

# LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges

NO. 74 MARCH 2021



- Mooroolbark celebrates again!
- Our multicultural neighbourhood
- Yarra Ranges welcomes councillor Sophie Todorov

11,500 free copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark and district



## Introducing

## Sophie Todorov

We've recently witnessed the not-so-straightforward transition from the Trump administration to the Biden presidency in the US.

I've enjoyed reading some of the more positive stories that have emerged—stories that have offered glimpses into the family backgrounds and life experiences of people nominated for important and influential roles in the new administration. Many of the stories describe some of the challenges that the incoming leaders have faced in their lives.

Some had experienced deep, debilitating poverty or had been subjected to racial inequality and bigotry. Others had experienced personal trauma, suffering, loss. For these men and women, the challenges they've successfully faced have equipped them with insights, experience, compassion, grit and perseverance that can enhance their leadership.

In our neck of the woods, the election of our Yarra Ranges councillors took place late last year. Mooroolbark is split up between three wards. Two councillors were returned—Richard Higgins (Chirside) and Len Cox (Walling) and incoming new councillor Sophie Todorov was elected to Melba Ward, which represents the biggest chunk of Mooroolbark by quite a margin.<sup>1</sup>

Although Len and Richard are reasonably well known by Mooroolbark residents, I think many of you may share my curiosity about Sophie.

As Sophie and I shared email, phone and screen time, I learned that she's a good communicator. When I interviewed her in person, I warmed to this bright, engaging, energetic and friendly young woman.



School was sometimes difficult for Sophie (shown here with her younger brother Nick) because her parents were immigrants.

Sophie's parents came to Australia from Europe. "My mother was from France and my father from Bulgaria, and they met in Paris, and came out to Melbourne to start a new life together," said Sophie. "We settled in Glen Waverley and I am the eldest of six children."

Throughout school, Sophie was very active

<sup>1</sup> Mooroolbark is split across three wards: Melba 52%, Walling 23%, and Chirside 25%. [tonystevenson.com.au/mooroolbark](http://tonystevenson.com.au/mooroolbark).



and was involved in several sports. She attended Avila College in Mt Waverley. "I loved being involved and became the sports captain there," she said. "After that I went to university to study journalism. Journalism is a cut-throat industry—and because I'm an active person I didn't fancy a job sitting in an office writing blurb for pharmaceutical companies, so I applied to join Victoria Police because I believed that I could make a difference by engaging with the community and particularly young people. I've been there for almost 25 years."

It sounds like a charmed childhood and straightforward life pathway. But as the interview progressed, Sophie shared some of the challenges she'd faced. Her experience of being the child of immigrants wasn't always easy. There was occasional bullying at school and a strong consciousness of being different, with 'stinky wog sandwiches' for lunch. In addition, Sophie faced complex challenges at home, and when she was about 12, after their house was destroyed in a fire, the family was housed for a time in the presbytery of the local diocese.

"I have witnessed family violence first hand," Sophie explained. "My father was an alcoholic and a very violent man. I've had my fair share of trauma in my life and I can understand the impact it can have on young people and the scar that it leaves. It helped shape my understanding and rapport with people going through similar things. And I've come through mental illness—severe depression—as well, and I can sympathise."

Sophie was divorced after four years in her first marriage, and as she juggled shift work and raising her children, she appreciated the help of others. "I was very reliant on Mum and also a neighbour, an older gentleman who was like a grandfather to the kids," she said. "It was a struggle and was difficult, but I love my kids and I'm just so

proud of who they've become. They're really good kids who've done very well in high school and they're both off to uni this year." In 2016, Sophie met Paul Tirant at the Shortest Lunch fundraiser for the CFA in the Yarra Valley, and they were married at the same event in 2019.

Sophie has had her share of difficult times. But from the school of hard knocks comes compassion for others and many useful life lessons and insights which I believe have equipped Sophie for her new role in local government.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the challenges of her life, Sophie doesn't seem to have lost sight of her *joie de vivre*. She very much enjoyed the opportunities to volunteer at her children's school. "My mum encouraged me to help her when she was involved in things like canteen duty. She inspired me so that it was second nature to do similar things as my children grew."

"That flowed into Little Athletics. My children started when they were about seven and, having been an athlete, I wanted to get involved as much as I could. I became a parent helper, and later joined the committee and coached. That lasted for about 12 years, and in addition I enjoyed additional involvement around my children's other interests such as the Girl Guides and Healesville and Yarra Glen footy clubs."

Sophie herself began participating in athletics

<sup>2</sup> I've written elsewhere about some of my own youthful mistakes and lessons learned: [nationaltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Labassa-Lives-Vol8No3-2020.pdf](http://nationaltrust.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Labassa-Lives-Vol8No3-2020.pdf)



Sophie (centre) has competed in athletics from the age of seven until two years ago when an injury prevented her from continuing.





Sophie and family: daughter Estelle, husband Paul, son Alec and dog Alfie.

at a young age. “I started when I was about seven years old and finally stopped competing about two years ago due to a hip injury. I was a sprinter. Anything over 400m is long distance to me. I did a lot of the jumps, and throws as well. It has been a great hobby, and keeping fit helps you feel good about yourself. And I have quite a pronounced competitive streak! I last competed in the Australian Masters in Tassie a few years ago, and was pretty chuffed with about nine gold medals.”

As you might imagine, Sophie is feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the steep learning curve she’s experiencing in learning about the way Yarra Ranges Council operates. It’s been complex and demanding, but she’s up for it.

“I want to understand everything, but it’s going to take some time. It’s easy to forget what it was like when I first started work all those years ago. There’s much to learn—new language, concepts, processes and people. I’m apprehensive about the unknown and of course I don’t want to make too many mistakes whilst I’m learning.”

“I didn’t come with pre-conceived plans of what I was going to do, but I was confident that my skillsets would equip me to listen to community members,” Sophie continued. “I’d hope to be a positive role model by celebrating and valuing the diversity within our community as well as playing a constructive role in encouraging inclusion and partnerships which contribute importantly to healthy community.”

“My role as a councillor will be to gauge what the community desires and work within the processes of local government to help

communities achieve outcomes that serve the common good. There are always three sides to every story, but with careful understanding it’s possible to arrive at fair outcomes.”

Sophie’s first impressions of her council colleagues have been very positive. “Everyone seems very approachable, which I believe is an essential part of good governance. There’s been good communication, too. We spent a whole training day talking about the vision of the council plan. We’re a diverse bunch, but we share very similar goals and outlooks. We each bring our varied work/life experience to the table, but I sense we will work well together as a team and participate in respectful, healthy debate.”

“Last year I completed some training with Leadership Victoria which helped me learn more about treading lightly,” continued Sophie. “Learning to step back from heated argument by respectful listening and sharing one’s own view of things. I’m very much a run-of-the-mill kind of person who likes to find common ground. I don’t have a political agenda.”

In mid-December Sophie was a guest at a Zoom meeting of our ‘organisation of local organisations’, the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group. We were encouraged by her desire to listen, to learn more about our community life, and by her willingness to share ideas and contacts that may enhance our work.

Sophie mentioned during our interview that she’s not here to dictate to community, but to come alongside and look for ways to enhance the good things that community groups are doing. Likewise, the interview left me encouraged by

the value she places on community and council mentors.

We wish Sophie well in fulfilling her demanding, complex and somewhat daunting role, involving as it does the juggling of personal, family, work, and civic demands! I look forward to seeing her grow into and mature in a leadership role that, at its best, contributes powerfully to our common good.



Randall Bourchier



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# celebrate mooroolbark festival

How does a week of music, magic, face painting, billy cart races, market stalls and a fun trail appeal to you?

The months of planning Celebrate Mooroolbark are coming to fruition and Wednesday 24 March will begin eight days of festivities, with something for everyone. There will be pop-up entertainment for preschoolers in Manna Lane from 10 am to noon, free activities provided by community groups for older children, and live entertainment under the marquee every night for the youth and adults on the vacant block next to the Tandoori Plaza restaurant, which for the purpose of the festival has been named Red Earth Lane.

On Saturday and Sunday 27-28 March beginning at 10 am, Hookey Park will no longer be a tranquil place to take a walk or sit and smell the eucalypts, as most of the spaces under the trees will be occupied by stall holders displaying their products. There will be a variety of items for sale, from quirky spoons to garden plants, modified Japanese clothes, candles, soaps, educational literature and much more. Animals on the Move, pony rides and go karts will be there to entertain, and we have invited a limited number of food stalls.

Dave the Meccano Man will liven up the Terrace Shopping Centre on Saturday and Sunday with the Hornby train and a table for children to build their own creations. Also in the Terrace, we plan to display the creative entries from the recycled sculpture competition in one of the shop windows, so keep your eyes open. Entries for the competition represent the festival theme, Snapshot '21, and have been made using recycled materials only.

Unicycle Paparazzis will be roving Brice Avenue, Manchester Road and Hookey Park on their unicycles, "snapping photos and being snapped"—with permission, of course. The duo travels around with vintage cameras and a mobile 'Snap' booth which contains fun props to help create quirky, memorable photos. Check out their website [funarts.com.au](http://funarts.com.au).

In the car park on the corner of Brice Avenue and George Street there will be a festival caravan with volunteers handing out flyers which will give times, locations and other information about festival attractions. In Hookey Park entertaining the children with her stories will be a fairy, and the same delightful fairy will be painting faces in Manna Lane Monday to Friday, following performances by Kofi the West African drummer and Steve the magician.



PHOTO: FUNARTS MEDIA



PHOTO: THE FINES

On Saturday night, in Red Earth Lane in Manchester Road under the ambient lighting in the marquee, we will have a karaoke night. On Sunday we have planned an evening of fun with an 'open mike' competition, and there will be prizes to be won both nights. These events are alternatives to Red Earth Unearthed, which we would normally hold in the community centre. Our annual parade, which usually leads the crowds onto the grounds of Red Earth Park, has also had to be cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions. We encourage everyone to create and wear a costume related to the theme anyway, although there won't be prizes.

The monthly photo competition sponsored by Croydon Camera House is now into its last month and we congratulate all our winners—the judges have been impressed by the quality of the photos.

It is our hope that the businesses in Brice Ave and Manchester Road will get into the spirit of the festival and decorate their shop windows with ideas developed from the theme Snapshot '21, and that the food outlets will create a special festival dish. One shop has offered the use of its outside area to have small pop-up stalls during the festival week and others are looking forward to seeing some extra liveliness in Mooroolbark over the festival days.

All entry points in Hookey Park will have a volunteer with a counter so that the numbers of attendees will be kept at a permissible level. There will also be hand sanitiser available and a QR Code to scan with your mobile.

We thank our premium sponsors the Yarra Ranges Council; our major sponsors the Lions Club of Croydon-Mooroolbark, Mooroolbark Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank, the Professionals, and *Living Today*; and our significant sponsors Ross MacKay Creative, GRV, and Mooroolbark Traders, which enable us to bring you live entertainment and free activities. Without them and our volunteers, the festival would not be possible.

We welcome Tom, Regina and Rosa this month to our dedicated committee and as always, if you would like to be involved as a sponsor or a volunteer, please contact Barbara on 0417 381 542 or email [barbara@celebratemooroolbark.com](mailto:barbara@celebratemooroolbark.com).

**Barbara Austin**  
Chair, Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee



# The Story of Mooroolbark

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ROSSMACKAYCREATIVE

After last year's hiatus, Celebrate Mooroolbark is back! Our cover photo shows Aalia enjoying an ice cream at the 2019 festival.

On a cool and windy day in December, a group of people gathered in Hookey Park Mooroolbark for the official launch of a book written by local historian Anthony McAleer OAM and Geoff Earney FREI, CEA (REIV). The book, *From Farms to Suburbia: The Development of Mooroolbark*, is an interesting look at the history and development of Mooroolbark.

Both authors have had a long association with the local area. Geoff Earney's father Jim started work in the office of real estate business J Methven & Co in 1966, and later bought the company. After serving in the Vietnam War, Geoff returned to Australia and joined his father in the business in 1972. He is now the director of the company and is the longest-serving business owner in Mooroolbark. He also served as a volunteer with the Mooroolbark CFA for 30 years (12 of those years as captain) and was awarded a life membership of the CFA.

Geoff's love for Mooroolbark led to his enthusiasm for having its history put to paper, and his collaboration with Anthony McAleer on the project. Anthony has written 20 history books, mostly to do with the Yarra Valley, especially the area's military heritage. For more than 30 years he has been a part of numerous community organisations, including historical societies and the RSL. He has been involved in the establishment of more than 60 military memorials in the Yarra Valley area, including the Mooroolbark War Memorial in Hookey Park. In 2017 Anthony was awarded an Order of Australia for his work as a local historian.

*From Farms to Suburbia* was launched by Liberal member for Croydon, David Hodgett MP, and is full of fascinating old and new photos, maps and anecdotes. It begins at a time before European settlers started buying up large areas of land to build homes and graze sheep and cattle. Mooroolbark was then mainly open country dotted with scrub and trees. Kangaroos and wallabies, emus, wombats, koalas, echidnas and gliders were attracted to the area. The open grasslands were the result of the Wurundjeri people inhabiting this area. It was the Wurundjeri people's practice of burning off vegetation to control the landscape—called 'firestick burning'—which created new growth and therefore a new food

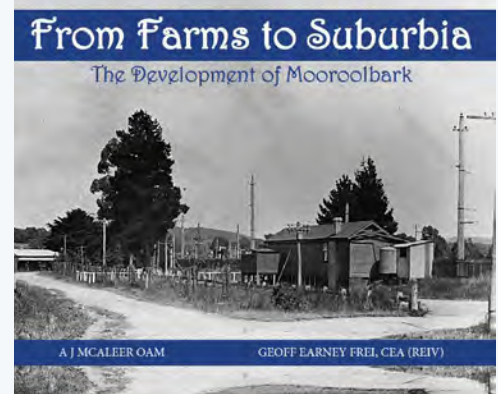
source for native creatures such as the kangaroos and wallabies.

Once the settlers arrived, the Wurundjeri people moved on to other areas and were rarely seen. The land was then divided up as grazing and dairy farmland by the settlers in the 1800s and continued to be used for dairy farming up until the 1950s. The development of the railway line, followed by the opening of the Mooroolbark station in May 1887, was a boon to local farmers, as this was a much cheaper and faster means of transporting their produce to the city.

The opening of the railway station was also the beginning of the future township, as a large area of land adjoining the station was advertised for sale with the potential of being divided into 'township blocks'. Although it took another fifty years to eventuate, this did take place, and Mooroolbark developed as a suburb that is now the most populated suburb in the district.

In concluding the book launch, David Hodgett commended the 'true community spirit' that led Geoff Earney to donate copies of the book to many organisations, including local schools, historical societies, the National Library in Canberra, and the State Library of Victoria.

Barbara Austin



Geoff Earney, left, and Anthony McAleer, right, co-authored the book on the history of Mooroolbark.

"From Farms to Suburbia: The Development of Mooroolbark" is available in hardcover (\$40) and softcover (\$23). Copies may be purchased from Methven Professionals Real Estate in Brice Avenue (phone 9726 8888).

## Lydia's Spoons

During the second Melbourne lockdown, Mooroolbark mum Lydia was given 25 souvenir teaspoons. Lydia wasn't a spoon collector, so in her quest to find a use for the spoons she decided to imprint messages onto them, creating unique and attractive works of art. Although she originally didn't intend to sell the repurposed spoons, Lydia soon found that her hobby had the beginnings of a small business. When Lydia's mother suggested that she try to sell her creations, Lydia held a gift stall at the Olinda market, and was pleased with how well her spoons were received. "I was surprised by how popular they were," she said. "They made people laugh."

Some spoons are inscribed with jokes, motivational quotes, or personalised messages, and others feature colourful art prints. Lydia teams some of the spoons with pot plants, or includes them in attractive hampers with locally-sourced scented candles and dried flowers. Other spoons are turned into unique bookmarks and display pieces.

Lydia's customers have found many inventive uses for the spoons. One woman used the spoons to ask her friends to be her bridesmaids; another sent a hamper to her mother with a spoon message telling her that she was going to be a grandmother. Other people have used the spoons as birth announcements or as wedding mementos, and parents have found that the potted succulents with personalised spoons, starting at just \$8, make unique end-of-year teacher gifts.



For now, Lydia is fitting her spoon creations around her job as a medical receptionist and her role as a busy mother of three daughters aged 14, 10, and 9. She has displayed her spoons at several local markets and is looking forward to introducing them to more people at her stall at Celebrate Mooroolbark on the weekend of 27-28 March. However, she hasn't ruled out making the spoons part of a more serious business venture in future. "It's my dream to have a little café gift shop," she said. "I enjoy it, so it doesn't feel like work. And I love it that people love what I do."

Janet Van Dijk

To see Lydia's creations, go to the LydiaSpoons Facebook page or visit her stall at Celebrate Mooroolbark.

## Mooroolbark Veterinary Clinic

If you are an animal lover, as I am, you know that taking your pet to the veterinary clinic can be a journey of hope, heaven, or hell.

**Hope:** when you realise that something is not quite right with your adorable, much-loved pet. Whether your companion is a dog, a cat, or a goldfish, when you are waiting for the prognosis from the vet, your heart is full of hope.

**Heaven:** is when that trusted, qualified veterinarian is able to say, "Nothing much wrong here; a small dose of this or that will have them back on their feet again."

**Hell:** is the bad news of "I am so sorry, but there is nothing we can do for your pet companion. It will be best if you allow us to give him relief and peace." This is the most painful

decision to be made by you, but it is the vet's best recommendation for your pet.

Whether your scenario is that of hope, heaven, or hell, the highly qualified veterinarians at the Mooroolbark Veterinary Clinic are here to help you with your pets' medical needs.

I first experienced the expert and compassionate care at MCV when I discovered an abandoned, flea-ridden, starving cat hiding under my veranda, and took him to Mooroolbark Veterinary Clinic, which cared for him for a couple of weeks until I could bring him home. With the help of the vet's excellent care, the forlorn stray was soon a fluffy bundle of good health named Simba.

The MVC has been in Mooroolbark for more

than 50 years and the doctors at the clinic, who have many years of experience, have seen and diagnosed thousands of animals. If the diagnosis is not good, they will gently guide you, with sincere and deep concern, to help you come to terms with what has to be arranged for your pet.

The qualified veterinary doctors at the clinic are Ian Griggs with almost 40 years of working with animals, and Helen Van Der Wel. Assistants Wendy, Jane, Jenna, and Lisa have all been fully trained to care for your much-loved companion as if it was their own.

The battle for your pet's future begins as soon as you leave it in MCV's care. The clinic is a warm and very friendly place, the surgery is spotless, and the doctors are firm but gentle with your precious pets. Their firm but kind demeanour is necessary for some of their 'interesting' confrontations. How would you handle a vicious 60-kilo rottweiler?

Barry Austin



Simba, once a flea-ridden and starving stray, was the picture of health and contentment a couple of months after being cared for by MVC.

The Mooroolbark Veterinary Clinic is located at 78 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark and is open Mon-Fri 7:30 am to 7:30 pm, and Saturday 10:00 am until midday. Please phone for an appointment on 9726 7089. Due to high demand, all visits (except for emergencies) are by appointment only.





# Mooroolbark Mustangs Women's AFL



Alison (back row, far right) with members of last year's team. Holding the yellow football is team captain Lauren Howell.

Alison Fitzgerald has followed AFL since childhood, and has always been an avid Hawthorn supporter. Both Alison's brothers played Under 18s and beyond with the Mooroolbark Football Club, but for Alison that wasn't an option. "There was never really a place for girls in football after about ten or eleven years of age, and by that stage most of us had already committed to a different sport."

"Women's role in football has traditionally been as team managers and canteen ladies—all the background roles," said Alison. "But with the introduction of AFLW—that very high standard of football—women's and girls' football around the country is growing rapidly."

As a mother, Alison has been involved with the Mooroolbark Football Club since one of her two sons began playing in the Under 8s. She has been a team manager, and also assistant coach for the Mustangs Under 15 Boys. Alison herself was playing in another suburban football league, but she had a goal to bring senior women's games closer to home, and also to provide an opportunity for the girls in the Mooroolbark club to have somewhere local to play once they had left the junior league. Last year Alison was thrilled to learn that the Eastern Football and Netball League (ENFL) had accepted a proposal put forward by Alison and other players to introduce both a Senior Women's league (for players over 18) and a Veterans' (Vets) league for women over 35.

The Mustangs formed Senior Women's and Vets teams to play in the EFNL league, but due to last year's coronavirus restrictions neither team has yet had a chance to play. At age 45, Alison's focus is on the Vets team. "Most of our players are 40 plus, and we even have a player who is 52." The Mustangs are currently recruiting for all their teams, and the Vets team in particular is looking forward to welcoming new members.

Alison has always loved sport—she spent years competing in basketball, netball, swimming, and Little Athletics, and in high school she was an Australia-wide Under 18s champion weightlifter. However, she has a special love for AFL, which has traditionally been a male-dominated sport. "Every other sport I have played is non-contact," Alison explained. "AFL is a contact sport, and I like the intensity and competitiveness of doing the best I can in that way. AFL really allows you to step into that competitiveness and fully immerse yourself in the sport without having to pull back too much." The fact that AFL is unique to Australia is also appealing. "It's one of a kind."

Alison emphasised the role of team sports in cementing the value of teamwork and maintaining fitness past adolescence. "Women around my age may have lost that if they were busy raising children and had a different hat on for a while. It's very healthy for us having the support of other women who are likeminded and accepting of each other. It's incredibly important for your emotional health, your mental health, and obviously your physical health. If you're in a team where you feel supported and safe, that is a huge part of why you will continue playing sport."

Because of the physical differences between men and women, the ENFL has modified some of the rules to alleviate concerns of injury. "No-one wants to get injured, particularly if they are busy mums, working and running around after kids," said Alison. One of the modifications to reduce the risk of injury is the rule that there is no tackling to the ground.

While people still compare men's AFL and women's AFL, Alison sees that as an unnecessary comparison. "We're very aware that women are built differently, move differently, play differently. So there are certain



things that won't happen in the sport because of physical or athletic differences. As a culture that is beginning to accept women's AFL, we need to celebrate the differences and not compare men and women."

The senior men's team at MFC has taken the women's veterans team under its wing, offering great encouragement and support. "These are young guys who have been playing since they were six or seven and they're fully behind the old chooks," said Alison.

MFC starts its season in April, with nine rounds of play and two weeks of finals. Senior teams play every Saturday during the season and train twice a week, while the Women's Vets play every second Saturday. There are two weekly training sessions, but the Vets understand if some players can only make one training session. "We want to make it fun," said Alison.

The Mooroolbark Football Club also has an active social calendar, with weekly events such as casual get-togethers, live music nights, theme nights, and the end-of-season awards night.

"Just because we're women, and just because we're over 35, doesn't mean that we don't love our sports. Anybody of any age and any ability is welcome at the Mustangs—it doesn't matter whether you can kick a ball or not," Alison said. "It's first and foremost about having fun and creating friendships."

**Janet Van Dijk**

*If you are interested in the Mooroolbark Mustangs Women's Vets team, please contact Alison on 0411 121 043. You can also find more information on the Mooroolbark Football Club Facebook page or by email at [alisonaddison@icloud.com](mailto:alisonaddison@icloud.com).*



# Heading North



Val and Dan on one of their trips north.



The spare wheel on the Tokell's 4WD had a handmade "Dan Val" cover.

*Like many retirees, Dan and Val Tokell have headed for the sunny shores of Queensland to begin a new chapter of their lives. But after decades of living and raising their family in the beautiful Yarra Ranges, the Tokells have very happy memories of the nearly 50 years they spent in Mooroolbark.*

Danny and Val Tokell haven't always been true-blue Aussies. In fact, they were both born and raised in the United Kingdom. The idea of moving to Australia began when the couple had been married about ten years, and Danny was looking for a better career. He saw a notice in a UK paper, advertising a Department of Defence engineering job in Melbourne. Dan applied for the job, attending an interview at London's Australia House. The application was successful, and before long Dan and Val, with their 9-year-old daughter Deborah and 5-year-old son David, were headed to Australia on the *MS Achille Lauro* ocean liner. "If it doesn't work out, we can go back to England in two years and consider it a good holiday," they reasoned. Their first-class sea voyage took five weeks, and they arrived in Melbourne in November 1970.

The Tokell family stayed at Victoria Hotel for three months. While deciding where to settle, they went for a drive to the Yarra Valley. They liked Mooroolbark, bought a block of land there, and had a house built in Orrong Road. Theirs was the first house on the long steep road, which was nicknamed 'Billy Cart Hill'.

Debbie and David began attending Manchester Primary School. When David was in grade 6, Bimbadeen Heights Primary School opened over the road from their home and David began attending there. Dan and Val were on the school committee with Mr McKenzie, the Mooroolbark Commonwealth Bank manager, and Val also helped out at the school canteen. The following year, David joined his sister Debbie at Mooroolbark Secondary College. After high school, David went on to study engineering at Melbourne University and worked as head of engineering at Synchrotron. He married Yvonne, a local girl whose family was from Scotland. Debbie met her future husband when she was working after school at the fish and chip shop in Hull Road, near the Mooroolbark Road rail bridge.

Val had always had a flair for sketching and in 1972, inspired by the light and atmosphere in Australia, she began painting in oils. She later took up watercolours and taught that medium in outer Melbourne. Val's art has won first prizes and commendations, and her paintings are in private collections in Italy, France, UK, Germany, Africa, Japan, Austria, New Zealand and Australia.



Danny was handy with tools and repairs, and at one job interview he was asked how he kept fit. Danny answered that he did their home maintenance. The interviewer replied, "How would that keep you fit?" Obviously, the interviewer was not a gardener or home handyman! During the early years in their Mooroolbark home the Tokells installed air conditioning, a ducted vacuum system, and a downward spiral staircase to a games room. Later, they added a workroom for picture framing, at the rear of their home. They also added six interior arches, a patio, and steel double gates. Danny also began framing Val's paintings, which were exhibited at art shows on many weekends and were also displayed on a rotating basis at the Commonwealth Bank in Mooroolbark. Dan soon began doing picture framing for other people as a side job. A sandwich-board sign out the front of their home was a good landmark; later a school crossing was established at the front of their home, so customers couldn't miss where to go for framing.

Soon after taking up residence in Mooroolbark, Dan asked a bank teller to recommend a good place to have a holiday. The teller suggested camping at Pambula in NSW, so Dan and Val bought a sun wagon and for many years they loaded up the wagon with their children, two cats, and bicycles, and headed off on long weekends around Victoria and to Pambula in the Christmas holidays.

Dan and Val make good friends wherever they go, and they formed strong friendships in Mooroolbark. They were part of the Chums Club, which was a largely English friendship group of people who all lived in the Yarra Ranges. The club had monthly dances with a different theme each month, with themes like the Roaring 20s, for which Dan and Val won first prize; a Hawaiian night; Easter Bonnet Parade; and Old Time Music Hall. For a time, Val and Dan also hosted music evenings at their home, which included games of darts for the men and culminated in supper. Music often piped throughout their home during the day—the neighbour's children would comment, if they heard classical music, that it was "Danny and Valerie" music.

Among the Tokell's English friends, there were often announcements of people going 'home' for a holiday. Although it was 15 years before Dan and Val's first trip back to England, they have been back at least eight times and would often be asked, "When are you coming back to visit again?" The Tokells pointed out that visiting could go both ways, since "It's just as far from Australia to

England as it is from England to Australia!" Some of their extended family did come from England to visit: Danny's parents came three times, Val's mother twice, and siblings on both sides and their spouses, nieces and nephews also visited. Although none of their overseas family has migrated to Australia, Dan and Val have never regretted settling here.

At 55, Dan retired from full-time work, wondering how they would manage financially—but he soon found that he was busier than ever with picture framing, keeping meticulous records of completed jobs, and displaying Val's paintings on the wall in his workshop. To their great delight, they became grandparents to six grandchildren, and now have three great-grandchildren.

Danny had been used to getting up at 6:30 am during his working life, and he maintained this early start even in retirement. He enjoyed a cuppa and toast and the daily cryptic crossword mid-morning with Val on the front porch; afternoons were enjoyed on the back patio.

In summer, most days included a dip in their above-ground pool. In retirement Dan and Val frequented well-known local cafés for lunch a few times each week: some of their favourites were Miss Marples in Olinda, The Cuckoo or Chudleigh Park in Sassafras, Warran Glen in Warrandyte, Succulent Cafe in Lilydale, and the Chirnside Country Club.

After retiring Dan and Val went on a six-month caravan trip around Australia, with a 'Dan Val' logo, painted by Dan, on the cover of the spare wheel on the back of their vehicle. For about 20 years, Val and Dan, like many other happy, healthy retirees, took an annual trip north from Mother's Day to Father's Day. Lake Placid Caravonica was their favourite caravanning spot. Many regular framing customers would make a concerted effort to have their framing needs up to date before Val and Dan headed north on holidays for winter. Interwoven with their trips north, the Tokells made a few trips to Bali, and trips to New Zealand and Fiji. Their visits back to England sometimes included trips to other parts of Europe.

After 48 years in Mooroolbark,

Dan and Val sold their home and moved to Queensland with their daughter and son-in-law, and their granddaughter, her husband and their three children. Three homes were sold, and four generations headed north to Noosa on the Sunshine Coast. Dan and Val maintain close ties with their son, daughter-in-law and four grandchildren who are still in Melbourne's outer east, and with friends they have made from the Yarra Valley over the years. Dan and Val have now settled in Kewarra Beach, North Cairns and are 'living their dream'; visiting familiar cafés and exploring new ones, rekindling friendships made over many years, and exploring the new cycling bike tracks in their area. On 17 September last year they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary, which was also Val's 80th birthday.

Even though they are happily living their retirement dream in Queensland, Val and Dan will never forget the memories and friends they made in Mooroolbark.

Liz Skilbeck



The Tokells were married in September 1960 and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.



Four generations.



## The Ending You Didn't See Coming

There are almost 7000 movies on Netflix—and that's only one of the dozen or so streaming services available. Right now, we are awash in stories, narratives, and characters. As human beings, we've always loved stories, and technology transforms our living rooms into home theatres.

Personally, I enjoy movies that make me think, and allow me to be the ride-along detective. The unexpected ending is a favourite device these days. That last act or scene where the bad guy turns out to be the good guy, or the poor character turns out to be royalty. The movie may have included an avalanche of scenes that gave clues you simply didn't see.

The whole story, through all its twists and turns, comes together in a new light suddenly. You may not have seen it coming, but when the ending comes it makes sense of everything else.

In the New Testament, Paul points to an unexpected ending to the message of Jesus. He connects the story of Jesus with the story of Israel and the rest of the world, showing how it ties everything together.

Look at what Paul said regarding this:

*But when the right time came, God sent His Son into the world. A woman gave birth to Him, and He came under the control of the laws given to Moses. God sent Him to pay for the freedom of those who were controlled by these laws so that we would be adopted as His children.”<sup>1</sup>*

The right time. The long story of Israel—God setting one nation apart, then one family line, then one family, then one person who represents all of humanity.

Jesus didn't come because the law failed. He didn't scrap all that had gone before to start a new story. He completed the story begun in Adam and Eve. Jesus became flesh to enter the story at the appointed time.

<sup>1</sup> Galatians 4:4-5 (NOG)



He is the unexpected ending that makes history—His story—make sense.

Do we recognise Jesus as the ending for us? It's that part of the story that was missing in your life and mine that makes everything come together. He makes all the bits and pieces come together, makes everything neatly fit into place.

He completes not only your story, and mine, but the grand narrative of all of humanity—all the wars and dynasties and joy and pain in all of history. Jesus is not the ghost who comes from nowhere, but the ending the story was building to all along. And that is *great news*.

**Greg Williams**  
*Speaking of Life*



## Giant Easter Egg Hunt

On the morning of Saturday 3 April, the lawns of Life Ministry Church at Chirns Park will be filled with fun and excitement as hundreds of children race around the grounds looking for Easter eggs. The annual event is “a real festival of fun and celebration,” said event organiser Matt Daly.

The Giant Easter Egg Hunt was first held in 2013 after Matt learned that a friend of his was running a similar event interstate. “I thought it was something that could be a real blessing to our community, something really fun and family friendly, so we decided to give it a go.”

In the beginning, the challenge was knowing how many eggs to provide. “The first year I had no idea how many people might come—we might get fifty, we might get a thousand, who knows?—

so I took a guess,” said Matt. “God gave me the number that it would be around the 600 mark—and we had 598 people want to come that year!” Over the past several years the event has become very popular, with ticket sales restricted to 1,000 to ensure that there will be enough parking spaces.

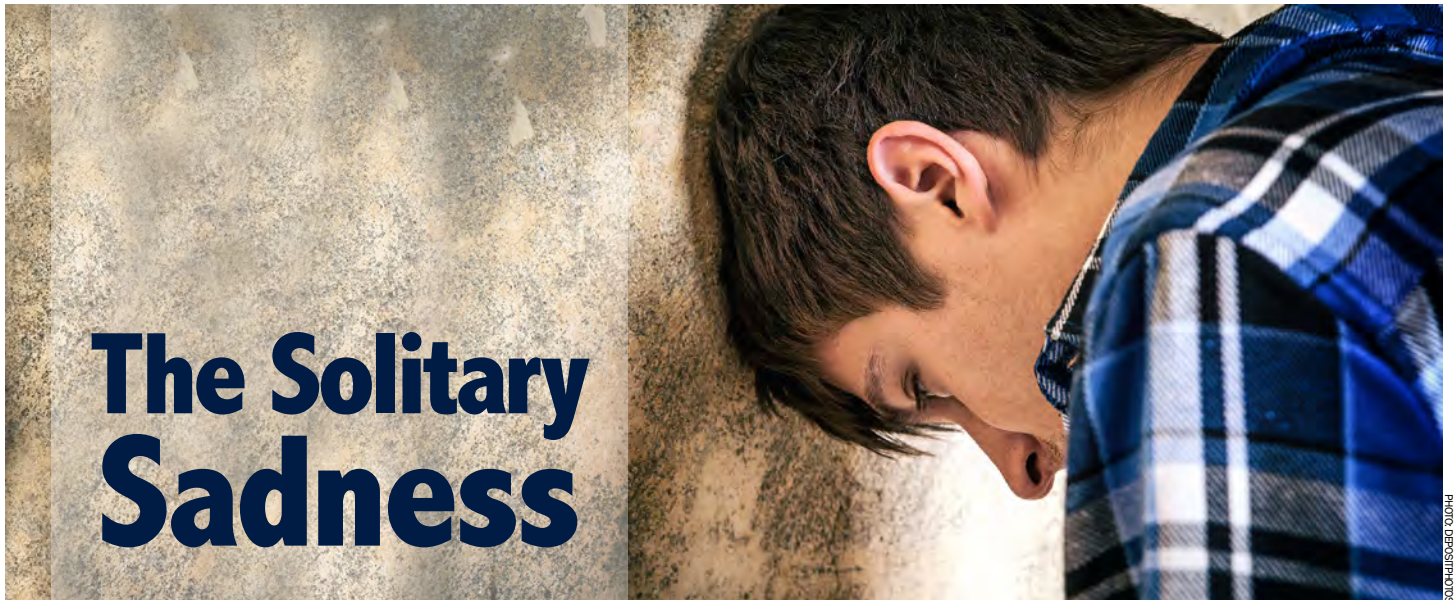
The event is for children of preschool and primary school age, and entry is \$12 per child. Each ticket entitles the child to participate in the egg hunt and to a free egg bucket, two rides on the giant inflatables, face painting, and a free balloon creation. Children are allocated to separate age-appropriate sessions so that little ones don't get bowled over by enthusiastic older kids. For siblings who would like to hunt together, there are two open-age sessions. Those who wish

to spectate are admitted free, and while they wait they can enjoy music and the carnival atmosphere with a sausage sizzle, fairy floss, drinks and ice creams available for purchase.

Over a hundred volunteers help out on the day to keep costs affordable and to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Money raised will benefit LMC's Amari Community Development Organisation, which supports children in developing nations—principally Uganda—through education, development and welfare programs.

For more details check out [giantegg hunt.com.au](http://giantegg hunt.com.au). Tickets often sell out within hours of going on sale, so if you miss out this time, join the mailing list to be among the first to know about next year's event





# The Solitary Sadness

We all have times of times of sadness—when we face a personal disappointment or loss, when things or people around us let us down, when we fail to measure up, when things just don't work out. There is a deeper sadness that takes over when someone near and dear departs, when a long-cherished dream fails, when we lose something important. This is part of life—and in time, the sadness fades and we find new hope and meaning in life. There may be scars left, memories that are painful, but the day dawns when we no longer wake up feeling sad, when our loss or failure is not the first thing to jump into our minds.

But there is another sadness experienced by some, a solitary sadness that takes over and holds us in its grasp for weeks or months on end, making life not only miserable but seemingly impossible.

This disease, which affects one in five of us, is clinically recognised as depression, although the term hardly conveys the reality of the experience.

One writer—a former sufferer—put it this way: "I'm not referring to the normal down periods that everyone goes through once in a while, that can be brought on by a rainy day, a broken heart, the flu or even for no particular reason. We mope around, listen to sad music and feel sorry for ourselves. These moods go away within a couple of days, and we can enjoy life again. Clinical depression is much more than that...it is an illness that affects a person in many different ways. It can affect appetite, sleep patterns, powers of concentration, and even slow down movement and speech. While the predominant feeling depression brings is often sadness or a blue mood, it can also be a numb, empty feeling, anxiety, hopelessness, loss of self-esteem or self-worth, inability to make decisions or a combination of these. Unlike a passing mood, clinical depression dominates a person's life and brings it to a screeching halt."<sup>1</sup>

Depression can come out of nowhere, for no apparent reason; it may creep up gradually over a period of time. It may be possible to trace some trigger events, or it may not. It can make life seem meaningless and burdensome to the point of giving up—completely. When there is no joy or hope, where is there a future?

The fact that one in five of us encounters this

at some time in our lives means that all of us will be affected by this insidious disease. If it's not us, it'll be someone near to us. And since it carries few physical symptoms of something awry, we may find it difficult to accept it for what it really is: an illness that needs help just like any other. So once the condition is even suspected, it is time to take immediate steps.

Mental health organisation Beyond Blue provides a wonderful resource of information for those facing uncertainty over what they are experiencing. The website [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au) provides help in identifying depression, the risk factors, how to help yourself and others, and enables people to share personal experiences. There are links to people you can talk to, for example:

- GROW Support Groups: 1800 558 268
- Reconnexion: 9886 9400
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Mensline: 1300 789 978
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

However, sometimes the check-listing to identify depression can be just too clinical, and the questions may not be relevant. They are necessarily general, and for someone suffering from this solitary, enveloping sadness, specifics are more meaningful. Below are some "un-clinical symptoms" of depression from the website [wingofmadness.com](http://wingofmadness.com). You can find more of these symptoms by searching "what does depression feel like" on the site.

## What Does Depression Feel Like?

- You don't feel hopeful or happy about anything in your life.
- You're crying a lot, either at nothing, or something that normally would be insignificant.
- You feel like you're moving (and thinking) in slow motion.
- Getting up in the morning requires a lot of effort.
- Carrying on a normal conversation is a struggle. You can't seem to express yourself.
- You're having trouble making simple decisions.

- It seems like there's a glass wall between you and the rest of the world.
- You're anxious and worried a lot.
- You feel like you can't do anything right.
- You have recurring thoughts of death and/or suicidal impulses. Suicide seems like a welcome relief.
- You have a feeling of impending doom—you think something bad is going to happen, although you may not be sure what.
- In your perception of the world around you, it's always cloudy. Even on sunny days, it seems cloudy and grey.
- You feel as though you're drowning or suffocating.

The most common problem at this stage is that we feel we can deal with it on our own, whether it's ourselves or a loved one that is affected. Those suffering, or their friends and family, often feel they can work or talk their way out of it. Don't ever believe it! Many people think someone with depression can get better just by being more positive. That's like saying someone with muscular dystrophy needs to work out at the gym more, or that an acquired brain injury can be healed by doing sudoku. Humans tend to have trouble believing that something we can't see, touch, taste or feel can be a real ailment that needs medical assistance.

So we need to engage the help of a sympathetic, qualified doctor to both get to the bottom of the illness and find the track to wellness again—for two very important reasons. Firstly, depression is a life-threatening disease. Secondly, depression is often associated with other serious illnesses and conditions such as heart disease, thyroid malfunction, cancer, autoimmune disorders, vitamin deficiencies, drugs, and other medications. If you don't get it checked out medically, a serious illness could go undiagnosed.

If you feel you might be depressed, seek help right away. Contact one of the many mental health organisations that are available, to talk it through and find out what to do next.

Terry Villiers





Vive la Différence



My experience of change while growing up in Ballarat in the fifties was of slow, incremental change—very different to the helter-skelter rate of change these days.

Those were the days when, for many Australians, the routine main meal of each day was meat and three veg. Against that backdrop, I've never forgotten the surprising flavours and textures of the first Chinese meal I experienced—a treat repeated not frequently enough for my liking at the time. Also still fresh in my memory is the first “real spaghetti” meal I struggled through at a classy Melbourne restaurant (a new experience in itself). It was an embarrassing meal for me in the company of my sophisticated cousins. My experience to that point, of spaghetti from a can, left me ill-equipped for the art of wrapping multiple strands of spaghetti securely around my fork for the tricky transit from plate to mouth.

For my family in those days, and in stark contrast to our now daily enjoyment of saladings, salad was a dish enjoyed only at big family gatherings at special times such as Christmas.

Many people regarded garlic with suspicious disdain. Olives arrived in our household very spasmodically and it took time for them to become an acquired taste. And then there was the revelation that there were multiple varieties of cheese—an unimaginable explosion of tastes and textures, especially as my experience of cheese had been confined to a processed cheddar that arrived in a blue packet! Over time, coffee, wine, and a greater variety of vegetables were also introduced.

Australia's post-war immigrants changed our culinary landscape hugely for the better, as have those who have subsequently arrived on our shores from many more cultures.

It wasn't until the seventies that my wife and I visited Mooroolbark for the first time. By then, massive change had transformed the area from a largely rural dairying, farming community into a suburb. The sixties saw massive development in Mooroolbark. An advertisement of the day proclaimed, “We can look forward with great confidence to making Mooroolbark the model suburb of Melbourne.”<sup>1</sup>

Local historian Anthony McAleer writes:

“All of this development meant one thing for Mooroolbark, a huge influx of residents. High amongst them were immigrants, particularly immigrants from the United Kingdom, who saw advertisements promoting Mooroolbark home and land packages on display at their migrant hostels. Another large group were ex-servicemen, particularly those having just returned from service in Vietnam who were

eligible for War Service loans. Like everyone else, they saw the new subdivisions of Mooroolbark as an affordable way of owning their own home.

At the beginning of the sixties it was estimated that around 300 people lived in Mooroolbark, but by the end of the decade it had expanded to around 9000.”<sup>2</sup>

In recent years we've seen a similar explosion of change in Mooroolbark, with a surge in population due to the construction of units on subdivided land.

My wife and I moved into the Mooroolbark area early in our marriage and raised our three children here. We considered the leafy eastern suburbs ideal for family life. As our children grew, one of our regular adventures was to spend a Saturday evening in Carlton. As time went on we also frequented Sydney Road and Brunswick Street. What a buzz it gave us to enjoy the bustling restaurants—pizza, pasta, Middle Eastern delicacies—followed by some leisurely time browsing in local book shops, while the kids hunted for a gelati before we all rendezvoused for coffee and cake at the amazing Brunetti café.

And now, years later, it seems that almost overnight Mooroolbark has transformed into a cosmopolitan township where residents and business owners represent many varied, diverse cultural backgrounds.

These days, as we walk through Mooroolbark, I'm struck by the very different people-scape when compared with our early years here. In close proximity to our home we enjoy a great diversity of neighbours. No longer the preserve of residents with an English background, our neighbourhood is the home of friendly, hard-working people of Chin, Italian, Greek, Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese, Thai, Iranian and German backgrounds.

And what a welcome change this has been in spite of some of the teething difficulties and adjustments that change and inclusion can present.

These days, it's possible to enjoy not only a diverse range of cuisines due to the big increase in eating places, but also the contribution made to our neighbourhood by people of many cultural backgrounds.

A large Burmese community—representing the Chin, Karen and Hakha minority groups—has settled in the area and are a tremendously friendly and hospitable people. A quick tour around Mooroolbark reveals at least three Burmese grocery stores where not only the local Asian population but many other residents are able to buy the ingredients of dishes perhaps discovered through travel. There is also Little Burma restaurant to set

your tastebuds tingling for a meal to eat in or take away.

The Burmese shops now compete with some of the longer-established Chinese and Indian eating places in our town. There are also Middle Eastern options in Manchester Road and on Fiveways, if you, like me, hanker for those particular flavours.

Mooroolbark now enjoys a range of flavours, textures and aromas along with the usual burgers, fish and chips, coffee shops, bakeries and pizzas—including authentic Sicilian pizza. We also have Thai food, and businesses serving noodles and dumplings. And let's not forget the French, with Mon Poulet down at Fiveways.

We also enjoy other businesses that are owned and operated by people who now call Australia home. The Chinese owners of the newsagent-Tattslotto agency in Brice Avenue help us by displaying free copies of each edition of *Living Today*, and other Chinese residents operate cafés and some of the now-familiar “\$2 shops.” Settlers from Sri Lanka operate the paint shop on Fiveways. The kindly Indian man Kasi and his family operate our local 7-Eleven and have been community minded since their arrival, as has the friendly Italian family which provides fresh produce at Mooroolbark Fresh.

Many people of multicultural backgrounds are employed by Mooroolbark businesses, and there are also professional people who contribute significantly to our wellbeing. One such professional is Matthew Imani, of Iranian descent. His denture clinic in the shopping centre near Coles is a bright and welcoming place where Matthew cares for his patients. A sign on the door tells us that Matthew has been recognised for his expertise: 2009 ADPA Award Winner for most outstanding dental prosthetic as a student at RMIT University.

As a nation, we celebrate our multicultural diversity. And, for us, as one small township, we also share in the benefit brought to us by Australians who have come to our shores, settled, and made their imprint and contribution to this place. They have brought so much that enriches our lives.

Let us do our part to be welcoming, to contribute to forming friendships with our neighbours old and new. May we embrace the fundamental value that recognises the inherent dignity and value of every human being. Let us do everything in our power to enrich, strengthen, and enhance our life together while we enjoy the contributions made by new arrivals to our community.

As Maxime Croiset at Mon Poulet might say: “Vive la différence!”

Randall Bourchier

<sup>1</sup> McAleer, A. and Earney, G., 2020. *From Farms to Suburbia: The Development of Mooroolbark*. 1st ed. Mt Evelyn: J D Publishing, p.73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.





# Guiding Life

In 1992, when six-year-old Jaydine announced that she wanted to join Mooroolbark Guides, it began a decades-long association with the Guides for Jaydine and her mother Sandy McElroy. Sandy took Jaydine to her first meeting and then, as a protective mother, decided to stay each week to observe. Finally, the leader told Sandy that if she was going to be at every meeting, she may as well join Guides.

Sandy did so, and she and Jaydine have been enthusiastic Guides ever since. Jaydine, who is now a teacher, is part of the leadership team for one of the Mooroolbark units. Sandy has held many roles over the years and is currently the liaison between Mooroolbark's four units, as well as being a co-manager for the Yarra Ranges district's eight groups.

For many of us, the term 'Girl Guides' conjures up images of outdoor activities—camping, hiking, perhaps roasting marshmallows around a campfire. So what was this active group to do when a government mandate required everyone to stay indoors as much as possible, as happened in mid-2020?

Summoning their trademark resourcefulness, the Mooroolbark Girl Guides met the challenge by embarking on a fun-packed and interesting online program. Using technologies like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Slack, they joined together in projects such as cooking classes, science experiments, crafts, and photography. Guest speakers spoke to the girls about topics like wildlife preservation, drama, and sign language. The girls were also able

downhill on giant ice blocks. One popular activity is similar to indoor 'escape rooms' and uses problem-solving skills the girls have learned. Each activity is designed to build teamwork, inspire confidence, and develop friendships and a love for the outdoors. Two much-requested activities during 'patrol time' at weekly meetings are making slime and cooking. The girls also contribute to the local community with service activities, and learn traditions such as flag raising, which they perform at the annual Mooroolbark Anzac Day service.

Guides range in age from 5 to 17, and belong to one of four units according to age. During school terms there is one meeting a week for each unit. Once girls reach 18, they may choose to join an adult unit such as the Olave Program<sup>1</sup> or the Trefoil Guild<sup>2</sup>.

One of Mooroolbark's best-known Guides is 91-year-old Elsie Bolwell, who was instrumental in establishing the Mooroolbark Guides in 1962 and has held many leadership roles over the years. In December last year Elsie celebrated 60 years of Guiding, and this milestone was acknowledged with a ceremony in February. Elsie was also awarded a lifetime membership with Trefoil Victoria, making her one of the few members to receive such an honour. "Elsie is the embodiment of what being a Guide is about," said Jaydine. "She's never shied away from a challenge. She's very connected to the community, always supporting other people. I remember Elsie being there as a support as far back as I remember being a Guide."



PHOTOS: JAYDINE RUMNEY

to share their interests, skills and achievements with each other online via video or photographs.

"Our biggest goal during that time was to help the girls create and maintain social connections, because we know a lot of them were struggling being away from their friends," said Jaydine. "We were able to offer a place for girls to come and connect with their peers—there was a real need for it in the community." To help families who were struggling financially during that time, Guides Victoria suspended fees from term 2 in 2020 until the end of first term this year.

The Mooroolbark Guides resumed meetings last November, getting together on the lawn of the hall to ensure social distancing. Guides and leaders were all excited to see each other and return to in-person activities.

"Guiding is what we call 'girl-led'," explained Jaydine. "That means that our role is to help the girls learn to choose and develop their own program." Sandy added that the leaders ensure that the activities are safe, affordable, and compatible with the ideals of Guiding.

In Mooroolbark, some of the outdoor activities the girls have enjoyed are obstacle courses, crate stacking, archery, canoeing, and even sliding

Sandy mentioned that Elsie consistently sets a high standard, including always being immaculate in her uniform. She recalled hearing a story about ladylike Elsie going on a snow trip wearing her Guides skirt, and stepping into snow halfway up to her calves before realising how deep the snow was. "I can just picture her, all prim and proper, stuck in the snow," laughed Sandy.

Jaydine and Sandy expect that they, like Elsie, will always be Guides. "Guiding was a really big support for me during high school," said Jaydine. "The skills I learned will stay with me my whole life." Sandy agreed: "Once you become a Mooroolbark Guide, you always feel like you belong."

**Janet Van Dijk**

*If you would like to know more about becoming a Guide, either as a child or an adult, please contact Sandy on 0412 106 183, or visit the Mooroolbark Girl Guides Facebook page.*

<sup>1</sup> [girlguides.org.au/programs/olave-program](http://girlguides.org.au/programs/olave-program)  
<sup>2</sup> [guidesvic.org.au/volunteer/trefoil-guilds](http://guidesvic.org.au/volunteer/trefoil-guilds)



# Celebrating the Trailblazing Women of The Yarra Ranges

Celebrate International Women's Day with the brand-new exhibition *Trailblazers: Women of the Yarra Ranges*. The exhibition, at Yarra Ranges Regional Museum in Lilydale, is in recognition of the local champions and agents of change who have helped to shape our community. Women of history and the present are being honoured in a series of paintings created by local artist Cat McInnes. Accompanying biographies were written by Yarra Ranges writer Lindy Schneider.

Learn more about the women who have made the Yarra Ranges what it is today, from opera singer Dame Nellie Melba to Wurundjeri Elder and activist Aunty Joy Wandin. Book your museum visit at [culturetracks.info](http://culturetracks.info) or by phoning 1300 368 333.

Explore Australia's history of feminism and social change at an International Women's Day screening event. *Brazen Hussies*, a new film about the second-wave feminist movement and how it has shaped our country, will be showing at both The Memo in Healesville and the Arts Centre in Warburton on the evening of 9 March. *No Time for Quiet*, a documentary for tweens and teens, is about a group of young people who attend the Girls Rock! Melbourne band camp and learn new things about their music and identity on the way. *No Time for Quiet* will be shown at Warburton's Arts Centre on 10 March and at The Memo on 11 March.

This autumn, be the first to find out about new performances, workshops and more. Stay up to date with our upcoming program of events by signing up for our e-newsletter at [culturetracks.info](http://culturetracks.info).

Yarra Ranges Council



## TRAILBLAZERS Women of the Yarra Ranges



## Outdoor Dining in the Yarra Ranges

It has been a long time between seated lattes, but now is the perfect time to celebrate and embrace them once more!

Across the Yarra Ranges, council has engaged with local cafés and restaurants to help activate their extended outdoor dining plans and offer every support resource available to ensure our COVIDSafe summer is as comfortable, practical and prosperous as possible.

Since the introduction of the Temporary Outdoor Dining Permit in October last year, council's Outdoor Dining team has issued over 90 permits to provide hospitality businesses with more space to welcome back customers to seated dining. Council visited hundreds of businesses to identify and analyse what space they had available and where it was safe and practical, provided traffic barriers and webbing to create new expanded outdoor dining settings. This was achieved while preserving access for the whole community including pedestrians, people with mobility aids, prams, public transport and disability parking, and most importantly maximising the safety of patrons.

Many businesses have capitalised on this opportunity to get creative in their new extended outdoor area, with locals and visitors flocking back to venues, bringing life and vibrancy into our centres once more.

Now is a great time to reconnect with the beauty and appeal of our region, with everyone encouraged to get out and about in one of our many wonderful townships to enjoy the outdoor dining spaces on offer. Discover some new places and enjoy some of the incredible food available in our region.

If you are a business wanting to set up your own outdoor area you can find more information regarding Temporary Outdoor Dining in the Yarra Ranges at [yarraranges.vic.gov.au/outdoordining](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/outdoordining).

Yarra Ranges Council

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## Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	<b>Craft and Produce Market:</b> 9-2 pm 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.
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. Please call to confirm class will be going ahead: 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.
Tuesdays & Thursdays	<b>Mooroolbark Men's Shed:</b> 9 am-2 pm. Cnr Ellen Road & Croydondale 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	<b>GymbaROO:</b> Formative Sensory Perceptual Motor Program for babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More info: mooroolbark@gymbaroo.com.au or Facebook.
Thursdays during school term	<b>Music Together Program:</b> 0-5 years. St Margaret's Uniting Church hall. 9:45 am. Morning tea and playtime included. \$10 per session per family. Contact Nancy Isherwood on 0413 389 441.
Thursday evenings each week	<b>Maroondah TOWN Club: (Take Off Weight Naturally).</b> 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. Details: 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.
Wed 24 March - Wed 31 March	<b>Celebrate Mooroolbark:</b> Popup entertainment and events all week in Brice Avenue, Manchester Road and Hookey Park. Flyers with times and locations available at festival caravan in George Street and Brice Avenue carpark from Wed 24 March.
13 March, 10 April, 8 May	<b>Urban Harvest:</b> Backyard fruit and vegetable growers: swap your excess produce. Red Earth Community Park, second Sat each month, 10-11:30 am. Enquiries: Claire Coutts, 0425 700 280
25 April	<b>Anzac Day Service.</b> 12 noon Hookey Park.
10 - 18 April	<b>ARK Theatre presents Robin Hood: Men in Tights.</b> Bring a picnic blanket for the outdoor performance at Melba Park, Lilydale. Tickets: arktheatremelb.com
2 May	<b>The Yarra Valley Wool and Handicraft Show:</b> 10 am-5 pm. All things handicraft - Lots of stalls, demonstrations, Devonshire teas and a sausage sizzle. Mooroolbark Community Centre.

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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9726 5388

 Bendigo Bank

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

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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.