



Good Things Are Brewing

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Editorial

The first week of July marks NAIDOC Week, an opportunity for Australians to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As part of our acknowledgement of NAIDOC Week, one of our regular columnists, Michelle Paul, has contributed a feature article examining the early years of settlement in the Avon Valley and the impact those years had on the Ballardong Noongar people.

It is not always easy reading.

Like much of Australia's frontier history, it is a story that contains courage, resilience and determination, but also conflict, dispossession and loss. For many Australians, these chapters of our history were either glossed over or omitted entirely from their history lessons. Today, there is a growing recognition that understanding our past requires us to examine all of it – not only the parts that make us comfortable.

Whenever these subjects arise, an inevitable question follows: what should people living today do with this history?

Some argue that present generations should feel guilt for the actions of those who came before them. Others reject the idea entirely, pointing out that they bear no responsibility for events that occurred nearly two centuries ago.

Personally, I believe there is an important distinction between guilt and responsibility.

Guilt is personal. It belongs to those who commit wrongs. None of us need bear guilt for decisions made long before we were born.

Responsibility, however, is something different.

Every generation inherits the community built by those who came before it – the good and the bad alike. We inherit roads, schools, farms, businesses and traditions. We also inherit the consequences of past decisions, including those that caused harm.

That does not mean we should spend our lives apologising for the actions of our ancestors. Nor does it mean we should ignore history because it is uncomfortable.

Rather, it means we should be willing to understand it, and understand its enduring impacts.

The reality of intergenerational trauma is not difficult to grasp. We recognise it within families. The experiences of grandparents can shape parents, and the experiences of parents can shape children. Communities are no different. The effects of significant loss and disruption can echo across generations.

Acknowledging that fact is not about assigning blame. It is about recognising reality.

At the same time, we should be careful not to define people solely by the hardships of the past. The story of the Ballardong Noongar people is not simply one of suffering. It is also a story of survival, resilience and enduring connection to Country. Despite everything, those connections remain strong today, and there is so much beauty in that.

Perhaps that is one of the most valuable lessons of NAIDOC Week.

It invites us to listen to stories that may be different from our own, to learn more about the place we call home, and to appreciate that our local history did not begin with European settlement.

We do not all have to agree on every interpretation of history. But we can approach it with curiosity, respect and an open mind.

A stronger community is built not by forgetting the past, nor by being trapped by it, but by understanding it honestly and moving forward together.

I encourage readers to take the time to read Michelle's article and reflect on the stories that have shaped our region. They are, after all, part of the shared history of the Avon Valley.

Our Cover



This month's cover features Eclipse Brewery directors, Ryan Sandrini and Bryn Allan out front of the newly opened Brewpub Northam.

Thank you to Naomi Sherrington for capturing this image for the cover this month.

Eclipse Brewery is open Wednesday to Sunday. Pop in and check out Northam's first brewpub.

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Aboriginal People should be aware that this publication contains images or names of people who have passed away.

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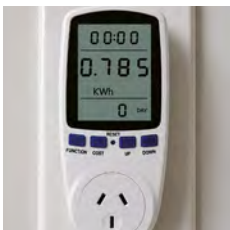
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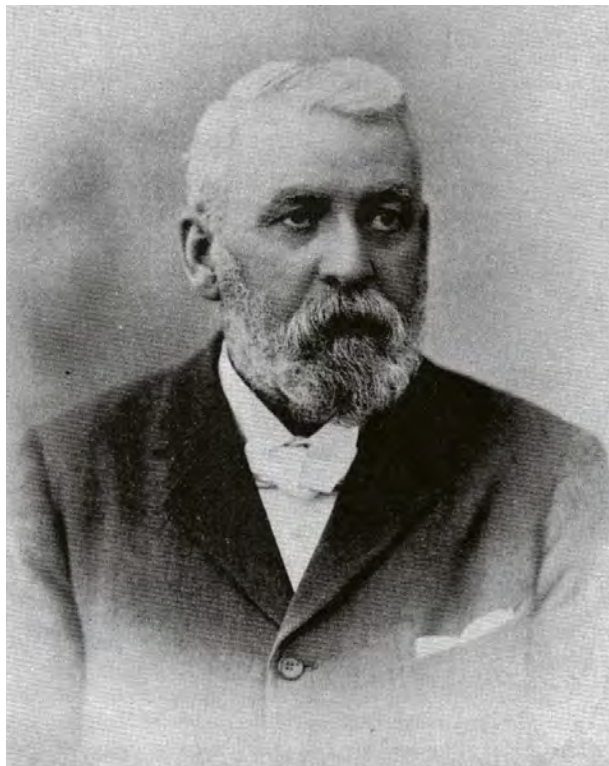
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BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

George Throssell – The Lion of Northam



by Naomi Sherrington

Some people leave their mark on a town. Others help build it.

Few figures in Northam's history loom larger than George Throssell – businessman, mayor, parliamentarian, Premier and devoted family man. Known throughout Western Australia as "The Lion of Northam", Throssell spent almost his entire adult life championing the town he loved, helping transform it from a small Avon Valley settlement into one of the State's most important regional centres.

Born on 23 May 1840 in Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland, George arrived in Western Australia as a ten-year-old boy when his family emigrated aboard the Scindian in 1850. After attending Perth Public School, he headed east to Northam, where opportunity awaited those willing to work hard and dream big.

At just 21 years of age, Throssell established his own business, Geo. Throssell & Co. What began as a modest produce store steadily expanded into a flourishing

enterprise that included farms, a flour mill and a chain of stores. By the late nineteenth century, his name had become synonymous with commerce across the district. The old Throssell Emporium on Peel Terrace stood as a symbol of both his business success and Northam's growing importance as a gateway to the eastern goldfields.

Yet business was only one part of the story.

Throssell believed deeply in public service. From 1864 to 1874 he served as Northam's postmaster, helping connect a growing community to the wider colony. He became a founding figure in local government, serving on the Northam municipal council before spending many years as chairman and mayor. Whether advocating for roads, services, commerce or infrastructure, he was rarely far from the centre of civic life.

His relentless energy earned him the nickname that would follow him for the rest of his life – The Lion of Northam. It was a title that reflected not only his commanding presence but also his fierce determination to advance the interests of his community.

By the time responsible government arrived in Western Australia in 1890, Throssell was one of Northam's most respected citizens. He was elected unopposed as the town's first representative in the new Legislative Assembly, carrying the voice of Northam to Perth.

As Western Australia entered a period of extraordinary growth driven by the gold rush, Throssell's influence continued to rise. In 1897 he joined the government of Sir John Forrest as Commissioner of Crown Lands, overseeing one of the most important portfolios in a rapidly developing colony.

Then, in 1901, history called.

When Forrest resigned as Premier, to enter Federal Parliament following Federation, George Throssell became Western Australia's second Premier. Although his premiership lasted only a few months, it came at a pivotal moment in the State's history as Western Australia adjusted to its place within the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia. In recognition of his service, he was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) that same year.

For all his political achievements, Throssell's greatest pride may have been his family. He and his wife Annie Morrell raised a large family of fourteen children. One



of them, Hugo Vivian Hope Throssell, would go on to become one of Australia's most celebrated soldiers and the only member of the Australian Light Horse to receive the Victoria Cross during the First World War.

George Throssell never forgot Northam. Even as his influence spread across the state, his heart remained in the town where he had built his life. He continued representing the district in Parliament for many years and remained a respected figure until his death in Northam on 30 August 1910.

Today, reminders of his legacy remain woven throughout our community. Historic buildings associated with the Throssell family still stand, including the grand Fermoy House, named after his Irish birthplace. The old Throssell Emporium remains a tangible link to the entrepreneurial spirit that helped shape the town.

More than a century after his passing, George Throssell remains one of the defining figures in Northam's story. He arrived as a migrant boy seeking a new life and became a businessman, civic leader, Premier and patriarch of one of Western Australia's most notable families.

But perhaps his greatest achievement was something simpler.

He believed in Northam – and spent a lifetime helping it become the community we know today.



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Northam honours community champions with inaugural Walk of Fame

by Naomi Sherrington

Some of Northam's most influential citizens have been permanently honoured with the unveiling of the Shire of Northam's inaugural Walk of Fame in Bernard Park.

Families, friends, community representatives and local leaders gathered on May 23 to celebrate the official opening of the Walk of Fame, which recognises individuals whose dedication, service and achievements have helped shape the Northam community.

Located near the swan enclosure in Bernard Park, the Walk of Fame features six plinths, including an introductory display and five inaugural inductees selected through a community nomination process.

Shire President Chris Antonio said the project was established to formally recognise people whose selflessness, passion and commitment had contributed to making Northam "the wonderful place it is today". He said the Walk of Fame would continue to grow, with one new inductee to be added each year.

The project began in 2024 when the Shire called for community representatives to assist in selecting inductees. A panel comprising Mr Antonio, Shire CEO Debbie Terelinck and community representatives Andrew Quin and Eric Chamberlain reviewed nominations before recommending the inaugural honourees to Council. The Shire received a strong response from the community, with organisers describing both the quality and quantity of nominations as overwhelming.

Speaking at the unveiling, Mr Antonio said recognising local achievements was about more than celebrating the past.

"The Walk of Fame is more than just a physical space. It is a lasting tribute to individuals whose dedication, talent and commitment have made a meaningful impact," he said.

"It reflects who we are as a community, our values, our aspirations and our pride in those who go above and beyond."

The inaugural inductees represent a diverse range of contributions to Northam's history and development.

Former Western Australian Premier Hon. George Throssell CMG was recognised for his leadership in business, local government and state politics. Known as the "Lion of Northam", he served as Mayor of Northam



Photo: left to right, Vivienne Sellers, Lachlan Hunter, Heather Young, Chris Antonio, David Throssell, Genoeffa Budas, Marlene Gazis and Peta Watson

before becoming Western Australia's second Premier.

Heritage advocate Genoeffa Budas was honoured for decades of work preserving the stories of displaced persons and migrant families who settled in Northam after World War II, helping ensure an important chapter of the town's history is not forgotten.

The late Janice Mary James was recognised for her lifelong commitment to local history, Aboriginal genealogy and cultural preservation. Her work included creating one of Australia's largest collections of Aboriginal genealogical records and authoring numerous books documenting the region's history.

Marlene Gazis was acknowledged for founding Share and Care and helping establish services that have supported vulnerable people throughout Northam and the wider Wheatbelt for more than 50 years.

Long-time sporting volunteer Shirley Christmass completed the inaugural group, recognised for more than seven decades of service to netball and the wider community through coaching, umpiring, administration and volunteer work.

Mr Antonio said the Walk of Fame was intended not

only to celebrate those being recognised today, but also to inspire future generations.

"Greatness is not only found on national or global stages, but right here in our own backyard," he said. "With passion, resilience and hard work, incredible things are possible."

As Northam's newest public landmark, the Walk of Fame stands as a permanent reminder of the people whose vision, service and dedication have helped define the community's past and continue to inspire its future.



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MEMBER FOR CENTRAL WHEATBELT



Authorised by L. Hunter, 185 Fitzgerald St Northam WA 6401

Wheatbelt Filipino Community Marks 128th Philippine Independence Anniversary



Photo: Organising committee led by coordinator and organiser Digna Verlinden and Chris Antonio (back)

The Filipino community across the Wheatbelt gathered at Northam Town Hall to celebrate the 128th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence in a vibrant and well-attended event.

The program featured cultural performances showcasing Filipino music and dance, complemented by a sumptuous luncheon of traditional Filipino dishes. The celebration was attended by Shire of Northam councillors, CEO of Chamber of Commerce and other guests, reflecting strong community support.

The success of the event reflected the dedication and hard work of the committee under the leadership of the coordinator and organiser Digna Verlinden.

“This celebration comes from the heart of our community,” said Digna Verlinden. “It reflects the hard work, unity, and shared love for our culture that brings

us together, even when we are far from home.”

The organising team also thanked community members for their enthusiastic participation, particularly in the cultural performances that brought the event to life.

The celebration strengthened community ties and reflected the enduring Filipino spirit of bayanihan (a traditional Filipino value of communal community, cooperation, and helping one another).



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50 Years of Deadly: Northam prepares to celebrate NAIDOC Week



Photo: Local Unity walk organiser, 'Wonka' with students from Cunderdin District High School and Senior Constable Nathan Smith

by Naomi Sherrington

Communities across Australia will come together from 5–12 July to celebrate NAIDOC Week 2026, with this year's milestone theme, 50 Years of Deadly, marking half a century of recognising and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.

While the week itself spans just eight days, its significance reaches far beyond a single celebration. For fifty years, each national NAIDOC theme has reflected the issues, aspirations and achievements of its time—honouring Elders, recognising leaders, celebrating culture and reminding Australia that the oldest continuing culture on Earth remains vibrant, resilient and evolving.

This year's theme looks both backwards and forwards.

Rather than simply celebrating a milestone, 50 Years of Deadly acknowledges the generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who ensured NAIDOC endured. It honours the organisers, artists, activists, Elders and community leaders who kept culture strong, often through periods when Aboriginal voices were ignored or marginalised.

In Aboriginal English, deadly is a term of pride and celebration. It describes something outstanding,

impressive or exceptional, making it a fitting theme to celebrate five decades of achievement, resilience, leadership and cultural strength.

As National NAIDOC Co-Chair Steven Satour explained when launching the theme, it recognises the leadership that has carried the movement for five decades while affirming that its future will continue to be shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities themselves.

Co-Chair Aunty Professor Lynette Riley echoed that sentiment, describing NAIDOC as something that has "always belonged to mob", paying tribute to those who continued organising, creating and leading so that culture and community remained at the heart of the celebration.

Today, that leadership can be seen across every aspect of Australian life—from health, education and business to the arts, media and politics—with First Nations people increasingly telling their own stories on their own terms.

For Wheatbelt communities, NAIDOC Week provides an opportunity not only to celebrate Aboriginal culture, but to strengthen relationships and deepen understanding.

That spirit of reconciliation was already on display in Northam last month, when the town's annual Unity Walk was held on 23 June. Now in its fifth year, the walk has become an important fixture on the local calendar, bringing together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in a shared show of respect, recognition and unity ahead of NAIDOC Week.

This year's walk attracted approximately 440 students from Northam Senior High School, Goomalling Primary School, Cunderdin Agricultural College, Cunderdin District High School, Avonvale Primary School and West Northam Primary School. They were joined by teachers, community organisations, government agencies and local leaders, all walking side by side in recognition of the region's shared history and commitment to reconciliation.

Rather than focusing on speeches or ceremony, the Unity Walk symbolises the simple but powerful act of walking together acknowledging the past while looking towards a future built on mutual respect, understanding and partnership.

Northam will again host its annual Community

NAIDOC Week Celebration, welcoming Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents alike to share in a day centred on culture, community and connection.

While organisers were still finalising the full program at the time of publication, the event is expected to include a traditional opening ceremony, performances by Noongar musicians, cultural activities, community stalls, children's entertainment and opportunities to learn more about local Aboriginal history and culture. As in previous years, the celebration aims to create a welcoming environment where everyone can participate, regardless of background. The free event reflects the same spirit embodied by the Unity Walk—bringing people together through culture, conversation and mutual respect.

Elsewhere in Perth, NAIDOC Perth Aboriginal Corporation will officially open the week with its annual Opening Ceremony on Sunday 5 July before a series of cultural events, community gatherings and celebrations continue throughout the metropolitan area. This year's national celebrations also coincide with a new three-year partnership between NAIDOC and SBS/NITV, ensuring First Nations stories and voices receive even greater national exposure.

The timing is particularly fitting as Australians continue important conversations about truth-telling, reconciliation and recognising the country's shared history.

NAIDOC Week is not simply about looking back at what has been endured. It is equally about recognising the extraordinary contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to make every day, celebrating the richness of cultures that have flourished on this continent for tens of thousands of years, and acknowledging that those stories remain an essential part of Australia's future.

Whether attending a community celebration, taking part in a Unity Walk, listening to local Elders, supporting Aboriginal artists or simply taking time to learn more about the history of the land beneath our feet, NAIDOC Week offers every Australian an opportunity to participate.

After fifty years, the message remains as relevant as ever: culture endures, communities endure, and the story continues.

Community Leaders recognised, and Northam couple crowned Miss and Mr NAIDOC Perth



by Naomi Sherrington

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this article contains the name of a person who is deceased.

Two young Aboriginal leaders from the Northam district have been recognised for their commitment to culture, leadership and community after being crowned Miss NAIDOC Perth and Mr NAIDOC Perth for 2026.

Duana Nickels and Adrian Hardy received the honours during the Miss and Mr NAIDOC Perth Crowning Night, held at Fraser's Restaurant in Kings Park on June 6.

Now in its 15th year, the Miss NAIDOC Perth program—and fourth year alongside the Mr NAIDOC Perth program—is an empowerment and leadership

initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 18 to 30. Rather than a traditional pageant, the program focuses on developing confident young leaders through cultural education, professional development and community engagement.

Over six weeks, participants took part in leadership workshops, a cultural education day with Elders, a professional photoshoot, a sponsors' and judges' dinner, and a series of activities designed to strengthen cultural identity, build confidence and foster lifelong community connections before the program culminated in the annual crowning ceremony.

According to the organisers, the program is about far more than awarding titles. It aims to empower young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to become leaders within their communities while celebrating culture, identity and service.

For Duana and Adrian, the recognition reflects their ongoing commitment to community and their efforts to create positive opportunities for Aboriginal young people.

Since being crowned, the pair have already been sharing their leadership journey closer to home, participating in the NAIDOC Unity Woola Woola event in Northam, where they spoke with local students about culture, leadership and embracing opportunities.

The 2026 program also recognised Jarnda Councillor-Barns and Greg Turvey as the runner-up Miss and Mr NAIDOC Perth recipients respectively, while Alexandra O'Brien was named Miss Kwobordok,

and Ben Jeakings received the Moorditj Maarman title.

Scarlett Drage and Presley Ryder were presented with the Doolann Award, named in honour of the late Aunty Doolann Leisha Eatts, a highly respected Whadjuk-Ballardong Noongar Elder who dedicated her life to preserving and sharing Noongar culture and history. Aunty Doolann was an enormously influential cultural leader who:

- taught Noongar language and culture in schools for decades;
- was an acclaimed storyteller, author and educator;
- served on the City of Perth Elders Advisory Group as a founding member;
- received multiple NAIDOC honours, including NAIDOC Female Elder of the Year;
- was inducted into the Western Australian Women's Hall of Fame in 2015; and
- devoted much of her life to preserving and sharing Noongar history and culture.

These achievements come as communities across Australia celebrate NAIDOC Week under the 2026 theme, 50 Years of Deadly. Marking five decades of NAIDOC Week, the milestone theme celebrates the strength, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples while honouring those who have carried the movement forward and inspiring following generations to continue that legacy.

Northam Connections Recognised in King's Birthday

Former Central Wheatbelt MP Brendon Grylls and Northam-raised former minister David Templeman have been recognised in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours, receiving Member of the Order of Australia awards for their service to Western Australia.

Two former Western Australian MPs with strong connections to Northam and regional Western Australia have been recognised in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours.

Former Nationals WA leader Brendon Grylls and former Labor minister David Templeman have both been appointed Members of the Order of Australia (AM), recognising their service to Parliament, their communities and Western Australia.

The pair were among a number of former parliamentarians recognised this year, reflecting decades of contribution to public life across the State.

While they sat on opposite sides of politics, both entered State Parliament in 2001 and went on to build distinguished careers spanning more than two decades.

For Wheatbelt residents, Mr Grylls' recognition acknowledges one of the most influential regional political careers in modern Western Australian history.

Raised in Corrigin, he entered Parliament as the Member for Merredin before becoming the inaugural Member for Central Wheatbelt in 2005. As leader of The Nationals WA, he championed Royalties for Regions, a policy that redirected a share of the State's mining and petroleum royalties into regional communities.

The program transformed the way governments invested in country Western Australia, funding infrastructure, health services, schools, community facilities and economic development projects throughout regional WA.

Current Member for Central Wheatbelt Lachlan Hunter said Mr Grylls' impact could still be seen across the Wheatbelt today.

"As the Member for Central Wheatbelt, Leader of The Nationals WA, Minister of the Crown and architect of Royalties for Regions, Brendon fundamentally changed the way governments invest in regional communities," Mr Hunter said.

"His vision ensured that regional Western Australians received a fairer share of the wealth generated in our state, leaving a legacy that can still be seen in communities right across the Wheatbelt and regional WA today."

Mr Grylls became known as a passionate advocate for regional communities and a strong voice for decentralisation, regional development and investment beyond Perth.

David Templeman's connection to Northam is of a different nature, but equally significant.

Raised in Northam and educated at Northam Senior High School, Mr Templeman was elected as the Member for Mandurah in 2001 and served continuously in Parliament for more than 24 years.

During his career he held a range of ministerial portfolios including Local Government, Heritage, Culture and the Arts, Sport and Recreation and International Education.

Widely respected across the political spectrum, Mr Templeman became known for his enthusiasm, accessibility and commitment to community organisations, local government, heritage and the arts.

Northam resident and former Member for Central Wheatbelt Mia Davies said the honours recognised two people who had dedicated much of their lives to public service.

"I had the privilege of serving alongside both Brendon and David and, while they came from opposite sides of politics, they shared a genuine commitment to making a difference for the communities they represented," Ms Davies said.

"Brendon never stopped asking whether regional Western Australians were getting a fair go. His determination to advocate for country communities reshaped regional politics and changed expectations about what governments should deliver beyond Perth."

"David brought extraordinary energy and enthusiasm to public life. Whether it was local government, heritage, the arts or community organisations, he approached every role with passion and a genuine desire to help people."

"Politics can be a tough and often unforgiving profession, but both men dedicated decades of their lives to serving others. Their appointments as Members of the Order of Australia are richly deserved and reflect the lasting contribution they have made to Western Australia."

For Northam and the Wheatbelt, the recognition of both men is a reminder of the contribution regional Western Australians continue to make to the State.

Their appointment as Members of the Order of Australia acknowledges decades of public service and a lasting contribution to Western Australia.



Photo: Brendon Grylls

Brewing something special: Eclipse Brewery opens a new chapter for Northam



Photo: The Eclipse team

by Naomi Sherrington

Many friends have, at some point, sat around over a few drinks and decided they were destined to run a bar together. For most, the entrepreneurial planning ends when the glasses are empty, and the enthusiasm fades faster than the hangover.

But for Ryan, Bryn and five of their mates—whose friendship stretches back to kindergarten in Northam—this dream outlasted the last round. It became the beginning of a remarkable journey, and an exciting new addition to Northam's social landscape.

It started when Bryn's sister-in-law dug up an old bottle in a chook yard, which Bryn identified as being from the old Eclipse Brewery in Northam, established in 1897. Intrigued, they began researching the historic brewery and discovered a number of newspaper articles—one featured a quote from the owners of the original brewery describing a local brewery as a sign of a prosperous town.

They started to wonder, "what if we brought Eclipse back?"

The friends initially began brewing beer in backyard sheds purely for the enjoyment of it. As their skills improved, and the quality of their product was recognised in local brewing competitions, they put together a one-page prospectus—more tongue-in-cheek than serious—and circulated it among friends. To their surprise, people wanted in, and the dream suddenly became real.

Years of home brewing, refining recipes, learning from fellow brewers and entering competitions eventually evolved into Brewhaven Beer Co. Now those award-winning beers are being served at Eclipse Brewery's newly opened Northam Brewpub.

The decision to open the Brewpub in Northam was all about community. It also made perfect sense to brew beer in the heart of one of Western Australia's most productive grain-growing regions.

All of the founders have deep ties to the Wheatbelt and have spent years working throughout the region and watching family farms steadily disappear as larger agricultural businesses expanded, leaving many country main streets with empty shops and declining foot traffic.

Rather than lamenting those changes, they wanted to invest in reversing them—and that philosophy now underpins every aspect of Eclipse Brewery. Located on Minson Avenue overlooking the Avon River, the brewpub embraces a true "paddock-to-pint" philosophy, using Wheatbelt-grown barley and wheat, while showcasing local produce throughout its menu and drinks list. For the founders, supporting local farmers and producers isn't a marketing strategy—it's recognising that their own success depends on the success of the region around them.

Beyond supporting local produce and creating local jobs, the founders believe the Brewpub will strengthen tourism

by giving people based in or visiting Perth another reason to head east and encouraging them to spend more time in Northam.

The road to opening the brewery was far from straightforward. Like many independent breweries, Eclipse initially relied on contract brewing, with larger commercial breweries producing its beer. While this allowed the business to get started, it also highlighted one of the biggest frustrations facing small brewers: maintaining quality is difficult when production is in someone else's hands. "We're perfectionists," Bryn explains. "If you're passionate about what you're creating, you want to control every step."

Having their own brewery now allows the team to oversee every batch from start to finish, ensuring the consistency and authenticity they always envisioned rather than chasing industry trends.

A pleasant surprise has been the generosity of Western Australia's craft brewing community. Despite competing for customers, experienced brewers have willingly shared advice, encouragement and technical knowledge. "There really is a camaraderie among brewers," says Ryan.

These days, the greatest reward isn't simply brewing beer. "It's getting out of bed every morning to do something you genuinely love," Bryn says. "It gives you the warm fuzzies."

As the community gets to know the venue, it will become clear that Eclipse Brewery is more than just a new local watering hole. It is the revival of a historic name, an investment in local producers and community prosperity, and perhaps most importantly, a place designed to bring people together.

Having visited over the weekend, I'd be surprised if it doesn't become the gathering place its founders envision. The food is excellent, the atmosphere relaxed and welcoming, and if you're wondering where to start with the beer list, The Descent IPA gets my vote—closely followed by the Brown Ale!



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Continuing a family legacy of support for good causes



Photo: Kylie Gorham in the Golden Madonna

by Mairi Barton

When Kylie Gorham hits the outback roads in a 46-year-old car to raise money for cancer research in August, it will mark 10 years since her father David Gorham lost his battle with oesophageal cancer.

Sadly, David died before he could see the Share & Care building in Northam – named in his honour after his more than two decades of service on the Share & Care Board – fully completed and functioning for aged care and mental health services.

But Kylie was back in Northam recently to tour the building and accept \$1,000 sponsorship from Share & Care for her participation in the Shitbox Rally Spring 2026.

The donation, which will go to the Cancer Council, was made in memory of both Share & Care former Chairman Ann Gibbs, who died with cancer in January 2026, and of David Gorham.

Accepting the funds from Share & Care Board member Jill Lefroy, Kylie said Share & Care was woven into her family's history.

"David was very proud of the work of Share & Care, the people who work and volunteer to deliver care and community services, and of his own contribution," Kylie said.

A key rule for Shitbox Rally participants is that they are not permitted to spend more than \$1,500 to purchase their car.

Kylie managed to score a 1980 W123 Mercedes Benz for that price and as a little nod to a joke once shared by David. He said a father had been successful when their kids were successful, and two of his kids now drove Mercedes – his son drove a Mercedes ambulance in his role as a paramedic and for Kylie, it was actually a zippy little smart car!

Since buying the 'shitbox' Mercedes, Kylie has repainted it by hand and named it the Golden Madonna.

During the rally, Kylie and her co-driver Stephanie Kramer-Dean will join a couple of hundred other teams on a trek from Adelaide to Darwin on rough, unsealed roads, with a few river crossings as bonus challenges.

"While it is a fun adventure, the real goal of the Shitbox rallies is to raise funds for the Cancer Council and support the fight to fund prevention and treatment for cancer," Ms Gorham said.

"In Australia more than 150,000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year and sadly, more than 50,000 die each year due to their illness."

Anyone who would like to make a donation can find more details at: <https://spring2026.shitboxrally.com.au/golden-madonna>.



Photo: Sarah Mentshelyi, Jill Lefroy and Kylie Gorham with the Share & Care donation cheque



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Wheatbelt Careers Expo Returns to Northam in August

The Wheatbelt community is warmly invited to attend the Wheatbelt Careers Expo 2026, a highly anticipated event taking place on Wednesday, 12 August from 10am to 2pm at the Northam Recreation Centre.

This inspiring and community-focused event will bring together a diverse range of local employers, training providers, education organisations and support services, creating a vibrant space where opportunity and possibility come to life. Attendees will have the chance to explore exciting career pathways and discover new directions for their future.

Hosted by the Wheatbelt Jobs and Skills Centre, the expo welcomes students, jobseekers, parents and the wider community who are eager to learn, grow and connect. It is an invaluable opportunity for individuals at all stages of their journey to gain clarity, confidence and motivation when considering their next steps.

Visitors can look forward to engaging conversations with industry representatives, gaining real insight into workplaces, and asking questions in a friendly and supportive environment. From trades and construction to health, community services and education, the expo showcases the diversity of industries helping shape the future of the Wheatbelt region.

More than just an event, the Careers Expo plays a vital role in strengthening connections within the community. It brings people together, supports local businesses, and empowers individuals to take positive steps toward meaningful employment and training opportunities.

Employers are also encouraged to get involved. If you are an employer looking to connect with your next generation of team members, this expo provides a

valuable opportunity to showcase your organisation, promote career pathways, and engage directly with motivated local jobseekers and students.

Whether you are a student dreaming about your future, a jobseeker ready for a fresh start, or an employer looking to grow your workforce, this event offers a welcoming and encouraging space to explore what's possible and take the next step with confidence.

For more information about the event, contact the Jobs and Skills Centre on 0432 794 063 or email brenda.deatta@crtafe.wa.edu.au.



WHEATBELT CAREERS EXPO
Explore careers, training and employment opportunities

Wednesday 12 August 2026
10.00am – 2.00pm
Northam Recreation Centre

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- Discover pathways to your future.
- Talk to career advisors & training providers.
- Learn about different industries & careers.

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WA Long Weekend Storm

The storm over the WA Holiday long weekend holiday was, as we all know, very severe.

We were very fortunate in Northam that no major damage was reported, and your Northam & Districts SES volunteers had no local callouts. This is not what they expected, as they did anticipate there would be some damage caused by the storm, and so they were on standby in preparation to assist the community for the three days of the storm.

As they had no local callouts, they were asked to support SES units in the Perth Metropolitan area, due to the extent of the damage caused by the storm in that region.

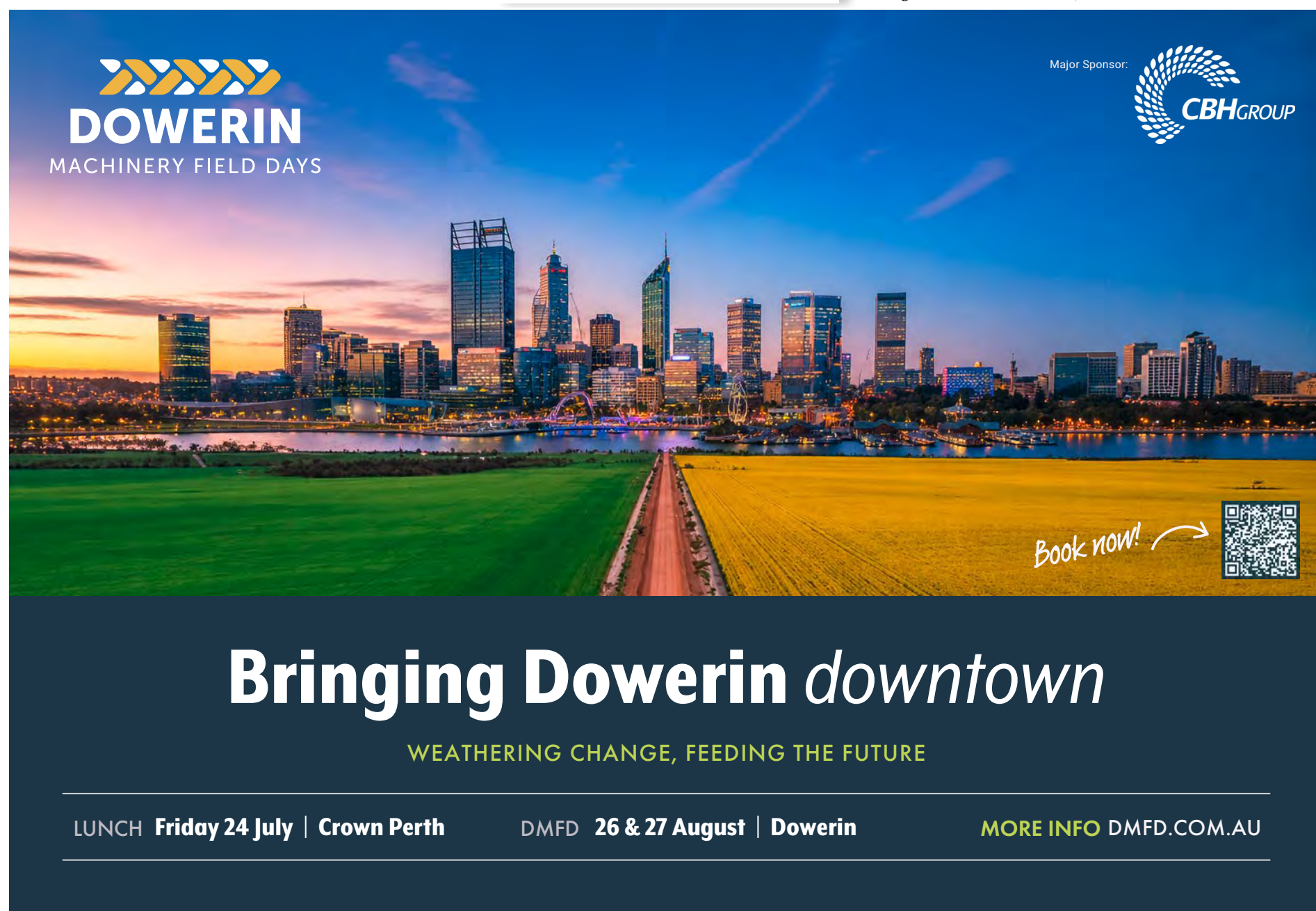
Perth had over 800 callouts, and like all SES units do, your Northam & Districts SES volunteers went to support the units in the Metropolitan area, when asked.

SES volunteers can be deployed anywhere in Western Australia, and in fact Australia, if the need arises, and they wish to go. In this particular case it was “just down the hill” to City Beach and Marangaroo.

Northam and Toodyay SES volunteers combined, and went to City Beach and Marangaroo to assist the SES Units in those areas

Northam & Districts SES volunteers were also on standby for part of Sunday night to support Mundaring SES unit. Mundaring SES unit had several callouts and asked Northam & Districts SES if they would be able to assist them, if required. In the end they were not required, so ultimately had a quiet night.

If you would like to be part of this exciting team, just give Lin a call on 0499 362 990.



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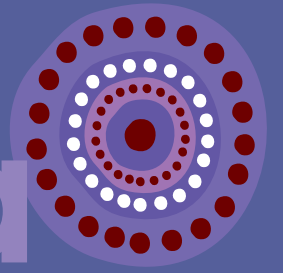
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Update from Chris Antonio, Shire of Northam President

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the preparations for the recent launch of the Shire of Northam Walk of Fame, and to extend a huge congratulations to our 5 inaugural inductees and their families. Nominations for 2027 Walk of Fame inductees are now open, so take this opportunity to nominate those you think are worthy of inclusion.

The 5-yearly Census is coming up on 11th August. This nationwide count, conducted by the ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) is important for the Shire, as it provides essential data that affects our funding, which in turn affects infrastructure and services that we are able to provide. Make sure you participate, and that your voice is heard. There are also job opportunities for locals if they want to be involved.

As has been demonstrated many times, the resilience and safety of our Shire relies heavily on local emergency services and their volunteers. The groups are always seeking the involvement of enthusiastic and reliable community members. If you're thinking of becoming involved, what a great way to share your unique and valuable skills; to find out more, visit the Shire of Northam website.

Many events, such as the upcoming Northam Bilya Festival and the Avon Descent are listed on the Shire of Northam website. If you would like your event to be included, please reach out to the Shire of Northam. This may be another way to promote your event to a wider audience.

If you want to keep up to date with recent events, follow the link on Instagram: @shire_of_northam_president



2026 Bendigo Bank Bilya Festival Street Parade

On Friday 7th August, the Bilya Festival will be back so wrap up warm and join us for the biggest street party of the year!

Each year, one of the most beloved parts of the event is the Street Parade, where businesses, community groups, schools, and other organisations work together to create a float to showcase their community spirit. The theme of this year's parade is "Hollywood".



Entry into the parade is FREE, and there are prizes up for grabs for best float in three categories.

To enter your float for the 2026 Street Parade, scan the QR code, or visit the Shire of Northam website. Applications close Friday 31st July.

This year's parade is proudly sponsored by Bendigo Bank.

Ready Set SWIM

Following the successful launch of our Ready Set Swim School during the 2025/26 season, we are excited to announce that the program will be returning this summer at the Northam Recreation and Aquatic Facility. The inaugural season saw strong participation and positive feedback from families, with swimmers of all ages developing confidence and essential water safety skills in a fun and supportive environment. Uplyft (previously Wanslea) working with our swim school facilitator delivered an after-school initiative aimed at educating at-risk youth on important water safety principles while developing their swimming skills and confidence in the water.

Building on the success of the 2025/26 season, we look forward to welcoming both returning and new participants for another fantastic summer of swimming, learning, and water safety education. Further program details and enrolment information will be available soon. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for updates.

Community Survey Results

A big thank you to everyone in our community who stepped up to complete our recent community survey. We are sharing the baseline results to start a conversation about where the Shire is heading, ensuring that moving forward you are kept in the loop about the services we deliver to the community.

From now until our next major review, we will be publishing updates across our channels to keep you fully informed about what we are up to. Moving forward, you can expect us to:

- Focus on the areas you scored as needing the most improvement.
- Take you along on the journey of some of our biggest local projects.
- Be transparent about the regional issues we are advocating for to State and Federal bodies.

Please note that we are using your feedback across all 40+ service areas behind the scenes to guide operational improvements. Just because a specific service area does not get a dedicated social media post on any given week, it does not mean your input was not invaluable. Every piece of data is currently being used to not only improve our services but also how we communicate with the community.

You can find further information about the survey, such as its methodology and demographics on our website at www.northam.wa.gov.au/scorecard

Stay connected & have your say

We want to keep the conversation going. If you have any questions about the MARKYT Community Scorecard, want to log a request, or want to share further feedback, you can reach out to us directly:

- In Person with our Engagement Team: 298 Fitzgerald Street, Northam
- Phone: (08) 9622 6100
- Email: communications@northam.wa.gov.au

AvonWest responds to Community Questions with Sustainable Vision

As community discussion around digital infrastructure grows, AvonWest's developer says the estate was designed with renewable energy and water efficiency at its core.

Mia Davies, Director Corporate Affairs & Business Development for Procon Developments Australia, said recent discussion reflected growing public interest in how the digital economy operates and the resources it requires.

"They are reasonable questions," Ms Davies said.

"People want to understand how these facilities use power and water, what benefits they bring and whether they are being developed responsibly."

She said those considerations had influenced the design of AvonWest from the outset.

The estate is planned to operate as an off-grid industrial precinct powered by 100 percent renewable energy. It will also incorporate an innovative wastewater treatment facility designed to collect, treat and reuse water generated within the estate, reducing reliance on potable water supplies wherever possible.

"Water is one of our most precious resources, particularly in regional Western Australia," Ms Davies said.

"That's why AvonWest has been designed to capture, treat and reuse water within the estate rather than simply treating it as a waste product.

"The estate's renewable energy system, wastewater treatment facility and water recycling infrastructure were planned from the outset to support future industry while reducing reliance on traditional power and water networks."

While the estate's wastewater treatment facility is designed to reduce demand on potable water supplies, AvonWest is still required to connect to and upgrade scheme water infrastructure as part of its development.

Ms Davies said the project required the extension and upgrade of water infrastructure servicing the Yilgarn Avenue corridor.

"The upgrades will be funded by Procon, however the infrastructure will ultimately become a Water Corporation asset capable of supporting future industrial growth in the area," she said.

"The Shire of Northam has identified Yilgarn Avenue as

an area with long-term industrial potential.

"As the first major development in the corridor, AvonWest is delivering infrastructure that has the potential to support future investment and business growth."

Recent community discussion regarding AvonWest has largely centred on a development application approved by the Shire of Northam in September 2025.

The application identified cryptocurrency mining as the proposed use.

The Shire of Northam has advised that the proposal was consistent with the approved land uses for the AvonWest estate and assessed through the Shire's standard delegated approval process, which did not require public consultation.

"A development application for a crypto mining warehouse was assessed and approved under the land use classification of 'warehouse/storage' in line the provisions of the Shire of Northam's Local Planning Scheme No. 6, which is a permitted use in a Light & Service Industry Zone. The use 'warehouse/storage' means premises including indoor or outdoor facilities used for the storage of goods, equipment, plant or materials; or the display or the sale by wholesale of goods," Shire of Northam President, Chris Antonio confirmed.

Through the approval process, the Shire has applied a number of standard conditions as per normal planning approvals, and any development is required to comply with the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997, both during construction and when operational.

"One of the priorities identified by the more than 940 respondents to the Shire's recent community survey is economic growth and development. The economic growth opportunities offered by developments such as AvonWest strongly align with our community's desire to see a strong, connected and sustainable future," said President Antonio.

"It is recognised that investment in utility and service infrastructure by AvonWest will support future development of the broader Yilgarn Avenue Precinct and I hope we see similar investment from the WA Government to ensure we can deliver on our community's priority for sustainable economic growth," he added.

Ms Davies said any discussion regarding digital processing facilities needed to acknowledge the role of digital infrastructure in everyday life.

"Whether it's banking, freight logistics, agriculture, healthcare, education or government services, digital processing infrastructure supports many of the services we rely on every day," she said.

"The challenge is ensuring these facilities are located in places that can manage their energy, water and infrastructure requirements responsibly.

"That is exactly what AvonWest has been designed to do."

Ms Davies confirmed that while Procon facilitated the planning application for the warehouse, and other tenants in the estate, they were not the owner or operator of the businesses.

"It's not unusual for developers of business and industrial estates to facilitate planning applications on behalf of tenants to ensure consistency across the estate," she said.

"We recognise the community's interest in businesses proposing to locate within AvonWest.

"As the project progresses, we look forward to keeping the community updated alongside these new businesses that will bring jobs and opportunity for our region."

Ms Davies said that while activity on site had been quieter in recent months, planning and development work had continued behind the scenes.

"Like many developments across Australia, AvonWest has been impacted by broader market conditions, including recent increases in fuel and construction costs," she said.

"Approximately 700,000 cubic metres of earthworks have now been completed, with around 5,500 cubic metres remaining as we prepare for the next phase of activity."

Civil works for the estate are now expected to be completed in late 2027.

"While the timeline has shifted, work on the project has continued and we remain focused on delivering the long-term vision for AvonWest."

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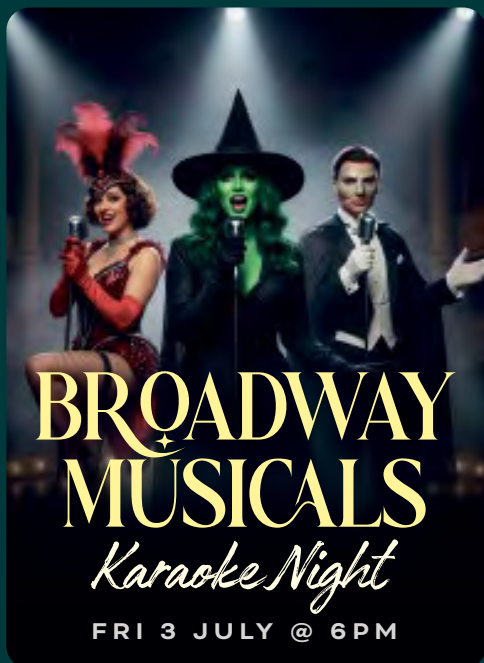
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Bendigo Bank Avon Valley Art Trail Exceeds Expectations in Inaugural Year

by Lindsay Newland

The inaugural Bendigo Bank Avon Valley Art Trail has been hailed a resounding success, with artists and visitors embracing the opportunity to explore the creativity, landscapes and communities of the Avon Valley over the WA Day long weekend.

Featuring 27 artists across more than 20 locations across the shires of Northam and Toodyay, the three-day event welcomed visitors into artists' studios, galleries and creative spaces, offering a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse into the artistic process while showcasing the remarkable talent that exists within our region.

Despite forecasts of heavy rain and strong winds on Sunday, visitors continued to travel throughout the trail, demonstrating a genuine enthusiasm for the arts and for exploring the region. Many visitors came from Perth as well as regional towns including Denmark and Bruce Rock, with some making a weekend of the experience by staying in local accommodation and camping grounds.

What stood out most for participating artists was not just the number of visitors, but the quality of the conversations and connections made along the way. Artists spoke of meeting people who were genuinely

interested in their work, sharing stories about creative practice, discussing future projects and connecting with both experienced collectors and people exploring art for the first time. One artist described the highlight of the weekend as "meeting everyone and sharing the joy of art making", while another reflected on the enthusiasm shown by visitors and the number of meaningful discussions that took place throughout the trail. For many, the event provided an opportunity to engage directly with the community in a way that traditional exhibitions do not always allow.

The feedback from participating artists has been overwhelmingly positive. Many commented on how well organised the event was and how valuable the coordinated marketing, signage, promotional materials and trail booklet were in attracting visitors and creating a professional experience. Several artists indicated they would happily participate again, with some reporting strong sales and many others highlighting the broader benefits of increased exposure, networking opportunities and community engagement.

The Bendigo Bank Avon Valley Art Trail was made possible through the support of our major sponsor, Bendigo Bank, whose commitment to regional

communities helped bring the vision to life. Additional support was provided by the Shires of Northam and Toodyay, along with local businesses who advertised in the trail booklet and helped offset production costs.

An event of this scale is only possible through the work of a dedicated team. Special thanks go to Art Trail Coordinator Natasha Rados, Finance Officer Elizabeth Greep, Rebecca Lennox for digital marketing, design and promotional materials, Chelle Ellery representing Arts Toodyay and coordinating the Toodyay region, and Lindsay Newland representing Avon Valley Arts Society and coordinating the Northam region.

Most importantly, thank you to the artists who opened their studios and creative spaces, and to the many visitors who embraced the opportunity to discover the Avon Valley through art.

For a first-year event, the response exceeded expectations and demonstrated a strong appetite for an arts trail that celebrates both the artists and the unique communities of the Avon Valley. The enthusiasm shown by artists, visitors, sponsors and volunteers has laid a strong foundation for the future, and planning is already beginning for next year's Bendigo Bank Avon Valley Art Trail.

Photo: Three generations of artists at Stable Hand Studio near Toodyay, Mill Murfitt, Michelle Murfitt and Barbara Greaves.

Photo by Rashelle Predovnik



Photo: Artists Lindsay Newland, Jess Edwards Parker, Rachel Kennedy and Ratna Knights at a shared studio space at Avon Valley Arts Society building.

Photo by Rashelle Predovnik



Photo: Toodyay artists Chelle Ellery, Kat Ferguson and Nicola Cowie

Photo by Rashelle Predovnik



Photo: Artists Lindsay Newland, Carole Anne Wescombe with Joy Smith and Dusty (the dog) as helpers at her home studio

Photo by Rashelle Predovnik

Open Studio Doors on the Artist Trail

by Madi Byfield

On a persistently drizzly day in late May, the first day of the WA Day long weekend, I braved the rain and hit the trail - the Avon Valley Artist's Trail, in its inaugural year and run in partnership with Bendigo Bank. The trail, a free event, provided the public a unique opportunity to visit artists' studios in the area, watching artists as they work, hearing their stories, and even making a purchase or two if they fancied. A map was provided, with each visitor encouraged to make their own trail, visiting artists in the major centers of Northam and Toodyay and sprinkled throughout the areas in-between.

Luckily for me, my neighbour of many years, Carrie Westcombe, happens to be a very talented artist participating in the open studio event, so I didn't have far to travel in the patchy weather until I arrived at my destination—the beautiful Irishtown Church, lovingly converted into a living space by the previous occupants, and with ample signage pointing toward the open studio at the back. There I found multiple groups of visitors crammed into the little space, painted bright yellow but only tiny slivers of wall visible past the decades of artistic practice, through many mediums and subjects, all on display for the public to see—for the first time, for the studio itself and most of its works.

As I arrived, Carrie was explaining to a group of visitors that she'd already had about thirty-odd visitors pass through her studio, which took me by surprise, given we were only midway through the first day of the three-day

event—and the weather had not been particularly kind to those having planned a sightseeing drive.

Prepping her studio had been something of an undertaking. "It took me three weeks every day, about two hours every day," Carrie told me over a cuppa some days later, after the event itself had concluded. "It was a nightmare. Twenty-five years of accumulated stuff. I think I filled the trailer up twice." As good an opportunity as anything for a bit of a clear-out for Carrie, who self-admittedly came from a generation who didn't have much, and held on to whatever might be useful.

This observation reflects on the nature of her artistic practice, as much as anything—I've known Carrie as an artist since my very first memories of her, and her artistic practice itself has collected many mediums throughout those years. Currently, she works mostly in textiles, but the walls of the church and her studio alike are a tapestry of her journey through many other mediums like painting, collage, and weaving. "It seems to be the thing with artists," she remarked. "You start off painting and then you find other things."

It's hard to think of a way to allow the public a glimpse into as long and winding an artistic journey as that, other than letting them walk through it themselves—as unique an opportunity as each artist who participated, with 27 participating artists throughout the valley during the long weekend. The trail expects to be able to open even more studios to the public in their next events.

Both locals and tourists were seen in great numbers hitting the trails, and they came eager to see, touch, and even

buy. Carrie recalled people being eager to ask questions, fascinated both by her finished works and by parts of the process, like her felting machine. "Some people had come in on the Saturday and then came back on the Sunday and said, I want to buy that quilt," said Carrie, as we reflected on how difficult it can be to sell artwork in a rural area. While our area boasts a thriving arts scene, opportunities to get works in front of people who might appreciate it are mostly limited to the few exhibitions that can be run in a year by local societies. Nobody is attending a farmers' market expecting to spend the \$450 in cash one of her art pieces had sold for on that Sunday.

Of course, it's not just about sales. Carrie seemed gratified by the amount of curiosity and interest people brought to her studio across the weekend.

For artists like Carrie, who is in her mid-seventies and has been a member of the community and a practicing artist in the area for decades, it's encouraging to see the efforts of younger people in the current AVAS committee begin to bear fruit. "They just recently had a youth art exhibition and they had something like 50 entries," she said. "It's all going well and they've always got things going on there. So I'm just so impressed."

We can only hope that the local scene and this event itself grow bigger and better. If the rain kept you inside this year, I can only encourage you to brave it if you have the chance again! You never know just where an artist might be hiding in your neighbourhood.

You can keep tabs on the event for next year via social media, or by visiting avonvalleyartstrail.org.au.

The Cost of Keeping Warm

by Peter Weatherly of the Avon Valley Environmental Society inc

Winter is upon us and if you're like me – you feel the cold. Northam is an inland town, well away from the modifying effect of the ocean which irons out the extremes of weather in coastal areas. That great mass of water does not warm – or cool – easily so Perth is both cooler in summer and warmer in winter. This is something we just have to live with.

So, how do we get warm in winter. Well outdoors, put on warm clothes and exercise. For the home it's not so easy. Best if you live in an energy efficient home. Mine isn't bad but it's a retrofit because it's so old – being built in the final decades of the 19th century in the federation style. When it was built, modern means of energy efficiency weren't known by Australians even though the Romans had worked it out 2,000 years ago and the Aboriginals sited their shelters facing north.

I say mine 'isn't bad' as it faces north so takes advantage of the sun, is heavily insulated, some windows are double glazed, there is solar hot water, solar panels, batteries and plenty of greenery.

It's not quite enough. We still need supplementary heating and cooling to be really comfortable.

That costs money and in some cases, a lot of money – particularly for heating in winter.

From an economic, comfort and possibly aesthetics point of view, there is a standout option. It's called reverse cycle air-conditioning. From a cost point of view, it's a clear winner. It also has a massive advantage inasmuch as it both cools and heats your home – depending on the season.

Why is this? Well, the main reason is that it is a heat pump – it pumps heat from outside the home – even in winter – and sends it indoors. Incidentally, you already

have a heat pump in your home – you call it a refrigerator. They are efficient and long lasting. They are efficient because they do not create heat, they just move it around. For that reason, they give approximately four times as much heat per unit of electricity used as any other heating appliance such as a blow heater, gas, oil etc. So, one kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity going into the air conditioner results in four kWh of heat (or cooling) going into your home. This ratio is known as the COP or Coefficient of Performance. It is normally written in the specifications on the device.

When you look at the specifications and/or the advertising it will say something like 'Heating 3.3kWh, input 0.8kWh, Cooling 3.4 kWh, input 0.9kWh. For the cost of running the appliance, look at the input – that is the electricity you will use when the pump is operating. The other is what you get in heat or cooling. Remember also that your pump does not run all the time as it has an inbuilt thermostat that turns the pump off when the chosen temperature is reached. The fan may still keep running.

Inverter technology means that the pump can run at a variable speed which is adjusted to match the temperature requirements. They are usually more efficient than the on/off variety and appear standard on many new air conditioners – especially the split system type. There is some time gap between switching them on and what appears to be the system operating.

I recently replaced my old wall/window air conditioner with a same brand, newer and more powerful wall/window one. It is 3.5kWh cooling and heating and uses just over one kWh when running and about 100W with just the fan. It does a great job. We're very pleased with it. It cost \$800 delivered and fitted the hole in the wall exactly. It plugs into a normal power point (in my case a 15amp socket) so



there were no extra costs for an electrician.

I have attached a picture of the instrument I use to check actual use of electricity. You plug it into your power point and then plug your appliance – in this case my air conditioner – into the instrument. This shows it is using 0.785kWh warming my home. A good result. It's a cheap instrument to buy and use if you wish to know how much power each appliance uses.

Why not an inverter split system? The answer is to avoid the cost of installation which can exceed the cost of the appliance. My old wall/window system lasted us at least 30 years so we think we are onto a good thing. It's still working but it was beginning to get noisier. It's sitting on my front veranda. It's heavy. We're happy to give it to anyone who would like it.

Stay warm, keep cool.

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EVENT QUICK GUIDE

- The Date: Saturday, 22 August 2026
- The Venue: Cobbler Pool, Morangup
- The Host: Transcend Trails

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The Regional Price Tag

by Naomi Sherrington

Cost-of-living relief sounds simple in a press release.

A fuel payment. A power bill credit. Free public transport. Student assistance. Tax cuts. Rent relief. Capped regional airfares.

The problem is not that these measures are useless. Most households will take whatever help they can get. The problem is that much of this relief is designed around an average household that does not really exist — and certainly does not often look like a regional household.

In the 2026–27 State Budget, the WA Government committed more than \$1 billion in cost-of-living support. That includes a \$100 Fuel Support Payment for Western Australians with a driver's licence, another round of the WA Student Assistance Payment, free public transport initiatives, regional airfare caps, expanded concessions and targeted support.

Federally, the Government has leaned heavily on income tax cuts, energy bill relief, cheaper medicines and broader household support.

On paper, it is a long list. Critically, however, the question is not whether money is being spent. The question is whether the spending matches the pressure.

For regional Western Australia, the answer is mixed at best.

Take the \$100 fuel payment. In Perth, it may be a welcome bonus. In the Wheatbelt, it is closer to an acknowledgement note. For many regional households, fuel is not discretionary spending. It is how people get to work, school, sport, medical appointments, groceries, family and essential services.

A one-off \$100 payment does not seriously address the structural reality of regional transport. It does not matter whether a family budgets carefully if they must drive hundreds of kilometres a week because public transport is limited or non-existent.

That is the core failure in much cost-of-living policy: it treats fuel as a household expense rather than regional infrastructure.

Free or discounted public transport has a similar problem. It is good policy where public transport exists. But it does very little for people in communities where

the practical choice is not between a bus and a car, but between driving and not going at all.

This is not a small oversight. It is a metropolitan assumption dressed up as universal relief.

Regional airfare caps are more relevant, particularly for remote communities. But for much of the Wheatbelt, the bigger issue is road travel — and the steady accumulation of fuel, tyres, servicing, registration, insurance and time off work.

Health costs reveal the same pattern.

Patient travel assistance is essential, but it still operates as a patch on a deeper problem: too many regional people must travel to receive care that metropolitan residents can access much closer to home. Even where subsidies exist, they rarely capture the full cost of leaving town for treatment. Fuel, accommodation, food, parking, lost wages and childcare all add up.

A specialist appointment may be “covered”. The trip to attend it often is not.

Energy bill relief is also welcome, but again, broad payments can blur regional realities. Older housing stock, poor insulation, extreme temperatures and limited rental choice can leave households with high power bills they cannot easily reduce. A rebate helps, but it does not fix inefficient housing or the lack of affordable upgrades.

Tax cuts are broader still. They help working people keep more of what they earn, but they are least useful to those with little taxable income. Pensioners, carers, unemployed people, people with disabilities, and those in insecure or seasonal work may see limited benefit. In regional communities, where incomes can be uneven and costs can be unavoidable, that matters.

The political logic of broad relief is obvious. It is simple to explain. It reaches many people. It avoids complex eligibility rules. It is hard to object to. It will attract some voters.

But good politics is not always good policy.

A regional cost-of-living strategy should start with distance. How far do people travel for work, school, health care and essential shopping? What services are missing locally? Which costs are unavoidable because of



Photo: from Freepik

geography rather than personal choice?

From there, policy would look different.

Fuel relief would be better targeted to regional residents who genuinely rely on long-distance driving, rather than spread thinly across all licence holders. Patient travel assistance would more realistically reflect the true cost of accessing health care. Public transport funding would include practical regional mobility solutions, not just cheaper fares where services already exist. Energy relief would be paired with serious investment in improving older regional housing. Freight and supply-chain costs would be treated as part of household affordability, not merely a business issue.

Most importantly, governments would stop pretending that equal payments create equal outcomes. Because they just don't.

A \$100 payment is not the same thing in Northam as it is in Perth. A public transport discount is not the same thing in a town with no practical service. A medical subsidy is not the same thing when the appointment is hours away.

Regional people are not asking to be treated as special. They are simply asking government to recognise the reality that distance has a cost, limited services have a cost, and thin markets have a cost. If policy does not account for those costs, then regional households will keep paying the difference.

Cost-of-living relief should not just be measured by how much government spends; it should be measured by whether it reaches the pressure points that actually hurt.



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Housing Promises Are Not Housing Solutions

by Naomi Sherrington

Governments have finally noticed the regional housing crisis. That is the good news.

The bad news is that many of the proposed solutions still look too slow, too narrow, and too dependent on the same strained construction market that helped create the problem in the first place.

In the 2026–27 State Budget, the WA Government has made housing one of its central themes. The headline commitments are substantial: more than \$1 billion through the Housing Australia Future Fund partnership to deliver 1,426 homes, \$452 million for social housing, and \$419 million for more than 500 government worker dwellings in regional WA under the Seven Cities New Build program.

The Regional Housing Support Fund has also been increased from \$25 million to \$75 million, offering grants of up to \$5 million for local governments, community housing providers and developers to support regional housing projects.

On paper, this is significant. In practice, it is not enough.

The first problem is scale. Five hundred government worker homes across regional Western Australia sounds impressive until it is spread across a state of this size, over five years, and aimed primarily at public sector workers. Teachers, police officers and health workers absolutely need housing. But so do aged care workers, childcare workers, mechanics, hospitality staff, cleaners, farm workers, apprentices and small business employees.

A town cannot function on government workers alone.

The second problem is geography. The Seven Cities vision focuses on major regional centres such as Bunbury, Albany, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Port Hedland and Broome. That may make sense as an economic development strategy, but it risks leaving smaller regional communities in the familiar position of watching investment flow to larger centres while their own housing shortages remain unresolved.

Northam is not Port Hedland. York is not Karratha. Beverley is not Bunbury. Housing policy that treats “regional WA” as a single category will miss the point.



Photo: from Freepik

The third problem is timing. A house announced in a budget is not a house someone can live in. Land needs to be identified. Planning approvals need to be secured. Builders need to be available. Materials need to arrive. Costs need to hold. In regional areas, every one of those steps can become a blockage.

This is where government announcements often become slippery. Funding is announced immediately. Housing arrives years later. Meanwhile, employers need staff now.

The Federal Government’s housing agenda also has merit, particularly the National Housing Accord target of 1.2 million new homes by 2029, the Housing Australia Future Fund, and payments to states and territories to support new supply. But these national programs are blunt instruments. They may increase housing numbers overall, but they do not automatically solve the problem of whether a nurse can find a rental in Northam, or whether a local business can recruit a worker who has nowhere to live.

The Commonwealth can fund, incentivise and set targets. But it cannot pretend national supply targets alone will fix local housing failure.

What is needed is a much more clinical approach.

First, regional housing should be treated as essential infrastructure, not a side benefit of economic growth. If government wants workers in a town, housing must be planned alongside roads, power, water, schools and health services.

Second, smaller towns need direct support, not just trickle-down benefits from larger regional centres. A \$5 million grant may help some councils unlock land or support a project, but many smaller local governments do not have the staff, expertise or financial capacity to carry complex housing developments from idea to completion.

Third, governments need to stop assuming the private market will automatically respond. In many regional towns, the numbers simply do not work. Construction costs are high, resale values can be uncertain, and developers often see easier returns elsewhere. If the market has failed to deliver housing, policy must be designed around that reality rather than wishful thinking.

Fourth, worker housing needs to extend beyond the public sector. Government Regional Officer Housing matters, but private and community sector workers are just as essential to liveable towns. A regional housing policy that houses the police officer but not the aged care worker has only solved half the problem.

Fifth, modular and prefabricated housing should be taken more seriously. It is not a magic solution, and quality matters, but regional WA needs faster delivery models. Traditional construction alone is unlikely to meet demand quickly enough.

Finally, there needs to be accountability. Not just money announced. Not just “homes supported”. Actual dwellings completed, occupied and located where the need is greatest.

The housing crisis is not simply about shelter. It is about whether regional communities can grow, function and retain the people they need.

The current commitments are not meaningless. They are a start. But they are also late, limited and structurally cautious.

Regional WA does not need another promise that housing is coming. It needs houses.



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The Avon Valley Frontier: Ballardong Noongar and Early Settlement

by Michelle Paul

The Ballardong Noongar people are the Traditional Custodians of the Avon Valley. For thousands of years, they have maintained deep cultural and spiritual connections to the land, waterways, and natural resources of the region.

Traditional Noongar rights and interests in country are not the same as the Western concept of land ownership. For Noongar people, to have connection to country is to have a responsibility to the land. Noongar people managed and cared for the land through the strategic use of controlled burning, which encouraged the growth of fresh grasses in the following seasons. They also used conservation principles that helped protect and sustain food resources.

Shortly after the establishment of the Swan River Colony, Ensign Robert Dale explored the land east of Perth. He described the area as fertile, with gently rolling grassy plains and open woodlands that appeared well suited to grazing and agricultural development. What Dale didn't know was that intensive Aboriginal land and resource management over tens of thousands of years had created the grassy, fertile and varied landscape.

European explorers were aware that there were Aboriginal people in the Avon Valley. Dale's expedition in August 1830 encountered several groups of Ballardong people, including hunting parties tracking emus. Lieutenant Archibald Erskine's expedition the following month reported meeting the Ballardong people fishing on the banks of the Avon River. Both Dale and Erskine encountered evidence of permanent habitation.

Although the number of settlers was small, by 1832 their expanding agricultural and pastoral activities had impacted Ballardong foraging and hunting. The Aboriginal people were not only losing their country, but also their means of finding food. Before long, these communities were dependent on bread, rice, sugar and other food supplied by the settlers.

When they were denied food, the Aboriginal people were forced to steal crops and kill livestock to survive.

In 1831 a Noongar person was killed for taking potatoes; this resulted in a Whadjuk Noongar warrior and leader from the Swan/Canning region, Yagan, killing a servant of the household, as was the response permitted under Noongar law. In 1832 Yagan and two others were arrested and sentenced to death, but a settler named Robert Lyon argued that Yagan was defending his land from invasion and therefore should be treated as a prisoner of war. The argument was successful and the three men were exiled to Carnac Island but escaped a few weeks later.

For thousands of years, the Aboriginal people had their own system of retributive justice or payback. If a lore or custom was broken, appropriate retribution would be carried out. The severity of the payback depended on the significance of the crime. In the case of a killing, a person's death had to be avenged before their spirit could rest.

Aboriginal law was neither understood nor recognised by settlers, who abided by their own legal system. The coexistence of these differing systems led to significant conflict. As Noongar people sought to defend their traditional lands and access resources that had sustained them for generations, tensions escalated with settlers, who viewed the use of their food supplies and livestock as theft. Efforts by the Ballardong people to protect their Country and secure food were often met with severe and violent punishment.

Governor James Stirling ordered and encouraged soldiers, civil officials and settlers to use extreme measures regarding the Aboriginal population. In

carrying out these instructions, illegal violence, including murder were frequent; however, they were never held accountable for their actions.

Robert Lyon was one of the few colonists willing to criticise the Stirling administration for turning a blind eye to evidence of murder and violence against Aboriginal people. He later remarked how it was "painful to reflect that the rightful owners of the country, are killed day after day by our own people, without trial by either judge or jury, and often in mere sport".

One particularly awful incident of unprovoked extra-judicial mass killing occurred in 1832, with Lyon recording that the "settlers and soldiers at York have committed a horrible action.

They went at night to an encampment of the natives and, while they were sitting round their fires, poured the shot among them – men, women, and children. Their cries were dreadful."

In 1836, Governor Stirling sent Lieutenant Henry Bunbury and Lieutenant Mortimer to the Avon Valley, where they were joined by York Resident Magistrate Donald MacLeod. The three were acting under Stirling's orders to "make war upon the Natives". Bunbury found patrolling the valley during winter exhausting, but hoped the campaign would be brief, writing in his journal that "the Natives seem inclined to be quiet since I shot a few of them one night". His use of violence was indiscriminate.

In response to Stirling's orders, the British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, sent a stern letter to Governor Stirling. He expressed serious concern and ordered that the colonial administration deal with any acts of injustice or violence committed by settlers against Aboriginal people with the greatest severity. Stirling replied to Lord Glenelg's letter by defending settlers' use of vigilante violence. Stirling openly disobeyed Glenelg's instructions and on several occasions wilfully ignored evidence that soldiers and settlers had attacked and killed Ballardong people without any pretence of judicial process.

Revenge killing was an aspect of the conflict which settlers became well aware of. Noongar men's retaliation was almost always in response to settler attacks and was carried out with a clear sense of proportionality. One act of retaliatory violence led to the deaths of William Chidlow and Edward Jones at Mead Rock on the Katrine Road, near Northam. Historical accounts suggest these killings were a response to an earlier attack in 1837, when a party led by Macleod and Lieutenant Mortimer approached a Noongar camp at night and fired into the sleeping people, resulting in the deaths of a woman and a three-year-old child.

The death of Chidlow and Jones set off a wave of fear throughout the colony. Stirling immediately despatched Bunbury with a mounted party to York to add to the existing military force under Mortimer. Bunbury's 1836 deployment in the Avon Valley was marked by his use of indiscriminate and overwhelming violence, and it was no different in 1837. The Ballardong Noongar people were maimed, murdered and mutilated with impunity.

Soldiers were instructed by Bunbury and McLeod to shoot Aboriginal people indiscriminately. A military party led by Macleod and Bunbury murdered 18 innocent people without a trial and without any evidence against them.

By September 1837 a bloody peace had settled over the valley as the Aboriginal people were driven into submission, killed or hunted out of the district. However, the settlers did not change their view. They were still victims of theft and, with the Aboriginal people subdued, settlers felt more confident in dealing with them themselves, and cases of mistreatment multiplied.

In 1839 a new Governor, Governor Hutt, bought a noticeable change in official policy towards Aboriginal people. Hutt tried to bring Aboriginal people under British law and reduce uncontrolled frontier violence. He supported the "Protectors of Aborigines" and policies aimed at education and assimilation into colonial society. Unlike Stirling, Hutt maintained that crimes committed by either the white population or Aboriginal people should not go unpunished.

Hutt's policy had a major setback following the killing of Sarah Cook and her baby near York in May 1839. This event started a new period of ruthless and indiscriminate acts of vengeance and Governor Hutt gave settlers the right to fire at suspects attempting to flee arrest. The Cook murders, and the events that followed, gave rise to what was among the most brutal episodes of frontier violence in early colonial Western Australia.

When reports of the Cook deaths started to spread throughout the colony, outrage and fear erupted, and reports suggest some settlers and armed parties carried out indiscriminate reprisals against Aboriginal people. That August a party under Resident Magistrate Rivett Bland of York came across a camp of Aboriginals. Some of them were suspects of the Cook murders and were called to surrender.

When they ran, the Europeans fired into the camp, killing a woman and child and wounding four men. Some of the settlers further desecrated the bodies by shooting at them and removing the ears, which they nailed to their doorways as a warning to other Aboriginal people or displayed them in the kitchen as a grim symbol of victory.

In 1840 two men accused of the Cook murders were captured and publicly executed near the scene of the crime. Their bodies were hung in chains from a gum tree and settler spectators shot at and mutilated the bodies which remained hanging from the tree for another two years.

Another result of the Cook murders was the establishment of a mounted Native Police force with John Drummond of Toodyay in charge. The use of Native Police was a key mechanism of frontier control. Aboriginal men were recruited from other regions of Western Australia, sometimes in circumstances shaped by colonial dependency and pressure. This reduced social ties with the local Noongar communities and made it easier for them to track and pursue groups resisting settler expansion. Drummond and his native police were influential in bringing an end to the last traces of Aboriginal resistance in the Avon Valley.

By the end of 1840, open conflict had mostly ended, although this "peace" was maintained under the continuing threat of settler violence. By the mid 1850s, fewer than sixty Aboriginal people were officially recorded in the Avon Valley. By 1900 it was reported that the number of Aboriginal people in the Northam district could be counted on one hand.

Occasionally corroborees took place, one common spot was Koberi Boodja (Enright Park) near the Taylor St bridge. In 1895 a big gathering was held near the site of the old hospital, and four years later near the Aboriginal Reserve on Katrine Road. The 100 or so that gathering at the last corroboree were near starving and all the children were sick.

The early years of European settlement in the Avon Valley were marked by conflict, dispossession, and loss of life. While this period is a painful chapter in the region's history, it is also an important reminder of the resilience of the Ballardong Noongar people, whose enduring connection to Country continues today and whose descendants remain an important part of the Avon Valley. Understanding these events helps foster a more complete and honest view of the Avon Valley's shared past.

Where Am I? – Avonway Drive-In



by Jim Lucy

Last month's Where Am I? took us to the old entrance of the Avonway Drive-In on Mitchell Avenue, Northam - a place that once lit up many a night in Northam.

The Avonway Drive-In officially opened on New Year's Eve, 1959, leading in a fresh wave of modern entertainment for the district. Operated by Ace Theatres, one of Western Australia's major cinema chains at the time, it could hold roughly 350 cars and quickly became a landmark of its era.

For close to 25 years it was a regular meeting point for families, teenagers and film lovers alike. You'd place the speaker onto your window, settle back in the car and watch the latest Hollywood releases under the open sky. Kids would be running about in the fading light before the show, while the snack bar did a steady trade in drinks, hot chips and those unmistakable Chiko Rolls.

Of course, like drive-ins everywhere, it wasn't just about the movie. There are songs that seem to belong to that whole era — Saturday Night at the Movies, the Beach Boys' Drive-In, Night Moves by Bob Seger, Nanci Griffith's Drive-In Movies and Dashboard Lights, even moments echoed in Grease. All of them tapping into

that same mix of freedom, mischief and young romance that the drive-in was famous for.

And then there were the Avon Valley quirks. The moment the film reached "that exciting bit" and the river fog would roll in and swallow the screen. The odd panic at the gate when someone (allegedly) was discovered in the boot. The smell of hot chips drifting through the car. Or the realisation, halfway through a horror film, that the safest place on earth was suddenly your own bed at home.

The first film ever screened there still remains something of a mystery. Titles like Ben-Hur, Pillow Talk, There's a Girl in My Soup (with Peter Sellers and Goldie Hawn), and High Society (Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra) have all been suggested as possibilities. If anyone has the definitive answer, The Northam Advertiser would be very keen to hear it.

The Avonway continued until 1983, when declining audiences, television, and eventually home video brought the curtain down. The site is now residential and the big white screen that once stood along Mitchell Avenue is now long gone. Still, for many, a drive past the old entrance can bring back echoes of Saturday Night at the Movies and a very different kind of night out.

Street Name Origins



Roediger Drive is located in East Northam, with its main section extending from the end of Killick Street, which runs off Throssell Street. A second section of the road connects with Woodley Farm Drive.

While no official record has yet been located confirming the origin of the street name, it is likely that Roediger Drive commemorates the Roediger family, a well-known Northam family with strong links to the district's business, agricultural and civic history.

Members of the Roediger family were established in the Northam area during the early twentieth century. Official records show that Paul Hermann Roediger owned land in the district, while the family became widely known through the operation of Roediger Bros Butchers in Fitzgerald Street.

The business grew to become one of Northam's best-known commercial enterprises and was associated with an abattoir on Goomalling Road. Together, the butcher shop and abattoir provided employment for many local residents and formed part of the town's commercial and industrial development during the mid-twentieth century.

The Roediger family was also active in community affairs. Family members served on local governing bodies and were involved with a number of civic, church and community organisations over many years.

Although the exact reason for the naming of Roediger Drive remains unconfirmed, the available evidence suggests the street was named in recognition of the family's long-standing contribution to Northam rather than any single individual. The name remains a reminder of one of the district's prominent local families.



Where industry, innovation and sustainability meets.

Email admin@procon.net.au to sign up for community updates.



GUESS WHAT!

Where am I?

Buildings of Northam



Who am I?

Prominent Identities



Win a Coffee voucher

Send your guess to jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

Last month's answers:

Where am I? Avonway Drive In

Winner: Luke Brennan

Who am I? – John Woods

Winner: Tarlee Forward

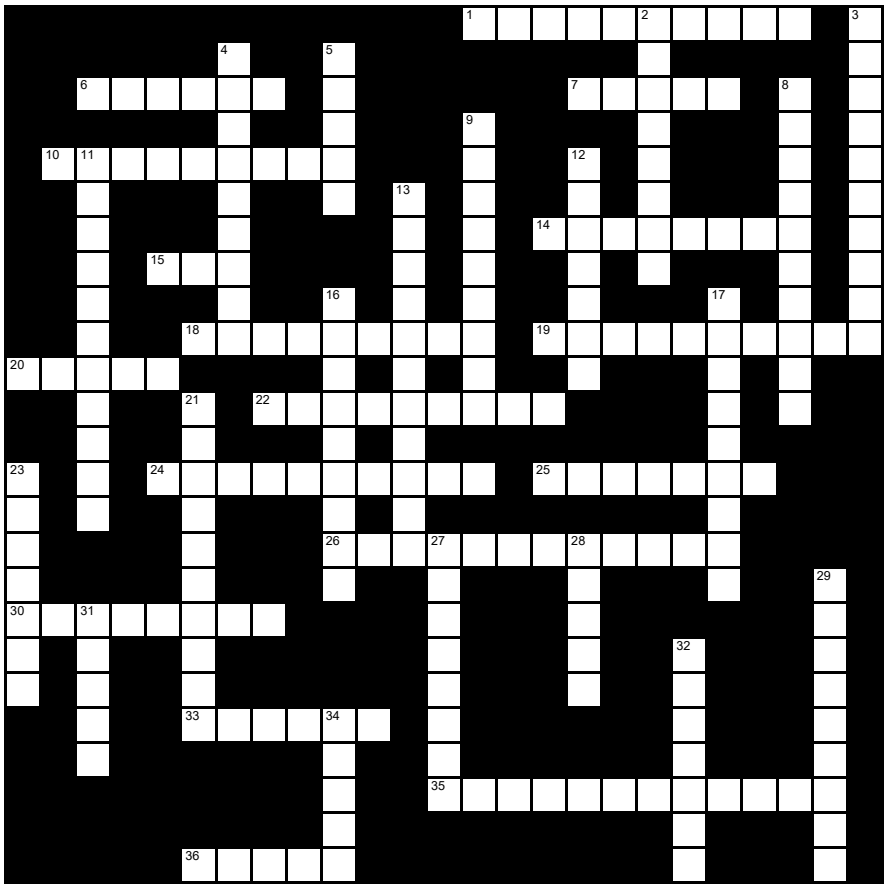
SUDOKU

4		3			6			
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WORD SEARCH

S K P H L I A T Y G J M Q E
E R C F W S B X D N U O H Z
V Q L I O K G A J T B K Y D
P A W N R U H M R S C P L O
F Y E M G T Z B N K P J X G
N B S A Q J W O L U I D C M
H D U P I C R N P Q F N B A
T L O B Z A D E S J Y H G I
Q M H X L N F H O W L T E P
K J G L D I Y C B Z P S R U
L P O V H N Q A X E M G W T
A C D S P E L U F L A D Y J
W X Q I M L K Z I H R V O N
U L A T Y G E B D P T C F S

CROSSWORD



- ### Across

1. The gold rushes of the 1850s brought a huge increase in Australia's _____ (10)

6. Co-developer of penicillin, Howard ____ (6)

7. Australia's national anthem before 1984 was "God Save the _____" (5)

10. Early NSW governor, Lachlan ____ (9)

14. Ancient supercontinent that included Antarctica (8)

15. Adult male (3)

18. WWI Anzac campaign site in Turkey (9)

19. Western Australian goldfields city (10)

20. Burke and ____, ill-fated explorers (5)

22. The first and third words of the three-worded coral wonder off Queensland's coast (5,4)

24. Giant prehistoric wombat-like marsupial (10)

25. Indigenous Australians traditionally maintain a deep spiritual connection to _____ (7)

26. Founding document of a nation's governance (12)

30. Gregory ____, who helped cross the Blue Mountains in 1813 (8)

33. Fossilised footprints in Western Australia's Kimberley have provided evidence of ancient dinosaur _____ (6)

35. Australia's first prime minister (6,6)

36. Score of six dozen, or three score (5)
- ### Down

2. Australia's driest state capital (8)

3. Northern Territory rock shelter with ancient human occupation evidence (10)

4. Enormous extinct monitor lizard of prehistoric Australia (9)

5. Indigenous Australians are believed to have arrived at least this many thousand years ago (5)

8. Prehistoric marsupial lion (10)

9. Extinct Tasmanian tiger (9)

10. The world's oldest continuing cultures are those of Indigenous _____ (11)

12. Indigenous people of south-western Western Australia (7)

13. Giant extinct short-faced kangaroo (11)

16. Traditional Aboriginal tool used in land management (4,5)

17. Indigenous Australian tool designed to return when thrown correctly (9)

21. Ludwig ____, explorer who vanished in the outback (10)

23. Indigenous eel trap complex in western Victoria often claimed among the world's oldest aquaculture systems (7)

27. Eureka ____, 1854 miners' uprising at Ballarat (8)

28. Sacred sandstone monolith in the Northern Territory (5)

29. Extinct giant flightless bird of prehistoric Australia (9)

31. Fossilised tree resin used to preserve ancient specimens (5)

32. Month first fleet arrived in Australia (7)

34. Bushranger Ned ____ (5)

Dogs

ball

barking

beg

Bolt

bone

canine

collar

dog

doghouse

growl

hound

howl

Lady

paw

pet

puppy

sit

tail

Tramp

trick

walk



York Yarns July

Only halfway through winter and I say, "Bring on Summer"! Not that winter doesn't have its benefits - homemade soups, hot chocolate, mulled wine and midweek roast dinners but I do miss my daily swim, a cold one watching the sunset and gardening without my feet and hands turning to ice blocks! Oh well, plenty of sunny days ahead, I am sure.

Meanwhile if you are thinking you might like to get involved in something new in your hometown this is certainly the season of AGMs. A perfect opportunity to go along to an organisation's Annual General Meeting to check out what they are about & consider offering your services; trust me if you volunteer the gig is yours. All local groups are run almost exclusively by volunteers, joining one of them could be one of your best decisions - it was for me.

Well York is certainly blazing a trail for the number of ladies in high office these days. It started with our new council, 4 to 3 in favour of the ladies including the Deputy Shire President, and now our newly appointed CEO for the Shire of York Alina Behan joins the dream team, congratulations Alina. Let's take York forward together.

The Theatre 180's recent presentation 'Catalpa' was a brilliant adaptation of the story of the infamous Fremantle prison escape brought to life by this talented group and played to two sell out performances in our Town Hall and with all those people in the space it didn't even seem that cold, honestly. If you haven't seen this or any other of their shows do yourself a favour and next time one is available, make sure you catch the production. Apart from a good night out strong continued support means Theatre 180 can continue bringing these works to the regions for us all to enjoy.

Sometimes it is hard to keep up with the ever-changing retail and hospitality venues here in York but our newest coffee offerings at Bardo have been hailed the go to for good coffee in a super relaxed atmosphere. Currently they are open from 7am-4pm Thursday to Monday and excitingly soon to morph into a wine bar sometime in August, just the seemingly endless paperwork to deal with. Good luck, this sounds like the perfect plan for the many wine connoisseurs of York! Check them out on Facebook.

July could see a new venture at the stunning Masonic Hall in Joaquina Street come to fruition - just aforementioned paperwork etc.



Photo: 'New' York Barber

The plan sounds fascinating, the 'New' York Barber will be locating to this great space along with a mix of classic preloved clothing, men's and ladies, including hats, shoes, jewellery, bags, plus great artwork from Carl, Graven Image, and a strong music vibe with instruments for sale, and a lounge & listen corner to hear to some amazing vinyl for the traditionalists among us who have never quite come to terms with CDs let alone streaming. This will be a family run project with Karen and John at the helm ably assisted by their daughter, Anna, who has a passion for vintage clothing and recently settled in York. The family have a strong musical background and are keen to develop this part of their offering so who knows where it will end up; an exciting addition to the ever-burgeoning music scene in York and the Avon Valley.

There are lots of great events coming up over the next few months as we move into slightly warmer weather in Spring, undoubtedly the favourite time of year for many of our visitors. The main ones will be featured as they come online, the only one I can't give you an exact date

for is the canola flowering, but it will happen, and it will be spectacular. Yellow is such an uplifting colour and heralds the change of seasons and mother nature at her absolute best.

But when planning events, you don't always have to search for new ideas; often you can just re-invigorate some from a few years ago with a bit of an update.

In 1977 the York Society promoted a short story competition and published the best stories in a booklet entitled 'Mountains in Time'... Since then many similar competitions have been run throughout the Wheatbelt but for various reasons none have endured, so, no happy ending, until now. Welcome to 'Tales from the Avon Valley' a new slant on the basic idea to be run with the York Heritage Weekend 2027. We are looking for 1500-2000 word short stories with a historical theme and it can be fact or fiction. Entries open in August to give time to research your project. There will be two categories, under 16yr and over 16yrs, and two prizes in each category one for best fact and one for best fiction. Details here next month or on the York Heritage Weekend Facebook or York Shire events page in a few weeks. If this goes well, we could end up with a great collection of Avon valley stories in book form to celebrate the 2031 York Bicentenary. Wouldn't you love to be a part of that?

So, sharpen your pencils, fire up the computer, adjust thinking caps, get the creative juices flowing and good luck to all aspiring writers.

Stay warm and hope to see you in York real soon.

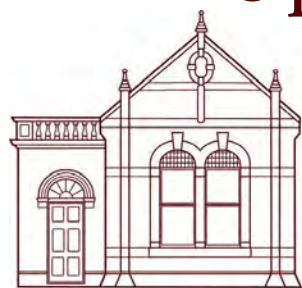
The York Scribe.



Photo: Preloved clothes at the 'New' York Barber

“ a room without books
is like a body without
a soul ”
Cicero

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THEME: WONDERS OF WATER



SHOW
SCHEDULES
COMING
JULY

STALL
HOLDERS
APPLY
ONLINE NOW

RUN BY THE
VOLUNTEERS
OF THE
NORTHAM
AG SOCIETY

BECOME A
MEMBER! OR
VOLUNTEER!
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2026 NORTHAM FARMERS SHOW

12TH SEPTEMBER

ONE DAY SHOW
9AM - 9PM



SECTION 1 - ART

1. Feature Class – Best article from classes 2-5 following theme “Wonders of Water”
2. Painting (oil / acrylic / water colour)
3. Drawing or mixed media
4. 1. Sculpture, pottery, or junk Art, maximum size 1m² x 30cm deep
5. Any other exhibit of art not mentioned eg: paint by number, digital art

SECTION 2 - COOKERY

Northam Feature Pumpkin Fruit Cake
Ingredients

1 cup cooked mashed pumpkin, 4 tablespoons melted margarine, 1 Egg, 1 cup mixed fruit, 1 cup sugar, 2 cups of Self Raising Flour, 2 Teaspoon mixed Spice, 2 Teaspoon cinnamon

Recipe

Beat the egg, margarine, sugar, pumpkin and spices together, mixing well. Add the fruit and flour to the mixture and combine thoroughly. Place into a deep, greased 20cm square cake tin. Bake in a moderate oven for 45-50 minutes.

2. Scones Plain, six (6), unglazed, base free of flour
3. Scones Pumpkin, six (6), unglazed, base free of flour
4. Slices - Sweet, one variety, six (6) pieces
6. Biscuits Sweet, one variety, six (6) biscuits
7. Orange Cake, iced only, no decoration - in a loaf tin
8. Chocolate Cake, not iced, no decoration - in a round tin
9. Banana Cake, not iced - in a round tin
10. Carrot cake, (can include nuts) uniced - in a loaf tin
11. Boiled Fruit Cake
12. Sponge Sandwich, unfilled, no decoration
13. Pikelets, six (6)
14. White Loaf Bread any variety, one (1)
15. Muffins, sweet, one variety, four (4)
16. Muffins, Vegetarian, one variety, four (4)
17. Cup Cakes six (6) - decorated by hand, 2 designs
18. Decorated Cake – from any Women's Weekly Cake Cookbook, photo of the cake from cookbook to accompany entry
19. Meringues, no filling, six (6)
20. Packet cake, any variety, follow all instructions on the packet as cake must look like picture. Packet to accompany entry for display
21. Men's cake – chocolate cake – Any Shape (can be packet)

SECTION 3 - CRAFTWORK

1. Feature Class - Decorated Hat reflecting the theme “Wonders of Water”. The hat may be handmade or purchased.

1. CRAFTWORK CONT- WOODWORK

2. Any article, model or piece
3. Any article embellished with wood burning done by hand

METAL WORK

5. Any functional article, model or piece

PAPER CRAFTS

6. Scrap booking including photos and journaling

7. Handmade card

JEWELLERY AND BEADING

8. Earrings
9. Necklace
10. Bracelet

11. Any other item

TEXTILES AND FIBRES

12. Home spun wool – felted, knitted or crocheted
13. Cushion OR Cushion Cover-any medium
14. Dressed doll or teddy bear
15. Shopping bag – any medium
16. Tea cosy – any medium
17. Article using recycled material/s
18. Child's soft cuddly toy
19. Christmas decoration
20. Article made with up to six (6) Granny Squares
21. Needle felting
22. Pincushion
23. Apron
24. Slow stitching

OTHER

25. Collection of three distinct items from 3 different above classes
26. Any other article of craftwork not listed, recognising the international year of the woman farmer

SECTION 4 - FARM PRODUCE/ PASTURE

1. Feature – Wheat, green sheaf in ear, not less than 15cm bundle
2. Wheat, any variety, 2kg from 2026 crop, in a durable bucket
3. Barley in Ear, 2026 crop, green sheaf, not less than 15cm bundle
4. Oats for Hay, 2026 crop, green sheaf, not less than 15cm bundle
5. Wheat for hay, 2026 crop, green sheaf, not less than 15cm bundle
6. Legume, 2026 crop, green bundle, not less than 15cm bundle
7. 30cm square clover, contained in a durable box
8. 30cm square mixed pasture, contained in a durable box
9. Biscuit of Hay contained in a 15cm durable box
10. Biscuit of Wheaten Hay contained in a 15cm durable box
11. Canola, green sheaf, not less than 15cm bundle

SECTION 5 - FLORICULTURE

1. Feature-Ikebana, must not exceed 40cm high including the pot and 30cm wide.
2. Pot plant, foliage (non-flowering species), one (1) plant only in a pot
3. Pot plant, bromeliad or drought tolerant, one (1) plant only in pot
4. Flower, one (1) cut, Dutch Iris
5. Flower, one (1) cut, bulb any variety
6. Flower, one (1) cut, any other variety
7. Flowers, three (3) cut, must be same variety
8. Daffodil, three (3) cut
9. Iris, three (3) cut
10. Pansies, three (3)
11. Roses, three (3) cut
12. Geranium/Pelargonium, one (1) stem, any variety with leaves attached
13. Vase or bowl of flowers, any variety
14. Floral arrangement in a basket
15. Dried arrangement
16. Corsage or buttonhole piece one (1)
17. Arrangement, one (1) flower
18. Arrangement, three (3) flowers
19. Arrangement, five (5) flowers
20. Arrangement of flowers in an unusual container-max 20cm x 30cm

SECTION 6 - FRUIT & VEG

1. Feature – Collection of Heirloom Fruit and Vegetables (Not purchased). Each item must be clearly labelled with the variety
2. Lemons, five (5) – label variety
3. Oranges, five (5) – label variety
4. Citrus, any variety, five (5) – label variety
5. Broccoli or Cauliflower, one (1)
6. Green Peas (Snow / Sugar / Pod) or Beans, ten (10)
7. Collection of Fruit & Vegetables, no less than five (5) items, displayed in a suitable container, named
8. Spring Onions or Onions, five (5)
9. Bunch of Silver Beet or Spinach, five (5)
10. Celery, one (1)
11. Potatoes, three (3)
12. Pumpkin, one (1)
13. Collection of Salad Vegetables, no less than five (5) items, displayed in a suitable container, named
14. Radish, any variety, five (5)
15. Collection of Soup Vegetables, no less than five (5) items, displayed in a suitable container, named
16. Cabbage, any variety, one (1)
17. Kale, bunch of five (5) stalks
18. Collection of Fresh Herbs, no less than three (3) in one container, named
19. Carrots / Parsnips, five (5)
20. Swede / Turnip / Beetroot, three (3)
21. Nuts, any variety, one small bowl (1)
22. Fruit / Veg any other variety not listed above, no more than five (5) pieces named
23. Home Grown Dried Fruit or Veg, one (1) variety

northamagsoc.secretary@gmail.com

www.northamshow.com.au

2026 PAVILION SCHEDULE

ENTRIES CLOSE 04.09.2026
FOR ENTRY FEES, RULES, DROP
OFF/COLLECTION PLEASE SEE
WWW.NORTHAMSHOW.COM.AU

SECTION 7 - HOME INDUSTRIES

1. Feature –Collection of 3 preserves, one (1) of each Jam, Chutney, Mustard Pickles
2. Eggs, one dozen, one variety, all one colour
3. Eggs six (6) one variety, all one colour
4. Eggs, white, six (6)
5. Eggs, brown, six (6)
6. Mayonnaise, cooked or uncooked
7. Lemon squash, one (1) bottle
8. Marmalade, true to label, one (1) jar
9. Jam, true to label, one (1) jar, any variety
10. Jam, stone fruit, one (1) jar, any variety
11. Pickled vegetables, clear vinegar, true to label, one (1) jar
12. Mustard Pickles, any variety, true to label, one (1) jar
13. Chutney, any variety, true to label, one (1) jar
14. Sauce, any variety, true to label, one (1) bottle
15. Relish, any variety, true to label, one (1) jar
16. Diabetic preserve, true to label, must be suitable for a diabetic person, one (1) jar or bottle (must list ingredients)
17. Honey, one (1) jar, labelled variety
18. Lemon cheese, one (1) jar
19. Dried herbs or Spice mix one (1) jar (must be labelled with ingredients)

SECTION 8 - PRE K, KINDY, PRE PRIMARY

1. Art, drawing or painting
2. Floriculture, container of garden flowers
3. Edible decorated biscuits, three (3) on a plate in oven or clear plastic bag
4. Recycled article “Decorated Cardboard Cake” max 20cm x 30cm
5. Craftwork any variety
6. Any other exhibit

SECTION 9 - SCHOOL YEARS 1-3

1. Art, drawing, painting, any other exhibit any subject, any medium
2. Cooking, three (3) Edible Decorated Biscuits in oven or clear plastic bag
3. Craftwork, any article, model or piece, self-supported max 50cm x 50cm
4. Floriculture, vase of flowers from home garden
5. Recycled article Water Theme max 20cm x 30cm- Made out of cardboard
6. Vegetable creature
7. Any other Exhibit

SECTION 10 - SCHOOL YEARS 4-6

1. Art - drawing, any subject
2. Art- Painting, any subject
3. Art - any other exhibit any subject, any medium
4. Cooking - chocolate cake, in round tin, not iced, on plate in oven or clear plastic bag
5. Craftwork - any article, model or piece, self-supported max 50cm x 50cm
6. Floriculture - vase of flowers from home garden
7. Photography - open study, mounted on card (must accompany entry form)
8. Vegetable creature
9. Recycled article “Decorated Cardboard Cake” max 20cm x 30cm
10. Cupcake (1) Decorated by hand (No Shop Decorations)

SECTION 11 - SCHOOL YEARS 7,8,9

1. Art - drawing, any subject, any medium
2. Art - painting, any subject, any medium
3. Art - any other exhibit, any medium
4. Cooking - butter cake, cooked in round tin, iced, on plate in oven or clear plastic bag
5. Craftwork - any article, model or piece, self-supported max 50cm x 50cm
6. Floriculture - vase of flowers from home garden
7. Needlework - any piece
8. Photography - open study, mounted on card (must accompany entry form)
9. Recycled Article Theme “Wonders of Water” max 20cm x 30cm
10. Cupcake (1) Decorated by hand (No Shop Decorations)
11. Any other exhibit

SECTION 12 - SCHOOL YEARS 10,11-12

1. Butter cake - cooked in round tin, iced, on plate in oven or clear plastic bag
2. Art - Any article
3. Needlework - any article
4. Craft any article (e.g. metal wood plastic)
5. Photography - any article mounted on card (INDIVIDUALLY MOUNTED SECURELY with a 1 cm border on stiff card with rough sided Velcro on back- NOT FRAMED)

SECTION 13 - NEEDLEWORK

1. Feature Class-Creative Freedom Tote Bag depicting “Wonders of Water” theme. No bigger than 40cm x 40cm. Can be Any Medium.

- EMBROIDERY
2. Cross Stitch - any piece
 3. Any other piece not listed – hand embroidered
- PATCHWORK AND QUILTING
4. Cot Quilt-1 person work
 5. Queen Quilt-1 person work
 6. Cot Quilt-Professionally made
 7. Queen Quilt - Professionally made
 8. Patchwork quilt – machine made, can be professionally quilted
 9. Any other piece not listed
 10. A quilted or pieced block mounted on card, max size 30x30cm
- CROCHET
11. Crochet bag
 12. Doyley or table centrepiece- mounted on card
 13. Knee rug – maximum size 70cm x 122cm
 14. Any garment or piece not listed
 15. Article made from granny squares
 16. Crocheted scarf
 17. Crocheted baby garment
- KNITTING
18. Beanie
 19. Child's jumper or cardigan
 20. Any babies garment (must be wearable)
 21. Any knitted article
 22. Baby booties, one pair
- SEWING MACHINE
21. Any machine-made item
 22. Potholder or mitt

SECTION 15 - LEGO

Class 1 – Child Entry under 18 years of age

SECTION 14 - PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Feature Class – 1. Any size photograph featuring the Wonders of Water.
SIZE: Post Card 15cm x 10cm
2. Portrait
3. Sunrise/Sunset
4. Sport
5. Floral/Tree
6. Animal/Bird
7. Family
8. Farming theme
9. Open Study
10. Iconic photo from overseas holiday
11. International year of the Woman Farmer

SIZE: Enlargements

12. Portrait
13. Sunrise/Sunset
14. Sport
15. Floral/Tree
16. Animal/Bird
17. Family
18. Farming Theme
19. Open Study
19. Iconic photo from overseas holiday
20. International year of the Woman Farmer

SECTION 16 - SENIOR CITIZENS

1. Feature - Blueberry Crinkle Cookies
see schedule for recipe

FOR EXHIBITORS 65 YEARS & OVER

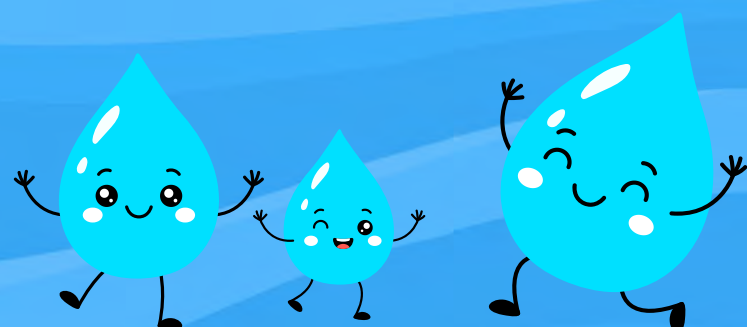
2. Slice, any variety six (6) pieces
3. Scones, any variety, six (6)
4. Rug, knitted or crocheted
5. Baby's Jacket, knitted or crocheted
6. Babies beanie or booties knitted or crochet
7. Scarf, knitted or crocheted
8. Jumper/cardigan, child/adult, knitted
9. Any crocheted article not listed
10. Any knitted article not listed
11. Coat Hanger covered, two of, any material
12. Any piece of Patchwork/Quilting
13. Pot plant
14. Preserves, Sweet - one jar, true to label
15. Preserves, Savoury - one jar, true to label
16. Any craftwork not listed
17. Flower, 1 cut any variety
18. Vase of flowers grown by exhibitor
19. Art – any exhibit

FOR EXHIBITORS 80 YEARS & OVER

20. Packet cake, any variety with packet attached
21. Scones, any variety, six (6)
22. Preserves, Sweet - one jar, true to label
23. Preserves, Savoury - one jar, true to label
24. Craftwork, any piece
25. Pot plant
26. Needlework, any item
27. Container of flowers grown by exhibitor
28. Flower, 1 cut
29. Art – any exhibit

SECTION 15 - WOOL

1. Merino Fleece, one (1), fine wool
2. Merino Fleece, one (1), medium wool
3. Merino Fleece, one (1), strong wool
4. Merino Ram Fleece, one (1), fine or medium wool
5. Merino Lambs Wool, not to exceed 450g from lamb dropped since April 1st, 2025
6. Merino Hogget Fleece
7. Merino Fleece, one (1), summer shorn
8. Commercial Value Wool



UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 3

QUIZ NIGHT - XMAS IN JULY

Get ready for the biggest and best Quiz Night in Northam — hosted by Northam Railways FC, Northam Rec Centre, from 6pm. Book a table through Kylie Gorbis on 0418 138 616.

JULY 09

DEATH CAFE

At a Death Cafe people drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. Our aim is to increase awareness of death to help people make the most of their lives. 2pm-3.30pm, Bakers Hill. Call 0408 020 722 for details.

JULY 10

MICKEY WILSON- HOW YA GOING TOUR

He's sold up EVERYTHING packed the kids & caravan, & gone ALL IN on stand-up comedy. At Riverside Hotel from 7pm. Tickets \$35 from Humanix. \$40 at the door.

JULY 15

NWIB- BUSINESS BEGINNINGS

Hear from 3 panelist who went from traditional employment to starting their own local business. Held at the Jennacubbine Tavern. See Facebook for details and tickets.

JULY 15

NORTHAM NEUFRIENDS COFFEE CLUB

NeuFriends Coffee Clubs are safe, welcoming spaces for people impacted by neurological conditions or symptoms, including individuals, families and carers. 11.30-1.30pm, Bridgeley Community Church

JULY 18

FEDERAL FOOTBALL & NETBALL LADIES DAY

Gather your girls and lock it in the calendar because this is one you won't want to miss! Free flowing champagne, delicious nibbles & food and more. 2pm-5.30pm. Tickets at eventbrite.

JULY 23

CHRISTMAS IN JULY- NORTHAM RACE CLUB

Christmas in July Long table Buffet luncheon \$70 per person Top class provincial thoroughbred racing Full Bar and Tote facilities. Starts at 12pm.

JULY 25

MOSIAC MORNING- AVAS

Bring along a surface to mosaic at our monthly mosaic morning. This is a non-facilitated workshop designed so we can learn from each other. All materials and tools provided. No bookings necessary. 10am-12pm. Cost: Members \$10 Non-members \$15

JULY 27

INTRODUCTION TO LEAD LIGHTING

Discover the timeless art of stained glass in this hands-on five-week workshop at AVAS. 5 week course: Mondays 27 July - 17 August, 6.30pm - 9.00pm. Weekend course: 25th - 26th July, 9am - 4pm. Bookings: 5 week course Trybooking/DNKXU. Weekend course Trybooking/ DNLRC

Do you have an upcoming event?

Send it to us at jodie@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au and we will include it here.

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NORTHAM

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

MON 6 JULY

Assorted Board Games
10.30am-12pm
Northam Rec Centre
5yrs+ FREE

THURS 9 JULY

Make A Book
1.30pm-3pm
Wundowie Library
All Ages FREE

THURS 16 JULY

Weaving Fun
1.30pm-3pm
Wundowie Library
5yrs+ FREE

FRI 17 JULY

Make A Book
10.30am-12pm
Northam Library
All Ages FREE

TUE 7 JULY

Movie Day
1pm-4pm
Avon Community Services
12yrs+ FREE

MON 13 JULY

Indoor Soccer
10.30am - 12pm
Northam Rec Centre
5yrs+ FREE

THURS 9 JULY

Community NAIDOC Day
10.30am - 1.30pm
BKB, All Ages FREE

WED 15 JULY

On Country
10am-3pm
Depart PCYC
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Mon 6 July - Fri 10 July
Mon 13 July - Fri 17 July



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Meet at PCYC at 9.30am
Depart at 10.00am
Back at PCYC by 3.30pm

WHEN Wednesday 15th July 2026
9.30am - 3.30pm

WHO Ages 12 - 17

In collaboration with



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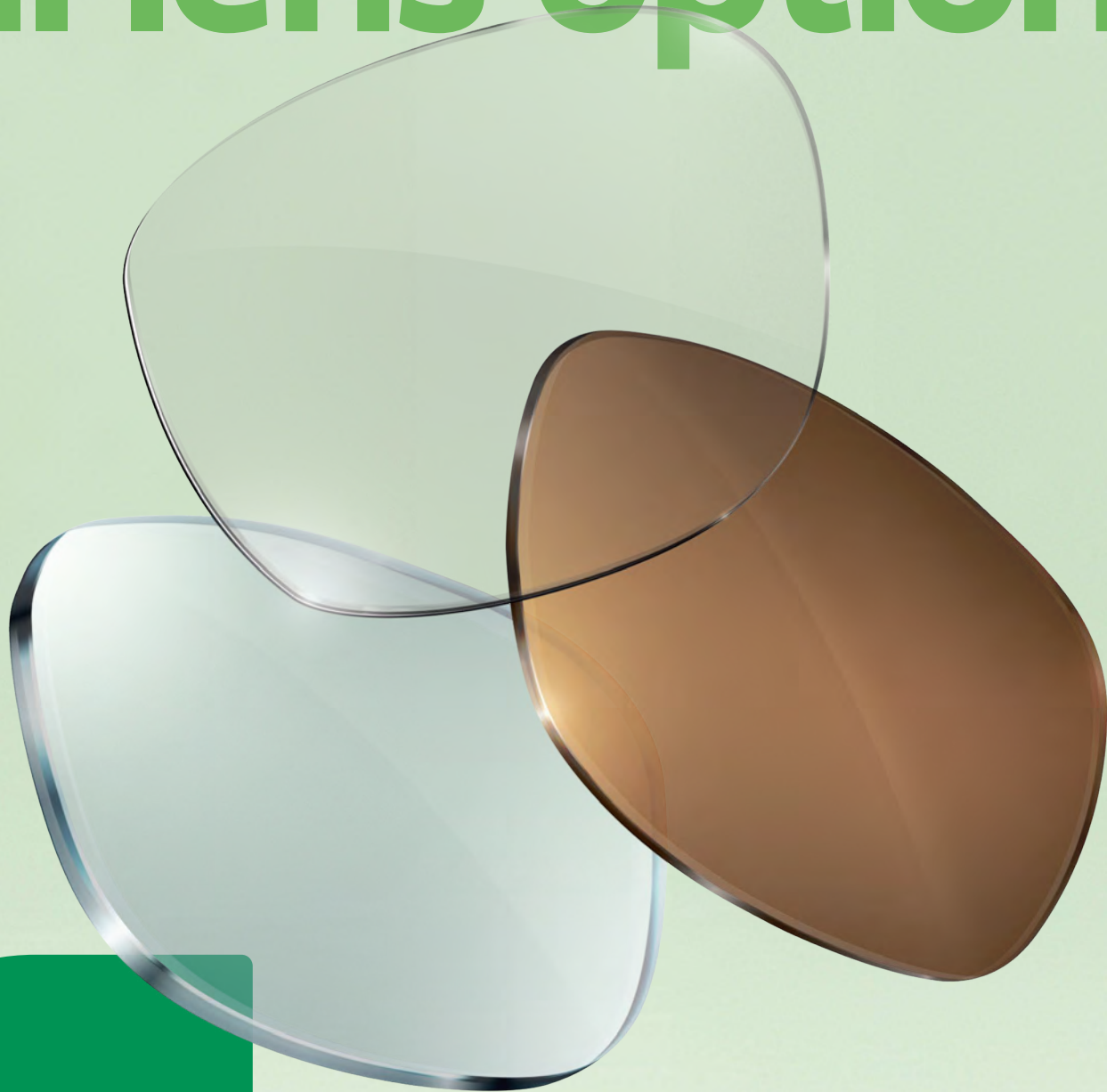
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Hope for Australians living with cystic fibrosis and diabetes as new research targets breakthrough treatment

A leading diabetes and respiratory researcher is investigating whether a breakthrough cystic fibrosis treatment could change the course of a serious form of diabetes affecting Australians living with cystic fibrosis.

The important research is supported by the 2026 Royal Australian College of Physicians and Diabetes Australia Research Establishment Fellowship.

The Fellowship will support Dr Bernadette Prentice's project, "RESET-CFRD: using REgistry Studies to Evaluate the impact of Trikafta in Australians living with cystic fibrosis-related diabetes."

The research will examine whether Trikafta, a transformational therapy for cystic fibrosis, may also influence the development and long-term impact of Cystic Fibrosis Related Diabetes (CFRD), a serious complication affecting around 30 per cent of adults living with cystic fibrosis in Australia.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic condition that causes severe damage to the lungs and digestive system. CFRD develops because of damage to the pancreas that reduces insulin production, adding another complex chronic condition to individuals already at risk of recurrent infections and reduced life expectancy.

Dr Prentice, a Paediatric Respiratory Physician and Co-Head of Department at Sydney Children's Hospital, said the Fellowship would help generate critical evidence for Australians living with CFRD and their families.

"It is an honour to receive this support, and I am truly appreciative of the RACP's and Diabetes Australia's commitment to advancing diabetes research in people living with cystic fibrosis and improving the lives of those affected," Dr Prentice said.

"For many families, CFRD adds a significant layer of

complexity to an already demanding chronic condition.

"Parents, caregivers, and young people navigate daily challenges involving glucose control and insulin use, nutrition, treatment burden, and uncertainty about the future," she said.

Through the RESET-CFRD project, researchers will analyse data from the Australian Cystic Fibrosis Data Registry to compare outcomes in individuals with and without CFRD and evaluate whether the registry can better monitor long term diabetes complications as individuals living with cystic fibrosis live longer.

"This research aims to generate clear, real-world evidence about how Trikafta, a transformational therapy for cystic fibrosis, may change the trajectory of diabetes in this population," Dr Prentice said.

"This Fellowship brings us significantly closer to achieving this."

Diabetes Australia Group CEO Justine Cain said the Fellowship highlighted the importance of investing in research that supports people living with all types of diabetes.

"Dr Prentice's work has the potential to improve understanding of CFRD nationally and strengthen the way Australia monitors long term diabetes complications in people living with cystic fibrosis," she said.

"Diabetes research changes lives. It drives scientific discovery, accelerates innovation and helps people with diabetes live longer, healthier and more productive lives," Ms Cain said.

"CFRD was identified as a priority because it affects around 30 per cent of adults living with cystic fibrosis in Australia and places an enormous burden on individuals and families already managing a complex chronic condition."

Ms Cain said Diabetes Australia's Research Strategy 2025-2030 places people living with and at risk of diabetes at the centre of research projects to ensure studies deliver meaningful real world impact to those that need it most.

Diabetes Australia is investing \$40 million into Australian diabetes research over ten years to accelerate discoveries and improve outcomes for people living with all types of diabetes.

Around two million Australians are living with diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes, with approximately 300 people diagnosed every day.

National Diabetes Week: 12-18 July 2026

Annual campaign to raise awareness of diabetes and strengthen understanding of its impact on people, families and the broader health system.

diabetesaustralia.com.au

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Residents urged to check vaccinations following diphtheria outbreak in regional WA

Western Australians are being urged to ensure they are up to date with their diphtheria vaccination in response to an outbreak of cases in regional WA.

There have been 60 confirmed cases of diphtheria reported in regional WA since late December 2025, with the majority occurring in Aboriginal people.

This includes 55 cases in the Kimberley, three in the Pilbara, and two cases in the Goldfields.

Cases have primarily occurred in children and young adults, with a smaller number spread across older age groups.

These figures reinforce the importance of maintaining strong vaccination coverage across all age groups, particularly in regional communities.

Diphtheria is a serious disease, and vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent severe illness and reduce transmission.

It can present as either a sore throat that can become severe and life-threatening, or poorly healing skin infections, and spreads through close contact with respiratory droplets, infected skin sores or contaminated items such as bandages and shared towels.

Western Australia’s Chief Health Officer Dr Clare Huppatz said diphtheria has previously been very rare in Australia due to high vaccination rates and improved living conditions.

“Respiratory diphtheria has not been seen in WA for more than 50 years, and diphtheria skin infections have become rare,” she said.

“However, cases have re-emerged in the last few years in parts of northern Australia, including the Northern Territory which has also recently declared a diphtheria outbreak.”

Dr Huppatz said the current outbreak in WA was a reminder that booster doses of diphtheria vaccine, usually given in combination with tetanus and pertussis

vaccines, are very important to maintain immunity in teenagers and adults.

“We are seeing cases concentrated in some regional areas, which is why it is especially important that people of all ages living, working in or travelling to these communities are up to date with their vaccinations,” she said.

“People who have previously been vaccinated and live in the affected regions can receive a diphtheria booster dose if it has been more than five years since their last vaccination - this is especially important for Aboriginal people and healthcare workers in these regions, who are at higher risk of exposure.

“Anyone who is unvaccinated or unsure of their status should speak with their GP or health provider about starting a vaccination course.

“Parents and carers should ensure children receive their routine vaccinations on time, including all recommended booster doses.”

Diphtheria vaccine is routinely provided to children as part of combination vaccines that are given at two months, four months, six months and 18 months of age, followed by a dose at four years of age and a booster during year seven of school (typically between 12 and 13 years of age).

Public health teams are closely monitoring the situation and responding with appropriate health measures including vaccination, case management and contact tracing.

State-funded vaccinations are available for free through GPs, community pharmacies, community health clinics and Aboriginal Medical Services in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields regions. An administrative fee may apply.

National Immunisation Program vaccines remain available free of charge across Western Australia.

For more information about diphtheria, visit [HealthyWA](#).

Young carers invisible in WA classrooms, new research warns

Thousands of young carers in Western Australia are supporting family members every day — but new research shows many remain invisible and unsupported in schools.

A new report from Carers WA and The University of Western Australia, Evaluation of the Young Carers Peer Support Group Toolkit, highlights the urgent need for a coordinated and consistent approach to young carer identification and support in WA schools.

These young people provide significant care for family members with disability, illness or mental health challenges, often at the expense of their own education, wellbeing and social connection.

Many face school absence, isolation and emotional strain — yet remain unrecognised.

The research shows schools are critical to identifying and supporting young carers — but current approaches are inconsistent and often rely on individual staff awareness.

Without a coordinated system, many young carers continue to fall through the gaps.

The report evaluated Carers WA’s Peer Support Group (PSG) Toolkit, designed to help schools establish structured peer support for young carers.

Findings confirm the program improves connection, confidence and coping for young carers — providing a safe space to feel seen, supported and understood.

However, limited resourcing and staff capacity are restricting its reach.

The report calls for consistent identification of young carers in schools; trauma-informed, whole-of-school approaches; expanded funding for peer support programs for young carers and stronger links between schools and support services.



NDIA Connecting Day

Are you a community member, a person with disability, or a disability service provider? Join us for our Connecting Day — an event designed to bring Providers and Participants together.



Tuesday 21st July 2026



Northam Recreation Centre Sports Hall 44 Peel Terrace



10.00am to 2.00pm



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What is the NDIS?



What is a Disability?



How to access NDIS



What are Supports & Services?

OUR COMMUNITY, YOUR STORIES 31

Communication Differences

As blokes we often get told men just don't talk! However, in the work we do we have come to realise that when given the right circumstances and a safe environment, blokes do talk. Sometimes this involves us disclosing personal issues or just telling our story.

In our modern society we seem to have increased life pressures to the point where we reach breaking point in our relationships. Relationships are more than just our partners and can include our workplace interactions, dealing with children or even our parents. We need to encourage understanding of the need to listen and be heard in all relationships. Sometimes we are guilty of misunderstanding someone of the opposite sex. We need to maintain the basics when communicating; talking, listening, taking time to hear and be heard and not just acknowledging and contributing a few fleeting words on the run.

Modern technology, even though it is part of the mix, can never replace the basic need for face-to-face communication. Most of our communication is non-verbal, so when we don't have access to a person's body language, messages are often misunderstood.

To achieve more effective communication, firstly we must acknowledge the differences between the genders (men are hardwired differently, are risk takers, winners and problem solvers), and secondly, differ on how we go about communicating. There is no right or wrong, but we need to recognise the differences such as:

- Blokes generally talk less than ladies.
- Ladies speak in a narrative way.
- Single word answers (yes/no/good/ok) are often valid responses for blokes.
- Blokes find it harder to talk about their emotions, we are hardwired differently but over time have also been conditioned not to talk.

Men, in particular, are challenged by their lack of verbal skills, so we need to recognise when we are worried, be encouraged to seek help and importantly be asked what the problem is. We need to question, has he resolved the problem and how has he resolved the problem?

One of the most difficult things for men and women is the ability to discuss issues with the significant people in their lives. These issues can be about relationships, children, farm ownership, health and a range of other



Photo: from Freepik

matters which affect our inner wellbeing. Often the unspoken issues create long term destructive relationship issues that are difficult to resolve.

We need to develop positive communication skills. Some useful tips aimed at assisting with a more productive outcome when communicating, include:

- Choosing the right environment.
- Timing is an important factor to consider - make time.
- When discussing an issue be open to alternate solutions and a realistic compromise.
- Be prepared to listen, listen, listen!
- Identify the relevant mates you can trust to discuss matters of concern.
- Getting help if all else is failing.

The Regional Men's Health Initiative

P: (08) 6314 1436

E: menshealth@4blokes.com.au



Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is an ailment that causes calcium to leach out from the bones making them fragile and prone to fracture. It can also cause pain in the joints, spine, lower back and neck areas.

According to Ayurveda, the things contributing towards this condition are -

- Lack of oil in the diet
- Too many raw vegetables.
- Anxiety & insomnia
- Lack of warm milk
- Too much coffee and carbonated drinks
- Constipation and an irregular lifestyle
- Excessive running
- Cold hands & feet- circulation

All these things aggravate the Vata intelligence (responsible for all movement in the body, ie nervous system, blood flow, digestion, oxygen intake). By bring Vata back to balance you can avoid, halt or minimise the progress of this disease.

It may be to your advantage to make the following changes to your diet and lifestyle.

- Include good oil (ghee is the best) in your diet
- Eat mostly warm cooked unprocessed food. Don't drink while you are eating as it dilutes your digestive enzymes.
- Avoid raw foods, carbonated drinks, and cold food & drinks.
- Include warm, unhomogenised milk, perhaps as a bedtime drink with herbs such as cinnamon, cardamom & turmeric with honey
- Adopt a regular lifestyle - rise early (more oxygen), regular meal times, regular bowel habits.
- Avoid hot showers- hot water on your head particularly, upsets your hormonal balance.
- Clean nasal passages, practise deep breathing exercises.
- Either self-massage with warmed oil or get regular Ayurvedic massage to move toxic build-up from your bodily tissues.
- Walk for 20 minutes twice a day.

If you would like more information about the treatment of Osteoporosis, please contact Jane at Tula Healing 0411 864 041. tulaayurveda.com.au

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CEO UPDATE by Theresa Lee

Happy New Financial Year to our business community, community organisations and residents across the Northam region!

During the fast-paced month of June, we were pleased to participate in the Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry WA (RCCIWA) mid-year Forum in Perth, which brings together Chambers from across regional Western Australia, allowing us to advocate collectively as one voice on the issues that matter most to regional communities and businesses.

The forum included a day at Hale House with State Government Ministers, the Premier and the Leaders of the Opposition and Nationals, providing an important opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing regional economies. Key topics discussed included the raising of the Payroll Tax threshold; headworks to residential and commercial development; support around the rising cost of doing business amid a housing/staffing crisis; and a host of other issues and topics.

The Chamber also attended the quarterly meeting of the Bullwinkel Alliance, hosted by the Mundaring Chamber of Commerce. A highlight of the event was the Small Business Expo, which showcased an impressive range of businesses operating throughout the diverse rural-urban electorate of Bullwinkel. The expo provided a fantastic opportunity for networking,



Regional Chambers of Commerce Conference 2026
Photo by Kenneth Lim Photographer

collaboration and business promotion. We were inspired by its success and are already exploring how we can replicate a similar event when Northam hosts the next Bullwinkel Alliance meeting in September.

Closer to home, our team has been busily contacting the many hundreds of businesses and community groups across the Shire of Northam and surrounds ahead of the launch of our inaugural printed Business Directory. Scheduled for release by September, the response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. We are extremely grateful to the Shire of Northam and the many businesses who have chosen to support this important project. The directory will become an attractive and practical resource, finding a place

on coffee tables, office desks and reception counters throughout the Avon Valley.

We were also proud to support the opening of Eclipse Brewery in June. Congratulations to Ryan, Bryn and the wider team on the extraordinary effort, vision and dedication required to turn their dream into reality. The brewery is a welcome addition to Northam and an impressive new landmark that will undoubtedly contribute to the town's growing appeal as a destination for visitors and locals. As a parent myself, I'm sure their glass wall between the dining area and the playground will become a favourite feature for our local families!

Finally, while the Middle East crisis appears to be settling, we continue to monitor the residual flow-on effects this may have on local businesses and households. We welcome feedback from our members and the broader community so that we can continue to advocate effectively and keep decision-makers informed of conditions on the ground.



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Image courtesy of Kelly Thomas (photographer)

Family Business: Succession = Change!

by Dr Catherine Bowen, Generation to Generation: The People Factor

For most people, the thing they fear most in life is not public speaking, or taxes or death, but change! Significant change is usually viewed with caution – even trepidation. It gives rise to countless questions, imagined scenarios, fears and, dangerously, assumptions! Because change may threaten our sense of personal security, our natural reaction is to resist.

However, for any organism to survive, it must be able to change: to adapt, compete, re-energize. Family businesses (FBs) are no different. The challenge is to get the process of change right. Well managed and timely succession planning allows people to adjust to changes, to minimise risk, clarify uncertainties and build in security structures for each generation. Many FBs choose management transition first and ownership later.

A well-known theory on change suggests the succession process can be likened to a slowly shrinking iceberg or

a fiery burning platform! Imagine standing on either, your comfort zone clearly under threat. Both scenarios present a truth that FBs can't ignore: at some point, both scenarios will run out of time. It may be a fast burn, or a slow melt, but without some action, both will collapse - and take you with them! Similarly, slowly or crisis driven, the survival of your FB depends on planning and decisions. That is the process of succession!

Four fundamentals of organised change can assist the challenges of succession planning.

Each element aids long-term planning, inclusive communication and shared decision-making. Each works to meet the security needs of each generation – with less likelihood of family recriminations later on.

1. Involvement – the family must agree that the changes are right for the business.
2. Understanding – the family understand what changes will take place; how and the timeframes involved.

3. Agreement – open planning and communication are essential. Difficult conversations now can work towards building a stronger business for everyone.
4. Commitment – the family must own the changes to avoid future recriminations and build resilience ensuring roles and responsibilities are in place and clear.

Change in any organisation can be destabilising. For FBs there are the added challenges of balancing family and personal or generational security needs with good rational business strategies. Open communication and planning remains key to the process.

Succession is all about change. It can be threatening and people will resist. Good planning and open communication will make it easier on everyone and allows time for adjustments as people move from their existing comfort zones into new positions, new responsibilities and new futures.

Dr Catherine Bowen – Family Business Consultant.
www.gentogen.com.au

Proactive risk management for modern agribusinesses

Decision-making in farming businesses

Farming has always involved considerable risk, and that really will not change.

However, today's operating environment places unprecedented pressure on decision-making.

Rising input costs, supply issues, rising interest rates, tighter lending conditions and seasonal variability mean that disciplined financial decision making has never been more important to driving performance.

Grain prices, livestock values, interest rates, operating costs and supply conditions can shift rapidly, often simultaneously. The Iran conflict highlights how quickly external events can amplify this volatility. The risk lies in making major financial commitments, such as machinery upgrades, land purchases or enterprise changes, based on short term conditions that may not hold. Disciplined decision-making requires a clear understanding of the drivers behind financial movements and stress testing decisions before committing capital.

Strong farming businesses align financial decisions with a well-defined, long term strategy. Decisions driven purely by short term cash flow or seasonal pressure can weaken your equity over time if not carefully assessed. Disciplined operators test whether a decision strengthens profitability, improves resilience and enhances capital efficiency over the long term, rather

than simply solving today's problem. If it doesn't stack up, it isn't implemented.

Reactive decisions are expensive. Asset purchases under pressure, poorly tested financing and growth without working capital buffers all increase risk. Discipline, through budgeting, cash flow forecasting and sensitivity analysis, allows better timing and more confident financial decisions.

Financial risk extends beyond cashflow alone. Disciplined decision-makers evaluate cash flow impacts alongside debt-servicing capacity, exposure to seasonal variability, reliance on key individuals, fatigue related error, risk and regulatory compliance costs. Assessing decisions through multiple risk lenses leads to more resilient and robust financial outcomes.

Farming businesses often support family needs, but financial discipline depends on clearly distinguishing between commercial decisions and personal requirements. Separating family drawings, lifestyle expenditure and succession expectations from the core business enables a more accurate assessment of profitability, return on assets and sustainable debt-servicing capacity. Without this clarity, planning for future growth becomes challenging, particularly when difficult trade-offs or competing priorities arise.

Many farming decisions carry significant succession and

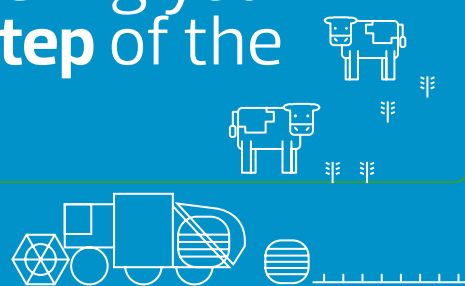
structural implications. Debt levels, asset ownership, trading structures and off farm investments can either support or constrain future inter-generational transfer. Financially disciplined decision-making intentionally considers how today's borrowings and investments will impact future ownership, retirement funding and family equity outcomes. The transfer of inter-generational farming assets is also likely to become more challenging as regulatory requirements evolve.

It is important to recognise that you don't have to make these decisions on your own. Independent input strengthens financial discipline. Accountants, advisers and peer review boards provide structure and challenge assumptions. External perspectives often reveal risks or efficiency opportunities that are difficult to identify within the business. Having trusted people who add genuine value to your business is invaluable.

Disciplined decision-making does not eliminate uncertainty in farming, but it significantly improves financial control. In an environment of tighter capital and higher operational and regulatory risk, the most resilient farming businesses will be those that treat disciplined financial decision-making as a strategic skill, protecting equity today while positioning for long term profitability and succession.

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The home trends we're quietly ditching in 2026

Here's what Australian homes are moving away from this year – and what we're embracing instead.

Some trends disappear overnight. Others slowly fade into the background until one day you realise nobody's doing them anymore.

And in 2026, Australian homes are moving away from spaces that feel overly polished, performative or impractical, instead embracing interiors that feel warmer, more personal and actually enjoyable to live in.

From cold minimalism to overly themed styling, here are the home trends we're quietly ditching in 2026 – and what's replacing them instead.

All-grey everything

For years, cool greys dominated Australian homes. Grey floors, grey walls, grey kitchens – sometimes all at once.

Now, homeowners are gravitating towards spaces that feel softer and more grounded.

Warmer neutrals, earthy mocha tones, olive greens, terracotta and rich walnut finishes are replacing colder palettes, helping homes feel calmer and more lived in.

This doesn't necessarily mean bold colour everywhere. Instead, it's about layering warmth through timber, texture and richer undertones.

Minimalism

The era of the stark, gallery-white interior, where every surface was kept immaculately clear and homes felt too precious to actually live in, is fading fast.

2026 is all about the return of the 'collected' home.

We are embracing spaces that tell a story. This means shelves filled with actual, well-read books, displaying inherited vintage pieces alongside contemporary furniture, and choosing art because it moves you, not because it matches the rug.

The new evolution is warm minimalism: spaces that still feel clean and uncluttered, but also textured, comfortable and personal.

Think linen, travertine, soft lighting, natural woods and tactile finishes replacing cold white walls and overly sparse rooms.

Perfectly matched furniture

The days of purchasing an entire matching bedroom

suite or living room set straight off the showroom floor are well and truly behind us.

We are moving away from spaces that feel overly prescriptive, highly coordinated, and completely brand-new, as they often lack personal charm.

Instead, Australian homeowners are finding joy in the thrill of the hunt, actively seeking out vintage, antique and second-hand pieces to repurpose and restore.

Whether it's giving a tired mid-century sideboard a new lease on life or reupholstering a classic dining chair in a contemporary fabric, integrating older, upcycled pieces adds instant warmth and character – as well as ultimate humblebrag rights.

The shift reflects a broader move away from made-for-Instagram interiors towards homes with more individuality and emotional warmth.

Overly themed interiors

Homes that feel too heavily committed to a single aesthetic – whether that's coastal, farmhouse or ultra-modern – are slowly giving way to more balanced, personality-led interiors.

Rather than decorating for trends alone, homeowners are increasingly blending influences, colours and styles in ways that actually reflect how they live.

It's part of the reason postmodern-inspired interiors and curated maximalism are gaining traction – not necessarily because people want clutter, but because they want homes to feel expressive again.

Open plan

For decades, the ultimate Australian dream was to knock down every internal wall to create one massive, stadium-sized living, dining, and cooking zone.

But the reality of one large, echoing room, where the noise of the dishwasher competes with the television, has finally lost its shine.

Enter broken-plan living.

'Broken-plan' living uses clever zoning, such as internal steel-framed glass doors, dual-sided fireplaces, or varied floor levels to create distinct, purposeful areas while maintaining light and flow.

We're also seeing a massive resurgence in the dedicated

dining room and cosy, enclosed 'snugs' designed solely for reading and unwinding.

The ubiquitous bouclé sofa

It's had a spectacularly strong run, but the moment of the oversized, bright (often white), curved bouclé sofa has finally ended.

What began as a high-end architectural statement became heavily mass-produced, and the impracticality of keeping an all-white, highly textured sofa clean in a bustling Australian home eventually took its toll.

Comfort is still king, but we are swapping the stark white for rich, forgiving tones – think deep chocolate, olive green, warm rust and aubergine.

Tactile, durable fabrics like heavyweight linens and sumptuous velvets are taking centre stage, applied to classic, structured sofa silhouettes that won't date in a year's time.

Everything you need to give your space a makeover and add a little sparkle can be found at Snooze, with new season trends that will never go out of style.

Fast decor

The appetite for buying baskets full of cheap, trend-driven decorative objects that look good for a season but hold no real value is waning.

Consumers are increasingly aware of sustainability and the environmental cost of disposable décor, with many adopting a "buy less, but better" mentality.

The focus has shifted from kitsch to craftsmanship.

Expect to see homes accented with hand-thrown ceramics, bespoke joinery, and original artworks by local artists.

These are pieces with patina and soul – designed to be loved for a lifetime, not just a season.

No matter whether you're doing a full renovation, redesigning your storage, or simply wanting to add some new life into an old space, Snooze has you covered for all jobs big and small with their extensive range of furniture, decor and everything else you could need for a style makeover.

Article taken from <https://www.realestate.com.au/advice/the-home-trends-were-quietly-ditching-in-2026/>

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Negative-Gearing

As of now, the government has announced its policy intention, but the changes are not final law until the legislation is passed by Parliament, with the proposed commencement date set for 1 July 2027.

What could this mean for you if the legislation is passed by Parliament?

If you're planning to buy an investment property once the law has been passed, the government's changes to negative gearing may affect your strategy. The good news is that negative gearing hasn't disappeared, it just works differently depending on the type of property you buy.

If you purchase a new build, off the plan home, or newly constructed investment property, you can still negatively gear the property, claim interest, rates, insurance, and maintenance and claim depreciation on new fixtures and fittings. For many investors, this keeps new homes an attractive option.

If you buy an older, established property, you cannot negatively gear it, you can only claim expenses against rental income, not your wages. The strategy becomes more about long term growth and yield. Established homes remain great investments, they just rely less on tax benefits.

If you already own an investment property purchased before the rule change, your negative gearing benefits stay in place.

The bottom line for buyers will become clear once the proposed legislation is passed by Parliament.

New homes = Full negative-gearing benefits

Established homes = No negative gearing, but strong long-term potential

It's not about what you can't do, it's about choosing the strategy that fits your goals.

If you'd like to explore negative gearing in more detail, we recommend speaking with an accountant, mortgage broker, or financial adviser.

Avon Descent 7th - 9th August 2026



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Focus on Farming

by Chris Antonio

Now that seeding has completed and crops well established, the talk and focus is on fertiliser applications, weeds and spraying and looking toward the sky for rain and rain forecasting. I have looked at two charts released by the Bureau of Meteorology. The first showed that there is a small chance of exceeding the median rainfall over the next two months. The second shows that there is a good chance in our area for rainfall to be reached or exceeded over the next two months. Only time will tell.

Looking at grain prices – summarised as: Wheat, relying on data from the Northern Hemisphere harvest, which is currently keeping a lid on prices. Unknown factors include geopolitical risks, El Niño effects and US-China relationships: Barley, supported by Australian domestic demand, and supported by importers such as China and Southern East Asia. Probably pressure downwards on prices: Canola, remaining volatile, but currently impacted by conflict in the Middle East. With WA reliant upon the export market, the watch is on the Northern Hemisphere harvest, particularly Canada. Other factors overall include – continuing tariff uncertainty, continued global conflict, demand from China and India, the weather, and then the Australian Dollar exchange rate to a lesser extent.

Regardless of the factors, engage with your professional business partners for grain marketing options.

Although this is a July article, if read during June, there may still be time for taxation planning. Again, the best option is to work with your professional business partners to plan and prepare as best as possible.

Beyond the Shed Building a Stronger Local Workforce for Regional WA

As regional industries continue to seek reliable labour, programs like Beyond the Shed are helping build a more flexible, capable and resilient workforce that supports both local businesses and regional communities year-round.

The Beyond the Shed program supports shearing industry workers in developing additional skills to help them gain year-round employment. As a result the positive impacts on the agricultural sector and local regional enterprises are becoming increasingly evident.

For farmers facing ongoing workforce shortages, the program provides access to workers who are already part of their local communities. Unlike transient workforces that may only be available for a short period and will require accommodation, many shearing contractors and shed staff live and work in regional WA year-round, creating long-term workforce capacity while delivering economic benefits back into local towns and businesses.

Many shearing shed workers already possess the attributes farmers are looking for – they are hard working, practical, accustomed to long days and experienced working in our often challenging WA rural conditions. By providing the additional training, Beyond the Shed is helping create a pool of skilled, work-ready people who can support farming businesses during peak periods throughout the year.

Dael Parnell, a shearing contractor and wool classer from Jerramungup, said the program was helping strengthen the regional workforce while creating opportunities for workers.

“The Beyond the Shed training has been a great opportunity for people in our industry to pick up practical skills that can be used throughout the year,” she said.

“A lot of shed workers are already hardworking, reliable

people who are used to long days and physical work. Training in areas like fencing, machinery operation and heavy vehicles gives them more employment options while also helping farmers and regional businesses find skilled workers when they need them.”

The Beyond the Shed program has seen early strong uptake throughout the Wheatbelt, Great Southern and Mid West, with 29 shearing contractors and more than 90 shed workers already signed up and undergoing training aimed at building practical skills beyond the wool industry.

Whether it’s assisting with seeding programs, fencing projects, machinery operation, transport, livestock management or general farm work, participants are gaining qualifications that can be immediately applied across regional industries.

Courses currently being delivered include seeding operations, fencing, heavy vehicle driver operations, chainsaw, forklift, first aid, AusChem accreditation and working in confined spaces.

An upcoming harvest course will be delivered by Eastough Ag in York on 4 & 15 July and 21 & 22 July. For more information about upcoming training opportunities through Beyond the Shed program and to attend, contact Tiff Davey at btstraining@wasia.com.au

Beyond The Shed is funded by the Federal Government as part of the phase out of live sheep exports by sea transition package.



Photo: Dael Parnell

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Australia's fuel excise cut extended to keep fuel petrol, diesel prices under control

by Damion Smy, Deputy News Editor, CarExpert

The Australian Government has announced it will extend its fuel excise cut for motorists for at least another month beyond its original June 30 expiry, and it hasn't ruled out further extensions.

At a press conference in Sydney on Saturday (June 20), the federal government announced an extension of the temporary discount until July 31 after it was introduced on April 1 as a three-month reprieve for motorists.

An extension of the discount was not included in the Federal Budget handed down on May 12, leading to speculation it would not continue beyond its original June 30 expiry date.

In extending the discount, the federal government also reduced the temporary excise cut from 26.3 cents per litre to 16c/L, which became a 32c/L saving when state and territory contributions were included.

The 16c/L discount will take effect from July 1, but is currently scheduled to be eliminated completely from August 1, when motorists are set to once again pay the full 52.6c/L fuel excise.

The government will also extend its cut to the Heavy Vehicle Road User Charge. However, after being reduced to zero from April 1, it will increase to 16c/L – half its standard 32.4c/L rate – until August 2.

"The 16 cents a litre extension to the fuel tax cut that we've announced today will reduce the cost of a 65-litre tank of fuel by around \$11," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told Sky News.



Photo: from Freepik

For reference, Australia's best-selling diesel and petrol vehicles year-to-date – the Ford Ranger ute and Toyota RAV4 mid-size SUV – have fuel tank capacities of 80L and 55L respectively.

The discount has seen Ford, for example, offer fuel cards worth up to \$5000 (or discounts to the same value) with the purchase of some Ranger models, and \$4000 discounts on the recently updated MY26.5 Ranger.

The discounts were intended to reduce the impact of record fuel costs on motorists and the transport sector, along with the knock-on effects across other industries.

They were introduced following conflict between the US and Iran, which have affected shipments of crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East since March.

However, with tensions continuing between the two countries, Mr Albanese did not rule out further extensions to the fuel excise cut. "We'll continue to do

what we can to shield Australians from the worst impacts of this conflict, including securing additional fuel from our partners," the prime minister told Sky News.

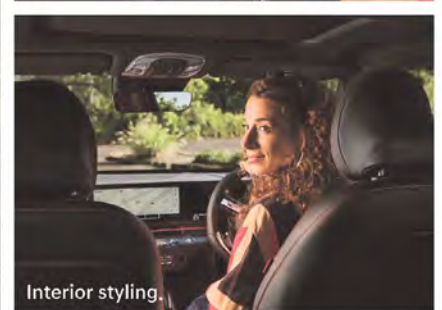
Speaking at Saturday's press conference, the Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen said Australia had 44 days' worth of petrol and 32 days' worth of jet fuel, the highest level of fuel reserves since 2023.

Record fuel prices in Australia have been a boon for electric vehicle (EV) sales, with the Tesla Model Y becoming the first EV to top the nation's overall monthly sales charts when it was Australia's best-selling vehicle in May.

The Model Y's popularity contributed to EVs achieving a record 19.9 per cent market last month, up 111.6 per cent on May 2025.

Article taken from carexpert.com.au/car-news/australias-fuel-excise-cut

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IN THE garden this month

by Naomi Sherrington

July is often the coldest month of the year in the Wheatbelt, but it's also one of the most rewarding. The garden is well and truly awake now. The paddocks are green, winter-flowering natives are putting on a show, and every day of decent rainfall feels like money in the bank for the months ahead.

While it can be tempting to stay rugged up indoors, July is actually a wonderful month to be out in the garden. The soil is workable, weeds are easy to pull, and plants continue to establish strong root systems while temperatures remain cool.

Garden To-Do List

- Continue planting natives

July remains one of the best months of the year to establish native trees and shrubs.

- Take advantage of wet soil

Digging, planting and weeding are all easier while the ground has moisture.

- Watch for frost damage

Don't panic if plants get a little scorched — many will recover as temperatures rise.

- Check stakes and tree guards

Winter winds can loosen supports and damage young plants.

- Keep an eye on snails and slugs

They love cool, damp conditions almost as much as your seedlings do.

- Add compost to garden beds

Winter is a great time to build soil ahead of spring growth.

What's in Bloom

- Grevilleas continuing their spectacular winter display
- Hakeas beginning to hit their stride (my Burrendong Beauty is finally in bloom, and she is stunning – and my mum was delighted to find some blooms on her pincushion hakea!)
- Wattles bringing splashes of gold to the landscape
- Winter-flowering gums and paperbarks
- Early orchids appearing in bushland areas

Ripe for Picking

- Citrus
- Kale
- Broccoli
- Parsley and coriander
- Cauliflower
- Silverbeet

What to Plant Now

Vegetables

- Peas
- Broad beans
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Garlic
- Onions

Natives and Ornamentals

- Grevillea
- Hakea
- Banksia
- Melaleuca
- Eucalyptus
- Acacia

Plants established during winter will often outperform those planted in spring because they have months to develop strong root systems before summer arrives.



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Gardening for Birds in the Wheatbelt

by Naomi Sherrington

One of the greatest rewards of gardening with native plants is the wildlife that follows.

When I first started planting, I thought I was creating a garden. In reality, I was creating a habitat.

Every shrub, tree and groundcover provides food, shelter or nesting opportunities for something.

Different Birds Need Different Plants

One of the easiest mistakes to make is focusing only on flowering plants.

Nectar-rich species such as grevilleas, banksias, hakeas, and bottlebrushes are fantastic for attracting birds. But a truly bird-friendly garden needs more than food.

Birds also need shelter from predators (and little insectivorous birds like robins often need shelter from territorial honey-eaters!), protection from weather, safe nesting sites, places to escape dominant species.

Don't Forget the Shrubs

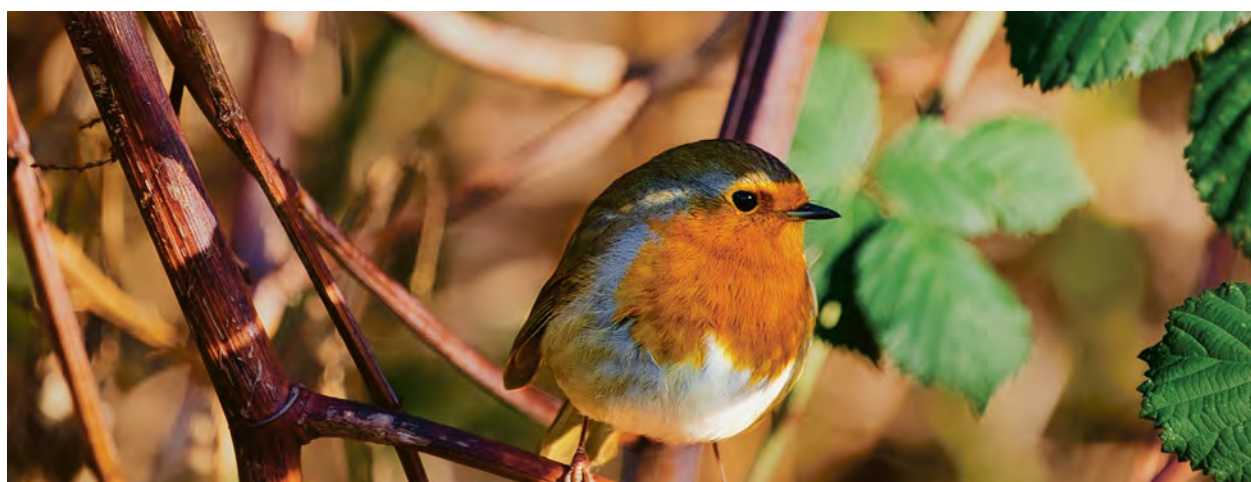
Some of the most valuable plants in a wildlife garden aren't the showiest.

Dense shrubs such as saltbush provide safe refuge for wrens, robins and other small insect-eating birds. I have a particular soft spot for saltbush. They're versatile, tolerant of almost any soil, look beautiful in the landscape, and provide wonderful little hideaways for smaller birds when the bolshy honeyeaters get a bit too territorial.

Think in Layers

The healthiest habitats contain multiple layers:

- Groundcovers
- Small shrubs



- Medium shrubs
- Trees

Different species use different parts of the garden.

A red-capped robin won't use the same space in the same way as a red wattlebird.

The more layers you provide, the more wildlife you'll attract.

Water Matters Too

A shallow bird bath can be just as valuable as a flowering shrub.

Place it:

- somewhere birds can easily see approaching predators
- near protective vegetation
- in a spot that's easy to clean

Fresh water becomes particularly important during summer.

Start Small

Creating wildlife habitat doesn't require a huge property.

A single native shrub can provide food.

A small clump of dense foliage can provide shelter.

A bird bath can provide water.

Every plant helps.

Final Thought

One of the things I love most about gardening is that the rewards aren't limited to flowers and foliage.

Plant a tree, and you may gain shade.

Plant a grevillea, and you may gain a honeyeater (or twelve!)

Plant a dense little shrub, and you might find yourself sharing your morning coffee with a family of wrens.

And really, that's one of the best reasons to garden at all.

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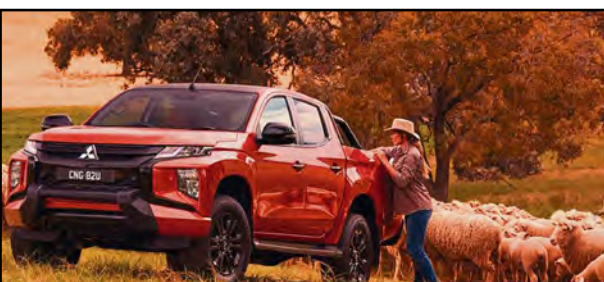
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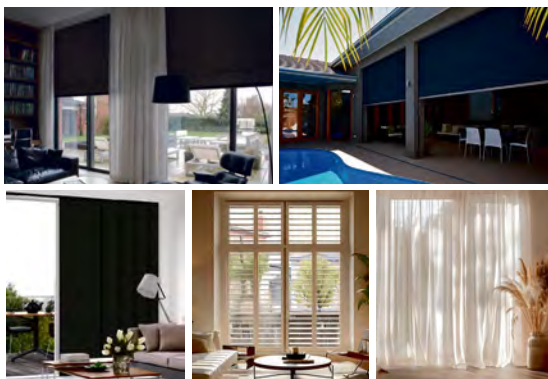
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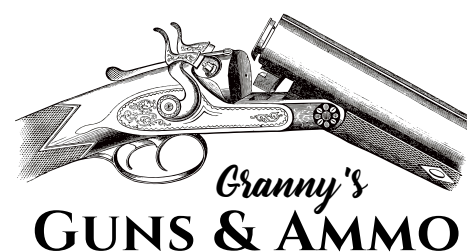
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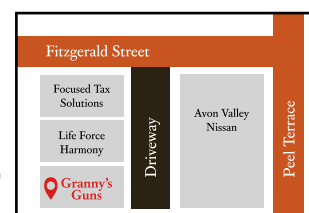
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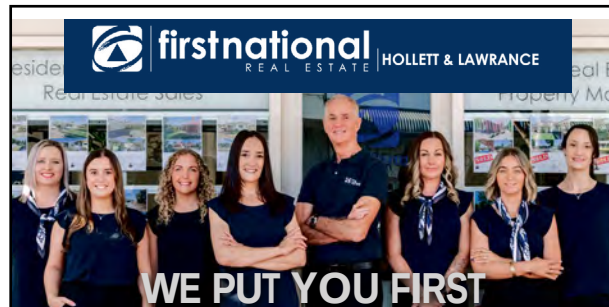
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The Funeral Service for the late Vivianna Antonia Jackson of Midvale, formerly of Northam, will be held at 10.30am on Friday 03 July 2026 in the East Chapel at Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park.



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Obituary



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Northam Netball Celebrates Championship Success



Photo: Grand Final Winners - Northam 12U Team

A big congratulations goes out to all of the Northam Netball Association (NNA) representative teams who competed at the Association Championships on the long weekend in June. It was fantastic to see so many players proudly representing NNA, demonstrating great sportsmanship, teamwork and determination every time they stepped onto the court.

Saturday's competition got off to a positive start, with teams recording several wins, a couple of draws and a number of closely contested matches. Unfortunately, Sunday's severe weather forecast resulted in the afternoon hubs for the 13U, 14U and Open divisions being cancelled. This meant those teams were unable to complete their scheduled matches, which ultimately impacted the ladder results heading into the final day of competition.

A special congratulations to the 13U team, who progressed through to the Grand Final against Geraldton. The team gave everything they had and should be incredibly proud of their efforts, with Geraldton proving just a little too strong on the day.

A massive congratulations to the 12U team, who delivered an outstanding performance in their Grand

Final against Katanning, coming away convincing winners 22-7 and bringing home the championship title!

The lead up to the Association Carnival requires hours of dedication from the Association's coaches, team managers, umpires and committee members. A big shout out to the coaches who developed the selected representative teams, and planned and executed specialist training sessions before the carnival - 12U coach Lauren Stone, 13U coach Kassidy Emery, 14U coach Leanne Hunt, 20U coach Sarah Lynch and Open coach Gemma McPherson. Each coach who takes a team must be accredited with a minimum of development level coaching trained through Netball Australia and the Association now has a contingency of 6 development coaches along with another 4 intermediate coaches.

Carnival C Badge umpires - Jorjia McLellan, Tahlia Jones and Harper McPherson, braved the challenging weather conditions across the weekend to ensure all teams could take the court. Without umpires, there is no game, and NNA are incredibly grateful for everything these young umpires contributed throughout the championships.



Photo: Northam 13U Team



Photo: Northam 14U Team



Photo: Northam 20U Team



Photo: Northam Open Team

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New Program Aims to “Level the Field” for Avon Valley Girls in Hockey



Girls aged 13–17 from across the Avon Valley are being encouraged to register their interest in a new hockey initiative designed to increase participation, confidence, leadership and connection for teenage girls.

The Level the Field program has been made possible through a \$5,000 Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport Game On, Girls Grant awarded to Northam Hockey Club and delivered in partnership with Avon Hockey Association. The program aims to support girls currently playing hockey, encourage new participants into the sport, and create stronger connections between girls across the Avon Valley hockey community.

Planned activities include a girls-only trip to Perth to attend an elite women's hockey match, transport to and from the event, and a girls-only coaching session with high-level female players and coaches. Subject to interest, additional social and skill-development opportunities may also be offered throughout the program.

Program coordinator Esther Bliss said the initiative was about far more than hockey.

“Research shows girls who participate in sport gain confidence, resilience, teamwork and leadership skills that benefit them throughout their lives. There is also strong evidence linking participation in sport with future leadership and career success.”

“Just as importantly, sport creates friendships, connection and a sense of belonging. In regional communities, where girls are often spread across multiple towns and clubs, those social connections can be every bit as valuable as the physical benefits.”

Girls aged 13–17 from across the Avon Valley, whether they currently play hockey or are interested in giving it a try, are encouraged to scan the QR code and register their interest.

For further information, contact Esther Bliss at Northam Hockey Club.

Expressions of Interest are now open.

Minkey Hockey Helps Young Players Build Skills and Confidence



Photo: Jayde and Anna with daughters Cleo and Maddison

Young hockey players from across the region have been enjoying the benefits of the Northam Hockey Club's Minkey Hockey program, which provides children with a fun, safe and welcoming introduction to the sport.

Designed for younger players and beginners, the program focuses on developing fundamental hockey skills while encouraging teamwork, confidence and a love of being active. Through a series of engaging weekly sessions, participants learn the basics of stick handling, passing, shooting and game play in a supportive environment tailored to their age and ability.

The program has been made possible through the dedication of Northam Hockey Club's volunteer coaches and helpers, who generously give their time to support local children and create positive sporting experiences. Their commitment helps ensure that every participant feels included, encouraged and able to progress at their own pace.

Minkey Hockey has also provided an opportunity for families to connect with the club and discover the many benefits of community sport, including physical activity, social connection and personal development.

While this year's Minkey Hockey program is coming to an end shortly, the club is already looking forward to welcoming new and returning participants in future programs.

Anyone interested in learning more about future Minkey Hockey opportunities, junior hockey or becoming involved with the club is encouraged to get in touch. Updates will be shared through the Northam Hockey Club Facebook page, or enquiries can be sent via email to northamhockeyclub@gmail.com.

Northam Hockey Club thanks all volunteers, families and participants for making this year's program such a success.



Photo: Minkey coaches Hanru Zietsman, Jye Rowling, Bailey Naughton and Jeremy Parker



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2026 WBGF Regional Carnival

Yesterday Northam proudly hosted the WBGF Regional Carnival, welcoming 29 teams from across the region ranging from GO through to Open Division.

Despite the chilly weather, it was an incredibly successful day for NNA and a fantastic showcase of talent, sportsmanship and the dedication of our players, coaches, team managers, umpires and volunteers.

- Our GO teams had an amazing day developing their skills, making new friends and experiencing the excitement of carnival competition.
- 12&U continued their strong form throughout the day, remaining undefeated and earning their place in the Grand Final against Mana — finishing the day with a fantastic 17–9 win!
- 13&U challenged themselves by competing in a division above their age group. They played some excellent netball, came away with 2 wins, and gained valuable experience for the future.
- 14&U continued to improve with every game and remained undefeated throughout the carnival. They finished the day in style, taking out the Grand Final against Merredin 27–13.

- 18&U welcomed several new players into the team and showed incredible teamwork across the day. Their Grand Final against Imperials was an absolute nailbiter! Locked in a draw at full time, the match went to overtime where a two-goal advantage was needed. After an intense extra period and plenty of back-and-forth action, Northam secured the win!
- Open Division showcased the depth of talent across our association, with players representing multiple clubs and coming together nicely. After finishing second on the ladder, they fought hard to take out the Grand Final against Merredin 18–15.

A huge thank you to our amazing coaches who gave their time, energy and support throughout the day:

- GO – Liz Osborne
- GO (2) – Jess Wilkes
- 12&U – Lauren Stone
- 14&U (2) – Kass Emery
- 14&U – Leanne Hunt
- 18&U – Sarah Lynch & Gemma McPherson
- Open – Jenny Jones

We are also incredibly proud of our young association umpires, with Macey French and Tia McPherson both achieving their C Badge accreditation — an outstanding achievement and recognition of all your hard work.

Special congratulations to Macey French, who was awarded the WBGF Regional Rising Star Umpire Award — an incredible accomplishment and one to be very proud of!

A special mention to our NNA Life Members, Jenny Jones, Leanne Hunt & Michelle O'Driscoll for becoming involved throughout the season. We are incredibly proud to have your continued support within our association and value the experience, knowledge and passion you share with our players. Your contribution helps inspire and develop the next generation of Northam Netball.

Finally, thank you to all of our volunteers who helped in the canteen and behind the scenes to ensure the day ran smoothly. Events like this simply don't happen without the support of our amazing netball community.

Well done to every player, coach, umpire, volunteer and supporter who represented Northam.



Photo: GO Team 2



Photo: GO Team 1



Photo: 12U Team



Photo: 14U Team



Photo: 18U Team



Photo: Open Team

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Hockeyroos Inspire Northam Students During Special School Visit



Photo: Greta Hayes and Aleisha Powers out the front of the Northam Primary School. Image by Adam Crane - Salt Diaries/Hockey Australia

Northam Primary School students were treated to a memorable visit from two of Australia's top hockey players when Hockeyroos stars Aleisha Power and Greta Hayes spent the day in Northam as part of the Hockey Australia Foundation's regional outreach program.

The visit formed part of the Foundation's commitment to bringing hockey to remote and underprivileged communities, helping introduce young people to the sport while encouraging participation and inclusion.

During their time in Northam, Aleisha and Greta visited three schools and connected with a total of 339 students. They were joined by Bren from the Northam Hockey Club, who assisted in delivering the clinics and activities throughout the day.

For Aleisha Power, the visit was particularly special as she returned to the place where her own journey began — Northam Primary School.

Students in Years 3 to 6 gathered for an engaging presentation where the Hockeyroos shared their experiences as elite athletes. They spoke about the dedication, perseverance and commitment required to succeed at the highest level of sport, as well as the importance of setting goals and believing in yourself.

The players also reflected on some of the highlights of their careers, inspiring students to pursue their own dreams both on and off the sporting field.

Following the assembly, selected Year 5 and 6 students were given the opportunity to participate in a mini hockey clinic. Working alongside the Hockeyroos and coaches, students practised fundamental hockey skills while experiencing firsthand the excitement of the sport. Greta Hayes said the Hockey Australia Foundation played an important role in introducing hockey to regional communities.

"Thanks to the Hockey Australia Foundation we have the opportunity to come out to regional towns just like Northam and bring hockey, the game that we all love, to kids who've never played hockey before," she said.

"And we are able to run some super fun hockey sessions and hopefully brighten their days."

The Hockey Australia Foundation works to create opportunities for children from a wide range of communities, including First Nations peoples, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women and girls.

The Foundation also supports regional clubs in becoming official Hookin2Hockey providers, helping ensure ongoing access to the sport in communities across Australia.

Northam Primary School thanked Aleisha Power and Greta Hayes for taking the time to visit and inspire students, creating lasting memories and encouraging the next generation of hockey players.



Photo: Greta Hayes with students from Northam Primary School. Image by Adam Crane - Salt Diaries/Hockey Australia



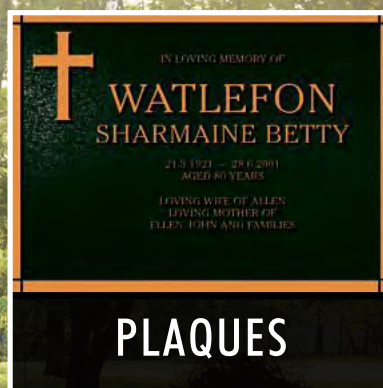
Photo: Greta Hayes with students from Northam Primary School. Image by Adam Crane - Salt Diaries/Hockey Australia

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Northam Railways joins the fight against MND



Photo: left to right, Carol Dall, Jasmin Griffiths, Kyle Cornthwaite, Neale Daniher, Jermain Davis, Lachlan Hunter and Jenny Jones. Image taken by Kelly Griffin

by Naomi Sherrington

More than 300 people gathered at the Northam Railways Football Club earlier this month to support the fight against Motor Neurone Disease, raising about \$1,700 through the club's inaugural Arctic Blast from the Past fundraiser.

Inspired by the nationally recognised Big Freeze campaign, the event saw seven community members bravely take on an icy slide in support of FightMND, helping raise both funds and awareness for a disease that has touched the lives of many local families.

The fundraiser carried added significance following the recent passing of AFL great Neale Daniher, whose extraordinary advocacy transformed public awareness of Motor Neurone Disease after his own diagnosis. Since launching the Big Freeze campaign in 2014, Daniher inspired Australians to unite behind the cause, raising millions of dollars for research, treatment and support.

His legacy was represented in Northam by his brother, Terry Daniher, who travelled to the Wheatbelt to join the Arctic Blast from the Past and take his own icy plunge.

Joining him on the slide was a diverse group of local

identities, each representing different parts of the community while sharing a common commitment to the cause.

Member for Central Wheatbelt Lachlan Hunter accepted the challenge alongside Jasmin Griffiths, whose grandmother is living with Motor Neurone Disease. Jenny Jones slid in memory of a friend's father who lost his battle with the disease, while AFNA President Carol Dall honoured her grandmother, who also died from MND.

Northam Railways junior football representative Kyle Cornthwaite took part on behalf of the club's youngest players, while Railways life member and past player Jermaine "Bomber" Davis also answered the call.

The varied backgrounds of the participants reflected the message behind the fundraiser—that Motor Neurone Disease can affect anyone, and fighting it is a cause that belongs to the whole community.

Club officials described the afternoon as one of the highlights of the season, with the crowd enthusiastically supporting every icy descent while donating generously throughout the event.

"The event carried added significance following the recent passing of Neale Daniher, whose courage and



determination in the face of MND inspired people right across Australia," the club said in its newsletter.

"It was fitting that our fundraiser took place in his memory, and the generosity shown by everyone who donated throughout the afternoon was truly humbling."

The club said every dollar raised would contribute towards research, care and support for people living with Motor Neurone Disease and their families.

The success of the inaugural Arctic Blast from the Past was made possible through the efforts of volunteers and supporters, including Dunning's Fuel, which donated the ice used to create the slide.

While the spectacle of community leaders launching themselves down an icy ramp provided plenty of entertainment, the day served as an important reminder of the devastating impact of Motor Neurone Disease and the ongoing work needed to find effective treatments—and ultimately, a cure.

For Northam Railways, the fundraiser was more than just a novel way to raise money. It was a demonstration of the club's commitment to supporting causes that extend well beyond football, bringing the community together in the spirit of generosity, courage and hope.

If you want to be part of the fight against MND, donations may be made at support.fightmnd.org.au/fundraisers/arcticblastfromthepast



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