

August ~ September 2023 vol 15 ~ issue 16.2

THE WINTER ISSUE



*...and on days not long gone,
after a long trek, riders could
tie up at the pub rail*



The Blackwood Times acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the land, waters & forest where we live & work. We pay deep respect to Elders past, present & emerging.



EDITOR'S THOUGHTS...

It has been a cold winter in Blackwood and a couple of confronting months with the passing of two much-loved local gentle-men: Dave Commins a valued member of the Blackwood Times team (see tribute to him on p3) and Garry Fischer, a local legend (p8). Whilst these events have greatly saddened us, they have also brought us closer together. Old Farts night at the pub on the Monday, when we learned of Dave's death, once again showed how supportive the Blackwood community is of each other.

So, this is a sad & glad issue of The Times, but the darkness of the winter forest is being lit with the vivid yellow of wattle and the heath problem is a purple wonder to behold.

It is 10 years since the Blackwood Times came into being, evolving out of 5 years of Blackwood News. Now the paper has become The Blackwood Times Vic Inc. enabling us to apply for funding in our own right and insuring the team against slanderous slips of the pen. The double page colour centre-fold is one innovation and this issue highlights the Storm Recovery Street Party. It is just on 2 years since the storm and for too many the consequent difficulties remain. The Party and the Emergency Management Plan (p13) came about in partnership with Moorabool Council to aid in our recovery.

Getting together and having fun sure helps. The Bush Dance is coming up; we enjoyed 2 great music concerts in The Chapel and there's excitement a-plenty with The Pub coming under new ownership. As usual, there's some history including a great story about Captain Moonlight (p5).

Also, a big thank you to Bendigo Bank, Trentham for their support.

Enjoy the read.

~ John Kemp, Editor for this issue

THE BLACKWOOD TIMES AGM

The Blackwood Times was established as an Incorporated entity on 22 March 2022. The 1st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Blackwood Times Vic. Incorporated was held at 7.00 pm, Tuesday 11th July 2023 in the Blackwood Hall Office.

Present - Kylie Richardson, Paul Kukiel, Robert Poulter, Jeanne Tahini, John Kemp (minutes), Noelle Shader, Lisa Caines.

Apologies - Caitlin Hansford, Kath Berrill, Jinny Coyle.

Financial report - it was noted that the finances are in good shape with an operating profit of about \$5,000 for the financial year.

Nominations & elections - all positions were declared vacant.

Lisa Caines acted as Returning Officer and subsequently the following positions were filled -

President - Kylie Richardson

Vice-President - John Kemp

Secretary - Paul Kukiel

Treasurer - Robert Poulter

Committee members - Noelle Shader, Caitlin Hansford, Jeanne Tahini

Associate members -

Jinny Coyle (online marketing), Kath Berrill (photo-editing)

Purchase of camera & software - it was noted that both Moorabool Council and Bendigo Bank, Trentham, have approved grants for \$3,000 each for the purchase of equipment enhancements, specifically a laptop computer, digital camera and related software.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

HARD COPIES OF THE BLACKWOOD TIMES

If you live out of town and would like a hard copy of The Times mailed to you, just ask and (for a small donation) we will arrange. The paper comes out in the 1st week of Feb/April/June/Aug/Oct/Dec.

SUCCESSION PLANNING – NOTICE TO YOUNG 'UNS

We are on the look-out for young people to be involved with the Blackwood Times. Maybe to write a story or poem; follow up an important issue; take photos or learn how the paper is produced. A possibility might be to make it a part of a school project. A career in journalism awaits.

Just email us your idea/interest - team@theblackwoodtimes.com.au

COVER PHOTO

Garry, Topaz & Enhance (& unknown rider), courtesy Fischer family.



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• DAVE COMMINS •

June 1968 - July 2023

MY FRIEND DAVE

I lost my mate Dave Commins this month. I know Dave also touched many of your lives around town, I know this as Dave introduced me to many of you. Dave taught me how to cook, Dave never said no and always had an ear and patience for me. It wasn't a long friendship, but it was a strong and meaningful one. We had a lot of adventures and good meals and some of our best times were simply spent having a beer on your back deck eating dim sims and chips. I miss you and I'll never forget you Dave but I know you have your peace now.



~ Paul Kukiel

THAT GUY...

If asked "When did you last have a really good conversation?" I'd have to answer "With Dave". A conversation with Dave was about chasing the truth of things, avoiding facades and shallowness and finding a way of thinking about the topic that allowed for wonder and spontaneity. Often, Dave's brown eyes would twinkle and we'd all find ourselves laughing for the sheer pleasure of laughing. Our last conversation was about his trip to Japan. Now I think of Dave rather like the Medieval Buddhist poet, Saigyō who travelled throughout Japan seeking solitude and contemplation. His poems were brief, poignant observations of the human heart awakening to the transient beauty of the natural world and finding sanctuary in that ephemeral space.

Let me not spend my life
Lamenting the world's sorrows
For above
In the wide sky
The Moon shines pure.
-Saigyō

Travel safe dear friend, with heart's ease in gratitude.

~ Maeve McKeown

OUR TOWN LOST DAVE

On the 17/7/2023 our town lost Dave, he was an amazing guy. Dave was a really funny and kind person. Dave told the funniest jokes. He was very wise as he knew a lot about everything. He was a really generous and smart person. Dave was good at craftsmanship, woodworking and especially cooking. He was a hard worker and a cook. Dave was a very successful man. Dave even helped at The Blackwood Times helping my Dad, Paul.

~ Aleks Kukiel



PICNIC WITH DAVE

One evening in late summer Dave took me fly-fishing to the Upper Coliban Reservoir - he was definitely not a rod and reel guy. Completely in his element as he surveyed the currents and the wind; selected a fly from a dozen or more; donned his waders and slipped into the waters. He saw ripples and signs that escaped me at first but through his gentle guidance and patience I started to see



and feel. He was so happy and peaceful and present. And generous - his potato salad was brilliant. He caught a tiddler, proudly held it up and then returned it. I wish he knew how much he was loved.

~ John Kemp

DAVE

It is going to take a long time to accept that Dave is no longer here, but it only took a short time to become his friend. The first time I met Dave I knew I wanted him in my life. He had such an incredible warmth and was so easy to be around. Conversations with Dave were never dull and he listened to any one speaking with him in a way not many do. He was creative, intelligent, kind, funny and endlessly interesting. Rest well Dave. You will be dearly missed.

~ Kylie Richardson

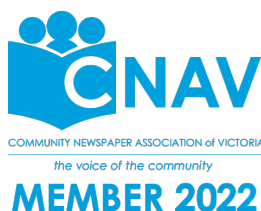
FAREWELL DAVE

My first meeting with Dave was over his beautifully crafted, unique wooden spoons that he was selling at our small market at the Chapel. Dave's spoons were made from timber from blackwood trees that had come down during the storm. He explained that he enjoyed repurposing and using the beauty of the wood in making his spoons. With good humour, he discussed with me how the market could be improved, as he had been a stall holder at many other markets.



After that first meeting, Dave and I shared several intense sessions, over many hours, as we put together two large issues of the Blackwood Times. After the production of the first issue we did together, Dave designed our Writing Plan - a many-columned, coloured spreadsheet which has greatly assisted with all subsequent issues compiling the Times. The team will ever be indebted to him for his practical solution to effectively manage everything that goes into each issue of The Blackwood Times. As I came to know Dave better, I appreciated what a multi-talented person he was. We enjoyed many discussions on a wide range of subjects - philosophy, history, Zen Buddhism and management practices. Over time we shared our life stories with each other. Dave was a great cook and he helped me improve my vegetarian 'sausage' rolls over several tastings. It was a joy to watch him assemble the flies he used for fly fishing, knowing the precise weight and movement needed for the lure. Dave always left me wanting more: conversations; sharing good food and more time with him. Dave will be sorely missed. Vale Dave, aka That Guy.

~ Jeanne Tahini



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.

MEMBER 2022



VISIT BLACKWOOD: ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN AN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT TOWN

Introduction

Blackwood, an historically significant town with a rich heritage dating back to the 1850s, is hoping to undergo a remarkable transformation with the introduction of the Visit Blackwood project. This initiative aims to enhance the visitor experience, attract more tourists to the area and encourage them to stay longer by offering various interactive and immersive components.

Spearheaded by local businesses and supported by Moorabool Shire, this proposal outlines the key features of the project and the positive impact it will have on Blackwood. The project is currently seeking funding through the "Funding Victoria" program of work and is successful in the hoping to create the following pathways:

Engaging Web Application

At the heart of the Visit Blackwood project lies a web application designed to serve as a gateway, providing a guided tour of the town and its surrounding areas.

This interactive platform will showcase key historical sites through pictures and informative audio descriptions, making it easy for visitors to explore and learn about Blackwood's captivating history. Information will be conveniently accessed through QR codes located at key sites or with the availability of hard copies throughout the area for those who prefer more traditional methods.

Highlighting Natural Beauty

In addition to its rich history, Blackwood boasts picturesque surroundings and stunning natural beauty. To promote this aspect, the web application will include an interactive map displaying biking and walking tracks, complete with detailed information on their condition, suitable timings and distances.

This unique feature will enable visitors to immerse themselves in the tranquillity of the region while engaging with the outdoors. For those who prefer physical copies, brochures and maps will also be readily available at key locations throughout Blackwood.

Effective Communication

To ensure the success of the Visit Blackwood project, clear and effective communication is paramount. Public signs strategically placed on the Visitor Information Board and throughout the area will provide key information and directions, guiding visitors to the various attractions and amenities.

Community Support

The Visit Blackwood project would not be possible without the support and involvement of the local community. Several local businesses have shown their support, recognising the positive impact this initiative will have on the economy and the town's overall growth. Moorabool Shire has also lent its support, recognising the value of preserving and promoting the historical significance of Blackwood.

Conclusion

The Visit Blackwood project represents an exciting opportunity to enhance the visitor experience in an historically significant town with a rich heritage. By developing a web application as the primary platform, visitors will be able to engage in a guided tour, focusing on Blackwood's historical sites as well as its stunning natural surroundings.

With effective communication strategies and the support of the local community, this project will undoubtedly contribute to the growth and prosperity of Blackwood, ensuring a memorable experience for all who visit. If the grant is not approved the opportunity will not be lost as we will endeavour to source grants from other avenues.

For more information contact: Lisa Cains at lhcaines@gmail.com

A BLACKWOOD GARDEN WINTER 2023



As some of you will know I spent most of May in England visiting gardens.....I loved it. Everywhere was so, so green and the Cape Chestnuts were in flower everywhere. The massive Oaks in their Spring green were a magnificent sight. One of the things that most impressed me was seeing roadsides left unmown and in many of the gardens, meadows were replacing lawns. There is a great consciousness in the need to give pollinators enough to forage. I was amazed at how many meadows were in Kew Royal Botanic Gardens and even in the more formal gardens

I visited. Now Blackwood...lovely to be home. No matter where I've been, coming home to Blackwood is always a delight. Already we're half way through Winter. What a relief, because it's so cold and the thought of it for too much longer would depress me; not that I'm under any illusion that the cold will not extend into Spring. Even when many trees are bare and my garden can look empty, there are some particularly beautifully perfumed plants for this time of year that I have growing. Daphne for one; is just next to my front door. Winter Flowering Honeysuckle is outside my bathroom window which would be nice if I ever opened it during Winter! Witch hazels (Hamamelis) are a particular favourite flower and the species to have the best perfume is Palisades. I have violets of every colour and although tiny when in a posy their scent is divine. Try and finish your Winter pruning before new growth appears and there's still time for planting while deciduous plants are dormant. I want to move a few plants and so now is the best time to do it as the soil is easier to dig and there is less stress to the plant. I find it a good time to do a bit of tool maintenance, aerate the compost and the grass and prepare the soil for Spring planting.

~ Jane Howat

CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT (MOONLITE)



The Shack Captain Moonlight stayed in

It's always an interesting time at the Blackwood Historical Society and we thought this particular visit from Caitlin Perry was worth a little bit of an extra story. Caitlin, a resident of Green Hills, was after

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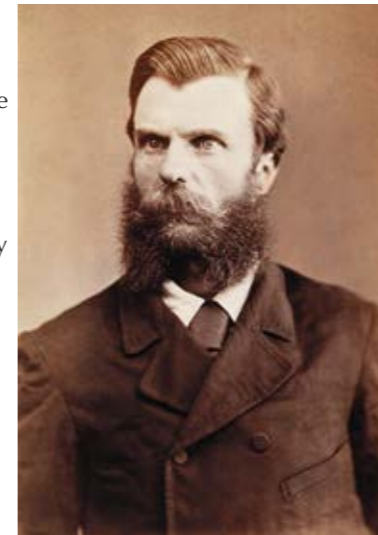
HOW'S THE WEATHER BEEN?

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)
May '23	62.5	90.3	-2	16.6	11.1	2.6	6.7
Jun '23	164.5	106.9	-3	16.8	9.5	3.4	6.4

The June rainfall was well above average.

~ Don Owen

some information about her property. Caitlin reached out to Margot, our local Historian and then decided to pay a visit to the Historical Society on one of our open days. We were excited to have our first guest as a direct result of our new FaceBook page! Hey we might like history but we are also catching up with the times. Caitlin brought in some photos that an earlier resident of the property and area had taken many-many years ago (they were black and white and around the 1950s). Our president, Mark spotted one particular building in one of the photos and decide to fill us in on a bit of folk lore from the area. This particular little shack/cabin was once visited and the resting place of the infamous Captain Moonlite



Captain Moonlight Himself

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Moonlite). Captain Moonlight (Andrew George Scott) was said to have frequented the area and his gang were often mistaken for the Kelly gang of which they used the Kelly gang's notoriety as a threatening mechanism for on-going crimes. The Historical Society has heard the folk lore tales that Captain Moonlight himself did frequent Blackwood and surrounds



The Murphy family -1950s residents of Green Hills Road

and that, after his capture and hanging, the shack was searched to reveal belongings and a firearm tucked away hidden beneath the floorboards of the shack. As with history these tales are passed down and shared and currently, we have no further evidence. If you have any information, photos or artifacts that either support or dispute this story we would love to hear from you. Stay tuned to next edition of the times where we divulge one more folk lore tale of the Captain and the area.

~ Paul Kukiel

MOORABOOL SHIRE & BENDIGO BANK, TRENTHAM - \$6,000 TO THE BLACKWOOD TIMES



The Blackwood Crowd

Recently, The Blackwood Times hosted a visit from Moorabool Shire and Bendigo Bank Trentham to celebrate and thank them for their support that has enabled us to purchase a laptop computer (MacBook Pro with software InDesign, Photoshop, et al) and a Sony RX IV digital camera.

We told them what we try to do, namely:

- * provide a community service
- * serve as a vehicle to promote discussion
- * provide an historical document in its own right
- * celebrate Blackwood's rich history
- * provide a means of advocacy on behalf of the community.

We explained our need for these Technological Enhancements given how the new team (now over a year old) operates. Certainly not under one roof. Anyway, they bought it! The Deputy Mayor Cr Ally Munari & Zoe represented Moorabool Council. Customer Relations Officer Corina Sabo and Ray Falloon, representing the Bendigo Bank, Trentham. This hardy group braved a very Blackwood winter day to present the grants (\$3,000 from each). Ally spoke energetically of this "magical town" and this "amazing publication." She congratulated the Blackwood Times team, not just for the grant, but for picking up the production from where Jinny & Brendan left off. "There is a big need for new volunteers. They come together and make things happen in communities." Corina is well known to many in the community. She spoke of Bendigo Bank as a community



Corina Sabo, John Kemp, All Munari

bank. Supporting local communities is just one aspect of what the Bank values and by putting funding into ventures such as this. Ashley Molloy (Moorabool) and Charl Paris (Bendigo Bank) were thanked for their assistance & advice in the process.

~ John Kemp

Photos - Peter Donnelly



HISTORIC TREE PINE TREE AT BLACKWOOD SPORTS GROUND

By Margot Hitchcock, Historian for the Blackwood & District Historical Society

One of the most oldest and historical trees in Blackwood would have to be the big old pine tree at the Sports Ground at Blackwood.

In 1989 the Blackwood & District Historical Society received a letter from the National Trust asking for recommendations for any Historic significant trees in the area, to be registered for the Significant Tree Register in Victoria. Margot Hitchcock and Penny Garnet went to the Sports Ground and Measured the circumference of the big old pine tree and estimation of the height of the tree by the shadow on the ground. Margot took photos of the pine tree and Penny researched the type of pine tree and history of who planted the tree and when. They then sent their report to the National Trust.

National Trust - Trust Trees Australia – National Trusts of Australia 'Register of Significant Trees'.

Common Name : Pine - Monterey

Scientific Name : Pinus radiata

Circumference : 9.71 metres (382 inches)

Height: 3.00 metres (173 feet)

Crown: 35.00 metres (114 feet)

Points: 584

State : VIC

Town: Blackwood

Location: Blackwood Recreation Reserve

Coordinates: 37 28 20.02 S 144 18 16.34 E

Nominator: Alan Deumer

Year Measured: 2010

Age: 100

Comments :

NATIONAL CHAMPION

DETAILS - Common name - Monterey Pine

Botanical name - Pinus radiata

Municipality - Moorabool (VIC)

Condition – poor

Age 134 yrs

Diameter – 3 metres

Height – 50 metres

Location - Blackwood Recreation Reserve, Recreation Reserve Road, Blackwood VIC 3458

Access - Unrestricted

Significances Person/Group/Institution (Historic)

Date of measurement - 01 Jan 1989

Date of classification - 08 Dec 2014

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

'The Monterey Pine at the Blackwood Recreation Reserve is an enormous tree. There is some uncertainty as to when and by whom the tree was planted. The area was originally a billabong and later a Chinese market garden. Mr Roy Terrill, whose family own the adjacent farm, remembers his father, Mr Ernest Terrill and his uncles talking about levelling and preparing the ground. He guessed that was some 100 years ago. The perimeter was then planted with various conifers, five or six of which still remain, including this pine.'

Above information courtesy of the National Trust page - 'Register of Significant Trees', and Nominator.



MONTEREY PINE - WORLD'S LARGEST?

There will be an article in the Moorabool Times in the next week or two. The subject is a competition held by the National Trust each year to vote for your favourite tree in Victoria. We will be nominating the massive pine at the sports ground, it's hard not be in awe when standing beside it and I know everyone I have shown it to feels the same way. Nominations start July 30 with voting commencing Oct 10. Here is the link to vote <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/treeoftheyear/>. I will post a reminder a little closer to voting time. The tree inspired me to try to find out where it stands in terms of others of its kind in Australia, namely Monterey pines. I went searching sites that collate this info and to my surprise it's recognised officially as the largest in Australia!! That fact surely warrants some tourist signage on the Trentham Greendale Rd to capture some of the tourists on their way through to Trentham and Daylesford. Whilst down there they can also discover the prettiest sports ground in Victoria (not just my opinion). Hopefully this inspires them to linger a little longer and perhaps grab a coffee or bite to eat here instead of just passing through. I believe we have lots of treasures that are only known to us. I decided to measure the pine as it was last officially measured in 2010. Using the accepted means I have the circumference at 10.4 metres and a height of between 56 – 62 metres. To put that in perspective, if the tree fell it would hit the cricket pitch with a few metres on the other side! On checking the comprehensive website Monumental Trees, I am fairly certain, that in fact, we actually have

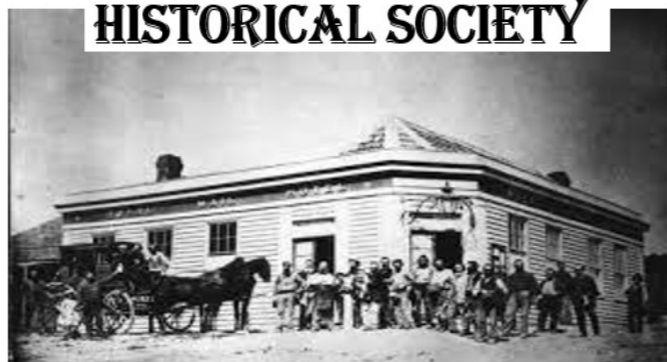


the largest Monterey Pine in the world! Now that demands tourist signage! Not only here but on our highway exit, as well as an info board near the tree with its vital stats. I think we should also name it at some stage, my initial thought is the "Majestic Monterey", but perhaps it could be the subject of a competition. We are all looking to breathe life into our town again and our "secret" tree may well go a long way towards achieving this. I know if I went past a

sign declaring World's Largest, I would go out of my way to check it out. I have forwarded this info to Ally Munari in the hope the council action it in some way.

~ Ray Castalin

BLACKWOOD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Open August 5th and September 2nd 10:00am - 1:00pm
Small Donation requested upon entry.

Blackwood & District Historical Society and Police Stable Museum,
Cnr Martin St and Warner St, Blackwood VIC 3458

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• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hi team, as winter really sets in we are so appreciative of our new split system, it's hard to leave our meetings as we know what's waiting outside!! We had a donation of a bunch of documents from Dave Evans (Robina Brown's dad) recently, his hobby horse is researching all the deaths and incidents from mining accidents in years gone by. He has written extensively on the subject so his work is invaluable to researchers both now and in the future. It is quite sobering to read about the demise of some of the old miners when safety wasn't "a thing". We have quite a few of them in our cemetery who didn't make old bones.. Thanks Dave.. He and his wife ran the general store (now the coffee roasters for you newbies) for many years in the 70s. Had a nice visit from Dawn Keer from Canada at our last meeting. Dawn was like a kid in a candy store with all the stuff on the Livy family we furnished her with.. She also made a nice sized donation which is always much appreciated! Still on the lookout for volunteers who can assist us with scanning and filing our extensive collection of documents and photographs. There are countless hours (nay years) of work ahead of us there so if you are looking for something really worthwhile to do, come to our next meeting. Meetings held at 10.00 am on the first Saturday of the month and all welcome. We also have a good laugh so it's not all "business". Join us, they are sick of my jokes!!

~ Ray Castalin

ST MARTIN'S CHAPEL IS HERE TO STAY

Good news, although the Herald Sun may have reported that St Martin's Chapel was going to be sold, I can tell you unequivocally that this is not the case. The reporting in the Blackwood Times is what is to be believed. A report from the St Martin's Management Committee was written for Presbytery on what is happening at the Chapel, what our aims are, and how we are working with the community in a variety of ways. Letters of support from residents of Blackwood were also sent. The next day, Trevor Bassett who is the Minister for Pastoral Leadership and Education for the Presbytery of Western Victoria, rang to thank us for the report and to assure us that St Martin's was not going to be sold and that what is happening here should be held up as a model for

other churches. Putting the report together also gave us the opportunity to reflect on all the great happenings that have occurred at our little weatherboard building since we reopened as St Martin's Chapel. The letters of support that we received reinforced how important it is to have a place where people, no matter their background, religion or beliefs all feel welcomed as part of a lively, caring and robust community. More good news. The driveway at the top side of the Chapel is being made into a proper roadway in the interests of everyone's safety. Lights are also being installed at the Byers Road entrance. A new large electric oven with a gas stove top has been installed in the kitchen as well. We have a couple of fund raisers coming up soon. There will be another Pizza Night, the date TBA and we have a Cabaret happening on 14th of October. There will be a three-course meal and the entertainment will be provided by Corey Hall who will be accompanied by Ross Bullock. Corey starred in the Lyric Theatre company's production of "Priscilla Queen of the Desert" in 2022 playing the role of Anthony Belrose (Hugo Weaving's character in the movie). This year he is performing in "The Sound of Music". Ross is an accomplished pianist and organist who now resides in Ballan. It will be a fantastic night of entertainment. Further details soon. Money raised from these events will go towards the kitchen refurbishment.

~ Robyn Zanon

CEMETERY TRUST

Hi all, some of you may have noticed we have replaced the gates at the entrance to the cemetery. We were looking to enhance this area with gates more in keeping with its heritage as opposed to the farm gates that were there. I hope we have achieved this, the old ones were necessary at the time as there were a few sheep on the property to keep the grass down. The other solution we were seeking was to be able to lock them in. We found that on occasion people and contractors were driving in and doing their own thing without our knowledge. If you feel you have good reason to drive in, come and see either myself, Wally or Lou. We will be looking to extend the cremated wall area in the next couple of years, these slots have proven popular so we will run out of them in the foreseeable future.

~ Ray Castalin

SAM RAE MP

LABOR MEMBER FOR HAWKE

Get in touch

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Authorised by Sam Rae MP, 100 Mckenzie Street Melton VIC 3337



• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

• GARRY (FISH) FISCHER •

27 May 1959 - 18 June 2023



Garry (Fish) Fischer passed away on Sunday 18 June as a result of a tragic accident on the property that he and his partner Deb live on in Greendale. Garry held a great passion and knowledge of Blackwood and its surrounds local history, the work and discoveries of the pioneers and adventurers that had gone before. He willingly told tales and shared the folk lore. He possessed a great understanding of the terrain and imparted his love and extensive knowledge of the region and its rich mining history to his son Ben. Garry and Ben spent much time exploring old mines and trails. It was one of Garry's passions.

He truly cared about the forest and its environment, and held a strong passion for the old mines and an appreciation and respect for our history. He strongly believed and hoped that an understanding of history and the journey the region had experienced would support sound, good management of the bush environment the loved. Garry was a member of the now decommissioned Bacchus Marsh SES Mounted Search and rescue unit. His understanding and knowledge of the bush and, in particular, the Wombat State Forest and the Lerderderg State Park was significant. Riding in our Wombat State Forest was one of his greatest joys. He would saddle up his old horse Beau and head out the gate straight into the forest. Beau was due for retirement and Garry's young horse Ruger was learning the ropes. Ruger was being gently introduced to this wonderful new world by his mentors - Beau and Garry. Garry had his trails all set up and worked hard to try and disguise them from the dirt bike riders! He treated his horses with fairness and respect. He did this with people too - no judgement. He was a member and past President of the Kyneton District Trail Riders club, a part of the Australian trail Horse Riders Association, of which Garry was known by many members far and wide. Within the trail riding community, he was respected for his integrity, wonderful horsemanship, knowledge of the Victorian bush and willingness to share his knowledge in a calm, respectful and welcoming way. He loved the Victorian High Country and spent many hours riding and walking in those mountains. Garry worked in the quarry sector for much of his working life. He had a way with machinery, rocks, and soil. At the time of his accident, he had been working for Mansfield Crushing for a little over 6 years at a site in Little River in the You Yang's. He was an invaluable member of the team, leaving a mark on both the company and all those lucky enough to work alongside him. His dedication, passion and commitment to the job set him apart and made a lasting impact. His work mates and management noted "Fish possessed an



infectious spirit that radiated comradery. He had a genuine care and concern for his colleagues and was always willing to lend a helping hand. He became a mentor and father figure to so many of the younger generation, something that was created, not from any work title or position, but from the natural way in which he looked out for and guided others. He had an incredible ability to bring people together and make every person feel valued and heard. On any given day, he knew exactly how to boost the morale within his team if the mood was low or something wasn't right. He looked out for others and was instrumental in creating a workplace that was inclusive. His banter was like no other. The back and forth on the radio with his workmates and truck drivers was Fish's way of making work a little bit of fun, allowing people the opportunity to be themselves and have a laugh." Garry had no idea how broad his reach was and what a positive impact he had on people. His motivation was just to be generous, and kind, and he did that effortlessly - it was just him.

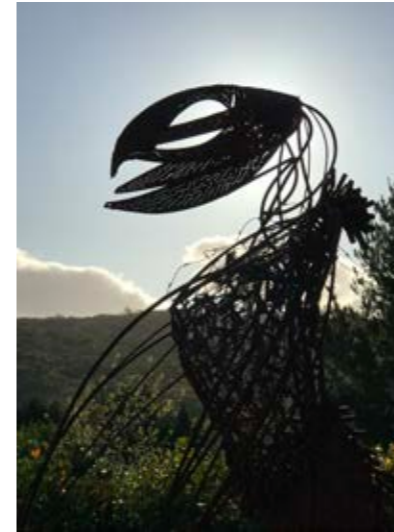


Garry was a keen and competitive sportsman. He played table tennis at Mount Edgerton and Aussie rules football for Montmorency and Research in the early days and then Darley and Ballan football clubs. Some would say he was a 'passionate' player, others might say formidable, and maybe a few other descriptions of his playing style as a ruckman. Garry's grandkids Shiloh, Xavier, William, Alyssa and Austin were his greatest joy. He was Bubba and Poppy. Such a big kid, he would sit his 6 foot something frame onto a toddler chair and help the kids draw, build Duplo and Leggo. He would take them for rides on the quad bike, take walks and play chasey. So much screaming, laughter and running through the house. And of course, coco pops for breakfast! He was teaching them to be brave and courageous and will be watching over them. The family have all been wrapped in so much love from so many and for that they are eternally grateful. And the support that has come to support the supporters is amazing. The family have a long road ahead, but they will get there together. The family wish to thank the Emergency Services - to the triple zero call taker who stayed with Deb until the Emergency Services arrived, the Paramedics who were so compassionate and considerate, Victoria Police officers who kept watch over all the family and protected them in such a beautiful way on the day and beyond, and to the CFA - Greendale Brigade and Ballan rescue - the family will never forget what you did for them on the day of the accident and beyond. Your compassion, kindness and professionalism will not be forgotten. Garry is survived by his partner Deb, children Ben and Kim and stepchildren, Chris and Bec and grandchildren Shiloh, Xavier, William, Alyssa, and Austin. His family and friends are fortunate to have such wonderful memories of this man. Vale Garry Fischer.



~ compiled by Deb Shaddock and Ben Fischer
Photos courtesy of Fischer Family

BLACKWOOD & BARRY'S REEF LANDCARE GROUP (BBRLG) REPORT



We held our AGM on Sunday 9 July and all committee members were re-elected with the exception of Peter Daghish who has decided to take a well-earned break from managing the equipment and making sure all the gear is available at working bees. A big and important job. Thanks Pete we have really appreciated your hard work. If you want to borrow equipment please send an email to 3458landcare@gmail.com. A small working bee was held in the Chapel grounds and around the Mineral Springs plantings on 18 June. Our next

working bee is/was 30 July at the Mineral Springs. All events are advertised on our Facebook page. Here is Michael Hotchin's report for the Landcare AGM. Another amazing and productive year for BBRLG. Because of the commitment and dedication of a wonderful committee we were able to achieve a lot including on-ground works, community education and strengthening networks within the local community.

The following is a summary of the year:

- The launch of the Caring for our Patch video at last year's AGM and subsequent promotion of the video via Facebook and on the website. A metal sign of the logo was produced for working bees and events, and the logo is used on promotional flyers.
- Over 800 native seedlings were planted by 28 people in a single day in May at the Mineral Springs Reserve. Site preparation by a contractor and the purchases of plants from Rowsley Community Nursery were enabled by a grant from the Victorian Government's Landcare grants program.
- A stall at the Easter Carnival included the ever-popular waterbugs display, information on weeds, reference books on indigenous plants and the distribution of 500 bush tucker, bush medicine and cultural use seedlings made possible by Moorabool Council's Storm Recovery program. Kathy provided postcards and quality prints of the artwork contained in the Caring for our Patch video.
- A series of workshops were conducted in the latter half of 2022 and early part of 2023 to promote the Moorabool Gardens for Wildlife program. These were made possible by a grant from Moorabool Council and included nest box construction with participants making and taking home a nest box, native plant identification via a walk along Byers Back Track, plant propagation techniques to enable participants to "grow your own", and a soil health information session to give wildlife friendly gardens a solid foundation. Moorabool Council's waste officer provided information about green waste and other waste programs.
- Weed removal and treatment working bees were held at the Mineral Springs and the Blackwood Hall, both Crown Reserves assets, along with the grounds of St Martins Chapel Community Centre.
- BBRLG became a proud member of the Community Reference Group for the Barry's Reef Avenue of Honour project led by the Ballan RSL Sub-Branch which aims to restore this historical area, including revegetation and weed control.
- BBRLG is supporting the local Reconciliation group's application for

funding from Moorabool Council for a childrens' event. - We added a number of pieces of equipment to our "arsenal" including tree poppers, loppers, spray bottles and a backpack sprayer. The chipper continues to be called upon and its maintenance is a continual task. We also have wasp dust available for the community via the Post Office.

- The Facebook page has become increasingly popular this year thanks to Hannah's attention and now has 581 followers!

- BBRLG advocated for sensible outcomes regarding the harvesting of wind felled timber in the Wombat State Forest, raising concerns about industrial scale log removal and the impact on soils and the water quality of the Lerderderg River. We also lobbied the government and council regarding long delays with clearing walking tracks around Blackwood of windfall wood and overgrown weeds. We would like to see the Lerderderg Track between the town and the Mineral Springs improved to allow people to view the river and to also provide a safer route than the narrow road in the town.

A huge Thank You to Diana, Noelle, Brett, Hannah, Peter, Chris, Michelle and Billy and everyone else who came from near and far to make these events so successful.

~ Diana Dawson & Michael Hotchin
Photo by John Kemp

WOMBAT BOOK CLUB

Hello, a very warm greeting from Wombat Bookclub. We hold meetings for Book Club on the third Sunday of each month. The last get together was held at the Blackwood Pub. Locations and times could vary, although the Pub seems to be a favourite location for our very informal meeting where we enjoy a drink and good company. Yes...we do discuss the novel we read as well. If you would like information about our lovely, friendly gathering please contact Rose at rcarrington1@hotmail.com. The books we all enjoyed reading this last couple of months were- 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama, and 'The Rain Heron' by Robbie Arnott.

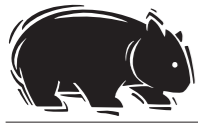
Sandy: Becoming; overall was well-written and easy to read. The memoir Michelle Obama wrote was somewhat interesting about her life as a child. For me, it was interesting to read how she and Barack met and his rise to the White House and her own adaptation to the new life. How she influences changes in diet particularly in children, by encouraging them to grow their own vegetables. For those who enjoy memoirs, the reader will find her story interesting - 3.5 Wombies
Jane H: BECOMING -Michelle Obama's autobiography was a great read; interesting and well written. I found her story of her early years a little slow. I hadn't realised that she and Barack had such a background in law and social justice and what busy careers they both had. Really I knew nothing much about either of them except the obvious. It was an eye opener to the behind the scenes of both the campaigning for and the US presidency and written from an interesting perspective. It confirmed that Barack Obama was really a very decent human being.

4 Wombies

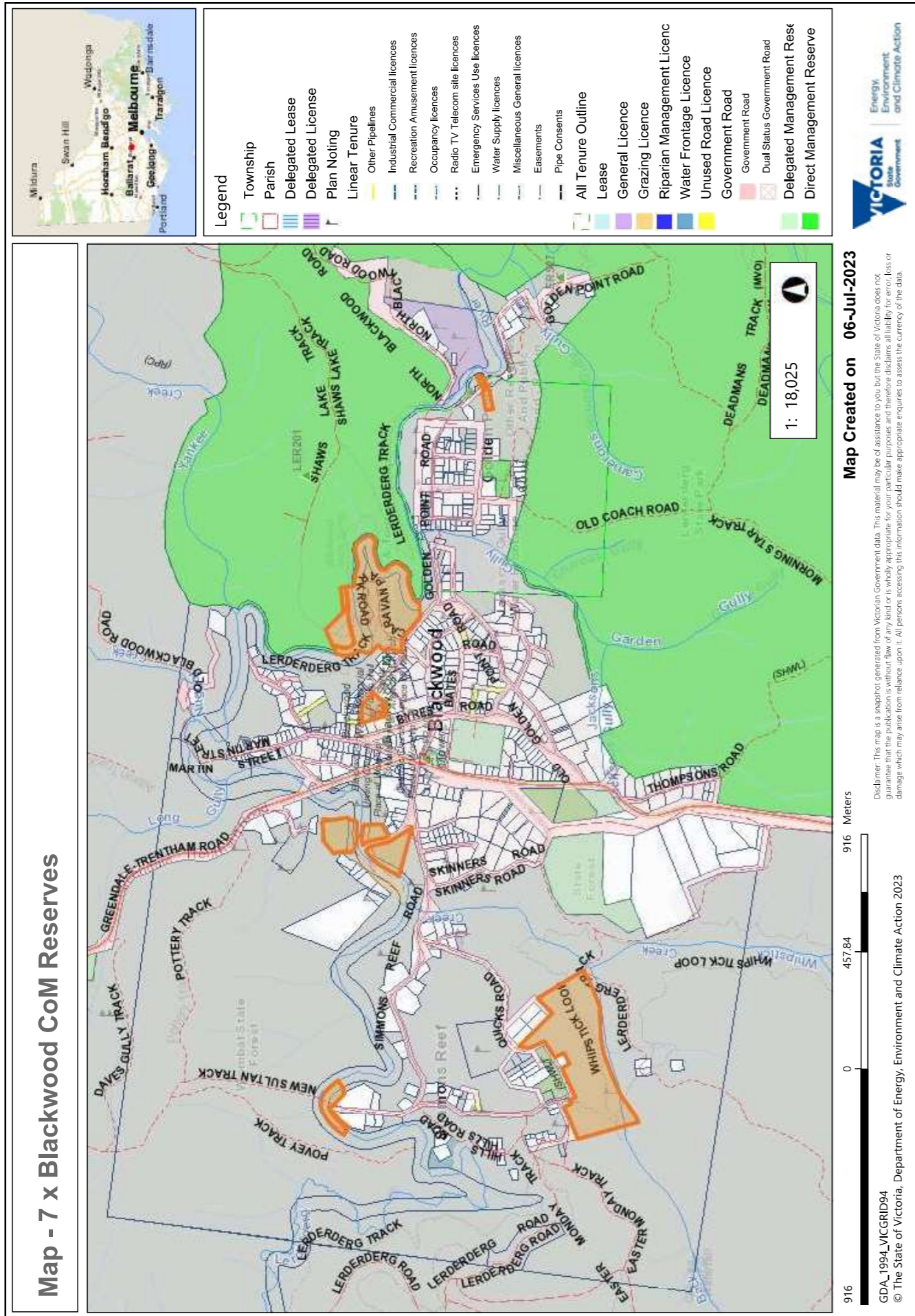
Sandy: The Rain Heron; first reads as if it is three different stories, but cleverly comes together in the fourth part. Ren, a lady who lives in a cave where a country has gone through a coup. Why she is there is revealed later as the story unfolds. A young soldier and her group, enter Ren's life and destroy what she has. The young soldier is in search of the Rain Heron, a mythical creature which she is sure Ren knows about, and could lead her to the whereabouts of this strange bird. The story is a mix of imagination, strange myths and revelations of why the protagonist behaved in the way they did. I was intrigued by this tale and kept turning the pages - 4 Wombies

Jane H: THE RAIN HERON -This book is a beautifully written, a very complex story; a combination of a mythical creature, resilient women and their relationship with the natural world - 5 Wombies

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• COMMUNITY UPDATES •



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CROWN RESERVES COMMITTEE

A new tourism body has been created, Tourism Midwest Victoria (TMV). This will be a great resource for Blackwood and businesses and for the broader promotion of events and tourism support.

<https://tourismmidwestvic.com.au/>

TMV will be focussed on encouraging visitation to the City of Ballarat and the Pyrenees, Moorabool, Golden Plains (south of Ballarat to Rokewood), and Hepburn (Creswick and Clunes shires). The aim is to position the region as one of Victoria's premier tourism destinations, showcasing its unique attractions, rich history and vibrant community. As most people know, Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges have very successful tourism bodies specific to those areas and to have peak body where our natural attractions and businesses are appropriately promoted will benefit the overall economy. I would encourage all businesses to join (TMV) and become an Industry partner. Go to the "I want to" tab/ and become an industry partner - to register your business and to ensure you are kept up to date on a host of TMV useful resources. The Germans talk of "Hidden Champions", which are internationally highly successful privately owned companies whose names are practically unknown, even in Germany. While not a Hidden Champion per the German definition, without doubt Blackwood is a Hidden Champion in terms of a unique location with unlimited potential to capitalise upon - if indeed this is what the townships wants.

Caravan Park

The Caravan Park recently purchased a third caravan that will be a popular choice for families. The van sleeps 6 people, has a massive annex with couch and TV, separate bedroom that sleeps 3 and another double bed and table and chairs for 6 in the van itself. This brings our caravan total to 3, the most popular van being the dog friendly van. New managers, Nicole and Wyatt have settled into their new role and doing a great job and bringing many good ideas to promote the caravan park and Springs. The manager's residence has undergone an update with new carpets, oven, internal doors, wood fire installed, painting, engineered flooring and new blinds throughout. After winter the external of the house will be painted as will the hall. Typically, the next couple of months are relatively quiet giving Nicole and Wyatt time to settle in. By the end of the year we will have revamped the web page to make it more "up to date" with a new logo, maps and marketing material for the Park and springs. Although very close to being finished the renovated amenities are at a temporary stand still awaiting further direction from Moorabool on a sewer related connection issue. The male and female toilets & showers are fully operational but the accessible toilet is unable to be connected until further notice from Moorabool.

Finally, this time we have included a decent map of Blackwood's Crown Reserves.

~ Peter Fowler

BLACKWOOD COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

With winter, demand for emergency medical response has increased in our area. At the same time, the number of CERT members available to respond has declined. This means, sadly, that we have not been able to get out to those in our community in need of emergency care before an ambulance arrives. As care givers, we are saddened to know that people in our community need our help, but due to low numbers, we cannot always be there. We are sorry for that, but we simply need more people to join with us so that we can consistently give the level of care we all want and need in our local area. There is so much good that comes from volunteering in any community and CERT is a great opportunity to learn new skills, make new friendships and be part of the solution in providing fast response in an emergency. Any of our Team would love to discuss this opportunity with you or



you can contact our Co-Team Leaders - Jan 0409 857 180 or Leonie 0438 797 007.

** We are sad, but proud, to see two of our Team now move into employment with Ambulance Victoria, via the Rural Paramedic Scholarship Pathway. Well done Jaice and Sarah and thank you for your contribution over the years!

~ Leonie

BLACKWOOD CRICKET CLUB

Hello all, our presentation was happening as the last news letter was being published. Results were - Duck award surprisingly me (Brian Sutters), The Ray Meade, President's award - Jodie Sanders, for helping with the bar and other jobs. Side note volunteers are always welcome and appreciated. The Bert Suters, best clubman, picked by the captain - Brian Suters. The Ron Salmon, best batting, - Ben Whitehouse. Wally Sweet, club champion and Jack Stringer, best bowling average were both picked up by Tom Matkovic. I must add a huge thankyou to Steve O'Brien and his family for all they have done over the years and kept the club running. The canteen and the easter carnival bar would've been in trouble over the years if Heather and the kids didn't help out. But now Steve wants to retire and watch his dog's race. Best of luck and I'm sure you will be seen at the club over the years.

~ President Brian Suters

PROGRESS REPORT

Notice of Annual General Meeting -

AGM to be held on Thursday, 12 October 2023 (venue tba). Office bearers to be elected and the financial report will be tabled. Community support and new members (\$10 membership fee applies), would be greatly appreciated. Future community issues to be discussed, so come along and support your community.

~ Louise Scott

SPIRITS AT THE PUB Paranormal Investigation & Dinner

That chill you felt in an old house just might be a former Blackwood resident returning. Perhaps they have something to tell you!

Come along and meet some of Blackwood's colourful charcters, past and present.

When: 15th of each month, dinner
Where: Blackwood Hotel



• COMMUNITY UPDATES •

CFA REPORT JULY 2023

It is the middle of winter, cold and wet. The up side is we are halfway through now. Remember to keep an eye on candles and the fireplaces, ensure these areas are clear of anything flammable such as curtains and any other materials. Kids in particular should be supervised around fires and candles. The Storm Anniversary street party on June 24th was a great success. We had a short heavy shower in the afternoon while setting up, but apart from the wet ground, that was the end of the rain for the event. The brigade was happy to help out with tents, lighting and generators. Also occurring on the same night as the street party, we had a major water leak at the fire station. A ruptured hose on the fire refuge hose reel pump, sprayed thousands of litres of water into the engine bay. Due to the enhanced fire proofing of the roller door seals, the water level rose high enough to flood the carpeted meeting room and office. We are currently waiting for the new carpet to be laid, so the station is a little disorganised. While our training has been interrupted, our tankers can still turnout rapidly as normal. The brigade has recently commissioned the construction of a new trailer. When fitted out, the small trailer will carry a portable quick fill pump, a generator with emergency lighting, plus fuel etc to support chainsaws. Multiple storm events in the last two years has shifted the brigade's focus to mobile emergency support when the town is isolated. Expect to see the trailer in use around the town. On a serious note, the current situation with the economy and utility prices are causing many people to feel quite stressed, if you are feeling down, sad, blue don't keep it to yourself and reach out to family or friends or one of the help lines to get and help you require. We are all in this together and need to keep an eye on our neighbours, friends and family to make sure they are ok.

If you are feeling any of the above keep these numbers handy:

Lifeline - call 13 11 14 for this free, 24-hour Australia-wide crisis support and suicide prevention service.

Suicide Call Back Service - call 1300 659 467 for this free service for people having suicidal thoughts, family or friends affected by suicide and healthcare professionals treating suicidal people.

SuicideLine - call 1300 651 251 for free and anonymous support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Victoria.

Beyondblue - call 1300 224 636 for telephone support, information and resources for people dealing with depression or anxiety, or visit their website.

Black Dog Institute - visit their website for information on symptoms, treatment and prevention of bipolar disorder and depression.

These are just a number of contact numbers that are available for help which can be found on this site

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/counselling-online-and-phone-support-for-mental-illness#mental-health-crisis-helplines>

Don't be afraid to reach out for help.

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. If you are interested in joining, we always welcome new members. We can be contacted at the station or through the Brigade Facebook page or the morning of the first Sunday of each month or drop us an email to blackwoodcfa@gmail.com. DO NOT USE FACEBOOK IF YOU ARE REPORTING AN EMERGENCY. ALWAYS RING 000 or 112 on a mobile.

~ Karl Church
Communications & Community Safety Liaison Officer
Blackwood Fire Brigade

STREET PARTY CELEBRATES OUR RESILIENCE

In June two years ago, Victoria was struck by devastating storms.

The towns of Blackwood, Dales Creek and Barrys Reef were among many that were battered from pillar to post. Destructive winds and torrential rain blew massive trees down on houses, garages, studios, fences and powerlines. Huge areas of bush land were levelled. Roads and walking tracks were blocked at every turn. The experience for residents was terrifying. The sound of trees snapping and falling could be heard from all directions. More unsettling for many, was the fear that the next tree might fall on the roof of their homes.

The light of day revealed huge wreckage and left our towns without power or telecommunications. The storms were so widespread that SES and other emergency services were stretched beyond capacity and we were left to deal with the immediate effects of the situation ourselves.

That's when our communities showed what they were made of and sprang into action to deal with the situation at hand.

Anyone who could wield a chainsaw, swing an axe or use machinery to clear debris did what they could to assist neighbours to clear roads, tracks and driveways. The town very quickly had to work out how to cope without power or the ability to use telecommunications to contact the outside world. We needed to quickly assess the situation and provide assistance to those who needed it. And we did!

As a part of our collective response we organised public meetings to share information and work out and provide what was needed. One of these meetings morphed into much much more. It all started with Jerry Dimas. Jerry organised to bring in a mobile food van to feed those who had no power to cook. Then of course, the rest of the community swung into action. BBQs appeared along with perishable food that needed to be cooked along with pots of soup, cooked by those who could. Lighting and fire drums arrived. We even had martinis served by a Leon, a master cocktail maker. Then of course our wonderful Bluegrass musicians turned up. Yes, it morphed into a street party! But most importantly we came together as individuals who experienced trauma and needed to share our experiences and support each other.

To commemorate the June 2021 storm event and celebrate our resilience and efforts to deal with adversity, the residents of Blackwood and surrounding towns in the Moorabool Shire came together on Saturday evening 24 June for another street party. The street party was organised by locals for locals. The usual heroes, such as our CFA and many other volunteers, turned up and did the hard yards to get the party off the ground. Due to the high chance of nasty weather, our street party was relocated to St Martin's Chapel with food provided by local caterer, Rose, Martin Street Coffee Roasters and St Martin's Chapel. The Blackwood Hotel also offered a warm, dry venue for locals to enjoy.

We came together again, gathered around fire drums, shared food and the odd beverage, were entertained by wonderful musicians, shared more stories and enjoyed the company of a strong, caring, vibrant and resilient community. A huge thanks to Moorabool Shire Council and Emergency Recovery Victoria for supporting this event and subsidising food, hot drinks and entertainment.

~ Carol Guthrie
Photos by Peter Donnelly (pg 12, 14-15)



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BLACKWOOD'S 8 ACTIONS

to improve community emergency awareness & preparedness



Establish a formal Community Emergency Management Action Plan (CEMAP) Committee



Partner with local authorities and service providers to better understand their roles, responsibilities and processes in emergencies



Seek funding for CEMAP priority projects



Create a magnetic flipchart that includes local and personal emergency contact numbers and information



Organise an annual community event (TBC)



Develop a 'New Residents Kit'



Partner with local authorities to run emergency exercises/drills with the community



Create a resource for the community to connect with each other (i.e. phone tree, know your neighbour card)

A Community Emergency Management Action Plan for Blackwood and surrounds

Developed in response to the storm events in 2021, Blackwood's 8 Actions presents opportunities for the community of Blackwood and surrounding areas to become more resilient by being better planned and prepared for emergencies. It is based on feedback received from the local community and was created by the Blackwood Emergency Resilience Group Inc (B.E.R.G.) who will oversee its implementation.

The plan highlights the importance of sharing information, community connection and collaboration to enable the community to play a role in their own wellbeing, safety and resilience.

For more info please contact BlackwoodERG@gmail.com



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Owners of the land, waters and forest where we live and work. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.



• STORM RECOVERY •

• STREET PARTY •





BLACKWOOD MAKER: CRAFTING "PARK WINE" IN BLACKWOOD



This issue, we welcome Georgia and Lucas, along with their two daughters, Safiya and Sadie, who have been permanent residents of Blackwood for nearly four years now and absolutely love it. We sit down with them to learn about their journey into winemaking and how they found their passion for crafting their unique "Park Wine", as Lucas calls it. **Paul:** How did you get into winemaking? **Georgia:** It all started when we were going through a phase of enjoying and trying different wines. One of my friends mentioned that they make their own wine and that really piqued our interest. So we decided to give it a shot and bought around 80kg of grapes. I remember it was a scorching hot day and hauling all those grapes into our small apartment was quite a task. That was when we made our very first wine, which we fermented in buckets in our bathroom for a week before moving it to a spot under the stairs until it was ready to be bottled. It turned out okay, but not great. It was a red wine. **Paul:** Tell us about the second time you tried winemaking and how you acquired the necessary skills. **Lucas:** For the second batch, we decided to experiment a bit more. We left the grapes on the skins and started the fermentation process that way. This means

we keep the grapes whole for a little while before pressing them to extract the juice. As for the skills, it was all self-taught. People often ask us how we do it, but honestly, it's quite straightforward. We just squash the grapes and let them ferment before bottling. **Paul:** Earlier, you mentioned working at a winery. How did that experience help you continue with your winemaking venture? **Lucas:** When we were living in Melbourne, I worked at a winery, which was a fantastic experience. When we moved to Blackwood, I took up a role at a winery in Kynton, which gave me access to



valuable knowledge and good quality grapes. This made it easier for us to continue making our own wine. We usually go with about 80 kgs of grapes, which yields approximately 45 bottles of wine. The whole process, from picking the grapes in March to fermenting and bottling in September, keeps us busy. By springtime, the wine is ready to be enjoyed, and we usually let it settle a bit before sharing it with family and friends during Christmas. **Paul:** That sounds delightful! You mentioned your wine is known as "Park Wine." Could you tell us more about it? **Georgia:** Absolutely! Our wine is meant to be enjoyed rather



than kept for long periods. We fondly call it "Park Wine." It's the kind of wine that's perfect for casual gatherings, picnics in the park, or simply relaxing with friends. We like to keep it simple and let the natural flavours of the grapes shine through. There's no complexity in our winemaking process – it's all about fermenting and crushing the grapes to create a pleasant, easy-to-drink wine. **Paul:** This year you went with double the quantity of grapes. Tell us about the wines you crafted this time. **Lucas:** Yes, this year, we decided to experiment with two different grape varieties. We went with 80kg of a darker red Sangiovese and another 80 kg of Shiraz. The type of grape you use really determines the character of the wine. We still maintain our simple winemaking approach, focusing on fermentation and crushing, and we're thrilled with the results. **Paul:** That sounds wonderful! Lastly, do you have any plans to expand your winemaking venture? **Georgia:** At the moment we are quite content with making wine for our family and friends to enjoy. It's a rewarding hobby and, each year, we see improvements in our process and the final product. However, we don't have any plans to become competitive winemakers. Sharing our "Park Wine" with loved ones is all the fulfillment we need.

Paul: Georgia and Lucas, thank you for sharing your delightful winemaking journey with us. We wish you continued success and many more wonderful batches of "Park Wine" in the future! And there you have it, the inspiring story of Georgia and Lucas, who found their passion for winemaking in the charming town of Blackwood. Their "Park Wine" is a testament to the simple joys of life, shared with loved ones over a glass of homemade goodness. Cheers to the art of crafting wine with love and devotion!

~ Interviewed by Paul Kukiel

COMMUNITY BANK TRENTHAM & DISTRICTS PROUDLY SPONSORING YOUR COMMUNITY

Community First is a mantra that resonates strongly with Community Bank Trentham & Districts and aligns with our values of returning profits back to our local communities where the impact matters most. Blackwood and Trentham have always had a long-standing history as neighbouring towns and we are committed to supporting that relationship for the long term so we can all grow and prosper together.

A Shared Return – Community Bank Trentham & Districts. Have you ever wondered what a 'Shared Return' actually means?

At Community Bank Trentham & Districts we do this through sponsored partnerships with local districts clubs, groups, and organisations. We have contributed over \$7,500 through sponsorship projects in Blackwood this includes: Blackwood Woodchop & Easter Carnival, Blackwood & Barry's Reef Landcare Group, The Great Dividing Trail Association Inc. & The Blackwood Times Inc.

We know that growth is a shared return that supports and benefits those that live locally. When you bank locally good things happen in your community. Great reasons to complete a home loan health check with Bendigo Bank. Whatever your banking needs, Community Bank Trentham & Districts are here for you. We deliver quality products, exceptional customer service, and flexibility (we will come to you). For a better banking experience call us on 5424 1608.

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• AROUND TOWN •

HAIR AND JAPPY – SCOTTISH FOLK ON HARP, GUITAR & FIDDLE



For the lucky audience at St Martin's on 14 June, we were treated to an intimate concert by a most talented duo: Rachel Hair and Ron Jappy; fresh from the National Celtic Folk Festival held in Portarlinton. Rachel, from Ullapool in the Scottish Highlands, is a maestro of folk music on the clarsach, aka the Celtic harp. Ron is a most accomplished fiddle player from Findochty, in Scotland's North East. He took up the guitar while studying in Glasgow at the same time as Rachel. The fun started with Rachel and Ron playing a jaunty trilogy of slip jigs. No chance of being floated away with ethereal melodies, the pace was up-tempo from the get go. We went on to Calum Stewart's Looking at a Rainbow Through a Dirty Window, a beautiful piece that allowed the duo's virtuosity to shine through. From the Isle of Man to Japan; we were taken away on polkas, Irish marches and English crescendos.

We were reminded how different our little world of Blackwood is, even compared with Portarlinton, let alone Glasgow. Rachel's up front and personal with huntsman spiders, leeches and assorted wildlife was, apparently, eye-opening. Who would have thought that Rachel is both an arachnophobe and a bdellophobe? After the interval the frighteners continued with Fiona spooking us out with The Dundee Ghost, unaccompanied except for the eerie sounds from the back of the room. Fiona then teamed up with Rachel on the harp to give us Fear a Bhata, a Gaelic love song from the Isle of Lewis. Then it was Ron's turn to show his skills as he took up the fiddle and gave us some of his favourite tunes, including a Scott Skinner strathspey, The Laird o Drumblair. Did you know there is a little bit of Ullapool in the Waipu Scottish Migration Museum, thanks to Norman McLeod? Scottish folk music evolves and remains contemporary with groups like Hair and Jappy! St Martin's and Fiona Ross, what a combination! We are well spoilt by the quality of the acts that you attract to Blackwood.

~ Tony Tonic
Photo by Jeanne Tehini

TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS

On Saturday night 17th June, Blackwoodians were treated to a special night of performances which showcased the next-level talents of local musicians from various styles of folk music. The event was titled the 'Transatlantic Sessions' as three bands performed a mix of folk tunes from Ireland, Scotland and the United States. The event was held at St Martin's Chapel on a night when the weather was wet and cold outside, but the mood and music was warm and comforting inside the Chapel. The musicians involved in each act all lived in, or within 5km of Blackwood, which highlights the unusually high number of amazing musicians living and performing in our small community. First on the



bill was 'Newbury Fog' which consists of Nara and Karina Demasson. These two instantly got the crowd foot stomping with their chicken picking, beautiful melodies and driving rhythms. Their rendition of various old-time tunes wowed the audience and their beautiful vocal harmonies, and regular swapping of instruments was extremely impressive. 'Is the Big Man Within?' is

a new local Irish Trad band who are turning some heads. This band consists of Nicola Strating, Gerry Daly and Kit Joyce. These three are top notch musicians who also regularly interchange their instruments onstage. The big sound created is a beautiful interpretation of traditional Irish and Scottish tunes. 'Is The Big Man Within?' perform regularly at Radio Springs Hotel if you wish to see / hear more of them. At the Top of the Bill was 'Blue Mount String Band' who have been playing old-time tunes together for decades. This incredible band consists of Nick Dear, Janet Dear and Philomena Carroll. These three showcased their

virtuosic playing over a variety of American folk tunes. It was such an enjoyable performance; I could have sat there listening to Philomena sing all night with her amazing voice. It's refreshing to see St Martin's Chapel being utilised regularly for community events. Recently, we have had an increase in both international and local musicians perform for us at the Chapel. Thanks to all those who help organise these amazing nights. Look out for upcoming events at St Martin's Chapel and see you there!



~ Barry Daniels
Photos by Jeanne Tehini





• AROUND TOWN •

BUSHWAHZEE OUR BUSH DANCE BAND

Bushwahzee Bush Band is a Melbourne institution. Hundreds, even thousands of schools, companies, businesses, families celebrating weddings, anniversaries and birthdays have hired Bushwahzee to call dances for them. The band was formed, as a 9-piece band, for a production of Reedy River at the Organ



Factory, Clifton Hill in 1982, but soon became a regular 4-piece band for hire. Although the band has had a few steady 3-piece line ups over the years hundreds of musicians have received the call to play a gig with Bushwahzee. In 1992 Bushwahzee evolved the school one-day production - The Bush Cabaret, which took the band all around Australia on tour during the 90s and early 2000s. In 2012 the band's fiddle player and manager, Felix Meagher, wrote The Man They Call The Banjo, a musical play about the writing of Waltzing Matilda. Further Bushwahzee theatrical productions followed - Barry Versus Kelly, Runaway Priest and Adventure Before Dementia, with music by Louey Hesterman.

The lineup for the bush dance at Blackwood on August 26 is Felix Meagher (Vocals and fiddle), Louey Hesterman (dance caller guitar and bass), and Dennis Walsh (guitar and bouzouki).

See p 23 for details in The Big Bush Dance Poster
Contact Bushwahzee - email felix@bushwahzee.com

~ Felix & Maeve

BLACKWOOD STREET LIBRARY

Is this the biggest street library you've ever come across? It certainly is for me. Launched on the night of the street party, library was paid for out of a 'Storm Recovery - Healing Country' grant from Emergency recovery Victoria (ERV). The criteria of the grant was that it was to be used with consultation with our Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung elders. The bulk of the grant was used in community consultation sessions with Aunt Gail and Aunt Julieanne. If you were at this years Easter Carnival you may have met Aunt Gail who was reading her set of 'in language' children's book. The Aunties were really happy that the part of the grant was to be used for books. The problem was, where would they live that would be accessible 24/7. There was no where we could think of so ...



Enter the street library.

Matt from 'Just 2 Hands' built us our beautiful library, largely out of recycled materials, and Progress subsidised the signage.

Thanks to Karen for allowing us to put the library in its for ever home.

Also to Amanda & Cameron from the Shire for their support & help to organise the purchases. The second part of this activity has been the purchase of an age appropriate First Nations book for each local child 12yo & under. Caitlin Perry, Mel Bodiam, Karen Bruno & Carol Guthrie



helped me to compile a list of our children - 82 in total - can you believe how many young in's we have in town now? If your local child hasn't got their book yet please send an email to communications@theblackwoodtimes.com.au so I can arrange to get them to you. I'll need your name, child's name, gender & age.

Finally, Noelle shader, thank you for being by my side researching & learning with me. I am so proud of what we have achieved together.

The street library celebrates the resilience of our community. It is by the community for the community.

Take a book - Give a book - Share a book

~ Jinny Coyle

THE PUB HAS NEW OWNERS!



Kylie: Firstly, congratulations on the purchase of the pub. Is it something you've been considering for a while?

Lisa: Thank you - we remember saying if the Blackwood Pub came up for sale it would be great to get back up and running and we should look at it. We would never consider buying any other pub, it was just something about the old girl that attracted us both.

Kylie: I understand that there is a fair bit of experience in running a business between you. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Lisa: Fiona started Roselea Blinds and Curtain 20 years ago and has built a strong reputation on customer satisfaction. I had a pet food delivery business which I built up from scratch and sold in 2021. I also do business consulting for compliance in the logistics industry.

Kylie: When did your connection to Blackwood begin?

Lisa: Fiona first came to Blackwood in 2006 and loved the energy. With many return visits with friends Fiona decided she would love to buy a house here. After many visits to open homes in 2017 Fiona finally found the right property. We met in 2020 and the rest is history.

Kylie: What is one thing about the pub that you love and want to maintain?

Lisa: We want to maintain the good old country pub feeling, where people walk in and feel the charm of the old girl.

Kylie: What are some of the things you would like to change?

Lisa: Creating more space for people to come in and enjoy a drink. We will reopen the "snug" and put some couches around the fire area in the dining area so people can relax and enjoy the atmosphere.

Kylie: It was great to see so many people turn up at "old farts" recently to hear you speak and show support. Is there anything you would like to pass on to the wider Blackwood community?

Lisa: "It takes a village" we have been overwhelmed by the community support and thank everyone. We know the heart of many communities is the hotel and we hope to turn this once again into a pivotal part of the community. We know we are going to make mistakes along the way but please be kind, we have the best interest of the hotel and the history of Blackwood at front of mind with every decision we make. Please enjoy the journey with us as there will be plenty of blood sweat and tears. Look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.



~ Photos by Kathryn Berrill

THE HUMBLE SPUD



In all seriousness, what is better than the humble spud? Maybe the only thing that can beat it is double spud & our newest local business has managed to nail that too. Kathleen has bought all things potato to the reimagined food van. A Ballan local, Kathleen has a long history with Blackwood having worked at the Blackwood Pub on and off over the years. Kathleen loves to keep busy and, amongst other things, enjoys "growing cows and goats." Her most recent project is a great addition to the town, giving us all another great option for lunch or dinner. Some regularly featured spuds include the Irishman which is topped with hot pot, mashed potato and tasty cheese, the Bushman which comes with scalloped potato, bacon, onion and cheese and the Chilli Con Carne needs no explanation. A lamb roast is available on a Sunday and we will be treated to spit days from time to time. Come down to the main street and treat yourself to something delicious Thursdays and Fridays from 4pm - 8pm or weekends from around 11am. Cash only at this stage.

~ Kylie Richardson

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• AROUND TOWN •

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I'm back – and ready to make your real estate dreams a reality! After a brief break supporting my daughters' final school years and building my dream home in Trentham East, I am excited to return to my passion – helping clients buy and sell their property. My approach is simple and honest. Building strong relationships based on trust is key to my success. With deep roots in Trentham and a love of our great community, I'm here to support you every step of the way. Call or email me today on 0425 766 799 or frances@harkinestateagents.com.au. Watch this space! My gorgeous new office in TOTS on the corner of Market and Victoria Streets is coming soon. Building your dream home in Trentham. Building your dream home takes vision, time and patience. But it doesn't have to break the bank. As a long-term Trentham resident, I knew I'd build my dream home here someday. I had two clear design elements in mind – a classic country facade perfectly partnered with a sleek and stylish modern behind. My local friend teases, "I've copied their house." But in truth, it's a mix of the many great houses I've sold in Trentham and surrounds over the years. Simple and elegant design. As a local artist, jeweller, and experienced home renovator, having a simple and elegant but practical family home that takes in the sweeping views of our gorgeous countryside in Trentham East was essential. Paying homage to local artists with some well-appointed interior design elements is key to the overall feel of my home. My experience as an owner-builder. The most important part was knowing my floor plan. With teenage kids and a business, there were a few must-haves I knew I couldn't live without. Most important was having a logical flow from work to home, with ample space and designated living spaces for me and my kids. With the help of a local draftsman, we found a cost-effective way to make my dream home a reality. My next project! I'm excited to start my next project, fitting out my new Harkin Estate Agents office in the gorgeous TOTS building on the corner of Market and Victoria Streets in Trentham. I'm confident my keen eye for design and wealth of knowledge of the area will aid buyers in seeing the full potential of any property. Property is my passion – and I look forward to supporting our community to achieve their property dreams.



~ Frances Harkin

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DINNER CLUB



Dinner club is held on the first Thursday of each month and has been running for over 18 months. We have a few who attend regularly but it is open to anyone who likes to try different cuisines, to have a chat and a laugh. If we have enough people, we take the bus (\$10 each to cover costs) or we carpool and meet at the venue.

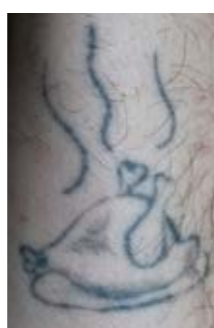
Notification is usually via the Community Events Facebook page a week before, but if you would like to go, but don't have Facebook, we will attend locals night at the pub the Monday before, or you can leave a message at the post office. Anyone who has attended or expressed interest is added to the messenger group.

For our night out in July we went to St Anne's Winery. We had a group of 10 which was one of our best attended nights. The setting was warm and inviting, the staff were attentive, and the food was delicious. The conversation and laughter flowed along with the wine and a great night was held by all. The menu changes regularly so we have already decided to go back again in August. If you are interested in going, please let Rose, Janette D or myself know and we will add you to the list. See below for our reviews on the July dinner. It will cost \$45 for two courses or \$65 for three, most of us felt the two courses was plenty or shared entree and dessert - Kathy B

First one I have been on because of circumstances but had a ball. The food was yummy, company great and driver excellent - 5/5 Lynda

So hard to choose between all options. Loved the mussel entree, steak main and spotted dick dessert. Wonderful touch was the welcome drink and appetiser. Staff were awesome. Thanks Kath for driving the bus! - 5/5 Terri

I thought St Anne's Winery was one of the best we've been to, I chose 2 courses for \$45, entree was mussels in sauce and main was scotch fillet. Service was good, beautiful presentation of the restaurant and nice and cozy as it was cold and windy outside. I would rate the night a 4/5 as the sauce with the mussels was a tad salty but the overall night was fantastic and I would definitely go back - Janette



~ Lucas Moy

WHOSE TATT IS THAT

I got this tattoo while I was on a euro-bender, in Budapest. I also got a washing machine tattooed on my arm, inspired by a story about a friend losing his socks. I really wanted the tattoo to show the hot cartoon steam coming off the chicken. I think the tattooist did a good job! I'm glad I didn't get more tattoos such as a hotel, an ice cream, a bus, a beer, a train, or other travel related tattoos. Think I dodged a bullet there! Maybe next time...

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• GIG & EVENTS GUIDE •

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
AUGUST		
Sat 5: 11:30am	Mister Ants & The Slapstick Circus	5 Grant St, Bacchus Marsh
Sat 5: 5 - 8	The Beat Bros	Pig and Whistle
Fri 11: 8	Jeff Tynan	Blackwood Pub
Sat 12: 7:30am	Berry Long Run	Blackwood
Sat 12: 11 am	Mister Ants & The Slapstick Circus	Sweet & Sassy, Fisken St, Ballan
Sat 12: 5- 8	Complete Unknown	Pig and Whistle
Sat 26: 12:30pm	Meet the Author: Mark Brandi	5-31 Victoria St, Trentham
Sat 26: 5 - 8	The Beat Bros	Pig and Whistle

SEPTEMBER		
Sat 16: 8	5 O'clock Charlie & Pub's 155th birthday	Blackwood Pub

REGULAR STUFF		
Mon from 5	Old Farts Night & meat tray raffle	Blackwood Pub
Wed, 7 - 10	Taproom Trivia	The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh
Wed evenings	Locals night dinner specials	The Cosmo
Mon	Locals night dinner and drink specials	Pig and Whistle
Fri, 5 - 9	Meat tray raffle & cocktail night	Greendale Pub
Fri pm	Meat tray raffle	The Cosmo
Fri pm	Raffle	Pig and Whistle
Last Fri monthly	Flashbank Friday with Ian Banks	The Taproom, Bacchus Marsh
Sat, pm	DJ, Duo or Band	Pig and Whistle
Sun	Pizza Sundays with live music	St Anne's Winery
Sun: 3- 6	Celtic Sessions	Radio Springs
2nd/4th Sun: 2	Regular service	St Martin's Chapel

VALE BARB HENDERSON



Mum & Dad moved permanently into Blackwood in 1997. For years they stayed in their caravan every weekend before deciding to settle and buy in Blackwood. Mum started working at the pub doing various roles cooking, cleaning and working behind the bar. When mum left the pub she stayed home and enjoyed the surroundings living in Blackwood. Mum enjoyed catching up with friends on Monday nights at Old Farts and enjoyed seeing friends. Mum really liked living in Blackwood where she enjoyed the quietness and peacefulness the town offered; enjoyed seeing the wildlife feeding in the yard around the house and just enjoying the fresh county air. Mum fell ill in early 2023 and had

IMAGES OF BLACKWOOD WINTER



~ Photos by Peter Donnelly

a procedure in March which she never really recovered from. This was the reason mum moved to Geelong to spend her final months closer to family at an aged care centre where she could receive the treatment/help she needed. Dad also moved into the same building where they both had a shared room. Mum passed away on 27 July 2023 peacefully.

~ Greg Henderson



Blackwood Community Bush Dance

Saturday 26th August 2023

@ the Blackwood Community Hall

Doors open @5:30pm

Spit Roast Dinner & Dessert @ 6:30pm

BYO Drinks (Tea & Coffee available)

Band: Bush Wahzee from 7:30pm

Adults \$45

Kids 15 & under FREE

Prizes: Best hat, best coo-ee, best dancing child, best dancing couple

Tickets are available online see the link below.

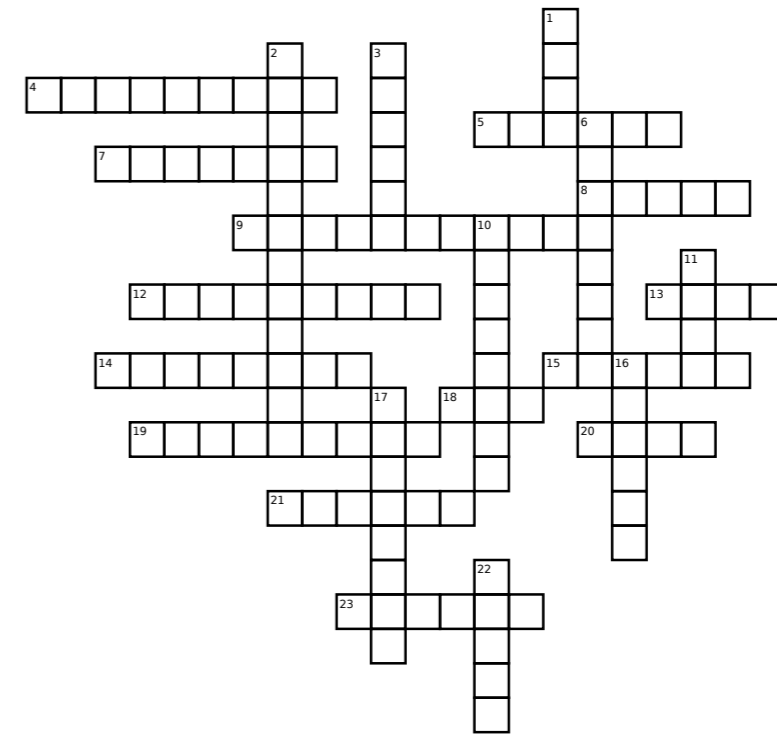
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The Blackwood Crossword



Down:

1. How many games Blackwood Cricket Club won last season
2. New Pub owners
3. Point
6. 3458
10. Blackwood and Barrys Reef environmental group
11. Local Mountain
16. Famous Lookout
17. Popular event at Easter Carnival
22. Greenadale pub Tuesday night special

Across:

4. Original Pub
5. Karen's Hat
7. St..... Chapel
8. Name shared by our coffee roasters
9. Local musical couple
12. To be held on August 26
13. Our local councillor
14. Winter Morning Temperature
15. Famous drummer in cemetery
18. Occupant of the triangle house
19. What is our Shire name?
- 20.
21. What to visit at St Erths
23. The Forrest we live in



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