

# TOONGABBIE NEWS

ISSUE 24

SPRING 2025



*A very large crowd of men, women and children at the Toongabbie West picnic, held on 24th May 1893. They are in a cleared area surrounded by tall trees and bush.*

Article credit: The Cowan Family Toongabbie By Vera O'Mara – July 1983

Source: Traralgon History Facebook Page, Posted by Heather Lang 2023

## Cowan Family - Toongabbie

A very large crowd of men, women and children at the Toongabbie West picnic, held on 24th May 1893. They are in a cleared area surrounded by tall trees and bush.

John Duncan Cowan was born in Brooklyn, Massachusetts, U.S.A., in about December 1833. He migrated to Australia in about 1852 or 1853 and married Ann Jane Clarke. In company with his wife's parents, he set out from Sale for the gold mines at Walhalla.

They travelled by cart and, having passed through Rosedale and on to where the present township of Toongabbie stands, they decided to abandon the idea of going to Walhalla as they kept hearing from passing travellers that the mining prospects were disappointing. As they had with them a good load of supplies, they decided to erect a small store and accommodation house, the first store in Toongabbie. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke soon returned to Sale but the Cowans stayed on to supply the needs of the many people travelling to the mines and to be the founders

of the township.

At first, the store consisted of a little canvas structure with a bush gunyah in front. Later, it was replaced, with a galvanized-iron building. In 1863, Ned Stringer, the discoverer of gold at Walhalla, stayed at Cowan's accommodation house while on his way to Sale to seek medical treatment. He died there and was buried by the roadside, close by.

The Cowans had six children - William John (born 1862), Hessey Marian (1864), Ellen Caroline (1867), Margaret Sarah (1869), Edwin Robert (1872) and Annie Elizabeth (1875).

In about the year 1865, Cobb & Co. commenced a coach service from Rosedale to Toongabbie. John Cowan became one of the first drivers of these coaches. In 1860, John Cowan was a member of the first Toongabbie School Committee. He died on August 26, 1876, at the age of 42 yrs. 8 months, and was buried in the Toongabbie cemetery. His wooden headstone was the first headstone erected in the Toongabbie cemetery;

it has been partly destroyed by fire but lettering, crudely chiselled by hand, can still be read. The wording is as follows:-

**Sacred to the memory of John D. Cowan who died August 26th 1876 aged 43 years**

Mrs. Cowan remained at Toongabbie and, a few years later in about 1879 or 1880, married Henry Freeman. They had four children, Henry, Florence, Clare and James. She lived in Toongabbie all her life and watched the township she had helped pioneer flourish to become an important centre. Then she saw it decline in population. She died on January 24, 1924, at the age of 83 years and is buried in the Toongabbie cemetery. Her second husband, Henry Freeman, is also buried there.

Margaret Sarah Cowan married William Bertram Gilbert at Toongabbie on December 10, 1890. They had a family of four boys and three girls. The eldest, William Bertrand, was accidentally drowned in the Latrobe River, on January 11, 1914, at the age of 23 years.

The Toongabbie News is produced by the Toongabbie Township Group who welcome news and photographs from community groups, clubs and individuals.

Please send text and photos as separate attachments by email to the Editor, Shazelle Witt E: [toongabbienews@gmail.com](mailto:toongabbienews@gmail.com)

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or Township Group. Although care is taken, no responsibility is assumed for any errors which may occur. Submissions may be subject to editing.

**THE SUMMER EDITION  
DEADLINE**  
For all contributions is  
**FRIDAY 17th October 2025**

Want to see more community news? Visit the websites below  
[www.toongabbie.vic.au](http://www.toongabbie.vic.au) or at  
[www.facebook.com/  
toongabbievicau](https://www.facebook.com/toongabbievicau)

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Toongabbie**

SUPPORTED BY:



The Toongabbie Township Group has been successful in acquiring a grant through the Latrobe City Council Quick Response program to continue publishing the Toongabbie News. We have received \$1,500 which will go towards the cost of publishing our quarterly newsletter for Summer 2024, Autumn 2025, Winter 2025 and Spring 2025. Printed copies of the newsletter are available free of charge from the Toongabbie General Store and Post Office with all editions uploaded to the Toongabbie website (<https://toongabbie.vic.au/newsletter/>).

We would like to acknowledge the Latrobe City for their financial contribution and extend a huge thank-you to the volunteers that make this newsletter possible.

## Local Groups

### TOONGABBIE TOWNSHIP GROUP MEETING

First Tuesday of the Month 7.30pm  
Mechanics Hall Meeting Room All are Welcome  
email: [toongabbietg@gmail.com](mailto:toongabbietg@gmail.com)

### Toongabbie CFA Juniors

Every Second Thursday 6 - 7pm  
Contact Cassandra for more info

### Friends of Toongabbie Wetlands

Meet at 2pm the 2nd Tuesday of the month  
at the Mechanics Institute New Members Welcome



The Wellington - Latrobe Lions Club meet  
the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.  
The first Wednesday is a dinner meeting.  
New Members always welcome!



# Toongabbie & District Pony Club

## Toongabbie Pony Club Rider Gallops into Victorian Tetrathlon Team!

Toongabbie & District Pony Club are thrilled to announce that Flossy White a dedicated member of the Pony Club, has been selected to represent Victoria in the upcoming National Tetrathlon competition! This is a remarkable achievement that reflects Flossy's hard work, talent, and commitment to the sport.

Tetrathlon is a challenging multi-disciplinary event that combines running, swimming, shooting, and riding. Flossy has demonstrated exceptional skill and determination across all four disciplines, earning a well-deserved place on the Victorian team. Her selection is not only a personal triumph but also a proud moment for our entire pony club community.

We're incredibly proud of Flossy and wish her the best of luck as they prepare to compete at the national level. Her dedication and passion serve as an inspiration to all our members, and we'll be cheering her on every step of the way! Go Flossy!



Photo supplied: Flossy White to represent the Pony Club at the upcoming National Tetrathlon



## Toongabbie Pony Club's Stockman's Challenge a Roaring Success!

Toongabbie Pony Club recently hosted a Stockman's Challenge that drew competitors and spectators alike, marking a highlight in our community's equestrian calendar. The event showcased impressive horsemanship and the strong bonds between riders and their horses. Participants navigated a series of challenging courses designed to test their skills in obstacles, precision riding, showjumping.

The day was filled with thrilling displays of agility and control, as riders expertly guided their horses through obstacles that simulated real-life scenarios. The skill and determination on display were a testament to the countless hours of training and dedication poured in by all involved. Beyond the competition, the event had a sense of community spirit, with families and friends cheering on their favourite riders.

The success of the Stockman's Challenge wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of local businesses and volunteers. Their contributions ensured a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Toongabbie Pony Club extends heartfelt thanks to all who contributed, and we look forward to hosting another exciting event next year!





# Toongabbie Mechanics Institute

How time flies. Quite a few things have happened since my first contribution to the Newsletter, so it's well and truly time for an update. The Toongabbie Mechanics Institute has suffered a few calamities and as many victories in the past couple of years, of which just adds to the history of the previous 140 years. My small first victory was having the little driveway fixed up. It's no longer the muddy bumpy track to Cowen St entrance. The Latrobe City scraped and dropped some new gravel in there, much to my delight and those who use it are most grateful. These little deeds made such a difference.

Then, as many of you know, the chimney came down in one of the huge storms we had back in September last year. Why it didn't go through the roof, I don't know, and how the bricks that did come down, didn't ruin the fence or cause any other damage or injury is also miraculous. Many thanks to Mark Woods for his collaboration and liaising with Latrobe City in the hasty rectification work. I have to admit I was at a loss of what to do. Thank you Mark.

Mid last year we were successful in gaining a Minor Works Community Grant from the Latrobe City to replace all the weatherboards on the toilet block. Over the years they had deteriorated badly and only the paint was holding them up. A big thank you to Ted Mackay, Roger Ries and his paint brush, and a couple of volunteers who worked furiously in the heat to achieve a fabulous outcome, it's looks a treat and will stand the weather for years to come. The programs run by Latrobe City Council are so important to our communities.

I can't forget to mention the installation and dedication of the Toongabbie Cenotaph beside the Hall. A wonderful achievement by Scott Mitchell and the Township Group. Well done.

A joint project funded by the Toongabbie Township Group, and made by the Toongabbie Mens Shed has seen the tree guards around the Hall replaced with new ones. They look fantastic, well done by all



Image Supplied: Recent damage and works completed

involved. They make such a noticeable difference.

Our heating/cooling system decided to go on the fritz, a major cost to our budget, but a kind and substantial donation from the Wellington-Latrobe Lions Club has been extremely timely. So rest assured you will be comfortable for your event at the Hall. Thank you so much Wellington-Latrobe Lions Club. A quick thank you to Brenton for an emergency plumbing repair.

In between these happenings, we have still managed to function without too much disruption. The Old Time Dance continues, as does the Lions Seniors Dinner, the Paranormal Files, along with the birthdays, life celebrations and all of the other events we have hosted over the last year.

A last word, we invite anyone with some spare time to join our committee or volunteer, help is always welcomed, from making a cup of tea to coming up with big ideas. And please support the towns community groups that support us.

I can always be reached for bookings and enquiries on 0419874958 (preferred) or [toongabbie.mechanics.institute@gmail.com](mailto:toongabbie.mechanics.institute@gmail.com)

- Tracy



Image Supplied: Car park before upgrade.



# Toongabbie Golf Club



## **Spring has sprung and as the warmer weather returns, our local course should be looking good.**

We've had our share of problems over the last few months as our greens mowers and the tractor that mowed the fairways all died and had to be replaced. On the downside, this has placed our finances under strain and we have had to borrow to purchase the new tractor. But the silver lining is that our new greens mower does a much better job than the old one and our long suffering volunteers won't be spending endless hours just trying to keep the old machines running.

Just keeping everything running and maintaining the course is an expensive business, even for a 100% volunteer run club like ours. But the very noticeable improvement in the greens seems to have attracted quite a few more green fee players which is very pleasing and helps greatly in paying off the loan. So many people have commented on the quality of our town's course and how much it has improved over the last few years. It is becoming a community asset of which we can all be justifiably proud.

And we're not looking to rest on our laurels. We are hoping to reconfigure and resurface the 3rd green around December. This will be the 7th or 8th green to be replaced over the last 10 years or so. Once again, it is the increasing number of people playing

the course that is making it financially possible for us to keep the improvements coming.

Our membership year has just kicked off and so, if you have been thinking of joining, this is a great time to get involved. Over the coming months we will be hosting a number of our major annual events which are always good fun to be a part of, and anyone who is a member and has an official golf handicap can join in. It only takes three rounds to get a handicap and we will do all the work to get it happening for you.

We have had a few new members join over the last couple of months and they are really enjoying taking part in our weekly competitions and social events. Any trepidations they might have felt about joining were quickly overcome when they experienced the friendly and supportive environment of our club.

Our membership and green fee prices are still far and away the lowest in the area and we want to keep them that way to encourage our locals and others to get involved and enjoy the healthy recreation and social connection that playing golf provides. And remember that unlike at the major clubs in the region, you can play at Toongabbie virtually whenever you want.

**For more information call 5192 4755 or  
email [tgc3856@gmail.com](mailto:tgc3856@gmail.com).**



# *New Members Needed!*

**The Wellington/Latrobe Lions need your help!  
VOLUNTEERS DESPERATELY NEEDED!**



**Can you spare a bit  
of time to make a  
difference in your  
community?**



Visit our website



**Contact Colin Gardner on 0427 489 349**



# Lions Club of Wellington/Latrobe inc News

It may be Winter, but we Lions have not been hibernating! In May, the 73rd MD 201 Convention was hosted by local Clubs in Traralgon running from 2nd - 5th May, with Lions from all around Australia attending. This was a major event that showcased Lions and the projects that they run to benefit communities and causes all around the country- projects like Need for Feed, Ride for Sight, Lions Hearing Dogs, Tree Planting/Greening Australia, Research for a cure for Childhood Cancer and many more. This event brought many people into Traralgon boosting tourism and hospitality for the whole valley and was very successful.

On a more local front, members of our club joined with a few other clubs conducting Children's Vision Screening at some of the primary schools in the Traralgon, Moe & Morwell. This screening detects vision defects in children that can affect their learning at school - tests consist of vision chart, colour, 3D depth perception and a camera that picks up abnormalities in the iris - any problems are then referred to an optometrist. We are still providing the Breakfast Club service at the Toongabbie Primary School every Thursday, where the children can come in have breakfast and also sit down and chat (very loudly) with their friends - both of these projects are very enjoyable and rewarding for us as well as being beneficial to the children.

Our lions Club has just purchased 12 new roses for the Toongabbie Rose Garden that we try to maintain. Hopefully they and the rest of the old roses will put on a beautiful show with a bit of love and care and a lot of water as spring and summer approach.

You will still find us at the Glengarry Market each month with our sausages and bacon/eggs - even when it is freezing! This is our main source of income and enables us to donate to local organisations like the school, scouts, Mechanics Institute, hospital, Need for Feed, BlazeAid, many Lions projects and any disasters in the state, country & the world - plus more! Every



LIONS CLUB OF WELLINGTON/LATROBE  
THE NEW BOARD FOR THE 2025/26 LIONS YEAR.



Community Helper (and lover of chocolates)  
TRACY WHITE being presented with the "JOHN BURTON" award

time you buy a sausage, you are helping us help someone, somewhere!

We could not do any of these services without the help of some very valued community helpers - you know who you are - THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

The club also had its annual changeover during the July Dinner meeting. The formalities were conducted by Zone Chairman Bill Lack from Heyfield.

There were few if any changes, with lion Margaret Foulds continuing on as President, lions Peter Feenstra as 1st Vice President and Secretary, Lion Joy McLoughlin as our trusty Treasurer and Lion Colin Gardner once again as our membership Chairperson.

Other than that, just about every club member has been given some sort of job to do.

One of the highlights of the changeover dinner was the awarding of the very prestigious "JOHN BURTON" award. This time this award was given to a great community helper, Tracy White!

This award was instigated after the passing of our much-loved member Lion John Burton.

Lion John was the driving force behind our BBQ trailer; John was a tireless Lion and getting the Annual John Burton award is a real Honor.



# Toongabbie & District Men's Shed News

The Toongabbie & District Men's Shed members attended a CPR and defibrillator refresher course at the Shed, thanks to Ambulance Victoria supplying two members who demonstrated the revised and simpler CPR method, as well as a refresher on the use of the defibrillator. Ambulance Victoria is also promoting the GoodSAM app in country areas across Victoria. It alerts trained first aiders and off duty medics when someone is in cardiac arrest nearby, so that CPR and defibrillation can be started until paramedics arrive. Every minute counts to the survival of a cardiac arrest. The GoodSam Responder app can be downloaded on your smartphone or find out more at [ambulance.vic.gov.au/goodsam](https://ambulance.vic.gov.au/goodsam).

Thanks to the Toongabbie Township Group for giving the Men's Shed members the opportunity to construct and install four new tree guards, as well as refurbish two existing guards at the Toongabbie Mechanics Institute Hall. The project was a great outcome for the members and the community. Thanks to member, Stephen Bailey for doing a great job of managing the project.

A well-attended "Christmas in July" social event was held at the Shed, with a delicious hot meal of turkey, pork, beef and vegetables, followed by Christmas pudding, cheese cake and apple pie, all enjoyed by members, partners and their families in a Christmas like atmosphere. Thanks to Margaret and all the members who worked to make it a great night. Graeme Clark and Tracey White entertained everybody after the meal with some great music. Graeme also displayed his collection of electric guitars that he has made, some of which he has



Image Supplied: Guitars made by Graeme

shaped at the Men's Shed.

Through a successful application for a Latrobe City 2024/25 Quick Response Grant and funding by the Men's Shed members, a Precision Drill Sharpener was purchased. It will enable the sharpening of drill bits, thus extend their life and not have to replace them as quickly. This will be a cost saving, as well as making work safer and easier with using a sharp drill bit.

The Toongabbie & District Men's Shed executive and members would like to acknowledge the support of the Latrobe City Council through their grant funding that allows small community organisations to achieve their goals much sooner, which then enables them to prosper and contribute to building better, healthier communities.

Our great vegetable gardeners, Terry, Alby and Colin have been growing some great winter vegetables, with some beautiful broccoli picked recently for all to enjoy. With spring and the warmer weather, the garden will soon be full of fresh vegetables again, thanks to their gardening skills.

**New members, male and female are always welcome, drop in, have a chat and see what there is to offer. Membership is \$60.00 per year.**

**The opening times of the Shed are every Wednesday 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm, Friday 2.00 pm till required and any other time by arrangement.**

**For more information, please contact Mark on 0407 924 700.**



Image Supplied: Tracey and Graeme



At Toongabbie Primary School we endeavour to support students' academic and social learning with opportunities to lead or be involved in extra curricula activities. This includes incursions like science and music performances, excursions that support classroom learning, camps and various sporting activities. These bring real life understanding to the children's application of learning. Some of these activities are outlined below.

Our student leadership team put the **"Do It For Dolly Day"** together. They approached several members of our school community to assist. They also made most of the items for sale at the market stalls. The colour run was a big hit with children enjoying it immensely. At the end of the day they raised over \$3000 dollars to go towards supporting the work of Dolly's Dream.



**ANZAC Day** is another occasion that the children have the opportunity to represent the school in. Being able to march and show gratitude for those who have given their lives for us. The children lay wreaths at both the Toongabbie Dawn service and the Glengarry Cenotaph.



**Incursions** that broaden student's knowledge and understanding of other cultures is a must in our small community. Acceptance of diversity and the colour that brings to our lives enhances student inclusion of others.



**Grandparent's Day** is one of the school community's most loved day. Our school is filled with Grandparents who come from far and wide to spend time with the children at school. Lots of fun and time spent with those they love.



**School Camps** are a wonderful opportunity for the children to develop team skills, to meet and get along with others and challenge themselves in a positive way to overcome challenges. Learning independence in caring for themselves and making connections with others before moving onto secondary school are a big part of our school camp program.





# Events



## TOONGABBIE CFA



**Toongabbie CFA Juniors 2025**  
Time: 6 -7pm

**Term 1**  
Feb 6, Feb 20  
Mar 6, Mar 20  
April 3

**Term 2**  
May 1, May 15, May 29  
Jun 12, Jun 26

**Term 3**  
No Juniors

**Term 4**  
Oct 16, Oct 30  
Nov 13, Nov 27  
Dec 11



**Must be aged over 11 and under 16 years to join the program.**

**FOR MORE INFO CONTACT CASSANDRA**  
0411 422 173 cassandra.tolsma@members.cfa.vic.gov.au

## SCHOOL WORKING BEE



Please come along and help freshen up our School. Some jobs include Painting, Weeding, Mulching, Raking to name a few




**13 SEPTEMBER 2025**  
AT 9 AM - 3 PM

**BBQ LUNCH PROVIDED**



**WEATHER PERMITTING**



Bring along the kids, wheelbarrows, gloves and any of your favourite tools.

Even if it's an hour of your time, that would be greatly appreciated



## SCHOOL READY? JOEY SCOUT READY!

GLENGARRY JOEY SCOUTS ARE INVITING ALL 5 YEAR OLDS WHO ARE STARTING SCHOOL IN 2024 TO HAVE FREE 3 WEEK TRIAL.  
TUESDAY 5:30pm to 6:30pm



Adventure Personal Growth Friendship

Joey Scouts helps build essential skills, but not just in the outdoors, we build leadership, independence and community.

[Bin75@email.com](mailto:Bin75@email.com)

**Want to know what we have to offer here in Toongabbie?**

Check out the Toongabbie website, community run for the community, you'll find local community groups, history on the area, events and news and of course all past and present newsletter editions.

<https://toongabbie.vic.au> or scan the QR code.



## Toongabbie Men's Shed

The opening times of the Shed are every Wednesday 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm, Friday 2.00 pm till required.

Any other time by arrangement.

For more information please contact Colin on 0427 489 349.





# Stop wondering if you could. Start knowing you can.

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Ph. 03 5134 5971

**BERRY  
STREET**

**St. David's Toongabbie**  
Services held every  
1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays  
11am Holy Communion

**Toongabbie Mechanics Institute**  
Committee Meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at 7.30pm  
at the Rec Reserve

# TOONGABBIE AND SURROUNDS 2026 COMMUNITY CALENDAR

\$15.00 ea



All proceeds from the sale  
of this calendar will go  
towards the following  
community group:



[tooncalendar@gmail.com](mailto:tooncalendar@gmail.com)