

MAY 2024 #6

A WORD WITH WALSHY

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Rene Martens



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WILL MITIAMO BE THE NEXT EL DORADO?

I was out Mitiamo way recently to check out some of the extensive test drilling being done by gold miners. And on the way back dropped into the Mitiamo Store when I bumped into owner Jill Ramskill. She runs her famously eclectic business in the heart of the little town, and she has turned that into a little nugget as well, with people coming from far and wide to sample her wares. Meanwhile, back on the gold fields, the drilling is certainly showing a lot of promise, with viable quantities at multiple sites.

So Jill and her store - along with the rest of the town - will be looking for a new golden era. Good luck to them all.



Thanks to photographer Rene Martens for the image (www.rensmartphotography.com) who covers a fair slice of Victoria's back blocks in his daily travels.



FROM THE FRONT PAGE ...

If you think things have been a little frosty on recent mornings, count your blessings you are not in the paddock with these horses.

Our lows across my electorate are starting to nudge towards 0C - and may have already got there in one or two places - so winter really is here with us.

KOKODA TREK GETTING SERIOUS NOW



Conquering the Kokoda Trail is fast becoming a reality for the five students from my electorate who will be travelling to Papua-New Guinea at the end of June as part of the Colin Sinclair Scholarship.

All five recipients are part of a program I launched this year following my trip to Kokoda last year.

When they arrive in PNG they will join 15 other regional Victorian students from similar programs being run by The Nationals in other electorates.

Recently the five Colin Sinclair recipients met at Moama RSL Club for their formal briefing about the gear they will need to take with them, their medical requirements and – most demanding of all – their training.

East Gippsland Nationals MP Tim Bull, who is a veteran of three walks with students, and will be one of the tour leaders this year, ran the briefing session, taking them through his own experiences and also providing them with the back story behind the program.

We were also able to use the night for a little recruiting of our own – Luke O'Toole, father of Swan Hill student Billy – will be going as well, making him the second father to enlist, following Rochester's Oakley Tarrant, whose father Patrick signed up weeks ago.



At the Kokoda briefing were, back: Tim Bull, Layne Trevena, Billy O'Toole, Oakley Tarrant & Peter. Front: Cora Wilson and Matilda Sowter.

FUNDRAISER TO GET YOUR TEETH INTO



Echuca Regional Health, which serves more than half the people in my electorate - and quite a few from NSW - held one of its major annual fundraisers in May.

This year it was called Celebrating Culinary Careers and it brought in chefs such as Adriano Zumbo, Adrian Richardson, Glenn Austin and John Sloane.

Glenn is an Echuca born and bred chef and now an Asian based global hospitality consultant, Adriano Zumbo is a TV cooking host and pâtissier, John Sloane hails from Singapore's Marina Bay Sands and Adrian Richardson is a well-known television presenter, chef and author.

Kagome was the principal supporter of the night, and it was good to catch up with its CEO Jason Fritsch (pictured below) - he and his company are huge local employers and supporters.

The food was fantastic and best of all, the evening cleared a whopping \$180,000 for the ERH Mental health and Wellbeing programs.

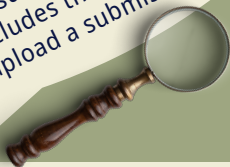
Congratulations to all involved & and what a great community success! My wife Liz & I had a fabulous evening.



Victoria HAVE YOUR SAY on water recovery ...

This is another chance to have your say on how water recovery is taking place across the Murray Darling Basin. The Federal Labor Government made changes to the Basin Plan in 2023, passing powers to allow water buy backs and amending the socio-economic protections for Basin Communities.

You are invited to provide feedback by completing the survey. The survey includes the option to upload a submission.



Have your say:
**Planning
our Basin
future together**



<https://engage.vic.gov.au/planning-our-basin-future-together>

VOLUNTEERS

Nominations for the 2024 Volunteering Awards are now open!

Victorian volunteers generously give their time and skills to support people, communities and causes across the state – the Volunteering Awards celebrates their contributions.

For more information and to submit nominations visit <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/events/awards> Nominations close on the 22nd July.

 **volunteering
VICTORIA**

2024

Volunteering Awards

Nominations open!

[volunteeringvictoria.org.au](https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au)

 **VICTORIA**
State
Government

GETTING INTO GEAR FOR

Harness Racing

The harness racing industry in my electorate is facing a tough future so Shadow Racing Minister, Tim Bull, and I have met with the Echuca Harness Racing Club president, Shane Gloury, and Swan Hill Trotting Club vice-president Gerry Moloney to discuss at length the well-documented challenges facing them.

I see the key to that discussion is the importance – and proud history – of harness racing in regional economies. I think while most people would agree there does need to be some reform and change to put the industry in a more secure, long-term position, a slash and burn strategy is not the answer.

There has been financial mismanagement of the highest order at Harness Racing Victoria. HRV has had combined losses of \$10.8 million in 2022 and 2023 and is facing another huge loss in 2024.

We have already made representations and advocated for our local clubs to be given the strongest possible calendars – with long-term guarantees so their industry can make plans for future investment and growth.

Grassroots clubs such as Echuca and Swan Hill have been told by HRV to expect a significant cut in the number of meetings they are allocated in the upcoming 2024/25 season and that needs to be carefully monitored.



Peter Walsh, Shane Gloury, Tim Bull and Gerry Moloney at their meeting to discuss the future of regional harness racing.

LABORNOMICS . . .



Fred and Jack saw an ad in the newspaper and bought a donkey for \$100 as a new source of on-farm power.

The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day.

The next morning the farmer drove up and said: "Sorry, fellers, I have some bad news, the donkey died last night."

Fred and Jack replied: "Well, then just give us our money back".

"The farmer said: "Can't do that. I went and spent it already".

They said: "OK then, just bring us the dead donkey."

The farmer asked: "What in the world ya'll gonna do with a dead donkey?"

Fred said: "We're gonna raffle him off.

"The farmer said, "You can't raffle off a dead donkey!"

Jack said: "We sure can! Heck, we don't hafta tell nobody he's dead!"

A couple of weeks later, the farmer ran into Fred and Jack at the saleyards and asked: "What'd you fellers ever do with that dead donkey?"

They said: "We raffled him off like we said we wuz gonna do".

Jack said: "Shucks, we sold 500 tickets for \$2 apiece and made a profit of \$898".

"My Lord," the farmer said. "Didn't anyone complain?"

Fred said, "Well, the fella who won got upset. So we gave him his \$2 back."

Fred and Jack now work for the Allan Labor government organising funding for a sustainable renewables program.



Any clean items to donate can be left at
EchUCA Neighborhood House 261 High St.



ECHUCA MOAMA COMMUNITY
**COAT &
BLANKET
DRIVE**

**Do you NEED a coat, blanket,
doona, beanie or scarf?**

Clean Winter warmth has been donated by
your community so we invite you come to
St Mary's Parish Hall and collect some free winter
items to help you through the coming months.

Collection days: St Mary's Parish Hall (next to Aldi)
Thursdays JUNE 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th | 10am—2pm

FREE COFFEE STATION



**FREE
EVENT**

**MIND COLD PLUNGE
FUNDRAISER 2024**

SUNDAY JUNE 16

9AM - 12:00PM

TINDARRA RESORT - 79 PERRICOOTA RD, MOAMA

BREAKFAST ROLLS & COFFEE | LIVE MUSIC BY DREW WALKER | YOGA & MEDITATION
PRIZES TO BE WON ON THE DAY. BEANIES & RAFFLE TICKETS FOR PURCHASE

JUNE Fri 7 Sat 8 & Sun 9

<https://country.racing.com/swan-hill/carnival>

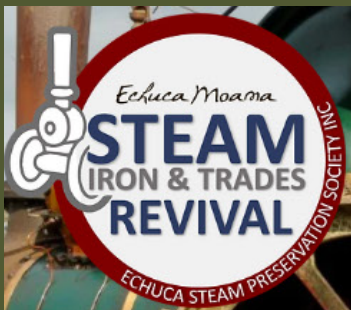
IT'S **OUR** COUNTRY RACING



Swan Hill June Racing Carnival

Friday 7th, Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th June

Gates Open at 11:00am



 **JUNE 8-9**

Sat: 10am - 7pm

Sun: 9am - 3pm

 Rotary Park, Echuca

 Tickets available online or from the gate.

steamrevival.org.au

TICKETS NOW ON SALE

LIGHT SHOW EXPERIENCE

RIVER LIGHTS

28 JUNE - 7 JULY

 Swan Hill