

LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

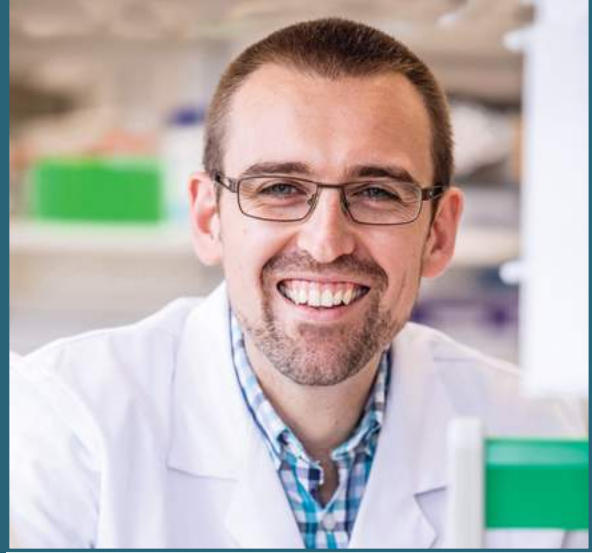
NO. 67 JUNE 2019

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Good news stories from your local community

Dr Scott Ayton

A life lived well



Dr Scott Ayton in the lab with colleague Dr Yen Ying Lim

I have the privilege of a friendship with a young man who has achieved outstanding success in his chosen field. Dr Scott Ayton, although only in his early 30s, is deputy director of the Melbourne Dementia Research Centre at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health. In that role he heads a team of researchers working in the institute's Translational Neurodegeneration laboratory. In 2016, Scott received the prestigious Young Researcher of the Year award from the Bethlehem Griffiths Research Foundation.

By the time this article is published, the annual Yarra Ranges Mayoral Breakfast on the National Day of Thanks will have taken place. Many of our readers will not have had the opportunity to attend and hear Scott's address as the 2019 guest speaker.

For that reason, I'd like to share with you some of my observations about this young man's life. I first met Scott when he was one of my students at Templestowe Park Primary School, where I taught music. Last year, when the school named its new STEM centre after Scott, I was privileged to reconnect with him. In subsequent conversations I have discovered that there is one specific characteristic of Scott's life that has played a substantial role in him becoming the man he is.

That characteristic could be described as "reflectiveness"—the intentional space made in daily life for quiet thought. It's the habit of setting aside regular, undistracted time to carefully consider one's life—pondering on what might be, and potential pathways to an envisaged future.

Scott has thought carefully about life from an early age. He speaks with gratitude and respect for his father, who struggled with the lifelong effects of a motorcycle accident as a young man.

"My Dad had an acquired brain injury from a motor cycle accident in his early twenties," Scott told me. "As a young person I came to understand that Dad had lost about 80 percent of his vision and also suffered from other complications. I admired the way he continued to press on with his life. In spite of his obvious handicaps, he continues to inspire me by the way he managed over 40-odd years to provide for our family from the business he ran. That he just persevered motivates me. I don't have any handicaps, but I've learned through his example that when things get tough, push on, as my father did, despite his challenges."

His father's difficulties helped Scott become interested in brain science. "I knew that his eyes were OK, but I wanted to understand the way



that affected pathways in the brain caused his impaired vision,” Scott said. “I remember looking at anatomy textbooks and a brain atlas to try to figure things out. I guess I saw a problem and wanted to see if I could figure out why. I was starting to discover the process we go through in research.”

Scott’s mother supported him in anything he wanted to pursue. “She encouraged me in my music and piano studies. Over ten years or so, I learned important lessons, not just about music, but about myself, about life. I learned about how to receive feedback. I learned about attentive listening. I began to learn about how to improve and how to motivate myself to continue to do something that seems very challenging.”

“I remember looking at several pieces of music initially and thinking, ‘How am I ever going to play this? There are so many black notes, so many flats and sharps—this is just not going to be possible.’ But you learn to give it a go. You figure out the first bar, then the second bar, and then a line. Soon you’ve figured out a page and then you slowly put things together.”

Scott has learned to apply the same process to many aspects of life. “It was a life lesson for me, to chip away at things. Things may appear initially confronting, but they’re achievable if you patiently keep working at things. So many things seem impossible at the beginning, until someone figures it out.”

Scott often applies a phrase he learned from science: “It’s always disaster, until it’s not”. “That’s as true of a piece of music as it is of a research project,” he said. “It doesn’t look like this could turn into something until it all comes together and, in the end, you go, ‘Ah! We got there.’”

Scott also valued his time in the Scouts, forming important insights for living from those experiences as well.

“I learned a lot about working in teams and also working with people who are not necessarily like me,” he said. “We often had to work in teams to complete badges, and we had to learn that people in their diversity are able to make unique contributions. You learn to embrace and celebrate diversity and doing things in teams—in community. Such lessons about relating to and valuing people have equipped me for learning some of the challenges of team leadership in my current role.”

This approach has been helpful for Scott in his field of scientific research, which is undergoing a challenging long-term transition of leadership

style. “I’m passionate about fostering diversity within the team,” Scott explained. “Rather than viewing the team as a means to serve the ambition of one dominant leading figure, we work together—diverse abilities, temperaments, genders, nationalities—all contributing to a common goal of seeking to bring benefit and better treatments for people who struggle with neuro-degenerative conditions like dementia.”

Scott is grateful for his church, which was another positive influence from childhood. “As I grew up into adulthood, I had a wonderful congregation. I went to Templestowe Baptist. Some of my best friends attended and I experienced really tight bonds and community there,” Scott said. “I believe that being active in church leads to being reflective of who you are, to challenge yourself to grow and to take a perspective on something that is more than yourself. Growing up within this space is both inward and outward. And I guess when you’re a young person you’re absorbed with self, so I valued the encouragement to keep looking towards other people and at the same time reflecting on personal weaknesses and growing in character—to reflect and to grow.”

One of the joys of Scott’s team leadership comes from the privilege he feels in working with and mentoring bright young graduates pursuing their interest in research. I asked about the qualities he believes are necessary for success in research.

“It begins with knowledge and interest. You need to have a real passion and thirst for knowledge, along with a deep curiosity about your topic and knowledge in general. But I don’t think the amount of knowledge or your intelligence is a deciding factor in terms of success in research. That’s just the beginning. Success in research is really about leadership and being able to take a field in a particular direction because you see value in that.”

Being continually reflective is something that Scott sees as essential. “You need to constantly challenge your thinking and allow yourself to be challenged by people and to reflect upon those challenges and criticisms, and adjust where necessary. But at the same time there’s a need for bravery—the capacity to be strong enough to not necessarily listen to nay-sayers, when you believe that you’re on what you believe to be the right track.”

This strength can be crucial in the elementary stages of an idea, when it may seem unconvincing to other people. “Rather than being shut down by criticism or negativity, someone who’s reflected deeply on an idea learns to deal with the discomfort and the uncertainty and to persevere. Along the way you must learn to live with inevitable painful self-doubt, the negative feedback from others,” Scott said. “I often say that to be successful in research you need more emotional intelligence than intellectual intelligence so that you can live

with uncertainty.”

“It helps me to keep going when I recall the great discoveries in science that frequently looked silly early on,” continued Scott. “I’m encouraged by listening to prominent scientists as they muse about their successes and say things like, ‘This didn’t get funded. No one believed this early on.’ But they saw the future and they persistently worked towards it.”

Scott spoke with gratitude about the funding that is provided by government for research and for the financial support that comes from people and families affected by particular diseases. He said, “It helps you keep at the forefront of your thinking that you’re doing this research to help people like them.”

For Scott, each day provides a poignantly personal reminder of the significance of medical research. “My wife was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis while I was still an undergraduate. The treatments that were available to her initially were not very good. There were many side-effects and only a modest effect in slowing down the disease. It was a really tough time for her initially.”

But less than a year after Scott’s wife Darshini was diagnosed, the first of several new life-changing drugs became available for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. “I found it difficult to grasp how quickly she responded to the treatment, but basically she became a new person,” said Scott. “She had so much more energy and more strength. Since then, as some drugs have stopped working for her, she’s been able to move on to other treatments that have become available.”

Scott said that having access to such treatments has had a major impact on Darshini’s life. “It means that she’s been able to keep working—and so much human dignity derives from our work,” he said. “But there’s also her independence. Without these treatments, she may well be in a wheelchair by now and unable to work in the manner that she enjoys so much. My wife’s a trooper—she’s an inspiration in the way she adjusts to accommodate medical treatments, and the time management necessary to successful management of conditions like multiple sclerosis.”

Seeing such improvements in his wife’s quality of life, and knowing that she depends on progress made through similar research to his own, motivates Scott even further. “I’ve seen that transformative impact on her life and I just hope that I can be involved in a discovery that can impact some other patient’s life,” he said. “That would be the most wonderful thing to be a part of.”



Randall Bourchier



celebrate mooroolbark festival

Mooroolbark was alive with music, colour and plenty of action at the annual Celebrate Mooroolbark festival in March. The fun began on Friday night with the Red Earth Unearthed talent show. Despite a late start due to heavy rain and thunderstorms, and power cuts which affected the sound system, Paris and her team kept the audience entertained and most people were unaware that the evening was running late. The quality of performers was exceptional. Next year we'll be hoping for even more entrants in the dance category, which was new in 2019 and is expected to be a permanent fixture in the future. Prizes—sponsored once again by the Lions Club—were awarded to winning acts and a delicious supper was provided by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship.

The following day began with rain, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the parade participants, who had come prepared with umbrellas and rain coats. After the opening ceremony, MP Tony Smith announced the winners of the parade costume competition. With the formalities over, the Australian Youth Band struck up a tune and the entertainment continued uninterrupted throughout the festival. Among the performers were Celebrate Mooroolbark regulars as well as several performers who were new to the festival. Two-man band Loud Shirts and rock and roll band Fast 59 both enjoyed their first time at the festival and hope to come again next year.

Red Earth Community Park was transformed into a huge market place with stalls run by community organisations, handmade craft stalls and workshops, many kinds of food stalls and the popular Lucky Straws stall. Festival-goers were able to get hands-on with the animal farm and Museum Victoria's interactive display. There were classic cars, Action Events rides for

the children, the Youth Zone with lots of local talent, and a Minilympics with Ready Steady Go Kids at the Action Living Hub. The Eastern Raptors Rugby League Club, Mooroolbark Tennis Club and the Mooroolbark Soccer Club provided demonstrations of their sports and encouraged children to become involved.

New to the festival this year was the Whale's Tale, a hugely entertaining story of a sick whale. The cause of the whale's illness was eventually diagnosed as being due to it having swallowed a large number of plastic bags. The highly interactive show had lots of riotous slapstick, providing an amusing but educational lesson for both children and adults.

The Swordcraft Group participated in the parade and also demonstrated Live Action Role Play (LARP), which was particularly popular with its costumes and realistic weapons made of foam. Colourful Doc Dealer entertained the public with his tricks, and Brendan Johnson from MOOP Patrol roamed the park on his unicycle, amusing people with his juggling acts and skilful cycling, while ensuring there was no Matter Out of Place.

None of this festival fun would have been possible without our many volunteers and

our sponsors! We would like to thank them all, especially our premium sponsor, the Yarra Ranges Council, and our major sponsors the Lions Club, Bendigo Bank, Professionals Real Estate, *Living Today* magazine, Mooroolbark Traders, GRV Print and Verve Electrical.

Despite the morning downpour, attendance was good and as the day wore on there were still many families taking advantage of the afternoon sun and enjoying the activities, while older people were content to sit and watch the entertainment on the main stage.

Keep Friday 20 and Saturday 21 March 2020 free for next year's festival, which will be a special celebration of forty years of festivals in Mooroolbark!

Barbara Austin
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee

As always, we need volunteers in many roles for next year's event, including some to assist the coordinators of the subcommittees with the idea of eventually stepping up into that role. For more information please contact Barbara on 0417 381 542 or by email: barbara@celebratemooroolbark.com

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One Good Turn ...

The motto of Scouts Australia is "be prepared" and 11-year-old Cub Scout Joshua Graaf of Mooroolbark certainly had everything ready when he turned up at Celebrate Mooroolbark to do a good turn for stallholders and other volunteers.

As a Cub Scout with the Mt Evelyn Scout Group, Josh wanted to complete one last level before moving up to Scouts—his Gold Boomerang. Earning the Gold Boomerang involves mastering skills and acquiring knowledge on a variety of topics, including first aid, outdoor skills, safety, and the Values of Scouting. As part of his community service



requirement for the award, Josh had to plan and pay for an activity that would assist an organisation that helps other people. With Celebrate Mooroolbark coming up, Josh thought he knew how to help the organising committee and others working at the event. "Because it was going to be such a hot day," said Josh, "I decided to give out water for free."

Josh did some research to decide which water to buy, purchased the bottles and loaded them into his mother's car. On the morning of the festival, he filled a cart with dozens of water bottles, and walked around the event site, offering water to grateful stallholders and volunteers. Before the day was over, he had given out nearly a hundred bottles of water. The weather wasn't as hot as anticipated, but for those workers who were feeling thirsty and couldn't leave their posts, seeing Josh approach with bottles of refreshing spring water was a welcome sight.

Earlier in the day, Josh and his mum Kerri had also helped set up for the event. "Josh and I went down there that morning at about 5:30 for about three hours, and we helped the stall holders and the committee members work out where each stall holder was going to be," said Kerri. "Josh was a really good helper—for him it was a great experience, dealing with different types of people and learning how to problem solve."

There's a proud history of Scouting in the

Graaf family, starting with Josh's grandfather in Holland more than fifty years ago. Josh's older brothers Ben and Sam also joined Scouts at a young age. Sam has now moved on to representative basketball, but Ben is still a Scout and was recently awarded the prestigious Australian Scout Medallion.

Kerri and her husband Alfons appreciate the examples of community service and leadership that Scouting provides, and the fact that it encourages children to use their abilities to benefit their families and communities as well as themselves. "We chose Scouts for the boys mainly because our families live interstate and overseas—so having no family structure here, we decided that Scouts would be a good environment for the boys," said Kerri. "It gives them the chance to have older leadership role models." For Josh, the practical experiences are important too. "You get to learn life skills that you can use later on in life," he said.

Having completed the requirements for his Gold Boomerang, Josh has now also achieved the Grey Wolf Award, the pinnacle award of Cub Scouts, and is looking forward to more fun and adventure at the next level of Scouting. One of the most important parts of being a Scout is community involvement, so if you're paying attention you may soon see Josh—or someone dressed just like him!—doing more good turns for people in the neighbourhood.

Janet Van Dijk



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Hair Mania

A friendship, a dream, and caring for others.

Hairdressers and best friends Sue and Michele launched Hair Mania 23 years ago. Their friendship began in Mooroolbark, with both of them dreaming of one day owning their own hair boutique. In the end “the opportunity arose for both of us to begin, and we did,” said Michele.

Hair Mania cuts and styles hair for people of all ages. The salon also provides hair treatments, stocks a variety of haircare products and offers hair colouring that could be described as works of art. Over 23 years hair styles might have changed, but Sue and Michele’s passion for hair has not. “The people are the best part of the job... and we both enjoy the creative side of it.” Sue said that one of the best parts about trading in Mooroolbark is its community: “We’ve got to meet a lot of great shop owners—and our clients are like our extended family.”

Michele and Sue’s love for people began in Mooroolbark with Hair Mania, and in the last eight years has expanded to Bali, in Indonesia. Sue and Michele’s passion for the people of Bali began when they went to Indonesia to upskill as part of a hair-colouring course. During their trip, Sue and Michele had the opportunity to meet with the locals and after seeing the state of poverty that many of them lived in, decided to do something to help. In 2010 Hair Mania partnered with a small village in the remote mountain region of Bali to support their poorest families and children.

What started with sending over clothes and food packages grew over the years into raising money for wheelchairs for disabled children.



Sue (left), and Michele at Hair Mania

Hair Mania saw a need for wheelchairs “because in the village we found a boy playing in the dirt without the use of his legs, and we were told that because he couldn’t walk, he’d have no life, and not be able to work,” Michele said. In 2017 Hair Mania raised over \$6,000 to help build a medical facility for women and children in rural Bali.

Hair Mania often runs raffles to raise funds for their partner village in Bali, and both Sue and Michele agree that they are very lucky to be supported by the local community.

Michele explained that their motto is “Together we can make a difference,” and that Hair Mania believes in “a hand up, not a hand out”.

Iris Kennedy

Contact Hair Mania on 9727 3344 or pop into the salon at 111 Brice Avenue, between Coles and the Mooroolbark Community Centre. To follow Hair Mania’s activities and see photos of their creative styles and hair colours, visit their Facebook page.



Michele and Sue have been able to make a difference for one Balinese community

Five Ways Mower Service

Gardening is cheaper than therapy... and you get tomatoes!



PHOTOS: BARRY AUSTIN

Right on the Mooroolbark-Croydon border, just after the Five Ways roundabout, is 5 Paul Street, where you will discover Five Ways Mower Service. Here, in an interesting and spotless environment, you will find Adam and Rachael Schroder. This husband-and-wife team are the new owners, who also manage and run this specialist equipment sale and service outlet.

Adam went into a trade after leaving school and is now a qualified light engine technician with over 20 years’ experience in the field. He worked at STIHL for 10 years in various roles, including that of national technical trainer. “I’m good with my hands and for this type of work you do need mechanical knowledge,” he said. “And if it turns out to be complicated, I like the challenge.”

While Rachael has her own careers in both primary school teaching and nursing, she has joined the family business and is one of the friendly faces you will see upon entering the showroom. Along for this new and exciting venture are their two young children, Angus and Layla—and no, they are not for sale!

These two very personable newcomers decided to come to Mooroolbark to live and work because Cambridge Road is where Rachael grew up and Adam has always lived in the hills, close to our very

liveable suburb of Mooroolbark. The Schrodgers offer a personal approach with top-quality products at comparable prices to the big chain stores where quality, service and after-sales support can often be hard to find. Adam and Rachael go the extra mile to ensure every customer feels satisfied and valued with their experience in store.

Five Ways Mower Service stocks a large array of machines, from chainsaws to mowers and brushcutters, to blowers and all the gardening equipment to keep your garden looking fabulous. They carry products in many different brands and, as reflected in the business name, they also service and repair all brands of outdoor power equipment.

If you like a beautifully displayed shop with an extensive range of products, the new Five Ways Mower Service is for you.

Barry Austin

Five Ways Mower Service is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, and on Saturday from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. To see the latest promotions, deals and advice, look for the store’s pages on Facebook and Instagram.

Billanook's Field of Poppies

Poppies are an iconic tribute to the memory of our fallen and returned servicemen and women. The Anzac spirit was fittingly commemorated this year with a moving installation created by Mooroolbark's Billanook College and its local community.

Billanook College partnered with Phillip Johnson, internationally renowned landscape designer and co-creator of the 5000 Poppies project, to recognise and pay homage to the memory of our ANZACs. On Wednesday 24 April at its annual Anzac Day service on the banks of Brushy Creek, Billanook College ceremoniously unveiled an outdoor poppy display, designed by Phillip and installed by teams of Billanook students.

The college community worked tirelessly to create the masterpiece. The original target of 5,000 handmade poppies was well and truly surpassed, with more than 13,000 poppies made. Weekly student and staff poppy workshops, with assistance from current and past families, local knitting groups and even interstate donations, contributed to a spectacular and moving outdoor display.

Reflecting on the success of this collaborative project, Principal Roger Oates said, "It's moving and re-affirming to see how a project such as this highlights the importance of community. The significance of sharing intergenerational skills, family stories and dedications to those who made the ultimate sacrifice is immeasurable."

Georgie Bennett
Billanook College



PHOTOS: BILLANOOK COLLEGE

"All Gave Some—Some Gave All"

The Anzac Day service in Mooroolbark's Hookey Park is always a moving event, but this year it seemed to be especially so. The service reflected the National War Memorial's theme of "Welcome Back Home" and emphasised the contribution of the Vietnam War veterans. In comparison to those returning from World Wars I and II, the Vietnam veterans were given a very "shabby" welcome home, according Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) Chair Randall Bourchier in his address to the crowd. Randall honoured Michael Hannaford, who grew up in Croydon. Michael served in

the Vietnam War and died at the age of 22, leaving behind a young wife.

Neil Mitchell, deputy chair of MUG, conducted the memorial service which was well supported by the people of Mooroolbark, with attendance being much greater than in past years. Guests included local dignitaries and representatives from local schools, guides and scouts.

Mooroolbark History Group and Lilydale RSL worked together to organise the service. In his opening remarks, Neil mentioned that Paul Payne, vice president of the Lilydale RSL, had transported the eternal flame from an earlier service that morning, making it the first time the flame had occupied a space at the Mooroolbark service.

Three students from Yarra Hills Secondary College spoke about a recent afternoon tea for seventy or eighty returned soldiers hosted by the residents of Mooroolbark and Kilsyth, and helped out by Montrose residents. As each car arrived at the afternoon tea, the road was lined with students from Mooroolbark, Kilsyth and Montrose schools all waving small Australian flags and welcoming the soldiers.

Tom Steele, making his twenty-third appearance at the Anzac Day service, played the "Last Post" and a minute's silence was observed, followed by the "Reveille".

Neil closed the service by inviting all students to the front. As the students waved their Australian flags, the crowd united as one to sing a moving rendition of "I Still Call Australia Home."



PHOTO: MARY BOURCHIER

Barbara Austin

Talking to Kids about Tragedy and Violence

The news bulletin came on the car radio while I was taking my twelve-year-old son to basketball. As I drove, I became conscious of him quietly taking in every word: reports of shootings, murder, sexual assault, war, and natural disasters. Many of these events were remote, but some had occurred not too far from home. Some involved children of a similar age to him. I felt an impulse to switch the radio off to shield him from the darker aspects of our community and to keep the world a happy, safe place for a little longer.

However, as much as we might like to, we can't safeguard children and teens from learning about tragic events. They are often more aware of what is happening in the world than we realise. Details of the recent mosque shootings in Christchurch, for example, were splashed all over the news for weeks. It was hard for anyone to remain unaware that dozens of people, including children, had been ruthlessly gunned down. Even if we don't have the news on at home, young people will still hear about what's happening when they are out with friends, in class, and in the community. If children want to know more, further detail is easily accessed through the internet. Large televisions with surround sound and technologies such as CCTV and dashcam provide a greater sense of immersion than ever before.

Events that involve young people are often even more likely to be on our children's radar than other news. In March 2018 a devastating fire at a shopping mall in Kemerovo, Russia, killed more than 60 people—two-thirds of them children. Is knowing about events like this too much for young people to handle?

Children and teens can be easily affected by news events,¹ particularly as visual imagery is more readily retained and recalled. Unlike adults, young people don't have the world view or maturity that enables them to filter this information. They may misunderstand the scale

of what has happened, the proximity to home, or the likelihood of it reoccurring. It can be difficult for them to realise when they have seen too much and feel overloaded, to know when it is time to switch off.

The rising rates of anxiety in children and young people have been partially attributed to the media coverage of catastrophic events such as this.² Every day, we hear about kidnappings, shootings, abuse and disasters. The potential for danger moves closer to home when children learn about cyber-safety or lockdown procedures at school. It is easy for young people to start expecting the worst of others and to feel unsafe and vulnerable.

Somehow, we need to strike a balance: to clarify what has happened without overloading our children or damaging their sense of security. We want young people to be informed about their world and be interested in the lives of others. We want them to care when things go wrong, to empathise and feel compassion when people are hurting. At the same time, it is vital that they grow up feeling safe and secure. Although they should take sensible precautions, they need to know that people are generally decent and there is certainly much goodness in the world.

It is a difficult subject, but we must be prepared to talk about these tragic events. Young people need our wisdom and guidance to help them navigate their way through these situations and to find a suitable response. The following tips will help you find a way to discuss these events with your child or teen.

Be ready to talk: Before talking to your child or teenager, you may need some time to determine your own reaction, process what has happened and perhaps talk about your feelings with another adult. If your children or teenagers want to talk before you are ready, let them know that you are keen to discuss this topic, but need some thinking time first. Make sure you come back to them within a day or two.

¹ Wilson, B. 2008. Media and children's aggression, fear, and altruism. *Future Child*, Spring, 18(1): 87-118

² Youth mental health report: Youth Survey 2012-16. Mission Australia.



Teenagers lay flowers and toys to commemorate the victims of the Kemerovo shopping centre fire

Choose a suitable time and place: Although it might seem timely to discuss an event when you first hear about it, most young people need the opportunity to first absorb and think about what they have learned. It might be better to wait a little while and then bring up the subject when you both have some space and availability to talk. Some young people—particularly boys—prefer to talk side by side, such as when travelling in the car, rather than face to face.

Gauge their understanding: Gently explore what they already know. Listen carefully to their concerns. They may have gathered scraps of information from a number of places and then assembled their own story about what occurred. A pieced-together story can tell a skewed version of events and be particularly frightening.

Share the facts: Provide some basic facts about what happened—who, what, where and when. Avoid going into unnecessary detail or speculating on the 'why'. The amount and level of information you give will depend on your child's age and understanding. Generally, keep it brief and then allow your children room to ask further questions if they are curious.

Acknowledge their feelings: It is natural for young people to feel outraged or saddened by these events. Encourage them to express their emotions, but don't force them. Some children might prefer to play with you or use drawing or painting to share what they feel. Let them know you recognise their feelings, that it is OK to cry and that whatever they feel is valid. Don't be in a rush to dismiss or dissipate the emotion too quickly. Praise their compassion for others.

Respond to their questions: Try to respond clearly and calmly. You certainly don't have to know all the answers—no-one does—but you can provide some perspective and proportion. If there are questions you can't answer, look it up together.

Make them feel safe: Our children need to feel secure at home, at school and in the community. Emphasise the things that are regularly being done to reduce risk and keep them out of danger. Some children may be reassured by having a clear safety plan, so that they know what to do in various emergency situations (for example in case of fire) or at times when they might feel vulnerable (walking home from



A twilight beach vigil honours those killed in the Christchurch mosque shootings

Get in the photo, Mum!

Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.

~Dr Seuss

As a funeral celebrant, I recently conducted the funeral of a 44-year-old wife and mother of four kids, who sadly died way too soon.

During her beautiful service, we played three audio-visual tributes with music and photos, and so many of the photos displayed were of Nadine and her children. This got me thinking about which photos my family would use given the same situation, as I don't think there would be enough photos for even one photo tribute.

As a mother of two children myself and a keen photographer, I have thousands of photos—but sadly, very few with me in them. And I am not alone—I know many mums who are the family's unofficial photographer, and who take lots of photos of the family on various occasions but often find a reason not to be in the photo. As mothers, we are a big part of our children's lives, but often appear in very few family photos.

We are often our own worst critic and can easily come up with an excuse: "I will take the photo", "I look too tired", "I'm in my old clothes", "I need my hair done", or "I feel frumpy". But not every photo needs to be perfect. Social media has made us a little obsessed with making sure that every picture is perfect. And, like many other mothers, I am guilty of deleting photos because I don't think I look good in them.

school). Let them know how much you love them and that their safety is important to you.

Provide hope: Counterbalance the bad news by sharing some good news stories. Talk about people who do admirable things—everyday heroes who make the world a better place. Share your faith and belief that there is a better future in store. Draw attention to efforts that are made to help people affected by disaster. They may like to respond by fundraising or volunteering towards a cause that they feel passionate about. Our children need to know that their efforts count and that change is possible.

Be prepared to step in: Although we want our children to be informed, there are certainly times when it is wise to turn off the television, radio or iPad and limit their exposure to a troubling event. Avoid watching news footage before bedtime. Try to watch the news together so you can monitor how it is affecting your children. Be alert for signs of distress or anxiety: children becoming withdrawn or clingy, avoiding activities that they usually enjoy, preoccupation with the event or their personal safety, or problems with sleeping or eating. If you suspect that your child's wellbeing or mental health has been affected, seek some help from the school counsellor or a qualified mental health professional.³

As much as we might prefer not to dwell on tragic events, our children and teenagers need to know that we are willing to talk and that they can turn to us if they are feeling upset, confused or anxious about things that are happening around them. By keeping the lines of communication open and sharing our perspective, we can help them to acknowledge the realities of the world we live in, but also maintain a sense of hope for the future.

■ **Kate Chivers**

Kate is a registered psychologist who works with children and families.

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- "Trauma and children - tips for parents." Better Health Channel. betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Ginsburg, K., 2017. "Changing the Way We Talk to Teens about Tragic Events." *Psychology Today*. psychologytoday.com

³ If you or your child have any concerns, call Parentline Victoria on 13 22 89 or Kids Helpline (for kids, teens and young adults) on 1800 551 800



As Nadine's children sat there watching their lives with their mum flash before them, they didn't care that she didn't have makeup on, or perhaps wasn't looking her best. All they could see was how much she loved and adored them. They had memories that they will treasure forever.

One day, we won't be here and the least we can do is leave our children some photographic evidence that we were once there with them too. It can be hard to savour the moment when you think there will be many more. We always think there will be a next time—but what if there is no next time?

We really need to make an effort to be in more photos—we need to do it for our children and for how we want them to remember us. So—*get in the photo, Mum!*

Fiona Garrivan

Fiona is a Melbourne-based funeral celebrant. More of Fiona's writing can be found on her website: funerals.fionagarrivancelebrant.com.au



Fiona with her children, Ronan and Maeve

Free Family Movie Night

Christopher Robin

Christopher Robin is now all grown up and has a family of his own! When he receives a surprise visit from his childhood friend Winnie the Pooh, the two set out to find the rest of the gang—Tigger, Eeyore, Owl, Piglet, Rabbit, Kanga and Roo. Once they are reunited, Christopher Robin's childhood friends help him to remember the playful boy inside and rediscover the joy of life. *107 minutes; rated PG*



This is a joint community service extended to families by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship and Mooroolbark Community Centre

3 July 2019, 7:30 pm

Mooroolbark Community Centre

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee available

To reserve your tickets phone

1300 368 333

or book online at

www.culturetracks.info

*If you have not made a booking, please come anyway, as uncollected tickets may be reissued at 7:15 pm — there are usually seats available.

Turn Your Life to 'Rest' Mode

Have you ever noticed that rest is the most neglected discipline in our day and age?

Everywhere we look there is input from the internet, television and radio. And now the phones in our pocket also give input all day! Work weeks are longer, the input is constant, and time with family and close friends is constantly being invaded. It's no surprise the sleeping pill industry is skyrocketing. One study estimated that the sleep industry, as it's called, makes over \$32 billion (US) dollars per year¹ in the US alone! As a society, we've forgotten how to rest.

Having a smart phone means that I am always available 24/7. On one hand this tool allows me to be incredibly productive, and on the other hand, if not handled with care, it becomes a taskmaster robbing me of peace and rest. Over time, I have learned to switch my phone to aeroplane mode once I get to a certain point in the evening, and not turn it back on until I get to the office.

The Jewish calendar has a tradition of a Jubilee year. The Jubilee year was to be observed every 50th year. This time was marked by liberation. Indentured servants were to be freed, leased land was to be returned to its original owners, and the fields were to lay fallow. People were to live off the stores they had, and the fruits that grew naturally in the land.

Sharing and togetherness, as well as rest and relationship, would be the themes of



PHOTO: DEPOSITPHOTOS

the day. To rest in that time meant to trust that what they had stored would be enough for them, and what the land provided would be enough as well. In short, it was an act of trust in God's provision. As with all Israelite practices, these things pointed in a certain direction. They were signposts and symbols of God's deliverance that was going to come. They were a people in waiting.

Jesus announced to His generation that the year of Jubilee was then here, being fulfilled in Him. And God's rest is still here; freedom and rest are still to be found in Christ.

Today, as we can find ourselves living as virtual slaves we also find we can be liberated in a Jubilee—and that from the cruellest master ever, *ourselves*. Jesus has proclaimed the year of Jubilee, and we can experience that now in simple trust and rest as we wait His return. This is what it means to be people of the Jubilee. This is what it means, in a restless world, to rest in God.

Greg Williams
Speaking of Life

¹ thefiscaltimes.com/Articles/2012/07/23/Sleepless-in-America-A-32-4-Billion-Business

Why Australia has a National Day of Thanks

Australia's first National Day of Thanksgiving was officially launched in 2004 by the then Governor-General, as a way to celebrate our nation's Christian heritage and acknowledge the blessings and freedoms we enjoy in Australia. The name was later changed to avoid confusion with America's Thanksgiving, and the day continues to be celebrated on the last Saturday of each May.

The mission statement of the National Day of Thanks is 'Thanking God...thanking each other.' Schools, churches and community groups are encouraged to focus on those people and organisations that have made a difference in their communities. Individuals are invited to make a

special effort to say 'thank you' to people who have helped them in their personal lives—friends, teachers, parents, grandparents—through actions like writing a card, giving a gift or taking someone for coffee.

Since 2006, a committee of Christian leaders from various Yarra Ranges churches has organised an annual Mayoral Breakfast on the National Day of Thanks. Hosted by the mayor, the breakfast is an opportunity to thank the 'unsung heroes' who work tirelessly for the benefit of the community in areas like education, the health

sector, service organisations, and in unpaid volunteer work. Each year a few of the Yarra Ranges' most deserving 'unsung heroes' are officially recognised for the differences they have made in the community.

Those attending this year's breakfast on 25 May were privileged to hear an address by Dr Scott Ayton, a medical researcher with the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health who has received national recognition for his laboratory and clinical research on neurodegenerative diseases. Scott is also a founding member of Ignite, a not-for-profit organisation which aims to develop maturity and leadership in young people through school and community-based mentoring.

A Dream Fulfilled

Three years ago, having their own church building was just a dream for the congregation of the Victorian Chin Baptist Church. Today, the church's spacious new building in Croydon is a testament to the power of faith, love, generosity, and sheer hard work.

Each weekend, three church services at the new building cater to a congregation of more than 1200 people. The services are conducted in Hakha, the language spoken by most of the congregation. For the adults, singing and worshipping in their own language is familiar and effortless. For the congregation's more than 300 children, most of them born in Australia, the Hakha language is another connection to their cultural heritage.

The VCBC began in Mooroolbark in 2003, under the leadership of Reverend Japheth Lian and with the support of the Mooroolbark Baptist Church, which met on Sunday mornings and gave the Chin congregation use of the church facilities in the afternoon. The size of the congregation increased rapidly as more Chin people settled in Mooroolbark and surrounding suburbs. Most were refugees, having fled their homeland of Myanmar after being persecuted for practising their Christian faith. It wasn't long before the church grew from its initial 13 members to a congregation of several hundred. With the seating spilling into the church's foyer each week, it was obvious that the Chin church needed a larger place, perhaps even their own building.

were Baptist, there were also large contributions from other denominations. Unfortunately, it was soon clear that despite this generosity, the church would not be able to raise or borrow enough money to accept the quotes it had received for the construction of the building. It was then that a new plan was formulated—the



Retired pastor John Billingham worked with teams of volunteers to complete the building

church would construct its own building using the skills of the congregation.

Japheth turned to his friend John Billingham, a retired Baptist minister who had supervised the building of the Wandin Baptist Church during his time as pastor there. John agreed to become site manager for VCBC's project, overseeing the entire construction process. Japheth has nothing but admiration and gratitude for the

prepared for the volunteer workers. "Sometimes I had a hundred people having lunch together," said Japheth. John, Japheth and the other volunteers worked long hours, with some shifts starting early in the morning and others working into the evening in the summer time.

One of Japheth's most important roles was acting as liaison between John and the workers, many of whom didn't speak much English. "Because of language barriers I had to be with them and help them work with the plan. Sometimes I went to Bunnings while John explained it to them and he thought that they got it, but because of language problems they did it wrong," smiled Japheth. "When I came back I said, 'Oh—what happened?'" and John said, 'I don't know, Japheth—they said that they understood!'"

Despite these occasional problems with communication, after more than two years the construction was completed to a high standard, and the church was officially opened in December 2018. The building is a spacious, light-filled structure that incorporates a church auditorium, a large foyer that can be used for social activities or to accommodate overflow from the main auditorium, several Sunday school rooms, kitchens, meeting rooms, and office areas for the administrative staff and four pastors.

In the foyer, a gated play area for small children occupies one corner. On the wall, rising above the foam mats scattered with blocks and



Left: An aerial view of the work in progress and (right) the finished building

Thanks to donations from church members and a loan from the Baptist Investment Fund, the VCBC was able to purchase a large block of land in Lusher Road, Croydon, and plans were drawn up for the building. The church congregation had input into what the finished structure would be like. "It was a combination of ideas from the kids, leaders, everyone," said lead pastor, Japheth Lian. "I even asked the children's group, what do you want to do here, what kind of room are you expecting?"

Church members gave willingly to the building fund, and several other churches—some from as far away as Adelaide—also contributed generously. While about half of those churches

skill and dedication John brought to the job. "He knows a lot," he said. "He's like my best friend, supervisor, mentor." For the next two years both men were on site almost daily, with Japheth in the role of assistant site manager while many of his pastoring duties were taken on by his associate pastor.

Hundreds of volunteers, both skilled and unskilled, helped with the project. Many of the Chin men had worked in construction while living in Malaysia waiting for approval to come to Australia, so they had skills and experience in construction, plastering, and bricklaying. Other people helped out with painting, clearing up rubble, and cooking. Every day, food was

dolls, is a large map of Chin State. "Many of our kids are born here," explained Japheth. "When we talk about Chin State or Myanmar, they can't imagine it. With the map, now they understand."

For this latest generation of little Aussies, the new church building is likely to be a place of connections, both spiritual and physical. As they worship together, they and their parents will remember Myanmar, but will also be grateful for their new home in a country where they have the freedom to practice their religion—in a building put together by faith, love, and their own hands.

Janet Van Dijk

Lauren Burns

A Passion for Living



PHOTO: BEN GLAZER

PHOTO: STEVEN RAM

The 2000 Olympic Games, held on Australian soil, were especially memorable for most of us. Australia performed admirably against many much larger nations, coming an impressive fourth in the overall medal tally. Among the medals was Australia's first-ever Olympic taekwondo gold medal, won by Melbourne's Lauren Burns. Competing in the women's under 49kg class, Lauren brought home the gold after winning her final match against Cuban Urbia Melendez.¹

Not only was Lauren's taekwondo medal the first for Australia, but it was also a first for the world, as taekwondo was making its Olympic debut that year.

A year later, in a promo for an ABC *Australian Story* episode entitled "Unbreakable: Lauren Burns", Lauren was described as "one of the Games' unlikeliest success stories."² Born to showbiz parents—singer-songwriter and musician Ronnie Burns, and his wife, choreographer Maggie³—Lauren was, according to *Australian Story*, "destined to shine in a different field."

"A year ago, aged 26, she surprised the sporting world by winning Australia's first ever gold medal in taekwondo... She was one of only three Australian women to win individual golds, along with Cathy Freeman and Susie O'Neill. But what nobody knew at the time was just how much Lauren went through to get there... from being beaten with a stick in training sessions

in Korea to starving herself down to an almost skeletal weight. And then there were all the injuries, wounds and the operations...⁴

As *Australian Story* suggests, taekwondo can be a pretty tough and demanding sport.

Martin Hall, Olympic and club coach, told the program, "I've seen Lauren cry and I've seen her get hurt really bad. I've seen her get knocked down by an illegal punch to the face. I've seen her, you know, nearly get knocked right out, as in eyes roll back. And that's, it hurts. It hurts everybody—not just her, but the coaches and everybody involved."

Head Olympic coach Jintae Jeong recounted a training incident not long before the Olympics, where he accidentally broke Lauren's nose with a kick to the face. Although the injury was able to be successfully treated, Jintae said the doctor told him, "Don't break Lauren's nose!"

Lauren's mother Maggie told *Australian Story*, "What I see of Lauren is the gentle, soft, feminine woman that she is, but she has developed this warrior-like nature and it surprises me."

It seems that Lauren's involvement in her chosen sport surprised many of her friends and family. We frequently have stereotypical mental images of fighters which tend to emphasise the tough, competitive, aggressive side of their natures while ignoring the complex, holistic makeup of every person.

During a recent conversation I had with Lauren, I was struck by her enduring compassion for people and dedication to their wellbeing.

In January 2001 Lauren was invited by World Vision to become its Ambassador for Landmines following an international seminar called "Breaking the Curse: the fight against landmines," hosted by World Vision Australia in November 2000,

"I've always been passionate about giving back to people where I can, and immediately after the Olympics, I was invited to be involved in WV's campaign in ridding Cambodia of land mines," said Lauren. "I went over to Cambodia a few times and we raised money to build a school and a health centre. We filmed these places being built and what the impact was for those communities. It was incredible and inspiring to be over there and to see firsthand what's going on."

For some time Lauren was also involved as a Red Dust⁵ role model travelling to remote indigenous communities to promote healthy living.

"I'm not so much involved at the moment because of where my kids are at and what they're doing," said Lauren, "but I was involved with them for a long time. I'd go to remote Aboriginal communities and occasionally to Fiji and India."

"It was another amazing experience. I'm not sure who got more out of it, the athletes/role models or the kids, because they gave so much and shared so much from their culture. It wasn't just athletes, but musicians, comedians etc. Really fantastic."

"Sport is a great connection," continued

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

² Transcript: abc.net.au/austory/unbreakable-october-11.-2001/10474418

³ [wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronnie_Burns_\(singer\)](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronnie_Burns_(singer))

⁴ [imdb.com/title/tt4167526/?ref_=adv_li_tt](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4167526/?ref_=adv_li_tt)

⁵ reddust.org.au

Lauren. “You can get out there and play some basketball, start building those relationships, and then start some classroom work around healthy lifestyle. One day I’d love to get back out there. I always encourage other athletes to become involved.”

Lauren’s compassionate concern for other people is shared by her parents.

“Mum and Dad set up a children’s foundation—Appin Hall,” she said. “They help to support children who have terminal illnesses and those who care for them. The property is near Cradle Mountain in Tasmania⁶ and they offer a variety of services like camps, respite care for families—it could be the parents themselves, or the siblings who are also affected. For instance, there may be a child who has cancer and is receiving a lot of treatment; everyone in that family is affected and in need of respite care.”

“There was also a camp they had regularly, called the Young Carers Camp, which catered to children who were carers for their siblings. These children are not always recognised as carers. They may be hanging out at school with their friends, but at home have this incredible responsibility, helping their parent look after their sibling. Enabling them to be able to hang out with other kids who are also going through that experience was really positive and powerful for them. I went over and ran some taekwondo workshops as part of this program.”

As Lauren prepared for the Sydney Olympics, she took a year out from her studies in naturopathy, another passion of hers. Having received great relief from naturopathic treatment with herbal medicines for bronchial issues when she was younger, Lauren appreciates complementary medicine and how it has worked for her.

“I’ve always been passionate about the influence of diet and lifestyle on health,” Lauren said. “I went on to study naturopathy alongside my elite sporting career, which meant I could incorporate a lot of what I was learning into my training. But I really think it’s a balance; I’ve had so many different practitioners—a dietician, naturopath, physio, sports medicine doctor—it’s all about bringing everything together and taking what works from all those disciplines to maximize optimal performance.”

Lauren’s studies have continued, and she anticipates completing her PhD soon—research which reflects the convergence of some of her long-time interests.

“I’m in full swing and coming to the end of it. It’s been a five-year journey. I’ve been looking at the link between lifestyle practices and mindset and high performance. Initially I interviewed ten world Olympic and Paralympic champions. I covered a range of sports—individual and team sports—and included Paralympians, who are not always included in this type of research.”

Some of Lauren’s work, looking at lifestyle and performance, has been published by the

British Journal of Sports Medicine.⁷ “One of the strong themes that emerged is the importance of interpersonal relationships and support networks,” said Lauren. “This is an area I am very passionate about. Not only is it important in sport but also in life generally. The more we discover about isolation and the determinants of social health, the more we discover how community and being connected with others is essential. Having someone in your life that you feel close connection with in a quality relationship, whether it’s a friend, sibling or partner. Some of the athletes talked about their service providers—a masseur or physio, for example, who they see regularly—who provides a mentoring, sharing relationship.”

Lauren’s research expands on established research that proves the connection between high-quality relationships and reduced threat-related brain activation. The research suggests that high-quality relationships attenuate physiological responses such as cardiovascular arousal, cortisol and glucocorticoid levels, reduce threat-related brain activity and enhance general health and longevity.⁸

As a qualified naturopath, Lauren’s interests and experience have led her to branch out into complementary, related activities. She published the cookbook *Food from a Loving Home* in 2010, writes the wholefood menu plans for Nino Early Learning Centres, conducts cooking classes, holds workshops about wellbeing, and is a motivational keynote speaker for conferences and other public events. In 2001 she published her best-selling book *Fighting Spirit*, which was updated and re-released earlier this year.

On 9 October, Mooroolbark Umbrella Group will host Lauren as she visits Mooroolbark, where she will conduct sessions for local primary and secondary students during the day. That evening, she will speak at the Umbrella Group’s annual forum at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, where she will also help present the 2019 Quiet Achiever awards.⁹

I’m very much looking forward to hearing some of Lauren’s stories and things she’s learned during her life when she visits Mooroolbark. She’s an inspiring person who practises what she preaches, making sure that her family and other relationships occupy a primary place in her life.

“Our sense of community and our connections are vitally important,” Lauren explained. “As an industrialised Western nation, we are seeing more and more cases of isolation. We have lost the art of living as community and even as extended families where family members help each other with rearing children and enjoying shared meals. I believe these things are incredibly important.”

“Rather than drift further, we all need

to make a greater effort to stay connected,” she continued. “Even just making time to catch up with friends, going out for dinner, having a laugh, experiencing those feelings of care and connection—these things can be so uplifting and therapeutic.”

Lauren pointed out that there is extensive research highlighting the links between social isolation, depression and mental illness. “It is vital that everyone feels connections in some way. It may be just one person—not necessarily someone that you see every day, but who you know is there for you and you for them. Even the connection with one significant person in our lives can create so many positive health outcomes.”

With a passion for community involvement, a string of awards and achievements to her name, and an interest in the physical and mental benefits of healthful foods and strong relationships, Lauren is living a full and dynamic life.

Keep up your significant and beneficial work Lauren! We’re looking forward to seeing you in Mooroolbark on 9 October.

Randall Bouchier



As a naturopath and an athlete, Lauren is interested in the relationship between a healthy body and a healthy mind, and the importance of strong social connections

⁶ appinhall.com. As I write, Ronnie and Maggie Burns are in the process of relocating to Victoria and continuing their Appin Hall services closer to their family.

⁷ Co-authored with Juanita Ruth Weissensteiner and Marc Cohen
⁸ bjsm.bmj.com/content/early/2019/03/29/bjssports-2018-100312.abstract

⁹ For more information about Lauren’s visit, contact Matt on 0412 674 319

Rescue our Recycling!

Yarra Ranges Council is joining other councils from around Victoria to call for more investment in recycling from the state and federal governments.

The Municipal Association of Victoria, which represents all Victorian councils, recently launched its Rescue our Recycling campaign, calling for all levels of government to intervene in the ongoing recycling crisis.

Yarra Ranges Mayor, Tony Stevenson, said while recyclable material was collected in the Yarra Ranges by VISY and processed, the recycling industry is in dire need of help. "Even though we've been able to weather some of the recent impacts to the recycling industry—such as one of the state's major recycling companies briefly suspending operations—there's no doubt that serious change needs to happen to keep the future of our recycling industry sustainable," Councillor Stevenson said.

"Our recycling provider, VISY, sends a majority of the recyclables collected to Australian markets, so materials can be re-used here, and others to Indonesia to be purchased and used by manufacturers there. They've also brought ethical processes in place to ensure that any recyclables sent overseas are managed appropriately. The simple fact is that the current Australian market can't sustain the amount of recyclables we're producing, which is why

recyclables end up overseas."

Some of the materials produced from recycled products are not classified as food grade, meaning that new materials are required for some packaging.

"What's clear is we need changes from every level of government and the community to solve this and other problems the industry is facing."

Cr Stevenson encouraged residents to continue recycling as much as possible, and to look at ways to reduce the amount of rubbish they generate at home.

"It's clear that one of the easiest ways to reduce the strain on the industry is, wherever possible, look at reducing, reusing and recycling—in that order," he said. "That can be reducing the amount of waste we generate by buying less items with lots of packaging—especially soft plastics—looking at reusable items like coffee cups, and recycling as much as we can."

Top Tips for Recycling:¹

- **Soft plastics can't go in your recycling bin.**

If you have plastic and you can scrunch it up, it can't be put in the recycling bin. Make sure you take it to a participating supermarket for soft plastics recycling.

¹ For more information, visit yrc.vic.gov.au/recycling



- **Keep recyclable items out of plastic bags.** When you throw your recycling in the bin, it can't be in a plastic bag. If it is, the machines at the recycling facility can't automatically sort your rubbish.

- **Separate different recyclable materials.** Make sure you keep different materials separate. For example, if a glass jar has a metal lid, take it off so it can be automatically sorted at the recycling facility.

Cr Stevenson said the Rescue our Recycling campaign is calling for manufacturers to generate less waste and place more emphasis on recyclability, and for governments to support better ways of sorting and processing, so more material can be recycled.

"We need a container deposit scheme to encourage recycling and reduce litter in Victoria, national targets, timeframes and investment from the federal government to encourage manufacturers to create products with minimal or no waste, and conversations at a council and community level on how we can encourage recycling in the community. The goal here would be to create a system where we're all recycling effectively, processing all of our material onshore, support industry to manufacture recycled products cheaper or same cost as new material so manufacturers use that material to create their products, rather than buying new material."

Council uses recycled material for different projects, such as recycled plastics for some bollards and boardwalks, which are made from soft plastics dropped off at supermarkets. Council's standard practice for road construction is to use at least 20 per cent recycled asphalt, with a 30 per cent minimum in road patching.

Cr Stevenson said the state government's landfill levy, which council paid for each tonne of material sent to landfill, had generated more than half a billion dollars across the state.

"We appreciate the effort the state government has gone to, in supporting councils following last year's announcement that China would no longer accept recyclable material," he said.

"However, there's more than half a billion dollars generated by the landfill levy—a fee which has increased by 637 per cent in the last ten years being held by the government, and that funding should be used to find sustainable solutions to the way recyclable materials are collected and processed in Australia."



Yarra Ranges residents are encouraged to reduce the amount of rubbish they generate, and to recycle as many items as possible.

Showcasing Roald Dahl, Rossini, and the Victorian Concert Orchestra

Snuggle up inside one of the Yarra Ranges Council's cosy venues to enjoy some winter-warming events! Culture Tracks, the YRC's year-round program of arts and cultural performances, shows, exhibitions, music and comedy, has some delightful offerings this winter.

Roald Dahl's The Twits brings the 1980s family classic to life on stage in the latest production from the highly acclaimed Spare Parts Puppet Theatre. Two talented puppeteers switch effortlessly between the characters with exquisite facial expressions and movement. Children will be captivated by the tale of Mr and Mrs Twit, the most horrible people ever to have lived. There are worms in spaghetti, a case of 'the shrinks', and a monkey forced to stand on his head, in this never-ending game of revenge and trickery.

Opera Australia will be visiting Mooroolbark with a delightful performance of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. Designed to engage children in the wonderful world of classical music, this performance is sure to delight music lovers of all ages. Count Almaviva has fallen head over heels in love and the wily barber Figaro is here to help—and make a profit. Sung in English by professional opera singers, this exciting tale of romance, trickery, and hilarious misunderstandings will delight young viewers.

The Victorian Concert Orchestra has been entertaining audiences for over a hundred years. Performing a range of stunning classical pieces by Mozart and Tchaikovsky, the 50-piece symphony orchestra will move and delight you. The diverse program includes operettas, musical theatre pieces and the famous score from *Star Wars*. The performance will be directed by world-famous ABC Orchestra conductor Gerald Keuneman, who has worked with Frank Sinatra, Elton John, Olivia Newton-John and Nick Cave. Enjoy the sounds of this prestigious orchestra performing a dizzying array of beautiful music.



Are you new to Mooroolbark, or simply keen to engage further with your local community? Participate in our regular oil painting and pottery workshops or join in the crafting fun with the Sandwiches group. At Mooroolbark Community Centre we have a noticeboard full of pamphlets and flyers that our wonderful community members have posted—drop by to see what groups or classes you might want to join!

Did you know that Mooroolbark Community Centre is just one of five cultural centres around our shire? Be sure to check out culturetracks.info to discover other great performances around the traps.



Doing it Naturally

When it comes to weight loss, having support for your efforts can mean the difference between success and failure. That important practical, emotional and social support provides encouragement for a group of men and women who meet every week in Mooroolbark at the Take Off Weight Naturally (TOWN) club.

The Maroondah TOWN Club began in Croydon in 1972 and moved to Mooroolbark in the early 1980s. The club is part of TOWN Clubs Victoria, (a non-profit organisation), which began in Melbourne in 1968 and now has more than 100 clubs around the state.

TOWN clubs encourage members to lose and maintain weight in a healthy, sustainable way. There is no prescribed diet, but healthy eating is promoted and extreme diets are discouraged. Discussions at the meetings revolve around established weight-loss principles like the importance of exercise and nutritious foods. Before joining, participants must supply a doctor's letter stating their ideal goal weight.

At each meeting, members' current weights are recorded before they enjoy a meal that they have brought themselves in accordance with their own diet plans. After enjoying some time socialising, people break off into groups for therapy sessions. According to member Joy Emmett, the group sessions give people an opportunity to talk about how they're going, or why they might be struggling. The latest ideas

and research around weight loss and nutrition are also discussed in the group sessions.

Fees are minimal, covering administrative costs and providing rewards for those who meet various targets. Each year, a celebration dinner is attended by members from clubs around the state, and further recognition and awards are given. To make the competition fair, people compete in different divisions according to their current and goal weights.

Many members of Maroondah TOWN Club have reached and maintained their goal weight over the years, but continue attending meetings as graduates. They appreciate the support and encouragement the club provides, as well as the social interaction that keeps them motivated. "My husband tends to think it's more a social club," Joy laughed. "I tell him that if we weren't coming every week we would probably start to put the weight back on, because we wouldn't be accountable to anybody."

For Joy, the social support is an important part of what keeps her coming back to Maroondah TOWN Club each week. "I enjoy the friendships and the encouragement to lose weight and to eat healthily and exercise," she said. "Everybody's supportive and helpful, and very pleased to see you each week."

For more information about Maroondah TOWN Club, see the calendar item on page 16, or visit the TOWN Clubs Victoria's Facebook page.

Janet Van Dijk



TOWN Club graduate June Caminiti continues to maintain her goal weight

PHOTO: JOY EMMETT

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.
Mondays except public holidays	Gifford Arts: Painting & creativity afternoon, 1–4 pm. Gifford Village Community Centre, 389 Maroondah Highway, Croydon North. All ages welcome. Further information: 9051 3000.
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.
Every Tuesday	Food and Friendship Lunch: 12 noon. Gifford Village Community Centre, 389 Maroondah Highway, Croydon North. All ages welcome. Further information: Uniting Harrison 9051 3000.
Tuesdays & Thursdays	Mooroolbark Men's Shed: 9 am–3 pm. Cnr Ellen Road & Croydondale Drive, Mooroolbark. 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.
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
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.
Thursdays during school term	Music Together Program: 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.
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
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. Starts 18 January 2019. Enquiries Barbara: 0417 381 542.
2 June	Singularity: 30-voice SATB choir sings Gilbert & Sullivan's <i>Patience</i> . 2:30 pm, St. Margaret's Uniting Church. \$10 pp includes afternoon tea. Funds go to Rubaga Youth Development Association, Uganda.
15 June	Book Sale And Devonshire Tea: 9:00 am – 12 pm. St. Margaret's Uniting Church, 219 Hull Rd. Thousands of good quality books at bargain prices. Robert 9735 2393 or Marj 9726 7286.
14 - 16 June 20 - 23 June	Mooroolbark Theatre Group presents: <i>Key For Two</i> . Mooroolbark Community Centre. For ticket and booking information please phone 0455 202 038.
3 July	Ronald Dahl's The Twits: 11 am, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$14-\$18. Ages 5+. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
8 July	Opera Australia: The Barber of Seville: 11 am & 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12 full. Ages 4+. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
21 July	Family Fun Day: 10 am at Life Ministry Church FREE Family Service! Featuring Christian Children's Entertainer Sean W Smith, sausage sizzle and giant inflatables!
28 July	Community Tree Planting: All welcome. 1:00–3:30 pm. Selina Avenue Reserve, Mooroolbark. BYO gloves and digging implements. Followed by afternoon tea. Information/RSVP: 9726 8898.
4 August	Victorian Concert Orchestra: 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12 full. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info
8 June 13 July 10 August	Urban Harvest: Backyard fruit and vegetable growers—swap your excess produce. Red Earth Community Park, second Saturday each month, 10-11:30 am. Enquiries: Claire Coutts, 0425 700 280.
6 December	Community Carols: Picnic dinner from 6:30 pm, carols start 8 pm. 7:50 pm Croydon Citizen's Brass Band. 8:00 pm Carols begin. BYO rug or chair; food and battery-operated candles for sale.

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.

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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)

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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.