

Traf District News

March 2026 – Edition 283

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The Traf Vet Clinic could find a new home on Kitchener Street

By Jordan Ross and Dr Jared Waddell-Smith

A planning application has been submitted to the Baw Baw Shire for a new purpose built veterinary clinic at 38 Kitchener Street, Trafalgar.

This location is just around the corner from the current Trafalgar Veterinary Centre located on 7 Contingent Street. The Clinic began operating in various forms in 1949. The new location will allow for a larger premises to ensure the highest quality service and veterinary care to the local community while remaining conveniently located in the heart of the Trafalgar township. The team believes that as the local community continues to grow, upgrades are needed to meet the changing and increasing need for vet care.

Dr Jared Waddell-Smith and Dr Jackson Chuo purchased the practice in 2021 and are now planning this construction together. Dr Waddell-Smith has been with the practice since 2009, and Dr Chuo since 2018. In total, there are 6 veterinarians, 8 veterinary nurses and 2 receptionists employed.

There is currently a single dwelling house located on 38 Kitchener Street. If the plan goes ahead, this will be demolished to make room for the new commercial space.

The planned building will include separate dog and cat waiting areas, a reception area, bathrooms, five consulting rooms, two surgeries and scrub areas, a

CT imaging room, a dentistry room, a laboratory and a pharmacy dispensary among other additions. An external outdoor dog yard will also be included.

The building will have entrances on McCrorey Street and Kitchener Street. A 15-space car park will also be developed.

The history of the clinic

A veterinary clinic was first established in Trafalgar in 1949. The first vet, Dr Wes Southgate provided services mostly to the local abattoir and nearby farmers. Only a small amount of time was dedicated to caring for pets.

Sometime later, the clinic moved from its original site where the Princes Highway now runs through the town, to its current location on

Contingent Street. As pets began to play a more important role in people's lives, the need for pet care increased. Therefore, the Traf vets spent more time caring for the town's furry friends.

The original clinic was taken over by Dr Peter McCourt in 1985, and in the '90s underwent a significant renovation and expansion under the ownership of Dr McCourt and Dr. Gee Tawfik, who co-owned the practice for over 25 years. This doubled the size of the once very small practice.

A minor renovation in 2019 allowed better use of the space, but the size and layout of the practice has again become limiting in providing everything that a modern veterinary clinic needs to offer.



The former Traf Vet Clinic. Image supplied.



The current Traf Vet Clinic on Contingent Street. Image from Google.

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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.

Editorial and advertisements can be submitted via our website or by email: articles at editor@trafnews.com and advertisements at advert@trafnews.com

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Traf News looking for committee members

By Judith Bishop

To ensure the continued operation of our local community newspaper, Traf District News, a committee of management needs to be formed.

Traf District News is a community incorporated association managed by a committee.

It produces approximately 3800 copies to residents in Trafalgar and surrounding districts such as Thorpdale, Yarragon and Willow Grove.

The governance of Traf News Incorporated is the responsibility of its committee while the production of the Traf District News newspaper is the responsibility of the

editor, advertising representative and graphic designer.

The committee does not interfere with the activities of the editor insofar as they relate to the production of the paper.

Current committee membership consists of Michael Fozard OAM, Mick Bourke OAM and Judy Bishop. There are also four vacant positions available.

Please direct any enquiries to Mick Bourke OAM 0409 512 672, Michael Fozard OAM: 0418 513 092 or Judy Bishop 0402 204 770 from whom further information and detailed position descriptions are available.

Volunteers Needed to Distribute the Traf District News

Are you a keen walker around the streets of Trafalgar or Yarragon?

Can you spare a few hours once a month to help distribute our newspaper to town letterboxes?

We need delivery help with streets between Con-

tingent and Murray St, Trafalgar; between Contingent Street and Dodemaides Rd, Trafalgar and east of Loch St, Yarragon.

Any contributions are certainly appreciated.

Please contact Judy Bishop 0402 204 770 with any offers of assistance.

Correction

From the Editor

The Traf District News apologises for a mistake on Page 9 in the story 'Number Please, The End of an Era. The man-

ual telephone opened in 1910 and not in 1911. We apologise for this mistake and thank the author John Hanley for making us aware.

A moment for volunteers

By Jordan Ross

At the last council meeting, Mayor Cr Kate Wilson took time to thank those who volunteer in our local community and "significant contributions."

"[There is] so much community spirit, so much inspiration in people who are doing their bit to contribute to the community."

"There are many more [people] than we [are] able to recognise formally [at award ceremonies]."

This speech came following several award ceremonies across the shire on January 26. The Baw Baw Shire recognised nine individuals and

groups who have contributed to their local communities. Trafalgar acted similarly, recognising Jonah Meredith as Youth Trafalgar Citizen of the Year.

Mayor Wilson then took a moment to encourage all to join in and participate in community groups and events.

"If you aren't yet a part of something, perhaps consider joining a community organisation of some kind; I'm sure that all committees would welcome newcomers with open arms."

"You get more than you give when you volunteer," she said.



Mayor Kate Wilson (right) with Deputy Mayor Suzanne Allen (left).



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Blue Rock Lake’s popular walking track seeing upgrades

Starting last month, the Blue Rock Lake has been undergoing new erosion control works that will protect the foreshore track – ensuring continued access and supporting the lake’s health.

Water levels are typically lower at this time of year, making it an ideal time to start The Blue Rock Lake Foreshore Stabilisation and Community Path Renewal Project. 130 metres of eroded shoreline will be rehabilitated.

Parts of the tracks around the lake were closed from February 9 to 18.

“We appreciate[d] the community’s patience as we work[ed] to complete the job quickly,” said Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network Project Officer Caroline Hammond.

Hammond said this project will help protect the environmental and recreational values of Blue Rock Lake well into the future.

This project was delivered in partnership by Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network (LCLN), Southern Rural Water, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (the CMA), and the Tanjil Valley Landcare Group. Additionally, funding of \$43,000 from the state government’s Regional Development Victoria’s Tiny Towns Fund saw large rocks placed adjacent to the track, creating a ‘beach’ that will protect the foreshore and track from further damage caused by wave action and weather.

Once erosion control works are complete, Tanjil Valley Landcare Group will host a community planting

day to revegetate the site with native riparian, ephemeral, and aquatic species.

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Rivers and Wetlands Officer, Matt Koury said these plantings will strengthen the foreshore, slow water impact, and create valuable fish habitat.

“This project will protect and improve access to

this much-loved community space, while later next year native aquatic plants will be restored to the foreshore as new habitat for fish and wildlife,” said Matt. Regional Development Victoria’s Tiny Towns Fund helps small towns enhance local infrastructure, strengthen communities, and create healthier, more vibrant places to live.



The walking track along the foreshore of the Blue Rock Lake.



Construction of the Rockwall. Image supplied.

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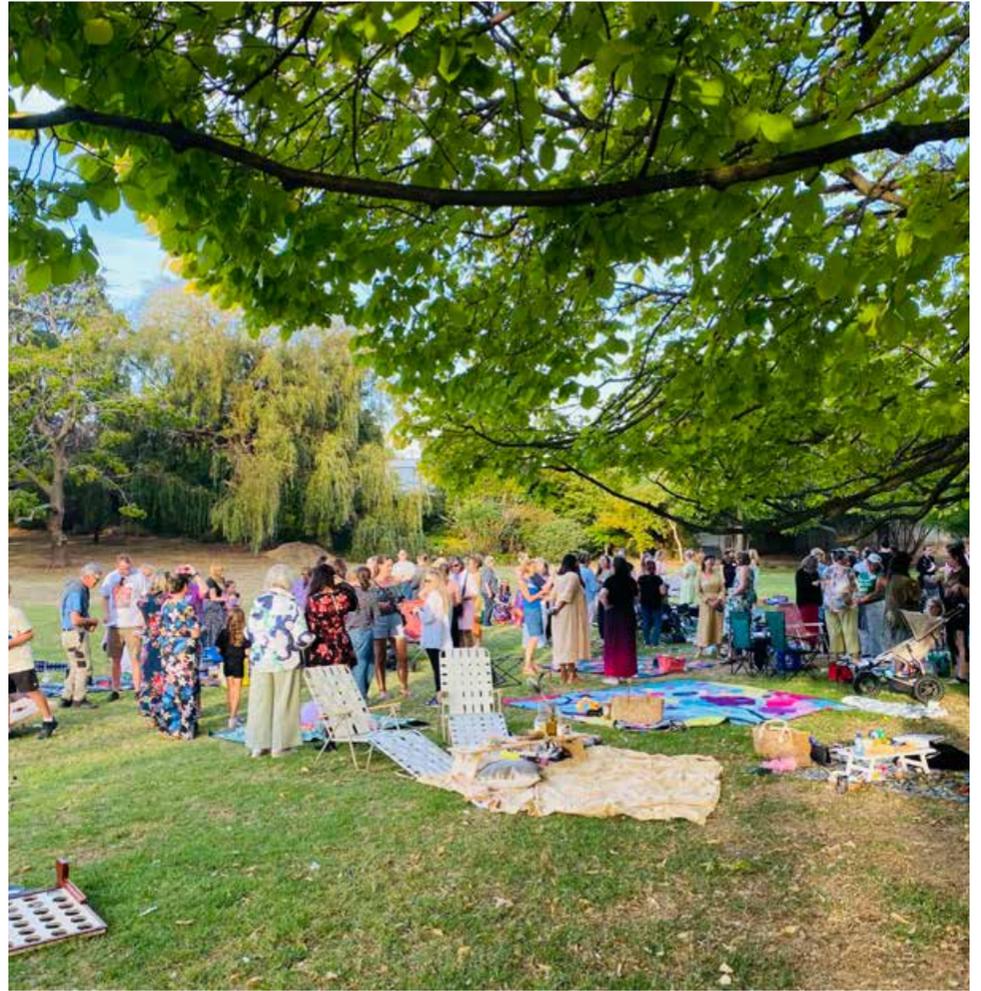
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Women in Gippsland marks International Women’s Day with mini film festival



Women in Gippsland will host a mini film festival to celebrate International Women’s Day at Peninsula Cinemas Warragul on **Sunday March 8.**

The festival will feature two powerful Australian documentaries that highlight the courage and determination of women who fought to change workplaces and society.

The event aligns with this year’s United Nations International Women’s Day theme, Balance the Scales,

which calls for fair, inclusive and accessible justice for every woman and girl.

Women in Gippsland co-founder Kerry Wilson said the day was about recognising progress while acknowledging there is still work to be done.

“Workplaces and society have progressed greatly over the years, but there is still balancing of the scales to be done,” Ms Wilson said.

“It takes hard work and action to make change and even small steps can have a big impact. We want to remind women and our allies of the inspiring actions that led to change between the 1960s and 1990s - and encourage continued progress today.”

This is the 11th International Women’s Day event hosted by the group.

The first documentary, Women of Steel, screening at 10am, tells the true story of local women who fought for 14 years for the right to work in Wollongong’s steel indus-

try. A Q&A will follow the screening to explore what has changed and progressed for women in male-dominated industries, and where challenges remain.

The second film, Brazen Hussies, will screen at 2:30pm and look back at Australia’s women’s liberation movement and the bold activists who reshaped the social landscape for generations to come.

Between screenings, attendees are invited to head out for lunch and relaxed networking - providing an opportunity to connect, reflect and continue the conversation.

“If you’re local, or up for a Gippsland day trip on the long weekend, we’d love to see you there,” Ms Wilson said.

“All are welcome.”

Tickets are \$19 per film and can be purchased on the Peninsula Cinemas Warragul website at: <https://www.movietkts.com.au/movielist.php?siteCode=WARGUL>

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Solar battery project up for discussion

By Jordan Ross

On February 24, the Traf community was invited to engage in consultation surrounding a proposed solar battery project.

German-based solar energy company ib vogt has lodged a planning application with the Department of Transport and Planning to develop a 360MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on an 18-hectare site in Rowells Rd. It would sit between Trafalgar and Moe.

Representatives from the company were available to speak to locals and answer questions. Locals made their voices heard. Feedback left included that it was the “wrong place” for the batteries and that there would be “no positives” for the community.

There is also concern from the local farming community.

Last year, the Baw Baw Shire Council formally opposed solar and battery projects like this in the shire, citing disruption to farmland.

“Many local farming communities feel blindsided by the sudden appearance of industrial-scale proposals on land that has supported generations of essential food production. People are asking reasonable questions about how these facilities will affect their livelihoods, their safety, and the amenity of their rural communities — but answers have been slow to come, if at all”, said then-Mayor Cr Danny Goss.

Projects like this can bypass local council planning if they are fast-tracked by the state government’s planning minister. That news has left locals feeling like they may have no say in this decision.

Cr Brendan Kingwill and Mayor Kate Wilson attended on February 24 and spoke to locals about their concerns.

The company says it will set up a Community Benefits Fund that would be able to support local projects or community groups and events. A spokesperson from ib vogt said that they were still determining how this

would work and where the funding would come from.

ib vogt makes the argument that solar energy, stored by batteries, has been considerably cheaper than coal (five times cheaper) and gas (seventeen times cheaper) in Australia in the last year. This is supported by research conducted by the Clean Energy Council, which says that a faster transition to renewables in Australia will bring down energy bills.

The battery would be connected to the Victorian Transmission Line, which also connects power stations like Hazelwood and Yallourn. Other Battery projects in the Baw Baw Shire are located at Shady Creek and Yarragon North.

In the future, a second project is under consideration, a solar hybrid facility, but that would require an additional application and consultation phase.



Spokespeople from ib vogt were in attendance to hear from locals. Both images were supplied by Ric Nicolson.



Traf locals attended the community consultation to learn more about the project and voice their opinions.

Water play in the park

Sourced from the Warragul Gazette

Water play was the theme of the first “pop-up playgroup” event for the year, held at Trafalgar’s McGregor Park.

Co-ordinated by Baw Baw Shire, the free program provides pop-up playgroup events across the shire for young families.

Each event includes a range of activities to keep children with different interests entertained, including music, crafts, physical play and story time.

The program is suitable for children up to five-years-old. Parents and carers are required to actively supervise their children throughout the events.



Enjoying a pop-up playgroup in Trafalgar are Noa Leys and Vicki Malady.



There were lots of water play activities on offer for Ari, Beth and Millie Baker when they attended the pop-up playgroup event.

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AI data centre proposed for former Hazelwood power station site

By Jordan Ross



A \$10 billion AI data centre hub could be coming to Hazelwood after a Singaporean company, Keppel, struck a deal to lease the 123-hectare former power station site.

It would be the largest site of artificial intelligence infrastructure in Australia.

The site is ideal, as it has direct access to the power grid and a water source. Data centres like these require massive amounts of electricity to run the servers and in turn, massive amounts of water to cool the heat produced by the servers.

“The site near Morwell offers significant scalability,

with clear pathways to securing competitively priced green power, non-potable water for cooling and low-latency fibre connectivity, making it a compelling location to site next-generation AI campuses,” said Chief Executive of Connectivity at Keppel, Manjot Singh Mann.

State Member for Morwell, Martin Cameron said that this announcement is “great news” and “a show of confidence in our industrial landscape and workforce capacity.”

He hopes this will encourage further investment into infrastructure and industry in Gippsland.

State Member for Eastern Victorian Melina Bath said that was an exciting announcement in terms of employment opportunities in the region.

“I look forward to seeing the project translate into secure local jobs, stronger industries and long-term regional economic growth,” she said.

With the closure of local coal-fired power stations over the next decade, projects that provide clarity for the local workforce and create opportunities for skilled workers are increasingly important according to the Latrobe Valley Council.

The Hazelwood site would have a power capacity of 720 megawatts. There are concerns from the Australian industry sector that these new AI infrastructure projects will deplete Australia’s already over-burdened energy system.

Its suggested location is within the proposed Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone, stretching from Morwell to Sale.

There is however major environmental concern

across the world when it comes to data centres and the use of AI more broadly like these. Studies have shown that one request through ChatGPT consumes 10 times the electricity of a Google Search. When 80% of the world’s power comes from fossil fuels (according to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute), the environmental impacts of increased energy use from AI are potentially massive.

Globally, AI-related infrastructure is predicted to soon consume six times more water than the entire country of Denmark. Considering around a quarter of the world’s population already lacks access to clean water and sanitation, it poses a question about where our priorities are.

The Latrobe Valley Council is expecting to receive a briefing and a planning application from Keppel.

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The Trafalgar Story Continues (1900-1945)

By Jean Huffer

As the town grew, many businesses and services came into being. There were two newspapers in the community – on May 3, 1902, Christopher Johnstone began publishing the ‘Trafalgar and Yarragon Times’. Richard J. Rolls started his own paper, ‘The Trafalgar and Yarragon Settlement News’ in January 1904. This paper survived a change of names, management and ownership over the years, to end its life as ‘The Trafalgar News’ on July 20 1988.

Christopher Johnstone managed his paper for 55 years, when it finally merged with the ‘Latrobe Valley Advocate’, after its final edition on October 25 1957. Trafalgar remained without a paper

of its own until 1999, when Mick Bourke, aided by a team of volunteers, re-established a local paper ‘The Traf News’ which later became commercially printed. The paper was supported by local business ads, donations and subscriptions, and recorded the life and events of Trafalgar and the surrounding district towns. It survived until March 2023, when once again, Trafalgar and district were without a paper of its own.

However, by December of that year, the paper was restored under the leadership of the late Trevor Colvin, who had recently settled in Trafalgar with his wife, Susie. It now has a slightly altered masthead, ‘The Traf District News’ and continues to the

present, always with the support of local businesses and volunteers.

The Narracan Shire Office was moved from Moe to Contingent Street in Trafalgar in 1908. In 1934, a new building, now the Community Centre, was built on the Highway, after a fire destroyed the Shire

Offices and the Mechanics’ Institute and the town’s public library.

There was a Racing Club formed in the town on January 28, 1903. By 1908, land had been purchased on the western side of the town, and a track was established. By 1930 it had extended with

lawns and a Grandstand. The late Bill Collins grew up in the vicinity of this course. He later became a well-known Racing Commentator on the radio. Support for local racing declined in the late 1930s, and the track was eventually sold for farming

purposes. Sadly, the Historical Society has never been able to unearth any photos of the Course, although we have large posters advertising racing carnivals at Trafalgar with special trains running from Melbourne for the event.



Farewell To Friends

The following list is of people whose death was recorded by Trafalgar & District Historical Society’s Gazette during 2025.

Due to the timing of the publication of the society’s official publication, some of those recorded may have died in late 2024, and some in late 2025 may have been after the last Gazette publication.

Traf District News thanks Trafalgar & District Historical Society for providing the following information.

Aldersea, Alice Late of Trafalgar, formerly of Lakes Entrance

Anderson, Gwen Late of Andrews House

Baldassa, Mary Late of Trafalgar

Bechaz, John Late of Hill End

Blakeman, Dorothy Late of Andrews House

Bourchier (nee Robinson), Lucy Late of Trafalgar

Brew, Nola Late of Willow Grove

Butterworth, Wayne Late of Thorpdale

Carpenterie (nee Gervasi), Marie Late of Thorpdale

Carse, Roger Late of Trafalgar

Collins, Mavis Jean Late of Trafalgar

Colvin, Trevor Late of Trafalgar

Coyle, Robert Late of Trafalgar

Davis, Lorraine Margaret Late of Trafalgar

Gibson (nee Grant), Eileen Formerly of Trafalgar

Gunn, Lindsay John (Joe) Late of Trafalgar

Heslop, Belinda Late of Trafalgar

Hill, Ronald William Late of Murgon Queensland, formerly of Trafalgar

Johnson, Christopher Late of Trafalgar

Kellas, Ian Gordon Formerly of Yarragon

Kleeven, Rudolphus (Rudy) Late of Yarragon

Lucas (nee Webb), Joan Late of Trafalgar

McDonald, Cyril John (Jack) Late of Trafalgar

McKenzie, Graham Late of Trafalgar

Mahoney, Ronald Formerly of Trafalgar

Marslen (nee Hunt), Margaret Formerly of Willow Grove

Marslen, Sydney (Peter) Late of Hill End

Mikula, Andreas Formerly of Andrews House

Minichiello, Brett James Late of Trafalgar

Mynard, Robert (Bob) Late of Trafalgar

Myrteza, Graeme Late of Thorpdale

O’Hern (nee Marslen), Joan Elaine Late of Trafalgar

O’Meara, Frank Late of Shepparton, formerly of Trafalgar

Phipps, Edward (Neil) Late of Trafalgar

Pym, David Charles Formerly of Trafalgar

Ralls, Allan Edward Formerly of Trafalgar

Richards (nee Marsh), Dorothy Mary (Mary) Late of Trafalgar

Richards, Meagan Sheree Late of Trafalgar

Richardson, John Late of Trafalgar

Robins, Roy Late of Yarragon

Sefedia, Graeme Late of Thorpdale

Smith, John (Jack) Late of Trafalgar

Speck, Ruth Formerly of Trafalgar

Swingler, David Late of Trafalgar

Trickey, Sue Late of Yarragon

Van Dongeran, Basil Late of Trafalgar

Varsaci, Pietro (Peter) Late of Trafalgar

Webb, John William George (George) Late of Gainsborough, formerly of Trafalgar

Williams (nee Alchin), Christine Formerly of Trafalgar

Wyatt, Ian Noel (husband of Margaret) Formerly of Trafalgar South

Wyatt (nee Clark), Dame Margaret Lorraine (wife of Ian) Late of Amberlea Aged Care, formerly of Trafalgar South

Young, Robert Formerly of Trafalgar

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COUNCIL News

Tonnes of fun at Family Friendly Expo!

Bring the family along for a fun filled morning at the West Gippsland Arts Centre on Saturday 21 March.

The Family Friendly Expo, previously the Paint Baw Baw ReAD Expo, will connect families with local services in the early years sector, and showcase what's on offer for our young people in the community.

Local playgroups, members from the performing arts, children and paediatric health services and physical education groups will have demonstrations going, as well as giveaways on the day, so there will be no shortage of activities to keep the little ones busy!

Find out what activities you can get your children involved with and make the most of the services available in your local area.

Visit <https://bawbawshire.co/familyfriendlyexpo> for all the details!



Upcoming Events:

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



Housing Options as We Age – Free presentation coming to Trafalgar

A free presentation covering housing options for people who are entering their senior years will come to Trafalgar at the end of the month.

Baw Baw Shire Council is proud to support Seniors Rights to deliver 'Housing Options as We Age' at the McGregor Park Hall, Trafalgar on Monday 23 March from 1.30pm – 2.30pm
For more information, visit <https://seniorsrights.org.au/events>



NEW Emergency Dashboard

Council has launched a new Emergency Dashboard. For more information on how to stay informed, prepared and connected this fire season and to view the Emergency Dashboard visit www.bawbawshire.co/emergency or follow the link on Council's website.



Baw Baw Connect – Have Your Say, Your Way!

For a full list of current consultations visit bawbawconnect.com.au to have your say, your way.



YOUR SAY,
YOUR WAY.

Upcoming Council Meetings:

The following Council meeting will be held in March 2026 in the Fountain Room, West Gippsland Arts Centre.

Wednesday 25 March – 5.30pm
Ordinary Council Meeting

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 2026, visit www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/CouncilMeetings

Local fishers worked to install habitat for bass at Blue Rock Lake

On February 8, local fishers and the broader community stepped forward to support a new Blue Rock Lake habitat restoration event.

Eight large, specifically designed 'fish hotels' were constructed and installed at the lake. They provide important shelter, breeding grounds, and suitable habitat for native fish.

OzFish, Australia's only fishing conservation charity, organised the event but was supported by the Latrobe Catchment Landcare Network, Southern Rural Water and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA). Warragul BCF helped with donations and supplies.

"By installing these fish hotels, we aren't just giving the fish a place to hide, we are building a more resilient ecosystem. These structures will specifically benefit shore-based anglers, making sure that you don't need a boat to get in on the action," said



Volunteers build fish hotels. Image supplied.

Andy Foudoulis, OzFish Project Manager for Victoria.

"It's about community stewardship," Foudoulis added. "When a fisher helps build a fish hotel, they're investing in the future of their own local fishing spot. We're proud

to work alongside the Latrobe Landcare Network to ensure Blue Rock remains a great destination for generations to come."

The timing of the installation was strategic. With current water levels low,

volunteers have a unique window to assist in the precise placement of these habitats, ensuring they are positioned perfectly to support the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) ongoing stocking efforts.

TRAF NEWS COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

Want to contribute to Trafalgar's paper? Become part of its committee of management.

Traf News Inc needs four people to fill its complement of committee members.

You will be part of a group that plans the future of our paper.

The role administers Traf News Incorporated, the body to which our paper belongs.

As a committee member, you are not involved in the actual publication of our paper. That responsibility sits with our editor.

For further information, please contact:

Michael Fozard OAM: 0418 513 092
Mick Bourke OAM: 0409 512 672
Judy Bishop: 0402 204 770

Gippsland farmer fined

A Gippsland sheep farmer has been fined following charges of animal cruelty laid down at the Korumburra Magistrate's Court.

Julian Beasley was fined \$2,500 as part of an aggregate sentence and ordered to pay \$144.60 in statutory costs. Beasley first had charges against him laid in 2024. Agriculture Victoria has been

investigating him since then, following a discovery of a group of neglected sheep.

It was said that one of the sheep from the mob was carrying over 250mm of wool, indicating it may not have been shorn for over 2 years. Subsequent visits to the farm indicated further welfare concerns which Mr Beasley failed to act on despite officers issuing 2 Notices to

Comply under the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals Act 1986.

"Victorians have a reasonable expectation that livestock will be cared for by those in charge of them," said Agriculture Victoria Compliance Manager Daniel Bode.

"Shearing your sheep is critical to reduce the risk of flystrike, impaired vision, and their wool getting stained," Mr Bode said.

Magistrate Mr Starvaggi said that the offences were extremely serious and left the sheep in a "catastrophic circumstance."

This charge follows other recent incidents of sheep neglect, including a Mallee farmer who was jailed last year after more than 700 sheep were found dead on his property.

Bendigo Bank Community Bank Trafalgar & District

What's On around Trafalgar

If you have an event, please feel free to send information to us (editor@trafnews.com). Trafalgar District News is distributed in Trafalgar, Yarragon, Thorpdale and Willow Grove.

Event	Date/Time	Location
Warragul Parkrun Reigster at www.parkrun.com.au/warragul/	Every Saturday 8am	Brooker Park, Warragul
Trafalgar Farmers Market Fresh produce, local crafts, and community	First Saturday of Each Month	McGregor Park, Trafalgar
Longwarry Fire Brigade Market	First Sunday of Each Month	Longwarry Fire Station
Rokeby Market	Second Saturday of Each Month 8am to 12:30pm	Rokeby Recreation Reserve
Warragul Farmers Market	Third Saturday of Each Month	Logan Park Warragul
Trafalgar Playgroup Runs during the school terms	Every Thursday 9:30am to 11am	Scout Hall, Trafalgar
GCS - Raising Awareness One Drive at a Time Inc Community outreach service and mental health support	Every Friday 11am to 3pm	Moe Neighbourhood House
Croquet at the Traf Hub	Every Saturday 10am	Traf Park Croquet Cub Ashby Street
Try pickleball in Trafalgar	Every Tuesday 6pm	Trafalgar High gym
Yarragon Craft and Produce Market	March 28 9am to 1pm	Campbell Street, Yarragon

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Road Upgrades in Gippsland

By Jordan Ross

A combined project between the federal and state governments will aim to deliver road upgrades along Moe-Glengarry Road and Main-Neerim Road. It should deliver safer and smoother journeys on Gippsland's roads.

Twenty-seven kilometres of Moe-Glengarry Road between Newborough and Glengarry and 21 kilometres of Main-Neerim Road between Rokeby and Noojee will have safety improvements.

"Our communities deserve safer roads and the Australian Government, partnering with the Victorian Government, is delivering that through critical investments in the regional network," said Federal Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, Kristy McBain.

Works include sealing shoulders, side-road entries and vehicle pull-over areas, line marking and signage improvements.

Main-Neerim Road will also have upgraded safety barriers and a lowered speed limit of 80 km/h between Old Sale Road in Drouin West and Bloomfield Road in Cross-over, while Moe-Glengarry Road will have new safety barriers installed.

These critical works will improve safety for everyone by reducing the risk and severity of crashes, improve traction by removing dirt and gravel on the road, and help drivers stay in control if their vehicle leaves the road.

These roads provide key connections for local community industries accessing essential services, including farmland, the Yallourn Power Station and tourists accessing the alpine resort township of Mount Baw Baw.

The Federal and Victorian governments are investing \$9.26 million into both projects as part of the Road Safety Program to improve road network safety and efficiency.

Victorian Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Melissa Horne MP said that *"by investing in these vital upgrades, we're ensuring that these two key routes are safer for everyone travelling through the region – whether you're a local, working for industry or a visitor."*

Temporary lane closures and reduced speed limits will be in place to help drivers travel safely through the construction areas.

Please follow the directions of traffic controllers and allow for additional time when travelling.

Probus Club

By Glenda Mynard

If you were walking through McGregor Park last month when the Trafalgar & District Probus Club held their meeting, you may have heard peals of laughter echoing out of the hall. You may have wondered what the cause was. It was just our guest speaker, John Gardner, also known as The Dunny Man. Fifty years ago he was a dunny man and as the Probus audience was 60 or above they were very familiar with this term and many had firsthand experience with the Sanitary Service of the day.

The Dunny man was a common sight in most communities around the 1920's and a weekly visitor to most backyards. Most homes lacked indoor plumbing and

sewerage at this time. Households relied on pan toilets or outhouses, which were crucial for public health. Down in the backyard was usually where the household toilet was. This little building had no pipes, no water and no lights, just a big metal bucket and the sanitary contractor or Night man would collect this weekly and replace it with a clean pan. Rather than venture into the dark backyard when nature called at night, most households had a chamber pot under the bed.

John would start his day about 4.00am and load about 120 pans onto his truck to be emptied. This was an essential and serious service but John was able to recall many funny tales about life as a night man. John has written a

book about the history of the Dunny Man in Australia. It's a humorous tale about actual events, some very strange employees and many challenging situations. His book is called *The Dunny Man: Taking Care of Business*.

We also welcomed a new member to our group, Barbara Handson. Visitors are always welcome to our group, just come along to the Trafalgar Park Bowls club on the first Thursday of the month at 10 am.



The Dunny Man with a clean pan!



New member Barbara Handson with Barb Butterworth.



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Heading to Moomba Festival or the F1 Grand Prix?

Victoria’s Big Build works continue across the state with road disruptions on Clyde Road and the Eastern and Princes freeways. These works could impact your travel into Melbourne to attend the F1 Grand Prix or Moomba Festival.



Avoid delays and check before you travel at bigbuild.vic.gov.au



Vale for Reverend Father Bernard (Bernie) Krotwaar (28/6/1957 – 23/1/2026)

By Jean Huffer

On Tuesday, February 23, St John's Church Trafalgar was crowded. People had come from all over Gippsland to say farewell to Rev. Father Bernard Krotwaar, known to most of them as 'Bernie', the former Parish Priest of St. John's. The Church was filled with Bernie's extended family, the Bishop of Sale and his fellow priests of the diocese, friends and past and present parishioners.

Bernie was born in Carlton June 28, 1957, to Bernard and Tina Krotwaar, who later moved to Cranbourne, with their family.

He grew up in Gippsland, and after leaving school, completed his apprentice-

ship as a fitter and turner. However, his life took another path when he felt the call to become a priest. At age 33, he began his studies for the priesthood, as a priest for the Catholic diocese of Sale. He was ordained by Bishop Jeremiah Coffey at St. Mary's Cathedral in Sale on August 24, 1996.

For the remainder of his life Bernie was to serve the people of Gippsland, first as Assistant Priest at Narre Warren, Cranbourne and then the Cathedral parish of Sale. In 2001, he was appointed as Parish priest to Foster/Yarram, and in 2008 he came to Trafalgar after the retirement of Father Tom O'Connell. St John's Parish

encompassed Yarragon, Narracan, Thorpdale, Childers and Willow Grove, as well as Trafalgar.

Bernie's life was not without challenges. He suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, and spinal troubles which never quite recovered after surgery for spinal fusions. These problems increased with time and caused him much pain, as he went about his days.

In his time at St. John's parish, he also faced the problems of building maintenance. The Church had been built after WW II as a war memorial church, and by 2021, it was in need of much renovation, starting with the replacement of the floor.

This was a cost too great for a small congregation; but the Trafalgar Community rallied around. Donations came in from not only the Catholic congregation but from all over the district, and were sufficient for the old timber floor to be replaced with concrete. This led to some weeks of Mass being offered in different sections of the church depending on where the floor was being replaced during the week. When the new floor was finished, new

carpet also had to be relaid as the former red one had worn out in places.

This is in the middle of all the restrictions of the Covid epidemic.

Later in 2021, life was becoming too great a struggle and Bernie realised he could not carry on as Parish Priest. He needed assistance and care, and so his life again took another path when he retired in August and went into residence in Trafalgar's Andrew's House. Father Ber-

nard Buckley, became the new Parish Priest. However, Bernie's vocation as a priest continued. He was able to say Mass for the other residents and to be available to anyone who needed him.

Ultimately the continuing pain wore him down and his health gave out.

He finally went home to God, dying on January 23, 2026, aged 68, and, in accordance with his wishes, was buried in the Trafalgar cemetery.

Tip truck's trip stops in Traf

By Peace Ijiyera and Aidan Knight. Sourced from the Latrobe Valley Express.

Another car chase in Traf.

Three men have been charged following a pursuit involving an allegedly stolen truck across the Latrobe Valley on 25 January.

Police activity, including patrol vehicles and the Air Wing, was observed in the Traralgon area earlier in the day, before the incident culminated near Trafalgar about 1pm, where traffic was disrupted on the Princes Freeway and the left lane was closed.

Wellington Highway Patrol officers first tracked the Kenworth tipper truck in the Maffra area about 11.35am.

Police stop sticks were deployed near Trafalgar, puncturing two tyres, however the truck continued driving.

The vehicle allegedly travelled onto a dead-end road, driving through paddocks and farm fences.

Two men are alleged to have jumped from the truck and hidden at a nearby property, where they were arrested.

Police allege the driver continued onto the Princes Freeway before fleeing the vehicle on foot. He was arrested a short time later.

A 29-year-old Wandong man was charged with theft

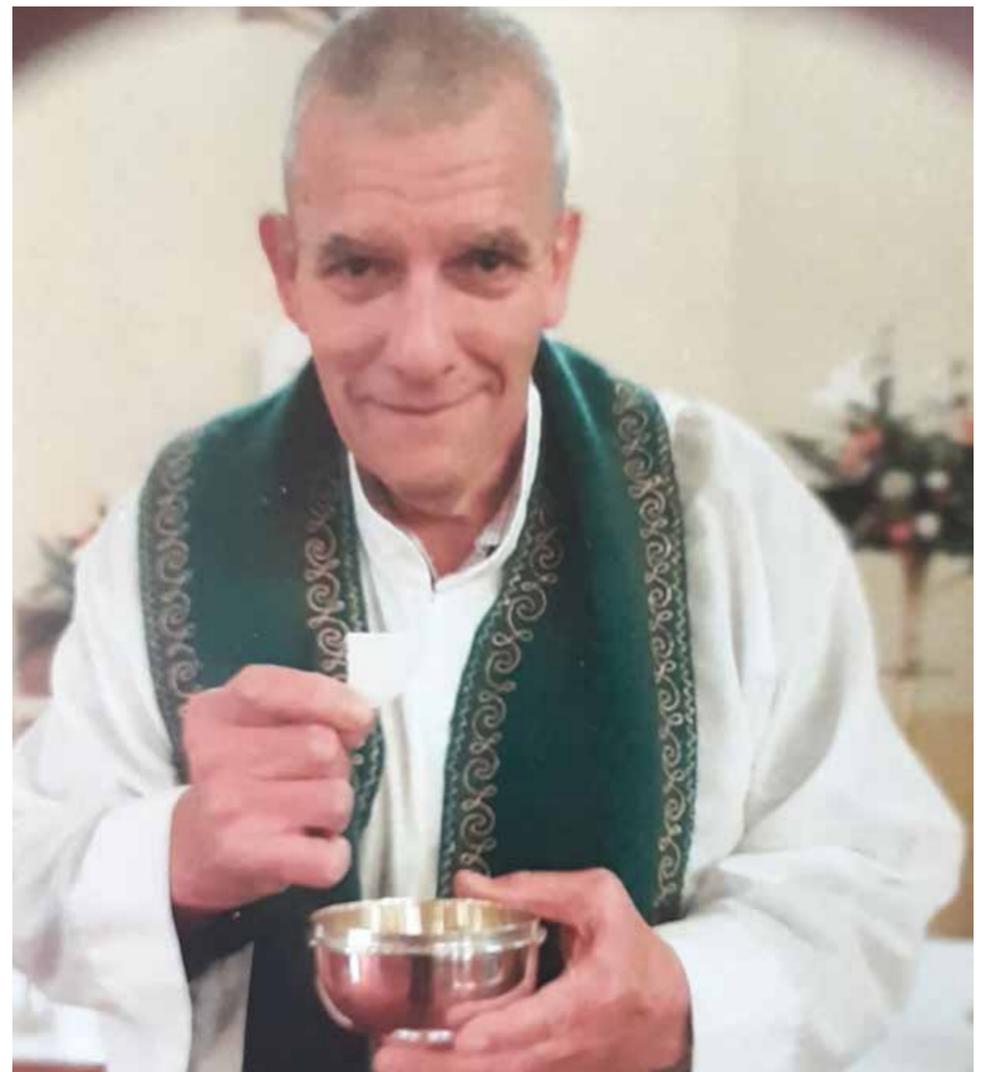
of motor vehicle, dangerous driving while being pursued by police, drug driving, criminal damage and burglary.

He was remanded to appear at Latrobe Valley Magistrates' Court.

The two passengers - a 29-year-old Leongatha man and a 35-year-old Wallan man - were charged with theft of motor vehicle, trespass, burglary, and recklessly handling proceeds of crime.

They were bailed to appear at Sale Magistrates' Court on 11 August.

Police allege the truck was stolen from Wallan Railway Station on 24 January.



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“Financial shortfall” for Warragul Library project

By Jordan Ross

After continuous reports from the Baw Baw Shire Council about financial constraints, cost cutting measures have been enacted on a Warragul infrastructure project.

A number of adjustments have been made to the upcoming Library and Learning Centre project in Warragul.

These include the removal of the basement and the building's timber structure.

The adjustments will not affect the project's purpose to provide a new community building, but will greatly reduce the required cost.

“We want to be open about the proposed changes being made and communicate these

to the relevant funding bodies, and community,” Baw Baw Shire Mayor Cr Wilson said.

“We simply have a financial shortfall with this project so we are exploring the decision to rework the scope to ensure we can deliver it within our budget,” she continued.

Around \$10 million has been committed to the new

Library and Learning Centre with the balance being funded through State and Federal Government grants. Mayor Cr Wilson said the decision to reduce cost showcases responsible project management.

The Library and Learning Centre will be located on the corner of Albert Street and

Civic Place in Warragul. Tender to begin early works is expected to be approved at a future council meeting.

There is still a conversation regarding the future of a permanent library in Trafalgar.

The site of the former Contingent Street kindergarten has been allocated as a

space for a library. However, more kinder spaces will be needed as the town's population continues to grow and there is some desire by the local community to have the space reallocated as a kinder. This would leave the future of the library in doubt and without a decided home.

The town is currently serviced by a mobile MYLI library which is in town on Tuesdays and Fridays.

In December, Mayor Cr Kate Wilson, said at a Trafalgar town meeting that planning for the future will require the community “to be creative”, given the “harsh reality” of the current financial constraints in Baw Baw.



Designs for The Library and Learning Centre in Warragul.



The Myli Library Busy. Photographed by Trevor Colvin.

Baw Baw Arts Alliance

By Carol Monson

The Baw Baw Arts Alliance seems to spread its impact on the world of the Creative Arts in Gippsland further afield each year.

2026 will be the first of many years when the VRI Hall in Queen Street, Warragul, will make its presence felt. Thanks to the always hard-working members of the management committee there will be free or very low-cost Art activities in the hall on the third Saturday of each month for the whole year. For a complete list of all these see the BBAA website, <https://www.bawbawartsalliance.org.au>

To accompany the Arts and Makers Market on the third Saturday of February, an exciting ‘Groups Expo’ was held. This was designed to inform the general public of a range of Arts activities open to everyone. These regular drop-in groups welcome both experienced Artists and those who have no experience, but are keen to learn. Group leaders at the Expo were on hand to tell people about their group and its Artwork, demonstrate different forms of Art and talk about how each group operates.

One new group is the Tuesday fibre and fabric group that meets at the VRI Hall in Warragul. The group

has spent February delving into the mysterious and exciting world of Cyanotype printing and is currently planning an exhibition in the ‘Through Life Physiotherapist’ rooms. This is one of three fibre-based groups, each one being quite different. A Creative Art Textile group encourages the collaboration of members to work on themes. Meanwhile the Fibre Friday group which has been operating for several years has regular exhibitions. In March, long-term members of this group will exhibit their sophisticated works in felt. Don't miss the work of Marlene Ogden, Heather Brimblecombe, Jenny Tulloch and Kar-

en-Anne Jones at the ‘Station Gallery’, Yarragon.

For the full range of creative Art drop-in groups in the VRI, Warragul and the Artspaces in the former Trafalgar Railway Station see the BBAA website.

Creative energy continues with the Baw Baw Arts Alliance and Rotary Easter Art Sale at Logan Park, Howitt Street, Warragul. The sale always draws large numbers of Artists and buyers. It will commence on Friday, April 3 and finish on Saturday, April 12, 2026. Do not miss this wonderful opportunity to purchase an Artwork you can take and hang on your wall immediately.



Ingrid Thomas and Mary Cheng at the VRI Hall.



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Trafalgar Community Directory

This directory has been compiled to provide a list of local and important contacts for the community in Trafalgar. Please advise Trafalgar District 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
Members of Parliament			
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.trafaps.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	Website: https://trafalgarboxingclub.wordpress.com/ Website: https://trafalgarcricketclub.com.au/ Email: trafalgarcricketclub@gmail.com	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
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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/ Email: bawbawsn@gmail.com	0428 866 417
BawBaw Sustainability Network	Malcolm McKelvie	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/ Email: info@lcln.com.au	0477 115 666
Earls Rd Landcare Group	Jim Whiley	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
St John's Church (Trafalgar)		Email: Trafalgar@cdsale.org.au Website: https://www.stjohnstrafalgar.com.au/	03 5633 1166
St. Jariath's Church (Yarragon)		Email: gcsecretary74@gmail.com Website: https://www.gippslandcampdraftingassociation.com/ Facebook: Trafalgar Campdraft Association Inc	0416 166 027
Trafalgar Campdraft	Cheryl	Email: trafalgarpubliccemetery@desi.net.au Website: https://australiancemeteries.com.au/vic/bawbaw/trafalgar.htm	03 5633 2282
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Trafalgar Chamber of Commerce		Facebook: Trafalgar Community Notice Board	
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

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Hawks visit Traf High

By Blake Metcalf-Holt

Hawthorn swooped into the region last month, providing some sought after star power ahead of the AFL season.

Across one day, Hawks players visited a staggering 27 regional schools, before finishing with a super clinic and signing session at Western Park, Warragul to wrap things up on Monday, February 9.

Some players even visited a Warragul retirement village, participating in a game of bingo with residents.

The squad was spread out during their Gippsland tour, with nine Hawks arriving to Trafalgar High School for a Q&A and signing opportunity.

Students of all year levels packed into the school gymnasium to converse with some of the Hawthorn stars, including Dylan Moore,

Blake Hardwick, Josh Battle, Massimo D'Ambrosio and Nick Watson.

New draftees Aidan Schubert and Cameron Nairn, as well as seasonal Hawks Ned Reeves and James Blank also offered insight.

To no surprise, The Wizard (Watson) was bombarded with the most questions, as was pretty boy D'Ambrosio.

Some future sports journos could be coming out of the high school, as one kid stood up to ask the first, hard-hitting question to the group in regards to the Zach Merrett saga.

The Essendon star's heavily publicised push to play for the Hawks ultimately proved unsuccessful during last October's trade period.

While Hardwick and D'Ambrosio (former Bomber) heaped praise on Merrett and applauded the student's

efforts in asking the question, they predictably talked around the hot-button topic.

Even tougher questions followed from the Trafalgar students, including 'what animal are you most scared of?' - giving the group time to highlight Moore's strange tuna fish phobia.

One kid cheekily asked The Wizard if he'd reached the height of five-foot yet, sending the crowd into hysterics and seeing his teammates hiding their laughs.

Watson seemed less enthused and referred to it as "a dog question".

The players then spent upwards of 20 minutes signing memorabilia and posing for photos, as students lined up out of the door.

At the moment, the Hawks are a little short of local representation, as the 2025 AFL Trade Period also saw the de-

parture of Morwell's Changkuoth Jiath, who joined Melbourne after eight years in the brown and gold.

Inverloch's Jai Serong (brother of Fremantle's Caleb) also left Hawthorn after four seasons and 10 games, finding a new home with Sydney.

The Hawks still have Churchill prodigy Calsher Dear (son of Norm Smith medallist Paul), who recently saw his sister Maya drafted to Hawthorn's AFLW side, becoming the club's first father-daughter selection.

Calsher has made the switch to the number 13 for the upcoming season, in honour of his late father.

Morwell's Casey Sherriff is also currently with the Hawks AFLW.

Poowong's Jai Newcombe was the recipient of the Peter Crimmins Medal (Hawthorn best-and-fairest) in 2024, and was this year announced as co-captain alongside James Sicily.



One student kept it old school, getting the footy cards out for Hawthorn defender Josh Battle to sign.



Nick 'The Wizard' Watson signing a poster for one lucky Trafalgar High School student. Photographs: Blake Metcalf-Holt



Many were getting their phones out, with this student grabbing a quick selfie with Blake Hardwick.



Hawthorn supporter Jake stands tall next to Dylan Moore.



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Footy tragedy, club goes into recess

By Liam Durkin

You do wonder how much longer some of these clubs can hang on.

Swan Reach Football-Netball Club has gone into recess.

The Omeo District Football-Netball League club made the decision not to field any football or netball teams last month.

The club was considering just fielding netball and junior football in season

2026, before deciding on a whole-club reset.

As they say, winning wall-papers over a lot of cracks.

Incredibly, the Swans have gone from playing in a senior football grand final to just about folding in the space of one off-season.

Swan Reach only lost the premiership by less than a goal, however some controversial off field issues have brought the crisis to a head.

Reports of frequent brawls and unruly behaviour at Swan Reach games over the last few years means the club now has virtually no senior footballers.

A match between Swan Reach and Bruthen was called off last season due to fears Bruthen Recreation Reserve would become the host of violent retribution between two families connected to the clubs.

Things tipped over even further after the grand final, when videos circulated online depicting mock smoking ceremonies and war dances.

Notwithstanding the ODFNL's strong Indigenous population, the videos were deemed highly offensive and inappropriate. It is understood AFL Gippsland will host a number of cultural awareness sessions with all Omeo clubs this season.

The ODFNL season will be reduced to five teams and a somewhat farcical 12 rounds.

It is also understood no umpire associations want a bar of Omeo, meaning clubs will have to supply their own - hardly the ideal way to address a competition already grappling with an image where man on man football means going toe-to-toe

For Swan Reach, there is now fears for the immediate future of the small town riverside club.

Omeo games only require 16-a-side, and given it is not uncommon for 60-year-olds to play senior football in that part of the world, for Swan Reach to not even be able to cobble together a dad's army

just to get a team on the park, could spell the beginning of the end.

History is unfortunately littered with clubs going into recess and never coming back.

Devon-Welshpool-Won Wron-Woodside was the last Gippsland club to do so, and hasn't played since 2017.

Former Trafalgar footballers Ben Doran and Cohan Lee had stints at the Allies.

Sale City is one club that has risen from the ashes. The Bulldogs went into recess in 2003, recalibrated, and have been a powerhouse of North Gippsland ever since.

There is hope Swan Reach can do similar, and their plight is perhaps helped by having had the numbers for an under 16 team this season.

Arguably, clubs without juniors that have to pay the salary cap just to field a senior team are of more concern than clubs like Swan Reach.

It is unclear what use, if any, the Swan Reach Recreation Reserve will have during winter, although it is hoped Swan Reach FNC maintains some sort of presence.

The club can still host weekly meals and fundraisers, critical to ensuring total club identity is not lost.

Swan Reach spent the 1996 season in recess between time in the now-defunct Riviera league and the ODFNL.

The last time the ODFNL had only five clubs was in 1995 when Ensay folded early in the season. The league had four clubs until the late 1970's when Bruthen and Buchan joined.

Former Trafalgar footballer Todd Mann played in a premiership with Bruthen a few years ago.

Teams scheduled to play the Swans this year will have a bye.

The situation has renewed discussion about merging the ODFNL with East Gippsland FNL.

Given the current climate, it appears inevitable this will eventually happen.

It also again speaks to the ever-changing demographics of country footy.

How staggering it is to think Omeo and Benambra were separate clubs only 20 years ago.

New record partnership

By Liam Durkin

Alex McKenna and Rhys Holdsworth broke the Trafalgar Cricket Club's fourth wicket partnership record last month.

Both players scored tons, with Rhys belting 166 and Alex 126 against Iona at Trafalgar Rec.

Their 249-run stand bettered the 203 set by Graeme Rankin and Gary Edwards (The Wizard) against Newborough in 2000/01.



New Trafalgar Cricket Club record holders Alex McKenna and Rhys Holdsworth.

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Traf success on turf

By Liam Durkin

Moe Racing Club likely had a quieter bar trade than usual for its first meeting of 2026.

This was a good thing though.

It was all about the kids on Sunday, January 25 as the racing club opened its gates to families.

Moe Racing Club's Kid Day Out meeting once again showed there is much more to a day at the races than drinking and gambling.

Drinking was certainly a requirement however – water of course – as temperatures got close to 30 degrees.

The on-course ice cream van was certainly a popular destination, with the line only reduced once it was time to pack up.

If brain freezes weren't your go, there was the op-

tion of cooling off at the water slide, or simply relaxing underneath the shade of an umbrella.

Families also brought their own tents and picnic rugs to pass the time between races every half hour.

Elsewhere, ball sports were played on the lawn, while parents took their kids to check out horses in the mounting yard.

A number of tennis balls were fetched off the track itself, kindly tossed back as impromptu games of cricket took place, clearly with no regard for the six and out rule.

Up on the Hillside Pavilion, Fancy Disco kept the good times going, belting out a few crowd favourites.

Kids were given showbags from Country Racing Victoria upon arrival, which included a drawstring bag,

water bottle, skipping rope, horse socks and an inflatable horse stick.

With the meeting falling a day before Australia Day, visitors to the region took the chance to get their racing fix.

Travellers came from as far north as Moama, and even international guests from The Netherlands.

Those who frequent country racing locally will attest to knowing just about every second person at any given meeting. Moe Racing Club officials would have surely been pleased then it was able to showcase the club to an array of guests.

Eight races were held on a track rated a Good 4, which was baked the previous day under a high-30s sun.

Trafalgar jockey Jason Maskiell celebrated his return from suspension in the

best way possible, riding \$61.00 outsider Tassadar to victory in the Race 2 Ace Earthmoving Maiden Plate over 2050 metres.

The four-year-old put in an incredible run to win on the inside by a head for trainer Aaron Laing.

The win completed a nice full circle moment for Maskiell, who previously rode for Laing's father Rob.

"Laing family has been very good to me for many, many years and it's nice to get a winner for him," Maskiell told *Racing.com*.

A win seemed some way off after Tassadar reared at the gates, but Maskiell said he settled from there.

"To his credit once he got there he really switched off throughout the run, he stuck on nicely."

Melbourne Cup-winning jockey Jye McNeil saluted in Race 7, taking Southern Crescent to an equally remarkable win in The 56 supported by Maccas Gippsland 1200m for Aaron Purcell.

Southern Crescent literally lifted its front leg to see it over the line millimetres before Prancing Queen. Such was the margin, usual eagle eye caller Adam Olszanski couldn't split them.

The Ben Will and JD Hayes stable came third in the Uncommon Solar Maiden Plate (1600m), won by Positivo for Saab Tabilk.

Will Hayes plays football for Warragul, and they will be one of the most closely followed teams this Gippsland League season under the coaching of Gary Ayres.

Some regular winners featured in the remaining races.

The Race 1 Brandy Creek Estate Maiden Plate (2400m)

was won by Brookers Turbo for Jody Thompson at Kilmore (coldest place on Earth).

Anthony Freeman had a winner in the Race 4 Morwell Bowling Club Maiden Plate (1100m) with Baked, while La Roux won for Phil Stokes in the Race 5 Langden Construction BM62 Handicap (1000m).

Mitch Freeman's five-year-old mare Yoomee Wonder was too strong in the Race 6 Ladbrokes Hosted Pots Fillies and Mares BM62 Handicap (1200m), winning by a length.

The meeting was rounded out by Flag Flyer winning the Race 8 Butchers on George BM62 Handicap (1600m) for Greg Eurell.

With such positivity and great weather for the first race meeting of the calendar year, it is hoped this will set a great tone for 2026 at Moe.



Trafalgar jockey Jason Maskiell returns to the mounting yard after riding \$61.00 outsider Tassadar to victory at Moe.

Have batsmen gotten better or simply the bats they use?

By Liam Durkin

Some big scores have been posted in recent weeks across two day matches in Gippsland.

Trafalgar declared with 350 on the board in one game.

Of the top 15 highest scores in the Ships' history, 11 have been made in relatively recent times since 1991. Eight have been made since 2000, and six of those since 2006.

Scoring rates have clearly increased. A score of 150 was considered a good total in a one day match not that long ago. Now, even 200 is only considered competitive.

Does this reflect a rise in batting standard or simply a rise in the power of modern bats? Or conversely, does it point to a decrease in bowling quality?

There are certainly more sixes hit in today's game, although there isn't as many out and out quicks for batsmen to deal with either.

Equally however, there can be little doubt the quality of spin has increased due to the sheer amount of international players now playing club cricket. A lot of teams now play three spinners, whereas in a previous era, one part-timer was generally

used, and only then to give the quicks a break.

In his younger years, Moe's Rob Phoenix would sometimes bowl pace before lunch and then spin in the afternoon once footmarks appeared.

Dale Banks (Mirboo North) and Michael Warne (Ex Students) are both quality leg spinners, yet would have bowled a lot more overs than many current frontliners working in tandem during the middle stages of games.

This is where team of the year selections sometimes need to be taken with a grain

of salt. Blokes in struggling teams for instance might bat twice as much as others due to the number of second innings.

It is also often worth considering statistics relative to history.

For many clubs, their highest scores are made between the world wars, often at unknown venues.

Scores then need to be kept in perspective. There was less people playing during war times, while it's disputable just how organised a competition was circa 100 years ago.

Brem blasts his way to 200 wickets

By Liam Durkin

He'll bowl until he can't walk - literally.

David Bremner too his 200th senior wicket for Trafalgar Cricket Club last month.

Fittingly, Brem reached his milestone late on Day 1 of the game against Iona with his trademark dismissal - sending the stumps flying.

The right arm quick has targeted poles and pads over the journey, which has led to a host of club bowling aggregates and five wicket hauls.

Brem is also a league bowling aggregate winner, and two time Errington Medallist as TCC's best-and-fairest in First XI cricket.

He is in the top 10 on the club's all-time wicket takers list, and part of the 1000 runs/100 wickets club.

His batting is definitely entertaining, and he jokes it usually last "a total of three minutes".

Nonetheless, he has scored a couple of half-centuries and hit some huge sixes, very much epitomising the 'hit out or get out' mantra.

He also took arguably the greatest catch in club history, holding onto an insane blindsided grab running back at mid-off during a midweek T20.

His bowling though is where he shines, especial-

ly when required to put in huge shifts.

Twenty over spells are not uncommon for Brem, who has the heart of a lion.

His self-taught action may defy the sport scientists, but it allows him to generate considerable pace off only a few steps.

A painter by trade, he helped paint the rooms their distinctive red tone around the bar area.

In all cricket, Brem's tally would be closer to 300 wickets, with stints at Willow Grove and Newborough, where he enjoyed premier-ship success.



David Bremner holds the ball aloft after taking 6/19 last month.



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