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Numurkah LEADER
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2020 \$1.30

INSIDE



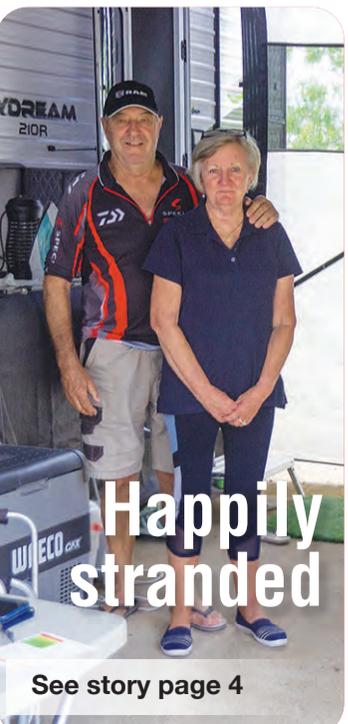
Happy surprise

See story page 5



A cuppa with Deb

See story pages 10 & 11



Happily stranded

See story page 4

Appeal success

NUMURKAH Good Friday Appeal coordinator **John Shrimpton** is thrilled with this year's local donations made during trying times. See story page 2.

High speed pursuit ends in capture for Rickky

WANTED local fugitive Rickky Leigh Dunn was apprehended by police on the weekend, after leading them on a high speed pursuit across the district.

Police units from Shepparton, Numurkah and Cobram attended a Tallygaroopna address just after midnight on Easter Monday, acting on information that 28 year-old Dunn may be at the address, or in the vicinity.

Dunn fled in a vehicle with a 29 year-old Wunghnu man, leading police on a pursuit through the back roads of Bunbartha and into Echuca.

It is alleged that the vehicle reached speeds of up to 150 kms per hour during the pursuit.

Dunn and his companion abandoned the vehicle on Bangerang Road, Echuca, and split up, with the other offender being apprehended on foot.

Dunn ran into the front yard of a nearby property and stole a Mitsubishi Triton ute that had been left with the keys in the ignition, and drove through the property's fence to get away.

He fled through Echuca CBD pursued by police, including the police air wing, knocking over temporary fencing at the Port of Echuca before driving down Scenic Drive Track.

Dunn was apprehended after he performed a U-turn and collided with a pursuing police vehicle, and the stolen ute became stuck between the police vehicle and a tree.

Following his apprehension on Monday, Dunn was held in custody and appeared before Shepparton Magistrates Court yesterday facing a large number of charges relating to the pursuit.

Those charges include reckless conduct endangering persons; dangerous driving while being pursued by police; fail to stop vehicle upon police request; unlicensed driving; possess methylamphetamine; theft of motor vehicle; criminal damage; aggravated reckless exposure of police officer to risk by driving stolen vehicle; and theft.

Dunn was also charged with failing to appear on bail at Shepparton Magistrates Court on March 10, and contravening conditions of bail for failing to attend at Odyssey House drug rehabilitation centre on February 26.

Police executed four outstanding warrants of apprehension and a revocation of bail warrant when they arrested Dunn on Monday.

Continued on page 3.

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Mayor's message – COVID-19 update

I WOULD like to congratulate our local residents, who played their part over the Easter break and stayed at home.

Normally we would welcome visitors to the shire and encourage locals to go out and about and enjoy our beautiful shire, however it was vital we all 'stayed put' to minimise the risk to our health care system.

The April ordinary council meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, April 22, at the Cobram Civic Centre from 5pm.

Due to the continuing Victorian Government COVID-19 stage three restrictions, public attendance would be a breach of the stay-at-home directions and we are asking people not to attend.

Instead, this meeting will be streamed live via

our Facebook page and questions from the public will still be considered.

You can email questions to info@moira.vic.gov.au. All questions must be submitted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

We have been speaking with residents about options moving forward to help pay their rates.

Our COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy is just one of many initiatives we have put in place and this policy applies to all rateable properties within the shire.

I would like to encourage any ratepayer who would like to discuss setting up a payment plan to suit their needs, or anyone who is in financial difficulty to give us a call.

Please continue to stay safe and stay at home unless you need to leave for an approved activity.



Thankful... Mayor Libro Mustica has praised the behaviour of locals over Easter.

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Numurkah virtually digs deep for annual appeal

NUMURKAH residents have stepped up to do their part for the Royal Children's Hospital, with around \$4,000 raised so far for the annual Good Friday Appeal.

Local appeal coordinator John Shrimpton, from Numurkah CFA, said the brigade was delighted with the result.

"We usually raise around \$15,000, but most of that comes from door-knocking and tin-rattling which we couldn't do this year, so we knew we would be well down on that," he said.

"We also weren't able to do the usual hamper raffle, which always makes a decent amount of money.

"Given the circumstances, \$4,000 is a great result and we are very grateful to the local community for going out of its way to support us."

Around \$1,000 came in before Easter through tins placed in local businesses and clubs, whilst another \$2,600 was raised through Numurkah's online virtual tin.

Another \$140 was also raised in just a couple of hours through a drive-by donation bin.

There are still some tins in local businesses that the brigade has not been able to collect and add to the tally due to current movement restrictions.

"Once those are counted and factored in, the total will be even higher and we're thrilled with that," John said.

"Between the bushfires and floods, and now coronavirus, these are trying times and we are really happy to see people showing their support for the appeal, and very grateful for their generosity."

John said that, although he is looking forward to things getting back to normal for next year's appeal and the return of door-knocking and tin-rattling, this year's appeal has shown the potential of online donations.

"The necessity to do things differently this year has shown what we can do with a greater online presence, and that's definitely something we'll be looking to explore more in the future."

Across the state, the appeal raised a record \$18.2million, largely thanks to a last-minute injection of funds from the Victorian Government.

At 9.30pm, Victorians had given \$9,640,437, but in an unprecedented last-minute gesture, Premier Daniel Andrews pledged to top up the fund 18.2 million, ensuring that it beat last year's total of \$18.145 million.

Chemical smell on Saxton St



WHILE the rest of us stay safe at home, local fireys remain busy, with four turn-outs in the past week.

Just after midday yesterday, Numurkah and Katunga brigades, along with Shepparton hazardous materials van (Hazmat), responded to a report of a chemical smell in a unit on Saxton Street, Numurkah, between Gray and McCaskill Streets.

A health support worker visiting the unit noticed a strong chemical smell; they evacuated the occupants and called Vicfire.

Numurkah fire brigade cancelled Katunga, and waited for Shepparton Hazmat to attend with their detectors.

No trace of chemicals could be found; the chemical smell must have dissipated before the Shepparton crew arrived.

At 10.30pm last Wednesday, April 8, Nathalia, Numurkah, Picola and Barmah brigades were called to a shed fire at Tenaces Road, Nathalia, between Katunga/Picola Road and Peter Clay Road.

A quad bike in the shed had

caught fire, destroying the quad bike and doing significant damage to the interior of the shed. Numurkah assisted with breathing apparatus wearers.

At 6.25pm on Good Friday, Numurkah brigade was turned out to a hay bale fire at Hendys Road, Numurkah, between Naring Road and Naring Hall Road.

Two bales were on fire, and some others were smouldering as a result of spontaneous combustion; six bales were removed into a large paddock, spaced so they could burn out. The farmer spread out the remaining bales in case any of them ignited.

On Easter Monday, at 9.40am, Numurkah and Wunghnu brigades, along with Shepparton's aerial pumper and hazardous materials van, responded to an alarm at the GrainCorp plant on McDonald Street, Numurkah.

A drop in water pressure caused a pressure switch to activate the alarm, which is what it is designed to do. There was no fire. The Wunghnu and Shepparton vehicles were stopped enroute.

Changes to local police station availability

IN an effort to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, Eastern Region Wangaratta Police Division - which includes local stations - will be restricting entry to stations and conducting a COVID-19 risk assessment before approving entry.

If you need to visit a police station, you are required to read the signs on the front

door and abide by any instructions.

Eastern Region Moira LGA Manager Senior Sergeant Darren McGrillen said regional police are working hard to ensure there is minimal impact to their service.

"We are committed to serving the community during these challenging times. We appreciate your continued cooperation and support," he said.

Police urge shutdown security

POLICE are reminding owners or operators of any business going into shutdown due to the COVID-19 emergency, to maintain the security of their premises.

Police are urging operators to ensure, where possible, that all cash, cigarettes and any valuables, are removed from the business premises and secured.

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High speed pursuit ends in capture for Rickky

Continued from front page.

Those warrants relate to a total of 45 charges, which include trafficking methamphetamine and ecstasy, unlicensed driving, failing to stop when directed by police, and car and motorbike theft, arising from a number of incidents in the Numurkah area in early December 2019.

It is alleged that on December 1, Dunn sped away from police on the GV Highway at Wunghnu at speeds up to 150kms per hour.

On December 3, he is alleged to have stolen a police car after police attended to perform a welfare check after he was seen apparently unconscious behind the wheel of a car parked on Lukies Road, Naring.

When police approached, Dunn is alleged to have fled the vehicle, gotten into the unoccupied police car and driven off.

A search involving a number of police cars and helicopters ensued, with Dunn spotted on Lukies Road travelling at speeds alleged to be up to 200kms per hour.

The police car was later located at the rear of a Yarroweyah property, but Dunn could not be located.

On December 6, he was allegedly located at a property at Tobruk Road, Naring, at around 6.30am.

Dunn is alleged to have fled towards Numurkah, along with another person, in a Mitsubishi Pajero, hitting and causing minor damage to a police vehicle as they did so.

The offenders drove off towards Numurkah, and police initiated a pursuit, but called it off a short time later due to safety concerns. Police believe one of the occupants left the Pajero and got into a Holden Commodore, which was seen in Numurkah a short time later and was briefly pursued until the pursuit was once again termi-



Gotcha ... Rickky Dunn was apprehended by police after a lengthy police pursuit through the district in the early hours of Easter Monday.

nated for safety reasons.

Dunn already had three outstanding warrants when those offences occurred.

Dunn appeared before Shepparton Magistrates court on February 21 on charges arising from those incidents, and was released on bail on condition that he attend Odyssey House drug rehabilitation centre where a bed had been secured for him, but he never arrived at the centre.

The conditions of his bail included that he live at Odyssey House, not attend Moira Shire, not use illicit substances and not drive a car.

The 29 year old Wunghnu man involved in Monday's pursuit was charged with a range of offences, and bailed to appear at the Shepparton Magistrates Court at a later date.

Those offences include evade police; reckless conduct endangering life; dangerous driving while being pursued by police; careless driving; breach interlock device and possess proceeds of crime.

Both men have also been fined \$1,652 for failing to comply with social distancing regulations as a result of Monday's pursuit.



SUZANNA SHEED MP

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR SHEPPARTON DISTRICT

Coronavirus

We are all making sacrifices during these difficult times, none more so than our health workers to whom we are enormously grateful.

I would like to also thank the many people who are keeping the rest of us safe—the retail workers and essential small business owners, the farmers, fruit pickers and truck drivers, our factory workers and our emergency services who continue to perform their vital duties.

And I would like to thank all of you who are performing the valuable role of staying home. As the weeks turn into months, we are all facing new challenges. Some of us, like myself, continue to work while social distancing and keeping our family and loved ones safe. Others are teaching their children in their homes and I hope this is proving a rewarding and positive experience.

We will come through this and I am proud that when faced with Coronavirus, my country, my state and my community have shown together we can and will overcome this pandemic.

Please remember to check in with friends and family on a regular basis.

Stay safe everyone.

Schools

As announced by the Victorian Government last week, the vast majority of primary and secondary students will be studying from home for Term Two.

Some schools will still be offering on-site learning, but this is restricted to students of essential services staff and those who cannot study at home. Please contact your school for details.

The Government has also initiated a program to assist those in need with sim cards or dongles to connect to the internet and the loan of suitable devices such as laptops. Again, please contact your school to see if you qualify for this program.

Locals fined for flouting social distancing

FOUR Numurkah residents have each been issued with infringement notices of \$1,652, for failing to comply with social distancing regulations.

Sergeant Tim Gleeson told the *Leader* that the fines were issued after the individuals, three men aged 36, 42 and 78, and a 30 year-old woman, who were gathered at the front of a Melville Street residence, ignored three warnings in three

hours to comply with regulations.

"We are trying to assist the public to ensure that everyone complies with the regulations, but people need to do the right thing and recognise that the regulations are non-negotiable," he said.

"We understand that there may be some confusion as to what is permitted under the regulations, and we are trying to educate people so they can do the right thing, but when people

ignore our directions, infringement notices will be issued.

Sergeant Gleeson said that, generally, local people have been really good.

"Most people accept it for what it is and understand that, although it's inconvenient, it's for the good of the entire community.

"Like everybody else, we just want everyone to get through this."

One more COVID-19 case confirmed in Moira

MOIRA shire now has 11 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with the eleventh case being confirmed by the Department of Health and Human Services on Saturday.

It is not known where the diagnosis was made, or where in the shire the person resides.

The number remained at 11 as of lunch time yesterday.

Greater Shepparton's total number of confirmed cases remains at nine, with no new cases reported in the past week.

The total number of COVID-19 cases in Victoria is 1,291 – an increase of 10 between Monday and Tuesday, as testing for the virus expands in Victoria.

To date, 14 people have died from coronavirus in Victoria, but no new deaths were reported on Monday.

The total number of cases is made up of 672 men and 619 women, with people aged from babies to their early nineties.

There are 122 confirmed cases in Victoria that may have been acquired through community transmission.

Currently 40 people are in hospital, including 15 patients in intensive care. 1,118 people have recovered. More than 71,000 Victorians have been tested to date.

Of the total 1,291 cases, there have been 1029 in metropolitan Melbourne and 236 in regional Victoria. Several cases remain under

investigation.

To better track the spread of the virus in the community, Victoria is once again expanding the testing for COVID-19.

Testing will now be based only on the clinical symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of age or occupation – making Victoria's testing criteria the widest in Australia.

These symptoms include any new fever, chills or breathing problems, specifically cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.

Only people in the general community with these symptoms will be eligible for testing.

As the testing expands, the public are assured that it will also continue for people with compatible symptoms who are close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, travellers from overseas, cruise ship passengers, as well as healthcare workers and people whose employment and contact with the broader public may place them at higher risk.

Healthcare workers and other frontline employees will be able to have their test results returned faster, allowing them to get back to their vital work in the community as soon as possible.

Expanded testing has been made possible by a reduction in the number of people returning from overseas, and more labs having come online. There are now 40 screening clinics open across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

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Victoria's state of emergency extended

THE state of emergency in Victoria is being extended for another four weeks to give the Victorian Government the powers it needs to keep slowing the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

Premier Daniel Andrews announced on Sunday that the state of emergency declared last month, which was originally due to expire on April 13, would be extended until midnight on May 11.

The extension will allow for the continuation of measures designed to 'flatten the curve' of coronavirus and give the state's health system the best chance of managing the virus.

Under a state of emergency, Authorised Officers (AOs), at the direction of the Chief Health Officer, can act to eliminate or reduce a serious risk to public health by detaining people, restricting movement, preventing entry to premises, or providing any other direction an AO considers reasonable to protect public health.

The month-long extension will ensure the government can continue its strict enforcement of social distancing, isolation and other directions put in place by the Chief Health Officer to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Premier Daniel Andrews said that, while we are starting to see some improvement in the rate of transmission, now is not the time for complacency.

"There are positive signs our efforts are working – but if we relax now, our hard-won gains will evaporate and people will die," he said.

"This is an unprecedented crisis – we need to extend the state of emergency to help slow the spread of the virus, protect our health system and save lives."

Mr Andrews thanked those Victorians who are doing the right thing by staying at home, but said we must keep at it to save lives, because if we relax now, the virus will start spreading quickly and our health system will be overwhelmed.

Victorians have been repeatedly told that, under the stage three restrictions currently in place, there are only four reasons to leave your home: food and supplies, medical care and caregiving, exercise, and work or education.

Police have strong powers to enforce these directions and can issue on the spot fines, including up to \$1,652 for individuals and up to \$9,913 for businesses. Under the state of emergency, people who don't comply could also be taken to court and receive a fine of up to \$20,000. Companies face fines of up to \$100,000.

Since March 28, Victoria Police have conducted 19,303 spot checks at homes, businesses and non-essential services across the state and issued over 900 fines.



Happily stranded ... Graham and Jill Green are waiting out the pandemic in Numurkah until they can continue their trip.

Worse places to be stranded

LIKE the rest of Australia, Graham and Jill Green from Mandurah in Western Australia had no idea what was coming when they left home for a year-long trip around Australia in early February.

"If we'd known this was going to happen we'd have stayed at home and taken our trip when this was all over," Jill told the *Leader*.

The Greens made good time getting to Victoria where they stopped on the Mornington peninsula for several weeks to visit their son.

"We'd planned to stay a bit longer, but the owner of the caravan park at Dromana announced he was closing the park and everyone but permanent residents had to leave," Graham said.

With the car booked in for a service in Shepparton, the couple headed north, staying in Shepparton for a couple of nights, before heading to Numurkah

where they had already planned to visit friends, and had a site booked at the Numurkah Caravan Park.

Though they had originally only planned to stay in town for a few days, as their planned departure date approached, South Australia and Western Australia both announced that they were closing their borders, and new restrictions on movement were introduced across the country.

"Terry told us that he had been ordered to close the caravan park, but as we were already here when the order came through, we were allowed to stay," Graham said.

"We're lucky, because even though we'd planned to visit other friends in Victoria before we headed north, we didn't have anywhere we really needed to be by any given time," Jill said.

"We would like to be able to go on

day trips, but we're in the same boat as everyone else and doing what we're told.

"We haven't even really been able to spend any time with the people we came to visit, but there'll be time for that when the restrictions are lifted."

Having now been resident in Numurkah for several weeks, the couple have settled into a daily routine.

"We take the dog for a walk every day and go to the supermarket if we need any essentials, but we had planned to live out of the van for a year anyway, so we have everything we need and we're happy just to stay put here."

"We could have applied for an exemption and headed back to WA, but even if we were at home we still wouldn't be able to see anybody, so we decided to wait it out here and then continue our trip."

"Numurkah's a lovely little town, there are much worse places to be stranded."



COVID-19 Community Update

The shut down of all 'non-essential' activities to combat the threat of COVID-19 is continuing and we are all needing to be flexible. Congratulations to all our local residents who are playing their part in this health crisis by staying home.

Will there still be council meetings?

Yes, it is business as usual with our ordinary council meetings.

The next meeting will take place at the Cobram Civic Centre from **5pm on Wednesday 22 April**.

Due to the continuing Victorian Government COVID-19 Stage 3 restrictions, public attendance would be a breach of the stay-at-home directions.

Instead, this meeting will be streamed live via our Facebook page and questions from the public will still be considered.

Email questions to info@moira.vic.gov.au with all questions to be submitted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Customer Service update

Council places the highest priority on the health and wellbeing of our staff and community and as such we have put the following measures in place –

- Our Customer Service Centres in Cobram and Yarrawonga will remain closed for face-to-face enquiries for the foreseeable future. However you can still contact us a number of ways – visit our website www.moira.vic.gov.au, email us at info@moira.vic.gov.au or phone us on (03) 5871 9222.
- Our visitor information centres will remain closed.
- Council facilities including all sports stadiums, recreation reserves, playgrounds, skate parks, public barbecues and public exercise equipment are closed.

Transfer Stations Update

The Tungamah, Strathmerton and Yabba Transfer stations will remain closed due to the continuing COVID-19 health emergency.

In addition, all Resource Recovery Sheds are now closed and no access will be granted.

Even though all other transfer stations, including the Cobram Landfill Site, are still open we are urging residents to only come if **ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**; please follow the Victorian Government messaging and "stay at home".

Remember to download the Waste App if you haven't done so already, with notifications going out regularly, updating the community on any changes to our waste facilities.

COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy

Council is committed to helping customers, ratepayers and businesses throughout the shire who are facing financial hardship at any time, but particularly during this current health crisis.

The COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy is just one of many initiatives we are putting in place and will apply to all rateable properties in Moira Shire.

Simply give our friendly Customer Service team a call on 5871 9222 for details on how to apply.

Economic support

Council is not charging user fees to sporting clubs that use municipal land and buildings whose seasons are affected.

We have also waived the rent for the June quarter on enterprises that operate from Council owned or managed land and have been affected by the enforced closures.

Immunisation Update

Our immunisation sessions have ceased to be drop-in sessions and have moved to scheduled appointment times.

This arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

Importantly, only those receiving a vaccine and their parent/carer are to attend their scheduled appointment – DO NOT attend if you or your child is unwell.

Please contact us on (03) 5871 9222 to book your appointment.

More information

For the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 please go to our website or www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

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Scolyers pack up their troubles in dad's old kit-bag

SURPRISE packages received by mail are arguably one of the nicest parts of Christmas, and Nathalia's Scolyer family received one last December that beat them all.

The Scolyers knew the package was on its way from Queensland, and knew that it was something that once belonged to their father - but that was all.

When the package finally arrived, they were delighted to discover that it was a WWII kitbag, which had belonged to their father Lance Corporal John Scolyer who had served as a dispatch rider with the 30th Australian Works Co. from 1942 to 1946.

The bag had been found several years ago in a garden shed in the small Queensland town of Tolga, with the name J.R. Scolyer and an Australian Infantry Force service number written on the flap.

Nobody knows how, or when, the bag got there, but it somehow seems like fate that it did, because you get the feeling that nobody else but the shed's owner, Janice McDonald, would have bothered to make sure it found its way home.

Janice's grandparents bought the home she now lives in in 1932, and Janice purchased the property and moved in after her aunt died in 2006.

The house and shed were both full of things that had been there for a very long time, and Janice gradually began going through them, which was when she found the kitbag.

"The bag was a great home for cockroaches when I found it," she told the *Leader*.

"It was actually fairly clean on the outside, so I hosed it down and hung it up to dry, with the intention of donating it to a museum one day."

With Janice slowly working away at renovating the property, 'one day' was a long time coming, and the kitbag got moved from room to room, but never thrown out.

Janice said that in around 2017 she did attempt to trace the name and service number online, but war records hadn't yet been digitised, so she set



Unexpected gift ... Bob Scolyer, Cheryl Williams and Kevin Scolyer with their father's old kit bag and other mementoes from his war time service.

the project, and the bag, aside once again.

Late last year, Janice decided to have one more go.

"I looked for the war records again and they were online," she said.

"It told me his date of birth and spouse's name, so I went on Ancestry.com and used that information to find a death record that mentioned Nathalia.

"I found there was a Nathalia genealogy group, so I emailed them and asked if they knew of the family, and if they were still there."

Lynn Franklin of the Nathalia Ge-

nealogy Group received the email and forwarded it to a surprised and intrigued Scolyer family, who replied to Janice.

"We confirmed that our dad was John Reece Scolyer and that he had served in the AIF," Kevin Scolyer said.

"I said we'd be really pleased to have anything that belonged to Dad and I gave her the address."

Shortly before Christmas, the parcel arrived, with a card from Janice extending her best wishes to the family.

"We still didn't know what it was until we opened it up, so it was a great surprise, and very exciting," said

Kevin's brother Bob.

"I was amazed at what good condition it was in, and to see Dad's name and service number written on it was incredible."

"We knew Dad had trained in Kanungra, so we knew he had passed through Queensland, before he went to Borneo, but whether the bag went astray on the way there or the way back, we don't know," Kevin said.

"We have no idea how it ended up in Janice's shed all those years later, but we're extremely grateful to her for keeping it and tracking down the owner and sending it to us. That was

very kind of her - she could have just thrown it away."

Janice said it never occurred to her to throw the bag away, and she is pleased to have been able to return the item to its original owner's descendants.

"I value history and I have a respect for the hardships that people sometimes had to go through to get their belongings, and what those things may have meant to them - especially during war time," she said.

"I'm very pleased to hear that the family is happy to have their father's bag and that it means so much to them."

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April Ordinary Council Meeting

Our next council meeting will commence at 5pm Wednesday 22 April at the Cobram Civic Centre.

Due to the continuing Victorian Government COVID-19 Stage 3 restrictions, public attendance would be a breach of the stay-at-home directions.

However, this meeting will be streamed live via our Facebook page and will be available to view on our website after the meeting.

Questions from the public will still be considered - questions must be emailed to info@moira.vic.gov.au and be submitted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Submitted questions will be read at the designated section of the meeting and answered by the appropriate officer or councillor.

For more information please give our friendly Customer Service Team a call.

(03) 5871 9222

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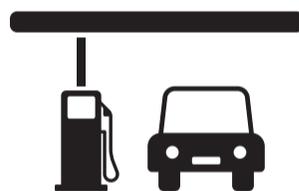
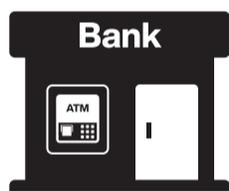


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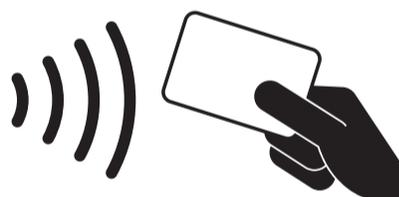
OFFICIAL MEDICAL ADVICE

Coronavirus: You must take action to save lives in your community.

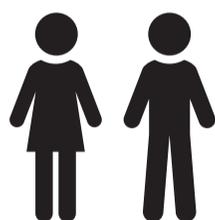
Stay at home unless absolutely necessary. Banks, supermarkets/groceries, petrol stations, medical services and suppliers will remain open. You must avoid non-essential travel.



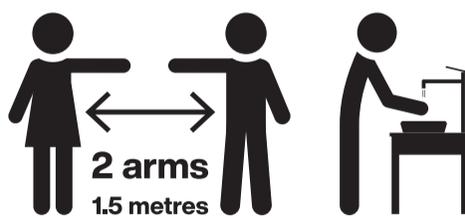
If you can, work from home. Use phones for meetings and stop handshaking. Tap to pay where possible instead of using cash.



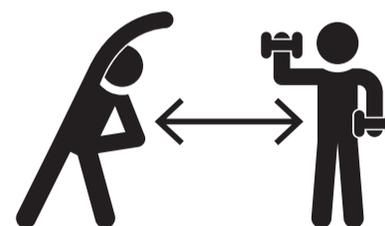
Gatherings of 2 people max are being enforced, with the exception of households, work and education.



You must stay 2 arms lengths away from others and wash your hands for 20 seconds.



Exercise away from others.



Coronavirus

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Numurkah locals mending fences

WHILE it's fair to say the events of March 2020 onwards have left the entire world reeling, many bushfire affected Australians were deep in crisis before coronavirus was even heard of.

Fortunately, as devastating as the 2019/2020 bushfire season was, kind-hearted Australians rallied behind the victims - including four local people who have literally been mending fences for fire affected farmers.

Forest and Cath Stanyer are old hands at the volunteer fencing game, having assisted after the Black Saturday fires, as well as after fires at Terang, Benalla and Wunghnu.

When they started pitching in again at the start of this year, helping rebuild fences near Cudgewa, their efforts inspired fellow Numurkah Uniting Church congregants Ian and Helen Furness to lend a hand as well.

Cath told the *Leader* that helping someone who has lost so much and doesn't know where to start with recovery work is immensely satisfying.

"It gives them a bit of hope, and the job of recovering doesn't seem quite as overwhelming when there are people there to help," she said.

"Usually they have lost all of their fencing, but if you can get the boundary and containment fences up fairly quickly, then at least they can get their cattle rounded up and off the roads and safe.

"Seeing a new fence go up in the place of a burnt one is very satisfying, and gives you a real sense of purpose."

While Cath and Forest were old hands at the fencing game, Helen was keen to help, but wasn't sure how much help she could actually be.

"I was surprised at how many things I could actually do," she said.

"I just followed instructions and, although it could be tiring because it's physical and you end up doing a fair



Team work ... Cath and Forest Stanyer (centre) with fellow fencing volunteers helping to rebuild fences destroyed in the Corryong fires.

bit of walking, it wasn't really difficult.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's not always easy to know how to help people, but this is something practical you can do that makes a big difference to people."

Forest, who as a former farmer himself is probably handier than most and does more of the technical work, agreed.

"You don't need experience to fence, it's pretty simple really, you just need to be willing to do the work," he said.

As well as fencing, Cath and Helen also spent a day folding 1,000 t-shirts to be sold at the Rise from the Ashes benefit concert held at Cudgewa Recreation Reserve at the end of February.

"It was a great day, and we were made really welcome and really felt a part of it," said Cath.

"The locals up there have really looked after us.

"We've been staying at the footy ground in caravans and using the kitchen in the community hall. The

local Rotary club put on a dinner for us and some of the families, and the farmers have been very good to us as well."

Whilst Helen and Ian could only devote a couple of weeks to the cause, Forest and Cath had been at it since early January, coming home every second weekend to water their garden and catch up with family before heading back to do more fencing.

Cath and Forest have been core members of a team of 45 volunteers

who have gone through, putting in over 3,000 hours, helping 19 farmers and erecting around 20kms of fencing.

"Because of the pandemic restrictions, we had to come home almost three weeks ago because we couldn't use the community hall any more," Cath said.

"As soon as we can, we'll be heading back up there.

"We have to - there are still hundreds more kilometres of fences that need to be rebuilt."

Influenza program commences

We are offering four extra sessions, in addition to our normal vaccination timetable, for influenza vaccinations.

These sessions will offer all National Immunisation Program (NIP) vaccines to approved infants, adults, and secondary school students plus catch up immunisations to those students who missed their scheduled doses in Term One due to school closures.

We will also offer paid influenza vaccinations, \$18 per dose, to those people not on the NIP and these will be allocated on a 'first to register' basis.

These sessions are **BY APPOINTMENT** and only those people receiving their vaccines and their primary carer (if required) should attend the session.

Please phone **(03) 5871 9222** to book your allotted time.

Flu Vaccine Session Times

- Cobram Civic Centre - 17 April - 12.30pm
- Yarrowonga Maternal and Child Health Centre - 20 April - 9.30am
- Numurkah Visitor Information Centre - 28 April - 2pm
- Nathalia Maternal and Child Health Centre - 30 April - 9.30am



Childhood Immunisation Update

Our normal immunisation sessions are now by appointment only. Only children receiving the vaccine and their parent or carer should attend. Please don't attend if you or your child is unwell. For all session times please go to our website then give us a call on 5871 9222 to make an appointment.

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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PACKAGES EXPLAINED

The Australian Federal Government have introduced a number of measures to assist Businesses and Individuals to manage through the impact of the Coronavirus.

Below we highlight some of the main features of the package and how to access these.

SMALL BUSINESS MEASURES

JOBKEEPER PAYMENT

Under the Jobkeeper payment businesses significantly impacted by the coronavirus will be able to access a government wage subsidy of \$1,500 per fortnight per employee, for up to six months. Employers (including not-for-profits) will be eligible for the subsidy if their business turnover has reduced by more than 30% relative to a comparable period a year ago (of at least a month). This is for businesses with a turnover of less than \$1 billion.

CASHFLOW BOOST – TO BE

DELIVERED IN TWO TRANCHES:

1. The First Phase will include a minimum amount of \$10,000 and maximum of \$50,000 and will be payable on the lodgement of the March BAS. The payment will be equal to 100% of the tax withheld from salary and wages.

2. Additional payments to be introduced in the July to October 2020 period, equal to the total of all first cash flow boost payments received. The maximum total payment is \$50,000 and the minimum total payment is \$10,000.

These payments will be delivered by the ATO as a credit against the balance on the March, June & September Activity Statement's lodged. If this places the entity in a refund position, the ATO will deliver the refund with 14 days.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS WITH

APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

If you are an employer who employs apprentices, you can apply for a wage subsidy of 50% of the apprentice's wage paid during the nine months from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020. Employers will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$21,000 per eligible apprentice (\$7,000 per quarter). Employers can register for the subsidy from early April 2020, with all claims for payment required to be lodged prior to 31 December 2020.

INCREASING THE INSTANT ASSET

WRITE-OFF

From the 12 March 2020, the instant asset write-off threshold is set to increase from \$30,000 to \$150,000 until 30 June 2020. From 1 July 2020, this threshold reduces to \$1,000, for businesses with less than \$10 million turnover.

SUPER MEASURES

Access to lump sums from super on compassionate grounds

If certain criteria is met you may be able to access up to \$10,000 of your super before 1 July 2020.

A further \$10,000 can be accessed from 1 July 2020 for a limited time.

You must apply for the lump sum through the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) via MyGov. If eligible, the ATO will issue a determination to the member's fund.

INCOME SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

– JOBSEEKER PAYMENT

A new six-month 'Coronavirus supplement' of \$550 per fortnight will be paid to individuals who are currently eligible for certain income support payments.

For the period that the Coronavirus supplement is paid, the Government will also expand access to certain income support payments (e.g., the Jobseeker Payment, the Youth Allowance Jobseeker and the Parenting Payment) for eligible individuals.

TAX-FREE PAYMENTS OF \$750 TO

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

The Government will be providing two separate \$750 tax-free payments (referred to as 'economic support payments') to social security, veteran and other income support recipients and to eligible concession card holders.

For further details on any of the above measures and how you are able to access these contact Belmores.



Protecting their charges ... Numurkah Pioneers Memorial Lodge nurse unit manager Deb Hitchcock giving the flu vaccination to staff member Annie Munroe.

Mandatory flu vaccination for residential aged care

NCN HEALTH staff are rolling up their sleeves to protect residents against the flu this year, and urging the community to get immunised before May 1.

NCN Health CEO Jacque Phillips said the outbreak of any virus in an aged care facility can cause significant health concerns to staff and residents.

"From May 1, no-one will be allowed on the premises of any residential aged care facility within NCN Health if they do not have an up to date vaccination against influenza," she said.

"We are committed to protecting the health and safety of our residents. These restrictions are in line with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act and will apply to everyone including staff, health care workers, visitors, health practitioners

and volunteers."

Ms Phillips said from May 1 all visitors to a residential aged care facility will be asked to provide proof of vaccination prior to entry. This may be a statement or record from a health practitioner, an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online, or from the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

Even if you are not planning on visiting a residential aged care service, NCN Health is asking the community to be vigilant against the flu this season.

"In light of the coronavirus we are expecting to see an increased demand on all areas of our health service. Having your flu vaccination is not just about keeping yourself and your family well, but reducing the im-

act on our health system at the same time," Ms Phillips said.

The annual influenza vaccinations have been offered free to aged care residents, employees and volunteers at NCN Health since the start of April.

Some community members are eligible for bulk billed appointments. You may be able to receive a free flu vaccine if you:

- Are 6 months to 5 years of age.
- Are over 65 years of age.
- Have a chronic condition (diabetes, heart disease or asthma).
- Are pregnant.
- Are an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait islander person aged six months to five years.
- Are an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait islander aged person over 15 years.

To book your flu vaccination, please contact your local GP.

Interpol warning on COVID-19 scams

INTERPOL has issued warnings about financial fraud linked to COVID-19, advising that criminals are taking advantage of coronavirus anxiety to defraud victims online.

The international policing agency has warned that an increase in people working from home, and more frequent government announcements, may increase vulnerability to people falling victim to online scams.

People are urged to be aware that scammers are adapting existing technology to play on people's fears around coronavirus, and selling products claiming to prevent or cure the virus.

Scamwatch has received multiple reports of phishing scams sent via email or text message

that claim to be providing official information on coronavirus, but are actually attempts to try and obtain personal data.

Scammers are impersonating official organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the Department of Health, or legitimate businesses.

People wanting information on the pandemic are advised to visit the Department of Health and the World Health Organization websites directly.

If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank or financial institution immediately.

More information on coronavirus scams is available on the Scamwatch website, including how to make a report and where to get help.

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THINGS TO BINGE

Bitter Ricky is darkly amusing

WITH season two arriving on Netflix in a couple of weeks, there has never been a better time to discover comedian Ricky Gervais' latest series *After Life*.

Gervais plays Tony, a journalist (and I use that term loosely) for a local village newspaper, grieving the death of his wife Lisa from breast cancer.

Though it would appear that he used to be a friendly, easy-going type, his recent loss has turned Tony into a bitter bloke with nothing to lose.

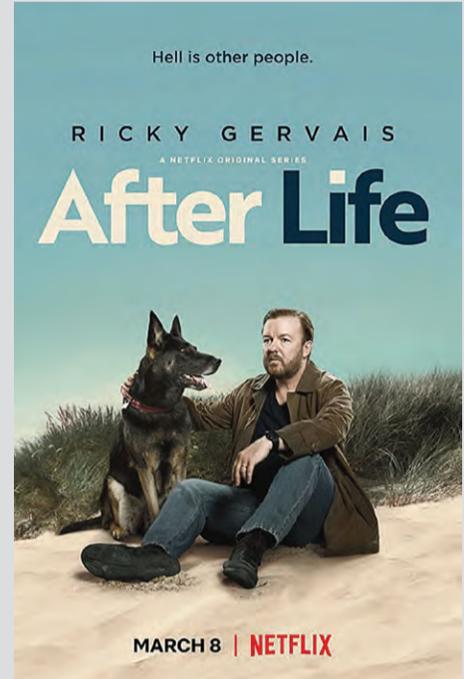
Tony wanders around shell-shocked, telling people exactly what he thinks and trying out some extremely questionable coping mechanisms.

Brief flashbacks, and Tony's repeated viewing of video messages left by Lisa, provide a glimpse at exactly what Tony has lost and make you feel for him, regardless of how mean he can be to others.

Gradually, Tony emerges from his grief long enough to make new friends and gain some appreciation for the fact that there are others standing staunchly by him no matter what he says or does.

Despite its subject matter, *After Life* manages to be funny, even if the laughs often come from moments that you know you probably shouldn't find quite so amusing because they're actually pretty wrong.

Gervais is great as the morose and bitter Tony who continues to endure purely because that's what his wife wanted of him, and the supporting cast - which includes quite a few faces familiar from past Gervais offerings - is



One morose man and his dog ... Ricky Gervais' *After Life* will have you laughing even as you wonder if you should.

terrific too. With just six 30 minute episodes, this darkly funny series is an easy watch, and will have you looking forward to season two dropping on April 24.



Disappointing ... Damage to the heritage listed pavilion, which has recently been refurbished, has disappointed locals.

Cemetery damage disappoints

DAMAGE done to a grave and the heritage-listed pavilion at Numurkah cemetery has left the cemetery trust committee disappointed.

The damage occurred overnight on Saturday, April 4, and is believed to have involved a large vehicle.

The vehicle had driven through a makeshift barrier erected the previous day to prevent vehicles entering, due to the ground being waterlogged as a result of recent heavy rain.

Numurkah and Wunghnu Cemetery Trust secretary Bernadette Steward said the damage was discovered at around 6am on the Sunday morning.

"Our maintenance man had been in self-isolation for a fortnight because he had just returned from overseas, and he was chomping at the bit to get down there and see how things were, so he got there early on the Sunday," she said.

"He noticed the damage to the pavilion straight away, but we didn't realise the grave had been damaged until a couple of days later."

Overall the damage is estimated to be valued at \$5,000, with the marble lid of the grave dislodged, a side bearer flattened, and the headstone moved.

The damage to the pavilion is particularly disheartening for the committee, as the structure, which dates back to 1889, had recently been refurbished.

"We refurbished the pavilion as part of a program to improve the cemetery, and we have had generous grants and donations from local businesses and service clubs to help us do that," Ms Steward said.

"The work is almost complete, with the original gates being re-installed this week, following their renovation.

"We take pride in keeping the cemetery nice for the community, and it's really disappointing that there are people who think they can come along and do whatever they like and make things hard for everybody."

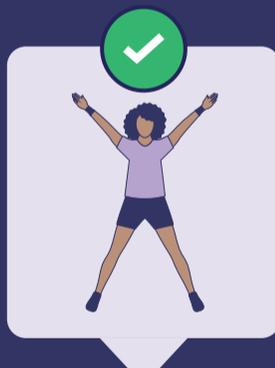
An important message from the Victorian Government

STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS ARE NOW IN PLACE.

That means there are only four reasons to be out.



Shopping for food and supplies that you need.



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Medical care and caregiving.



Work and education - if necessary.

Stay informed at coronavirus.vic.gov.au



Managing this *together*

A CUPPA WITH DOM



A cuppa with Deb Fowler

Time for a cuppa

ONE of the many simple pleasures the current social distancing regulations have robbed us of, is the freedom to get together for a cuppa and a chat.

Fortunately, before those regulations kicked in, the *Leader* took the opportunity to sit down with a few well-known locals and to get to know them even better.

Through a mixture of seemingly light-hearted questions, and a few deeper, more specific ones, we gain an insight into these familiar faces and learn some things we might never have otherwise guessed.

This week we get to know Deb Fowler - manager of the Numurkah Community Learning Centre and wildlife carer - a little bit better.

Full name: Debra Anne Fowler

Age: 60

Marital status: Partnered with six kids

Schools attended: Noble Park Primary School, South Vale Primary School, Heather Hill High School, Southern School of Natural Therapies, regional TAFES and training organisations

Summer or winter: Winter

Beach or mountains: Mountains

Oscar the Grouch or Cookie Monster: Oscar the Grouch

Crunchie or Violet Crumble: Violet Crumble

Elvis or The Beatles: Beatles

AC/DC or INXS: INXS

Favourite colour: Green

Favourite song: Georgia by Don Burrows

Favourite TV show: The Walking Dead

Favourite book: My Mother Myself

Do you make lists?

No. I have particular things each day that I know I have to do - Monday is compliance, Tuesday is something else, and so on. In this job you can make a list but it's so changeable it gets thrown out the window, so I learned a long time ago that that was really frustrating, so now I just try and concentrate on getting a certain area done each day.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a writer more than anything. I think then I would have liked to have been someone who wrote something really meaningful and philosophical. As I've grown, I think I would just like to write a book about the life of a wildlife carer and my stories



People skills ... Deb Fowler says that making people feel heard and understood is the key to good people management.

about those things.

If you could have one superpower what would it be?

Invisibility, because I think sometimes you need to be able to watch what's going on quietly to understand it, and you could do that if you were invisible.

Which of the seven deadly sins do you commit most often?

Gluttony, especially when it comes to wine and chocolate.

You run Bohollow Wildlife Shelter - how did you become a wildlife carer?

I used to be a publican, and a lady who was a wildlife carer used to come in with her little joeys and I just fell in love with them. I've always been an animal person, so I asked her if I could learn how to do it. That was 25 years ago and it just developed from there.

What is it that draws you to animals?

I suppose it's their need and the disrespect and lack of importance they're given by hu-



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A CUPPA WITH DOM

The Numurkah Leader
GOULBURN VALLEY FARMERS AND FRUIT GROWERS GAZETTE

100
years ago

This week in 1920 ...

To celebrate the State Library of Victoria's digitising of the war years editions of the Numurkah Leader, each week we will include the news of the week, 100 years ago.

To view these editions online go to trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/title/591.

The Numurkah Leader issue of April 14 is missing from the Trove collection, so we have included this report on the Goulburn levees, from the April 7 edition.

THE GOULBURN LEVEES AGAIN

There was a fair attendance of landholders interested in the levees at a public meeting held in the Public Hall, Nathalia, on Thursday last. Cr Schier (shire President) was voted to the chair, and outlined the scheme as already given in "The Leader"

Cr. J. H. Tuckett spoke at length against the proposal. The levees had already done thousands of pounds worth of damage, and it would take more than £1 an acre to clear the land of gum suckers that had sprung up. A cut at McCoy's bridge would ruin still more land. They should ask that the ballot be postponed so that the farmers could be educated to the meaning of the proposal.

Any money spent as proposed would be wasted. He moved that Messrs Clarke and Mitchell endeavor to have the ballot postponed, and that the Commission meet the landholders again.

Mr J. Collins seconded.
Mr W. P. Scott said he had changed his opinion regarding the efficacy of the levies, which were only a waste of money. If the scheme were gone on with farmers would be induced to grow wheat, which would be destroyed by floods, but they would still have to pay the rate. He intended voting "No" on his ballot Paper.

The chairman said the scheme had already been explained to a public meeting by the commission, and he did not think there was anything to gain by carrying the motion. He would vote against the proposal.

Mr A. McDonell said there was no chance of having the ballot delayed. So far he knew the vote was to be on an area basis.

Mr H. Broom, sen., said he had returned his paper marked 'No.'

Cr Garonne thought the vote should go on, and the people organised to vote "No."

The scheme might be all right for Loch Garry, but it was a different thing at McCoy's bridge, where they proposed to take the water from the river and return it at a narrow place. With a 32ft. flood the banks would go as before. He advised everybody to vote against the scheme.

Mr Golding announced his intention of voting "No," and said the Commission was using its power to take a ballot, without first educating the people as to its meaning.

Mr McDonell was against the rate, because the district could not stand the burden, but he thought the vote should be proceeded with. The Undera people wanted the work carried out, and the works at Loch Garry would ease things a good deal here, he thought. He moved as an amendment that the meeting oppose the striking of a rate and that all landholders be urged to vote "No."

Mr J.L. Harding seconded.

The vote was not on an equitable basis, for leaseholders had received papers, and they would have the power to put a tax on the land for all time. The levees had proved a failure, and instead of rich river flats the land adjoining had been impoverished.

Mr O'Rourke favored the work, Mr Burroughs thought something should be done. The levees could be repaired and the creeks opened up. Good work had been done at Loch Garry.

After considerable further discussion the amendment was carried.

Should the Commission comply with the request to allow of scrutineers being appointed, Messrs J. Broom and S. Garonne are to act. Mr. P.D.K. O'Hanlon was appointed secretary to the movement.



© Kirsty Ramadan

Her happy place ... Deb is never so relaxed as when she is outdoors with the native wildlife she loves so much.

better.

How have you been dealing with the social distancing regulations?

I really hate that it's called social distancing – I prefer to call it physical distancing. We can be at a physical distance from each other but still socialising. I think when you're talking about isolation it's really harmful to a community and I think we need to look at a different way of talking about it, because we're not really isolated when we can continue to connect and socialise in one shape or another.

I find that it's these things that are making some people push back against and refuse to be told what to do – it's a misunderstanding because we're not being told not to socialise, we are being told to keep a physical distance.

You have two quite intense jobs – what do you do to relax?

I play Playstation – my favourite game is the Witcher. Apart from that I really just love to be outdoors. I find sitting outside with my animals really soothing. I don't really have any hobbies that I do to relax.

Do you have any special or unusual talents?

No, I'm very ordinary and I'm happy with that. I don't want to be special. I don't like the lime-

light; I just like to get out and about and do my own thing.

On your office door you have a sign that says 'The trouble is, you think you have time'. Is that a mantra that you live by?

I do love that mantra, I think it's an important thing to remember.

Probably the mantra I use most of though, comes from *The Handmaid's Tale* 'Don't let the b**tards grind you down.' I use that a lot. It fits with a lot of what I do, especially with the wildlife rescue when people are asking me why I want to save a kangaroo or corella because they're just pests.

I remind myself that it's what makes me happy and fills my soul, so I won't let anybody grind me down – I just get on with what I need to do, and don't let what other people have to say, get me down.

What one issue do you feel humankind needs to resolve to ensure a positive future?

Definitely the environmental issues around climate change and animal welfare and the welfare of humans.

We need to be kinder. We really need to be kinder.

School speed zones

School will look a little different this term, but school speed zones will remain the same.

With Easter Monday signalling the end of Victorian school holidays, speed zones around schools were reactivated yesterday, despite it being a pupil free day.

The State Government has taken the decision to apply a consistent rule to school zones across the state to protect students getting to and from school and to avoid confusion for motorists about what speed limits apply.

Some school speed zones are permanent, while others operate from 8am to 9.30am and from 2.30pm to 4pm on weekdays during the Victorian school term.

All school bus services will operate as normal from today, to help students who cannot study at home get to and from school.

Social distancing measures will ensure any student who must travel to school can do so safely, but the message to students and teachers is clear – all children who can learn from home, must learn from home.

While Tuesday, April 14, was the official return date for government schools in Victoria, dates for independent schools will vary from school to school.

Real-time traffic conditions are available at traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au or via the VicTraffic mobile app. The latest public transport information and network status is available at ptv.vic.gov.au or in the PTV mobile app.

Fruit fly numbers will soar without funding, growers warn

INDUSTRY insiders have warned Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) numbers will increase by between 60-70% in the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV), if the Victorian Government fails to fund continued prevention and management measures after June this year.

The region has been successful in reducing fruit fly numbers through the GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project, but the future of the project is uncertain, with the Victorian Government yet to advise whether it will be funded after June 2020.

The project has reduced fruit fly numbers by more than 73% in Cobram and 60% in Greater Shepparton, Campaspe and Strathbogie Shires.

GMV Fruit Fly Project Governance Group, Chair and Cobram and District Fruit Growers Association, President, Tony Siciliano said it was inevitable fruit fly numbers in the GMV will increase to where they were prior to the project's commencement, if the project was to cease.

"Despite the many economic challenges facing the government, it's imperative and a matter of common sense that we continue to protect our horticultural industry by maintaining our focus on reducing the spread of fruit fly," Mr Siciliano said.

"If funding for the project stops in June fruit fly numbers will increase to what they were before the project began, which will bring with it huge blows for our growers and our horticultural industry.

"At this point in time we are in a positive

position because we have significantly reduced the threat of fruit fly. There is no question that the COVID-19 virus must have centre stage at the moment, but a rise in QFF numbers next fruit season will be the finish of lot of growers.

"If QFF is not managed, you can say goodbye to our fruit exports and forget about post COVID-19 recovery in horticulture. This is about assessing the threat to our industry and acting now to prevent losing next season's harvest. If the government is thinking recovery, it will be too late for us," he said.

Summerfruit Australia Deputy Chair Adrian Conti echoed the need to continue to protect the industry's longer-term prospects and prosperity.

"Next season the world will hopefully be coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and export demands are expected to accelerate sharply. Our industry needs to be fruit fly free to take advantage of the expected global demand," Mr Conti said.

"We are involved in gaining and maintaining market access which relies on complying with strict protocols. It is critical to continue the work of the GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project, as without this project we would not have been successful in dramatically reducing fruit fly populations to the point we are at today.

"Our exports to the end January were over 13,000 tonnes and up about 8% on volume, and our goal is to be able to continue this next season which is hopefully post the COVID-19 pandemic."

Easter 2020 style

WITH no-one able to go out for Easter this year, we asked our Facebook followers to share photos of what they had been up to on Sunday.



Bunny apprentice ... Archie Erickson decided to dress up as a rabbit to go Easter egg hunting.



Fun day ... Charlie Boler enjoys the chocolate bunny he found on his isolation Easter egg hunt at home.



Where to start? ... Max Erickson wasn't holding back with his Easter treats.



Special treat ... Kerry Cursons enjoyed traditional Macedonian Easter biscuits handed over the fence by her neighbour.



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ANZAC DAY 2020

Due to the current situation and the requirements of Headquarters RSL Victoria Inc., no official Anzac Commemorations Services will be conducted in Numurkah. However the public are invited to lay a floral tribute at any time during the day (as you go shopping) at the Memorial Park in Melville Street. Poppies will be available adjacent to the Cenotaph.

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BIRTHS

SMITH (EDIS) — John, Amanda and big brothers Emmett and Sterling are delighted to announce the arrival of **MAEVE RUBY** born Thursday, 9th April, weighing 2.8kg (6lb 2oz).

DEATHS

AUSTERBERRY (Barnes) — Patricia Florence Evelyn 'Pat' 31.7.1929 - 10.4.2020 Passed away peacefully, aged 90 years, at Goulburn Valley Health, Shepparton. Loved and loving wife of Ray (dec.). Loved and loving mother and mother-in-law of Geoff and Jen, and Marg and Gary O'Donnell. Devoted and loving Nan Pat of Daniel and Nicole, Matt and Amanda, Kiersten and Michael and Monique and Michael. Loved and loving great grandmother of Patrick and Thomas, Will and Jack and Oliver and Toby.

So Dearly Loved and So Sadly Missed Forever In Our Hearts

A Private Funeral will be held on Friday April 17, 2020. A farewell and celebration of Pat's life will be held for extended family and friends, at a later date.

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DEATHS

MATTHIES (Philpot) — Jean Margaret. 19.11.1933-6.4.2020 Formerly of Mardan South. Loving wife of Ivan (dec.). Terrific mum of Phillip, Dianne, Faye and Andrew, and their partners. Nanna of Brodie, Jordan, Nicholas and Alisha, and their partners. Great Nanna to 4. Dearly loved sister of Joyce, Bob, and John and families.

"Card sharp extraordinaire"
Private cremation



Due to the current restrictions, a celebration of Jean's life will be held at a later date.


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PETER KRAKE

DEATHS

OSBORNE — Kevin Edward. 12.11.1933 – 7.4.2020 Late of Invergordon, passed away at Karinya, Numurkah. Dearly loved husband of Maureen (dec.). Loved and loving Dad of Peter and Kathy. Much loved Pa of Lilly and Holly; Cheyne & Linda, Hayley & Stuart, and Jayson; and Great Pa of Amelia, Riley and Sophie; Bailey; and Logan.

You had a smile for everyone. You had a heart of gold. You left us wonderful memories. For us to have and to hold.

Reunited With Mum

A sincere thank you to the wonderful staff at Karinya for their loving care of Dad.

Donations appreciated to Karinya, can be made via credit/debit card by ringing NCN Health on (03) 5862 0555

Due to government restrictions, a Private Service will be held at Numurkah Lawn Cemetery.

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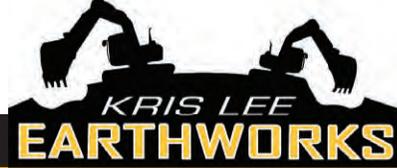
Please let us know before this year's edition so that we can ensure that all the information is correct

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LOCAL SPORTING LEGENDS

Getting to know our local sporting greats

HERE at the *Leader* we know that for those who start reading the newspaper from the back page, the cancellation of sporting competitions locally, nationally and globally has hit hard. With little to no sport being played live, there is little to nothing new to

report - but that doesn't mean there's nothing at all to report sports-wise. Scratch the surface, and the Numurkah district has a large number of seemingly ordinary residents who have achieved remarkable things in a wide variety of sporting fields.

So, each week, we speak to one such local each week - at least until sport starts back up. After all, just because we can't get together for a chat doesn't mean we can't get to know each other a bit better.

Practice makes a profession for Geoff

ANYONE who ever doubts the power of practice needs only to study Geoff Sutcliffe's career as a lawn bowler to have their doubts blown away for good.

In Geoff's first season as a lawn bowler at Numurkah Golf and Bowls Club, at the age of 21, he won the club singles championship. The first of a total of 33 times he would achieve it.

In his first year out, you might put that down to beginner's luck, but, in fact, Geoff had been practising for six years.

Geoff's parents were very good lawn bowlers who enjoyed the sport so much they installed a practice green at the family's Waaia farm when Geoff was 15, and Geoff and his siblings got as much use from it as their parents did.

"Us kids used to come home from school and get the bowls out and play," Geoff said.

"I became pretty good at it in those six years."

Geoff had only waited so long to test his skills off the farm because club rules prevented him from playing championships or pennant until he turned 21.

"When I won the club singles that first season I thought 'you know what, I might be okay at this game,'" he said.

Once he got started, Geoff began playing pennant for the club, where he was the youngest member by 15 years.

With regular competition, Geoff got better and better, and five years later, when he was 26, he was invited to trial for the Victorian team, and gained selection.

Up to that point, Geoff had also been playing football, but he gave it away for fear of a football injury impacting on his ability to play bowls.

Geoff's bowls game continued to improve, and with improvement came success - and a decision to be made.

"Mum and Dad had left the farm by then and my wife Jenny and I were running it," he said.

"I had started to get invitations to tournaments all over Australia and New Zealand, and we knew that we either had to sell the farm so I could go ahead with my bowls, or give bowls away and do the farm work."

At the age of 31, Geoff sold the farm to become a professional lawn bowler, and almost immediately won the Victorian title.

"I hadn't won a state title until I went professional, and then I won a state singles. With just the bowls to focus on I kept getting better and better and then I got a call up from the Australian selectors to trial.

In 1992, Geoff was ranked as the number two lawn bowler in Australia.

"The number one player was Rob Parella - he had a fantastic drive and he was so devastating; he was the one I really looked up to," Geoff said.

"I beat him 31 - 30 at Southport to win the Australian singles title. God, that was a great moment, and it was the kick I needed to get into the Australian squad."

After two years of trialling, Geoff was selected to represent Australia at the Pacific championships in Hong Kong in 1992, and won two silver medals.

It was the first of 38 games he would play for the national team - including four times against New Zealand in the Trans Tasman championships.

As a professional lawn bowler, Geoff toured

Australia and New Zealand, competing for prize money.

"You're not talking hundreds of thousands of dollars with lawn bowls, you're talking \$5,000 to \$10,000," he said.

"The most I ever won in a tournament was \$8,000 - and also a gold nugget - in the Gold Nugget tournament at Tweed Heads."

On the professional circuit, Geoff formed close friendships with the other players.

"You're constantly travelling around with the same 20 players and you get to be really, really good mates.

"You'd all have a drink in the bar together after the tournament but playing against each other on the green it was on. We were playing for money, so it was really on."

If he wasn't off to a tournament somewhere in Australia or New Zealand, Geoff would be at the Numurkah Golf and Bowls Club practising.

"It's like any sport, what I put into it is what I got out of it, and those years I played professionally I would be over at the golf club practising every day, like a pro-golfer would, and of course I got better at it."

Alongside his victory against Rob Parella, another singles victory stands out for Geoff.

"Mum and Dad used to take the caravan up to the Gold Coast and anytime I was playing up there they would come and watch," he said.

"John Snell was an iconic Victorian player who had won nine masters, and I beat him in the final at Coolangatta, and Mum and Dad were there. That was a really exciting day."

Beyond the personal victories, one of Geoff's all-time highlights is a victory he got to share with friends, and fellow Numurkah Golf and Bowls Club players Des Staggard, Steve Piggott and Andrew Henderson.

"We won the state fours in 1995 in Ballarat, and then went to Tasmania to compete in the Australian titles," Geoff said.

"We didn't do any good in the nationals, but we had fun. It was Drew's first time on a plane and we stayed at a five star hotel. To be able to share that with mates from my club was fantastic."

After five years as a professional - which he describes as the best five years of his life - Geoff walked away from the touring life.

"I'd achieved my goals," he said.

"I'd played for Australia, won a state title and a national title. At 37 years of age I thought I'd better get back in the workforce."

Geoff and Jenny bought a farm at Katunga, and Geoff started working as the curator at the Numurkah Lawn Tennis Club.

Bowls coaching also beckoned.

"I was approached by Nathalia Bowling Club to coach, and I coached for three years and we won the premierships each year.

"After that, Shepparton Golf Bowls Club approached me and I coached there. They had played in seven finals but never won a premiership, and the year I went there we won it, and came runner-up the following year.

"I did a year at Numurkah Golf and Bowls Club after that, and then a year at Shepparton Park.

"Coaching was different than playing, and I loved it - you're involved in the club in a different way and not just focussed on your game.

"I already knew the better players in the clubs - especially Nathalia and Shepp Golf - but I got to know the average player and the ladies that



worked in the kitchen and I still know them now when I go to those clubs, and I enjoy that."

A decade ago, when he turned 60, Geoff gave coaching away, but continues to play.

"I've wound my bowling down a lot now. I'm still competitive, and I can hold my own against others, but I haven't got the consistency now that I had when I was younger."

After 50 years in the game, Geoff was thrown a new challenge last year, and although it was unwelcome at first, he has since embraced it.

"I injured my back on a fishing trip and I couldn't bend down to bowl anymore, so I need to use a mechanical arm now," he said.

"It was pretty devastating at first having to use

the arm. I thought 'I'll never get this' but I practised for the whole winter in Coffs Harbour last year; out there every day, just like I used to when I was playing full-time. I'm pretty good with it now, and I'm improving all the time.

"It's actually been exciting to have a new challenge again. I didn't expect to be presented with a new challenge after 50 years."

Geoff, who is a life member of the golf club and was inducted into the Murray Bowls Hall of Fame a few years ago, is now content to do bowls the way most people do - semi-retired and playing pennant on Saturdays and the odd tournament around the district.

"I'm just an average bowler now, but I enjoy it."

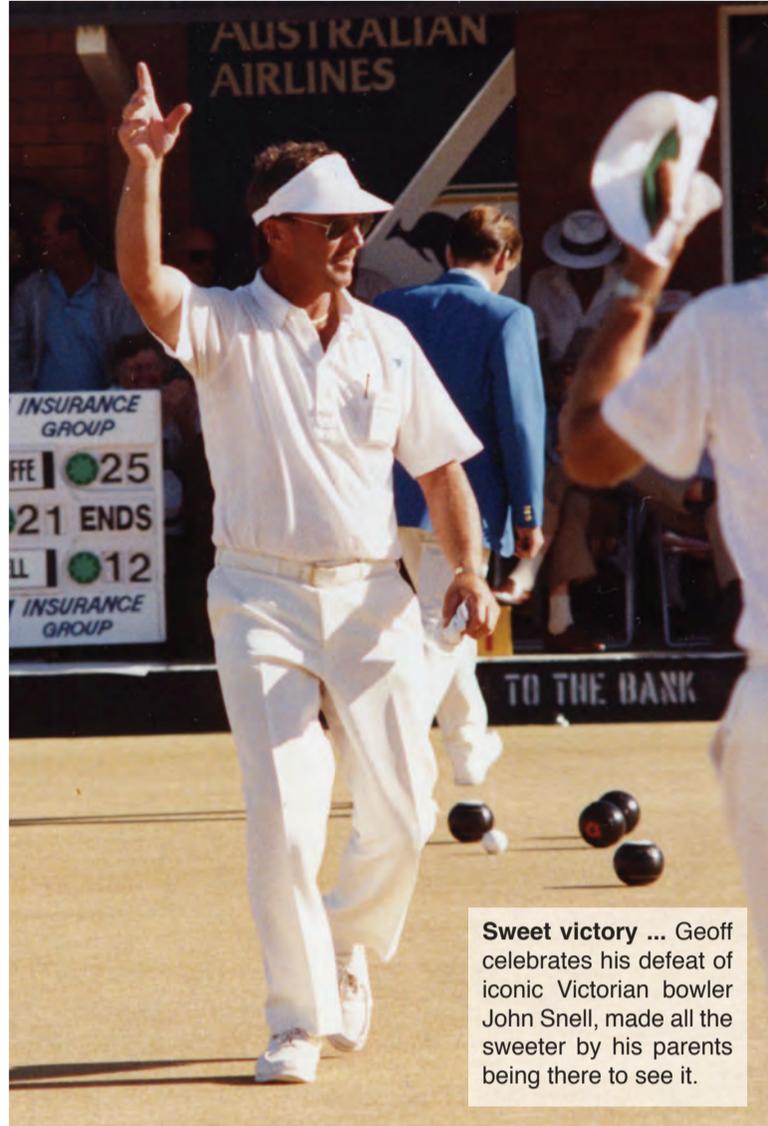
LOCAL SPORTING LEGENDS



Proud to wear the green blazer ... Geoff represented his country 38 times during his illustrious career.

GEOFF'S STATS

- 38 games for Australia
- 340 games for Victoria
- One Australian singles title
- One Victorian singles title
- Two Victorian country singles titles
- One Victorian Champion of Champions title
- One Victorian State Fours title
- One Teed heads Gold Nugget
- Two Coolangatta Master of Masters
- Two Murwillumbah Masters Fours
- One National Under 35 singles title
- One Bicentennial Pairs (Tasmania)
- One Gold Coast Winter Carnival Pairs
- One Wagga City Masters Pairs
- 33 Club championships
- 43 Association titles
- 18 Group titles



Sweet victory ... Geoff celebrates his defeat of iconic Victorian bowler John Snell, made all the sweeter by his parents being there to see it.

Miles scores big

Picola league season still on hold

THE Picola and District Football and Netball League has advised that it is still unable to put a date in place for the start of its season.

League operations manager Shane Railton had previously advised that it was the PDFNL board's intent to meet prior to April 17, to review and/or confirm a possible May 2 commencement of the 2020 season.

"With the necessary state and federal gathering rules remaining in place, and there being no indication as to when they will be lifted, the PDFNL is unfortunately not able to provide any further information at this stage on when the PDFNL season may be able to commence.

"The PDFNL advises that, as gathering rules brought upon the suspension of the 2020 season, the lifting of such will be the trigger for the immediate commencement of the PDFNL season.

"Such is the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, options and possible season structures are forever being considered" Mr Railton concluded.

WHILE COVID-19 has caused the cancellation of a multitude of sporting events and end of season presentations over the past month or so, one local club managed to hold its presentations in a different manner.

Katunga Cricket Club announced their season trophy winners with an entertaining slideshow played on the club's Facebook page.

The presentation included round highlights, game votes, leader boards and photos of the division one players receiving their premiership medals, all accompanied by music and photos of the trophies.

The 2019/20 season proved most successful for division one captain Toby Miles, who walked away with a premiership flag and a best and fairest award for his efforts.

The opening bowler scored 30 votes in the club's top award, ahead of Brad Tweed and Adam Cook, who tied for the runner-up position on 22 votes.

Miles also won the bowling average with 32 wickets for an average of 8.13 runs, the MVP with 512 points, and was named the best player in finals, to cap off a most successful season.

Daniel Henderson took out the batting average with 269 runs at an average of 38.43. The captain's award went to Mitch Doyle, and the coach's award went to Ben Whitford.

Daniel Henderson and Jarrod Rankin shared the honour of being named as the best clubmen.

Club president Brad Tweed said this year's award was a hard decision, "with the usual people helping out all the time".

"These two blokes' hard work stood out to us, and we appreciate everything they have done."

Spencer Small held on to win the division two best and fairest award by a solitary vote, with 13, ahead of Robert Harris on 12.

Harris took some consolation, though, winning the MVP and the bowling average, taking 16 wickets with an average of 8.56.

Ayden Youd was named the best player in the finals series, as well as taking out the season batting award, with 283 runs for an average of 56.6.

Yehan Sooriarchchi was awarded the coach's trophy.

Under 14 Xavier Morris had a great season, taking out the MVP and winning the batting average with a total of 117 runs at an average of 23.40, showing why he was named the Russel Cook most promising junior.

Nathan Simpson won the bowling average with 13 wickets at a terrific average of 6.92, Darby Salter was awarded the coach's trophy, and Ryan Said was named the David Miles most determined player.

All of the under 12 players will receive a trophy for their participation.



A mile ahead ... Toby Miles enjoyed a terrific season as captain of Katunga's division one side.

PRACTICE MAKES A PROFESSION FOR GEOFF



ANYONE who ever doubts the power of practice needs only to study Geoff Sutcliffe's career as a lawn bowler to have their doubts blown away for good... *Story Page 14*

OUR DOORS ARE CLOSED BUT WE ARE STILL HERE TO HELP YOU

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