

Super-fast internet has arrived in Balonne - and it's now live

The long-awaited super-fast internet service is now “live” across much of the Balonne Shire.

The areas covered now are from St George to Dirranbandi to Hebel, from St George to Nindigully, and around Mungindi.

The plan from here is that Thallon and south will follow later this year, and work is underway that will see the areas from St George west to Bollon connected late next year. (See the map on page three for more details about coverage areas.)

While an official launch of the service will take place later in the year, the new service is already being introduced to potential clients.

Balonne Shire Mayor Samantha O’Toole said super-fast internet had been long-awaited but now was becoming a reality for local communities.

“This is a wonderful breakthrough for communications in our region, and I want to thank the Federal Government and State Government

[READ MORE: PAGE 3](#)

C’mon, let’s vax to the max

By Mayor Samantha O’Toole

Congratulations to everyone in the Balonne Shire who has rolled up their sleeve and been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Congratulations and thank-you. You are helping to protect yourself, your family, your friends and your community.

We all know that being vaccinated is the best way to beat COVID-19 and the more people who are vaccinated across our communities, the better.



SUPER CONNECTION: This unassuming tower is a key piece of Balonne Shire’s new high-speed fixed wireless internet network, which is already going live.

Our communities in the Balonne Shire and across the south-west region have been leading the way in stepping forward to be vaccinated.

I have not seen very recent vaccination figures on a per-head-of-population basis but a few weeks ago more than 60 per cent of adults in the Balonne had received at least one of their two vaccinations, and that made us the second-most-vaccinated local government area in Queensland.

[READ MORE: PAGE 5](#)



VAX: More than half of all adults in Balonne have received their first dose.

What's On

First 5 Forever

A weekly session for children aged 0-5 and their parents/guardians, aimed at building strong literacy foundations and neural pathways in kids.

WHERE: St George Library

WHEN: each Friday, 9.30am

Balonne Cutting Horse Futurity

Seven days of cutting horse action are underway in St George! Get in quick to catch the last days of this exciting spectacle.

WHERE: St George Showgrounds

WHEN: 1-5 September

Annual Clay Target Shoot

For keen marksmen, Balonne is the place to be. St George Clay Target Club is holding their weekend-long annual shoot, and spectators are welcome.

WHERE: 12896 Carnarvon Hwy

WHEN: 3-5 September

Bollon Campdraft and Rodeo

Chasing some authentic outback sporting action? Bollon is the place to be for this fun-filled weekend.

WHERE: Bollon Showgrounds

WHEN: 3-5 September

Nindigully Campdraft

For a fun-filled weekend of entertainment and skilled horsemanship, pop down to the 'Gully. Saturday night will be the main night with music, dancing, and prizes to be won.

WHERE: Nindigully Sports Ground

WHEN: 11-12 September

Got a story, event or notice?

Tell us! We can include your information in the newsletter.

Phone: 07 4620 8888

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au

A message from the Mayor

Recently, Balonne Shire had a taste of what the discovery of a positive COVID-19 case could be like.

On Tuesday 24 August, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk announced at her daily COVID press conference that a truck driver who returned a positive test had passed through Bollon and St George.

By the following afternoon, the Pelican Rest Tourist Park alone had had a hundred cancelled bookings.

Other accommodation providers reported cancellations as well, as travellers got on their Google maps and plotted routes that gave our towns a big swerve.

It wasn't until Wednesday evening that the news came through the driver's first test – a so-called "rapid test" taken in New South Wales – had produced a false positive.

Two subsequent tests in Queensland, and then a more thorough re-test of the original New South Wales sample, all came back negative.

Of course, we got this good news out on social media and in a press release as soon as we heard it.

The news came as a great relief to our communities in Bollon and St George – where the driver stopped for fuel and overnight accommodation – because it meant no-one in either of these towns was ever at risk of acquiring COVID-19 from this driver.

We have also been promoting the good news to tourists, especially through local and regional radio, newspapers and television in Brisbane.

We have been pushing the message that the Balonne Shire is a safe and welcoming destination, and we're looking forward to greeting tourists sharing our wonderful spring weather.

Let's hope those tourist numbers bounce back quickly. In the meantime, we will keep banging the drum about our friendly locals and terrific tourist attractions.

This recent brush with COVID-19 should remind everyone that the



virus is still spreading through communities not far south of the Queensland border.

Please, everyone in Balonne Shire over the age of 16, if you haven't been vaccinated yet, make an appointment and get it done.

Do it for yourself, for your family, for your friends and for your community. That's the way for us all to stay safe from COVID-19.

Now, I want to talk to business-owners in the Shire – and that includes farmers too of course. Please think what you would do if a positive case of COVID-19 really had been discovered in one of our towns.

What if one or more of your employees caught COVID or were even close contacts of someone with the virus?

This is everyday reality for shops and farms and other businesses in places like Shepparton and Dubbo right now.

How would you cope?

What contingency plans do you have in place to keep your business running if your employees were suddenly put into quarantine?

I will talk more about this in the future but please start to think about this scenario right now and dust off your contingency plans.

We cannot be complacent.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole

High speeds, reliable signal: Fixed Wireless is going live

From page 1

for the funding that made this possible.”

A spokesperson for Field Solutions Group (FSG) – the specialist regional telecommunications carrier who has built the network – said the service was designed for farm, business and home use.

FSG says it builds end-to-end solutions that connect all parts of a farming property, from the farm gate to the homestead, sheds and even moisture sensors on water troughs.

Business can connect to broadband said to be equivalent to big-city technologies, including applications such as offsite storage, security, disaster recovery and cloud apps.

In the home, it provides NBN plans and mobile plans and more.

If you are reading the electronic version of this edition of the *Balonne Bulletin*, you have the opportunity to learn all about the super-fast internet service now available in Balonne Shire at a public presentation on Thursday, 2 September.

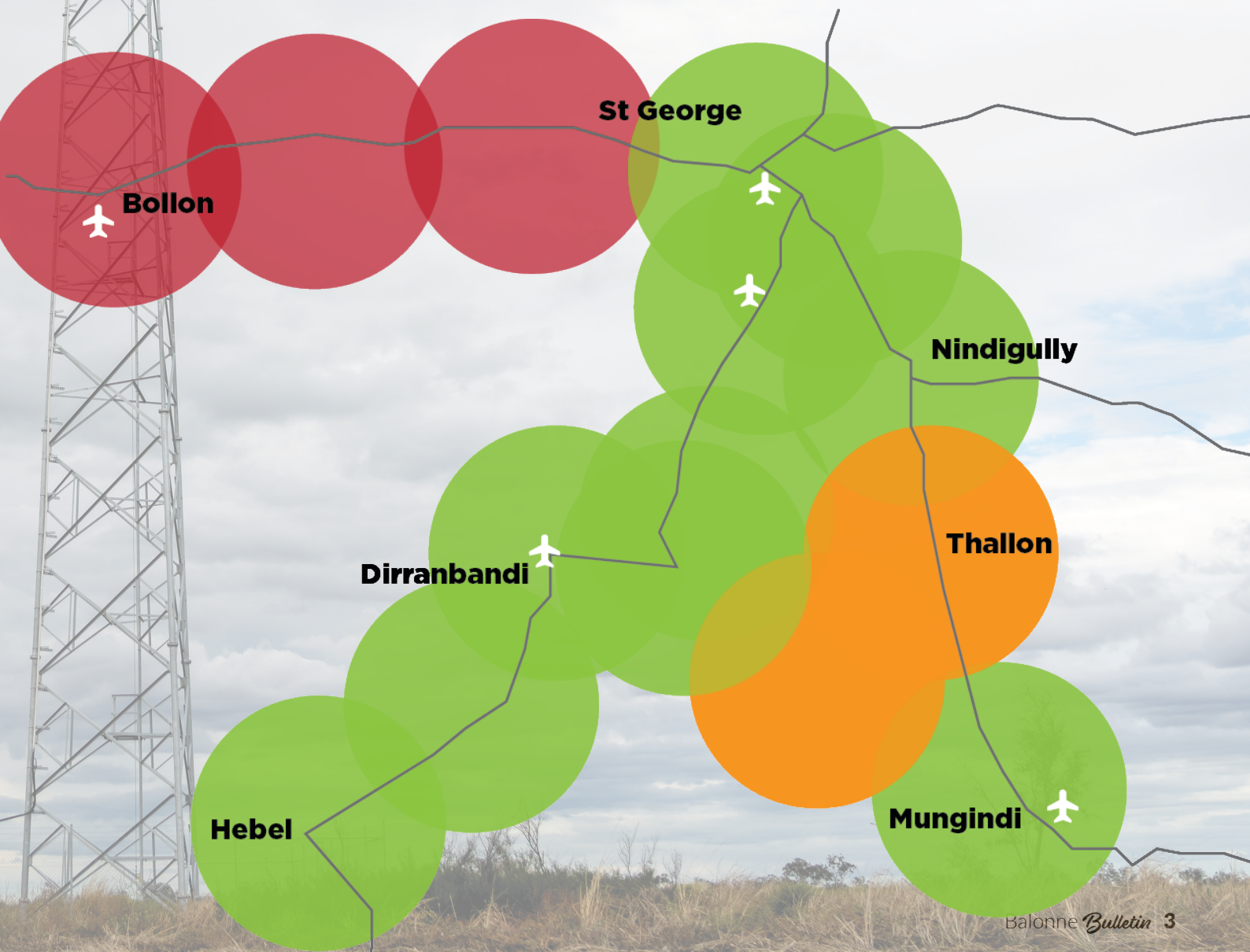
A representative from Field Solutions Group will be on hand to explain the new service.

The event is open to all interested members of the public from 4pm to 5pm.

The venue is the Country Universities Centre, off Grey Street, behind the Balonne Shire Council chambers.

Be amongst the first to learn the details about this new internet service that Balonne Shire has been waiting so long for.

- Live and connected now
- Live in Oct 2021
- Live in Oct 2022



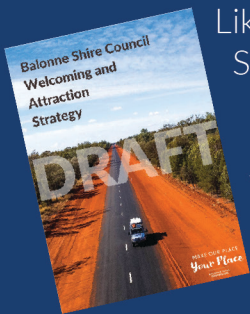
HAVE

YOUR SAY!



Community Consultation is now open on...

Welcoming and Attraction Strategy



Like many rural areas across Australia, Balonne Shire is grappling with the ongoing challenge of population decline.

We cannot continue to lose residents at this rate and we must work to find sustainable solutions to this problem.

The Welcoming and Attraction Strategy will chart a path for building our population up again.

Community Development Survey

Council is committed to providing services and programs which benefit and support our communities.

To do this, we need to know what is important to you.

This survey will guide our Community Development team in advocating for services and planning future events and programs.

It will also help us tailor better communications from Council.

To have your say, scan the QR code >>>

www.balonne.qld.gov.au



Flavours of the Balonne takes our tastebuds around the world

Flying to a far-flung country may be off the cards right now, but Balonne Shire foodies took a trip of a different kind during August.

In celebration of Queensland Multicultural Month, St George's cafes, restaurants and pubs banded together for a mega promotion: *Flavours of the Balonne*.

Every day from 23-29 August, our local chefs turned out tasty treats from across the globe - and it proved hugely popular among patrons.

Those dedicated diners who collected five stamps on their special *Eat the Week* passport have gone into a draw to win a Buy Balonne Gift card, valued up to \$150.

Council thanks all businesses for their enthusiasm and delicious meals:

- Australian Hotel
- Cobb and Co Hotel
- Asian Pearl
- Riversands Winery
- The Farmhouse
- DeliCate Gourmet Foods
- Stevie Jeans
- Rivers Restaurant
- St George Bakery
- The Local Pit Stop
- St George Hotel
- The Merino

Flavours of the Balonne is a collaboration between Balonne Shire Council, Queensland Government, and participating businesses celebrating Queensland Multicultural Month.



FLAVOURFUL: Brett and Liz Nosse, Dan Gallagher, Lynda Myburgh and Kingsley Blanch sample Mexican cuisine from Cobb and Co Hotel.



Stevie Jeans went all-out, decorating to complement their Greek food.



Riversands Wines took us to Italy, pairing local wines with tasty food.

Growing vaccination numbers a win for Balonne

From page 1

Queensland Health figures show that – by Saturday, August 28 – a total of 19,303 people have received at least one of their two vaccinations in the south-west region.

That number included 268 in Bollon, 939 in Dirranbandi, 1,100 in Mungindi and 3,130 in St George (comprising 2,461 at St George Hospital, 603 at St George Community Clinic and 66 at a special Goondir Outreach one-day clinic).

I do want to congratulate Goondir Health Services Clinic Manager Kelvin Duiker and his staff for that

very successful one-day clinic they organised at their Victoria Street clinic on Friday, August 27, and also thank Goondir for making their premises in the former RSL building available for ongoing community vaccinations by Queensland Health.

As I said, Balonne Shire has been leading the way in stepping forward, rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated.

If you haven't taken the opportunity to get vaccinated yet, please contact the South West Hospital and Health Service and book a time.

For more details, telephone SWHHS

on 1800 844 886 or go to the website: southwest.health.qld.gov.au

For statewide figures, scan the QR code below or visit:

covid19.qld.gov.au



Rates Notices are out - get in early to secure a discount

By now, property owners will have received their Rates Notice in the mail, along with a reminder that they can receive a 10 per cent discount by paying them early.

Rates officially went out on 17 August and residents are given 30 days to take advantage of the Rates discount period.

This means the final day to claim a discount on your rates is 17 September - the payment deadline is close of business.

Along with a Rates Notice, property owners will find a useful fact sheet explaining Council's updated rating categories, how bore and river water charges are split, and how to make a Category Objection (which must also be done by 17 September).

Property owners can pay their rates in person at Council's main office in St George, over the phone, or via BPAY.

Further information about Balonne Shire Council Rates is available on the website.

Scan the QR Code - it will take you directly to our website.



KNEAD TO KNOW: Workshop attendees started by making their own bread.

Permaculture workshops capture a growing audience

Home grown food and home baked bread seem to be enjoying a revival among everyday Aussies, and Balonne Shire is also jumping on board the self-sufficiency bandwagon.

A series of permaculture and gardening workshops has kicked off in St George during August, with an impressive 19 attendees taking interest.

The full-day workshop, hosted by St George's own Permaculture Practitioner Sheila Marshall, taught locals how to make their own sourdough bread and construct a moisture-wicking garden bed to grow just about anything.

The theme of it all: to build a more

resilient and sustainable life.

Workshops will continue through September and October in Thallon, Dirranbandi and Bollon:

- Thallon, 4 September. Register: thallongardeningworkshop.eventbrite.com.au
- Bollon, 19 September. Register: bollongardeningworkshop.eventbrite.com.au
- Dirranbandi, 3 October. Register: dirranbandigardeningworkshop.eventbrite.com.au

This course is organised by Balonne Shire Council and fully funded by the Queensland Government's *Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care* (TRAIC) initiative.

Balonne Shire is testing sewage each week

Balonne Shire Council has begun routine sampling of sewage for COVID-19 particles.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole said samples will be taken in St George and Dirranabndi each week.

"A sample was taken from wastewater in St George a couple of weeks ago and sent to Brisbane, to test the logistics of collection and transport.

"From Monday 30 August, wastewater samples from both St George and Dirranbandi will be sent each week to the testing laboratory run by the University of Queensland.

"Council has initiated this sampling as part of the Queensland Government's routine testing

program."

Mayor O'Toole said that, if ever a trace of COVID-19 was indicated in Balonne wastewater, Queensland Health would consider further action.

"Queensland Health says the test looks for COVID-19 genetic material. Detections may be related to a recovered case who is still shedding but is no longer infectious, or may indicate that there is an infectious person living in or visiting the area who has not yet been identified.

"Any detection of COVID-19 in wastewater is considered carefully alongside other information available to Queensland Health, such as recent known cases of COVID-19 in that area.

"They say that, typically, an expert panel will be convened by the public health unit to evaluate the circumstances surrounding each detection of COVID-19 and advise on further measures if necessary.

"There have been regular detections of COVID-19 in a number of areas, such as the Sunshine Coast last week and Cairns three weeks ago, that have led to increased testing but without shutting areas down to visitors.

"I envisage the same thing would happen if it was ever detected in Balonne."

And the result of the first sample? "The first sample tested negative," Mayor O'Toole said.

CUC BALONNE

SHORT COURSE DATES

SEPTEMBER

13/09/2021 Dirranbandi 3 Day	Licence to Operate a Forklift Truck Facilitated by Ag Training
16/09/2021 St George 3 Day	Licence to Operate a Forklift Truck Facilitated by Ag Training
20/09/2021 St George 1 Day	Construction Industry White Card Skill Set Facilitated by TAFE Qld
22/09/2021 St George 1/2 Day	Introduction to Coffee - Basic Barista (non accredited) Facilitated by TAFE Qld
23/09/2021 St George 1 Day	Food Handling Facilitated by TAFE Qld
24/09/2021 St George 1/2 Day	Computer Basics (non accredited) Facilitated by Carter Deacon, 5 years in IT Industry
27/09/2021 St George 1/2 Day x 2	Excel: Beginners (non accredited) - AM Session Excel: Intermediate (non accredited) - PM Session Facilitated by TAFE Qld

OCTOBER

5/10/2021 St George 2 Day	Chemical Application for Agriculture Skill Set Facilitated by TAFE Qld
7/10/2021 St George 1 Day	Introduction to Farm Risk Management Skill Set Facilitated by TAFE Qld
08/10/2021 Dirranbandi 1/2 Day	Introduction to Xero (non accredited) Facilitated by Craig Dreher, O'Regan and Partners
13/10/2021 St George 1/2 Day	Introduction to Xero (non accredited) Facilitated by Craig Dreher, O'Regan and Partners

Rural yogis find their zen at hugely popular new classes

Yoga classes are surging in popularity, as Balonne Shire residents make the most of free and low-cost lessons with local instructor Jessica Halls.

Hailing from Hebel, Ms Halls is currently teaching in-person yoga classes at Dirranbandi twice a week, running special full-day yoga retreats in Thallon, and running a weekly virtual class, delivered online through Zoom.

The new offering is attracting upwards of 15 people at each weekly class and the first of two full-day yoga retreats.

Registrations for all classes remain open and people of all ages and abilities are welcomed with open arms.

To sign up for the weekly virtual class, visit: theyogapartnership.com.au/balonne-shire

To secure your place at the Thallon Yoga Retreat, visit:



NAMASTE: Yoga classes are gaining popular favour in the Balonne Shire, with local instructor Jessica Halls (right) travelling across the region for lessons.

thallonyogaretreats.eventbrite.com

All yoga classes are supported by Council and funded through the

Queensland Government's *Tackling Regional Adversity through Integrated Care* (TRAIC) initiative.



MUNGINDI MAKEOVER

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

RUBBISH REMOVAL +
KERBSIDE COLLECTION

Our team will be removing rubbish from Council-owned allotments, road reserves, streets and footpath areas during **August and September**.

A general kerbside collection of bulky items will follow.





PEITIT POINT: Dirranbandi and Thallon students learn from Queensland Ballet.

Bush ballerinas learn from the pros at Dirranbandi workshops

Tomorrow's prima ballerinas could very well be diamonds in the dust.

Children from the Balonne have had a taste of the Queensland Ballet, learning from the company's skilled dancers at Dirranbandi.

In August, Queensland Ballet taught school groups, petit pointers (2-5 years), young dancers (6-14 years), a unique Ballet for Adults lesson, and professional skills for teachers.

The visit to Balonne was part of a wide-reaching South West tour.

Queensland Ballet Education Manager Martha Godber said her team loved working with children and adults of all ages.

"For us it was particularly special to see the children from across the region travelling into Dirranbandi. To visit such a welcoming, and passionate community and to see students giving ballet a go, for some for the very first time, and enjoying themselves was fantastic. We look forward to being back next year."

Channel 7 charmed by Balonne Shire's warm welcome

There's no better place to be than by the banks of the Balonne River, as any local will know.

Recently the beautiful Balonne Shire also caught the attention of a Brisbane-based news crew.

7 News Brisbane stopped in to the region for a short visit, filming a number of stories on a three-day expedition.

After covering the state border closure at Mungindi and meeting local residents, journalist Elliott Chipper made a stop in St George to film with the Chamber of Commerce and Mayor Samantha O'Toole.

They discussed the need for extra farm workers as harvest approaches, and the St George Region's exciting promotion to attract more tourists.



Mayor Samantha O'Toole jumped on camera for 7 News Brisbane.

Balonne Shire Church Services

Anglican/Lutheran, St George
8.30am, each Sunday.

Bush Disciples, St George
10am, 1st - 4th Sunday.

Church of Christ, Dirranbandi
6pm, 1st and 3rd Sunday.
10am, 2nd and 4th Sunday

Harvest Point, St George
9.30am, each Sunday.

Hebel Catholic Church
10am, 1st Sunday.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Bollon
11am, 4th Sunday.

King's Church, St George
10am, each Sunday.

Riverlife Church, St George
9.30am, each Sunday.

Riverlife Church, Warrawee
10am, 2nd Wednesday.

St Andrew's, St George
9am, each Sunday.

St James Anglican, Mungindi
9am, each Sunday.

St Patrick's, St George
6pm, 1st and 3rd Saturday.
8.30am, all other Sundays.

St George Uniting Church
9am, each Sunday.

St Therese's, Dirranbandi
8am, 1st and 3rd Sunday.

Thallon Catholic Church
10am, 3rd Sunday.

Want to include your Church service or Church group meeting?

Email: media@balonne.qld.gov.au with your Church name, plus the time and location of worship.

Frippy Fillies face off with stiff competition in Super Saturday

The St George Frillnecks Women's 7's Team made it through to the Super Saturday played in Goondiwindi, where they came up against the top-scoring team of the season, Roma 1 as well as the Dalby Wheatchix and University of Southern Queensland (USQ).

It was a tough day on the field, with the girls being short of players toward the end of the day, due to injuries.

With this, the girls failed to put any points on the score board for the day. However, the girls were not discouraged and didn't go down without a fight.

The tone was set in the first game against USQ, with Olivia Hoolihan making a break down the side line which was ended just metres from the try line, keeping USQ on their toes, followed by some big hits from forward Vanessa Beavan, who later went down to a knee injury, and some explosive runs from Lyndal Thomas.

Reeghyn Beardmore ran Dalby and Roma through their paces, kicking the ball deep in the field when the girls felt pressure closing in on their try line.

Captain Alice Rathie and Vice-Captain Claire Armstrong gave the



TOUGH TEAM: St George Frillnecks Women's 7's running on to what would become a tough yet thrilling Super Saturday. **Photos: Georgia Hoolihan.**

girls some words of encouragement between games to ensure as few points as possible were scored against the Women's 7's team.

April McLaren consistently made big metres throughout the games, keeping the ball alive and running the defenders around the field, while Isabel Morice was there to cover the rucks and make big-impact tackles.

Despite getting knocked out of the Super Saturday and not making the grand final, the Women's 7's team and coach Cameron Knights were very happy with their efforts and look forward to doing it all again next year.

This was the first year since the Women's 7's Team was developed in 2019 that they haven't made the Grand Final.



Rugby-favourite Frillnecks finish runners up in hard-fought Grand Final

From page 12

regularly and the forwards earned their supper with a plethora of scrums and line-outs.

Halfback Tim Houston tackled like a terrier and, with 10 minutes left in the first half, threw a dummy to break through.

But Dalby picked off two penalty goals to go to the break in front 16-5.

St George came out blazing again at the restart. Veteran Lance Wippell collected the ball from a misfiring lineout for a big run.

His teammates shifted the ball to the

wing and Will Jones was denied inches from the line. But Clem Brosnan dived over to bring the difference back to 10-16.

An intercept had St George backpedalling, with Webster and Mitch Bullen cutting off tries. But Dalby jumped out to 21-10 with a chip and chase, with winger Henry Finlay grounding the ball.

Some big drives from Jones and Webster prepared the ground for a scrum, putting fullback Nic Perkins within a metre of the try line and Jamie Deshon finished off to drag the

difference back to six points.

But less than 20 minutes to go and the Wheatmen snagged another penalty kick to move nine points ahead. Another covering tackle by flanker Tom Sandow averted another try, but Dalby slotted yet another penalty to move to 27-15.

Perkins got the ball back on the Wheatmen's try line, yet the Frills were unable to capitalise.

Dalby profited from two more penalties in the last five minutes to clamp their mitts firmly on the trophy 33-15.

Dirran riding high after local carnival win

Dirranbandi Polocrosse Club have capped off the local season with a hugely successful carnival - and a win in the B-grade final to boot.

Riders from far and wide descended during the first weekend of August, travelling from the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, and even Holbrook in New South Wales.

The well-travelled visitors from Albury-Holbrook Polocrosse Club claimed the grand prize while Chinchilla were runners-up.

Dirranbandi won their B-grade final against runners-up Toompine.

Local players Tom O'Sullivan and Emily Watts were awarded best players in their field; Cody Madder was declared Most Improved Local.



ABOVE: Emily Watts takes possession for Dirranbandi. BELOW: Dirranbandi faces off with teams from Wandoan (green) and the Gold Coast (purple).





Frillnecks start as favourites, denied a Grand Final victory

Downs Rugby B-Grade grand final favourites the St George Frillnecks were beaten in the big game despite scoring three tries to two.

Penalties by the Frillnecks and an accurate kicker in the opposing Dalby Wheatmen saw them beaten 33-15.

A total of 21 of Dalby's 33 points at the Clive Berghofer Stadium in Toowoomba came from penalty shots.

After a string of nine wins and only three losses for the season – those losses coming against minor premiers Dalby in round one, Rangers in round two and Warwick in the fifth round – St George started favourites.

But they weren't able to sustain their honed strategy of dominating possession and the boot of Dalby kicker Rohan Gale kept turning the screws.

The forwards shouldered a heavy workload and some spectacular covering tackles averted further carnage as both teams turned over plenty of ball.

The Frills jumped out of the barriers like a team at a grand final, with Will Jones, skipper Tom McDonnell and Murray Webster smashing into a wall



FINALS FEVER: St George came in as the team to beat, but a formidable Dalby side pulled no punches against the Frillies. **Photos: Georgia Hoolihan**

of solid straw. But Dalby winger Corey Nolan found a gap to score within 30 seconds of the match starting.

Webster is reported to have had a blinder, turning over the ball with a smashing tackle on a Dalby player and with his skipper got the lizards back into range inside the Wheatmen's 22.

Dalby kicked deep and might have scored, but for a solid save by inside centre Angus Stokes. The Wheatmen had plenty of possession in the first half, but the Frills' defences were equal to the task.

Both sides turned over the ball
READ MORE: PAGE 10

