

The Toodyay Herald

Your locally owned
community newspaper
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5000 copies circulating in Toodyay, West Toodyay, Goomalling,
Bolgart, Calingiri, Morangup, Coondle, Wattening, Culham,
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\$23m 'error' forces council backflip

**Pool and Showgrounds safe
after Herald story exposes
'errors' and 'inaccurate'
costings in flawed sports plan**
Michael Sinclair-Jones

BUNGLED costings have forced the Toodyay Shire Council into an embarrassing backflip over a planned new \$23 million sports and recreation precinct, including a long-awaited public swimming pool.

A pool will still be built near the high school but plans for a new football and cricket oval, stadium seating, multi-purpose function centre, second set of changerooms and major earthworks have been scrapped.

Borrowings will be slashed by two thirds and limited to a new rectangular pitch for hockey, soccer and rugby, new courts for netball, basketball and tennis, changerooms and a 'modest' 25m public swimming pool.

Halving the total cost and scale of the project also removes any need to sell the Toodyay Showgrounds to help fund the original project, an option denied by Shire CEO Stan Scott despite his November report that includes moving the Toodyay Show as part of the shire's \$23 million business case.

Serious financial errors were exposed when *The Toodyay Herald* revealed in its December Page 1 story that a new \$8 million loan to help fund the project would hit ratepayers with more than \$1 million in extra costs every year for the next 20 years.

Though Crs Ben Bell and Sally Craddock voiced concerns over the size of the cost at November's council meeting, councillors voted 6-2 in favour of Mr Scott's recommendation to quadruple shire debt.

"Do ratepayers know we are about to commit them to an \$8 million loan?" Cr Bell had asked.

"Yes, it's been advertised," Mr Scott said. That decision lasted only a week before Shire President Brian Rayner – who missed the November meeting – called a hurried 'special' meeting on December 12 to scrap the CEO's flawed \$23 million spending plan.

The special meeting was called "in light of errors identified in the project's life-cycle costs," Mr Scott reported to council.

He said the *Herald's* front page story a week earlier had "raised the profile of both the project and its funding".

"The life-cycle modelling that supported the (council's) decision was inaccurate and understated," Mr Scott said.

Cr Rob Welburn said the CEO's original costings – which he described in November as "serviceable" – were in fact "too far out".

"It worked out to be too burdensome for the shire to maintain," Cr Welburn said.

Cr Craddock's move to rescind the council's November decision was seconded by Crs Welburn and Judy Dow, and passed 9-0.

Shire Deputy President Therese Chitty then moved to approve a significantly reduced plan to borrow \$2.7 million instead of the original \$8 million.

Cr Bell had argued earlier that the shire could build a \$4.7 million pool quickly by borrowing only \$60,000 – "I just want to deliver something to ratepayers," he said.

*Continued Page 9.
Editorial Page 4.*



Toodyay Shire President Brian Rayner (centre) after awarding certificates to our newest Australian citizens (from left) Howard Diver, George McCombie, Karen Booth, Ronja Bergmann, Ruth Hamlyn and John Liddle.

Our newest citizens chant 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi-oi-oi'

TOODYAY'S annual Australia Day picnic in Duidgee Park on January 26 provided a large crowd with joyful morning of free food and entertainment to help celebrate what it means to be an Australian.

A highlight of the morning's events

organised by the Shire of Toodyay was citizenship pledges by six new Australians who immediately after chanted "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi-oi-oi".

Earlier, shire councillors and staff served a cooked breakfast of sausages, bacon and

eggs in buns, sauce and fresh fruit and cold drinks for long queues of local residents and visitors.

The shire also provided free face-painting for children and a water slide.
More photos Pages 16 and 18.

All new mines now required to be advertised

A DISPUTE over whether mining should be listed as a 'banned' land use in the Shire of Toodyay has been resolved by requiring all new mining applications to be advertised for public comment.

Mining was not listed in the shire's previous local planning strategy and sparked a public outcry last September when the Toodyay Shire Council proposed that its new local planning strategy listed mining as a 'discretionary' (D) land use.

Opponents argued it should an 'X' (banned) land use.

However, the shire said it had no power under State law to ban mining which was a State Government responsibility – banning mining as an 'X' land use would most likely be rejected by the State.

The strongest opposition came from Morangup, where local residents oppose a proposed large-scale open-cut bauxite mine which has been put on temporary hold by a State-owned Chinese mining conglomerate.

Local residents complained in 2014 that they knew nothing about the massive new mine planned near their 600 homes until they

read about the shire spruiking its benefits for local firms on Page 1 of *The Toodyay Herald*.

Shire CEO Stan Scott's recommendation to add mining as a 'D' (discretionary) land use was seen by opponents as sending the wrong signal to potential new miners.

China's Yangkuang Group has pegged extensive bauxite exploration tenements throughout the shire, including in the Julimar area and across parts of Nunile and Bolgart.

Shire Deputy President Therese Chitty told a December 19 council meeting that the shire had received more than 60 submissions about its proposed new local planning strategy, and most were about mining.

"I think we need to listen to the community, she said.

"I don't think anyone in this room wants more mining in Toodyay."

Cr Rob Welburn said "we've had nothing about mining in the past, and we know that doesn't work.

"The alternative should be something that shows where we stand."

Cr Ben Bell moved that the recommended 'D' (discretionary) use be replaced by 'A'

which – though still discretionary – triggers automatic consultation by requiring the shire to advertise all new mining applications.

The motion was carried 9-0.

According to the WA Planning Commission, an 'A' classification means mining is not permitted unless a local government council advertises it for public comment.

New quarry deferred, Page 3.

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The Toodyay Herald

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Deadlines for the next edition are listed below with the paper on the streets in the first week of each month except in January when there is no edition.

All advertising should be emailed to advertising@toodyayherald.com.au. Editorial contributions and photographs should be emailed to news@toodyayherald.com.au.

Photographs for publication should be at least 500kb in file size to ensure quality reproduction in the newspaper.

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Ol' Blind Joe

Devilish dealings

Stirling Hamilton

I WON the last game of pool against Death, and he said "let's split this place", and we rode off into the sunset and spent the night sleeping next to a fire in Death Valley with Mount Diablo in the distance.

In the morning we headed further west to the coast and dismounted outside a mansion on the Malibu beachfront.

Death didn't even bother knocking, saying that the old man would be out the back next to the pool.

We sat down next to a bloke with the longest beard I've ever seen, and Death said to me "this is Satan".

I shook Satan's hand contemplating the manifold allegories concerning him in the history of mankind and asked how he got his reputation as a fallen angel.

He replied that "in the Old Testament you'll find I sat at the left hand of the Boss doing whatever it was He wanted me to do".

He gave a wry smile and said, "it's true concerning Job - I killed his 10 children, wife and livestock, laid waste his lands and afflicted him with every malady known to man to test his devotion to the Boss".

"I always get the blame, but everything was signed off on by the Old Boy.

"I'm just another branch on the tree of life and the fruit I bear is bittersweet but truthful.

"It was the early Church that came up with all that fire and brimstone stuff to keep their flocks living in perpetual fear of their authority and to keep people submissive.

"I'm less forgiving than the dude who sits at the right hand of the Boss, but all that rubbish about me trying to lead mankind into temptation is the Church's invention.

Seek within

"EVIL lurks in the hearts of men and has nothing to do with me - seek within to find its source and own it.

"The fallen bit was because I'm a bit argumentative and won't back down, and perhaps I do have some questionable hygiene habits.

"Sure, I'm a psychopath and Death here is a lovable sociopath but, hey man, we're both just fulfilling our roles in the scheme of things.

"I do entertain a few friends downstairs that Death brings me, and we'll visit them after these beers."

Our host explained how he would deal with the guys who drive into innocent pedestrians for no good reason.

"I would chain them to the nearest lamp post, hand out baseball bats to the victims and their families, and proceed to break every bone in their bodies and let them crawl into court and out of prison eventually."

I said: "I'm with you there, man."

Back in 2003 in Toodyay, someone set fire to the dongas at the rear of the Victoria Hotel.

I was living in my bus out the back and this

fire went down at 2am.

By the time the coppers managed to wake me up, the place was well ablaze.

I wandered around disoriented and couldn't believe how the walls were just seething red furnaces.

You'd think they're just tin shacks but it's the insulation and contents that engulfed the joint.

My brain finally kicked in and I realised that there was a really good man in one of those dongas who would never see the light of day again after being incinerated.

Turned out this bloke had lit fires before at other worksites and would then warn everyone so as to become the 'hero man' to his workmates and save the day or night.

Seems he got parole a couple of years ago by pleading remorse, and I would have loved to introduce to him to a full, frank and flavoursome variety of that trait.

Truth in justice

EACH hand has 27 bones, and I've got a damn good hammer - they could have met together in an engaging manner to ensure his inability to ever light a match again.

Satan laughed and said "there's hope for you lad," reasoning that if you know with absolute certainty who the bad guy is, then justice is the truth applied unapologetically.

He grabbed an apple from the table and walked towards the stairs leading down to the basement, flashing a smile to indicate that we should follow.

As we descended, he explained that he liked to drop in on these friends below just to make sure they were comfortable.

On the landing he reached into an aquarium and drew out a snake, and when we got to the open-plan basement, he let the snake loose and threw the apple onto the floor.

Seated on an old couch were the Boss himself and a bunch of archangels fighting over a bag of Tim Tams.

Both ignored the snake and the apple on the floor because nothing could distract them from the vision of Hell being played out on a TV screen in the corner.

They were watching *My Kitchen Rules* and laughing their haloes off without noticing how the cult of food worship had consumed the Western World while famine and starvation ran rampant across the planet.

Satan nudged my shoulder and said "See what I've done? - I told you this is what it's really like down in Hades," he laughed.

When we got back upstairs for some more beers, we were still laughing our hearts out and savouring the irony, which was delicious.

Death turned to me and said: "It's good to see you once more man - and when I see you again at the Final Crossing, I'll make sure I have a cold carton of Coopers for us to stop and share on our journey across the river."

The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time - Revelation of St John, 12:12.

New Herald website ticks all the boxes

Heather Appleby

TECHNOLOGY is moving faster and faster these days and although our website was updated in 2016, we've done it again.

The new website is now online and is more user-friendly, as well as providing more information and features.

News stories from the current edition are included, as are regular columns from the Editor, Police Beat, Letters, Bat in the Belfry and Ol' Blind Joe.

We now have an Advertisers' Directory, so you can search for the trade or service you need, click on the business name to see their advertisement, or click on the phone number

to dial them directly.

All the previous features are still there, including office hours, deadline dates, advertising costs, and guidelines for submitting articles, and of course full contact details.

The classified advertisements and public notices are now available at the click of your mouse, as are the coming events and the emergency contact list.

Take a look for yourself at toodyayherald.com.au.

If you notice any problems, or if pages don't load correctly, let us know. Although it has been thoroughly tested, the odd error may still be there.

Office Hours are from 9am-1pm on highlighted days February - March 2018

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
February		5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	March 1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mavis not fussed about Queen's telegram

Ieva Tomsons

MAVIS Rowles turns 94 in April and she's not too fussed about reaching 100.

"Old age is overrated," laughs Mavis who first came to Toodyay as a nine-year-old to holiday with her sister Ciss (Florence May) and brother-in-law Godfrey (Goff) Sinclair.

After a 30-hour steam train journey from Meekatharra where she lived with her father and six other siblings, Goff picked up Mavis in Northam and drove her back along the bumpy dirt road to Rose Valley Farm six miles (9.6km) west of Toodyay.

"I loved Toodyay – and the people – right from the start," said Mavis.

The youngest of Florence and Albert Hayles' eight children, Mavis was four when her mother died, leaving Ciss to shoulder the care of the younger siblings while their father worked on mines around Meekatharra.

When Ciss married local lad Goff in 1936, Mavis returned to live permanently in Toodyay.

Each day, before pedalling nearly 10km on dirt roads to Duke Street State School, she helped her sister with the farm jobs – milking the cow, feeding the pigs and horses and hauling up water from a well with a rope and bucket.

Goff was often away shearing, so the sisters had their work cut out for them.

The introduction of the school bus made life a lot easier for Mavis, but she quit school at 15 and worked for the Sanderson family's fruit, vegetable and wine store for the next three years.

World War Two started in 1939, the year Mavis started working and the next year she joined the local Voluntary Aid Detachment, training in first aid every Monday night for the next six years.

Young Mavis was in the thick of organising dances for the troops who were stationed at the showgrounds and racecourse, and she clearly remembers a three-day troop movement of tanks, trucks and men marching down the main street of Toodyay.

"Food was rationed and clothes were rationed.

"Don't ask me where the coupons came from but I once blew all my coupons on a blouse from (Perth department store) Boans."

Mavis knew Patrick (Paddy) Rowles from childhood.

Paddy had enlisted in the Australian Infantry Forces at the start of the war and spent time in the Middle East.

Coded letters were exchanged during their courtship and they married in 1944 when



Mavis Rowles loves a laugh, does cryptic crossword puzzles and enjoys a glass of wine ... red in winter and white in summer.

Mavis was 19 while Paddy was on leave from Darwin.

A year later Paddy was manpowered out of the army to work as a labourer on Ernest Lee Steere's property Hawthornden where the couple lived for eight years.

"I'd drive the horse and cart into town with (oldest son) Trevor in the pram. There were horse troughs in the main street and the Middle Pub (The Vic) and Bottom Pub (Freemasons) had stalls where you could hitch your horse."

While at Hawthornden, Mavis and Paddy had three more children. Ian and Patricia died in infancy, but Bernard survived to start a new chapter in 1953 on Key Farm on Toodyay Road.

For the first seven years they leased out the farm's guest house, Paddy sheared and the couple became involved with the Toodyay

Race Club where Paddy served as Clerk of Course for 22 years.

When they took over running the guest house, Mavis' workload ratcheted up more than a few notches.

During the school holidays and Easter, a cook and local school children would come to help but the rest of the time Mavis and young Trevor soldiered on alone when Paddy went away to shear.

"Often, within hours, something had got out, something had broken or something needed attention."

The upside of coping alone was the light-hearted one-upmanship of recounting the disasters to friend Gwen Lee whose husband sheared with Paddy.

"One day a horse or foal had got its hoof stuck in a can – I beat her that day," laughs Mavis.

With such a heavy workload it's remarkable that Mavis has been an active member of the CWA for more than 60 years, still spins with the Toodyay Spinners and gets out and about with the Red Hat Brigade.

Paddy was electrocuted on the farm in 1983 and, after 37 years on the farm, Mavis moved into town.

She still drives, does the daily cryptic crossword, uses the internet and ... she just read the racy best-seller *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

"I find it hard to believe that one man could be so, what's the word ... energetic," hoots Mavis.

Like it or not Mavis, the *Herald* has its money on this lady clocking up a century.

In 2000, Mavis recorded her life history for the Toodyay Historical Society, and the transcript is available at Donegan's Cottage in the showgrounds.



August 2016 flashback: the RSL's Bruce Guthrie with two Anzac trees facing the axe.

New president says Anzac trees to stay on shire hit list

A COUNCIL decision to axe two tall trees at Toodyay's ANZAC Memorial Park will stay on the books, says new Toodyay Shire President Brian Rayner.

President Rayner, who was abused by protesters at the site two years ago, told this month's annual electors' meeting that the council's 2016 decision to cut down the two lemon-scented gums would not be rescinded.

He was answering a question from a heavy haulage vehicle operator who asked "when are the trees going to go because they are an utter and absolute traffic hazard".

The two trees stand on one of four tight corners that breach truck safety standards on the town's temporary heavy haulage bypass.

The council gave no public notice of its 2016 decision to axe the trees, sparking

community anger when the story appeared in *The Toodyay Herald* the following week.

"As far as I'm concerned, those trees have to go," the ratepayer said.

President Rayner said there was still a decision on the books to remove the trees.

"We're not going to take them out yet

because we've applied for funds to widen that corner," he said.

"We've put a stay on it until we can get Main Roads WA funds for all four corners.

"We are liable if there is an accident on that corner, which is why the council's decision (to cut down the trees) must stand."

Endangered cockatoo plea delays new quarry

CONCERNS for the protection of endangered Carnaby's Cockatoos have prompted the Toodyay Shire Council to delay a new 5.28ha (13-acre) quarry in Hoddy's Well.

A decision on the Chitty Road gravel pit was deferred last month after Toodyay Naturalists Club member Desraé Clarke said the site was home to many black cockatoos.

She said a company report which claimed cockatoos would not be affected was based on a survey completed in early October which was outside the local nesting season.

Councillors voted 9-0 to defer a decision until more information is obtained.

More in Bat in the Belfry, Page 5. Toodyay Road gravel pit opposed, Page 10.

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The Toodyay Herald

Total screw-up

HOW could anyone get it so wrong? Last November, Toodyay Shire CEO Stan Scott convinced our elected councillors to borrow \$8 million to build a massive new sport and recreation precinct, including a long-awaited town swimming pool.

The decision gave Mr Scott authority to proceed with raising funds for the \$23 million project, the biggest in shire history.

Two councillors warned the huge loan would cost too much but they were ignored.

It was a pet project of former shire president David Dow, who made two trips to Canberra in three failed shire attempts organised by Mr Scott to secure Federal funds to help pay for the massive project.

In the background was an option to move the historic Toodyay Agricultural Show to a new sports oval and relocate cramped shire offices to a modern new administration centre by selling the old showgrounds site to property developers.

It all sounded so great for Toodyay that few bothered to check Mr Scott's figures.

Perhaps they were dazzled by the sheer size and scope of the plan, and wanted to show ratepayers that after years of inaction they were finally going to deliver.

But what they failed to grasp was the simple fact that borrowing \$8 million would cost ratepayers an additional \$900,000 a year over the next 20 years which – with annual pool running costs of \$120,000 a year – would have sent the shire broke or forced rates to skyrocket.

If this newspaper had not blown the whistle on costs in its December edition, ratepayers may well have been saddled with a crippling debt for the next 20 years.

Cr Rob Welburn told a hastily convened special council meeting on December 12 – the first of two council meetings that month – that the CEO's flawed costings were "too far out" and "burdensome".

Mr Scott reported that his advice to council contained "errors", was "inaccurate" and "understated the real cost of the project" but he offered no explanation or apology.

How could anyone paid at least \$180,000 a year plus a vehicle, fuel and other ratepayer-funded perks get it so wrong?

As regular *Herald* readers would know, this is not the first time our shire CEO has screwed up big time.

Other examples include last year's 'unlawful' rates that had to be quashed in Perth, two botched attempts at new shire local laws that had to be re-advertised, long delays for new video surveillance cameras to help Toodyay police combat local crime, a new visitor information bay which stood empty for a year and a new shire rating system, which – for some property owners – appears yet to be finalised.

Then there's more than \$500,000 of ratepayers' money lost in a failed bid to sue former shire CEO Graham Merrick and former shire president Charlie Wroth for \$160,000, in which Mr Scott and former shire president Dow played leading roles.

Are ratepayers getting good value for money? You be the judge.

Michael Sinclair-Jones
Editor

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The way we were – primary school students and teachers occupy a temporary classroom at the former Toodyay State School (previously Newcastle School) in Duke Street after a fire mostly destroyed the Toodyay District High School in 1993. The Duke Street school is now a private home but was used as a Uniting Church at the time of the fire. Newcastle Gaol Museum is keen to identify the students pictured.

LETTERS

Marg from the bank signs off

WHERE do I start to say thank you for the amazing opportunity to have worked in our community bank for the past 18 years.

Not really sure, but I will try and be brief because I could write a whole book.

The time, sadly, has come now for me to step away and I will no longer be Marg from the bank, but just Marg – for the moment anyway.

I am the last of the original staff, having seen community banking in Toodyay come from an idea, to a plan, then a process and finally our own community-owned bank.

The journey for me has been one of amazing trust, respect, commitment and belief and I truly thank our past directors and management for all the opportunities I have had.

For them listening to my crazy schemes and ideas and trusting me to let them take flight and become a reality.

To the many wonderful people I have worked with, thank you and remember, I was the serious one.

To our customers, I hope your experience was more than just a financial transaction because I really loved the opportunity of getting to know you all.

Community banking is more than just a bank, it is about a community which works together to achieve the very best possible; it's about communication, people, heart and soul, believing in what you are doing and the many rewards that become far too numerous to measure.

I am richer for my 18-year journey. Thank you for the opportunity.

Margaret O'Sullivan
(Marg from the bank)
Toodyay

She was inspiring

PROPERTY in Toodyay sells more because of the town than the house – in other words, potential buyers first fall for the town and then go looking for a house.

When I'm out and about with clients, I love to talk about what the town has to offer – all those things that we residents sometimes take for granted.

The sense of community, the volunteers, and the overall support given often by few for the many.

Take for instance, Marg O'Sullivan, who you may know as 'Marg from the Bank.'

Well, sadly, there's no 'Marg from the Bank' anymore and, after 18 years of putting her heart and soul into the growth of the Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank she's now hung up her green pixie suit and other mad-cap costumes and has begun the next chapter of her life.

I for one am very sad to see the end of such an inspirational and highly energetic career.

For the past 18 years I've seen Marg race from one committee meeting to the next, from one not-for-profit organisation to

another, always with nothing more driving her than a love for the town she calls home and her need to connect the community to its community bank.

I've lived in Toodyay for all of Marg's 18 bank years and – because of her – my opinion of the bank and its place in my community is what I've always described to potential new residents as quintessentially Toodyay.

It's part of what makes Toodyay a community town.

Quite simply, Marg O'Sullivan's presence at the bank will be sadly missed.

Barb Dadd
Toodyay

Sad to see her go

IT HAS come as a shock to many people to hear of the resignation of Margaret O'Sullivan from the bank.

Margaret put her heart and soul into her job, which she loved.

She will be sadly missed by the Toodyay community and organisations for all she has done to help those in need.

Thank you, Margaret.

H Evans
Coondle

More trucks mean more danger

THE PROPOSED gravel pit at Bailup will put 132 more 50-tonne trucks per day on Toodyay Road.

That is a truck every five minutes if spread over 12 hours.

They will join the existing gravel trucks and rubbish disposal trucks, plus the unfortunate commuters and residential users who do not have alternative routes.

Toodyay Road is a dangerous road because it is often impossible to overtake gravel trucks which slow traffic on uphill stretches and out-pace other users on downhill sections.

They are frequently speeding and so are unsafe to pass.

Red Hill is already a bottleneck. Blind Freddy could see the dangerous situation building or increasing.

Suzanne Blumer
Gidgegannup

Mining threat to wildflowers

ALL OUR paddocks now have introduced flowering grasses and today, wild flowers can only be found in our bushland – most of it in bush around Toodyay that is marked for bauxite mining.

Pink Everlastings are starting to come back again – a few on the Dewar's Pool-Bindoon Road, but there were lots here once, especially half way along the northern boundary of Poison Gully Reserve.

Blue orchids seem to grow in most of our bushlands.

There are lots of kangaroo paws all over the country – the best I have seen are on the left-hand side of the Bindoon Spring

Reserve, about 100 yards (91.4m) off the road. They grow there as high as the saddle on a 15-hand horse.

There used to be lots of donkey orchids on the watercourse on the east side of Bindoon Spring, but there are not many now because land clearing has increased the salinity.

The plain white spider orchids still grow just off the water courses and the yellow silk spider orchids are found over most of our bush land.

The most beautiful spider orchid is the short-stem red silk spider orchid and I can now only find one patch in the whole of the Julimar bush.

There are, however, plenty of the plain long-stemmed red spider orchids.

Cats paws are plentiful everywhere, as are the cowslip orchids.

Blue leschenaultia grows over most of our gravel land but there used to be black kangaroo paws in odd patches. I can't find any these days – they used to be on a block between Bindoon and Gingin.

The sticky rainbow flowers that feed on insects are still aplenty.

Green ferns still grow everywhere in our rocky hills and yellow everlastings are still plentiful on our gravel land, as are buttercups.

Our poison plants flower well – York Road, Runner Poison, Box Poison, Berry Poison and White Gum Poison.

Kangaroos don't seem to eat these, although the little grey brush wallaby seems to find them edible and the bronze-wing pigeon eats the seeds.

There are many more varieties of flowers in our bush, but if bauxite mining takes place we will lose most of them.

What a terrible thing – no wild flowers left for the children of tomorrow to see. Once they are gone, they're gone.

Ron Waters
Toodyay

True Blue blue

I JUST read in the December *Herald* about the painting of Bruce Cleasby's truck that was presented to him by Davina Twine.

I'm sure he would be happy about that. The article mentioned that several years ago I exhibited a sculpture named Blue Angel.

Just to clarify, my sculpture was called True Blue – no angels involved.

The sculpture of Bruce and his truck sat upon a wooden box which was part of the sculpture and the title True Blue is stencilled onto it.

Margot Watkins
Toodyay

The Toodyay Herald invites you to have your say in our letters page. Please email us at news@toodyayherald.com.au with your full name, address and phone number. Letters that are short, sharp and to the point about topical local issues are preferred. The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, grammar and punctuation.



This month's annual general meeting of shire electors in the Toodyay Memorial Hall with Toodyay Shire President Brian Rayner and Deputy President Therese Chitty (both centre) at the top table and (continuing right) Crs Rob Welburn, Judy Dow, Sally Craddock, Paula Greenway and Eric Twine. Crs Di Granger and Ben Bell sent apologies for their absence.

Shire leadership split on CEO performance as new councillor mocks 'meaningless' answers



Geoff Appleby

IT'S OFFICIAL – Toodyay's new shire president admits "it is the general feeling among councillors that we are not very good".

Most of us already knew this but it was encouraging to hear it announced publicly at last month's council meeting.

Now all we need is for the shire CEO to follow suit, and then for the whole lot of them to do something about it.

President Brian Rayner made a promising start by announcing he had arranged for WA's Local Government Association (WALGA) to deliver councillor training, with two sessions completed in Toodyay last month.

The first was about how meetings should be

run, and the second covered council budgets, balance sheets, financial statements and other important money matters.

All good stuff – let's hope it sinks in. However, problems have stemmed from attitude as well as comprehension, and that needs to change for improvement to occur.

For instance, public question time was an even more embarrassing farce than usual with written questions on notice to the CEO either lost by him, answered evasively or written in such obtuse language as to render them meaningless.

'No clue': New Cr Ben Bell said on Facebook later that he didn't have a clue what CEO Stan Scott's answers to his 13 questions on notice meant – and Cr Bell is no fool.

The whole thing was so confusing that 10 days' later, the shire still hadn't published minutes of the meeting to inform the rest of Toodyay what had happened.

If other councillors think this is good business practice for a publicly accountable elected body, then President Rayner surely has his work cut out.

After the first few responses, Toodyay Progress Association Chair Larry Graham gave up asking questions because no real answers were forthcoming.

He agreed for his remaining queries to be taken on notice for the next council meeting.

A similar thing happened to President Rayner when he tried later in the meeting to answer a question during a debate.

Mr Scott cut in and told the president not to respond until he – the CEO – did more research and had drafted a written response for the president to give at a later date.

There's a saying in business and politics that he who controls the agenda controls the meeting.

This is something our elected representatives might like to ponder if they are serious about wanting to improve their performance.

Brick cheque: Before general business got underway, Midland Brick Quarry and Distribution Manager Garry Price presented a cheque for \$36,500 to the council to compensate for wear and tear by his company's trucks on local shire roads.

Only two agenda items were debated publicly.

Cockatoo concern: Despite the CEO's best efforts to get councillors to approve a new 5.28ha (13-acre) Chitty Road gravel pit in Hoddys Well, the item was deferred to assess claims that the required native tree clearing might destroy nesting hollows for black cockatoos, including Carnaby Cockatoos which are listed as an endangered species by the Federal Department of Environment and Energy.

Earlier in the meeting, Toodyay Naturalists' Club member Desraé Clarke made an impassioned plea opposing the "desecration" of habitat for what she called an "iconic" local native bird.

Mrs Clarke said a gravel company report that the birds would not be affected was based on a site survey completed early last October when black cockatoos were absent because it was outside the local nesting season.

"Does the money we get from these companies replace our icons, the cockatoos?" she asked.

"I think not."

Mr Scott said the gravel pit needed Federal approval to proceed, which meant that council approval wouldn't affect the outcome as far as cockatoos were concerned.

However, Cr Sally Craddock disagreed, saying she had many questions that had not been answered.

The shire's environment officer had not even visited the site to assess the situation, she said.

Approving the gravel pit despite local concerns about black cockatoo habitat would send the wrong message to the Federal environment agency.

Cr Craddock's motion to reject the gravel pit was lost 3-6 (only Crs Paula Greenway and Bell supported her) but Deputy President Therese Chitty foreshadowed an alternative motion to defer the decision while the CEO gets more information about local wildlife.

Cr Rob Welburn agreed, saying: "I would prefer to defer so we can have a proper assessment done otherwise we will get chopped to pieces in SAT (the State Administrative Tribunal) and it will cost us thousands of dollars."

The deferral motion was carried 9-0.

Bodger secure: The second issue discussed in public was an application by a Morangup

family to keep five dogs, which exceeds the shire's two-dog policy.

Bindi, Marley, Max, Bodger and Brian are aged two, three, seven, 11 and 15 years respectively.

Shire rangers had assessed the situation and supported the application, which was moved by Cr Craddock and seconded by Cr Greenway.

The only opposition came from Cr Judy Dow who referred to a growing number of dog attacks in the shire.

The resolution was carried 8-1 with Cr Dow against.

Split decision: The council then went behind closed doors to discuss a motion on notice from Cr Di Granger that the council establish a new CEO performance review committee which – after about half an hour of debate immediately after the dinner break – was lost 3-6.

However, Deputy President Chitty joined Crs Granger and Bell to support the failed motion, which means that the shire's elected leadership – president and deputy president – disagree over how the council should manage the CEO's performance.

We know this because Cr Dow took the extraordinary step of asking for the names of all six opposing councillors – including herself – to be recorded in the minutes as voting against Cr Granger's motion.

No prize for guessing what that was all about.

Even more intriguing, according to the minutes, was that the CEO was present in the chamber for all of the debate over how the council should manage his performance and – if past form is anything to go by – probably had plenty to say about it too.

Comic finale: The public was allowed to return for the evening's final act – 13 questions on notice from Cr Bell on a variety of topics, including jobs for local contractors, legal costs, landfill and council compliance with State law.

His Facebook comment after the meeting says it all:

"Brief and concise – two things you can't accuse this shire of being when answering questions.

"Having been supplied answers to my questions at tonight's council meeting I still haven't a clue what on earth the responses mean.

"Check out the answers when they are published.

"A classic example of how to answer someone without saying anything all.

"Many of these answers would make (US comedian) WC Fields proud.

"So ... looks like there are going to be quite a few follow-up questions from me at the February meeting."

I rest my case.



CORBRACAGH DOWNS ALPACAS

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Taylor's Mekae (Suri)

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YOGA

Wednesday 5pm
Friday 9am



Sally 9574 4184
Toodyay Community Centre

Toodyay meth dealers jailed as heavy-haulage driver nailed for drug-driving

Police Beat

With Sgt Warren Conder

Toodyay Police Station



Toodyay police tested the driver of this prime mover positive for two drugs.

TWO OF Toodyay's main drug dealers have been jailed after months of good work by police in Toodyay and Midland.

The pair – a man and a woman from Bejoording who had previously lived in the Toodyay townsite and elsewhere – made several court appearances before being jailed in December and January.

The two drug dealers had been selling crystal methamphetamine (ice) and cannabis locally, as well as dealing in stolen goods.

The repeat offenders had also committed several other traffic and criminal offences.

"Local dealers usually get their drugs from Perth or Northam and their activities attract people who police suspect are involved in drug use," Sgt Conder said.

"Drug users generally go to someone's house to buy the drugs, which is how we are able to find the dealers.

"This particular operation involved the use of search warrants on homes, and random and targeted traffic stops aimed specifically at the two drug dealers."

Sgt Conder said stolen goods including a stolen motor vehicle were recovered.

"We urge local people to help by reporting any suspicious activity, such as vehicles frequently visiting houses or properties for short periods of time, then leaving a few minutes later," Sgt Conder said.

"This can help us identify drug dealers and stop these criminals from selling drugs in our community, including to children and teenagers."

Heavy-haulage drug bust

THE DRIVER of a heavy haulage-truck (above right) tested positive for amphetamines and cannabis after he was stopped by Toodyay police at Bakers Hill last month.

The traffic stop was part of a random 10.30pm police check on Great Eastern Highway near the town bakery.

"The truck driver was fidgety, slurring his words and his eyes were dilated," Sgt Conder said.

"We also found drugs in the front console of his prime mover – usually they are in the sleeping quarters at the back of the cab."

Sgt Conder said the driver – an independent contractor – was charged with driving under the influence of drugs.

"Trucks are a huge target for us," Sgt Conder said.

"We also check for fatigue management by checking their logbooks and report any breaches to WorkSafe WA.

"Generally we do two types of trucks – heavy haulage and livestock carters, including farmers.

With livestock, we inspect consignment notes to check for stolen animals.

Christmas blitz

POLICE stopped a total of 1012 vehicles over the Christmas/New Year holiday break, resulting in 38 traffic charges.

Eleven drivers were affected by drugs, 18 had no authority to drive and five were drunk drivers.

"We got a high result for drug driving," Sgt

Conder said.

"Some were transients and some were in large trucks.

"Motorists were stopped on back roads as well as in town – don't think you're safe if you're driving on a dirt road.

"It's disappointing that some people in our community think it's OK to drive unlawfully or while drugged or drunk.

"They put everyone – including our families and children – at risk.

"That's why I ask local community members to be vigilant, and report to police anyone they know who continues to commit these offences so we can reduce the risk and harm to our community."

Firearms warning

TOODYAY police are receiving a lot of notifications – mostly relating to local farmers – for failure to renew firearms licences.

Firearms licence records are held in Perth and when an expiring licence is not renewed, local police are asked to investigate.

Gun owners with expired licences are served with a \$421 infringement notice and may also face prosecution, plus the cost of renewing their firearms licence.

"We get up to a dozen notifications from Perth a month," Sgt Conder said.

"Offenders run the risk of losing their licences for all of their guns.

"Seized guns – including scopes – are put inside a big machine and crushed so that they can never be used again."

Two servo break-ins

TWO PEOPLE believed to be young males – one (below) wearing a distinctive red cap – broke into the Shell service station near Newcastle Bridge on two successive nights last month.

They used a pole to smash a glass front door between 1am and 3am on Monday January 8 and Tuesday January 9.

It is the fourth time the service station has been burgled in 12 months but new CCTV cameras have given police a clearer lead on catching the offenders.

Cigarettes, food and soft drinks were stolen in the latest incidents.

Police are urging anyone who saw anything

at the time of the break-ins to contact them.

Truck roll-over

A HEAVY truck and trailer rolled over on Salt Valley Road near Fernie Road in Hoddys Well last month.

The empty BGC truck from a nearby quarry dug deep gouges into the road surface (below) as it rolled but the driver was unhurt.

The vehicle was quickly salvaged and towed away.



Deep gouges cut in road after truck roll-over.

Facebook posts can reveal aged mental decline

Computer Safety
Phil Hart

YOU MAY have seen articles about the dangers of the internet for children, but what about the risks for older people?

In particular, what about the dangers for people whose mental health and mental agility decline as they get older?

Sometimes the mental decline can be so gradual that nobody notices it for months or even years.

This can be a very difficult area for families with a member who is experiencing this.

It needs to be approached with great sensitivity, not just for the affected person but for everybody else as well.

There is no 'one size fits all'. Each case is different.

It will always be a balancing act between the needs and rights of the person suffering mental decline, and the need to protect them from the dangers of the internet.

Mental decline is not linear. Some days the person will be very much better than other days.

One sign to look out for is posting private comments in public places, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Other signs include expressing frustration with the internet, confusion over the meaning of emails and, becoming secretive.

Access to the internet needs to be managed accordingly.

One option is to have a family member present at all times when the affected person is using the internet.

Other options include changing passwords on the relevant services; again, Facebook and Twitter are examples.

Another option is to change the password on the device.

While it is an extreme option, it is always possible to delete their accounts entirely.

It can be a very difficult time for families and talking to other families can help.

Happy surfing.



Toodyay servo thief caught on video security camera.

T O O D Y A Y
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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Size matters when it's a water tank



Julimar volunteer firefighters christen their new 1.4 light tanker.

**Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
Julimar
Grant Scobie**

WATER – it's the most important thing on the fire ground and without it, there'd be little chance of controlling the fire.

Rural fire brigades have a big problem – we don't always have the luxury of fire hydrants to supply us whether fighting a house fire or a bush fire.

All fire appliances have water tanks and it's the size of the tank that's important.

As mentioned many months ago, a 2.4R tanker carries 2000 litres of water while a 4.4R carries 4000 litres.

That may seem like a lot but it's also possible to empty a 2000-litre tank through a hose in around four minutes.

We do have water tanks strategically placed throughout the shire but, sometimes, they're not all that strategically placed.

We also have the water trucks. To start with, we have the Toodyay 12.2 (carries 12,000 litres; 2-wheel drive), a tanker supplied by DFES (Department of Fire and Emergency Services) to supply water to appliances on the fire ground.

It's set up with outlets and pressure to be able to supply four units at a time but lack of space and crew members usually means appliances are topped up one at a time.

We also have the luxury of our local water carters.

These folk give their time, sometimes many hours, and their fuel to make sure we're kept well supplied.

Now, what about that statement that we can

empty a truck of water in four minutes? That all depends on the 'branch' used.

Yes, fire fighters, like all other professionals, have special names for things: a 'branch' is the bit on the end of the hose used to direct the water to the fire (the Romans used a hollowed out branch of a tree for that purpose) and that's topped off by a 'nozzle' to make either a spray or a jet of water from the 'branch'.

Some 'branches' are set up to deliver water at a set rate; others can be adjusted from 19 litres per minute up to 575L/m.

There are uses for all and a fire fighter using the 'branch' needs to decide what amount of water is to be used for what purpose.

The water is forced out through the hose and 'branch' by a pump attached to a tank – mostly.

Out in the bush, almost exclusively from a tank; in the towns and cities, usually from a pump attached to a water source such as a hydrant.

The smart bush fire firefighters use lower pressures and lower rates when necessary to conserve water.

Sometimes, such as when a large tree is alight, it's necessary to grab the big 'branch', crank it up to maximum, crank the pump up to a high pressure and blast the area high up the tree to try to put it out; this usually occurs during 'mop-up' (after the fire is contained.)

The most important thing is to keep a little water left over if the new protection sprays are to be useful (it's no good spending all this money of saving lives if there's no water to squirt over the cabin, etc).

All fire appliances nowadays are supplied with beepers to inform firefighters of low water levels – if the beeper goes off, you return

to a water point and fill up.

Unfortunately, these beepers sometimes go off when driving up or coming down a steep hill even when the tank is full.

Firefighters have to be aware of this and not let the 'cry wolf' syndrome affect their water-saving work.

The other water 'problem' is for the aerial attack helicopters and planes.

The fixed-wing aircraft have to land and can be supplied with water from hydrants at the airport, assuming there is one with water hydrants nearby.

The helicopters or 'helitacs' are able to suck up water from various water sources such as rivers, dams, swimming pools, etc. However, in the middle of summer, these can sometimes be limited, too.

Mind you, water is useless if there's no volunteer to spray it around.

Head down to the fire shed and meet those vollies; they don't bite – much.



Helitac rotors throw up leaf debris and dust while re-loading water from a collar tank.

Fake packages a bundle of trouble

**Toodyay Community Safety and Crime Prevention Association
Desraé Clarke**

THE CHOOSE Respect initiative is moving forward in Toodyay.

The Community Morning Tea held in early December at the Cola Café gave further insight into this exciting program.

We are grateful for Michael and Bec providing the excellent venue – it was really appreciated.

If you have further queries or questions about the Choose Respect program contact toodyaycscpa@westnet.com.au

A warning from WASCAMNet has been issued about people receiving an email stating that an 'undeliverable package' is being held for them by Australian Post or FedEx.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has received thousands of complaints about this scam.

With 'on-line' shopping now a popular concept, the fake email has been sent claiming to be from Australia Post or FedEx.

The email then directs the recipient to open an attachment and click a link or download a file to retrieve the parcel.

Australia Post and FedEx do not contact their customers in this manner. Delete any email claiming to be Australian Post or FedEx.

Do not click on any link or download any data. Report the receipt of the email to the ACCC as soon as possible.

Regularly back-up your data on a separate hard drive.

If you think you have been scammed ring WASCAMNet on 1300 30 40 54 or contact wascamnet@commerce.wa.gov.au.

If bank details have been given contact your bank to cancel the transaction.

For emergencies only call 000, Toodyay Police 9574 9555 or Crimestoppers 1800 333 000.

TOODYAY

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

Total fire ban breaches face crackdown

PEOPLE who ignore total fire bans will be targeted under a new scheme to educate West Australians about the dangers of breaching the law as well as catching and prosecuting serious offenders.

Department of Fire and Emergency Services' (DFES) records show almost one third of out-of-control fires on total fire ban days during the 2016-2017 bushfire season started as a result of banned fire activity.

The penalty for breaching a total fire ban or exemption is a fine of up to \$25,000 and/or 12 months' jail.

The DFES investigates breaches of total fire bans, issues warning notices and prosecutes repeat and serious offenders.

The WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, police and local councils also have the authority to take action against breaches of total fire bans to ensure serious and repeat offenders are dealt with.

Total fire bans are usually published on emergency.wa.gov.au the day before they take effect but can be declared at any time if weather conditions warrant.

The blanket ban prohibits lighting any open-air fires.

This includes deliberately lit fires, burn-offs, cooking with open fire appliances, campfires or conducting business activities that could start a fire, such as using incinerators, welding equipment, grinding, soldering and gas cutting.

For more information about total fire bans, fire restrictions and industry exemptions, please visit the DFES website at dfes.wa.gov.au.

Tony's motto is 'bee prepared'

**Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
Morangup**
Sue Maddrell

THE BRIGADE had its January meeting and one of our members Tony Lloyd was presented with the 15-year National Medal for service.

Tony is an active member in the brigade and last year was elected as our third lieutenant.

He's there when you need him and even carries a bee suit in his truck for those times when a beehive is disturbed at a fire.

Thank you, Marcus and Brian for making sure Tony's wife Joanne snuck into the back of the room just prior to the presentation of the medal to Tony.

We recently signed up six new members and once they do their training they'll be out on the fire ground.

It's good to see a few young ones interested in joining.

So far, this season has been quiet for the Toodyay shire with only one call at the time of writing.

The brigade has a meeting on the third Saturday of the month at 5.30pm with a barbecue after for those that wish to stay.



Pictured from left: Kim Maddrell, Tony Lloyd with his service medal and Jeff Venn.

Anyone interested in joining the brigade enquiries contact our captain Jeff Venn on 0417 714 798.

Santa bags provide quick exit for firies

**Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
Bejoording**
From the desk of The Badger

IT WAS Christmas time in the bush and at Bejoording we all wondered if Santa would bring a gift for our members.

He sure did. All active (ie: rostered) members received a large bright red tote bag big enough for all their protective gear including helmets and boots.

The idea simply being that such a bag stored in the car boot or near the entrance

to their home would facilitate a quick exit if a call-out came, and nothing would be left behind.

After all, they can do a quick change at the shed on arrival.

Anyway, the bags were well received with one member of smaller proportions even posing with herself inside the bag (it was on Facebook of course) just to prove how ready to go she was.

Bejoording went without any major fire events and all members were able to enjoy their family festivities, even if those on roster had to resist the liquid pleasures.

Speaking of surprises, the brigade members would like to offer sincere thanks for the generous donation from The Toodyay Op Shop.

The Op Shop does a great job supporting local brigades and other local causes.

January continued in a fairly benign way to the great relief of everyone.

We were well prepared of course but the weather was reasonably cool and some heavy rains in January helped reduce risk, but as of the time I write this, it had been

very quiet on the fire front.

Fingers and toes crossed for February. Please note that our regular monthly meeting has shifted to the third Friday of the month at 5.45pm.

A sausage sizzle or similar is now a feature of the meeting and attendance has definitely improved.

Our next regular meeting will be at the shed on Friday February 16 at 5.45pm.

The Bejoording Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade asks you to be vigilant and careful using any tools or vehicles with the potential to cause a fire.

Remember to always plan and prepare for fire and have a clear contingency strategy in place should things get out of control.

Fires can be a catastrophic risk to people, animals and property, so take care. Advice is free but getting it wrong can be expensive.

If you have any questions remember you can contact captain Barry Grey on 9574 2149 or The Badger on 9574 4834.

Please leave a message if we're not there.

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Scott Palmer (left) and Caleb Duggan preparing for their Brisbane to Broome air race.

Pilots race to raise funds

NORTHAM-trained pilots Scott Palmer and Caleb Duggan are fundraising ahead of the 2018 Outback Air Race for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

They are hoping to raise \$4000 before the race starts in Brisbane on August 18.

The 3940km race across the top end from Brisbane to Broome is a GPS-based time trial over two weeks which raises funds for essential medical equipment and RFDS services.

Last year, the RFDS made an average of

915 patient contacts or transports and flew 72,358km a day.

The organisation ran 14,471 healthcare clinics, operated 67 aircraft from 22 bases and employed the equivalent of 1072 full-time staff.

This year, the RFDS will celebrate 90 years of service.

More information about the race and how to donate can be found at oar18.everydayhero.com/au/teamzic and, outbackairrace.com.au/.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mick 'The Brick' Lee (74) on the job at new ambo depot

St John Ambulance
Carolynne Haigh

WORK is well underway on construction of a new ambulance depot at the Morangup community complex in Wallaby Way.

The depot now has the north, east, west and internal brick walls in place and is waiting only for a south wall to be built before the roof can be installed and concrete aprons poured.

A core of committed local people have volunteered their trade skills, while local and other businesses have donated materials and machinery.

There are too many to name all but top of the list is Mick 'The Brick' Lee.

Mick volunteered his services to lay some 23,000 bricks to extend the nearby Morangup fire station which opened in 2014, and is on target to lay another 12,000 bricks to help build the new ambulance depot.

Mick is a retired bricklayer who turns 75 in May.

Construction would not have been possible without the commitment of the Toodyay and Districts St John Ambulance brigade, and local volunteers such as Valdis Taukulis, Don Bridger, Glenn Melton, Jeff Venn, Allan Rose, Brian Allen and Kim Maddrell.

After a long incubation period, the site

was excised from a reserve that houses the Morangup community complex, which includes a local fire station, community hall and children's playgrounds.

Midland Brick has provided extraordinarily generous direct support to the Morangup community over the past six or so years.

The company provided all the bricks, plus concrete and fill material for the fire station extensions.

With help from Austral Bricks, the company also donated the fill and provided trucks and drivers for three days to cart some 5000 cubic metres to prepare the pad for construction of the ambulance new depot.



Above (from left): Jamie Evans, Charlie Wroth, Garry Price and Kim Maddrell inspect site plans while Mick Lee (right) shows his form with the trowel.



Pool survives costings bungle

Continued from Page 1.

HOWEVER, Deputy President Chitty said it was important to include new facilities for basketball, netball, hockey, tennis, soccer and other sports because there was nowhere else in Toodyay for these sports to be played.

"Parents have to take their children to other towns, which is a disincentive for them to take part in healthy activities that most other country towns take for granted.

"Hockey and soccer need a new field because their previous location was on an Aboriginal burial site," she said.

"Our basketball and netball courts are too small.

"Our kids are our future, and having adequate sporting facilities is vital in rural communities.

"It will also bring more money into our town when visiting teams and children with their parents come to Toodyay to compete in sporting events, and stay on to eat in our hotels and cafes, and shop locally.

"I see this happen when our teams go to other country towns, but we always miss out because we don't have the same sporting facilities and venues that they do.

"Let's not just sit on this again and keep repeating history."

Cr Di Granger proposed an alternative

motion that Mr Scott provide the council with a "comprehensive and fully costed council business case for only a swimming pool".

She also said a new swimming pool should be heated for year-round use.

However, that motion lapsed when Cr Chitty's motion for a scaled-down project – seconded by Cr Dow – was passed 6-3, with Crs Bell, Craddock and Granger against.

President Rayner said if the council's reduced funding bid failed, a pool would still be built using existing shire resources and could be designed to be heated later.

Editorial Page 4.

YOGA

Wednesday 5pm
Friday 9am

Sally 9574 4184

Toodyay Community Centre

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"Provide First Aid" HLTAID003

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To be held on Saturday 10th February 2018 and Saturday 10th March 2018

St John Ambulance, Stirling Terrace Toodyay

This is a general one day course that would benefit all those at work, home or for leisure. The course provides an excellent general grounding in first aid and will enable you to perform appropriate first aid procedures and basic life support skills. This unit satisfies training requirements across a range of community and workplace settings.

Contact Carolynne for further details:
Phone: 0428 957 600 or 9574 2390
Email: sjatoodyay@bigpond.com

Free first aid kit for all participants

Cover-ups hurt and almost never work

Toodyay Progress Association
Larry Graham, Chair

BECAUSE we have had to battle entrenched and old-fashioned Toodyay Shire Council attitudes, the progress envisaged in our title has been somewhat lacking.

Nevertheless, we have avoided making personal attacks and remain totally focused on council policy and procedures.

This is challenging and we accept that a focus on detail can confuse people.

However, we push on because our council seems to think that it doesn't have to comply with the law unless it suits and gives the impression that it resents anyone questioning this.

It is your money being spent by the council, and we think you are entitled to know why and how, and what is happening.

And by that we don't mean accepting the council's own propaganda about what it does – we are talking about what's really happening.

Our association is still pursuing the legal

costs issue and the reason is simple – since February last year, we have been trying to get the council to explain what it did.

We asked a lot of genuine questions about the council's accounting processes, the cost and how decisions were made, but have not received as many genuine answers.

We are deeply concerned that the council did not comply with its legal obligations or follow its own policies.

This is a tad sad because our council has a pretty good compliance policy that tells it what to do if a requirement is not followed.

So, we asked a pretty basic set of questions to find out how the compliance policy was applied when the council did not follow requirements under WA's Freedom of Information (FOI) law.

The short answer is that we and the councillors are being told that because the FOI matter has been finalised by the FOI Commissioner, the council's failure to comply with the law is a now dead issue.

I reckon a shedload of ratepayers would love to be able to use that defence if they

failed to comply with council local laws.

One of the many lessons I learnt in public life is that nobody ever gets into too much trouble after admitting a mistake.

However, cover-ups always hurt and almost never work.

In a scenario worthy of a British Monty Python TV comedy sketch, new ground is being broken with what looks like an attempted cover-up of a cover-up.

Our council is a very strange organisation because what we are asking from it is a very basic accountability measure.

All we wanted to know was how the council followed its own compliance policy or – to put it another way – after not having complied with State FOI law, did our council then follow its own policy to deal with the non-compliance?

It's not rocket science.

The really miserable thing is that any competent organisation would have just answered: "Yes – we followed our policy, we did these things on these dates and the audited cost of the legal case totalled \$..."

Game over.

It really isn't that hard, is it? That is unless our council didn't follow the law or its own policy and doesn't know the full cost of its legal case.

Then it really is a cover-up and, if that is the case, ratepayers have every right to be mightily upset with those who are either not seeking to get that information or are assisting in a cover-up.

However, there was some good news from last month's council meeting because – despite not competently answering any questions asked by the association or Cr Ben Bell and rejecting Cr Di Granger's proposal to improve council management of the CEO – the shire president made a statement to the effect that the council was not performing as well as it should and that councillors will be offered further local government training.

The Toodyay Progress Association thinks that is a small step towards the progress we seek and looks forward to more of it.

As always, we point out that we are a not-for-profit volunteer public advocacy group that will not and has not, run, supported or endorsed candidates for elected office.



Heavy trucks a concern for local residents.

Residents oppose new gravel pit

IN DECEMBER the *Herald* reported on the proposal to increase the size of a gravel pit on Toodyay Road in the Shire of Mundaring.

Local residents were initially given two weeks to respond to the proposed twenty-fold expansion of quarrying operations which would result in 33,000 more heavy trucks a year entering Toodyay Road near Dryandra Road.

Morangup residents applied to the Mundaring Shire for an extension and were given an extra two weeks over Christmas to make their submissions.

More than 100 submissions were received and residents who participated will be advised by mail of the council meeting where the planning application by Trico Resources Pty Ltd and Swan Gravel Pty Ltd will be discussed.

See story Page 21.

Bank backs Arabian night

Caroline Campbell

NORTHAM women in Business (NWIB) has secured its major sponsors for a fundraising ball thanks to the Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank and the Northam Customer Service Centre.

The Toodyay branch of Bendigo Bank has donated a substantial amount to the NWIB scholarship program and will continue to support the program in the future.

With bank confirmed as a major sponsor, the ball promises to be even bigger than last year.

Guests will be treated to an Arabian Nights themed experience with an all-inclusive four-course meal and drinks package as well as plenty of spectacular entertainment.

The Arabian Nights Grand Ball will take place on Saturday February 24 from 6.30pm to midnight at The Grand in Northam.

Tickets to the event cost \$180 and have been selling fast.



Ball president Joanne Hill (centre) with burlesque dancers.



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M: Rosie 0430 335 516







Unseasonal rains help fill dry dams but spoil feed

Toodyay Agricultural Alliance
Frank Panizza

THE NEW Year has brought with it unseasonal heavy summer rainfall, similar to last year's start.

Though not as heavy as previously, it was widespread and very consistent across the shire with most farmers reporting at least 80mm.

Some areas on the western part of the shire and near the Toodyay town site received more than 100mm.

The early summer rain, though a boon for water storage and dam levels, is a headache for livestock producers.

The gentle nature of the rain has thoroughly soaked the soil surface which has germinated pasture, particularly clover, which will not survive the summer.

This, combined with the destruction of any dry feed still available before the rain, will lead to poor quality summer feed.

Graziers will need to hand feed or seek agistment for their livestock.

Competition for agistment on crop stubbles has been strong.

Feed prices, particularly lupins, has risen over the past few weeks.

Sheep farmers, despite the headaches caused by the unseasonal rain, have good reasons for cheer.

Very strong sheep prices, particularly lamb, have buoyed confidence in the industry.

Recent sheep sales in the Eastern States



Trevor Lee trails out lupins to supplement summer feed. Photo: Frank Panizza.

have seen lamb sell to a near record high of \$7 kilo slaughtered weight.

Industry commentators suggest that as the price of wool is also at a near-record high,

sheep prices will remain strong as graziers rebuild sheep numbers by retaining them for breeding stock.

Wool prices which traditionally have not

closely followed lamb prices, are also very strong.

Strong demand from the burgeoning middle class in China is suspected to be the reason for the reignited interest in wool.

Demand for western-styled business clothing, particularly from young women, has been cited as a new and promising development for the wool industry.

Demand for high-end woollen garments from Europe remains steady, however the rapid rise in demand from China is a new and welcomed development.

Farmers who have no livestock will generally be planning lime sand programs, collecting fertiliser and beginning summer weed-spraying programs.

The usual summer weeds consisting of melons, mintweed, roly-poly and caltrop will all need spraying due to the heavy summer rain.

This job most farmers dislike as not only does it add another expense, the spraying needs to be done when the weather is cool which means an early start – sometimes 3am.

One of benefits of GPS guidance in modern sprayers is that night spraying is now possible.

Spraying at night and in the early hours of the morning allows for lower amounts of spray to be used as the risk of evaporation and spray drift is much less.

2J 2AIR reaches out for local feedback

Toodyay Community Radio
Bethan Lloyd

SINCE our official launch in November, the committee of 105.3FM Radio has been working hard to make your radio station 2J 2AIR the 'Heartbeat of the Community'.

We would appreciate your comments on what you are listening to – are you tuning into 105.3FM daily?

The Green Hour program discusses environmental, gardening and sustainability topics and we are seeking gardening questions, suggestions for topics and guests to buddy up with our presenter and record segments of interest to the community. Call 9574 5882 or email us at 2j2air@gmail.com.

Current program presenters organise their own segments and we have a diverse range of music for everyone's taste.

Gracie's Hour presents a youth view of



the world, Crooners and Swooners presents lounge music from the greats. There is folk music from around the world and on Friday

nights you can tune in for Ready to Rock.

Feedback for our programmer presenters is crucial so do visit us on Facebook, add your comments and suggestions and keep an eye out for a fantastic competition coming soon.

All suggestions on what you would like to hear will be graciously accepted and passed onto our programming committee so drop us a line by emailing us on 2j2air@gmail.

Until next time – remember to tune into 105.3FM your local community radio station.

YOGA

Wednesday 5pm
Friday 9am



Sally 9574 4184

Toodyay Community Centre

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Locals slip into motor mayhem in the mud

Bejoording Community Group News
From the desk of The Badger

EVEN though our weekly shed gatherings are closed in January the social activity in this neck of the woods has been just as active as ever, even if some of the numbers have been a bit small due to holidays and family commitments elsewhere.

We said goodbye to 2017 in grand style with a successful Christmas party at the shed, jointly hosted with the fire brigade.

The range of traditional foods was awesome and a great big thank you goes out to all those who put time and effort into cooking.

Boxing Day was our largest gathering since Christmas when most of the community as well as a few visitors gathered for a day of fun in the mud.

A shortened footy game was held in the mud, as so many regular players were away, but fun nevertheless and there was plenty of motor vehicle mayhem on the mud afterwards.

A big thank you to Marc Bodium and Linda Veldtman for all their preparation and hosting.

Since then it seems that there has been some sort of gathering from half a dozen to a crowd of 20 plus at someone's shed or back porch, two or three times every week.

There are a few new faces in the district

and they have all fitted in very well.

We're looking forward to another year of weekly gatherings, community events and regular footy nights once the season gets under way.

Our first proper meeting for the year will be Wednesday February 7.

It's our annual hamburger night, and members will have the opportunity to participate in our planning for the year, as well as to volunteer for all sorts of things.

This is one of our occasional 'proper' meetings as well as a social event, so try to get there before 6.30pm.

If you aren't a member this is the best night to join up.

For members all events during the year at the shed are free, so it's worth it.

Your monthly reminder - we meet every Wednesday evening (except in January) at the Bejoording Community Centre which shares premises with the local volunteer bush fire brigade in Bejoording Road.

Come along from 6pm and leave when it suits you.

It's strictly 'come as you are' casual, kids are welcome, and there are fun events every month.

If you want to know more, you can contact president Barry Grey on 9574 2149 or call The Badger on 0414 250 484.

Hope to see you soon.



Alan Axon surrounded by the things he loved best, including a photo on the rear wall of himself and UK singer Cliff Richards.

Bonnie farewells Alan Axon

Bonnie Axon

SOME Herald readers may know, but for those who don't, my gorgeous man lost his battle with cancer in December and now has a golden microphone in heaven.

Alan really fought hard and tried to hide his 'sickness' from everyone, in the hope that he would be able to continue to live life to the full regardless of this insidious disease.

And that he did. He certainly knew how to live and get the most out of each day, so much so it was often hard for me to keep up with him.

Thank you to all who carried us through, supported us and showed understanding

and to the communities of Toodyay and Darlington for their condolences and beautiful words. Without you I would not have been as strong throughout this.

I will certainly miss him beyond words.

For those that knew him well, you will understand that he didn't want a fuss, so the family held a private cremation. However, also at his request, a fitting memorial service and celebration of Alan's life was held at home, Ipswich View Homestead in Folewood Road.

Goodbyes are hard when the story was not finished, and the book has been closed.

Al, I will carry you with me 'til I see you again.



Mud footy is always a favourite with Bejoording locals.



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Tameka and Alyssa on track for Sandakan

Caroline Campbell

IN APRIL, in the tenth year of the Sandakan Scholarship Program, two high school students from Toodyay will travel to Sandakan in Borneo to commemorate Anzac Day.

Tameka Baker (15), and Alyssa Farrell, (14) will leave on April 15 and their itinerary includes a visit to see where the prisoners of the infamous Death March were imprisoned.

The Sandakan Death March has always deeply affected the people of Toodyay.

Four of the men who perished on the infamous march were sons of Toodyay – Reg Ferguson and three of the five Dorizzi brothers Tom, Gordon and Herbert, making this particular place and moment in history so poignant.

Thanks to the generosity of the Toodyay community and sponsors, the local RSL sub branch has been able to send students from Toodyay to commemorate the Death March each year.

The Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank is a major sponsor of the Sandakan Scholarship Program for students living within the Toodyay Shire.

The program commenced in 2009 with 11 scholarship winners to date receiving the unique opportunity to visit Sandakan.

Toodyay and Districts Bendigo Community Bank Branch Manager Kirsten Barrack said the scholarship program gives students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"It's not that often you get to experience first-hand the place of a historical event that's so deeply embedded in the psyche of our Toodyay community.

"It's thrilling to see two more winners



Toodyay RSL President Peter Brennan with Sandakan Scholarship joint winner Tameka Baker.

going to Sandakan this year and it's an achievement our whole community can own.

"The Toodyay Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank has been a sponsor of the scholarship program since its inception 10 years ago and our whole branch team are passionate supporters of its importance," Ms Barrack said.

Lou Kidd, who leads the program for the Toodyay RSL Sub Branch, said the bank had been a long-time supporter of the program.

"I don't know where to begin about how

great the Toodyay branch of the Bendigo Bank has been to us at the Toodyay RSL."

Sandakan Scholarship sponsors over the years have also included the Shire of Toodyay, Toodyay Lions, Op Shop, Michael McGuinness AM, Grant Woodhams MLA, Judi Moylan MLA, Anderson Earthmoving, The Toodyay Brewbakers, Toodyay Miniature Railway, Christian Porter MP, Shane Love MLA, Rogue Riders Motorcycle Club, Toodyay St Johns Ambulance and Charlie and Marion Ferguson.



Sandakan joint winner Alyssa Farrell.

Toodyay RSL picks Borneo scholarship winners

RSL Toodyay Sub Branch
Bruce Guthrie

THE PRESIDENT of RSL Toodyay Sub Branch Peter Brennan reported that applicants for this year's Sandakan Scholarship program were interviewed on November 10 in the Toodyay Council Chambers.

Five applications were received and four well-presented students were interviewed by a panel of six representing some of our sponsors plus a representative from the sub branch executive.

Following deliberations, Tameka Baker from Toodyay District High School and Alyssa Farrall from St Joseph's School in Northam were selected to undertake the scholarship program and will travel to Borneo in April.

Our sincere congratulations to both students.

The sub branch held its annual Christmas function in the Memorial Hall on December 3.

There was a good turn-out of members and guests and the occasion was enjoyed by all. The audience greatly appreciated a very informative address given by Dr Michael McGuinness AM.

As the year commences, members are turning their thoughts towards activities to celebrate the sub branch Centenary of Charter on 7 October 2019.

The main event is to be a Centenary Ball on Saturday 5 October 2019 in the Memorial Hall.

If you are able to offer your skills, time or a donation please contact our president Peter Brennan via toodyayrsl@gmail.com.

This event will be open to the Toodyay community but numbers will be limited due to seating capacity in the hall; tickets will be available in 2019.

The Toodyay RSL Sub Branch is organising an Open Walk In information desk for the public and ex-service personnel and their families on Saturday February 10 at Federation Square between 10am and 12.30pm.

This is an opportunity to find out what our sub branch does and who is eligible to join. Affiliate membership is only \$10 a year.

Members please note that the next meeting of the sub branch will be held on Saturday February 10 in the Lesser Memorial Hall, commencing at 1pm.

We look forward to seeing you there.

New sink helps turners flush chips from eyes

Avon Woodturners
Max J Heath

WOODTURNERS would like to wish one and all a happy and safe new year.

We had a relatively quiet December before we went into our Christmas break but there were a few members making Christmas presents, etc.

Just before Christmas we had a new member join and we would like to welcome Phil Perkins to our midst.

Due to an accident at the shed recently we went through our old first-aid kit and decided that a new one was due.

This has been purchased and put in a prominent place in our building where everyone can see it.

On January 14 we started up again with a barbecue breakfast and most members turned up.

We are going to get our butts into gear and next time organise something for our Wednesday turners, some who have other commitments on Sunday preventing them from coming along.

Future plans for the shed are coming along nicely and by the time this goes to print we will have our plans for dust extraction, etc. under consideration.

We have also had approval to put in a soak well and set up a sink with the ability to be able to wash eyes in case of accident.

At our meeting on January 27 we learned

that the Friends of the River has seedlings growing for the beautification of the area and these will be planted later in the year.

Well that is about all from the Woodturners except to say that we hope everybody had a good safe Christmas and New Year.

In closing, remember our Roadwise motto – don't drive tired.

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IN MOORE WITH LOVE

I am concerned at the proposal to increase gravel extraction activities at Bailup. Morangup and local residents chose this locality for lifestyle reasons and do not want a nearby minesite contributing noise and dust. The Wheatbelt Highway Safety Review of December 2015 listed Toodyay Road as having the highest serious crash density of the roads in question. The increase in tonnages of gravel extracted at this Bailup site will result in more truck movements on Toodyay Road, having a further detrimental effect on the safety of this road. I have written to the Minister for Road Safety and the Minister for the Environment to raise my concerns.

The Nationals WA will continue to fight the McGowan Labor Government decision to close Moora Residential College. Moora's college provides an important boarding option for families between Geraldton and Perth that is affordable and close to home for many. Labor will also apply a 20 percent tax to income made by the six Agricultural College farms, including Cunderdin and Morawa Agricultural Colleges. This blatant cash grab by Metro-centric Labor will also affect agricultural programs at a further 10 schools in Perth and regional areas. This is a time to invest, not tax agricultural education. For updates -

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

Shane Love MLA
Member for Moore

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Magnificent eagle sculpture lands in Bolgart

Bolgart News

Serena Syred and Nolene Kaszanski

SUE AND Geoff Ludemann are now grandparents. Son Henry and daughter-in-law Karen who live in California had a little girl, Haven Sunniva Jay, on January 20.

On the same day, Edmund and Elly Forrester (Guthrie) who live on Kunanda Station welcomed Millie Rose to the world. Congratulations to the Guthrie and Forrester families.

The bowling ladies celebrated their Christmas Party on December 21.

It was a very hot day so we played indoor bowls in the air conditioning, had a Secret Santa and enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea.

The next day, The Bolgart Rural Merchandise, Walker Mechanical and Bolgart Hotel held their Christmas Party at the Bolgart Hotel.

Father Christmas arrived on his Harley, much to the excitement of the kids. A lovely dinner was served and a great community night was enjoyed by all.

Barbara Mottershaw celebrated her 70th



Bolgart eagle sculpture in the school grounds.

birthday recently. The highlight of her day was being serenaded over the phone by the Bolgart Library ladies.

Serena and Phil Syred and friend Muffy Edmonds celebrated a white Christmas in Canada.

Christmas Day was minus 32 degrees with the highlight of looking out of the window to see some Aussies playing cricket in the snow. That's a difference of 68 degrees from Christmas in WA.

The group toured on to Montana to visit former Bolgart residents Dean and Jo Clarke and enjoyed New Year with a big bonfire and fireworks.

The Bolgart P&C commissioned artist and school art teacher Laurie Smoker to create a magnificent eagle garden sculpture.

Many thanks to Lester Snooke, Peter Kaszanski and Doug McGill for installing the sculpture in time for the end-of-year concert.

The community of Bolgart has been saddened by the passing of two local stalwarts.

Doug King was the father of Karen, Irene, Cheryl, Diane and Stuart.

He was a progressive farmer who also ran his own merino stud and was involved with the football and bowling clubs.

Doug and his wife Doris retired to Perth but were still involved in running the farm with Stuart and Petrina until later years.

Kathleen Travers passed away on Friday January 19.

Kath had been heavily involved in the tennis, golf, CWA and bowling clubs for many years, holding committee positions in all clubs.

She, along with her husband Ron and son Mark, farmed on Carroll Road. Kath will be missed immensely by her son Mark and daughter Susan along with the rest of the community.



Father Christmas and Pip Snooke on the Harley.



Bolgart ladies at Cunderdin Gala Day from left: Deb Campbell, Pam Meston, Jenni Knowles, Barb Mottershaw, Dale McGill and Nolene Kaszanski.

Diary of a Monster – Part 2



Sneak peek – a glimpse of a possible winner. Photo: Heather Blackwell.

leva Tomsons

DOWN on the Dumbarton river flats there is trouble in the pumpkin patch.

In early November, giant pumpkin grower John Blackwell transplanted six seedlings grown from imported seeds that could potentially produce pumpkins weighing 500kg, but the early signs weren't promising.

John is still hoping to grow a monster gourd which will surpass last year's Dwellingup Pumpkin Festival winner which weighed in at 220.8kg and earned him the title of Pumpkin King but, he's not holding his breath.

Hot weather annihilated half of the seedlings and of the remaining three, only one has produced a pumpkin with the other two struggling to develop.

John isn't in the habit of naming his 'babies' but jokes that the pumpkin could be dubbed Steve Smith after the Aussie cricket captain who defies the odds at the crease.

Giant pumpkins don't face blistering balls on the pitch, but they need to withstand blistering heat, perishing winds, falling branches and numerous viruses that can literally wither them on the vine.

Unofficial Zucchini Queen Heather Blackwell, who last year produced the heaviest and longest Trumboncino zucchinis for the Dwellingup competition, still has time on her side to produce her monster marrows.

While the growing season of a giant zucchini is far shorter than that of a monster pumpkin, Heather says that her marrows

"had better get a move on in the next few weeks" to be ready for the Easter deadline.

"There is a lot of luck involved (in growing a huge pumpkin) and we might have run out," said Heather.

Win, lose or draw, the Blackwells have done their bit for the state's giant pumpkin growers.

After winning their battle with quarantine regulators to import genetically superior seeds from NSW, the Blackwells shared the seeds with other competitors.

After last year's time-consuming regime to produce the winning pumpkin, John isn't too fazed about the possibility of losing the remaining 'baby'.

"At least we'll be able to get away on a holiday," he said.

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YOGA



Wednesday 5pm
Friday 9am

Sally 9574 4184
Toodyay Community Centre

Drones and diviners join the hunt

Ieva Tomsons

THREE-year-old Border Collie Jack's disappearance on December 21 triggered a massive community response to help a recently arrived family find their much-loved pet.

The Polettis had relocated their Bedfordale horse-training business to Berry Road, Gidgegannup, seven weeks before Jack disappeared into the dense bush on John Ffarington's 4047ha (10,000 acre) property.

"I've never met a community like this; people came out of the woodwork to help us," said Bethany Poletti who embarked on a punishing eight-day search for Jack.

On the evening of Jack's disappearance Bethany searched well into the night, resuming at 4am on foot before attending to the horses for a few hours before resuming the search until 8pm.

"It wasn't just me; Holly Taylor our horse-breaker/track rider went riding, searching," said Bethany who was joined by friends and family who clocked up 10 to 12 hours a day in the hunt for Jack.

Six hundred flyers and a Facebook post on the Gidgegannup community page had alerted the district that Jack was missing and on December 23 Utah Road resident, Sally advised that Jack had been spotted but had disappeared back into Ffarington's bush.

There were no other sightings until December 28 when two motorists reported trying to get Jack into their car at Utah and Toodyay Roads.

"Fifty people came out to help us – walkers, motorists, old and young; everybody," said Bethany.

Michael Antony, Claire Webster and Josh Cesery-Hopkins sent up drones, Ernie Holmes provided a fox trap to catch Jack and Berry Road neighbours Karen and Daneika Andrich tentatively offered to locate the dog using their water-divining skills.

"My brother (who can also divine) used to play a game of hide-and seek using his daughter's hair to find her," said Karen who trialled the technique before approaching the Polettis.

"We didn't want to pin people's hopes on it, but we practised using the hair and wire and it worked."

Bethany provided a clump of Jack's fur to the Andrichs and they drove to Utah Road where Jack had been seen on December 28.

Earlier that week, following the advice of Search and Rescue, Bethany had placed



In the search for Jack, dog fur was placed in the hand holding the divining rod.

Jack's bed with sausages and water at the entrance to Ffarington's on Utah Road.

Before the diviners arrived, the items had been moved along the road by Bethany's daughter Alyce King who had heard that Jack might be on another property, Crimson Park.

The Andrichs didn't find Jack, but the fur and divining rod led them straight to the dog's relocated items.

The diviners then moved to Bailup Road where they received strong 'pulls' and where, after eight long days, Jack was finally found.

The sun was setting and Bethany decided

to walk a little further up Bailup Road for one last look after he was seen in the area by Kate Saunders.

Bethany was talking to her daughter Alyce on the phone and Jack popped up in a nearby paddock, leapt the fence and jumped into Bethany's arms.

He was covered in ticks and burrs, foot sore and 7kg lighter.

"We couldn't have done it without the community. So many eyes looking out for Jack," said Bethany who is still overwhelmed by the support they received from locals.



Micaile takes Benny for a ride.

Micaile

By Bill Gordon

He was driving on the loco at the Toodyay Mini-rail
A railway man for all his years, said his name was Micaile
His little mate rode with him, a big smile on his face
A terrier named Benny sat behind in pride of place.

With diesel running through his veins and coal dust in his hair
His love for all things railway would take him everywhere.
A life lived on the train tracks from the Rockies to the plains,
And then out to Australia, and those Pilbara iron ore trains.

Micaile was born to wander, a Romany of old
Proud of his gypsy heritage with all the tales he told
The places he had been and seen, the people he had met
There always was a train close by, on that you're safe to bet.

His home is now in Toodyay, beside the railway line
He knows each train as it goes by, and if it is on time
The AvonLink to Midland with its city businessmen
Students to the big smoke, and a tourist now and then.

The famous Indian Pacific that spans the Nullarbor
CBH's fleet of grain trains taking harvest to the shore
Every time a train goes by a smile comes to his face
And here beside the line will be his final resting place.

Corey signals an eye for detail

Toodyay Miniature Railway
June Eastwood

AUSTRALIA Day proved to be extremely busy with the first passengers leaving the station around 7.45am and the last carried just after 11am.

The day did not begin well as vandals had forced slivers of wood into the locks on the tunnel gates and we were unable to remove the wood.

With time running out, the special chains had to be cut – a laborious task in itself.

However, after the Australia Day awards where Toodyay Miniature Railway brought home the winning certificate and impressive medal, the mood was very jubilant.

Steve King hung the medal on the front of diesel Len and did a lap of honour.

It was a very bold move as, had that precious medal fallen off and been scrunched, Steve himself would have been in mortal danger as far as the secretary was concerned.

We were told a lovely story by a local grandfather as we left the ceremony.

His five-year-old grandson Corey (I hope I have the name right) visits from time to time from the city.

He is passionate about the railway and although it is best if we are running, if we are not, he simply walks round the station and track revelling in the surrounds.

On this particular Sunday we were not running but as he and grandfather walked away from the station, young Corey observed that the signals were missing.

Because of fear of vandalism, the signals are removed after the end of each run day and stored on a tailor-made wagon.

Corey was horrified and immediately implored his grandfather to "race home and ring the man and tell them the signals are missing before there is an accident".

Well done, Corey. Perhaps around 2050 we will have a new Minister for Railways.



Safe and back at home in Gidgegannup. Jack and Bethany Poletti.



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There will also be stalls for those that wish to purchase music festival merchandise. The Toodyay Music Fest runs from 11am and ends at 9pm with what promises to be a fun and exciting free family community event. Bring a rug or chairs and share a great day out with your friends and family and help make Toodyay shine.

toodyaymusicfest@gmail.com



Australia Day date was really the second landing

Toodyay Historical Society
Robyn Taylor, President

WE HAD a perfect day for the Australia Day commemoration and the shire is to be congratulated for organising such a splendid event.

The number of new citizens who took the pledge was impressive, as were the extraordinary achievements of the citizens and volunteer organizations nominated for the awards.

It is important to acknowledge these contributions to our region and country and to welcome new citizens.

Historically, there have always been days chosen to commemorate an important event such as foundation days, but not always can an actual day be pinpointed as being 'the day'. Australia Day is a case in point.

I enjoyed reading Professor Jane Lydon's piece on the web (the address is too long to reprint here) about this very topic.

Professor Lydon holds the Wesfarmers Chair in Australian History at the University of Western Australia.

She writes: "The First Fleet actually arrived on Australian soil on 18th of January 1788 but found the French already in occupation – so they moved the whole fleet around the corner to Sydney Cove."

She goes on to point out that not only does January 26 commemorate the second landing by the fleet, but also that only the male convicts were allowed to go on shore; the females had to remain on board until February 6.

So, no doubt with tongue in cheek, she speculates: "So a more accurate name for the event on January 26 might be the 'Second Landing of Male Convicts Day'."

Taking this argument further, I wonder, should we have another celebration on February 6 for 'Third Landing of Female Convicts'?

In WA, as with the other states, we commemorate our own particular Foundation Day on June 1. Following Federation of the Australian states in 1901, it wasn't until 1935 that a common date was agreed upon for Australia Day.

Professor Lydon notes that: "Since 1938 ... Aboriginal Australians have pointed out that, from their perspective, the arrival of the British is not a cause for celebration; on the contrary, it ushered in an era of dispossession." That's 80 years of trying to get a point across.

One of the good things to come out of the debates and discussions this year, is the quality of the published articles from eminent historians and others such as Geoffrey



Australia Day Senior Citizen of the Year Stan Eastwood (left) with nominees Heather Appleby, Paul Sutton and Marlene Andrijich.

Robinson QC, who have researched and thought deeply about Australia's foundation, its governance, and the impact on Aboriginal Australia.

Apart from the negative impact on our First People, enlightened governors such as Arthur Philip and the Scot Lachlan Macquarie enabled a far more democratic, less class-ridden society to evolve in this country.

The Imperial government in Whitehall was not amused, and Governor Macquarie in particular paid a heavy price for its displeasure.

Macquarie's acerbic observation: "There are but two classes of individuals in the country... Those who have been transported and those who ought to have been," did not earn him friends in high places.

It's fascinating stuff and contributes to our understanding about what makes Australia different and why we have good cause to celebrate.

It's also why there needs to be a robust debate about the date.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday February 21 at 7pm in Drummond House, Toodyay Environment and History Centre, next to the bank.

For more information: secretary Linda Rooney, secretary.2j.ths@gmail.com; president Robyn Taylor 9574 2578, rdtaylor@inet.net.au or, Beth Frayne, toobide4@inet.net.au, 9574 5971.

Donegan's Cottage in the showgrounds is open every Thursday from 1-3pm. Postal address PO Box 32, Toodyay WA 6566.

There are also displays of books and other items at Drummond House which is open on Saturday mornings.

You can also find us on our website: toodyayhistoricalsociety.org.au/.

Membership is fantastic value at \$10 per annum.



Enjoying Toodyay's Australia Day celebrations.



Cr Judy Dow prepares breakfast for the Australia Day Awards in Duidge Park.

Stitchers retreat to the CWA's cool comfort

The Crooked Needle
Heather Wright

AS WE roll into another year, most of us are still wondering where the last year has gone.

Our year ended on a lovely note as Jan and Annette set up the CWA rooms with a beautifully decorated Christmas table.

The centrepieces and hand-made serviette rings were a treat and added to the food-laden table.

The homemade gifts were a delight and everyone was very excited to receive a special surprise gift.

Added to our homemade surprise gift was a special one-off gift from the group itself which entailed a quick trip to Spotlight to splurge on something special; I can't wait to hear what everyone purchased.

During the off-season it was decided to move back to the CWA rooms from the showgrounds as the heat played havoc with a few of the members.

We thank the shire for allowing us to have a cupboard there but now we are back to taking sewing machines, urn etc with us at the end of each meeting.

So on the first Friday in February, we will again enjoy the air-conditioned comfort of the CWA rooms.

During January we have been in recess. I love January for all the sport I can enjoy but must admit I'm slightly over it all and looking forward to some craft.

Some of the ladies have met to chat and do some craft in the interim but it will be great to be back together again.

Our thoughts are with dear Bernie who sustained a very nasty foot break just before Christmas. Get mobile soon Bernie.

Lynda has also been having a rough time and we send good wishes; it's not good having our fit ladies being bowled over.

Sheila was unwell for the Christmas dinner but still sent plates of delicious prawns; we thank her for that.

So, we hope our full complement of girls is with us for the first day.

The ladies, mainly Phyllis, created a beautiful quilt for our long-time member Glenda, who is heading to Donnybrook.

Gosh, how we will miss her quiet demeanour and absolutely beautiful crochet work.

We wish Glenda and Neil all the best as they start a new chapter in their lives.

Let us hope that 2018 sees us fit, happy and well and that we continue to create some masterpieces.

Phyllis went to a dance sewing course and produced the most amazing tiara and tutu for her ballet dancing granddaughter. What a lucky girl she is.

Until next month, stay safe and keep well.

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