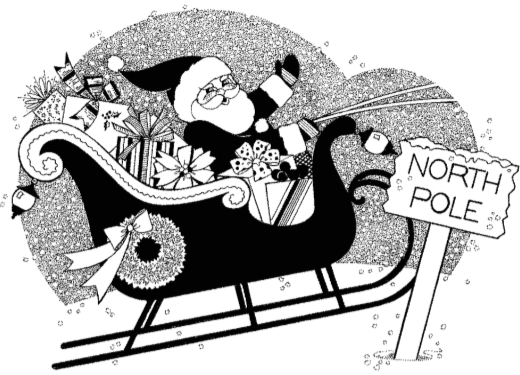


**DONALD**  
 Phone: 5497 1222  
 Articles to:  
 news@buloketimes.com  
 Adverts to:  
 admin@buloketimes.com

# The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

**BIRCHIP**  
 Phone: 5492 2735  
 Fax: 5492 2863  
 Email:  
 birchipblc@  
 bigpond.com



# Merry CHRISTMAS

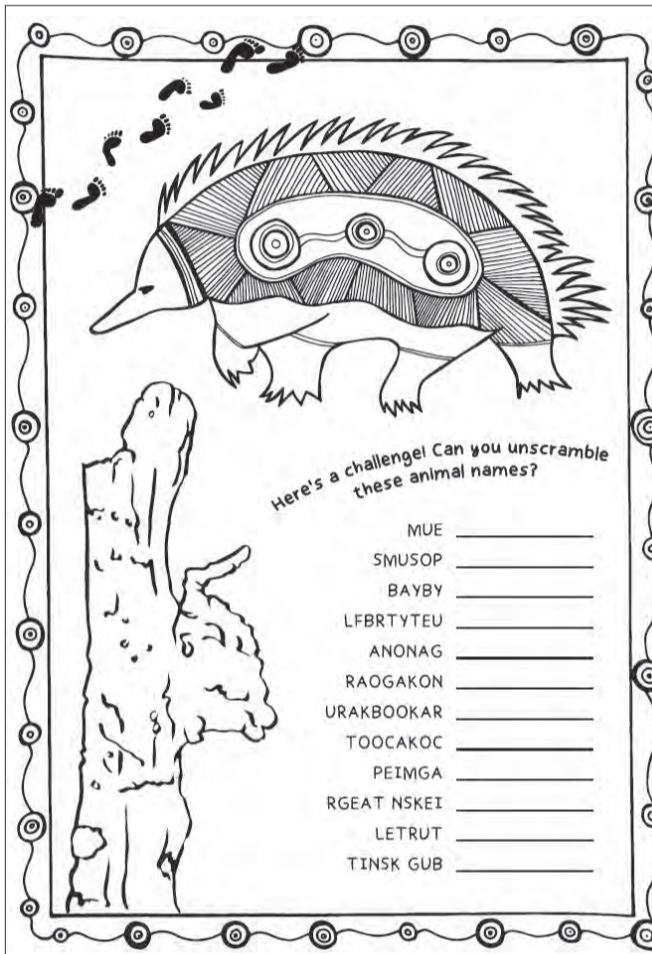
PP 331336/00001

**Price \$2**  
 Inc. GST



Tuesday, December 24, 2024

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



### For the Caregivers

We hope this book has not only brought fun and creativity to your days but also inspired a sense of empowerment and connection among our youth, laying the foundation for a community that will shine brightly into the future.

### Buloke's Town Features

For your safety and convenience while travelling around our amazing communities.

	CHARLTON	DONALD	BIRCHIP	WYCHEPROOF	SEA LAKE	MULLAWILL	BERRIWILLOCK	CULBDA	WATCHEM	NANDALY
Playspace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Free Pool	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fuel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public toilet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ATM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospital	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bird box	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* coming in 2025

### Useful Resources

If you or someone you know is in need of crisis support call triple 000

Kids Help Line	1800 55 1800	Bambler's Help	1800 858 858
Safe Steps	1800 015 188	Nurse on Call	1300 606 024
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186	Parents Line	13 22 89
Rainbow Door text	0408 017 246	Beyond Blue	1300 244 636
Maternal & Child Health Line	13 22 29	Mensline	1300 789 978
Koori Maternity Service Swan Hill	03 5032 8600	Lifeline	131 114
Rural Financial Counselling	1300 735 578	13Yarn	13 92 76
Mallee Family Care	03 5023 6966	Non-emergency Police	13 14 44

## Kids' Wellbeing Book Brings Community Together

Get ready to unleash your creativity and explore the wonders of Buloke with the new Community and Wellbeing Activities Book!

Featuring Buloke's Bearded Dragon, this exciting book invites kids and families to colour their way through local towns, traditional lands, and iconic landmarks, all while learning fun facts and discovering important wellbeing resources.

Brought to life by the artistic talents of Wotjobaluk

artist Kristie Witt and Birchip artist Kristie Dean, and developed by Buloke Shire Council's Community Recovery Team, this book is a vibrant celebration of connection, culture, and creativity.

More than just a colouring book, it provides essential wellbeing and contact infor-

mation for young people and carers, including Kids Help-line and Nurse on Call.

Engaging in art activities like those in the book is proven to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and improving overall health and well-being.

The books have been distributed to schools, kindergartens, libraries, neighbourhood houses, and Traditional Owner groups.

Grandparents have particularly appreciated this initiative as a creative and engaging way to entertain visiting grandchildren during the holidays.

Local teachers have praised the book for its engaging approach to teaching

geography and fostering a deeper connection to the region.

Importantly, all expenditure for this project has been invested in our community, making it a valuable exercise in inclusion and support, and was supported by the Australian and Victorian Government's Community Recovery Hubs Program.

For more information or to secure your FREE copy, visit

your nearest participating location today:

- Neighbourhood Houses at Birchip, Charlton and Sea Lake.
- Community Resource Centres at Donald and Wycheproof.
- Buloke Libraries.
- Buloke Maternal and Child Health Centres.
- Buloke Shire Council Customer Service - Wycheproof Office.

## A "Life" So Truly Earned

Donald 2000 is proud to announce the induction of its very first Life Member – the one and only John McConville.

If you've ever asked John how he's doing, you already know his answer: "GREAT!" And that's exactly what he is – great in every sense of the word. For decades, John has dedicated himself to helping our town and its people, always ready to roll up his sleeves and get things done.

John has been at the helm of Donald 2000 since its inception in the 1990s. While he may have missed a meeting or two over the years, his trademark "let's just do it" attitude

has never wavered. Time and again, he has taken the lead to make incredible things happen for Donald.

Here's just a small sample of the many projects John has been instrumental in bringing to life:

- Installing bollard lighting along Byrne Street pathways (twice!).
- Purchasing the community bus.
- Organising Guy Fawkes nights.

- Leading Donald's 150th celebrations.
- Building the Camp Street seat and shelter.
- Overseeing construction of the childcare centre, scout hall, swing bridge, barbecue shelter, and the iconic Apex Park windmill with lights.
- Constructing the footbridge to Scilley's Island.
- Facilitating critical water projects with GWM for supply and environmental flow.
- Developing Penfold Place.

- Establishing the off-road racing event and track.
- Extending the Men's Shed building.
- Updating the Train Park and relocating the Taggerty dining car.
- Upgrading the airport.
- Developing the Federation Walking Track.
- Restoring and securing the lease for the railway station building and area.
- Continued on page 2.



• John McConville is presented with his life membership by current Donald 2000 president, Jodie Hollis.

# St Joseph's Celebrates the 2024 School Year

With singing, baking, crafting, swimming, movie-watching, gingerbread house building and spreading Christmas cheer far and wide, the students of St Joseph's School have enjoyed a less structured finish to the school year.

Last Tuesday evening the school community gathered to acknowledge the 2024 school year with a Mass of celebration, which included graduation for the Grade 6 students. The theme of the Mass was "Let Your Light Shine" celebrating the vibrancy and individuality of each and every student.

The whole school community gathered to celebrate all that had been achieved throughout the year and to give thanks for those who were leaving the school community.

The Grade 6 class of Willow Caine, Rosie Fitzpatrick, Henry Lanyon, Darcy Olive, Marly Morkos and Isaac

Roberts was recognised, and each student was presented a certificate of graduation.

## Awards

Awards presented were as follows:

Bendigo Bank Grade 6 Academic Award (presented by Neville Spruhan-Cloak): Henry Lanyon.

Cabbaritta CWA Award – Junior and Middle Progress Awards (presented by Margaret Fradd): Junior, Oli Power-Hall; Middle, Connor Caine.

Lions Club Citizenship Award (presented by John Headon): Rosie Fitzpatrick.

Sisters of the Lady of the Missions (presented by Mary Hogan): Willow Caine.

Charlton Arts Inc, Prep/1/2 Award (presented by Bernice Kenny): Johan Siju.

Charlton Arts Inc, Gr 3/4 Award (presented by Bernice Kenny): Macey Revell.

Charlton Arts Inc, Gr 5/6 Award (presented by Bernice Kenny): Sophie Roberts.

Oscar Bourke Memorial Award (presented by Clancy Bourke): Toby Bourke.

Congratulations to all award winners and a special "thank you" to all award donors and presenters.

All look forward to the 2025 school year, welcoming new students and staff, and experiencing all that the new year brings! Best wishes for a blessed Christmas season and a safe and happy new year!



• Award recipients left to right: Willow Caine, Toby Bourke, Connor Caine, Macey Revell, Henry Lanyon, Oli Power-Hall, Rosie Fitzpatrick and Sophie Roberts



• Grade 6 graduation class left to right: Henry Lanyon, Isaac Roberts, Darcy Olive, Rosie Fitzpatrick, Willow Caine and Marly Morkos.

# Mayor Shares Festive Spirit

As the holiday season begins, Buloke Shire's Mayor Alan Getley, encourages everyone to embrace the spirit of kindness and giving, reflecting on the joy of community connection.

"Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! This is a time to celebrate generosity, compassion, and the strength of our local connections," said the Mayor.

"Let's share the festive cheer and continue supporting one another."

The newly elected Buloke Shire Council's first Ordinary Meeting addressed key areas to strengthen governance, community well-being, and policy alignment.

It also awarded over \$7,000 to local community groups under the Council's Community Grants Program for projects ranging from repainting engine J524 in Donald Train Park to an event for senior high school students to

promote the best ways to live healthy lives.

Updates to the Expenses Policy now include improved approval processes for memberships, professional development, and travel, alongside enhanced administrative support for Councillors.

Significant updates were also made to the Governance Rules and Election Period Policy, introducing a dedicated "Governance" section to the Order of Business and streamlining public participation through written questions submitted two days before meetings.

Council reaffirmed its commitment to child safety by adopting the Child Safe Standards Policy, requiring



• Cr. Alan Getley.

adherence to strict standards to prevent harm and align with legislative requirements.

Council welcomed Stephen Gardner as the new Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee, highlighting its ongoing focus on financial reporting, risk management, and disaster recovery improvements.

The next Council meeting will be held in the Wyche-roof Supper Room on Wednesday, February 19, at 7:00 p.m..

# Declan Graduates

Former Donald High School student, Declan O'Shea, the school's dux of 2011, graduated from Melbourne University on Tuesday, December 17, after successfully completing a PHD thesis which included research that looked at how to improve estimates of extreme flood risk.

One of 56 doctorates presented on the day, Dr. O'Shea, a senior hydrologist who is currently employed by Melbourne based company Hydrology and Risk Consulting, was described as having developed novel statistical methods and modelling approaches to improve the estimation of flood risks.

This work represents a profound contribution to

understanding of how floods vary with catchment wetness and rainfall extremes, and how the risk of flooding is impacted by climate change.

Declan's parents, Raeanne and Shane O'Shea, attended the presentation, ceremony conducted at the Melbourne Exhibition Building.



• Declan O'Shea.

## A "Life" So Truly

• Continued from page 1.

• Organising the unforgettable Baby Boomers festivals.

And that's not all – while contributing to our community, John also managed to:

• Raise four wonderful sons.

• Maintain a strong and loving marriage.

• Run his steel business and later a school bus route.

• Build a holiday home in Marengo.

Oh, and he's done all this with just one kidney!

John, you are truly one of a kind. Your contributions to Donald are immeasurable, and your dedication, kindness, and friendship are deeply appreciated.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition from all of the Donald 2000 Committee and the community, and thank you for everything you've done. You're not just a great man; you're an extraordinary one.



On behalf of the East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS) Board of Directors, to the staff of EWHS, we thank you for your dedication and hard work during 2024.

To our communities who have supported EWHS either as a user of our services or as a business providing services to EWHS, we hope the Christmas period brings you happiness and joy.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year and stay safe over the Christmas holiday period. Thank you.

— Julianne Clift  
EWHS Board Chair

# Donald's Names and Numbers



• Carol Holland and Kez Duncan with Donald's new phone book.

**Finally! The new Donald phone book is now available for purchase at the "Buloke Times", Donald Post Office and Donald Newsagency.**

Kez Duncan, Carol Holland and Chris Clark have spent over six months compiling and editing the information and urge everyone to ditch their previous copies of the Donald phone book and purchase a 2025 edition.

The price remains at \$8 and all proceeds go towards Donald 2000 community projects. The girls thank everyone for their patience and for answering their persistent and annoying phone calls.



# Letters to the Editor



## The Year That Was (The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Sir – As another year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past twelve months and express my gratitude for the privilege of serving as the Member for Mildura.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making our region such a wonderful place to live and work. Your efforts truly make our community special.

I am grateful for the continued support of my electorate and colleagues and for the opportunity to continue to serve the people of the Mildura electorate as we work together to achieve a better future for all.

As the holiday season approaches, I would like to acknowledge those who will spend this time serving our community, often sacrificing moments with their loved ones. Please know that your dedication is deeply appreciated and warmly recognised.

To support our emergency workers and keep everyone safe, I encourage all to follow road rules, stay vigilant near the water, drink responsibly, and show care and kindness to one another.

It's been a truly incredible year as your local MP, and I look forward to many more in the years to come.

Wishing everyone a joyful and safe Christmas and New Year. May 2025 be your best year yet!

**Jade Benham MP.**

## Hosts, Where Were You?

(The Editor, "The Times")

Dear Sir. – Two well known district family names thought it appropriate to initiate VCAT proceedings against me because I had done everything asked of me to have my own house on my own land.

Because all turbine hosts sneak around doing deals secretly, they believe I should

bow to their selfish plans, and I don't deserve a house.

After months of waiting and planning for D-Day to come during harvest, I take time off and travel to Melbourne for the Compulsory Conference, but none of the Objecting Hosts bother to show; apparently their time is more important than mine. They got to stay in their house on the land they own whilst denying me the same.

Suits everywhere, no plans for the next step as they thought I would "buckle" before then. Council flew a town planning adviser down from Mildura that did not advocate for me at all or explain why the Council had agreed with my house plans in the first place. Neither side would negotiate, so round 2 happens next year. Your shire rates at work. I wonder how these hosts feel now knowing they are puppets of the Wind Collecting Company?. WAPLEE.

**Nyal Chivell.**  
Houseless.  
Wilkur.

**The Teams at DCIRS wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas.**

Please note that our offices will be closed from 4pm Tuesday December 24th and will reopen at 9am Thursday January 2nd.



For urgent matters during this time please contact the on-call number for assistance on **0468 940 674**



## See You on the 21st

Today's edition is the last for 2024. The first issue in the new year will be Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Thank-you to all our readers, contributors and advertisers for their loyal support during the year. We also thank all our distributors, particularly the district's news-agents, who see that the "Times" reaches

its destination, no matter what the weather.

The "Times" management and staff wish all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, safe and accident free festive season.



• Photo on my land, Warrack/Birchip Road, where I want to put a house. WAPLEE is an acronym that those of us fighting this tripe will understand.



**INTERNATIONALS** for Regional Australia

I wish you and your loved ones a safe, happy and restful Christmas and holiday break!

**Anne WEBSTER MP**

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MALLEE  
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR REGIONAL HEALTH

Office will be closed December 20th to January 6th. Emails will be monitored.

# "Times" Classifieds

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

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

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

- Jan. 3, Keiarah Brooks
- Jan. 5, Piper Smith
- Jan. 15, Tayla Wyllie
- December 25, Keith Adcock
- Dec. 25, Marty Burchell
- Dec. 25, Emma Burke
- Dec. 25, Jayke Fisher
- Dec. 26, Gail Frankling
- Dec. 28, Mitzi Black
- Dec. 28, Julian Smith
- Dec. 31, Kate Clark
- Dec. 31, Stacey Dunstan
- Dec. 31, Bronwyn McLoughlan
- January 1, Max Sands
- Jan. 3, Teagan Anderson

**Darrell Lea** Fine Chocolates **JOHN SANDS**

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

**BIRCHIP HOTEL**  
*Christmas Eve Party*  
TUESDAY | **24 DEC** | KITCHEN 4.30PM-9PM  
LIVE MUSIC - DRINK - FOOD  
*Christmas Day*  
Happy hour 11am-1pm  
MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE BIRCHIP HOTEL TEAM

**HAPPY 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**  
for December 23  
*Leslie Cook*

Wishing you a very happy birthday, thanks for all you do for us.

—Love from  
*Graeme, Michelle & John, David & Gitta, Tony & Josie, Chris & Claire and your grandchildren Caitlin, Peter, Ruby, Emily, Hannah, Harry, Ollie and Lucus.*

  
**60<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**  
Friends are invited to celebrate with  
*Ian and Alison McEwen*  
8 Sproats Lane, Donald  
**Sun., January 26, 2025**  
for afternoon tea.  
*No gifts thank-you.*

**SIGNS 'R' US**  
**BUSINESS FOR SALE OR LEASE**  
by June 2025  
Phone 5497 1624;  
Mob. 0409 959 046

 **Donald & District Australia Day Committee**  
is calling for **NOMINATIONS FOR**

- Citizen of the Year 2025
- Young Citizen of the Year (Under 25) 2025
- Event of the Year

**Nominations should include a summary of supporting information.**

Post nominations to Donald 2000, Box 200.  
Applications close January 19, 2025.

**DEATH HOGAN.**—  
Brendan John  
Passed away peacefully, out of my arms into Lorna's arms in heaven, on December 5, 2024, aged 92 years.

Adored father of Julianne & father-in-law of Gavan. Grandpa to Jessica, Jaimies (in heaven), Mellita & Andy; Rachel & Dan. Great-grandpa to Eden & Jaimie; Isobel, Leni, Bronte & Coco.

Special grandpa to Jess, Ryan, Charlotte, Bree & Mark, Skylar, Hudson & Levi.

My Dad in Heaven. They say there is a reason, they say time will heal. Neither time or reason will change the way I feel. Gone are the days we used to share, you were always there for me know matter what. However, in my heart you are always there. The gates of memories will never close. I miss you more than anybody knows. Love and miss you every day. Till we meet again.

*Always and forever love you Dad.*

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

**WANTED TO BUY POULTRY**  
Roosters, ducks and geese. Ph. 0407 515 528.

*Wishing you a safe and happy Festive Season*

Our offices will close  
**5 pm Tuesday 24 December 2024,**  
and reopen  
**8 am Thursday 2 January 2025.**

Remember, for service difficulties or faults, call 1800 188 586 anytime.



**tchum lake**  
AQUATIC CLUB

You can become a member by completing the Tchum Lake Aquatic Club membership form and enjoy a range of benefits.

**\$40 SINGLE**  
**\$25 SENIORS**  
**\$100 FAMILY**, (2 parents/guardians & children U18)

Cheques can be made payable to:  
**Tchum Lake Aquatic Club Inc.** and delivered to: Birchip Neighbourhood House, 77 Cumming Avenue, Birchip, in an envelope marked Lake Membership or posted to: Tchum Lake Aquatic Club, Membership Co-ordinator, PO Box 14, Birchip 3483

Direct Deposits can be made to:  
Account Name: Tchum Lake Aquatic Club  
BSB: 063 643  
Account Number: 1006 0727

For more information on memberships contact Birchip Neighbourhood House:  
[tchumlakecamping@outlook.com](mailto:tchumlakecamping@outlook.com)

**Take care on the roads — no one is safe from careless drivers.**

**Donald UCA**  
There will be no Christmas Day Service at Donald UCA. Services will resume as normal at 10 a.m., December 29, and in January.


**Live-Alones' Luncheon**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 14**  
12 noon  
WOODS ST CAFÉ  
RSVP: Call the Woods St Café on 5497 1313 or drop in to reserve your place.

**DONALD BOWLING CLUB INC.**  
You are welcome to join in  
**Barefoot Bowls**  
**WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 8, 15, & 22.**  
*Come each night or any of the nights.*  
Time: 6 p.m.  
BBQ 5.30 p.m.  
*Bowls supplied if needed.*  
Next to Memorial Park.

 **BCG**  
SHARED SOLUTIONS  
**NOW HIRING**  
**AGRICULTURE EXTENSION OFFICER**

BCG (Birchip Cropping Group) are looking for an Agriculture Extension Officer to develop and present information and co-ordinate events that promote agricultural research outcomes to support grain farmers across North West Victoria.

Find out more at [bcg.org.au/about/work-with-us/](http://bcg.org.au/about/work-with-us/) or apply to [info@bcg.org.au](mailto:info@bcg.org.au) or (03) 5492 2787.



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**70 Woods Street, Donald — 5497 1211**

# Capri Joins Jonny's Journey

When soldiers put their lives on the front line, long-term health challenges are almost inevitable, but assistance dogs are improving both the physical and mental wellbeing of those in need.

Birchip resident Mr Jonathan (Jonny) Kemp has recently completed training with Integra Service Dogs Australia, becoming the custodian of an Integra-

owned assistance dog named Capri.

**Overcoming Trauma**  
Jonny's journey began with rigorous training as an Australian soldier, a

demanding yet rewarding experience that took him to the Kapooka Military Area in New South Wales.

Tragically, just as he completed his training and was leaving Kapooka, Jonny was struck by a stolen car driven by two fifteen-year-old boys in a hit-and-run incident. The collision left Jonny with shattered legs, a brain injury, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

At just 19 years old, Jonny was confined to a wheelchair for 18 months and was unable to actively serve, despite having signed up for a six-year term as a qualified Private Soldier.

Since then, Jonny has endured over 40 admissions to the Department of Veterans' repatriation hospital at Austin Health for PTSD, depression, anxiety, service-related injuries, and suicide attempts.

## Integra

Austin Health introduced Jonny to the Psychiatric Assistance Program, which provided critical support to help manage his health challenges.

"The program is awesome, it is stopping veterans from suicide," Jonny said.

Through the program, Jonny was connected with Integra Service Dogs Australia, which provides highly trained



• Close companions, Jonny and Capri.

assistance dogs to veterans and first responders.

Capri, a labrador-retriever, underwent 18 months of specialised training at a cost of over \$70,000 to prepare him for his vital role.

"In just two weeks, Capri has given me companionship, love, and support," Jonny said.

"She is always watching me and by my side, responding to every situation."

Integra covers veterinary costs, insurance, and other associated expenses, while also helping clients learn how to manage these costs as they

take on the responsibility of their assistance dogs.

## Training

Jonny undertook an intensive four-day training course with Capri at the beginning of their journey together.

Under the professional support of Integra, Jonny successfully completed his Queensland Guide Hearing and Assistance Dog (GHAD) Public Access Test (PAT) assessment.

Jonny was issued with a GHAD Primary Handler Identity Card, allowing him and his labrador-retriever to work on-lead in busy complex public settings, offices, hospitals, public transport and in official, retail and commercial settings.

Capri is trained to be calm and focused in public,

dedicated to supporting Jonny without being disruptive.

## At Birchip

Birchip residents will soon become accustomed to seeing Jonny and Capri out and about. Whether visiting public spaces or local businesses, the pair, with Capri proudly wearing her Integra jacket, are a testament to the life-changing impact of assistance dogs.

Integra Service Dogs Australia is a not-for-profit organisation providing invaluable support to first responders and Australian Defence Force personnel. Thanks to their efforts and the loyalty of dogs like Capri, veterans like Jonny are finding renewed hope and strength to face life's challenges.



## QUALIFIED PLUMBER

Hardingham's Plumbing and Electrical (Vic) Pty Ltd provides quality plumbing services to the Donald, St Arnaud, Charlton and Birchip areas.

We are currently seeking a full-time qualified Plumber or a fourth-year apprentice to join our team of skilled plumbers. Salary is negotiable depending on your experience.

If you wish to unleash your potential in a rewarding plumbing career, then please call the office on (03) 54971464 or send your resume to [plumbing@hardingham.com.au](mailto:plumbing@hardingham.com.au)

## DUNSTAN WOOL

Woolgrowers, for

- PROMPT CLIP VALUATIONS
- COMPETITIVE PRICES
- PAYMENT ON WEIGHING

Phone Donald 5497 1003

a.h. Glenn Dunstan 5497 1815; mob. 0427 971 004

AT DONALD: Every Friday at the Wool Store, Hammill Street, all day.

## ACEN Australia announces new project: Corack East Wind

**What is Corack East Wind?** ACEN Australia is in the early stages of investigating a large-scale wind farm 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.

**Where will it connect to the grid?** ACEN Australia is investigating opportunities to connect Corack East Wind to the proposed VNI-West interconnector, being developed by Transmission Company Victoria.

**What stage is the development at?** Corack East Wind is in the Development stage. This stage is expected to take four years. Pending project approval, construction is proposed to begin in 2029, to align with delivery of VNI West.

**How will ACEN engage with the community to share information and seek input on the project?**

ACEN Australia believes it is important to engage early and provide the community with an opportunity to learn about the project, share feedback and information and meet the ACEN team. To achieve this, we will collaborate with host landowners, neighbours, First Nations groups, and the wider community, sharing information about proposed changes and exploring how the project can bring meaningful benefits.

Our goal is to be a valued, long-term contributor to the community.

**Who is ACEN Australia?** ACEN Australia is the platform representing ACEN's renewable energy assets in Australia. With more than 1 gigawatt (GW) capacity of large scale renewable energy generation in operation and construction and more than 13GW capacity in the development pipeline, its portfolio includes several solar, wind, battery and pumped hydro projects across Australia.

**Where can I find out more about the project?**

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

Phone:  
1800 498 550

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

ACEN Australia Website:  
[www.acenrenewables.com.au](http://www.acenrenewables.com.au)



*Olive Joy Licensed Cafe sends a huge thank you to everyone for your support in our first year of trading. Our friends reach far and wide and this has meant so much.*

We are having a little rest over January and wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. Olive Joy's last day for 2024 will be Friday December 20th, 2024. We will reopen for normal trading on Monday, February 3rd, 2025.

*- Thank you from the team at OJs*



*The Sharp family & staff wish their customers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and thank them for their support during 2024.*

\*\*\*\*\*

CLOSED

Wed. 25th, Thurs. 26th DECEMBER

Wed. 1st JANUARY

# Coal Mine Expansions "Fly in Face of Science"

The Federal Government's approval of four coal mine expansions locks in decades of climate pollution and flies in the face of science, says the Climate Council.

Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek has justified the mine approvals because they will mostly produce coal for steelmaking, with some thermal coal also produced for burning in power stations.

Climate Councillor Professor Lesley Hughes said: "Our atmosphere doesn't care if this coal is for steel or power - it's all heating our planet and driving climate pollution. Burning coal fuels the climate

crisis, worsening bushfires, floods and heatwaves that devastate our communities. This decision flies in the face of science, common sense, global responsibility and our duty to protect our kids' future."

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has made it clear: new or expanded coal mines are incompatible with limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Even for steelmaking, existing coal supplies are capable of meeting demand through to 2050.

### Biggest Threat

This decision is a clear example of how Australia's broken environment laws fail to protect the environment from its biggest threat: climate change. Currently, they don't require projects to account for their climate pollution, allowing coal and gas giants to

open more polluting projects without accountability. Addressing this blind spot by strengthening our environmental laws could stop this, but the Albanese government seems to have all but given up on these critical reforms.

"Approving these mines while delaying stronger protections shows a clear disconnect between the government's rhetoric and its actions. It's past time to make

cuts to climate pollution central to every decision we

make," Professor Hughes said.

## The Mallee Shearing Shed

I would like to thank all my valid, loyal clients for their continued support. May you all have a wonderful Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

All the best for 2025.  
Rach xx



**Merry Christmas to all our valued customers, family and friends.**

We wish you all a safe and Happy New Year!

**Trendz on Napier**

117 Napier st,  
St.Arnaud.

**Elders Insurance**

Our office will be closed from  
2 p.m., on Christmas Eve and  
2 p.m. on New Years Eve.  
Otherwise normal business hours apply.

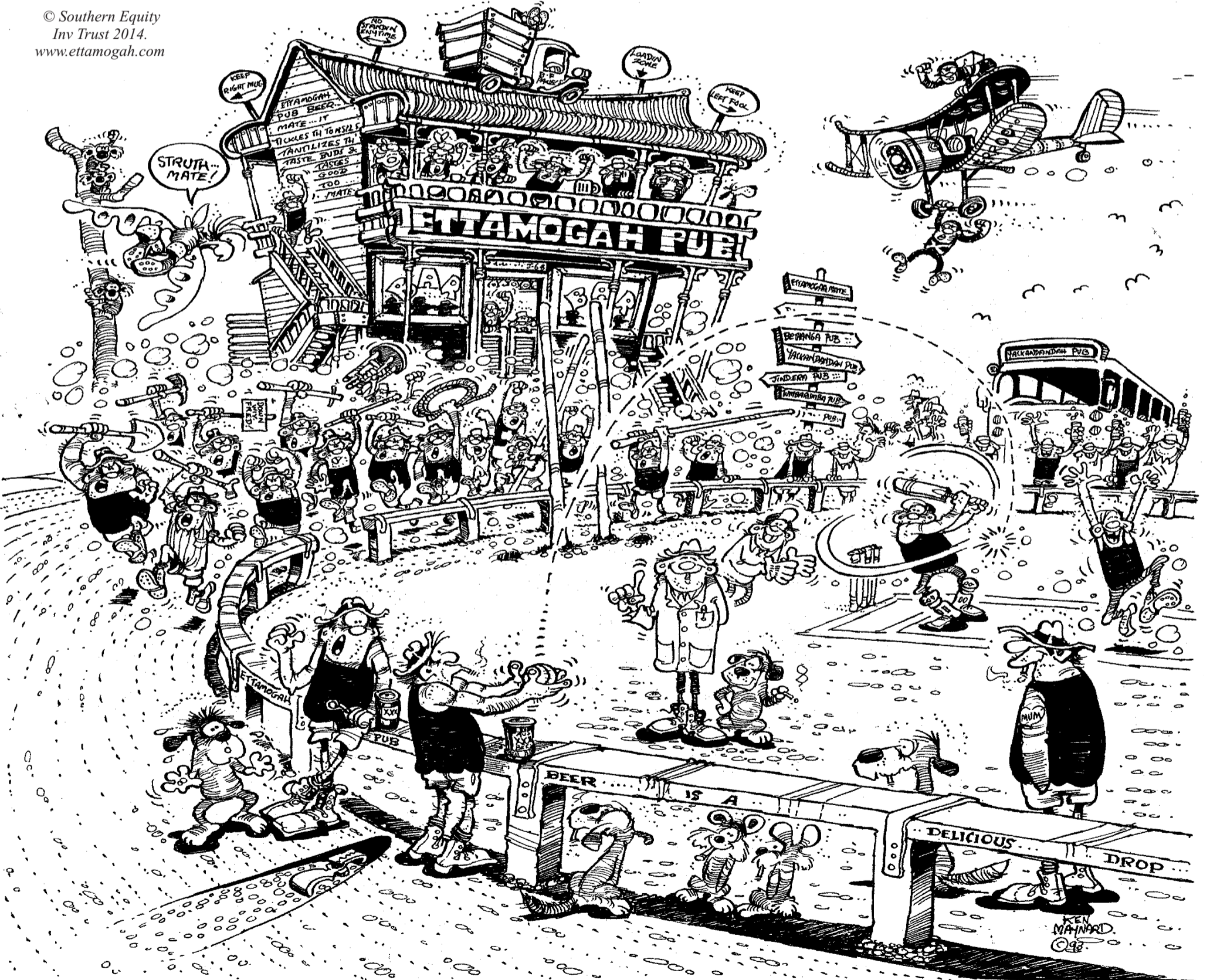
Urgent enquiries can be directed to  
Jenelle Christian on 0417 249 520

Elders Insurance Donald  
81A Woods Street, Donald. 3480  
P. 03 5497 7100  
E. eldersinsurancedonald@elders.com.au

Jenelle, Anne,  
Simon and Paul  
at Elders  
Insurance  
wish all our  
clients a very  
merry Christmas  
and a safe and  
happy New Year.

# The Ettamogah Pub Mob

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www.ettamogah.com



"Good one Fred ... you've just caught ou th' local hero one short of his century ... you've put th' club out of th' shed competiitiion and you've wiped out a day of social drinking!"

# Take Care as Temperatures Soar

The State Government is reminding Victorians to take care of themselves and others as one of the hottest days this year approaches and heat blankets most of the state.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas warns Victorians to be prepared for the scorching days ahead, with temperatures expected to hit 40-degrees or higher in many parts of the state on Thursday.

Extreme heat kills more people than natural disasters, but there are simple steps people can take to beat the heat:

- Drink plenty of water, stay cool by seeking out air-conditioned buildings.

- Plan ahead and schedule activities to the coolest part of the day.

- If heading outdoors, seek shade when possible, wear a hat and sunscreen and avoid exercising in the heat.

- Check in on others most at risk in the heat.

People who are vulnerable to extreme heat include the elderly, babies and infants, pregnant women, people with

acute or chronic health problems and people who are socially isolated. These conditions can lead to heat exhaustion and heatstroke, trigger heart attacks or stroke, or worsen existing conditions such as kidney or lung disease.

Children and pets are particularly vulnerable to heat if left in enclosed areas like parked cars, where temperatures can more than double within minutes, and which are often 20 to 30 degrees hotter than outside – a deadly combination for children, whose body temperatures rise much faster than adults.

Ambulance Victoria data shows paramedics made 117 callouts to people in locked cars in November with the total reports in the past year surpassing 1,210 – almost 90 per cent of cases involving

children under 13, with 12-3 p.m. the busiest time for call outs.

Leaving the windows of a parked car down has little effect on reducing the temperature, with tests showing that when windows are left open 10 centimetres, the temperature will only reduce by five degrees.

If you or someone you know is showing signs of heat exhaustion, heatstroke, or other health emergency, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

For non-life-threatening emergencies people can contact the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, visit an Urgent Care Clinic, call NURSE-ON-CALL or visit a GP doctor or local pharmacist for advice.

For more tips on surviving heat, visit [betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/survive-heat](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/survive-heat).

gov.au/campaigns/survive-heat.

“We’re urging Victorians to be prepared – stay hydrated, stay indoors as much as possible and check in on loved ones.”

“With summer upon us, it is an important reminder that chronic health conditions can be exacerbated in the heat and leaving kids or animals in hot parked cars can have deadly consequences.”



**AMBULANCE PHONE NO. 000**

## Donnellon's Bulk Haulage

BILL, FIONA, MURRAY, GRANT, JENNIFER & ANDREW.

wish their valued customers a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2025

## Birchip Post Office & Bowen's Sports Store



**Trading Hours Over Christmas-New Year**

**Closed** Wednesday and Thursday, December 25 & 26, 2024.

**Open** Friday December 27 Monday and Tuesday December 30 & 31, 2024.

**Closed** Wednesday, January 1, 2025.  
**Hours** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m..

Mark, Jennifer, Raylene, Leah, Pam, Stacey, Remi, Marcia and Lou extend their warmest wishes to all valued customers for a Merry Christmas and a Safe and Healthy New Year, and thank you for your support during 2024.

### Christmas & New Year

Trading Hours

**Monday, Dec. 23 OPEN**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 24 OPEN**  
Wednesday, Dec. 25 CLOSED  
Thursday, Dec. 26 CLOSED  
**Friday, Dec. 27 8 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.**  
Saturday, Dec. 28 CLOSED  
Sunday, Dec. 29 CLOSED  
**Monday, Dec. 30 8 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 31 8 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.**  
Wednesday, Jan. 1 CLOSED  
**Thursday, Jan. 2 8 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.**



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Ag Solutions™

96 SEALAKE RD, BIRCHIP

## Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year



Debs, Gayle, Chris, Kuli, and Christine

**Donald Pharmacy**



**LaundroMutt Dog Wash**  
Phone Karena 0437 951 888

13 Raglan St., St. Arnaud Vic. 3478

Karena and her family wish all her clients and their owners a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Closing for Christmas on Tues. December 24, re-commencing on Mon. January 13, 2025

Wind farms typically take up less than

**2%**

of the hosting land

Once constructed, the typical wind farm infrastructure footprint is less than 2% of the hosting land.

Wind farms are highly compatible with agricultural operations. Livestock grazing and cropping can continue right up to the edge of all turbines, hardstands and access tracks during the operational life of a wind farm.

During construction, we work directly with landholders to explain possible disruptions to agricultural activities to minimise impacts where possible.



Learn more about renewable energy generation on our website.

[www.w-wind.com.au](http://www.w-wind.com.au)  
[reception@w-wind.com.au](mailto:reception@w-wind.com.au)  
03 5421 9999



Terry, Debbie, Duane & staff at

**Michaels**

wish everyone a

**Merry Christmas**

and a

**Safe and Happy New Year**

We will be closing from December 24 at 3 p.m., re-opening on Thurs, January 2.

**MICHAELS OF DONALD**



McCulloch Street, Donald  
Phone 5497 1203

**Birchip Neighbourhood House**  
At the Shamrock, 77 Cumming Avenue Birchip3483  
Ph. 5492 2735 Mobile: 0429 922 735  
Email: [birchipbh@bigpond.com](mailto:birchipbh@bigpond.com) Web: [www.birchip.vic.au](http://www.birchip.vic.au)  
Neighbourhood Houses  
The heart of our community

# Transmission Plan Update Released

VicGrid has released the “Draft Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP) Guidelines Final Engagement Report – What We Heard”.

The report is an update to the Draft VTP Guidelines Interim Engagement Report that was released on September 30.

The report released at the weekend summarises and analyses:

- All feedback about the renewable energy zone study area, received during a 10-week consultation period from July 22 to September 30, 2024.

- Feedback about the draft Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines, received during a 5-week consultation period from July 22 to August 25, 2024.

It explains how feedback helped shape and finalise the 2024 Victorian Transmission Plan Guidelines. It also outlines how feedback will be used in the process to identify draft proposed renewable energy zones as VicGrid

develops the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan.

The report is available on the Engage Victoria website: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/vic-transmissionplan>

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from the team at

### Birchip Newsagency

53 Cumming Avenue - Phone 5492 2578

\*\*\*

*Thank you for your great support throughout the year.*

The team at  
**Greg's Digging**  
would like to thank everyone for their support in 2024, and wish them a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe and Prosperous New Year.

**Leo and Sue Noonan**  
wish all their valued clients a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Prosperous New Year.  
**Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.**

### Brian's Carpet Cleaning Birchip



Cleans all carpets  
dining chairs  
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Modern equipment  
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**Brian & Lorraine Lea**  
phone 54922681 mobile 0408320588

**BRIAN & LORRAINE EXTEND  
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS  
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO EVERYONE**

Dale, Sandie and the staff at Wimmera Mallee Accounting, would like to take this opportunity to thank our valued clients for their support over the past 12 months.  
*We wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.*  
We will be closed from **5pm Monday 23 December 2024**, re-opening **9am Monday 20 January 2025**.

**WMM**  
Wimmera Mallee Accounting

Merry Christmas FROM THE BCG TEAM

We hope you have a safe and bountiful harvest and a prosperous and happy new year!  
Please note our office will be closed from 25 December 2024 reopening on 2 January 2025

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

**LET'S CLEAN UP**

**2025**

# AUSTRALIA

**JOIN OUR  
BIGGEST  
EVER  
CLEAN UP  
SUNDAY 2 MARCH**



**REGISTER NOW  
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# Power Fails, but Party Prevails

(By Daniel Puentes)

Donald's whole town Christmas party was held on Friday, December 20, and despite considerable weather challenges, entertained the community as well as rewarding a number of lucky shoppers with the much-anticipated Chamber of Commerce Christmas draw.

I arrived to the sounds of Christmas carols being carried by the winds, with laughter and joy swiftly following.

The breeze kept the heat in check and it promised to be a warm and welcoming evening. However, shortly after my arrival the first unfortunate disaster struck and the power suddenly shut off.

With the carols muted and the bouncy castle deflating, I paused to wonder what that meant for the evening, for the people already gathered and the more to come.

I did not need to wait long, however, as quickly a voice sang out, paired beautifully with a guitar. The kids were all screaming and shouting their excitement as they spent time with both Santa Claus and getting their face painted. There were also free Zooper Doopers, though those weren't only for the kids!

The Lions Club also worked through the heat, perhaps even adding quite a bit of their own with the amount of food coming off the grill! While it was certainly a shame that many of the planned activities fell through because of the Grampians fire, I had been looking forward to tiny goats! The biggest take away was how connected the community is.

When the power first went out and the microphones stopped working, not only did some people head out to get a generator up and running, others came to offer their own support either in what they could do or what they could get.

Many thanks to those who were so willing to assist with keeping the show going! While the show may not have been what people expected, and my heart goes out to all the organisers, the community coming together really

showed what Donald's people are all about.

## Winners

Huge congratulations to all the winners!

This year for the Christmas lights and decorations competition, we had Meyer Street taking home best street, stopping Napier from a third win in a row!

That doesn't mean Napier Street didn't have a good showing with the Flagg family of 7 Napier Street taking home best house.

This year was added a new category, a kids choice award! The winner of this new award was the Chapman family, at 12 Elizabeth Street.

Then of course we moved on to the big draws out of the barrel! With a bunch of good spins to make sure it was all



• The Donald community came together to both solve issues and have a good time!

well and mixed up, the draw began.

Sixth to ninth place, winning \$250 were Kim Spencer, Mark Northwinds, Megan Jardine, and Mon Humphrey.

Fourth and fifth, winning \$500, Alison McEwen and Cheteina Chuwthusi.

Third, winning \$1,000, was Vicci Howard.

Second, winning \$2,000 was once again Mon Humphrey.

First, winning the big \$5,000, was Brian Legg!

And another congratulation to the voucher winners: Christine Weaver, Pat Hepworth, Collie Cartright, Megan Box, Geoff Rigby, Peter Wyllie, Jenny Guild and Geoff Rigby.

While not everything went as planned – few things seem to this year – it was an incredible experience to see the community really come together to make the event enjoyable in the face of such misfortune. Once more I thank all who set this up and I hope everyone has a merry Christmas!



• No power no problem: Elias singing and strumming to entertain the crowd.



• Claire Hayhurst got herself an adorable Christmas koala!



• Santa on his sleigh, a bright red beacon of the Christmas



• Even amidst the smoke and wind, the community still gathered round.

# Birchip P-12 School Presentation Night:

A large crowd congregated at the Birchip Public Hall, for the 44th annual Birchip P-12 School speech night.

Those who gathered witnessed the distribution of book and monetary prizes to the members of the school community who gained excellent academic and vocational results, or excelled in sporting, cultural, leadership or community pursuits.

Mr. Andrew Sayle, principal of Birchip P-12 School, began proceedings by introducing Mrs. Lauren Baker and the grade 6 graduating class. The grade 6 class was presented to the audience individually, and the Dux of grade 6 was revealed to be Sienna Richmond.

## Achievement Awards

The Achievement Awards acknowledge students who, in the eyes of their teachers, put concerted effort and focus into their learning. They display organisational abilities, application to tasks and take on feedback to improve their outcomes. The Achievement Award winners this year were: Prep, Riley Cullen; Grade 1, Flynn Boyle; Grade 2, Amelia Baker; Grade 3, Greta McClelland; Grade 4, Stacey Bowen; Grade 5, Millie Poyner; Grade 6, Chloe Cross; Year 7, Stephanie Trickey; and Year 8, Alana Calwell. In year 9 and 10, students receive Endeavour Awards in recognition of their efforts with their studies: Year

9, Max Field; Year 10, Bambi Navaro.

The Harry Rickard Memorial Encouragement Award went to a student who was recognised for their focus on their studies and the learning growth made this year. This student was Helna George. Former student, Carrie Richmond, and her husband Jono Gourlay, sponsor the year 12 All Rounder Award. This recognises academic achievement, leadership and contribution to the school community. The winner of this award for 2024 was Blake Lee

The most prestigious academic awards are the Dux of Year 7 to Year 12, students must obtain an average mark over 80% across all subjects studied for the year. The Dux award winners were: Year 8, Asha Lee; Year 9, Lana Angel; Year 10, Kyan Wallace; Year 11, Les Cooper. The Dux of the school, with an ATAR of 89.8, was Bella Morris.

Additional subject award winners were also recognised. Birchip Landcare Junior Science Award, Levi Poyner; and the Middle Years Humanities award, Max Field. The Language other than English (LOTE) Award was presented to Eliza Gould for her outstanding work to complete

two year levels of Japanese (Years 9 & 10) in 2024. The Richmond Mathematics Prize was awarded to Michael Darby. Michael received this prize for displaying a deep interest in Mathematics. The Kwong Lee Dow Scholarship offered by Melbourne University for high achieving year 10 students was presented to Zali Angel and Kyan Wallace. These two students join a long line of others from the school who have benefited from the VCE preparation, revision classes and the opportunity to receive money towards their accommodation costs at selected Halls of Residence. Nutrien Ag Solutions Award, facilitated by North Central LLEN was won by Les Cooper.

Mr. Travis Knights introduced the class of 2024, who received VCE Certificates from Principal, Mr. Andrew Sayle. Cr. Graeme Milne presented books to the VCE and VET academic winners in Unit 3 and 4 subjects. With a study score of at least 35. Book prizes awarded to: English, Blake Lee; Mathematics and Media, Elliott Bidstrup; Psychology and Food Studies, Bella Morris; Commerce and Ag & Hort, Connor Lee; Product, Design & Technology, Hudson McCredden; Hospitality, Keira Lowry; Engineering, Les Cooper

The Vocational Major/ Vocational Pathway Certificate award was again sponsored by the family of Rowan Tierney. Rowan was a staunch advocate for the Vocational students that he taught before his untimely passing. This award went to a Hannah Kemp.

## Scholarships

A former student, Sally Conheady (Ryan), instigated a scholarship to encourage students to pursue their further study options. In Sally's own words: "I am in a position to give back to a community that helped me achieve my goals and I'm pretty sure that without their support I wouldn't have." The Sally Conheady Further Education Award went to Verity Rafter.

The Birchip P-12 School, "Buloke Times" and David and Valerie Lee continue to recognise the contribution Janet Lee made to the community through her tireless work, with her reporting on local events and issues over an extended time. This award was won by Les Cooper for his application of sophisticated vocabulary, writing creativity and fearlessness to try new forms of writing. Les was also recently named a winner of Heywire for 2025 for a piece of writing that highlighted the importance of giving back to his local communities.

Vocational Education and Training continues to offer students the opportunity to receive Nationally Accredited

training in vocational courses. Our students can receive this training at Birchip P-12 School's Hospitality or Engineering centre or can travel to Horsham for other courses. Students were presented with their certificates by Ms Angela Poxon who provides valuable support to the Birchip P-12 School careers program. The annual VET award went to Keira Lowry and Les Cooper for their excellence results in Certificate II Cookery and Certificate II Engineering.

The Birchip P-12 School's Parent Body sponsors the Arts Awards. These awards are presented to students who have displayed talent, interest and involvement in the Arts including creative writing, drama, food, art, graphics, music and craft. Mrs. Sarah Barber, vice-president of the Parent body presented awards to Tilly Hogan (junior section) and Elliott Bidstrup (secondary section) for their excellence in the arts.

The Primary and Secondary Citizenship Awards are two of the highest awards Birchip P-12 School offers its

students. These awards are presented to students who, in the opinion of staff, have contributed to the overall welfare of the school and local community. Levi Poyner was the winner of the Primary Citizenship Award sponsored by the SES Birchip branch, presented by Mr. Mark Darby. Les Cooper was the winner of the Secondary Citizenship Award. Les was recognised for his excellent community work for the Nullawil community as well as his involvement, as Student Board president, in many student initiated activities across the school in 2024.

The Australian Defence Force again sponsored the Long Tan Leadership Awards. The students were identified through a clear set of criteria, encompassing leadership, teamwork, values, problem solving, resourcefulness, communication, co-operation and community involvement. The year 10 winner was Eva Coffey and at the year 12 level Jenna Angel. The ADF also sponsored the Future Innovators Awards, this went to Elliott Bidstrup.

Sporting achievements of the students in swimming, cross country running and athletic pursuits were recognised through the Lions Club Sports Awards. The individual sporting Champions were: Grade 5/6, Sienna Richmond and Archie Tyler; 12/13 year old, Mia Sharp and Willow Ryan; 14 year old, Asha Lee and Hugo Warne; 15 year old, Beau Haslam and Oliver Cook; 16 year old, Eva Coffey; 17 year old, Sassia Coffey and Harry Cook; 20 year old, Jenna Angel and Connor Lee. The overall winner of the intra-school sporting competition for 2024 was Young House.

Mr Sayle identified and thanked the students who held positions of responsibility during the 2024 school year. He thanked the bus captains, Junior SRC and their office bearers, as well as student board members and those elected to positions of responsibility. The House Captains for Fraser and Young sporting houses were recognised for their contributions to sport organisation also.

• Continued on page 11.



• Dux Bella Morris and Principal Andrew Sayle.



• Helna George (Year 11 RSL Harry Rickard Encouragement award) and Blake Lee (Richmond Gourlay All Rounder award). Absent Bambi Navaro (Emerging Talent and year 10 Endeavour award).



• VCE and VET Subject Award winners: Les Cooper (Engineering & VET prize), Keira Lowry (Hospitality award & VET prize), Bella Morris (Psychology & Food Studies), Hannah Kemp (Vocational Pathways Award), Hudson McCredden (Product Design and Technology), Connor Lee (Agriculture and Horticulture & Commerce), Elliot Bidstrup (Mathematics & Media), Blake Lee (English Award).



• Year level Dux: Year 10 Kyan Wallace, Year 11 Les Cooper, Grade 6 Sienna Richmond, Year 8 Asha Lee, Year 9 Lana Angel.

# Recognition of a Year of Achievement

• Continued from page 10.

## From the Principal

In his Principal's address Mr. Andrew Sayle thanked the Birchip P-12 School Community for being involved in another successful year. Andrew's speech acknowledged the enormous impact that a positive and interested school community has on the

culture of the Birchip P-12 School. Andrew recognised the excellent VCE results achieved this year, congratulating students, staff and families for this achievement. Andrew also highlighted two extra-curricular activities for the year and the rewards they provide to students, these being the trip to Cambodia and

the School production.

School Council president, Mr. Tim McClelland, highlighted the school values, and in particular the value of aiming high. Tim spoke eloquently as he referred to two high achievers that have realised success through persistence, dedication and setting goals: Harry Coffey and Zoe

Foster Blake. These two individuals highlight that the process is more important than the outcome, which is a good lesson to follow, not only during the school years, but also throughout life. Tim also took the opportunity to recognise the significant milestone of 35 years of service to the Education Department by Andrew

Sayle and Russell Christie. He congratulated both for their dedication, work and loyalty to the school and broader community.

The last two speakers were Jenna Angel and Blake Lee who carried out their last speech of their School Captaincy. In a thoughtful and ar-

ticulate manner, they reflected on their role throughout the year. They also congratulated the award winners and all other students that contribute toward the positive environment of the school. Jenna and Blake then thanked fellow students, staff and parents for providing our student body with opportunity.



• Les Cooper (Nutrien Agriculture award) and Michael Darby (Richmond Mathematics award).



• VCE graduating class. Back: Clarice Bennett, Riley Hogan, Sassia Coffey, Hudson McCredden, Verity Rafter, Ruby Kemp, Jenna Angel, Hannah Kemp, Chloe Hawkins, Jazmine Trollope, Bella Morris, Emily Barber. Front: Connor Boyle, Samuel Hogan, James Hampton, Elliott Bidstrup, Joshua Woods, Connor Lee, Blake Lee.



• ADF Leadership and Teamwork: Year 12 Jenna Angel, Year 10 Eva Coffey, Year 7 - 12 Citizenship Award Les Cooper, P-6 Art Award Tilly Hogan, 7-12 Art Award and ADF Future Innovation award Elliott Bidstrup, Year P-6 Citizenship Levi Poyner.



• Verity Rafter (Sally Conheady Scholarship), Zali Angel and Kyan Wallace (Kwong Lee Dow Scholars).



• Levi Poyner (Junior Science award), Les Cooper (Janet Lee Literature award), Max Field (Middle Years Humanities award), Eliza Gould (Middle Years LOTE award).



• Birchip Lions Club Achievement Awards: Stacey Bowen, Millie Poyner, Chloe Cross, Stephanie Trickey, Alana Caldwell, Max Field, Riley Cullen, Finn Boyle, Amelia Baker, Greta McClelland.

# VFF Announces Election Results

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) has announced the outcome of its elections for VFF president and vice-president, as well as a number of VFF commodity group roles.

VFF Returning Officer Brendan Tatham congratulated all successful office bearers as the future leaders of Victoria's peak agricultural advocacy body.

"VFF members have elected Brett Hosking as president and Peter Star as vice-president," he said.

"I congratulate both Brett and Peter and look forward to working with them and the wider VFF team to help deliver for farmers and regional Victorians in the coming years.

"The VFF would like to acknowledge and thank all candidates for their interest in positions and encourage them

to continue to contribute to the VFF and the farming community into the future.

"The VFF also thanks all outgoing office bearers for their contributions over the years and helping to facilitate succession in the VFF to the next generation of VFF leaders," Mr Tatham said.

The 2024 VFF election vote counting process was conducted on the morning of Friday, December 20, 2024 at Farrer House in Melbourne under supervised conditions.

About the VFF president and vice-president:

## Brett Hosking, President

Brett is an experienced and respected agricultural advocate

and has previously served as vice-president of the VFF (2016-2018) and president of the VFF Grains Group.

He is a fifth-generation mixed farmer from Quambatook in Victoria's Mallee region where he grows wheat, barley, canola, lentils, field peas as well as running sheep and cattle.

He is also a respective director of the Birchip Cropping Group and Farmers for Climate Action and chairperson of the Grains Market Access Committee for Grains Australia and a former Grain Growers chairperson.

Brett believes the VFF's greatest opportunities come

through strong members, branches and commodity groups aligned together under stable and inclusive leadership where informed and enthusiastic voices combine to create greater outcomes for all farmers.

## Peter Star, Vice-President

Peter Star, vice-president Peter has been VFF Livestock vice-president since 2022. He is a livestock farmer from Tallangatta in Victoria's north-east.

Amongst a host of previous experience, he is the current VFF representative to the National Wild Dog Action Plan Stakeholder Consultative



• Brett Hosking.



• Peter Star.

Group. He has also held positions of the VFF Land Management Committee, served as the Livestock Council Representative to the VFF Board and is a current member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Peter is passionate about supporting the next generation of farmers, while engaging with our established farming families on issues like succession planning and generational transfer.

**GILCHRIST + Co**

Rohan, Nicole, Aileen, Chloe and the team thank their valued clients for their support during 2024. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

We will be closed from Thursday, December 19 and re-open on Monday, January 6.

90 Woods St, Donald | 1/1728 Sturt St, Ballarat  
(03) 5497 1749  
info@gilchristco.com



Adam & Alex Schulz together with the staff at  
Sam & Chloe Penfold

### HARDINGHAMS PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL

Wish all their customers a happy, safe and **VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS**

We will be closed on  
Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2024  
Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025



**DONALD TIMBERYARD** wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

We will be closed from Christmas Day and Will re-open on Monday, January 6, 2025

## Donald Auto. Electrical

20 Racecourse Road, Donald

David and Gavin wish all their valued customers a very Merry Christmas and a great New Year.

**Closed December 19 @ noon**  
**Re-open Mon, January 6, 2025**

David 0428 519 496 and Gavin 0498 490 656 on call.

**BULOKE HIRE** Goldy's Patch

Buloke Hire and Goldy's Patch would like to wish all our customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to your continued support at 4 Racecourse Road, Donald in 2025.

info@bulokehire.com.au 0439 285 653  
goldyspatch@bulokehire.com.au 0407 900 670

John and Staff at

## DONALD STEEL METALAND

wish you a very Merry Christmas and thank you for your patronage in 2024, and look forward to being of service in 2025.

**Closed from Friday, December 20, re-open Monday, January 6, 2025.**

• Emergency repairs and sales please contact John (Mob. 0427 971 738)

Revtoy Transport & Signs 'R' Us

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Would like to thank our valued customers for their continued support and wish all a Safe & Prosperous New Year

## HARVEST Cafe

29 Woods Street Donald  
**Christmas Opening Hours**

Est. 2023

**CLOSING** Sunday, December 22 @ 4 p.m.  
**RE-OPEN** Friday, January 3 @ 11 a.m.

*The Chapman and Donnellon families & staff, wish our customers a safe and happy holiday period.*

**LOVE SHACK GIFTWARE**

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Wishing all our valued customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Stay updated on our shop hours by following us on Facebook and Instagram.

Shop online 24/7 at [www.loveshackgiftware.com.au](http://www.loveshackgiftware.com.au)

Thank you for your support! 🌟  
Stacey & Wayne

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and safe and Happy New Year

Dunstan Engineering will be closed from Friday December 20 and will re-open Monday, January 13, 2025.

## Jasper & co. HOMEWARES

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

Jasper & Co wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas. Thank-you to all our customers for your wonderful support in 2024.

We will be CLOSED from 12 p.m. Dec. 24 until end of January. Re-opening again February 2025.

92 WOODS ST, DONALD

# Salvos Remember Cyclone Tracy

This December marks the 50th anniversary of Cyclone Tracy; one of the most destructive natural disasters ever recorded in Australian history.

The Salvation Army was on the ground in Darwin and at relief centres across Australia to help those who fled the devastation, providing more than 25,000 meals in the first four days and supporting over 36,000 people who were affected by the disaster.

Captains Alan and Margaret Walker, and Captains Hilton and Wilga Morris were The Salvation Army Officers in Darwin at the time. Despite facing their own loss and trauma, they jumped into action with their fellow Salvos team to provide crisis relief on Christmas Day and in the weeks and months ahead.

Today, The Salvos remember the 66 lives lost, the 145 individuals who were seriously injured and the tens of thousands who were directly affected by the disaster which saw 80 per cent of Darwin wiped out in the early hours of Christmas Day, 1974.

Memories of the disaster remain vivid 50 years on. The Salvation Army's current Chief Secretary, Colonel Winsome Merrett, is the daughter of Captains Hilton and Wilga Morris. She remembers sheltering in the kitchen and being evacuated on a crowded plane to Brisbane. After the disaster, she returned to Darwin to complete Year 12 at the only secondary school that was left standing.

Former Commissioner of The Salvation Army Australia, James Condon, was the leader of the Mt Isa Salvos, an evacuation centre for people from Darwin. James has clear memories of the devastation and the emergency relief provided to people who needed shelter, food and clothing.

As was noted at the time, "Santa never made it into Darwin that year, but the Salvos did, and they made their presence felt. Throughout the Cyclone Tracy disaster, The Salvation Army:

- Supported 36,000 people who had to be clothed, fed and evacuated from Darwin;
- Served more than 25,000 meals at Darwin Airport within four days of the cyclone hitting town;
- Opened centres in most capital cities across Australia to receive donated goods and store supplies, then trucked or flown to Darwin

- Met evacuees at the other end of their flight, boarding planes to comfort people who were distressed and traumatised;

- Raised over \$1 million through their National Appeal in the first few days, which was used to support those affected by Cyclone Tracy.


The Salvation Army was privileged to provide support



• Colonel Winsome Merrett pictured during the cyclone.

to those devastated by Cyclone Tracy and has remained committed to supporting Aussies affected by natural disasters ever since.

The Salvos have been present in countless bushfires, floods, cyclones and more in their 140 year history, and will continue to do so, providing vital support as people recover and rebuild in the aftermath of devastating disasters.



**The Buloke Times**

Would like to thank their readers, contributors and advertisers for their support throughout the year and wish all a very safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.

## 2024.5 | 7 YEARS ROADSIDE ASSIST & CAP PRICE SERVICING

# END OF YEAR CLEARANCE

ABN Discount Prices



**MY 2024.50 Ranger Wildtrack** Dual Cab Pick-up, Aluminium, Leather Seats, ARB Bull Bar, Boss Tray, Air Bags **\$94,700** Drive Away

**MY 2024 Everest Trend** 2.0Ltr Bi-Turbo, 4x4, Towing Pack, 18Inch A/T Tyres, Arctic White **\$70,490** Drive Away

**MY 2024.50 Ranger** Dual Cab, Sport, 3.0Ltr V6 Diesel, 10 Spd Auto 4x4, Arctic White, Sport Embossed Seats, Flexible Rack System **\$76,000** Drive Away

**MY 2024.50 Ranger** Dual Cab, XLT, 2.0Ltr Bi-turbo Diesel, 10 Spd Auto 4x4, Aluminium, Premium Cloth Seat Trim, Touring Pack **\$65,900** Drive Away

**MY 2024.50 Ranger** Dual Cab Raptor 3.0Ltr V6 Petrol, 10 Spd Auto 4x4, Arctic White, Raptor Embossed Leather Seats, Power Roll Shutter **\$97,500** Drive Away

**2023 F-150** Double Cab (crew cab) Lariat Series, 3.5Ltr V6 Petrol, 10 Spd SWB **NOVEMBER END OF YEAR RUNOUT \$139,990** Drive Away

**My 2024.50 Transit Custom Trend** 2.0L Diesel, 8spd, Automatic, Frozen White/BlackOnyx, Load Area Protection Kit **\$59,200** Drive Away

Please call  
**Duane Johns 0434 566 830** or  
**Tye Sibley 0409 286 614** for further information

**Michaels of Donald**  
 13-15 McCulloch St, DONALD Ph. 54971203 LMCT 6873





## Flaxleaf Fleabane

Fleabane research will be a focus at BCG's Trial's Review Day on Friday, February 21 at the Birchip Community Leisure Centre.

BCG Agronomist Angus Butterfield will detail why the key to controlling mature flaxleaf fleabane (*Coryza* spp.) is in the first pass of a double-knock strategy.

Butterfield undertook two trials researching the stubborn weed near Birchip, Victoria in the summer of 2023-24, focussing on double-knock control. The first trial focussed on the effectiveness of different first pass options and the second trial, second pass treatments.

Growers may find the results surprising. "What we found," Butterfield explains, "is that first spray applications are critical for effective control of mature flaxleaf fleabane and premium herbicide products often deliver better results in the first spray".

The wind-borne surface germinating weed has become prolific since the adoption of no till farming systems. Each plant can produce up to

110,000 seeds (Wu 2012) and its waxy surface gives it a natural tolerance to glyphosate (Daniel 2015).

"What makes it particularly tricky to control is that fleabane often comes up in spring under crops and therefore options for its control while it is still small and easier to kill are limited," Butterfield says. "Our trial work highlights that the addition of Dropzone® to a standard summer spray significantly improves control of flaxleaf fleabane, while common mixes such as 2,4-D ester and triclopyr offer no additional control over a standard glyphosate mix."

Another interesting finding of the trials was that glyphosate and Terrad'or® may not be needed to control flaxleaf fleabane and excluding these products could significantly reduce costs.

To read the full article visit [www.bcg.org.au/flaxleaf-fleabane-control/](http://www.bcg.org.au/flaxleaf-fleabane-control/). To hear more



• Angus Butterfield.

about BCG's mature fleabane control research, search Shared Ag Solutions by BCG wherever you get your podcasts.

BCG will release its latest research results to BCG members on Friday 21 February. To book your place and receive your 2024 BCG Season Research Results compendium, sign up to become a member today at [bcg.org.au](http://bcg.org.au) or call (03) 5492 2787.



• Flaxleaf Fleabane.



## Robotic Weed Manager Pays its

Weed detection and spot spraying in fallow is a powerful way to reduce chemical use, conserve soil moisture and run down the weed seed bank.

Andrew and Cynthia Purshouse and their eldest son James recently employed a Swarmbot named 'Mooki', fitted with a 13 m RBE boom and Weed-IT Quadro sensors as their dedicated fallow spot-spraying unit on their 5100-ha mixed farming operation, 'Breeza Station', on the Liverpool Plains, NSW.

In 2015, they began optical spot spraying using a 36 m Weedseeker boom on their Miller Nitro SP to reduce their chemical use in fallow fields.

Spot spraying fallow weeds, including milk thistle, fleabane, ryegrass, windmill grass, and barnyard grass, uses much less chemical per spray pass than blanket spraying, representing significant savings to their business.

James said that although the 36 m Weedseeker boom worked well, they frequently needed their self-propelled machine to do two jobs simultaneously. The family investigated their options and weighed the pros and cons of buying a second self-propelled sprayer or an autonomous (robot) to increase their spray capacity.

"While both are expensive pieces of machinery, we saw the benefit of the robotic option as the ability to do two spray jobs simultaneously without needing to employ an extra operator," he said.

In 2022, they ordered a robotic platform from Swarm-Farm as a dedicated fallow weed spot-spraying unit, and it was deployed on Breeza Station in June 2023.

"In the 14 months between June 2023 and August 2024, the Swarmbot completed 1490 engine hours, which includes time travelling, spraying and in sleep mode," said James. "It has an average operating speed of 9.7 ha/hr, uses 0.8 L/ha of diesel, and has a running cost of \$4/ha."

In comparison, their SP sprayer typically covers 50 ha/hr and uses 0.9 L/ha of diesel when camera spraying, giving a similar running cost per ha. It also requires a driver.

James said they have made a major shift from reactive to proactive weed management, where they are now targeting smaller weeds more often using a spray rotation of three to four weeks, according to weather conditions.

"All weeds are more susceptible to herbicide when they are small," he said. "The robot removes the normal temptation to hold off spraying to wait for a few more weeds to emerge."

"The fact that the robot will return to each paddock within a few weeks means that we are continually driving down the weed seed bank by eliminating small weeds before they can establish and set seed."

The Purshouses have implemented many of the WeedSmart Big 6 tactics to reduce their risk of herbicide resistance, including increasing their spray efficacy with the robot providing a consistent 50 cm boom height and slower operating speed so the Weed-IT sensors can detect very small weeds in heavy stubble.

To comply with their controlled traffic system, 'Mooki' has 4 m centres and a 13 m RBE spray boom. This is standard for 12 m CTF systems to provide a 0.5 m overlap for each pass. The platform carries a 1500 L

spray tank and weighs about 5t when fully loaded.

"The Nitro SP weighs about 20 t when fully loaded, so the robot has a distinct advantage when it comes to minimising compaction and getting onto paddocks sooner after rain," said James. "We selected 1400 mm high-clearance chassis so we didn't lock ourselves out of future use opportunities such as inter-row spraying in skip-row cotton crops."

Since adding Mooki to the farm workforce, the self-propelled sprayer's engine hours have been reduced, extending its effective life. Staff time and skills have also been better utilised.

"At cotton picking time, the whole team can focus on picking and mulching jobs knowing that Mooki is attending to the fallow spraying," said James. "This means all jobs are being done on time, and we don't have to worry about the fallow weeds depleting our stored soil moisture or setting seed. And none of us wish we were out spot spraying!"

For more information about automated weed detection, visit the WeedSmart website: [www.weedsmart.org.au](http://www.weedsmart.org.au)

WeedSmart is the industry voice delivering science-backed weed control solutions to enhance on-farm practices and promote the long-term, sustainable use of herbicides in Australian agriculture.

WeedSmart has support from the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), major herbicide, machinery and seed companies, and university and government research partners, all of whom have a stake in sustainable farming systems.

The GRDC is a Platinum investor in WeedSmart to ensure Australian grain growers have access to world-class research in strategies to mitigate weeds and control herbicide resistance.

## Resources for Ewe Pregnancy Scanning

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) have released a range of new resources to help producers scan and manage pregnant ewes.

The new resources are the result of a multi-year co-investment between MLA and AWI aimed to improve lamb survival and reproductive rates in the Australian sheep flock through better adoption of pregnancy scanning. The background research was completed by The University of Adelaide and included many industry consultants in the project team.

In 2018, an MLA-funded survey of Australian sheep producers determined that 69% of respondents did not pregnancy scan their ewe flocks for litter size.

According to Project Manager for Sheep and Goat Productivity at MLA, Dr Daniel Forwood, this limits a producer's capacity to maximise lamb and ewe survival.

"Pregnancy scanning is a vital tool for improving sheep

reproductive performance. It enables identification of litter size early in pregnancy, so that multiple-bearing ewes can be differentially managed to meet recommended condition score targets and increase survival," Dr Forwood said.

"Research shows pregnancy scanning in sheep provides an average increase in profit of \$5.55/ewe scanned.

"By customising ewe nutrition during pregnancy and lactation according to whether ewes are carrying singles or multiples, producers can help to reduce lamb and ewe mortality."

As part of the project, AWI General Manager for Research, Bridget Peachey, said that AWI and MLA conducted an extensive benefit cost analysis on the value of scanning across a range of sheep producing regions and enterprise types.

"In addition, the two organisations undertook a series of grower interviews and surveys to create a better understanding of the barriers to adoption of pregnancy scanning, then develop solutions to overcome these barriers," Ms Peachey said.

"Important to increasing producer adoption is having a detailed business case for pregnancy scanning which is applicable to different production environments and enterprise types, producer needs and resource availability."

The resources released include the value of pregnancy scanning; ewe scanning and management checklist; pregnancy scanning: an ultrasound investment; resource guide for sheep reproduction; the value of pregnancy scanning: a benefit-cost analysis.

This project is an initiative under the Sheep Reproduction Strategic Partnership (SRSP). The SRSP is a sheep industry initiative managed by MLA that seeks to profitably and sustainably increase lamb production by increasing weaning rates and decreasing mortality.

The SRSP Management Committee oversees the direction of the partnership. Its membership is composed of the Southern Australia Livestock Research Council (SALRC) and Western Australian Livestock Research Council (WALRC) chairs and producer members, Sheep Producers Australia (SPA), AWI, and MLA's Sheep and goat Productivity and Consultation programs.

For more information visit: <http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/resources/>



# 100 useful things

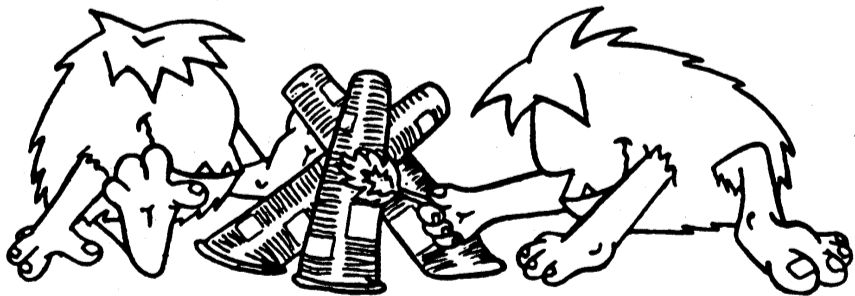
## you can do with the newspaper



- 1 Cover your head when it rains
- 2 Line your bird cage
- 3 Make a fireman's hat
- 4 Shade the sun from your eyes
- 5 Mulch for your garden
- 6 To pottle train house pets

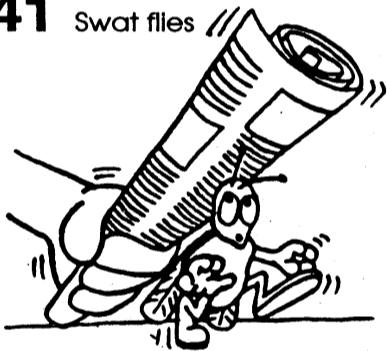


- 7 Wrap fish and other rubbish in it
- 8 Wrapping for freezing meat
- 9 Use to pack with when moving
- 10 Roll into fireplace logs
- 11 Blanket for bench sleeping
- 12 Roll up to make telescope
- 13 Recycle for cash
- 14 Clean car windows
- 15 Temporary curtains for your home
- 16 To make papier mache
- 17 Put on floor when painting
- 18 Use for wrapping gifts
- 19 **Emergency toilet paper** (although we'd rather you didn't)
- 20 Use as insulation
- 21 Use letters for writing ransom notes
- 22 Rustling sound effect for home movies
- 23 Start a fire with it



- 24 Make into house slippers
- 25 Roll up to make a megaphone
- 26 Stand on pile to appear tall
- 27 Make a collage

- 28 Use as a temporary cast
- 29 Use as shoehorn
- 30 Make a fan
- 31 Empty vacuum cleaner on it
- 32 Fix hole in shoe
- 33 Keep flowers fresh until you get vase
- 34 Put on floor when you shell peas
- 35 Spank dog
- 36 Make confetti
- 37 Scoop up dead bugs
- 38 Fingerprint on it
- 39 Stuff in wet boots to help them dry
- 40 Insulate water pipes in winter
- 41 Swat flies



- 42 Use rolled up to beat rug
- 43 To line the rubbish can
- 44 Make a kite
- 45 Paper your friend's yard
- 46 Clean your feet on
- 47 Use as funnel for filling petrol tank
- 48 Make patterns for sewing

- 49 Make a pair of Bowyangs for days among the snakes
- 50 Keep kitchen clean when transferring potted plants
- 51 For finding a nice type
- 52 Make printer's hat

- 53 Stuff in shirt to make muscles
- 54 Feed a goat



- 55 Absorb things you spill
- 56 Make paper dolls
- 57 To hide in at dinner table
- 58 For table cloth at annual picnic
- 59 A source for rubber bands
- 60 Collect as hobby
- 61 Make yourself look important by carrying it
- 62 Use as door-stop
- 63 Disposable plate when eating watermelon
- 64 Use in magic tricks
- 65 Tearing strips for birthday party streamers
- 66 Save the seat next to you
- 67 Dry up shaving nicks
- 68 Take out frustration by tearing and throwing
- 69 To collect hair when cutting
- 70 Blot your lipstick
- 71 For learning to spell
- 72 Test out your new paperweight
- 73 Practise stapling
- 74 Make people think you're not at home
- 75 Stuff pillows
- 76 Backing for wax transfers
- 77 Use under car when you have oil leak
- 78 Make a dummy for tricks
- 79 Mask your car for painting
- 80 Use as a coaster for cold drinks
- 81 Use as a dart board
- 82 Practice for softball

- 83 Fold up a page and make your wallet look impressive
- 84 Make your hat fit better
- 85 A wrapper for used chewing gum
- 86 Collect the yellow from the sun
- 87 Good for breaking windows, screen doors etc.
- 88 Exercise your grip
- 89 Teach dog to fetch
- 90 Backing for magic marker art projects
- 91 Under jersey, windbreakers
- 92 Time consumer in toilet
- 93 Keeping drink bottles cool
- 94 Wrap fish and chips
- 95 Send overseas for departing residents
- 96 For Origami
- 97 Paper stencils
- 98 Use as worm food



- 99 Advertise: New cars, garage sales, grand openings, clearance sales, fashions, televisions, help wanted, used cars, pets, furniture, boats, cosmetics, groceries, toys, coupons, antiques. If you want to sell anything or everything, you can sell it quickly with an advertisement in the "Buloke Times".
- 100 People read it for local news, sport, editorial, human interest, television listings, wedding announcements, births, deaths, restaurants and entertainment, movies, are all available in "The Buloke Times".

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 Message Further**

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**The Buloke Times**

Est. 1875



# New Careers for Graduate Paramedics

**Ambulance Victoria (AV) has recruited 61 graduate paramedics who will start the new year with a new career, saving lives across Victoria.**

Interim Chief Executive Officer Andrew Crisp and Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas welcomed a group of new recruits as they get ready to join paramedic crews in 2025.

“Our paramedics, volunteers and support staff are our greatest assets,” Mr Crisp said.

“It is through them that AV continues to lead the way in patient care, including one of the best cardiac arrest survival rates in the world.

“We now have more than 5,000 on-road paramedics delivering the very best lifesaving care, everywhere, and it’s great to see more joining our ranks across Melbourne and regional Victoria.”

On December 9, 2024, the latest intake of 40 new graduate paramedics started their careers at AV with a four-week operational induction program.

The intake is made up of 30 graduate paramedics who will work on Medium Acuity Transport Service (MATS) teams across metropolitan Melbourne and 10 graduate paramedics going to regional ambulance branches in Hamilton, Ballarat, Sebastopol, Yarrowonga, Benalla, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Echuca and Mildura.

The group also includes four Ambulance Community Officers (ACOs) who, through the GAP program, will become qualified paramedics and continue to provide care to communities in regional Victoria.

They will all hit the road on Monday, January 6, 2025. On the same day, another intake of 21 graduate paramedics will begin induction and hit the road on Monday February 3, 2025.

The recruits all undertake a comprehensive operational induction program giving them the “real world” skills

they need to hit the road with experienced paramedics.

Mr Crisp said since the introduction of Australia’s first ambulance officers training course in 1961, Victoria has remained a leader in paramedic education.

“In Victoria, we are proud to have some of the most highly trained and skilled paramedics in Australia,” Mr Crisp said.

“During their induction, our new recruits learn vital skills such as safely moving and loading patients to prevent inquiries, aggression and assault prevention, and safely driving ambulance vehicles.

“Over the course of their program, graduate paramedics work to become qualified paramedics. They initially work under the direct supervision of clinical instructors to assist with the transition from the classroom to their role as paramedics.

“However, training continues throughout their entire careers to ensure patients receive the very best, and most up-to-date life-saving care – and paramedics stay safe while they are doing so.

“Like all our hardworking paramedics, these new recruits have chosen this path because they are compassionate and courageous and want to make a difference to the community.

“It takes a special kind of person to do that, and I wish them all long and rewarding careers at AV.”

AV has undertaken record recruitment in recent years, with a 53 per cent increase in on-road clinical staff over the past decade. In 2023-24, 258 paramedic employees were recruited by AV.



• Interim Chief Executive Officer Andrew Crisp and Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Mary-Anne Thomas welcomed the group of new recruits.

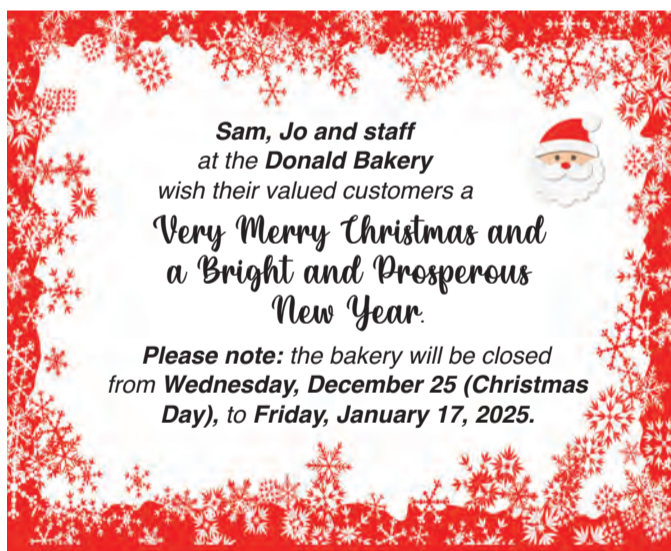


• The 61 graduate paramedics will start the new year with a new career, saving lives across Victoria.

## “Times” Crossword

### QUICK PUZZLE NO. 8160 - SOLUTIONS

**Across** - 6, Contaminate. 7, Bolt. 8, Vermouth. 9, Stroll. 10, Report. 12, Nausea. 15, Arrest. 17, Stimulus. 19, Roan. 20, Clandestine.  
**Down** - 1, Unctuous. 2, Marvel. 3, Mirror. 4, Sago. 5, Pewter. 6, Clout. 11, Portrait. 13, Attack. 14, Allude. 15, Assist. 16, Slake. 18, Mean.



## East Wimmera Health Service Update

**Birchip Medical Practice - Notice of Leave and Closure**

The team of the Birchip Medical Practice have confirmed that the Birchip Medical Practice will be closed from 12 noon Monday, 23 December until 9am Monday, 6 January 2025.

As an alternative you may wish to use the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department which can be accessed online <https://www.vved.org.au/>

The EWHS Birchip Campus Urgent Care Centre will continue to provide a 24/7 service with the support of our EWHS Doctor On Call

## Support services

### Adult

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

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

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

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

**StandBy Support After Suicide**  
1300 727 247

### Youth

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

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

**ReachOut:** ReachOut.com

### Other resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

# The Best Christmas Gift Ever

A visit to my cousin's dairy farm reminds me of a wonderful Christmas gift a young man gave his father. The story begins with a young man named Rob.

Rob was 15 years of age at the time when a few mornings before Christmas he overheard his father telling his mother how much he hated to wake up Rob each morning at 4 a.m. to help with the milking of the farm cows. His dad realised his son was under pressure to get school work done and he was often tired. Rob strained to hear all that his father said to his mother and realised then how much his dad cared for him and how much he loved his dad.

Getting up to milk the cows was never quite the drudgery it had been before.

As he lay in bed on Christmas Eve thinking about his

planned gift to his father, he began thinking about the meaning of Christmas and remembered the time he asked his father what a stable was. His father replied, "It's a barn, son, just like ours". Rob then realised that Jesus had been born in something like a barn, because the baby Jesus was placed in a manger which was an animal feed trough of those times. If God's gift to the world had been born in something like a barn, Rob thought he could give his gift to his father in a barn too.

For fear that he wouldn't wake up in time, Rob barely slept that Christmas Eve night. He dozed off and then



• Bruce Stewart

looked at his bedroom clock. He must have done that 20 times during the night, then at 2.45 a.m. on Christmas morning, he quietly got up and went over to the barn. The night was silent and still and as Rob entered the barn the cows looked at him strangely. It was early for them too. Rob got the hay, the milking bucket and two large milk cans. He felt excited thinking how surprised his father would be. He milked for all he was worth, filled the big milk cans and put everything back in its place and went back to his room.

Rob barely had time to undress and jump back into bed before he heard the familiar knock on the door. "Time to get up Rob. I'll go ahead and get things started".

"Okay", Rob sleepily called back. Rob grinned to himself because soon his father would discover his special Christmas gift. Minutes dragged by and then he heard his father's footsteps and the door swung open. His father chuckled as he pulled the covers off Rob's bed.

"Rob, thought you'd trick me, did you?!"

"It's for Christmas, Dad"

It was still dark but as Rob reached out to grab his father



## A Milking Shed Christmas Gift

*"Son, I thank you. It's the best Christmas gift I have ever received and I'll remember it every year on Christmas morning as long as I live". A wonderful gift that cost no money!*

*The words a grateful dairy farmer dad said to his son...*

## DONALD MOTORCYCLES

**Will cease trading on Friday December 20, 2024.**



*Andy, Sue and Kerrie would like to thank their loyal customers for your ongoing support over the past 44 years.*

Merry Christmas to all and a safe and happy 2025!

*Andy has left the building ..... he's gone fishing!!*

**SPUDS CAFE**  
42 Woods St, Donald. Phone: 0473 991 185

### Christmas Opening Hours

Wednesday Dec. 25: CLOSED  
Thursday Dec. 26: CLOSED  
Friday Dec. 27: CLOSED  
Saturday Dec. 28: CLOSED  
Sunday, Dec. 29: CLOSED  
Wednesday, Jan. 1: CLOSED

**Merry Christmas**  
If these closures upsets you, consider buying the business :)

# Pope

LIGHT FREIGHT  
ph - 0417 383 335

**POPE LIGHT FREIGHT IMPORTANT DATES**  
Pope Light Freight will be taking a short break after Christmas.  
Last run on Friday, December 20, 2024  
Return on Monday, January 6, 2025.

We would love to thank everyone for their business throughout 2024. **Please respect that this is our only break for the whole year.**

Merry Christmas & Happy Safe New Year.  
Looking forward to business with you all in 2025.  
- Nathan & Megan Wait.

**Donald Bingo Committee**  
wish all their loyal Bingo players a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

*Be safe and hope you all have a jolly old time this Christmas.*

**Re-starting Bingo January 16, 2025**

## Share in the merry

From silent nights to loud Christmas lunches, may your festive season be a special one.

During the festive season our branch will close on Tuesday 24 December 2024, and reopen Monday 6 January 2025.

**Merry Christmas from the Community Bank Charlton & District team.**

Community Bank · Charlton & District 5491 2322

**Bendigo Bank**  
Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited ABN 11 068 049 178, AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 237879 A1419239 OUT\_41940810, 26/11/2024

**Jade Benham MP**  
The Nationals Member for Mildura & The Team

*Wish all a*  
**MERRY**  
*Christmas*  
**& HAPPY NEW YEAR**

35a Deakin Avenue, Mildura Vic 3500 (03) 5021 2828 jadebenham.com.au jade.benham@parliament.vic.gov.au #JBMP

# Buloke Strengthens its Emergency Preparedness

Preparedness is essential in managing emergencies, and Buloke Shire Council has been actively enhancing its readiness to support the community during severe weather events.

Recent annual training, live drills, such as practising raising the marine-grade aluminium flood barriers in Donald on Thursday, and

investments in flood mitigation infrastructure, demonstrate Council's commitment to improving emergency response capabilities.

Council also recently supported the distribution of Safer Together funding to all Community Planning Forums and Neighbourhood Houses, to develop and deliver emergency preparedness activities in their local communities. This funding program has been developed through a grant received from the Safer Together Strengthening Local Government Partnerships: Buloke Communities Prepared.

### Stay Informed

Residents are also encouraged to stay informed using trusted resources for real-time updates and revisit emergency planning.

Council has FREE copies of the Red Cross RediPlan available to the Buloke community. These are also available at local Neighbourhood Houses and Resource Centres across the shire, or ask for a copy at Council's Customer Service counter at the Wycheproof office.

### Other Resources:

- VicEmergency – Alerts about incidents in the area: <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond>. Facebook: VicEmergency or via the app.
- Bureau of Meteorology – Weather reports and river



• Buloke Shire Council staff practiced deploying the mechanical flood barrier in Donald early on Thursday morning, ensuring staff are prepared to protect the community during flood events.

heights: <http://www.bom.gov.au>.

Facebook: Bureau of Meteorology or via the app.

• Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) – Preparedness and management of incidents: <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au>. Facebook: Victoria State Emergency Service.

• Flood-Eye – Individual property reports of flood risk: <https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/flood-eye>.

• Road Safety Reminders: VicRoads – Operates 24/7: <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/traffic-and-road-use/report-a-road-issue>. Phone: 13 11 70.

• Buloke Shire Council-owned roads – Operates Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm (note holiday closures from 24 December 2024). Phone

Customer Service on 1300 520 520.

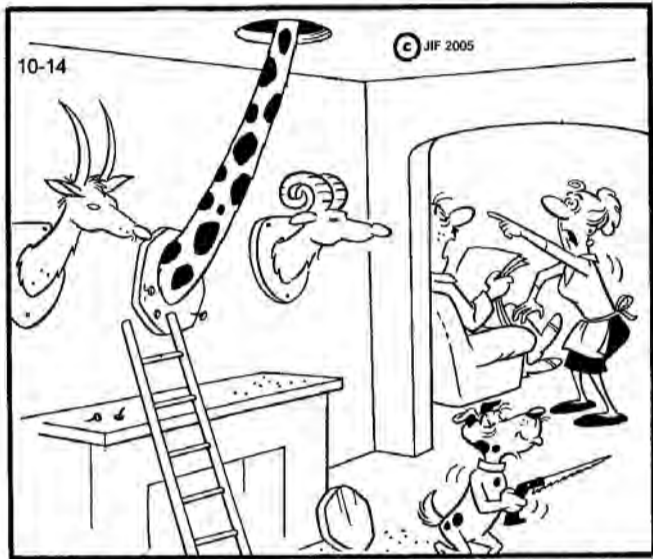
Together, by staying informed and prepared, we can

enhance the safety and resilience of the Buloke community during this summer season.

## MICHAELS OF DONALD

bring you

Belvedere By George Crenshaw  
[www.belvedere-cartoons.com](http://www.belvedere-cartoons.com)



"I know there is no room for the giraffe head, why?"



### Mallee Steel Supply & Fabrication

*Cuzo, Sue, and Staff wish all their valued customers a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

**We will be closed Friday, Dec. 20, re-opening Monday, January 20, 2025.**

**Enquiries Robert, 0427 922 517**

## The Buloke Times

Est. 1875

# A Gift that lasts a year!

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## North-Central Football Season Starts April 5

### Round 1, April 5 —

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

### Round 2, April 12 —

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

### Saturday, April 19 —

League bye for Easter.

### Round 3, April 26 —

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

### Round 4, May 3 —

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

### Round 5, May 10 —

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

### Saturday, May 17 —

League bye for hockey.

### Round 6, May 24 —

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

### Round 7, May 31 —

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

### Saturday, June 7 —

League bye for Kings Birthday.

### Round 8, June 14 —

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

### Round 9, June 21

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

### Round 10, June 28 —

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

### Round 11, July 5 —

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

### Saturday, July 12 —

League bye for school holidays.

### Round 12, July 19 —

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

### Round 13, July 26 —

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

### Round 14, August 2 —

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

### Round 15, August 9 —

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

### Round 16, August 16 —

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

### Saturday, August 23 —

First Semi-final

### Saturday, August 30 —

Second Semi-final

### Saturday, September 6 —

Preliminary final

### Saturday, September 13 —

Grand final

## Vets to Hit Donald

For the first time, Donald is to host a veterans' match of cricket when Vic Country plays Hamilton on the Jeffcott Ground.

The over-60s game is scheduled for Sunday, January 19, 2025, at 11 a.m., and all the players are looking forward to some Wimmera-Mallee hospitality.

Described cheekily as "cricket in slow motion", there is still plenty of skill on show in a competition which is rapidly growing.

Everyone is invited to catch the action, a week before the recommencement of Wimmera-Mallee cricket after the Christmas break.

• Pictured during last season's Echuca carnival are Vic Country players Barry Hopper, David Letts, and Shane Noonan.



**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**  
from all the crew at BP Wycheproof

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**Birchip Automotive**

extends best wishes to all for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for your support in 2024.

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**Christmas Trading Hours**  
Closing 3 p.m., Tuesday, December 24.  
Re-open Monday, December 30, 2024.

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**RACV CALLS 13 1111**

## Share in the merry

From silent nights to loud Christmas lunches, may your festive season be a special one.

During the festive season our branch will close from Wednesday 25 December, and reopen Monday 6 January.

From Tahlia, Skye, Anjalee, Kez and Kirby.  
Your Community Bank Donald Team.

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Brett and Rebecca would like to wish all our Valued Customers A Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. We would like to inform you our last delivery will be on Tuesday December 24th 2024, and we will return to work on Monday January 13th 2025. We look forward to your continued support in 2025