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



• Thousands rallied outside State Parliament to protest the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund. (Photos by Blake Lee)

The Message Could Not Have Been Clearer: “Scrap the Tax”

(By Blake Lee)

Thousands of firefighters, farmers and regional Victorians rallied on the steps of State Parliament on Tuesday, May 20, protesting the newly passed Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

The Allan government passed the Bill just before 2 a.m. last Friday morning after a marathon sitting of parliament, following a deal with the Greens and Animal Justice Party.

Volunteers Rally from Across the State

Producing a cacophony of sirens through Melbourne streets during peak hour, fire trucks and volunteer firefighters made the journey from all corners of the state, bringing an estimated 300 fire trucks into the city.

Many attendees left their homes in the early hours of the morning to have their voices heard outside Spring Street, arriving via bus, train and car.

“Scrap the tax” was the message echoed throughout the rally, shouted in powerful unison.

What is the ESVF?

The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF), or “tax” as referred to those in attendance at the rally, is set to replace the existing Fire Services Property Levy

– but will now fund services including VICSES, Triple Zero Victoria, the State Control Centre, Forest Fire Management Victoria and Emergency Recovery Victoria, as well as the previously funded Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV).

“Not only is this tax wrong, it’s \$5 billion that will be ripped from the community to retire debt,” Peter Marshall, secretary of the United Fire Fighters Union said at the rally.

“We want it (the levy) to be rescinded, we want a parliamentary inquiry, and we certainly don’t want farmers being pushed to the brink where they can no longer do it any longer.”

The government said the levy will give “hardworking emergency services the funding and equipment they need – so that communities can respond and recover from floods, fires and storms.”

It also promised to guarantee in legislation that 95 per cent of VICSES and CFA funding will come from the

ESVF, and 90 per cent of FRV’s annual funding will come from the levy.

\$110 million of the funds raised from the levy will deliver a rolling fleet replacement program for VICSES, the CFA and Fire Rescue Victoria.

New Model

“This new funding model is giving our incredible emergency service workers and volunteers the modern equipment they need to help keep communities safe,” Emergency Services Minister Vicki Ward said.

All ratepayers will be affected by the new levy, which includes a fixed charge along with an amount calculated using a property’s improved capital value, which means the land plus any structures built on it. Local councils will be responsible for collecting the levy on behalf of the state government.

For example, under the new levy, farmers will be charged a fixed fee plus 71.8 cents for every \$1,000 of

• Continued on page 2.



• Brim farmers, and volunteer fire fighters for over 50 years, Bev and Colin Appledore.



• Curyo fire fighters.

The Message Could Not Have Been Clearer:

• Continued from page 1.

their property's improved value – a significant increase from the current 28.7 cents. Residential property owners will also see their rate nearly double, from 8.7 cents to 17.3 cents per \$1,000.

Many farmers will face annual increases of thousands of dollars, adding to already substantial financial pressures due to drought and rising living costs.

Farmers and Volunteers Respond

Jacinta Allan last week slightly eased the levy that farmers are required to pay from a planned 189 per cent increase, to 150 per cent.

But farmers and volunteer firefighters say the government has got it wrong.

“What we’re asking here as a community that’s come together from all walks of life – and indeed we’ve had our differences in the past – is that we’re saying very clearly to this government and the cross benches who voted for it: ‘you have got it wrong’,” Marshall said.

“They argue that the surplus delivered in Tuesday’s budget is coming directly from their pockets through the funds that are set to be paid through the levy.

“All of a sudden you have a \$500 million surplus in this budget. Where did it come from? This tax.”

Brad Battin, Victorian Opposition Leader, said that the Liberals will promise to get rid of the levy if elected next year.

“If we are elected in November next year, the Victorian Liberals will scrap the tax,” he said.

Pressure Mounts on Government

The Allan Government has promised to give emergency services volunteers access to a rebate on their principal place of residence or farm. Volunteers can apply for the rebate after paying the levy in full.

Volunteers include active VICSES and CFA, Operational and Support Volunteers who have served for at least 12 months, passed probation and have not been suspended or taken extended leave in the past year.

Pensioners, veterans and single farm enterprises will continue to receive concessions.

Victorian Farmers Federation President, Brett Hosking, highlighted the burden that the levy will have on farmers already doing it tough.

“We’ve got farmers who have walked away from their businesses today to come and be here,” Mr. Hosking said.

“They should be carting water for drought-stricken livestock, sowing crops, shearing, feeding sheep.

“It’s incredible that every summer our CFA volunteers

walk away from their businesses to go and defend their communities.

“Today there’s another fire coming for your businesses and what’s really good is that you’re standing here defending your businesses, your communities and your families,” he said.

Kaniva farmer, John Bennett, spoke at the rally on the importance of volunteers to small country towns.

“Volunteering and co-operation are deeply embedded in farming communities. This unjust tax threatens to unwind that spirit of co-operation,” he said.

In Buloke

Buloke representatives Shire Council Mayor, Alan Getley, told the “Buloke Times” that the council strongly opposes the levy.

“It’s going to affect everybody – every ratepayer, every renter, every business,” he said.

“Buloke ourselves have met with the local government minister, made our views pretty clear and supported motions through the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Rural Councils Victoria opposing the new levy.

“We’ll keep advocating strongly that this tax doesn’t happen and we (Buloke Shire Council) don’t want to see it happen.”

• Continued on page 3.



• Fire trucks line up along Spring Street.



• Secretary of the United Firefighters Union, Peter Marshall.



• Fire fighting jackets were left outside State Parliament.



• Victorian Opposition Leader, Brad Battin, was joined by MPs and colleagues to announce that the Liberals will “Scrap the Tax” if elected in November next year.



• Local farmers De Ferrier, Nadine Frank, Dave Ferrier and Kate Reilly with their signs on the steps of State Parliament.

“Scrap the Tax”

• Continued from page 2.

Councillor Getley reassured residents that there are still enough emergency service vehicles in place if they are required to attend emergencies.

“The Birchip, Donald and Charlton brigades are still here if need be, and the Shire water tankers are full and ready to go... we’ve made sure that they’re full and on standby if water is needed for any emergency,” he said.

From Brim

Farmers Bev. and Colin Appledore made the journey

from Brim and have been volunteer firefighters for over 50 years.

“The tax on farmers is a lot more than anyone else has to pay and we’re the ones going out and fighting the fires,” Bev said.

“We’ve had enough of the unfair tax and had to come down to protest and get our voices heard.”

Premier Jacinta Allan remains firm in her position to introduce the levy, claiming that it is necessary to fund emergency services.

“We’ve taken that existing levy and expanded it to provide them (emergency services) with that additional support,” she said at a press conference on Tuesday.

Calls for Inquiry and Ongoing Protest

As tow trucks removed fire trucks from outside Parliament House and other major city streets, firefighters and farmers vowed that this would not be the end of their fight. With further protest activities planned, pressure on the Allan government to overturn the levy is far from over.



• The message is clear from protestors.



• Kaniva farmer John Bennett.



• Fire fighters watch the rally from the top of their trucks.

Letter to the Editor

Property Levies
(The Editor, “The Times”)

Dear Editor.— I write in the hope that I can provide some brief historical context to the development and adoption of property levies to fund fire and some other emergency services in most Australian states, which have come into focus in Victoria in recent weeks.

The rationale underpinning these levies seems to have been either forgotten or not understood by both opponents and proponents.

The implementation of a property-based levy to replace fire service premiums collected through building and contents insurance happened first in South Australia in the late 1990s; I served as a consultant to the then state government during the legislative process. What was recognised by both the government and the Insurance Council of Australia at the time, was that rising costs of insuring property

were resulting in an increasing number of people abandoning insurance altogether, or failing to fully insure their assets.

The extent of non or under insurance could always be estimated following natural disasters, when insurance claims could be matched against damage and loss assessments.

In some cases it was found that as many as 50% of those impacted by natural disasters had either no insurance, or were carrying significant policy excesses.

The concern was that the system of funding fire and some other emergency services via property insurance was becoming progressively less equitable. After all, if you have a fire, whether you are insured or not, you expect a fire service to turn up and put it out!

Why attach a levy to property? It is primarily property which is protected by fire and state emergency services.

Property values tend to increase over time, so that rising capital improved valuations generally match, if not exceed the rise in cost of the provision of the funded services. The revenue stream the levy generates lends a degree of certainty to the government budget process which was absent from the insurance-based model.

Single title urban property values usually exceed those in rural localities, resulting in higher levy contributions. That reflects the fact that urban properties, particularly in a capital city, are usually covered by fully professional fire services equipped with often specialised equipment to limit and suppress fires, or rescue people trapped in high rise buildings.

Regardless, every property in the state, wherever located, has an expectation of service in the event of an emergency arising. In South Australia, that expectation extends to boat moorings, which are also caught by the levy.

Conceptually at least, an ESL, by whatever name it might be called, provides a firmer foundation for the funding of emergency services, and a more equitable basis for contributing to the cost thereof than was the case with insurance-based levies.

That said, like any tax, the government of the day can manipulate it to operate unfairly and contrary to the interests of certain community groups. Victorian primary producers and CFA volunteers in particular seem to have copped a raw deal in the formulation of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund. The challenge for government is how to preserve the conceptual integrity of the funding model in the face of obvious inequities and pressures for exemption or

partial remission from the levy. For example, primary producers likely have no expectation that a snorkel unit will turn up to put out a fire in a hayshed, so why should they be levied as if they had that expectation?

One hopes that when the new ESVF tax becomes operative on July 1 the government makes provision for a post-implementation review, including public consultation, of the fairness and efficiency of the tax, and that the Auditor-General’s

Office has the opportunity to review, assess and report to Parliament on the disposition of the funds collected.

Given the significance of the impost, we are all entitled to know how the money is spent and whether the system needs any re-thinking.

Regards,

David Green,

Cape Woolamai.

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8177 - SOLUTIONS

Across - 6, Complacent. 8, Idol. 9, Opal. 10, Robin. 11, Gash. 12, Groundsel. 16, Sceptical. 20, Fire. 22, Quilt. 23, Grab. 24, Thou. 25, Improbable.

Down - 1, Copper. 2, Applaud. 3, Hatred. 4, Pebble. 5, Sting. 7, Roost. 13, See. 14, Gingham. 15, Right. 17, Chirpy. 18, Petrol. 19, Arable. 21, Equip.

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.

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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

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info@corackeastwind.com.au
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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.

DEATH BAKER.—

Robert Francis "Bob"
Passed peacefully
at his home,
Goodwin Village Donald,
on May 15, 2025.
Aged 98 yrs.

Dearly loved husband of
Peggy (dec.), loved father
and father-in-law of
Suzanne & Graeme,
Cheryl, Debra & Mark,
Mandy and John &
Rachel. Treasured Pop
and Old Pop of his 16
grandchildren and 28
great-grandchildren

A funeral service for Mr.
Bob Baker was held in
Donald on Tuesday, May
20, 2025.

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DEATH BAKER.—

Robert Francis "Bob"
Dad's love, strength &
compassion will forever
live in our hearts. A life
beautifully lived deserves
to be beautifully remem-
bered.

Dad,
as much as I'm hating not
having you around, I'm
happy to know you are at
peace & Mum will now
have someone to nag
again. You may not be
with us anymore, but our
love for you will never die.
Loving father, grandfather
& great-grandfather.

—Love Always,
Cheryl; Marni & Mark,
Makye, Hudson &
Lincoln; Brent & Tammy,
Abby & Louise; Nathan &
Jessie, Elsie & Jimmy.
Forever in our Hearts.

DEATH BAKER.— "Bob"

The Donald Senior Citi-
zens Club have lost a
much valued member.
Bob's presence at the 500
table where he was still
plying his craft to the end
will be sorely missed.

*A long life extremely well
played, nice work Bob!*

DEATH MORTLOCK.—

Donald William
21/07/1939

Son to Jean and William
Mortlock.

Brother to Heather.

Husband to Elsie.

Father to Darren, Ian,
Carol and Mark.

Father-in-law to Jennine,
Wendy, Phillip and Jenny.
Pa to Kurt & Anna, Jake
& Max, Abbey & Justin,
Shane & Amanda,, Tyson
& Michelle, Ashley, Jesse,
Madison & Bailey, Ethan,
Macie, Lainey & Samuel.
Great-grandpa to Sophie
& Ellie, Jensen, Jobe &
Elodie, Lola and Harry.

Family was
everything to Dad,
and Dad was
everything to us.

*Rest in peace Dad,
We love you.*

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Mother's Day Raffle

Winner: Courtney Doak
from Donald.

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a birthday, or wedding anniversary
or some other special occasion, let
us know and we'll let the world know!

- May 20, Dawson Hollis
- May 21, Betty McMillan
- May 21, Cherry Pearce
- May 23, Olivia Connell
- May 23, Carmen Bath
- May 23, Gerald Walsh
- May 24, Jodie Westerland
- May 26, Annalie Gilmour

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*A final list will appear in next Friday's edition
of the "Buloke Times."*

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569 717 for more information or to donate an item.

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Northern Grampians to Cease Issuing Building Permits

Money saved from Northern Grampians Shire Council's decision to cease issuing building permits will be important in making efficiencies leading up to the 2025/26 draft budget.

The organisation needs to make efficiencies ahead of the budget due to rate capping coupled with cost increases above the cap.

At the May council meeting, councillors voted to stop issuing building permits effective from July 1, 2025.

The decision is subject to the Minister for Planning granting an exemption, releasing the organisation's Municipal Building Surveyor from their obligation to consider building permit applications in accordance with section 216A of the Building Act 1993.

Mayor Karen Hyslop said the decision followed a strategic review of the council's building services, which was designed to align services with demand, optimise resource use, and ensure the organisation delivered value-for-money outcomes.

"We are in the process of developing the draft 2025-26 Annual Budget and must make decisions about how to best allocate the money we will receive from municipal rate charges. It's important that we look for efficiencies and cost savings wherever we can and this is one area where there are alternative service providers," she said.

"The building services review showed the current

model is no longer sustainable or aligned with the community demand.

"Historically, council has played a key role in timely permit administration and local inspection availability. However, recent trends show a decreasing reliance on council."

A report to council showed:

- Permit activity has declined significantly, with private surveyors now handling 70 per cent of the local building work, particularly higher-value, complex projects.

- Council's permit role is largely limited to small-scale structures, such as sheds, with reduced cost recovery and high service expectations.

- Resourcing must shift to reflect reduced permit volumes, maintain compliance, and deliver value-for-money outcomes.

Cr Hyslop said the declining permit demand presented an opportunity to rationalise operations and reinvest savings.

"It is costing council more than \$400,000 a year to issue building permits and the majority of people in our shire apply for permits through private surveyors," she said.

"By making the decision to no longer issue the permits, it

brings the costs down to about \$150,000 a year – that is a significant amount of savings that can be put to better use as we consider our 2025-25 Annual Budget and 2025-29 Council Plan."

Cr Hyslop said until the council received an exemption from the Minister for Planning, it was "business as usual".

"We will also still complete any permit applications we have in transit, it just means we will avoid taking on any new ones," she said.

"There are plenty of private surveyors who provide services locally, who will no longer be competing with us for business, so this decision benefits them as well."

Charlton Ladies Golf

Eight players brought home some excellent scores; Wendy Hargreaves the winner with 41 points.

Followed by Chris Livingston with 38 points. Marj Bartlett winning the 12 hole group on a count back from Pat Mathews with 17 points.

The pennant team had mixed results on Monday at the well presented Wycheproof course, winning against

Bichip in the morning. Loosing to Boort in the afternoon which caused Charlton to slip to fourth position. With one round to play at the slightly green course at Boort on Monday against Wycheproof the club is hoping for a clean slate to finish in touch with the group.



• Chris Livingston (left) and Wendy Hargreaves.

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Planning Victoria’s Renewable Energy Future

[From Vic Grid]

VicGrid, the government body responsible for planning and developing the state’s renewable energy zones, has released the Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan for community and industry feedback ahead of the release of the final plan later this year.

The Victorian Transmission Plan is necessary to keep the lights on and keep energy costs affordable as Victoria’s coal-fired power stations close.

It sets out how much more wind and solar energy Victoria is expected to need over the next 15 years and identifies the most suitable locations for new renewable energy and transmission projects.

In response to significant community and industry consultation conducted in 2024, the draft plan identifies proposed areas for the renewable energy zones.

In total, less than one per cent of the state will be

needed for onshore renewable infrastructure. The proposed renewable energy zones cover about 7 per cent of the state. Not all this land will host energy infrastructure. Many of these projects will also be able to coexist with other land uses.

“Your Decision”

If you’re a landholder in a renewable energy zone, you can choose whether to host new wind or solar farms on your property – it’s your decision and we encourage landholders to discuss this with their neighbours. All proposed projects will continue to be subject to planning and environmental approval processes.

Energy Zones

The seven proposed onshore renewable energy zones identified in the plan were chosen for their suitability to host renewable energy projects, taking into account feedback from communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, the quality of wind and solar resources, existing land uses and how projects can connect to the grid.

VicGrid has listened and learnt from the agriculture industry to ensure the draft plan minimises impacts and focuses development in areas where farming and renewable energy are believed to be more compatible.

VicGrid is also working to ensure new transmission is built in the right places and at the right time to reduce the total amount of new transmission needed and keep costs as low as possible for Victorians.

Minimum Impacts

We have prioritised upgrades to existing transmission lines wherever possible to minimise impacts on landholders and communities and to limit cost impacts on consumer power bills.

The Victorian Transmission Plan has identified the need for four new transmission lines in addition to projects already under way.

The new projects include an additional line to support future offshore wind energy in Gippsland, a second line from South West Victoria to Melbourne, a second line between Yallourn and Hazelwood and

a short line between Truganina and Deer Park in Melbourne.

Where possible, VicGrid will investigate the use of or expansion of existing easements for any new transmission lines.

Compensation

Landowners who host transmission will receive full and fair compensation under the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act. The Victorian Government has also introduced an additional payment of \$8,000 per km per year to recognise the important role landholders play in hosting energy infrastructure.

Projects inside renewable energy zones will be required to contribute to Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds, which have been subject to public consultation and will be finalised before the publication of the final Victorian Transmission Plan. These funds will be in addition to benefits provided by individual proponents.

Projects outside of a final renewable energy zone will also be required to meet standards of community engagement and benefits set out by the government and will be subject to a Grid Impact Assessment. As part of this assessment, the project must prove it will not have a negative impact on other projects inside the zone by limiting their generation and taking up capacity on the grid.

Improved Supply

The Renewable Energy Zone Community Energy Funds will be used to improve energy supply, reliability and affordability for communities,

households and businesses. This could include things like solar panels, microgrids and cheaper energy. VicGrid will work with local councils and communities to understand their priorities for funding. The final Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan, including estimated amounts, will be published alongside the final Victorian Transmission Plan.

People can have their say on the Draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan at engage.vic.gov.au/vicgrid or at one of many in-person hubs and events around Victoria.

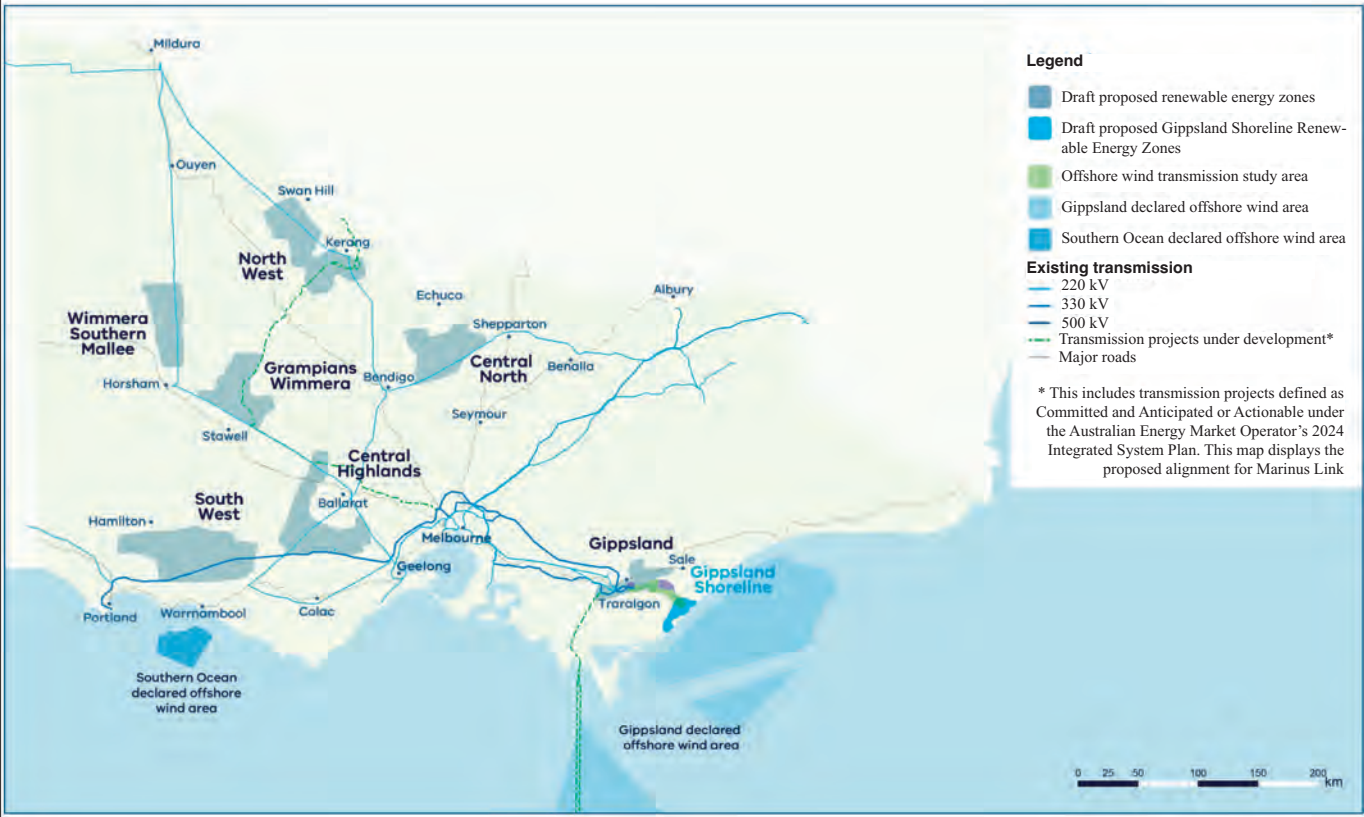
“Benefit for All Victorians”

VicGrid CEO Alistair Parker said, “The transition to renewable energy will benefit all Victorians and boost regional economies, but it needs to be done right with long-term planning, certainty for industry, genuine consultation and real benefits for host communities, landholders and First Peoples.

“We are changing the way energy infrastructure is planned to give communities a real say from the beginning of the process and working closely with key industries like agriculture to ensure they continue to thrive.

“Victoria has already taken big steps in the transition to renewable energy with 40 per cent of the state’s power coming from renewables.

“Through the Victorian Transmission Plan, we can make sure we have the right infrastructure in place to keep the lights on and deliver affordable renewable power to homes and businesses as coal-fired power closes down.”



• Draft proposed renewable energy zones: Seven draft proposed renewable energy zones have been identified across Victoria for onshore renewable energy, and a shoreline renewable energy zone to coordinate offshore wind connections.

Protection of Volunteer Workers: An Important Reminder

This National Volunteer Week (May 19-25), the country’s peak body for workplace health and safety is reminding organisations that unpaid workers must be protected under the same laws as paid employees.

There are more than six million volunteers across Australia, spanning a range of industries from aged care, sport, the arts, crisis response, to environmental protection.

The Australian Institute of Health and Safety (AIHS) chairperson, Cameron Montgomery, said workplace health and safety (WHS) obligations apply to every worker in Australia, including those at volunteer organisations.



“Volunteers play a vital role in our community. Whether it’s helping a neighbour collect groceries, joining the mud army to clean up following a natural disaster, working the tills at a local charity shop, or running the local soccer team or theatre group, volunteers are an essential workforce,” Mr Montgomery said.

He added that all volunteer organisations, which employ at least one person to work on a paid basis, must adhere to WHS laws.

“For organisations, every safety risk, both physical and mental, must be assessed. Practical means of ensuring volunteer safety include ensuring all equipment is suitable and safe to use, providing volunteers with PPE, and giving clear instructions,

training, and supervision on how to work safely,” he said.

“Volunteers are also responsible for their own safety and must not adversely affect others’ health and safety, including other volunteers, people they may be assisting, or members of the public. This, in part, can be achieved by following procedures, policies and instructions from colleagues and other volunteers.”

Other Tips

- Sharing regular updates to WHS policies and procedures through newsletters, an organisation’s website, and meetings.

- Encouraging volunteers to contribute ideas on how to improve safety, through email, a “suggestions box”, or regular meetings.

- Bringing in health and safety professionals to advise if requested.

“Everyone has the right to go to work and come home safely, and that includes those who give up their time and donate their skills working as volunteers,” Mr Montgomery said.

“National Volunteer Week is an important opportunity to recognise and celebrate the contribution volunteers make, and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the more than 100 volunteers who work with us at the AIHS, helping to improve safety in workplaces across Australia.”

Safe Work Australia has a range of resources to assist volunteer organisations here: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/industry-and-business/volunteer-s/resources>

“Lies We Tell”

A gothic thriller set in Ireland is the captivating story of the “Lies We Tell” screening at The Rex this weekend.

Based on the novel “Uncle Silas” by Sheridan Le Fanu, a bereaved young woman, Maud Ruthyn (Agnes O’Casey), is grieving her father’s recent death before returning to her ancestral home of “Knowl” where, on her father’s demise, she has inherited a vast amount of money making her a most eligible prospect for would-be suitors.

Meeting with trustees of her father’s estate – Dr. Bryerly (Mark Doherty), and Captain Ilbury (Kieran Roche) – the pair caution Maud about her uncle Silas, who has been awarded sole authority over her person and property. Her uncle is a person of ill repute, so the pair are concerned that his presence, should he move into her home, will tarnish her reputation.

Within a short period of time Uncle Silas (David Wilmot), along with his son Edward (Chris Walley), daughter Emily (Holly Sturton), and mysterious French governess “Madame” (Grainne Keenan), arrive at Knowl. Things begin

to spiral downwards as Uncle Silas encourages Edward to pursue a romantic relationship with Maud – ultimately with an eye on accessing her immense fortune. Maud’s rejection of Edward sees her freedom slowly being reduced. As time passes, Maud becomes aware that she has no legal recourse to protest the conditions in which she finds herself. Legal loopholes are there to be exploited by her uncle and used against her.

Each of the characters seem as though they are now circling around her, as her options are reduced and safety becomes elusive.

Visually atmospheric and audibly suspenseful (footsteps on wooden floors, slamming doors), Knowl becomes a forbidding place of secrets as a tense and relentless struggle unfolds for Maud’s survival.

“Lies We Tell”(MA15+ 88mins |Thriller) screens Saturday, May 24, 8 p.m. | Sunday, May 25, 2 p.m. | Tuesday, May 27, 8 p.m.

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• Ann Dunstan addresses some of the visitors whilst standing in front of the new notice board.

“Digging Up the Past”

The Swanwater West Cemetery Trust hosted a very pleasant occasion called “Digging Up The Past” on Sunday, May 4.

President of the Trust, Wayne Jones, welcomed everyone to the cemetery, which is situated about 8 km from Cope Cope on the Cope Cope/Traynor’s Lagoon Rd. Wayne spoke briefly about the trials and tribulations of maintaining an old cemetery in a place where the population has dwindled substantially.

The first burials in the cemetery were in 1877 and the first trustees were J. Shean, W.W. Watson, N. McPhee, W.B. Trollope and W.H. Howard. C.J. Sparrow held the position of secretary/treasurer for 36 years and Harold Bath for 53 years. The current secretary/treasurer is Carol Campbell and she has taken to the task with great enthusiasm, applying for local government grants to carry out required maintenance on the site.

One grant has secured a very impressive notice board, built by Donald Steel, which gives the location of the graves of people buried there.

The cemetery is predominantly Methodist, as it was built next to a Methodist Church, which is long gone, but there are several Anglican, four Presbyterian and two Catholic graves as well. The notice board is well positioned and the information on it, and also on several of the gravesites, is very well done.

Bushland

The delightful bushland at the rear of the cemetery is quite beautiful, consisting only of Bulloak trees with native flax bushes as the understorey. Former secretary/treasurer, Berys Jones said that it is very beautiful in the spring when the grass is green, the flax is flowering and the freesias, planted by the early settlers, are in full bloom and emit their lovely perfume.

Carol secured another small grant to put on the event, “Digging up the Past” which was to showcase the work recently completed by the trust. This provided the 20 visitors with a lovely barbecue lunch, which was cooked by Carol’s son and a delicious afternoon tea, which was held

in the Donald Courthouse at the end of the day. Karen Probst, Northern Grampians councillor, was present on the day and enjoyed viewing the fruits of Carol’s hard work and talking to the visitors.

Cemetery Walk

Ann Dunstan conducted a detailed cemetery walk and read out the histories of many of the people buried there, many of whom still have descendants in the district.

On your next trip from Donald to St Arnaud or vice

versa, why not detour at Cope Cope and pay a visit to this very interesting site? There is some seating and you can have a picnic lunch.

The bushland at the back will provide the shade, if needed. On your way back to Cope Cope you cannot help but notice Brown’s Lake, which is still holding water and it is not too much of an effort to take a drive through there as well, as you make your way back to the highway.



• President of the Cemetery Trust, Wayne Jones talks to Brian Brasier, secretary of the Donald History Society in the lovely bushland at the rear of the cemetery.

REZ Map Redrawn to Zero In on Mallee Communities

Member for Mallee, Dr. Anne Webster, says the Victorian Labor government has sharpened its sights on Marnoo, Navarre, Beulah, War-racknabeal, Normanville and Quambatook to bear the brunt of the VNI West transmission line, wind turbine and solar panel burden of their energy targets.

Updated Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) mapping released this week now proposes that Mallee host 3 of the state’s 6 REZ, with Coalition-held Gippsland and Nicholls hosting 1 each, and Wannon hosting 2.

“While this is good news for the Horsham, Robinvale, Charlton, Donald, Wyche-proof and Kerang communities that were included in the original 2021 REZ mapping and earmarked as Tier 1 top priority on page 5 of Labor’s September 2024 plan, I am very concerned that yet again Labor’s railroading of the energy agenda again identifies political targets instead of listening to the community and the science,” Dr Webster said.

Obfuscation

“We saw Labor use the same obfuscation and hiding behind ‘health advice’ for decisions the Andrews Government took during the COVID-19 Pandemic, and here again we see regional Victoria kicked to the curb to achieve political targets.”

Dr Webster noted the new mapping goes out of its way to avoid much of the Labor-held greater Ballarat region and state electorate of Ripon – which were in the original “V3” REZ mapping and Labor-held Bendigo seats including the Premier’s own, which were in the original “V2” REZ mapping.

“I hate to be cynical, but could this mapping have anything to do with unprecedented huge national swing against Labor in Bendigo after The Nationals’ brilliant campaign falling painfully short earlier this month and the November 2026 state election?” Dr Webster asked.

Swings

“Having made my concerns clear about Labor’s railroading of farmers and regional communities, there were strong federal election swings to The Nationals in Mallee at Inglewood, Bridge-water, Newbridge, Carisbrook

and Talbot, which were within the original REZ mapping.”

“I will always take a strong stand fighting for regional communities, particularly where locals have not been listened to and where energy cowboys pay lip service to gaining social licence.

“Victoria’s newest REZ mapping will further embolden the cowboys to crack on with non-disclosure agreements, buying off farmers and pitting neighbour versus neighbour, stirring bad blood where it had never been so before.

“Victorian Labor’s globally unprecedented ‘renewables only’ approach is not underpinned by gas, coal or nuclear energy. At the geographical scale proposed, the Allan Government is taking yet another reckless policy approach, saddling Victorians with constantly increasing electricity bills. Worse still, they are now hitting up the same victims of their radical REZ approach with steep hikes to the emergency services levy.

“Let me also be clear – there is no ‘renewable drought’. As I said last winter, the dunkelflaute is a well-known phenomenon and cautionary tale on an all-renewables approach. Farmers are struggling with the early indications of an actual drought in the region, but farmers are used to challenges and take a responsible approach to farming in Australia.

“They save and prepare for the lean times with backup – a baseload, if you like, of assets and storages such as fodder – for the lean times.



• Dr. Anne Webster.

Labor’s all-renewables approach goes all-in on an energy grid without backup – batteries just won’t cut it. So, spare me the talk of a ‘renewables drought’ – Labor’s only drought is of common sense and giving a damn about regional Australians.”

Church Notices

DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES “East Wimmera Parish”

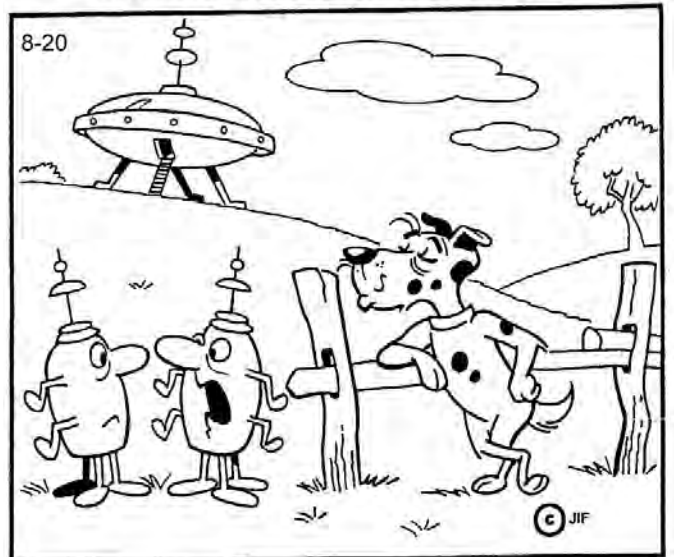
Birchip	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
Boort	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
Banyena	No Mass
Charlton	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream out to churches without Mass)	
Donald	10.30 a.m.
(Livestream in)	
St. Arnaud	8.30 a.m.
W’proof (Sat.)	7.00 p.m.

Fr. Gerry Prunty
0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator
– Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976

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For St. Joseph's School Community: A Busy Month

Grade 6 students from St Joseph's School recently travelled to Bendigo to take part in the GRIP Student Leadership Conference, accompanied by staff members Mrs Olive and Mrs Lanyon.

The event is tailored to equip young leaders with practical skills and a deeper understanding of their responsibilities. Students participated enthusiastically and returned with a renewed sense of purpose. The school has also invested in resources from the day to support continued leadership development.

Learning Through Culture:

St Joseph's students took part in the "Country & Belonging" Regional Arts Program, a special initiative designed to deepen their knowledge of First Nations history, art, and culture. Funded by Charlton Arts, Charlton Neighbourhood House, and supported by the Charlton Lions Club (which provided a daily sausage sizzle), the program included hands-on creative projects. Grade 3-6 students even brought their artwork to life with overhead drone photography.

Running into Success

To cap off an already action-packed week, students participated in both the school Cross Country and Winter Sports events. The energy and school spirit on display were commendable, with students showing strong sportsmanship

and embodying the school's core values of safety, responsibility, and respect.

A special congratulations to Vinny, Lila, Mia, Megg, Flynn, Toby, and Sophie, who qualified to represent St Joseph's at the Sandhurst Division Cross Country in Bendigo.

Celebrating Mother's Day

The school hosted a heartfelt morning tea to celebrate Mother's Day, welcoming mothers, grandmothers, and significant women in students' lives.

A highlight was the attendance of four generations of the Wright family, making it a truly memorable occasion. The event served as a warm reminder of the vital role these women play in supporting students and the wider school community.

Dance Program Energises Students

Last week, students embraced rhythm and movement through the STOMP Dance Program. The sessions, led by dynamic instructor, Izzy, built not only dance skills but also confidence, teamwork, and creativity.

Students performed choreographed dances at a showcase event on Friday morning to an appreciative audience.

Laudato Si' Week: Raising Hope

To mark the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' Laudato Si' encyclical, students and staff at St Joseph's has been actively reflecting on environmental stewardship. Each classroom planted a Vegepod to grow healthy, waste-free snacks. A special prayer assembly was held, and students are creating art to honour the week's theme, "Raising Hope".

Storytime Unites Readers

On Wednesday, St Joseph's participated in National Simultaneous Storytime, now in its 25th year, with this year's chosen book, "Truck Cat". The story follows the adventures of Tinka, a cat who lives on the road. Staff read the book across classrooms, followed by engaging literacy activities to inspire students' love of reading.

Looking Ahead:

Staff and students are looking forward to kicking off Catholic Education Week celebrations next week, with a school open morning on Monday. The event will showcase student learning and highlight the spirit of community that defines St Joseph's School.



• Sophie Roberts and Lila Lanyon crossed the line in first place in their age group Cross Country.



• Four generations of the Wright Family. Left to right: Kelly Wright, Tess Wright, Ruby Wright, Mia Wright, Deb Hobbs and Pat Mathews



• Ivy Giles, Oliver Power-hall and Jovakkim Niju rehearsing their STOMP dances.



• Grades 3-6 making a river snake.

Tiny Town Funding Secured for Nandaly

Buloke Shire Council is pleased to announce that Nandaly will receive \$50,000 in funding through the Victorian Government's Tiny Towns Fund to upgrade the town's old tennis courts into a new multi-purpose community space.

The project will transform the underused courts into a flexible outdoor area suitable for various court-based sports and community activities, opening the door to basketball, pickleball, and other recreational uses that meet local needs

This is the fifth project in the Buloke Shire to be funded through the Tiny Towns Fund. Council has previously secured funding for projects in Berrillock, Culgoa, Watchem and Nullawil, all developed in close partnership with local communities and shaped by their individual Community Plans.

Buloke Shire Council Mayor, Cr Alan Getley, welcomed the latest announcement.

"This is great news for Nandaly," he said. "These projects are community-led

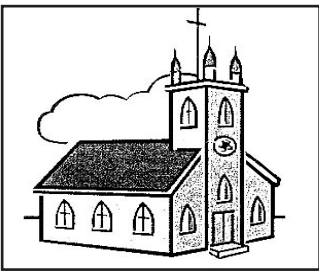
and aim to improve what matters most to residents. In this case, it's about revitalising an unused space and turning it into something active, inclusive and social."

Work on several of the earlier projects funded through the program is already well under way, with some nearing completion.

The Tiny Towns Fund is an initiative of the Victorian Government, supporting towns with fewer than 5,000 residents to improve local infrastructure and community assets. More than \$5.1 million was awarded to 159 projects across the state in the latest funding round.

"We're grateful to the State Government for continuing to invest in rural Victoria," Cr Getley said. "Each project funded through the Tiny Towns Fund program helps to

build pride, connection and liveability in our smallest towns."



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Friday, May 30
St. Paul's, Birchip, 5 p.m.

Sunday, June 1
St. Martin's, Charlton, 9 a.m.
St. George's, Donald, 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity, W'burn, 3 p.m.

Cabbaritta Golden Girls

A celebration of past and present members of Charlton's Cabbaritta Country Women's Association (CWA) were joined by guests as the recognition of fifty years of service was applauded in festive style at last Monday's golden anniversary.

In an afternoon which highlighted the "sisterhood" and communal outreach of the organization, speakers and service award recipients reinforced the message of enjoyment for which CWA

membership is renowned.

The event, held at the Charlton Bowling Club rooms, saw deft touches of elegance in a high-tea setting, welcoming the more than seventy guests who attended. Delicate

floral centre-pieces incorporating filigree 50th numerals featured on all the tables, along with fine bone china and hand-crafted chocolate boxes. The creativity of Branch members Donna McCallum and Shirleen Stafford had also produced individually made invitations, along with the stylish chocolate box gifts for all attendees.

Behind the scenes the kitchen was humming with activity. Benches were filled with an array of heirloom teapots – sparkling and ready for use – as members assiduously filled cake stands with exquisite morsels of afternoon tea fare before the formalities began.

An extensive display of handwork, archival scrapbooks, and CWA memorabilia complemented the occasion, revealing the scope of the organisation's activities and outreach across the years.

In her opening address, Cabbaritta president, Maria Perger acknowledged the contributions of the Charlton Day Branch and Younger Set who forged the traditions of the local CWA. Asking those gathered to stand and say the CWA Collect and sing the national anthem, she then welcomed East Wimmera Group president Pam Brightwell, and incoming president, Barabara Douglass, along with Buloke Councillor, Bruce Stafford who formally opened the celebrations. Representatives from East Wimmera Group Branches included Bealiba, Kara (St. Arnaud), Marnoo, Stuart Mill, Wedderburn and Wirrim (Birchip).

Opening his address Cr. Stafford praised the "strength, resilience and dedication of the women who have kept this Branch thriving for half a century."

Citing his own personal connections to the organization, Bruce said his mother, Rose's involvement during the 1940s had been as editor and publisher of "The Countrywoman" magazine. Now through his wife Shirleen's in-

• Continued on page 11



• Fifty years of service by (left to right) Margaret Fradd, Bernice Kenny and Pat Sutton was acknowledged by East Wimmera Group President Pam Brightwell (right). An incredible 70 years of CWA involvement by Pat Sutton was spread between the St. Arnaud and Charlton Branches.



• Formally opening the special anniversary was Buloke Councillor Bruce Stafford pictured with Cabbaritta member Bernice Kenny. Bernice made the celebration cake and was one of three recipients to receive a 50 year Long Service certificate and badge.



• A milestone anniversary as Cabbaritta CWA Branch celebrated its Golden Anniversary last Monday afternoon. Established in May of 1975 foundation members (left to right) Margaret Fradd (secretary), Patti Jones (treasurer) and Margaret Hinks (vice president) were joined by the current president, Maria Perger (second right) in the cutting of the birthday cake. Foundation president, Val Robinson was unable to attend, but sent greetings and congratulations for the occasion.



• CWA memories were shared by the many visitors attending the anniversary celebration.



• Tasked with keeping the Cabbaritta legacy going are the current executive (left to right) Bronwyn Fisher (vice president), Maria Perger (president) and Liz Richardson (secretary). Sue Walsh (treasurer) was an apology on the day.



• It was a hive of activity behind the scenes as the party preparations were finalized. Left to right are Janet Stafford and Bronwyn Simpson. Janet received a ten year Long Service certificate and Bronwyn, a twenty year certificate. Bronwyn's reflections included the interesting fact that both she and her mother were the first mother/daughter combination to serve as Group Presidents at the same time.



• Amongst the many visitors attending the function were (left to right) Brenda and Lyn Box (Stuart Mill Branch) Juanita Halden and Julie Benaim (Wedderburn Branch) and Maureen Donnellon (Wirrim Branch).

Celebrate an Anniversary

• Continued from page 10

volvement, Bruce highlighted the social advocacy and the depth of care which has created the legacy of “connection, compassion and capability which lives on today”.

For the support and strengthening of the local community Bruce said, “To all the members of Cabbaritta Branch, past and present – I congratulate you on 50 years of remarkable service.”

The cutting of the birthday cake (made by Bernice Kenny) followed, and was undertaken by three of the foundation members – Margaret Hinks (vice-president), Margaret Fradd (secretary) and Patti Jones (treasurer). Val Robinson, (Foundation president) was unable to attend, but sent an apology and special greetings for the celebration. The gathering then joined in the singing of “Happy Birthday”.

Group president Pam Brightwell was then invited to come forward and present Long Service Awards to the following recipients, acknowledging their commitment and contributions to the Branch.

10 Year Service: Janet Stafford (current craft secretary), Sue Walsh (current treasurer), Donna McCallum (junior co-ordinator).

20 Year Service: Pam Rosewall, Moira Olive, Bronwyn Simpson, Lyn Southwell.

50 Year Service: Margaret Fradd (founding secretary), Bernice Kenny, Pat Sutton (whose CWA involvement spans 70 years). These recipients also received the first Service Badges in Victoria at Cabbaritta’s 40th anniversary.

Recipients were encouraged to share their reflections on what CWA means to them, each drawing on memories, emphasizing their pride in the organization and the connections, friendships, networks

and outreach which CWA has facilitated for their own personal and collective growth.

In concluding the formalities, president Maria congratulated award recipients, and thanked Branch members “who have gone above and beyond to make this afternoon a success”. Recognition for the work of the creative team, the cooks and the behind-the-scenes crew was acknowledged, before attendees were thanked and wished a safe journey home.

“We look forward to celebrating 100 years of the CWA organization in Charlton in just four years’ time,” Maria said as the afternoon wound to a close. Proceedings ended with the saying of the CWA Motto.

The crowd then made the most of catching up with friends and acquaintances during the afternoon tea as memories and reminiscences were shared over a cuppa.



• Making the most of a catch-up chat and taking time to enjoy the extensive display of handcrafts were (left to right) Sandra Patton and Lyn Grylls.

Dianne Speaks of Life in Wartime

(By Maureen Donnellon, secretary)

What an amazing day to be at Birchip Probus for the April meeting and to have an ANZAC address by the daughter of a digger and to have present, her mother , the wife of a WW2 soldier, Mrs Vera Woods, about to celebrate her 100th birthday anniversary, and able to add her own personal details about what it was like to live through war, something very few people are alive to share in 2025.

Guest speaker Dianne Lehmann introduced her mother Vera and said she was one of 6 children, 4 boys – Ray, Ron, Lindsay and Jackie and two girls Frances and Vera. Jackie died at about 8 months and the family grew up in Aspendale, Victoria. Vera’s family owned a Palais and picnic ground in Aspendale.

War broke out in New Guinea and Vera’s two brothers enlisted and subsequently went to war. Ron was 18 and Ray was 23. War was

terrible and both died; however, Ray’s remains have never been found. Ray has his name in the Rotunda at the Romana Cemetery, Port Moresby, and Ron is buried there. Last year Vera had her DNA collected through the University of Queensland by professors, in conjunction with the Australian Department of Defence, to be used if the body was ever found, so the family may have some closure.

As a result of the stress on his family, Vera’s father, after

losing two of his sons and another eligible to serve, bought a farm, as he knew that farmers had a chance of being exempt as they were valuable to the country by growing food. The film “Saving Private Ryan” tells a similar family story.

Memorials

In 1995 on the 50th Anniversary, Frances travelled to Port Moresby on the Russian ship Mikhail Sholokov to see the memorials, while Vera’s father flew to PNG in 1953 to view the grave and memorial

as a chosen person, which was wonderful for him and some small form of closure. It was of great comfort to see that both were acknowledged as soldiers who fought too.

Dianne’s father, the remaining brother, also joined the Army, was posted to Perth and never had to leave Australia to fight. Vera’s parents never recovered from their loss and the family was changed forever. Vera’s father had to work the farm by himself for those years. However his remaining son was allowed to come home to help for some harvest and sowing times.

Vera’s sister Frances wrote to John Howard when he was Prime Minister thanking him for the new memorials in New Guinea and Kokoda and received a very nice letter back, both of which Di read to us.

Dianne has recently been shown some pictures of rocks near Mareeba in Queensland which was where the soldiers trained and they have the names of all the soldiers on them. It is a place of pilgrimage for a future trip for family members.

Life during World War 2 was very hard on all the families, Vera acknowledged. There were shortages and rationing of all food and fuel, clothing and coupons for necessities. The worst part was never knowing what was really happening and where the boys were, if they were in the thick of fighting, or prisoners, wounded or dead.

Di concluded by reading a very thought provoking reflection about the losses and the lack of gains since the war, which pointed out the paradox of our time. I have picked out some of the most important of these.

We have things such as taller buildings, but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we buy more, but enjoy less, have more medicine but less wellness; multiplied our posses-

sions but have reduced our values. We have learned how to make a living, but not a life. We have been to the Moon, but cannot seem to cross the road to speak to a neighbour; conquered outer space, but not inner space; known times of steep profits and shallow relationships; fancier houses but broken homes; days of two incomes but more divorces; pills that can help give life but can also kill; and we have done larger things but not better things.

The writer of the piece urges the reader to spend more time with loved ones, as they are not always going to be there. Say “I love you” to your partners and families, look out for your neighbours and friends and finally, “Life is not measured by the number

of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

We were all very moved by Dianne’s words and Vera’s comments and could imagine how hard it was for those young men who were used to using guns, but only for shooting rabbits, then expected to kill men from a country they barely knew, who were the enemy. All thought of how that must have affected all families at that time and hoped our families would never know war the way Vera and her family had done. There was a lot for us on which to reflect.

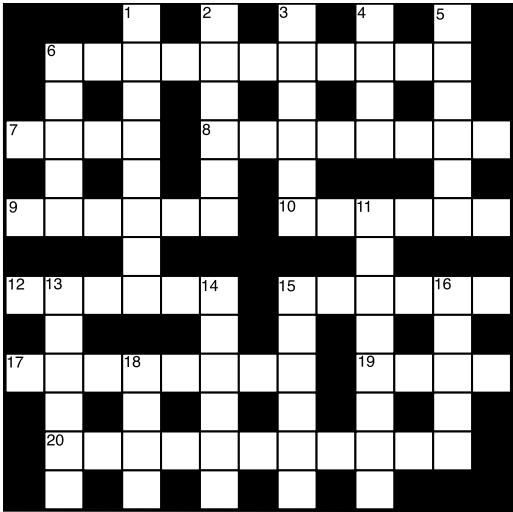
Dianne and Vera were thanked and invited to join us for lunch, while Vera was wished a very happy birthday by all.



• Dianne Lehmann and her mother Mrs Vera Woods with Lorraine Lea (Entertainment Officer) Birchip Combined Probus.

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8178



ACROSS

- 6. Feasible (11)
- 7. Couple (4)
- 8. Fearless (8)
- 9. Sweet (6)
- 10. Game (6)
- 12. Victor (6)
- 15. Colour (6)
- 17. Malicious (8)
- 19. Jot (4)
- 20. Unravel (11)

DOWN

- 1. Herb (8)
- 2. Rigid (6)
- 3. Thwart (6)
- 4. Competent (4)
- 5. Live (6)
- 6. Greek philosopher (5)
- 11. Vehicle (8)
- 13. Hamper (6)
- 14. Purify (6)
- 15. Column (6)
- 16. Measure (5)
- 18. Tooth (4)

• Solution next issue.



• Sue and Jeff Stokes on the front verandah of Cobham Hall.

Through Glenloth and Teddywaddy... Golden Grains Museum Hosts Memorable Tour

The Charlton Golden Grains Museum rolled back the years on Sunday, May 3, with a fascinating bus tour through the historic rural landscapes of Glenloth and Teddywaddy.

The journey offered participants a unique opportunity to explore and reflect on the rich heritage of the district.

The tour focused on highlighting significant local landmarks – some still standing, others now only preserved in memory. Among the locations visited were the sites of former country schools, the River Tennis Courts, the Glenloth Hotel, and the Glenloth Memorial Hall. At some stops, like the Glenloth racetrack and Glenloth football ground, no physical trace remains.

Passengers included both locals and visitors with ties to the area, all keen to learn more or simply reminisce. Each was provided with a detailed tour map, historical notes, and photographs to enrich the experience.

Special guests on the tour were Frank Sait and Esme Avery (née Churchill), both former pupils of Teddywaddy State School. Frank delighted the group with a commentary, offering personal insights as the bus wound its way

through the countryside. Stuart Giles also contributed, sharing his knowledge of the families and farms along the route.

The tour concluded at “Cobham Hall”, the historic homestead of Greg and Marea Judd, where guests enjoyed a delightful afternoon tea in picturesque surroundings.

By all accounts, it was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative afternoon – one that celebrated community, memory, and the enduring spirit of the Charlton district.



• Esme Avery, Basil Avery and Frank Sait.



• Group photo at Cobham Hall.

The Photo Says It All



• This row of CFA jackets, previously worn by fire brigade volunteers, has been left hanging on a fence on the outskirts of Donald.

Wedderburn's First Responder Team Chalks Up Two Decades

Ambulance Victoria's (AV) Wedderburn first responder team has celebrated 20 years of providing local pre-hospital emergency care.

It began as a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), with the first crew hitting the road on April 25, 2005.

CERTs are made up of volunteer first responders and are located in less populated and more remote areas of the state. CERT members typically work within their local community, so are often first on scene and can provide immediate care until an ambulance arrives.

“Following almost a year of weekly training, the Wedderburn CERT car and pagers went live on ANZAC Day 2005,” Paramedic Community Support Co-ordinator – Loddon, Josh King, said.

First Crew

“The first volunteer crew rostered on was Lisa Barrass and Glenn Thompson. It is truly fitting that 20 years on, Glenn was once again on the roster and responded to a call-out whilst being a part of representing the team at the Wedderburn ANZAC Day Service.”

In 2016, the team transitioned to an Ambulance Community Officer (ACO) team.

ACOs are first responders employed on a casual basis, working on-call. They are trained to provide advanced first aid and can transport patients to hospital.

“We have come a long way from where it all began those many years ago. Transitioning from a CERT to an ACO team, getting a stretcher ambulance and our own branch, relocating to a better home in 2021, and now in 2025 being the busiest ACO team in the whole state,” Josh said.

“We are truly blessed to have the experience and wisdom of Glenn, as a founding member of the Wedderburn CERT, as well as Dede-jo

Williams, Karen Thompson, Bruce Hargreaves and Reece Carroll who all commenced as CERT members and remain active and integral parts of the Wedderburn ACO team today.”

Achievements

The Wedderburn first responder team has had several achievements over its two decades of operation, one of the highlights being named AV Loddon Mallee Team of the Year in 2020.

Josh said the team is made up of community heroes.

“This is a team of highly motivated, skilled and passionate individuals, who reflect the true essence of what it is to be a team and a work family,” he said.

“We have become known as a hub for training the future paramedics of AV with many past and present paramedicine students spending time as a first responder in Wedderburn.

“Every member of the team, past and present, is a community hero and I am so proud and honoured to work alongside each and every one of them.”

Crucial Efforts

Josh said the team is indebted to the efforts of the late Shirley Smith, who was crucial in establishing the CERT 20 years ago.

“Shirley was always a strong advocate for ambulance services in the area and was a very active member of the Charlton Ambulance Auxiliary,” Josh said.

“Shirley knew from her personal experiences that the Wedderburn community deserved better ambulance services and lobbied for many years, with other community members, to start a local CERT.

“Although Shirley is no longer with us, her spirit, passion and legacy live on in the Wedderburn ambulance team.”

Last year, Wedderburn ACOs Glenn, Dede-jo and Bruce spoke about their first responder careers after being recognised for AV service milestones.

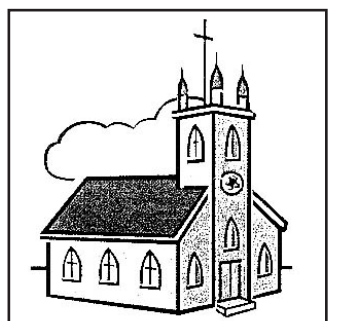
This week is National Volunteer Week, May 19-25, an annual event which highlights the important role of volunteers in our community and invites people not currently volunteering to give it a go.



www.granitecommunitychurch.com

At Granite Church
10.30 a.m.

Speaker: Ross Barnes
Baptist Union of Victoria



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

Donald, 10 a.m., with Jacqui Douglas - “Cuppa” to follow
Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services,
10 a.m. Sunday, June 1

Contact Number: 5497 1033

Podcast Challenge

Late last term our Birchip P-12 School Year 9 students entered the Podcast Challenge; an initiative run by Anglicare.

Mental ill-health and problem gambling often go hand in hand, resulting in complex challenges that impact individuals, families, and communities.

Anglicare Victoria's Gambler's Help Program has partnered with Making Media, Bendigo TAFE, and local schools in the Loddon Mallee region in a Podcast Challenge to raise awareness about these issues and encourage young people to access mental health support services early to prevent future harm.

The Year 9 Students interviewed Dan (who has experience with gambling), Emily (a Headspace Clinician), Kathryn (works at

YoDAA to assist people with drug and alcohol addictions), and Janaya (Gamblers Help).

This podcast challenge means our Year 9 students are now competing with other schools. The school with the most podcast "listens", in total, will be the winner of the challenge and will win \$3,000 in recording equipment.

If you would like to listen to the podcasts and assist the students in their challenge, then please go to <https://online.flipbuilder.com/xjke/fqvd/>

Advance Program

Birchip P-12 School Year 9 students also participated in a week of enriching activities as part of the school's Advance Program which entailed



Drivers Education, the Podcast Challenge, a day in Bendigo to experience ten pin bowling and a shooting range, and then a two-day intensive Wilderness First Aid program.

Whilst the Year 9 cohort was participating in the Advance Program, the Year 7 and 8 students were enjoying their school camp to the Grampians, and the Year 10 and 11 students went on work-experience at locations across the state.



• Cassie Tynan, Asha Lee, Mia Sharp and Esther Bourke record their podcast.

Leap Forward for Nhill Renewable Energy Facility

Construction of a new solar farm and battery at Nhill is now complete and has successfully connected to the electricity grid – supplying cheap renewable energy to power operations at Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water (GWMWater).

This Nhill Renewable Energy Facility covers 70 percent of the electricity consumed by GWMWater's 330 sites, propelling the water corporation toward achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2025 and reaching net zero emissions by 2035.

The facility comprises 6.5 megawatt (MW) solar farm with a 2.75 MW (6.5 MWh) battery system fully integrated and connected to the local grid.

Lower Power Bills

This investment in renewable energy will help lower power bills for GWMWater, which means they can continue to deliver affordable

water and sewer services to the community.

The facility is being jointly developed, owned and operated between GWMWater and Vibe Energy, an energy infrastructure company based in South Australia.

The energisation of the Vibe Energy high-voltage connection asset is the first stage in the commissioning of the Nhill Renewable Energy Facility, and a major milestone for the project.

The project is expected to be fully commissioned by mid-2025.

Victoria is on track to reach its target of 95 percent renewable energy generation

by 2035 and net zero emissions by 2045.

Great Asset

"This solar farm and battery will be a great asset for the local water corporation, helping to reduce their running costs and help provide affordable water services into the future," said Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action Sheena Watt.

"The connection to the electricity grid represents a significant leap forward for GWMWater, working towards becoming a carbon-neutral, net-generator of electricity," said Grampian Wimmera Mallee Water Managing Director Mark Williams.

Tree Grants Help Bees Thrive

Community groups across Australia will create more vital habitat for bees and other pollinators, thanks to the Trees for Bees Community Tree Grants, backed by the When Bee Foundation and Carman's.

Habitat loss is one of the greatest threats to bees, with increasing urbanisation, bushfires and floods reducing critical areas where they forage and breed.

Now in its third round, the Community Tree Grants program provides grants of up to \$500 to schools, clubs and community groups to plant pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs in their local area.

The program is run by the When Bee Foundation in partnership with Carman's and is launched each year as part of the celebrations for World Bee Day on Tuesday, May 20, 2025.

Since 2023, the program has awarded 46 grants across Australia, supporting the planting of about 4,300 pollinator-friendly trees and shrubs with nearly 7,500 community members involved.

Inspiring

When Bee Foundation CEO Fiona Chambers said it's inspiring to see communities across Australia come together to plant for pollinators.

"Pollinators play an essential role in our food systems, with one in three mouthfuls of the food we eat depending on bees for pollination," Ms Chambers said.

"The Trees for Bees Community Tree Grant program is about creating lasting habitats for pollinators and strengthening local communities.

"The program is a simple yet powerful way for communities to come together and make a real difference."

Carman's Founder Carolyn Creswell said they are thrilled to be working with When Bee Foundation again on such an important program for bee populations and local communities.

Impact

"What I love most about this program is seeing the impact it has on both a community level by bringing people together for the planting days, and on a bigger level supporting the pollination of crops for Aussie farmers," Ms Creswell said.

This year, 20 grants are available, with applications open to community organisations, not-for-profits, school groups, Landcare groups, sporting and gardening clubs and sustainability groups.

Applicants will be judged on their proposed project's benefits to pollinators, the area covered and community impact.

Applications are now open and close on July 18, 2025, at 5 p.m. AEST. Find out more and apply at whenbeefoundation.org.au/communitytree-grants



• Nhill Renewable Energy Facility Ministerial Event held on Sunday, May 18 (left to right): Monica Revell (CEO, Hindmarsh Shire Council), Ron Ismay (Mayor, Hindmarsh Shire Council), Alistair Clouston (Site Manager, Next Generation Electrical), Sheena Watt (Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Action), Luke Harley (Senior Project Manager, Next Generation Electrical), Graeme Dick (Manager Strategic Infrastructure Projects, GWMWater), Mark Williams (Managing Director, GWMWater), Tim Rule (Head of Operations, Next Generation Electrical), Caroline Welsh (Chairperson, GWMWater), Nick Mumford (Executive Manager Infrastructure), Chris Baker (Senior Project Engineer, GWMWater), Uncle Ron Marks (Independent Aboriginal Board Delegate, GWMWater).

Flags to Fly for a Special Week

Northern Grampians Shire councillors will raise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in Stawell and St Arnaud to mark National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.

National Sorry Day is on Monday, May 26, which leads into National Reconciliation Week. The week, from May 27 to June 3, offers an opportunity for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements.

Mayor Karen Hyslop said the event also offered opportunities to explore how all people could contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

"Council is committed to reconciliation and overcoming any division and inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians," she said.

"This year's theme is Bridging Now to Next, reflecting the ongoing connection between past, present and future."

National Reconciliation Week recognises two significant dates in Australia's history. On May 27, 1967, Australians voted to remove clauses in the Australian Constitution that discriminated

against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

On June 3, 1992, the Mabo decision was made in the High Court of Australia, recognising Native Title and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having rights to the land. The decision further recognised that, in some cases, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' Native Title had survived British colonisation.

Northern Grampians Shire Council's reconciliation journey stated with a symbolic decision to return management of Sisters Rocks to Traditional Owners.

In April 2021, the council worked with Barengi Gadjin Land Council and the State Government to transfer ownership of the land to the state, to be managed by the land council on behalf of Traditional Owners.

Cr Hyslop said the council was in the process of drafting a Traditional Owner Acknowledgement Policy and

was working with both DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and Barengi Gadjin Land Council on delivery of the Local Government Engagement Strategy as part of their respective Recognition and Settlement Agreements.

She encouraged people to attend the flag raising ceremonies, at Pleasant Creek Historic Precinct, Stawell, on Monday at 9.15 a.m. and Market Square, St Arnaud, on Thursday at 9 a.m..

The ceremonies are designed to be a sign of respect for First Nations people and their culture.

Stawell and St Arnaud library branches will recognise the week with book displays and colouring activities for children. There will also be a display in Shop 108, Main Street, Stawell, throughout National Reconciliation Week.

People can visit www.reconciliation.org.au for more information about the week.

The Late Graeme Davidson:

(Eulogy by his grandson, Brendan King)

There were four constant pillars in Pa's life – home, family, friends and sport, and they were consistently intertwined across his life.

To avoid any confusion for the remainder of this celebration of Pa's life I'll refer to him as Graeme.

He was born on the first of June 1939, and his parents, John and Edith Davidson, would take him home to Corack Road. And there he would stay for the rest of his life. Graeme was a real home body. It wasn't until his later years that he would venture outside Donald's town limits for any small period of time, to visit his own family. Even on the back end of those stays away, he was antsy and eager to get home. Home for his entire life was Corack Road, Donald, and he loved it.

Graeme was the tenth child of John and Edith, and he would be part of a family where he had 7 sisters and 9 brothers. His own children would tease him for having just a single Christian name, expressing their view that his parents had obviously run out of names by the time they got to him. Given that his younger siblings had second names, his parents must have just liked the sound of "Graeme" on its own.

Graeme didn't understand what all the fuss was about with all those siblings, and he was very proud to be a part of the Davidson family from Corack Road. He got along well with all of his brothers and sisters most of the time and acknowledged that like any family they would have the usual spats, eventually get over it and move on. He got on particularly well as a youngster with Betty, who was closest to him in age. One story that he confessed to much later in life involved going to church with Betty. Their mum would give them sixpence or tuppence to put in the collection plate, which they did dutifully most times. Other times, they would wave their hand over the plate, keeping the money in their

hand or they would drop in the coins and take change. On the way home from church they'd buy an all-day gob stopper and explain to their mum, that they either found the money or some kind lady had bought it for them.

Graeme lost his own father when he was fifteen. He enjoyed a close relationship with his mum, and his maternal grandparents, despite the fact his Granny would be quick to give him a clip if she thought he was being naughty.

Back Yard Games

Graeme would play a lot of organised sport with his brothers and of course there were footy and cricket games in the back yard with lots of his siblings. When it came to choosing teams for footy, he'd pick Heather and Dottie ahead of some of his younger brothers, as he thought they were tougher and a better kick.

There were also times when he would work with his brothers, particularly at Onley's. Once Graeme retired, he was able to enjoy more regular contact with those members of his family who had moved from Donald. He also developed a routine as he visited his brothers living locally.

One of his favourite things for a while, prior to retirement, was to go on a regular weekend tip run with Davey and Ray. They would fill up a trailer of rubbish to take to the tip and would invariably arrive home with a trailer load of someone else's treasure to be stored down the back for one of those "just in case" moments.

Industrial Estate

This was around the same time as the Donald Shire was developing the industrial area down Racecourse Road. Needless to say, it was a strong belief amongst Graeme's family that they had their own developing indus-

trial estate in the back block behind their house. Later there would be some banter between the sons-in-law as to who would inherit said industrial estate or acquire it as part of the dowry for his daughters. We'll come back to the industrial estate later.

School

Graeme was a diligent student at school and completed his Intermediate certificate. He achieved quite a few academic awards for arithmetic, history and science. He valued education and encouraged his own children to at least finish Year 12. Graeme was proud that they all did and that three of them would go to university.

Farm

When Graeme first left school, he worked on the family farm and in 1956 as a seventeen-year-old, his brothers allowed him to take responsibility of a paddock situated on the edge of Lake Buloke for the first time. Everything was going well and his crop looked magnificent. Unfortunately, '56 was a wet year and almost 70 years later he was still lamenting the fact that all he harvested from his paddock was two swan eggs.

Occupations

Graeme had a number of occupations over his working life. He was a shearer as part of his brother John's contracting business. He started a 20 year association with Onley's Holdings as a drainer just before Sisa was born and before he retired, he spent 15 years on the Buloke Shire as part of the outdoor crew.

Over those years he made numerous good friends through the people he worked with. None more so, than Max Harris, who Graeme had known most of his life. They became great mates when they worked at the Buloke Shire and Max, alongside Verna, would be wonderful friends to Graeme for the duration of his life.

After their retirement Graeme and Max, along with Marlene, would sometimes head over to Joel Joel to help son-in-law Bruce with shed work, during shearing. Graeme decided that with the advancement of hand piece technology, he might make a comeback to shearing. Back in the groove with half a dozen sheep shorn his plan came to a sudden halt with a nick to his hand. Five stitches later the shearing comeback was extremely short lived.

Marriage

Graeme met Marlene at a Donald Football Club ball. After a whirlwind courtship, they were married on the 17th of April 1965. When working out the wedding date, it either had to be before footy season started or after footy season ended. They travelled around western Victoria and over to Mt Gambier for their honeymoon before making it back to Donald on Friday, so Graeme could play in the opening game of the football



• Graeme and Marlene Davidson.

season. They lived at the Davidson family home for the first six weeks of their marriage before moving into their own home in Corack Road, right next door. One of his proudest achievements was his marriage to Marlene, and we believe he was determined to make it to their 60th wedding anniversary in the last few days of his life.

Do-It-Yourself

Unofficially Graeme was a bit of a trend setter by being a do-it-yourself renovator – sometimes through necessity, but mostly under Marlene's instruction, well before all these do-it-yourself reality TV shows hit our screens. This is where we can refer back to the Industrial Estate because back in the day, there was no such thing as Bunnings, so every good renovator needed a stockpile of material. In Graeme's case this involved a 4 metre by 3 metre by 1.5 metre high pile of second-hand wood. Wood for building another extension if required, patching up rogue weatherboards and wood for burning in the newly self-installed pot belly stove.

Precautions

Of course, certain precautions had to be taken to fire-proof the property for summer, and one Friday evening Graeme and Marlene did a little bit of controlled burning before fire restrictions came into effect in and around the industrial estate.

The next morning Graeme and Anthony were up early and headed off to junior cricket. The girls in the house were determined to have a sleep in despite the odd crackling sound coming from outside and the occasional waft of smoke, which they put down to Uncle Ray next door, or neighbour Leo Allen, doing some burning off. Graeme was most surprised and disappointed when he arrived home to discover the monstrous wood pile had transformed into a mere smouldering pile of ashes, and that the clothes that had been hanging on the line were now just scorch marks on the ground.

Family

As implied in the previous story, Graeme and Marlene would add to their family with the arrival of Terri, Suzanne, Anthony and Penni. His experience as a father was a little different for his children due to their age differences. Terri and Sisa knew that if they got a smack from Graeme they were in big trouble, as it was Marlene who usually handed out the discipline. Anthony and Penni never knew what a smack from Graeme was, but they all knew when he growled, he meant business.

Graeme gave his children some great lessons, particularly that you should treat people how you wanted to be treated, and that it was important to give back to the community you lived in, particularly if you were benefitting from something within that community.

Reading

Graeme instilled a love of reading in Terri through regular bedtime stories, and later they would compare their Christmas reading, and swap over their novels.

After his older girls chose the wrong footy teams, Anthony and Penni were always going to be one-eyed Essendon supporters, whilst Sisa was the recipient of a number of important lessons in Occupational Health and Safety. The first of which was not what to do with burns.

Annual Fete

When the Donald Primary School held its annual fete, Graeme would be in charge of making a batch of toffees to be sold on a stall. One particular year, Sisa was taking a close look at how to make them. As he finished boiling the mixture on the stove, he told Sisa it was not like a cake mixture where she could lick the bowl and not to put her finger in the saucepan.

Of course, she stuck her finger in the boiling toffee and as she wailed at the near third-degree burn, quick as flash Graeme shoved her finger into the butter. The subsequent blister eventually healed, and Sisa never put her finger in hot toffee again.

Another OH & S lesson occurred later when the almond tree near the clothesline was dead or dying. Graeme decided he'd cut it down. Marlene wasn't too keen as it was right next to her clothesline. Graeme assured her that if he cut it on the right angle and Michael and I pulled on a rope, the tree would miss the clothesline.

We got set up; Michael and I on rope duty and Graeme cutting. There would be some small progress before an instruction to pull on the rope was issued. We hadn't got very far when the cutting got out of control, Graeme missed the opportunity to call "pull", and the felled tree, partially swinging on a rope, fell on the clothesline so that now it was at right angles to the ground and rendered useless. Needless to say, Marlene was not too impressed.

Sport

One of Graeme's biggest enjoyments in life came from his involvement in sport. From a youngster in the back yard at Corack Road right up to two years ago, he was involved in some sort of sport himself, and he was an avid watcher of most sports. He followed the sporting talents of his grandsons and local family members through the reports they gave him personally or through the "Buloke Times".

As Donald thrived through the '50s and '60s, Graeme tried his hand at many sports. He would be part of the town's table tennis competition; he'd have a hit of tennis and be part of the cycling club. He took up golf, after retiring from footy, and later lawn bowls. But his two favourite sports were cricket and football, and he was quite successful at both.

He would play over 200 games with the Royal Blues. Those 200 games were a mixture of senior and reserves games, when the population of the town saw a healthy competition for getting a game. Not very tall, he was quick off the mark, and in 1968 and '69, he was the league's leading reserves goal kicker. He would

• Continued on page 15



• A young Graeme Davidson.

A Popular Donald Citizen

• **Continued from page 14**
captain a reserves team or two, and he won a couple of reserves best and fairest awards amongst some other club awards. Despite playing in two senior preliminary finals teams in consecutive years, he never tasted senior premiership success, as he was dropped for the grand final both times.

Umpiring

When footy finished for him as a player, he would take up umpiring, and one of the early family outings would include Marlene packing a picnic lunch in the car with Terri and Sisa, and travelling to whatever town he was sent to in the North Central League. He would also be the junior secretary of the Donald club for a couple of years after a back complaint retired him from the golf course.

Essendon

Graeme's team in the AFL was the Essendon Bombers, chosen because of his admiration of Dick Reynolds. He would sometimes go down to the MCG on the train with his sisters, Heather and Lois, to watch Collingwood take on Melbourne on the Queen's birthday weekend. Graeme enjoyed the action at the "G", but he didn't necessarily enjoy the company on the way home, as the losing sister would have cracked it.

In recent years, the nemesis to Essendon having any success, in his view, was the CEO firmly planted at AFL House. It didn't matter who the CEO was, he was always referred to as "that bloody Demetrius" in reference to former CEO Andrew Demetriou. Even though he was long gone "that bloody Demetrius" was blamed for the Essendon drug saga, the demise of James Hird, the biggest travesty in football in asking Jobe Watson to hand back his Brownlow, that Essendon hasn't won a final since who knows when, and that he's even had the nerve to appoint an AFL endorsed coach to the current team. Obviously, Graeme was not a Brad Scott fan either.

Cricket

Graeme would begin competition cricket in the Donald and District Cricket Association playing for the Services Cricket Club. Here he would play with brothers, Davey and Ray. After a few seasons, he joined Jeffcott Cricket Club, and he would play with Jeffcott until he retired from playing when he was 46 years old. He was in the team for his batting, sometimes as an opener, and sometimes he was the wicket-keeper. Very occasionally he'd bowl an over of loopy off spin. Two centuries, one in "A" grade and one in "B" grade, were his highest scores.

For Graeme and his family, life in summer revolved around cricket. They would head out to the cricket ground, that very much resembled a random paddock, at the Jeffcott Hall. Marlene would help the ladies prepare the afternoon tea and the kids would play with any kids who came to an away game with their cricketing fathers.

From Jeffcott to Donald

Graeme was one of the club members who were instrumental in moving the club from Jeffcott into Donald to its current position at the bottom of the showgrounds, to ensure that it survived the shifting population trends of the early '70s. He was very satisfied that his team was the last remaining stand-alone Donald based club in the competition. Graeme, along with the other members at the time, worked tirelessly to get the playing field up to scratch, and over a couple of seasons, a new club room. In the early days, he was the ground curator and every Friday night he would have to go and roll the pitch.

Graeme helped convince younger brothers Davey and Ray to join Jeffcott, and any nephews who showed the slightest interest in the game, were quickly snapped up. All of the Davidsons, who played cricket on a regular basis,

played for Jeffcott and this filtered down to the next generation, as well with the Donnellon boys, and Rodney's sons playing too.

Graeme's one cricketing regret involved his brother, Shorty. He had been trying to convince Shorty to come and play and this particular Saturday, Shorty was filling in for a game against Litchfield. In a very close game, the ball was hit towards Shorty fielding in the outfield. It should have been an easy one run to the batsman, but unfortunately, the ball rolled into one of the many rabbit holes on the ground, and Shorty couldn't find which one. While searching for the ball, the batsman ran a comfortable 6 runs. Graeme was none too pleased and let Shorty know, promptly ending Shorty's cricketing career.

Captain

When the competition grew to include "B" grade, he captained the newly formed team and worked hard to recruit new players to the club, particularly encouraging the family members associated with the Jeffcott district to play. He even enticed his old mate, Bernie McEwen, to have a run. As a captain of the "B" grade, if you didn't get a bat, he would try to give you a bowl, to ensure your time in the game was not just as an all-day fielder.

Jeffcott didn't have a lot of on field success at the time he was playing, but a lot of the young players he helped recruit during that period, helped the club eventually break the premiership drought.

Five-a-Side

Off field Jeffcott was arguably one of the most successful clubs through the running of their 5-a-side competition held over the Australia Day long weekend. Graeme was an integral part of the 5-a-side event organising committee and as the event grew, he was ground manager at the Jeffcott ground across the three days of the competition. Then he would follow up at the cabaret on Sunday night. Graeme and Marlene made a great team during the cricketing years, working to keep Jeffcott a viable entity.

He really enjoyed the camaraderie around the club, being part of a team and playing with his mates and family. Graeme would be recognised for his contribution to Jeffcott cricket club with a Life Membership.

Friends

Many great friends were connected to the cricket club. Geoff and Anne Whiting would become lifelong friends beginning through their association with Jeffcott. For many years, Anne and Geoff would venture to Corack Road every Friday

night, cricket season or not, and over a few beers, Graeme and Geoff would discuss all things cricket and what ever else they felt needed to be discussed. Sometimes that discussion required a couple of hours and many beers for any resolutions.

In 2023, Graeme was diagnosed with myeloma. He found this incredibly frustrating as one of the symptoms and subsequent side effects of the treatment was constant fatigue. He went from being an active 83-year-old to spending most of his time in his chair in the lounge room at Corack Road.

Weekly trips to Horsham for treatment became the norm and he found that frustrating too, although it gave Terri and Sisa some extra "dad time" to share some stories and discuss the fortunes of their footy teams and the national cricket team.

Graeme's health took a turn for the worst in the last four weeks of his life and he passed away in Donald hospital in the early hours of April 19th.

Graeme's family would like to thank Doctors Oleg Rachinsky and Adam Facey, and the staff at Donald Hospital and the Wimmera Cancer Clinic for their care of Graeme over the last two years.

As we say good bye to Pa today, we also celebrate a full and happy life.

Story Time at Primary School

On Wednesday, May 21, Donald Primary School students were treated to an extra special "story time" with local truck driver Dion Woods, followed by a chance to explore his Kenworth B-Double truck.

Every year, for National Simultaneous Storytime, a picture book, written and illustrated by an Australian author and illustrator, is read simultaneously in libraries, schools, pre-schools, child-care centres, family homes, bookshops and many other places around the country.

As part of National Simultaneous Storytime, the whole school turned out to hear the story of "Truck Cat" by Deborah Frenkel and Danny Snell, following the journey of truck driver Yacoub and his companion cat, "Tinka" as they travel the roads of Australia.

Dion's natural ability as a story-teller was showcased as

he animatedly shared the story with the children, engaging them with additional tidbits of information directly related to truck driving. At one point, he compared the illustration on the cover of the book to his own truck parked behind him. "It's a Kenworth too," he said. And went on to point out that the second trailer means both trucks are B-doubles.

The session with the down-to-earth truck driver resonated well with country kids, some of whom come from farms with trucks and machinery used for operations. Many excitedly shared similarities from their home lives with Dion, ensuring

the story book would remain memorable for them.

National Simultaneous Storytime is now in its 25th successful year. It is a colourful, vibrant, fun event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children's book that explores age-appropriate themes, and addresses key learning areas of the National Curriculum for Foundation to Year 6.

Donald Primary School's creative way of delivering this year's simultaneous story surely captured the attention of its students, providing an interesting and engaging session involving far more than just "reading".



• With his own Kenworth B-Double providing the backdrop, local truck driver Dion Woods reads "Trick Cat" to the Donald Primary School students for National Simultaneous Storytime.

• Following story time, Dion Woods let the children explore the big Kenworth truck, pictured here: Valentina and Lexi in the cab, and Thanya and Sophey waiting their turn next.

When it Comes to What Farmers Need...
New Drought Support Package Falls Short

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed the announcement of new drought support measures but says the package does not go nearly far enough to address the mounting pressure facing Victorian farmers and rural communities.

VFF president Brett Hosking said that while any support is appreciated, the limited scale of the package falls well short of what is required, especially when compared with more substantial efforts in other states such as South Australia.

Not Handouts

“Farmers are not asking for handouts. They are asking for meaningful recognition of the strain this drought is putting on their livelihoods, their families and their mental health,” Mr. Hosking said.

“The response so far is too narrow in scope. What is urgently needed is for the government to get out into the regions, speak directly with the farmers doing it tough, and take real action based on what they are hearing.”

The VFF has put forward a number of constructive suggestions to Agriculture Victoria, but Mr. Hosking cautioned against announcing piecemeal initiatives without fully grasping the broader needs of the farming sector.

“Of course, financial support is vital, but it is also about showing that people in the city understand and care about what is happening in the bush,” he said.

Huge Concern

“Mental health is a huge concern. When farmers feel isolated, unsupported and forgotten, the consequences can be devastating for individuals and entire communities.”

Mr. Hosking also highlighted that some of the most impactful changes would not cost the government anything.

“There are simple regulatory shifts that could make an immediate difference, such as allowing better control of pest animals like kangaroos, or relaxing regulations to allow more high-productivity vehicles on our road networks to cart additional fodder to feed the starving animals we are seeing on farms as a result of the drought. These changes would help farmers protect their stock and manage limited resources more effectively.



• Brett Hosking.

“This drought is not just about dry paddocks. It is about people, families and communities under stress. We need a more serious, co-ordinated response that shows farmers they are not facing this alone.”

The VFF is calling on the Victorian Government to engage directly with regional communities and deliver drought support that reflects the real needs of farmers across the state.

Cattle are Part of Climate Solution

The Australian beef industry can play a positive role in the climate solution provided policy settings recognise the science of the biogenic carbon cycle, according to a leading international air quality specialist.

Professor Frank Mitloehner, of UC Davis in the United States, told a recent Cattle and Climate forum, organised by producer representative body Cattle Australia (CA), that while livestock do have an impact on our climate, the contribution of animal agriculture is often exaggerated at the expense of farmers and viable solutions.

He told the forum that high school students know that for plants to grow they need carbon dioxide, sunlight and water. Pastures absorb CO2 and store it as cellulose, which is consumed by livestock and then released back into the atmosphere as methane.

After 10 years, that methane is converted back into CO2 and the cycle starts again. As a result, methane levels remain relatively stable in the atmosphere if emission sources are stable, unlike CO2 emissions from the burning of fossil fuels that add carbon to the atmosphere.

Methane

“Methane warms our climate differently than CO2, which persists for hundreds of years, while methane warms for about a decade. Methane is more potent than CO2, but that also gives us an opportunity to quickly reduce warming,” Prof. Mitloehner said.

“If we continue to reduce methane emissions in livestock sectors, whether through better grazing and forage, genetics, or tools coming online such as feed additives, livestock can be part of a climate solution. There aren’t many sectors that can say that.”

Forum

More than 100 people participated either in person or online in CA’s Cattle and Climate forum, which was held at Marcus Oldham College Geelong, to connect producers and industry to discuss market opportunities connected to sustainability initiatives.

Rather than being wrongly cast as a climate villain, Prof. Mitloehner presented an opportunity for the livestock industry to be part of the climate solution.

“Farmers and graziers are stewards of the land and have been for generations. Stewardship is sometimes called sustainability, but regardless of the term, it’s part of the make-up of agriculture to manage the environment responsibly,” he said. “If we can reduce methane emissions from livestock, which we have, we can reduce warming by absorbing some of the excess greenhouse gases being emitted by industry.”

Target Set

In California, an aggressive target was set for the dairy industry to reduce methane by 40% by 2030 – a goal it is on track to meet



• Professor Frank Mitloehner, of UC Davis in the United States, told the Cattle and Climate forum, organised by Cattle Australia, that while livestock do have an impact on our climate, the contribution of animal agriculture is often exaggerated at the expense of farmers and viable solutions.

through the combination of herd improvement, manure digesters converting methane to energy, alternative manure management strategies and methane-mitigating feed additives.

“California decided to work with its farmers to reduce emissions by incentivising the adoption of climate tools,” Prof. Mitloehner said. “Taking the carrot versus the stick approach has made all the difference as the dairy sector is roughly two-thirds of the way to its methane reduction goal.”

Embrace

Cattle Australia Chief Executive, Dr Chris Parker, urged politicians and activists to stop blaming burping cattle and embrace the beef industry as part of the climate solution.

“Australian cattle producers manage 50% of Australia’s land mass which presents a massive opportunity to sequester emissions in natural sinks like our soils, but policy settings need to

change to provide producers with both the tools and economic incentives to achieve this,” Dr Parker said.

“Firstly, the biogenic carbon cycle must be incorporated into Australia’s national carbon accounting systems so that graziers have the means to participate in carbon markets. We also need the Beef Herd Method, which accounts for improvements in grazing efficiency, to be reinstated by the Federal Government as soon as possible.”

About CA

CA is the national peak body for the grass-fed beef industry, providing a visible, unified, and influential voice for Australia’s 52,000 grass-fed cattle levy payers.

CA is responsible for developing and driving contemporary policy; guiding research, development, and adoption (RD&A) and marketing investment for the sector; and advocating on all matters important to the Australian beef industry.

The Risks of Alternative Feeds

(By Brett Davidson, Dairy Regional Manager, Tatura)

Livestock owners looking to use alternative feeds as the drought continues in the south west and extended dry conditions in other parts of the state, are urged to be aware of the risks and limitations.

As most by-products are produced as surplus from food making industries, they can have their challenges when using as feed alternatives for livestock.

Therefore, you need to consider your animals fibre needs first and build from that base.

For example – an option such as Palm Kernel Expeller (PKE) is becoming more popular, and while it is high in fibre, the fibre is not functional in the rumen, so you still need hay or straw in the diet. PKE also needs to be stored dry to use safely.

Another key consideration is to check by-products are free from Restricted Animal Material.

For example, using bakery waste such as bread rolls could be illegal if they have bacon in them, or have come into contact with meat products.

Restricted materials also include rendered products, such as blood meals, meat meals, meat and bone meals, fish meals, poultry meal and feather meal, and compounded feeds made from these products.

Chemical Residue

Another concern is chemical residue levels. By-product material such as citrus pulp, fruit pomace, grape marc, vegetable skins, and outer leaves can have concentrated levels of agricultural chemicals, which could increase livestock residue levels, which may lead to withholding periods for meat and milk.

For this reason, producers will need to declare if they have fed by-products on their National Vendor Declaration (NVD) within 60 days of selling livestock.

With hay getting dearer more farmers will be looking at alternative feed sources,

and it pays to spend time before you purchase to think through the risks, practicalities and considerations on how by-products can fit into your farming operation.

Top Tips

My 3 top tips for producers to think about when purchasing alternate stock feeds:

- Never feed restricted animal material.
- Be aware of chemical residues.
- Ask for and provide the required vendor declarations.

To assist farmers with making decisions around alternative feed sources Agriculture Victoria is holding a webinar on May 28 from 12:30 p.m.. To register visit <https://bit.ly/3RPKJIL>

For more information about drought and dry seasonal conditions support head to agriculture.vic.gov.au/dry-seasons or call 136 186.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Adult	Youth	Other resources
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	Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 kidshelpline.com.au headspace: 1800 650 890 headspace.org.au ReachOut: ReachOut.com 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	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

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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.

The Compliments Just Keep Coming



• A family affair. Bill (centre) with family members. At left are sons Kevin and Dale, with their wives Trish and Megan. At right: Colby Anderson (grandson), Glenda Kelly (daughter), Teagan Anderson (granddaughter), and Mark Kelly (son-in-law).

A packed Blue Room at the Dunstan Sports Stadium on Saturday afternoon, and an equally enthusiastic attendance at the Shamrock Hotel dining room that evening, paid tribute to the life-time contribution made to the Donald community by Bill Anderson, who celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary on May 14.

At a gathering a week earlier, the president of the Donald Football Club, Danny Forrest, delivered the following tribute to Bill and his contribution to football.

*

Today is a truly special day in the proud history of the Donald Football Club – a day we come together as past players, supporters, life members, and community members to celebrate one extraordinary individual. A man who has given more than 70 years of selfless service, who has built connections across generations, and who has shaped the very fabric of this club with quiet determination and unwavering heart – Mr. Bill Anderson.

In the Beginning

Bill's journey with the club began as a 14-year-old, running out in the senior side in 1949. Since then, his boots may have come off, but he never left. He played over 200 games, was a reserves best & fairest, and a proud premiership player during Donald's famous triple flag year of 1963. Yet it's what followed his playing days that truly defines his legacy.

There are a lot of things we can say and Billy doesn't want us to share everything but we do have to share a few, though we won't share his love for footy umpires as it is legendary – he even keeps stats on them.

Bill is the very definition of a behind-the-scenes legend. Whether as selector, secretary, treasurer, committee member or mentor – there isn't a role he hasn't stepped into when the club needed him. He joined the committee at just 18, was made a Life Member at only 28, and has given every decade since to serving this club with integrity and loyalty. So much so, even last weekend after we had lost, he was in the pub being positive about the place.

Relationships

But what sets Bill apart isn't just his longevity – it's the way he's done it. Bill has always been a relationship builder. He's the friendly face that new players meet when they arrive. He's the quiet listener offering advice when things get tough. He's the dependable volunteer who turns up every day at the Footy Farm – for the past 30 years and counting – putting in the hard yards without fanfare, just because it needs to be done.

The Family

His contribution runs deep. The Anderson Family Blue Room proudly bears his name – a tribute not only to Bill, but to a family which has clocked more than 1,000 games and decades of service across football and netball. He was inducted as a Legend in our first Hall of Fame class. And now, as he approaches his 90th birthday anniversary, he's still working every morning at the Farm – starting at 9 a.m. and finishing at lunch, rain, hail or shine.

- Paper round 3 days a week; 5 a.m.
- Footy farm road. Recycled asphalt two years ago; rake and shovel.
- Yesterday cut four tonnes of wood because it had to be done – battle scar.

Bill never sought recognition. He never asked for applause. He just turned up, rolled his sleeves up, and got on with it. That's why he is so deeply respected. Because his service came not from obligation – but from love. You have a conversation with Billy, especially about footy, you've gained a new mate.

So today, on behalf of every teammate, coach, committee member, life member, supporter and junior player who has come through these Goff Letts oval gates – we say thank you. Thank you for being the glue that held this club together, the steady hand behind the scenes, and the heart and soul of the Royal Blues.

In Bill's own words, "The Donald Footy Club has been my life. I love being part of it – I love my footy!"

And how true that is!

Footnote: While most of the weekend's celebrations centred on Bill's contribution to football at all levels, he also excelled at other sporting activities. As a member of the Donald Water Ski Club, headquartered at Brown's Lake (Cope Cope), he was an outstanding water skier, while also during the summer he was captain of the former A.N.A. (now Donald-Jeffcott) cricket team in the Donald district competition, his "specialities" being wicketkeeping and batting.

Community Update

Tiny Towns Funding for Nandaly

We are proud to announce that Buloke Shire Council been successful in securing funding for another project that was submitted as part of the Victorian Government's Regional Development Victoria Tiny Towns Fund.

Council will receive \$50,000 to upgrade the old Nandaly tennis courts into a multi-purpose court for other court-based sports, such as 1:1 basketball and pickle ball.

The project was developed in partnership with the Nandaly Progress Association Inc and is based on a priority of the Nandaly 2030 Community Vision.

The Tiny Towns Fund is a part of the Government's record \$45 billion investment over the past decade in projects and programs that support Regional and Rural Victoria.

Draft Council Plan, Annual Budget and Revenue and Rating Strategy on Public Exhibition

The Draft Council Plan 2025-2029, Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025-2029 and 2025/26 Annual Budget are currently on public exhibition and open for submissions.

Copies can be downloaded from the council website at www.buloke.gov.vic.au

Hardcopies can also be viewed at the Wycheproof Customer Service Centre, 367 Broadway, Wycheproof or requested by contacting

Buloke Shire Council on 1300 520 520 or buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au

Submissions must be received in writing no later than 5pm on Thursday 29 May 2025 and can be provided in the following ways:

- Email to buloke@buloke.vic.gov.au
- In person by placing a submission in the box at the Wycheproof Customer Service Centre, 367 Broadway, Wycheproof.
- By mail addressed to Buloke Shire Council, PO Box 1, Wycheproof, Victoria 3527.

Following the public exhibition period, the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029, Revenue and Rating Strategy 2025-29 and 2025/26 Annual Budget are scheduled for adoption at the Council Meeting on Wednesday 18 June 2025.

Notice of an Application for a Planning Permit

The land affected by the application is located at **24-26 High Street, Charlton VIC 3525.**

The application is for a permit for the **external alterations to a Commercial building and Heritage building and alteration of a redline area.**

The application reference number is **PA25011.**

You may view the application and supporting documents on the Buloke Shire Council website <https://buloke.greenlightpm.com/planning> or by making contact with the office of the Responsible Authority, Buloke Shire Council, Wycheproof on 1300 520 520.

This can be done during office hours and is free of charge. Any person who may be affected by the granting of the permit may object or make other submissions to the Responsible Authority.

An objection must be made to the Responsible Authority in writing, include the objectors name and contact details, include reasons for the objection, and state how the objector would be affected. An online submission form is available on the Planning page of the Buloke Shire Council website.

The Responsible Authority will not decide on the application before: **5 June 2025.**

If you object to the application, the Responsible Authority will tell you it's decision.

Notice of an Application for a Planning Permit

The land affected by the application is located at **6 Peel Street, Charlton Victoria 3525.**

The application is for a permit for the **construction of a building in a Heritage Overlay (dwelling).**

The application reference number is **PA25015.**

You may view the application and supporting documents on the Buloke Shire Council website <https://buloke.greenlightpm.com/planning> or by making contact with the office of the Responsible Authority, Buloke Shire Council, Wycheproof on 1300 520 520.

This can be done during office hours and is free of charge. Any person who may be affected by the granting of the permit may object or make other submissions to the Responsible Authority.

An objection must be made to the Responsible Authority in writing, include the objectors name and contact details, include reasons for the objection, and state how the objector would be affected. An online submission form is available on the Planning page of the Buloke Shire Council website.

The Responsible Authority will not decide on the application before: **5 June 2025.**

If you object to the application, the Responsible Authority will tell you it's decision.

Buloke.



Employment Opportunities with Buloke

Council is an equal opportunity employer. Our roles are non-gender specific, and Council encourages all suitably qualified applicants to apply. For more information on equal opportunity, call Human Resources on 1300 520 520.

You can find all current employment opportunities at www.buloke.vic.gov.au/employment

Applications can be lodged by:

Mail - PO Box 1, Wycheproof VIC 3527 or

Email - recruitment@buloke.vic.gov.au

Systems Administrator

Permanent (Full Time) - From \$100k pa (+ statutory superannuation)

→ **Applications Close: 30 May 2025**

We are looking for a motivated person to provide support and assist with the design, implementation and management of ICT enabled projects on a permanent full-time basis. The position will be based out of Councils Wycheproof Office and has flexibility to support hybrid work.

Manager People and Culture

Permanent (Full Time) - Salary package in the range of \$130k - 146k pa

→ **Applications Close: 30 May 2025**

We are seeking someone to lead change, inspire our people, and foster a culture that supports high levels of employee engagement and performance.

The successful applicant will provide critical leadership to the organisation and our People and Culture Team. Responsibilities include organisational design and development, human resources, performance management, OH&S, reward and recognition and HR systems.

Team Leader Road Services (North)

Permanent (Full Time) - From \$89,000 pa (+ statutory superannuation)

→ **Applications Close: 26 May 2025**

We are looking for a proactive individual to provide leadership and direction to our Road Services Team.

The role will ensure the planning and coordination of its maintenance and construction crews and the delivery of Council's Road Preventative Maintenance program, including grading and patrol activities as well as facilitate timely inspections and response of Council's local road network.

Heavy Plant Operator (Road Services)

Permanent (Full Time) - From \$31.75 per hour (+ statutory superannuation)

→ **Applications Close: 23 May 2025**

We are seeking a self-motivated individual, responsible for the safe and efficient use of heavy road plant, operating as part of our Road Services crew.

The successful applicant will carry out routine, preventative maintenance and improvements to local Council roads to ensure safe local road networks in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan.



Phone: 1300 520 520
www.buloke.vic.gov.au

Junior Country Championships:

Over the weekend of May 17–18, North Central took six teams to Melbourne for the 2025 Junior Country Championships – a key event on the junior hockey calendar.

Across three venues, 86 players represented the region, supported by 27 adults who volunteered as coaches, managers, and parent helpers. For many, it was their first time playing on turf, and the weekend provided a great opportunity to gain experience, test skills, and build team spirit.

This year, North Central was pleased to welcome guest players from Hockey Central Vic, Sunraysia and Wimmera Hockey Associations, who slotted into teams across various age groups, providing a valuable opportunity for players from neighbouring regions to compete together.

As always, the weekend was about more than hockey. From the long bus ride on Friday to the flurry of activity at the accommodation (gear sorting, bed allocations, and those all-important coaching meetings), the weekend is a massive team effort.

Here’s how the teams went:

- U-14 Boys finished 6th in a competitive field of eleven.

Coach: Chelsea Challis-Broad (Boort); Manager: Monique Saggars (Birchip-Watchem); Parent Helpers: Jacqui Challis (Boort), Alistair and Alison McClelland (Sea Lake-Nandaly).

- U-14 Girls reached the 3rd place play-off, narrowly going down 0–1 to Hamilton.

Coach: Brenton Henderson (Boort); Manager: Naomi Fitzpatrick (Charlton); Parent Helpers: Sherryn O’Flaherty (Boort), Tanya Frith (Sea Lake-Nandaly) and Carly Pearse (Donald).

- U-16 Boys, hit by injury, showed incredible resilience – finishing with a 2–2 draw in their final match with just 10 players on the field.

Coach: Nicola Kirk (St Arnaud); Manager: Julianne Kilroy (Birchip-Watchem); Parent Helpers: Vanessa Field

(Birchip-Watchem, Stephanie Smith (St Arnaud).

- U-16 Girls brought home 3rd place after a determined 1–0 win over Hockey South West.

Coach: Marcus Williamson (Calder United); Assistant Coach: Adrian Hensley (Hockey Central Vic); Manager: Lilly Pritchard (Calder United); Parent Helper: Jessica Krause (Donald).

- U-18 Boys came heart-breakingly close to the gold medal match – missing out by just centimetres. With two players down in their final game, they finished a hard-fought weekend in 4th place.

Coaches: BK Swallow (Charlton), Lincoln Westerland (Donald); Manager: Lucy Malone (Boort); Parent Helper: Candace Jay (Donald).

- U-18 Girls wrapped up their campaign on a high, securing 5th place with a confident 2–0 win over Hamilton.

Coach: Kate Gifford (Calder United); Manager: Mel Waters (Calder United); Parent Helpers: Alistair and Alison McClelland (Sea Lake-Nandaly)

Additional Support

Parent Helper: Janelle Barbary (Sea Lake-Nandaly). Umpire: Erika Bicket (thank you for also officiating across the weekend). Bus Tags: Special thanks to Chrissie Coombes for once again

creating the now-iconic bus tags. Club JCC Reps: A big thank you to the JCC representatives from each club for their planning and behind-the-scenes work in the lead-up to the weekend.

A big thank you to everyone who made the weekend happen – especially the adults who gave their time to coach, manage, drive, and help out. It’s a huge job, and we’re grateful for the support.

Thanks also to our long-term supporters – the Charlton and District Community Bank and the North Central Hockey Association – for making opportunities like this possible for our juniors.

And finally, to our players – well done. You represented North Central with great effort, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Go North Central Ninjas!



• Under-18 Girls: back row from left, Mel Waters (team manager), Sienna Boyd, Pippa Symes, Olympia Van Maanen, Shaylee Field, Georgia McClelland, Sarrah Ryan, Kate Gifford (coach), Zoe Ross. Front row, Maddy Lanyon, Keely Allan, Louise Barber, Miranda Sy, Chanelle Badenhorst, Isobelle Rowe. Charlotte Bicket (GK).



• Under-18 Boys: from left, Lincoln Westerland (coach), Ben Krause, Chris Chaplin, Joe Velleley, Rory Ellis, Glenn Pearse, Jacob Harrison, Harry Malone, Geordie Smith, Sidney Caine, Tom Batchelor, Ben Greenaway, Luke Boyd, Toby Smith, Curtis Rice, BK Swallow (coach) and Lucy Malone (team manager). Front, Jacob Gray (GK).



• Under-14 Boys: from left, Monique Saggars (team manager), Jakoby Saggars, Henry Hawken, Tristan Broad, Lewis Lowe, Samuel Greenaway, Zac Green, Finn Evans, Sadidas Gardiner-Paieka, Duncan Kirk, Ned Ezard, Sullivan Steel, Tom McClelland, Rhys Gahan, Chelsea Challis-Broad (coach). Front, Archer Lee (GK).

Down the Middle?

Eleven players played in the Clothes Bin Monthly Medal with three ladies opting to play only nine holes.

The winner was Maree Egan with 34 points and runner-up was Kerry Wood on 33 points. This was on a count-back from Brenda Brennan, who was given a hanky as a consolation prize to “dry her tears”.

Nearest the pins turned out to be “The Debbie Burton Show” with Deb taking out Donald Auto Electrical’s 3rd, Weir’s 7th and Bendigo Bank’s 16th. Beris jones spoiled Debbie’s clean sweep by taking

out Nu Farm’s 14th. Well done to all the winners and thanks to Sandra at the Clothes Bin.

Other results: The pennant team lost to Boort 3-0 in the morning and defeated Sea Lake 2-1 in the afternoon.

The club is in second spot at the moment and need to win on Monday and Boort, which is on top, needs to lose for Donald to claim the pennant

Next week:

Monday golf - Assemble at 9.45 a.m.

Monday 26th – Final day of Pennant at Boort – 9 holes only.

Wednesday 21st – 1st round of the Club Championships, stroke and putting, sponsored by “The Buloke Times”.

Highlights and Lowlights

Kerry Wood absconded with Beris Jones’s golf cart, leaving Beris to drive Debbie Burton’s cart to the next tee. It doesn’t pay to let those Laen girls loose on the course, Deb.

If anyone is looking for a good plumber, call Carol Stuchbery. When the clubhouse kitchen was flooded during a function on Tuesday, Carol brilliantly identified the problem and by the time Brod from Buloke Plumbing had arrived the problem was solved. Thanks to Lachie for his prompt response to our SOS and for fixing the errant hose.

Thanks also to everyone for helping at the function on Tuesday.

Player Profile

Margie Quick

For how long have you been playing golf? About 60 years – a long time.

What do you enjoy about golf? The company.

What’s the best part about your game? Chipping in.

What advice would you give to anyone who is thinking of taking up golf? Just try it.

What’s your best score? 82.

What’s the best shot you’ve ever played? Chipped in from 75 meters.

What is your current position in the club? Retired, but I come back on special occasions to catch up with the girls.



• First time Brenda Brennan and Kerry “Brennan” have enjoyed a round of golf together on Wednesday.

North-Central Competes at Melbourne



• *Under-16 Girls: back row from left, Lillian Pritchard (team manager), Marcus Williamson (coach), Sheena Fitzpatrick, Tia Lanyon, Abby Potter, Sienna Hartney, Isabella Bickmore, Abby Eagle, Adrian Hensley (assistant coach), Annemieka Symes, Priya Coatsworth, Quinn Guthrie. Front row, Addison Wright, Charlotte Hensley, Kailie Krause, Mara Reynolds, Arleea Sarre.*



• *Under-14 Girls: back row from left, Brenton Henderson (coach), Morgan Beattie, Nevaeh Pearse, Victory Davis, Indi O'Flaherty, Cleo Vellely, Hayley Stringer, Hannah Talbot, Naomi Fitzpatrick (team manager). Front: Alisha Henderson, Charli McClelland, Rosie Fitzpatrick, Alice Marsh, Ali-jane Thompson, Emily Henderson, Sophie Roberts, Frankie McClelland.*



• *Under-16 Boys: Forbes Kirk, Murphy Fitzpatrick, Mitchell Coatsworth, Oakley Brennan, Max Field, Miller Evans, Jordan Chamberlain, Austin Lowe, Jesse James, Finn Green, Jack Batters, Garth Kilroy, Parker Bicket, Zeke Harrison.*

Mum Returns as a Winner

(By Peter Hibberd)

It would be fair to say that Lucinda Boyd (nee Doodt) is not a high profile lady jockey, having only ridden 112 winners in her career, which started in November 2015, according to the racing website.

Last Monday, at Horsham, she was the toast of the Victorian racing community, when she won her first race since starting a family with her husband Anthony. Her last race ride before the baby was born was at Swan Hill in March 2024. The baby boy was born in September and his name is Harlen.

Whilst absent from racing, Lucinda and Anthony (a former jockey) have bought a property at Ballarat to establish a training and pre-training centre.

Since having Harlen, Lucinda said, "It was a lot of hard work and eating properly to regain fitness."

The horse that she won on was called Quizlet. Followers of the jump outs held on Monday, May 5, at the Donald Racing Centre would have collected as it was a comfortable win on that day.

• *Right: Lucinda with 9 month old son Harlen.*

• *Below: Quizlet trained and ridden by Lucinda Boyd (formerly Doodt), winning at Horsham on May 19, her first race since September 14, 2023.*

–Photos by Matthew Rigby.



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Magpies Under the Microscope

(By Shane O'Shea)

After a confidence-building start to its 2025 season, Boort finds itself in a third successive searching challenge of its footballing credentials when it welcomes Birchip-Watchem to Boort Park tomorrow.

Having accounted for St. Arnaud, Charlton and Donald in comprehensive fashion, the Magpies then faced Sea Lake-Nandaly in round 4, and passed that test with flying colours. They defeated the Tigers for the first time since 2017, to share ladder leadership with Birchip-Watchem.

Boort received a reality check the following round, however, when a rampant Calder United exposed flaws in the Magpies' game, which is very heavily reliant on the goal kicking of Jhye Baddeley-Kelly and the tight defence led by Keiren Wilson.

The Lions nullified Baddeley-Kelly, restricting Boort to just 4 goals, while its multi-pronged attack, bolstered by the return of Jordan Humphreys, repeatedly pierced holes through the Magpies' defence, via its skilful mid-field and rapid ball movement.

Tomorrow, against the all-conquering Birchip-Watchem, Boort needs to bring its "A" grade game from the first bounce, if it is to regain its composure and show that it is a genuine top two team.

Against the Bulls' miserly defence, led by Ben Lakin and Dale Hinkley, Baddeley-Kelly is going to need more support from the likes of Kane Rutley, while the Magpies' defence will be hard pressed to disrupt the efficiency of Birchip-Watchem's impressive attacking arsenal, featuring Ben Edwards, but not limited to just one scoring option.

Tomorrow's round 6 game of the day will be won and

lost in the midfield, and Boort's challenge of matching the output generated by Hamish Hosking, the Rippon brothers, Meyrick Buchanan and Bill Lee will be the Magpies' undoing, unless James Wilson, Tom Potter, Jayden Dick and Carlos Egan stamp their authority on the contest.

Great Divide

The divide separating Calder United, Sea Lake-Nandaly and Wedderburn from Charlton, St. Arnaud and Donald looks certain to widen tomorrow, when the Lions, Tigers and Redbacks take on the latter trio.

Charlton, coming off a morale-boosting victory over Donald, will be confronted by the visiting Sea Lake-Nandaly, keen to improve its position and percentage after a stuttering start to its title defence.

The Tigers have too much talent and too many potential game changers, including Wade Donnan, Tyson McKenzie, Thomas Cox and Ryan O'Sullivan, for the Navy Blues to cover, and any chance of them causing an upset rests heavily on the shoulders of coach Mitch Collins, Ben Lanyon, Ben Xiriha and Bailey Kemp.

Charlton will also go into the contest without Luke Dunne, one of its leading goal contributors, after he was suspended for 2 games for rough conduct against Donald.

Uphill Battle

Donald will also feel the impact of suspension after tenacious onballer Glenn Meulendyks received a 5-game penalty after being



• Photo from round 3 is Boort's Nick Whyte takes off with the Sherrin in front of Donald's Jett Adams. Other players from left to right, Tom Potter (Boort), Josh Talty (Donald), James Keeble (Boort) and Eddie Landwehr (Donald).

found guilty of engaging in rough conduct against Charlton.

His absence and a shoulder injury to the dashing Darcy Harrison will further limit the options available to coach Daniel Pearce to combat the visiting Wedderburn combination, which needs to register a comprehensive victory to ensure it stays in touch with the competition's top four teams.

The absence of Jake Palpratt, suspended for 2 games for striking (he received a 3-game penalty, downgraded to 2 after early guilty plea), is a setback Redbacks' coach Tom Metherell will need to overcome. But with quality players including Darcy Jackson, Corey Lowry, Zach Palpratt and ageless warrior Danny Benaim in good touch, Wedderburn should have the

edge over the very inexperienced Royal Blues.

• The report of Donald's Ryan Bath was withdrawn.

St. Arnaud, coming off a thrashing at the hands of Sea Lake-Nandaly, faces the daunting task of challenging a Calder United outfit nearing full strength and chock full of confidence.

With their eyes firmly set on a top two finish this season, the Lions are unlikely to

take the Saints lightly and risk an upset result.

The return of joint coach and versatile onfield leader, Jordan Humphreys, has provided fellow coach, Darryl Wilson, with one of the missing pieces in a jigsaw that is the multi-talented line-up, and which is starting to produce the high-level performances that the blended combination has promised since amalgamation.

Zane Keighran and Oscar Madden have added top end talent that includes established key players Dean Putt, Steve Kennedy and Matt Wade, a combination that will stretch St. Arnaud's key personnel, including Kurt Torney (in his 150th. game for the Saints), Jay Kirwood, Max Hungerford, Zac Phillips and Harley Durward, to breaking point, possibly very early in their clash.



(By Course Language)

Last weekend was Donald Pharmacy sponsored Monthly Medal and Pies Putting.

Playing off the Red markers, the winner with a 79-7-72 was Luke Kelly closely followed by Brett Kelly on 78-4-74. The "Pies Putting" was taken out by a true one-eyed Magpie supporter in Robert Burton, with 23 putts on a count back from Bill Livingston. Those Collingwood supporters really stick together. Richard Gallagher had a birdie on the 18th sponsored by Donald Steel.

The "Nearest The Pins" were: The Donald Auto Elec 3rd, Luke Kelly; Weirs IGA 7th, Bill Livingston; Nufarm 14th, Brett Kelly; Bendigo Bank 16th, Colin "Pug" Cullen.

I'm not sure whether some of our golfers felt that playing off the red markers wasn't a

big enough challenge or just that old habits are hard to break, as there were a lot of them heading to the wrong tees before realising their mistake. I won't go as far as mentioning names as the scribe may have made that mistake himself at one stage..

Dad's Army

Last week's Dads Army had 5 players with the winner being Leon Mann with 26 points.

Coming Up

At home this weekend is a Stableford event sponsored by North Central Freight.

Away is the Kara Kara Weekend Pennant at Wyche-proof. Good luck to our team.

Dad Jokes

What makes a martial artist sick - Kung Flu.

A mate of mine asked his boss the other day if he could leave work early? He said "Sure, if you make up the time". My friend replied "OK, it's twenty past fourteen."

I saw someone holding his shoe up to his ear the other day. I asked what he was doing and he said "Listening to Soul Music."

I was told that after a vasectomy I wouldn't have kids anymore. Imagine my shock when I got home, and they were still there.



GOLDACRES NORTH CENTRAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ROUND 6

SATURDAY MAY 24TH, 2025

CHARLTON NAVIES	VS	SEA LAKE NANDALY TIGERS
CHARLTON PARK		
DONALD ROYAL BLUES	VS	WEDDERBURN REDBACKS
GOFF LETTS OVAL		
ST ARNAUD SAINTS	VS	CALDER UNITED LIONS
LORD NELSON PARK Pink Sports Day - PLAY4ECNA		
BOORT MAGPIES	VS	BIRCHIP-WATCHEM BULLS
BOORT PARK		