

# 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,  
Wooroloo, Wundowie, Gidgegannup and local districts.

April 2026  
Edition 455

## Costs climbing



Pictured: Toodyay Hardware and Farm Supplies store manager, Jeff Hudson.

### Rashelle Predovnik

THE diesel shortage is starting to bite in Toodyay, with a local hardware store warning rising fuel costs, big price hikes on products made from oil-based plastic and disrupted deliveries could soon push up prices for residents and farmers.

Toodyay Hardware and Farm Supplies owner Damien said the flow-on effects were already being felt across its supply chain, with freight costs skyrocketing in the past few weeks.

He said the current diesel shortage was driving up costs and cutting down deliveries.

“Our freight supplier charges us a fuel levy on top of the standard pallet cost and at the end of February, this was a comfortable 17 percent,” he said.

“Today, it’s sitting at 60 percent and with seeding starting, I can only expect it to climb higher.”

To combat the rising costs, some suppliers have added extra delivery fees and freight companies have scaled back deliveries to manage higher costs.

Damien said to date the business has done what it can to absorb these extra costs.

“But if this drags on past April, we may have no choice but to start raising prices.”

Damien said the fuel shortage was also causing price hikes on some PVC pipes and plastic fittings.

Simply because a huge portion of the oil used to make plastic resin comes from the exact same supply chain as the oil used to produce our fuel.

“It’s all connected.”

He said several suppliers had warned of price increases between 20 percent and 50 percent on certain products.

Despite this, several major suppliers have also indicated they do not plan immediate increases.

Shadow Minister for Agriculture Lachlan

Hunter MLA said the crisis was now hitting agriculture hard, with devastating consequences for farmers heading into one of the most critical periods of the year.

“Without diesel, tractors stop, seed stays in the shed and next year’s harvest is put at risk.”

Mr Hunter said without urgent action, the fuel crisis will quickly become a full-blown food crisis.

“When diesel does not reach the people who produce and move our food, the cost does not disappear, it lands squarely on the kitchen tables of Western Australian families,” he said.

“This is how a fuel crisis becomes a food price crisis, with higher freight costs, disrupted supply and more pressure on families already struggling with the cost of living.”

In response, the State Government has activated emergency powers to take control

... continued on page 3

### Coming events

#### this month

classifieds	26
emergency services	8-9
environment	28-29
health	30
letters	4
public notices	26
puzzles	27
sport and leisure	31
trades & services	22-24
when & where	26

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# Celebrating Toodyay's first triathlon



Pippa Fulwood, Eugenie Fulwood and Ava Murray.



Katie Sharples, Kirsty Palmer, Crystal Glossop.



Summer Roberts, Emma Thompson, Patrick Thompson.



Guy Boggs, Benjamin Wood, Hamish Wood.



Waiting to compete.

TOODYAY'S very first triathlon was a huge success, drawing a big crowd of spectators to watch the exciting competition and more visitors to the town.

The inaugural Toodyay Triathlon held on Sunday March 8 at the Toodyay Aquatic Centre attracted 129 competitors between 7 and 79 years of age.

They competed solo or as a team in one of three race distances.

Competitors swam, rode and ran their way through the course as an estimated 200 supporters and spectators cheered them on.

Every competitor received a finish medal, followed by a

visit to the recovery tent for water, hydration, fresh fruit and a free sausage sizzle.

Presentation of medals and prizes were given to first, second and third place male and female competitors and to the first team for each event.

Thanks to generous business sponsorship, each placing competitor received a cash prize and all competitors were eligible to receive a range of spot prizes distributed at the event.

The Toodyay Triathlon introduced 67 people (51 percent of competitors) to the sport of triathlon for the first time.

It encouraged people to be active, to swim, cycle and

run on a regular basis and contribute to positive health and wellbeing.

The event demonstrated that triathlon is truly a sport for all ages and abilities with examples of three generations of one family all participating in an event for the first time.

The Toodyay Triathlon created community connection and generated a sense of belonging in our community.

It showcased Toodyay's Aquatic Centre to local residents and attracted visitors to Toodyay, including overnight stays and associated visitor spending, and promoted Toodyay as a destination for triathlon in the broader WA triathlon community.

## 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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### DISTRIBUTION

The Toodyay Herald has a distribution of 5000 copies, with copies delivered to letter boxes in Toodyay, and Morangup. Copies are also available at roadhouses and businesses in Toodyay, Northam, Bolgart, Bakers Hill, Calingiri, Clackline, Gidgegannup, Goomalling, Wooroloo and Wundowie.

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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, Michael Black and Allan Gregory.

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### RATES - NO GST IS APPLICABLE

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**Quarter Page:** Mono - \$174.00; Col. - \$225.50.

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**Page Nomination Loading:** Front page - 100%, Back page - 50%, Centre pages / Page 3 - 25%, other pages - 10% (based on mono price).

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### Specifications

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### Trades and Services

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## NEXT TOODYAY HERALD EDITION

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

**Noon Thursday  
April 30**

STORY DEADLINE

**Noon Friday  
May 1**

DISTRIBUTED

**Thursday  
May 14**

# Over \$400k planned to be spent on a bridge you can't run or cycle on

Rashelle Predovnik

COUNCIL will discuss funding options to fix the town's ageing Newcastle Footbridge, which will now only be allowed to be used for walking.

Council voted to reopen the bridge to pedestrians, with no e-bikes, scooters, cycling or any other means of transport allowed.

The April report to council said there needed to be a long-term financial commitment from council to keep the bridge open and extend its life by 20 plus years through maintenance.

The report proposed setting up a special reserve fund to repair and maintain the bridge from an extra two percent rate increase.

"It is recommended the shire begins reserving two percent of rates annually into a ring-fenced reserve account."

But *The Herald* has queried the lack of other funding options presented to councillors – as the report focused solely on an additional two per cent rate increase as a solution.

*The Herald* has asked why the report did not include other options such as seeking grants or external funding, establishing a reserve without increasing rates, or reprioritising existing spending within the current budget.

While the two per cent increase was recommended by officers, council did not adopt this proposal.

Instead, council agreed to proceed with a

full bridge decking replacement, estimated at \$270,000, to be funded through the annual budget.

Council also supported a staged approach to the broader repairs.

This includes structural works - estimated at \$120,000 to \$150,000 - within five years.

Rather than introducing a two percent rate rise, council unanimously voted to consider the funding implications as part of the 2026-27 annual budget process.

It remains unclear whether a special reserve fund will be established as part of those discussions.

Council voted to reopen the footbridge to pedestrians only, subject to insurance requirements and the installation of signage warning of trip hazards.

The move to open the Newcastle footbridge was welcomed by Newcastle Park parkrun member who made a statement at the council meeting.

"We are excited and supportive of the officer's recommendation for option one, reopening the footbridge with appropriate signage and progressing decking replacement through the 2026-2027 budget."

But local mum Laura told *The Herald* the community wanted more information about the cost of the bridge and why it was closed.

"We were not told how much the bridge was costing to keep open and it just shut one day," she said.

"If they're saying it cost 'X amount' to fix the bridge then give us a break down of the cost and justify the spending."



Harriet, Darci and Will with mums Nikki and Laura on the Newcastle footbridge

# Uniform rate plan sparks backlash over hefty hikes

Rashelle Predovnik

MORANGUP residents have fired up against a council decision to create a uniform rate in the dollar, warning it will drive up costs for rural property owners and potentially deliver a bigger-than-expected financial blow when rates are finalised.

The modelling in the report to council that supported the uniform rate pushed GRV rural residential rates up by five percent and UV rural rates up 21 percent.

But critics of the move are bracing for a bigger hit when rates are finalised, as the percentages in the council report were based on last year's lower rate setting.

This means the projected increases outlined in the report could end up even higher if this year's rates are set above last year's levels.

Council voted to change the method of rating from July 1 this year moving from differential rates to a uniform rate in the dollar for properties valued using Gross Rental Value (GRV) and Unimproved Value (UV) at its March meeting.

The uniform rate won't significantly change the shire's total rate revenue, which will stay about the same according to the report to council.

But it will have a big effect on many household budgets.

The report to council showed the biggest changes affected two groups: 410 properties in the UV General category saw their rates

drop by 58 percent, whereas 198 UV Rural properties saw their rates jump up 21 percent.

The biggest category (1,055 'GRV Rural Residential' properties) had a five percent increase.

Whereas 626 GRV Residential properties saw their rates fall by four percent.

But the figures modelled in the report to council were from last year and they will be outdated when council ratifies its new budget and sets its rates for the 2026-2027 financial year.

This means, the small decreases modelled in the March report to council could disappear and small increases could spike if council sets a rate this year higher than last year's 2.2 percent.

The neighbouring shires of York, Chittering and Victoria Plains have a uniform rate structure.

Whereas Northam and Goomalling still use the differential rating model and so did Toodyay before the change last month.

In a statement the shire said this change will make rates fairer, clearer, and easier to understand, and it will help ensure long term

compliance with rating laws.

"This isn't about raising more money — it's about simplifying the system and improving transparency," the shire said in a statement.

"Slight reductions or modest increases may appear on individual rates notices, depending on your property type and valuation."

But the actual percentage increases and decreases for this year are yet to be released.

*The Toodyay Herald* asked the shire to confirm that the figures to be advertised for public comment in May will be based on the final 2026-27 budget and updated modelling, rather than last year's figures presented in the March report to council.

So the community could make informed submissions.

*The Herald* is yet to receive a response from the shire to its questions.

A statement on a Morangup community website slammed the decision to hit Morangup residents with a rate hike — while Toodyay town residents rates went down — as divisive.

Although the shire said the change was

not about raising more money, Morangup residents are being warned to brace for the first of many rate rises if council proceeds with its plans to flatten the system.

"The March decision is the method change — the reshuffling of who pays more and who pays less," it said.

"It does not necessarily include whatever broader increase the shire may later apply through the 2026/27 budget."

Morangup residents opposing the uniform model said they were not reacting to one isolated tweak.

They were reacting to a pattern over time of rising costs, town-centric assumptions, heavy shire spending programs, weak outer-locality voice, and now a council decision that shifted more of the rating burden onto rural residential, while giving town residential a reduction.

The uniform rating model will be put out for public comment next month.

The proposal will be advertised for 21 days, seeking community feedback so the community can have their say.

## Costs climbing

... continued from page 1 of fuel supply data and direct deliveries to the regions most in need.

Fuel for agriculture is being prioritised, to ensure seeding can go ahead in hard-hit communities.

Road train limits have also been relaxed to move more diesel and petrol into regional areas faster.

A taskforce led by Deputy Premier Rita Saffioti is working with regional suppliers, including Great Southern Fuels, and the Federal Government to find new ways to get fuel into affected areas.

The measures come after widespread reports of fuel shortages across regional WA.

For now, Toodyay residents are being urged to brace for slower deliveries and the possibility of higher prices if the fuel squeeze continues.

Your local voice for Toodyay!

Here to help!

[lachlan.hunter@mp.wa.gov.au](mailto:lachlan.hunter@mp.wa.gov.au)

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- 📍 185 Fitzgerald St, Northam (Next to the Commonwealth Bank)

LACHLAN HUNTER MP

MEMBER FOR CENTRAL WHEATBELT

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

# The Toodyay Herald

## From the editor's desk

CONFIDENCE in local government is built on two things: trust and transparency.

When mistakes happen (as they inevitably do in any organisation) what really matters is how they are acknowledged and addressed.

In past editions, *The Herald* reported the shire failed to claim \$195,000 it was owed in GST and an audit report revealed ongoing failures that persisted across multiple audits.

So a recent decision by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARIC) to step up its oversight is a good move.

It means mistakes like missed reconciliations, duplicate payments and fraud risks are more likely to be picked up early and fixed.

### Newcastle Footbridge

All ratepayers will be hit with an extra two percent rate hike each year to maintain a bridge that users will only be allowed to walk on.

Resorting straight to a rate hike to fix the Newcastle Footbridge instead of looking at other funding options was something *The Herald* has queried.

Especially since there are state and federal government funding streams the shire could have accessed.

Two federal government grants available include: the Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program and the Thriving Suburbs Program, which both give money for bridges.

Ratepayers have a right to expect all funding avenues are considered before they are asked to dig deeper into their own pockets.

### Uniform rates

In the wake of a fuel and cost of living crisis, one has to question the council's latest decision to roll out a uniform rate rise, that has seen some rates rise as high as 21 percent – while others drop 58 per cent.

This roller coaster has caused angst amongst GRV rural residential property owners – as the modelling behind the 21 percent rate rise was from last year's rates.

That means, if this year's rates come in higher – as many expect – the actual impact could be worse than what councillors were shown.

The shire says the new uniform rating model won't significantly increase its rates revenue.

And the reason given for the new model is past mistakes made by the shire under the differential rating system, which it described as complex.

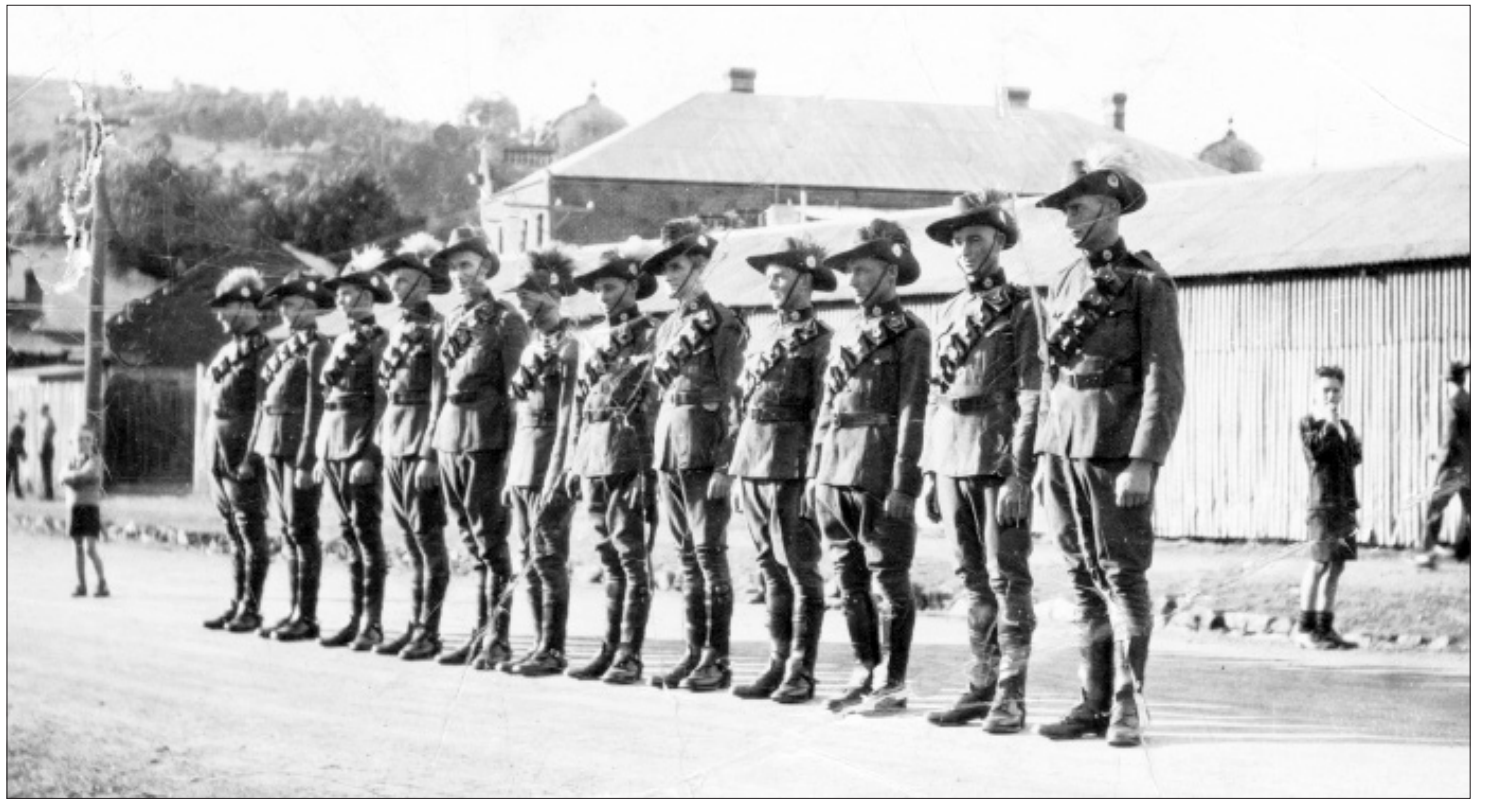
The shire says it's aiming to improve transparency and compliance but why not just identify where past mistakes have been made and improve the process?

Surely that can't be a difficult task for a shire with a small rate base of 2,400 dwellings.

Change is sometimes necessary, but it needs to be backed by clear communication and careful modelling.

If the shire can demonstrate both, it will go a long way towards easing community concern.

Rashelle Predovnik  
Editor



*The way we were – Light Horse Regiment soldiers on parade in the 1930s in Clinton Street (now Piesse Street) in front of former stables belonging to the Freemasons Hotel (rear). From Newcastle Gaol Museum collection.*

## LETTERS

### A divide and rule strategy?

THE Shire is intending to remove the differential rating system.

That system is for a purpose.

The recognition that those living in the rural parts of the shire have fewer ratepayer funded amenities and greater costs associated with using town-based facilities and services.

These include the waste transfer station and recreation centre.

The contention is that this will create a small increase for some ratepayers.

However, a look at the numbers reveals that those on UV Rural will be paying an extra 21 percent and that is before any rate rise (in past history perhaps around 4-5 percent) to accommodate the budget.

Those on GRV Rural Residential will pay an extra five percent also before the additional amount dictated by the budget.

Those in agriculture will take a big 'hit' especially in light of the current fuel and fertiliser issues.

Many residents of most subdivisions, including Morangup, Bejoording, Hodywell, Julimar, Coondle and parts of several others, are GRV Rural Residential and they will be paying the same rates as those in the town (incidentally townsite properties are getting a reduction).

The bottom line is that around two thirds of shire residential ratepayers, e.g. those who live outside the townsite will be paying the same rates as those in town but without equitable access to ratepayer funded facilities and services.

This is iniquitous and appears to be continuing the trend towards urbanisation that seems to be a hallmark of this council and administration.

Perhaps it is time for the community, especially those in agriculture and rural residents to speak up loud and clear and send a message to the council/shire.

Jo Hart  
Morangup

*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.*

### Aboriginal heritage legislation

CURRENTLY the legislation dealing with Aboriginal Heritage is being reviewed: (*High stakes hearing. Toodyay Herald, March edition*) but there is a matter, long overlooked, that needs to be dealt with.

At this time the decisions of the Aboriginal Heritage Committee have no legal effect.

This has been so since the inception of the legislation.

This situation has been brought about because of a failure to comply with some provisions of the Interpretation Act 1984. (and the previous Interpretation Act of 1918).

The Interpretation Act applies to all legislation unless specifically excluded – section 3.

Decisions of the committee are caught by the definition of *subsidiary legislation* in section 5.

Section 41 provides that all subsidiary legislation shall be published in the gazette or (now) on the WA legislation website, and "come into operation on the day of publication".

The current Aboriginal heritage legislation came into effect in 1972.

At that time the previous Interpretation Act (1918) was in force.

The relevant provisions of that act were to the same effect as the current legislation.

It is now over 54 years later and there has not been one relevant entry in the government gazettes.

There are other provisions in the Interpretation Act which also contain devastating consequences.

John King  
Toodyay

### Local art displayed

INFORMING all Toodyay residents interested in art to visit the Toodyay Visitors Centre each month.

The centre has dedicated a large space for local artists to exhibit their work.

Each month a different artist's work will be displayed and will be for sale.

Please go in and have a look.

It is free.

It is a wonderful experience to view the fantastic artwork on display.

Sandy Wessley

### Wise words for unsettled times.

**Desiderata - "things that are desired"**

GO PLACIDLY amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly, and listens to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter,

For always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery but let this not blind you to what virtue there is.

Many persons strive for high ideals and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself...

Especially do not feign affection.

Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.

But do not distress yourself with imaginings.

Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars.

You have a right to be here and, whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God.

Whatever you conceive Him to be and whatever your labours and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life.

Keep peace with your soul... with all its sham and drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be careful. Strive to be happy.

This text was widely distributed in poster form in the 1960s and 1970s.

The inscription was found in Old St Pauls church, Baltimore, dated 1692.

"Desiderata" was actually written as a 1927 prose poem by the American writer Max Ehrmann.

Yani Wessley  
Julimar

# Audit committee steps up scrutiny



Rashelle Predovnik

THE Audit and Risk Committee (ARIC) has stepped up its scrutiny of the Shire of Toodyay's governance and finances calling for more meetings and more oversight – in a move that prompted pushback from the chief executive officer.

Under the Local Government Act, ARIC is responsible for the oversight of risk management, internal controls, financial management and compliance.

The committee's decision to step up its oversight follows the 2024–25 audit's financial management report, which identified major issues that have persisted across four audits.

Auditors found \$242,521 had been mistakenly been paid twice, no monthly

bank reconciliations were done for almost an entire financial year and the risk of fraud had increased.

ARIC held a special meeting on March 17 at the shire's council chambers on Fiennes St to endorse an annual work plan and a new reporting process.

ARIC's report outlined a plan that included monthly meetings instead of quarterly, and it substantially increased the reporting requirements for finance, governance, risk and operations.

The committee said regular monthly meetings would better help them to detect issues early, monitor trends or intervene before risks escalated.

ARIC also asked for an operational overview summary to inform the committee about key activities and significant incidents

that resulted in compliance breaches, reputational harm or the need for corrective action.

A reconciliation status report was also requested, including bank accounts, GST and asset registers to help the committee look at the integrity of the financial records.

ARIC also asked the shire's CEO Aaron Bowman to provide a formal written statement of assurance each quarter on the effectiveness of the organisation's processes and to identify any issues that warranted ARIC's attention.

In response, Mr Bowman described the discussions ARIC had as 'secret, behind closed doors meetings' and discussions that did not promote transparency as he was not told before the special audit meeting that ARIC wanted a more detailed work plan.

Mr Bowman also raised governance concerns, saying the committee's role was to review reports from the CEO and make recommendations to council.

He said the CEO was responsible for administration, staffing, systems and reporting.

He added that any extra reporting requests would need to be assessed for practicality, staffing and legal requirements before going to council for approval.

Moving to monthly meetings and endorsing a complex reporting schedule would also impose significant workload increases and administrative demands, Mr Bowman said.

In a statement, ARIC chair Natalie Mills said members meeting to discuss priorities and what reporting was required for proper oversight was not 'non-compliant' behaviour — it was the committee simply doing their job.

She said the committee had a responsibility under the Act to decide the information, reporting and assurance it needed to fulfil its statutory functions.

"To meet this obligation, ARIC must establish a structured and predictable reporting framework that ensures it receives the information necessary to monitor financial controls, compliance, risk management and organisational performance throughout the year."

"The proposed reporting framework sets out a suite of standing reports, delivered at defined intervals to ensure ARIC receives timely, evidence-based information that supports informed decision making and effective oversight."

ARIC also noted that it had requested the required reports from the CEO in accordance with the committee's charter and statutory functions.

Mrs Mills said if the reports required by the framework could not be produced, that could pose a serious risk to the shire.

"Identifying such risks is one of the reasons why this committee exists."

Members of the audit committee unanimously voted to support the annual work plan and to hold monthly meetings at the special audit meeting held last month.

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# Raising awareness one run at a time

SIMONE Brown has hit the ground running, striding towards an ambitious statewide running challenge to honour her mother who passed away this year after living with a rare brain disease, and she'll be at the Toodyay park run next month to raise funds and awareness.

Cerebral Autosomal Dominant Arteriopathy with Subcortical Infarcts and Leukoencephalopathy (CADASIL) is a rare, hereditary disease that affects small blood vessels in the brain and causes strokes, early-onset dementia and migraines.

It typically appears in patients aged 30–50 years and Ms Brown is running to raise awareness.

She recently marked a milestone in her campaign, *CADASIL – Raising Awareness One Run at a Time*, finishing her tenth parkrun and raising nearly \$4000 towards her \$10,000 goal for vital research.

What began as a tribute while her mother was still alive has now become a legacy.

Ms Brown kicked off her challenge at the Woodbridge Riverside Parkrun in January and she will participate at every parkrun across Western Australia, to shine a light on CADASIL and support vital research.

Her mother was diagnosed in 2020 after years of unexplained fatigue, confusion and balance issues.

She passed away surrounded by family in February this year after a long and difficult decline.

Ms Brown recalls her mum was carefree, vibrant and independent.

“Watching her gradually lose her mobility and independence was heartbreaking.

“But continuing this challenge gives me purpose.”

There is currently no cure or specific treatment for the disease, with doctors focusing on reducing the risk of stroke.

It's estimated around 1,350 Australians may be living with CADASIL but researchers believe it's underdiagnosed.

Now 10 Parkruns down, Ms Brown says the support from local runners and the broader WA community has been welcomed and extremely encouraging.

“I can't change what happened to mum,” she said.

“But if we can raise awareness, fund research and give another family hope for better answers in the future, then her story will mean something bigger.”



Simone Brown is fundraising for vital research in memory of her beloved mother.

## RSL marches into a new era



The initial concrete pour for the Toodyay RSL's new home marks a major milestone.

AFTER more than a century without a permanent base, the Toodyay RSL is finally getting a home of its own with construction now underway.

Toodyay is one of the oldest sub-branches in the state, turning 107 this year and RSL Toodyay sub branch president Geoff Brown said it was about time they had their own building.

“We were established in 1919 and the joke is that we've been in this town for 107 years and we're finally getting our club room.”

Mr Brown said in 1956 the RSL donated their building fund to the shire to refurbish the memorial hall.

“They refurbished the hall, but the RSL never got the full use of it.”

The Toodyay Shire council did eventually vote to give the former parks and gardens

depot site on Clinton Street to the Toodyay RSL, with the agreement finalised around 2020.

Mr Brown said it was now all coming together.

“This is quite a significant part of the RSL's history and we're all getting rather excited about watching the progress,” he said.

The building's pad was laid last month and, as well as being used by Toodyay's large veteran community, the venue will also be made available to the community more widely.

In a statement, the sub-branch said there was not enough attention being paid to the younger members of the veteran community who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Once we are into our new home, we hope to attract more members.”

## Heartbroken family offers cash reward



### Rashelle Predovnik

NEARLY a year after their tiny dog vanished into the Wheatbelt, a grieving family is offering a generous cash reward and refusing to give up hope she will come home.

Poppy, a small chihuahua ‘the size of a kitten’, slipped away while in the care of Romy's parents in Northam on April 29.

She was briefly spotted along Katrine Road, walking along a farm fence line, more than 15 kilometres from town and the couple who spotted her were unable to catch her.

Despite a tireless search effort, including drones, hours spent walking the Avon River and help from strangers across the Wheatbelt, Poppy has not been found.

For Romy, the passing of time hasn't dulled the pain or her determination to find the family's much-loved pet.

“I feel like someone has picked her up,” Romy said.

“She had a harness and name tag on. “Whoever has her would know she belongs to someone.”

But not really knowing has been the hardest part and Romy said in those first desperate days, the community rallied.

People walked alongside her father, followed leads, and they shared posts all over social media.

A year later, some people are still helping to spread the word and Romy still has hope.

“We walked fence lines because that's what dogs do – they follow roads,” Romy said.

“By the second day, she would have been starving and exhausted, that's when they'll let someone pick them up.”

Poppy, who turns three this year, had only just missed celebrating her second birthday with the family.

“My young daughter still asks for her for Christmas and for her birthday,” said Romy.

And she is holding on to hope because she says stranger things have happened.

“You hear of dogs being reunited after a year or longer so, I can't let it go.”

Poppy is microchipped, registered as missing, and described as highly intelligent and resilient – all traits Romy believes could have helped her survive.

She also believes someone, somewhere, knows where she is and a generous cash reward is now being offered for information leading to Poppy's return.

“She was my shadow,” Romy said.

“She came from a very loving home and we just want her back.”

Anyone who may have seen Poppy, or who has taken in a small tan chihuahua matching her description, is urged to come forward.

Romy can be contacted on 0422 479 694.

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# Pioneering Ferguson clan celebrates 60 year milestone

ONE of Toodyay's oldest pioneering families will reunite this Easter to continue a 60-year tradition and celebrate a remarkable legacy that spans generations.

The Ferguson family traces its Western Australian roots back to February 1, 1831, when Alexander (Sandy) Ferguson and his wife Christian arrived aboard the *Drummore* with their three young children.

Another child was born and died during the voyage, and the couple later had six more children.

The family eventually made their home in Toodyay and established themselves at Barn Elms to become one of the district's foundational families.

Alexander Ferguson holds the distinction of being the first person buried at Nardie Cemetery in April 1858, and Christian was laid to rest next to him in 1870.

The family grew in size as children married and had families of their own, and while surnames changed through marriage — bringing in names such as Donegan and Sinclair — the strong Ferguson connection remained.

The now well-established reunion tradition began in 1965 at the funeral of Henry James Ferguson, one of Alexander and Sarah's children.



The first reunion in 1966.



Alexander and Sarah and their 13 children.

At the time, a number of cousins remarked that funerals were the only time they saw each other.

Determined to change that, family members Vern and Boyce Donegan, Mac Ferguson and Spec Sinclair organised the first official gathering in 1966.

Family reunions followed in 1976 and 1986, before the family agreed that a 10-year

gap was too long.

Since then, the Ferguson descendants have come together every five years.

Only two of Alexander and Sarah's 13 children — Elsie May and Herbert Edward — were still alive in 1966, and both attended.

Today, the family tree has grown to an impressive 1,649 descendants, according to its most recent update in 2023.

The oldest female descendant is Bel Row (93), the oldest male is Royston Sinclair (85) and the youngest is Adella Acciano (nine days).

This Easter, relatives travelled from across Australia and overseas — including from as far as France — to reconnect, share stories and honour the legacy of those who came before them.



## Age is no barrier: Peter lifts himself and others

Rashelle Predovnik

HE IS known around town as the wise-cracking Moondyne Men member, always happy to lend a hand, but Peter Phillips is also quietly helping others get stronger in the only club of its kind in Western Australia.

The International All-round Weightlifting Association (IAWA) might have clubs all around the world but in WA, Toodyay is the only club holding the bar — thanks to one very determined founding member.

Mr Phillips moved to Toodyay in 2000 where he set up Western Australia's only IAWA club.

He was also the club's only member.

Mr Phillips said he started by himself and a small membership grew from word-of-mouth.

"I bought all my lifting gear and set it up in the shed and a couple of the boys from the Moondyne Men soon joined."

The 72-year-old's journey to weightlifting didn't start in the gym — it started after a truck accident he had in his early 30s.

"A bloke tipped a truck over on top of me," Mr Phillips recalls.

"I was in the sleeper box of my truck when it happened, so I started as a cripple back in 1985."

Mr Phillips was badly injured and on workers compensation for 12 months.

He said doctors kept telling him to go home and rest.

But he got angry instead and picked up a few dumbbells.

"And that's how I started."

Over the next five years he won powerlifting competitions, body building competitions and he became an Olympic lifting coach.

Decades later, and retired in Toodyay, Mr Phillips met a man at the pub who was also on workers compensation.

"I told him how I fixed up my back through exercise and he started coming

around," Mr Phillips said.

"He saw all the exercise equipment and it started from there.

"He's improved dramatically and he's now back at work full time."

Mr Phillips has 11 people who regularly drop into his home gym and they are all in their senior years.

"I have one man who comes around three times a week because he had a fall and hurt his neck pretty badly, and when he started with me he was virtually a cripple," Mr

Phillips said.

"It's purely strength training, you start light and work your way up."

Although the small Toodyay club often competes against itself, the results carry global weight.

Their performances are sent to England to be officially ratified under international rules and this allows members to compete against lifters worldwide.

Strength training has been life changing for Mr Phillips but he cautions others not to

compare themselves with him.

"You need to understand your own body and find the right way to build your strength because no two people are the same."

The club is invitation only, but Mr Phillips says he's always happy to have a chat with anyone interested in learning more about what they do.

Peter can be contacted on his mobile 0447 000 549.



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EMERGENCY SERVICES

# Do you have a first aid kit?

**St John Ambulance Toodyay**  
Michael Black

IT IS always busy at the Toodyay subcentre of St Johns and our volunteers are here to help.

This includes transferring patients between hospitals to emergency medical aid at home or on the road.

In the last month we have attended approximately 102 people and travelled over 5800kms.

Do you have a first aid kit in your car or at home? What about at work?

Ensuring that you carry a first aid kit in your car and having one at home is a simple and effective way to help you be prepared should an emergency or minor injury happen.

Incidents happen without warning. At home, cuts, burns, sprains or insect bites are easily dealt with when you have an appropriate first aid kit.

Instead of scrambling about trying to find what you need, it is all conveniently in one place.

Don't forget that prompt treatment of even minor cuts and burns can reduce the risk of infection. A well-stocked first aid kit can give you peace of mind.

In the car, a first aid kit can help manage unexpected injuries resulting from minor

accidents or providing essential care while waiting for emergency services.

In rural areas where 000 response times may be a little longer, having a first aid kit available may make an important difference.

Having a first aid kit at home and in your car is a low cost and practical way to manage an emergency situation.

Accidents are always unexpected. Be Prepared.

The St John office opposite the bakery has a wide range of first aid kits for sale.

You can also book yourself to do a first aid course.

A Provide First Aid course in Toodyay will be held May 16. If you would like to understand how to use your first aid kit effectively, this is the course for you.

Injury management and CPR skills together with how to use a defibrillator are covered in the course.

There is a new defibrillator at the lay-by at the corner of Toodyay Road and the Northam - Toodyay Road. This was paid for, installed and maintained by St Johns.

Book yourself into a Provide First Aid course and get familiar with how to use a defibrillator.

From all of us at St John have a safe and happy April.



## Four wheels turn

**Northam SES**  
Lin Booth

ON A recent weekend Northam and Districts State Emergency Service (SES) Unit conducted an off-road driving (4 Wheel Drive) course and a vehicle recovery course.

Students came from Northam, Toodyay and Kalgoorlie with instructors from Northam and Rockingham/Kwinana SES Units.

The courses are very demanding. They require five hours training on Friday night, and a full day Saturday and Sunday.

In the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the SES is the only division that performs vehicle recovery training.

They do this training due to the wide range of natural disasters where they work to assist their local community.

In broad terms, the SES have to be able to work in all natural disasters except fire.

When requested, they provide logistical and other support to the fire service.

The courses, although demanding, did not prevent the students from enjoying themselves.

In order to ensure the students are competent they have to be able drive in rough, sandy and muddy terrain, and recover vehicles from the same terrain. They have to convince the instructors they are competent in all phases of both courses. This is not an easy task.

The slope where the vehicle is being recovered is actually steeper than it looks so the terrain really tested their skills.

And they excelled. Well done to all students.

Be part of something big. Step up, learn new skills and help keep your community safe.

To find out more, and the many interesting things they do, call Lin on 0499 362 990.



The new Defibrillator.

## Training, teamwork and thanks

**VBFB Coondle Nunile**  
Aurelie Zimmermann

OVER the past weeks, the Coondle-Nunile Volunteer Bushfire Brigade has been keeping a watchful eye as permit season continues.

While it has been relatively quiet in terms of callouts, the brigade has responded promptly to a couple of small incidents in the local area.

Thanks to the swift action of local volunteers, farmers, and brigade members, these fires were contained before they could spread or cause significant damage.

Overall, it has been a quiet season which is always a welcome outcome.

These incidents highlight the importance of preparedness, early reporting and community cooperation.

We thank everyone who supports our efforts whether by helping on the ground or by following fire safety regulations.

Training has continued alongside our operational work.

Last month, the brigade held a comprehensive training session focused on electrical and vehicle fires.

The session included a review of past local incidents, highlighting potential hazards and best practices.

Volunteers discussed how to isolate electrical sources and approach these types of incidents safely as a bushfire brigade.

The session was very well attended with everyone actively participating, asking questions and sharing experiences.

This reflective approach ensures that all members learn from past incidents and continue to improve their skills.

The day concluded with a hearty meal. Combining practical knowledge, teamwork and a full tummy is a recipe for a great training session.

Recently, the brigade has taken the opportunity to acknowledge the incredible support we receive from local organisations.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to the Toodyay Op Shop, Bunnings in Northam, the Toodyay Lions, the Moondyne Men and Fun and Fitness.

Their support is invaluable showing real commitment to the work of our brigade by giving their time, raising funds and sharing those resources with other volunteer organisations.

We are very grateful. This is an amazing effort and these groups truly deserve more recognition for the vital role they play in supporting volunteers and our wider community.

As we move into cooler temperatures and

shorter days it's important to remember that the fire danger has not passed.

Vigilance remains key and the brigade encourages everyone to stay alert, follow fire safety guidelines and report any signs of fire promptly by calling 000.

A calm season does not mean the risk is gone as continued awareness ensures the safety of our homes and surrounds.

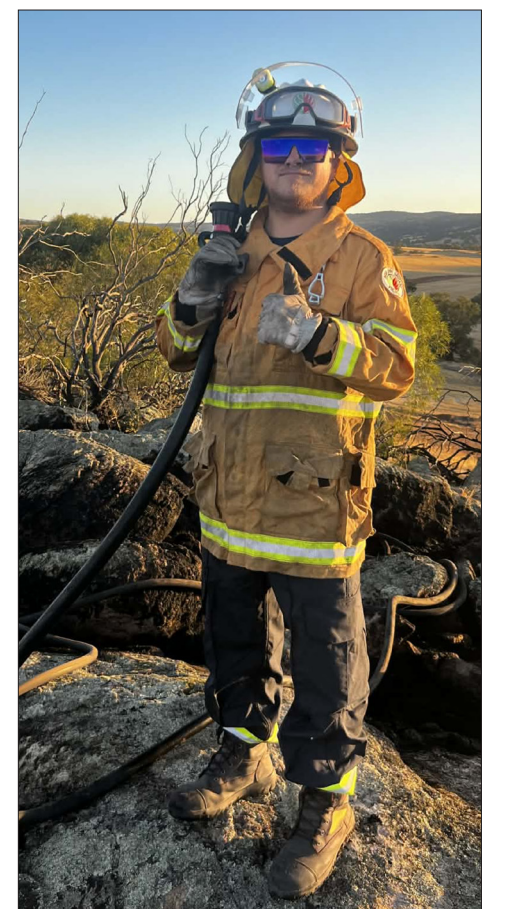
The Coondle-Nunile Bush Fire Brigade is always keen to welcome new members.

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, 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.



Jesse, pic courtesy Aurelie Zimmermann



# 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.



## Ready to make a difference?

Book a first aid course with us



# New volunteers join as season winds down

**VBFB Toodyay Central**  
Peter Brennan

THE restricted burning period remains in place until April 30 and as highlighted in our March article, a permit must first be obtained from the shire.

The permit will only be issued for burning of stubble and chaff for crop preparation purposes. Permits are not issued for social occasions or burning of rubbish.

The brigade has received four callouts since the last *Herald* article.

Three were stand downs.

One was for the Toodyay 12.2 Bulk Water Tanker, to a fire in the Mundaring Shire.

We thank our crew of Brian Clarkson

and Dan Mason who spent seven hours supporting firefighting efforts at this incident.

Many thanks guys for an outstanding effort. Thankfully, there have been no other callouts during the period.

Weekend crew rosters continue to be maintained by our volunteers.

Recently we have had five new volunteers join the brigade. As their applications are processed, they will join other new volunteers across the shire brigades to undertake the two foundation courses.

These must be completed before they can go on a fireground as a firefighter.

They are all very keen and as their time permits, they have been turning up to vehicle checks on a Friday evening.

We are pleased to welcome them into the team and introduce them to each of our truck layouts and operational procedures.

If anyone else wishes to join the Toodyay bush fire brigades, now is the time.

Initial training courses will be run over the coming months.

As the days begin to cool down, it is a good time to get out in the garden and on our properties to commence our annual autumn clean-up of fallen leaves and branches, dead material in gardens and freshly shredded paper bark.

Some mulch at home, some take green refuse to the local waste transfer station to be mulched, and some burn their refuse on site during the winter, following the end of the restricted burning period.

At the end of the restricted burn period, it is your choice to burn at home.

Please ensure you are aware of the conditions around you.

Wear the correct clothing and footwear.

Have available a good rake which allows you to maintain the fires perimeter. Most importantly, have a good reliable water source available. Please remain vigilant at all times.

Every year, we attend fires where the homeowner is on site but has been

temporarily distracted and a wind gust has taken the fire out of their control.

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another season.

The brigade annual general meeting will be on Tuesday May 12.

It gives us time to reflect on the season and to thank both our members and the families/partners who support them.

All committee and brigade positions will be made vacant, and nominations called for to take us into the 2026-27 season.



Dan Mason left and Brian Clarkson attending an incident with the Toodyay 12.2 Bulk Water Tanker.

## Give it a go and Volunteer



JVBFB members enjoying a quiet moment on the fireground.

**VBFB Julimar**  
Gayle Nelson

THERE'S so much happening behind the scenes at your local bush fire brigade.

So, what does the life of a volunteer firefighter look like?

Rostered crews begin their weekend shift on Friday evening with appliance checks.

Appliance is simply the formal name for a fire vehicle.

Each one is inspected to ensure it's fit for service.

Under the guidance of their crew leader, volunteers work through a detailed checklist covering everything from recovery gear to fire pumps and radio communications.

The goal is simple; make sure the truck is ready to roll the moment a call comes in.

Across the weekend, rostered crews remain on standby until Sunday evening.

They are ready to deploy as soon as requested.

An appliance is mobile within 15 minutes of an alarm being raised.

When a Triple Zero call is received, firefighters and incident controllers are alerted via SMS and the BART (Broadcast Alert Response Turnout) app.

BART allows members to quickly indicate their availability using a simple trafficlight system.

Green for attending, red for unavailable, orange for delayed.

This helps crew leaders and incident controllers plan an effective response.

Once a callout is received, rostered members head to the station, gear up in PPE, establish communications with the incident controller and head out.

On arrival, crews receive their tasks. This may include mopup and blacking out (not glamorous, but essential to prevent flareups), asset protection or active fire suppression using direct or indirect attack methods.

An incident shift runs for around eight hours.

Shire rules and state health and safety laws define our maximum shift lengths and required rest breaks.

New members receive four days of initial training and are paired with a mentor to help them settle in and build their skills.

As a volunteer brigade, we value any level of commitment: there's no pressure to overextend yourself.

If you're aged between 16 and 80 years old, interested in a meaningful, challenging and rewarding way to contribute to your community, drop into the station at 1415 Julimar Rd, any Friday evening between 5.30pm and 7.30pm for a chat, or email us at [secretary@julimarbfb.org.au](mailto:secretary@julimarbfb.org.au).

## Trespassers & illegal shooters

**Safer Toodyay**

Desrae Clarke

TRESPASSERS and illegal shooters are not welcome on rural properties.

If a property owner requires shooters, it is advisable to use experienced people from reputable associations or ask for references from property-owners who have previously used these people.

State firmly that dogs, including small ones, are not to be brought onto the property as the latter are as much a menace to stock as large animals.

Place 'No Trespassing' and 'Private Property' signage on boundary fences, access roads to paddocks and the main property entrance.

If trespassers are found illegally on the

property take as much information as possible. Include vehicle type, colour, the number of people and, if possible, the registration.

If meeting intruder to face to face, politely ask to them to leave.

Worried stock, stock losses, broken fencing, gates open or tampered with, unfamiliar vehicle tracks, fuel theft and unfamiliar dogs on the property denote a problem.

Contact Police Emergency on 131 444 or CRIMESTOPPERS 1800 333 00 as soon as possible with as much information to assist with the enquiry.

This information could lead to a larger operation than one property.

There may be other property owners in the district experiencing similar problems.

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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?

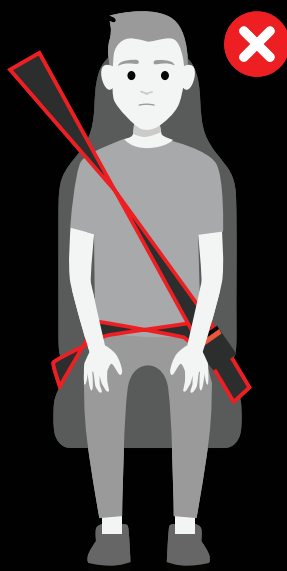
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**St John First Aid Training**

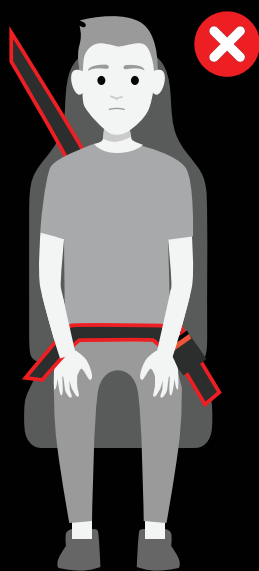
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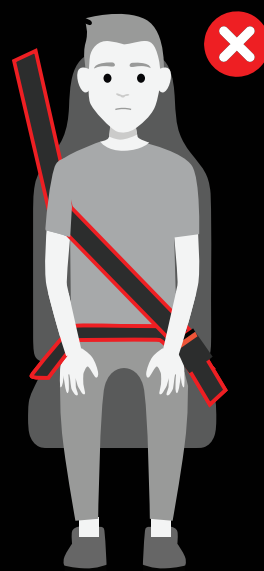
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# Countdown to the Toodyay Lions Club 2026 Community Jumbo Auction

Lions Club of Toodyay  
Heather McNamara

THE wait is almost over.

The Toodyay Lions Club is entering the final stretch of preparation for one of the most anticipated community events of the year.

The 40th Toodyay Lions Community Jumbo Auction, taking place on Saturday 18 April 2026.

As the big day approaches, the Lions are gearing up for what promises to be the most colourful, energetic and well-attended auction in the event's proud four decade history.

For anyone new to town, or anyone thinking of coming along for the first time, this year's milestone auction will deliver everything regulars know and love.

There will be lively bidding, great finds, friendly faces and the unique sense of community spirit that Toodyay is famous for.

**Hundreds of lots and plenty of variety**  
Buyers can expect an impressive spread of items across the oval, including:

- Tools, workshop equipment and garden gear;
- Furniture, homewares and quality household goods;
- Antiques, collectables and curiosities;
- Outdoor items, recreational gear;
- The occasional mystery treasure.

One of the enduring charms of the Jumbo Auction is that no two years are alike.

There is always something surprising, amusing or downright fascinating appearing in the lot lineup.

There will be vintage memorabilia to oneofakind handcrafted pieces.

The 2026 auction aims to offer something for every buyer, collector and bargainhunter.

**Buyer tips from the auctioneer**  
Long time auctioneer Tony Maddox offers friendly advice for newcomers and seasoned bidders alike.

"Arrive early to browse, take your time and make a list of what catches your eye," Tony says.

"If you're unsure how bidding works, just watch the first few lots and you'll pick up the rhythm very quickly."

He also encourages buyers to set a comfortable spending limit.

"Bring a pen to keep track of bidding numbers and enjoy the atmosphere."

"Above all, have fun, it's a community day, and the goal is to enjoy yourself."

**Final reminder for sellers**

There is still just enough time for sellers to get involved.

The Lions remind all sellers that items must be clean, safe, and in working order/  
Sellers' fees are \$5 per lot.

Commission: 10 percent of the sale price (supporting Lions' community projects).

Unsold items must be collected at the end of the day, sellers registration forms are available from:

- Home Hardware Toodyay.
- Makit Hardware.
- Tony Maddox Real Estate.

Forms include details on drop off times, acceptable items, and preparation requirements.

**Food, fun, and a full day out**

Alongside the bidding, attendees can enjoy refreshments, proudly supported by the Shotokan Karate Club, Lions hospitality, and a welcoming family friendly atmosphere.

With plenty of parking, mobility access, and clear signage, the Lions aim to make the day smooth and enjoyable for all ages.

**Stay updated**

For last minute updates, including lot previews, event timings, seller reminders, and behind-the-scenes photos, follow the Toodyay Lions Facebook page.

The club's online countdown features stories from past members, video messages and sneak peeks at incoming items.



The Avon Valley Vintage Vehicle's annual swap meet drew big crowds to Toodyay.

## Vintage swap meet draws big crowds

THE Avon Valley Vintage Vehicle Association of WA (AVVVA) in Northam has held swap meets since 2002 and last year was the first time their swap meet was held in Toodyay.

This year, was the second annual swap meet in Toodyay.

On Sunday March 15, sellers arrived before 5am at the Toodyay Showgrounds. The gates were opened at 5.30am to clear the traffic off the main road into Toodyay.

One hundred and fifty sellers filled the oval, which was pleasing for AVVVA president Ron Mackay who said many club members were concerned the high fuel prices would stop people attending but fortunately that was not the case.

The public attended from 7am and over 2,000 people came through the gates.

They looked for vintage car parts, collectable car and oil memorabilia and even some household items.

Sixty classic and vintage cars were also on display on the small oval next to the main Toodyay football oval.

Members of the various car clubs in WA were well represented with their pride and joy on display.

The AVVVA had many club volunteers working to keep the swap meet running smoothly.

Toodyay Lions Club also manned the main gate taking the entry money and the Toodyay Moondyne Men did the public car parking.

All these people volunteered their time on the Sunday to make the day a success.

Another Toodyay local club was the Avon Valley Shotokan Karate – they had a food stall to keep the public well fed.

Another swap meet in Toodyay is planned for Sunday 14 March 2027.

For more information contact the association's secretary Fred Singleton fsi93402@bigpond.net.au

Or visit the AVVVA's website <https://avvva.wildapricot.org>

Or follow us on Facebook



One of the many vintage vehicles on show.



**The Lions Club of Toodyay Inc.**

**40th "Ruby" event!!**

**JUMBO AUCTION**

**Saturday April 18th 2026**

The Toodyay Lions Jumbo Auction is on again for 2026! Come along and join the fun – and maybe pick up a bargain.

Auction will commence at **9am sharp, on Saturday, April 18th**, at the **Toodyay Showgrounds Oval**.

Gates open for viewing at 8am. A \$2 buyers' ticket is required for all bidders.

**Information for sellers.**

- Sellers' donation is \$5 per lot, plus 10% commission on sale amount.
- Please fill out a Sellers Registration Form, available at Tony Maddox Real Estate, Toodyay Real Estate, Toodyay Home Hardware, MAKIT Hardware, or online at [www.facebook.com/ToodyayLionsClub](http://www.facebook.com/ToodyayLionsClub).
- Delivery of lots will be on Friday, April 17th, from 8am. No lots will be accepted on the day of the Auction.
- **All items not sold must be removed by the owner and all purchased lots must be removed by the buyer by 5pm on Auction day.**
- No old TVs or computers please.
- Sellers with more than 10 lots (20 maximum) are accepted by prior arrangement only. For these, or large or expensive items, please advise by Thursday April 16th - Steele Williams on 0497 337485, Peter Edwards on 0418 342199 or John Pearce on 0427 742248.

The Toodyay Lions Club takes no responsibility for Lots after the fall of the hammer, when sale goods become the buyers' responsibility.

**Food and drinks will be available for purchase at the Auction.**

**No dogs are permitted on the Oval during the 2 day event.**



**Beneficiaries Include: Local Volunteer Fire Brigades, Toodyay Youth Care Council and Forget-Me-Not Cafe**



Princess Royal Fortress, Albany.

## Exploring Albany's past

**Toodyay Historical Society**  
Dr Robyn Taylor, Patron

WHAT an exciting time seven of our members had in Albany last month.

There were a number of reasons for this trip including experiencing Lighting the Sound, touted to be the biggest light show on the planet.

This event was part of the City of Albany's Albany 2026 celebrations, being WA's first Bicentenary of colonial settlement.

In December 1826, Major Edmund Lockyer arrived on the brig Amity to establish a military outpost at Mammang-Koort /King George Sound.

On January 21, 1827, an official ceremony was held proclaiming the foundation of the first settlement in Western Australia.

This time there was greater inclusion of indigenous heritage in the program such as the story of Mokare and his tribe living alongside the settlers.

The Albany Historical Society has produced a beautiful medallion featuring Major Lockyer on one side and Mokare on

the reverse with the wording *Kinjarling Two Peoples One Community*.

King George Sound is famous as the gathering place for the thousands of soldiers and ships from New Zealand and the eastern colonies before embarking for Gallipoli and the Middle East.

This visit was highly relevant to those of us who work in the fields of history, heritage and, especially for Toodyay's Museum Curator Margie Eberle.

We were also invited for afternoon tea with CEO Andrew Eyden and some members of the Albany Historical Society in the Society's office in the Patrick Taylor Cottage Museum precinct.

The cottage, built in 1832, is said to be the oldest surviving dwelling in Western Australia.

The April THS events are the launch of the new exhibition in the Newcastle Gaol Museum, Sunday, April 26 at 10.30am *Toodyay Railways: A Tale of Two Lines* and, six free special walks *Built, By-passed and Gone: Toodyay's Railway Walk* at 10.30-11.15am from April 29, 2026.

Book here: <https://tinyurl.com/524w2v9n>  
For details about us: See Where and When.

## Toodyay welcomes our new Pastor

**Toodyay Baptist Church**  
Jenny McDougall

TOODYAY Baptist Church is excited to share the appointment of Luke Winter as Pastor.

Luke has a heart for Toodyay and surrounding towns and is looking forward to being part of this great community.

Luke is a very approachable young man, with a wonderful gift to share the message of God's word.

A Christian revival is happening around the world with rumblings in Toodyay.

God is breathing fresh life into the Church, shaping the people of God and calling out to his lost sheep.

These are very exciting times in a turbulent world and we're grateful to have Luke help us navigate our journey with God.

Luke leads our Sunday morning services from 10.30am to noon at 18 Stirling Tce, Toodyay.

You may be new to the thought of God, or a regular attendee, but everyone is welcome. We also run a Children's Ministry.

Our Men's Fellowship group meet once a month, with the women's bible study starting up again next semester.

We're also excited to share that Toodyay Baptist Church will be hosting the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea fund-raiser on Thursday May 14.

This event will include motivational speakers, games and quizzes and a delicious morning tea.

RSVP preferred. Keep watch for all the details in next month's *Toodyay Herald*.  
Contact Jenny 0428479489



Our new Pastor Luke Winter.

## Artificial Intelligence and echo chambers

**Computer Safety**  
Phil Hart

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence (AI) engines are designed to be friendly and approachable, otherwise nobody would use them.

They also sometimes become part of an echo chamber on social media.

One person reports that he had convinced an AI engine that God exists. Another person reports that he had convinced the same AI engine that God does not exist.

Both people misunderstood the responses that the AI engine was giving them as they were in their own echo chambers.

People tend to attribute human

understanding and intent to apps that interact using human-like language.

This phenomenon was first seen over 50 years ago.

Confirmation bias also plays a part.

People tend to interpret ambiguous or neutral statements in a way that reinforces their existing beliefs.

Distancing yourself emotionally from an AI engine may require conscious effort.

Critically examining output from an AI engine also requires conscious effort.

It can be helpful to remember both of these points when interacting with any AI engine.

This article was prepared with assistance from ChatGPT.

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# CWA blankets for Knit4Charities

**Country Women's Association**  
Elizabeth Mansom, Secretary

AT THE beginning of March, Val, Margaret and Elizabeth drove to Helena Valley to attend the Gathering of the Birds.

Surrounding branches come together to let everyone know of events each has planned for the coming year.

We gave notice of Moondyne, our anniversary in July and the jumble sale in August.

The way that money is raised in branches and managed by state office returns to communities is in the form of bursaries.

These are available to secondary and tertiary students.

There were twelve successful recipients of the CWA lower and upper secondary and CWA tertiary bursaries this year.

A total of \$16,250 was awarded to help these students with their education expenses.



CWA member Kathy the 'Blanket Queen'.

Field nursing scholarships are also available, generally, on the proviso that on qualifying the winner spends some time in a country posting.

An amount of \$13,500 was awarded to three nurses for further education and training in the fields of anaesthetic technology, midwifery and parenting.

The United Nations has designated 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

This recognises and promotes the vital contribution of women in agriculture worldwide.

The aim is to spotlight the essential roles women play in agrifood systems which often goes unrecognised.

CWA is playing a part in this endeavour by offering a photo competition and winners will be announced at our state conference in June.

An ongoing activity amongst members is knitting squares.

These are assembled into blankets and distributed through Knit4Charities.

They go to hospitals, aged care facilities, children's services and camps, shelters and social service organisations, and animal rescue and wildlife rehabilitation groups.

This year Kathy has single-handedly knitted and assembled six blankets.

She is eleven squares short of a seventh which she will bring into our April coffee morning. We have made that the cut-off date for this year.

The blankets will be in time for the cold weather. A bag is provided for each blanket to make it easier to carry.

Anzac Day is approaching. Members have been busy baking those familiar biscuits.

Look for our members and their baskets of tasty treats after the 11am service.

Our hall is air-conditioned and accessible for walkers and gophers via Charcoal Lane.

We do ask if you come on a gopher that you leave it on the veranda as they can become a hazard inside the hall.

Margot takes the hall bookings and can be reached on 0405 067 591

We look forward to welcoming you.

# Triumphs and tribulations

**Moondyne Men**  
Graham Hill

WELCOME back to the triumphs and tribulations of the Moondyne Men.

The team has been extremely busy the last few weeks with helping at the BBQ for the Toodyay Triathlon on March 8 and the Vintage Car Club swap meet on Sunday March 15.

We are also committed to help Toodyay Arts move display items from Northam to Toodyay on April 26 and return them on May 3.

This will be in conjunction with our main fund-raising event, The Moondyne Festival on May 3.

An ongoing project is the fitting of wall mounted key lock boxes to the residencies of Butterfly Cottages and surrounding areas by the Moondyne Men in conjunction with St. John Ambulance Toodyay.

The code numbers will be registered so emergency services will have quick access if required.

While that sounds like a fairly heavy workload, we also have time for some relaxing activities.

Recently a film night was held at the Toodyay Club where we saw a film on the early days of the shearing industry with narration by Darryl Grey and others.

On Thursday March 19 our guest speaker was Rashelle Predovnik, recently appointed editor of *The Toodyay Herald*.

On Sunday March 22 our Moondyne weightlifting team competed in an international competition with several members receiving international recognition.

We also have a Wednesday Moondyne motorcycle group who venture to various venues.

A donation by the Toodyay Op Shop has enabled us to purchase a new trailer to haul our log splitter recently purchased as a result of a grant from Bendigo Bank Toodyay.

This will allow us to cut and prepare firewood for the coming winter.

All this along with our Monday and Thursday meetings and our free breakfast

and committee meeting held the first week of each month.

If you would like to join Toodyay's most progressive and proactive men's group, come along or call our Secretary Colin on 0424 195 003.



Club chairman Peter Phillips and John Morrissey with their new log splitter.

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Your local accountant Melissa visits Toodyay CRC each month

Keiran Sullivan, Partner  
E Keiran.sullivan@rsm.com.au

rsm.com.au/northam

# Thank you

Chalice would like to express our gratitude to the many volunteer brigades who worked tirelessly to keep all our homes, farms and hollows safe during the bushfire season.

Research cameras showed how 'close to home' a December fire was to our Carnaby family at the Gonneville Project. We are thrilled to report the freshly hatched baby is flourishing and our feathered family is thriving.



Contact us  
0487 371 961  
community@chalicemining.com

Check our Facebook page for updates

What's coming up



See you in Northam  
Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May

Chalice is excited to support this event and hear what lies ahead for our industry colleagues and regional neighbours.



THE ARTS



The Toodyay Theatre Group loves to put on great shows, with rehearsals now underway.

## New faces welcome in theatre group

### Toodyay Theatre Group

Daryl Cooper, Committee Member

DUE to lack of a quorum, the annual general meeting of the Toodyay Theatre Group, due to be held in February, had to be postponed until March.

In contrast, the rescheduled meeting was well attended.

This included new members who had joined after auditioning for roles in the upcoming production of *Godspell*.

The election of office bearers and the committee saw positions filled with several new and enthusiastic faces, and the return of one of the group's longest standing members.

After 10 consecutive years in the job (and 13 in total), David Mitchell has (as constitutionally he must) stepped down as president of the group.

In those past ten years David has overseen a number of successful productions.

David has also kept the group financially sound and he was instrumental in establishing

### Youth Productions.

This has given our local youth the opportunity to experience the performing arts and it also proved popular with local audiences.

After several years not taking an active role, well-known local songstress Vicki Haggerty has returned and taken the president's chair.

Vicki was a founding member of the Toodyay Theatre Group 42 years ago and has previously held several offices, including president.

If you care to mention almost any role necessary in being an active member of a theatre group – Vicki has done it.

She brings a wealth of experience to the new committee who, under her guidance, are expected to continue providing the Toodyay community with great theatrical productions.

In other news, rehearsals for the upcoming performances of *Godspell* are now under way.

Presentation dates will be advertised soon. Watch this space next month.

# Needle felting workshop

## Toodyay Spinners and Weavers

Chris Stokie

TOODYAY Spinners and Weavers has had a very productive month.

At the start of March, we held a needle felting workshop for our members, run by our very own expert Jenny.

Needle felting is a dry method of sculpting wool by mechanically binding the fibres together with a needle.

Colourful rovings are used and can create either flat 2D or sculptured 3D figures.

A number of members had been interested in trying this particular craft and the workshop was popular.

A lovely time was had by all, learning a new skill, working on our own individual projects, while sharing thoughts and ideas and of course

enjoying a delicious morning tea.

During March we also held our regular quarterly meeting. Judy G and Chris showed off their completed needle felting projects.

Plans for our stall at the upcoming Moondyne Festival were discussed and we look forward to seeing everyone at this fun event.

Toodyay Spinners and Weavers meet at Parkers Cottage at the Toodyay Oval, every Wednesday from 9am to noon and on the first and third Saturday of every month from 9am to noon.

New members are always welcome.

Please feel free to drop in and meet the group for a coffee and a chat.

You can learn new skills or just enjoy your current wool crafts in a friendly group environment.



Talented Toodyay Spinners and Weavers members enjoyed a needle felting workshop.

## Young artists let creativity flourish

### Arts Toodyay

Chelle Ellery

ARTS Toodyay's youth art programs are off to a fantastic start in 2026.

Local children are embracing creativity, connection and a whole lot of paint along the way.

The pilot Youth Art Labs have seen an amazing turnout.

Around 20 young people are taking part in the program.

Held at the Toodyay Youth Hall, the space has provided a welcoming and practical environment for creativity to flourish.

We do our best to chase every drop of paint.

With 20 enthusiastic young artists, the occasional speck is part of the creative process.

Arts Toodyay was also delighted to be part of the recent Toodyay Farmers markets.

We ran a community raffle to help raise funds for ongoing arts activities.

Every dollar raised goes directly into supporting youth programs and creative opportunities across the community.

Congratulations to our winners Zoe and Emma.

A heartfelt thankyou to everyone who contributed to the raffle, including Kate and Ted, Blue Moon Crystals and the Toodyay Bottle-mart, along with the incredible volunteers who make these events possible.

Special recognition also goes to the Toodyay Op Shop, whose support has helped enable the 2026 Youth Art Labs to go ahead.

Arts Toodyay is hoping for a successful grant outcome to continue and expand these programs into Term 3 and beyond.

We will keep the community updated.

Arts Toodyay would also like to acknowledge Jess Parker for her dedication in delivering the Toodyay Sketchbook Club at the Toodyay Community Resource Centre for the past 16 months.

The program has provided a valuable space for young people to explore creativity in a relaxed, self-directed way, with attendance reaching up to 15 participants at its peak.

At this stage, Sketchbook Club is on pause due to low attendance but there is strong interest in bringing it back should demand return.

The program offers a unique opportunity

for young people to experiment, learn and access materials they may not otherwise have available.

Arts Toodyay remains committed to creating inclusive, accessible opportunities for creativity and supporting the next generation of local artists.



Youth art labs - colour, creativity and community.

Arts Toodyay Presents...

# 2026 Toodyay Art Prize



An open exhibition celebrating artworks in all mediums

### Important Dates:

#### Entries Due

19 April, 5pm

#### Opening Night

1 May, 6 - 9pm

#### Youth Presentation

2 May, 10 - 11am

#### General Exhibition

2 - 3 May, 10am - 4pm

### Toodyay Memorial Hall

[www.artstodyay.com](http://www.artstodyay.com)

\$4,850 Prize pool



Image: 2025 winning artwork 'Stingray Fever' by Beck Langmead

Sponsored by:



# Woodturners workshop turns up the heat

**Avon Wood Turners**  
Hamish Dobie

AVON Woodturners hosted a workshop in the Toodyay Memorial Hall on March 21.

Members from eight other woodturning clubs attended including some from Manjimup and Collie.

The number of turners who attended was a little lower than expected as we were hit with a double whammy, the soaring fuel price and a scorching 41 degrees.

However, those who attended were treated to three exceptional demonstrations of woodturning, a smorgasbord of food prepared by our own Margaret O'Sullivan, and a large number of raffle prizes that were all donated by local businesses.

Our sincere thanks go to Coorinja Winery, Toodyay Caravan Park, Makit Hardware, Bottle Mart, Butlers Essentials, Kate & Ted, Victoria Hotel, Toodyay Garden Centre, Uniquely Toodyay, Bunnings Northam, M & M Electrical, P Square Agencies, B & S Jackson and Emporium Toodyay.

The attached photo shows the turners watching a demonstration on stage but, judging by the number of bare heads, it could have been a toupee making demo.

Although the temperature was extreme, everyone enjoyed the day and, as the

members from other clubs left, we ensured that they took a couple of bottles of water each to keep them hydrated on their way home.

After the departure of our colleagues our members packed our equipment to transport to the shed, cleaned the Memorial Hall, packed away the tables and chairs, locked up then returned to the shed to unload the equipment.

Then, we went home to lie down and recover.

Earlier in the month we received an offer we couldn't refuse.

Not from the mafia, but from someone who could no longer turn and who wanted to donate his woodturning equipment and timber to the club.

Our members met up at the shed, drove out to his property and stripped his workshop bare.

The donation of equipment augmented our existing stock and was also used to replace some of our aging "pre-loved" machines.

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

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

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



Labels are important and can also be the best indication for quilt care.

## Machine Washing your hand made Quilts

**Ragbags Quilting Group**  
Kerry Gregory

WHILE in the Wheatbelt recently a conversation turned to the issue of washing quilts.

These ladies are inclined to put everything into their big wide-opening washing machines as they are part-time housewives and part-time farmers.

The main complaints seemed to be that appliqué design pieces (probably hand sewn) come adrift from the quilts and some of the quilts lose their shape and become lumpy.

This can happen in some machine spin cycles when lightly quilted.

I discussed laundering quilts about six years ago and machine washing of all quilts is not the best way to care for your quilts.

It is probably worth revisiting these items to consider before putting them in the washing machine.

- Most quilt fabrics are 100 percent cotton, generally pre-washed, but if unsure using two to three sheets of 'Colour Catcher' in a cold-water machine wash will greatly lessen discoloration.
- Heavily quilted with lots of stabilising stitching is generally OK to machine wash but light quilting can cause problems between the layers.

The West Australian Quilting Association (WAQA) guidelines suggest quilting stitch lines be no wider than the width of a lady's palm.

This will help stabilise the layers of a quilt from separating and wadding sagging during laundering.

- Hand piecing or hand appliqué quilts are better laundered by hand in cold water in a bathtub if too large for the laundry tub.
- After rinsing, roll the quilt in a couple of bath towels to remove excess water and dry flat in the shade on more towels.

I use a desk fan to provide a breeze across the quilt to speed up the drying which can take a few days.

- Wool and silk fabrics or combinations may be hand-laundered but dry cleaning may be best.
- Wool can shrink if you're unlucky.

Embellishments, like buttons, baubles, laces and hand-made items, may necessitate removal if preferred before laundering and hand washing.

- Polyester fabrics usually are colour fast and when machine pieced and firmly

quilted are usually quite suitable to machine wash and even line dry.

Remember the wonderful thing about special quilts is that many become heirlooms and last for generations when properly cared for.

Bear in mind that this is a guide only and, when in doubt, ask the questions to a quilter and use your best instincts to wash or dry clean.

A number of our ladies are currently engaged in crafting with *needle punch* and fabulous coloured wool yarn to really brighten up their creative projects.

Wendy has even managed to punch out a stylised image of her little dog.

What a great way to vent any frustrations poking needles into the blanketing on foam blocks.

New members are very welcome at the Ragbags Group.

Join us for a cuppa and a chat; we love to see and share your creativity and enthusiasm. Bring your beautiful handiwork.

All craft projects are special and we often share a little *Show and Tell* session of current or not so current projects to admire your talents.

There is plenty of room to even bring your quilting blocks and sewing machine if you wish.

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

It's cool inside and bring your lunch – we use the back door.



The WAWA Workshop at Toodyay Memorial Hall.

## The search continues for new singers

**Toodyay Community Singers**  
Anne Millar

HOPE everybody is well.

The singers are in rehearsals for Moondyne Festival on Sunday May 3.

We are still rehearsing at CWA Hall on Stirling terrace on a new night, Monday from 4pm to 5.30pm.

We are always looking out for new voices. Would love to hear some new voices.

## This is your invitation to go beyond the gallery wall



Hidden behind the doors of art studios all across the Avon Valley, something wonderful is waiting to be discovered. Take a peek behind those doors.

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Community Bank  
Toodyay & Districts

THE ARTS

# Moondyne Joe rides back into town

Moondyne Festival Committee  
Jean Melhuish-Hill

THE town of Toodyay celebrates its 42nd year of Moondyne Festival.

The town will step back in time to celebrate the life and times of the iconic Moondyne Joe by hosting the Moondyne Festival Toodyay.

We celebrate the infamous Avon Valley bushranger Moondyne Joe and bring his escapades to life, the highlight of the day being the re-enactment of Moondyne Joe's various escapades and his mock trials.

The festival is the premier colonial festival in Western Australia.

It was first held in 1984 to celebrate the life and times of Joseph Bolitho Johns, known as 'Moondyne Joe', the Avon Valley's legendary bushranger.

The festival transforms the picturesque historical town of Toodyay into a lively all-day festival with the sound of song, dance, laughter and fun for the whole family.

The opening ceremony is at 10am.

Locals and guests are encouraged to dress in 19th century costumes for a colourful procession down the main street followed by a fun, colourful, energetic and noisy parade.

The parade will have street actors, stilt walkers, a town crier, blacksmith, wood chopping and much more.

Some period costumes are available for loan to wear at the festival; email [moondynecommittee@gmail.com](mailto:moondynecommittee@gmail.com) for details.

Cheer on 'Joe's Gang', the floozies and coppers, swaggies and the town crier as Joe is chased by the coppers.

Joe is tried by a kangaroo court, convicted by a corrupt judge and escapes with the help of local people and his gang.

They all love Joe.

One would say he was the WA equivalent of Ned Kelly or Robin Hood.

The festival will be held on Stirling Terrace Toodyay which will be closed to traffic from 8am to 4pm Sunday 3 May 2026.

As well as the street entertainment, there will be more than 90 variety and food stalls,

displays, performances and demonstrations. Visit the 10th Light Horse display, Barn Baby's Animal Farm and Western Australian Reptile Park.

Check out the vintage motor vehicles and bikes or take a ride on the horse and cart or mini train.

Local Toodyay artists will be playing as well as the Pioneers Bush Band, Jarrah Celts, Darren Gillis and Paul Davis Entertainment.

Avon-Fun Dance Club will be joining us as well as The Black Chooks.

Listen to bush poets, Australia's early settler's folk music that will include Irish, Scottish, Italian and English music performed by various entertainers.

Enjoy once again the very popular Royal Australian Navy Band, the Coastal Scottish Pipe Band and Toodyay Community Singers.

The festival follows through the main town site to the beautiful Duidgee Park.

Resting on the banks of the Avon River you can watch the horse works, hot air balloon display and have a go at making clay animals.

Events include log chopping, blacksmithing, bush poetry, stilt walkers, historical tools restoration, and the ever-popular Swaggie Camp.

Visit Stirling Park for kids amusement rides.

A visit to Moondyne Joe's cell at the old Newcastle Gaol Museum is a must.

The mini train ride at Duidgee Park is always a highlight of the day.

This event is packed full of family fun and the kids' entertainment.

Children will be delighted with stilt walkers, carnival, face painting, petting zoo and clay modelling.

Make sure you don't miss this brilliant event suitable for all ages.

Entry is free but a gold coin donation on entry would be greatly appreciated.

For more information and to view the event's program visit:

[www.moondynefestival.com.au](http://www.moondynefestival.com.au), or FaceBook <https://www.facebook.com/Moondynefestival>, or Email: [moondynecommittee@gmail.com](mailto:moondynecommittee@gmail.com)

# Were you ready for Easter this year?

The Crooked Needle  
Jean Melhuish-Hill

IN THE lead up to Easter a couple of our members led hands-on workshops on two simple, inexpensive gifts.

While Easter brought them to mind, these goodies could be used for other occasions by changing the decoration.

The first was led by Gail Fellows with four components: a sheet of card, a piece of ribbon, a hole punch, Easter bunny decorations and craft glue.

Five folds of the card, dab of glue for the decorations selected, punch a hole in the top and add a ribbon. When complete you can fill with eggs or lollies.

If you want to use it for another occasion, select a piece of decorative card or decorate with something that takes your fancy and drop in a small hand cream or a gift card.

These could suit either a child or an adult and they were really simple to make. They could also be used as Christmas decorations.

The second morning was led by Terri Watson using a face flannel, an Easter egg, rubber band, ribbon and glue-on eyes and nose.

Rolling and twisting the flannel around the Easter egg and securing it with a rubber band allows you to move onto adding a ribbon, eyes and nose.

A couple of the ladies used bars of soap rather than an egg. Again, this could be used for other occasions by just changing the decorations or replacing the egg.

Both of these gifts were completed within 15 to 20 minutes, created a lot of conversation and there are some lucky grandchildren who will receive our efforts.

Our thanks to Gail and Terri.

We have set the date for our Australia's Biggest Morning Tea in support of The Cancer Council. To be held on Friday June 26.

We hope this year will exceed prior year's fundraising. You will find us at the CWA Hall each Friday from 9.30am. Come along and join us for a cuppa, chat and craft sharing. See Where and When for contact details.

# An very Irish March singalong

Toodyay Music Club  
Jenny Edgecombe

THE Music Club's March meeting began with the customary group sing-along.

This session is an important part of the afternoon, allowing participation for visitors and members who prefer not to sing individual songs.

The remainder of the afternoon is devoted to songs prepared by individual performers and small groups.

At the March meeting there were many excellent items, including songs old and new.

Anne and Collette combined to present a moving rendition of *Galway Bay*.

Collette commented that one of her own selections, *Come by the Hill*, is looked on as something of a 'party piece' in Ireland.

Her beautiful flowing rendition of this song demonstrated why it is so popular.

Later in the afternoon, Anne invited

everyone to join in the chorus of the ever-popular *Cockles and Mussels*.

When members are unable to attend a theme day, they will often present their theme songs at the next meeting.

We heard several items held over from the previous month's theme of Boots and Shoes.

Maurice presented the thought-provoking *Walk a Mile in my Shoes*, with Eileen providing beautiful harmonies.

Blues guitarist, Phil, included the atmospheric song, *Magnolia*, in his contribution to the afternoon.

We enjoyed the usual scrumptious afternoon tea, supplied by our members. This allows time for members and visitors to mingle.

Please join us as audience member or performer for our next meeting.

This will take place at the CWA Hall on April 11 starting at 1pm.

For more information, please call Joe on 0400 862 694.

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