

# LIVING TODAY

IN MOOROOLBARK/YARRA RANGES

NO. 46 MARCH 2014



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# MAYOR OFFERS A NEW



Fiona and James, and their children Nelson, Gemima and Cassius



Councillor Fiona McAllister is committed to bringing a common-sense approach to her new role of mayor

You might remember Australian actor Leo McKern's starring role as Rumpole in the Thames TV series *Rumpole of the Bailey*. The series revolved around the twilight years of the career of Horace Rumpole – “the down-at-heel yet brilliant barrister ... who never prosecutes, always defends ... notorious for turning away many suits according to his own moral code.”<sup>1</sup> Rumpole jousted regularly with a judge who was fond of expounding the virtues of “good old common sense”. What was “common sense” to the judge frequently failed to grasp some of the nuances and complexities of the points Rumpole was attempting to put forward! So, when the expression “common sense” cropped up several times in my interview with the new mayor of Yarra Ranges Council – Councillor Fiona McAllister – I wondered what she meant by the term.

“I think it gets down to putting yourself into another person’s experience and thinking about the impact of the decisions on them. It’s very easy in any big bureaucracy to be very rule-focussed. The rules are absolutely important and have to be there, but rules are often applied in a black and white sense. It is possible to make decisions that achieve a much more realistic outcome for those concerned within the spirit and intent of the rule.”

Fiona continued, “It’s important that we make decisions – not simply for decisions’ sake, but based on the philosophy that expresses itself as ‘let’s sit down and look at what you’re wanting to achieve. How can we help you achieve that?’”

To illustrate her point, Fiona mentioned a situation from last year: “Some ancillary lights were taken down from a sporting ground for safety reasons. Unfortunately, this had an immediate effect on the local dog obedience club. It had the potential to shut

them down and affect about sixty members. We didn’t have money specifically allocated in the budget for any immediate work, but, after a conversation with the manager of that area, a common sense outcome took place. We could have made a ruling based on the budget, insisting on adding a budgetary item next year, but instead chose to try to find the money from a surplus elsewhere, and within two months, the difficulties were resolved. That was a common sense decision.”

In the lead-up to last year’s council election, Fiona wrote:

*We need common sense and helpfulness in the council planning department ... people I speak to have had a planning experience that frustrates, makes them angry and empties their pockets with needing unnecessary expert reports. The requests for additional information, consultants and expert advice that is then often ignored is unacceptable. See the recent planning decision made at Council – Tuesday where the officer recommendation was to ignore CFA expert advice and refuse a permit to build on safety grounds. Luckily for once Council stepped in and made the decision and a compromise was reached – although still at significant cost to the applicant who has to build a bunker.*

*We need to support people building in the bush. We need to support businesses and industry. We don’t need planning processes that mean it takes 2 years to get a permit to build a barn or relocate a bus depot. We need to encourage planning for a retirement villages in our areas, not put that outcome at risk due to concerns about losing a few trees. There needs to be confidence among the business community to retain their investment in our areas. If elected then I will be seeking planning reform where COMMONSENSE interpretation of policy is the focus rather*

*than control and enforcement.*<sup>2</sup>

Cr. McAllister also queried a council decision to spend \$500,000 on a Healesville toilet block: “It comes back to where should we spend our money; where is it of benefit to the community? And that’s common sense too. We need to not lose sight of that.”

We spoke a little about local government:

“I’m a strong believer that local government exists because of the community,” explained Fiona. “That’s how local government began in the first place – as a result of communities petitioning the state government of the time to form local municipalities.”

“I believe it is vital that everyone involved in Yarra Ranges, staff and councillors, be constantly putting themselves in the seat of the person in the community and what their needs might be in terms of being informed. It’s not OK, for example, to schedule meetings two weeks in advance in a way that may convenience the council, because we must consider community people with busy lives and family and community commitments. Rather, we need to be talking to these people a couple of months in advance. For me it’s taking a step back and seeing things from the eyes of the people with whom we are seeking to build partnering relationships.”

Councillor McAllister believes it comes back to values of respect and empathy, particularly in a big business like the council which has a thousand very busy employees. “It’s nevertheless important to make time to ensure you don’t forget that we are here for the community,” she said. “The challenges are even greater for a large council like ours and it’s important to get the balance right between longer-serving employees with richly formed local knowledge and newer employees from elsewhere who can contribute fresh and sometimes creative ways of looking at things.”

<sup>1</sup> Liner notes - *Rumpole of the Bailey. The Complete Collection. 2001. Fremantle Media Enterprises.*

<sup>2</sup> <http://fionamcallister.com.au/planning-reform/>

# PERSPECTIVE

Fiona grew up in New Zealand, but has been in Healesville for eight years and in Australia for well over half her life. She grew up outside Dunedin in a town the size of Healesville in country NZ. "My Dad was the local GP. And I did what every good Kiwi does – put on a backpack at age 18, travelled the world and ended up coming to Australia and settling here a few years later. These days, with my husband and children here, Australia is very much home! My husband James is a lawyer, and our children are Nelson (13), Gemima (10) and Cassius (1)."

Fiona's family enjoys spending a lot of time together and having adventures. One December the family drove to the Northern Territory in a caravan James had built, and had a fantastic time touring. "We've had everything from camping holidays to sailing holidays," said Fiona. "We love our time with our children and make sure we do lots of fun things together, whether it's getting out and kicking the footy around or just cooking together."

Fiona described her father as an old-style country doctor. "My parents were (and are) people who always stepped in to help others and were actively involved in our community. Mum and Dad were involved in everything from St. Johns to Rotary, to Mum doing the church flowers, to Meals on Wheels – a little bit in the local sporting clubs, but more in community service groups. Dad still teaches the 'oldies' how to use computers, and he's 80 now. He trains people to use iPods and things like that. He's in very good health; fitter than I am!"

Fiona credits her parents with teaching her the values of tolerance, acceptance and inclusion. "I hope that these are obvious in my role as a councillor and also what I've done professionally."

And education?

"I did a BA at Otago University followed by a post-grad diploma in applied psychology at Swinburne and Melbourne universities. I returned to Melbourne Uni and completed a graduate certificate in knowledge management a few years ago. This was all about sharing ideas and information, and, as an organisational psychologist, I work within businesses particularly in local government and the not-for-profit sector, in helping organisations better share the experience of learning, through things like mentoring programs and support and encouragement for employees with fresh ideas. It's about change

processes, and encouraging leaders to see how important these things are."

Fiona is also a member of the Country Fire Authority, joining the Healesville CFA in 2010. Although an accredited wildfire fire fighter, she hasn't done much actual firefighting. "My forte has been to help out with the community education activities of the brigade, particularly by visiting and speaking to school groups."

"Being in the CFA has been an incredible experience," said Fiona. "I've learned to value the absolute commitment of volunteers, who put in hours each week on top of family and work commitments – often with very little recognition and certainly no allowances, or anything like that."

"I know that the community appreciates the CFA, and would like to see an even greater understanding of their commitment. Even on the training that I've done – on advanced pumps and so on – you're talking about at least a year of training, perhaps 300 hours all-up. By the time our volunteers put in four hours a week for regular brigade training and then extras for additional training plus turnouts for reported fires and so on, you can see that their dedication is amazing!"

Fiona observed that some of the most inspirational stories of local government come from very small councils with limited resources.

As an example, Fiona mentioned Golden Plains<sup>3</sup>, which has a staff of less than one hundred. "They've led the way for many years in their community development work. Council staff and residents have a very close relationship. It's hard to see where council starts and community ends. It's very much a partnership approach. It's very challenging for us to learn from them, as they have a population one fifth of ours and all the staff lives within the municipality. So although the comparison is quite different, these close partnering relationships are something we can aspire to more and more, building on the good work already underway in YRC."

The mayor believes that in a good community, "people know each other, and who they can rely on for support. There's a willingness to jump in and help. It's really about thinking of others – selflessness – a willingness to drop what we're doing to help. I can think of heaps of people who go unnoticed, but who every day do things like popping into

the neighbours down the street to see if they want something down at the supermarket. Now in a good community, those things happen. People do them without thinking. I think it's harder in an urban environment than a rural environment."

We spoke of much more besides, but let me conclude with some of the things that our new mayor hopes she'll be able to contribute towards:

"The single issue that I'd love to see, would be changes to the legislation like the BMO (Bushfire Management Overlay) so that people in the community can get on with their lives. I'd love to see council policy developed in a common sense way, where council and community together focus on what our communities value."

Councillor McAllister is looking forward to working with her fellow councillors in keeping rates reasonable and correctly prioritising spending. "It probably doesn't sound very inspirational, but it ultimately makes a big difference to the community."

"Local government is here to serve the community, so the economic rationalism argument just doesn't work for me. There's a balance between being fiscally responsible and focussing on community needs. An economic rationalist approach makes it difficult to provide libraries, swimming pools and youth services. Such things can never be cost-neutral, which is why people pay their rates. Ratepayers want to see those services offered, and they value their parks and open spaces! As the branch of government closest to the local community these are the issues upon which YRC does and should continue to focus."

We're looking forward to having Cr. McAllister with us in Mooroolbark on two occasions soon. She'll formally open our family festival Celebrate Mooroolbark on Saturday morning 22 March<sup>4</sup> and will also host the Mayoral Breakfast held each year on the National Day of Thanksgiving, which in 2014 will be on Saturday, 31 May.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at these events – and would like to thank Fiona for sharing some of her thoughts with us, in the midst of the time-consuming and challenging responsibilities of councillor and mayor!

**Randall Bouchier**



3 <http://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/page.aspx>

4 <http://celebratemooroolbark.com/>

Editor's Note: The need for common sense in our lives is a concern for many of us. For more tips about common sense, see Steve Steel's article 'Something's Missing ...' on page 8.

# celebrate mooroolbark 2014

**March 21st Mooroolbark Talent Quest** – Mooroolbark Community Centre  
**March 22<sup>nd</sup> A Free Family Festival** – Red Earth Reserve

Premier Sponsor



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We Serve



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**Please note:** Station Street and Brice Avenue will be closed temporarily from approximately 10am on Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> to allow the parade to reach the Red Earth Community Park. We thank you for your patience and hope that you enjoy the parade.



**What is "A Mad Hatters Tea Party"? You will find the answer at Celebrate Mooroolbark.**

In just a few short weeks, the Red Earth reserve Mooroolbark will come alive for our very own festival. It will be a fun-packed family festival celebrating the community in which we live. Most things are in readiness – all we need is a crowd of people looking to enjoy themselves and the festivities. It's bigger and better this year, with the theme of the Mad Hatter's tea party. You'd have to be crazy to miss it!

The festival will spread out from the Mooroolbark Community Centre to the Red Earth reserve and oval with a variety of activities to keep all ages amused. Food and drink available on the day will range from the Lions Club BBQ sausages to Devonshire teas, pancakes, vintage ice-cream and everything in between. There will be the usual community market, with a variety of produce and goods, as well as community groups with information booths. There will be rides, an animal farm, a puppet theatre, the scout rope bridge, ice-blocking and other activities for the kids, including hat making and singing workshops. Most activities are free or at low cost because of the generosity of our sponsors. There will also be a number of competitions throughout the day. 'Lucky straws' will be there again and this year, one in five will win a prize. Young folks are invited to hunt for the hats, in a scavenger hunt with a twist. Look out for us on Facebook – if you 'like' us you go into the draw for a special prize. There will also be a crazy hat competition on the stage in the afternoon, with prizes in junior and open categories. The judges will be

# THE MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY

looking for style, flamboyance, imaginative design and whimsical nature. Entry is free.

The festival itself kicks off on the night of Friday March 21st with the Mooroolbark Talent Quest at the Mooroolbark Community Centre at 7:30pm. An audience is required and at only \$5 it is a great night out. Winners will appear on the community stage the next day. The stage program is packed with a variety of acts throughout the day – we have already confirmed Kofi the African Drummer, Ghawazee Charm Belly Dancers, Good Life Fitness Centre and the 40-strong Australian Youth Band. But there are still more acts to come! As you wander around the festival, do not be surprised to encounter a variety of interesting and unusual characters. There will be story time from the library, a magic show and puppets, and Tubby has said she is coming. And look out for the remote controlled cars.

Our street parade will be leaving Hookey Park at around 10:15 a.m. with a costume competition for the participating groups. Participants – from local schools, bands and community groups – will march together to the festival. Keep an eye out for the marchers and give them a wave and a cheer. When the parade arrives, they will be welcomed by our Mayor, Councillor Fiona McAllister, who will then declare the festival open.

Celebrate Mooroolbark offers something for everyone in a fun-filled festival. Plan to be there some time in the day and join in the festivities – the only danger is that you will enjoy yourself too much!

■ **Andrew Lang**  
Celebrate Mooroolbark

# A Fresh Approach for MOOROOLBARK POLICE STATION

The newly-renovated and very up-to-date Mooroolbark police station, at the corner of Hull and Cambridge Roads, is now up and running. And station commander Senior Sergeant Jeff (aka Joffa) Haines is bursting with pride – not just for the new facility, but for the way the police officers who work with him responded to the eight-month renovation period when the Mooroolbark police force was divided between the Lilydale and Mt Evelyn police stations.

Senior Sergeant Paul Van Gemert and Jeff Haines have a total of 75 years of policing experience between them, and were well-placed to determine what was needed for the renovation and what could be done without. This was the first major renovation since the station was commissioned in 1972.

The new conditions have generated even better use of policing skills, storage for all the needs of a modern police force and improved camaraderie – which was great before and is even better now. One very important feature of the upgrade is greater security for the police officers and any members of the public who are at the police station. All persons who are detained in the custody area are safely isolated and secure from the rest of the station.

Before the renovations,

conditions at the station meant that police had to be particularly resourceful to complete their jobs to the best of their abilities. Senior Sergeant Haines has no doubt that, whatever the situation, “we as coppers will make it work.”

The very high reputation of the force here is in part due to the vast area covered by the Mooroolbark police force – out to Warburton, down to Macclesfield, back to Belgrave and up to Mooroolbark, as well as providing assistance to other stations as needed further afield. And, according to Jeff Haines, “the station is fully staffed including a waiting list!”

Senior Sergeant Haines was concerned that during the renovations, the force would lose some of its connection with the Mooroolbark community, and that returning personnel would have to rebuild their loyalty to the community and to one another. However, that didn't happen – perhaps due to the fact that the police officers were still a visible presence on Mooroolbark streets even while based at other stations.

On behalf of all the community, thank you to the members of the Mooroolbark police force for the brilliant policing service performed 24 hours a day, seven days a week for our community. **Barry Austin**

Senior Sergeant Jeff 'Joffa' Haines is proud of the flexibility shown by his officers during the renovations.



## DIFFICULT CHOICES

Doug Lewis

Like so many other students in their senior years at secondary college, Mooroolbark student Patrick O'Rourke found himself faced with some critical decisions. As he looks back on his years at Yarra Hills Secondary College, he is most thankful to the people who mentored him and helped him to make good decisions along the way.

In his early years at secondary college, Patrick's main focus was on sport. He was determined to do well and hoped to achieve recognition and leadership opportunities in his various sporting pursuits. However, at the same time he elected to also follow his interest in music by beginning saxophone lessons in year 7, and was invited to join the school band.

In year 10 Patrick was delighted to be able to participate in a tour of New Zealand with the school band. At that time the school's instrumental music coordinator, Mr Richard O'Toole, noted Patrick's talent and suggested he audition for the Australian Youth Band. Patrick followed this advice and was successful in gaining a place in the band. This opened up opportunities for him to participate in special functions around the state and to join in international trips – to Malaysia in 2011 and China in 2012. Participation in the AYB meant attending rehearsals each Saturday, and also meant he must choose between his beloved football and music, which offered so much in the way of life opportunities.

Patrick says, “It was a very hard decision, as I really enjoyed my football and all the mateship that goes with it. But I knew that the opportunities in music were very special – and I'm pleased now that I chose that path.” Associated leadership opportunities came along, as Patrick was elected music captain and house captain in year 10.

Patrick continued the music leadership through to year 12 and has been asked to return to Yarra Hills in 2014 to address younger Yarra Hills students about how music helped him find his 'personal pathway'.

In his VCE years, Patrick also had another major choice to make. He had long enjoyed carpentry following some work experience in that field, and was considering following that career path. However, he had also had a lifelong interest in flight (planes, helicopters and rockets). He was fascinated by their design and how they work.

Physics teacher Dale Vermont saw Patrick's potential and encouraged him to take up physics in year 11 with a view to pursuing a career in aerospace and mechanical engineering. Assured by his teacher that he had the capacity to achieve this goal, Patrick chose to take physics and a related IT subject in years 11-12, even though it meant dropping music as one of his VCE subjects.

He said, “I'm pleased that I made that choice. I was able to keep up my music with the Australian Youth Band in my own time and I have greatly enjoyed pursuing the studies in physics and IT which I hope will lead to an exciting career.”

In 2013 Patrick achieved the school's year 12 award for excellence in his IT subject and has now been accepted to RMIT to study mechanical engineering.

We congratulate Patrick on his determination to seek the best decisions in his life and career choices and wish him every success for the future.



# From Cambodia to Mooroolbark

Barbara Austin

## Jenny's Ladies Fashion and Handbags

38 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

Starting up a business without any experience is a challenge at any time, but starting up a business with no experience and in a strange country with limited English is a huge achievement.

Nine years ago, with just a strong interest in fashion and clothing and the help of a friend, business owner Jenny did just that.

Jenny was born in China to parents who came from a farming background. The family moved to Cambodia for a better life, and Jenny met and married her husband there. At 29, Jenny and her husband moved to Melbourne where her two children, John, now aged 20 and Thomas, 19, were born. Both boys were educated at Keysborough primary and secondary schools, and now both are at university, with John studying commerce and Thomas studying business.

When Jenny first arrived in Australia, people who couldn't speak English were expected to take a government-provided 510-hour English course, which Jenny completed successfully. She then built on this over the years by talking and listening to her customers. She now speaks quite fluently with just a hint of an accent.

The family lived in Keysborough for 14 years and then moved to Springvale where they have stayed. Jenny and her husband separated in 1996 and because the children were still very young, Jenny stayed home to look after them.

It was nine years ago that Jenny embarked on her business venture and opened up a fashion shop in Lilydale Market, but moved to Ringwood Market after one year. Another year later, she came to Mooroolbark and shoppers may remember her as being in The Terrace before she opened Jenny's Ladies Fashion and Handbags at 38 Brice Avenue. Her shop is filled with tops, dresses and slacks of all colours and styles, as well as handbags in many different shapes and sizes. All are reasonably priced. She caters for the 30-plus age group and, like others in the trade, has experienced highs and lows following the financial crisis, as well as competition from online shopping.



Jenny chose Mooroolbark because the people are friendly and the shopping centre is close to the station, so there are plenty of people coming and going. Even though it means travelling from Springvale every day, Jenny likes the outer eastern area. She has a pleasant, quiet manner and is happy for people to just come in to her shop and browse. We wish her well and hope that she continues to be successful in her business.



## Hot Chips and a Warm Welcome

Brice Avenue Fish and Chips, Shop 67 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

Janet Van Dijk

Brice Avenue Fish and Chips proprietors Perry Wu and Ling Lin make it their business to get to know as many of their customers as possible, and are quick to give a friendly smile. The Wus have owned the shop for just over two years, and know that building rapport takes effort. "People need time to get to know us and learn to trust us," said Ling.

Perry and Ling met in Melbourne, having both come from China several years earlier. From a small town in Fujian Province, Ling came to Australia to attend university. Her aim was to open a business, following in the footsteps of her father who had his own business in China. Ling's parents were content for her to come to Australia because her sister was already happily living in Melbourne. Ling herself did not have any second thoughts about leaving: "I am very independent. I did get homesick, but not for a long time."

Ling had planned to return to China after university, but her plans changed when she met her future husband, Perry, who had arrived in Australia about two years after Ling. Perry had graduated from Jiaotong University in busy Shanghai and came to Australia for further studies.

After marrying, Perry and Ling started thinking about opening a business. Perry had been working for several years in his cousin's very successful fish and chip business in Montrose and had learned a great deal about the business. When a shop vacancy came up in Mooroolbark, it was a perfect opportunity for the Lins, who love Mooroolbark.

"It's a really good area," said Ling.

The Wus work long hours in their business and are very grateful to have the support of Perry's parents, who live with them and help care for their two-year-old son, as well as assisting with household tasks.

A number of local high school students work part-time in the shop. Perry said the teenagers are enthusiastic workers, but he hopes they will maintain a balance between work and study. Ling is surprised at the maturity of Australian teenagers who work while still at school. "When I was fifteen or sixteen I didn't know anything," she laughed. "I didn't get a chance to go out and earn money for myself."

The shop's menu includes the usual fish-and-chip-shop favourites – fish, chips, burgers, and souvlaki – and there are also vegetarian options. Perry and Ling are proud of their high standards and are committed to improving wherever they can. Ling quoted the words on their menu: "If you are satisfied, please tell others. If not, please tell us."

Regular customer Stephen Alter wishes all shop owners were as friendly as Perry and Ling. "They know me by name and always want to know how the family is," said Stephen. "They seem to know everyone that walks in the door and genuinely enquire about them also."

If you have not already visited Brice Avenue Fish and Chips, Ling and Perry would love the chance to meet you, and to get to know you too!



# Mooroolbark Traders Association



**Mooroolbark Traders Association president Geoff Earney is excited about the ongoing improvements to the Mooroolbark shopping district.**

Geoff Earney (who was recently elected president of the Mooroolbark Traders Association) is full of confidence in the potential for further growth and development of our local shopping precinct in Mooroolbark and is enthusiastic about contributing to that process.

Geoff pointed out the big advantages of having a railway station adjacent to the shopping strip and the resultant traffic it brings to the area. He said, "The challenge for us as traders is to know how to best make the most of the opportunities this passing traffic provides. Certainly this response involves presenting a fresh and attractive facade to our

business premises and offering the best we can in the way of products offered and service provided." He added, "The traders' message to our community is – shop locally and we will look after you. Let's build our community together!"

The traders group believes Mooroolbark has a lot to offer the local community. Its members point out that Mooroolbark has two major supermarkets, many specialty and variety stores and a host of good eating places and coffee shops within the shopping area. It is a great place to do our shopping.

The Traders Association remains committed to doing all that it can to make the shopping areas even more attractive and inviting. It has already decided to double the number of Christmas decorations in December 2014 and is looking at other ways to make the area more attractive, particularly on special days such as the Celebrate Mooroolbark weekend and Mothers' Day.

Geoff was quick to thank and congratulate the Yarra Ranges Shire for the work recently done to improve the streetscape, the

developments at Hookey Park and the commitment to upgrading the station area. He also noted that

the shire has taken over the maintenance of the five-ways intersection roundabouts from VicRoads and is confident this will result in their better management. Council is planning to significantly improve the appearance of the roundabouts as they are one of the "gateways" to the township and the Yarra Ranges Shire.

During 2014 the association will hold monthly meetings at 6 pm and encourages all traders to come along and have a voice in the ongoing work of promoting the local shopping area for the benefit of everyone. Notices of the meeting will be delivered to all shops and business in the week prior to the meeting.

Thanks to the Traders Association for the work it does to help continue the process of building and development of our local township area – an area that means so much to us all.



## A Life-Changing Journey Doug Lewis

Sophya and Dianna Hoi Hlei Sung are delightful young Burmese twins who came to Australia just one year ago and enrolled in VCE studies at Yarra Hills Secondary College. Their route to Australia has been a dramatic and totally life-changing journey – a long and very difficult road.

The girls remember their village life in Burma as being spent in a remote area of their war-torn and troubled country. "Life was very basic," they said. "Our family was very poor. There were no shops. We survived by growing our own food in the village farm area." Their early memories of village life include going out with their grandmother to cut wood for cooking, and playing in the mud around their small home. They added, "We had heard about a very different life in other parts of the world and dreamed of living in a developed country where we could have a decent, independent life and the opportunity for a proper education."

The twins' opportunity came in an unexpected way. Some members of their community had been accepted as refugees into India and had helped the girls' family to successfully pursue that same goal. With very little delay they set out on a difficult four-day road trip to New Delhi, where they joined with a community of other Burmese refugees.

Moving from their village home to the noisy, bustling and highly-polluted city of New Delhi presented a difficult time of adjustment for the family. The girls said, "The dramatic cultural change and the language difficulties made things very hard for us."

They survived mainly on small payments from an Indian refugee organisation which was funded through the United Nations. Sometimes there was work for their mother and other adults in factories. The best aspect of life in New Delhi for the girls lay in the fact that they were able to attend a refugee school and to begin learning English.

An aunt who had previously migrated to Australia was in touch with them and would occasionally send assistance to them. She also encouraged them to seek refugee status in Australia – which they did. After more than five years in India they were accepted to come to Australia and arrived here just over a year ago. The family group includes their mother (Man Lang Man Iang), a cousin, an older brother (aged 19) and two younger sisters, - Jennifer, who also attends Yarra Hills and Ruth, who attends Pembroke Primary School.

The girls spoke of the family's grief at leaving Burma without their father, who had travelled away from home looking for ways to provide for his family. When they had the chance to leave for India they had to leave quickly – or lose the opportunity. In the midst of the country's turmoil, their father could not be contacted. They are now in touch with him again and have begun the process of helping him to be reunited with his family in Australia.

When asked about their new life here, the girls said, "It is so different from India. At school our teachers have been so friendly and helpful to us. We have regular opportunities



Sophya (left) and Dianna with Ms Gillard

to talk about our new life here and the challenges that lie ahead. Last year our junior campus principal, Mr Greg Carroll, arranged for us to attend Ms Julia Gillard's lecture at the Melbourne Town Hall and to meet Ms Gillard." Dianna and Sophya felt that the experience was an amazing opportunity for two young refugees from a remote part of Burma!

"We are also greatly supported by the broader Chin community here in Mooroolbark. Together, we are a very close community. Many of us are related in various ways. They have provided much assistance in helping us to get settled."

Both girls are keen to work hard and do their best in VCE. They would both like to study medicine in the future. We hope they can achieve that very worthy ambition.

*Living Today* congratulates the whole family on all that they have been able to achieve, despite many difficulties and challenges. We wish them every success in their future life here in Australia, and especially wish them well in their endeavours to reunite their father with his family.

# Something's Missing ...

Our society seems to have lost something really important – and sadly, I suspect we might never get it back the way it was! But if you *could* get it back for your family, for your children, if it was modelled in a way that when others noticed it, they wanted it too ... would you consider striving for it?

I am referring to something that used to be everywhere! Everyone had it – granted, some had a little less than average, but they still had it. It was ordinary to have it, normal to have it – it was expected by everyone that you had it... and used it! It was quite *common* to have it.

I'm talking about common sense. These days, perhaps it's better described as extraordinary sense because it doesn't seem very *common* anymore. People do silly things; make bad decisions leading to trouble which could have been avoided if common sense was in play.

Common sense should be the thing that governs every attitude and behaviour. It's a bit like wisdom.

I really like this definition of wisdom: "wisdom is being able to see the end of a matter."

Let's think about that a minute. If we are able to make a judgement on how something we do will turn out – *before we do it* – and let that judgement alter our decisions, then we're using wisdom. We can see into the future by thinking about the results of an action, or inaction ... and choose to proceed if it *looks good*, or to desist if it doesn't. Alternatively, we might make a plan that does look right!

## Not so complicated

OK, that might *sound* a bit deep, but common sense is like a cut-down version of wisdom. It's like wisdom, but for everyone! Common sense is formed from time-tested beliefs and values. Common sense is more than what is right or true; it's about what works best. What worked best 100 years ago generally still works well today, regardless of technology or scientific advancement. Technology can help us live and enjoy life more, but it should not *replace* common sense or make it redundant. Which I think is the heart of the problem ... technology is doing a lot of the thinking for us.

My mum used to know every main street in Sydney, where my family grew up. She knew where they went, what was on them ... the museums, the theatres, the shops etc., and she never drove – she walked everywhere after getting off the train. Yes, some people have a good memory for such things, but with a GPS handy to most people with a phone, they need to think about nothing: just plot the course and

go. TV news and video have become the main source of information for many of us. We don't have time or even the desire to read.

## We Have to THINK

When we just receive information and don't thoroughly process it, we don't maximise the opportunity to develop and grow our common sense.

Common sense is all learned. It's developed by gaining a broad knowledge of many things, and through many experiences. It's derived from shared experiences and lessons learned; by exploring alternatives to outcomes of a situation. It requires us to think, not just react on impulse!

Emotional responses are produced by the brain more quickly than decisions are, and being aware of that might help us choose more wisely if we take a breath and think the situation through.

I've written about emotional maturity in

When we get our emotions and our logic working together, our common sense will have a great place to grow and mature

previous articles. When we get our emotions and our logic working together, our common sense will have a great place to grow and mature.

Here are a few actions that should involve common sense. When it isn't involved, there's probably trouble ahead. Common sense tells you things won't end well when:

- You put your wedding ring on the sand at the beach – just for a moment.
- You walk on the same side of the road as the traffic going your way.
- You drink five cans of soft drink every day.
- You use 'password' as the security word for your internet banking.
- You cross the road while looking at your phone. (We seem to have forgotten that roads are made for cars, trucks, and bikes!)
- You don't worry about having only ONE key for your car or house.
- You put the box for an expensive brand-new TV on the nature strip for collection.

These simple examples are not hard to understand when we read them, but mistakes like these happen with increasing regularity. There is little regard for the potential of these actions to finish unpleasantly.

## Seriously ...

Do we need special signs to help us avoid these mistakes, or do we just need to think it through a bit? It will take a bit of practice.

It seems that new laws are made every day, and extra layers are added to existing laws to penalise (or protect) people who make irresponsible decisions. Laws aren't made for a few people; they are made for the population. Sadly, it's a population which has lost its common sense, and now needs laws to guide it – laws that can have serious penalties!

Most of us have seen silly warnings on instructions for some new products. Things like:

- For a frozen dinner: 'defrost before use'.
- On a chain saw: 'do not attempt to stop chain with hands'.
- With a microwave oven: 'not to be used for drying pets'.
- Clothes washing detergent: 'remove clothes before washing'.
- On a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle: 'some assembly required'.
- On a peanuts packet: 'may contain nuts'.
- With hair colouring: 'do not use as ice cream topping'.

Seriously, why is this necessary? Why are we being treated like idiots with these instructions?

Two reasons ... increasingly, it seems we need them, and the manufacturers are trying to avoid legal liability for any injuries.

There was the driver who set her new camper van on cruise-control, and went into the back of the van to make a coffee. The camper crashed. Now the manufacturer places a warning sign on the vans because the driver sued the company for not explaining what cruise-control was ... or wasn't.

Action-packed movies are full of people performing death-defying stunts without a scratch! Contrary to the warning 'do not attempt this at home', young males – who seem to think they are indestructible – do go home and try their luck, often with dire consequences. They do things like jumping off the house roof, treating dangerous weapons like toys, or driving cars with complete disregard for other road users. I could go on, but I think you know what I mean.

## The Challenge

So how do we rediscover common sense? How do we pass on to our kids the things we often took for granted growing up?

Using common sense saves a lot of trouble because it looks ahead to avoid problems in the first place. When it's used





often, it becomes habit, and a repertoire of ready-made responses becomes part of who we are. For example, the fact that our kids learn to drive on their 'L's with 120 hours of practice must be a significant contributor to avoiding accidents as they drive on their own on 'P's. As parents we're helping to generate an awareness of what's happening on the roads – what to look out for, what are the most frequent causes of accidents, how to brake properly, how to drive amongst other cars so traffic flows smoothly, and how to look ahead to the traffic lights and drive accordingly.

So if we can learn from our experiences and our mistakes, our kids can learn from them too. Talking to our kids about what happened in our day is an effective way of sharing our thoughts. We can look for connections to discuss an issue from our lives, and what we learned from our experiences while sharing dinner together.

Let's rediscover common sense and make it a part of who our children turn out to be ... sensible, thoughtful and alert to what's going on and how to respond to new or dangerous situations.

You could try a discussion with your family centred on completing the phrase "common sense is ..." As we come up with everyday examples that can be put into practice, it should help not only our families, but those around us.

If we can rediscover common sense, if we can recover the ability to think with both our emotions and our logic, common sense will have a chance.



Steve Steel

As an incentive to rediscover common sense, we're offering our readers the opportunity to win a prize for the best 'common sense' idea. If you have a common sense suggestion that you think would help others, please send your tip (in 25 words or less) to:

[living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com](mailto:living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com) OR  
Living Today - Common Sense  
PO Box 228, Mooroolbark 3138

Thanks to the support of Coles Mooroolbark, the idea deemed the best will receive a **\$50** Coles voucher.



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# CHURCH NEWS



In these tough economic times, most of us would like to get our hands on some real money. Well, how about one hundred trillion dollars? That would last us for a while, wouldn't it?

Well, I'm afraid not. The Bank of Zimbabwe issued a bank note for that amount a few years ago, just before their economy completely collapsed. At that time, the value of the currency was shrinking daily. By the time that note was printed it would barely buy a loaf of bread!

It just goes to show the danger of trusting in physical wealth for our security. In a hyperinflation situation such as this, even millionaires saw their wealth disappear. They learned by painful experience the wisdom expressed in the Book of Proverbs: **"Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich; restrain yourself! Riches disappear in the blink of an eye; wealth sprouts wings and flies off into the wild blue yonder."** (Proverbs 23:4-5, *The Message* translation).

There is nothing wrong with wealth per se if it is come by honestly and used for good. But when we

begin to trust in wealth for our security, or the social status and privilege it can provide, we find ourselves at risk. Notice what Paul wrote to Timothy, **"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."** (1 Timothy 6:10)

The problem with money, or what it can buy, emerges when we focus on it, rather than on what is eternal and truly life-giving. Our greatest wealth is knowing who and what we are in Christ, and living in close relationship with him. Likewise, the greatest poverty is not in the absence of physical wealth, but in a spiritual poverty that comes with living outside a loving and faithful relationship with Christ. This is why Jesus tells us to store up treasures in heaven, where we enjoy being the beloved children of our Creator God. When we find a relationship with Christ is our treasure, even if we are poor, we are truly rich.

Joseph Tkach: *Speaking of Life*  
See: <http://www.gci.org/spol>

## Children and Families PASTOR APPOINTED

Brent Allred and his wife Glenda bring a rich background of pastoral experience to Brent's appointment as Pastor to Children and Families at Mooroolbark Baptist Church, commencing January 2014. Originally from New Zealand, they have had extensive experience in a number of areas.

Their early years in ministry took them to Ecuador in South America, working in Christian radio, which Brent describes as being radio geared to bringing a Christian perspective to general news services and cultural, music, science and general interest programs. Brent describes their years in Ecuador as a most enjoyable part of their life's work spent in a wonderful country. The youngest of their three children, Melissa, was born there; their oldest son, Joshua, was born in New Zealand and their second son, Timothy, was born in Texas while they were learning Spanish. Brent and Glenda find great joy in the five grandchildren that have been added to their family. Two of their children and their families live in the area.

Eighteen years ago the Allreds moved to Melbourne, where Brent devoted twelve years to the ministry work of children and families at Ringwood Church of Christ, including serving as chaplain at Eastwood Primary School. During that time they took up residence at Chirnside Park.

Following his tenure at Ringwood Church of Christ, Brent was



employed for the last five years by Pioneers Australia, which is part of an international movement serving 2,600 workers in over 100 countries. Glenda had already been working there for some time, in the finance area. Brent headed up the member care team, providing pastoral support for over 200 long-term missionaries working in 40 countries around the world.

Eighteen months ago Brent and Glenda began attending Mooroolbark Baptist Church, to be part of a church family closer to their Chirnside Park home. Late last year Brent was appointed to the position of Pastor to Children and Families at MBC. Glenda continues to work with Pioneers and also helps lead a Wednesday playgroup and teaches Sunday School at MBC.

Brent said, "We love to travel, and have done a fair bit of it." He also loves movies and admits to being something of a *Lord of the Rings* fan.

We congratulate Brent on his appointment at MBC and wish Glenda and Brent a fruitful and rewarding time in their ministry there.

**Doug Lewis**



## FREE FAMILY FILM NIGHT

**ALL WELCOME**

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**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

98 minutes - Rated PG

**Film commences at 7:30 p.m.**

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee available

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

**To reserve your tickets\* phone 9726 5488 or book online at**

**[www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/mcc/shp](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/mcc/shp)**

**Bookings commence from Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March**

\*If you have not made a booking, please come anyway, as any uncollected tickets may be re-issued at 7:15 p.m. – there are always seats available.

A caregiver receives some special pampering



Kelly is thrilled with the first glimpse of her new haircut

## WHO CARES?

### *Who cares? The good news is ... lots of people do!*

When Mooroolbark resident Lisa Currie decided to organise a special day of pampering for those who look after loved ones with a physical or intellectual disability, she was inundated with offers of help from people in the local community.

Lisa runs the Ripple Kindness Project<sup>1</sup>, a community and school program providing opportunities to help people practice kindness toward others. She began planning an event to recognise and reward caregivers after she observed the struggles of her sister's family. Lisa has a 6-year-old nephew with autism and has seen firsthand the strain caused by providing constant supervision and help to disabled relatives. "I have come to learn what these families go through," said Lisa. "What they go through to get through every single day ... it's amazing, it's traumatic, it's devastating, and sometimes triumphant – and sometimes so exhausting that they just can't function anymore."

Unfortunately, government funding is not nearly enough to cover the cost of all the therapies that many disabled children need in order to integrate into society, so families struggle to pay for therapies on their own. In addition to lack of money, most carers of the disabled just don't have time to spend looking after themselves.

Lisa envisioned an event at which carers like her sister could relax and be pampered, at no cost. Irabina Childhood Autism Services in Bayswater was happy to provide its premises for the day, and Diane Ryan of Irabina quickly became Lisa's invaluable friend and colleague on the project.

Once people started hearing about the plans, offers of help came pouring in. Dozens of people contacted Lisa and offered services such as makeovers, hairdressing, massage, yoga, and counselling. A few businesses helped with promoting the day, and other companies and individuals gave generously to provide items for goodie bags, prizes and gifts.

After four months of planning, everything was ready, and the doors of Irabina opened to carers on Sunday November 17th. Caregivers could choose from a range of activities including art therapy, massage, yoga, relaxation sessions, meditation and craniosacral therapy. Bingo, musical entertainment and card-making were offered, and carers also had the chance to be pampered with makeovers, pedicures, manicures, and even a hairdressing session. Tea and coffee had been donated, and a delicious range of home-baked cakes and slices, provided by volunteers, was available all day.

Among the helpers at the event were Lisa's husband, two sons, and her parents. The event was filmed by Ian Skurrie of Videocentric, and Nikki of Nikki Parawahera Photography volunteered her time to take dozens of photographs of the occasion. Our cover photo and the pictures on this page were all taken by Nikki.

One of the most popular activities of the day was hairdressing, and one woman added to the spirit of giving by having her long hair cut into a new short style and donating her long locks to the Pantene Beautiful Lengths program, which collects hair to create free, real-hair wigs for women with cancer.

Kelly Jarvis-Clark was another grateful recipient of a new haircut. Kelly's son Shaun, 25, was diagnosed with autism when he was a young child, and Kelly has been a single mum to Shaun and her other two children – Ben (29) and Hailey (14) – for most of Shaun's life. Kelly describes her son as high-functioning, but he is still very dependent on her and will need her care for the rest of his life. Kelly had never attended an event that honours caregivers, and she felt very emotional talking about just how special the day made her feel. "Even though Shaun is my son and my responsibility, I felt as if the community was recognising that I did OK with him and was thanking me for it," Kelly said. "It was one of the best days of my life."

Lisa knows that the day benefitted both the volunteers and those who enjoyed the therapies. Some volunteers commented that they had previously felt that they didn't have anything to offer others. Once they learned that they could contribute, they were excited about the prospect of continuing to do so. "It was a day with different objectives and outcomes for lots of people – it wasn't just about the carers," said Lisa. "It was about people who were giving of themselves – sometimes for the first time."

Many years ago Kelly Jarvis-Clark wrote a poem about her desperate need to connect with and protect her son Shaun. It begins, "If I look hard enough I'll find you; and I'll search forever more ..." The poem is a touching testament to a mother's love and the daily challenges of coping with a child that she can never completely understand. For those like Kelly, taking some time to relax and forget about their daily struggles was a real gift – a taste of luxury provided by Lisa's team and the dozens of volunteers who have shown that people really DO care!



Participants in the art therapy sessions released both buried emotions and expressions of creativity

Janet Van Dijk

<sup>1</sup> ripplekindness.org; facebook.com/RippleKindnessCards

# Chatting with Aunty Dot

*Some people impact our lives in profound ways – either beneficially or detrimentally.*

I'd heard stories about Wurundjeri elder Aunty Dot Peters. But, as good as they were, the stories didn't do justice to the pleasure of time spent in her company – an hour here, an hour there – over several years. Dot is welcoming, gracious, humourous, encouraging and sometimes self-effacing. I particularly enjoy her quality of reflective stillness, and very much appreciate her generous sense of inclusiveness.

In recent years, when Dot has participated in the opening ceremony at Celebrate Mooroolbark she reminds us all of the privilege we've been given to share our land. She elaborates further:

"I don't think any of us own the country, whether you are Aboriginal or not. I think we all belong to the land – we don't own it. And that applies to everybody, so when I say to you 'I welcome you to my land', it's not my land. It's all part of you as it is part of me."

For Dot, growing up in Healesville was a very happy time. She remembers being happy at school, and into her teens and early twenties. "At school, I loved to run, play tennis. I enjoyed any sport that we played, including vigoro which was what they called women's cricket in those days.<sup>1</sup> I loved dancing, and in my teens I enjoyed going to the dances, going to the football and falling in love with all the footballers. In addition, I loved being with my own people sometimes – in a group being taught to make the baskets and eel traps and becoming aware of our culture and sharing in it."

According to Dot, Aboriginal culture is centred on respect, caring and sharing. "That's the way all cultures should be. I'd like all of us to learn these values – we have a great country, and we should be working together to make sure it stays that way."

I asked Dot about Coranderrk – a reserve on Badger Creek in Healesville that was home to up to 200 Aboriginal people at a time between its opening in 1863 and its official closure in 1923<sup>2</sup>:

"When Coranderrk was closed, quite a few of the families moved into the Healesville township and there was no racism that I can remember," said Dot. "I remember when my Dad was killed on the Burma railway,<sup>3</sup> Mum owed some money to the butcher Mr Christie

and to Mr Endacott, the grocer. They told her to forget it when Dad died. It was just the way people were in those days. Growing up in Healesville was a happy time."

Dot began her schooling at Badger Creek, which was also where her mum had started

would have to go and get permission to go and visit her. The powers that be<sup>4</sup> would decide whether I could go for an hour or a day, or if I could stay overnight, but it was up to them to decide what I could do."

"I was born in 1930, in the Women's



Dot Peters as a young woman

Aunty Dot demonstrates traditional basket weaving to a new generation.

school. "I was there for a year and ended up going to the Healesville primary school, and went to grade 8 there, and then followed with two years at Lilydale High. I can remember visiting Coranderrk quite a few times during the week."

"When Coranderrk closed, some people were sent to Cummeragunja and others were sent to Lake Tyers, but six people – my grandparents (the Davises) and Uncle Bill and Dan Russell, Aunty Jemima and Tom Donnelly, who didn't want to go elsewhere – were allowed to stay on the reserve."

"About the time that Coranderrk opened, my grandmother came there with her mother. My mum was born on there, as were my sister and three brothers. The peak population would have been round about 200, and others would come and go, if the government administrators gave their permission – for instance, if I didn't live on the reserve but my mother lived there, I

Hospital in Melbourne, so we could visit Gran quite often – that's when she taught me to make baskets out of the grass and the sword grass, and to fish in Badger Creek," remembered Dot. "She taught us to respect everything around us – to respect animals, to respect each other, and to believe in the Creator. Aboriginal people took to Christianity very easily, because that was already in their hearts. They believed that everything had a spirit. Unfortunately, it has gone out from a lot of our young ones today. I'd like to see much more contact between our young people and the elders, so that they can learn about respecting and caring and sharing."

Dot's mother had similar values. "She taught us to sit together at the meal table and always say grace. She taught us not to speak

1 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vigoro>

2 Coranderrk is the name for a native, aromatic Australian shrub that thrives in shaded gullies, also known as the Christmas Bush.

3 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma_Railway) Aunty Dot's father, Vincent, was a Yorta Yorta man born at the Cummeragunja Mission in New South Wales. He fought in the Second World War, but was captured and died a prisoner of war on the Thai Burma railway. (<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/projects-and-programs/leadership/victorian-indigenous-honour-roll/victorian-indigenous-honour-roll-2011-inductees/dorothy-peters-born-1930>)

4 Dot explained that 'the powers that be' refers to the Governor – part of the governmental committee that administered the reserve.

whilst eating, but to talk after we had finished. Just being respectful toward Mum and Dad – that was one of the most important things.”

“I was at a luncheon the other day, the Victorian Honour Roll for Aboriginal people<sup>5</sup>, and it surprised me that they didn’t say grace,” continued Dot. “I remember going to the Long Walk lunch last year, and I asked the MC if they’d say grace and she said, ‘No we don’t, because not everybody believes in God so we’re not going to do it’. But I’ll be having a little say about it this year, because I think they should say grace. I think it’s important to be thankful for what we’ve got and to thank the Lord for that, you know.”

The front cover of Dot's short illustrated booklet *A New Dreaming About Badger Creek*, written in conjunction with students from Mount Lilydale Mercy College. Copies can be purchased for \$15 each by emailing Aunty Dot, care of Living Today: [living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com](mailto:living.today.mooroolbark@gmail.com)

A new Dreaming  
about Badger Creek  
by Aunty Dot Peters

Illustrated and developed by students  
from Mount Lilydale Mercy College  
and Worawa Aboriginal College  
Edited by Spiri Tsintziras



I asked if there was a dominant tribal group living at Coranderrk: “Not particularly that I know of. Residents came from everywhere – from all over Victoria. My grandfather was Wurundjeri, my grandmother was Tunnerong; my father was Yorta Yorta and my Mum was Yarra Yarra, so what does that make me? And that applies to practically all families. So I believe that it’s impossible to say that things belong to any one culture. They don’t. A little power game comes into things, you know?”

Dot feels that when Aboriginal people were given the right to vote in 1967 and a lot

of money was given to Aboriginal communities, “it ruined a lot of people.” Dot believes, “Our culture went out the window. People became more interested in power games, being in charge and getting the money. We lost our local co-op because it was just looking after one family. The woman in charge was just looking after her own family and when we complained about it, it got closed.”

“Sadly, some prefer to look after their family or their close friends, rather than the community,” observed Dot. “And others can look after their communities but can become overly politicised.”

Dot’s actions in the wake of her father’s

when they came home, some hotels wouldn’t serve them drinks; if they went into a shop they would have to wait for non-Aboriginal people to be served before they would be served. Their children weren’t allowed to swim in pools where non-Aboriginal people were swimming, and I thought, this is terrible, something needs to be done about this, so I approached our local RSL and asked them to become involved in reconciliation.”

“I’d worked for reconciliation for some forty years, and some of the members were against it. But the manager at that time happened to be Egyptian, and he knew what I was on about, so he pushed for it. And the RSL ended up saying ‘yes’. My son and his mate recorded a version of ‘the Ode’ (said at the RSL every day), with the didgeridoo in the background. And they play that every year during Reconciliation Week.”

“When the Shrine heard what was going on, they called for a meeting down there, and that resulted in a service at the Shrine for the first time in 2006, acknowledging the Aboriginal wartime service and raising the Aboriginal flag. The governor was there, all the ‘big bods’ from the different services and, I think, the premier was there that day along with other important people. And the following year it went Australia wide and it still happens every year in Reconciliation Week – they have this service for the Aboriginal input, which is a pretty good thing, I think.”

When Dot speaks to young people about getting things done, she tells them to approach the right people. “You don’t attack people,” explained Dot, “you approach them.”

Dot has always taken great comfort in her belief in God, and she reiterated that it was easy for Aboriginal people to accept Christianity. “That’s what’s given them the strength. That’s what’s given me the strength. Granny would say to me, you’ll go through life

and somebody will tell you off, but you don’t have to worry about that because you’re not the one with the problem. That’s very true. I don’t get involved in arguments; I walk away from an argument. And if I see something that needs to be done, I’ll go about it quietly and approach the right people and try and get something done about it. And that’s the way I was brought up, the way I was taught. I learned that from my grandparents and my parents.”

Perhaps you can better understand why it is that I feel such a grateful and affectionate admiration for Aunty Dot – and why it is that I value having had regular opportunities to enjoy both her company and a good yarn!

death highlight the respectful caring and sharing she would like us all to practice.

“I came across a page from the 1941 *Sun*, and there was a photo of him holding my brother Eric in his arms. It had been taken at Puckapunyal training camp<sup>6</sup> before the troops went overseas. Dad fought in the Middle East, and was on his way home when he was taken prisoner at Java and ended up working on the Burma railway. We used to get these cards – they were printed cards, saying he was OK, he was being treated OK and that he was alright. I don’t know where they were printed or where they came from but we now know the prisoners were treated badly. When we got the word that he’d died, in December 1942, it was a very, very sad time.”

“In 2006 I was thinking of Dad and our young men and women who went to war ...

<sup>5</sup> Aunty Dot’s work has been acknowledged with many awards, including a NAIDOC Elders Award, Yarra Ranges Shire Lifetime Achievement Award, Victorian Aboriginal Award, and, in 2001, a Centenary Medal. In 2011, Dot was inducted to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. (<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/projects-and-programs/leadership/victorian-indigenous-honour-roll/victorian-indigenous-honour-roll-2011-inductees/dorothy-peters-born-1930>)

<sup>6</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puckapunyal>

Randall Bouchier





It might be the fresh air, or the hills. Don't try to outrun these girls; they will catch you in a very short distance! Madeline, Olivia, Estelle and Georgia recently won first place at the state relay championship for the U9-11 medley. In the process, these superfast girls broke the old record and now hold the new Victorian Best Performance record in a smashing time of 2 minutes 11.98 seconds. All are members of Yarra Ranges Athletics, a club based in Mt Evelyn which offers little athletics and senior athletics.

Yarra Ranges Athletics has approximately 230 members ranging in age from six to sixty years. Little Athletics is usually run on



Saturday mornings from 9 till 12. Track and field competition is run from October to March, and cross country is available in the winter months.

Yarra Ranges Athletics is part of Little Athletics Victoria and offers centre competitions, and well as regional and state championships. Senior Athletics is usually held on a Saturday afternoon and is part of the eastern region of Athletics Victoria.

New members are always welcome, and can join throughout the season.

General training for seniors and juniors is available on a Wednesday night and covers most of the track and field events. We have



a large group of junior and senior athletes training every week, with qualified coaches. Our facilities are first class, with a recently constructed all-weather track, great equipment and brand-new clubrooms. Our members are from the Yarra Valley, Mt Evelyn, Lilydale and Mooroolbark, so there is a good chance you will know some of us already.

If you are looking for an activity to keep you or your children fit, and want to make some new friends and have lots of fun, come and try athletics at Yarra Ranges Athletics!

**Website:** [www.yarrarangesathletics.org.au](http://www.yarrarangesathletics.org.au)

**Enquiries:** [info@yarrarangesathletics.org.au](mailto:info@yarrarangesathletics.org.au)



## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Janet Van Dijk

Plans are under way at **Edinburgh College** to celebrate a very special milestone – the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the school. The secondary school campus of Edinburgh College – previously Lilydale Adventist Academy – will celebrate its golden anniversary on the weekend of May 3rd and 4th.

Surrounded by acres of bushland, the Edinburgh College campus is located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges in peaceful tree-lined Edinburgh Road, Lilydale. The property was originally part of the Mitchell estate, owned by the family of famous soprano Dame Nellie Melba. Building of the school began in 1963 and the first students streamed through the doors on February 10th, 1964.

From its inception, Lilydale Adventist Academy was primarily intended as a boarding school, to provide a quality Christian education for students from rural areas. It was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist church and based on the church's belief that true growth is achieved when the mental, physical and spiritual needs of children are all met. Over the years, the ratio of day students to boarders increased, and the boarding program was discontinued in 2007. The campus is now a day school for hundreds of students of varied cultural and religious backgrounds. Most come from nearby suburbs, although there are students who travel from as far away as Warburton or Emerald.



A time capsule buried twenty years ago will be unearthed as part of the anniversary celebrations

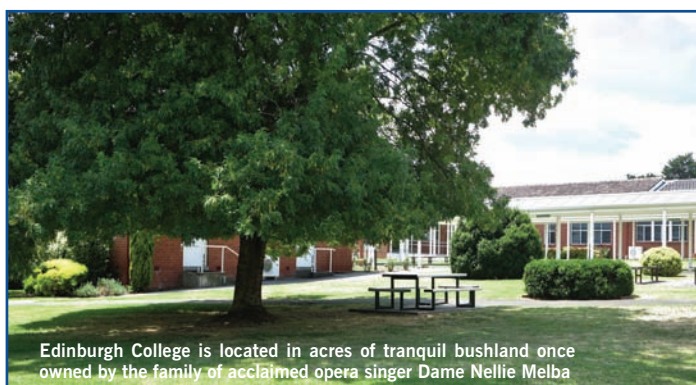
In 2000 and 2006 respectively, Edinburgh College primary school and the Edinburgh Early Learning Centre joined the campus, ensuring a cohesive educational experience from preschool to year 12.

As Lilydale Adventist Academy, the college was well-known among locals for its annual Billy Cart Grand Prix, which ran for 12 years before concluding in 2012. In the race's prime, 70 to 85 teams (each of nine competitors) from schools and youth groups all over the region raced in the Billy Cart Grand Prix each year.

Over the anniversary weekend there will be events aimed at students, teachers and others associated with the school, both past and present. Celebrations on Saturday night will include a food festival and fireworks spectacular, open to the community. On Sunday, the school will be open to the public for a huge "fun day", which will include a variety of activities and entertainment for the whole family.

One of the special events of the anniversary will be the opening of a time capsule which was buried on the 30th anniversary of the school in 1994, with the intention of being opened at the golden anniversary twenty years later.

**More information about the 50th anniversary can be found on the college's Facebook page ([facebook/50yearsatlaa](https://facebook.com/50yearsatlaa)), by phoning the school on 9728 2211, or the webpage ([www.edinburghcollege.vic.edu.au](http://www.edinburghcollege.vic.edu.au)).**



Edinburgh College is located in acres of tranquil bushland once owned by the family of acclaimed opera singer Dame Nellie Melba



# 2014 Programs at Mooroolbark and Montrose ENTERTAINMENT FOR EVERYONE

Following a sell-out 2013 season, March marks the launch of the exciting new 2014 program for both the Mooroolbark Community Centre and Montrose Town Centre, continuing their ongoing commitment to low-cost programming for all age groups.

On the day of the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival, both centres will be offering discount ticket specials, along with a free program of activities including Come'n'Try workshops in pottery, children's art, Gymbaroo, and belly dancing, while the auditorium hosts the festival's own Mad Hatter's Tea Party featuring renowned author Andy Griffiths from 1:00 – 2:00 pm.

As part of its commitment to young people in our community, a Youth Services stage will feature emerging young local performers, and an exhibition of VCE student artwork – all to launch a forthcoming youth program to include performances by hard-core band Prepared like a Bride; a special Youth Week hip hop presentation of Bam Bam; and the FReeZa band competition.

2014 also sees the introduction of the Mooroolbark monthly Monday Morning Movie Club. Featuring classics such as *East of Eden*, *Citizen Kane* and *Gallipoli*, the club offers a free annual subscription to the first 20 registered members. Other upcoming daytime programs include the Australian Air Force Band, a return of the recently sold-out Melbourne Welsh Male Choir, and one of the most talked-about professional touring stage productions of last year, the hilariously fast-paced take on Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*.

For young families, the Mooroolbark Community Centre continues its low-cost after school art programs, and free and inexpensive school holiday activities, this year featuring the "next big thing" in children's entertainment, "The Amazing Drumming Monkeys" and the highly sought-after Opera Australia children's program *Cinderella*.

Meanwhile, the Montrose Town Centre launches the 21<sup>st</sup> year of its very popular concert series with Australian music icon Archie Roach on Friday March 28<sup>th</sup>. May



Famed concert pianist David Helfgott is scheduled to perform at the Montrose Town Centre

brings performances by much-loved comic impersonator and political satirist Max Gillies, and internationally-renowned jazz pianist Paul Grabowsky. The other big news is the upcoming performance by one of the best-known names in the world of classical music, David Helfgott, performing as part of Yarra Ranges' inaugural Classical Tracks Winter Sunday Series.

It promises to be a big year at both centres. All shows are on sale now and, if last year was anything to go by, will sell out quickly!

**For more information, pick up the brand-new edition of *Culture Tracks* at the Mooroolbark Community Centre, visit [www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach), or call 9726 5488 and speak to Caroline or Malcolm.**



Phyllis Dixon was honoured with a lifetime achievement award on Australia Day

## Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award

Phyllis Dixon was awarded the Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Australia Day Awards ceremony on Sunday, 26 January which recognised the outstanding achievements of Yarra Ranges residents.

Yarra Ranges Mayor Fiona McAllister said the Australia Day awards were a chance to celebrate community spirit and recognise those who had given so much to their community.

"There are hundreds of wonderful people in our community doing so much to make the Yarra Ranges an even better place to live and work," she said.

Phyllis Dixon has lived in the Yarra Ranges for 62 years, during which time she has made outstanding contributions to many community groups and sporting clubs.

In 1994 Phyllis was a founder of the Yarra Valley Over 50s Friendship Club and has now been president of the club for the last 20 years. In that role she is responsible for chairing the committee and running two catch-up sessions each week.

Phyllis ensures strong relationships are built and lifelong friendships and companions made. She always makes time for club members who are in need or are ill, regularly visiting them at home or in hospital.

Phyllis' service has earned her lifetime membership to not only Yarra Valley Friendship Club, but also Mt Evelyn Tennis Club. Her passion for tennis has seen her coordinating the junior Saturday teams, as well as assisting as the club secretary for 20 years. She is also a keen lawn bowler, representing her club in pennant competitions across the community.

To add to her achievements, in 1987 Phyllis received the Freemasons Hospital Life Governor medal, and in 2009 was recognised by Diabetes Australia with the Kellion Victory Medal.

Her caring and supportive attitude, combined with her hard-working nature, put her at the heart of the Yarra Ranges community. When she isn't busy volunteering, Phyllis enjoys spending time with her family and supporting the Collingwood football club.

### This year's Yarra Ranges Australia Day Award winners are as follows:

- Citizen of the Year – Tanya de Visser
- Young Citizen of the Year – Lily Belle Hellicar
- Community Group of the Year – HICCI (Healesville Interchurch Community Care)
- Environmental Achiever of the Year – Jean and David Edwards
- Ken McIntosh Memorial Award (Young Environmental Achiever of the Year) – Georgia Grimmer
- Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award – Phyllis Dixon
- Ian de la Rue Award for Community Leadership – Norman Orr

**Certificate of Recognition recipients:** Judy Thorburn and Michael Halligan

# Community Events Calendar

First Sunday of each month	<b>Farmers Market:</b> Bellbird Park, Swansea Road, next to Lillydale Lake. Combined Rotary Clubs. All proceeds to local and overseas projects. Contact Bill Sutherland: 9727 0037.
Friday nights during school term	<b>Fridays@Kids Domain:</b> Activities for primary school age kids. 4-6 p.m. Oxley College stadium. Details: phone 9726 8111 or <a href="http://www.lmc.org.au">www.lmc.org.au</a>
Thurs evenings weekly	<b>Maroondah TOWN Club:</b> (Take Off Weight Naturally). Weekly, starting at 6:30 p.m. at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. More information: 0425 739 576.
Mondays weekly	<b>Scottish Country Dancing:</b> Mondays 8 p.m. (except public holidays.) Beginners and experienced. Minimal charges. St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. Enquiries: 9876 9206.
Second Monday of each month	<b>Mooroolbark Country Women's Association:</b> 1:00 p.m. at St Margaret's Uniting Church, Hull Road. New members always welcome. Contact Jeanne Wilson: 9726 9858
Thursdays during school term	<b>Music Together program:</b> for 0-5 year olds, run by trained music therapist. St Margaret's Uniting Church. Morning tea & playtime included. \$12.50 per session per family. Call Yvonne: 9726 9347.
Wed & Thursdays during school term	<b>Happy Hands Art Time - Encouraging Creativity in Toddlers:</b> children 1-5 yrs. Wednesdays: 9:30-11:00 a.m. or 11:45-1:15 p.m. Thursdays: 9:30-11:30 a.m. Register online: <a href="http://www.happyhandsart.com">www.happyhandsart.com</a>
March 12 May 14	<b>Edinburgh College (preschool-Year 12) Tour Dates:</b> March 12 & May 14. Open Night: May 14. Enquiries: 9761 9991 (ELC), 9728 8833 (primary) or 9728 2211 (secondary) or <a href="http://www.edinburghcollege.vic.edu.au">www.edinburghcollege.vic.edu.au</a>
March - May	<b>Yarra Ranges Council Immunisation sessions:</b> Mar 4, 12, 25, Apr 1, 9, 22, May 6, 14, 27. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More info: 1300 368 333.
March - May	<b>Red Earth Gallery Exhibitions:</b> "VCE Creative Showcase" 11/3 - 19/4 (opening 13/3), "Suburban Autos" by Suzanne Phoenix 21/4 - 23/5 (opening Apr 24). Red Earth Gallery, M/bark Community Centre, 9726 5488.
March - June	<b>The VoiceMob Project:</b> invites residents of the Yarra Ranges and beyond to participate in an all singing, signing and dancing Flash Mob extravaganza. See <a href="http://www.thevoicemobproject.com">www.thevoicemobproject.com</a> for times and locations.
March 3, April 7, May 5	<b>Mooroolbark Movie Club presents Hollywood Classics</b> - <i>Citizen Kane, East of Eden, Gallipoli.</i> 10:30 a.m. Mooroolbark Community Centre: 9726 5488. Free to new subscribers.
March 6, April 3, May 8	<b>Montrose Movie Club presents Hollywood Classics</b> - <i>Citizen Kane, East of Eden, Gallipoli.</i> 7:00 p.m. Montrose Town Centre 9761 9133.
March 15	<b>Women's Clothes Swap:</b> Mooroolbark Soccer Club, Esther Cres. 10:00 - 1:00. Entry \$2. Bring items in good condition to swap, or pay \$2 per item. (No underwear, swimwear, track pants, polar fleece).
March 21	<b>Mooroolbark Talent Quest:</b> Mooroolbark Community Centre; commences 7:30 p.m. Entry \$5.
March 22	<b>Celebrate Mooroolbark - your local community festival:</b> 9:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Red Earth Park Brice Ave.
March 22	<b>GymbaROO Mooroolbark's 30th Birthday Reunion:</b> we invite all past families to visit us during the festival and leave a message in their handprint on a mural. Enquiries: Marion 9726 8740
March 22	Mooroolbark History Group's book Celebrating Mooroolbark will be available from several stalls around the festival. Enquiries: Margaret 9726 4161.
March 28	<b>Montrose Concert Series 2014 Launch - Archie Roach:</b> Australia's most admired Aboriginal singer/songwriter. Montrose Town Centre 8: p.m. Bookings: <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 9761 9133.
April 7 - 18	<b>School Holiday Program: Free and low cost activities</b> - art & craft, live performances, movies. Mooroolbark Community Centre & Montrose Town Centre. Bookings: <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333.
April 10	<b>School Holiday Performance: The Amazing Drumming Monkeys:</b> 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Mooroolbark Community Centre. Bookings: <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333. Book online for \$5 tickets.
April 11	<b>FReeZa / B.A.M. B.A.M. (Hip Hop):</b> youth music event from 6 p.m. Mooroolbark Community Centre. More info: Youth Services 9294 6716 or <a href="http://www.yrys.com">www.yrys.com</a>
April 4 & 15	<b>Red Cross Blood Bank: Mooroolbark Community Centre.</b> Bookings 13 14 95
April 16	<b>School Holiday Performance: Sean Choolburra</b> - Acclaimed indigenous performer. Montrose Town Centre 11 a.m.. Bookings <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333. Book online for \$5 tickets.
April 19	<b>Giant Easter Egg Hunt:</b> Life Ministry Church, Old Melbourne Rd, Chimside Park. \$10 per person. Details: <a href="http://www.giantegg hunt.com.au">www.giantegg hunt.com.au</a>
April 21	<b>Term 2 workshops commence: pottery, oil painting, tribal belly-dance, young artists, Pottery 4 Kids &amp; craft.</b> Mooroolbark Community Centre. Bookings <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or Mooroolbark 9726 5488 / Montrose 9761 9133.
April 25	<b>Anzac Day service:</b> Hookey Park. Starts 12:00 noon and includes unveiling of new remembrance plaques.
April 26	<b>Montrose Concert Series:</b> Jeff Lang - Australia's premier roots virtuoso guitarist in a powerful performance of blues, folk, rock, ballads and improvisation. Montrose Town Centre 8 p.m. Bookings <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333.
May 3	<b>Montrose Concert Series:</b> Max Gillies - Actor, comedian and impersonator extraordinaire. Montrose Town Centre 8 p.m. Bookings <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333.
May 24	<b>Montrose Concert Series:</b> Paul Grabowsky - accomplished pianist and composer; contemporary Australian jazz. Montrose Town Centre 8 p.m.. Bookings <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333.
May 25	<b>Australian Youth Band:</b> Mooroolbark Community Centre 2 p.m. Bookings: <a href="http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach">www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach</a> or 1300 368 333. \$5 concession

To include your community event in our calendar please contact the editor on 9761 1121 or [lewisdm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lewisdm@bigpond.net.au)  
Our next issue will be in the first week of June, and calendar entries need to be lodged by the 1st of May.

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# LIVINGTODAY in Mooroolbark

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## Editor

Doug Lewis

## Associate Editor

Janet Van Dijk

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## Contact

Phone 03 9726 8898

Mail PO Box 228 Mooroolbark VIC 3138

Email [lewisdm@bigpond.net.au](mailto:lewisdm@bigpond.net.au)

## Distribution

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## Contributing Writers for This Issue

Barbara Austin, Barry Austin, R. Bouchier  
A. Lang, D. Lewis, S. Steel  
J. Tkach, J. Van Dijk

## Photographs

Barbara Austin, Barry Austin  
R. Bouchier, A. Lang, D. Lewis  
N. Parawahera, J. Van Dijk

## Graphic Design

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Publication Perspectives  
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## Like to contribute?

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

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of *Living Today* can be accessed at: [http://mcf.gci.org.au/lt\\_archive.html](http://mcf.gci.org.au/lt_archive.html)

## 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

## ADVERTISING POLICY

*Living Today* does not publish direct advertising. We do, however, greatly appreciate the valuable contributions made by those who partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. We acknowledge those partners in each issue.