ECHO NEWS

SINCE 1985

Friday, January 16, 2026

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VOL.43 NO.1945

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Boya bushfire debrief

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Runs to raise CADASIL awareness

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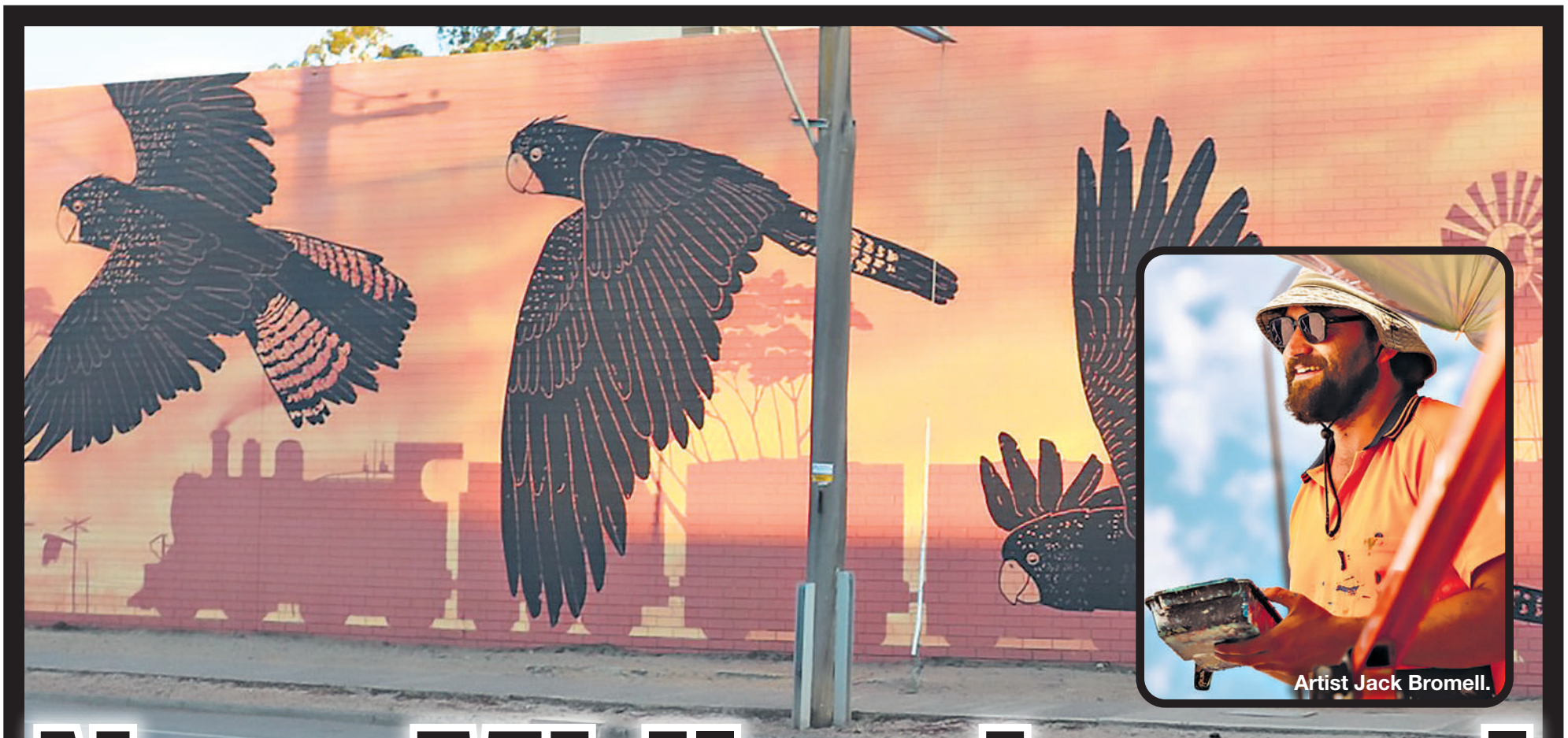
Staged plans for affordable homes

P8



Artist Jack Bromell.

New Midland mural

The brick facade of Victoria Street has been transformed into a soaring tribute to heritage and nature at the official unveiling. PG 4

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BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY
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THE BRICK FACADE ON VICTORIA STREET OUTSIDE MIDLAND IGA NOW HAS A STUNNING MURAL, SHOWING A SILHOUETTE OF THE B6 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE AND WITH FIVE RED TAILED BLACK COCKATOOS, THE MURAL DEPICTS MIDLAND'S RAILWAY HERITAGE, MIDLAND BECOMING A MODERN COMMUNITY CONNECTED TO ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

ECHO YOUR THOUGHTS

Have your say:
editorial@echo-news.com

Thought for the day

"We have never arrived. We are in a constant state of becoming." **– Bob Dylan**

Thanks for DFES efforts

Dear *Echo News*,

I live in what was the red zone of the last fire on the evening of New Years Eve and I had first-hand experience of the wonderful work DFES did then and I want to thank all concerned for their fantastic efforts, it was awe inspiring.

Leaving our house as recommended by DFES and going down the West Terrace hill with all the fire trucks passing us coming up the hill reminded us of the 9/11 coverage where it showed evacuees descending the stairs whilst the firemen went up it.

D Hodson
Kalamunda

Reducing pedestrian death toll

Dear *Echo News*,

Towns in Europe have decreased accidents and reduced pedestrian deaths to zero.

Can we copy the town of Cambridge?

They have managed to close one lane of traffic in both directions and put in a separated bike/personal EV path on their major roads?

In Midland we could start at Great Eastern Highway and the freeway and close one lane all the way to Victoria Street leaving a safe separated bike path each side of the road and a central lane for turning ie cut down to one lane in each direction and reduce the speed to 40kph (There must be a way of checking how many accidents on that stretch.)

From Victoria Street in both directions take away street parking on the left and establish a separated bike path to and from the station.

Again, single lane in the centre with turning lane on the right.

We could then replant street trees improving shade and the amenity all along Great Eastern Highway Midland like the Town of Cambridge has to meet the 30 per cent tree canopy cover set by WALGA.

Next the shire and state government should legislate roofing the car parks in the centre of the road and providing EV charging from all the rooftops to a shared VPP battery.

Labor could make the streets safer for our kids.

Reducing emissions and cooling and cleaning up the air we breathe.

Let's make Midland the best liveable town in WA.

C Hughes
Midland

Dumped shopping trolleys

Dear *Echo News*,

Regarding the dumped shopping trolley mess.

Why do Mega stores like Woolworths, Coles, etc, not add a sensor to the trolleys that set off an alarm when a trolley is taken outside a certain area?

This would not be difficult and save them tens of thousands of dollars in lost trolleys that are simply dumped all over the suburb, making a suburb look like an untidy dumping ground.

An alternative would be for customers to be required to have an electronic sensor that would record the customer's information so that they could be fined if the trolley is removed from the shopping centre precinct.

There has to be many ways to control this burgeoning dumping problem in our suburbs.

Perhaps the local councils should start fining the companies whose trollies are found outside the shopping centre precinct.

This may press them to do something.

At the moment, all they do is pass the cost losses on to all shoppers.

S Oliver
Ellenbrook

The Echo reserves the right to edit letters for length, legal reasons or clarity. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Echo. All letters must contain the author's full name, address and phone number for verification purposes.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Social media ban for under 16's results in more scams

With Commissioner for Consumer Protection Trish Blake

UNLESS you've been living under a rock, you'll know that many social media platforms are now no longer allowed to let Australians under 16 create or have an account.

Just as you and the family are adjusting to this new social-media-free-world, another challenge emerges. Scamwatch, led by the National Anti-Scam Centre, has identified several scams that opportunistic criminals may use to take advantage of any confusion a major change like this could cause.

Young people and their parents or carers are likely to be the primary targets, along with general social media users who may not yet understand the new requirements.

One of the scams involves fake messages or emails that appear to come from a social media platform or an age verification service. These could warn that an account will be locked unless the user supplies personal details to "prove" their age.

Scammers may also pretend to be from the government or police. They'll claim you or your child have broken the new law and you must provide personal identification or pay a fine to avoid further trouble.

A more familiar trick, often called the "Hi Mum" scam, may also reappear in a new form, with scammers posing as teens aged 16 or older and asking parents to help them verify their account.

In these cases, the aim is to steal your personal information or your money… or both.

Make your teen aware they may get offers online that promise fake identification or access to age-verified accounts in exchange for payment. These are aimed directly at young people keen to stay connected despite the new restrictions.

To stay safe from these scams, take a moment before responding to anything that feels urgent or unusual. No legitimate platform will pressure you to act immediately or ask for payment connected to the new laws.

If you receive a message that seems suspicious, take the time to check whether the organisation or person contacting you is genuine. It can help to read up on how your teen's social media platforms are communicating with users about age rules and verification so you know what real messages look like. You can usually find this information in the 'Help' or 'Support' sections.

Take the time to chat with your child about not clicking on links, or downloading any attachments.

Parents and carers who would like more details about the changes can visit the eSafety Commissioner's Social Media Age Restrictions Hub.

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Proposed Swan planning scheme amendment concerns

GUANHAO CHENG

A SEVENTH-GENERATION Swan Valley farmer has raised concerns over a proposed planning scheme amendment rezoning rural West Swan land for residential development.

Swan Valley resident Cheryl Rogers was among a small group of landholders who received a letter and questionnaire from consulting firm Element Advisory.

The letter stated the firm was acting on behalf of "a local landowner within the West Swan area" investigating a potential request to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) to amend the Swan Valley Planning Scheme (SVPS).

The proposed amendment area extends south from Harrow Street to Reid Highway, east of the Malvern Street alignment and west of the proposed future Henley Brook Avenue alignment, where the land currently transitions to the suburb of Dayton.

Ms Rogers said a significant portion of her family's property falls within the investigation area, which is zoned rural and classified as priority agriculture under the SVPS and Act.

Standing on her property during an on-site interview this week, Ms Rogers pointed out the paddocks and tree plantings that would be affected.

"For us it's about five hectares including the road reserve, or closer to three hectares if the road isn't included," she said.

"That's land where we currently grow trees."

Ms Rogers' family operates a tree farm of about 1700 trees supplying urban landscaping to mitigate canopy loss, alongside a beef cattle enterprise.

Ms Rogers said the land also faces increasing pressure from rising groundwater, which she attributes to urban development to the west.

"We now have hard surfaces built on sand over clay soils, where water runs downhill," she said.

"To protect the Swan Valley, you would need an absolutely first-class drainage system to intercept that water and deliver it to the river and we haven't had that."

She said ongoing development pressure on the valley's western edge risked rendering the land unsuitable for agriculture.

"You have to wonder whether this degradation is accidental, or whether it makes it easier later to argue that the land has lost its value for rural use," she said.

The questionnaire sent to landholders asks whether recipients would support a coordinated residential development request, whether their land could be included in an amendment area, likely timeframes for sale or development, and whether they would contribute to shared consultant costs on a pro-rata basis.

"The survey requests all sorts of information about me and my property, while they remain in the shadows," Ms Rogers said.

She also raised concerns about infrastructure constraints within the proposed area, including multiple gas pipelines.

Running through the Rogers property is an APA gas pipeline installed in 1971, which carries restrictions on development within a 70-metre setback.

"That line is 54 years old and built to a rural standard, not an urban one," she said.

"Any developer would be looking at significant costs to work around that."

She said the area is also crossed by other major gas pipelines, describing it as a very busy gas corridor.

Ms Rogers said neighbouring residents who bought five-acre blocks east of her property believed the Swan Valley Act would protect the area from incremental rezoning.

"One neighbour told us he specifically read the Swan Valley Planning Act before buying and felt confident it would protect the area," she said.

"If land can be nibbled away like this, it makes you lose confidence in how strong the protections really are."

She said residents in nearby Dayton, who enjoy rural outlooks toward the valley, do not appear to have been consulted, despite being affected by loss of open space.

Swan Valley farmer Will Holt and Cheryl Rogers standing in the rural area proposed to be rezoned for residential development. Picture: Guanhao Cheng

"They look east over our cattle paddocks and trees," she said.

"Some of that marketing even promised views of 'forever green parklands' and I think that green parkland might be us."

Ms Rogers said she does not blame residents in Dayton for wanting housing and said the issue should not be framed as a conflict between communities.

"It's not an us-and-them situation," she said.

"They're victims of poor planning too, and we know many people there who care deeply about trees and the environment."

The Element Advisory letter states that completing the questionnaire "does not commit you or our client to any participation or progression of the proposal" and that any amendment would still require approval by the Minister for Planning.

Despite that assurance, Ms Rogers said she remains concerned about what she sees as repeated attempts to erode the Swan Valley's rural zone.

Ms Rogers said she has repeatedly sought engagement with the office of MP Rita Saffioti, who introduced the Swan Valley Act while serving as planning minister.

"We're always told to engage with councillors, and we do, but it's very hard to get any response higher up," she said.

Ms Rogers said less stealth was needed.

"I don't like all this secrecy," she said.

"It feels like planning decisions are made quietly, and people only find out when it's almost a fait accompli."

The questionnaire deadline for landholders is January 30.

APA Gas and Element Advisory have been contacted for comment.

Landholders wishing to share their experience with the survey and questionnaire may contact *Echo News* via editorial@echo-news.com

Ellenbrook shoppers targeted by card-skimming scammers

BRAYDEN MOULD

RESIDENTS of Ellenbrook are being urged to check their bank statements immediately following reports of a sophisticated card-skimming operation using the identity of a business that has been closed for six years.

Fraudulent transactions are appearing on bank statements from customers shopping around Ellenbrook Central under the name Ellenbrook Martial Arts, despite the business no longer being in operation.

In a social media post two weeks ago, the former owners of the closed business warned the community about the theft of their identity.

"Someone has stolen this logo, out of date ABN, address, and phone number and are somehow skimming cards locally and taking money directly from bank and credit cards," they said.

"It's either someone walking around the shops or a shop where someone has put a machine in their swiper, and the matter has been reported.

"They (have currently taken) thousands of dollars in the amounts from $45 up to $120.

"We're very sorry if that has happened to you and we urge you to follow this up with your bank and police in the hope that these people are caught."

A card-skimming scam is a type of financial fraud where criminals use hidden electronic devices attached to EFTPOS terminals, or handheld scanners used in close proximity to victims, to steal card information.

A Consumer Protection spokesperson urged residents to be proactive, in case they become victims of card skimming.

"Some common warning signs a card has been compromised include unfamiliar or repeated small transactions on their bank statement, or charges processed under business names they do not recognise," they said.

Customers who believe they have been the victim of card skimming should report the crime to their bank and police.

"(We urge) consumers to report any fraudulent transactions to their bank immediately, as the financial institution is best placed to attempt to recover funds or secure the affected accounts."

A police spokesperson said that consumers should report any suspicion of fraud or criminal activity so authorities can investigate.

"If you believe you have been the victim of a business impersonation scam you can submit a report online to Cyber Crime via www.cyber.gov.au and to WA ScamNet at Consumer Protection via www.scamnet.wa.gov.au," they said.

"For enquiries or advice, WA ScamNet can be contacted on 1300 30 40 54 or consumer@lgirs.gov.au."

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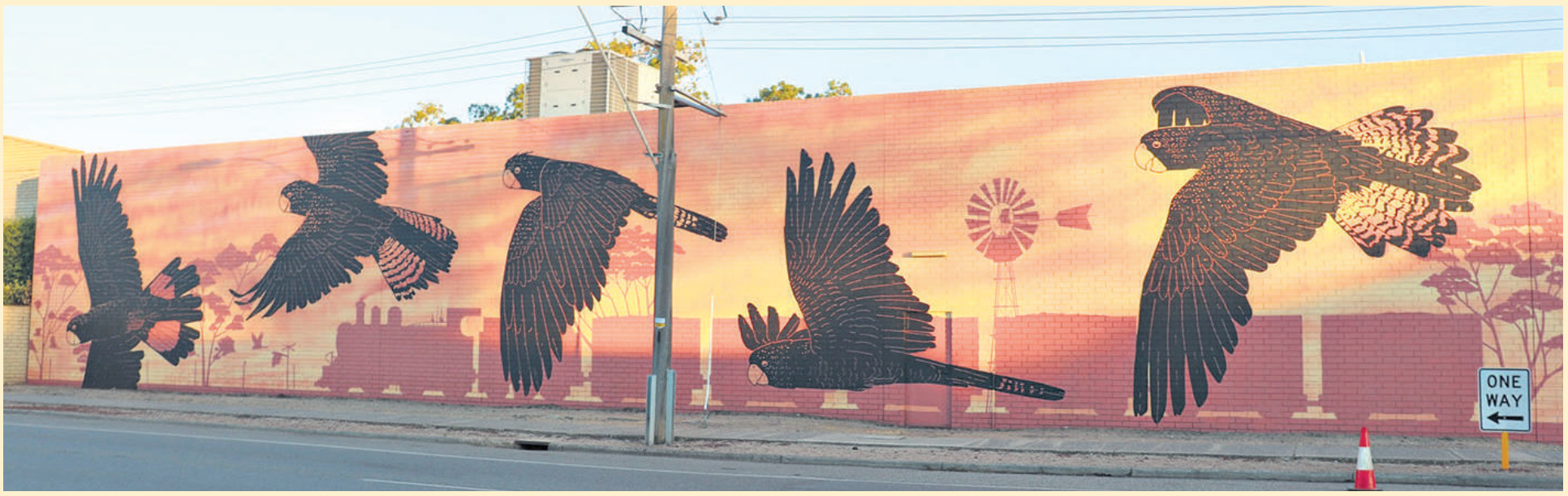
Natural gas pipes in the Bassendean area are nearing the end of their life. As part of our proactive Replacement Program, ATCO Australia will be upgrading the natural gas distribution network in this area. This work will ensure the continued security and reliability of these services for decades to come. For more information please visit our website or scan the QR code.

- There is no charge for this service and there is no requirement for you to be present when the work is undertaken.
- For safety purposes, your gas supply may need to be temporarily turned off for short periods between the hours of 8am-4pm while network upgrades are in progress.
- Traffic management will be in place in order for this work to be completed safely. There will be temporary lane and road closures around this area during these works, local detours will be in place. Please observe signage on site.
- Every effort will be made to minimise disruption and to permanently reinstate affected areas to their previous condition as soon as possible, within 15 working days of completion of works.
- We appreciate the community's understanding while these essential works are undertaken and apologise for any inconvenience.
- ATCO Australia builds, owns and maintains the network of underground pipe infrastructure near your home, which makes it possible for you to connect to natural gas.

Please direct construction enquiries to **13 13 56** *(weekdays 7am-6pm)* or email **enquiries@atco.com**

For more information search for 'replacement projects' at **www.atco.com.au**



Community mural brings Midland centre to life

BRAYDEN MOULD

THE brick facade of Victoria Street outside Midland IGA has been transformed into a soaring tribute to heritage and nature following the official unveiling of Midland's latest public mural, Feathers and Metal.

Unveiled on January 5, the immense 6m by 35m mural is the work of celebrated Western Australian artist Jack Bromell, who completed the work over the month of December.

The artwork features a striking silhouette of the B6 steam locomotive – the last survivor of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia – set against a sprawling sunset and paired with five red-tailed black cockatoos.

These elements all combine to symbolise Midland's transition from a historic industrial railway hub to a modern community deeply connected to its natural environment.

IGA Midland group operations and marketing manager Matthew Pham, said the initiative came as a welcome surprise when the City of Swan first approached him last year.

"It was a bit out of the blue, If I'm being honest, I got a phone call from the City of Swan in the middle of last year asking if I would be interested in a mural for the side of the building," he said.

"They really wanted to showcase Midland, and all it has to offer, especially with the new train station opening soon."

Mr Pham said the mural was designed to represent both Midland's past and future.

"The artwork represents a bit of the old, and of the new, the cockatoo's in forward flight, signifying that Midland is moving toward the future, while still paying homage to the historical past of the railway workshop.

For Mr Pham, the mural also reflects Midland's identity as a regional gateway.

"We see Midland as the place where country meets city," he said.

"People coming from the north or heading toward the Wheatbelt all pass through here, it has so much history we don't want to forget.

While the mural was organised by the City of Swan, Mr Pham was quick to credit the artist for the physical feat of completing the massive scale project during the peak of summer.

"Jack Bromell deserves a lot of kudos and recognition. For the better part of two weeks, he was out there in sweltering heat to get the artwork done. Without that dedication, none of this would have been possible," he said.

"We're excited with where Midland's going to go, and as a local business owner in Midland, I think it's just an exciting time with all the new infrastructure and development happening in Midland."

Artist Jack Bromell completed the 6m by 35m mural through the month of December.

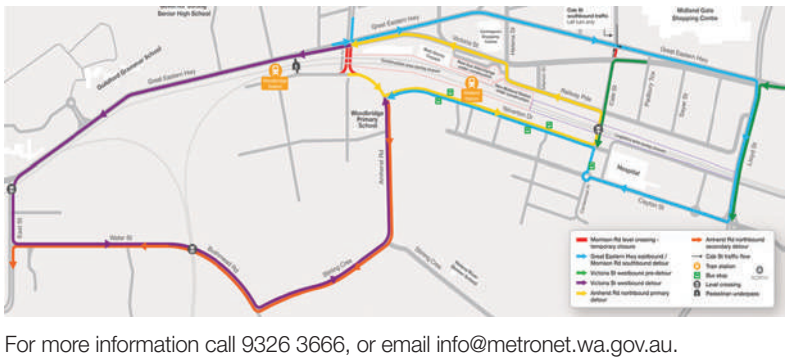
METRONET
Public Transport Authority
BUILDING FOR TOMORROW

MIDLAND LINE SHUTDOWN AND TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF THE MORRISON ROAD LEVEL CROSSING – THURSDAY 22 JANUARY TO SUNDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2026

A 31-day closure of the Midland Line (between Bassendean and Midland) will take place from **Thursday 22 January to Sunday 22 February 2026** to carry out essential works for the METRONET New Midland Station. During the shutdown, rail replacement buses will operate. Plan your journey on the Transperth app or at www.transperth.wa.gov.au. When the line reopens, train services will recommence from the new Midland Station.

During the shutdown the Morrison Road level crossing will also be closed to vehicles and pedestrians from **12.30am on Thursday 22 January and 12.00pm on Sunday 22 February (times subject to change)**. An alternative pedestrian crossing is available via the Woodbridge Station underpass and the Cale Street level crossing.

Detours will be in place – plan ahead and follow the signs.



For more information call 9326 3666, or email info@metronet.wa.gov.au.

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Discover our digital edition online
www.echonewspaper.com.au

Ellenbrook Medicare urgent care clinic is officially open

THE Ellenbrook Medicare urgent care clinic, located at 7/150 Coolamon Boulevard, has officially opened with extended hours seven days a week from 10am to 8pm.

No appointment is needed, patients can walk in and all services are bulk billed.

The highly trained doctors and nurses are equipped to treat a range of conditions and injuries that need urgent attention but aren't life threatening, including cuts, viral infections, or a sprained ankle.

New data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows the Albanese government's Medicare urgent care clinics across Western Australia are easing pressure on Western Australian hospitals.

Non-urgent presentations to Western Australian emergency departments have dropped by 6.8 per cent and semi-urgent presentations have dropped by 2.7 per cent.

The clinic will join the existing network of eight existing UCCs across Western Australia with a further five to be established across the state.

This is part of the Albanese government's commitment to deliver more urgent care clinics across the country with four out of five Australians to live within a 20 minutes' drive from their local clinic.

Labor's urgent care clinics have already seen more than 2.3 million presentations since the first sites opened in June 2023, including over 257,700 presentations to WA clinics.

Over one in four of these were patients aged under 15 years old, more than one in four were on weekends, and over one in five were weekday after hours visits (at or after 5pm).

The Ellenbrook Medicare Urgent Care Clinic is commissioned by WA Primary Health Alliance.

Hasluck MP Tania Lawrence said the clinic will make a real difference for locals by providing convenient, bulk billed urgent care right in the heart of Ellenbrook.

"From injuries playing sports at the DOS to a fall at home, I know families in Ellenbrook and surrounds will be glad to have fully bulk billed urgent care just around the corner from home.

ForHealth Group regional manager north Amanda Robinson, Hasluck MP Tania Lawrence, Swan Hills MLA Michelle Maynard, Broadway Medical practice manager Victoria Gray, and WA operations advisor Ajay Vinayan.

"This clinic joins the Midland and Morley urgent care clinics in delivering affordable health care to my constituents of Hasluck.

"The opening of the clinic is a huge win for our community, taking the pressure off the emergency department at St John of God Public Hospital."

Federal Health Minister Mark Butler said the new clinic will be open seven days a week, for extended hours and most importantly patients will be fully bulk billed.

"This new data shows Medicare urgent care clinics are taking the pressure off West Australian hospitals and making sure patients can get the care they need when they need it."

Mundaring publishes submissions ahead of pending final SAT decision

GUANHAO CHENG

SHIRE of Mundaring published a redacted version of its closing submissions for North Stoneville ahead of a State Administrative Tribunal decision expected early this year.

The submissions argue the North Stoneville proposal should be refused due to unacceptable bushfire risk, traffic impacts and environmental concerns.

The shire's submission pointed out bushfire danger in the Perth Hills had intensified under hotter, drier conditions and that the North Stoneville site was particularly exposed.

It argued the applicant has failed to demonstrate bushfire risk would be acceptable if the structure plan were approved.

The submissions state proposed mitigation measures would not materially reduce the risk posed to future residents or surrounding communities.

Concerns were also raised about whether the local and regional road network could safely accommodate additional traffic, particularly during emergencies.

The shire argued the proposal fails to appropriately balance bushfire management with the protection of environmental conservation values and approving the structure plan would not represent orderly and proper planning for the area.

Personal information and legally confidential material were redacted from the publicly available version of the submissions.

The release follows the conclusion of open SAT hearings in December, during which developer Satterley proposed staging the development rather than delivering all 1001 lots at once.

The Shire of Mundaring calls for North Stoneville plan to be refused as fears over bushfire risk and traffic persist.

Satterley told the tribunal it would initially release 135 lots, pending construction of the Eastlink highway, as reported in *North Stoneville SAT hearings conclude* (*Echo News*, December 19, 2025).

That story also reported evidence from Main Roads WA indicated Eastlink may not commence until 2036 or later.

Community group Save Perth Hills told the tribunal the staged approach would still require the clearing of about 60,000 trees.

Cross-examination during the hearings highlighted a lack of detail surrounding a proposed on-site bushfire refuge, including its capacity and management arrangements.

Shire of Mundaring president Paige McNeil said council resolved to refuse Structure Plan 34 due to bushfire evacuation risk, traffic impacts and environmental conservation concerns.

The North Stoneville proposal was first lodged in 2019 and refused by the WA Planning Commission in July 2020.

The commission again refused an amended version of the plan in December 2023, citing failures to demonstrate acceptable bushfire risk and traffic impacts, as reported in *Mundaring shire welcomes North Stoneville decision* (*Echo News*, January 12, 2024).

The matter has since been the subject of a lengthy SAT appeal process that *Echo News* has tracked through its special reports coverage.

In July last year, the tribunal ordered the parties to file expert evidence and submissions as part of the final stages of the appeal, as reported in *North Stoneville on track for August directions hearing* (*Echo News*, August 1, 2025).

Earlier reporting documented sustained community opposition, including rallies and warnings from former emergency services officials about the risk of catastrophic bushfire events.

Satterley maintains concentrating growth around existing townsites aligns with state planning policy and says its amended plan includes environmental and infrastructure improvements.

The shire's closing submissions reject that position, arguing the risks identified outweigh any claimed planning benefits.

The tribunal's decision is now expected in early 2026 following the completion of all submissions and reply material.

The Shire of Mundaring has urged SAT to prioritise the protection of human life and ensure planning decisions in bushfire-prone areas do not place communities at risk.

Guildford woman to run every WA Parkrun

GUILDFORD resident Simone Brown is lacing up her running shoes for an extraordinary challenge - to complete every Parkrun in Western Australia, to raise awareness and funds for research into CADASIL, a rare inherited brain disease with no known cure.

Her campaign named CADASIL Awareness - One Run at a Time launched on Thursday, January 1 at her local event, the Woodbridge Riverside Parkrun.

From there she plans to run at every Parkrun across the state, one week after another, sharing her story and shining a light on this often-overlooked condition.

Her motivation is driven by her family history.

Her mother Gwenda Christmass was diagnosed with CADASIL in 2020 following years of unexplained fatigue, confusion and balance issues - a diagnosis that came after Simone's uncle had passed away from the same disease.

"Mum was always such a strong and independent woman. She loved gardening, swimming, walking and volunteering at her local op shop. Watching her decline was heartbreaking - but if what I'm doing helps another family recognise the signs earlier, or supports research that leads to treatment, it will be worth every step," Mrs Brown said.

CADASIL - which stands for Cerebral Autoomal Dominant Arteriopathy with Subcortical Infarcts and Leukoencephalopathy - is a rare, progressive genetic condition that affects the small blood vessels in the brain.

Most people begin to experience symptoms in their thirties to fifties, but there is a wide spectrum of severity, and symptoms can vary greatly from person to person.

Common signs include stroke or ministroke, migraines with visual disturbances, cognitive decline, depression, anxiety, apathy, fatigue and, in some cases, seizures.

The disease is caused by a mutation in a single gene, giving the children of those affected a 50 per cent chance of inheriting it.

It produces a distinct pattern of brain changes that can be detected on MRI scans, but despite these recognisable markers, CADASIL is often underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

Simone Brown with her husband Graham and dog Fergus at the recent Woodbridge Riverside Parkrun on Christmas Day 2025. Right: Simone Brown running at the recent Woodbridge Riverside Parkrun.

While there is no specific treatment or cure, doctors focus on managing cardiovascular health to reduce the risk of stroke and slow disease progression.

Current estimates suggest around 1350 Australians may be living with CADASIL, though researchers believe the true number is higher.

That's where research comes in. The Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing (CHeBA) at UNSW Sydney is home to AusCADASIL, the first and only dedicated Australian study of CADASIL, led by Dr Danit Saks under the direction of Professor Perminder Sachdev.

The program is currently recruiting participants across Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

Prof Sachdev, CHeBA co-director said Mrs Brown's efforts are both moving and important.

"Her commitment is truly inspiring. CADASIL is an under-recognised condition that profoundly affects families. Research is critical to understanding the disease and finding pathways to treatment. Community champions like Simone play an invaluable role in driving awareness and hope."

Funds raised from the campaign will go directly to support CHeBA's AusCADASIL research program, which aims to improve understanding of the disease, identify targets for treatment and help families prepare for the challenges ahead.

"Maybe I can't help Mum anymore, but maybe I can help someone else - another family, a doctor looking for answers, or a researcher searching for a breakthrough," she said.

To donate please go to https://cadasil-awareness-one-run-at-a-time.raiselysite.com/

Simone Brown and her mother Gwenda Christmass out for coffee a number of years ago.

Notice of Meeting -

Annual General Meeting Of Electors

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*, the City of Kalamunda will convene the Annual General Meeting of Electors in the Council Chambers at the City of Kalamunda Administration Centre located at 2 Railway Road Kalamunda, on:

Tuesday 3 February 2026 commencing at 6:30pm

The Annual General Meeting of Electors is open to the public and will include the presentation of the City's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2024/2025, questions from the meeting and other general business relating to the City of Kalamunda.

The City of Kalamunda Annual Report for 2024/2025 is available for review on the City's website at www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au. Hard copies are available for inspection at the City's Administration Centre, 2 Railway Road Kalamunda, and the Kalamunda, Forrestfield, Lesmurdie and High Wycombe Libraries.

Anthony Vuleta
Chief Executive Officer

City of Kalamunda

kalamunda.wa.gov.au

eye on crime

Clackline fatal crash investigation

Officers from the Major Crash Investigation Section are investigating an incident that occurred in Clackline on Monday, January 12.

About 9.05pm, a white Mazda 3C sedan was travelling in a north easterly direction on Great Eastern Highway when it left the road and collided with a tree.

The 29-year-old male driver of the vehicle and a 43-year-old male passenger were taken to Royal Perth Hospital for treatment of critical injuries received.

A 39-year-old female passenger of the vehicle died at the scene from injuries sustained in the crash.

Major Crash investigators are conducting an examination of the scene and are appealing for any witnesses to report to Crime Stoppers online at www.crimestopperswa.com.au or by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Dash-cam or mobile phone vision relating to this crash can uploaded directly to investigators via this link: https://wapf.au.evidence.com/axon/community-request/public/clacklinefatal

Jane Brook reckless driving charges

ROAD policing investigations have charged three men following a reckless driving incident that occurred in Jane Brook on Friday, July 11 2025.

It will be alleged about 11pm, a blue Ford sedan was filmed reversing at speed onto the driveway of a residence on Huntsman Terrace, colliding with the garage roller door and causing significant damage.

It will be further alleged the driver then conducted a burnout along the driveway and onto Huntsman Terrace, creating excessive smoke and leaving significant tyre marks on the driveway and roadway.

Footage of the incident was later uploaded to social media.

As a result of inquiries, Daniel Celinski-Myslaw a 20-year-old man from Ballajura has been charged with reckless driving in a confiscation zone and criminal damage or destruction of property.

He appeared before Midland Magistrates Court on January 9 where he was remanded through to February 20, where he'll reappear at Midland Courthouse.

A 22-year-old man from Clarkson and a 20-year-old man from Pearsall were each charged with reckless driving in a confiscation zone.

Superintendent Michael Dalla-Costa of road policing operations said this behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

"Driving a vehicle into someone's property and performing burnouts is not entertainment – it is criminal, dangerous and causes significant harm to victims and the community.

"This incident resulted in thousands of dollars worth of damage and was deliberately filmed and shared online to glorify dangerous behaviour.

"Let me be clear: if you choose to drive recklessly, damage property or endanger lives, we will identify you and you will face the full force of the law.

"WA Police will continue to target high-risk driving behaviour anywhere, anytime. We urge all motorists to drive responsibly and respect the safety and property of others."

Police want anyone with information regarding the above incidents to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or you can make a report online at www.crimestopperswa.com.au

Sultana Road West residents buffer concerns remain

GUANHAO CHENG

HIGH Wycombe residents are pressuring City of Kalamunda and state planning authorities to resolve the impacts of industrial operations near their homes as the city clarifies the complex timeline of the issue.

High Wycombe resident Michael Ryan and members of the Landowners High Wycombe South Action Group have been in dispute with the city for several years over a 32m separation zone, made up of a 20m road reserve and 12m residential setbacks.

The buffer sits between stage 1 of the Forrestfield–High Wycombe Industrial Development Zone and existing homes, with residents arguing it falls short of separation distances required under local planning scheme 3 and a 2015 State Administrative Tribunal decision.

Residents have repeatedly requested technical calculations demonstrating how the 32m distance was determined.

According to Mr Ryan, those calculations have never been formally produced.

"The city and the government have placed many of us in harm's way for nine years by not affording the community a buffer," Mr Ryan wrote to chief executive Anthony Vuleta.

Residents have compiled extensive noise logs documenting disruption from nearby industrial operations, particularly Golden Eggs and Ascent Steel, which conducts steel fabrication, sandblasting and painting.

In a December 21, 2025 log, resident Diane English reported that Golden Eggs machinery malfunctioned at 1.30am on a Saturday morning, operating continuously for more than nine hours.

"I phoned the city's after-hours number at 6.20am, which is recorded, and was told to report it Monday," Ms English wrote.

"The recording is there, which proves this has happened."

Mr Ryan has also questioned whether Ascent Steel's development approval accurately reflects its activities, noting it is described as a "light industrial workshop" in its application which is a classification he argued did not exist under the local scheme.

"Ascent Steel is definitely not industry-light," he said.

Concerns have also been raised about industrial traffic, with residents supplying photographs of heavy vehicles reversing into the steel fabrication site along Sultana Road West.

The city declined a resident request for a January 13 meeting, stating issues raised had been "extensively addressed through previous correspondence and formal processes over a number of years".

Picture of a truck a resident shared reversing in on Sultana Road West which they claim is a breach of LPS3.

However, in a December 22 response, the city acknowledged there was no single, clearly documented buffer calculation available at the time.

The dispute sits within a broader planning transition that includes both state and local planning decisions.

Mayor Margaret Thomas said the area along Sultana Road West was originally planned and zoned for industrial use, before state priorities shifted following the proposed delivery of a Metronet station.

"That prompted the state government to request the area be reconsidered for residential development," she said.

The city then prepared a local structure plan to guide residential growth, which was approved by the state government and now sets the long-term planning direction for the precinct.

Ms Thomas said the core challenge was managing the interface between historic industrial zoning and newer residential outcomes driven by state-led infrastructure and land-use decisions.

"Resolving the issue requires coordination between multiple parties, including the city, the state government and the WAPC," she said.

She said local governments did not have the authority or financial capacity to independently resolve legacy interface issues arising from state planning decisions.

Ms Thomas said the city has been actively advocating to the state government and confirmed that the chair of the WAPC has requested collaboration on a new structure plan to address the interface.

"The city and state are now engaging on the development of this new structure plan, with the aim of progressing a more coordinated and long-term planning solution," she said.

Under the High Wycombe South (Forrestfield North) residential precinct local structure plan amendment 1, approved by the WAPC in August 2023, Sultana Road West was designated as the transition point between industrial and future residential land uses.

While the structure plan includes provisions for design treatments to manage this interface, residents have strongly objected to being required to fund them.

"(Development services director) Nathan Ritchie also told Diane and Peter English and I that landowners on the interface would have to fund a (taller than) 9m high wall extending about 400m, along with roads and landscaping, in addition to the development contribution plan," Mr Ryan wrote.

"We vehemently objected."

Residents are seeking access to technical information they say was relied upon to allow ongoing industrial operations with the current 32-metre buffer.

Ms Thomas said the city understands residents' frustration and acknowledged the issue has persisted for many years.

"However, the current situation is the result of planning transitions over time, rather than a single decision by the city," she said.

She said further updates would be provided as structure planning and state engagement progresses.

Labor

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Member for Hasluck

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Tania Lawrence Hasluck

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Shop 2/5 Junction Parade
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IGA Waterhall
9 Waterhall Rd
STONEVILLE:
Stoneville Fresh Food Market
5345 Richardson Rd
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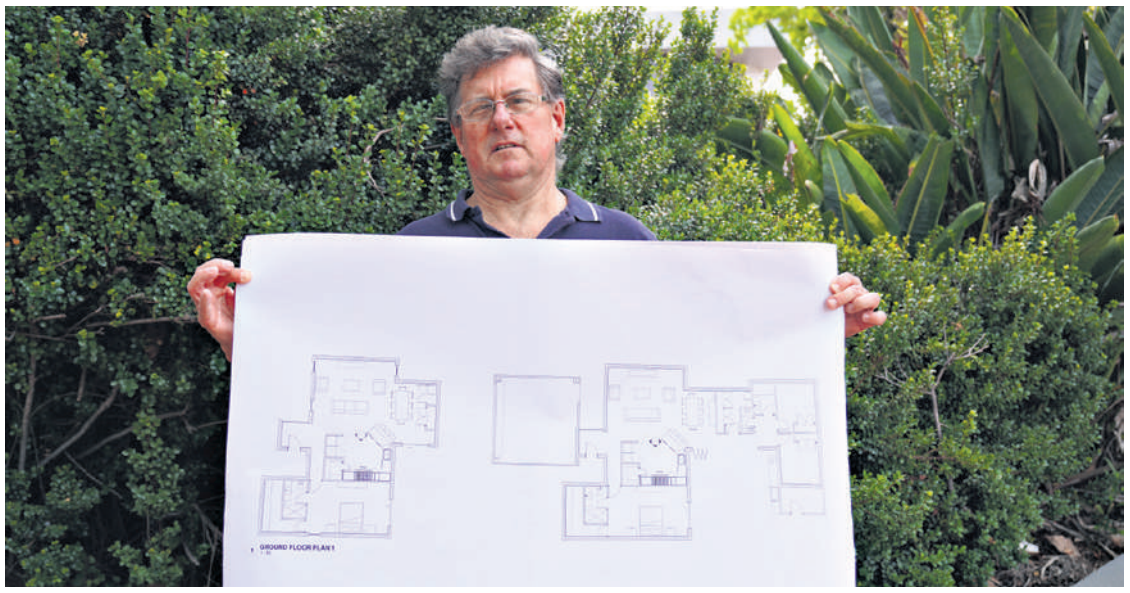


Kalamunda building designer Neil McKenzie shows one of his designs for an affordable staged home. Picture: Guanhao Cheng

Kalamunda designer proposes staged homes for affordability

GUANHAO CHENG

A KALAMUNDA building designer is proposing a staged housing concept he believes could help people enter the property market as construction costs and affordability pressures rise.

Kalamunda-based building designer Neil McKenzie has developed a "future-proofed" home design that allows buyers to start with a smaller initial build and expand over time as their financial situation improves.

Mr McKenzie said the idea grew from years of frustration with wasted roof space and what he sees as a growing focus by project builders on large, fully built homes that are out of reach for many first-time buyers.

"You start off with this massive roof area that's just holding air and collecting dust," he said.

"It makes more sense to design it so it can be used later on, when people are ready to expand."

The concept centres on building a modest single-storey home, often with one bedroom, one bathroom and an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area.

The design is documented so additional rooms can be added later without major redesign or disruption.

By allowing for future extensions in the original plans, services such as plumbing and gas can be positioned to avoid costly rework when homeowners choose to build on.

Mr McKenzie said the approach could significantly reduce upfront building costs, potentially saving buyers around $150,000 depending on the design and site.

"With house prices and construction costs where they are, that kind of saving can be the difference between getting into the market or staying stuck renting," he said.

He said high material and labour costs, combined with large deposit requirements, were making it increasingly difficult for buyers to secure their first home.

"If you're trying to save 15 or 20 per cent for a deposit, that's a big hurdle," he said.

"Starting smaller makes the loan smaller, which makes it easier for a broker to get you over the line."

Mr McKenzie said many volume builders favoured selling large packages upfront, sometimes exposing buyers to price increases during construction.

"If someone signs a fixed-price contract, it should stay fixed," he said.

"People are getting a rude shock when prices change partway through the build."

Unlike modular or factory-built housing, Mr McKenzie's designs favour traditional double-brick construction, which he said remained popular with Perth buyers because of its strength and longevity.

He said modern insulation standards and energy-efficiency requirements meant brick homes could still perform well in Perth's climate.

Mr McKenzie said the staged approach was suited to buyers planning to remain in one home long-term as it allowed them to build only what they needed initially and expand as their family or finances change.

"People don't need four bedrooms straight away," he said.

"They need something affordable that they can grow into."

Mr McKenzie said Cosmopolitan Design has operated for about 30 years, working on residential extensions, renovations and small commercial projects.

Mr McKenzie has been based in Kalamunda for around a decade.

He said his proposal was not a single answer to housing affordability challenges but one option he hoped would be considered alongside other solutions.

"This is a solution, not the solution," he said.

"But it's a practical way to help people get started."

Cost of living top issue for youth

COST of living is the top issue of concern for young people, according to Australia's largest annual survey of young people.

Results from Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2025 have revealed young West Australians aged 14-19 consider cost of living (61%), climate change and the environment (28%) and housing and homelessness (28%) to be the top issues.

It's the second year in a row that cost of living has been identified as the top issue, continuing a strong long-term shift in what young people view as the most important issue in Australia.

Mission Australia WA State Director Sue Budalich said concern about the issue had climbed sharply; up from 57 per cent in 2024 and 28 per cent in 2023.

"Cost of living concern is at the highest level since the question was first asked in 2010," she said.

"Young West Australians are worried about the cost of food, bills and basic essentials - it's affecting their mental health and outlook on life."

Concern about climate change and the environment remains top of mind for young people, despite dropping from a record high of 40 per cent in 2023.

"Young people care about the environment, but it's hard to be proactive when they are worried about paying bills and having a roof over their heads," Ms Budalich said.

Mental health was both a national issue for young people (26%) and a personal concern, with 40% reporting feeling stressed about their mental health and wellbeing.

One in five said their family was often stressed about money, with one in ten saying they couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups.

One in five reported experiencing high levels of psychological distress in the weeks before the survey.

For the fourth year in a row, housing and homelessness has featured in the top 10 national issues for young West Australians.

"We must do more to ensure that young people feel safe and supported and have access to safe and secure housing," Ms Budalich said.

"Young people have clearly told us they are aware of and concerned about the housing crisis and increases in homelessness, which is why we need greater investment in social and affordable housing, responsive and tailored support and more youth-specific housing like Youth Foyers.

"Young people are our future and it's important they feel heard and their concerns are acted on.

"We are thankful for their responses, for sharing their hopes and dreams with us, and we want them to know we are listening."

The 24th annual Youth Survey was conducted between April and August with results shared with schools, community service organisations, councils, policy makers and those who support young people.

DEMERSAL FISHING RECOVERY REFORMS

For future generations

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR WA'S FISHING COMMUNITY

To help recover stocks of spawning dhufish, pink snapper, and red emperor, urgent action is needed with stronger measures up and down our coast.

The recovery closure for boat-based recreational demersal fishing in the West Coast Zone (Kalbarri to Augusta) will be extended until Spring 2027.

Commercial demersal fishing in this zone will end permanently, and charter fishing will not be permitted between Lancelin and Mandurah.

Recreational and commercial fishing for demersals will remain open in all other regions with additional management measures introduced.

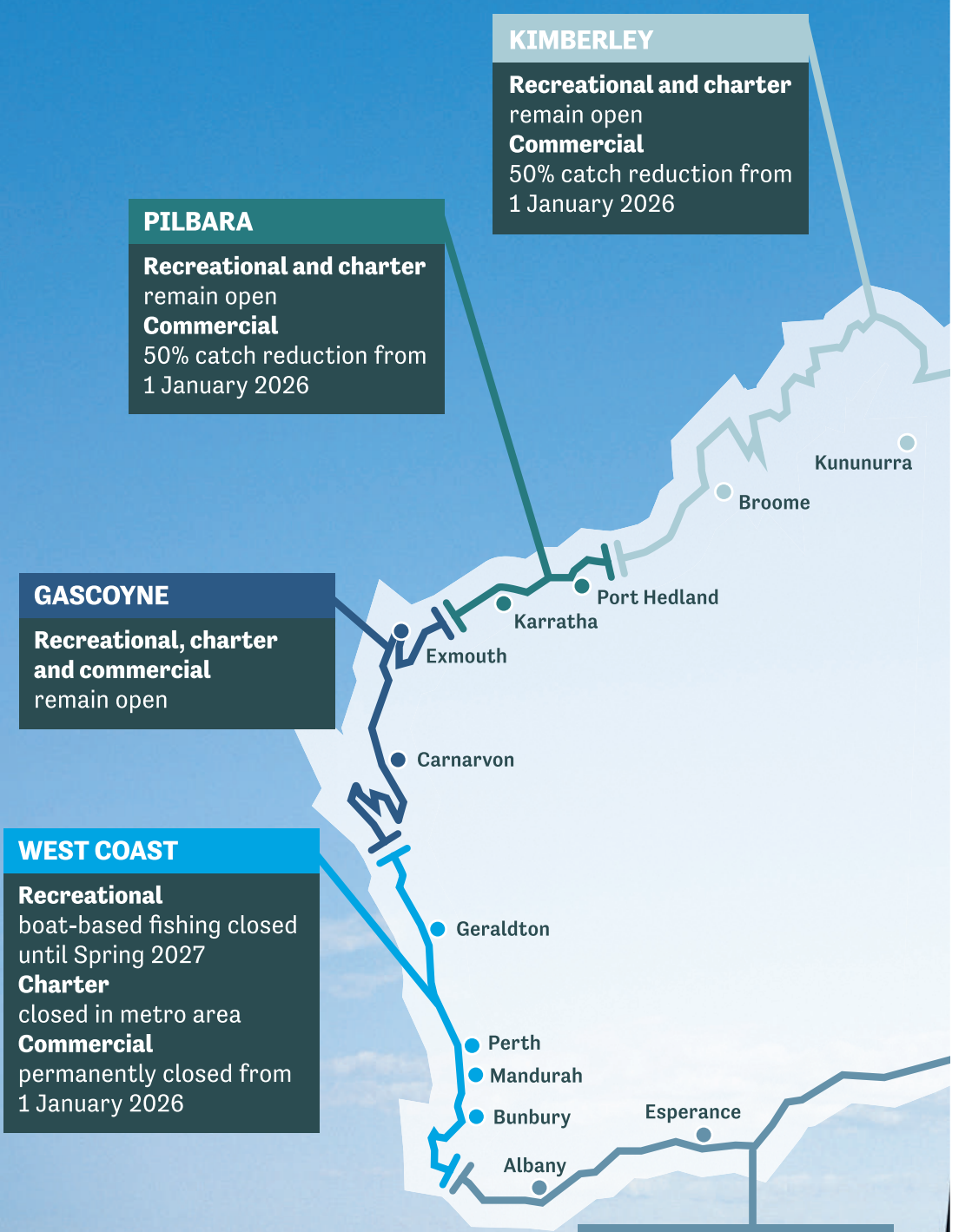
WHAT DO THE REFORMS MEAN?

After the recovery period, the West Coast Zone will become an **exclusive** recreational fishing zone, meaning more fish in the water and a stronger future for WA's recreational fishing community.

CAN I STILL GO FISHING?

Yes. Recreational fishing for other fish species like Mahi Mahi, Mackerel, Yellowtail Kingfish and Tuna is still permitted.

Everyone needs to play their part for WA's future generations of fishers.



These fish are at risk

Search **Fishing Futures WA**

Darlington Brigade debriefs after New Year fire response

The devastating aftermath of the fire. Pictures: Craig Chiswell.

A WEEK after the Boya Quarry Reserve fire threatened homes in Darlington members of the Darlington Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade (DVFB) gathered for a debrief on Saturday January 10 at the Darlington Fire Station.

The fire, which started just before 5pm on Friday, January 2 quickly took hold and headed for properties along Sandover Road, View Terrace and Orange Road.

A huge response by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, including Fire and Rescue Service, Volunteer Fire and Emergency Service, and Bush Fire Service units from around the metropolitan area, well supported by the use of water bombing aircraft, prevented any homes from being lost.

The Darlington VBFB were among the first fire crews to arrive, and not only battled the initial blaze, but provided crews for firefighting, mop-up and patrols until the following Wednesday.

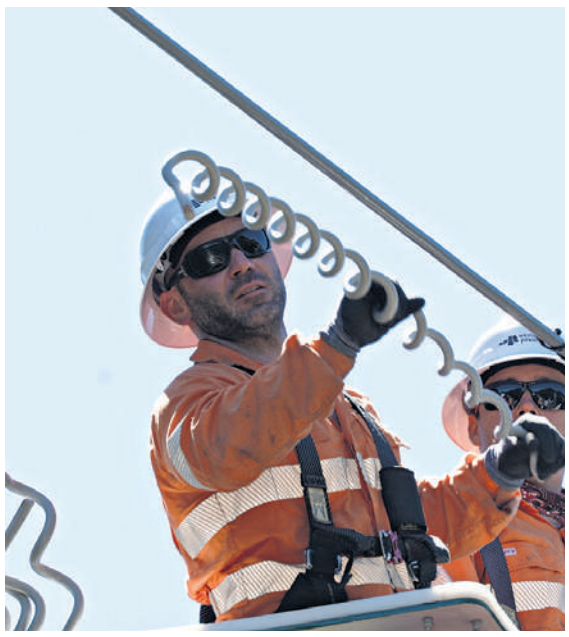
Dozens of the brigade's crews volunteered their time at this incident, including overnight shifts, to make sure that the community were safe and protected, beyond the impact of the initial fire.

Last Saturday morning, after their volunteers had checked, serviced and restocked their trucks, completed their weekly radio checks, and tidied up their station, they got to catch-up during a BBQ brunch, giving them time to reflect on, and chat about the fire, their response, and any issues to be addressed.

The brigade members were also joined by Shire of Mundaring President Paige McNeil, shire councillors Ben Heptinstall and Luke Ellery, and Bullwinkel MP Trish Cook to discuss recent fire events, the brigade's responses and actions, and the brigade's requirements moving forward.

For further information on the brigade's debrief, or the Darlington Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade please contact publicity and promotion officer Ricky Harvey on 0409 685 445 or email him at rdharvey@iprimus.com.au

Attendees at the debrief following the recent Darlington fire. Picture: Ricky Harvey



Western Power crew install covered conductors. Covered conductors to be installed in Parkerville. Pictures: Western Power.

Covered conductors to be trialled in Parkerville

WESTERN Power has begun a trial in targeted areas of the network paving the way for a large-scale trial in Parkerville expected to commence mid-2026 aimed at increasing network resilience, enhancing safety and reducing bushfire risk.

The trial will determine the feasibility of a new type of covered high voltage (HV) conductor - a powerline covered with an insulating material.

Executive asset management manager Gair Landsborough said the conductor is expected to reduce bushfire risk, protect wildlife from electrical infrastructure, and improve the resilience and safety of the overhead assets.

"Using covered HV conductors reduces bushfire risk and helps to minimise the impact of vegetation and wildlife coming into contact with the network," Mr Landsborough said.

"Installing covered HV conductors is expected to increase the resilience of the network against weather events, reducing the number of unplanned outages and enhancing reliability for homes and businesses.

"A small-scale pilot project was successfully completed in late 2025 on a two-kilometre section of the network in Yanchep, paving the way for a large-scale trial in Parkerville," Mr Landsborough said.

"Through this trial we'll convert 16 kilometres of HV powerlines in Parkerville to covered conductor.

"We're also converting 14 kilometres of low voltage (LV) bare conductor to LV aerial bundle cable improving reliability and helping reduce bushfire risk.

"When the trial's complete, the entire Parkerville network will be converted to covered conductor - a first for the Western Power network."

Police target reckless eRiders during Ellenbrook crackdown

BRAYDEN MOULD

FOLLOWING a recent Ellenbrook police crackdown on eRideables, calls for more consistent enforcement are mounting as residents report a surge in dangerous riding across local roads.

The enforcement action was executed last Friday when Ellenbrook police intercepted a juvenile riding an illegal device near Coolamon Oval area.

Authorities confirmed the scooter failed to meet state safety standards, resulting in the device being impounded and slated for destruction under motor vehicle laws.

In the wake of the police action, residents have voiced their own concerns over a surge in dangerous behaviour they've witnessed across the suburb.

Resident Guy Cook said he has experienced a dangerous escalation in the conduct of reckless riders first-hand.

"The kids riding seem to think they're invincible, throwing rocks and causing issues," Mr Cook said.

He warned without a sustained increase in police presence, accidents and reckless behaviour will only become more frequent.

"(Dangerous behaviour) will only become more prominent until police seriously ramp up action," he said.

"It will end up taking the lives of riders and pedestrians and ruin the lives of drivers when they do end up hitting them."

Another Ellenbrook resident, Michelle Hooper, also voiced her support of the police action, where she said she witnesses dangerous riders of eRideables on a constant basis.

"If you live in Ellenbrook (you know) these kids on eRideables and off road bikes are actually going to get themselves killed," she said.

"They're constantly weaving and darting through traffic and using roads and flying down footpaths nearly hitting pedestrians."

The frustration mirrors events in Perth's northern suburbs where authorities recently launched large-scale enforcement in Joondalup with Operation Moorhead.

Legal operation requires riders to be at least 16 years of age and the max speed is 25km/h.

The operation was a targeted strike against reckless eRideable use that resulted in 11 scooters being seized in just its first few days.

The Joondalup operation saw teenagers as young as 14 charged with multiple offenses after allegedly evading police through ovals and pedestrian zones.

Current Western Australian regulations stipulate that any legal eRideable must be speed-limited to 25km/h and weigh no more than 25kg.

Strict dimensional limits are also enforced, requiring devices to be no larger than 1250mm in length, 700mm in width, and 1350mm in height.

Legal operation requires the rider to be at least 16 years of age and equipped with an approved helmet at all times.

Police have warned any device that exceeds these legal benchmarks are classified as unlicensed motor vehicles and riders caught operating these non-compliant devices face severe enforcement action, including the possibility of prosecution.

Police seek public assistance after High Wycombe bushfire

The fire closed down the highway between Berkshire Road and Kalamunda Road as firefighters battled the blaze. Picture: Facebook

STRIKE Force Vulcan investigators are seeking the publics' assistance following a bushfire that broke out along Roe Highway last Wednesday afternoon.

The blaze was first reported around 2.05pm on January 7 and scorched 10ha of native vegetation, coming dangerously close to both the highway and nearby residential homes in High Wycombe and Maida Vale.

The emergency response required 13 ground crews and a water bomber to extinguish the flames, leading to the closure of Roe Highway between Berkshire Road and Kalamunda Road.

While fire crews and water bombers battled the flames, local residents were seen spraying down their homes with hoses and putting out spot fires with watering cans and sprinklers.

DFES lowered the alert to watch and act at around 4.45pm as the fire's forward progress slowed.

By 8pm, the blaze was officially put out and the threat to the community ended, resulting in a final downgrade to an "advice" level.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation, and authorities are urging anyone with information or suspicious activity reports to contact Crime Stoppers at 1800 333 000 or via their website at www.crimestopperswa.com.au

Anyone with CCTV, mobile phone or dash-cam vision of any suspicious persons, or activity in the area of this fire, is asked to upload the vision direct to investigators via the link https://wapf.au.evidence.com/axon/community-request/public/vulcan

Information can be provided anonymously, and a reward of up to $25,000 is being offered for any tips that lead to the identification and conviction of an arsonist.

Kalamunda fireys give thanks and reminder

KALAMUNDA volunteer bushfire brigade thanked the community for their support during the hills fires and said preparing a bushfire plan was the best way to support the brigade.

Captain Natalie Smailes said in a statement that she was sincerely thankful all 90 members of the Kalamunda volunteer brigade answered the call on New Years to protect the City of Kalamunda.

"Thank you also goes to all volunteer and career firefighters, DFES personnel, SES members and countless other emergency services that came to help from all over the metro area," she said.

"It is because of you that lives, properties and houses were saved.

"The very best way you can support us is to make sure you have a bush fire plan.

"You can also join or create your local bushfire ready group in your street.

"Lastly, make sure you have downloaded the Emergency WA app or are familiar with the website."

Western Power program to protect fauna

PETER W LEWIS

WESTERN Power has installed 53 protection devices through their fauna protection program including possum guards, bird covers and cable guards throughout the cities of Swan and Kalamunda, shires of Mundaring and Northam and Town of Bassendean.

There have been 24 devices installed in the Shire of Mundaring, 16 in Swan, 10 in Kalamunda, two in Bassendean and one in Northam.

While there are no fauna protection devices currently installed in the shires of Gingin and York through the program, a Western Power spokesperson said the utility was continually monitoring the network for areas where protection devices may be beneficial, particularly in locations where animals and birds have been known to come in to contact with assets.

The fauna protection program aims to reduce the risk of fauna contact incidents with power infrastructure, safeguarding wildlife and helping to ensure safe and reliable power supply for the community.

Western Power executive manager Jo Christie said in the 2024-25 financial year the utility installed fauna protection treatments at 50 locations across the network to mitigate risk of inadvertent contact.

"South West WA has a diverse range of conservation-significant fauna, including the endangered Western Ringtail Possum and three species of black cockatoo," Ms Christie said.

"From time to time these animals are known to use the overhead power network to perch or to move from one habitat to another which sometimes leads to fatal contact for the animal and subsequent network damage and power outages.

"To help protect our native wildlife and reduce unplanned outages, we've installed possum guards on 98 poles, 166 bird covers on crossarms, 64 bird diverters on conductors and 376 cable guards on infrastructure through the program.

"We've also considered fauna protection in the design and specifications of new assets. As an example, our pole top switches now have a larger gap between the live and earth components creating increased space for fauna to move around, reducing risk of contact."

These measures complement other conservation initiatives Western Power has implemented including supporting the installation of nesting boxes on infrastructure, installing Osprey nesting platforms in Lancelin and Geraldton, conserving potential black cockatoo breeding trees and donating materials to Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Conservation Centre.

"We have installed around 30 nesting boxes of various sizes within the last two years around Western Power sites to provide additional habitat for native fauna," Ms Christie said.

Western Power has been installing bird diverters to protect fauna.

"The nest boxes are part of a monitored program in collaboration with The Re-Cyc-Ology Project and has shown great success with an array of fauna using them including Carnaby cockatoos, Australian shelducks, Australian Ringneck parrots, Brush-tailed phascogales and large brushtail possums.

Western Power have implemented several other important measures to reduce animal contact with the network including vegetation management around powerlines and integrating fauna conservation into design of new assets.

"Management of the vegetation around powerlines is a shared responsibility between property owners, local governments and Western Power," Ms Christie said.

"Ensuring proper clearance requirements are maintained is critical in reducing fauna access to powerlines from over-hanging vegetation.

"We're continuously looking at ways to protect the natural environment, deliver sustainable outcomes and conserve WA's unique biodiversity through appropriate planning and design of the network.

"Having a sustainable approach to fauna protection is integral, not only for conservation but also to ensure a reliable power supply for the community."

Keep the Sheep to continue fight

KEEP the Sheep have vowed to continue their fight against the closure of the live sheep export industry.

"Stopping the ban on live sheep exports remains our key focus. We will keep calling out Albo's failures with this so-called transition," a spokesperson said.

"But we will also speak up on other big issues hurting people in the bush."

He said of the $139.8 million promised by the federal government for the closure of the industry, $33.9m has gone to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - the bureaucracy in Canberra.

"Not one dollar has gone to farmers.

"That is not a transition. It is a disgrace. And rural families are being left to carry the cost.

"At the last election we fought hard. We made the plight of sheep farmers and rural communities in WA into a national issue.

"Although we did not change the outcome of the election, we proved something important: when people in the bush unite and stand together, we can make a difference.

"So, while we have been quiet for a little while, we have not gone away."

Slashed fares to benefit Midland commuters

MIDLAND residents are set to enjoy significant savings on public transport thanks to the Cook Labor government's major overhaul of fare structures across the state.

Under the 'Go Anywhere Fare', Transperth passengers will be able to travel anywhere on the network for $2.80 per trip when using an autoload SmartRider, or $3.50 when paying by card.

"This is the cheapest fare structure since the mid-1980s and will deliver real cost-of-living relief for local families," Midland MLA Steve Catania said.

For regular commuters travelling to and from the CBD, these changes could mean savings of up to $625 per year.

DayRider and FamilyRider fares will also drop to $7.00, making it easier and more affordable for families and visitors to explore Perth.

Regional Western Australians will benefit too, with TransWA fares permanently halved, reducing the cost of travel to more than 240 destinations across the state.

A return trip between Kalgoorlie and Midland will now save passengers around $100.

Mr Catania said being able to travel anywhere on the network for as little as $2.80 means more money left in the household budget, better access to jobs and training, and easier connections to healthcare and community services.

"This is exactly the kind of practical support people have been asking for," he said.

Midland MLA Steve Catania with local high school student Darcy who will benefit from free travel to school for students.

"The Cook Labor government made clear commitments to deliver lower fares and better public transport, and we are honouring those commitments.

"Halving TransWA fares and introducing the Go Anywhere Fare builds on Metronet's expansion of rail and stations, Fare Free Sundays, and free travel to school for students. This is what building a better community looks like."

York in top five baby hotspots

YORK has emerged as one of the top five baby hotspots in WA at a time when birth rates are drastically reducing to a record low.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) births data showed the five local government areas in WA with the highest fertility rate during the 2023-24 calendar year were all in country WA.

WA's fertility rate of 1.434, the average number of babies per woman, is among the lowest in the country and well below the population replacement level of two.

However regional WA bucked the trend with Moora and Gnowangerup achieving the top fertility rate of 2.81 followed by Wagin (2.67), York (2.57) and Waroona (2.56).

Australia's population grew by 1.5 per cent in the 12 months to June 2025, according to the latest ABS figures.

ABS head of demography Beidar Cho said the nation's population at 30 June 2025 was 27.6 million people, 420,100 more than in June 2024.

Natural increase, the number of births minus those who died, added 114,600 people from June 2024 to June 2025. Both the number of births and deaths registered in Australia also increased by 3.4 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively.

Net overseas migration was 305,600 people from June 2024 to June 2025. There were 568,400 overseas migration arrivals and 262,800 departures.

"Western Australia again had the fastest rise in population of 2.2 per cent, with Victoria and Queensland equal second highest, as both grew by 1.8 per cent," Ms Cho said.

ARTS&ENTERTAINMENT

Antony Muia, Untitled, 2022, unique state, etching on hand coloured paper.

Mundaring Arts exhibition explores paper and skin

MUNDARING Arts Centre will be exhibiting Paper Thin, Skin Deep which features nine emerging, mid-career and established female artists interrogating the materials and metaphorical layers of skin through paper and sculpture.

Drawing on diverse cultural perspectives and disciplines, Emma Craig, Jo Darvall, Stephanie De Biasi, Sharyn Egan, Robyn Jean, Annette Peterson, Emily Rose, Nicole Steenhof and Sarah Thornton-Smith present a study of surface, body and memory, reflecting on how even the most delicate materials can hold, record and reveal human experience.

Through the processes of folding, casting, stitching and layering, paper becomes a material that records pressure, time and gesture, while sculptural forms address themes of trauma, tenderness, memory, transformation and identity.

The artworks challenge the notion that surface is merely skin-deep.

Cuts, creases and impressions echo the ways bodies hold histories, inviting reflection on how we inhabit self, materials and memories.

In complement, another exhibition titled CMYK brings together five printmakers working across woodblock printing, etching, stencil embossing, cyanotype and screen-printing.

Featuring Shanti Gelmi, Erin Kilbane, Antony Muia, Matt Perrin and Kristy Scaddan, the exhibition celebrates the art of print as both a disciplined craft and a site of experimentation, revealing the alchemy and diversity of ink, chemistry and process on paper.

Through bold and subtle lines, bleeding colour, layering and the interplay between positive and negative space, the artists transform the surface of paper, creating depth, mood and form.

Named after the foundational print colours Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Key (Black), CMYK reflects the constraints inherent in working on a flat, two-dimensional surface.

Rather than limiting expression, these boundaries provide a framework for experimentation, whilst the ability to re-do, make copies and repeat, offer the artists a freedom to play, and allow the medium to become a collaborator in the process.

Together, these exhibitions offer audiences an immersive encounter with paper as a site of material investigation, both conceptually and practically.

Surface, colour and form reveal stories of process and experimentation.

Paper holds presence, it transforms, conveys depth and catalogues memory, transcending beyond its humble and often fragile state beyond surface interpretations.

Stephanie De Biasi, The Flesh of Things, 2025, paper, nylon, wire. Photo by Rylan Blair.

Paper Thin, Skin Deep and CMYK are on display at Mundaring Arts Centre from January 25 to March 22.

For further information and Public Program details, visit the website mundaringartscentre.com.au

Swan markets animal and reptile experience

BRAYDEN MOULD

SWAN Settlers Market in Herne Hill is inviting families to escape the house this weekend as they host a captivating schedule of free animal encounters to keep the school holiday boredom at bay.

As a popular hub for families and visitors alike, this historic venue is set to transform into a vibrant, hands-on wildlife destination for all ages to enjoy.

The adventure begins with a cuddly animal farm on Saturday, January 17 from 10am to 2pm, where young children can get up close with furry barnyard favourites like lambs and rabbits, introducing them to farm life in the heart of the Swan Valley.

The atmosphere shifts on Sunday, January 18 from 12pm to 2pm, as the Perth Reptile Company arrives with their fascinating array of scaly visitors.

Brave youngsters and adults can learn about wildlife conservation while meeting lizards, a friendly turtle, a resident frog, and several snake species.

Between these wild encounters, families are encouraged to explore the eclectic food stalls and artisan markets housed within the historic building.

While parents browse handcrafted local goods or enjoy gourmet coffee, the kids can burn off excess holiday energy in the dedicated indoor and outdoor play zones.

To make the most of the summer weather the market will also feature live music from 12pm to 2pm on the Sunday.

With free entry, ample parking, and no booking required, it will be a memorable summer day out.

The animal farm and reptile encounter will be held on January 17 and 18.

ENTERTAINMENT & GIG GUIDE

Your local Gig Guide

Fri January 16

Mahogany Inn & Distillery
Bill Chidgzey
6-9pm. Free.
4260 Great Eastern Hwy
Mahogany Creek

Parkerville Tavern
Kane Cahill
From 6pm. Free.
6 Owen Road
Parkerville

Woodbridge Hotel
Powerplay
From 8pm. Free.
50 East St Guildford

Lyric's Bar
Michael Vdelli & the Art of Dysfunction
From 7.30pm.Free.
22 Lyric Lane
Maylands

Sat January 17

Lyric's Bar
Bucket
From 7.30pm. Free.
22 Lyric Lane
Maylands

7th Ave Bar & Bistro
Karaoke Night
From 8.30pm. Free.
74 Helena Street
Midland

Mahogany Inn & Distillery
Brett Hardwick
6-9pm. Free.
4260 Great Eastern Hwy
Mahogany Creek

Woodbridge Hotel
Jamm'n
From 8pm. Free.
50 East St
Guildford

Sun January 18

Woodbridge Hotel
Kane Cahill
From 3pm. Free.
50 East St Guildford

Childlow Tavern
Live Music
12.30-3.30pm. Free.
4 Thomas Street
Chidlow

Mahogany Inn & Distillery
Rhay Rom & Chantel
5-8pm. Free.
4260 Great Eastern Hwy
Mahogany Creek

Parkerville Tavern
Another Fine Mess
From 4pm. Free.
6 Owen Road
Parkerville

Tues January 20

Woodbridge Hotel
Ravenswing
From 6pm. Free.
50 East St Guildford

Mahogany Inn & Distillery
Smooth Groove
6-8.30pm. Free.
4260 Great Eastern Hwy
Mahogany Creek

Wed January 21

Childlow Tavern
Muso Jam Night with Brett Hardwick
7.30pm till late. Free.
4 Thomas Street
Chidlow

Mahogany Inn & Distillery
House Grooves
Presented by Fenton Wilde
6-9pm. Free.
4260 Great Eastern Hwy
Mahogany Creek

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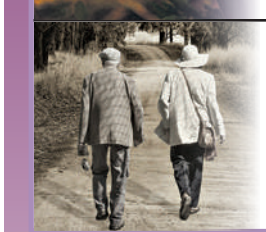

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Essential lifes skills for children

THE Helen O'Grady Drama Academy is proud to declare that their self-development drama programme has been preparing children and teens for life since 1979 – still prevalent in guiding our youth of today!

The prime aim of their International Programme is to give children ongoing confidence and skill in verbal communication, a vital ability in today's fast changing world of technology in which our children are now immersed.

Learning to be able to communicate effectively with others allows children to find their own path through anxiety, school pressures, friendships, family changes and navigating challenges with a positive mindset.

Children love our classes and parents love the results says Helen O'Grady Drama Academy principal Merylena Sulak.

"We are very proud of our programme which covers a wide variety skills that incorporate speech training, creative movement, improvisation, script work, performance techniques and much more," she said.

"Drama not only gives children and teenagers an opportunity to express themselves in a fun, safe environment but also enables them to practise everyday life skills such as leadership, discussion and negotiation."

Weekly classes are held for 5 to 8-year-olds, 9 to 12-year-olds, and 12 to 18-year-olds.

There are five studios operating in the eastern suburbs area: Swan View, Kalamunda, Guildford Homeschool, Mundaring and Dianella.

Enrolments are now open for Term 1, 2026. Although many of their classes fill very quickly before the term has even started!

They also offer Drama clubs and incursions in liaison with your school, Childcare Centre or Homeschool Co-Op. Call Merylena on 9378 4332 or 0490 808 206, visit www.helenograde.net.au or email merylena.sulak@helenograde.net.au for more information.

Sunset Series
MOVIE FESTIVAL
2026 Season

Friday 30 January Minecraft (PG) **Walliston Primary School** 11 Dianella Road Walliston	**Friday 6 February** How To Train Your Dragon (PG) **Falls Road Primary School** 50 Falls Road Lesmurdie	**Friday 20 February** Back to the Outback (PG) **Lesmurdie Primary School** 49 Sanderson Road Lesmurdie
Friday 27 February The Lost Tiger (PG) **High Wycombe Primary School** 60 Newburn Road High Wycombe	**Friday 6 March** Spy Kids (PG) **Dawson Park Primary School** 120 Bougainvillea Avenue Forrestfield	**Friday 13 March** If (PG) **Kalamunda Primary School** 32 Heath Road Kalamunda

Pre-show activites start 5:30pm | FREE Popcorn | Movies After Dark

Bring your loved ones, pack a picnic and experience the magic of an outdoor movie night!

Movies kick off between 6:20 and 7:20pm, depending on the sunset.

For more information, scan the QR code

See you under the stars!

Sunset Series MOVIE FESTIVAL

Perth Airport

City of Kalamunda

Dance like Nobody is watching @ Jus' Dance

Jus' Dance offer a diverse range of ballroom dance classes including social group classes, medal classes and private dance lessons, suitable for dancers of all levels of experience – from beginners through to professionals.

Term 1 has commence on the 12th & 13th January at both Maddington and a new location in Kalamunda – St Swithens Church Hall, 195 Lesmurdie Rd Lesmurdie. So why not come down and have some fun and meet new people while learning something new.

Our first Social dance will be held on 20th February from 8.00pm until 11.00pm. Adults and Seniors $15.00 p/p – BYO Drinks and enjoy the floor show and dance the night away.

Adult and Senior dance classes, day & evening include Ballroom, Latin, Salsa, Rock 'n Roll, Jive & Swing and New Vogue. Youth & Kids Ballroom & Latin classes for children ages 5 – 17 yrs. Kid Sport approved Club.

Great music excellent Teachers, good fun.

Pay for full 6-week Term & receive 20% off total cost for all NEW students. Enrol online www.jusdance.com.au or Contact Jenny 0413430721 for more information.

Learn to play bridge at Kalamunda Bridge Club

Kalamunda District Bridge Club is your local place to learn or play bridge in a relaxed Hills environment and new members are always welcome!

So come down, keep your brain sharp and make new friends, beware though it can be addictive.

Bridge is played at our clubhouse in Ledger Road, Gooseberry Hill, 5 days of the week. We are a friendly club with players at all levels of bridge. We usually offer beginner lessons twice a year, the next one will start on Friday 6th February and conclude Friday 27th March 2026, with an Open Day happening on Thursday 29th January 2026, from 12.00 – 2.00pm. We have occasional lectures from visiting experts and run a variety of competitions catering to all levels of bridge.

Monday evening supervised sessions are open to anyone wanting to practice their bridge skills. A partner is not necessary. It is a very popular evening where new players can gain experience in a very friendly atmosphere!

Please refer to our website for more information regarding days and times or phone Jenny on 0407 085 229 for information and to register.

Summer Nights Sorted: Sunset Movie Series Returns in 2026

The magic of outdoor movies is back in the City of Kalamunda, with the 2026 Sunset Series kicking off on Friday 30 January 2026 at Walliston Primary School.

Thanks to a generous $22,000 funding boost from Perth Airport, this year's program builds on the success of the 2025 season by partnering with local schools to host the movie series. This partnership brings together multigenerational communities and provides valuable fundraising opportunities for schools.

Families can look forward to an expanded line-up of heart-warming, action-packed, and laugh-out-loud films, all in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Mayor Margaret Thomas is excited for the 2026 season, stating "We're incredibly grateful for Perth Airport's continued support, which helps us deliver high quality, family friendly events for our community."

"By working closely with our local schools, we're strengthening community connections and creating welcoming spaces where families can come together and enjoy these special summer evenings."

Each movie night promises a fun-filled evening, with free popcorn, and exciting pre-show activities from 5:30 PM, followed by the outdoor cinema experience. Movies will begin between 6:20 PM and 7:20 PM, perfectly timed with the sunset. Bring your picnic blankets, a low chair, and enjoy a fantastic night with loved ones.

For the full program of dates and movie titles, visit www.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/sunset. Don't miss out on the magic – mark your calendars and join us for a summer to remember!

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KALAMUNDA DISTRICT BRIDGE CLUB
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Come and check us out!
Beginners Lessons
by Mark Goddard
Friday 6th February 2026 9-11am
till Friday 27th March 2026
For further details and to register please phone Jenny on
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www.kalamunda-district.bridge-club.org
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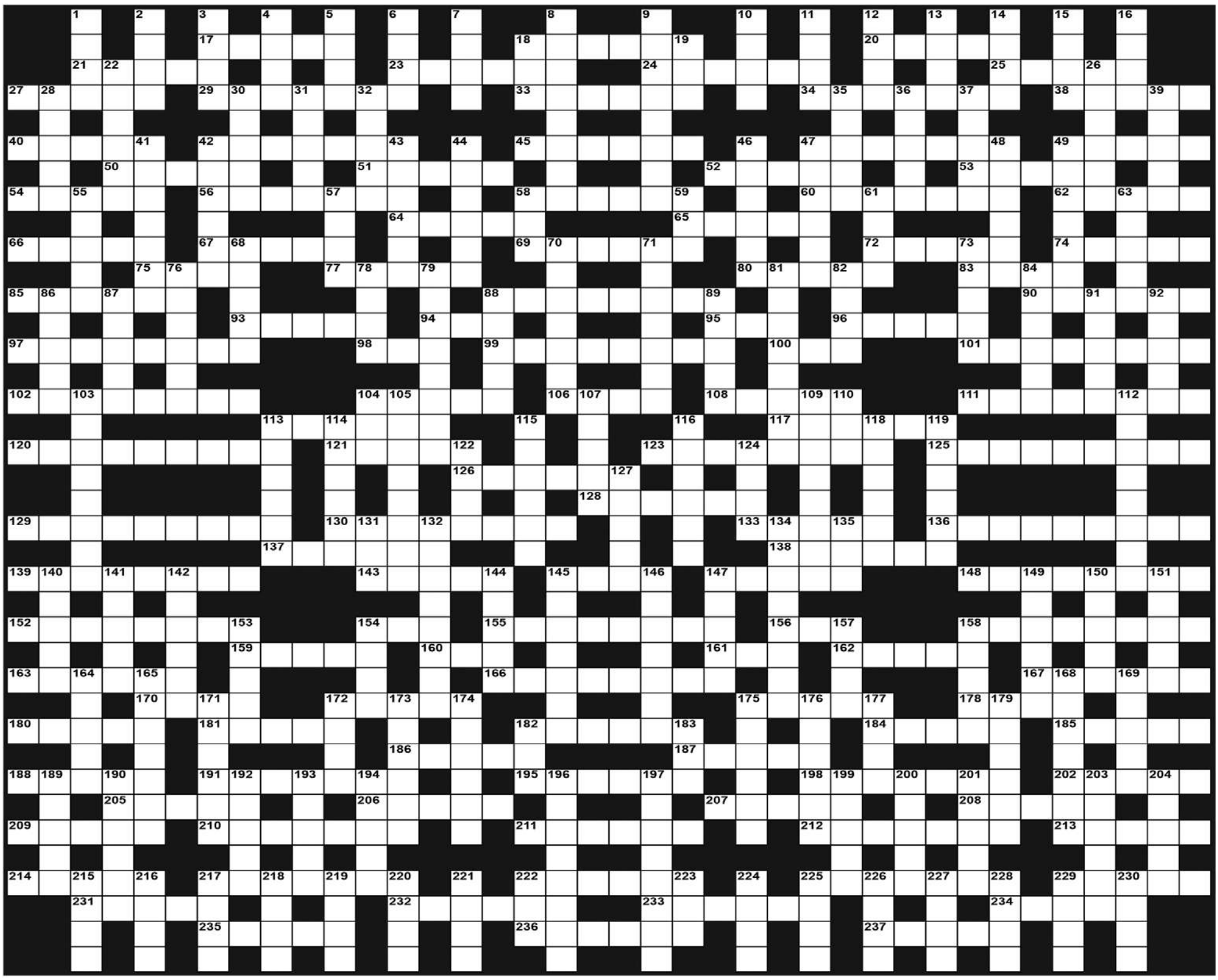
ECHO Mind Boggler Crossword 1251



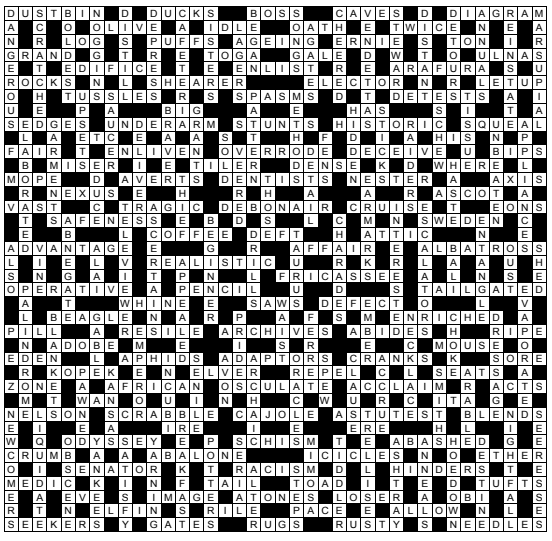
ACROSS

17 Concur
18 Ball game
20 Take place
21 Bestowed excessive love on
23 Dawdle
24 Eraser
25 Close relative
27 Sets of six bowls
29 Eventually (4,3)
33 Revere
34 Quiver
38 Sea duck
40 Take along
42 Rises
45 Alpine hut
47 Stretches
49 Bend downwards
50 Clark ...
51 Springs
52 Feel one's way
53 Former overseas telegram
54 Handle
56 Abashed by guilt
58 Goblin
60 Aims at
62 Assault
64 Elegance
65 One who donates
66 Light narrow boat
67 Repasts
69 A crowd
72 Jog
74 Laud
75 Organ of smell
77 U-shaped bicycle bar
80 Try the flavour of
83 Poisonous snakes
85 Just about
88 NCO
90 Makes amends
93 Enraged
94 Baked dish
95 Native metal
96 Versify
97 Destroy
98 Drink a little at a time
99 Sublime
100 Cricket score
101 Paying an account
102 Leopard-like animals
104 Voyages
106 Immediately following
108 Not telling the truth
111 Genetic make-up
113 More eventful
117 Aluminium soap
120 Name
121 Measured
123 Faith
125 Spectators
126 Recognised truths
128 Pay respect
129 Exactly alike
130 Dignified
133 Practise theft
136 TNT
137 Failed to hit
138 Lifted up
139 A particular wind
143 Unlawful
145 Verse writer
147 Burdens
148 Beginner
152 Drew lots
154 Grievous distress
155 Short opera
156 Fold over
158 Spine
159 Ground
160 Travelling stock route (init)
161 Enemy
162 Fewer in number
163 Move back
166 Sturdy
167 Froth
170 Spoken
172 Set moving
175 Practice
178 Science
180 Former Central Mexican people
181 Sacred song
182 Draw
184 Male duck
185 Former copper coin
186 Replace part of a tyre tread
187 Silly
188 Main artery
191 Itchy
195 Kidnap
198 Without interruption
202 Gelatine-like products
205 Lively
206 Star shaped
207 Perfect
208 Reigning beauty
209 Beg
210 Idlest
211 Removes dirt, etc
212 XVI
213 Jewelled ornamental coronet
214 Theatre attendant
217 Bespatter
222 Fragments
225 Wander aimlessly
229 Telephone greeting
231 Vote to accept
232 Defacer
233 Practicable
234 Prior to
235 Complies with instructions
236 Monetary unit
237 Ill-humoured

DOWN

1 Cipher
2 Full stops
3 Temporary pursuits
4 Stern
5 Notice
6 Month
7 Cordial
8 Dignity of a feudal superior
9 Most cheerful
10 Catches suddenly
11 Excerpt
12 Beautiful flower
13 Blackleg
14 Authentic
15 In lieu of
16 Nuisance plant
18 Ocean
19 Regret
22 Citrus fruit
26 Eavesdrop
28 Poetry
30 Fertile desert places
31 Effusion of serous fluid
32 Confuse
35 Council fees
36 A town in Florida
37 Long shafted weapon
39 Behave theatrically
41 Flower plots
42 Frightens
43 Grass-like plants
44 Beehive
46 Neckcloth
47 Exercises mercy
48 Waistbands
49 Least progressive
55 Spite or malice
57 A religious service
58 Collection
59 Ovum
61 Fret
63 Devil
68 Weird
70 Barbed spearlike missile
71 Closest
73 Looks steadily
76 Capital of Canada
78 March 15th
79 Variety of corundum
81 Warning
82 Ripped
84 Minister
86 Bloodsucking worm
87 Think
88 Tries to find
89 Add up
91 Lubricated
92 German painter
103 Simplicity
104 Bind with a cord
105 Butler
107 Tests
109 Flat top of a metal fastener (4,4)
110 Main Post Office (init)
112 Recognise
113 Halt through lack of wind
114 Cigarettes (coll)
115 Bell sounds
116 Take away
118 Spiritual beings
119 Mustered stock animals
122 Cover with plaster
124 Chills
127 A healing ointment
131 Australian State (init)
132 Distance-measuring device
134 Towed vehicles
135 Australian Institute of Sport (init)
140 Up and about
141 Diacritical mark placed over a letter
142 Worthless person (Brit coll)
144 Honour
145 Roast beforehand
146 Gigantic
147 Abounding in foliage
149 The supernatural
150 Custom
151 Tint
153 Distributes cards
154 A particle
157 A puritan
158 Fracture
164 Provide food
165 Wages deduction
168 Road-making substance
169 Reddish-orange dye
171 Overcome with fear
172 Righteous
173 Run in
174 Label
175 Where Kampala lies
176 Sports enclosures
177 Biblical garden
179 Start again
182 Mineral spring
183 Strike
189 Level playing fields
190 Followed closely
192 Rips
193 Unsophisticated
194 Continues
196 Unmarried man
197 Pageant
199 Small oval drupe
200 Smooth glossy fabric
201 Excessively fat
203 Type of counter
204 Rustic
215 Possess
216 Wild party
217 Over
218 Look slyly
219 Skin eruption
220 Wicked
221 Writing fluids
222 Father (coll)
223 Knight's title
224 Wild goat
225 Humbly patient
226 Military forces
227 Destiny
228 Narrow beams of light
229 Motor-car bonnet
230 Season of fasting

Crossword Solution 1250 from 9 January, 2026



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- Have the ability to source their own stories and get to the heart of the local area so local knowledge of our distribution areas would be an advantage.
- Have good communication skills, creativity and knowledge of media law is strongly desired.
- Attend 'out of hours' council/shire meetings, industry events and business functions.
- Have a valid driver's licence and a reliable vehicle.
- Be capable of working to tight weekly deadlines is an essential component of this position.

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The closing date for all applications is 5pm Wednesday 18th January 2026 with the successful applicant to start ASAP.

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Public Notices

ANNUAL ELECTORS' MEETING

Electors of the Shire are advised that the annual electors' meeting will be held on Monday, 2 February 2026, commencing at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, 7000 Great Eastern Highway, Mundaring.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

1. Adopt the 2024/25 Annual Report; and
2. Conduct General Business

A copy of the 2024/25 Annual Report is on the **Annual Reports and Progress Reporting page** on the Shire of Mundaring website. Hardcopies are available for inspection at the Mundaring Administration Centre and Mundaring and Boya Public Libraries.

Information about how the meeting be conducted, including how to submit questions or motions, is outlined in the **Electors' Meeting Page.**

To submit a question or motion, please provide completed forms to **shire@mundaring.wa.gov.au** by **4pm, Wednesday 28 January 2026.**

Note, this meeting will be audio recorded and livestreamed.

Shire of MUNDARING

Garry Bird
Acting Chief Executive Officer

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ECHO Notice Board

Upcoming Events

• **Kalamunda Prostate Cancer Support Group** meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Falls Farm, 41 Cagney Way Lesmurdie from 10am-1pm. For more information call Roy 9295 2522 or Ray 0427 095 892.

• **Mundaring CWA** meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am at the CWA Centre (Sculpture Park), Jacoby Street, Mundaring. There is a general meeting and cuppa with craft and social to follow until 3pm. New members and visitors welcome. For more information call Marg on 0417 956 628.

• **Midland Men's Shed** Social Tuesday is every Tuesday from 9.30am to 11.30am in the Baptist Church Hall, Bellevue. Call Andy on 0419 921 805. For workshop inquiries call 0411 833 055.

• **Wednesday Wellbeing** will be hosted at 50 Old Perth Road, Bassendean on Wednesday's from 9am to 11am starting next week. It is a seven-week wellness program for over 55's. The program will include fun activities like Tai Chi, chair dancing, and Nordic Pole Walking. The program is free. For more information call Ashlyn at 0420 589 995 or Vicki on 9361 2904.

• **Voice Interest and Education of Women** meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10am with a 10:30am start at Bayswater Tennis Club, Bayswater. The club has approximately 60 members who enjoy a wide range of social activites while raising funds to sponsor 12 financially disadvantaged students with their education. Ladies are welcome. For more information call Michelle on 0438 929 535 or email bayswatercitywa.viewclub@gmail.com

• **Mundaring CWA** will hold its first meeting of 2026 on Wednesday February 25 at 10am, at the CWA centre at the east end of the sculpture park. Due to low attendance the branch may have to close and full attendence is needed at this meeting to allow members to vote if they want to close or continue into 2026 where they will have to vacate the centre due to town planning. On March 3 the branch will celebrate 88 years to honour foundation members. For more information call Marge on 0417 956 628.

• **The Really Really Free Market** is happening this Sunday January 18 and they are looking for volunteers. They need help setting up from 8am to 9am and packing up from 10am to 10.30am. Can you spare 30 minutes or one hour to help out? For more information email ttguildford@10416751.mailchimpapp.com

Noticeboard is for non-profits and community groups advertising free/low cost events/programs. Entries must be emailed to editorial@echo-news.com two weeks before the event.

Woofer of the week

Boss is a three-year-old Kelpie. He has come from a farm and would be best suited for a property with a bit of land as he gets bored easily.

Boss sometimes gets into trouble from barking. He is sterilised, microchipped, and vaccinated. Costs Apply.

Contact Bakers Hill Dog Sanctuary on 9574 1438.

Read between the lines

By Pastor Ian Kirk

Lifted Up

While in Albany recently, we enjoyed catching up with friends, as well as doing some sightseeing. One place we went to was the wind farm.

The wind turbines, sitting high above the coastal cliffs, constantly spin due to the consistent winds that blow. It's magnificent to stand beneath one of the turbines and to hear the blades cutting through the air.

Besides the wind farm, the rugged coastline nearby is so spectacular - especially on a sunny day. While enjoying the scenery, a para-glider went by. He even waved to us. Effortlessly, without any mechanical power, he went straight by us and back again, being lifted up by the winds coming off the sea and up the cliff-face. I was mesmerised watching him move so effortlessly.

It reminded me of how eagles soar on thermal currents. Without flapping, but just stretching out their wings, they are lifted up. There's a verse in the Bible that refers to this. In Isaiah 40:31 we read "*Those who wait on the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.*"

Like an eagle with its wings outstretched, when we stretch out our hands to God metaphorically in prayer, in the name of Jesus, looking to Him for guidance and support, He will lift us up.

In this new year, may we be lifted up as we look to the Lord and pray to Him.

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Kalamunda cyclist crowned national champion

Mackenzie Coupland alongside teammate Ruby Roseman-Gannon (left) and Canyon-SRAM cyclist Neve Bradbury (right). Picture AusCycling

KALAMUNDA cyclist Mackenzie Coupland has officially become the second 20-year-old rookie to claim the Australian road cycling championship.

She secured the title during her debut race as a WorldTour rider at the AusCycling Road National Championships held at Kings Park last Sunday.

Representing the professional women's team Liv AlUla Jayco, the Kalamunda cyclist completed the 109km course in just under three hours.

During the final lap of the eight-circuit race, she broke away from the main group and overtook fellow Liv AlUla Jayco cyclist Josie Talbot, who had led the early breakaway.

Ms Coupland admitted she was initially hesitant to leave her teammate behind before making the decisive move to forge ahead for the solo win.

"I was very hesitant when I caught Josie and she told me to go, but it wasn't until I saw one of our staff on the side of the road about 500 metres after that they told me to go," she said.

Maintaining her composure, the Kalamunda cyclist managed to fend off a determined chase from a group of three, Neve Bradbury from Canyon-SRAM, Katelyn Nicholson from Butterfields Ziptrack, and teammate Ruby Roseman-Gannon.

"The team definitely had a lot of pressure, (but we) had a lot of confidence in each other… that really helped my confidence," Ms Coupland said.

She also drew strength from the local crowd, stating she felt a wave of support from friends, family, and community members along the route.

"I think I heard my name on almost every corner, so I definitely felt a lot of support out there," she said.

By winning the elite women's category, Ms Coupland also managed to win the U-23 category, marking a double win for the young athlete.

Ms Coupland will now wear the prestigious green-and-gold bands of the Australian champion for the remainder of the 2026 season, including the Tour Down Under, and the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race.

"Honestly, it's the biggest privilege ever, there are no words to really describe it," she said.

"It's such as huge achievement and I'm proud to just bring it to Liv AlUla Jayco."

Midland Guildford juniors shine at recent game

JOSHUA MCKENZIE

IN the first matches for Midland Guildford Cricket Club in 2026, the female sides and junior teams were the focus of the action this weekend.

The female A grade struggled to post a competitive total against Subiaco Floreat as they were bowled out for 110 after 36.5 overs.

Georgie Manek took 4-22 from ten overs in the bowling innings as their opposition chased the target with four wickets remaining.

In the female B grade match against Subiaco Floreat, they were able to dismiss their opposition for 194 in 38.3 overs.

Zoe Tickner took 4-56 from eight overs, but the target proved difficult to chase down as they were bowled out for 70 in a 124-run defeat.

The male U17 were beaten by 19 runs in their T20 match against Wanneroo, while the Male Under 15s won by 20 runs against the same opponents.

Parker Byfield top scored with 55 runs not out from 57 balls in the win.

It was a dominant nine wicket victory for the female U17 in their T20 match against Rockingham Mandurah.

Their opponents posted a target of 111 for victory with Kaitlyn Magistro, 2-2, Amani Sharma, 2-20, and Georgia Baker, 2-31, being the key contributors in the bowling innings.

Magistro, with 63 not out from 60, and Baker, with 37 not out from 56, both played important roles in the run chase, sharing a 101-run partnership as the side won by nine wickets.

The female U14 played against South Perth and posted 7-101 after being asked to bat first by their opposition.

Their opponents managed to chase down the score with four wickets remaining and three overs to spare.

An exciting weekend of matches coming up with most teams in action, including the senior male sides completing their two-day matches against Wanneroo.

Midland Guildford Cricket Club's junior and female teams took center stage this weekend, with the female U17 securing a dominant nine-wicket victory over Rockingham Mandurah.

ECHO Local Real Estate

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Homes for sale in Perth plunge to record lows

HOMES for sale across Perth fell to a record low of 1881 at the end of December, according to REIWA.

This was 35.5 per cent lower than November and 57.2 per cent lower than December 2024.

REIWA President Suzanne Brown said the decline was to be expected, but the seasonal drop was compounded by ongoing strong demand and an extended period of lower-than-usual new listings.

"Historically, active listings decrease in December," she said.

"At this time of year, the number of new listings slows (as) people are busy with the festive season, or go away, and put their plans to sell on hold and active listings decline as a result.

"However, new listings have been significantly below long-term averages in the last six months.

"New listings in winter were 11.5 per cent below the 10-year average, with new listings in spring 15 per cent below the 10-year average.

Ms Brown said comparatively, demand remained extremely high and FOMO returned to the market as members reported strong competition for homes, offers well over the asking price in many cases, and homes selling in record timeframes.

"The significant imbalance between demand and supply saw active listings fall dramatically in December," she said.

"People want to sell, but with the speed of sales and relatively low availability of homes, they are concerned about finding somewhere to live.

"They don't want to be rushed into buying a new home, and it still remains challenging to find a short-term rental, especially if you need to remain in a certain area for work or schooling reasons."

Ms Brown said new and active listings traditionally increased in January.

"However, due to the current constraints in the market, we may not see as much of an increase as we have in previous years," she said.

Perth's median house sale price continued to grow and reached a peak in December.

According to REIWA data, the suburbs that saw the most median house sale price growth in December included Lesmurdie and Swan View.

Lesmurdie was up 4.3 per cent to $1,085,000 and Swan View was up 3.2 per cent to $735,000.

Homes in Perth have reached a record low in sales as the strong demand and lower than usual listings cause seller's to hesitate in listing their homes for sale.

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