

# The Toodyay Herald

Your locally owned  
community newspaper  
Est. 1902

5000 copies circulating in Toodyay, West Toodyay, Goomalling, Bolgart, Calingiri, Morangup, Northam, Coondle, Hoddys Well, Wattening, Dewars Pool, Culham, Bejoording, Nunile, Julimar, Bakers Hill, Clackline, Woorloo, Wundowie, Gidgegannup and local districts.

March 2026  
Edition 454



## High-stakes hearing

Toodyay property owner Tony Maddox was flanked by supporters Central Wheatbelt MLA Lachlan Hunter and former Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA president Tony Seabrook at the Supreme Court last month. (Photo: Rashelle Predovnik).

### Rashelle Predovnik

THE personal toll of a court case that has ramifications for property owners across the state was evident by the strain on Tony Maddox's face when he prepared to step into the Supreme Court last month with his supporters.

High profile barrister and former state Attorney General Christian Porter is representing him in the Supreme Court where Mr Maddox is launching an appeal after being charged for breaching a newly amended Act he said no one was told about.

He is appealing against – what he says was a flawed process – that found him guilty of breaching the Act when he built a concrete crossing on his property.

He is also pinning his case on a section of the Aboriginal Heritage Act that protects people who did not know – and could not

reasonably know – about changes to the Act that has made their land a protected site.

The marathon hearing went for the whole day before the judge asked both parties to come back again with more information and a future hearing date is yet to be set.

To date, Mr Maddox's legal costs amount to more than \$140,000 and the public have been generous with their donations to his fighting fund.

If Mr Maddox's appeal is unsuccessful he will consider taking his fight to the High Court. Supporters who fronted up to court last month included Toodyay residents who have been supporting him every step of the way.

He was also flanked by Central Wheatbelt MLA Lachlan Hunter and former Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) president Tony Seabrook who are standing alongside him in a fight they say needs to be won.

Mr Hunter said he was standing with Mr Maddox to support fair, common sense protections for WA landowners.

He said the fight was one that should concern every single landowner and every single primary producer in the state.

The amendment to the Aboriginal Heritage Act that captured Mr Maddox was added in November 2023.

Mr Hunter said if Mr Maddox could be convicted under these laws, without even knowing those laws applied to his land, then everyone should be concerned. "It's a basic principle," he said.

"If it's your land, you should have the right to manage it with clarity and confidence."

Mr Hunter said the state's cultural heritage laws were causing confusion and uncertainty across regional communities.

...continued on page 11

### Coming events Toodyay Lions Jumbo Auction Saturday 18 April

classifieds	26
emergency services	8-9
environment	28-29
health	31
letters	4
public notices	26
puzzles	27
sport and leisure	31
trades & services	22-24
when & where	26

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## A bohemian celebration

TOODYAY newly weds Michael and Dianne Black celebrated their wedding surrounded by a beautiful group of family and friends on a warm summer's day in December.

Dianne's sister and brother-in-law went to great lengths to transform their garden in Hillarys into a stunning Bohemian scene which was very much Dianne and Michael's vibe!

Guests traveled from near and far (the UK and

Melbourne) and locally to share in their heartfelt vows, speeches, dancing, love and much laughter on 20 December, 2025.

A week later, they had a wonderful 'wedding party' in their garden, with their 'Toodyay family.

They are deeply grateful for the friendships and connections they have made in the two short years they have lived in Toodyay.

They say it really is a beautiful place to live.



# The Toodyay Herald

The Toodyay Herald is a free monthly newspaper published and owned by a not-for-profit incorporated association - The Toodyay Herald Inc. Contributions via email or on flash drive are preferred. There is no charge for articles that appear in the paper. 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](mailto:advertising@toodyayherald.com.au). Editorial contributions and photographs should be emailed to [news@toodyayherald.com.au](mailto: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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David Palmer 0417 097 825 or [advertising@toodyayherald.com.au](mailto:advertising@toodyayherald.com.au)

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### PRODUCTION

Editor: Rashelle Predovnik  
 Sub Editor: Hannah Coupar  
 Design/Layout: David Palmer  
 Production: Jessica Predovnik  
 Admin/Advertising: David Palmer

### ACCOUNTS

Liz Sullivan  
[accounts@toodyayherald.com.au](mailto:accounts@toodyayherald.com.au)

### NEWS & GENERAL INQUIRIES

[news@toodyayherald.com.au](mailto:news@toodyayherald.com.au)

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### THANK YOU

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped produce this edition of *The Toodyay Herald*: Joseph Fernandez (Legal), Peter Ruthven, Beth Ruthven, Richard Grant, Judy Morrissey, Jenny Hildred and Michael Black.

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### NEXT TOODYAY HERALD EDITION

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Noon Thursday  
 March 26

STORY DEADLINE

Noon Friday  
 March 27

DISTRIBUTED

Thursday  
 April 9

# Community out of pocket after \$195,000 lost in unclaimed GST

Rashelle Predovnik

AN INTERNAL investigation is now underway after council rejected a request by the Toodyay Shire administration to write off \$195,000 in unclaimed GST owed to the shire by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Council instead voted to support a recommendation by the Audit and Risk Committee to do more investigation and get external advice.

The request to write off the funds as a loss was made because a four-year window open to claim the money has now closed.

In response to questions asked at the December council meeting, the shire confirmed the loss would decrease the available funds which it would otherwise use to deliver services to the community.

“The community will have to bear the brunt of this in the 2025/26 year by reducing the amount of funds available for much needed community projects.”

A report to the Audit and Risk Committee said, as part of council’s standard end of year procedure, a reconciliation should have been done to ensure that all monies owed to the shire by the ATO in the form of GST credits had been claimed.

“And if not, lodge revised Business Activity Statements (BAS) to ensure those monies are claimed and received by the shire,” the report said.

But an investigation found that no reconciliation of GST had occurred

Records also showed a large amount of money held by the Australian Tax Office that was owed to the shire in the form of GST credits for purchases made by the shire.

“The reconciliation showed that \$633,000 was owed to the shire by the ATO dating back to 2020.”

The report said under the ATO rules, the shire was only able to amend BAS returns dating back four years.

Funds owed from before December 2021

cannot be claimed by the shire and this equates to \$195,000.

The report also noted that this credit should have been picked up by management when preparing the annual financial statements each year, but there was no evidence that this had happened.

The historic failure to identify the money owed by December 2024 spanned successive shire administrations, including the current one.

Toodyay Shire chief executive officer Aaron Bowman told *The Herald* the matter was not brought to his attention by the then executive manager of corporate and community.

He said the issue only came to light when the current executive manager of finance and corporate services completed the year end GST reconciliation, at which point it was formally reported to him.

*The Herald* questioned why the opportunity to retrieve some of the GST up until December 2025 had not been taken.

Mr Bowman said as the matter was only raised with him towards the latter part of 2025 the opportunity to act earlier had already passed.

“Additionally, the year end reconciliation process required significant time to complete, which further restricted the window for recovering any remaining GST,” he said.



# Toodyay Local Care secures landmark Foodbank deal

Rashelle Predovnik

TOODYAY Locals Care (TLC) has entered into a new partnership with Foodbank WA, in a win for the region and the first agreement of its kind for the shire and the Central Wheatbelt.

The landmark deal has increased the food supplies of the caring local group who are now able to provide a bigger range of everyday pantry items.

This increase will add to the current stockpile of fresh fruit and vegetables TLC picks up from Woolworths Northam and Second Bite.

Foodbank WA has warmly welcomed the new partnership in a statement on their social media.

“Last year, Foodbank WA received generous support from CBH Group through the Harvest Mass Management Scheme, where forfeited grain is sold and the proceeds go directly to charities supporting graingrowing communities.”

“We are committed to making sure that support stays exactly where it is needed.

“Funds raised in the Wheatbelt remain in the Wheatbelt which means local individuals and families facing hardship receive help close to home.”

Foodbank WA said they relied on trusted local partners.

“Have you ever wondered how we make sure support reaches the right people?”

“It is because of incredible partners like TLC.

Their deep community connections and local knowledge ensure food reaches those who need it most.

“We are so grateful for this partnership and

for the generosity behind it.

“This support strengthens our ability to provide food relief across the Wheatbelt and helps us stand beside locals when times are tough.”

TLC vice president David Miller said the first food box was dropped off last month at the pavilion.

“I must say it was a little overwhelming how many people turned up; in fact we were swamped,” he said.

“It has shown us that there is a real need for what we do at TLC and those in need appreciate our help.”

Mr Miller said the following food drop-offs saw people come from all over the Wheatbelt.

“If it continues the way it started, we can see this service expanding rapidly.” Another win TLC is celebrating is the new market their frozen meals have now found.

Mr Miller said some people found it hard to cook for themselves.

“If this sounds like you, please reach out,” he said.

Or if someone you know, a friend or neighbour for instance, could use some support please let us know.”

For more information call or text Dave on 0418 919 094 or Roz on 0427 744 352.



In agreement: Heidi Miller from TLC and Candice Long from Foodbank WA.

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**MEMBER FOR CENTRAL WHEATBELT**

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# The Toodyay Herald

## From the editor's desk

IT'S edition two of the *The Herald* under my watch and there's certainly been no shortage of news crossing the desk this month.

A WA Supreme Court appeal by local landowner Tony Maddox – backed by high-profile barrister and former attorney-general Christian Porter – is shaping up as a case with consequences for property owners right across Western Australia.

Maddox is challenging a conviction he says stems from new state laws landholders were never properly told about.

There are now calls for changes to the WA Aboriginal Heritage Act to give landowners more information on their property titles if their land is declared a site – particularly if new restrictions apply.

We'll continue to follow this legal fight as the case returns to court.

Closer to home, an internal investigation is underway after the shire failed to claim \$195,000 in GST credits it was owed by the Australian Taxation Office before the four-year deadline expired.

Council unanimously rejected a request to simply write off the loss, and instead backed the Audit and Risk Committee's call for more investigation to be done and for external advice.

The loss means there's less funds to deliver services and projects to the community and residents have been left wondering what will go next, following last year's axing of the popular Toodyay International Food Festival, after 19 years of bringing Avon Descent crowds into town.

There's also some lighter news on the horizon: The Rec Toodyay Hotel (formerly the Freemasons Hotel) is planning to open with a free community party – so keep an eye on their Facebook page for details.

The new owners of the Cola Café are also adding Chinese dishes to the menu next month, which will be a new food offering for the town.

On a final note: my second edition of *The Herald* has really brought home just how many dedicated community contributors help shape this paper each month.

This paper – your paper – is only possible because of the people who generously volunteer their time to share stories, report on local happenings, and run the programs that make our town so vibrant.

A sincere 'thank you' to everyone who contributes and helps bring each edition to life.

I am already looking forward to working with you on the April edition.

Rashelle Predovnik  
Editor



*The way we were – spectators gather to watch the annual Toodyay Wheelbarrow Races on 18 August 1935. The race was held every year during the Toodyay Show with heavy betting on who would win.*

## LETTERS

### Composting facility disappears

I HAVE to let the community know that the shire has terminated the composting facility down at the community depot, bit of a shame as we didn't know anything about it until it was being taken apart.

Seed group paid money to get the facility established years ago along with a grant from the waste mgt authority.

We don't know what's going to happen now until a meeting with the shire later in March, but it seems the compost facility will not be reinstated.

The main ingredients for making the compost were grass clippings and donated stubble straw. The shire is not collecting grass clippings from the main ovals anymore but there are other sources of organic matter we could have used.

Sorry to all those who have asked about getting compost.

It was a great initiative when it was working well.

B Lloyd  
Toodyay

### Well done Toodyay Library

I WOULD like to acknowledge the successful Valentines Day morning tea at the Toodyay Library.

Heidi Malone and her team made it an amazing fulfilled atmosphere.

The icing on the cake was the outdoor seating area.

People shared tables and relaxed in the area set up thoughtfully by the library staff.

Well done ladies.

Perhaps a permanent outside seating area could be arranged for this library area.

It's nice to read, catchup and unwind under those beautiful trees.

Cheryl-Jean  
Toodyay

### The real Mardi Gras

FEBRUARY 28 is when the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is held in Sydney.

It has no connection with the real Mardi Gras, also called Fasching.

The name depends on the Catholic country's language where this celebration takes place.

Mardi Gras's tradition dates back to the pagan celebrations of spring and fertility.

When Christianity arrived in Rome, as was done with other pagan festivals, religious leaders decided to incorporate the pagan's popular traditions into the new faith (e.g. Christmas and Easter).

This resulted in the feasting and debauchery of the Mardi Gras season before the onset of Lent.

The 40 days of fasting and penance is between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday.

Mardi Gras begins on November 11 at 11.11am every year.

This date is chosen for its significance in world history.

World War I ended then, known as Armistice Day.

It brought a new beginning and joy after hard times to Europe.

The merriment of Fasching, the Bavarian/South German word has its primary dance and dress kick off after the Advents time on December 31, Sylvester Night.

The most intense party celebrations are dress-ups during the last six days of Fasching.

Mardi Gras or Fasching also happens in Toodyay.

This is an annual event in our home February 13.

Our friends arrive in a party prerequisite, costumes.

There was an Indian with a gorgeous outfit tailored in New Delhi, a fearsome Mexican and a marvellous beauty and her beast.

In Venice face masks were worn to make everybody as 'equal'.

M Zechetmayr  
Toodyay

### A bad kind of quiet

Down by the river today as the sun is going down there's a bad kind of quiet and while there's nobody else around.

I sat down and wept for the birds. Just yesterday these trees were full of chattering, squawking, whistling, screeching, laughing, rustling sounds of the life of the birds.

I listened to them up by the sheds a good long shout away and wondered what they say to each other. Their joyful conversations are the soundtrack of the bush.

They roost in the trees here at night, in great numbers, down by the river; the Corellas, and Galahs, the Ring-necks, the Whites and Blacks, But not today.

I wish I had known how to warn them. I'm not sure how they did it but They are all gone. Leaving a stunned space like,

A quickly silenced opera, Clandestine. A cut off scream. Indifference. A kick, a yelp. Complicit. Cull.

Tonja E Powell  
Mountain Park, Dumbarton

### Thanks for support

TOODYAY Local's Care held a very successful raffle at the Bulls, Bikes and Bands earlier this year.

Jo and Mark Kestel, owners of Double Barrel Entertainment, were very generous not only with their time but a very kind donation as well.

TLC thanks you for all your kind support and also for bringing great events to Toodyay.

D Miller  
Morgangup

### Toodyay Rainfall

Recordings and average commenced on 1 January 1907

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2019	1.8	0	5.8	15.4	8.7	125.7	128.4	66.3	13.4	15.2	6.0	0	386.7
2020	0	31.6	9.8	6.4	38.2	48.9	43.7	61.8	30.2	5.9	48.8	3.5	328.8
2021	0.03	17.3	137.3	11.1	21.7	0	5.4	0.3	0	61.6	2.2	0	645.13
2022	31.7	4.5	14	30.9	56.0	0	42.9	15.4	0	15.6	12	5.1	431.4
2023	0.1	0	54.9	29	21.8	74.3	42.4	19.8	32.3	2.9	7.4	2.0	286.9
2024	9.8	4.5	0	7.8	43.5	59.2	77	85.3	18.7	21.6	22	1.9	345.3
2025	3.7	0	27	47.6	15.2	23.8	65.7	118.9	28.3	43.4	2.5		183
Average	17.20	17.30	15.50	26.10	54.80	57.04	79.16	81.93	29.41	23.74	14.41	2.08	418.68

The Toodyay Herald invites you to have your say in our letters page. Please email news@toodyayherald.com.au with your full name, address and phone number.

Letters less than 300 words about topical local issues are preferred. The Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length, grammar and legal reasons. Publication of letters is at The Herald's discretion.

# Wheatbelt Corella cull ruffles feathers

Rashelle Predovnik

FLOCKS of corellas that once blanketed Toodyay's landscape have been decimated in a coordinated cull, despite a last-ditch attempt by the Animal Justice Party to stop the mass shootings.

The cull coordinated by the Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management (WNRM) was done in partnership with the shires of Toodyay, Northam, York, Goomalling and Victoria Plains.

But the program and the short notice given to the community has come under fire from Animal Justice Party WA MP Amanda Dorn who slammed the cull as cruel, rushed and ethically indefensible.

She said two out of the three species present in the region - the Western Corella and the Little Corella - were native to Western Australia. "Both have expanded their range largely due to agricultural clearing and altered landscapes."

"We have taken their land for farming, removed trees, altered water sources and changed landscapes, and now we plan to kill them for trying to survive in the environment we reshaped."

"Killing birds for responding to those conditions is not responsible environmental management."

Ms Dorn said most significantly, public notice of the cull was posted on 17 February, just days before the scheduled killing.

"That is not meaningful community consultation," she said.

"This is a major wildlife cull involving native species, yet residents have been given only days' notice and limited information."

Ms Dorn said Corellas flocked together and lethal programs risked harming many native birds indiscriminately.

"If culling is being described as a last resort, the public deserves clear evidence that alternatives were genuinely implemented and assessed."

Ms Dorn said she acknowledged local governments had cited hefty infrastructure damage costs.

But she said if infrastructure was vulnerable, why hadn't investment been made into infrastructure solutions?

"Modification, adaptation and habitat management are more ethical and often more sustainable than repeated lethal programs."

The Animal Justice Party WA has called for the full public release of impact assessments and operational details and transparent reporting of proposed kill numbers as well as independent animal welfare oversight.

WNRM chief executive officer Renata Paliskis said wildlife management decisions were complex and she understood they could evoke strong and legitimate community perspectives.

Ms Paliskis said the Corella management project had been underway for several years in response to significant and escalating impacts associated with large Corella populations across parts of the Wheatbelt.

"These impacts include serious threats to biodiversity, displacement of other species such as the critically endangered and rapidly declining population of Carnaby's Cockatoo chicks from nesting sites, and damage to agricultural infrastructure."

Ms Paliskis said non-lethal methods used by local shires in the past included gas-guns, bendy men, scare tactics and drones. But these methods didn't work as the Corellas quickly become use to them and other humane methods were being explored.

Ms Paliskis acknowledged that community expectations regarding humane treatment of wildlife was evolving and she said ongoing scrutiny and improvement of the practice was appropriate.

Ms Paliskis also acknowledged the concern regarding the timing of the public notice. "While communication occurred through



Critics of the cull say Corellas are highly intelligent, they mate for life and co-parent but supporters of the cull say it's a last resort necessary measure to protect our biodiversity.

participating local governments, we recognise that community expectations around consultation are increasing," she said.

"This is an area where we are committed to reviewing our approach and strengthening transparency for future activities."

Ms Paliskis said WNRM's objective was to ensure management actions were evidence-

informed, proportionate to the level of impact, undertaken responsibly and subject to ongoing review.

"WNRM is working closely with other partners on driving renewed conservation objectives in the Wheatbelt to promote the restoration of the necessary habitat for our local native species to thrive."

## Setting the record straight on the shire's president's column

THE *Toodyay Herald* wishes to correct statements made by the Shire of Toodyay through its email distribution and on its Facebook page regarding the shire president's monthly column.

The shire stated: "Owing to the *Toodyay Herald's* recent decision to cancel our shire president Mick McKeown's *Between You and Me* column in its monthly edition, we are now providing it to the Toodyay Shire community through the shire's channels."

This statement is not correct.

The *Toodyay Herald* did not cancel the shire president's column.

On 12 January, *The Herald's* new editor emailed the shire to advise the president's message would now be included in the shire's two-pages of advertising.

The president's message has at various times in previous years, been published as part of the shire's paid advertising.

So, including this column in the shire's advertising space is consistent with past practice and it's a natural fit with the *'shire news'* page.

This approach also recognises the president as the shire's official spokesperson.

On January 13, the chief executive officer emailed to advise that because the advertising space is fully paid for by the shire, they would decide what content to include in it.

The shire then submitted content for its two-page advertisement without the president's message.

*The Herald* did not refuse or cancel the column — the decision to not include the president's column in the February and March edition was made by the shire.

*The Herald's* offer to publish the president's message within the shire's paid advertising still stands.

A past edition example below



### President's Report



The announcement by the Hon. Terry Redman MLA of a \$6.575 million funding package spread over a 3 year period to extend and expand the

Unfortunately Mr Redman's visit to Toodyay on the 2 September 2014 somewhat overshadowed a coinciding visit by Hon. Tony Simpson MLC, Minister for Local Government, Community Services; Seniors; Volunteering and Youth. Mr Simpson gave Council a brief update of the current position of his government on the proposed amalgamations of metropolitan



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# New owners keen to add Chinese food to the menu



New owners Gioi Manh Nguyen and his wife Tina will add Chinese food to the menu of a popular café on Toodyay's main strip.

**Rashelle Predovnik**

IT'S A new chapter for the Cola Café as experienced bakers take the helm and, while some fresh new flavours are planned, the

much-loved menu will stay on offer.

The café now has a new kitchen, ceiling and cool room and its new owners are keen to put more variety on the menu of one of Toodyay's most popular destinations.

Curious locals have been following the countdown of Facebook since the café announced it would close for renovations at the end of last year.

The doors opened again last month and new café owners Gioi Manh and Tina Nguyen say they have been made to feel very welcome by friendly locals.

It was Toodyay's famous Christmas shop that originally drew Tina to town for a visit and she liked what she saw.

So, when the Cola Café was listed for sale, the couple jumped at the opportunity.

Gioi and Tina are seasoned business operators who have worked together for 27 years.

Gioi is a baker and the couple ran a bakery in Merredin for 20 years and one in Kalgoorlie for seven years.

The Nguyens are promising to keep the café's traditional menu; they just want to add more variety.

Tina said she noticed there was no Chinese food in Toodyay and her husband loved to cook.

So Asian flair will now be added to the menu, including fried rice, honey chicken and noodle dishes.

The new menu will officially begin next month on the Saturday of the Easter long weekend.

# Personal alarm SOS watch

**Desraé Clarke**

THE wearing of a watch alarm is a comfort should assistance be needed for an unexpected event such as a fall or loss of way.

The watch alarm detects falls and automatically alerts the contacts you have had recorded in the case of a fall.

The watch alarm also has the position of the fall, or loss of way, on GPS to alert your contact/s as to the area of concern.

A bonus is the watch alarm is showerproof so it can be worn while showering.

There are several watch alarm products photographed and described on the internet with more narrow bands available for ladies together with a range of coloured bands; prices vary.

- Crime Stoppers** 1800 333 000
- Police** 131 444
- Toodyay Police** 9574 9555
- Graffiti** 1800 442 255



Photograph: George Milton

# Recording a fail: what the shire's electors meeting really revealed

**Rashelle Predovnik**

TRANSPARENCY in local government shouldn't be controversial and in 2026 it shouldn't even be a question.

Yet at the annual meeting of electors, residents had front row seats to an argument between the chair and a resident about what was or wasn't said at last year's meeting.

The reason? There was no recording.

From January 2025, shires have been required to record their council meetings, and this helps to create an accurate public record, including a record of what the shire does well.

At this elector's meeting, the manager of finance delivered an interesting presentation that outlined issues the shire had identified and fixed.

He talked about the money saved, in what was a positive story about the responsible management of public funds.

Yet there is no record of that presentation on the shire's website.

When the *Toodyay Herald* asked for those details so our readers could be informed about those savings, the shire president told us to find it ourselves.

He said, "The executive manager provided examples in his presentation at the annual electors meeting, all of which are documented in previous minutes of ordinary council meetings."

That response may have technically answered the question – but does directing our readers to trawl through a year's worth of old minutes really serve the public interest?

The information we asked for was already available in a document that could have easily been emailed.

Instead, we were told to comb through the archives of past council minutes without dates, page numbers or agenda references – to reconstruct what the shire had already presented on PowerPoint slides.

Transparency should not require detective work.

In this case, recording matters because public meetings are not private conversations – they are part of the official democratic record.

The shire's website notes there is no legal requirement to record the annual meeting of electors but, although that is technically true, it misses the point.

Good governance is about doing more than the bare legal minimum.

Recording this annual elector meeting didn't

require a new policy, new equipment or extra funding.

It just required the shire to wheel out the same recording equipment it uses for council meetings or even a mobile phone at a push.

Instead, the room was left listening to two conflicting versions of the same event with no ability to review a recording.

And this incident summed up a broader problem on display that night.

The annual meeting of electors is a forum for residents to ask questions, raise motions, and discuss general business.

Apart from this editor, only ten ratepayers attended and only two questions were submitted to the shire in advance.

No motions were raised or voted on, and no questions were asked about the annual report.

So, there was time and there was space.

Yet when a ratepayer tried to ask questions from the floor, she was told she couldn't, because her questions needed to be sent in before the meeting.

Instead of allowing her questions to be heard – and answered or taken on notice – time was spent reading out legislative provisions explaining why they could not be asked from the floor.

Ironically, it would have taken less time to hear her questions.

When the shire president formally closed the meeting after 20 minutes, he then chose to speak to those remaining in the room.

Unsurprisingly, the ratepayer who was not allowed to ask questions chose not to stay and listen.

*"What Toodyay residents saw at this meeting appeared to focus more on procedure than participation"*

If you deny someone the right to be heard, they will naturally disengage.

Democracy can be messy: questions can be repetitive, they can be uncomfortable and they can test patience.

But respectful leadership requires a tolerance for scrutiny – especially at a meeting designed to give ratepayers a voice.

Toodyay residents are capable of forming their own views, but what they saw at this meeting appeared to focus more on procedure than participation.

Ratepayers deserve genuine engagement and they deserve respect.

At the very least, they deserve a meeting where someone presses 'record'.



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# No dark corners for spiders in this riverside bird hide

Rashelle Predovnik

IT WAS a special trip to Toodyay for Sharon Quigley (née Ponsford), who designed the Avon River's only bird hide but never saw it built.

Her visit to the hide last month, where she met with Toodyay Naturalists Society president Greg Warburton, was close to her heart.

The bird hide next to Red Banks Pool along the Bilya Walk Track now features an informative display of Noongar artwork, Ngulla Moort (our family).

Its display explains the many uses of the pool before European settlement and the naturalist society said it was pleased to be able to share the bird hide with traditional owners.

The John Masters Bird Hide, officially opened in August 2013.

The following year, Toodyay won Western Australia's Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities title for its residents' attitudes towards solar lighting, cycling, birdwatching and volunteering.

The judges said they were impressed by Toodyay's near-perfect entry.

Conservation projects that also impressed the judges included the John Masters Bird Hide where people could watch local and migratory birds.

Mrs Quigley said she was honoured 13 years ago to be asked by Mr Warburton to design the bird hide.

"I moved to Ireland soon after and never got to see the bird hide constructed."

Ms Quigley said she was delighted to hear

about how the bird hide has been used by the community 13 years on.

She said the hide had some unique and very useful design features.

"My first task was to research bird hides around Australia," she said.

"So I asked a birdwatching friend of mine to send me photos of her favourite bird hides she had seen across Australia over the years, along with details of what she liked or didn't like about each of them.

"I spent the next couple of weeks analysing each photo to discover what features I also liked and didn't like about each of them."

Mrs Quigley said she noticed something straight away.

"Each of the bird hides pictured was a fully enclosed cabin, which was perfect for their remote locations but it didn't fit the idea I had

for the new bird hide at Red Banks Pool."

"I wanted this bird hide to be different.

"I wanted it to become a multi-purpose space enjoyed by everyone visiting Red Banks Pool, not just birdwatching clubs.

"I wanted to provide a shady refuge for nature walkers to sit for a welcomed rest on hot summer days, an education space for schools and other groups, a performance space for celebration of events and of course a birdwatching space."

The design included cladding the walls only on the two sides facing the river, leaving the opposite two sides open.

Mrs Quigley said that deliberate choice allowed plenty of natural light into the hide, ensuring no dark corners for spiders or snakes to hide.

The gap between the lower edge of the wall cladding and the ground was designed to create extra airflow.

It would also help any loose leaves on the ground to be blown away by the wind.

The location of the bird hide, high up on the river bend and its rectangular shape positioned to follow the bend of the river were other carefully considered elements.

Mrs Quigley said to help achieve this, two separate overlapping roof planes were created.

She said the horizontal ventilation space in between provided air flow to stop the space under the roof from overheating in summer.

"The only design features shared with other bird hides was the elongated rectangular windows and the inside seating built onto the walls."

Mrs Quigley said one of the greatest joys of her work as a building designer was seeing the finished building.

"The John Masters Bird Hide is a project I am grateful to have been part of," she said.

"I'd like to congratulate Greg and the crew at The Toodyay Naturalists Society for their persistence in making it happen."



From sketch to sanctuary – designer Sharon Quigley (née Ponsford) finally get to see her now built John Masters Bird Hide.

## A beautiful life in rhythm with local seasons

Dudja Waangkiny  
(Toodyay Yarning)



Noongar Kaartdijin Aboriginal Corporation

NOONGAR families settled this valley for tens of thousands of years.

When some websites describe Toodyay as "first settled in 1836", they overlook the deep and continuous human history of this valley.

Long before colonial arrival, Dudjabup – the place that attracts mist – was already home to Noongar families whose presence stretches back more than 45,000 years.

For countless generations, Noongar moort (family groups) lived, moved and cared for this land.

Each family had moort-boodja – family lands – sometimes known as moortung.

One way to understand this today is through a familiar lens.

What we now recognise as the Shire of Toodyay can be seen, in many ways, as resembling a larger Noongar cultural landscape, much like a wider language or kinship group boundary.

Within the shire are smaller localities such as Coondle, Julimar, Moondyne, Bejoording, Wattening, Jimperding and Morangup.

Today, these are administrative or geographic names, but in earlier times these same areas formed part of extended Noongar family estates.

Within those estates were smaller, carefully managed Noongar family "patches", places where particular moort (family) held responsibility for caring for water sources, food resources, spirituality and the ecological balance of Country.

Seen this way, the structure is not unfamiliar.

Where we now see farms, properties, and family holdings passed through generations of settlers and their descendants, there once existed Noongar moort-boodja, family lands governed by lore, obligation, kinship, and deep ecological knowledge.

Different systems, but recognisably human in their organisation and purpose.

This was not a transient existence, but a beautiful, ordered way of life lived in rhythm with the six Noongar bonar (seasons), the availability of food and water, and the responsibilities people held to both Country and each other.

These were not random campsites.

They were ancestral land estates with clear obligations to look after springs, waterholes, hunting grounds, gathering areas, and story-connected places.

Dudjabup's rich soils, freshwater pools, and river system made it an important place for movement, trade, ceremony, and kinship

connection across Yued, Ballardong, and Whadjuk groups.

Toodyay was not an empty valley waiting to be settled.

It was a thriving cultural landscape, maintained through sophisticated land management practices.

Fire, water care, and sustainable harvesting supported biodiversity for millennia.

When colonisation arrived in 1836, it marked the beginning of dispossession, not the beginning of settlement.

Yet despite enormous disruption, Noongar people have maintained their connection to Country.

They continue today to care for remaining

pockets of their moort-boodja, restoring cultural knowledge that was interrupted but never lost.

Recognising this truth is important for all of us.

It allows Toodyay's story to be understood not as a 190-year-old settlement, but as part of a 45,000-year continuum of Noongar life, culture, and custodianship.

Dudjabup has always been a lived-in, loved-in place.

It always will be.

For more local Noongar information and history head to our website: [www.noongarkaartdijin.com.au](http://www.noongarkaartdijin.com.au), or follow us on Facebook.



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EMERGENCY



The St John Ambulance midnight crew enjoying a well-deserved break.

## Smoked brisket lures volunteers

St John Ambulance Toodyay  
Michael Black

AS WE head towards the end of summer and welcome autumn, your local St John Ambulance volunteers have been busy.

Since the beginning of the year St John volunteers have attended 81 patients and travelled thousands of kilometres.

St John also provides a community transport service (CTS).

In January St John CTS volunteers helped eight Toodyay locals get to hospital and specialist appointments.

All volunteer organisations are constantly looking for new recruits and St John is no exception.

On Thursday February 19 we hosted a recruitment evening.

It was a fun evening with new, prospective ambos given an outline of what we do and what to expect if they sign up.

The new prospects got a tour of the sub centre and a close and personal look at the ambulances.

Earl Stamp, our local Community Paramedic, and Dale Reid, St John's District Operations Lead, both gave really good insights on their roles and the organisation.

Dale also cooked up a storm with an amazing locally smoked brisket.

If for no other reason, joining St John as a volunteer for the food is a good reason.

It's a few months away but starting on May 18, it is National Volunteers week.

There are thousands of events and activities taking place across Western Australia.

Volunteers are the backbone of country WA and Toodyay is no exception.

Volunteering WA has a website that lists events and workshops.

There is a link where you can nominate a volunteer for the WA Volunteer of the year award.

One night a few weeks ago Toodyay had three crews out attending emergency calls.

In the country, if it wasn't for Volunteer Ambulance Officers supporting our Community Paramedic, there would be no ambulance service outside the metro area.

Most volunteers do it for the humanity and the community.

Some volunteers do it for the Emergency Department sandwiches with mates in the hospital ambulance bay into the wee hours of the morning.

Whatever the motive, a big thankyou to the volunteers who keep our emergency services available in the country, day and night.

Information about coming and helping out at St John can be found at the St John shop opposite the bakery in Toodyay.

## Vigilance essential as summer ends

VBFB Coondle Nunile  
Aurelie Zimmermann

AS WE move into March and welcome the beginning of autumn, we reflect on a season that, while not over yet, has been relatively quiet compared with previous years.

Warmer days and dry fuels remain and vigilance is still essential.

Even a quieter season is a reminder that fire conditions can change quickly, and being prepared is key to protecting the community.

Since the last edition of *The Herald*, our brigade has been kept busy responding to a number of incidents.

The majority of callouts have involved tree, scrub and grass fires.

At this time of year fires can spread quickly if not brought under early control.

One incident required follow-up attendance after hot spots flared and extended the burn area.

These situations are a timely reminder that, even after a fire is contained, conditions such as wind, heat, and residual fuel can cause flare-ups.

Volunteers across the Shire remain vigilant and ready to respond at all times.

As the season changes, we encourage the community to remain attentive.

Ensure your properties are kept clear of dry fuel, maintain garden and firebreaks, and always have a plan in case of fire.

Training continues to be a strong focus for the brigade.

At our most recent session, members undertook radio training, covering both fundamental radio procedures and advanced features available on our handsets.

Effective communication on the fireground is critical.

Clear, concise radio use ensures crew safety, improves coordination between appliances, and allows important information to be shared quickly and accurately.

Our members are continually building their skills to make sure we operate safely and efficiently at every incident.

Looking ahead, the brigade has further training sessions planned to develop skills in

areas such as electrical fires and Rural Urban Interface exercise.

Vehicle checks continue to take place every Friday throughout the year.

These regular checks ensure our appliances and equipment remain operational and ready to respond at any time.

They provide an opportunity for members to inspect tools and fittings, identify anything that may need replacing and maintain the vehicles to a high standard.

Importantly, these sessions also allow newer members to become familiar with the trucks and the equipment they carry, building confidence and capability before attending incidents.

The Coondle-Nunile Bush Fire Brigade is always keen to welcome new members.

Joining the brigade is a great way to learn practical skills, build confidence, and gain valuable experience; all while giving back to the community.

We meet every Friday from 5pm at the fire station, located at 775 Bindi Bindi-Toodyay Road near the old wheat bins.

If you're unsure whether firefighting is for you, we encourage you to come down to meet the team and see what we're about.

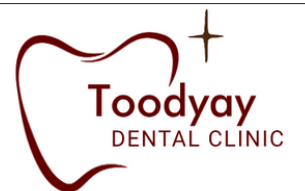
Volunteering with the brigade is both rewarding, meaningful and plays an important role in helping keep our local community safe.



Air support. Courtesy Aurelie Zimmermann

## Toodyay Dental Clinic

SUPPORTING HEALTHY SMILES IN OUR COMMUNITY

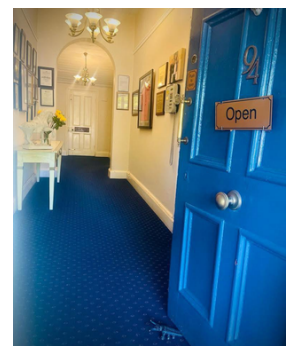


Toodyay Dental Clinic is proud to continue caring for the families and residents of our wonderful community. Conveniently located on Stirling Terrace, we are committed to providing gentle, professional and reliable dental care for patients of all ages — from children attending their very first check-up to long-time locals maintaining their healthy smiles.

Our friendly and experienced team understands that visiting the dentist can sometimes feel daunting. That's why we take the time to listen, explain your treatment options clearly, and ensure you feel comfortable and supported every step of the way.

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toodyaydentalclinic@outlook.com

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## Upcoming first aid courses

### HLTAID011 - Provide First Aid

Course type: Accredited | Duration: 1 day in class + Online learning

Price: \$180.00

When: Wednesday 20 May - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Saturday 11 July - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Monday 21 September - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Saturday 21 November - 8:30AM - 4:30PM

Where: Morangup Sub Centre, 48 Wallaby Way, Morangup WA 6083



#### Understand first aid

Learn about first aid theory and action plans



#### CPR and defibrillation

Practise CPR skills and how to apply a defibrillator.



#### Injury management

Treat and manage injuries in interactive training scenarios.



### Ready to make a difference?

Book a first aid course with us

St John First Aid Training



# The restricted burning period starts but permits needed

**VBFB Toodyay Central**  
Peter Brennan

THE restricted burning period began on Monday March 9.

The date can be subject to change but remains in place until the April 30.

During this period, a permit to burn must be obtained from the shire.

A permit will only be issued for legitimate mitigation outcomes or for primary producer requirements.

Permits will not be issued for social occasions, burning of rubbish or for burning which can be reasonably deferred or avoided.

For more information on permits visit the Toodyay Shire website at [Toodyay.wa.gov.au](http://Toodyay.wa.gov.au). Click on fire information then fire-restrictions-and-permits.

The question is often asked, "what training do I need to do to become a fire fighter, and what commitment do I have to make?"

Becoming a volunteer bush firefighter means dedicating time to the safety of our community and also others outside of our shire boundary.

The first step is to make contact by sending an SMS message with the name of the brigade you may wish to join to 0408 017 439 (the number for Toodyay Central).

Following contact, you can meet with our captain Will Hort and members.

You will be shown around the station and appliances and given an insight into how they operate. If your interest continues the captain can sign you up.

Your application is then passed to the community Emergency Services Manager (CESM) Sam Roberts for further processing.

Shortly after, you will be required to complete a standard Police check.



Toodyay Central volunteer firefighter Dave mops up after a blaze.

Once completed, you will be assigned a DFES service number and advised to order your personal protection equipment and when training courses will be available.

Before going onto a fireground, new members must have completed both the Bushfire Safety Awareness and Firefighting Skills courses.

Each course takes up two full days, usually over a weekend.

Once completed, you can turnout with the brigad however, new members are initially introduced to the mopping up stage of a fire incident.

This gives you the opportunity to experience working with low intensity fire, the appliance equipment, other team members and employing fire safety awareness skills.

Once settled in, new members will then join other crew members in attending more

challenging bushfire incidents.

Our motto is 'we put fires out'.

We respond to callouts and once an incident is over and appliances readied for the next call, we go home to our families.

Toodyay Central VBFB is not a social brigade, apart from a Christmas family lunch function and a winter appliance detailing and BBQ event.

However, we are a very friendly and

cohesive group that works well together as a team.

Having made the commitment to a brigade, members are expected to turn out to calls as often as possible.

We share the load and expand our own individual experiences at different incidents and with different appliances and crews.

This point is critical, as Toodyay Central has three appliances.

A minimum of six members is required to crew them.

More importantly, during big bushfire incidents, we need to be in a position to crew these appliances across multiple shifts.

Brigade members are also expected to attend as many monthly brigade meetings as they can.

This forum is where important safety and training issues can be addressed.

Additionally, members are expected to volunteer for weekend rosters and attend Friday evening appliance checks which helps reinforce equipment familiarisation.

Once basic experience is obtained, members are encouraged to complete other courses in order to develop additional skills that can enhance our utility and safety while protecting our community from the threat of bushfire.

All up, this is a significant commitment to make, but one which is extremely rewarding and brings many personal benefits.



On standby: a fleet of Toodyay Central's firetrucks undergo weekly checks.

## New off-road tanker tested

**VBFB Julimar**  
Gayle Nelson

WHILE things have been relatively 'unbusy' (not going to say the 'Q' word) since Mad Monday in December, that doesn't mean our firefighters have been taking it easy.

With a pleasantly low number of callouts over January and February, Julimar VBFB with other shire brigades sent firefighters to the Boddington fire as part of a strike team.

They helped strengthen control lines and carried out mopping-up work.

The Julimar 4.4 also attended a recent fire in the City of Swan.

Critical support was supplied during suppression and mop-up.

In addition, one member deployed to the Lake King (Newdegate) fire as part of a commercial team of dedicated professionals focused on establishing control lines.

Exposure to different vegetation, terrain, and fire behaviour and working alongside other organisations is an invaluable experience that strengthens the shire's overall fire response.

The callouts over the past couple of months have also given Julimar plenty of opportunity to bed-in the Tatra.

Holding four thousand litres of water and with plenty of off-road capability, the Julimar 4.4 provides a significant capability upgrade over the much-loved Julimar 2.4.

The Julimar 2.4 is still supporting fire operations in other areas.

Firefighters have been maintaining equipment through our regular Friday night vehicle checks, as well as completing mandatory and elective training.

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thankyou to the community members who have dropped by over the past month to offer their thanks following the Moodyne fire.

Your kind words, visits and support mean a great deal to our volunteers and remind us why we do what we do.

Did you know there are many roles within a shire volunteer bushfire brigade that don't involve firefighting?

Auxiliary members contribute in many ways, including cleaning and providing welfare and refreshments, through to administrative roles such as secretary, treasurer, or equipment officer.

Last but not least, congratulations to Connor, a member of both Toodyay VFRS and Julimar VBFB for his nomination in the recent Toodyay Young Citizen of the Year awards.

We're very proud to have him as part of the best bush fire brigade in Toodyay.

If you'd like to support your local community in a meaningful way, but feel firefighting may not be your specialty, feel free to contact our secretary or captain to discuss options.



TATRA 4.4 Fire Appliance, with our fantastic brigade lieutenant, Lucas McLerie.



## Upcoming first aid courses

**HLTAID011 - Provide First Aid**  
**Course type:** Accredited | **Duration:** 1 day in class + Online learning

**Price:** \$180.00  
**When:** Saturday 14 March - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
 Saturday 16 May - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
 Thursday 16 July - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
**Where:** St John Ambulance Toodyay, 120D Stirling Terrace, Toodyay WA 6566



**Understand first aid**  
Learn about first aid theory and action plans



**CPR and defibrillation**  
Practise CPR skills and how to apply a defibrillator.



**Injury management**  
Treat and manage injuries in interactive training scenarios.



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# Social media buzz builds for free Rec hotel party

Rashelle Predovnik

THE Rec Toodyay is set to open with a community party that includes three hours of free food and drinks as the countdown to their opening is shared on social media and an opening date yet to be announced.

For the past few months, The Rec's story has been unfolding on Facebook in a series of posts that include 'happy hour' glimpses on the menu, their bid to get a TAB licence and a shout-out for staff.

The Rec Toodyay general manager, Steve Dabinett-Halliday said the response to their shout-out for staff was fantastic and the positions have now been filled.

The brand has built a name for blending heritage hotels with vibrant bars and The Freemasons Hotel on Stirling Terrace is their latest project in a growing portfolio that includes Northam, Boulder, Malaga, Capel and Waroona.

This is the first time The Rec has focused so strongly on social media, throwing open the doors to the community and inviting them into their journey as they work towards opening.

General manager of operations Troy Lowrey said normally The Rec would say nothing

until they knew they were going to open.

"And then we hit hard," he said. "But we thought we'd try a 'build up' approach on social media and that strategy has developed more engagement for us.

It's has also allowed The Rec to have a conversation with the community and tell people what they are doing.

Mr Lowry said not all the comments on social media had been positive with a very small percentage not wanting a 'city pub' in a country town.

"We'll they're not going to get that anyway," he said.

"All we're going to do is bring it back to life and make her what she once was, and probably better."

He said The Rec was keen to bring more engagement and involvement, and more of a community feel to the pub.

"People come to us because they want to enjoy the activities we provide and every day is going to be a different.

"From Bingo, to meat raffles, to quiz nights to karaoke to live music supporting local talent - everything you expect from a local pub is what we bring."

"We've seen how much the community in Northam loves a venue that feels like home



Steve and Brendan Dabinett-Halliday look forward to welcoming the community.

and we can't wait to bring that same energy to Toodyay, honouring the Freemasons

history while creating a new space for families to make memories."

## Maddox appeal comes at a human cost to the defendant

...continued from page 1.

Mr Seabrook said Mr Maddox was a brave man.

"Tony said, if he pleads guilty - he pleads guilty for every single landholder in Western Australia who has a gully on their farm and might have built a crossing."

"So you can have a piece of freehold land, with a title that says its freehold land, they [the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH)] have drawn a line on it and they haven't even told you about it."

Western Australia's peak agricultural bodies are now demanding the State Government make immediate changes to ensure existing

and new Aboriginal heritage sites are shown on the Certificate of Title for all properties.

The call has come in response to the Mr Maddox's appeal in the Supreme Court.

WA Farmers President Steve McGuire said the DPLH register of Aboriginal Heritage contained more than 15,000 entries, many of which were on private property.

"The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Committee (ACHC) meets every two weeks and regularly adds new sites to the register without notifying property owners that they have a new encumbrance on their land," Mr McGuire said.

"What we learned from the Tony Maddox

case is that the DPLH doesn't always write to property owners when their land is being considered for a new site, doesn't publish the agenda or minutes of the ACHC and doesn't notify anyone when a new site is declared.

"The fact is, there are many property owners who simply don't know it is illegal to do a number of things on their land because they've never been told it is a declared site."

Mr Seabrook said the laws needed to change.

"Right now it is an offence if your dog or livestock enters the boundary of a registered site - even if it's on your property," he said.

"Other regulations say you need ministerial

approval to disturb the surface of the ground, dig a hole, cut your grass or remove any part of a tree that you own, even if it's dead.

Mr Seabrook said the Tony Maddox case proved having a registered site on your land was a liability.

"It is astonishing that someone can buy land in WA and not be forewarned that the property comes with the encumbrance of containing a registered Aboriginal Heritage Site," he said.

"The government must ensure registered sites appear on the Certificate of Title so buyers can understand the risks of the property they are considering."



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# Happy chatter and delicious cake

**Ragbags Quilting Group**  
Kerry Gregory

IT WAS lovely to be returning to our regular Wednesday quilt and crafting mornings in early February.

We have welcomed some new creative ladies who are now residents of Toodyay.

We are very pleased you've joined us. It is always lovely to enter the back door of the hall and hear the happy chatter of the ladies, as I anticipate what activities are currently being pursued.

It is also a lovely treat to see that someone has provided us with a delicious cake for morning tea; enjoyed by us all.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness. Most of the group are engaged with small projects. From a glance around the table there seems to be a resurgence of crochet items with a couple of ladies stating that they are determined to master the craft before tackling larger crochet projects.

My perusal of the box of NZ Quilter magazines continues.

I'm fascinated by the unique ideas and designs including using everyday items as inspiration for designs in many of them.

For instance, lasagne sheets inspired a strip-like quilt using pieces of multi-coloured fabrics of three and a half inches by seven and a half inches.

This is easily achievable using up left over pieces from previous quilts, although preferably using strips twenty inches long to enable strip sewing and hastening the project along.



Looks like it is past time to actually do something with all these blankets.

Last month I mentioned possibly making quilts from recycled wool fabrics and my collection of quality woollen blankets.

Further to this, I have recently found an article in the December 2025 edition of the WA Quilter's Quarterly highlighting their *Exotica Special Interest Sewing Group*, which meets once a month.

The article defines *Exotica* as being different, strange, alluring or from foreign countries.

This enthusiastic group is happy to support and help with confidence and techniques to engage in creating special projects from non-traditional fabrics.

I think this may be the group to inspire me to cut into some of my old blankets.

If you are looking for an interesting weekend away, this state's premier sheep show is on again at the Wagin Woolorama on 6-7 March 2026.

This is the 53rd Wagin Woolorama and of interest to life-time home dressmakers like me. There are a host of interesting program items. These include three daily Fashion Shows focusing on natural fibres.

As in the past, this event highlights outstanding wool garments with their versatility, durability, impressive warmth and exceptional fine quality.

Along with all the usual developments and innovative agricultural endeavours, this year they are also honouring all women working on the land; "Year of the Woman Farmer".

New members are very welcome at the Ragbags Group. Join us for a cuppa and a chat. Bring along your beautiful handiwork; quilting, knitting, crochet or craft projects for a little *Show and Tell* session. Bring your quilting blocks and sewing machine if you wish.

We love to see all your creativity and fabulous projects, and share your enthusiasm.

The Ragbags Group meet at the St Stephens Anglican Church Hall, Stirling Terrace Toodyay (next door to the Cola Cafe), on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10am to 2pm.

It's cool inside. Bring your lunch. We use the back door.



A *Creating Country Together* meeting puts this year's Moondyne Festival on the table.

# Noongar flavour to Moondyne

**Arts Toodyay**  
Chelle Ellery

THIS year's Moondyne Festival will feature a special hands-on community artwork at Dudgee Park.

It will bring people together to reflect on Country and celebrate local creativity.

"Creating Country Together" is a collaborative art project led by Midland Brick in partnership with Arts Toodyay, local Aboriginal representatives, the Shire of Toodyay, the Moondyne Festival Committee, Toodyay District High School and the Carnaby Crusaders.

Across the festival day, community members will be invited to help shape a large artwork using sand, clay and natural materials.

Participants will create a flowing river form representing the Avon River, surrounded by clay shapes symbolising native plants and animals significant to Noongar culture and the local environment.

The project is designed to reconnect the river and the town in a simple but meaningful way encouraging families to slow down,

work alongside one another and reflect on the importance of place.

Dudgee Park will be buzzing with free family activities throughout the day, including the popular mini railway, the Liberty hot air balloon display, the Carnaby Crusaders and other festival attractions.

The festival weekend will also showcase local artistic talent through the Toodyay Art Prize Exhibition, organised by Arts Toodyay at the Toodyay Memorial Hall.

Artist entries open in early April, with the exhibition opening night on the 1 May, Youth Presentation on 2 May, and the final viewing day on the 3 May during the Moondyne Festival.

The community is warmly invited to visit the exhibition and support local adult and youth artists.

Arts Toodyay thanks Midland Brick as lead sponsor and acknowledges the support of the Moondyne Festival Committee, Toodyay District High School and the Shire of Toodyay in making the event possible.

You can contact us via the Arts Toodyay Facebook page or by emailing president. [artstoodyay@gmail.com](mailto:artstoodyay@gmail.com).

# Celebrating International Women's Day

For over a century, March 8 recognises the achievements, challenges and opportunities for women and girls globally.

Chalice proudly celebrates women in every corner of our communities, businesses, farms and schools, whose leadership, contributions and expertise drive change.

International Women's Day is an important time to reflect, elevate and amplify the focus on gender equality.

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Reminder that funding applications close March 31.

Visit: [www.gonnevilleproject.com.au/community/community-investment/](http://www.gonnevilleproject.com.au/community/community-investment/)



**Contact us**  
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5 Charcoal Lane, Toodyay  
[community@chalicemining.com](mailto:community@chalicemining.com)



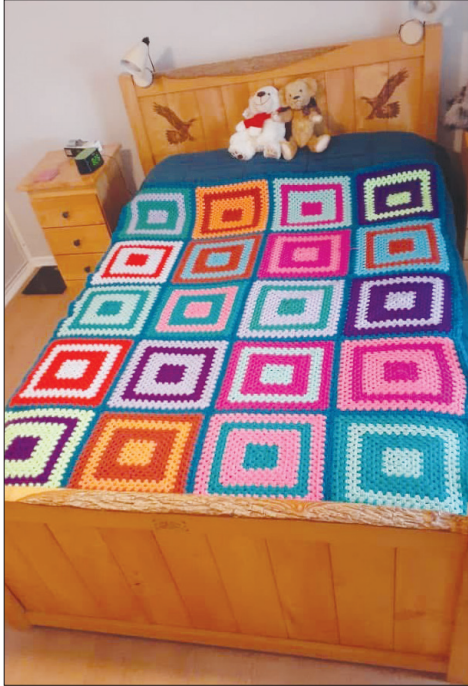
## Grandma's hobbies help you to live longer

**The Crooked Needle**  
Jean Melhuish-Hill

MARCH is here and the year is getting busy after a leisurely Christmas.

At our last gathering we noticed we had about 40 per cent of our ladies knitting, 45 per cent crocheting, 10 per cent doing some type of needle work with the other 5 per cent enjoying a good chat and a cuppa.

Some days all you need is a friend, a listening ear and an opportunity to catch up with people.



This beautiful crocheted piece of handiwork was created by talented Teddy James.

It is not always about creating a physical item.

A long-running study from the University of Helsinki found that women who regularly engage in traditional "grandma hobbies" such as knitting, sewing, crocheting, and gardening tend to live up to eight years longer.

These activities help calm the nervous system by lowering stress and promoting a meditative, focused state through repetitive movement.

They also build confidence by creating a sense of purpose, routine and visible accomplishment.

Mentally, such hobbies keep the brain active, supporting memory, attention and cognitive flexibility as women age.

Together, these effects show that simple, creative pastimes can be deeply therapeutic, emotionally grounding and beneficial for long-term health.

I have noticed, while watching movies both new and older ones, that there are many instances where there are handmade quilts and blankets in the background of the scenes.

This surprised me.

Keep your eye out while watching. The crafts that we do may be old-fashioned but definitely worthwhile.

We are about to look at what group projects we might take on this year.

This activity will take some of us out of our comfort zones and some of our experts will help less experienced crafters.

If you are interested in getting to know some local ladies, take up a craft or share your knowledge with others, please come along and visit us at the CWA Hall, each Friday from 9.30am.

See the contact details page in *The Toodyay Herald*.

## Looking forward to the daily grind

**Avon Wood Turners**  
Hamish Dobie

IF THERE is one thing that can make the difference when woodturning, it's the sharpness of the tools that you're using.

There's nothing worse when you are just finishing off a project on a lathe than a 'gouge' which is often caused by an incorrectly angled or blunt tool.

Many a curse and swearword can be heard, even German curses on occasions.

We have a high-speed grinder to sharpen tools.

Using this can overheat the metal or, if sharpened at the wrong angle, can ruin a tool.

Personally, I'm a bit of a duffer and sometimes get the sharpening process wrong.

I go to the more experienced turners for help, as do several others.

This can wear their patience thin, especially as it happens several times per session.

Now, thanks to a donation from WAWA and some fundraising of our own, we have obtained a Rikon low speed 200mm bench grinder with

diamond encrusted grinding wheels.

This doesn't sound much to the layman, but it's the equivalent of a rev head getting hold of a Holden Camaro.

Our members had a demonstration on tool sharpening using the same machine some months ago. (Refer to the photo).

Even the poorest turner (me) made a success of sharpening and getting the individual tools' angles correct.

We are now confident that our output will be much enhanced.

The experienced turners will have more time to themselves, and the level of cursing will be greatly reduced.

Watch this space.

If you have an interest in joining the club, the Avon Woodturners are located at Shed 1, Community Depot, at the end of Railway Road, Toodyay.

We meet on Wednesdays and Sundays from 9 am until noon.

For more information, please email me on hamishd2701@gmail.com, or call 0423 115 204.



George Murray upsills Beatrice a lesson on how to sharpen tools.

## These boots were made for walking

**Toodyay Music Club**  
Jenny Edgecombe

THE Music Club met for the first meeting of 2026 in February.

Following our usual warm-up session of group singing, we moved to individual numbers.

February was a theme month.

Members chose songs on the whimsical theme of Boots and Shoes.

Anne was our first theme performer, with a most entertaining recitation of *To a Moose*.

We were also treated to a stirring organ piece by Meg, in March of the *Negro Slaves*.

Jenny lowered the tone a little later with the whimsical ditty, *He Wore Black Leather Trousers and Motorcycle Boots*.

It can only be described as a rather unusual song, not to be taken too seriously.

We could not have a Boots and Shoes programme without the classic of younger years, *These Boots are Made for Walking*.

Collette sang this delightfully, accompanied by Joe on guitar.

Meg was a very welcome visiting performer.

Her numbers included a delightful delivery of *English Country Garden* on keyboard.

Why not join us as an audience member or performer for our next meeting.

This will take place at the CWA Hall on March 14, starting at 1pm.

For more information, please call Joe on 0400862694.

## Songsters prepare for Moondyne Festival

**Toodyay Community Singers**  
Anne Millar

THE singers are now rehearsing on Monday evenings from 4.30pm to 5.30pm at the CWA Hall on Stirling Terrace.

We are currently selecting songs for the Moondyne Festival on Sunday 3 May, 2026.

There is time if anyone would like to be part of community events.

We only ask that you enjoy singing and attend rehearsals and have a good time.

## Toodyay playgroup and kindergym merge

**Toodyay Playgroup and Kindergym**  
Shelly Maes

EXCITING things are happening for Toodyay's littlest residents.

Our much loved Toodyay Playgroup and Toodyay Kindergym have recently merged to form one strong, enthusiastic committee.

The committee is dedicated to providing fun, connection, and support for families with young children. In joining forces, the new committee can streamline planning, improve communication, and ensure our programs continue to thrive.

This merger helps make organising sessions smoother and ensures both services remain vibrant parts of community life.

**Come Join the Fun**

WHETHER you're new to Toodyay, have a new baby or toddler, or simply haven't visited in a while, we warmly invite you to come along.

Both Playgroup and Kindergym offer welcoming spaces for children to explore,

play, move, and make friends.

Parents and carers can also connect with other local families.

*Toodyay Playgroup meets:*

Tuesdays 9.30am – 11.00am at the Recreation Centre, next to the doctor's practice.

*Toodyay Kindergym meets:*

Fridays 9.30am – 11.00 at the Town Oval Pavilion.

Your first session is free.

Come along, meet everyone.

See what we are all about with no pressure.

**We Need You**

LIKE many small communities, we are looking for new families and new members to keep these wonderful programs going.

If you have thought about joining, this is the perfect time.

Your involvement, big or small, helps keep these sessions available for all Toodyay children now and into the future.

We would truly love to meet you and welcome you into our friendly, relaxed group.

See you soon at Playgroup or Kindergym



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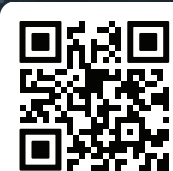
Government of Western Australia  
WA Country Health Service

# Patient Assisted Travel Scheme

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) provides financial subsidies for eligible WA country residents to reduce the cost of accessing the closest specialist health services where not locally available.

In 2025, we helped more than 35,000 rural and remote residents to access PATS. It's just one of the ways we're helping to make it easier for country patients travelling for specialist health services.

PATS is a subsidy program funded by the Government of Western Australia administered through WA Country Health Service.



Scan the QR code to learn more or search online for the latest information

 patient assisted travel scheme



# Technical hitch delays Godspell, new sound guy sought

# Chaplain of many hats

**Toodyay DHS YouthCARE**  
Vivienne Freeman



The Toodyay Theatre group is inviting the community to get in touch and join in the fun, with performances dates scheduled in May.

**Toodyay Theatre Group**  
Daryl Cooper, Committee Member

DUE TO a technical error, cast only received their scripts for the upcoming production of the musical *Godspell* last week.

This has resulted in rehearsals confined to the musical numbers.

There is insufficient time left for the cast to "learn their lines" in time for performances in April as originally scheduled.

We are now looking at performance dates in May.

Sadly, following the performances our sound guy Barry is resigning after many years of outstanding service to the Toodyay Theatre Group.

We will be looking for a replacement with skills in electronics and audio-visuals.

The rescheduled annual general meeting of the group will be held on Wednesday March 18 at 6pm, at the Toodyay Memorial Hall.

Nominations will be accepted for the positions of president and secretary.

We are saying farewell to our president Dave Mitchell.

After ten years as president, Dave has decided it is time to hand the baton.

If you have an interest in amateur theatre, or would like to give it a go, please feel free to contact the Toodyay Theatre Group via our Facebook page or email, for more information.

THE SCHOOL Chaplain at Toodyay DHS is Doug McGhee.

Doug is employed for 3½ days a week, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and alternate Mondays and has been at the school for eight years.

Doug also runs the weekly Cadet program, with about 100 students involved, nearly the whole high school.

They are presently doing drill training for the upcoming Anzac Day Service with instructions from Northam Youth in Emergency Services.

The Toodyay RSL is watching on. There will be a cadets camp in March at Hillarys with outdoor adventure activities.

A visit is scheduled with DFES Whitfords Marine Rescue when the cadets will visit the rescue tower and go on rescue boats.

Doug coaches school basketball and transports students to Country Week.

He organizes wilderness hikes, is the school photographer and a listening ear for students, parents and staff.

The Toodyay YouthCARE Committee AGM will be held on Tuesday 28 April 2026 at 2pm at the school.

Positions up for election are chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, treasurer and committee members.

If you have questions please contact the secretary, Vivienne Freeman on 0484 918 678 or freeos@iinet.net.au.

## Digital legacies

**Computer Safety**  
Phil Hart

PREVIOUS generations could leave legacies in the form of letters, diaries, manuscripts and artwork.

The current generation is generating ever increasing volumes of digital information, including email and social media.

Both groups face the issue of how to make all this available to those who follow.

With physical legacies it could be as simple as a bequest in a will.

Digital legacies come with a range of issues. Emails, calendars and personal files may be in unexpected places.

They can also be password protected.

Personal files may be organised chaotically, making them hard to find.

They may also be stored on outdated technology, even as old as floppy discs.

Some files may be stored directly on the computer. These may or may not be encrypted.

Other files may be stored on cloud services such as OneDrive, Google Drive and Dropbox.

Accessing files that are stored on a computer is generally not too much of an issue unless they have been encrypted.

Accessing files stored in the cloud means having the user's credentials (username, password, two-factor-authentication (2FA) as well as any passkeys).

If you want to leave your legacy to your loved ones, make a record of your credentials that you share with at least one of them.

If you change a password, your 2FA or your passkey details, update that record.

Google adds a nice touch: it invites you to nominate someone else if you don't access your files for three months.

# A brief history of the Broadway hit

**Toodyay Theatre Group**

ACTORALLY Cordi grew up in a home where her mum had an original recording of the musical *Godspell*.

Ally "absolutely loved the recording and was excited when she successfully auditioned for a role in Toodyay Theatre Group's upcoming production.

She is delighted to be returning to the stage again.

Ally previously won best supporting actress for Garrick Theatre after the 2024 season for her role as Mrs Pearce in *Pygmalion*.

She also appeared as the Madame Miss Mona in *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, for Goldfields Repertory club in Kalgoorlie many years ago.

Ally's enthusiasm in having a leading role in the production has led her to research (with the assistance of Google) the history of the musical.

Her research is reproduced here.

In 1971, Ally was in grade 1 when Colleen Hewitt released the song Day by Day.

The song peaked in the Australian charts at #2, and in 1972 ranked #18 in the top 100.

*Godspell* began as a project for drama students at the Carnegie Mellon University in Philadelphia in 1970.

It was performed at an off-Broadway venue known as La Ma Ma.

It was conceived and originally directed by drama student John-Michael Tebelak.

It was originally written as his thesis.

It was taken to Broadway in 1971.

At this point the producers hired Stephen Swartz to re-score the music by Edgar Lansbury, brother of Angela Lansbury of *Murder She Wrote*.

*Godspell* ran at Cherry Lane and later the Promenade theatres in Broadway for over 2000 performances.

In 1971 *Godspell* hit Australia.

First in Melbourne, then in Sydney, with such names as John Waters, Colleen Hewitt, Collette Mann, and Marty Rhone.

Other names associated with the musical you'll recognise are Martin Short, playing Jeffrey, now famous for *Murders in the Building*, and Eugene Levy playing Herb.

Later, *Godspell* became a movie released in 1973.

Globally, the production ran in San Francisco, London, Hamburg, Melbourne, Boston, Paris, New York and Washington.

It had international stars such as David Essex, Jeremy Irons and David Haskell.

In 1977 it won the Tony award for the best original screenplay.

*Godspell* is a production that takes on a new meaning with each performance, in an era of artificial intelligence, environmental disasters and global warming.

*Godspell* reminds us that the answers to our human problems come from connection to each other, community, love and forgiveness.



The original cast of *Godspell*.

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# SHIRE NEWS

## INVITATION FOR PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

### Application for Extractive Industry Licence for Stormville Gravel Quarry, Hoddys Well (Vernice Gravel Pit).

The Shire of Toodyay has received an application for an Extractive Industry at Lot 3 (826) Clackline-Toodyay Road, Hoddys Well (commonly known as Vernice Gravel Pit).

The proposal seeks approval for the extraction, crushing and screening of gravel and sand at the site. As part of the assessment process, the Shire is inviting public comment due to the potential impacts associated with the proposed quarry operations.

For more information on the proposal and how to make a submission please visit the Public Notice section of the Shire's website [toodyay.wa.gov.au](http://toodyay.wa.gov.au).

**Submissions close 4pm, Thursday 2 April 2026.**

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST Affordable Life Planning Legal Services

We know that getting your 'life documents' in order can feel overwhelming. That's why we're looking to bring Griffiths Rice and Co to Toodyay to help our community get these sorted at a reduced rate.

Contact the Toodyay CRC to express your interest in this service by calling 9574 9399 or emailing [crc@toodyay.wa.gov.au](mailto:crc@toodyay.wa.gov.au).

**Expressions of Interest close Wednesday 25 March 2026.**



## Margot Watkins Art Exhibition on Now!

Local Toodyay multi media artist Margot Watkins has transformed the Visitors Centre showcase space into a mini studio for March.

Drawing inspiration from the world around her, Margot's creativity shines

through in every piece on display.

Explore iconic Toodyay landscapes alongside her quirky sculptures and textiles, and experience the work of one of Toodyay's award winning artists.



## WE'RE HIRING CRC Customer Service Trainee

The Shire's CRC is offering a unique opportunity to work full-time as a Customer Service Officer while undertaking a traineeship.

For more information on this opportunity

and how to apply, please look for Employment Opportunities under the Council section of the Shire's website [toodyay.wa.gov.au](http://toodyay.wa.gov.au). **Applications close 4pm, Monday 16 March 2026.**

## Canva Basics Workshop a Big success!

The Toodyay CRC received some great feedback from the Canva Basics workshop held on 18 February – so much so that we will be running another one again soon, so keep an eye out on the CRC and Shire Facebook pages and Events section at [toodyay.wa.gov.au](http://toodyay.wa.gov.au) for more details.



## TOODYAY RAILWAYS A Tale of Two Lines Exhibition Coming Soon!

Save Sunday 26 April on your calendar for the official launch of our newest exhibition at the Newcastle Gaol Museum: Toodyay Railways – a Tale of Two Lines.

As part of the National Trust Heritage Festival, we are diving deep into the history of the railway lines that have shaped Toodyay since 1887.

This exhibition is proudly presented in partnership with the Toodyay Historical Society.

For more information, contact Toodyay Museums at 9574 9380, email [toodyay.museums@toodyay.wa.gov.au](mailto:toodyay.museums@toodyay.wa.gov.au) or visit [australianheritagefestival.org.au](http://australianheritagefestival.org.au) and search for "Toodyay".

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

# Life Planning

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Have your essential estate planning documents prepared with Griffiths Rice & Co, right here in Toodyay. Special reduced rates available for Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney, Enduring Powers of Guardianship, and Advanced Health Directives.

Wills (normally \$440) - \$220.  
EPA & EPG (normally \$165 each) - \$110 each.  
AHD (normally \$110) - \$55.

Contact us with your interest by Wednesday 25 March.  
To register your interest, please contact the CRC on (08) 9574 9399 or email [crc@toodyay.wa.gov.au](mailto:crc@toodyay.wa.gov.au)

# Tea & TECH

All sessions are FREE and run on a Friday from 10.30am - 12pm

2026

February 27: Library  
March 27: CRC  
April 24: Library

Learn about topics such as online banking, scams, and AI while enjoying morning tea

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TOODYAY RAILWAYS

# A Tale of Two Lines

Join us for the official launch of our upcoming exhibition as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival. Discover the impact on Toodyay of two separate railway lines running through the township from 1887. Explore the structural and social history of the line, covering bridges, Windmill Hill Cutting, floods, rail accidents, and the loss of buildings and heritage.

**EXHIBITION LAUNCH**

SUNDAY 26 APRIL, 2026  
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

AT THE NEWCASTLE GAOL MUSEUM

RUNNING FOR 12 MONTHS!

For more information, please contact Toodyay Museums on (08) 9574 9380 or email [toodyay.museums@toodyay.wa.gov.au](mailto:toodyay.museums@toodyay.wa.gov.au)

In partnership with the Toodyay Historical Society