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The Buloke Times

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

“Office On Wheels” Coming to Charlton

The Victorian Government’s Small Business Bus will be rolling into Charlton on Tuesday next, February 25, offering free expert business advice to small business owners and those wanting to start a business.

Small Business Bus

Charlton

Tuesday 25 February

Outside the GMG
Accounting Office
52 High Street



JACLYN SYMES MP
STATE LABOR MEMBER FOR NORTHERN VICTORIA

• The Small Business Bus.

The Small Business Bus will be outside the GMG Accounting Offices from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Walk-ins are welcome, but bookings are recommended.

The Small Business Bus is an “office on wheels” that travels across Melbourne and regional Victoria, providing in-person, expert advice to small business owners where they live or operate their business.

Since it first hit the road 14 years ago, the bus has made more than 3,300 visits and helped more than 47,000 small business owners across the state.

Free Assistance

Small businesses can seek general business assistance, as well as advice on business planning, financial and cash-

flow management, marketing, business compliance and staffing issues – entirely free of charge.

With 22 per cent of the state’s small businesses located in regional Victoria, the Small Business Bus plays an important role in connecting regional communities to services that help build and grow their businesses.

Victoria is proudly home to over 700,000 small businesses that make up 97 per cent of all Victorian businesses. Small businesses make a significant contribution to communities, local jobs, and the Victorian economy.

Fantastic Resource

“The Small Business Bus is a fantastic resource for people looking to start or grow their small business –

providing them with free expert advice so their business can grow, thrive and create local jobs for their community,” said Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes.

“Every business and every business owner is unique, which is why the Small Business Bus provides tailored expert advice for each business owner to help support them in the way that suits them best.”

Online Sessions

For those unable to attend in person, online business advisory sessions are available through Business Victoria.

For more information about the Small Business Bus and to make a booking, visit business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/small-business-bus.

From Those Inner City Electorates . . . Out of Sight, Out of Mind

As the energy policy debate rages on, Member for Mallee, Dr. Anne Webster, addressed parliament on February 11.

The following are excerpts from that address:

*

I focus today on energy policy, because this is a government that 97 times promised before they were elected that they would reduce power bills permanently by \$275 per annum. That promise was officially broken on January 1, this year. They hate us talking about it. It was a big promise, it was a bold promise, and it is broken.

Why?

Why is this promise broken? Is it because this Government couldn’t deliver an outcome even if it was gift-wrapped on their doorstep? Yes, that’s part of it.

Is it broken because this is an incompetent Government, unready for office and showing no sign of improvement?

Yes, that too.

The promise to reduce energy bills is also broken because Labor are joined at the hip to the Australian Greens political party. Labor didn’t run in the Prahran by-election for some bizarre reason, but in the seats Labor does hold, they fret about losing them to the Greens. So Labor rob regions to buy votes in the inner cities, throwing country people under the figurative bus to save themselves from the Greens.

Labor thinks that a rapid race to a political carbon

emissions reduction target, is the smart thing to do. It is not.

The Albanese Labor Government is turning Australia into an international pariah. No nation of the geographic scale like Australia, with the tiny emissions profile like Australia, is doing what this blind government is doing with 28,000 kilometres of transmission lines across agricultural electorates like mine with VNI-West.

Almost every other developed nation is turning to zero-emissions nuclear energy for the long term. The Coalition has a responsible plan for energy policy, and when I look at:

• The almost \$179 million in this bill for the Department

of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and water.

• The \$263 million plus for the Department of Industry, Science and Resources.

• The \$33 million for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

What About Nuclear?

I wonder for that collective taxpayer spending of in excess of \$575 million how nobody has piped up and said – what about nuclear? What about looking and learning from the rest of the world? What about our farmers and fishers and the impact reckless energy policy is having on them?

Either those agencies are incompetent, or this is a government so blind to its political and ideological energy target that it simply won’t listen to sound advice.

Worse than the direct taxpayer impact of the government spending in this bill – spending on agencies that are either incompetent or ignored by the government anyway – there are hidden costs to every taxpayer in the consequences of collective energy policy failures at state and federal levels. In my home state of Victoria we have a State and Federal Labor government who are zeroing in on my electorate of Mallee as Labor’s dumping ground for bad policy, namely, railroading small regional communities and farmers with unwanted wind turbine, solar panel and transmission line projects.

The Spin

Don’t buy the spin from foreign wind cowboy companies – over 90 per cent of



• Dr. Anne Webster.

over 1,800 people who own, work or have a close connection with farms oppose renewable projects on farmland, according to a recent survey by farming advocacy group Farms for Food.

Victorian Labor had six renewable energy zones in their initial plans, now almost all the singular REZ is landing in Mallee.

While Australians struggle with the cost of living and 27,000 small businesses have

• Continued on page 2.

In St. Arnaud, Charlton and Donald Areas . . . Local Power Maintenance Blitz

Powercor has begun a large package of maintenance work on the distribution network in the St Arnaud, Donald and Charlton areas to keep the power safe and reliable for customers.

Over the coming months, crews will replace 263 poles, 47 cross-arms, 25 insulators and 69 LV Services on both public and private land.

Crews identified the items to be replaced or upgraded as part of routine inspections conducted during November.

Powercor’s Head of Operations and Delivery, Barry David, said local crews would work closely with landowners to minimise disrupting farming operations.

“We conduct essential maintenance on the distribution network

all year round to make sure our customers have safe power that they rely on,” Mr David said.

“Many of our poles and wires are located on private properties so our crews will need to enter some of these sites to conduct their work.

“We are contacting landowners directly ahead of any work that needs to occur on their property.

“We know that every property has unique access and biosecurity needs that must be met and we will work with landowners

to make sure we are aware of their individual requirements.”

Crew members will be in Powercor uniforms and carry Powercor identification badges.

Mr David said the work was part of Powercor’s regular maintenance program and was not related with transmission work or new network infrastructure.

“We know there’s a lot of discussion in the community about electricity infrastructure and we want to assure people that our crews are simply maintaining the distribution network to keep power safe and reliable,” he said.

Customers with any questions at all can call Powercor’s contact centre, based in Bendigo, on 13 22 06.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

• Continued from page 1.

gone to the wall under Labor – with energy costs a major factor in falling business viability – Labor pretends its \$275 permanent energy reduction promise never happened. The arsonists stand there with a bucket of water pretending they're helping. They toss into the energy prices bonfire a one-off series of four quarterly payments to somehow nurse their wounded polling through an election. Mark my words, no sooner will the election pass and power bills will surge back up again.

This Government cares far, far more about its own political survival in inner city electorates than it does about struggling Australians and battling small businesses.

Dividing the Mallee

Labor is dividing the Mallee with duplicated infrastructure that we will not need if we put zero emissions nuclear energy at existing coal-fired power plant sites.

Labor forgets that during the early decades of this century, energy bill payers already paid a fortune to gold-plate our transmission network. Governments set reliability standards that were high in order to meet peak demand events which might only occur a few times a year, namely those couple of hot weeks we've just endured recently, when everyone is home in the evening and air conditioners are churning. Into this mix they've thrown intermittent wind turbines which cannot guarantee peak generation when it is hot – it is incompetency at the nearly criminal level.

The same bureaucrats and boffins – in whom we are being asked to invest in this Bill today – back in the early 2000s projected that electricity demand would keep rising. What they didn't foresee was that energy efficiency improved and the takeup of rooftop solar panels.

Church Notices

ANGLICAN "Parish of Charlton-Donald"

Enquiries: Rev'd Judi Bird
0435 593 359

Friday, February 28
St. Paul's, Birchip, 5 p.m.

Sunday, March 2
St. Martin's, Charlton, 9 a.m.
St. George's, Donald, 11 a.m.
Holy Trinity, W'burn, 3 p.m.



www.granitecommunitychurch.com

At Granite Church
10.30 a.m.
Speaker: Ross Barnes
Baptist Union of Victoria

False Prophecies

The gold-plating of the grid (based on false prophecies) saw us all pay early this century for new substations and transformer upgrades, more transmission and distribution lines, investments in network reliability and redundancy and capacity for peak demand that was rarely used.

In Australian energy policy today we also see another clear illustration of the need to revisit where we stand as a federation when it comes to responsibility. Energy policy is nobody's direct responsibility, just like health policy as I find all the time as Shadow Assistant Minister for Regional Health.

The national energy arrangements like the Australian Energy Regulator and the Australian Energy Market Operator are set up under national, not federal arrangements. Australian energy policy is an accountability vacuum and we all pay as a result.

The former Coalition Government intervened in this accountability vacuum by creating what is now known as the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner. The first Commissioner was Andrew Dyer. Andrew retired relatively recently from the role and let me put on record my appreciation for Andrew's work. I connected with Andrew and in turn connected him with Mallee farmers and landholders who were being railroaded by Labor governments and harassed by the foreign energy cowboys Labor had enticed into regional Australia, stirring bad blood in regional communities and families. Andrew called out those cowboys and sought greater regulation of their behaviour. This has not happened.

I recently met in Parliament House with the new Commissioner, Tony Mahar, and he has a big job on his hands.

Unreliability

The unreliability of Labor's energy plans is writ large when you look at the recent collapse of a wind turbine in Berrybank south of my electorate. These foreign energy cowboys are proposing turbines as large as 280 metres high, which is just 17 metres short of the Eureka Tower in Melbourne. Each turbine at 280 metres high would clock in at number 7 in the tallest structures in the nation, behind the Sydney and Q1 Towers, Australia 108 in Melbourne and three naval communication towers.

But Wait, It Gets Worse

A German company is planning to build a turbine 364 metres high to the tip of its blades – if we had those in Australia, that would be the equal second highest building in the nation.

Out of sight, out of mind from those inner city electorates where Labor is competing against Green and Teal votes, under the shadow of the Eureka Tower and Sydney Tower, Labor proposes pin cushioning electorates like

Mallee with massive turbines that, after the Berrybank turbine collapse and other recent safety incidents, you have to ask whether turbines are safe – or good – for the environment, let alone the potentially devastating impact on agriculture our primary industry. Labor is happy to transform Mallee into an industrial wasteland.

The Victorian government has removed their 2022 report which says, without offshore wind generation Labor will need up to 70 per cent of Victoria's agricultural land for their renewable energy objectives. Don't worry, I kept a copy of the document. With offshore wind in Victoria on the rocks, you can see the wind turbine map of electorates like Mallee rapidly turning into a pincushion.

Australians are feeling the pain of this reckless energy transition in their energy bills, and will continue to do so as the Coalition revealed late last year that Labor's renewables-only plan will cost almost \$600 billion, with the Coalition's responsible energy transition 44 per cent cheaper, at \$263 billion.

Cost of Plan

Moody's late last week confirmed Labor's energy plan could cost up to \$230 billion over the next 10 years alone – and drive household electricity prices up another 25 per cent in that time. This is yet another independent warning that Chris Bowen's renewables-only approach will continue to hurt Australians, forcing families and businesses to the wall.

Chris Bowen promised wholesale prices of \$51/MWh (per megawatt hour) in 2025, but the reality is Australians' quarterly prices have been in excess of \$100 per megawatt hour over the past year.

Energy policy failures are why regional Australians are urging their city cousins to desert the axis of Labor, the Greens and the Teals – who I must add are backed by the energy barons of Climate 200, the very enablers of this destruction not only of our regional landscapes and lifestyles but environments.

Salt of the Earth, Hard-Working Farmers

I can only hope the expenditure in this Bill might go towards departments and staff who will call out this nonsense on behalf of regional Australians, salt of the earth hard-working farmers like Glenden Watts, Ben Duxson, Tess Healy, Barry Batters, Gerald Feeny, Andrew Weidemann, and Ross Johns and too many more to mention from my electorate who didn't choose this fight.

It chose them, and they are fighting, I am fighting alongside them and I am grateful to Peta Credlin from Sky News for giving them a platform, and I look forward to hosting Peta and Shadow Minister Ted O'Brien in Mallee before the election to show all Australians the human face and cost of reckless energy policy and the alternatives at our fingertips.

Letter to the Editor



The Need to Know

(The Editor, "The Times")
Dear Sir.– Buloke Shire Proposed Governance Rule Changes: What Ratepayers Need to Know.

I am writing to bring attention to the proposed changes to our Shire's governance rules and the significant impact they will have on Councillors and Ratepayers in the Shire.

As we move closer to a decision on these changes, it is crucial that all residents understand the consequences of the changes and express their opposition to these changes.

Firstly, it is important to understand why these rules are being changed (the old ones aren't broken).

They are as a DIRECT result by the State Government appointed Monitor to "noble" Buloke Shire Councillors from doing the job that you elected them to do. That is, ensure that Council services are delivered to you on time, on budget and at a reasonable cost. (God knows we have the highest cost per capita on rates even now.)

The Monitor has just released his report into Buloke Shire and has blamed the previous Councillors for, and I quote:

"Poor Councillor behaviour has been the primary issue affecting good governance and performance at the Council."

In my view, poor Councillor behaviour directly relates to poor Community Satisfaction Survey Results.

So, in a nutshell, an outsider who has no knowledge of Buloke can solve our problems by initiating Governance rules that effectively "gag" Councillors from asking questions, streamline Council meetings and stop discussion on significant issues to the community and give more control to the CEO.

The new governance rules, while intended to modernize and streamline processes, will shift the balance of power and accountability in ways that affect the transparency and fairness of decision-making. For ratepayers, this could mean:

• **Increased Costs:** Changes in governance structures will come with unforeseen administrative expenses, which could lead to higher rates or fees for residents.

• **Reduced Transparency:** The proposed rules will limit public access to information or reduce opportunities for community input, making it harder for ratepayers to hold

decision-makers accountable.

• **Shifts in Priorities:** New governance frameworks will alter how resources are allocated, potentially diverting funds away from essential services that directly benefit residents.

But don't take my word alone for these matters, the Monitor has made it clear in his report that for Buloke Shire it means:

- Amalgamation of Shire offices and depots.
- Increased rates.
- Reduction in services.
- Less capital works.

It is essential that we, as a community, thoroughly examine these proposed changes and consider their long-term implications.

Ratepayers deserve to know how their money will be managed and how these rules will shape the future.

I urge all residents to engage with their Councillors to ensure that the proposed changes are rejected. If they aren't, you may as well do away with Councillors in Buloke Shire going forward.

Sincerely,
Daryl Warren
Former Councillor and Mayor,
Buloke Shire Council.



Buloke

Burglary: Between 12 p.m. Sunday, February 15, and 9 a.m. the following day, offenders have forced entry to a church in Berriwillock. During a similar time period, offenders have also forced entry to a building at the Berriwillock Recreation Reserve. At this stage it appears nothing has been stolen.

Gannawarra

Deception: In January, the victim received a text from someone purporting to be her son, advising that they had lost their phone and requested funds. It was only after the transfer was made, that the victim realised that they had been scammed. There has been some reporting around the "Hi Mum" scam. Please actually speak to the person requesting funds before transferring any.

Swan Hill

Theft from motor vehicle: Just after 2 a.m. on Saturday the 15th of February, an offender has gained entry to a vehicle parked in Pritchard Street, Swan Hill, and stolen a laptop and Garmin. A second vehicle in the area was targeted but no entry gained. During a similar period vehicles parked in Foster Street were also targeted.

Vehicle theft: Between 12 p.m. Wednesday, February 15, and 6 a.m. the following day, offenders have stolen a white Hilux ute from a property on Saleyards Road, Swan Hill.

Local Council Elections: Did You Vote?

Close to 530,000 Victorians who appear to have failed to vote in the October 2024 local council elections will have an opportunity to explain why when they receive an "Apparent failure to vote notice" in the coming days.

Electoral Commissioner Sven Bluemmel says the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is urging people who receive a notice to respond with a detailed explanation, as the VEC is required to issue a fine of \$99 if a person fails to respond in writing within 28 days.

"An 'Apparent failure to vote notice' is not a fine – it's a chance to explain why you appear not to have voted," Mr Bluemmel said.

"If you respond to the notice in writing with a valid reason and evidence, you are

much more likely to be excused.

"Completing and sending the notice back to us within the 28-day timeframe gives us a chance to consider your explanation and whether you can be excused."

Voting in local council elections is compulsory in Victoria if you were enrolled to vote.

Voters are encouraged to sign up to receive VEC VoterAlert updates to receive reminders about future state and local council elections at: vec.vic.gov.au/VoterAlert

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Fruit and Veg. in Regional Victoria are Not Dearer!

(From Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health / Public Health Association of Australia)

A new study analysing fruit and vegetable prices in regional Victoria shows that locally grown produce doesn't necessarily cost more than fruit and veg. grown outside of the region.

Health experts say the findings are good news for household budgets, local communities, local farmers and retailers, as well as the environment.

Loddon Campaspe

The study, published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, investigated the prices of 36 commonly consumed fruits and vegetables in the Loddon Campaspe area of regional Victoria to determine whether their price varied depending on where they were grown and sold.

Local food systems are receiving increasing political attention to support better health and environmental outcomes, as reducing the distance that produce travels before it is consumed lowers emissions from things like transport and storage. It also supports employment for

farmers, retailers and workers in local economies.

Researchers collected prices from 65 vendors between February and May 2023, finding that fruits and vegetables grown locally in the Loddon Campaspe region are similar in price to those grown outside the region.

Unhealthy Diets

Lead researcher, Dr Christina Zorbas, from Deakin University's Institute for Health Transformation (IHT) says unhealthy diets are a key concern in the Loddon Campaspe region, but this new research offers insights into how we can address economic access to fresh, healthy food.

"Fruit and vegetable intake is vital to good health, but currently only one in eight residents in the Loddon Campaspe region meet the daily recommendation of five serves a day of vegetables, and only around half are getting enough fruit each day. Similar trends can be seen around the country.

"Particularly during a cost-of-living crisis, having access to affordable locally grown foods can play a significant role in determining what we eat and how healthy we are. We conducted this study to find out if eating local, fresh produce was more expensive and are pleased to report that it doesn't cost more to eat local Loddon Campaspe fruit and vegetables."

Dr Zorbas says the results of the study also provide insights into where residents can source local fruit and vegetables.

"Locally grown fruits and vegetables were primarily available through the local farmers' markets, followed by greengrocers and small supermarkets. Unfortunately, large supermarkets rarely stock locally grown produce.

More Needs to be Done

"The study shows that more needs to be done in Australia to invest in our local fruit and vegetable supply chains to help growers sell to

their communities at affordable prices and convenient locations. This will likely produce benefits for the health of communities and the planet and help re-balance power across the food supply chain."

Co-author and IHT Professor Kathryn Backholer, vice president, Public Health Association of Australia, says that the cost of fresh produce is viewed as just one barrier to healthy eating, and the study also points to the need for comprehensive action to address Australia's obesity crisis.

Key Areas

"In the lead up to the 2025 Federal Election, the Public Health Association of Australia is calling for the next Australian Government to act on seven key areas, including obesity and the growing impact of climate change on our health.

"We need comprehensive strategies to tackle both of these challenges. Local, state level and national actions all play an important part.

"This should include strategies that ensure healthy foods are affordable and campaigns that raise awareness amongst residents that locally grown produce is not more expensive than produce from outside the region, and in fact offers additional benefits, including supporting local businesses, reducing environmental impact, and providing cost-effective, fresher options for consumers. It's a win, win, win scenario and it is likely to apply in most parts of Australia where local produce is grown."

The research project was conducted in partnership between Deakin University and Healthy Loddon Campaspe – a Victorian State Government-funded initiative aimed at improving health outcomes for communities in six municipalities (Campaspe Shire, Central Goldfields Shire, Loddon Shire, Macedon Ranges Shire, City of Greater Bendigo, and Mount Alexander Shire).

Fruit and vegetable item	Locally grown price (\$ per kg)	Victorian grown price (\$ per kg)	Australian grown price (\$ per kg)
Strawberries	19.92	22.37	19.19
Red apples	6.90	6.77	5.72
Iceberg lettuce	4.11	4.37	4.73
Spinach	23.69	25.18	20.40
Potato	3.50	5.10	4.43
Pumpkin	2.25	3.49	2.75
Bok choy	8.25	9.09	9.02

*Examples of average prices collected from 65 retailers between February and May 2023

Church Notices

UNITING CHURCH (North Central Living Waters Cluster)

Donald, 10 a.m., with Harold Flett

Next Birchip and Wycheproof Services,

10 a.m. Sunday, March 2

Contact Number: 5497 1033

DISTRICT CATHOLIC CHURCHES "East Wimmera Parish"

Birchip 10.30 a.m.

(Livestream in)

Boort 10.30 a.m.

(Livestream in)

Banyena No Mass

Charlton 10.30 a.m.

(Livestream out to churches without Mass)

Donald 10.30 a.m.

(Livestream in)

St. Arnaud 8.30 a.m.

W'proof (Sat.) 7.00 p.m.

Fr. Gerry Prunty

0419 247 779

Parish Co-ordinator

- Noeline Hogan: 0476 617 976

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ENGAGEMENT PEARCE - MURDOCH

It is with great pleasure Lauren and Rob would like to announce their engagement on January 1, 2025.

~ DRUM ~ Angela (Ange)

Passed away on
February 13, 2025
Aged 66.

Ange, your sudden death has dimmed a bright light for family and friends. We have wonderful memories of a kind, generous and creative person. You had a passion for teaching, catering with flair and your ability to keep up with loved ones was extraordinary.

Dearly loved, 4th of 8 children of John & Dorothy (both dec.)
Drum, sister-in-law & beloved *Aunty* of 12, **Geraldine** Drum, **Jenni** & **Hoody** Symes, [Wayde & Talia, Willa & Nate], **Bernadette** & John (dec.) Taylor, [Darren & Michelle, Jake & Elyse, Paige & Sidney], **John** & Angela Drum [Chelsea & Tyler Athanasos, Bianca, Riley & Connor], **Helene** & Turvs (Craig) Turvey [Danica & Anthony Cutter, & Mikaela], **Damien** & Melissa Drum, **Josephine** Drum & Matthew Coleman [Jessica, Benjamin, & Samuel] & Vicki McEvoy (no 9!).

A memorial service on a date to be determined is likely to be in the Wimmera.

Details will be updated with www.davidbull.com.au



"Times" Classifieds

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



**DEATH
GODWIN.**— Gordon
1762559
Member of
*Berriwillock Fire
Brigade.*

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

**DEATH
GODWIN.**— Gordon

The team at Greg's Digging are saddened at the loss of our employee, Gordon.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

**DEATH
HOGAN.**— Valerie

Much loved only sister of Bobby Rickard (dec.), and much loved sister-in-law of Rosie. Loving Aunty to Jim, Peter, Chris and Robbie and families.

Rest in Peace

**DEATH
STEBBINS.**— Roma
December 11, 2024

Loved wife of the late George. Mother of David & Libby, Peter & Maree, Sue & Roland and Graeme.

A service was held at the Anglican Church Berwick, on Saturday, February 22, 2025.

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

FUNERAL ALLAN.—

The funeral service for Mrs Fay Irving Allan will be held at the Wycheproof Uniting Church on Monday, February 24, commencing at 11 a.m.

Burial will follow at the Wycheproof Cemetery.

The service will be live streamed, please go to the livestream tab.

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

Mark and Raelene O'Halloran
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP



FUNERAL HOGAN.—

An Anglican service for the life of Valerie Faye Hogan will be held at St Mary's Catholic Church, 2 Corack Rd, Birchip on Monday, February 24, at 3.30 p.m. Burial will follow at the Birchip Lawn Cemetery.

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

Mark and Raelene O'Halloran
KELLY FUNERALS BIRCHIP



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.

DONALD-MINYIP FIELD & GAME Poachers' Weekend

2 Day SHOOT
Prizes each day and overall

DAY ONE

**Donald, Sat., Mar. 1
9 a.m. start**
75 ASF OTG

Sponsored by: Donald Timber Yard, Dunstan Wool, Customised Spreading, Brunt Truck Repairs, Spud's Café, SA Coffee.

DAY TWO

**Minyip, Sun., Mar. 2
9.30 a.m. start**
75 ASF OTG

Sponsored by: J&A Shooting Supplies, Water Tech Solutions, C&R Sheet metal (Maryborough), TUFF Engineering, Nutrien Ag (Rupanyup & Murtoa).

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Come and hear about LIVING NEAR A WIND PROJECT

The legal, noise and health impacts, and what that means for you.

Speakers: Dominica Tannock DST Legal and Viva-Lyn Lenehan Wind Farm Living

Monday, February 24, 7pm

At the Warracknabeal Community Centre, Anzac Park, Warracknabeal

See us on Facebook - All welcome

CHARLTON LIONS CLUB TOWN GARAGE & CAR BOOT SALE



Sunday 23rd February
8am Onwards



Enquiries: Harry Brindley 0427 911 407

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TCV's regional pop-ups recommence in February 2025



Community members can meet the TCV team in towns across the region in February and March, as the regional pop-ups program resumes.

TCV will rotate between Charlton, Kerang, Boort, Donald and Stawell each week, hearing from community members directly, responding to questions and sharing project information.

Drop in for a casual chat, ask questions, and share your thoughts on the project with our engagement team.

Please note that these dates are subject to change, please check the TCV website for more details.

All welcome!

Donald

Date
Tuesday, February 18
Tuesday, February 25
Tuesday, March 4
Tuesday, March 11
Tuesday, March 18

Time	Location
3:30pm	Post Office, 64 Woods Street, Donald

Charlton

Date
Wednesday, February 19
Wednesday, February 26
Wednesday, March 5
Wednesday, March 12
Wednesday, March 19

Time	Location
10am	30-34 High St, Charlton

Visit www.transmissionvictoria.com.au/landholders-community/community-events or scan the QR code to the right for more information about the regional pop-up events.



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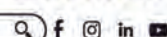
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Dougall McAllister Speaks on Regenerative Farming

President, Ann Dunstan, welcomed 17 members to the first Donald History Society meeting for 2025 and guest speaker Dougall McAllister, who spoke about his venture into regenerative farming.

Dougall has returned to the family farm at "Bonnie Brae", Banyena, and has been applying his regenerative ideas for the last two years, which means that he has had a very wet year followed by a very dry year — an interesting start.

Dougall had an Environmental Science degree and then followed that up with an Ag Science qualification. He said, however, that neither of those courses directed him to the path that he has chosen and that he now gets most of his ideas from private companies.

There is no set definition for regenerative farming as each type of agriculture requires a different approach. For broad acre farming, the basic aim is to put more carbon back into the soil.

Dougall spoke for about ten minutes explaining some of the ideas that he is applying, including winter cover crops, where the plants put nutrients into the soil via the root system, foliar spraying, the use of humic acid instead of pickle, and compost spreading where locally sourced chicken manure or pig manure has been used.

Another aim is to try to eventually reduce the use of chemicals, but Dougall admits that this will have to happen gradually and summer spraying is still an important part of the cropping program.

Running sheep is also part of Dougall's program, which he particularly enjoys, as that is what he grew up with. Dougall produced some informative slides for his presentation and he spoke clearly and convincingly to his attentive audience.

Brian Brasier thanked him for his presentation with a small gift on behalf of the History Society.



• Donald History Society Members assemble in preparation for the first meeting and guest speaker, Dougall McAllister. Front Row: John Kumm, Lorraine Pearse and Bev Gilmour. Second Row: Pam Pendlebury, Norm Hollis, Beth Hollis, Enid Brasier (hidden). Third row: David James, Brian Brasier, Mary Archbold, Yvonne Postlethwaite, Alan Postlethwaite (hidden). Back Row: Bob Baker, Peter Pendlebury, Leslie Pendlebury, Harold Flett. Anne Walsh and Ann Dunstan are out of shot. (The baby in the cradle behind Harold is one of the Courthouse Museum exhibits).

Community Engagement Vital for 2025-2029 Council Plan

Northern Grampians Shire Council leaders are calling on the community to make the most of several opportunities to help shape the organisation's priorities for the next four years.

The council is developing its 2025-2029 Council Plan and accompanying Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, which will both continue the overarching direction and objectives achieved within the 2021-2025 versions.

Resident participation is already under way, with a Community Engagement Survey running until February 28.

The survey aims to assess the level of importance and priority across the council's key services and community responsibilities, from the community's perspective. It also aims to reaffirm the organisation's 20-year Community Vision, which was developed in 2021 and provides a set of guiding principles to aid council decision-making.

Mayor Karen Hyslop said the initial response to the survey, launched on February 3, was positive, although she hoped people would continue to provide their feedback and insights.

"The survey does take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete, which might be a bit off-putting at first, but is vital to understand your wants and needs for the future of our shire," she said.

"I suggest setting aside some time at night or on the weekend, with a cuppa or after you've put the kids to bed."



Listening Posts

Cr Hyslop said council staff had developed a series of listening posts and discussion forums, which would also provide opportunities for feedback.

Council has hosted listening posts at Concongella, Glenorchy and Halls Gap, with further events scheduled for Stuart Mill, Navarre, Stawell, St Arnaud, Great Western and Marnoo.

People can visit the council's website, www.ngshire.vic.gov.au for more details, including dates and locations.

The listening posts are designed to offer opportunities for the community to ask questions of council staff and/or councillors, to help equip participants with the information they need to complete the survey.

"For example, people might have questions about current council priorities or past planning outcomes that could affect how they would answer," Cr Hyslop said.

People will have access to hard copies of the Community Engagement Survey at the listening posts, or they can complete the survey on the council's website.

The council will also host four discussion forums next month, at Stawell on March 11; Halls Gap, March 13; Great Western, March 18; and St Arnaud, March 20.

The forums will run from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. and participants need to register their interest via the council's website.

"The forums will enable members of the community to come together to discuss key themes and insights presented through the survey," Cr Hyslop said.

"These forums are a limited opportunity, therefore please do not hesitate to add your details if you are interested in participating."

Cr Hyslop said community participation was key to shaping the region's future.

"This period and process is critical to ensure council is aligned with the community's needs and aspirations for our shire over the next four years," she said.

"We encourage everyone to engage with the process and provide feedback whenever and wherever possible, so their voice can be heard."

Hard copies of the Community Engagement Survey are also available from council customer service offices and libraries in Stawell and St Arnaud, Stawell Neighbourhood House and St Arnaud Resource Centre.

Senate's Loddon Local to "Keep the Bastards Honest"

Central Victorian resident, Carly Noble, has been endorsed as the Australian Democrats second Senate candidate in Victoria at the federal election, due to be held by May 17. She recently ran as a candidate for Loddon Shire at the council elections held in November.

Mrs Noble is married with three children and lives and farms at Arnold, where she breeds dual-purpose cattle for local markets. She has qualifications in leadership, mental health, business, agriculture, teaching and workplace health and safety. She has previously worked in construction, viticulture and horticulture. Mrs Noble is also an agribusiness consultant where she assists farmers build resilience in their operations.

Mrs Noble is excited to be running as an Australian Democrats Senate candidate because she shares similar values with the party. She said, "I stand firm on valuing evidence-based science and problem solving, as well as fairness, transparency and accountability. These are the values of the Australian Democrats, and I am standing for the Senate to make a difference and create positive change".

Coming from rural Victoria, Mrs Noble understands and respects the many issues facing farmers. She is a prominent community leader and is passionate about promoting the mental health and wellbeing of our rural and regional farming communities. She said there are many challenges facing rural Australia, with the effects of climate change creating greater volatility in seasonal conditions.

"I am a long-time advocate for policies that minimise the effects of climate change on farmers and am a proud sup-



• Carly Noble.

porter of Farmers for Climate Action," she said.

She aims to be a strong advocate for the domestic supply chain and the importance that it brings to farmers around Australia. Mrs Noble is a voluntary agri-food advocate with the City of Gastronomy in Bendigo and said, "For the economy to remain strong we do need a plan that builds sustainability and resilience across the whole agri-food industry in Australia. I am a long-time circular economy student and continue to promote the importance that recycling offers within industries."

Mrs Noble will be contesting the election with Heath McKenzie, a business

development manager for a major producer of vegetable seedlings, which supplies farmers around Australia. Mr McKenzie is standing as a candidate to advocate for an economy that looks after its people as well as the environment.

The Australian Democrats was founded in 1977 by Don Chipp who was disillusioned with the state of Federal politics at that time. He wanted a party that supported the ideals of honesty, tolerance, and compassion in our political system. His slogan "Keep the Bastards Honest" still rings true today and is the ideal Carly Noble and the Australian Democrats will uphold in the Senate.

Keep Abreast with Local Happenings!

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• Relaxing on the lawn at Beulah's 2024 Wide Open Spaces festival.

Be at Beulah for "Wide Open Spaces"

Beulah's "Wide Open Spaces" Music and Family Festival is coming on March, 8 and 9, 2025.

Held on the green grass, under shady trees beside the Yarriambiack Creek, there is plenty of space to relax, dance, and enjoy the music, food and refreshments with friends and family.

A fantastic program of events has been organized with something for everyone to enjoy.

Saturday, March 8.

The popular Creekside Market will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a range of different vendors with unique stalls showcasing local crafts, art, and handmade products. It's the perfect opportunity to support local businesses and find one-of-a-kind treasures. If you would like a walk down memory lane then the Classic Cars display on the

oval will be of interest as well.

The Southern Mallee Remote Controlled Trucks will be entertaining the crowd once again for the whole weekend.

Attracting some phenomenal Australian musical talent the music will be from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m..

Returning from last year will be Paul Costa and Band, and Rhys Crimmin – the crowd loved them so much organisers wanted them back. To add to the talent local duo Darryn Wardle and Jeff Woodward are always popular with the crowd; along with Brodie and Danny Glen, the Edmonds Family and Brylie Chivell, you are sure to have a good time.

Sunday, March 9.

The Annual Fishing Competition will return from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. with huge prize money – \$500 for under-16 and \$1,000 for the open group.

Breakfast is available from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.. Find yourself a good spot around the creek, pack your good luck, and be in the running to win cash and prizes!

Sunday's Family Day and Music is from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

This is a day for the family with a Music for Kids show put together by Gaye Edmonds, pony rides with Squatter Coffey's Trail Rides, face painting, the Annual Duck Race, Spinning Wheel

prizes, jumping castle and a kids' play space inside the Community Centre.

Once again there is a great program of music from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. with Elias Lanyon (The Voice), Darryn Wardle and Jeff Woodward, Nicole Matthews, the Edmonds Family and Brylie Chivell

Tickets are available online via the "eventbrite" website, or available on the day at the ticket booth.

At \$50 for a weekend pass (from 2 p.m. Saturday to Sunday 9 p.m.) or individual days can be purchased with children under 18 free. Concessions prices are also available.

Accommodation is available with free unpowered camping for self-sufficient campers at the venue and paid powered or unpowered sites at the caravan park still

available. Get in quickly to book as there are limited spaces.

"Don't forget to bring your picnic blanket or camping chair to make yourself comfortable. Remember to dress comfortably and bring sunscreen as the event is outdoors. We want you to have a great time without any worries! So mark your calendars and join us at the Wide Open Spaces Festival in Beulah. It's going to be an unforgettable weekend of music, food, and good vibes. See you there," said Barb Moore.

Workshop

The Native Superfoods Work Shop With Meez On Plus is on Saturday March 8, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

"Wide Open Spaces" is happy to welcome Billie from Meez on Plus for her workshop on native super foods.

Billie is passionate about her work and enjoys imparting her knowledge to others. She spends a lot of her time in schools helping them set up native food gardens and learn how to use what they grow.

The class will include discussions on the best way to grow native foods, how to incorporate them into our everyday meals as well as information on where to source them.

There will be "hands on" opportunities and at the end of the class, some tasty treats to enjoy with a refreshing native tea. Questions are welcomed and there will be a selection of books, plants, jams and chutneys to purchase.

The cost is \$40 per person, with numbers limited to 15, so get your name in quickly. A second class on Sunday the 9th is possible, if there are enough numbers.



• Musician Brylie Chivell performing at Wide Open Spaces festival in 2024.



• Local entertainers Darryn Wardle and Jeff Woodward will be entertaining the crowd again at this year's Wide Open Spaces festival held in Beulah on March 8 and 9.

Donald Primary School Update

It has been a busy start to the year welcoming new students and new teachers.

Donald Primary is excited to welcome Ms Tanya McCulloch who comes from Melbourne and is excited to bring Japanese lessons to the students. The school also welcomes Bronte Campbell back to Donald to kick off his teaching career.

To begin the school year, Donald Primary School Grade 6 students have completed their leadership speeches and have been elected into their leadership positions. Anabel Robinson and Judd Hawkes have been elected as school captains. Other Grade 6 students will be leading houses as house captains.

These leaders were celebrated at a badge ceremony. David Green, a former Donald Primary School student and successful banker was there to present the leaders with their badges and speak to the students about what it is to be a leader.

At this ceremony the Student Voice Team was also inducted; this comprises students from grades 1 to 5. The DPS Student Voice works together to create celebratory days and provide an opportunity for all students to contribute to the school decision making.



Swimming Sports

To round out the first few weeks, Donald Primary School held the House Swimming Sports.

Students were all excited to show off the skills they have been learning over the first few weeks with Mrs Green, and the large crowd was impressed. It was a close finish for the senior champions with a tie win for Charlee Williams and Indi Goldsmith for the senior girls championship and Justin Hepworth taking out the senior boys championship.

It was a big field for the Teacher / Parent / Student relay with 2 student teams and 2 parent teams and a teacher team all jumping in the pool to compete for a year of bragging rights. Ultimately it was the green house, Buloke, which was able to celebrate the win for the day!



• Congratulations to Buloke on the win!



• House Leaders left to right: Anabel Robinson, Judd Hawkes, Indi Goldsmith, Mackenzie Wild, Jhonrick Embate, Eleeshia Dejong, Max Wardlaw, Ross Clark, Liam Edgley, Charlee Williams.



• Bronte Campbell.



• Swimming Champions: Justin Hepworth, Indi Goldsmith, Charlee Williams.



• Tanya McCulloch.



• Mr Young and special guest Mr Green with the school captains, Anabel Robinson, Judd Hawkes.



• Student Voice. Back row: Judd Hawkes, Anabel Robinson. Middle row: Rosie Jones, Luna Hawkes, Pippa Pearse, Denna Gilmour, Noah Clapham, Beau Richards, Marlie Adams. Front row: Makayla Sandy, Kendra Clark, Jieszter Embate, Jordan Jones, Sophie Duynhoven, Christopher Rossin, Mason Pearse.

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With a Nuffield Scholarship... Be Curious, Drive Change

Nuffield Australia has opened applications for its 2026 scholarships, calling on the next crop of Australian agriculturalists to be curious, drive change and help their industry thrive.

Farmers and those working in the agriculture industry are encouraged to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity by applying for a scholarship for 15 weeks of overseas study.

Nuffield Australia CEO and 2013 scholar, Jodie Redcliffe, said Nuffield scholarships were recognised as the pinnacle of industry-based, experiential learning for primary producers.

Unique Opportunity

"Scholars have a unique opportunity to visit, learn from and collaborate with not only other scholars, but with agribusiness leaders around the world," Ms Redcliffe said.

"By fostering a culture of curiosity and excellence, we challenge scholars to step beyond their comfort zones, exploring groundbreaking ideas and solutions that can reshape Australian agriculture.

"The journey is transformative – offering life-changing experiences that empower individuals to lead with focus.

"From paddocks to boardrooms, Nuffield scholars ensure Australian agriculture will thrive in a changing world."

The organisation awards around 20 scholarships each year, enabling the sharing of knowledge that creates a sustainable and profitable food and fibre industry. Some of these scholarships target specific agricultural industries, while others are open to a wider range.

Nuffield Australia, which this year celebrates its 75th year of scholarships, will again offer up to five drought resilience-specific scholarships, supported by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

Profound Impact

Soon-to-be-released research commissioned by Nuffield Australia shows its alumni overwhelmingly say their scholarship was an incredibly rich and diverse experience, which had a profound impact on their life.

Claire Catford from Hoyleton, South Australia, was awarded a scholarship last year. She said while it was initially a daunting prospect, "going outside your comfort zone is where amazing things happen and I'm seeing that clearly already.

"The most wonderful and surprising thing has been the welcoming and supportive network that opens up when you're awarded the scholarship," Mrs Catford said.

"In planning my travels I've been astounded at the opportunities that have

opened because of the Nuffield network.

"I can only imagine where this is all going to lead over the next 12 to 18 months, and no doubt beyond that time as well. I urge anyone who's on the fence about applying to just go for it – there's never a perfect time for these things, but taking the leap could help you discover something you might never have imagined."

Applications close on Friday, May 16. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed during June, with a final round of interviews in July. Successful recipients will be announced at the Nuffield Australia National Conference in Adelaide from September 8-10.

Find out more and apply at <https://nuffield.com.au/how-to-apply>

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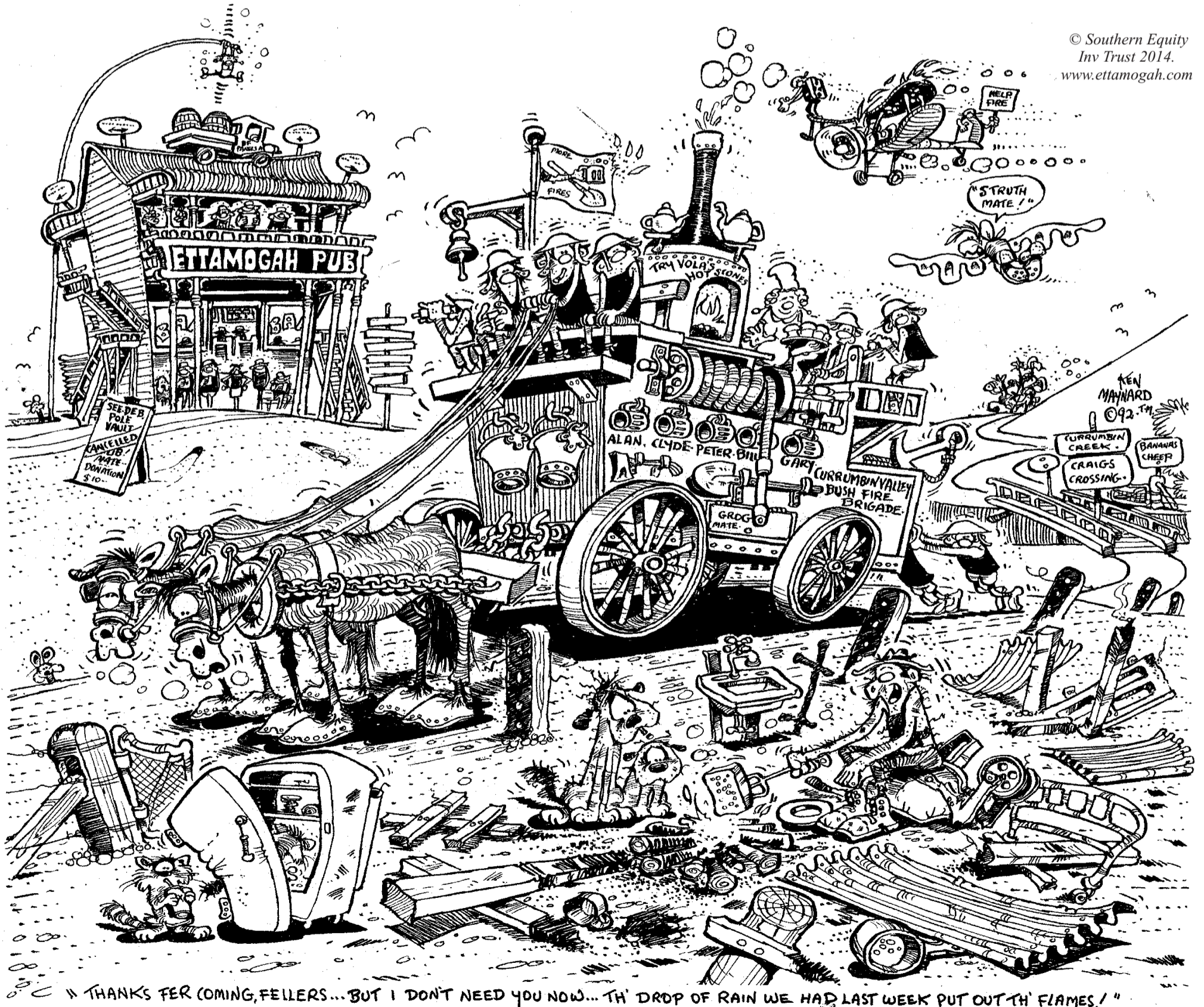
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Halls Gap Business Grants: Council Waits for Response

Northern Grampians Shire Council has strongly advocated on behalf of the Halls Gap businesses for the State Government to support business grants in the wake of the Grampians fires.

The businesses in Halls Gap have been devastated financially given the ongoing fires at peak season with a dramatic reduction in visitors and trade.

Council's advocacy has included promptly completing a business survey and credit card impact assessments in support of the case. Credit card data shows that spending in Halls Gap has dropped by on average 63% over the past two months compared to the same period last year.

Millions Lost

At the one-month mark (17/01/25), businesses had already lost \$13 million, and as the fires persisted, an estimated \$8 million more has been lost. Even over the January long weekend – typically a peak trading period – spending was down by 20%. Cancellations are now extending into May, and under even the most conservative projections – a 20% drop in visitors for the remainder of the year – we are facing an additional \$19 million loss in Gross Regional Product.

Secondly, the Council met with all the key Ministers when they visited Halls Gap and quickly followed up with formal letters from the Mayor

incorporating supporting business survey findings. These letters asked the State Government to request the Commonwealth approve category "D" disaster recovery funding arrangements (DRFA), which would allow impacted businesses to apply for grants. This would be a lifeline.

Northern Grampians Shire mayor Karen Hyslop said: "Council leaders have worked tirelessly to advocate for state and federal government support to help businesses and tourism operators keep their doors open.

On the Edge

"Many businesses are on the edge and have big cash-flow challenges. We now await a response from the State Government on our request for business grants under Category 'D' of the DRFA. We are optimistic on a positive outcome.

"As part of the recovery efforts, councils are focused on supporting opportunities for psychosocial connection, such as yoga and meditation for the Halls Gap community.

"This community, and its neighbouring communities, have been through so much. Just this week we marked the 12-month anniversary of the Pomonal bushfire, which destroyed more than 45 properties."

Collaboration

Cr Hyslop said the council was collaborating with a new

Halls Gap community organisation, Kitchen Cabinet, which includes representatives from other regional groups.

"We have so many people to thank, not only in this recovery and reopening phase, but throughout the whole situation," she said.

At the February council meeting, Cr Hyslop tabled a Notice of Motion thanking a wide range of services and volunteers for their efforts and dedication.

"The Notice of Motion was designed to acknowledge and extend council's sincere thanks to all the individuals, groups and organisations that provided invaluable assistance and support during and after the recent Grampians fires," she said.

Tireless Efforts

"This includes the tireless efforts of the firefighters, emergency services, volunteers, local businesses, community groups, council staff and all others who worked to protect our community, provide aid and assist with recovery efforts."

Cr Hyslop said the council also extended its deep appreciation to the agencies, local government staff and council staff who helped operate the Stawell Emergency Relief Centre and Horsham Incident Control Centre.

Expert Alert on Bird Flu

What does the new Victorian bird flu outbreak mean for farmers and backyard chicken owners?

A La Trobe academic is available to discuss the discovery of "bird flu" at a Victorian poultry farm.

Postdoctoral researcher, La Trobe Institute of Molecular Science (LIMS), Dr Emma Grant, PhD, is a viral immunologist with research focusing on understanding immune responses to viruses with a particular interest in influenza viruses.

"The outbreak at the Victorian farm is a different strain to the influenza viruses seen in Australian poultry farms last year," Dr. Grant said.

"These viruses are also different from the H5N1 viruses circulating in other parts of the world.

Quick Spread

"Avian influenza viruses can spread quickly through animals, and farmers will

need to remain vigilant and report anything of concern to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline. However, measures suggested by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the swift action of farmers ensured that the outbreaks seen in 2024 were brought under control.

"According to Wildlife Health Australia, which surveys influenza viruses in wild bird populations across Australia as a part of its National Avian Influenza Wild Bird (NAIWB) Surveillance Program, these H7 influenza viruses have not been found circulating in wild birds in Australia.

Simple Steps

"For those with domestic poultry, The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and

Forestry lists some simple steps on its website you can take to protect your animals from emergency diseases, including keeping the area clean, making sure they have access to fresh clean water, and avoiding contact with wild birds.

"Due to the way avian flu transmits, the risk to the general public is very low, as avian influenza viruses find it very difficult to bind to human cells. Therefore, transmission of avian influenza viruses to humans is uncommon, as are instances of human-to-human transmission."

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

Call for No More National Parks

The Liberals and Nationals this week tabled the largest petition in Legislative Council history as anger brews about the Victorian Government pushing ahead with the expansion of national parks.

More than 40,000 signatures have been received for the No New National Parks petition, which stands up for the rights of those who want to keep accessing our state forests for traditional bush activities.

In a massive show of support, almost 34,000 concerned bush users signed up on-line, making it the largest e-petition in Victorian history for both houses of parliament.

Many concerned bush user groups gathered on the steps of parliament to make a sig-

nificant statement and raise awareness of their fight.

Affected groups include those involved in dispersed camping, hunting, four-wheel driving, hiking, horse-riding, mountain biking, prospecting and fishing.

We do not need more padlocked national parks, which are poorly maintained and a fire risk.

Neglecting public land leads to overgrown tracks and the proliferation of invasive weeds and feral pests, which degrade the environment and pose a threat to native flora and fauna.

Shadow Minister for Public Land Management, Melina Bath, tabled the petition.

"Labor's flawed policies are not saving vulnerable species, through neglect and mismanagement it is placing them and Victorians at a greater risk of bushfire," Ms Bath said.

"The Liberals and Nationals will actively manage our public land for better environmental and recreational outcomes.

"Our historic petition is a voice for Victorians who cherish our bush and immerse themselves in nature through the traditional outdoor activities of dispersed camping, hunting, four-wheel driving, hiking, horse riding, mountain biking, prospecting and fishing.

Your Blood is Worth Bottling

If you are visiting Ballarat or Bendigo and have a bit of time to spare, a trip to the Blood Bank would be a very rewarding experience.

You will need to book, by phoning 13 14 95.

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Wycheproof to Challenge Donald Golf

Wycheproof earned the right to challenge Donald Golf for North Central Playing Area's 2024-'25 midweek pennant premiership, after defeating Wedderburn by 17 shots in Tuesday's preliminary final, played at St. Arnaud.

Weather conditions were perfect for bowls, with mild conditions combining with hardly a hint of a breeze, much better weather than that experienced by North Central bowlers on Saturday.

After scores were close in the early stages, Wycheproof, through the agency of Jono Grylls's combination of Carol Jones (lead), Vince Grant and Jeannie Grylls picked up a five shot haul just prior to the luncheon break, opening up a lead from which Wedderburn's Alan Jackson, with Lance Standfield (lead), Judy Matthews and Sandra Steel never fully recovered; the final margin favoured Wyche. by 11 shots.

It was a case of bowls déjà vu for skippers Grylls and Jackson, who also met three days prior, in last Saturday's first semi-final clash that

subsequently also decided Wedderburn's fate for the current season.

Matt Nicholls, with lead Andrea Coatsworth, Shirley McKenna and Des Nicholls, accounted for Wedderburn's Laurie Witham, with lead Robina Little, Sandra Standfield and Amy Roberts, by 9 shots.

The combined winning margins more than compensated for Wedderburn's only winning rink of Andrew Caserta, with lead Helen Stephenson, Joan Murnane and Ruth Hall, who defeated Wyche's Dale Groves, lead Cheryl Rayes, Lynette Nicholls and Alan Jones, by 3 shots.

Wycheproof will play Donald Golf in next Tuesday's grand final, to be contested at Boort, with a 10 a.m. roll up.

Wycheproof d. Wedderburn
Carol Jones, Vince Grant, Jeannie Grylls, Jono Grylls (s) 27 d. Lance Standfield, Judy Matthews, Sandra Steel, Alan Jackson (s) 16.

Cheryl Rayes, Lynette Nicholls, Alan Jones, Dale Groves (s) 22 lost to Helen Stephenson, Joan Murnane, Ruth Hall, Andrew Caserta (s) 25.

Andrea Coatsworth, Shirley McKenna, Des Nicholls, Matt Nicholls (s) 22 d. Robina Little, Sandra Standfield, Amy Roberts, Laurie Witham (s) 13.



• North Central Playing Area Ladies Champion of Champions, Ruth Hall, delivers her bowl. Watching on is Wycheproof's Alan "Spike" Jones.



• On of the local area's leading sporting administrators delivers his bowl. Lance Standfield plays for the Wedderburn Bowls Club.



• Wycheproof skip Jono Grylls delivers his bowl. Jono had another victory over Wedderburn's Alan Jackson.

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Pressure On Donald Tennis

Donald's final hopes suffered a somewhat surprising setback on Saturday with a 2-8 loss to Wycheproof.

While still able to make the finals, Donald would require strong wins in the final two rounds of the home-and-away season to play finals for the second season in a row.

With Wycheproof a little short on numbers, several Donald men, including Braxton Hollis, Stuart Potter, Samuel Mortlock, Myles Hollis and Max Reilly turned out for Wycheproof.

In the men's section, Donald won four of the six sets played. Derek Hollis, Jesse Higgins and Mark Mortlock kicked off a strong start to the day for Donald, with Derek and Jesse defeating Jarrod Bence and Aidy Coatsworth 8-1. Derek and Mark Mortlock followed up with a narrow 8-6 win over Jarrod and Samuel Mortlock while Jesse and Mark defeated Aidy and Samuel in a tiebreaker.

In the lower men's section Richard Reilly and Joe Melino defeated Braxton Hollis and Rob Elder 8-3, before Braxton and Joe Sheridan turned the tables by defeating Richard and Jack Reilly 8-6. Rob Elder and Joe Sheridan had a comfortable 8-1 win over Joe Melino and Jacob Bath. The final score in the men's section was Donald 39 games (2 points) to Wycheproof's 33 games (0 points).

Women

In the women's section, Wycheproof equalised the game, winning four of the six sets played. In the top women's section, Mary Anne and Wendy Pollard defeated Donald's Jasmine Hollis and Cherie Reilly in a tiebreaker, while Jasmine and Meaghan King won another tie breaker over Maryanne and Jake Bish. Wendy and Jake had a strong 8-2 win over Cherie and Meaghan.

In the bottom women's section Hamish Duncan and Stuart Potter lost 8-6 to Donald's Jenny Mortlock and Katie Gillahan. Hamish and Max Reilly defeated Jenny and Carmel Lowry 8-6. In the final set, Stuart and Myles Hollis defeated Katie and Carmel 8-0. The final score in the women's section was a 14 game win to Wycheproof. Wycheproof 45 games (2 points) defeated Donald 31 games (0 points).

Mixed

With an eight-game deficit going into the mixed, Donald was once again in danger of dropping a vital match that would jeopardise its finals hopes. Unlike the previous week against Nullawil where Donald would make up a significant deficit in the mixed section to take the day, this time it would be Wycheproof which would claim the mixed section and the match. Nevertheless, father and daughter combination Derek and Jasmine Hollis would start the section well for Donald, defeating Jarrod Bence and Wendy Pollard 8-4. Richard and Cherie Reilly would also win their set 8-2 against Stu-

art Potter and Hamish Duncan. From then on it was all Wycheproof.

Aidy Coatsworth and Mary Anne Pollard defeated Jesse Higgins and Meaghan King 8-1, while Samuel Mortlock would take bragging rights against his parents Mark and Jenny, combining with Jake Bish to win their set 8-4. A couple of close matches would finish the day, but both were to be won by Wycheproof. Rob Elder and Myles Hollis defeated Jack Reilly and Carmel Lowry 8-6, while the "battle of the Joes" was won by Joe Sheridan and Max Reilly in a tiebreaker over Joe Melino and Katie Gillahan. The overall final scores for the mixed section was Wycheproof 38 games (2 points) defeating Donald 34 games (0 points) by four games.

The final match scores were Wycheproof 8 points (116 games) defeating Donald 2 points (104 games) by 12 games.

Derek Hollis was the only three-set winner for Donald while Joe Sheridan won all his three sets for Wycheproof. Jasmine Hollis and Jake Bish for Wycheproof came within one game of also winning three sets. Myles Hollis and Max Reilly (both playing for Wycheproof) won both of their sets.

Tonight

This coming Friday night, Donald is at home to Kara Kara. Could all Donald players please be at the courts by 6 p.m. at the latest ready for a 6.15 p.m. start? Please note, that in lieu of afternoon tea there will be pizza and hot chips for tea with a small fee required from Donald players to cover costs.

Tournament

It's now only three weeks until the Donald Lawn Tennis club's 71st Labour Day Weekend tournament.

Entries for the tournament on the 8th, 9th and 10th March, 2025, are now open. The 2025 entry form (both in PDF and Excel form) can be found on the tennis club's website at www.donaldtennis.com.au, as well as a link that will take you to an online entry form via Tennis Victoria's website. It is our preference that players enter via this link if possible.

Print copies of the entry form can also be obtained from the Donald Newsagents, Donald Family Butchers and the Bendigo Bank.

Singles, doubles and mixed doubles are again all on offer with competitions in a range of grades from Open right through to 13-and-under events. The club also has a new event – an under-10s competition organised under the auspices of Tennis Victoria. Once again, the Veterans' Doubles event (for all those over 40) – is again being held. The Veterans event will be a "rotating partner" format, with the overall winners being determined on number of games won overall.

Entries close on Thursday, March 6, 2025, in order for draws to be constructed before play begins on the Saturday.

It is hoped to see plenty of returning and new players entering this long running tournament.

The NCLTA ladder after Round 12 is as follows:

	Total pts	Games For	Games Against	%
St Arnaud	81	1279	1022	125.15%
Kara Kara	79	1257	1076	116.82%
Wirrim	78	1143	991	115.34%
Charlton	62	1013	1015	99.80%
Donald	56	1273	1308	97.32%
Birchip	54	1095	1064	102.91%
Nullawil	48	1077	11178	91.43%
Wycheproof	22	792	1275	62.12%

Donald Swimmers at St. Arnaud

(From Tony Cashin, Sports Co-ordinator)

On Monday, February 17, Donald High School took 28 swimmers to St Arnaud to compete in the North Central District Inter-school Swimming Carnival in beautiful conditions.

There were many committed performances on the day, with a number of our younger swimmers being asked to compete up an age group to fill gaps.

Our team finished 5th out of the 9 schools in the overall aggregate, with St. Arnaud Secondary College being the clear winner on the day.

Congratulations to Abby Griffiths who won the 20 years female age championship.

Also, well done to Max Reilly, Evie Donnellon and Luca Rice who all finished second in their "B" grade freestyle and breaststroke events respectively.

A special mention must also go to Hugo Funcke who



competed in 7 different events on the day.

All students should be extremely proud of their efforts. The students' competitive spirit and positive attitude are to be commended.

Thanks also to Mr Pettifer and Ms.Cavanagh for helping out on the day.



Twenty years female age champion, Abby Griffiths.



Donald High School's inter-school swim team.

North-Central Pennant Bowls

This Week's Selected Club Teams



DIVISION ONE

Prelim-Final, Saturday, February 22

Donald Golf v. Wycheproof
DONALD GOLF
W. Livingston, A. Humprey, G. Rigby, D. Pettifer (s)
G. Stopps, B. Murray, S. Hollis, P. Hibberd (s)
M. Frank, G. Geddes, R. Adams, R. Reseigh (s)
Cars: Geddes, Rigby, Stopps. Leave 11.50 a.m..

WYCHEPROOF
Teams not available

DIVISION TWO

Prelim-Final, Saturday, February 22

Wedderburn v. St. Arnaud Country Club
WEDDERBURN
Teams not available
ST. ARNAUD COUNTRY CLUB
D. McAllister, C. Webb, K. Meade, J. Needs (s)
B. Medlyn, M. Pole, N. Robinson, A. Bond (s)
G. White, S. Atkinson, P. Mullins, P. Elliott (s)
Cards: G. White. Manager: J. Needs.
Emergencies: Coloe, Bales.

Birchip Pennant Teams

Birchip Grey to play Sea Lake, at Woomelang 9 a.m., February 22, 2025, grand final.

Division One
K. Donnellon, B. Hogan, R. Bragg, R. Haddrick (s)
L. Scott, N. Noonan, D. Reid, D. Ryan (s)
M. Spicer, C. Reid, G. Cartwright, M. Bowen (s)
Division Two
L. Blair, S. Fraser, G. Smith, P. Hogan (s)
L. Whiting, P. Bragg, R. Ince, M. Connelly (s)
Meet at 7.55 a.m..

Camera at the Cricket



More action from the “B” grade game at the Jeffcott Ground.



• Southern Mallee Giants' Daven Pulham drives for four. The 'keeper is Donald Jeffcott's Andrew Bayles.



• Bleeding the youngsters was a feature of the Giants' side. Here, Axel Decker adds to his total of five.



• Donald-Jeffcott's Niluka Nanayakkara collected 4/30 off his 8 overs.

TCV is seeking input into the development of workforce accommodation for VNI West



We are undertaking a public Expression of Interest process to identify land available for lease, and we want to understand the interests, concerns and questions that communities have in relation to our workforce accommodation approach.

We want to hear from you!

The TCV workforce accommodation web portal will enable people to share feedback on our approach to developing accommodation, and how to reach our team for more information.

We understand that many areas in the VNI West project corridor face housing availability and affordability challenges. TCV is committed to delivering long term housing benefits for local communities impacted by VNI West.

The input we receive via the online portal will inform work underway with the VNI West Social Value Reference Group to understand how we can develop the project in a way that meets local needs and creates long term, permanent housing solutions.

Visit the workforce accommodation portal on the TCV website at: www.transmissionvictoria.com.au/about-vni-west/vni-west-workforce-accommodation

Expression of Interest

In parallel with determining permanent housing solutions, TCV is seeking sites suitable for:

- Temporary workforce accommodation – up to three sites of about 12 hectares each to accommodate between 200 and 300 people each at peak construction;
- Construction laydown areas – up to eight sites of about 5 hectares each; or
- Combined accommodation and laydown area sites.

We are committed to providing landholders with a fair and transparent leasing arrangement that reflects true value and opportunities for use.

Properties that express interest will be assessed as part of the VNI West EES and appropriate options for accommodation and laydowns identified by April 2025. This is an opportunity for landholders with properties they believe may be suitable to express their interest in their site being assessed, with a view to entering into a lease agreement for the site's use.

Expression of Interest responses close 28 February.

Visit www.transmissionvictoria.com.au/about-vni-west/vni-west-workforce-accommodation or scan the QR code to the right.



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Saints Hit Tennis Lead

Wirim's reign at the top of the North Central Tennis ladder came to an end on Saturday, as Kara Kara delivered a commanding performance to claim victory.

Meanwhile, St Arnaud continued its impressive form, securing eight of the ten points on offer against Birchip to claim the top ladder position.

Kara Kara v. Wirrim

Men's: Kara Kara's men dominated, winning all seven matches to secure the section 56-14 games. Luke and Will Jackson set the tone with a solid 8-3 victory over Jon Haslam and Russell Christie. Bailey Durward and Ned Jackson proved too strong for Wirrim's newcomers, Aaron Bruce and George Addis. The momentum continued as Luke and Bailey, along with Will and Ned, secured impressive 8-0 wins.

In the lower section, Jack McRae and Rogan Hando provided Wirrim's best challenge, but narrowly lost 8-6 to Bruce Hando and Ben Collins. Bruce Hando then paired with John Goode for an 8-1 win over McRae and Des Coffey, adding to the home team's tally.

Women's: Kara Kara's Aimee Jones and Trudie Jack-

son opened strongly, winning 8-5 against Fiona Best and Sandie Richmond. However, Wirrim responded with an 8-0 victory by Steph Coffey and Kelly Haslam. Aimee Jones and Kim Nevill were successful in a tiebreak, while Sandie Richmond and Kelly Haslam secured an 8-3 result.

Tylah Haslam, Beau Haslam, and Denley Tyler delivered consistent performances, claiming 8-4, 8-1, and 8-4 wins. Wirrim won the women's section 52-28 games, earning their only two points of the day.

Mixed: The mixed section was fiercely contested, with Kara Kara narrowly defeating Wirrim by four games. Luke Jackson and Aimee Jones led the way with an 8-1 victory, supported by Will and Trudie Jackson's 8-6 win over Jon and Tylah Haslam.

Rogan Hando and Sandie Richmond clinched a tiebreak win, while Ned Jackson and Alex Baldwin responded with a tiebreak victory for Kara Kara. George Addis and Beau Haslam secured an 8-6 win,

while Ben and Sarah Collins added an 8-5 triumph. Despite Aaron Bruce and Denley Tyler's 8-2 win, Wirrim fell just short, losing 43-47 in the mixed section.

Kara Kara's total of 131 games to Wirrim's 109 saw it move into second ladder position.

Three set winners for Kara Kara: Luke Jackson, Will Jackson, Ned Jackson, Ben Collins, Aimee Jones.

For Wirrim: Beau Haslam, Denley Tyler.

St. Arnaud v. Birchip

Men's: Winning all but one match, St Arnaud's men were impressive as always. Sam and Jake Male delivered an 8-3 win against Callum Goode and Dave Ferrier, while Jason Rowe and Matt Goode achieved the same result against Blake and Robbie Lee. Further 8-1 and 8-4 wins to St Arnaud increased the score margin.

Owen Lowe and Ben Greenaway secured an 8-5 win against Tim McClelland and Mitch Bourke, whilst Tim then flipped that score with James Goldsmith, defeating Owen Lowe and Don Erwin. A further 8-3 win to Don Erwin and Ben Greenaway brought St Arnaud's total games won to 53, compared to Birchip's 27.

Women's: Birchip's women dominated the section, 50-27 games. Birchip got off to a strong start with 8-5 wins to both De Ferrier and Julie Coffey, against Sharyn and Katie Erwin, and Jo Lee and Greg Simpson, against Keegan Amos and Wendy Shaw. De Ferrier and Jo Lee then recorded an 8-1 win while an 8-3 win to Julie Coffey and Greg Simpson put Birchip in a comfortable lead.

Sheridan and Caitlyn Goode's 8-2 victory was St



• Denley Tyler focuses on his forehand return.

Arnaud's women's only success of the section, while 8-2 and 8-3 wins to Birchip's Asha Lee, Stacey Hamilton and Julie McClelland saw Birchip win the section.

Mixed: In a closely contested mixed section, St Arnaud edged out Birchip 49-42 games. Birchip featured strong family partnerships, with family connections present in four of the seven matches. Sam Male and Sharyn Erwin started strongly for St Arnaud, defeating Dave and De Ferrier 8-2, while Callum Goode and Julie Coffey were narrowly defeated in a tiebreak.

Robbie and Asha Lee, along with Tim and Julie McClelland, were Birchip's only winners in the mixed section. Despite Birchip's effort, St Arnaud secured the overall win with 129 games to

Birchip's 119, propelling it to the top of the ladder.

Three set winners for St Arnaud: Sam Male, Jake Male, Jason Rowe, Ben Greenaway.

For Birchip: Julie McClelland.

St. Arnaud now leads the ladder by two points, with Kara Kara in second and Wirrim in third. With just two rounds remaining, the battle for the top spot is set to be fiercely contested.



• Caitlyn Goode returns a backhand shot.



• Steph Coffey hits a forehand.



• Jake Male launches into his serve.



• Jon Haslam reaches for a forehand shot.

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"He just loves giraffe hunting."

Both Grey Sides Through to Tyrrell Grand Final

On a warm and windy day, Birchip hosted the preliminary final of the Tyrrell Bowling association's '24/'25 season.

With Birchip Grey Division One already through to the grand final, all eyes were on Division Two Grey to see if it could book a grand final berth, and it did not disappoint, coming away with a 39-shot victory over Quambatook.

Peg Hogan's rink had a strong 34/17 victory with Les Blair and Stan Fraser leading the way, and Moya Connelly and Peg putting the final touches to the game.

Caroline Reid had an impressive 33/11 win in the

other rink, demonstrating the strength of the Birchip club with Caroline, a young bowler skipping a successful finals rink. Smithy, Pauline Bragg and Rob Ince were solid all day to give Caroline the support needed for their victory.

In Division One, Sea Lake and Berriwillock had an enthralling battle to decide who will challenge Birchip Grey in the grand final and it wasn't until the last couple of ends that it became apparent that Sea Lake was going to be

victorious. Congratulations to Sea Lake which has worked hard all year to make it to the grand final.

Tomorrow, weather dependent, will be the "big dance" and all roads lead to Woomealang for the '24/'25 Tyrrell Association grand final, with Birchip Grey taking on Sea Lake in Division One and

Birchip Grey taking on Sea Lake in Division Two

Again, a huge thank you to all who attended the working bee on Saturday morning to prepare the green and to all the ladies for their work in the kitchen; such a great club to be involved with.

Go Greys!



• Pauline Bragg.



• Sea Lake's Noel Watson.



• Peg Hogan.



• Peg Hogan and Rob Ince.



• Rob Ince checking on his Quambatook counterpart's measuring.



• Moya Connelly coaxing the bowls.



• Caroline Reid.