

# livingtoday

Issue 84 // September 2023

Good news. Locally.

Mooroolbark & surrounds.



## The Community Issue

HANGING OUT AND CUTTING HAIR AT MAD CUTZ • MOOROOLBARK COMMUNITY GARDEN

# Hello from the Living Today team

Since the founding of Living Today magazine in September 2002 we have had a mission of “contributing towards” and fostering “a growing community spirit” within Mooroolbark and its surrounds. I remember speaking to our founding editor, Doug Lewis, who told me someone once said to him in quite definite terms, “Mooroolbark. What good is there in Mooroolbark?!”

After 21 years and 84 issues, we have still not exhausted the content of people, their places, and their communities. People live together here, each one storied, and with integrated lives that have been part of and contributed to the local community through these 21 years.

Challenging in any community are the many drivers of social isolation. Whether it be from using social media, longer working hours or less participation in community groups, it is evident that people are engaging in less social contact. Robust scientific evidence shows that this is extremely detrimental to our health.<sup>1</sup>

Social researcher Hugh MacKay talks of isolation leading us to ask what the world can do for me. The paradox, he says, is that this is precisely the wrong response. Rather, thinking of others and taking our minds off ourselves is shown to help prevent isolation.<sup>2</sup> This is why highlighting the many positives within our community is also part of the aim of this magazine. There is a lot of community good happening that is also good for each one of us.

In this issue we highlight a snapshot of core community volunteers who are doing good for us in Mooroolbark. These people have strengthened and enriched the social fabric of our community for many years. Something new is happening that will also do this – plans for the Mooroolbark Community Garden are underway and many are looking forward to growing together in more ways than one. We also feature an organisation that works locally to enable care and social connection to our very important carers in the community. And don't forget the kids' pages, for heaps of fun.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Living Today.

**Matthew Gudze,  
Lead Pastor, Grace Communion Mooroolbark  
(Sponsors of Living Today)  
on behalf of the Living Today Editorial Team.**

1. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-17/social-media-work-hours-cost-of-living-rising-loneliness/102563666>

2. <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/conversations/conversations-hugh-mackay-2018/9749264>

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## Like to contribute?

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

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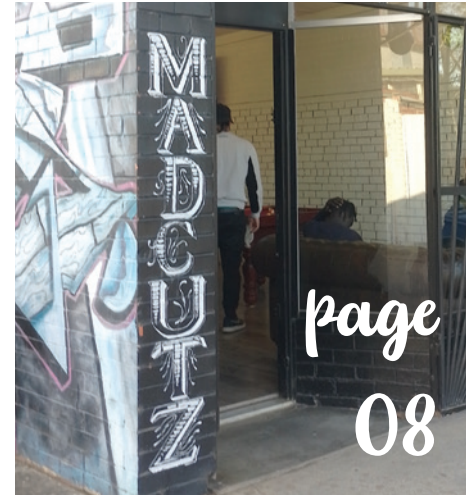
## Our Sponsors

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.

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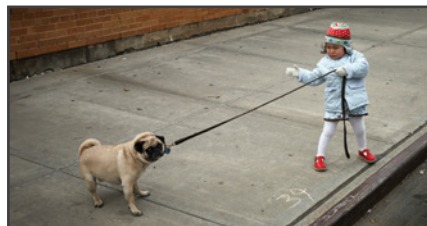
To contribute towards and to help to foster a growing community spirit within our neighbourhood. We seek to achieve this by:

- Highlighting the many positives within our community
- Encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- Contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

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# It's what you do, isn't it?

by Randall Bouchier

I must've been five. It was my first errand! "Randall, go across the road and ask Marvey if we could borrow a cup of sugar, please." Thus began my regular childhood experience of being sent to ask for the occasional cup or flour or sugar or delivering gifts of a freshly-made sponge cake or biscuits to some Ballarat neighbours.

Rarely would I return home without having shared a chat, a glass of cordial and a biscuit. I always felt safe. And never thought about the benefit I was receiving – learning the art of conversation with a variety of adults in my neighbourhood. It was what you did, wasn't it?

This ease of popping in on neighbours unannounced continued – even expanded – during my high school years in a new neighbourhood. I took it for granted that you would know your neighbours and be known by them. That you'd share conversation and laughter, you'd help and be helped.

During my university years I was amazed by the community spirit and neighbourly generosity when I first volunteered to help fight a bushfire not far from Ballarat. After a stint on the tanker in the fire zone, weary firefighters would snatch some rest by their tankers. Inevitably a ute or panel van would come by with a couple of women and teens sitting on the tailboard offering mugs of hot tea and freshly cut sandwiches.

Community connection, neighbourliness. Face-to-face relationships with people. It's normal and healthy, isn't it?

Since my wife and I moved into the Mooroolbark region in the early '70s we've been increasingly impressed by the people we've met who have devoted countless hours and a multiplicity of talents in contributing to our community.<sup>1</sup>

That would be normal, wouldn't it?

Recent data states that almost one-third (29%) of Australians aged 15 and over participated in unpaid voluntary work through an organisation or group in 2019. Over a 12-month period, volunteers contributed an estimated 596 million hours to the community.<sup>2</sup>

And further: Volunteering is a tower of strength in our communities ... making an estimated annual contribution of \$290 billion to our economic and social good.

Will this beneficial state of affairs continue? Will it increase, will it decrease, will it be the norm?

It depends on you! It depends on me! We are urgently challenged by a recent report in a July 2023 ABC article 'Why are Australians less sociable and lonelier?'<sup>3</sup>

The article reports that Australians are having less social contact than ever before. According to Melbourne University's Ferdi Botha, "Since 2001, we've seen a definite trend in the frequency of social contact, and the trend unsurprisingly worsened during the years of the COVID pandemic."

Maybe what I thought was normal isn't so normal anymore! What's more, according to Botha, social isolation has led to increasing loneliness, particularly among young people aged 15-24.

Assistant Minister for Charities Andrew Leigh comments: "There's been a shrinking of Australia's social circles that's left us at risk of becoming a nation without friends. The number of close friends that Australians have has approximately halved since the mid-1980s, as has the number of neighbours who we know well enough to drop in on uninvited."

Michelle Lim, one of Australia's foremost experts on the science of loneliness, comments that, "Loneliness is an innate human signal for us to connect, for us to reach out to our community ... so that we can thrive and flourish. Loneliness is part and parcel of life, but what's not normal is when we don't respond by reaching out to reconnect. When we try to ignore the feeling of loneliness and stay disconnected, there's robust scientific evidence that it's extremely detrimental to our health and well-being."

The article claims that the main drivers of social isolation are thought to be social media, longer working hours, more people living alone, and declining participation in church groups and volunteer organisations.

Andrew Leigh says, "We have prided ourselves on being a country that works together ... so there's a need for a civic renaissance that takes us back to the roots that make us wealthier, healthier and ultimately happier."

What will you do? What will I do to respond to this challenge?

Take a look at the accompanying text boxes about some of the people who've helped make Mooroolbark what it is today. Their example can inspire us to do similarly. Some of the boxes testify to generous long-term involvement in our community. Some encourage us with evidence of the involvement of younger people. The article about Mad Cutz describes not only the involvement of younger people, but also a fine contribution from newer residents of Mooroolbark. There's also a box of trivia questions – how well do you know this community?

What will we do? How might you contribute a couple of hours a week to bring benefit to your own, and community, wellbeing? Will we engage? Will we play our part towards a healthy Mooroolbark, and at the same time benefit from wider circles of friendship – and the probability of increased health, well-being, and even life expectancy that volunteering can bring?



1. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/volunteers>
2. <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy/advocacy-campaigns/towerofstrength/>
3. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-07-17/social-media-work-hours-cost-of-living-rising-loneliness/102563666>



## Next Gen

Thankfully, there are signs that the next generation is picking up the volunteering reins, helping to fill the gaps left by those in the community who've contributed so much in the past.

**Yolande Pickett:** Yolande first served on the Celebrate Mooroolbark committee in 2009. Last year the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group (MUG) presented her with a Quiet Achiever Award. MUG secretary Matt Gudze describes her as “a wonderful connector of people who has since had roles with council, coordinated local art instalments, and continues serving through Celebrate Mooroolbark and the Mooroolbark Traders amongst other things”.

**Moe Win:** Check out the accompanying article in this issue about a newer arrival, part of the local Burmese community. A successful businessman who is looking to not only earn a living but through Mad Cutz hairdressing is also offering a welcoming and safe space for young Mooroolbark men.

**Renae Jones:** After volunteering for many years at the Mooroolbark Miniature Railway, Renae joined the Celebrate Mooroolbark committee in 2020. One role led to another, until she succeeded the late Barb Austin as President. Renae is thankful to her parents for raising her in a home where community volunteering was “something you did”. Over to you, parents – let your children learn from your volunteering in our community.

## Our local women!

In our June issue, we bid farewell to Barb Austin who contributed to our community in mammoth ways. Barb wasn't the only long-time female contributor to Mooroolbark's community richness.

**Marion Stott:** Passionate about our history, Marion continues to provide key leadership in the organisation of our annual Remembrance Day and Anzac Day services and is also active in other key local organisations.

**Sandy McElroy:** Think local guiding – think Sandy. We'd have small fortunes if each of us were given a dollar for every hour that Sandy has contributed. And that's not counting the help she gives in other capacities around town.

**Elsie Bolwell:** Elsie is in her nineties, and still active. She has been a champion of the Girl Guides and local history, and served on the MAP Mooroolbark executive which was the forerunner of our township group the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group. She was the organising patron of the long-running Disabled People's Company which is planning, with Elsie's involvement, to resume meeting again following the COVID years.

And there are more... the late Jean Mitchinson and Marg Lewis, and Andy Higgins, Wendy Rowles, Marj Hookey, Lisa Currie, Ruth Castledine, Arline Myers... At this point, I must stop. The names just keep coming!



## Blokes, too

**Tony King:** Tony retired recently after serving as Brigade Captain in Mooroolbark since 2005, a mammoth achievement when you think of the many hours conducting training on Thursday nights and Sunday mornings, plus callouts and the inevitable administrative load!

**Ian Skurrie and Neil Mitchell:** One significant role they play is in leading the Goodness Gracious team that distributes the weekly Second Bite food delivery. You might recognise Neil as one of our local MCs on Anzac Day or the Hookey Park carols, and Ian behind a camera at community events.

**Geoff Earney:** Geoff is the Managing Director of Mooroolbark Professionals. Passionate in living out his conviction that it's a win-win when business contributes to the well-being of the community, Geoff has been generous in underwriting community projects and continues as President of the Mooroolbark Traders.

**Rowan Alexander:** Rowan has now retired as Manager of the Mooroolbark Bendigo Bank team, succeeded by Ash Toogood. The bank has consistently underwritten local community initiatives and staff are also regularly involved at community events.

And what about the late Bob Gatherum and Pete Higgins – or Doug Lewis, Peter Gittings, George Nantes, Fritz Van Reyersdael, Terry Charity, John Van, Craig Ingham, and the blokes involved week by week with sporting teams, the men's shed, etc.?

# How well do you think you know Mooroolbark?

1. During the war years there was controversy about food delivery to Mooroolbark. Which food supplies the missing word in 'the Mooroolbark \_\_\_\_\_ wars'?
2. Who was the founding editor of Living Today, as well as principal of a Mooroolbark primary school, and who, with his wife, took out an Australian Family of the Year award?
3. We enjoy our beautiful Hookey Park named after Jack Hookey. What significant role did Jack play in Mooroolbark's history?
4. Prior to Celebrate Mooroolbark, what was the name of Mooroolbark's annual festival?
5. Which Melbourne underworld figure was associated with Mooroolbark during the early 1900s?
6. What was the name of the long-standing railway employee who was on duty when the last train departed Mooroolbark's iconic railway station?
7. Where is the old station building to be relocated?
8. Which local long-time advocate for disability has a love of clowning?
9. Many, if not most, of those who settled in Mooroolbark's early subdivisions came from \_\_\_\_\_?
10. Many refugees from which country have formed a large, visible and vibrant local community in recent years?
11. Which Victorian artist designed and made the origami bird sculptures in Hookey Park?

*If you think you can answer all these questions, email Living Today on [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au). Answers to be provided in the next issue.*

# Mad Cutz

by Randall Bouchier

A funky new and unique barber shop has recently opened in Mooroolbark, catering particularly to youth who not only want to get the latest hair design (buzz cut, undercut, tapered, to name a few) but also want a safe place to hang out with their friends after school! While waiting for your session with one of the young, creative and qualified barbers (Lex, Zاده or trainee Jesse) to help you with the latest look, you can play pool, use the Playstation, or just relax with friends and strum a few chords on the guitar!

Situated on Manchester Road near Mooroolbark station in what was formerly a ladies' salon, Mad Cutz has been transformed into a men's-only barber shop that features revamped black vintage 1940s-style barber stools and a large Chesterfield-style lounge, its smooth brown leather softening the mainly black and white interior colour scheme. On one side of the shop is a free pool table and Playstation screen to use to while away the time, and soon a free football indoor table set is also planned. Free Wi-Fi is also available (controlled internet access only).

The owner and manager of Mad Cutz, Moe Win, arrived in Australia in 2008 with his mother and younger brother from Myanmar, settling in Croydon. Completing his secondary schooling at Melba College, he went on to study Management at RMIT for three years, before helping co-manage Win Asian Grocery Store and opening Mad Cutz on 1 July this year.

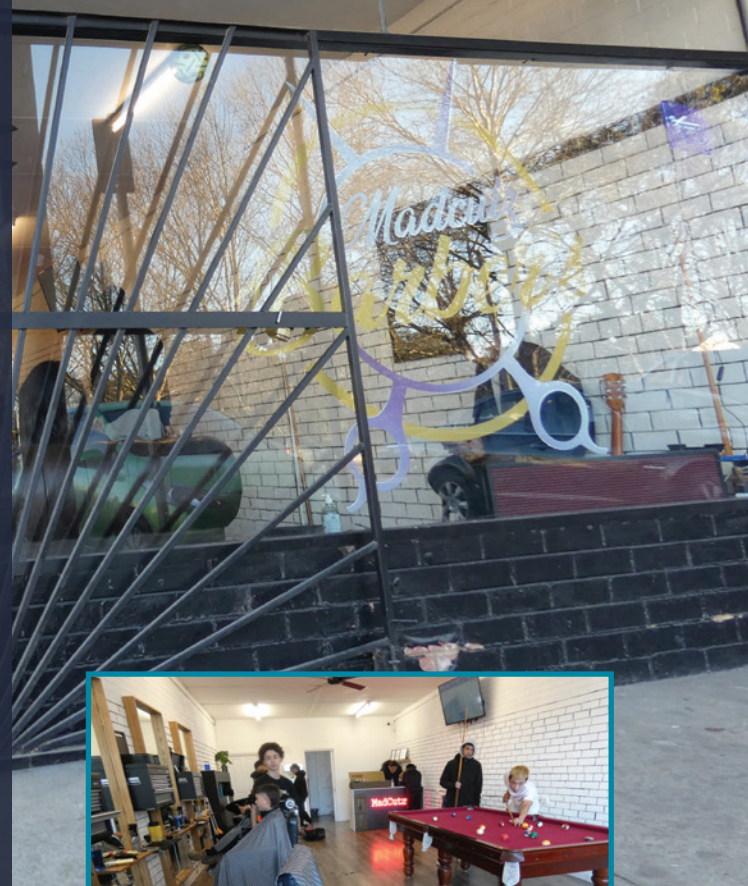
Moe will be on hand most days to personally welcome customers and guarantee that his new barber shop is a relaxed, positive and fun space for both customers and local youth to hang out and make new friends.

**45 Manchester Road, Mooroolbark.**

**Open Monday to Saturday  
from 10 am - 6.30 pm.**

**Prices:** \$25 for students under 16 (any hairstyle); \$25 Seniors Special (any style plus beard trim/face shave); 20% Veterans Discount. Bookings available or just walk in.

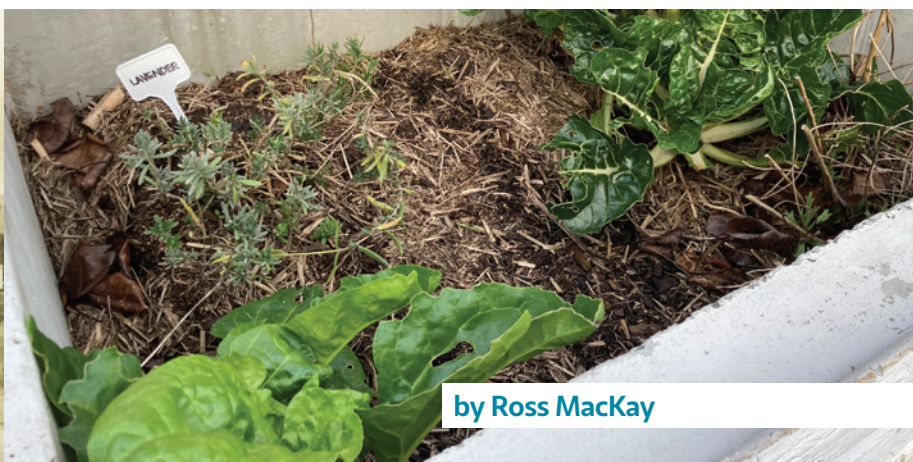
MADCUTZ  
BARBER'S



Moe Win fondly remembers his time in the Army Cadets, so when he came across some old ammunition boxes from the Vietnam war, he bought them and recommissioned them as a coffee table and display cabinet.



# From Community Hall to Community Garden



by Ross MacKay

History can be found in many corners of Mooroolbark – from the 1970s vibe of the Mooroolbark Terrace to the (now relocated) old station building, parts of which hailed from as far back as 1887. But dig a little deeper and you find that sometimes it's the *unexpected* corners that tell the most stories.

Take for example the corner of Station and Charles Street, opposite Hookey Park. For many of us this has always been a gravel/boggy (pick your year) car park that saved many a commuter when car parking ran out across the railway line. But this very corner was a community hot spot for many years before its sad descent into a forgotten wasteland.

The **Mooroolbark Public Hall** was erected on land donated by Mr J. E. Taylor in 1923 for the purpose of building a community hall. Over the years it was used for a wide variety of events and was the meeting place for many a community group.

The building was originally a temporary ballroom on the grounds of an old mansion in Toorak. As such it is no surprise that it was host to Irish dancing lessons, ballroom dancing, jazz classes and Saturday night dances. Local churches made use of the hall with the Presbyterian Church holding Sunday afternoon services there and it was the first home for the Mooroolbark Salvation Army.

It served as the Scout and Guide Hall and was home to the local kindergarten before their permanent building was erected over the road. It was host to the 'Mooroolbark Fete', craft markets, judo classes, guitar lessons, cricket afternoon teas and movies shown during school holidays.

After the new Mooroolbark Community Centre was opened in March 1980, the Lillydale Shire sadly let the old Public Hall deteriorate to such a state that it was either moved or demolished - its actual fate remains uncertain.

And now, a new era of community connection is about to begin on the site that for over 60 years was a hub of the community.

With the opening of the new station car park, a council survey has established that there is no longer a need for the site as a car park. Possible future uses were explored through community consultations. These included a youth space (skate park, basketball court), exercise equipment, public stage/amphitheatre, food truck park or a gathering space.

The concept of a community garden was chosen, as it is a use that could be temporary, easily constructed and be a space the whole community, young and old, could utilise.

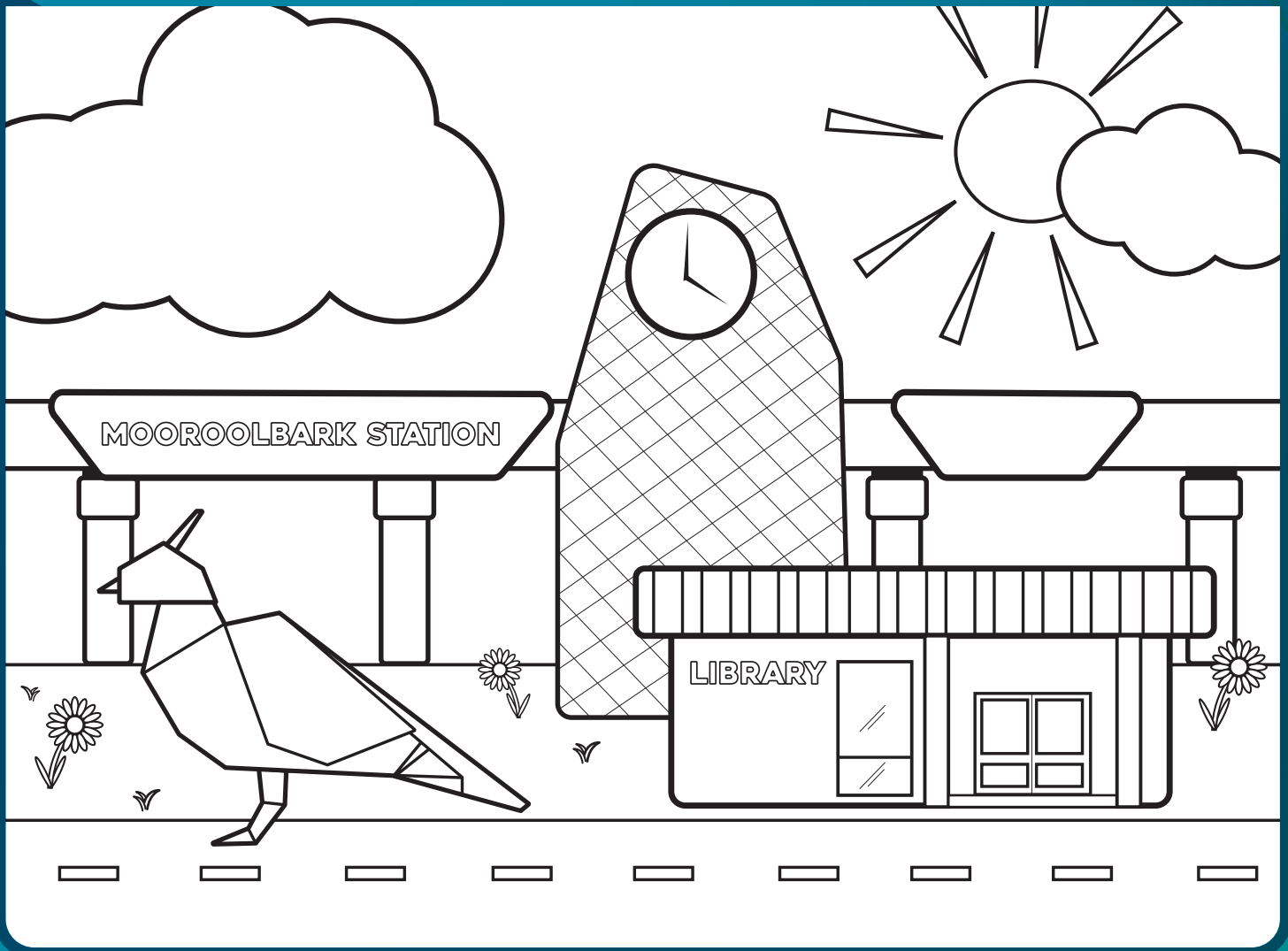
Funded by the Level Crossing Removal Project and assisted by the Mooroolbark Community Garden Group, works on the Mooroolbark Community Garden have already begun, with an expected completion date of September 2023.

While the eventual permanent use of the space will not be decided until 2024-2028, this 'pop-up' garden will provide quality sustainable food for local traders and the community.

One hundred years on, it's wonderful and very fitting to see the same small corner of Mooroolbark set to once again bring the community together.

For more information about the Mooroolbark Community Garden visit [tinyurl.com/mbcg2023](https://tinyurl.com/mbcg2023)

The town planning committee have decided that Mooroolbark has too many greys and browns and have hired you to give the town a makeover. Use your imagination to give Mooroolbark a new colour scheme! We'd love to see what you design – email us your colouring at [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au) and maybe it will feature in our next issue!



## Last month's colouring

from Bec Gilbert:

*"Hi Living Today team, Indigo (6) from Mooroolbark really enjoyed your kids pages and the crossword and colouring in."*

## A door, a girl and a stack of baked bean cans

Part one of our continuing story for kids // by Ross MacKay

Most doors to secret fantastical worlds are found in quaint, charming locations. Ancient weather-beaten train stations, dusty oak-lined libraries or deep within enchanted forests. But not the one I found. No, my door was nestled between a stack of baked bean cans and a stand promoting 1.56 minute noodles at my local supermarket. It was a small, wooden door, painted red with a bright yellow doorknob. And I seemed to be the only one who could see it.

"Mum, what's that?" I asked, tugging at my Mum's sleeve. She was a bit distracted with the long list of groceries needed for my older sister's birthday party. It had grown increasingly larger in the last few days to the point where it was beginning to seem as if she was planning to host a 12th century banquet, not a 12th birthday party for my sister and her annoying friends.

"Hmm? They're baked beans honey, you know that," Mum muttered while looking up and down the aisle for something. "What does your sister mean by a big packet of Ogglydoodles? Is that some kind of lolly? Could be dog food for all I know."

"No Mum, the door just next to the... the little red door, right there... see it's... it's..." It's no use is what it was. She was in another world, the world of Ogglydoodles and ridiculous requests from a soon to be 12-year-old girl who is frankly getting far too much air time in this story than she should be. Back to me. And the door.

At this stage I was tired of shopping so I figured that there was no harm in seeing where the door led. I'm not sure exactly what I was expecting; possibly just a secret entrance to the storeroom, maybe it just led out the back of ThreadWorths, or perhaps it was just a fake door and I'd be back to pondering why my sister wanted Ogglydoodles at her party, given that they were disgusting and left your tongue green.

I bent down to grab the door handle. It was a small door and for an 8-year-old boy like me it was going to be a bit of a tight squeeze to get through. I was beginning to grow slightly concerned I might get stuck halfway, the fire brigade would have to be called and I'd have to be cut out and then I'd be on the front page of the newspaper and...

"What newspaper? Ooh, or should that be *which* newspaper?" I jumped and turned to find a small girl standing next to me sucking on a lollipop. She had a slightly bored expression on her face, as if reading people's innermost thoughts was a

common occurrence for her. "I mean, if you're thinking one of the big papers, I doubt it. They usually have dull stories about banks or footballers doing the wrong thing. They never lead with interesting things like 'dangerously curious boy gets stuck in magical door next to slightly unstable tower of baked bean tins'... anyway are you going to go through, only I'm in a bit of hurry." She barely paused between sentences and I wondered if she had heard of the full stop.

I had questions. "I have questions," I said.

"Oh don't we all? I imagine it's along the lines of *how did you read my mind, what do you mean you're in a hurry and did you say magical door, what do you mean magical door, how do you know it's a magical door?* Am I right or am I left?"

I was confused and was about to open my mouth to ask my aforementioned questions when my brain caught up and realised that she was right – those were my questions.

"Doesn't matter. Ask me another time. I need to leave, so I guess I'm left. Time I had. Goodbye and grab a can on the way through, you might get hungry." And with one swift motion she ducked, swung the door open and slipped through before I had a chance to say, "What the, who the, why the... can?" By the time I had managed to say it, I realised the futility of the words and had begun to doubt I had met the little girl at all - it had all happened so fast.

I looked up at Mum, wondering if she had seen the whole thing, but she was just slowly turning on the spot saying, "Og... gly...doooooo...dles" as if saying it slowly with a knowing look in her eye would help her find them. I considered telling her they were in aisle 16 right next to the Twitzimatfels but I didn't think that would help.

Besides, she was distracted and I had a door to get through. In a matter of a few minutes I had gone from random boy in a supermarket to *very curious* boy in a *magical* supermarket who had a secret *magical* door to get through. Okay, so I had no proof of any of that – but it sounded exciting and besides, I also had a mission – find the girl and get some answers! I grasped the door handle, swung the door opened and slipped through.

Two seconds later I reached my hand back out and grabbed a can of baked beans. I had a feeling I was going to need it.

*To be continued...!*

# Temcare

## Caring for children and families

by Matthew Gudze

You have no doubt heard about the uptick in needs of vulnerable people and families in our local communities as the cost of living and housing crises affect more and more. We have many community organisations that serve and provide community care in this space. I would like to let you know about a locally run and funded organisation I found out about recently called Temcare.

Temcare is a not-for-profit Christian social services agency caring for children and families, operating since 1968. It is managed locally from an office in Ringwood North, providing help for a variety of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Temcare has 10 staff, about 40 current volunteers, and a board of six directors, supported by more than 10 different Christian denominations. It does not receive government funding and is supported by charitable trusts, congregations, businesses, and individual donors. It is thus enabled to come alongside people in need and help share their burdens.

Naomi has worked for Temcare for six years, and has previously worked in juvenile justice, child protection and school well-being. She says there is “a huge waitlist for our services and increasing needs in the adolescent and teen space”. As Temcare accepts referral recipients from Anglicare and Uniting Care for example, they provide both individualised and group assistance, such as short-term respite care, family services casework and mentoring. Temcare have also recently expanded the mentoring program with new youth workers and an advanced mentor.

Their respite care provides a much-needed break for families while offering children a loving and caring environment, available for babies and children up to 15 years, for one to two nights every six weeks. Temcare connects families in need with church volunteer carers.

The Temcare family services arm provides individual casework by experienced and professionally trained welfare staff and seeks to address parenting difficulties and factors that contribute to stress and breakdown within the family unit. Staff members work closely with professional networks and supportive local churches to provide families with stability, safety and care.

Temcare also has various mentoring programs in place, including Mates Mentoring, for adolescents aged from 10 to 15, where an adult mentor is connected to a young person for regularly organised activities and group social events, and Women of Hope monthly support groups for mums in our local community. At Women of Hope, Temcare believes in supporting all mothers through their physical, emotional, and spiritual journeys. Some of the topics they discuss include mental health, parenting, and healthy relationships.

With further funding, Temcare hopes to continue expanding their services to provide tutoring for vulnerable secondary students, crisis pregnancy support, parenting mentors, sports participation for vulnerable children, court chaplaincy, and general prisoner family support, which currently includes mentoring.

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**Mooroolbark**

**B Bendigo Bank**



CARING FOR CHILDREN  
SINCE  
1968  
& FAMILIES



Naomi also said that walking alongside people means that she and her colleagues are not just providing casework and mentoring but are also at the forefront of the everyday needs of people in a crisis situation. She can find herself cleaning houses, providing food, and helping children to get a good start in their education through providing school supplies.

"There are always more needs than the services we can provide," says Naomi, "but it is a joy to walk alongside those we get to know, and we often develop deeper relationships with them."

**“ We celebrate the big and small wins with clients – sometimes that can be a text from them just saying ‘Thank you’. ”**

Currently, Temcare has two significant needs – people to volunteer in their respite care and mentoring programs, and financial support, especially for implementing new services.

For further information, please visit:  
[www.Temcare.org.au](http://www.Temcare.org.au)



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## Meet Krystal

"When I first came to Temcare with my three-month-old baby girl, I was just out of an abusive relationship. We were living in emergency accommodation, had very little money and had not long moved, so I didn't know anyone.

"A friend of mine had been helped by Temcare and referred me to them. Rachel from Temcare contacted me and we hit it off straight away. After a while I explained my curiosity to attend church, so she invited me to hers. She introduced me to a life group and I haven't looked back.

"In my experience, it is imperative to have a community around us, and Temcare was instrumental in introducing me to my community. I started going to the Women of Hope group through Temcare, which meets every month. I went from having no one to now belonging to six very special community groups."

# Stubborn? Who me?



Have you ever been accused of being stubborn? I'm sure we've all had our moments. My wife and I sometimes tease each other as to which one of us is more stubborn. Truth be told, it's me.

Stubbornness is often equated with refusing to admit a mistake. And that's a problem. But when we look at the full definition of stubbornness, we see there is also a good side. It is explained as a "dogged determination not to change one's attitude or position on something". Some positive characteristics associated with stubbornness are: persistence, resolve, determination, and tenacity.

When I talk about my love for my family – my wife, children, or grandchildren – I'm happy to declare that my love for them is not governed by their actions, their emotions, or their words. I have a stubbornness – a determination – to not allow that to change how much I love them.

I share this because when I think of God's faithfulness, I see that same kind of stubbornness. God refuses to change his mind about how much he loves me and you. He has a resolute commitment for his love to always have the last word.

Take for example one of the most 'stubborn' expressions of God's love, found in the book of Romans in the Bible.

"For I know that nothing can keep us from the love of God. Death cannot! Life cannot! Angels cannot! Leaders cannot! Any other power cannot! Hard things now or in the future cannot.

The world above or the world below cannot! Any other living thing cannot keep us away from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39 NLV)

God's stubbornness in his love for us is what gives us hope, courage, strength in the tough times, as well as the desire to love him in return. Stubbornness in his case is safe and sure. We can have absolute confidence that nothing can separate his love from us.

That's the kind of stubbornness I'd love my wife and family to 'blame' me for. And then I'd smile and remind them of my love for them – much like God does for us.

- Adapted from Greg Williams, Speaking of Life

**Speaking of Life** is a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website: [gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/](http://gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/)

This magazine is sponsored by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (previously known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), a congregation of Grace Communion International. If you would like more information or pastoral support, our local congregational contact is Matthew Gudze on (03) 9737 0126.

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# Is working from home “morally wrong”?

by Anna Grummitt  
Centre for Public Christianity



Now that lockdowns are behind us, should employees who have been working from home return to the office full-time?

This question has been doing the rounds in the media over the past few months. Many employers want staff back in the office – for good. Employees are resistant, preferring a hybrid work model.

And while employers mostly focus on the benefits of in-person gatherings for collaboration and development, some are framing this as a moral issue. CR Commercial Property Group CEO Nicole Duncan recently made headlines for describing remote workers as “selfish”, and Elon Musk famously labelled working from home as “morally wrong”.

Personally, as an extrovert, I enjoy going into the office. But at the end of 2021, I became a mum. And as I navigated breastfeeding, sleep deprivation, and the sheer relentlessness of caring for a newborn, having my husband work from home was an absolute lifeline.

It would have been easier for him to go to the office. He could have enjoyed a peaceful commute instead of changing nappies, cleaning up vomit, and dealing with countless tears (both mine and our baby’s). Far from being selfish, working from home gave him more time to devote to caring for and bonding with our son – all while still kicking goals in his paid job.

Drawing on a Bible verse, US author Andy Crouch describes humans as “heart-soul-mind-strength complexes designed for love”. If this is true, then human flourishing looks like investing our time in activities that develop us in all these dimensions – many of which take place outside work hours.

It’s right that we discuss the future of work in a post-pandemic world. But if we hold onto this notion of what it means to be human, surely we can have a richer conversation.

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## Local Churches

**Mooroolbark Baptist Church**  
153-157 Hull Rd, Croydon  
Sunday 10am  
[mbc.org.au](http://mbc.org.au)

**Mooroolbark (St. Margaret's) Uniting Church**  
207-219 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark  
Sunday 10am  
[mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au](http://mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au)

**St Peter Julian Eymard, Mooroolbark Parish**  
240 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark  
Saturday Vigil Mass - 6.00pm  
Sunday 9am & 11am  
Weekday Mass: Tuesday and Wednesday - 9.30am  
[spje.org.au](http://spje.org.au)

**Mooroolbark Salvation Army Corps**  
305 Manchester Rd, Chirnside Park  
Sunday 10am  
[salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps](http://salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps)

**Life Ministry Church**  
15-49 Old Melbourne Rd, Chirnside Park  
Sunday 10am & 6pm  
[lifeministry.church](http://lifeministry.church)

**Grace Communion Mooroolbark**  
Mooroolbark Community Centre,  
125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark  
Sunday 10.30am  
[mooroolbark.gci.org.au](http://mooroolbark.gci.org.au)



# upcoming events



September - December 2023

## Library Events

Check out all the events on at your local libraries at:

[yourlibrary.com.au/whats-on](http://yourlibrary.com.au/whats-on)



## Creative Yarra Ranges

For all the latest arts and culture events around the Yarra Ranges head over to:

[yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/The-Arts](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/The-Arts)



## Victorian Concert Orchestra

**8 October, 2.00pm. \$15.00**  
Mooroolbark Community Centre

For nearly 100 years this iconic 50-piece symphony orchestra has been renowned for an ever-changing variety program that ranges from the classics including Bach, Mozart and Tchaikovsky, through operetta, musical theatre – from Gilbert & Sullivan to Andrew Lloyd Webber, and contemporary composers such as John Williams (Star Wars) and Peter Allen.

To reserve your tickets book online at [yarraranges.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/111697](http://yarraranges.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/111697)

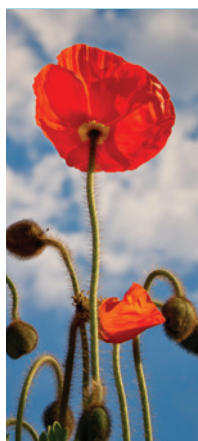


## Beck Mitchell - "7 Marathons, 7 Days, 7 Continents"

**Wed 18 October, 7.30pm**

Guest at Annual Forum and Quiet Achiever Awards Night

Hosted by Mooroolbark Umbrella Group at the Mooroolbark Community Centre



## Remembrance Day Service

**Saturday 11 November, 2.00pm**

Hookey Park

Includes the unveiling and dedication of the fourth memorial plaque.

## Mooroolbark Miniature Railway



### Train rides!

Fourth Sunday of each month excluding December. 11am-4pm, with a lunch break between 1-2pm where trains and the kiosk close. Train rides \$3.00 each, children under four free.

### Upcoming dates:

24 Sept, 22 Oct, 26 Nov 2023