

**DONALD**

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# The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

**BIRCHIP**

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Friday, May 9, 2025

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

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



• Deputy Chief Officer Adrian Gutsche and Acting Chief Officer Garry Cook, AFSM.



• Deputy Chief Officer Brett Boatman lighting a candle.

## Firefighter Memorial Honours Fallen Heroes

**Hundreds gathered at the Victorian Emergency Services Memorial in Treasury Gardens on May 4, to honour firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty.**

Each year, CFA holds a memorial service to remember those firefighters who gave their lives to protect others and to honour the personal sacrifices and commitment our firefighters make each and every day.

Acting Chief Fire Officer, Garry Cook, AFSM, said the day was one for remembrance and reflection.

“The memorial service affirms the dedication and courage of our firefighters

and allows families, brigades and members of our communities to remember our fallen heroes, while reflecting on their exceptional service in protecting communities from harm,” Garry said.

“I encourage all Victorians to take a moment to reflect on those who are no longer with us and recognise the incredible commitment and contribution our members make every day to protect others.”

Each year the service is held around International

Firefighters’ Day, which was started in 1999 following the death of five CFA firefighters near Linton in 1998.

Recognised worldwide, the day coincides with St Florian’s Day in recognition of St Florian, the patron saint of firefighters.

• *Right: Barry McLean, whose son Darren John McLean, died in Churchill, 1982, lays a wreath. Barry been attending every year since his son died.*



• The Nationals’ Member for Mildura, Jade Benham, with Fire Rescue Victoria personnel.

## As Latest Levy Targets Regional Victoria ... Benham Backs “Scrap the Tax”

**The Nationals’ Member for Mildura, Jade Benham, is urging residents within the Mildura electorate to send a message to the Allan Labor Government to dump the controversial new emergency services tax.**

The Nationals have launched the “Scrap The Tax” campaign aimed at killing off Labor’s latest hit on hard-working regional Victorians.

“The emergency services tax, a sneaky and callous cash grab will be Labor’s 60th new or increased tax,” Ms Benham said.

“We plan to stop it happening. The window to strike is now, with a vote in Parliament on the new tax deferred until next month, following public backlash.

“We need the help of all regional Victorians. Visit scrap-thetax.com.au and send your protest message to the Treasurer, Jaclyn Symes.”

The impact of this tax makes for ugly reading:

- Households will pay almost double.
- Costs will be passed on to renters.
- Commercial rates to increase by 100 per cent.
- Industrial rates will soar by 64 per cent.
- Farmers face a painful 189 per cent rise.

“I’ve heard from many constituents across the electorate already struggling under the burden of Labor’s taxes including big increases in land tax,” Ms Benham said.

“This latest tax grab is not about emergency services, it’s a sneaky attempt to raise extra revenue because Labor can’t manage money and it is regional Victorians who will pay the price.

“Volunteer emergency service organisations remain in

• Continued on page 2.



# Reduce Risk This Autumn... Register Burn-Off Online

Following a year that saw CFA volunteers respond to 936 incidents caused by escaped burn-offs, CFA and Triple Zero Victoria are urging land-owners to take extra precautions before lighting up.

With fire restrictions easing across the state, some residents are now taking the opportunity to burn-off grass, stubble, weeds and undergrowth to maintain and prepare their properties.

While encouraged, land-owners are reminded to register any planned burn-offs online through the Fire Permits Victoria website at [www.firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify](http://www.firepermits.vic.gov.au/notify) and ensure regulations and applicable local laws are followed.

An online registration is the fastest and simplest option and allows 000 Call-takers to prioritise emergency calls. Unregistered burn-offs can not only cause a spike in calls to Triple Zero (000) but also unnecessary callouts for fire-fighters.

Landowners will be looking to take advantage of the mild autumn conditions and authorities expect a surge in burn-off registrations over the coming weeks.

### Plan Ahead

Triple Zero Victoria Chief Operating Officer Nicole Ashworth encouraged residents to plan ahead and register their burn-off online.

“When someone calls 000 to report seeing smoke we can confirm if it’s recorded on the burn-off register,” Ms Ashworth said.

“So, check the weather, plan ahead and notify us online

through Fire Permits Victoria’s website – it’s fast, easy and most importantly, allows our call-takers to focus on emergency calls.”

Ms Ashworth said the Yarra Ranges, Cardinia, Greater Geelong and Macedon Ranges council areas saw the highest number of burn-off notifications last year.

### Preferred Platform

Acting CFA Chief Officer Garry Cook said the Fire Permits Victoria website is the preferred platform for community members to register their burns and is just one of many safety steps to take this autumn.

“By registering your burn-off, it allows emergency services to verify the fire is not an emergency, manage fire risk effectively and avoid placing unnecessary strain on local brigades,” Garry said.

“In 2024, over 19,084 volunteer hours were utilised responding to incidents involving escaped burn-offs. Our message is clear – please don’t leave your burn-off unattended.

“We ask landowners have enough people and water on hand to monitor, contain and extinguish their burn-off safely and consistently monitor wind conditions before and after the burning day.”

If you wish to start your burn-off immediately (within



2 hours), you can register calling 1800 668 511, however early online registration is preferred.

For more information about burning off safely, visit [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/burnoff).

### Necessary Action

Before you notify us, ensure you:

- Follow regulations or laws by CFA and local council.
- Notify your neighbours if the burn will generate fire and smoke.
- Check the weather forecast for the day of the activity and a few days afterward.
- Postpone your activity if high fire risk conditions develop.
- Establish a gap in vegetation or fire break of no less than three metres cleared of all flammable material.
- Have enough people to monitor, contain and extinguish the burn safely and effectively. Never leave a burn-off unattended.

# Buloke to Launch Pre-Prep

Victoria’s Pre-Prep roll-out is continuing in 2026 – and Buloke Shire is next in line.

Enrolments are now open for Pre-Prep – an extended Four-Year-Old Kinder program that gives children extra time to learn before they start school.

Led by qualified teachers, Pre-Prep provides more hours of quality play-based learning to children in their four-year-old kinder program. From 2026, eligible children in Buloke Shire can access between 16 and 20 hours of kindergarten each week – up from 15 hours.

More hours means more learning through play. Studies show that more time at kindergarten can make a significant difference to a child’s cognitive, social and emotional

outcomes, including how they manage their feelings and relate to others.

### Free Kinder

Free Kinder is available for Pre-Prep programs at both sessional kinders and long day care centres. Families with children enrolled in a kindergarten program at a long day care service receive a fee offset.

Elsewhere in Victoria, Pre-Prep is also commencing in the local government areas of Benalla, Corangamite, East Gippsland, Horsham, Loddon, Mansfield, Mitchell, Pyrenees, Strathbogie, Wangaratta and Wodonga.

The staged roll-out prioritises regional areas before expanding across the state. This

phased approach allows time to grow the workforce and build the infrastructure required to support the local kindergarten services teaching the next generation.

From 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum-seeker background, and those who have had contact with Child Protection will also have access to up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep each week, no matter where they live.

If you’re interested in learning more about Pre-Prep, visit the Pre-Prep information booth at the Rex Theatre in Charlton on Saturday, May 10, or visit [vic.gov.au/pre-prep](http://vic.gov.au/pre-prep).

## Letter to the Editor



### Salvos Red Shield Appeal

(The Editor, “The Times”)

Dear Sir.– It is that time of year again. May has come around, the weather is beginning to get cooler, and The Salvation Army is gearing up for their biggest fundraiser yet.

The 61st Red Shield Appeal is here. The collecting outside your local shops, the knocks on your front door, and the emblazoned Red Shield around the town means that it is time to dig deep to support Aussies in need.

It is a time of year that isn’t just about the funds raised. The Salvos are always blown away by the ways the community comes together across the country in support. We are in awe of our Army of volunteers, this year aiming to be 20,000 strong, who make all of this happen. It is the everyday folk in local communities that is the heartbeat of The Salvos and the Red Shield Appeal.

Why is the Red Shield Appeal so important? Because it allows for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society to get the support they vitally need and deserve. It means we can continue our work in areas like homelessness, family and domestic

violence, youth, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, financial hardship and so much more.

The Salvos help someone in Australia every 17 seconds, but this doesn’t happen by accident. It is because of our incredible frontline workers who work tirelessly to support Aussies in need. It is because of our dedicated volunteers who give their time so selflessly for others. And it is because of the generosity of Australians, giving what they can to our Red Shield Appeal so someone else can receive hope.

Indeed, by giving to the Red Shield Appeal, you can be the hope that someone desperately needs.

Whether you are able to give financially, or give your time through volunteering, every little bit supports us to continue what we do best – helping people.

The Salvos are aiming to raise \$38 million this year for our Red Shield Appeal. We trust Australians will be generous, and for that, we offer a sincere thank you.

And the best part is, when you see the folk collecting outside the supermarket, or receive a friendly knock on the door, you can know that funds raised locally in your community will remain local, supporting your fellow community members doing it tough.

So please, if you can this year, consider supporting the Salvos Red Shield Appeal.

To donate or volunteer for The Salvation Army’s Red Shield Appeal or if you need support from the Salvos, visit [salvationarmy.org.au](http://salvationarmy.org.au) or call 13 SALVOS. You can also donate at any Salvos Store.

**Major Bruce Harmer.**  
The Salvation Army.



### Gannawarra

**Damage:** At about 4.30 a.m. on Friday the 2nd of May, a male has approached a facility in King George Street, Cohuna, and damaged the front door area. Cohuna Police were able to identify the offender and interview him in relation to the damage.

### Swan Hill

**Theft from motor vehicle:** Overnight Sunday /Monday the 27th of April, offenders have gained entry to an unlocked vehicle parked in Gummow Street, Swan Hill, and stolen power tools. A neighbour found the tools in his front yard, and they were handed to police and then returned to the owner.

**Theft:** On Friday the 25th of April, a female entered a business in Campbell Street, Swan Hill, and stole sunglasses. A couple of days later, police attended a Swan Hill address and arrested a 43-year-old female in relation to the theft. She was charged and bailed to attend court at a later date.

### Buloke

**Fire:** At about 11 p.m. on Wednesday the 30th of April, a loud “bang” was heard by residents in Wycheproof. The source of the noise was investigated, and the occupant of the property was interviewed by police in relation to lighting a fire. He is expected to be charged and attend court at a later date.



## Benham Backs “Scrap the Tax”

• Continued from page 1.

the dark about Labor’s tax. I have met with both the Country Fire Authority and local councils recently to discuss the potential impacts of this tax and to understand if stakeholders on the ground have any clarity over it.

“Instead of properly funding them, Labor is diverting

this levy to cover core government agencies such as Triple Zero, the State Control Centre, and Emergency Management Victoria – services that should already be funded from existing tax revenue.

“This tax should never see the light of day. It must be scrapped.”

## Church Notices

**GRANITE**  
Community Church  
[www.granitecommunitychurch.com](http://www.granitecommunitychurch.com)  
At Granite Church  
10.30 a.m.  
Speaker: Ross Barnes.  
Baptist Union of Victoria

**ANGLICAN**  
“Parish of  
Charlton-Donald”  
Enquiries: Rev’d Judi Bird  
0435 593 395

**Friday, May 16**  
St. Paul’s, Birchip, 5 p.m.

**Sunday, May 18**  
St. Martin’s, Charlton, 9 a.m.  
St. George’s, Donald, 11 a.m.  
Holy Trinity, W’burn, 3 p.m.



# Phonics Plus for Students' Future

The Victorian Government is making best practice common practice in the Education State with Victoria's Phonics Plus program setting up our youngest students for life-long reading success.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, Ben Carroll, last month visited Reservoir Primary School to announce the release of new English Lesson plans, including Phonics Plus lesson plans, to support the delivery of the state's revised English curriculum.

The Government has mandated that all students from Prep to Grade 2 will be taught using a systematic synthetic

phonics approach as part of their reading programs, with a minimum of 25 minutes daily explicit teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness.

The English lesson plans help primary and secondary students build their vocabulary, read increasingly complex fiction and non-fiction texts, and strengthen their spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.

The new Phonics Plus lesson plans, developed by teachers, will help reduce teacher workloads so they can spend less time preparing lessons and more time engaging with students. The Year 1 Phonics Check takes about 10 minutes, compared to the current 40 minutes per student, saving teachers approximately 12 hours in assessments.

Schools have indicated a strong demand for more pro-

fessional learning and resources, with 8,200 downloads of Victorian Lesson Plans since February.

Announced in October last year, the program is already an essential part of Reservoir Primary School's literacy

learning and is helping Prep students make meaningful connections with letters and sounds.

## Carol Speaks to Donald Probian

Donald Probus members were pleased to welcome Carol Holland as guest speaker at their May meeting, where all mothers were wished a happy Mother's Day this coming weekend and George Bowles was welcomed as a visitor.

Carol moved to Australia in 1967 from Scotland, and after living in Leongatha, Bendigo, and Melbourne, eventually found herself living in Donald, moving here about 20 years ago.

Expanding her creative interests, she was shown the art of sign writing by Geoff Taylor, who was wanting to retire from the craft.

She has made various sized signs from toilet signs to honour boards locally and in the surrounding areas. Included in these are decorative signs used at weddings and also at funerals.

Some of her work has travelled interstate. Carol displayed photos of some of her very delicate work in glass, made to go above the front door on the inside.

There are many different kinds of material created on software. Some of it is very expensive. Much of her work is displayed throughout our town.



• Carol Holland, guest speaker at Donald Probus.

### Corack East Wind

Renewable Energy from ACEN

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

#### Drop-in information hub

Every Wednesday 1pm-6pm

Meet the project team, find out more and provide feedback

**30 April - Birchip Leisure Centre**

**7 May - Charlton Park Community Bank Complex**

**14 May - Charlton Park Community Bank Complex**

**21 May - Charlton Park Community Bank Complex**

[www.corackeastwind.com.au](http://www.corackeastwind.com.au)

[info@corackeastwind.com.au](mailto:info@corackeastwind.com.au)

1800 498 550

Corack East Wind

# WEIR'S

## plus LIQUOR

41 - 43 Woods Street, Donald — phone 5497 1110

### Happy Mother's Day

### WEEKEND SALE

THIS SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup> & SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> MAY ONLY

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<div>Premium Beef Mince</div> <div>\$14.99</div> <div>per kilo</div>	<div>1/2 Cabbages</div> <div>\$2.99</div> <div>each</div>
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<div>Virginian Ham</div> <div>Sliced or Shaved</div> <div>\$9.99</div> <div>per kilo</div>	<div>Continental Cucumbers</div> <div>\$1.99</div> <div>each</div>
<div>Coleslaw Salad</div> <div>Made fresh in our Deli</div> <div>\$12.99</div> <div>per kilo</div>	<div>Sausage Mince</div> <div>\$10.99</div> <div>per kilo</div>



# “Times” Classifieds

Phone Donald 5497 1222, Birchip 5492 2735 Email [admin@buloketimes.com](mailto:admin@buloketimes.com)

**Deadlines:—**

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

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



### ENGAGEMENT WILSON - BATH

Meg and Jordan are excited to announce their engagement on April 28, 2025.



### ENGAGEMENT

Bruce and Christine Leeder together with Phil and Patsy Catterson of Ballarat, are delighted to announce the engagement of, Grace and Matthew.

The wedding ceremony is planned for the coming summer at Leeder’s farm “Nurrumbeet”, in Cope Cope.



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Mike: 0408 316 394  
Brendan: 0427 794 479  
Nathan: 0409 525 805

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### BRENDA BRENNAN 90th Birthday 09/05/2025

To dear Mum, Mother-in-law, Nana & Nana Brenda, Wishing you a wonderful 90th birthday.

Enjoy your special day. We are so privileged to have you as our mum, you are an inspiration to us all.

—Love always, your family.

### Happy 100th Birthday Vera Woods 09/05/2025

An amazing milestone in one’s life.

—With lots of love from,  
Graham & Marlene,  
Jeanette & Allan  
Williams, Dianne &  
Roger Lehmann, Cheryl &  
Lindsay Brain, Debbie  
(dec.), Les & Sue Dunn,  
John & Ros and all your  
grandchildren & great-  
grandchildren.

We are so blessed to have you in our lives.

We are having a family gathering in Bendigo on Sunday.



### DEATH CRUTCH.— William “Bill” (2990334)

Member of  
Buckrabanyule  
Fire Brigade.

The Chairman, Board, Management and members of CFA regret the passing of their colleague and offer their deepest sympathy to his family.

### DEATH CRUTCH.— William “Bill”

The Charlton Lawn Tennis Club is saddened by the loss of Club Legend and Life Member, Bill Crutch.

Bill’s tennis IQ was matched only by his on court craft, quick wit and good humour, an 8 time club singles winner, a true gentleman, and champion of the Charlton Lawn Tennis Club on and off the court.

Deepest sympathies are extended to Beth, Sarah and Andrew at this sad time from all past and present members.

Cherished memories of Bill, on the tennis court, and at club working bees will live in our hearts forever.

RIP “Crutchy”

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

### DEATH EWART.— Pym Heather May 21/03/1945 - 01/05/2025

Dearly loved daughter of Allan & Jean (dec.). Loving sister of Max, Don, Marge, Dorothy (all dec.), Thelma & Raymond and family.

Beautiful memories are ours to keep.

RIP

### DEATH KELLY.—

David Michael  
Peacefully, on May 5, 2025 at St John of God Hospital, Bendigo.

Dearly loved and loving husband of Merr (Mez) for nearly 44 years.

“My darling Dave, my love, my support, my champion. Always the love of my life.”

Cherished loving father to his two daughters, ‘Kit’ and ‘Len’.

“Lush (Dad), you’ve loved us our whole lives and we will love and miss you for the rest of ours.”

You fought a long and difficult battle and are now resting peacefully.

### KELLY.— David Michael

Dearly loved eldest son of Sheila and Michael (both dec.). Loved brother to Priscilla, Pauline (dec.), Michael, Kathleen, Dennis, Patricia, Timothy (dec.), Daniel, Coleen, Erica, Leesa, Laurel (dec.) and Eugene.

Loved always.

### DEATH KELLY.— David

The Birchip Cemetery Trust members extend their deepest sympathy to Merrilyn, Kaitlyn and Jacqueline on the passing of life member David, a valued and knowledgeable member of the trust since 1985.

### DEATH McKENNY (Moore).— Kerri Ann 10/12/1959 - 05/05/2025

Passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family, in St Arnaud.

Loving wife of Daryl (dec.) and “one-of-a-kind” Mum & Nan who was loved so much by Mathew, Marnie, Noah, Sarah, Elizabeth, Lillian; Jacki, Brad, Nate, Eva, Bella, Gracie; Lori; Harley, Tegan, Elsie, Nellie and Millie.

You will live in our hearts forever.

Love you too, see you later.

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

### FUNERAL McKENNY.—

A service to celebrate Kerri’s life will be held at the Church of Immaculate Conception, St. Arnaud, on Wednesday, May 14, at 11 a.m.

A private cremation will follow.

Condolences and livestream details at [lifelived.com.au](http://lifelived.com.au)

KELL FUNERALS  
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### FUNERAL KELLY.— David Michael

Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Mr David Michael Kelly will be offered at St Mary’s Catholic Church, Birchip at 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 and afterwards to the Birchip Lawn Cemetery.

Live stream available at: [kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au](http://kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au)

Mark and Raelene O’Halloran  
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP



## ROYAL BLUES

Round 5  
MAY 10

### Billy Anderson Day

The Donald Football Club invite past players, supporters, Life Members, and community members to

**celebrate Bill’s 70 years of volunteering**

**11.45 a.m.** Special presentation in the home rooms.

**12.05 p.m.** Further presentations in the Anderson Blue Room

**2.15 p.m.** Guard of honour before senior game and Bill to toss the coin

**All welcome**

In Bills own words “The Donald Footy Club has been my life, I love being part of it, I love my footy!”

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- ~ Roast Pork with apple sauce
- ~ Swiss Chicken - with vegies or salad
- ~ Flathead Tails - with vegies or salad

**Main only \$20  
2 courses \$25**

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Mob. 0409 959 046**

## "Times" Classifieds

Donald Art and Photography Show  
**Painting Workshop**  
*With guest artist, Tarli Bird*

**Sunday, 11th May, 2025**  
at 1.30 p.m. DONALD MEMORIAL HALL

**Cost: \$5**

*See article for more details*

Bookings: **Alison 0407313648 or  
Charmaine 54971707**



*Cultivating Healthy Communities*

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**Campus Negotiable**

Community Nursing – Acting Nurse Unit Manager

**Birchip**

Resident Lifestyle Coordinator

**Donald**

Enrolled Nurse

**St Arnaud**

Associate Nurse Unit Manager

Ward Clerk

Registered Nurse

Enrolled Nurse

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

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

Mark and Raelene continue the Kelly and O'Halloran names, known and trusted for personal, dignified and professional service for over 60 years.

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Funeral Directors AFDA

## Donald Art and Photography Show

DONALD MEMORIAL HALL

**Friday, May 9 to Monday, May 12**

Entries still being received. See schedule on:

**Web Page:** Donald Learning Group/Events

**Facebook:** Donald Art and Photography Show

**Opening night: 6.30 p.m. \$20 early bird or \$25 at door**

~ Complimentary glass of wine and nibbles ~

~ Background Live Music ~

~ Ticket is a pass for Saturday, Sunday and Monday ~

**Judges announcement: 7.30 p.m.**

Guest Artist: Tarli Bird

**Painting Workshop with Tarli Bird,  
Sunday, May 11. 1.30 p.m. \$20**

Bookings close: Fri., May 2. Ph 0407313648 or 54971707



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## BUSINESS FOR SALE

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## SIGNS 'R'US

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**25 Racecourse Rd., Donald**

Excellent opportunity to own  
or lease your own business.

*(If not sold or leased, business  
will close by end of June).*

**Mob: 0408 856 375  
or 0409 959 046**



Indicator	Latest Value	Latest Period	Value 12 Months Ago	12 month change (%)	Value 10 Years Ago	10 Year Change (%)
Victoria - Dwelling Units Approved - Houses - Private Sector	2426	Mar-25	3030	-20%	2783	-13%
Victoria - Dwelling Units Approved - Houses - Total Sectors	2473	Mar-25	3036	-19%	2858	-13%
Victoria - Dwelling Units Approved - Total (Type of Building) - Private Sector	4064	Mar-25	4171	-3%	6112	-34%
Victoria - Dwelling Units Approved - Total (Type of Building) - Total Sectors	4147	Mar-25	4179	-1%	6194	-33%
Victoria - Value of Building Approved - Total Residential - New	\$2,306,781,000.00	Mar-25	\$2,284,881,000.00	1%	\$1,623,368,000.00	42%
Victoria - Value of Building Approved - Total Residential - Alterations/Additions	\$278,995,000.00	Mar-25	\$400,528,000.00	-30%	\$192,345,000.00	45%
Victoria - Value of Building Approved - Total Residential - Total Work	\$2,585,776,000.00	Mar-25	\$2,685,409,000.00	-4%	\$1,815,713,000.00	42%

# Housing Crisis Spirals as Approvals Collapse

The State Government’s war on property ownership – and its addiction to ever-increasing taxes and charges – is accelerating Victoria’s housing crisis at an alarming rate.

New figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics released this week reveal:

• A 20 per cent reduction in house approvals in March 2025 compared to the same time last year;

• Total dwelling approvals down 33 per cent compared to a decade ago.

For Victorians working hard to break into the housing market, the news is even worse. While house approvals have plummeted by 20 per

cent over the past year, the cost of building a new home has soared by 42 per cent over the past decade.

This follows the Housing Industry Association’s report in March revealing that taxes and charges on new homes

have skyrocketed 73 per cent since 2019.

Government taxes now account for a staggering 43 per cent of the cost of a new house and land package.

Shadow Minister for Housing, Richard Riordan, said the State Government’s financial mismanagement and ideological obsession with taxing housing into oblivion was pricing Victorians out of home

ownership.

“The Government is front and centre of Victoria’s housing crisis,” Mr Riordan said.

“Labor’s lack of budget control and failure of governance has created a dangerous reliance on taxes and charges that are now strangling first home buyers.

“You cannot tax Victorians into homes. Basic economics and average wages determine

what people can afford. Labor’s soaring taxes and its ideological planning regime are forcing Victorians out of the housing market.”

Mr Riordan said only the Liberals and Nationals have a clear plan to reverse the crisis.

“A Victorian Liberal Nationals Government will lower taxes and reduce regulations to make homes more affordable for more Victorians.”

## So Voters Can Have Their Say... Help to Deliver State Elections

Applications are now open to work at the 2026 state election with the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) recruiting more than 1,000 senior election officials across Victoria.

Senior election officials play an invaluable and significant role in co-ordinating elections for entire districts and local councils.

Acting Electoral Commissioner Dana Fleming said that the role is a critical pillar of delivering democracy at a local level during elections.

“You don’t need previous election experience. It’s all about the skills and life experience you can bring to the role – if you’re organised, have a good eye for detail, and most importantly bring a positive attitude, that’s what we’re looking for,” Ms Fleming said.

### Critical Role

The VEC also plays a critical

role in the education and inclusion of Victorian communities who are traditionally under-represented at the ballot box. For the 2026 state election our senior election officials will be engaging with these communities by delivering outreach services, raising awareness about the democratic processes.

Ms Fleming said elections are a rewarding experience, working with community and ensuring we deliver fair and trusted elections.

### Experience

“Many of our senior election officials have now been working with us for more than 20 years and we are proud to have their experience and

depth of knowledge in our organisation,” she said.

“If you’re a business owner, if you’re retired or semi-retired, if you’re a parent, if you’re an artist, or a coach of the local footy club – we want to hear from you.”

Applications are open until May 25, at: [careers.vic.gov.au/job/senior-election-officials-855486](https://careers.vic.gov.au/job/senior-election-officials-855486)

## New Welfare Call Service

With elderly Australians often living alone, social isolation and missed check-ins can lead to serious concerns for families.

CareAlert, a leader in personal safety alarms, has launched an Automated Welfare Call Service – a simple, cost-effective solution to ensure loved ones are safe, even when life gets busy.

For less than 30 cents per day, this service provides scheduled welfare or medication reminder calls, offering peace of mind for families and reassurance for elderly Australians living independently.

“Too often, elderly individuals are forgotten or unintentionally neglected due to busy schedules,” says Darren

Steele, Manager of CareAlert. “This service ensures they receive a daily check-in, reducing the risk of extended periods without contact.”

### How It Works

• Set up to two calls per day – Choose the days and times that best suit your loved one (available 24/7).

• Available in 10 languages – Including Chinese, Greek, Italian + more.

• Simple confirmation – The recipient of the call simply presses any key on their phone to confirm they are okay.

• Instant alerts – If a call goes unanswered, an emergency contact is instantly notified via phone call, email and optional SMS.

• No contracts, no hidden fees – Cancel anytime.

Unlike mobile apps or complicated technology, the welfare calls work on any landline or mobile phone, ensuring ease of use for elderly Australians who may not be tech-savvy.

Families can now sign up within minutes via the CareAlert website: [www.carealert.com.au/pages/welfare-call](https://www.carealert.com.au/pages/welfare-call)

To the Editor

### The Rudeness Parade

(And Why We Need Kindness)

Some folks wake up with a grumble and groan,  
And launch a complaint before checking their phone.  
They type up an email, quite brutal and brisk,  
With CAPS LOCK and drama—emotional risk.

They dial your number, you pick up with grace,  
They bark out a rant, then vanish—no trace!  
Not “thanks,” not “goodbye,” not even “you’re wrong,”  
Just a click and a beep—oh, so charmingly strong.

They stop you mid-walk, with a scowl and a frown,  
“You parked like a goat, you’re bringing me down!”  
You smile and nod, try not to combust,  
As they flail with complaints they think are just.

Now listen up, friends, let’s give this some thought:  
Just ‘cause you’re upset doesn’t mean you should swat  
At strangers, at workers, at folks passing by—  
We’re all just humans who laugh, cry, and try.

You don’t get to dump your mood on the masses,  
Or judge people’s lives through your own tinted glasses.  
Your stress is real, sure, we all carry weight—  
But kindness and pause? Those things make us great.

So before you press “send” or you dial and yell,  
Before shouting in public or making life hell—  
Take a deep breath, be decent, be still,  
The world spins much better when hearts show goodwill.

Be kind, be resilient, be patient, be true,  
The world needs more soft hearts—especially from you.  
So next time you’re steaming and ready to blast—  
Think first, speak gently—and make kindness last.

Author unknown.

Name and Address supplied.

## The Ettamogah Pub Mob



“He mighn’t have a good attitude mate ... but by cripes he sells a lot of cars!”



# THE PUT YOURSELF OUT THERE BIT

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

[VISITVICTORIA.COM](https://www.visitvictoria.com)

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# Birchip's Busy Term

Birchip P-12 School has had a busy return to term two. The school captains represented Birchip P-12 School at the annual Anzac Day ceremony run by the Birchip RSL Sub-Branch.

Students laid wreaths, and Year 11 Student Bambi Navarro sang the National Anthem beautifully.

Students from Years 7-12 participated in the annual house cross country last Tuesday. Students ran in perfect conditions around the 3km and 5km course, with many students performing very well. It was also very pleasing to see students who may not enjoy running providing their

best efforts to cross the finish line and gain valuable points for their respective sporting house. Individual winners will go on to compete in the North Central District cross country event held in St Arnaud later in May.

The primary students, from Years Prep-Six, competed in the junior cross country competition on Friday. The event was well supported by families cheering on students, as well as senior



students who acted as guides for the younger students. The senior students role modelled the values of resilience and aiming high; assisting their younger peers to run as well as they could, and to complete the challenge.



• Group photo of Senior School Cross Country runners 12-13 Division.

## Supporting Grampians Recovery: Better Access to Walks

If you're headed to the Grampians, finding your way to iconic walks from the Halls Gap township is now even easier.

Budja Budja is the latest trailhead that has recently opened in the heart of town, linking it to the world-class Grampians Peaks Trail and other popular walking tracks in Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park.

The Budja Budja trailhead not only makes it easy for visitors to set off on short and long journeys to discover the spectacular sights of the national park, but also helps walkers find their way right to businesses in town, helping support the local economy. The trailhead features elements of the Grampians Peaks Trail including boulders, a boardwalk and an example of a tent camping platform.

**Mt. Zero**  
Although a large section of the Grampians Peaks Trail was affected by fire during the summer months and remains closed for the time being, the northern part of the walk connecting Halls Gap to Mt Zero can still be enjoyed. With stunning scenery and hiker huts for those who can't or don't want to carry all their supplies, this part of the walk caters for overnight hikers of varying abilities.

The very southern part of the Grampians Peak Trail also remains open to hikers between Griffin Trailhead and Dunkeld, including the Djardi-djawara and Mud-Dadjug campgrounds.

Since the Grampians Peaks Trail opened in late 2021, hikers have booked more than 30,000 nights camping along the trail, proving the popularity of this unique natural and cultural hiking experience.

**Peak Trail**  
The Grampians Peak Trail provides options for overnight and multi-day walks along the northern Grampians Peaks Trail from Halls Gap to Mt Zero Trailhead – including the Gar and Werdug 3-day hike, as well as shorter walks such as The Pinnacle, Venus Baths and Chataqua Peak.

The Budja Budja trailhead upgrade was made possible

by a \$5 million investment from the Victorian Government to provide more options to access the Grampians Peaks Trail. The project is supported by \$200,000 from Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC) and is consistent with Council's Halls Gap Action Plan.

**Fire Recovery Works**  
Over the next three months Parks Victoria is delivering \$1.88 million of initial fire recovery works, focusing on critical biodiversity and urgent visitor site recovery in the fire area.

For more information about experiencing the sections of the Grampians Peaks Trail that are currently open visit: [www.parks.vic.gov.au/grampianspeakstrail](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/grampianspeakstrail)

"Previously visitors may have found it difficult to find where to start walks in the national park – now they will be able to stand at the local shops and more easily see exactly where to start their walking adventures," said Parks Victoria Area Chief Ranger Charlie Richardson.

"Supporting communities in and around the Grampians is a key focus to ensure their recovery. Building this new trailhead to better connect the town and businesses of Halls Gap to the walking trails in the park is just one way of doing this."



• Mr Shane McLoughlan (Birchip RSL Subbranch President) and Bambi Navarro singing the national anthem.



• Better access to walks supports Grampians recovery. View of Budja Budja trailhead. (Photos by Parks Victoria).



• Better access to walks supports Grampians recovery. View of Budja Budja trailhead.



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# Lions Outmuscle Bulls

Under picture-perfect conditions, the Birchip-Watchem Bulls’ first encounter against a well-drilled Calder Lions under-17s outfit proved to be a tough day at the office for the home side.

Calder came out firing in its inaugural clash against the Bulls, dominating the opening term with clean skills, precise ball movement, and superior game sense. The scoreboard told the story early: Bulls 0.0 (0) to Lions 9.4 (58) at quarter time. Birchip-Watchem continued to find itself under pressure, struggling to gain any momentum against a relentless Lions outfit. Despite the lop-sided scoreline, the Bulls’ backline led by Jack McAullife, Jackson Goss, and Cameron Jones had a busy but solid day, often standing up under intense fire.

Calder’s Max Fawcett was one of the best on ground, showcasing his class through the midfield and he was instrumental in setting up several scoring opportunities with smart ball use. Darcy Poyner was relishing the chance to play well against his school mates and the league’s newest team had several dominant forwards able to capitalise with Ollie Dayton and Beau Chapman both scoring 5. In the end, the Bulls were unable to register a score as the Lions cruised to a commanding win: Calder United

18.12 (120) defeated Birchip-Watchem 0.0 (0). It has been a sobering start for the undermanned Bulls, but they will look to bounce back in the coming weeks. Inversely the merger has given Calder an increased list to choose from and they will take plenty of confidence into the rest of the season. Awards for Birchip-Watchem: Ollie Cook, Noah Dean, Ben Perry, Kobe Hamilton. For Calder United: Max Fawcett, Tynan Perry, Ollie Dayton, Darcy Poyner.



• Ollie Cook and Rhett Hogan ruck. (Photos Blake Lee.)

## Be Wary of Unsolicited Superannuation Promises

CPA Australia is warning Australians to beware of unsolicited financial advice relating to the recent drop in superannuation balances caused by global trade disputes.

The superannuation balances of millions of Australians have plunged following the imposition of global tariffs by the United States, because the success of many funds is partly linked to the performance of global stock markets. CPA Australia is aware of super account holders receiving unsolicited calls claiming to provide a super health check. These calls include an offer to review the individual’s super fees and insurance costs, as well as their investment options, to help grow their balance. Unscrupulous Richard Webb, CPA Australia’s Superannuation Lead, says unsolicited calls that offer financial advice may often be merely unscrupulous,

but could also be criminal in their intent. “There’s a high chance you’ll be getting unlicensed financial advice, or these calls could be designed to steal your personal information – or even your superannuation savings,” he said. Look and Listen Mr Webb encourages Australians to look and listen out for clues that the call may not be legitimate, such as: • The call comes from a withheld number or another suspicious-looking number like a mobile. • The caller is vague or attempts to skim over where they are calling from, such as using an acronym. • They ask “have you heard about this” to gauge

your level of knowledge about the issue at hand. • They create a sense of urgency, trying to convince you that you need to act quickly and quote statistics or other “evidence”. “If you receive a call, an email or SMS like this, do not click on any links and do not hand over any personal details such as your super account number, passwords or any other information,” he said. “Do not make any decisions about your superannuation without first talking to a licensed financial adviser or your superannuation fund.” Australians can get legitimate financial advice about their superannuation and other retirement savings by engaging a licensed financial adviser. In doing so, individuals are encouraged to check the official Financial Advisers Register.



• Ollie Daykin gets up on the shoulders of Bayley Kemp for an attempted mark.

## Pothole Problem at Wycheproof Crossing

Following a speech in parliament by Wendy Lovell, Liberal Member for Northern Victoria, calling for urgent attention to the dangerous pothole at the pedestrian crossing on the Calder Highway in Wycheproof town centre, the Department of Transport and Planning will soon conduct a hazard inspection and make repairs as required.

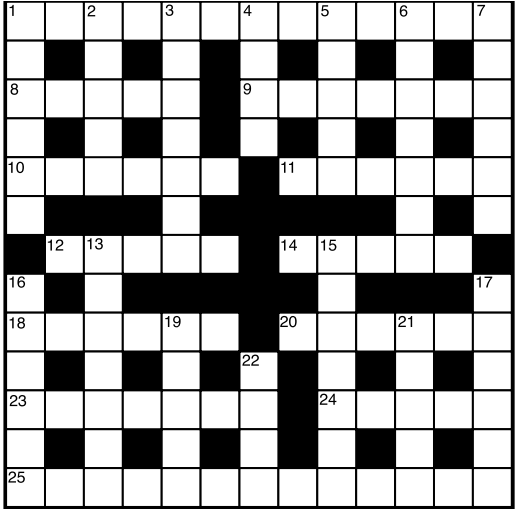
Ms Lovell noted in her speech that the Calder Highway A79 runs through the middle of Wycheproof, and is constantly busy with trucks, but there are no traffic lights for pedestrians who want to cross from the shops on one side of the road to shops on the other. Pedestrians use the designated crossing, but the road surface at this crossing has become very dangerous with the development of a large

pothole and asphalt wave that pose a serious trip hazard. The Minister for Roads and Road Safety recently replied to Ms Lovell’s speech to inform her that DTP would complete the requested safety inspection and repairs when it undertakes programmed pavement works on the Wycheproof section of the Calder Highway, which are scheduled for completion by June 2025.

**Serious Hazard** “There is a large pothole right where pedestrians cross main street in Wycheproof, and this is a serious trip hazard for anyone unsteady on their feet, or using a walking aid,” said Ms Lovell. “The Minister for Roads has agreed to my request for a safety inspection, and I call on the Department of Transport to make the necessary repairs as soon as possible.”

### “Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8176



- ACROSS**  
1. Majority (13)  
8. Rejoice (5)  
9. Wine (7)  
10. Grave (6)  
11. Conflict (6)  
12. Sheep-like (5)  
14. Country (5)  
18. Madness (6)  
20. Grow (6)  
23. Laxity (7)  
24. Banish (5)  
25. Tree (5,8)
- DOWN**  
1. Delight (6)  
2. Same (5)  
3. Couch (7)  
4. Bird (4)  
5. Cook (5)  
6. Cancel (7)  
7. Christian festival (6)  
13. Condiment (7)  
15. Voice (7)  
16. Settle (6)  
17. Thoroughfare (6)  
19. Fabric (5)  
21. Vegetable (5)  
22. Yearn (4)

• Solution next issue.

### CHURCHES

**UNITING CHURCH (North Central Living Waters Cluster)**  
Donald, 10 a.m. with Harold Flett.  
Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services, 10 a.m. Sunday, May 18  
Contact Number: 5497 1033

**DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES “East Wimmera Parish”**  
Birchip 10.30 a.m. (Livestream in)  
Boort 10.30 a.m. (Livestream in)  
Banyena No Mass  
Charlton 8.30 a.m.  
Donald 10.30 a.m. (Livestream in)  
St. Arnaud 10.30 a.m. (Livestream out to churches without Mass)  
Wycheproof 10.30 a.m. (Livestream in)  
Fr. Gerry Prunty 0419 247 779  
Parish Co-ordinator – Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976



# Calder Reserves Dominate

Calder United Lions Reserves delivered a powerful statement on the weekend with a dominant 18.12 (120) to 3.6 (24) victory over Birchip-Watchem Bulls.

Bolstered by the off-season merger, the Lions fielded a team brimming with senior experience, including Demons stalwarts Tom Trewin, Jed Bish, and Ricky Allan, who all played pivotal roles in the win. From the opening bounce, Calder United set the tone. Tom Trewin was commanding in the ruck, consistently giving his midfielders first use of the ball. The Demons' on-ball brigade capitalised, moving the ball with precision to a

dangerous and mobile forward line. Early goals to Heath Senior, Dude Kelly, Billy Forrester, Hunter Connolly, and Blair Hogan gave the Lions a strong 5.3 (33) to 0.0 lead at the first break and set the scene for what was to come. The second quarter saw a brief resurgence from the Bulls, who managed to restrict Calder United to just three behinds early on. Matt Berry finally broke the drought for Birchip-Watchem with a

much-needed goal. However, the response from the Demons was swift, with Trewin again asserting his dominance and pushing the margin back out before half-time. The brother combinations of Sol and Dude Kelly and Angus and Billy Forrester helped Calder United Lions to resume control in the third term, with their forwards again hitting the scoreboard. Hunter Connolly, George Forrester, and Rowan Jones



• Josh Woods and James Ison are even in the ruck contest watched on by rover Archie Lewis and umpire Mark Bowen.



• Josh Woods and James Ison are even in the ruck contest watched on by rover Archie Lewis and umpire Mark Bowen.

added goals as the Lions' class and depth shone through. Despite some valiant midfield efforts from Riley Hogan and Bodie Colbert, who gave the Bulls some drive through the centre, the Lions extended their lead to over ten goals. Connor Lee provided a reprieve for Birchip-Watchem, slotting a goal after a period of solid play from the Bulls. The final quarter saw the Lions continue to flex their muscles. With fresh legs rotating through the middle and relentless ball movement, more goal kickers emerged. Jed Bish, Sol Kelly, and Tom Trewin all added majors as Calder United capped off a polished and relentless performance. Heath Senior finished

as the most prolific forward with four goals, while Angus Forrester kicked three in a damaging display up forward. Birchip-Watchem's struggles were compounded by a brutal run of injuries. Ruckman George Addis went down with a hamstring injury, followed soon after by another tall, Tom Sheridan, who suffered three broken ribs. Calum Goode also failed to finish the match, leaving the Bulls without a bench. Already missing several regulars promoted to the senior side, the Bulls' smaller bodies were overpowered, especially around the contest. Despite this, the experienced backline trio of Matt Rickard, Alex Noonan, and Ed Rickard stood up under siege and battled

hard throughout the whole day. In the end, Calder United's experience, speed, and class proved far too much. With eight individual goal kickers and a spread of contributors across the field, the Lions look every bit the premiership favourites as they charge toward September. The Bulls, meanwhile, will be hoping for reinforcements and better luck with injuries in the rounds to come. Best for Birchip-Watchem: Matthew Rickard, Bodie Colbert, Edward Rickard, Alexander Noonan, Riley Hogan, Joshua Woods. For Calder United: Thomas Trewin, Jed Bish, Billy Forrester, Hunter Connolly, Heath Senior, Jack Morrison.



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# Donald Netballers at St Arnaud

It was a beautiful morning in St Arnaud for the girls to be playing outside the stadium.

**Under-14 “B”**  
The Donald girls hit the court with energy and excitement, putting the first goal on the board! But the St Arnaud girls quickly found their rhythm and showed off some impressive skills. With speed and control across all areas of the court, they soon took a strong lead.

Donald experimented with a few different player combinations, but St Arnaud had built up momentum, and nothing seemed to slow it down.  
On the defensive end, Marnie and Ellie were working hard to create turnovers and put pressure on the St Arnaud attack. Their efforts gave Donald plenty of opportunities, but unfortunately, those chances didn’t convert to goals on the scoreboard.

A special highlight of the match was Holly stepping on to the court for her first game alongside her big sister, Indi.  
A tough game but there were moments of brilliance and lots of potential to be seen.

Final score: Donald 3 lost to St Arnaud 21.  
Donald awards: Ellie Burke, Loveshack Giftware; Marnie Harmer, The Clothes Bin.  
St Arnaud awards: Canteen, Zarleya H.; Anne Ezard Award, Indi J..

**Under-14 “A”**  
Quarter 1: Donald made some changes to its shooting team with Sophie Burke joining the shooters and putting on the GS bib for her first game in the ring. The game started slowly for Donald with St Arnaud putting early points on the board, but once Donald found its rhythm it adjusted well to the play. Sophie had good confidence in the ring alongside Layla Griffiths

and both girls were working well together. The defence was working well together and St Arnaud was utilising the ball when it got it and making it hard for Donald to pick off any errors.  
Quarter 2: The shooting team was changed again, with Chloe coming back in, she and Layla G. were strong together and did well working the ball in the shooting ring, strong centre play by Evie Donnellon helped assist the ball down the court, with Lucy Robinson playing strongly in the WA position. Patience was strong in GK, picking up loose balls and making it tough at times for St Arnaud to get the ball to their shooters; however when the ball did get into the ring, the St Arnaud shooters were strong and worked well together.  
Quarter 3: Donald was up in this quarter and came out strong – the trio combination with shooters was working with Sophie, Layla and Chloe sharing the GA, GS bib and finding a good rhythm. A change up with Lucy going into C and Evie having a run in the wing, meant St Arnaud had to change its game plan, but the girls worked seamlessly together. Driving the ball through the mid court. Layla H, River and Nevaeh played through the mid court defence and in the ring – all three girls worked well together and were very cohesive. St Arnaud players proved they are always a force and didn’t let up; they played on the ball and kept Donald playing hard through this quarter. The morning sun was lovely for those spectating, however certainly made it hot out there for the girls.  
Quarter 4: Donald really pushed this quarter, the numbers on the score board were

in its favour but it didn’t stop fighting and credit to the Saints, neither did they. St Arnaud always draws a great game crowd and the support was positive from its spectator bench. St Arnaud fought hard during the second half of the last quarter. Donald kept fighting and walked away with the win, credit to the girls coming off a couple of losses is always hard; they stayed motivated and turned up for each other. Thanks to St Arnaud for hosting; it is always great to play on its courts and use its great facilities.  
Donald awards: Sophie Burke, Gilchrist and Co.; Chloe Italia, Harvest cafe (best on).  
St Arnaud awards: Canteen, Dahla P.; IGA award, Grace B..  
**Under-17 “A”**  
The game got off to a promising start with Donald’s attack showing great teamwork, putting into play strategies they’ve been working on at training. There was strong mid-court pressure and plenty of hands over the ball, helping to disrupt the flow of a tall and skilled St Arnaud opposition. The use of rolling substitutions allowed for on-the-spot coaching, giving players the chance to regroup and better track their opponents.  
In the second quarter, some defensive changes saw girls step into unfamiliar positions – and gel well together. Donald’s efforts through the centre third remained tireless, working hard to move the ball into the attacking ring. The attackers read the play beautifully, delivering some fabulous passes into the shooters. Defensively, the girls continued to apply relentless pressure to contain St Arnaud’s attack.

The third quarter saw both teams lift the intensity, with St Arnaud continuing to play strong, hard netball. Pressure was evident all over the court, but Donald rose to the challenge, providing solid leads and re-offers to maintain possession and drive the ball down the court.  
A full-court shake-up in the final quarter proved just what the team needed. Defensive pressure ramped up significantly, with players in the ring working together brilliantly and listening well to feedback from the sidelines. The attacking ring continued to combine well, showing strong leads to the ball. Communication across the court improved, and with growing teamwork and smart decisions, Donald is beginning to form some exciting connections that will no doubt strengthen with each game.  
Donald awards: Donald Family Butcher, Halle Rice; Bev’s Baubles, Nevaeh Pearse.  
St Arnaud awards: Sporting Club, Scarlett Hand; Country Kitchen, Chloe Needs.  
**“C” Grade**  
The “C” grade girls once again showed grit and determination on court, battling hard in warm conditions against a strong opposition. While the scoreboard didn’t fall Donald’s way, with a 13 – 53 result, the team continues to show encouraging signs of development. Each week, the girls are growing in confidence and cohesion, building skills both individually and collectively.  
The use of rolling substitutions worked well again this week, giving fresh legs a chance to make an impact and allowing others to observe the game’s flow from the sideline. The team’s spirit remains high, and their willingness to keep pushing, learning, and

supporting one another makes them a great team to work with.  
Donald awards: Julia Pearse (Gilchrist & Co); Jenna McCallum (Caremore Pharmacy); and Sarah Jardine (Coach’s Chocolate).  
St Arnaud awards: Jarryd Ezard Construction, Lex Cameron; St Arnaud Physiotherapy, Torri Tillig.  
**“B” Grade**  
A closely contested first quarter saw both “B” grade sides start well. Quite a fast paced first half saw the Saints take control of the game early. Their relentless attacking and defending proved difficult for Donald to break down. Consistent defence, key intercepts and rebounds from St Arnaud gave it crucial possessions, which it capitalized on to maintain a slight lead throughout the match.  
Donald defenders held up to the St Arnaud attacking challenges and with consistent second and third efforts some crucial turnovers saw Donald claw back in the final quarter.  
Donald played hard until the final whistle, however St Arnaud’s steady performance and consistent defence strategy ultimately secured its victory taking the 4 points 38 to 33.  
Donald awards: Zara Staples, Donald Hotel; Jess Nunn, IGA.  
St Arnaud awards: DK Build, Ava Wilson; Torney Fighting Fit, Ada Buenaventura.  
**“A” Grade**  
Donald “A” grade claimed a strong win over St Arnaud in a display of 4 quality quarters of netball. The match began with Donald quickly taking control, building a 15–10 lead by quarter time. Strong connections through the midcourt and accurate shooting saw it maintain momentum into the second

quarter. Abby Griffiths was influential through the centre, picking off numerous intercepts and driving the ball forward.  
The second quarter stayed tight with Georgia Taylor as the Saints’ GS working tirelessly in the goal circle, providing a reliable target and converting well when given opportunities. Aleshia Petrie stood out in defence, putting pressure on Donald’s shooters and fighting hard to turn the ball over. Donald extended its advantage to 24–19 by half-time.  
Donald’s dominance showed in the third quarter, outscoring St Arnaud 17–9 to open up a commanding 41–28 lead at the final change. Debutant Zoe Grigsby impressed in her first “A” grade match for Donald, stepping up in the goal shooter position and finishing with composure under pressure. Ally Doak, Rachel Meulendyks, Anna Sudholz and Sara Adams were applying solid pressure on the St Arnaud attack before Ally was forced off with an injury.  
The final quarter saw Donald finish strongly. Xanthi Rice was effective at wing attack, delivering consistent feeds to the goalers Zoe and Milla, helping maintain fluid movement in the attacking third. St Arnaud made some changes to try to combat the lead and fought until the end, but Donald took out the match 57–36.  
It was a well-rounded performance from Donald, which will take plenty of confidence from the result as it builds towards the next round.  
Donald awards: Jasper & Co., Zoe Grigsby,; Mensland, Abby Griffiths.  
St Arnaud awards: St Arnaud Solar, Georgia Taylor; St Arnaud Physiotherapy, Bridgette Douglas.



• Battling for the netball are St Arnaud’s Sophie O’Donnell and Donald’s Olivia Wollermann during Saturday’s “C” grade game. Other players left to right are Donald’s Megan Godkin-Briggs, Kiera Lopes and Saints’ Steph Smith.

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8-17

“Yes, I asked Belvedere to clear the table. Why?”



# Navy Netballers Visit Wedderburn

[From Charlton Netball Club]

A well-played team effort by all girls this week, everyone worked hard for the ball and supported each other.

### 14-&-Under “A”

Rosie F. led Charlton’s attacking end strong and steady, providing leads and goaled with accuracy. Anna F. and Sophie R. fed smoothly into the goal ring for our shooters. Defensive pressure was strong all the way down the court, many girls getting intercepts, tips and turnovers of the ball. Marley M. read the play incredibly, intercepting all game long. All players pushed themselves all game and did not stop fighting to try for the win until the final whistle sounded.

Charlton 10 def. by Wedderburn 15.

Charlton awards: Steel’s Butcher Best, Marley McGurk; Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Sophie Roberts; Nutrien Ag & Roberts Windrowing “Have a Crack”, Lily Mae McPhee.

Wedderburn awards: Wedderburn Plumbing Award, Chelsie; The Locksmith Store Choc, Destiny K..

### 17-&-Under “A”

Charlton 42 d. Wedderburn 32.

A great win for our 17s girls! Our shooters shot well all game with all attackers moving well to front cut their defenders and making some strong drives to the ball. Our defenders won plenty of ball with continued pressure on the Wedderburn attackers creating some great turnovers. A great team effort and win by all.

Charlton awards: Bendigo Bank Best, Josie Larmour; Ladies Auxiliary Coaches, Maggie Riley; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Stella Nicolson.

Wedderburn awards: Phil Caruana W’Burn Tyre Service, Kayla; Loddon Test & Tag, Chloe; The Locksmith Store Choc, Indi.

### “C” Grade

Charlton 26 def. by Wedderburn 57.

After a couple of close games in the previous rounds,

our girls faced some tough competition in Wedderburn. Our attackers were consistent again this week with our gun juniors coming up to help us out. Taylah Giles and Stella Nicolson worked hard with Jac to keep up the accurate shooting. Up the other end our defenders were rotated through but kept fighting against their opponents even with the switches.

Well done to our girls for always stepping on the court with good spirits and a smile!

Charlton awards: Vale of Avoca Best, Ebony McCarthy; JS Plumbing Coaches, Mia Ayers; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Stella Nicolson.

Wedderburn awards: Canteen, Sarah Turnbull; The Locksmith Store Choc, Lucy Hall; F45/FS8 Players Choice, Sarah Turnbull; Coffee 2 Di 4, Emily Glenister.

### “B” Grade

Charlton 13 def. by Wedderburn 57.

A tough opponent this week coming up against the reigning premiers. After some missed goals early on our defenders, Kate and Holly worked hard for several intercepts and rebounds. Anika stepping into WD helped close down space, with Vec having a purple patch in WD at the beginning of the third quarter. Defenders worked tirelessly all game. Welcome to Tori Hutchins to our club stepping out for her first game, rolling into WA providing some great direction before going into the goals, working very hard against some tough defence.

Charlton awards: Teys Charlton Feedlot & Ergo and Mane Best, Kate Stuchbury; Teys Charlton Feedlot Coaches, Tori Hutchins; Caffeinated Chaos Captains Coffee, Kate Stuchbury.

Wedderburn awards: JH Builds, Alice Hubbard; Coffee 2 Di 4, Grace Lockhart; The Locksmith Store Choc,

Ingrid Gould; F45/FS8 Players Choice, Alice Hubbard.

### “A” Grade

Charlton 26 def. by Wedderburn 47.

Charlton started the match with great intensity and cohesion, combining well across the court and capitalising on early opportunities. Its strong start saw it take a narrow lead at quarter-time, 9–7.

In the second quarter, a rotation saw new player Tori Hutchins step into the Wing Attack position, and while the team adapted well, Wedderburn lifted its intensity and applied significant pressure. This shift challenged Charlton’s rhythm, with Wedderburn outscoring Charlton 13–7 for the quarter.

Despite structural changes and a determined effort to regroup in the third term, Wedderburn’s relentless pressure continued to build, ultimately allowing it to take control of the match in the second half.

While the final result didn’t go Charlton’s way, there were many positives to take from the game. The team’s defensive pressure and height in the ring helped restrict Wedderburn’s scoring opportunities, demonstrating the potential Charlton has to compete strongly against top-tier teams. The players have gained valuable insights and will take these lessons into training as they prepare to come back stronger in the weeks ahead.

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

Wedderburn awards: F45/FS8, Paige Ryan; Mara Metal Art, Olivia Lockhart; The Locksmith Store Choc, Holly Lockhart; Coffee 2 Di 4, Kelsey Pallpratt; Driscoll Douglas, East Players Choice, Paige Ryan.



• “C” Grade: Charlton’s Stella Nicolson taking a heavily pressured pass.



• “B” Grade: Bec Sexton looking to pass to Abby Mulquiny (WA).



• “A” grade: Claire Smith pressure over the shot with Megan Bruns (WD) and Issy Soulsby (GD).



# Charlton Bowls Championships

On Thursday, April 3, Wayne Southwell won his third championship, defeating Kevin Willey in the 100-up final, 102 to 85, in gusty conditions, making it difficult to do two bowls the same.

Following on from this game the club completed its pairs championship, with Cher Brien and Kevin Willey defeating Zac Irwin and Michael O'Brien, 18 shots to 5.

The triples final, with Steve Harper, Jeff Cox and Ken North to play Greg Barnard, Dale McCallum and Michael O'Brien, was held on Saturday, April 19, with the winners being Steve Harper, Jeff Cox and Ken North, 20 shots to 5.

Closing day bowls and presentations were cancelled on Anzac Day, with the forecast of rain, and it did rain at

the time it would have started at 12.30 p.m..

As Charlton Bowling Club is a Gold member of Good Sports, it promoted "Game Ready Round" on Friday, with 100 other Good Sports clubs. This is a stand against Drink Driving and providing Safe Transport. The club has been supplied a Merchandise pack, including hats.

### Fundraising

Charlton Bowling Club is proud to be supporting Jerimah Webb in her fundraising campaign, "Dance for Sick Kids" which is part of National Families Week from May 12 to 18.

In just four years Jerimah has raised over \$7,800 for sick kids in supporting Ronald McDonald House. A great effort, contact Jerimah if you can help 0455 556 590.

### Game Ready Round

With an onset of rain on Anzac Day, Charlton's Closing Day was postponed for a week to Friday, May 2. Charlton Bowling Club Inc is a Good Sports Gold Club, and was registered to play in the Good Sports Game Ready Round, where players took a stance on Drink Driving. A Merchandise kit was supplied which had hats, posters, car deodorisers and a ball bearing game of skill.

Club members also played a game of skill called Scroungers, where players had their own score card. They played two games of ten ends and the first three closest bowls to the kitty scored 3, 2, 1.

This proved to be a great game, as you were playing for yourself, and it made you try to draw the shot to get a score. The eventual winner was Kevin Willey, with a score of 41 shots, narrowly defeating Lynne Southwell on 40 shots. A meat tray was kindly donated by member Cher Brien.

### Presentations

After two games of bowls, everyone ventured inside where presentations were held and enjoyed an afternoon tea of cakes, slices, biscuits and fruit supplied by the members.

Championship winners were presented with their trophies by president Michael O'Brien who congratulated all winners this season. It has been a pretty good year doing some needed maintenance with still more to do, but the club needs to get some new members to boost its numbers, as it could be losing some for next season.

Singles winners has become a family affair once more, with Wayne Southwell and Lynne Southwell (mother and son), where it has been in the past Ian Southwell and Lynne Southwell.

Donald's newest life member Ian "Nuggett" Southwell has attained the age of 80 years young, so with this achievement, president Michael O'Brien presented Nuggett with a certificate of his bowls history and a Super Veterans badge.



• Charlton Closing Day Good Sports Game Ready Round: Secretary Kevin Willey, Ken North, Jeff Cox, Cher Brien, President Michael O'Brien, Greg Barnard, Ian Nuggett Southwell, Wayne Southwell, John Headon, Eily Rosewall, Mark Hamley, Rhys Gahan, Dale McCallum. In the shadows, Lynne Southwell, Wendy Laffin.



• Pairs Championship: Cher Brien and Kevin Willey.



• "Nuggett's" OBE: President Michael O'Brien presenting Ian "Nuggett" Southwell his Super Veterans Badge.



• Championship: Kevin Willey congratulating Wayne Southwell winning the 100-up Handicap.



• Fours Championship: Wayne Southwell, Rhys Gahan, Dale McCallum – absent Joo Ong.



• Triples Championship: Ken North, Jeff Cox, Steve Harper.

### Support services

#### Adult

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

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

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

**MensLine Australia:** 1300 789 978  
mensline.org.au

**StandBy Support After Suicide**  
1300 727 247

#### Youth

**Kids Helpline:** 1800 551 800  
kidshelpline.com.au

**headspace:** 1800 650 890  
headspace.org.au

**ReachOut:** ReachOut.com

#### Other resources

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

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

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

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

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

**Culturally and linguistically diverse:** embracementalhealth.org.au



# One-Point Thriller

There had been plenty of classroom banter leading into this much-anticipated clash between the Bulls and Calder United Lions under-14s and the match delivered on all the hype, with Calder scraping home by a single point in a nail-biting contest.

Birchip-Watchem made the early running, with Denley Tyler setting the tone by clearing it cleanly out of the centre. The Bulls pushed forward early and had what looked like the opening goal, only for it to be touched on the line and ruled a minor score. Calder responded with two behinds of its own in a physical, hard-fought quarter. At quarter-time, the Bulls trailed narrowly, 1 point to Calder's 2 points.

In the second term, Birchip-Watchem lifted. Willow Ryan was everywhere transitioning from defence to attack seamlessly and playing a vital linking role all over the ground. Sadidas Gardiner-Paikea had his best game of the season, showing confidence and composure in the backline beside his team mate Eligh Dean. Des Coffey presented well providing options through the middle, and Archie Tyler was rewarded for his persistence with the

team's first goal. Jed Coffey continued to compete hard in the ruck, while Sam Ferrier added spark with his trademark energy.

At half-time, Birchip led 1.3 (9) to Calder United's 0.3 (3).

Calder came out strongly in the third quarter, turning the momentum with two goals, one each to Levi Hall and Van Harrison, and their defence did well to keep the Bulls goalless. Liam Spezza added a behind, but Calder's midfield pressure and ball movement started to tell. Desmond Polzin and Morgan Beattie were instrumental in Calder's surge.

In a gripping final term, the game tightened again. Bull Sam Ferrier followed up with another major, keeping the crowd on edge. But Calder United kept chipping away with three behinds, eventually nudging back in front. It came down to the wire with tension high. Despite the Bulls' best efforts to

score in the final stages of the match they were beaten by the timer. Calder had held strong led by Harry Humphreys's efforts around the ground and they held on to claim a thrilling one-point win.

Final score: Calder United 2.6 (18) defeated Birchip-Watchem 2.5 (17)

Goals for Birchip-Watchem: Archie Tyler, Sam Ferrier.

Goals for Calder United: Levi Hall, Van Harrison.

Birchip's best players: Willow Ryan, Archie Tyler, Denley Tyler, Jed Coffey and Eligh Dean.

Calder United's best: Desmond Polzin, Morgan Beattie, Van Harrison, and Harry Humphreys.

Co-coach Sam Simmons praised the Bulls for their fight, focus, and resilience, noting that despite the narrow loss, it was one of the team's strongest four-quarter performances so far.



• Archie Tyler attempts to flick the ball as Levi Hall applies pressure.

## Junior Hockey at Birchip

An exciting day of junior hockey was played at the Birchip-Watchem field, which is starting to green up.

The minkey players all enjoyed the run around in the beautiful weather and were all eager to try to score goals, even though no official scores were recorded. Birchip-Watchem award winners were Hamish Noonan (Brooke & Troy Morris) and Thomas Noonan (BWHC canteen). For Calder United, Flynn C & Jayden W.

### Under-12s

In a high scoring under-12s game, which created lots of noise from the sidelines. Grace McAuliffe was solid in defence for the Bulls, providing lots of great clearances and plenty of run which enabled Denley Tyler to score three excellent goals following some one-on-one contests with the Calder United goalie. The Lions kept the Bulls accountable though, scoring a goal of their own and a second from a short corner where the Bulls were left with three defenders out of their five due to breaking.

The final score saw Birchip-Watchem 3 defeat Calder United 2. Awards for Birchip-Watchem Grace McAuliffe (Sharp's Bakery), Denley Tyler (O'Connors). For Calder United: Tyler H. and Van H.

### Under-15s

In a tense and tightly contested under-15 hockey clash, Birchip-Watchem Bulls and Calder United Lions played out a gripping 0-0 draw on Saturday, with both sides demonstrating defensive grit and goalkeeping brilliance.

Despite the scoreboard remaining untouched, the match was far from uneventful. A flurry of short corners kept spectators on the edge of their seats, as both teams pushed hard for a breakthrough. The Bulls were led by standout performances from Max Field and Beau Haslam, who worked tirelessly out of defence and through the midfield, applying pressure and creating attacking chances. Willow Ryan was a force to be reckoned with through the middle of the field, frequently breaking the lines with clever runs and precise passes.

However, it was Bulls' goalkeeper Eligh Dean who

proved pivotal in keeping Calder United at bay, producing several sharp saves under pressure, particularly during a string of short corners in the second half.

For Calder United, Priya and Mitchell Coatsworth showed impressive composure and vision in controlling play, linking defence to attack with skill and determination. At the back, Rylie Beattie stood tall in goal, matching Dean's efforts with a string of

crucial saves to deny the Bulls any sniff of a late winner. Though the deadlock couldn't be broken, both teams can hold their heads high after a spirited performance that showcased the talent and tenacity of young players on both sides.

Birchip-Watchem awards: Beau Haslam (Andy and Sarah Barber) and Willow Ryan (Birchip Hardware). For Calder United: Kiarah B, Zeke Harrison.



• Griffin Vearing prepares to soccer the ball as Birchip-Watchem's Archie Tyler applies pressure.

## Junior Hockey at St. Arnaud

In the underage hockey clash, St Arnaud came out firing against Donald, making a strong statement from the outset.

The Saints scored within the first few minutes and quickly followed up with a second goal, setting an early tone. They continued to press hard, adding a third goal to their tally as they kept up the relentless pressure. Despite the challenging start, Donald's defenders – Oakley Brennan, Sophie Burke, and Kailie Krause – worked tirelessly to contain the St Arnaud attacks. Darcy Burke, Isaiah Stirling and Nakyra Clapham showed determination in their tackling. Eventually, however, St Arnaud broke through again

to notch a fourth goal and then a fifth before the half-time whistle, giving St Arnaud a commanding 5-0 lead at the break.

In the second half, Donald showed marked improvement. Early on, Sophie made a crucial clearance following a short corner attempt by St Arnaud. Darcy, Nevaeh, and Latoya all contributed strongly in defence. Although St Arnaud managed to break into Donald's D again, the Donald defenders regrouped and cleared the danger multiple times.

The game continued with back-and-forth play, as the Royal Blues held off several more St Arnaud attacks, including another short corner. Despite their efforts, St Arnaud managed to slot in one final goal just before the final siren, finishing the match with a 6-0 win. Despite the scoreline, Donald's second-half performance showed great improvement and resilience. Award winners for Donald, Best on Ground: Oakley Brennan; Coach's Award, Sophie Burke; Encouragement Award, Nevaeh Pearse.

## Down the Middle

Four seasons in one day were experienced on Wednesday when ten players played in a stroke and putting competition sponsored by Love Shack Gifts.

Winner on the day was Luke Kelly with a 71 nett and runner-up was Debbie Burton on a countback from Margot Paynter, both on 74 nett. The putting was also won by Debbie and to top that off she took out nearest the pin on Donald Auto Electrical's 3rd and Nu Farm's 14th. It was also her birthday, so that was a nice present for her. Well done Deb and happy birthday. Carol Stuchbery was nearest the pin on Weir's 7th and Margot Paynter had the honours on Donald Community Bank's 16th. The putting was won by Luke Kelly with 24 on a countback from Debbie Burton.

### Next Week

Monday golf – Assemble at 9.45. Monday – Pennant at Birchip. Thanks to all those who put their hand up to represent the club. Wednesday 14th – Stableford and Clothes Bin Monthly Medal. **Highlights and Lowlights** The pennant team had two wins last Monday. In the morning they defeated Wycheproof 2-1 and in the afternoon they won 3-0 against St Arnaud. Welcome back to Carol Stuchbery. You certainly didn't take any time to get on the winner's list. All that cycling in Patagonia has kept you very fit.

Luke Kelly excelled himself this week with two birdies, not that he was skiting about them! The wind played havoc with our buggies, sending them flying into trees and down embankments. The Kara Kara 4 ball will be played at a later date due to players being unavailable at the moment.

### Player Profile Maree Cullen

For how long have you been playing golf? Roughly 35 years. I learnt while I was pregnant and then gradually got into golf when time permitted. What do you enjoy about golf? The social connection. I have made life long friends from other towns through golf. What's the best part about your game? My driving. What advice would you give to anyone who is thinking of taking up golf? Do it. You really won't regret it as you are only trying to beat your last score. What's your best score? 79 at Wedderburn. What's the best shot you've ever played? An eagle at Sheep Hills. Who is your favourite golfer? NOT Patrick Reed! Cam Smith. What is your current position in the club? Match Committee.



# Bulls and Lions in Netball Battles – Eight Games on Birchip Courts

**GO**

The Go netball game on Saturday was an exciting experience for all players, showcasing significant improvement in skills. Throughout the match, the team worked well with all contributing to the overall performance of the Bulls. Sadie Bourke and Olive McLoughlan were the award winners. Both teams are already looking forward to the next game, eager to apply what they've learned and continue improving.

**Under-14 “B”**

As the doors opened on democracy voting at the town hall, the under-14 “B” girls were warming up ready to welcome Calder United to the courts for the first time. Calder United won the toss and took the advantage of the first centre, resulting in the first goal of the game. Birchip-Watchem answered straight back with Addison Hamilton scoring the first goal for the Bulls. The quarter rounded out with Birchip-Watchem in the lead 6-1.

In the second quarter, the Bullettes made a quick couple of changes bringing Tilly Hogan into defence and Georgia Tynan and Lucy Coffey into attack. Calder United continued to apply defensive pressure down the court and Billie Chapman was able to add another goal to its tally. Georgia Tynan was lucky to beat the buzzer and sink a goal taking the tally to 8-2 at half time.

Third quarter saw Birchip-Watchem extend its lead out to 13 goals, four of them coming from Frankie McClelland.

In the fourth quarter Isla Ferrier and Ivy Bourke intercepted well with the ball continuing up and down the court, Calder United was able to keep the Bullettes scoreless for the quarter, however, it wasn't strong enough to overcome their lead and Birchip-Watchem won 13 to 6. Award winners for Birchip-Watchem

Frankie McClelland and Issy Sharp. Awards for Calder United: Jaymee Poyner, Greta McClelland, Lillie Poyner, Ava B.

**Under-14 “A”**

Top of the ladder Birchip-Watchem took on 4th-placed Calder United Lions at Birchip. Starting strong with Gemma Tynan and Anieka Boyle shooting accurately, the Bulls had a 5 goal lead at quarter-time.

The Bulls continued to play well together and although Willow Vearing was putting plenty of pressure in defence for the Lions, it was not enough to slow down the more experienced Bulls' team.

The Bulls' Alana Caldwell made it very difficult for the Lions to find scoring opportunities, playing a great game in GK, and Birchip-Watchem 26 defeated Calder United 11.

Awards for Birchip-Watchem: Gemma Tynan and Alana Caldwell.

**Under-17 “A”**

The Bulls started their first quarter with strong defence from Lana Angel and Eva Coffey, who worked together to shut down Jessie Fawcett and Tessa Sheahan in the ring. Asha Lee and Gracie Ferrier helped move the ball down the court, however by the end of the first quarter it was clear it would be a tough game for the Bulls.

The second quarter began with Elise Cox working tirelessly in wing defence and using her speed to get plenty of intercepts. Zara Lowry moved into wing attack and helped the ball flow down the court, creating plenty of shooting opportunities which led to the Bulls creating a smaller gap at half-time.

The third quarter saw multiple changes with Esther Bourke moving into wing attack and using her strength to help the ball flow down the court. Zali Angel moved back into goal keeper and continu-

ously worked hard to keep Calder's goal attack, Libby Thompson, on her toes.

During the last quarter Cassie Tynan went into wing attack to help feed the ball into goal attack Beau Haslam. The Bulls kept trying, however, Calder's goal defence, Gracie Humphreys, continued shutting down the ring leading to the full time score being 33-57 Calder's way.

Awards for Birchip-Watchem were won by Asha Lee and Gracie Ferrier and for Calder United Georgia Hogan, Grace Mckersie and Ruby Ison.

**“C” Reserves**

The Bulls “C” Reserves have had limited games and are still trying to gain momentum and get to know their team mates. Calder United's merger has resulted in more depth in their senior grades and they were able to account for the Bulls winning 37 to 21.

Award winners for Birchip-Watchem were Kimberley Phelan and Zoya Rickard. For Calder United Olivia McKay and Claire Barker.

**“C” Grade**

The Bulls started off strong in quarter one by leading the score, 15 to 8, with Megane Greenway and Immy Boyle in goals together. By quarter 2 the Lions caught up and took the lead with the scores being Bulls 22 to Lions 24. Hannah Wilson was quick and strategic with her movements and worked extremely hard to keep possession of ball for the Bulls and Ash Tierney and Steph Coffey in defence fought hard to keep the ball down the other end, but the Lions were too strong and defeated the Bulls 52 to 36.

Awards for the Bulls went to Hannah Wilson and Maddy McQueen, and for Calder United they went to Moni Kelly, Holly Saul and Claire Harrison



• Beau Haslam shoots as Gracie Humphreys defends, while Ruby Ison and Zali Angel wait under the ring.

**“B” Grade**

In a tightly contested “B” Grade netball match Calder United edged out Birchip-Watchem with a final score of 51 to 44.

The game was evenly matched early on, with only a one-goal difference at the end of the first quarter. However, Calder United gained momentum in the second quarter, where it outscored its opponents 8 to 15.

Strong performances from Calder's defending end ensured maintained the lead, despite Birchip-Watchem's efforts to close the gap in the final quarter.

Best on for Birchip-Watchem was Holly Hinkley and Khiana Brooks, for Calder United Holly Fawcett and Jessie Fawcett.

**“A” Grade**

In an exhilarating encounter, the Birchip-Watchem edged out Calder United in a nail-biting netball match, securing a 45-44 victory. The game was a true showcase of skill, determination, and fierce competition as both teams gave their all on the court.

From the first whistle, Calder United looked to dominate, with quick passes and strong shooting accuracy. It held a lead throughout much of the match, with standout performances from its goal shooters Ella Sheahan and Gemma Fawcett and mid-court players, Libby Thompson, Meg Fawcett and Gracie Humphries, who kept the ball moving with precision. Their defence was solid, and they seemed to have the upper hand as the game progressed, with a six goal lead at half-time, 27-21.

However, the Bulls were not to be outdone. After a tense first half, they started to find their rhythm. Critical changes were made that altered the flow of the game, with Meghan Noonan stepping in to support the defensive end, and a switch between the Bulls' sisters in goals, Jenna and Zali Angel, which started to open up the play. Meghan showed that her experience was instrumental in the change of flow, shutting down the Calder attack, and allowing the Bulls' mid court to shine and Zali's height in GA caused hesitation in the Lions' defence. The Bulls' ability to adapt to Calder United's tactics,

combined with their increasing confidence, set the stage for a thrilling final quarter.

In the last minutes of the game, with both teams giving their all, the score was tied at 44-44. It was anyone's game as the clock ticked down. With just seconds remaining, the Bulls seized the opportunity, young goaler Zali Angel converting a crucial shot to seal the win with a final score of 45-44.

Bulls awards went to Meghan Noonan and Zali Angel. All awards were sponsored by Yield Finance Group. Awards for Calder went to Laura Sheahan and Libby Thompson.

## Magpies Soar as Tigers Tumble

• Continued from page 16.

going to take everything the Redbacks have to offer and more to rein in the Bulls' stampede towards September.

### Battle of the Blues

On what has been designated as Billy Anderson Day by the Donald Football Club, honouring a dedicated stalwart of over 70 years' voluntary service, the Royal Blues will do battle with their Navy Blue counterparts from neighbouring Charlton.

Both clubs have had little to get excited about during the current season, although Charlton has chalked up one victory, over St. Arnaud, and must be well placed to add Donald to its list of conquests.

The respective coaches have been in very consistent form, Mitchell Collins playing a pivotal role in midfield which comprises and combined the experience of Ben Xiriha and the youth of Elliott Fitzpatrick, repeatedly working tirelessly against bigger and stronger opposition.

Tomorrow they will be matched against an opposition

combination that includes young ruckman Brady Griffiths and the hard-nosed aggression of Eddie Landwehr and Josh Talty.

If you add the emerging talent of Luca Rice, who continues to grow in confidence with every game, to the core of contributors supporting first year coach Daniel Pearce, the general in the Royal Blues' defence, it's not all doom and gloom for the winless Royal Blues.

To break the ice and win tomorrow, however, Donald needs to play a much more consistent brand of team football, and stick to its strengths.

It possibly won't be the most free-flowing or high standard battle of the Blues, but it will give supporters of both persuasions reason to get involved vocally, because both teams have what could be a rare opportunity this season to secure four premiership points.

On recent form, Charlton appears to be the best placed to achieve that goal.



• Laura Sheahan and Zali Angel are in full flight as they compete for the ball.

AMBULANCE  
PHONE NO.  
**000**





## Magpies Soar as Tigers Tumble

(By Shane O'Shea)

**Is this the season Boort finally achieves the results it has desperately been striving for since its last finals appearance in 2017, and secures a berth in the North-Central football's top echelon?**

Three consecutive lead-up wins had placed the Magpies at the head of the league ladder, but questions remained to be answered about their ability to match the competition's stronger teams. This scribe was one left unconvinced, despite the team's massive victory over a very undermanned Donald, largely due to the Magpies' disposal inefficiency by foot and hand under limited pressure.

The 2017 season was also the last time the Magpies defeated Sea Lake-Nandaly, in round 5. From the outside looking in, last Saturday's clash seemed likely to see the Tigers add to that winning streak.

Boort's stirring victory over Sea Lake-Nandaly, on the day club stalwart Jack Smith celebrated his 200th. game, however, could be the major stepping stone current coach Dale Cameron and several of his recent predecessors, together with the club's playing group and supporters, have been striving for.

Tomorrow brings another probing challenge of the Magpies' credentials, this time from a Calder United combination that is starting to find its groove, in what promises to be an enthralling encounter.

Better prepared and match hardened, Boort must capitalise on every opportunity that presents itself. And with players of the calibre of Jhye Baddeley-Kelly, Keiren Wilson, Jarred Fitzpatrick, James Wilson, Carlos Egan, Kayne Rutley, and emerging talents including Tom Potter and Ethan Coleman, the Magpies should be able to put pressure back on the talented Lions.

Calder United's strong midfield, including ruckman Dean Putt, ball winners Matt Wade, Steven Kennedy, Daniel Watts and Koby Lloyd, which went within 3 points of orchestrating the downfall of the all-conquering Bulls, backed by a defence strengthened by the return of Jordy Humphreys, can give the Lions a match winning edge, but forwards, including Jack Excell and

Mitch Farmer, will need to have their goal kicking radars switched on from their first scoring opportunity.

At home at Wycheproof, Calder United should win.

### Tigers to Regain Their Roar?

In a rare occurrence in recent seasons, league champion, Sea Lake-Nandaly, has lost consecutive games, which may leave it vulnerable to an upset against the visiting St. Arnaud, which had its confidence boosted by a convincing win last Saturday.

The inclusion of five players with limited match conditioning, combined with the absence of indefatigable ruckman, Ryan O'Sullivan, might have contributed towards last weekend's loss to Boort, but joint coaches, Bryce Delmenico and Billy McInnes, will be demanding a return to the brand of football that has won the Tigers consecutive premierships.

Unfortunately for the Saints, they are likely to feel the full force of that rebound, led by the Donnan brothers,



• Saints, Max Hungerford, reaches for the ball as Donald's Charlie Campbell tries to make it difficult.

Tom Cox, Bryce Delmenico and Tyson McKenzie.

If St. Arnaud is to have any chance, potential match influencers Zac Phillips and Jay Kirwood are going to need maximum support from forwards, in particular Max Hungerford.

One pleasing aspect of the Saints' performance last Saturday was the contribution of several home-grown youngsters, including Jackson Needs, Ryan Bigmore (making his senior debut), Owen Lowe and Luke Jackson, together with the Male brothers, Sam and Jake.

They represent the building blocks on which the club can create a positive future.

Last Saturday's win by St. Arnaud over Donald is the first time the Saints have defeated the Royal Blues since the 2015 preliminary final.

### Road Gets Tougher for Redbacks

Following Boort's significant win last round, Wedderburn finds itself in a position of having to claim the big scalp of at least one of the competition's leading teams if it is to stay in contention for a top four berth.

The Magpies have a more favourable draw in comparison to the Redbacks, a factor which will come into play as the season gets closer to its business end.

The possible return of goal kicking forward, Mitch Jensen

for Wedderburn would change the dynamics considerably tomorrow, against the undefeated Birchip-Watchem, and if he and Oscar Holt can reward the efforts of Zac Pallpratt, Mitch and Jackson McEwen, the result could remain in the balance until the very end.

Without prolific goal kicker Ben Edwards, the Bulls just scraped home against Calder United, in a riveting encounter.

Birchip-Watchem's engine room, comprising Hamish Hosking, Nic and Marshall Rippon, Meyrick Buchanan, Daniel Bell and Sam Simmons, is finely tuned and firing on all cylinders, so it is

• Continued on page 15.



(By Course Language)

**Last weekend was the first round of the singles knock-out for the men. There were some very close matches played with most of them coming down to the last couple of holes. The draw has been done for the last 5 remaining in the event and the second round is due to be played this weekend.**

The winner last weekend on a countback from Luke Kelly was Richard Gallagher with 34 points. One notable mention goes to our Captain Matt Clarke with a Birdie on the second hole sponsored by Beaupaires.

The "Nearest The Pins" were: The Donald Auto Elec 3rd, Richard Gallagher; Weirs IGA 7th, Brad Bath; Nufarm 14th, Brad Bath; Bendigo Bank 16th, Richard Gallagher.

A couple of notable golfers returning on the weekend were Andrew Bayles and Robert Burton. Andrew has had a lengthy break from golf due to work and other sporting commitments, but his first up form was impressive, with his score being better than some of the regulars. After touring Australia for the last year Robert's form was also none too shabby. Pleased to have you back if only while you plan your next adventure.

Thanks to those who helped "patch" the track at the races last Saturday. It's very much appreciated, as the money goes towards our whole club.

Last Sunday was May the 4th, and as such the date has the reference to the Star Wars saying of "May the force (fourth) be with you". Well Richard Gallagher was certainly in the zone, using his Jedi intuition to dodge golf balls coming at him from all directions. The first one missed him by a good three feet but second was only centimetres from knocking him off his buggy. Better luck next time "Hoges". The drinks will be free all night if you're successful next time.

### Dad's Army

Only three veterans did manoeuvres on Thursday with Luke Kelly the winner. Great to see Major General John Howley back out there to instruct the younger brigade.

### Coming Up

The second round of the singles knock-out will be played this weekend with extra Stableford for those not competing in the knock-out event. This week's sponsor is North West Ag.

### Dad Jokes

There's a virus going around that makes people forget rock bands form the 1980s – nobody knows "The Cure".

When a friend of mine moved into an igloo in Greenland, his friends threw him a house warming party – now he's homeless.

If a Viking is reincarnated – is he Bjorn again?

A mate of mine has identical twin daughters – he named one Kate and the other one Duplicate.

The other day I opened my electricity bill and water bill at the same time – I was shocked.

**GOLDACRES NORTH CENTRAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

# ROUND 5

**SATURDAY MAY 10TH, 2025**

 <b>SEA LAKE NANDALY TIGERS</b>	VS	 <b>ST ARNAUD SAINTS</b>
SEA LAKE COMMUNITY COMPLEX		
 <b>DONALD ROYAL BLUES</b>	VS	 <b>CHARLTON NAVIES</b>
GOFF LETTS OVAL		
 <b>BIRCHIP-WATCHEM BULLS</b>	VS	 <b>WEDDERBURN REDBACKS</b>
GEORGE CARTWRIGHT OVAL		
 <b>CALDER UNITED LIONS</b>	VS	 <b>BOORT MAGPIES</b>
WYCHEPROOF REC RESERVE		