

Traf District News

March 2024 – Edition 261

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Savage storm leaving days of disruption

By Trevor Colvin

The storm looked innocent enough as it approached Trafalgar from the West just after 4pm on February 12, but it left massive chaos and destruction in its wake. Two days later and the town of Traf was largely without power or communications as were Yarragon and Moe. All around the town nature strips were covered

in branches as scores of trees have been destroyed. Residents spent the following twenty-four hours with chainsaws cleaning up the mess. A spokesperson from the Bureau of Meteorology said the atmospheric environment on Tuesday produced the severe thunderstorms over West, South and East Gippsland. Mirboo North may have

been hardest hit. A dairy farmer near Mirboo North was killed when debris struck him and several of his cows. Many homes were completely or partially destroyed. Mirboo North resident Andy McCarthy considers himself lucky as he watched bulldozers demolish his neighbour's house only metres away from his own. *"Fifteen or 20 of my friends*

have either lost their house completely or lost their whole roof, or part of their house has caved in," Mr McCarthy said. Further south, Yarram saw wind gusts reach 126 kilometres per hour, destroying buildings while a short-sharp blast at Warragul and in the Strzelecki hills received gusts of 90km/h mark. All four units at AGL's Loy

Yang A power station in the Latrobe Valley were offline at one point and it is believed two transmission towers physically collapsed. **STORM SHOWS CASH IS KING.** Two days after the storm your correspondent went to work early only to find the power was off and headed to BK's for a coffee. In a ten minute period we watched as

four tradies come in for their coffee and takeaway only to leave empty handed because they had no cash and the electronic payment system was out. Some ventured next door to the bank but found the eftpos machine also down. They left empty handed.

SEE MORE PHOTOS
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Letter to the editor

From John Hatch

SUBJECT: ORGANIC VEGE'S

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this paper. It felt like a return to honest community based information.

Regarding the idea of

correlating a list of farm gate producers with the view to the public going and picking their own, I think it's a great idea.

Bypassing bureaucracy and bullshit and finding a way to help our local food producers, is definitely the

way forward.

I watch with interest the farm protests in Europe and wonder when it will be needed here.

John Hatch
Mirboo Nth

Traf District News February Quiz – ‘Caservan’

We made up this word and asked readers to give it meaning and offered a \$30 IGA voucher to the entry we liked the most. Thanks for your entries and we can't publish them all, but the winner is:

It's a Ford Laser that has

been converted to a panel van only to inadvertently be displayed at the Traf Holden Museum due to its Holden Crossover appearance.

C from Crossover Laser from Ford Laser van. Well that's obvious!

Tim Ruyg

Tim added 'What a great way to take an error and engage the community! Keep up the great work!'

Thanks Tim, we will.

Traf District News needs your help

EDITORS:

A small band of volunteers put the editorial content of this paper together each month and we need more input. Do you like to write? Would you be happy to give some time to this newspaper each month?

Since we re-launched, we can't keep up with copies of this newspaper placed into

outlets such as IGA, Traf Newsagency, cafes and similar. Even weeks after publication, copies are still being picked up and we can only assume they are being read.

Traf District News is now delivered to all homes in Trafalgar and Yarragon and to roadside mailboxes so more and more people in our district are reading the paper.

We are hearing from a lot of people who are delighted the paper has returned and are enjoying reading it. You could help us to improve the paper.

CLUB NEWS:

We don't have the resources to cover all the local news from social clubs, sporting clubs and similar

organisations, but news from such clubs is important to us and to our readers.

If you are a member of such a club, would you please send us material for each issue? We can't guarantee that everything will appear every time, but we will do our best.

We are keen to have information and photographs.

Our deadline for such ma-

terial is the tenth of the previous month.

OFFICE SUPPORT:

We have a decent office in Traf but it needs someone to help with general administration such as paperwork, filing, research and similar.

Do you have such experience and would you give a few hours every week to

support our editor and the team?

This is an important role because it will allow our writing and reporting team more time to focus on their work and not be distracted by administrative duties.

If you can help with any of these positions, please write to admin@trafnews.com

Editor's note

When submitting letters to the editor please include full postal address, email address and contact number. Your privacy will be respected, your details won't be printed in the paper.

Traf District News

Traf District News is a monthly publication aimed at providing news, entertainment and information to the people of Trafalgar, Yarragon, Thorpdale and Willow Grove.

Traf District News is published by Traf District News Inc 3,500 copies of **Traf District News** are distributed each month to homes and businesses.

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THE GENEROUS PEOPLE WHO WALK THE STREETS LETTERBOXING THIS NEWSPAPER

Lynette Alexander
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Karen Byrom
Trevor Colvin
John Duck
Michael Fozzard
Brett Hicks (Scouts)
Christine Holroyd
Laura Lawdon
Wayne de Malmanche
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MARCH EDITION DEADLINE:

Advertising Bookings Close: March 8
Advertising Material Deadline: March 15
Articles for Publication Close: March 15

Letter to the editor

From Michael Fozard

Australia Day and when it should be celebrated will always have many views. We are fortunate that as a country we can have varying opinions and be able to express them, hopefully without "fear".

I was born in Australia of Italian/English descent – my parents migrated in 1948. My father served in World War 11 in the British Navy with service in the Pacific. At the time he saw Australia as the land of opportunity. They were the so called 'ten pound poms', sometimes called "whinging poms".

My home town was in the great Australian

tradition, of a small mining town where my father worked in the gold mine and volunteered as the ambulance driver and ran the picture theatre. We were a typical Australian family.

Yes on occasion we were seen as different, but this was the influence of our background. I grew up with Christian values, but respected all religions. I have many friends and associates from around the world and treat them all equally. I see myself as a "true blue Aussie" and hope that we can all live together in harmony and still be able to express our differences.

I have a passion for Australia Day and see it as a time for everyone to reflect on their role in this great country, and look forward to an even better life. I have no difficulty with the 26th January – as it is only a day to celebrate. Most people do not reflect on why this date was chosen or even its significance in our history. If we need to change, why not Federation that occurred in January 1901 when Australia became a sovereign country, we united as one Australia!

Let us work together as one - a united country for all people and communities.

Michael Fozard OAM

Letter to the editor

From Lucy M Bouchier

Dear Sir,
The cost of the unjustifiable shutting down of the timber industry goes far beyond the livelihoods of workers and rural towns!

LEADBEATER POSSUMS DO NOT LIVE ON GUM LEAVES!

Yes, they do use hollows in old eucalypts for communal nests. But even more importantly, their diet consists of a large variety of insects living in the undergrowth, as well as exudates produced through damage to the growing plants and

their leaves. However, this undergrowth diminishes as a forest ages.

Modern practices on logging coups have been to identify and retain habitat trees. After harvesting, coups were re-sown, with the re-growth then attracting insects - which are

responsible for a varied diet for the Leadbeaters. Although it has been regularly claimed that the population of Leadbeaters has been declining,

surveys by those who know where to look, dispute this.

Meanwhile, with

the removal of logging equipment and experienced workers not only has a significant fire-fighting asset been lost but as bush tracks become overgrown through lack of use, access to threatened areas will go.

This has been no more than another politicised decision that will result in untold trauma, for not only our rural communities but for the so-called endangered species that inhabit our forests.

Thank you.

Lucy M Bouchier

Letter to the editor

From John Duck

During my 50 plus years of living and working in and around this town, I have read, contributed to and delivered the "Traf News".

The recent reincarnation of the paper is exciting, but I believe there are worrying signs in the latest, the second, edition, whilst acknowledging time must be given for the venture to settle back in.

I worry that it may not be the local paper we all knew and appreciated, in that too much content does not appear to relate directly to and meaningfully to, its local readership.

There are worthy stories on regional and beyond issues, but too many, and misplaced on the all-important front page.

Similarly misplaced is the presumably paid for and full page advertorial for a regional private college, on page three with the time-humoured Australia Day awards relegated to page 17.

There are too many articles reprinted from other newspapers, previously read by many, with tenuous links to our towns and district.

For example, about football clubs a long way from here (and not

in Trafalgar's league), 'celebrities' on the way to somewhere else having a coffee break in Trafalgar, or, admittedly a local sporting event but conducted last November.

I would look forward to previously successful features like street interviews, personality profiles. "Remember When", A day in the life of", current news with photos from local clubs, organisations, schools and events as well as historical features.

The foundations have been rel-aid for a fine and much required local newspaper, and I would urge others to provide feedback, get involved and by all means disagree with me!

John Duck
Trafalgar

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Thanks for the letter and your thoughts and comments. We appreciate them and we hope others will take your advice and join in. Debate is healthy and as a newspaper with a new team, and a broader base, we are settling in and it will take time to get the right balance.

Specifically, you would

have noticed John, that the masthead is now Traf District News and the paper is now distributed much more widely geographically. We are attempting to reflect that broader distribution with broader content. It is no longer a strictly Trafalgar newspaper and there are very sound reasons why that is so but this is not the place for that discussion.

Testing of the engine development for the article on page one was done in a number of sites in our extended district across many months, so it has a local flavour in our view.

The private college booked the page three half page advertisement on the proviso that it appear on that specific page and it seemed logical to us to publish their results on the same page. Before the relaunch of Traf District News we surveyed as many people as we could about what they might want to read and 'education' was high on the list which further justified our decision to publish it on an early page.

You make many other comments which we won't address here, but again, others are welcome to join in.

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Pat and Vanessa are Trafalgar’s citizens of the year

By Mick Bourke

Pat Tatterson is the recipient of Trafalgar’s 2024 Citizen of the Year Award. She has served the Trafalgar community for over 60 years and she has done so in a number of different roles.

She has been a nurse at the Warragul Hospital for 40 years, then worked at Andrews House, Trafalgar caring for the local elderly. Over these years Patricia demonstrated considerable care and compassion to those under her care.

Pat has been a member of the Trafalgar Fire Brigade for 53 years. When she joined the brigade, women were not allowed to fight fires and so she became a member of Trafalgar Fire Brigade Auxiliary.

She was awarded a life membership for her dedication and ongoing service. During her time with the brigade,

Patricia held the roles of president, secretary and treasurer.

Pat is a member of Trafalgar Bowls Club and has played bowls for 30 years. In 2017 she won the ladies championship. She assists with Bingo on a Tuesday evening, manages the kitchen, has been a selector for the pennant teams and is a board member at the club.

Pat joined Trafalgar Lions Club in 2014 and became secretary in 2017 until 2021. She was appointed Secretary again in 2023.

She assists in BBQs, cutting, stacking, bagging and selling wood, selling Christmas raffle tickets and oversees the Junior Public Speaking every year.

The latter role involves traveling to local schools and in all requires eight months to complete. This year alone the program engaged five local

schools and 75 individual students.

Pat also mentors students from Trafalgar High School and has done so for the past five years.

She meets with students every Monday night, providing a listening ear and a positive interaction with the local youth.

Pat also is a member of Trafalgar Thorpdale RSL sub-branch, and assists with the selling of products for Anzac Day fundraising. Her father served in World War II, and she is proud of all who served for our country.

When asked about her community involvement via the various community groups, Patricia stated; “I feel proud that I am helping them all to exist and that we are helping so many people.

“I am very proud to have received the award. I didn’t expect to get anything like

this.”

Patricia is a most worthy recipient of the Trafalgar Citizen of the Year Award and we thank her for her services over the past 60 years.

Vanessa Hornby is the recipient of Trafalgar’s 2024 Young Citizen of the Year Award.

Vanessa started as a Youth Scout in 2018 and progressed to the Venturer Scouts. As a scout she was awarded the Peak Award for the age group, the Australian Scout Medallion. Vanessa also designed the OZ Venturer Victorian Contingent shirt.

In 2023, Vanessa returned to scouting as an adult volunteer. She now serves as a leader at 1st Trafalgar Scouting Group assisting groups from the Joey Scouts aged five to seven years, Cubs Scouts aged seven to 11, Scouts aged 11 to 15 and Venturer Scouts

aged 15 to 18 years.

Attending RMIT University in Melbourne, Vanessa travels back and forwards from Melbourne to Trafalgar to support the local scouts group. In the 2023 Term 3 holidays Vanessa spent a week in the Dandenong Ranges with the Trafalgar Cubs Scouts, as well as their peers from Newborough and Leongatha as part of a state-wide event.

Vanessa has become a trained Participant – Bushwalking Tracked Environments so that she can take local scouts on hikes across the state and has been part of the hundreds of scouting youth who represent the inclusivity of scouting at the Midsummer Pride March.

In addition to her impressive contribution to 1st Trafalgar Scouting group, Vanessa also participated in a number of creative programs

involving both the visual arts and music during her time as a student at Trafalgar High School.

During the COVID lockdown years, she was a strong contributor to not only the online learning but also online social programs run by the school. Vanessa also won the VCE Units 3 and 4 Visual Design subject award for the top score in the class in 2021.

Vanessa has participated in Warragul Youth Theatre productions as both cast and off stage support.

“I am so honoured and delighted to be the recipient of this award, said Vanessa

“Being a role model to young people through my involvement in Scouting is so fulfilling and brings me so much joy. “I love being able to make a positive impact on the Trafalgar community.”



From left: Trafalgar’s 2024 Youth Citizen of the Year, Vanessa Hornby and Trafalgar’s 2024 Citizen of the Year, Pat Tatterson.

Show Me Some Art festival

By Noel Blundell

It’s that time of the year and the fourth ‘Show Me Some Art’ festival’ is on again.

The festival has a jam-packed program starting out the day with the ‘all ages, all ability, colour run’. This is a great fun family activity where runners run a course while spectators throw ‘colour-bombs’ at them resulting in a very colourful finishing line.

The festival will have a wide range of market stalls displaying a huge range of art, jams, chutneys and various interesting items. The day will finish up with the ‘After Party’ at the old Moe town hall, with live music performed by local entertainers.

The festival began in March 2021 and struggled through the pandemic to become a huge success. Steve Bechaz and his family, along with a small committee of volunteers, set a packed program each year. Each festival has a strong mental health focus through awareness, in-

formation sharing, and fundraising.

Steve is an accomplished artist, who takes pride in the numerous completed murals popping up across Gippsland adding to his artistic achievements. Works such as the Lifeline’s WES service Mowell, Latrobe Community Health building and the Newborough RSL to mention a few.

A major purpose of the festival is to give these local artists, 60 in total, an opportunity to display their work and bring the community together while raising awareness of mental health issues, sharing information and highlighting local services.

Many local businesses support the ‘Show Me Some Art’ festival which raised over \$16,000 last year.

This year’s event will also include artists, kids activities, face painting, musicians and mental health activities.

The festival kicks off from 10.00 am on March 16, in the Moe Botanical Gardens, Botanica Drive, Moe. Admission is free. All proceeds from the festival go to charity. Everybody is welcome.

mission is free. All proceeds from the festival go to charity. Everybody is welcome.

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Trafalgar Skate Park

By Remi Blundell

Located just off Depot Lane in the heart of Trafalgar’s CBD, the Trafalgar Skatepark has become a beloved fixture in the local community. This vibrant skatepark boasts an ideal location, nestled near shops, a convenient car park, public toilets, and easily accessible public transport. Its strategic placement has made it a go-to destination for skaters, bladers, and bike-riders of all skill levels.

After witnessing the attractions of skateparks in neighbouring towns, this sparked enthusiasm in a local Trafalgar committee back in 2000, prompting them to consider and develop Trafalgar’s very own skatepark. Through a process of elimination and countless visits to skateparks Melbourne-wide, the committee designed an appropriate skatepark for Trafalgar which was funded by the state government

Initially, although the proposal for a skatepark in Trafalgar yielded some skepticism from the general public. Residents expressed apprehension regarding the

perceived negative associations often linked with skateparks, fearing potential adverse impacts on the town’s central area. Another concern was misbehaviour of unsupervised children and the potential deterioration of Trafalgar’s great reputation. The committee and the public worked through the issues and a valuable community asset is the result.

We spoke to local resident Jason and a father of four children has expressed his appreciation of the facility as a useful location for families.

“I think it is a great area for families to bring their children during the nice weather to use their bikes and scooters,” he said.


Jason and his family regularly visit the skatepark, turning it into a favourite destination for their outings during school breaks and weekends. It’s where his children can freely ride around and have a great time.

Aside from its primary attractions for skaters, the skatepark offers additional amenities for families to enjoy. Park benches dot the

landscape, providing comfortable seating for picnics and lunches in the sunshine. This thoughtful addition has transformed the Trafalgar Skatepark into not only a recreational hotspot but also a communal gathering space for families to bond and connect. Families in the area have praised the facility as an ideal spot for children to engage in outdoor recreation, citing its safe environment and ample amenities.

Over the last two decades, the Trafalgar skatepark has become an attraction for kids wanting to test their skating ability. Two signs positioned around the park detail the appropriate rules of conduct, emphasising the importance of respectful behaviour to ensure enjoyment for all residents.

Maintained to high standards, the facility offers a safe environment for skating enthusiasts. Its presence fosters a sense of unity within the community, attracting residents to come together and enjoy its qualities.



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Myli Staff's Book Recommendations

Myli - My Community Library staff have put together some short book reviews and recommendations for the New Year! Check out their recommendations below:

- 'Angry Women's Choir' by Meg Bignell - 10/10
- "Great as an eAudio-book. Set in Tasmania, Angry Women's Choir includes original songs and is a fun and quirky contemporary feminist fiction." - Sue
- 'Looking for Alibrandi' by Melinda Marchetta - 7.5/10
- 'A Must Read! A long-time favourite, this classic Australian novel deals

with the issues of mental health, growing up and family issues gracefully, all set in the background of 'Sydney, Australia.' - Charlotte

- 'Daisy Jones and the Six' by Taylor Jenkins Reid - 10/10
- "Daisy Jones and the Six reads like an interview with a popular band comparable to Fleetwood Mac. The story and characters felt so real that I had to check whether they were real or fictional!" - Fem
- 'None of this is true' (9/10) and 'The Family Upstairs' (8/10) by Lisa Jewell
- "I am currently loving Lisa Jewell's eAudiobooks

when driving around the countryside. The voice actors (including Nicola Walker!) have been selected very suited to the book's characters. The actors (including Nicola Walker!) have been carefully selected to suit the book's characters. The stories really come to life and have you sitting on the edge of your seat!" - Brejje

The Baw Baw Mobile Library services Trafalgar and other local areas. Head to Myli's website to check out the 2024 timetable > myli.au/nm or call 1800 44 6954 for more information.

IGA gives back to Traf community groups

Manager of Trafalgar IGA, Dom Griffin recently presented cheques of \$1,000 each to Trafalgar Lions Club and Trafalgar District News.

This newspaper is ex-

tremely grateful for the generous donation.

IGA have been a solid advertising supporter of this paper and to also receive a significant cash donation is a welcome extra. The Lions

Club of Trafalgar is equally thrilled to receive \$1,000 which will be well spent on community works.

IGA has more donations to present and we expect to cover those in the next issue.



IGA Manager Dom Griffin presenting cheques to Trevor Byrne of Traf Lions and Traf District News committee member Michael Fozard.

Cr. Leaney re-elected to chair Peri Urban Councils

Councillor Michael Leaney has been re-elected as Chair of the Peri Urban Councils of Victoria (PUCV), marking a significant vote of confidence in the leadership and direction of the organisation.

Joining Cr Leaney in re-election is Deputy Chair Cr Moira Berry of Moorabool Shire Council.

Peri Urban Councils Victoria is comprised of five member Councils including the Bass Coast Shire Council, Baw Baw Shire Council, Golden Plains Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, and Surf Coast Shire Council.

Cr Leaney reflected on the challenges and opportunities ahead and said he looked forward to working with representatives from the four other member Council's.

"The peri-urban regions surrounding Melbourne and Geelong are among the fastest-growing in the country. It's imperative that we proactively invest in these areas to manage

urban sprawl effectively and preserve the unique lifestyle and character that define our communities."

PUCV is set to take an active role in shaping the new National Urban Policy, 'Plan Victoria', as well as participating in the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into food supply in peri-urban areas.

Mayor of Baw Baw Shire, Cr Annemarie McCabe commented "Regions like ours face unique pressures," she said.

"Securing targeted

funding and advocating for policies that will let us address the challenges of rapid population growth are so important to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in our shire.

As a highly experienced Councillor and former Mayor of Baw Baw Shire, Cr Leaney has a deep understanding of the issues we are tackling. I've no doubt the PUCV will continue to do invaluable work for peri urban regions under the leadership of the current board."



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Rocky Road from across the Strzelecki Ranges delivered fresh

Met Peter Doherty. Pete lives in Foster but visits the Trafalgar Farmers' Market every month with a wide range of colourful and tasty sweets which sell swiftly to market visitors.

Peter's wife hand-makes

all of the Rocky Road sweets and Peter travels to markets from Tarwin Lower to Traralgon, Foster to Moe. He is also a regular at Mirboo North and Warragul markets.

You can catch Peter at the Trafalgar Farmers'

Market on the first Saturday of every month.

Admission is free and as many as sixty vendors are there to tempt you with fresh produce, food and fun.

Trafalgar Croquet Club, Ashby Street, 9am to 1pm.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



**Russell
Broadbent MP**
Federal Member for Monash

**Happy Easter to
you and your
family.**

**Please stay safe on
the roads this long
weekend.**



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Russell Broadbent MP

Authorised by Russell Broadbent MP, Independent Federal Member for Monash, Warragul



COUNCIL News.

Julia Baird to headline International Women's Day event.

Tickets are now on sale for an unmissable event at the West Gippsland Arts Centre this March.

Baw Baw Shire Council and Women in Gippsland are thrilled to present their annual International Women's Day event on **Friday 8 March**, an evening sure to be filled with celebration, connection, inspiration, and hope.

Australian journalist and bestselling author and broadcaster Julia Baird will attend as the keynote speaker.

The night will also feature a panel discussion with inspiring Gippsland women from diverse backgrounds, including Victorian Multicultural Honour Roll recipient, Arfa Khan and Gippsland Women's Health CEO, Kate Graham. Producer, podcaster and author, Aleisha McCormack will moderate the panel, while local Jules Cole will bring the energy as MC.

Tickets are \$30 for general admission and \$18 for under-18s and concession cardholders. All proceeds go to not-for-profit Women in Gippsland to continue its advocacy work.

To purchase tickets for this year's event, head to the West Gippsland Arts Centre website at wgac.com.au or phone the Arts Centre on **5624 2456**.



THE EARLY YEARS CAREERS EXPO IS COMING THIS MAY.

It's not too late to submit your Expression of Interest (Eoi) to be a stallholder at the inaugural Early Years Careers Expo happening this May.

Baw Baw Shire Council would like to hear from local businesses or community groups who are connected to the early years sector and are keen to spread their word at a free event.

Eoi's are open until Monday 4 March, so click the QR code in this article, or visit Council's website to get yours in.

The Early Years Careers Expo will take place at the West Gippsland Arts Centre on **Thursday 30 May** and is a chance to explore careers in this field. There will also be a pop-up playgroup and the chance to learn more about preparing cover letters and resumes.

The expo will run from **9.30am – 12.30pm**. See you there!



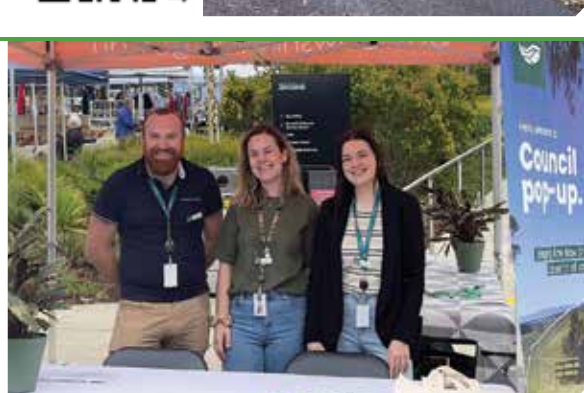
STORM EVENT – COMMUNITY UPDATE.

Following the storm event on Tuesday 13 February, Baw Baw Shire Council has provided several community updates to help assist affected residents.

Stay tuned to our social media pages, and the dedicated storm update page in the 'latest news' section of Council's website for current information.

Following the storm, the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund (GERF) was launched, which is an appeal to raise funds to support Gippsland residents impacted by the current storm emergency.

Donations can be made via the GERF website, at www.gerf.org.au and all donations more than \$2.00 are tax deductible.



VISIT US AT FARM WORLD IN MARCH!

Staff from Baw Baw Shire Council will be at Farm World, which will run from **22 – 24 March**.

Farm World, which is held at one of Baw Baw's premier destinations, **Lardner Park**, is one of Victoria's biggest regional agricultural shows.

Make sure you head over to Council's stand to chat with officers, share your thoughts and feedback with us and find out what's happening in the Shire this year.

bawbawshire.vic.gov.au

bawbaw@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au

1300 229 229

What's new in autumn/winter fashion?

Walk in and be inspired by the new autumn/winter range at Rendezvous. Strong, vibrant colours which include emerald green, teal, mustard, vibrant yellow, hot pink, terracotta as well as some beautiful florals, are the trend for this year. With quality labels by designers such as Joseph Ribkoff, Marco Polo, Foil, Threadz, Clarity, Orientique, Dolcezza and many more, you are sure to find plenty to choose from. Rendezvous carries garments in sizes 8 - 22.

The ever-versatile cardigan is making a big comeback also.

Vests will be very popular,

from sleek and fitted to oversized styles - perfect to pair back with a classic shirt and wide leg pants or jeans.

Rendezvous also carries a wide range of fun jewelry to complement your new outfit, as well as handbags, shoes and boots.


Retro-inspired lounge-wear will also be a strong focus this season.

Things are looking fabulous for autumn/winter at Rendezvous. Do pop in and see for yourself and if you feel you need some expert guidance, Kelley or Dorthea are both so very helpful.

Clothing sizes range from 8 - 22.



Kelley & Dorthea wearing Zacket & Plover.



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Rendezvous is a well-established boutique located in the heart of Yarragon.

We stock many quality labels with sizes ranging from 8 - 22. For work, play, the everyday and special occasions, we've got you covered. Literally! With gorgeous handbags, shoes and jewellery to complete any outfit. Book a free one-on-one personalised shopping experience and allow us to help you fulfill your wardrobe needs.

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RENDEZVOUS OF YARRAGON:
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Fun Duck Racing Day on the Latrobe River

By Trevor Colvin

Simon and Rosie Duck, proprietors of Gippsland's popular Noojee Hotel are due to host Noojee's 2024 Annual Charity Duck Race and Family Fun Day, to raise money for 'Variety' - the Children's Charity, Victoria.

The lawned area below the iconic hotel runs alongside the river and is perfect for families to enjoy various activities



including a sausage sizzle, ice cream van, lucky ducks amusements, jumping castle, a lolly and novelty stand, an animal nursery, a display of Variety Bash vehicles and colourful plastic ducks racing in the river.

Come along on Saturday **March 16** for a lot of fun starting at noon and the **first race is at 3pm**.

The event has been huge success in previous years

raising in excess of \$50,000 for Aussie kids in need. This year is looking to be bigger and better!

'Variety' the Children's Charity supports children and families who are facing many challenges through sickness, disadvantage or living with special needs. This is done through grants, programs scholarships and children's events.

The duck race brings together many businesses and community groups from around the district to pull off this awesome day.

Ducks are available to pre-purchase at the hotel for \$20 or message their Facebook page "2024 charity duck race and fun day"

Ducks will also be available to purchase on the day.



VALE Harold Mitchell: local Traf boy who really made it big

By Trevor Colvin

Harold Mitchell was an advertising icon, philanthropist and very successful businessman who died unexpectedly from complications arising from knee surgery. He was eighty-one.

Harold - the son of a sawmill - came from humble beginnings in Trafalgar to develop and operate the biggest media placement business in Australia.

Harold and your writer shared parallel paths as young blokes. He went to Melbourne and was working in an advertising agency in Latrobe Street. I went from Trentham and was working in the advertising industry in the same little courtyard where Harold worked. We were both shy country kids.

In 1962 we both enrolled in a four-year diploma course at RMIT along with one hundred and thirty other hopefuls. We suffered cold lecture rooms, half cold

pies and bad coffee in order to further our careers. Only twenty of us graduated. Another member of that group was a bloke named Bruce who told us one night that he was giving up advertising to pursue a career in music as his amateur folk group had secured a long-term gig on a cruise ship. I remember thinking that was a courageous move, but it worked out very well for Bruce Woodley and 'The Seekers'.

Harold and I both worked in different advertising agencies in that time but at some point Harold spotted an opening and in 1976 founded Mitchell and Partners which went on to become the biggest media buying agency in Australia, which he later sold to an English crowd for a lot of money.

Harold made a lot of money and was estimated to be worth \$370 million, but he gave a lot of it away. He was particularly fond of the arts

and many groups benefitted from his generosity. He cared about community health and sports and was patron of many groups which he helped financially. At one point he owned the Melbourne Rebels Rugby team.

I last saw Harold in the eighties when I was writing articles on the future of the media for some magazine or other and went to Harold for insight. He told me then that he had managed to get on top of his weight problem and he had much earlier given up

alcohol altogether.

It wasn't always plain sailing for Mitchell. The first business he started went stunningly broke and he was bailed out by Kerry Packer.

Harold once said *"Sometimes I reflect on where life has taken me - from the sawmills of Gippsland, to the intimate circles of Australia's richest and most powerful media families"*.

Many honours were bestowed on Harold Mitchell over the years. He deserved them all.





Contributors Wanted

This newspaper could really use more writers providing a range of articles and ideas.

Contact:
articles@trafnews.com
or call 5633 2591

Healthy Ageing Program helps Barb return to her love of horse riding

By Lynne Smith, Gippsland Healthy Ageing Program

Barb Harding's goal in life is to keep horse riding until she is 80.

And it looks far more likely now for the 77-year-old since she completed the Healthy Ageing Program, funded by Gippsland Primary Health Network and delivered by Healthlinks Gippsland.

Barb always admired the late Queen Elizabeth for her horse riding skills. "I thought if she can keep riding at 96 then I can do it at 80," she laughed.

But her goal was not looking great a few months back with joint pain preventing her from not only horse riding but line dancing and Tai Chi too. She was also finding it difficult to help husband Mal on their 170-acre beef

cattle farm between Willow Grove and Hill End.

"Getting up on the horse was difficult and getting off was even harder," Barb said.

Years of working outside on the farm, milking cows, feeding calves and helping with the general farm work had caught up. A fall in the mud didn't help.

It was fate that Barb picked up a flyer for the Healthy Ageing program at Trafalgar and decided to give the eight-week program a go.

"After just three weeks, I started to see a huge difference. The gentle exercises, stretching, balance work and weights relieved all the tightness and tension. After the eight weeks, I felt really good."

So good in fact Barb was

back up on her 22-year-old mare Charm, riding around her yard once again. She's gone back to line dancing, taken up Pilates and is even thinking of re-joining the Moe Riding Club.

Barb started riding as a young woman when she worked on a farm near her home at Dandenong.

After marrying Mal, the couple moved to a property near Longwarry before buying their current farm, Thislepark, 27 years ago.

The property is located in a green valley, with rolling hills on three sides and a creek with native bush on the other. Barb could often be found riding through the bush with her dogs not far behind. Endurance riding

has always been a favourite pastime.

She has four horses but Charm, who she bought two years ago, is her riding partner. After throwing the saddle on Charm's back last week, Barb climbs the mounting block (her only concession to age) and in an instant, is sitting high above the ground, speaking gently to Charm the whole time. The two friends then go through their riding exercises, around obstacles, over small logs and some breaking into some fancy side-stepping small logs and some breaking into some fancy side-stepping.

Barb is keen to share the positive benefits from health ageing. "Old age creeps up

on you and then suddenly, you're struggling to move."

Gippsland PHN funds a range of early intervention activities and models of care for chronic disease management to support senior Australians to live at home for as long as possible.

Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the Early Intervention activities and models of care were designed to promote healthy ageing and reduce pressure on local health services.

"Our Health Needs Assessment includes information relating to the over 65 year population and assists with defining areas for potential work."

It is estimated that 23.6% of the Gippsland population

are aged 65 years or older, compared to 15.8% in Victoria. An even higher proportion of the Bass Coast and East Gippsland populations are aged 65 years or older; 28.7% and 29.4% respectively.

By 2030, 28.1% of the Gippsland population is expected to be aged 65 years or older with 33.5% of the Bass Coast population and 34.9% of the East Gippsland population, compared to 17.1% in Victoria.

Ms Proposch encourages old residents of Gippsland to find out more about programs available across the region. Contact Lynne Smith on 0437 918 234 or lynne.smith@gphn.org.au for more information.

The Black Dog nips rather than bites at your mental wellbeing

By a Trafalgar resident (who chooses to remain anonymous)

There is nothing pure or well-bred about the 'Black Dog'; it is a mongrel from snout to tail.

It nips imperceptible bits from your well-being, so tiny you don't notice them, until the sum of them causes you to hit the wall.

The black Dog is the symbol of depression. It is silent and hard to see until it is upon you - and then you hit the wall.

I hit that wall recently and I didn't see it coming.

People who know me struggle to believe I could suffer from depression because they see me as an extrovert, when in fact I am an introvert. Is that possibly a factor?

Looking back through the horror of sleeplessness there were many signs that the dog was on my tail, but I didn't see them.

When you know you are unravelling but don't understand why, fear kicks in and wildly exacerbates every issue. Confidence weakens, judgement fails, the ability to

think and perform rationally, disappears. Confusion and doubt sneak in to take their place.

I am an eighty-year-old male, evidence that depression can hit anyone at any time and I am grateful to this newspaper for publishing articles on mental health. It is an important topic and needs to come out of hiding.

The world breaks everyone, and afterward many are strong at the broken places.'

Ernest Hemingway



Barb Harding with Charm.



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Trafalgar High School

Information Evening

Year 7 2025

4pm-6pm Monday 18th March 2024

Sports Centre—Trafalgar High School

- View facilities and learning areas at the school.
- Discuss with teachers the work undertaken and the opportunities each learning area provides.
- Make an informed choice regarding secondary school in 2025.




Further information or enquiries may be directed to Mr. Jack Brown or Mr. Sean Richards on 5633 1733

Trafalgar High School
Principal: Mr. Brett Pedlow

A busy month for Probus

By John Atwell

Here we are at the end of another Probus year with the Annual General meeting ready to go. We have a full Committee with quite a few new faces who are all ready to carry on the future of the Probus ideals and support the Trafalgar and District community.

We have plenty of

activities at Probus to provide a wide range of events for members. A craft group has now started which meets twice a month at the Probus hall and co-ordinated by Elaine Boyles and there are plans for a dancing group at the hall.

Our January meeting saw three new members inducted with Marjorie O'Donnell, Rod Cheatley and Shirley Leviston inducted by President Glenda Mynard. We are sure that they will enjoy your Probus adventure. Please contact our Secretary Elly Fallon on 0422 331 707 if you are interested in joining Probus.



New probus members 2024.

Visit Traf District News Online
www.trafnews.com

Trafalgar Public Cemetery News

By Robyn Gunn

The Trafalgar Public cemetery has a long history within our area first commencing on the 17th of May 1887. Ten acres of land was set aside for the Cemetery and approved by the Governor-In-Council.

In January 1888 the election of trustees was held with those appointed being, John McMahon James Whitton, William Henry Cox, Michael O'Neill and George Hough.

Each Trustee was a volunteer who represented a church group and were then approved by

the health Commission to manage the cemetery.

In June 1888, the Trustees resolved the land would be divided into five sections, -

Episcopalian / Church of England, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian and Strangers. There would be two intersecting half chain roads running north-south and east-west. The east-west roads are still present today.

In the early days there are many stories of problems on the journey to the cemetery due to the heavily timbered hills,

lack of roads and muddy impassable tracks. It is said some of the coffins were brought from the hills on horse back, some carried or transported along the firm ground along the railway tracks, some put on railway hand trolleys to reach the cemetery.

The oldest Gravestones in denominations within the Cemetery are

- Church of England -Elizabeth Teychenne 1892 aged 28
- Methodist - James Caughterty 1888 aged 40

- Presbyterian - Ivy Whitton 1888 aged 23years 9 months,
- Roman Catholic - Honora Considine-Hayes 1900 aged 65.

Our beautiful Cemetery is still managed by voluntary Trust members who oversee the running of the cemetery and having it looking it's best for those resting and those visiting.

However there are always many more small tasks that need attention.

At our last meeting we agreed to formally establish a group to be known as

"Friends of Trafalgar cemetery".

The purpose of the group is to maintain the gardens and do any other small jobs, such as pruning, planting, sweeping etc.

The group is scheduled to meet on the first Sunday of each month commencing March 3 th except for September when it clashes with Father's Day. We will meet at 1pm at the cemetery Office, afternoon tea will be provided. Bring your gloves, a few gardening tools, maybe a hat and sunscreen. If Sunday doesn't suit,

there is still an opportunity to be involved as you may be able just to clean up a single grave that we have identified as needing attention or complete another small task.

Please contact Robyn Gunn, Trust Member on 0409957078 if you would like to help out.

For other inquires our office is open Thursdays 11am to 2pm by Secretary Howard Jones 0418345595. Trafalgar Public cemetery.

Trafalgar Community Directory

This Directory has been compiled to provide a listing of not-for-profit community based organisations operating in Trafalgar. Please advise Traf News of any corrections and additions.

Organisation	Contact	Email/Website	Phone
Baw Baw Arts Alliance	Sue Murphy	bawbawartsalliance.org.au	0428 866 417
BawBaw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Darren Wallace	bawbawshire.com.au	0476 000 053
BawBaw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Michael Leany	bawbawshire.com.au	0476 000 119
BawBaw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Peter Kostos	bawbawshire.com.au	0438 570 304
BawBaw Sustainability Network	Malcolm McKelvie	bbsn.org.au	0490 485 370
Bettermentall Together	Kerry Rantall	Bettermentall@gmail.com	0477 115 666
Bowls Club	Ian Miles	trafalgarbowlsclub@bigpond.com	0400 210 033
Boxing Gymnasium	Shane Cameron	box_on_box_all@hotmail.com	0408 962 764
Campdraft	Cheryl	facebook.com/trafdraft	0416 166 027
Cemetery Trust	Howard Jones		5633 2282
CFA (non emergency contact)	Districtg HQ	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm	5624 1900
Chamber of Commerce	Jade McGegor	facebook.com/visittrafalgar.com.au	0421 467 270
Community Notice Board		facebook.com/trafalgarcommunitynoticeboard	
Cricknet Club	Liam Durkin	trafalgarcricketclub@gmail.com	0402 556 338
Croquet Club	Michael Fozzard		0418 513 092
Earls Rd Landcare Group	Jim Whitley		0423 832 122
Football Netball Club	Brett Tonkin	trafalgarfnfc@gmail.com	0477 636 648
Golden Girls Trafalgar	Social Group		5623 6032
Golf Club		golf@trafalgargolf.com.au	5633 1110
High School			5633 1110
Historical Society	Dianne Ireland	historicalsocietytraf@gmail.com	0439 655 172
Kindergarten			5633 1233
Lions Club	David Koschade	trafalgarlions@gmail.com	0428 331 157
Mens Shed	Leigh Shepherd		0427 757 595
Opp Shop	Glenys Brennan		0417 587 454
Police Station (non emergency conact)			5633 1188
Polocrosse Club	Gill Massey	trafalgarpoloxclub@gmail.com	0455 440 062
Pony Club	Denise Marriot		0411 890 299
Primary School		trafaps.vic.edu.au	5633 1162
Probus Club	John Atwell		0419 701 331
Public Hall		trafalgarpublichall@gmail.com	
St John's Church	Trafalgar	6pm Saturday	
St. Jariath's	Yarragon	10 am Sunday	
Trafalgar Tennis Club	Sue Klemke	traftennis@gmail.com	

Please direct any changes or additions to this directory in writing to publisher@trafnews.com

What's On

Traf District News is distributed to Trafalgar, Yarragon, Thorpdale and Willow Grove and this directory is intended to reflect events in all of those locations. We welcome your input about upcoming events in your area. Please send information to articles@trafnews.com

Activity	Location	Date	Time	Contact	Cost
Silk Road Market.	Trafalgar Bowling Club.	Saturday 3rd of March 2024.	8.00 till 1.00 pm.		Free
Bettermentall Community Group.	36 Contingent Street Trafalgar.	Every Thursday	10.00 am to 12.00pm	Jason Randall	Free
BEEES IN MOE!!	99 Saviges Rd Moe.	Saturday 16th of March 2024	9.00 am - 2.00 pm		Free
Charity Duck Race	Noojee Pub River Flats. Noojee.	Saturday 16th March 2024	12.00pm - 5.00 pm.		Free
Coffee and Classic Cars Newborough	24-34 Boolarra Ave Newborough	Saturday 9th March 2024	9.00 am		Free
Free Hike Mt Worth Circuit	Mt Worth State Park, Seaview	Sat 2nd & Sun 3rd of March 2024	9.00 am start	Dif-ficulty Grade 3	Free
Future Lab - Mindcraft at Warragul Library	75 Victoria St Warragul	Tuesday 12th of March 2024	4.00 to 5.00 pm		Free
Gippsland Rhythm and Blues Jam	30 Darlim-urlia Ave Newborough	Sunday 24th March 2024	2.00 pm - 6.00 pm.		Free
Kid's Movie Club.	Latrobe City Council Library Moe 1/29 George St Moe	Saturday 2nd of March 2024	10.00am to 12.00 pm.		Free
Leongatha Pop-Up Science Show	52A Roughhead St Leongatha.	Saturday the 12th of March 2024	10.00am - 4.00 pm		Free
Ronen Apcar, Piano Recital.	Yarragon Studio. 515 Yarragon Sth Rd Yarragon South.	Saturday 23rd of March 2024	3.00 - 4.00 pm.		Free
Show Me the Art Festival	Botanic Gardens.Botanic Drv Moe	Saturday 16th of March 2024	10.00 am		Free
Warragul Show	Logan Park. 19 Howitt St Warragul	Fri 1st & Sat 2nd of March 2024	8.00 am		Free
Y(Our) Fest. Morwell Wooden Park	60 Elgin St Morwell	Saturday 9th of March 2024	12.00pm - 6.00 pm.		Free
Farm World	Lardner Park	Friday 22nd March - Sunday 24th March			
Gippsland Wellness Expo	Kernot Hall in Morwell	Saturday 23rd March- Sunday 24th March			
Easter Art Sale	Warragul Exhibition Hall, 15 Howitt St, Warragul	Saturday 30th March - Sunday- 7th April			

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March 23rd & 24th 2024 at Kernot Hall, Morwell

Profile: Liam Durkin

By Trevor Colvin

Liam Durkin is the editor of the Latrobe Valley Express and two other newspaper titles and a significant news contributor to Traf Daily News. Liam was editor of Traf News for some years.

TRAF DISTRICT NEWS (TDN):

"You have chosen journalism as a career but were you expected, or tempted, to go into the Durkin family potato and transport business?"

LD:

"There was never any pressure put on me to do that. Dad did always say that the farm was there if ever I wanted it. But no, farming was never something that I envisaged as a career. There are quite a few people in the arts sphere that have come from the Durkin family. We've got Patrick Durkin, who's at the Fin Review, and cousin Catherine who's a presenter with Fox Sports. So I guess it might be in the genes somewhat. I always enjoyed writing and telling stories.

"Nan was always on to us about our grammar growing up, so maybe it could stem from that as well. But, yeah, I guess journalism was probably something that was always on the cards for me."

TDN:

"Did you go to school here locally, or were you educated elsewhere?"

LD:

"I was shipped off to boarding school right from the start. So, from year seven right to year twelve. I was at Assumption College in Kilmore.

"It was quite daunting to start with. I would have been twelve years old when I started. I was one of two very young boys in a dormitory of 16 year olds, so I had to grow up pretty quickly. A few beltings along the way,

but that was all part of it. I guess it made me grow up pretty quickly and I certainly learned to fend for myself.

"I wasn't an excellent student in terms of flat out applying myself, but I think I applied myself when I had to and got reasonable marks in the end."

TDN:

"You are a keen sportsman, playing cricket and football. Did that come from your years at Assumption College?"

LD:

"I was interested in sport regardless, but certainly it was a very sort of alpha male-dominated environment. Cricket is the sport I love the most. I enjoy football and I was pretty passionate about it when I was younger. It has tapered off a bit in recent years, but I do still play.

"It didn't necessarily matter if you were any good or not, as long as you were playing. I think that was probably the way to earn some respect amongst your peers. If they could see you were willing to participate, that was much better than the alternative."

"After Assumption College I had a year off because I'd been at boarding school for six years and never really had an opportunity to experience the workforce, apart from the times on the farm, but as I was only ever coming home on school holidays there weren't many of those. So I had a year off just to dabble in the workforce and just mucked around with a few jobs here and there.

"After that I went to Deakin's Melbourne Campus, which was in Burwood. I studied there for four years, doing my B.A. in professional writing.

"I wouldn't say it was a battle, but it was certainly unrelenting in terms of assignments and submitting things on time. I think there's a misconception with

university that it's a bit of a breeze but certainly when you're there, it's pretty intense.

"I was still playing cricket and footy back in the Valley. I felt it was important to keep doing that just to keep touch with my mates I had down here. So, yeah, I'd study during the week and then come home on the weekends to play, which was good. And then managed to finish up uni and graduate with an undergraduate in professional writing."

TDN:

"And then you started working for this newspaper?"

LD:

"Actually, I need to thank Traf News, because I got my start here. The paper was at a bit of a crossroads. They weren't sure who the next editor was or where it was going to be and essentially, there was an SOS put in one of the issues and basically they said that if they couldn't find an editor, then that might be the end of Traf News. I was studying in that area, so I thought it might be a good opportunity to learn a few things about newspaper production and maybe get my foot in the door as well.

"So put my hand up at the age of 22. Luckily, two other people put their hands up as well and we all came on board which lightened the load.

"It was a bit of a whirlwind to start - a bit of a baptism of fire - but like most things, you get better the more you do it."

TDN:

"You are now 30 and I'd love to know what you think of the future."

LD:

"In terms of the newspaper game, it's hard to quantify just where it's heading, because even when I first started it seemed like people were talking about the end of the printed issue and moving solely to digital format. But

I still feel there's a great market and a great desire for a printed newspaper to be hitting letter boxes every week.

"It does seem like political correctness has just gone totally too far to the left or too far down one particular stream and whether there's a way to correct that or not, I don't know. It seems like no matter what you do, you're going to offend someone regardless of what political views you have. It is very tricky. And this comment is probably, ironically, going

to offend people, but it does seem like people enjoy being offended in this day and age.

"Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the future is not so much fabricated facts, but fabricated evidence. If I was going to pinpoint the biggest challenge moving forward, that would be it. We have so many media streams, and that's all well and good, but it seems like anyone who's been to an online college or anyone who has been able to get a PHD out of a cereal box, automatically becomes an expert in a certain field.

And their word is gospel and no one else can ever just disprove whatever they've got to say, or no one can ever dare challenge what they say. They could absolutely be off the mark, or they could absolutely be spot on. But it seems like there's no room for disputing whatever evidence they seem to come forward with. So, yes, that term, 'fabricated evidence' is a major challenge."

TDN:

"Thanks for your time and your insights Liam."



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Mirboo North Italian Festa

(Traf District News was unable to cover this important festival and is grateful to the Latrobe Valley Express for allowing us to use some of the article and images by their journalist Katrina Brandon, who covered the event.)

The Mirboo North Italian Festival was once again a massive success, as more than 30,000 people attended.

While the food was cooking, so were attendees in 34-degree Celsius conditions. This didn't worry the crowds, though.

According to the organiser, Rosie Romano, the people just adapted to the intense heat and said that this year was the first time that it was warm for the event.

"This is the first ever hot day we have had. Usually, it rains on the Saturday and then gets cooler on the Sunday," she said.

"It's been a different experience for it to be really hot. People moved furniture out of the sun and into the shade. People adapted to it. There is a lovely breeze now. We are really happy with how it turned out."

In 2016, the Mirboo North Italian Festa was revamped by Rosie and others in her team of Lorella, Adele, Paula, Anna, Mary, Nucia, Gina, Maria, and their families and friends. Now, the festa has flourished, with over 200,000 followers on Facebook.

The morning was set to start at 10am, but people

couldn't wait any longer than 8.30am to begin arriving and viewing the incredible displays within the mercato, with some even beating stallholders to the punch.

Mass was the opening session on the main stage. Many people joined, either standing or sitting and praying among themselves. After mass, the statue of St. Paul was carried around the park, led by Mirboo North Primary School students, organisers, churchgoers and the flag throwers from Faenza, Italy.

While the mass was underway, people were already lining up for food from one end of the festival to the other. The build-up of people did not come gradually but all together.

Busloads of people poured in from Melbourne and across Victoria. The 'parking lot' (football grounds) was jam-packed with thousands of cars.

Ms Romano said, "It's just spread like wildfire. Every year, we seem to get more and more people, and we think, 'Oh, people will be sick of it. They might not come.' But really, they come with more people, more family, more friends."

There were three mass areas, including one main stage where comedian James Liotta kept things moving throughout the day with quick flicks of humorous takes; another stage featured Nonna's Cucina (kitchen) and magician Luigi Zucchini, who performed for the

children.

Off to the next competition, Member for Eastern Victoria Region, Melina Bath and Member for Gippsland South, Danny O'Brien, competed in una uva (grape) stomping competition and won.

The breath-taking moment called for a celebration with another Italian classic, Aperol Spritz.

The festival was supported by generous businesses including Gippsland Water, Community Bank Mirboo North and District, Mirboo North and District Community Foundation, Destination Gippsland, Cummaudo Farms, Travellers Rest Hotel Thorpdale, Manny's Market Morwell, Traralgon Market,

Grandridge Brewery Bistro, and Cool Aqua Springs Water were large supporters of the event.

Overall, the day was a massive success not only for the festa but for the local businesses. Mirboo North Hotel was flooded with people.

Ms Romano said, "People had a ball, and they absolutely love it every year that we do. There are so many positive compliments. What can I say? It just gets bigger and better for us every year."

"We are really happy with how it turned out. We love seeing people who are really happy."

To watch out for next year, head to the Mirboo North Italian Festa Facebook page.



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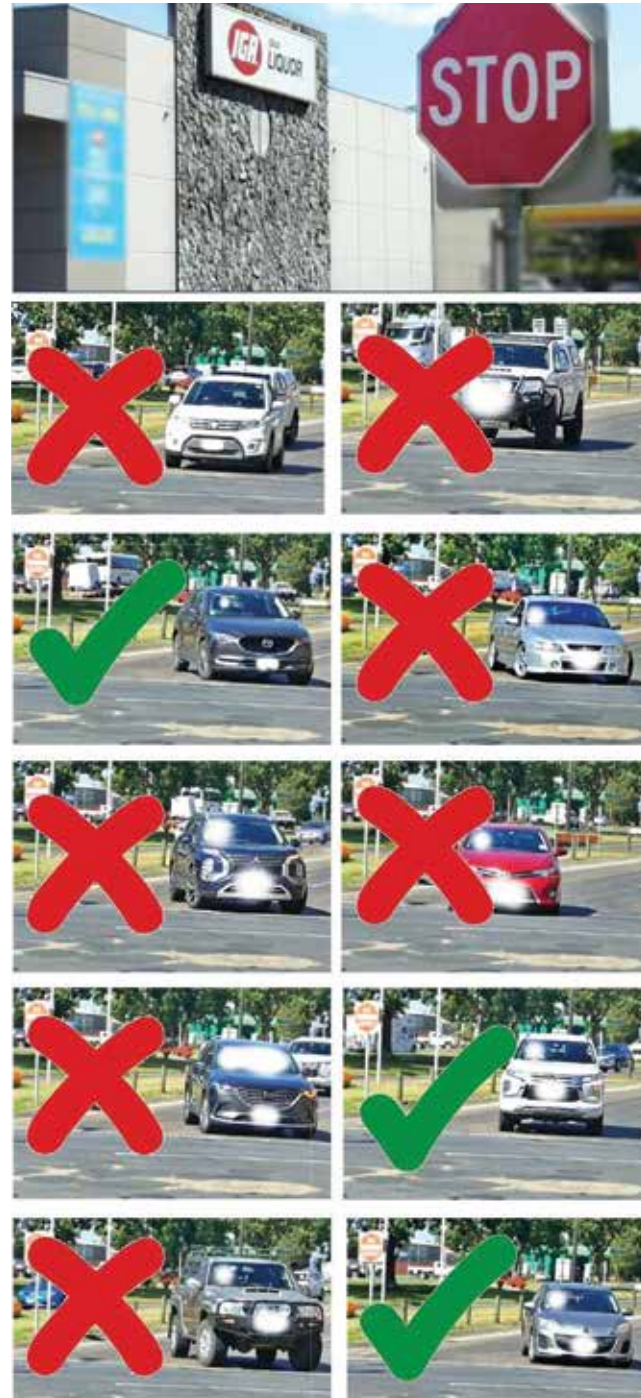
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Should this stop sign become a Give Way Sign?

In a two-minute interval, seven out of 10 cars didn't stop at this intersection near IGA. Is it a case of disregard for traffic control generally, or should it be replaced with a 'Give Way' sign.

Traf District News welcomes your thoughts.
Write to articles@trafnews.com



Coming up in the April Issue of Traf District News

We expect to bring you the following articles, among many.

Logging: What economic impact has the December closure had on Gippsland's economy.

Profile: Trafalgar Youth

Citizen of The Year Vanessa Hornby.

Dodemaides Road: Should the 80k zone near this intersection be changed to 60 to make turns out of Dodemaides Road a little safer?

Trafalgar Lions “Bring Something Old”

By Trevor Byrne

At a recent meeting of the Trafalgar Lions club, members were asked to bring something old that they treasured and give a talk of a few minutes on the items. Among the many items were very old and unique camera's, a pocket watch previously owned by a member of the Kaiser's Army and a book presented to a Grandfather in 1885.



Kevin with a pillow skilfully embroidered by his Grandfather while recovering from wounds suffered 3 months before the end of the First World War



Glenn with his favourite elephant JINGO



Greg with his remarkably preserved wind-up trotter/pacer, Greg still has the original box the toy came with. A member made some remark about the toy beating some of the horses he backs.

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Rural Australians twice as likely to die from preventable causes

The further we live from an urban centre, the lower our life expectancy according to a recent study.

Rural Australians are also twice as likely to die from preventable illness. The latest research shows that rural men are 2.5 times and women 2.8 times more likely to die from potentially avoidable causes than those in urban areas.

This statistic, along with demographic information, health risk factors and health outcomes are some of the data provided in the National

Rural Health Alliance Rural Health in Australia Snapshot 2023. The snapshot also provides data on health workforce distribution in rural, regional, and remote Australia.

“The statistics show that the further you are from an urban setting, the more likely you may die of disease due to various factors, including the tyranny of distance and workforce shortages,” said the Alliance Chief Executive Susi Tegen. “Fit for purpose funding is critical to ensure that the necessary policy and infrastructure is in place,”

she added.

The Snapshot shows that small rural towns of less than 5,000 people, have access to almost 60 per cent fewer health professionals than major cities per capita, indicating continuing workforce and access challenges in rural areas. Major cities have more choice and more General Practitioners and other health practitioners providing primary care compared to large regional centres, small rural towns, remote areas and very remote areas.

Many rural people have no access to primary healthcare services within an hour's drive from their home. They use Medicare up to 50 per cent less than those in cities, indicating that people rather not go through the difficult process of a long journey and long waiting time to access health care. As a result, the burden of disease in remote areas is 1.4 times that of major cities.

“There is clear evidence that per-person spending on healthcare is not equitable, and that this inequity is contributing to poorer health

outcomes in rural areas,” said Ms Tegen.

“The biggest deficits are in accessing primary health care which then leads to higher rates of costly and potentially preventable hospitalisations and increased hospital expenditure. This is a sad reflection on the rest of Australia, when not every citizen has the same access to a basic healthcare need.

“We welcome the Government's reforms and look forward to a rural health system reform that reflects population health need and

place-based and led planning and service delivery, to address this discrepancy of health care access,” she said.

The National Rural Health comprises 50 national organisations committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the 7 million people in rural and remote Australia.

Membership includes representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, health professional organisations, health service providers, health educators and students.

Thousands more Victorian homeless seek help

By: Council to Homeless Persons

Victoria's peak body for homelessness says rising housing stress, evictions and the number of working people who cannot afford a place to live, underscores the need to build at least 6,000 new public and community dwellings a year.

The Australia Institute of Health and Welfare's annual specialist homelessness services report reveals one in 67 Victorian people received help for homelessness assistance, compared to the national average of one in 95. The top three reasons were financial difficulties (48 per cent), domestic and family violence (40 per cent) and housing crisis (36 per cent).

The data also shows 34,708 Victorians sought help from frontline services because of housing affordability stress in the year to 2022-23, an increase of 2,287. The number of people who sought help because they were being evicted rose by 1,163 to 35,036. Meanwhile, the number of working people seeking help for homelessness increased by 1,594 to 12,770. The number of people sleeping rough who sought assistance also rose by 2,636 to 12,613.

Council to Homeless Persons CEO Deborah Di Natale said “Another 60,000 new public and community homes were needed over the next decade to turn the housing and homelessness crisis around.

“This report is another indicator of just how badly Victoria's broken rental market is failing vulnerable people and leaving them with nowhere else to turn,” she said.

“We're seeing thousands

more people seeking help for housing stress and evictions. This includes people working full and part time.

“Previously, employment was a significant protective factor against homelessness. But soaring rents and the lack of social housing have eroded that buffer for many people. And if it's difficult to keep a roof over your head while working full or part time, it's virtually impossible

to do so on a very low or no income.

“The homelessness crisis is not abating; it is simply leaving more people to slip through the cracks and resort to sleeping on someone's couch, in a vehicle, in parks or on the street.

“This is why we need the government to commit to building 60,000 homes over the next decade. Failing to invest will cost much more

down the line. But acting now will reduce the burden on hospitals, community services and the justice system.”

Editor's footnote: We learned this week that the NSW State Government is considering a bill to fine people who live in caravans on private property, despite a huge increase in homelessness and a severe shortage of housing stock.



Not just the unemployed are doing it hard. More than 12,000 Victorians – who have jobs – are currently homeless.

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Some of the homeless in Melbourne last month.

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Strzelecki Bushwalking Club take on The Australian Alps Walking Track

By Caroline Dyke

Strzelecki Bushwalking Club take on The Australian Alps Walking Track

By Caroline Dyke
Starting at Walhalla and finishing in Canberra this 650 km trail presents walkers with lots of challenges

The track was conceived in the 1970's to link several National Parks including the Baw Baw, Alpine, Kosciuszko

and Namadgi. It generally follows ridges and plains through some of the highest country in Australia.

Walkers can join the track at many places between Walhalla and Canberra. It can take six or seven weeks to complete the whole trail, but many people choose to complete shorter sections.

Here in Gippsland, we are fortunate to have access

to several sections of the Australian Alps Walking Track on our doorstep. The Strzelecki Bushwalking Club has several leaders who have extensive knowledge of these local walks.

On Saturday 17th February, Wendy led a group of eleven walkers over a section of the AAWT beginning at Stronach's

Camp through to headwaters of the Thompson River and back around to Frangipani Saddle. Along the way walkers were treated to several sightings of Lyrebirds and other native animals. This is a very peaceful way to spend a Saturday walking amongst the many species of eucalyptus trees and tree

ferns.

The SBWC regularly conducts bushwalks for various levels of ability, bike rides and kayaking events.

The Strzelecki Bushwalking Club is very inclusive and has approximately 150 members.

Does this sound like the type of Club you are interested in? If so,

visitors are welcome to attend our monthly meetings held at the Trafalgar Scout Hall on the second Wednesday of each month beginning at 7.00 p.m.

Further information is available on the website at sbwc.org.au, on our Facebook page or by contacting publicity@sbwc.org.au



Wendy (far right) leading a group of walkers to Frangipani Saddle

A giant tomato called John

Erlinda James has been growing veggies in her Moe garden for more than thirty-five years and noticed quality was dropping off gradually over time. The soil must be tired she thought and set about correcting that.

The result is a giant tomato affectionately named

'John.' Many other massive tomatoes grew alongside John, but none matched John's 1.2kg weight.

The answer to the tired soil was fish. Not emulsion, but real fish bits and pieces which Erlinda collected from the Dandenong Market and fed to the soil over time.

All of Erlinda's veggies are

doing well but John takes the prize for size.

Given size isn't everything, did these huge tomatoes pass the taste test?

Several of Erlinda's work colleagues gathered for the tasting and they all agreed it was delicious and full of flavour.

An added advantage of

tomatoes that size is that it only takes one slice for a sandwich.

Editor's Note: Traf District News is keen to hear from other gardeners and would be delighted to have a regular garden column. If you are interested, write to publisher@trafnews.com



Erlinda James with 'John' who weighs in at 1.2 kg



Sliced and ready for the taste test.



'John' with a normal tomato for comparison and other giants from Erlinda's garden in the background.



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Christmas Cheer at Bettermentall

By Noel Blundell

Bettermentall's Christmas breakfast went off with cheer, happiness and was full of festive fun. The event was held at Bettermentall's home location at the Uniting Church at 36 Contingent St Trafalgar.

Over 60 people attended the breakfast to be greeted with Christmas poppers, decorations and lots of free delicious food cooked and supplied by local businesses and volunteers. Santa arrived

in Trafalgar's Country Fire Authority's fire truck to wish everyone a merry Christmas, to hand out lollies, gifts and have photos taken with all those interested.

Bettermentall held its annual Christmas Gift drive and received hundreds of gifts donated by families, individuals and businesses from the township of Trafalgar and surrounding areas. All the gifts were then bundled up into gift and food hampers, and personally

delivered to each nominated home by Jason and Kerry Randall, Bettermentall founders.

The gift drive's focus was to ensure that families in need, had food and gifts for their children on Christmas morning. In total, 76 children from 40 families received hampers and gifts.

Jason and Kerr were presented with a cheque for \$450 which were the proceeds of a local community raffle run by Silk

Road, the organisers of the Trafalgar Night market.

Trafalgar Rotary Club donated a further \$400 to help fund the Christmas luncheon and gift drive.

Bettermentall is a privately funded organisation and donations ensure it continues to provide services to those members of the community who are struggling, not only at this time of the year, but throughout the entire year.

Bettermentall will

continue to hold their community groups, and provide food aid supplied by Baw Baw Food Relief every Thursday morning from 10.00am until 12.00pm, and everyone is welcome.

A range of services and programs are on offer including peer support, one-on-one mentoring, group activities, NDJS support and coordination, youth group and drop-in services.

Bettermentall's philosophy echoes, 'as

a community we can all come together for the betterment of all' and believes that the road to recovery and healing begins with the first step. Those first steps don't have to be taken alone.

Over the past three years Bettermentall has helped hundreds of people and held hundreds of events all designed to assist those in need, create a sense of community and provide support.

McIlwain and Coutts take out Traf Bowls Men's Section Championship.

By Ian Miles

Trafalgar Bowls Club Men's Section Pairs Championship has been won by the young team of Wil McIlwain and

Matt Coutts who defeated the father son combination of David and Nathan Cook in a brilliant display of lawn bowls by both teams.

The final, which was played in perfect conditions on Trafalgar's 'Blue Lagoon' was an even contest with neither team giving an

inch. In the end, a couple of big drives by Coutts and some deft touch by McIlwain got them over the line with the score of 16/11.

In the semi-final McIlwain and Coutts were too strong for defending Champions Peter Jonas and 'Ollie' Giles while Team Cook

overcame previous Champions Tim Anderson and Ken Capper to make the final.



L to R Wil McILWAIN, Peter JONAS, Bruce GILES and Matt COUTTS.



L to R David COOK, Nathan COOK, Tim ANDERSON and Ken CAPPER.

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Slick Ships take title

By Liam Durkin

Catches win matches. Chances that often go begging were snapped up by Trafalgar's Second XI last Sunday, on their way to the Warragul District Cricket Association one day premiership.

The Ships, defending what most thought was a below-par score on a pristine Garfield Recreation Reserve, bowled well and caught even better in the Division 4 limited overs decider.

Arriving to play an opposition on their home

deck, Trafalgar was out to win the club's first premiership for the season, and signal the start of its return to the WDCA on a positive note.

Intentions of batting first in above 30 degree heat were helped when Garfield elected to send the visitors in.

Trafalgar's innings never reached any great heights, but importantly, the Ships batted most of their allotted 40 overs, ending with 140 on the board.

Trafalgar built a few small partnerships during the innings, mainly

around Brendan Dawson and Louis Hennessy, who combined for a 41-run stand in the middle.

While the return wasn't astronomical, it was crucial in the context of the game, and took the Ships into triple figures.

Earlier in the day, opener Mitch Claridge scored a busy 26 off 35 balls, making for a strike rate of 74.28.

Trafalgar recovered from an indifferent position of 4/46, as the lower order scratched out as many runs as possible.

Dawson provided the calming influence needed, making 27 after seeing off a danger period that could have well and truly left the side scrambling.

Louis Hennessy batted through to the end, knocking the ball around in his 25 not out.

Turning to their perceived strength, the Ships got the ball rolling with a wicket in the second over of the Garfield-Tynong innings.

A little while later, James Pace set the tone for what was to be a remarkable day in

the field, taking a well-judged catch at backward square.

Louis Hennessy struck with his first ball, enticing an edge that saw the batsman promptly walk, before another decent grab, this time by McLeod-Agland (2/24) and Louis Hennessy (2/16).

Catch of the day however was to come, when Olly Hennessy dove to his right to take the ball inches off the ground at mid on, giving his younger brother a second wicket.

Louis repeated the dose with an equally ridiculous

catch at fine leg, falling to the ground under the weight of the ball as it came down.

In between this was a spell from Teilor Woolford that broke the game open, as he took 3/20, following the work from McLeod-Agland (2/24) and Louis Hennessy (2/16).

Youngsters Jordan Chapman and Pace chipped in with timely wickets, before Olly Hennessy ignited celebrations, taking the final pole to see Garfield-Tynong bowled out for 104.



Toasting a job well done is Cooper Burgess, Billy Claridge and Connor Dastey.



Olly Hennessy takes the winning wicket.



Trafalgar Cricket Club Second XI celebrate after winning the WDCA One Day premiership. Pictured is Back row: James Pace, Brendan Dawson (captain), Oliver Hennessy, Mitchell Claridge, Owen McLeod-Agland, Jordan Chapman, Teilor Woolford. Front row: Brodie Burgess, Cooper Burgess (captain), Kobe Heathcote (mascot), Connor Dastey, Ashton Woolford (mascot), Louis Hennessy, Brent Claridge.

Forgotten AFL player Leo Connolly could yet resurrect his fledgling career

By Liam Durkin

The Trafalgar local is currently training with Melbourne this AFL preseason.

Connolly has not played an AFL game since 2021, and was delisted by St Kilda at the end of last season.

Despite this, the speedy half-back has not given up hope on an AFL comeback, and will spend this year with Melbourne's VFL affiliate Casey.

In what turned out to be good timing, and given AFL clubs generally need surplus players to get through a preseason, the Demons dipped into their Casey list to see who might be available.

Connolly was, and now he is suddenly back training with an AFL club.

Connolly admitted him training with Melbourne was just to "fill in some numbers", but he was grateful for the opportunity all the same.

"Loving it, been a change

of scenery from the last four years, getting to know everyone, it's a great club, organised really well, everything is on point, tough as well which is what you need preseason," he said of his first impressions with Melbourne.

The 22-year-old has been training with Melbourne for the last few weeks, the Demons themselves coming down to Casey Fields in Cranbourne East to get ready for the season ahead.

After winning a drought-breaking flag in 2021, the red and blue have stumbled in successive finals series, bowing out in straight sets.

It is little surprise to learn just how professional one of the leading clubs in the AFL go about their business, as Connolly has experienced first-hand.

"That was one of the first things I noticed, honestly within the first 15 minutes of

training, the way everything is done, on time, in order, when you need to, with intensity, the boys train very, very hard, even though it's your own teammates," he said.

"They go flat out, you can tell why they've been successful."

Connolly has been able to rub shoulders with a few notable names in his short time running around in a Melbourne singlet, including 2021 Norm Smith Medalist Christian Petracca.

"Petracca is something to behold in person, it's even more ridiculous in person than it is on TV," he said of the midfield bull.

"I lined up on him at training and it was scary.

Another scary one if Kozzy Pickett because you just have no idea what is going to happen at any given stage, and Max Gawn is probably the largest human I have ever

met.

"They've been very welcoming, they love having us down to help out and are more than willing to teach us what roles we need to learn and what role we are playing.

"Had Gussy Brayshaw (Angus) playing half-back with me, he's just talking to me the whole time, telling me where I need to be, what I need to be doing."

Connolly has at least one familiar face training alongside him, with former St Kilda teammate Jack Billings now a Demon.

The man himself is set for an intriguing season, as he makes the transition from full-time professional to knockabout country footballer for the first time.

Where football was previously his job, the dynamic has now shifted,

meaning Connolly will need to juggle a range of commitments playing for not only Casey, but for De La Salle in the Victorian Amateur Football Association on occasions as well.

"It will be interesting, I'm looking forward to playing for Casey, the people there have made it so welcoming, really easy for me to come in and enjoy my footy," he said.

"De La Salle, they are a great bunch of lads, hopefully I can get a few games there and qualify for finals, but hopefully at Casey we are going all the way."

As for an AFL return, Connolly is holding out hope to anyone willing to throw him a lifeline.

"That's a fingers crossed sort of thing, I would love to get redrafted again, midseason draft is the

soonest it can happen, ideal world that happens, but if not, there is also the end of the year," he said.

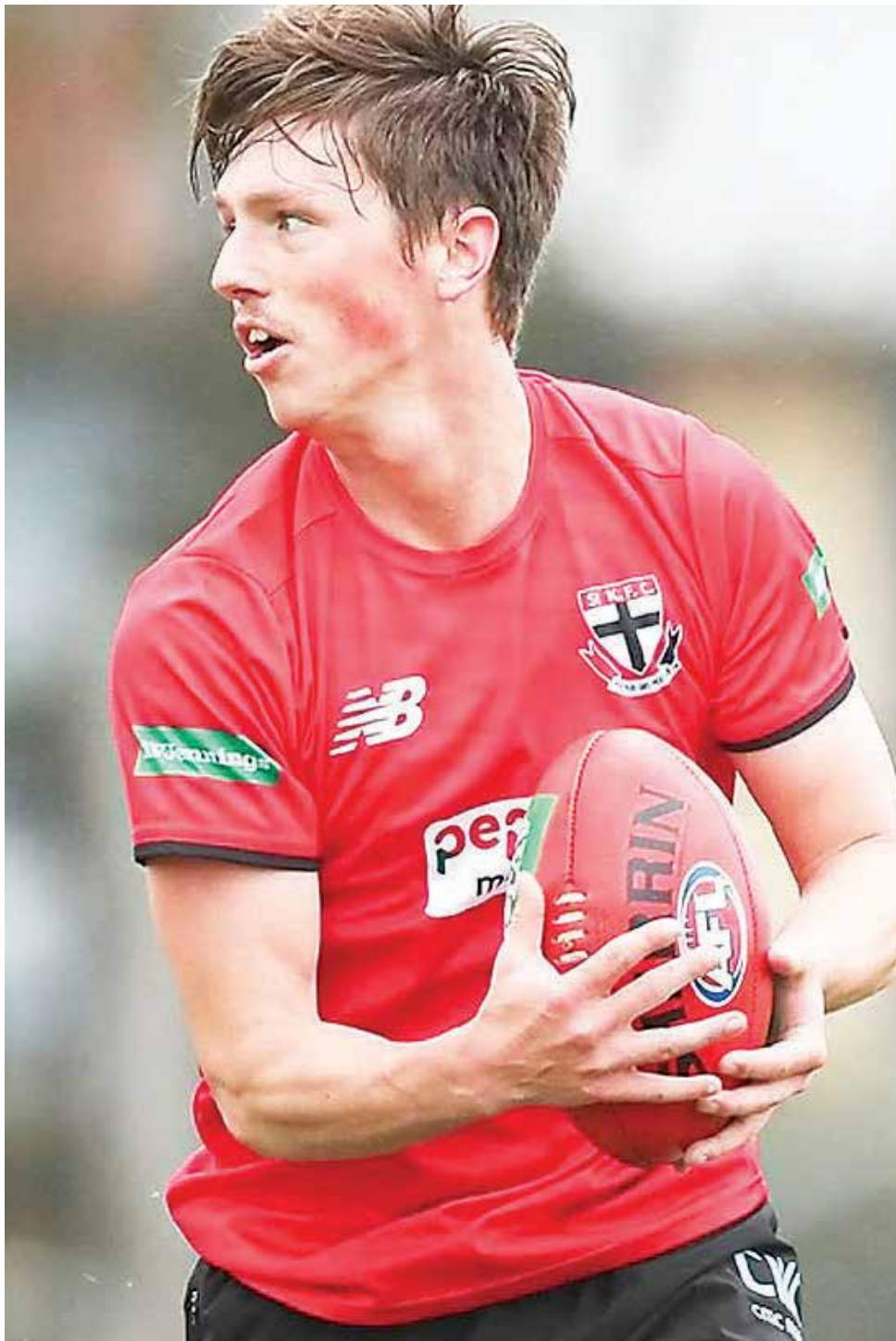
"Just need to put a good year of footy ahead of me and hope for the best after that."

"After getting delisted it made me question if I wanted to take it seriously, after getting back into preseason, especially after training with Melbourne it's certainly lit that fire back up."

"I'll be doing everything I can."

Connolly played seven games for St Kilda after being taken in the 2019 National Draft.

He played junior football for Trafalgar, and has returned home this summer to have a hit with the Trafalgar Cricket Club where his brother Aydan captains the First XI.



Trafalgar footballer Leo Connolly is training with Melbourne this AFL preseason.



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Local footy legends return home

By Liam Durkin

LOCAL football legends Peter Knights and Barry Rowlings were back in Gippsland recently.

The Hawthorn premiership teammates returned for a Saturday morning breakfast organised by Rowlings' brother Graham 'China' Rowlings in Moe.

The Moe breakfast has been going strong for the last 15 years, and allows a group of retired Gippsland League footballers the opportunity to stay connected long after their playing careers have come to an end.

Knights' visit had been some three years in

the making, and he was all too keen to mingle with the group, which included Traralgon FNC legend Terry Hunter, whom the Maroons' home ground is named after.

Knights grew up in Longwarry, where he played in a senior premiership with his hometown at the tender age of 16 in 1968.

It was to be the Crows last senior flag for more than 50 years, broken only a few season ago in 2019.

Knights played 264 games for Hawthorn, and is regarded as one of the greatest centre half backs in the game's history.

Speaking to the past players assembled, Knights, who still looks remarkably fit at age 71, said while he still enjoys the game, he missed the true head-to-head battles between key position players of yesteryear.

The three-time Hawthorn premiership player rated goal-kicking machine Peter Hudson as the greatest player he has seen, and made the point that tactics such as flooding were still prevalent back in the early 1970s, when Hawthorn would leave Hudson isolated within goal-kicking range (there was no 50 metre arc back then).

Hudson also said the Hawks' biggest mistake was letting Rowlings go to Richmond at the end of the 1978 season.

After 82 games and the 1976 flag with Hawthorn, Rowlings went on to play a further 152 games with Richmond, featuring in their 1980 premiership side.

Rowlings grew up in Thorpdale and later made his way to Moe, where he won consecutive Trood Award and Rodda Medals as the best player in the Gippsland League in 1973 and 1974.

Despite not being picked up by an AFL club until

he was 25, by all reports, Rowlings' determination to make it to the top level was unmatched.

The tiny hamlet of Thorpdale has produced a decent list of sporting names. Joining Rowlings is former Essendon footballer Jason Winderlich, who returned home last season to coach the Blues, and Jim Forsyth, who played a handful of games with Essendon in the 1960s. His son Tim later won Bronze at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Another Thorpdale AFL connection is Ryan Ferguson, who played 47 games for Melbourne in the mid-2000s

and is currently head coach of Richmond's AFLW team.

His dad, Dave, has been a long time Thorpdale resident, and was the town's postmaster for many years as well as treasurer of both Thorpdale FNC and Thorpdale Cricket Club.

Recalling funnier times, Knights and Rowlings remember training under legendary Hawthorn coach John Kennedy, who had them doing circle work for what seemed like an eternity.

At the request of players to change things up, Kennedy obliged, and immediately ordered players to "go the other way".



Former Thorpdale resident and AFL footballer Barry Rowlings (right) with his Hawthorn premiership teammate Peter Knights.

Kicking goals off the field

By Tom Hayes

AFTER being diagnosed with probable Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), former Gippsland footballer Leigh McDonald set out on a mission to improve concussion protocols at a regional level for all age groups.

McDonald suffered around 40 concussions throughout his 20-year career, spanning from the age of 15 to 35, which has left him a different man.

Looking back through the years, McDonald recognised the symptoms of CTE began to take a toll on him after about 10 years, highlighting the last five years was where he began to rapidly go downhill.

After months of seeing a significant decline in McDonald's mental and physical wellbeing, his wife Michelle sought for help from renowned specialist neurologist in Sydney, Dr Rowena Mobbs, which not only was difficult because it was interstate, but the cost and time on top of the travel was another strain.

McDonald suffered his worst concussion playing for Coburg in the 2004 VFL season, cutting his season short. Following the hit he was put in an ambulance, where he suffered a brain bleed. He couldn't even remember who his own dad was.

His last concussion was dealt in his second-last game in 2019. He was diagnosed with probable CTE roughly six months ago.

CTE is developed through repeated head trauma and is most common in combat and contact sports. The disease develops over time, generally after eight to 10 years.

Symptoms of CTE include behavioural problems, mood problems, and issues with thinking, which could lead to further complications including brain damage, dementia, depression or suicide.

McDonald has been a prominent figure in local football, coaching a senior premiership and pulling on the blue and yellow of the Churchill Cougars and coaching Wonthaggi in the Gippsland League.

In the early 2000s, McDonald trained with Richmond during their preseason under Danny Frawley – who himself died as a result of CTE in 2019.

McDonald went on to play in Richmond's VFL affiliate, Coburg.

Following a three-to-four-month spell of trying to get his head around the probable CTE diagnosis, McDonald set out on a mission to improve concussion protocols in regional leagues.

"Although I feel better now, it's still a daily challenge," he said.

"I have to eat well, I have to not drink much at all, and I have to exercise pretty much every day."

Since November last year, the McDonalds have been inspired to get the ball rolling

on this initiative, speaking to local clubs and leagues about a possible implementation, yet more work is still to be done.

The aim is to create clear pathways for family and friends of past and current players that may show CTE symptoms, and to know where to seek help.

His long-term goals are to meet with the AFL, and have them fund the concussion courses, in order to get the idea off the ground, so that all players will be treated the same for a head knock, minimising the risk of the development of CTE later in their lives.

"My aim is to implement these things around Gippsland, and the leagues in Gippsland, to make sure that seniors right through to juniors are following protocols," McDonald said.

"What I really want to push for is that there is someone at every game of football – juniors, girls, whatever it is – that has run a concussion course.

"I want to push for the AFL to fund for a little while, two-to-five years, to get these first aid officers to do a concussion course. Then after a while it will be part of what clubs need to upkeep and make sure that they've got in place.

"That will obviously take time, but I can't see why we can't start with making sure that there is protocols in place for leagues immediately. Leagues can make that

decision straight away."

Concussion protocols have taken a positive spin just recently, with the release of new concussion guidelines, which recommends a mandatory 21-day stand down period for players who suffer a concussion.

However, this is only a guideline, and not a rule, meaning regional sporting clubs or leagues can still administer the players however they see fit.

More recently, McDonald revealed that he had teamed up with the Concussion Legacy Foundation, with plans to run a marathon to raise money for the project.

"The Concussion Legacy Foundation, the donations from the fundraising that we're doing, that's all pretty much what it's all going towards – trying to implement (concussion) protocols for regional level and juniors to make sure things are getting implemented," he said.

"I've jumped on board with the Concussion Legacy Foundation, and I'm on the board there. We've organised a fundraiser event – I'm going to run a marathon in Cairns, something I've never done before.

"It's a big thing for me, six months ago I couldn't run a kilometre with the condition, I was sort of stuck in bed, so to be getting up and pounding the pavement now is a real positive.

"I've met with some families across Victoria who have lost their kids to CTE through

suicide, so that's been a pretty impactful catch up. So I'll be dedicating the marathon to some of those people."

McDonald will dedicate his run to those who have lost their lives to CTE through suicide, and in particular he named late Traralgon footballer, Nick Lowden, who last played in the SANFL with Norwood, and former Richmond player Shane Tuck, who McDonald lined up alongside at Coburg, as two he will be running for.

Also coming up, McDonald will be a part of a panel, speaking at Morwell's Italian Australian Club on Saturday, March 23, led by The Restoration Project, an initiative by local Mark MacManus.

MacManus is a Heyfield junior, who played in a senior premiership with Yinnar at just 17-years-old, and is the creator of The Restoration Project.

"Steven Baker from St Kilda is going to come down and do a chat, and also Matthew Ferguson (former Sale coach) – who played with St Kilda as well," McDonald said.

"The event is really based around resilience, so it's not just based around CTE.

"Steven Baker has been through a bit with depression and things like that, so he's going to be speaking about how he's changed his life and what he's done to get on top of it. Matthew Ferguson's journey has also been one of resilience, competing in Ironman events and living a uniquely driven lifestyle.

"Then I will talk about what's happened to me and how I'm dealing with it, what I've gone through and how it's changed my life and the highs and the lows of it, and what I'm doing to change my life."

McDonald has had to adjust to speaking in front of crowds, which was something he felt very comfortable doing and had to do regularly, but now because of his condition, finds it difficult.

"Talking in front of large groups ... is something that came easy to me – I enjoyed it, I was passionate about it, but now it's a lot different, it's a challenge because (my) memory is poor," he said.

"I was thinking I wasn't capable and contemplated not doing it, and we were going to make a video – which we are still making – but we thought that the vulnerability of the night, people seeing me that may have seen me coach and talk before can maybe see the difference now, hopefully that can raise some awareness around what CTE can do to someone."

To support Leigh's fundraiser, visit the website at tinyurl.com/k2fft279

Tickets to The Restoration Project night at the Italian Australia Club can be found at tinyurl.com/ybpyhxrh

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