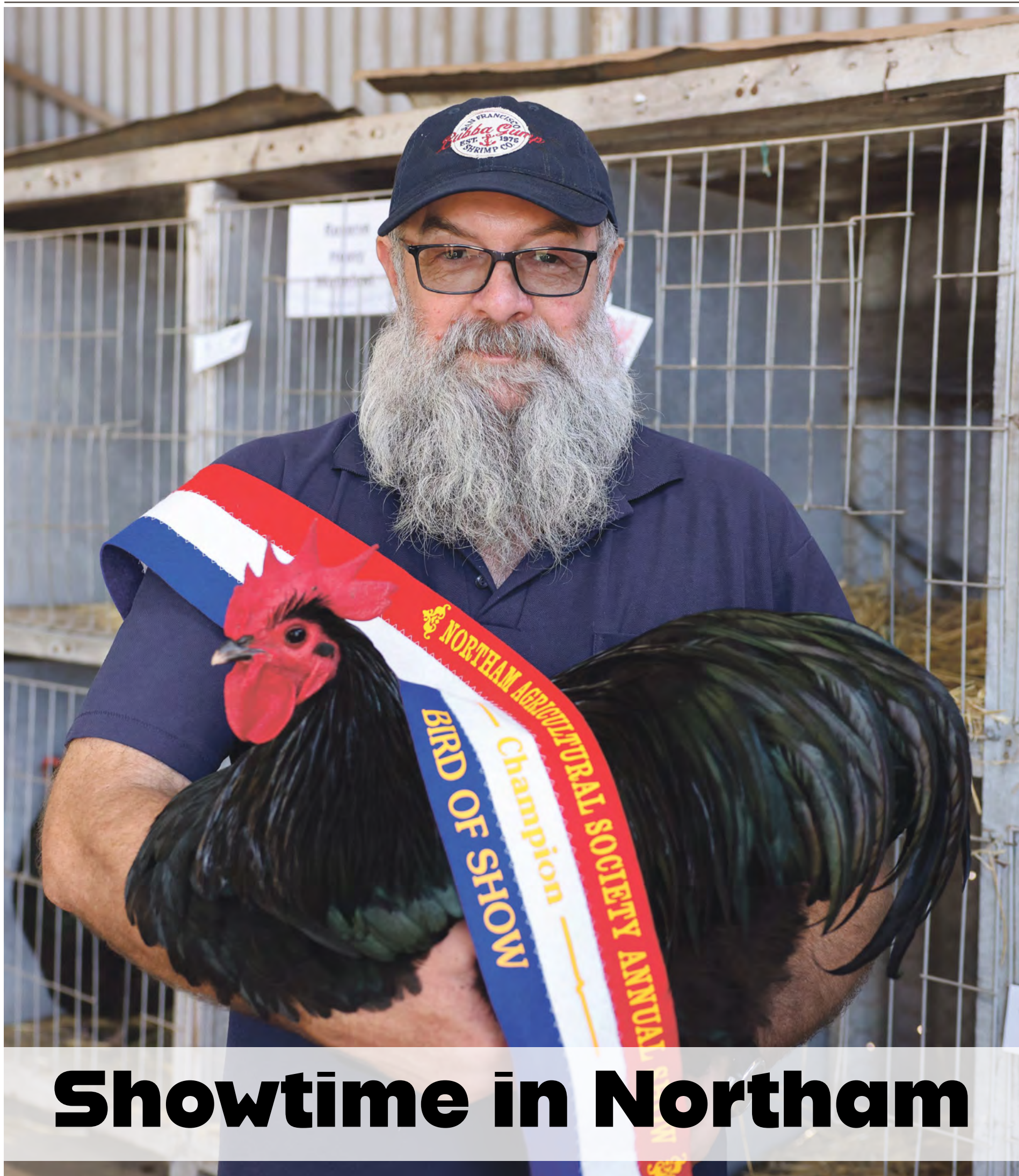




Showtime in Northam

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Editorial

September brings with it Father's Day — a day of handmade cards, questionable breakfasts, new socks and, for many families, an opportunity to recognise the dads who have helped shape our lives.

But putting together our Father's Day feature this month had me thinking about fatherhood a little more broadly. My sister and I were incredibly lucky to grow up with a wonderful father, but not everyone has that experience. Some fathers fall well short of what the role should mean, while many people find the guidance, support and example we associate with fatherhood in men who are not their fathers in either the biological or legal sense.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Wonka, a Student Support Officer whose work with young people has seen him become an exceptional role model to students who may need an extra steady adult in their corner.

What struck me most during our conversation was that the things he described as important weren't particularly complicated. Being present. Listening. Setting boundaries. Having a laugh. Making sure a young person knows that somebody notices when they are there — and notices when they aren't.

Wonka spoke, too, about his own upbringing and the influence of the men who made sure he grew up knowing he was loved, included and that he belonged. Those experiences now inform the way he supports young people himself.

There is something quite powerful in that cycle.

We tend to think about fathers in terms of family trees, but the people who help raise us don't always fit neatly onto one. They might be fathers and grandfathers, stepfathers and uncles. They might be teachers, coaches, neighbours, family friends or mentors. Sometimes they are simply people who recognise that a young person needs somebody dependable — and decide to be that person.

Of course, Father's Day can also be complicated. For some it is a celebration; for others it carries grief, absence, difficult relationships or memories of someone deeply missed. Families themselves come in countless forms.

Perhaps that makes it all the more worthwhile to think about what we are really celebrating.

At its best, fatherhood isn't simply a title. It is found in the ordinary, repeated acts through which someone helps another person feel safe, capable and valued. And you don't necessarily have to be a father to provide them.

In small communities particularly, young people grow up surrounded by adults who have opportunities to influence their lives — often without ever knowing quite how much that influence matters.

So this Father's Day, we celebrate the dads. But perhaps we can make a little room beside them for the other men who have helped us grow, too.

And if there is someone who played that role in your own life, September might be a good time to tell them.

Our Cover



Our cover this month features Glenn Stone with his prize winning bird from the 2025 Northam Farmers Show. A huge thank you to the photographer, Kylie Board, for allowing us to use this image on our cover.

Head along and support the 2026 Northam Farmers Show. There is always so much to see and do at the show.

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before 15 September.

Scan the QR code to view our Media Kit.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Northam Advertiser acknowledges and pays respect to; the Ballardong Traditional Custodians and Elders - past, present and future; the Nyoongar Nation and the continuation of their cultural, spiritual and educational practices.

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

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John, James and Johannah Lloyd

by Michelle Paul

James and John Lloyd were born in Ireland. According to a letter written by James' son, their mother was a lady of high degree, and their father was shot in the back and killed while riding home from a fair. The brothers had been well educated: James worked as a school teacher and John as a baker. But when the Great Famine struck in 1845, they were forced into poverty and the workhouse.

Believing they had no future in Ireland and no money to leave, James devised an extraordinary plan to secure free passage to a new country: steal two cows and be transported as convicts. The brothers committed the crime undisguised and in broad daylight to ensure they were caught, and the cows were returned to their owner.

On 21 June 1850, James and John were convicted of cattle stealing. James, 26, was sentenced to ten years' transportation. John, 17, initially received 12 months because the court accepted that his older brother had persuaded him to take part. Remarkably, John then asked the court to give him the same sentence as James so their plan could proceed. His request was granted.

Two years later, still imprisoned, John regretted the decision. With the famine over, he wrote to the Earl of Eglinton begging for release and explaining that he believed he could now earn a living. His ten-year sentence remained.

After almost three years in prison, the brothers were transported to Western Australia on a 113-day voyage carrying 301 convicts. Eight died during the journey. The ship leaked, the crew were mutinous, and convicts helped man the pumps to keep it afloat.

The brothers eventually made their way to the Northam and York districts. James met Johannah Enright, whose Irish family had its own convict history. Her father, Thomas Enright, had been transported for arson in 1854 and was farming at Wilberforce, an Irish tenant-farming community between Northam and York. Coincidentally, three of

Johannah's brothers had travelled on the same ship as the Lloyd brothers.

At Wilberforce, James tutored the children of surrounding farmers, many of them Catholic families. He married Johannah in 1858 and they went on to have a large family.

John remained unmarried. He worked at Grady's Farm near York and for many years was landlord of the 19 Mile Inn on the busy York–Guildford Road. One colourful story tells of John being bitten on the finger by a black snake while picking grapes. He immediately chopped off the finger with a tomahawk, mounted a horse and rode more than 30 kilometres to York for treatment.

In 1883, John took up farming at Sandgate Farm between York and Beverley, where he became a highly regarded settler. He died there in 1897, aged 65.

James and his family moved to Northam around 1864, and in 1866 he became teacher at Northam's first school, remaining in the position for 13 years. As enrolments increased, a school mistress was appointed to teach the girls while James taught the boys.

The family appeared settled and prosperous, but in 1872 a severe storm and flooding destroyed their home. In the aftermath, Johannah appears to have suffered some form of mental breakdown, and her behaviour became increasingly troubled. She was arrested for vagrancy, offensive language, breaking and entering and other minor offences.

The Resident Magistrate described her as a "constant disturbance within the community" and sentenced her to three months' confinement at Fremantle Lunatic Asylum. Johannah, then 35, was admitted on 26 April 1873. The asylum was severely overcrowded, with poor sanitation, inadequate resources and untrained staff. The Matron's Occurrence Book described Johannah on arrival as "obstinate, abusive and threatening", recording that she became quieter after being washed and having her hair cut short. Her difficult behaviour later returned.

As the end of her three-month sentence approached, James was asked either to take his wife home or have her remain at the asylum because her condition had not improved. Northam residents petitioned for her to remain there as a pauper, and the petition succeeded.

Meanwhile, James rebuilt his life in Northam. A new cottage was built in Wellington Street near the Catholic church, and he became deeply involved in civic affairs. Among other roles, he served St Joseph's Church, the Northam Mechanics' Institute and Roads Board, was town librarian and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and became Northam's first Town Clerk, a position he held for 16 years.

Johannah remained at Fremantle Asylum. Her later medical records repeatedly noted little or no change in her condition, including the observation: "This chronic case remains without material alteration, bodily health good, mind affected as formerly."

James died one year after his brother, aged 74. Lloyd Bridge on Old York Road, near the site of Northam's first school, was named in his honour. His obituary recorded his large family of grown sons and daughters but made no mention of his wife.

Their children went on to successful careers. Maria became a teacher; Emily and Matilda worked as postmistresses and telegraphists; and sons John, Frank, Edward and Robert began careers in the Postal Department. John eventually became Postmaster General in Perth.

Johannah's story had a much sadder ending. After 26 years at Fremantle Asylum, she died on 17 October 1899. Her recorded cause of death was influenza and mania. She was buried in an unmarked grave in the Roman Catholic section of Fremantle Cemetery.

Through James's contribution to education and civic life, John's years as an innkeeper and farmer, and the achievements of the next generation, the Lloyd family became an enduring part of the history of Northam and York.

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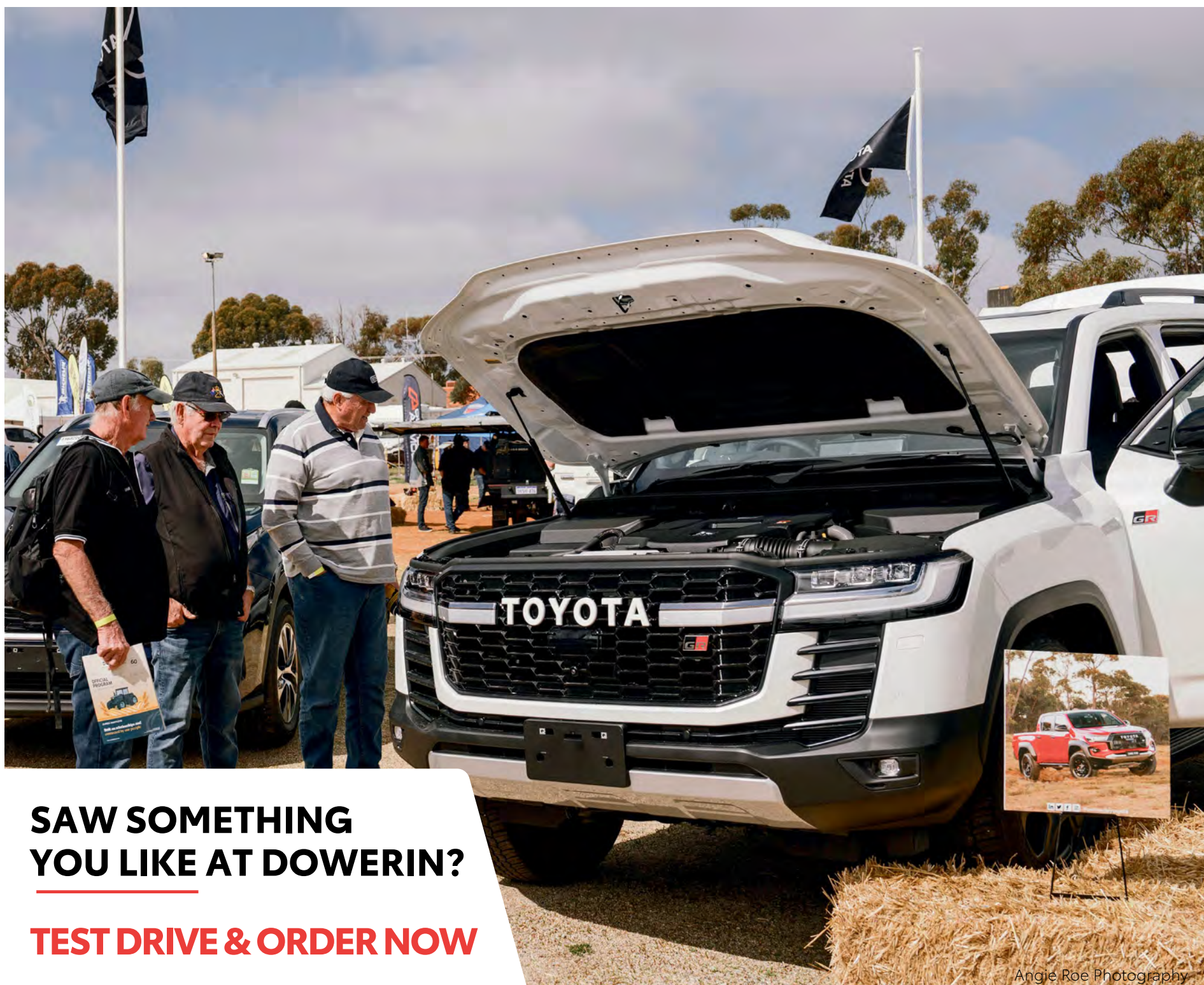


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More than a Father's Day: the men who help us grow

William "Wonka" Dick Jnr. knows something about the importance of having someone in your corner. Among the native hibiscus in Northam Senior High School's Sorry Day Gardens, their purple flowers abundant, he reflected on what it means to be a mentor and support to the young people in his life.

For the past six years, Wonka has worked as a Student Support Officer (SSO), part of a team helping students navigate school, as well as the sometimes-difficult business of growing up. Before that, he spent eight years at the school as an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO). Along the way, he discovered a knack for building rapport with young people – and a strong motivation to help them.

It is the mentoring side of his work that he finds particularly rewarding.

Wonka doesn't pretend to have always made the right choices himself. In fact, he sees his own mistakes as part of what he can offer young people who may be heading down a similar road. Mistakes, he says, are a natural part of life. They are how we learn. And when he recognises a student potentially taking a wrong turn, he can speak from experience and tell them, "I know where this path leads. I know the consequences that'll meet you at the end of it."

As much as possible, Wonka tries to connect what happens at school with the world waiting beyond it. He describes school and adolescence as a kind of "rehearsal for living" – a place where young people are inevitably going to get some things wrong while they learn who they are and how to navigate the world. His aim is to give them the support and space to make those mistakes safely, and to learn from them.

Perhaps one of the hardest experiences for a young person is feeling invisible – or feeling that the person others see isn't who they really are – so central to Wonka's approach is making students feel seen, included and as though they genuinely belong.

Wonka remembers that simply being a kid can be tough – so when former students return and tell him, "just knowing you were there made school bearable", that is the cherry on top.

Learning from the men before him

With Father's Day approaching, our conversation turned to the men who shaped Wonka himself.

Father's Day is traditionally a celebration of dads, but fathers are not the only men who can have a profound influence on a young person's life. Coaches, teachers, uncles, grandfathers and mentors can all provide guidance, encouragement and an example to follow. Wonka is careful not to see his role as replacing anyone's dad; rather, he recognises the value of young people having positive male role models in their lives, and of being another trusted adult in their corner.

Although he does not yet have children of his own, he has plenty of young people in his life – cousins, nephews and students he has taken under his wing. In guiding them, he draws on the example set by his own father and his two grandfathers.



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

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Wonka considers himself fortunate to have grown up surrounded by strong male support, while both his mum and dad instilled good values in him. Most importantly, he knew that he was loved.

There was something understated about the example set by the men in his family. Wonka remembers his paternal grandfather, like his father, as someone who simply went about his business. His dad, he recalls with a smile, was “a bit stricter” than his mum, and one of the important lessons he passed on was humility.

His relationship with his grandfathers brought something else, too. “Grandfathers are more like your best mates, aren’t they?” he laughs. Both have since passed away, but their influence will never leave him. Wonka says he can still hear their voices offering guidance – the lessons of one generation continuing to shape the next.

It is an idea that sits particularly comfortably in a conversation about Father’s Day.

Father figures aren’t necessarily defined by biology, nor is their influence confined to their own children. They can be grandfathers, uncles and cousins. They can be teachers, coaches and mentors. Sometimes they are simply the men who consistently show up, listen and make a young person feel that somebody sees them and cares what happens next.

For Wonka, those relationships work both ways. He has considered moving into teaching, but wonders whether doing so would mean giving up something important about the role he has now. As an SSO, he occupies a particular position of trust, with the freedom to build relationships with students beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Becoming a teacher might allow him to influence students in a different way, but he would be reluctant to lose the connection his current role allows him to build.

Instead, one path he is keen to pursue is art therapy. A painter himself, Wonka has a strong interest in art and its therapeutic benefits, particularly its potential to create another avenue for connection, mentorship and support. For young people who may not always find it easy to put what they are feeling into words, art can offer a different way to communicate, build trust and begin a conversation.

For now, the opportunity to make a difference from where he is remains compelling. And should he become a father himself one day, he already knows what he hopes to carry forward from his own upbringing: the same sense of being seen, being loved, and belonging.

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Hunter appointed Shadow Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Exploration

Leader of The Nationals WA Shane Love MLA has named Member for Central Wheatbelt Lachlan Hunter MP as Shadow Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Exploration in an adjustment to The Nationals WA's shadow ministerial responsibilities.

Mr Love said the change reflects the continued development of The Nationals WA parliamentary team and recognises Mr Hunter's strong understanding of regional industries and the crucial role mining and petroleum projects play in Western Australia's economy.

"Mr Hunter has established himself as an energetic and passionate regional representative, and this portfolio is a natural fit for his experience and interests," Mr Love said.

"Born in Kalgoorlie and now representing the Central Wheatbelt, Lachlan understands firsthand the importance of the resources sector to Western Australia's prosperity, as well as the need for development to deliver lasting benefits for communities right across the State.

"This appointment reflects the strength and depth of our parliamentary team and gives Lachlan the opportunity to make a significant contribution in one of Western Australia's most important policy areas."

Mr Love said he would remain closely engaged with the sector in his capacity as Nationals Leader.

"Mining and petroleum will continue to be a major priority for The Nationals WA, and I look forward to working closely with Lachlan as he takes on the portfolio."

Mr Hunter said he was honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility.

"Western Australia's resources sector is a vital pillar of the State's economy, supporting thousands of jobs, driving investment and creating opportunities for communities across Western Australia.

"I look forward to working closely with industry to ensure Western Australia remains an attractive place to invest, and I thank Shane for his confidence and for the strong foundation he has established in the portfolio."

Northam Senior High School News



Northam Senior High School is proud to announce that students in the School Production endorsed program are presenting Grease Young@Part this year in our Performing Arts Theatre.

Students have been singing and dancing their way through the world of Grease and are looking forward to sharing with you the fruits of their labour. Our students travel from Cunderdin, Bakers Hill, York and Toodyay to rehearse with our Northam students over many Sundays, thankfully supported and encouraged by their parents and guardians.

Grease was originally a stage musical before being turned into the famous movie starring Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta. Our version sees the role of Sandy shared by two students (at different performances), Miley-Mae Ruddy and Nhorlyn Bekkers, while Danny is played by Maxwell Jones, and the role of Rizzo is played by Alexandra Guillooy. Our musical leads are ably supported by an enthusiastic cast playing all your favourite characters.

The School Production team is supported by staff in our Arts, and Design and Technology faculties without whose help the production would not achieve the level of artistry required for your entertainment.

Grease will be performed from 20 – 23 September.

Please call Northam Senior High School on 9621 6300 or check our Facebook page for access to tickets.



Community Update

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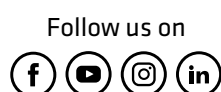
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Update on White Swans of Northam

In response to a priority action in the Shire of Northam's Council Plan 2026-2036, that focuses on engaging subject matter experts to consider viable options to support a White Swan management program, the Shire has in recent years been exploring various options to increase the population of mute swans in Northam and to ensure the continued wellbeing of the birds.

With recent reports of H5 Avian Influenza reaching Western Australia, Shire Rangers have been working closely with Perth Zoo and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to ensure the ongoing protection of the swans and to establish a management plan in the short-term for the safety of the local colony.

Separating a number of mute swans from the existing colony is the agreed, most prudent course of action to minimise the risk to the entire local population should an outbreak occur. Understandably, the focus of the DBCA will be on the protection of native bird species in the first instance and paired with capacity limitations at Perth Zoo, it has been necessary for the Shire to investigate alternative options for relocating the some of the mute swans.

Shire of Northam President, Chris Antonio said:

Although no cases of the H5 Avian Influenza have yet reached the Shire of Northam, forward-planning is crucial to ensuring that we are prepared for any scenario that may present itself, should the issue progress.

The Shire has been working closely with the operators of Kanyana Wildlife Sanctuary, an existing wildlife sanctuary within the metropolitan region, that has expressed an interest in housing several relocated mute swans at their facility.



Photo: From Shire of Northam Facebook page

While separating the local colony is not ideal, it is the safest and most logical option for the long-term preservation of the mute swan population.

Founded in 1986, Kanyana is a DBCA licenced operator able to provide a separate enclosure including a pond for up to four white swans from the Northam colony and has a documented history of caring for sick and displaced wildlife from across WA, as well as with successfully establishing breeding programs for animals in their care.

It is proposed that the Shire will send two cygnets and a younger breeding pair of swans, Jen & Maarli, to Kanyana for an undetermined length of time while the H5 Avian Influenza situation unfolds, and with a view to establishing a longer-term breeding program moving forward. Shire Rangers will continue to work closely with both the Northam Swan Guardians and with the team at Kanyana to ensure the swans are adequately cared for wherever they may be.

In other swan-related news, it was recently reported that a swan was injured following an incident on the river. We are thrilled to report that the swan in question was quickly taken for medical care and has been recovering well with the support of the medical team and Shire of Northam Rangers.

Where Am I? - Northam Race Club



Horse racing has been part of Northam's story for more than 160 years, making the Northam Race Club one of Western Australia's oldest sporting organisations.

The district's first organised race meeting was held on 2 November 1863 after local publican Thomas Wilding called a meeting at his hotel, now the Avon Bridge Hotel. Chaired by Captain James MacLean Dempster, those gathered agreed to establish annual race meetings under the Turf Club rules, laying the foundations for a tradition that continues today.

The club itself was formally established in 1880, with pastoralist William Chidlow allowing part of his Springfield property east of town to be used as the racecourse. In 1901 the club purchased the land, with members raising half the funds and the State Government contributing the balance.

Generations of locals have gathered trackside to cheer home champions, admire the fashions and enjoy the social occasion as much as the racing itself. Today, the Northam Cup remains one of the Wheatbelt's premier racing events, ensuring a tradition begun in 1863 continues to thrive while celebrating an important chapter of Northam's sporting and community history.

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Dominic Perissinotto – organ

Eva-Marie Perissinotto – soprano

Bookings <https://www.trybooking.com/DOQEG>



Shire Secures \$3.2 Million to Deliver Eight New Worker Homes

The Shire of Victoria Plains has secured \$3.2 million through the Western Australian Government's Regional Housing Support Fund (RHSF) to deliver eight new key worker homes as part of the Edmonds Street housing development in Calingiri, helping address one of the region's most pressing challenges in housing availability.

The announcement marks a significant milestone for the Edmonds Street housing development, which was first endorsed by Council in late 2025 as part of the Shire's long-term commitment to increasing housing supply and supporting population growth in Victoria Plains.

The funding will support the construction of a mix of two and three-bedroom homes designed to attract and retain essential workers and their families. Earlier funding enabled site preparation and supporting infrastructure works, while the newly announced RHSF funding will support construction of the homes through local building contractors.

Shire President Cr Pauline Bantock said housing availability remained one of the most significant challenges facing regional communities.

"Housing shortages continue to impact communities right across Western Australia, but the challenge is often even more acute in regional areas where a lack of suitable accommodation can limit our ability to attract and retain the workers needed to support local services, businesses and industries," Cr Bantock said.

The project forms part of the Shire's broader commitment to increasing housing supply and builds on work already underway through the Wheatbelt Regional Housing Initiative, a collaborative program led by the Shire of Victoria Plains and involving 10 Wheatbelt local governments working together to address housing shortages across the region.

Sean Fletcher, Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Victoria Plains, said the funding would help convert years of planning and advocacy into tangible housing outcomes for the community.

"This announcement is the culmination of significant work by Council, staff and funding partners to turn the Edmonds Street vision into reality," Mr Fletcher said.

The Edmonds Street development was specifically designed to help address identified key worker housing shortages in Calingiri, supporting the recruitment and retention of workers in sectors such as local government, healthcare, education, emergency services and agriculture. The new homes will provide additional accommodation options for workers and families looking to live and work within the Shire.

"Whether it's healthcare workers, teachers, tradespeople, local government staff or workers supporting our agricultural sector, access to suitable housing is often the deciding factor when people consider moving to a regional community," she said.

Mr Fletcher said the funding marked an important step forward for the Shire's broader housing strategy.

"This funding is an important milestone for Victoria Plains and builds on the groundwork already undertaken through the Edmonds Street project," Mr Fletcher said.

"By investing in housing today, we're creating opportunities to attract new workers, strengthen local services and support the long-term growth of our community."

Construction timeframes will be confirmed as detailed planning and procurement activities progress. Once completed, the homes will provide important housing options for workers who support the delivery of essential services and economic development across the Shire.

Wundowie Iron Festival Set to Bring Family Fun and Billy Cart Action



Photo: from Wheatbelt Kids Facebook page

Wundowie – September 19, 2026

Wundowie is gearing up for a fantastic free family day out when the Wundowie Iron Festival & Billy Cart Challenge takes over the town on September 16.

A major attraction of the annual festival will once again be the free rides for kids, with families able to enjoy bumper cars and other amusement rides at no cost.

Celebrating Wundowie's proud history and strong community spirit, the festival will also feature the ever-popular Billy Cart Challenge, bringing plenty of action, friendly competition and old-fashioned fun for spectators and participants alike.

Visitors can enjoy a range of market stalls, food and refreshments, entertainment, displays and activities for children throughout the day.

Proudly organised by the Wundowie Progress

Association, the Iron Festival provides an opportunity for the local community to come together while welcoming visitors from across the Wheatbelt and surrounding areas.

With free entry, free rides, family entertainment and billy cart racing, the festival promises something for everyone.

The Wundowie Progress Association has thanked its valued sponsors and supporters, whose contributions help make the community event possible, including the Shire of Northam, Lachlan Hunter, National Party and Team, Avon Waste, Komcat Electro and Connect Real Estate.

The association said the support of local organisations and businesses was greatly appreciated and played an important role in bringing the festival to the community.

For the latest updates, registrations and further information, follow the Wundowie Iron Festival & Billy Cart Challenge Facebook page.

Treebate returns with \$150 rebates for native trees

Western Australians are being encouraged to add more greenery to their backyards, with the popular Treebate program back for another year.

The program has 10,000 rebates of up to \$150 available to help residents buy and plant native trees, following strong demand in its first year, when more than 10,000 trees were planted.

Applications opened on Monday, August 3, with people who received a rebate last year able to apply again. Residents aged 18 and over can claim up to \$150 towards the purchase and planting of up to five eligible native trees in their yard.

The process is simple: buy an eligible tree, plant it, then make a claim.

The program is particularly encouraging tree planting in outer Perth suburbs, where tree canopy is among the lowest. More trees can provide shade, help cool neighbourhoods, support local wildlife and make streets and yards more pleasant places to live.

"Whether you're wanting to plant a single tree or creating a larger native garden, Treebate offers practical support for Western Australians to enhance their local communities," said Environment Minister Matthew Swinbourn.

The quickest way to apply is through the ServiceWA app, while an alternative online claim form is available for those unable to use the app.

There is also extra help available for residents who have lost trees to polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB). Through the WA Tree Recovery Program, eligible residents can receive rebates of up to \$150 to replace trees removed because of the invasive pest.

WUNDOWIE

IRON FESTIVAL

& Billy Cart Challenge

★ A FREE FAMILY DAY OUT! ★



MARKET
STALLS



FOOD &
REFRESHMENTS



ENTERTAINMENT
& DISPLAYS



KIDS
ACTIVITIES



BILLY CART
CHALLENGE



SATURDAY
19TH SEPTEMBER 2026



10.00AM – 3.00PM
WUNDOWIE

FREE ENTRY ★ FREE RIDES ★ FUN FOR ALL AGES!

COME ALONG, BRING THE FAMILY AND ENJOY A GREAT DAY IN WUNDOWIE! ★  FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR UPDATES, REGISTRATIONS & MORE INFORMATION





Young People Can Make Change

What would you change about your community if you could?

At the Northam Town Team, we believe young people have great ideas about what could make Northam more fun, connected and welcoming. You don't need to wait until you're older, have a committee behind you, or know exactly how to make it happen.

Sometimes, the first step is simply discovering what you care enough about to build yourself.

Maybe you want more things for young people to do, a place to gather, a creative project, a community event, or simply something that makes people smile. The Northam Town Team can help you turn that idea into action — helping you work through the practical stuff and, where we can, removing the barriers that are stopping you from getting started.

And it doesn't have to be a huge project. Start with a Quick Win.

Quick Wins are simple changes that can make an immediate difference. They're free, require no committee, no experience and often no permission. They're about seeing something that could be better and having a go.

You don't need to have all the answers. You just need an idea and the willingness to give it a try.

What do you want to change in Northam? What do you care enough about to build?

Get in touch with the Northam Town Team. We'd love to help you turn your idea into your next Quick Win.



Northam Gets Ready to Pink Up for Cancer Care



Photo: left to right, Katie Leeder, Jess Joy, Tracy Bevan, Natalie Thomas and Esther Bliss

by Esther Bliss

Pink Up Northam is back for another year, bringing the Northam community together to turn the town pink and raise vital funds for McGrath Cancer Care Nurses.

This year's campaign builds on an incredible seven years of community fundraising, with more than \$100,000 raised through the generosity of Northam locals. Every dollar raised helps support a McGrath Cancer Care Nurse, providing vital care, support and guidance to people and families experiencing cancer.

A McGrath Cancer Care Nurse is located at Northam Hospital, supporting local people and families when they need it most.

Everyone can be part of Pink Up Northam. You don't need to organise a major event to make a difference. Hold a pink morning tea at work or school, decorate your home or business windows, wear pink laces, a pink wig or pink shirt, enjoy a pink drink, or simply add a little more pink to your day.

Every pink gesture sends an important message to people affected by cancer: we care, we see you and

you are not alone. It also helps raise awareness and encourages us all to make time for those important health checks that can so easily be pushed aside when life gets busy.

A much-loved part of Northam's fundraising effort, Lucy's Tearooms, will once again be getting behind the cause with their popular raffle and selling Avon Bakery's delicious pink cupcakes.

The Northam Town Team will also join the fun with a special Halloween Walkthrough, bringing community spirit, family fun and fundraising together.

Pink Up Northam is about more than raising money. It is about coming together as a community and showing local people experiencing cancer that they matter.

So, Northam, it's time to Pink Up! Whether you wear it, bake it, decorate it, drink it or donate it, every bit of pink helps make a difference.

Turn Northam pink and help ensure no one goes through cancer without the care and support of a McGrath Cancer Care Nurse. See the PinkUpNortham Facebook page for more details and tag us at @pinkupnortham #pinkisthecolour.

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New Bullwinkel Nursing Awards Open to Nominations

The vital work of nurses and midwives from the Perth Hills to the Wheatbelt is to be recognised with the launch of a new nursing award.

The Bullwinkel Nursing Awards will be sponsored by registered nurse and Federal Member for Bullwinkel, Trish Cook MP.

"I know that the work of nurses, midwives and health professionals is hugely important to the wellbeing of our community and often goes unrecognised. These awards aim to shine a light on the exceptional and humble individuals who go above and beyond to care for their patients across the Bullwinkel electorate," explains Trish Cook MP.

The Bullwinkel Nursing Awards will recognise the extraordinary care, compassion and commitment to health demonstrated by nurse and midwives in the electorate.

The electorate of Bullwinkel is named after WWII heroine, Lt Col Vivian Bullwinkel, a nurse who demonstrated extraordinary acts of compassion, care and heroism as the sole survivor of the Bangka Island Massacre and a prisoner of war.

Trish Cook MP is a registered nurse, who worked in remote area nursing and occupational health before moving into research, where her PhD focuses on patient

experiences of home-based immunotherapy treatments.

"The Bullwinkel Nursing Awards are a wonderful opportunity for patients, colleagues and community members to nominate exceptionally caring individuals working across a range of specialities and settings in our constituency," explains Trish Cook MP.

New Bullwinkel Nursing Awards Open to Nominations

Nominations are invited in the following categories:

- Bullwinkel Excellence in Enrolled Nursing Care
- Bullwinkel Excellence in Registered Nursing Care
- Bullwinkel Excellence in Residential/Aged Care Nursing
- Bullwinkel Excellence in Aboriginal Health Nursing
- Bullwinkel Excellence in Community Care Nursing
- Bullwinkel Excellence in Midwifery Care

These inaugural awards will recognise the extraordinary care, compassion and professionalism shown by registered nurses, enrolled nurses and midwives living and/or working across the Bullwinkel electorate.

Nominations are now open and close on the 28th August 2026. Head to the website to nominate: <https://trish-cook.com.au/Bullwinkel-Nursing-Awards>.



Give Your Spare Work Gear a Second Life

Regional communities across Western Australia are being encouraged to dig through their sheds, wardrobes and work lockers as part of a new campaign helping shearing industry workers build extra local work opportunities beyond the wool shed in quieter periods of the shearing off-season.

Beyond The Shed is a program run by the WA Shearing Industry Association. Executive Officer and Program Director Valerie Pretzel explains, "Beyond The Shed is coordinating training for shearing teams. This will result in a larger trained local workforce for farming producers and regional businesses looking for casual, short term and seasonal workers. For local communities this keeps people living and working in their local towns. For the shearing industry it gives the opportunity for all year round work, to help with the shearing season's ups and downs."

The Boots on the Ground campaign, delivered through Beyond the Shed, is asking people to get involved by doing a simple "closet clean out" and passing on their quality second-hand workwear and boots. As shearing team workers undertake courses in areas such as fencing, chainsaw operation, machinery operation, seeding, harvesting and other practical skillsets, having appropriate workwear is an important part of being able to confidently step into new work on farm.

Training Coordinator Tiffany Davey said the campaign is about regional communities helping get boots on the ground for local workers as they build new skills and take on additional employment opportunities outside the shearing season.

"Having the right workwear and safety gear is a simple but important part of getting started," said Ms Davey.

"We know there are quality pairs of boots, work shirts and other clothing sitting in sheds and wardrobes across regional WA that are no longer being used. Through this campaign, we're asking communities to consider passing on those items so they can help someone else take the next step with their ag training and work."

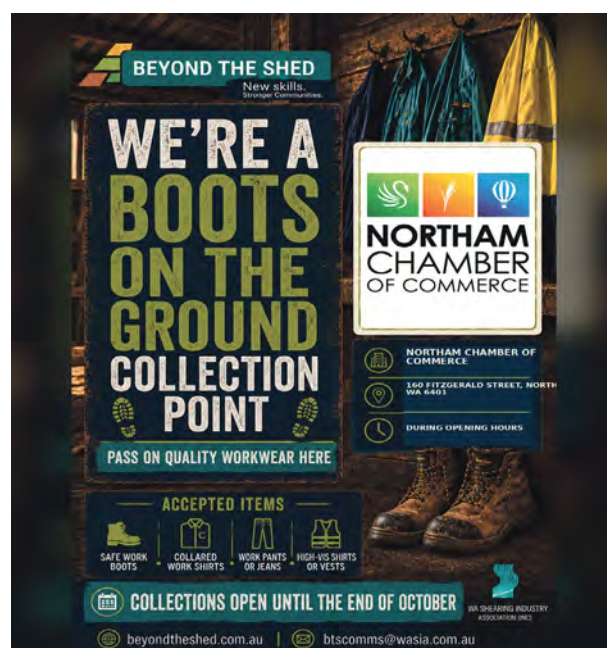
Grower groups and community organisations across WA are being invited to act as local collection points, encouraging members to pass along clean, wearable work gear that is no longer needed. Items being sought include:

- Work boots (steel cap or other)
- Long-sleeve collared work shirts
- Work pants or jeans
- High-visibility shirts and vests

Valerie Pretzel says Beyond the Shed has already seen strong uptake from shearing shed workers and contractors. "To date we have 34 shearing contractors registered and we have trained nearly 130 people over 300 days of training in courses such as seeding, harvesting, fencing, chainsaw courses, heavy vehicle driver operations, basic welding, first aid and more. Our Boots on the Ground Campaign provides an opportunity for farming communities to support the local workforce that services their businesses."

Delivered by the Western Australian Shearing Industry Association (WASIA), Beyond the Shed has been established to help retain skilled workers in regional communities by providing access to training that allows participants to diversify their skills and secure more consistent year-round work.

The Northam Chamber of Commerce at 160 Fitzgerald Street is the local drop off point for donations.



Wundowie Students Discover Aboriginal Culture at WA Museum



On August 11 our students from PP to Year 6 enjoyed an enriching visit to the WA Museum.

Our PP, Year 1 and Year 2 students participated in the Custodians of Country workshop, where they were encouraged to step back into the 'cold time', Nyitting, and explore the powerful beginnings of creation.

Through the deep knowledge of Nyoongar Boodja (Country), passed down through generations through oral histories, students discovered how the land, people, animals and sky were formed, and the important ways in which Country continues to be cared for.

Our Year 3-6 students took part in the Cultural Collisions workshop, exploring the early encounters and interactions between Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia and a variety of newcomers.

The workshop provided students with valuable insights into the different cultures, perspectives and experiences that shaped our shared history. It was a wonderful day of learning and discovery, with our students walking away with a deeper appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal culture, history and connection to Country.

A big thank you to the WA Museum for providing such informative and engaging learning experiences for our students and a big thank you to our P&C for the delicious lunch and snacks!

Lions Beacon of Light Brings Mental Health Support to Northam



by Naomi Sherrington

A conversation lasting just ten minutes can sometimes be the beginning of a life-changing path.

That is the idea behind the Lions Beacon of Light Mind Health Van, which visited Northam on Monday, 3 August, bringing mental health information, support and a listening ear directly into the community.

Stationed in the Northam Library carpark, the van joined local organisations and service providers

including Holyoake, APM, NDIS and Share & Care as part of a collaborative effort to raise awareness of mental health and connect people with support.

The Beacon of Light is one of Lions' newer community initiatives and has recently become available to travel throughout the Wheatbelt, Great Southern and Coral Coast regions.

Operated with the support of volunteer Lions members, the mobile service is designed to make conversations about mental health easier and more accessible – particularly in regional communities, where distance and access to services can create additional barriers to seeking help.

The need for mental health support in regional Australia remains significant. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures show that suicide rates tend to increase with remoteness. In 2023, the age-standardised suicide rate in very remote Australia was 21 deaths per 100,000 people, more than twice the rate of 10 per 100,000 recorded in Australia's major cities.

The Beacon of Light project focuses on prevention and early intervention. Visitors can access current mental health information and resources, learn where further assistance is available or simply have a conversation in a safe and welcoming environment.

Volunteers involved with the project have undertaken

mental health and suicide-prevention training and can provide a listening ear while helping people identify appropriate avenues for further support.

For Lions, an important part of the project's philosophy is recognising that people do not need to be in crisis before reaching out.

Loneliness, depression, grief and loss affect people throughout our communities, and sometimes having an opportunity to talk – without judgement and close to home – can be an important first step.

Northam residents will have another opportunity to visit the Beacon of Light van when it returns for the Northam Farmers Show on Saturday, 12 September.

The Mind Health Van will be joined at the Show by the Lions Hearing Van, where community members will also be able to access free hearing screenings.

The Northam Farmers Show will be held at the Northam Showgrounds on 12 September, bringing the community together for one of the district's major annual events.

Lions thanked the Shire of Northam, participating organisations and members of the community for supporting the Beacon of Light's August visit and helping make mental health awareness a visible part of community life.

Sometimes making a difference starts with something very simple: making it easier for someone to stop, talk and know that support is available.

From Rehabilitation to Helping Others: Luke's Journey of Giving Back

by Naomi Sherrington

Northam-based disability support worker Luke Smith is drawing on his own experience of rehabilitation to help some of Western Australia's most vulnerable people reconnect with their communities, while highlighting the role frontline support workers can play in fostering independence.

Luke has spent the past two and a half years with Beltara Care, providing one-on-one community access support to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants and people experiencing complex mental health conditions, disability, addiction and social isolation across Perth and the WA Wheatbelt.

The work takes him across a vast area. Luke says he travels more than 100,000 kilometres each year, taking clients to medical appointments, helping them access essential services and supporting them to reconnect with their communities. While community access support can sometimes be viewed primarily as transport, he says its value can be much broader, particularly for people at risk of becoming socially isolated.

"This type of frontline support is often misunderstood, but it can be the difference between isolation and independence," Luke said.

For Luke, the work is deeply personal.

After completing a rehabilitation program run by Beltara Care founders David and Tina Gunter, Luke joined the organisation himself, inspired by its focus on individualised care. His own experiences, he says, have given him a particular understanding of some of the challenges faced by the people he now supports. Several of his clients have been through the same rehabilitation program, allowing him to draw on lived experience as well as his professional role.

Luke believes that individually tailored support can have a significant impact. He points to one participant living with complex mental health challenges who had been considered to be at significant risk of returning to prison, but is now volunteering in the community each week. For Luke, that illustrates why community access to support is about more than simply getting someone to an appointment.



"It's about making sure people on the fringes of our communities aren't pushed even further to the outskirts," he said.

Beltara Care CEO David Gunter said Luke's journey demonstrated the value lived experience could bring to the support sector, describing his empathy and resilience as qualities shaped by his own experience of overcoming adversity.

"When someone is given the right support, encouragement and opportunity, they can go on to make an extraordinary difference in the lives of others," Mr Gunter said.

Mr Gunter has also called for greater engagement with frontline providers as reforms to the NDIS continue, arguing that those delivering services should have a role in discussions about how changes are implemented. He supports stronger regulation to identify poor-quality providers, but believes reform should also take account of the experiences of providers achieving positive outcomes and the individual needs of participants.

He said Beltara Care was particularly concerned about the possibility of some participants losing forms of support without suitable alternatives being available.

"Care cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach," Mr Gunter said. "We will keep advocating for better community consultation."

2026 Northam Farmers Show: "Wonders of Water"



The Northam Farmers Show is on Jubilee Oval on Saturday 12th September from 9am to 9pm. This year's theme is "Wonders of Water".

Entry gate on Chidlow St will take EFTPOS payments with adults \$15, school aged children \$5, and under 6yo free. A family pass for \$40 will gain entry for 2 adults and 2 school aged children.

There will be a selection of rides and showbags in Sideshow Alley run by the WA Showmen's Association. Free entertainment provided by local sponsors include laser tag, cuddly animal nursery and of course the grand finale of the fireworks display.

This year the bar will be operating "cashless" so make sure you have your card with you. Market stalls and food vans are always popular on the day. A variety of entertainment is shaping up with local band Whisky River performing for your enjoyment in the late afternoon/evening.

There will be competitions for goats in the animal sheds and horses and show jumping on the oval. The Pavilion will have various local arts, crafts and cooking competitions along with the displays from local schools. However, with the developing conditions surrounding bird flu in Australia, the running of the poultry competition is yet to be decided.

The Northam Agricultural Society is the not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation behind the Northam Farmers Show. For generations our members have brought the district together each year to celebrate farming, craft, competition and community spirit in the heart of the Wheatbelt.

From the earliest produce competitions to today's much-loved family day out, the Society has been proudly run by locals, for locals - and we're always glad to welcome new faces.

Avon Food Relief serves up more than 800 meals for locals in need



A new Avon Valley charity has prepared more than 800 meals for people in need in just a few months – and is now calling on locals to help identify people who could benefit from a little extra support.

Avon Food Relief Inc was established in April this year after a group of friends recognised a need for nutritious, ready-made frozen meals, particularly for older people, those in poor health and people unable to cook for themselves.

Working from the kitchen at St Joseph's Catholic Parish Hall, the group began cooking in June and is now distributing an average of about 100 meals each week.

Its reach already extends well beyond Northam, with meals making their way from Bolgart to Tammin and

Northam to Toodyay, as well as communities in between.

The fledgling charity comes at a time when food insecurity remains a significant problem across regional Western Australia.

Foodbank's 2025 Hunger Report found almost one in three households surveyed in regional WA experienced some level of food insecurity during the previous 12 months. Foodbank WA has also highlighted the particular pressures facing regional households, where distance and transport costs can make food more expensive and accessing food relief itself more difficult.

For Avon Food Relief, the response is deliberately practical: provide nutritious meals that can be frozen,

delivered and reheated by people who may struggle to prepare a meal themselves.

The organisation says the rising cost of living is affecting families, older residents and people in poor health across the Avon and Wheatbelt regions, with some people on fixed incomes increasingly struggling to balance the cost of food against other household bills.

Avon Food Relief is a Foodbank Charity Partner, giving it access to bulk pantry staples including pasta, rice, breakfast cereal and tinned foods, along with fresh fruit and vegetables and ingredients used in its prepared meals.

But while people frequently approach the organisation asking to volunteer in the kitchen, Avon Food Relief says its cooking roster is currently well covered.

What it needs from the community is something different: help finding the people who need the meals.

Residents who know an elderly neighbour, relative, friend or another person who is struggling to cook or afford nutritious meals are encouraged to get in touch.

The organisation also relies on donations to keep its kitchen operating and says it aims to turn every dollar donated into two meals.

Avon Food Relief is already demonstrating what a relatively small community organisation can achieve when local volunteers, established organisations and donors work together – turning a kitchen, donated ingredients and a few hours of time into hundreds of meals reaching people across the region.

To refer someone who may benefit from meals, text Dave on 0418 919 094.

For more information about Avon Food Relief or to make a donation, visit avonfoodrelief.org.au.

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- Transcend Trails - 12km Mental Health Trail
- Moondyne Men Inc
- Avon Valley Arts Society Inc
- Shire of Toodyay - Christmas Street Party
- Toodyay Events Planning - Moondyne Festival
- Arts Toodyay - Avon Valley Arts Trail
- RSL Toodyay - "21 Hearts" theatre production
- Toodyay Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services
- Toodyay Agricultural Society - Fireworks
- Avon Valley Showjumping & Pony Club Inc

- Toodyay Football Club
- Toodyay Golf Club
- Bolgart Primary School
- Northam Army Camp Heritage Association Inc
- Vintage Sports Car Club of WA Inc
- Toodyay Soccer Club
- Toodyay Kindergym
- Shire of Northam - Bilya Festival
- Northam Country Club

Find out more. Call 9574 4077 or search Bendigo Bank Toodyay.



For Toodyay. For Good.

What if a community could build something today that would continue making a difference for generations to come?

That is the vision behind the Toodyay Community Fund.

The Fund is based on a simple idea: people who live in a place often understand its needs, strengths and opportunities better than anyone else. By bringing local generosity together and directing it towards local priorities, communities can create lasting change.

This is known as place-based philanthropy: supporting the people and organisations working in a particular community and investing in the future of that place.

The Toodyay Community Fund is being developed as a permanent community fund for Toodyay. Its purpose is to build a growing pool of philanthropic funds that can support worthwhile local initiatives over the long term.

The Fund's focus is deliberately broad. It aims to help children and young people flourish, reduce social isolation, support mental health and wellbeing, strengthen community connections and care for the local natural environment.

These are not abstract issues. They affect the everyday lives of people in regional communities.

A young person may need an opportunity, a mentor or support to develop their potential. An older resident may need connection and companionship. A community group may have an excellent idea but lack the resources to make it happen. An environmental project may need funding to get off the ground.

A permanent community fund can help respond to these needs as they emerge.

Unlike a one-off donation or fundraising appeal, an

endowment-style community fund has the potential to grow over time and provide an ongoing source of support. Donations made today can help create benefits not only for the current community, but for future generations as well.

And building a community fund is not something that belongs only to wealthy philanthropists. It is something an entire community can contribute to.

A large donation can make a difference. So can a small regular donation. Businesses, community organisations, families and individuals can all play a part. The power comes from bringing many contributions together and using them to support the community as a whole.

The Toodyay Community Fund is building on a strong existing culture of generosity and community spirit. Toodyay has a long history of people helping one another, supporting local organisations and contributing to the wellbeing of the community.

The Fund provides another way to build on that tradition — bringing contributions together to create a lasting source of support for the community and its future.

It is about recognising the generosity that already exists in Toodyay and finding ways to make its impact reach even further.

The Toodyay Community Fund is still growing. Its future will depend on the support, ideas and involvement of the community itself.

If you would like to learn more about the Fund, its vision and how you can help build a stronger future for Toodyay, visit <https://toodyaycf.org>.

Street Name Origins



The name Strickland Avenue may have a remarkable connection to one of Australia's greatest sporting champions — Shirley Strickland, whose path to Olympic glory included her school years in Northam.

Born in 1925, Shirley was the only daughter and second of five children and grew up on her family's farm near Pithara. After receiving her early education by correspondence, she attended the newly established East Pithara School before winning a scholarship to Northam Senior High School.

It was at Northam that her extraordinary sporting ability became apparent. In 1939, as a schoolgirl, Shirley won an astonishing 47 of the 49 athletic events she contested, establishing herself as an outstanding sprinter and hurdler.

Her achievements after leaving Northam were even more remarkable. Shirley competed at three Olympic Games between 1948 and 1956, winning seven medals - three gold, one silver and three bronze. Her gold medals came in the 80-metre hurdles at Helsinki in 1952 and Melbourne in 1956, along with the 4 x 100-metre relay at Melbourne.

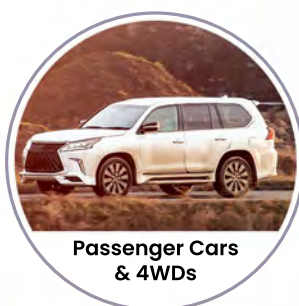
She also won three gold and two silver medals at the 1950 Commonwealth Games.

No official record has yet been found confirming that Northam's Strickland Avenue was named after Shirley. However, given her strong Northam High School connection and extraordinary sporting record, the possibility is certainly worthy of consideration.



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The End is not Nigh - False Alarms

by Peter Weatherly of the Avon Valley Environmental Society inc

Those who read my articles have probably come to realise that I am a bit of a cynic when it comes to climate change. One of the reasons for this is that well qualified experts have made predictions that simply did not happen and this brings into question the reliability of forecasts that predict runaway warming. Perhaps they think that if they frighten us enough, we will accept almost any privation and restriction on our liberties in order to avoid it. Government has form here – just look at the disastrous Covid response – and we're still paying for it!

So – let's have a look at some of those predictions so you can make up your own minds –

1. Climatologist Professor James Hanson – 2008 – The Arctic will lose its ice by 2018. In September 2008, Arctic sea ice was 4.59 million km². In 2005 it was 4.6 million km²
2. Professor Tim Flannery – 2005 – Eastern Australia will be in state of permanent drought. 5 years later Brisbane was flooded – the worst in 150 years.
3. Dr David Viner, Senior Research Scientist at the University of East Anglia – Snowfalls are now just a thing of the past (for Britain). In 2025, the BBC reported that hundreds of schools closed as snow falls over the United Kingdom.
4. Professor James Hansen, climatologist – 1998 – Washington DC would go from its current 35 days a year over 90 degrees (Fahrenheit) to 85 days a year. In 2025 it went to 36 days per year.
5. Paul Ehrlich - biologist 1969 – England will not

exist in the year 2000 (due to rising seas). Hmmm – last time I looked it was still there.

6. NBC News – Polar Bears are dying out. – 2007 - The estimated polar bear population was then 16,000. In 2023 it was estimated that there were 23,000.
7. Denis Hayes – founder of Earth Day – 1970 – It is too late to avoid mass starvation. According to Oxford University – 'our world in data', Humanity is producing and consuming more food than ever before.
8. The Independent newspaper reported – 2016 – The Great Barrier Reef is dead. Statistics from the Australian Institute of Marine Science 2024 – the last three years has had more coral ... than in every one of the last 35 years.
9. John Kerry – US Secretary of State and then French Foreign Minister Lauren Fabius – 2014 – we have 500 days to avoid climate chaos – 500 days later – 25 September 2015 – there was no sign of chaos, or if there was, it was apparently not newsworthy.
10. Antonio Guterres – United Nations Secretary General – 2023 – declared a new era in human history – the era of "Global Boiling". Surely, he's not serious. The boiling point of water is 100 degrees centigrade. The highest temperature reached on earth – 2013 – was 57 degrees centigrade – Death Valley, California.

This should be funny but government are pursuing policies on the strength of these beliefs that are contrary to the best interests of the country. They are very, very costly and it is the people who eventually have to pay for

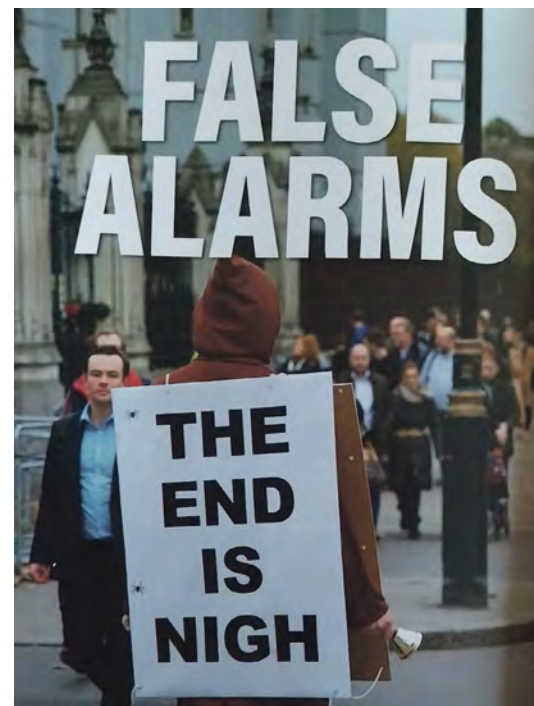


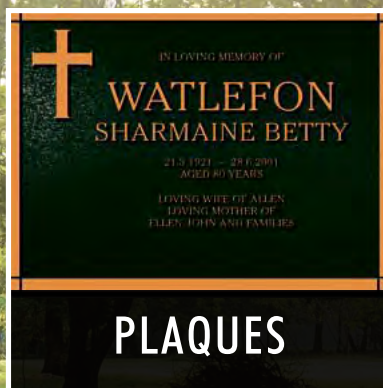
Photo: Many thanks to the IPA (Institute of Public Affairs)

this misadventure. The environmental damage they are doing is enormous.

Climate changes – always has, always will. We cannot control it – only adapt to it as we have done for millennia. This may be sinking in at last as the foolishness of net zero is beginning to sink in – Chris Bowen – our Minister for Climate Change hasn't mentioned the words in his last 3 major speeches! Perhaps he realizes that ex-President of the USA Ronald Reagan was right when he said 'Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem'. Here, here!

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IN THE

garden this month

Spring is officially here – and the garden is wasting no time.

Warmer days bring fresh growth, flowers, insects and plenty of jobs, but September is also one of our last good opportunities to get plants established before the Wheatbelt begins its rapid march towards summer.

Garden To-Do List

- **Plant while you can**

Get new plants into the ground while the soil still holds winter moisture – particularly those that need time to establish before summer.

- **Top up mulch**

Get it down before the heat arrives, keeping it clear of trunks and stems.

- **Feed spring growth**

Roses, citrus and other hungry plants will appreciate a feed. Go gently with WA natives.

- **Stay on top of weeds**

Pull them before they have a chance to flower, turning one weed into hundreds!

- **Check the retic**

Find blocked drippers and broken fittings now – not on the first 38-degree day.

Plant a tree for... 2226?

by Naomi Sherrington

September is a wonderful time to plant for ourselves... but it's also a chance to plant for someone we may never even meet!

Carnaby's black-cockatoo is found only in south-western Western Australia and is nationally listed as endangered. Once much more numerous, it has suffered heavily from the loss and fragmentation of native vegetation – particularly in the Wheatbelt, where much of its breeding habitat has been cleared.

These birds return inland to breed in old eucalypt woodland, especially salmon gum and wandoo. But there is a catch: a eucalypt doesn't produce a cockatoo-sized nesting hollow overnight. Some research suggests eucalypts may take more than 200 years to develop hollows large enough for black cockatoos. To put that in perspective, if a eucalyptus had been planted by one of WA's earliest European settlers, it would only now be reaching the age at which it might offer a suitable nest hollow!

This slow growth also means that about eighteen generations of cockatoos could come and go in the time it takes a tiny eucalyptus seedling to develop into a tree with a hollow large enough for a breeding pair.

That makes every old hollow-bearing tree extraordinarily valuable. If you have one, protect it – even if it looks scruffy, has dead limbs or isn't where you would have chosen to put it. Have potentially dangerous trees assessed rather than automatically removing them, and retain safe old trees and hollows wherever possible.

But we also need to grow their replacements.

If you have the space, planting a locally appropriate salmon gum or wandoo is an investment on a timescale very different from ordinary gardening. You won't see a Carnaby's cockatoo raise a chick in the tree you plant this spring – neither will your grandchildren. But a couple hundred years from now, that tree could contain precisely the hollow a breeding pair needs.

Food matters too. Successful breeding depends on good

feeding habitat close to nest sites. Carnaby's eat seeds from eucalypts and members of the *Proteaceae* family, including banksias, hakeas and grevilleas.

For Wheatbelt gardens, good possibilities include Two-leaf Hakea (*Hakea trifurcata*), Honey Bush (*Hakea lissocarpa*) and Parrot Bush (*Banksia sessilis*), provided the species suits your particular soil and location. BirdLife Australia recommends choosing plants local to your area: they are better adapted to local conditions and more likely to provide familiar food for the birds.

And don't assume a small garden can't contribute. A hakea or banksia can begin producing food long before a future nesting tree develops its first useful hollow. Add a clean, reliable bird bath or other safe water source and even an ordinary garden can become one small piece of a much larger habitat network.

We usually garden in seasons: what will flower this spring, shade us this summer or look good next year. Planting for Carnaby's asks us to think differently.

The best time to grow a 200-year-old nesting tree was 200 years ago – the next best time is right now.



Plant for our other threatened neighbours, too!

Black cockatoos aren't the only threatened wildlife that can benefit when we rebuild Wheatbelt habitat.

Red-tailed phascogale – Plant wandoo, York gum and rock sheoak, and retain old trees and hollow logs. These tiny marsupials are now largely confined to Wheatbelt woodland.

Chuditch (western quoll) – Western Australia's largest native carnivorous marsupial still has an important stronghold close to home. As wide-ranging predators of large invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals, chuditch are an important part of a functioning woodland ecosystem. Protecting local native woodland and understorey, retaining safe hollow logs as den sites, and controlling foxes and feral cats all help give this vulnerable species a future.

Western spiny-tailed skink – In the northern and eastern Wheatbelt, protect and restore York gum, salmon gum and gimlet woodland – and don't cart away every fallen log. Hollows provide vital shelter.

Malleefowl – On larger rural properties in appropriate areas, restore locally occurring mallee eucalypts, wattles, melaleucas, hakeas and other native shrubs, and allow leaf litter to accumulate. Dense, diverse understorey and plentiful litter help recreate the complex habitat malleefowl need.

Western yellow robin – Not officially threatened, but disappearing from parts of the Wheatbelt as woodland and understorey are lost. Even a small garden can help: plant dense local shrubs and groundcovers beneath taller natives, provide a safe bird bath, avoid insecticides and keep cats indoors. These little insect-eaters need the messy, layered habitat that many modern gardens have lost. Remember: habitat isn't just living plants. Old trees, hollows, logs, bark and leaf litter can be some of the most valuable things in the garden!

A note on bird baths: Fresh water can be enormously valuable to wildlife, particularly as the Wheatbelt heats up. Change the water frequently, remove droppings and debris, and regularly scrub the bowl rather than simply topping it up.



Shire of Northam News

September 2026



Update from Chris Antonio, Shire of Northam President

Congratulations to everyone involved in the recent Bilya Festival and street parade. The support by all of the businesses and community groups in getting those fantastic floats ready, and the community participation were of the best standard that I have seen for many years. Well done to the Shire of Northam staff, who were instrumental in putting together a fantastic evening of events and activities.

Please take note of the extraordinary election being held in Northam for one vacancy in the East Ward, on Saturday, 24 September 2026. This is a postal election, so if you live in the East Ward and are eligible to vote in this election, you will receive a package from the WA Electoral Commission detailing the voting process. Thank you to those who have nominated for the position; Therese LEE, Hayden APPLETON, Debbie HUGHES, and Glenn BRADBURY.

Finally, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank our retiring (by the end of 2026) CEO, Debbie Terelinck, for the absolutely fantastic service given, not only toward the Shire of Northam over the past 3 years, but to the decades serving the local government community throughout Western Australia. Debbie, the entire Shire of Northam thanks you, and wishes you the best for your next adventure.



If you want to keep up to date with what I've been up to, follow me on Instagram at @shire_of_northam_president.

2027 Walk of Fame Nominations Open

Have you nominated a local legend for inclusion in the Shire of Northam Walk of Fame yet? Nominations are open until 22 September and we want to hear from you!

If you know someone who has made a lasting difference in the Shire of Northam, tell us all about them in a nomination by visiting www.northam.wa.gov.au/nominations.

Become an Emergency Services Volunteer

Across the Shire of Northam, emergency services volunteers play a vital role in keeping our community safe. From responding to bushfires and storms to supporting road crash incidents and community recovery efforts, volunteers are often the first to step forward when help is needed most.

Volunteering with a local emergency service unit is a rewarding way to give back to the community, learn valuable new skills, build lifelong friendships, and make a real difference when it matters most. Whether you have a few hours a week or can contribute on an as-needed basis, there are a variety of roles available to suit different interests, skills and lifestyles.

No previous experience is required. Training and ongoing support are provided, and you'll become part of a dedicated team committed to protecting and supporting our community.

If you've ever thought about giving back, now is the perfect time to get involved. Join your local emergency services volunteers and help make our community safer, stronger and more resilient by heading to northam.wa.gov.au/volunteer.

Community Growth Grants

The Shire of Northam is offering grants of \$2,001–\$10,000 (ex. GST) to support projects that make a lasting difference in our community. Funding is available for strategic projects, major community events, building upgrades, and club development initiatives.

Applications close: 27 September at 11:59 pm. Find the guidelines and application information for this and other grants at northam.wa.gov.au/funding

Update on the White Swans

In response to a priority action in the Shire of Northam's Council Plan 2026-2036, that focuses on engaging subject matter experts to consider viable options to support a White Swan management program, the Shire has in recent years been exploring various options to increase the population of mute swans in Northam and to ensure the continued wellbeing of the birds.

With recent reports of H5 Avian Influenza reaching Western Australia, Shire Rangers have been working closely with Perth Zoo and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) to ensure the ongoing protection of the swans and to establish a management plan in the short-term for the safety of the local colony. Read the full story on the Shire of Northam website.

Funding Secured | Regional Road Safety Grants

The Shire has successfully secured \$1,645,000 in State Government funding through Tranche 2 of the Regional Road Safety Program.

This funding will deliver three major upgrades for our local road network:

- Werribee Road – Shoulder sealing & audible line marking
- Southern Brook Road – Shoulder sealing & audible line marking
- Mitchell Avenue - Audible line marking

A huge well done to our Engineering Services team for their hard work in securing this funding for our community!

Local young people benefit from Sketchbook Club



Children and young people across the Avon Valley will have a welcoming place to create, connect and belong with Healthway supporting the Avon Valley Arts Society Sketchbook Club for 12 months.

Healthway's support will give young people the opportunity to build resilience, confidence and sense of belonging by engaging in visual arts creative play, developing new skills and expressing themselves in a fun, inclusive and supportive environment.

More than an art club, Sketchbook Club is a mental wellbeing program that uses creative arts to support the social and emotional wellbeing of young people.

Avon Valley Arts Society Deputy Chairperson Lindsay Newland said that they are delighted to partner with Healthway to support local people.

"Parents have reported increased confidence, stronger social connections and improved wellbeing in their children, with many describing the Sketchbook Club as a vibrant and welcoming space," Ms Newland said.

"The sessions have become a place where friendship

grow naturally through shared interests and where young people are encouraged to participate regardless of their artistic experience."

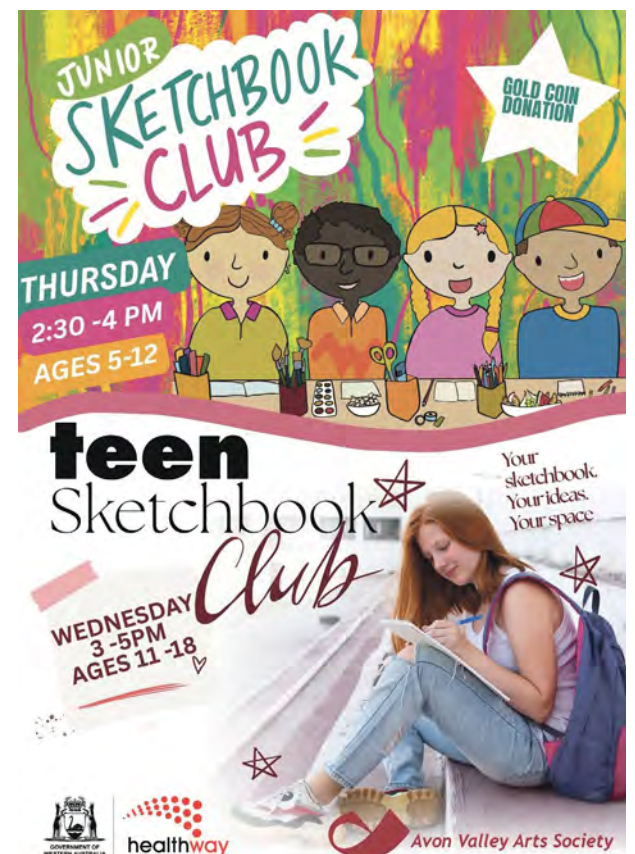
Healthway CEO Colin Smith said that Avon Valley Arts Society was successful in receiving funding through the Creativity and Wellbeing for Young People program, a joint initiative with the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport.

"Every young person should have access to activities that help them thrive," Mr Smith said.

"Programs like Sketchbook Club demonstrate the positive role creativity plays in supporting children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing."

Junior Sketchbook Club is open to children aged 5-12 years and meets Thursdays after school until 4pm. Teen Sketchbook Club welcomes young people aged 11-19 years and runs on Wednesdays after school until 5pm.

Sessions are held during school term at the Avon Valley Arts Society with new participants welcome throughout the year.



Coming up at Avon Valley Art Society Sketchbook Club

Teens: Wednesdays, after school - 5pm

Youth: Thursdays, after school - 4pm

All materials supplied

Cost: gold coin donation (optional)

After School Art Classes

Tuesdays 3.30pm

Animal Portraiture with Lindsay - creative art classes exploring animals through a variety of fun and engaging projects.

Cost: Casual classes \$25 or \$20 per session when booking for the remainder of the term.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG 29

SORRY MOLLY ALBUM LAUNCH

Join us at the Jennacubbine Tavern for an unforgettable night of live music as Sorry Molly celebrates the launch of their brand new album, 'The Outcome'. 7pm onwards.

SEP 4-6

MAGIC VALLEY- GOLDEN FIELDS EDITION

For 3 days and 2 nights, step into a living fairytale hidden amongst the blooming fields of the Avon Valley. Tickets at Humanitix from \$65.

SEP 12

2026 NORTHAM FARMERS SHOW

Rides, animals, showbags, live entertainment, local food and the famous Pavilion exhibition - all in one unforgettable day at the Northam Farmers Show. Gates open at 9am.

SEP 13

TUNES AT THE TRACK

Tunes At The Track - Top Class Thoroughbred Racing at the Northam Race Club. Free Entry, Poppy's Music playing throughout the day. Full Bar, Tote Facilities & Oncourse Cafe.

SEP 13

ANNUAL ORGAN CONCERT

Annual concert featuring the historic 1925 Pipe Organ built by J.E. Dodd and Sons Adelaide. Tickets \$20. 3pm-5pm at St John's Church Northam.

SEP 19

WUNDOWIE IRON FESTIVAL

Wundowie Oval comes to life with iron sculptures, paintings and photography, as well as kids activities, stalls and much more from 10am - 3pm.

SEP 19

MOSAIC MORNINGS- AVAS

A monthly get together to create mosaics. Cost: Members \$10, Non-members \$15. 10am-12noon.

SEP 26-28

ARCADIA CROP CIRCLES

A wheat paddock in Goomalling will become the canvas for Arcadia Crop Circles Art Installation - the only one in Australia! A unique outdoor art installation showcasing the work of 14 talented artists.

SEP 27

YORK MEDIEVAL FAURE

Step into the Middle Ages with live knight fights, historic displays, markets, music, and family fun! Avon park by the river from 9am.

SEP 27

TOODYAY TABTOUCH PICNIC RACES

Toodyay TABTouch Picnic Races are a celebration of country hospitality, community spirit, and the thrill of thoroughbred racing. Gates open at 11am.

Do you have an upcoming event?

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LES MARFIELDS

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6PM - 11PM

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The Map Has Changed – But Has Mobile Coverage?



by Naomi Sherrington

When The Northam Advertiser reported on proposed changes to Australia's mobile coverage maps in May, we asked a deceptively simple question: what actually counts as coverage?

At the time, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) was finalising new rules intended to provide a more honest and consistent picture of where Australians could expect their mobile phones to work.

Those rules have now arrived – and they have dramatically changed the picture of mobile coverage across regional Australia. From 30 June, Telstra, Optus and TPG Telecom have been required to produce coverage maps using the same national standard for the first time.

Previously, telecommunications companies could use different methodologies and assumptions when producing their maps, making comparisons difficult and potentially leaving consumers with an overly optimistic impression of the service they could expect.

Under the new ACMA standard, coverage is classified as good, moderate, basic or no coverage, using consistent signal-strength thresholds.

The effect has been striking. Nationally, Telstra's mapped mobile footprint has reportedly shrunk by at least 860,000 square kilometres under the new methodology.

That does not mean hundreds of thousands of square kilometres suddenly lost reception on June 30. Rather, areas previously included within Telstra's advertised coverage footprint no longer meet the new standard. In other words, the network did not shrink. The definition of what could be called "coverage" changed.

That distinction is particularly important in regional areas such as the Wheatbelt, where the difference between a faint theoretical signal and a reliable mobile connection can have serious consequences.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission welcomed the introduction of the new standard on July 1, while issuing a warning to telecommunications providers about how they represent their networks to consumers.

The consumer watchdog said coverage claims should reflect where consumers can reasonably expect reliable service – rather than simply where a signal might technically be available. The ACCC said it continued to receive complaints from consumers about patchy mobile service and the accuracy of coverage maps, particularly in regional, rural and remote Australia.

It has also warned providers that misleading representations about network coverage could breach Australian Consumer Law, and said it would continue examining coverage claims and take enforcement action where appropriate.

The warning follows a complaint made by TPG Telecom to the ACCC in May 2025 concerning Telstra's geographic coverage claims. While the ACCC ultimately decided not to take enforcement action, it identified the absence of a consistent industry-wide standard as one of the difficulties in assessing competing coverage claims. That standard now exists.

There is another important development for Wheatbelt residents. Alongside the new mapping standard, the Federal Government's National Audit

of Mobile Coverage is physically testing mobile services along approximately 180,000 kilometres of regional and remote roads each year. Unlike coverage maps, which are based largely on predictive computer modelling, the audit involves equipment travelling Australian roads and measuring what mobile coverage is actually available.

And those measurements have already identified discrepancies between predicted coverage and reality. The Federal Government publishes what it calls mobile coverage "non-alignments", including locations where its testing found no mobile coverage despite a telecommunications provider's predictive map indicating that coverage should exist.

Data published before the new mapping rules came into effect included such discrepancies within the Wheatbelt. Among the local government areas appearing in the data were Northam, Toodyay and Cunderdin, where government testing identified locations at which a provider's map predicted coverage but the audit did not find it.

That does not necessarily mean the entire locality, town or local government area lacked coverage. The findings relate to particular sections tested by the audit. But they demonstrate something many regional residents have argued for years: a coloured area on a coverage map does not necessarily mean a phone will work when and where it is needed.

The new rules should make mobile coverage claims considerably easier to compare. They do not, however, guarantee that every prediction shown on a map will

match a person's experience on the ground. Coverage maps remain predictive. Buildings, terrain, vegetation, the handset being used and other factors can affect whether a mobile service actually works at a particular location.

For Wheatbelt residents, that matters. Farmers routinely work alone, around heavy machinery and kilometres from immediate assistance. Residents travel long stretches of regional roads where help may be some distance away. In those circumstances, the difference between theoretical coverage and a reliable phone connection is more than an inconvenience – it can be a safety issue.

The new standard therefore answers one of the questions raised by the Advertiser in May: Australia now has a common definition against which the mobile networks can be compared. But it raises another: do the new maps actually match the Wheatbelt?

Over coming months, The Northam Advertiser will attempt to compare the newly standardised coverage maps with government testing and the experiences of people living and travelling throughout the region.

If you live or work in a location shown as having mobile coverage but regularly find your phone has other ideas, we want to hear from you. Because after years of debate about what counts as mobile coverage, we finally have a common standard. Now comes the more important test: whether the map matches reality.

Help us test the new mobile coverage maps

*Does the map match reality where you live, work or travel?
If you're with Telstra, scan the QR code to open its new coverage map:*



Search your home, farm, workplace or a known mobile black spot and compare the predicted coverage with what you actually experience outdoors at that location.

Then tell The Northam Advertiser:

- **Where:** the road, property or locality – a dropped Google Maps pin is even better.
- **What the map says:** what coverage Telstra says you should receive.
- **What actually happens:** Can you reliably make and receive calls? Send texts? Use mobile data? Or do you experience no signal, dropped calls or intermittent service?

- **How often:** Is the problem constant, regular or occasional?

Screenshots of the coverage map and your phone's signal at the location are also welcome.

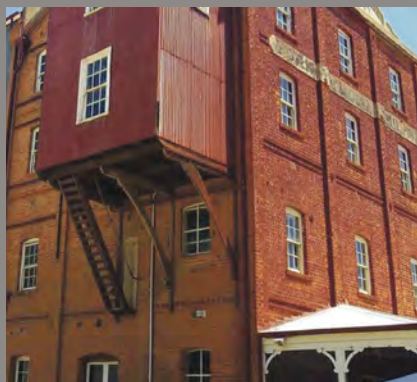
Not with Telstra? Check the latest coverage map provided by your own telco and send us the same information.

Your experiences will help us compare the new maps with mobile coverage on the ground across the Wheatbelt.

Send your findings to:
editor@thenorthamadvertiser.com.au

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Last month's answers:
Where am I? Northam Race Club
Winner: Stuart Briegel

Who am I? Michelle O'Driscoll
Winner: No winner

SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Biblical patriarch promised that he would become the father of many nations (7)
- 3 Scientist sometimes called the “father of modern observational astronomy” (7)
- 5 Succession of rulers from the same family (7)
- 8 Father of five daughters in *Pride and Prejudice* (6)
- 11 Son who failed to heed Daedalus’s warning (6)
- 12 Daughter who sprang fully armed from Zeus’s head (6)
- 13 Miranda’s father in *The Tempest* (8)
- 18 Father of an animal, especially one used for breeding (4)
- 21 Shakespearean king whose division of his realm among his daughters goes badly (4)
- 23 Trojan king and father of Hector and Paris (5)
- 24 Wolfgang, the prodigious son of composer and teacher Leopold (6)
- 25 Son whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice (5)
- 26 Ancient Greek traditionally called the “Father of Medicine” (11)
- 27 Mythical craftsman whose paternal advice went unheeded (8)

Down

- 2 Scout and Jem Finch’s father in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (7)
- 4 Father of Odysseus — and, confusingly, the name of a character in *Hamlet* (7)
- 5 Naturalist Charles, grandson of physician and polymath Erasmus (6)
- 6 Male head of a family — or one of its founding ancestors (9)
- 7 Surname shared by *The Three Musketeers* author and his novelist son (5)
- 8 Surname of Patrick’s three celebrated novelist daughters (6)
- 9 Greek historian dubbed the “Father of History” by Cicero (9)
- 10 British prime minister whose father, Randolph, was Chancellor of the Exchequer (9)
- 13 An ancestor or originator (10)
- 14 Name derived from that of one’s father or male ancestor (10)
- 15 Son who awaits Odysseus’s return in Homer’s *Odyssey* (10)
- 16 Lear’s faithful youngest daughter (8)
- 17 Creator and father figure of Pinocchio (8)
- 19 Property inherited from one’s father or ancestors (9)
- 20 Relating to a son or daughter (6)
- 22 Titan whose method of dealing with his children was to swallow them (6)



York Yarns September

With every extra spray of blossom that opens I know we are one step closer to spring! I know the days have been mainly sunny and gorgeous, but I will be happy to see the back of those icy mornings; when you have a new puppy that needs to be let out as soon as it is light every morning it gets a bit much! Hopefully he will be better organised next winter. Memo to self, must get him his own key cut.

Most country folk are probably aware that this year has been designated as the 'International Year of Women Farmers' and that the organisation that is the CWA do an amazing job supporting country women and their families. So, it was obviously a no brainer for the York CWA to invite the Emin family to come along to a meeting to share their Albanian family history and the fascinating stories of the families settling in York and how they went from growing vegetables to finally purchasing and developing their own farm. Definitely a great migrant tale!

To keep the theme going put a note in the diary for the CWA Long Table Lunch on 1st November at the York Golf Club to support 'Farmers Across Borders' with guest speaker Sam Starcevich who, along with Anne Bell, started this amazing project with the simple goal to keep farmers on the land, to keep food on Australian tables and to make sure rural communities know they are not alone. Tickets will be available soon though York CWA, keep the date!

Another not to be missed event is the amazing York Agricultural Show on September 5th. This great family event has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 1840 and although there are many things that have changed over the years, the main attractions are still very much in line with the original idea of



Photo: Di Robertson Smith on the left, CWA president with Rose, Zuki, Sally and Jas Emin.

showcasing agriculture throughout York and surrounds. A fantastic day out for the whole family!

York Peace Park markets are on Saturday 12th September and stall holders get more varied as the weather warms up. Never too early to start thinking about some Christmas shopping... isn't it amazing how our favourite people are always just that little bit harder to buy for? You may find just the gift at the markets or, if not, around the town after you have recharged your batteries with a super coffee or hot chocolate.

An amazing exhibition at the residency museum is open until the 27th September. Entitled Faith, Art and a Life in York it features the life and times of Rev. Peter Molds including his time at York Anglican Church.

Another event packed weekend is the 26th/27th September with the Medieval Feast and the Medieval Fayre. A great excuse to dress up and partake of a traditional feast on Saturday with great entertainment and on Sunday traditional style games and activities for everyone to enjoy. On Sunday the York and District Archery Club have one of their 'Come and Try Days' which are always great fun and a great way to try your hand (arm?) at archery and to find out how you can be part of this friendly team.

Looking a bit further ahead Sunday October 4th is York Garden Club's 'Open Garden Day' always a super day totally run by volunteers and a great fundraiser for local charities. Lots of plants, pottery, gifts and what would a day out looking at gardens be without some scones jam and cream? Let's hope we never find out!!

Did you know York has an amazing food bank that operates from the Sandalwood yards every week? This amazing organisation is run by the team at Healthy Self Wellness and is part of a great programme of support services that so many locals have taken advantage of, often then joining the team of volunteers to help support those needing a bit of extra support during challenging times. They are currently working on a great project to have a sustainable food forest out on Carter Road next to the Men's Shed and are looking for volunteers to be involved in the incredible project. If you would like to be involved, get in touch and offer your services, check out the York community Facebook page for details.

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Gogulyar Bilya Environmental Discovery Centre Cnr Glebe & Clifford St
Entry Clifford St – Talks by Local Presenters

Nick & Elizabeth 34 Clifford St – Stalls

Lynette & Bob 130 Newcastle St – Stalls

Peter & Paula 5 Camfield Place – Stalls

Hope Farm 15 Carter Rd – Petting Animals & Music

York Heritage Weekend 2027 is already taking shape but the exciting addition to the programme is the 'Short Story Competition' 1500-2000 words of either historical fiction or a factual project about a family, an event or similar could win you \$250.00 but, better than that, a spot in a book of 'Tales from the Avon Valley' we hope to put together to commemorate York's Bicentenary in 2031. There are so many great stories out there let's get some of them put together to preserve the amazing history of the best part of Western Australia for everyone to enjoy! Get those thinking caps on and record some tales from granddad & grandma or that lady down the road who knows everyone! Check out the York Heritage Weekend Facebook page for how to enter or just call me on 0418936214.

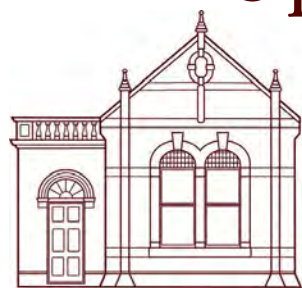
Stop Press! The York Palace Hotel has a new owner. After 10 years Nola and Richard are moving on, Nola to continue her success on the Perth Comedy scene and Richard? Well, mainly being Richard! The new owner will do some renovating to the rooms and has lots of exciting plans for the restaurant so a reopening date shouldn't be too far away and certainly something to look forward to. Will be great to have this grand venue firing on all six again! We wish Nola and Richard all the best and really hope we will still see them around for a chat and a coffee or a beer.

See you in York real soon.

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Daily coffee and a lower risk of atrial fibrillation

by Lisa Guy

New research suggests a daily coffee may protect against atrial fibrillation (AFib), a common heart rhythm disorder that increases stroke and heart failure risk. Contrary to longstanding advice to limit caffeine, participants who drank at least one cup of caffeinated coffee daily had a 39 per cent lower risk of AFib recurrence.



The findings come from the DECAF study, the first randomised trial to examine coffee's effect on AFib, conducted by the University of California, San Francisco and the University of Adelaide. The six-month trial involved 200 patients with persistent AFib or atrial flutter undergoing electrical cardioversion. Researchers suggest coffee's benefits may stem from its anti-inflammatory compounds, diuretic effects that reduce blood pressure and replacing less healthy beverages.

"The results were astounding," says first author Christopher X Wong. Senior author Gregory M Marcus adds coffee may also increase physical activity, further lowering AFib risk. The study indicates moderate coffee consumption is safe and potentially protective for heart rhythm.

Dark Chocolate to Slow Ageing

by Lisa Guy

A study published in *Aging* by researchers at King's College London has identified a link between the cocoa compound theobromine and slower biological ageing.

The researchers measured theobromine levels in the blood of more than 1600 participants from two European cohorts, including Twin Suk and KORA, and compared these with biological age markers based on DNA methylation and telomere length. Individuals with higher theobromine levels tended to appear biologically younger than their chronological age.

"Our study finds links between a key component of dark chocolate and staying younger for longer," says Professor Jordana Bell, senior author. Theobromine was the only cocoa compound showing this association, highlighting its potential role in influencing gene activity and cellular systems linked to ageing.

While the findings are promising, researchers caution that eating more dark chocolate is not a guaranteed anti-ageing strategy, as chocolate also contains sugar and fat.

Articles taken from <https://www.wellbeing.com.au/body/health>

National Stroke Week highlights women's unique stroke risks

Western Australian women are being encouraged to learn the signs of stroke and seek emergency medical care without delay as National Stroke Week (3-9 August) shines a spotlight on the significant impact stroke has on women.

Stroke claims the lives of more women than breast cancer, yet many women remain unaware of the unique factors that can increase their risk.

WA Stroke Director Dr Andrew Wesseldine said while stroke could affect anyone, women faced additional risks throughout different stages of life that were not always well understood.

"Stroke can affect anyone, but women face unique risk factors throughout different stages of their lives that are not always as well known," Dr Wesseldine said.

While stroke can affect anyone, women face additional risks throughout different stages of life, including pregnancy, certain migraine conditions and hormonal contraception. Older women are also disproportionately affected because they generally live longer than men.

Women are also more likely to experience less typical symptoms such as sudden confusion, weakness, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, loss of consciousness or severe headache.

"The F.A.S.T. message remains the most important way to recognise a stroke," Dr Wesseldine said.

A New Conversation Begins in Northam

There are some conversations we put off because we think there will always be time. Often, we put off conversations about death, perhaps because we feel that the conversation will bring death closer. Perhaps the conversation brings up painful memories of a lost loved one. Perhaps it makes us confront the strange fact that one day we will no longer be here.

Yet every one of us will one day experience the death of someone we love—and eventually, our own.

That lack of conversation is exactly why Northam's first Death Café was established.

Despite its name, a Death Café isn't gloomy. It isn't a counselling session. It isn't a support group.

It's simply a welcoming gathering where people can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, something delicious to eat, and talk openly about life, death and everything in between.

Some people come because they have recently lost someone they love. Some come because they are caring for ageing parents. Others are simply curious.

Many discover that talking about death doesn't make

"If you notice any signs of stroke in yourself or another person, even if they are brief or disappear, call Triple Zero (000) immediately."

Stroke remains one of the leading causes of death and disability across Western Australia, with more than 5,300 Western Australians experiencing a stroke in 2025 and more than 45,000 people across the State living with the ongoing effects of stroke.

National Stroke Week provides a timely reminder for all Western Australians to think and act F.A.S.T. if they suspect someone is having a stroke:

- Face: Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?
- Arms: Can they lift both arms?
- Speech: Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- Time: Time is critical. If you see any of these signs, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Western Australians are also encouraged to be aware of the less typical symptoms women may experience, as recognising these symptoms and seeking urgent medical care can help save lives and reduce disability.

The WA Government is investing \$240,000 over three years to support the Stroke Foundation's F.A.S.T. Community Education Program, helping Western Australians recognise the warning signs of stroke and reinforcing the importance of calling Triple Zero (000) without delay.

life darker.

It makes life richer.

When we acknowledge that life is finite, our conversations often become kinder. We become more willing to forgive. We remember what truly matters.

The Death Café offers an opportunity to gather, and talk. Or not talk, but simply listen. There is no agenda and no expectation that anyone must speak.

The Death Café is presented by Caroline Neeling, founder of Walking Beside You, a Northam-based end-of-life service supporting individuals and families throughout the Wheatbelt.

Northam Death Café:

- Zax & Co, 148 Fitzgerald Street, Northam
- First Thursday of every month at 10am
- Purchase tea/coffee and cake from the café
- Everyone is welcome: please let us know you're coming. Call Caroline on 0427 425 065 or email hello@walkingbesideyou.com.au

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Bowel Health – It's Worth Giving a Shit!

The bowel is an important part of our digestive system, but what is it, and what should we be aware of when weighing up our overall bowel health?

The bowel is made up of 3 parts:

1. The small intestine is around 6 meters in length and is the narrower (small) section of the bowel. It absorbs the nutrients in the food we digest.
2. The colon and rectum make up the larger intestine, it is much shorter but thicker. Its role is to reabsorb fluid and process the waste material.
3. Finally, the rectum is where the waste material is stored until we go and drop a log so to speak.

What comes out and the frequency of our bowel movement is something else we should take note of. Our poo or stool should be soft, sausage shaped and should not require too much effort to pass. The frequency can depend on individual habits, changes to our diet, but the main thing to remember here is a sudden change in your poo routine could indicate other issues.

What's not normal?

Signs of Blood: Bright or fresh signs of blood on the toilet paper could be the result of haemorrhoids (usually a result of constipation or straining too hard) or wiping too hard and frequently can cause small cuts/tears on the anus. Blood in the poo (especially darker blood) could mean bleeding further up the bowel and should be discussed with a doctor immediately.

Constipation: Dry or hard poo sometimes associated with cramping or bloating in our lower abdomen (something we have all probably experienced) can often be resolved with some lifestyle changes i.e. drinking plenty of water, eating a diet high in soluble fibre (fruit/vegies/oat bran/lentils/beans) and an increase in physical activity.

Diarrhoea: We have all probably had a mean curry that has caused us to frequent the loo, but diarrhoea is usually caused by our intestine becoming inflamed and irritated affecting the reabsorption of water from the waste material. This can be caused by numerous factors such as: illness/infection, food poisoning, drinking contaminated water, ulcers, stress and certain food intolerances.

Leakage: Accidental leakage or incontinence can be associated with severe diarrhoea but can also be caused

by weakness or damage to the muscles around our bowel and anus. The Continence Foundation of Australia is a great resource to get assistance, advice and support if you are affected by incontinence.

If any of these issues are having an effect for more than 2-3 days, a visit to the doctor is recommended. A prominent cancer is bowel cancer and can remain undetected until well advanced. Participate in the free bowel cancer screening test from the age 45 onwards – it saves lives!

Remember good bowel health and our digestive system is often compared to being just as important as brain function, just at the other end of the body. Remember it is worth giving a shit about!

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Menopause - a very natural process

From the age of about 45, women will become aware that their body is changing. Periods will start to become irregular as they wind down to eventually stop. The period is a gift to women, in that it gives your body a chance to release toxic waste every month. Blood has a heating quality, so when this process slows and then stops, that heat will build up in the body and begin to affect other tissues such as the nervous tissue.

This heat may cause dryness of the skin. Hair may start to thin, hot flushes may occur as your body seeks to release excess heat, sleep may be disturbed, bone tissue may begin to deteriorate, blood pressure may rise. A healthy body is able to adapt to this new state of being.

The severity of these symptoms largely depends on how well you have looked after your body during the previous working and producing years. Good nourishment, plenty of sleep, calm state of mind are factors that will set up your post-menopause years.

If that has not been the case, seeing an Ayurvedic practitioner in the peri-menopause stage to rebalance your mind and body will help make the transition to post-menopause an easier ride. Good diet (cooked, nourishing, warm food eaten at regular times is a good start.)

Good mental health allows solid sleep, healthy nerve function and good digestion. I use herbal tonic and body treatments with herbal oils.

It is important to note that any suppressed emotions and actions taken in the past that contradict your truth, will rise to be healed at this time.

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CEO UPDATE by Theresa Lee

We are excited to announce the launch of the inaugural Northam & Surrounds Business & Community Directory! After many months of production and dedication, we are incredibly proud to deliver this resource to our community. A special thank you to our Marketing Executive, Jodie Longmire, whose skill and care in the design and layout process has been first class.

Congratulations to the Shire of Northam on a successful Bilya Festival, kicking off the 53rd Avon Descent weekend. Some difficult judging of the parade produced the winners: Eclipse Brewery, Overall Winner; Northam BMX, Most Creative; Northam Senior High School, Most on Theme; and Share and Care, Best Decor. Winners shared in a prize pool of \$2000 Northam Dollars, thanks to the Shire, to be spent at participating local retailers.

Congratulations to Brenda DeAtta and her team at the Jobs & Skills Centre for bringing the Careers Expo back to Northam in August. The great variety of businesses, training providers and stakeholders on display welcomed hundreds of students and jobseekers on the day. It's fantastic to see so many local workforce and career opportunities being promoted and to showcase the pathways available.

Our August Northam Women in Business event was hosted by Joanne Lee, Dealer Principle at Northam Mazda & GWM. Joanne shared her inspiring journey as a woman working in heavily male-dominated motor industry, while Jane Leeming from Tula Healing provided top wellbeing tips from an Ayurvedic perspective. We service our cars regularly – a timely reminder that our bodies need the same care to help us cope with the busy-ness of running a business!

The final activities in our Workforce Development Program, funded by Tourism WA, rolled out recently, including Avon Valley Ambassador workshops to build local knowledge of what to see and do across the Avon, alongside initiatives to inspire new hospitality and tourism careers. The Approved Manager Course sold out, with another heavily subsidised course planned for October. Through our advocacy highlighting the strong local need for this training, Central Regional TAFE has successfully scoped this course for in-house delivery, improving access to face-to-face training across the region.

As ag show season begins, we look forward to visiting the Dowerin Machinery Field Days and wish all involved the very best. September will also bring the Northam Agricultural Show and Wundowie Iron Festival – thank you to the many volunteers involved. There are never enough hands though, so please reach out to these organisations if you can lend a hand.



The Chamber will host the Bullwinkel Business Alliance quarterly event in Northam on 22 September, featuring a mini business expo and networking opportunity. We look forward to welcoming and hearing from special guests Trish Cook MP, Federal Member for Bullwinkel, and Lachlan Hunter MP, Member for Central Wheatbelt.



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The Thucydides Trap and Family Business Succession!

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

Challenges associated with changes in leadership and ownership are as old as humanity itself. For family business succession, the challenges of ownership transition are further complicated by the need to navigate relationships, identity, trust and power.

Four hundred years before Christ, the Greek historian, Thucydides, referring to political powers rather than family enterprises, warned of the dangerous pressures, and often serious conflict, that can emerge when a rising power threatens to displace an established one. Examining his theory in relation to war, a Harvard study (Allison, G. 2011) found that in 16 instances where a rising power had challenged a ruling power, 12 of those cases had resulted in war – including WW1 & WW2. Thucydides' theory has since become known as the 'Thucydides Trap'.

So what is the link here to FB?

Working with FBs, I regularly see situations where a senior generation feels threatened by the energy, capabilities and ambitions of a younger rising generation. The latter, frustrated by their lack of opportunity or the power to plan and manage, become unsettled. Neither party are seeking conflict, but FB conflict can be an insidious thing; creeping into conversations, making uninformed assumptions and straining relationships.

Initially, most families tolerate these tensions, hoping they'll resolve themselves. But for many FBs mention of succession threatens. It can mean different things for different family members. Some family members will resist, moving into defensive positions, others – while not reaching for spears and swords – will seek out legal advice. At this point, the 'war' is handed over to others to negotiate. The financial cost can be substantial, but the emotional cost to the family and the business itself – is usually far greater.

Thucydides was not just an historian, but also a keen observer of human behaviour. Historians have described his work as reflecting an "uninhibited joy in things that are typical in both humans and events," and that there is "a good bit of rationality in each". His insights remind us that while conflict may be understandable, it is also avoidable. The 'Thucydides Trap' is not a prediction of conflict in a FB, but rather a warning that when fear of displacement or frustration with progress overshadows communication, planning and mutual respect, families place both their relationships and the business at risk of future conflict.

It is the responsibility of FB leaders to prepare the next generation to lead. By recognising the warning contained within the 'Thucydides Trap', families can replace fear with trust, threat with collaboration and conflict with communication and planning - preserving not just the business, but the relationships that made it a family business in the first place!

For advice contact Dr Catherine Bowen, Family Business Consultant | www.gentogen.com.au

Productivity Commission must visit WA to consult on flawed GST report

The Productivity Commission must hold public hearings in Western Australia as part of its GST distribution reforms review.

The Commission, which on Friday called for up to \$6 billion a year to be ripped from WA's budget, will hold one week of public hearings, completely online from the East Coast.

CCIWA Chief Economist Dr Daniel Kiely said holding hearings in WA would help to counter concerns of an East Coast bias in the Productivity Commission's interim report.

"You can't get a real picture of the economic, social and business environment in Western Australia via a video link from Canberra or Melbourne," he said.

"We urge the Productivity Commission to visit WA and hold several days of hearings in this state, ideally visiting Perth and the Pilbara, to get a true picture of what is at stake for this state and hear from the people who could be impacted by their final recommendations.

"The Productivity Commission visited Western Australia back in 2017 when it was last reviewing the GST and we urge them to do so again in 2026.

"We also believe that one week of hearings will not be enough to gain a full and accurate view of the GST system."

CCIWA has written to the Productivity Commission, urging it to hold hearings in WA and extend the hearing period.

Dr Kiely said the interim report is dominated by East Coast voices, with references to other State Government submissions vastly outweighing those made by WA.

"It's alarming that the Western Australian Government's submission is only referenced ten times in the report, yet it is the state that has the most to lose" he said.

"The Productivity Commission's interim report talks a lot about WA but it hasn't listened to what we've had to say."

CCIWA has called on the Federal Government to reject the findings of the Productivity Commission's interim

report, after repeated promises from the Prime Minister that there would be no change to WA's GST deal.

"Our message to the Prime Minister is simple: Keep your promise and keep the deal," he said.

"We've seen the gleeful reaction of the other states to the interim report, but we urge the Prime Minister to stand firm in the face of a growing East Coast push to hamstring WA's economy.

"The fact is that the 2018 reforms were introduced for a reason. The Productivity Commission itself said the old system has significant weaknesses.

"We can't go back to a system where WA gets less and less of its own GST revenue while industry here delivers for the nation.

"The solution to another state's budget pressures can't be to punish WA by returning to a broken system."

More than 7,300 people have signed CCIWA's petition to keep the current GST deal.



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Worst time on record for first-home buyers, new study reveals

by Aidan Devine

The Albanese Government's messing with the real estate market has put first home-buyers in their worst position in over a decade. This is why.

It's officially the worst time to be a first-home buyer in at least 56 years.

New figures have revealed first-home buyers face the most challenging buying conditions since price records began in 1970 due to soaring debt, high interest and minimal growth in wages.

And recent falls in prices in many suburbs and generous government support have done little to help, the FoundIt research noted.

The study flies in the face of recent claims by Labor frontbencher Tanya Plibersek that: "It's never been a better time to be a first-home buyer".

It also throws in doubt Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's claim his budget would help first-home buyers.

Back in May, he claimed his changes would "make our tax system fairer to help more Australians into homeownership ... this is about giving younger Australians a leg-up in the housing market".

The study by analytics group FoundIt – authored by Kent Lardner, a pioneer in Australian valuations data – measured interest rates, the average gap between wages and prices and deposit requirements.

It found that an average income earner purchasing a median-priced capital city home needed to spend 10.2 times their wages to get into the market, the highest since 1970.

2026 was found to be the first year on record where saving a 10 per cent deposit required more than a year of the average wage.

Recent price decreases were also deemed to have been little benefit for first-home buyers because interest rate hikes had reduced their borrowing power by more than the discounts they could get on homes.

Meanwhile, wages had failed to keep up with the cost of living, meaning homeowners had to divert much larger proportions of their income into servicing their mortgage repayments than in previous years.

Mr Lardner said it was a "horrible" time to be a first-home buyer because getting into the market required record levels of debt that was becoming more expensive to service.

It was also noted that current conditions presented more of a challenge than even the 1989 market, when interest rates were 17 per cent.

Part of the reason was because the debt required to buy in the current market far exceeded levels in 1989 – prices then were four times the typical income, today they're 10 times higher.

First-home buyers have been slammed with an additional level of risk: prices in the bottom end of the market have yet to fall by anything close to the margins in the top-end of the market.

Some popular first-home buyer markets have actually recorded price rises, even as the rest of the market has fallen.

Ray White economist Nerida Conisbee said this situation wouldn't last and price falls would eventually spread to the bottom-end, meaning first-home buyers in cheaper suburbs risked buying at a price peak and then watching the value of their home get eroded.

This would be problematic for first-time buyers who accessed the government's 5 per cent deposit scheme as they risked falling into negative equity, Ms Conisbee said.

Mr Lardner said the scheme was "flawed" because it was one of the driving forces behind price growth in the bottom end of the market, but was also exposing first-home buyers to risk in the form of higher debt.

Mr Lardner said getting helped with a deposit did not make housing more affordable for first-home buyers, it made it less affordable.

"The scheme (reduces) the deposit and hands the buyer the heaviest repayment schedule on record in exchange," he said.

"It relocates the burden — it doesn't remove it. On no reading does it make 2026 the best time in history to buy."

LJ Hooker head of research Mat Tiller said one of the challenges for first-home buyers was that recent negative gearing reforms in the May budget were starving the bottom-end of listings.

Read the full article at <https://www.news.com.au/finance/real-estate/worst-time-on-record-for-firsthome-buyers-new-study-reveals/news-story>

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Spring Has Sprung:

What Are We Seeing in the Property Market?

Over recent years, we've seen a noticeable seasonal pattern in the property market. Winter can bring a natural slowdown — colder weather, shorter days and wet conditions can make buyers and sellers less inclined to attend home opens, organise inspections or take on the process of moving house.

But as we head into spring, the market starts to come alive again. Warmer weather brings more people out and about, gardens begin to flourish, lawns are greener and properties naturally present at their best. We also see more buyers starting to actively look, particularly those who have been waiting through the quieter winter months.

For sellers, this can make spring an appealing time to bring a property to market, with the potential for increased buyer activity and competition.

If you've been considering selling or leasing your property, now is a great time to start preparing. A little planning before your property hits the market can make all the difference — from getting the gardens and street appeal looking their best to completing those small maintenance jobs that have been waiting through winter.

Spring Tips



A few simple ways to improve your street appeal:

Tidy the gardens – mow lawns, trim hedges, weed garden beds and remove any green waste.

Freshen the entrance – clean the front door, entryway and windows, and make sure your house number is clearly visible.

Clean up outside – sweep paths, tidy the driveway and remove any clutter from the front yard.

Check the little things – replace tired light fittings, repair fences and gates, and attend to any visible maintenance.

Think like a buyer or tenant – your property's exterior is often the first thing they see online and in person, so presentation matters!

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Focus on Farming

by Chris Antonio

There are several issues making the Agricultural News cycle now. Some of these are – phosphine exposure limits, upcoming grain varieties, the continued impact on grain prices with the conflicts and growing conditions in the Northern Hemisphere, markets impact on sheep and meat prices and seasonal conditions.

Phosphine is a fumigant widely used to protect grain in silos from insect pests. Safe Work Australia's review of workplace exposure standards recommends reducing levels within the eight-hour time-weighted limit. Everyone in the grain industry supports protecting worker health and therefore reducing potential workplace exposure to hazardous substances. With the suggested reductions, Australian grain industry bodies, along with bulk handlers and growers are calling for a practical, evidenced-based approach to the proposed changes.

Around this time of year, grain breeding companies announce upcoming grain varieties for the 2027 season. Picking a couple from WA-based companies, keep an eye out for Trigg, a hard wheat variety, Reaper, a malt barley, and Strike, a TT canola. Others include Quokka, a noodle wheat, Rocket, a malt or feed barley, and Collie, also a noodle wheat variety.

Wheat prices remain volatile, with reports of a truce in the Black Sea region. However, Russian and Ukrainian exports remain heavily disrupted. Canola prices are heavily affected by growing conditions in Europe and Canada, and trade relations between China and Canada. Barley prices appear to be mostly affected by Chinese imports. As the WA season progresses, there will be the impact of local conditions and shipping slots affecting prices.

Building Knowledge to Better Support Northam Farmers



Photo: Shannae Ramsay, AFGRI Equipment

by Tracy Dent

For AFGRI Equipment's Shannae Ramsay, building a career in agriculture has been about growing her knowledge and finding new ways to support the farmers and customers she works with every day.

Shannae began at AFGRI Equipment's Northam branch as a trainee four years ago, graduating from her traineeship in 2023 before continuing her career in the parts department. Around a year ago, she took the next step into a customer sales representative role, building on her strong parts and machinery knowledge to help customers with their broader equipment needs.

"Working in Parts gave me a really good understanding

of machinery and the components that keep it running, while also allowing me to work closely with our customers," Shannae said.

"I've always enjoyed learning how things work, so moving into sales has allowed me to build on that knowledge. I now get to learn even more about how the whole machine operates and then see it out in the paddock doing the job it was designed to do, which is pretty cool."

Based at the Northam branch, Shannae works with farmers from across the local area and surrounding Wheatbelt, getting to know their operations and helping them with their small to medium agricultural machinery needs.

"For me, it's about knowing our customers and understanding what they need. Having that background in Parts gives me another level of knowledge that I can bring to those conversations."

Shannae is enjoying the opportunity to continue building her career from Northam and being part of a local team supporting the agricultural community.

"There is always something new to learn in agriculture, and I'm lucky to be able to keep developing my knowledge while working with great local customers and seeing the machinery out there working on their farms."

For anyone looking for their next piece of small to medium agricultural machinery, Shannae encourages them to drop into AFGRI for a chat – located in the industrial area, at 20 Yilgarn Ave, Northam.

"Come in and see me. I'd love to talk about what you need and help find the right machine for your operation — and of course, put together a quote."

CBH Group celebrates major rail fleet milestone

CBH Group has commemorated the arrival of its new narrow-gauge locomotives and all new wagons in Western Australia, marking a major milestone in the state's grower-owned grain supply chain.

This milestone is more than new rolling stock. It is CBH's co-operative model and Path to 2033 Strategy in action: grower value being reinvested into the supply chain WA growers own and rely on.

The investment includes 17 new custom-built narrow-gauge locomotives and 650 new grain wagons, all of which have now been delivered into Western Australia.

Half of the CM20ACi narrow-gauge locomotives, delivered from Wabtec Corporation's Brazil facility, are now in operation, alongside wagons manufactured by CRRC Meishan in China.

A further seven standard-gauge locomotives are expected to arrive from December 2026, completing the new fleet.

The new rolling stock will expand CBH's existing fleet of 25 locomotives and 572 wagons, purchased in 2012, and will take CBH's owned fleet to 49 locomotives and 1,222 wagons, excluding leased assets.

CBH Chief Executive Officer Ben Macnamara said the arrival of the new fleet was a significant moment for the co-operative and Western Australian grain growers.

"This milestone is about more than new locomotives and wagons. It shows CBH's co-operative model in action: reinvesting grower value into the supply chain WA growers own and rely on," Mr Macnamara said.

"As custodians of that supply chain, CBH's role is to keep investing in the infrastructure, capacity and capability growers need now and into the future.

"The new fleet will support the co-operative's Path to 2033 Strategy goal of increasing grain export capacity towards 3 million tonnes a month by 2033, while strengthening a safer, more reliable and more efficient

pathway to market for WA growers."

The new fleet is part of CBH's broader investment across rail fleet, outloading and network capacity.

Mr Macnamara said CBH's broader Path to 2033 investment program was already delivering benefits, with the co-operative regularly achieving strong monthly grain exports – including 2.5 million tonnes in January – as it builds towards its target of 3 million tonnes a month by 2033.

"New trains are only part of the story. They deliver the greatest value when paired with faster outloading, longer sidings and better network capacity," he said.

"This investment is about putting grower capital back into the network — improving the way WA grain moves from paddock to port and onto customers around the world."

The rapid rail outloading facilities form part of CBH's broader network investment, delivered through the Agricultural Supply Chain Improvements (ASCI) Program – jointly funded by the Western Australian and Commonwealth governments. Under Package 1 of the program, government funding is supporting the upgrade of rail sidings at 11 CBH sites, enabling longer trains to load faster, reducing bottlenecks and increasing the co-operative's capacity to move grain to port during peak demand.

CBH acknowledges and thanks the many organisations involved in the delivery of the new fleet, including Wabtec Corporation, CRRC Meishan, Aurizon, Arc Infrastructure, government and industry stakeholders, and CBH employees.

"A lot of work has gone into delivering the new fleet and having it in operation is a significant achievement everyone involved should be proud of," Mr Macnamara said.

"We are excited to see the value it delivers for WA growers and the communities that depend on this industry."

Graingrowers Flags Historic Constitution Changes

As Australian grain growers battle rising input costs, increased regulation and an uncertain geopolitical climate, GrainGrowers is proposing a new membership category for the first time in its history.

At its Annual General Meeting on 7 October, GrainGrowers members will be asked to vote on constitutional amendments to create a new category of membership to enable State Farming Organisations to apply to become members of GrainGrowers.

GrainGrowers Chair Rhys Turton said the proposed changes followed grower member feedback and approaches from NSW Farmers and Grain Producers South Australia, which were both seeking representation on national issues.

"Growers have consistently told us they want to see a stronger and more united voice on national grain industry issues. This proposal provides a way for like-minded organisations to work more closely together while ensuring GrainGrowers remains firmly grower-led," Mr Turton said.

"The issues facing Australian grain growers are becoming more complex, from rising costs and regulation through to trade and market uncertainty. By working together, organisations with shared objectives can amplify and increase our collective influence on issues that matter most."

Under the proposed changes, any State Farming Organisation admitted as a member would hold a single vote as a membership entity.

GrainGrowers will be consulting with members at events taking place across the country over the coming weeks. There will also be an online webinar for members who can't attend in person. GrainGrowers will then hold its Annual General Meeting on 7 October where growers will have the opportunity to vote on the proposed amendments.

Online Registration Set to Make Off-Road Vehicles Easier to Register in WA

The Motor Trade Association of Western Australia (MTA WA) welcomes the State Government's launch of an online registration system for off-road vehicles (ORVs) launched today. This system is designed to make it easier for owners to register their vehicles and supporting the future development of off-road riding in Western Australia.

Until now, owners who wanted to register an ORV had to visit a licensing centre in person. As a result, relatively few vehicles were registered. This system has limited the ability of government and local authorities to accurately understand the number of ORVs in use and track where riders are accessing facilities. It has also hampered the police's ability to investigate illegal activity, identify stolen vehicles, and return them to their owners.

Improved registration data will help government and local authorities better understand demand for off-road vehicle areas and make more informed decisions about where to invest in maintenance, upgrades, and the development of new facilities.

MTA WA supports Minister Beazley's announcement to move registration online and introduce optional registration stickers. These stickers have been trialled through the committee and with motorcycle dealer members and have been shown to improve vehicle identification without creating concerns for riders.

While registration will remain voluntary, riders must register their vehicle if they wish to legally use a designated off-road vehicle area.

Importantly, registration fees will go directly into a dedicated fund that supports the maintenance, improvement, and development of off-road vehicle areas across Western Australia. Therefore, increased registration uptake will directly result in greater funding

for these facilities.

MTA WA Chief Executive Officer Neil Le Febvre said the changes simplify the process for owners and will help deliver better outcomes for riders and communities.

"MTA WA has been actively calling for a simpler and more accessible registration process for off-road vehicles. Requiring owners to attend a licensing centre in person created a significant hurdle and contributed to very low registration rates."

"We need better information about ORV usage to support smart planning and investment. Data helps inform key decision-makers to ensure funding is directed where it is needed most, ensuring the industry can continue to grow."

Mr Le Febvre said the reforms will deliver long-term benefits for riders through improved facilities and infrastructure.

"Every registration contributes directly to the dedicated fund for off-road vehicle areas. The more vehicles that are registered, the more funding becomes available to maintain existing areas, improve facilities and develop new places to ride."

MTA WA thanked the Department of Transport and Minister Beazley for their commitment to the issue and welcomed the announcement as a positive step forward.

Mr Le Febvre said MTA WA would continue to advocate for compulsory registration of off-road vehicles at the point of first sale to further build on this uptake of registration.

"Moving registration online is an important step forward, but we believe registration at the point of first sale remains the best way to ensure vehicle records accurately reflect the true usage across the state."

Owners can register their ORVs here: <https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/vehicle/license-vehicle/license-register-off-road/register-off-road>.

Spotlight on country driving amid road safety crisis

RAC is urging regional road users to make safety their top priority, as WA continues to experience our worst level of road fatalities in almost two decades.

RAC Head of Communications Rhys Heron said higher speed limits, changing road conditions, long-distance travel, fatigue and wildlife can create extra hazards for country drivers.

"It's hard to describe the utter devastation road trauma causes, and the ripple effects it has on regional communities," Mr Heron said.

"These aren't just numbers. These are family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, school mates. These are people who hold communities together and whose loss will be felt for many years."

"This is why having a discussion with your loved ones about road safety is so critical. We all have a responsibility to keep our roads safe."

With WA on track to record its worst level of road deaths since 2008, it's never been more important for road users to change their attitudes and avoid complacency behind the wheel.

"Our road trauma crisis is escalating at an alarming rate, and we should all be deeply concerned," Mr Heron said.

"So far this year we've seen 129 people lose their lives on WA roads, and if we keep going at this rate, we will surpass 200 road deaths for the first time in 18 years."

RAC has welcomed significant investment in the crucial Regional Road Safety Program (RRSP) in recent years, to help make country roads safer and more forgiving.

"However there remains a need for more investment in local road upgrades as part of the RRSP, and continued support for community education, enforcement, and safer speeds," Mr Heron said.

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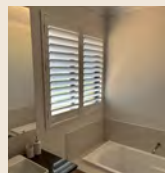
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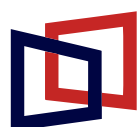
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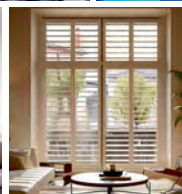
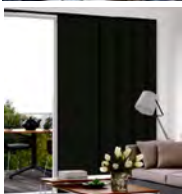
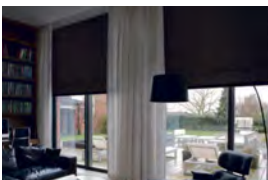
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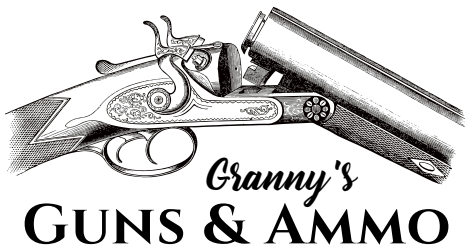
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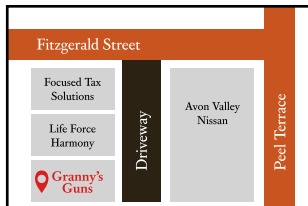


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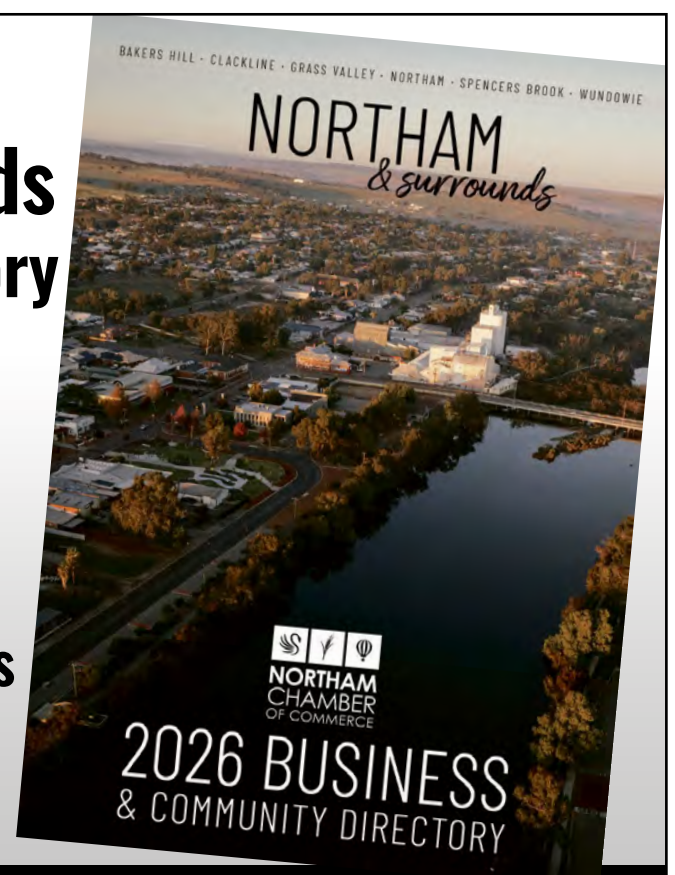


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Avon Football Finals Time



Photo: Kellerberrin/Tammin Kats League versus Quairading Bulls League last Sunday in Northam

Last weekend marked the start of finals for the Avon Football Association.

The games started with Federal Reserves playing Cunderdin Magpies Reserves at Henry St Oval in Northam.

Federal Reserves claimed the first goal and continued upwards from there. Cunderdin continued to challenge them but Federals proved too strong in the end.

The elimination final resulted in Federal Reserves coming away with the win. The full time score was 101 to 15.

The Federal Reserves now wait to see who they will play in the preliminary final. They will find out this weekend after Kellerberrin/Tammin Kats Reserves play Northam Railways Reserves in Beverley this Sunday.

The league game followed with Kellerberrin/Tammin Kats League facing off against Quairading Bulls League.

The final score was Kellerberrin/Tammin Kats 91 to Quairading Bulls 47. The Kats will now proceed to the preliminary final.

This Sunday in Beverley at 2.15pm Northam Railways League will play Cunderdin Magpies League in the qualifying final.

Grand finals for both the league and reserves will be played in Kellerberrin at the town oval on Sunday 13th of September. The reserves game will be played at 12.15pm followed by the league game at 2.15pm.

All teams encourage supporters to come along to the games and cheer on their team.



Photo: Federal Reserves versus Cunderdin Magpies Reserves last Sunday in Northam



Upcoming Finals
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Grand Final
Sunday 13 September
Kellerberrin Town Oval 12.15pm

Remembering Dave Through a Love of Golf

Bakers Hill Golf Club will host a special end-of-season event on Saturday, October 3, celebrating the life of much-loved club member and former president and captain, Dave.

Dave served as president of Bakers Hill Golf Club on several occasions and was captain during his final years as a member. He continued to hold the captaincy even after he was no longer able to play a full 18 holes, demonstrating his enduring commitment to the club and his love of the game.

Sadly, Dave passed away in April 2025.

To honour his memory, the Carter family and Bakers Hill Golf Club are coming together to host a fundraising event in support of the Heart Foundation.

The day will feature a nine-hole mixed Ambrose competition, open to golfers of all abilities. More than just a competition, the event aims to bring people together to share Dave's passion for golf and celebrate the contribution he made to the Bakers Hill golfing community.

Non-golfers are also warmly invited to attend in the afternoon, with a range of other fundraising activities planned.

Those unable to attend but wishing to support the cause can make a donation through the dedicated page on the Heart Foundation's Do It for Heart website.

Everyone is encouraged to come along, enjoy a day of golf and community, and help honour Dave's memory while raising funds for an important cause.

The event is hosted by Bakers Hill Golf Club, with the Carter family, and promises to be a fitting celebration of Dave and his love of the game.

Nominations for the day can be done through the Bakers Hill Golf Club Facebook page or to 0427190571.

Donations can also be made to <http://doitforheart.org.au/fundraisers/bakershillgolfclub/ds-carter-memorial>.

Do it for Heart funds will contribute to medical research, support health professionals and provide programs and advice to people at risk of heart disease.



Donations can be made directly to the Heart Foundation, at this link.
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Correction:

Last month in Junior Golf News one of the players names was incorrectly spelt. It should have read Xavier Sibley.



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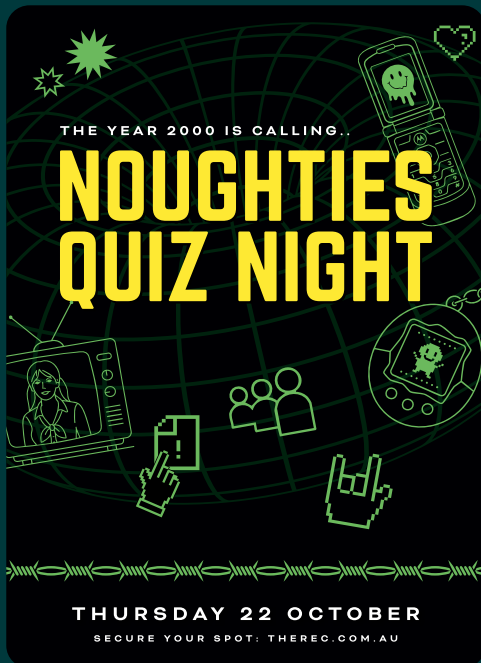
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Hockey Momentum Continues in Northam



Photo by Adam Crane - Salt Diaries/Hockey Australia

by Esther Bliss

Northam Hockey Club is proud to continue building on the excitement created by the Hockey Australia Foundation's visit to Northam earlier this year.

In May, Northam-born Hockeyroo Aleisha Power, alongside Greta Hayes, visited three local schools as part of the Hockey Australia Foundation's HookIn2Hockey program. With the support of Northam Hockey Club representatives, the pair reached an impressive 339 students, introducing them to hockey in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

Northam Hockey Club continued the program with a follow-up series of clinics with help from five Northam Senior High School students.

Reaching more than 40 students the response was overwhelmingly positive, with students excited to see the hockey program return.

The club was also privileged to work with eight students from Avonvale Education Support, who embraced the opportunity to participate, learn something new and be included in the program. Their enthusiasm and enjoyment were a highlight of the day.

To help keep the momentum going a hockey kit has been donated to Avonvale Education Support, allowing students to continue enjoying the sport and developing their skills.

Northam Hockey Club hopes to build on this successful program by delivering similar hockey clinics across other local primary schools in early 2027.

The club is proud to be playing its part in growing hockey in the Northam community and looks forward to seeing players of all ages discover a love for the game with "walking hockey" and a summer social series planned as well.

Level the Field – Exciting Opportunities Confirmed for Avon Valley Girls

Exciting plans are taking shape for Level the Field, a new Avon Valley initiative focused on creating better opportunities for girls aged 13–17 to participate, connect and remain involved in hockey.

Made possible through a \$5,000 WA Government Game On, Girls grant, the program is being coordinated by Esther Bliss from Northam Hockey Club, in partnership with Avon Hockey Association, with girls from clubs across the Avon Valley encouraged to be involved.

The first major experience has now been confirmed – an all-inclusive trip to Perth Hockey Stadium to watch the Perth Thundersticks, combined with a special all-girls training session involving Hockeyroos players.

Also confirmed is a summer social hockey series for girls, creating a relaxed and supportive environment focused on fun, friendships and developing skills rather than competition.

There is still time to join the program – so jump on board! Whether you've never played before, have stepped away from hockey or already play, now is a great time to get involved. Participants can look forward to giveaways, development opportunities, social activities and a growing network of girls from across the region.

Esther is a passionate advocate for girls remaining involved in sport, and says Level the Field is deliberately about more than hockey.

"We know the teenage years are when many girls leave sport, yet the confidence, friendships, resilience and leadership skills they gain from staying involved can have benefits well beyond the sporting field – including their wellbeing and future careers."

Importantly, Level the Field is not intended to be a one-off program, but the beginning of a longer-term focus on improving opportunities and conditions for girls in Avon Valley hockey.



Community support is already growing, with Mr V from PCYC assisting with transport and Avon Valley Toyota generously supporting participant prizes.

Local businesses are also invited to jump on board.

"If you can support the program in any way, big or small, please get in touch. Your support will be widely acknowledged and promoted, and you'll be helping

create something genuinely positive for girls in our region. This is a feel-good, community-benefiting program you'll want to be part of."

Girls and families can scan the QR code to register their interest in Level the Field. For any questions about the program, contact Esther on 0417 753 566.



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Avon Hockey Players Make Their Mark at Nationals

by Amy Screaigh

This year the Australian Country Championships were held in Bendigo, Victoria. The WA men's and women's squads travelled over together a few days prior to the tournament to get in a couple of days of training. These sessions were incredibly valuable, as both squads had a number of fresh faces or "rookies" representing WA Country hockey for the first time. The women's squad in particular welcomed 11 new players into the side, so the training days gave us a great opportunity to gel as a group and prepare for the tournament ahead.

The days throughout the tournament were well structured. Both squads would start match days with a team walk and stretching session, usually followed by a coffee run. Both squads had a physio who did an incredible job looking after the players and keeping us in the best condition possible to go out and play each day. Warm-ups and recovery were a key component throughout the tournament, and after every match the two squads would return to the accommodation and "enjoy" an ice bath using the outdoor pool.

After a bit of downtime, teams would come together for a team meeting where the game would be discussed and vision shown of what went well and what could be improved. These meetings were open and honest and provided players with plenty of feedback and encouragement.

For the women's squad, once the business talk was over, we would use this time to read out the day's "fines". Each day we had a nominated fines master, chosen by the previous day's fines master, who would take note of any fineable offences throughout the day. Some standouts included a player forgetting her stick back in



Photo: Cody Peipi, Amy Screaigh, Ryan Dodd and Phaeton Gibbs from Avon Hockey Association at the WA Country State Championships. Photo by Banworth Photos

WA, players discovering their sticks weren't approved to play due to too many cracks and splits, one player forgetting her playing top and only realising during the warm-up, and a certain room setting off the fire alarm while cooking dinner...

Unfortunately for whoever received the worst fine of the day, there was an additional punishment. They had to wear a cape (made from the old women's State skorts), a tiara and carry around a toy Tigger. These props had to be worn at all times outside of matches, including during morning walks, team meetings, ice cream runs and pub dinners.

The squads played a match each day from Saturday through to Tuesday before receiving a well-deserved rest day on Wednesday. It was up to the players how they wanted to spend the day, with some opting for a walk and brunch, shopping or sightseeing around Bendigo. Both squads were also lucky enough to be offered a time slot at a local recovery centre, which included ice baths, a sauna and leg compression boots to help us prepare for another few days of games.

Throughout the tournament, the culture across both WA squads was a standout. Staying at the same accommodation created a really supportive and encouraging environment. Whenever either team was heading off for a match, there was always a chorus of good lucks, cheering and high-fives from the opposite

squad. Some games were also fixtured so the men's team could come and watch the women's games and vice versa. The support during games was a huge boost, both from our fellow WA players and the families who travelled over.

While the results weren't what either team had hoped for, the championships were an invaluable experience for both squads. The competition was of a very high standard, and seeing the established combinations and team culture of sides such as Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria gave us something to aspire to as WA Country hockey continues to develop. We've seen what WA is capable of in recent years, with the men's side winning gold and the women's side coming away with bronze.

Coming from country towns like Northam and York, having the opportunity to represent WA at a national level is something we are incredibly proud of. Country hockey has played a huge part in our development as players, so being able to pull on the black and gold and represent not only WA, but also the Avon hockey community and the towns where we grew up, made the experience even more special. For a couple of us, the opportunity had also been a long time coming, having trialled for State Country over the past few years before finally earning a spot in the travelling squad and getting our chance to represent WA at the championships. Hopefully, seeing local country players reach this level also encourages younger players throughout the region to keep putting themselves forward and pursuing the opportunities that hockey can provide.

Our eyes are already on 2027, when the Australian Country Championships will be held in Griffith, NSW. Both the men's and women's sides are determined to continue building and cement themselves as medal contenders.



Photo by Banworth Photos



Photo by Banworth Photos

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