

# “WHAT'S NEWS”

ISSUE 355 WANDONG/HEATHCOTE JUNCTION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER : FEBRUARY 2026 ABN 17 022 858 565

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## AUSTRALIA DAY 2026 AT WANDONG

Carolyn and Jack van der Ree are the Wandong Heathcote Junction Australia Day 2026 local award recipients.

Pages 13 & 17 for details and photos.



PLEASE JOIN THE WANDONG HEATHCOTE JUNCTION COMMUNITY GROUP AND VOLUNTEERS AT THE WANDONG RAILWAY STATION CAR PARK AT 9AM ON SUNDAY 1ST MARCH TO HELP CLEAN UP RUBBISH ON CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY.

## INLAND RAIL PROGRESS AT WANDONG

As What News goes to print, the new Wandong – Broadford Road bridge will be lifted into place.

Made up of 41 girders in total and assembled on-site, the new bridge is 35 metres long, 14.5 metres wide and weighs approximately 246 tonnes.

It will be craned into place by a 600-tonne crawler crane. The existing Broadford-Wandong Road bridge will be demolished once the new bridge is open to traffic later this year.

Inland Rail is replacing the bridge in Wandong to allow sufficient clearance for double-stacked containers on freight trains to use the rail line.

It is anticipated that the new bridge will improve safety, connectivity and amenity, with a new shared use path, intersection improvements and the addition of open community space extending to Pickett Walk.



IF YOU MISS AN ISSUE OF “WHATS NEWS” go to website <[www.wandong.vic.au/local-news/whats-news](http://www.wandong.vic.au/local-news/whats-news)>

Wandong - Heathcote Junction - why would you live anywhere else. Until February 2026, Allen Hall (editor)  
NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE: COPY & ADS 28 February 2026 DELIVERY from 11 March 2026

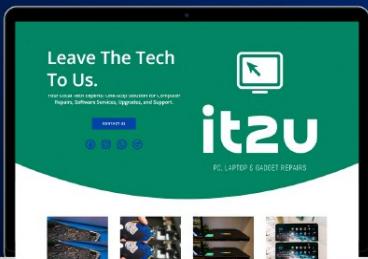
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## WANDONG TENNIS CLUB

Email: [wandongtennisclub@hotmail.com](mailto:wandongtennisclub@hotmail.com)  
or text Lisa on 0407 112 880.

Information is posted on our Facebook page.  
[www.facebook.com/wandongtennis](https://www.facebook.com/wandongtennis)



Congratulations to our section 1 singles team of Sean Dennis and Dylan Hall who were runner up in the MDTA Spring 2025 grand final. Well done on a great season.

Tuesday night and Thursday night autumn seasons have now started. Good luck to all teams.

Coaching is available at the club. Please contact Karl on 0423611317  
Or [kv.tennis@hotmail.com](mailto:kv.tennis@hotmail.com)



# What's Happening

## WANDONG OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE



Service Phone Number:

**0497 877 771**

Your service coordinator will be available during session times. TheirCare support is available during office hours if required on 1300 072 410

### How to Enrol

Visit TheirCare website:

[www.theircare.com.au](http://www.theircare.com.au)

and click on 'Book Now' in the top right hand corner to register your child's details.

### Operation Times

Before School Care	6:30am – 8:45am
After School Care	3:30pm - 6:30pm
Pupil Free Day	6:30am – 6:30pm
Holiday Program	6:30am – 6:30pm

### ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS

18 Feb	Marj & Allan Knight	W
21 Feb	Karen & Alastair MacDonald	W
7 Mar	Gary & Judy Fairweather	WP
10 Mar	Olivia & Clive Allen	HJ
10 Mar	Frank & Bette Sartore	W
11 Mar	Pat & Lindi Leddin	HJ
13 Mar	Irene & Kevin Bartlett	W

### GET “WHATS NEWS” BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive "Whats News" by email each month, send your name and email details to : [whatsnewwhj@gmail.com](mailto:whatsnewwhj@gmail.com)

Remember  
"Whats News" is also available on the website <[www.wandong.vic.au](http://www.wandong.vic.au)>

### COMMUNITY WEBSITES

[www.wandong.vic.au](http://www.wandong.vic.au)  
[www.upperplenty.com](http://www.upperplenty.com)

### *Mitchell Bushwalking Group*

The group walks once a fortnight, with some evening walks during the summer months.

Please contact:  
Mary 0428 479 469  
or Wayne 0451 519 734  
or email [mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellwalksgroup@gmail.com)

for more information

### HIRE THE WANDONG PUBLIC HALL

To hire the hall contact Christine for bookings or other information on 0448 604 770.



### BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

We wish the following people a very happy birthday

16 Feb	Guy Batey	W
16 Feb	Caitlin Gough	HJ
16 Feb	Brent Candy	W
16 Feb	Lauren Saw	HV
17 Feb	Breeanna Thomas	B
17 Feb	Rosemary Hobson	HJ
18 Feb	Loren Page	C
20 Feb	Ashleigh Sannweld	HJ
21 Feb	Bianca Villanti	HJ
22 Feb	Jake Saw	HV
22 Feb	Hayley Mumberson	HJ
24 Feb	David Bartolo	UP
24 Feb	Steve Kilroy	W
25 Feb	Daniel Hannemann	W
25 Feb	Lyn Thomas	B
27 Feb	Graeme Edwards	HJ
27 Feb	Jennifer Cocks	W
28 Feb	Carol McIntyre	KE
2 Mar	Simon Caeli	W
2 Mar	Heather Limbrick	B
3 Mar	Colin Williams	HJ
4 Mar	Rhiannon Bradshaw	W
4 Mar	Heather Flannery	W
7 Mar	Kim Kyriacou	K
8 Mar	Blake Dennehy	HJ
8 Mar	Marilyn McNaughton	HJ
8 Mar	Tim Abela	HJ
8 Mar	Rodney Stone	HJ
10 Mar	Bree Chisholm	HJ
11 Mar	Steve Albert	HJ
12 Mar	James Stewart	W
12 Mar	Sharna Flannery	W
12 Mar	Jayden Rhead	HJ
13 Mar	Phyllis McCarthy	HJ
13 Mar	Kylie Coad	W
14 Mar	Geoff McMahon	HJ
16 Mar	Lisa Kelly	HJ
16 Mar	Chris Waldie	W
17 Mar	Catherine Humphries	W
17 Mar	Andrew Ryan	KE
17 Mar	Kylie Warburton	HJ
17 Mar	Abigail O'Sullivan	W
19 Mar	Jackson Kilroy	W



### MYKI RETAILER



### THE SHACK IS BACK

The Upper Plenty Community Hall  
“THE SHACK”  
is open for hire.  
For information and bookings call Susan or Wayne on 0499 907 017



# Wandong IGA

*It's all about locals and how they like it!*

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## WANDONG CAROLS 2025



A night of fun and Christmas celebrations was had by all December 14<sup>th</sup> singing Christmas Carols and Australian themed songs - like Home Amongst the Gum Trees as we reside in the Mitchell Shire and surrounding areas in this special season. We encouraged the real meaning of Christmas - Jesus Christ. The community and a variety of churches with all their unique skills, talents and willing volunteers made this a successful event. A night of fun and joyfulness. Performers from previous years came and entertained us as well as the new. Bendigo Bank were the sponsors; Wandong IGA helped with our refreshments - Sam's big heart prevailing. Joy of Life blessing families attending giving out their hampers.

Life can be tough in some nations - some even thrown in to gaol, unable to worship, let alone mention the name of Jesus. Some very adverse circumstances and horrific events happening for some believers.

So please, take the opportunity to be able to worship freely, visiting a church.

Advertised as HIS LOVE BANNER - not just at Christmas, not just at Easter; but at all times! God's Love Banner is always over us, so reach out for that special love. Staying away from fear, doing our best to listen to trusted and nonviolent media reports - only encouraging news. AS GOD'S LOVE BANNER CONTINUES TO BE OVER US ALL.

Merle Croskell

### **Upper Plenty Merri Catchments Landcare Group**



We provide support for land management issues such as weed, pest and erosion control.

Also improving soil and biodiversity by providing advice, support, and grant funding. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 6.30pm at "The Shack" 1240 Wallan road, Upper Plenty 3756.

**ALL WELCOME**

See our facebook page:

Upper Plenty Merri Catchments Landcare Group  
And website:

[Http://www.upmclg.org.au](http://www.upmclg.org.au)

Membership enquiries:

[membership.upmclg@gmail.com](mailto:membership.upmclg@gmail.com)

or Chris Cobern 0413855490

# Which order should the cutlery be in the drawer?

I got to thinking the other day, (A risky thing at my stage of life!) I was mulling over the priorities in life, the multiple choices available to us in almost every decision during our day, some discussions, which appear to be of monumental importance at the time (in our house at least) differences of opinions, irritating habits and even laundry practices seem to fade into oblivion with the passing of time! Almost to become objects of amusement on reflection at a later date.

I remember once when I was running round like a chook with its head cut off, I read “Be still and know that I am God!” I have learnt (gradually) to look at my priorities and to refer to my Bible for a guide in these hectic times.

Jesus said

Behold I stand at the door and knock! If anyone invites me in, we will eat together and swap stories. (Revelation ch.3 v.20). Jesus knocks and sometimes we are probably arguing so loudly about important things like which way the toilet roll should hang that we can't hear visitors knocking!

Jesus puts a lot of importance on listening and said that when his people hear His voice and follow his ways, He recognizes them and promises them eternal life with the assurance that nobody will ever take them away from His care. John10.27-28-29.

(That promise alone makes it important to see who's at the door surely!)

Jesus may be knocking at a time that may not be convenient to us, or in a form that is unfamiliar or even distasteful, He may knock in the form of a lonely child, a recently bereaved person, a homeless beggar, an annoying neighbor or perhaps a close friend that, while appearing calm on the outside, may be full of resentment, guilt or loneliness that only a sensitive, quiet discussion or a good listen may be called for!

Behold I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears Me and opens the door I will come in and we will eat and talk together!

That's a pretty fair promise and a start for a good and lasting friendship if ever I heard one, why not open the door and invite Him in?

Behold I stand at the door and knock. Don't be overly concerned about the cutlery arrangements but seek first to follow My teachings and all other things will be added to you. Matthew 6/33. (A bit of 'literacy' 'literacy' ???? license there.)

Behold I stand at the door and knock. Peace, I leave with you My peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid! (I got carried away there but that happens a bit when you get on in years!) look it up, John14.27.

In this life of confusion and turmoil Jesus offers direction, purpose, satisfaction, peace and of course everlasting life to all who accept Him as the son of the living God.

Priority One see who's at the door!

(I've been told by some who used to be my friends that my priorities are not exactly as they should be!)

I don't think ED allows survey results in his magazine, but I couldn't resist. Toilet roll installation. 51% flap out --- 49% flap in.

A.G. (Trainee surveyor.)

## Whittlesea Anglican Christ Church

We are located at  
5—9 Wallan Rd, Whittlesea.  
Phone: 9716 2042

**Sunday service is at 10.30am**

All are welcome to stay back for a cup of  
coffee, tea, scones and biscuits.

### Services to the Community:

Whittlesea Opportunity Shop  
The Op shop is now on site at  
5-9 Wallan Rd, Whittlesea.  
Phone: 9716 2042

Open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm,  
Saturday 9.30am to 12.30pm.



*To equip and release people into their God given destiny*  
Meeting at 10.30am every Sunday  
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Enquiries to ;  
Pastor Frantz Heinzelmann  
Mobile: 0411 794 188  
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## Probus Club of Kilmore District Inc

Are you retired, semi retired or simply looking for new friendships and activities?  
Kilmore Probus are looking for new members and you would be most welcome.

Our meetings include guest speakers and in-house fun. Activities include weekly morning teas supporting local businesses and fortnightly/monthly lunches.

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Monday of each month (except December) at Trackside, East Street Kilmore at 10.15am. Come and join us.

Enquiries to: Margaret Jakymczuk  
Mobile: 0412 335 657  
Email: [margaretjakymczuk1@gmail.com](mailto:margaretjakymczuk1@gmail.com)



**Anyone wishing to join  
Kilmore District Mens Shed  
Should contact  
John Perrett 0418 288 024 or  
Ron Hamilton 0481 268 471**

**Operating hours are  
Tuesday and Thursday  
9.30 am - Approx. 1.30 pm**

**email: [Kilmoremensshed@gmail.com](mailto:Kilmoremensshed@gmail.com)**



## The Kilmore & District Hospital

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**Oncology  
Surgical Procedures  
District Nursing  
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**Dianella Hostel and  
Caladenia Nursing Home Website:  
[www.kilmoredistricthospital.org.au](http://www.kilmoredistricthospital.org.au)**



# GARDEN SCENE WITH GAIL

Hope everyone had a memorable Christmas and New Year. Well, it's another hot and dry Summer for us, across the state, no moisture here but the Northern states are flooding and given how dry it's been I've relied on the Seasol wetting agent so much this year and I'm applying it every few weeks. (avoid applying to any foliage). Watch as you water and if the water is running off the roots instead of soaking in, it's time to reapply and this can be an indicator as to the condition of your soil. Rich, porous soil with nutrients will hold moisture so much better than poor dried out soil that is more inclined to be hydrophobic. As I've weeded, I've applied the liquid wetting agent, well-rotted cow manure around the roots and followed up with mulch. This weather will take its toll on our gardens, lawns, pots and hanging baskets in particular, and it may be beneficial to move the baskets and potted plants into a more sheltered position out of the direct heat and wind. Fuchsias and our beautiful Hydrangeas will suffer so give them a bit more attention than normal. Ensure the soil that they are in, whether pots, baskets or in the ground is thoroughly watered with deep waterings. If the sun is really getting to the Hydrangeas and you can't move them, consider covering them during the hot part of the day with an umbrella or shade mesh and peg it up off the plant so it's not fighting heat as well as extra weight on the foliage. If hot dry weather and low rainfall is going to be the norm we can consider using hardier plants in our gardens to avoid the uphill battle of fighting against nature. Plants such as Plumbago with such pretty blue flowers, Echium, 'Pride of Madeira' (not Echium plantagineum-it's invasive) again with blue flowers and a deep shade of purple. Natives are amazing, shunning the heat and flowering profusely in it, Grevilleas, Callistemons (Bottle Brush), Banksia, to name just a few and they come in a wide range of heights and flower colour and don't the birds love them. Agonis are lovely and they can do well but keep in mind, they, as indeed many of our native plants are adapted more to Western Australia with their soil structure being more open and of a sandy nature. Adenanthes 'Woolly Bush' are fantastic plants with soft grey/green foliage and red flowers which is a great contrast and don't overlook Coreas, tough plants of various sizes and flower colour. What about the good old-fashioned plants such as Geraniums and Pelargoniums, they are fantastic and if they get a bit straggly, prune them in late Summer and use as cuttings. They will take root really easy and you've got more plants, free. The range of colours is so good and the smaller growing plants like 'Big Red' make a big impact in gardens, but they even look better in pots, particularly when mass planted. If you have an area in your garden that needs to be revamped what about 'Big Red' teamed with the grey foliage of succulents such as Cotyledon or Crassula, tough plants teamed with tough plants and the effect is great. When you team up plants do like for like, plants that love the same conditions.



Have a great February,  
*Gail Mains Kendrick*  
(your local real estate agent)



*Wandong District Church*  
**29 Wandong Ave,  
Wandong**

"Letting the  
LIGHT Shine  
in the World"

**Services held at 5pm Sundays**  
**ALL WELCOME**

**Enquiries to:**  
**David Moran 5787 1738**

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CHURCH, WANDONG**  
**WANDONG AVE, WANDONG**

**Enquires 9308 2452**

**Services: 8.30am  
on 1st & 3rd Sundays**

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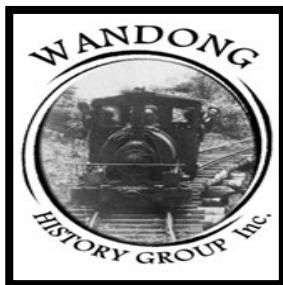
**Wandong**   
PHARMACY

\*FOR FIRST THREE MONTHS. CONDITIONS APPLY.  
PLEASE CALL OR SEE IN STORE FOR **DETAILS**

# WANDONG HISTORY GROUP

Welcome to the new year, it's been a difficult start with fires and extreme heat, and we are thinking of those communities that have been impacted. We know how it feels, the rebuild is demanding stressful and very difficult and the trauma lifelong. A massive shout out to the CFA who over and over again drop everything and put their lives on the line to help others, it takes real courage to do the job, so good on you all, you are appreciated.

For the history group we will start to regroup after the break and get to work on our projects for this year. We will be saying more about that as the year progresses.



We were sad to hear of the passing of Shirley McDonald recently; it wasn't long ago that her sister Olga passed on and our thoughts are with the family.

Olgas' daughter shared this photo of the four sisters together at Wandong.

Karen Christensen  
President  
Wandong History Group  
[wandonghistorygroup4@gmail.com](mailto:wandonghistorygroup4@gmail.com)  
<https://wandongheathcotejunction history.com.au>

## Whittlesea Community Network

### Visy Recycling

Our merry band of volunteers is still counting CANS AND BOTTLES. Our regular hours for over the counter recycling are: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday each week 10am – 3pm and Saturdays from 8am – 4pm. Please note we are not open on Public Holidays.

Got some time on your hands and looking for an easy and regular volunteering role (perhaps to meet your Centrelink obligations). Look no further! Our recycling team is seeking volunteers for regular shifts call 9716 3361 to discuss.

Are you a group or club? Did you know that you can register as a donation partner and receive the 10 cent return on recyclable items as a donation from the community? Go to <https://cdsvic.org.au/donation-partner-registration>.

### Community Meals

Big Blokes Brunch can be found at the Whittlesea Community Activity Centre on Tuesdays! Join the blokes for brunch each week (even during School Holidays): Still \$2.00 per person

### Women's Lunch

First Lunch 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2026 11.30am – 1.00pm Gold Coin Donation

### Fix it Friday

Fix it Friday returns in 2026 on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Make a note to get real help from a real person and sleep better at night in 2026.

Talk to us about problems that relate to legal matters, housing, finance, NDIS, My Aged Care, Centrelink, Fines, Mental Health as well as No Interest Loans and Police matters. The Victorian Ombudsman is also in attendance for all complaint matters related to government entities (eg councils, state government, Fines Victoria, VicRoads, Worksafe). We have free Barista made coffee to keep you fuelled up. Worried about something? Talk to us today on 9716 3361.

Pop in during open hours for a cuppa Mon – Thurs 10am – 3pm.



# Bridge works

## Wandong

### 1 February to 2 March 2026

JOHN  
HOLLAND

John Holland will continue works to construct the new Broadford-Wandong Road bridge during February. There will be round-the-clock works during this time.

#### Work being done

- Installation of the new Broadford-Wandong Road bridge using a 650-tonne crane
- Construction of bridge columns, abutments and supporting walls
- Removal of rail delineation barriers
- Signalling works within the rail corridor
- Construction of temporary access road for residents and drainage works alongside Wandong Road
- Roadworks on Broadford-Wandong Road
- Relocation of utilities.

#### What can I expect?

- Works 7am-6pm Monday to Friday and 7am-1pm Saturdays
- Round-the-clock works between:
  - 7am Sunday 8 February and 6pm Thursday 12 February, one or two overnight works will be required
  - 7am Friday 27 February and 6pm Monday 2 March
- Nearby residents likely to be impacted by out-of-hours works will be notified ahead of time
- Traffic management including long-term temporary single lane shuttle flow on Broadford-Wandong Road
- Nearby residents may experience some noise and vibration.

#### Machinery used

650-tonne crawler crane, cranes, trucks, piling rigs, concrete pumps, excavators, pumps, and rollers.

Workers using hand tools and traffic management equipment.

#### How we're managing impacts

- Traffic management and reduced road speeds
- Residential property access maintained
- Environmental controls in place.

#### Cancellation or extension of works

Works can sometimes take longer than anticipated or be cancelled at short notice and rescheduled. Should this occur, impacted residents will be notified.

#### Rail possession - line closure

Our works will occur during a rail possession between 8am Saturday 28 February and 11pm Sunday 1 March, when the rail line between Sydney and Melbourne will be closed with no trains running.

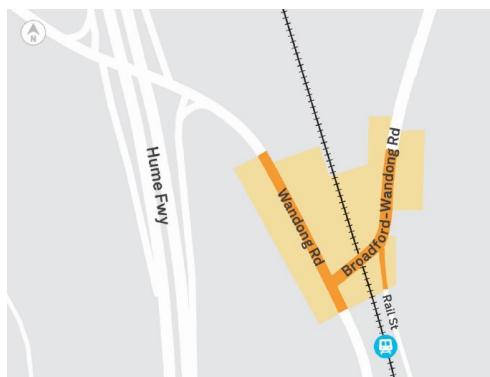
For passenger service changes visit, [vline.com.au](http://vline.com.au) or [transportnsw.info](http://transportnsw.info)

#### Talk to the team

For any concerns phone 1800 732 761 or email [inlandrailvic@inlandrail.com.au](mailto:inlandrailvic@inlandrail.com.au)

If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please contact [B2ACommunity@jhg.com.au](mailto:B2ACommunity@jhg.com.au)

Thank you for your patience and cooperation while we carry out these works.



1800 732 761 @ [inlandrailvic@inlandrail.com.au](mailto:inlandrailvic@inlandrail.com.au)

PO Box 217, Collins Street West, VIC 8007

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INLAND  
RAIL



Neighbourhood Watch

February 2026

# Column

SOUTH MITCHELL



## Young People and Crime

**Although youth crime gets a lot of attention, young people account for a small share of overall crime. The biggest risks come from things like poverty, trauma, or school exclusion — and the best prevention comes from support, and helping kids feel included in their community.**

In Victoria, children aged 10-17 have consistently accounted for around 1 in 10 recorded crime incidents over the last decade. These incidents range from minor offences such as graffiti to serious crimes like carjacking, robbery and assault. As a society, we worry about young people becoming involved in even low-level crime due to concerns that they will get on the wrong track and become entrenched in a criminal way of life. Researchers from many fields have been studying youth crime for decades now, and some truths have become very clear:

- Poverty is a key driver of youth involvement in crime, along with homelessness and being involved in out-of-home care (residential care in the child protection system).
- Excluding kids from school through expulsion or suspension greatly increases the likelihood they will end up in the criminal justice system.
- Most young people who commit crimes will stop doing it as they mature without any intervention.
- The younger a child is when they come into contact with police, the more likely they are to stay in the system.
- The brains of young people don't fully develop until they are around 25 years old, particularly the parts of the brain responsible for decision-making. (This is why we don't let children drive cars, drink alcohol, sign contracts, or vote!) This ability to make decisions is particularly impaired when young people are in stressful situations.

- Most young people in our youth justice system have been victims of abuse, violence and trauma.
- Many of the young people in our youth justice system have mental health and/or disabilities, including learning or cognitive issues.
- Keeping a young person in youth detention (jail) is expensive - \$2.8 million per year per child. Sentences carried out in the community cost \$188,700 per year per child.
- Around 60% of young people sentenced in the Victorian Children's Court reoffend within 6 years.

What does this mean for what we can do to reduce youth crime? These are some strategies backed by strong evidence of their effectiveness:

- Protecting children from harm and support around children and families experiencing trauma, violence and abuse.
- High-quality mentoring for young people, giving them a role model who believes in them and their potential.
- Resourcing schools to diagnose and support kids with learning, disability, behavioural and mental health issues to remain engaged and included.
- Ensuring detention (jail) is a last resort, after other interventions like cautions, conferencing and diversion.
- Military-style youth bootcamps are ineffective and often harmful. Young people in our youth justice system have been victims of abuse, violence and trauma.

## What can community members do?

- Most crimes committed by young people are opportunistic, so be sure to take preventive measures like locking your home and vehicle and keeping valuables and keys out of sight.
- Volunteer for local programs that support young people, such as L2P, sports, scouts, etc.
- Volunteer for programs that support young people in schools with reading, tutoring, etc or programs assisting adults with language and literacy through Local Learning networks
- Get to know your neighbours and young people in your community, and help them feel included and welcome by speaking positively to them and about them.
- If you run a business, consider employing a young person who is in need of some extra support or strong role models.

Written by Anika Dell, a criminologist with over 25 years of experience across academia and state & local governments, and a NHW Victoria board member. For the full article, refer <https://nhw.com.au/children/young-people-and-crime/>



**GROUP AREA:** SOUTH MITCHELL

**Phone:** 0419 531 610

**Email:** newsletters.smnhw@gmail.com

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/southmitchell.nhw.inc](https://www.facebook.com/southmitchell.nhw.inc)

**Web:** <https://sites.google.com/view/south-mitchell-nhw/home>

**ABN:**

48 947 471 718

**Inc. No.**

A0105968T

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2026

# GLOVES ON



## GIVE BACK TO THE PLACE WE CALL HOME

**EVENT:** CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

**LOCATION:** WANDONG RAILWAY STATION CARPARK

**DATE:** SUN 1ST MARCH    **TIME:** 9.00AM

**CONTACT:** ALLEN HALL (0413 832 411)



**CLEANUP.ORG.AU**

## WANDONG AUSTRALIA DAY COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Wandong Heathcote Junction Australia Day community awards in 2026 were awarded to husband and wife Jack and Carolyn van der Ree. Presentations were made by Lauren Kathage, State Member for Yan Yean, Mitchell Shire Councillors Tim Hanson and Bob Humm and Rob Mitchell, Federal Member for McEwen spoke to the audience about the meaning of Australia Day.



Jack van der Ree has been a dedicated and energetic member of the South Mitchell Neighbourhood Watch since 2018. As the group's equipment coordinator, he keeps operations running smoothly, while also taking on the important task of distributing—and often personally delivering—its newsletters. Known for his reliability and good humour, Jack has long been the “number two man” at countless sausage sizzles for both South Mitchell Neighbourhood Watch and the Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group, supporting community events year after year. Jack's generosity reaches far beyond his formal roles. Widely regarded as one of the most charitable members of the community, he gives his time freely wherever it is needed. He helped assist with the arbor at the Wandong Bushfire Memorial Park and played a key role in erecting the roof over the Wandong History Group's container shed—affectionately dubbed “Jack's shack” in his honour, before the sign sadly disappeared. Family is at the heart of Jack's life. He is the proud father of four adult children plus a step-father to one adult child, grandfather to eleven, and great-grandfather to seventeen. Originally from the Netherlands, Jack migrated to Australia at the age of five, settling first in Kinglake West—just up the road from where he lives today. Following in his father's footsteps, he became a carpenter after leaving school. His lifelong trade has made him an invaluable helping hand to many in the community who rely on his skill and generosity. Jack and his wife Carol have called Wallan home for the past eight years, where Jack continues to embody the spirit of service, community, and kindness that defines him so well.

For the past seven years, Carolyn van der Ree has been an invaluable driving force behind South Mitchell Neighbourhood Watch. She first joined the group as an Events Coordinator and quickly became a cornerstone of its operations, stepping into roles including Secretary, Media Coordinator, Police Liaison Representative, Grants Coordinator, and more recently, Treasurer. Her dedication has helped raise more than \$13,000 for local community groups, strengthening programs and initiatives across the region. Carolyn's commitment extends beyond her local group. She also serves in several key roles with Mitchell Shire Neighbourhood Watch Incorporated, the body that oversees all Neighbourhood Watch groups within the Shire. During the COVID lockdowns, when face-to-face engagement came to a halt, Carolyn turned her energy toward developing comprehensive Policies and Procedures for Mitchell Shire NHW Inc.—covering everything from volunteer recruitment to event management and ensuring the organisation remained prepared for a wide range of scenarios. For the past four years, Carolyn has represented the community on the Mitchell Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee, and for the past three years she has contributed to both the Southern Mitchell Local Safety Committee and Neighbourhood Watch Victoria. These responsibilities sit on top of her ongoing South Mitchell Neighbourhood Watch commitments, making her one of the busiest and most dedicated volunteers in the region. To many locals, Carolyn is also the friendly face of the organisation—manning the cash tin and EFTPOS machine at sausage sizzles, coordinating events, and writing the group's newsletters. Outside her community work, Carolyn keeps herself happily occupied with her passions for genealogy, travel, and spending time with her large extended family of Jack's. Her energy, generosity, and commitment continue to enrich both Neighbourhood Watch and the broader Mitchell Shire community.

# NEW CLASSROOMS OPEN

THANKS TO

## Wandong Primary School Upgrade

**Lauren Kathage MP**  
State Member for Yan Yean

 T27, 14 Alliance Avenue, Mernda VIC 3754  
 lauren.kathage@parliament.vic.gov.au  
 03 9432 9782

Authorised by L Kathage, T27, 14 Alliance Avenue, Mernda VIC 3754



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**ROB MITCHELL MP**  
MEMBER FOR McEWEN

5716 3000 [robmitchell.com.au](http://robmitchell.com.au)

Authorised Rob Mitchell MP Australian Labor Party, 57-59 High St, Wallan

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FEBRUARY 2026

### >>> NETSETGO!

WOOLWORTHS NETSETGO REGISTRATIONS  
ARE NOW OPEN!

Get ready, little netball stars... it's time to join the fun! ✨

Our Woolworths NetSetGo program is officially open for all 5–10-year-olds, including our enthusiastic current U9s who are ready to keep building their skills!

NetSetGo is the perfect introduction to netball — a super fun program that teaches the basics through movement, games, teamwork and confidence-building. With our tiered Net & Set levels, every child can learn at their own pace in a friendly, supportive environment. 🎉

#### 📅 PROGRAM DATES

Wednesdays, 4–5pm

From 4 Feb – 1 April 2026

📍 Wandong Netball Courts

💰 COST: \$99

Every registration includes a FREE Netball Victoria pack:

👕 T-shirt

🔑 Keyring

🏀 Ball

Whether you're completely new to netball or continuing from our U9s, this is the perfect way to learn, play and make great friends along the way. 🌟



### >>> 2026 WINTER COMP REGISTRATIONS

With our huge 2025 season now wrapped up, we're already looking ahead to welcoming families into an even bigger and better 2026!

Registrations for the 2026 Winter Season are NOW OPEN on Netball Connect.

Now it's your turn to be part of the action - Register now to receive an automatic 25% off bringing your Club fees down to just \$77!

Players must be turning 7 in 2026 to be eligible. Age groups: U9, U11, U13 & U16.



### >>> 2026 SPONSORS NEEDED



2026 SPONSORSHIP LEVELS		
<b>PLATINUM</b>	<b>DIAMOND PACKAGE PLUS</b> *X-Large banner displayed at courts Acknowledgement at all events Logo on Match balls	<b>\$5000</b>
<b>DIAMOND</b>	<b>GOLD PACKAGE PLUS</b> *Large banner displayed at courts Logo on Coaches/Team Manager Jumpers	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>GOLD</b>	<b>SILVER PACKAGE PLUS</b> *Medium banner displayed at courts Recognition on socials	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>SILVER</b>	<b>BRONZE PACKAGE PLUS</b> Small banner displayed at courts year round	<b>\$500</b>
<b>BRONZE</b>	<b>PACKAGE INCLUDES</b> Name/Logo displayed on wall during all home games Thank you for supporting your local Netball Club in 2026	<b>\$250</b>

\*Banners increase in size for each package, they are not duplicated

We're gearing up for an even bigger and better 2026 season — and we'd love for you to be part of our journey! 🤝

In 2025 we proudly had 87 registered members, and with strong growth already on the horizon, we're aiming even higher for 2026. As our club continues to expand, so does our need for amazing community partners to help support our players, programs and development. Your sponsorship will make a **HUGE** impact.

Funds raised will go directly towards:

🌟 Replenishing and upgrading equipment for the season

🌟 Supporting our exciting plan to take every team to the

Train Like A Vixen team days at the State Netball Centre — an unforgettable high-performance experience for our players.

By sponsoring the Wandong Netball Club, you're not just supporting a team — you're helping grow confidence, connection and community for young athletes across our region.

If you or your business would like to join us as a 2026 sponsor, we'd love to chat!

✉️ Send us a message or email us to receive our sponsorship package. e:wandongnetball@gmail.com

Let's make 2026 our biggest year yet — together! 🤝

# Community Bank

## Wallan, Kilmore and Broadford

### 03 5783 2422

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2.  
**Your community shares in our success.**  
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3.  
**Your community has a voice.**  
**Locals decide which projects get funded.**



4.  
**Good things happen in the community you care about.**



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# AUSTRALIA DAY 2026 AT WANDONG

Over 70 residents and visitors attended the Wandong Heathcote Junction Australia Day breakfast, flag raising and awards ceremony. The event was sponsored by the Wandong Wallan Lions Club, the Wandong Public Hall and the Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group. Everyone enjoyed a free hot breakfast followed by children raising the Australian flag. Lauren Kathage, State Member for Yan Yean with Mitchell Shire Councillors Tim Hanson and Bob Humm presented local Australia Day awards to Carolyn and Jack van der Ree (see their bios on page 13) and Rob Mitchell, Federal Member for McEwen spoke to the audience about Australia Day.





The L.B.Davern Reserve is open to all our community, so please come down and enjoy this great facility ,join the various clubs , just walk through along the G-Day trial, take the kids down to play on the play equipment or just play and excise on the oval. Tennis is back on, Cricket is on and finals not too far away, Dog Club, and the Horse Clubs, the Stadium activities -Basketball, preschool and Wandong Primary are all back operating. Junior Football and Netball Clubs are busy organizing their Registration days and preseason training has started, watch out for them and please support our Junior Clubs. Keep an eye on Auskick as their registration and season coming soon. Kilmore Cricket Club are at the Reserve-, both Senior, Junior and the Female teams, Saturday Mornings and Afternoons.

Please be cautious around the Reserve at present due to various sitting of Snakes being reported. Also as it is busy with activities just a reminder to all when driving in to be cautious and the speed limit is 10 kilometres



**our community, we need your help;  
We need to catch any persons vandalizing our Reserve!!!!**

If Residents notice anything out of the ordinary please contact the police on 000 asap.  
It is in our community interest that we all keep our Reserve safe for all to use!!



#### **Copper Theft::**

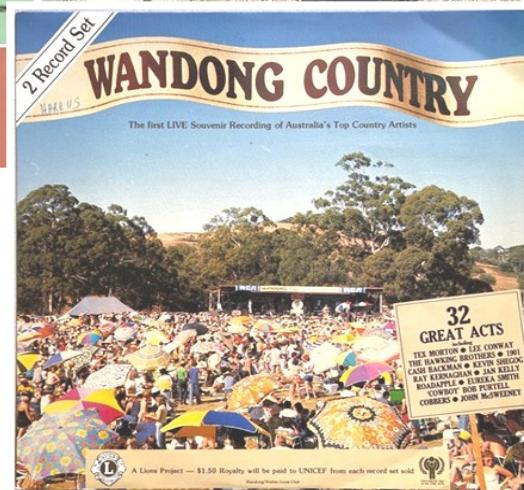
L.B has been hit again in early January, we were lucky as minor damage occurred at one of our switch boards instead. Police investigating.

**Continued Page 19**





**Outdoor Fitness Equipment:**  
Keep active and fit using the outdoor fitness equipment at Davern Reserve.



#### Instructional signage on site and includes:

- Leg Press for a lower body workout, using your weight to be the resistance to strengthen all muscle groups in the legs.
- Chest Press for an upper body workout using your weight to be the resistance to strengthen muscle groups in the arms and chest.
- Body Twist for promoting lower back and hip flexibility.
- Step Up for a low impact activity to help improve your quadricep strength and also your ability to balance and practice core stability.
- Dexterity Builder for building and maintaining dexterity, co-ordination and wrist/elbow mobility.
- Shoulder Mobility Wheel to promote greater shoulder flexibility and strength.

The outdoor fitness equipment station at LB Davern Reserve is one of three stations along the [Say G'Day trail](#).

#### For all L.B.Davern Reserve

##### Bookings to either:

- Oval Bookings, Stadium bookings and enquiries - Mitchell Shire Council Recreation and Open Space unit ph. 5734 6200.
- Community Centre and Sports Pavilion contact: Darlene Gunter on 0418 312 762

Rob Telfer, President  
L.B.Davern Reserve Committee

#### L.B Davern Reserve: Oval Lighting Upgrade

Mitchell Shire Council is preparing a grant application through Sport and Recreation Victoria's Local Sports Infrastructure Fund to upgrade the sports lighting at LB Davern Reserve, Wandong.

The proposed upgrade will bring LB Davern Reserve up to current AFL facility standards, creating a safer, more inclusive space for evening sport and community activities. Improved lighting will encourage greater participation — particularly among women and girls, multicultural groups, and other diverse community members — helping to make LB Davern Reserve a more vibrant and welcoming community hub.

The project includes replacing the existing sports lighting and installing four new 28-metre poles with energy-efficient 100 lux LED lights. The grant outcome is expected in April 2026, construction is expected to begin in late 2026.



# Free Webinar for Carers: Understanding Carer Counselling

You don't have to face the challenges of caring alone.  
Learn how Carer Counselling can support you!

Includes Q&A with a Carer Counsellor!

1-1:45pm | 17 February 2026  
Online - Register to attend



Cassandra Allen  
Holstep Health

## How to register

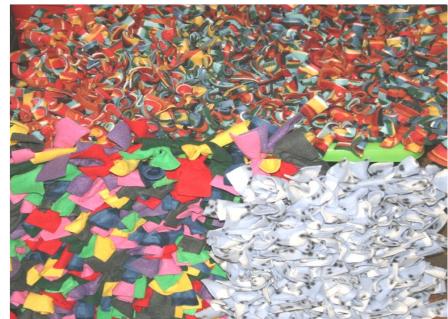
Scan the QR code to register.  
For assistance, email  
[cgmarketing@holstephealth.org.au](mailto:cgmarketing@holstephealth.org.au).



## Snuffle mats for sale

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## Vale: Norm Hulett

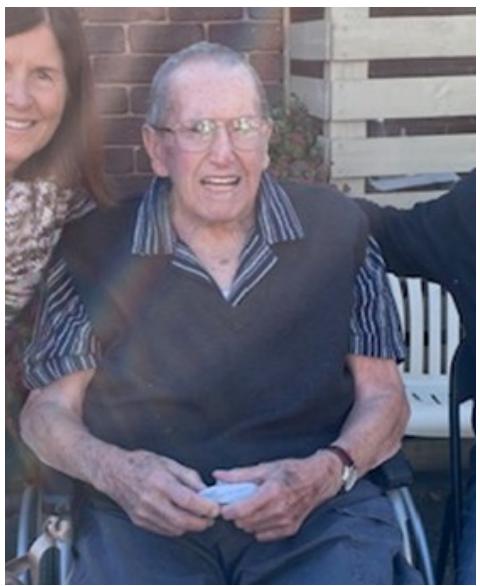
On the 10th May, 2025 we helped Norm Hulett celebrate his 100th birthday. It is with great sadness that we now record Norms passing on Sunday 1st February 2026.

Norm was a long time contributor to this publication, the last years as our weatherman.

Norm was one of the early members of neighbourhood watch, a church volunteer, a volunteer on tree planting days and even played Santa at the primary school.

We will miss you Norm.

Our sincere condolences to Ros and the family, we are thinking of you.



## WANDONG-HEATHCOTE JUNCTION COMMUNITY GROUP

P.O. Box 242, WANDONG 3758 Tel: 0413 832 411

**WEBSITE:** In January the [www.wandong.vic.au](http://www.wandong.vic.au) website received 1012 visits. If any business or group has noticed any content which needs to be corrected to their entry, please let us know.

[whatsnewswjh@gmail.com.au](mailto:whatsnewswjh@gmail.com.au)

**We continue to clear rubbish**

**from our town -**

**PLEASE JOIN US AT THE  
WANDONG RAILWAY STATION  
CAR PARK AT 9AM ON  
SUNDAY 1ST MARCH  
TO HELP CLEAN UP RUBBISH ON  
CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY.**

The Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group Christmas raffle has been drawn and the three winners were:

Damo of Jamieson Street, Broadford.

Dawn of the Elms Blvd, Kilmore

Sue of Royal Pde, Kilmore

Congratulations to our winners and many thanks to all our supporters of our Christmas raffle.

It was a massive disappointment to the Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group and our community when grass particularly along the Epping Kilmore Road, Wandong was not mowed before the Christmas holiday period. Wandong is an important gateway to Mitchell Shire and you would think it would be made presentable and attractive for the hundreds of visitors passing through and using facilities at the Wandong Bushfire Memorial Park and accessing the businesses at Wandong Plaza. Grass at Davern Reserve and Rail Street was also left long over this period.

The response from Mitchell Shire stated the previous mow was on 25 November and mowing was on a six week cycle. It hopes for better timing next Christmas holidays.





## Heard about the Herd?

The 2026 year at the Combined Probus Club of Whittlesea commenced on Monday 2 February when *Sam White of Sidonia Beef* was the guest presenter. Sam is the current manager of the family's one hundred and fifty year old property at Sidonia, a farming area north of Kyneton.

In 1997 the farm was home to six thousand merino sheep, but two of the flock were detected with *Ovine Johne's Disease* (OJD) an incurable, chronic, and contagious wasting disease in sheep and goats. As a result all sheep on the property were destroyed and the property destocked for two summers.

During and after the forced "recession" Sam became interested in the concept of Regenerative Land Management [RLM], and has become a recognised exponent and spokesperson for the innovative farm management.

The difference between regenerative and sustainable agriculture was explained. Sustainable, by definition means that something is able to be maintained at a certain rate or level. Regenerative Agriculture aims to keep improving and regenerating all the natural cycles in nature (i.e. water cycle etc.) and not just keep it sustainable.

One report indicates that in Australia, about two thirds of agricultural land is degraded due to several past engrained farming practices. Sam acknowledged that each generation has gathered knowledge from the last and each have been able to build on caring for their land and its environments. But some practices thought to be suitable were detrimental!

Superphosphate spreading and chemical drenching was once the only way to maintain pasture and healthy stock. These are no longer used at Sidonia Beef, substantially reducing outgoings. Neither is the need to cut hay for feeding when pastures are dormant. The only expenditure is an annual electronic ear tag for new calves. Interestingly, twenty years on soil tests note the presence of synthetic fertiliser!

Since 2005 using Organic Principals the land has been brought full circle working in harmony with nature by managing the property, using RLM. The holistic approach allows all elements to be in harmony to promote biodiversity and a healthy environment

Regenerative agricultural practices and techniques are similar to that of sustainable agriculture, but the tools and techniques are customized to the specific agroecosystem in which it takes place and is soil-based rather than seed based. Attention is given to increasing the amount of nutrients cycling through soil by improving soil organic matter while also increasing the soil's potential for storing carbon.

The manner in which the farm is managed is somewhat contrary to old practices, but the results show otherwise. The cattle are a tool for creating biodiverse pastures as they are able to efficiently recycle nutrients and keep important nature cycles working well.

The cattle are run in one herd. They pressure soil, trample their manure and create an environment for new life before moving on to a fresh place. Recovery is allowed to take place on the land they have walked increasing biodiversity and water quality.

As a result the cattle graze freely on natural pastures, which are allowed to regenerate via organic mulching, topping and resting paddocks to encourage soil restoration. An interesting unintended consequence has been noted. The grass in paddocks is allowed to grow to its genetic height which kangaroos avoid and move to the neighbours. Managing stocking density to enable best-practice animal and environment management is paramount.

The large herd being constantly moved from paddock to paddock have developed some form of contraceptive. It seems that close company has changed the "all for one and one for all" breeding and some selective approach has resulted'. Perhaps the chemical free fertilising and drenching has reverted the stock to their original breeding practises which existed before man's interference.

Some cattle are sold through traditional markets but around 20% are sold ready to eat. Originally processed beef was sold to local restaurants and upmarket city establishments. The conflict between clients' orders and the slaughter ability caused a cessation and a move to individual online customers.

Sidonia Beef Boxes contain 5kg or 8kg of 100% Pasture Raised Black Angus Beef. Each box contains a selection of prime cuts and secondary cuts from the entire animal. There is minimal to no wastage as all parts of the carcass are used.

Everything on the beast except the bellow covers the Paddock to Plate criteria and nothing on the ground except nature seems an appropriate encapsulation of the White Family and Sidonia Beef.

Some internet issues caused Sam's presentation to be abridged, but the audience members were not left with any doubt that Regenerative farming has many benefits.

*Written by Michael Halley*



# WANDONG FIRE BRIGADE



Wandong has had a busy month with 39 turnouts; 5 in our primary area and 34 supporting local brigades. This is in addition to covering at least 18 shifts as part of strike teams at the Longwood fires and having 2 of our members manning the Staging Area at Longwood. Thank you to the firefighters, their families, and employers for allowing us to support our community.

We are extremely grateful to the community for the amazing support that was shown over this time. We received donations of water, sports drinks, muesli bars, snacks, lip balm and body wipes. The gorgeous messages that were sent and comments left on our Facebook page were shared with all brigade members and were mightily appreciated.

We were also supported by Capycool, who sent us portable personal fans and cooling cloths and Kemp's Bakery, Wandong, who sent us Bakery goods. The Rose Café and Lauren Kathage delivered parcels of snacks and drinks.

A grant from the Community Bank of Wallan, Kilmore, and Broadford (Bendigo Bank) of \$2000 allowed us to provide safety workboots, gloves, safety glasses and masks to people from fire affected communities so they could safely assess and work on their properties.

## Fire Season

The fire season is not over yet. There are several high fire risk days predicted for February. It is crucial that everybody continues to monitor Fire Danger Ratings, and enacts their Family Fire Plan when needed. **Fire Danger Ratings tell you how dangerous a fire could be if one started.** The CFA website has some great resources on preparing your property, and what you Can and Can't do on total fire ban and fire restriction days.

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions/can-i-or-cant-i>

## Recruitment

Wandong Fire Brigade is a 100% volunteer brigade. We are now taking expressions of interest for volunteer firefighters. Training will begin towards the end of the fire season. All training and uniform is provided free. Train over the cooler months and be ready to turn out next Summer. Watch out for the Facebook page where we will post details. You can register your interest to join your nearest brigade on the CFA website.

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteers-careers/volunteer-with-cfa/come-join-us>

## WANDONG PUBLIC HALL

The Wandong Public Hall built in 1902 is a very special place in our community. It has hosted many weddings, engagements, receptions, Art Shows, Australia Day Celebrations, birthdays, anniversary parties and many other events and even the occasional funeral service.

Our regular user groups are always keen to have more people joining them and they are listed below..

The Lightwood Flats Book Club meet monthly - contact is Christine Cram Ph : 0458 238 270



Wandong Country Knitters meet monthly- contact is Coralee Souter Ph: 0479 163 548

Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group meet monthly Ph: 0413 832 411

CPR Training - 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month Ph Louise 0409512526 contact [@ehssol.com](mailto:@ehssol.com)

To hire the hall please contact Christine for bookings or other information on 0448 604 770. Please leave a message or text for Christine to follow up.



# LIONS CLUB OF WANDONG – WALLAN INC.

PRESIDENT: SAM BEDI

PO Box 225  
WANDONG, VIC. 3758

We are back. Most of the activities we participate in were a great success.

Cakes sold well although we had a lot left over. They will still be good next year. They are stored at the IGA in Wandong. We also did a barbecue at Bunnings giving us some more funds. We also sold some cakes. It was a worthwhile exercise.

100 hampers were prepared and handed out via the schools. These hampers were prepared in Sam's garage with others correcting the mistakes I made. I wanted to put an autographed photo of me in each hamper but the suggestion was turned down. I don't understand why.

School awards were given out along with vouchers and hamper of goodies. Again I was refused permission to include a personal photograph. I have a complaint to make about one of the schools. They tried to help me up onto the stage. They were mixing me up with Elizabeth.

Approval has finally been granted to put our 50 year anniversary seat into the Lions park in Wandong. We now have to get a quote on a concrete base to bolt it into. These things seem to take forever.

Looking at bushfire relief, we have been given a grant of \$2000 from the Bendigo Bank and we are looking at \$10,000 from club accounts. We will consult and donate to where we think it will be best needed.

Elizabeth, Sununda and I helped with the Australia day breakfast at Wandong. Elizabeth looked after hash browns, which is her speciality. While Sununda and I expertly cooked eggs and bacon. We cooked in a shed beside the hall. It was smoky and greasy but we carried on like brave Lions should.

As I reported Biker Bill did something to his shoulder. He was seen sitting on his machine in the carport making motor bike noises. His shoulder is better now so he can burn off the police on the highway again. He told me that he can now put on his helmet without taking off his glasses. This is a great relief to the rest of the motoring public.

Steve the drag queen has done something to his back. I am told that it has nothing to do with falling off his high heels. It might have something to do with bending over backwards to appease the council.

Now I have been urged to relate a couple of incidents relating to me. I was watering the garden, lost my balance and landed face down in the rhubarb. One unkind young lady wondered whether the rhubarb was ok. No concern for my welfare. Just for the record the rhubarb was fine.

This will do for now. I cannot understand why my fellow Lions are interested in my minor indiscretions. It's not that I pick on others.

I will catch you next month unless I can persuade some other sucker to do it.

Catch you,

Clyde the champion Riley.

## PLEASE TAKE YOUR RUBBISH HOME

The Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group continues to remove rubbish from Wandong streets, the Epping Kilmore Road, the Wandong Hume Freeway ramps, and Wandong Broadford Road.

Much of the rubbish is thrown from vehicles passing through Wandong but there is also rubbish that can only be from our residents. To those people we can only appeal to them to look after our beautiful town and take your rubbish home.

### FRIENDS OF DISAPPOINTMENT

Are you interested in the history, conservation and community of the Mount Disappointment State Forest and surrounding areas.

Join "Friends of Disappointment" to share history, photos and ideas.

<https://www.facebook.com/mountdisappointmentclonbname/>

### Kilmore/Wallan RSL Sub Branch

meets the last Thursday night of the month  
and open every Wednesday 10am -12pm  
at Kilmore Memorial Hall

Contact: Graeme McSolvin - 0413 701 040

We have Compensation & Well-Being Officers, please call for an appointment.



## WHAT TRAINING METHOD IS BEST ???

### Are you having trouble with your dog ???

Just going for a walk is not the pleasant event you had imagined. instead it is more a battle of wills, with you and the dog struggling to decide where to go. Perhaps there are other times when your dog just seems to go 'mental'. He jumps all over your guests or rounds up the kids when they play in the back yard. You really want to do the best by your dog. You went Puppy School, you Googled for advice, you might have even been to a private trainer but it didn't seem to help. Now you feel like a failure ... OR perhaps you just have a bad dog...

### **However there are factors that you may not have considered.**

When we look to our human world we see perhaps 9 or even more types of intelligence. People use these different skills in varied degrees. Consider how many schools standardised their programs which cater to perhaps 4 of these intelligence types - kids who actually learn best outside these standard methods are then left scratching their heads.

From my experience, the same principle applies when it comes to teaching dogs. If you lock yourself in to using any specific "training method" it will suit some of our dogs, but NOT others ... instead we need to be open and think about how our dog learns AND it is important to also remember the handler who is on the other end of the leash... as both dog and handler learn best in their own way.

Formal studies are now starting to delve into how dogs learn but for the most part, the science is just playing catch up with what many experienced dog professionals already know.

Consider some of the training methods currently on offer:

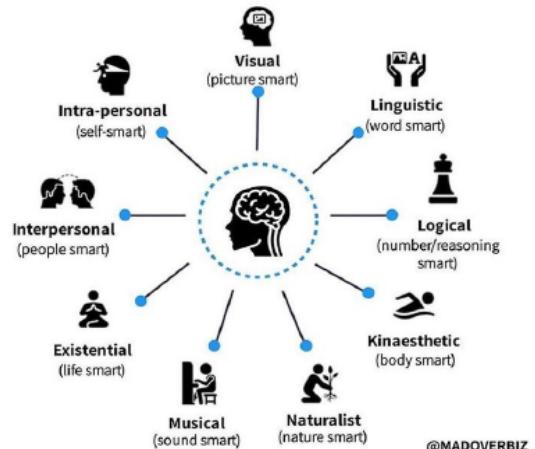
**Obedience Format** - this style of training is more about the dog following a command.... SIT, DROP, HEEL.... Etc.

However 'Obedience' is the dog following direction under set guidelines... This is great for situations like a competition, but this doesn't solve your everyday problems and it is difficult for both the human and the dog to relate this into your everyday life, particularly when there are variations in your home situation or when taking the dog into new environments..

**Distraction Format** - Often using food/toys and incorporating clicker training - this can be terrific when the dog is food motivated but when your dog is highly distracted (say walking in the street and spies a new dog) then dog easily loses interest in the food you are offering. In fact you now find yourself trying to juggle the leash and trying to DISTRACT the dog with toys or foods and perhaps even using clickers. Very complicated and messy particularly for the average pet owners.

**Avoidance Format** - You may be advised to try walking down the road then when you come across a high distraction you need to turn around and walk away. Avoid areas that the dog becomes highly aroused until the dog improves or matures. In reality this means you never get far, you also find yourself going out at times or places when you won't encounter others. So you never seem to improve and never get the chance to go out with friends to a park or a cafe.

## 9 Types of Intelligence



@MADOVERBIZ



It is important to understand both the dog and the human are individuals so the objective is to find what style works for both. So don't give up, you might need to seek help from different clubs or trainers before you find the one that works for you and your dog.

**Alfoxton Tip : Remember when it comes to training - You are NOT changing the dogs personality - Instead your objective is to change undesirable Behaviours.**

# SUDOKU

Answers  
on page 28

Place the numbers 1-9 only once in each row, column & 3x3 block

			2					
1	3	4				5		
2			5	4	1			
3	4			5	9			
8	7			3		4		
	9	3			1	7		
6	5	3				9		
4			8	7	2			
	1							

## THIS MONTHS QUIZ

Answer appears on Page 28 but no cheating!

1. Who was the last Australian to win the Australian tennis grand slam?
2. What colour is a polar bears skin?
3. What is the largest country in South America?
4. What is the worlds fastest growing plant?
5. What is the largest rodent in the world?
6. What was the first railway station built in Australia?
7. Which country has the most UNESCO World Heritage Sites?
8. What is Australia's oldest theme park?
9. What is the main language of Mexico?
10. Where is Milford Sound?
11. Where was Barack Obama born?
12. What is the capital of Peru?
13. Where is the famous Raffles Hotel?
14. Who invented the cochlear implant?



**MYKI RETAILER**

## MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL



How to keep up to date with Council online:

- > E-News direct to your inbox, sign up now
- > On our website [www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)

Not online?

- > Fortnightly Council Ad in the local newspaper
- > Monthly radio shows

Or, contact Mitchell Shire Council on 5734 6200.



For information about coming  
MBUG rides, check out the  
website at

< [www.mbug.org.au](http://www.mbug.org.au) >

or contact the Secretary,  
John on 5781 1604

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**Phone 5782 1746  
Mobile 0418 323 838**

Hello Readers,

Firstly let me wish you all a Happy New Year and what a beginning to 2026 it has been.

Sadly our country has already seen much tragedy, with a number of shootings, drownings, shark attacks and Mother Nature showing us who's boss. The north has been ravaged by floods and here in the south we've endured bushfires, many properties have been destroyed and there have been great losses of livestock. We send those affected our deepest condolences and pray for better times.

Let's move on to some happier and more uplifting news.

Wallan U3A finished 2025 with a delicious Christmas Break Up lunch at our Neighbourhood House, catered for by JBL Catering of Wandong. Our newly formed Singing Group entertained our members with a selection of favourites from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The group enjoyed thunderous applause after the performance which will undoubtedly spur them on to perform at other functions.

We enjoyed the final Morning Melodies for 2025 at Kilmore Trackside and rounded out the month with a well attended Trivia afternoon hosted by our Trivia Master, John.

Many of our classes began in early January and the response from members has been positive and enthusiastic for what is to come in the coming months.

February begins the first of 6, Equip for Life sessions, aimed at improving our health, fitness and wellbeing.

Some members will be tapping their toes, singing and probably dancing in the aisles at the Michael Jackson Stage Show at the end of February, while others will have enjoyed the Stage Show production of Cats.

There have also been several ideas tossed around for excursions during the year, so stay tuned. The future looks bright, let's enjoy.

If you require further information about U3A Wallan and it's activities, please contact President - John Lanphier on 0413 083 089.

Till next time

Bye for now, John Lanphier



University of the Third Age

Wallan Neighbourhood House

42-47 Bentnick Street Wallan

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE - BECOME A VOLUNTEER

If you are young, elderly, retired or working, please consider joining a community group and enjoy the rewards of volunteering. Join one of the community groups operating in Wandong Heathcote Junction.

Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group Inc: Call 0413 832 411

Wandong Wallan Lions Club: Call 0418 142 172

Wandong History Group: Call 0432 120 736

## Philman Excavations

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## All Weather Training Facility - Heathcote Jct

(Established 1995)

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Behaviour Problems



## Alfoxton Dog Centre

[www.alfoxton.com.au](http://www.alfoxton.com.au)

*Boarding Dogs / Cats -short and long term Farm Stays.  
Dogs have large indoor/outdoor pens. Also big play paddocks  
where your dog has room to get out and burn off their energy.*

*Cats and little Dogs get to hang out in fully enclosed and heated  
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Phone: Anne **0402 118929**

60 Junction Rd, Heathcote Junction, Vic

Alfoxton is a registered Domestic Animal Business - Mitchell Shire

## Weather Report - Heathcote Junction/Wandong December 2025

The temperatures seemed to fluctuate between occasional warmer days followed by mainly cooler nocturnal temperatures. Rainfall consisted of 30 mls in the first half of the month and 20.5 mls in the second half. Rainfall was recorded on only six days.

There has been a slight increase with our supply dam Sunday Creek since the second of December with 68% recorded on 29th December.

## January 2026

There is not much to say about January except that it was very very dry with only a total of 6.5 mls recorded over five days throughout the month. This is the lowest recording since 2009 when zero rainfall was recorded.

### Stats

January 2026 - 6.5 mls

Previous year - 43 mls

Average prev 10 years - 70 mls

Total this year - 6.5 mls

Total prev year - 43 mls

## Wandong Playgroup

New members are welcome at playgroup.

You can start anytime of the year.

Come along and check it out.

The first session is free and  
then it's \$5 per family  
plus payment of Playgroup Victoria  
membership to cover insurance.

Playgroup is for parents,  
guardians, grandparents and  
carers and their 0-5 year old children.  
Come and look!

Anytime is a good time to start.

Every Tuesday (during school terms)  
9.30am till 11.30am

At Wandong Community Centre,

LB Davern Reserve

Dry Creek Cres, WANDONG

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ABOUT PLAYGROUP CONTACT:**

Briony Schaeffer 0413 828 175

## QUIZ ANSWERS (from page 26)

1. Ashleigh Barty
2. Black
3. Brazil
4. Bamboo
5. Capybaras
6. Flinders Street station (1854)
7. Italy
8. Luna Park (St Kilda) 1912
9. Spanish
10. New Zealand south island
11. Hawaii
12. Lima
13. Singapore
14. Prof Graeme Clark (Melbourne)

SUKODU solution

9	5	4	7	1	2	6	8	3
1	7	3	4	8	6	9	2	5
2	6	8	9	5	3	4	7	1
3	4	1	8	7	5	2	9	6
8	2	7	6	9	1	3	5	4
5	9	6	3	2	4	8	1	7
6	8	5	2	3	7	1	4	9
4	1	9	5	6	8	7	3	2
7	3	2	1	4	9	5	6	8



*Kilmore  
&  
District*

PO Box 550, Kilmore 3764  
President: Elaine De Gabrielle  
Secretary: Mark Perrott  
Contact: [info@u3akilmoreanddistrict.com.au](mailto:info@u3akilmoreanddistrict.com.au)

We extend our best wishes for the New Year and are pleased to report a strong start to 2026 with a successful registration day on 16<sup>th</sup> January thanks to strong volunteer support in setting up and running the event. It was pleasing to see a strong turnout for membership renewals and class registrations, and we were pleased to welcome a significant number of new members. Our convenors contributed to the morning providing engaging class displays enticing members to join the various group activities. Membership renewals and class registrations remain steady, and most group activities still have places available.

We have some new and exciting classes starting this year, Monday morning has Memoir Writing with Dawn 9.30am to 11.30am, Monday afternoons there is Tai Chi with Danielle from 2-3pm and we also have the introduction of a Lifestyle programme 4.30pm to 6pm designed to keep us informed about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

Thursday computer class runs every week and now accommodates all experience levels, offering classes from beginners to advanced, thanks to Steve's initiative. Additionally, the new 'Crafty Fingers' group meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month, providing a relaxed environment for craft enthusiasts.

Two further activities have been added on the third and fourth Thursdays: Jazzminton with Deirdre, a light-hearted racquet sport, and Pickleball with Cheryl, a game combining elements of tennis and table tennis. Both have generated significant interest.

With these additions U3A now offer 26 group activities throughout the year, these are Carpet Bowls, Cinema, Computer, Craft & Chat, Creative Writing, Darts, Embroidery, Exercise Programs, Games, Gardening, History of Kilmore, Jazzminton, Lifestyle, Memoir Writing, Pickleball, Recorder, Stitch & Chat, Thai Chi, Thursday Crafty Fingers, Trivia, Tuesday Lunch Group, Ukulele Singalong, Upholstery, Walking Group, and Yoga.

For those of us who grew up basking ourselves in the hot sun to get the ultimate tan...a little reminder

...

Due to the unusually hot weather we are currently experiencing, remember to stay hydrated, wear a hat and sunscreen, seek shade during peak sun hours, and avoid direct sunlight whenever possible.

U3A welcomes individuals over 50 who are no longer working full-time, providing an affordable and enjoyable way to learn new skills and connect with others.

Take the next step- join us today! For more information or to register, please email [info@u3akilmoreanddistrict.com.au](mailto:info@u3akilmoreanddistrict.com.au) or visit our website at <https://u3akilmoreanddistrict.com.au/>.

Till next time, Christina Kinna

## Kilmore Golf Club Inc.

Welcome back to all readers. I hope everyone had a restful break.

The Kilmore Golf Club calendar year has commenced with 3 players- Ian Gray, Barry Archbold & Matt Murray tied for the January Monthly Medal competition with scores of 70. This means that all 3 will be competing in the February Medal.



Events for February include: Ladies- Pat Johnstone Trophy, Men- Kilmore Cup(4BBB)

Unfortunately, the corellas have returned and are doing untold damage on the greens.

The Sonic Bird scarers do work to a degree until the birds become accustomed to the interreference. The gas gun used intermittently has proven to be quite useful. Members have been filling in holes on the greens each morning but it is a constant job and this is taking its toll on morale. So, if you know of a solution other than shooting please contact the Club.

[info@kilmoregolfclub.com.au](mailto:info@kilmoregolfclub.com.au)

Keep in mind the Club is offering Social passes (pro rata) and Membership to new residents @ \$400 (pro rata) or those who have never been a member in the past.

Contact the Club – [info@kilmoregolfclub.com.au](mailto:info@kilmoregolfclub.com.au) for further information

# WATER MATTERS

Recent fires and periods of extreme heat have had a significant impact on many people across our region, and we want to acknowledge just how challenging this time has been. Our priority throughout emergency response, and then recovery, has always been to support communities in every way we can.

During the Longwood fires in our southern region, our staff worked around the clock to keep water and sewerage services operating safely. As conditions changed rapidly, our teams stayed on the ground to ensure towns had reliable access to water when they needed it most.



We also assisted communities outside our service area, providing emergency drinking water sources for non customers who were directly affected and needed supplies close to their homes and properties.

As the recovery continues, extended extreme heat has placed additional pressure on local water systems. To help meet demand, our crews have established water fill points in Euroa, Alexandra, Yea and Bonnie Doon, and provided access for nearby communities including Ruffy, Yarck and Molesworth.

For larger water carters supporting impacted residents, we have made select drinking water standpipes available free of charge during this period to ensure supply can be maintained where it is needed most.

At the same time, we continue to tanker water into Longwood while the local treatment plant remains offline due to fire impacts.



Scan for helpful info about your water supply during a fire.



Scan for helpful info about water use during a heatwave.

## Shaping our next Urban Water Strategy together

Thank you to everyone who shared their views last year at our November and December pop ups at markets, shopping centres and community events. Your feedback will help shape our next Urban Water Strategy, a long term plan guiding how water is managed across our towns over the next 50 years.

Community engagement will continue into this year, with more opportunities to have your say.

## Water knowledge a focus during October's National Water Week

Recent research shows that while many people care deeply about waterways, understanding where water comes from and how everyday actions affect it can vary across the community.

October's Water Week highlighted how small changes can make a big difference. Through events like our Waterwise Gardens seminar, Water Night and school programs such as the Don't Flush It competition, the community built practical knowledge about saving water and protecting wastewater systems.

As summer continues, building water knowledge is one of the most effective ways to take action. Understanding how and where you use water is the first step to reducing demand at home, both indoors and outdoors.

If everyone in our service area saved just 10 litres a day, together we would save around 504 million litres a year. That's enough to fill 200 Olympic swimming pools!



Scan for tips to save drips, or visit: [gwwater.vic.gov.au/save-water](http://gwwater.vic.gov.au/save-water)



Need to get in touch?

General Enquiries: 03 5832 4800

24/7 Faults & Emergencies: 1800 454 500

Email: [mail@gwwater.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@gwwater.vic.gov.au)

# Our Town's Football Club



The new season is just around the corner. We're excited to be pulling the boots on again. The new season will bring another year of friends, fun, football and success on and off the field.

Lots of players have taken advantage of our early bird registrations and playing spots are filling quickly.

Registrations are now open in all age groups for the 2026 season. Get in fast to ensure your child can be a Warrior in 2026.

Preseason training is back on after the Christmas break and the Coaches are ready to go. Go Warriors!



## Registrations are NOW OPEN!



Go Warriors!

### Registration age limits

U9 01/01/2017 – 30/4/2019

U10 01/01/2016 – 31/12/2016

U12 01/01/2014 - 31/12/2015

U14 01/01/2012- 31/12/2013

U16 01/01/2010- 31/12/2011

Scan the QR code and become a Warrior in 2026

## **Wandong Warriors 2025 SPONSORS**



Wandong Junior Football Club

We would like to thank our sponsors; without their generosity our club would not exist.