

livingtoday

Issue 95 // Winter 2026

Good news. Locally.

Mooroolbark & surrounds.



Celebrate Mooroolbark 2026

Multicultural • Visioning • Celebrating

Hello from the Living Today team



This year I attended a local Anzac Day dawn service with my son, who gathered with his fellow CFA Juniors. It was cool, clear and starry morning, and high above in the nearby branches of the stringybarks the kookaburras added their chorus to the ceremony as dawn broke below. We all went back to the CFA station for breakfast. Let me say, nothing is better than the smell of eggs and bacon on toast with hashbrowns and a cup of hot tea to warm the cold hands. It wasn't three-star Michelin, but the place was warm and it was humming. Current volunteers and their families were there, as well as past volunteers and their families, all whom have given their time and love to a cause for the benefit of the local community. I hear there were other breakfast morsels offered that morning at the Scouts Hall and, of course, at the RSL.

It made me think about what a village should be like and perhaps what we all want deep down. In the crushing loneliness that seems to describe our age, there are pockets of village life where we bear each other's burdens and serve for the benefit of the other, rather than giving it all over to big business, paid experts, entertainment and social services to provide what we think we need. What we really need first and foremost is a circle of concern that radiates outwards from family to extended family and to friends, local connections, clubs and organisations.

In this Living Today issue we hope you get a taste of that. We feature a friend and shoulder-to-shoulder volunteer colleague of mine, Ian Skurrie, who has served the Mooroolbark community for many years, leaving a legacy that will last well beyond his tangled grey beard. We also have a photo collage of the autumn Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival and Anzac Day service in which the village came together to be thankful and enjoy what we have. For which there is much. .

We hope you enjoy this issue.

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

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Like to contribute?

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Contents | Winter 2026



06
Multicultural art plan



07
Mooroolbark visioning



08-09
Celebrate Mooroolbark

10
ANZAC Day

11
Sensory hair studio

15
Church services

16
Upcoming events

Mission statement To contribute towards and 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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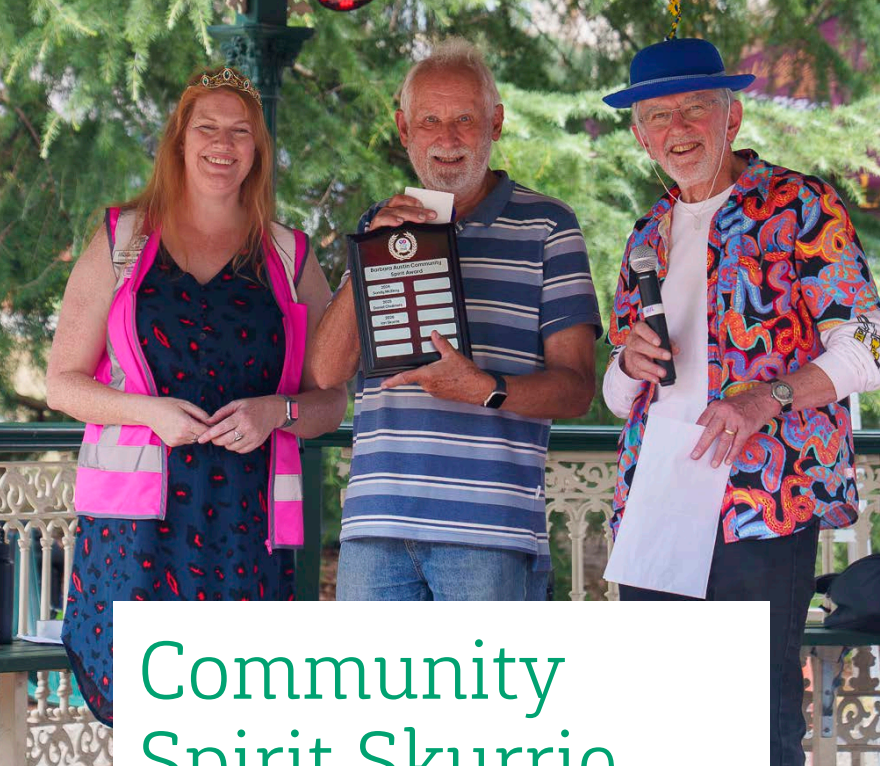
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We meet every Sunday at 10.30am at the Mooroolbark Community Centre. Come along and enjoy a service and stay for a chat, with delicious tea, coffee and biscuits.

Green Printing Credentials



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Community Spirit Skurrie

by Randall Bouchier

Above left, left to right: Renae Jones, Ian Skurrie and Randall Bouchier.

We would be the poorer were we 'Skurrie-less'. Ian Skurrie, whose working life was centred in medical laboratory technology, would fully understand how human wellbeing relies on chemistry. Having run a small pathology department in the army at Puckapunyal as a national serviceman, he returned to civilian life and concluded his studies at RMIT, graduating as a Hospital Scientist in the mid-seventies. Ian worked in bacteriology and then successfully established a virology department at the Royal Women's Hospital.

Science conclusively shows that brain-released chemicals like oxytocin (the 'love hormone'), serotonin, and dopamine are essential to our vitality and wellbeing. Crucially, these 'feel-good' chemicals are triggered by real-life, face-to-face social interaction – not screen-based, virtual connections. Our current love affair with screen time drives social isolation, which increases the risk of depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, and cardiovascular disease.

Ian's life reflects a deep understanding of this need for human connection and community. He attributes much of his success to his marriage, noting that his wife, Rosalyn, "filled in the gaps that I left". His desire to support others was sparked during his school years by his father, a builder on the Mornington Peninsula. His father set a powerful example by his concern in helping new migrants with settlement issues and contributing to community wellbeing through serving in the McCrae Progress Association.

When Ian was born, the prevailing medical opinion in

Australia was that the common, usually temporary, childhood condition of being 'knock-kneed' required medical attention. Prior to commencing school, Ian wore callipers, and I wonder whether this experience contributed to his compassion towards people who struggle with hardship and suffering

As a young man Ian became a Christian. In becoming more deeply involved in community service, he says he became firmly convicted that his Christian calling involves making a difference for those 'doing it hard'. He says it's a kind of 'no-holds-barred love' – taking people as they are and helping them.

Ian is a gifted audio-visual buff, and I first met him when he was filming some footage documenting the contribution of volunteers in our community. Years earlier, it was whilst helping a mate produce a film for The Salvation Army that he met Rosalyn who featured as a singer in The Salvation Army jazz band 'Solid Rock'.

My initial encounter with Ian led to many years of working shoulder to shoulder in our community. Ian has been a great encourager – a terrific team player – who sees a need and looks to respond.

At this year's Celebrate Mooroolbark festival, Ian received the well-deserved, annual Barbara Austin Community Spirit Award.

Each year the award is given to a "quiet achiever, the person that does a lot for their community without the need for accolades. Someone welcoming of all newcomers, inspiring, willing to pitch in and help,

advocating for those less fortunate than themselves, passionate, enthusiastic and kind". Ian embodies this.

Take food relief in Mooroolbark as an example. When the weekly SecondBite food delivery was in danger of being lost to Mooroolbark, Ian didn't just voice concern – he was actively involved in helping Neil Mitchell establish Goodness Gracious Network (GGN) and ensuring that vulnerable community members continued to receive support. He continues to play his part in helping to sustain food relief not only through GGN, but also through food relief available in the Terrace, recognising that these services are lifelines for many families.

Ian's passion for community is evident in one word that defines his approach: availability. Time and time again, he makes himself available to meet community needs, demonstrating the kind of welcoming, inclusive spirit that makes people feel valued and supported.

His compassion and gentle way of going about things create an environment where people feel safe to participate and contribute. Whether he's working with fellow volunteers, supporting someone with disability, or navigating complex organisational challenges, he brings a calm, welcoming presence that puts people at ease.

What makes Ian's service to our community particularly inspiring is his willingness to persevere through challenges that might well cause others to walk away. During the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group's auspicing of the Mooroolbark Community House, he navigated the complexities of dealing with multiple stakeholders including the Department of Fairness, Family and Housing, the Yarra Ranges Shire, and the Community House organisation. He moved well outside his preferred skill set to work through compliance issues, learning new areas simply because the community needed someone to do it.

His approach to service is captured in the philosophy of Mother Teresa: "God hasn't called me to be successful but to be faithful." This humble perspective – focusing on faithfulness rather than scale – inspires others to recognise that every act of service matters. Ian demonstrates that true community building isn't about serving everyone, it's about faithfully serving those you can reach.

There's nothing dour and joyless about Ian. Nothing one-dimensional about him. His sense of humour is robust – sometimes self-effacing. He's cheery. He and his wife are environmentally conscious – contributing to community planting days, for instance, and photographing local native flora. He's active – sharing in tai chi at the Community House, and weekend yachting at McCrae.

Nuff sed!

What makes Ian's service to our community particularly inspiring is his willingness to persevere through challenges

Let me conclude with these words from his nomination: "Ian deserves the Barbara Austin Community Spirit Award because he embodies every quality that made Barbara special: he is a quiet achiever, humble, compassionate, and deeply committed to making a positive difference in our community."

Like Barbara, he is a 'hidden gem' – someone whose contributions might go unnoticed because he doesn't seek recognition, but whose impact is felt across multiple organisations and countless lives. His servant heart drives him to persevere through challenges that would cause others to give up, always focusing on faithfulness rather than recognition.

His availability, demonstrated time and time again across years of service, mirrors Barbara's selfless giving. Whether it's showing up weekly to support someone with disability, working through complex compliance issues late into the night, or stepping into leadership gaps when organisations face crisis, he consistently puts the community's needs above his own comfort.

What makes him truly worthy of this award is his gentle compassion and the gentle way he goes about his work – bringing the same warmth and humble dedication that Barbara was known for. He doesn't just volunteer; he inspires others through his example of 'long obedience in the same direction', showing that sustained, faithful service is what truly builds community.

His fingerprints are on so many of the vital services that make Mooroolbark a caring, connected community – from ensuring people have food on their tables, to providing spiritual support, to creating an independent community house, to documenting and celebrating our community's story through photography. Yet he remains humble, quietly persistent, and always ready to serve.

In honouring him with the Barbara Austin Community Spirit Award, we recognise not just his achievements, but the spirit in which he achieves them – with kindness, humility, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to others. He truly is another 'Barb' for our community. *tt*



Above left, left to right: ????

Mooroolbark's Multicultural Murals

Yarra Ranges Council

Mooroolbark is about to look a little brighter and a lot more like the community who call it home.

Yarra Ranges Council is proud to announce Trading Stories: Mooroolbark's Multicultural Murals, a new public art project that celebrates the people behind the local shops, cafés and family-run businesses that give the precinct its character. In collaboration with the local community, this project will turn its attention to the people who have chosen Mooroolbark as their home or place of work.

"It will be wonderful to see Burmese and other cultures from our local business community celebrated through murals in the town. We would be proud to see different cultures represented, and we hope this helps young people feel a sense of pride in their heritage." – Moe, Mooroolbark business owner.

Set to appear on façades throughout the town centre, the murals are being co-created with local business owners from a mix of cultural backgrounds. Real stories will become the heart of the murals, transforming everyday walls into vibrant markers of identity, pride and connection.

The Mooroolbark township is emerging as a connected trail of artworks, and this project will complement and add to the Mooroolbark Street Art Project, an initiative by the Mooroolbark Traders & Community Group. From Red Earth Park, through

the shops along Brice Avenue, around the corner into Hookey Park, around the Mooroolbark Library and on Cardigan Road, the area is gradually forming a walkable network of creative sites.

Beyond brightening the precinct, Trading Stories aims to create a stronger sense of belonging, encourage people to explore the town centre, and spark conversations between neighbours who may never have met otherwise. The artworks will be daily reminders that behind every shopfront is a family with a story worth knowing.

Further details about the artworks, artists and community involvement will be shared in the coming weeks as the project continues to unfold. The result will be a colourful, outdoor gallery that reflects the many cultures, voices and histories that make up Mooroolbark today. [It](#)

As a multicultural artist, I'm constantly looking at ways to include representation of diverse groups in my art so I'm particularly supportive of the program's commitment to engaging local artists and cultural communities in the creative process

– Dinesh Pasupathyrajan, local artist



Mooroolbark visioning

by Neil Mitchell & Jane Monk

The 2025 October community forum in Mooroolbark used a different format this year.

It did acknowledge three local Quiet Achievers but, instead of having a guest speaker, participants were invited to participate in an interactive process of storytelling and visioning.

After participants shared “stories and memories that captured something they loved and valued about Mooroolbark” they named “values that are important to us”.

There was keen chatter around tables as people shared stories that highlighted friendships, being included, unexpected generosity, memories of good fun times and the contribution of so many people who help Mooroolbark develop as a community with a village feel.

Values that people thought important included hospitality, connection and the promotion of community, generosity, friendliness, and the sharing of resources, volunteering, gratitude, thankfulness, kindness and acknowledgment.

Participants then used a ‘visioning’ exercise and were invited to draw their vision onto the paper tablecloths (overcoming all those years of good behaviour which told us not to draw on the table!).

Visions emerged of Mooroolbark as a friendly, connected and sustainable community, with a greener landscape (with “tall trees along the streets”).

A community: :

- with “cultural festivals to celebrate diversity”
- “smelling like cinnamon doughnuts – warm and comforting”
- “which is a safe, calm, unhurried pace that is family friendly”
- “with intergenerational school experiences and a Mooroolbark Wellbeing Centre”
- “with the Mooroolbark Community House radiating out into the community (drama, music, crafts, blood bank etc.)”
- “with gardens, open community space; I hope the circus will continue to visit”
- “where we can have a ‘Repair Shop’ and a renewably powered community battery”
- “where people don’t need to travel long distances for work; where a ‘living salary’ is available, and generous hands continue to reach out” .

So, an evening well spent, with warm and fruitful conversations.

How are you promoting your vision? 



Celebrate Mooroolbark 2026

A Wonderful Community Success

by Renae Jones, Coordinator, Mooroolbark Community House



The 2026 Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival was a fantastic success, with perfect weather helping to create a wonderful day for our community to come together and celebrate everything that makes Mooroolbark such a special place.

From the moment the festival opened, there was a great atmosphere throughout Hookey Park, the Terrace car parks and the entrances to the park. Families, friends and visitors enjoyed exploring the many attractions, market stalls and activities spread across the festival site.

One of the highlights of the day was the full stage program, which featured a fantastic lineup of local performers and entertainers. The stage remained a focal point throughout the festival, showcasing the incredible talent that exists within our local community.

This year's festival also provided a wonderful opportunity to recognise one of our own, with Ian Skurrie receiving this year's Barbara Austin Community Spirit award (see the main article about Ian on pages 4 and 5) in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the community. Congratulations, Ian, on this fitting acknowledgment of your dedication and service.



There was no shortage of things to see and do. The Mooroolbark Scouts provided their popular abseiling tower, the Mooroolbark Guides ran a silent disco, emergency services were present and engaging with the community, the animal farm and go-karts were popular, the Library was open for story-time and activities, and our local Members of Parliament took the opportunity to meet residents.

An event of this size simply wouldn't happen without an enormous amount of work behind the scenes. A heartfelt thank you goes to our dedicated committee and weekend volunteers who generously gave their time and energy to ensure the festival was a success.

I'd also like to sincerely thank every member of the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival Committee for the months of planning, organisation and hard work that made this event possible. This festival marks the end of an era, with several of our long-term committee members stepping down from their roles. We'd like to acknowledge the following outgoing executive committee members for their immense contributions over the years:

Renae Jones – Chairperson 2021-2026, Clare Cafferty – Treasurer 2019-2026, Helen Godfrey – Secretary (and other roles) 2019-2026, Liz Ryan – Vice Chair and life member.

General committee members: Danielle, Helen, Susan, Ebony.

Additionally, the Yarra Valley Wool and Handicrafts show will move to become a separate organisation, with Jodie and Emrita taking the reins.

Losing so many committee members puts the festival in a precarious position and we would love to hear from anyone who would like to come on board and keep the festival alive! You can email us on chair@celebratemooroolbark.com

Finally, thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, performed, sponsored, exhibited or supported the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival in any way. Events like this are a reminder of the strength, spirit and pride of our community. 

A wonderful day for our community to come together and celebrate everything that makes Mooroolbark such a special place.



Anzac Day

by Randall Bouchier

The weather turned it on for us – a beautiful, warm, autumnal day in the inviting setting of Hookey Park – the kind of day that makes you glad to live in Melbourne. And given that it was Anzac Day, the large crowd assembled acknowledged our gratitude for the sacrifice many have made in the past to ensure our freedom to gather and remember.

The event was hosted again by the Mooroolbark History Group, together with support and help from local schools, community groups, politicians and local leaders.

The service centred around the contribution of many women in the defence of our country and highlighted the 75th anniversary of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps.

Mayor Richard Higgins spoke about the dangerous service of Australian nurses. Over 70 nurses sacrificed their lives, in their commitment to saving the lives of many.

Federal MP Aaron Violi spoke of the huge shift in the role of women in our services. The appointment of Lieutenant General Susan Coyle who will become the new Chief of Army in July 2026 – the first woman to lead a branch of the Australian Defence Force – is indicative of the contribution of women in all levels of our defence.

Outgoing State MP David Hodgett spoke briefly about the roles of the five women whose names appear on our Mooroolbark War Memorial.

Marion Stott OAM spoke in honour of Matron in Chief Grace Wilson CBE who served during WWI in France and England. Grace received many prestigious awards including the Florence Nightingale medal. She served briefly in WWII until due to ill-health she returned home to live in Mooroolbark.

A special treat came as local poet Jim Brown recited his poignant and moving 'A Splash of Red' which had been written for the recent unveiling of a memorial at the Nurses Memorial Garden at Montrose.

It was encouraging to enjoy polished contributions from the younger generation as the Yarra Hills school captains, Ethan and Bawi, read the Anzac Requiem. Mooroolbark Guides formed an honour guard at the flagpole and the Mooroolbark Scouts hosted a sausage sizzle following the service.

The service ended with the newly formed Mooroolbark Melodies leading us in a final 'tongue-in-cheek' song, "There's a track winding back to that old-fashioned shack along the road to – Mooroolbark!"

It was a fitting end to a service about which many commented was warm and welcoming – with a tone not too formal, yet suitably dignified. *lt*



Magical Sensory Hair & Beauty

by Mary Bourchier

Open Tuesday to Saturday by appointment only. For bookings: 0494 117 953

Located in Shop 5, 91-111 Brice Avenue, Magical Sensory Hair & Beauty Salon is located at the quiet end of busy Brice Avenue shopping centre, Mooroolbark. This autism-friendly salon is especially designed for all children, teens and adults who may be on the spectrum.

The owner of the Magical Sensory Hair & Beauty Salon, Jess Collings is well qualified to attend to your child. She is a mother of three children with special needs, and can extend the understanding, compassion and patience that is needed to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for you and your child.

Your child's first appointment is inside the sensory playroom, where there are easily accessible and carefully selected sensory fidget toys and gadgets. And Jess will spend time getting to know your child. This is especially important for children who are non-verbal or anxious.

Here Jess will play and interact with your child to get to know them and create a sense of calm and safety. She patiently waits until the child is ready to have their hair attended to and will then invite them back into the salon to find a chair of their choice – on the horse, or the car, or even on the floor!

As well as washing, cutting and trimming hair, Jess offers braiding, curling, hair glitter and extensions. There are special occasion packages for birthdays and bridal parties. Personalised certificates for a First Haircut and Gift Vouchers are also available.

Some of the services/packages at Magical Sensory Hair and Beauty:

- Workshops for mums and dads. Contact Jess for the next session of fun, giggles and selected hairstyle for children.
- Mermaid Package – braid with added colourful hair extension, finished with hair glitter!
- Girls Day Out – bring a friend or family member for some curls, small braid, hair accessories and glitter.
- Dad and Son – clipper cut and style. Wash and scalp massage included for the dad!
- Services include wash, blow wave and style, balayage, peek-a-boo colours, clipper cuts, fades and more.

Other packages include Mother/Daughter, Princess, Superhero, Viking, as well as bridal and flower girl packages. *tt*

Back to Normality

The final part of our kids story by Ross MacKay

Time slowed down. I don't mean that a lot of things happened in a very short space of time and it seemed like time slowed down. No, I mean that time actually did slow down. I tried turning my head but it was like moving through treacle. Opening my mouth to speak was similarly time-consuming and even when I did manage to vocalise something I only managed "Whhhhhh..." before I was interrupted by a blur that darted around me.

"Allan the door is too small closed and not black yet - what am I going to do?" said the blur which settled into the shape of Morag as it stopped in front of me.

Behind her I could see the bulky shape of Crunfer floating ever so gently and slowly through the air. The can of baked beans shot by Fido was propelling the hunk of metal at what would normally have been superspeed towards the door.

Time however had been slowed down for everything. Everything that is, except for Morag who was continuing to talk at me in lightning speed. Given that forming a sentence would probably take the better part of a day I opted instead to try and communicate via eyebrows. It still took an agonisingly long time to raise my right eyebrow but I managed to clearly convey that I had no idea what was going on and that she was speaking gobbledygook.

Morag stared at me, then she too raised her eyebrows. I interpreted this as "oh right, you didn't understand a word of what I just said and communicated that clearly with your single eyebrow raise."

However what she verbally said was: "I just realised I can read your mind, do you have something wrong with your eyebrow? It's twitching. Very slowly. Anyway, sorry I think I need to explain what's happening - and bring you up to speed! Literally."

Suddenly I felt as if the treacle that was holding me in position let go and I stumbled forward. I was once again able to move at normal speed while everything

else around me continued to run at treacle speed. On my phone screen I could see the faces of Nuttingale and Abythwrd frozen in anticipation, each with a hand of popcorn en route to their mouths. Crunfer continued sailing (very slowly) through the air while Fido was frozen in a rather undignified 'doing a raspberry' pose if you can imagine a tulip doing that. Which you probably can't to be fair.

"Right," started Morag, "so I realised, as your tulip was doing its spitty-can thing, that the CFR is far too big to fit through that tiny door and it's not even the right colour yet. We need it to be black, right? Oh and it's closed. So, um, I slowed time down for everything except me - and now you too of course - to give me time to think."

"What do you need to think about?" I asked. "It seems like you can magic anything up! How about you just change the flow of time for the door back to normal and once it's black I'll swing it open while you shrink the CFR so it can fit through."

Morag sighed. She looked tired. "Allan, it's taking a lot of energy to even do what I'm doing... I don't even know how I'm doing it and well, look around, things are already speeding up!"

She was right, the CFR was half way across the cave now and getting closer to the (closed and still too small and too-not-black) door. If Morag couldn't do anything we were basically going to end up with Crunfer crashing into the wall/door and achieving nothing. I took a deep breath and... suddenly I had an idea. I took another breath. Yes, I was certain of it, this would work!

"Stop it! Stop time, I mean stop stopping time! I have a plan!" I yelled.

"Is this like your sledgehammer plan?" Morag asked, which was a fair point.

"Marginally better," I admitted. "OK, so it's less a plan, more an idea... a possibility... a passing thought."

"You fill me with such confidence. Are you sure?"

"Nope, but for once I think that is an instance where doing nothing might actually be better than doing something. Maybe we just need to let things happen..."

Morag let things happen again. Time returned to its normal state of flowing forward, and yet ironically what happened next seemed to all happen at once.

The first thing that happened was that the door flickered to a pleasing shade of black. This was swiftly followed by Crunfer's collision with the wall. This caused an almighty CRASH that even capital letters and exaggerated italics couldn't do justice to. Morag and I threw ourselves to the ground as dust and debris were blasted throughout the cave. The sound of the crash had barely dissipated when a new sound took its place. A sudden rush of gale-force wind swept through the cave, sucking the dust and debris away... and then began to suck at us.

I was able to glance around to see what on earth was happening. To my utter joy and relief I saw that we were being sucked towards a gaping hole in the wall that appeared to lead to outer space. Grabbing hold of the nearest rock, I grinned and shouted "YES!"

"Have you lost your marbles!?" yelled Morag over the noise of everything in the cave being sucked toward the oblivion of the vacuum of space. She too was holding on to the same rock I was, but we wouldn't last much longer – the pull of space was far too great.

"This is exactly what I hoped would happen – Crunfer hit the door-portal-thing with such force that it ripped the portal wide open! Crunfer will be sucked into deep space..."

"Followed by us... the hole in your plan matches the one in the wall!"

In unison our hands both slipped from the rock. I took another deep breath and relaxed, we would be OK.

While the next few moments should have seen the two of us plummet horizontally into deep space, what actually happened was much more preferable. I felt a tug as something wrapped around me and pulled me back to safety. I could see the same was happening to Morag and I smiled as Fido pulled us safely away from our certain doom with its exceptionally strong blade-shaped leaves. Literally rooted in place, Fido stood firm and held on to us tightly.

I was at last able to see what had become of Crunfer. Unfortunately for us, it too had found a rock to cling to. Unfortunately for Crunfer, it didn't have a tulip on its side. Yes, it did have all the power of unreality, but as I suspected it got all the power but none of the brains. So rather than calling on said power to save itself, it slipped and was immediately sucked into the gaping hole in the cave. There was an almighty SLLLURPPP sound, a flash of red and then silence.

The hole had gone. Crunfer had gone and all being well, that was that. Aquatia was saved.

And that was it really. When Nuttingale and Abythwyrd joined us in the cave a few moments later Nuttingale confirmed that things seemed to be back to normal. At the very least the cave was no longer in mid-air and the river was flowing back along its regular ground level route. I wanted confirmation of things being back to normal across the entirety of Aquatia so she checked the weather forecast. This seemed to confirm things as the next day's forecast of showers was altogether more normal than the previous day's forecast of plums with a sprinkling of bananas.

Morag was looking puzzled. "Allan, I don't want to doubt your skill in plans, or lack of plans as it turned out, but why were you suddenly so confident that things would work out?"

I smiled. "It was when I took a deep breath, I smelt something that could have been turnips, or maybe cardamom, possibly even rotting coffee grounds... not to mention there was a crackling, poppling and fizzing in the air. I remembered that was what we noticed when the Winds of Coincidence arrived! I just hoped I'd got it right and that the Winds had returned. You did say they could bring serendipitous events so I thought let's just leave it to chance..."

Keen to get home, I said my farewells. Morag was going to use whatever powers she retained to help Aquatia rebuild. She was also able to create a small red door for my trip back. I said goodbye and stepped back through to my own Here, Earth, and found myself back where it had all begun in Threadworths supermarket by a stack of baked bean cans. Mum hadn't noticed I had been gone – it seemed that no time had passed here. We went to the checkouts. Yeah, after everything that had happened, that is as mundane as it sounds.

For some inane reason the supermarket had recently installed TVs blaring out music videos and news reports to those waiting in line. Right now it was the news reports that were dulling my brain so I tried to tune out. But it's hard to tune out when the news is reporting on a recent find in Antarctica – something that mysteriously came crashing to earth in the last few hours. Helicopters were broadcasting live footage of an ice crater formed by the crashed object. Steam was rising from the crater and it was hard to make out what had crashed. The reporter was just making a comment about how officials were claiming it was just a weather balloon and definitely not aliens, when I spotted something through the steam. Something pink and blobby, grey and blocky.

"Well," said the cashier as she picked up a can of baked beans with her tentacle. "That's a bit odd."

The CFR was here on Earth. The confusion had begun.

The End
(for now at least)

Fearfully and wonderfully made

Adapted from Joseph Tkach, Speaking of Life



Image: magnific.com

Steinway grand pianos are legendary for their craftsmanship. Since 1853, the New York company has created iconic instruments, working for an entire year to assemble a single piano from 12,000 individually handcrafted pieces. The focus and dedication necessary to create these beautiful instruments is amazing.

But as advanced as a Steinway piano is, it falls impossibly short of a human being. We are true masterpieces! As the Psalmist writes: "For You shaped me, inside and out. You knitted me together in my mother's womb long before I took my first breath. I will offer You my grateful heart, for I am Your unique creation, filled with wonder and awe. You have approached even the smallest details with excellence; Your works are wonderful..."

Think about that for a second. The same hands that created galaxies personally wove your DNA. That same breath that commanded the sun to shine also breathed life into you. It's an overwhelming and humbling thought, but one that can easily be forgotten. From commercials, to magazines, to billboards, we're surrounded by non-stop images of 'ideal physical beauty', images that often prompt us to think about what we lack, instead of giving thanks for what we have that is so special.

The truth is, every human being who has ever walked the earth, no matter how 'imperfect' by human standards, is a unique and masterful work of art, created with perfect love and care by our heavenly Father. Although our human failings have tragically intervened, God, through his Son, is working to bring to completion and perfection all of his creatures and the entire cosmos in which we exist.

So the next time you hear the beautiful notes of a concerto played on a grand piano, remember the care and love with which your heavenly Father has taken in crafting you, and give thanks that the Creator of the universe loves you so much that he is taking the care to shape each and every part of you. *tt*

Speaking of Life is a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website: 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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What if we get AI to do all the boring stuff?



by Andrew Sloane

Centre for Public Christianity.

Icon by Studio Danro from Noun Project

Recently I've been thinking boring thoughts. It's surprisingly interesting.

I've mostly been thinking about the threat posed by AI's elimination of the mundane and the menial, the boring work that humans often do badly and machines can (possibly) do well.

The replacement of menial data-entry jobs and flabby middle-management by efficient systems sounds great. But it risks hollowing out workplaces, eliminating the entry-level positions that give young workers the experience that develops the wisdom that enables them to do the 'higher-level' work that AI supposedly creates the space for.

And this is what really concerns me: that outsourcing the mundane and the menial to AI will lead to the gutting of our interior landscapes, stripping out the cognitive furniture that makes the imaginative, creative and personal possible.

As I think about my brief medical career—and my wife's much longer nursing career—there was a lot of boring work. Learning anatomy and physiology and

drug-interactions. Taking patient histories and doing routine physical examinations.

Checking blood results and ECGs and patient charts. Sitting with patients in clinics and on the wards.

Machines can do much of that much better. But it's those hours of tedium that slowly built the technical and interpersonal knowledge and skills that make for a good practitioner. The capacity to form a judgement that something is 'off' with this patient—something the machines don't yet show. This is the kind of judgment that ICU nurses make day after day and on which the specialists and those they care for depend. Judgment shaped by the boring and the tedious.

It's the menial and the mundane, not the interesting and creative, that shapes the intuitions and forms the character on which we depend. Such are the virtues of boredom. *lt*

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We meet on Sunday for our Worship Service from 10am at the Mooroolbark Community Centre.

Come along, enjoy a service and stay for a chat with delicious tea, coffee and biscuits.

For more information visit our website

mooroolbark.gci.org.au

For other local church details please visit their websites:

Life Ministry Church
lifeministry.church

Mooroolbark Baptist Church
mbc.org.au

Mooroolbark Salvation Army Corps
salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps

Mooroolbark Uniting Church
mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au

St Peter Julian Eymard, Mooroolbark Parish
spje.org.au

upcoming events



The Living Room

@ The Mooroolbark Community House

The Living Room

A new name and location for Shop 16 with the same spirit and community connection

Mooroolbark Community House, and Mooroolbark Community Connect at Shop 16, are transitioning to the Mooroolbark Community House.

We're building on our foyer program which has been fondly renamed, The Living Room.

- Cuppa and chat • Play chess or board games
- Work on craft or a project • Sit and knit
- Work on our puzzle • Read a book



Tai Chi with Jeff

Mooroolbark Community House

Jeff runs an ongoing Tai Chi class that is suitable for all skill levels.

Beginners: Monday 10:30-11:30

Advanced: Monday 11:30-12:30

\$120 per term, bookings essential.

Call Renae on 0493 096 600 or email hello@mooroolbarkch.org.au

Mooroolbark Miniature Railway (mmr.org.au)

4th Sunday each month (except December) January to May 11-4, June to August 11am-3pm, September to November 11am-4pm. Train rides are \$4.00 each, with children under four riding free.

Community Garden Market



The last Sunday of every month

9am-1pm, 8 Station Street, Mooroolbark (opposite Hookey Park)

Jellis Craig

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