

# The NORTHERN Times

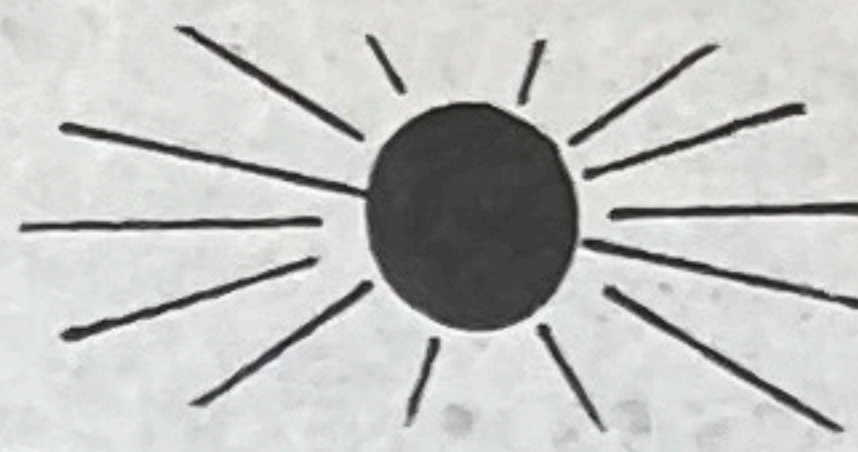
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## REGIONAL WEATHER DETAILS

**TEMPERATURES**  
Thursday minimum 8.1 degrees, maximum 17.6 degrees. Friday 6, 20.6. Saturday 7, 21.4. Sunday 6.6, 21. Monday 6.8.

**RAINFALL**  
Nil. Month to date, 103.4 mm. Year to date, 317.8 mm. (1993 to September 27, 384 mm.)  
**EVAPORATION**  
Weekly pan evaporation, 21.8 mm.



**FORECAST**  
Mild to warm with cloud increasing and patchy rain developing later. Moderate northerly winds. A warning of

major flooding is current for the Loddon River around Appin South, and the Murray River from Barmah to Barham. A warning of moderate rural flooding is also current for around Barham. Outlook Wednesday: Becoming fine. Mild to warm. Thursday: Rain developing. Mild to warm.

History saved over 30 years

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# The big wet

## Record flooding inundates rural properties

By JULIE PARKER and GREY MORRIS

**RECORD** flooding in the Loddon River catchment has inundated thousands of hectares of district paddocks and closed many rural roads.

There were no reports yesterday morning of farmhouses being threatened, although farmers were maintaining levees with soil and sandbags.

The Loddon River exceeded the record 1981 peak at Appin South by 9 cm during the weekend and was rising at Kerang towards a height close to the record.

The river peaked yesterday morning at

Old Kerang road, near the State Electricity Commission sub-station.

The river measured 77.59 m (Australian Height Datum above sea level) at Patchell's Bridge at 7.15 am yesterday. The river was around the 1973 flood level and at that stage was only exceeded by the 1981, 1975, 1964, 1983 and 1956 floods in order of height.

Rural Water Corporation operations controller at Kerang, Mr Ross Frantz, said the river was expected to reach predicted levels, between 77.6 and 77.8 m after this issue was published.

The Kerang Weir reached 76.83 m yesterday morning.

Appin South residents still had to contend with record flood levels yesterday, although the peak was subsiding.

Saturday's peak was 3.18 m, compared with the 1981 peak of 3.09 m. The river height was 3.15 m at Appin South yesterday morning.

The Avoca River peaked at Quambatook at 2.3 m late on Saturday and measured 2.18 m yesterday morning.

Moderate to major flooding in the Murray River was continuing to affect rural areas around Barham, with rises still expected. The river peaked at 94.5 m AHD at Echuca on Friday.

Mr Frantz said local people appeared to

have coped with the floods quite well and the RWC had been able to create a fair amount of storage space in the wetlands to handle the flood waters.

"Everything seems to have gone pretty well," he said.

Kerang shire engineer, Mr Peter McDonald said yesterday that it was too early to assess what damage the floods had caused to shire's roads, however it was expected to be minimal.

Mr McDonald said sections of Stedman and Gilmour lanes, in the Appin area, and Old Kerang road, just south of Kerang, were closed to traffic.

He said Appin South road had been closed but was probably usable.

## 1000 sandbags filled by local volunteers

By GREY MORRIS

**VOLUNTEERS** from local service clubs filled 1000 sandbags on Saturday morning in anticipation of the high water levels.

Rotary, Apex and Lions filled the sandbags to provide a stockpile at the Borough of Kerang depot. The bags are available to landholders from the borough depot as they are required.

Rural Water Corporation controller of operations at Kerang, Mr Ross Frantz said that although the flood levels were similar to those of 1981, many people had understood what was required to repel the flood waters and the subsequent need "to do something" had prevented any major dramas.

There were dramas of sorts in the Appin South area during the weekend. Dairy farmers, Allan and Judy McGrath lost a major portion of a newly constructed levee when the water level quickly rose on Saturday.

Fortunately for the McGraths, the "blow-out" occurred downstream of the main current, allowing water to cover only half of a paddock close to the dairy and main house.

"We were lucky it broke where it did

because if it had broken upstream of the main current the water would have easily reached the dairy," Mr McGrath said.

"I was surprised it rose so quickly. The water level is as high as 1981 and as bad as I have seen in the last 30 years."

Tragowel farmer, Mr Ritchie Theobald had 120 hectares of his farm inundated.

"I knew it was coming and was able to get organised, but the fact that it rose six inches (15 cm) on Saturday night was proof of how much water was coming down from Canary Island," he said.

Appin South mixed farmers, Alan and Glenys Evans' property was almost submerged by the flood waters.

Mr Evans said the water level was comparable with the damaging 1974 flood and was "definitely higher than in 1981."

He said a decision to top up the levees around the house prior to Saturday's peak had been a Godsend despite some water getting to the house via a damaged sillage pipe.

Most of Mr Evans' 20-ha lucerne crop was inundated on Saturday.

"We decided to diversify into lucerne from

sheep and cattle so any impending loss will be a blow," Alan Evans said.

He was disappointed that the newly formed bitumen road at Appin South had caused a water build-up on the upstream side of the water flow.

"When we had a gravel road, the water would run away not long afterwards, but the bitumen caused about a 5-inch (13-cm) differential on the upstream side," he said.

Kerang residents, Ian and Julie Wilkinson, were forced to sandbag around their Lower Loddon residence as water levels in the Pyramid Creek and the adjoining Loddon River began to rise.

About 20 friends and neighbors helped fill and place the sandbags in position.

Mr Wilkinson said the excess water from the Loddon tended to push the waters of the Pyramid Creek back around his property, creating a potential flood risk off Weir road.

He said he was sandbagging right around the property to prevent this possibility occurring when the flood peak arrived.

### SMALL FIRE

A SMALL cumbungi fire adjacent to Hastie court was quickly brought under control by Kerang firefighters early on Sunday evening.

The fire, on the old Koondrook railway line, was suspected to have been started by children playing with matches. It burned a small area.

### FLOODING INFORMATION

The Shire of Kerang offices in Victoria will be the Displan headquarters for co-ordinating flood protection efforts.

Details about flood levels and expected peaks are available 24 hours per day by ringing a recorded flood warning message on 52 2307.

Record Loddon River flooding has turned the small settlement of Appin South into a virtual inland sea. Floodwaters have inundated thousands of hectares of farmland along much of the catchment. The flood reached a new record peak at Appin South and was rising at Kerang yesterday. Picture: WALLY GROTE.



Jim Whelan

Jim "Elbows" Whelan played 12 seasons for the Tigers between 1961 and 1968. Other present pennants home sides are Barr (Union) in 1961, 1962 and 1963. Reg "Spud" Whelan (Cohuna) in 1971.