

Charlton Children Bewitched

The amazing Dr Hubble recently visited Charlton’s historic Rex Theatre to present his magical children’s bubble show.

A large group of children of all ages was fascinated by the performance, which created huge bubbles and included audience participation by eager children.

This free event was proudly arranged and supported by the Charlton Neighbourhood House and Regional Arts Victoria.

All those attending agreed it was a fantastic activity and hoped Dr Hubble would return again in the near future.



A large group of children of all ages were fascinated by Dr Hubble’s performance, which created huge bubbles and included audience participation by eager children.

Restart Needed for Unfinished Inquiry

Continued from page 1.

In March, the Essential Services Commission of South Australia’s regular review indicated more councils were potentially unsustainable, including the Adelaide City Council and the District Council of Loxton Waikerie.

Sydney’s Northern Beaches Council recently secured a 25.2 per cent rate increase after the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) acknowledged its current position was unsustainable long term and had an infrastructure backlog. The Council had sought a 39.6 per cent increase.

Future Fund

“The Nationals fought hard last month to ensure the Coalition remains laser-focused on a Regional Australia Future Fund which will deliver funding, in perpetuity, for regional Australia,” Dr Webster said.

“Regional councils and shires often depend on grants to deliver infrastructure – they don’t have the alternate means of raising revenue that city councils do. Rural councils increasingly are also the only organisation in town that can end childcare deserts, deliver appropriate home care services for the aged and NDIS users. Shires are holding back because they are being fiscally responsible, fearing for their long-term viability.

“I also fear for regional communities suffering record low rainfall, drought, flooding or other unfolding natural disasters that will make it even harder to approach their ratepayers to stay financially sustainable.

“While The Nationals will advocate for the Regional Australia Future Fund policy right through to the next election, this Local Government Sustainability Inquiry – and

the evidence of shires and councils on the brink of collapse – must be presented and debated urgently.”

Terms of Reference

The inquiry’s Terms of Reference were:

- The financial sustainability and funding of local government.

- The changing infrastructure and service delivery obligations of local government.

- Any structural impediments to security for local government workers and infrastructure and service delivery.

Trends in the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce in the local government sector, including impacts of labour hire practices

The role of the Australian Government in addressing issues raised in relation to the above.

Understand Your Vehicle’s Dashboard Warning Lights

Continued from page 1.

According to RACV roadside assistance data, ignoring these particular warnings accounts for approximately 40 per cent of all major breakdown callouts.

“Modern vehicles are sophisticated machines with dozens of sensors monitoring everything from engine performance to tyre pressure,” Ms Morris explained.

“When a warning light appears, it’s because a sensor has detected something operating outside normal parameters.”

RACV’s guide provides clear explanations for each warning light and practical advice on what action to take, from safely pulling over immediately to scheduling a service appointment.

Drive School

RACV’s Drive School also addresses car maintenance in their six-stage program, which focuses on developing better, safer, more confident drivers and equipping them with life-long skills – like basic car maintenance checks – to help

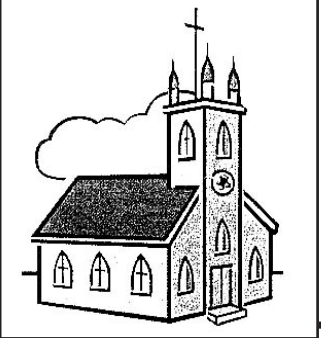
keep them and their car safe on the road.

“We understand that seeing a warning light can cause anxiety for drivers,” said Ms Morris.

“RACV’s Drive School focuses not only on skills to help drivers be safe on the road but we also go through skills like basic car maintenance checks to help drivers understand what their car is telling them and make informed decisions about when professional help is needed.”

The guide, available on RACV’s website, also advises drivers on preventative maintenance to avoid triggering warning lights in the first place. Regular servicing, proper fluid levels, and maintaining correct tyre pressure are essential practices highlighted in the guide.

RACV Emergency Roadside Assistance providers are equipped to perform diagnostic tests when warning lights appear and can often resolve minor issues on the spot, potentially saving motorists from costly repairs.



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	8.30 a.m.
Donald (Sat.)	7.00 p.m.
St. Arnaud	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream out to churches without Mass)	
Wycheproof	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	

Fr. Gerry Prunty
0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator
– Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976

Volunteer Equipment Grants Now Open

Applications for the 2025-26 round of the Volunteer Emergency Services Equipment Program (VESEP) are now open.

This year the government has announced an additional \$15 million in funding for VESEP.

Under the program, the Victorian Government matches every \$1 paid by volunteer groups with a \$2 co-contribution to a maximum contribution of \$250,000 (up from \$150,000).

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan said brigades and groups from across the state are encouraged to apply for the life-saving equipment which help protect communities.

“VESEP supports volunteers by providing funding to replace or purchase equipment such as vehicles, trucks, tankers, watercraft, trailers, and can also include minor facility improvements,” Jason said.

Five Categories

There are five categories under which funding is available:

- Tankers.
- Specialist and Support Vehicles.
- Operational Equipment.
- Volunteer amenities costing less than \$5,000.
- Minor works costing less than \$250,000.

Key Focuses

“One of the key focuses of the program will be aiding those brigades that have not previously benefitted under VESEP and may face challenges with fundraising,” Jason said.

In the previous round of funding, CFA received more than \$11 million across 167

successful VESEP projects, including six light tankers, 15 Ultralight tankers, six new Big Fills and the replacement of 18 Field Command Vehicles.

The 2024-25 round also funded more than 40 brigades received grants for minor works at their station.

Brigades/Groups can only apply for one project per funding round as per Emergency Management Victoria guidelines.

Application documents, vehicle flyers, the program guidelines and further information is available on Members Online.

Applications for the 2025-26 funding round close July 28, 2025, with the announcement of successful projects expected later in the year.

Corack East Wind

Renewable Energy from ACEN



ACEN Australia is in the early stages of investigating a large-scale wind energy project in Buloke Shire in Western Victoria, called **Corack East Wind**. The development is proposed to be located on privately owned land between Donald, Birchip and Wycheproof.

Drop-in information hub Every Wednesday

Meet the project team, find out more and provide feedback.

Wed, 28 May – Donald 12-5pm*

Scout Hall, Racecourse Road
* please note different time for this session

4 June – Birchip 1-6pm
Birchip Leisure Centre

11 June – Charlton 1-6pm
Charlton Park Community Bank Complex

www.corackeastwind.com.au

info@corackeastwind.com.au

1800 498 550

Corack East Wind

THE DISCOVER YOUR COUNTRY SIDE BIT

Head for the hills and discover
Victoria's regional events.
Try your hands (and feet) at various
things you've never done before.
You could find yourself cider
quaffing, tulip sniffing, grape
stomping, maybe even fun running.

VICTORIA EVERY BIT
DIFFERENT

VISITVICTORIA.COM

“Times” Classifieds

Phone Donald 5497 1222, Birchip 5492 2735
Email admin@buloketimes.com

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.

BIRTH OTTE (RESEIGH)

Tahlia and Josh are delighted to announce the birth of –

Oakley Mae,
3.753 kg,
on May 6, 2025.

A little sister for Gus and Fleur.



ENGAGEMENT KAY - MCLOUGHLAN

Sue and Garry Kay, together with Bronwyn and Ged McLoughlan, are pleased to announce the engagement of,

Dannielle and Jim,
on May 2, 2025.



SOLICITOR

116 Napier Street,
St. Arnaud

**Experienced practical
advice in plain English**

Appointments also
available in Charlton,
Donald and Wycheproof

Ph. 5495 2595
Karen@klp.net.au

*Enjoyment &
Employment Have
Both, Shop in Your
Own Town!*

DONNELLON, Mary Frances (nee PAINO)

Late of Wellington Point,
Queensland.
4/4/1945 - 01/06/2025.
Passed away peacefully.

Daughter of Jack & Grace Paino (both dec'd).
Loved and loving wife of Barry for 55 years.
Loved and loving mother of John and his friend Kylie.
Loved and loving mother of Andrew and mother-in-law of Kate.
Loved and loving mother of Sam.

"Nonna" to Emma and Tom.

Fond sister-in-law of John & Sue Donnellon, Margaret & Bryan Main, and Judith Donnellon. Aunty Mary to their children.

Family and friends are invited to a requiem mass for Mary at Mary MacKillop Catholic Church, 12 Hardy Road, Birkdale, on Monday, 9th June 2025, at 10.30am.

K.M.SMITH
FUNERAL DIRECTORS since 1883
CAPALABA 3390 1333

Queensland family owned

DEATH DONNELLON.— Mary “Paino”

In loving memory of our treasured friend.

Our beautiful and happy memories we will hold close in our hearts forever

—Kate, Joy, Sue, Val
and Veronica

Mary it will be
5 o'clock somewhere

DEATH NICHOLLS.— Cheryl Dean

Passed away peacefully
at Grandview Lodge,
Wycheproof,
on June 4, 2025.

Dearly loved wife of John, loved mother and mother-in-law of Christopher (dec.), David and Annette, Sharon and Ross, Stuart and Paige, and Matthew. Loved Grandma of Bella, Louisa, Spencer, Savannah and Locke.

Reunited with John

FUNERAL NICHOLLS.—

Family and friends are invited to attend the wake for Mrs Cheryl Jean Nicholls at the Royal Mail Hotel, Calder Highway, Wycheproof on Friday, June 13, 2025 commencing at 3 p.m. a private burial will have preceded the service.

A tribute can be left on
our website: [kellyfunerals
birchip.com.au](http://kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au)

Mark and Raelene O'Halloran
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP

Inc. **KELLY**
5492 2547

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

Gardening and Pruning in Donald and surrounding towns:

Complete garden maintenance including specialist pruning services and paving. Qualified and professional with 25+ years' experience.
**Contact David Barrance
on 0413 782 303**

SIGNS 'R'US

25 Racecourse Rd., Donald

Now offering my
valued customers

Digitally Printed Signs

- Gold Leaf - Safety Signs
- Truck Doors - Lots More

**Phone 5497 1624;
Mob. 0409 959 046**



DONALD HISTORY
SOCIETY INC.

FURTHER INFO: 0427 976 208

Meeting

Note correct date

**Monday, June 9
2 p.m.**

Speaker:
John Kumm,
the Men's Shed.

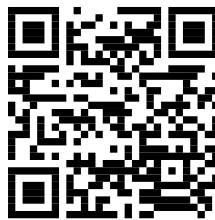
ALL WELCOME



Building Permit Solutions
Made Simple

VIC: BS-U100218 | NSW: BCD05375

Providing private
building permits
across rural Victoria
& NSW for builders
and homeowners.



Servicing Local Government Areas

Buloke | Horsham | Nth Grampians | Yarriambiack | Gannawarra | Surrounding Shires

0487 416 541 howard@northerninspections.com.au

Mark and Raelene continue the Kelly
and O'Halloran names, known and
trusted for personal, dignified and professional service for over 60 years.
From two of the smallest family owned
businesses in the Mallee.



5492 2547 90 Curlew Street Swan Hill
swanhillfunerals.com.au
* * * 5032 1011

1 Morrison Street, Birchip 3483
kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au

24 Hours 7 Days a Week

**MARK & RAELENE O'HALLORAN
Funeral Directors AFDA**

SMD AUTOMOTIVE

We've just opened! Need a service, repair, or new gear fitted? No fuss,
just honest work and solid advice. Drop by and we'll sort it out!

- Servicing all makes and models
- Log book servicing (whilst maintaining your vehicles warranty)
- Diagnostics
- Auto electrical services
- Fitting of accessories to cars and 4x4's
- Air conditioning re-gassing, testing, servicing and repairs
- Battery testing and replacement
- Pick up/drop off service available

Specialising in Ford, Isuzu and Jeep
Senior Ford technician
Bronze level Jeep trained

Josh Smulders
Automotive Technician

SMD Automotive

Ph. 0435 046 755
13 Enterprise Dr, Donald



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.

Trebuchet Design - Nevaeh (Young-Coleman) Pearse and Chloe Italia
DONALD HIGH SCHOOL YR 8 TED

Mensland

OUTFITTING MEN SINCE 1959



R.M. WILLIAMS
AUSTRALIAN MADE

• LEATHER •
• BELTS WALLETS •
• BOOTS •

Some shirts are now Australian made



Just ring or email mensland@iinet.net.au and we will deliver your order.

For Promotions, Specials and
Competitions, us on Facebook

Find us on

70 Woods Street, Donald — 5497 1211

“Times” Classifieds



Cultivating Healthy Communities

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Campus Negotiable

Graduate Registered Nurse
Graduate Endorsed Enrolled Nurse
Nurse Practitioner

Birchip

Resident Lifestyle Coordinator

St Arnaud

Maintenance Officer

Payroll Officer

Director of Finance and Administration

Further information available at
<https://ewhs.org.au/careers>

EWHS is an Equal Opportunity Employer, we welcome applications to all positions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, LGBTQI+ People, and People of All Abilities.

CFA Table Tennis

6:30 pm on the 20th of June in the Donald Primary School big shed.



Sheild to be awarded to the winning team!!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COME N YOUR FAVOURITE SPORTING TEAM THERE WILL BE SOME PRIZES,IF NOT YOUR PRESENCE WILL BE ENOUGH.



Free sausage sizzle and soft drinks provided.(:

CAPTAINS TO MAKE TEAMS AND GET THEM TO (0429230434) BY THE 16TH OF JUNE.



Office: 03 5494 3120
Mike: 0408 316 394
Brendan: 0427 794 479
Nathan: 0409 525 805

For all Earthmoving works including:

- Shed pads, sheep yards, house pads
- Dam construction and fill in, channel fill in
- Driveways and roads
- Supply and Delivery of gravel, sands and quarry materials.



SHEARING SHAK BARBER SHOP

McCulloch St, Donald

Ph. 0460 879 139

OPENING HOURS

Wednesdays	10 a.m. – 2.30 p.m.
Thursdays	10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Fridays	11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturdays	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Walk in - No appointment necessary

DRAG BINGO! Saturday 28TH JUNE

@ **Royal Mail** 8PM

\$30 PER PERSON
BUY YOUR TICKETS FROM THE WCRC

SHE'S BACK!

Wycheproof Community Resource Centre

Printed and published for the proprietors by Robin Letts, at the office of “The Buloke Times”, 6 McCulloch Street, Donald.

Donnellon's Bulk Haulage

Pty Ltd

BUYING ALL GRAINS

BULK CARRIERS of . . .

- Gypsum
- Fertilizer
- Gravel
- Woodchips
- Road Base Materials

Public Weighbridge 3008

Phone Bill

5492 2333 or 0428 136 483

More hours, more learning, more play



Children in Buloke Shire can now have more time to learn through play, with 16-20 hours of free Pre-Prep every week.

Learn more at vic.gov.au/pre-prep



Department of Education



**Best Start
Best Life**

Letters to the Editor



Community Consultation

(The Editor, "The Times")
Dear Editor.— On behalf of the Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Buloke Shire Council kindly requests your support in promoting a series of important community consultation sessions scheduled across our region in June.

These sessions form part of a wider project being undertaken by the Mallee CMA to improve flood preparedness and inform future planning by reviewing and assessing levees on public land.

They provide a valuable opportunity for local residents to share their lived experiences, observations, and knowledge of past flood events – particularly the 2022 floods – which will help refine current flood maps and planning tools.

We would greatly appreciate if you could consider promoting the following upcoming drop-in sessions through your newspaper and community notices: Culgoa, Thursday, June 19, at the Mallee Bunker, 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.; Nullawil, Thursday, June 19, at the Recreation Reserve, 3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.; Berriwillock, Friday, June 20, at the Community Centre, 9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.; Sea Lake, Friday, June 20, at the Community Complex, 11.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m..

These consultations are part of a \$2.715 million Victorian Government investment to support CMAs, including Mallee CMA, to work in partnership with local governments and VICSES to strengthen flood emergency management and infrastructure resilience.

The Mallee CMA has already undertaken extensive work, including aerial mapping from the 2022 floods, to update regional flood data.

Local participation in these sessions is vital to ensure the accuracy of that work and to inform decisions around the future management of levees and emergency response strategies.

We hope you will consider assisting with this important

initiative by promoting the consultation events to your readership. Thank you for your continued support of our local communities.

Yours sincerely,
Luke Ryan

Emergency Management Co-ordinator, Buloke Shire Council.

Reply to Tim McClelland's letter re signs around Birchip.

(The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Editor.— My mother recently celebrated her 100th birthday. She lives in the Nursing Home in Birchip. When she was just 16, her 2 brothers went to war in New Guinea, to fight for Australia. They both died at war. Mum was never to see them again. They made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, and our free speech. I dare anyone to go and see Mum and tell her, that members of her family cannot, within reason, stand up for what they believe in.

Tim, it turns out that your beautiful little daughter was Mum's pen pal from the school. They met recently at the Nursing Home and during their conversation realised they had something in common. Mum's sister and your daughter shared the same name. It was lovely to see them together. Tim, this situation relating to windfarms, mines and transmission lines is very pertinent to families in this North Central area. As a result, I will continue to park my car, with its pretty passive sign, and my soldier statue, outside the football ground during home games, until the authorities ask me to remove them. Lest We Forget.

Dianne Lehmann.

Divided We Fall – A Call for Unity and Progress in Birchip

(The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Editor.— Something has shifted in our town. Lately, the atmosphere in Birchip has become tense and uncomfortable – not because of weather or harvest, but because of division.

The growing intensity of the anti-turbine movement, particularly the excessive

signage and public displays, is creating a divide that's hard to ignore. While everyone has a right to voice their opinion, the tone and scale of the opposition have moved (in my opinion) beyond respectful disagreement and into something more troubling. It's making people in our community feel uneasy, hesitant to speak, and concerned for each other.

Birchip has always prided itself on being forward-thinking – a community of doers, innovators, and people who embrace change when it brings opportunity. This current wave of negativity feels like a step backward. Are we really the kind of place that shuts down progress without discussion? That allows fear to stifle the very innovation that could help secure our economic and environmental future?

We can – and must – do better. We can have robust conversations, ask hard questions, and make thoughtful decisions without turning on one another. Let's not allow this issue to define us or fracture the spirit of co-operation that has always made Birchip strong.

Come on Birchip, we're better than this. Let's bring back respectful dialogue, open minds, and the progressive thinking we've long been known for.

Personally, I reckon the sand mining industries are a larger issue than the turbines as far as the farming community is concerned. Others have differing opinions, and that's the great thing about healthy democracy.

Kindest regards
Gav O'Donnell
Birchip

Editor's note: While some letters on this topic have recently been published, having been written from an objective viewpoint, the content of other correspondence on this subject still threatens to go beyond this newspaper's legal scope. Please be reminded that letters to the editor containing information that can be used to the detriment of another, will not be published.

Drought-Affected Farmers in Need of Interest-Free Loans

Member for Mallee Dr Anne Webster MP is calling for Labor to bring back interest-free loans for farmers from the Regional Investment Corporation (RIC), impacted by current drought-like conditions.

Dr Webster said farmers across Australia have been simultaneously devastated by record low rainfall, drought and – in other parts of the nation – recent floods.

"I was speaking with affected farmers in Mallee and the Leader of the Nationals and Shadow Agriculture Minister David Littleproud MP in Wodonga on the weekend remembering how, in 2020, the Coalition introduced a two-year interest-free period for loans up to \$2 million for farmers experiencing hardship during the drought," Dr Webster said.

"The zero per cent interest rate applied to new and existing drought loans and to refinance existing debt from a farmer's commercial bank, to give farmers some breathing space, saving them cashflow and giving them time to restock and replant.

Initiative

"The Coalition's 2020 initiative stopped a lot of farms from going bankrupt. It is clear recent rain and drought

events are really hurting farmers, which is why I am calling on Labor to revisit this RIC loan product once again."

Mr Littleproud has written to Agriculture Minister Julie Collins, requesting support for the thousands of farmers dealing with floods and drought.

Dr Webster said current assistance doesn't go far enough and farmers would get much-needed reprieve by having access to a \$2 million loan with an initial 2-year interest free period, then 3 years interest only, then 5 years principal and interest.

Deficiencies

"Mallee farmers are suffering severe rainfall deficiencies, and some are in drought, and I have been speaking with farmers across the electorate in recent weeks about the distress they are experiencing," Dr Webster said.

"Late last year I sent out information on all the programs available to help them, but quite rightly they have pointed out the offering from



• Anne Webster.

Federal and State Labor Governments are simply not enough.

"Worse still, it's taken farmers' courageous mass protest against the Victorian Government's terrible new 'emergency services' levy increases to get the Allan Labor Government to give a temporary reprieve from the callous new tax grab.

"Our farmers are feeling significant pain, and it is now time for the Victorian Government to make this loan product available for drought-affected farmers."

Sledgehammer Takes to Housing Affordability

The State Government has taken a sledgehammer to the construction industry, introducing the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 which will push the cost of building a home up by as much as \$30,000.

Rather than fixing Victoria's housing crisis, Labor is making it worse – failing to protect consumers, punishing reputable builders, and putting the dream of home ownership even further out of reach for young Victorians.

Shadow Assistant Minister for Planning and the Building Industry, Wayne Farnham, said the bill was just the latest example of Labor siding with fringe parties instead of backing Victorian families.

"At a time when young Victorians are finding it harder and harder to build a home, the Government – along with the Greens, Cannabis Party and Animal Justice Party – have again voted to make housing more unaffordable," Mr Farnham said.

The Real Problem

"This bill does nothing to fix the real problem of consumer protection. The only thing it achieves is to push up construction costs."

Master Builders Victoria CEO, Michaela Lihou, said the bill failed to deal with the real issues in the building sector.

"Let's be clear – this legislation will do nothing to protect consumers from

unregistered and uninsured operators delivering substandard work," Ms Lihou said.

"Piling more legislation on decent builders is just another way of pushing them out of the industry, at a time when we've never needed them more."

Housing Industry Association Executive Director, Keith Ryan, warned the bill unfairly targets one side of the legal process.

Legal Process

"Our legal process for resolving disputes, be it a domestic building dispute or any other matter, can be easily

abused by an unscrupulous party to a case," Mr Ryan said.

"The new legislation tries to resolve that general flaw in the legal process by limiting the rights of one side – builders – to a fair hearing.

"It is not reasonable or necessary that all home builders stand to suffer due to the misbehaviour of a minority."

As housing approvals collapse, costs continue to rise, and builders leave the industry in record numbers, the Government's answer is more red tape, more cost, and no solution.

EWHS Board Meeting

The EWHS board met on Monday, May 26, and among the items discussed was the recent strategic planning consultation that included EWHS staff and members of each community.

Conversations highlighted a number of themes to inform future planning that mostly centred around access to services delivered in the community.

Other items included:

- The finalisation of staff and student accommodation at Birchip.
- An expected visit from the new Secretary of the Department of Health.
- The expectation that health service budgets will be

released prior to June.

- Continued development of arrangements for new health service networks.
- The board approved a number of maintenance projects that included painting across all campuses, repairs to the pathology building at St Arnaud and IT equipment replacements.

As in previous years, EWHS has worked with St Arnaud Medical to facilitate arrangements for the upcoming

leave period for the doctors. St Arnaud Medical will publish service arrangements that include limited coverage from both a GP and a Nurse Practitioner each week.

EWHS would like to remind all service users to consider contacting the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department or Instant Script to access care from home, and to remind everyone that the Urgent Care facility remains available every day.

CHURCH NOTICES

GRANITE
Community Church

www.granitecommunitychurch.com

At Granite Church
10.30 a.m.
Baptist Union of Victoria

ANGLICAN
"Parish of
Charlton-Donald"

Enquiries: Rev'd Judi Bird
0435 593 395

Friday, June 13
St. Paul's, Birchip, 5 p.m.

Sunday, June 15
St. Martin's, Charlton, 9 a.m.
St. George's, Donald, 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity, W'burn, 3 p.m.



Call someone who gets it.

Every year we help thousands of people control their gambling. So, we get that every story is different.

To change the way you think about gambling, call **Gateway Health** on **1800 657 573**

Scan for language options.



gateway
health

 Gambler's
Help

 VICTORIA
State
Government

In Its Current Form... Transmission Line Project Rejected

Northern Grampians Shire rejects VNI West project in its current form
June 3, 2025 Northern Grampians Shire councillors will call on the State Government to find an alternative to its VNI West transmission line project amid fears for the nation’s food security along with community mental health and wellbeing.

Victoria to NSW Interconnector West – known as VNI West – is a proposed new 500kV double circuit transmission line connecting high-voltage electricity grids in New South Wales and Victoria.

The project’s preferred route affects landowners in Northern Grampians Shire, with the proposal involving developing major overhead transmission lines through prime agricultural land, from Bulgana to north of St Arnaud.

At Monday’s council meeting in Stawell, councillors carried a notice of motion “that the council does not support the VNI West project in its current form”.

The notice of motion, brought by Cr Murray Emerson, also resulted in the council agreeing to continue to:

- Advocate to the State Government for an alternative to the VNI West project.
- Bring to the attention of the government their responsibilities under the Paris Agreement, where it specifically protects farming land from alternative energy projects.
- Strongly advocate to the State Government on the importance of food security in Victoria and the wellbeing and mental health of our community. Cr Emerson said his notice of motion followed the council completing due diligence on the project, which travelled through large sections of prime farming land.



“I have been directly involved in closely monitoring its progress for approximately two-and-a-half years. There have been numerous discussions over this time, with community, people who are affected by the path of this transmission line, and the so-called experts on this topic,” he said.

“I am unable yet to understand what benefit this development brings to our shire and its constituents. Yes, we need energy as the coal stations are closing, but not at the expense of prime farming land.

“We, as public representatives need to robustly advocate to the government, both state and federally, for this development to cease forthwith and seek a better outcome for all.”

Cr Emerson said councillors were of the opinion that alternative projects and transmission lines were required for the benefit of Victoria.

“However, due to the overwhelming objection by our local farming community over an extended period of

time I believe we should be taking a stance against the project,” he said.

Crs Jack Blake and Karen Probst also spoke in favour of the motion, echoing Cr Emerson’s points about a lack of consultation, mental health concerns, cost blow-outs on other projects; and companies having “money at heart” rather than community.

Deputy mayor Justine Hide – who chaired this section of the meeting because mayor Karen Hyslop had declared a conflict of interest – also voted in favour. Cr Jenny Greenberger is on a leave of absence.

Cr Hide said the decision was a popular one among the gallery.

“There has been significant opposition to this project in our community,” she said.

“As Cr Emerson said, we are yet to see the benefits the transmission lines will offer our region but have been inundated with people deeply concerned about the mental health impacts, along with the physical impacts of taking over prime agricultural land.

“We didn’t make this decision lightly, we did do our due diligence, and we will be advocating to the State Government to come up with an alternative proposal.”

Cr Hide said the council did not support the compulsory acquisition of farmland or native vegetation for transmission-line construction.

“The state and federal governments need to take a hard look at our food and water security; our supply chains are already vulnerable,” she said.

“Having Australian farmers producing Australian food for Australian mouths is something the government is taking for granted. The government should respect the signed Paris Agreement – it states that primary producing land should not be compromised by renewable energy.”

Cr Hide said councillors were also dissatisfied with elements of the consultation process to date.

“Our officers are engaging at all available levels to obtain the fullest information possible and to keep both councillors and residents informed,” she said.

To Support Farmers and Rural Communities... VFF Unveils Drought Framework

Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) president Brett Hosking has unveiled a comprehensive and scalable drought response framework designed to deliver timely, targeted support to farmers and regional communities battling prolonged dry conditions.

“Our farmers are doing it tough. With rainfall in some regions falling below the tenth percentile for months on end, we need a clear plan that delivers help where and when it’s needed most,” Mr Hosking said.

Three-Tiered Approach

The VFF’s framework, developed in consultation with Agriculture Victoria and submitted to the Victorian Government, reflects months of policy engagement with the Victorian Agriculture Minister. It outlines a three-tiered approach to drought support that is evidence-based and ready to implement. Measures include infrastructure and re-seeding grants, municipal rate relief, water security initiatives, and dedicated mental health services. The model is built on empirical climate triggers to ensure support is equitable, transparent and responsive to escalating conditions.

Meeting

It comes as VFF president Brett Hosking gets ready to meet directly with Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan to discuss the request this week.

“We’ve got the Premier’s ear and now it’s time to deliver for regional communities which are really struggling.

“This isn’t just about hand-outs. This is about keeping rural communities on their feet, safeguarding food production, and making sure that no farming family feels like they have to go it alone,” Mr Hosking said.

The framework also urges the State Government to address longer-term strategic barriers, including the relaxation of pest control restrictions, improved freight access for fodder transport, and the fast-tracking of critical pipeline infrastructure projects.

“Drought doesn’t just affect paddocks. It affects people. That’s why our framework includes support for kids to keep playing sport, families to stay connected, and farmers to access the mental health care they need,” Mr Hosking said.

Mr Hosking welcomed recent public interest in supporting farmers and called for a whole-of-government



• Brett Hosking.

approach involving state and federal leadership.

“We are also calling on the Victorian Premier, the Prime Minister, and both the State and Federal Agriculture Ministers to visit drought-affected communities in Victoria, he said. It is vital that leaders see first-hand what these communities are experiencing in order to understand the challenges and identify how they can best support them.

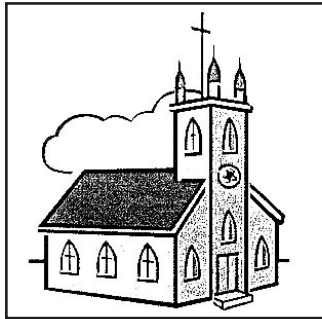
“We’re ready to work with all levels of government to implement this framework. With the right plan and the right partnerships, we can get through this together,” Mr Hosking said.

MICHAELS
OF
DONALD
bring you

Belvedere By George Crenshaw
www.belvedere-cartoons.com



“His food bowl must be empty.”



Church Notices

**UNITING CHURCH
(North Central Living Waters Cluster)**

Donald, 10 a.m., Pentecost with Jan Flett.

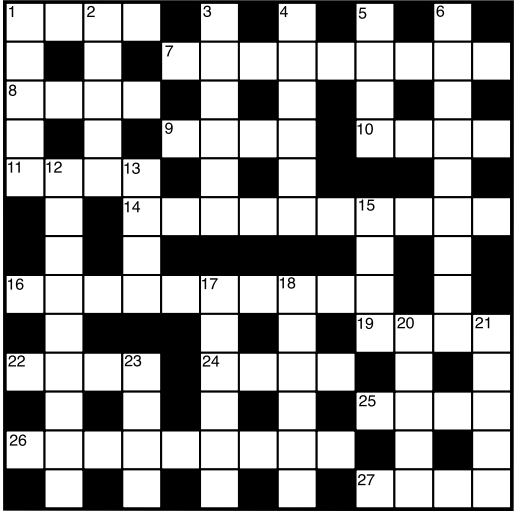
Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services, 10 a.m. Sunday, June 15

Contact Number: 5497 1033

Enjoyment & Employment — Have Both, Shop in Your Own Town!

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8180



ACROSS

1. Cook (4)
7. Blackguard (9)
8. Step (4)
9. Tree (4)
10. Song (4)
11. River (England) (4)
14. Apathetic (10)
16. Fortune-teller (10)
19. Soothe (4)
22. Check (4)
24. Space (4)
25. Support (4)
26. Singer (9)
27. Kill (4)

DOWN

1. Dog (5)
2. Boredom (5)
3. Scribble (6)
4. Spice (6)
5. Notion (4)
6. Scrumptious (9)
12. Feeling (9)
13. Goad (4)
15. Measure (4)
17. Lasso (6)
18. Cave (6)
20. Month (5)
21. Vacant (5)
23. Insect (4)

• Solution next issue.

Support services

Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

StandBy Support After Suicide
1300 727 247

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890
headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

SANE: 1800 187 263 (10am-10pm)
online forums: saneforums.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: 13YARN.org.au or 13 92 76

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au

Big Challenge for Bulls Juniors

It was a challenging day at the office for Birchip-Watchem's under-17s as they came up against a sharp and skilled St Arnaud outfit.

From the opening bounce, the Saints showed why they are one of the competition's strongest, piling on scoreboard pressure quarter after quarter. But despite the final margin, there were silver linings for the Bulls in what turned out to be a spirited and determined showing.

While the scoreboard read 135-2 by the final siren, it only told part of the story. The Bulls had moments of strong link-up play, especially down the wings where players like Ollie Cook, Noah Dean, and Willow Ryan worked hard to transition the ball out of defence. Cook in particular was a standout, applying immense tackling pressure and showcasing the grit that earned him a well-deserved call-up to the reserves side.

The backline was under siege for much of the match, but Kobe Hamilton and Bayley Kemp were immense, holding firm against wave after wave of St Arnaud attacks. Their composure and work ethic were highlights of the day, particularly given the skill and strength of their direct opponents. Jack McAuliffe and Noah Dean also rotated through the middle and defence with great effect, doing their best to stem the flow.

There were flashes of brilliance from solo runs by Cook, Dean and Jack Knights, who broke lines and gave the team moments to cheer for. The Bulls also showed glimpses of strategic play, patiently chipping around the backline before spotting and hitting up a free player on the wing.

Despite the tough result, the mood within the group remained positive. Coach Bill Lee's rallying cry of "Play the couch!" – a nod to the squad's Friday night wrestling sessions over the best seat – became the unofficial motto of the day. That energy and rough-and-tumble camaraderie carried on to the field.

While the scoreboard may not have favoured the Bulls this round, the signs of effort, heart, and potential were clear. With continued growth and intensity, there's no doubt the Birchip-Watchem U17s will bounce back stronger.

Final score: St Arnaud 19.21 (135) to Birchip Watchem 0.2 (2) Awards for Birchip Watchem: Ollie Cook (Noonan Tyres and Brad and Connely Ryan), Noah Dean (YBS), Willow Ryan (Birchip Café), Jackson Goss (Bulls' canteen). Awards for St Arnaud: Sean Bridgeman (John & Brenda Beggs), Aiden Wickhom (Croplands), Chase Zander (Uniting Church), Chase Hendy (Parkview Bakery), Rylan Leach (Canteen Award), Hamish Tannock (Sonya's Hair Directors).

Under-14s

In wet and slippery conditions that tested every player's resolve, the Birchip-Watchem under-14s showed plenty of grit, despite going down to a well-drilled St Arnaud side by 70 points.

From the outset, it was clear the backline would have its work cut out. Under relentless pressure, defenders Logan Cullen, Jed Coffey, Toby Kemp, Sadidas Gardiner-Paikea and Ryan Goss held strong, repeatedly rushing the Saints' kicks and forcing them into inaccurate scoring. St Arnaud finished with 23 behinds, a credit to the Bulls' defenders who refused to give in, even when the ball rarely left the defensive 50.

Sadidas Gardiner-Paikea stood tall throughout the match, earning the Noonan Tyres and Jake and Bill Noonan awards for his courage and composure under fire. Logan Cullen also stood out, his desperation and effort earning him the IGA Birchip award in a backline that fought tooth and nail all day.

In the midfield and forward line, Willow and River Ryan made their presence known, applying tackle after tackle to stop the Saints in their tracks. Their pressure

was a shining light in tough conditions and helped keep the Bulls competitive in the contest.

Liam Spezza's work around the ball didn't go unnoticed either, earning him the TMC Enviro award for his consistent effort and determination across four quarters. Up forward, Jett Hinds made the most of limited opportunities, showing good movement and work rate to be recognised with the Bulls' Canteen award.

Despite the scoreboard, the Bulls never dropped their heads. The conditions were against them, and the opposition was fierce, but Birchip-Watchem's young guns showed heart and plenty of future promise. With performances like these in tough circumstances, the team is building a foundation of resilience and teamwork that will hold them in good stead for the rest of the season.

Final score: St Arnaud 10.23 (83) def. Birchip-Watchem 2.1 (13).

Best for St Arnaud: Lewis Lowe, Spencer Kay, Ned Ezard, Xavier Batters, Riley Wilson-Cook, Samuel Greenaway. For Birchip-Watchem: Sadidas Gardiner-Paikea, Liam Spezza, Jett Hinds, Logan Cullen.



• Under-17s: Nathan Saludes looks to get the handball away as the Bulls' Archie Tyler applies pressure.



• Under-14s: St. Arnaud's Sami Weir is under pressure from Denley Tyler. Also pictured are the Saints' Jesse James and Bulls' Toby Kemp.

Down the Middle

Eleven players took part in the second of the Club Championships enjoying the sunshine if you happen to find yourself out of the shadows and the chilly wind.

The day's winner was the evergreen Brenda Brennan with a 72 nett and runner-up was Maree Egan on 76 nett on a count back from Kerry Wood and Debbie Burton

Joan Pearce took the honours for the putting with 25.

Nearest the pins were: Kerry Raven on Donald Auto Electrical's 3rd, Debbie Burton on Weir's 7th and Bendigo Bank 16th with Maree Egan on the Nu Farm's 14th.

Well done to all the winners and thanks to our weekly sponsor DCIRS.

Next week:

Monday golf – Assemble at 9.45.

Wednesday, June 10 – 3rd round of the Club Championships, stroke and putting.

Highlights and Lowlights

Lots of golf played today in and around the trees with Beris Jones getting herself in and out of trouble with expertise.

Margot Paynter had an exciting round with a "cracking" hit on the 12th which caused some sparks and smoke with nearly a call out to the CFA! Margot later lost control of her buggy and nearly required a JCB to rescue it.

Debbie Burton and Beris were thankful of their carts for protection thanks to Kerry Wood and Jo Beavis hitting some stray shots. Maree Egan and Margot came home with a gobbler each.

Thanks to Jo, Margot and Kerry R for doing the scrapes this week and the club wishes a couple of its members who are unwell speedy recoveries.

Player Profile Beris Jones

For how long have you been playing golf? 35 years.

What do you enjoy about golf? Enjoying the benefits of improved vision thanks to cataract operations and the addition of a golf cart.

What's the best part of your game? Hitting into trees.

What advice would you give to anyone who is thinking of taking up golf? Enjoy the benefits of belonging to a club.

What's your best score? 89.

What's the best shot you've ever played? On a Par 3, landing near the flag.

Who is your favourite golfer? The late Marilyn Apostol.

What is your current position in the club? Player. Previous captain and match committee.



• Nero's successful hit out – unbothered by the challenge.

AMBULANCE
PHONE NO.
000

Making parenthood possible for more Victorians

Start
your fertility
journey
with us

Until now, fertility services have been out of reach for many Victorians wanting to try for a family.

Public Fertility Care is here to make fertility treatments – like IVF – affordable and easier to access for more Victorians.

Speak to your GP about a referral.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au/public-fertility-care



Scan to learn more



Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.



Shooters Out in Force

There was a great turn out for Donald Field and Game's 75 ASF Handicap June shoot with 70 shooters.

Congratulations to Greg Deutscher for shooting a possible (25/25) in the second round.
High Gun off the Gun: Pepe Luciani (Natimuk), 71.

Targets Only: 1st Glenn Meulendyks 43, 2nd Dylan Gowlett 40, 3rd Dawson Hollis 39.
All other results include shooters handicaps.

High Gun Handicap: Greg Deutscher (Minyip), 73.
AA: 1st Jim Sawyer (Ararat-Stawell), 68; 2nd Kelvyn Ball (Natimuk), 68; 3rd Peter Teasdale (Minyip), 67.

A: 1st Phillip Jardine (Donald), 71, 2nd Neil Millard (Grampians), 68; 3rd Andrew Falla (Donald), 67.
B: 1st David Manifold (Donald), 70; 2nd Harry Birch (Donald), 67; 3rd David Brennan (Donald), 66.
C: 1st Ian Longmire (Donald), 72; 2nd Jason Lester (Coleraine), 70; 3rd Peter Russell (Donald), 70.

Ladies: 1st Carey Brennan (Donald), 62; 2nd Tiffany Johnstone (Ararat-Stawell), 61; 3rd Larelle Souter (Natimuk), 60.

Veterans: 1st Garry Hut-ton (Dunolly), 73; 2nd David Lanyon (Donald), 69; 3rd Lachy Mclellan (Clunes), 69.

Juniors: 1st Lachlan Clark (Donald), 70; 2nd Hayden Clark (Donald), 69; 3rd Mitchell Wilson (Donald), 67.

For tied results there was a count back on the second round.

Thank you to sponsors, Regional Touring and Warakirri Cropping.

Next Shoot

Next Donald F&G shoot will be its July 50 ASF Handicap plus a 26 "mates" novelty shoot, 10 a.m. start. Once again the Donald F&G July shoot will be turning PURPLE and donating to Pankind - The Australian Pancreatic Cancer foundation #playinpurple. This year Donald F&G has also set up a fundraising page so that anyone in the community can donate to this cause <https://playinpurple.org.au/o/donald-field-and-game>



• David Brennan, Carey Brennan and sponsor representative Jono Robinson.



• Squad 9: Glenn Meulendykes, Andrew Falla, Dawson Hollis, Dylan Gowlett, Beau Morgan (in the stand) and Phillip Jardine.



• Birds eye view: David Manifold with Ray Falla.



• Highgun OTG winner Pepe Luciana with Jono Robinson (Warakirri Cropping).

A Gift to Last a Year!

A subscription to . . .

The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

is an ideal gift for your son or daughter who is about to leave the family home.

It can also enable family members and friends living elsewhere to keep in touch with news and developments occurring throughout the region.

Call in the "The Times" Offices, Donald or Birchip
or phone 5497 1222 for details.



• Shoot off: Pepe Luciani in the stand with Greg Deutscher waiting his turn (Trent Grant obscured).



• Brothers Hayden Clark and Lachlan Clark scoring 2nd and 1st in Juniors.

Big Day for Bulls' Netballers

Although the Bulls lost the first game of the day in Under-14 “B” against the Saints, they warmed up as the sun came out, and won the remaining games of the day on their home court.

Birchip-Watchem awards were sponsored by Ryan Commodities and Lowry Brothers.

Net Set Go

The youngest Bulls and Saints netballers impressed with teamwork, communication, and persistence despite unseasonable heat.

For the Bulls, Ari Richmond landed a goal in the first minute. Olive McLoughlin, Sadie Bourke and Jock Richmond made several intercepts. Harper Noonan and Ava Boyle led well, Greta McClelland and Remi Bowen shot accurately, and Zayvier Sagers and Amelia Baker showed skill tapping the ball out.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Ari Richmond and Amelia Baker.

St Arnaud awards: Not provided.

Under-14 “B”

Both teams started strongly, backed by loud support. For the Bulls, Stacey Bowen was strong in attack, with Frankie McClelland and Ivy Bourke defending well. St Arnaud pulled ahead in the second half, winning 21–13.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Frankie McClelland and Stacey Bowen.

St Arnaud awards: Can-teen, Sienna; Anne Ezard, Phoenix A.

Under-14 “A”

After early fumbles, Birchip-Watchem scored first. A fast-paced game saw both teams apply pressure, ending the first quarter tied at 4.

Birchip-Watchem took control in the second quarter with key intercepts and accurate shooting, leading by 5 at half-time. St Arnaud goalers Eliza Scarce and Hannah Stones worked well in the third, but Mia Sharp controlled the mid court and the Bulls extended their lead to 21–11.

Alana Caldwell rebounded well in the last quarter. Final score: Birchip-Watchem 29 defeated St Arnaud 13.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Mia Sharp and Alana Caldwell.

St Arnaud awards: Can-teen, Eliza S.; Weirs IGA, Charlie J.

Under-17 “A”

The Bulls got off to a fast start, leading 13–6. Their defence created turnovers and helped build a 20–13 half-time lead. St Arnaud lifted, but the Bulls stayed composed and finished strong with a 42–29 win.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Beau Haslam and Zara Lowry.

St Arnaud awards: Colins Fencing Solutions, Scarlett Hand; St Arnaud Physiotherapy, Georgie Wande.

“C” Reserve

The Bulls started well. Zoya Rickard took key intercepts, and Ada Bourke and Lauren Robinson scored accurately for a 12–4 lead.

Ava Torney led St Arnaud’s second-quarter fightback, but the Bulls maintained a 19–11 lead. In the third, Ashley Zsigmond defended well for St Arnaud, while Emily Hotker led Bulls’ defence.

Birchip-Watchem surged in the final quarter. Kimberley Phelan impressed as goal shooter. Final score: Bulls 45 defeated St Arnaud 24.

Bulls awards: Ada Bourke and Lauren Robinson.

St Arnaud awards: Ava Torney (Country Kitchen), Ashley Zsigmond (Petrie Mechanical).

“C” Grade

Steph Coffey and Ash Tierney were strong in defence, and the Hannahs moved the ball well for a 13–7 lead.

The second quarter was even. Maddy McQueen was solid at WD, and strong mid-court play helped extend the lead. Rebounds from Tierney and Coffey and accurate shooting from Greenaway and Boyle kept the Bulls ahead.

Despite solid defence from Imogen Amos and efforts from Sophie O’Donnell, the Bulls won 49–32.



• The Saints’ Imogen Amos defends the pass to Toni Jones in the ring.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Immy Boyle and Maddy McQueen.

St Arnaud awards: Gilmac, Sophie O’Donnell; Hendy Tyre & Batteries, Steph Smith.

“B” Grade

A tight first quarter saw the Bulls edge ahead 16–11, despite strong St Arnaud defence.

An injury to Isabelle Hand broke St Arnaud’s momentum. Bulls defenders Meghan Noonan and Eva Coffey restricted scoring. Bulls led 26–23 at half-time.

Tylah Haslam moved to centre in the second half,

energising the Bulls. Accurate passes to Jenna Angel and Toni Jones extended their lead to 43–34. The Bulls finished strong, winning 57–40.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Meghan Noonan and Eva Coffey.

St Arnaud awards: Weirs IGA, Chloe Douglas; St Arnaud Physiotherapy, Bridgette Douglas.

“A” Grade

Under clear skies, Birchip-Watchem bounced back with a dominant 63–38 win over St Arnaud.

The Bulls came out strong, using Zali Angel’s height and

accuracy to build an early lead. St Arnaud showed moments of promise, but Birchip-Watchem’s defence – led by Cheyenne Parsons and Sophie Parfrey – was relentless.

The Bulls capitalised on turnovers and held their composure in a tough match. Their pressure-to-points conversion made the difference.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Cheyenne Parsons and Sophie Parfrey.

St Arnaud awards: O’Connors, Chloe Needs; Bendigo Bank, Leish Petrie.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA

IS YOUR RENT GOING UP?
IS YOUR TOILET BROKEN?

RENTERS,
YOU HAVE RIGHTS

KNOW THE
FUNDAMENTALS
OF RENTALS

Learn more at
[consumer.vic.gov.au/
fundarentals](http://consumer.vic.gov.au/fundarentals)



Calder Unites to Extinguish Navies' Fire

A promising opening five minutes of play gave hope to the visiting Navies of Charlton taking the game to their fancied rivals from up the road, the newly formed Calder United Lions, the game played in front of a large crowd gathered for Ladies' Day in Nullawil.

The bright Navy flame flickered only briefly, the class of the Lions coming to fore when the challenge was laid down, perhaps needing Charlton to kick the opening two scores of the game to remind Calder United that games still have to be won, regardless of the opposition.

For the Charlton side, in the middle of a series of games against North Central's "Big Three", coming off a thumping at the hands of Sea

Lake-Nandaly, to kick the opening goal through Rhys Thompson, on the end of a promising build up involving youngster Angus Johnstone, in for his first senior game of the season after missing almost all of last season with a knee complaint, would have lifted the spirits of players and supporters alike. A Mason Heenan intercept moments later and the Navies could have had the first two goals of the game on the board, his

long shot drifted wide of the mark, registering a minor score as the game reached the five-minute mark. From there the response was as rapid and fierce as it was predictable, the impressive array of Lion recruits, new and old, complemented by a handful of talented locals far too strong for the Navies, who tried hard all day, but just don't have the depth of talent of their northern neighbours. Zane Keighran, Matthew Trzeciak and Zach Caccaviello set up play from half back, and were influential all day. Keighran slotted the Lions' opener to start the ball rolling for the home side, before Jack Exell opened his account. Despite finishing with nine goals, Exell certainly did not have things his own way, engaging in an entertaining battle with emerging Charlton defender Bailey Dixon; Dixon ensured Exell had to work hard for his opportunities, and capitalize when they came.

Forward options proved plentiful for the newly formed Lions, resting on-baller Steven Kennedy showing his abundance of class, a talented forward in his own right, and if played out of the goal square, could easily have brought up double figures (such was the quality of his forward craft) the majority of his damage was done further up the ground though. Charlton's depth sorely tested, most notably on the wings, the Navies' youngsters being taught a lesson or two, Rylee Smith's blistering pace and precision delivery inside forward 50 worth the price of admission alone.

For Charlton, Ben Lanyon continues his fine season as first ruck, the twenty-year-old showing exponential development, a second quarter

"speccky" the exclamation mark on another fine performance.

The Lions blasted away from their visitors early in the second term, five straight goals opening up a 10-goal advantage half way through the term. Doggedly the Navies hung in, a Johnstone of Charlton goal briefly stemming the flow, before the Lions' forwards lost their goal kicking boots, a run of 7 straight behinds at the end of the second and start of the third as forward system went astray and individual tendencies started to creep in. Calder United by 66 points at the main break.

Charlton started the second half with renewed endeavour, the Sherrin spending plenty of time bouncing between half back lines, neither side able to cut a way through the defensive pressure being applied. It wasn't until almost 11 minutes of time had elapsed before the first goal of the second half hit the scoreboard, Darcy Munro added his second and the Lions' 13th of the day. Starting a run of Calder United goals, Charlton's Tom Parkinson momentarily interrupted the run, putting through the visitors' third and what would be final goal of the afternoon. Meanwhile Exell would add his eighth and Kennedy took his personal tally to three as the margin approached 100 points. Evidence of what might be Calder United's greatest challenge to winning this year's premiership emerged during the final term. Undoubtedly laden with talent, the Lions' individuality shone through, a ridiculously wasteful final term in which they would add six goals and nine behinds as Charlton's defensive effort tired, some of which excusable as the Lions



• Jack Exell trying to hold on as Bailey Dixon goes for the steal.

attempted to get debutante Max Fawcett on the scorecard, two behinds before finally registering the first goal of his fledgling senior career.

A golden opportunity to build what could be telling percentage let slip by. Calder United by 140 points, a comprehensive victory.

Best for Calder United: Jack Exell, Mitch Farmer, Matthew Trzeciak, Zane Keighran, Rylee Smith, George Turner.

For Charlton: Bailey Dixon, Kris Clifford, Archer Patterson, Elliott Fitzpatrick, Rhys Thompson, Mason Heenan.



• In a mad rush for the ball the players ended up in a "marking sandwich".



• Ben Lanyon and Daniel Watts fighting high in the sky for the ball.



(By Course Language)

There were no takers for a round of golf last Saturday but a few dedicated or desperate, as the case may be, lined up for the first round of the club championships on Sunday.

On a course that, like many others in the state, is desperately in need of rain Richard Gallagher won the day's event with 82-14-68. Closely followed by Robet Burton on 81-12-69. Richard also had a birdie on the 11th which is still sponsored by Matthew "Smiley" Spencer.

The Nearest the Pins were: The Donald Auto Elec 3rd, Brad Bath; Weirs IGA 7th, Brad Bath; Nufarm 14th, Jacob Bath; Bendigo Bank 16th, Robert Burton.

Good to have Jacob Bath back having a hit on the weekend after returning from walking the Kokoda Track. He must have enjoyed all the trees over there as he took a fancy to them on Sunday as well. After hitting the ball from under a tree, the ball went forward 20 metres, hitting another tree, rebounding back into the tree he had just

played from under, only to have the ball come to rest 10cm from where the shot was played. At least he didn't have to walk far to play his next shot.

With the weather getting cooler it "would" (no pun intended) be a great time to have a trailer load of wood sitting in the shed. The Club is having a Wood Raffle next Thursday and Friday in front of the Post Office. If anyone can spare an hour or two to help sell tickets please see Robert Burton.

Thanks again to Harbergers for a loan of their Telehandler to move a bit of dirt, your support is very much appreciated.

On Saturday, July 14, the whole club is having a casse- role tea to farewell Matt and Berlinda Clarke. All members please bring something to share with more details next week.

Coming Up

This weekend for the King's Birthday holiday it's a bit of a mixed bag. Saturday is a Stableford event, Sunday is the Footy Club Golf Day and Monday is Stableford, Secret Partners. The sponsor this weekend is Michaels of Donald. With a bit of luck it might all be cancelled for being too wet!

Dad Jokes

Did you know that nearly all garden Gnomes have red hats? – It's a little Gnome fact.

A mate of mine is going to take up coin collecting – he reckons the change will do him good.

Why did the chicken go to the gym? – To work on his pecks.

How does a satisfied croupier describe his job at the casino? – Ideal.

Tigers and Royal Blues Share Netball Honours

Under-14“B”
The Donald girls got off to a strong start, scoring the opening goals and setting the tone for the match. With steady teamwork, composure and accurate shooting, they gradually pulled ahead. Finished off the game strong and came away with their first win for the season.
Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 3, Donald 17.
Donald awards: Marnie Harmer, (Loveshack Giftware); Aria Brennan (The Clothes Bin).
Sea Lake-Nandaly awards: Tigerland Showbag, Brooklyn; Player of the day award (canteen voucher), Emma.

Under-14 “A”
Sunny morning for 14 “A” netball, Donald came out strong with an early lead and held that lead throughout the game. Sea Lake-Nandaly showed great team spirit and supported each other well. Its defenders worked hard to hold back the Donald shooting combinations of Sophie Burke, Laya Griffiths and Chloe Italia.

Donald is showing strength as a team as it moved the ball through the court well. Fantastic sportsmanship shown by both sides and lots of encouragement.

Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 0, Donald 30.

Donald awards: Evie Donnellon, (Gilchrist & Co); Laya Hepworth, (Harvest Cafe).

Sea Lake-Nandaly awards: Haeuslers beanie, Alyssa; Player of the day award (canteen voucher), Charli.

Under-17 “A”
Donald made an enthusiastic statement on the court over the weekend, opening its match with a sharp and cohesive attacking performance. The goalers worked in perfect sync, consistently reoffering for passes and making space with ease, showcasing the trust and understanding built between them. The attacking end not only impressed with its offensive flair but also demonstrated versatility, quickly converting to apply defensive pressure whenever Sea Lake-Nandaly forced a turnover. This quick transition proved vital in regaining possession and maintaining momentum.

Donald’s defensive unit was relentless throughout, going after every ball with determination and putting high

hands over its opponents at every opportunity, making life difficult for the Tigers’ attack. The improvement in Donald’s cohesion and teamwork continues to show week after week, and this game was a clear reflection of the players’ growing confidence and connection across the court. A great match that highlighted just how far this team has come in the season so far.

Final scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 55, Donald 30.

Donald awards: Jaya Stirling, (Donald Family Butcher); Kailie Krause, (Spud’s Cafe).

Sea Lake-Nandaly Awards: Milkshake voucher donated by Skymirror, Prue; Hair on best voucher, Scarlett.

“C” Grade
Donald “C” grade put in a solid effort against Sea Lake-Nandaly on Saturday, going down 26 to 57 in warm conditions.

The team started strongly, with centre passes flowing well and the goalers putting their individual goals into action early. Despite the heat, the girls worked hard and it was great to see them applying feedback to improve their game.

Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 57 to Donald 26.

Donald awards: Olivia Wollermann (Gilchrist and Co.), for her hard work in defence and Megan Godkin-Briggs (Bev’s Baubles), for adapting well to playing centre.

Sea Lake-Nandaly awards: \$20 Swan Hill Wholesalers voucher, Nat Prange; Club mug sponsored by Agri Lending Solutions, Jordan Gravestocks.

“B” Grade
Both teams started out strong, with both ends of the court working together well. Donald worked hard to take the lead in the first 5 minutes of the second quarter but Sea Lake-Nandaly worked its way back. Courtney Doak rose to the occasion, getting turnovers on Sea Lake-Nandaly’s centre passes.

In the third quarter Donald made some changes putting Abby Griffiths into goals. Donald’s defence worked well but Sea Lake-Nandaly’s goalers just weren’t missing.

Zara Staples and Abby Griffiths worked beautifully in the goal ring together.



• Chasing after the netball are Donald’s Kiera Lopes and Tigers Emily Weir. Other players, left to right, Alyssa Hepworth (D), Abby MacDonald (SLNT) and Megan Godkin-Briggs. (D).

Both teams played a fantastic game, resulting in a draw at the final siren.

Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 45, Donald 45.

Sea Lake-Nandaly awards: \$20 Royal Hotel Voucher, Prue; Club glass sponsored by Cropsmart, Abby Walklate.

“A” Grade
Both teams started off strongly with 3 goals each in the first few minutes of the game. Donald’s defensive end worked well turning the ball over numerous times. Sea Lake-Nandaly shot very well and managed to get a lead on Donald in the first quarter.

Donald’s attacking end worked hard but the Sea Lake-Nandaly defence kept getting its hands on the rebounds. However Donald did not give up and came back in the second half of the second quarter. Ally Doak and Sara Adams worked extremely well at Donald defensive end.

Great turnovers throughout the mid court gave Donald the lead for the first time of the game. Lovely shooting from Milla Adams and Zeo Grisby. The Tigers kept up with Donald’s fast pace, which saw them edge back in front of Donald.

Great defensive pressure from down the court from Donald going into the final term. However Sea Lake-Nandaly did not give up. In a very close well fought out game Sea Lake-Nandaly proved to be too good for Donald in the dying minutes of the game.

Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly

40, Donald 38,
Donald awards: Ally Doak, (Jasper & Co.); Rachael Meulendysks, (Mensland).

Sea Lake-Nandaly awards: Mortimer Petroleum Travel

Mug, Ash Roberts; Club mug sponsored by Kaneira Hotel, Maya Arentz.

Bulls Build Towards Senior Hockey Teams

Although Birchip-Watchem is not fielding senior hockey teams this season, the club is certainly on track with its rebuilding.

On Saturday, the minkeys once again took to the field first, with enthusiasm and cheerfulness, showing noticeable improvement that’s been great to watch each week.

There were two games played, with a more experienced team and a less experienced team, providing chances for the children to shine. Award winners for Birchip-Watchem were Remi Bowen (Troy and Brooke Morris) and Lucy Noonan (BWHC canteen).

The calm, positive approach of minkey coach Julie McClelland and her assistants Frankie McClelland, Archie Tyler and a variety of helpers from De Ferrier to Grace McAuliffe, continues to create an encouraging environment, and it’s clear the kids are thriving because of it.

The smiles, cheers and support from parents and grandparents on the sidelines add to the friendly, community atmosphere, showcasing that North Central really is unique having juniors and seniors play three sports on the same day at the same ground.

The addition of hockey, to the traditional football/netball model prevalent in country Victoria (and across Australia) provides an opportunity for children to learn a different sport and for some, it provides an opportunity to still play sport with their family and friends if they don’t enjoy football or netball, or if those teams have an abundance of players.

Junior Grades

The same positive spirit was evident in both the under 12s and underage, guided by their dedicated coaches Tim McClelland (under-12s), Sasha Salzano, and Allie Knights (under-15s).

The under-15s are also fortunate to have Xanthe

Fitzpatrick on board, who has recently located to Birchip from Charlton with her partner Matt Ryan and their baby, Dotty. Xanthe has slotted in seamlessly, bringing not only her warmth but also her wealth of skills and gamesmanship, which she’s generously passing on to what the club hopes will be the next generation of senior players.

Under-12s

The under-12s clash between Birchip-Watchem and St. Arnaud saw a dominant performance from the home side, with Birchip-Watchem storming to a convincing 7–1 victory.

From the opening whistle, Birchip-Watchem set the tone with strong ball movement, sharp passing, and relentless pressure. It didn’t take long to hit the scoreboard, with Greta McClelland putting herself into the right position to attack and score, supported by some good work from Denley Tyler and a goal from Addison Hamilton.

By half-time, Birchip-Watchem had raced to a convincing lead, with its defence holding strong against St. Arnaud’s few attacking forays.

St. Arnaud’s forward Patrick Zsigmond managed to claw one back early in the second half, sparking brief hope of a comeback. However, Birchip-Watchem responded almost instantly, regaining control and continuing to score. Greta McClelland continued her standout performance with tireless running to ensure she was in the right spot to receive the pass and shoot from the best angle, while Sadie Bourke played one of her best games, providing plenty of pressure and making sure she was in the right position to defend flawlessly.

The game showcased the depth and teamwork of Birchip-Watchem, with all players contributing, but it was the determination shown by Greta McClelland and Sadie Bourke that earned them the awards, which were sponsored by Sharp’s Bakery and O’Connors.

Birchip-Watchem should retain their second position on the ladder, while St. Arnaud will stay in fourth position.

Underage

After a frosty start to the day the sun came out for the underage and the Bulls were rearing to charge, although they knew it was going to be a tough day against St Arnaud, which has only lost one game for the season.

In slippery conditions the Bulls played a great game, but unfortunately the score didn’t reward them for their efforts, as St Arnaud made a quick start, scoring five goals in the first half. The Saints had runners and lots of forwards prepared to pepper the goal, giving Eligh Dean a tough workout.

The Bulls were much better in the second half and had a few attempts for goal but just couldn’t quite get there. There were some outstanding plays and they all stepped up and fought hard until the final siren. Sadidas Gardiner Paikea had several runs downfield and Ben Horton and Toby Field, who were awarded the prizes donated by A&S Barber and TMC enviro, worked hard all match, trying to implement the coaches instructions to reduce the deficit.

St Arnaud was the overall winner, 7-0, with Lewis Lowe and Kirk Forbes scoring two goals, and Maeve Patton, Finn Evans and Amelia Watts all adding 1.



• Saints’ Finn Evans is under pressure from the Bulls’ Lana Angel.

Changes Needed in Harness Racing

• Continued from page 16.
young lady driver, Tasmyn Potter, who has already driven 73 winners. She has only been driving since February 2023 and this was her first ever winner at Charlton.

Race five: Driver Jack Laughter took the drive of the

day award with Oopzee Daizee. Sitting well back in the field, he made his move 900 metres from home. Worked around the field to find the lead and with horses behind him making errors, was left in front and scored comfortably.

Race six: Rod Barker said it's a long way home to Hamilton, but after the win of Doctor Go Joh, driven by Jackie Barker, it would be enjoyable. Jackie was able to lead all the way, defeating two Robinvale pacers.



• Another of the younger drivers starting to make a name for themselves is Shepparton based Tasmyn Potter. With her is winning trainer Ben Pell after the win of Valiente.



• The Barker family from Hamilton have been long time supporters of all local clubs. Driver Jackie Barker with her fater Rod with Doctor Go Joh after winning the Cricket Club/V.H.R.C - Del Re National Foods pace.

Calder United Hosts Charlton Netballers

Net Set Go
Charlton awards: Signwise Solutions Net Set Goer of the Week, Matilda Leslie.
Calder United awards: not provided.
14-&-Under "A"
Charlton 3 def. by Calder United 33.

Charlton awards: TeeJet Best, Lila Schofield; FHN Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Anna Fitzpatrick; Nutrien Ag & Roberts Windrowing "Have a Crack", Isabella Stahl.
Calder United awards: Wimmera Mallee Accounting, Heidi H; Wycheproof Op

Shop, Kelly H; Access Grain, Ashlei P.
17-&-Under "A"
Charlton's attackers worked well under tough pressure. Taylah Giles shot well while Lacey Smith created strong leads down the court and some great feeds into Charlton goalers. Defenders put pressure over everything, cutting off the opposition's drives and getting hands to create many turnovers for the team. Overall the Charlton girls had an awesome game and all put in a really strong effort for the entire game.

Charlton 21 def. by Calder United 59.

Charlton awards: IGA Charlton Best, Lacey Smith; FHN Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Maggie Riley; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Erin Blair.

Calder United awards: Wimmera Mallee Accounting, Jessie F; IGA cash award, Priya C.

"C" Grade
A tough game against some well-oiled players, however, we saw Emmy Nelson step up and commit to goals and direct play. Well done also to Brooke Prior for stepping into GK alongside Tahlia Holmes-Brown; they kept Calder's strong shooters to a minimum. With regular rotations Charlton players never dropped their work rate and kept in good spirits.

Charlton 22 def. by Calder United 79.

Charlton awards: Jack Thompson Construction Best, Emmersyn Nelson; S&D Consulting Coaches, Mia Ayars; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Zoe Carney.



• 17-&-Under "A". Calder United's Jessie Fawcett shoots for goal while Charlton's Maggie Riley (GD) defends the shot with Anika Holmes-Brown ready for a rebound (GK).

Calder United awards: Lizzy McGrath, Regan Kelly, Claire Harrison, Ruby Scott.

"B" Grade
Tough game for Charlton's "B" grade girls coming up against a strong side in Calder. Bec Sexton showed some great talk and direction in the centre. Tahli Roberts had her shooting shoes on with a high percentage sinking. Tori Hutchins moved well into space, positioning herself well. As everyone tired in the third quarter Bec Sexton stepped it up with several intercepts. Charlton's defenders worked hard together to pick up a number of rebounds and turnovers. Anika Holmes-Brown got into the action with two intercepts in a row.

Charlton 31 def. by Calder United 61.

Charlton awards: Teys Charlton Feedlot and Ergo & Mane Beauty Best, Tahli Roberts; Teys Charlton Feedlot Coaches, Bec Sexton; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Emily Olive.

Calder United awards: Paige Arnel, Tessa Coles, Tessa S.

"A" Grade
Charlton started well, working on starting combinations with Maggie Riley in WA then using rotating subs to combine Maggie into GA with Claudia Lee into WA. Chloe Walsh's movement was beneficial in opening up the ring and feeding and also rebounding very well. Charlton defenders worked tirelessly to capatilise on turnovers – Isabel Soulsby's drive through the mid court was crucial as well as her pressure over shutting down the WA's

drive. Megan Bruns and Claire Smith got plenty of tips and rebounds. Overall, some good learnings from more rotations this week with Holly Thompson coming on for fresh legs also, Charlton kept the score down to a minimum and not a blowout. Things are starting to work and improve.

Charlton 41 def. by Calder United 57.

Charlton awards: Walsh Motors and Ergo & Mane Beauty Best, Isabel Soulsby; Walsh Motors Coaches, Chloe Walsh; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Claire Smith.

Calder United awards: Meg Fawcett, Ella Sheahan, Gracie H.

Thank you to the ladies of Calder United for putting on a wonderful Ladies' Day – a very enjoyable afternoon bringing both clubs together.



• "B" grade. Charlton's best on court, Tahli Roberts going for strong rebound. The Calder United player defending is Amy Smith.

Bulls' Reserves Overwhelm Saints

The Birchip-Watchem Bulls roared to life in the second half to record a commanding 18.12 (120) to 8.5 (53) victory over the St Arnaud Saints in front of a lively crowd at George Cartwright Oval on Saturday.

It was an evenly poised contest early, with both sides trading blows in a see-sawing first quarter. Jack Lee, Alex Hay and Bailey Baxter were on target for the Bulls, while Jake Hicks, Heath McNally and George Gorrie hit the scoreboard for the Saints. Lee was a bull at the contest, dominating stoppages and setting the tone in midfield, while Saints' forward Zach Notting provided plenty of headaches across the half-forward line with his creativity and link-up play. At the first change, scores were locked at 3.2 (20) apiece.

St Arnaud took the upper hand in the second term, led by the experienced Simon Elliott who imposed himself in the ruck, giving his midfielders first use. Jarryd Kell was a strong target at centre half-forward, clunking several contested marks and converting one major. Goals also came from Hicks, Ash Craddock and Elliott himself, while Birchip-Watchem kept in touch with majors to Tom Gibson, Hay and a second from Lee. At the main break, the Saints held a narrow 8-point lead, 7.4 (46) to 6.2 (38).

The third quarter proved to be a turning point as the Bulls stampeded back into the contest with a dominant display. Joshua Woods began to assert his dominance in the ruck, giving midfielders Riley Hogan and Lee the platform

to drive the ball forward with precision. Hogan was electric, using his speed to break lines, while the Bulls piled on six unanswered goals. Matt Berry was dangerous up forward with two goals, supported by Hay, Connor Boyle, Ollie Cook and Hogan, who each added one. St Arnaud could muster only a solitary behind, as Birchip-Watchem surged to a 33-point lead at the final break.

There was no let-up from the home side in the final quarter, as the Bulls put the game to bed in emphatic fashion. Gibson and Ty Colbert orchestrated numerous attacking forays, while Matt Berry added another major to cap off a strong afternoon. Cook, Hogan, Lee, Archie Lewis and veteran Steve Nottle also hit the scoreboard — the latter celebrating his goal with trademark flair. Despite the relentless pressure, St Arnaud never stopped trying, with Hamish Darby standing tall in defence and Jake Hicks adding his third goal of the day.

When the final siren sounded, Birchip-Watchem had run out the comfortable 67-point winner, producing a scintillating second-half performance that showcased their depth, class, and fitness.

The Bulls will take plenty of confidence from their four-quarter effort, especially their ability to respond under pressure. Meanwhile, the Saints

will look to regroup after a tough outing, with positives to draw from their first-half showing.

Best for Birchip-Watchem Jack Lee (O'Connors), Riley Hogan (YBS), Joshua Woods (Agrifac), Tom Gibson (Donnellon's Bulk Haulage), Ty Colbert (Nutrien Ag), Steve Nottle (Ryan Commodities).

For St Arnaud: Zachary Notting, Simon Elliott, Jarryd Kell, Chase Zander, Hamish Darby, Luke Ezard.

• Right: Tom Gibson is tackled by the Saints' Heath McNally.



• Ty Colbert is on the run during reserves, under pressure from St Arnaud's Sam Penfold, while Josh Woods puts on a shepherd.



• A very keenly contested finish to the first race at Charlton. Fake Collection driven by Ryan Backhouse defeats outside, Blue Ocean, driven by Glenn Gull and hidden on the inside in third place, Sea Hawke, driven by Luke Dunne.



• The family of the late Josie Harvey present driver Ryan Backhouse with a horse rug after the win of Fake Collection.

Changes Needed in Harness Racing

(By Peter Hibberd)

This is my opinion only – some very big changes are needed in harness racing.

Over recent months, with the decrease in prizemoney back to \$4,000 per race, one particular club did not get enough nominations to have its meeting, which was surprising as it is one of the biggest harness areas in Victoria.

Another case was Charlton last Monday with only enough horses running for six races. Thanks to the Charlton Harness Training Centre and local area trainers, who supplied nearly 15 horses, without which, this meeting could have been in doubt. A lot of clubs are now having to run six race programs. It still costs the clubs basically the same amount of money whether it is 6, 7, 8 or 9 races. At least they are having a go!

I have been told two big stables have gone from the Sunraysia area to interstate for a lot better prizemoney.

HRV is running roadshows in four key areas of Victoria this month, wanting input from participants. Well, I

know of one trainer who sent an email with what seemed to be a very good idea... No response. Will this be the same at these "roadshows"?

Charlton Last Monday

Only a six-race program, but some very keen races for the lower class horses. One of the best wins of the day was a new horse to the Tori Hutchins stable, Jilliby Tidalwave. Only transferred recently and showed very good pace to run the fastest time of the day.

The Charlton Club and the family of the late Josie Harvey enjoyed the festivities and the running of the memorial race.

Results

Race one: Bendigo owner, trainer and driver, Glenn Bull, produced the quinella in the opening race with Fake Collection and Blue Ocean respectively. But it did not have the winning drive, it went to Ryan Backhouse. In this race the Josie Harvey memorial, it was very keenly contested

with 5 ½ metres separating the first five horses.

Race two: A local quinella for trainers Tori Hutchins and Michael Gadsden, with Jilliby Tidalwave and Hungry Hogarth. Tori has only very recently taken over the training of this pacer. Jordan Leedham had the winning drive. One of the part-owners who was on course said she is over 90 years old and thoroughly enjoyed the win.

Race three: Another winner that recently changed stables was Faith Full. Now trained by Jamie Egan near Shepparton, has only a small team, has now won races at Charlton at his last few visits. Driven by Connor Chase, it sat behind the leader and came around them to score a good win.

Race four: With very good sectionals throughout the race, Valiente, who thrives in this type of race, basically had the race won on the final bend. Driven by a very good

• Continued on page 15.