

The Yea Chronicle

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

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

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Yea Rotary changeover celebrates achievements



Yea Rotary's incoming board. Left to right: president elect Penny Paxman, community service Terry Hubbard, secretary Julie Lynch, president Tony Jacobs, international Tippy Anderson, treasurer Gary Fitzgerald, youth services Lily Cocks, and membership Sue Carpenter. Absent: Club service Gary Cocks and foundation Paul Kellett. -AR

THE Rotary Club of Yea held their annual changeover night at Flowerdale Estate on the evening of Thursday, June 29. Although cold and threatening rain outside, the atmosphere inside was warm and convivial.

Rodney Ridd called the room to order. Past president and past District Governor, David Anderson, district chair of the Rotary Foundation, spoke about diversity, equality and inclusion in Australia, and said that regardless of background, we are all Australians. He then introduced outgoing and incoming president, Tony Jacobs.

Tony welcomed the various dignitaries, special guests, Rotary members and partners to the occasion before Glenda Woods spoke about some of the club's recent history of international connection in toasting Rotary International.

District Governor David McPherson said that there are many projects for Rotarians to become involved in, and that if people are unable to find a project to pique their interest, they should make up their own. He gave various examples of highly successful and impactful projects which started through one Rotarian having an idea.

He also spoke about the Rotary project, End Polio Now. In 1985, there were 100 cases a day around the world. As a result of \$2.4 billion in funding and 2.6 billion children being vaccinated, with very significant support from Rotary, there have only been six polio cases in the world in the past six months. Smallpox was previously eradicated from the world, and soon polio may also be gone. Funding needs to continue however, with \$50 million needed per year, matched two to one by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The evening's presentations were held after the lovely main course.

Disbursements of \$1000 were awarded to the Yea Suicide Awareness Walk and the Yea Cancer Support Group.

Presenter Terry Hubbard spoke about David Long, after whom the David Long Award was named, before presenting the award to Denis Smith from the Yea Racing Club. Denis has been involved in many significant activities at the club, including the merger with the St Pat's Race Club and being voted picnic club of the year in

2014-15. While Denis now lives in South Melbourne, he grew up in Yea.

Paul Harris Fellow recognitions were awarded to Vicki McMaster and Marjorie Hamilton. Vicky is mother to five children and has been involved in various parenting committees, as well as assisting and fundraising for the Yea Football Netball Club. She also became a member of the Yea CFA with her son, and soon became the treasurer. This is all in addition to her work as owner of Just Great Coffee in Yea.

Marjorie Hamilton joined Yea Rotary in 2011 and since then has taken on many leadership roles, including being chair of the Yea Open Gardens committee and director of the Yea Art Show. She has also facilitated courses in mental health awareness and worked with incoming president elect Penny Paxman on the Lift the Lid fundraiser. In addition, she has been a volunteer at Yea Wetlands and is involved with Landcare.

Alexandra Rotary was awarded at the event for highest membership growth of a club in Victoria. This award was shared with three other clubs. The award was accepted by Sharon Fox.

Following dessert and some lovely songs by singer Gracie Neville, Tony Jacobs provided the president's report. He said that Yea Rotary is "a small club doing a mighty job." They have set themselves the challenge this year of recruiting a minimum of six new members, and are looking towards younger demographics. In the previous year, they recruited five new members and six Friends of Rotary.

In the past year, Yea Rotary established the Ruth Konig scholarship for year 12 students and Olivia Johnson and Declan Fulford from Yea High School were the successful recipients. They also assumed responsibility for running Australia Day celebrations from Murrindindi Shire Council, started a regular spot on UGFM radio and updated the club's constitution, bylaws and information manual. They sponsored local student Kai on a student exchange to Denmark and will host an incoming student from Switzerland this year. The last financial year was in a post-COVID-19 environment and Rotary were able to run all of their annual events, including Cycle Dindi, the Yea Art Show, the Yea Garden Expo and Yea Open Gardens.

More images on page 6.

Tourism spend up by 73 per cent in high country

VISITOR expenditure in Victoria has hit a record high of \$35 billion annually, reaching the Victorian Government's 2024 tourism target more than a year ahead of schedule.

The latest data, released by Tourism Research Australia has showed visitor expenditure in Victoria for the year ending March 2023 surpassed the 2019 pre-COVID peak of \$32.5 billion.

In other news, Victoria is leading the nation's tourism recovery. The state attracted 22.1 per cent of Australia's total visitor expenditure over the 12 month period and made the largest market share gains in the country with a 2.9 percentage point growth.

The research also revealed that Melbourne has kept its crown as the number one interstate overnight

leisure destination in Australia, with 3.6 million visitors staying 14.6 million nights and spending \$5.1 billion.

Regional Victoria continued to deliver outstanding results with all tourism regions hitting all-time highs, with visitor spending in Phillip Island increasing by 75 per cent, High Country up by 73 per

cent, and the Grampians rising by 66 per cent since 2019.

Overall intrastate overnight visitation numbers to regional Victoria were up six per cent since 2019, with total nights increasing by eight per cent and expenditure up 58 per cent.

International markets continued to recover, reaching \$4.2 billion in

visitor expenditure in Victoria in the year ending March 2023, which is approximately 50 per cent of 2019 levels.

China has returned as the number one international market after only reopening in January and India continues to be a growing international market with visitor expenditure now 11 per cent higher than in 2019.

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

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Standard The Yea Chronicle

First Victorian team returns after a month fighting Canadian fires

A GROUP of 46 Victorians returned to Melbourne on Friday, June 30 after more than a month assisting Canadian emergency services and communities in their wildfire emergency.

The team, including 42 people from Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) and four people from Country Fire Authority (CFA), have spent the last 35 days providing much needed relief to exhausted Canadian crews.

Firefighters from FFMVic have been backburning areas not yet impacted in

an effort to contain the fires. There are also several staff providing logistical, administrative and communications support behind the scenes.

A total of 115 Victorians have travelled to Canada since May 25, as part of a wider Australian and New Zealand response, with all Australian states sending specialist support. Crews have also been deployed from the United States, South Africa, France, Chile, Costa Rica, Portugal and Spain.

The wildfires continue to challenge crews, with around 422 active fires across Canada. Those returning have received fantastic feedback from their Canadian counterparts and communities, praising their approach and professionalism.

Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp said it's great to welcome home the first contingent of our highly skilled crews who have provided invaluable support to their Canadian colleagues and their communities.

"This team of 46 have represented our state in the best possible way through helping our Canadian colleagues, as the Canadians supported us during the 2019/20 fires," he said.

Forest Fire Management Victoria Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman said it was important to support Canada in its time of need, particularly after so many Canadian firefighters helped Victoria during the devastating 2019/20 bushfire season.

"We have contributed 80 experienced campaign firefighters who have worked incredibly hard and made a real difference to the Canadian firefight. They've been supported by amazing incident management, vehicle support, logistics and communications personnel from our partner agencies across from Australia and New Zealand, who are working extremely well to integrate into the Canadian wildfire management system," he said.

CFA Acting Chief Officer Garry Cook said Victorians can be proud of the valuable contribution our members continue to make to help protect Canadian communities from wildfires.

"Our CFA personnel are highly trained to assist in a wide range of emergencies and I thank this group for showcasing their expertise internationally and helping communities abroad," he said.



Commissioner Andrew Crisp and some of the firefighters who were deployed to Canada to fight the bushfires. -S

The Yea Chronicle **Standard**

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COMMUNITY DIARY

Local Radio Frequency

UGFM 88.9 Yea / Highlands
UGFM 98.9 Flowerdale / Hazeldele
UGFM 94.5 Kingleke Ranges

WEEKLY

Thu Town Club, RSL Hall, 6-8pm. Ph 5797 2179
Sun AA Anglican Church, Alexandra 7pm Ph 1300 222 222
Sun Alanon Recovery Anglican Church, Alexandra 5.30pm.

MONTHLY

1st Mon St Lukes Seniors St Lukes Church Ph 0407 972 099
1st Thu Yea Hospital/Rosebank Aux 2pm. Ph 5797 3057
2nd Sat Alex Repair Cafe 1-3pm @ Embassy of Ideas 0422 225 801
2nd Wed Molesworth Crafty Critters, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
2nd Thu Yea Garden Club Yea RSL Hall 1.30pm Ph 0439 870 315
4th Wed Molesworth Crafty Critters, Molesworth Hall 10am-4pm.
4th Thu Yea CWA Yea RSL Hall, 1.30pm Ph 0458 808 603
Last Fri Yea-Kingleke RSL, 11.30am RSL Hall, Ph 5796 9353

ALEXANDRA NEWSPAPERS

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.

RIVER HEIGHTS FOR THE GOULBURN CATCHMENT

STATION NAME	TIME	HEIGHT	TENDENCY	FLOOD CLASS
Goulburn R at Lake Eildon D/S	9.00am Mon	2.91^	falling	below minor
Rubicon R at Rubicon	9.00am Mon	0.79	steady	
Acheron R at Taggerty	9.22am Mon	1.36	steady	below minor
Home Ck at Yarek	7.59am Mon	0.35	steady	
Yea R at Devlins Bridge	9.59am Mon	0.78	steady	below minor
Yea R at Yea	9.09am Mon	1.66	steady	
Goulburn R at Ghin Ghin	9.00am Mon	5.48	steady	
King Parrot Ck at Flowerdale	9.00am Mon	0.80^	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Trawool	9.00am Mon	3.51^	steady	below minor
Sunday Creek at Tallarook	9.00am Mon	0.40^	steady	below minor
Goulburn R at Seymour	10.00am Mon	3.40	steady	below minor
Whiteheads Ck at Seymour	8.34am Mon	1.39	steady	

****ISSUED AT 10.16AM ON MONDAY, JULY 3, 2023****

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Weekly Weather
July 5 - July 11, 2023

Temperatures may be subject to change from date of publication

Alexandra			Yea		
DAY	LOW	HIGH	DAY	LOW	HIGH
Wednesday	7	13	Wednesday	7	12
Thursday	7	11	Thursday	7	12
Friday	7	10	Friday	7	11
Saturday	7	9	Saturday	7	10
Sunday	7	11	Sunday	7	11
Monday	6	12	Monday	6	12
Tuesday	6	12	Tuesday	6	12

Standard **The Yea Chronicle**

DISTRICT RAINFALL

Alexandra	N/Amm
Buxton	17mm
Eildon (AWS)	9mm
Flowerdale	8mm
Kingleke	22mm
Lake Eildon	16mm
Marysville	N/A
Strath Creek	N/A
Taggerty	9mm
Yarek	2mm
Yea	2mm

Above details for 7 days to 9am Monday

LAKE EILDON

Height above sea level this week	288.24m
Capacity as at 9am Monday	97.4%
Metres below full supply	66cm
Daily inflow	9000ML
Release	12000ML
Eildon Pondage (may be subject to rapid change)	67%

The Yea Chronicle

DEADLINES

Real Estate	Thursday noon
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

Local landholders seeking changes to dam operating procedures

A GROUP of local landholders, many still recovering from the October 2022 flood, have been lobbying for Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) to reduce the level of Lake Eildon, and they believe that GMW is legally liable for the damage caused, potentially opening the way for a class action lawsuit.

Landholder opinions vary, and they may not necessarily choose to pursue a class action, however should they choose to do so, it may occur at any time in the next six years due to the statute of limitations.

Ultimately, their desire is to see a change to the operating procedures of Lake Eildon, particularly with regard to flood mitigation. They are also seeking a quick response the current high water levels at Lake Eildon. As of Monday, July 3, Lake Eildon was sitting at 97.4 per cent. Between June 16 and July 3, GMW has been releasing 10,000 to 12,000ML per day from the dam.

The landholders believe that they have been met with resistance to change from GMW, with a seeming preference for defending the status quo.

Under GMW's statutory obligations, Section 122ZL(2), GMW is required to "mitigate flooding, where possible."

Section 157 provided information on the liability of authorities arising out of flow of water. It states, "(1) If - (a) as a result of intentional or negligent conduct on the part of an authority in the exercise of a function under part eight, part nine, division two, three or five of part 10, or part 11 or any corresponding previous enactment, a flow of water occurs from its works onto any land; and (b) the water causes (i) injury to any other person; or (ii) damage to the property (whether real or personal) of any other person; or (iii) any other person to suffer economic loss - the authority is liable to pay damages to that other person in respect of that injury, damage or loss. (2) If it is proved in a proceeding brought under subsection (1) that the water has flowed from the works of an authority onto any land, it must be presumed that the flow occurred as a result of intentional or negligent conduct on the part of the authority unless the authority proves on the balance of probabilities that it did not so occur." Further clauses in the same section are also of relevance.

The legal argument proposed by the landholders is that GMW operates Lake Eildon under the policy that in wet years. The lake is to be at or near 100 per cent capacity in late winter or early spring under the current procedures. This appears to be to maximise the water available therefore maximise revenue potential. Inflows over 100 per cent must be discharged to protect the structural integrity of the dam. If the inflows are of flood proportions, the discharge of the inflow will itself cause a flood. Any flood occasioned by Lake Eildon being at or near 100 per cent capacity is caused by the intentional policy of GMW. It is therefore argued that GMW is liable for loss and damage caused by the flood under Section 157 of the Water Act. The same argument applies when Lake Eildon is near capacity, and the landholders question whether GMW would also be in breach of its statutory duty to mitigate flooding. The implementation of the current policy means that there is no scope for flood mitigation. It was noted that GMW would not be liable for flooding if it was in the exercise of its function under part six of the water act.



The Lake Eildon spillway. -AR

Yea Arts going from strength to strength

2023 has been a year of transformation for Yea Arts Inc. Established in 2015, Yea Arts has been presenting four or five touring shows each year to great acclaim in the district.

At the same time, local community theatre company YAPPERS, established in 2013, has been building a strong following with a group of skilled actors and capable production people.

Over time both groups had considered the benefits of merging but it wasn't until the pandemic arrived and imposed live performance restrictions that finally a merger seemed the best way to build a solid foundation for the Arts in Yea and surrounding towns.

Last December's AGM saw the membership vote in a new executive team and approve the merger of YAPPERS and Yea Arts. At the same time there was a broadening of the scope of supported activities to include visual arts, local theatre, touring theatre, musicians and youth theatre. The new team has been working hard behind the scenes these last six months, establishing a solid structure, governance and processes to make the organisation sustainable.

Now Yea Arts Inc is calling for new members. They need help to build a strong Arts community in the district. Anyone can join. Whether you want to simply enjoy their performances and exhibitions or participate as an artist, helper or organiser, they would love to have you aboard. Membership costs only \$15 per annum, which supports Yea

Arts Inc. as they strive to provide artists and performers with opportunities to develop and display their crafts.

Those who join will also be offered access to regular member-only events. These will be small affairs offering activities such as script readings, musical performances, watching videos of local theatre shows and other rarities, and maybe even group activities such as singalongs and charades. Members will also receive a regular email newsletter detailing Yea Arts Inc activities and highlighting all the Arts-related events in Murrindindi Shire and beyond.

For the second half of 2023, YAI is excited to present a number of events as well as an important project currently in the planning stages, the development of a new Yea Arts Hub in the railway station precinct. More information about that project will be revealed soon, but in the meantime, Murrindindi Shire residents are invited to attend three events that are guaranteed to warm up their winter.

A film and theatre trivia night will be held at Marmalades of Yea on Friday, July 7. This is expected to be a fun and frenetic night with grazing platters on each table, drinks for sale at the bar, and an entry price of \$15.

Soon after that event, the popular a cappella group *Suade* will dazzle the audience at Yea Shire Hall on Saturday, July 15. *Suade* wowed audiences around Australia and internationally until their retirement in 2017. But in 2023, the *Suade* boys are tickled pink to be getting one of

Australia's most fearsome, fiery and flat-out fun vocal groups back together for one night only with a mix of sing-along covers, heartfelt harmonies and original music. It's an aural spectacle that should not be missed.

Local group *The Dusty Dogs* will also play, along with a preview song from the cast of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Seating will be in tables of eight and patrons are invited to bring nibbles and party food. Beer and wine can be purchased at the bar. The night is expected to be an absolute party, and at \$35 it's great value for a good time.

The first two weekends in August will see the *YAPPERS* team present a Broadway musical at St Lukes Hall in Yea. *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* is filled with snappy songs, gorgeous musical arrangements, dancing and more. Six adult actors play the children from the Peanuts gang, including Snoopy, and it's great to watch the cast shrug off the constraints of adulthood and enjoy the fun of seeing the world through the eyes of children. The show is intended for an adult audience, and there are six performances including two matinees. Tickets are \$30 each.

Yea Arts has a new website, so you can visit YeaArtsInc.org for more information and booking links for their events. You could even become a member while you're there.

Wherever you live in the Shire of Murrindindi, Yea Arts hope to see you at one of their events soon.

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SUADE IN CONCERT
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 You'll be bathed in song and laugh the night away!
7pm Sat 15 July, Yea Shire Hall
 Book Now - only \$35!
 Try Booking.com/CIXGO
 Support acts, table seating, beer & wine on sale
 More info: YeaArtsInc.org or call 0488 670 077



Out & About

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SATURDAY, JULY 15

Suade in concert at Yea Shire Hall 7pm.
Book now \$35 trybooking.com/CIXGO

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Goulburn Fishing Festival 2023. Free event at Eildon. 10am-4pm. Lions Park, Riverside Drive. Live music, market stalls, Snobs Creek Hatchery tours, Vic Fish Kids clinics and more. Fireworks at 7pm. vfa.vid.gov.au/goulburnfishfest

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Yea Hospital and Rosebank auxiliary AGM invites you to their AGM at 2pm at the Grace Bennetts Centre Meeting Room Yea. RSVP by Friday, June 30 to Ruth Crockett 5797 3057 for catering.

MONDAY, JULY 17

Murrindindi East U3A will hold their AGM at 10.30am at the Alexandra Bowling Club. A light lunch will be provided. Enquiries to secretary@murrindindiastu3a.org.au

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Sunday Services, 8.30am Communion.
Minister: Rev. Ruwan Palapathwala
0458 113 099

ST LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH OF YEA

Sunday Service time 11am
Father Mario Hendricks Ph: 0437 937 433

CATHOLIC PARISHES OF ALEXANDRA AND YEA

Parish Priest, Father Jose Mathew
0459 402 547

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

CATHOLIC PARISH OF KINGLAKE

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

SCOTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, YEA

Station Street Yea
Colin Whiteway Ph 0419 351 267 / 5799 1295
Sunday Service 11.15am

UNITING CHURCH

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

How can the shire's childcare challenges be solved?

WITH the rising cost of living and the financial pressure that comes along with it, families are relying on the use of early education services more than ever, but there are some significant challenges to overcome to ensure that there are enough places.

The roll out of the Victorian Government's \$9 million commitment will expand kindergarten programs across the state over the next decade. Four year old kindergartens will transition to 'pre-prep', increasing to a universal 30 hour a week program of play-based learning for every four year old child in Victoria. Pre-prep will be delivered through sessional kindergartens and long day care centres. For three year old kindergarten, the government is investing in \$5 billion over the decade to deliver 15 hours per week for every three year old child.

It was also announced that 50 Victorian government owned and affordable childcare centres will be established. These centres will be built in areas that have unmet demand and will make it easier for families to access childcare. The first of the centres will be available in 2025.

In Murrindindi, access to early childhood education places are few and far between. Many families are needing the service and one of the big challenges is not having enough qualified educators to adhere to mandatory early childhood ratios. The situation has become so dire that childcare centres are forced to cap enrolments because of the staff shortage.

Government financial incentives for educators to take up a role in a kindergarten program at selected services have been available. There are early childhood teaching courses where students will be able to stay in the workforce while they learn, and financial support packages will assist with course fees, study materials and other expenses.

Scholarships and financial incentives have been available to complete an Accelerated Bachelor of Early Childhood Education program for educators looking to take the next step in their career at Australian Catholic University, Deakin University and Victoria University. These degree programs mean Victorian educators can upskill to become an early childhood teacher in a compressed timeframe of between 18 months and two years.

In the area of Long Daycare, not much incentive has been put in place to attract educators to train or upskill. It's all been geared to the new kindergarten changes which are for three and four year olds, but we still need qualified educators for children aged zero to two to help working families.

In the 2021 Census, statistics showed there were 651 children in the Murrindindi Shire aged zero to four years of age (4.3 per cent) and the available approved places to cater for these numbers doesn't even come close to these statistics.

Waitlists for daycare centres are growing as families try to make ends meet. The centre director at Yea Uniting Early Learning, Fiona Purvis, reported the centre is at capacity and currently holds a minimum wait list of nine and can be up to 20 per day. This centre has 67 approved places at the centre with another 34 places in their daycare section of the centre.

Privately owned centre Alexandra Baby Care provides long daycare for families who live in the Murrindindi Shire. The centre caters for 24 children and babies. They also have a waitlist for children's spaces. Centre director Kate Goschnick explained, "We do our best to fulfill parents requests when able, unfortunately, it's not always possible. The challenge this centre is facing is getting qualified staff on board as educators."

"Within the whole Murrindindi Shire, there may well be a need for more childcare, whether it be in a care facility or family daycare home based environment, but more importantly, a real need for educators with a genuine interest in the caring for children and babies and meeting their requirements of care as individuals and some, with more complex needs."

Marysville Preschool is a 60 place centre with 30 allocated spots for long day care. They have a waitlist of four families at present, but they could also offer more if they had more qualified staff.

Centre Director, Katie Gelbert said, "At Marysville we have enough space for further growth, however we are limited by the lack of educators in the area. We offer above award wage, petrol and accommodation vouchers, paid training for anyone entering the sector and very flexible working conditions. With the whole of Australia



experiencing staff shortages in this sector, I don't believe we are alone in this scenario."

Murrindindi Shire Council has a family daycare service and are also finding it difficult to provide that service with such high demand and minimal educators.

Murrindindi Shire Council's Director Community and Development Andrew Paxton said, "Currently, we have 15 registered educators, out of which five are based in Murrindindi Shire. These dedicated educators cater to over 200 children from 154 families residing in Murrindindi and surrounding shires, taking care of their developmental and learning needs.

"Family Day Care does not have a fixed number of approved places as it depends on the number of available educators and their working hours. The capacity is flexible and varies accordingly. Regarding waiting lists, they are managed collaboratively with the educators. While we cannot provide an exact timeframe for the current wait, it's worth noting that most of our educators have closed their waitlists for this year. Approximately 15 families are currently awaiting placements.

"In Murrindindi Shire, we have around 100 children attending Family Day Care, with approximately 31 children attending on a daily basis. It's important to note that not all enrolled children attend services every weekday, and some are enrolled with multiple Family Day Care educators.

"The shortage of Early Childhood Education and Care is affecting our shire, especially in Alexandra and Eildon. Murrindindi Family Day Care plays a crucial role in supporting our communities and local economy. However, it is currently challenging for parents to access the care they require.

"To address this issue, council is actively seeking more early childhood educators. We encourage individuals with early childhood education experience who are interested in trying something new to consider a career as a Family Day Care educator. By joining this key service, they will make a significant impact on the local community and support the future of our shire."

At last weeks council meeting Councillor Carpenter mentioned that council are aware of the challenges ahead with the introduction of the increase to kindergarten hours due to the best start best life reforms.

"As our population increases, we must plan for the increasing need for these services. We hope to secure government funding to support infrastructure planning for the early years education services in Alexandra and Yea. The roll out of pre-prep, 30 hours a week under the Best start Best Life reform will bring challenges. Consultation with all key stakeholders including schools, kindergartens and childcare centres will be crucial to successful outcomes."



Geoff Penny. -Dale Mann



Outgoing Terip Terip CFA Captain Geoff Penny. -Dale Mann

Thirty one years as Terip Terip Captain

GEOFF Penny has stepped down as Captain of the Terip Terip CFA brigade after 31 years in the role.

Geoff began volunteering with the CFA as a boy. Firefighting was in the family. "My father was in the CFA, and as a young boy I was just asked to go to a fire locally. I was probably 15 or 16 and I just progressed on from then," Geoff said.

Thirty-one years as captain is an impressive length of service, but Geoff has actually been an active fire fighter for around 45 years. "I was probably going to fires before I was even registered because

back then it wasn't such a big deal. As a youngish one I was just put on the truck and told to put out the fire," he said.

He explained that the CFA has "changed quite significantly now, what with training and minimum skills and general fire fighter requirements before you can go on a truck. Back then it was just 'hop on the truck and there's the hose and put out the fire,'" he said

Geoff shared a couple of his more memorable experiences. One was "Driving en route to the Creighton's Creek fire in 1990, observing the rapidly growing column of smoke and weather conditions.

We entered a small dirt road and traveled a small distance. Upon seeing the fast approaching fire, we found somewhere to turn around and make a hasty retreat. We turned back on the main road and entered a gateway to a paddock. Visibility was very limited. We were told we could cross a creek to a hayshed but by this time it was fully involved, so we retreated to the main road as fire had jumped it. There we attempted to extinguish the fire until out of water all to no avail. Fire traveled up a hill and into next valley very quickly.

"During the 2009 fires, the Euroa Group and the Terip truck were sent to Yea, where we were situated for a considerable time. Our brigade manned our tanker every second day, helping with blacking out, back burning and helping residents. For

a small rural brigade I thought this was a commendable effort, especially as the threat of fire in our area was considered a possibility."

Geoff farms sheep and cattle on his 640 acre family property in Terip Terip, as well as managing another property of 1300 acres in Ruffy. But while he's no longer captain, Mr Penny has no intention of quitting fire fighting any time soon.

"I still think I'm a valued member and I can still drive the truck while I can. I might decline to go big distances now, but I think the community still needs personnel, particularly mid-week. We have a lot of members that work away out of the district. I'm one of the fortunate ones that works here."

Road safety camera now live

DRIVERS doing the wrong thing behind the wheel are being put on notice that new high-tech road safety cameras are now live following a trial period.

The mobile device and seatbelt detection cameras began operation in April this year, using AI technology to capture high-resolution images of vehicles and detect offences.

From Saturday, July 1, drivers began facing penalties of four demerit points and a \$577 fine when caught using a mobile phone while driving, and three demerit points and a \$385 fine for drivers and passengers not wearing a seatbelt.

During April and May this year, the cameras detected 7160 offences, including

3523 drivers and 767 passengers not wearing seatbelts and 2870 drivers using mobile phones.

There are currently four camera trailer systems in operation, enforcing more than 8000 hours each month. The cameras can be deployed to up to 200 locations in rural and metropolitan areas. A further two camera trailer systems will be operational in the coming months.

Distracted driving is a major contributor to serious and fatal collisions. In 2022, nearly a quarter of vehicle occupants who died and their seatbelt status was known were not wearing a seatbelt. Drivers are also 10 times more at risk of crashing if they are texting, browsing or emailing on their mobile phone.

VicForests loses appeal in glider case

ON Tuesday, June 27, the Supreme Court announced its decision on VicForests appeal of the November 2022 court decision in Kinglake Friends of the Forest and Environment East Gippsland vs VicForests, known as 'the glider case'.

In the original case, Justice Richards handed down a decision requiring state owned logging agency VicForests to thoroughly survey for endangered greater gliders and threatened yellow bellied gliders in forest it planned to log, and implement certain protections for gliders living in forests scheduled for logging.

The panel of three judges upheld Justice Richards' findings that VicForests' actions were in breach of environment laws. As a result, the orders limiting logging in forests that are home to endangered gliders will remain in place.

Last year the greater glider's listing was changed from threatened to endangered. It was found that the species has experienced an 80 per cent decline in population over the last 20 years due to the cumulative effects of bushfires and native forest logging.

Sue McKinnon, president of Kinglake Friends of the Forest, said, "This decision gives endangered forest species a fighting chance of survival. It's testament to the power of communities to fight for the

natural world; for the places we love and the wildlife we share them with.

"The courts have shown that VicForests is incapable of observing environment laws. They must be abolished.

"For years we have reported illegal logging to Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) [and precursor agencies]. They have ignored VicForests countless breaches. We are concerned that now loopholes will be found to log critical habitat under other names, and the department will continue to turn a blind eye."

Contacted about the case, a representative from VicForests said, "VicForests is disappointed with the Victorian Court of Appeal outcome and will review the decision in full before making any further comment.

Last month, the Victorian Government announced that native forest logging will end by the end of this year, seven years ahead of schedule.

Concurrent to the appeal, VicForests is defending other allegations of illegal logging in the case of Wildlife of the Central Highlands (WOTCH) vs VicForests. The decision on this case is yet to be handed down.



Flood recovery update - AgVic grants closing 13 July



Applications for Victorian Government Primary Producer Flood Recovery financial support for the October 2022 floods close at 4.00 pm on Thursday 13 July. These grants are designed to provide financial support to flood affected farmers and primary producers.

Grants closing on 13 July:

- Primary Producer Flood Recovery Grant
- Rural Landholder Grant
- Flood Recovery Transport Support Program
- Primary Producer Flood Recovery Concessional Loan

For more details on available grants and other available support, visit the Agriculture Victoria website at agriculture.vic.gov.au/floods

For assistance in understanding what's available to you and the application process, call Agriculture Victoria on 136 186 Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm.

For more flood recovery information

For more information about resources available to you during recovery, you can visit the Flood Hub on Council's website. This hub has information on available grants, infrastructure updates, and support services available. Find out more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/floods2022

You can sign up to our free email Flood Recovery Newsletter for updates straight to your inbox at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/recoverynewsletter

Yea Rotary changeover celebrates achievements



Singer Gracie Neville. -AR



Tony Jacobs and Vicki McMaster. -AR



Terry Hubbard and Denis Smith. -AR



Tony Jacobs (centre) with representatives from the Yea Suicide Awareness Walk. -AR



Glenda Woods, Tony Jacobs and Marj Hamilton. -AR

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Tony Jacobs (right) with representatives from the Yea Cancer Support Group. -AR

- A journey of -

150 YEARS

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

Compiled and published by Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd 2020.



The dinner at Flowerdale Estate. -AR

PUZZLES

SOLUTIONS
Page 13

Our History: Yea girl wins Grand National

by Yea and District Historical Society

MICHELLE Payne may have been the first girl to win the Melbourne Cup but former Yea girl, Miss Dorothy Shiel, made history by winning the Grand National Steeplechase in July 1932, which caused an uproar at the Victoria Racing Club (VRC).

Born in the Yea district in 1905 to parents Edward and Frances Shiel, owners of the 'Aswarby' pastoral property, she was, in the words of her father, "born in the saddle" and from her earliest years took an interest in her father's horses.

School took her away from home for some years and for five years she was a boarder at St Michael's Church of England Girls Grammar School, where she distinguished herself at sport. Although after school she played a little golf and bridge and was an expert ballroom dancer, hunting was her favourite diversion.

For five seasons she hunted with the Findon Hunt Club and won many trophies but her most brilliant achievement was winning three point-to-point races on *Precocious*, the horse she trained for the Grand National Steeplechase in 1932.

It was the first occasion that the winner of the Grand National Steeplechase at Flemington had been owned and trained by a woman. Although the win was very

popular with the public, the VRC refused to allow her to enter the mounting yard to accept the trophy.

Since World War One, women had been permitted to nominate themselves as horse owners. This entitled them to train their own horses without first obtaining permission from the VRC.

The chairman of the VRC, Mr L K McKinnon, said that the committee were unanimously of the opinion that women were not suited for training, and they had no difficulty in adopting the new rule.

"I don't think that part of racing is a game for women. They should not be allowed to run around engaging jockeys and performing other duties that are essentially jobs for men. The ability of some women trainers is not questioned," stated the chairman to the Argus newspaper, saying the ban would come into effect on August 1.

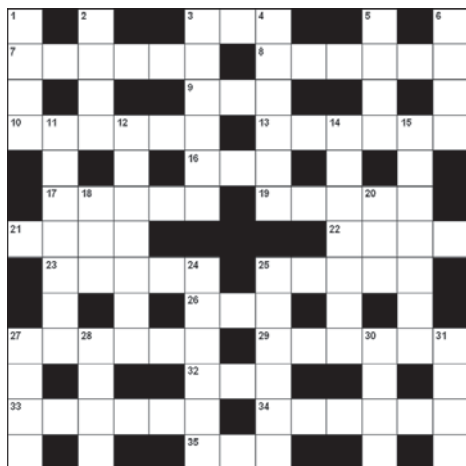
"Prominent among woman trainers who will be excluded are Miss Dorothy Shiel, who trained *Precocious* for his Grand National Victory; Mrs F Chapman, owner of *Acceleration*, which won the Australian Steeplechase at Caulfield last year; Mrs L Costello, owner of *Canardly* and other horses and Mrs L Jones who formerly trained *Duo Sylk*", reported the *Argus*.

The restrictive measures were not lifted until the early 1970s.

Crossword

ACROSS

- A donkey.
- Partly divided.
- German elf or brownie.
- Large African antelope.
- Take a trip.
- A cry of sorrow.
- A light, pliant leather.
- Strong and sharp.
- Father Christmas.
- Having an outer covering.
- A portable shelter.
- Trudge along on foot.
- Light purple.
- Poem meant to be sung.
- One of subnormal intelligence.
- First in order of birth.
- Primitive fish with long jaws.
- Bring back to life.
- Supreme knowledge in a field.
- Point of conclusion.



DOWN

- Improvised jazz singing.
- The sunfish.
- Fished with a hook.
- Moves about stealthily.
- The trunk of a tree.
- Prepare for publication.

- Real estate broker.
- Green with vegetation.
- Spread over a surface.
- Subtle differences in meaning.
- Motor vehicle.
- Light afternoon meal.
- Chinese unbleached silk fabric.
- Sly sidelong glance.
- Rudely abrupt.
- Grudging admiration.
- Female sheep.
- Ballet skirt.

Word Search - Cats

Bengal	M L I B M Z Y G M G F D E L A
Chinchilla	H K U J E N L I R F R P M C L
Feral	A X N F I N R B E C I U O V G
Fluffy	F G B E Y K G R P A E K G R C
Friendly	D K Y B B A T A A E N U G J T
Laperm	H W G E L F L E L C D T I F P
Moggie	D I Z O Q Z S P H E L Y E V F
Persian	O R N G X E E I W F Y R Q I H
Playful	A Z R Z M F N T X Y A K C T V
Siamese	Y X B A W C F K D L M H S J U
Sphynx	Z U I F H Z V L S P H Y N X G
Tabby	I S N I A P V H U O O T I E E
	G G L M H M N U K F B A J H G
	I L N A I S R E P R F X Z W B
	A Y P N L T B P Z N U Y F G I

Double Puzzle

WKMEORTA

LEUTSR

FRETFO

DEFRISN

ECMTOOU

UTCOPDR

MCAITP

Many hands make light work

Unscramble the letters found within the puzzle. Take specific letters from the unscrambled words and use those letters to decrypt a hidden phrase.

Math Time

Fill in the missing numbers

The missing numbers are integers between 0 and 6. The numbers in each row add up to totals to the right. The numbers in each column add up to the totals along the bottom. The diagonal lines also add up the totals to the right.

0	5	3	5	6	2				21
0	0	2	1	6	1				10
0	5	1	1	0	3				10
1	6	5	3	4	2				21
0	3	5	6	5	4				23
4	2	0	4	6	4				20
5	2	1	6	2	0	2	7	1	6
									13

Trivia - Entertainment

- Staying Alive, the sequel to the movie Saturday Night Fever, was released what year?
- Sylvester Stallone was born in which US city?
- Who directed the 1962 film Lawrence of Arabia?
- What is Bugs Bunny's catch phrase?
- What actor played James Bond in two Bond films in between Roger Moore's Bond and Pierce Brosnan's?
- What movie features the Kerrigan family?
- Which Australian film featured a pig that enjoyed singing Christmas carols?

Minimum wage increase

AS part of the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review 2022-23, from July 1, the National Minimum Wage increases to \$882.80 per week or \$23.23 per hour. Award minimum wages increase by 5.75 per cent.

Other award wages, including junior, apprentice and supported wages that are based on adult minimum wages, will get a proportionate increase.

The increase applies from the first full pay period starting on or after July 1. Further information can be found at the Fair Work Ombudsman website.

From July 1, the superannuation guarantee will increase from 10.5 per cent to 11 per cent.

Time to book your stay in nature

ARE you keen to take a break? The 2023-24 Parks Victoria camping and accommodation bookings have opened for dates from September 2023 to October 6, 2024.

More information and full instructions on how to book are available on the Parks Victoria website at parks.vic.gov.au/where-to-stay/booking-information.

Parks Victoria has halved campsite fees at every bookable campground across Victoria, with more than 50,000 camping bookings made last summer, a 20 per cent increase compared to the summer before the program began.

The state government is also funding the construction of new and upgraded campgrounds across the state, as well as improvements to iconic 4WD routes.

Goulburn Valley Water

Notice of fees and charges: 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Goulburn Valley Water would like to advise all customers of new tariffs, which have been approved by GVW's Board and the Essential Services Commission. These are applicable to all customers in GVW's serviced areas, unless alternate special fees apply.

Water service fees (daily)	\$
Standard residential (20mm)	0.4859
Vacant land - unconnected	0.2429

Water usage fees (per kilolitre, based on meter readings)	\$
Potable water (drinking)	1.2241
Non-potable water	0.8566
Raw water	0.6117

Trade waste (daily)	\$
Category 1 and 2	0.6571

Wastewater fees and charges	\$
Residential (daily)	1.2620
Vacant land - unconnected (daily)	0.6309
Non-residential (daily)	1.2620
Non-residential usage (per kilolitre)	1.67
Non-residential (yearly charge per cistern where volumetric charges cannot be applied)	461.92

Bills are issued three times a year. Properties with fire services are charged a fee equivalent to 10 per cent of service fees.

If you are having difficulties paying your bill, support is available. We offer flexible payment options, concessions and access to government grants and programs - call us to ask about available options to suit you.

For a full list of all other fees and charges for 2023-24, please visit our website or call 1300 360 007.



ON THE LAND

Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture

CSIRO introduces national data and information tool for soil

THE CSIRO has launched a new tool that will help Australia sustainably manage a critical natural resource which sustains lives and livelihoods.

Now live and available for use, the Australian National Soil Information System (ANSIS) brings together soil data from across Australia, connecting multiple

data sources to provide access to nationally consistent soil data and information.

The new system will equip farmers, policy makers and researchers with the data and information they need to better manage, restore, and protect Australia's soils.

Speaking at the Soil Science Australian conference in Darwin, ANSIS project

lead at CSIRO, Peter Wilson, said it was an important step forward for the future sustainable management of soils in every part of the country.

"Soil is the backbone of our food security, and it is critical that we manage it effectively for climate change adaptation and economic and environmental prosperity to support national and global agrifood priorities," Mr Wilson said.

"Until now, it's been exceptionally difficult to find, access, integrate and compare soil data.

"This new system brings together all this information providing easy access to soil data and information that will underpin the effective management of soil."

ANSIS will be a valuable tool for farmers and farm advisors, allowing them to compare the condition of their soil with other soils in their region. This will help monitor how their soil has changed over time and inform opportunities for change or improvement in land management practices.

Governments and industry bodies will be able to use data and information through ANSIS to support the development of effective policies to ensure our soil is sustainably used and enhanced for future generations, and to inform policy decisions

in areas such as drought resilience, climate adaptation, natural capital accounting and biodiversity conservation.

Australia's National Soils Advocate, the Hon Penelope Wensley AC, said the launch of the new national soil information system was an exciting development.

"It represents a major advance in implementation of the National Soil Strategy. Good data, available in a consistent, accessible form, is essential for better understanding and management of Australia's soil.

"I know development of the system has been a challenging task and extend my compliments and thanks to CSIRO and everyone involved in delivering this important new tool for soil stakeholders and policy makers," she said.

Mr Wilson said ANSIS would enable researchers to better understand the way our soil works, its role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the impacts we have on this valuable natural resource.

ANSIS is supported by funding through the Australian Government National Soil Strategy (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) in collaboration with CSIRO and partner organisations.

PHOTO COMPETITION

Remember to submit your photo competition entry to win a \$50 gift voucher from Dindi Country Clothing in Alexandra.

This month's theme is 'landscape'. See our June 28 edition for details.



The new Australian National Soil Information System has been launched. -SuSanA Secretariat

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ON THE LAND

Agriculture, Horticulture, Viticulture, Aquaculture and Silviculture

New technology to sharpen horticultures traceability

THE horticulture industry is on the look out for emerging technologies that can be deployed to make it easier for growers to trace their produce along the supply chain, to support maximum food safety and quality and support sustainability claims.

Supported by a \$471,000 grant from the Australian Government, the initiative is being led by Hort Innovation in partnership with key players within the horticulture supply chain field such as Freshcare and Fresh Markets Australia.

This month, the Australian Government announced \$6 million in funding for innovative solutions through the Regulatory Technology Research and Insights grant round of the National Agriculture Traceability grants program.

The RegTech grants aim to help businesses and exporters meet regulatory requirements

more efficiently, giving Australian agriculture a trade advantage.

Hort Innovation chief executive officer Brett Fifield said the funding would boost the horticulture sector's efforts to enhance and protect their supply chains.

"Having robust traceability systems in place assures consumers and trading partners that Australia's produce is fresh and safe," Mr Fifield said.

"Australia is a world leader when it comes to having trustworthy processes and systems in place, but this funding gives us the opportunity see what else is out there and identify technology that can both bolster our traceability systems, while also reducing costs for growers."

Freshcare chief executive officer Jane Siebum said she was looking forward to seeing what technology could be

implemented in Australia to make grower's lives easier.

"This project will see us identify 'regulatory technology' solutions that increase efficiency for growers and our industry as a whole," Ms Siebum said.

"The solutions identified through this work will be made available to the whole sector, so that, together, we can future proof Australia's horticulture industry."

National Farmers Federation Horticulture Council executive officer Richard Shannon said this program is a critical focus for horticultural businesses.

"This announcement marks the start of a collaborative approach within the horticulture sector to remove unnecessary red tape and also bolster the way we trace product claims throughout the supply chain," Mr Shannon said.

"It is great to see key players within the horticulture industry join forces in an effort to reduce duplication for growers and increase efficiency."

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Recipe kindly submitted by Kaye Baynes of the Yea Branch of the CWA

BERRY BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

by Kaye Baynes

INGREDIENTS

3 Eggs
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 1/2 cups milk
6 slices fruit bread crusts removed
1 cup frozen raspberries
1tablespoon margarine

METHOD

Preheat oven to 160 (fan forced)
Whisk the eggs, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and milk together in a bowl
Spread the bread with margarine and cut slices diagonally
Layer the bread in rows in an ovenproof dish
Sprinkle with Raspberries
Pour over the egg mixture
Place the ovenproof dish into a baking dish
Pour boiling water into the baking dish until halfway up the side of the ovenproof dish
Bake for 40 minutes or until golden and set
Now enjoy!

Australian broadacre farmland prices reported strong growth

THE average price of broadacre farmland per hectare has almost doubled over the last three years, increasing by 93 per cent from 2020 to 2023.

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) Executive Director Dr Jared Greenville said recent growth in farmland prices has been extraordinary, and likely reflected a combination of factors including low interest rates, recent good commodity prices and seasonal conditions, and increased demand for land in general.

"Farmland is often used to secure lending, so increases in value can both improve equity and drive investment," Dr Greenville said.

Median farmland prices have grown most in the high rainfall zone, increasing by 125 per cent over the last 3 years to almost \$9000 per hectare. Price growth in the wheat sheep zone was also strong, increasing by 80 per cent over the same period to \$3465 per hectare.

Coming off a lower base, the average price of pastoral zone farmland increased by 130 per cent since 2020 to reach \$1528 per hectare in 2023.

Dr Greenville said the latest farmland price estimates can be accessed by anyone through ABARES' new Farmland Price Index online tool.

"Through an innovative and simple to operate dashboard on our website, users can gain valuable insights into market trends, access reliable information on the value of their farmland assets and track annual changes over time," Dr Greenville said.

"Users can make price comparisons between farming zones or download data for their own analysis.

"The Index utilises a robust and effective method developed by ABARES ensuring estimates reflect market conditions."

This is the first release of the ABARES Farmland Price Index, a statistically robust measure of Australian broadacre farmland prices using CoreLogic data and a stratified median approach. Further expansion of this product is already underway to include detailed regional estimates and quarterly indexes.

ABARES' new Farmland Price Index can be found at agriculture.gov.au/abares/data/farmland-price-index

SAVE THE DATE

July 10 - Wagga Wagga
Carbon Conversations
- AgriFutures
July 11 - Wallup
Young Farmer Business Bootcamp
- AgVic
July 12 - Online
Irrigation Webinar Series
- AgVic
August 13-15 - Wagga Wagga
Thriving Women Conference
- AgriFutures

UPCOMING CATTLE SALES DATES

July 7 Combined agents store sale
Aug 4 Combined agents store sale
Sept 1 Combined agents store sale
Oct 6 Combined agents store sale



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By Jed Durston



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Entries close and need to be received by 11am Monday prior to our next edition.

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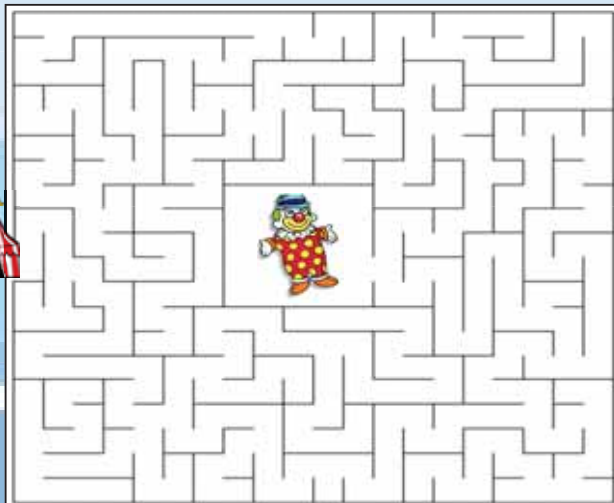
D.O.B. _____



WORLD JOKE DAY JULY 1.

MAZE

Help the clown find the circus



Did you know that July 1 is International Joke day

The first joke is often attributed to the Greeks, specifically Palamedes, who is also credited with the invention of many other things.

Greece also boasts the first comedy club, though its purpose was sharing jokes among friends rather than stand up performances as we have now.

daysoftheyear.com/days/joke-day/

If you lift a kangaroo's tail off the ground, it can't hop.

Most people fart around 14 to 23 times a day!

A crocodile can't poke its tongue out.

Pirates wore earrings because they believed they improved their eyesight.

An apple, potato, and onion taste the same if you eat them with your nose plugged.

thefactsite.com/top-100-random-funny-facts/

NUMBERS AND LETTERS

What word means the action or sound of laughing?

6 + 6 = __ G

3 X 3 = __ N

20 - 1 = __ L

12 - 6 = __ I

9 - 2 = __ K

4 X 1 = __ A

7 - 4 = __ H

7 + 8 = __ U

19

4

15

12

3

6

9

12

Solution is 'Laughter'

WINNER

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Print Post Approved - PP 10000292.

PUBLIC NOTICES



PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE ONE (1) MOBILE PHONE BASE STATIONS WITH 4G/5G AT KILLINGWORTH

- The proposed works consists of:
488 Killingworth Road, Killingworth VIC 3717
www.rfnsa.com.au/3717019
The proposed works on the monopole facility consist of:
 - The installation of six (6) new 4G/5G panel antennas (2533mm x 350mm x 208mm), mounted on the existing headframe
 - The installation of three (3) new 5G panel antennas (819mm x 400mm x 254mm), mounted on the existing headframe
 - The recovery of six (6) existing panel antennas, from the existing headframe
 - The installation and removal of associated ancillary equipment, including RRUs, junction boxes, TMA, feeders, cables, etc.
 - Works within the existing equipment shelter
- Telstra Corporation Limited (A.C.N 086 174 781) regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018* ("The Determination") based on the description above.
- In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or comments should be directed to: Ken Hsieh on behalf of Telstra, 0488 725 667, ken.hsieh@ericsson.com by **Thursday 20 July 2023**.



PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE ONE (1) MOBILE PHONE BASE STATIONS WITH 4G/5G AT FLOWERDALE

- The proposed works consists of:
2488-2586 Whittlesea-Yea Road, Flowerdale VIC 3717
www.rfnsa.com.au/3717018
The proposed works on the monopole facility consist of:
 - The installation of six (6) new 4G/5G panel antennas (2533mm x 350mm x 208mm), mounted on the existing headframe
 - The installation of three (3) new 5G panel antennas (819mm x 400mm x 254mm), mounted on the existing headframe
 - The recovery of six (6) existing panel antennas, from the existing headframe
 - The installation and removal of associated ancillary equipment, including RRUs, junction boxes, TMA, feeders, cables, etc.
 - Works within the existing equipment shelter
- Telstra Corporation Limited (A.C.N 086 174 781) regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018* ("The Determination") based on the description above.
- In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or comments should be directed to: Ken Hsieh on behalf of Telstra, 0488 725 667, ken.hsieh@ericsson.com by **Thursday 20 July 2023**.



PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE MOBILE PHONE BASE STATION LOCATED AT MOLESWORTH

Telstra plans to upgrade an existing telecommunications facility located at Cottons Pinch, Goulburn Valley Highway, Molesworth Victoria 3718
www.rfnsa.com.au/3718002

- Telstra Limited (A.C.N 051 775 556) are currently upgrading existing mobile network facilities to allow for the introduction of 5G to Telstra's network. As part of this network upgrade, Telstra proposes the installation of NR850 (5G) technology at the Molesworth locality and surrounds.
- The proposed works at the above site include the removal of six (6) existing panel antennas, and the installation of four (4) new panel antennas (each no more than 2.8m long). The installation of four (4) new RRUs and the installation of associated ancillary equipment. All internal equipment will be housed within the existing equipment shelter located at the base of the facility.
- Telstra regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the *Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2018* based on the above description.
- In accordance with Section 7 of C564:2020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code, we invite you to provide feedback about the proposal. Further information and/or written submissions should be directed to: Matilde Tobon, Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd (A.B.N 54 005 139 873) via email to: Matilde.TobonMaya@aurecongroup.com or via post to: Matilde Tobon, Aurecon Australasia PO Box 23061, Docklands, VIC, 8012 by 5pm on 19/07/2023.

SITUATION VACANT



Support Services Assistants (Casual)

Alexandra District Health is looking for enthusiastic team members to join our catering and domestic services department.

The casual positions are responsible for assisting in the preparation of meals, the distribution of meals and the cleanliness of the kitchen ensuring food safety plan objectives are met at all times, maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness standards in the hospital, ensuring the work place is safe at all times for patients, clients, staff and the community.

Successful applicants will be required to undergo a current National Criminal History Check, hold or be willing to undertake a Working with Children Check and have three COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations.

For further information regarding this role please contact Melissa Rigg, Support Services Manager 5772 0993 or email Recruitment@adh.org.au. Applications will be accepted immediately.

For further information or to apply visit adh.org.au/careers/current-vacancies.



QUALITY AND RISK COORDINATOR PERMANENT PART TIME 24 HOURS PER WEEK

Alexandra District Health is seeking an experienced office administrator to join our team as Quality and Risk Coordinator.

The Quality and Risk Coordinator is responsible for:

- Promoting customer service excellence.
- Acting as a quality champion across ADH, supporting managers, and staff to strengthen capacity of quality improvement within their teams.
- Maintaining the ADH incident reporting software, quality reporting systems, preparation and documentation of policies and procedures and governance documents.
- Assisting in the facilitation, coordination and education of all accreditation processes.

The successful applicant will demonstrate exemplary communication skills, will be focused on the provision of excellent customer service and patient safety, maintaining confidentiality and will exhibit an attention to detail whilst being able to juggle multiple tasks at once and have advanced computer skills. The successful applicant will have access to an extensive handover process. Please contact Juliana McCashney, Manager People and Culture, if you have any queries regarding the role 5772 0997.

For further information, position description and application details visit adh.org.au/careers/current-vacancies. Applications close Friday, July 14, 2023, close of business.

SITUATION VACANT



Admin/sales support

FULL TIME

This is not a work from home role

Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd is one of the oldest newspapers in Victoria, and the oldest in the Murrindindi Shire, first publishing in June 1868. We publish *The Alexandra Standard* and *The Yea Chronicle*, across Murrindindi and beyond. We are looking for someone to fill a role in our administration department and to assist our sales department. You will need to have the ability to be able to take on a large and important part in our team.

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- All aspects of office administration
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- Assisting sales department as required
- Assisting with weekly paper distribution
- Organising commercial printing jobs

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- Excellent knowledge of all Microsoft programs
- To be friendly, helpful and motivated
- To be a great team player
- Able to follow written and verbal instruction
- Ability to work under the pressure of deadlines and multi task in a busy office.
- To be punctual and professional with a strong work ethic
- Have initiative and be well organised
- Be able to problem solve and brainstorm
- To be methodical and thorough, with attention to detail
- A willingness to learn many aspects of the business
- Previous admin experience is an advantage
- Drivers Licence

How to apply:

To be considered for this position, submit your resume and cover letter to manager@alexandranewspapers.com.au

Only applicants who are Australian residents or hold a relevant visa are eligible to apply.



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Phone 5772 1002

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Classifieds

DEATH NOTICES

TEKLEBURG,
Suzanne Elizabeth
31/08/1939 – 26/06/2023
Passed away at
Box Hill Hospital.
Loving wife of John for
over 61 years. Mother
to Stephen (dec.),
Barry, Andrew, Phillip
and Joanne. Nanna to
Christine, Richard (dec.),
Sarah, Katherine, Kyra,
Nathan, Nicholas and
William. Great Nan to
Alexis, Elaina, Reid, Billie,
Remi and Hallie.
Burial on Friday, July 7, at
11am.
My loving husband passed
away 9/07/2021 two years
ago. Father of four, Pa
of eight. Always in our
hearts. Bette and family.

Walters, Elizabeth
04/11/1931 – 23/06/2023
Passed away peacefully
at Darlingford Upper
Goulburn Nursing
Home, Friday, June
23, 2023, aged 91
years. Loved wife of
Leonard (dec). Loved
aunt (Betty) of Dawn
and Lisa, sister of
Geoffrey. Thank you
to Darlingford for their
care and kindness to
Elizabeth.

STACK (MAHON),
Jacinta –
13/04/1962 - 25/06/2023
Dearly loved daughter of
Margaret and Jack (dec).
Much loved sister of
Gerard, Therese, Anthony,
Monica, Lawrence (dec).
Carmel, John and Paul.
Always in our hearts.

FUNERAL NOTICES

TEKLEBURG,
The funeral service
for Suzanne will be
held at Alexandra
Football Netball
Club rooms on
Thursday, July 6,
2023 commencing at
11am. Followed by a
private Cremation.

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FUNERAL NOTICES

Walters
A private burial for
Elizabeth will be
held at Alexandra
Lawn Cemetery on
Friday, July 7, at
11am.

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IN MEMORIAM

RENFREY, GEORGE
My loving husband passed
away 9/07/2021 two years
ago. Father of four, Pa
of eight. Always in our
hearts. Bette and family.

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MEETINGS

**MURRINDINDI EAST
U3A AGM** will be held
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Bowling Club, 4 Paynes
Avenue. Guest speaker
will be Bruce Hyatt,
local MICA Paramedic,
followed by a light lunch.
Enquiries to secretary@
murrindindieast3a.org.au.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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MASONIC LODGE**
Wood raffle winner
Wayne Miller, Alexandra.

Concern rent freezes could make regional rent situation worse

CONCERNS have been raised that proposed rent controls may have unintended consequences in regional Victoria. Rent controls are currently being considered by the state government as a means of making rentals more affordable for Victorians.

Rents in regional Victoria rose by 6.3 per cent in the year to March 2023, significantly above the long-term average of 4.2 per cent, according to the state government's figures. Renting is the most unaffordable it's been since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Victorian parliament is holding an inquiry into rental and housing affordability in Victoria, aimed at identifying the factors contributing to the low availability and high costs of rental properties.

As part of their budget negotiations with the Greens, Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas has agreed to consider "rent caps or other forms of rent control", "regulation or taxation" of the short-stay industry and "improvements" to the state's vacancy tax, according to Guardian Australia, who have reported citing a letter to that effect sent to the Greens by Mr Pallas.

Tenants Victoria, the peak body for the state's nearly two million renters, would also like to see more government intervention. Farah Farouque, Director of Community Engagement for Tenants Victoria told *The Yea Chronicle*, "solving the rental housing crisis is complex and requires ongoing effort from the ground up." Tenants Victoria are advocating for more legislation to assist renters. "Housing affordability remains a huge concern for regional renters ... the private rental market requires additional regulation to ensure fairness for all," said Ms Farouque.

"Whist there is no single silver bullet solution for the rental housing crisis, much more ambition is needed by all tiers of government, ranging from sustained investments in more social and affordable housing to strengthening renters rights

through the National Cabinet process which is on the cards," Ms Farouque said.

But there are concerns that the unintended consequences may instead be higher prices, less supply and the rise of a black market in rental properties, making the regional situation even worse than it already is.

The Yea Chronicle approached the Alexandra and District Tourism and Traders Association for their view on what the effect of potential rental controls would likely be. The ADTTA surveyed their members and replied "The majority of respondents express concerns about the consequences of rent controls on the availability and prices of rental properties in the region. They believe that rent controls would lead to negative outcomes, such as increased rents, reduced availability of rental properties, and discouragement of property investment. There is a sense of scepticism about the effectiveness of rent controls in achieving both availability and affordability simultaneously."

With steep increases in mortgage rates, growing land taxes and the rising costs of property maintenance, some rental property owners are concerned about their ability to cover the costs of holding their properties, let alone the return on investment which is their inducement to provide properties to rent in the first place.

The underlying causes of rental supply shortages are more than just the costs of borrowing money or maintenance charges. Issues such as government policies regarding land release and red tape in construction approvals, as well as increases in material costs and lengthy delays in the supply of building materials have all had a significant impact on the availability of properties for rent.

Rental bidding is another factor. It is illegal in Victoria, so agents are forbidden from asking prospective tenants to make offers on properties above the advertised

rent. However, agents are not prohibited from accepting offers when they are made without inducement, so it has become increasingly common for desperate people to try to improve their chances of a successful rental application by offering money significantly above the advertised price.

This has already led to a situation where significant numbers of rental properties are leased at prices well above what they were advertised at, giving well-off renters an advantage over those with lesser incomes.

Rent control regulations also have the potential to lead to a black market in rental properties, where landlords do things 'off the books' so they can maintain control over what they charge for their properties, allowing them to be sure they can meet the costs of holding that investment.

Tenants Victoria are "calling for the introduction of a 'fairness formula' in Victoria to regulate future rent increases. This would be essentially a very modest market intervention which would offer more certainty for renters in the private rental market. It would not be a prohibition on rent increases but set up a cap, if you will," said Ms Farouque.

Tenants Victoria have also recognised the impact that the short stay rental market has had on the regions. "Tenants Victoria is looking forward to seeing the State Government's upcoming housing statement which should also address issues such as the lack of regulation of the short-stay market. We really need more AirBnB homes to return to the long-term rental market to house workers in need of homes in regional areas," Ms Farouque said.

Victorians interested in making a submission to the government's inquiry into the rental crisis and housing affordability have until Friday, July 7. Visit new.parliament.vic.gov.au/rentalandhousinginquiry

Beanie festival cheque handover

MURRINDINDI Beanie and Fibre Festival is supporting the TAC L2P learner driver mentor program at Alexandra Community Hub with the handover of a \$1000 cheque from funds raised at the event.

The TAC L2P Program is funded by the Department of Transport and assists learners under 21 years of age, who do not have access to a supervising driver or vehicle, to gain the 120 hours driving experience required to apply for a probationary licence.

TAC L2P Program was launched in Victoria in 2008 and the program was first delivered by Berry Street locally before their services ceased in town.

To that the program opportunities would continue to be offered to the younger community, Alexandra Community Hub, with some interim

support from Murrindindi Shire Council, took on the responsibility in 2018.

This program ensures learning to drive has become easier for the young people in Murrindindi thanks to the TAC L2P Program. Since the program began in the community, over 70 young people have gained their P plates, already three this year.

Alexandra Community Hub coordinator Sue Sedelies said, "After gaining their P plates, some of the participants have secured employment which may not have been possible if it were not for the program. Road safety and good driving habits are something that the whole community benefits from and it's pleasing to see the results achieved by the Murrindindi TAC L2P Program to date.

"Funds for the new car are one of our many focal

points for the program going forward. Last week we also received approval to expand the number of learner places we can offer. As a result, we are currently looking for volunteers with driving experience to help learner drivers gain on-the-road driving experience".

Stephen Wright pictured has been a mentor since 2018. John Herridge, another valued volunteer, commented, "It's very rewarding to see the learners progress through to become safe and courteous drivers."

Professional training is provided, and anybody interested in becoming a volunteer mentor can visit the Alexandra Community Hub or call 5772 1238.

When receiving the cheque, Sue Sedelies from the Alexandra Community Hub exclaimed, "Wow. That is fantastic. Thank you. We love the Murrindindi Beanie and Fibre Festival. We hang donated beanies on our veranda to support the festival and those who may need one to keep warm at this time of year. The donation of funds is a huge kick start towards replacing our much-loved L2P car in 2024, after its 10 years of service to this invaluable community program. Car replacement is one of the aspects that the program funds cannot be used for, so this contribution is very much appreciated."



Murrindindi Beanie and Fibre Festival event coordinator Carolyn Weeks, Alexandra Community Hub coordinator Sue Sedelies, L2P mentor Stephen Wright, and Murrindindi Beanie and Fibre Festival secretary and treasurer Pam Petersen. -S

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

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C	L	O	V	E	N	K
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R	E	V	I	V	E	X
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DOUBLE PUZZLE

Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.

MATH TIME

							21
0	5	3	5	6	2		21
0	0	2	1	6	1		10
0	5	1	1	0	3		10
1	6	5	3	4	2		21
0	3	5	6	5	4		23
4	2	0	4	6	4		20
5	2	1	6	2	0	7	16
							13

TRIVIA

1. 1983
2. New York City
3. David Lean
4. What's up Doc?
5. Timothy Dalton
6. The Castle
7. Babe

Murrindindi Shire Council's June meeting

MURRINDINDI Shire Council's monthly meeting was held on the evening of Wednesday, June 28. All councillors were present.

A petition was received on June 1, titled *Save the Swale, Leckie Park*, from Ruth Selover. The petition called for council to continue the Leckie Park swale trial for its planned two year duration. It was signed by 56 people, and met the requirements of council's governance rules.

Cr Gallagher commented that he was looking forward to the sharing of views about Leckie Park when the community preferences are surveyed.

No community members spoke during the Open Forum section.

In Questions of Council, a question was submitted by Steve Joblin. He said via a letter that council may be aware that December 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of Hume and Hovell passing through what is now Murrindindi Shire. On their travels, they named the creek, referred to as Narangurnung or Narrangeanong, as King Parrot Creek. The creek was still referred to by the Taungurung name for many years. Mr Joblin asked, "Will council undertake to work with the Taungurung and regulatory authorities to have the creek returned to its original name and the sign placed in particular at the bridge over the creek on Goulburn Valley Highway for the 200th anniversary of Hume and Hovell passing through Taungurung land."

In response, shire CEO Livia Bonazzi said council officers will raise the creek naming with the Taungurung traditional owners to understand their priorities and the potential to align with the December 2024 timing. Such a change would also require community consultation, and it would need to follow Victoria's required process for place naming. Ms Bonazzi said that the request is consistent with council's Reconciliation Action Plan and state policy.

An update to the Grants and Contributions Policy was to be considered during the council meeting, so Cr Walsh suggested that the current round of applications occur first, as they would be assessed under the pre-existing policy.

The council officer recommended funding of \$17,000 for the Lions Club of Marysville and District Inc's Marysville Music Weekend. This was approved by council. Decisions made under delegation were a fee reduction of \$75 for the Murrindindi Film Society and \$136.50 for a planning permit extension for Kinglake Ranges Cemetery Trust.

The Grants and Contributions Policy was then reviewed. A smaller number of grant streams was recommended without limiting the types of applications currently being made. It was proposed that grants be made on a quarterly basis, the business planning stream removed, removal of fee reductions, introduction of a minimum request value of \$200, raising delegated authority to \$2500, the streamlining of forms, CFA and SES application exemptions for fee reductions, special purpose grants, and other changes. It was also proposed that the name be changed to Grants and Sponsorships. Council approved the changes.

During the last financial year, the scheme made funding allocation total of \$126,184.50

The Audit and Risk Committee received council endorsement to re-appoint Dr Craig Nisbet as an independent member for a second three year term, ending June 30, 2026. In addition, they adopted the revised Audit and Risk charter, noting the increase in chair remuneration from \$500 to \$650 per meeting, commencing in July 2023.

Instruments of Delegation and Authorisation to Council Staff were also adopted.

Council was also invited to consider an adjustment to the total contract for plumbing services. The total five year contract for the six suppliers, commencing September 2020, was \$1,500,000. However, as of May 3, the total amount paid since commencement is \$1,039,415. It was anticipated that due to increased work from unanticipated grant funding and unanticipated increased maintenance and emergency works, the total contract amount had been underestimated. The officer recommended an increase to \$2,863,636 over the term of the contract. The full funding may not be spent, and it's not an increase to budget. Council approved the adjustment.

The Asset Management Strategy recommendation, that council note the significant work required in advancing strategic asset management practices and improved asset maturity as outlined by the Asset Management Strategy 2023-2027, was approved by council.

In Councillor Reports, Cr Carpenter spoke about council services for children and young people. She noted that council are looking to recruit more Family Day Care childhood educators as the demand for care exceeds the number of places available. She also noted that, as the population increases, there needs be planning for the increasing need for these services. She said that council hopes to gain government funding to support infrastructure planning for the early years education services in Alexandra and Yea. She said that the rollout of the pre-prep 30 hours per week reform will bring local challenges, and consultations with schools, kindergartens and childcare centres will be crucial to successful outcomes. The maternal and child healthcare building in Alexandra has been undergoing extensive renovations and is nearing completion.

Cr Carpenter also said that the Reconciliation Action Plan has been implemented by council, and council will soon be recruiting for representation on the advisory group.

She congratulated Alexandra District Health and the Yea and District Memorial Hospital on the launch of their initiative to develop Murrindindi Restart, a community response to the harms of substance use and addiction.

Cr Gallagher extended the community's appreciation to the CEO and directors for rapidly assembling a stakeholder forum to learn more about the sudden accelerated cessation of native timber harvesting. The government representatives in attendance learnt a great deal about the anxiety of local contractors most acutely impacted by the transition. He spoke about the need for certainty. The contractors learnt that the state is keen to maintain their local presence, machinery and intergenerational experience.

He also spoke about the Alexandra Art Show, the Alexandra Rotary changeover event, and the Kellock fundraiser, Dance

the Night Away, and acknowledged the two Murrindindi recipients of Fire Service Medals, Paul Denham and Dawn Hartog, and new OAMs Natalie Wischer and Larry Fallon. He also acknowledged the work and legacy of Tara Carter at council as she departs.

Cr Gallagher said he "wanted to continue the discussion on one of the great governance matters of this generation. It's the referendum to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. The Constitution of Australia is our country's governance framework, and it's a very intentionally understated document, a concise document of about 30 pages... A referendum is the legal mechanism to change Australia's constitution. In the history of Federation, there have been eight changes to the constitution and 36 unsuccessful attempts... My point is that constitutional change is uncommon and so the opportunity for us to consider what better looks like for the founding document for our country is a rare and valuable gift... Personally, I think that a chapter nine change is a solid step towards national reconciliation and supports the 86 per cent of Indigenous Australians in support of a yes vote." He said that he would be happy to discuss his personal views with members of the community.

Cr Gerencser spoke about accessibility upgrades at two locations, and the work being done on the Maternal and Child Health building. The Yea Caravan Park bridge was opened this week after it was damaged in the October flood, and the Break O'Day Road bridge opened on June 26, on schedule.

She said that a consultant has been appointed for the road safety strategy and action plan, with Regional Roads Victoria participating in the action group. She said that there has been an increase in potholes in the shire, but that road and drainage programs are continuing. She asked that people drive to conditions and report any damage. Flood studies are underway, including UT Creek and Flowerdale, with funding received jointly with Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority.

Cr McAulay welcomed Ben Hardwell as Manager of Economic Development. She also spoke about the artwork on the Great Victorian Rail Trail, now completed. Signage and promotional material are also underway. She is looking forward to seeing the locational specific promotional brochures for different parts of the shire, and council has put \$5000 towards a Lake Eildon episode of *The Fishing Show* on Seven Mate. The new Eildon Blue Gums Trail is already being used by walkers and cyclists and will be promoted in spring. Officers are also working with Murrindindi Food and Wine on a range of events. In addition, Cr McAulay spoke about NAIDOC Week plans at the Yea Wetlands.

She commented on Murrindindi Shire Council being pleased to support the Alexandra Truck, Ute and Rod Show as a major sponsor. She congratulated the committee and owner drivers.

Cr McAulay also spoke about the council meeting with timber contractors to discuss concerns. Council will be developing a communications plan and a website with support information. She asked that people impacted by the end of native timber forestry continue to engage with council.

Cr Haslam spoke about the container deposit system which will commence in November 2023. Visy is the network operator in the north east. They are inviting businesses and community groups to apply to become a collection point.

She was pleased that the Blue Gums trail is being used, but was concerned after discovering a parked car on the trail and the occupants had lit a fire on the trail. She said that there had also been other reports of vehicles on the trail. Additional bollards may be installed to prevent this from happening. She asked that people report such poor behaviour to council. She was also concerned about the fencing at the AGL gates. She reminded people that they are in place for safety.

The Eildon Biggest Morning Tea raised over \$3000 for breast cancer research and she thanked the organisers, value hosts and the community.

Cr Walsh spoke about some of the events he attended in the last month, describing them as interesting and uplifting. He attended, along with the shire CEO, the Australian National Government Association National Assembly. Around 1100 delegates from councils attended. The Australian Government also hosted the first meeting in 10 years of the Australian Council of Local Governments. The mayor and CEO also met with Murray Watt, Minister for Emergency Management, the advisors for Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Jobs and Skills, and Member for Indi, Dr Helen Haines. Ms Haines arranged the meetings for them.

One of the key messages was that the Australian Government is keen to support projects, but only after gaining state government support. They will be looking at post-secondary education opportunities.

He said that council is continuing their advocacy to have the Minister for Water change the regulation in relation to the water levels at Lake Eildon, to be met prior to the summer irrigation loads, from 100 per cent down to 95 per cent. The minister's communication states that the Bureau of Meteorology is predicting an early El Niño and therefore the current settings should remain. He said that they will continue to argue that an incorrect assessment of risk by them will have a major impact on Murrindindi and communities downstream.

Shire CEO Livia Bonazzi said that the shire partnered with Emergency Management Victoria to conduct an exercise in Yea Shire Hall. Around 60 people participated. Commissioner Andrew Crisp was in attendance. The focus was on the use of emergency response centres.

Murrindindi Shire was successful in their grant application for \$125,000 under the National Disaster Ready Fund for the mid-Goulburn flood study. The shire has also been allocated \$30,000 under the circular economy household education fund for the new four stream waste service.

Ms Bonazzi provided an update on Breakaway Bridge in Acheron. Council has received the relevant hydrology information from the catchment management authority which allows the bridge consultants to finalise the assessment of the condition to the damaged bridge. Rectification options will be considered and a further meeting will be held with the community.

Citizen scientists concerned about tree geebung

CITIZEN scientists from Wildlife of the Central Highlands (WOTCH) and the Victorian Forest Alliance (VFA) have said that state-owned logging company VicForests has destroyed numerous endangered tree geebung while doing regeneration works. The area in question is within the Immediate Protection Areas announced by the state government in 2019.

The groups have reported logging of the endangered plant, calling for VicForests to be charged for violating state environment laws. The groups say that the the Environment Department's regulator said it doesn't have the

power to act on the breach because the protection areas haven't been formalised.

Chris Schuringa, Victorian Forest Alliance Campaign Coordinator, said, "VicForests has once again been caught red-handed. The agency repeatedly flouts the law, while the regulator does nothing to stop them. Despite the government's plan to bring an earlier end to native forest logging, we hold grave concerns for forests and endangered species like the tree geebung, that are still under threat from VicForests destructive logging. VicForests needs to be wound up."

While the government has said they are phasing out native forest logging on January 1, no decision about the future of VicForests has been announced.

The tree geebung (*Persoonia arborea*) is a mid-story tree found only in the tall wet forests of Victoria's Central Highlands.

On October 26, 2022, Warburton Environment Inc won a Supreme Court case against VicForests over the agency's failure to protect tree geebung from logging. In his judgement, the Honourable Justice Garde stated, "...no attempt was made by

VicForests to show that it was not reasonably practicable to protect the significant number of tree geebung... Given the evidence as to the past harvesting and burning practices of VicForests, it is highly likely that significant numbers of mature tree geebung have been lost in the Central Highlands in the past through harvesting and regeneration burning. The precise extent of the loss will never be known, but on the basis of recent records it is likely to amount to many hundreds or even thousands of mature trees.

Wildlife of the Central Highlands (WOTCH) President Hayley

Forster said, "The government must enact proper protections for forests, particularly after January 1, when logging is slated to end. Logging has had terrible impacts on forests over the last 50 years, and there's a lot of important ecological restoration work that needs to be done. But VicForests have shown that it cannot be trusted in that role."

VicForests were contacted for comment on the case. A spokesperson said, "VicForests has recently been made aware of this report and we are considering it."

Local businesses express concern over proposed rent controls

THE Alexandra and District Tourism and Traders Association were approached for their views on the potential outcomes of rent controls, as proposed by the Victorian Government.

The issue arose after Treasurer Tim Pallas responded in writing to Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam. It was a part of the discussion around seeking the support of the Greens for the Victorian Budget. The letter stated that rent controls would be considered.

When contacted about the issue, ADTTA ran a survey of members. Seven business owners responded, with 50 per cent considering themselves an 'employing business'.

What do you envision the consequences of rent controls would be on the availability and prices for rental properties in the region?

Overall sentiment: The majority of respondents expressed concerns about the consequences of rent controls on the availability and prices of rental properties in the region. They believe that rent controls would lead to negative outcomes, such as increased rents, reduced availability of rental properties, and discouragement of property investment. There was a sense of scepticism about the effectiveness of rent controls in achieving both availability and affordability simultaneously.

A variety of comments were received, including, "Immediately, all landlords would increase rents at the maximum allowable rate at every chance due to fear of what could change next year," "Rent controls have the potential to discourage people from considering the purchase of an investment or rental property as they may see that it will be too controlled and limit their investment going forward," "The business case for renting a property becomes less and less viable," "This assumes that rental controls are applied to conventional leases and not short-stay accommodation," and "Reducing rent at a time when mortgage rates and general costs are significantly increasing will reduce the appeal of long-term rentals and push people to short-term rentals for higher income."

There tended to be a negative sentiment towards rent controls, suggesting that such controls may have unintended consequences, and may not be effective in achieving the desired outcomes of availability and affordability.

Do you think rent controls will achieve the goal of relieving rental price increases?

Overall sentiment: The majority of respondents do not believe that rent controls will achieve the goal of relieving rental price increases. They express scepticism about the effectiveness of rent controls and suggest alternative measures such as introducing incentives for investors or focusing on increasing rental availability. Some respondents also emphasize that rental price increases in their area are reasonable and not as drastic as in metro areas. There is a general sentiment that the rental market should be left to operate freely without government intervention.

The key quotes included, "While some landlords, at the recommendation of real estate agents, have already hiked rents excessively, many regional rental properties are privately managed and have not had rent increases," "No, not at all. If the government wants to increase house rental availability, they should instead look to introduce incentives for investors to purchase houses that can be made available for rent," "Yes,

If that's the aim, then regulation of rent controls to cap the price of rentals, but is that a problem that needs solving? The problem seems to be availability," "No, it should be a free market," "No, it is market-controlled," and "No, generally in our area the increases are reasonable. We are not seeing local increases by thousands as they do in metro areas. Rent is increasing at a lower rate than mortgage payments."

The responses show a lack of confidence in rent controls as an effective solution for relieving rental price increases. Respondents highlight the importance of considering other factors such as availability and suggest alternative approaches to address rental market challenges.

Can you foresee any unintended consequences of these measures?

Overall sentiment: The majority of respondents foresee unintended consequences resulting from the proposed measures. These consequences include a shift of landlords towards the short-term rental market, which reduces long-term rental availability and negatively impacts the regional labour market. Additionally, the measures are expected to discourage potential investors from purchasing properties for rental purposes and may lead to higher rents. The removal of tenanted properties to platforms like Airbnb and private off-the-book rentals is also mentioned as a potential consequence.

The key quotes included, "Increasing controls on long-term rentals will push more landlords into the short-term rental market, reducing the long-term rental stock available, and consequently reducing the regional labour market," "It will further reduce the availability of rental properties as it becomes a less viable option for investing funds," "The potential is there to reduce potential investors from purchasing properties for rental purposes," "If rentals are capped, then the motivation to invest/develop is impacted. If the intention is to set a rent-price floor to improve availability, then affordability is impacted," "I see fewer rentals being made available if landlords cannot cover costs and continue to make a profit," "Removal of tenanted properties to Airbnb and private off-the-book rental," and "Yes, much, much higher rents."

These concerns suggest a need for careful consideration and evaluation of the potential effects of implementing rent controls.

At a time when local businesses are struggling to find staff because there is nowhere for them to live, and are begging landlords to change their properties from holiday rentals to long-term to solve this problem, is it likely that those landlords will be discouraged from making the change because they'd be forced to absorb any costs that arose as a consequence of the rent controls and they were fearful of their ability manage those?

Overall sentiment: The majority of respondents believe that landlords would be discouraged from changing their properties from holiday rentals to long-term rentals due to the potential costs associated with rent controls and their concerns about managing those costs. They express concerns about the attractiveness of renting properties as a business case and emphasize the importance of allowing landlords to manage their properties as they see fit. There is a consensus that rent controls could have a negative impact on the availability of long-term rentals and discourage landlords from participating in the rental market.

The key quotes included, "Anything that further adds to the costs of a landowner will

make it less attractive to rent a property as the business case becomes less and less attractive with much more risk," "At the end of the day, if a landlord owns a property, they are entitled to manage that property how they see fit," "It would take more analysis, I would think, to understand if the implementation of rental controls to discourage short-stay rentals would be a motivator for owners to make properties available for longer-term leases," "Yes, it will discourage people from providing rentals to the market."

It was noted that the change may exacerbate the challenges faced by local businesses in finding housing for their staff.

ADTTA also asked their members about alternate strategies which Murrindindi Shire Council could consider implementing (via changes to the rates system or via local laws controls)?

Thirty-three per cent believed that council should charge a premium rate for vacant developable residential land, 33 per cent suggested measures to treat short-stay

accommodation properties as commercial operations, and 67 per cent suggested 'something else'. In the 'something else' category, there were suggestions that the shire could release more residential and commercial land, and that there be incentives for landlords, such as cheaper rates or rental guarantees.

Some additional suggestions were also made in regard to rent controls. One said to modify planning regulations temporarily to encourage the development of vacant land in the short term. Another was very much opposed to the premium rates for vacant residential land and short stay as commercial operations, and instead said "interfering with market forces might sound attractive however, the consequences will be most counterproductive. Murrindindi Shire Council should be lobbying for a reduction in taxes on property (ie. land tax) to make it more viable for people to invest." Another respondent said, "There absolutely should be set limits on how many Airbnb and short-stay accommodations can operate in a shire."

Looking at pensions into the future

FOR decades, men expected to retire at 65 and receive the pension. For women, it was 60. The age of eligibility for women was increased over the ten years between 1995 and 2004 until they too reached the same qualifying age as men.

In 2009, the Rudd government lifted it to 67 for men and women, but it was phased in from 2015, with six month increases every two years, starting from July 1, 2017. Now we've arrived, after almost 30 years, at a pension age of 67.

"But it could have been worse," Ian Henschke, Chief Advocate of National Seniors Australia said. Almost 10 years ago, Treasurer Joe Hockey announced it would go to 70 by 2035. Mr Hockey said it was "highly probable a child born today would live to 150." This followed on from a report from the Commission of Audit, which recommended the qualifying age be linked to life expectancy. The thinking was, because Australians are living longer than their parents and grandparents, they should remain in the workforce longer. There was significant backlash to this, including a campaign led by National Seniors. A popular slogan at the time was: "Only someone who's worked in an office their whole life would think you can work until you're 70."

In the run up to the 2019 election Scott Morrison dropped the age 70 target as Liberal policy. His deputy, Nationals leader Michael McCormack, said it was "probably a step too far" adding "I think if you're a tradie, or a brickie, or a shearer in rural and regional Australia you don't want some suit in Canberra telling you you're going to have to work until you're 70." National Seniors were pleased the government "backed away from the unpopular idea" and called the decision "a win for common sense".

Now a group of academics has revisited the statistics and released a report saying a further rise is warranted to ensure the country has a sufficient supply of workers into the future. Macquarie University Business School Professor Hanlin Shang and his co-authors say there should be three more pension-age increases over the next 27 years. They suggest 68 by 2030, rising to 69 in 2036, and 70 by 2050. Professor Shang says Australia's low birth rate is one of the key factors.

"Less people in the working group and more in retirement will make the old age dependency ratio (OADR) higher," he said. "What this means is there is less working people to support elderly people. And with more elderly people in the population, this will create a burden for the government pension system."

Mr Henschke's response was, "Professor Shang and his team should read, or hopefully re-read, *The Age Pension in the 21st Century* by 2018 Actuary of the Year Michael Rice. He revealed the cost of the age pension as a per centage of GDP will fall, not rise in the decades to come. There will be far fewer full pensioners, and far more part pensioners and self-funded retirees."

National Seniors claim Michael Rice's work shows the "burden" simply won't be there. The pension was 2.9 per cent of GDP when then Federal Treasurer Peter Costello's 2002 Intergenerational Report predicted it would grow to 4.6 per cent of GDP by 2042. But National Seniors say it was just 2.7 per cent of GDP five years ago, and Michael Rice projected "expenditure to fall to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2038" and said "the downward trend will continue well into the future." They say, "it's predicted to be just 2.1 per cent of GDP by 2060", because superannuation has realised a significant rise in self-funded retirees.

National Seniors reject calls for raising the age to 70 on both fiscal and social policy grounds. They say many people exit the workforce because of ill health and they argue Australia should consider a Canadian style system where you can opt to get the pension earlier but get a bit less. They also say the best way to tackle declining participation is to provide incentives so people will choose to work longer.

Their 'Let Pensioners Work' campaign calls for a reduction in the income test rates so people can keep more of their pension if they choose to continue working. National Seniors say this is fairer than raising the pension age because it rewards people who want and need to work. They say pensioners who chose to work would benefit from extra income and their participation would also help the economy.

The Chronicle Sport



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Pony club takes the rail trail to Cheviot Tunnel

by Louis Hill, aged eight

ON a beautiful winter's day, the Alexandra Pony Club ventured out onto the rail trail for their July rally.

We went through the Cheviot Tunnel, which was dark and exciting. Everyone was spooked.

Louis, Clay and Chase went on top of the tunnel to explore.

The weather was perfect. Some of the riders went on a shorter ride of six kilometres. The other children went 13km from Cheviot to Molesworth.

We finished at the Molesworth pub for lunch. It was a great day everyone loved it.



Yea Golf report

by Alan Pell

ONLY six brave men challenged the course on Wednesday, June 28 with Tom White (28) showing winning form with 36 points on count back from Anthony Coleman (4). Tom was also nearest the pin on the eighteenth and Mic Sheather won the club award.

Tom White again (27) with 37 points won the Men's

Stableford on Saturday, July 1. Second was Alan Pell (14) with 34 points from third Phil Armstrong (20), with 33 on count back from Kevin Coghlan (22) fourth. John Phillips was nearest the pin on the second. Steve Rumney won the Club Award. Five ladies also played on Saturday with Vicki Clements (26) winning with 26 points.