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The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

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Published Tuesdays and Fridays

PP331336/0000 1

Friday, June 20, 2025

PRICE (inc. G.S.T.) \$2

For the Shire of Buloke, and the districts of Birchip, Charlton, Donald, St. Arnaud, Watchem and Wycheproof



They're Real Trimmers!

This was the scene in Hammill Street, Donald, mid-afternoon on Wednesday.

In the bucket of the 17-metre "tower", and right into the branches of the tree, was Juhari Yahya, a contractor employed by Powercor to trim the trees around power lines, and below service lines to some local houses.

At ground level was Ken Heffernan, from VGA (Vegetation Group of Australia), whose Victorian office is at Mount Waverley.

Also in Donald at the time was another truck and

"chipper" with the severed branches being later converted to a "mulch" of wooden chips.

Currently accommodated at Wycheproof, the workers were back in Donald yesterday to continue the "pruning" process.

• Pictured at right with Wednesday's "trimming" are Juhari Yahya (left) and Ken Heffernan.



Charlton Shares FRRR Grants

Charlton Neighbourhood House has received a \$9,500 grant to improve digital access and skills development for seniors, thanks to funding from the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR).

Twenty-six communities across remote, rural and regional Australia will benefit from grants up to \$10,000 to support community-led initiatives that build connected communities that are resilient, sustainable and liveable.

In Victoria, the grants will support projects in Alexandra, Bairnsdale, Charlton, Dargo, Dunolly, Euroa, Kyabram, and Ultima.

FRRR, in partnership with Telstra, awarded \$200,000 to

not-for-profit organisations which FRRR CEO, Natalie Egleton says will have a far-reaching impact on non-urban communities.

"These grants go far beyond simply getting people connected to the internet. They're about ensuring that people in remote and regional Australia have access to essential services and opportunities," she said.

"The ripple effects of these community-led projects are

significant and contribute to stronger local economies, more connected communities and greater resilience overall."

The Charlton Neighbourhood House project, titled "Digital Inclusion for Seniors: Empowering Connections and Confidence", will allow senior residents to loan computer equipment to improve their on-line connections.

Residents will also receive practical training in digital

literacy and capability so that they are able to stay safe on-line and have greater access to services without the need to travel long distances to regional cities.

Loretta Willaton, Regional Australia Executive at Telstra, said the number of applications received highlighted the desire for regional Australians to access improved digital connectivity and new technologies.

"Organisations all over the country have stepped forward with a solutions-focussed approach to improving their

digital capabilities and improving social and environmental outcomes for their communities," Loretta said.

"Access to technology is especially crucial in times of crisis. We appreciate that the preparedness of communities ahead of disasters, as well as in response to or recovering from them, is made so much more robust with greater access to digital tools and knowledge."

Other projects across Victoria include enhancing communications security at a volunteer-run café in Ultima,

facilitating training in radio and podcasting in Eurora to build stronger social connections and digitising historical records in Gippsland.

Natalie Egleton says the funding will allow small communities to act on local issues thanks to the support of FRRR and Telstra.

"Reliable digital infrastructure and skills are fundamental to improving quality of life and these communities are demonstrating real drive to respond to local issues innovatively, with our support."

Birchip Forum Meets

Birchip Community Forum met last Monday, June 16, for its monthly meeting. The Birchip silo art project was further discussed, and a plan has been made for the mural to be painted in stages over the year.

It is hoped that the artwork will be completed by the end of 2025, taking into consideration additional infrastructure that will need to be built around the site, such as safety fencing and a viewing platform.

The committee received a response from local MP Jade Benham about the shortage of police in the Buloke Shire, where only five out of eleven positions are currently filled. Ms Benham highlighted a statewide shortage of police officers and noted the issue of police leaving the force in high numbers. Ms Benham will write to the Minister for Police as a matter of urgency,

pointing out that the Buloke Shire is desperately in need of police presence in our small town.

The forum is engaging with a local business to facilitate the provision of unleaded petrol to the township. The committee is also committed to lobbying for the improvement of the “five ways” intersection as a matter of importance leading up to the state election.

The forum expressed concern over the recent council review of the Birchip Library. The committee recognises the excellent and personalised service run by the current staff at the library for after hours

patrons. President Steve Nottle will write a letter of support to the shire outlining concerns of the service being diminished.

The forum is continuing to work towards improvements of the main streetscape as well as town signage. The committee brought up the lack of souvenirs that celebrate Birchip, and members are pursuing possible products or mementos that would be appealing to town visitors. Any Birchip residents who have suggestions for souvenir ideas, please contact the Birchip Community Forum at birchipcommunityforum@gmail.com

Some Wins On Drought Taskforce but... Big Challenges Remain

Rural Councils Victoria has acknowledged some breakthrough wins delivered by the Victorian Government’s Drought Response Taskforce, while warning significant challenges remain unresolved.

The Government has agreed to speed up access to interstate fodder, expand fodder delivery routes and fast-track kangaroo control permits for rural landholders.

Rural Councils Victoria is represented on the Taskforce by RCV Deputy Chairperson Cr Kate Makin (who is also the Mayor of the Corangamite Shire).

“These are steps in the right direction, but there’s still a mighty long way to go,” Cr Makin said.

RCV has been in constant dialogue with member councils about the types of supports rural communities require.

Key Matters

Cr Makin said there were key matters the Taskforce still needed to deliver on: subsidised council rates, fair

loans and ongoing council supports.

“We need to be talking about how to deliver fully-funded rate subsidies for primary producers in drought zones, zero interest loans that don’t need to be matched by farmers, and direct funding for councils to boost local support programs and infrastructure spending.

“These are common sense measures that would help farmers and local economies immediately,” Ms Makin said.

Other Challenges

Other challenges raised by rural councils include the need for:

- Greater access to emergency water supplies, including assistance with delivery.



- Household allowances to support families through hardship.
- Boosted mental health supports.
- A relaxation of roadside grazing rules.
- The expansion of the Rural Financial Counselling Service.
- More flexibility in the criteria for on-farm infrastructure support.
- Additional support for community events and informal social opportunities to strengthen social bonds and reduce isolation.

Resilience Strategy

RCV Chairman Cr Rob Amos (Campaspe Shire) said, “Victoria needs a whole-of-government drought resilience strategy that integrates economic, health, environmental and community outcomes.

“Entire rural communities are feeling the strain, including farmers, families, shop owners and service businesses.”

Cr. Amos said rural councils are on the frontline of the drought crisis and have unmatched local networks and relationships.

“Rural councils should be formally engaged in the co-design and delivery of drought response programs,” he said.

“They know their communities and are best placed to tailor efforts locally.”

He said as the peak representative body for rural communities, Rural Councils Victoria stands ready to assist with the strategic co-ordination of drought responses.

The Drought Taskforce is chaired personally by Victorian Premier, Jacinta Allan.

Letter to the Editor



Reflections on the Impact of the Municipal Monitor

(The Editor, “The Times”)
Dear Editor.— “Victorian Minister for Local Government, Melissa Horne, has today announced a municipal monitor will be appointed to Buloke Shire Council to support good governance processes and practices at the council. Peter Harriott will begin as municipal monitor to the Council from May 9 until December 31.”

The Member for Mildura, Jade Benham MP, came out as the “cheer leader” for this appointment with the following:

“I would encourage residents of the Buloke Shire to vote for new local representatives or stand for election themselves should they be interested.

“I know our community is filled with people that can make a real difference at a local government level and put the needs of the local region as their number one priority,” said Ms Benham.

“This is a great opportunity to have genuine, community-focused people in positions that allow them to represent their region.”

The terms of reference for municipal monitors direct them to advise and provide any relevant assistance and support to the council to improve its governance processes and practices.

The Local Member should be aware, given her privileged position, that there is a protocol about being presumed innocent before any findings are made in such matters.

Twelve months down the track since that appointment, which cost ratepayers nearly \$160,000. What has been achieved?

Mr Harriott presented his report to the Minister in January of this year, in which he made a number of recommendations, mainly about cutting back Council services, increasing the rates and urging the Council to buy back an old Council tip so it could spend millions of ratepayers’ money on fixing it up (wonders never cease).

Twenty-four times in the report he refers to poor Councillor behaviour, but can only come up with one example of such at a Council meeting of which he didn’t attend (in legal terms that is hearsay).

So, what has been achieved in terms of good governance? Nothing is the short answer, but what has been achieved is the enfeebling of the Buloke Shire Councillors and their ability to speak up on behalf of the people that elect them.

In December Council put out for public comment new Governance Rules which saw a radical change by gagging Councillors from asking questions in Council meetings amongst other things.

It changed the existing Governance Rules (without proper notice) to remove any information about Planning

and Building matters from the Council agenda so that the public and Councillors had no idea what matters were under consideration by the staff (the most notable example of that was the Esoteric Festival and the intended refusal of a Planning permit).

Suffice to say that these new proposed Governance Rules have been shelved. Depending on who you speak to there is a variety of reasons why. The question has been asked at two Council meetings and, surprise, there have been two conflicting reasons given, neither satisfactory.

Since the debacle associated with the Esoteric Festival and the ongoing “debate” about renewables, mines, transmission lines and the new Emergency Service Levy, Buloke Shire has had to be dragged into the debate.

Its reluctance to engage the State government and actively advocate on behalf of the community, let alone the 72% of ratepayers (the farmers), who contribute the bulk of revenue to the Shire is laughable.

They recently had the opportunity to show some leadership when the Minister Lily D’Ambrosio MP visited Buloke Shire, given the meeting was held in secret and not advertised to the community at large just adds to the perception that the Shire is a closed shop living in Noddy land.

Since the departure of the Monitor, it has become obvious that Buloke Shire Council doesn’t want to engage with its community, you need only open Facebook and see that they have removed the ability to comment on their posts.

The role of a Councillor is to represent and advocate on behalf of the people who elect

them, nothing else is negotiable. The fact that unelected officials now set the agenda and stifle discussion on any matters is testament to a seismic change that has gripped local government, not only in Buloke but further afield.

A wise man once said: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”.

Just harking back to a key deliverable that the Monitor was to investigate, Governance, you can see that he failed miserably.

Key indicators that are required to be posted on the Council website as per the Local Government Act have not been touched since 2018 or never updated.

As an example, interstate travel and expenses incurred by Mayor, Councillors and Staff must be listed on the Council website as per the Local Government Act.

Either the Mayor, Councillors and Staff haven’t been interstate, or they are too worried to show how often and how much it costs. These are simple actions that wouldn’t require a huge effort. Sadly the Monitor was not able to “fix” that problem as well.

After spending \$160,000 of our money, we have nothing to show for it. We have a Council that is now afraid of its own shadow.

The only winner out of this whole sorry saga is the Municipal Monitor, who on the strength of the great job he did at Buloke, perhaps, has been appointed as the CEO of Central Goldfields Shire.

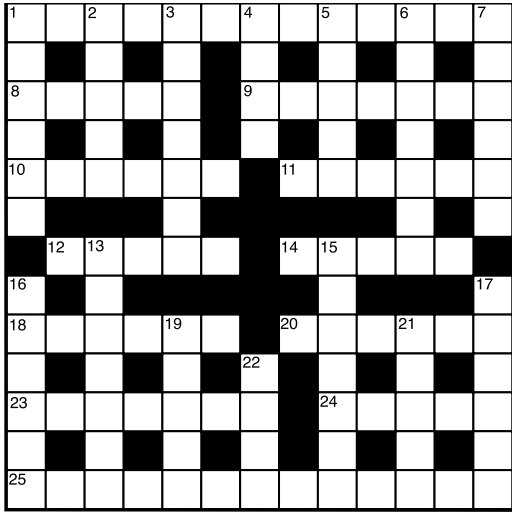
As Ned Kelly fittingly said as he faced his fate: “Such is Life”.

Daryl Warren.

Former Buloke Shire Councillor and Mayor.

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8182



ACROSS

1. Merciful (13)
8. Sovereign (5)
9. Traditional (7)
10. Hit (6)
11. Mix (6)
12. Sharp (5)
14. Fragile (5)
18. Boat (6)
20. Pass (6)
23. Unliven (7)
24. Over (5)
25. Imperturbable (4-9)

DOWN

1. Fondle (6)
2. Tooth (5)
3. Fruit (7)
4. Bag (4)
5. Animal (5)
6. Spear (7)
7. Transcend (6)
13. Critical (7)
15. Free (7)
16. Ever (6)
17. Saw (6)
19. Fastener (5)
21. Holy (5)
22. Sediment (4)

• Solution next issue.

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- ☐ TURN OFF THE HEATER BEFORE BED
- ☐ NEVER OVERLOAD POWERBOARDS
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- ☐ CLEAN CHIMNEYS AND FLUES YEARLY
- ☐ TURN OFF ELECTRIC BLANKET BEFORE BED
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It's Time to "Choose Food"

An exciting new business venture opened its doors in Donald on Tuesday, June 16, at the popular cafe location on the corner of Woods and McCulloch Streets, rebranded with the name "Choose Food".

However, it is not quite as cut and dried as the name implies, this cafe is offering more than just "food" with a variety of organic and gluten free options for the discerning diner.

In today's day and age, cafe and takeaway food is not often associated with healthy eating and for those with special dietary requirements, dining out can be such a challenging experience. Even those striving for a healthier lifestyle, while juggling a hectic schedule might find it difficult to choose the healthy option, which is why "Choose Food" is such an exciting addition to the town.

Dine-in or Take Away

Whether dining in or taking food to go, patrons can choose from a wholesome menu that is 90 per cent gluten free and order their hot

beverage made of entirely organic ingredients. Not only that, a small organic grocery complete with a scoop and weigh station has been set up in the front of the store, ensuring those delicious delights can be taken to your own dining table at home.

Locals Supporting Locals

The cafe is owned and operated by Ashton Jane, together with her partner Jesse Higgins, who wanted to bring some of her favourite foods back to Donald.

"Things like organic cheeses and items from smaller businesses," Ashton said. "I like to support the little guys."

And the shelves in the grocery display a myriad options from honey to ham, produce to prosciutto, dried fruits to dairy and so much more! In stocking this unique organic

pantry, this small business is striving to source local produce and in doing so, support other small businesses reach their goals; not just wholesome food being served here.

"Choose Food" is additionally staffed by a couple of well-known "whizzes in the kitchen" – Tiffany Miliano and Rachel Grant – undoubtedly a successful combination so the future of this little venture looks bright.

The cafe operates from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and as the colder weather sets in, now is the perfect time to "Choose Food" in Donald; try something warm, hearty and wholesome from the menu, which can be found on the Facebook page, or phone 0455 034 748 for more information.



• Rachel Grant and Ashton Jane.



• Tiffany Miliano preparing the beef stew for lunch.

Quick Fix for Pipe Problem



• James McKenny shovelling as Luke Ezard watches over the operation.

A burst water main caused a stir in Donald early Thursday morning, with GWM Water crews responding swiftly to repair the damage.

GWM's Andrew Bayles was first on the scene around 5:30 a.m., soon joined by James McKenny and Luke Ezard. The team promptly excavated a section of the road, on Woods Street, to access the broken pipe.

Repairs were estimated to be completed by lunchtime, with the site expected to be filled and cleaned up by around 3p.m..

The early-morning incident left some residents without water during their usual morning routines, catching many off guard, during their daily preparations.



• The burst water main on Donald's main street receiving attention from GWM.



• The small organic grocery offering locally-sourced produce, complete with a scoop and weigh station.



• Left to right: Heather Flood, Lynette Broughton, Zoe Tonkin, Liz Russell, Jan South enjoying their morning coffee.

"Times" Classifieds

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Deadlines:— Tuesday's Issue: Classified advertisements (single column), 10 a.m. Monday. Display advertisements (2 or more columns), 3 p.m. Friday prior.

Friday's Issue: Classified advertisements (single column), 10 a.m. Thursday. Display advertisements (2 or more columns), 3 p.m. Wednesday prior.


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DEATH
McGURK.—
Shane Robert
Passed away
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Much loved cousin of Prue, Nigel, Jarrod, Priscilla, Brenton, Dylan, Holly, Shayla, Skye, Tara, Jade, Todd, Jayden, Liam and families.

*Always in our hearts.
R.I.P. Shane*

THANK YOU

I would like to thank my family and friends for their prayers, phone calls, visits text messages, cards, gifts and flowers while I was in hospital recently. It is very much appreciated.

— Margaret Lowry

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Students researched, brainstormed at least 5 designs and trialled prototypes prior to the construction of a final trebuchet. Materials used: masking tape, small spoon or bottle top, icy pole sticks and elastic bands. The final results placed Lithil and Xen's trebuchet in first place for distance and accuracy.

Trebuchet Design - Lithil Hitihamillage and Xen Thomson
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Police Beat



Buloke
Theft from motor vehicle: Between Sunday, June 8, and Wednesday, June 11, there were several thefts and attempted theft from motor vehicles reported in the Charlton township. This investigation is ongoing.

Theft: Between 10 p.m. on Friday, June 13, and 10 a.m. the following day, copper cable has been stolen from the ground at business in Camp Street, Wycheproof.

Mail Theft: Police are investigating the theft of mail from a letterbox of an address

on Fradd's Road, Glenloth East, which occurred on Friday, June 13.

Gannawarra
Trailer theft: In the early hours of Monday, June 16, offenders forced entry to the yard of a business on the Murray Valley Highway, Kerang, using a utility stolen from Cohuna and stole a green 10 x 6 trailer. The ute was located on the Loddon Valley about 5km south of Kerang engulfed in fire.

Burglary: Between June 6 and 10, offenders have attended a property in the

Beauchamp area. Offenders appear to have used on-site machinery to load shuttles containing chemical on to the victim's tray truck. They have stolen a CRF50 motorcycle and Spika gunsafe containing 2 firearms and ammunition. They have also stolen a fuel trailer and fuel. The stolen truck and fuel trailer were located in the Kerang area on Wednesday, June 11.

Swan Hill
Vehicle theft: Between 4 p.m. Thursday, June 12, and 9 a.m. the following day, a gold

coloured Ford Ranger ute was stolen from outside an address in Beveridge Street, Swan Hill. It was located in McPherson Street, Swan Hill on Saturday, June 14.

Burglary: Between Sunday, June 8, and 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, offenders have attended an address in Karinie Street, Swan Hill. The offenders have entered a shed on the property and stolen tools including a Makita 3.5 inch angle grinder, impact driver, drill and batteries.

Winter Races at Donald Tomorrow

(By Peter Hibberd)

The Donald and District Race Club will run its winter race meeting tomorrow at the Donald Racing Centre, on the day with the shortest amount of daylight hours for the year.

After recent and welcome rain, the track is rated a heavy 8 and the rail is out by 3 metres for the entire circuit. With very few other local meetings this week, the club received 558 nominations, therefore a nine-race program will be held, with the first race scheduled to start at 11.31 a.m..

With the weather forecast improving, the place to be could be the races, sitting inside the main complex and hopefully picking a winner.

It looks to be a tough day for punters with five maiden races, a lot of first starters and

a heavy track. Trainer Patrick Payne and jockey Brad Rawiller could have a good day.

Selections

Race one: Allured, Harbour City, Miss Kanimbla.

Race two: Star Canto, Smother, Triple Oh.

Race three: Plenty of Grunt, Karasmatic, Miss Maverick.

Race four: Bebe's Legacy, Russian Escape, Bruzani.

Race five: Cliste, High Tempo, Specky Boy.

Race six: Itwasonlyakiss, Feargal, Squander.

Race seven: Seacryption, Elsie Girl, Rubiquity.

Race eight: Time to Rumble, Mr Tickles, Cool The Jets.

Race nine: Cavill Tycoon, Red Sparks, Whitson.

Best bets: Allured, Cliste, Cavill Tycoon.



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E-Mailers!

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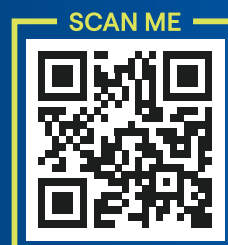


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MADE FOR MORE



• Donald Men's Shed members accepting the Ripon Volunteer Award 12/10/2019. Back row: Les Mellings, Max Harris, John Kumm, Louise Staley, Keith Smith, Bob Baker, Ray Walker, Norm Hollis, Peter Wyllie, Zoe Weir. Front row: John Howley, Peter Pendlebury, Keith Smallacombe, Harold Flett, Alan Sands, Les Bower.

Musings on Men's Shed Movement

The June Donald History Society Inc. meeting was held at the Courthouse Museum at 2 p.m. on June 10.

The fourteen members were present and they were privileged to hear a fine presentation about the Donald Men's Shed given by History Society and Men's Shed, member, John Kumm. John's presentation was so well done that it has been reproduced here with no alteration and with just one of the many excellent photos that made up the slide show which ran continuously throughout his talk.

*

Donald Men's Shed – A Living Story

It has long been recognised that men are much less likely than women to talk about issues that relate to health, feelings and emotions, particularly in mixed company.

As a result, many men tend to have issues relating to their health, loneliness and depression. These issues can also become more pronounced as men reach retirement age and lose many of the support structures that had been part of their working lives.

During the 1980s, a movement in Australia was formed to find ways to overcome these issues. As a result, community sheds started to appear to provide a space supported by local communities in which men were able to interact and develop appropriate activities.

These community sheds were inspired by the iconic Australian backyard shed, where a man would go and carry out tasks such as restoring furniture or fixing tools.

Men's sheds can also be seen as a modern reinvention of Working Men's Clubs and Mechanics Institutes of the nineteenth century "to provide recreation and education for working-class men and their families".

In The Beginning

The Men's Shed movement originated in Australia during the late 1970s and the 1980s. Issues relating to men's health and wellbeing provided a launching pad for the establishment of bodies that provided space for older men to develop skills and encourage social interaction.

The early development of these sheds was somewhat haphazard in those early years, with support being provided through local community groups, with no overarching bodies in place.

Foundation

During the early 2000s, the need for a national group to offer support, training and government advisory services was recognised. The Australian Men's Shed Association was founded in 2007.

Men's Sheds provide a safe, friendly and inclusive environment where men can meet and work on meaningful projects:

- At their own pace.
- In their own time.
- In the company of other men.

While there are more than a thousand Men's Sheds in Australia, the concept has now spread throughout the world, with more than 3000 Men's Sheds in 12 countries (and counting).

Research

Professor Barry Golding, a Donald expatriate, was heavily involved in research to the planning and delivery of the Men's Shed movement in Australia. During these discussions, Barry and Peter "Soapy" Vallance began to look at the possibility of establishing such a shed in Donald.

The Donald Men's Shed has become an important part of Donald's community since its launch in 2006.

A meeting was held on June 9 to discuss the establishment of the Donald Men's Shed, and as a result, and significant work from the inaugural members of the Shed's community, the Donald Men's Shed, under the auspices of the Donald Leaning Group, was officially launched by Professor Golding on August 4, 2006.

The location of the Donald Men's Shed was previously used as the old Donald Show luncheon pavilion. This meant that the first activities for the Shed's members involved removing and dismantling the tables and stools from the shed and setting up the original kitchen as their communal meeting area.

Development

The Shed has developed substantially since then, with an additional shed constructed on the vacant piece of land between the original shed and the Donald P&A pavilion and, more recently, a new shed to house the Donald Community Precinct's groundskeeping equipment and a set of public-access toilets.

Members of the Donald Men's Shed gather five mornings per week to work on projects, discuss local news and share a cuppa and biscuit with their mates.

They see themselves as a support facility for the people of Donald and surrounds, and are involved in a wide range of tasks, community service and activities.

Men's Shed members bring a very wide range of skills and expertise to the Shed, and are very happy to pass on this knowledge to

other members, as well as to help out other community support groups as needed.

Activities

Activities that have been provided to Donald community bodies include:

- Large book storage racks and refurbishing a "buddy bench" for the Donald Primary School.
- Assisting with Christmas decorations and a steel "Christmas tree" for Donald 2000.
- Providing a large nativity placard for the Granite Church.
- Managing the Agricultural Museum on behalf of the Donald History Society.
- Helping out when required for the Donald Helping Hands Op Shop.
- Providing support services for the Donald Learning Group and Community House.
- Developing street display Easter Eggs and timber Christmas trees.
- Providing best of show awards for the Donald Show Committee.
- Assembling seating and carpet storage units for the Donald Precinct Committee.
- Decoration and construction of bird nesting boxes for the Buloke Shire.
- Building horse stalls for the Donald Show Committee.
- Designing and building horse jump stands for the Donald Pony Club.
- And numerous others.

As well as these activities, we also offer support to individual people in the region. This may involve:

- Refurbishment of chairs.
- Renovation of fireplace surrounds.
- Assistance in transferring goods and furniture.

Opportunity

Of course, one of the most relevant factors that support

the concept of the Men's Shed is the opportunity for the guys to develop a sense of being part of a community of people with similar interests, and who are often facing similar issues in their lives.

This is why the morning tea aspect of operations is so important. A number of members show up simply to share some time each day with the others. This is a vital part of the Shed's existence.

The importance of this aspect of activities was highlighted by Bob Baker, one of Donald's most senior members. Bob often claimed that the Men's Shed kept him alive for many years by giving him a reason to get up in the morning and to be a part of an active group.

During the COVID lockdowns, it wasn't possible to get together each day, and so it was necessary to come up with something that would keep members together during this difficult time.

Solution

The solution was the establishment of a group call which allowed members to join together in a virtual morning tea three mornings each week. This chance to keep the group

going was particularly appreciated by those who were living on their own.

The Donald Men's Shed has about 25 members at the moment, and usually has about 10 or so coming in each morning.

As with many of the clubs and societies in Donald, Men's Shed tends to see the average age of its membership increasing year by year. The effect of this is that the physical ability as a support group also lessens.

The challenge is therefore to attract new and younger members to become part of the community. The group has recently purchased and installed a computer controlled routing machine that is capable of cutting and engraving timber material up to 2400 x 1200 mm (8 by 4 feet). The hope is that the opportunity to learn about and work with a modern woodworking tool may encourage some younger men to consider becoming a part of the community.

The group is currently seeking opportunities to promote the Donald Men's Shed and its benefits for both its members and for the Donald community.

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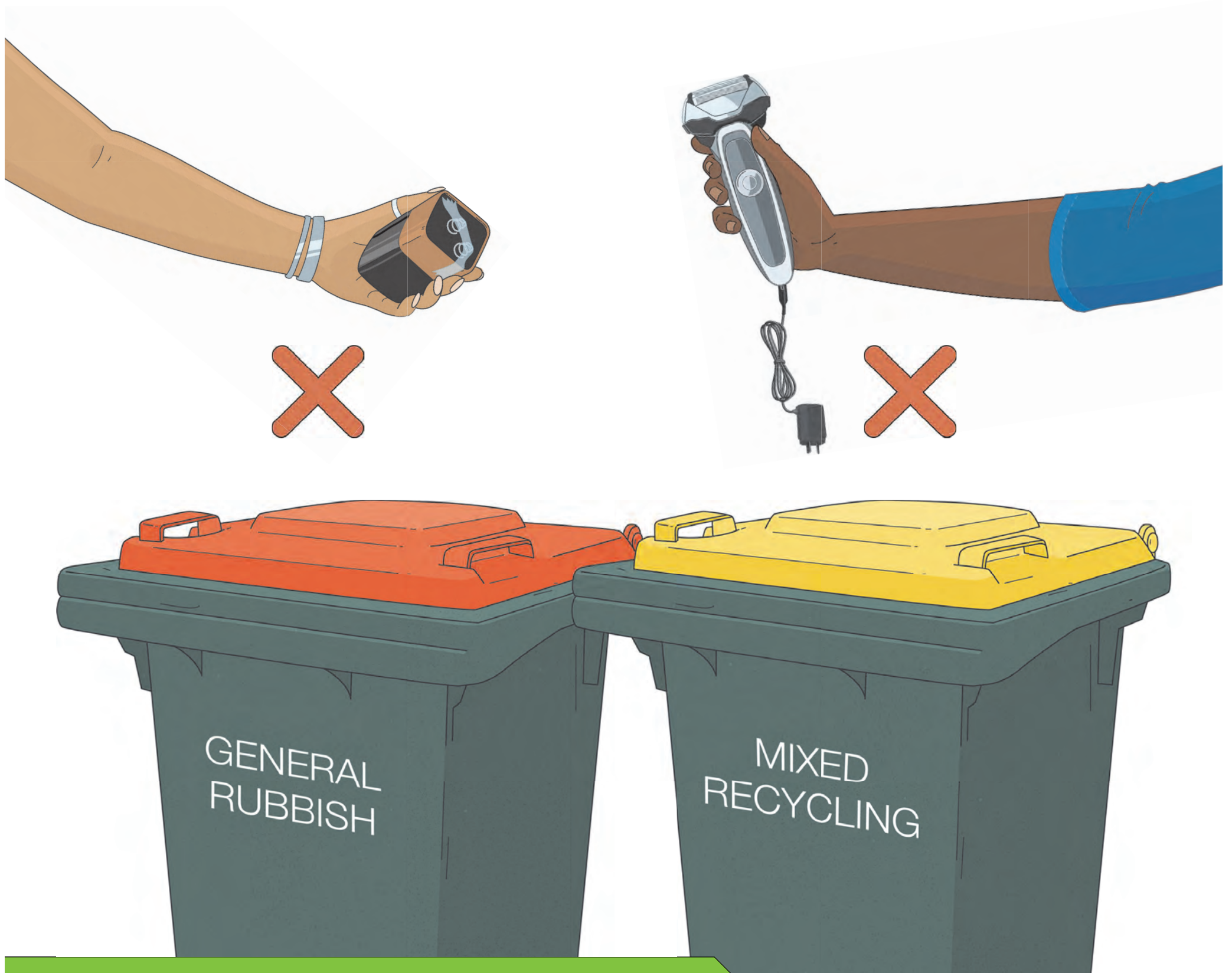
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• Alyssa Hepworth.

Winter Solstice

Brrr! Winter has really impacted us the last couple of weeks! The cold winds have started blowing, snow has been falling on the high country and thankfully some very welcome rain fell across much of our farming land.

This is a reminder that on Saturday, June 21, we in the southern hemisphere have our “winter solstice”, the day with the shortest hours of sunshine for 2025.

After the winter solstice we will experience slowly lengthening and warming days until December 21, which is the summer solstice – the day with the longest hours of sunshine in the southern hemisphere.

How amazing is the impact of the sun on planet Earth! Its size is incredible. Scientist, Russell Griggs, reminds us that, “If you wanted to fill the sun with Earths, you would need one million of them!” The sun is made up of white-hot hydrogen and helium gases. The temperature at the sun’s surface is about 6,000 degrees Celsius. No wonder we on planet Earth are impacted by the sun’s light and warmth 150 million kilometres away!

Every Second

It boggles my mind to know that according to scientists the sun burns about 4 million tonnes of its own matter every second (yes, every second!) to produce the light and heat which impacts us on planet earth. Without the sun there would be no life on earth. The photosynthesis process in plant leaves requires sunlight and the hydrology

cycle demands much energy from the sun.

Warmth from the sun evaporates water out of the oceans and lakes leading to the condensation of this moisture as it rises and cools in the atmosphere, producing clouds and precipitation when conditions are right. The sun’s heat also impacts our atmosphere and thus generates air currents, transporting moisture-laden clouds all around earth – depositing rain, dew and snow.

There is a verse in the Bible which says: “The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry” (Isaiah 55:10).

Privileged Planet

Cropping and farming can be very challenging because we live on a sin damaged planet now, which generates “droughts and flooding rains”, but despite this, the earth is a “Privileged Planet” indeed. Earth is just the right distance from the sun and the positioning of the moon gives the earth axis stability and tidal movement helping cleanse the oceans.

We have just the right components of gases in our atmosphere; for example, 21% oxygen, the right balances of land and sea and the gift of life itself for its



• Bruce Stewart

inhabitants. The 23.5 degree axis angle of the earth gives us our seasons. The list goes on and on, leading many scientists to say there is a “Master Designer” – making this planet just right for life.

The Bible says, “For this is what the Lord says – He who created the heavens, He is God; He who fashioned and made the earth, He founded it; He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited – He says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other’.” (Isaiah 45:18).

The universe around us is so complex and amazingly designed it leads an astrophysicist like Dr Paul Davies to write, “The equations of physics have an incredible simplicity, elegance and beauty. That in itself is sufficient to prove to me that there is a God who is responsible for these laws and responsible for the universe.”

Evidence

Former Macquarie University lecturer, Dr John Dickson was asked on an ABC “Q & A” television program, “How do you know there is a God?” John replied, “I see evidence for a Creator in the beauty and complexity of creation and I think overwhelming evidence points in the direction of Jesus, as Son of God. His life, His teaching and His healings, His death and resurrection.”

Whether in the midst of winter or summer, each day is a wonderful gift. Be grateful for the gift of life, use each day wisely and well. Have a great day!

Bruce Stewart.

Students’ Driving Program

(From Kim Griffiths, Year 10 Co-ordinator)

Fifteen Donald High School Year 10 students attended Chartsec Driving School in Charlton for a three-day pre-driver program from Wednesday, June 11 to Friday, June 13.

The material covered during the driving component of the program included: steering, right and left turns, U-

turns and reversing, roundabouts and convoy driving, angle parking and hill starts, reverse parallel parking, over-

taking, 3-point turns, and a practical drive test. On Wednesday night, the students also benefited from experiencing a “night” drive.

The students had a great time, and the instructors were very impressed with the students’ attitudes and skills, although a number of stop signs were hugged (this was the penalty handed out for failing to stop at a stop sign!).

This program is a valuable opportunity for our young people to gain new skills and confidence when in charge of a vehicle. For some students, it was their first time behind the wheel of a car, while many others enjoyed the opportunity to practise driving a manual car.

A big thank-you must go to the wonderful staff at Chartsec Driving School, especially Brett Schofield for his co-ordination of the program. Thanks also to Year 10 parent Glenn Davis for transporting the students home from the night drive.

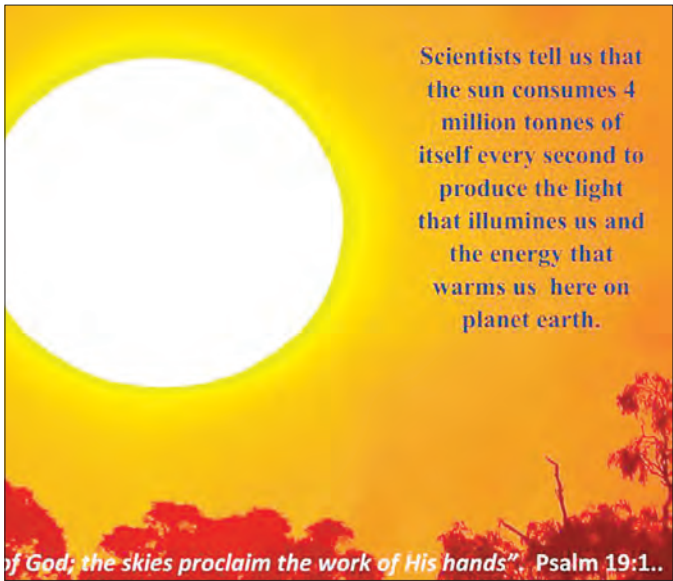
• Left: Jasmine Anderson.



• Chartsec classroom.



• Aria Brennan.



Scientists tell us that the sun consumes 4 million tonnes of itself every second to produce the light that illumines us and the energy that warms us here on planet earth.

of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands”. Psalm 19:1..

Chathura Silva’s Medicine and Music: Birchip Fosters Eminent Career

Long-term Birchip residents may remember, about 30 years ago, when two young Sri Lankan boys, Tharanga and Chathura Silva, enrolled at the school.

Ranjith, their father, a civil engineer by profession, was on the staff of the Buloke Shire Council and Rahini, their mother, worked in childcare. They quickly settled into the community; the boys enjoyed school and Rahini rapidly became known for her specialty cooking.

So comfortable were they that when Tharanga was fourteen, his parents decided that it was time for them to teach him to drive. Unaccustomed to Victorian bureaucratic ways, they proceeded to do just that, much to the town’s entertainment.

From an early age, Chathura showed a keen interest in and aptitude for things musical, developing early a strong sense of rhythm and a little later, a fascination for the sounds of string instruments, which he now describes as “mesmerizing”.

Lessons

Chath’s first formal music lessons involved learning how to play the drums at school with music teacher Robyn Ferrier, who also gave him his very first formal guitar lessons and introduced him to a range of other instruments including piano, bass guitar and electric guitar.

During a twelve-month period which the family spent in Rylstone NSW, the young enthusiast took private guitar lessons and was further introduced to the classical technique by a local teacher who quickly realised that he had met someone who had already exceeded his own capabilities.

At 15 years of age after an invitation from the Manager of Shire Council, Chath gave his formal debut recital at the Rotary Club International in the presence of the Governor of New South Wales.

On returning to Birchip, he entered the local Push Start Music competition for which he was awarded runner-up for playing Isaac Albeniz’s virtuoso

piece “Asturias”. This brought with it the opportunity to give live performances on ABC Radio, Western Victoria, and to participate in an artist interview with host Leon Comp-ton.

Chath says: “My school teachers were proud and some of the interview and the performance was also aired on the Birchip P-12 school announcement speaker. I honestly don’t think I would be here if it wasn’t for the support I received from Birchip P-12. They allowed me to continue music theory via distant education during VCE and even gave me my own music roster that allowed me to enter the music room at my designated period to practise guitar. My English teacher, Anne McClelland, even brought me back a set of French classical guitar strings as a souvenir on her return from a holiday in France (I still have this packet of strings to this day).”

On the Road

“But most of all, I wouldn’t have made it this far in music and medicine if it wasn’t for my parents. Even during VCE, my dad drove three-and-a-half hours with me every fortnight from Birchip to Melbourne city for master classes with Antony Field, who was the Head of the Classical Guitar Department at the Victorian College of the Arts. Dad and I drove back together on the same day, which was seven hours on the road!”

Despite their dedication to Chath’s music, his parents were determined that their boy choose a second string to his bow – medicine – to which he came after a lot of hard work and dedication.

After exploring a range of possibilities, and having experience as a Microbiology registrar, he “developed a passion for Tropical Infectious Diseases” which he studied

initially at the Liverpool School in the UK.

Returning to Australia, he achieved his Fellowship of the Australasian College of Tropical Medicine and then moved on to qualifying for a Master of Medicine, specializing in Infectious Diseases and Immunology at the University of Sydney.

Chath is currently working as a panel physician which both fosters and satisfies his interest in public health, and involves screening for various infectious diseases like tuberculosis that pose a health risk from an immigration perspective.

Mixed Venues

Throughout his medical career, he continued his musical development, performing very regularly at numerous mixed venues, both formal and informal, and recording pieces which are now available on various online platforms including Spotify, YouTube, Amazon, Music, and SoundCloud.

While Chathura was a medical student, one of the consultants also invited him to play for his hospital patients for a lunchtime concert, a most memorable moment. Giving classical guitar recitals at his current workplace as part of its Well-Being Program also taps into another interest: music as therapy.

Chath’s first ticketed concert on May 31, at Knox Community Arts Centre, Melbourne, was “by far the most sentimental of my music career, because my mentors Robyn Ferrier and Anne McClelland were also there”.

Especially important was the presence of his closest friend and partner in music, Brody Harrison, with whom he has continued to play music, beginning in Birchip and continuing throughout their lives. Brody and his father Ken, together with

Sandy, a cousin, drove five hours each way to attend.

Chath said that this concert, “run and hosted by my medical colleagues who have supported me and my parents throughout my musical journey, has been the biggest privilege of my entire music and medical career”.

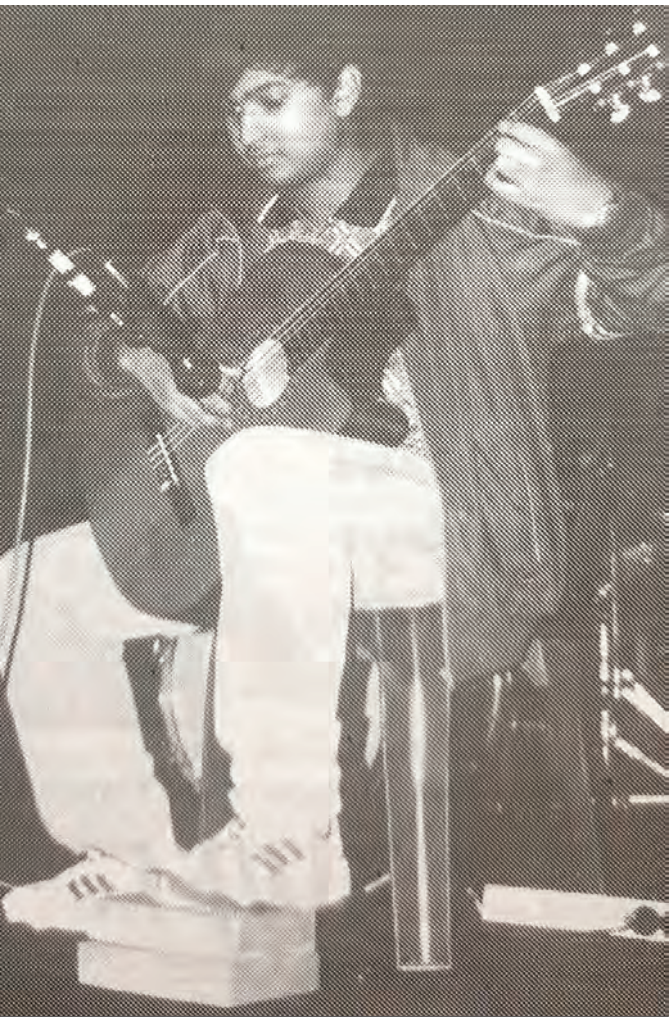
Having worked and studied so hard in both medicine and music, he felt that the time had come to prioritise his music on the concert stage.

“It’s such a privilege to be able to play music that can have a positive effect on the way people feel.”

Recital at Birchip

Chath has offered to give a classical guitar recital in Birchip, with all proceeds going to the Birchip P-12 School.

Chath feels that it is only natural to give something back to the Birchip community and school which fuelled his passions as a young boy.



• Then and now. The young Chathura.

“I am greatly looking forward to it, and especially to seeing some familiar faces,” he said.

The concert will be held in the Birchip Uniting Church, Saturday, July 5, 2025, at 7.30 p.m..



• Chath on stage at his recent recital.

“Let’s Talk About BIG Weather”

St Arnaud and district residents are invited to participate in a community-wide conversation about ways to better respond to extreme weather events and shape solutions that make sense for the region.

Make a Change Australia, in partnership with Northern Grampians Shire Council and supporting organisations, will host a “Let’s Talk About BIG Weather” community event on Tuesday, June 24.

The event will be at St Arnaud Town Hall from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m..

Make a Change Australia executive director Karen Corr said “Let’s Talk About BIG Weather” was designed to bring together residents, businesses, students and community groups to share experiences, spark ideas and build stronger local responses to the impacts of heatwaves, fires, floods and other extreme weather events.

“This is a community-led initiative, tailored specifically for the Northern Grampians, and focuses on fostering bottom-up, locally relevant solutions,” she said.

“It’s also a first step in building stronger connections between locals, young people and the organisations working on climate resilience and recovery.”

Ms Corr said extreme weather was already having a lasting impact on Northern Grampians Shire residents’ homes, livelihoods and wellbeing.

She said following recent fires and ongoing climate pressures, there was a clear

need to prepare for what might come next.

Young People’s Vital Role

“We think young people in particular have a vital role to play in shaping how our communities respond to climate-related challenges,” she said.

“They bring fresh ideas, lived experience and are likely to have a strong interest in what the future holds.

“Despite being increasingly aware of these challenges, young people are often left out of the conversation.

“This project aims to change that. It’s about giving them a seat at the table and

supporting their leadership so we can co-create local solutions that last.”

Mayor Karen Hyslop said the community event would provide a welcoming space for intergenerational conversations, practical advice and real connections between people who cared about the future of St Arnaud.

“We’re pleased to partner with Make a Change Australia on this project,” she said.

“Let’s Talk About BIG Weather provides an opportunity for youth to take the lead, so I encourage all young people to consider attending this free local gathering, along with other residents and representatives of businesses and community organisations.

Speakers

“We will hear from guest speakers, enjoy morning tea

and share ideas on how we can prepare, adapt and recover from the challenges of ‘big weather’ more effectively.”

Tickets for the community gathering are free but are required for catering purposes and are available online at <https://events.humanitix.com/northern-grampians>

Ms Corr said “Let’s Talk About BIG Weather” was part of a broader plan to connect local experience with practical action, and to inspire greater participation from young people and emerging leaders across the region.

“If you can’t make it to the event, you can still take part by sharing your views online,” she said.

“Community members are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and ideas

around extreme weather through a short survey.”

People can complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/northerngrampians>

Feedback

Ms Corr said feedback would help shape future programs and contribute to a growing network of residents working together on climate resilience and community wellbeing.

“This project also builds on existing initiatives and recovery efforts, helping to link people, ideas and support – now and into the future,” she said.

People can call Karen Corr or Jess Willman at Make a Change Australia on 0483 104 361, or email makeachange@jumbleads.net for more information.

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Donald’s Tough Tussles on Nullawil’s Netball Courts

[From Donald Netball Club.]

Under-14 “B”
Calder proved to be the quicker and more determined side, relentlessly chasing down loose balls and creating turnovers across the court. Despite Donald’s efforts and a number of solid intercepts throughout the game, we struggled to convert those opportunities and couldn’t disrupt Calder’s momentum.
Score: Donald 4, Calder United 16.
Donald awards: Char-lotte Perry (Gilchrist & Co), Charlee Williams (Harvest Cafe).
Calder awards: Wimmera Mallee Accounting, Esse; Wycheproof Op Shop, Greta; Access Grain, Billie C.

Under-14 “A”
Cold start at Nulli on Saturday, Donald came out strong with an early lead; however, Calder Lions kept fighting and the game was very close in the third quarter. Both teams had cold hands and control of the ball was impacting the flow of play, with lots of dropped balls and missed passes. Both teams played strongly; however, Donald continued a steady lead throughout the game. Once again Calder showed great sportsmanship and its spectators were supportive from the sidelines. Big shout out to young Ellie Burke, who got on the court for U14 “A”. She did so well and was a great contributor to the game.
Final score: Donald 23, Calder United 18.

Donald awards: River Stirling (Donald Family Butcher), Patience Beavis (Bev’s Baubles).
Calder awards: Wimmera Mallee Accounting, Willow V; Wycheproof Op Shop, Kelly H; Access Grain, Millie P.

Under-17 “A”
The Donald under-17s had an early start in Nullawil, taking on a strong and well-drilled Calder Lions team. With a clear team goal in mind, the girls were encouraged to focus on their own game and enjoy the experience – and they did just that.
From the first whistle, the improvement in the Donald side was clear. The girls read the play well, created space with strong drives, and worked hard to stick to their structures. Even as the scoreline edged away, their heads never dropped.
Defensively, the team worked tirelessly to contain Calder’s attacking pressure, while the midcourt and shooters showed resilience, constantly adapting to Calder’s ability to read and disrupt their set plays.
We’re so proud of every player for the effort they put in. It’s been incredible to see their growth, and we look forward to watching them continue to improve each week.

Final score: Donald 17, Calder United 87.
Donald awards: Asha Pearce (The Clothes Bin), Halle Rice (Love Shack).
Calder awards: Ruby (Wimmera Mallee Accounting), Grace McKersie (IGA Cash Award).

“C” Grade
Donald’s “C” grade side faced a huge challenge this week, taking on top-of-the-ladder Calder United. As expected, Calder proved to be a dominant force, showcasing the strength of their well-drilled side. It was a welcome boost to have Claire Adams back in the team after her overseas holiday, which opened the door to trial some fresh combinations in the ring. Despite the lopsided 70–10 scoreline, Donald remained determined throughout the match. The team focussed on playing at their own pace and working towards individual and team goals, showing grit and resilience against strong opposition.

Final score: Donald 10, Calder United 70.
Donald awards: Belicia Francis (Weirs IGA), Julia Pearce (Donald Hotel).
Calder awards: Kasie Matheson, Ruby Scott and Holly Saul.

“B” Grade
First quarter was a great start for Donald’s defence forcing errors, strong competition in the centre and great moving in the ring against the Lions’ defence. First quarter score was 9-11 Donald’s way.
The Lions came out fighting the second quarter, closing down the centre and not giving Donald attackers an inch. Donald players kept their heads up and defenders kept the pressure high to hold the Lions up. Second quarter score was 22-20 Lions’ way.

Donald’s defence forced many errors in the third, but the Lions’ high pace kept them in front by 6. Third quarter score was 36-30 Lions’ way.
Donald tried to close the gap in the last, but unfortunately the Lions’ high pace made them able to keep their 7 goal lead.
Final score: Donald 41, Calder United 48.
Donald awards: Millie Lydom (Jasper & Co), Courtney Doak (Mensland).
Calder awards: Paige Arnel, Jess F, Lizzy McGrath and Tessa Coles.

“A” Grade
The first quarter saw some great contested netball with hard drives and precision passing at both ends of the court.
Donald defenders worked hard to try and shut down the persistent Calder Lions attacking end. Both ends of the court demonstrated accuracy in the goal ring.
A few quick turn overs saw Calder United increase its lead to 10 early in the third quarter. Donald fought back and gained a couple of quick goals; 31 v. 37 going into the last quarter.

In the closing term Donald continued to fight back with great front play narrowing the margin to just 3 goals. However Calder United never backed down, picking up the pace and managed to pull away from Donald again.
Final score: Donald 39, Calder United 43.
Donald awards: Abby Griffiths (Gilchrist & Co), Sara Adams (Caremore Pharmacy).
Calder awards: Meg Hogan, Libby T. and Gemma Fawcett.
Congratulations to Donald’s Abby Griffiths who played her 50th senior game last weekend; an outstanding achievement at the age of just 17.



• A Grade’s “Best On” Meg Hogan, GD for Calder, is under pressure from Donald’s Milla Adams.



• “A” Grade, back row from left: GK Gracie Humphreys (Calder United), GA Milla Adams (Donald), WD Paige Arnel (CU), GK Sara Adams (D), WD Gabrielle Ives (CU), WD Anna Sudohlz (D), C Libby Thompson (CU), C Xanthi Rice (D), GS Ella Sheahan (CU), GS Zoe Grigsby (D). Front row: GA Gemma Fawcett (CU), WA Abby Griffiths, appearing in her 50th senior game (D), GD Meg Hogan (CU), GD Ally Doak (D) and WA Lauren Thompson (CU). –Photo Suzie Thompson.



(By Course Language)

An eventful weekend at the Donald Golf Club last weekend. Saturday night there was a casserole tea held to farewell Matt Clarke and his family as he heads of for work in the Yarrawonga area.

Matt will be sorely missed as he’s made a great contribution to our club over the seven years he’s been here.
His send off, although well deserved, was somewhat of an excuse to gather people for the surprise presentation of Life Membership to Bill Livingston from both the Golf and Bowls divisions of our club. Bill was very surprised and humbled by the honour bestowed on him but it was very much deserved. Congratulations Bill.
The other great happening at the club last weekend was the emergence of green grass all over the course. Although not jumping away due to the cool weather, there’s still hope that with the follow up showers we’ve had this week and more forecast, the course, like many of the paddocks around

will soon be a lush green colour.
Last weekend saw the Donald Pharmacy Monthly Medal played for and won by Brad Bath with 76-5-71 from Brett Kelly on 81-8-73. Pies Putting was won by Robert Burton with 22 putts.
The Nearest the Pins were: Donald Auto Elec 3rd, Brad Bath; Weirs IGA 7th, Luke Kelly; Nufarm 14th, Kelvin Clark; Bendigo Bank 16th, Brad Bath.
The wood raffle that the Golf Club ran last week was won by Peter Pendlebury.
Brian Bayles informed the club that there’s at lot of golf balls in the paddock behind the Goodwin Village. He wondered that now that Matt Clarke has left, this may not be the case in the future. Now,

we all know that Matt can hit the ball a long way and is not known to be that accurate at times, but I’m pretty confident that the 2-kilometre distance from the golf course to the Goodwin Village was a bit far for even Matt to hit the ball. However, I think we all know where those pesky crows have been flying off to with our golf balls.
Dad’s Army
Eight veterans answered roll call last Thursday with Geoff Stopps being the winner. There may be a change for Dad’s Army on the way, so keep an eye out for further details.
Coming Up
This weekend is Stroke for the third round of the club championships sponsored by McLennan Bulk Fuel. Also

Tuesday the 24th there will be Vets at Wycheproof.
Dad Jokes
A friend of mine went to a palm reader and said he wanted his palms read – so she hit his hand with a hammer.
Why should the number 288 never be mentioned? – It’s two gross. (A gross = 144 if you’re struggling with this joke)
What’s the worst thing about sea sickness? – It comes in waves.
If you’re attracted to both women and men but neither are attracted to you, does that make you bi yourself.
My pet hamster broke his leg the other day so I made him a splint out of a couple of matches – you should have seen his face light up when he started walking again.

An advert. in “The Buloke Times” can cost as little as \$10, and up to 5,000 readers will see it.

Down the Middle?

Calder Hosts Donald Hockey

Donald Golf Club’s Annual Club Championships wrapped up this week.

The three best scores across the 4 weeks are taken and the results are:

“A” grade champion is Kerry Raven on 250, followed by Debbie Burton on 264 and Joan Pearce on 269.

“B” grade champion is Maree Egan on 291, followed by Jo Beavis on 307 and Beris Jones.

“C” grade champion is Kerry Wood on 314, followed by Brenda Brennan on 348.

Congratulations to all our champions and to all those who competed.

The day concluded with a delicious afternoon tea, where some of our local legend golfers joined us to celebrate.

This week was a stroke event. Winner of the day was Maree Egan; runner-up was Margot Paynter.

Nearest the pins: 3rd, Debbie Burton; 7th, Kerry Raven; 14th, Maree Egan; 16th, Margot Paynter.

Highlights and Lowlights

The “Crows” have been noisy but haven’t taken any balls yet – maybe the “Magpies” have them covered this year!

Kerry Raven seems to be playing for the putting competition, posting an impressive 20 putts this week!

Apparently, George Wood is getting the blame for the

balls in Brian Bayles’ yard. Great hitting, George.

A huge congratulations to Bill Livingston, who was awarded Life Membership of

the Donald Golf Bowls Club last Saturday. A well-deserved honour for his years of dedication to the club.

Next week is Ambrose.



• Donald Golf Club ladies champions, “B” grade Maree Egan and “A” grade Kerry Raven. Absent at the time of photo was “C” grade’s Kerry Wood.

Women

What an amazing effort by the Donald ladies going against the top team of the women’s side!

This game showed the massive improvement that the players have been making each week and reinforced that they now are a team that could very well be a massive threat moving forward.

Within the opening moments, Donald took control of the game and after going again and again at Calder’s goal keeper Sue-Anne, Lauren was able to finally get it past her and score the first goal of the match.

With this added boost to Donald many great plays were had throughout the match. Charlotte made multiple clearances at shots at goal by Calder and when she was unable to get there, all Donald players were doing their best to stop the ball from moving forward.

Hannah, Kailie and Erika were able to stop the ball multiple times from progressing up the field before Sarah B. was able to score the first goal for Calder. Bec had a run with the ball before getting a green card. She then received another green card for not being five metres away and then Sarah B. was able to score another goal to secure the win for Calder.

Donald women should be very proud of how they played and to keep the score

this low is a testament to their training and teamwork.

Donald 1 def. by Calder United 2.

Donald goal: Lauren Hawkes.

Calder goals: Sarah Botheras (2).

Donald awards: Della Vedova, Isobelle Rowe; Best on, Charlotte Bicket.

Calder awards: Meal Voucher, Olinda Elsom; Wycheproof Cafe & Kebabs Voucher, Ruby I.; Beauty Bliss Skin and Body Voucher, Kiarah B.; IGA Powerade, Bec Botheras.

Under-12s

With a very cool start to the day the under-12 team started out strongly.

This young team is developing nicely, clearly seeing the training paying off. The players’ calls are loud, passes

clean and defence is nearly on point. Donald’s under-12 team is showing growing co-ordination in communication and skills, as well as a few developing their love for particular areas of play. Goalies from both teams were put through their paces with many successful goals defended. With a few missed opportunities from the Donald team to score and such strong competitors, it was nice to see spirits held high.

Final score: Calder United 6 d. Donald 0.

Calder goals: Tyler Harrison 4, Ryder Harrison 1, Levi Harrison 1.

Donald awards: Best on, Zoe Nuske; Coaches Champ, Darcy Burke.

Calder awards: Newsagents award, Van H.; Canteen award, Jai P.

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NOTICES †

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At Granite Church
10.30 a.m.
Speaker: Ross Barnes
Baptist Union of Victoria

ANGLICAN
“Parish of
Charlton-Donald”

Enquiries: Rev’d Judi Bird
0435 593 395

Friday, July 4
St. Paul’s, Birchip, 5 p.m.

Sunday, July 6
St. Martin’s, Charlton, 9 a.m.
St. George’s, Donald, 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity, W’burn, 3 p.m.

CHURCHES

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One Each for Bulls’ and Navies’ Juniors

Under-17s
Charlton proved too strong for a determined Birchip-Watchem side on Saturday in their U17 football clash, storming home to record an 84-7 victory. Despite the lopsided scoreline, the Bulls showed glimpses of promise, especially through their younger brigade which never stopped trying in challenging conditions.

The opening term saw Charlton burst out of the blocks, piling on three quick goals in the first ten minutes and establishing dominance around the contest. Seb Zagame was omnipotent and was scoring goals, along with brother Charlie, and Murphy Fitzpatrick was taking some good grabs.

Birchip-Watchem managed to push the ball forward on several occasions, primarily through clever short passes and the drive of their under-14 players, but couldn’t convert any chances. Willow Ryan impressed early, setting the tone with clean disposals and strong positioning.

In the second quarter, Charlton’s top-age players continued to assert themselves, stretching the margin with composed ball use and scoreboard pressure. The Bulls struggled to penetrate past their forward 50 late in the term, but showed resilience in defence, with Noah Dean, Kobe Hamilton, and Jack McAuliffe working tirelessly to limit Charlton’s scoring options.

The third quarter offered a bright moment for the Bulls as Bayley Kemp nailed a long-range goal from 35 metres, sparking life into the side and momentarily halting Charlton’s momentum. Defensive efforts lifted across the board, particularly from Ollie Cook, who laid several impactful tackles and shut down one of Charlton’s key playmakers.

Birchip-Watchem’s pressure limited Charlton to just



• Charlton’s Joseph Monogan gets his kick away under pressure from Noah Dean and Kobe Hamilton.

two goals for the quarter, which was a small win for the Bulls.

Charlton re-found its rhythm in the final term, with captain Isaac Bourke leading the way. The Navies started the quarter with some errant kicking, but straightened up to add another handful of majors. The Bulls finished with pride with Noah Dean and Willow Ryan everywhere in the last quarter, combining well in the midfield and standing tall in defence. Liam Spezza also worked hard across the ground, consistently putting his body on the line.

While Charlton took the four points with a commanding 12.12 (84) to 1.1 (7) win, the Bulls can walk away with their heads held high, buoyed by the growth of their younger players and the efforts of key contributors Noah Dean, Willow Ryan, Bayley Kemp, and Liam Spezza who won the weekly awards.

Award winners for Charlton were Seb Zagame (Walsh Motors), Leigh Van Boven (Jye Roberts), Isaac Bourke (Julbre Park), Murphy Fitzpatrick

(Jack Thompson Construction), Rhys Gahan (Michell Wool), Mitch Boyle (CFC Auxiliary) and Cooper Phillips won the Holmes-Brown “Have a crack”.

Under-14s
In incredibly foggy conditions Birchip-Watchem got a good start to the game, keeping the ball in its forward end, where a quick point resulted followed by a second after Charlton defenders desperately touched the Bulls goal-ward kick. Eventually Oscar Sharp scored a major to give the home team an 8-point lead at the first break.

The Bulls maintained the momentum in the second, with the help of George and Morgan Greenaway who were a welcome inclusion. The Bulls were winning the tap out and moving the ball into attack where they scored a goal and retained much of the play until they scored a second. Charlie Zagame kept the Navies hopes alive with a goal to keep them within 23 points at the half-time change over.

Charlton came out strongly after the break, winning the ruck contest and getting the ball deep into its forwards but the Bulls defenders were switched on and cleared it out of danger and scored a goal on the rebound. The third term was a more even affair, as Charlton responded and both teams went goal for goal. Liam Spezza was on fire, kicking his third for the Bulls and at the last change, Birchip-Watchem ahead 7.5 (47) to 3.1 (19).

A highlight of the Navies’ game was their accurate kicking as they scored their fourth goal, but it was the Bulls who retained the impetus of the game to record their second win of the season.

Final score: Birchip-Watchem 11.8 (74) defeated Charlton 4.1 (25)

Best players for Birchip-Watchem: Morgan Greenaway, Liam Spezza, Toby Kemp, George Greenaway. For Charlton: Charlie Zagame, Cooper McGrath, Xav Good, Toby Bourke, Henry Lanyon, Tamsyn McGurk, Archie Smyth.



• Charlton’s Cooper McGrath attempts to pull Willow Ryan to the ground. – Photos Blake Lee.

Charlton Ladies Championships

The third round of Charlton Ladies Championships was played out on Wednesday on a typical winter’s golf course. Some players adjusted better than others to the mostly green fairways.

“C” grade winner is Carmel Fitzpatrick, “B” grade winner is Mary Headon and Club Champion is Wendy Laffin with a three game total of 270 strokes.

Doreen Heanan two best netts was Chris McGurk, 72 + 80 = 152.

Glad Dew putting is Wendy Laffin, 80 putts.

Three best netts: “A”, Anne Kenny; “B”, Chris McGurk (c/b Diane Roberts); “C”, Wendy Hargreaves (c/b Chris Livingston).

Today’s competitions winner, silver spoon and putting Wendy Laffin, runner-up Carmel Fitzpatrick.

Nearest the pins: 2nd Anne Kenny; Charlton Newsagents 7th, Kim Laffin; 14th, Mary Headon.

May monthly medal: Wendy Hargreaves.

Next week Charlton ladies play a Pinehurst round.

• Right: Wendy Laffin and Chris McGurk.



• Club Champions (left to right) Carmel Fitzpatrick, Wendy Laffin, Mary Headon.

MICHAELS

OF DONALD

Belvedere

By George Crenshaw
www.belvedere-cartoons.com

8-28

“Gosh, I think Belvedere likes him!”

Church Notices

DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES

“East Wimmera Parish”

Birchip	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
Boort	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
Banyena	No Mass
Charlton	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream out to churches without Mass)	
Donald	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
St. Arnaud	8.30 a.m.
W’proof (Sat.)	7.00 p.m.

Fr. Gerry Prunty
0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator
– Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976

Bulls Reserves Eyes are on Double Chance

Birchip-Watchem’s reserves delivered a commanding performance against Charlton on the weekend, as they edge closer to second spot on the ladder.

The home side burst out of the blocks in the first quarter which was assisted by the inclusion of Lochlan Sirett and Stefan Pye, who played their first games for the Bulls in 2025.

In the ruck, Josh Woods had a competitive battle against Fergus Bourke, but it was the Bulls’ midfield which was winning the ground ball and linking up to get it into the strong and experienced Bulls forwards.

With Lochlan Sirett, Matt Berry and Tom Gibson dominating up forward the Bulls were in control for the opening quarter, piling on seven goals and two behinds while Charlton was kept scoreless by a dour backline led by Matt Rickard.

This opening term set the tone for the rest of the match, as Birchip-Watchem’s run and carry proved difficult for the visitors to overcome, despite the second and third quarters being quieter on the scoreboard.

Birchip-Watchem was still in control, but Charlton was applying plenty of pressure, and its four underage players were handling themselves well. Nick Ryan had volunteered to fill in for Charlton and he was effective, kicking a goal for the Navies and fittingly, he ended up being

named among the best players for both sides.

Young Isaac Bourke also kicked a goal for Charlton and worked hard across the game, and Bulls under-17 player, Noah Dean, played his first reserves game for the Bulls and showed that he was up to the challenge.

Charlton, despite the tough day, had solid performers with Luke Dunne, back from senior duties prevailing on ball, and John Leathan, but overall Charlton lacked the depth to counteract the Bulls’ balanced and potent forward mix.

The Bulls finished the match strongly in the final half, capping off a solid performance with another impressive scoring burst, albeit some off target.

Tom Gibson was dominant all day, adding three goals and providing a commanding presence around the ball. Matt Berry added four and Tison Wiantara and Archie Lewis also capitalised on the mid-field’s hard work to add to the Bulls’ fourteen-goal tally.

Lochlan Sirett and Stefan Pye made strong returns in their first game of the year, bobbing up with two goals. The inclusion of these experienced players was a huge benefit to the talented group

of youngsters currently in the Birchip-Watchem reserves team.

Bulls coaches, Matt Ryan and Jake Noonan, were impressed with the Bulls’ willingness to run in waves, move the ball quickly and share the goal scoring, which was a highlight of their game on Saturday.

Birchip-Watchem will be endeavouring to build on this again this week when it plays the winless Donald to build its percentage, which could become crucial in the later stages of the season, as the top four teams fight for the coveted second chance come finals.

The final scoreboard saw Birchip-Watchem 14.11 (95) defeat Charlton 2.3 (15).

Award winners for Birchip-Watchem: Tom Gibson (O’Connors), Lochlan Sirett (YBS), Stefan Pye (Agrifac), Nick Ryan (Donnellon’s Bulk Haulage), Joshua Woods (Nutrien Ag), Matthew Lae (Ryan Commodities).

For Charlton: Luke Dunne (National Hotel & Charlton IGA), John Leathan (O’Connors), Billy Sexton (Bellvue Machinery), Fergus Bourke, Ethan Needs (Biaco Battler), Marcus Campbell (Homers Honour), Nick Ryan.



• Harry Cook runs free from the pack and towards the pressure of Charlton’s Travis Salmon. – Photos by Blake Lee.



• Josh Woods fends off Charlton’s Luke Dunne under pressure from James Dean-Gilley.

Junior Hockey Braves the Cold at Birchip

In the coldest morning of the season thus far, where the fog had barely lifted and the frost still lay on the field, the spirits of the junior Charlton and Birchip-Watchem players couldn’t be dampened.

Minkey

Two teams of enthusiastic minkey players lined up on two fields and were encouraged loudly by their peers, parents and grandparents. The improvement every week is pleasing to see and their

willingness to listen to their coaches’ instructions is admirable.

The older game saw lots of passing from the Bulls and in the second half after they were encouraged to carry the ball a bit longer before pass-

ing, they got close to scoring some goals, like the Charlton players who were capitalising on their strong dribble and passing game enabling them to score several times.

Awards for Birchip-Watchem: Charlie Ferrier

(Brooke and Troy Morris) and Eamon Wood (BWHC canteen).

Charlton awards: Finn Schofield and Audrey McPhee (IGA mars bar), Jon Morkos and Sally Armstrong (Connect coffee).

Under-12s

The under-12 clash was built as the match of the day with the top two teams meeting for the second time this season. Denley Tyler scored first for the Bulls and it was expected that Charlton would retaliate quickly, but the Bulls didn’t let up, with Des Coffey, Jude McLoughlan and Logan Cullen checking their opponents closely. Rotating wingers Grace McAuliffe, Sadie Bourke, Addison Hamilton and Jakoby Saggars continued to provide space out wide, with great passing back to the inners, Oscar Sharp and Denley Tyler and options close to the goal face, which allowed both Jakoby and Des Coffey to score one, which gave the Bulls a 3-0 lead at half time.

In the second half the Bulls’ teamwork continued with Addison Hamilton and Greta McClelland providing options for quick passes into the goal circle. Maddie Lanyon and Sophie Roberts worked hard to get some forward momentum for Charlton, but Lucy Coffey was steadfast, with solid tackles

and clearing, and Zayvier Saggars was on the ball in goals, not letting anything go by.

Despite some great saves from Archer Smyth, Greta McClelland capitalised on the quick passes into the circle, scoring twice and Oscar Sharp scored one of his own and the Bulls demonstrated the level of improvement they have achieved over the first round with a 7-0 win, to take the top position on the ladder.

Charlton awards: Finn Schofield (Foley’s Hill best on), Maddie Lanyon (auxiliary kiosk), Toby Bourke (Connect coffee), Sophie Roberts (IGA mars bar), and Nutrien Ag Player of the Round, Tom McGurk, for his great second efforts and never giving up.

For the Bulls the award winners were Addison Hamilton and Oscar Sharp.

Underage

In a spirited underage hockey clash between the Birchip-Watchem Bulls and the Charlton Navies, it was clear that the Bulls have come a long way since the teams last met, but it was difficult for them against a very strong Charlton outfit which recorded an impressive 10 goals to 1 win.

With most players now having half a season’s experience under their belts, the Bulls took to the field with

confidence, structure and determination. Their efforts were rewarded with a brilliant goal from Grace McAuliffe, who showcased her sharp reflexes and skill in front of goal. The play was set up by a spectacular run from Archie Tyler, who dribbled the ball up the sideline before timing his pass perfectly for Grace to strike.

The Bulls’ improvement was evident all across the field, with players showing stronger positioning, communication and determination. Credit is due to coaches Sasha Salzano, Allie Knights and Xanthe Fitzpatrick, whose dedication to training and development is clearly paying off.

However, Charlton’s strength and accuracy was difficult to counteract with the Fitzpatricks dominating all over the ground. Murphy and Rosie both scored three goals and Amali added 1, along with Ruby Wright scoring 2 and Lila Schofield 1 giving the Navies a percentage boost on Maddi’s Round.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Grace McAuliffe (Fiona Best Award) and Jed Coffey (O’Connors Award).

Charlton awards: Rosie Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick transport), Lila Schofield (auxiliary kiosk), Rhys Gaha (country savers) and Ruby Wright (connect coffee).



• Charlton’s Murphy Fitzpatrick is on the run as Birchip-Watchem’s Archie Tyler attempts to block. –Photo Blake Lee.

Memories of Maddi Run Deep

(From Chloe Walsh – Charlton Netball Club President.)

This weekend was a very special one for us at the Charlton Netball Club, which came together to remember Maddi Fitzpatrick.

This round will always be a special and significant one for Charlton.

Maddi's passion for the game and her infectious energy will never be forgotten. We will continue to play in her memory and strive to embody the same dedication and spirit that she brought to the court. Every time we step on to the court, Maddi is on our minds, and we aspire to keep making her proud.

Maddi was a one of a kind netballer and she is deeply missed at the Charlton Netball Club and throughout the North Central League.

It was great to see so much green and purple around the grounds! Thanks to the North Central League for all its hard work in keeping this round going.

#noonefightsalone
14-&-Under "A"

Charlton 0 def. by Birchip-Watchem 30.

Charlton awards: Steels Butcher Best, Rosie Fitzpatrick; FHN Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Maddie Lanyon; Nutrien Ag & Robert's Windrowing "Have a Crack", Sophie Roberts.

Birchip-Watchem awards (sponsored by O'Connors): Anika Boyle and Isla Ferrier.

17-&-Under "A"

The girls put in a solid effort this week! The attackers moved the ball well but had to work hard against some tough and tall opponents. Sarah Blair and Taylah Giles shot beautifully, once again showing great accuracy under pressure. Down the other end, our defenders worked tirelessly all game, putting plenty of pressure on the opposition, with Erin Blair having a standout game! The girls put up a good fight with Maddi in their minds, pushing themselves for the whole game. A special shoutout to Anna Fitzpatrick and Lila Schofield for stepping up from under-14s and doing an amazing job!

Charlton 31 def. by Birchip-Watchem 50.

Charlton awards: Bendigo Bank Best, Erin Blair; FNH Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Maggie Riley; Caffeinated

Chaos Captains Coffee, Lila Schofield and Anna Fitzpatrick.

Birchip-Watchem awards (sponsored by O'Connors): Gracie Ferrier and Eva Coffey.

"C" Grade

Another full game effort from our girls despite the loss. Goalers Emmy Nelson and Jac Leslie played really well together, and are starting to read each other. The team worked well in the first half to bring the ball down to the shooters. Some handy rotations in C and WD with Erin Blair and Stella Nicolson giving some fresh legs. Our defenders, Annie Olive and Zoe Carney, did all they could against some very tall and accurate shooters.

Charlton 85 def. by Birchip-Watchem 27.

Charlton awards: Vale of Avoca Best, Jac Leslie; JS Plumbing Coaches, Taylah Boyle; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Annie Olive.

Birchip-Watchem awards (sponsored by O'Connors): Maddy McQueen and Ashlee Tierney.

"B" Grade

A tough hit out for our "B" graders this week coming up against a well-oiled team in Birchip. Positional changes did spark some action for our girls but Birchip's defence was making it hard to get the ball into our goalers, despite many opportunities from our defender's intercepts. Holly Thompson and Anika Holmes-Brown worked hard and combined well together. Special mention to Emmy Nelson stepping in to WD and absolutely crushing it. Our third quarter showed to be our best with the girls showing off their front cuts beautifully and clawed back the score.

Charlton 24 def. by Birchip-Watchem 51.

Charlton awards: Teys Charlton Feedlot Best, Holly Thompson; Teys Charlton Feedlot Coaches, Emmersyn Nelson; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Emmersyn Nelson.

Birchip-Watchem awards (sponsored by O'Connors): Asha Lee and Sophie Parfrey.



• Above and below: "A" Grade: United as one. –Photos by Blake Lee.



"A" Grade

A big honour for our "A" grade side this week, being presented with a special edition dress for Maddi's Round – our girls were given their dresses Thursday night by Kim and Shane Fitzpatrick; a beautiful presentation to remember Maddi.

Our girls settled quickly in attack after the first whistle, with Chloe's height proving to be an advantage with early pressure from Claire Smith in defence providing balls for us to score off. Remi Jeffery and Issy Soulsby worked well in the mid court to cover and shut down Birchip, while also providing support in the transition to our attackers. Claudia

Lee in WA making some great feeds into the goalers, with Lacey Smith coming on to create opportunities through intercepts in the last quarter. An inspiring uniform this week for our girls, despite a loss, everyone played with heart and pushed until the final whistle.

Charlton 43 def. by Birchip-Watchem 67.

Charlton awards: Walsh Motors Best, Claudia Lee; Walsh Motors Coaches, Chloe Walsh; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Maggie Riley.

Birchip-Watchem awards (sponsored by O'Connors): Eva Coffey and Khiana Brooks.



• Eva Coffey attempts to defend the pass to Charlton's Maggie Riley as Claudia Lee awaits the outcome.



• U17s: Charlton's Taylah Giles passing off.



• "B" Grade: Anika Holmes-Brown and Holly Thompson fighting for the intercept with Toni Jones.



North-Central Turns for Home

(By Shane O'Shea)

With eight games remaining in North-Central football's home-and-away season, the undefeated Birchip-Watchem leads the way and is looming as the team to beat for the 2025 premiership.

Tomorrow's round 9 match of the day sees two of the Bulls' most serious challengers, Sea Lake-Nandaly and Calder United, go head-to-head at the picturesque Sea Lake Community Complex.

Prior to last weekend, both teams had won five of their previous seven games. They also achieved victories in round 8 by big margins, but the vagaries caused by a lop-sided competition came into play.

Prior to last Saturday, Sea Lake-Nandaly sat in second place on 20 points, and just over 50 per cent ahead of third placed Calder United (also on 20 points). And yet, despite defeating Wedderburn by 9 goals, the Tigers' percentage actually dropped by almost 17 per cent.

Calder United, on the other hand, smashed Donald by 166 points, and boosted its percentage by a whopping 50.1. As a result, the Lions leapfrogged the Tigers into second place.

Big wins against the bottom teams can unnaturally inflate a team's percentage, while results against teams in the top half of the ladder can also create unusual corrections.

The winner of tomorrow's clash between Sea Lake-Nandaly and Calder United will occupy second place, while the loser is likely to find itself in fourth place, given that Boort (which has also won 6 of its 8 games) should be able

to account for Charlton.

Sea Lake-Nandaly was at near full strength against Wedderburn, with both Josh Jenkins and Oscar Brownless taking the field for the first time in several weeks. If the pair is available tomorrow, it will make Calder United's challenge even more significant.

Counteracting the influence of the abovementioned pair, Calder United's engine room has been boosted by the return to top form by Koby Hommelhoff.

A knee injury has limited his playing time in recent seasons, but after being nursed back to something like full fitness, his influence against Donald last Saturday, in unison with Rylee Smith, Steve Kennedy and Zane Keighran, repeatedly had the Lions on the offensive.

Their battle with Tigers' Wade and Trent Donnan, Brownless and Tom Cox will shape the outcome of one of the most important clashes of the season.

Having watched both Sea Lake-Nandaly and Calder United in recent games, admittedly against an underwhelming Donald, the Tigers looked to be a little sharper in attack, which, if repeated, should give them a winning edge.

The battle for second place doesn't end there, however, and round 16, when the pair clash on the eve of the finals, could ultimately decide their respective finishing positions.

Magpies Must Capitalise

With positions in the top four potentially decided by percentage, it is important for fourth placed Boort to make every post a winner from here until the finals, particularly against teams below it on the ladder.

Whilst almost assured of a finals berth, the Magpies' percentage remains low in comparison to teams above them, but with games they should win against Charlton (away) tomorrow and Donald (home) in round 10, they have opportunities to bridge that divide.

Multiple scoring opportunities must be generated from the midfield, via Peter Barbopoulos, Jhye Baddeley-Kelly and Jarred Fitzpatrick, while small forward Kayne Rutley needs to get back to his free-scoring best.

Charlton's defence has shown it can handle pressure, with Jed Thompson, Bailey Dixon and Patrick Soulsby combining resolutely, but to prevent another blowout on the scoreboard, it will take a team effort to penetrate Boort's tight defence, led by Keiren Wilson, if the Navy Blues are to have any chance of causing an upset.

Pain Without End?

It has been a tough row to hoe for Donald's senior footballers, and there's no indication that the pain they are currently suffering, in terms



• First ruck contest between Calder United's Dean Putt and Donald's Tom Reekie. Ready for the tap are Donald's Eddie Landwehr and obscured is United's Matt Wade.

of match results, is going to end any time soon.

Tomorrow the Royal Blues take on the all-conquering Birchip-Watchem, at the Goff Letts Oval, in potentially one of the biggest mis-matches of the season.

Donald's backline, bolstered by the inclusion of Dyson Bell-Warren, Callum Van Den Driest and Charlie Campbell, as well as having Brady Griffiths in a new role in defence, together with Josh Smulders, performed admirably against

Calder United, as did Tom Reekie in the ruck, but an inability to force the ball past half-forward severely limited scoring chances.

Stemming the tide of opportunities flowing the way of leading goal kicker Ben Edwards will be just one of the many problems faced by Donald coach Daniel Pearce and his fellow team leaders.

Matching the Bulls' powerful midfield, which includes Hamish Hosking, Nic and Marshall Rippon and Meyrick Buchanan, as well as finding ways through the opposition's tight knit defence, led by Dale Hinkley and Ben Lakin, are factors likely to intensify the pressure being inflicted on the Royal Blues.

Redbacks Almost Done?

Three games plus percentage is the gap currently separating fifth placed Wedderburn from the top four. With just eight opportunities to secure much needed premiership points and make up the percentage difference, the Redbacks must win almost every game, starting tomorrow against St. Arnaud, and through to round 16.

Tom Metherell's charges face several very stern tests of their capabilities and desire in coming weeks, but tomorrow they have the opportunity to reignite a fire under their slender finals aspirations by dominating St. Arnaud.

Unfortunately for the Saints, this is one of those potential mismatches, with the opposition needing to score heavily, but coach Scott Driscoll can also use the challenge as a way of gauging how far his young charges have come this season.

After a slow start against Boort, St. Arnaud clawed its way back into the contest, with Max Hungerford providing much needed fire power up forward, while Kurt Torney and Bailey Durward relished their return to senior ranks.

If Wedderburn is to "win big", Mitch Jensen needs to kick a bag of goals, together with a sizeable contribution from Oscar Holt, from opportunities generated out of the midfield by the McEwen brothers, Jackson and Mitch, Joe Lockhart and Darcy Jackson.

Injuries continue to impact the Redbacks, but their best football should overpower the young Saints.

GOLDACRES NORTH CENTRAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ROUND 9

headspace

SATURDAY JUNE 21ST, 2025

 SEA LAKE NANDALY TIGERS	VS	 CALDER UNITED LIONS
SEA LAKE COMMUNITY COMPLEX		
 DONALD ROYAL BLUES	VS	 BIRCHIP-WATCHEM BULLS
GOFF LETTS OVAL		
 CHARLTON NAVIES	VS	 BOORT MAGPIES
CHARLTON PARK		
 ST ARNAUD SAINTS	VS	 WEDDERBURN REDBACKS
LORD NELSON PARK		

Church Notices

UNITING CHURCH (North Central Living Waters Cluster)

Donald, 10 a.m.
 Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services,
 10 a.m. Sunday, July 6
 Contact Number: 5497 1033