

DONALD

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The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

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Friday, March 7, 2025

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

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



• Attendees quickly filled the hall, with more arriving at the start of the meeting. In the second row, (left) speaker Rachel Grant can be seen holding the folder containing 13,464 signatures amassed over just a few days. Taking notes in the front row are John McConville (second from left) and Sam Goldsmith.

Festival Forges Ahead

The decision to issue a planning permit to this year's Esoteric Festival was made conditionally at Buloke Shire Council's ordinary meeting held on Monday night in Wycheproof.

The Council had announced its decision to deny a ten-year planning permit late last week following health and safety concerns, as well as emergency services regulations. The Council meeting was called to allow festival organisers the chance to reduce the duration of the permit they had applied for, to respond and rectify issues, and to meet the standard of safety required following review with emergency services prior to the opening of the event.

The Council meeting heard from organiser Sam

Goldsmith, detailing the importance of the Esoteric Festival, not only to those directly involved, such as staff and patrons, but also to the wider community and vast number of local clubs and businesses which benefit from the number of visitors to the town each year.

Impact

President and vice-president of Donald's Chamber of Commerce, Rachel Grant and Sarah Jardine, then spoke highly of the annual event

• Continued on page 2.



• Bus one offloading Donald passengers at Wycheproof.

Long Weekend: Campfire Warning

Victoria's fire and land management agencies are urging campers and holidaymakers to prioritise campfire safety ahead of the upcoming long weekend.

Since July 1, 2024, Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) and Country Fire Authority (CFA) have responded to almost 250 incidents involving campfires, including a bushfire that burnt through 14 hectares of land, left around 100 campers stranded and forced dozens more to evacuate a popular Cape Otway camp site in January.

FFMVic Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman urged people to be careful when it comes to campfires, as gusty winds can

easily carry embers from a campfire into the bush, posing a serious fire risk.

Big Problem

"Campfires that escape are a big problem in Victoria. Always fully extinguish campfires with water, not soil and make sure it's cool to touch before leaving," Mr Hardman said.

"We want people to enjoy the bush safely. By knowing and following the rules for building and maintaining campfires, we can help keep the bush healthy and safe for everyone."

Parks Victoria Executive Director Operations, Kylie Trott, said campfires are only allowed in dedicated fireplaces in most parks in Victoria.

"Not all parks or campgrounds allow campfires. There are some limited areas where campfires are permitted outside of constructed fireplaces, but you need to check before you go," Ms Trott said.

"Remember to always have someone in attendance while a campfire is going and properly extinguish the fire with water before you leave. The consequences

can be devastating if you don't."

Zero Tolerance

Chief Conservation Regulator Kate Gavens said given the extreme fire hazard posed by unattended campfires, the Conservation Regulator takes a zero-tolerance approach to those found breaking the law when it comes to campfire safety.

"Unattended and unsafe campfires can result in devastating consequences – the risk is real, and all campers have a responsibility to know and abide by campfire rules," Ms Gavens said.

"It just takes one ember to cause a destructive bushfire, and this is why there are

significant fines for those who leave campfires unattended.

"Our forest and wildlife officers will be out over the weekend to remind campers about the importance of campfire safety."

Responsibility

CFA Chief Officer Jason Heffernan reminded campers it is their responsibility to check if the area they're visiting is under a Total Fire Ban.

"It was concerning to see several illegal campfires, including a bonfire, during the recent Total Fire Bans on February 22 and 23," Mr Heffernan said.

"This kind of activity increases risk for our forests,

and our fire-fighters.

Before hitting the road, people should download the VicEmergency app and be familiar with local campfire regulations and safety measures to help protect the environment and local communities.

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.

Letter to the Editor

Team Teal at the Mallee Bull Cup

(The Editor, "The Times")
Dear Editor.— At the Birchip Harness Racing Club Mallee Bull Cup meeting on Sunday March 9, attendees will be invited to make a donation to the Women Can Team Teal Campaign.

In all states of Australia and New Zealand in February and March, harness reinswomen wear teal pants while driving. Harness Racing Victoria and Tabcorp donate \$400 for each winning driver in teal pants.

Last season, Charlton reinswoman Ellen Tormey won twenty-four races raising \$9600. Hopefully she will be driving again in 2025.

Funds raised provide women with gynaecological cancer with access to clinical trials, especially in rural and remote areas. Research relies heavily on donations to further their work.

Earlier this week the Melbourne "Herald Sun" reported that "an Australian grown discovery has collared the culprit causing deadly ovarian cancer to return.

"Identifying what causes the disease to return offers women hope that they can defeat the cancer. Clinical trials are expected to start early next year."

This year at the Birchip meeting, ambassador Dianne Byron (nee Hogan, an "old"

Tchum Lake girl) will be in attendance. Dianne was diagnosed with Ovarian Cancer seven years ago and is still going well, mainly due to treatment procedures developed in research clinics.

Admission to the Birchip Harness Racing Club meeting is free, but guests are invited to make a donation to the "Women Can Team Teal" campaign at the gate with the special SES volunteers. EFT-POS will be available. Last year the donations tally was an amazing \$3600.

Let's all enjoy this special day out in Birchip and support a great cause.

Regards,
Maurice "Blackie" Hogan

Police Beat



Gannawarra

Theft from motor vehicle: Between 2 and 3 p.m. on Thursday the 27th of February the victim left their car parked in Scoresby Street, Kerang. During that time, it is reported that a black passport wallet containing cash was stolen from a red holden sedan.

Trailer theft: Between 3 p.m. Wednesday the 26th of February and 7 a.m. the following day, a grey box trailer has been stolen from a building site in Shadforth Street, Kerang.

Attempted burglary: At about 2 a.m. on Wednesday the 26th of February the victim was woken by the sound of someone trying to open the front security door of their home in Olsen Road, Koondrook. Entry was not gained.

Swan Hill

Burglary: Between 8.20 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Thursday the 27th of February, an offender has forced entry to a home in Gummow Street, Swan Hill, and stolen cash.



Church Notices

ANGLICAN "Parish of Charlton-Donald"

Enquiries: Rev'd Judi Bird
0435 593 359

Friday, March 14
St. Paul's, Birchip, 5 p.m.
Christmas Crib Service.

Sunday, March 16
St. Martin's, Charlton, 9 a.m.
St. George's, Donald, 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity, W'burn, 3 p.m.
Christmas Crib Service.

Festival Forges Ahead

• Continued from page 1.

and reminded Council of impact of late cancellation and the financial loss to businesses which have stocked up to cater to the influx of visitors already arriving in the district.

"Esoteric is more than just a festival, it is a vital economic driver for the local community," said Rachel.

"Each year, it brings thousands of visitors who spend money at local businesses –

fuel stations, accommodation providers, cafés, hardware stores and many more. The loss of the Esoteric Festival would not just impact festival organisers, it would send shockwaves through our local economy and beyond."

Petition

They were armed with a petition signed by over 13,000 signatures of supporters of the festival, pleading for council to review its decision and at least grant a permit for a 12-month period.

Finally, John McConville spoke highly of the Goldsmith family as being particularly decent and generous people, highlighting their unfailing loyalty to the community and the respect they receive from their peers in return.

He also mentioned the international acclaim the festival has been receiving, attracting international visitors to the region. He implored councillors and council staff to visit the festival site themselves to see how amazing it actually is.

"This is voted as one of the best festivals in the world," he said. "The music industry is failing because of all of these rules and regulations being placed on events, but we don't need that – we're all in this together."

Permit Granted

Following the speakers, Councillor Milne announced the permit to be granted under certain conditions, specifically the duration of the planning permit being reduced from 10 years to 12 months, and the event complying with emergency services standards with CFA, Ambulance, GWMWater and other relevant emergency services departments all checked off for this year's event to proceed.

Cheers

There were audible cheers and much celebration from those who had turned up by the busload in support of the Esoteric Festival.

Showing its gratitude to the entire town for the ongoing support, organisers announced free festival entry to anyone from Donald; all you have to do is show your ID at the gate to get your chance to check out a world-class event held right here in district.

It's On Now

Esoteric Festival opened at Gil Gil yesterday (March 6), with the opening ceremony scheduled to commence tonight at the Ascension Stage. Locals and visitors to the region are strongly encouraged to show their support to this vital tourism event.



• The relief is evident as Karen Goldsmith celebrates with Cr. Graeme Milne following the Council's decision.



• Sam Goldsmith is quick to shake hands with all council staff and councillors present.



• Cr. Graeme Milne reads the motion and conditions.

Next Week's "Times"

With the Labour Day long weekend approaching, please be advised that next week's editions of the "Times" will be on Wednesday, March 12 and Friday, March 14.

All advertising and other material for publication should be submitted as early as possible, to meet printing deadlines.

“Late Mail” Has the Answers

Twenty tables of locals and their visitors competed in the Birchip Tennis and Cricket Club quiz night on Friday at the Birchip Community Leisure Centre.

As usual, the questions ranged from local general knowledge to worldwide politics, movies, sport, geography, art, and music and it is always surprising to see who knows what, and who can recall it when needed.

The generous donations from the local traders and businesses ensured there were lots of prizes to be won throughout the night, with six in-between rounds including “Who am I?”, “What town am I?”, and “Name the Song and Artist”.

Six attendees were delighted to take home their mystery prizes donated by Mallee Shearing Shed, Birchip Newsagency, Birchip IGA, SARE, Birchip Hardware, YBS, Mallee Branded, Birchip Post Office, and Bowen’s Sports Store.

Stellar Form

The return of Boyd Pickering and Kim Stewart to the “Late Mail” team with regular team members Stephanie Coffey, Georgina Warne, Tim Coffey, and Kellie Matthews saw them in stellar form, only missing out on six correct answers from eighty questions. Their impressive total of 84 out of 90 earned them the first

prize meal vouchers donated by the Birchip Hotel.

Whilst the “Late Mail” team never looked like being headed, it was close for second between “Putin My Mouth” and “Anthony’s on His Albows and Kneesies”, who also had impressive results, scoring 10s on multiple occasions. Eventually, it was the “Putin” team who finished second to win the pizza vouchers donated by the Birchip Café, with 77 points.

Table Warmer

The two tables made up of BCG staff also did well, and regular quizzers on the “Not Much Has Changed” table were also thereabouts adding to the intrigue on the night.

The table warmers, with quizzes on famous faces, advertising slogans, big tourist attractions, and collective names for animals, were a little easier this year, with most tables scoring high twenties or low thirties out of a total of forty.

The winners with 32 were the “Whirly Wise Guys” (Kellianne and Jim Sheahan, Paul and Cathy Lowry, and Danny and Julie Lowry), and they won coffee and cake vouchers donated by Olive Joy Café.

Not to be outdone, Tadhg Lowry’s table won the cash pool in the “Poor List” competition, where representatives from the tables had to name as many streets, roads, crescents, or avenues in Birchip as they could.

Student Tables

It was great to see several student tables competing on the night and scoring higher than several of the adult tables. “Danny Crabb”, with Allie Knights, Tylah Haslam, Imogen Boyle, Austin Dean, Eva Coffey, and Keira Lowry, won the six bakery vouchers for best junior table donated by Sharp’s Bakery.

One of the highlights of the evening was the much-anticipated raffle draw, where several lucky winners took home incredible prizes valued at over \$2000. These were won by Stephanie Coffey (a \$600 Katana 4-Piece Power Tool Kit donated by O’Connors), Zoe Wilson (pot belly stove donated by Nutrien Ag), Tess Lee (a sports pack donated by Bicknell’s Inter-sports), and Kate Gifford (grinder donated by Mallee Steel).

Jim Sheahan earned himself around \$200 in the \$2



• Winning team “Late Mail”, left to right, back row: Steph Coffey, Tim Coffey, Boyd Pickering. Front row: Kim Stewart, Kellie Matthews, Georgina Warne.

coin drop and had the good fortune of peeling all the stickers off his prize pool. The winner of the best table name was “Tess Tickle”, earning Tess Lee’s team members all a box of chocolates donated by

WMA Accounting.

The generosity of the sponsors plays a significant role in making the evening enjoyable and rewarding for all attendees and the tennis and cricket clubs are incredibly grateful.

A big thank is also extended to everyone who participated and contributed to the Quiz Night. Your enthusiasm and support made the event a fun night and a successful fundraiser for the two clubs.



• Winning junior team, left to right: Tylah Haslam, Imogen Boyle, Eva Coffey, Keira Lowry, Allie Knights, absent Austin Dean.

Government Urged to Commit to Rural Maternity Services

Leading up to International Women’s Day on Saturday, March 8, The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) is calling on all political parties to outline their policies to address the worsening crisis in rural maternity care, as closures and service downgrades put women, babies, and families at risk.

The latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that nearly 80,000 women give birth outside Australia’s cities each year.

ACRRM President Dr Rod Martin says that with so many women and babies reliant on high-quality healthcare close to home, it is critical maternity care is prioritised in political discussions.

“We welcome both major parties’ support for women’s health in their election promises, but we are yet to see a clear commitment to improving rural maternity services,” Dr Martin says.

“In recent months, there has been increasing media coverage of maternity service closures and downgrades across the country including in Tasmania, Far North Queensland, and New South Wales.

“These losses diminish access to affordable care for rural women and their families and significantly lower maternal safety.

“We should not have the death of a mother or a baby to signal the need for true change backed by genuine investment.”

ACRRM has outlined practical solutions to improve maternity services in its 2025-2026 Pre-Budget Submission, calling for:

- A commitment to stopping rural maternity service closures.

- Targeted funding to attract and retain the rural maternity workforce, including Rural Generalists (RGs) skilled in obstetrics and anaesthetics.

- An intergovernmental taskforce to secure funding and ensure the continuity of rural maternity and women’s health services at risk of closure.

Dr Martin says that properly funded, rural-focused models that integrate RGs with advanced obstetric and anaesthetic training, working alongside midwives and other health professionals, can provide high-quality care locally, reducing the financial and emotional burden on rural families.

“RGs are essential in antenatal and postnatal care, planned deliveries, and emergency obstetric cases.

“We must also ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support this vital service,” Dr Martin adds.

A recent success story is the integrated women’s health service established in May last year for the Queensland communities of Weipa, Mapoon, Napranum, and Aurukun.

“By incorporating RGs with obstetric and anaesthetic

training, the service has enabled more mothers to give birth closer to home, improving outcomes and reducing the disruption of leaving their communities for care,” Dr Martin says.

“This model puts the health of women, babies, and families in rural and remote communities at the forefront.

“It is driven by Rural Generalists who are skilled at providing high-quality continuous care as well as specialist care when and where it is most needed.”

Church Notices

DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES

“East Wimmera Parish”

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

Fr. Gerry Prunty
0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator
– Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976

Corack East Wind

Renewable Energy from ACEN



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

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Every Wednesday 1pm-6pm

Commencing 19 March, 2025

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Boardroom

Charlton Park Community Bank Complex
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www.corackeastwind.com.au

info@corackeastwind.com.au

1800 498 550

Corack East Wind

"Times" Classifieds

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

DEATH
ADAMS.— Colin
Passed away
February 25, 2025

A friendship I've been blessed to share. I'll miss our daily cuppas and chats.

A true gentleman now resting in peace.

—Raelene



DEATH
HOSE.— Kathy

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Kathy Hose, Life Member of Donald Amateur Basketball Association. Kathy held many roles at the club and was instrumental in teaching younger generations the game of basketball by running Aussie Hoops for many years.

Our sincere condolences to Claire, Marcia, Tarah, Sacha, Brydie and Kailey and their families.

—From all past and present members, players and supporters of D.A.B.A

DEATH
PEARSE.— William "Bill"

Passed away peacefully on March 4, 2025, aged 91 yrs.

Loving husband of Patricia and father of Grant, Aaron and Drew. Father-in-law of Edwina. Treasured Grandpa of Tom and Lola.

Now resting in God's hands



DEATH
LINDSAY.— Ashley William

Service No. 312826

Born June 27, 1951, sadly passed away on February 28, 2025 at the age of 73.

Loved partner of Denice Cozens.

Ashley will be deeply missed by family & friends.

Forever in God's care.

Funeral arrangements see: kellyfuneralsbirchip.com.au

Mark and Raelene O'Halloran
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP



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DEATH
LINDSAY.— Ashley

Birchip RSL is saddened by the passing of our esteemed member, Ashley. His military service will be remembered with pride by us all. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ash's family and friends.

Lest We Forget

DEATH
Ash

Birchip people will miss him.

—From the Commercial Hotel and Birchip R.S.L

FUNERAL
PEARSE.—

A Service to celebrate Bill's life will be held in St. Andrew's Uniting Church, Donald on Tuesday, March 11 at 10.30 a.m. The cortege will then leave for the Donald Lawn Cemetery.

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IN MEMORIAM
HARRIS.— March 11, 1960

Dulcie 48 yrs
Dawn 18 yrs
Graeme 15 yrs

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Gone but never forgotten.

—Max, Margaret and Geoffery

THANK-YOU

We would like to sincerely thank the volunteers from the Litchfield and Donald Fire Brigades, for their prompt action in attending the fire started by lightning on our property on February 2, 2025.

—Pete & Liz Russell



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Law Notice

Shirley Maureen Davidson, late of Riverview Aged Care, 1 Aitken Avenue, Donald, Victoria 3480, Home Duties, deceased.

CREDITORS, next of kin, and others having claims in respect of the will of the above named deceased, who died on 5 September 2024 are required by the executors, Kerryn James Davidson and Darryl Leslie Davidson, c/- the undermentioned solicitor, to send particulars of their claims to them by 21 May 2025 after which date the executors may convey or distribute the assets, having regard only to the claims of which they then have notice.

MCL LEGAL
78 Napier Street,
St Arnaud, VIC 3478



REMINDER

Birchip RSL Sub-Branch
POOL NIGHT

TONIGHT

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WIMMERA MALLEE CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Grand-Finals

TOMORROW SATURDAY, MARCH 8,
TIMES TBA

"A" Grade

Donald-Jeffcott v. Birchip @ Warracknabeal

"B" Grade

Donald-Jeffcott v. Watchem Panthers @ Marnoo

Esoteric Festival

Limited tickets available

Esoteric Festival is on again at Gil Gil from midday Thursday, March 6 and concludes at midday on Tuesday, March 11.

Gate hours are: 8 a.m. to midnight - Friday to Monday

Opening ceremony is on at 7 p.m. Friday and the closing ceremony is at 9.30 p.m. at the Ascension Stage.

"Local Look" tickets are available from Friday to Monday at the gate, bring ID.

For any enquiries or concerns throughout the weekend, the Site Office can be contacted anytime on: (03) 9086 5255 or ECC (03) 9086 5253

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The Birchip Cricket Club thanks its generous sponsors for season 2024-2025



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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.



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Church Notices

UNITING CHURCH (North Central Living Waters Cluster)

Donald, 10 a.m.

Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services, 10 a.m. Sunday, March 16

Contact Number: 5497 1033



www.granitecommunitychurch.com

At Granite Church 10.30 a.m.

Speaker: Ross Barnes
Baptist Union of Victoria



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Allergy Advice for Rural Australians

A groundbreaking new platform, believed to be the first of its kind globally, is set to transform the landscape of allergy care for rural and remote Australians.

The National Allergy Council, in partnership with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), has launched allergy assistTM, a free online platform designed to provide timely, specialist advice to General Practitioners (GPs) and Rural Generalists.

With over 5 million Australians affected by allergic conditions – including food allergies, insect sting and bite allergies, allergic rhinitis, and anaphylaxis – the need for patients to be effectively managed by their GP or Rural Generalist, has never been greater.

This initiative offers a lifeline to those in rural and remote areas who are unable to access specialist care due to distance.

Funding

The allergy assistTM platform – an initiative of the National Allergy Council’s Shared Care for Allergy Project – is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Allergies and Anaphylaxis.

Expected to assist thousands of doctors and, in turn, their patients, allergy assistTM aims to bridge the gap in healthcare access for rural, remote and First Nations communities while alleviating healthcare costs by reducing unnecessary referrals visits.

This supports the Shared Care for Allergy Project’s aim of patients receiving the right care, at the right time, from the right healthcare professional, in the right place.

Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ged Kearney says, “All Australians deserve best possible healthcare, including those living rurally or remotely. Allergy assistTM is a major step forward in achieving that, empowering local doctors to provide timely specialist care.

“As a nurse I saw just how debilitating and common allergies can be. So, now it’s important to me that the Federal Government supports this initiative.”

The allergy assistTM platform provides healthcare professionals with access to an education and advice hub, featuring online learning

modules, diagnostic support, and links to ASCIA resources.

It allows GPs to submit de-identified patient cases via a secure system, where a panel of clinical immunology/allergy specialists can review and provide guidance within 48 hours.

The platform also supports GPs in diagnosing allergies, selecting appropriate testing and treatments, ensuring proper patient use of medications, and determining risk levels – enabling local management when appropriate or referral in cases of anaphylaxis risk.

Hosted on ACRRM’s learning management system, it is available at no cost to ACRRM members, and other doctors who apply for access in regional, rural, and remote areas across Australia.

Addressing a Growing Crisis

Allergy is among the fastest growing chronic conditions in Australia, affecting approximately 1 in 5 Australians, with food allergies alone affecting 10% of babies in Australia. For many families,

allergies aren’t just an inconvenience – they are life-threatening conditions that demand prompt identification of the allergen and education of the patient and their families to avoid further exposure and reactions.

“For families in rural areas, conditions like allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever, are often trivialised, yet they can significantly impact a person’s quality of life – affecting their sleep, work, and social interactions,” said Maria Said, National Allergy Council Director and Co-chair, and CEO of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia.

“People with allergic rhinitis often face long waits to see a specialist in a tertiary hospital due to triage systems that don’t prioritise their condition. Allergy assistTM brings vital expertise closer to home, empowering GPs to manage patients locally where possible and providing families with the support and care they need.”

Building on Proven Success

The platform builds on the success of ACRRM’s Tele-Derm,

an online dermatology service that has supported over 5,000 rural doctors with specialist advice for more than 20 years.

ACRRM President Dr Rod Martin says, “By applying the successful model of Tele-Derm to allergy care, we’re giving rural doctors a tool that can make an immediate difference. This initiative strengthens the capabilities of Rural Generalists while ensuring their patients receive the care they deserve.”

Dr Melanie Wong, National Allergy Council Director, and Clinical immunology/allergy specialist, adds “This platform is not only a game-changer for allergy care in rural Australia, but as a likely world-first, it positions Australia as a leader in innovative solutions to healthcare inequities. By educating and upskilling doctors, it ensures better outcomes for their patients. It’s a transformative tool that addresses the unique challenges of rural healthcare and empowers local doctors to deliver life-changing care closer to home.”

Looking Ahead

The 12-month pilot of allergy assistTM will run until February 2026, during which its impact will be evaluated. If

successful, the platform has the potential to become a permanent fixture in Australia’s healthcare landscape, reducing inequities and ensuring rural communities receive quality care. The pilot will be evaluated and has ethics approval through The University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: 2025/ET000027).

“This is about bringing equality to healthcare,” Maria Said concluded. “No matter where you live, you deserve access to quality allergy care.”

As Australia grapples with the rising tide of allergies, allergy assistTM offers a lifeline to those who need it most – a bridge to better health for all Australians.

For more information, visit: <https://nationalallergy-council.org.au/projects/shared-care-for-allergy/allergy-assist>



LABOUR DAY WEEKEND – OPENING HOURS

	Thursday 6th March	Friday 7th March	Saturday 8th March	Sunday 9th March	Monday 10th March	Tuesday 11th March
BP Donald	6am-7pm	6am-7pm	7am-7pm	7am-7pm	7am-7pm	6am-7pm
Bullocks Head Tavern Bistro	3pm-Late 6pm-8pm	3pm-Late 6pm-8pm	3pm-Late 6pm-8pm	Closed	Closed	3pm-Late Closed
Donald Bakery	6am-2pm	6am-2pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	6am-2pm
Donald Chinese Restaurant	5pm-9pm	5pm-9pm	5pm-9pm	5pm-9pm	Closed	Closed
Donald Hotel	11.30am-Late	12pm-Late	11.30am-Late	11.30am-Late	4pm-Late	4pm-Late
Donald’s Family Butcher	8am-5.45pm	8am-5.45pm	9am-12noon	Closed	Closed	8am-5.45pm
Donald Newsagency	5am-5.30pm	5am-10am	5am-12pm	Closed	Closed	5am-5.30pm
Harvest Cafe	11am-8pm	11am-9pm	8.30am-8.30pm	8.30am-8pm	8.30am-4pm	11am-8pm
Jeffcott Hotel	10am-10pm	10am-10pm	10am-10pm	Closed	2pm-10pm	2pm-10pm
SA Coffee & Co	Closed	Closed	Closed	9am - 12noon	Closed	Closed
Spud’s Cafe	6am-2pm	6am- 2pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	6am-2pm
Weir’s IGA	8am-7pm	8am-7pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	8am-7pm
Wood’s Street Cafe	Cafe 9am-3pm Fish & Chips 5.30pm-7.30pm	Cafe 9am-3pm Fish & Chips 5.30pm-7.30pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

Subject to Change - Please check hours with relevant business



Weaving with Wooden Looms

The Charlton Neighbourhood House was excited to host a very popular activity that was well supported by the community.

David Beatty led the class that instructed residents in the art of weaving using wooden looms. At the spacious well-lit location of the Charlton Senior Citizens Rooms, par-

ticipants were greeted with an array of machines that would be theirs for the day.

Wooden looms have a fascinating history that dates

back thousands of years. The earliest looms appeared around 5 BC and were simple wooden frames designed to hold threads in place for weaving. Over time, these

looms evolved, incorporating innovations like heddles and treadles to make weaving more efficient. The Industrial Revolution brought significant changes, with wooden looms transitioning to mechanized versions. However, traditional wooden looms are still cher-

ished today for handweaving and artisanal crafts.

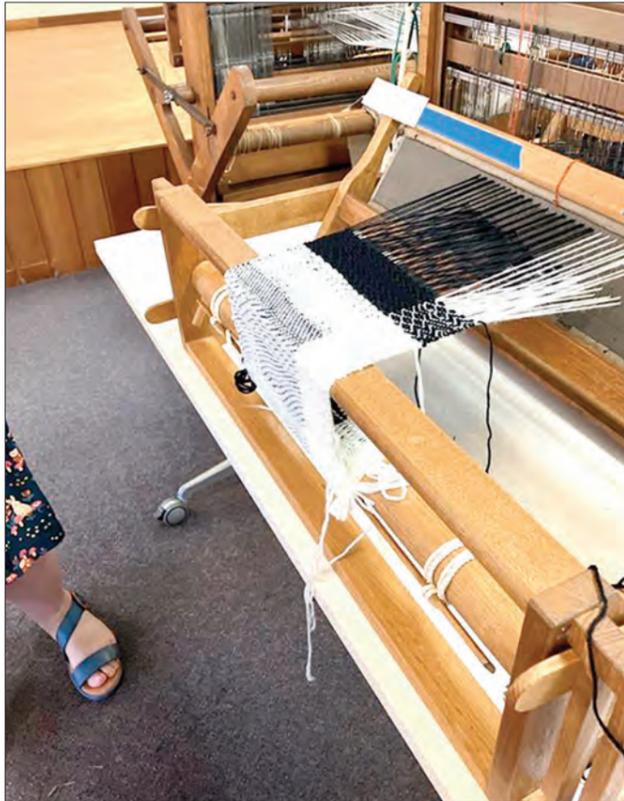
The eager participants received some first hand knowledge from David and created some basic items to take away. All agreed it was a terrific activity and are keen to return

and continue their education in weaving.

For details of these and other exciting activities or courses call the Charlton Neighbourhood House on 0473 759 456 for further details.



• David instructing participants.



• Weaving loom.



• David Beatty checking the looms.

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Visit by Parliamentarians

Last week the Grade 4-6 students from Birchip p-12 School welcomed Dr. Anne Webster, MP, Federal Member for Mallee, along with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Honourable Milton Dick.

Their visit was part of the Parliament in Schools program, which promotes a bipartisan approach to civics and citizenship education. They travelled to local schools to explain the parliamentary process and the development of laws in Australia.

Dr. Webster discussed her role in the opposition and how she represents her community, while the Honourable Speaker outlined his responsibilities in maintaining order and overseeing debates in the House of Representatives. The visit provided a valuable opportunity for students to gain first-hand insight to our government.

Additionally, they met with our senior Student Board executive to discuss issues affecting young people in our community. Dr. Webster also brought a replica of the Mace, ceremonial symbol of the authority of the House of Representatives.

Fit2Drive Program

The Birchip P-12 School Year 11 cohort participated in the Fit2Drive program last Thursday. Zoe Stewart presented, and the students found her to be very engaging and entertaining. Zoe became a Fit2Drive presenter to help young people become more empowered to make positive choices surrounding road use.

This year the Fit2Drive session focused on the Young Road Users: A Commitment to Staying Safe. Zoe ran the students through unsafe driving behaviours group exercises, and they discussed what constitutes high and low risk behaviour.

Mates

Following the Fit2Drive program, the Year 12 class attended a Looking After Your Mates session run by Phil Tennant, representative of the Department of Transport from Bendigo. The presenter emphasised the need for good



road sense and always looking after your mates. He touched on the impact a crash has on everyone, not just the immediate family.

He asked students to reflect on how such an event would make them feel and stressed the sense of loss and sadness it creates amongst the wider community.

Swimming

In sporting news four students Lucy Coffey, Des Coffey, Grace McAuliffe and River Ryan competed in the Black Ranges Swimming Carnival.

All students swam extremely well; all four students have qualified to complete at the Regional Swimming Carnival held next month.



• Black Ranges Swimming: Des Coffey, River Ryan, Grace McAuliffe and Lucy Coffey.



• Fit2Drive: Georgia Hogan seated in the police car.



• The Honourable Milton Dick and Dr Anne Webster MP with the Birchip P-12 School Senior School Executive.

Concerns Over Use of Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

Fresh concerns have been raised in state parliament about Labor's handling of the Allan Government's Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF).

The ESVF, a newly doubled and rebranded version of the former Fire Services Property Levy, has sparked criticism for its lack of transparency.

The Nationals' Member for Mildura, Jade Benham, said Labor's decision to include "volunteers" in the levy's name was misleading and did not change the reality of a double tax burden.

"Labor refuses to disclose how the \$2.1 billion it collects is being distributed," Ms Benham said.

"The Allan Government continues to dodge questions, yet our community has a right to know how much of this

money is supporting essential emergency services and how much is actually reaching our underfunded volunteer organisations."

In parliament, the Nationals demanded that Labor come clean on how the ESVF is being allocated.

"Volunteer emergency service organisations remain in the dark about Labor's tax. I have met with both the Country Fire Authority and local councils recently to discuss the potential impacts of this tax and to understand if stakeholders on the ground have any clarity over it," Ms Benham said.

"Instead of properly funding them, Labor is diverting this levy to cover core government agencies such as Triple Zero, the State Control Centre, and Emergency Management Victoria – services that should already be funded from existing tax revenue.

"The Allan Government must be upfront about where this money is going and ensure all emergency service organisations receive a fair share," Ms Benham said.

"Additionally, volunteers who dedicate their time to keeping our community safe deserve a levy exemption in recognition of their invaluable service."

BCG RISKWISE ROADSHOW

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Farm Succession Planning

- 🕒 Wednesday 12 March, 9:00am – 2:30pm
- 📍 Birchip Community Leisure Centre

Gain tools, insights and expert guidance to start shaping your succession plans with confidence.

Farm Performance

- 🕒 Tuesday 18 March, 9:00am – 2:00pm
- 📍 Donald Recreation Reserve

Through analysing a model farm benchmark, gain skills in assessing your own farm performance.

Machinery Investment & Land Expansion

- 🕒 Wednesday 26 March, 8:30am – 3:30pm
- 📍 Sea Lake Community Complex

Two part workshop to help you navigate key investment decisions. Attend one or both sessions – Machinery Investment (8.30am-12.00pm), Land Expansion (1.00pm-3.30pm)





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bcg.org.au/events →



For People of All Abilities... Water Aerobics Continue

Another perfect morning for exercise in the water at Donald. The second session was well attended, and instructor Meg Tonkin was thrilled with some extra participants.

Once again some of the Donald Dolphin participants (Wendy Harvey, Helen Amos, Maree Cullen, Margo Painter

and Michelle May) came along and assisted, which is very much appreciated.

Also appreciated is the

continued support from the Buloke Shire which provides the lifeguards (Darcy O'Shea and Jesse Amos) who were on duty for the second session.

"Having the Buloke Shire Council on board to support inclusive sport and recreation makes these initiatives much easier to conduct and more affordable for those participating, which is very welcoming," said Rhonda Allan, of the Mallee Sports Assembly.

As mentioned previously, this program is an initiative of the "Access for All Abilities" program (funded by Sport & Recreation of Victoria) which focuses on inclusive sport and recreation for all levels of abilities.

Meg delivered another fun and energetic session, and the participants really enjoyed the support from the Donald Dolphin ladies. The pool season is drawing to a close and there are now two sessions remaining. (Wednesdays, March 5 and 12, 2025, 10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.).



• Lifeguards on duty Jesse Amos (left) and Darcy O'Shea.



• Donald Dolphin member Maree Cullen (left) supported Doug Walker (right) during the session.



• Lyrebirds have a hidden talent for farming.

Bird with a Hidden Talent for Farming

From La Trobe University

A beloved Australian bird best known for its stunning tail and powers of mimicry may have a cunning hidden talent. New research has revealed the superb lyrebird to be a resourceful farmer, creating micro-habitats to host and fatten its prey before returning later to feast.

Scientists from La Trobe University observed the ground-dwelling birds working to create habitats suitable for their diet of worms, centipedes and spiders.

In a new paper published in the Journal of Animal Ecology, the researchers found that lyrebirds arranged litter and soil on the forest floor in ways that promote more prey.

They fenced lyrebirds out from small areas throughout the forest to create lyrebird-free environments. In some of these areas the researchers

raked the leaf litter and soil to simulated lyrebird foraging. Where raking had been undertaken, there were more types and larger invertebrates than the areas without simulated lyrebird foraging.

Rarely Seen

Lead researcher Alex Maisey said this type of animal farming was rarely seen in nature.

"Lyrebirds set up the perfect home for their prey, creating conditions with more food resources and effectively

fattening them up before eating them," Dr Maisey said.

The superb lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*) is mainly found in the moist eucalypt forests in south-eastern Australia.

Dr Maisey said lyrebirds, through foraging, heavily influenced the plants and animals that lived in Australia's south-eastern forests.

In this project, lyrebirds were measured moving an average of 155 tonnes of litter and soil per hectare while farming invertebrates.

"They also lower the intensity of bushfires by burying leaves and branches that fuel fires, thereby shaping whole ecosystems," Dr Maisey said.

"Lyrebirds are widespread and active across millions of hectares of forest. Their farming actions play an important role in maintaining forest biodiversity."



• Meg Tonkin (left standing) encouraging the participants.



• Left to right: Fay Taylor and her carer Tayla Jones with Mandy Ali watching the swim session under the shade.

"Times" Crossword

QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8167 - SOLUTIONS

Across - 7, Disintegrate. 8, Pistol. 9, Throng. 10, Bassoon. 12, Hairy. 15, Stork. 16, Gazelle. 18, Plunge. 20, Potato. 22, Vituperative.
Down - 1, Militant. 2, Mint. 3, Stilton. 4, Agate. 5, Carriage. 6, Keen. 11, Strength. 13, Relative. 14, Vampire. 17, Leapt. 19, Love. 21, Tote.

Donald Basketball's Big Night:

The Donald Basketball Association finals took place on Thursday, February 27, with a lineup of games showcasing the talent of local players.

Under-12s:

Wildcats v. Midgets

The under-12s final saw the Wildcats, coached by Evie Donnellon and Milla Adams, take on the Carlee Lydom's Midgets. Umpires Kath Campbell and Emma Burke officiated the match.

It was a thrilling contest with plenty of back-and-forth action with all team members contributing to the score board, with the Midgets leading at half time 18-8. The young athletes gave it their all, and the Wildcats were continually finding space for scoring opportunities, however, they were missing some crucial goals. Midgets managed to score 3 unanswered goals and time was running out for the Wildcats, who to their credit, never gave up until the final siren. Midgets won 26 to Wildcats 14. Standout players for the match included Holly Goldsmith and Larou Clapham. After the match, awards were presented in front of an appreciative crowd of family and friends.

Under-12s Coaches' Awards:

- Saints – Blake Michael (Coach: Eliza Rotherham. *Trophy donated by Corey & Michelle Donnellon*). Blake's eagerness to learn and improve his skills has been impressive. His confidence grew throughout the season, and Eliza looks forward to seeing him develop further.

- Dodgers – Caleb Michael (Coach: Glenn Pearse. *Trophy donated by Bullock's Head Tavern*). Caleb consistently listened to his coach's advice and prioritized teamwork, often passing to teammates instead of taking the shot himself.

- Midgets – Justin Hepworth (Coach: Carlee Lydom. *Trophy donated by The Clothes Bin*). Justin, in his first year of basketball, was always positive and encouraged his teammates, ensuring everyone was involved in the game.

- Wildcats – Holly Goldsmith (Coaches: Milla Adams & Evie Donnellon. *Trophy donated by Nick Pearse Sand*

and Soil). Holly was a hard-working and determined player who never gave up. She followed instructions, encouraged teammates, and brought great energy to the team.

Most Improved Players:

Wildcats, Charlotte Perry (*Donated by "The Buloke Times"*); Saints, Aki Norton; Dodgers, Anisia Podasca (*Donated by Mortlock Farming*); Midgets, Anabel Robinson.

Under-17 Girls:

Devils v. Dodgers

The Dodgers were coached by Megan Tonkin, with Glenn Davis stepping in for the night. The Devils were led by Abby and Kim Griffiths. Umpires for the match were Carmen Bath and Kath Campbell.

Both teams seemed to start nervously with fouls slowing down the pace of the game. At the 11-minute mark, scores were almost level with the Dodgers up by 1 point, 7-6. Milla Adams found her straps and was driving well, contributing to a half-time lead by 10 points, 20-10.

The second half saw the Dodgers dominate, securing a 33-16 victory. Even with leading scorer Milla Adams fouling out, the result was never in doubt.

Awards: Best in Final, Milla Adams; Most Valuable Player (*donated by BB Harvesting*), Milla Adams (21 votes); Runner-up MVP (*donated by Springlake Farming*), Evie Donnellon (18 votes); Top Goal Scorer, Milla Adams (244 points).

Coaches' Trophies:

- Dodgers – Victory Davis (Coach: Megan Tonkin. *Trophy donated by Cherie and Richard Reilly*). Victory's confidence and skills improved throughout the season. She was a true team player, always encouraging and supporting her teammates.

- Devils – Evie Donnellon (Coaches: Kim & Abby Griffiths. *Trophy donated by Mark and Kim Griffiths*). Evie gave 110% every game, listening intently to coaching feedback and consistently hustling on defence.



• Men's Best in final winner Jam Borden.

- Midgets – Patience Beavis (Coach: Sophie Fulton. *Trophy donated by Angie Donnellon*). Patience showed tremendous growth in her first season, displaying dedication and teamwork.

Under-16 Boys:

Midgets v. Panthers

Richard Reilly coached the Midgets, while Daniel Pettifer led the Panthers. Umpires were Sara Adams and Matt Godkin.

The game was neck and neck, with the score locked at 12-12 after 14 minutes. With two minutes remaining, the match was still tied at 16-16, creating an electric atmosphere in the crowd. The Midgets managed to edge ahead, securing a 33-27 victory.

Awards: Best in Final (*Trophy donated by The Jeffcott Hotel*), Luca Rice; Most Valuable Player (*Trophy donated by Robert & Debbie Adams*), Luca Rice (25 votes); Runner-up MVP (*Trophy donated by Spuds Café*), Jesse Lydom (20 votes); Top Goal Scorer (*Trophy donated by David & Carey Brennan*), Luca Rice (243 points).



• Under-12s in action: Emmanuel Soni is chased by Isaiah Stirling and Larou Clapham.

Coaches' Trophies:

- Devils – Noah Michael (Coach: Will Noble. *Trophy donated by Sara Adams*). Noah improved significantly throughout the season, taking on coaching advice and growing as a player.

- Midgets – Jake Italia (Coach: Richard Reilly. *Trophy donated by Des & Kerry Wood*). Known as the "smooth operator," Jake displayed confident mid-range shooting and had a major impact on games.

- Olympics – Elijah Mansibang (Coaches: Chase & Bronte Campbell. *Trophy donated by Mensland*). Elijah showed tremendous improvement, consistently putting his team first.

- Panthers – Nullah Clapham (Coach: Daniel Pettifer). Nullah's confidence and defensive skills were key to his team's success.

Men's Final:

Saints v. Midgets

Marc Adams and Sara Adams umpired the final game of the night. The Saints jumped to an early eight-point lead, but the Midgets fought back, the contest was tight. The sibling rivalry between Chase and Bronte Campbell was a highlight, with the brothers taking their competitiveness on court to the crowd's delight. Seamless teamwork from both sides kept the entire arena on the edge of their seats.

At half-time, the Saints led 21-16, and with 12.5 minutes

left, the game was tied at 19-19. The Saints found their rhythm, fuelled by Jam Borden's accurate three-pointers, and pulled away for a 45-27 victory. A quality match.

Awards: Most Valuable Player (*donated by The Donald Hotel*), Brannon Walker (20 votes); runner-up MVP (*donated by AgiElec*), Brady Griffiths (17 votes); Top Goal Scorer (*donated by Donald Auto Elec*), Brannon Walker (161 points).

Special Awards & Acknowledgments

- Geoff "Woofa" Guild Award (Best Club Person): Emma Burke.

- Referee Encouragement Award: Milla Adams.

• Continued on page 11.



• Under-16 boys premiers.



• Men's premiers the Saints, from left: Cooper Anderson, Ben Krause, Sam Goldsmith, Geordie Smith, Bronte Campbell, Jam Borden and Ethan Clapham.



• Under-17 girls premiers the Dodgers from left: Aria Brennan, Kaillie Krause, Milla Adams, Victory Davis and Nevaeh Pearse.

Stadium Hosts Four Grand Finals

• Continued from page 10.
A Season to Remember

Donald Basketball Association president Kim Griffiths thanked the committee members – Kath, Emma, Matt, Michael, Shannon, Jess, Chris, Richard, and Sara – for their dedication. She emphasised the importance of

youth involvement in the committee to bring fresh ideas and energy to the association.

The season saw an impressive turnout, with 17 kids participating in Aussie Hoops and 126 players overall – a remarkable achievement for a small town.

The night concluded with the raffle draw: Cherie Riley won the Donald Family Butchers' voucher; "Spud" Hepworth won the hydro plant donated by Sara Adams.

It was a fantastic night, and congratulations to Donald Basketball on an incredible season!



• Geoff "Woofa" Guild best club person, Emma Burke.



• Aria Brennan makes a break during the under-16 girls match.



• Under-17 girls award winners, left to right: Patience Beavis, Victory Davis, Evie Donnellon, and Milla Adams.



• Jesse Lydom attempts to break through to score.



• Under-12 premiers the Midgets from left: Coach Carlee Lydom, Elsie Nunn, Larou Clapham, Anabel Robinson, Emmanuel Soni, Jezster Embate and Justin Hepworth.



• Congratulations all round: brothers Chase and Bronte Campbell shake hands at the end of the men's final.



• Under-12 award winners, back row: Holly Goldsmith, Charlotte Perry, Blake Michael, Justin Hepworth, and Anabel Robinson. Front: Anisia Podasca, Aki Norton, and Caleb Michael.



• Under-16 boys award winners, left to right: Noah Michael, Nullah Clapham, Jake Italia.

Rotary Launches Music Scholarship

The Rotary Club of Melbourne has launched the Rotary Victorian Music Scholarship, a new initiative designed to support Victoria's most promising emerging musicians. With a total prize pool of \$10,000, this initiative provides financial support for tuition, instrument purchases, travel for performances, and other essential career-building expenses.

Rotary Melbourne is a longstanding advocate for the arts, committed to fostering young musicians and helping them access essential resources to create opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach.

This scholarship will contribute to the artistic and professional development of its recipients, ensuring that economic constraints do not stand in the way of musical excellence.

Scholarship Overview

The Rotary Victorian Music Scholarship offers financial support to help musicians with tuition fees, the purchase of instruments,

travel expenses for performances, and other essential costs associated with advancing their careers. The scholarship will be awarded as follows: First prize: \$5,000; second prize: \$3,000; third prize: \$2,000.

This scholarship is open to all Australian citizens residing in Victoria, with the selection process focusing on musical talent, artistic potential, financial need, and dedication to community engagement.

Eligibility and Application Process

To be considered for the scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Active Engagement in the Music Community – demonstrated involvement in performances, community music groups, local events, or other musical activities.

- Under the age of 30.
- Australian Citizenship and Victorian residency – applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents.

- Musical Aspiration – a strong commitment to furthering a music career, demonstrated through past achievements, current projects, and future goals.

- Financial Need – evidence of financial hardship that impedes musical development.

- References from Music Professionals – two references from industry professionals, educators, or mentors who can attest to the applicant's talent, dedication, and potential.

Key Dates and Selection Process

Applications open February 2025 with the shortlist announced in May 2025.

A Showcase and Award Ceremony will be held at Sofitel, Melbourne in June 2025.

A Commitment to the Arts

"If I hadn't received a music scholarship at a young age, I may not have had the

opportunity to establish my music school and touring productions. The initial support encouraged me to thrive and share the gift of music with others." – *Karen Kim, Director of Hello Music Studios, Arts Committee Member at Rotary Melbourne.*

"The Rotary Melbourne Music Scholarship fulfils two objectives: the furtherance of the arts and the values of Rotary with relationship to education and giving people in need a start in life. These values are epitomised in the work of this unique committee." – *David Kram, International Conductor and Arts Committee Chairman at Rotary Melbourne.*

"Financial assistance is vital for early-career artists, who often have to balance part-time work with practice

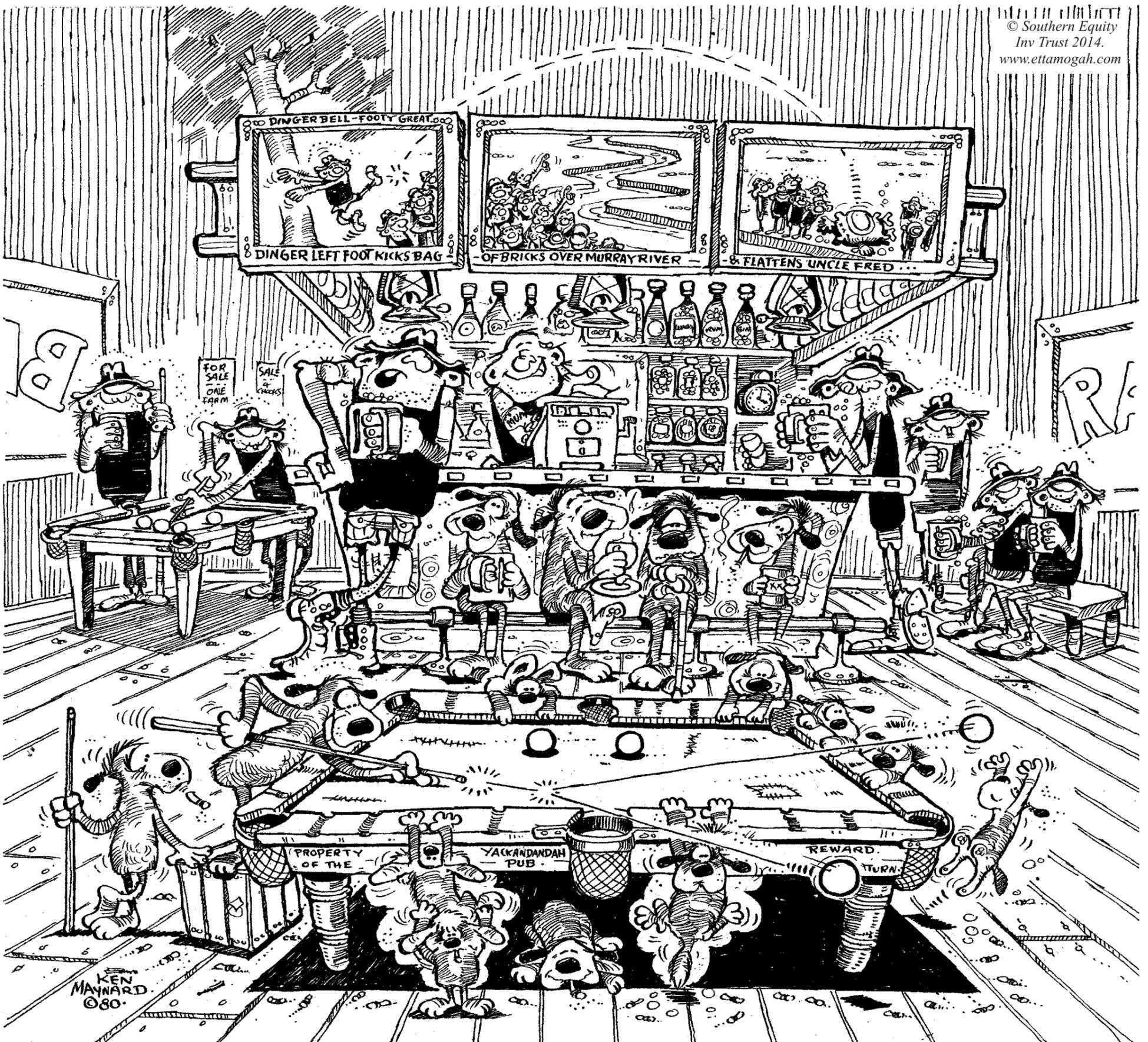
and development. Scholarships like this help alleviate that stress, giving artists breathing space. It affords them dedicated time to focus on their creativity and artistic practice." – *Daniel Szesiong Todd, International Opera Performer and Teacher.*

This scholarship aligns with Rotary's broader mission to support education and community engagement, ensuring that the next generation of musicians has the resources to thrive in the industry.

How to Apply

Applications and additional details about the scholarship, including eligibility criteria and selection processes, can be found at: <https://rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au/music>

The Ettamogah Pub Mob



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www.ettamogah.com

"Th' boss said if we have any more strikes for better pay and shorter hours – don't bother coming back – he'll send our pay cheque straight to th' pub!"

Cup Winner – Disqualified

(By Peter Hibberd)

Last Sunday's Boort Pacing Cup was decided in the stewards' room, in a protest that took forty minutes before a decision was announced.

The original winner, Collective Works, was protested against by runner-up Lincoln River, driven by Kerryn Manning, on the grounds that it gained an unfair advantage by using the sprint lane early in the race and interfered with another runner.

Rule 154, clause 1 states that if a horse breaks gait, its driver shall take immediate action to avoid interference with other runners and without gaining an unfair advantage, restrain the horse to its correct gait before rejoining the race without interference to another runner.

Clause 2 states that where in the opinion of the stewards a driver fails to comply with clause 1, the horse may be

disqualified for the race or placed in a lower position and the driver is guilty of the offence.

Rule 166, clause 2 explains that if the driver of a horse in contravention of 154-1 is guilty of an offence, the horse may be disqualified or given a lower placing. Stewards found that in the sprint lane, Collective Works had improved its position, gained an unfair advantage when re-joining the race and caused interference. Consequently, stewards disqualified Collective Works and placings were amended.

Top Drivers Dominate

Kerryn Manning and James Herbertson, two of

Australia's best drivers, took the honours at the Boort Cup meeting. Kerryn had three winners on the day, including the Hon. Peter Walsh Trotters' Cup and the Neil Beattie Family Boort Pacing Cup.

James "Herby" drove the first two winners on the day. Both started favourite, so punter were off to a great start.

Two trainers Michael Watt and Danny O'Brien both had doubles on the day. Danny's biggest success on the day was with Sir Eros winning the Trotters' Cup.

The Crowd Cheered

One of the biggest cheers I have heard on a racetrack

occurred for St. Arnaud trainer, Scott Torney, with the win of his 12-year-old trotter, Tension Seeker.

The cheers started at least 50 metres before the finish line and continued until he returned back to the finish line. Scott only has two horses in work, and with the win, blew punters away at the big odds of \$21.00.

Congratulations

To president Tim and secretary Tom, another fantastic day of typical country harness racing. I think HRV should have another look at its allocation of meetings and support this club by giving its lost meeting back.



• One of the feature events at most club meetings is the Hygain Pony Trots for future drivers of the sport. The Boort winner was Lollipop with her driver, Ebony Mason. Ebony comes from St. Arnaud.



• Pocketoflollies completes a driving and training double for James "Herby" Herbertson and Michael Watt. This horse was named after a grandfather who loved his grandchildren.



• The first of three winners on the day for Kerryn Manning: The Ninth Wave defeats Midnite Muscle driven by Jack Laughter in the Bill Foley Tribute Trot.

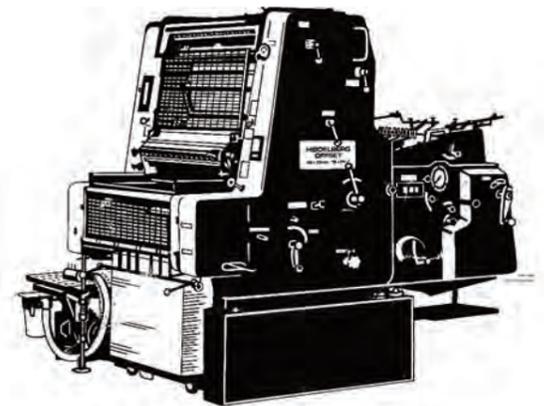


• I don't know who is more happy – the horse or the driver: Tension Seeker smiles for the camera and driver Scott Torney salutes to the crowd after their win.

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Poachers' Weekend Turns Twenty-Five:

[From Donald and Minyip and District Field & Game]

Donald Field and Game (DFG) went on a hunt to figure out how long the Day 2 shoot between Donald and Minyip known as Poachers had been running for. The investigation started last year with Sarah O'Brien (DFG member) asking Tanya Clark (M&DFG member) – Tanya's remark was, "We must be close to twenty-five."

History of Poachers

After scrolling through old minute books, a post on the DFG Facebook page and a challenge set to the "Buloke Times" it was confirmed the first Poachers Weekend was held in March of 2001.

Donald FG Executive meeting notes dated 5th April 2001.

Four competition shoots to be held in Year 2002. Poachers Weekend to remain 1st Saturday in March.

Moved: Ged McLoughlan. Second: Paddy Bloomfield.

From Greg Deutscher (Minyip FG) commenting to a FB post: "According to my old cards and from what I remember, in 2001 there was a two day shoot ran on the first weekend of March, 50 tgts each day, about 60 - 70 shooters shot it. The next year 2002 Donald ran 75 tgts and Minyip 50 tgts. And in 2003 the same layout. Then in 2004 both clubs shot 75 tgts. I won the Overall Highgun in 2003 which has Poachers' Weekend on the trophy".

Excerpt from the "Buloke Times" Poachers' Weekend article: Fifty-target shoots were held on Saturday and Sunday, March 3 and 4. This was the first ever "Poachers' weekend" and a new two-day initiative for Minyip and Donald Field & Game clubs

Poachers 2025

A brilliant weekend for shooting and socialising. Donald F&G had 179 shooters attend on Saturday 1st March (Day 1) and on Day 2 at Minyip and District F&G there were 196 shooters in attendance. Overall 160 shooters shot both days. 29 different clubs from Victoria, NSW and South Australia were represented.

Prizes

Minyip's major raffle prize winner of a Companion 45L Fridge was Tim Lardner from Shepparton. The Overall Lucky Door Prize winner of an Angle 40 L Fridge donated by B&G Bulk Haulage was Gavin Pay from Sunraysia.

Donald – Day 1

Shoot offs were held for: AA Grade for 2nd and 3rd: John Handley, Russell Chaplin, Leigh Norton and Brendon Pearson.

A Grade for 2nd: Phillip Toose and Peter Chase.

B Grade for 2nd and 3rd: James Fritsch, Gene Di Gandomenico and Russell Lardner.

Ladies for 3rd: Brenda Murphy and Shannon Ware.

Vets for 2nd and 3rd: Barry Wentworth, Denis Kell and Tony Barrett.

Juniors for 3rd: Brendan Winter, Joshua Fitzpatrick and Lachlan Clark.

High Gun: Murray Hill (Minyip) 67.

In memory of Wayne "Wog" Lowan, his son Cameron Betts presented the

Highgun trophy at Donald. Wog won Highgun at Donald in 2016 and 2017, Minyip in 2018 and 2019 and went on to take out the Overall Highgun in 2017, 2018 and 2020. He scored a possible (25/25) in 2022 at Donald, and in 2017 at Minyip he scored a double possible (50/50).

AA Grade: Kevin Jacobs 66 (Moe); 2nd Russell Chaplin 63 (Deni); 3rd John Handley 63 (Clunes).

A Grade: 1st Gavin Pay 65 (Sunraysia); 2nd Tim Lardner 63 (Shepparton); 3rd Peter Chase 60 (Ararat-Stawell).

B Grade: 1st Andrew Falla 56 (Donald); 2nd Russell Lardner 52 (Shepparton); 3rd James Fritsch 52 (Donald).

C Grade: 1st Seamus Killeen 45 (Sunraysia); 2nd Jarred Newell 42 (Donald); 3rd Ben Clark 40 (Donald).

Ladies: 1st Vicki Norris 50 (Kyabram); 2nd Vicki Chaplin 48 (Mt Wycheproof); 3rd Brenda Murphy 47 (Swan Hill).

Veterans: 1st Chris Charleson 66 (Swan Hill); 2nd Denis Kell 59 (Cranbourne); 3rd Tony Barrett 59 (Morwell).

Under-18 Juniors: 1st Jarred Ellis 56 (Natimuk); 2nd Chase Porter 55 (Natimuk); 3rd Lachlan Clark 45 (Donald).

Under-15 Sub Juniors: 1st Mitchell Wilson 51 (Bar-rook); 2nd Peter Fitzpatrick 50 (Ararat-Stawell); 3rd Evie Hendy 36 (Minyip).

Minyip – Day 2

Shoot offs were held for: AA for 1st and 2nd: Greg Deutscher and Kevin Jacobs Ladies for 2nd and 3rd: Vicki Norris and Vicki Chaplin.

Vets for 1st and 2nd: Chris Charleson and Neil Campbell.

High Gun- Jackson Welsh 69 (Grampians).

AA Grade: 1st Greg Deutscher 68 (Minyip); 2nd Kevin Jacobs 68 (Moe); 3rd Russell Chaplin 68 (Deni).

A Grade: 1st Shaun Thomas 65 (Bar-rook); 2nd Tim Lardner 64 (Shepparton); 3rd Ryan Milgate 63 (Minyip).

B Grade: 1st Boof Lorenzen 58 (Clunes); 2nd Peter Bridley 55 (Sunraysia); 3rd Ross Tyben 54 (Bendigo).

C Grade: 1st Kelvin Tyler 50 (Minyip); 2nd Craig Durand 47 (Ballarat); 3rd Daniel Brullo 46 (Bar-rook).

Ladies: 1st Vicki Chaplin 51 (Mt Wycheproof); 2nd Vicki Norris 51 (Kyabram); 3rd Michaela Shirley 50 (Clunes).

Veterans: 1st Chris Charleson 67 (Swan Hill); 2nd Neil Campbell 67 (Bennalla); 3rd Jim Wood 65 (Morwell).

Under-18 Juniors: 1st Chase Porter 58 (Natimuk); 2nd Jarred Ellis 61 (Natimuk); 3rd Joshua Fitzpatrick 50 (Ararat-Stawell).

Under-15 Juniors: 1st Mitchell Wilson 63 (Bar-rook); 2nd Peter Fitzpatrick 50 (Ararat-Stawell); 3rd Evie Hendy 34 (Minyip).

Overall Winners

(combined 2 days) Off the Gun High Gun: Kevin Jacobs (Moe).

All remaining winners include handicap on count back. Highgun Handicap: Boof Lorenzen (Clunes).

AA Grade: 1st Russell Chaplin (Deni); 2nd Brendon Pearson (MCC); 3rd Leigh Norton (Sunraysia).

A Grade: 1st Murray Hill (Minyip); 2nd Tim Lardner



• Overall Highgun (HCP) winner: Boof Lorenzen.

(Shepparton); 3rd Jackson Welsh (Grampians).

B Grade: 1st Ross Tyben (Bendigo); 2nd Andrew Falla (Donald); 3rd Gene Di Gandomenico (Clunes).

C Grade: 1st Daniel Brullo (Bar-rook); 2nd Wayne Hendy (Minyip); 3rd Rebecca Close (Ballarat).

Ladies: 1st Shannon Ware (Bennalla); 2nd Mihalya Pay (Sunraysia); 3rd Vicki Chaplin (Mt Wycheproof).

Veterans: 1st Chris Charleson (Swan Hill); 2nd Tony Barrett (Morwell); 3rd Barry Wentworth (Geelong).

Junior: 1st Joshua Fitzpatrick (Ararat-Stawell); 2nd Brendan Winter (Donald); 3rd Chase Porter (Natimuk).

Sub Junior: 1st Mitchell Wilson (Bar-rook); 2nd Peter Fitzpatrick (Ararat-Stawell); 3rd Evie Hendy (Minyip).

Sponsors

Donald: Donald Timber Yard, Dunstan Wool, Donald Hotel, Customised Spreading, Brunt Truck Repairs, B&G Bulk Haulage, Spuds Café, SA Coffee and LoveShack Giftwares.

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"Poachers' Weekend" at Donald and Minyip

Fifty-target shoots were held on Saturday and Sunday, March 3 and 4. This is the first ever "Poachers" weekend, and is a new two day initiative for Minyip and Donald field and game clubs.

Day one was held at Donald and day two at Minyip. The weather was bright and sunny, making very good conditions for shooting.

Cricket

ADE
1st S. Randall 18; B. 3/6, J. Hedley 2/10 and in 45, A. Sayle 40 not out; 113 (B. Blandford 35, G. P. J. Lehmann 7/36, A. Blandford 35 not out, J. Connelly 2/38).
1st Barry 16, D. Hooper 14; 3/13, A. Hewitt 3/15 and Varne 27, C. Barry 23; M. 5, A. Hewitt 2/35 lost to 8, D. Poyner 26, D. Barker 2/16, H. Barry 2/33 and 1. Pollington 38, G. Smith

ADE
1st 96, B. Orr 43, S. Riordan 2/25, D. Wright Simpson 47, C. Poulton 22, R. Taylor 2/28, N. Fraser

field 77, G. Allan 46, R. 4/97, L. Hogan 3/16, H. in 26, D. Crawford 24; L. H. Hogan 2/20 lost to Wilson 29, J. Noonan 23; B.) and 7/109 (L. Hogan 31, D. Crawford 3/31, J. Keane



DAY ONE RESULTS

High Gun: Darren Storer 46/50.
AA grade: Greg Deutscher 44/50, 1; Robert Paps 42/50, 2.
A grade: Andrew Pickthall 46/50, 1; Gavin Winfield 44/50, 2.
B grade: C. Pickthall 38/50, 1; Geoff Featherstone 36/50, 2.
C grade: Jim Sporie 32/50 s/o, 1; Trevor Hollis 32/50, 2.
Handicap: Vets: Stan Cations 36/50, 1; Bruce Paps 36/50, 2.
Ladies: Wendy Turnbull 39/50, 1; Tanya Clark 37/50, 2.
Juniors: Kai Tonkin 46/50, 1; Mark Turnbull 44/50, 2.

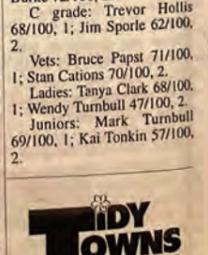
DAY TWO RESULTS

High Gun: Darren Storer 45/50.
AA grade: Robert Paps 43/50, 1; Greg Deutscher 41/50, 2.
A grade: Ian Reading 43/50, 1; Colin Clark 42/50 s/o, 2.

B grade: Simon Burke 39/50, 1; Paul Amos 37/50 s/o, 2.
C grade: Trevor Hollis 36/50, 1; Craig Jordan 31/50, 2.
Vets: Roy Krause 36/50 s/o, 1; Doug Sellick 36/50, 2.
Ladies: Tanya Clark 39/50, 1; Gayle Barlow 30/50, 2.
Juniors: Scott Reading 43/50, 1; Mark Turnbull 39/50, 2.

OVERALL RESULTS

High Gun: Darren Storer 91/100.
AA grade: Robert Paps 85/100 s/o, 1; Greg Deutscher 85/100, 2.
A grade: Ken Schurmann 86/100, 1; Bill Harker 83/100, 2.
B grade: Geoff Featherstone 72/100 s/o, 1; Simon Burke 72/100, 2.
C grade: Trevor Hollis 68/100, 1; Jim Sporie 62/100, 2.
Vets: Bruce Paps 71/100, 1; Stan Cations 70/100, 2.
Ladies: Tanya Clark 68/100, 1; Wendy Turnbull 47/100, 2.
Juniors: Mark Turnbull 69/100, 1; Kai Tonkin 57/100, 2.



• Article from BT in 2001: First ever Poachers'.



• Volunteers: Wayne Piera, Phillip Jardine and Geoff Blake.



• Minyip Day 2 winners and overall Handicap winners, back rows, left to right: Jackson Welsh (HG winner), Chase Porter, Jarred Ellis, Nathan Cassells (OTC Rep), Tim Lardner, Shaun Thomas, Andrew Falla, Daniel Brullo, Greg Deutscher, Kell Tyler, Chris Charleson. Middle: Shannon Ware, Ryan Milgate, Brendan Winter, Mitchell Wilson, Vicki Norris, Neil Campbell, Peter Fitzpatrick, Joshua Fitzpatrick, Rebecca Close, Boof Lorenzen. Front row: Vicki Chaplin, Evie Hendy, Wayne Hendy, Brendan Pearson, Jim Wood, Gavin Pay, Kevin Jacobs (Overall HG winner), Mahayla Pay, Peter Chase.

Shooters Flock to Donald and Minyip



• Back row, left to right: Kevin Jacobs, Tony Barrett, Andrew Falla, Denis Kell, James Fritsch, Ben Clark, Nathan Cassells (OTC Rep), Jeremy Jardine (DFG President), Russell Chaplin, Lachlan Clark. Middle row: Evie Henry, Peter Fitzpatrick, Mitchell Wilson, Vicki Norris, Tim Lardner, Russell Lardner, John Handley, Jardy Ellis, Chase Porter. Front row: Vicki Chaplin, Murray Hill (HG winner), Peter Chase, Seamus Kilcullen, Gavin Pay, Chris Charleson, Brenda Murphy.

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Minyip: J&A Shooting Supplies, TUFF Equipment, C&R Sheet Metal (Maryborough), Water Tech Solutions and Nutrien Ag (Murtoa & Rupanyup).

Overall: Outdoor Trading Company (OTC).

A massive thank you to all the volunteers who worked in the kitchen, these people are an invaluable asset in running these days. Big thank you to all office workers, set up crew, number crunches and anyone else who helped make the day a great success. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes to make this weekend happen.

Next F&G shoot is Donald Sunday, April 6, and Minyip Sunday, April 20.

An absolutely SMASHING weekend with an amazing bunch of people from three different states. There were lots of old and new faces supporting the sport of shooting. Both clubs hope to see you all again and more at Poachers in 2026.



• Lucky Overall Door Prize winner: Gavin Pay.



• Minyip & District FG Highgun winner: Jackson Welsh.



• Donald F&G Highgun winner: Murray Hill with Cameron Betts.



• Squad 2: Carey Brennan (shooting), James Fritsch, David Brennan and David Manifold.



• Overall Highgun (OTG) winner: Kevin Jacobs with club presidents Bill McFarlane and Jeremy Jardine.

Mallee Bull Cups This Sunday

(By Peter Hibberd)

This Sunday, after many months of work, the Birchip Harness Racing Club will run its Mallee Bull Cups day with 59K in prizemoney. In addition will be a \$1000 prize to leading trainer and driver on the day and also a \$900 speed challenge.

There will be plenty of activity off the track, with food, drinks, live music, kids' activities, bookmakers with betting vouchers to be won, punter club and also fashions on the field.

Buses will run from Watchem and Tchum Lakes and also the Birchip Hotel.

Don't forget, donations at the gate for Team Teal's fight against ovarian cancer.

The first race is at 1.04 p.m. in a very interesting nine-race program.

Looking for a Winner?

Zesta La Go Go in race two and Hellovatime in race four should be at each way odds.

Best bet for the day is John's Boy in the Trotters' Cup. This is a highly promising ex-New Zealander, which has been impressive in its two runs in "Oz".

In the Pacing Cup, Valiente had no luck at Boort last week, but it's a race with many chances.

Selections

Race one: Franc, Salute To Sunny, Yoshida.

Race two: Zesta La Go Go, Tension Seeker, Surprise To Me.

Race three: Blackrange Glory, Christmas Babe, Zingara Lass.

Race four: Hellovatime, Margaritari, Livermere.

Race five: Letsgo Big Girl, Stylish Gem, Im Shadow Boxer.

Race six: John's Boy, Show Me The Moolah, Wish Upona Dream.

Race seven: Redbank Molly, Flexi Bet, No Emotion.

Race eight: Valiente, Maxy Wants To Play, Bruised Ego.

Race nine: Dooo Don't Think, Metro Memory, Thelongroadnowhere.

Best bets: Zesta La Go Go, Hellovatime, John's Boy.

Cricket Grand Finals Tomorrow

(By Chris Graetz)

The Wimmera Mallee Cricket Association grand finals will be held tomorrow, Saturday, March 8. Donald-Jeffcott, which won both grades last year, will aim for back-to-back titles.

In "A" grade, Donald-Jeffcott will play Birchip at Anzac Park in Warracknabeal. Donald-Jeffcott finished first with 12 wins and one loss and defeated St Mary's to make the grand final, while Birchip Swans finished third with seven wins and six losses, upsetting Marnoo on the weekend to make it.

They have played twice this year in the one-day format, with Donald-Jeffcott winning on both occasions.

In round three they won by 70 runs and in round nine, they won by two wickets in a tight match.

Donald-Jeffcott is the superior batting team with

Daniel Atkins second on the table this year with 378 runs at an average of 31.5, 68 behind Marnoo's Nic Baird. Lachlan Jones is third on 349 at 69.8, and Cooper Anderson sixth with 259 runs at 19.92.

Birchip's top batsman for the season is Rylee Smith, who has scored 226 runs at 37.67. Riley Doran is the only other Birchip player to score over 200 runs, with 218 at 27.25.

Donald-Jeffcott also led the way in the bowling, boasting a potent attack of Cooper Anderson, Daniel Atkins and Eddie Landwehr.

Anderson has taken 23 wickets at an average of

11.26, Atkins 21 at 10.38, and Landwehr 18 at 7.17.

Birchip's bowling is also strong, with Jonty Randall leading the way with 19 wickets at an average of 10.16 and Rylee Smith with 17 at 8.18. Riley Doran also has 17 at 13.29.

Despite Birchip's strong bowling attack, Donald Jeffcott has the better all-round ability and should come away with the win.

"B" Grade

Donald-Jeffcott and Watchem will square off at Marnoo Recreation Reserve in "B" grade.

Donald-Jeffcott finished on top of the ladder with 11 wins and two losses, defeating the Southern Mallee Giants to make it, while Watchem finished third with nine wins and four losses and defeated the highly rated Charlton.

They have played twice this year in the one-day format, and have a 1-1 record, setting up an intriguing finale.

In round four, Watchem won by five wickets. In round 10, Donald-Jeffcott won by 111 runs after scoring 284.

Donald-Jeffcott has the edge in the batting department. Andrew Bayles has scored 379 runs at an average of 63.17, Thomas Reeke 360 at 45, Kalon Green 248 at 27.56, and Sam Postlethwaite 241 at 30.13.

Watchem's Ty Colbert leads the league with 493 runs at an average of 54.78. Daniel Slater is sixth with 269 runs at 26.9, and Daniel Tatarskyj is ninth with 196 runs at 24.5.

Watchem has the better bowling attack, which will trouble its opponents. Austin

Dean leads the league with 22 wickets at an average of 9.64, Connor Boyle has 21 at 11.95, and Ty Colbert has 16 at 17.31.

Donald-Jeffcott's bowling attack is led by Thomas Reekie and Niluka Nanayakkara who have 14 wickets each at 15.21 and 15.50 respectively.

If Watchem's bowlers bowl to their potential, and can get a few key wickets, that will give them the edge in what is expected to be a close match.

Camera at the Cricket Semi-finals

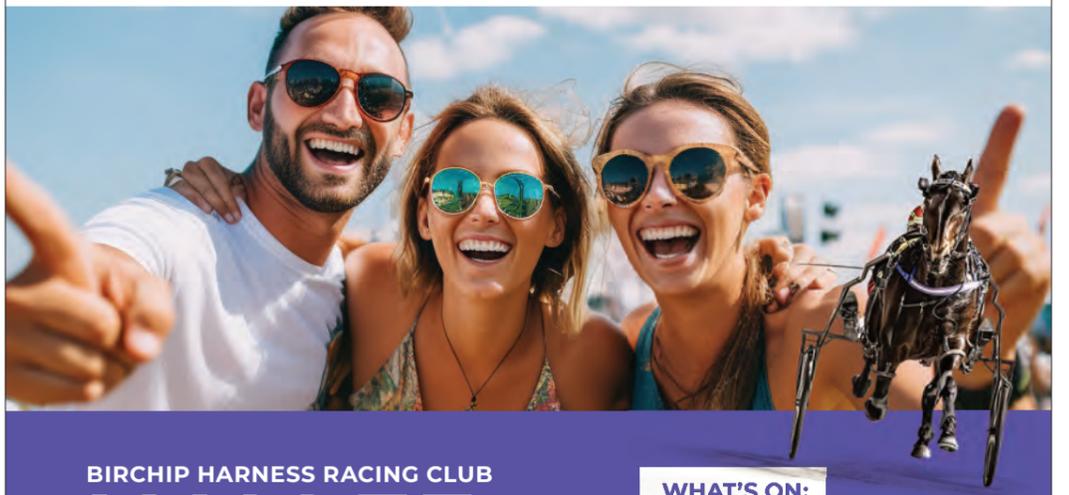


• Birchip Will Marks 47 runs at last weekend's semi-final. —Photo Amanda Casey.



• Jacob Donnellon bowls with umpire Keith Kemp watching on.

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