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The Buloke Times

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

Melbourne Cup is Coming to Buloke

On Sunday and Monday, August 31 and September 1, Donald will host the 2025 Lexus Cup during its five-month tour, beginning in New York, U.S.A., early this month.

On May 29, the Victoria Racing Club was thrilled to unveil 36 destinations for the Cup tour at a special Launch event held at Flemington Racecourse.

Representing Donald at the presentation was Daryl Warren, with his wife, Yan Li (pictured with the Cup).

"For anyone, that would be a special event," said Daryl, "but when you come from China, and you're still learning that you get a day off for a horse race, well..."

Yan Li says, "Thank you, Donald 2000."

The People's Cup is set to embark on an extraordinary journey from New York to Normanton in Outback Queensland, giving fans and communities across the world the rare opportunity to see the prestigious prize up close and feel the magic of Australia's most iconic race.

Highlight

The 18-carat gold trophy, now worth a record

\$850,000, will be joined by some familiar faces on the road before returning home to Victoria in the weeks leading up to the 165th Lexus Melbourne Cup.

One of the highlights of the launch was a special performance by Lexus Melbourne Cup-winning jockey Robbie Dolan, with fellow Cup winner Michelle Payne, OAM, making a grand entrance carrying the 2025 trophy.

This year, the Tour will visit a number of Australian towns that have recently experienced severe drought and flood events including the Wimmera town of Warracknabeal in Western Victoria, with the aim of uplifting community spirit.

The final route will see the Cup travel far and wide across Australia, including stops in Walcha in northern New South Wales, Toodyay in Western Australia's

• Continued on page 2.



• Lexus Melbourne Cup winning jockeys Michelle Payne and Robbie Dolan.



• Yan Li holding the Lexus Melbourne Cup.

After 50.5 Years With Elders... Shane's Career Comes to a Close



• Jess Bidstrup, Colin Hill, and Shane McLoughlan.

On Friday 30th May, after more than half a century of dedicated service with Elders, Shane McLoughlan has closed the final chapter of an extraordinary career, handing over the keys of his final house sale on his last day of work.

It was a fitting farewell for a man who has spent his life connecting people with their future. Shane was thrilled to be passing the keys to a young local couple, Jessica Bidstrup and Colin Hill.

"This has been a highlight of the job," Shane said, "seeing young local couples excited to start the next step of their journey in their first home."

Jess and Colin both grew up in Birchip and later left the area to pursue their careers. They have now returned "home" to take up the respective roles of Communications & Engagement Officer with the Birchip Cropping Group and site manager at the Birchip division of Cargill Australia.

Shane's Career Journey

Shane's journey with Elders began when he was just

16, spending two formative days at the Newmarket sale yards in Melbourne under the guidance of Jim Coffey.

"I caught the train to Melbourne and it was the start of a long and fruitful career. I have worked much of my life under Jim; he was my first and last boss," Shane reflected.

Shane's first posting was in Hopetoun, a move that proved life-changing not just professionally, but personally, as this was where he met his future wife, Debbie.

Shane later worked in Kerang for a year, followed by an 18-month stint in Ouyen and six years in Woomelang. During these years, Shane and Debbie had three children – Matthew, Leigh and Tim – and in 1985 they all relocated to Shane's home town of Birchip.

• Continued on page 2.

Drought Announcement

[Statement from the Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Emma Kealy.]

The Allan Labor Government’s drought announcement fails to deliver the immediate support farmers have been calling for and desperately need.

While doubling drought resilience infrastructure grants and deferring the emergency services tax on agricultural land for a year may sound helpful, it does little to provide immediate support for farmers who are at breaking point.

Delaying Labor’s emergency services tax is simply delaying what is an unjustified and unfair tax on

The Buloke Times

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025

Victorian producers – whether it’s drought conditions or not. The tax should be scrapped entirely.

It’s disappointing that even after sitting with farmers, hearing their stories and seeing their tears, the Allan Labor Government still doesn’t understand that many farmers simply don’t have the available capital to build a new shed or clean out a dam that can’t be filled until it rains.

The latest drought package falls short when it comes to water and fodder requirements farmers have been calling for over several months.

This is a lost opportunity and highlights the Allan Labor Government does not understand the needs of regional Victorians.

Many areas of the state currently experiencing critically low rainfall conditions are still ineligible for drought grants — a baffling oversight that leaves struggling farmers without support when they need it most.



• Emma Kealy.



Letter to the Editor



What Is Stress?

(The Editor, “The Times”)

Dear Editor.— Stress is our body’s response to a pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when we experience something new or unexpected that threatens our sense of self or when we feel we have little control over a situation. As individuals, each of us deals with stress differently.

Stress can result in many different physical, emotional and behavioural responses. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. You can’t avoid it, but stress management techniques can help you deal with it.

Stress responses help your body adjust to new situations. Stress can be positive — keeping you alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger. For example, if you have an important test coming up, a stress response might help your body work harder and stay awake longer. But stress becomes a problem when stressors continue without relief or periods of relaxation.

Types of Stress

There are three main kinds of stress: acute, episodic acute and chronic.

• Acute stress: Acute stress is short-term stress that comes and goes quickly. It can be positive or negative. It’s the feeling you get when you’re riding on a rollercoaster or having a fight with your partner. Everyone experiences acute stress from time to time.

• Episodic acute stress: Episodic acute stress is when you experience acute stress on a regular basis. With this kind of stress, you don’t ever get

the time you need to return to a calm, relaxed state. Episodic stress frequently affects people working in certain professions, like healthcare providers.

• Chronic stress: Chronic stress is long-term stress that goes on for weeks or months. You may experience chronic stress due to marriage troubles, issues at work or financial problems. It’s important to find ways to manage chronic stress because it can lead to health issues.

What Causes Stress?

Stress is how your body reacts to a change or challenge, and many different things can lead to it. Stressors can also be positive or negative. For instance, getting a new job or losing a job can both cause stress. Other causes of stress include: An illness or death of a loved one, marriage, separation or divorce, financial issues, moving to a new house, going on holidays, having a baby or retiring.

Stress can also be acute, meaning short term, causes of acute stress may include everyday stressors, like: studying for a big test, getting ready for a work presentation, having an argument with a friend or loved one.

Needing to get a lot completed in a short amount of time, experiencing many small problems all at once, like getting in a traffic jam, spilling coffee all over yourself and running late.

Stress can also put you at a higher risk of developing a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety

Mr editor, many people ask, “How can I relieve

stress?” You can’t avoid stress but you can stop it from becoming overwhelming by practising some daily stress relief strategies: stress management starts with feeling good physically.

Try getting some form of physical activity when you feel symptoms of stress coming on. Even a short walk can help positively boost your mood. At the end of each day, take a moment to reflect about what you’ve accomplished — not what you didn’t get done.

Set goals for your day, week and month. Narrowing your view can help you feel more in control of the moment and long-term tasks. Consider talking to a counsellor or a healthcare provider about your worries.

Try relaxation activities, like meditation, yoga, tai chi, breathing exercises and muscle relaxation. Programs are available online, in smartphone apps, and at many gyms and community centres.

Take good care of your body each day. Eating right, participating in physical activity and getting enough sleep can help your body handle stress much better.

Learn to stay positive and practise gratitude and acknowledge the good parts of your day or life. Accept that you can’t control everything.

Find ways to let go of worry about situations you can’t change. Learn to say “no” to additional responsibilities when you’re too busy or stressed. Stay connected with people who keep you calm, make you happy, provide emotional support and help you with practical things. A friend, family member or

neighbour can become a good listener or share responsibilities, so stress doesn’t become overwhelming.

Stress can be a short-term issue or a long-term problem. Depending on what changes in your life regularly using stress management techniques can help you avoid most physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms of stress.

Southern Mallee Counselling Service reminds you that it’s natural to have stress and stressful situations like: you slept in, your shirt’s wrinkly and you’re going to be late for that job interview — now, you feel stressed. But long-term stress can cause physical, emotional and behavioural symptoms. It’s important to get control over

your chronic stress because it can lead to other health issues. If symptoms of stress aren’t going away with stress relief techniques and if you’re feeling overwhelmed, talk to a healthcare provider or counsellor.

Sincerely yours,
Kenneth King
Southern Mallee Counselling Service.
Birchip

Melbourne Cup is Coming to Buloke

• Continued from page 1.

Wheatbelt region, and Winton, Queensland, for their annual Outback Festival.

In Victoria, this year’s itinerary will span a range of country towns across the state, from Donald in the west to Traralgon in the east. It will also include a visit to the resilient community of Gunbower, which has faced tough times in recent years, including the loss of its much-loved annual race meeting.

National Sweep

The Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour National Sweep will return this year, featuring 24 rural and regional destinations on its itinerary. Each town will be allocated a barrier in

the Lexus Melbourne Cup, giving them the chance to win \$50,000 for a charity of their choice. Last year’s winner, Harden, donated the prize to the Harden Pony Club to upgrade its facilities, providing a better experience for budding equestrians.

VRC CEO Kylie Rogers was excited for the journey ahead of this year’s Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour.

“The Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour is one of the most significant ways we can share the excitement and legacy of the Lexus Melbourne Cup with communities across Australia and beyond,” Ms Rogers said.

“We’re also proud of how the Cup continues to reach and inspire the next generation — through visits to schools and engagement with young Australians, we’re ensuring the story and spirit of the Melbourne Cup lives on for years to come.

“Thank you to Lexus for its continued support of the Tour, its partnership plays a vital role in bringing the

magic of the Lexus Melbourne Cup to so many people and places.”

Lexus Australia CEO John Pappas was proud to support this important community initiative.

“Lexus is again delighted to support such a significant cultural event that brings communities together throughout the country,” Mr Pappas said.

“Each year the Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour fosters meaningful connections and creates lasting memories for thousands of Australians, in the same way Lexus creates amazing experiences for customers.”

This year’s tour will commence its journey on Thursday June 5, visiting New York for the Belmont Gold Cup which offers a coveted golden ticket into the Lexus Melbourne Cup.

• Hoofnote: Among other Victorian towns to be visited by the Cup will be Warracknabeal (August 30), and Bridgewater on Loddon (September 2).

Shane’s Career Comes to a Close

• Continued from page 1.

On the 1st October, 1985, Shane commenced his role of Livestock and Real Estate Agent, where he has remained for almost forty years. For the past four decades, he has been a constant and respected presence in Elders, building lasting relationships and helping generations of families, whether it be buying their first home or selling a mob of sheep.

Reflecting on his retirement, Shane expressed deep gratitude for his time with Elders and the people he’s met along the way.

“It’s been a tremendous experience. I have met so many good people from different walks of life,” he said.

Shane’s legacy is one of commitment, connection, and community, qualities that have defined his long and storied career with Elders.

Corack East Wind

Renewable Energy from ACEN



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

Drop-in information hub

Every Wednesday

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

Wed, 28 May - Donald 12-5pm*

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

4 June - Birchip 1-6pm

Birchip Leisure Centre

11 June - Charlton 1-6pm

Charlton Park Community Bank Complex

www.corackeastwind.com.au

info@corackeastwind.com.au

1800 498 550

Corack East Wind

Thank You

The team at The “Times” extends sincere thanks to Brannon and Tom Walker for their dedicated work on Sunday night, ensuring the paper could be printed and distributed on schedule today, Tuesday. Donald is fortunate to be able to rely on skilful individuals.

Next Week’s “Times”

On Saturday of this week (June 7), there will be no North-Central football, netball or hockey, because of the King’s Birthday holiday two days later (Monday, June 9).

That being so, there will be no issue of the “Buloke Times” on Tuesday next, June 10. The one issue of the “Times” next week will be on Friday, June 13.

Bill's Award Well and Truly Earned

Charlton's Bill Freeman was awarded outstanding recognition at the Table Tennis Victoria AGM with the conferral of the Joan Guggenheim "Volunteer of the Year" Award at the 10th May event, held at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre.

Bill, who has been a long-time and passionate supporter and player of the game, was invited to the event knowing he was to receive an award, but had no idea what it would be.

Named in honour of the dedicated administrator Joan Guggenheim, Bill's acknowledgement applauded his own dedication to a game which has been an integral part of his life for many decades.

Citation

His citation reads as follows: "Bill's life-long commitment to the sport – spanning nearly six decades – is nothing short of extraordinary. Since 1966, he has attended every Victorian

Country Championships, serving not only as a competitor but as a tireless administrator and committee member for over 40 years.

"As a former chairman of the Country Championships, Bill introduced a lasting list of initiatives including leading player medallions, winner's shields, and the now iconic Bill Freeman Shield (for Country Championships B3 Grade). He also organized countless interstate tours, nurtured the development of country players, and promoted lifelong participation in table tennis – right up to the age of 90.

"Bill's humble, consistent and passionate service truly embodies the spirit of this

award. We are proud to honour him as the 2024 Guggenheim Volunteer of the Year."

Bill's contributions to the sport were also acknowledged last year during the Country Championships with the conferral of a 50 Year Award and a Country Lifetime Service Award.

Background

The game of "ping pong" took a serious hold for the former lawyer when he moved to Donald in 1965. Joining the local club, his first involvement in the Country Championships was with the Donald players, and so it has progressed from there.

Now at the age of 90, Bill still plays intermittently as a fill-in member in the Bendigo "C" grade competition at the Eaglehawk Badminton and Table Tennis Centre.

While most of his fellow teammates are in the "younger" age bracket, Bill extolled the benefits which the game inspires, citing two examples of players who have had significant gains from involvement in the sport.

"There is one fellow who plays who is recovering from a stroke – his carer actually decided to learn how to play and now takes part regularly, and another lady who has early onset dementia, she plays social games three times a week with the support of her carers," Bill said.

One of the reasons Bill so enjoys the game is its accessibility.

"You can play it anywhere, and in any conditions and it doesn't cost a great amount of money to be involved. It can basically be played on the smell of an oily rag".

Championships

As the Country Championships approach this weekend (June 7-9) Bill is once again looking forward to taking up his role of looking after the shields, trophies and medallions for the competition.

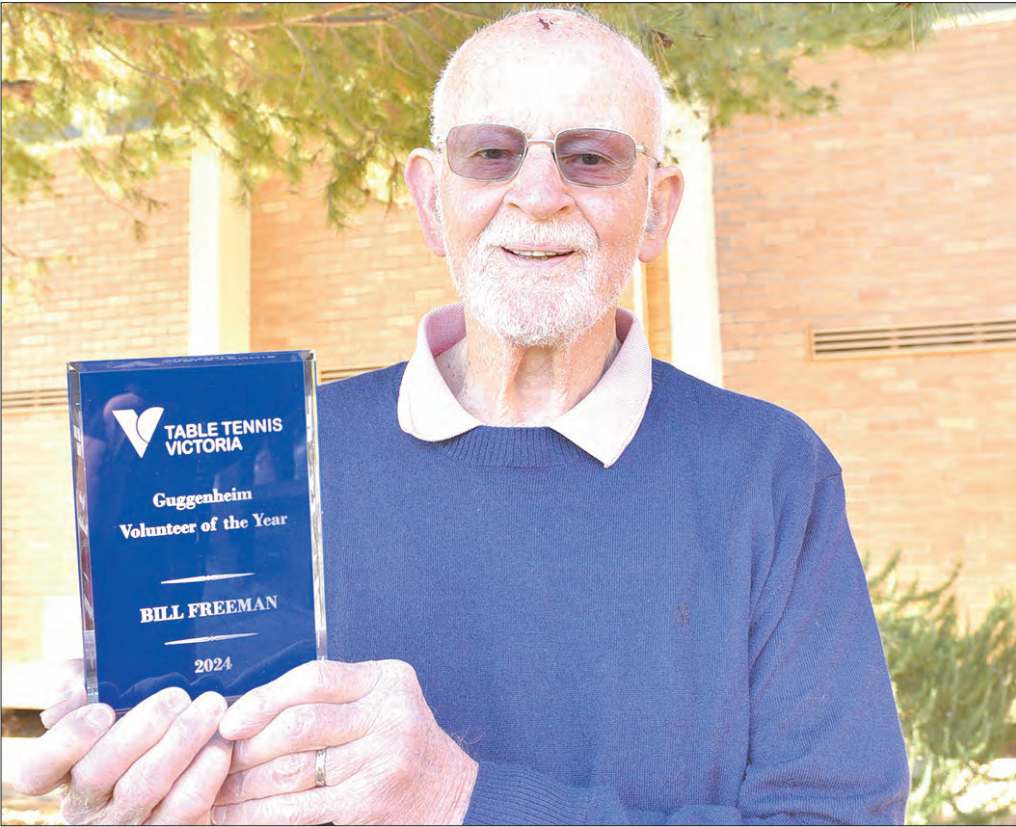
"Around 250 players, officials, administrators and camp followers attend the Gippsland Regional Indoor Sports Centre at Traralgon," said Bill.

"It's quite a family orientated sport – there can often be father/son or mother/daughter combinations in the teams, and family members are strong supporters."

Along with his wife Joy, Bill has also enjoyed volunteering at the table tennis at the 2000 Sydney Paralympics, the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games and at a number of Pacific Games held in Bendigo.

This remarkable contribution to a sport which has clearly had a significant and meaningful impact on his life is well deserved.

Congratulations, Bill!



• Bill Freeman is pictured with his Table Tennis Victoria "Guggenheim Volunteer of the Year", award. Deriving great satisfaction from the sport, Bill said, "When one gets pleasure from an activity, one puts back into it."

For This Long Weekend... Campfire Safety Urged

As Victorians head outdoors to enjoy the King's Birthday long weekend, fire and land authorities are reminding campers and visitors to forests and parks to be safe around campfires.

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman said with cooler temperatures settling in, it might feel like the fire risk has passed, but with parks and forests remaining dry, campfires can quickly escape and become devastating bushfires.

After a warmer and drier-than-average autumn and normal rainfall expected this winter, the fire risk is higher than usual – particularly in parts of western, southwestern and southeastern Victoria.

"Even at this time of year, just one unattended or poorly managed campfire can cause serious damage to the environment and put lives and property at risk," Mr Hardman said.

Incidents

"This season, we've responded to more than 370 incidents involving campfires. This included the Boroka Lookout Fire, where an illegal campfire turned into a bushfire in difficult terrain, on the edge of the cliff diverting resources responding to bushfires in the Grampians National Park.

"With a little extra care around your campfire this long weekend, we can keep forests and parks healthy and safe for everyone to enjoy.

"Never leave a campfire unattended and use water to fully extinguish it – if it's cool to touch it's safe to leave.

Cause of Bushfires

Chief Conservation Regulator Kate Gavens said: "Campfires are a cause of bushfires that are 100% preventable and our authorised officers will be visiting campsites throughout Victoria's parks and forests to make sure everyone is following the rules so we can all have a safe and enjoyable long weekend."

Parks Victoria Executive

Director of Operations Kylie Trott said: "We want people to get out and enjoy Victoria's great outdoors, but unsafe campfires can have devastating consequences. It only takes one camper ignoring the rules to endanger the community and our environment."

Extreme Care

CFA Acting Chief Officer Garry Cook AFSM said, while conditions over the weekend will also be an opportune time for residents to burn-off, extreme care should be taken to ensure enough water and resources are on hand to extinguish burns properly.

"Escaped burn-offs, particularly in the current dry conditions, continue to cause significant concern and great risk to our communities across the state," he said.

"It is really important landowners have someone monitoring their fire activity at all times. Although cooler days are arriving, now is not the time to be complacent.

"Take a Moment"

"This weekend, take a moment to check the wind forecast, ensure you've left ample room in your fire break and please register your burn-off online to help reduce unnecessary callouts to emergency services."

Before hitting the road, people should be familiar with local campfire regulations and safety measures to help protect the environment and local communities at <https://www.vic.gov.au/campfires-stoves-and-bbqs>.

People who breach campfire regulations on public land face a maximum penalty of \$19,759 if the matter is prosecuted in court. The maximum penalty for lighting or maintaining a fire during a day of Total Fire Ban is \$47,421.60 and/or 2 years in jail.

Report unattended campfires to 136 186 or call 000 to report a bushfire.

Remember, if you light it, you own it!

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www.belvedere-cartoons.com



"I don't care if it is raining. That's why you have a kennel."

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Stay up-to-date and informed in all the local news.

“Pieced Together”: Quilt Exhibition

The historic Charlton Courthouse Gallery will be draped in colour and fabric this June long weekend for its latest exhibition, “Pieced Together”, a collaborative exhibition by Charlton and district quilters.

On display will be a diverse collection of quilts and other patchwork items that highlight both traditional techniques and modern creativity. Exhibitors include members of local patchwork groups as well as individuals. Hosted in the beautifully restored Courthouse Gallery, its high walls will provide the perfect backdrop for the striking designs and stitchwork on display.

Exhibition co-ordinator, Jodie Quinn, says, “This exhibition

really shows the strength and spirit of our quilting community. Each piece tells a story, and it’s a wonderful opportunity for people to show off a favourite quilt — even if it’s been tucked away for a while.”

Running from Saturday, June 7, to Monday, June 9, the exhibition will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Visitors can expect a welcoming and inspiring display that celebrates skill, connection, and creativity. Entry is by donation.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

DATES Monday 16th & Wednesday 18th June

TIMES 9:30am - 4:30pm (both days)

COST FREE

VENUE Birchip Community Leisure Centre
Catering provided.

Locals of Buloke and surrounds are encouraged to sign up for FREE Mental Health First Aid training.

A great professional development opportunity and an invaluable asset to any workplace or club.

Attendance at both days is required to complete the course. Places are limited so please confirm you place quickly!

Please call Stacey: **0467 746 606** or email: **stacey.keller@ewhs.org.au** to secure your place.



“Times” Classifieds

Phone Donald 5497 1222,

Birchip 5492 2735

Email admin@buloketimes.com

DEATH SUMMERHAYES.–

Phyllis Elizabeth
30/09/1936 - 29/05/2025

Beloved daughter of the late George and Hilda Summerhayes.

Loved sister of Marie (dec.), Ronald (dec.), Maureen (dec.), Noel, Lynette (Edge, dec.) and Susan.

Loved Auntie Phyllis to her nephews, nieces and all their families.

DEATH WEIR (Tillig).–

Amanda Mary
“Mandy”

of St Arnaud
31/08/1967 – 25/05/2025

Dearly loved mother and mother-in-law of Bec & Jake; Jackson & Tea. Loved and adored Nanny Mandy of Kruz, Florence; and future baby Weir.

Loved daughter of the late Keith & Joan Tillig and loving sister of Maureen, Noela, Sue (dec.), Greg, Lynne, Anne, Tony, Peter, Paul, Jayne and Sonya.

Love you Mum

THANK YOU

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my family and friends for the beautiful flowers, cards, gifts and good wishes on my special birthday.

– Brenda Brennan

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

FUNERAL SUMMERHAYES.–

An Anglican funeral service for Phyllis Elizabeth Summerhayes will be held at the Sea Lake Uniting Church, 168 Best Street, Sea Lake on Thursday, June 5, commencing at 1 p.m. Burial will follow at Sea Lake Cemetery.

The service will be livestreamed, please go to the livestream tab on our website.

A tribute can be left on our website: kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au

Mark and Raelene O’Halloran
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP



FUNERAL WEIR.–

Requiem mass for the repose of the soul of Amanda Weir will be offered at the Church of Immaculate Conception St Arnaud on Tuesday, June 10 at 11 a.m. A private burial will be held.

*Condolences at
lifelived.com.au*

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**DONALD HISTORY
SOCIETY INC.**

FURTHER INFO: 0427 976 208

Meeting

Tuesday, June 10
2 p.m.

Speaker:

John Kumm,
the Men’s Shed.

ALL WELCOME

Live-Alones’ Luncheon

Tuesday, June 10
12 noon

HARVEST CAFÉ

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0447 235 482 or drop in
to reserve your place.

An advert. in “The Buloke
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Quilt Exhibition

PIECED TOGETHER:
A Collaboration of
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Saturday, June 7 to
Monday, June 9
10am – 4pm

Charlton Courthouse
Gallery

8 Camp Street, Charlton
Entry by donation

Dob in a friend
If you know someone celebrating a birthday, or wedding anniversary or some other special occasion, let us know and we'll let the world know!

- June 3, Lachlan Hollis
- June 4, Margaret Pearse (91)
- June 4, Janet Wood (91)
- June 5, Alyssa Walker
- June 9, Will Burke
- June 14, Raelene O'Shea
- June 16, Jodie Francis

If you know someone celebrating a special anniversary, let us know at
Donald Newsagency & Emporium
For all your Greeting Cards, Wraps, Ribbons and Stationery needs.
37 Woods Street, Donald. 'Phone 54971510.

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rextheatre.org.au

COMING ATTRACTIONS

THE SALT PATH
M 98 mins | Drama
Sat 7 June 8pm
Sun 8 June 2pm
Tue 10 June 8pm

COMING: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: THE FINAL RECKONING M 170 mins

In A Persian Garden
SAT 21 JUNE 2 PM
TICKETS: \$35

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Students' Study Scholarships

Earlier in the year two students, Verity Rafter and Eliott Bidstrup, applied for and received scholarships from Birchip P-12 School for costs associated with their further education or training.

The two students used the \$2,000 to buy items associated with their further study such as computers and tuition costs. Eliott is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts at The University of Melbourne and Verity is studying to be an Allied Health Assistant at Gordon Tafe in Geelong.

Birchip P-12 School is able to offer these scholarships through the generous donations of grain at harvest, the generosity of the Berri-willock Wheat Scheme and individual donors.

Youth Health Expo

Birchip P-12 School Year 9 and 10 students had the opportunity to engage in a whole day of personal development in the Buloke Youth Health

Expo. Schools from across the region congregated at the Birchip Community Leisure Centre to listen to speakers present on mental health, healthy eating and living, and literally saving lives.

Tim O'Donnell, a Mental Health Social Worker from Horsham, related his experience as an actor in "Shrek – The Musical" and how the characters in the cast all display different degrees of poor mental health. Health Promotion Workers from East Wimmera Health Services discussed super food choices for energy and brain development. A representative from Ambulance Victoria spoke about how to respond in various emergency situations called "Call. Push. Shock." Gabrielle Mentz from Women's Health Loddon Mallee explained the "bystander effect" and how to combat silence or inaction. An informative session was also run on the risks associated with vaping, drugs and alcohol.

Students also participated in hands on activities on the oval and netball courts with Headspace, Active Schools, Reclink and Ambulance Victoria. The Smoothie Bike was a hit, as were the giant games. The students found the day to



be engaging and enjoyed the opportunity to chat to other students from other schools on the cold but sunny day.

Cross Country

Six Birchip P-12 students participated in the Loddon Mallee Region Cross Country. Despite the cold and windy St Arnaud weather, students all ran very good times in their respective fields. Sienna Richmond placed within the top ten competitors for her age group, qualifying her for the State Finals in July.

Birchip P-12 students from Grade 4, 5 and 6 competed in the Black Ranges Winter Sports in Stawell. The students competed in both netball and football making it to the Grand Final in both sports. Whilst the two teams were runners-up, it was a great achievement for the students competing against much larger schools in the division.

• Right: Jackson Goss and Michael Darby enjoy games at Buloke Healthy Living Expo.



• Eliott Bidstrup scholarship winner.



• Verity Rafter scholarship winner.



The Buloke Times

Coloured Photographs

Copies of "Times" photos can be purchased from our office/s.

Photos not published may also be available.

Call in to our offices,
McCulloch Street, Donald,
phone 5497 1222;
or Cumming Avenue, Birchip,
phone 5492 2735.

Advertorial

No risk to human health from wind farms

Claims about health risks from wind farms – including electromagnetic radiation - are inaccurate.

A decade ago, after a systematic review, Australia's National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC) concluded there is no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans.

The NHMRC review was overseen by a Wind Farms and Human Health Reference Group with two observers appointed to ensure transparency. For more information on the review, visit nhmrc.gov.au.

WestWind Energy's Chief Development Officer, Marla Brauer, said 'Wind farms have been in operation in Australia for decades. We understand that communities which have new projects in development nearby may have concerns about the possible impacts on community and environment.

However, there are strict requirements in place across the country to manage impacts – including electromagnetic fields and noise.'

Scientific studies from around the world also conclude that wind turbines do not produce harmful radiation that impacts human health.

These include research from the World Health Organisation and internationally recognised universities such as MIT and Harvard.

As far back as 2014, the Australian Medical Association stated that 'based on the findings and scientific merit of the available studies, the weight of evidence suggests that when sited properly, wind turbines are not related to adverse health.'

What about electromagnetic fields?
Modern blades are typically made of synthetic materials which have a minimal impact on the transmission of electromagnetic radiation.

Other elements in a wind turbine that produce electromagnetic fields such as generators, transformers, power electronics and electrical conductors are very similar in nature to electrical infrastructure we find in every neighbourhood. The strength of the electromagnetic fields around those common electrical infrastructure elements is very low once you're just a few metres away.

In a 2014 study in the Environment Health Journal, electromagnetic fields around wind turbines were measured in Ontario, Canada

The study found that magnetic field levels detected at the base of the turbines were low, and rapidly reduced with distance, becoming indistinct from background within just 2 metres of the base. The specified minimum distance between houses and turbines in Australia ranges from 1 km to 1.5 km.

Magnetic field levels under transmission lines also reduce very quickly with distance. The research found that neither source influenced magnetic field levels at homes located just over 500 metres from the source.

There is no evidence that living near sources of electromagnetic fields increases the risk of disease, including cancer.

This is supported by the World Health Organisation who, after reviewing around 25,000 studies over 30 years, found there is no link between electromagnetic fields and childhood leukaemia.

Electromagnetic fields and risks to livestock

In the same way, electromagnetic fields from wind turbines do not impact the health of sheep, cows or any other type of livestock and animals generally living alongside wind turbines.



In relation to transmission - in 2020, New Mexico State University reviewed scientific evidence on the biological effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields on both human and livestock subjects. Their review concluded 'there is not an increased risk of adverse health events when exposure occurs to extremely low-frequency EMFs, such as those associated with power transmission and distribution lines.'

'If any member of the community has concerns about wind farms and health impacts, we encourage you to contact well-recognised expert medical organisations like the NHMRC or the Australian Medical Association,' WestWind's Marla Brauer said.

For answers to many Frequently Asked Questions about wind farm developments, visit www.w-wind.com.au/faq





Contact information

104 Scott Street, Warracknabeal Vic 3393 | PO Box 433, Gisborne Vic 3437
(03) 5421 9999 | info@WilkurEnergyPark.com.au | www.w-wind.com.au



Year 10 Students At Primary School

Donald High School's year 10 Personal Growth class has recently been visiting the two local Primary schools to help out in the classrooms.

It was a fantastic way to involve the students in the community and give them a different opportunity to volunteer (other than in our sporting clubs).

The Year 10s recently visited Donald Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, volunteering in classrooms for one hour each week over three weeks.

This initiative was linked to the Barefoot Investor step "Volunteer in your local

community", which students were exploring in class.

The experience was thoroughly enjoyed by the Year 10s, who appreciated the opportunity to return to their former primary schools and give back by assisting teachers and younger students.

Many students felt they made a meaningful contribution, which left them with a strong sense of personal satisfaction.

Thank you to Donald Primary School and St Mary's



Primary School for their ongoing support of this valuable program.



• Brady Cummings and Lexi.



• Jesse Lydom and Buckley.



• Chelsea Hart working with a small group of St Mary's students.



• Marty Burke and a St Mary's student playing a Maths game.



• Lyric Davis and Cruz.

Myth Exposed Amid Cuts To Road Repair Targets

The Victorian Government's claim it is repairing roads at record levels has again been exposed as a myth.

State Budget detail reveals major "road patching" targets have been cut by 93 per cent in regional Victoria and 89 per cent in outer metropolitan Melbourne.

The area of road resurfaced or rehabilitated is falling again too, with the target down 14 per cent in regional areas to just 2.7 million square metres.

That is an alarming drop given the target was as high as 11.4 million square metres in 2021/22.

These reductions come after budget papers show the government failed to even go close to meeting its own targets last year.

Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Melissa Horne, was grilled on both the patching and rehabilitation shortfalls in Parliament today, but

dodged the questions, refusing to explain.

Fiction

Leader of The Nationals and Shadow Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Danny O'Brien, said Labor had been caught out spruiking fiction as Victoria's road network continues to crumble.

"When it comes to roads, the budget figures show it is always prudent to look at what Labor does, not what it says," Mr O'Brien said.

"Despite claiming it is spending record amounts on roads, Labor's own budget papers show a shocking 93 per cent reduction next year in patching works and a 14 per cent reduction in road resealing and rehabilitation.

"Where is the money going? Or is it just fiction? Because whatever Labor



• Danny O'Brien.

claims to be spending, its own figures show it is not improving our roads – it's doing less.

"All Victorian motorists, regional and metro, are suffering from roads that are more like goat tracks because of the government's neglect."

Northern Gramps Girls Can

Young women in Northern Grampians Shire can participate in free fitness sessions and challenges as part of a campaign designed to encourage them to move their bodies in a way that suits them.

Northern Gramps Girls Can is based on VicHealth's This Girl Can campaign, which ran from 2018 to 2024, and broke down barriers that kept many women from enjoying the physical and mental benefits of being active.

Northern Gramps Girls Can runs from Monday, May 26 until Wednesday, July 16 and includes several opportunities to be active in Stawell and St Arnaud.

Northern Grampians Shire mayor Karen Hyslop said these events aimed to remove barriers such as fear of the unknown and a lack of confidence in trying new sports or activities.

"We know that for many women and girls, finding the time and space to get active can feel hard – particularly when you're juggling other priorities like school, work and family commitments," she said.

"We also know many women and girls don't necessarily feel safe or included in gyms, sports clubs, parks or fitness classes. We know a big part of not trying new activities or getting involved in sport is a fear of being judged or not being fit enough to make a start.

"That's why we're excited to offer a localised campaign for young women and girls in our shire, encouraging them to be active in a safe, comfortable and inclusive environment."

Monday Nights

On Monday nights, sporting facilities in Stawell and St Arnaud will be lit up to encourage people to enjoy the spaces with their family and friends.

The outdoor lights will be on at Lord Nelson Park oval in St Arnaud and North Park athletics track and netball courts in Stawell between 6 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.. Stawell and St Arnaud police will also have a presence at these locations on Monday nights throughout the campaign.

Wednesday Afternoons

On Wednesday afternoons, Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre will run free fitness sessions in the gym between 4.15 p.m. and 5.15 p.m., for girls aged between 12 and 18 years.

A personal trainer will supervise the sessions, which will include a combination of free gym time – to encourage participants to use whatever equipment they want – and organised activities such as Boogie Bounce and yoga.

Cr Hyslop said the fitness sessions were free of charge to remove the access barrier of needing a gym membership.

"It is also designed to make participants feel comfortable using equipment and provide a safe and supportive space to show them how much fun being active can be," she said.

Bookings are not required, however a sign-in sheet will be available at each session so attendees can keep track of how many they attend.

Participants who attend every week will go in the draw for a free one-month gym membership.

Challenges

Northern Gramps Girls Can also includes weekly fitness challenges and video highlights featuring local women and girls talking about why being physically active is important for them.

Every Sunday afternoon, campaign leaders will post a new weekly challenge and video highlight to the Northern Grampians Shire Council and Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre social media pages.

"The challenges will revolve around the 'Northern Gramps Girls Can' message, for example, Northern Gramps Girls Can – go for a walk with a friend, park their car or get dropped off a block away and walk to work or school," Cr Hyslop said.

"There's going to be a competition for this one too, via a community survey, asking people to tell us what

they've learned the most about themselves by taking part.

"The winner will receive a three-month gym membership to a gym of their choice, which helps ensure residents outside of Stawell – who can't attend the Wednesday night activity at the aquatic centre – can also get involved."

Funded by VicHealth, the Northern Gramps Girls Can campaign is also supported by Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, which has been rolling out events for school groups across the region.

Council and the sports assembly co-hosted a brunch at the aquatic centre on May 5 to launch the campaign.

Guest Speaker

St Kilda AFLW player Rene Caris was guest speaker at the event, which was attended by female students in years seven and eight at Stawell and St Arnaud secondary schools.

"Rene grew up at Quantong and spoke about how much she loved playing sport in a regional community, saying it was a great chance to meet up with friends outside of school and provided her with amazing sporting opportunities she may not have otherwise received," Cr Hyslop said.

"Her message was about how important it is for young girls to play team sports in particular, given her success with football. Her sister Maggie is also a successful young sportswoman, previously playing AFLW for Melbourne and now representing Melbourne Vixens in Australia's premier netball league.

"Northern Gramps Girls Can is about creating opportunities for young girls to be active – you don't have to be headed down an elite pathway, it is simply about gaining the physical and mental health benefits of moving your body."

People can visit www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Community/Northern-Gramps-Girls-Can for more information about the campaign.



• St. Arnaud lights.

Northern Grampians Joins Call to Scrap Cruel Fund

Northern Grampians Shire joins call to scrap "outrageous" Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

Northern Grampians Shire Council is standing behind its residents – particularly its farmers – by joining an overwhelming call for the State Government to "scrap" its unjust new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, ESVF.

Mayor Karen Hyslop said she was full of outrage and disbelief following the passing of the Fire Services Property Amendment (Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund) Bill 2025 recently.

She said she was deeply concerned about the effects the new tax would have on residents' capacity to pay, the council's ability to collect it and the region's already-stressed economy.

The ESVF replaces the current Fire Services Property Levy and starts on July 1, with the cost added to council rate notices. The variable rate at which the levy is calculated is more than doubled in most instances, with primary producers the hardest hit.

Cr Hyslop said the municipality was expected to contribute \$2.3 million to the fund, with farmers collectively contributing an additional 137% compared to the previous year.

"The fund will affect all Victorians, with increases affecting all residents – but no one will feel the full brunt of this enormous financial burden more than farmers," Cr Hyslop said.

Incredibly Unjust

"It is incredibly unjust to impose further pressure on a group of people who are already struggling with the crippling cost of drought and everyday living.

"On top of the dramatically increased cost of inputs over the past five years, without the increase of revenue to match it, farmers are currently also paying to cart water, feed stock – some can't even afford to pay themselves a wage right now, and yet, the government is demanding they pay more and more. It's outrageous.

"Our farmers certainly understand the importance of funding emergency services, particularly firefighting efforts. Many of our farmers double as volunteer firefighters and when needed, drop everything on their farm to help protect life and property – whether they are personally affected or not."

Cr Hyslop, along with municipal leaders from across regional Victoria, has spent months advocating against the amendment due to grave concerns about residents' ability to pay the new tax.

Parliament House Protest

"I attended the first protest on the steps of Parliament House last week, trying to convince politicians to vote against the bill, and it was plain to see how many people in regional Victoria are hurting," she said.

She said she would continue to call on the government to "scrap the tax" and was currently in consultation with other municipal leaders in the region, considering next steps.

Municipal Association of Victoria, of which Northern Grampians Shire Council is a member, has passed a series of resolutions to try to get the government to collect the levy.

"Councils have their own role to play and should not be forced to collect taxes on behalf of the State Government," Cr Hyslop said.

"The State Revenue Office can send out bills for land tax, there's no reason they can't collect the ESVF payments themselves.

"They know this tax is unpopular, that people won't want to pay it, and they are pushing the burden of collection and chasing up missed payments on to councils, which are already stretched as it is.

"The government has promised some additional resources to help councils with the administration of the payment, but we don't have any details about that. How soon is this going to happen? When people don't pay – because they refuse to or simply can't afford to – councils will be left to carry the debt."

Drought

Cr Hyslop said there needed to be a more equitable solution, particularly considering the state was in a period of drought.

On Friday, the State Government pledged an additional \$15.9 million in drought support for farmers, with Northern Grampians Shire now being included as an Eligible Local Government Authority.

The support package includes infrastructure grants and financial counselling for farmers.

Cr Hyslop said the infrastructure grants, of up to \$5000, were on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

"Farmers have to spend money to get drought support, so the drought package is tokenistic at best," she said.

She said the mental health ramifications of the state of drought, the ESVF, a tough fire season, concerns about transmission lines and renewable energy proposals, and the general cost of living could have grave consequences.

"The whole community is worried," she said.

"I haven't spoken to one person in favour of this new levy. We are very concerned about how people will cope with this on top of everything else."

Cr Hyslop said she was also concerned for business owners, especially those in Halls Gap recovering from devastating financial loss due to the December-January fires in Grampians National Park.

"Businesses in Halls Gap are in recovery mode and although the government has finally announced the guidelines for recovery money, it is way short of what we were hoping for and what they need," she said.

"For these businesses – particularly if they own their own shop – the ESVF just isn't fair.

"We and our community have been advocating for months, but the government just isn't listening."

Lifeline

Cr Hyslop encouraged anyone struggling with mental health to call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

"I'd also like to encourage people to look out for one another," she said.

"If you know somebody who is experiencing mental health or think you know somebody who's struggling, please keep an eye on them and keep checking in on one another."

People can visit website www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Emergencies/Recovery-2024-Grampians-Bushfires/Health-and-Wellbeing-Materials for a list of free and confidential mental health support services.



• North Park lights.

To Improve Farm Safety . . . Producers Grow Together

A two-year WorkSafe project is proving the first step to a safer farm can be as simple as having a conversation with others facing the same challenges.

Practical safety videos, the implementation of QR codes and streamlining the induction process for new and casual workers have been among the achievements of 26 farms signed up to the Safety Learning Network. Funded by WorkSafe, and driven by experts Velisha Education Group (VEG) and agriculture consultancy ORM Consultancy and Communications, the project involved regular catch-ups and farms visits where safe systems of work and practical safety improvements were the main topics of conversation.

Amanda Smith, from Gippsland’s Riviera Farms, said the network sparked important conversations about safety, which led them to create new training videos for multicultural workers.

First Step

Ms Smith said the best first step to improving safety was to “just start talking about it”. “Just mentioning the word “safety” in everything that you do. It becomes habit and that's what you need. It just needs to be in-grown in people,” Ms Smith said.

VEG Managing Director, Catherine Velisha, said farmers could often be reluctant to reach out for help which is where the collaborative nature of the network came in.

“Knowing people who are running the same business as you, doing the same roles as you and also having the same challenges and the same stresses – I think that gives real freedom and opens up conversation,” Ms Velisha said. Fourth-generation almond, citrus and asparagus grower Darren Minter, from the Mildura region, said the program prompted him to replace paper instructions with a QR code system that takes workers to videos showing how to correctly and safely operate machinery. .

“As an employer, I want everyone to be safe on my farm and go home every night. It's not just the person injured, it's all the people around you who are going to deal with the trauma. I do not want that on my farm, period,” Mr Minter said.

ORM Senior Agribusiness Consultant Jane Foster said the network brought together grain growers from across the Mallee region.

“A lot of people felt a little bit overwhelmed about how to start,” Ms Foster said. “Amongst the group, there's now a really positive mindset towards safety and proactively managing risks and hazards on farm.”

With the Boxall family’s cropping operation in the Mallee expanding, mother and son Leonie and Callum joined the network to ensure they had the right safety systems in place to support their new workforce, including developing a comprehensive induction process.

Continual Improvement

“It’s always going to be about continual improvement,” Callum said. “It helped develop more awareness of identifying what hazards are around and being able to prioritise these.”

WorkSafe Executive Director of Health and Safety Sam Jenkin said conversations with fellow farmers were invaluable for preventing deaths and injuries.

“It takes courage to start those conversations and to reach out and seek advice when you need it – and nothing resonates more than connecting with people in a similar situation,” Mr Jenkin said.

The Safety Learning Network program is now undergoing an evaluation process to assess how it may run in the future. For more information about the safety learning networks visit worksafe.vic.gov.au/agriculture-safety-learning-network



• Producers grow together to improve farm safety.

Stay Ahead of the Winter Blues

There are numerous viruses, identified and unidentified, which are commonly given the name as ‘flu. Most viral attacks, however, which involve coughs, colds, fever, muscular aches and pains, tiredness and exhaustion, are usually given this label.

With the cooler weather now upon us, it’s time to seriously consider natural remedies to build up the body’s resistance to infection.

Treatment needs be immediate, so as to raise immunity levels as well as combatting possible virus attack. Most important, include plenty of vitamin C (500-1000 mg daily), carrots, spinach, oranges, grapefruit, guavas, horseradish (freshly grated root on bread), onions, chives, green peppers, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes and turnips in your diet.

Use fresh garlic in food or take a garlic supplement available from your health store. Garlic helps to prevent colds, expel catarrh from the chest, acts as an antiseptic, will help to soothe a nagging cough, and aids in the relief of sinusitis, and is considered to be a natural antibiotic if taken in large enough doses. It contains vitamins A, B, and C, and copper, sulphur, manganese, iron and calcium, and because its oil, is composed of sulphides and disulphides, garlic inactivates undesirable virulent micro-organisms in the body, without harming the helpful organisms.

Sprinkle Cayenne pepper on food and mix into the following “cold brew” herbal tea. It induces perspiration which

helps to bring down fever and to eliminate poisons and bacteria from the body. To make your “cold brew” blend equal parts of dried peppermint, elder flower and yarrow (available from most health food shops) and brew one teaspoon of the mix in a covered ceramic cup for five minutes. Strain, reheat if necessary, and add one tablespoon of lemon juice and honey to taste, then sip slowly.

If you are shivery and cold, and feel that you have the onset of something more, take a warm bath to which six drops each of pine, eucalyptus and cypress essential oils have been added. Sit with your knees up and your head between them so that you can fully inhale the restorative vapours, and as the water cools, slosh it over your body.

Get out of the bath, vigorously dry yourself with a warm towel and then wrap yourself in another warm towel for a few minutes. Finish off by massaging your entire body with the following oil mix: dissolve two drops of tea tree oil and three drops of eucalyptus oil in one teaspoon of sunflower or almond oil, and then go to bed.

Bedrooms should be sprayed with thyme or lavender oil to help combat airborne nasties. Dissolve thirty drops



• Alan Hayes

of either oil in five millilitres of methylated spirits and add this to a pump-spray bottle containing half a litre of distilled water. Use on a fine mist setting.

A few drops lavender oil in a bowl of warm water, placed on a table away from windows, will also provide protection against bacteria.

At the first sign of a cold, add one drop of eucalyptus or tea tree oil to a glass of warm water and then gargle. For a chest rub, eucalyptus oil is very penetrating since it opens up the air passages as well as fighting infection. Dilute ten drops of the oil in one dessert-spoon of sunflower or almond oil and apply to the chest just prior to going to bed.

Visit Alan on the Net - www.itssonatural.com

Drought Taskforce Welcome – But More Help Needed

Rural Councils Victoria welcomes the establishment of a bipartisan Drought Response Taskforce, but warns more work is needed to support rural communities now.

The Premier, Jacinta Allan, has announced she will personally chairman the new Taskforce, which also includes Corangamite Mayor Kate Makin as a representative of Rural Councils Victoria.

Cr Makin (who is also the Deputy Chairman of Rural Councils Victoria) described the Taskforce as a positive step.

“The Taskforce is a welcome acknowledgement that

the drought is biting, it’s affecting huge swathes of Victoria and that more help is needed,” he said.

“The real test will be action.

“I’m hopeful the Taskforce can help design further measures the Victorian Government will take to support rural communities.”

Funding

As part of the taskforce announcement, Victoria will spend an extra \$37.7 million

helping farmers though small cash grants and additional funding for financial counselling and mental health support.

The Victorian Government also confirmed it would pause the introduction of the flawed and unfair Emergency Services Volunteers Fund levy.

Half-Measure

RCV Chairman Rob Amos said this was a half-measure – but welcome all the same.

“The ESVF is a bad tax that will do great harm to rural communities. We would still like to see its full removal.”

“But delaying its implementation is very welcome.

“It’s at least a sign the government has listened and is taking action to remove some immediate financial burdens from primary producers.”

Cr Amos said Rural Councils Victoria will work supporting the Taskforce and Ms Allan, to ensure the government delivers the extra support rural communities need.

“The government can’t make it rain, but we do expect it to adequately support rural communities through the tough times,” Cr Amos said.

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

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SUPPORT SERVICES

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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		



• Local school children on the Donald Station platform, looking for their “free train”. – Photographs were captured by Julia Pearse Photography.

Kids Call Out Public Transport Fail: “Where’s the Tram?”

What began as a casual conversation in the “Donald Mums” Facebook Messenger thread turned into a powerful moment of grassroots action last Friday afternoon.

The local chat – usually buzzing with parenting tips and life hacks – took a serious turn when several mums shared their frustration over the latest political announcement from the Victorian Government.

While the state unveiled a new Emergency Services Levy, it also tried to sweeten the blow with a headline-grabbing promise: free public transport for all Victorian children under 18, starting January 1.

But for rural communities like Donald, that promise rings hollow.

“We have no trains, the tram is decommissioned, and the only bus comes through town once a day – early in the morning and only one way,” said local mum of four, Lisa Woods.

“Our kids are being used for political gain without receiving any real benefit.”

Determined to make a statement, the mums put out a last-minute call on social media to meet at the Donald Train Station in front of the disused tram. Within hours, more than 40 young people gathered after school – students from Donald Children’s Centre, Donald Primary School, St Mary’s Primary School, and Donald Secondary College.

“These kids saw straight through the empty promises,” Lisa said. “And without being prompted, they began chanting, ‘Where’s the tram?’ It was chilling to hear. They know they’re being overlooked.”

Video

A short video of the gathering, posted to Facebook, has already reached more than 27,000 views, showing just how deeply the issue resonates with country Victorians.

Local mum and fellow organiser, Alison Duynhoven, added, “A quick comment soon became a whole group of people coming together for a really good cause. We need to advocate for our country kids to get the same opportunities as city kids. We also need to call out these so-called government handouts when they don’t even help those they claim to.”

“The promises of free public transport for kids in Victoria is yet another city-centric policy. Country kids



• Local school children from Donald asking the government “Where’s their free train?”

have been forgotten about by our current government,” said Susie, mum of 5.

Buloke Shire Councillor Graeme Milne, who stopped by after seeing the post online,

said he was impressed by the turnout.

“It’s remarkable how many students came out to lend their support, especially with so little notice. It shows just

how important this issue is to the community,” Cr. Milne said.

At the heart of it all is a simple plea to Premier Jacinta Allan: Country kids count too. Don’t leave us behind.



• Buloke Shire Councillor Graeme Milne (third from left) stopped by after seeing the post online, meeting with local parents, left to right, Susie Burke, Fiona Stephens, Kelvin Hepworth, Lisa Woods, with her two children (front).



• Without being prompted, the children began chanting, “Where’s the tram?” It was chilling to hear.

VFF Welcomes Drought Assistance Package

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed the Victorian Government’s announcement of an expanded drought assistance package and the 12-month pause on Emergency Services Levy (ESL) increases for primary producers.

VFF President Brett Hosking said it represents a step in the right direction as Victoria endures crippling drought conditions across the state.

“Farmers are doing it tough and some are facing the worst drought conditions in living memory,” he said.

Glimmer of Hope

“This announcement offers a glimmer of hope and is recognition that the pressure we’ve applied is being heard. It’s a step in the right direction, but plenty more remains to be done.

“You can’t begin to understand the impact of this

drought until you actually visit these areas in person. I thank Premier Jacinta Allan, Treasurer Jacyn Symes and Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence for coming out to see what we’re facing and this extra support,” Mr Hosking said.

Mr Hosking said that 12 month pause to the controversial ESL is welcome and allows more time to talk with the government.

Underlying Problem

“Pausing the ESL increases for 12 months is the right call, but it doesn’t change the underlying problem: this levy is

an unfair cost shift on to farmers,” he said.

“We’ll use this extra time to continue making the case that it needs to be scrapped altogether, not simply paused.”

The VFF is continuing to call for the Victorian Government to commit to a long-term, transparent, and genuinely collaborative approach to drought and regional resilience. Farmers and their communities have repeatedly raised concerns, but too often these warnings have been ignored until pressure becomes political.

“This latest package is welcome, but will only make a difference if the support actually reaches those who need it most. The government needs to start listening earlier,

not months down the track when frustration boils over,” he said.

He stressed that drought recovery is a long-term process and requires sustained investment beyond seasonal headlines.

“Even if we get rain tomorrow, the financial and emotional scars of drought last for years. We need enduring support, not one-off fixes,” Mr Hosking said.

The VFF will continue advocating through the newly formed Drought Response Taskforce and will keep pushing for practical, farmer-in-



• Brett Hosking.

formed solutions that reflect the reality on the ground.

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8179 - SOLUTIONS

Across - 7, Blackcurrant. 8, Bottle. 9, Strown 10, Had-dock. 12, Sneak. 15, Least. 16, Lanyard 18, Coyote. 20, Thrush. 22, Unattractive.

Down - 1, Allocate. 2, Scut. 3, Screech. 4, Crest. 5, Warranty. 6, Stew. 11, Disloyal. 13, Abrasive. 14, Martial. 17, Testy. 19, Opus. 21, Rate

Virtual Fencing Welcomed, But...

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has welcomed the Government’s announcement of draft regulations to enable the legal use of virtual fencing in Victoria, following years of advocacy by the VFF and the broader farming community.

However, the organisation says more must be done to ensure farmers can access and implement the technology, particularly in the face of deepening drought conditions.

The draft regulations, now open for consultation, would pave the way for the use of GPS-enabled virtual fencing collars for livestock, which are already legal and widely used in other Australian states to support productivity, animal welfare and improved land management.

Long Overdue

VFF President Brett Hosking said the announcement was a long-overdue recognition of the need to modernise Victoria’s outdated rules.

“This is a win for common sense and a testament to the advocacy efforts of the VFF and our members,” Mr Hosking said.

“Virtual fencing is already proving its worth in other states. It’s time Victorian farmers had the same opportunities to improve livestock management and reduce pressure on our land.”

The VFF and United Dairyfarmers of Victoria (UDV) have worked closely with manufacturers, researchers and regulators to support the responsible rollout of the technology. UDV President Bernie Free noted the technology’s potential to transform operations for dairy producers.

Groundwork

“Dairy farmers have been ready to adopt virtual fencing for years. We’ve done the groundwork, and while this announcement is welcome, we can’t afford to wait much longer,” Mr Free said.

While recognising this as a positive step, the VFF is urging the Victorian Government to make existing drought and preparedness funding eligible for virtual fencing and stock containment infrastructure once the regulations are finalised.

“The timing of these changes is critical,” Mr Hosking said. “We’re in the middle of a challenging season, and farmers need every tool available to manage feed, protect soil, and rotate stock efficiently. Virtual fencing is one of those tools.

“Once regulations are in place, we want to see support made available, not just through words, but with practical funding that helps farmers adopt this technology where it’s most urgently needed.”

The VFF also reiterated its disappointment over recent policy decisions, such as the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund levy, which has added pressure to rural communities already managing severe cost and climate pressures.

“We won’t forget the government’s decision to ignore rural voices on the unfair levy. But we’ll always support policies that help farmers do their jobs better and virtual fencing is one of them,” Mr Hosking said.

The VFF will continue to work closely with the government and industry to ensure the final virtual fencing framework is safe, practical, and aligned with the needs of Victorian producers.

Community Update

Buloke.

Community Grants Awarded

Councillors awarded funding of \$14,000 for three community projects under our Community Grants Programs at the May Council meeting.

Congratulations to:

- **Birchip Community Leisure Centre** – \$10,000 for the Keep Birchip Golfing Project under the *Community Sustainability Grants Program*
- **Birchip Neighbourhood House Incorporated** – \$2,000 for the Birchip Community Christmas Party under the *Community Grants Program* (retrospectively funded)
- **Donald Learning Group Inc** – \$2,000 for the Donald Art & Photography Show 2025 under the *Community Grants Program* (retrospectively funded)

If you have a project that benefits the Buloke Shire community, then you could be eligible for a Council grant too. To find out more or apply visit: www.buloke.vic.gov.au/community-grants

Free Grant Writing Workshops for Community Groups

We are excited to be providing free grant writing workshops for local community groups looking to strengthen their grant-writing skills. Sessions are free and open to all volunteer groups in the Shire. Options include both online and in-person.

Online:

- **Wednesday 11 June, 6.00–8.00pm**
- **Monday 30 June, 6.00–8.00pm**

In-Person:

- **Tuesday 24 June, 1.00–3.30pm in Wycheproof**
- **Tuesday 24 June, 5.30–8.00pm in Birchip**

To register or find out more, contact Council’s Community Partnerships Team via 1300 520 520 or email grants@buloke.vic.gov.au

Buloke CFA Volunteers Recognised

Buloke Shire Council congratulates members of the CFA Buloke West Group recently recognised for their service and bravery.

National Medals were awarded to David Manifold, Brad Burke, Michael McLoughlan, Graeme Milne, Richard Rielly, Adam Campbell, Robert Adams, and Kelvin Hepworth for their commitment to the CFA and their communities.

A special honour, the Chief Officer’s Commendation for Courage, was presented to Bradley Burke, Captain of the Jeffcott Fire Brigade, for his heroic rescue of a truck driver moments before the vehicle caught fire.

Acting Deputy Chief Officer Bill Johnstone, who presented the awards, noted it was the first time in his career he had delivered such a commendation. Council extends its thanks and congratulations to all award recipients.

Photos and article courtesy of CFA District 18 Buloke Catchment BASO Tanya Decker.

Notice Of An Application For A Planning Permit

The land affected by the application is located at **14 Florence Court, Donald VIC 3480.**

The application is for a permit for the **construction of a dwelling and associated outbuilding within an Environmental Significance Overlay.**

The application reference number is **PA25016.**

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

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

An objection must be made to the Responsible Authority in writing, include the objectors name and contact details, include reasons for the objection, and state how the objector would be affected. An online submission form is available at <https://www.buloke.vic.gov.au/planning-applications-on-exhibition>.

The Responsible Authority will not decide on the application before **19 June 2025.**

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



Curtailling Phalaris in Winter Crops

(With Prof. Bhagirath Chauhan, weeds researcher, University of Queensland)

Is there an integrated approach for curtailling Phalaris in winter crops?

High-level infestation of Phalaris (*Phalaris paradoxa*), aka paradoxa grass, can reduce wheat yield by 40 per cent and add 3100 weed seeds/m² to the weed seed-bank. Phalaris is considered the second most difficult-to-manage winter weed in the northern grains region, after wild oats.

Bhagirath Chauhan, professor at the University of Queensland's Centre for Crop Science, says the increasing prevalence of Phalaris with resistance to Group 1 and 2 herbicides makes controlling this weed more difficult and demands a more integrated approach.

"We have conducted a series of weed ecology studies to better understand the conditions for germination and growth of Phalaris in southern Queensland and northern NSW," he says. "Field trials in wheat and chickpea crops have also demonstrated the efficacy of different pre- and post-emergence herbicide options and increased crop competition to suppress Phalaris establishment, growth and seed production."

These field trials showed that the standard practice of a single post-emergent herbicide application gave variable results. However, adding more diversity with pre-emergence herbicides and increasing crop competitiveness provided excellent weed control and increased wheat and chickpea yields compared to the control.

"Once again, taking an integrated approach using the WeedSmart Big 6 strategy can keep weed numbers low – using both herbicide and agronomic tactics," says Bhagirath. "We plan to conduct further studies into the biology and management of Phalaris and are looking for growers who have a problem with this weed and are happy to host trials."

This year, Geraldton is hosting WeedSmart Week on July 29 and 30, showcasing how growers can implement the Big 6 tactics to tackle hard-to-control weeds.

What Phalaris control options work in wheat?

At Gurley, NSW, LRPB Raider wheat was sown on 29 April 2024 on 30 cm row

spacing at two plant densities – 100 and 150 plants/m² – into a natural seed bank of Phalaris suspected to be resistant to Group 1 herbicides (e.g. Axial). Mesosulfuron-methyl (Group 2, e.g. Atlantis) was chosen as the post-emergence herbicide; however, when used alone, Atlantis did not provide commercially acceptable control of Phalaris.

Four weeks after the post-emergence herbicide application, the control plots (no herbicide) had 374 Phalaris plants/m², and the Atlantis-treated plots had 286 plants/m². In contrast, the Phalaris plant density and seedhead production were significantly reduced in plots treated with pre-emergent herbicides (Sakura [pyroxasulfone] and Mateno Complete [aclonifen/diflufenican/pyroxasulfone]).

Sequential herbicide applications (i.e. pre-emergence followed by post-emergence) provided the most consistent and near-complete Phalaris control. These plots generally produced higher yields, 16 to 27 per cent greater than in the Atlantis-alone plots.

Control plots produced over 80 seedheads/m², compared to 4 and 15 seedheads/m² in plots treated with Mateno Complete and Sakura, respectively. Increasing the crop density (seeding rate) also reduced seedhead production by over 30 per cent across the herbicide treatments.

The same trends were observed in the replicated field trial at Gatton.

Can Phalaris be controlled in chickpeas?

A similar trial was established on 28 May 2024 at Garah, NSW, to assess



• Phalaris – Moree.

Phalaris control options in chickpeas (cv. CBA Captain). The chickpea crop was sown into a natural seedbank of Phalaris on 30 cm row spacing to establish two crop densities – 30 and 45 plants/m².

Four weeks after applying the post-emergence herbicide treatment, haloxyfop (Group 1, e.g. Verdict), the Phalaris density was around 120 plants/m² in the control (nil herbicide) plots and 30 plants/m² in the Verdict-only plots, demonstrating that haloxyfop is a valuable stand-alone option. However, the pre-emergence herbicides tested (Sakura and Rifle [pendimethalin]) reduced the weed density by a further 80 to 85 per cent and almost 100 per cent control was achieved when sequential pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides were applied.

Relative to the untreated control, all pre-emergence herbicide treatments achieved over 95 per cent Phalaris control.

Herbicide treatments and chickpea crop density also had a significant impact on Phalaris seedhead numbers. Increased crop density significantly suppressed Phalaris seed head numbers but did not provide a commercially acceptable level of control on its

own. Combining crop competition with sequential pre- and post-emergence herbicides reduced Phalaris seed head numbers to 0–1 per m².

Increasing the crop density to 45 plants/m² increased chickpea yield in the untreated control and several of the herbicide treatments. Although Verdict-alone achieved 75 per cent Phalaris control, it did not provide a yield advantage over the untreated control.

A combination of increased crop competition and pre-emergence herbicides is highly effective in reducing Phalaris density and seed production, and retaining chickpea crop yield potential.

The same trends were observed in the replicated field trial at Gatton.

Are there other tactics that can be used for the integrated management of Phalaris?

In addition to prioritising weed-free crop establishment using effective pre-emergence herbicides and adjusting seeding rates and row spacing to enhance crop competitiveness, growers may also have other tactics at their disposal.

Weed ecology studies at Gatton have found that:

- Phalaris prefers cooler temperatures for germination.

- Rapid exposure to high heat (over 150 °C) destroys the seed.

- Only 10 per cent of seed on the soil surface germinates

- Phalaris is effectively controlled by a range of pre- and post-emergence herbicides (for use in crop or fallow situations).

- Phalaris tolerates drought and saline conditions.

When preparing an integrated weed management strategy for Phalaris, growers could consider taking these findings into account. For example, stubble or windrow burning could reduce the weed seedbank after a weed blow-out. Early planting of wheat (e.g. end of April) could allow a competitive wheat crop to establish before the emergence of Phalaris.

Leaving seed on the surface should minimise germination; however, deep tillage (more than 8 cm inversion) may be useful if the weed seedbank is high. Although several pre-emergence herbicides effectively control Phalaris in bare soil, stubble loads exceeding 2 t/ha compromise the efficacy of all options in wheat. At 2 t/ha residue cover, only pyroxasulfone (e.g. Sakura) provided effective control of Phalaris.



• Professor Bhagirath Chauhan in the field. (Photos Megan Pope.)

Are Your Livestock Fit to Transport?

As drought and difficult conditions continue across Victoria and livestock producers consider further destocking, Agriculture Victoria is issuing a timely reminder.

Agriculture Victoria Livestock Industry Development Officer Dr Hannah Manning said it's important to consider the condition of animals under your care before transporting them.

Dr Manning said there have been recent reports of stock arriving at livestock exchanges in poor condition.

"It's important to make early decisions to minimise welfare impacts on livestock.

"Body condition of livestock must be factored in when making a decision to sell to ensure they are strong enough to make the journey ahead.

Dr Manning said as part of its drought support Agriculture Victoria is offering a one-on-one advisory service to help farmers with stock

management strategies, decision making, and planning for managing these difficult seasonal conditions.

"Animals being sold via a saleyard can have long transport journeys ahead of them depending on the buyer, and therefore careful planning and preparation is needed to ensure their welfare is appropriately managed.

"All people involved in transporting livestock have a responsibility for their welfare from the original owner or person in charge that decides to sell the livestock, through to transporters, selling agents and the purchaser.

"If you have any concerns about the condition of your animals before they are transported, contact your veterinarian or Agriculture Victoria."

Information relating to Fit to Load standards is available on the Agriculture Victoria website and Meat & Livestock Australia's national guide titled "Is the animal fit to load?"

Indicators that an animal is not fit to load include:

- not able to walk normally or bear weight on all 4 legs. This may be due to a recent or old fracture, injury, a deformity or any other condition likely to further compromise its welfare during transport.

- not strong enough to make the journey.

- suffering from severe distress or injury.

- in a condition that could cause it increased pain or distress during transport.



- blind in both eyes.
- in late pregnancy.

"Unfit to load animals should be either treated appropriately and then reassessed for transport once recovered, or humanely euthanised on farm or via knackery service in some areas," Dr Manning said.

Resources to assist fit to load decision making and on-farm disposal of livestock are available on the Agriculture Victoria website.

For more information on drought and dry seasons support and the technical decision-making support, visit our website at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/dryseasons or call 136 186.

What's On

GRDC Grains Research Update, online – Using seasonal forecasts in decision making

Date: June 11, 2025; 1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Description: Free Online

How to interpret seasonal forecasts and how to use them for decision making.

Peter Hayman – SARDI will discuss his tips and tricks for making the most out of the BoM seasonal forecasts. As part of the national GRDC funded RiskWiSe project, he will highlight how this information can be applied to decision making using a worked example of in season nitrogen planning.

Contact: Matt McCarthy.

Email: admin@orm.com.au

Phone: 03 5441 6176.

Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/grdc-grains-research-update-online-insights-into-nitrogen-decision-making>

GRDC Farm Business Update – Horsham Town Hall, 71 Pynsent Stree, Horsham.

Date: June 18, 2025 9:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Description: Ag2050 Scenarios report – An outlook for productive, resilient and sustainable landscape farming systems with Dr Rose Roche and Mr Martijn Mooij, CSIRO

Contact: Jane Foster.

Email: admin@orm.com.au

Phone: 03 5441 6176.

Register here: <https://remote.orm.com.au/EventProConnect/Registrations/AttendeeType.aspx>

Saturday Showcases Spirit of Country Sport

Saturday at Birchip was a shining example of everything that is good about sport in country towns.

While the funds raised through the Goods and Services Auction were nothing short of phenomenal, the real highlight wasn't the dollar figure. It was the connection, camaraderie, and passion within the extended Birchip-Watchem sporting community that was on display.

From the very first netball game at 8 a.m. to the final item auctioned at 9:30 p.m., parents, grandparents, players, and volunteers gave their time and energy and showed their support in countless ways. It was a day of shared laughter, spirited competition, catching up with friends and foes from the opposition – a welcome escape from the work week and a celebration of all that makes country sport special.

There were uplifting stories everywhere, from youngsters Olive McLoughlan and Imogen Noonan showing impressive improvement in the Minkey hockey, to Year 12 students Harry Cook and Austin Dean playing senior football before heading into the kitchen to help alongside their year 12 compatriots.

Volunteers
Grandparents Bev and Leo "Shorty" Ryan embodied the family connections that run through North Central sport. Their son Brad is the club president, and along with his wife Conelly, they take on numerous volunteer roles within the club. And although their other children Andrew and Jo have moved away from Birchip their children, Bailey Baxter and Mackenzie Ryan, have returned "home" to be part of the day.

On Saturday Bev and Leo had the joy of watching their grandkids play across all three codes of sport, from junior hockey to junior and senior football through to "A" grade netball and on Saturday night, grandson Bailey Baxter was spotting and auctioneering at the goods and services auction.

Returning To Play
Jacob Christie is travelling home from Geelong to play for the Bulls this year alongside his cousins. In recent weeks he's shared the field

with Bill and Jack Lee, and on Saturday, he lined up with another cousin, Connor Lee, ten years his junior. Their grandparents, Eddie and Frances respective life members of the football and hockey clubs would have been very proud.

Archie Lewis, son of Jacinta Lewis (nee Lowry) is another ex-local to return to play with his cousins in the purple and green.

Not Just Locals
But it is not just the locals, the travelling players are not just good footballers, they are passionate supporters of the Bulls as are their families. Many of their family members had travelled to Birchip on Saturday to watch the game and get involved in the goods and services auction.

Barwon Heads couple Tim and Sandy Goddard, saw the impressive list of items in the BWFC goods and services list online on Friday night, and came for a drive. They stayed at the Birchip Hotel, came to the auction and purchased several items, including a group of under-17 footballers to do a day's labour for them. Coach Bill Lee insisted he would drive them down in a bus to complete the day's work. Hopefully he remembered this promise in the cold light of Sunday morning.

Fabulous Feast
The evening kicked off with a dinner to rival any city restaurant. Head Chef Joshua Richmond and his team prepared a feast of 12 different pizzas, eight pasta dishes, three salads, and classic kids' favourites like chips and nuggets.

The Auction
The auction began promptly at 7:30 p.m., with 196 lots quickly and cheerfully handled by auctioneer Shan Coffey and his assistant, Bailey Baxter. The crowd was engaged, respectful, and full of friendly rivalry as they bid on everything from nights out and loads of gravel, to dog leads, farm services, prints, footy jumpers and labourers.

Top-selling items included a Robo Mower donated by YBS, purchased by Dale and Holly Hinkley for over \$3,000, and a Gold Coast hol-



• Left to right: Ty Colbert, Josh Woods, Connor Lee, Riley Hogan, Charlie Frank, Harry Cook, and Ollie Cook.

iday donated by Issy Atkins and family, bought by Brendan Gleeson.

Farming items were also in hot demand, with a load of gypsum from Andrew and Julie Slater and a bluestone load from the Hinkleys both selling for over \$2,000. Other highlights selling for over \$1000 included lunch for 10 at Tim and Julie McClelland's, a seafood dinner at Jarrod Tyler's, and a Magnetic Island holiday from Deb and Cam Barber.

Collective Effort
Yet it was the collective effort that made the night a success, from the firewood and dressed sheep to the lolly hampers and drink packages from Chris Lee's Multi-Bev, there was something for everyone.

Organisers Matt Ryan and Alex Noonan expressed deep thanks to the committee who compiled the list of items and everyone who helped them ensure the success of the night.

Club president Brad Ryan echoed those sentiments with an empathic thank you to everyone who donated and purchased items on the night and to head auctioneer Shan Coffey. Brad said "I am incredibly proud of what we achieved tonight. This highlights what a great club we have and it is what are all working so hard to achieve here at the Bulls."



• Marshall Rippon hyping up the auction.



• Shan Coffey and apprentice Bailey Baxter.

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Percentage Boost for Tigers

A polished Sea Lake-Nandaly proved far too strong for Donald on Saturday.

To begin with, it was great to see Matt Elliott and Luke Martin lining up for the Tigers in the reserves, their first games for some time.

In the main game it was time to celebrate Donald's Brady Griffiths, who reached the milestone of fifty games, and the first for Sea Lake-Nandaly's Brayden Allan.

As for the game itself, it was a masterclass from an outstanding Tigers' outfit. It all started in in middle with veteran ruckman Ryan O'Sullivan, who continually palmed the ball to his on-ball brigade, including his son Cruz and the dynamic Thomas Cox, who booted no less than nine goals as a rover.

Not sure if the Bendigo Pioneers have ever looked at this player, but he seems to be a "cut above". The Donnan brothers, Wade and Trent, also ran amok and helped provide constant supply to forwards Lachie McClelland and Max Cahoon, who snagged ten goals apiece.

Donald never gave up the fight, particularly from its inspirational leader, Dan Pearce, who led the way with his endeavour. Others to try to stem the flow were defenders George Walker, Kalon Green and Nick Atkins, while forward Ben Arho made the most of his limited opportunities.

All told, Sea Lake-Nandaly's forty-four goals were

shared among ten players while Donald's solitary major came from the boot of Ryan Bath in the final quarter.

Next week we all pause for the King's Birthday break, a time for the players to rest and recover. Then it will be Sea Lake-Nandaly travelling to Wedderburn, and Donald taking on Calder United.

Scores: Sea Lake-Nandaly 44.22 (286) to Donald 1.0 (6).

Best for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Lachy McClelland, Thomas Cox, Max Cahoon, Wade Donnan, Trent Donnan, Ryan O'Sullivan.

For Donald: Dan Pearce, George Walker, Ben Arho, Tom Reekie, Kalon Green, Nic Atkins.



• The ball spills free from the Tigers' Joel Donnan and Donald's Sam Goldsmith. In the background is the Blues' Ryan Bath, Luca Rice, Ben Ahro and Seth Pearce.

Charlton 100 Years Ago

(Information from "East Charlton Tribune")

May 30 to June 3, 1925.

Musical Examinations: The May Theory and Harmony Examinations of the Musical Society of Victoria, Charlton Centre, were held on 2nd May in the Higher Elementary School, and were supervised by the head master, Mr Keogh. The Piano Section was held on 18th and 19th May. The results were Preliminary Grade – Honors, theory, pass piano T. B. Wilkinson; pass, theory and piano Elsie M. Allison; pass, piano Elsa I. Paterson; Ida Johnson, Thelma Biddestone. Junior Grade – Pass piano Florence Rosengrave, Margaret M. Haw, Sarah M. Haw, Ellen M. Paterson. Diploma of Associate – Pass, theory, harmony and piano Katherine M. Allison, Marjory Nolen; pass piano Phyllis J. Dew. Katherine M. Allison and Marjory Nolen gained the distinction A.M.S.V. having passed in theory, harmony and piano.

Social Landmark: The 1925 Ex-Students' Association Annual Ball was a success. Despite the state of the roads, the large number of local people who attended was supplemented by visitors from various parts of the district, and even as far away as Tasmania, Melbourne, and Bacchus Marsh. The stage at the Victoria Hall had been arranged in the form of a drawing room. Lovely dresses, embodying Dame Fashion's latest designs were admired. The large array of dancers made full use of the seven hours' programme. The music was of the customary excellence associated with the Charlton Jazz Trio. The supper menu combined excellence, daintiness, and wide variety – sandwiches, fruit salads, trifles, jellies and cakes.

Football: Charlton lost to Wycheproof on condition. In the first half their air work

was meritorious, and at the midway interval they were ahead. The third quarter, however, settled the issue in favour of the visitors. Charlton had no better all rounder than their new captain, Bill Wood. Ben Dullard (who scored two goals) was the best of the forwards. Billie Soding played a fair game; as did Frank Edwards and S. Arundell. In the ranks of the Blue-and-Whites were several newcomers, including W. Thompson, Charlie Howard from Sebastopol, R. Green from Cheltenham and E. Rawlinson from Golden City. With more training, Charlton, as a team, will achieve much better results. The final scores were: Wycheproof 7.12, Charlton 4.5.

The Gun: Sweepstakes were decided with the following results – No. 1 (4 bird sweep) won by A. C. Bertoli. W. Lazarus and W. Bertoli divided second money. No. 2 won by W. Lazarus, N. Frahm second. No. 3 (5 bird President's trophy shoot) – Sweepstakes divided by W. Lazarus, W. Bertoli and R. H. Klunder; in the shoot-off R. H. Klunder got his second leg-in. No. 4 (8 birds), divided by N. Frahm, A. J. White and R. M. Klunder. No. 5 (miss out), cut up by N. Frahm, W. Lazarus, A. C. Bertoli and W. Bertoli.

Sounding Board for Victoria Hall: The Standing Committee's report, presented by the Chairman (Cr W. Williams) to the Shire Council, recommended that a sounding board be fixed on the stage in the Victoria Hall, cost not to exceed £12. The idea was to put a ceiling of 3-ply from the proscenium to the girder which ran across about the centre of the hall. In the case of the majority of entertainments, no person would be speaking or singing further back than that. Sound would

be thrown forward, as the stage would then be enclosed, and no voice would be lost.

Tarring of Footpaths: Referring to the repair of the footpaths, Cr Williams stated at the May meeting of the Council that people had been complaining of the tar not setting properly. It appeared as if more sand was wanted. The Engineer said that the weather being cold, the tar cooled quickly, and instead of the stones getting a thin volume of tar they got a lot of free tar. This could not be avoided without a proper mixing machine. The only thing was to keep spreading sand on it until it dried up. The Engineer said he would get Patrolman Hayes to do that immediately.



• Donald's Dan Atkins is placed in a sleeper hold by Tigers' Max Cahoon, Chase Tait, and first-gamer Brayden Allan, with Donald's Jesse Lopes pictured at right.



• Elsa Paterson's Piano Certificate.

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SEA LAKE-NANDALY	10.7	20.11	29.19	44.22	(286)
DONALD	0.0	0. 0	0. 0	1. 0	(6)
Goals for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Max Cahoon 10, Lachy McClelland 10, Thomas Cox 9, Trent Donnan 3, Tyson McKenzie 3, Chase Tait 3, Bryce Delmenico 2, Wade Donnan 2, Cruz O'Sullivan, Jai Wright.					
For Donald: Ryan Bath.					
Best for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Lachy McClelland, Thomas Cox, Max Cahoon, Wade Donnan, Trent Donnan, Ryan O'Sullivan.					
For Donald: Daniel Pearce, Robert Walker, Ben Arho, Thomas Reekie, Kalon Green, Nicholas Atkins.					
CALDER UNITED	6.3	12.8	17.13	23.22	(160)
CHARLTON	1.1	2.2	3. 2	3. 2	(20)
Goals for Calder United: Jack Exell 9, Zane Keighran 3, Steven Kennedy 3, Darcy Munro 3, Daniel Watts 2, Max Fawcett, George Turner, Matthew Wade.					
For Charlton: Rhys Thompson 2, Angus Johnstone.					
Best for Calder United: Jack Exell, Mitch Farmer, Matthew Trzeciak, Zane Keighran, Rylee Smith, George Turner.					
For Charlton: Bailey Hooper-Dixon, Kris Clifford, Archer Patterson, Elliott Fitzpatrick, Rhys Thompson, Mason Heenan.					
BIRCHIP-WATCHEM	9.1	15.5	23.8	28.15	(183)
ST ARNAUD	3.2	3.3	3.4	3. 6	(24)
Goals for Birchip-Watchem: Ben Edwards 14, Rhona Conboy 4, Austin Dean 3, Lachy Foott 2, Nicholas Rippon 2, Meyrick Buchanan, Dale Hinkley, Marshall Rippon.					
For St Arnaud: Lucas Bridger 2, Max Hungerford.					
Best for Birchip-Watchem: Ben Edwards, Meyrick Buchanan, Hamish Hosking, Rhona Conboy, Austin Dean, Ben Lakin.					
For St Arnaud: Zac Phillips, Owen Lowe, Luke Jackson, Bailey Durward, Max Hungerford.					
BOORT	7.0	10.1	13.2	16. 3	(99)
WEDDERBURN	4.1	6.8	7.8	14.10	(94)
Goals for Boort: Jhye Baddeley-Kelly 3, James Keeble 3, Jarrod Fitzpatrick 2, Kayne Rutley 2, Brodie Arnold, Peter Barbopoulos, Ethan Coleman, Jayden Dick, Lachlan Hall, Nick Whyte.					
For Wedderburn: Jye Mortlock 4, Mitch Jensen 3, Oscar Holt 2, Andrew Chalkley, Noah Furlong, Darcy Jackson, Hamish Lockhart, Mitchell McEwen.					
Best for Boort: Carlos Egan, Matt Austin, James Keeble, Jhye Baddeley-Kelly, Jarrod Fitzpatrick, Kayne Rutley.					
For Wedderburn: Hamish Lockhart, Jye Mortlock, Samuel Lockhart, Jackson McEwen, Isaac Holt, Mitchell McEwen.					

Haeusler's Reserves

SEA LAKE-NANDALY	7.6	15.7	21.10	30.11	(191)
DONALD	0.0	2.1	3. 2	3. 2	(20)
Goals for Sea Lake-Nandaly: John Summerhayes 8, Zachary Wemyss 8, Isaac Durie 3, Matt Elliott 3, Ethan Ellis 3, Jordan Bath, Jacob Cox, Luke Martin, Harry Pitchford, Brody Weir.					
For Donald: Ryan Leeder 2, Jack Tellefson.					
Best for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Zachary Wemyss, Joel Clohesy, Brody Weir, Isaac Durie, John Summerhayes, Jordan Bath.					
For Donald: Ryan Leeder, Dion Hawkes, Brod Harrison, Braxton Hollis, Marty Burke, Glenn Pearse.					
CALDER UNITED	5.4	12.5	16.8	19.10	(124)
CHARLTON	0.0	1.1	2.2	2. 2	(14)
Goals for Calder United: George Forrester 5, Heath Senior 5, Samuel Hogan 2, Joel Turner 2, Jed Bish, Rhylie Botheras, Angus Forrester, Sol Kelly, Kaleb Kennedy.					
For Charlton: Travis Salmon, Ethan Soulsby.					
Best for Calder United: Heath Senior, Samuel Hogan, Joel Turner, Jed Bish, Thomas Trewin, George Forrester.					
For Charlton: Tom Walsh, Marcus Campbell, Lachlan Holmes-Brown, Nicholas Mccallum, Dan Whykes, Fergus Bourke.					
BIRCHIP-WATCHEM	3.2	6.2	12.8	18.12	(120)
ST ARNAUD	3.1	7.4	7.5	8.5	(53)
Goals for Birchip-Watchem: Matthew Berry 3, Alexander Hay 3, Jack Lee 3, Oliver Cook 2, Riley Hogan 2, Bailey Baxter, Connor Boyle, Tom Gibson, Archie Lewis, Steven Nottle.					
For St Arnaud: Jake Hicks 3, Ash Craddock, Simon Elliott, George Gorrie, Jarryd Kell, Heath McNally.					
Best for Birchip-Watchem: Jack Lee, Riley Hogan, Joshua Woods, Tom Gibson, Ty Colbert.					
For St Arnaud: Zachary Notting, Simon Elliott, Jarryd Kell, Chase Zander, Hamish Darby, Luke Ezard.					
BOORT	3.4	8.5	9.11	11.18	(84)
WEDDERBURN	0.2	1.3	3. 6	5. 6	(36)
Goals for Boort: Cameron Ross 3, Max Beattie 2, Jacob Mulquiny 2, Alex Cockerell, Patrick O'Rourke, Sam Toose, Chris O'Rourke.					
For Wedderburn: Matthew Tansley 2, Matthew Lockhart, Levi Sims, Aaron Smith.					
Best for Boort: Chris Hatcher, Cameron Ross, Sam Toose, Alex Cockerell, Malachi Coleman, Max Beattie.					
For Wedderburn: Levi Sims, Joshua Hall, Ashley Younghusband, Robert Tonkin, Aaron Smith, Matthew Lockhart.					

Community Bank Charlton & District Under-17s

SEA LAKE-NANDALY	0.4	2.6	6.10	10.14	(74)
DONALD	1.1	1.1	2. 2	2. 2	(14)
Best for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Ryder Newick, Nate McClelland, Riley Allan, Charlie Mitchell, Henry Cox, Archie Alday.					
For Donald: Chase Campbell, Judd Geddes, Brady Cumming, Jesse Lydom.					
CALDER UNITED	4.1	7.4	7.6	13.8	(86)
CHARLTON	0.2	1.3	1.4	2.4	(16)
Best for Calder United: Angus Cowell, Tiger Vearing, Rhett Hogan, Mitchell Coatsworth, Beau Chapman, Tynan Perry.					
For Charlton: Ethan Soulsby, Samuel Olive, Charlie Zagame, Sebastian Zagame, Jarvis Wright, Tully Bourke.					
ST ARNAUD	6.4	10.11	16.13	19.21	(135)
BIRCHIP-WATCHEM	0.0	0. 0	0. 1	0. 2	(2)
Best for St Arnaud: Sean Bridgeman, Aidan Wickham, Chase Zander, Chase Hendy, Rylan Leach, Hamish Tannock.					
For Birchip-Watchem: Oliver Cook, Noah Dean, Willow Ryan, Jackson Goss					
BOORT	1.2	2.8	6.10	7.13	(55)
WEDDERBURN	2.4	4.5	5. 5	6. 6	(42)
Best for Boort: Cooper Gooding, Cooper Gould, Owen Byrne, Darby Perryman, Brodie McPherson, Jack Gould.					
For Wedderburn: Jimi Read, Jye Dingfelder, Miller Polglase, Noah Winslett, William Cunningham.					

Next Round

Round 8, Saturday June 14 -

Wedderburn v. Sea Lake Nandaly	Calder United (N) v. Donald
Birchip-Watchem v. Charlton	Boort v. St Arnaud

Uniting Church Under-14s

SEA LAKE-NANDALY 4.3 (27) D. DONALD 0.0 (0)
Best for Sea Lake-Nandaly: Hamish Landry, Henry Cox, Aydan Smith, Riley Allan, Tom McClelland, Lenny Landry
For Donald: Emmett Geddes, Noah Michael, Max Reilly, Maximus Wardlaw, Abraham Beavis, Liam Stopps.
CALDER UNITED 2.2 (14) D. CHARLTON 1.3 (9)
Best for Calder United: Smith Morrison, Harry Humphreys, Morgan Beattie, Harry Kilby, Griffin Vearing.
For Charlton: Darcy Olive, Oliver McPhee, Isaac Roberts, Hudson Mcgrath, Cooper Mcgrath, Flynn Zagame.
ST ARNAUD 10.23 (83) D. BIRCHIP-WATCHEM 2.1 (13)
Best for St Arnaud: Lewis Lowe, Spencer Kay, Ned Ezard, Xavier Batters, Riley Wilson-Cook, Samuel Greenaway.
For Birchip-Watchem: Sadidas Gardiner-Paikea, Liam Spezza, Jett Hinds, Logan Cullen.
WEDDERBURN 14.10 (94) D. BOORT 0.5 (5)
Best for Wedderburn: Miller Polglase, Matilda Rose, Jimi Read, Blaz Cramp, Ryder Gault, Atilla Clarke.
For Boort: Seth Muller, Jed Perryman, Tyler Stringer, Beau Kane, Casey Gleeson.

Positions of Teams

Goldacres North-Central Seniors

Teams	P	Pts	%	W	L	D	B	For	Ag
Birchip-Watchem	7	28	290.09	7	0	0		995	343
Sea Lake-Nandaly	7	20	315.15	5	2	0		936	297
Calder United	7	20	264.56	5	2	0		881	333
Boort	7	20	152.60	5	2	0		792	519
Wedderburn	7	12	146.27	3	4	0		607	415
Charlton	7	8	26.17	2	5	0		258	986
St Arnaud	7	4	39.81	1	6	0		332	834
Donald	7	0	12.82	0	7	0		158	1232

Haeuslers Reserves

Teams	P	Pts	%	W	L	D	B	For	Ag
Calder United	7	28	618.80	7	0	0		724	117
Boort	7	24	370.49	6	1	0		678	183
Birchip-Watchem	7	20	220.95	5	2	0		654	296
Sea Lake-Nandaly	7	16	157.58	4	3	0		572	363
Wedderburn	7	12	40.65	3	4	0		250	615
St Arnaud	7	8	85.54	2	5	0		355	415
Charlton	7	4	42.26	1	6	0		262	620
Donald	7	0	9.50	0	7	0		93	979

Community Bank Charlton and District Under-17s

Teams	P	Pts	W	L	D	B
St Arnaud	7	28	7	0	0	
Sea Lake-Nandaly	7	20	5	2	0	
Boort	7	20	5	2	0	
Calder United	7	16	4	3	0	
Donald	7	12	3	4	0	
Charlton	7	12	3	4	0	
Wedderburn	7	4	1	6	0	
Birchip-Watchem	7	0	0	7	0	

Uniting Church Under-14s

Teams	P	Pts	W	L	D	B
Sea Lake-Nandaly	7	24	6	1	0	
St Arnaud	7	24	6	1	0	
Wedderburn	7	20	5	2	0	
Donald	7	16	4	3	0	
Calder United	7	12	3	4	0	
Boort	7	8	2	5	0	
Birchip-Watchem	7	4	1	6	0	
Charlton	7	4	1	6	0	

Tooleybuc Sporting Club Presidents' Award

Voting for round 7:
Sea Lake-Nandaly: Lachy McClelland 3, Max Cahoon 2, Thomas Cox 1.
Donald: Daniel Pearce 3, George Walker 2, Ben Arho 1.
Calder United: Jack Exell 3, Steven Kennedy 2, Riley Smith 1.
Charlton: Bailey Dixon 3, Ben Lanyon 2, A. Patterson 1.
Birchip-Watchem: Ben Edwards 3, Meyrick Buchanan 2, Hamish Hosking 1.
St Arnaud: Bailey Durward 3, Owen Lowe 2, Zac Phillips 1.
Boort: James Keeble 3, Matt Austin 2, Kayne Rutley 1.
Wedderburn: Hamish Lockhart 3, Jye Mortlock 2, Sam Lockhart 1.

Saturday's Leading Goal Kickers

Seniors

Ben Edwards (B-W) 14	58
Jhye Baddeley-Kelly (Boort) 3	35
Jack Exell (CU) 9	34
Max Cahoon (SLNT) 10	21
Lachy McClelland (SLNT) 10	20
Kayne Rutley (Boort) 2	19
Nicholas Rippon (B-W) 2	18
Thomas Cox (SLNT) 9	18
Joseph Reid (B-W) 2	18

Reserves

Harry Weaver (Boort) -	20
Heath Senior (CU) 5	20
Alexander Hay (B-W) 3	19
Zachary Wemyss (SLNT) 8	18
Alex Cockerell (Boort) 1	17
George Forrester (CU) 5	14
Matthew Berry (B-W) 3	14
John Summerhayes (SLNT) 8	14
Joel Clohesy (SLNT) -	13

CHS Broadbent Club Championship

(Senior win 10 pts., Reserves 6, Under-17s 4, Under-14s 2)

	Snr.	Res.	U-17	U-14	Ttl.
Calder United	10	6	4	2	112
Boort	10	6	4	0	110
Sea Lake-Nandaly	10	6	4	2	106
Birchip-Watchem	10	6	0	0	102
St Arnaud	0	0	4	2	62
Wedderburn	0	0	0	2	62
Charlton	0	0	0	0	40
Donald	0	0	0	0	20



• The Bulls Lockie Ryan and the Saints Zac Phillips compete for the Sherrin.

Edwards Adds 14 Goals to Bulls' Tally

• Continued from page 16.

The Bulls responded. Their hunger for the contest was evident, as they consistently won the ball and left Saints players trailing. Dean again opened the quarter with a goal – this time in under 30 seconds. A lack of structure in St Arnaud's forward line made movement difficult, despite efforts from Saunders and Hungerford.

Jake Noonan continued to apply pressure in the back half, while Cormacc Wilson showed strong intercept work.

Driscoll led from the front with grit and determination, but the margin continued to grow.

It's great to see the Bulls making the most of their young talent, with Harry Cook and Connor Lee each playing his first match of the year, and Austin Dean and Charlie Frank slotting seamlessly into the side.

When the final siren sounded, it capped a clinical four-quarter performance from the Bulls, who ran out 159-point winners, 28.15 (183) to 3.6 (24).

With the league bye next week, Birchip-Watchem will look to continue its form in what should be comfortable matchups against Charlton and Donald before gearing up for crucial clashes that could shape the finals.

Awards for Birchip-Watchem: Ben Edwards, Meyrick Buchanan, Hamish Hosking, Rhona Conboy, Austin Dean, Ben Lakin.

For St Arnaud: Zac Phillips, Owen Lowe, Luke Jackson, Bailey Durward, Max Hungerford.



• Donald's winning team Kerry Raven, Maree Egan, Debbie Burton, Bill Livingston, Margot Paynter and Robert Burton.

Donald's Midweek Pennant

The last round of Midweek Bowls Pennant was held at Boort on Monday which came down to the wire.

Donald had a 2/1 win over Wedderburn and Boort went down 2/1 by Sea Lake which was the deciding match. Congratulations to the Donald team on its win.

Thank you to all who played pennant this year. It

has been a hotly contested competition. And thanks to Boort for supplying a great luncheon to finish off the day.

Results: Sea Lake 2 d. Boort 1; Wycheproof 2½ d.

Charlton ½; Donald 2 d. Wedderburn 1; Birchip 2½ d. St Arnaud ½;

Ladder: Donald 11; Boort 10; Wycheproof 9; Sea Lake 8; Birchip 7; Charlton 6; Wedderburn 3; St Arnaud 3.

Letter to the Editor



The Level of Discussion

(The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Editor.– I'm writing as a concerned member of our

Birchip community – not to argue for or against any proposed developments such as wind turbines, mineral sands mines, or transmission lines,

but to speak about how we're handling the conversation around them.

It's clear there are strong opinions on all sides, and that's completely valid. These are big decisions that affect the future of our town and the land we all care about. But what's worrying is how the debate is playing out.

Everyone should feel encouraged to express their view, but how we do that matters.

Posters plastered throughout town, slogans parked outside community sporting events – these aren't just signs of opposition, they're starting to feel like tactics of pressure and intimidation.

When we use public space not just to express a view but to drown out others, we create an environment where people feel afraid to speak. That's not how good decisions are made, and it's not how strong communities thrive.

We must make space for respectful conversation. That means listening without shouting down. It means trusting that our neighbours are capable of weighing up the facts and forming their own opinions. Even if their opinion is different to yours it doesn't make it wrong. And it means recognising that bullying – no matter how passionately it's wrapped – is not activism, it's harm.

Let's all commit to raising the level of our discussion, not the volume of our signs. Birchip is better than division. Let's show it.

Tim McClelland.

North-Central Hockey



Results of round 7 –

Under-12s: Sea Lake-Nan 0 def. by Donald 4; Calder United 1 drew with Charlton 1; Birchip-Wat 7 d. St Arnaud 1; Wedderburn 4 d. Boort 0.

Underage: Sea Lake-Nan 0 def. by Donald 6; Calder United 1 def. by Charlton 2; Birchip-Wat 0 def. by St Arnaud 7.

Women: Sea Lake-Nan 0 def. by Donald 3; Calder United 2 def. by Charlton 3; Wedderburn 1 def. by Boort 2.

Men: Sea Lake-Nan 0 def. by Donald 3; Calder United 10 d. Charlton 1; Wedderburn 1 def. by Boort 2.

POSITIONS OF TEAMS

	Women									
	P	W	D	L	F	For	Agst	SD	Pts	WR
Calder United	6	5	0	1	0	25	8	17	15	83
Charlton	6	5	0	1	0	24	8	16	15	83
St Arnaud	6	5	0	1	0	19	8	11	15	83
Boort	6	3	0	3	0	21	20	1	9	50
Wedderburn	6	1	1	4	0	9	13	-4	4	22
Donald	6	1	1	4	0	6	20	-14	4	22
Sea Lake-Nan	6	0	0	6	0	1	28	-27	0	0

	Men									
	P	W	D	L	F	For	Agst	SD	Pts	WR
Calder United	6	5	0	1	0	31	9	22	15	83
Donald	6	5	0	1	0	16	6	10	15	83
St Arnaud	6	4	1	1	0	24	5	19	13	72
Boort	6	3	0	3	0	27	8	19	9	50
Wedderburn	6	2	1	3	0	11	12	-1	7	39
Sea Lake-Nan	6	1	0	5	0	5	30	-25	3	17
Charlton	6	0	0	6	0	4	48	-44	0	0

	Underage									
	P	W	D	L	F	For	Agst	SD	Pts	WR
Charlton	6	6	0	0	0	33	3	30	18	100
St Arnaud	6	5	0	1	0	34	1	33	15	83
Boort	6	3	0	3	0	22	22	0	9	50
Donald	6	3	0	3	0	19	23	-4	9	50
Calder United	6	1	1	4	0	6	12	-6	4	22
Birchip-Wat	6	1	1	4	0	12	40	-28	4	22
Sea Lake-Nan	6	1	0	5	0	7	32	-25	3	17

	Under-12s									
	P	W	D	L	F	For	Agst	SD	Pts	WR
Charlton	7	6	1	0	0	18	2	16	19	90
Birchip-Wat	7	6	0	1	0	45	6	39	18	86
Calder United	7	5	1	1	0	21	6	15	16	76
St Arnaud	7	4	0	3	0	20	12	8	12	57
Wedderburn	7	2	1	4	0	10	8	2	7	33
Sea Lake-Nan	7	1	1	5	0	1	32	-31	4	19
Boort	7	1	0	6	0	1	25	-24	3	14
Donald	7	1	0	6	0	7	32	-25	3	14

Charlton Golf

It was the younger members of the golf club who came out on top at Charlton's Stableford event on Sunday.

Nick Olive recorded his personal best score of 44 points to clearly bring home the best card in the 15 player field. Jacko Zagame, another emerging young player was runner-up with 37 points.

The experienced campaigners, Chris Mathews and Wayne Southwell both followed on 36 points each. Next best in the ball count was Jeff Mccloughlan and Anthony Hargreaves, with 35 points each.

Nearest the pins, sponsored by Charlton Newsagency: 7, J. Soulsby; second, T.McGurk.

Next week, June 7, King's Birthday weekend, competition is on Saturday for a stableford teams event.

Sunday, June 15, is the first round of Club Championships. If unavailable, contact Men's Captain Clinton Olive 0409 860336.



• Nick Olive and Jacko Zagame were the winners at Charlton on Sunday.



Edwards Adds 14 Goals to Bulls' Tally

Birchip-Watchem extended their unbeaten run at home on Saturday, shaking off an early challenge from St Arnaud to storm to a commanding 159-point win.

In yet another standout performance, Ben Edwards delivered a masterclass up forward, slotting 14 goals to take his season tally to 58.

Played in near-perfect conditions, the Bulls found its stride midway through the first quarter and never looked back, dismantling the Saints across all areas of the ground.

St Arnaud looked up for the fight early, with ruckman Zac Phillips using his agility to match up well against the more physical Hamish Hosking. Brayden Phillips was busy on the wing, soccering the ball forward to set up an early opportunity, but Bailey Nicholas' pressured shot fell short.

The tide quickly turned when Marshall Rippon surged the ball back into Bulls territory, finding Edwards on a strong lead just inside the arc. It was the first of many, with Edwards going on to dominate in the air and on the ground.

Despite an early major from Max Hungerford that briefly gave the Saints a one-point lead, the Bulls began to assert themselves. Young gun Austin Dean was dynamic inside 50, weaving through traffic and bagging three goals for the match.

St Arnaud capitalised on a rare defensive error from the Bulls to snatch a second goal through Lucas Bridger, but Birchip-Watchem soon clicked

into gear. Dale Hinkley and Charlie Frank were solid down back, repelling multiple Saints entries, while the mid-field began to find rhythm.

As the quarter wore on, the Bulls piled on three quick goals to end the term, taking a 9.1 (55) to 3.2 (20) lead that didn't reflect the early physicality of the contest. Those three Saints goals would be their last for the day.

Saints assistant coach Darby Schilder remained upbeat at the break, commending his side's early pressure – but the cracks began to widen in the second term. The Bulls found their rhythm, moving the ball with precision as Meyrick Buchanan slotted a set shot and Daniel Bell began to dominate around the stop-pages.

Edwards was simply unstoppable up forward, often out-marking two opponents. Sam Male did his best to steady the Saints in defence, but their struggles to clear the ball beyond the centre square allowed the Bulls to dominate territory.

As the Saints' composure faded, turnovers crept in. Two missed kicks out on the full summed up their frustrations. Buchanan was relentless in defence, spoiling effectively, while Dean continued to impress with clean disposal and creative movement.

Nick Rippon was influential inside 50, but it was Edwards

who again stole the show with another four goals in the quarter, taking strong grabs and finishing with class. Lachy Foott chipped in with two of his own for the match, moving with the pace of a man half his age.

By half-time, the Bulls had blown the margin out to 74 points, holding the Saints to just a single behind for the quarter.

The second half opened with immediate pressure from the Bulls, as Dean snapped his second within the opening minute. Nick Rippon and Daniel Bell continued to drive the ball forward, while the Saints' defence, led by Jake Male and Bailey Nicholas, remained under siege.

Edwards kept the scoreboard ticking over – and even the Sherrin needed a breather, getting stuck in a tree after one of his 14 majors. A flat replacement ball drew complaints, but Edwards still slotted it through. A determined Denley Tyler eventually freed the original.

Conboy added to the highlights with a strong overhead mark for one of his four goals of the day.

Despite the Saints' best efforts, they managed just one behind for the quarter, as Bulls coach Ash Connick urged his side at the final change to remain ruthless and push their limits.

• Continued on page 15.



• Hamish Hosking and Zac Phillips ruck as rovers Meyrick Buchanan and Luke Jackson await the outcome.



• Nick Rippon gets up on Owen Lowe in the goal square.



• Ben Edwards holds the mark in the 2-on-1 contest with Jake Male and Harley Durward.

North-Central Netball



Last Saturday's results:

"A" Grade

Calder United 57 d. Charlton 41; Sea Lake-Nan 40 d. Donald 38; Wedderburn 53 d. Boort 44; Birchip-Wat 63 d. St Arnaud 38.

"B" Grade

Calder United 61 d. Charlton 31; Sea Lake-Nan 45 drew with Donald 45; Wedderburn 55 d. Boort 42; Birchip-Wat 57 d. St Arnaud 40.

"C" Grade

Calder United 79 d. Charlton 22; Wedderburn 53 d. Boort 48; Birchip-Wat 49 d. St Arnaud 32; Sea Lake-Nan 57 d. Donald 26.

"C" Grade Reserves

Wedderburn 22 def. by Boort 68; Birchip-Wat 45 d. St Arnaud 24.

Seventeen-and-Under

Sea Lake-Nan 55 d. Donald 30; Wedderburn 26 def. by Boort 62;

Calder United 59 d. Charlton 21; Birchip-Wat 43 d. St Arnaud 29.

Fourteen-and-Under "A"

Calder United 33 d. Charlton 3; Birchip-Wat 29 d. St Arnaud 13; Wedderburn v. Boort; Sea Lake-Nan 0 def. by Donald 30.

Fourteen-and-Under "B"

Birchip-Wat 13 def. by St Arnaud; 21; Sea Lake-Nan 3 def. by Donald 17; Wedderburn v. Boort.

Results of round 7:

"A" GRADE

	P	W	L	D	B	FW	FL	F	A	Pts	%
Wedderburn	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	384	224	28	171
Sea Lake-Nan	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	303	244	20	124
Boort	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	367	312	20	118
Calder United	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	316	281	16	112
Birchip-Wat	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	350	312	16	112
Donald	7	2	5	0	0	0	0	299	335	8	89
Charlton	7	1	6	0	0	0	0	240	356	4	67
St Arnaud	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	212	407	0	52

"B" GRADE

Wedderburn	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	423	252	28	168
Boort	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	363	280	24	130
Calder United	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	347	283	20	123
Birchip-Wat	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	347	304	16	114
St Arnaud	7	3	4	0	0	0	0	281	337	12	83
Donald	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	224	281	4	79
Sea Lake-Nan	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	227	286	4	79
Charlton	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	162	351	0	46

"C" GRADE

Calder United	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	397	188	24	211
Sea LakeNan	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	228	185	20	123
Wedderburn	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	326	269	20	121
Birchip-Wat	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	290	252	16	115
Boort	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	277	268	16	103
St Arnaud	7	2	5	0	0	0	0	260	265	8	98
Charlton	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	211	375	0	56
Donald	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	147	334	0	44

"C" GRADE RESERVES

Sea Lake-Nan	5	5	0	0	2	0	0	250	104	20	0.48
Boort	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	259	105	16	0.49
Calder United	5	3	2	0	1	0	0	178	117	12	0.30
Birchip-Wat	5	2	3	0	1	0	0	123	210	8	0.12
Wedderburn	5	1	4	0	2	0	0	117	237	4	0.10
St Arnaud	5	0	5	0	1	0	0	106	260	0	0.08

SEVENTEEN-AND-UNDER

Calder United	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	514	167	28	308
Birchip-Wat	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	381	256	20	149
Boort	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	303	247	20	123
St Arnaud	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	337	270	16	125
Sea Lake-Nan	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	271	319	16	85
Charlton	7	2	5	0	0	0	0	240	288	4	83
Wedderburn	7	1	6	0	0	0	0	209	402	4	52
Donald	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	157	463	0	34

FOURTEEN-AND-UNDER "A"

Birchip-Wat	7	6	1	0	0	0	0	205	84	24	244
Boort	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	168	71	24	237
Donald	7	5	2	0	0	0	0	194	74	20	262
Calder United	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	143	115	16	124
St Arnaud	7	3	4	0	0	0	0	130	108	12	120
Charlton	7	1	6	0	0	0	0	64	184	4	35
Wedderburn	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	37	148	4	25
Sea Lake-Nan	7	1	6	0	0	0	0	50	207	4	24

FOURTEEN-AND-UNDER "B"

St Arnaud	6	6	0	0	1	0	0	124	27	24	0.77
Boort	5	4	1	0	1	0	0	89	39	16	0.46
Birchip-Wat	6	4	2	0	1	0	0	98	57	16	0.29
Wedderburn	5	2	2	1	1	0	0	52	67	10	0.16
Donald	6	1	4	1	1	0	0	46	109	6	0.07
Calder United	6	0	4	2	1	0	0	33	65	4	0.08
Sea Lake-Nan	6	0	4	2	1	0	0	22	100	4	0.04