

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2024 #2

# A WORD

## WITH WALSHY

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*Rochester Floods Jan 2024*

- Rochester Floods
- Swan Hill College dux
- Gaelle Broad MP - office opening Bendigo
- Kokoda "Sinclair Scholarship"
- Gunbower Harness Racing Club 100th Anniversary
- Save Our Bacon campaign

# BRAVE FACE OF THE INDOMINABLE ROCHESTER

You can imagine what was going through the minds of every Rochester resident when the rain kept falling and the waters started rising – again.

Technically, the besieged community was able to dodge a bullet, there was no repeat of 2022 or 2011.

But the psychological damage was very real, the trauma of a possible third flood more than stirred up memories too many people are still trying to forget.

During the January high tide I was in Rochester talking to locals and meeting with key groups, including the SES and Rochester Business Network, and repeatedly heard of a cautious local confidence however, with more rain events forecast at the time it was obvious there would be few good nights of sleep for some time.



Above - Rochester Business Network president Tracie Kyne is still living in her backyard shed after the 2022 floods.



Right - Opposition leader John Pesutto (right) and Rochester community member Leigh Wilson (middle).

Right - Local SES coordinator Judith Cledhill at the height of the floods.



## CONFIDENCE IS STILL THE CASUALTY

Confidence, clearly, remains the ongoing casualty in Rochester as the town continues to battle with its physical, financial and mental recovery from flooding.

At a meeting with Opposition leader John Pesutto, Campaspe Shire, Rochester and Elmore District Health Service, Rochester Community House and community groups the message from every corner was the same, over and over.

Managing the overall mental health and wellbeing of Rochester – of the people still living in the town and of the many yet to come home.

The urgent response to providing the right support and services is, according to almost everyone there, fractured at best and ineffective at worst. This is something I will continue campaigning hard to improve as Parliament resumes next week.

## ZOE WRITES HER OWN PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

The end of every academic year has always been a highlight for me – the chance to go around the schools and meet as many of the graduating classes as possible and to congratulate the most outstanding achievers at each college or high school.

But the 2023 year stretched into the New Year for the first time in some time when I was unable to catch up with Swan Hill College dux Zoe Steicke. I should not have worried, as she soon turned up again, this time as a recipient of the Jodie Sharam Knox Memorial Tertiary Scholarship, one of many fantastic academic opportunities offered by the Freemasons Foundation Victoria which will be helping offset the costs of her medical degree at Charles Sturt University in Orange.

Congratulations to Zoe on a remarkable journey through school and I wish her every success for her university years and beyond



## GAELE BROAD 'OFFICIALLY' OPEN FOR BUSINESS

After a wait of more than a year, Gaelle Broad, Nationals' Upper House Member for Northern Victoria, finally has her new electorate office in Bendigo and a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday afternoon made it all official. Her state of the art office at 30 Queen St has become the Parliament of Victoria blueprint for electoral offices and provides her and her team with a fantastic base to service the people of her seat, which stretches from the South Australian border to the High Country of eastern Victoria and down to the northern fringe of Melbourne. It's a big electorate, with a big responsibility, and although in her first term as an MP, and as one of the seat's five members, Gaelle is already making her mark as a powerful and passionate representative of her constituents.

Senator Bridget McKenzie &  
Member for Nth Vic Gaelle Broad

# CALLING ON YEAR 11 STUDENTS TO CONQUER THE KOKODA

I am genuinely pumped to announce the launch of the Sinclair Scholarship, a local program to send a group of Year 11 students to Papua New Guinea to trek the Kokoda Trail. We are starting with a small trial this year, with a group of probably five students who will be given fully sponsored tickets to Port Moresby (by plane) and then the Kokoda (by foot) on what will be one of the adventures of their lives. Having made this walk last year, in the company of a large group of Year 11s from Gippsland, I was determined to offer the same experience to students here, which I believe will be achieved with the support of RSLs and fantastic sponsors.

Crossing of a valley stream with help from the porters



His cousin Ronald Sinclair had moved from Moama to Rushworth before enlisting. Although he transferred out of the 39th before Kokoda, he was in New Guinea when the battle started, having been transferred to the New Guinea Force Training Centre which handled reinforcements from Australia, and returnees from hospital, who had been ill or wounded.

Diggers at Kokoda during the height of the battle



Aus troops with a light mountain artillery piece during the Kokoda campaign.



The application forms are going out to participating schools this week and I look forward to introducing the successful students to the Murray Plains community. The scholarship is dedicated to the memory of Colin Sinclair (grave site picture above) a private from Rochester who fought in the 39th Battalion and who died, aged 28, of wounds on December 19, 1942, following the battle of the beachheads.



## DONT BE A DORK, BACK OUR PORK

I am delighted to be a co-sponsor of the 2024 [saveourbacon.com.au](https://www.saveourbacon.com.au) Gunbower Centenary Trotters Cup which has now become a showcase supporter of northern Victoria's besieged pork industry.

This year's cup will be run on Sunday February 18th as part of the 100 year celebrations of the Gunbower Harness Racing Club.

I agreed to put in money to keep the cup running provided it could be used to support the region's pig producers, who are now facing a Victorian government inquiry into their very future.

Labor's inquiry is a ham-fisted probe into pig welfare in Victoria and I am doing everything I can to stand against this attack on an industry backed by peer-reviewed, global scientific research into animal welfare.

Premier Jacinta Allan is now coming after your ham, an industry worth almost \$500 million to the Victorian economy – and supporting almost 2700 fulltime jobs.

And many of those ethical, quality pork producers are based in this part of the state, injecting significant money into the local economy.

If, for example, the Allan government bans pork production in Victoria, the gap will be filled by interstate producers, or global competitors, such as Denmark.

This is a cruel cloud over the pork industry, so I am glad such an important annual fixture as the Gunbower Pacing Cup is happy to support many small local farm businesses.



SUN. 18 FEB | FREE ENTRY

# 100 YEARS

OF GUNBOWER HARNESS RACING CLUB

- KIDS WATER SLIDE • FACE PAINTING • PUNTERS CLUB • TOTE
- BOOKMAKER • LIVE MUSIC AFTER LAST RACE • GREAT RAFFLES

HISTORY BOOK LAUNCH AT 12 NOON



TRACKSIDE MARQUEE PACKAGE WITH  
ALL INCLUSIVE DRINK PACKAGES.  
BOOK VIA THE QR CODE.

GUNBOWER  
HARNESS RACING CLUB



[HTTPS://WWW.SAVEOURBACON.COM.AU](https://www.saveourbacon.com.au)

# PRO RODEO

Friday 23rd February 2024

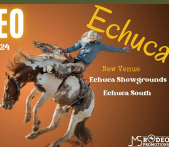
## TICKETS

[www.m3rodeo.com.au](http://www.m3rodeo.com.au)

EARLY BIRD TICKETS:

ON SALE

OCTOBER 20TH



New Venue

Echuca Showgrounds

Echuca South

M3 RODEO  
PRODUCTION

## 2nd Annual Pyramid Hill Art Competition and Sales



## A Major's Vision

16th-22nd February 2024

Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall - Kelly Street

### \$4500 IN PRIZES

Open and Junior Sections

Guest judge: Terry Jarvis



SWAN HILL TOWN HALL

## Twilight ARTS MARKET

ART - FOOD - MUSIC

Saturday, 24 February

4pm to 7pm

Swan Hill Town Hall

All ages

FREE!

FEB 9th - 11th

Echuca Moama

[www.southern80.com.au](http://www.southern80.com.au)

## Southern 80



Kerang

Sat 10th FEB

Atkinson Park



FREE Gate  
ADMISSION

'Great Northern Show'

## ROCHESTER

23rd & 24th February 2024

@ Rochester Recreation Reserve



*TOOLEYBUC SPORTING CLUB*  
*proudly presents*

**THE MURRAY  
MUSTER**

TUESDAY 5TH, WEDNESDAY 6TH, THURSDAY 7TH  
MARCH 2024

11AM - 10PM EACH DAY

\$25 per person per day *OR* \$60 for three day pass

TICKET SALES AT DOOR UPON ENTRY - CASH ONLY

Enquiries: Col Thomson  
0407 798 979

