

# LIVING TODAY

in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges NO. 76 SEPTEMBER 2021



- An evening with Uncle Jack Charles at The Memo
- Siblings: when equal just isn't fair
- A brotherhood of blokes

11,500 free copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark and district

# A Quiet Perseverance

You might wonder why he wasn't spotted more quickly!

There's a story from Lloyd Stott's family folklore that describes the day that as a child he was so determined to go to work with his father that he stood on the running board of his father's car and clung to the door handle. The car had travelled two kilometres before his father noticed that Lloyd was there.

As Lloyd shared some of his story with me, it seemed that his life has been characterised by a quiet, determined and courageous tenacity already evident in this childhood story.

While Lloyd is usually away from the public eye, his wife Marion is well known in the Mooroolbark community, and has been the subject of several *Living Today* articles over the years.<sup>1</sup> Marion received a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2020 for her devotion to the Mooroolbark community through involvement with groups such as Celebrate Mooroolbark, the Mooroolbark History Group, and the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group.

And that's without mentioning her leadership in our remembrance of those from our region who served in the armed forces in multiple theatres of conflict. That we gather in Hookey Park to celebrate Anzac Day and Remembrance Day is largely due to Marion's passion for our doing so; indeed, I doubt that the war memorial in Hookey Park would have been relocated and developed in the manner it has been were it not for Marion, her family and friends.

For 37 years, the Stotts and their staff have served thousands of families in our community through their business, GymbaROO Mooroolbark, which provides activities promoting the neurodevelopment of preschool children.<sup>2</sup>

Marion has been the public face of the family in the community and in business, but she has depended upon Lloyd in doing so. The couple works together in complementary ways, with Lloyd providing essential behind-the-scenes support not only by his encouraging, persevering presence but through his research skills, IT and



Lloyd was the first of his parents' four children.

technical abilities, and administrative help.

There's no doubt in my mind that Lloyd's parents contributed enormously to the shaping of Lloyd's character. His father, Gordon, was born in Geelong, the youngest of 12 children. Having trained as a pharmacist, Gordon went to India as a missionary. Lloyd's mother Vera, who

<sup>1</sup> For example pp. 10-11 livingtoday.org.au/uploads/LivingTodayIssue30.pdf

<sup>2</sup> gymbaroo.com.au/about-us/what-is-gymbaroo/



Lloyd and Marion met at RMIT in 1970.



Lloyd at HP in about 1970, holding a 9120 thermal printer (an accessory for the 9100 electronic calculator)



The Stotts' wedding in January 1972



PHOTOS SUPPLIED

trained as a nurse at the Austin Hospital, had been born in China, the child of American and Australian missionaries. Vera was accepted for the position of nursing sister to Hebron, a school for European children in Coonoor, South India, which had been advertised in a Melbourne Christian weekly.

Lloyd tells the story: "My mother and a friend were both bound for India, but only one berth was available. They tossed a coin and the friend got to go." Sadly, the ship the friend travelled on was torpedoed. Not deterred, Vera went on the next ship. Vera and Gordon met in India and were married in Coonoor on 25 August 1945 in the presence of the assembled upper classes at the school where Vera was a nurse.

After returning to Australia, Lloyd's parents settled in Melbourne, where they raised four children: Lloyd, Philip, Elizabeth, and Anthony. Living in West Heidelberg, Lloyd's first school was Heidelberg State School. "When I was about eight, we moved to Rosanna and the state school was at the end of the street," said Lloyd. "I matriculated from Macleod High School in 1964 and commenced an Associate Diploma of Electronic Engineering at RMIT, at a time when electronic engineering was a comparatively new discipline."

Lloyd recounts with gratitude that his parents were always there for him and that they were invariably supportive and encouraging of his plans and ambitions. "My father built the first chemist shop in Rosanna," said Lloyd. "From an early age I helped by delivering medicines on my bike. One of his customers was managing director of Hewlett Packard Australia. My father asked him whether he had a job for his son. For a year or two I had a part-time job there. Some days involved going to RMIT in the morning, catching a train to Glen Iris for work, and the MD driving me home at the end of the day. There were about 28 staff when I started."

Lloyd began full-time employment with Hewlett Packard in November 1970 with a salary of \$330 per month. "I was responsible for on-site maintenance of electronic calculators—at that time about the size of a typewriter," said Lloyd. "Some years later, HP introduced PCs. As new models were introduced, I'd be sent to San Francisco for training. Other overseas trips were to France, UK, Singapore and Papua New Guinea. My job evolved to being a product specialist—a desk job—in the response centre. Sometimes I'd be called upon to recommend on customer requests for product refunds. At times I'd recommend a compassionate response to a struggling customer even though they may have largely contributed to the equipment problem they were experiencing."

Each time I enjoy Lloyd's company I become aware of his wry, somewhat self-effacing sense of humour glimpsed in this further comment about his career: "At a dinner to commemorate my 35 years at HP the comment was made that



In this 2013 GympaROO portrait by Little Things Photography, the Stotts are pictured with their granddaughters.

I'd worn out a manager every 18 months!"<sup>3</sup>

While studying at RMIT, Lloyd met Marion. He explained, "In 1970, a club I belonged to at RMIT decided to enter a contestant in the Miss RMIT quest. The club canvassed potential candidates in Bowen Street [the central thoroughfare]. We chose Averel, a librarian student. As I was unattached romantically, I was nominated to be her escort. Averel introduced me to her cousin, Marion. The girls had come to Melbourne from country Victoria and roomed together. My first date with Marion was on my 24th birthday at the RMIT ball at the Camberwell Civic Centre."

After the couple married, they first settled in Mt Evelyn before moving to Larbert Road, Mooroolbark in August 1977. At the time Larbert Road came to a dead end with farmyard paddocks and horses and cows. "Things are very different now. Larbert Road is three subdivisions longer, with buses regularly running past."

Lloyd and Marion will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in January—a milestone accomplished through the sharing of common goals, mutual tolerance and a lot of enjoyment along the way.

Lloyd finds great enjoyment from the things that he and Marion are able to do together, whether it be with GympaROO, the history group or other community ventures. The couple are committed in their lives together to contribute to the common good, in spite of recent health challenges that Marion has experienced. On the day I interviewed Lloyd, the couple had been at Mooroolbark train station to witness the removal of what has been the iconic and historic station building. The 1887 station building will be rebuilt and relocated near the Tarrawarra Abbey along the Yarra Valley Tourist Railway, largely through the passionate advocacy of the Stotts and a group of local friends.<sup>4</sup>

It has been a pleasure to draw the attention of our readers to Lloyd Stott. When I think of him, the images that come to mind are of a

mild-mannered, patient, faithful presence. Love of family is evident through glimpses of his interaction with grandchildren and children. And wherever Marion is—so frequently doing something in the public eye—if our gaze lingers, we may spot Lloyd, supporting and encouraging Marion with his patient kindly presence. But be aware that Lloyd's genial, friendly presence has been preceded by his persevering behind-the-scenes work in the way of research via Trove and Google, and his invaluable technical expertise!

Our grateful thanks go to the Stotts for the way they have offered their lives to bring benefit to all of us in the Mooroolbark region. We congratulate them and wish them a wonderful golden anniversary celebration in the new year!



Randall Bourchier



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<sup>3</sup> Lloyd's quick humour was responsible for Mooroolbark's township group adopting the name Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG).

<sup>4</sup> [bigbuild.vic.gov.au/news/level-crossing-removal-project/boom-gates-gone-early-new-stations-open-by-christmas](http://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/news/level-crossing-removal-project/boom-gates-gone-early-new-stations-open-by-christmas)

# celebrate mooroolbark festival

# 2022

Did you know that Celebrate Mooroolbark is the biggest festival in the Yarra Ranges? Due to our shire having the largest geographical area in metro Melbourne, Yarra Ranges Council has a policy that it doesn't run festivals. Instead, it provides grants to support community-run festivals, and there are approximately 16 festivals held in the shire every year. Following the end of Red Earth Festival (which was the biggest community-run festival in Victoria and of all festivals in the state, second only to Moomba), Celebrate Mooroolbark began in 2002 with just a handful of stalls, a small street parade and one stage. Prior to the pandemic, it was hosting more than 130 stallholders, numerous stages, activities, workshops, competitions, roving performers, an Active Living Hub, billy cart races, rides and more.

We depend on the help of volunteers and sponsorship from local businesses and community groups to put this on every year. Our committee, a superb mismatch of local misfits, brings music, craft, entertainment and food, for free to the streets of Mooroolbark every year and in 2022 we are going to be bigger and better than ever. In



PHOTO: VOLANDEPKICKET



PHOTO: REIMAE JONES



PHOTO: ANDREW RUMNEY

March this year (in arguably the most difficult year to run a festival to date) we had a fresh injection of local volunteers and together we were able to get approval to host the event in the unusual week-long format. After cancelling the festival entirely in 2020 due to COVID-19, and having to hold it over eight days this year, we are really looking forward to a new style of festival again this year; something in between the original and recent formulas. And, restrictions willing, to bring back the beloved street parade!

The theme for the festival in 2022 is RE-CONNECT, and the festival will be run on 19 and 20 March 2022. After the unusual circumstances we have all experienced recently, the festival committee decided that the theme this year would not only reflect local business and community involvement, but also the positive implications of our suburb's 5-kilometre radius—things like supporting small businesses, encouraging more engagement, and the simplicity of meeting and RE-CONNECTing with our neighbours and local groups in person. Our aim is to help everyone appreciate being back together after COVID-19 and become re-energised post lockdown. We want everyone to be able to find something to enjoy and participate in.

We are excited to bring new energy to this local community event, making it into an even better family-friendly festival for everyone to RE-CONNECT and reinvigorate. After the festival this year we lost some really valuable, long-standing volunteers who have been involved from the start, who due to health and family reasons can no longer continue. We are looking for volunteers of all ages and abilities to assist making Celebrate Mooroolbark 2022 RE-CONNECT the best year ever. It really is the amazing people that make these events shine!

Have you ever wanted to become more involved with the local community? Wanted to try your hand at organising a street parade, assist with site management or fundraising? Are you a small business owner who wants to engage and share? Just moved to the area and want to create lasting friendships and connections? Got some resume space to fill? Time to kill? We need you!

To register your interest in volunteering for the festival, please contact Liz Ryan on 0434 012 264 or email [liz@celebratemooroolbark.com](mailto:liz@celebratemooroolbark.com).

This year, we are asking everyone to please follow us on Facebook and Instagram, as well as via our fresh website ([celebratemooroolbark.com](http://celebratemooroolbark.com)) so we can keep you updated and informed about all the great entertainment on offer. RE-CONNECT 2022. Be curious, ask questions and most importantly, get involved!

**Bec Gilbert**  
Marketing & Social Media  
Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee

# Community Connection at The Parents Hub

“If women are feeling like they are part of a community, then mission accomplished!” said Erin Bourke, founder and CEO of The Parents Hub. Formed in 2018, the group is passionate about creating an inclusive, fun and supportive community for parents.

Erin had been dreaming of creating an inclusive space for mothers and parents to connect when an ideal opportunity literally came knocking. The parent-run Blairgowrie House Playgroup in Mooroolbark was struggling with insufficient finances and membership when they approached a nearby community centre and asked Erin’s then boss about taking over the group. “I had previously told my boss about my vision for a parents’ hub, but it hadn’t been viable to pursue at that time. It just so happened that they walked into our community centre and my boss immediately told me about the opportunity.”

Risking her job and income, Erin took the plunge and grabbed the chance to bring her vision to life. Taking over the old playgroup, located in what had once been a family home in Mooroolbark’s Manchester Road, she set up The Parents Hub as a not-for-profit organisation and a registered charity. “We got a \$6000 grant from the Bendigo Bank in Mooroolbark and used it to paint the interior of the house and put in curtains. We really wanted to make parents feel at home and have a multi-use space,” said Erin.



One playgroup session quickly became three, and the new hub was soon a thriving community for local parents. “It went from 30 members to 200 member families. That’s about 400 people coming through the centre each week,” said Erin. Although the COVID-19 pandemic forced the centre to shut for long periods in 2020, and again periodically in 2021, Erin noticed that “the demand has increased ridiculously—it’s doubled since COVID.”

“Parents increasingly want to get out of the house with their young kids. We have a good reputation and are quite different to a standard playgroup session. There’s a lot of word of mouth.” Erin is also grateful for the significant support from the Yarra Ranges Council, which has helped the hub to grow.

Today The Parents Hub has expanded to much more than playgroups. Also on offer are first aid classes for new parents, mothers’ group newborn classes, baby classes for one-on-one time and sensory play, the ‘Gather’ monthly events for mothers to spend time together and share their experiences of motherhood. Erin said, “The idea is that parents can start with us with their newborn, then come to baby classes, and then to the playgroups until Prep starts. We see parents coming back with their second and third child, which is lovely, because we feel like home.”

The Parents Hub mission to promote and support the wellbeing of parents in the community is deeply relevant. Erin believes the hub plays



The Parents Hub founder and CEO Erin Bourke, centre, with facilitators Cody Rowlands (left) and Kaitlyn McKerrow



The biggest change, however, was not just updating the old lemon and lime-coloured walls but establishing a new playgroup model and creating an inviting community for families. “The previous playgroup was self-run, where parents would let themselves in, set everything up and run it themselves. We believed strongly that the new model needed facilitators to run sessions—both for safety and to add value,” Erin explained.

At the hub, the facilitators’ role is to support the parents and ensure that the playgroup experience is as relaxing and enjoyable as possible. “Our point of difference is that the facilitator’s main job is actually to focus on the parents, not necessarily the kids, whether it’s holding one child so a parent can focus on their other child, or making a cuppa for them,” said Erin. The facilitators are a welcoming face at each session and help to introduce parents and encourage an inclusive environment. They also run group time during part of each session, with a different theme each week.

The presence of the facilitators enables parents to be fully present during the playgroup. “Many parents are so distracted these days—it’s hard not to be. At the hub you would often barely see a phone out for the whole session. Parents are able to be really present with their children. It’s two hours of quality time,” said Erin.

an important role in providing support and encouragement for parents. “Everyone has an opinion on parenting these days, but sometimes you just need a supportive shoulder to lean on. So many women just need someone to talk to and listen. That peer-to-peer support is so crucial.”

Looking ahead, The Parents Hub hopes to expand into family-style weekend events, and venue hire for birthdays and events, the profits of which will go back into the services and equipment. In a recent review of their member families, they were surprised to find that more than half were living outside of Mooroolbark. Erin said this highlights the need for more hubs around Victoria.

Reflecting on what she is most proud of about The Parents Hub journey of the past few years, Erin said, “When I became a mum in 2016 I felt pretty isolated, even with friends and family nearby—because none of them had young kids. I started to run support groups for mums, and I had this vision of creating a safe plan for mothers to have conversations about the challenges of parenting. That this vision has come to life in a little house in Mooroolbark, full of love, focused on children’s activities and creating a space for mums, is wonderful.”

Carissa Sianidis

The Parents Hub is located at 168 Manchester Road, Mooroolbark. Families interested in The Parents Hub can find more information on the group’s Facebook page or website: [theparentshub.com.au](http://theparentshub.com.au).

In 2005, beauty salon owner Leanne Timms realised that she was living her long-held dream. A client, whose daughter had gone to school with Lea, reminded her that in her Year 12 school yearbook, Lea had written that in ten years she wanted have her own beauty therapy business. On hearing the client's words, Leanne realised that—in exactly that time frame—she had, in fact, achieved that dream. "I've always been very passionate about beauty therapy, but until that point, I had forgotten exactly what my dream was," remembered Lea.

Lea opened the All Buffed Up beauty salon in 2004 to meet a need she saw in Mooroolbark, where she has lived since she was two. As an experienced beauty therapist, she knew she could offer many services that weren't available in the suburb. "It was a scary step, but the business grew very quickly. It was more than I could have ever hoped for—and I've never looked back."

The salon offers a range of services, from routine beauty treatments like facials, waxing and spray tans to more technology-based skincare solutions. The salon uses Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) to treat skin conditions and reduce signs of aging, and also has injectable anti-aging treatments. "Our clientele want to look and feel their best," said Lea. "You can

fast-track it with injectables, or you can take a more natural approach with things like skin peels and LEDs."

The customer-focused business suits Lea. "I love being around people—I love helping them. Clients trust you when they realise that you are not just trying to sell them something that you make money on."

However, Lea describes the last couple of years in the business as being 'really tough' financially, for a number of reasons. "I was worried about how the train station work would affect us, but that's been a walk in the park compared to what COVID's done to businesses around here," she said. With every lockdown, Lea's salon has had to close, which takes its toll. "We've come to the realisation that this will happen again and again, so everyone feels a bit defeated." To bring in some money when her doors are closed, Lea sells kits of quality products for facials, waxing, manicures and pedicures online.

All Buffed Up is located at 62 Brice Avenue and can be contacted on 9727 0378. For more details, check out the salon's Facebook page or website: [allbuffedup.com.au](http://allbuffedup.com.au).



In spite of her reduced income, Lea is grateful for what she has—her two young children, and her husband, who has been able to continue working. "I know that as a business we're not the worst affected—so each time we just close up and hope that we can open up again as soon as possible," she said.

## Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages Protecting a Family Tradition

Most Australians would probably be surprised to learn that, tucked safely away in the Mooroolbark shopping precinct, there is an endangered species. Even more surprisingly, this endangered species is not a plant or an animal, but ... a sausage!

The signature Gervasoni Bull Boar sausage made by Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages in Mooroolbark is on the Slow Food foundation's list of endangered foods and recipes. Established in the 1980s, the Slow Food organisation has an 'Ark of Taste' register, which lists traditional foods at risk of extinction in the modern world. The Bull Boar sausage is one of the few Australian foods on the register.

Owned by father and son team Brendan and Luke Janssen, Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages has been located in the Terrace shopping centre for 13 years. The endangered Bull Boar sausage is just one of 28 specialty sausages they make by hand with fresh, natural ingredients.



PHOTO: YARRA VALLEY GOURMET SAUSAGES

Brendan had been a butcher for more than two decades when he opened Lockton Farm Gourmet Sausages with his father-in-law. The goal was to make gourmet sausages without the high levels of fat and preservatives contained in most commercial sausages. The business created a range of artisan sausages to provide customers with a healthier, better quality option—sausages that they could be proud of.

After his father-in-law's recent retirement, Brendan relaunched the business under the new name Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages, and the baton was handed down to one of Brendan's four sons, 21-year-old Luke. Luke is enthusiastic about the company's sausages, which are all low fat, egg free and gluten free, with additional options for people who have intolerances to nuts, lactose, fruit, or grains. With names like Chicken, Spinach and Pine Nut; Beef, Sundried Tomato and Basil; and Hoisin Duck, more than half of the sausage varieties contain vegetables, leading to a colourful display of sausages in shades of green, red and orange.

The legendary Gervasoni Bull Boar sausage dates back to Swiss-Italian settlers on the Victorian Gold Fields in the 1850s, and is based on a recipe handed down through generations of the Gervasoni family, from whom Brendan's wife is descended. Despite Brendan marrying into the family, it was more than 16 years before he was given the carefully guarded recipe. "Dad had to sign that he would give the recipe to no-one but his boys," said Luke.

Foot traffic in the Terrace shopping centre is slower than Brendan would like, and the business relies on its weekend trips to farmers' markets around Victoria for the majority of its income. However, said Brendan, once people discover Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages, they remain loyal. "Our customers really appreciate the quality of the ingredients and the time it takes to make our products," said Brendan. "That's what keeps them coming back, and that's what keeps us going."

Janet Van Dijk

Yarra Valley Gourmet Sausages is at Shop 13 in the Terrace (phone 9727 3200) and is open from 9 am–5 pm Tuesday to Friday. The company's Facebook page shows the entire range of sausages, along with details about which local weekend markets they will be attending.



# SenseAbilities

Nearly 20 years ago, pediatric occupational therapist Kathy Clarkson was frustrated by the shortage of therapeutic toys and equipment available to her clients. There was only one Australian business selling the resources she needed, and everything else had to be ordered from overseas.

Kathy and her sister Robyn Kirkham wanted to make it easier for people to find resources that would contribute to their sensory, emotional and intellectual development. Together the sisters launched SenseAbilities, which sells a range of toys, equipment, and books that promote sensory processing and motor development. Almost two decades on, SenseAbilities caters to customers Australia-wide through its online business and from its store in Mooroolbark.

The resources at SenseAbilities support the mental health and sensory processing needs of both adults and children. According to Robyn, the majority of customers are shopping for someone who has special needs, particularly autism spectrum disorder, and SenseAbilities stocks a range of items that help people function better at school, work, and in the community. The store is also a great source of educational toys for children of all abilities, as well as teenagers and adults looking for something to help them stay focused and on track, particularly in this time of online learning and work. "The toys that we have chosen to stock have a purpose to their play, whether it's to improve fine motor development, gross motor development, or mental health."

Robyn explained that even children who don't have a special needs diagnosis can struggle in the classroom, and that there are resources to meet a child's physical or mental needs and make classroom learning more effective. For example, an anxious child may continually bite on the end of a pencil, or have trouble sitting still and concentrating. These behaviours indicate what their brains and bodies need in order to feel less anxious or



better regulated. It can help to introduce items to chew on that provide greater intensity, or an air-filled cushion to provide more movement input to help them concentrate more effectively. "You have to address those self-regulation needs before you can address teaching the child," said Robyn. SenseAbilities also stocks the popular 'fidget toys'—small objects that can be squeezed, moved or pulled to help relieve stress and regulate the need for touch and movement. "Fidgets have two purposes," said Robyn. "They can help you manage in an environment, or they can help you zone out from an environment that is overwhelming because of noise and movement. We've been selling those for the past 18 years, and they've suddenly become something that interests everybody."

Janet Van Dijk

*The SenseAbilities range can be found online at [senseabilities.com.au](http://senseabilities.com.au), on Facebook, or in store at 12 Winyard Drive in Mooroolbark. The shop is usually open from 9:30-3:30 Monday to Friday—however, hours do vary, so Kathy and Robyn recommend that customers phone first on 9726 8047 to check that the store is open, or to make an appointment.*

## A Space for Everyone



Mooroolbark Traders & Community Group is looking for community input into an exciting new opportunity that promises to contribute to the vibrance of the shopping precinct.

Thanks to the generosity of its owner, Shop 16 at Mooroolbark Terrace is being offered rent free for community use. With just minimal charges for utilities, the shop will provide a low-cost meeting place for groups and activities. The brightly lit space was previously used as a base for the Mooroolbark Street Art Project

and is equipped with tables and chairs, storage space, display cabinets, and access to tea and coffee-making facilities.

"It's a great opportunity for the community to make use of this space," said Yolande Pickett, marketing coordinator of Mooroolbark Traders & Community Group (MTCG). "It's up to us to tailor it to what the Mooroolbark community wants."

Inspired by community connection programs in other suburbs, MTCG and Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) are applying for a Yarra Ranges Council grant to fund the project and reactivate

the space as a community hub. One use of the funds, if granted, could be to pay someone for supervising and coordinating the use of the shop. "Part of our budget could be to employ, or at least pay an honorarium to, a community member who could help maintain the space," said Yolande. MUG President Randall Bourchier believes that a focused, employed 'community connector' would be instrumental in fostering community partnerships.

Both MTCG and MUG are looking for community input on the best use of the space. Suggestions from the community have already come in, with low-cost art and craft workshops being a popular idea. Other suggestions include setting up card games and board games for both adults and children, or a meeting space for community groups, including local support groups.

To submit your ideas for potential uses for this community space, please contact Yolande on 0415 569 238 or at [info@mooroolbark.vic.au](mailto:info@mooroolbark.vic.au). MUG will find out in November whether its application for a grant has been successful. If the bid is successful, planning and further consultation with the community is expected to begin in the new year.

# When Equal is Just Not Fair

Flicking through a decorating magazine, I noticed photos of a beautiful home belonging to a family with two young daughters. One photo showed a girl's bedroom, adorned with carefully coordinated curtains, wallpaper and furniture, but there were no photos of the other daughter's room. In the article, the mother explained that to preserve equality, both girls' rooms were decorated exactly the same. As I admired the furnishings, I couldn't help but wonder if the girls were truly happy with their identical rooms, and for how long they would be satisfied.

Equality and fairness are highly regarded values in our society, and for good reason. There are too many examples of children who have been disadvantaged, disregarded or discriminated against because they are different in some way. The impact of this can be extremely damaging.

Most parents want to treat their children fairly and avoid any partiality. Perceived favouritism can be a source of deep and lasting hurt for children, one that can extend into adult years with an impact on mental health and subsequent relationships. Parents who have experienced unjust treatment in their own childhoods can be even more fervent about providing equivalence for each child in their families.

However, the problem with trying to treat children equally is that it is impossible to achieve. We can exhaust ourselves trying to provide equal measures of time, attention, care, opportunities and resources for our children, only to find that it never quite balances out. If we have a large family, multiple births, or children with additional needs or disabilities, it becomes even more challenging. As parents, our resources are finite—we do not have unlimited capacities. To make up the shortfall, we can find ourselves neglecting other important needs such as self-care, time with our partner, or simple downtime.

Children are perceptive. If they sense that equality is paramount, it can become a focal point to the detriment of other family values. In his article, 'Treating Siblings Equally', Tommy Page gives the example of two boys who both wanted to sit on the same side of the couch to watch their favourite TV program. To remedy this, their mother introduced a timer so that they switched positions every five minutes. She thought they would become better friends because they were being treated the same, but instead they became more focused on who got what—the dividing of the couch became symbolic and they began to fight about everything.<sup>1</sup>

Injustice can also be used by children as a

bargaining chip, a way to push their own agenda. If parents are sensitive to injustice, they can be quick to react when children claim, "It's not fair!" This can lead to a cycle with parents constantly trying to make it right, and children becoming increasingly attuned to any hint of imbalance—the harder the parents try, the more the children feel unfairly treated.

In reality, there are many aspects of family life that are just not going to work out evenly. Children with disabilities often require additional parental attention, support, and programming to foster their development, particularly in the early years. A child who has certain talents or abilities may also need special opportunities and training in order to develop his potential. A seriously ill child will absorb considerable time and energy. In order to build resilience, tolerance and compassion, our children need



PHOTO: UNSPLASH/JANIK FERLIC

to understand that life will not always be even-handed. There will be circumstances that are unjust and simply beyond control.

When we focus on treating our children the same, we are setting ourselves up for failure. We also miss an important point. Each child is an individual with distinct needs, interests, abilities and preferences. Mother of three Laura Epstein writes, "I don't treat my children equally because my children are absolutely not equal. I have a six-year-old with autism and two neurotypical identical twins. I love all three equally but they have their own strengths and weaknesses. They very much require different things from me... instead of treating them equally... I focus on

giving each child what they need."<sup>2</sup>

Developing a strong and loving relationship with each child is much more important than treating children the same. In *The Five Love Languages of Children*, Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell write about loving each child for their individuality, for who they are, and showing love in a way that makes the most impact for that child. For example, one child might thrive on having quality one-to-one time with his parent while another child may respond better to kind and encouraging words.

When children are loved for their individual qualities and shown love in ways that are meaningful for them, equivalence becomes less relevant. Instead of balancing the scales, parents can focus on enjoying family life and loving each child for the unique and special person that they are.

- When fairness issues arise, it is important to listen and acknowledge what your child is feeling, particularly when there are recurring issues. Pent-up feelings can lead to resentment and lasting hurt.

- Try to detect the underlying need. Children are not always aware of or able to articulate what they really want, so they may just complain about the current circumstance. For example, a child grumbling about being unable to go somewhere with a parent may actually be craving that parent's undivided attention.

- Think about small, meaningful and unique ways to show children that they are noticed and appreciated for who they are. For your son, it might be working on a special project together. For your daughter, it could be running her a deep bubble bath after her footy training. An older child might respond to being allowed some extra responsibilities or privileges.

- Provide some perspective. There are some real and harsh injustices in the world that people battle every day. People are regularly discriminated against because of their race, gender,

ability, beliefs or sexual preferences, to name a few. Draw your child's attention to these situations, build empathy, and encourage them to support causes that are important to them.

Kate Chivers

## Further reading:

*Treating Children as Individuals*, [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)  
*The Five Love Languages of Children* by Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, L. (2019, April 30). *Why I Don't Treat Children Equally: A Valuable Parenting Lesson I Learned from My MIL*. [scarymommy.com/dont-treat-children-equally/](http://scarymommy.com/dont-treat-children-equally/)

<sup>1</sup> Page, T. (2013, August 17). *Treating Siblings Equally*. [ezinearticles.com](http://ezinearticles.com)



# Blokes LEANING ON Blokes



## Victorian Brotherhood Male Support and Suicide Awareness

Just four and a half years ago, life for Joshua Martin was looking good. He had his own home in the Yarra Ranges, was working as a building supervisor, and had been a volunteer for 17 years at the Country Fire Authority. His second child was due to be born any day.

Then, in the blink of an eye, everything changed. In March 2017 Josh was involved in a serious motorbike accident, leaving him with extensive injuries that would require years of therapy, both physical and emotional.

“Before my accident I was someone who frowned upon people who said that they had mental issues,” admitted Josh. “I used to think that people who committed suicide took the easy option—I didn’t understand what was going on behind the scenes. Then I experienced it firsthand. I went through a suicide attempt after my accident. Luckily it wasn’t successful, and that’s what made me want to become an advocate for other people.”

“For the first four months after the accident, my partner Tracey had to shower me, feed me and do everything for me, as well as looking after a newborn baby—I was fully dependent on her,” said Josh. Unable to return to work, Josh soon found his life spiralling downward. He was let go from his job at the construction company, and resigned as captain of the Badger Creek CFA, a position he had held for more than six years. He was unable to pay the mortgage on his house. “I went from the highest of highs to scratching around in an ashtray to find money to put food on the table.” Diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression, Josh felt that he had no-one to talk to. “My mates weren’t the sort of mates who would sit there and listen; they were the type who would say, let’s have another beer and forget about it.” Eventually, a friend took Josh to a psychiatrist. “He physically put me in the car and took me to meet this bloke, and it opened up a whole new perspective on what I was going through.” The first year after his accident, Josh had six four-week stints in a psychiatric hospital, and for the past four and a half years he has spoken to a psychiatrist every week. “It saved my life,” he said.

Along the way Josh met Benjamin McInnes (‘Benny Mac’), who also suffered mental health issues. The pair formed a solid friendship and stayed in touch. Together, they realised there was a deficit in the mental health system. “There are professional services, but a lot of people are scared of what will happen if they reach out. We wanted to create a platform on a level of friendship, where men could just talk openly and honestly with others who have been in similar situations, with no judgement.”

“We wanted to create something that I wished I had had back at the time of my accident. Blokes leaning on blokes, I guess.”

In May 2020 they established Victorian Brotherhood Male Support and Suicide Awareness, an online support community. At the time, the world was in the grip of the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, which created even more concern about people’s mental health. Less than 18 months later, the group has expanded beyond anything Josh and Benny

could have imagined. The private Facebook group has nearly 20,000 members from all over Australia, and the public Facebook page has more than 3,000 followers. Four evenings a week, members of the private group get together in an online meeting. “It’s a platform for males to have a talk about what’s going on in their day, share experiences and knowledge and just have a chat,” said Josh. “It’s about breaking down the stigma around men’s mental health.”

“We’re just a bunch of blokes who have been through our own experiences, but we strongly push the message that it’s OK not to be OK, that it’s not weak to speak, and that there are plenty of people out there who are willing to listen. We encourage people to get professional mental health support, and we fund some of that. We started out in Victoria, but it’s basically locals supporting locals Australia-wide, whether you are in Tasmania or the top end of WA.”

As well as supporting each other, members of the Victorian Brotherhood reach out to those in the community who are going through hard times. The group raises funds at local markets by selling food and their branded merchandise, and also has an online store. Through these sales, as well as generous sponsorships and donations, the group has raised more than \$23,000 to give back to the community in a number of ways—providing meals and food vouchers, funding drug and alcohol counselling and medical appointments, and helping the families of Aussie veterans who have died by suicide. The group has also worked with local churches to help those in need, and with Lilydale charity Holy Fools to support those experiencing homelessness. In January, Josh was presented with the Yarra Ranges Council’s Ian De La Rue Award for Community Leadership. “I accepted it on behalf of everyone involved with the Victorian Brotherhood community,” he said.

These days, Josh is a stay-at-home dad to his two sons, aged nine and one, and his four-year-old daughter. Although he is still undergoing physical rehabilitation to increase his mobility and function, he’s grateful for what he has. “It wasn’t easy,” he said. “We lost all the materialistic things we had. But not everything in life is about what you have. It gave me a different perspective—if you’re healthy, if you’re alive, if you’ve got your family around you, they’re the things that actually matter. A roof over your head, a loving family. Just the small things.”

Janet Van Dijk

To find out more about Victorian Brotherhood, check out the group’s Facebook page or support their community work by purchasing merchandise at [shop.victorianbrotherhood.info/collections](http://shop.victorianbrotherhood.info/collections).



**Stable One**  
more than a place to stay



## A Place to Call Home

Those who have never experienced homelessness may not understand just how life changing it can be to be given a helping hand just when it's needed the most. "It's been an amazing experience," said Adam, who was provided with safe, low-cost accommodation by charity group Stable One. "It's allowed me to take a breath, get back on my feet... now I feel very, very confident about taking the next step."

Three years ago, *Living Today* brought you the story of Stable One, a ground-breaking program<sup>1</sup> that provided emergency accommodation on cold winter nights to those without shelter. In partnership with around 30 local churches, Stable One used church buildings as temporary overnight accommodation for men and women in the Yarra Ranges. With the help of more than 160 volunteers, the charity provided not only warmth and food, but a journey toward hope. The plan was to continue providing winter night shelters every year, but due to the global pandemic, the Yarra Ranges shelters were unable to be established in 2020 and 2021.

that network," said Jenny Willett, managing director of Stable One. "We give them access to our policies, forms, and training videos. They're autonomous shelters, but we consult and train, and share what we did with ours." Jenny also facilitates Zoom meetings with coordinators of those different shelters so that they can network with each other. "The aim is to learn from each other and keep developing the model for our program," said Jenny.

In July 2020, Stable One took another big step, beginning a pilot program of supported accommodation. The successful three-month trial in the winter of 2020 paved the way for the official opening of The Lodge in April this year, on a tranquil property in picturesque Launching Place. The Lodge provides accommodation for up to 12 people—six male and six female—who otherwise might be at risk of homelessness.

"It's the next step after crisis accommodation," Jenny explained. "We're looking to create a community that cares, connects and



Despite the inability to set up local emergency shelters, Stable One has continued to work toward its mission to provide accommodation to those in need. The charity has mentored other groups setting up their own winter night shelters, from places as far-flung as Toowoomba and Shepparton, to the Mornington Peninsula. "We've developed a Winter Shelter Network, and we invite other groups to affiliate with

empowers people experiencing homelessness. The way we try to do that is by having good people around. We have live-in staff on site to help create community, and volunteers come in to spend time with people." As well as providing companionship, many volunteers have skills that they can pass on, such as gardening or making ceramics. "We try to offer activities that will help people grow a little bit while they're here," said Jenny. "We're looking for opportunities to connect them to supports they might need, while keeping in place the supports

<sup>1</sup> September 2017. A Bed for the Night. *Living Today in Mooroolbark and the Yarra Ranges*, (60), p.5.

they've already got, and helping them to connect to people within and without the community here. It's more than just a place to stay."

Around 50 volunteers contribute to the running of The Lodge, most of them members of local churches. "These are volunteers who just give their time to help others, so that's quite a special thing," said Jenny. Volunteers can participate in a buddy program known as 'Alongsider', committing to walk alongside a lodger as a friend, guide, and listening ear. If both parties wish, the relationship may continue once the resident leaves The Lodge and integrates into mainstream society. There are also on-site chaplains, and in August, thanks to funding from the federal government, Stable One was able to employ a social worker in the role of case manager. "That will make a real difference to the outcomes for people who stay here," said Jenny.

Lodgers contribute to the cost of their accommodation, paying \$240 a week. This amount, which for most people is covered by Centrelink and other government benefits such as rent assistance, covers accommodation, meals and utilities. Each resident has a separate bedroom, with shared bathroom and living facilities. While the all-inclusive cost is less than a person would expect to pay for just accommodation elsewhere, the cost to Stable One is about twice that much for each resident. The shortfall is made up through fundraising, grants, donations, and the generosity of regular sponsors.

Residents at The Lodge make a commitment to being part of the community. "That means we eat dinner together at night; that means they help take care of the place," explained Jenny. "They might be washing up, or mopping the kitchen floor, or setting the table. We don't employ cleaners; we clean the place together. We're really like a big family."

Many local churches partner with Stable One to support The Lodge through financial contributions or donations of pantry items. On Saturday nights, members from different local churches take turns to come and cook dinner for the residents. Anyone who wishes to individually contribute to the running of The Lodge can do so by participating in the 'One:One' program, sponsoring "one place for one lodger for one week." The sponsorship of a week's rent, when spread out over a year, works out at \$20 a month.

While The Lodge feels like home for the residents, it's not intended as long-term accommodation, and lodgers move on "when they are ready," according to Jenny. "Our biggest challenge is always where people go next, because safe and affordable options are few and far between, particularly for people who want to live alone. Most people want some independence; they don't want to be in a boarding house."

Stable One is committed to its vision of finding ways to care for the weak and vulnerable, described by Jesus in Matthew 25:40 as "the least of these". Jenny is hoping that before the end of this year Stable One will have a workable solution to providing some longer-term housing, perhaps in partnership with another organisation. "It's certainly part of our vision," she said.

If you or your church would like to partner with Stable One to help those experiencing homelessness, find out more at [stableone.org](http://stableone.org) or on the group's Facebook page.

Janet Van Dijk

## In the Depths of Despair

Have you ever felt like you are at the bottom of the ocean crying for help?

Maybe you are in over your head but no one even knows you're struggling. Or maybe you've sunk so deep in despair that you think no one could possibly hear or understand you. Sometimes it's a deep wound in our very being that even we can't wrap our mind around or see a way out. Maybe we find ourselves in some deep-seated mess that seems impossible to escape.

For many of us, we may be looking around, reading the headlines, and feeling that the entire world is too broken, torn, and distorted to be pulled out of the mire. We all have a cry from the deep. The question is, "Will we be heard?"



PHOTO: PHABBY/PIETELINDORF

Listen to this cry from the deep:

"From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help... I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word. I long for the Lord more than sentries long for the dawn."<sup>1</sup>

God doesn't just note our situation with a casual dismissal. Nor does He look down at us in our deep pit and ask us what we did to fall in. No, He climbs down into our pit of despair in order to lift us out. How far will He climb? All the way to the very bottom! Further, in fact, than we think we have fallen. He gets below our despair, underneath our wounds, as far down as necessary in order to completely lift us out.

This process sometimes requires patient waiting on our part, but we can always wait in anticipation, knowing that He does hear us and will answer us in His deep, abiding love. In fact He has already heard our cries from the deep before we know it.

Not only does He hear our cries from the deep, we can know He will also always answer.

Heber Ticas  
*Speaking of Life*

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 130:1, 5-6 (NLT)

This article was prompted after a long-time community friend described his immense satisfaction and gratitude for the after-hours advice and concern he and his wife had received from Dr Peter Janovic as they faced a recent emergency.

Peter has been a long-time identity in our township. After graduating from Monash University in 1979 and exploring a few career options, he discovered that he enjoyed the “outer-suburban style of practice” and in 1984 he began a medical practice in Brice Avenue. Peter told me that as the practice grew it was eventually ‘re-potted’ and moved to the Terrace shopping centre in around 1995.

Not long after the move to the Terrace, Dr Andrew Protassow joined Peter, after Andrew’s Charles Street practice was destroyed by fire. The two men are still practice colleagues.

More than ten years ago, Peter established a comprehensive medical service at Mooroolbark Medical Centre, where he continues to work with “seven to eight doctors, several nurses, a diabetes educator, with podiatry, psychology and pathology services on site.”

“My philosophy is to try to get the right mix,” said Peter. “A balance between high standard,



PHOTO: RANDALL BOUNCHIER

# Dr Peter Janovic Striking a Healthy



PHOTOS SUPPLIED



Peter and his wife Marcia were married in 1979.



Peter with his parents after his graduation from Monash University in 1979



The Janovics with children and grandchildren

professional medical care, and a warm, family-oriented, pleasant environment.”

Some five years ago, Peter sold the centre to Qualitas Health<sup>1</sup> due to his desire that the established professional standards and welcoming friendly environment be maintained into the future. Qualitas subsequently appointed Peter as its Chief Medical Officer, and Peter says he’s “more or less still here doing what I’ve always done.”

Peter wonders how much the health struggles experienced by his late parents may have contributed towards the career he enjoys so much. Both parents survived the Holocaust, but at a cost to their long-term health. His mother escaped walking a snow-covered route, leading to the loss of her toes, and his father was often unwell following his difficult wartime experience.

Of the influence of his parents and their Jewish heritage, Peter mentions “a strong sense of family—I suppose akin to Italian and other European families.”

“I also inherited my ethos towards work and business from my father. He had a good

<sup>1</sup> [qualitashealth.com.au/](http://qualitashealth.com.au/). Qualitas runs the administrative side of the practice.

reputation in the textile industry. He was a very hard worker who tried to ensure that those he dealt with would be as happy with the outcome as himself. He knew that being too cut-throat or too ruthless is not sustainable in the long run. This helped me develop the attitude that in providing a service to people, you attempt to provide the best service you can, rather than big profits. And as you do, people will return loyally year after year.”

Peter enjoys the camaraderie and long-term relationships he has with many people in Mooroolbark. “You see people in their 20s and 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s and try to assist them when health issues become more apparent. I enjoy the privilege of sharing the struggles of people responding to significant medical and relational challenges. It’s very satisfying. And it’s always fascinating to see how people go with the problems they face, and the resilience and fortitude they develop to get through difficult times and come out alright at the other end.”

Despite its changes over the years, Peter sees Mooroolbark as having an outer-suburban, almost country, ambience. “Nowadays much of the vacant land that was here when I started is developed,” he said. “And yet, even with all the mod-cons and the availability of necessary services, there’s still something of an endearing country feel.”

Peter acknowledged that, although his desire is to always try to make people happy, that can be more difficult with some people than others. He explained, “One of my medical colleagues said that some people we see are the ‘worried well’. They may be experiencing multiple physical symptoms, but may not have major physical ailments. Although when they arrive they may feel miserable, you want to see what you can do to make them feel a bit better by the time they leave. And so you take time to address their specific issues, reassure accordingly, and provide whatever strategies and techniques may be helpful.”

The real skill, Peter continued, is to identify those who are really unwell. “For example, people may come in with headaches. For the majority, it’s not that significant. The challenge is to pick up the person whose condition is significant. It’s a case of diagnostic problem solving. When confronted with some symptoms that don’t seem to make a lot of sense, to find what’s really happening requires much more detail. I find such diagnostic challenges interesting and stimulating.”

Over the years, Peter has seen some significant changes in the practice of medicine. “Probably the biggest is the increase in people who’ve diagnosed themselves on the basis of whatever website they’ve been on. They’ve diagnosed themselves with terminal cancer, for example, when what they have may be a bit of gastritis. These days there are more assertive patients with preconceived ideas about their condition and what treatment they should receive. I take the approach of listening to their description of their symptoms, and then suggest we talk about them and see what I think

the problem is. Fortunately, I’ve never had the approach that some doctors do: ‘It’s my way or the highway’—that’s not the way to approach things.”

With regard to Australia’s national response to COVID-19, Peter described the challenges that doctors have had, due to either a lack of, or changing, information. “It was difficult to plan how to roll out vaccinations—you weren’t sure when you’d receive the vials, how you’d get them, which variety you were going to get, the criteria for eligibility... and that’s continued all along.”

With the goalposts continually moving, it’s difficult for doctors to give the best advice. “As an example, at the moment I can only offer people AstraZeneca,” said Peter. “We can refer people elsewhere providing they meet the criteria for Pfizer. Initially we were told not to give Astra to people under 60, but the advice changes.”

“These difficulties were bound to happen due to the urgent need of vaccinating people. What’s disappointed me the most has been the beat up by the press on the very rare complications of AstraZeneca, and also the political point-scoring by state and—to a lesser extent—federal health ministers. As a doctor it’s meant that there’s so much more you must filter out before you arrive at a clearer picture of going forward. I don’t envy the politicians in getting the balance right.”

Peter also chose the word balance when speaking about the desire for healthy wellbeing. “Some people with physical or mental health issues might say that they are limited in what they can do. I challenge them. ‘Let’s look at what you *can* do and make that happen!’ For example, those who have diabetes and are overweight might claim they don’t have time to exercise. I tell them to make an appointment with themselves as their exercise time. Go outside, don’t sit at the desk, turn the phone off, and you’ll find that your overall efficiency and performance will improve. I try to impart getting the balance right. You have to have some ‘you’ time.”

“In relationships, you have to have time for each other one-on-one, and as a family. But you also must have time for yourself to pursue your own activities. If all your time is interacting with your spouse or significant other, that’s not healthy. If your time is totally by yourself, that’s not healthy either.”

It’s obvious from the photos in Peter’s office that he practises his own advice of living a balanced life. There are pictures of him and his wife enjoying time with their three children and five grandchildren. And Peter is devoted to his hobbies—he’s a passionate Demons supporter, is serious about his golf, and enjoys cycling.

“It’s been very satisfying giving my entire life to one career,” Peter concluded. “It has been wonderful to provide a service to the community and form close relationships within the community. How good it is when, by contributing to the happiness of others by your deeds and actions, you also become happier!”

Randall Bourchier

# Balance



Peter’s parents, pictured here in Prague on their wedding day in 1946, both suffered ongoing health problems as a result of the Holocaust.



## Storms Ignite Community Spirit

When Lisa Currie put out a call on Facebook for donations for Yarra Ranges residents affected by the violent June storms, she knew that the people of Mooroolbark would respond generously. Through her work with Nourish Network, which gives a helping hand to families experiencing financial difficulty, Lisa knows about the community's kindness. However, even she wasn't quite prepared for just how responsive people would be. "I couldn't believe it," said Lisa. "People are always very generous, but that was overwhelming, and in just a matter of days—and things kept coming in."

In early June, powerful winds and rain lashed Melbourne's outer east, causing damage and destruction to thousands of homes. Large trees were ripped from their roots and flung onto cars and homes. As broken powerlines waded in the wind, thousands of residents were plunged into blackout, cut off from heating, phone lines, and internet. Flash flooding and tree-straddled roads made access difficult for vehicles. Despite concerns for their own safety, CFA and SES volunteers worked around the clock to free people from their homes and make emergency repairs. Local residents also responded quickly and selflessly, working alongside each other with chainsaws and other tools to clear the debris.

About a week after the storms, Lisa Currie wrote a Facebook post on behalf of Nourish Network, asking for donations for those in storm-hit communities. With electricity still out in many areas and winter temperatures often close to zero degrees, there was an urgent need for blankets, battery-operated lanterns, candles, food, and fresh water. "I just put one post on Facebook and thought we might get a few items," said Lisa. Within a couple of days, though, there were enough items to fill five carloads—too much for the church she had originally been collecting on behalf of. Lisa contacted members of Lilydale SES, who showed up at very short notice to load their vehicles with donated goods to take to those who needed it. Additional items were given to Yarra Ranges Council to distribute.

Nourish Network was just one of many groups and individuals that rallied around to help after the wild storms. Lisa feels that the uncertainty and concern surrounding COVID-19 over the past 18 months has engendered the community's already generous spirit. "People are starting to realise just how important community is, how much people have suffered, and how much we all need to be there for one another," she said.

Janet Van Dijk



PHOTO: LISA CURRIE

PHOTO: CAROLINE SCHAPPE



## Riding for the Kids

If you happen to be driving along Victoria's western district roads this October, you may have to make way for an enthusiastic group of people riding the distinctive Honda CT110 motorbike, more commonly seen across Australia as the iconic vehicle of Australia Post mail carriers.

From 21-25 October, more than 30 CEOs from various businesses will set out on the "My Kids' Postie Bike Charity Ride" to raise money for mental health. The ride is the brainchild of Phil Stenhouse OAM, founder and CEO of Bridge Builders Youth Organisation in Lilydale. Bridge Builders is a not-for-profit group that creates opportunities for young people aged 12-25 to have fun, feel safe, and to grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As a charity, the group relies entirely on donations and fundraising to support young people in various ways. The money raised from the ride will be spent on mental health and wellbeing, which Phil believes is a very important focus due to the isolation that has resulted from the coronavirus pandemic. "We're on a mission to help 25,000 young people with their mental health over the next 12 months. The money we raise will help us design programs and establish a greater counselling arm for our organisation."

The group of postie bikes will head out from Melbourne towards Apollo Bay and will travel 1500 kilometres along country highways before returning to Lilydale. Some of the \$100,000 fundraising target has already been met through corporate sponsorships, and participants hope to raise more money by 'tin rattling' in the towns they visit along the way.

The riders will be followed by a recovery trailer, which will be filled with equipment and supplies needed in case of inclement weather, breakdown, or emergency, and will be emblazoned with the names of corporate sponsors. The ride will be filmed by local media in various townships and also by a ride-along crew. Clips from the footage will be shown on social media platforms, highlighting the cause and the contributions of the sponsors.

The 'My Kids' in the name of the charity ride stems from a memorable comment made to Phil by a mentor about 30 years ago. The mentor said, "If you do something for me, I'll thank you—but if you do something for my kids, I'll never forget you."

Janet Van Dijk



Five of the Bridge Builders' riding group with their Honda CT110s. L-R: Josh Stenhouse, Stuart Gruchy, Beck Mitchell, Phil Stenhouse, Luke Collings.

PHOTO: TONY WARD/ALAMY PARTNER TURNER

To make a donation or find out more about the inspiring influence Bridge Builders is having on young people, go to [bridgebuilders.com.au](http://bridgebuilders.com.au) or see the group on YouTube: [youtube.com/watch?v=Wxy37uYCOCU&t=246s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wxy37uYCOCU&t=246s).

# Buy, Employ, Enjoy Local

We all know that the Yarra Ranges is the best place to live, work and play, and this has been especially evident over the past 18 months. The incredible Yarra Ranges spirit shone with communities coming together to support each other as we spent more time closer to home, exploring our local surrounds and making new discoveries.

As we look to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and the recent storms, now more than ever it's time to celebrate all that our wonderful region has to offer and to find ways to continue to support local.

*Buy, Employ, Enjoy Local* is a Yarra Ranges Council initiative designed to put our community front and centre of our recovery efforts and daily life, and showcase everything right here in our own backyards.

Local businesses play a huge part in our communities. They keep our high streets thriving, give us the convenience of popping to the shops, and the thrill of finding something unique. They employ our family, friends and neighbours, support local schools, and sponsor community groups. From dentists to florists, new cars to second-hand books, butchers, bakers, and even candle makers—you can find what you're looking for right here in the Yarra Ranges. When

challenges confront our community, local businesses are at the forefront of relief efforts, raising money, providing food, coffee, or a warm place to sit and recharge, even as their own livelihoods are affected. Now it's our turn to give back to them by choosing to Buy Local whenever we can.

To help local businesses to Employ Local, we're launching the Yarra Ranges JobLink online employment portal, which helps connect prospective employees with local employers and is free for both employers and jobseekers. For those wanting a career in our vibrant hospitality and tourism industry, our Hospitality Jump Start for Jobs training programs are free for locals looking to gain professional skills and employment. Run in conjunction with our partners Cire Training and Box Hill Institute Lilydale, the program also connects students with hospitality businesses looking for qualified staff.

When it comes to Enjoying Local, every pocket of Yarra Ranges has something to discover and enjoy, from our pristine natural environment of forests, rivers, lush valleys and wildlife, to our 55 unique townships. Why not try a new playground or swimming pool, hiking or bike path, or perhaps a library or sporting facility? Keep an eye out for new 'parklets' popping up in townships across



PHOTO: CATHY RONALDS

Yarra Ranges too. The parklets are happy relaxed places to catch up with friends over coffee, or just sit in the sun and enjoy a book. They're designed to help reinvigorate communities—and you might even discover new favourite artworks created by local artists!

Across the year, the Yarra Ranges host hundreds of events celebrating all the region has to offer—art, food, wine, flowers, gardens, fun runs, markets. And while winter may be dreary in other parts of the world, it is what we do best, so stay close and Enjoy Local. Watch the mist lift over the valleys on crisp winter's morning walk or enjoy a cosy evening by the fire at your neighbourhood pub or café.

**Marnee Kaspersson**  
Yarra Ranges Council

## The Arts in Springtime

This spring the Culture Tracks team is very excited about some wonderful events coming to the area, so fingers crossed that you can get out and about to enjoy them!

We are over the moon to welcome *Art Quilt Australia 2021* back to the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. This free exhibition runs until Sunday 31 October and features the very best in art quilts from Australia, New Zealand, and around the world. It showcases 25 extraordinary works of art created by incredibly skilful artists who are at the forefront of textile art. A collection of bold, intricate and colourful art quilts combines modern designs and traditional methods to create exquisite landscapes and abstract imaginings. The exhibition also includes the winners of Ozquilt Network's Award for Excellence and the National Wool Museum's acquisitive *Expressions: The Wool Quilt Prize*.

For those passionate about theatre, *Every Brilliant Thing* is on for two nights on Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 September at The Memo, Healesville. Described as an internationally renowned hour of life-affirming humour, the play is performed in the round. Guided by the incredible

solo performance of Luke Hewitt, audiences become part of the story, playing fathers, lovers and friends, following one person's life in the shadow of mental illness. This joyous work, described by the *Guardian* as "possibly one of the funniest plays you'll ever see", will show you the miracles in life's minutiae.

The Memo is also proud to present *An Evening with Uncle Jack Charles* on Saturday 30 October. Join Uncle Jack for an evening of truth, love, laughter and legendary storytelling. This award-winning actor, Aboriginal elder and activist is here to share his colourful life and brilliant career in words and music, joined by some special surprise guests. A member of the Stolen Generation, Jack has spent his life in between acting gigs caught in the 'addiction/crime/doing time' cycle.

On Saturday 6 November, Jude Perl brings her



PHOTO: YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

*And Then There Were Three* by Cathy Jack Coupland (detail)

sharp wit and musical comedy to the people of Montrose in *I Have a Face*, an entertaining and all-too-relatable show. Jude's insight into her own personal mental health struggles with 'adulthood' will make you want to sing, cry and laugh. Come along to this special cabaret show at Montrose Town Centre for an honest, hilarious discussion of mental health with a theatrical twist. She'll talk about some tough stuff, make you laugh, and make you feel truly human. Visit [culturetracks.info](http://culturetracks.info) for details.

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.
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 8:00 pm (except public holidays). Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. Croydon Senior Citizens Hall, cnr Mt Dandenong Rd & Civic Square. 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 term	<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.
Monday mornings Wednesday evenings	<b>Free English Classes:</b> at St Peter Julian's Church, 240 Hull Road, Mooroolbark. Call Jan Reilly on 0414 763 801 for bookings.
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	<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.
3 September – 30 October	<b>Lost in Serenity:</b> Local artist Lucinda Makin makes her solo exhibition debut. Lucinda uses colour and subtle textures to emphasise the changing surfaces of nature. The Memo, Healesville.
16 September – 2 October	<b>A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder:</b> Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company presents this award-winning musical comedy. Tickets: lilydaleatc.com or 9735 1777.
21 – 23 September	<b>LMC Kids Camp Healesville:</b> For grades 3-6. Includes gospel messages, songs and lots of activities. All welcome. Phone 9726 8111 for details.
22 September	<b>Every Brilliant Thing:</b> An hour of life-affirming humour. This joyous international work shows us the miracles in life's minutiae. 7:30 pm. Bookings 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info
22 & 28 September	<b>School Holidays Kids' Pottery Classes:</b> 11 am and 2 pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre. Suitable for ages 9+. Bookings phone 1300 368 333 or online: culturetracks.info.
30 September – 2 October	<b>Murdered to Death:</b> ARK Theatre presents a comedic spoof in true Agatha Christie style. Set in a manor house in the '30s, an eclectic group try to determine who murdered their host. arktheatremelb.com
16 October	<b>DYLANesque:</b> This Bob Dylan tribute is a theatre piece that takes you on a moving and powerful musical journey. The Memo, Healesville. Bookings 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info.
29 October	<b>Celtic Illusion:</b> Irish dance and magic in a Broadway style. Spellbinding illusions and choreography and a musical score that will send shivers down your spine. 7:30 pm. Bookings 1300 368 333.
30 October	<b>An Evening with Uncle Jack Charles:</b> An evening of truth, love, laughter and legendary storytelling. 7:30 pm Saturday 30 October. Phone 1300 368 333 or culturetracks.info.
Until 31 October	<b>Art Quilt Australia:</b> Ozquilt Network's biennial juried exhibition features the best in art quilts from Australia, New Zealand and worldwide. Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. Free entry.
11 September 9 October	<b>Urban Harvest:</b> Backyard fruit and vegetable growers—swap your excess produce. Red Earth Community Park, second Saturday each month, 10-11:30 am. Enquiries: Claire Coutts, 0425 700 280
Sunday 7 November	<b>Remembrance Day Service:</b> 10:45 am, Mooroolbark War Memorial, Hookey Park. The 4th plaque will be unveiled. For more information or to contribute: contact 9726 8740 or mooroolbarkhistorygroup@gmail.com
25 November – 11 December	<b>Witness for the Prosecution:</b> Ingenious Agatha Christie murder mystery presented by Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Company. Tickets: lilydaleatc.com or 9735 1777.

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*  
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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)  
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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.