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PO Box 213, Kinglake 3763

WEBSITE

www.mountainmonthly.com.au

EMAIL

mmkinglake@bigpond.com

EDITOR

Jane O'Connor
0407 318 648 • mmkinglake@bigpond.com

ADVERTISING

Neesha Sinclair
0493 740 926 • advertisingmm@bigpond.com

PRODUCTION/GRAPHIC DESIGN

Ann Friedel Publishing

ACCOUNTS

Nadia Chevriaut
0447 175 240 • mountainmonthlybilling@gmail.com

DISTRIBUTION

Sean O'Connor

MM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: Dr Angela Palmer
Treasurer: Chris Boyer
Board members: Rob Verhagen

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Keep Running Rob!



When we received a message at MM from a guy named Rob Pope, saying he was heading our way – running from Melbourne to Brisbane – we had to investigate further.

He politely asked if anyone might be able to offer him a bed for the night or a part of their yard where he could pitch a tent.

Mountain hospitality for visitors being a given, we connected with Rob to follow his progress into the township and see him keep running from there.

Rob – a veterinarian from Liverpool, England – not only runs for charity causes, but he makes some amazing connections along the way.

With his faithful trolley of supplies – named 'Rosie' – he aims for more than 70 kilometres a day and on 18 December is intending to run into the Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane for the AC/DC concert.

The band has adopted his cause, gives him a song dedication at their concerts and will sell signed band gear to add to his \$100,000 target for the World Wildlife Fund, British charity, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Smith Family.

He runs in the shirt and tie arrangement to thank them.

So why such a circuitous route through Kinglake and the shire on his way to Brisbane?

Rob doesn't do easy. He has run across the United States 'a couple of times' for charity.

He'd spent some time in Australia with his wife, working as a vet and returned for this run.

A friend had mentioned that he was particularly fond of the Kinglake area, so Rob simply plugged it into the Google walking directions so he could check it out.

He says he gets to see far more attractive and interesting places that way, rather than just sticking to the standard main routes.

When we met, he'd just pushed 50kg 'Rosie' at a run from Diamond Creek and up the Kinglake-Heidelberg Road to stump up at Foodworks for a well earned snack and drink.

"I might just consider moving here it's so nice", he said.

He didn't stay long – a bit of favourite honeycomb and an energy drink onboard - and he was heading out on Glenburn Road to reach the Melba Highway and was planning on camping in Yea that night.

We'd welcome him back as a new mountaineer anytime.

You can follow Rob on Instagram @run.robba.run, or if you want to encourage him along the way email goingthedistancerun@gmail.com.

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*Orphaned babies galore. Have a very Tawny Christmas.
Photo: Lorraine Casey*

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Council adopts key strategic plans

Murrindindi Shire Council has adopted a number of key strategic plans that will help shape the future of the Shire's services, infrastructure and communities.

The plans include:

- Financial Plan 2025-2035
- A Shire Health Plan
- New Residential Design Guidelines
- Kinglake Ranges Community Plan
- Council Asset Plan
- The Yea Structure Plan

Mayor Cr Damien Gallagher said these plans set a clear strategic direction for how we care for our people, our places and promote the sustainable growth of Murrindindi Shire.

"They reflect the aspirations of our community and provide a roadmap for

how we'll deliver on them in the years ahead."

The Asset Plan 2025-2035 sets out how Council will manage and maintain more than \$640 million worth of Council assets, including roads, bridges, buildings and open spaces over the next decade. The Plan focuses on sustainable investment, renewal and ensuring value for money for ratepayers.

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 outlines a shared commitment from Council and partner agencies to improving the physical, mental and social wellbeing of residents, with particular focus on children, young people and older people. The Plan will be delivered in partnership with local health organisations and community partners.

Council also adopted the Murrindindi Residential Design Guidelines, providing practical advice to support well-designed, sustainable and diverse housing across the Shire. The guidelines will help developers and residents design houses that reflect local character and respond to the local context, protecting the unique rural charm.

The Yea Structure Plan 2025 was adopted to guide sensible growth and development in Yea.

The plans set the direction for Council's decisions.

The reports are extensive and detailed and all documents are available on Council's website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/documents

We bring you reports on a selection of them in this edition.

Shire Assets Under Review

Murrindindi Shire Council manages over 29,000 assets valued at more than \$640 million – including roads, bridges, drainage, buildings, sporting facilities, parks, and lighting and shared pathways – to underpin essential community and critical services.

This represents the Shire's largest cost, with limited ability to generate income (see the Financial Plan 2025-2035 outline in this edition).

Over the next 10 years, the shire will concentrate its resources on the assets whose failure would affect service delivery or community safety.

This Asset Plan presents a 10-year lifecycle framework for maintaining, renewing and selectively expanding the asset portfolio, as well as retiring or disposing of under-utilised or ageing assets.

It outlines the annual funding required to sustain renewal rates but does not constitute a firm commitment to spend at that level.

This Asset Plan and Council's Long Term Financial Plan share a unified objective: reduce the renewal gap by applying consistent strategies around reducing costs, finding efficiencies and ultimately increasing the capacity to fund renewal on an annual basis.

Council's ability to generate income is limited, typically capital programs are funded from a diversified mix of internal and external revenue streams.

"Despite strong community expectations, we face economic constraints—including limited revenue-raising powers, rate capping, and a structural shortfall in State and Federal grants", the Assets Review Report says.

The Council will tackle its funding/

renewal gap by:

- Extending the useful life of assets through proactive maintenance and targeted renewal programming.
- Prioritising renewal and upgrades of high- priority infrastructure to support community growth, economic development and visitation.
- Develop and maintain "grant-ready" projects to capitalise on external funding opportunities.
- Explore new future uses for underutilised assets to unlock value and reduce carrying costs.
- Identify and implement new revenue streams while driving cost efficiencies across operations .
- Minimise the renewal backlog by increasing annual capital allocations and leveraging external grants.

A copy of the Asset Plan can be found on the Council's website.

A Health Plan For The Shire

Enhancing mental health and wellbeing, promoting active living and strengthening social connections will be the priorities in the Shire of Murrindindi's four year Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The plan will prioritise young people and older residents.

Wellbeing portfolio Councillor, Cr Jodi Adams, says that wellbeing is influenced by more than just access to healthcare, but is also shaped by our environment, social connections, opportunities for participation, and the settings in which we live.

"Our success will depend on the strength of our partnerships - with local health services.

The Shire is not explicitly funded to deliver health promotion and prevention activities. Therefore, successful delivery relies heavily on effective partnerships with health promotion and prevention organisations, community groups (e.g., neighbourhood houses) and health and wellbeing services.

For details on the Shire's current health and wellbeing data, a copy of the Plan can be found on the Council's website.

What's on Kinglake Ranges Events

December 2025 Council Pools Open	2&16 Pub Trivia	7-20 Whittlesea Christmas Tree Extravaganza	21 Kinglake CFA Santa Run	21 Rotary Market	22 School Holidays begin
January 2026 Council Pools Open	6&20 Pub Trivia	15 Mountain Monthly Deadline	22-26 Yea Rotary Art Show	28 Schools return	

Enjoying Where We Live This Holiday Season

As the Mountain Monthly signs off it's last edition for the year, we wish all our valued readers, business and other advertisers, and our community contributors a safe and happy holiday season.

We will return for our next edition in February and look forward to a successful 2026 and continuing to connect the Kinglake Ranges and beyond as we have since 1981.

You will find this edition awash with wonderful activities, places to go, where to find a great meal or coffee and what the community is planning ahead for.

Some major strategic plans have been released by the Shire of Murrindindi and form an important guidebook that will affect the way we live for the next 10 years.

But, we don't have to go far outside of our

own zone to make it an affordable and enjoyable holiday season.

Whether it's having a day out in our spectacular environment, checking local shopping outlets for general supplies and Christmas presents, going for a free swim in a Shire pool with the kids, enjoying a market, or supporting our local cafes and restaurants, it is under our noses.

Then there's a fun trivia night at the pub, an art show in Yea, a Christmas market, finding a picnic spot beside a stream, marvelling at a waterfall in the Kinglake National Park, or taking a stroll on the Great Victorian Rail Trail, we are truly blessed with choices.

Underpinning all of that is our community safety and the volunteers who turn out in all weathers and at any time of the day and night to respond to emergencies.

Please take the time to put our SES and

CFA details into your phone or have them handy as we plan for the summer season.

The CFA Santas will again be on the fire trucks to give the kids an annual thrill.

Fire restrictions were put in place in November, so ensure you follow the rules and instructions so we can wish our residents and volunteers a safe holiday season.

It's a time to care for and acknowledge others too – check in on neighbours; those among us who are battling the tougher economic conditions; the army of volunteers without who our community couldn't run effectively; and new residents who may be seeking the right information in their new community.

Be kind, stay safe and enjoy where we live.

The Mountain Monthly Team

MM DEADLINE REMINDER

A reminder for our value advertisers and contributors.

The next edition of MM will be February 2026.

The deadline for contributions will be 15 January, 2026

For the February edition.

We look forward to hearing from you then.

The MM Team

Mountain Monthly

NEW
POSTAL ADDRESS

Please note MM has a new postal address: **PO Box 213, Kinglake 3763**

Shire Faces 10 Year Deficit

Without significant interventions - including a rate rise above the State Government's cap and increased government funding – Murrindindi Shire Council is projected to remain in deficit for the next 10 years.

The shire's Financial Plan 2025-2035 also says that Council can no longer postpone or defer necessary asset renewal and upgrade expenditure if it is to continue delivering safe and necessary services and infrastructure to the Murrindindi community.

The plan says that "Council's financial sustainability risk has increased in recent years and continues to trend unfavourably, impacting critical decisions and outcomes on infrastructure, services delivery and achievement of the community vision".

Funding the asset and other requirements will significantly affect Council's financial position over the next decade, as evidenced by:

- An adjusted underlying operating result remaining in deficit throughout the Plan.
- Insufficient internally generated rate and grant income to fund asset expenditure for each year of the planning period.
- Liquidity and unrestricted cash indicators falling below sustainable levels.

To reverse this unfavourable financial projection, the three most critical to securing Council's future financial sustainability are:

1. Consideration of an early exemption to enable Council to raise rates above the rate cap for one year.

The current rate cap is 3% for the 2025/26 financial year and it limits the maximum amount a council can increase general rates and municipal charges.

The council has not indicated the percentage increase it would be seeking and the Minister for Local Government sets the cap for the following year before 31 December each year.

Other shires that have been approved for higher caps include Hepburn Shire at

10% and Indigo Shire at 7.54%.

Murrindindi's Revenue and Rating Plan provides the framework for the setting of fees and charges, statutory charges, rates, and other Council income sources. It also makes assumptions regarding non-controlled revenues that the Council expects to generate over the 4-year period, such as grants, subsidies, and contributions.

Additionally, it defines the amounts of rates to be generated either through a uniform rate, or from different ratepayer/property classes through municipal charges, differential rates, service rates and charges, and special rates and charges (where they have been adopted).

2. A substantial increase in government financial assistance to recognise the lack of alternative own-source revenue options for Council and limits on the capacity of the community to contribute more.

3. Debt funding of Council's short-life assets.

The Plan also intends establishing a deliberative community panel to guide decisions about consolidating or disposing of under-utilised Council buildings and facilities.

This is accompanied by developing a Service Planning Framework to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and affordability of Council services and continuing Council's strong advocacy for fairer State and Federal funding arrangements to address the financial disadvantage faced by small rural councils.

The financial outlook is linked to the council's Asset Plan.

The Council manages over \$640 million in assets.

This plan is a framework for maintaining, renewing and, where possible, selectively expanding the asset portfolio.

"In line with Council's current financial sustainability challenges, Council has adopted a risk-based and cost-conscious approach to asset management, meaning

that over the next 10 years Council's finite resources will be focused on those assets where failure would most affect service delivery or community safety".

Council plans to narrow the renewal gap over the next decade, ensuring ageing and capacity-constrained infrastructure remains safe, reliable and fit for purpose. This will be achieved through prioritisation, improved asset data, and targeted investment aligned with service needs and financial capacity.

Addressing the renewal gap, and ideally achieving an optimised lifecycle spend, remains one of the most significant financial challenges facing Council.

Cost shifting

The plan also outlines how limits on rural councils' revenue raising are also exacerbated by additional costs imposed on them via the decisions of other levels of government. Local government is expected to comply with new government policies and regulations, and to deliver an ever-increasing range of social, environmental and economic services and infrastructure to support and enhance the wellbeing of their communities.

"It is widely accepted that this expectation is impacting negatively on the financial sustainability of the sector".

Councils often become the service provider of last resort, the plan says, when other levels of government or the private sector fail to provide adequate services or where services are transferred to local government without adequate financial support. Known as 'service scope creep' the net cost to councils increases over time as the real value of funding diminishes.

These unfunded mandates represent a significant impost and contribute to the deterioration of Council's underlying financial position.

The Shire's Annual Report 2024/25 and Financial Plan 2025-2035 and Asset Plan 2025-2035 are available on Council's website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/publications



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New Housing Design Guidelines Released

If you are planning on building a home, renovating for lifestyle needs, or looking at developing a new housing enclave or other building, the Shire of Murrindindi's new Design Guidelines will determine how it should look and perform.

The guidelines came about as the Shire undertook planning for its Alexandra East Development Plan, and has extended it across the shire.

Whether it's in one of our small townships, a large lifestyle block, or walkable to a town centre, the guidelines aim to produce housing that is attractive, sustainable and "in tune with the rural charm and distinct identity of our towns and settlements".

The guidelines complement the approval processes and don't replace any of the existing controls or regulations, but are a reference for all landowners, developers and builders.

The Guidelines will:

- Facilitate future residential development to enable the Council to effectively address current housing shortages and

anticipated future demands.

- Describe design outcomes for typical residential typologies in Murrindindi Shire, as well new typologies to encourage more diverse housing types in the right locations.
- Provide design guidance on how new housing can respond sensitively to a variety of local town and landscape characters and contexts as well as sustainability and climate resilience
- Celebrate Murrindindi Shire's culture of design excellence.

Like many regional areas Murrindindi Shire has an aging population while at the same time is experiencing a transition to emerging industries creating new opportunities for key workers.

With a current population of 15,603, the Shire has a housing target of 3,350 by 2051.

Murrindindi Shire's housing character is shaped by an elegant simplicity that respects the rural landscape, blending functional, modest forms with generous open space, natural materials, and traditional rural features.

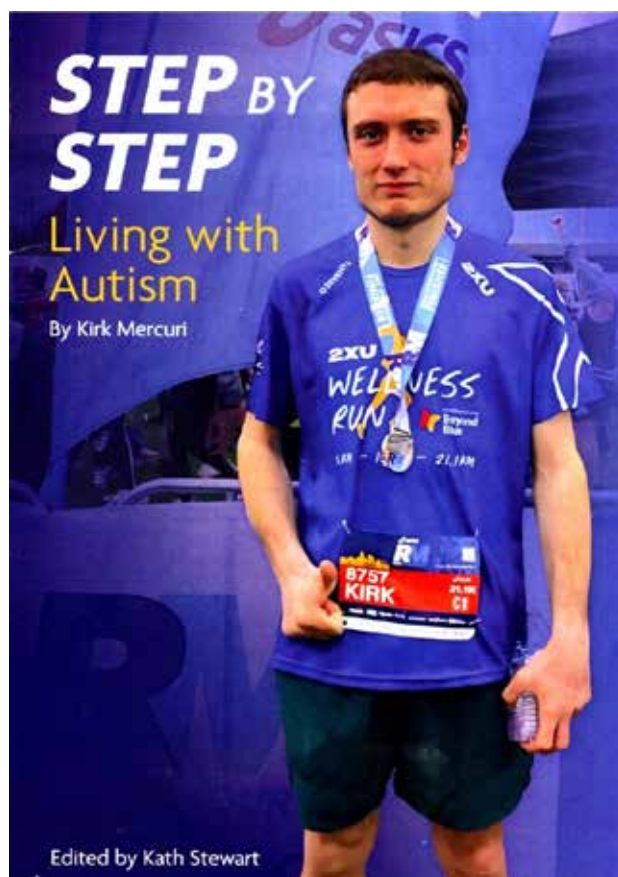
Our housing character:

- Emphasises simple, functional building forms that harmonise with the natural landscape rather than appearing plain or generic.
- Integrates homes sensitively with existing topography and vegetation to maintain the area's rural character.
- Incorporates traditional rural elements such as gable roofs, verandas, and natural materials to reflect local building traditions.
- Maintains an understated presence by avoiding visual clutter and unnecessary ornamentation.
- Celebrates open space, gardens, mature trees, and expansive landscape views as integral parts of each home's setting.
- Celebrates housing design that is adaptable, modest in scale, and practical, ensuring it meets the needs of residents throughout different life stages.

Energy efficient housing and water infrastructure are also integral in the designs.

A copy of the Design Guidelines can be found on the Council's website.

CONGRATULATIONS, KIRK! Book Launch For Kirk Mercuri



On 30 November many in the community gathered at Ellimatta to celebrate the launch of a new book – 'Step By Step: Living With Autism', written by local Kinglake man, Kirk Mercuri.

Kirk is well known across the Kinglake Ranges and is often seen out riding his bike from Kinglake to Kinglake West, waving to people as he goes. He brings positivity and sunshine wherever he goes.

Kirk is stalwart volunteer for many community groups – including the Kinglake Junior Football Club; the Kinglake Football/Netball club; the basketball club; the Kinglake Library; Kinglake Rotary; and the local Opp shop. He was recognised for his service to the community in 2023 when he received the Murrindindi Young Citizen of the Year award.

During the Covid years, which proved to be a particular challenge for Kirk with his autism, he turned to writing about how those times affected him. He also recorded a lot of statistical data during this period, weaving his story amid the statistics.

Local writer, Kath Stewart, undertook the task of editing this writing - a task which took nearly

three years and included many interviews with Kirk to bring the story together. The book was printed by Bart'n'Print (Bendigo) and was finally ready for Kirk to share with the world.

Special thanks to Kinglake Rotary for their generous support of this project and to all the community groups who welcome Kirk into their fold.

"Everyone deserves the chance to strive to achieve the very best that their ability allows. Everyone, regardless of who they are, will do better when they are accepted, supported, and encouraged to be the very best they can be". – Kirk Mercuri

Step By Step is Kirk's story about what it is like to live with autism and about the challenges he faces on a daily basis. His story is a great insight into the world of someone on the Spectrum and helps to develop an understanding of that world.

Congratulations, Kirk on this wonderful achievement.

Copies of the book can be obtained from Kinglake Rotary, the Kinglake Library or from Foodworks. Cost: \$15



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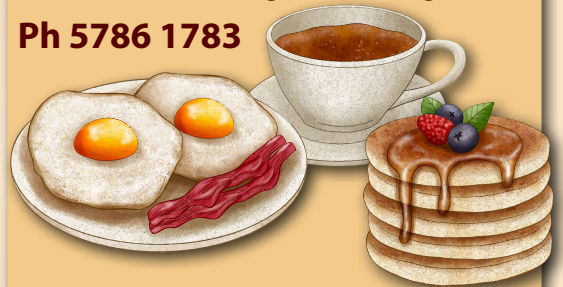
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Better Management For Our Forests

A new Public Land Act aimed at modernising the legislation that protects our forests will be introduced and will support investment in public land.

The legislation is based on the findings of The Great Outdoors Taskforce and Eminent Panel for Community Engagement that has been in place from 2022 to 2025.

The Panel's recommendations have formed a \$30 million investment in Victoria's public land "to make sure we protect what the community values most about our forests, including recreation experiences and the environment".

The Act will also support investment in public land by streamlining outdated processes and approvals that get in the way of good opportunities, it says.

Almost \$20 million will be invested to drive recreation and tourism in regional communities including upgrading facilities like toilets, campsites and signage and making it easier for businesses to operate on public land.

The process also follows the end of commercial native timber harvesting in state forests in 2024.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) says the government is investing \$4 million to pilot Healthy Forest Plans.

This investment directly responds to a core recommendation from the Great Outdoors Taskforce and will support communities, including Traditional Owners, to work together to plan how we can best keep our forests resilient, valued, accessible and open for all to enjoy.

Another \$4 million will deliver more on-ground field staff to help guide and educate forest visitors, encourage positive behaviours, and work with communities to support the needs of local and visiting users.

Almost \$20 million will be invested to drive recreation and tourism in regional communities including upgrading facilities like toilets, campsites and signage and making it easier for businesses to operate on public land.

Since commercial native timber harvesting in state forests ended DEECA has started work to regenerate 1,200 hectares of forests, and to rebuild the seed store – critical to restoring forests after major disturbance.

The government is now investing another \$3.2 million to remove pests and weeds to protect and enhance native flora and fauna.

View the Government's full response to the Great Outdoors Taskforce and Eminent panel for Community Engagement via the DEECA website.

A Community Plan for the Ranges

Many ideas for possible projects and future priorities have been presented in an initial Kinglake Ranges Community Plan.

A working group began meeting in 2025 made up of volunteer representatives from many groups across the ranges.

After a number of meetings, they organised and attended the Community Planning dinner at the Kinglake Pub to

decide priorities with 24 community groups represented, and drafted the Plan.

The Working Group also worked with Council on some of the Foundational Projects outlined in the report released by Murrindindi Shire Council.

A Kinglake Ranges asset map was created and is outlined in the report.

The future priorities include community building, child and youth development,

strong local leadership and capacity, caring for our unique environment, and improving local services and infrastructure.

The report says that a community plan is created by the community for the community and it is up to the community to bring the plan to life.

A copy of the plan is available on the Council website.

Decorate a Christmas Tree in Whittlesea

The Whittlesea Agricultural Society is holding its annual Christmas Tree Extravaganza from Sunday 7 December until Saturday 20 of December.

The annual event encourages individuals, schools and businesses to participate in decorating their own tree in their own way individual manner (the more unusual, the better!!)

The public vote for their favourite tree in the categories of Commercial, Individual and Community and there is a prize in each group.

The trees are on display from 1pm to 8 pm every day at the Administration Building, Whittlesea Showgrounds, McPhee's Road, Whittlesea.

Why not join us and the hundreds who visit between these dates to view a Christmas spectacular!!!

Entry is \$2.00 per person and children under 5 free.

Vote for your favourite tree and buy a ticket in the Christmas raffle.

For an entry form please call Anne Greer on 0408 516 582.

Shire Pools Open

The shire's pools are now open and entry for the season is free.

Pools are in Alexandra, Yea and Eildon, with the Marysville Pool and the Baanh ba Djila Splash Park expected to have opened as well.

This season, council is introducing an easy, optional way for those who wish to support the pools – by way of a voluntary \$5 contribution. Every dollar goes directly towards helping maintain and operate these facilities.

Payments will be entirely digital, surcharge-free and completely at the discretion of patrons.

Council's Community Wellbeing Portfolio Councillor, Jodi Adams, said the start of the pool season is always a highlight for local families and visitors.

"Our pools are some of the most loved spaces in our Shire. By keeping entry free and offering an easy, optional way to contribute, we're helping ensure these facilities remain accessible and sustainable for years to come", she said.



When your husband calls you and asks: "Do you want to buy a restaurant?"; most of us would have to think very long and hard about that.

Even more so when you are new to the business and in need of a fast learning curve.

But, Lucy and Fulton Zylstra said 'why not?' and their venture is hitting the ground running at 1274 Whittlesea-Yea Road, Kinglake West with their Little Italy family restaurant and pizzeria.

The couple moved from the inner suburbs to Whittlesea and have now concentrated their working life at Kinglake West.

They are already proving popular with their dinner opening hours at this stage and will be introducing facilities for functions, celebrations and catering for functions going forward.

Check the advertisement on page 7 in this edition for the opening days and hours, along with Christmas and New Year holiday closures.

Getting the Kids Hooked on Fishing

If dangling a line in one of our myriad waterways is something your primary school student would like to do, then a roll out of free Little Angler Kits will happen later in 2026.

The Victorian Government will be distributing the kits through 1900 schools across the state.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation, Steve Dimopoulos, says the tender for the 82,500 kits has been called for.

The Little Angler Kits have everything a first-time fishing enthusiast needs to get started including a fishing rod and reel with line, tackle box with tackle, and an eight-page Kids' Guide to Fishing outlining the basics of fishing safety, knots and rigs.

It also provides advice on the best baits to use, peak fishing seasons and hot spots across Victoria as well as colour illustrations of freshwater and saltwater species likely to be caught.

The initiative is funded by recreational fishing licence fees.

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) is leading the Little Angler Kit rollout and has created a series of informative tutorial videos presented by VFA Ambassador Lee Rayner and Michelle Brittain from the Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating Network with step-by-step instructions on how to get started.

Check out the kid-friendly web page at www.vfa.vic.gov.au/littleanglerkit





Join Us For Trivia Fun

It is fun, with a bit of friendly competition thrown in and a great way to meet others.

The brainchild of locals, Jodi and Daniel, to bring the community together for a mid-week night out, twice a month trivia sessions at the Kinglake Pub are already proving popular.

The evening starts at 6:30 with a picture round, has a some general knowledge and special rounds, and is wrapped up by about 9pm.

Get a team together and you will find an interactive effort with some spirited feedback, while some groups prefer to stay quiet and make their presence known with good answers.

Prizes are awarded for round winners to a 1st/2nd/third outright and what ever feels right on the night.

Teams range in size from 2 to 8 people with groups often being

formed on the night from singles or doubles wanting to join in. Teenagers and up are welcome as the questions are intentionally broad and not super difficult nor obscure.

The pub kitchen is open from 5:30 with rotating specials as well as the regular menu, and of course cold drinks are available from the friendly staff at the bar.

As the night is growing in popularity bookings are essential to ensure we can cater for all of the teams. The last trivia night started out a little chaotic dealing with finding tables for everyone who turned up!

We will even give you 3 bonus points for booking at the pub.

Through summer, Tuesday Trivia will be on twice a month, the 2nd and 16th of December - and in the new year January 6th and 20th. Depending on the weather we may hold one of the January trivia nights in the beer garden.

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This was the culmination of another very busy year
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... from our assistance to Kinglake Ranges
Neighbourhood House Foodshare to Santa with
his trolleys of presents for local children
... from School scholarships to wildlife pouches
... and multiple other activities in which our
little group participated

KINGLAKE CWA is proud to be part of and
contribute to this great caring community.

We hope you have a peaceful and happy
Christmas break and look forward to
working with you all in 2026.

Alaine, Alex, Chrissy, Christine,
Jodi, Ursula and Viki

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Rotary Club of Yea

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Melbourne Reclaims the Lead: First Home Buyers Drive Spring Price Growth

The housing market has remained resilient through spring, with buyer activity holding firm despite shifting expectations around inflation and interest rates.

Capital city values have now risen 5.9% year-to-date, adding an average of \$53,700 to dwelling prices.

Most of the strength is coming from the lower and middle price brackets, where first-home buyers continue to compete for accessible stock.

In fact, Melbourne has surprised many analysts with monthly growth of 0.9% — stronger than Sydney — thanks to a noticeable lift in first-home buyer purchasing.

Combined capital city house prices are now at record highs after 11 consecutive quarters of growth, up 7.2% over the past year. Melbourne values are up 6.2%.

At the top end of the market, growth has been softer as tightened borrowing limits and mortgage stress weigh on

premium buyers.

Affordability remains a challenge. The share of suburbs with median house prices under the new first-home buyer caps has fallen from 51.3% to 47.3% since August.

Auction clearance rates eased slightly to around 70% nationally, with Melbourne softer at 66%, largely due to a reduced auction calendar over Derby Day and Spring Carnival.

Even with this pullback, clearances remain well above the same time last year. Most analysts expect a gradual slowdown into the Christmas period, but enquiry levels, pre-approvals and open home attendance remain healthy.

The latest inflation data has taken some heat out of speculation for further rate cuts. Underlying inflation lifted to 3.0% annually, and businesses, particularly hospitality, are now passing more of their rising costs to customers. This includes

increases in electricity, wages, produce and insurance.

Household consumption is still strong, up 5% over the year, helped by previous rate cuts and wage growth, but economists warn inflation could stay sticky if businesses continue raising prices to rebuild margins.

NAB has announced a major push to boost housing supply, increasing lending to developers by 20% and allocating up to \$30 billion toward creating 50,000 new homes.

Another \$30 billion has been set aside to help first-home buyers, with lending targeted at build-to-rent, student accommodation and community housing as well. This is a notable shift after years where major banks pulled back from construction finance. Although, owner builder still remains difficult to finance.

Investor mortgages now make up 38% of the market, with lending up 6.7% year-on-year,



the strongest rate since 2015.

APRA has flagged that it may step back in with macroprudential tools if needed, as demand accelerates while listings sit about 18% below average.

With inflation running hotter than expected, markets are now pricing fewer (or no) rate cuts in the short term, a major change from only a month ago.

For now, buyer sentiment remains positive, competition is steady, and first-home buyers are staying active thanks to deposit schemes and bank incentives. Well-presented homes continue to attract strong interest.

Will Verhagen

www.integrityrealestate.com.au

Rotary Club of Yea Art Show 2026

The Rotary Club of Yea is pleased to be hosting their Annual Art Show in the iconic Yea Shire Hall from Thursday 22 January 2026 until Monday 26 January. The Opening night is Thursday 22 January at 7.30pm- \$25 per head entry.

It will be the 54th Art Show to be held in Yea. Prizes this year total more than \$7500, with a first prize of \$2500. Thanks to the ongoing support of the Frank Hargrave Trust, Murrindindi Shire Council, and many other sponsors for their generosity.

Artist entry forms will be available online at www.yearotary.org.au from the start of December and close on Friday January 2 2026. All prizes are non-acquisitive. New this year will be a section just for photography.

The Art Show is more than just another fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Yea. The opening night is a fun social evening, and everyone present on Opening Night gets first choice of

purchasing some wonderful artwork. This year the theme for Opening Night is 'Something Floral'!

Come along, enjoy a complimentary drink and finger food and make the room a sea of flowers! The raffle prize this year will again be a beautiful painting donated by talented artist, Julian Bruere, with ticket sales commencing in December.

For just an entry fee of \$5, you will be able to enjoy viewing some excellent artwork. Entry each day is from 10am to 5pm, except for the last day, Monday 26 January, when the door closes at 2pm.

Patrons can purchase tickets at the door, but for Opening Night bookings are preferred via Try booking at <https://www.trybooking.com/DGVVG> to assist with catering, with bookings closing on Friday 16 January at midnight. Anyone booking after that the cost will be \$30 so book early and save.

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How to Navigate Hot Property Prices

Property prices are running hot as we head into summer, and the market is tipped to dial up even further over the next 12 months. Here's how it could shape your home-buying plans.

Aussie home values are sprinting into summer, with property price growth hitting the fastest pace in over two years in October. The price hikes are unlikely to stop there.

A record nine out of ten (88%) respondents to a recent API Magazine survey expect home prices to climb higher and it seems the experts agree.

PropTrack believes we could see further price rises over spring and summer, while the Commonwealth Bank says "we still expect further gains this year".

If forecasts of rising home prices prove accurate – and as we'll see, there's a decent chance they could – now could be the time to bring forward your home-buying plans.

Home prices jump 6.1% in the past 12 months

It's been a big year for property, with home prices nationally climbing 6.1% over the past 12 months.

Several factors have come together to push home values higher.

The bottom line is that the potential for further price rises might be a compelling reason to bring forward home buying plans.

Home price growth is eating away at borrowing power

Buying a home is never a decision that should be rushed.

But with no end in sight to property price gains, now may be time to advance your buying plans.

This is not about sprinting in to buy the first home that comes along.

Rather, it's a matter of making the most of the buying power you have today, because it could be lower tomorrow if



home prices keep rising.

You see, while the Reserve Bank's interest rate cuts have given households on the median income a \$51,000 increase in borrowing power, median home values across our big cities have risen almost \$54,000 since February.

Put simply, home prices are rising faster than homebuyers' borrowing power.

Call us to get the ball rolling

An unexpected jump in inflation has put a question mark over possible future rate cuts.

So homebuyers can't rely on future rate cuts for an uptick in personal borrowing power.

A better strategy is to talk to us today.

We can explain if you're home loan-ready right now, and how to get the ball rolling on home finance before prices rise further.

Nicole Sevenich

NS Finance & Mortgages CRN No. 479851

Tree Works Kinglake Main Street

During routine inspections, Council's Arborist has identified structural defects in six large trees along the main street in Kinglake.

Council will be holding a popup information session to discuss the upcoming pruning of these significant trees. Come along and have a chat!

When: Saturday 13 December from 10.00 to 11.00 am

Where: Outside Kinglake Community Foodworks

12 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, Kinglake



Murrindindi
Shire Council

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The NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE will close at
4pm on Thursday 18th December and
re-open Monday 19th January 2026.

THE NOOK

will close at 4pm on FRIDAY 19th December and
will re-open on Wednesday 21st January 2026.

FOODSHARE

Foodshare is open every Wednesday from 1pm-3pm for
anyone who needs access to basic toiletries, cleaning
products, frozen meals and non-perishable food items.

Fresh fruit & veggies are available on the third
Wednesday of each month.

The last day we will be open for 2025 is
WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER

Foodshare will reopen from 1pm-3pm on
WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2026.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank our incredible volunteers who are the heart and soul of the Neighbourhood House.

From our Committee of Management and House volunteers to our dedicated tutors and the wonderful team at The Nook, your time and commitment are
invaluable to the ongoing operation of the House.

We also extend our thanks to all the House participants, funders and the wider community for their support this year and wish everyone a very
Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

We look forward to seeing you at the House in 2026!

Hendrika, Laura & Naomi

WWW.KRNH.ORG

Our Heritage

Back in the Dancing Days

Persons of a 'more mature age' among present and former residents of the Kinglake district will remember the days when the local Saturday night dance was the chief source of entertainment for the young and also the not so young.

The committees of the local schools, halls, churches and sporting clubs ran regular dances as their main fundraising efforts. From the 1930s, there were three halls in Kinglake and, every Saturday night, there would be a dance in at least one of them, sometimes in two on the same night, although the local committees tried to avoid that as it reduced the attendance at each.

Each of the halls had good timber floors for dancing and these were prepared for a dance by spreading a layer of sawdust laced with kerosene which was then swept up to leave the timber surface clean and shiny with just the required amount of 'slide' for ballroom dancing.

If it was a special occasion, the hall might be decorated with streamers and balloons or perhaps tree-fern fronds and pot plants. The ladies of the committee in charge of



Ball in Kinglake Hall

the evening would arrive early with baskets of sandwiches and cakes for the supper and they would proceed to set up in the 'back room', a fairly basic kitchen with a copper in which the milk for the coffee was heated.

The band would also arrive early to set up on the stage with their own drums and saxophone and using the hall piano. Sometimes the band would have come from the city but Mrs Dot Lawrey formed the local Clover Band in the 1930s, playing the piano herself and with local musicians Bill Murphy and Maurie Ryan assisting.

Newspaper reports in 1937 provide details of two such functions which were a little out of the ordinary. On 17 July 1937, 150 people, from Kinglake, Queenstown, Hurstbridge, Whittlesea, Diamond Creek and Melbourne, attended a Ball in the Kinglake Hall which was hosted by the 'Bachelors of Kinglake'.

They were 5 Collier brothers, 3 Reeves brothers, 2 O'Rourke brothers, 2 Toohey brothers, 2

McLaine brothers, and Arthur Thomson, Keith Bradford, Keith Murphy, Jack Upton, Bill Chrystie, Phillip Lorenz, Frank Snelling, Fred Owen, Jim Davey and Tom Russell – 24 gentlemen dressed in their best suits and bowties.

Keith Bradford was the MC in charge of proceedings and the report states that 'both modern and old-time dancing was indulged in with gusto'. Music was provided by the Clover Band and a number of novelty dances were featured.

The newspaper report also states that, during the evening, 'a competition for the most popular bachelor was won by Mr Ray Collier who, amid cheers, was presented with a large white bowtie and, judging from some of the languishing glances cast at him from the ladies, he will have to fight hard to retain his eligibility for the contest'.

On this occasion, the supper was provided by a Mr and Mrs Manchester, the owners of the Kinglake Hotel, and their chef, Mr Sack. According to the report, 'it was voted the best supper yet in the hall and added the

crowning touch to a delightful evening'.

In October 1937, a Return Ball was arranged by the young ladies of Kinglake as a 'thank you' to the Bachelors and it proved equally as successful with as large a crowd as the first occasion. The floor was in excellent condition, the Clover Band played, and Mrs Manchester organised a 'first class' supper. During the evening, Miss Shirley Lawrey entertained with a song and tap dance, and there were also several novelty dances with prizes awarded to Mr & Mrs J. McMahon, Miss I. Fogarty and Mr J. Rowe. At the end of the evening, Mr Ray Collier, on behalf of the Bachelors, thanked the ladies for a very enjoyable night's entertainment.

Ah, those were the dancing days!

Information from *The Advertiser* 23 July 1937, *The Year Chronicle* 7 October 1937.

Deidre Hawkins
Kinglake Historical Society
kinglakehistoricalsociety@
gmail.com

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Introducing The Essence of Japanese Meridian Therapy

This month our article is about the Japanese style of treatment that I (Dr Chrys Soenaris) studied in Japan recently and how that differs from Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Japanese acupuncture feels different to modern Chinese acupuncture in a few ways — **it's very gentle, precise and meditative.** It usually involves moxa that gently warms points on the body and some very precise instruments to stroke or stimulate meridians. Meridian Therapy/ Keiraku Chiryō is a tradition born from Japan's effort to preserve authentic classical Chinese acupuncture wisdom during an age of Western modernisation, that sees the body as a machine.

This system emphasises skill, sensitivity, and understanding the body's natural rhythms. It is an invitation for patients to listen deeply to their body's responses and reconnect the body-mind-emotion awareness. This approach is an invitation for us to really feel into ourselves on a deeper level. Other aspects of this form are:

- **Ikigai** – Life-long dedication and reverence for the medicine, and deep passion to serve patients in their healing journey.
- **Calm, focused practice:** treatments performed with meditative attention, creating a tranquil space for healing. As a practitioner, self-cultivation practice is a must, to be able to hold space for the patients with impartial kindness and firmness.
- **Respecting subtle changes:** Every session is tailored through careful observation and touch—no two treatments are the same, even for the same patient. One never steps into the same river twice.
- **Perceiving the meridian channels:** The body is viewed as a natural landscape responding to cosmic and earthly



changes, and as an interconnected network of pathways like rivers; this perception guides every treatment plan.

- **Root and branch treatment:** Addressing the root cause first, then relieving symptoms for lasting improvement. The body has an innate ability to heal and a natural want to find homeostasis, the path with the least resistance. By addressing the root and the soil, the whole tree can flourish.

- **Less is more (shallow or deep needling based on what the body needs):** Ultra-fine needles placed just beneath the skin for maximum comfort and precision. Deep needling when required is still applied.

- **Revival of the classical (non-inserted)**

tools: The Yellow Emperor Inner Classic of Medicine (ca. 475 BCE) documented the use of nine types of tools in the art of meridian therapy. A few of them are not puncturing the skin. What we normally encounter in acupuncture clinics are the hair-thin filiform needles. However, there are other tools to treat the meridians, such as what is shown in the photos.

Meridian Therapy embodies the idea that healing is a dynamic interaction of polarity and harmony is not a state, but a skill to flow with change — when one loses the ability to move and gets stuck, this is when disease manifests.

Best wishes for your health and happiness!
Dr Chrys Soenaris for Kinglake Chinese Medicine

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What is Clinical Pilates and why is it beneficial?

Clinical Pilates is a type of exercise that is guided by a physiotherapist or another trained health professional. It takes the main ideas of regular Pilates—such as improving core strength, posture, flexibility, and body control—and adapts them to help people recover from injuries, move better, and prevent future problems.

Clinical Pilates provides specialised exercise programs for each individual based on their unique needs, taking into account their strengths, weaknesses, mobility or flexibility restrictions, and any injuries or conditions. These exercises are completed in a controlled, supervised setting to ensure correct technique and to achieve the greatest possible benefit from each session.

What is the focus of Pilates?

Pilates exercises focus on strengthening the muscles that provide deep stabilising support. This includes, but is not limited to, the deep muscles of the core such as the transverse abdominis, obliques, and pelvic floor muscles. There are also deep gluteal and back muscles that help stabilise the hips, pelvis, and spine.

These deep muscles act as a bracing mechanism in anticipation of movement and help reduce the load placed on the

spine. This function is often affected by pain or injury to the spine, poor posture, abdominal surgery, or pregnancy. Deep muscle strengthening exercises form the foundation of any effective exercise or rehabilitation program.

What conditions benefit from Clinical Pilates?

- Non-specific lower back pain
- Lumbar spine conditions (discogenic pain, stenosis, facet joint arthropathy)
- Cervical pain and whiplash-associated disorders / whiplash
- Thoracic pain and stiffness
- Postural-related dysfunctions
- Shoulder instability or impingement syndromes
- Hip-related conditions (femoroacetabular impingement, gluteal tendinopathy, bursitis)
- Sport-related injuries and rehabilitation
- Return-to-sport conditioning needs
- Sacroiliac joint dysfunction
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Pregnancy-related musculoskeletal pain
- Falls and balance-related concerns
- Global muscle weakness and functional decline
- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Osteoporosis and osteopenia



- Stroke rehabilitation
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Cerebral palsy (mild cases)
- Scoliosis

What does Clinical Pilates look like at Whittlesea Physiotherapy?

Comprehensive, full-body Clinical Pilates assessments are conducted by our experienced physiotherapists for each individual prior to beginning their classes. From this assessment, a detailed and individualised program is developed, allowing clients to begin their Clinical Pilates journey either through supported group classes or one-on-one sessions.

Clinical Pilates at Whittlesea Physiotherapy incorporates the use of specialised equipment, including—but not limited to—Reformers, a Trapeze Table, and a Wunda Chair. Classes have a maximum of four participants per group and are facilitated by our qualified allied health professionals.

Reach out today to learn more or to book your Clinical Pilates assessment!

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Cindy McLeish MP State Member for Eildon

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Stress, Tension and Pain: The Holiday Connection



Innova Osteopathy

As the holiday season approaches, many of us start to feel that familiar discomfort—whether it's neck or back tension, or just a general sense of unease.

But why does this happen, especially around Christmas? The answer lies in how stress affects our bodies.

How Stress Affects Your Body

Stress triggers natural reactions in your body designed to help you respond to challenges. This is known as the 'fight or flight' response, and it prepares the body for action in times of perceived danger.

While this is a normal and protective response, it can also amplify feelings of discomfort and pain.

Here are two ways stress affects your body:

- **Chemical Changes:** When stressed, hormones like adrenaline and cortisol are released. These hormones increase your heart rate and blood sugar levels, in preparation for immediate action. While this is helpful in emergencies, it can also heighten your sensitivity to pain.
- **Muscular Tension:** Your muscles tense up when you're stressed, as your body braces for action or protection. This can lead to tightness or pain - especially in areas you may already feel tender or vulnerable.

During the holiday season, stress can

arise from many sources - whether it's juggling work deadlines, navigating family dynamics, or trying to plan the perfect holiday getaway. While these physiological changes are natural, understanding them can help you manage both stress and any resulting pain throughout the season.

Why Pain Feels Worse When We're Stressed

The link between stress and pain is complex. Simply put, stress puts our nervous system on high alert, which can amplify the perception of pain.

E.g. A minor ache or tight muscle may feel more intense under stress. Over time, if stress becomes chronic, it can lead to prolonged pain or discomfort.

What Can You Do About It?

The good news is that there are simple ways to manage stress and reduce its impact on your body:

1. **Breathe ~** Deep breathing can help calm your nervous system. Focusing on your breath, helps lower your heart rate, and better manage stress and pain!
2. **Stretch and move ~** Stress causes muscle tension, which can lead to aches and pains. Regular stretching and gentle movement help relieve tension and promote relaxation.
3. **Sleep ~** Sleep is crucial for recovery

and stress management. Establishing a consistent sleep routine helps you recharge and prepare for the day ahead.

4. **Manage pain early ~** If you are experiencing aches or pains, see your local healthcare professional for an assessment and early advice to address the issue.

Stress Isn't a Bad Thing

Stress isn't inherently bad! It's a natural and necessary part of life that helps us respond to challenges. The key is understanding how stress works and learning how to manage it effectively. By doing so, you can take proactive steps to manage it, you can reduce the impact it has on your pain levels and overall wellbeing—especially during the busy holiday season.

Osteopathy: A Holistic Approach to Pain and Stress Relief

If you're looking for a natural, holistic way to manage stress and pain, Osteopathy could be a great option. Osteopathy focuses on the body's musculoskeletal system with a focus to assist with relieving tension, improving mobility, and reducing pain.

To learn more about how Osteopathy could help you this holiday season, visit our website: www.innovaosteopathy.com.au or contact us on 0458 112 608.

*Dr Nikola White
BHSc / BAppSc (Osteopathy)*

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Kinglake LANDCARE

SUMMER

Kinglake district is the traditional land of the Taungurung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, which in December welcomes the changeable thundery weather of Gunyang (Kangaroo Apple Season), emergence of Kangaroo Apples, active Goannas, longer days and shorter nights.

Locally we also see continued flowering of Coranderrk/ Victorian Christmas Bush (*Prostanthera lasianthos*).

COMING UP

Watch for our mailouts of any activities over December/ January.

ACTIVITIES JUST GONE

In a busy November, KLG was part of a major weed control effort west of the Kinglake Community Centre together with volunteers from Kinglake Rotary and Disaster Relief Australia.

Their great effort removed a 100 metres long hedge of highly invasive woody weed Flax-leaf Broom. This was cut and transported in many trailerloads to Kinglake Tip for mulching (see more in article by John Stewart).

Murrindindi Bioblitz in October, instigated by local ecologist Michael Cincotta, was part of an event across the Southern Hemisphere to record as many species as possible using the free iNaturalist platform.

Upper Goulburn Landcare Network, which includes KLG, helped deliver this project across Murrindindi Shire at Eildon, Molesworth, Toolangi, Kanumbra, Yea, Alexandra, and Kinglake (see photos).



There were 3,335 audio or photo recorded observations of 1,035 species from bird surveys, fungi walks, and activities throughout the shire including at Wombelano Falls in Kinglake National Park, where seven Greater Gliders were spotted.

During **Frog ID Week** in November, MSC coordinated an Australian Museum webinar at several locations in the shire. We observed it at Kinglake Library.

This was followed by a local site visit to record a cacophony of local frogs at my place (photo). The website frogwatch.org.au by the Amphibian Research Centre is very informative and the FrogID app by the Australian Museum was very handy in recording and helping identify frog calls. We have at least 11 frog species recorded in Kinglake district and also in Murrindindi Shire according to the Australian Museum report which we obtained from MSC Communications Unit.

GET OUR FREE BOOKLET

'Caring for Your Patch' covering backyard garden design, food growing, plant selection, weed and pest animal management and more, is available from Kinglake Library, KRNH, Kinglake Heritage Centre, local garden suppliers, Landcare events, some local shops and servos, or online from our website kinglakelandcare.org. On that site you can also locate detailed vegetation reports on selected local roads.



Top: Observing Greater Gliders at Wombelano, Kinglake National Park. Above: Bioblitz at Toolangi State Forest. Below: Frog habitat at my place in Kinglake West.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Interested? You can contact our website kinglakelandcare.org for membership details for \$16 per year or be added to our free 'friends' mailing list for notification of events.

Roger Cook, President

Next meeting: AGM 7.30pm Monday 1 December upstairs at Kinglake Memorial Reserve Hall. Then next meeting on 16 February 2026.

Next events: Will be advised by our mailouts.



Broom Blitz: Community Unites to Tackle a Growing Threat

If you've travelled around the Kinglake Ranges recently, you've probably noticed splashes of bright yellow lining roadsides and fencelines.

At first glance, the pea-like flowers might seem picturesque – but don't be fooled. This is Broom, a highly invasive weed that's rapidly spreading across the district, threatening local ecosystems and creating ideal hideouts for pest animals.

A Silent Invader

Broom's cheerful exterior hides its true nature. Large patches have now taken hold in several parts of the Ranges, demonstrating just how aggressively this plant can outcompete native vegetation. While our native animals find no food value in Broom, pest species such as foxes and rabbits thrive in the thickets it creates.

If Broom is growing on your property, now is the time to act. The recommended removal method is simple:

- Cut the plant cleanly at the base, and
- Immediately dab the stump with herbicide to prevent regrowth.

Although Broom seeds can lie dormant for years, they germinate readily—and the resulting seedlings are usually small enough to pull out by hand.

Look Twice: Not Everything Yellow Is Broom

Several native plants, including Golden Tip, can be mistaken for Broom, particularly when in bloom. Both have yellow pea-like flowers and similar seed pods. However, native pea flowers are generally smaller with more delicate, slender foliage. Taking a closer look before removing plants will help protect our indigenous flora. Detailed information about identification of native pea-flowering plants can be found on the Landcare website kinglakelandcare.org

A Community Effort: 100 Metres Cleared

Last month, a dedicated team of Rotary, Landcare, and Disaster Relief volunteers tackled a significant 100-metre infestation of well-established Flax-leaf Broom near the walking path by the Community Centre.

Thanks to the support of Murrindindi Shire, which provided access to the Recycling Centre, volunteers transported an impressive 35 trailer/ute loads of Broom debris during the week, followed by



another 12 loads for mulching the following weekend.

Importantly, residents are reminded not to mulch Broom plants that have developed seed pods, as this risks spreading the weed even further.

With the Broom now removed, the once-smothered ground plainly reveals how much native growth had been held back.

Looking Ahead: Restoring the Landscape

Stage one of the project has been a tremendous success, and heartfelt thanks go to every individual and group involved. The cleared area will soon be replanted with indigenous vegetation, bringing back seasonal colour, restoring habitat for native wildlife, and helping the community reclaim its natural spaces.

An ideal time to tackle Broom is while it's in flower and easy to spot, but before it forms seed pods. Every plant removed helps protect the ecological health of the Kinglake Ranges.

Together, we're proving that community action can make a visible, lasting difference. Come and join us next time.

John Stewart, (Kinglake Landcare) on behalf of Kinglake Rotary and Disaster Relief Australia volunteers.

Summer Water Wisdom

Water!

It's availability is vital for all of us and given the tricky weather predictions as we head into summer, the best advice on how to manage it is crucial.

Our farming community has been battling ongoing drought conditions with the resultant costs to their businesses.

Agriculture Victoria (AV) has a range of excellent free tools and advisors available for farmers and landholders to take stock of water reserves.

Land Management Extension Officer, Clem Sturmfels, recommends that farmers consider the following questions:

- what is the condition of dams on my farm?
- how many are full, how many are yet to recover from the drought?
- how do they compare to the same time last year?
- are water levels rising or falling?
- how do my stock numbers compare?

"Our dams, rivers, streams and springs have become less reliable after a lack of cool season rainfall, together with warmer average temperatures", Mr Sturmfels says.

A stocktake of water reserves and livestock needs and reviewing your drought plan is particularly important at this time of the year.

Measuring the water level in a dam can be a difficult task unless you have installed a permanent marker, like that used on some road crossings, or have an electronic water level monitoring device.

"A simple way to measure water depth is with the use of the Dam deep device, a tool made from a hand fishing line, a float, sinker and beads".

You can access a video on how to make this device on the Agriculture Victoria website.

Take photos of your key dams as an easy way to track dam performance.

"While some are forecasting a wet finish to the year, this is unlikely to have much impact on dam levels unless a high intensity rainfall event occurs".

Agriculture Victoria has several tools

to help farmers calculate dam volumes based on shape, length, width and depth, including the Farm Water Calculator and the Summer Water Calculator.

Water Management Help Available

Support is available to assist with stock water planning and other farm management decisions.

All farmers in Victoria can register for a free one to one consultation with a farm management specialist.

This advisory service offers a session of up to 3 hours (face-to-face or online) and a follow-up call, to talk through and help develop a plan for managing drought conditions.

Rachael Campbell from AV says this advice is tailored to your situation, with a consultant that you nominate from Agriculture Victoria's panel. Advice can include stock feed planning, water planning and a range of other on-farm decisions.

Knowing your farm water requirements allows you to plan and make informed changes as required.

Reducing water losses across the farm can achieve significant water savings, such as in the short term, repairing any reticulation leaks and in the longer term, reducing evaporation from farm dams by planting windbreaks and minimising seepage.

Is Your Dam Evaporating?

Kerri Goschnick, Land Management Extension Officer, advises identifying which is having the greatest impact – water used through stock consumption or water lost through evaporation or leakage.

Have you simply run out of water because there has not been sufficient rainfall to produce the required runoff?

To generate runoff into storages, rainfall events typically need to exceed 20mm. If your grass height is over 50 mm, you may need 60 mm or more per event. Many regions have not had these types of events for some time.

Identifying and managing leakage

Leakage from dams often shows up as wet spots or clumps of green grass in a small area during the drier part of the year. This

can occur when dry dams fill quickly but dam walls haven't fully re-saturated.

If you suspect leakage, consider using treatment products but choose carefully, as many are soil-type specific. You will get the best value when you take this into account.

If you treat your dam, ensure the dam is properly fenced to exclude all stock. Storage treatment products can range from \$1,000–\$10,000 and should only be used when you are certain that your storage is leaking.

Understanding evaporation

Wind has the biggest effect on evaporation. Even in good seasons, you can lose up to 0.75m of water, often half the dam's volume.

Shallow water (less than 1 m deep) warms quickly, increasing evaporation. Dams deeper than 3m retain cooler water and lose less to evaporation.

There are a variety of materials that could be used to cover the dam surface area to minimise evaporation further. Powders, oils and polymers are all affected by wind blowing the product to one side, reducing effectiveness. Plastic sheets, discs and balls are options but also expensive and can cause small animal entrapment.

Expanding or consolidating storage

Storage enlargement is not always an option due to factors such as soil types, contractor availability and seasonal timing for earthworks, a project which can run into the tens of thousands.

Measuring, calculating and adjusting your water use according to what you have available and stock needs is generally the cheapest option.

Explore further resources on water in the farm management section of the AV website.

For more information on available drought support, visit www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/ drought or call 136 186.

Farm Drought Support Grants provide eligible farmers up to \$5,000, as a co-contribution grant to support activities like water infrastructure upgrades (pipes, tanks, troughs and dams), plus other activities.



With the coming summer months, the usual questions gardeners ask – how hot, dry or wet will it be?

Forecasting the weather has become more hit and miss over the years. White La Nina is on the table, the heat wave over Antarctica is another curve ball into the predictions. Either way, preparation will help alleviate the problems gardeners face every season.

No matter what the weather does, there will be the usual weeds and insect pests.

Weed management needs to be a weekly job now. There will be regrowth of some of the spring weeds and newer ones emerging. Composting some weeds, especially before seed set, is one way to use a problem for a good outcome.

Most gardeners do cold composting, which will not kill seeds, bulbs, corms and runners. Weeds that are good for cold composting are:

- Dandelions - no seeds
- Chickweed
- Sticky weed - Cleavers, no seeds. Very high in silica
- Nettle
- Clover
- All the milk weeds - spurge and thistle type (often confused with dandelion)

The insect pests we are likely to encounter are snails and slugs which can be managed with snail pellets (iron based ones are better as they are considered safer for animals and when the pellets break down they release iron into the soil.)

- Aphids - love the milk weeds and can be easily removed with a simple soap solution
- White fly, spider mites, stink bugs, leaf miners - can be removed through organic products such as pyrethrum, eco oils and physical removal
- Fruit fly - use the traps available
- Caterpillars - an organic option is Btk - *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Available at nurseries under the name of Dipel.

Bringing in beneficial insects such as ladybirds, lacewings, hoverflies and assassin bugs will help control most of the pests. It helps to plant pollinator plants to

attract these helpers. These plants could be a collection of nasturtiums, Borage, Calendula, Basil, Marigolds and Alussum.

Chop and Lay

Not every plant you remove has to go to the tip or green waste. Two plants that are very useful can be used to great benefit in your garden. These two plants are readily available to most gardeners up here.

Comfrey

It is useful as a composter but comfrey which is loaded with potassium, calcium and other micro nutrients, can be directed to feed your plants directly. When the leaves are large enough, chop them off at the base and lay the leaves on the ground around the plant. Fruit trees and other food plants will benefit from the release of the nutrients as the leaves break down. As well as this, the leaves are a good mulch.



Comfrey 'tea' is also very beneficial. It is simply made by cutting a bundle of leaves, chopping them roughly. Place this in a bucket. In order to keep these leaves submerged, place a weight like a brick or paver on top and then fill the bucket with water.

If you can cover this for the next 2 to 4 weeks that will help contain the smell - which is fairly dreadful - so put this away from the house.

Dilute one part with 10 parts water and this can be watered directly or as a foliar spray.

Bracken

Bracken is the gift that keeps giving, it is everywhere up here and most of us have it around. The leaves can be chopped off, the stalk can be put aside, and used as a mulch. Bracken is an ancient plant that goes back 55 million years and has been used by Indigenous people for both medicinal and food uses.

Bracken is high in potassium and nitrogen so using the leaves as a mulch helps to reduce the loss of these elements in the soil by breaking down and putting in these nutrients. Chopping the leaves



and using them as a mulch is useful as a weed suppressant, helps retain moisture, improve soil health and soil structure and acid loving plants like blueberries, rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas benefit.

I have used the bracken leaves, unchopped, piled high around maples to deter rabbits. Having multiple layers of bracken won't cause rot on the bark as the air space in the bracken allows for ventilation and good flow of moisture.

If you want to compost bracken, use only the leaves, not stems or roots. Bracken will break down more quickly if the leaves have been chopped. Dry bracken leaves can also be used as well. Dry leaves and composted bracken destroys the toxic carcinogen ptaquiloside, so there is no residual effect in using the compost around your vegies. The spores of bracken won't germinate.

Things to do in December

- If you have Daphne growing and need a few more, this is a good time to take cuttings. Daphne can have a short life span and succession planting is a good idea.



- Daffodils have finished by now and they need to be allowed to yellow off. It looks untidy but the bulbs will need the food from the leaves in order to flower again next spring. Once the leaves are truly brown, then they can be removed.

- Check your fruit trees as they will be in the early fruit stage. It is good to remove some of the fruit such as apples to thin out the bunches. It is something I am conflicted with every year, as I know that by keeping all the fruit, it results in



a smaller fruit size and can create tight places for pests. It's difficult to remove what appears to be healthy fruit in its immature state.

- Tomatoes can go in this month. As we are cooler our season tends to be later. My preference is for the bush types but I will have the climbing type also included which will be the paste type to make sauce.
- If you are going to plant bush beans,

make the spaces wider so you can interplant lettuces or other leafy vegies. They will benefit from the nitrogen fix from the beans.

Blackberries will be flowering now which is the optimal time to spray them for best uptake of herbicides.

Things to do in January

- Prune roses and perennials after flowering
- Tie up tomatoes on stakes and remove the lower lateral leaves. This helps to reduce risk of disease. Remove the lower leaves also for bust type tomatoes.
- If some of your vegies have gone to seed, collect seed for later planting. Saved seed can be put into a paper bag, labelled and kept in a cool dry place.
- Brussel sprouts and leeks can be planted now in seed raising trays.

• Dig up garlic bulbs when the tops are in flower. Hang the bulbs with their stem in a cool dry airy area.

• Strawberries can start to send out runners. These runners can be replanted or given away. They need to be removed as they will deplete the amount of fruit by taking the energy away from fruit formation.

• Pick your beans regularly. The picking stimulates the plant to produce more beans.

Tip: When sowing some veggie seeds directly into the ground, like beans and peas, instead of just placing one seed in the hole, place 2 to 3. This will allow for a bushier plant and take up less space.

Enjoy your time in the garden over the next couple of months and best wishes for the New Year to you all.

Don't Bin Your Batteries

Murrindindi Shire Council is again urging residents to dispose of household batteries safely after two fires have recently occurred at the Alexandra Landfill.

The landfill fires were caused by the incorrect disposal of batteries, and have put the safety of staff, property and the environment at serious risk.

"When batteries are mixed in with general rubbish or recycling, they can

be compacted in our kerbside collection trucks or at landfill sites, where they may spark against other materials and ignite fires", Sustainability and Assets portfolio Councillor, Sue Carpenter, said.

Council is reminding residents never to place any type of battery in kerbside bins, Resource Recovery Centre waste bays, or landfill.

Instead, batteries can be recycled safely and for free in specially marked battery

disposal containers at Council's Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs) in Alexandra, Yea, Marysville and Kinglake, or at participating FoodWorks supermarkets across the Shire.

To make your batteries safe for recycling, cover the terminals with sticky tape before dropping them off at a local RRC or supermarket.

For more information about safe battery disposal and drop-off locations, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/batteries

ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

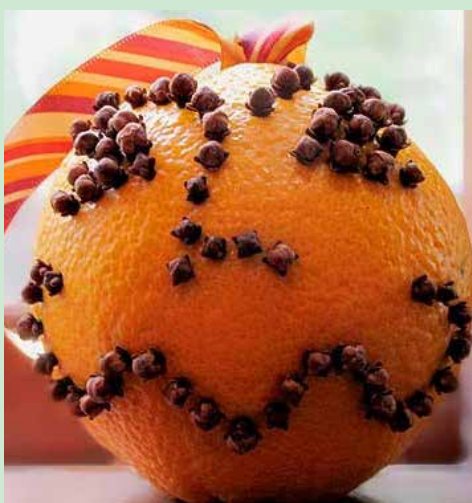
Orange Pomanders

If you are considering the use of natural décor, then orange pomanders might just be the solution to add a touch of glamour to the festive season.

Whether as baubles on the branches of the tree, arranged on the sprigs of wreaths or as part of a centrepiece, their intensity provides much glow to any type of setting.

The word 'pomander', known as pomme d'ambre in French language translates to 'apple of amber'. The word 'apple' describes its spherical appearance while 'amber' is used due to the colour of ambergris, a highly scented resin that is part of the duct of a sperm whale.

At the time of the Black Death in Medieval Europe, ambergris was used to eliminate filthy smells as a means of clearing them and other diseases.



Orange pomander decoration. Courtesy of Wendy Piersall, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via **Wikimedia Commons**

As a result, individuals from that era would often carry satchels or small-sized bags

that were filled with dried herbs such as rosemary or mint. or flowers such as lavender and roses.

Wealthier folks made carrier bags filled with spices available then such as cloves, nutmeg or cinnamon or the dehydrated peels of citrus fruits, such as oranges, clementines or lemons. Other fragrances used, besides ambergris, were musk, civet and another resin, agarwood. Although these all worked well as air, they had little effect on warding off any type of disease.

Subsequently, rather than being used for medicinal purposes, during the 1700s and 1800s they began to be given as Christmas gifts due to their elaborate scent and the toil needed to produce such objects.

So, if you are looking for a touch of brightness and an inviting scent to enhance the festive spirit, bear in mind these orbs of nature and all they have to offer.

Campfire Safety During the Holidays

You've set up the campsite or caravan - or even the swag or tent - now it's time to get the fire or barbecue lit and think about dinner.

However, it often goes horribly wrong.

Unattended and fires not extinguished properly are the major headache and cause a great deal of grief and work for our emergency management services.

Not to mention the threat to the environment and potential damage caused.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) regularly issues requests to holidaymakers to be responsible when lighting fires at any time, but particularly during holiday periods.

Add warmer and drier weather in summer and the need for attention to detail ramps up.

The first rule is to check the weather conditions and be aware of any Total Fire Bans or fire ratings before you leave home.

Make sure you understand what is permitted at your destination. There are different rules, depending on locations.

Make sure that your campfire is put out correctly by extinguishing it completely with water, not soil.

Fires that haven't been properly extinguished can smoulder under soil for days and reignite in warm and windy conditions.

You can check all the restrictions applying to public land by downloading the VicEmergency app or go to the Emergency Management Victoria website.

Authorised officers will be visiting our parks and forests to make sure that campers are following the rules and to make sure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable break.

People who breach campfire



It may look safe and wet, but let's keep our environment safe from fire this season.

regulations on public land face a maximum penalty of \$19,759 if the matter is prosecuted in court.

The maximum penalty for lighting or maintaining a fire during a day of Total Fire Ban is \$47,421.60 and/or 2 years in jail.

Report unattended campfires to DEECA at 136 186 or call 000 to report a bushfire.

For more on campfire rules,

visit: Campfires, stoves and BBQs.

Other Fire Restrictions

Fire restrictions were applied from the end of November in our region.

So, even if you are cranking up the barbecue at home on a hot day, or feeling tempted to burn that garden pile, check the restrictions and requirements before you light up.

On Total Fire Ban days, the use of farm or other machinery, is also restricted.

Stay safe and follow the rules to keep yourself and the environment safe this summer.

The CFA website will provide instructions regarding any restrictions and make sure you have the VicEmergency App available for alerts and warnings.

Kinglake Mens Shed

Greetings to all the Kinglake people and surrounding areas.

Christmas is about to be upon us, so be careful on the roads, and we will see you all in the new year,

We at the shed have been quite busy creating different things to sell over the internet, and/or hopefully having a stall at the Kinglake market, over the next coming months.

Hopefully we can advertise, promote the shed for new members and also sell some of our current projects

We have been lucky to be part of the Bunnings Mernda family night 5 December, where we are creating different items we can sell, starting at 4pm.

We will also be showing some of the items where we have used our laser machine.

We are working on having a stall at the Kinglake Market, we already have the tents, tables and items of interest,

items to promote the shed and men's health, and just to assist and answer any questions that the local community wishes to ask. Look out for us there.

Recently, we created an AI song about the men's shed, which has been played on the local radio station, UGFM 94.5 and it has also been placed on our facebook page.

A member of the shed has also been visiting other sheds within the local area, where we are now a member of the Yarra Ranges men's shed network, and also attending meetings with the Lower Goulburn men's shed.

By being part of these groups, it helps our shed to grow within the community and have a better understanding of what other sheds are doing within their own communities.

We have also been going to local shire community sessions ran by the Murrindindi Shire in different venues, also trying to encourage council assistance



in supporting the needs of the shed to exist and to function.

It has been a project of a member to create a rather large sign which will be placed in front of the main gate of the shed, so when members of the local community drive into Oldfields Rd they can see where the shed is situated. We can also create similar signs for anyone who wants one. We still have pallet sets available.

These days, the shed is still about helping the local community (male population mostly) with more the day to day, month to month, stress of today's living, with mortgages, finances, teenage children, etc,

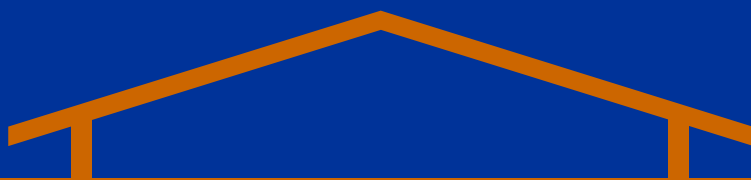
and other items that affect our daily living.

Also repeating ourselves, we have a well organized kitchen, pool table, library, of books and videos, and large television.

So, as previously mentioned in other editions we have posted in the mountain monthly, you can contact us via

E: kinglake-shed@outlook.com
Facebook: Kinglake ranges mens shed
Mobile: 0402 523 488
Or drop in any Thursday evening after 4pm until at least 8pm
5 Oldfield Road, Kinglake West
PO Box 159, Kinglake 3763

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Church Services

ALABASTER CHURCH KINGLAKE

St Peter's Memorial Church

Chr Bald Spur/Whittlesea-Kinglake Rds, Kinglake

Sunday service: 10:30am

Instagram @alabasterkinglake

W: www.alabasterchurch.org.au I

E: michelle@mcchurch.org.au

ANGLICAN CHURCH

St Peter's Memorial Church:

Cnr Bald Spur/Whittlesea-Kinglake Rds, Kinglake (Mel 250,B4)

St Peters Memorial Church

Sunday service: 8.30 am

Minister: Rev'd Dr Walter Firth 0439 447 395

(03) 9716 2042

Christ Church, Whittlesea

5-9 Wallan Rd, Whittlesea (Mel 246E9)

Sunday service: 10.30am Communion

Minister: Rev'd Dr Walter Firth 0439447395

03 9716 2042

Walter.firth@gmail.com

Weddings and baptisms by appointment

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For all enquires for Baptisms, reconciliation, First

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Please call the office:

Phone: 9412 8493 or Mobile: 0448 101 401

Office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9am-4pm

Email: merndawhittlesea@cam.org.au

Website: www.christthelightparish.org.au

WHITTLESEA PRESBYTERIAN

Weekly services, including Sunday School

10.30am, 7 Lime St. Whittlesea

Enquiries: A. Johnson 9407 1797

Sunday School: Adele 9715 1198, Diane 5783 1658

Campfire Church

Anna the Prophetess

The first Christmas is a story about ordinary people who became part of the greatest story ever told. People like Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna were nobodies in the world's eyes, but God knew them by name. They had the eyes of faith to recognize who Jesus really is.

Anna – an 84-year-old Jewish widow – had devoted her life to prayer in the Jewish temple ever since her husband had died many years before. She longed for the Messiah to come, because He would right all the wrongs and make all things new. Her prayer was that God would allow her to see the Messiah before she died, and God answered her prayer.

The moment Anna saw Jesus in His mother's arms, she knew He was the One foretold by the prophets – the One who would bring salvation to the world. It was the Spirit of God who revealed the child's identity to Anna, for there was nothing noticeably special about the child, or the parents.

Anna shared what God told her to the parents, and to anyone else who would listen. Mary and Joseph marvelled at her words.

After King Herod found out about the child – when the wise came looking for Him 2 years later – Joseph and his family fled from Bethlehem, and lived in Egypt as refugees. After Herod died, they decided to go back to Nazareth, where Jesus could grow up in relative obscurity.

When Jesus launched His ministry, the ordinary people received Him gladly, but the religious establishment opposed Him. They feared His popularity, and resented Him when He called out their hypocrisies. They convinced the political establishment that He was a threat to the status quo, and got Jesus killed – but God's plans were being fulfilled.

In Isaiah 53 – written in 700 BC – we learn that Jesus was sent to take the sins of the world upon Himself.

"...He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ... Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried ... But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities ... chastened for our well-being ... and by His scourging we are healed. Is 53:3-5

Jesus explained His purpose when He said,

"For GOD so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON, so that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. For GOD did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:16,17

Jesus overcame death itself, proving that He did have the power to save us – just as Anna had said.

Multitudes have turned from their sins and found peace with God through Jesus Christ. May you find that same peace, that only Jesus gives, this Christmas.

Campfire Church meets each month. See the directory in MM for details.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

Lift the Lid Walk & Kinglake Ranges Show & Shine

What an amazing day it was! Thank you everyone!



CANS FOR A CAUSE

"Cans for a Cause" is now taking applications for our 2026 community recipient! After a fantastic year of 'Cans for Karts' helping young boys Nate and Koby chase their go-karting championship dreams, we're ready to choose the next local project or initiative in 2026. If you know a person, group or initiative that deserves our support, contact us via our website or email. Every can donated at our market bins goes straight back into supporting amazing local legends.



Foundation Awards

Rotarian Andrew Beohm & Wife Rhonda attended the District 9790 Foundation Gala Dinner. Our Club was proudly recognised with two awards: the Level 1 Annual Donor Award and a Certificate of Appreciation for supporting End Polio Now. Thank you to all members who continue to champion Rotary Foundation efforts and raise awareness for polio eradication.



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WILL BE GOING
TOWARDS ROTARY
FOUNDATION

Middle Kinglake Primary School



The Heritage Centre. Top right: Bike Workshop



Grades 3-6 Camp



Police in Schools

We can't believe that the end of year is so close!

What a fabulous year we've had at MKPS and we thank the school and Mountain Monthly community for their support throughout 2025.

Some highlights this term have included the Police in Schools program, Responsible Pet Care, Shocktober, Grade 3-6 Camp, visit to the Kinglake Heritage Centre, bike riding, Pevan and Sarah concert plus all the fun things that happen on a day to day basis.

If you know Michael you know his love for bikes. Michael has encouraged us all to also love bikes and bike riding.

We have a shed full of bikes that students use on a regular basis. This term during PE students have enjoyed bike riding, learning skills and safe bike riding. Michael has also set up a bike workshop to teach students about taking care of bikes. The bike workshop is a very popular place and we thank Michael for imparting his love of bikes to us!

We love working with organisations in the Kinglake community and have been very lucky to have the Kinglake CERT team visit us for Shocktober. They taught us the importance of being able to administer CPR if required. Students were very engaged and now feel much more confident about CPR.

We also had a visit from Rose and Laura from the police. They talked to us about their role in the community as police officers. Everyone got to try on Rose's vest and had some terrific questions to ask.

As part of the Grade 3/4 unit of study of the History of Transport, they visited the Kinglake Heritage Centre. They learned lots about the local history and Ken even brought his vintage car to show.

Prep Transition continues to provide opportunities for students and families to become familiar with MKPS. Prep students have been paired up with their buddies, who will assist their transition to school.

Grades 3-6 headed to Aireys Inlet for their camp. A great time was had by all.

Enrolments remain open for 2026. We encourage new families to come and check out what MKPS has to offer. Our staff work hard to provide an engaging and individualised Literacy and Numeracy curriculum plus many specialist curriculum subjects including Art, Music, Library, Social & Emotional Learning, Auslan, Health & PE and STEM. We have a huge focus on Sustainability, including the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. Students are involved in gardening, cooking and learning about environmental issues. If you would like more information about our fabulous school, please don't hesitate to contact us. Call us to schedule a personalised tour. Check out our website <https://www.mkps.vic.edu.au> or 'like' our Facebook page for up to date happenings.

We wish all our students and families a happy and safe Christmas and New Year break. Term 1 resumes on Tuesday 27 January for staff and Wednesday 28 January for all students.

Meagan Callander, Principal

Kinglake West Primary School

As the year draws to a close, Kinglake West Primary School is still buzzing with energy and excitement. While planning for 2026 is already underway, there's no slowing down for our students and staff — with plenty of wonderful activities and achievements taking place across the school.

Hooptime Success

A huge congratulations to our Hoop Time team, who proudly represented KWPS at the Regional Finals! The team played brilliantly, showing outstanding teamwork, sportsmanship and determination throughout the day. Despite some tough competition, they won several games and finished an impressive 5th overall. What a fantastic effort — we are all so proud of you.

Day for Daniel

On Thursday, 7 November, our students and staff wore red in support of Day for Daniel, Australia's most extensive child safety education and awareness day. This vital initiative encourages children and adults alike to Recognise, React and Report unsafe situations. At KWPS, we take this message to heart and continue to make child safety and well-being a central focus of everything we do.

Football Clinic

Our students were thrilled to take part in a special football clinic hosted by representatives and coaches from AFL Victoria, as part of a community initiative organised by Disaster Relief Australia, NAB, and AFL Victoria. The highlight of the day was hearing from football legend, Kevin Sheedy, who spoke to students about teamwork, resilience, and following your passions. Students had the opportunity to ask him questions before joining the coaches for a range of fun and energetic footy drills.

Breakfast Club

Our Wednesday morning Breakfast Club has been a hit this term. Students have loved starting their day with hot chocolates and pancakes, generously provided and served by the wonderful volunteers from Alabaster Church. The warm smiles and delicious breakfasts have created a lovely sense of community to kickstart our Wednesdays.

Whittlesea Show

A big congratulations to our Whittlesea Show prize winners! We certainly have some talented artists and imaginative writers among us. It's wonderful to see our students' creativity and hard work recognised beyond the school gates — we're so proud of their achievements.

Big Group Hug

Over Terms 2 and 3, KWPS held a Clothes Drive to support Big Group Hug, a charity that helps children and families in need. Our Student Representative Council (SRC) students then had the opportunity to visit the Big Group Hug warehouse in Thomastown to see exactly where our donations go. They were shown around the warehouse and learned how donated items — including clothes, toys and even repurposed pillowcases — are used to support those less fortunate. It was a powerful and eye-opening experience for our students, reinforcing the importance of kindness, empathy, and community action.

It's been another busy and rewarding term at Kinglake West Primary School. We are so proud of the enthusiasm, compassion and creativity our students bring to every experience. With just a few weeks left in the year, we look forward to celebrating more achievements and finishing 2025 on a high.



Kinglake Football/Netball Club

What a fantastic season it has been for the Kinglake Football Netball Club!

We'd like to extend a big thank you to all our players, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters for their commitment and contribution throughout the year.

The passion, effort, and spirit shown both on and off the field/court continue to make our club something truly special.

Looking ahead to 2026, it's shaping up to be an exciting year. We'll be fielding three football teams — Under 19s, Reserves, and Seniors — and four netball teams — Kinglake 1, 2, 3, and 4.

We're also very fortunate to have our major sponsors — Down South Diesel, Mather Homes, and the Whittlesea Bowls Club — continuing their valued support next season. Their ongoing commitment plays a vital role in the success of our club, and we sincerely thank them.

A huge thank you also goes to our 2025 committee for their dedication and hard work throughout the past year. We now welcome our new committee as we move into what promises to be another big year for the Lakers.

Football

The club is thrilled to announce our 2 senior assistant coaches for 2026, Rodney Pratt and Justin Sherman.

"Stig" is a club stalwart who has played over 200 club games while also coaching our Reserves for the past 2 years. He also doubled as an assistant for our senior side. Stig will step in as full time senior assistant in 2026.

Justin joins us fresh off Premiership success with Riddell this year where he served as a senior assistant.

He brings a wealth of AFL experience with over 100 games for the Brisbane Lions and



24 for the Western Bulldogs. Justin is no stranger to the NFNL having coached both Whittlesea and Laurimar.

Welcome Justin and his family to the Lakers.

Netball

Kinglake Netball is back playing in the NNL Summer season after a successful main season.

Kinglake has 4 teams entered with returning players and a long list of new players. The league has finished grading with all 4 teams collecting wins.

Kinglake 1 - Division 2,
Captain Amy Simmons
Kinglake 2 - Division 3,
Captain Nakita Meade
Kinglake 3 - Division 6,
Captain Taryn Jennings
Kinglake 4 - Division 10,
Captain Natalie Gibson

We look forward to an exciting pre-season ahead and can't wait to see what the 2026 season brings.

Here's to a successful and enjoyable 2026 — both on and off the field/court!

Go Lakers!



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Kinglake Junior Football

As we head into summer it is great to see players returning to the oval for some pre-season training.

Our U14s and U16s have commenced and it was terrific to see them bringing the energy, teamwork and lots of laughs. The U14s have one more session before Christmas on Wednesday 3 December at the Kinglake main oval from 4.45pm – 6pm and the U16s will be at the Kinglake West oval (next to primary school) at 10am on Sunday 7 and 14 December. U10s and U12s will commence their pre-season in the new year.

Everyone is welcome to come down to the training sessions, so please keep an eye on our socials for further information regarding training dates for 2026.

In November, Rotary in collaboration with Disaster Recovery Australia held a corporate working bee to help the community prepare for the seasons ahead. Over 50 AFL corporate and NAB foundation staff have been working hard conducting maintenance at the Neighbourhood House as well as preparing fire wood for those in need next winter.

The great Kevin Sheedy was in attendance as well as Mayor Damien Gallagher and Councillor Jodie Adams from Murrindindi Shire.

The children at Kinglake West primary were also treated to an AFL skills session. It was a fantastic effort and very well received by everyone who attended. KJFC look forward to helping deliver some of the chopped wood to local residents next year.

Also in November Rotary held the Lift the Lid Walk. It was a fantastic turnout and we would like to extend our thanks to everyone who turned up to support mental health and raise much needed funds for this worthy cause



Under 14s pre-season training



Committee members with Kevin Sheedy.

It was a big month of events

In November we also celebrated the book launch of much-loved local legend, Kirk Mercuri. We were very proud to be able to purchase a copy of 'Step by Step – Living with Autism' for every player in this season's teams. We would like to congratulate Kirk on his very well-attended launch and for all that he does for the local community!

If you have a child who is interested in becoming a Laker in 2026 or you are a returning player, please follow this link to register: <https://www.playhq.com/afl/register/f72ea0>

Go Lakers!

Facebook: @Kinglakejuniorfootballclub

Website: www.kinglakejfc.org.au

Email: kinglakejfc@gmail.com

Auskick enquiries: Rebecca - 0423 629 241



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Kinglake Riders Club

Kinglake Riders rallies are held on the 4th Saturday each month at the club grounds at the Kinglake Trust Reserve, Kinglake.

PRESIDENT: LISA PORTMAN lisaportman@bigpond.com PH 0428 373 171

VICE PRESIDENT: PAT EVERINGTON paeverington@bigpond.com PH 0409 663 943

SECRETARY: ALYSSA FLETCHER allysafletcher89@gmail.com PH 0458 618 143

Kinglake Fire Brigade

Prepare for Summer

Now is the time to make preparations for our upcoming summer fire season.

The weather predictions this year are showing a trend towards drier and warmer conditions than we have experienced in the last few years.

While it's still looking green and conditions are cool, it will not take long for this to change.

Now is the time to be preparing your home and property. Clean up any leaf litter and fine sticks and branches that have collected around your house.

Keep grass short and if possible watered to keep it green.

Now is the time to be planning for the event of fire coming to Kinglake. These are just some of the several things to consider.

1. What to do before Summer

- Seek advice.
- Prepare your property.
- Check any firefighting equipment and service if required.

2. Prepare or review your fire plan

- Prepare a written plan or checklist (you will not remember everything under pressure)
- Practice your plan and ensure the whole family is aware of the plan, including your family and friends off

the mountain.

- Have the plan ready in a prominent location in your home.
- Have important documents ready or backed up off the mountain.

3. On a Hot Day or Total Fire Ban

- Consider leaving the area early. (it's too late once a fire starts)
- Recheck your equipment.
- Monitor weather conditions.
- Monitor websites and the Vic Emergency App for developing situations.
- Be ready to act.

If you would like further information on how to prepare and "Get Fire Ready" this summer you can visit the CFA web site: [cfa.vic.gov.au](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or contact your local fire station. Local brigades are ready to provide information and support.

You can also request a 'Property Advice Visit. PAV's visit, where a CFA member can visit your property and provide initial advice on better preparing yourself and your property for fire.

Recruitment

"Give us a Hand"

The Kinglake brigade is always looking for new members. We are looking for people to join our team and provide a valuable service to the community. If you are a shift worker or work from home, then we

would love your help during the day.

The brigade regularly trains on a Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, however there are other options available if these don't work for everyone. The CFA will provide you with personal protective equipment and the training that is required.

If you are interested in joining then you can drop down to the station on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night, where we will show you around and explain what is required to become a volunteer fire fighter. Alternatively, you can go to the CFA website and click and follow the links to "Become a Volunteer"

<https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/volunteers-careers>

Santa Claus is coming

Santa this year will be visiting Kinglake on Sunday 21 December. He will follow our usual route finishing up at the Rotary Christmas Market around lunch time. Please follow our Facebook page to get updates on Santa's progress around town and listen out for our sirens and music.

Finally we would like to wish everyone a Merry, Safe and fire free Christmas and New Year.

Stay Safe Everyone.

From the Officers and Members of Kinglake Fire Brigade

KINGLAKE FIRE BRIGADE ANNUAL SANTA RUN 2025



Santa will be roaming the streets of Kinglake on Sunday 21st December, starting at 9:30 am from the Kinglake Fire Station.

If you want to catch up with Santa he will be following the route below:

- Grandview Cres and Bald Spur Rd
- Outside Church cnr Main Rd and Bald Spur
- Bollygum Park (Inc Ward St and Shelley Harris Crt Residents)
- Aitkin Cres (opp toilets)
- Keith St and Mervyn St
- Hawkins Drive, Elvin, Morris Ct and Thompson Lane
- Top of Mill St, Down Bower St, along George St to Glenburn Rd
- Kinglake Primary School car park
- Currajong Ave, Ellison St and Royal Cres
- Elm Gve, Robertson Rd, Victoria Rd and Reserve Rd
- Cnr Mountain Home Rd and Mt Slide Rd
- Edward Staff Dve, Gordon Grove and Nayloch Way
- Kinglake Community Centre Rotary Market



If Santa is not coming down your road please go to one of the roads nearby. Parents please ensure you and the children stay to your side of the road, for your safety. If we go past on one side and you are on a main road we will most likely come back. Listen out for the sirens and you will know Santa is close.



Note : Route may change or it may be postponed if we are required for fire operations.

Kinglake SES



Training has been busy since our last article, and both Graeme and Bonny have completed the first step (Crew Member Supervised) and are now operational members of the unit and can turn out to RFAs (Request For Assistance).

At the same time 4 Other members completed step two (Crew Member Level 1). This indicates that they have turned out to a number of RFAs and put their learned skills to use, so congratulations to Erin, Evelyn, Troy and Greg H.

And, as I write this they are undertaking the last of the steps (Crew Member Level 2) where they demonstrate all their learned skills in a team environment.

Another Whittlesea Show has come and gone, I hope that you had the opportunity to call in and say hello to our members, or

were able to watch the display showing different techniques we use to extract casualties who are trapped in their car following a motor vehicle collision.

This year a number of the people listed above used this to learn these techniques under the watchful eyes of the more experienced members.

For those who did attend you would have seen our Junior Member, Amber, involved in these displays.

It should be noted that all members are trained together in all aspects of what we do. This time last year Evelyn was an interested spectator, and this year was involved in the display.

While training is taught to all members, including juniors, juniors are not allowed to attend any motor vehicle collisions.



The last month has been quiet with only 8 RFAs received plus the 2 days at the Whittlesea Show.

the RFA's were Assist Ambulance 2

Trees down 6

PLEASE REMEMBER IF YOU NEED OUR ASSISTANCE DIAL 132 500

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY DIAL 000

Again thank you to all the members of our community who drop off bottles and cans, as this definitely helps raise funds for our unit.

If joining us is something that you are interested in then come down to the unit. We train every Monday night from 7.30pm to 9.30pm except public holidays. Juniors can start from 15 years old. Contact our Unit Controller Leanne Klammer 0428 110 773, Deputy Controllers Andrew Derwent 0419 581 520 or Wayne Leech 0407 400 465 and have a chat, you might find it a good way to meet people in our community and learn new skills at the same time.

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December 2025

Kinglake Main Street Tree Works

During routine inspections, Council's Arborist has identified structural defects in six large trees along the main street in Kinglake.

Council will be holding a popup information session to discuss the upcoming pruning of these significant trees. Come along and have a chat.

When: Saturday 13 December from 10.00 to 11.00 am
Where: Outside Kinglake Community Foodworks at 12 Whittlesea-Kinglake Road, Kinglake.

Community Leadership Program Introduction Session

Join Council's free online introduction session on Wednesday 3 December from 6.00 to 7.00 pm and learn about the upcoming 12-week Community Leadership Program.

To register visit our website at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/leadership or call Council's Community Capacity Building Officer on 5772 0333.

Council's Community Directory

This free online resource allows you to create and maintain your own listing, promoting the great work you do for your community and encouraging others to get involved.

Profiles in the directory are kept up to date by each individual organisation/group. To update the details of your existing listing or to create a new one, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/communitydirectory

2026 Immunisations

Did you know, a comprehensive childhood immunisation service is provided throughout the Shire and offered free to all children aged between 6 weeks old and less than 5 years old? Our experienced nurses are available to discuss your child's immunisation program and give the required vaccines.

For more information or to book an appointment, visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au/vitavo or email immunisation@murrindindi.vic.gov.au



Holiday season closures

Council offices, Library and Customer Service Centre's will be closed from 3.00 pm on Wednesday 24 December to Thursday 1 January 2026, returning to our regular hours on Friday 2 January 2026.

For non-urgent requests or further information about changes to Council services during this period, please visit murrindindi.vic.gov.au

For urgent matters, such as stock on roads, dog attacks, or unsafe road conditions, including fallen trees, please contact our After Hours Service on **5772 0333**.

Keep safe on the road this summer

Long daylight hours make driving safer, but drought conditions can increase wildlife movement as they are forced to search further afield for food and water. Slow down and stay alert, especially at dawn and dusk.

If you spot animals near the road, slow down and keep an eye out, especially at dawn and dusk. Let's keep our roads safe for everyone.

Learn more at murrindindi.vic.gov.au/wildlifeonroads

Breastfeeding Support Program

Breastfeeding can be tough, but you don't have to do it alone. Qualified lactation consultants now offer free, personalised breastfeeding support at your local Maternal and Child Health centre or at home.

For more information and to book, email mch@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Get in touch
5772 0333

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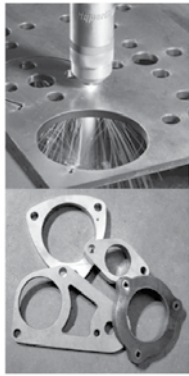
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ML Accounting Solutions 0438 778 303

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Kinglake Ranges Service & Repair 0418 515 506

Parkers Auto Plus 9716 2010

BANKS

Bendigo Bank – Kinglake 5786 1656

BIN HIRE

Barbers Bin Hire 9714 8511 or 0409 677 687

BUILDERS

Fair Dinkum Builds 0432 511 024

Leonard Interiors 0418 335 475

Mattador Building & Construction 0400 357 408

BUSHFIRE PLANNING

Kinglake Bushfire Planning Consultancy
0413 188 248

CAFES, BAKERY, FOOD & RESTAURANTS/CATERING

Cappa Rossi's Cafe 5786 1783

Kinglake Fish N Chippery 5786 1828

Kinglake Pub 5786 1230

Little Italy 5786 5216

Songbird Cafe & Larder 5786 1275

CARAVANS & RV'S

All About Leisure 0417 364 549

CARPENTRY

Vazbuilt 0414 085 247

CONCRETE, STONE & BRICKLAYING SERVICES

Fleetwood Concreting 0418 534 973

Wheeler & Sons Construction 0421 435 766

EARTHWORKS

Bulldozer Hire 0473 525 695

JR Earthworks Damien 0418 506 130

ELECTRICIANS & DATA SPECIALISTS

Kinglake Electrical Services Jason 0448 810 715

ENGINEERING, DESIGN & WELDING

R & D Burns Engineering 0428 300 357

FINANCIAL SERVICES

NS Finance & Mortgages – Nicole 0412 169 035

FIREWOOD

Action Firewood 0448 583 861

Whittlesea Hardware 9716 2226

FUNERAL HOMES

Halls Funeral Services 9438 5416

GARDEN SERVICES & SUPPLIES

Morgan's Fuel Reduction 0419 895 464

Pheasant Creek Gas and Property Maintenance
0401 870 158

GAS SUPPLIES

Kinglake Gas Barry 5786 2197

Pheasant Creek Gas and Property Maintenance
0401 870 158

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Ann Friedel Publishing 0418 556 107

HAIRDRESSER

L D Hair Studio 0404 092 927

HARDWARE

Simply Timber & Roofing 03 5743 0000

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Chinese Medicine – Dr Angela Palmer 5786 1889

Innova Osteopathy 0458 112 608

Whittlesea Physiotherapy 9716 2250

LANDSCAPING

Wheeler & Sons Construction 0421 435 766

MEDICAL SERVICES

Whittlesea Medical Imaging 9716 0278

METAL FABRICATIONS

Outer Edge Creations – Custom Fabrications
0409 575 846

NDIS SERVICE PROVIDER

Care for Living Adrian 0402 095 585
Sarah 0419 116 217

NURSERY / GARDEN

Alowyn Gardens 9730 2400

PAINTERS

John Kyme Painter & Decorator 0418 564 851

On Time Painting Australia 0402 771 175

PEST CONTROL

Home Pest Services 0488 004 882

PHARMACY

Kinglake Community Pharmacy 5786 1109

PLASTERING

NCC Plastering 0435 842 859

PDL Plastering 0417 558 727 or 5786 5591

PLUMBING & PUMP SERVICES/SALES

Irelands Plumbing 0447 710 631

Kinglake Plumbing & Drainage 0408 176 342

Licensed to Plumb 0405 263 224

Mountain Range Plumbing
Damien 0418 506 130

POST OFFICE

Kinglake Post Office 5786 1209

REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Integrity Real Estate 5786 2033

ROOFING

CB Roofing 0403 555 279

SCRAP METAL

United Metal Recycling 9467 5505

SEPTIC SERVICES

GC Septic Tank Cleaning 0418 303 761

Septic Services 0421 764 072

Septic Tank Specialists (Kinglake) 0408 176 344

Wallace Septic Tank Cleaning 0490 390 158

SUPERMARKET

Kinglake FoodWorks 5763 6602

TANK CLEANING

Accent On Tank Cleaning 0407 684 910

Pristine Water Systems 0458 940 188

TIMBER SUPPLIES

Simply Timber & Roofing 03 5743 0000

Whittlesea Hardware 9716 2226

TREE SERVICES

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Star Tree Service 5783 3170

Unlimbited Tree Services 0419 506 739

VALUATIONS

Yarra Valley Valuations 5961 9176

VETERINARY SERVICES

Mountain Ranges Vet Clinic 5786 1777

WATER BORES

Northwest Drilling 0409 362 289 or 9436 1982

WATER SUPPLIERS

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0400 389 022 or 0457 681 992

WEDDING VENUE

Forest Weddings 5786 5230

MURRINDINDI SHIRE COUNCIL

Customer Service &

General Enquiries (03) 5772 0333

Alexandra Library (03) 5772 0333

Yea Library (03) 5772 0333

Kinglake Library (03) 5772 0333

Mobile Library (03) 5772 0333

Operations Emergencies* (03) 5772 0333

(eg collapsed bridge or trees over road)

Community Safety Emergencies* (03) 5772 0333

(eg stock on roads or dog attacks)

***These numbers must only be used in the**

case of an emergency. For further information

on Council or opening hours of the Resource

Recovery Centres please visit the website [https://](https://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Home)

www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Home

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COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Kinglake Police	5786 1333
CFA	000
Police	000
Ambulance	000
SES	13 25 00
Nexus Primary Health	1300 77 33 52
Kinglake Ranges Health Centre	
Whittlesea Medical Clinic	
Whittlesea	9716 2207
Dental 24 hr Emergency (Bundoora)	1800 233 684
Mountain Ranges Vet Clinic	5786 1777
Help for Wildlife	0477 555 611
Wildlife Victoria	1300 094 535
Local Laws	0419 572 425

CRISIS NUMBERS

Berry Street	5770 2200
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Lifeline 24hr	13 11 14
Breastfeeding Helpline 24hrs	1800 686 268
24hr Maternal & Child Health line	13 22 29
Poisons Information	13 11 26

ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

Nexus Primary Health	1300 773 352
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MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental Health Advice Line	1300 280 737
Crisis Assessment & Treatment Team	1300 859 789
Aged Psychiatric Assessment and Treatment	1300 369 005
Adult Mental Health Mon-Fri BH	5735 0333
Afterhours/Weekends/24hrs	1300 369 005
Child And Adolescent Mental Health	
Monday to Friday 9-5	5735 0300
Afterhours	1300 369 005
Mental Illness Fellowship	5735 2000
Goulburn Valley Health Mental Health Services	
Seymour	1300 369 005
Epping	1300 874 243
Heidelberg	1300 859 862

HOUSING SERVICES

Office of Housing – (Seymour DHS)	5793 6400
Rural Housing Network	5735 2000
Pathways – homeless or at risk of becoming	5735 2055
Homeless	
– Outreach Connections Program BH	0409 812 159
The Bridge – for people up to 25yrs	5799 1298
Nexus Primary Health	1300 773 352
Consumer Affairs – Tenancy advice	1300 558 181

AGED AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Aged Care Assessment Service	5823 6000
Aged Psychiatric Assessment and Treatment	1300 369 005
National Dementia Helpline	1800 100 500
Carers' Respite and Information Service	1800 059 059
Community Interlink	1800 222 582
DHS – Disability Access and Response Team	1800 783 783
Regional Information and Advocacy Council	1800 221 944
Victorian Aids and Equipment Program	1300 747 937
Interchange	
– for children with disabilities	5735 4600
Nexus Primary Health	1300 773 352
– Rural Access Worker – Disability Case Management –	
Physiotherapy, OT, Speech, Dietetics, Continence Advice, Podiatry	
SCOPE	5799 0148
Deaf Access Victoria	1300 302 335
Vision Australia	5831 3555
Kinglake Carers' Support Group	5786 1232

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

DHS Child Protection	1800 650 227
	After Hours 13 12 78
Foster Care – Berry Street Victoria	5799 0039
Family Day Care – Murrindindi Shire	1800 633 792
Permanent Care & Adoption – DHS	5832 1500
Specialist Children's Services – DHS	1800 783 783
Familycare	1800 663 107 or 5735 4600
Telephone Parenting Program	1800 880 660
Access & Support Worker	5774 2404

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Nexus Primary Health	1300 773 352
Womens Domestic Violence Crisis Service	9322 3555 or 1800 015 188
Whittlesea Family Violence Unit, Mill Park Police	9407 3333

COUNSELLING SERVICES

ATAPS (Access to allied and psychiatric services)	5734 8400
General Counselling	
– Yea Community Health	5736 0400
Familycare	1800 663 107
Nexus Primary Health	1300 773 352
– Women in Relationships, Financial Counselling, Gambling	
Counselling, trauma, family therapy, play therapy	
G.V Centre Against Sexual Assault	5831 2343
Men & Relationships Program	1800 663 107
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277
Catholic Care	5786 1016
Victims Support Agency	1300 362 739
Victims of Crime Helpline	1800 819 817
ACGB Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement	9265 2111

HEALTH SERVICES

Hurstbridge Medical Centre	9718 2611
FamilyCare	5735 6400
Yea Medical Centre	5736 0444
Yea & District Memorial Hospital	5736 0400
– Acute care, District nursing, Ultrasound, Pathology, Physiotherapy, Visiting specialists	
Nexus Primary Health	
(Kinglake Ranges Health Centre)	1300 77 33 52
– Dietitian, OT, Diabetes educator, Asthma educator, Counsellor, Support Worker, general practitioner, practice nurse	
Maternal and Child Health	5786 1337
Lower Hume Palliative Care	5735 8070

COMMUNITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

Kinglake Neighbourhood House	5786 1301
Kinglake Ranges Men's Shed	0402 523 488
5 Oldfield Road, Kinglake West 5757	
email: kinglake-shed@outlook.com	
KRBN	5786 1976

SCHOOLS

Kinglake PS	5786 1284
Middle Kinglake PS	5786 1295
Kinglake West PS	5786 5262
Flowerdale PS	5780 1264
Toolangi PS	5962 9255
Strathewen PS	9714 8278
Yea High	5797 2207
Whittlesea SC	9719 1200
Diamond Valley	9438 1411

KINDERGARTENS/PLAYGROUPS

Kinglake Ranges Childrens Centre	5786 1352
Kinglake Playgroup	5786 1301
Flowerdale Kinder	5780 2816

PUBLIC PLACES

Bollygum Park	5786 1426
Community Centre Bookings	5786 1522
Kinglake Library	5786 1522
Lions Tool Library	0414 555 544
Sports Stadium Bookings	5786 1522
Kinglake West Mechanics Institute	0435 414 110
PO Box 108, Pheasant Creek 3757	
Football Clubrooms	5786 1580
National Park	13 19 63 www.parks.vic.gov.au
Flowerdale Community Hall	5780 2027
Flowerdale Community House	5780 2664

PATIENT TRANSPORT

Red Cross Patient Transport Service	0419 872 230
Lower Hume Community Transport Scheme	5799 2965

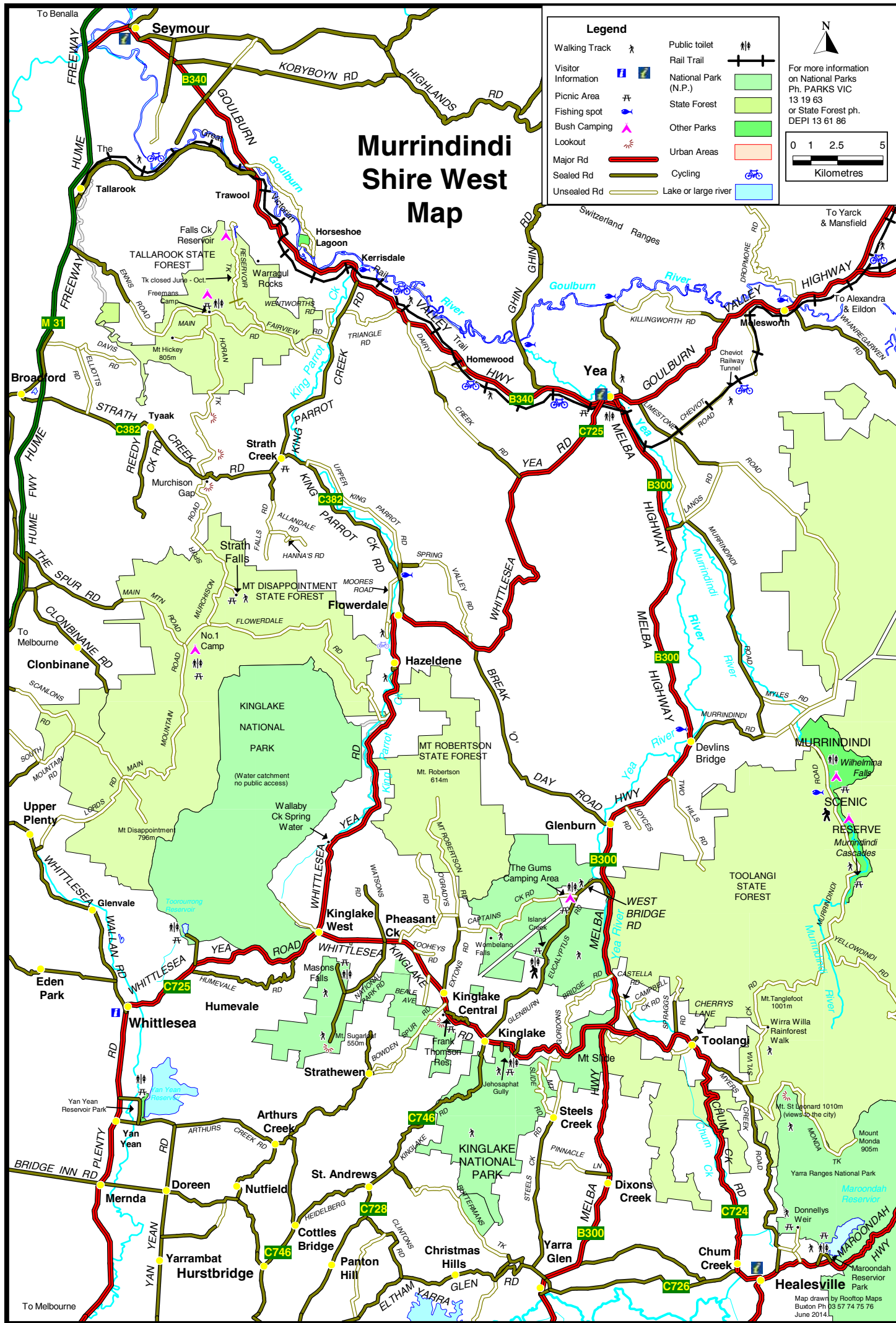
JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

K Stewart (Kinglake)	0419 347 581
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