

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

NO. 66 MARCH 2019



- Let's celebrate!
- Meet the new mayor
- The power of gratitude

11,500 free copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark and district



PHOTO: RANDALL BOURCHIER

Meet the Mayor

After I had enjoyed an hour or two of conversation with Yarra Ranges Council's new mayor, Councillor Tony Stevenson, he emailed me a link to a video clip that shows a makeover of a young woman's face. After hours of hairstyling and the creative application of cosmetics, followed by photo-shopping to change facial details—*voilà!* A super model revealed! The resulting image on a giant billboard is a fake face—a person vastly different from what the young woman looks like in day-to-day life.¹

Having worked in the IT field for 30 years, Tony is certainly able to appreciate the benefits technology brings. However, he's sufficiently well informed to be able to recognise both the strengths and weaknesses of technological advances.

Tony wrote of the clip, It's a real eye-opener to see that even super models don't look like themselves. Unfortunately this mythical beauty has terrible consequences on young people—women and men—who harm themselves in the pursuit of the unobtainable. Everyone's body is different and people need to be loved and appreciated no matter their size or shape. Whether it's idealised beauty, 'perfect' lifestyles or gold-plated materialism, there are some very shallow, aspirational ideas that are widely propagated. For many people, sustaining an image or having lots of 'stuff' ultimately proves to be unfulfilling. But it is hard to resist the glitz and glamour that's pumped out 24/7 through every possible medium."

I share this story to show that Tony's thoughtful, down-to-earth approach to issues of our day equips him well for his role as mayor.

Having grown up in Coffs Harbour—his mother from a farming family and his father a horticultural advisor—Tony remembers how one of his teachers taught him the importance of evaluating what's happening in the world in deeper, more thoughtful, well-informed ways. He's clear in articulating how important this is in politics and civic leadership. "For good governance, people need to be attuned to what the challenges really are. Noisy elements would like you to focus on their small pockets of interest. But we have to think about the whole of society and most people's needs. We need to also reflect the traditional egalitarian nature of Australia's society and ensure that people aren't left behind as we advance."

"Planning and decision-making must be based on rigorous and informed analysis of the issues and the possible solutions," continued Tony. "Decisions need to be made so as to achieve the best long-term benefit for the community, not just for some individuals. We need to have cool heads and warm hearts, to be fiscally responsible and compassionate, to do what's right, not necessarily what's popular."

Tony and I spoke at some length about Appreciative Inquiry (AI): the notion of focusing on organisational strengths and building on those, rather than taking the more negative approach of overly dwelling on things done not so well.² AI is similar to Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), which works towards strengthening communities by encouraging the community to take charge of its future by developing its assets—"focusing on what's strong, not what's wrong".³

As Tony weighed up whether to become involved in civic leadership, he thought that the good things Yarra Ranges Council (YRC) was doing

¹ [youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCnOj46U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCnOj46U)

² whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Appreciative-inquiry-AI

³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset-based_community_development

far outweighed any weaknesses that were present. He avoids the political mentality that suggests that everything the previous lot did was wrong. The approaches of AI and ABCD very much aligned with his thinking. He also believes that governments exist to serve people—a refreshing perspective, given the many examples in our world of governments that seem to exist to exercise power as an end in itself.

Tony admires those who choose to work in local government, knowing full well that many employees could earn more money in the commercial world. “This organisation has a good set of employees who work hard and strive to deliver the best for the community,” he said. “There’s a feeling among local government employees that they’re doing meaningful work that directly benefits people. For them it’s better than working for a big business where you’re a small cog in a much larger machine, doing something of indirect value.”

Tony mused on the age-old stereotype of community and council people being all talk, no action.

“There’s a lot to be done to correct these myths. I’d like to continue the work of previous mayors in helping make our community leaders, volunteers and our council staff feel respected and appreciated for all they’re doing. If you want to get the best out of people, you need to support and encourage and develop them. How can people in society expect to get the best out of their community and council teams if they spend most of their time ‘bagging’ them?”

Tony acknowledged such culture shifts take time, perseverance and patience. Such is the realistic long-term view! I mentioned the phrase ‘living proximately’, which I’d come across in a book by Steven Garber. The book explains the notion this way: “Whatever our vocation, it always means making peace with the proximate⁴, with something rather than nothing... That is not a cold-hearted calculus; rather it is a choice to live by hope, even when hope is hard.”⁵

Our conversation moved on to the way in which well-formed public policy imposes limitations on activities that, if left unchecked, might exploit people, rob them of wellbeing or impoverish the richness of community life. We talked about how, given the weight of the well-informed consensus of scientific opinion, refusing to agree to limits on carbon emissions will disadvantage all in the longer term.

Garber suggests that while many of us may dislike limits, “unless we choose to live with limits, there is no honest happiness. Starkly and plainly, there is no other place to live for any of us. We are always straining against limits, most of the time never content with limits—and that is true for marriages as it is true for work as it is true for politics.”⁶

Five years ago Tony left the St Kilda Road-based organisation where he worked, to spend more time with his family. He’d arrived at the conclusion that his family had enough resources to live well, but what they lacked was time. Tony feared that before he knew it his kids would have grown up and left the nest. However, it’s hard to break the habits of a lifetime and before long Tony found himself at home but back ‘at work’, developing systematic share-trading algorithms. For a while this was intellectually fulfilling. However, during lunch with a friend, who was also share trading for a living, the subject came up about civic service. Should we feel guilty if we don’t actively put back into our communities?

The conversation led to Tony seeking ways to be more engaged locally. A neighbour once asked him, “Why don’t you stand for council? I reckon you’d be good at it.”

Well, the rest is history! Tony found himself elected to represent Chandler Ward—Kalorama, Macclesfield, Monbulk, Seville, parts of Montrose, Mount Evelyn, Olinda and Emerald, and most of Seville East and Wandin North.

The ward suits Tony’s interest in rural life. He speaks very fondly of his visits to farms with his father during school holidays, and growing up among his mother’s farming relatives. Tony represents YRC on the board of Agribusiness Yarra Valley, which is dedicated to partnership between

farmers, industry and government, to sustain local agriculture.

Toward the end of our wide-ranging conversation I asked Tony what he hopes *Living Today* readers would understand about YRC. “Yarra Ranges is quite different to many of our neighbouring councils, as it’s a large and incredibly diverse region—from the urban areas through to the hills of the Dandenongs and the wide expanses of the Yarra Valley,” Tony replied. “YRC looks after an area over three times the size of Singapore, with 150,000 people living in 55 towns and all the spaces in between. The sheer size and distances, along with the variety of landscapes, settlements, public land, roads and infrastructure, all add to the cost and complexity of providing services. It’s not a complaint—it’s simply the reality!”

“As an example, we have 63 sporting fields scattered over Yarra Ranges. When we have someone mowing the fields, they might finish one before driving the tractor 10 kilometres down the road to the next—given the distances, there’s a limit to how efficient you can be.”

Another challenge is that while many suburban councils have just one main street, the Yarra Ranges shire has 55 main streets. “If YRC were to provide and display Christmas decorations for each of those townships, it would come at the cost of some of the essential and important services that council has to provide all year round,” said Tony. “Fortunately, in many towns engaged communities and traders are working together to bring that Christmas cheer.”



PHOTO: JESSE D. GRAHAM

“There are many big things like rail services, sewerage and roads that still need to be updated across Yarra Ranges. We will keep working hard on those alongside other agencies. There are never enough resources to do everything we’d like to do, as quickly as we’d like, so some tough choices need to be made. These are our realities—we seek to work through our challenges as best we can to be efficient and effective in serving our communities.”

I think we’d agree it’s a big job!

When you have the opportunity to speak with Tony, you might ask him what he’s been reading recently. In his quest for understanding so essential to his civic role, he reads widely. When Tony was in Grade 6 a teacher wrote in his report, “Tony might get somewhere if he could take his nose out of a book for a minute or two.”

I wonder what the teacher’s response would be to Tony’s life now, given his family, his accomplishments, and his dedication to good governance, serving the people of Yarra Ranges.



Randall Bouchier

⁴ Close; nearest; immediately before or after in order, place, occurrence, etc

⁵ Garber, Steven. *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common Good*. 2014 IVP, p.203-4

⁶ Garber, *Visions of Vocation*, p.203-4

celebrate mooroolbark festival

DARE TO DREAM

22 & 23 March

2019



Mooroolbark's premier community festival is just days away! The event, which is a major attraction in the Yarra Ranges, involves a large number of schools, community groups and businesses from local suburbs.

Please note the new starting time of 7 pm on Friday 22 March with 'Red Earth Unearthed', our local talent quest, at the Mooroolbark Community Centre in Brice Avenue. The evening is an opportunity for our young people to display their talent on stage and includes a delicious supper. There are cash prizes to be won in each category, very generously donated by the Mooroolbark Lions Club. We are happy to announce that this year there is a new dance category for our budding dancers.

The following day the festival kicks off at 10 am with a parade led by the essential services vehicles. Participants in the parade are encouraged to dress up, and a first and second prize will be awarded for the most creative costumes, with particular attention to



those who follow the theme. The theme for this year is Dare to Dream: we are asking people to follow their dreams, to think of someone they admire, who motivates them, or who they are proud to know.

As usual there will be much to see and do. We are planning to have a roller-skating rink for teens, as well as rides from Action Events for younger children. There will be local talent performing on the Youth Stage once again, with the Australian Youth Band, Parkville Music, Loud Shirts, Alizarin Tribal Bellydancers, the Croydon Citizens' Band and many others on the Community Stage.

Kofi, the popular West African drummer, will have free workshops for people of all ages and magician Dr Hercules E. Dealer will be back to entertain you with his clever tricks—and there may be a whale of a tale to be told to entertain the young.

Museum Victoria will also be there with a range of objects that can be touched, including dinosaur bones and fossil casts, marine shells, live bugs and a set of Federation Handbells. Inside the community centre, festival-goers can make pottery and observe oil painters at work. Small children will be kept busy on the Gymbaroo play equipment, the Meccano Man may be back, and much, much more.

Thanks to our sponsors' generosity, most activities are free or low cost. There will be competitions and prizes, as well as a variety of stalls, including the lucky straws stall, activities and entertainment. Food stalls include pancakes, vintage ice cream, and the Lions Club sausage sizzle. There will be various community information booths and workshops, rides for children, and an animal farm. All stall



holders have been encouraged to embrace the objectives of zero waste, reduced energy consumption, and environmentally sustainable consumables.



Cathy Grbac

Unfortunately, one of our committee members has had to resign due to work commitments. Cathy Grbac has contributed greatly to Celebrate Mooroolbark in the three years she has been with us. When she first arrived on the scene as our site manager, Cathy didn't know exactly what

the job entailed. However, in her unflappable manner she carried out her duties efficiently and competently, and has spent many hours fine tuning the position to make it easy for someone else to take over. This year, Cathy has also been responsible for much of the administrative work, which included our child safety policy and the council grant application. Many thanks, Cathy—you will be sorely missed.

For more information please go to our website, visit us on Facebook, or email admin@celebratemooroolbark.com.

Barbara Austin

Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee

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Choosing Gratitude

Last year, I was challenged to keep a gratitude journal. At a workshop on positive mental health and wellbeing facilitated by psychologist Maria Ruberto, we were asked to write down three things that went well each day for one month and also, why we thought it went well.

Many of the things I noted in my journal were simple, ordinary events—eating raspberries fresh from the vine, watching my chickens scratch in the backyard, and walking my children to school. Everyday delights like these are familiar to most of us. However, there is something about writing down your thoughts that compels you to think more deeply about each experience and savour it.

Thankfulness is about appreciating and reflecting on events and experiences as they occur, day to day. It involves slowing down and pausing for a few moments, so that we can observe and absorb the good things that are happening around us, even in the midst of life challenges. It is also about recognising the positive ways that we connect with other people.

This approach to life doesn't always come naturally. We live in one of the most privileged and wealthy societies, but many of us just don't recognise it. In their book, *Affluenza: When Too Much is Never Enough*, Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss emphasise that many Australians feel constantly deprived, disappointed and dissatisfied, despite having one of the highest living standards in the world. Many of us are confused about what it takes to live a worthwhile life, and this can leave us feeling empty and disillusioned.

Gratitude helps to refocus our thoughts on what we have, rather than what we are missing out on. There is mounting evidence to show that the simple act of keeping a gratitude journal can result in people feeling significantly more satisfied and contented with their lives, despite the level of stress or unhappiness they were encountering when they started their journal. The 'gratitude attitude' has also been associated with higher energy levels, improved

relationships and a better night's sleep.^{1,2}

Our children also benefit from learning how to approach life with a grateful heart. Research indicates that teenagers who are grateful are more satisfied with their lives: home life, school, friendships and themselves. They are also more hopeful about their lives and are less likely to experience depression and other negative emotions.

Although noticing the world around us with a sense of gratitude doesn't come naturally for many of us, this attitude can be cultivated. For this to happen, our appreciation needs to be much more than a fleeting thought or a quick thank you. It needs to be thoughtful and purposeful. Maria Ruberto describes gratitude as having two main parts: "to consider and then deliver". Both aspects are vital to bring about a positive effect.

To **consider** is to remember the details of what happened, to bring that memory into the present—to reflect on how lovely, precious or important it was, and how we felt at the time.

To **deliver** involves re-creating the event, telling the story of what happened. This could also involve sharing our appreciation with others, particularly with the ones who made us feel grateful in the first place.

There are some simple ways that we can practice gratitude on a regular basis, to the benefit of our relationships, mental health, and wellbeing:

- **Start a gratitude journal.** Before bed each day, take a few minutes to write down three things that went well, and why. If life is challenging right now, this might be a struggle at first. However, with perseverance, it becomes increasingly easier to think of positive things even in the midst of difficult circumstances. Photos, artwork and collages can also be used to capture the blessings in your life.

- **Compose a letter of thanks.** Write to someone who has made a difference in your life. Tell them specifically what they did, how it affected you and your appreciation. If a whole letter seems daunting, start by adding a few lines to the message you usually write when sending a greeting card.

- **Make gratitude part of your routine.** Take time before meals to think and talk about special and pleasant events of the day. Before bedtime, ask your children what went well for them and why. Make a practice of sending thank you cards or messages when someone does something helpful or kind.

When we start looking, we start finding. When gratitude is practiced regularly, we become better at thinking about and savouring things that have gone well. Poignant, uplifting and wondrous moments will pop up where we least expect them. And when we share that gratitude with others, we bring joy and positivity into the lives of those around us.

■ Kate Chivers

Thank you to Maria Ruberto for sharing her knowledge, thoughts and resources to support the writing of this article. Maria is an established psychologist and neuropsychologist. She is also the Director at Salutegenics, a strengths-based psychological service specialising in mental fitness, resilience and wellbeing: salutegenics.com.au

Further reading:

Affluenza: When Too Much Is Never Enough by Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss.

Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being by Martin E P Seligman.

5 Gratitude Exercises That Will Boost Your Happiness Levels by Mike Oppland. Positive Psychology Program: Your One Stop Positive Psychology Resource. positivepsychologyprogram.com.

¹ *Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths* (Third edition) by Shane Lopez, Jennifer Pedrotti and C R Snyder.

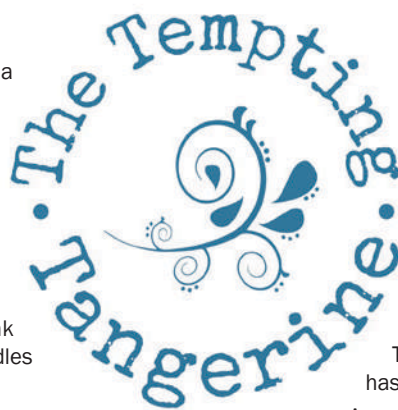
² *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being* by Martin Seligman



● It's been a journey of exploration and creativity for Melissa Dalton,

the owner of The Tempting Tangerine, a gift boutique specialising in handmade soaps, soy candles and bespoke gifts in Mooroolbark. Melissa started out in the house-cleaning business and she wanted to give small thank you gifts to her clients. "I started making candles and it went from there," Melissa said.

Before long, Melissa was selling her handmade soaps and candles at local weekend markets around Melbourne, and within a few years, she was trading twice a week at the Queen Victoria Market. "One day, I said as a joke, 'Oh, I should open a shop'. I ended up being given the green light, and off I went!" Opening The Tempting Tangerine on Brice Avenue gave Melissa the opportunity to expand



and offer an extended range of gifts, along with freeing up her weekends to spend time with her family. The shop offers natural soaps, candles, handmade jewellery and other gift items. For those who can't make it to Mooroolbark's main street, The Tempting Tangerine also has an online store.



Melissa Dalton

According to Melissa, one of the best parts about trading in Mooroolbark is "giving customers the knowledge about what's in Tempting Tangerine products". The handmade soaps are all natural, with no parabens, no sulphates, and are palm-oil free. Melissa is concerned about the use of palm oil in personal care products, which has contributed heavily to deforestation and is driving orangutans and other endangered species to extinction. The Tempting Tangerine supports the Orangutan Project by adopting an orangutan every month, advocating for these endangered animals whose tropical rainforest habitat is threatened due to tree clearing for palm oil plantations.

When asked "What's the best gift you've ever received?" Melissa replied "My children!" Family is the essence that underpins The Tempting Tangerine. The shop's name was a brainwave of Melissa's husband, and her children have been the inspiration for many of her handmade products.

Melissa sums up The Tempting Tangerine by saying, "It's just me doing what I love to do!"

Iris Kennedy

The Tempting Tangerine is located at 14 Brice Avenue Mooroolbark and is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 9 am. For closing times and more information about the range of beautiful gifts, visit the website: thetemptingtangerine.com.au.

To learn about or support the work of the Orangutan Project, go to orangutan.org.au.



PHOTO: IRIS KENNEDY

Sadie & Co. BOUTIQUE

● Opening a women's clothing store in Mooroolbark felt like coming home for Sharon of Sadie & Co Boutique. Sharon was born in Kilsyth,

attended school in Lilydale and worked in the Terrace Shopping Centre when it first opened, so she's familiar with the area and enjoys the friendly atmosphere. She loves the fact that other shop owners pop their head in the door as they are passing to call out a greeting. "I love Mooroolbark!" she said. "It's so friendly."

Sharon spent many years working in auditing, but the rest of her work life has been in retail. When the opportunity came to open up her own shop it was only a matter of discussing it with her husband and the "deal was done". Her long-time friend Tracey, who had been a teacher and was then a stay-at-home mum, was only too happy to join in this new venture when approached by Sharon. The two complement each other—Sharon is spontaneous whereas Tracey is more meticulous, especially when buying clothes.

Unable to use her own name for her clothing store for trademark reasons, Sharon thought of her beautiful white retriever dog Sadie—and Sadie & Co Boutique was born. The boutique opened on 1 July last year, and it has been a learning curve for both Sharon and Tracey. They buy sizes 8-24 in Australian brands, which is sometimes hard to do as not every brand has the complete range of sizes. Another challenge when submitting a new order is to predict ahead what is

going to be fashionable and what is going to be suitable for customers ten months in advance.

The shop is alive with colour and light, filled with casual and smart casual clothes for mature customers. Sharon and Tracey have discovered that most women are quick to find flaws in their own body, but they help their customers find clothing to complement their body types with their personal service.

Sharon loves meeting people and enjoys building relationships. She has three stepsons who are married and have children of their own, so much of her spare time away from the boutique is spent visiting grandchildren.

Sadie & Co is located at 20 Brice Avenue and opens at 9:30 am from Monday to Saturday. Closing times are 5 pm Monday to Wednesday, 6 pm Thursday and Friday, and 2 pm on Saturdays. Sharon and Tracey also have plans to sell online in future. Pictures of the colourful clothes and unique accessories stocked at the store can be seen on the boutique's Facebook page.

Barbara Austin



PHOTO: BARBARA AUSTIN

A Step in the Right Direction

There is an increasing awareness about the importance of wellbeing and mental health in our communities. Wellbeing involves more than just looking after our physical health—social and mental wellbeing are also very important determinants for enjoying a meaningful and high quality life.

Steps to Wellbeing is providing free and confidential support for people in the eastern suburbs who want to improve their sense of wellbeing and to address anxiety, stress and depression.

Steps to Wellbeing is delivered by community mental health provider Neami National, and funded by the Australian government under the Primary Health Network program.

The program uses an evidence-based approach to help people identify their strengths and values, and to take steps to achieve their aspirations. Over a period of up to six sessions, and through a supportive working relationship, wellbeing coaches help people to explore and gain clarity on their thoughts, feelings and experiences, and develop strategies to improve resilience and self-care.

The program offers a range of support options, from one-on-one coaching to group sessions and phone or video conferencing.

People accessing support from Steps to Wellbeing may be experiencing a significant life transition, increased life stressors, or showing signs of anxiety or depression. These signs can include low mood, feeling overwhelmed, low energy, feelings of hopelessness, fear, nervousness or worrying, and social isolation.

Steps to Wellbeing is a free service available to all people aged 16 or over who live, work or study in the northern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne, including the Yarra Ranges and Maroondah shires. People can refer themselves, or be referred by a health professional.

For more information about how to benefit from this program, phone 8691 5450 or go to stepstowellbeing.org.au.

Kirsten Taylor



Steps to Wellbeing



PHOTO: AMY PIESSE

Wellbeing coaches support individuals to develop personal strategies and skills for resilience and wellbeing.

Free Family Movie Night



Migo is a friendly Yeti whose world gets turned upside down when he discovers something that he didn't know existed—a human. He soon faces banishment from his snowy home when the rest of the villagers refuse to believe his fantastic tale. Hoping to prove them wrong, Migo embarks on an epic journey to find the mysterious creature that can put him back in good graces with his simple community.

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10 April 2019

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Better Kids for the World

What would our world be like if people only did what they were paid to do?

At the moment, such a world seems unlikely; we see many people around us who devote themselves selflessly to their families and communities. But if this trend is to continue—and improve—we as parents must make sure that we don't neglect teaching our children about the value of hard work in the service of others. Future generations won't understand the fundamental concepts of community and consideration for other people if their parents haven't provided them with opportunities to learn these important values.

In essence, parenting is the process of training children to be ready for an adult world. This means giving children a range of skills so that they are prepared to live alongside others and do their bit to contribute to the lives of people around them.

One of the essential skills for adulthood is knowing the necessary chores for a home to work efficiently. As they leave home, young adults need to be skilled at performing a range of household tasks reliably and to a reasonable standard. If left undone, the simplest daily tasks can make life quite stressful and wearying for everyone in the house or workplace. Ignoring basic responsibilities leads to disorganisation and strained relationships.

When children are young, parents typically shoulder most of the household responsibility. As children start to help out, tasks are usually done jointly with parents in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome. For example, washing a car can be a complex task, especially for children. A team effort, including instruction and supervision, is required for some time until an acceptable standard of work is reached. While young children are learning, it is natural that many jobs will need to be redone or finished off by the parent in order to reach a satisfactory level. However, over time and with clear instruction, support and encouragement, children can develop their skills to a sufficient level so that they can make a real contribution to how the family functions.

I saw a poster recently that rang true for me. It said, "Everyone talks

about leaving a better world for our kids. Maybe we should think about leaving better kids for the world." Teaching our children how to do their part, to do a good job and to give back to the community are important ways that we leave a legacy for the future.

It sometimes seems that as a society, we are in danger of losing the thoughtfulness that is necessary for living alongside others in an orderly and harmonious way. A simple indicator of this is the increase in littering and dumping of rubbish. There can be a sense of discouragement when we see litter and rubbish on the streets, and there may be some temptation to do as others do. Disposing of our rubbish properly may not seem to make any difference when others around us apparently don't care. We may feel that our little bit of rubbish is not going to make any difference, as there is already so much about.

However, if we think about how other people's lack of consideration affects us, we can see the positive effects of behaving appropriately. For instance, many people don't bother to return supermarket trolleys to the trolley bay. It may be tempting to do as others do and leave our trolleys where everyone else is dumping theirs—but we're more inclined to do the right thing if we think about how we feel when there are abandoned trolleys in the only parking space available!

Our children need to learn the importance of meeting acceptable standards. Some jobs have to be done properly or they are simply unsatisfactory. Putting the bins out on garbage night might seem a simple task, but it's a job that requires a certain level of skill. If the bins don't get put out or are positioned incorrectly, they will remain unemptied and cause considerable difficulty as the next week progresses with overflowing bins.

It takes integrity to maintain standards of decent behaviour, consideration and care for others. If our children are the only ones doing their bit, they may feel like lone crusaders. Reassure them that their attitudes and behaviours certainly do have an impact on others. When families leave the movie theatre and take their rubbish with them, they provide an example of appropriate behaviour. When they leave a campsite tidier than when they arrived, they set a standard for the next campers,



silently urging them to do the same.

Our local communities provide us with many examples of people who consistently leave the world a better place. These everyday heroes go well above and beyond what they are paid to do. Our communities' greatest volunteers are quiet, unobtrusive, good-natured, humble and persistent people. They readily sacrifice their time, money, energy and heart for the benefit of others in the community. They don't get paid for what they do! In fact, it usually costs them considerably more than we might be comfortable with. They lend a hand not just now and then, but over many years—even decades.

Our children may not realise that people in the community regularly volunteer their time and services. For example, they might not know that the Salvation Army and the Country Fire Authority are mostly manned by unpaid workers. Show your children that you respect what these volunteers do within the community, perhaps by making donations or volunteering your own time. These organisations have a long history of doing good and helping others, even at great sacrifice to themselves—sometimes too great! Our kids need to know about the work these volunteers do and the way our community depends on them for help in times of deep need.

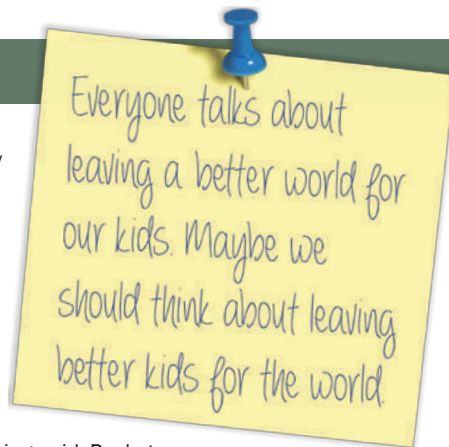
Older children and teens may enjoy and benefit from an opportunity to work without pay at their school or in the community. Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering and provides a database of volunteering opportunities that may be suitable. Some of these jobs are one-off events, just requiring help for a couple of hours. Visit the Volunteering Victoria website for more information.¹ Young people can also offer to help at local community events, such as sports days, Celebrate Mooroolbark or the yearly tree-planting event.

¹ volunteeringvictoria.org.au

We need to carefully consider how, when and why we give our children pocket money. Aim for a balance between rewarding kids for completing their chores while also expecting them to make some regular contribution to the household without being paid. Pocket money certainly helps children to develop an understanding of saving, spending and budgeting. However, if we want our children to learn about giving without getting, some chores must be done simply to contribute to the family or community—for free! Each family will need to determine how this might work for themselves, depending on their individual circumstances. Perhaps some jobs around home might be rewarded with payment, while others just need to be done. We can certainly praise our children and let them know how their efforts made a difference. Each family has the challenge to grow each child towards maturity without using money as the core incentive and reward.

As parents, leaving 'better kids for the world' may well be the toughest job we will ever have. We need to stick to what we know is right and do so quietly and consistently. When we do this, we send a powerful message. Others, including our children, will notice what we do—even if they seem to be looking the other way. When we teach our children to recycle their rubbish, pick up after themselves and volunteer to do a bit extra, we uphold important values that will leave the world a better place.

Steve Steel



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This whimsical artist's garden takes you on an adventure via a labyrinth of pathways leading to umpteen 'rooms', each with a different colour and theme made almost entirely from 'junk'—found, recycled and reused in the most creative ways.

Come and be inspired!

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Come—Everything is Ready

World Day of Prayer, 1 March 2019

Rezka Arnuš of Slovenia can barely see. In good light, she has only five percent vision. And yet, for the past 18 years, Rezka has been creating works of art which have been exhibited around the world. This year, one of her paintings has received special attention as the featured artwork for the World Day of Prayer.

The World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a global day of worship which is celebrated annually in 170 countries around the world on the first Friday in March. The movement originated in the USA in 1887 and has existed in its current form since 1927. Led by Christian women, it aims to bring together people of various races and cultures in fellowship and prayer.

Each year, the worship service focuses on a different country and a specific theme; in 2019, the focus is on Slovenia. Committees from Slovenia have prepared the order of service for worship events which will be held around the world. Mooroolbark's World Day of Prayer service will be hosted by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship and will take place at St Margaret's Uniting Church in Hull Road. Mrs Magda Pisotek, a Slovenian member of St Peter Julian Eymard Mooroolbark Parish, will be the featured speaker.

Every WDP service is organised by women, in recognition of the fact that women in many parts of the world have specific needs. Men and children are also encouraged to attend. Services are held in various places, from church buildings to school chapels or religious instruction classrooms, private homes, coffee shops, or retirement villages. By joining together in prayer on this particular day, men and women around the world offer solidarity and support to those who need it. Christians of different denominations, with various worshipping styles and traditions, will come together to pray for the needs of Slovenia. In a 24-hour period, united prayers will be going up in what Margaret Lewis, representing the hosting church Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, called a "wave of prayer around the world".

This year, women from the focus country Slovenia have chosen the theme "Come—Everything is Ready". Based on Luke 14:15-24, the theme focuses on Christ's invitation to all types of people to enter His kingdom.

In her painting, Rezka Arnuš has combined elements of her home country with the biblical story of the feast. The green background represents the fields and forests of Slovenia, and red and white are traditional colours of Slovenian folk embroidery. The table is decorated with love—especially a caring for the overlooked,

the less fortunate—expressing the intent of Luke 14: "... when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed."¹

Under the table are depicted those who are often perceived as being marginalised. "They heard the invitation to the feast," explained Rezka. "A homeless woman carries a child in her arms, a blind woman with arms in front already preparing for a step, a deaf person responds by changing the position of his head, a spastic girl's involuntary movements shows her joyous acceptance of the invitation to the banquet."²

The motto of the World Day of Prayer is "informed prayer and prayerful action". Each



year, the focus country presents its needs and concerns through the order of service, and people around the world support that country through prayer and attending the service.

When Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, religious gatherings were once again permitted, and WDP services were able to be held in Slovenia. Since its independence, this small country of breathtaking natural beauty, home to 2 million people, has become the wealthiest and most politically

¹ Luke 14:13-14

² worlddayofprayeraustralia.org/world-day-of-prayer/wdp-2019/artist/



open country of the former Yugoslav republics. However, like all countries, it is not without its problems. There are high rates of drug and alcohol abuse, unemployment, and suicide. Wages are low, making housing and living costs difficult for many people.

"We will be praying for Slovenia and praying for the world," said Margaret Lewis. "Slovenia has the same sorts of problems we've got here—drugs, alcohol, domestic violence and things like that."

In praying for others, Christians are encouraged by WDP to be enriched by the faith of Christians in other countries and cultures, and to become aware of the whole world rather than living in isolation. Participants are urged to pray with and for other people, and take up their burdens, using their talents to serve others.

Every year, an offering is taken up during the service. In 2019, funds are being raised for an Australia-wide project called Trauma Counselling for Women. WDP, in conjunction with the Bible Societies of Australia and Slovenia, will use the money to provide a proven trauma healing course. Course materials will be translated and 30 group facilitators trained, so that sessions can be held around Slovenia. The trauma healing program will transform lives in Slovenia for the next two years, enabling women to work through issues such as depression, post-war trauma, substance abuse, and violence, which have been identified as being commonly experienced by Slovenian women.

The one-hour service at St Margaret's will be followed by morning tea, giving people a chance to talk together and also look at some cultural items from Slovenia which will be on display.

Please come—the women of Slovenia and Mooroolbark are ready.

Janet Van Dijk

**Combined Churches of Mooroolbark
World Day of Prayer
10:00 am Friday 1 March
St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road**

The Demolition Artist

In 2006 my son played in a high school championship game in what was the Georgia Dome—then an impressive indoor American football arena where professionals played for 23 seasons. On 20 November 2017, it was demolished to make way for an even more impressive stadium with a retractable roof and the largest video board of any sports complex—the Mercedes Benz Stadium. And it certainly is the Mercedes Benz of all stadiums.

Whether on TV or in person, we've all seen demolitions. People usually stand by and observe; there may be a news camera or two. Then an abandoned building jerks and smokes and buckles, quickly becoming a cloud of dust. What may have taken years and millions of dollars to put up is gone within minutes.

One of the most famous demolitions in recent history was the levelling of the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St. Louis in 1971. Pruitt-Igoe was a symbol of modernism. Modernism held, among other things, that human beings are hyper-evolved animals that simply needed the right physical conditions to thrive.

The Pruitt-Igoe housing project was an attempt to bring these principles to life. It was to be the

best of modern architecture, electrical, plumbing, and other amenities. It was erected in one of the worst neighbourhoods in inner-city St. Louis as “project housing.” The residents were moved in, and the country waited to see modernism at work. But within fifteen years, crime, racial tension, and poverty were rampant, making Pruitt-Igoe, the great modernist project, a terrifying place to live and a complete social failure.

Many philosophers and thinkers see the symbolic end of modernism in the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe in December 1971. This view of humans, as one-dimensional beings who only need their physical needs met to thrive, had failed completely.

In His day Jesus demolished brave ideas about what God's long-awaited deliverance was going to look like. He didn't bring about an expected political or military victory, He didn't deliver only the Jewish people alone, and He triumphed in death on a cross rather than via a conquest of power.

He demolished human expectations of how God should arrive on the scene. Here He was



PHOTO: US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

being baptised rather than baptising, here He was quietly making some wine with a miracle rather than something more spectacular, here He was saying that He had authority to forgive faults and failures. Even today He demolishes our expectations, bringing what we need into our lives rather than always what we want. He calls us to service and sacrifice rather than a winner-takes-all life.

That's the way it is when Jesus, the demolition artist, is at work. Just like the Pruitt-Igoe project which symbolised the end of modernism, so the demolition Jesus does destroys our flawed understanding of God and humanity.

Greg Williams
Speaking of Life

ON YOUR DOORSTEP



Doongalla Picnic Ground

The tranquil Doongalla picnic ground at Simpsons Road in The Basin is part of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The former Doongalla Homestead mansion, which was established in the 1890s, was destroyed by bushfire in 1932. Only the servants' quarters and the stables survived the fire. Today, the former servants' housing is now used by Parks Victoria rangers and the stables section is a peaceful picnic ground, with a variety of introduced trees among the native bush. This creates an attractive location that changes with the seasons.

There are two picnic areas at Doongalla: the former homestead site and the lower, more shaded area of the former stables. Both areas have picnic tables and wood fire barbeques (BYO wood), with car parking facilities and toilets.

Walking tracks from the picnic areas access other parts of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. The Stables Track loop is a 1.9km 45-minute walk, commencing from the lower picnic area. From the upper picnic area, the Channel 10 Track winds up the towards the communication towers near the top of the mountain. Further along up the Zig Zag Track, there are spectacular views over Melbourne and out to Port Philip Bay. A short walk further along, you can read about the historical Kyeema DC-2 aeroplane that crashed near the site in 1938. The Kyeema memorial and information shelter nearby provides information about the nature of the crash and those who perished in this tragedy.



The tracks vary in their surface, though it is possible to stay on the wide gravel-topped surface if the weather is wet. Many of the tracks can also be explored on by mountain bike or on horseback. The vegetation is varied and includes mountain ash, tree ferns, mountain grey gum and messmate trees. Wallabies reside in the area, along with echidnas and prolific bird life. You may be lucky enough to see a lyrebird along the tracks or even in the picnic ground if it is quiet.

What to bring:

- All your picnic needs
- Wood if using the barbeques
- A frisbee or ball games for the lawn section
- Sturdy shoes to explore the walking tracks
- Drinking water—the toilets are supplied with untreated water

How to get there:

The picnic area is approximately 40km east of Melbourne. At the roundabout at The Basin where Mountain Highway and Forest Road intersect, take the Basin-Olinda Road, then turn left into Sheffield Road. Turn right into Doongalla Road and follow the signs to the picnic area. There is a gate which closes the park in the evenings before it gets dark, with the times clearly posted at the entrance.

Further information, including a map and walking trails, can be found on the Parks Victoria website. Check for any changed conditions or track closures before heading out to this beautiful location, right on your doorstep.

Tim Chivers

Making Mooroolbark Better

Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) is a collection of local organisations that seeks to nurture, support, and encourage the work done by the extensive range of community organisations that serve the common good of Mooroolbark.¹ Each year, MUG is proud to present the Quiet Achiever Awards, which recognise local people who have served Mooroolbark and helped make it a better place.

The Quiet Achiever medallions are awarded to people who, in significant and often long-term ways, have brought benefit to our lives together. The 2018 awards were presented at the November Annual Town Forum by Yarra Ranges Mayor Cr Tony Stevenson and Emergency Management Victoria Commissioner Andrew Crisp.

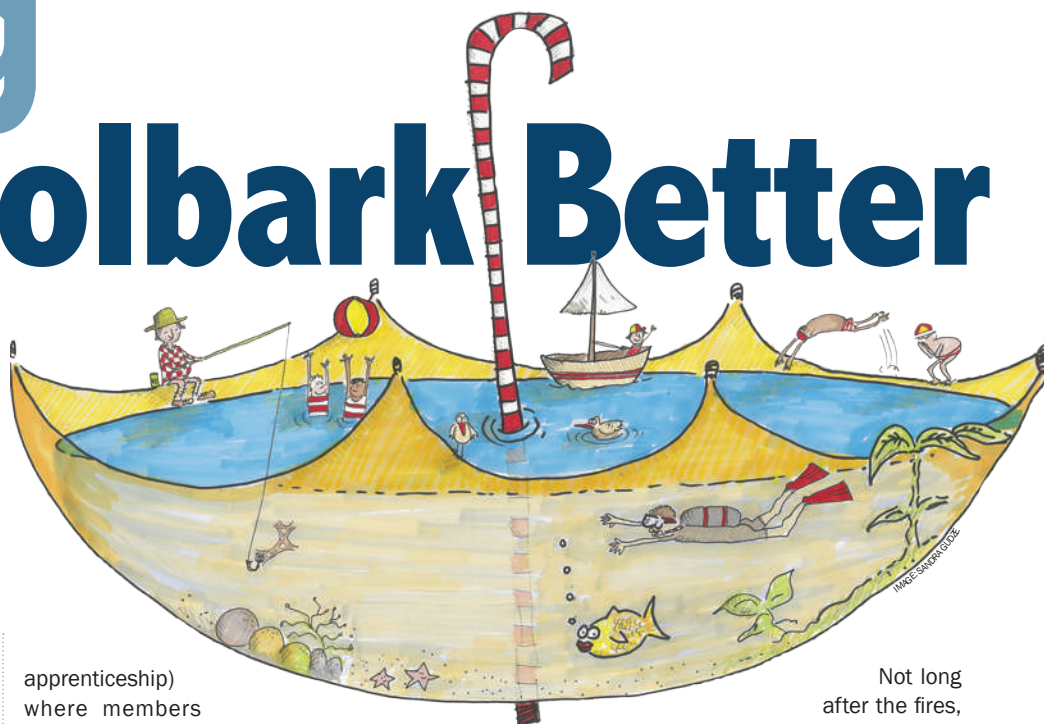
As 2019 is the tenth anniversary of the 2009 fires that devastated our region, MUG called for nominations from emergency response organisations. As a result, two awards went to Country Fire Authority (CFA) personnel who had been involved in the 2009 fires. Two further awards honoured young Victorian researchers working in the field of community resilience and response to emergencies. The fifth award went to a long-serving Pembroke Primary School staffer.

Tim Holland grew up west of Bendigo in Newbridge and joined the CFA during his teens. He followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who'd had long histories with the CFA. "It was just what you did in the community," said Tim.

Moving to Melbourne to study, he continued his CFA voluntary work with the Yarrambat brigade before becoming a professional firefighter in 2005. Years later, Tim now serves as a CFA Operations Officer, overseeing and supporting brigades at Badger Creek, Chirnside Park, Coldstream, Dixons Creek, Healesville, Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Mt Evelyn, South Warrandyte, Warrandyte, Wonga Park and Yarra Glen.

In 2012 Tim graduated from MBA studies, which gave him helpful insights into ways to improve collaboration between the brigades, other Emergency Management (EM) agencies and local communities. In 2017 he was a member of a team sent to support those fighting the California fires.

Although much of his work involves the oversight of structured training (almost an



apprenticeship) where members learn operational skills, the use of apparatus and appliances, safety and risk management and information about the science of fires, Tim is committed to fostering CFA cultural change. He believes it essential that members continue lifelong learning: not just in operational matters but developing essential skills and values such as empathy, listening, participation, teamwork, camaraderie, self-evaluation, motivation, dedication, and willingness to receive guidance.

Tim's colleagues think highly of him. His approach was described by one CFA member as "an often quiet, caring, behind-the-scenes manner through words of advice or encouragement, or suggesting the direction to take to resolve a problem."

Jim McKee joined the Wonga Park CFA after the destructive 1952 fires. He captained the brigade for 26 years and was a CFA employee for 17 years in charge of stores, providing equipment, protective clothing and other gear to the brigades.

Jim was very active during and after the 2009 fires. A colleague of his at the time, Ken Reed, described the devastating fires in the Steels Creek area:

It "takes the breath away... the heat must have been staggering. The trees show the power of the fire. As it came over the hill into Steels Creek Valley it simply twisted the tops off the trees. And elsewhere the incredibly intense heat petrified trees—branches all leaning in one direction—frozen in a single moment in time..."

"You think you've seen it all... but every time it's different... this was very different! It topped it all. The CFA blokes, every one of them, did everything they could—one death, an unpreventable tree fall... injuries were minimal... grateful for the training the CFA provides."

Not long after the fires, Ken told me of Jim

McKee and another CFA member visiting fire-affected properties door to door on Black Saturday night. "They were about to leave one property when they heard a whimper—and discovered a 90-year-old woman in a dam behind her burnt-out house." In the weeks after finding the elderly woman, Jim and his CFA colleagues volunteered their time to help rebuild her house, putting in pathways and making sure the electrical and plumbing work was completed.

Jim told me of his two strokes since the 2009 fires. It's a sobering reminder of the way volunteers frequently put their own safety and health on the line to respond to and care for others in need.

Two of the awards this year went to outstanding young researchers nominated by the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).² CRC Director of Research John Bates described the two as "outstanding... emerging young researchers who are passionately committed to their research and who derive their satisfaction from how others use their research outcomes to improve public safety, community growth and to reduce pain and suffering. They are driven by the opportunity to use their research to improve community safety, rather than seeking public recognition amongst their peers."

Dr. Blythe McLennan's research comes as a response to changes in volunteering patterns.

Jim McKee and Tim Holland's father and grandfather are examples of "classical volunteerism", which is characterised by organisational loyalty, long-term commitment and altruism. As society has changed, so too have volunteering patterns. Increasing numbers of volunteers want greater flexibility,

¹ Last year, MUG was awarded Community Group of the Year 2018 at the Yarra Ranges Council Australia Day awards.

² bnhrcc.com.au



L-R: Emergency Management Victoria Commissioner Andrew Crisp, Leanne Richards, Dr Briony Towers, Jim McKee, Tim Holland, Dr Blythe McLennan, MUG President Randall Bouchier, Yarra Ranges Council Mayor Tony Stevenson



Tim Holland and Dr Blythe McLennan



Dr Briony Towers and Jim McKee

short-term commitment and, frequently, self-organised project-based opportunities.

Blythe's Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) research team is tackling questions like the following: How can we best encourage the continuation of volunteering in ways that are safe and rewarding? How can we introduce an organisational culture in EM agencies which embraces the local community by moving from 'delivering to' to 'partnering with'? Can such changes be made without losing the vital response strengths of the command structure?

Blythe came into the EM field as an outsider, and became hooked when she realised how open the EM sector is to learning. She's passionate about encouraging sustainable emergency volunteering that can accommodate both the classical forms of volunteering alongside the newer forms of more flexible volunteering.

Blythe has also helped co-author a new national handbook on spontaneous volunteering for the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience.

Dr Briony Towers is also a research team leader at RMIT, whose research explores active roles for children within their families and communities.

Highlighting the town of Strathewen, which sustained much destructive damage during the 2009 fires, Briony is enthusiastic about the partnering of the local brigade with the local school in helping to develop and deliver knowledge and skills to help people assess bushfire risks on a given day. She says that the partnership is vital. Brigades have knowledge; schools know how to teach.

Briony's important research is identifying ways of empowering children to become educators in their communities. As children

learn about fire safety and emergency response, they have the opportunity to become involved. Contrasting with the passive approach of taking a glossy information brochure home, children are given the opportunity to take ownership as they learn to create their own articles, brochures, films and presentations to take home. It's a win-win! The children are proud of what they've created and parents love learning from and enjoying what their children have prepared. The research recognises the power of our children's voices.

John Bates said, "Briony is absolutely committed to influencing the way that we educate our children to improve their understanding of the risks posed by emergency situations and disasters, and to building skills in those children that promote safe decision-making and safe behaviours that can be called on in times of extreme danger. She understands that this is generational change and that the success of her work relies on many people."

Through her work with schools and fire agencies, Briony hopes to see the Strathewen model adapted to suit every high-risk town in Victoria.

Leanne Richards has worked at Pembroke Primary School (PPS) for decades. She comes from the school of hard knocks. Growing up in the country, the youngest child in a large family of boys, equipped her for the challenges of some 'rough nuts' that have come under her care at school.

Leanne can match it with the best of them! On occasions when the 'rough nuts' are threatening 'to tear the house down', she has the knack of providing the appropriate level of restraint and plain speaking. She does this in ways that allow the kids to understand that she cares for their wellbeing and wants the best for them. She offers even the most troublesome

child a fresh start each day.

One boy, who was a particularly challenging case, still visits occasionally to say hello, and to thank her for the help she gave him.

One teacher asked, "Where would PPS be without Leanne?" Other teachers describe her as "courageous".

"She's dedicated and passionate about the kids. She's a loyal friend. She's strong. She is raw, honest and doesn't take things too seriously. For her community of family, friends, colleagues and students—she does all that she can for them and always pushes herself to give more. In her wider community of (but not limited to) sporting groups and allies in the battle against cancer, Leanne represents with pride, determination and ferocity. People gravitate towards Leanne because of her fun, welcoming and maternal nature, knowing that she will always be there for a chat, a laugh, a cry and a (very large, half strength) cuppa. People also love and appreciate Leanne. I am so very grateful to be able to call this miraculous woman my friend."

Late last year Leanne gave up evenings and weekends to help a promising Burmese athlete to get to the state and national carnivals. Beyond the call of duty she took time off, and with a friend, gave up her weekend and drove to Adelaide so that the child of a refugee family could have such an opportunity.

MUG invites *Living Today* readers to nominate quiet achievers who inspire them and enhance community life. The successful nominees will be honoured during MUG's 2019 Annual Town Forum later in the year. Please email your nominations to moor.umb.group@optusnet.com.au

Randall Bouchier
President, Mooroolbark Umbrella Group

Remembering Black Saturday

Through all the drama and all that horror, it made me proud of the volunteers and the people who put enormous effort into helping others at that time, and I think that's what needs to be remembered.

Those were the heartfelt words of Yarra Ranges Councillor Len Cox as he addressed a community gathering at Yarra Glen's McKenzie Reserve on 7 February. The event, hosted by Yarra Ranges Council, marked the tenth anniversary of one of the most tragic events in Australia's history—Victoria's Black Saturday bushfires.

As the commemoration began, it was standing room only in the Yarra Glen Living Centre. Local residents, emergency services workers, Yarra Ranges staff, and friends and family of those affected by the bushfires gathered to remember and to pay tribute to those who lost their lives.

Saturday 7 February 2009 was a bleak day in Victoria's history. On that day, a combination



After the commemoration, people stayed to chat and enjoy coffee, ice creams, and a sausage sizzle cooked by Yarra Glen Men's Shed.



McKenzie Reserve's bushfire memorial is dedicated to Yarra Ranges residents who lost their lives on 7 February 2009 and to the heroic efforts of emergency services personnel and community members. The panels illustrate the destructive force of the fire, the rebuilding of the community, and regeneration of the land.



The bushfire-ravaged remains of a house in Yarra Glen

of factors—an unprecedented heatwave, 100km-plus north-easterly winds, extremely low humidity levels, faulty powerlines and an existing fire having jumped containment lines—led to the outbreak of around 400 individual fires. The intense fires raged for weeks, becoming the most devastating in Australia's history and resulting in the highest ever loss of life from bushfire. In the aftermath, 7 February became known as Black Saturday. The effect on human life was overwhelming, with 180 deaths and more than 400 people injured. In addition, hundreds of thousands of hectares were burnt, more than 3,500 buildings were destroyed and over a million domesticated and wild animals perished.

"The anniversary of such traumatic events can be difficult," began Yarra Ranges Mayor Tony Stevenson as he thanked people for attending the event. "We are only human, after all." He went on to say that it was nevertheless important to get together for mutual support and to pay tribute to the vital role that was played by council employees, emergency services workers, community organisations, volunteers, and the general public. The mayor welcomed distinguished guests, Yarra Ranges councillors, emergency services personnel and other volunteers, including the Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry volunteers. He acknowledged that attending memorial functions is still too difficult for many of those who experienced the bushfire. "They are in our thoughts," he said.

Student representatives of Dixon's Creek Primary School were introduced to talk about the school's participation in the Firesticks project, which is an initiative led by Wurundjeri elders with support from Yarra Ranges Council and the Victorian government. The project teaches students about traditional fire practices and the use of cultural burning to facilitate fire and land management, and has also helped with community healing after the Black Saturday fires.

Cr Len Cox, who was Yarra Ranges mayor during the 2009 bushfires, addressed the assembly next. "I've never seen anything like Black Saturday before and, believe me, I hope

I never do again," he said. He recounted the extraordinary combination of events that led to the firestorm. "With all the experience we had in the control centre that night, we were still confused as to what the fire was doing and what it was going to do next." The morning after the disastrous events of Black Saturday, Cr Cox drove out to the fire-devastated town of Steels Creek, which he described as looking like a moonscape. "There was nothing left except for tufts of smoke coming out from rocks, where it was still smouldering."

An enduring memory for Cr Cox is the good that was done by so many in the face of such tragedy. "Volunteers by the thousands moved in to help, not just with fighting the fire but to help settle people who had been burned out, who had been traumatised, who had lost loved ones."

He concluded, "For all those people who helped, for all those volunteers, for all those people who maybe hurt themselves to help somebody else—thank you very much. Council was so proud not only of our staff but the volunteers... It's a credit to all of you as Australians."

Councillor Fiona McAllister spoke next, thanking the countless volunteers, including members of the Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service, "not just for what they did on that day but for what they continue to do—and for what many of them are still haunted by... we are very grateful." Struggling with emotion, she acknowledged the lives lost. "Today is an opportunity to come together as a community and to pause and remember, with love and joy and deep sadness, those who are no longer with us."

The memorial concluded with a performance of two songs by the Badger Creek Women's Choir. As the second number drew to a close, there was an air of optimism, with audience members clapping and singing along to "This Little Light of Mine." What began as a time of remembrance and sadness had also been a time of gratitude and hope. As the choir sang, "it shows what the power of love can do", it was clear how many people understood exactly what that meant.

Janet Van Dijk

Culture Tracks:

Tchaikovsky, Military Music, and Crazy BMX Moves!

Culture Tracks is Yarra Ranges Council's year-round program of arts and cultural performances, shows, exhibitions, music and comedy.

We are still heady from the excitement of our 2019 Culture Tracks program launch held at The Memo, Healesville, in February. If you missed it, make sure you grab a copy of the program from Mooroolbark Community Centre to check out what's on in 2019.

This quarter, we have a varied and dynamic lineup of music and children's shows coming to Mooroolbark Community Centre.



No one rides a bike like Scott Hone

Back by popular demand, the illustrious **Australian Army Band Melbourne** will perform live in concert on 31 March. There will be stirring classics, concert band favourites, toe-tapping swing numbers and dance-inducing rock. The Australian Army Band Melbourne has been an integral part of the community since 1940. Enjoy a performance that celebrates our community and the service of our Army Reserve men and women. The band's versatility sets them apart from other ceremonial ensembles as they perform concert band and ceremonial music through to classical, swing, jazz, and rock and roll, certain to appeal to all ages and musical tastes.

As ever, our April School Holiday Program promises to be a delight for children. Witness the uncanny abilities of world-renowned BMX trick-bike rider Scott Hone, as he performs a dizzying array of tricks on his trusty bike at **Scott Hone's BMX Trick Bike Show** on 18 April. Telling the story of his first bike all the way to joining the circus, Hone inspires young children as he demonstrates how thinking outside the box and trying new things can lead you on a grand adventure through life.

Watch in awe as Scott balances on his handlebars and flips his bike in the air, or stands on the bike—sideways! Backwards on the front wheel. Frontwards on the back wheel. Frontwards on the front wheel, backwards upside-down. With an incredible finale—six people on the bike at once—Scott's BMX Trick Bike Show is certain to inspire the next generation.

The Whitehorse Orchestra will be returning to the Mooroolbark Community Centre on 26 May, presenting popular works by Tchaikovsky. The program will be all Tchaikovsky, featuring favourites *Violin Concerto in D*, the *1812 Overture*, and selections from *The Nutcracker Suite*. The orchestra will feature world-renowned violin soloist, Matthew Rigby, who recently returned from his 2018 tour to Europe.

Did you know that Mooroolbark Community Centre is one of five cultural centres around our shire? Be sure to jump onto culturetracks.info for information about other great performances around the traps!

Road Safety Upgrades for Chirnside Park

Much-needed improvements at two key intersections are about to go ahead in Chirnside Park, thanks to federal government funding and support from Yarra Ranges Council and developers.

New traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing, worth \$376,000, will soon be installed at the Kimberley Drive and Black Springs Road intersection at Chirnside Park.

The federal government's Roads to Recovery program has provided \$247,000 towards the project. An additional \$129,000 will be levied from developers under the Chirnside Park Major Activity Centre Development Contributions Plan. The tender has been awarded and works are expected to begin in March.

Federal Member for Casey Tony Smith said the federal funding would provide safer roads and intersections.

"We all want safer and better local roads," Mr Smith said. "These much-needed safety upgrades, at two very busy intersections in Chirnside Park, are funded through the federal government's Roads to Recovery Program. Council will also undertake road projects in other areas throughout this year."

New traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing will also be installed at the intersection of Edward and Switchback roads at a total cost of \$530,000. This project is also funded by the federal government's Roads to Recovery funding (\$500,000) with contributions from developers and council.

The tender will be awarded in the coming weeks and works will begin in late March or early April. The works are expected to be completed by 30 June.

Chirnside Ward Councillor Richard Higgins said both pedestrians and



Cr Richard Higgins and Member for Casey Tony Smith at the intersection of Kimberley Drive and Black Springs Road

drivers would benefit from the improvements at these busy intersections.

"These are both long-awaited projects which will reduce time for residents waiting in traffic and encourage people to drive safely, while keeping pedestrians safe and giving them confidence when crossing these busy roads," Cr Higgins said.

"In peak times it is difficult to turn out of Black Springs Road to turn right into Kimberley Drive due to the volume of traffic. As part of the traffic signals there will also be a pedestrian crossing, which we have been advocating for on behalf of the community."

The community should expect traffic delays during the construction. A traffic management plan is under way to ensure delays will be minimised, with alternative routes available.

Anna Chisholm
Yarra Ranges Council

Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	Craft and Produce Market: Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Rotary Club of Lilydale. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Rotary Club Lilydale: 0423 558 833.
Friday nights during school term	Fridays@Kids Domain: Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 pm. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or www.lmc.org.au
Monday evenings March to November	Scottish Country Dancing: Mondays 8 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9725 9074.
Second Monday of each month	Mooroolbark Country Women's Association: 1 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Helen Linnie: 9726 0477.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together: 0-5 years. St Margaret's Uniting Church hall. 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Call Yvonne 9726 9347 or Nancy 9726 4475.
Thursday evenings each week	Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 pm. St Margaret's Uniting Church. Hull Road. For more information call Kaye: 0414 984 062.
Wednesdays during school term	Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup: Painting, story time, activities and games for children 0 - 3½ years. 9:15 am. More info: 9725 4320 or kilsythps.vic.edu.au
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am–3 pm. 91 Swansea Road, Montrose. For more information please contact President John Lowry on 9726 9970 or 0419 366 939, or via Facebook.
Tuesdays - Thursdays during school term	Gymbaroo: Formative Sensory Perceptual Motor Program for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Ph: 9726 8740 mooroolbark@gymbaroo.com.au
Every second Friday	People's Pantry: 6-7 pm. Three course home-cooked meal for the homeless and lonely. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Rd. Enquiries Barbara: 0417 381 542.
Every Wednesday	Disabled People's Company: 10 am – noon, Mooroolbark Community Centre for morning tea and a chat with other people who have a disability. More information: ring Elsie 9726 4004.
15–17 March	Chics Hideaway: A weekend away for all ladies! Beautiful location in Marysville. Delicious food, relaxing activities & inspirational messages. Register: lmc.org.au/events
23 March	Red Earth Unearthed: Talent Quest. Mooroolbark Community Centre; commences 7:30 pm. Entry \$5 per person. celebratemooroolbark.com/competitions/red-earth/
24 March	Celebrate Mooroolbark: Your local community festival. 10:00 am–4:00 pm. Red Earth Community Park, Brice Avenue.
31 March	Maddie's Embellished Garden: 10 am – 4 pm at 80 Pembroke Road, Mooroolbark. Entry \$6 adults, \$1 children. For more information see page 9.
31 March	Australian Army Band Melbourne: 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12 full. Bookings: 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info
5-14 April	Visiting Mr Green: a play by Jeff Baron, directed by Lisa McNiven. ARK Theatre at Lilydale Heights PAC, 17 Nelson Rd Lilydale. Tickets \$20: arktheatremelb.com or 0491 194 744.
18 April	Scott's BMX Trick Bike Show: 11 am & 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12 full. Bookings: 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info
20 April	Giant Easter Egg Hunt: 9 am-12.30 pm. \$12 for preschool & primary aged children. 1000s of chocolate eggs, face painting, giant Inflatables & more! Tickets: giantegg hunt.com.au
17-19 May	Men's Camp: Open to men young and old. Includes camping, 4WD, fishing, bush walking and relaxing! More info: lmc.org.au
26 May	Whitehorse Orchestra Presents Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D: 2pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12 full. Bookings: 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info .

Our Community Events Calendar offers a free service to local clubs and organisations.

To include entries for your group's community events in future issues please contact Janet Van Dijk on 0407 110 051 or email calendar@livingtoday.org.au

Note: *Living Today* is distributed quarterly – in the first week of March, June, September and December. Calendar entries need to be submitted one month prior to the distribution date.

Proudly supporting Living Today in Mooroolbark.

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LIVING TODAY in Mooroolbark

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Like to contribute?

If you have a good news story about people or groups who are an inspiration to the community, please contact the editor on our church-office phone number or by email (details above)

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at: livingtoday.org.au

To join the email distribution list please send a request to editor@livingtoday.org.au

MISSION STATEMENT

To contribute towards and to help to foster a *growing community spirit* within our neighbourhood.

We seek to achieve this by:

- highlighting the many positives within our community
- encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

OUR SPONSORS

Living Today greatly appreciates the valuable contributions made by several businesses which partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. Their financial sponsorship makes the magazine possible, and we gratefully acknowledge those partners in each issue.