

Traf District News

July 2025 – Edition 276

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People power prevails as emergency services levy postponed for farmers

By Jordan Ross

On May 28, hundreds of locals made their opinion on the state government's new Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF) clear. They rallied inside and outside of the West Gippsland Arts Centre in Waragul where the Baw Baw Shire Council was holding a bi-monthly meeting.

Many made their voices heard, using the meeting's community participation time to speak on the levy, which passed through the Victorian Legislative Council at the start of May.

Local farmer, Craig Devnan, summed up how many were feeling.

"[It's an] absolute disgrace. It's time to send a message to

the state government to axe this tax," he said.

"[I've] never really attended a rally. To be fair I've never felt the need," he said.

According to the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, the new levy will be calculated based on a fixed charge that varies by property type, and a variable charge based on property value.

State Treasurer Jaclyn Symes explained that the levy will make *"sure our emergency services have the sustainable funding"* they need, while Nationals MP Melina Bath has said that households may see their rates almost double while farmers' rates could increase by 150%.

Helen Case, dairy farmer from Drouin, spoke at the

meeting about how she believes this levy will *"impact everyone."*

"There isn't a single family in this shire who is not going to be impacted," she said.

Cr Adam Sheehan echoed this, saying *"this bill does not only impact our farming community, but everyone, our whole community, our volunteer organisations and services,... our small businesses,... our land and homeowners, our renters, our sporting groups, our arts community."*

Another local, Ric Nicolson, warned that *"every ratepayer is going to be affected by this."*

Lorraine Box, a contractor for Labatoosh Agricultural Solutions, spoke about how farmers are already struggling.

Unable to afford supplies and unable to access water due to drought.

The councillors acknowledged and thanked those who had attended the meeting and showed their support.

Cr Ben Lucas said *"It means a lot to our community [and] It means a lot to us in the chamber."*

Lucas spoke of his experiences on his grandparents farm in Shady Creek. He said

he felt *"gutted"* and had been on the phone with a number of farmers in the community.

"I'm actually begging [the politicians] to show some heart," said Cr Lucas.

Continues P2



CFA members joined in. Image supplied.



People turned up in the hundreds to support the council as it formally opposed the new levy. Photographed by Trevor Colvin.



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Traf District News

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One-year reprieve for farmers as Labor hit pause on the levy

From P1

The councillors moved the following motion, requesting that the council: "Write to the Allan Government to formally oppose the Victorian Government's newly legislated Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund on behalf of Baw Baw Shire Council and our ratepayers, and call on the Victorian Government to repeal this decision."

This statement was amended to ask that if the levy cannot be repealed, that it be deferred for a year because of the adverse drought conditions.

Cr Ben Lucas also proposed that the Baw Baw Shire Council explore options to partner with neighbouring councils to advocate for their communities.

Recent statements from neighbouring councils would indicate their interest in collaboration. Council areas such as Mansfield, Latrobe, Wellington, South Gippsland, and Cardinia have all raised concerns over the new fund.

Latrobe City Council called for the levy to be abandoned with Mayor Dale Harriman saying that it "at-

tacks our farmers... [and] our business owners."

A press release from the Mansfield Shire labelled the ESVF "unfair" while John Schelling, Mayor of South Gippsland Shire said that while efforts to raise money for the CFA are "well-intentioned," they will "unfairly impact regional Victoria."

Cr Sheehan reminded everyone that when the levy is in place, "councils will be obligated to collect the levy."

He said that failure to collect it could result in the state government pursuing legal action. Ultimately, a third-party debt collection agency would be charged with collecting the levy, at the expense of the local council.

"We need your voice, and as much as we will provide our support, we need your support in return," Cr Sheehan said, encouraging everyone who opposes the levy to make that known.

Levy frozen for one year

The new levy will now be frozen for all primary production properties for 2025-26. The amount will be capped to the same amount they paid in 2024-25. This

will mean the ESVF variable rate on primary production properties will remain at 28.7 – the same as it was in 2024-25 – for the duration of the 2025-26 financial year. This reduced rate will be applied to rates notices for primary production properties automatically.

Treasurer Jaclyn Symes said that, "by capping the rate of the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund for primary production properties, we're ensuring farmers can remain fully focused on their drought response and recovery."

"The increasingly devastating effects of drought aren't confined by postcode or region – it's impacting farmers across Victoria. It's why we're expanding support statewide," said Premier Jacinta Allan. However, this reprise will not help the rest of Victorians, who will still pay the increased rates.

President of the Victorian Farmers' Federation, Brett Hosking, welcomed the news of the 12-month pause.

"This announcement offers a glimmer of hope and is recognition that the pressure we've applied is being heard. It's a step in the right direc-

tion, but plenty more remains to be done," he said.

He said that an extra year will give farmers more time to talk with the government and find a more viable solution.

"Pausing the ESL increases for 12 months is the right call, but it doesn't change the underlying problem: this levy is an unfair cost shift onto farmers."

"We'll use this extra time to continue making the case that it needs to be scrapped altogether, not simply paused," Mr Hosking said.

Making good on their motion, In June, Mayor Goss wrote to the state government to urge them to further repeal the levy.

"It is positive to see the Victorian Government shifting on the issue but that far more needs to be done," Cr Goss said.

"While Council is pleased to see that the Victorian Government has finally started to listen to rural Victorians, they have not done enough."

"We will continue to stand by our community, our farmers, our volunteers and advocate for the levy to be fully repealed," he said.



Baw Baw Shire Councillors rallied against the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund. Outside the West Gippsland Arts Centre, (from left) Councillors Adam Sheehan, Paul Pratt, Ben Lucas, Kate Wilson, Tricia Jones, Jess Hamilton, Suzanne Allen, and Brendan Kingwill. Photographed by Susie Foletta.

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Jason walks his talk over 800 kilometres

By Trevor Colvin

A very chill wind and icy rain were blowing across the Joe Carmody Athletics Track when Traf District News caught up with Jason Rantall last month.

Readers may remember that last year Jason took on running 3,249 kilometres; one kilometre for every Australian who took their own lives in 2022. During that long run, hundreds of people joined Jason for a lap or two and a chat about the challenges of mental health, and the run raised \$70,000 to assist with better understanding mental health.

Jason's goal was to encourage people to join him and have a chat because no one has to do this alone as he ran 801 kilometres over ten days; one kilometre for every Victorian who took their own lives in 2023. And join him they did; some in flip flops, some in boots, but all determined to do a lap or two and enjoy each other's company and perhaps receive some advice and encouragement.

One man on that journey that day who broke away from the run to talk to Traf District News, was 'Hughsey', who told us just how important it was to him to join Jason on this run, helping him get through what has been some pretty tough times in the past few years. Anyone can hit a wall at any time and it can be a lonely vigil where drugs and alcohol seem to assist, but in truth, they only mask the pain. 'Hughsey' understands that and is now addiction free and enjoying life. Your writer also went down that very dark road some years back and knows just how hard it is to break free and



Jason Rantall (right) and friends who joined him for a chat midway through his 801K run.

see daylight, and would have benefited from someone like Jason Rantall at the time. 'Hughsey' had committed to doing 80 laps and rejoined Jason at lap 76.

Your writer couldn't join Jason that day for a jog and a chat because of a very bad knee and Jason couldn't stop – pointing to a very bruised calf and damaged Achilles tendon – "If I stop to chat, I won't be able to get going," he said, determined to complete his 80 kilometres for the day; run, jog, walk or crawl.

To put some perspective on that, 80 kilometres is

equivalent to 200 circuits of the athletics track and when your body is screaming with fatigue and pain, it takes some gumption to keep going and perhaps even more grit to get up and do it the next day, and then again for 10 days straight.

On the final day, more than 100 people crossed the finish line with Jason.

During the 10 day run, approximately 700 people joined in to walk, to talk, to watch or support and help raise awareness and much needed funding.



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Mayor Goss to get “back to business” following re-election

By Jordan Ross



Deputy Mayor Tricia Jones with Mayor Danny Goss after their appointment last November. Photographed by Trevor Colvin.

Following his suspension, Cr Danny Goss was unanimously re-elected to his position as mayor, following a council vote on June 6. Only five of the nine councillors were present, and no other nominations for mayor were made.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, an election must be held following any vacancy in the office of mayor. The vacancy was, of course, caused by the 21-day suspension of Cr Goss.

Cr Goss was grateful for the support of his fellow councillors and looked forward to continuing to lead council for the remainder of the term.

“I thank Deputy Mayor Cr Tricia Jones for acting in the role over the past few weeks, it’s not an easy job to step in so I formally acknowledge her hard work and share my appreciation,” Cr Goss said.

“To my other councillors here today, I appreciate the nomination – I know how much you’ve been doing over recent weeks, and I very much appreciate the work you’ve done and the incredible support you’ve given me,” he said.

He also acknowledged the absences of councillors Adam Sheehan, Kate Wilson, Brendan Kingwill, and Paul Pratt from the meeting, but ensured that they had “indicated their support from afar.”

Now, Cr Goss said, “It’s back to business.”

“There is much work to be done with many important and exciting projects hitting our agenda soon, and I’m pleased to resume service to this wonderful community,” he said.

The next mayoral elections will be held in November 2025, marked by the end of the one-year term.



The current Baw Baw Shire Council who were elected in November last year. Photographed by Trevor Colvin.

MP Mary Aldred opens office

Newly elected Member for Monash, Mary Aldred has opened her office in Waragul. It is located at 46C Albert Street. Constituents are welcome to visit and meet Aldred and/or her team. In July, Aldred will travel to Canberra when Parliament resumes.



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The Little Village Project receives significant grant in latest round of bank generosity

By Trevor Colvin

‘It takes a village to raise a child’ is a proverb thought to be of African origin and in many African communities it is common for a child to be raised by its extended family, in many cases spending extended periods of time living with grandparents, aunts and uncles. Even the wider community sometimes gets involved. ‘One knee does not bring up a child’ is another way to express it.

Ben Tunks was a well-being officer in Traralgon who saw many disadvantaged children who had less than one knee for support and needed many more. “I needed to buy a [disadvantaged]

little boy a school uniform and tried to source some funding to get him a school uniform and a bag and everything so that we could make this placement happen. And I couldn’t get any funding, or anyone who would pay for this uniform. It was about \$350, I think, for the uniform and the backpack all up. So my wife and I ended up paying for it.” Ben told Traf District News.

Ben’s sister worked as a midwife in Tanzania, so Ben was familiar with the ‘village’ concept and at that moment decided to put the concept into practice: ‘The Little Village Project’ was born.

The Little Village Project is founded on the belief that

every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and flourish—regardless of their circumstances. The project supports vulnerable children by providing access to evidence-based support that helps improve their engagement with both education and the wider community

This includes children in foster care, those who are neurodiverse, experiencing housing insecurity, or from low-income backgrounds. By empowering both schools and families with the right support at the right time, the project helps children thrive—academically, socially, and emotionally.

Ben spoke with many teachers and found that

many had a wish list for kids but with no way to fulfil it. “I wish I could get this done or this done or this done. If we only did this, their life would be so much easier. Or if we did this, it would be so much easier for them to access their education.

“Some teachers would reach into their own pockets and they’d pay for things for kids just to make sure they didn’t miss out or feel different, which was really inspiring. And I thought, well, if teachers are willing to do it, maybe there’s some community members around Taralgon who might be willing to reach into their pockets and say, ‘well, let’s as a town take ownership for these vulnerable kids.’”

Ben approached the Gippsland Regional Executives Forum and told them his idea, saying “Why don’t we approach this as a village? A few members of the executives forum were really interested in that idea. One of them was Rhonda Renwick, who at the time owned Latrobe Valley Bus Lines and who has a philanthropic foundation called Kindred Spirits Enterprises. Rhonda came to visit me at the school and offered to auspice the Little Village Project. That organisation covers all our overhead expenses, so that everything that we earn can be put to where it’s needed,” said Ben.

At the same time David Hackford, now a solicitor in

Traralgon, and John Mitchell and Alan Wilson from Alan Wilson’s Insurance Brokers got Ben off the ground with three thousand dollars in the knowledge that every cent of that money would be spent directly helping kids.

Since its beginning in 2019 The Little Village Project has raised \$200,000 and funded 116 children across four primary schools in Traralgon.

With a generous \$30,000 from Community Bank, Trafalgar and District, the work will now flow to Thorpdale and Trafalgar primary schools and expand work already being done at Tanjil South primary.



Ben Tunks happy to accept \$30,000.



Ben Tunks, (left) Founder and project Lead and Shaun Mallia, Executive Officer, Kindred Spirits Enterprises with bank personnel on award night last month.

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Biggest Morning Tea raises \$5,000 for cancer research

Encore Retirement Living's Trafalgar village recently hosted its annual Biggest Morning Tea in the newly opened Community Centre, drawing a crowd of more than 125 attendees.

Residents and guests gathered not only to raise their cups but also to raise vital funds for the Cancer Council, with an impressive \$2,504 collected. Encore Living Management gen-

erously matched the donations, bringing the total to a TEA-rrific \$5,008.

The day's fundraising featured a small entry fee, granting attendees access to a delightful spread of sweet and savoury treats, lovingly prepared, many by the residents themselves. Guests praised the offerings, calling it *"The best spread ever."*

A poignant minute's silence provided an opportu-

nity for reflection, honouring those touched by cancer.

The morning concluded with a much-anticipated raffle, with lucky winners taking home a variety of prizes generously donated by local businesses. Thanks to the incredible support and generosity of all involved. And a heartfelt THANK-YOU to everyone who contributed to making the day so meaningful.



Resident Trish



Residents Lynette and Annette with Village Manager, Rosa.

Baw Baw Shire Council finalise 2025/26 budget

By Jordan Ross

On June 11, Council endorsed their 2025/26 budget.

After a period of public consultation for the draft budget from April to May, some adjustments were made to divert additional funding to key areas. This included \$250,000, to fund minor capital works and \$150,000, for footpath improvements.

East Ward Cr Kate Wilson said that while *"difficult and unpopular decisions"* have been made, she is particularly proud of the adjustments made to provide greater funding for grants and footpaths.

As a part of their budget, the council will offer over 70 services, including road maintenance, community infrastructure projects, rubbish and waste collection, youth programs, library services, and community grants. Council has also allocated \$100,000, to their community grants program, funding arts and sporting programs.

Cr Paul Pratt said that it's *"disappointing"* that not all

community projects can be funded, but maintained that they *"need the support of state and federal governments"* to expand what can be funded and delivered.

Council also plans to deliver three infrastructure works in Yarragon, including the Downton Park Pavilion upgrade, the Loch Street footpath, and the Rollo Street, Yarragon Masterplan project.

"Budgeting isn't just about numbers... it's about community needs, providing services and planning for the future," said Deputy Mayor Tricia Jones.

"We've listened and collaborated closely with our community and are proud to deliver a budget that is shaped by their voices," she said.

It was clear though, that not everyone was in agreement with all aspects of the budget. Cr Jess Hamilton said that she doesn't agree with all the decisions made but maintained that *"compromise is essential for a balanced outcome"* and urged locals to *"keep their faith in this council."*

Cr Ben Lucas said that he was *"struggling"* with a decision to cut the pensioner rebate, but still chose to endorse the budget. This decision will put an end to the previous \$50 rebate from council rates to eligible pensioners. In 2025/26 the rebate will be reduced to \$25, before being phased out completely in 2026/27.

Cr Lucas admitted that he felt they had *"missed the mark"* with this decision in regards to community feedback, which had been vocally against the removal of the rebate.

"I just find that with the \$160 million that we bring in, that's where we are choosing to save \$150,000," he said.

In the end, he conceded *"we win some, and we lose some."*

Mayor Danny Goss maintained that they needed to make *"tough decisions"* as they ensure the shire is financially secure.

The budget goes into effect on July 1, 2025.

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Imagining Trafalgar’s future

By Jordan Ross

At the end of May, the Baw Baw Shire Council endorsed the Trafalgar Structure Plan. With our town expected to see considerable population growth in the next 30 years and the pressures that will come with this, the council has recognised the need to plan for the future of Trafalgar.

The council has forecasted that by 2043, Trafalgar’s population will have grown by approximately 1700 people. In addition to this, the town will require significantly more industrial, retail and non-retail employment, and residential space.

The plan reads that “Trafalgar will be a prosperous, liveable, and sustainable community, characterised by its unique heritage, landscape setting, scenic views, and friendly, inclusive spirit.”

“Trafalgar will be a place people want to live, work, and visit for generations to come,” it continues.

Reinforcing Trafalgar’s country town character is listed as a crucial key direction. Providing sustainable residential growth, supporting local resilience and economy, and enhancing green spaces are listed as others.

There was some indication that not all the councillors agreed that all of the specific plans were the best going forward, however Cr Kate Wilson assured that “It is just the beginning of the conversation.”

Cr Brendan Kingwill noted that it is his belief that Trafalgar “needs a strategic plan rather than a structural” but was reassured that there is a lot of “good stuff” in the plan and voted in favour of it.

Cr Kingwill also encouraged more community input and is hopeful of a town meeting to discuss Trafalgar’s future.

There are discussions surrounding the highway that runs through Trafalgar. Former councillor Darren Wallace said that it would be a “no-brainer” to replicate the service lane seen in Yarragon, which allows for improved traffic and parking. He also discussed the idea of flipping the train station to the north onto Waterloo Road.

“I think our whole commercial area is being held back because of [it’s] proximity to the highway,” he said, adding that it is “dangerous” as well.

This point is made in the plan, with the “safety and frequency of pedestrians crossing along the highway” noted.

Some key opportunities within movement and transport that are laid out in the plan are:

- Provide new and connected walking and bike riding paths.
- Investigate opportunities to improve the safety of pedestrian crossings along Princes Highway

- at Ashby Street, Contingent Street, Davey Drive, and Anzac Road.
- Investigate the opportunity to provide an additional pedestrian crossing over Princes Highway and the railway corridor to improve access between the recreation reserve and planned development in the west.
 - Understand and improve on the current car parking.

Underdeveloped land at the Trafalgar Recreation Reserve is also a regular talking point, with the community still waiting for the second football oval. Works were underway in 2021 at the reserve, with the multi-purpose Turr Pavilion opened for use by the cricket, football and netball clubs.

While the future of the Trafalgar Business Centre is uncertain - it’s currently listed for sale - neighbouring Trafalgar Community Centre has had some renovations.

According to a council spokesperson “council replaced the carpet, window blinds and repainted the interior of the Trafalgar Community Centre within council’s Community Facility Flooring Renewal and Community Facilities Renewal Programs.”

Editor’s Note: We will continue exploring this topic in upcoming issues.



The Trafalgar Train Station. All photographs by Jordan Ross.



The Trafalgar Train Station.



Trafalgar’s dog-friendly park, Hollydell Park.



The Trafalgar Business Centre. It was previously the Narracan Shire building but the Shire was abolished in 1994 and Trafalgar became a part of the newly created Baw Baw Shire. Photographed by Jordan Ross.



The Princess Highway that runs right through Trafalgar. The historic Hotel Criterion can be seen in the background.



McGregor Park on Contingent Street.

The Giant Gippsland Earthworm might be right under your feet

By Kirby Leary, South Gippsland Landcare Network

It is hard to imagine a worm two metres long and two centimetres thick but this Gippsland giant could be right under your feet and Landcare is asking you to help identify its presence.

The Giant Gippsland Earthworm (GGE) is considered the biggest worm in the world and is only found

in south-west Gippsland. The average adult can weigh around 200 grams. In the 1870s, a specimen was found and sent to the National Museum of Victoria for studying. This underground giant is a natural wonder - but the future of this threatened species is uncertain.

For the first time since 1980, a large-scale census survey is being conducted to map where GGEs are found. Landholders can complete the survey online or fill in a paper version (coming soon

to mailboxes in areas within the species' range). A mobile phone app has also been developed, to help people record the location of GGE habitat on their properties.

With almost the entire GGE population found on private land, landholders play a critical role in its survival. By reporting where they occur, you'll help scientists understand whether GGEs are thriving or declining in response to climate changes —and help guide future conservation efforts.

GGEs spend their entire life in underground burrows, usually near streams or drainage channels, or on south or west facing slopes. Many landholders first notice them by the gurgling sound they make underground.

How to get involved:

- Complete the survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/GGECensusSurvey. Download the app: Search 'Giant Gippsland Earthworm' in the Apple

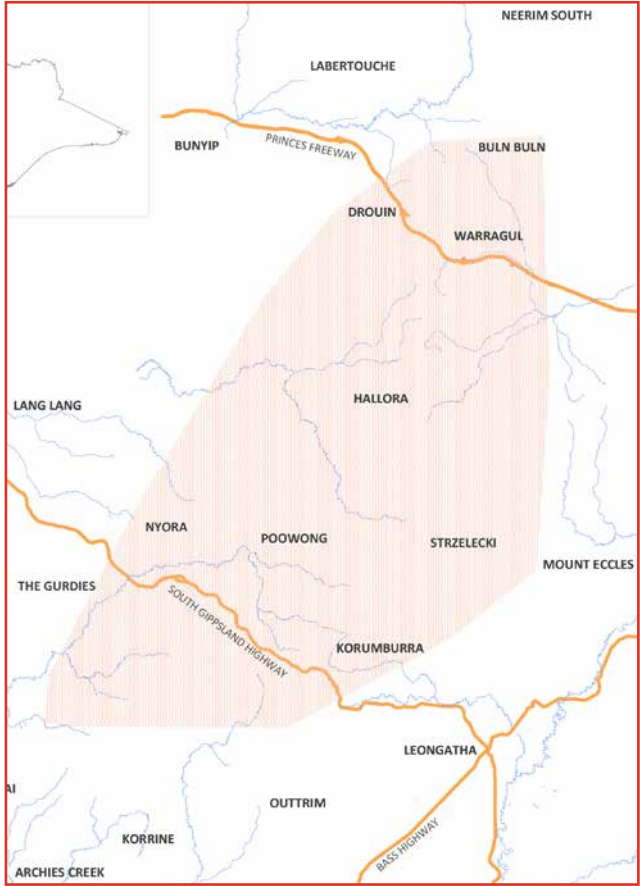
or Android app store (select the image of a cartoon worm).

- Or learn more: Visit www.giantearthworm.org.au for habitat maps and more details.

This project is led by the Gippsland Threatened Species Action Group in partnership with the South Gippsland, Bass Coast and Latrobe Catchment Landcare Networks, GGE expert Dr. Beverley Van Praagh, and a local plant ecologist.

Dr. Beverley Van Praagh notes that Giant Gippsland Earthworms are a protected species in Victoria. They are very fragile animals and digging up these worms to view them or handling them incorrectly is likely to result in their death. We do not encourage any digging up or handling of these worms unnecessarily. The best way to conserve these worms is to protect their habitat and leave them in their underground homes.

The 'Census of the Giant Gippsland Earthworm in South and West Gippsland' is funded by the Australian Government under the Saving Native Species Program.



A map of the distribution of the Giant Gippsland Earthworm. Image supplied.



The Giant Gippsland Earthworm. Image supplied by Dr Beverley Van Praagh.



WARRAGUL & MOE OPTICAL



SWAROVSKI

The Baw Baw Shire welcomes 39 new citizens

By Peace Ijiyera

On the evening of Wednesday June 18, a citizenship ceremony was held in the Fountain Room at the West Gippsland Arts Centre Waragul.

The evening saw 39 new conferees from 15 different countries become recognised as Australian citizens.

The ceremony was the third one of the year and fell on Refugee Week.

Mayor Cr Danny Goss hosted the ceremony and spoke about the significance of refugee week saying, it is *“an opportunity to reflect on Australia’s long history of resettling refugees and others in humanitarian need and acknowledge the many contributions they make and have made to Australia”*.

“Refugees have brought diversity to our cities, suburbs, and towns.

“This diversity has helped create the Australia we know, enjoy and love today.”

Goss welcomed the conferees saying, *“we are delighted that you have chosen to live in Baw Baw Shire as your home”*.

Newly elected MP, Member for Monash, Mary Aldred was in attendance and delivered a message on behalf of MP and Minister for Immigration and Citizenship Tony Burke.

Concluding Burke’s message, Aldred highlighted how *“special”* the ceremony was for her.

“In my capacity as the member for Monash, this is my first citizenship ceremony.

“While I know many of you will remember this for the rest of your life, I will also remember this for the rest of my life”, Aldred said.

Conferee Sandy Henery said she feels *“very happy”* to become a citizen.

Henery highlighted how friendly the Australian people are, and how beautiful the nature is.

Henery’s husband Amir Elsaid said the occasion was an *“honourable moment”*, and with his wife now a citizen, they are excited to *“contribute to the country socially and economically”*.

Conferee Lea Sookharee said the occasion was important for herself and her family.

“We actually belong here,” Sookharee said, highlighting how becoming a citizen solidifies her place in Australia.

For conferees Jayme and Henry George Emery, becoming Australian citizens means *“everything”*.

“It feels like the last piece of our puzzle to feeling at home,” Jayme said.



Conferee’s Henry George and Jayme Emery with Cr Suzanne Allen, Mayor Cr Danny Goss and MP Mary Aldred. All images supplied by Baw Baw Shire Council.



Lea Sookharee receiving certificate from MP Mary Aldred.



Conferee Sandy Henery with Mayor Cr Danny Goss, MP Mary Aldred and Deputy Mayor Cr Tricia Jones.



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Trafalgar clubs and groups receive council grants

By Jordan Ross

At the Warragul Country Club on June 12, Baw Baw Shire gathered the recipients of their Community Grants Program together for a wonderful night of socialising, networking and celebration. And of course there was reason for celebration with 41 local community groups and non-profit organisations receiving a share of \$154,000.

Grants ranged from \$1,000, to \$5,000, for each recipient. Among the recipients were sporting clubs, social, cultural or historical groups, and arts programs. The grants can contribute to projects, equipment purchases or event funding.

Mayor Goss was excited to attend the event, jokingly noting it's a rare occasion where everyone wants to thank councillors rather than criticise them. Importantly, he thanked community groups and not-for-profits for the work they do.

"Thank you all for what you do for the community," he said, continuing to say that a strong culture of volunteering "helps [to have] a thriving community."

He also spoke to the fact that the council chose to increase the budget of the

grants programs for the next financial year as they "value this program" and the impact it can have on the community.

Robert and Tony attended the event on behalf of the Trafalgar Bowls Club. The club applied for the grant to purchase a battery-operated greens sweeper which is essential for "greens maintenance."

They've already purchased the sweeper and it's making the job faster and more efficient. It is used before playing on the green to prevent damage to the surface and improve playability.

Trafalgar & District Probus Club was represented by members John and Tina. They want to purchase a Macbook. At each meeting, Probus members present to their fellow members on a particular topic. A slideshow accompanies the talk to provide visual representation, so access to a working computer is vital.

"It will make a difference, people are using their own equipment at the moment... it will be far better to have a club computer to use," Tina said.

John and Tina agreed that it will make for better and smoother presentations.

Probus meetings are known for their interesting guest speakers and presentations. In April, Probus had retired police officer Caroline Pethick visit to recount stories of her life on the force.

Other recipients from Trafalgar included; The Trafalgar Holden Museum which received \$5,000, for Route 69 event traffic management and advertising, the Trafalgar Men's Shed who received \$5,000, for the purchase of a cabinet saw, and Trafalgar Park Bowls Club which received \$2,980, for the purchase of trestle tables, cupboards and pickleball starter kit.

Guest speaker, Cassie Atkinson presented on behalf of her organisation, Volunteering Gippsland. She spoke of her experiences of working with volunteers and of the importance of community involvement.

The next round of community grants opens July 7. Mayor Goss encouraged all to apply.

"We want as many people to [apply] as humanly possible," he said and explained that "council officers are here to help."



Trafalgar recipients of the Community Grants Program. (From left) Leigh, Mick, Peter, John and Tina. Photographed by Jordan Ross.



Image supplied.



(From left) Tony and Robert from Trafalgar Bowls Club.



Robert from the Trafalgar Bowls Club accepts their certificate. Photographed by Jordan Ross.



Grant recipients were invited to socialise over food and drinks. Photographed by Jordan Ross.



Councillors Suzanne Allen, Danny Goss, Paul Pratt and Tricia Jones joined grant recipients to celebrate the spirit of community and volunteering. Image supplied.

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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 Shire Council			
Baw Baw Shire Council		Email: bawbaw@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au Website: https://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/Home	03 5624 2411
Baw Baw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Adam Sheehan	Email: adam.sheehan@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au Facebook: @adam4bawbaw	0461 515 690
Baw Baw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Brendan Kingwill	Email: brendan.kingwill@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au	0474 652 435
Baw Baw Shire Councillor (East Ward)	Kate Wilson	Email: kate.wilson@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au Facebook: Kate Wilson - East Ward Baw Baw Shire Council	0460 829 001
Government Members			
Member for Monash (Federal Electorate)	Mary Aldred	Email: mary.aldred.mp@aph.gov.au	03 5614 3600
Member for Narracan (State Electorate)	Wayne Farnham	Email: wayne.farnham@parliament.vic.gov.au	03 5623 1960
Education / Childcare			
Nido Early School Trafalgar		Email: trafalgar@nido.edu.au Website: https://nido.edu.au/early-schools/vic/trafalgar/	03 5633 1233
Trafalgar High School		Email: generaloffice@trafalgarhs.vic.edu.au Email: Trafalgar.hs@education.vic.gov.au Website: https://trafalgarhs.vic.edu.au/	03 5633 1733
Trafalgar Primary Early Learning Centre		Email: trafalgar@ykinders.org.au Website: https://ykinders.org.au/centres/trafalgar/	03 4311 1592
Trafalgar Primary School		Email: trafalgar.ps@education.vic.gov.au Website: https://www.trafps.vic.edu.au/	(03) 5633 1566
Trafalgar Primary School (Before and After School Club)	Holly	Website: https://www.oshclub.com.au/find-us/trafalgar-primary-school/	0439 735 713
Sport			
Trafalgar Bowls Club	Ian Miles	Email: trafalgarbowlsclub@bigpond.com Website: https://trafalgarbowlsclub.com/	03 5633 1274
Trafalgar Boxing Gym	Shane Cameron	Email: box_on_box_all@hotmail.com Webite: https://trafalgarboxingclub.wordpress.com/ Website: https://trafalgarcricketclub.com.au/	0408 962 764
Trafalgar Cricket Club	Liam Durkin	Email: trafalgarcricketclub@gmail.com	0402 556 338
Trafalgar Football Netball Club	Brett Tonkin	Email: trafalgarfnfc@gmail.com Facebook: Trafalgar Football Netball Club	0477 636 648
Trafalgar Golf Club		Email: golf@trafalgargolf.com.au Website: https://www.trafalgargolf.com.au/ Facebook: Trafalgar Golf Club	03 5633 1110

Trafalgar Outdoor Pool		Email: bawbaw@ymca.org.au Website: https://bawbawpools.ymca.org.au/trafalgar-outdoor-pool	03 5623 4017
Trafalgar Park Bowls and Croquet Club			0468 322 066
Trafalgar Ping Pong Club		Email: trafalgarpingpongkings@gmail.com	0418 598 174
Trafalgar Polocrosse Club	Gill Massey	Email: trafalgarpoloxclub@gmail.com	0455 440 062
Trafalgar Pony Club	Denise Marriot	Facebook: Trafalgar Pony Club	0411 890 299
Trafalgar Tennis Club	Sue Klemke	Email: trafftennis@gmail.com Facebook: Trafalgar Tennis Club	
Trafalgar Victory Football Club		Email: committee@tvfc.com.au Website: www.tvfc.com.au	
Other			
Baw Baw Arts Alliance		Sue Murphy	Email: president@bawbawartsalliance.org.au Website: https://www.bawbawartsalliance.org.au/bcms/ 0428 866 417
BawBaw Sustainability Network		Malcolm McKelvie	Email: bawbawsn@gmail.com Website: bbsn.org.au Facebook: Baw Baw Sustainability Network 0490 485 370
BetterMental Together		Kerry Rantall	Email: bettermentall@gmail.com Website: https://bettermentall.com.au/ 0477 115 666
Earls Rd Landcare Group		Jim Whiley	Email: info@lcln.com.au Website: https://www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/westgippsland/earls-road/ 0423 832 122
Jade MacGregor Legal		Jade MacGregor	Email: reception@jmacgregorlegal.com Website: https://jmacgregorlegal.com/ 03 5644 0000
Rotary Club of Trafalgar		Michael Fozard	Email: mrfozard@bigpond.com Facebook: Rotary Club of Trafalgar 0418 513 092
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Trafalgar CFA (non-emergency)			Facebook: Trafalgar Fire Brigade 03 5624 1900
Trafalgar Chamber of Commerce			Website: https://www.trafalgarchamber.com.au/
Trafalgar Community Notice Board			Facebook: Trafalgar Community Notice Board
Trafalgar District News		Jordan Ross	Email: editor@trafnews.com 03 5633 2591 0432 889 930
Trafalgar Farmers Market			Email: Silkroadcommunitymarkets@gmail.com Facebook: Trafalgar Farmers Market (Silk Road Community Markets) 0417 131 316
Trafalgar Historical Society		Jean Huffer	Email: historicalsocietytraf@gmail.com 03 5633 1960
Trafalgar Holden Museum			Email: info@trafalgarholdenmuseum.com.au Website: https://trafalgarholdenmuseum.com.au/ 03 5633 1684
Trafalgar Lions Club		David Koschade	Email: trafalgarlions@gmail.com Facebook: Trafalgar Lions Club 0428 331 157
Trafalgar Mens Shed		Leigh Shepherd	Website: https://mensshed.org/sheds/trafalgar-mens-shed/ 0427 757 505
Trafalgar Opp Shop		Glenys Brennan	Email: glenys_barnyard@yahoo.com.au Facebook: Trafalgar Opp Shop 03 5633 2788
Trafalgar Police Station (non-emergency)			Email: TRAFALGAR.UNI@police.vic.gov.au 03 5633 1188
Trafalgar Probus Club		Glenda Mynard	Email: glendamtraf@gmail.com 0458 332 149
Trafalgar Public Hall		Tanya Stanley	Email: trafalgarpublichall@gmail.com 0409 015 662
PLEASE DIRECT ANY CHANGES TO PUBLISHER@TRAFNEWS.COM			

Save Our Farmers public meeting July 20

The state government's Fire Services Levy Bill will have a devastating effect on farmers, imposing huge increases they simply can't afford. Farmers are going through a tough time with drought forcing many farmers to sell off their stock because they

can't afford to feed them. Hay is hard to source and prices are subsequently at record highs. An impressive lineup of speakers will dissect the reality of the Fire Services Levy and detail what it means to our farming community - and to you - at the Trafalgar

Community Centre on Sunday July 20; 11am to 2pm. While farmers stand to be hardest hit, the levy will affect everyone and perhaps many people are not aware of this. This event will clarify the extent and impact of the levy. Under great pressure, the government has deferred

the levy on farmers for one year, but still intends to apply it to households and businesses from this month. Speakers will be: Sharon Gibson, Deputy Mayor of Latrobe City will talk on the cost and effect of the tax on local manufactur-

ing, commercial landholders and private homes. Farmer Wade Northausen, Billboard Battalion, travels the country exposing what's wrong in this country and has a lot to say about this tax. Councillor Ben Lucas comes from a farming back-

ground and will talk on the parlous state of our farming industry and the added burden of the tax. Councillor Brendan Kingwill is angry that this is just another tax grab which will take millions out of our local economy and which will disappear into city-centric projects.

Leonie Blackwell is a passionate advocate against the attack on our national parks and the controls and changes being introduced which will seriously affect our farmers and the community at large.

Short talks from each of the speakers will be followed by a panel discussion, followed by refreshments and a mix and mingle opportunity.

A gold coin donation is required to cover hall hire costs.

The Trafalgar Community Centre is at 105 Princes Highway.



Recent protest against the tax (Morwell)

We talk to some of the stallholders at the Traf Farmers' Market

Traf District News decided to bring you a different slant on the monthly market by introducing you to just a few of the fifty or more stall holders who make the market happen on the first Saturday of every month. Unlike many markets, this one doesn't close over the winter months and the June market was cold, but didn't dampen the spirits of those we talked with.

Stefanie Hildmann

"Oh, I love this market, it's my favourite. Yes, there is a certain vibe here, I cannot explain it but most people here are my friends, so most stallholders are my friends, so for me this is just a happy market. Meeting my friends, I get many hugs in the morning, and I sell very well; fantastic! So it all comes together here for me."

"I trade as Radical Soil Care, which is the title of my book because I am vitally interested in healthy soils and helping people understand that."

Stephanie can be found at the Traf Farmers' Market every month and her book is certainly worth reading as she has a wealth of knowledge.

Taylah Rose

"I'm Taylah from Made by Taylah Rose. I've been in business for 11 years now, starting when I was 15 years old. I go to markets, I do online stuff, I'm a YouTuber as well."

"I love this Traf market. It is one of my favourites, just because of the community. There's so many lovely stallholders here and the organisers are so nice."

"It's just... it feels like family when I come here, and even

though today is meant to be a really rainy day, I didn't mind because I just thought it was like a little social event for me to come out and just talk to everyone, and yeah, get out of the house."

"I have a few customers coming to pick up orders and I'm sure I'll still make a bunch of sales."

Leigh Addison

Labertouche Organic Produce

"This market is really good and it picks up every month. We get our regulars coming back and commenting about how good the quality of our produce is."

"The biggest thing about the farmers' markets and community is that the struggles with supplying the Melbourne markets just isn't present here. The people in the community, like this one, will actually tell

you what they want to see and then we grow accordingly. We get back to our grass roots on what people want."

"We've got our standard lines, pak choi, spinach and so forth, and our tomatoes and they are our core business. But we've dabbled now, as you can see, in corn and a lot of things that people are getting back to and want on their everyday plate. These people know what they want and give us direct feedback."

Frankie Kennedy

"I believe in all this organic produce and this market generally and I love the traders here and I have been coming for quite some time."

"So when they said, could I volunteer my time by offering Leni's amazing organic soup, I said, absolutely, If I can give back to the community, I will."

"Leni donated the soup and it is a gold coin donation, with any money raised going back to the market organisers to help run future markets."

And your writer can speak highly of the soup. It was a great pick-me-up on a cold June morning.

Pieter Tromp

Mill Grove Dairy

"I am a cheesemaker; a local cheesemaker from the Yarra Valley and I love these farmers' markets because I get to interact directly with my customers."

"Recently, I've also become market manager at the Mill Grove Market and we really boost the local community and the local economy. And we create a trade platform for small businesses and for start-ups."

Pieter was offering tastings samples, and your scribe

tried his newest hot chili cheese and it was hot. Pieter is a regular at the Traf Farmers' Market and Mill Grove.

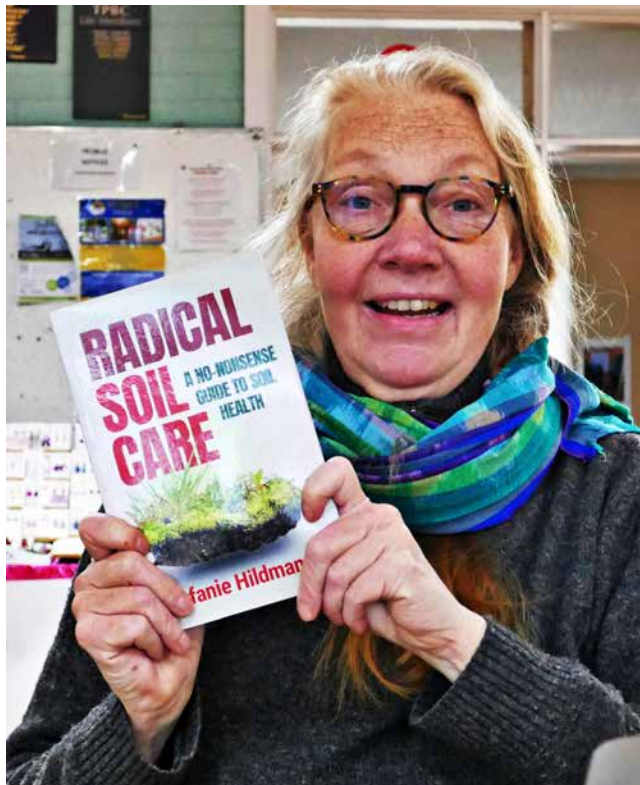
Matija Pecek

Matija is a classical guitarist and violinist and teaches both and we found him tucked away between stallholders in the hall playing some beautiful classical guitar, gently, through a quality amplifier. Loud enough to be heard and enjoyed yet unobtrusive.

Matija gives his time and his talent for everyone to enjoy and if you would like to learn from him, contact: matijapecek1995@gmail.com

For further interest in the market either as a customer or stallholder we would love to hear from you. The managers

traffarmersmarket.com.



Stefanie Hildmann. All photographs by Trevor Colvin



Taylah Rose



Leigh Addison



Frankie Kennedy



Pieter Tromp



Matija Pecek

Victorian Government backing regional pride events

By Jordan Ross

In recognition of Pride Month and in preparation for Victoria's Pride 2026 Festival, the state government is backing new ideas and local events that celebrate the LGBTIQ+ community.

Over 25,000 people took part in regional Victoria Pride events in the past year. This included Picture Me in Warragul last year. The event was a day where the community came together to create a safe and inclusive environment for gender identity exploration, with attendees accessing free hair, clothing, and make-up services.

Bailey Risorto, one of the founders of the event, said that the intention was to "increase visibility and servicing [for queer people] in regional areas."

"We had a passion for building that visibility and servicing," they said.

While the event was aimed to create a safe space for trans and gender diverse people, it was important that the event was "open to

the [wider] community," affirming the idea that all people - not just non-binary and transgender people - can explore their gender identity.

While Risorto and the founders of the event are now based in Melbourne, many of them grew up in regional areas and recognised the lack of support for LGBTIQ+ people in these areas.

"There are gaps in services... the further from Melbourne you get," they said.

Risorto discussed how trans and gender diverse people might fear discrimination or judgement in commercial hairstyling, make-up and clothing settings, so providing friendly, safe and inclusive spaces is important. Therefore, the event was also an amazing opportunity for attendees to connect with local hairdressers, makeup artists and mental health providers who are LGBTIQ+ allies.

"We wanted an event that was impactful and actually connected the community [together]," Risorto said.

In 2025, grants of up to \$10,000 are available for community groups, councils and organisations to deliver inclusive events that help connect LGBTIQ+ communities and celebrate pride across the state.

Vicki Ward, the Victorian Minister for Equality said that "these grants will help bring communities together in powerful, joyful and creative ways across regional Victoria."

"We want every LGBTIQ+ Victorian - no matter where they live - to feel proud, seen and celebrated," she said.

Risorto said that support from the state government was "incredibly important" in the success of Picture Me.

"It wouldn't have happened [without it]," they said, also referencing the contributions of local partners.

The funding received enabled Picture Me to fully financially compensate their service providers. They believed that by paying these providers for their work, it ensured quality, accountabil-

ity, and contributed to the long-term sustainability of the program.

Risorto added that it was "unreal" to be able to offer those services to attendees for free as they know that "a lot of [the] community experiences a lot of barriers, challenges, and discrimination." The event being free ensured accessibility and eased some of the barriers faced by the community.

With the success of the event in 2024, the Picture Me team is looking forward to an event in Bairnsdale later this year. While the details are still being worked out, Risorto said the aim is to "build off what we did last year... pushing further east."

Applications for Victorian Government funding for regional pride events are open from now until Tuesday, 5 August. To apply or for more information, visit midsumma.org.au/regional-activation.

For more information about Picture Me, visit <https://www.pictureme.com.au/>.



Gippsland Drag Queen Magnolia Starr. Image supplied. All Photographs by Ella Maximillion.



Free makeup and hairstyling services were provided to attendees. Image supplied.



Image supplied.



The event was well attended with people travelling from all over Gippsland. Image supplied.

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Fallen soldier's bugle returns to France 108 years on

As told to Traf District News by Lynn Mizen, President of the Warragul RSL.

George Eyre from Buln Buln East was a mature 34 when he travelled to South Australia to enlist in WW1. George trained with the 16th reinforcements before being shipped to the Western Front.

George fought in France before falling at Louveral Wood on April 8, 1917, but the amazing story of his bugle lives on.

The youngest of seven children, George became a blacksmith, working for J.H.Colquhoun in Warragul, and this is most likely where George customised his bugle, embossing his name, stamping 'AUSTRALIA' on it, and adding the famous rising sun and crown.

The bugle went missing for more than 60 years but by remarkable coincidence a Mr. Wilkes from Cairns, visiting relatives in Norfolk in 1983, came across the bugle in a small shop and immediately recognised it as Australian. Seventy-five pounds changed hands and the bugle came

back to Australia. Mr. Wilkes traced George Eyre back to Warragul and offered the bugle to the Warragul RSL sub-branch for the amount he originally paid. The RSL was delighted to receive the bugle and it is a proud possession, regularly used at Anzac Day and Memorial Day services.

As this story is being written, Sarah and Anthony Lucas, of the Warragul Municipal Band, are winging their

way to France, with members of the City of Traralgon Band where they will honour fallen soldiers. The band will visit cemeteries in France and Denmark, celebrating the lives of the fallen and their sacrifice, through music.

After quite some research Sarah Lucas identified where George is buried and the members of the band readily agreed to alter their itinerary to include a visit to George's

graveside. There, they will conduct a special service, concluding with playing the Last Post on George's own trumpet, 108 years after George gave his life in the service of his country.

One of George's older brothers, William Eyre, moved to New Zealand and served in the New Zealand Army Reserve, making the Eyre brothers Anzacs in the truest sense.



S & A Lucas L Wilson



6th reinforcements, 10th battalion. Magnified Standout: Could this be George Ayre?



J.H Colquhoun 1900s

The Trafalgar story continues: the medical chapter

By Jean Huffer of the Trafalgar & District Historical Society

Trafalgar's first doctor, Dr. O.F.Gmelin, came to the town in 1904. He was followed by Dr. Smithwick, who built his surgery in Seven Mile Rd., and then in Waterloo Rd., next

to St. John's Presbytery. Later doctors included Drs. W. C. Marsden, R. J. Fullerton, W. A. Collopy, P.J. Campbell and A. B. Swain who lived in the surgery later occupied by Dr. W. Ferguson on the

Princes Highway. Dr. Ferguson worked in Trafalgar from 1945 until his death in 1997, apart from a few years spent in Morwell in the late fifties.

There were several private hospitals in the town. In 1905, Mrs Helen Dawson opened a midwifery hospital which she operated until 1924, when it became St. Margaret's Private Hospital. Nurse Margaret Gale opened a nursing home in Contingent St. in 1907, and Nurse Janet McDonald opened a hospital north of the line in 1909. This was taken over by

Nurse Hannah Townsend, and later by Sisters Dorman and Dashwood who built a new hospital on the Seven Mile Rd., called St. Monance Private Hospital.

Currently there is a medical centre at 24a Contingent St., possibly on Nurse Gale's former site. It was established by Drs. D. Murphy and J. Brown. Extensions were added in 2004. The practice has greatly expanded since then. It has 15 local practitioners and offers training for newly graduated doctors as well as offering primary

care in the building across the street which was occupied originally by O'Halloran and Davis, Solicitors,

In 2018 a second medical centre opened at 3 Ashby St. in the building which was once the home of Mr. and Mrs B. Thompson, the former newsagents. There are 12 medical practitioners who offer a seven day service in Trafalgar as well as allied health services.

Trafalgar is truly fortunate to have such medical care available locally.

Over the years the small local hospitals closed, the last being at the house in Ashby St. on the right hand side, almost opposite the Ashby St. Clinic. It had been an extension from the Warragul Hospital, where many of the locals were born before 1947.

In the 1990s the Moe Hospital also closed, despite being built after huge district efforts in fundraising. Consequently, the nearest public hospitals to Trafalgar are at Traralgon and Warragul. There are private hospitals at Morwell and Neerim South.



Dr. Ferguson. Image supplied.



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Drought support delivered, but is it enough?

By Jordan Ross

While calls for support for farmers and against the new emergency services levy have resulted in the levy being postponed for farmers for twelve months, it has also brought about expanded drought support.

Throughout May, a majority of the state received just 20 per cent or less of the average typical rainfall expected in the month.

Due to these worsening conditions, the Labor Government has delivered a new and expanded Drought Package – supported by an additional \$37.7 million in funding.

Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to fund on-farm drought management improvements, in addition to financial counselling and mental health support. Farmers in particularly affected areas in the state's west will be eligible for grants of up to \$10,000.

Premier Jacinta Allan spoke of the need for this support, saying *"the increasingly devastating effects of drought aren't confined by postcode or region – its impacting farmers across Victoria. It's why we're expanding support statewide."*

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence said that it's important that *"no drought-impacted community is left behind."*

Nationals MP, Melina Bath said that these measures *"fall well short"* of what is needed to adequately support farmers.

She recognised that drought causes *"enormous stress for our rural farming families and communities,"* and that support for farmers is *"imperative."*

"The Nationals are backing [a] three tiered drought support framework which relies on an evidence informed approach to support farmers experiencing hardship and tailor interventions to severity," she said.

The state government is also forming a Drought Response Taskforce. This will include members from the Labor Government, the Coalition opposition, as well as farming representatives including the President of the Victorian Farmers' Federation (VFF) Brett Hosking.

"The new taskforce will bring together Victorians from different communities, different backgrounds and different political parties. Most importantly, it'll be focused on delivering real relief for farming communities," said Premier Allan.

Hosking welcomed the expanded drought support but encouraged further work to be done, saying *"It's a step in the right direction, but plenty more remains to be done."*

"Farmers are doing it tough and some are facing the worst drought conditions in living memory... you can't begin to understand the impact of this drought until you actually visit these areas in person," he said.

Because of these factors, the VFF is continuing to call for the Victorian Government to commit to a long-term, transparent, and genuinely collaborative approach to drought and regional resilience.

For more information on the newly announced drought support, please visit: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/farm-management/dry-seasons-and-drought-support>.



Wheat field and tyre tracks during the 2008 Victorians droughts. Photographed by Keith Pakenham. Image supplied courtesy of the CFA.



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Baw Baw Arts Alliance

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bawbawartsalliance.org.au for more details

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Bank gives \$2,000,000 back to our community

By Trevor Colvin

Bank closures across regional Australia have been severe, with 424 branches closed in 2023 alone. Trafalgar has seen the big banks disappear and yet the Community Bank, Trafalgar and District,

has grown and prospered and ploughed its profits back into the community.

Last month, the bank gave more than \$77,000, to fifteen community groups in its twice yearly grant giving program, with the total now

exceeding \$2,000,000, since the program began.

It is hard to imagine how some community groups would exist, or some events could be run, without the support of the bank, because

they are not limited to one bite of the cherry. If a community group has a need for funds they have the right to apply each time the grant program becomes available. Any application will be judged on its merits.

The grant application process will open again on August 6.

Supporting the Community Bank, Trafalgar and District, allows the bank to reinvest in local clubs, local events, schools, and com-

munity organisations. This newspaper has benefited directly from a no strings attached grant.

Drop in to the newly renovated branch to see how the bank might help you and the community.



More than \$77,000 was shared by fifteen community groups at last months grants ceremony.

Understand land tax and the importance of declaring your principal place of residence

By Bryce Grimshaw of J MacGregor Legal, Trafalgar

Land tax is a state-based tax levied on the value of land owned by individuals or entities, excluding exempt land such as your principal place of residence (PPR) in most cases. It is crucial for property owners to understand how land tax works and the significance of correctly declaring their PPR to avoid unnecessary tax liabilities.

What is land tax?

Land tax is calculated annually based on the total taxable value of land owned as at midnight on December 31 of the preceding year. The tax is generally applied to investment properties, commercial/industrial properties, vacant land and holiday homes, but exemptions or concessions may apply

depending on the land's use and ownership.

In Victoria, land tax applies to land holdings exceeding \$50,000.00 in value, with a progressive tax rate structure.

Principal Place of Residence (PPR) exemption

One of the most significant exemptions from land tax is the PPR exemption. This exemption applies to the property you live in as your main residence. To qualify, you must meet certain criteria, which typically include:

1. **Occupancy:** You must occupy the property as your primary home.
2. **Ownership:** The property must be owned by you or jointly with others.

3. **Use:** The property must predominantly be used for residential purposes.

If you own multiple properties, only one can be declared as your PPR for land tax purposes.

Why declaring your PPR correctly is crucial

Failing to correctly declare your PPR can lead to significant financial and legal consequences. Here's why it's important:

1. Avoiding overpayment of land tax

If you do not declare your PPR, the property may be treated as taxable land, and you could be charged land tax unnecessarily. This can result in substantial overpayments, especially for high-value properties.

2. Preventing penalties

Providing incorrect or misleading information about your PPR can lead to penalties, including fines and interest charges. State revenue offices conduct audits and may investigate discrepancies in your declarations.

3. Ensuring compliance with state laws

In Victoria, you must notify the State Revenue Office (SRO) if your circumstances change, such as renting out your home or moving to another property. Failure to comply can result in the loss of the exemption and backdated tax liabilities.

4. Maximising exemptions

By correctly declaring your PPR, you can maximise your exemptions and minimise your overall tax burden. This is particularly important for individuals with multiple properties or those transitioning between homes.



Harriet Shing MP

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Your voice in the Eastern Victoria Region

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Authorised by H Shing, 216 Commercial Rd, Morwell.





COUNCIL News

COPELANDS ROAD UPDATE

We're investing \$4.9 million into vital road upgrades at Copelands Road, improving traffic flow, capacity, and safety for our growing community. These important works include an upgraded road surface, underground stormwater drainage improvements at the Moe River crossing, new footpaths, and a shared bicycle path.

A full road closure is currently in place to enable the safe construction of a new bridge over the Moe River, along with drainage upgrades. Detour routes are in effect, and we appreciate the community's patience while these essential works are carried out.

This project is jointly funded by Baw Baw Shire Council and the Development Contributions Plan (DCP) as part of the Warragul Precinct Structure Plan, supporting the infrastructure needs of our growing region.

For more information on this and other major projects, visit our website.

Upcoming Events:

For a full list of the current events, visit www.bawbawshire.co/Events-Calendar



Baw Baw Connect – Have Your Say, Your Way!

Council currently has one community engagement opportunity open for consultation!

- Significant Trees Register Review (open till 18 July)

Visit bawbawconnect.com.au to have your say, your way.



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– they're available 24/7!

Head to our website to check if the road you need to report is looked after by Council or VicRoads
www.bawbawshire.co/Roads



Upcoming Council Meeting:

The following Council meeting will be held in July 2025 in the Lyrebird Room, West Gippsland Arts Centre.

Wednesday 9 July – 5.30pm

All community members are welcome to attend in person or tune in via the Live Stream on our website.

For a full list of the meetings for 2025, visit www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/CouncilMeetings

Trafalgar Probus Club welcomes new members

By Glenda Mynard

Trafalgar Probus Club has had another eventful month which started by welcoming three new members to join in the “*fun, friendship and fellowship*” of Probus. Garry and Lynne Willis, and Maria Slot were looking forward to attending dine outs, walks, craft groups and various other activities that are organised.

At the end of this June some members are going on a tour of Parliament House in Melbourne. The plan was to travel by train and have lunch in the “*big smoke*” be-

fore investigating where our state politicians work. This trip has become a little more complicated due to coaches replacing trains on the Gippsland line for the next couple of months but hopefully the coach will get us there and back without too much trouble.

Our most recent walk was in Morwell at the Immigration Park. This heritage walk is great for history buffs as it has 72 information panels which celebrate the contribution of migrants to the development of Gippsland. We were spoiled with beautiful

winter sunshine to complete the lakeside circuit. We sat and watched the local ducks also enjoying this pleasant weather while we had a cuppa.

At our general meeting, Tanya and Jess from Elder Rights Australia, informed us about the support they offer to older community members and their families to access Aged Care, to protect the rights of older people and to resolve problems with aged care providers. Their support is free, confidential and independent of government and aged care provid-

ers. They highlighted the Statement of Rights which is part of the new Aged Care Act and comes into effect on July 1, 2025. Older people who receive care at home or in care, have the right to safe and high quality care and the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Tanya and Jess, both work in Gipps-

land and when you call, you speak to a person rather than pushing buttons or waiting on hold.

We also learnt about an Australian Government funded initiative -The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors scheme. This program is centred around social interaction and is designed to offer companionship and support

to older individuals who would benefit from regular company. Volunteers are welcomed and are matched with care recipients who share similar interests, hobbies or backgrounds.

Probus general meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at the Trafalgar Park Bowls Club.



New Probus members (from left) Gary, Lynne and Maria with president Tina Hambleton.



Probus visited Immigration Park in Morwell, (from left) Shirley Leviston, Julie Phillips, Sharon Harrison and Gabby Blandford.

Update from the Baw Baw Arts Alliance

By Carol Monson

As winter weather keeps most people inside, consider some new creative activities to keep you occupied in a group setting. The Baw Baw Arts Alliance lists a wide range of art-based activities that are challenging, as well as relaxing and creative, on its website. <https://www.bawbawartsalliance.org.au>

There are numerous drop-in group meetings each week in the Art Spaces at Trafalgar Railway Station and in the VRI Hall in Waragul. Two such groups are the mixed media ones led by Ingrid Thomas and Deborah Churchill. Both Ingrid and Deborah are experienced local artists with a passion and energy for their creative art practice. They pass this enthusiasm onto the participants in the drop-in groups who are encouraged to experiment with printing on paper, gelli plates, printing on leather and fabric. They use a wide range of conventional materials such as pen, ink, paint and pencil but other interesting media such as wire and beads. Deborah's group runs each Wednesday evening from 6.30 pm to 8.30

pm at the VRI hall in Waragul, while Ingrid's group is on Thursday morning from 10 am to 12 pm also in the VRI Hall.

If you have an interest in art but are too time poor to attend regular workshops visit the Station Gallery in Yarragon to catch up with the latest July exhibitions. Cathy Smith, a long term local artist has her work featured in an intimate exhibition at the 'Station Gallery' until July 27. Cathy has a fascinating, rather quirky look at the world through her exhibition title 'Too Many Towers, Not Enough Ladders'.

In the main exhibition space in the 'Station Gallery', a retrospective display of work from 'Fusion Fibre Arts Network', a group from East Gippsland, will have you fascinated by the wide range of textile art possible when imagination, skill and talent are combined to explore the world of textile art in a collaborative manner.

Don't just whizz through the exhibitions...browse through the locally produced artwork available for purchase in the gallery shop.



(From left) participants in the Thursday morning 'Mixed Media' group sharing ideas for Art work. Mary Cheng, Sue Murphy and Ingrid Thomas.

New requirements for burning off after the fire danger period

According to the Baw Baw Shire Council, permit requirements for burning off have changed following the conclusion of the fire danger period in April.

Any burning off on private land is now subject to controls and provisions of the Community Local Law 2024, which guides council's compliance and enforcement activities for a wide range of activities, including burning in open air.

Another important change is that a notification of all planned burning off activities must be registered online at www.triplezero.vic.gov.au/burn-off-water-off-notifications or by calling 1800 668 511, not council.

An online registration is the fastest and simplest option and allows 000 call-takers to prioritise emergency calls. Unregistered burn-offs can not only cause a spike in calls to Triple Zero (000) but also unnecessary callouts for firefighters.

Triple Zero Victoria Chief Operating Officer Nicole Ashworth encouraged residents to plan ahead and register their burn-off online.

"When someone calls 000 to report seeing smoke we can confirm if it's recorded on the burn-off register," she said.

"Check the weather, plan ahead and notify us online through Fire Permits Victoria's website - it's fast, easy and most importantly, allows our call-takers to focus on emergency calls," she said.

Acting CFA Chief Officer Garry Cook said that registering planned burn offs

"avoid placing unnecessary strain on local brigades."

"In 2024, over 19,084 volunteer hours were utilised responding to incidents involving escaped burn-offs. Our message is clear – please don't leave your burn-off unattended," he said.

While it's important to consider what you're burning, the Environment Protection Authority Victoria is urging people to be careful with what they burn as well.

They advise that materials like treated timbers, plastics and common farm waste (such as hessian, concrete, metals, or tyres) should be recycled or disposed of correctly and not mixed with legitimate burn off materials.

EPA Regional Operations Director Martha-Rose Loughnane said that "no smoke is good for you, but smoke from burning farm waste like old tyres and treated timber can lead to harmful effects on human health, particularly for people with asthma or other lung conditions, older people, pregnant women, babies and young children."

The EPA also warned that they can fine a person more than \$9,000 for burning inappropriate materials.

Summary of burning off requirements as provided by council

Burning off on private land

No permit required if:

- The burning is for genuine hazard reduction purposes;
- The fire is not within 20 metres of any neighbouring dwelling;



A burn-off. Photographed by Keith Pakenham. Image supplied by the CFA Digital Library.

- The fire is not within 10 metres of any other structure; and
 - A pile size of no more than 4 cubic metres of vegetation is burnt at any one time (not applicable to primary producers).
- Safety requirements before and during burning:
- The burning must occur between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (not applicable to primary producers);
 - The fire must be supervised by a person over 18 years who has capacity and means to extinguish the fire;
 - The person in charge of the fire must be able to see it at all times and be no more than 50 metres from the fire;
 - Sufficient fire protection equipment must be available, including adequate water to extinguish the fire;
 - The vegetation that is burnt must be dead and dry;
 - The wind speed forecast at the site of the fire must not exceed 15 km/h when the fire is lit and while it is burning;
 - The temperature forecast at the site of the fire must not exceed 30 degrees celsius when

- the fire is lit and while it is burning;
 - A notification of burning must be registered online; and
 - The person who has lit the fire or is in charge of it, must either completely extinguish the fire or ensure that a person over the age of 18 who has the capacity to extinguish a fire remains in charge before leaving the place of the fire.
- The above restrictions don't apply to:
- A barbecue, pizza oven or other properly constructed appliance

- while it is being used for cooking food;
 - A fire in a brazier, fire pit or chiminea or other similar and properly constructed appliance while it is being used for heating.
- ### Burning off on public land
- A permit is required to light a fire in the open air on a road, council land, crown land or any public place.
 - Residents must contact and obtain a permit from the relevant authority prior to burning off on any public land.



A heavy tanker. Photographed by Keith Pakenham. Image supplied by the CFA Digital Library.

Local weightlifter returns from Junior World Championships in Peru

By Diana Mattea

Isabel Grylls, a young athlete from Trafalgar East shares insight into the sport of weightlifting. Isabel's recent competition in Peru, at the 2025 IWF Youth & Junior World Weightlifting Championship, placed her seventh in the world.

Diana Mattea (DM): Are young women encouraged to participate in weightlifting?

Isabel Grylls (IG): "There is no real push or drive for any athlete male or female to compete in weightlifting or even to try the sport. The sport of weightlifting is not a mainstream sport like swimming or football. Most people get into weightlifting because it is in their family or they have come from another sport.

There are more females competing in weightlifting

today than males. For the last Olympics weightlifting was only given three spots for Australia, and two of those spots were taken by females."

DM: How strict is your diet and schedule when preparing to compete overseas?

IG: "The sport of weightlifting has weight classes, this year there are eight different weight categories to compete in. Previously this was ten, but for the LA Olympics the IWF has made changes so that more athletes can compete at LA compared to Paris, which only had five.

For me and my weight class I comfortably sit in the middle. I do not need to work on cutting weight or add extra body weight. I do need to make sure that I eat correctly to help my body build muscle and have

the energy to not only train, but also go to school.

That is where I am lucky, Mum cooks all my food so I just have to eat it.

My schedule gets tight with focus being on training and school, parties are out including late nights as my body needs to recover."

DM: Can you give an insight to a weightlifter's schedule?

IG: "For my schedule, I train four times a week in the gym at Gippsland Weightlifting. These sessions take anywhere from 1.5 to two hours depending on how my body is moving.

I then spend time doing my recovery, which includes stretching and walking the dog.

There are some days I split my training up to make

my day work for me with school and homework. Which means I train in the morning before school and then in the afternoon, making the sessions smaller.

Not all athletes have the same schedule; it needs to work for them at the end of the day."

DM: What inspired you to take up the sport of weightlifting and what age?

IG: "I never really thought about competing in weightlifting. Mum has competed for some time. Her coach at the time has become my coach. He saw me doing some cheerleading tricks when he was in Victoria a few years ago and asked if I knew how to squat; love of the sport developed from there. I needed to decide to either stay with cheerleading or move to weightlifting. I understood I could have more opportunities working with the three-time Olympic coach so I made the switch.

I first met coach Miles when I was 14. He is from Queensland and we work well together remotely, and

we also see each other at training camps."

DM: What are the good and challenging aspects of competing?

IG: "The biggest challenge is not with your body being able to lift the bar but your mind telling you, you are not good enough to do so. I get pumped when I can defeat that little voice inside my head proving to myself I am capable.

This little voice always comes out on competition day. The competition is never against anyone else but yourself being the best you can on the day."

DM: How was your recent 2025 IWF Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships in Peru, and what were your achievements?

IG: "Competing at worlds was insane! I still cannot believe that I got to stand on the world stage for Australia and show what I can do.

I finished seventh overall in the world which is one of the highest-ranking places for Australia in the last few years.

I absolutely loved the trip as I got to meet other athletes from around the world who are my age. We connect with weekly chats. I got to work with, and be around respected, Australian athlete coaches giving me the opportunity to learn from them. My best friend also went, making the trip even more special."

DM: Do you feel like weightlifting will be part of your future ambition?

IG: "Yes. I have solid goals that I will continue to work towards."

DM: Do weightlifting categories exist for mature women if they decide to continue the sport?

IG: "Yes. Weightlifting has a masters category starting for anyone over the age of 30. You do not have to compete to learn how to weightlift, you can learn the sport for your own personal benefit.

If you do want to compete in masters like my mum does, you get to travel to different places which I think is another great part of weightlifting.

Find the right coach for you and give it a try."

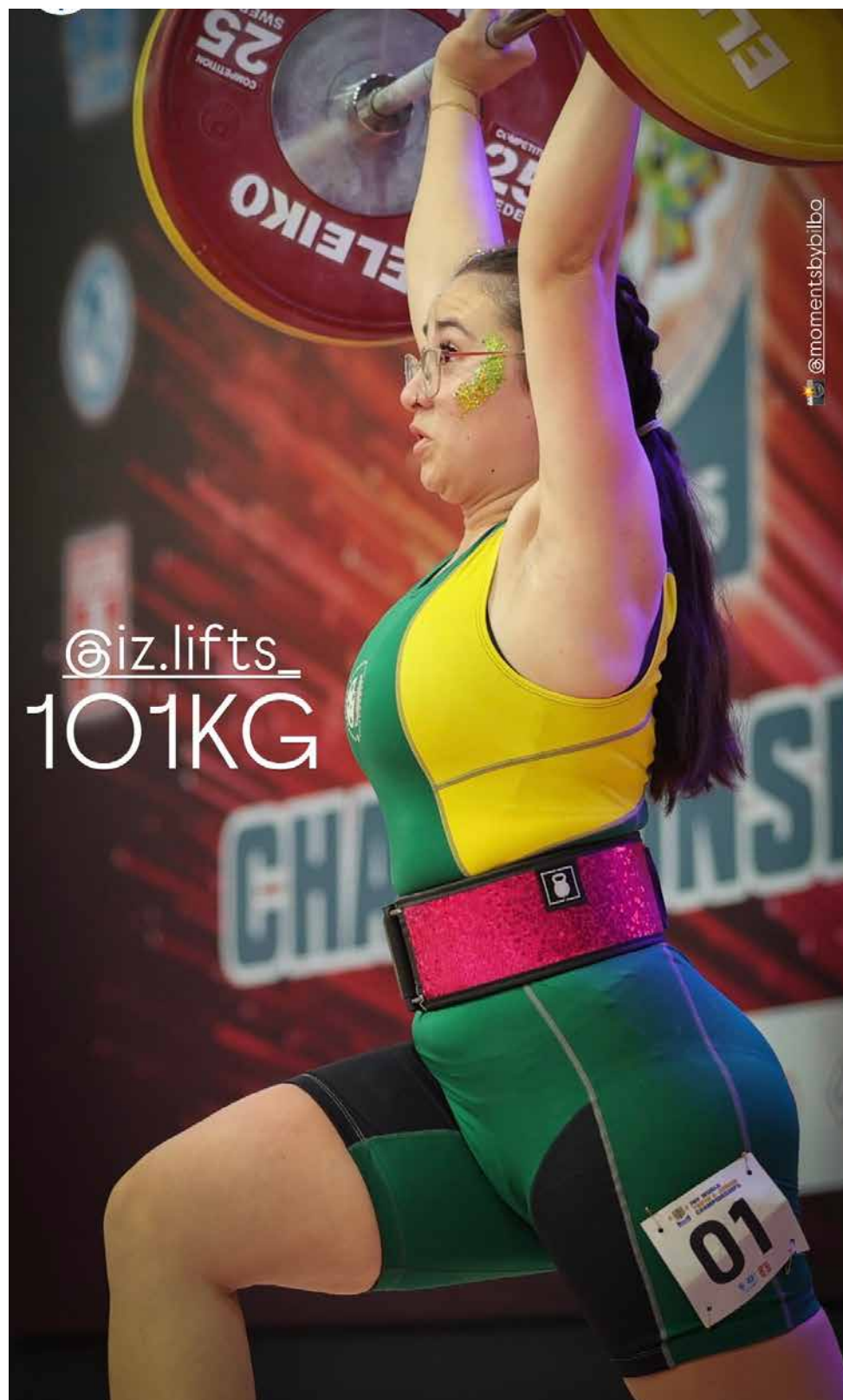


Image Supplied. Photographed by Moments by Bilbo.



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Regional grants for all abilities sport

Victorians living with a disability can look forward to more opportunities to be involved in the sports they love, with the Allan Labor Government announcing the recipients of grants supporting even more people to participate on and off the field.

Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence, recently announced 88 grants worth more than \$1.5 million from the *Regional All Abilities Participation Grants* program for grassroots sport and active recreation clubs, and not-for-profit organisations.

“We’re delighted to back initiatives that increase all-abilities opportunities for Victorians whether as instructors, coaches, volunteers or administrators,” said Minister Spence.

“We want to create inclusive environments for people with disabilities to not only participate but kick start new opportunities in a range of roles in the sports they love,” she said.

With grants of up to \$25,000, the program aims to increase access, inclusion and options for people living with a disability to reap the benefits of sport and active recreation in regional Victoria.

The Shepparton Netball Association will receive \$15,000 for a year-round All Abilities Netball Program co-designed by people living with a disability. The program will include summer and winter seasons and a Walking Netball program.

Cycling Without Age Gippsland, has scored more than \$22,000, to support people living with a physical and cognitive disability to get involved in cycling in their local community.

Murray Human Services will be using its \$20,000 grant to install MultiBall in Echuca, an interactive, all ability sport wall to support adults living with a disability including those with sensory or behavioural needs who are unable to participate in traditional sports.

Disabled Wintersport Australia received more than \$21,000, towards accessible equipment including sit skis, headsets for vision impairment, and outrigger skis to make skiing in Victoria’s alpine regions more accessible.

Within the Baw Baw Shire, The Warragul Amateur Swimming Club has received grant funding.

The program is part of the Labor Government’s \$40 million *All Abilities Sport Fund* that is removing barriers for people with disability to get involved in sport and recreation across regional Victoria.

Increasing opportunities for more Victorians to participate in sport and active recreation is a key objective of the Labor Government’s Active Victoria 2022-2026 – a strategic framework for sport and active recreation in Victoria.

For more information on the grants and a full list of recipients visit sport.vic.gov.au

YMCA Victoria and Baw Baw Shire Council celebrate Life Saving Victoria Gold Endorsement

YMCA Victoria is pleased to announce that all Baw Baw Shire aquatic facilities managed by the YMCA - Warragul, Drouin, Neerim South, Trafalgar, Thorpdale and Rawson - have achieved 100% Life Saving Victoria (LSV) Gold Endorsement.

Gold Endorsement from LSV recognises a sustained commitment to aquatic safety, operational excellence and industry-leading supervision. It confirms that each facility consistently surpasses stringent industry safety standards.

This achievement positions YMCA Victoria’s Baw Baw facilities among the top-performing aquatic centres in the state, setting a benchmark for regional facilities.

“Achieving Gold Endorsement across every Baw Baw site reflects the ongoing hard work, attention to detail, and genuine dedication our teams demonstrate every day,” said Sarah Hadjialexiou, Area Manager at the YMCA.

“We greatly value our partnership with Baw Baw Shire Council, whose facilities we proudly manage and whose support has been crucial in achieving this recognition.”

YMCA staff members Alishia Collins and Liam Lenders played key roles in leading staff training, implementing comprehensive safety protocols, and ensuring consistent adherence to best practices.

For the community, this endorsement reinforces commitment to providing facilities where safety is paramount. It gives families, schools and recreational swimmers confidence that their local pools offer an exceptional standard of safety, supervision and quality, helping ensure every visit is enjoyable and safe.

Baw Baw Shire Deputy Mayor Councillor Tricia Jones congratulated YMCA on achieving Life Saving Victoria’s Gold Endorsement at every site in the shire.

“This is a wonderful achievement and something that should be celebrated. Well done to all,” she said.

This achievement highlights YMCA Victoria’s role as a trusted partner in leisure management, dedicated to working closely with councils and the leisure industry to enhance aquatic safety and operational standards.



(Left to right): Liam Lenders, Kendall Sinclair (Baw Baw Shire Council), Callum Hazell (Life Saving Victoria), Kerry Hayden, Ashleigh Sinclair, Alishia Collins, Taryn Durrant, Lachlan Terry.

Cricket club elects office bearers

By Liam Durkin

Trafalgar Cricket Club has elected its office bearers for the 2025/26 season.

The Ships held their annual meeting at the Criterion Hotel last month.

The meeting heard from incumbent president, Daniel Heathcote, who thanked all for their efforts the previous season.

Heathcote made particular mention of the Third XI on their premiership victory.

“On the field, off the field, and in the nets, we continue to build something special, and I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed throughout the season,” he said in his president’s report.

“A major highlight of 2024/25 was our C Grade premiership secured by our Third XI under the leadership of Brent Claridge.”

“Congratulations to Brent and the team on an outstanding season that culminated in a well-deserved flag. Their consistent performances, team-first attitude and finals composure were a great reflection of the values of our

club. A premiership is always special, and this one is a credit to everyone involved.”

Election of office bearers saw Heathcote re-elected unopposed for a sixth term. Reigning secretary, Liam Durkin was also re-elected unopposed.

Fellow senior player and local financial adviser Connor Dastey was elected treasurer, marking the start of his time as the club’s bookkeeper.

Zack Brown was elected Junior Vice President. A primary school teacher by profession, and one of the leading wicket-takers in the club’s history, it is anticipated Brown will prove an ideal appointment as junior coordinator for any young players coming through.

Returning to the committee is Brent Claridge, Christian Burgess, Cooper Burgess, Scott Moorhouse, Jackson Noonan and Rowan Stokes. New faces are Adam Carlson, Owen McLeod-Agland and Mitchell Claridge.

The club wished to thank outgoing committee members Brendan Dawson, Billy

Pace and Blake Zimora for their time.

A number of players also achieved milestones during season 2024/25.

They were:

- John Asmussen - 400 senior matches;
- Christian Burgess - 250 senior;
- Rhys Holdsworth - 200 First XI;
- Daniel Heathcote - 200 senior;
- Jackson Noonan - 200 senior/150 First XI;
- Brodie Burgess - 150 senior, and;
- Zack Brown - 150 senior.

Asmussen became the first player in the club’s history to reach 400 games, and is now also the only player to score more than 1000 runs in three separate grades (firsts, seconds, thirds).

Christian Burgess went past 5000 runs during the season, while fellow veteran Anthony Faltum scored his 1000th run for the Ships.

Wicket milestones saw Holdsworth go past club great Garry ‘Wizard’ Edwards on

the list of First XI scalps, to move to outright second with 247, while Heathcote took his 250th senior pole.

On averages, Noonan looks a good chance of reaching 300 senior wickets next season, and needs another 20 to do so.

Other statistical highlights were David Bremner Jr, who joined the 1000 run/100 wickets club. Such

an achievement came as something of a surprise to the fast bowler, given in his own words, he *“bats for three minutes per innings.”*

The Trafalgar Cricket Club has been active in another way over winter, opening its rooms to the Drouin football and netball clubs (two separate entities). The Hawks are playing away this Gippsland

League season while their home ground is redeveloped.

New players are always welcome to come and play with the Ships.

The club fields three senior teams and multiple junior sides, and is sure to have a standard to meet all levels.

For more information, email: trafalgarcricketclub@gmail.com.



Trafalgar Cricket Club fast bowler David Bremner joined the 1000 runs/100 wickets club this season.

Catchup with the Strzelecki Bushwalking Club

By Carolyn Dyke

June was a busy month for the Strzelecki Bushwalking Club. There were multiple activities planned for every weekend of June.

The highlights of the June calendar were a kayaking adventure around Lake Naracan, an easy walk around the Spoon Bay area of the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, and a mysterious walk into the Aberfeldy River.

We had other groups going to the Tarra Bulga Nation-

al Park and over to the Great Southern Rail Trail.

When the snow season begins there are always several “snow” activities held every year. These are very special events as the Baw Baw National Park is extremely beautiful in winter.

The Strzelecki Bushwalking Club is an active and vibrant community of outdoor enthusiasts. We currently have approximately 170 members but are always welcoming likeminded new members.

Visitors are welcomed on most walks, and this is a great way to try out bushwalking.

Every month we hold a club night on the second Wednesday of each month in the Trafalgar Scout Hall starting 7.30 p.m. This is a chance to catch up with members and have a “cuppa and a chat”.

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



A beautiful day in Noojee for members of the SBWC. Image supplied.



SBWC President, John Scarlett (middle) leads a group to the Cobberas Wilderness Zone. Image supplied.

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