

# LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

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**Forty years  
of celebrating  
Mooroolbark**



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In this family photo, taken by Edna Walling, Grace and Joyce are seated in the archway. In the foreground are their parents, brother Eric and sister Florence.

PHOTO: EDNA WALLING

# Devoted Sisters

Grace Dodge and her younger sister Joyce came to Mooroolbark with their family from a beautiful dairy farming property near Foster in Gippsland. Situated on the side of a hill, it had views of Yanakie and Wilson's Promontory. Sounds beautiful! Grace had reached high-school age, and so that she wouldn't need to travel seven miles each way to high school on horseback the family decided to move to Melbourne in 1946.

Two properties were available—one in Footscray and the other in Mooroolbark. Arthur and Lydia Dodge chose to buy the Mooroolbark property from the Ellis family, and Arthur was able to replace Bill Ellis as a machine operator at the lime quarry.

Grace and Joyce recall their childhood years in Mooroolbark as being very happy. Their property was surrounded by paddocks. "There were very few houses, very few families, one shop which was post office and general store across the railway line. So that's where you got your mail. There was no electricity, telephone or town water."

"A bus service from Croydon took us to school, and also brought out blocks of ice that were placed in a rusty old tin that was nailed to a tree at the bottom of Carronvale Road. That was our only cooling system for a bit. We walked to our neighbour's place and collected fresh milk from Mrs Elms. Our vegetables were delivered by the Ellises who came around with a horse and cart and sold vegetables they'd bought from

Victoria Market. Our meat arrived after dark by horse and cart from Lilydale."

"And there were more bridges in Mooroolbark then, as Brushy Park Creek wasn't yet diverted underground. We remember being able to walk across the paddocks and walking up Mt. Dandenong."

World famous landscape designer Edna Walling,<sup>1</sup> who lived nearby in the area that would later be known as Bickleighvale Village, was a good family friend. A keen photographer, Edna took many photos of her friends and neighbours, including the Dodge family.

Grace recalled, "Edna would come over to talk to Mum and give us a few plants, and we'd go over there. One visit I remember was to share in Edna's Christmas celebrations—she was dressed up in her green corduroy slacks and played her Messiah records."

"Edna loved nature and the Australian outdoors. She gave me a photo she'd taken from the top of Mt Kosciusko for my 21st birthday. Once when we were in England, we visited Bickleigh to see where she'd come from. She imported a little bit of England to Australia—the stone walls, poplars, and cotoneasters—but as time went on, she became more familiar with our indigenous plants."

The Dodge sisters' lives exhibit a strong ethic



PHOTO: RANDAL BOURCHER

of service, reflected in a love for people and a love for the land.

Both trained as teachers. Grace spent 30 years in East Pakistan—later renamed as Bangladesh—where she was involved in teaching, teacher training, school administration and Bible classes. She remembers her time there during the war of liberation in 1971. The local people appreciated their staying with them during the war, and Grace recalls the unforgettable jubilation and euphoria when independence brought freedom to the people of Bangladesh.

"When I came home after 30 years my teaching qualifications were quite out of date, so I was able to work as an interpreter for nearly 30 years," said Grace. "I have met people who have come here as refugees, and I appreciate them and understand why they're here. And I've met those who have come across as migrants and appreciate the difficulties they have with adjusting. Some of them had good jobs in Bangladesh, but when they come here that doesn't always translate in getting a high-profile

<sup>1</sup> en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edna\_Walling

job here. But I've met some beautiful people and appreciate the privilege of being there for them as an interpreter."

Grace maintains weekly telephone communication with friends in Bangladesh and shared an encouraging story of ongoing development work in Bangladesh: "Our people are working amongst the poorest of the poor in remote areas where nobody else is doing anything. It's basically teaching the women to read and write and do simple arithmetic and liberating them so that they learn to trust each other and deposit a minimum amount of money in a common bank that they control themselves. They are able to borrow from the common capital in order to set up small businesses."

Grace knows of some wonderful stories of people starting with just a few cents a week and working up to incomes of several hundred dollars a month. "The transformation is amazing, as skills are learned that empower the women to do what they always had the potential to do," Grace said, "giving them skills to live together, work together in community, and control their finances themselves. It's not foreign money; it's their own money, and they are able to use it in order to help each other and improve. Or send their children to school, or prevent their daughters being married off as they reach puberty, and instead have the opportunity for more education and a better chance in life."

Joyce's first school appointment was at Sale Technical School, and she concluded her career teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at Box Hill TAFE. Along the way, she worked overseas with Australian Volunteers International, spending three years in New Guinea, two years in a Vietnamese refugee camp in Malaysia, and two years in Laos.

As a result of her ESL teaching experiences at Box Hill, Joyce has had a lifelong interest in migrants and refugees. She said, "I get very steamed up about the government treatment of people locked up for years on Manus Island and Nauru. I struggle that the government won't agree to let them go to New Zealand or welcome them here. We have so much! It's very important to welcome migrants and refugees and help them to use their skills and knowledge to better their lives and contribute to the common good."

"The people who come here have amazing stories," continued Joyce. "We occasionally have some Chin people working here. One of them was here last Friday. He'd had eleven years in Malaysia. And there was one guy who'd had 16 years in the camp—16 years!—in Malaysia waiting to come, and then his wife and kids came. His kids were already in their late teens when they came here. They didn't get on the boats; they just waited for their chance to come. And when people see them walking around, they have no idea what these people have been through."

The sisters share a concern for Indigenous Australians also, and Joyce is part of a reconciliation group. She's saddened by the lack of respect and acceptance extended to our Indigenous people. In her home is a beautiful

1955 painting of a gum tree that was situated on the opposite side of Carronvale Road from the Dodge property. A Victorian Archaeological Survey entry<sup>2</sup> notes that "flakes and tools from an Aboriginal campsite were collected 30 years ago." The sisters remember that the tree in their painting had been a "canoe tree"—there had been a creek down the slope. Unfortunately, the tree was lost to fire in about 1970.

Earlier I mentioned Joyce and Grace's service ethic reflected a love for the land. Their house is set in their beautiful treed property, amidst the vegetables the sisters grow.

Joyce commented, "Another thing we are really committed to is energy-efficient house design. Our old family home was rammed earth. When we had to replace it, we built three houses. Our brother gave us good ideas of how to build energy-efficient homes. We've had the house open to the public on six occasions for Solar/Sustainable House Day. That's another thing I get steamed up about, people building houses that are just going to need air conditioning and use up energy."

"Our houses face north so that our slate floors absorb the warmth of the sun, especially upstairs. Sash windows and the one-metre eaves make use of the winter sun but prevent summer sun coming in."

Joyce said that the sisters would love to see the government commit to building energy-efficient social housing so that people with limited funds can enjoy good, comfortable housing with low energy bills.

"One time when we had the house on display, we pinned up our gas and electricity bills so that people could see our energy costs. One man got so angry! There's no comparison between what we pay and what other people pay. We can hear air-conditioners roaring away in the neighbourhood and we don't even have a fan on!"

"We've used conventional bricks on the outside and aerated concrete blocks as the inner skin. Slate on the floor absorbs the heat in the day and releases it at night. And the pelmet boards keep the cold air out. By using thick curtains and closing them in late afternoon, we manage to keep inside temperatures comfortably stable."

An ABC listing of "open garden" properties in 2009 described the Dodge property: "Mature fruit trees frame vegetables, natives and flowering exotics in an abundant densely planted garden around a 1990s passive solar



Grace in the late 1950s in a photograph taken by Edna Walling.



Joyce with friend and student Nasu at Asaroka Lutheran High School, New Guinea, 1971

house with many sustainable features."<sup>3</sup>

As I reflect on the lives of Grace and Joyce—these unassuming women, active in Mooroolbark church life, as their parents were—I'd describe them this way: Their lives reflect their Christian faith—their love for a loving God who shapes their whole-of-life, consistent devotion to the common good, expressed through care for people and care for the earth.



Randall Bourchier

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Archaeological Survey Register No. 1/037 S

<sup>3</sup> en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edna\_Walling



**20&21 March 2020** “Imagine the past and dream the future”—that’s the idea behind this year’s Celebrate Mooroolbark festival, which draws inspiration from a 40-year history of festivals in Mooroolbark. The current Celebrate Mooroolbark festival began in 2002, following in the footsteps of the Red Earth Festival, which was first held in 1980 and ran until 2001.

And now, Celebrate Mooroolbark 2020 is upon us. The meetings are ramping up and it’s all go! In just three weeks, Red Earth Community Park will be alive with mums and dads and excited children, colourful Bali flags, stalls, fairy floss and marquees.

As usual, Red Earth Unearthed, our annual talent show, opens the festival at our new time of 7 pm on Friday 20 March in the Mooroolbark Community Centre. With three categories including dance, everyone has a chance to show off their talents and skills. Come along and watch—the ticket price of \$5 per person or \$10 for families includes a delicious supper. Following the last item, the winners of each category will be presented with cash prizes donated by the Lions Club of Croydon-Mooroolbark.



Forty years after Mooroolbark’s first festival, the street parade is still a popular start to the day

The following day the festival begins at 10 am with a street parade. The parade has been a long-standing tradition at the festival, dating back to Red Earth Festival days. This year our parade will be led by our very own Mooroolbark CFA and the Great Gizmo will be interacting with the public, riding his unicycle and amusing everyone with his jokes and magic tricks. Participants are encouraged to dress up, and prizes will be given for the most creative costumes, with particular attention to those who follow the theme. It’s the parade that brings the people to the park, so be creative and make a big impression! A first and second cash prize will be awarded by Tony Smith MP during the opening ceremony.

This year we have added a free KIDZ Kingdom for children of primary school age and under. There is much for them to see and do, with a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities such as sewing wool and mesh bags, pom-pom making, colouring, dinosaur digging, bubble blowing, instant snow and table-top robots. There will also be line dancing, origami and possibly karate, soccer, music or sport at interactive workshop places.

For older children we have carnival rides, go karts in the car park, and a youth zone for local musicians and bands to show off their talents. They might even be interested in the Hornby train in the auditorium! Circus Lab gives everyone a chance to learn the skills of hula hoops, juggling, spinning plates, and much more.

Active Living Hub promises to have lots of activities, with a silent disco and retro races such as the three-legged race and egg-and-spoon race.

The very popular Parkville Music will entertain you on the main stage, with some other familiar faces. Whale of a Tale and Kofi, the popular West African drummer, are returning so if you were unable to see either of these last year don’t miss out this time around.

Inside the community centre, festival-goers can make pottery and observe oil painters at work. In the gallery, the Country Women’s Association will serve Devonshire teas for those who just want to relax.

Thanks to our sponsors’ generosity, most activities are free or low cost! We’re also doing our bit for the environment, asking all stall holders to embrace our objectives of zero waste, reduced energy consumption and environmentally sustainable consumables.

**Barbara Austin**  
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee

For more information please go to our website, visit us on Facebook, or email [admin@celebratemooroolbark.com](mailto:admin@celebratemooroolbark.com).

Our cover photo shows Kofi Kunkpe Music at last year’s Celebrate Mooroolbark festival

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We Serve



These days, with more and more women enjoying sports that were once dominated by men, you're more likely than ever to see a fluorescent pink football on the rugby league pitch.

Sports programs for women and girls are very important to Trent Ousley, president of the Eastern Raptors Rugby League Club. "I've got a daughter of my own; that's why I'm such an advocate for girls' sport."

Trent grew up playing rugby league in New South Wales, and considers it a great family sport. "My whole family was playing last year—I played Masters, my wife played First Grade, my daughter was playing Under 13s, one son was Under 11s, and my other son was Under 9s."

Trent is encouraged by the growing enthusiasm for rugby league in Victoria, where it's not as well known as other codes. "Last year the Raptors had their most successful year so far—we had about 100 kids registered, and 45 adults registered to play in our senior teams," he said. About 40 percent of the club's players are female, and Trent was recently involved with the Victorian NRL in the development of a comprehensive women's program. "We were losing girls at age 11 because they didn't want to be tackled by boys, who could be up to 20 kilos heavier, and musclier," said Trent. "It's just not fair on them."

For Raptors' vice president Jasmine Dalen, being able to play in a women's Raptors team in the past year has meant a return to the game after an absence of about twenty years. "Back when I was playing as a junior, I was the only



# THINK PINK

female playing at the whole club. Then I hit the age of 12, or close to that, and there were no teams available, so I stopped playing and didn't go back to it."

Jasmine has been involved in coaching and other volunteer roles for the Raptors for a few years, since her oldest son began playing in the Under 6 division. When discussions began about putting together a senior women's team, she was one of the first to put her hand up for it. "It's been great to be a part of it and to get on the field last year—I can't say I ever thought I would do that again."

"I've seen how it was as a junior player myself," said Jasmine, "and now I've come back and seen the massive growth and the fact that there are opportunities for girls of all ages now."

Trent is pleased that Victorian NRL has recently brought into line the prize money for men and women. "It's consistent across the board now," he said. "And we're offering a clear pathway for girls going from playing local club football to eventually playing in the women's NRL competition. Two years ago there was no pathway for girls."

The Raptors club is based in Boronia and has members from all over the eastern suburbs and outlying areas, from places as far away as Healesville and Blackburn. The next closest clubs are Waverley, Dandenong, and Mernda in the north, so the Raptors are drawing members from a large area. "We love seeing kids playing—we just want to see more kids at our club," said Trent. One way the club recruits new members is to get out into the community and talk about the game. "A lot of people don't know about rugby league, especially here in Victoria," Trent explained. "But it's a game for everyone—you don't have to have been brought up with it."

The Eastern Raptors have had an information stall at Celebrate Mooroolbark in the past, and will be there again this year. "The Mooroolbark festival is a good one for the kids in our club. They love getting involved—they all rock up in their footy gear and do the whole parade up and down the main street, and feel like they're part of the community. Last year we had 30 kids in the parade."

Children can join the Eastern Raptors Under 6 division at age four. "At that age we just focus on core skills like passing of the ball and running," said Trent. "The Under 6s and Under 7s participate in a Tackle Safe program so when they get into Under 8s they know how to tackle, and

they know how to fall. The girls play with the boys up until Under 10s or Under 12s, then we take them into an Under 13 Girls' competition."

Jasmine said that her younger son, who is three, is "itching to get out there and take the field." But for now, he enjoys playing with the other young children while the older kids train or play. "That's his second home," said Jasmine. "The younger kids always have their hands on a ball and everyone looks out for everyone else."

The Eastern Raptors offers football for Under 6s right through to Masters. "You can play your whole life if you want to," said Trent. He believes that what makes the Raptors a good family club is that it instills values that are about more than just football. "Everything is about respect in our club—respecting the coaches, respecting the team managers, and respecting the other kids in the club. It leads to healthier attitudes towards life."

Eastern Raptors is also an accredited member of Club Respect, a program that is run by an organisation called Nirodah and supported by the Victorian Women's Trust. Through the medium of sport, Club Respect aims to reduce rates of violence and abuse in Australia. "We participated in the pilot program and helped facilitate changes in the course," said Trent. "It's now a national program across all sports." Raptors coaches, committee members and other team volunteers have undertaken the program, which gives them the tools to be able to help children by identifying risk and working through it. "That's one of the things I'm most proud of about our club, that we're able to offer the Club Respect program," said Trent. The program underpins Eastern Raptors' own primary goal of instilling respect, which is one of their eleven core values, together with traits like friendship, teamwork, honesty, and discipline.

For Jasmine, one of the highlights of playing rugby league is the camaraderie between opposing teams. She explained that at the end of the game, both teams often socialise and talk about the game together. "There's a lot of mutual respect for each other, regardless of how tough it is out on the field, once the game's over. It's got a really good community feel to it."

"It's all about bringing families together and including everybody."

Janet Van Dijk



Jasmine Dalen loves being able to play rugby league again now that Eastern Raptors has a senior women's team.

*Eastern Raptors games are on Saturday afternoons and practices are Tuesday or Thursday. If you or your children are interested in becoming part of the Eastern Raptors, go to [playnrl.com.au](http://playnrl.com.au), check out the Raptors' Facebook page, or email [secretary@easternraptors.com.au](mailto:secretary@easternraptors.com.au).*

# Barkk Barbers

10A/79 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

Visiting Barkk Barbers, the new barber shop in Brice Avenue, is like taking a trip to another place. The atmosphere is quiet, relaxed, hip, yet very professional. For Rex Abbott, the gentle giant who started this “original style” barber shop, it’s all about you, the client.

The atmosphere is that of a relaxing oasis, with interesting, eclectic pieces on display. As you enter, the dedicated staff asks: What would you like to drink? Are you comfortable? Do you have any special requirements? There is an immediate obvious caring and concern for the client.



The Barkk Barbers team hard at work

hairdressing through his mum, dad and uncle for the last ten years.

It’s clear that staff Meagan and Jason are employed not only for their professional skills but also for their empathy for each customer. Meagan—a private person with a warm demeanour—enjoys her work, takes it seriously and thinks before she speaks. Jason is a positive person who chose to become a barber after looking for something “interesting” to do. Barbering is certainly interesting, especially if you like people, and Jason is a quiet listener.

Rex has a personal interest in contributing to local charities like the Mooroolbark Community Homes for Christmas Houses and Builder Brotherhood for Men’s Mental Health. Barkk Barbers is currently supporting a client’s quest to raise \$5000 for the Leukemia Foundation’s World’s Greatest Shave.

Prices at Barkk Barbers are comparable to similar establishments in the area, and Tuesday is seniors’ day, with basic cuts at a cost of \$15. The barber shop caters for men and boys, but the staff is capable of cutting hair of any gender.

**Barry Austin**



Rex Abbott with a young client.

PHOTOS: BARRY AUSTIN

The barber shop is open Tuesday to Saturday, and every second Monday. For more information phone 0426 623 138 or check out the Barkk Barbers Facebook page.



## Manna Lane

9/79B Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

When Susan Ta purchased Manna Lane 18 months ago, she had fallen in love with its attractive, modern interior and the fresh delicious food being served, and decided that she wanted to keep things the same. “The food, the coffee, the way they treated the staff—I knew it was something I would like to do.”

Susan makes decisions quickly and firmly. Although supported by her husband Chris, she was the one who decided to buy Manna Lane, the first business they looked at. “It was a rare find,” said Susan. The couple retained the previous chef and barista in order to replicate the thought and passion that the last owners had put into Manna Lane. “We kept the same staff, the same style, the same type of food, the same way they’d been managing, the same suppliers. I just took over the whole thing and I promised myself I would keep the high standard.”

Susan moved to Australia five years ago after meeting and marrying her Australian-born husband Chris in Vietnam, and has a very relaxed, flexible attitude to life. Although she works hard in the business—only taking off one or two days a month—she’s philosophical about the commitment she has taken on. “It’s always risky,” she said, “But I live day by day; I just go with the flow.” Susan and Chris have a four-year-old daughter, who according to Susan is “even

more chill than I am—she’s so easy.”

Although she has a degree in business administration, Susan enjoys the hospitality industry and can’t see herself doing anything else. “We are so proud of what we are doing—supporting local businesses, buying the best produce, eggs and milk—and what we have been putting on the plates. Everything is fresh, not pre-made. We want to put one hundred percent into what we’re doing, not try to do it the quickest or easiest way or cut costs.”

Susan has enjoyed getting to know her customers, many of whom are regulars. “They have become more like friends with us, which is amazing.” Susan emphasised that the meals at Manna Lane are not fast food and that she wants her customers to take time to enjoy them. “It’s healthy, and fresh—something that you will not feel guilty eating. We present it to you to enjoy looking at it, and enjoy eating it. It’s an appreciation of food.”

Most of all, Susan loves seeing her customers putting their phones down and sharing each other’s company. “We are happy to see you talk to your family and friends and enjoy the food and coffee that we put in front of you.”

**Janet Van Dijk**

Manna Lane is open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week, including most public holidays. For more information, phone 9726 9229 or see Manna Lane’s website or Facebook page.



Manna Lane’s Chloe shows off a delicious breakfast

# Take a Book, Return a Book



*Following the tradition of the official movement for free neighbourhood libraries, Nourish Network's Free Little Library is a book-sharing and social movement. Our aim is to help foster a love*

*of reading and create a sense of connectedness through a project that involves the community. Borrow a book and replace it when you've read it—or put another in its place for someone else to enjoy.*

That's the concept behind the "take a book, return a book" program that has been six months in the making for local mum Lisa Currie. Lisa was already running the Nourish Network outreach program with the support of a network of willing volunteers, and wanted to set up an additional way to encourage connection between community members.

The Mooroolbark Terrace shopping centre in Brice Avenue seemed an ideal location for the little library. With the help of Brett Clarke of Terrace Jewellers, who is part-owner of the centre and therefore involved with the body corporate, all the necessary checks were made. A woodwork teacher made the sign that sits proudly at the top of the bookcase, which was donated, as were the books, by members of the community. To encourage people to sit and read or socialise, tables and chairs were placed on each side of the bookshelf, with coloured pencils and bookmarks for children to colour in. People are invited to donate books and, to make the project even more special, to consider including a card with kind words or a bookmark inside the books to brighten the reader's day. Readers are also encouraged to add something special inside the pages of books before they return them to the shelf. It's another small way of creating a positive vibe in the community.

To complete the project, Lisa has set up a Community Cupboard close to the little library, for those doing it tough. The cupboard was an old louvered pantry that has been refreshed by the Mooroolbark Men's Shed, and the woodwork teacher who made the sign for the

library also made the signs for the cupboard.

The cupboard is full of packaged and tinned food, with some fresh bread, fruit and vegetables, and people in need are invited to take what they want. One woman, who was still days away from payday when she came to pick up a packet of cereal, told Lisa she has two children with disabilities. With much of her money going toward her children's special needs, she appreciated having access to the Community Cupboard when she found it hard to make ends meet.

The Free Little Library and the Community Cupboard supplement Nourish Network's weekly program, which focuses on providing practical and emotional support to those who need it. The program operates during the school term and is in effect a huge "community cupboard", providing food, clothing and household items through a tightknit and caring community. The Community



Cupboard in The Terrace will be a resource for people during the school holidays, or for those who can't attend the Friday program.

One of the hurdles that Lisa has had to overcome is getting enough people to donate items and assist with the program. After promoting the project on social media, she received a few offers of help from people like university student Danielle, who has committed to helping out for an hour each Monday. Lisa knows she can't operate the project on her own and is hoping that her Nourish Network volunteers and others in the community will get behind her.

Donations come from a variety of sources, and Lisa is extremely grateful for the backing she receives from Yarra Ranges Council, SecondBite and many



local businesses. Lisa hopes to inspire community members to help their neighbours by giving when they can and also helping to keep the cupboard and little library tidy. "Nourish receives a delivery from SecondBite each week," said Lisa. "A volunteer will visit The Terrace after our program is finished, with excess fruit, vegetables and bread to stock the cupboard each Friday afternoon during school terms. We also have something organised for Monday mornings, but need the community's support during the week, and especially over the school holidays."

Brett the jeweller is like a guardian angel, monitoring the cupboard from his shop. If people who are donating food are unsure about anything, they can take it to Brett and he will take care of it. At the end of the week Brett throws out any old bread and tidies up—but again, Lisa hopes the community will treat both the cupboard and free little library as their own and help to maintain it. "The community's support is critical for these projects to succeed."

To let people know what is in the cupboard, photos are taken regularly and posted on Facebook. If stocks get a bit low, Lisa sends a call out to the community asking for donations. She's also asking people who visit the cupboard to please snap a picture and message it to the Facebook page so that she can monitor stock levels.

"This wonderful program is a based on an honour system that brings the community together and lets people know that they are not alone," said Lisa.

**Barbara Austin**

*If you would like to know more about the Free Little Library or Community Cupboard, visit the Nourish Network page on the Ripple Kindness Project website, or the Nourish Network Facebook page.*



PHOTOS: BARBARA AUSTIN



# More Than Child's Play

Introduce your child to the fascinating world of hobbies

In 2009, British TV presenter James May set out to recreate the excitement and sense of accomplishment that he remembered from his hobbies as a boy growing up in the 1960s and '70s.

James, best known as one of the original presenters on the TV car show *Top Gear*, fondly remembered the toys he had as a child, when almost every boy in the developed world had either Meccano, Lego, Airfix scale models, or train or car sets. In order to introduce those old toys and hobbies to a new generation of children, James created and presented a series for the BBC called *James May's Toy Stories*. The series ran for six episodes in 2009, with four additional special episodes between 2011 and 2014.

With the help of the production team and volunteers, James May pushed the boundaries of what those old-style toys could do. The team created elaborate projects, including a life-sized Meccano bridge that could be walked on, and a full-size Lego house complete with furniture. With the aid of 400 volunteers and train enthusiasts, he also attempted to set up a model train track between two towns about 10 miles apart. One of the best known of the projects was a life-size Airfix model of a Spitfire fighter plane and pilot. These ambitious ventures generated a lot of interest among old and young alike.

## Take your time

Today, with electronic devices providing instant entertainment at the touch of a button and for minimal effort, asking children to engage in a Lego or Meccano building project might not be met with much enthusiasm. There's no immediate reward—these toys take time. Lots of time. But that's the whole point. What today's children might be surprised to learn is that these toys can be just as fascinating and addictive as the latest high-tech gadget.

As a kid I spent hours building model planes in my spare time. I had Lego and Meccano too, but model planes were my favourite. The pieces were carefully separated before being glued together, and then the model was painted, with great attention to the smallest detail, to create as much authenticity as possible. Finally, the decals were applied. As model plane enthusiasts, my friends and I often staged mock battle scenes, arranging the models in attack situations. Sometimes we'd even gently blow up some of the old ones.

## More than just toys

The building sets that I enjoyed were more than toys; they were hobbies! Hobbies don't just entertain—they draw out skill sets that may prove to be very valuable in life. Electronic gadgets and online games don't provide the same hands-on understanding of how things work in the real world—how to build and repair them, or make them stronger or faster!

There are important lessons to be learned from the firsthand experience that hobbies bring. Working with sets like Meccano and Lego develops an understanding of gearing, power, torque, strength of structure, and basic building principles. Kids learn about leverage and balance, and electrical and mechanical principles. Children who plant and look after their own vegetables and flowers are learning about cause and effect, responsibility, and where food comes from. Helping in the kitchen teaches

valuable skills for the future as well as information about measurements, flavour combinations and simple chemistry. Those who excel at swimming or other sports learn about patience, endurance, and how to achieve peak physical fitness.

## Getting started

Parents know the gifts, talents, and abilities of their children, and even their children's hopes and dreams. If parents plant a few seeds in the minds of young children and introduce them to activities that align with their aptitudes, a lifelong hobby may be born from a spark of passion. The dedication and commitment necessary for the hobby, in turn, encourages the pursuit of excellence. Parents can guide younger children in their hobbies at first, eventually letting them take over as they learn how to do it by themselves. If children save their pocket money to put toward their hobbies, they are also learning financial responsibility and the joy that comes from saving for something that they really want. Those who find a hobby that they are passionate about are likely to find it worth every hour and every dollar they spend on it, and it may even change the direction of their lives.

## There's a future in it

For a school leaver, it can sometimes be difficult trying to work out which career path to take. There are so many choices, such a wide variety of occupations and vocations, yet so much competition for what may be a very limited number of places. With many hours of a hobby as part of their personal life experience, children are likely to know their interests and abilities much better than someone who has spent the same number of hours using a keyboard or a game console. They will know what they are good at, what they enjoy doing—is it using their hands, designing things, fixing or modifying, inventing, or devising a new way to do an old task?

The skills learned through such activities can



be a basis for that new-found passion or dream job—one that not only pays the bills but which will be a source of enjoyment and accomplishment for a long time to come. The little boy who enjoys watching the night sky through a telescope, charting the positions of the stars and planets, may grow up to be an astronomer. The young girl who spends countless hours categorising and labelling rocks may have a career as a geologist.

Unfortunately, there are not many jobs making model planes for a living. However, I've been able to use many of the skills I gained from my hobbies in my adult life. I'm someone who loves his work. I get to design things, make things, fix things, and modify things, and it gives me great satisfaction every working day.

Many of the classic hobby toys from the '50s, '60s and '70s are still with us. You can find them in large toy stores or online, or in small hobby shops where you're likely to receive individual attention. The people who run these independent shops are usually hobbyists themselves and are only too pleased to advise, guide and give a helping hand to a newbie.

If we can pry our children away from their digital devices for a little while and direct them toward an interesting and challenging new hobby, it will broaden their horizons and teach them about the world and themselves. A lifetime of enjoyment is waiting!

Steve Steel



# 'We Will Remember Them'

'We will remember them'—this is why we feel compelled to attend Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services each year. We come to remember all those who served, and pay homage to those who gave their lives to give us the life of freedom that we enjoy today.

An annual Anzac Day service has been held in Mooroolbark's Hookey Park for the past 23 years. The 2020 service will be held at 12 noon on Saturday 25 April. This year, past Mooroolbark resident Albert Edward Fidge will be honoured. Albert served in the Boer War and World War I.

We held our first Remembrance Day service in 2014 when we opened the new War Memorial. Coincidentally, this was also the 100th anniversary of the beginning of WWI. In 2018 we held a commemorative Centenary Service which celebrated the ending of WWII.

We have now begun holding an annual Remembrance Day service on the Sunday before Remembrance Day. This year, the service will be held on Sunday 8 November. At last year's service we unveiled the temporary 4th Plaque, which will be replaced by a permanent plaque in the future. The plaque is dedicated to those from Mooroolbark who served from 1990 in Australian Defence Force overseas operations, including peacemaking and peacekeeping missions. We have also added the names of those who



Family members of those who served gather for the unveiling of the 4th plaque

served in other conflicts and are not listed on previous plaques.

At this service we also commemorate peace with white poppies, and introduce stories of the animals and birds who also served, honouring them with purple poppies. Along with representatives from federal and state government, Yarra Ranges Council, and a number of community groups, the public is also invited to lay a floral tribute of respect.

The local community is indebted to the Mooroolbark History Group and Lions Club of Croydon-Mooroolbark for their ongoing facilitation of these important and meaningful community events.

Marion Stott

## Community Involvement Honoured in Australia Day Awards

People who have devoted decades in service to their community, and young people who have shown leadership in their fields, were recognised by Yarra Ranges Council in its 2020 Australia Day Awards at Montrose Town Centre on 26 January.

Awards and certificates of recognition were presented to thirteen community members and a community group. Mayor Richard Higgins congratulated the award winners, all of whom have shown passion, commitment, and care for others in their professional, academic, and personal lives.



"If you ask people what they love about the Yarra Ranges, the answer is usually, and rightfully, that the people and the sense of the community is one of our greatest assets," Cr Higgins said. "Reading the nominations and hearing about the extraordinary people we have in our communities, you absolutely have to agree with that."

The awards list included the recipient of the Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award, Dick Leith, who has volunteered with numerous organisations in his seven decades as a volunteer, including the Warburton golf and football clubs, local primary school committees, Scouts, and the Warburton swimming pool. Dick was also instrumental in establishing the Warburton Community Bank.

Jayden Crozier, a hard-working, reliable, passionate and diligent young Aboriginal man, was named Young Citizen of the Year. Jayden is a community advocate who has numerous awards under his belt and has shown consistent leadership across various areas of his life—sport, education, employment, and the community.

Australia Day recognition was also given for achievements relating to community leadership, the environment, horticulture, and support for others in the community,

"These are just a few examples of the incredible people we have who live, work, play and volunteer in the Yarra Ranges, and our environment, our community groups and the community as a whole is better for having them here," said Cr Higgins.

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## You Are Special

When I was younger, I used to dread PE at school. It wasn't so much that I hated exercise, but what I really hated was when we played football. The teacher would choose two captains, usually the most athletic kids, and then they would choose their teams. Because I wasn't very good at football, I was usually picked last, and I felt unwanted, like I was a liability and not an asset to the team. Have you ever felt that way?

If you have, you might identify with how women often felt in historical times. You've probably heard how women were marginalized and treated as property, rather than dignified and respected as equally human beings. But when God intervened he showed that His standards in His kind of life are much different from human practices.

Since God unites with who He loves, Jesus became a human being, and to do that, He chose to be born as a human baby. This meant that a woman had to be part of the process, and the woman God chose was called Mary. Some scholars feel that Mary was only a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her she would give birth to God's Son.

Mary, as an unmarried teenage girl, was going to be pregnant with God's Son! She wasn't rich or powerful, but she was willing to participate as a critical part of the plan. Even before she knew how everything would work out, she said, "The Mighty One has done great things for me." She brought a willing heart and expected God to do "great things."

We don't have to be extremely talented, rich, or outstanding to participate with God. All we need is a willing heart and a listening ear, ready to respond as Mary did. While other people might think we don't have much to offer, God sees us as full of strengths and possibilities. In fact, it might be through our very weaknesses that God can work most powerfully. Mary recognised this when she said about God, "He has . . . lifted up the lowly."

In God's world we're chosen and loved for who we are. Made in His image, we are invested with non-negotiable dignity and value. Like Mary, we have the opportunity to participate with God in bringing love into a hurting world. We are never unwanted.

Michelle Fleming  
Speaking of Life



FIND YOUR WAY HOME

## ABOMINABLE

### Free Family Movie Night

8 April 2020, 7:30 pm

Mooroolbark Community Centre

After discovering a Yeti on the roof of her apartment building, teenager Yi and her two best friends decide to escort the magical creature back home, embarking on an epic quest to reunite him with his family. Throughout their journey, they must stay one step ahead of a wealthy financier and a determined zoologist who want to capture the lovable Yeti for their own gain.

97 minutes; rated G

Free ice-cream, tea and coffee

To reserve your tickets phone 1300 368 333 or book online at [culturetracks.info](http://culturetracks.info)

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

## World Day of Prayer

A service will be held at 10 am on Friday 6 March at St Margaret's Uniting Church, in Hull Road Mooroolbark, to commemorate the World Day of Prayer. This year's host country is Zimbabwe, and the women of WDP Zimbabwe have written the service on the theme of "Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk." Based on John 5:2-9, the service will focus on acting in love for peace and reconciliation. Everyone is welcome to attend, and to join us for morning tea after the service.



Zimbabwean artist Nonhlanhla Mathe created this work to celebrate the 2020 World Day of Prayer

# Amari

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION / UGANDA

**M**arita Simpson is a founding director and onsite administrator of Amari Community Development Organisation, based in Buliisa District, north-western Uganda, East Africa. Amari runs a school with a core focus to provide quality, Christ-centred education for orphaned and vulnerable children living in the community. It also assists children with medical needs and provides emergency and crisis care as needed.

“Godfrey has been diagnosed with a hole in the heart. He will need an operation, and it can’t be done in Uganda.”

This was the news I was greeted with early in March, 2015. Eight-year-old Godfrey was my immediate neighbour, and one of our sponsored students. Had it been Australia, Godfrey would have been diagnosed a lot earlier in life. He then

schools. And in 2009, ten years after my first visit and after a few years back in Australia, I returned to help set up Amari Community Development Organisation. “Amari” means “I love you” in the Luo language.

I’ve had the privilege of growing up in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and, as both a student and teacher at Oxley College, Chirnside Park, had a background in education. So with that, and coming from a family of teachers, it was a natural fit to start a school as a way of getting involved in community development and social work. I have been supported in this project by Life Ministry Church (LMC), which has been my church since I was ten years old. Amari is now the major mission focus of LMC.

Today we have 40 acres of land, and run the Amari-Gardiner Nursery and Primary School with



PHOTO: MARITA SIMPSON

local authorities, will assist with crisis care and emergency housing of children and other vulnerable people until they can be resettled with relatives. In many cases Amari also provides ongoing support to the families involved.

And Godfrey, our student with the heart issue? A cry for help sent out on a Ugandan Facebook page put us in contact with Morning Star Foundation, an organisation which funds heart surgeries for Ugandan and Chinese children, and they took on Godfrey as one of their cases. He had his surgery in India, and is now back in school and running around with his classmates!

We deeply appreciate the involvement of those in our local community here in Australia who help sponsor children, which funds the running of the school, and those who contribute towards our medical, crisis care and capital development funds. If you would like to be involved, or be kept informed, you can find out more on our website at [amari.org.au](http://amari.org.au).

Marita Simpson



PHOTO: LIFE MINISTRY CHURCH

would have been quickly admitted to the Royal Children’s Hospital and had the problem dealt with by world-renowned heart specialists.

However, this was not Australia, but Buliisa District, in rural Uganda—eight hours from the capital, Kampala, and in a region usually ranking in the bottom ten percent of the country in relation to health and education services and outputs. This was a dilemma that God would have to solve, because it was totally beyond me. I had no medical contacts, no money to get Godfrey sent to India for an operation, and no idea what to do next. And I wasn’t sure I had enough faith to believe for any miracles!

How on earth did I end up being in this position anyway?! And why Uganda?

In 1999 I was invited to come and homeschool an Australian family working over there, and following that, to help run a couple of Ugandan

around 300 students. Our first intake of students has just completed the last year of primary, and this year we will be running our first secondary class.

Eighty percent of the children in our school are sponsored, and come from families that are poverty stricken, afflicted by AIDS and other illnesses, or who are headed by grandparents and other relatives caring for orphaned or abandoned children.

In addition, Amari runs a children’s medical program which is currently assisting around 40 local children to get down to Kampala and other regional centres for medical assessment and, where feasible, surgery. The kinds of illness and disabilities treated include poliomyelitis, cleft palate, clubbed limbs, hydrocephalus and tumours.

From time to time Amari, working with

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## Informing, Engaging and Entertaining the Yarra Ranges

If you were at last year's Celebrate Mooroolbark street parade, you may have seen a tall, energetic man providing a lively running commentary to the camera as dance ensembles and marching bands trooped past. Undeterred by the cloudy skies and an occasional spattering of rain, he greeted parade-goers and waved

and events program and is normally released on Facebook each Tuesday evening and is also shared to YouTube. And then in the later part of the week or on the weekends we may do anywhere from three to seven live broadcasts, depending on what's happening around us in the Valley and the Ranges."

The YRLTV team is a small one, with just three

had a small computer business with a shopfront in Mt Evelyn, providing computer, marketing and design services.

Pat's real interest, though, was the local community. A long-time resident of Mt Evelyn, he had been president of the traders' association in Mt Evelyn while his business was there, and was very active in several other community



PHOTOS: YARRA RANGES LIFE TV

cheerfully at emergency services vehicles and classic cars as they rolled slowly by.

It's this heartfelt enthusiasm for community life that led to Patrick Boucher founding Yarra Ranges LIFE TV (YRLTV), which began its pilot month in April 2017 and has continued to go from strength to strength.

"Our mission is to inform, engage, and to entertain, and the feedback from our viewers is that we are doing just that," said Pat. "A lot of our viewers are rediscovering the wonders of the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges, and are finding things that they had never heard of."

YRLTV produces hyperlocal regular and weekly content using social media as the sole distribution platform, and as far as Pat can determine it is the only community broadcaster in Australia to do so. "Our flagship program is the Mid Week Wrap, which is a news, weather

people producing all the content. Pat works at it full time as executive producer, and he is assisted part time by Karina Stone and Danny Field. "Danny Field does all of our camera work and produces the Mid Week Wrap, and I've got a wonderful presenter, my offside Karina Stone. She's the newsreader for our weekly program and she does some live broadcasting as well."

The path to TV presenter and executive producer has been a circuitous one for Patrick. After entering university to study performing arts and teaching, he changed the direction of his studies to focus on multi-media. He later deferred his university education to enter the workforce, where he has had a variety of jobs. He spent many years in the corporate world (in the fields of telecommunications and non-emergency patient transport), then worked in real estate, and also spent 10 years in the construction sector. For a year and a half he

organisations. However, he had always wanted to contribute more to the community he loved.

Things came to a head for Patrick when he turned 40 and had what he calls "a bit of a midlife crisis". The previous several years had been very tough for him. He had experienced mental health issues since adolescence, and had a long-term habit of abusing substances in an attempt to cope. After the birth of his son in 2006, Pat's depression and anxiety spiralled out of control. He was diagnosed with post-natal depression, which he suffered for many years. He said that by 2016, he felt lost. "I wasn't fulfilling that inner desire to be creative, that inner desire to provide a community service."

As he began wondering what he was doing with his life, Pat's thoughts turned to the time he had spent on air as a teenager, volunteering at Yarra Valley FM community radio. "I wanted to



Danny, Karina and Pat getting ready for the At Home podcast



Pat and Karina on location at Festa di via Verde at the Ciao Yarra Valley Ciao festival

do something similar, and given the technology that was available, I realised that there was a niche that was missing on social media: covering local events and festivals, promoting community groups, and showcasing the quiet achievers in our backyard." Pat had learned techniques in photography, videography, and TV production in his uni days, and had experience both in front of the camera and behind the camera. "I thought, why not give it a go?"

The first step was to secure funding for a pilot program. An initial grant from Mooroolbark's Methven Professional's Real Estate, supported by other Methven branches, provided enough backing to get the program started. "They were all part of the sponsorship group that supported us for the first three months. Without their initial support, we would never have been up and running." The team has also received financial support from Garden Express, Bendigo Bank and a variety of other local businesses and organisations who see the value in the enterprise.

Despite the sponsorship, running YRLTV isn't yet financially viable. "We've never made budget," said Pat. "In order for us to operate full-time with a three-man crew and cover operating costs, we need to generate about \$200,000 per annum. I think last financial year we only pulled in about \$38,000." Because of his passion for the venture, and with the support of family members, Patrick hopes to continue for as long as he can.

Members of the local community have been very supportive of the endeavour. Yarra Ranges LIFE TV has produced almost 1,000 videos and currently has more than 8,800 followers on Facebook. "Since we started in April of 2017 we've had about two million Facebook video views," said Pat. "Our Facebook videos, events, and photographic posts have had a reach of about five million now. Per month, on average, we're getting a reach of about 250,000 to 280,000, and that's predominately a local audience."

As well as live TV crosses and the Midweek Wrap, YRLTV produces documentary-style segments which showcase local attractions and venues, and in 2019 began a podcast

called "At Home". Each program focuses on neighbourhood issues, events, people, and organisations. There are interviews with local politicians, and stories about the struggles and triumphs of local families and businesses. The programs also bring awareness to community concerns like homelessness, road accident hotspots, and environmental sustainability.

"People have learnt so much about the Valley and the Ranges, about the different groups and organisations, and the different events that take place. And I dare say they've been educated a little bit about the challenges that the municipality faces, trying to administer and govern one of the largest semi-urban councils in Victoria. We've got two and a half thousand square kilometres and a population of over 150,000—the rates that they collect don't go a long way. Every now and then, depending on what the story is, we do remind our viewers that's one of the challenges."

Live broadcasts have the potential to reach thousands of viewers in a short space of time, allowing them a peek into a local event that otherwise may not be accessible to them. In February, the Yarra Ranges Council launched its 2020 Culture Tracks program of arts and entertainment with a show of live performances at The Memo, Healesville. While such an intimate setting is unable to cater for large crowds, within three hours of the beginning of YRLTV's live coverage on Facebook, more than 2,600 people had viewed the event.

YRLTV also often broadcasts from various RSL locations, covering their Anzac Day services, commemoration services, and other functions. Pat said that coverage of these events is very popular. "We stream them live for people who are mobility impaired, who can't get to these events, but they still want to take part."

On Anzac Day last year, RSL Victoria awarded Patrick a certificate of recognition, acknowledging the contribution YRLTV has made to the RSL over the previous couple of years. In 2019 Pat also received an Australia Day award from Yarra Ranges Council, and was inducted into the honour roll at Mt Lilydale Mercy College. These awards for services to the community gave Pat the boost he needed

to continue, at a time when he was feeling despondent about the challenges of keeping the project going.

Patrick doesn't try to cover stories that mirror his own life. Instead, he said, "I seek content that reflects the amazing stories in the Valley and the Ranges". However, together with Danny and Karina, he does share some of his personal experiences in the podcast.

"People see me in front of the camera full of beans, a hyper-energetic, dynamic individual who's always having a laugh. But that's just one small aspect of my life, and the only image that our viewers know unless they tune into a podcast and understand that there's actually more behind that."

Pat has sought help for his substance abuse and has broken the cycle of daily drinking. "That was really empowering, because it demonstrated to me that I can be alcohol free. I'm not drinking to escape from the world." Despite ongoing pressures about issues like financial uncertainty, Pat has developed coping strategies. "I'm more aware of the triggers. So from a financial stress point of view, I don't flip out to such a degree that I'm seeking escapism through substances. I take a more focused approach to working out how to generate more income. I map out a goal, a plan, and hopefully in the next few months we'll see it come to fruition."

The YRLTV team has also been encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive feedback they have received from the public. "They love the format, because it's light, it's warm-fuzzy and it's real," said Pat. "People talk about reality TV—well, this is genuine reality TV. We're providing a platform for people to get their message out there."

"It's unscripted, it's unrehearsed, and it's live. It's real people sharing their stories."

**Janet Van Dijk**

*To check out all the community news on YRLTV, type 'Yarra Ranges LIFE TV' into the search bar of Facebook or YouTube. For all sponsorship and advertising enquiries, call 0439 397 303 or email [yrlife.tv@gmail.com](mailto:yrlife.tv@gmail.com).*

# Resilient Children: Weathering Life's Ups and Downs

On a camping trip a few years ago, my ten-year-old son was swimming in the river when a tiger snake was spotted crossing the water towards him. I watched the terror on my son's face as he quickly weighed up the options. He then duck-dived deep below the snake and emerged on the other side of the river. The snake continued on its course. We were so relieved our son was safe; he was elated. When we returned from the camping trip, he couldn't wait to share his adventure story with others.

Adversity is something that our children are going to face, in varying degrees, throughout their lives. Children might typically experience challenges such as conflict with friends, problems fitting in, family issues, and anxieties around performance at school or in sports. Some children will face more serious adversities such as disability, family illness, bullying and bereavement. We may have experienced some of these circumstances in our own childhoods, but there will also be situations, such as cyberbullying, that we may never have encountered.

Resilience is being able to bounce back after meeting hardship in life, emerging with a sense of confidence or readiness for the next situation. Child and adolescent psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg defines resilience as "an individual's ability to face, overcome, be strengthened by and transformed by adversity."

The concept of resilience has raised a lot of interest over the last ten years. It has been associated with many positive outcomes, including better academic results, improved behaviour, stronger connections, and greater levels of life satisfaction in the future. Resilient children are more likely to be mentally healthy, have a reduced risk of suicide, and be less prone to mental illness. In an age when the youth suicide rate is the highest in ten years, these statistics provide a measure of encouragement and a tangible way that we can improve outcomes for the next generation.

A common misconception is that resilient children are naturally buoyant and live a relatively trouble-free life. This is not the case. Resilience is something we can all learn. Research tells us that resilient children draw on a tool box of competencies. For example, they may be positive and hopeful about their future, able to recognise and express what they are feeling, willing to ask for help if they need it, and able to persist until they get the outcomes they

are hoping for.

We all want kids who are happy and optimistic about life. There are many ways that we can help children build resilience and support them as they work through life's inevitable ups and downs. In doing this, we can instil them with confidence so that they emerge stronger and better prepared for the future.

**Allow some adversity.** Sometimes we can be too eager to shelter children and young people from the troubles of life. This can particularly be the case when a child has a disability or a learning issue. Out of concern that it will be too much for them or that their confidence will be affected, we may jump in quickly to resolve the issue. It is important for children to have some opportunities to navigate challenging situations for themselves so that they can develop their own life skills.



**Acknowledge feelings.** Children and young people will experience strong feelings as they face adversity: sadness, disappointment, insecurity, loneliness. They need to know that you 'get' what they are feeling and going through. Reflect back the feelings they express, even if they are unable to label these feelings themselves. Reassure them that these feelings are normal. Sometimes adversity cannot be solved; it needs to be endured. This means coming to terms with strong and often unresolved feelings.

**Maintain your support.** A 'sink or swim' approach will make children feel anxious and fearful. They need to know that although you want them to work it through themselves, you are still with them on this: ready to listen, ready to talk, happy to share ideas or provide some level of assistance where needed. In some circumstances, such as if there is a risk of harm to your child or others, you will need to take prompt action. Consult with your child's teacher, school counsellor or wellbeing staff to help you make a judgement about when, how, and if you need to intervene.



**Let them know that you believe in them.**

Share your confidence that they have what it takes to get through the situation. Remind them of other times that they have encountered adversity and emerged on the other side. Encourage them to see the situation in a more positive light and to use positive self-talk. Sharing stories from your own life, where you have gone through something similar, may provide some encouragement and perspective.

**Encourage help-seeking.** We need to praise our children when they ask for help, and respond to their request—it can take enormous courage for young people to admit that they can't do it on their own. However, be judicious about the help that you provide. Always start by asking what kind of help they are hoping for: it may be that all they want is a sounding board. Help could also include connecting them with resources, generating some options or offering some practical assistance (for example driving them to a friend's house so they can talk about an issue). Where possible, offer support rather than taking over or solving the problem for them.

**Try to be a positive role model.**

Demonstrate some positive ways of thinking and talking when you are experiencing your own life challenges. Give them some insight into how you work through everyday problems by talking aloud about how you are feeling and thinking, about your decision-making

processes and what you have learned from the experience.

According to Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, resilience is not a rare ability, but instead is something that is found in most people and is a process that can be developed.<sup>1</sup> By providing thoughtful and ongoing support to our children, we can help them develop the resilience to face the adversity that life will inevitably bring.

## ■ Kate Chivers

Kate is a registered psychologist who works with children and families

<sup>1</sup> Carr-Gregg, M. (2018) How To Build Happy And Resilient Children. S. Witt, *Raising Resilient Kids* (p.5). Mt Evelyn: Collective Wisdom Publications

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## Culture Tracks

# Magical Rabbits and Tunes with Noons

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

The Royal Australian Navy Band is marching into Mooroolbark on Sunday 29 March for another fantastic performance. Listen to crowd favourites, swinging beats and rousing anthems from these talented service officers. They'll have you tapping your toes!

Is that a white rabbit hopping through the shire? In April, the Australian Shakespeare Company is bringing its rendition of *Alice in Wonderland* to Mooroolbark and Healesville. This children's classic will be brought to life on stage in a whirl of brilliant costumes and vibrant performances, as we all follow Alice down the rabbit hole. Meet the Mad Hatter and try to escape the tyranny of the Red Queen in a Wonderland adventure!

If you're looking for a mellow evening, then Katie Noonan has you covered. Let Katie serenade you with her favourite Aussie songs at *Late Night Tunes with Noons*, an intimate cabaret show at Montrose Town Centre. Sing along to Hunters and Collectors, You Am I and Archie Roach as Katie mesmerises you with her astounding voice.

Are you keen to engage further with the Mooroolbark community? Participate in our regular oil painting and pottery workshops or join in on 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!

Be sure to visit [culturetracks.info](http://culturetracks.info) for inspiration on other great performances at any of the five cultural centres around our shire.

Yarra Ranges Council



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PHOTO: PIXABAY/MAALBAK

## Keeping Kids Safe

### New Pool Safety Legislation

With a hot summer behind us and temperatures for the next couple of months forecast to be hotter than average, it's no wonder that our thoughts often turn to a refreshing swim.

However, the fun of backyard pools has a dark side: over the last 20 years, 27 children have drowned in swimming pools and spas at Victorian homes. For every fatal drowning, there are about six more non-fatal incidents, with about 20 percent of these resulting in long-term behavioural and learning impairment.

In a bid to prevent future drownings, the state government has introduced new legislation which requires all pools and spas—including inflatable pools, portable spas, and wading pools—to be registered with local councils by 1 June this year. Yarra Ranges Council Mayor Richard Higgins said the new laws came out of coronial inquests which showed that unsafe and non-compliant pool or spa barriers contributed to drowning deaths of children. "Drowning is the most common cause of preventable deaths of children under the age of five, and registration and certification will help us as a community to reduce this risk," said Cr Higgins.

"We know that having up-to-date safety barriers can actively help to reduce the risk of a child getting into a pool area and drowning. Losing a child in such an awful, preventable way is more than any parent should have to deal with, and anyone with a pool or spa has to do their bit by getting their barriers checked."

A 2018 survey by the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group found that pool owners generally had a poor understanding of their legal obligations, and about 90 percent of people surveyed had non-compliant pool and spa barriers.

Under the new law, all swimming pool and spa owners are required to contact their local council to register their pool or spa by 1 June 2020, and compliance certificates for pool and spa safety barriers will be required every four years. "I encourage every pool and spa owner to get on top of this as soon as possible and visit [yarraranges.vic.gov.au/poolregistration](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/poolregistration) to start the process," said Cr Higgins.

Cr Higgins added that children must always be supervised around water, and that young children should never be out of reach of a parent or carer, especially when in the water.

For more information about the legislation, or to register, visit [yarraranges.vic.gov.au/poolregistration](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/poolregistration).

Jesse Graham  
Yarra Ranges Council

## Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	<b>Craft and Produce Market:</b> 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	<b>Gifford Arts:</b> 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	<b>Scottish Country Dancing:</b> 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	<b>Mooroolbark Country Women's Association:</b> 1 pm at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Helen Linnie: 9726 0477.
Every Tuesday	<b>Food and Friendship Lunch:</b> 12 noon. Gifford Village Community Centre, 389 Maroondah Highway, Croydon North. All ages welcome. Further Information: Uniting Harrison 9051 3000.
Tuesdays & Thursdays	<b>Mooroolbark Men's Shed:</b> 9 am-3 pm. Cnr Ellen Road & Croydon Drive, Mooroolbark. For more information please contact President John Lowry on 9726 9970 or 0419 366 939.
Tuesdays	<b>Home League:</b> 10:00 am-11:30 am. A fun, inspiring and educational time where women fellowship with other women. Salvation Army, 305 Manchester Rd, Chirnside Park. Enquiries 9727 4777
Tuesdays - Thursdays during school term	<b>GymbaROO:</b> 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	<b>Kilsyth Primary School Playgroup:</b> 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	<b>Disabled People's Company:</b> 10 am-noon, Mooroolbark Community Centre for morning tea and a chat with other people who have a disability. Info: ring Elsie 9726 4004.
Thursdays during school term	<b>Music Together Program:</b> 0-5 years. St Margaret's Uniting Church hall. 9:45 am. Morning tea & playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Contact Nancy Isherwood on 0413 389 441.
Thursday evenings each week	<b>Maroondah TOWN Club:</b> (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	<b>Fridays@Kids Domain:</b> Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 pm. Oxley College stadium. phone 9726 8111 or lmc.org.au
Every second Friday	<b>People's Pantry:</b> 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
20 March	<b>Red Earth Unearthed:</b> Talent Quest. Mooroolbark Community Centre; commences 7:00 pm. Entry \$5 per person. celebratemooroolbark.com/competitions/red-earth/
21 March	<b>Celebrate Mooroolbark:</b> Your local community festival. 10 am-4 pm. Red Earth Community Park, Brice Avenue. For more details see page 4.
6 March	<b>World Day of Prayer service:</b> 10 am, St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Theme: "Rise! Take your mat and walk." All welcome.
7-8 March	<b>ARKfest Short Play Festival:</b> 25 original short plays across the weekend. Lilydale Heights Performing Arts Centre, Nelson Rd Lilydale. Tickets and information: arktheatremelb.com
27 March - 4 April	<b>ARK Theatre presents the play "100":</b> Directed by Lucy Morris. Lilydale Heights Performing Arts Centre, Nelson Rd Lilydale. Tickets and information: arktheatremelb.com
29 March	<b>Royal Australian Navy Band:</b> 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$12. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
1 April	<b>The Australian Shakespeare Company's Alice in Wonderland:</b> 1 April, 11 am and 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Tickets \$16-20. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
2 April	<b>The Australian Shakespeare Company's Alice in Wonderland:</b> 2 April, 2 pm and 5 pm, The Memo, Healesville. Tickets \$16-20. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
25 April	<b>Anzac Day Service.</b> 12 noon War Memorial, Hookey Park. Displays, refreshments. Facilitated by Mooroolbark History Group and Lions Club of Croydon-Mooroolbark.
3 May	<b>Yarra Valley Wool and Handicraft Show:</b> 10 am-4 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Entry \$5, under 13 free. Hosted by Mooroolbark Wool and Mooroolbark Traders. Enquiries: 9726 7291.
14 May	<b>Late Night Tunes with Noons:</b> 8 pm, Montrose Town Centre. Tickets \$45. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
Until 22 May	<b>Art Quilt Australia:</b> 10 am-4 pm, 7 days a week, except public holidays, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. Free exhibition. For more information phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info
12 June	<b>Mooroolbark Theatre Group</b> presents <i>Accommodations</i> , a comedy written by Nick Hall. Eight shows, opening 12 June. Tickets and more info at mtg.org.au or call 0455 202 038.

### 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](mailto: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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*Living Today in Mooroolbark* is produced by Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship, a congregation of Grace Communion International, assisted by local volunteers

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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 0407 110 051 or by email at [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au)

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at: [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)  
To join the email distribution list please send a request to [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto: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.