shire nearly double the Victorian average, it's clear how deeply community spirit runs here."

"Volunteers are the backbone of our community, supporting emergency services,

local events, and countless initiatives that sustain and enrich our lives. We've all witnessed firsthand the incredible impact our volunteers have on our community. I encourage everyone to nominate someone who has made a positive difference in our shire." Mayor Gallagher added.

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate the remarkable individuals and groups who make Murrindindi Shire a vibrant and connected community.

Discussion around new council plan

MURRINDINDI Shire Council is inviting all community members to be part of a conversation this February. This is your chance to share your aspirations and big ideas for the community's future and help prepare a new council plan for the next four years.

The council plan sets the strategic direction for council for the next four years, and your thoughts are key to informing this direction.

So far, in 2024, you've provided valuable feedback on council's progress with the 2021-2025 Council Plan, highlighting the projects and activities that matter most to you. Now, council want to take a deeper dive into your priorities and set bold goals and directions for the new council.

Murrindindi Shire Council invite you to attend one of their community conversations, where you can enjoy a light meal while connecting with other community members, councillors and council officers. This is an opportunity to share your ideas and help council deepen their understanding of key priorities.

Join them at the following conversations and make your voice heard.

Yea Community Session on Thursday, February 20, 6 to 8pm at the Yea Council Chamber, 15 The Semi Circle; Marysville Community Session on Monday, February 24, noon to 2pm at the Marysville Community Centre; Kinglake Community Session on Tuesday, March 4 from 6 to 8pm at the Kinglake Community Centre; Alexandra Community Session on Tuesday, February 25, noon to 2pm at the Alexandra Shire Hall.

Murrindindi Respect swimming for kids

MURRINDINDI Respect members are participating in the Starlight Super Swim in February. They have all chosen how far they will attempt

to swim, with the distances between two and 10 kilometres, as well as raising funds.

This is their way of helping and giving back

to the Starlight Children's Foundation Australia.

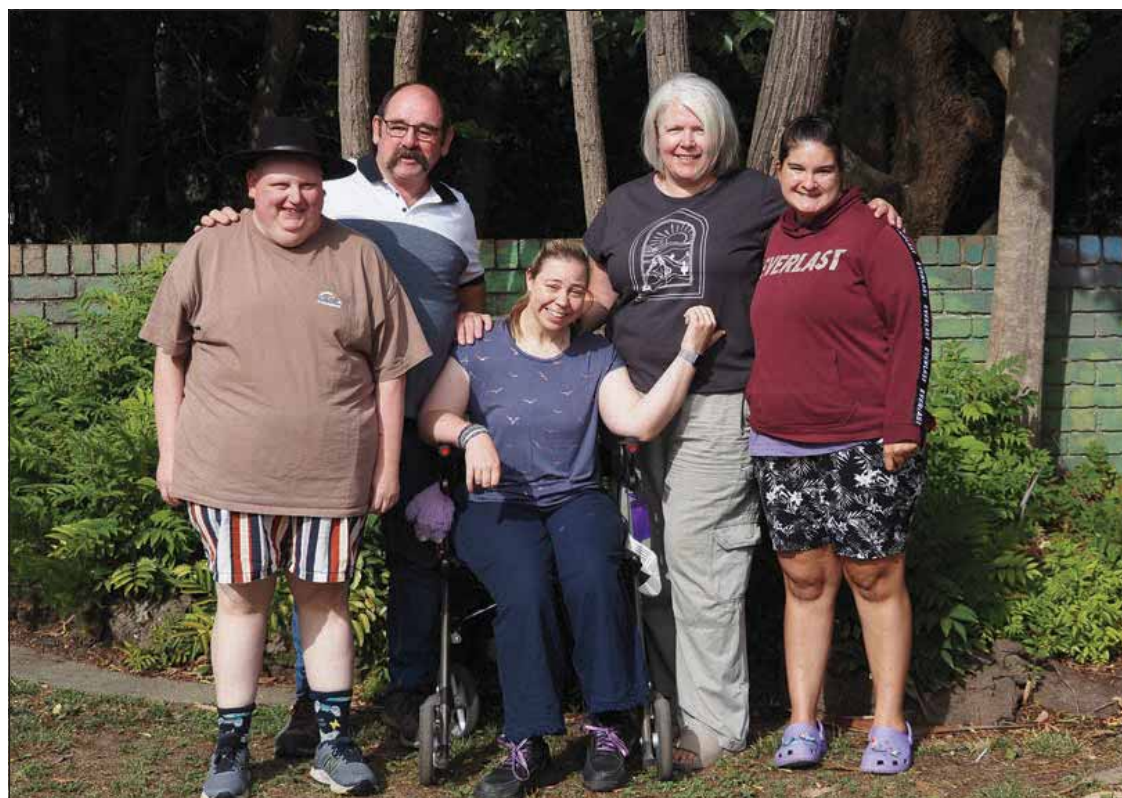
Wayne was assisted by the foundation when he was young, receiving a three-wheel bike

to assist with his balance. Nicole spent a lot of time from when she was a baby until she was 19 years old in the Royal Children's Hospital. She had two big operations, one at five years of age to lengthen her hamstrings and another at 12 years of age when she had a plate attached to her hip to stop it from dislocating, with over 50 visits to the Royal Melbourne for botox and physiotherapy to help her walk.

Nicole said she looked forward to going to the Starlight room. "The staff always made it fun and helped me and my family forget why I was there," she said.

The Starlight Foundation brings happiness to kids and their families during trying times in hospital.

If you would like to donate, you can go to the Starlight Super Swim website and look up Murrindindi Respect, or catch up with them when you see them in the area.



Wayne Butler, Mark Warren-Smith, Nicole Thorn, Clea Barr and Tayah Stevens. -AR



The homeschooling group, Dindi Wild and Free, were joined by homeschooling families from across the state for a tour of the scenic Kerrisdale Mountain Railway and Museum on Tuesday, January 21. They were guided by friendly volunteers on a 35 minute return train journey. There was also a steam museum demonstration and workshop tour. The group also enjoyed a lovely luncheon together. -S

Slow down, School is back

THE school year is back for another year so it's time to remember to slow down near school zones to 40km per hour. These reduced speed limits are designed to keep children safe by lowering the speed limit at peak times when children are travelling to and from school.

In most cases the speed limit during school speed zone times is 40km/h, this is when the original speed limit is less than 80km/h and the speed limit changes to 60km/h when the original speed limit is 80km/h or higher.

The speed limit and operating times will be clearly displayed on nearby signs.

School speed limits apply depending on the zone you're travelling in. The types of zones are permanent 40km/h zones and variable time based zones.

Time based school zones operate between 8 and 9.30am and 2.30 to 4pm, on weekdays during Victorian school terms, except for public holidays.

William Matthews Funerals



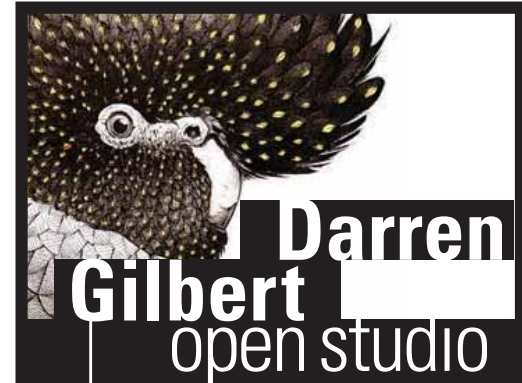
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Taungurung statement about January 26

WHILE many Australians believe January 26 (Australia Day) is a celebration of all the things we love about Australia: land, sense of fair go, lifestyle, democracy, the freedoms we enjoy but particularly the celebration of people and culture, the Taungurung people do not share this view.

For the Taungurung people, January 26 celebrates the colonisation/invasion of our lands and the lands of Traditional Owner Nations across this continent. It celebrates the suppression of Taungurung language and culture, the incarceration and genocide of our people, and is an annual reminder of the dispossession of our people and the ensuing systemic and institutional racism which continues to this day.

In the 2018 Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA), the state formerly recognised the devastating impact of colonisation upon Taungurung people, and the role that the state played in dispossessing Taungurung people of our Country. The state also acknowledged the continued suffering of the Taungurung people through the implementation of laws and policies that discriminated against us in the 19th and 20th centuries.

These far-reaching laws and policies fragmented both our families and the community. Beginning in the 19th century, Taungurung children were forcibly taken from parents in one of the most traumatic examples of state policy and practice. Depending on

how the state defined Aboriginality over time, Taungurung people could either be forced to live on a reserve or, under what came to be known as the Half Caste Act of 1886, forcibly evicted from a reserve, and prevented from living with our families. Other laws regulated Aboriginal marriages and employment. These laws and policies, including under the state's assimilationist efforts in the 20th century, ensured that Taungurung people were excluded from the life of the nation, the intrinsic value of our culture and our identity denied.

The state formerly acknowledged that the actions of early colonists on Taungurung Country including the deliberate killing of Taungurung people. The state also recognises the deadly and widespread impact of foreign diseases upon the Taungurung population, and the hunger experienced by our people who were no longer able to sustain themselves on Taungurung lands.

The Taungurung people continue to experience the ongoing effects and the impact of colonisation over 200 years later. This is seen through the continued dispossession of lands, denial of inherent rights, intergenerational trauma and institutional structures designed to negate and restrict.

From the very beginning, however, our people fought to survive. In the early days of colonisation, when sheep and cattle destroyed our traditional food sources, the Taungurung people took livestock and

destroyed crops to push pastoralists from our lands. The Taungurung people never accepted that the colonists owned our Country. The Taungurung people signed no treaties, nor took any action to relinquish our sovereignty.

Though Taungurung people were forced to find sanctuary at stations and missions such as Mitchelstown and Murchison, the Taungurung people also fought to maintain connection to our Country. In 1859, a group of Taungurung men, Bear-ring, Mur-rum-Mur-rum, Parn-gean, Bur-rip-pin and Koo-yarn, petitioned the colonial government for land in their own Country where they could grow crops, but where they could also continue to maintain their traditional ways of obtaining food. This stands as one of the earliest examples in Australia of Aboriginal people taking direct political action for the return of their land. Their appeal resulted in the Central Board appointed to watch over the interests of Aborigines (Aboriginal Protectorate) approving the Taungurung people's selection of and then surveying of land at a place they called 'Nakkrom' on the Acheron River near Alexandra. At the time, Guardian of Aborigines William Thomas described location as the 'Promised Land' of the Taungurung people.

Despite the land being approved by the Aboriginal Protectorate and the Board of Land and Works, there was strong resistance by pastoralists. Our people were later driven off our 'Promised Land' by the local

pastoralists. Denied a realistic alternative, most Taungurung survivors later joined other Kulin peoples at Coranderrk Station, on Woiwurrung Country. Over time, our people moved to mission stations and reserves elsewhere in Victoria, to Lake Tyers, Lake Condah, Franklinford, and Ebenezer, or to Cummeragunga in New South Wales. A number of Taungurung people, however, refused to leave our own Country, and remained there for the rest of their lives. Some found work within the colonial economy, including on local pastoral stations such as Molka, Wappan and Doogalook, as a way of staying on Taungurung land. One Taungurung man even took up a selection on his own Country in 1879, when it was rare for Aboriginal people to gain leaseholds. The Taungurung peoples' push to retain, and reclaim, their Country continued.

Through much of the 19th and 20th centuries, the state actively discouraged the practice of Taungurung culture. Despite this, our people continued to pass down knowledge via family and community gatherings, out of view of the wider community. In 1967, Camp Jungai was established near Alexandra, just south of Lake Eildon, in the heart of Taungurung Country. Named using the Taungurung word for meeting place, Camp Jungai became a place where culture would thrive, and continues to this day.

Continued Page 15

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

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

Out & About WHAT'S ON?

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.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

Yarck CFA Community Safety Meeting. 7pm on Thursday, January 30. Rail Trail Car Park on Wrights Rd, Yarck. In the event of a fire would you leave early or stay and defend your family, home, pets and property? Come along for plenty of information to help you make an informed decision. BYO chair.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Darren Gilbert Open Studios, Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm, or other times by arrangement. 5 Giffard Street, Yea. Visit monkeytaildesign.com for more.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Buxton Clearing sale A/C Est Wayne Briggs from 10am. Inspection is Saturday, February 1, 10am-2pm. Farm machinery, vehicles, farm sundries and more. 450 lots. 1842 Maroondah Highway, Buxton. For full details visit clearingsales@emblings.com.au

You are invited to the Dindi Dance launch party. Free community event. 39 Downey Street, Alexandra. Try a dance class, plus disco. Facepainting, glitter braids, arts and crafts and more. For more info visit dindidance.com.au. For RSVP scan QR code on page 9 of this week's *Alexandra Standard*.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

This Way North and Tuckshop ladies will be playing at Fawcett Hall, Doors open at 6pm, music from 6.30. BYO picnic, drinks, lawn chairs. Bookings essential trybooking.com/cxnvh

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Alexandra Pastoral and Agricultural Association will hold its AGM at 7pm in

the secretaries office/caravan park office at 17 William Street. All interested parties are welcome and they actively encourage new members. For more information email the secretary at pna.alexandra@gmail.com

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Council is starting a project to address housing shortages for key workers in the Eildon community. Community members are invited to share their perspectives on the design of the modular housing by completing a survey at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/kwh or join council at local pop up events in Eildon for a chat. The first being, Eildon Bowls Club from 5.30-7.30pm. See more information on pop up opportunities in this edition.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Council is starting a project to address housing shortages for key workers in the Eildon community. Community members are invited to share their perspectives on the design of the modular housing by completing a survey at theloop.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/kwh or join council at local pop up events in Eildon for a chat. The second being, Eildon Visitor Information Centre from 2-3pm. The last chance is Eildon Grocer from 4-5pm.

Trawool, Valentine's Day, Exclusive wine dinner by Grave Goose in Turbine restaurant. Limited seats available, Books essential 5792 1444 or trawoolstate.com.au. See ad in this edition for more upcoming events at Trawool.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Opera @ Eildon. Book your tickets now trybooking.com/CVOSP. For your chance to win two gold tickets, cut the coupon out of this week's paper and return to the *Alexandra Standard* office by, January 30.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Attention Yea and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape

the new council plan. Yea Council Chamber, 6-8pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan or scan QR code in ad in this edition on page 5.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Trawool, Drag Trivia. A more glamorous take on your traditional pub trivia. Grab your team mates and get to Trawool for this outrageous evening of run and trivia. Bookings essential 5792 1444 or trawoolstate.com.au. See ad in this edition for more upcoming events at Trawool.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Long Lazy Summer Lunch at Holmesglen at Eildon. Bookings essential noon - 4pm Delight in a beautiful summer lunch, featuring fresh local produce, live music and free flowing bubbles. 5774 2631. eildon@holmesglen.edu.au

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Attention Alexandra, Eildon, Marysville and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape the new council plan. Marysville Community Centre, noon-2pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan or scan QR code in ad in this edition on page 5.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Attention Alexandra, Eildon, Marysville and surrounds. Council are taking a deeper dive into your aspirations and big ideas for the communities future. Enjoy a light meal, chat, connect and share ideas with other community members, councillors and council officers. Your feedback will help shape the new council plan. Alexandra Shire Hall, noon-2pm. Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan or scan QR code in ad in this edition on page 5.

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 YEА
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 YEА
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, YEА
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

Drugs causing harm on Victorian roads

A MONASH University study investigated the trends in alcohol and other drugs in injured and fatal road crashes over a decade.

The study found Methylamphetamine is the most common illicit drug found in injured and fatal car drivers and motorcyclists in Victoria from 2010 to 2019.

Published in the journal *Injury Prevention*, the largest study of its kind conducted in Australia examined substances present in 19,843 injured drivers and 1596 fatally injured drivers and found methylamphetamine had the highest prevalence, found in 12.3 per cent of fatalities and 9.1 per cent of injured drivers, demonstrating an increase over time.

This cross-sectional analysis explored the trends of alcohol, methylamphetamine, MDMA and cannabis (THC) in road crashes and used data from the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and Victoria Police to assess drug prevalence in injured and deceased drivers across a period of 10 years.

Overall, the study found 16.8 per cent of car drivers and motorcyclists tested positive for one or more drugs, with 14 per cent of crashes overall involving a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.05 per cent. There was a decline in alcohol detections among fatalities specifically.

Co-senior author Adjunct Associate Professor Dimitri Gerostamoulos from Monash University's Department of Forensic Medicine and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, said the findings indicated that despite enhanced road safety measures in Victoria, drug driving persists, indicating a need for revised prevention strategies to target the growing issue.

Adjunct Associate Professor Gerostamoulos said the data indicates that methylamphetamine is the most prevalent illicit drug on Victorian roads, with a notable increase in detections among injured drivers.

"MDMA use has remained relatively stable over time at a low prevalence in fatalities, with a decline in injured drivers, while THC detections have slightly increased. There was a higher incidence of drug-positive driving in men and individuals aged between 25 and 59, as well as patterns of increasing drug use in motorcyclists," Adjunct Associate Professor Gerostamoulos said.

Game bird harvesting statistics rise in 2024 season

THE Game Management Authority (GMA) recently released the *Estimates of duck and Stubble Quail harvest in Victoria 2024* report.

Results show an estimated 391,900 game ducks were harvested in 2024, which is 22 per cent above the long-term average of 320,000.

Of the 21,383 licensed duck hunters, 60 per cent actively hunted in 2024. On average, active duck hunters harvested an estimated 30.3 ducks during the season over an average of 8.9 days.

The three most commonly harvested species were the Pacific black duck (39 per

cent of the total harvest), grey teal (25 per cent of the total harvest) and Australian wood duck (24 per cent of the total harvest).

The most popular hunting areas, with the highest numbers of ducks harvested, were around the towns of Sale, Kerang, Boort, Horsham, and Shepparton.

Results also show an estimated 457,400 stubble quail were harvested in 2024. This is almost triple the long-term average of 159,000 and is the second largest stubble quail harvest since telephone surveys began in 2009.

Of the 25,788 hunters licenced to hunt stubble quail, 22 per cent actively hunted in 2024. On average, active quail hunters harvested an estimated 79.4 stubble quail for the season over 8.5 days.

The most popular quail hunting areas were around the towns of Shepparton, Echuca, Rochester, Ballarat and Colac. The highest number of quail harvested were around the towns of Shepparton, Ballarat, Echuca, Rochester and Wangaratta.

GMA Director of Strategy and Research, Simon Toop said the research was based on information gathered from randomly selected licenced game bird hunters who voluntarily participated in the surveys.

"Favourable environmental and breeding conditions and more active hunters likely resulted in an increase in the number of ducks and quail harvested," Mr Toop said.

"The information hunters provide helps build a stronger understanding of gamebird harvest trends and hunting activity in Victoria and I'd like to thank all hunters who participated in the surveys."

Throughout 2024, approximately 3458 licenced game bird hunters were surveyed to collect information about their hunting activity, including how many game birds were harvested, where hunting occurred, hunting methods used, and the species of game birds harvested.

The report provides estimates of the total harvests of ducks and stubble quail by Victorian Game Licence holders and provides insights on hunting activity during the seasons.

The report is produced annually by the GMA in collaboration with an independent telephone survey company and the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research.

For a full copy of the *Estimates of duck and Stubble Quail harvest in Victoria 2024* report, visit gma.vic.gov.au/research/duck-research



An Australian wood duck. -BenjaminT444

"Despite a decline in alcohol among fatalities, it continues to contribute to road crashes, with a higher proportion of drivers and motorcyclists with a BAC over 0.05 per cent compared with studies from other Australian states.

"These findings confirm that the drugs that cause the most harm on Victorian roads continue to be methylamphetamine, alcohol and cannabis."

Monitor for blue-green algae in stock water

by Alison Lee, Principal Veterinary Officer of Small Ruminants

LIVESTOCK owners should look for signs of blue-green algae when inspecting farm dams, troughs and other water sources, particularly during the warmer months, when algal blooms are more likely to occur.

Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, are bacteria that can multiply rapidly under certain conditions.

Blue-green algae is more likely to occur when the water is warm and enriched with nutrients like phosphorus or nitrogen.

While blue-green algal blooms typically appear as green paint-like surface scum in water, they can also be reddish-purple or brown in colour. It can be difficult to tell blue-green algae from other less toxic algal species.

Blue-green algae may contain toxins that damage the liver or nervous system. Drinking contaminated water can kill livestock quickly and a number of livestock may be affected at the same time.

Animals exposed to affected water supplies may continue to die over a prolonged period. In milder cases,

productivity losses may occur, which in dairy cattle may be seen as decreased milk yield.

If a suspicious bloom is found, farmers should move their stock to an area on the property with a safe alternative water source.

Farmers should plan for managing water availability in the event that a blue-green algal bloom impacts their primary livestock drinking water supply.

The plan should include calculating how much water livestock would require if the primary water supply was unsafe to drink and identifying additional alternative on-farm water supplies that could be utilised quickly.

In the medium-term, your plan could include improving water reticulation systems, considering options for treating blue-green algae affected water, or agisting your stock elsewhere until your farm water is safe again.

A range of useful information such as the blue-green algae: options for livestock drinking water factsheet is available from the blue-green algae page on the Agriculture Victoria website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/water/blue-green-algae-in-water





JOIN OUR BIG CONVERSATION

Attention Yea and surrounds! So far, you've shared your thoughts on our progress with the 2021-2025 Council Plan and highlighted the projects and activities that matter most to you. Now, let's take a deeper dive into your aspirations and BIG ideas for our community's future.

Enjoy a light meal while you chat, connect, and share ideas with other community members, Councillors and Council officers. Your feedback will help shape our new Council Plan.



Yea Council Chamber
Thursday 20 February
6.00 to 8.00 pm

[Register at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan](http://murrindindi.vic.gov.au/councilplan)





The art show presentations at the Yea Shire Hall. -AR

Yea Rotary Art Show shines

THE 39th annual Yea Rotary Art Show opened on the evening of Thursday, January 24, and continued throughout the Australia Day long weekend.

The opening night at the Yea Shire Hall was well attended, with many taking up the theme of 'Sequins' with gusto. There were some truly fabulous outfits.

People enjoyed chatting and viewing the fabulous artworks while having a quiet tippie and canapes.

The judge for the evening was Marian Rennie, with all awards, apart from the People's Choice Award, announced on the night. She provided the rationale behind each of her choices.

The total prize money at the event amounted to \$7250. The winners were:

Best in Show: *Tallarook State Forest* by Nina Volk

Second Best in Show: *Rendevous at the Poker Table* by Sam Bruere

Work on Paper: *Snowgums - Mt Torbreck* by Julian Bruere

Special Prize: *The Longest Lunch* by Kate Collins (Ruth Hargrave choice)

Traditional Work: *Minds are Like Flowers* by Kylie Sirett

Contemporary Work: *Still Life with Kangaroo Paw* by Helen Miles

Local Work: *Goulburn Reflections, Molesworth* by Meg Heres

Emerging Artist: *Blood Oranges* by Sara Azevedo

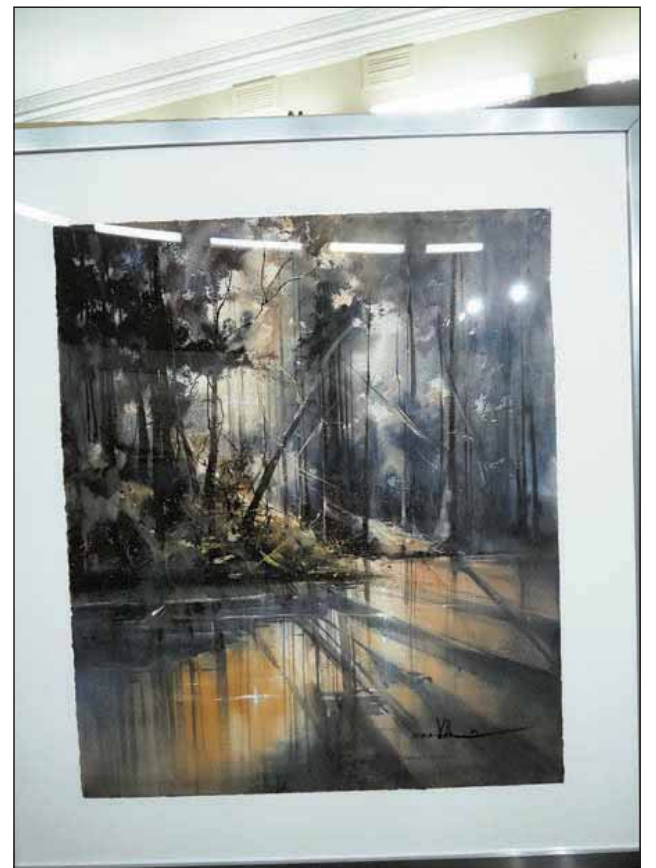
Portrait: *I'm Still Here* by Reza Matin

Nature: *Black Cockatoo* by Terri MacDonald

Junior Secondary: *Maggie* by Julian Gruchy

Junior Primary: *The Bank* by Zach Fairchild

The People's Choice was announced at 3pm on Monday, January 27 and will be included in the next edition.



Best in Show went to Nina Volk for her painting of Tallarook State Forest. -AR



Sam Bruere won Second Best in Show. -AR



The winner of the Junior Secondary prize was Julian Gruchy. -AR



Julian Bruere won the award for Work on Paper with this painting of Snow Gums on Mount Torbreck. -AR



Former schoolmates, Mary Oliver with show judge Marian Rennie. -AR



Rodney and Phillip. -AR



Artist Julian Bruere with siblings Holly and Mark. -AR



Artist Julian Bruere and shire CEO Livia Bonazzi. -AR

Peter Weeks awarded an Emergency Services Medal

ALEXANDRA SES controller Peter Weeks was awarded an Emergency Services Medal (ESM) in this year's Australia Day Awards for 'distinguished service as a member of an Australian emergency service'.

It's been a busy few months for Peter. In October 2024, he was inducted into the Community Broadcasting Honour Roll at the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) awards night on the Gold Coast.

The ESM award information states, "Mr Peter Weeks OAM joined the Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES) Alexandra Unit in September 1971, as a dedicated operationally active member. Over his remarkable 50 plus years tenure, Mr Weeks displayed unwavering dedication and leadership in various frontline roles. Initially serving as a member ordinary, he quickly ascended to become a unit officer, holding the position for an impressive 42 years. In this role, Mr Weeks led numerous operations, including search and rescue, storm damage, and boating rescue. Since 2015, he has served as the controller of the VICSES Alexandra Unit, overseeing all unit operations and ensuring readiness for emergency situations.

"In response to the October 2022 Victorian floods, Mr Weeks led the VICSES Alexandra Unit through its most extensive campaign since the 2009 Victorian Bushfires. His leadership was pivotal in managing over 140 requests for assistance, including the dramatic rescue of a young family from Acheron, where a five month old baby and pets were saved from floodwaters. Mr Weeks' proactive advocacy for timely flood warnings from Goulburn Murray Water significantly improved community preparedness and response, enhancing community safety.

"Beyond emergency response, Mr Weeks has driven numerous infrastructure improvements within the unit, ensuring its readiness for various emergencies. His effective management of the state-owned High Angle Rescue cache and collaborative efforts with AusNet Services to restore power to over 100 homes following a vital power line



Peter Weeks. -S

collapse near the historic Acheron Breakaway Bridge further underscore his commitment to community service.

"Mr Week's 50 year tenure with VICSES, coupled with his leadership during numerous emergencies and relentless efforts to enhance community safety, exemplify his distinguished service. His proactive approach to emergency management, coupled with his advocacy for infrastructure improvements and community preparedness, underscore his lasting impact on the Alexandra region and beyond."

When contacted about the award and asked about his background with the SES, Peter said that he joined in 1971, aged just 12. He used to do the radio communication at the headquarters for many years and as he got older, he started to go on searches and things like that. When he initially joined, it was called Civil Defence and in 1975 it turned into the Victorian State Emergency Service.

Peter said, "The first big search I did was for Damian McKenzie in 1975. I remember there

were 50 people on the line. It was cold and wet. We were pulling leeches off our faces."

Over the years, he's been involved he's also helped to improve communication systems so that the SES could be activated from the ambulance services locally and get much better turn out with notifications for incidences and the district ambulance service. We then got our own repeater system which then helped us with our local communications.

In addition to being the unit controller for the last 10 years with the service, he's also been duty officer, trained to operate the rescue boat, and has been involved in road rescue.

The Alexandra SES unit response area used to include Lake Mountain, meaning that they had a much bigger response area. When the Marysville unit was formed, and it reduced the Alexandra SES response area. The Alexandra SES now has a response area which extends to Big River, across to the other side of Yea for everything but road crash rescue, and the Alexandra, Eildon, Cathkin, Acheron area, and they join up with

neighbouring units from Marysville, Yea CFA and Mansfield SES.

Peter added, "Over the years we have had numerous floods and provided preparedness for locals and responded to the floods. I think in the earlier days we helped up and down the valley when there were major releases going to occur from Lake Eildon." Goulburn Murray Water now provides people with direct notifications.

He said, "I think what I have probably enjoyed the most is helping the community, making a difference in the community, and the friends you make with likeminded people in the organisations with a common goal of helping people in need.

"There is huge amount of training we have in order to perform and maintain these skills. You learn a lot. I think as a controller of the unit it's been a privilege to do that role for the past 11 years, it's a role working with police and emergency management and making sure the unit is fully operational 24/7, and that the members' needs and requirement are met.

"We always have space for anyone keen to get involved and to help the community. There are a lot of different roles in SES behind the scenes and in the field. You can be involved as little as or as much as you can," he said.

Peter also operates UGFM radio. He said that one of the prime reasons for establishing a local radio station was for local news and information, and emergency broadcasting is a big part of that. UGFM became the first community radio station in Australia to become an emergency broadcaster. "That was a big feather in our cap," Peter said.

He also assisted other community stations, especially in Victoria, and that interwove with emergency management. His background with the SES helped immensely with this.

He very much wanted to thank his family, and especially wife Judy, for their support, and added that with the SES, it really is a team effort.

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This Way North back in Fawcett following album release

FRESH off the release of their album *Punching Underwater*, pop indie music group *This Way North* are heading back to Fawcett Hall for the seventh year in a row.

“This is our seventh annual Fawcett Hall show that we do every year in February. We have ourselves, *This Way North*, and *The Tuckshop Ladies*, who are our good friends. We do that each year,” vocalist and guitarist Leisha Jungalwalla said.

“I can’t believe we’ve already notched up to seven, and we somehow throughout the COVID years we got away with still having it. In 2020 COVID hadn’t quite hit, and then 2021 we were back open again.

“Seventh in a row is pretty special, and it just ends up being a really wonderful, friendly, fun night where people bring their own picnics and drinks and seats and sit out under the big gum tree and have a couple of laughs and listen to some music.

“We love coming back to Fawcett every year to celebrate the year that’s been and look forward with everyone to the year that is coming up.”

With years of hard work poured into making their *Punching Underwater* album, Leisha said it was nice to see it well received.

“Last year we released our album, and that was our first show of the album tour. So, it’s been a year since we let our baby out in the world, and it’s been really awesome.

“We were really lucky. We managed to touch a lot of people’s hearts, and a lot of people have given us feedback that the songs are making a difference in people’s lives, and that they have songs that are go to songs for when people are feeling different things.

“It’s nice to have music out there that makes people feel and helps people through tough times or gets people pumped up for things. That’s all we could want.”

Asked what’s next for the group, Leisha seemed to hint that there’s some exciting things ahead for *This Way North*.

“We have some exciting things that we’re working on, but you have to come to the show. We’re always playing music and writing and planning and scheming. Nothing official yet, but definitely we’ll have some fun stuff that we can announce soon,” Leisha concluded.

This Way North will be performing alongside *The Tuckshop Ladies* with special guest Kerry Fields on Saturday, February 8 at Fawcett Hall from 6pm. You can purchase tickets at trybooking.com/events/landing/1327541



Leisha Jungalwalla performs guitar and vocals for ‘This Way North’. -S

David Blackmore awarded an OAM

ALEXANDRA local, David Blackmore, famed for his Wagyu beef, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Australia Day honours list. Speaking at his farm on the outskirts of Alexandra, David spoke about his journey in the beef industry.

David is a fifth generation farmer, originally from the Mount Gambier area. In the sixth generation, his son is also in the farming game, and there are high hopes that one of David’s grandchildren will also participate in the industry.

He explained that at the age of 10, his grandfather gave him a cow as payment for work done on the farm. “It was a calf that I was supposed to sell and get the money. But it was a cow and she was pregnant. She had calf and they had calves and all of a sudden, before I even left school, I’d built up a small herd running on his land and he said, you’re getting away with too much. I’m going to rent you a paddock. You’ll have to pay the rent and manage it. And I said, okay, what’s the rent going to be? He said, it’ll be a dollar an acre and I’ll pay the fertiliser.

He left school at 16, and then at 22 years old, he was offered a job as a stock agent in South Australia and was quickly promoted to their head office and in charge of the state area.

During that time, David went on a plane to South Korea with a plane load of cattle, as well as doing deals in Taiwan and Mexico. He also worked as a consultant for the Mexican government and Nestle. He found that the industry in Mexico had some inefficiencies, such as hand-milking, with a calf suckling on the other two teats, as the breed of cow didn’t have natural milk let-down. The government was keen to maintain farming viability for social stability.

In 1979, David organised and ran the first farm embryo transfer programs in Australia so that became part of his business.

In 1982, he went to China and taught 40 young vets how to do embryo transfer and at that time, a small company comprised of David and two friends took the first two loads of live cattle out of Australia into China, one beef and one dairy. One was a gift from the South Australian government and the other from the Federal Government.

They were also working out ways to get genetics into Mexico in 1988, and on the way, he stopped at a university in Texas. They had the technology, so they were able to arrange for the university to put embryos into the herds in Mexico. When they were showing David around, they commented on

how there were “a couple of Wagyu cattle over there.” David responded, “They can’t be. There’s none outside of Japan.” The Japanese were very protective of the Wagyu cattle at the time.

After some research, it was found that four bulls came out of Japan in 1976, sent to a university for research. A couple of people had built up a purebred herd from these bulls. David managed to get some calves up into Iowa, an Australian quarantine area, “and that was the start of getting genetics. They were only purebreds... They were up to F3” in terms of the crosses, so 87.5 per cent purebred.

David saw some potential for getting the genetics into Australia. In 1990, the first Wagyu females went out of Japan to America, so “then we could start full bloods.”

Asked whether the Japanese were aware that they were going to be bred for market, David said, “No, the Japanese didn’t want it to happen. In fact, the guy that sent them out was a very prominent Japanese breeder for fellow by the name of Mr Shogo Takeda.”

Mr Takeda was expelled from the Japanese Wagyu Association over the occurrence, and all of his cattle deregistered. It was a big scandal in Japan.

“The genetics went out from about 1990 to 1996, and now they’ve shut up shop,” David said. “No more genetics have left Japan since 1996, so we’re dealing with very old Japanese pedigrees.”

Once David moved to full bloods, they had very good carcass results, however unlike most stud breeders, they didn’t breed to sell genetics, even though everyone wanted to get hold of them.

After a lot of pressure, they put a bull into an elite Wagyu sale at the Wagyu Convention. It made \$220,000. “It was the first time we ever sold at auction and it was a record,” David said.

They breed the Wagyu to suit Australian conditions, including grazing and rearing their own calves.

Their goal was to produce beef aimed at top-end restaurants around the world. They now export to 14 different countries, and have an extensive waiting list. It’s very much in demand.

They’re able to sell their beef above the general market price and above fluctuation, setting the price once per year. They also have full traceability. Their logo is a nose print, as every nose print is different. Some of the top

chefs in the world decided to put their brand on the menu, which was very uncommon at the time. Some restaurants would even send all of their staff on familiarisation tours of the farm.

David Blackmore first came to Alexandra around 20 years ago. David and his wife had been looking around as they hadn’t inherited the family farm. They were initially involved in dairy farming and share farming in South Australia, and David had taken the embryo business with them out of the stock agency business as no-one else was doing it. They only ended up milking cows for about 18 months before leasing them out, because the embryo business took off. He was bringing a lot of beef embryos out of north America into Australia for sale after quarantine.

David estimated that now they would have sold 4000 to 5000 Wagyu embryos around the world to many different countries, although they sell no genetics in Australia. They also don’t sell anything to Japan. His reasoning is that there are good Wagyu farmers over there and he doesn’t want to compete with them.

After farming in South Australia, they lived in Serpentine for 17 or 18 years, still working in the embryo business. From there, it was on to Mickleham where they leased a 5000 acre farm. Down the track, Gina Rinehart bought 1000 breeding cows, and the financial boost allowed them to buy land in Benalla and Finley. They’d already purchased the property at Alexandra at that stage.

He faced some challenges in the Alexandra area due to land usage, and it received a lot of media coverage, however “We’ve moved on from that,” David said.

The Wagyu beef have now been moved up to Benalla, Wallan and Finley, and locally David has been focused on providing pastures for Rubia Gallega cattle, a tightly held Spanish breed which has won world steak championships.

David said of the breed, “The government and the association tried to stop us getting the genetics and that we managed to get embryos and semen into Australia.”

He said that it’s completely different to Wagyu, “but it’s very, very good quality.”

David Blackmore and Brain Leslie also started International Dairy Week, and they’ve now named the large complex where it’s held after the two men.

David has been married to Julie for more than 50 years, and he commented. “I couldn’t have had the life I’ve had without Julie’s



David Blackmore. -S

support.” The couple have four children and nine grandchildren.

Asked whether he was going to have an OAM party, David said, “This will sound crazy. I’ve probably spoken at 50 conferences around the world and there’s more than 25 television documentaries that have been filmed on this farm, and most of them international... I don’t enjoy any of it.”

Asked what he does like to do, David responded, “Well, I love doing what I’m doing. The farming side is my hobby. This is my dream. I don’t want to retire.”

He said, “When I look back and think of the awards, this is one of the award comments that I like the most that describes our business. [The Howard W Yelland Award for Outstanding Service to the Australian Beef Industry] says, ‘In recognition of his contribution to the Australian Beef Industry as a pioneer of Australian Wagyu branded product in both an export markets. His commitment to sustainable farming involving financial viability, respect for the environment, strong ethical standards in animal welfare and a passion for creating the best in the world emphasises his role as an industry leader prepared to share his knowledge and experience for the benefit of the industry.’”

He believes that his greatest achievement is longevity. “We were there at the start and we’re still there,” he said.



Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture



There were still many interested parties, despite the number of recent cattle sales in Yea. -BD



The cattle sale kicked off with two lanes of hereford cattle being sold before steers and heifers were broached. -BD

Cows and calves at combined store sale in Yea

by Bailey Dixon

THE Elders and Nutrien combined store sale for January took place last Friday in Yea, with almost 2000 cattle yarded including steers, heifers, and cows and calves.

The auction kicked off with two lanes of Hereford cattle before launching into the

usual steers and heifers. Cows and calves fetched the most money on the day, with the top price per head some \$2450.

Despite the top heifer pen clocking a top weight of 557.5kg, it only sold for \$1680, making 301c/kg. The top steer pen made \$2050 with a weight of 450.4kg, fetching a large 455c/kg.

This was higher than the respectable average of 393c/kg for the day, with an average price per head of \$1183 and average weight per head of 301.4kg.

The next cattle sale in Yea will be the Alex Scott and Staff weaner sale on Friday, January 31.



The Nutrien agents working with farmers to mark cattle. -BD

STOCK REPORT 24 JANUARY 2025				
Elders & Nutrien Store Sale	Total Yarding	Steers	Heifers	Cows & Calves
Number of head	1,958			
Average \$ per head	\$1,183			
Average weight per head	301.4kg			
Top price per head		\$2,050	\$1,680	\$2,450
Top weight		450.4kg	557.5kg	
Turnover	\$2.19 million			



Ruby, Tim, Ashleigh and Gus with their steers at last Friday's store sale. -BD

FEBRUARY PHOTO COMPETITION

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

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Email your photo and contact details to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au by noon February 26, 2025

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

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A Little Respect

Creating space for conversations in our community about important topics related to relationships, gender equality and family violence prevention.



Lee is the Free From Violence Project Officer at Murrindindi Shire Council. She is passionate about raising awareness about important issues in the local community, particularly related to gender equality and family violence prevention. Lee operates with curiosity over conflict and believes we all have something to learn from one another. Lee's work aligns with her studies in law and criminology, but mostly with her lived experience as Victim-Survivor. She has presented at state-wide Government Forums alongside other well-known advocates, and facilitated community forums focused on mental health, gender equality and family violence.

Topic of the month: Interview with Victim-Survivor

TRIGGER WARNING: This article discusses family violence, suicide and other topics that may be distressing to some readers. Please note that all names mentioned in this interview have been changed.

Conversations like these can be hard to have, but they are vital. Anyone can experience family violence. And even people we know and like may be using violence behind closed doors. In fact, when we hear about family violence in the news, perpetrators are often people who are well-liked in the community. This is often confusing as their public image doesn't always 'match up' with what we may assume about people who use violence.

However, such people are our neighbours, friends or even family. It is our responsibility as a community to learn more about the myths surrounding family violence so we can check our own internal biases, get curious and work together to create a safer community free from violence. This month, we are fortunate to learn from Morgan's lived experience. This is her story.

How did you meet your former husband (Joel)?

It was my Dad who met Joel first through his involvement in community sports. He thought we might get along, and we did. We met not long after I turned 20. Things progressed, we fell in love, and I moved into his place after a few months. Soon after I turned 21, he asked me to marry him and I said yes. I had always dreamt of getting married and was excited. I was swept up in it all. Looking back, I was too young to get married. I was still at uni and living with my parents before I moved in with him. I hadn't yet gotten to know myself as an independent adult.

Were there any red flags in the beginning?

When we started dating, Joel immediately started buying me expensive gifts. He would do this frequently. I now understand this is a form of 'love bombing' but I was so young and inexperienced that I was quite dazzled by it – although it did make me a bit uncomfortable at times. In particular, he bought me some swimwear that I didn't feel comfortable wearing. I gently told him so and he became angry, demanding that if I loved him, I would wear it. So, I did. From here, I felt pressure to 'perform' that I loved everything he gave me as I was worried about upsetting him. His moods became extreme and unpredictable, and I felt I was to blame. He would tell all my friends that he loved buying me gifts and they would often comment on how lucky I was. It's clear now he enjoyed the praise more than getting to know the real me. Image and public praise was extremely important to him.

In your mind, when did the abuse start?

I know more about family violence now than I did then, so it is hard to pinpoint one moment or event. However, in the lead up to our wedding, Joel decided we should move interstate to start our lives as newlyweds in a new place. He said he didn't want people intruding on our life together and "this time should only be about us". Being so young and inexperienced, this seemed like an adventure. But it was actually his desire for control and the beginning of him isolating me from my friends and family. Not long after we moved, he became very jealous of any new friends that I made through work and constantly questioned me about these friendships.

I started to shut down a bit and became reluctant to share things with him. This only inflamed his jealousy as he would accuse me of hiding things from him. I couldn't win. One night, after a few drinks, he became so upset about his perception that I was 'excluding' him, that he slapped me. He apologised the next day. Hoping it was just a one-off thing, I kind of blocked the whole thing out. However, soon after this, he decided we should move back to our hometown and try for a baby. I was reluctant at first, but he insisted, and I hoped the move back would help him feel more settled and secure.

How were things when you moved back home?

His jealousy intensified when we moved back. For example, one night we were getting ready to head to a party at a mutual friend's house and I mentioned my high school boyfriend may be there. He became extremely angry about this and in the end, it was easier to avoid the party. Things like this started to happen more often and I felt isolated from my longstanding social groups. More so than when we were interstate. He complained that none of my friends liked him (which they actually did at the time because he was really respected in the community). But due to his insecurities, I felt pressured to limit my contact with them. Separately, Joel was heavily involved in competitive sport and was obsessed with winning. When he didn't win, he would return home in a fit of rage, smashing things in the house and punching walls. These outbursts intensified after the birth of our first child. It was a high-risk pregnancy and a traumatic birth. I was incredibly unwell afterwards. Joel had been desperate to have a child but as soon as we did, he totally checked out and became even more obsessed with winning his sporting competitions and began to blame any losses on the baby. He was verbally abusing me regularly. I was still recovering from childbirth and often too exhausted to challenge his behaviour. But when I did, it was impossible to reason with him. He would just tell me to shut up.

Was there a moment you realised Joel's behaviour was family violence?

One of my family members expressed their concern to me. Maybe I wasn't ready to see it. My perception of family violence was that it was only physical. And because this had happened only once, I struggled to see it that way (not realising that smashing things/punching walls was also physical violence). Another family member said to me that I had gotten used to a different kind of normal – but that Joel's behaviour wasn't normal. But at the time, he and our baby felt like my whole world. I was so overwhelmed that I didn't have the capacity to see things for what they really were at the time.

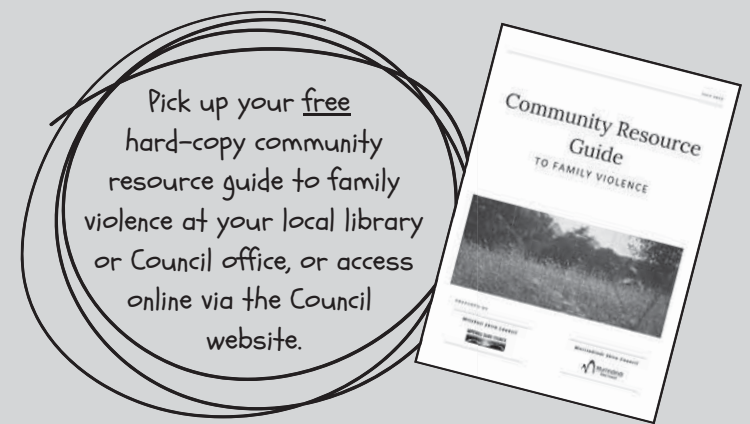
How did your relationship change after children?

I remember a few months after our first son's birth Joel came second in a competition. When we returned home, he started yelling and smashing things again. He blamed our son and I for "only coming second". He said that because I "made" him bathe the baby the night before, it affected his body for the competition. I was speechless. It didn't make sense. When our second child was born things deteriorated further. Because we didn't have a girl (which he was hoping for the second time round), he didn't make an effort with the baby at all. He refused to even hold him after he was born and blamed me that he wasn't a girl. It was heartbreaking. Nothing made sense.

Would you like your own deck of Free From Violence Activity Cards?

Scan the QR code below to register your interest and we will get in touch make sure you don't miss out on this great conversational and icebreaker tool!





In fact, in the operating theatre when the doctors were administering urgent blood transfusion treatment, he said in front of the whole room that we would be trying again for a girl as soon as we got home. The doctors had to ask him to leave the theatre. After this episode, I continued trying to seek support for him. But he just wouldn't engage. I also tried to get his parents to help, but they refused to accept that anything was wrong. One of his parents even told me (after I explained everything that had been going on) that "marriage means in sickness and in health" and that as his wife, I should be trying harder to make things work. I blamed myself. I see now their views were rooted in a different time and set of values. But I felt like I'd 'failed' at being a 'good wife'.

What made you decide to leave?

It was really a collection of a lot of things, not one lightbulb moment. But I eventually became so unhappy that I chose to leave the marriage. It was not an easy choice as our second child was still so small. We had moved (again) to a different part of the state and Joel was changing jobs frequently. He would quit each job for a new imagined reason. He continued to refuse professional help – saying it was me who 'had problems'. I felt powerless as I couldn't convince him to speak to anybody. His behaviour became more erratic, and I was living in fear of him, walking on eggshells every day. Despite having two small children at home, I was working a lot to make sure we had enough money. But Joel began draining the money in our joint account on material items that we didn't need (like fancy fitness equipment). Any essential purchases that I made, he questioned and criticised – even nappies for the babies were questioned. Perhaps the final straw was when Joel was yelling at me in front of our eldest son who started crying uncontrollably, distressed by what he was seeing and hearing. I knew it was unacceptable that our relationship was impacting our children, and I was concerned about the long-term effects the situation would have on them. I didn't want them to ever think abuse was okay. At this point, I felt like a shell of my former self. When we separated, I vividly recall feeling a weight leave my body and I finally felt free.

What was the hardest thing about leaving?

Trusting myself enough to leave was liberating at first. But soon after I left, Joel's abusive behaviour escalated. He physically attacked me in public when I was holding our young son. He also attacked my mother when she was babysitting our kids. When I calmed him down, my mother called the police. Luckily, the police were great and supported me to seek an intervention order. I didn't want to at first as I was so scared of his reaction. Even with the order in place, I was still fearful that he would come to the house and hurt us.

Did Joel ever threaten to harm you or your children after you separated?

Yes, he did make one chilling threat, referencing the man who drove his kids into a dam (drowning them). He insinuated that if I upset him that's what he would do to our little boys. He later laughed it off as a joke. I never allowed him alone with the kids after that. Thank goodness he didn't fight me on this.

Do you think mental illness can explain or excuse family violence?

No. I work in the health sector and have come across many people struggling with mental illness. I sometimes struggle with my own mental health as a result of the trauma of experiencing family violence. But, while mental health may play a role in exacerbating abuse, it does not cause or justify it. Past trauma and other mental health issues can be really tough to live with. I have so much compassion for anyone dealing with such things. However, the vast majority of people suffering with mental illness or past trauma are not violent. Everyone deserves the chance to get support for whatever challenges they may be facing. But, when someone's behaviour harms others, we must prioritise our own safety first. It is not your job to try and 'fix' someone that doesn't want help, especially when they are choosing to use violence.

Where are things at now? What does life look like for you?

A year after we separated Joel ended his own life. It was devastating. I truly believed that if he sought help, he could get better and show up for our children in a healthy way. I would never have wished for anything like this to happen. I still had love for Joel. It took me years to move past his death. Particularly as his parents overtly blamed me for his death. I know that Joel made that choice, but even with all I know now – I do still carry some guilt for leaving him. Healing never happens in a straight line. I am now married to the

kindest man who is a wonderful father figure for my boys. He cherishes them and I love our life together. I feel completely safe in our relationship and now understand what a true partnership looks like. Things are equal. We communicate in a healthy way and resolve disagreements calmly, with respect for one another's point of view. Of course, I bring a lot more maturity and awareness into this relationship given all I went through. But I also believe conversations about family violence are less stigmatised now. More people are learning about what healthy relationships look like and what the signs of family violence are. This has helped me on my own journey, as it validates that it wasn't my fault, and I didn't deserve what happened.

If you could give any advice to others in a similar situation, what would it be?

Reach out to your loved ones and seek support as soon as possible in a way that feels safe for you. Don't be afraid of judgment and put the safety of yourself and your children first. Seek advice from a free legal service. Information is empowering when you might be feeling totally disempowered. Your friends have more capacity for difficult conversations than you might think. You can be clear that you aren't looking for advice, just support and love. If you're not ready to leave, that's okay. If people know about the situation, they are better equipped to be there for you when you are ready. Finally, it's valid to be afraid to speak to the authorities. But, in my experience, the police were some of the most kind and supportive people I dealt with and provided me with a lot of good advice and guidance. Especially now, police are trained to navigate the complexities of family violence. I understand engaging police won't feel right for everybody. But I believe it ultimately saved my life and my kids' lives.

Has experiencing family violence changed the way you feel about men?

No, definitely not! I don't hate men or view men as a collective in a negative light. While I would love to see more men step up to help prevent and address family violence in the community (including having hard conversations with their friends or family where they observe disrespectful behaviour or suspect abuse), I certainly don't blame all men for the issue. Like anyone else, men have great capacity for kindness, curiosity and advocacy. We can all use our voice for good to contribute to change and change the story. This is especially important for our kids.

How do you think men can help or get involved?

It really doesn't have to be complicated or time consuming. Be aware of what is happening around you. And be brave enough to (even gently) challenge harmful behaviours in your peer groups. The kind of language you use is important too. Remember, fathers aren't 'babysitting' their kids - they're parenting them! I have learned that my partner isn't 'doing me a favour' when he does the dishes or other domestic chores. He's just participating in our partnership and contributing to our family life. This doesn't mean I 'wear the pants' (another unhelpful phrase) - it means I am capable of being clear about the expectations for our partnership and am flexible about who does what based on our capacity at certain times. The mental load is not just for women to take on. Even laughing at sexist jokes can feed into an overall culture that views women as 'less than'. Shifting these stereotypes prevents violence because it changes the culture in which violence can thrive more easily. If you want to protect women, encourage other men to model behaviour that makes us feel safe and respected. It really is that simple.

Getting support

Call 000 in an emergency or if you are/someone else is in immediate danger.

- 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 7 32
- NTV men's referral service: 1800 766 491
- Orange Door Goulburn: 1800 634 245
- Nexus Primary Health: 1300 773 352
- Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre: 1800 015 188
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Rainbow Door: 1800 729 367 or visit rainbowdoor.org.au - A free specialist helpline for LGBTQIA+ Victorians
- Djirra Aboriginal Women Support Service: 1800 959 563
- Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978
- 'Are You Safe at Home?': areyousafeathome.org.au
- ARC Justice's Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre: (03) 5831 0900 or 1800 310 900 - free legal information, advice and representation services

On Farm Connectivity Program returns to support farmers

THE National Farmers' Federation (NFF) has welcomed funding for a third round of the *On Farm Connectivity Program* (OFCP).

Announced recently by the Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland, the OFCP is designed to assist farmers to adopt advanced connected machinery and sensor technology.

In previous rounds of the program, farmers have benefited from a 50 per cent rebate on

eligible equipment costs, including installation and training, with rebates ranging from \$1000 to \$30,000.

NFF President David Jochinke praised the value of the program, with funding increased to a pool of \$20 million for round three.

"The NFF is a strong supporter of this program and the direct benefit it creates for farmers," Mr Jochinke said.

"Embracing connectivity and digital infrastructure is key to unlocking the productivity of the agricultural sector, but high upfront costs are often a barrier. This program is a smart investment for the government and a win for Australian farmers, who, through the NFF, have been calling for further rounds."

The NFF's Regional Tech Hub has resources and advice available for farmers seeking to access the program.

"I encourage farmers to get prepared for when applications open later this year. Find a spare moment to give the Regional Tech Hub a buzz and make the most of this opportunity," Mr Jochinke said.

"My advice to farmers however would be that like previous rounds, round three is likely to be oversubscribed. So if you're ready to buy some kit and the investment makes sense without the rebate, buy now."

Following the success of the two previous rounds and increasing industry interest, the NFF is calling on all sides of politics to get behind the program.

"This program has been a stroke of genius. As we head into an election, we would like to see all parties support further funding for the program to give producers and agtech providers confidence that this funding will flow," Mr Jochinke said.

"Now more than ever, we need programs which support increased productivity and sustainability. The *On Farm Connectivity Program* does exactly that by allowing more farmers to adopt technology that makes their farms safer, more productive and more sustainable.

"The NFF will continue to work closely with government on the design of the program to ensure it remains equitable and accessible to farmers around the country."

Lab grown labelling laws challenged

CATTLE Australia (CA) has criticised proposed regulations for lab-grown fake foods for their lack of clear labelling requirements and defiance of the recommendations of a Federal Senate inquiry.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has been undertaking public consultation in response to a proposal to permit the use of cultured quail cells as a novel food.

CA says the regulations proposed by FSANZ provide no reassurance that lab-grown proteins are safe for consumers and the environment, or that the labelling requirements will avoid misleading consumers.

"Lab-grown proteins must be held to the same food safety, environmental and labelling standards as real products like beef," CA Chief Executive Dr Chris Parker said.

"The processes and ingredients used to produce these products are often 'commercial in confidence' so it is very unclear what is actually in this stuff.

"The FSANZ framework fails to provide the detail consumers and industry are looking for as to how fake foods will be labelled, which goes against the recommendations of the 2022 Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee inquiry.

"If the pathway set out by FSANZ is followed, novel foods may only have to be described as 'cell-cultured' or 'cell-cultivated', which doesn't adequately describe to consumers that they are in fact eating fake meat."

CA has argued that minimum labelling standards for plant-based or lab-grown proteins should prohibit any reference to animal food products, including the words meat, beef, lamb, and goat.

"We strongly believe that the use of livestock images on plant or synthetic protein packaging or marketing materials should also be outlawed as it is a deliberate deception of consumers designed to dupe them into believing they are eating something that they are not," Dr Parker said.

"The use of the word beef and images of cattle on fake foods has been proven to be confusing to consumers, and actually weakens the value of the real thing.

"Beef should be defined in law as only including products derived from actual livestock raised by cattle producers."

EV charger out of order

MURRINDINDI Shire Council were contacted about the EV charging station that is out of order in Bakers Lane carpark in Alexandra.

A council spokesperson provided the following response, "As part of the Victorian Government's 'Destination Charging Action Victoria Program', Murrindindi Shire Council successfully advocated for the installation of an Electric Vehicle charging station located in the Bakers Lane carpark in Alexandra. This charger has two different plugs to enable charging of most electric vehicles.

"The charging station is partially out of order, due to the more commonly used plug being temporarily out of service. The other plug is only suitable for a limited number of vehicles.

"Evia Networks, who owns and manages this equipment, is responsible for maintenance and repairing faults. Council has contacted Evia Networks, however, they were not able

to provide an estimate for when repairs are due to be completed. We encourage users to check the Evie app or contact Evie Networks directly to confirm when the plug will be operational again.

"The nearest publicly accessible EV charging stations that suit most vehicles are the Tesla Superchargers behind FoodWorks in Yea.

"Council does not maintain a list of EV chargers in the shire for residents and visitors, as there are already free resources available such as PlugShare or Google Maps, which provide a comprehensive and regularly updated list. Additionally, most electric vehicles have built-in navigation with the ability to search for charging infrastructure, and most charging infrastructure companies, including Evie Networks, have apps and online maps that allow anyone to check if their chargers are currently available, or out of order."

Grants to support wellbeing in rural areas

THE Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) is inviting applicants to apply for grants up to \$20,000 with their *In a Good Place* program (IAGP). The project assists community driven projects that strengthen the mental, social and or emotional health and wellbeing of people living in remote, rural and regional places, particularly in farming communities.

This round, the IAGP program has \$290,000 to support initiatives or activities that prevent or respond to mental wellbeing concerns. Priorities include increasing mental health education and understanding to reduce stigma; supporting people to build connections and reduce social isolation; and encouraging, supporting and enabling people to seek help for their mental health.

Thanks to FRRR's donor partners, community groups and not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) can apply for grants through two streams of funding these are: Community wellbeing: for projects that focus on strengthening the general mental health and wellbeing of people in remote, rural and regional communities; Farmers and farming communities: for projects specifically supporting the mental health and wellbeing of farmers and the communities they live in.

Jill Karena, Head of Granting at FRRR, said that while Australia's farming communities are incredibly vibrant and

resilient, even the strongest person needs help from time to time.

"There is a legacy of silence and perceived stigma around speaking up and seeking support for mental health issues. Thankfully, in rural communities, this narrative is shifting.

"Together with our funding partners, we are supporting local groups to be part of that momentum and continue to challenge and positively shift perceptions about mental health in their remote, rural and regional communities.

"We want to fund initiatives that foster open and honest discussions around mental health, support the social and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable community members, and encourage farmers, and other community members concerned with their mental health, to seek support.

"We look forward to reading the project ideas put forward by community groups and not-for-profits across the country, and to be inspired by their positive, proactive and community-focussed, mental health initiatives," Ms Karena said.

Groups seeking support must first lodge an Expression of Interest (EOI), which is due Friday, February 14. Final applications from those shortlisted are due Tuesday, March 11.

To learn more about the grant visit frrr.org.au/funding/place/in-a-good-place/

Don't pump water if you don't have a licence

AFTER a spate of incidents in recent weeks, Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) is warning people against illegally pumping water from storages and waterways.

As the weather has become warmer and drier, there have been several cases of people parking at boat ramps or besides waterways on public roads and pumping water into their trailer tanks.

GMW Water Delivery Services General Manager Warren Blyth said people caught doing this would face legal action.

"The water stored in our lakes, dams and reservoirs belongs to entitlement holders," Mr Blyth said.

"When people illegally take water from our storages and waterways, they are taking our customers' water.

"Water is a valuable and limited resource. To ensure fairness in how it is used, we take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of unauthorised take."

People who are caught pumping water from a GMW storage or waterway without the appropriate authorisations can be prosecuted for water theft under the *Water Act 1989*.

Mr Blyth said those in need of water, but lacking entitlements could contact GMW to discuss their options.

"Our diversions inspectors can help people with any questions about how they can gain authorisation to take water," Mr Blyth said.

"People in urgent need of water also have the option of using emergency water supply points."

There are about 300 emergency water supply points in Victoria. These are bores and standpipes that people can draw water from for emergency stock and domestic or rural needs.

People can search for nearby emergency water supply points on the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action website water.vic.gov.au/for-agriculture-and-industry/emergency-water-supply-points

Those wanting to discuss their options for sourcing water can phone GMW on 1800 013 357.

People can use the same number to report any instances of water theft or send an email to compliance@gmwater.com.au

Fuel prices locked and price rises capped

VICTORIA will cap and lock fuel price rises in an effort to assist in cost-of-living by the Victorian Government.

The government's *Fair Fuel Plan* was announced last week, it will require fuel companies to publicly report their fuel price changes the day before they are in effect, and lock in those prices for 24 hours.

Fuel prices sometimes fluctuate multiple times a day. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission data also shows that in 2023, Melbourne motorists could have saved up to \$333 a year from filling up at the lowest point of fuel price cycles by securing the best deal.

The *Fair Fuel Plan* won't change everything, but it's one extra tool at families' disposal to help them save at the servo, and another way to keep fuel companies transparent about the prices they set and the deals they promote.

Under the plan, the state government will make it compulsory for the more than 1500 fuel retailers across the state to provide their pricing data in real time. This data will then feed directly into a new fuel finder feature on the *Service Victoria* app, giving Victorians the opportunity to shop around for the best deal when they're ready to fill up.

Currently, fuel price reporting in Victoria is voluntary and often patchy. While commercial price reporting websites exist, the *Service Victoria fuel finder* will include every fuel provider, won't be advertiser funded, and will never promote one outlet over the other.

The fuel finder and mandatory reporting will support the next phase of the *Fair Fuel Plan*, to not only cap the number of fuel price rises to once a day, but to lock in those prices the day before, and freeze them for 24 hours.

This means you'll be able to check your local area for which service station is offering the best price throughout the next day, and when you arrive in the morning to fill up, there'll be no surprises.

Under the plan, the price at that outlet can't rise at any time throughout that day, but there is not intended to be any limit to a company reducing its fuel price.

New regulations and legislation will be required, and work is currently underway to determine an appropriate enforcement structure and penalties for fuel retailers. Government will consult with industry on implementation to get it right, and to ensure the scheme is fair and practical for smaller retailers.

The *Fair Fuel Plan* will be phased in over 2025. The *Service Victoria fuel finder* will launch later this year and could save Victorian motorists hundreds of dollars a year at the bowser.



Firefighters working to stop the fire from crossing the rail trail into the nearby paddock. -BD



Alexandra Fire Brigade members fighting the main part of the Cathkin fire. -BD

Cathkin fire sparked by cooling system issue

A GRASSFIRE occurred last Wednesday afternoon in Cathkin, near the intersection of Goulburn Valley Highway and Cremona Road.

The fire burnt approximately 100 metres by 50 metres on the side of the road.

The fire was caused by a crane pulley overheating on the back of a truck due to a cooling system issue and exploding, causing hot metals to spit out each side of the truck as it drove through Cathkin.

Captain Chris Lynch of the Alexandra Fire Brigade said "He [the truck driver] wouldn't have known, had no idea. Not his fault, just an accident. So, when we got to the bottom of it, obviously seeing three different fires in three different areas sparks interest to potential foul play. That wasn't the case.

"When I came around the corner I was met with three different fire scenes. One was reasonably small, about two metres long and a metre wide. Then we had the main fire which was starting to spread, and I couldn't do anything about that immediately.

"And then the other scene of the fire was up in some grass heading towards some trees and



The fire burnt through the scrub on the side of the Goulburn Valley Highway.



Local firefighting vehicles assisting in extinguishing the grassfire. -BD

a house. All I could do was get out and put that one out with the extinguisher and then start putting some plans into action around suppression of the main fire," Chris said.

"We had Alexandra tanker one and two, two being the new tanker. We had Yarck, Molesworth, Koriella, Yea, Thornton. Plus, the Alexandra Forward Command Vehicle (FCV) and the Alexandra Group FCV.

"We were very lucky that middle fire didn't jump the rail trail and get into the paddock. That was my main concern, and how we were going to pull that one up. It was pretty close to getting helicopters and more tankers if that had gone across.

"We were pretty grateful for the local's assistance, with private firefighting vehicles. The ultralight that we sold to a farmer so we

could get the new tanker was actually the farm that was across the road and that was used in the suppression of that fire. That worked pretty well and was handy.

"Big credit to the help from the local firefighting vehicles, and a big shoutout to the Alexandra Police for their assistance with traffic," Chris said.



The result of a out of control burn off in Strath Creek. -S

Strath Creek fire from burn off

ON Saturday, January 18 a grass and scrub fire occurred on a Strath Creek property. The Yea Fire brigade, Homewood Brigade and other private units attended the fire that was a result of an out of control burn off which burnt approximately one hectare in size.

Emery McCarthy from the Yea CFA said "Quick action from responding brigades and number of private units got it under control. We want to reiterate

burn offs during the fire danger period is illegal without a permit the potential for this fire could have been severe, but we had favorable weather conditions on the day and got under control pretty quick.

"The bush and grassland is very dry and it doesn't take much to get out.... with a lot of the public holidays coming up, with campfires, extinguish them with water, we go by the motto if it's cool to touch it's safe to leave," Emery said.

UPCOMING FEATURES

Let's eat, it's our treat

Publishing: February 5

Deadline: January 30, 5pm

Live Well, Feel Good

Publishing: February 12

Deadline: February 4, 5pm

Work Local

Publishing: February 19

Deadline: February 13, 5pm

Let's eat, it's our treat

Publishing: March 5

Deadline: February 27, 5pm

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
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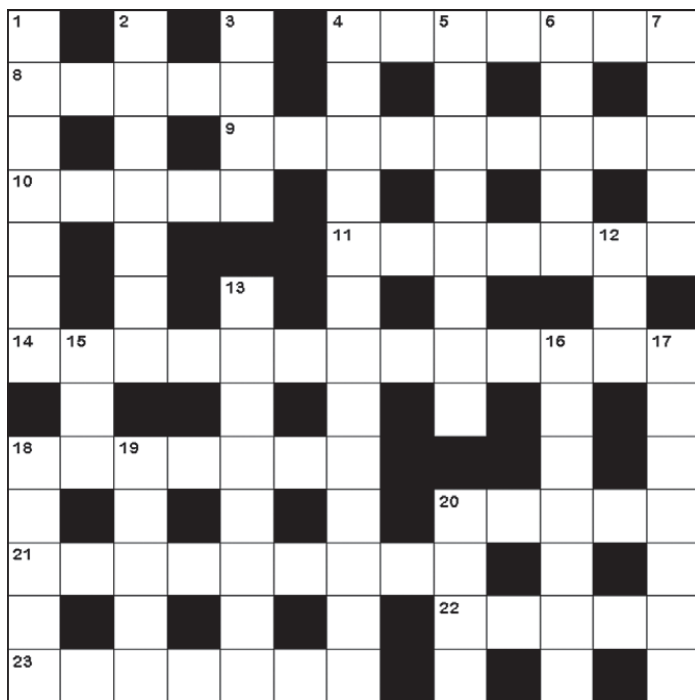
Crossword

ACROSS

- 4. Makes an ear-splitting noise.
- 8. Cook in a simmering liquid.
- 9. Absolutely necessary.
- 10. Many times at short intervals.
- 11. Watered down.
- 14. Emotional and unpredictable.
- 18. Gather in the crops.
- 20. Brief and to the point.
- 21. All drinks except water.
- 22. Fill with surprise and wonder.
- 23. Told tales on.

DOWN

- 1. Assign a position.
- 2. A fit of bad temper.
- 3. At what time.
- 4. Socially or economically deprived.
- 5. Declared invalid.
- 6. An order proclaimed by authority.
- 7. A dish of cold vegetables or fruit.
- 12. A distinctive period in time.
- 13. Involving intelligence.



- 15. Estimated time of arrival.
- 16. A rising current of warm air.
- 17. Described as similar.
- 18. An established custom.
- 19. Hold the attention of.
- 20. A male monarch of Russia.

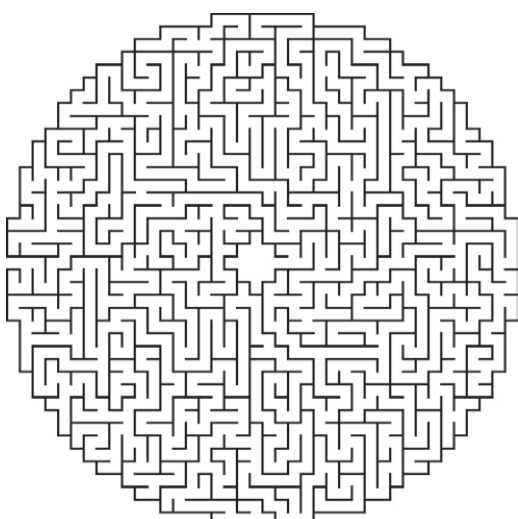
Word Search

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U U L I V E T K C E P W I C E
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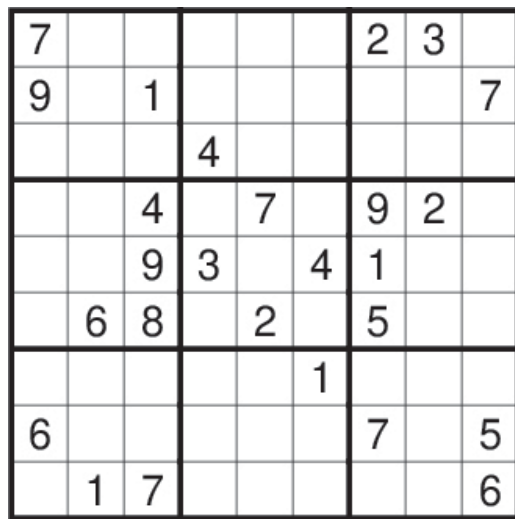
Occupations

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| ACCOUNTANT | PAINTER |
| CLEANER | RECEPTIONIST |
| DOCTOR | REPORTER |
| EDITOR | SALESASSISTANT |
| JOURNALIST | TEACHER |
| LAWYER | TRUCKDRIVER |

Maze



Sudoku



Difficulty: Hard

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

Math Square

	x		+	4	10
+		x		+	
	+	7	x		47
x		+		-	
	+		x		17
42		22		1	

Fill in the missing numbers.

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9. Each number is only used once. Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation. Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.



Heteropoda davidbowie. -Zleng

Fun facts about huntsman spiders

HUNTSMAN spiders are harmless to humans. They rarely bite us, but when they do, it's likely to cause only mild pain and can be treated with a cold pack.

Only the badge huntsman (*Neosparassus diana*) bite can produce unpleasant symptoms, including localised pain and swelling, sweating, nausea and vomiting.

No-one has ever died from a huntsman bite in Australia, however if you are concerned after a bite, seek medical attention.

The huntsman spider diet includes cockroaches, mosquitoes and other insects, as well as small skinks and geckoes. They don't build webs to catch them, but instead either ambush the insects or run them down and bite them to immobilise them. Cockroaches are their favourite food.

Huntsman spiders do create webs, but only to create daytime retreats or to protect their young.

There are around 200 different species of huntsman spiders in Australia, 94 of which have been described, and 1363 worldwide. One of Australia's huntsman spiders, the tiger huntsman, was only discovered in 2006 in far north Queensland and is yet to gain a scientific name.

In the bush, they tend to live in the bark of trees or under rocks, however they also like to live in homes or cars. They tend to be most active at night, and when it's raining or humid.

Delena cancerides, or social huntsman, are the only species of huntsman spider which

live together, and there can be hundreds of them in the one location. They hunt and raise offspring together. They're often found on dead acacia trees.

There's a species of huntsman spider, which sadly does not appear in Australia called *Heteropoda davidbowie*.

The wheel spider, a species of huntsman which lives in the Namib Desert in Africa, quite literally cartwheels down hills to escape predators. The videos are fantastic, and we recommend that you look them up.

The fastest huntsman is the golden huntsman. It has been recorded travelling at a speed of 110 centimetres per second.

Huntsman spiders have eight eyes divided into two rows. All the better to see you with my dear.

The average huntsman leg span is 15cm. The giant huntsman spider, which lives in Laos, has a leg span of up to 30cm.

Male huntsman spiders use sound to attract a mate. This can be heard by humans and tends to sound like a quartz clock ticking.

A female huntsman spider can lay up to 200 eggs.

Huntsman spiders live for about two years. They must shed their skin to grow, and this skin can often be found by humans.

Their predators include birds, geckos, spider wasps, nematode worms and egg parasites of wasps and flies.



A huntsman spider. -Bidgee

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The Yea Chronicle

Taungurung statement about January 26

Continued from Page 4

In the eyes of the Taungurung peoples, Australia Day ignores our history, our struggle, and the fact that our Ancestors have lived on, cared for, and maintained cultural obligations to and for Taungurung Country for over 65,000 years.

It is for this reason that many Taungurung people call Australia Day 'Invasion Day' as a reflection on the effects invasion had and still has on our community and Country. Taungurung people also refer to Australia Day as Survival Day, a day to reflect on our resilience and survival, and our continued determination and drive to exercise our cultural and inherent rights, and our continued fight for and assertion of rights on Taungurung land.

Moreover, January 26 has a long history of protest within the Aboriginal community. On January 26, 1888, on the centenary of British colonisation, Aboriginal leaders boycotted the 100 year anniversary celebrations.

On January 26, 1938, on the 150th anniversary of Arthur Phillip's arrival, Yorta Yorta man William Cooper and other members of the Aboriginal Progressive Association held the Day of Mourning and Protest. The protest took place in Sydney after an event to celebrate Arthur Phillip's landing, which included a parade and a re-enactment of the First Fleet's arrival. Afterwards, over 1000 First Nations people and their supporters formed a silent march through the streets of Sydney.

All this history of Aboriginal resilience, mourning and protest on January 26.

In 1946, the Commonwealth and state governments agreed to unify all the state-based Australia Day celebrations and celebrate on January 26 as a country, the public holiday was taken on the Monday closest to the 26th.

Australia Day officially became a public holiday for all states and territories only 31 years ago, in 1994.

Taungurung people therefore continue to see January 26 as a day of mourning and reflection, and not a day of celebration.

It is Taungurung peoples' wish that all people living on our Country take time to truly consider and respect that January 26 does not bring a sense of unity and pride and implores people to educate themselves about the true history of this Country and to consider what you can do to become an ally of the Taungurung people.

The Taungurung Land and Waters Council, through the direction of the Taungurung people have chosen not to participate in any activities associated with January 26 and request that our partners and stakeholders respect this position.

It is important to note the Taungurung people respect our partners/stakeholders' responsibilities and commitments to January 26, however, also request they frequently consider deeply the views of the Taungurung Nation and the actual need to continue celebrating a day which would continue to isolate and segregate the Taungurung people on their own Country.



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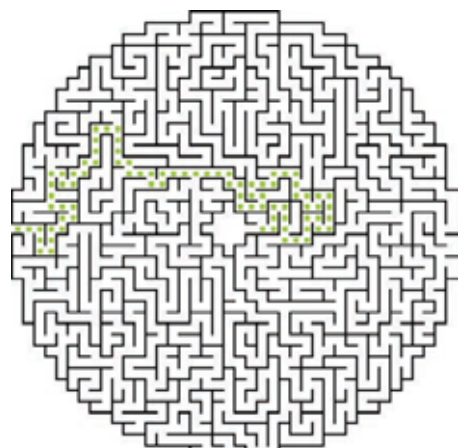
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FUNERAL NOTICES

McCARTHY
 A Funeral Mass of Thanksgiving for the life of Dominic McCarthy will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Yea commencing at 11.30am. The funeral cortege will proceed to the Broadford Cemetery for burial service commencing at 3.30pm.



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McCARTHY, Dominic George
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 Loved and loving husband of Pina. Stepfather to Matthew, Nick, Josh and Caleb and their partners Sam and Kate. Grandfather 'Doom' to Elijah, Charlie, Olivia, Wallace and Bonnie. Brother to Anthony, Kieran, Angela, Matthew and Joseph and their families. Loving son of Carmel (dec.) and Anthony. Loved and remembered, always in our hearts. Rest in Peace.



DEATH NOTICES

McEVOY, Michael
 ARC Life Member
 A hard working, long serving committee man and lover of thoroughbreds. Rest in Peace.
 ARC President and Committee

MEETINGS

ALEXANDRA PASTORAL AND AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.
 AGM on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 7pm in the secretaries office/caravan park office at 17 William Street, Alexandra. All interested parties are welcome and we actively encourage new members who look to promote agriculture/horticulture within our area. For more information, please contact the secretary at pna.alexandra@gmail.com.

DEATH NOTICES



GERENCSEK, Ilona.

It is with profound sadness that we express our deepest sympathy and support to the family and friends of Ilona Gerencser who died after a long illness. Ilona served as a dedicated Murrindindi Shire Councillor for the Kinglake Ward from 2020-2024. Her passion and commitment to the Kinglake Ranges community was evident in all she did. Ilona's tireless efforts to improve mental health, wellbeing and road safety for residents have left a lasting impact. She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered for her unwavering dedication and significant contributions to our community.

Mayor, Councillors and staff



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Protect yourself against Measles before travelling overseas

VICTORIANS are being encouraged to protect themselves and their families from measles by ensuring they are immunised, with outbreaks overseas posing a particular risk to those travelling to South-East Asia, particularly Vietnam at present.

This is after two new measles cases were identified in Victoria on Friday, January 17 following overseas travel, with the cases having attended multiple public places throughout Melbourne while infectious from January 13 to 16.

It is strongly advised that anyone travelling overseas who may not have been vaccinated against measles receives the measles vaccine before travelling.

Infants in Victoria are eligible for a measles vaccine from six months of age if they are

travelling to a country where measles is present, which is six months earlier than routinely scheduled.

“The last thing anyone wants when travelling overseas is to put their child at risk from a lethal disease, vaccination against measles is safe, effective, and free,” said Victoria’s Chief Health Officer Dr Tarun Weeramanthri.

“Anyone planning to travel overseas to a country where measles is present who hasn’t received the vaccine before should speak to their GP or immunisation provider ideally at least six to eight weeks before they depart to allow time for a full course of measles vaccine.”

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is available for free to: children 12

months and 18 months of age under the National Immunisation Program, anyone born during or after 1966 who has not already received two doses of a measles-containing vaccine, are unsure of their vaccination status, or do not have evidence of immunity to measles, infants travelling overseas to countries where measles occurs can be vaccinated with an MMR vaccine from six months of age. If an infant receives the MMR vaccine when they are younger than 12 months of age, they still need to receive the two further doses of measles-containing vaccine after 12 months of age, usually at 12 and 18 months of age as per the National Immunisation Program Schedule.

Any overseas travel could lead to exposure to measles, with outbreaks reported in Asia,

including Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and India, as well as Africa, Europe and the UK, the Middle East, and the USA in 2024.

Measles is a very infectious viral disease that spreads quickly with close contact, especially in those who are not fully vaccinated. Most people recover, however some people, especially young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are at risk of serious illness.

Measles usually begins with common cold like symptoms such as a fever, runny nose, red eyes, and a cough, followed by a rash. The characteristic rash usually begins three to four days after the first symptoms, generally starting on the face and then spreading to the rest of the body.

Food relief grants helping local families

KINGLAKE Ranges Neighbourhood House (KRNH) and Flowerdale Community House (FCH) were the fortunate recipients of the Victorians Government’s *Community Food Relief Program Local Grants*. These grants are to support local food relief activities and food security initiatives delivered by neighbourhood houses, community and volunteer led organisations across Victoria.

Discussing the grant with Laura Caine the Engagement Officer of KRNH, she started by saying “We feel really fortunate we have been successful with this grant, people are struggling it’s not just low income or people on benefits. People are struggling that have never struggled before.”

Laura explains, “The project is called Nourishing Connections in the Kinglake Ranges, we are going to be running a food handlers’ course and will be inviting community members to come along and attend and from that they would be expected once a month to help us cook and prepare meals we can then freeze, and they can be used in our FoodShare program.

“At the moment it’s just your basic staple items like rice and flour and spaghetti, we can actually be able to give people healthy and nutritious meals. There will be purchasing of the food to make the meals and the packaging, and stock the pantry shelves. We can top that off so there is a nice selection. We are also going to reinvigorate our food garden we already have here, but we can now spend money on it, seedling, trees, pest control, and buy the plants to provide the veggies, and it will be seasonal. So, when you come and get your staples and meals you can also go out to the garden and pick your vegetables.

“We also need to purchase a fridge and freezer as we prepare meals for people, so we need a decent size freezer to do all of that.

Laura said, “We are trying to get the message out that everyone is struggling right now and there is nothing to be ashamed of to be needing to come and grab some food. Not to feed the family for the week, it’s to top up.

“We are trying to get rid of the stigma around accessing FoodShare as it’s something that everybody at some point is possibly going to need.”

We’ll have further information on Flowerdale Community House’s plans in the next edition.

Secure water supplies for summer and beyond

GOULBURN Valley Water’s 2024 Annual Water Outlook has confirmed that water restrictions are unlikely this year and that drinking water supplies are in a stable position for the region.

According to the updated water security outlook, published on Goulburn Valley Water’s website, only one of the 54 towns supplied by 13 river, creek and groundwater supply systems has any chance of experiencing water restrictions during 2025.

The outlook for the Yea River System over the next two years says: “There is a very rare likelihood of water restrictions in the outlook period, with supply being well above demand. The average demand is predicted to be well below the water restriction trigger and the projected stream flows.”

According to the outlook, the Yea River System has a water entitlement of 438 megalitres, and in 2023-24 the total water use was only 207 megalitres, leaving plenty to spare.

Goulburn Valley Water Managing Director Dr Steve Capewell said a number of factors had been considered in the analysis, but the major contributors to the outcome were strong storage levels and wetter catchments following the spring 2022 floods.

“All of the northern region’s water supply systems, the Murray River, Goulburn River, Seven Creeks, Nine Mile Creek, and Katunga’s groundwater have a very rare likelihood of restrictions, while the Delatite and Upper Delatite River, Brewery Creek, Steavenson River,

Yea River and the Sunday Creek systems also have positive supply outlooks,” Dr Capewell said.

Water demand projections, population growth predictions, climate modelling and two-year forecast graphs have been used to develop the Annual Water Outlook. The 2024 outlook is bolstered further by the fact Agriculture Victoria’s December to February 2025 outlook is projecting average to above average rainfall conditions.

Dr Capewell said every five years Goulburn Valley Water produced an Urban Water Strategy to plan for short, medium and long term water availability and wastewater demand.

“The 2027 strategy will create more opportunities for the use of recycled water, which was a preference outlined by our customers during engagement for the development of the 2022 Urban Water Strategy,” he said.

Projects included in the current strategy are progressing well, and include a new pipeline connecting Numurkah to Nathalia, which is expected to be complete in 2027. There are also planned upgrades for water treatment plants in Shepparton, Broadford, and Cobram, along with a raw water pipeline in Mansfield.

The Annual Water Outlook can be viewed at gvwater.vic.gov.au/Portals/0/GV-Water/Documents/PlansStrategies/GVW_AnnualWaterOutlook_December2024_FINAL.pdf?ver=koINa0nhsefmNPWcONDag%3d%3d

Ambulance Victoria Service Medals announced

SIX highly regarded Ambulance Victoria (AV) personnel have been awarded Ambulance Service Medals (ASM) in this year’s national Honours, with two covering the Murrindindi Shire area.

The ASM recognises distinguished service by members of Australian ambulance services and is awarded to a select group of outstanding ambulance personnel, as nominated by their peers, each year.

The Australian Honours List acknowledges Australians for their incredible achievements, service and contribution to their communities.

Narelle Capp - Director Regional and Clinical Operations (Hume)

Narelle Capp is AV’s director regional and clinical operations in the Hume region and has held various leadership roles while maintaining her operational capacity, including ambulance paramedic, team manager, senior team manager and area manager.

Narelle has made significant contributions, particularly in the metropolitan and Hume regions, where she has led cultural reforms and served as a role model for women in leadership.

She has driven innovation in ambulance services for Victoria’s alpine areas. Recognising the outdated model and safety concerns, she led the introduction of a new dual crew roster system and upgraded equipment, including new snow vehicles and specialist training programs.

In 2024, Narelle oversaw the deployment of custom-built Can-Am over-snow vehicles, enhancing safety and efficiency for paramedics in alpine environments. She is passionate and advocates for the experience of first responders.

Narelle’s leadership in these reforms highlights her commitment to improving services and challenging existing practices to better serve the Victorian community.

Bartholomew (Bart) Wunderlich - Community Emergency Response Team volunteer (Kinglake)

Bart Wunderlich has dedicated 19 years to AV, beginning as a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer in Kinglake in 2005. He’s held leadership roles for 18 of those years, provided first aid at community events, and spearheaded the establishment of Kinglake’s ambulance station in 2013, ensuring training facilities were in place.

During the Black Saturday fires, Bart risked his life to assist others, earning recognition for his bravery. His testimony to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission drove critical changes in emergency response protocols. After the fires, he was instrumental in rebuilding Kinglake CERT, a vital part of the community.

Known for his unwavering dedication, he mentored future paramedics and supported challenging emergencies, all while balancing his duties at Northern Hospital Epping.

For or against Australia Day on January 26: Deakin survey

THE *Deakin Contemporary History Survey* asks Australians questions about the role of history in contemporary society. Over the years 2021, 2023 and 2024, the statement ‘we should not celebrate Australia Day on January 26’ was included in the survey.

Data collected shows that in 2024, 58 per cent of people disagreed with the posed statement, 41 per cent agreed that Australia Day should not be celebrated on January 26, and 2 per cent of people opted to remain neutral.

Breaking the statistics down further, younger Australians (18 to 34 years old) were more likely to agree that Australia Day shouldn’t be celebrated on January 26. Some 53 per cent of that age group supported changing the date.

People who disagreed with the posed statement and believe Australia Day should remain as is, were more likely to be older. Some 69 per cent of those aged 75 and older disagreed with the statement.

Of the other categories that covered the age groups in between 34 and 75, 66 per cent of

the 55- to 74-year-old group disagreed with the statement, and 59 per cent of the 35- to 54-year-old group disagreed as well.

What this means is that the 18- to 34-year-old group is the only one out of four groups that has a majority that supports the statement ‘we should not celebrate Australia Day on January 26’.

The full survey and all its data can be found at cch.deakin.edu.au/research/survey-on-attitudes-to-history/



Ian and Chris from Yea Rotary selling raffle tickets. -MP



Rotary President Penny Paxman introducing the Rotary Community Service award. -MP

Australia Day celebrated in Yea



Marlene Mason, Tippy and David Anderson singing Advance Australia Fair. -MP

THE Rotary Club of Yea held their famous Australia Day barbecue on Sunday, January 26. President Penny Paxman presented the Rotary Community Service Award to the Yea Football and Netball Club.

The football team established in June 1887, and they have won 14 premierships with the last one in 2005.

Penny said, "They came surging back in 2024, finishing sixth on the ladder. Over the years there have been several attempts to field a girl's football team. This year, for the first time, Yea will field a seniors women's team. Yea has always maintained a strong, successful netball team, although like many clubs it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract players. Football, netball and tennis have always been the mainstay of country towns, and Yea Football and Netball Club is no exception. For their service to the community for over 140 years, and in particular to their efforts in revitalising the club after two very rocky years, I have pleasure in announcing that the Yea Football and Netball Club have been awarded the Rotary Club of Yea Community Service Award for 2025.

Peter Kiss from the club accepted the award saying, "First of all, I'd like to thank the Rotary Club for putting on today, and the beautiful day that it is. Penny covered a fair bit of where we've been and where we're at today.

"I'd like to say that over the time where it has been tough as a football club, the netball club has been strong the whole time. They've held our backsides up for quite a while, and so I'd like to make sure that I say that. It was tough for two years. When we came in as a new executive committee, we didn't have a football club. We didn't have firsts, we didn't have seconds. We had netball.

"It's taken a lot of work, and a lot of the work has been done by Peter Armstrong, who's not here today, he would usually be accepting this. If you come down to a Tuesday or a Thursday night, you'll now see anywhere between 30 to 50 people on the training track on the footy oval. That's pretty much where we're at today.

"Like I say, a lot of work has been done by the committee, the past committee, and Peter Armstrong. For everyone here thank you, to all the Rotary, thank you, and all the best.



Dick Dashwood and Haruho Tanaka from the Youth Exchange Program raising the flag at the Australia Day event. -MP



A great turnout at the Rotary Australia Day breakfast in Yea. -MP



David Anderson emceed the event. -MP



A great day for locals and visitors alike. -MP



A great turnout on the median strip in Yea for breakfast. -MP



The Community Service Award presented by Yea Rotary was to Yea Football Netball Club, with Peter Kiss accepting the award. -MP



It was all hands on deck at the barbecue. -MP



A great combined effort by Rotary members to make the breakfast a success. -MP

The Chronicle Sport



Sports Editorial: sports@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Success for Will Fallon in national speedway competition

SIXTEEN-year-old Alexandra local Will Fallon has been achieving top results in national and state-wide speedway competition, with a fourth-place finish in the Queensland National Titles and fifth place in the New South Wales State Titles.

"We started racing January 10 or 11, a week after new years at Kingaroy [in Queensland] for a national title," Will told this masthead.

"We do a three-day thing, so it's a practice day, qualifying day, and then a race day. It

rained all of the practice morning, but then the sun came out. It's not like the sun down here, the sun up there came out and it was burning. It got to like 35 degrees, and the humidity was around 90 and the track dried up. It was good, I got a practice in and went seventh quickest in practice.

"Then the next day unfortunately we got rained out. There was that much rain that we were going to go racing around 7pm. We got sent a message saying get to the track at 9am

because if there is a clear patch of weather we were just going to go. But there was never an opportunity where the track was good enough to be able to do that. Unfortunately. So we had to come back the next day at 9am.

"Normally you have two days of racing, so a qualifying day which is three heats, and then you get one more heat and then you race. Your points add up. There were 78 cars, so there's two B grades and then A. The goal is to go straight into the A grade.

"And normally there's four heats, but because of the rain and everything we only got three heats on the one day. It was a bit challenging, but I got fifth, second and first. I qualified out of seven.

"There was a bit of carnage at the start of the race, and I ended up in the wall backwards at turn one once. I think it took four or five restarts to get it going. Once it got going it was alright, I got up to fourth and sat there.

"As I was about to go for an overtake on third the yellow flags came out, there was a spun car. The leader had spun out. That was five laps to go, so I sat in fourth for the rest of the race. So, I got fourth in the national, and the weekend just gone I got fifth [in the NSW state titles]."

Will has been racing since his 10th birthday, starting locally in Alexandra and achieving good results there, which prompted a foray into the state and nation-wide races.

"I only ever used to race at Alexandra, and then we got this car and built it up a bit and we started racing at other tracks and doing the state series, which I was fortunate enough to win last year. So we thought we'd go out of the state a bit and try some racing there," Will said.

Will wants to continue racing and move up into the bigger classes, such as sedans, in the future. He doesn't mind working mechanically on the car, but it is the racing that really excites him.

"It's a tricky one because it is all about money and budget, but I probably just want to upgrade and do what Dad does, he races sedan class. Just around locally. That would be good. But if I could ever do something national that would be the goal, but there's always a lot going on, especially when you finish school and going to university and all that kind of stuff," Will said.

"I'm 16 now, going into year 11. I started racing in year four. COVID-19 was tricky, because we had those two years where we couldn't really do any big sporting events. So I've only really been racing for four years, but the time has been six years. Mixing school with racing is challenging, but it's good."

Will gets a lot of support from his family, as well as local community sponsors.

"Mum and Dad help out a lot, always trying to get me to the best places and the best races and get me to win," Will said.

"We've got a few local sponsors. Alexandra Tyrepower, they're a pretty big one. Matt Coulson and the team there have given me a fair few tyres which is generous and kind of them. They're coming to watch me at Wangaratta this weekend. And L S Quarry from Yarck and Lima South, as well as the Day family, are helping us out. It's good to have people like that."

Will travelled to Wangaratta last weekend for the Victorian State Titles.



Will Fallon finished in fourth place at the National Junior Sedan Title in Kingaroy. He is pictured in his AX77. -S

Gender trophy heats up

by Alan Pell

LAST Wednesday saw 22 golfers contest the sixth stableford round in the gender challenge. With the weather much cooler and some gusting wind, conditions were a little different to the hot summer golf of recent weeks.

Winner of the day on countback was Di Elliott (27) from Penny Britton (31) both with 39 points. Gary Pollard (13) with 38 points was next best. However due to the

handicap position of the men (based on four more players) he was not counted in the gender points.

Next best was Vicki Butler (43) with 37 points from Chris Keogh (37) and Russell Haack (16) both with 33 points. The ladies took the team average 31.8 to the men 28.9.

Nearest the pins on the 18th were Di Elliott and Gary Pollard, with John Renehan winning the club award. So for the day the ladies scored 70 points to the men 15.

Overall standings after five rounds are: men 235 and ladies 190.

Rob and Miranda win four ball best ball WITH 38 players and 20 teams Rob (34) and Miranda Gill (17) scored a tremendous 48 points on Saturday to win the mixed four ball.

Unlucky second were Bob Glenister (13) and Chris Keogh (36) with also a fantastic score of 47. Third were Brendan Chenhall

(17) and Gareth Antobus (40) with 46 points from fourth Ken Whitfort (10) and Mic Spagnolo (6) with 45 on countback from Kevin Coghlan/Brendan Chenhall and Alan Pell/Bob Glenister.

Nearest the pins on the 18th were Russell Wealands and Miranda Gill. Individual winner was Gareth Antobus with 40 points on countback from Bob Glenister. The club award was won by Paul Clayton and Steve Rumney.