

# 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.

June 2026  
Edition 457

## Trail blazing



Carole Anne Wescombe is an artist in textiles, painting, acrylic and mixed media and she is pictured here with her beloved pet Dusty and her friend Joy Smith. (Pic: Rashelle Predovnik)

Rashelle Predovnik

A BIG storm may have drenched the region but it didn't wash away the record crowds that streamed through the inaugural Avon Valley Arts Trail on the June public holiday long weekend.

The trail's success has inspired some artists to start sketching plans on an even bigger canvas next year, with suggestions to partner with York and Beverly included in their feedback.

Traditional oil painter Henry Wood said the storm sent the trail's signage flying but it failed to dampen the enthusiasm of art lovers and visitors keen to enjoy a long weekend getaway in Toodyay and surrounds.

Mr Wood said he was on his own and he didn't get a chance to speak to a lot of people who came to his home.

Next year Mr Wood said he would make sure he had someone at his studio to help.

Watercolour collage artist Jessica Edwards Parker agreed working with others on the days was a recipe for success.

The artist, whose work hung at the Avon Valley Arts Society in Northam alongside other artists, said she strongly recommended partnerships for studios.

"We loved being able to help each other – it meant we could help each other and have breaks."

Ms Parker said, initially, she had gone into the weekend feeling a little despondent because lately her art sales had been slow at the Toodyay farmers market stall.

She wasn't even sure if anyone would turn up to their stop on the trail so she was delighted that over 70 people came each day with 84 visiting on Monday.

"The feedback I got from various people coming through the door was it's a lot to get through in one weekend so if we do extend it further afield it might need to be across two weekends."

Full time artist and owner of Earth Sculptures Pottery and Chalet Retreats Paula Greenaway said the weekend was a chance to down tools and invite people into her studio to enjoy the space.

"It wasn't about sales for me it was about opening up to support the art trail," she said.

"It was also a good excuse to clean up my studio and it was a really pleasant few days."

Artist Chelle Ellery, who was also one of the event organisers, said she was blown away by the results.

She said success was measured by the number of artists and venues involved, visitor numbers, community support and the general buzz around the trail.

"We had 27 artists across 20 unique locations, with some participants recording more than 70 visitors per day," she said.

"The response was better than we could

*Continued page 7...*

### Coming events

#### this month

classifieds	25
emergency services	8-9
environment	28-29
health	30
letters	4
public notices	25
puzzles	31
sport and leisure	30
trades & services	22-24
when & where	25

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# Rec opens with free community party



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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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**Noon Thursday  
June 25**

STORY DEADLINE

**Noon Friday  
June 26**

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**Thursday  
July 9**

## June council meeting

### Questions and answers

**Q:** Can the shire confirm whether Mr Aaron Bowman is on currently on leave related to stress or other medical issues and if so when did that leave commence?

**A:** Mr Bowman is on leave and I will not discuss the personal affairs of any employee.

**Q:** If Mr Bowman is considered medically unfit to perform his role as the CEO of the Shire of Toodyay but he is still continuing to attend council meetings and undertake councillor duties in the City of Swan has the shire sought legal or governance advice.

**A:** As I've already said, Mr Bowman is on leave from the Shire of Toodyay and I will not discuss the personal affairs of any employee.

**Q:** What is the total cost to ratepayers of appointing a temporary CEO while Mr Bowman remains employed as the CEO – what is the combined total cost of the position?

**Editorial note:** The shire president was advised by staff that the CEO's salary was confidential.

But the CEO remuneration package (\$245,496) is recorded in council minutes that are publicly available online and dated August 2024.

The temporary CEO Alan Hart was appointed at a special meeting on May 12 and council agreed to pay him the cash component of Mr Bowmans salary package.

Eventually, these details will also be made public as by law the total remuneration package of a shire CEO must be recorded in a local government's annual report.

**Q:** Does Mr Bowman still have use of a shire vehicle and fuel costs paid for by the shire? If so, what deal has been set up for replacement after a certain number of kilometres has been reached?

**A:** There's been no deal set up for replacement of the vehicle after a certain number of kilometres have been reached. It's part of his CEO package that we provide a vehicle for him.

**Q:** What is the difference between a temporary CEO and an Acting CEO and why has Mr Hart been appointed in a temporary capacity?

**A:** In a nutshell an acting CEO can be appointed for a period not exceeding six weeks but our policy states a temporary CEO then has to be appointed for periods greater than six weeks but less than 12 months.

**Q:** When the law states that the appointment of a temporary CEO cannot be for more than a year, why has Mr Hart been appointed to the position for a year and a day?

**A:** Well he hasn't. He's been appointed from 12 May 2026 to 12 May 2027 and the calculation of the time period does not include the 12th May 2026. I refer you to the interpretations act 1984 Section 61.

**Q:** Why has the shire not issued a public statement explaining why a temporary CEO has been appointed for up to 12 months and a day? Does the council not recognise the failure to explain why a temporary CEO has been appointed is fuelling speculation and damaging public confidence in the council's governance?

**A:** As I said before Mr Bowman is on leave and I'm not going to discuss the personal affairs of any employee while Mr Bowman is on leave. Under the council policy we need to appoint a temporary CEO.

**Q:** What assurances can the shire provide that this situation is being managed transparently and in the best interests of ratepayers?

**Q:** Could you give me an example of what that assurance might be? I just wondered what sort of assurance you might wish to receive? I'm just asking for clarification.

**A:** Well perhaps one of the assurances might be a detailed shire presidents address to the ratepayers by a media – probably *The Herald* – or something that will reach everybody. But at the moment its typical mushroom syndrome.

**A:** Well, I'm sorry, as I said before Mr Bowman is on leave and I will not discuss the personal affairs of any employee either in the Shire Presidents address or the Toodyay Herald or on Facebook.



Deputy shire president, Shelley Dival congratulates newly appointed CEO Aaron Bowman in August 2024. Pic supplied Facebook.

## On leave, on track? Question asked

Rashelle Predovnik

RATEPAYERS have sought clarity about the status of Toodyay chief executive officer Aaron Bowman who has been absent from the shire for months while a temporary CEO continues to fill the role.

Allan Henshaw, who served as shire president from 2001 to 2005, asked questions at the June council meeting, including the combined cost to ratepayers of paying for both the CEO and the temporary CEO.

In response, staff advised that employee salaries were confidential.

But August 2024 council minutes, that are publicly available online, confirm Mr Bowman's total remuneration package was \$245,496.

Last month, council appointed Alan Hart to be a temporary CEO from May 12, 2026 to May 12, 2027, during a special council meeting held on May 12.

In that meeting, council agreed to pay Mr Hart the cash component of Mr Bowmans salary package.

Shire President Mick McKeown said the appointment of a temporary CEO was required under council policy when a CEO was absent for an extended period.

Mr Henshaw also asked if the CEO still had the use of a company car paid for by the Shire of Toodyay.

Cr McKeown confirmed a shire-provided vehicle was part of Mr Bowman's CEO remuneration package and that he would not discuss the personal affairs of an employee.

Mr Henshaw told *The Herald* he asked questions because he wanted to find out what the situation was regarding the absence of the CEO and its effect on the shire.

"Ratepayers need to know what it's costing us," he said.

"I asked about the cost to ratepayers of effectively employing two CEO's because no end date for Mr Bowman's leave has been publicly announced."

Mr Henshaw said he was not interested in the reasons for Mr Bowman's leave, but rather the procedures and plans the shire had in place.

He said he wanted to know whether the

arrangement was likely to be long-term, whether the shire could afford to continue paying both the CEO and a temporary CEO, and what succession plans existed if the situation was not resolved soon.

"All questions which can be answered without impinging on the CEO's privacy," he said.

The former shire president said he was not impressed by the way the current shire president responded to his request for a public statement to be issued explaining why a temporary CEO had been appointed.

He said the shire's failure to issue a public explanation was fuelling speculation and damaging public confidence in the council's governance.

"I had to sit down in amazement after I asked the question about why the council was not keeping the public informed about the situation and the shire president's response was to ask me how he should respond.

"Frankly, if the shire president doesn't know how he should respond then perhaps he should be asking himself whether he ought to be in that chair."

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# The Toodyay Herald

## From the editor's desk

THIS month's edition of *The Herald* has plenty of good news.

The inaugural Avon Valley Arts Trail exceeded expectations, drawing strong crowds, despite the bad weather, and its success has sparked discussions about expanding the event's footprint next year.

Organisers are already reflecting on feedback and exploring ways to build on what has been a great start.

The town is also celebrating the opening of The Rec in one of the towns oldest buildings on Stirling Terrace, once named the Freemasons Hotel.

After a long wait, a countdown on social media and growing excitement, The Rec's doors finally opened with a free community party that drew big crowds throughout the day and night.

In this edition, we feature some photographs from the opening and the arts trail because both events are community milestones.

At the same time, strong communities also rely on the ability to ask questions and get answers.

This edition also includes a story about a ratepayer and former Toodyay shire employee who was the civil works and maintenance coordinator at the shire from January 2022 to November 2023.

Aldo Lamas, has repeatedly questioned what he suspects may be a significant overspend on the Bindi Bindi Rd project due to poor project management and council oversight both as a ratepayer and in his role as a community member on the shire's Works and Advisory Committee.

This was a road project that won a road safety award which he accepted on behalf of the Toodyay Shire in 2023. The same road also won another safety award in 2024.

Readers can form their own views about the concerns he has raised but this story highlights a broader issue: how easy is it for residents to get information about decisions made with public funds?

*The Herald* continues to experience similar challenges with none of the media enquiries we emailed in for this edition responded to, or even acknowledged.

Last month we were told media enquiries will no longer be answered by email and our questions should instead be asked during public question time at council meetings.

But council meetings only happen once a month, public question time is limited, and many residents can't attend at 5.30pm midweek meeting due to work or family commitments.

And in an age when most communication is done by email, why should they have to?

Good governance is about more than making decisions, it is also about explaining them.

As Toodyay celebrates new facilities, successful events and positive momentum, it is also worth reflecting on whether our access to information is keeping pace.

Rashelle Predovnik  
Editor



## LETTERS

### Market miss for Moondyne visitors

TOODYAY is a wonderful town, and we visit whenever we have an opportunity to do so but mainly for the Moondyne Festival.

Despite many visits we have never been to the Farmers Market and we finally did last month.

So, a farmers market it is not.

A farmers market consists of fruit, vegies and produce.

Simply renaming this event as a Sunday market would be more fitting.

There were certainly no eager beavers, more looking than buying and very disappointing.

Frank and Kerry Cherry  
South Lake

undermine and criticise Cr McKeown and other councillors who won office at that election.

People who stand for public office or take on senior roles in local government should be held to account, and the Local Government Act provides several ways of doing this. Public question time is one of them.

However, it is a two-way street and when individuals abuse the opportunity to question the council, and act in a disruptive manner, it is incumbent upon the chair to ensure the conduct at meetings is fair, disciplined and orderly.

Unfortunately, because of the persistent behaviour of a few, rules have been adopted to restore a sensible balance to what was becoming a travesty.

Geoff Appleby  
Toodyay

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: this still doesn't explain why the shire president will not answer The Toodyay Herald's media enquiries).*

### It takes two to tango at question time

THE 'editorial' and the page three 'opinion piece' (*Come dance with me, Toodyay Herald, May 2026*) were both extremely critical of the council's handling of public question time at the Shire of Toodyay's council meetings.

Whilst it was probably amusing to draw an analogy with dancing to illustrate the alleged shortcomings of the shire president, it would have been a more balanced approach to also examine and report on the reasons why question's now regulated.

The Apostle Paul told us *A man reaps what he sows*, (Galatians 6:7), and a more appropriate parable would be hard to find.

For two years Cr McKeown answered question for up to an hour each month.

Often, some individuals would ask up to 20 questions each month.

It was clear that the purpose of these questions, the answers to which in some cases could be found on the public record, and some of which were repeated, was to

Swan, which covers the Swan Valley: this is a two-faced situation.

Once the IFF has been cancelled (for a second year this year) and IF it is revitalised it will be extremely difficult to convince outsiders to come again.

Northam has a great festival at the start of the Avon Descent.

Thus, the question arises, why is it impossible for Toodyay to rise to the occasion with the IFF?

M Zechtmayr  
Toodyay

### Former councillor calls out accountability fails

WHEN I was on council, I regarded it as my duty to be open, transparent and accountable in all my words and actions.

Since February 2025 the president has chosen to ignore the 43 written questions that I submitted in six months: this equates to around seven questions a month.

From June 2025 all public questions were required to be submitted in writing before any meeting of council.

At the same time the asking of ad hoc questions was banned.

Additionally, anyone seeking to ask questions was required to be present in person to ask their pre-submitted questions.

Otherwise those questions were ignored rather than being answered by email.

At meetings and in minutes the president/CEO frequently gave answers that failed to address questions that were asked.

While ad hoc questions are now permitted, the sudden stopping of public question time discriminates against members of the community.

This behaviour by council denies the principle of open, transparent and accountable governance.

Phil Hart,  
Morangup

### Calls to revive Toodyay's popular food festival

THIS year's Moondyne Festival was larger than ever with more on all levels.

Congratulations to the organisers and participants.

However, what are the reasons that such a marvellous experience for Toodyay could not be replicated at the Avon Descent with an International Food Festival (IFF)?

It used to be a huge draw card for Toodyay. Thousands benefited one way or the other from this event until our shire, in its infinitesimal wisdom, decided to cancel it without public consultation.

Yet, the Swan Valley has an annual successful food festival, *Entwined in the Swan Valley*, and Toodyay's chief executive officer is also a councillor in the City of

#### Toodyay Rainfall

Recording and average commenced on 1 January 1907

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2020	0	31.6	9.8	6.4	38.2	48.9	43.7	61.8	30.2	5.9	48.8	3.5	328.8
2021	0.03	17.3	137.3	11.1	121.7	30.4	154.2	70.3	39	61.6	2.2	0	645.13
2022	31.7	4.5	14	30.9	36.8	43	42.7	151.1	44	15.6	12	5.1	431.4
2023	0.1	0	54.9	29	21.8	74.3	42.4	19.8	32.3	2.9	7.4	2.0	286.9
2024	9.8	4.5	0	7.8	43.5	53.2	77	85.3	18.7	21.6	22	1.9	345.3
2025	3.7	0	27	47.6	15.2	23.8	65.7	118.9	28.3	43.4	2.5	0	183
2026	1.6	0.63	34.2	24.2	7.6	15							
Average	6.7	8.36	39.6	22.4	40.6	41.2	45.2	84.5	32	25.2	15.8	2.0	370

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

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# Dead wrong: council forced to dig up cemetery decision

Rashelle Predovnik

GRAVE mistakes have come back to haunt council after it was revealed a decision last month was incorrectly recorded as passed, when it actually failed to get the required number of votes needed to pass.

Last month, *The Herald* reported burial blunders and grave mix ups had been unearthed in a report to council urging action to deal with what has become a serious operational risk for the Shire of Toodyay.

The report dug into systemic problems at the Toodyay Cemetery revealing grave sites in older sections of the cemetery were not properly pegged, making plots hard to identify.

Council moved to fix the problem by directing the chief executive officer to contact people who already held reserved

plots to let them know their plots couldn't be guaranteed.

Council supported a temporary policy that would prioritise burials for people with strong ties to Toodyay.

Council also decided to pull \$50,000 from a reserve fund to do some preliminary investigations.

But the motion required an absolute majority vote, which means it needed the support of at least four councillors to pass.

Instead, the motion was recorded last month as carried 3-2 so council was asked to amend the April 2 council minutes to record the motion as lost.

The Toodyay Cemetery issue has still not been properly laid to rest as council amended the minutes but did not say when this item will come back to council for a decision.

# Watchdog bites back at shire admin

Rashelle Predovnik

THE Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) had the shire administration firmly in its sights this month, accusing it of undermining the committee's independent oversight and overriding its recommendations in a report to council.

The oversight committee was established under the Local Government Act to receive and review reports, monitor risk, internal controls and compliance, and make recommendations to council.

In March, ARIC held a special meeting to endorse a new work plan that ramped up its scrutiny of the shire following a series of serious audit findings in 2024-25.

These included \$242,521 mistakenly paid twice, failure to complete monthly bank reconciliations for almost an entire financial year and an increased fraud risk.

The committee's endorsed annual work plan changed meetings to monthly instead of quarterly.

It also required the chief executive officer to provide more reports to ARIC on finance, governance, risk and operational matters.

ARIC's work plan was not welcomed by the CEO Aaron Bowman who said it would impose significant workload increases and administrative demands.

However, ultimately council was the final decision maker so ARIC's proposed reporting framework was included in the May agenda.

Instead of simply presenting ARIC's proposed framework for council to consider in a report, the shire put forward its own preferred option and listed ARIC's recommendation as the non-preferred alternative.

Nevertheless, council voted down the officer's recommendation in support of ARIC's proposed reporting framework (5-2) at the May council meeting.

In a series of strongly worded statements in the report to council this month, ARIC chair Natalie Mills said the report presented to the council in May tried to replace ARIC's annual work plan with an administration-prepared version.

The committee said its recommendations should be presented to council as the main governance advice, with staff comments provided separately and without bias.

ARIC said its independence was central to its oversight role, its recommendations needed to be presented to council unchanged and it should not have to compete against staff-generated alternatives.

The statements also raised concerns about governance, accuracy and transparency at the Shire of Toodyay.

ARIC asked council to direct the CEO to review internal report-writing protocols and provide a written update on any changes made to address the concerns raised at the next ARIC meeting.

Councillors voted unanimously to support all of the ARIC recommendations presented to council at the June meeting.





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WALGA President Karen Chappel presents a road safety award to the Shire of Toodyay in September 2023. The award was accepted by Aldo Lamas, the shire's coordinator for civil works and maintenance.

## Seal of disapproval: former works boss challenges project costs

Rashelle Predovnik

THE shire's former civil works and maintenance coordinator has repeatedly questioned what he suspects may be a significant overspend on the Bindi Bindi Rd project due to poor project management and lack of council oversight.

And he is yet to get a complete response to his questions.

Aldo Lamas is concerned the shire applied a seal on section of the road that didn't need it, which could cost ratepayers anywhere between \$350,000 to \$700,000 depending on what seals were applied.

Mr Lamas told *The Herald* the first section was completed in the 2023-24 financial year, which included a primer seal and two-coat hot seal (14mm aggregate for the first coat and 10mm aggregate for the second coat).

The second section, which is less than a year old, received a 5mm chip seal as a temporary preservation treatment due to delays in the sealing works.

This was then followed by a primer and two-coat hot seal using 10mm aggregate for the first coat and 7mm aggregate for the second coat.

"Technically, this results in three coats of seal within a short period, and now additional coats are being applied to various sections of

the road," he said.

"In my opinion this is not required, as the road surface is in excellent condition with no visible defects.

"A seal of this type would normally have an expected service life of 10-15 years before renewal or resealing is necessary."

Mr Lamas' said he also believed there were several other roads in far greater need of sealing, which were not completed in the 2024-25 financial year due to the lack of Road to Recovery funding.

Including Hoddyswell Rd, Salt Valley Rd, Beejoording Rd, Davies Rd and Phillips Rd.

### A history of asking questions

Mr Lamas' questions on the project span back to August 2024 when he was a community representative on the Works Advisory Committee.

He joined that committee because he believed his technical expertise would help ensure infrastructure projects were properly scrutinised on behalf of ratepayers.

In December 2024 CEO Aaron Bowman wrote to advise Mr Lamas council had resolved to disband the committee.

"We believe that the types of questions being asked at the committee level are best responded to via normal business correspondence, rather than through a committee or working group," he said.

"This approach will allow us to address your queries more efficiently."

But three months later Mr Lamas was told he was sending in too many questions, which had become a matter of significant concern regarding the volume and nature of his enquiries and service requests.

In a letter dated March 18, 2025, Mr Bowman said the disproportionate volume was placing an undue strain on the shire's limited resources.

He said it also impacted on the shire's ability to serve the broader community effectively.

But Mr Lamas said as a resident and a ratepayer, he was entitled to ask questions and he challenged Mr Bowman's claims the number of questions he asked was excessive.

Due to his technical background Mr Lamas worked at a high level of detail and asked questions he believed were necessary to understand projects, costs, risks and decision-making process.

He told *The Herald* he had asked between four to five questions a month.

He said his questions had piled up because they were simply not being responded to by staff, even though they had been taken as

questions on notice at council meetings held in September, October and December.

In his correspondence to Mr Bowman Mr Lamas said his questions stemmed from a growing community concern over administrative and council actions over the past year.

He said those actions had resulted in the resignation of 18 employees, the termination of two employees, union involvement and an appalling standard of work, or lack of completed work on shire assets.

He said his questions and the responses given at council meetings were also not included in the council minutes, despite this being a requirement under the Local Government Act.

He said if his questions had been answered in a timely manner, it would have led to less follow up questions.

In May 2025 Mr Bowman thanked Mr Lamas for his correspondence and said the shire would not be providing further comment in relation the matters raised in his letter.

### Still asking questions

But Mr Lamas has continued to ask anywhere between two - 10 questions at the shire's monthly council meetings and responses taken on notice last month about the road seal were included in the agenda of the June council meeting.

The shire's response said the final seal was included in the 2025-26 mid-year budget review and was approved and funded by Main Roads WA (MRWA) as part of the Regional Road Group funding program.

"This is to complete the section of road." In response to *The Herald's* query asking Main Roads if they funded the works a spokesperson said Bindi Bindi Rd was under the care and control of the Shire of Toodyay.

Mr Lamas had also asked who made the decision to carry out these works and who approved them from the shire, as they did not appear to be included in this year's capital works program.

Those questions were not answered in the shire's response.

Mr Lamas said up until the 2024-25 financial year, the budget was presented clearly and it allowed ratepayers to easily identify funding sources and municipal expenditure.

"But, in the current budget, this level of detail is no longer visible, and the relevant table appears to have been removed, making it difficult to understand how funds were being allocated."



# TOODYAY

MRB 10905

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Exhausts  
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Wheel Alignment

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tyres1@inet.net.au



...Continued from front page

have hoped for, both in the number of participating artists and the visitors who came through the open studio sites.”

She said the feedback from artists, visitors, and local businesses was positive.

“Local Toodyay businesses and venues also saw the value in bringing people into town, which added a lovely sense of energy across the whole weekend,” Ms Ellery said.

“We could not have been happier with the amount of visitors that braved the awful weather with many comments about how pretty our region is.

“We are already thinking about improvements for future years, especially now that Bendigo Bank Toodyay and Northam have committed to supporting the trail for three years.

Ms Ellery said the 2027 trail already felt like it will be more organised.

“The dream is for the Avon Valley Art Trail to become a much-loved annual event, something people put in their calendars and look forward to every year.

“Long term, we see it becoming a strong arts and tourism event that still feels local, welcoming, and artist-led.”

Mrs Ellery thanked the artists, venues, volunteers, businesses, sponsors, and visitors.

“Thank you to everyone who got behind the first Avon Valley Art Trail helped make it something really special,” she said.

“And a special thank you to Bendigo Bank for their support and trusting the team with the inaugural event.

“We’re proud of what was created, and even more excited about where it can go from here.”

Bendigo Bank senior branch manager Kirsten Barrack said a thriving community was built on long term support.

“With this in mind, we are thrilled to lock in a three-year partnership with the arts trail to help launch and grow this fantastic initiative.

“By securing its future for the next three years, we are proud to help establish a new cultural cornerstone for Toodyay.”

The shire of Northam provided \$1,750 in grant funding to match the funding given by the Shire of Toodyay.

Northam Shire communications manager Victoria Williams said the shire also invested in an advertising feature in the Avon Valley Arts Trail booklet and the shire would also consider supporting the arts trail again next year.

“The purpose of our community grants program is to strengthen the social fabric of the Shire of Northam community,” she said. “This collaboration between Toodyay and Northam is an example of this.”



Three generations of artists at this studio.



Great teamwork at this studio in Northam.



Rashelle Predovnik

THE Toodyay Agricultural Alliance (TAA) has welcomed a council decision to scrap a new rating system, which was supported by council in March, then reversed in May after legal advice.

Council voted to change the method of rating from differential rates to a uniform rate in the dollar for properties valued using Gross Rental Value (GRV) and Unimproved Value (UV) on March 5.

But the move left some rural property owners facing rate hikes of up to 21 percent, based on modelling done from last year’s figures.

Groups like the TAA, who represent broadacre farmers who run large-scale winter cropping and livestock production, were directly hit by the change.

In a statement on Facebook, the TAA said recent letters in *The Herald* showed many residents – even those not involved in farming – understood the serious impact the shire’s proposed “simplified rating system” could have on local agriculture.

“Most broadacre farms already pay \$30,000–\$60,000 a year in rates,” the TAA said.

“With operating costs soaring and no relief from recent national policy changes, any

further increase places real pressure on farm viability.

“Agriculture is Toodyay’s largest employer, and when farms struggle the effects flow through to local businesses, contractors, community groups, and the services that rely on strong farming families.

“This is not just a farming issue – it affects the whole community.”

The alliance said it had asked the shire for a meeting to discuss the proposed rating model.

“Our aim is to work together toward a fair outcome that protects local food production and the economic wellbeing of the entire district.”

In response, the alliance, which formed in 2015, to protect and support broadacre farming in the region, wrote to the shire outlining their concerns.

TAA chairperson Craig Stewart told *The Herald*, the alliance, which formed in 2015, historically had a good relationship with the shire.

“The main thing for most rural landowners is rates and roads and I don’t think anyone understood the way the formula was going to be and how it would influence the rates.”

“By our calculation it would have made a huge increase in rates to only a select group of ratepayers.”

Mr Stewart said basically, the system wasn’t broken and therefore it didn’t really need to be fixed but the decision had been made.

Yet, weeks after making that decision, the shire sought legal advice on March 25.

The legal advice that came back on May 20 made council abandon the plan altogether at a special council meeting held to revoke the decision on May 21.

The shire’s meeting with the TAA fell on the same day and by the time they met up the revocation motion had passed.

Mr Stewart said around 30 farmers turned up to that meeting and council’s reversal of the rates decision was a good outcome.

He said the group appreciated the fact council still made itself available to have a more general meeting about issues more broadly affecting the TAA.

“Although the catalyst for the meeting stemmed from council’s uniform rates decision it became an opportunity to meet with the shire in a positive way,” he said.

“I think the outcome of the meeting was that people were pretty pleased that nothing is going to change and I think everyone left the room thinking it’s good to get issues tabled.”

## The \$195,000 question yet to be answered

Rashelle Predovnik

A COSTLY mistake that left Toodyay ratepayers \$195,000 out of pocket is yet to be fully explained, with the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) still waiting for a report into the matter months after it was due.

In March, *The Herald* reported council had rejected a recommendation from the shire’s administration to write off \$195,000 in unclaimed GST owed to the shire by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as a loss.

A report given to ARIC found no reconciliation of GST had been done to ensure all credits owed to the shire were claimed.

The report also noted this credit should have been picked up by management when preparing the annual financial statements each year, but this had not happened.

In response to questions asked at the December 2025 council meeting, the shire confirmed the loss of \$195,000 would reduce the funds available to deliver services to the community.

ARIC called for an investigation and a

detailed report to be provided by February this year.

That request was endorsed by council in December last year but, to date, this has not been done.

ARIC has now asked council to direct the CEO to provide the overdue report, along with all incoming and outgoing documents, external advice correspondence and communications with the Australian Taxation Office, to its next meeting.

Council unanimously supported ARIC’s request at the June council meeting.

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# Break-in news

IT WAS 'lights, camera, forensics' at *The Toodyay Herald* following a break-in that brought the police forensic unit into the drama last month.

Staff found *The Herald's* office on 111 Stirling Terrace in Toodyay ransacked when they came to work in the morning on Wednesday May 13, and a small amount of petty cash stolen.

The forensic officers who attended the scene, Senior Constable Carr and Senior Constable Pearce advised on ways to improve safety to discourage thieves from coming back again, including installing wireless CCTV cameras that were affordable

and could be linked to a mobile phone.

More broadly, the Western Australian Police Force offers a number of safety and security initiatives for older West Australians including a rebate to ramp up home security.

Seniors can claim up to \$400 through The Safety and Security Rebate – a state government run program to help fund home security and safety items.

Including home alarm systems, security door and window screens, deadlocks, security sensor lights and mains powered smoke alarms.

For more information see here: <https://tinyurl.com/55cb5xsj>

# Controlling and monitoring burns

**Coondle-Nunile VBB**  
Aurelie Zimmermann

THE last couple of weeks have been particularly busy for crews across the Coondle-Nunile Bushfire Brigade, with members responding to numerous incidents throughout the shire.

Unfortunately, escaped burns are very common at this time of year and brigades have been called to all corners of the Shire at all hours of the day and night to assist in containing fires before they escalate further.

These incidents require rapid response, coordination across multiple crews, and careful management to prevent further spread in challenging conditions.

As the season continues, residents are encouraged to take extra care when conducting burns and to ensure water and firefighting equipment are readily available.

A burn may appear fully extinguished, but changing weather conditions and hidden heat in the ground can cause fires to reignite days later.

Please continue to monitor burn areas well after they have been extinguished, particularly during periods of wind or rising temperatures when conditions can change quickly.

In May, the brigade held its Annual General Meeting, with members electing office bearers for the upcoming year.

Bill Fletcher was appointed captain and training officer.

He will be supported by lieutenants Aurelie Zimmermann and Warren Mahar.

Aurelie Zimmermann will also undertake secretary duties, with Nicky Jones appointed treasurer and Glen Paine appointed equipment officer.

A heartfelt thankyou goes to all brigade

members and their families for the time, effort and commitment they continue to contribute to the brigade and community.

Whether attending callouts, participating in training, maintaining equipment or supporting operations behind the scenes, every contribution plays an important part in keeping the brigade operational and ready to respond.

The ongoing support from volunteers, families, employers, and the local community throughout the year is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

Brigade training recently included a planned burn exercise conducted on a private property in a controlled environment.

This provided members with a valuable opportunity to practise all aspects of a controlled burn, from preparation and ignition through to monitoring conditions and final mop-up.

The exercise was a worthwhile training opportunity allowing members to reinforce procedures, improve coordination and build confidence in safe and effective burn operations under realistic conditions.

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 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, or you can contact [coondle.nunilebfb@gmail.com](mailto:coondle.nunilebfb@gmail.com) for more information.

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

Volunteering with the brigade is both rewarding and meaningful.



## Upcoming first aid courses

### HLTAID011 - Provide First Aid

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

Price: \$180.00

When: Saturday 20 June - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Thursday 20 August - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Saturday 17 October - 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
Thursday 3 December - 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



# What is your emergency fire plan?

Gayle Nelson  
Julimar VBFB

MAY heralds the end of the restricted burning period and has always been a busy month for the Julimar volunteer bush fire brigade (VBFB).

This year has proved no exception, with numerous callouts.

We are now well into the unrestricted burning period; however, everyone is reminded to be responsible and remain vigilant when lighting a fire.

Despite restrictions on burning being lifted, we have not experienced any significant rainfall during May. With the ground and vegetation still relatively dry, it doesn't take much for a burn to get away.

Before lighting any fire, at any time of the year, it's always good to ask yourself a few simple questions:

Do I have an adequate water source and delivery system available?

Is there a back-up water source on hand?

What is the weather forecast, particularly the wind forecast for the planned duration of the burn?

Do I have adequate resources to cover the extent of the burn or fire?

What are my plans to ensure the burn is fully extinguished?

It's not uncommon for a call-out to be the result of a prior burn reigniting due to wind and retained heat.

One further step that can assist volunteers is lodging your burn with the DFES

Communications Centre by calling 1800 198 140.

While this is required under a permit during the restricted period, it can be done voluntarily at any time for any burn.

Having your burn registered with DFES helps reduce the number of false alarms.

During May, one Sunday saw a Julimar crew attend three callouts. This was followed only a day later by three more callouts in a single afternoon.

Many thanks to Reuben, who must hold some sort of record, at least for Julimar, attending six callouts over two days.

Living in Toodyay means being prepared, particularly when it comes to fire.

Do you have an emergency plan?

You can create one by visiting the Emergency WA website, where a step-by-step guide will walk you through preparing and putting your personalised plan into action.

Remember, you won't need it until you need it and if you don't have it by then, it will be too late.

By the time this article goes to press, Julimar VBFB, like all shire brigades, will have held its annual general meeting for 2026.

This will see a new leadership group and committee elected for the coming 12 months.

Congratulations to the newly elected leaders at Julimar and thank you to all our firefighters who have committed their time and considerable effort to helping keep our community safe over the past 12 months.

Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable low-threat season.

Please enjoy fire responsibly.



Julimar VBFB members celebrating after a successful training exercise.

## May callouts

Toodyay Central Bushfire Brigade  
Peter Brennan

WE HAD a great turnout at our annual general meeting on May 12 where we confirmed both our leadership team and committee representatives for the new season.

John Morrissey was named our Volunteer of the Year for his outstanding contribution as a firefighter, committee chair and the numerous other tasks that he has performed.

More Certificates of Appreciation were presented to newer members, Aaron Robertson and Chris Stothers for their efforts during the year and to Brad Gardner, who over a four-year period served the brigade as a lieutenant, appliance driver and firefighter prior to leaving Toodyay at the end of the season.

We wish Brad and Hannah the very best in their new home.

The meeting was chaired by Craig Stewart CBFCO and attended by both Deputy Chief Nick Griggs and CESM Sam Roberts.

Captain Will Hort summarised the past season, reporting that over the past 12 months, Toodyay Central VBFB logged 83 calls which is 10 less than previous season.

Of these, 45 resulted in a stand-down for Central.

Five of those callouts were to vehicle fires, five to structural, seven to reports of smoke, two to rubbish fires and two to escaped burns.

Overall, central members responded to fires in the Shires of Toodyay, Chittering, Cunderdin, Goomalling, Mundaring,

Northam and York.

The most significant fires were November 30, McKnoe Drive Morangup (46 hours); December 9, Toodyay Bindi-Bindi Road (108 hours); December 13, Plunket Road Julimar (151 hours); December 15, Deepdale Road Toodyay (77 hours); December 18, Deepdale re-ignition (48 hours) and January 24, Bindoon Army Training Area (82 hours).

We also received a total of 12 callouts during the season for the 12.2 bulk water tanker only and had another 24 calls where crew attendance exceeded six hours.

Overall, our brigade members contributed 908 hours to fires attended and an additional 1891 hours to training, stand-downs, weekly crew changes, meetings, deployments, refilling shire fire water tanks and admin.

When costed at the Australian Bureau of Statistics volunteer rate per hour this comes to over \$153,945.00 worth of service to the Toodyay community.

The value to the community increases substantially when you consider the contributions made by the other five brigades in the shire.

Many thanks to those members who agreed to take on/carry on in the various positions/roles within the brigade for the 2026/2027 season, your dedication is very much appreciated.

At time of writing, we have had 17 callouts just for the month of May.

We remain ever hopeful that this trend will reduce significantly over the coming months so that members can have some respite.



L to R: Local St John members Nicole Newman, Jennifer King and Michael Black.

## Fundraising for our vehicles

St John WA Toodyay Subcentre  
Michael Black

YOU may be aware that we have, very recently, celebrated National Volunteer Week.

It has been a delight to feel the gratitude and warmth from our Toodyay community.

At a recent assembly, Toodyay District High School showed their appreciation to many of the volunteer organisations in and around Toodyay with a wonderful homage and a morning tea.

A big thanks to all involved at Toodyay District High School.

It is always busy at the St John Toodyay subcentre – things to be done.

Our volunteers are probably best known for being available when people need us and making sure that people are safe and cared for in a time of crisis.

You may have seen the ambulances buzzing around the shire.

Keeping our vehicles in tip-top condition is of paramount importance.

They have to be dependable; there is no compromise on this position.

Our vehicles are checked on a regular basis and this is done by the volunteers at least

once and sometimes twice a week.

The equipment that we have onboard the ambulance has to be checked regularly to ensure that they work when we need them.

Are the batteries all charged? Are the tyres on the vehicle properly inflated?

Although many of the safety aspects of the ambulances are checked by outside agencies – brakes, tyres and the engine – it is the volunteers that organise and ensure these essential checks happen.

There are a lot of consumables on an ambulance.

Some are obvious; bandages, slings, masks, hand cleanser and so on, others not so much.

When these consumables are depleted, they need to be replaced and the stores on the ambulances are checked weekly to ensure there is plenty of stock on board in case of an emergency.

A big thankyou to those community members who stopped by our stall at the Moondyne Festival and purchased merchandise or made donations.

It is these donations and sales proceeds that go towards, and help us to fund and maintain, the day to day running of the ambulance service in Toodyay.

Thank you.



## 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



# COMMUNITY BANK NEWS



## Bendigo Bank proudly supports Transcend Trails

### HITTING THE TRAILS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Cobbler Pool will transform into a buzzing hub of energy on Saturday, August 22, as the Transcend Trails event comes to our region, showcasing incredible physical endurance and community spirit.

As a proud partner, Community Bank Toodyay & Northam is thrilled to support this signature event, specifically championing the **Bendigo Bank 12km Mental Health Hike and Run**. Serving as the centerpiece of the trail, the finish line will welcome participants, support crews, and cheering spectators from across Western Australia right to our doorstep.

"We are incredibly proud to bring our support to an event that so beautifully showcases our region's natural assets," says Senior Branch Manager Kirsten Barrack. "It is a fantastic, accessible distance that safely opens up areas of our spectacular landscape. Beyond the trail, this event brings a great boost to tourism, actively supporting our Toodyay businesses, cafes, and accommodation providers."



The event is designed to be an immersive, full-day experience for the whole community. Participants and spectators can expect a vibrant village atmosphere at the finish line, featuring local food stalls, entertainment, and a beautiful route highlighting the very best of the Avon Valley's natural environment. Whether you are running the course, walking with family, or simply cheering

from the sidelines, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

The Transcend Trails event will bring incredible energy to the Avon Valley. To find out more about **the Bendigo Bank 12km Mental Health Hike and Run**, view the course map, or to register your place, simply visit the official website at [www.transcendtrails.com/12km-hike-or-run](http://www.transcendtrails.com/12km-hike-or-run).

#### Beyond the Finish Line

Sponsoring the **Bendigo Bank 12km Mental Health Hike and Run** was a natural choice for our Community Bank.

In regional towns, mental health challenges touch almost every family. Often, the best medicine is simply stepping away from the grind, getting outdoors, and connecting with neighbours. That's why our branch team is so thrilled to be heading down to participate.

As a community bank, your everyday banking translates directly into vital local support. By banking with us, you are directly funding initiatives that allow our community to grow stronger, healthier, and more connected.

We'd love to see you at Cobbler Pool. Come grab a high-five from the Bendigo Pig and let's celebrate together!

If you want your everyday banking to make a real local difference, making the switch is incredibly easy. Please drop in and see our team at 108 Stirling Terrace.

— Kirsten Barrack  
Senior Branch Manager



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Your financial goals, our expert support.

Get local, personalised help with your everyday banking, home loans, and business needs.

Contact our friendly team to get started.

📍 Community Bank · Toodyay



# Connection and reflection at a special emergency services dinner

Aurelie Zimmermann

THE Emergency Services Dinner in Toodyay has become a milestone event for local emergency services, bringing volunteers together from across the shire for an evening of connection, reflection and shared appreciation away from the demands of operational response.

What began many years ago as a small but meaningful initiative has grown into a valued tradition that continues to recognise the commitment and resilience of those who serve the community in times of need.

The dinner was originally initiated by Ian MacGregor, the captain of the Toodyay Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, following a number of particularly difficult incidents that placed significant strain on volunteers.

The aim was simple but important: to create space for people to come together outside of emergency response, to support one another and strengthen the connections that are so vital in volunteer emergency services.

That early initiative has since evolved into something much broader.

Today, it brings together all emergency services within the Shire of Toodyay, including the five bushfire brigades, the two St John Ambulance subcentres, Toodyay SES, Toodyay Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and Toodyay Police.

This wide representation reflects the strong sense of teamwork and cooperation that underpins emergency response across the shire.

The dinner continues to serve its original purpose of recognising volunteers and emergency personnel, while offering a chance to reflect and connect away from operational demands.

This year's event included speeches and the presentation of awards recognising individual contributions across the services.

The event also highlighted the important role of families and the wider community in supporting emergency service volunteers.

Behind every callout are hours of training, preparation and time spent away from home and the evening provided an opportunity to

acknowledge that ongoing support.

A sincere thankyou is extended to the sponsors whose support makes this initiative possible: Toodyay Bendigo Bank, Volunteering WA, Lotterywest, Toodyay Water Carting and CJ Contracting.

Appreciation is also extended to members of the community who kindly donated to the cause.

The evening was also made possible through the generous support of local organisations.

The wonderful food was provided by the Toodyay District High School P&C, while beverages were coordinated by the Toodyay Football Club.

Sincere thanks go to both organisations for helping make the night such a success.

As the evening drew to a close, the message remained consistent with the original intent established by its creator, that supporting volunteers is just as important as recognising their operational work.

Events like this continue to strengthen relationships and remind everyone of the value placed on those who give their time to serve.

It's a simple tradition, but its value is deeply appreciated across the emergency services community.

From all of us across the network, thank you Macca.



Julimar Volunteer Bushfire Brigade at the Emergency Services dinner.



Toodyay Volunteer Fire & Rescue services.



St John Ambulance

## TOODYAY DENTAL CLINIC

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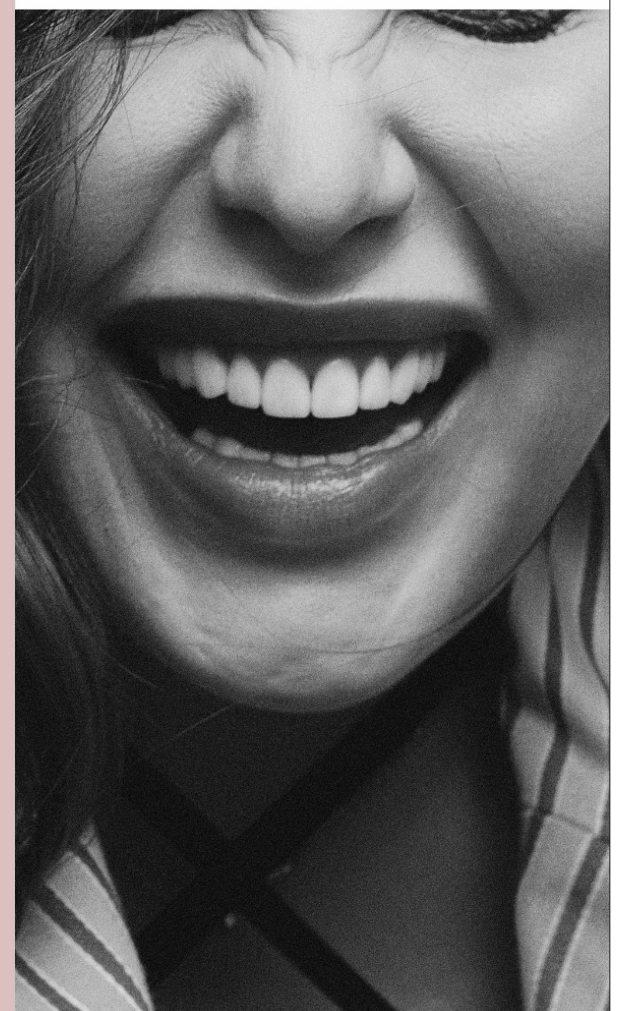
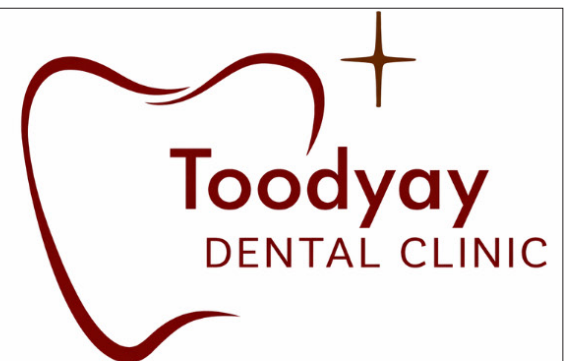
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# Busy times smaller projects

**Ragbags Quilting Group**  
Kerry Gregory

RECENT discussions with friends have highlighted for many of us the inability to find time to devote to designing, piecing and completing full-sized quilts.

The demands on our time, after household commitments, including farming activities, family commitments and assisting aging parents all seem to take precedent over quilting.

The need for self-expression and mindful benefits is still achievable if we down-size the projects.

There is no end to the range of small projects able to be completed in short sessions from wall hangings, lap quilts, table runners, mats, appliance covers, potholders, sewing project holders to serviette holders and pin cushions.



A collection of bright little quilted projects.

The possibilities are endless once you decide to aim for small projects to complete and the more small items completed ensure that your piecing techniques and quilting stitchery are once again enhanced.

The ability to add embroidery or embellishments enables some projects to be portable when required and contribute to a sense of achievement and well-being while providing bright, cheerful gifts.

Our group of Ragbags ladies have recently been collaborating with the Moondyne Men by providing two quilts and a large hamper box of winter warmer items; bed socks, heat pack, puzzle book, coffee, hot chocolate, biscuits and many goodies as raffle prizes for their fund raising.

Starting with their wood raffle in Toodyay on June 5 and 6, we hope you will join us in assisting this very resourceful and generous local group in their community work.

Thank you to our ladies for their generous contributions to this worthwhile community project.

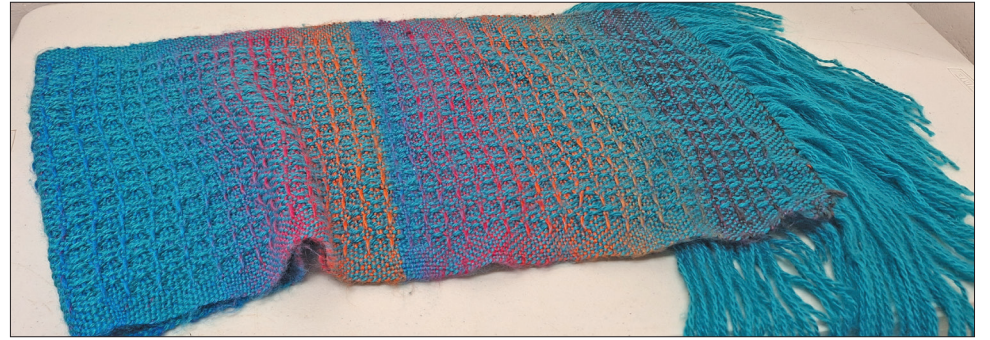
The Ragbags group are delighted to welcome a number of new members these past couple of months and we are very happy to see two full tables of very crafty ladies engaged in a full range of wonderful craft projects.

New members are very welcome at the Ragbags Group, join us for a cuppa and a chat. We'd 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 to admire your talents.

There is plenty of room to 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 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10am to 2pm. It's warm inside now that the weather is cooler; bring your lunch – we enter through the door at the rear of the premises.



Sue's beautiful woven scarf.

# Beanies, scarves and gloves

**Toodyay Spinners and Weavers**  
Chris Stokie

TOODYAY Spinners and Weavers have had a very productive and busy month and our colourful stall at the Moondyne Festival was a great success.

The cooler temperature on the day certainly helped with the sale of woollen items – scarves, beanies and gloves were very popular this year.

The event had such a wonderful crowd. It was lovely chatting to the visitors and discussing our various crafts.

Sue was busy at a meeting weaving a beautiful scarf on her 48cm loom and she brought in the finished project to show us.

Sue used Fleur (Cleckheaton) acrylic for the warp and a variegated Vera Moda (Bouvardia) acrylic and wool blend for the weft.

The pattern was achieved by using two pick sticks. It will certainly keep her warm and the colours are just right for the autumn months.

Following on from last month's article, Denise continues to develop her needle felting skills with great enthusiasm.

This time she made a beautiful bag, showing her artistic side and her great eye for colour.

We would like to let all our members know that this year's annual general meeting will be held at 10am on July 18 at Parker's Cottage.



Denise's wonderfully coloured bag.

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, so please feel free to drop in and meet the group for a coffee and a chat.

Whether you wish to learn new skills or just enjoy your current wool crafts in a friendly group environment.

## ADVERTORIAL

# Local Voices invited on Chalice's Gonneville Project

The Voconiq Local Voices 'Pulse' survey returns this June, inviting community members to share their views on the future development of Chalice Mining's Gonneville Project, located on Chalice-owned farmland approximately 25km west of Toodyay. Now in its fourth year, Voconiq Local Voices continues to capture community perspectives on the Gonneville Project and related activities, while also providing an opportunity for locals to support community

groups across the region. Insights gathered through the survey will help build a clearer understanding of the potential impacts and benefits of a future mine, to inform decision-making and engagement as planning progresses. This year's survey will also explore key topics such as future infrastructure corridor considerations in the area. As a thank you for their time, participants who complete the survey can support local

not-for-profit organisations registered with the Local Voices Community Rewards Program. Each completed survey enables participants to allocate \$5 to a local charity, sporting club or community group of their choice. Simply put, more survey responses mean more funding for local organisations. The Local Voices 'Pulse' survey is completely confidential, giving participants the opportunity to have their say in a safe and independent process. Participation is entirely

voluntary, with no obligation to donate. The survey is independently managed by the Voconiq team and is available both online and in hard copy. Representatives from Chalice Mining will be visiting the community throughout May and June to share updates on the Gonneville Project and provide information on how to take part. Paper surveys and reply-paid envelopes will be available at the Chalice Toodyay Office, Toodyay and Chittering Shire offices, and the Northam Chamber of Commerce. To complete the survey online, visit: <https://voconiqlocalvoices.com/chalice> You can also view results from previous surveys on the website. Pic Caption: Complete the Local Voices survey online or pick up a paper survey and mail it off to Voconiq in the reply-paid envelope



**Have your say on the Gonneville Project.**  
Survey opens 2nd June,  
closes 5th July 2026

**Voice your opinion** - Provide feedback on Chalice Mining's Gonneville Project and help inform decisions on the Project.

**Reward your community** - Complete the survey and allocate \$5 to a community group of your choice.

**Quick and simple** - Complete on your smartphone, desktop or tablet in under 10 minutes.



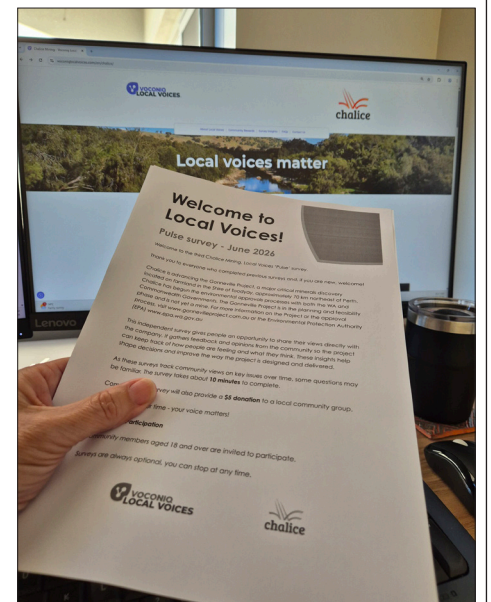
You can pick up your paper survey from the following locations

- Chalice Toodyay Office
- Toodyay Shire Offices
- Chittering Shire Offices
- Northam Chamber of Commerce

To learn more and see previous survey insights visit:

- [voconiqlocalvoices.com/chalice](https://voconiqlocalvoices.com/chalice)
- [fb.com/LocalVoicesChalice](https://fb.com/LocalVoicesChalice)

Scan the code and take the survey now:





The main winner of this year's Toodyay Art Prize was local artist Margot Watkins.

## Toodyay Art Prize celebrates record year of quality art entries

Arts Toodyay  
Chelle Ellery

ARTS Toodyay is celebrating a highly successful Toodyay Art Prize, with record attendance, record sales and 93 participants taking part in this year's exhibition.

Held over the Moodyne Festival weekend, the exhibition brought together artists, families, visitors, volunteers and sponsors in a vibrant celebration of local and regional creativity.

Arts Toodyay is especially grateful for the collaboration and support of the Moodyne Festival Committee, which helped bring strong engagement and energy to the town across the weekend.

The exhibition showcased a broad range

of work across painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography, textiles, mixed media and youth categories.

The quality and diversity of entries reflected the strength of the creative community in Toodyay and the wider region.

The response from the community was outstanding. The local support this year was incredible.

"We had strong sponsorship support, outstanding attendance, wonderful feedback and record sales, which is a fantastic outcome for our artists.

"It shows how much appetite there is for local arts in Toodyay."

The youth exhibition was a highlight of the exhibition and shone from the Toodyay memorial hall stage showcasing all of our local up and coming artists.

Following the success of the event, Arts Toodyay plans to align with other regional towns and extend the Toodyay Art Prize in 2027, opening its doors for a full week.

Congratulations to all artists who entered and shared their work, this year's Toodyay Art Prize winners included:

- Art Prize Main Winner: Margot Watkins, *Whatever I Am*
- Runner Up: Rachel O'Shea, *Leaf with Human Heart*
- Emerging Artist: Kat Ferguson, *Genesis*
- People's Choice: Jesse Collins, *Exploring the Yard*
- Painting: Jenny Davies, *Storm Watch*
- Ceramics: Franka Reuter, *Mixed Clay Bowl Set*
- Sculpture: De Passey *White Queen Checkmate*
- Photography/Digital: Lisa Mitchell, *Rain Drop*
- Mixed Media/Textiles: Katie Sharples, *Are you bogged mate*
- Youth 12-17: Lulu Sporyz, *Dark Fantasy Cyber Punk City*
- Youth 6-11: Violet Sharples, *Chicken run*

Arts Toodyay thanks all sponsors, volunteers, artists, judges, visitors and the wider community for helping make the exhibition such a success.



Arts Toodyay artist winner Jenny Davies.

## Intrepid woodturner's meet frosty mornings

Avon Woodturners  
Hamish Dobie

IT'S getting really hard to get out of bed on these frosty mornings, but the woodturners still turn up in numbers each Wednesday and Sunday, albeit to switch the kettle on for an early cuppa.

Whether it be cold, wind, rain (we wish) or fog, our members turn up to continue with their projects.

Young Thomas has become a pen making machine, turning out well-made pens in various woods and acrylic.

Beatrice has gone to another level since winning a prize in her section a couple of months ago and is now working on an outsize bowl.

Dave has been trying all sorts of different techniques and Chris has been making a large chess set, piece by piece.

As for me, I've been trying to make a pepper grinder that's acceptable to my other half.

Everyone has their pet projects and one especially has been designed to alleviate their particular situation.

There have been many foggy mornings

out in Coondle recently, and Mike has been busy on a lathe, turning a lighthouse to help passing traffic.

Although the chance of meeting a ship on Coondle West Road is very slim, he should be commended for his efforts to ensure safe passage.

We always know when Max is planning a trip away as he knocks out several turned pens to give to people he meets along the way.

He's been at it again, so travel safe and we'll see you soon.

During the month we had a great donation of well-seasoned wood which had been kept out of the weather and showed no cracking.

This is ideal for turning projects.

Thank you Mark.

If you have any wood that you think we would be able to use, please give me a call.

I know it's cold, but you don't have to burn it all.

The Avon Woodturners are located at Shed 1, Community Depot, end of Railway Road, Toodyay, and we are there on Wednesdays and Sundays from 9am until noon.

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



The woodturners (and Ruffin the dog) get together on a weekly basis to connect and create.

## Avon Valley Property Maintenance

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Fire Break Maintenance

Bobcat  
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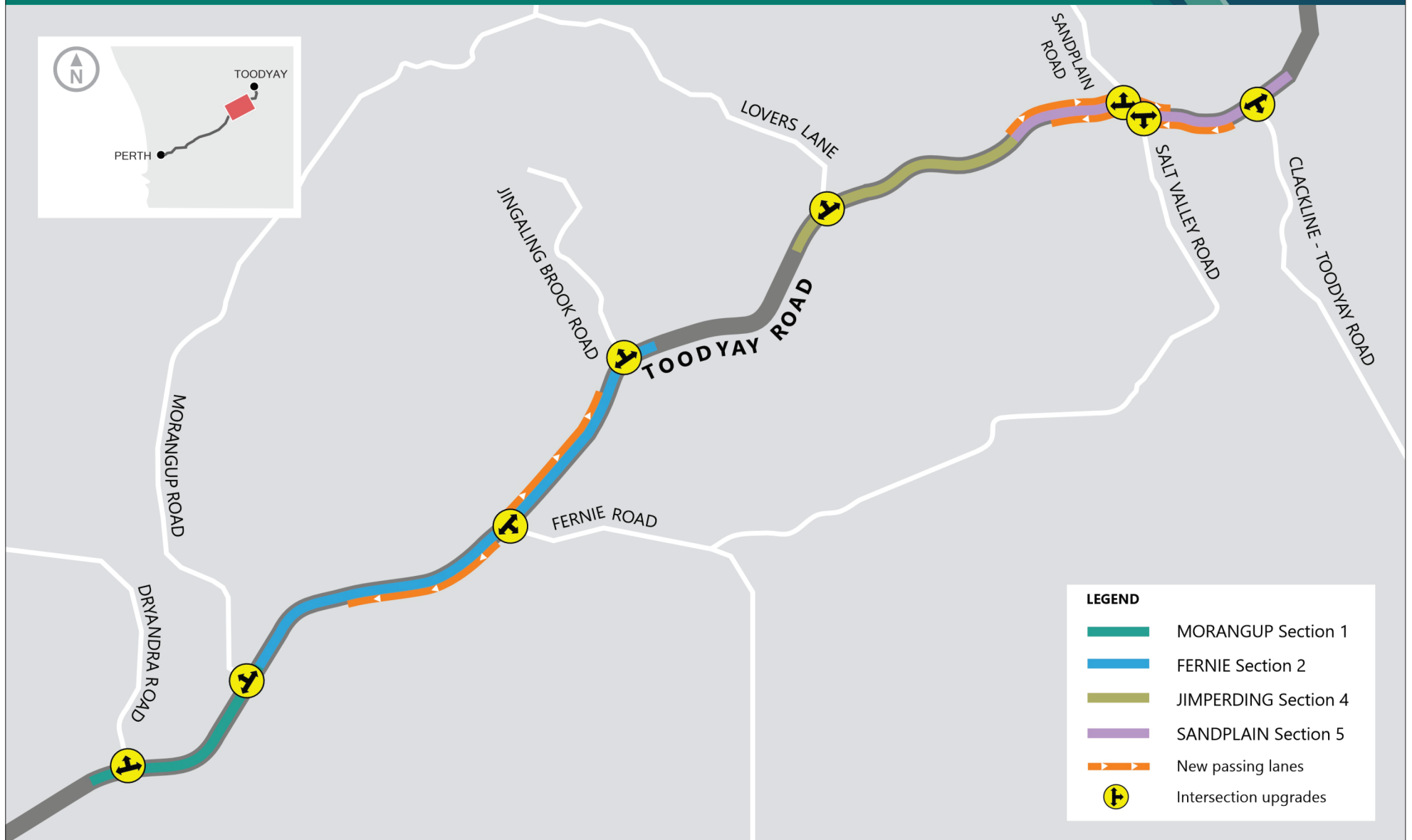
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# TOODYAY ROAD UPGRADE

June 2026



LEGEND	
<span style="color: green;">█</span>	MORANGUP Section 1
<span style="color: blue;">█</span>	FERNIE Section 2
<span style="color: olive;">█</span>	JIMPERDING Section 4
<span style="color: purple;">█</span>	SANDPLAIN Section 5
<span style="color: orange;">→ →</span>	New passing lanes
<span style="color: yellow;">T</span>	Intersection upgrades

## Toodyay Road construction ramps up

Construction activity on the Toodyay Road Upgrade project is continuing, with earthworks and clearing on the eastern sections of the alignment between Dryandra Road and Jingaling Brook Road making good progress. In June, works will get underway in the section of the project between Lovers Lane and Clackline-Toodyay Road.

### Works overview

#### Section 1 – Dryandra Road to Morangup Road

Vegetation clearing in Section 1, between Dryandra and Morangup Roads began in late May, along both sides of Toodyay Road. Clearing in this location will take approximately four weeks to complete.

#### Section 2 – Morangup Road to Jingaling Brook Road

##### Earthworks

Earthworks are underway in Section 2, which are required to construct temporary pavement between Morangup Road and Fernie Road, heading towards Toodyay. This temporary pavement will keep traffic flowing on Toodyay Road whilst the permanent upgrades are being constructed. Current works involve topsoil stripping, embankment construction, importing fill and compaction, along with the application of temporary sealant.

Vegetation clearing between Fernie Road and Jingaling Brook Road is substantively complete.

##### Temporary traffic realignments

Between Morangup Road and Fernie Road, there will be minor traffic realignments starting in June. As works progress and the temporary pavement is constructed in stages, traffic heading towards Toodyay will be moved onto this new alignment. Once traffic has switched onto the temporary pavement, the construction team can then safely construct the permanent upgrade works on the other side of the road.

#### Sections 4 and 5 – Lovers Lane to Clackline-Toodyay Road

Vegetation clearing will begin in Sections 4 and 5 in late May, along both sides of Toodyay Road. As these sections include the realignment of Toodyay Road, some clearing will also take place away from the current road. Clearing in this location

will take approximately 12 weeks to complete.

We understand that vegetation clearing is a key concern for many in the community, and we are committed to managing this work carefully and responsibly. Clearing will be kept to what is essential to complete the project safely and efficiently.

Before we undertake clearing, our team walk the project alignment with contractor NRW to identify opportunities to prune vegetation instead of removing trees wherever possible. We are also donating suitable branches to cockatoo rehabilitation centres, offering timber to local woodworkers and repurposing mulch for landscaping.

For more information on the environmental management considerations around the Toodyay Road Upgrade project, please view our Community and Environment Fact Sheet on the project web page.

#### Bridge construction

Construction of the new Jimperding Brook Bridge is well underway. Clearing in this area has been completed, and we have installed 16 bored piles, which will become the foundation of the bridge. The next stage of works in this location will include construction of pile caps, piers and abutments.

The bridge is being built 60 metres north of the current Toodyay Road alignment in pastoral land.

#### Traffic management

Traffic management will be in place in various locations as construction progresses along Toodyay Road. Please pay attention to signage and be aware of changing traffic conditions including realignments and temporary speed limits.

We thank road users for their patience and ask everyone to drive with care and courtesy while these essential works are underway.



Australian Government

BUILDING AUSTRALIA



#### Further information

The Toodyay Road Upgrade will significantly improve safety and efficiency along the Wheatbelt section of Toodyay Road.

To find out more about the project, please visit our project webpage where you can sign up for project updates [www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/toodyay-rd](http://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/toodyay-rd) or contact on 138 138 or at [enquiries@mainroads.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@mainroads.wa.gov.au) for project information.



The gathering at the RUOK breakfast at the Toodyay Mens Shed.

## Building stronger connections in the community one shed at a time

**Toodyay Men's Shed**  
Barry Keens

THE RUOK?® conversation convoy visited the Toodyay Men's Shed on May 27 and provided a free breakfast for the 37 people who attended.

The weather was kind so we were able to have the meeting both inside and outside.

It was a great opportunity for Toodyay residents to learn how to build stronger connections and better support people who may be struggling.

A short talk was given and printed support information was made available.

The convoy had stayed two nights in Toodyay and left late morning, after the breakfast, heading for their next stop in Merredin.

We thank them for coming to Toodyay and they say they enjoyed being here sampling the Heritage, The Bakery, Victoria Hotel and

The Rec Toodyay.

Pictured are a group who ate outside despite the chill in the air while others stayed inside.

The Shed has kept busy during the past month finishing off various projects and now hope to catch up on some shed maintenance and housekeeping.

We will, however, be having a stall at the June farmers market so do drop in and say hello.

The Shed meeting room and kitchen are available for hire, separately or combined, with rates starting as low as \$10 per hour.

There are a mixture of day and evening slots available and for enquiries and booking please contact our secretary, Jeff Roberts, on 0499 403 830.

Our Shed is open Monday, Thursday and Saturday 8.30am to noon for members general activities and visitors, and potential new members are always welcome.

## Hooked on helping: crafters raise funds

**The Crooked Needle**  
Gail Squires

SOME of you may remember last year our members completed some button art for a display at the agricultural show here in Toodyay.

The art was subsequently displayed and then donated to the Toodyay Library to sell as a fundraising event for the library.

We have received a lovely thankyou card and have been informed that \$165 was raised from the sale.

The monies have been put towards resources for Rhyme Time.

Many of our members not only knit and crochet. We also have dressmaking, quilting, watercolour painting, diamond art, cross stitching, tapestry, embroidery and other craft being completed within the group.

As well as making items for family and friends, members are also extremely generous and donate numerous items to many organisations who distribute to the needy and sick locally and throughout our state.



Some of our members finished crafts.

## Exploring a beautiful York garden

**Toodyay Garden Club**  
Judy Rowston

OUR garden club members enjoyed a visit to York for our May garden visit, some travelling on the bus, some choosing to make their own way and stay on to have lunch and wander around the York townsite.

What a treat to have such a beautiful garden to explore. Spotted gums and Queen of the Night welcomed us at the front of the property and as we entered the driveway we were surrounded by lush green healthy native plants, some in a spray of colour.

Orange Jessamine, Kings Park Special, Acacia, Hakea, Wattle and Eremophila to name just a few.

Our host Paula collects seeds and propagates a lot of her own plants, having an assortment of potted plants and hanging baskets for our members to purchase.

Her husband Peter, who is very talented with old fencing wire and tin, had lots of 3D animals on display including a huge wire blue tongue lizard as a feature.

Two water ponds, creating a haven for frogs, were a special garden feature with water wise plants and water lilies, sadly not flowering on the day.

This was a relatively new garden as Peter and Paula only moved to York 11 years ago, but you can tell they are passionate and knowledgeable with their landscaping and planting.

This garden was a treat for our Toodyay Garden Club members.

The next garden visit will be to Therese and Geoff Wise's property in Goomalling, then on July 2 the garden club will host a gala extravaganza in the Toodyay Pavilion, 9.30am to 3pm.

We will have raffles, give-aways and four guest speakers, all talking on their special subject for approximately 20 minutes after which guests will have time to ask questions.



The Garden Club raffle winners.

Speakers include Ben from Bunnings, speaking and enlightening us on gardening tools and their uses, safely and care, Bee Boys, Greg and Wim, speaking from domestic and native bees, and Terry from Utopia Nursery will share his knowledge on succulents and neutrog fertilisers, while Brian will promote fertiliser and their uses.

Our July gala day will be open to the Toodyay public at a cost of \$15 for non-members, which includes entry, morning tea, a light lunch and our guest speakers will have some product to give away.

To secure entry please contact our events coordinator Stephanie on 0429 888 314 and please RSVP by June 18.

For more information about the garden club and upcoming events, please email [toodyaygardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:toodyaygardenclub@gmail.com) or contact Stephanie on her mobile.



The water ponds at the York Garden.



**TOODYAY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY INC.**



Chalice Mining continue to be the sponsor of our 'Community Participation' program. Local community groups, organisations, businesses and individuals are invited to register their interest in undertaking the following tasks at the 2026 Toodyay Agricultural Show.

Monetary remuneration will be donated by TAS for the following activities:

- **Exhibition Hall & Lee Steere Pavilion:** cleaning, prior to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September
- **Facilities & Equipment:** assist with set-up, from 9.30am, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October and assist with dismantling, from 7am, Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> October
- **Gates:** staffing & operation, from 6am to 4.30pm, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October
- **External Parking:** at Toodyay, Connor & Jubilee Streets from 7am, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October

For the following opportunities the group will retain the profits from the activity and make a cash or in-kind donation to (catering for volunteer lunch and judges' supper) to TAS:

- **Sports Pavilion Tearooms:** organisation & operation, from 10am to 4pm, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October
- **Youth Hall Kitchen:** organisation & operation, from 10am to 4 pm, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October
- **Terrace Bar:** organisation & operation, from midday to 9pm, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October

**Please submit your Expression of Interest in writing by 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026, to the Administration Officer, Toodyay Agricultural Society Inc. via email at [admin@toodyayagshow.com.au](mailto:admin@toodyayagshow.com.au)**

## May moon and night sky theme

**Toodyay Music Club**  
Jenny Edgecombe

THE club meeting in May was a theme day, with most of the musical items based around the theme of the moon and the night sky.

Before starting on individual theme items, the whole group warmed up with some well-known songs, *Down by the Riverside* and *Deep in the Heart of Texas*.

The afternoon was livened up by the varied combinations of singers.

Teddy joined Anne to sing that beautiful traditional song, *Kumbaya*.

Later, Anne, Collette and Teddy combined for the *Tennessee Waltz*.

Eileen's songs included *Blue Moon of Kentucky*, with Maurice providing lovely harmonies.

Maurice played a lovely guitar accompaniment as he sang the haunting

song *Vincent*.

There is something special about family members singing together.

Collette and her son, Gavin, demonstrated this when singing *Pilades*, with lovely harmonies.

Collette also included a spirited version of *Lonely Sky* in her own items.

Members always enjoy Phil's guitar work. This month, he presented an excellent version of *Wild Horses*.

Marg has been a welcome addition to our club days in recent months and this month her keyboard contributions included *Climb Every Mountain*, with the audience singing along.

You are most welcome to join us as audience member or performer for our next meeting.

Next Meeting: CWA Hall on Saturday June 13, starting at 1pm.

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

## Nominations open to honour health heroes

TOODYAY residents are encouraged to nominate a stroke champion with nominations now open for the Stroke Foundation's national awards.

Now in its 18th year, the awards celebrate the achievements of survivors, carers, health professionals, volunteers, fundraisers, researchers and advocates.

The awards will be held in Melbourne and the Stroke Foundation will cover travel expenses for each finalist and one guest.

Finalists will be announced in August 2026 and winners in each category will be announced during the National Stroke Awards live on 15 October 2026.

Stroke Foundation chief executive officer, Dr Lisa Murphy, says the event is a special way to recognise and say thank you to those who make a positive difference in the stroke

community.

Dr Murphy is encouraging everyone in the community to step up and nominate.

The award categories are: Courage, Creative, First Nations Stroke Excellence, Fundraiser of the Year, Improving Life After Stroke, Stroke Care Champion, Volunteer of the Year, and Warrior.

Dr Murphy said if you know someone who has demonstrated courage in their stroke journey, creativity in their recovery, or perhaps a stroke champion who provided exceptional support and care when it mattered most, please tell us about them.

"So we can celebrate them," she said.

Nominations close on Friday July 31.

To submit a nomination follow this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ykvzxk8k>



**The Cast**

## Broadway hit storms the stage

**Toodyay Theatre Group**  
Naomi Millett

WHAT could be more heart-warming on a chilly winter's night than supporting the arts, specifically, first-time director Sara Whincup's earnest, imaginative, yet faithful reworking of the 70s cult musical *Godspell*.

Written by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak, *Godspell* features a group of ragtag, hippy disciples, who follow Jesus through the New York alleyways.

A Broadway hit, it has retained popularity since 1971, almost equalling the success of its rival, *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

*Godspell* is a product of its time – Woodstock – but still entertains, with dialogue, puppetry and song, touching on Jesus' well-known wisdom from the Gospel of Matthew – turn the other cheek, forgive one's enemies, and so on.

After an attention-grabbing, discordant intro (with blue cloths waved to imply baptismal waters), it's curtain up on a cityscape, not the Big Apple, but King Street, Perth, (a nod to God) and a fashion outlet shopfront.

Here, a scruffy, patchwork-coated Dave Barwood, as proselyte John the Baptist, gathers rubbish in a shopping trolley, while a busker (Elvis Moody) plays didgeridoo in an unofficial welcome.

Barwood in strong voice sings solo *Prepare Ye, the Way*, before an atmospheric chorus awash with rainbows and glitter.

There's a clown, a student, a surfer, a fairy, a punk, and Jesus (Maxwell Jones), who bounds onstage as an energy-filled teenager, clad in spandex soccer gear.

Under his guidance, they form a communal unit as events progress.

In *plays within plays*, actors switch dress from a stage-centre costume rack, using brooms, milk crates, ladders and bins in ingenious ways. Kudos to prop designer Amy Coulman here.

Creative license tweaks and localises the script, and the plot has a simplicity and openness which draws us in.

Even if you're not terribly religious, it's easy to get excited when you hear certain tunes.

In *Day by Day*, lead vocals are powerfully delivered by Jones and Lizzy Pollemans in

sweet harmony.

There's also a well-projected, a cappella solo by de Vos, and rousing team renditions of *All for the Best* and *Learn Your Lessons Well*.

An uplifting *All Good Gifts*, spotlights Rayanne Buchanan's sultry contralto, and a misunderstood *fatted calf* skit with Leisha Smith gets laughs aplenty.

In Act Two, *Godspell* becomes darker, outlining Jesus' final hours in the garden of Gethsemane, and the Last Supper.

Barry Vauses' evocative blood-red lighting adds depth to unexpected sci-fi scenes incorporating an ominous junk robot prophesying doom amidst crashing thunder.

*On the Willows, Psalm 137*, is sung beautifully by soloists and chorus, in sorrowful interplay.

Ultimately, *Godspell* reminds us how greed, selfishness and cruelty can destroy the fabric of society.

In an era when many of us are feeling disconnected and yearning for a sense of belonging and community, this message still needs to be heard.

That's the power of *Godspell*, brilliantly brought to life by the treasure that is our Toodyay Theatre Group.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995

### Shire of Toodyay Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law 2026

The Shire of Toodyay proposes to make the abovementioned local law, the purpose and effect of which is:

#### Purpose

The purpose of this local law is to regulate the use of thoroughfares, public places and local government property in order to promote public safety, manage obstructions, protect the natural environment, ensure fair and orderly trading, and provide clear standards for activities such as verge treatments, signage, street trading, outdoor eating facilities, and other uses of public land within the Shire of Toodyay.

#### Effect

The effect of this local law is to provide a legal framework that:

- Prescribes the activities that require a permit;
- Sets conditions under which those activities may be conducted;
- Regulates trading, events and signage in public places;
- Manages vegetation, firebreaks, environmental protection and activities that may impact thoroughfares;
- Establishes offences for non-compliance, including prescribed modified penalties; and
- Enables the Shire to issue notices and take enforcement action to protect public health, amenity, safety and environmental values.

A copy of the proposed Local Law may be inspected at or obtained from the Shire's Administration Centre at 15 Fiennes Street, Toodyay between 8.30 am and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday or at the Toodyay Public Library during normal opening hours.

The Shire invites submissions by **4.00pm on Friday 26 June 2026**.

Please address your submissions to the Chief Executive Officer:

Via Email: at [submissions@toodyay.wa.gov.au](mailto:submissions@toodyay.wa.gov.au)

Via Post: at Shire of Toodyay, PO Box 96, Toodyay WA 6566

In Person: At Shire Office, 15 Fiennes Street, Toodyay WA 6566

If you have any queries regarding the above please contact the Shire's Governance Coordinator on (08) 9574 9305.

Alan Hart  
*Acting Chief Executive Officer*

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E [Melissa.ruge@rsm.com.au](mailto:Melissa.ruge@rsm.com.au)  
Your local accountant Melissa visits  
Toodyay CRC each month

**Keiran Sullivan**, Partner  
E [Keiran.sullivan@rsm.com.au](mailto:Keiran.sullivan@rsm.com.au)

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