

DONALD

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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



• Alistair Smith – one of the F-35 Lightning II pilots who flew over Birchip last week.

Alistair's Flying Visit

Squadron Leader Alistair Smith, from 2 Operational Conversion Unit, has been in Victoria for the past two weeks for the Australian International Airshow held at Avalon as the AIA25 Detachment Commander and one of the F-35 Lightning II pilots.

In the lead up to the event, Alistair was one of two pilots participating in a 2OCU F-35A Lightning II Aircraft navigation training mission, performing circuits at Mildura Airport, and overflying Birchip township and the Birchip P-12 School before returning to Avalon.

Cruising at 1000 km/hr, the return flight from Avalon to Birchip took fifteen minutes. "Smithy" said, "climbing away I felt slightly emotional after flying over the Smith family farm, Tchum Lake and Birchip, where I was born and raised."

Alistair is the son of former Birchip residents Eileen and Ian Smith and completed his primary and secondary schooling at Birchip P-12 School. Alistair and his wife Alexandra Liston (daughter of Angela Liston and Bobby Liston, also of Birchip) currently reside in Newcastle with their three sons.

Alistair said, "I've wanted to do this for a long time, to provide a small amount of joy and give back to the Birchip and broader Buloke community."

And that he did! Cumming Avenue was lined with people, not just those who work in Birchip, but with farmers who had come into town and people had travelled from all over Buloke to witness the F-35 Lightning II

fly over Birchip.

At Birchip P-12 School, excited students and teachers gathered on the school oval, with some calling it the highlight of their school experience and others declaring their dreams of becoming a fighter pilot when they grow up.

Social media exploded with photographs, videos, and praise, filling the town with a buzz of positivity. Community members also expressed their admiration for Alistair and were enamoured with what he has achieved, highlighting what our local students can achieve when they have determination, passion, and a strong support system.

SQNLDR Alistair "Smithy" Smith's current role is to lead and manage F-35 Military Instructor Pilots, oversee F-35 Conversion Courses and instruct ab initio F-35 students. "Smithy" has been flying the F-35 for 3.5 years and instructing for the past 6 months.

During a 3.5 year posting to the USA, he was awarded an RAAF CAF Gold Commendation and RAF Dep Cdr Ops Commendation. He also earned a CDR ATG Commendation while deployed on Operation OKRA – ADF's contribution to the international coalition against ISIS – flying the F/A-18A.

"Smithy's" path to become a fighter pilot lasted approximately 3.5 years, included attending Officer Training School and flying training on the CT-4B, PC-9, Hawk 127 and F/A-18A Classic Hornet.

Alistair said, "The ADF recruitment process was a long a frustrating 7 years. Candidates are relentlessly assessed for excess capacity, their learning curve and work ethic but it has all been worth it".

As a farmer's kid, "Smithy" has always loved driving or operating any type of machinery. This passion combined with curiosity for how things work, has steered "Smithy" towards his current occupation.

Fighter jets are the most complex and rewarding to operate. Alistair said, "Interestingly, there is a disproportionately high percentage of country kids who become fighter pilots in the ADF. Students who are good team players, calm and have a willingness to learn are most likely to succeed as fighter pilots and leaders."

"Smithy" said, "I joined the ADF to fly, but it's my passion for leading teams through complex and uncertain tasks that motivates me to stay."

• Continued on page 2.

Mallee Care Workers Drop in on Lions

The Donald Lions Club at its March meeting welcomed members and workers of Mallee Family Care based in Swan Hill.

The visitors were led by nearly a local Robyn Hosking and husband John, Flood Recovery Officer Carolyn Inglis and M.F.C. based solicitor Geoff Dunstan, providing a free and confidential legal service advice.

Mallee Family Care assisted by sponsoring the evening and provided excellent information to all attendees. Donald is right at the southern tip of the M.F.C. area which goes as far as Broken Hill.

Mallee Family Care left a bag load of information for all members.

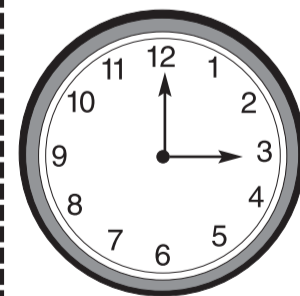
The food came from local cafés, the tasty casseroles from Judy at Harvest and the brilliant cheese cakes from Glenda at Spuds; great for M.F.C. to support our local businesses and accommodation.

Robyn Hosking is one of the V.F.F. Hoskings and is proud mother of Tegan Pearse and Kyle and grandmother of the 3 boys – so "almost a local".

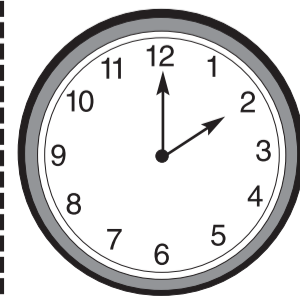


• Robyn Hosking, M.F.C., Housing, Lions President Michael Raynes, Solicitor, Geoffrey Dunstan and Carolyn Inglis.

Daylight Saving Ends Sunday



• Daylight saving will end on Sunday at 3 a.m., when clocks turn back an hour and we catch up an hour's sleep.



Alistair's Flying Visit

• Continued from page 1.

F-35A Lightning II

SQNLDR Smith led the F-35 contingent during the Avalon International Airshow 2025, which provided one of the few opportunities for Fighter Squadrons to engage with government, industry and the public for further recruiting, retention and awareness.

The F-35A Lightning II is the Australian Defence Force's first fifth-generation air combat capability. It is a highly advanced multi-role, supersonic, stealth fighter which will meet Australia's requirements to defeat current and emerging threats.

The F-35A is at the forefront of air combat technology. Advanced sensors and data fusion allow it to gather and share information faster than ever before.

Capable of supersonic

flight while retaining stealth, the F-35A has extraordinary acceleration, agility and 9G manoeuvrability.

The F-35A also provides its pilots with significantly higher levels of lethality and survivability in combat.

Avalon Airshow

The Australian International Airshow held at Avalon from March 25-30 is the fourth-largest airshow in the world and the biggest in the Southern hemisphere. It incorporates a public display, industry exhibition and key leadership engagement activities for Defence leaders to show the Australian public what they do.

This year the Avalon airshow featured historic warbirds like the Spitfire, CAC Winjeel, CT4A and CA-18 Mustang alongside their fifth-generation successors and for the very first time in Avalon history, a CAC-18 Mustang

and Supermarine Mk VIII Spitfire flew in a formation with the next generation of air power.

The heritage aircraft from No. 100 squadron were joined by an F/A-18F Super Hornet and F-35A Lightning II over the Avalon airfield.

Alistair said, "Flying an F-35 alongside an early fighter was an incredible experience that highlighted the evolution of aviation and served as a reminder of Royal Australian Air Force history."

"It's not every day you are able to witness how the raw, hands-on flying of the early fighter contrasts with the advanced automation and sensor fusion of the modern fighter," Squadron Leader Smith said.

Together, these fighters demonstrated how much the technology and performance of air combat capability has evolved over the past 80 years.



• Main stream crowd.



• Fighter jets flying over Birchip's main street.



Letter to the Editor



Trail of Lights

(The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Editor.— I was fortunate to attend the opening of Mildura's Trail of Lights on Lock Island, which includes a breathtaking display featuring more than 12,500 firefly lights.

This project is set to shine a well-deserved spotlight on our region and is expected to bring more than 185,000 visitors to Mildura over the next two years, delivering a significant boost to our local tourism economy.

The Trail of Lights is an incredible opportunity for locals and visitors alike to experience something truly unique. This is a world-class tourist attraction and art experience. With the addition of the FOSO installation at Wentworth, it will certainly shine a light on our region.

I encourage everyone to take the time to visit this spectacular attraction, support our local businesses, and showcase what makes our region so special.

I would like to congratulate Mildura Rural City Council and its collaborative and financial partners for their work in bringing this incredible installation to life. Their dedication to this project and promoting our region is a testament to their vision and hard work.

Well done to the entire team, who have worked tirelessly along with Bruce Munro.

You should be proud of yourselves.

Jade Benham, MP



† Church Notices †

UNITING CHURCH (North Central Living Waters Cluster)

Donald, 10 a.m.

Wycheproof, 10 a.m.

Birchip, 10 a.m.

Contact Number: 5497 1033

ANGLICAN "Parish of Charlton-Donald"

Enquiries: Rev'd Judi Bird
0435 593 359

Friday, April 4
St. Paul's, Birchip, 5 p.m.

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

Corack East Wind

Renewable Energy from ACEN



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

Drop-in information Hub
Every Wednesday 1pm-6pm

Commencing 19 March, 2025

Meet the project team, find out more
and provide feedback

Charlton Park Community
Bank Complex
Boardroom

Charlton Park Community Bank Complex
Calder Hwy, Charlton

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One Nation Names Mallee Candidate

Vaughan Williams, from a farming family in Clear Lake, understands the challenges and aspirations of the Mallee.

A former Councillor for the City of Greater Bendigo, he knows how to get things done and is committed to fighting for his community with the passion and straightforwardness One Nation brings to politics.

Local Issues and Solutions

Agriculture & Water – Mallee thrives on farming, and sustainable water policies are crucial. One Nation will revise water buyback schemes

to prioritise farmers and ensure fair water distribution.

Infrastructure & Connectivity – Better roads, reliable internet, and improved rail networks are essential for connecting Mallee's produce to markets. One Nation will push for regional infrastructure investment.

Healthcare – Rural communities deserve better access to medical services. One Nation will fight for more local facilities and incentives to attract doctors.

Jobs & Economy – Mallee needs economic diversity. Vaughan will advocate for policies that encourage new industries, support small businesses, and cut red tape for farmers.

One Nation Policies for Mallee

Immigration – Reduce intake to sustainable levels, prioritising skilled migrants in healthcare and agriculture.

Energy – Ensure affordable and reliable power by

exploring all energy options, including nuclear, coal, and gas. Oppose costly renewable mandates.

Education – Increase funding for rural schools to provide quality education for regional students.

Cost of Living – Cut government waste and ensure fair tax policies to ease financial pressures on rural Australians.

"Australia was built by farmers, manufacturers, and hardworking people who believed in a fair go," said Vaughn.

"We need leaders who will

put Australians first, protect our industries, and fight for common-sense policies that benefit everyone – not just the political elite.

"I will be a strong voice for the Mallee in Canberra, fighting for policies that put Australians first. Our farmers, businesses, and families deserve leaders who stand for common sense, not political games."

"Vote Vaughn Williams, One Nation, for Mallee in the 2025 Federal Election. Let's protect our industries, support our farmers, and fight for a fair go for all Australians."



• Vaughn Williams.

For more information on what Vaughn stands for and policy issues and ideas – www.vaughnwilliams.au

Most Deaths On Roads Happen Close to Home

New research reveals that most deaths on regional Victorian roads over the past five years involved local residents, showing that the unexpected can happen even on the most familiar roads.

Transport Accident Commission (TAC) analysis of road fatalities from 2020 to 2024 shows that more than 70% of people killed on country roads died within a 30km radius of their home address.

The research follows a tragic start to the year on Victoria's roads, with 74 lives lost compared with 75 at the same time last year. January this year was the deadliest

month on Victoria's roads since March 2008, and the worst start to a year since 2001.

The majority of fatalities so far this year have also happened on regional roads where there have been 43 lives lost, compared with 31 in metropolitan Melbourne.

In regional areas, road users typically travel longer distances in high-speed zones,

and the consequences are more severe if something goes wrong.

The Myth

Importantly, the new TAC data analysis dispels the myth that people dying in fatal crashes in regional Victoria are predominantly visitors or people unfamiliar with the roads they're traveling on – just 4 per cent of deaths were people travelling from outside

of Victoria or Australia.

Around 70% of the regional fatalities analysed happened on high-speed roads, most of which had low traffic volumes and gravel shoulders and involved either a vehicle running off the road or into an oncoming vehicle, or crashing at an intersection.

The findings have prompted the TAC to remind drivers to slow down on low-volume, high-speed country roads, come to a complete stop at intersections and ensure they are distraction free –

even on roads they know like the "back of their hand".

Tired Driving

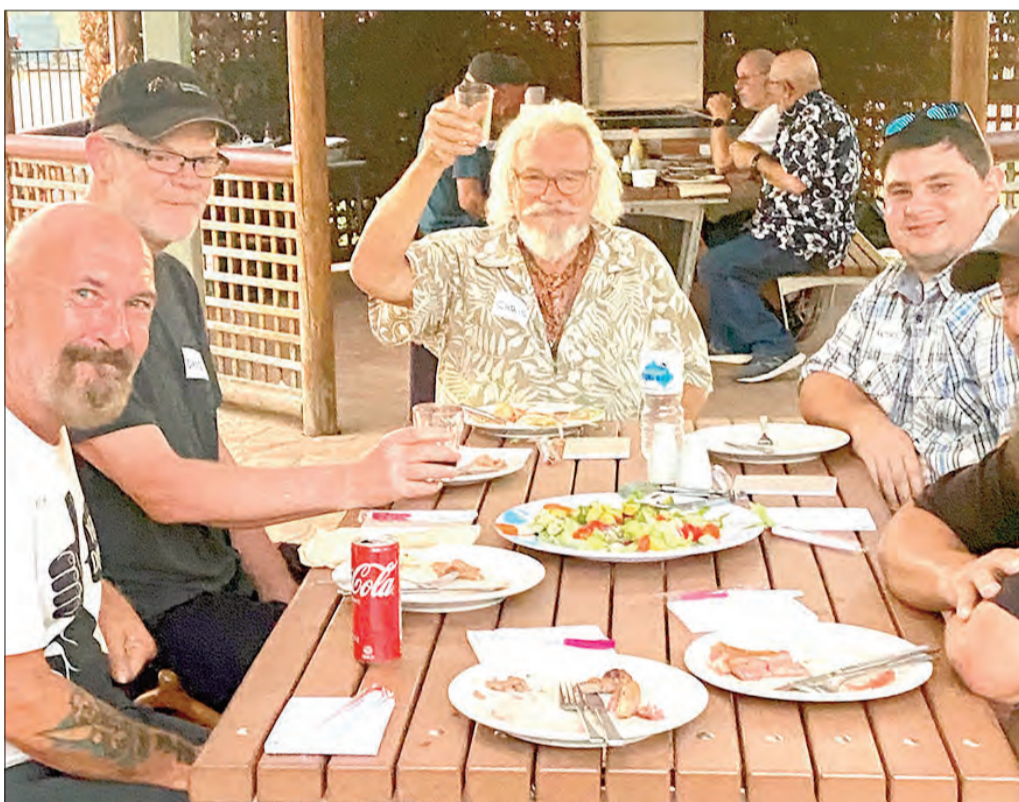
With travel on regional roads set to increase over the coming school holidays and Easter long weekend, the TAC will also be focusing on the dangers of tired driving. The TAC's fatigue campaign, "Driving tired? Wake up to yourself.", will be running across print, broadcast, digital and outdoor channels throughout the holiday period.

"The evidence is clear – crashes often happen close to home, on familiar roads that

we know like the back of our hand," said Transport Accident Commission CEO, Tracey Slatter.

"Our new insights reinforce the need for us all to be aware of risks on local roads, not to be complacent, and to give our undivided attention to driving until we reach our destination safely.

"We can all play a part in keeping ourselves and others safe on the road by obeying the law, avoiding risky behaviours and being 100 per cent focused very time we get behind the wheel."



• Left to right: Mark Mallisson, David Beatty, Chris Whykes, and Anthony Zudetich.

Bringing Men Together

A terrific evening was recently enjoyed at the Avoca River Travellers Rest barbecue area when the Charlton Neighbourhood House arranged a fun evening specifically for men.

With support from Buloke Shire, cook extraordinaire Ian Scott hosted the dozen participants with a friendly barbecue and drinks. Well-known around town for his cooking prowess, Ian gave some tips on preparing and serving the perfect steak.

The "Steak with a mate" concept is aimed at bringing men together in a friendly social atmosphere to enjoy some banter, a meal and a few drinks. Mateship is crucial for building strong, supportive relationships, fostering trust and collaboration. It encourages

emotional well-being by providing a sense of belonging and loyalty.

In challenging times, mateship offers strength, shared experiences, and mutual care. It strengthens communities and enhances resilience, making individuals feel valued and connected.

With funding from Buloke Shire, the evening could be made available free of charge, which was much appreciated by all involved.

For upcoming activities and initiatives, contact the Charlton Neighbourhood House for details on 0473 759 456.

Wycheproof Probiotics Meet

The Wycheproof Probus Club held its annual general meeting in March with interesting matters to report as follows.

The past president, Martin Duke, extended appreciation to all the 2024/2025 past officer bearers of the work they put in for the year.

Martin reflected on how the club enjoyed many outings over the year, and were most appreciative of all the people that came and spoke on various topics. Many members attended other Probus events and reported of the fellowship and friendship through these visits. Martin finished off by extending his best wishes to the incoming committee.

David Pollard as a guest, was kind enough to conduct the election of office bearers, as he has done in the past couple of years. Will Russ was appointed as president; Leanne Rose as secretary and Mary-Anne Duke as treasurer.

The attached photo shows David Pollard inducting Will Russ to the role of president with the chain of office.

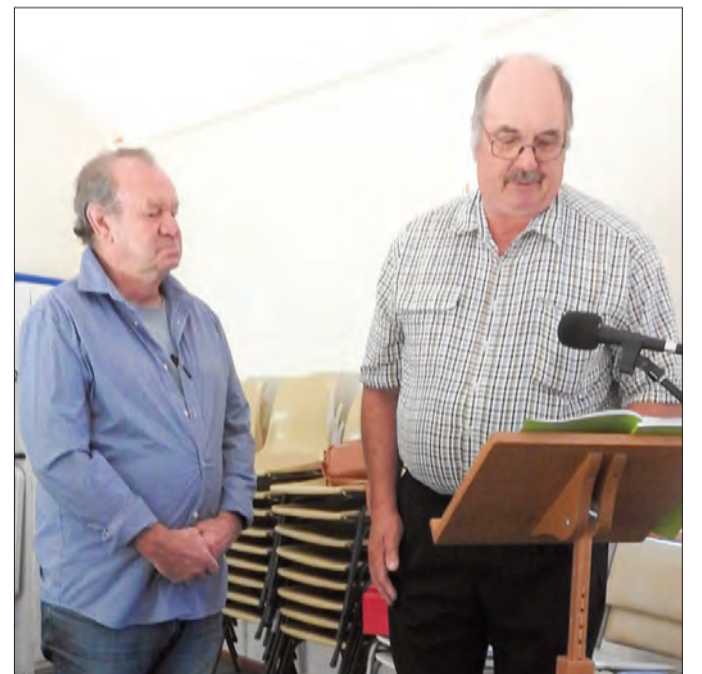
Other members of the Committee with various roles include Lyn Grylls, Martin Duke, Deb Crockett, Barry Crockett, Jenny Mead, Russell Bedggood, Wendy Turnbull.

The meeting took on a new initiative of appointing a group of people for the challenging role of organisers for outings, being Suzy Morrison, Dave Watkins, Glenda Humphreys and Viv Gilleland.

Separate to this a different group of Lyn and Rob Grylls along with Jenny Mead are the leads for arranging speakers.

The meeting decided to continue with the same membership and joining fees as from the previous year, and that the club's meetings will be on the second Thursday of the month at the Uniting Church Hall.

The Combined Probus Club of Wycheproof is looking forward to its next meeting in April and hearing from Amy Turnbull, who recently has set up a nursery and gardening business in Wycheproof.



• Will Russ and David Pollard.

Keep Abreast with Local Happenings!

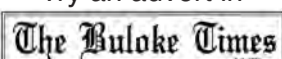
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Deadlines:— **Tuesday's Issue:** Classified advertisements (single column), 10 a.m. Monday. Display advertisements (2 or more columns), 3 p.m. Friday prior. **Friday's Issue:** Classified advertisements (single column), 10 a.m. Thursday. Display advertisements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

BIRTH TILLIG - (DOWNES)



Rachel and Jake are thrilled to announce the arrival of their baby girl, –

Ellidy Therese Tillig born at Bendigo Health on March 17, 2025, at 6:02 p.m., weighing 8 lbs 1 oz.

Ellidy is the first grandchild for Bernard and Julie Downes, and Tony and Shirlee Tillig, as well as a great-grandchild to Kathy Downes, Neville Coates, and Shirley Nevins.

BEREAVEMENT THANKS HOGAN.– Valerie Faye

Danny, Rozanne, Leigh and Sharyn and families would like to express our sincere thank you to all those who sent cards, flowers and words of condolences on Val's passing.

Remember the
Kids at this
Year's Good Fri-
day

GARAGE SALE 180 Woods St, Donald TOMORROW

Saturday April 5
9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Household, workshop items, fishing & motorbike gear, etc.

FRIENDS OF EAST WIMMERA HEALTH Donald Campus Annual General Meeting

THURS., APRIL 24
HOSPITAL
MEETING ROOM
2 p.m.
All welcome

DONALD FIELD & GAME Shoot

75 ASF (LVJ HCP)
SUNDAY, APRIL 6
10 a.m. start

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Easter Monday Market

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CHARLTON
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Sites-Available

Contact Kevin Willey
0428 911 830

BIRCHIP GOLF CLUB Opening Days

SUN., APRIL 6
names in by 11.30 a.m.
for 12 noon hit-off.
Contact Rodney Bennett
on 0428 922 651 or
come to the golf club
prior to hit off time.

Midweek Golf Commencing

WED, APRIL 9
names in by 9.30 a.m.
for 10 a.m. hit-off
Contact Di Lehmann on
0427 120 218 or come
to the golf club prior to
hit off time.

New golfers most welcome.
If you are interested in
playing golf, please come
along and join us. Ladies &
gentlemen welcome at all
events.

Litchfield Public Hall ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 9th
at 7:30 pm

LITCHFIELD DANCE SATURDAY, APRIL 5

8 p.m.
**ALL WELCOME
GREAT BAND
FREE ADMISSION**
Please come along and
help the Walsh family
celebrate the Centenary
of their arrival in the district



Donald RSL

Donald RSL
sub branch invites
YOU to help plan
ANZAC DAY 2025

At a meeting on
Monday, April 7, 2025,
at 7 p.m.

**RSL rooms Houston St.,
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Enquiries 0488 732 732

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Associate Nurse Unit Manager
Wycheproof
Food and Domestic Service Assistant

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

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

TERMINATION

Fire Danger Period

A reminder that the Fire Danger Period is scheduled to cease.
The Fire Danger Period will terminate at 0100 hours on the dates shown.

Municipality	Date of Termination
Buloke Shire Council	07/04/2025
Mildura Rural City Council	07/04/2025
Swan Hill Rural City Council	07/04/2025
Yarriambiack Shire Council Northern portion only. North of the line described by: Galaquil West Road and Galaquil East Road (formerly known as the wire netting fence)	07/04/2025

Certain restrictions on the lighting of fires are in force during the Fire Danger Period.

Information about fire restrictions within the Country Area of Victoria can be obtained from www.cfa.vic.gov.au, your local CFA District Office or Municipal Fire Prevention Officer.



Jason Heffernan
Chief Officer – CFA

“Times” Classifieds

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• Marj, Melinda, Rhonda, and Raul with the Mixmaster that was donated.

Donation Welcomed

Riverview Aged Care is pleased to have received a new Kenwood Mixmaster and attachments, including a blender and food processor thanks to the kind donation from Friends of Donald Hospital Auxiliary.

The residents love to cook and do so at least twice per week. This will be a significant help to the Leisure and Lifestyle program at Riverview Aged Care.

Other recent purchases that the auxiliary has helped with include new wheelchair scales with printers in the Haemodialysis unit (installed), a new ECG machine for the acute ward

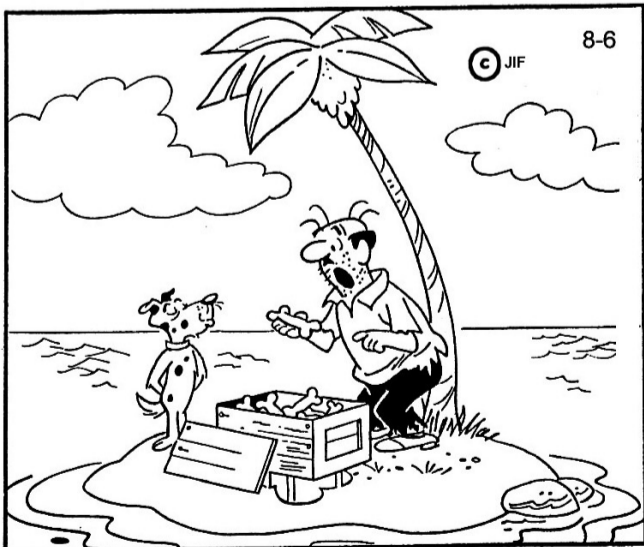
and urgent care and a bariatric shower chair (still to be delivered). And there are plans afoot for a new chook pen at the request of residents.

Campus Manager of Donald Hospital, Genette Milburn, thanked the auxiliary for their support of the services we provide which enhances the care that we can provide for our residents and patients, and helps our residents to feel more at home.



bring you

Belvedere By George Crenshaw
www.belvedere-cartoons.com



“What message did you put in that bottle ?!”

“Times” Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8171 - SOLUTIONS

Across - 6, Allegiance. 8, Vary. 9, Edge. 10, Plume. 11, Leek. 12, Crocodile. 16, Elegantly. 20, Lass. 22, Crude. 23, Exam. 24, Roar. 25, Accustomed.
Down - 1, Glider. 2, Beseech. 3, Limpid. 4, Annual. 5, Level. 7, Greek. 13, Ire. 14, Envelop. 15, Major. 17, Launch. 18, Grease. 19, Leaden. 21, Scrap.

Church Notices

DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES

“East Wimmera Parish”

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

Fr. Gerry Prunty
0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator
- Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976



www.granitecommunitychurch.com

At Granite Church
10.30 a.m.

Speaker: Ross Barnes
Baptist Union of Victoria



No Thank You!

The red bus spotted driving around Donald on Monday morning appeared to have been converted to living quarters.

Being towed by the bus was a covered trailer bearing a message most likely meant for those travelling too close behind.

• The photographer recording this image of a friendly donkey chose not to accept the invitation.



• Trucks on display at the Quambatook Tractor Pull.

Quamby Tractors Pull the Crowd

On Easter Saturday, the engines roar, the smoke rises, and the action heats up as Quambatook hosts its 47th Annual Australian Tractor Pull Championships. Prepare for an unforgettable day where brute power meets engineering excellence and machines defy gravity at the Home of Tractor Pulling!

The brute force of these modified tractors pulling great weights down the 100-metre track is a sight you need to see with your own eyes. The machines ranging from the famous 502ci Chev blown fuel injected Quamby Quaker to Super Mini Modified “The General” containing LS2 powerglide and Ford 9 diff and the Open Mini Modified, “Who Cares” with its blown alcohol 350 Chev power.

Quambatook is situated 45 minutes south of Swan Hill and is home to Australia’s first permanent purpose-built Tractor Pulling complex, featuring big and mini sled tracks side by side.

A range of modified and vintage tractors will be competing and exerting their power down the expertly prepared tracks. The small rural town is always ready to welcome you back for a bigger and better event every year.

The Quambatook Tractor Pulling Complex, with its entrance on Charlton Road, is renowned as a great track for competitors and spectators alike. Bring along a rug or chair to enhance your day’s enjoyment. A designated “dry area” guarantees your family a safe and relaxing day out.

Be witness to the competition of the Open Modified Tractors, “The Kings Of The Track”. “Riverina Screamer” with its twin-turbo 27LT Rolls Royce, alcohol-fuelled V12 will compete head-to-head with “Plum Crazy’s” 3 x 540ci Chevs and the diesel V8 Scania “Sledgehammer” along with “Rushin’ Devil” with a Transmash 38.8 litre V12 twin turbo diesel.

1 p.m. Start

The program will commence at 1.00 p.m. and conclude under lights at approximately 10.00 p.m.. The pulling begins with the vintage tractors at 1 p.m.. If you are interested in bringing your vintage tractor to enter the vintage tractor pull, please call Doug on 0427 346 634.

At 3.00 p.m., the spectacular modified tractors and trucks hit the tracks. An evening tea break will see the pit gates open to the public, which will allow enthusiasts the opportunity to share the passion with the pulling teams.

Airshows

Before the tea break, look to the skies to see Paul Bennet Airshows amaze the crowd with an aerobatics display

with some amazing manoeuvres. Paul Bennet’s solo display is an adrenaline-pumping spectacle of high-energy precision aerobatics that will leave you on the edge of your seat. Renowned as the world’s highest-performing aerobatic biplanes, the Wolf Pitts Pro is equipped with an astonishing 400-horsepower engine, pushing the boundaries of what’s possible in the air. They sure are a sight to be seen with their amazing workmanship in the skies.

During tea break former “The Voice Australia” contestant and local to the area, Elias Lanyon, will fill the air with tunes. He covers popular tracks and produces original music demonstrating versatility in instruments and vocals.

Following the break, the action will continue under lights until 10 p.m.. Tractor pulling at night is a spectacle to be seen, the Open Modified “Sledgehammer” with its 14LT V8 Scania motor. Those exhaust pipes glowing red at night and the flames from the top are worth seeing in person.

Off the Track

Off the track there are a variety of market stalls, kids’ entertainment and food and drink vendors. The vendors, which are serving from the Quambatook Community Facility area, are all run by local Quambatook committees. Committees that are helping throughout the day include Quambatook Lions Club, Quambatook Amity, Quambatook Co-operating Church, and Quambatook Development Association to name a few. Please support these vendors as all money goes back into the town of Quambatook, like all profits, the tractor pull makes each year.

Show and Shine

For those with diesel in their veins, have a wander through the modern fleet of trucks on display for the truck show. This year we are introducing a classic car display. If you have a car or truck you are interested in entering in our truck and car show and shine please contact Marcus on 0412 263 774.

For the visitors who prefer machinery of yesteryear you can explore the history of farming as harvest and ploughing equipment throughout the decades will be on show. Meander down memory lane with an exten-

sive display of heritage machinery courtesy of Quambatook Heritage Working Machinery Association.

As you can see this is more than just an event; it’s a celebration of power, passion, and community. Whether you’re a tractor pulling enthusiast or just looking for an exciting family day out, the 47th Annual Australian Tractor Pull Championships promises to deliver everything you need for a thrilling Easter Saturday.

- No glass containers allowed.
- No pets allowed into the complex.
- No BYO alcohol.
- No EFTPOS available.

Tickets are available at the gate or online via Ticketebo: www.ticketebo.com.au/QTPA

Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date information: www.facebook.com/quambatooktractorpull

Or for further information contact: Tim Betson on 0428 377 342, or Michael Lindsay on 0428 510 276.

Thanks to major sponsors: Kubota Australia, Scott McKenzie Transport, Corian Park Earthmoving, Crossy’s Ag Services, Perkins & Sons Transport Pty Ltd, North West Ag, Bingham Agricultural, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Andrew Leahy Earthmoving, Grain Corp, Quamby Autos, Central Murray Petroleum, The Truck Specialists, Boral Quarries (Charlton), Monk Rural Services.



• Riverina Screamer.



• Quamby Quaker.

Mates, Mullets and Mental Health

[From Black Dog Institute]

April 1: Black Dog Institute’s Mullets for Mental Health has officially kicked off, raising funds for groundbreaking mental health research.

Black Dog Institute is calling on Aussies everywhere to show they’re all ears by growing a mullet to support the 1 in 5 Australians who experience a mental illness each year. Back and bolder than ever, Mullets for Mental Health is the national fundraising challenge that brings together Australians of all hair types to shape and grow their mullets in the name of better mental health.

Perfect Time

For those rocking a mullet or thinking of embracing one, April 2025 is the perfect time to let those luscious locks flow. Every dollar raised

helps Black Dog Institute deliver groundbreaking new mental health treatments, education, and digital services to those who need them most.

“Mullets for Mental Health is more than just an opportunity to have fun with your hair – it’s a chance to drive change and spark important conversations among mates, families, and communities, breaking down barriers to seeking help,” says Mullets for Mental Health Campaign Manager, Tom Farrar.

Suicide

“In Australia, 9 lives are lost to suicide every day – 7 of them men. Sadly, suicide

remains the leading cause of death among Australian men aged 15-44, with rates even higher for those living in regional and remote areas. By taking part, you’re not only supporting Black Dog Institute’s vital suicide prevention research and programs, but also standing in solidarity with those affected by mental illness,” Farrar explains.

“So, rally your mates, grow a mullet, and raise funds for better mental health this April.”

Since its launch in 2020, over 35,000 participants have grown a mullet, raising an incredible \$13.3 million for better mental health. These funds

have driven real change, enabling critical mental health research, programs, and support services in communities across Australia.

Funds raised by Mullets for Mental Health this year will continue to support Black Dog Institute’s innovative research in suicide prevention, the development of digital mental health tools and apps for adults and children, and programs that bring community presenters into schools to promote mental health awareness and support.

Register now and start growing those locks for a great cause!

Birchip Probus February Report Mahjong – What I forgot to say...

(By Maureen Donnellon)

Birchip Probus met for the first meeting for 2025 on February 28.

All were busy catching up with one another's doings over the last few weeks and looking forward to the coming month with the Mali Heart Festival, RSL Kelly Pool night, music and meals at Birchip Hotel, and the Harness Racing/Mallee Bull Cup Day.

The March AGM Meeting was spoken about as new office-bearers are needed. Members were reminded of the Library Review, Swimming Pool Survey and Shire Surveys, which all were urged to do if possible, and the plans shared for some of the features ahead for Mali Heart.

Then the guest speaker was introduced, Tim McLoughlan, youngest son of Shane and Debbie, enthralled the group with the story of his life so far, particularly since leaving Birchip High School. Tim and his wife Mel, and children Jude and Olive, moved back to Birchip in 2022 from Perth.

Many Jobs

Growing up, Tim spent time working on the bunkers, farming, engineering and the bakery among many other jobs.

After year 12, Tim headed to Geelong in 2003 to begin training as an enrolled nurse which he completed and worked as, for 2½ years, in Birchip, Charlton and Wyche-proof hospitals and nursing homes, before heading to Perth where the mining boom had taken over.

It was in W.A. that he met Mel and during the next 16/17 years they worked and later raised their two young children. Tim worked as a tree lopper, surveyor, off-sider and with a demolition company for 18 months. In 2010 he went back to nursing, but in the field of dialysis and the growing world of home dialysis.

Dialysis

Tim explained that haemodialysis works as an artificial kidney filtering the waste and excess fluid from the blood. Haemodialysis, the variety we knew a little about, is administered in a hospital 3 times a week for about 4 hours, but means a lot of travel for patients.

And Peritoneal dialysis, which is able to be administered in the home situation through a tube into the abdomen 4 times a day for 7 days a week, and which can take place at night too. There are advantages with both, both socially and medically.

Home dialysis is possible with a trained partner or carer and in remote areas, where doctors and hospitals are distant, then Peritoneal dialysis is being seen as a better solution for many.

The area covered by Tim and his medical team stretched from Perth to Broome and Kununurra to Esperance, an area over 3600 kms.

Many patients were indigenous and 22% were being treated with dialysis mainly from diabetes. Low birth weights in Aboriginals are another factor causing kidney disease. There are some who have kidney transplants from family members. Western food is possibly adding to the problems of living in a world so far from the traditional environment and food that many grew up with. The traditional bush foods, plants and herbs helped the diet of older people but the take away food etc. that is popular now, is not so easily tolerated.

It is also quite difficult socially to convince many of the people that dialysis would be so beneficial. Once they feel its benefits, they are most grateful. Huge amounts of

time were spent travelling to clinics and helping people keep on their individual programmes successfully. With health care, the life expectancy has risen much higher.

Covid

Covid struck and was very difficult to travel for some. Western Australians were able to travel within the State, just not out of it, so the medical trips continued. Much higher restrictions were in Victoria.

The McLoughlans had not been able to see family and thought about moving back for the school and social life of their children. In 2022, they travelled by caravan, home schooling to many parts of Western Australia then to Townsville and down the East coast for 124 nights, seeing as much of the country as they could, such as a flight over the Bungle Bungles, the staircase to the Moon in Broome, Litchfield National Park, the Great Barrier Reef, Sydney and Taronga Zoo, Canberra War Memorial.

The family arrived back in Birchip on December 23, 2022, and finally found a home, the children settled in to school and were amazed how many relatives they have.

Equipment

Tim brought some of the dialysis equipment so we could see how the fine hair-like fibres filter and clean the blood and return it to the body again. He explained the work he is still able to do working from home for 30 hours per week, as well as setting up some lawn mowing and handy man work.

He answered many questions about the remoteness of the work in the west, the difficulty in getting many people convinced of the help available, and the importance of being able to understand the family relationships of indigenous people who belong to so many different clans. The Royal Flying Doctor Service also plays a big role in the remote communities.

Practical problems such as heat and untreated water, lack of cooling systems for medical supplies all had to be overcome. But there was great satisfaction when trust was developed and people became more ready to accept medical intervention, such as dialysis.

Tim also brought some beautiful books made from photos throughout the trips around Australia and all were enthralled with his stories of the life they had led in Western Australia and the many occasions that aid was able to be given. Tim was thanked with a small gift for his time and giving such an interesting presentation.

The March meeting will be the AGM and all were asked to consider taking on Executive roles for 2025, as most in those roles all wish to retire from them. Lunch was left to individual choice.

(By "No Joke")

What I forgot to say in the "Times" on March 21, was that Mahjong is simple to learn.

I may have made it seem complicated but that is most certainly NOT the case. Despite the unfamiliar terminology and the Suits and Honours not being instantly recognisable, the fundamentals can be picked up in the

course of a single afternoon. And you'll be playing unassisted in no time at all. And with just the slightest bit of luck you'll be declaring "Mahjong" some time that very afternoon, pushing tiles around like a professional.

So, for those who may have felt intimidated or a little over-awed..... Don't be!

Just turn up to the Donald Senior Citizens Centre on Thursday afternoon from 1:30 p.m. to join in the Mahjong action and the fun.

And just to give you a primer on the tiles themselves – there are 3 Suits (Bamboos, Balls and Ten Thousands) numbered from 1 to 9 and 4 tiles of each (3x9x4 = 108). And there are 2 Honours (Winds and Dragons) – 4 Winds (North, East, South and West) and 3 Dragons (Red, Green and White) and again there are 4 tiles of each (4+3x4 = 28), giving a total of 136 tiles.

Simple

I can't emphasise it enough – it's all quite simple. There seems to be some sort of undeserved connotation relating to the term "Senior Citizens" – sure, we've earned the right to be regarded as such but what we are is active and a very much young at heart group of people. We know how to interact with all age groups, having been kids ourselves once and later parents and even later, grandparents and yes, even great-grandparents. The very term "Senior Citizens" is limiting and gives no indication of what actually transpires at the Senior Citizens Centre, and for that reason, I am henceforth referring to our playground as the Donald Activity Centre.

I fully realise that I have no authority or even consensus to make that call, nevertheless I'm forging ahead with it. Our primary focus is activity and it's not just for so-called seniors. So, no matter how young (or how old) you are, join in one or many of our activities at the Donald Activity Centre, 4 Hammill Street. No stigma attached.



• These are the 3 Suits numbered 1-9. Bamboos on top, Balls in the middle and Ten Thousands at the bottom.



• And these are the Honours. The 4 Winds at the top and the 3 Dragons (Red, Green and White) at the bottom.



• Birchip Probus guest speaker, Tim McLoughlan, with Entertainment Officer for Probus, Lorraine Lea.

Police Beat

Swan Hill

Arson: Between 6 p.m. on Friday the 28th of March and midday the following day, someone has entered the ambulant toilet on Monash Drive, Nyah West, and set fire to toilet paper. The structure itself was not damaged.

Possess drug: Late Sunday evening, police intercepted a vehicle on Gray Street, Swan Hill. A search was conducted on the vehicle and female driver. A quantity of what is believed to be ecstasy, methyl amphetamine and prescription medication was located and seized. The 27-year-old was charged and bailed to attend court at a later date.

Robinvale

Criminal damage: Just after midnight on Sunday the 30th of March, a vehicle parked in the driveway of an

address in Ronald Street in Robinvale was damaged by a male who was walking with a group. The windscreen of the vehicle was damaged.

Buloke

Vehicle theft: At about midnight on Wednesday the 26th of March, unknown persons have attended a property on the Dumosa-Birchip Road, Narraport. They have stolen a black and red 2023 Kioti K92400 UTV. There was a weed sprayer on the back.

Arson: Between midnight and 1.30 a.m. on Wednesday the 26th of March, unknown persons have started a fire on the Swan Hill-Donald Road, Dumosa. CFA and police attended the scene and deemed the fire as suspicious.

Sea Lake

Swan Hill Highway Patrol is investigating a fatal collision in Sea Lake.

At about 3.45 a.m. on Friday the 28th of March, a B-Double truck is believed to have collided with a male pedestrian on the Calder Highway about 2 km from Sea Lake.

The pedestrian died at the scene. The driver of the truck was not injured.

Anyone with information or DASH CAM footage is urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or anonymously at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au or Swan Hill Highway Patrol on 5036 1600.

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



• Leo McLoughlan, Savannah Ryan and Billie McLoughlan at the Birchip P-12 School Fete.



• Squadron Leader Alistair Smith flying over the Birchip P-12 Oval.

Former Student in Fighter Jet Flyover

Birchip P-12 Students were delighted with the fly over of two fighter jets on Thursday of last week.

The jets, flying from Mildura to Geelong, flew over the main street of Birchip and then circled several times over the school oval.

Squadron Leader Alistair Smith, a former student of Birchip P-12 School and Birchip local, manned one of the F35s. The students and teachers alike were mesmerized

by the loud roar of the jets, as well as the low fly over where Mr Smith tilted the plane as an aerial “wave”.

Fundraiser

Birchip P-12 School successfully hosted its annual fundraiser, the school fete last Wednesday. The warm autumn evening attracted a large crowd on the front lawn.

Families were treated to stalls such as face painting, ball competitions and interactive games.

Students also ran food stalls and novelty races; 115 roast dinners were served to attendees and families sat together to enjoy their meal whilst participating in the spinning wheel raffle and waited for the major raffle,

The Monster Raffle, to be drawn. The total funds raised for the evening was close to \$7,400. These funds will assist future school improvements.

Thank you to the staff, students, and volunteers for running the evening and to the generous donations from community members. And a thank you to everyone that attended and supported the various fund-raising efforts.

Will in State Team

Former Birchip P-12 School student Will Marks has taken his cricketing journey to the next level, earning selection in the Renegades squad for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander T20 Cup in Melbourne in February.

His impressive performances in the tournament caught the eye of selectors, leading to his selection for



Victoria’s Indigenous Cricket Team.

Will has represented Victoria on the National stage as the team headed to Mackay, Queensland, on April 1 for the 2025 National Indigenous Cricket Championships.

Connecting and Learning

The Birchip Neighbourhood House’s “Connecting and Learning Through Food, Fun, and Fellowship” program resumed in 2025 with a welcoming morning tea provided by Mallee Family Care.

The event provided an opportunity for community members to come together, enjoy good company, and access valuable information from key service providers.

Representatives from Mallee Family Care, The Salvation Army, and Birchip Neighbourhood House were present to share insights to the services available to support the local community and they provided guests with goodie bags of information to take away.

My Aged Care

Annette Lavey is the Case Manager from The Salvation Army’s Care Finder program located in Swan Hill. Annette can help people understand and access aged care and con-

nect with other relevant supports in their community, target people who have one or more reasons for requiring intensive support to interact with My Aged Care, and access aged care services and other relevant community supports. Annette can be reached on 5036 7300.

Mallee Family Care

Attendees were informed about the Mallee Family Care program, Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect that they deliver in partnership with Mind Australia.

This program supports family members, carers, kin and supporters of people with mental health and/or substance use challenges. Sup-

port is free and no referral is needed to access a Connect Centre.

They can listen and connect you to tailored information, resources, advocacy, counselling, individual and group-based support, and access to brokerage. Services are available through walk-in, phone, online and outreach services. Narelle from Mallee Family Care, who provides outreach services to Buloke residents, can be contacted on 5032 4479.

In addition to Loddon Mallee Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect, Mallee Family Care (MFC) offers over 60 programs to support local individuals and families across the Northern and Southern Mallee region.

MFC work in the fields of family, youth and children, disability, mental health, housing and settlement, legal, financial, research and education and they are also an NDIS provider. They can provide tenancy assistance, advocacy, assist families through separation, provide family dispute resolution and mediation on parenting and property, financial counselling.

For all enquiries for Southern Mallee contact the Swan Hill office on 5032 4479 or Email: mfc@malleefamily-care.com.au.



• Mallee Family Care representatives and Annette Lavey from Salvation Army care finder providing information at Birchip Neighbourhood House morning tea.

Mental Health Service Providers in Buloke

East Wimmera Health Services have a range of services and supports including social workers and counselling services in all five campuses. Appointments can be made at any EWHS campus or through the EWHS central intake line on 5477 2222. You can also talk to your local GP.

Inglewood and Districts Health Service are funded by the Murray Primary Health Network to provide free mental health services to Loddon and Buloke Shires. Services can be face to face, via secure video conferencing or over the phone. Phone 5431 7000 or email referrals@idhs.vic.gov.au.

The Orange Door
Sometimes things at home or in a relationship are not OK, or families are worried

about the wellbeing of their children. The Orange Door can provide help for people who are experiencing family violence or who need support with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.

Staff at The Orange Door listen and help you to get the support you need, quickly and easily. It’s free and you don’t need a referral.

The Orange Door – Mallee operates during business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) from Monday to Friday (closed public holidays). You can attend in person or reach out by phone on 1800 290 943 or email mallee@theorange-door.vic.gov.au.

In an emergency, call Triple 000 and for support outside of business hours, call Safe Steps on 1800 015 188.

Feedback

These Neighbourhood House gatherings are de-

signed to not only be informative, but also to provide an opportunity for community members to enjoy a free meal in a friendly and inclusive environment.

The initiative is made possible with support from the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal’s (FRRR) Strengthening Rural Communities Program and the Australian Drug Foundation’s Local Drug Action Team (ADF LDAT) project.

The “Connecting and Learning Through Food, Fun, and Fellowship” program will continue in 2025 to offer residents a space to come together, learn, and support one another and the Neighbourhood House would welcome any feedback on how they can encourage more community members to come along. Contact Simone on 0429 922735.

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(By "Course Language")

Here we go again for another golf season for the Donald Golf Club. With Autumn being one of the most pleasant seasons of the year, what more incentive do you need to get the clubs out and spoil a good walk with a hit of golf?

Over the "off season", as you may call it, it was anything but quiet on the course. Thanks to our extremely hard-working grounds committee and volunteer members, there has been a huge amount of work done to the course, not only get it ready to play on, but also to improve the long-term health of the course.

The tree lines have been deep ripped (with only 3 repairs needed to the poly water pipes that traverse the course) and the many trees that have fallen have been cleared away.

The ladies have reconditioned the "Distance Marker Signs" to look like brand new. Gypsum has been spread on the fairways and dirt brought in to build up around the 9th scrape and sown down with seed and watered. With the tees being maintained all summer with watering and mowing and along with the scrapes prepared for the year ahead, I think we're ready for play.

A huge thanks to the members who have done all this work over summer, but a special mention to Corack Ag (the Reilly Family) and Warakirri Cropping - Baingarra (Jono Robinson) for the use of various machines and supplies to get all this work completed.

Ambrose

This Sunday we are kicking off the season with a men's and ladies 2-person Ambrose any combination sponsored by Elders Farmgate Insurance. (Please bring a plate of afternoon tea to share.) Assembly at 12 noon for a 12.30 hit off.

As with all clubs in country Victoria we would love to see more people playing golf. It's great exercise and a terrific way to meet new people or even catch up with others you may not have seen for a while. If you would like to know more, please reach out

to any golfing members and they can point you in the right direction, as we would love for you to join us. There are many opportunities to play throughout the week and they are as follows:

Mondays, 9 holes golf: 9:45 a.m. assembly; 10 a.m. hit off.

Wednesdays, 18 holes: 9:30 assembly; 10 a.m. hit off.

Thursdays, Dads' Army 12 holes: 1 p.m. hit off.

Saturdays, 18 holes: 12 noon assembly; 12:30 hit off.

Sundays, 18 holes: 12 noon assembly; 12:30 hit off.

Vets: Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m..

Dad Jokes

I showed my damaged luggage to the lawyer and said "I'd like to sue the airline" - He said I didn't have much of a case.

My wife found out I was cheating on her after she found all the letters I was hiding..... she got mad and said she's never playing Scrabble with me again.

Sometimes spelling a word or phrase backwards will still keep the original meaning. For example, if you spell "absolutely nothing" backwards, then you get "gnihton yletulosba" - which means absolutely nothing.



• Michael Darby and Steph Trickey.



• Ari Richmond, Tutor Kristie Dean instructing Ava Boyle, Ivy Bourke.

Art Club: A Space for Creativity and Fun

On Monday nights at the Birchip Neighbourhood House, children are embracing their creativity through "Art Club", facilitated by Kristie Dean.

This weekly gathering provides kids the opportunity to engage in art for enjoyment, without the pressure of achieving a perfect outcome. Running from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. at the Shamrock, the club welcomes children aged nine to eighteen.

Thanks to funding from the Buloke Shire's VicHealth Strong People grant program and the Birchip Neighbourhood House's LDAT project, Kristie has been able to purchase a wide range of art supplies.

Among the most popular materials are the canvases, which are being used to create vibrant masterpieces.

Simone Christie, the manager of the Birchip Neighbourhood House, is delighted that the old computer room has been transformed into an art space, saying, "It's great to come into work Tuesday mornings and see so many colourful creations

from Monday night's classes."

At Art Club, there is something for everyone. The relaxed and supportive environment encourages kids to explore various artistic techniques under Kristie's guidance. As a passionate advocate for the arts, Kristie volunteers her time to foster a love for creativity and self-expression among young participants.

Kristie believes that Art Club offers children and teens an invaluable opportunity to express their emotions, perspectives, and ideas in a creative way.

"Art Club will give children and teens an opportunity to find different ways of expressing their own feelings, perceptions, and insights. Learning how to explore new ideas and express them creatively is a valuable skill they can take through life," she says.

For many children, art provides an outlet to communicate emotions they may not have words for. The act of creating can be incredibly therapeutic, allowing them to unwind and relieve stress.

Unlike formal art classes, where students often follow specific instructions and complete structured projects, Art Club offers complete creative freedom, enabling kids to explore and express themselves in their own unique ways.

Most of all, Art Club is about having fun. It provides a space where kids can relax, enjoy themselves, and immerse in the joy of making art.

Those interested in joining can register with Simone at the Birchip Neighbourhood House by calling 0429 922 735, and they just bring \$5 a week along to replenish the art supplies.



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Charlton Cricket Closes the Season

Charlton Cricket Club gathered for its end of season break up on a very pleasant Sunday evening, March 30, to celebrate season 2024/2025. It was a great evening with around 40 attending, including Life Members, Greg McGurk and Kirk Boyle.

It was another o.k. year for "B" graders reaching finals, but not quite getting over the line, with eventual premier, Watchem, playing much better in the semi-final, to advance to the "Big Dance", and win the WMCA "B" grade Premiership – well done to the Watchem lads.

Hugh Sait and Pat Soulsby again led Charlton's "B" grade, with "veteran" Billy Sexton providing great mentoring, to assist these young leaders.

The club was again very fortunate to have Barry Findlay coming out regularly, from Bendigo on Sundays to provide expert one-on-one coaching to our juniors and

teenagers. His tuition and coaching knowledge has been invaluable to the developing of the juniors and teenagers. The club thanks Barry for continuing to do this and provide his incredible knowledge of the techniques and skills of the game.

The Formalities

President, Adam Soulsby formally welcomed all in attendance, acknowledging and thanking the Life Members who were in attendance.

Adam also thanked all those families and volunteers who keep the club ticking, in particular the time, effort and hard work of Shane and Kim, Kirk, Hayley for dedication to keep the club functioning.

WMCA Junior Country Week

Charlton had great representation at WMCA Country Week held in January again, including 5 girls playing in the WMCA Belles Girls and CW team. Indication of the strength and ability of the juniors, and the development of these kids, thanks to Barry Findlay's one-on-one coaching.

Woolworths Junior Blast Program

The Junior Blast was the best yet, with around 25 boys and girls participating in the Charlton Program, combining the Junior Blast and Tennis Hotshots Programs.

The Program was again lots of fun and co-ordinated so fantastically by Rachel Smyth and Jess McGurk, incorporating and providing all the skills needed for the kids to enjoy and development their skills.

Maddison "Maddi" Fitzpatrick – Rising Star Award

Maddi Fitzpatrick will always be Charlton's Rising Star and the Rising Star Most Improved Cricketer Award has been donated by the Fitzpatrick Family named in honour of "Maddi".

This year's recipient of the award is Ethan Soulsby, who really has had a break out season in the "B" grade team. He has played all 14 games, showing great all round ability, making some good scores batting and taking wickets throughout the season. Ethan also represented WMCA U15s at Horsham Country Week, being awarded the WMCA U15 Player of the Week.

Sponsors and Volunteers

Charlton Cricket Club thanks all its valued sponsors very much, grateful for their continued support.

Thank you to all the families, volunteers, supporters and sponsors who keep the club going.

2023-2024 Awards

Batting Aggregate (Shield donated by Life Member Brian Wright): Billy Sexton, 326 runs / 54.33 average (H.S. 79).
Batting Average (donated



• "Maddi Fitzpatrick" Rising Star Award recipient, Ethan Soulsby, pictured with Shane, Kim and Elliott Fitzpatrick.



• Bowling Average - Pat Soulsby.



• Captain's Award - Ethan Needs.



• KGB Medal Best in Finals - Ethan Soulsby receiving Award from Life Member, Greg McGurk.



• Left to right: Bowling Aggregate Award, Elliott Fitzpatrick with President, Adam Soulsby, and Batting Aggregate & Average Award, Bill Sexton.

by Charlton IGA): Billy Sexton, 54.33 average/326 runs.

Bowling Aggregate (Shield Donated by Life Member Brian Wright): Elliott Fitzpatrick, 21 wickets/9.43 average.

Bowling Average (donated by The Vale B&B and Dining): Patrick Soulsby, 8.95 average/20 wickets.

Maddison "Maddi" Fitzpatrick Rising Star (donated by Fitzpatrick Family): Ethan Soulsby.

Captain's Award: Ethan Needs.

Kirk Boyle Perpetual Trophy – Champion Player of the Year: Billy Sexton.

KGB Medal – Best in Finals (named after and donated by Life Member

Kelvin Baird): Ethan Soulsby.

Exceptional Performances: Elliott Fitzpatrick – HATRICK – 1st 3 balls of innings v. St Mary's.

Elliott Fitzpatrick – 6/10 (5 overs) v. Watchem.

Hugh Sait – 5/3 (3 overs) v. Birchip.

Future

The club is in a sound state going forward, with good junior numbers coming through over the next few years. "B" grade is still yet to claim the major goal, but has been so consistent, with a crop of boys and girls and young adults playing cricket.

As mentioned, the club has

such great families and few volunteers who keep it functioning.

Thanks so much to the sponsors, who provide such important financial support to allow us to pay for affiliation fees, equipment, insurances, facility maintenance and power costs, etc.

Charlton wishes all WMCA Clubs a safe and enjoyable break during the off season.



• Charlton Cricket Club Award 2024/2025 award recipients, left to right: Ethan Soulsby, Hugh Sait, Billy Sexton, Elliott Fitzpatrick, Pat Soulsby, Ethan Needs.



• Billy Sexton, Player of the Year, receives the Kirk Boyle Award from the man himself, life member Kirk Boyle.

Down the Middle?

What a great start to the golf season – dry dusty fairways, lush green tees and plenty of good hits, mis-hits and laughter among the fifteen who dared play in the 12 hole Ambrose event.

Winners on the day were Luke and Peter Kelly and Mark Beattie with 38 nett, which just proves that men are better when it comes to playing in B...dust. Well done boys. Nearest the pins on Donald Auto Electrical's 3rd and on the Bendigo Bank's 16th were taken out by Kerry (Crowie) Wood. She's as good as the crows when it comes to finding golf balls.

Next week: Monday golf starting at 10 a.m.. Assemble at 9.45.

Wednesday, April 9, Stableford and the first round of the eclectic. Or is that electric?

Sunday, April 13, and Monday, April 14, at 10 a.m., Kerry will be giving lessons to anyone who is interested. Old, new and ex-golfers welcome. If you don't have any clubs, we can provide them for you.

Highlights and Lowlights

Tickets for the Easter hamper that Weir's IGA have kindly donated will be available at Donald Bakery until Thursday, April 10.

Half the proceeds will go towards the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal.

Welcome back to Joan Pearce after an eight-year break. You haven't lost your touch, Joan.

Welcome to new golfer Mark Beattie. It's nice to have a win on your first day!

Kerry Wood, being an inexperienced golfer, didn't realise that she needed to take shelter when Kerry Raven is hitting her drive from behind a tree. Needless to say, she lost a bit of rubber off the side of her shoe. Partners Joan Pearce and Jenni Campbell, being "old pros", wisely took refuge in Kerry's cart.

Beris Jones was the only one to lose a ball to the crowd. Unfortunately for Beris she doesn't have a horn on her cart to scare them away. Maree Cullen suggested she invest in a gun, but the Captain thought that was a bit over the top and suggested a bike "honker" instead.

Jenni Campbell managed to lose most of her tees, which would suggest that silver probably isn't a good colour for tees.

It was great to have ex-golfer Jean Hogan join in for lunch at Harvest Café after golf.

Thanks to all those who have volunteered to help with the patching at the races on Monday, and thanks to those who have offered to sell raffle tickets next week. Your input is very much appreciated.

Player Profile Jenny Leishman

How long have you been playing golf? 6 years.

What do you enjoy about golf? Being outdoors on lush green fairways enjoying the wild life (women).

What is the best part of your game? Driving.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of taking up golf? Just get out there and don't worry about your score.

What is your best score? 91.

What is your best shot ever? I drove over the trees on the 9th (not deliberately though!).

Who is your favourite golfer? Marl Leishman. We must be related!

Position held in the club? Secretary.



• Joan Pearce and Kerry Wood talking with Captain Kerry Raven before the first shot of the season.



• Captain Kerry Raven hitting off today to commence the start of Golf Season. Eager player awaiting, left to right, Brenda Brennan, Helen Wee Hee, Enid Braiser, Ev Adams, Beris Jones, Mary Herben, Maree Egan, Margot Paynter and Jenny Campbell.

Birchip Golf Begins on Sunday

With these beautiful autumn days and daylight saving still upon us, it's hard to believe that winter sports are already set to begin this weekend. Yet, the season is here, and the Birchip Golf Club is encouraging locals to get on board.

Golf is not only a fantastic sport but also a great way to stay active and socialise. Birchip Golf Club boasts excellent facilities, and the club hopes to see more people enjoying them in 2025.

Whether you're a seasoned golfer or a complete beginner, there's a place for you at Birchip Golf Club.

Ambrose

The club is kicking off its season with Opening Day on Sunday, April 6th. Sunday's event will feature an Ambrose competition open to all, including novices and learners, making it a perfect opportunity for everyone to get involved.

Throughout the 2025 golf season, weekly Sunday golf

sessions will begin at 11:30 a.m., with a hit-off time of 12:00 noon. There will also be a midweek competition on Wednesday.

Midweek golf starts on Wednesday, April 9th, with play commencing at 9:30 a.m. for a 10:00 a.m. tee-off, providing a fantastic midweek sporting opportunity for players of all ages and all levels.

Juniors

Junior golf will be held on Fridays after school, giving young players a chance to learn or develop their skills in a supportive environment.

Membership fees for the season are \$130, which includes Golf Australia insur-

ance and a \$50 leisure centre membership. Social membership is available for \$65, while juniors can join for just \$25.

Welcome

The club is always eager to welcome new players and offers coaching for those interested in learning the game.

The club welcomes feedback and suggestions on how to enhance the golfing experience and encourage greater community participation.

For more information, contact men's captain Rodney Bennett or ladies' captain Di Lehmann.

Come along, have a hit, and enjoy the game!

A New Season Dawns

• Continued from page 12.

ruckman, Jordan Hargreaves.

Among those joining the club are big defender, Ben Bacon, Pallpratt brothers Zach and Jake, ruckman/forward Mark Robinson, Mitch Jensen and the returning Jarrod Postle.

Multiple premiership player Will Simpson is one of Sea Lake-Nandaly's biggest losses. But this should be offset by new faces on the list, including Oscar Brownless, Jarvis Keogh, Bryce Basken, and returning the Cooper Roberts.

Combine this influx with the potential availability of premiership players Austin Mertz and John Summerhayes back from long-term injuries, further strengthens the Tigers' prospects this season.

At home, Sea Lake-Nandaly is always hard to beat, and Sea Lake-Nandaly should launch its new season's campaign and a quest for three successive premierships with a win over the Redbacks.

Opportunity Knocks

Host club St. Arnaud and the visiting Boort both have something to prove this season, and their clash at Lord Nelson Park provides the perfect opportunity to launch their quests to climb much higher up the league's pecking order than their recent finishing positions.

To celebrate the new season, the contest between the Saints and Magpies will take place under lights, in a twilight fixture that gets under way with junior sport starting at 12 noon, and culminates with the senior football kicking off at 6.40.

St. Arnaud has been very active leading up to coach

Scott Driscoll's second season at the helm, signing a bevy of new talent that includes Josh Caddy, Baden Remmos, Sean Holroyd, Ash Livingston, Darby Schilder, Jay Kirwood, Max Hungerford and Oliver Goode.

The challenge in front of the Saints is to improve on their two wins of last season, with dedicated locals Harley Durward, Mitch Egan, Matt Goode, Jake Tillig, Tom Bertalli and Mitch Birthisel, and emerging talent Owen Lowe, primed to take the next step in their football journey.

They will be pitted against Dale Cameron's Boort, which scored a narrow victory against the Saints in round 18 last season to close out the 2024 home-and-away season.

The Magpies have lost two of their most reliable performers over recent years, Levi Moss and Jarred Starr, but may have acquired several very capable replacements, including Peter Barbopoulos (East Keilor), Jed Perryman, Carlos Egan, Flynn O'Rourke and the Rutley brothers, Tyson and Kayne, whose father spent time at the club some years ago.

This infusion of new talent, combined with the skills of Jarred Fitzpatrick, the Wilson brothers, James and Keiren, James Keeble and the leg speed of Jayden Dick might give Boort a winning edge.

Can Charlton Take the Next Step?

Charlton is in the same category as St. Arnaud and Boort, desperate to improve on last season's achievements, with coach Mitch Collins needing to find a suitable

replacement for talented teenager, Nick Thompson, who is testing himself in the Bendigo league with Eaglehawk.

Ben Xiriha, Aaron Schofield, Ashton Wood, Maryborough pair Luke Dunne and Liam O'Keefe, are among the new faces in navy blue this season, but they face a massive challenge against a Birchip-Watchem combination desperate for redemption after last season's grand final loss.

Birchip-Watchem has landed a recruiting coup securing the services of the vastly experienced and highly respected Ash Connick to replace Trevor Ryan.

Connick's coaching expertise has been garnered over many years, and includes guiding Sandhurst to last season's Bendigo league premiership and his appointment to coach Bendigo's inter-league team.

There have been relatively minor changes in personnel within the Bulls' playing ranks, one of the more significant departures being Pat Veszpremi (Williamstown CYMS), while an influx of new talent is headed by Ben Lakin and Rhona Conboy (Horsham), George Addis (Mt. Barker), and the return of two very handy former locals, Jacob Christie (Rupanyup) and Bill Lee (Uni Blues).

As a proven performer over recent seasons, and with renewed enthusiasm generated by the arrival of Connick, Birchip-Watchem can be expected to perform strongly this season, and should account for an improved Charlton.

Charlton Cricket Club

We wish to thank all our valued sponsors for their continued support during the 2024/2025 season:-

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- Charlton IGA
- The Vale of Avoca – B&B – Licensed Café



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- S & K Fitzpatrick
- Life Member – Kirk Boyle
- Life Member – Brian Wright
- Life Member – Greg McGurk
- Life Member – Kelvin Baird





A New Season Dawns

(By Shane O'Shea)

North-Central football, hockey and netball's 2025 season heralds the dawn of a new era of competition, with the formation of the Calder United Lions condensing the league into an eight-team competition.

As we say farewell to Nullawil and Wycheproof-Narraport, two clubs and communities with very proud sporting histories and records of achievement, and welcome their new combined entity, it promises to bring renewed excitement and challenges, for the Lions in particular, and the league and its seven other clubs in general.

Coaching Appointments

There have been minimal changes to the senior coaching personnel within North-Central ahead of the new season.

Darryl Wilson, last season's coach of Nullawil, has taken the reins with joint coach Jordan Humphreys at Calder United.

New appointments for the coming season include Ash Connick (Birchip-Watchem), and Daniel Pearce (Donald).

Five clubs have reappointed their senior coaches, Dale Cameron (Boort), Mitch Collins (Charlton), Scott Driscoll (St. Arnaud), Billy McInnes and Bryce Delmenico (Sea Lake-Nandaly) and Tom Metherell (Wedderburn).

Looking at the change in playing personnel within the local competition, there has been considerable player movement, both into and out of the league's clubs.

Sea Lake-Nandaly

Sea Lake-Nandaly enters the new season as the defending champion and the team to beat, and can expect probing

challenges on many fronts from a number of clubs who have recruited well to build on previous seasons' achievements.

Headlining Sea Lake-Nandaly's list of recruits is Oscar Brownless, son of retired Geelong champion, Billy Brownless, who joins the Tigers from Geelong Amateurs.

Jarvis Keogh (Swan Hill), Bryce Basken (Lake Boga) and Cooper Roberts (Mildura) are among the "ins", while dynamic small forward, Will Simpson, appointed assistant coach of Swan Hill, heads the "outs".

Birchip-Watchem

Last season's grand finalist, Birchip-Watchem, has added talented defenders Rhona Conboy, Ben Lakin and Pat Lakin (Horsham), George Addis (Mt Barker), Ben Edelsten (Minyip-Murtoa), and welcomes back Riley Hogan (Maroochydore, Qld), Jacob Christie (Rupanyup) and Bill Lee (Uni Blues).

Pat Veszpremi (Williamstown CYMS), Pat Hogan (Geelong West) and Koby Leith (Minyip-Murtoa) are looking for new challenges.

Donald

Donald, which reached the first semi-final last season, has experienced a significant loss of playing personnel, which includes established home-grown talents, Josh Potter (Tyntynder), Hayden Geddes (South Bendigo), Logan Geddes (Marybinong Park), Cooper Anderson

(Minyip-Murtoa) and Noah Berry (Geelong Amateurs).

The Royal Blues have also lost 2024 Feeny Medallist Andrew Browne (Tyabb), dynamic defender Ryley Barrack (Daylesford), Blake Grant (Torquay), Tom Heuston (Tyabb), Ryan Hards (Imperials), Jamie Papalia (Keilor), Jesse Wallen and Todd Stevenson (North Heidelberg).

Signings include Glenn Meulendyks (Tyrendarra), Callum Vandendriest (Tweed Heads), Charlie Campbell (Horsham Saints), Jordan Lynch (Albanvale), Luke Caruso (McLaren, S.A.) and Jye Johnson (Rupanyup).

Charlton

Charlton has gained the services of Ben Xiriha (Kyne-ton), Liam O'Keefe (Kangaroo Flat), Declan Ryan (Wilston Grange), Josh Harris (White Hills), Aaron Schofield (White Hills), Ashton Wood (Murrabit), John Leathen and Luke Dunne (Maryborough).

Departures include talented teenager Nick Thompson (Eaglehawk), Joe Tormey (Rupanyup), Jesse Taylor (Kilmore) and Harrison Taylor (Lorne).

Boort

Boort has signed several players with family surnames synonymous with the Magpies over the generations, including Jed Perryman (Wandella), Flynn O'Rourke (Pascoe Vale). Connections also run to former players, including Tyson and Kayne



• Last year's grand final between Sea Lake-Nandaly and Birchip-Watchem. Tigers Charlie Cox and Bulls' Joe Reid battle for the Sherrin.

Rutley (Keilor), while Carlos Egan (Strathmore) and Peter Barbopoulos (East Keilor) will provide an injection of new talent.

Departures: Kobie Streader (Mallee Eagles), Nick Clydesdale (Strathfieldsay), Jarred Starr (Bears Lagoon-Serpentine), Levi Moss (Pyramid Hill), Nat McLaren (Maldon).

St. Arnaud

St. Arnaud has added a wealth of talent to its existing list, including Jay Kirwood (St. Joseph's and a century goal kicker with Jeparit-Rainbow), Oliver Goode (Natte Bealiba), Will Thomas (Maiden Gully), Baden Remmos (Winchelsea), Sean Holroyd (Queenscliff), Ashley Livingston (Jeparit-Rainbow) midfielder/key position player Darby Schilder (Melton South), Tom Moore (Geelong West Giants), Max Hungerford (Geelong Amateurs) and Keegan Cuolahan (Ocean Grove) will also don the Saints' guernsey this season.

Departures: Ryan Lempa (East Geelong), Tyson Funston (South Barwon), Kenna Larusso (Navarre).

Wedderburn

In: Jarrod Postle (Clunes), Dane Keuken (Strathfieldsay), Mark Robinson (West Brunswick), Mitch Jensen (Diggers Rest), Zach Pallpratt (Sandhurst), Jake Pallpratt (White Hills), Aaron Smith (Currie), Ben Bacon (White Hills), Jye Mortlock (Natte-Bealiba).

Outs: Tom Campbell (Sandhurst), Jordan Hargreaves North Bendigo), Jacob Picolli (North Bendigo), Jesse

Douglas (Officer).

Calder United Lions

In addition to signing players from the respective Nullawil and Wycheproof-Narraport lists, the new look Lions have added Koby Lloyd (Balranald), Ollie Daykin (Redan), Tom Cotton (Lake Boga), Sam Hogan (Mt. Pleasant), Oscar Madden (Eaglehawk), Darcy Munro (Old Carey Grammarians).

Players not joining the new team include the following:

From Nullawil: Dean Smith (Colbinabbin), Kyle Doran (Tyntynder), Matt Quigley (Gisborne), Andrew Casey (Bell Post Hill), Matthew Hogan (Bell Post Hill), Ben Brennan (Gisborne).

From Wycheproof-Narraport: Josh Grabowski (Reservoir), Gedd Hommelhoff (Sebastopol), Nash Kerr (Elmore), Mayson Murgov (Albion), Will Allan (Warracknabeal Eagles), Kristian McNicol (Rochester), Adam Thompson (Murrabit), Will Rodda (Calivil).

History in the Making

When the Calder United Lions run out on to Donald's Goff Letts Oval tomorrow, to take on the home town Royal Blues in round 1, each of the 21 players selected will be creating a unique slice of football history, as the first to represent the new club at senior level.

With players of the calibre of ruckman Dean Putt, midfielders Daniel Watts, Steven Kennedy, David Isbister, Matt Wade, Rylee Smith and Zach Caccaviello, potential forwards Mitch Farmer, Jack Ex-

cell and Cody Green, and a defence built around Jordan Humphreys, Boe Bish, Spencer Allan and Josh Walsh, it's almost impossible to go past the Lions winning their opening game.

Donald will provide honest opposition, led by new coach and spirited competitor, Daniel Pearce, supported by one of North-Central's best, Ross Young, alongside Dyson Bell-Warren, Ryan Bath, Harry Forrest and recruits including Glenn Meulendykes, Callum Vandendries, Jordan Lynch and Charlie Campbell, but on paper the sheer weight of experience and talent favours the visitors.

Premiership Pennant Unfurling

Sea Lake-Nandaly will have the opportunity to unfurl its 2024 premiership pennant prior to the start of tomorrow's game against the visiting Wedderburn.

It's a new season of challenges for the Tigers, defending champions for the second successive season, who also have the opportunity to aim for their third successive North-Central crown.

Wedderburn is one of the many teams keen to test their mettle, and after a productive off-season recruiting campaign, have added significantly to the list available to coach Tom Metherall.

But the Redbacks had to cast the net far and wide in order to cover the loss of two pillars of the team in recent years, goal kicking centre half-forward Tom Campbell, and 2023 Feeny Medallist

• Continued on page 11.

GOLDACRES NORTH CENTRAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ROUND 1

SATURDAY APRIL 5TH, 2025

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

North Central Football League