

THE FORREST POST

FEBRUARY 2026

FREE

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and waters around us, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We respect their cultural heritage and knowledge here in Forrest where the waters flow over Gadubanud and Gulidjan Country.

Leaving Home

As the sun set red through the smoke from the Carlisle River/Gellibrand fires on Monday 26 January, there was not a BBQ in sight as Forrest and surrounds prepared to evacuate.

For some this was the first time they had packed up precious possessions and pets and left their homes due to the threat of bushfire. For others it was something well practiced over the years on extreme weather days, following the advice from the CFA that due to the bushfire prone nature of the town and the likelihood of roads being cut, the best place to be on a bad weather day is not in Forrest. A few still chose to stay.

The modeling was clear, a gusty westerly change on Tuesday would bring the fires straight towards Forrest. Monday evening was eerily quiet, the town deserted in preparation, the winds calm before the storm. If you were in any doubt, the looming orange smoke plume over the ranges, a rain of burnt leaves and bark and the strong smell of smoke left nothing to the imagination. The Vic Emergency App was telling everyone in the area to evacuate NOW before it was too late to leave, residents received text messages on their phones and a knock on the door from the police convinced those who were still not sure, that leaving was the safest option.

Many kind offers of accommodation streamed in as people heard of the evacuations also affecting towns to the north, south and east of the fires. At the worst of times you can find the best in people. The Hillview Cattery in Birregurra opened their doors to accommodate displaced moggies and offers of food and essentials poured in for those evacuating to the showgrounds in Colac. Brigades were fed and watered by thankful locals and their volunteer efforts very much appreciated, alongside all those in the emergency services who spent many long hours on the fire front, at road blocks, in the Incident Control Centre and holding the fort and the hands of scared and exhausted people at the evacuation centres.



It is the first time Forrest has officially been evacuated and as the weather continues to heat up and become more unpredictable, it may not be the last. Summer is not over by a long shot. With fire still in the landscape, we must continue to remain vigilant.

While Forrest was not impacted this time thanks to the incredible efforts of fire fighters and some milder weather, some have lost everything in these fires and the environment is devastated in areas that were being carefully tended to encourage the return of rare and threatened Otways species. Even for those not directly impacted by the fires, the uncertainty of evacuation and fear for friends, family and environment can take its toll. Recovery is a long journey. Be kind to each other and seek help when needed.

Contact the council for information about services available.

www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/My-property/Fire-and-emergencies/Colac-Otway-Emergency-Events-January-2026/Colac-Otway-Fire-Event-Recovery

Gillian Brew

Greenland Trumps Forrest

Donald Trump has announced that the US will not be invading or buying Forrest, switching all their focus to Greenland.

A leaked CIA report has revealed that the town is constantly under threat from what the Americans call wildfires, while simultaneously seeing devastating floods in coastal areas nearby. Neither are a serious concern in Greenland, as it is largely covered in ice.

While US forces were able to easily overwhelm the Venezuelan President's 200 bodyguards, the CIA reported that an episode of 'Backroads' had shown images of what appeared to be genetically enhanced police forces, and alerted the Americans to apparently secret military forces under the command of a General Store, and someone the CIA took to be a naval



commander named 'The Marriner'. The presence in the town of elite local defence forces known as the CFA and the SES was also a concern.

The largest drug cartel in the area turned out to be the pharmacy in Colac. But perhaps the final straw was finding that Forrest not only has no reserves of oil, it doesn't even have a gas (petrol) station.

Initial concerns from the Commander-in Chief that Forrest might be of strategic interest to the Russians and Chinese were lessened after an aide turned the map he was referencing up the right way.

Rob Cargill

Colac Otway Shire News

Council launches development of new Economic Development Strategy



Colac Otway Shire Council is inviting businesses, industry groups and community members from across the Shire to help shape a new Economic Development Strategy that will guide the Shire's growth, resilience and prosperity over the next five years.

Identified as a key priority in Council's current four year Council Plan, the Economic Development Strategy will help support local jobs, attract new and emerging industries, and build strong, resilient communities, with funding for its development included in the 2025-26 budget.

Council has engaged Urban Enterprise, a consultancy recognised for its expertise in economic development, regional planning, and tourism, to support the Strategy's development.

Ian Seuren, General Manager of Economy and Creative Industries, said the project represents a pivotal opportunity to consider the Shire's economic future.

"We have a strong local economy based on key industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, retail and tourism; however, our economy is evolving. We're seeing shifts in industry, new opportunities in innovation and creative sectors, emerging workforce challenges and a changing tourism landscape."

"This Strategy will set a clear direction for how we grow, adapt and position the Colac Otway economy for long-term success."

Mr Seuren emphasised that engagement across the whole Shire is essential to ensuring the Strategy reflects local strengths, challenges and aspirations.

"We want to hear the full spectrum of voices - major employers, small businesses, emerging entrepreneurs, rural industries, creative practitioners and community members from every town and settlement," he said.

"Every perspective contributes to a stronger, more diverse and future-ready economy. Workshops will be held in Colac, Apollo Bay and Forrest from 2 to 4 February 2026, supported by a Shire-wide online survey open now."

"The Strategy will guide how we attract investment, strengthen existing industries, support business growth, leverage our visitor economies, and improve liveability across the Shire."

"This is a significant opportunity for our community to help set the direction of Colac Otway's economic future."

Workshop Schedule

MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY

Colac Session One: 10:00 to 11:30am

Location: COPACC (Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre)

TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY

Colac Session Two: 1:00 to 2:30pm

Location: COPACC

WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY

Apollo Bay Session Three: 10:00 to 11:30am

Location: Apollo Bay Bowls Club

WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY

Forrest Session Four: 2:30 to 4:00pm

Location: GrassTree Building - next to the Neighbourhood House at 47 Grant Street, Forrest




For more information or to complete the online survey, visit www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

Forrest & District - Have Your Say

The Forrest & District Community Group strongly encourages you, your friends and family to attend this event to help shape our economic future. Join us on Wednesday 4 Feb, 2:30-4pm at the Grasstree building (47 Grant St) for an interactive workshop with consultants for the Colac Otway Shire.

Share your ideas and help shape the economic future for Forrest & District. This workshop is an opportunity for you to express your vision to help our region thrive in the years ahead. The Mountain Bike Trails have transformed Forrest from timber to tourism—so what's next? Come along, bring a friend, and get creative as we work together to imagine a bright future. Let's dream big for our little towns.

If you cannot make it in person, complete the online survey www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

Colac Service Centre: 2- 6 Rae Street, Colac, Open: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5pm   
Ph: 5232 9400 Email: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au or find us online: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au

Shakespeare's Insult for February

This one has no specific application but seems universally applicable in a multiplicity of situations

"Scratching could not make it worse.....such a face as yours".

- *Much Ado About Nothing.*

Writers: Gillian Brew, Rob Cargill, Mary Dracup, Amelia Baker McBride, Adam Davies and Ian Fry.

Design: Gillian Brew **Printing:** Forrest Primary School

Proofreaders: Mike and Katrine Juleff, Rob Carghill, Amelia McBride Baker & Sarah Lane.

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See how it feels to be on your own, no direction home

Bob Dylan is a musical genius without doubt, but definitely is not God! The February Forrest Flick biopic *A Complete Unknown* (2025) gives us a chance to revel in his poetry and music, as well as his habit of crashing through fusty traditions, while we vicariously relive his rocketing rise to fame in the early 1960s. By the end of the picture you might not like him a lot, but you will have had a very entertaining evening. For me, the cracking tension in the scene when Dylan and Joan Baez hammer out 'It aint me babe' in front of a huge audience is sublime.

The elusive, mercurial Dylan has endorsed the film, and the performance of Timothee Chamalet who plays his character. It was named among the top 10 films of 2025 and nominated for numerous music, film and acting awards.

A Complete Unknown will be showing on Thursday 12 February at the Forrest Hall. Doors open at 7 pm with a free glass of wine and light supper. The film starts at 7:30, followed by tea/coffee, more supper and a chance to chat about the film with your neighbours. Subtitles will be shown.

Forrest Flicks Film Society 2026 subscriptions will be on sale at the door with cash, or online through Humanitix using the QR code in the picture. Subscription costs are:

- 6 films - \$45/\$35 concession
- 3 films - \$25/\$20 concession
- 1 film trial - donation of \$10/\$8 concession, or use this as a deposit on a 3/6 film subscription.

Mary Dracup



Thursday 12 February
 Forrest Public Hall
 7 pm for complimentary wine and light supper
 Movie starts 7:30 pm



6 film subscription \$45/\$35 conc. - 3 film subscription \$25/\$20 conc. - 1 film try it and see \$10/\$8 conc.



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Andrea Ivermee
 Director/Licensed Estate Agent



Stuart Nelson
 Auctioneer/Sales Specialist



Skie Maddern
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Jacinta Mahony
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Melinda Cass
 Reception



Kiahna McCoombe
 Administration



Geelong Cemeteries Trust's ANZAC flag tradition is coming to Yaughar Cemetery

Each year, we proudly honour the courage and sacrifice of Australia's service men and women within the Colac & Otway region by placing Australian flags at their final resting places. This meaningful tradition has continued annually since 2014, ensuring past service members are remembered with respect, gratitude and a strong sense of community.

This year, we are extending the initiative to Yaughar Cemetery. Families wishing to have a flag placed at this location are invited to contact community@gct.net.au to request a registration form. To take part in 2026, please submit your completed form by Friday 27 February 2026.

Through these acts of remembrance, the ANZAC spirit endures.

If you have any family interred or memorialised at Yaughar Cemetery who served in any branch of the Australian Defence Forces, for any length of time, at any point in their life, do let the Geelong Cemeteries Trust know. GCT will erect a flag to commemorate them over the ANZAC Day period this year, and in future years.

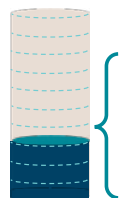
Amelia Baker McBride

CFA SW Comms team on fire

While in the thick of evacuations and emergency notifications the CFA South West comms team provide some serious messaging wrapped in a quirky cartoon style package. With characters like Phil the Dill Pickle, Silly Sausage Steve and Mandy the Drama Banana, the social media posts are loud and clear AND hilarious. When the chips are down it's good to have a laugh at the crazy situations that can happen. Turns out people (and food) can get up to the darnedest things - Thanks CFA SW for bringing the laughs, you are the best!

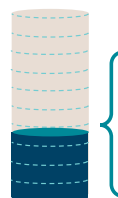


Barwon Water Updates



27%

West Barwon Reservoir



55%

Wurdee Boluc Reservoir



4ML

Current minimum daily passing flow at West Barwon

The Forrest Wastewater Project Barwon Water continues to plan for a sustainable long-term wastewater solution for Forrest

The Forrest Wastewater Project team is developing a draft business case for a sustainable long-term wastewater management solution for Forrest.

We're continuing to progress planning for the project, which includes consideration of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's (DEECA) Draft Great Ocean Road Strategic Framework Plan which will provide information on Forrest's growth potential.

This will guide our thinking on the size of the wastewater system required to meet the town's needs, which will in-turn inform updates to the concept design, costs and our economic case for investment. We expect DEECA's Strategic Framework Plan to be released in the coming months.

The proposed wastewater solution will be subject to a viable business case, Barwon Water Board approval, and ongoing community support. Importantly, it must secure an affordable outcome for all.

Find out more

Join us to find out more about the project and the current preferred wastewater management solution:

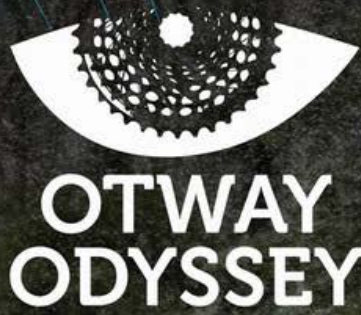
Pop-up information sessions
Forrest General Store (outside tables)*
10 am – 12 pm and 4 pm – 6 pm
Thursday 19 February 2026

Visit the project's Your Say web page at
www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest-hub-for-rest-wastewater or scan the QR code below.
*Subject to weather

Learn more!

For more information keep an eye out for updates on the project's Your Say web page, in the Forrest Post or on social media.





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HENDRY'S



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**HOW WELL
DO YOU KNOW FIRE?**



Forrest & District Historical Society

OPEN DAY

1 March from 11am

Shed 9 - Forrest Community Hub
47 Grant St, behind the Neighbourhood House

Forrest & District Historical Society invites you to a free BBQ and get together to celebrate our new display and artifact collection.

Attractions include recent donated memorabilia, local family histories as well as the recently recovered 1855 vintage Hop Press. This press was part of the farming and cultivation industry practiced in the area prior to the establishment of the Forrest township. An AV presentation and discussion with historian and prolific author Norm Houghton is a major feature at our events.

The Chef de BBQ of the day will also be one of our town celebrities (yet to be announced) so there promises to be many lively conversations and interesting banter under the trees.

Come and help us celebrate at Shed 9 (behind the Neighbourhood House) and on the beautiful lawn setting of the Forrest Community Hub.

Hope to see you there.



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- Workcover & TAC
- Instore medication reviews
- eScripts & MySL



OPEN 6 DAYS

40 Main Street, Birregurra, VIC 3242

Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 5.30pm

P: 03 5236 2288

Saturday: 9.00am - 12.00pm

F: 03 5236 2280

birrepharmacy@hotmail.com

THE FORREST POPUP OP SHOP

OPEN WHEN THE SIGNS ARE OUT



We are currently unable to take donations due to lack of space. For information contact Marita 0429 883 909

ST JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH - 18 GRANT STREET FORREST

ADVERTISE WITH US! Reach local customers and visitors and support your local volunteer run news sheet. Proceeds go to the Forrest Primary School or Neighbourhood House for printing costs and to support the Forrest Men's Shed. CONTACT US: theforrestpost@gmail.com for more information.



Coming soon - Kids Corner!

The Post is excited to announce we are welcoming a new member to the team. Already a published author and radio star, they will exclusively cover the news and views from the younger generations of Forrest and district.

The Forrest Post team are keen to foster young writers, artists and photographers so if you have something you would like to share for the new section, please send through your ideas to theforrestpost@gmail.com

We will keep you guessing about who it is for now, (although it's hard to keep a secret in Forrest) so watch this space while our new journo gets settled in. We can look forward to fresh new stories and ideas from a youthful perspective, giving a voice to the next generation.

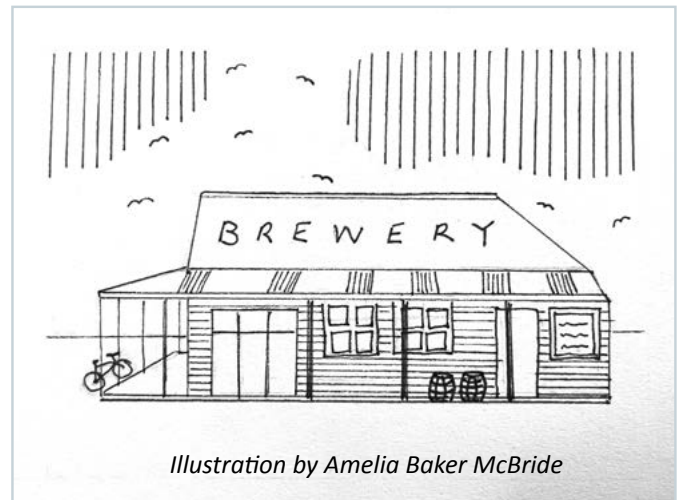


Illustration by Amelia Baker McBride

Spotted around Forrest

The perfect way to cool down on a hot day is with a banana smoothie from the Forrest Brewery's youngest team members... unless you are doing the peddling that is!

BIRDS OF THE OTWAYS

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Peregrine Falcon

The Peregrine Falcon is another of our iconic raptors. It is found to be moderately common all over Australia, and indeed most of the world. There is a pair nesting close to Colac, and they can be often be seen around Forrest and the coast. It is a very powerful hunter, swooping on flying birds from above, using its massive feet as a club, or catching smaller birds in flight. An older name for these raptors was Duck Hawk, owing to the fact that Teal and Ducks were high on the menu. As mentioned, they have a fast powerful flight, and they often soar on extended wings for long periods. They can dive at speeds of up to 320kph, (called a stoop) making them the fastest animal in the world. They like to nest on cliff faces, where they can overlook the surrounding country. They will even use man made cliffs, and there is quite a famous pair that utilize a building shelf at 367 Collins St Melbourne. They have been utilizing this shelf since the mid 1990s, and there has even been a live stream camera placed there for everyone to observe the pair. Very recently 3 young Falcons fledged, adding to the urban population, to the detriment of the local pigeons and starlings!

Ian Davies and Adam Fry



Visit Forrest online at www.forrestvictoria.com

