

THE BLACKWOOD TIMES

December 2022 ~ January 2023 vol 14 ~ issue 15.4



We spoke up for Wombie



We swore at the rain



We sang together





EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

Hello to all Blackwoodians and our extended neighbours! What a year it has been! A mighty cold and wet one, but also a year to begin coming back together and enjoying being out and about. As we bring in the end of the year, we wish everyone a safe and happy holiday period. The last couple of months have brought us many events, from the scary streets of the Halloween trick-or-treating, to St Martin's Chapel where concerts were enjoyed by all. We even saw a friendly protest to save our Wombie sign. As we welcome in some (hopefully) warmer weather we will be able to gather more and more. We would like to thank both Jinny and Brendan for all of their incredible work to make The Blackwood Times what it is today. This will be the last issue they have an 'official' hand in. From the team here at The Times we cannot thank you both enough for all that you have done for this community and we look forward to continuing in your footsteps.

I hope that you all enjoy this issue and look forward to seeing you in the New Year! Please do not hesitate to reach out through email at team@theblackwoodtimes.com.au.

Caitlin Hansford, Production

Apology from the Editor

To all, in the August-September 20012 (Vol 14) the publishing team inadvertently published a picture of Fletcher in Pet Senanigans with Seamus's article. The team would like to apologise for this oversight and we hope to continue to see the Adventures of Fletcher in future issues. When we do get it wrong, please contact us at team@theblackwoodtimes.com.au so we can continue to reflect our community well.



The Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV) is the peak body representing not-for-profit community newspapers across Victoria. CNAV works actively with its members to enhance the capacity & standing of community newspapers, to enable them to fully realise their vital role in communities.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
Kathy Holowko and photographer Daniel Williams have really excelled themselves in the beautiful and informative three minute animated film for Blackwood and Barry's Reef Landcare Group. See link https://vimeo.com/735278839 in the Oct Nov2022 issue of the Blackwood Times. It is something for those involved to be really proud of.

Don Owen

KAREN'S SUNSET SESSIONS

Our first session for the season kicked off with a warm, dry evening. Over 80 people took advantage of the strange weather to relax with DJ Bushrat (AKA Daniel) and enjoy the BBQ kebabs and salad on offer. Next session is in December and will feature a bit of scratching on twin turntables. Partytime is finally here!



The Blackwood Hat Shoppe



15 Martin St.
Open Sundays 11- 4pm, other times by appointment or chance ph 9018 5458

HOW'S THE WEATHER BEEN?

MONTH/ YEAR	Rainfall (mm)	Rainfall historical average (mm)	Temp monthly min (deg C)	Temp monthly max (deg C)	Temp average daily max (deg C)	Temp average daily min (deg C)	Temp average for month (deg C)
Sep '22	168	101.9	-4.4	18.9	11.5	3	7
Oct '22	237.5	94.1	-1.9	24.3	15.4	3.6	9.2

BLACKWOOD HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT

What an amazing turnout we had for our fantastic event. We saw so many happy smiling faces and terrific costumes.

Despite the weather we had 20 registered addresses and many more joining in on the fun. It will be bigger better and spookier next year.

Deirdre Cronin



Advertising in The Blackwood Times supports our close-knit community.

The Blackwood Times is a community newspaper run by volunteers that connects the community of Blackwood & its immediate surrounds by dispersing information, news & items of general interest. It aims to foster understanding as the demographics of the area change, as well as provide a platform for locals to showcase their creative skills & voice opinion.

The Blackwood Times is a bi-monthly community service published by The Blackwood Times Vic Inc. Publication costs are met through the support of advertisers & donations.

Your advertising investment will ensure that your business will be seen by residents and visitors to Blackwood, Trentham, Greendale with a print run of 500 copies and nationally and an average of 4,000 downloads per issue from our website: www.theblackwoodtimes.com.au.

Your investment can be as small or as large as you would like as we offer various sizing and pricing options which are outlined on our website.

The Blackwood Times needs:

- An advertising coordinator to help the Times survive well in this post-Covid world.
- Advertisers who promote their services to help Blackwoodians find their services.

Please email team@theblackwoodtimes.com.au



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the BLACKWOOD TIMES info

The BLACKWOODTIMES invites submissions from the community. If you're at a local event please take a photo or two & write a few lines to share in our community news. Deadlines are as follows:

Advertisers book space	Jan 15	
Regular contributors, features & items of interest, community groups & clubs	Jan 15	
Display ad artwork		Jan 20
Late breaking news		Jan 20

NO late submissions will be accepted. Please email submissions, display ads & articles to team@theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au or post to The Blackwood Times, PO Box 39 Blackwood, 3458.

Download our Advertising Rate Card & back issues (in colour) from www.theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au &, while you're there, sign-up to join our eList & follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/theblackwoodtimes>

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The BLACKWOOD TIMES is produced as a community service & supported by Blackwood Progress Assoc.

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HANDS OFF

WOMBIE!



Update on the Moorabool Shire Gateways Proposal to replace 'Wombie'

On Sunday 6 November a large gathering of locals came together to consider all the issues and then voice their concerns. At the time of writing, no decision has been made by the council. I have been advised that the Community feedback will be collated and then a private briefing given to Shire Councillors who will have the final decision. How long this will take is unclear, but is likely within the next 2 to 3 weeks.

For anyone unfamiliar with the issue, a recent Moorabool Shire Signage draft proposal briefly put out for community feedback, recommended removal of existing town signs including our 'Wombie', to be replaced by new signs. In the case of Blackwood specifically, the implementation table stated not 'if' but 'when' the sign is to be removed.

Council's rationale for the change include: current signs are outdated and ageing; are inconsistent across the shire; require ongoing maintenance and replacement costs, and that they champion themselves over their immediate settings.

According to the proposal, the vertical planes and poles of the new signs represent our forests and their colours, 'traditions of tool-making', mining and our agricultural heritage.

Despite having very little notice, quite a lot of people submitted their feedback. The Counsellors are well aware of our concerns and I think we have a good chance of retaining our town sign.

If anyone would like to give feedback you can email the seven Counsellors direct but we need to act quickly. Their emails are on the Council website.

Sue Donnelly

"What... you want to take away the wine glass and strawberries, the kangaroo, the wombat; these wonderful town signs that are unique to Moorabool?"

How do we dress up a cold flat metal sign? The roo and the wombat get decorated according to season. For example, Santa hats and Easter Bunny ears. These existing signs are colourful and artistic, unlike those proposed. Our pipeworked signs have proudly announced the start of each town that you enter. There is no missing them!

The Moorabool tiny invisible town signs that are currently used are faded, dirt covered and you really have to look for them as they tend to blend in."

Dales Creek resident

"Spend the money on improving safety on our roads & pedestrian walkways."

Blackwood resident

"Save OUR Signage. Let residents, not bureaucrats decide. Why must a unique town be subjected to the lowest denominator generic ordinary sameness."

Blackwood resident

"These (proposed) signs are so generic and boring! Current signs are unique and cool. I personally love the one in Gordon where I live."

Gordon resident

"The townships value their individual identities and creativity and see their current signs as a strength as well as an expression of town pride. And yet, the Council wants to take away the set of picture frame signs which identify the character of our six small villages."

Blackwood resident

ALICE THE WOMBAT

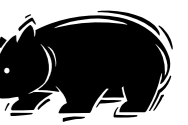
On a trip to the area recently the creator of these amazing t-shirts saw five wombats that had been hit and left for dead. She decided that money needed to be raised for the local wildlife centre and set about making these t-shirts on her great aunt's kitchen table.

The t-shirts have been screen printed using a hand cut stencil and feature a 3 colour print of the lovely Alice both front and back. A donation will go to the East Trentham Wildlife Centre for each t-shirt sold. They are available for purchase from the Blackwood Post Office and the Zest café in Ballan.

Alternatively you can shop at Etsy:Girt By Dirt Shop.



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COMMUNITY GROUP & CLUB UPDATES

WOMBAT BOOK CLUB

By Sandra Schmidt

Hello and welcome to the Wombat Book Club reviews. In the next couple of months, hopefully we can look forward to some warmer weather now Spring has sprung, and Summer on the horizon... hopefully even for Blackwood. We thought about some locations where we can hold our book club meetings. Most favoured keeping them in a Blackwood location, usually in the Garden of St. Erth – a gorgeous, handy spot for all. The last couple of meetings were held at Sue's then Dee's which was lovely. Thank you ladies for your kind Hospitality.

On behalf of Wombat Book Club, we would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Happy reading.

If you would like information about our lovely, informal gathering please contact Rose at rcarrington1@hotmail.com

The two books we all enjoyed this last couple of months were: 'One Italian Summer', by Rebecca Serle and 'Everything I Never Told You', by Celeste Ng.

One Italian Summer: by Rebecca Serle

Sandy: A romance with an unexpected twist at the end. Katy had a close relationship with her mother Carol. They planned a holiday in Italy where Carol once lived. Carol passes away and Katy decides to go by herself to visit all the places Carol talked about. The story became a little confusing for me, when Katy meets a lady also called Carol who was identical to a younger version of her mother. But one must keep reading to know the answer is to the riddle, and what Katy unexpectedly discovers. A story with a difference, could be one for your summertime reading.

4 Wombies

Everything I Never Told You: by Celeste Ng

Sandy: Everything I Never Told You, is about a family of mixed race which encounters their children being made to feel different from others in the classroom.

The story can be a little confronting especially when it comes to loosing a child.

The daughter is assumed to have suicided. Some blame is pointed at a couple of people to whom the daughter associated herself with. The truth emerges at the end, in a convoluted narrative. This story is not for everyone, but being part of Book Club, exposes us to a variety of works. Still, I must warn there are issues in this book which perhaps may not be suitable for everyone.

3 Wombies



ST MARTIN'S CHAPEL - UPDATE



What a fantastic year it has been at St Martin's Chapel. So many events have taken place such as concerts, information sessions, Bible Study, exhibitions, art shows, workshops, markets, a wedding reception, the longest afternoon tea, Qigong, anniversaries, thank you celebrations, a pizza night, sausage sizzles, yoga sessions, preschoolers activity days, an agape, town meetings, church services and many others.

It is so affirming and heartening to see that the vision we had for renovating this modest little church to serve the community has come to fruition.

A huge thank you to those who have helped in so many ways.

A special thank you to Landcare for their continuing work at the chapel and to Chris Durrell for donating fifty new native plants to beautify the surrounding landscape and to Noelle and Chris for planting them.

Another special thank you to The Blackwood Hotel for the donation of \$200 to support our Little Ones Activity group and to Penny for selling the tickets.

During November and December the Little Ones Group will take a break but we are planning to run a couple of school holiday activity sessions to include school aged children as well as those who are younger during January. Watch out for more information as we firm up our ideas and dates.

There will be Carols by Twilight in the grounds of St Martin's Chapel on Christmas Eve starting at 5.30pm. There will be a barbecue, sausages will be provided but if you want to cook something of your own that is fine too. Bring a salad to share, a blanket or chairs to sit on and if you play a musical instrument please bring that as well. If you would like to lead us in a Christmas Carol, that would be brilliant. Please let me know if you would like to participate in this way.

There are some great things planned already for next year such as a High Tea, a Cabaret evening, another pizza night and a few more.

A reminder too that church services are being held on the first and fourth Sunday of each month at 2pm. Everyone is welcome.

On behalf of St Martin's Committee of Management I would like to wish everyone a very, happy and safe Christmas time where we can take time to enjoy and feel true gratitude for our families, friends, community and our beautiful surroundings.

We are truly blessed.

Robyn Zanon



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BLACKWOOD CFA REPORT

With the large downpour during recent weeks, Blackwood has recorded 234 mm of rainfall. Considering the ground is very wet, be aware of falling trees around the area. Mosquitoes could also become a problem with a lot of water lying in areas.

On Saturday, November 12, the brigade competed in the Fiskville Cup which, due to Covid, had been suspended for two years. The cup is an annual event where the brigades in the Ballan Group area compete in a number of scenarios which may include extinguishing a fire, extinguishing a car fire, a first aid event, motor vehicle accident with injuries, a HazMat event, just to name a few. It is a very enjoyable day which pits the crews against each other in a competition of skills, communications and team work for the honour of getting their name on the trophy. The Blackwood team came second this year. Congratulations to Mark, the Crewleader, and all other members on the team.



Community Alert Sirens at Blackwood, Barrys Reef and Greendale and an update on the Telephone Exchange upgrade.

The siren at the Blackwood Fire Station can be remotely activated in the case of an emergency in our local area. Recently Emergency Management Australia wide have standardised their alerts so that all emergency situations are now rated as Advice, Watch and Act or Emergency Warning. In our area, Community Alert Sirens are at Blackwood, Barry's Reef and Greendale. Normally the siren sounds for 90 seconds if crew are required for a fire - although we rarely use this as brigade members have personal pagers.

In an emergency, the siren will sound for five minutes. Those hearing it should seek further information immediately. During October the five minute Emergency Alert siren activated a number of times as Watch and Act Alerts were declared for flooding in the Werribee/Lerderberg catchments. The sirens at Barry's Reef and Greendale were also activated. We have contacted the local Incident Control Centres to request that the sirens only be used in the case of immediate threat to our three local communities. The flooding Watch and Act area covered the entire Werribee catchment from Daylesford to Bullengarook, then to Bacchus Marsh, Melton and Werribee. Keep in mind that the emergency siren may be used for incidents other than fires. For example, hazardous chemical fumes from a truck accident. It is always worth checking the Vic Emergency website or your phone Vic Emergency app if you hear the siren.

THE FIRST PRIORITY IS YOUR SAFETY
Always ring 000 in the case of any emergency. If you have and fire and do manage to put it out, it is better to have us responding than to wait until it is too late.
For more information contact the station on 53686526 on Sunday mornings over the summer period and the first Sunday of every month during the rest of the year, as we are there for training and equipment checks.
Never let complacency set in and always be prepared, no matter what the season.

Progress has been made regarding the powering of the Blackwood exchange during prolonged outages. An automatic power switching device has been attached to the Blackwood and Trentham telephone exchanges. Once wired into the system, the device will allow the exchanges to be powered by a generator without Telstra contractors being on site. Our original intention was to power the Blackwood exchange from the Fire Station generator, so we are moving towards that goal.

Fire Danger – Community Notice

Fire Danger Periods (FDPs) may seem far off under the current conditions, but the first FDP for the season has now been declared for Mildura Rural City Council from 21 November and others will follow for many local government areas in the coming weeks.

Take a moment to familiarise yourself with the new Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) that commenced on 1 September.

AFDRS has four ratings and gives clear, easy to understand advice at each level. The ratings encourage people to act to protect themselves according to their bushfire risk. No matter where you live, travel or visit in Australia, fire danger ratings are now the same.

Prepare your property:

If you can prepare around your property, here are a few tips and tasks for you to be undertaking.

- Move furniture, woodpiles and mulch away from windows, decks and eaves
- Prune tree branches so they are not overhanging the roof or touching walls
- Keep grass shorter than 10cm. Regularly remove leaves and twigs
- Don't have plants higher than 10cm in front of windows or glass doors
- Check that your home and contents insurance is current and includes a level of cover in line with current building standards and regulations.

Keep burn-offs safe and legal:

- Check fire restrictions with your local council and register your burn online
- Check and monitor weather conditions – particularly wind – on the day of your burn and the days afterwards as fires can flare up in windy conditions
- Notify your neighbours
- Leave a three-metre fire break, free from flammable materials around the burn
- Have enough water and equipment to stop the fire spreading and to extinguish it
- Never leave a burn-off unattended – stay for its entire duration
- If your burn-off gets out of control, call '000' immediately

As always, you can check CFA's website for advice and information on how to be fire ready this summer.

Take care and stay safe

Jason Heffernan
CFA Chief Office



• COMMUNITY GROUP & CLUB UPDATES •

LANDCARE NEWS



The Landcare Christmas BBQ will be held on 4 December, 12 noon, at the Mineral Springs Reserve, all welcome, BYO everything and bring that outdoor game you have been wanting to play again.

We've had success with a Landcare Victoria grant and ordered 900 native plants that will be put into the Mineral Springs Reserve next year to fill spaces opened up by weeding. An exciting new project for us is the restoration of the Barry's Reef Avenue of Honour. This project is being led by the Ballan RSL and we are proud to be involved, particularly helping with weed control.

Our *Gardens for Wildlife* workshop series has seen nestboxes constructed and native plants being identified, led by three wonderful experts. Thanks to Moorabool Council for the workshop funds. Nestboxes and native plants have been added to the Chapel's grounds, and working bees have continued to remove holly, broom and gorse from the Chapel and the Town Hall. Thank you to all our hard-working participants. Have you seen Brett's demonstration of using a tree popper on our Facebook?

Blackwood & Barrys Reef Landcare Group is concerned about VicForests inappropriately removing windfallen logs from the Wombat Forest. We have sought further information from the relevant ministers on how VicForests will be protecting the Heritage River (the Lederderg) from sediment runoff and how they will ensure that cleared areas and tracks will be protected from weed invasion. We do not currently have confidence in their industrial-scale processes taking the necessary care and indeed question the need for the proposed huge areas of log removal. We believe that in most cases the logs are better off left on the ground for soil protection and biodiversity outcomes.

Diana Dawson - Secretary

BLACKWOOD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Firstly, Merry Christmas to all. Feels a bit weird saying that in early November as I write this, although time does fly!

For a change of scenery, we will be having our Christmas lunch at the Pig and Whistle. I have always been fascinated with that place in the middle of nowhere and how it has survived the generations.

Must have always had good ownership and management!

A big thanks to Sign Perfection of Melton who looked after us with large signage to place beside the roadway when we are open. You certainly wont miss it now!

A couple of our members have joined a committee, with other groups in the area, to attempt to restore the Barrys Reef Avenue of Honour back to a commemorative space.

The Committee is being led by the Ballan RSL and we're well down the path to securing the necessary grants to see this through.

A big thanks to Pippa whose foresight and perseverance has enabled this project to progress as far as it has through the endless red tape.

I, for one, cannot wait for the first commemorative service to be held there after 100 years of being swallowed back up by the bush. I would suggest most people wouldn't know it exists (much less, where it is!)

Of the 29 men who served from Barrys Reef, nine never came home! This re-dedication is for them.

We'll keep you informed of the progress in future editions. No doubt, there will be working bees along the way.

Ray Castellin

Blackwood and District Historic Society

October rain, and again and again. Some 'experts' call the Lederderg River a 'water-course'!

Photos Maeve McKeown



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• COMMUNITY GROUP & CLUB UPDATES •



BLACKWOOFs

Border Collies, widely regarded as the most intelligent, energetic and agile of working dogs, will drive you nuts if you don't give them a job. Lou's family refer to her as the collie/maniac cross.

18 months old now, she spent her first year in a Brunswick flat during lockdown. Not a sheep in sight! Mum and Dad wisely occupied the demanding pup with lots of obedience training and she now responds to some 30 commands, such as orbit, weave, middle and front. However, "bugger off" seems to be one that escapes her! Collies have been known to recognise hundreds of words, so there's plenty of rewarding work ahead for the youngster; and as she is a chatterer herself, regularly making up words of her own - she may even excel at this language caper.

The day after lockdown and the family fled the confines of the Brunswick flat for the wide beaches of Sandy Point and Lou's first holiday, where she immediately sniffed out and quaffed a mouthful of rat poison. Feeling a bit Not-Quite-Right, she then munched on seashells and swallowed gallons of seawater; and it kind of helped. But a visit to the stomach-pump person was really needed to do the trick.

All of which sounds like a best-forgotten Schoolie's experience. It's good to see her then, happy and healthy in her new home of Blackwood; with everything a doggo could wish for.

What did you say, Lou? A paddock of sheep?

BLACKWOOD CEMETERY TRUST

Merry Christmas from the Blackwood Cemetery Trust. Thanks to all the people who volunteered their time during the year in our sacred place.

It's you guys who continue to make our cemetery the envy of many, simply a lovely space to spend time with loved ones who have left us. Not to mention the stories and characters held within its fence line!

We have sourced some nice heritage style gates and will install them once suitably themed posts are erected.

It has been a quiet couple of months, so I will leave you with a little cemetery-themed humour:

Two mates are having a round of golf when a funeral procession passes by. Immediately the guy having his putt stops, takes off his hat, and bows in silence.

After the procession has passed his mate says "gee Wally, I have never seen you show such reverence before, why? Wally replies, "well, we were married for 35 years" .

Another one... A girl, Robyn, is taking a short cut through a cemetery late at night when she hears a tap, tapping sound. Obviously, she is scared witless at this and quickens her pace. To her surprise she comes across a guy chiselling a headstone. In relief Robyn says to him "What are you doing mate?". The man replies "Just getting my date of death correct, they buggered it up!"

Ray Castellin

BLACKWOOD CRICKET CLUB

Hello All, we finally got to play a game!

Round 5 was to be played at home but couldn't be due to poor ground conditions.

Round 6 was played at Lancefield. We were short of a couple of players but gave it our best, considering Thursday nights have been wet and not a lot of training has happened. So the out-of-form team made 36 runs (myself making a golden duck). We were then to bowl with Lancefield making 39 with no loss of wicket. We can only get better!

- R 7 Sat 19 & 26 Nov v Rupertswood at home
- R8 away v Diggers Rest
- R9 away v Bacchus Marsh
- R10 Sat 7th Jan Home v Diggers
- R11 away v Rupertswood
- R12 Sat 21 and 28 Jan Home v Hanging Rock
- R13 away v Wallan
- R14 Sat 11 and 18 Feb Home v Malmsbury
- R15 Sat 25 and Mar 4 away v St Anthonys

So please remember the home dates and bring your children down at 10am for a bat and bowl.

President, Brian Suters



Victorian Gold Panning Association

The Fosterville Gold 28th Annual Australian Gold Panning Championships

Saturday March 4th 2023

Recreation Reserve Blackwood

9am - 4pm

Registrations Close at 11:00am

Gold Pans Provided

Open to all ages and skill levels.

Category Prizes and Trophies

Stake Your Claim to win a gold nugget.

Free entry to spectators.

Food and Drinks available at the event.

Email: vicgoldpanning@gmail.com



MUSIC IS ALIVE AND

WELL IN BLACKWOOD



Concert Review – Michelle Nicolle Quartet

What a treat it was to have this fabulous concert right here at St Martin's Chapel in Blackwood on Saturday 1st October. This Melbourne-based band comprises vocalist Michelle Nicolle, Ronny Ferella on drums and Tom Lee on double bass. They were joined on the day by guitarist Stephen Magnusson.

The Quartet played a varied, well-balanced set that included Duke Ellington ballads as well as Michelle's original compositions. Michelle's vocals are sublime and it was a joy to experience her soulful song interpretations and expressive improvisations. On stage she exudes both warmth and unassuming confidence. It is safe to say that the audience was blown away by the standard of musicianship that this Quartet possesses – absolutely top notch.

Aside from the Blackwood locals who were lucky enough to enjoy this event right on our doorstep, the audience comprised quite a few devoted fans who had made the trip from Melbourne especially for the concert.

Before the Quartet took to the stage, we enjoyed an opening set from renowned guitarist and composer Robbie Melville, who treated us to a selection of pieces from his eclectic repertoire. A highlight of his set was when he was joined on stage by Ameliah "Bug" Melville - Robbie's 13 year old daughter - who plays bass guitar. Together with Ronny Ferella on drums, they gave us a delightful instrumental rendition of Willie Nelson's Crazy.

It's great to have St Martin's Chapel as a new venue for music and other events in town. On Saturday, the sun was shining and we were able to enjoy food and refreshments on the lawn before and after the concert. Karen's Kitchen had prepared delicious Indian curries and snacks and Mel from Chaplin's in Trentham was there providing drinks. All in all it was a perfect afternoon in Blackwood!

Fiona Ross

Leroy Johnson and the Waterbag Band

Blackwood Township came alive to the sounds of Leroy Johnson and the Waterbag Band on Monday 31st October, Melbourne Cup Eve. Leroy is a Barkindji/Malyangaapa man with strong connections to the lower Baaka (Darling) communities in far western NSW. He is the first Aboriginal Park Manager of Mutawintji National Park, a place which provides much of the inspiration for his music.

The Waterbag Band joined Leroy on double bass, mandolin, didgeridoo and harmonies for a soulful, country, toe-tappin' set, blending traditional music, with ancient and contemporary stories. The band features local Blackwoodians Oliver Dear (Mandolin) and Jack Simmonds (Guitar), who travelled up to Mutawintji as part of our yearly pilgrimage back in 2020, the first year of Covid Lockdowns. The local lads decided it was such a beautiful place with an amazing community that they decided to live there!

Leroy Johnson and the Waterbag Band performed at Maldon Folk Festival and finished their Victorian Tour with a concert at St Martin's Chapel. Leroy's songs were a salve, warming our hearts. We were lucky to have an introduction from Barkindji Elder Aunty Muriel Riley, sister of world-renowned artist Badger Bates. Aunty Muriel shared stories about the Baaka (Darling River) and Barkindji Country where she comes from.

The support act for the night was our very own Clint Dylan O'Grady (of Cat & Clint) playing his Delta Blues set featuring the slide guitar. We were kept warm by a roaring fire outside and our bellies and taste buds were treated to some delicious kebabs from Karen's Kitchen.

Big thanks to Jinny, Brendan, Gerry, Karen, Robyn, Wally, Clint and everyone else who helped make this event a huge success with 90 attendees! How lucky we are to have the beautiful St Martin's Chapel.

Leroy Johnson and the Waterbag Band have just received their new record. Visit <https://bandcamp.com> to follow Leroy Johnson and the Waterbag Band and buy a copy of their new album!

Cat Moser

Concert Review - We Mavericks

Spirits were high in St Martin's Chapel on Saturday November 5th. Right from the start of the evening the energy inside this beautiful, intimate venue was palpable. Expectations were high...and the audience was not disappointed!

The concert was opened by The Lyonville Ramblers, comprising Blackwood's own Nick Dear and Janet Dear, along with Mick Harrison and Ashton Edgley. The band gave us a superb bluegrass set, receiving loud and deservedly enthusiastic applause from their home crowd.

We then moved to the main feature of the evening – We Mavericks – who had made Blackwood a stop on their whirlwind regional Victorian tour. We Mavericks are Victoria Vigenser, originally from Auckland, and Lindsay Martin from the Riverina of NSW. Lindsay is a multi-instrumental who, on the night, demonstrated masterful playing on both fiddle and mandolin. Victoria adds punch with the driving rhythm of her guitar playing and is the main singer in the duo. Indeed, she is a magnificent songstress, with an arresting voice that goes to unexpected places. We Mavericks treated us to two wonderful sets of mostly original compositions along with a couple of traditional songs. Victoria's crystalline singing was perfectly complimented by Lindsay's emotive playing. The strength of the connection between these two musicians was obvious on stage, and they produce glorious harmonies together. The duo's songwriting doesn't shy away from challenging subjects. Their hard-hitting songs and evocative melodies were prefaced by wonderful tales of life on the road, stories of friends and family, and general musings that drew the audience closer into the world of these two incredible artists. It was a joy and a privilege to have We Mavericks come and play in our town!

The success of the event was thanks to support from St Martin's Chapel, from Nick Dear who generously provided sound equipment, and from Blackwood Progress Association who ran a bar on the evening to raise community funds. All in all it was a great Saturday night out in Blackwood.

Fiona Ross





AVENUE OF HONOUR

The History of the Blackwood Avenue of Honour in Barrys Reef. LEST WE FORGET.

Compiled by Margot Hitchcock, Historian for the Blackwood & District Historical Society. November, 2022.

THE 1914 - 1919 Barrys Reef ROLL OF HONOUR - Mounted on the wall in the Blackwood Hall.

I have been asked for the istory of the Barrys Reef Avenue of Honour which is getting funding for a memorial.

In 1919 the Barrys Reef School Committee and Teacher, Miss Eleanor Taylor, planted 29 Elm trees as an Avenue of Honour on Arbour Day in Barrys Reef. They were assisted by the pupils and a number of relatives of the men who had served in the First World War. Each tree had a metal nameplate and this was attached to two big pieces of hardwood that had come from the poppet head of the Sultan Mine which was being dismantled at the time. The reason being that a large number of the 29 men had been employed in some capacity at the mine prior to 1914. Miss Taylor carried countless buckets of water from mine holes to try to keep the trees alive, but only two trees survived' that of Will Broad and Fred Rattray.

Some history researched on soldiers who died by Margot Hitchcock:

Neil Kidd - Roll of Honour.

Service number: 1740, Rank: Private, Unit: 23rd Battalion (Infantry), Service: Australian Army, Conflict: 1914-1918, Date of death: 7 September 1915

Cause of death: Died of wounds, Cemetery or memorial details: Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.

War Grave Register notes: KIDD, Pte. Neil, 1740. 23rd Bn. Died of wounds at sea 7th Sept., 1915. 66.

Place of Birth - South Yarra Vic : Place of Enlistment - Melbourne VIC : Next of Kin - (Father) -Arthur Kidd of Yea.

Died at sea 7/9/15 - shrapnel wounds to jaw and throat – wounds received in action at Gallipoli died on board the S.S 'Maheno'. Buried at sea off Lemnos. Chaplain D.Dutton.

Source: AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army.

Neil Kidd was born at Blackwood in 1891 to Arthur Kidd and Euphemia McSwan, making him 24 yrs old when he died in 1915. Neil had a brother Alexander Kidd born in Blackwood in 1889, and Arthur born in Barrys Reef in 1883 Jane born 1884, and Euphemia born 1886.

Source: AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army.

Also found on the Honour Roll was the brother of Neil Kidd, that of Robert Kidd, so the father, Arthur Kidd lost two sons. Robert Kidd was born to Arthur Kidd and Euphemia McSwan.

Robert Kidd - Roll of Honour

Age 20 yrs & 9 months – Sergeant – Blackwood sawmill. Fourth Light Horse regiment. 2nd Anzac mounted regt. Later 2nd Lieutenant, 58th battalion. Joined 20-8-14. Father Arthur Kidd.

Killed in action in the field - 25/10/17. Was in hospital in Amiens, Havre, and Boulouge, France.

Robert Kidd's birth is not listed in Victoria but his brothers and sisters were born at Barrys Reef Blackwood that of - Arthur Kidd born 1883, Jane Kidd born 1884, and Euphemia Kidd born 1886, Alexander Kidd born 1889, and Neil Kidd born 1891.

Robert Kidd was recorded as 'Lieut R.Kidd was killed in action whilst moving up the trenches at Passchendaele Ridge east of Ypres. He was badly hit by shell. Burial was not affected to this Unit, arrangements been made with 60th Battalion to effect same. This the 60th Battalion I.D. but the location of the grave is not known by this Battalion. It may be the Military Cemetery near Anzac Ridge, Passchendaele.'



A card in the Canberra War Records showed that when a soldier died his effects were sent to his next of kin – such were the remaining items sent to Arthur Kidd the father of Robert Kidd – a sad reminder the father had of his son at war.

Record-Inventory list of effects of Kit store 14/7/18 of Robert Kidd as – 'One black bag (sealed) containing – 2 wristlet watches (damaged), playing cards, letters, 2 boot brushes, 5 pipes, 1 damaged, 1 small mirror (damaged), 1 towell, 1 muffler, socks, 1 knife, 1 pr. Mittens, 1 pr. Braces, 4 shirts, 1 balaclava cap, 1 collar, 1 leather purse, 1 gift tin, handkerchiefs, 1 pr. Breeches.'

Source: AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army.

Robert Power is listed as from Barrys Reef. A prospector prior to enlistment, he attended the State School Blackwood. He embarked with No.4 Section from Outer Harbor, SA on board HMAT 'Suevic' on 31 May 1916. Service No. 9534 died in France on 6th June 1917 and Roll of Honour - Service number: 9534, Rank: Sapper, Unit: 11th Field Company Australian Engineers. Service: Australian Army, Conflict: 1914-1918. Date of death: 6 June 1917, Cause of death: Killed in action. Cemetery or memorial details: Nieppe Communal Cemetery, France.

War Grave Register notes: POWER, Spr. Robert, 9534. 11th Field Coy. Australian Engineers. Son of Robert and Johanna Power. On the morning of the 6 June 1917, at "Stuff Camp" Pont Nieppe, Spr Power was instantly killed by a shell which landed in the camp, he was 42 years of age. Spr Power is buried at the Nieppe Communal Cemetery, France.

Source: AWM145 Roll of Honour cards, 1914-1918 War, Army.

Robert Power was born in Ballarat in 1874, and had a sister, Ellen Power born in Barrys Reef 20th January, 1878. Ellen Power was the mother of the late Grace Rayner who wrote the Poetry book 'A Selection of Blackwood Poems and Other Verses.' The late Grace Rayner was the niece of Robert Power.

Researched by Margot Hitchcock from her forthcoming book 'The History and Pioneers of Blackwood', hopefully to be published soon. Other books published by Margot Hitchcock – "Aspects of Early Blackwood", "Some History of Simmons Reef, Blackwood" and "The Billy Pincombe Tragedy". For help with information on Blackwood ancestors, contact Margot Hitchcock: margothitchcock@bigpond.com Barrys Reef Avenue of Honour 2008

Photo courtesy Margot Hitchcock. Barrys Reef Honour Board in the Blackwood Hall.

Courtesy Margot Hitchcock and the B.D.H.S.

NEST BOXES - TIPS FOR ENSURING SUCCESS

In September, Landcare hosted a 'Gardens For Wildlife' workshop. This was one of the best workshops I have attended in a very long time. The focus of the workshop was how to make nest boxes for hollow dependent native birds and mammals. Not only was it informative, but all participants left with a quality nesting box to place on their own properties.

The workshop was funded by the Moorabool Council and presented by Miles Geldard. For the last twenty years Miles has been making nest boxes for native wildlife. His background in threatened species conservation, tertiary education and experience in the construction industry has given him a broad understanding of wildlife's habitat needs and how to advocate for their conservation. He has also established Wildlife Nest Boxes (www.wildlifeneboxes.au) a business through which he endeavours to use his skills to provide quality habitat for hollow dependent wildlife.

Over the years Miles has supplied nest boxes to state and local governments, numerous landcare and funded conservation groups and hundreds of property owners both rural and suburban. In this workshop Miles generously shared with us what he has learnt over the years for ensuring nest box success. To ensure success, Miles advises that when purchasing or building nest boxes there are four key design elements that need attention: design; construction; installation, and monitoring.

The internet and other sources have many nest boxes of various designs available. Sadly, however some fail in several key areas (size, wastage of material, incorrect paint, water leakage and thermodynamics).

Design

Design should accommodate for each species particular traits and needs. Miles has spent a lot of time researching for appropriate design. He has spent time sourcing data from peer reviewed scientific papers and journals.

Generally speaking nest boxes for birds have entrances on the front and for mammals on the side. The exception are microbats, a flying mammal, which have a base entrance.

There is a common myth circulating that an internal ladder is needed for young to access the entrance of a nest box. This started when deceased chicks were found in nest boxes. Their untimely death may have been caused by several factors (disease, the nest box was made far too deep and/or from smooth-sided materials) but the most likely, heat stress. Heat stress needs to be addressed throughout all four of the fundamentals - design, construction, installation and monitoring.

Construction

To avoid unwanted negative animal welfare issues, such as nest boxes prematurely failing and/or falling to the ground, construction must use quality materials and be built strong. Nest boxes should last for more than 15 years minimum. As mentioned earlier, heat stress is a big issue and may be minimised by the use of thick insulating materials. Miles uses 19mm and 32mm ply. Some commercial nest boxes use 12mm or less! When constructing, avoid nails. Zinc screws and lots of them make for a sturdy nest box. Neat joints and at least two coats of exterior grade, light coloured UV acrylic house paint will act as a 'suit of armour' protecting the nest box from the elements. Oil finishes can be problematic as they require yearly re-coats. Water ingress must be considered. The habits of various species, such as chewing or digging, must also be taken into consideration.

**Do you have a
bird (or furry) tale to share?**
Give us a tweet sometime.
team@theBLACKWOODTIMES.com.au

Installation

Miles advises that it is again important to research the habitat needs of native animals in your area that you want to accommodate. Here are some sound guidelines to assist with installation.

1. Choose a tree without existing hollows to place the nest box. Nest boxes can negatively impact natural hollows and their inhabitants.
2. A ladder is required to install a nest box and the use of ladders, in particular ladders against trees, is a high-risk exercise. Use caution here and seek assistance if required.
3. All but the owl boxes may be placed at a height of 4m above the ground.
4. Install nest boxes on the east side of the tree. This orientation keeps the nest box in the shaded side of the trunk and at a reasonable temperature during hot summer afternoons. A nest box on the west side of a tree is a death trap.
5. Don't strap the nest box to a tree. Straps can quickly deteriorate and cause the nest box to fall. Never screw a nest box to a living tree or affix with wire as this will choke the tree over time. Use large nails.

Monitoring

This is the fun part. For many years following the installation of a nest box you can enjoy the comings and goings of native animals that you have attracted to your property. No two years are the same. The timing and fledging of the young makes for very enjoyable viewing. Nowadays, nest box pole cameras are very affordable and have excellent quality images. One may also invest in a trail camera mounted on a nearby tree to film the nocturnal activities of the inhabitants.

During monitoring, if pest animals are observed in a nest box such as honeybees, mynahs, rats etc. these must be dealt with humanely and not allowed to persist in a nest box. The focus should be on our native animals.

You now have the elements needed to make informed choices. And as Miles says, "All in all, by providing native wildlife with much needed hollow-habitat, you give them the opportunity to procreate and thrive. Whilst you are observing them doing all this, you can bask in the knowledge you have helped them in a very direct way. Win win."

Carol Guthrie in consultation with Miles Geldard

Visit Wildlife Nest Boxes to see a full range of nest boxes that suit our local hollow dependent wildlife.

www.wildlifeneboxes.au



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TOWN MEETING:

On Saturday 15th October a town meeting was held at St Martin's Chapel which was attended by 70 people. The Blackwood Times invited the three speakers to submit a summary of their views.

David Stevens is a long-term resident of the Wombat Forest and an advocate of social justice, environment and First Nations People. Industrial mining and timber extraction is set to continue in the Wombat Forest until at least 2024. Communities around the Wombat Forest, from Daylesford to Blackwood, are upset and extremely worried about the continued decimation of the environment approved by both the Labor and Liberal National Parties.

An internet search using the term Resource Licences Near Me, shows many mining corporation licences issued to mine on private land, around town water supplies, and in surrounding areas of forest. While there is no current protection for these areas of the Wombat Forest, no mineral licences exist at the near-by Lerderderg State Park as its conservation status protects it. To view active plans for current logging, search "Approved TUP Forest Recovery, March 2022". Lift the forest management zone layer to reveal a detailed view. An interactive map can be viewed showing more than thousand hectares of heavy impact industrial log extraction. No log extraction sites exist in Lerderderg State Park.

Following the failure of State Government authorities to intervene, Barrys Reef community formed a group to take non-violent action to stop exploration drilling, which, in some cases, was scheduled to be carried out directly beneath their homes.

The Department of Environment and Land, Water and Planning, (D.E.L.W.P), Earth Resources, water authorities, nor elected representative Mary-Anne Thomas MP have acted to protect the fragile and important areas of the Wombat Forest from heavy industrial mining and logging.

Forest conservation is fundamental to local water and food security, habitat and ecosystem protection. Increased impacts of mining include pollution and risk of floods and fire which can be seen locally, at Wombat Creek south of Daylesford and Wombat Dam, the town's water supply. Other examples include Osborne Road, Bullarto and Babbington Road Lyonville.

The Andrews Government is breaking its promise to protect the Wombat Forest and has not enacted the recommendations of the Victorian Environment Assessment Council's (V.E.A.C) report, June 2019. The current Government's delay has resulted in the devastating environmental vandalism carried out by Vic Forests and the creation of new mines in the best remaining forested areas.

V.E.A.C's report recommended balanced social, economic, and ecological development. Compiled over three years, the report encouraged the participation of the broader community, including Traditional Owner groups. Importantly, this is the closest the State of Victoria has ever come to a treaty about future land-use. It is also a first step in long-overdue planning for climate impact mitigation and adaptation.

Clan elders from Wombat Forest Traditional Owner groups have long supported local community and environmental activists. The Victorian Aboriginal Embassy in 2002 issued locals firewood collection licences to remove burnable offcuts from logging operations rather than being fuel for post-logging industrial burns.

The Embassy actively protects sacred sites alongside community, including when the Hepburn pool site was under threat of destruction from the Hepburn Shire and DNRE formally DELWP.

In 2002 a senior Victorian Aboriginal elder with three generations of family members, approached a group of timber workers and government logging officials. She informed them that they were welcome on country as community members but they should now remove their logging machines from the Wombat Forest. The reply she received "You want to fight; we will bring out the guns and fight!" The dignified elder responded "what has changed in 200 years?" The exchange was shown on Ballarat WIN TV News that night. A Government department spokesman announced "DNRE (now DEWLP) does not condone or condemn violence in any form". No apology nor retraction of the threat was offered. The elder's son, an Indigenous man, was the next day the first person removed from the forest for interrupting logging. This motivated non-Indigenous people from the local community to disrupt logging every day for 10 months. Following these actions the Wombat Forest ceased being logged until this year.

Labor with the LNP have recently legislated from May 2023 to imprison protesting local people who interrupt logging operations so I wonder to myself... what has changed? In 2002 the Daylesford ALP local branch voted unanimously for the Wombat Forest to be managed to ensure its ecological protection and health.

Democracy is failing its true believers in Victoria. This is evident through failure of policy and operations of departments and authorities not acting in the interests of the community and the environment to enforce promised protections. Global corporations dominate political parties and government departments via industry lobbyists: the Minerals Council, Forestry Australia, Victorian Forestry Industry Association, The Chamber of Commerce, and the CFMMEU forestry division amongst them.

Wombat Forest residents, local groups and surrounding communities want politicians to immediately enact a moratorium on all licensing, permits and works for industrial mining and timber extraction from the Wombat Forest until the promised protections are legislated.



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LOGGING & MINING

Gayle Osborne from Wombat Forestcare opened her talk explaining that the Wombat Forest is a State Forest, and therefore its resources of timber and gold are managed by the State Government. The Victorian Government has undertaken to create a new Wombat-Lerderderg National Park and some regional parks in the Wombat Forest, but has decided not to legislate them until the next term of government. National Parks are managed for protection of the environment while allowing for recreation and education. Regional Parks are managed for recreation, to protect the environment and allow for minor resource extraction but not saw-log harvesting.

While we have been waiting for these protections to be legislated we have had a massive storm that felled thousands of trees. As the Wombat Forest is still legally considered a state forest, VicForests has been able to create a salvage Timber Utilisation Plan and has listed 175 coupes in the Wombat Forest, 80 of those in the promised National Park.

Slides of the VicForests' operation in three coupes north of the Trentham-Daylesford Road were shown at the meeting. The worst of these is Babbington Hill where the destruction is heart-breaking. Over 2 acres of forest (Greater Glider habitat) has been cleared and tracks created that are 4 - 6 metres wide to carry machinery weighing 20 - 30 tonnes which cause damaging compaction of the soil.

There is an agreement between the State and Commonwealth Governments that regulates native forest logging. The Regional Forest Agreements provides an exemption for the protection of threatened species listed by the Commonwealth, on the basis that the States will protect them under their legislation.

The Code of Forest Practice for Timber Production lists some threatened species and how they will be protected. If a threatened species is not listed in the code for a specific region, there is no mechanism for its protection. For the Wombat Forest, with over 40 threatened species, only a few have some protection. The code has been written to protect the logging industry and there are limited safeguards for the environment, including waterways.

Our logs are going elsewhere in the State to prop-up failing timber mills and as pulp to the Maryvale Paper Mill in Gippsland. All the contractors have come from Gippsland and the Central Highlands. Locals will not even have access to these coupes for firewood.

The only way to stop this destruction is political – making your voice heard.



No Wombat Gold representatives gave an update on the status of mining in the Blackwood area. Barrys Reef are waiting for the outcome of a prospecting licence application, and plan to take Cauldron Energy to VCAT if the licence is granted.

Currawong Resources have applied for an exploratory licence that runs between Barrys Reef and The Garden of St. Erth. Many objections were made, but it is unlikely to stop the exploration licence being granted.

The Australia Institute has researched the economic realities of mining. It isn't pretty. The key facts are:

- Mining 'crowds out' other industries: The expansion of mining causes a contraction in non-mining industries, particularly manufacturing, tourism, agriculture and education. This results in business closures and job losses.
- Mining is a small employer: Mining is highly mechanised and employs few people relative to other industries. It employs only around 2% of the Australian workforce.
- Mining is a poor taxpayer: The effective corporate tax rate for mining is 13.9%, well below the industry average of 21%.
- Mining is highly subsidised: Every year the Commonwealth Government subsidises the mining industry by at least \$4 billion dollars.
- Mining is 83% foreign owned.
- Mining did not 'save' Australia from the GFC: Mining shed 15% of its employees within 6 months of the GFC. If the rest of the economy had behaved the same way, Australia would have experienced 19% unemployment.
- Source: www.tai.org.au.

Q: What industry will mining push out?

A: Tourism.

So... is it mining or dining?





Resolution from the Town Meeting

Those present at the meeting unanimously voted to resolve to write to Mary-Anne Thomas MP to request that the Premier and Cabinet impose a moratorium on all licences, permits and works for all commercial log removal and mining related activities in the Wombat Forest until after planned legislation is proclaimed granting National Parks and Regional Parks status.

Follow-up letters to the Minister

As shared with the Blackwood Times

Attt: Hon. Mary-Ann Thomas, State Member for Macedon
From: Frauke Hoffman, 23 Oct 2022

Attn: Frauke Hoffman, 03 Dec 2022
From: Office of Hon. Mary-Ann Thomas MP, State Member for Macedon

Dear Hon. Mary- Anne Thomas,
My name is Frauke Hoffmann and I live in Blackwood. I am shocked at the way the salvage operation in the Wombat State Forest is being done. Have you been out to Babbington Hill near Daylesford?
What this looks like is clear felling. Devastation. Soil ready to run off at the first rain. A moonscape.
As we all know, Blackwood was heavily affected by the storms and therefore lost a lot of tall trees to this event. We agree that the area needs to be cleaned up and made fire safe.
Vic Forests under the guidance of the State Government have started to salvage some of the affected forests. That sounded like a very good and productive idea.
However, what this looks like in practice is not what should be expected. I personally haven't seen anything like this since the days when logging companies were clear felling for wood chips in the Wombat State Forest and these brutal measures make me cry. I am so worried that the same practice is going to be used around Blackwood and other parts of the forest. Can you also imagine what effect this will have on our water catchment area, especially on these steep slopes?
What is the control system in place to watch over Vic Forests logging? Also, I believe that the communities in the Wombat State Forest need to be kept informed, as not knowing is making people, including myself, very anxious.
I therefore request "that the Premier and Cabinet impose a moratorium on all licenses , permits and works for all commercial log removal and mining related activities in the Wombat State Forest until after planned legislation is proclaimed granting National Park and Regional Park Status."
I am hoping that you are able to help in this matter and I am looking forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely,
Frauke Hoffmann

Dear Frauke
Thank you for contacting Mary-Anne.
The Wombat State forest has around 80,000 hectares of forest and 1,500 kilometres of road network affected by fallen and hazardous trees and debris, which has an impact on landscape, forest health, cultural heritage and industry.
The recovery work is part of a partnership between Traditional Land Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and VicForests to assist in restoring Country in the Wombat State Forest and surrounding areas.
Managing and recovering fallen trees and debris is a sensitive operation requiring specialised planning and expertise.
No trees are being removed unless they present a hazard or for operational necessity. No clearfelling is occurring in these operations. Trees that have fallen to the ground during storm damage are not suitable habitat for Southern Greater Gliders, koalas or owls.
After operations have been completed forest treatments such as burning or mechanical disturbance may be required to assist with forest regeneration. Tracks and landings made because of the recovery operations will be rehabilitated to secure the area to prevent erosion and prepare for rehabilitation.
Works undertaken under the Forest Recovery Timber Utilisation Plan (TUP) must comply with the Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014 (as amended 2022).
Storm recovery work in the Wombat State Forest and elsewhere involves cleaning up windthrown trees to reduce fuel loads and the fire risk to communities over the coming years.
Importantly, the work in the Wombat State Forest and surrounding areas to restore Country is a partnership between Traditional Land Owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, and VicForests.
This is not salvage logging, it is removing fallen trees and getting access to improve forest health and resilience, based on cultural practices and backed up by scientific research that supports active management of our forests.

Thank you
Kate-Ida Lee (she/her)
Office of Mary-Anne Thomas MP

EDITORIAL NOTE
Blackwood Times acknowledges that there are other points on view on this issue. We will obtain comment from VicForest, CFA and others in the next issue.

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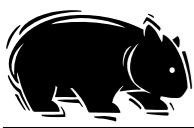
Earlier letter to the Minister

Attn: Hon. Mary-Ann Thomas MP, State Member for Macedon
From: Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group, 24 June 2022

Dear Minister,
Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group is concerned about the windthrown salvage log operations in designated Forest Recovery Coupes in the vicinity of Blackwood. Our concerns relate to the potential for soil erosion leading to loss of top soil, understory plants and associated fauna, pollution of the Lerderderg River, the negative impact on local residents' amenity and the incursion of weeds into areas opened up by the salvage operations.
As indicated on the March 2022 map located on the VicForests website, the Forest Recovery Coupes north of Blackwood along the Blackwood-Trentham Road in the vicinity of Barry's Reef are located in very steep country with highly mobile soil in close proximity to the Lerderderg River, a state-listed Heritage river and designated water catchment, adjacent to private land and highly visible from the road. Similarly are the coupes located to the west of the Trentham Road. More coupes are indicated along the entire length of Yankee Creek, a major tributary of the Lerderderg. All of these coupes are located in the Special Management Zone. A major concern is the number of coupes that are adjacent to each other causing a broad swath of area to be potentially impacted. While we are aware of the forestry code of practice, which gives general requirements, we would like to know site specific details.
Weed incursion, in particular blackberry and gorse, is highly likely to occur in opened up forest where heavy machinery is in use. We see this regularly occurring along the forestry tracks and the illegal motorcycle tracks and expect it to be much worse in a salvage logging area. The forestry code of practice is not particularly forthcoming on the management of weeds.
There is historic reference to an outcrop of tachylite in the vicinity, highly valued by the indigenous population for the crafting of tools. A trade in tachylite tools extended over diverse areas of Victoria.
According to the website <https://www.forestsandreserves.vic.gov.au/forest-management/forest-protection-survey-program1/definitions-and-further-information>, "a Special Management Zone includes areas for conservation of fauna species, point localities (special management sites) of significant features (historic sites and isolated populations of key threatened plant species) and areas where modified

timber harvesting techniques will be used to minimise the visual impact of harvesting and risks to catchment values. Each area has a plan prepared, which details if and under what conditions timber harvesting may occur."
Our questions are:
1. How is the soil in these Forest Recovery Coupes to be protected and stabilised to ensure no loss of top soil, native habitat, amenity or pollution of the Lerderderg River?
2. How will these Forestry Recovery Coupes be managed for weed incursion during and post salvage operations?
3. What funds have been allocated to managing weed incursion which, in accordance with standard ecological restoration practices, will have to occur for a minimum of five years?
4. Have the indigenous stakeholders been apprised of the possible disturbance of their cultural heritage?
5. Has the location of the tachylite outcrop been mapped?
6. Would any future wind event lead to a similar response by the state into a Conservation/ National Park?
7. Could we have copies of the Forest Recovery Coupe plans and for the Special Management Zone in order to better understand the potential operations?
8. Would a better approach be reducing the number of adjacent Forest Recovery Coupes by more than half so that such a broad area of land is not affected?
9. As the forestry code of practice (and associated standards) do not refer to windthrown salvage, should not the underpinning precautionary principle come into play in this instance?
Our Landcare Group is passionate about caring for our local area which includes the forest and the beautiful river which is of very good condition in the upper part of the Lerderderg catchment. We live here. The concern we have is the impacts will be long term for short term monetary gain if proper care and attention is not taken. The risk of potential future fire should be balanced by carefully understanding the immediate impacts on the upper Lerderderg catchment and currently we do not see such consideration by Vic Forests.

Yours sincerely
Michael Hotchin
President, Blackwood Barry's Reef Landcare Group



ST MARTIN'S CHAPEL CELEBRATES THEIR FIRST WEDDING RECEPTION FOR ABIGAIL WARD AND CLAUDE DAVIES

We got secretly engaged in Blackwood, after just a month of dating. We struggled to find the right wedding venue for a year, until we took another weekend trip to Claude's family hut in Golden Point and it clicked - we had to do it here.

From the moment we mentioned we wanted to get married in Blackwood, the locals were behind us all the way. We want to firstly thank Karen Bruno, who assisted us through the entire process. From directing us to the right people, letting us use her sensational plot of land for our ceremony, and providing delicious coffee, tea, and cakes.

We would like to thank Robyn and Wally Zanon, who very kindly let us use the idyllic St Martin's Chapel for our reception. We would also like to thank Annalice for the hair and makeup she provided for the bride and her family.

Lastly, we'd like to thank Rose Carrington for her delicious cheese platters at the reception. The quality of the food, and the presentation, was a constant topic of praise. We can't recommend her catering business, Rose's Country Table, enough.

Despite the 100% chance of thunderstorms that day, amidst the devastating floods in Victoria, the clouds parted right in time for our ceremony. Our wedding day exceeded all of our expectations, and we couldn't be more grateful for all the assistance we received.

The beauty of Blackwood, and the warmth and help from all the locals, has imprinted the town into the hearts of our family and friends forever. Thank you all for making our wedding such a sensational day.

Abigail and Claude



Abigail and Claude's wedding

LOCAL HAPPENINGS: RECENT SNAPSHOTS AROUND TOWN



Michael and Karin (and Max) tied the knot at the Blackwood Pub



Mad Cat riders visiting Blackwood for Lunch, Sat 19 November



Happy 21st Sean & Ali

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A BLACKWOOD GARDEN

Finally, it's been warming up in Blackwood so I'm sure you've been planting your summer veggies. In a rush before I left for Japan I planted my tomatoes - straight out of the green house and unfortunately for my tomatoes, suddenly, we had warm sunny weather. One plant went white, so I'll see if it has survived once I get back.

I'm in seventh heaven here in Japan and in Autumn. The colours are extraordinary and it's such a blast to the senses...a visual feast! It is very much needed after our long cold Blackwood Winter and early Spring. Here, in Japan, they are already preparing their gardens for Winter.

Japanese gardens have the philosophy of "less is more". A garden is only finished when there is nothing more to remove. The most important element in a garden is rock. They have such a different sensibility, which I appreciate, but would not be able to achieve in my Blackwood garden. They think colour is secondary and should only be used sparingly, except of course, the riot of colours in Autumn.

I'm looking forward to returning to Spring in Blackwood!

Jane Howat



BLACKWOOD MAKERS

Return to Nature Forest Therapy

Today we introduce two long-term and well-respected Blackwood Makers: Greg and Kerryn Cassidy. Together they run 'Return To Nature' - a purpose-built Forest Therapy business nestled in the heart of Wombat Forest.

For the past 25 years, Greg and Kerryn's lives have been tied very close to family, nature, art, professional health and wellbeing. Close friends and Neighbours (undisclosed) describe them as mad-keen naturalists, campers, artists, makers, bakers, explorers and adventurers - 'caring old souls'. As Kerryn stated: "yeah, we tend to live on edge of mainstream, but wouldn't have it any other way".

So what is Forest therapy?

As Greg describes; Forest Therapy is from the Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing; the simple and therapeutic act of emerging yourself in the forest through your senses. Forest Therapy helps bring you back in touch with the present moment using various guided techniques and hopefully, allow the inner stories to take a short rest.

Scientifically, there's a staggering body of evidence showing that, even a short forest therapy walk, brings immense physiological and mental health benefits. This includes improved sleep quality, mood, focus and immune response and lower anxiety, stress, blood pressure and muscle tension. This is due, in no small part, to the cortisol lowering Phytoncides pouring out of the trees and plants - that familiar fresh forest smell.

In Japan, Forest therapy is now included in the National Health Program and commonly prescribed by doctors as standard treatment for stress and anxiety. Little wonder Blackwood people seem so happy!

Greg adds, "Forest Therapy is really very simple... just be here, return to nature and the immerse your senses in the beautiful natural environment". "So that's what we do, guide people with walks and use simple techniques to reconnect".

Wanna know more?

To learn more about Forest Therapy or perhaps book a guided walk, please visit: www.return2nature.com.au.



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS IN VICTORIA - WHAT MAKES THEM TICK?



My involvement with the Blackwood Times, one of 100+ community newspapers throughout Victoria, extends over a few short months, so I am no expert on what makes them survive and thrive. However, in this period of transition from Jinny and Brendan, there are some clues. Willingness of individuals to learn and contribute; patience of the elders in guiding; respect for others and pride in the community itself are high on the list.

A few weeks ago I attended the 17th annual conference of the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV). This meeting of more than 70 not-for-profit newspapers throughout Victoria provided more insights. As the CNAV states, "These volunteer-driven papers inform and educate their communities, strengthening them socially and economically and help them be resilient in times of hardship. They publish stories to let their residents know and understand the history and culture of their people and localities."

Some of the papers have been going for decades and range from productions that go out weekly to bi-monthly – like our Blackwood Times. These publications can have an audience of many thousands and a widely variable demographic. What is truly remarkable is the survival rate.

A keynote speaker at the conference, Paul Rovere, photographic editor with The Age, pointed out that over the last few years community newspapers have thrived whilst tabloids have collapsed, particularly in regional areas. As social media has evolved so the CNAV members have supported each other to adapt. Some are confronted with the emergence of fly-by-night publications out to make a quick buck and who eat into the Community Newspaper's (CN) advertising base. All have to come up with creative ways to cover costs. All are reliant on volunteers with a range of skills and aptitudes.

Workshops and conversations at the conference provided ideas, strategies and, most important of all, network connections for when advice and help is needed. Some examples:

- How to cover elections and not be accused of bias
- What are the legalities regarding photography, particularly where minors are involved?
- When is it appropriate to go 100% on a campaign (eg sewerage in Blackwood, save our Wombie sign) or to present both sides of the argument (eg cool burning and/or removal of fallen lumber after storms)
- Succession planning. Many wanted to know how we are going about it
- Generating funds to cover costs. Sales of hard copy have declined. We don't want cover to cover advertising and it would be great with more colour
- Supporting youth - encouraging budding journalists from the local schools
- With a combined distribution of more than 180,000 copies per issue amongst CNAV members, the influence of our newspapers is certainly not to be taken lightly
- Where to find a good cartoonist?
- How to encourage, support and increase participation in volunteering.

But what is the purpose of our humble little publication?

We recently became Blackwood Times Vic Incorporated, for legal and financial reasons, with these aims and objectives:

1. To encourage and foster inclusion and to bring the community together
2. To produce a sustainable community resource by developing skills within the team and wider community
3. To maintain an archive that forms an historical community resource
4. To form sustainable partnerships with businesses and organisations which support the local community
5. Create an impartial voice for community issues .

Other CN's are taking on issues like affordable housing, how to safely communicate about mental health and suicide in our local communities etc. What, if anything might we take on? How do we decide?

What do you think? What can you/we do to ensure our BT survives and thrives?

Don't think I have ever thought of attendance at an annual conference as a pleasure, but this was. To be amongst such positive, collaborative folk doing their little big bit to help community was a privilege – and there were a few laughs.

John Kemp

News Just in:

The Blackwood Times was a finalist in The Community Newspapers Association of Victoria annual awards



OAKS DAY 2022

Blackwood Hotel, there might have only been seven of us but we had a ball. Yummy food, lots of champagne and sweeps all day – yes Lynda won three, Helen won three.

Rebecca judged: Robyn for the best dressed and Deirdre for best hat. A big thanks to Ebonnie and Rebecca for dressing up the bar and for doing the food. Thanks also to our lovely Marie behind the bar.

Hopefully we will have a lot more well dressed people next year.



Orienteering

Around 1,000 competitors from Australia and New Zealand descended on Blackwood for the Australian Orienteering Championships.

Just 2 days later this staging area became a raging river.

TIMOTHY REYNOLDS

Plotting a course which turned out to be a precise North, the young Reynolds family moved their home from Leongatha to Yarrawonga, where Tim's father had taken on a new ministry at St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church, and where, under cover of dark, young Tim would sneak in to play the organ (not very sneaky when everyone could hear you honking away). But so began a career in music.

These days he lives far from the 145th longitude, in a town called Blackwood with his partner, Amelia, whom he found one day sitting next to him in choir. Just as his parents had done.

Around the time he met Amelia in the second row of Trinity College Choir, Tim became involved with Victorian Opera, and then later with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Melbourne Bach Choir and smaller companies such as Pinchgut Opera, Melbourne Octet and Consort of Melbourne.

He maintains his love of church music, the music of his parents, specialising in oratorio and early music, Bach and Handel.

Footnote: Graham Reynold's parish included St. Oswald's in the district of Boomahnoomoonah. It doesn't have much of a bearing on this story; I just needed to write Boomahnoomoonah. There, it's done. I hope they have a squeaky and honking organ in the church in... Boomahnoomoonah.

Brendan Hehir



SUMMER'S LANDING:

A love letter to our beautiful girl

It was two and a half years ago that my partner Kieren and I enacted our tree-change, moving to Blackwood. 10 minutes was all it took at the open house to know that this was our place. After living in central Melbourne for the previous 13 years, this was the sanctuary we'd both dreamt of and the open space we could finally give our babies.

Now, when I say 'babies' I am of course referring to the fur variety. And when I say 'fur', I mean plenty of it. Your see, our babies are Golden Retrievers...Summer and her little brother Oscar.

To give them the space provided by our new home was a dream come true. To see their reaction when they arrived...well, imagine zoomies galore...sheer joy!

It was in that moment, seeing their reaction through the tears in my eyes, that the name I'd envisaged for our property was confirmed... SUMMER'S LANDING.

Two and half years since moving here, and a month shy of her 16th birthday, Summer passed away. To say we're heartbroken and we'll miss her, is an understatement. But the thought that she spent her final years here in this beautiful place fills us with gratitude.

Laying her to rest in the spot where we'll build a pond, it occurs to me that 'Summer's Landing' has become, and will continue to be, more than a property to us, but instead a love letter to our beautiful girl.

Rest in Peace Summer (25/12/06 to 24/11/22).

(by Summer's Dad, Rob McLellan)



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Who's tatt is that?

"In 2020 I got trapped in Berlin when COVID-19 hit. Unable to go home and not knowing when I could, I wanted something to remember this crazy time and so I marked my skin with ink. I went to @hanna_manna_tatu to get a tattoo when the lockdowns ended as a way to mark the craziness of the times. I chose her for her incredible skill with line work and to compliment the acrobatic bodies I had put on my back much earlier in my 20s.

The artwork took over 16 hours to complete across two days. It was an intense time in amongst rehearsals for a tour that somehow managed to go ahead in between the European lockdowns. I had to wrap myself in glad-wrap across my entire torso to protect the healing process as I had to continue acrobatic rehearsals on the Monday straight after the weekend of receiving the tattoo. This rehearsal involved being pummelled against bodies and aerial apparatus for hours over the course of the week. Somehow the tattoo and the detailed line work survived."

A: Phoebe Armstrong



And that?

This distinctive tattoo was intended by its wearer as a note to self.

It is an Enso circle which is a Zen symbol meaning "form contained in formlessness". It also symbolic of nothing and everything existing simultaneously.

A: Dave Commins (AKA Super Dave)

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IMPROVING OUR CONNECTIVITY

Recently a friendly bunch of Telstra experts spent a day in Blackwood. They came to talk with us about getting the best out of our Telstra services, maximising mobile coverage and ensuring we stay connected.

Many of us in Blackwood use Telstra services to connect to the internet with ADSL or through the Telstra mobile tower. Others connect via satellite to the NBN with other providers. How ever these signals enter and leave our homes, we can take actions to improve the speed of transmission; the strength of the signals going in and out and the reliability on our side of the fence.

Marcus Swinburne, Regional Engagement Manager for Northern & Western Victoria, described their work as fundamentally educative. They are currently working with Moorabool Council on ways to improve our digital connection with and to the outside world.

Whilst they were here checks were made on several houses and simple fixes were undertaken and recommended such as:

- upgrading the modem, the wi-fi box
- testing your broadband speed (<https://www.speedtest.net/>)
- checking wiring
- installing a booster if you are a way out of town (approx. \$2,200 installed).

Marcus made the point that in an emergency reliable and fast connection is paramount.

He told his story how he had started with Telstra help-desk call centre 30 years ago and the service then consisted of the customer running next door to ring Telstra. Asked if you could ring in or out, and if the answer was no, he would advise the customer that they would send a technician out. That's how it was then.. and how times have changed!

Contact details:

marcus.g.swinburne@team.Telstra.com
T. +61 3 8647 9024 M. +61 429 869 861

John Kemp

Counting Koalas

How many Koalas live in Blackwood? This little fella reckons he can count them on one paw. I must admit there seem to be fewer sightings these days. Back when you would plant a blue gum one year and by the following year there'd be a furball sitting in it!

So, if you've come across Blinky Bill recently, please join the count & fill out this form <https://rb.gy/gwmaxj>

DELWP's VKMS 2022 (don't worry, I'll translate) – the relevant department is releasing a new Victorian Koala Management Strategy this year. The last one was nearly 20 years ago, so they could probably do with some current info from our neck of the woods.

The strategy's goal is to "ensure Victoria's koala populations and habitat are secure, healthy and sustainable". We can't argue with that. So, let's do our bit and join the count. In the meantime I might just plant a couple of blue gums.



Two gum leaf or not two gum leaf... that is the question.

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LOCAL MUSICIANS PERFORM AT INTERSTATE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Local duo 'Cat & Clint' and local trio 'Honeyfields' were part of the stellar Australian line up of artists at the Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival that was recently held in Northern NSW.

To quote the festival's programme, "Cat & Clint are recognised as one of Australia's favourite Old-Time Duo's. They are inspired and driven by Traditional Mountain Music and the custom of passing down tunes that date back centuries".

Honeyfields comprises local Blackwood musicians Cat (from Cat & Clint) and Nicola Strating, along with Nicola's sister Corinn. All three have been playing music together since their childhood, originally meeting up at the various folk festivals around the country while travelling with their parents.

Dorrigo is a small town located in the hinterland behind Bellingen and Coffs Harbour, which is set on a plateau amongst some of the best farm land in Australia and is adjacent to a World Heritage Area with magnificent National Parks that support ancient sub-tropical rainforests with towering waterfalls. See you at the 21st Festival!

Des Peters



BLACKWOOD CHRISTMAS CAROLS

We will be having Christmas Carols by Twilight on Christmas Eve this year at St Martin's Chapel in the town centre. We will have a free Sausage Sizzle but if people want to bring their own meat they are welcome to, and a salad or finger food to share would be great.

Everyone is welcome. Sausages will be available from 5.30 and Carols will commence at 6pm.

Robyn Zanon

SAVE THE DATE - TOWN CHRISTMAS PARTY

Let's all get together to celebrate on Sunday 18th December. The Christmas party is traditionally held at the Cricket Ground but may be moved to the Mineral Springs this year so keep an eye on the community Facebook page for confirmation closer to the event.

The party will kick off at midday and the Food Hut van will be in attendance from 12pm - 2pm. The BBQ will be on and free to use all day so feel free to bring your own barbie favs.

As usual the Cricket Club will be running the bar and there will be plenty of activities to keep the kids busy. Santa will be visiting and there will also be a scavenger hunt and jumping castle. There will also be a raffle on the day - please contact Morgan if you would like to donate a prize.

Fingers crossed that the sun will shine and we can all get together to celebrate Christmas and community spirit in true Blackwood style.



BLACKWOOD TIMES GOES TO...

Amazing trip to East Arnhem Land. A privilege to have been invited for two weeks. But I had to bring a bit of Blackwood with me, so the best travel buddy was an edition of our local Blackwood Times.

Noelle Shader

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GIG & EVENTS GUIDE

Table with columns DATE, EVENT, VENUE. Rows for December events including Nathan Gluver at Blackwood Pub, 5k foam fest fun run at St Anne's Winery, Cam and Dave at Pig and Whistle, Karaoke & Cocktails at Blackwood, Landcare's Christmas BBQ by the River at Mineral Springs, Chan-Don's Christmas Cocktails & Karaoke at Blackwood Pub, Relentless Rumble! at Bacchus Marsh Public Hall, Bitter Sweet at Flanagans, Christmas Market at St Anne's Winery, Paranormal investigation & dinner at Blackwood Pub, Community Battery info session at St Martin's Chapel, SOS Abba Tribute at Greendale Pub, Beat Bros at Pig and Whistle, Market at St Martin's Chapel, Blackwood Christmas Party (check facebook closer to date), Brian Sadler at Greendale Pub, Turnstile + more at Commercial Hotel, Ballan, Carols by Twilight at St Martin's Chapel, Birds in Music at Ballan Mechanics Institute, Heros & Villans TBC at Blackwood Pub.

Table with columns DATE, EVENT, VENUE. Rows for January events including Informal recovery party (BYO everything) at Mineral Springs, Tristan J Ross at Blackwood Pub.

Table with columns DATE, EVENT, VENUE. Rows for regular stuff including Old Farts Night and meat tray raffle at Blackwood Pub, Bible Study at St Martin's Chapel, Date night, movie and pizza at Radio Springs Hotel, Locals night at Chaplins, Taproom Trivia at The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh, Local's night dinner specials at The Cosmo Hotel, Disco bingo at Pig and Whistle, Local's night dinner and drink specials at Pig and Whistle, Meat tray raffle + cocktail hour at Greendale Pub, Meat tray raffle at The Cosmo Hotel, Raffle at Pig and Whistle, Flashbank Friday with Ian Banks at The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh, DJ, Duo or Band at Pig and Whistle, Pizza Sundays with live music at St Anne's Winery, Little Ones story & activity time at St Martin's Chapel Sponsored by Anna of Engaged and Grow Therapies Speech Pathology.

COUNCIL-RUN FESTIVAL WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Moorabool Council is celebrating the Hide + Seek Festival winning a national award.

The festival won the 2022 Creativity and Culture Award at the National Awards for Local Government, announced on 13 October.

Hide + Seek was a free mid-winter music festival sharing artists and unique venues only found in Moorabool Shire. It featured more than 200 artists across 20 venues in Blackwood, Gordon, Bacchus Marsh and Ballan.

Moorabool Shire Mayor Cr Tom Sullivan said the win was a great reward for the effort put in by Council's Arts, Culture and Events

Officer Bec Carey-Grieve and everyone in Council who worked on putting the festival together.

"Congratulations to Council staff and everyone involved in making this festival a success - the musicians, the venues, the volunteers, those who attended- it was a fantastic event and this award is very well-deserved," Cr Sullivan said.

Council was one of only two Victorian Councils to win an award at the annual national awards.

You can view a video of the Hide + Seek Festival on Council's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/EerJKukIBWM>



BALLAN AUTUMN FESTIVAL

The Ballan Autumn Festival has been running for over 40 years and peaked with an estimated crowd of over 10,000 people in the year prior to covid. Like many things it lay dormant during the covid years and was able to come back to life this year due to a State Government grant, albeit in Spring. The funding received came with a deadline which was the reason behind the festivals change from Autumn to Spring this time around.

Despite a pretty dire weather forecast – the usual heavy rain & strong winds – thousands of people turned out in Ballan to enjoy the return of the festival on Sunday 13th November. People from all over lined Inglis Street for the Grand Street Parade which saw over 40 different community groups and entrants involved.

The local kinder kids featured near the start of the parade and were later followed by a minibus of Ballan seniors smiling and waving to the crowds. In between was everything from stilt walker, scout and dance groups, vintage tractors and roller-skating bank representatives. A few musical acts were also involved in the parade with the Gordon Ukulele Band (pictured) being a real crowd favorite.

ROAD FIX BLITZ ACROSS MOORABOOL SHIRE

Moorabool Shire residents will notice an increased work crew out and about fixing our roads, after Council recently voted to increase its road maintenance budget by up to \$600,000.

The decision was made to increase the budget as constant rain and storms have resulted in deterioration of the road network.

Mayor Cr Tom Sullivan said the motion moved by Cr Paul Tatchell in urgent business at the November Council meeting was good for the community, as more work would be completed in a smaller amount of time.

“There is a lot of work to be done on our roads, we understand that,” Cr Sullivan said.

“Recent storms and rain have created many problems. We’re being very proactive in making plans to have the roads fixed up as quickly and effectively as possible.”

Kids were well and truly catered for with pony rides, face painting, bubbles and mountains of fairy floss. Multiple food trucks provided plenty of variety and there was plenty of entertainment to suit all tastes. Market stalls lined both sides of the street and there was a wide range of community stalls covering everything from preparing for fire season to learning to create a wildlife friendly garden.

As always, the woodchop event proved popular with those enjoying a beverage out the front of the Commercial Hotel having the best vantage point. The pet show proved popular, as did the numerous musical performances. The Ballan dance troupe, Studio C performed with an energy that this writer could only envy by that point. To ensure absolutely all boxes were ticked the CWA put on a fantastic Devonshire tea that no country festival would be complete without.

I’m sure all involved would consider the day to have been a great success and we now only have to wait 4 months to do it all over again. In 2023 the Ballan Autumn Festival returns to the correct season and will be held on the 3rd Sunday in March.

Council will be able to claim some road repairs under the State Government’s Disaster Recovery Fund and an additional recently-announced fund – the Council Flood Support Fund, but these funds don’t cover repairs to all the issues on the large road network.

“This extra \$600,000 on top of what we have already set aside to maintain and fix our Council-owned roads in the Budget, will result in obvious improvements to roads across our entire Shire.”

To keep the community in the loop, Council will provide regular updates on the road blitz via our website (moorabool.vic.gov.au), on our social media accounts and through our print advertising.

Genevieve Clark

CUTTING-EDGE YOUTH PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN DAYLESFORD

A group of Daylesford College students last week celebrated the launch of a cutting-edge gardening program.

Mow2Grow is a Central Highlands Rural Health Population Health initiative in partnership with the college that aims to promote student self-esteem, confidence, and emotional intelligence and improve their overall mental well-being through hands-on learning outside the classroom.

The Year 9 and 10 students will also contribute to community recovery efforts following severe weather events across the region last year, assisting residents in cleaning up private property and public and community spaces.

Over the next 8 weeks, the Mow2Grow students will be engaged in a range of immersive activities, including mowing, the safe use of power tools, and general gardening skills.

Population Health Manager and Mow2Grow program manager Taletha Rizio said the students would develop industry skills and gain a better understanding of ecological systems, farming and forest management, and vegetable and fruit growing.

“Students will also learn about local food relief services, environmental sustainability, and future employment opportunities,” she said.

“We work closely with teachers and mentors throughout the program to ensure students engage with this industry-based education experience.”

Mow2Grow has been modelled on the successful The Cook, The Chef and Us food and hospitality program, which is also run at Daylesford College and is now in its fifth year.

Mow2Grow is jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

CAN’T MAKE IT TO THE BANK? WE’LL COME TO YOU...

Community Bank - Trentham & Districts has a new branch manager Edyta Wyatt who has over 14 years of experience in the banking industry and is a great asset to the branch team.

Edyta says “With years of experience as a Lending Specialist including home loans, investment property loans, refinancing and first home buyers, I’m ready to help. I’m very keen to expand on our Mobile Lending Services, as a mobile relationship manager I’m always happy to work around your busy schedule. Whether it’s at your home, office, local café or an online meeting – whatever suits the customer, works for me.” “Customers and Community are at the heart of what we do, and I want you to know we are flexible and available.”

“I am a local resident living just down the road, who is very community-minded. I love the Community Bank Culture because it’s all about supporting the local communities achieve their goals.”

Whatever your banking needs, Community Bank Trentham & Districts are here for you.

Community Bank Trentham & Districts branch team and CCCE directors would like to wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas, hope you find the time to celebrate the wonderful and we look forward to seeing you in 2023 to create the greatest impact together.



A COMMUNITY BATTERY FOR BLACKWOOD?

A community or neighbourhood battery enables customers to get the benefit of energy storage without having to pay for a battery at home. If feasible, it would be of benefit to everyone, even those without solar power.

It would improve the reliability of the network resulting in fewer outages and/or disruptions.

Recently the ABC reported on a community battery connecting approximately 65 residences in Yackandandah.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-24/community-battery-yackandandah-ausgrid-electricity-shakeup/100159460>

The project itself, including a snapshot of process, costs and fund sources is best described by the Yackandandah folk:

<https://totallyrenewableyack.org.au/2020/10/supersizing-a-community-battery/>

Another community battery project at Tarneit is nearing completion; has a significant number of solar households (13,800) and is building a much larger battery (360kWh) to service 170 households per annum. The principle is the same.

<https://www.powercor.com.au/network-planning-and-projects/major-projects/tarneit-community-battery-project>

These projects are clearly the fore-runner of a much broader scheme as indicated by the Labor party pledge to connect 100 neighbourhood batteries in their next term of government.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/nov/10/victorian-election-labor-promises-100-neighbourhood-batteries-as-coalition-makes-ivf-pledge>

We have invited Frank Forster from the EnviroShop, Newstead to be available on Wednesday 14 December at 6pm to share his experiences and may help us decide if the idea is worth pursuing.

Information session

Wednesday 14 December, 6 pm at St Martin’s Chapel.

John Kemp

Lyonville News

Saturday 4 February 2023 Lyonville Woodchop 50th Anniversary

All the fun of the annual woodchop plus a few special features to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this event.

The Real Gardens of Lyonville open garden day: Sun 26 March 2023

This event arose from suggestions made during the Community Planning process in 2020 - 2021 and is being organised by the Lyonville Community Planning Group Inc in conjunction with the Garden Club. All proceeds will go to fund projects identified in the community plan to enhance Lyonville.

The Real Gardens of Lyonville will showcase a number of our local cool climate gardens. At this stage, we’d like to invite you to open your garden for the day. No garden too big or too small! If you are interested, please contact Vicki on 0438178150 for further details.

If you’re interested, details on ticketing will be available soon.

Cafe de Lyonville

And of course, the Cafe de Lyonville continues each Sunday from 10am to 12.30pm with excellent coffee, home made cakes and a chance to meet your neighbours and catch up with the local gossip! For those of you with a musical talent, you might also like to entertain the cafe customers by playing our fine new piano.

Vicki

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2 1 611

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