NEW DEVELOPMENT WAVE THREATENS EMERALD

The liveability and landscape features of the Emerald area and Dandenong Ranges are again threatened by a new wave of development. World leading conservation planning 40 years ago seemed to solve the problems caused by over-development. However, nothing lasts when it comes to planning land use.

Governments have systematically demolished the planning systems set up in the 1970s and 1980s. For over two decades State Liberal and Labor governments agreed on planning policies to control development in the Dandenongs. Liberal Premier Sir Rupert Hamer and Cabinet members Bill Borthwick and Alan Hunt established a regional planning authority to implement State policy intended to control development. The Cain Labor government continued these policies. Local residents did the rest, electing local councillors in the former Shire of Sherbrooke who helped end a development free-for-all.

This was a rare Australian example of consistency between State, regional and local planning policy. Central to this approach were local planning provisions tailored to local conditions and needs. The Kennett government systematically undermined this strong regional and local voice. Between 1993 - 1999 it intervened to approve 61 planning amendments creating 1,369 additional lots contrary to the provisions of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges regional strategy plan.

More significant was the Kennett government’s scrapping of regional and local planning by forcing councils to adopt standardised planning provisions. The same provisions now apply across Victoria from Mildura to the Dandenongs despite

HEAVENLY BODIES

You may not know Neil Creek personally but you’ve probably seen his work. Neil is a photographer who has lived in the hills for the last decade or so. In that time he has photographed everything from real estate to heavenly bodies.

Getting his first SLR camera as a teen sparked his creative engine but on a teenager’s allowance he found the cost of developing film prohibitive, so he didn’t get into it as much as he would have liked.

“Photography didn’t really become a thing for me until the digital era when I got a compact 2 mega pixel camera but

Life Returns To Bunyip

Edible Villages Project

Aussie Comedy Show

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The Emerald Messenger is a community-led monthly journal published by Emerald Community House, covering stories about local interests, groups, local businesses, events, creative writing and commentary in a 15 kilometre radius around Emerald, the most populated town in the Dandenongs. Submissions from the community are welcome and must be sent by the 10th of every month in electronic format. Articles should typically be from 750 to 1000 words and include a high resolution image.

Contact our team to discuss promotions or advertising in the next edition of the Emerald Messenger. Bookings are due on the 15th of every month. Editions will be available online and in printed format at distribution points between Belgrave, Gembrook, Monbulk and Upper Beaconsfield townships. Download our rates and guidelines with booking deadlines and technical specifications for submitting artwork.

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INTRODUCING THE LYREBIRDS

This month I had the good fortune to interview the lovely Dalys Mithen who leads the singing group - The Lyrebirds. Formerly known as Cockatoo Sings, this is a group that has had some significant changes recently and is now making an impact in the local area.

The Lyrebirds are a dynamic group of people from all walks of life who gather together to enjoy singing in a warm and friendly environment. They have a ‘no audition’ policy - everyone is welcome! People from Cockatoo, Emerald, Gembrook and even as far away as Warburton come each week to sing with The Lyrebirds.

Weekly sessions start at 7pm with a sing for fun workshop which also includes some singing technique skills taught by group leader Dalys Mithen (also a singing and piano teacher) using fun, short-part/creative songs. At 8pm the group shares supper together and at 8.20pm the performance rehearsal part of the evening begins. The Lyrebirds perform at local events including ANZAC day, community dinners, local markets and Christmas events.

The group enjoys singing music ranging from current pop hits (the latest favourite is a Sia song) to good old time songs like ‘Sentimental Journey’ as well as ethereal choral style pieces like ‘Walking in the Air’. Most members of the group do not read music so all songs are taught aurally. Dalys accompanies the choir on piano, guitar and ukulele or sometimes the group sings acapella.

The recent name change from Cockatoo Sings to The Lyrebirds reflects the new direction the group has taken under the leadership of Dalys Mithen and is inclusive of all hills’ folk. Lyrebirds are native to the Dandenongs and are such versatile singers so the choir feel that their new name fits perfectly!

The Lyrebirds want to grow as a group to be able to sing more material at more places, more often and to share their love of music with the wider community.

Most people join choirs because they enjoy singing and want to do something for themselves. Singing with others has been proven to benefit physical and mental health and some members join for this reason. Others join because they like the community connection and a night out with friends or because they want to improve their singing technique and they enjoy performing.

The Lyrebirds meet on Monday nights during the school term (excluding public holidays) at St Lukes Church, 1 McBride Street, Cockatoo. The format is: 7pm Singing for Fun, 8pm Cuppa and Supper and 8.20pm Performance Rehearsal (optional). The cost is $10 full price or $5 concession. The first night is free!

The Lyrebirds Community Choir can be found on Facebook or you can call Dalys on 0412 715 031 or Sue on 0407 365 711.

We wish the Lyrebirds great success in their endeavours!

JOSE GARCIA
Calling all mums and dads in the Emerald area! Do you want your kids to have the best time ever these holidays? Loveable, loud and loaded with laughs, Aussie Kids Rock is armed with instantly catchy songs and manic comedy skits. They have toured throughout Australia with their unique blend of comedy and music racking up over a thousand shows and gaining a great reputation along the way. They will appear in Emerald as part of their 2019 Winter School holiday theatre tour.

Although their hilarious new Drop Bear show offers family fun right across the board, Aussie Kids Rock are mainly aimed at 6 to 11 year olds, setting their show apart from many pre-school shows.

Warragul resident, Dominic Finley has played the role of British (drop bear believing) guitarist ‘C.J’ since 2010. “After driving across the Nullabor and sailing to Tassie with Aussie Kids Rock it’s great to be playing on my own doorstep for a change. And the kids love it!” says Dominic who is also a former member of the eighties multi-million sellers Cutting Crew (known for their number 1 hit ‘I Just Died in Your Arms’). Although Dominic’s ‘C.J’ character certainly has his funny side, even he agrees that in this show it is debonair drummer ‘Deano’ who really has the kids laughing out loud (and mums and dads too!).

The wacky character of ‘Deano’ is played by Melbourne musician/comedy actor Pete Ryan, who was a founding member of Bjorn Again, the Australian ABBA tribute show that took the entertainment world by storm in the early 1990s. As well as scoring a top 20 UK hit with their cover of Erasure’s - A Little Respect, during Pete’s time, they performed in arenas across the globe with Bjorn Again including several sold out shows at the Royal Albert Hall.

Dominic and Pete have now fused their experiences from the rock world to become Aussie Kids Rock and are excited to be performing their new Drop Bear show in Emerald where they hope to inspire kids in their love of music and entertain the whole family.

Comedy rock duo Aussie Kids Rock will appear in Drop Bear, a fun concert for all the family on Friday July 12th at 11am at The Gem Theatre 19 Kilvington Drive, Emerald. Tickets are priced at $12 and available at www.trybooking.com/BBSZY or by visiting www.aussiekidsrock.com tickets are also available on the door priced at $15 (under 5’s are free of charge).

Dominic and Pete (aka ‘CJ’ and ‘Deano’) are available for press and radio interviews/live sessions and would be delighted to hear from you. Please call Dominic Finley on 0417 780 493, or Pete Ryan on 0411 359 699 or email aussiekidsrockshow@gmail.com
massive variations in landscape and conditions. Councils had to try to make standard provisions fit localised conditions which differed substantially across the state. This has proved impossible in the Dandenongs which were characterised by extensive inappropriate subdivision dating from the 1920s.

The result for the Emerald area and Dandenongs generally has been the incremental loss of values which mark this area as special and are so attractive to residents and visitors. These impacts can be illustrated by the rate of development and its impacts.

New housing in the Yarra Ranges municipality greatly exceeds what was intended 40 years ago. In 2016, 735 new dwellings were constructed, a figure approaching that of some inner urban councils at the metropolitan development epi-centre. Under current planning policies, this rate will increase over time. This trend contradicts the intention of planning policy since the 1970s to redirect development away from the Dandenongs, with its poor public transport and high environmental values, to the south-eastern growth corridors.

Emerald is particularly vulnerable to development. Transport impacts are acute. All roads lead to Emerald. One of the reasons Sherbrooke council restricted development in the 1970s and 1980s was because it foresaw the potential road traffic problems from new housing. The usual cycle of development and roadway improvements is a disastrous scenario for Emerald. New housing in Emerald and other towns inevitably congests the main road through the town. The only way to limit these impacts is to restrict development both in Emerald and the townships served by roads passing through Emerald.

Planning policy in the 1970s showed that State governments understood that development had to be radically restricted if environmental values and the quality of life were to be maintained. Policy stated that there would be no net increase in residential development in the Dandenongs Ranges. In 1979, 42 per cent of the 43,334 urban lots in the Dandenongs and Upper Yarra region were vacant and the number of vacant lots could potentially double through existing subdivision controls. The former Shire of Sherbrooke planning scheme basically prohibited all new urban and most rural subdivision. It also greatly reduced rights to dwelling construction in individual lots in ‘old and inappropriate subdivisions’ by restructuring thousands of lots. This allowed lot owners to buy each other out to gain the reduced entitlements and prevent owners of jointly owned lots from building on every lot. Some developers had bought up whole subdivisions affected by major environmental constraints, such as being sited in steep high value landscapes and forested areas, often prone to landslip. The state government bought back thousands more inappropriately zoned residential lots.

Councils have done their best to apply the Kennett controls to limit development impacts but many problems remain. The Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) is used widely to limit further subdivision on large residential lots. The Green Wedge Zone (GWZ), introduced by former Labor planning minister Mary Delahunty, is a major improvement to the Kennett zones and is used to control subdivision on larger residential lots and rural lots. But controls over ‘old and inappropriate subdivisions’ have been weakened. Some zones allow extensive new subdivision. The Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) is also used to limit subdivision but recent Labor government changes greatly weakened it. Liberal planning minister Matthew Guy introduced the NRZ to limit development to one additional dwelling per lot, prohibiting multi-unit housing. Labor’s planning minister, Richard Wynne, removed the restriction on multi-unit development.

In Emerald, the NRZ is used in the central township area, and the LDRZ and the GWZ restrict but do not prohibit some further residential subdivision. Zoning of the Cockatoos and Cembrook residential areas is generally split between the NRZ and LDRZ. This means that extensive further dwelling construction in these three townships will occur over time, both through subdivision of lots for an additional dwelling or for townhouses and flats. Further afield, the same pattern of NRZ and LDRZ zoning is repeated around Mt Evelyn, Montrose and Kilsyth. Much of the development in other towns will lead to substantial increases in Emerald traffic.

These trends indicate serious planning failure of State and local governments to maintain the Hamer vision. In 2014, Matthew Guy proposed to double the subdivision entitlement for the Low Density Residential zone (LDRZ). The Shire of Yarra Ranges enthusiastically embraced this idea proposing to allow a further 875 dwellings from this one change. Fortunately, the current minister rejected the Shire’s proposal. Guy failed to notice that increasing dwelling yield in one zone, the LDRZ, contradicted the impact of his reducing yield in another, the NRZ. Wynne failed to notice the opposite, preventing development in the LDRZ while increasing it in the NRZ. The Hamer and Cain governments, in contrast, maintained a consistent and unified set of planning policies tailored to this region.

Traffic jams and delays in Emerald are just beginning unless State and local governments understand this planning failure and prevent the incremental loss of the lifestyle and natural values that make the Emerald area such a state, national and international asset.

MICHAEL BUXTON

Michael Buxton is Emeritus Professor Environment and Planning, RMIT University. He is a former Shire of Sherbrooke President and former member of the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority.
Salvia display garden at Nobelius Heritage Park, Emerald

Salvia are one of the largest genera in the world with over 900 different species and almost as many cultivars and varieties. They are a diverse and exciting family of plants with a huge range of colours, from deep velvet purples and blues through to rich reds, vibrant pinks, pale yellows, pure whites and even a black salvia. No garden should be without at least a few. In fact there would be a variety to suit every niche in a garden, whether it’s in the sun or a dappled shady position. With a bit of planning, it is possible to have a salvia in flower in the garden all year round.

Given their good looks, ease of cultivation and drought tolerance it is surprising that they are not more widely grown. Many are aromatic with a high oil content in their leaves and have been used in medicine or for cooking all over the world. Those with strongly scented leaves also seem to be unattractive to grazing animals like rabbits, possums and kangaroos. Many leaf-eating and sap sucking insects are repelled by the scent, making the strongly scented varieties useful companion plants in the garden as they confuse and repel pests.

You may like to grow some strongly scented salvias near the vegetable garden and under fruit trees where they repel pests but also attract bees to help with pollination.

In their natural habitats salvias are important sources of nectar for birds, bees, butterflies and insects. In America they are essential to the tiny hummingbirds that feed on them. In Australia the same salvias attract honey-eaters and spine bills who delight in their nectar. My pineapple sage (Salvia elegans) lures the beautifully marked Eastern Spinebills to my garden right through winter. Other local birds come to feed on salvia seeds and the insects are attracted to the flowers. Blue and mauve flowered varieties also attract butterflies.

The large numbers of species and cultivars and the ease of cross-pollination has given rise to a large number of new cultivars. The numbers are increasing all the time because of new cultivars and new discoveries in the wild. The diversity and breadth of this family has given rise to a large group of passionate and committed collectors all over the world.

The Salvia Study Group have worked tirelessly to create a delightful and fascinating display garden in Nobelius Heritage Park in Emerald. We are so lucky to be able to come here, to see them growing in a variety of different conditions and to observe how they survive the cold winters and the hot summers without any extra watering. There is a variety for every garden position and thanks to the continued effort to maintain this display garden we can come and see how these salvias grow and perform before we put them into our own gardens.

LYNDI GARNETT
ENVISAGING A BRILLIANT FUTURE

2040 – A FILM REVIEW

It has become abundantly clear that our global economic system, which is based on perpetual growth, is incompatible with the reality of living on a finite planet. Political inaction on climate change, particularly in Australia, has left many experiencing what is now being referred to as climate grief – a feeling of hopelessness in the face of inevitable global catastrophe.

If, like me, you are feeling overwhelmed by recent global events and the effects of climate change then a trip to the cinema to see the film 2040 might lift your spirits somewhat.

In his 2014 offering ‘That Sugar Film’, Australian director and presenter Damon Gameau looked at the hidden sugar in the foods we all eat and the effects sugar has on the human body, in a ‘Super Size Me’ style documentary.

In 2040, Gameau shares his optimistic vision of an eco-friendly future looking at how the world could be by 2040 and suggesting there is still time to turn things around.

Addressing his four-year-old daughter, Velvet, he tries to imagine a bright future for her, one where the effects of climate change have been reversed. He gets the inconvenient and unpleasant truths out of the way early on. Yes, the planet is heating up, he admits. Earth’s climate hasn’t changed this quickly in the last 50 million years. Oceans are now 30% more acidic than 150 years ago and marine and terrestrial life are suffering as a result.

Gameau’s optimism isn’t just pie in the sky however, he travels the world meeting up with a cross section of people from farmers to scientists to engineers who are already working on the problems to reverse global warming. The film is a realistic look at what really is achievable and it’s surprising what is already underway, how quickly change may be wrought and how simple some solutions really are. It is also undoubtedly a call to action, particularly to the young.

He takes us to a village in Bangladesh where a micro-grid of solar panels has brought energy where previously there was little or none and increased economic benefit to a local community. With the purchase of just one solar panel and a specially designed device, residents can connect to a sharing network where they can buy and sell power directly with their neighbours. These networks can be built and then expanded and eventually power can be shared not just between neighbours but between villages, with the potential for a completely linked national power sharing network. Setting up these networks is both simple and relatively inexpensive.

Gameau shows us an effective technique for drawing carbon down from the atmosphere - marine permaculture. Trays of seaweed are lowered into the ocean, creating nutrient-rich environments for marine life. These seaweed farms absorb carbon from the atmosphere as they grow and provide habitat for fish and healthy food and fertiliser for human use when harvested. Marine permaculture gives a sense of hope that the seas can be regenerated and replenished and that humans can work within and benefit from the natural system.

He doesn’t stop there though. Gameau also takes a look at the future of motoring and what the driverless car could mean to cityscaping. He shows us what could be done with inner-city carparks if car ownership became a thing of the past.

You can imagine him talking to his daughter Velvet in just the same way he speaks to us about these frightening global issues, full of hope and faith in the possibilities. Using cute visual effects he keeps the mood light, by interviewing economist Kate Raworth in a miniature Monopoly car while driving along a Monopoly board and perching atop a wind turbine to chat with climate activist Paul Hawken. He helps us visualise a utopian future complete with rooftop gardens and twittering birds.

2040 is a friendly and light-hearted approach to a deeply serious message. It implores us to have faith in our scientists and engineers and to believe that it’s possible to reverse global warming. Gameau’s charm and optimism help us reframe our ideas about a bleak future and focus our attention on what is possible, what is already being done and what must still be done to save the planet that supports us. It gives us a glimpse of what a post capitalist future could look like. It was well worth allowing this film to fill my head with images of a brilliant eco-friendly future.

MEREDITH COLE

Tree planting scene from Damon Gameau’s film – 2040

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Harry and Izzy

I turned towards the familiar sound, a dog licking the floor. Familiar but not the same. Izzy was licking the kitchen floor near her bowl with the same diligence that Harry had done for years. An image passed through my mind of Harry - beautiful, soft, naughty, mischievous, handsome, clever Harry - visiting from wherever he is now to whisper in Izzy’s ear, letting me know he is still with me. He used to lick my ear, like a whisper of sweet love if I got down on the floor with him. He would nestle his cold, wet houndy-hound nose into the nape of my neck and bestow a gentle slosh, just once. I imagined him speaking to Izzy in the same joyful way, imparting to her all his smarts and tricks and the sparkle in his eye.

Harry was so clever and attentive once he realised I was communicating with him, that I used to call him ‘my little border collie’. A beagle-cross-bassethound canine genius. Not one born to please, however. Not desperate to cooperate, not pleading for a job to do. The only jobs he wanted were to look for stuff, preferably smelly, tasty stuff and to eat it when he found it.

He monitored the road and everything going past from the driveway gate - trumpeting the arrivals, the departures, the misty morning kids running for the school bus and their sauntering afternoon return, the beeping recycling truck, neighbours heading off to work, the evening strollers. He would look back through the small window facing the driveway after each blast of his instrument to make sure I was watching and appreciating his house guarding prowess. He was clever yet his purpose was not to use his intellect to work with me. His purpose was to satisfy himself while affectionately doing the bare necessity to keep me happy or at least not pushed to utter insanity.

He made me laugh every day with his antics and taxed my mind and my patience with his intense and constant conversation. Questions, hopes, desires and demands in every look, every tail wag, every gesture. One of my brothers described him as ‘a canine Pooh Bear crossed with Fred Basset’, the hound of cartoon fame - a perfect mix of thinking with his stomach and sardonic wit. He drove me nuts but I adored him.

Izzy arrived wanting to please. A squiggly wiggling dervish of flashing eyes and gentle teeth and tail, seducing, pleading, joking, a starburst of ten-month-old kelpie excitement and earnest joy. ‘Quick as a whip’ and ‘pocket rocket’ were the terms used to describe her on the Animal Aid shelter website.

Early on, when I threw a ball for her and my huge, darling, lumbering foxhound Norton, she didn’t know what it was for or what she was meant to do. But with that kelpie willingness, she followed along as best she could, trying to work it out. When she got that it was an opportunity for speed she shot like a bullet from a gun, making Norton look like he was standing still. She didn’t get what the ball was for though, so she let Norton have it, applying herself instead to trying to head him off like a sheep as he barreled his way through her, back to me.

I spent years looking for Harry. Coming when called, or keeping an eye on the human, is not part of the job description for a scent hound, bred as they are to think with their noses (and in Harry’s case his stomach) following trails, blind and deaf to all else. Harry only realised the point of cooperating with humans when he learned that checking in with me from time to time would draw a treat from my pocket. A hound expert once explained that “a hound can’t do its job if it is paying attention to what humans are doing”. So I was always on alert, always checking where he was, lest when I tried to give him off leash freedom his nose should lead him like the pied piper after that discarded lunch wrapper or the apple a kid threw into the bushes on the other side of the busy road. “Sandwich” was the nickname a friend gave him after hearing of his efforts when he joyfully ran off one day in the forest, clearing hills and gullies, logs and brambles, with me puffing behind all scratched and red and sweaty, wondering why I had trusted him with a dropped leash. All in pursuit of a lunch thrown deep into the bush.

I looked for Harry, but Izzy looks for me. And for Norton. On walks in the forest she positions herself between us, glancing back and forth at us on about a ten-second cycle like an anxious nanny. I don’t think she really knows what walks are for. She can’t figure out what the job is, so she makes a job out of minding us. It can be hard to live with dogs to whom it never occurs to stay close by and make sure they know where you are when on walks. So I thought I’d reinforce this with Izzy, by playing hide and seek. The first few times I ducked behind a tree in the seconds between her glimpses or the rare moments when she got lost in sharing a sniff with Norton. I felt terrible at her panic stricken expression...
as she darted back along the track, searching. When she realised where I was, her whole body went limp with relief like a rag on a clothesline. She got me yesterday though. Seconds passed and still nothing. I stepped out and there she was, looking straight at me all along through the trees from the other side. Not worried, more slightly exasperated... 'That human, keeps trying to hide. Not very good at it... Not very smart...' Hahahaha...

Sometimes Izzy is so sensible and easy, I joke with myself that she is Harry reincarnated or that she is channeling him and he is apologising through her attentive compliance, for being such a pain in the butt. The vision is easy to hold since she does other things he used to do as well. She is a sensitive dog so the way she wolfs her food can seem a little incongruent, unless I imagine her channeling Harry. She has taken Harry’s sentry spot at the gate and like him never barks without reason. Like him she is quick to learn and just as quick to get up to mischief. The other day I found a piece of my spare orthotic insole on the driveway, I’ve donated the boot she keeps stealing and am keeping its pair for future games.

As if in penance for Harry’s wayward independence however, Izzy is desperate to please. Harry would surveil me from a distance from about three in the afternoon, in sync with the inner clock that brought the ‘dinner look’ to his face. His little gestures and surreptitious nods towards the house made me imagine a thought balloon above his head with a full food bowl in it. Priorities! Izzy hangs out with me all day, trying to figure out what I’m doing, trying to help, or trying to get me to play. I do love the thought that somehow, Harry and Izzy have met and that through her, he visits me. Because in a way it’s true. Even if it’s just through the memories triggered by Izzy’s sweet mischief and clever compliance.

Today Harry is here with us. I can feel him. I might not have to look for her but hearing Izzy crashing about with one thing or another outside has sent me out to check what she’s up to at least six times as I’ve been writing this. She’s upended the same plant twice, destroyed a couple of plant pots, stolen a shoe, run rings growling around a sleepy Norton trying to kip in the sun and I don’t know what she’s up to now but it’s too quiet - I need to go check.

Thank you my darling Harry. I miss you. I can still feel your soft paddle paws in my hand, your silky ears against my cheek. And through Izzy, your laughter, your smarts and your jokes are sweetly ringing in my heart again.

KERRY DAWBORN

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HIKING FOR CHANGE

While visiting the US in 2017, Menzies Creek resident Dutchie Bergman heard about the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and from that moment could think of nothing else. The PCT is a 4270 kilometre walking and equestrian trail that stretches from Campo California on the Mexican border to Manning Park in British Columbia near the US-Canadian border. Running through three states, California, Oregon and Washington, the trail draws thousands of hikers each year from all over the world.

The following is the 2nd instalment of Dutchie’s journal entries written on the trail.

Pacific Crest Trail

The desert...

The land of snakes, lizards, blue skies and the harsh beaming sun. The land with creeks drying up faster then I want them to and long haul water carrying. The land without mercy.

I love the desert, I always have and after 7 weeks of hiking in it, I still do. There is something very special about it. The vast landscape of nothing, at least at the first blink of the eye, it seems that there is nothing. Brown, dry land with rocks and once in a while a shrub – not much else. But once you take the time to look, the most amazing things will appear. Once you put yourself in the here and the now you will slowly see lots of things.

You will see that the desert is a perfect harmony of little things working together. You will hear sounds from the little critters in the bushes and the songs of birds resting on a branch. You will see lizards sunbathing on a rock like a sticker on a piece of paper. Once they notice you they run so fast and chaotically on their little legs that it always makes me smile. Some of them are shiny rainbow colours that make you stop with a whispering ‘wow’, others, so black and ancient-looking that you have no doubt that dragons once existed.

You will see birds flying high in the sky dancing with the wind always keeping an eye on things below them. You will see fat black beetles that move along and across the path at their own pace never seeming to be worried about anything.

Once in a while you will hear the warning rattle from a rattlesnake that makes your heart skip a beat and your legs run forward. Other snakes give you a chance to have a closer look while they are warming up in the sun, always keeping my distance to be safe.

You will see beautiful rock formations that will become your heaven as they provide you with much needed shade during your daytime breaks.

And you will see the most amazing sight - flowers, so many flowers. Different colours, different shapes, all waiting for those raindrops to fall so they can bloom in all their glory. The smells are amazing. Some rise high in the sky while others are the incy wincy ones that are standing alone in the sand. Whatever size they are they always make me happy as it reminds me of the home where I was born.

Once you open your eyes the desert is a wonderful place of all the small little things that make me in awe of this beautiful world.

It is amazing how things change in 7 weeks. Where it was almost unimaginable to walk 15 miles a day at the beginning, days are now filled with 20 miles (32km) without too much trouble.

Things that were so unknown at the start have now become second nature.

One of the things I find amazing is that everything I have and need fits in a 50L backpack and is within arms-reach when I sit in my one person tent. It makes me think.

My days are mostly filled the same way - waking up at first light, eating breakfast (in my tent or on the trail when the sun has risen), figuring out the next water source, walking for 10-12 hours with an average of 2 miles per hour. This average includes snack breaks, pee and hole making breaks, collecting and filtering water breaks, lunch breaks and escaping the heat breaks, stretching my popping hip breaks, collecting rocks because I’m too tired breaks and the occasional “how much higher is this &*%# mountain break”.

At the end of the day I search for my secluded campsite. This has shown to be the most dangerous time of the day as it means getting off the trail and looking for the perfect spot. I like to camp alone and this takes a bit of effort to find on the PCT, resulting in passing thick scratchy bushes, fallen trees and loose sand which can result in rolled ankles, cuts and nasty slides.

Rising from the desert towards the Sierra Nevada along the Pacific Coast Trail
The landscape scrolls past like an old movie screen. Every day is a bit different, some have high mountains with jaw dropping views that bring tears of pure happiness. Others are filled with more difficulties, personal struggles and not so fun moments. Whatever the day brings, the happiness always wins over the hard times and when I lay in bed I feel fulfilled and excited for the next day. In those 7 weeks of desert there was not one day that was boring.

In the past 7 weeks my body has changed too. I know I have lost weight and it amazes me what I am able to eat and how much I want to eat. Food with the highest calories; sweets, chocolates, anything with as much fat as possible is good. The more calories the better as I am burning anywhere between 5000-8000 calories a day! This you simply can’t replace while on the trail, which means you’re hungry most of the time. You can imagine what kind of bulk eating I do when I’m in town. I have figured out what I’m going to eat in town at least a day before I actually get there. Starting with a bag of potato crisps followed by a burger, fries and a cold beer. If I stay a full day my second meal is a big green healthy salad.

My legs have been carrying me and a 30pound (13kg) back pack for almost 700 miles (1126km) and are more muscular than ever before. Those legs have scrambled over rocks, through loose sand and over mountains of 10,000ft. They have walked 120,000ft (36.5km) up hills and mountains and 117,000ft (35.6km) down hills and mountains! The pains of my body asking me what the hell I am doing are getting less. Some days they are non-existent, some days my breakfast includes several ibuprofen pills. My body is done begging me to stop and I feel there is now a mutual understanding between it and my brain. My body still struggles after any break or sleep for the first 10 minutes. I need to remind her that we are not done and that there is another day of hiking 20 miles (32km). I don’t mention she will be doing this for another 4 months.

The past week I passed the 600mile mark, the 1000km mark, the 1/4 mark and tomorrow I will pass the 700 mile mark and reach Kennedy Meadows!

Kennedy Meadows is nothing more than a big gas station and a restaurant but it is one of the biggest names on the PCT. When you arrive there, it means that you have survived the harsh dessert section and that you have arrived in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. This is a big achievement that you can be proud of. At this point around 30% have left the trail and yes I am proud. I am proud of my choices and I am proud of my achievements. I am proud I survived the desert and I am proud of making it to Kennedy Meadows.

I am proud that I am in a relationship where I am able to do this and I am proud of the support of my partner. I am also proud of my family - without my parents I don’t think I would appreciate the little things so much. I am also proud of their support. I am proud that I am hiking for the cause to stop sexual violence against women and I am proud to be called an inspiration. I am proud of hiking the PCT this far.

I stopped hiking early today and I am sitting naked in the sun by a river. While I wait for my underwear to dry I reflect on what has been. While the days roll together and are sometimes hard to keep apart I do know that I enjoyed every single one of them.

Now it’s time for The Sierra Nevada.

This is where the lizards and the snakes change into mar - mots and bears. This is where I need to carry a bear canis- ter, ice axe and micro spikes. It means icy snowy slopes and high water crossings. It means jaw dropping views, crystal blue lakes and snow covered pine trees. It means hiking mountains of +10,000ft on a regular basis, climbing Mount Whitney and passing the highest point of the PCT. It also means aching leg muscles and being out of breath. I’m sure it will also mean many more ‘how much higher is this &%*# mountain’ breaks.

I am excited and scared at the same time. I am excited about the change, the snow and the pristine beauty the Sierra is. I am scared for the unknown, the big climbs and the altitude. They say the desert is your training for the Sierra Nevada mountains, I can only hope that my training will pay off.

For now I say goodbye to the beautiful flowers, goodbye to the lizards and goodbye to the rattlesnakes. I say a happy goodbye to the long heavy water carriages and goodbye to the heat and the dryness.

And I say a big happy hello to the unknown with a big smile on my face.

DUTCHIE BERGMAN
EMERALD LIBRARY JULY

DIGITAL DROP IN
Need help with your smart phone, camera or other device? Every Tuesday from 2.30-3.30, drop in to the library to get some help with the basics. Bookings not required.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
All School Holiday events require bookings, unless otherwise stated.
Bookings open Monday June 17th at 10am.
To book our FREE School Holiday Program activities:
Online: Go to tinyurl.com/ccchols, choose your event and make your booking. In person: Go to your local library and our staff will book on your behalf.
By phone: Contact Emerald Library to book your place on 5949 4600.
Cancelling: School Holiday events are extremely popular and book out quickly. If you book for an event but can no longer attend, please cancel your booking via Eventbrite or call your local library. This means the spot will open for another child to attend.

GET CODING WITH SCRATCH!
See what all the excitement is with the Scratch coding program. Enjoy a program that is both fun and challenging.
Ages: 8+ years old
Monday July 1st
4pm to 5pm

BOOK BUNNIES
A session for kids who love bunnies and books! Learn all about how to look after animals, read stories and interact with bunnies from the Bluey & Alice Bunny Refuge in a calm and quiet environment.
Ages: 7+ Wednesday July 3rd & 10th
2pm to 3pm

A NOT SO TRADITIONAL FAIRY TALES STORYTIME!
Join us for some fairy tales, songs and craft which turn fairy tales upside down!
Best for Ages: 3+
Thursday July 4th
11.15am to 12pm

LEGO CLUB
Join us for our monthly Lego club, with a Dinosaur Lego challenge!
Thursday July 4th
4pm to 5pm

TINIES CRAFT SPECTACULAR!
Bring your crafting toddler along, with an art smock, to create a masterpiece worthy of any art gallery!
Friday July 5th
10.30am to 11.30am

GREATEST MAKEY MAKEY INVENTION YET!
Come and enjoy the fun of a Makey Makey and see what amazing inventions your imagination can create.
Ages: 8+
Monday July 8th
4pm to 5pm

DINOSAUR DIGGERS!
The Dinosaur Diggers experience is for all budding paleontologists aged 5-12 years. Join us for an interactive presentation on dinosaurs featuring museum-quality items including a lifesize T.rex skull. Touch the exhibits and enjoy a range of activities including a fossil dig.
Ages: 5-12
Tuesday July 9th
2.30pm to 3.30pm

DINOSAUR STOMP!
The dinosaurs are roaring and stomping for our Dinosaur Storytime! Have some fun with stories, songs and a dinosaur craft to take home.
Thursday July 11th
11.15am to 12pm

STEAM CLUB
Come and join in the fun of our monthly Steam club, as we balance, build and construct structures that test engineering skills!
Ages: 7+
Thursday July 11th
4pm to 5pm

MARVELLOUS PAINTING!
Wear your art smock or old clothes to create a fun squelchy colourful collage!
Ages: 7+
Friday July 12th
2.30pm to 3.30pm

CREATIVE SUBMISSIONS ENCOURAGED FOR POETS & WRITERS IN THE HILLS TO HAVE THEIR WORK PUBLISHED
STORIES@EMERALDMESSENGER.COM.AU

JESSICA NICHOLS
Emerald Library Team Leader

MORE ARTICLES CONTINUE ON PAGE 21
Program Guide

Term 3
(July 15th - Sept 20th 2019)

Semester 2
Short course programs, children’s programs, local events, venue hire, activities & community projects

Supporting Local Community Enterprise Zone:
Strengthening new opportunities for local business development, training pathways, volunteering and pathways to employment

All Welcome please come in & say hello

Office open
Monday - Friday
9am - 4pm
(During School Terms)

Our Vision is to be a place where connections are made and opportunities are realised.
Our Mission is to consistently meet the needs of the community by providing quality community development activities, programs and services.

Emerald Community House Inc.
356 - 358 Belgrave-Gembrook Rd, Emerald VIC 3782
Telephone: 03 5968 3881 Email: emhouse@iinet.net.au
www.emeraldcommunityhouse.org.au
‘Find us’ on Facebook - www.facebook.com/emeraldcommunityhouse
Membership, Course Enrolment Details & Conditions

Membership Fees
$10 for individuals and $15 for families applies to all users accessing any of the services/programs at Emerald Community House (ECH). The membership fee is an annual fee from January to December and goes towards House facilities and maintenance, community grant support, insurance, free community wifi and other house expenses. Further details www.emeraldcommunityhouse.org.au

Course Enrolment
Enrolment/membership forms are available at the office or online www.emeraldcommunityhouse.org.au. Course cancellations may occur if minimum class numbers aren’t achieved. Terms/Conditions are also online. NOTE: Course times and activity details are correct as at time of printing, but may be subject to change at the discretion of management.

Dig In Community Cafe

The Dig In Community Café is an ECH initiative to promote community volunteering, job skills and connections. ECH practises community dining as an exercise in preparedness and community engagement. Run by community volunteers under the House Manager, The Dig In Community Café provides a range of volunteer opportunities including menu planning, food preparation, cooking, venue setting, set-up, pack up and dishwashing. Donations are kindly accepted to keep the café going.

Volunteers and diners all enjoy a fun night and it’s a great outlet to make new friends and eat together around the community table. This takes place on the last Friday of every month, unless otherwise advertised. Other community groups are encouraged to get involved and run a Dig In Community dining event of their own.

Volunteers and food donations always welcome!

Thank you to all of our Dig In Community Café regular sponsors (Emerald Woolworths, Emerald Bakery & Cockatoo Bakery) and our wonderful team of volunteers!

Dates: Friday July 26th, August 30th & September 27th
Venue: ECH Hall
Time: 6-8pm

The Dig in Community Café is one of a collection of programs recognised by Monash/EMV Resilience Compendium in Victoria and EMV’s Community Resilience Framework

2019 Winter Markets
Sunday 9am-2pm July 21st
Sunday 9am-2pm August 18th

2019 Spring/Summer Markets
Sunday 9am-3pm September 15th
Sunday 9am-3pm October 20th
Sunday 9am-3pm November 17th
Friday 3pm-8pm December 6th
Sunday 9am-3pm December 15th

Variety of Stalls

Clothing & Jewellery
Community Groups
Drinks / Food
Fresh Produce
Gifts & Handcrafts
Health
Soy candles & more

Funds raised from market stall fees support the Emerald Community House not-for profit to continue running events, programs & community development projects
Health & Wellbeing

QiGong for Health & Healing
Course Code QG With Maxine Gardner

QiGong, (chi gong), from which Tai Chi originated, uses the same principles of combining breath-work, movement and stillness to improve the quality of life on all levels. The purpose of these ancient exercises is to seek stillness (relaxation) in movement (chaos). Bringing these aspects into balance will help to provide participants with practical tools for coping with the daily stresses of everyday life. QiGong can improve flexibility, balance, and coordination. It can be beneficial for arthritis, recovering from surgery or illness. Or it can simply help those who wish to enjoy the practice of a beautiful and gentle way of being, contributing to their health at the same time. Please bring water & a blanket.

Dates: Thursday July 18th - Sept 18th (9 weeks) No class July 25th
Time & Venue: 7pm - 8:30pm, ECH Hall
Course Fee: $148.50 (inc GST) Casual class fee $22 (inc GST)

Emerald Wellbeing Group - FREE
Course Code WP With Karen Jinnette & Dianne Edwards

Our popular and innovative program provides a diverse and fun environment for people to engage in various physical and intellectual activities that can improve quality of health and wellbeing. The program takes place in an environment that includes carers to develop friendships, receive support from the group and develops a network with a variety of people and age groups.

We offer a range of structured fun activities to improve general wellbeing directed at people over 50. There is a focus on providing people with an opportunity to get together for social gatherings, informal discussions as well as providing valuable information. Carers who support loved ones, must attend together and are welcome. Our program is coordinated by volunteers & currently funded by ECH.

Dates: Tuesday July 16th - September 17th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 9:30am - 11:30am, Emerald RSL

Information Technology

Computers (Day Sessions)
Course Code CD With Donna Asling

Learn all about the ins and outs of your computer in a supportive environment. Work at your own pace, guided by the tutor to help you learn what you need to know and are interested in such as simple documents, email and communicating through the internet. As your confidence grows learn about spreadsheets, inserting pictures or creating data bases. Participants can choose from Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft Office Suite (including Word, PowerPoint, Excel) and more.

Dates: Wednesday 24th July - September 11th (8 weeks)
Time & Venue: 12:30pm - 3pm, ECH Meeting Room
Course Fee: $70 (including material & amenities fees)
**Garden & Environment**

**Growing Berries, Sub-Tropicals & Citrus in Cool Climates**
Course Code GB  
*With Peter Allen*

Learn how we can grow avocados, macas, sapotes, guavas, bananas and many more in the Hills without a glass house. How to grow berries and vines, it’s all about placement and the essentials for citrus growing. Bring your lunch.

- **Date:** Sunday July 21st (1 session)
- **Time & Venue:** 10am - 4pm, Telopea Mountain Permaculture, 134 Invermay Road, Monbulk
- **Course Fee:** $104.50 (inc GST)

**Heritage Fruit Trees ‘The Basics’**
Course Code HF  
*With Peter Allen*

This class covers the basics about the species, variety selection, grafting and rootstock selection for your conditions. Grafting techniques for new trees will be explored as well as grafting on to your existing trees. Opportunity to tour 1000+ varieties onsite. Free book provided. Please your bring lunch.

- **Date:** Sunday August 11th (1 session)
- **Time & Venue:** 10am - 4pm, Telopea Mountain Permaculture, 134 Invermay Road, Monbulk
- **Course Fee:** $104.50 (inc GST)

**Winter vs Summer Pruning**
Course Code DOB  
*With Peter Allen*

Tips and tricks to reduce workload, reduce disease entry and create fruit or rejuvenate old trees. Focus on the advantages of pruning at the correct time to control disease, fruit and tree size. We also look at how to get the right tree first, so reducing the workload for the next 50 years of fruiting. Please bring your lunch.

- **Date:** Sunday August 25th (1 session)
- **Time & Venue:** 10am - 4pm, Telopea Mountain Permaculture, 134 Invermay Road, Monbulk
- **Course Fee:** $104.50 (inc GST)

**How to Propagate Rootstocks**  
Course Code PR  
*With Peter Allen*

Learn how to propagate rootstocks at home or commercially for apple, pear, cherry, plum and many more. Please bring your lunch.

- **Date:** Sunday September 15th (1 session)
- **Time & Venue:** 10am - 4pm, Telopea Mountain Permaculture, 134 Invermay Road, Monbulk
- **Course Fee:** $104.50 (inc GST)

**Cooking**

**Feta Cheese, Marscapone, Pot Set Yoghurt & Ricotta**
Course Code FMC  
*With Peter Allen*

Learn how to make your own cheese & yoghurt using all organic milk, cultures & ingredients. This class shows how to make dairy products ready to eat next day with very little equipment. Bring your lunch.

- **Date:** Saturday July 20th (1 session)
- **Time & Venue:** 9am - 4pm, Telopea Mountain Permaculture, 134 Invermay Road, Monbulk
- **Course Fee:** $132.00 (inc GST)
Literacy for Adults with a Disability
Course Code ALFA With Dianne Edwards

This course is geared for those who will benefit from basic numeracy and literacy skills in a small friendly group environment. Using fun and interactive methods, students will also increase their confidence and abilities to work in a group.

Dates: Monday July 15th - September 16th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 9:30am - 11:30am, ECH Hall
Course Fee: $80

Everyday Literacy through Cooking
Course Code ALTC With Sharyn Thomas

Participants will learn literacy, numeracy and food handling skills through practical cooking demonstrations and preparing their own recipes, incorporating the 5 food groups. Ideal for those with special needs, participants will learn the fundamentals of food safety and handling including use and sanitising of equipment, preparation and storage of ingredients and storage of food types including dairy, dry goods, fruit and vegetables, meat, seafood and poultry.

Hygiene procedures, identifying and preventing high risks and handling of waste items will be covered to provide safe practices and increase work place skills. Participants will also make up their own recipe book, using their literacy and numeracy skills while they learn how to prepare and cook a meal to take home and share.

Dates: Monday July 15th - September 16th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 12:30pm - 2:30pm, ECH Hall & Kitchen
Dates: Tuesday July 16th - September 17th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 1pm - 3pm, ECH Hall & Kitchen
Course Fee: $80 each term, including materials & amenities fees
Materials: Special dietary needs - add $20

Workplace Skills

Developing your Skills for the Workplace
Course Code DYSW With Sharyn Thomas

Ideal for those with special needs, participants will learn a variety of natural and environmental crafts that interest them such as making soaps, recycled paper and cards and how to present them for sale. Students will run their own market stall at the Emerald Market to sell their creative works and gain confidence within a community environment. The money raised goes back into the group and community by funding for activities for special needs groups. We have two groups running.

Dates: Tuesday July 16th - September 17th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 10am - 12pm, ECH Hall Kitchen
Course Fee: $80 (including materials and amenities fees)

Opportunities to Become a Tutor

Is there a course that you would like to run and have skills or experience in a particular subject?

We are always looking for local people who have a skill or experience which could translate into an adult education course, workshop or community enterprise. See details on our website for course ideas.

Volunteers needed at ECH for Tuesday class; Developing your Skills for the Workplace

Enquiries: emhouse@iinet.net.au or 5968 3881
Developing your Writing Skills
Course Code DYWS  With Maria Millers

Would you like to develop your writing skills further, become an author, a literary critic or write moving editorials? In this course, while exploring different literary works and sharing your creative writing, you will be introduced to a range of creative writing techniques that will help to develop your own personal writing skills. This is a supportive atmosphere headed by a skilled teacher with some students already published or going on to be successful authors. You can too, starting with this course.

Dates:                   Wednesdays TBA (5 sessions)
Time & Venue:      7pm - 9pm, ECH Meeting Room
Course Fees:        $80 (including materials & amenities fees)

Book Writers’ Workshop
Course Code WW  With Heather Ellis

Ever wanted to write that book? Make a start? This course will take you through the steps of writing a book, promoting it, getting it published and finding out about attending literary festivals and events around the world. Of special interest is the memoir - a historical account or biography from personal knowledge. Heather Ellis, author of the acclaimed memoir, “Ubuntu”, will take you down your memory lane and help you to collect your thoughts and get them organised. This course will run for two semesters to allow enough time to finish your book hopefully by the end of the year.

Dates:                   Wednesdays TBA (5 sessions)
Time & Venue:      7pm - 9pm, ECH Meeting Room
Course Fees:        $80 (including materials & amenities fees)

Introduction to Sustainable Design Practices
Course Code ISDP  With Adam Byron-Thomsen

Have you ever wanted to start your own sustainability project? Re-design your garden, kickstart a community group, provide a local service or create a partnership to deliver sustainable outcomes? Join this course to realise your ideas. You will be guided in planning an achievable project, make meaningful community connections and explore possibilities through discussion, activities and site visits. Join today and engage in the challenges and opportunities that your future may hold.

Enquiries:   Email emhouse@iinet.net.au for the start date
Time & Venue: Thursdays 7 - 9pm, ECH Meeting Room
Course Fee:     $80 (includes 10 sessions)

Dandenong Ranges Repair Café

Come along to the next session on Sunday July 21st from 9am-11am at the Emerald Community House during the monthly market and meet others interested in sustainability projects. Volunteers helpers are encouraged to come along and join the team.

www.dandenongrangesrepaircafe.community   facebook.com/dandenongrangesrepaircafe

Tax Help

Tax Help volunteers help people with simple tax matters and tell clients whether they need to lodge a tax return. Tax Help is a free & confidential service provided by local ATO-trained and accredited volunteers.

Low income earners who earn approx $60,000 or less per year and have straightforward tax affairs are eligible to use this service. Available by appointment until 31st October 2019. Phone 5968 3881 to book.
Workplace Skills

Hospitality Work Ready Training - includes RSA* (Course Code HT)

The Hospitality Work Ready Training is an accredited Work Skills program conducted over one day. It is aimed at providing participants the skills to be Work Ready to gain employment in the hospitality industry. Learn the fundamental skills to build your knowledge of the industry. Experience an insight into the professional operation of a commercial kitchen. Develop skills required to work in the ever expanding hospitality sector.

Skills covered in practical training & upon completion of workbook participants will achieve;
- SITXFSA001 Use hygienic practices for food safety
- SITHFAB002 Responsible service of alcohol (RSA)

Date: Saturday TBA
Time & Venue: 9am - 4pm, ECH Hall
Administration Fee: $75

* Please note: Individuals cannot be enrolled if they are currently studying as secondary students due to extra conditions for eligibility of participants for the Hospitality Training course. Please discuss any queries with the ECH Coordinator to confirm.

Provide CPR (Course Code HLTAID001)

Covering both the knowledge requirements and practical skills required to perform CPR on an infant / adult, the use of an AED, and the requirements for providing an incident/injury report.

Date: Saturday TBA
Time & Venue: 9.30am - 11.30am, ECH Hall
Course Fee: $70 per person (All prices include ECH admin fees)

Provide First Aid - Includes CPR (Course Code HLTAID003 - Blended Delivery)

The ability to deliver first aid can often mean the difference between life and death. Practical competencies in class, includes theory and assessments to be completed at home first.

Date: Saturday TBA
Time & Venue: 9.30am - 1.30pm, ECH Hall
Course Fee: $140 per person (All prices include ECH admin fees)

Travel & Tourism

Introduction to Working in the Wine Industry (Course Code IWW)

With Janette Connell

Interested in wine making varietals and what grows in our area? With the Yarra Valley right next door, you can look into working close to home with a commute through one of the most beautiful areas in Victoria. Why not combine with Intro to Travel and Tourism? An ideal starter course if you are seeking employment in a wine tasting venue, hospitality industry or pursue a career or further study in viticulture.

Introduction to Travel and Tourism (Course Code ITT)

With Janette Connell

Ever thought of combining your love of travel into a career? What is involved? Can you work from home? What are the options?

Explore the tourism industry and identify what skills are required, whether you want to pursue a career or manage boutique travel interests like tours, group travel or develop a local tourism business of your own.

Enquiry: Email emhouse@iinet.net.au for the start dates for both courses
Children's Programs

Occasional Childcare
Emerald Community House is a registered licensed childcare provider operating an affordable community based program. Occasional childcare is available on Monday, Tuesday (3 yr old +), Wednesday & Friday.

Sessions for 12mths - 5 year olds (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
9:30am - 2:30pm $40 per child

‘Kidzplay’ - 3 year old & over (Tuesdays)
9:30am - 2:30pm $45 per child

Kidzplay includes Spanish session run by Pilar Nesvura from ‘Global Kids’ which strengthens children’s reading, writing and mathematic development and through diverse cultural experiences. Inspires imagination, compassion, empathy and builds a sense of belonging.

NEW Childcare Casual rate: $10 per hour, per child (minimum 2hrs)

Our play & learning program offers lots of fun, love and social activities. Special experiences are provided each day, taking into account the children’s natural interests, and designed to promote their social, physical, intellectual, language and emotional development.

‘Bean Sprouts’ Playgroup
Facilitator: Adam Byron-Thomsen

Our facilitated playgroup has a focus on sustainable practices and naturally fun activities. Sourcing recycled materials, feeding the worm farm, recycled paper mache fun, planting and playing in edible garden spaces and making craft from natural materials teaches kids about our environment from the start. This playgroup is the perfect introduction to our suite of childcare programs. Small children practise the fine art of getting along with others & trying new ways to play.
A regular playgroup can be great for mums, dads, grandparents and caregivers too, especially if they are new to the community and want to meet other parents with children.

Call to secure a place and join in having fun with your little ones as they explore the world.

Dates: Thursday July 18th - September 19th (10 weeks)
Time & Venue: 9:30am - 11:30am, ECH Child Care
Term Fee: $65

Out-of-School Hours (OOSH) care
Emerald Community House is a registered licensed childcare provider operating an OOSH program for each weekday and supervises travel between Emerald Primary School to ECH. The program is self-funded by ECH as a community enterprise.
A substantial and nutritious breakfast and afternoon tea is provided within the cost of the program. Fun activities include arts & crafts, books, board games, outdoor activities, games and lots more. Laptop computers and internet access are also available to use for homework.

Morning - 6:30am - 9am $18 per child
Afternoon - 3:30pm - 6:30pm $20 per child
THE HILLS EDIBLE VILLAGES PROJECT

Inspired by the UK town of Todmorden, home of the first ‘Incredible Edible’ project that initiated a global movement of planting edible landscapes in urban environments, The Hills Food Frontier started ‘The Hills Edible Villages Project’. This project commenced in 2018 with the goal of transforming villages in the Dandenong Ranges into thriving, vibrant, aesthetic, functional, accessible, edible landscapes. Since then we have been engaging in community consultation and hosting various events and activities to inspire and mobilise the community toward empowerment around food security and food resilience.

For the past 2 years we have funded the Food Security Network program in local schools. Students from Upwey High, Sassafras Primary and Sherbrooke Community School have been learning the ‘hands on’ aspects of growing food alongside learning about food security. At the end of their growing seasons they have been donating their harvest to local communities experiencing food insecurity which has been very empowering for them. This has been a wonderful program and we have received very positive feedback from the students and teachers around all the amazing benefits this program is incorporating.

This year we are focusing on working with the local community, village traders and surrounding organisations in Kallista to create foodscapes, enabling access to fresh organic food in public places. The Edible Kallista Action Group have started meeting regularly to instigate projects in the area and we are working closely with Yarra Ranges Council to ensure that all projects will be sustainable. We have developed a strong partnership with Kallista Community House and have just started hosting monthly community shared dinners to further enhance community connection and facilitate discussion around relevant topics.

There are many benefits for the community, local businesses and the environment through creating Edible Landscapes and we hope to rally more involvement and support to enhance the power of small actions and really make a difference.

You can visit ‘The Hills Edible Villages’ Facebook group or The Hills Food Frontier website for dates of our upcoming events, our monthly community shared dinners and Edible Kallista Action Group meetings.

If you are keen to be involved or support The Hills Edible Villages Project please contact the project manager Christina Reeves on 0424 100 420 at christina@thehillsfoodfrontier.org.au

CHRISTINA REEVES
Community Project Worker,
The Hills Edible Villages Project
0424 100 420 or www.thehillsfoodfrontier.org.au

Monbulk Jewellers
162 Main Road Monbulk (03) 9756 7652
www.monbulkjewellers.com

Friendly and welcoming family business
Owners Ken & Helen Hunt have been at Monbulk Jewellers since 1994, assisting and providing quality services for the local community and surrounds.

Quality Onsite Repairs & Restoration
Australian Argyle Pink Diamonds
New jewellery designed and made • Engagement Rings • Diamond and gemstone specialists

Local students getting involved and learning about growing food
THE GAME’S AFOOT

The woman took a deep breath and stepped into the light. She was so aware of the hundreds of eyes watching her from the dark, she could sense their expectation and felt the tingle of anticipation that went with this moment. She knew she was ready – she had practised for so long and was determined not to fail them. With her heart beating hard in her chest, she walked forward knowing that it was now or never. Looking out, she opened her mouth and spoke the words. It was thrilling.

This is the twenty fifth year that Gemco Players have hosted the Dandenong Ranges One Act Play Festival in Emerald. For those who have joined us before, it’s on again and for those who are curious I will tell you more.

All over Victoria there are groups of people who come together to create stories for other people to enjoy. Like a much loved sport, we create a team, we practise our moves, we know when to come in and go off and we know that someone has our back. From Macedon to Traralgon, Brighton to Kyneton, people who love to challenge themselves will be creating short plays to make you laugh or glue you to your seats in fright.

Between July and October, theatre groups invite others to submit a play or two to be presented at their festival for their communities to enjoy. The plays can run from 20 to 45 minutes and vary in theme from comedy through to thriller. Often the plays have been around for some years but sometimes they have been written by local playwrights and have never been seen before.

Gemco Players are hosting their festival on Saturday July 20th and Sunday July 21st. We usually have about 15 plays spread over the two days and you could come along and see all of them or just one session which contains three plays. Margie Gemmell runs our refreshment area offering delicious food at modest prices.

This festival is also a competition and theatre groups compete for Best Production, Best Actor, Best Support, Best Director etc. In all we offer 14 trophies made by a local ceramicist and the Men’s Shed. In previous years the awards have been supported very generously with donations from local businesses such as Kaye Charles, Barry Plant, Mitre 10, Stockdale & Leggo, Tinkar’s Corner and Emerald Fruit Barn. Their support makes it possible for us to offer a reward for all the time and effort that’s been put into these plays.

The rule of thumb for putting on a play is that for every minute of the play there is one hour of rehearsal. Even though this seems a generous amount of time it never feels enough and there are always huge butterflies of anticipation when you’re just about to step out on to the stage. But the people who participate in this are passionate and love the energy that is required to create these plays. It’s not only the words, but the set, the costumes, the lights and sound. And it’s a huge amount of fun.

Gemco Players have been around in various forms for 39 years and this year we are celebrating the tenth year of our theatre being open. We welcome anyone who would like to get involved and give it a go, onstage or backstage, from prep to 80 and beyond. Not many sporting games can offer that! So don’t miss out on this wonderful opportunity. It’s live, it’s fun and it’s exciting. In the immortal words of Shakespeare, and made famous by Sherlock Holmes “the game’s afoot.”

EVIE HOUSHAM
Gemco Theatre President

Dandenong Ranges One Act Play Festival
Saturday July 20th & Sunday July 21st
Gemco Theatre, 19 Kilvington Drive, Emerald
Tickets: $15 per session | $35 for all weekend sessions
Details www.gemcoplayers.org

Theatre groups from all over Victoria bring their One Act Plays to entertain and compete over three days at Gemco Theatre. A great opportunity to sample all kinds of plays. Food and refreshments will be available for purchase at the bar.

Come celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Theatre with the Gemco Players on August 24th
Details www.gemcoplayers.org
INEXPENSIVE HACKS TO ‘STYLISE’ YOUR HOME!

We all love living in a nice space, go on, admit it. Unfortunately not all our budgets extend to overhauling our homes in the manner in which we’d like so we have come up with some cheap hacks to ‘stylise’ your home without the ‘stylised’ price tags!

TIP 1:
Commence the process with a neutral palette. Much can be built upon by starting with white walls and neutral coloured furniture, especially the big ticket items like the couch. Neutrals also never date so you can invest in this with confidence that you won’t have to upgrade in the near future.

TIP 2:
Layer with texture such as wool and cashmere. Add these in throw cushions, artwork or little sculptures for your shelves. Don’t be afraid to change it up with something a little quirky like leather or velvet cushions.

TIP 3:
Go big on the artwork. Oversized pieces of art are a talking point. They draw attention and make the space feel expensive. Head to second-hand stores, student art shows and even IKEA to score cool finds.

TIP 4:
Create a ‘curation’ feel by upcycling something old or treasured and blending the whole lot together to add a feeling that you’ve considered and curated your space. Hit op shops or garage sales for rare finds.

TIP 5:
Make it smell delicious by adding candles, freshly cut flowers or room fragrances. Not only will your home smell amazing, it will also create a welcoming vibe which you’ll treasure every time you walk through the front door.

Stockdale & Leggo
Stockdale & Leggo Yarra Ranges
P 03 5968 3933
First and foremost, our philosophy is you should only sell when YOU are ready, winter, autumn, summer or spring, if the time is right for YOU, then the time is right.

If you do happen to be considering a winter sale, grab a mug of something hot, rug up and read on......

Winter is often thought of as the worst choice for selling, however, cold, hard analytics from Domain reveal that selling in spring is no more advantageous than selling in winter. The secret is out and sellers are increasingly keen to use the season to their advantage. The Australian property market is now active all year round and with many sellers deciding to remain in hibernation over winter your home could prove to be the star attraction with less competition. At KCRE, we have recently experienced a post-election flurry of homes being snapped-up and have buyers waiting in the wings for more hills homes to hit the market, creating the perfect storm of opportunity if you are considering selling.

**Setting the Winter Scene**

The chilly days and even chillier nights are the perfect time to set the scene for the sale of your home. Buyers come to the hills in search of a feeling, an emotional connection. They want misty mornings, foggy nights, roaring fires and pots of soup. They want to step in from the icy cold air and feel their skin tingle with appreciation. Appreciation for fuzzy slippers, comfort food and guilt free Netflix. Winter is the perfect opportunity to supply all this and more. It’s the perfect time for buyers to experience that cosy hills feeling that only winter can bring. So set the scene, and they will come!

If you would like to have a chat about your future real estate plans over a hot mug of something, give me a call on 0428 744 498 or pop into our office at 12a Kilvington Drive, Emerald.

**KATIE WOODS**

Sales Manager – Kaye Charles Real Estate (Emerald)
IN PRAISE OF TRADIES

I want to send out a note of appreciation to all those tradesmen and women who help us out, often in emergencies. To those whom we get to know through repeated work in whatever field they are in. To those who say that they will be there at a certain time and are there on time. To those who treat the owners and the home they are entering with courtesy. To those who do a good job with their background of training, experience and skills in their trade and who inform the owner, their client, what has happened and what they are doing to fix the problem. And to those who are honest and charge a true and fair rate for the job done.

We moved back to the hills more years ago than I care to remember and bought a house that needed fencing and various other modifications and repairs, as well as considerable work in the garden, including planting a dozen roses which we had brought from our previous home. We put in a line of birches on one side of the drive and built a pergola to enhance the entrance to the house with a patio area and garden border beneath it. All these tasks were completed without delay by local tradespeople. Whether inside or out, all these jobs were done with great care and skill, everything measured beforehand so that the end result was spot-on.

Despite all our efforts to simplify the property, within a few short years we decided a unit was where we should be. Not too many jobs were required here but we needed a small garden shed to be erected on site, shelving in the garage, removal of far too many camellias in a pocket-handkerchief garden, all a couple of meters in height (they all went to good homes, successfully) and so on.

Much of this work at both residences was done by one man who continues, to this day, to help out with whatever needs doing and does it well. What a blessing. In addition, there is a plumber, electrician, air-con specialist, ducted heating genius, television Mr. Fix-It, gardeners and of course there is always help or advice from the good folk at Mitre 10.

These ‘tradies’ are very much appreciated by residents of Emerald and nearby areas. They are, indeed, a Godsend to all. Perhaps having these invaluable people around is due to Emerald being a small community but whatever the reason, I want to say thank you to all.

BRENDA WEBB
it wasn’t until I got myself a digital SLR in 2004 that things got really serious,” Creek says, smiling warmly.

With an interest in the Japanese anime subculture he began honing his photographic skills at cosplay conventions where he was able to photograph outrageously outgoing people dressed in the cartoon style costumes of their favourite anime characters. This was a fantastic subject for a portrait photographer who quickly gained a following among the cosplay set.

As you might imagine earning a living through photography can be extremely challenging but a chance online opportunity led Neil to turn his photography blog into an e-book. Neil began to gain a reputation as a photography educator at the time when electronic publishing was fairly new but his publication seemed to hit the mark with amateur photographers around the world.

Now photography isn’t Neil’s only interest. He’s also a keen amateur astronomer and a member of the Mount Burnett Observatory. You’d think that photography and astronomy were a natural pairing but that wasn’t the case when Neil first became interested.

“I’m thrilled to be able to bring my two passions of astronomy and photography together at last,” he says, pointing out that the technology has only become sophisticated enough in the last eight years to be able to really capture the night sky with any true clarity and depth.

Neil is quick to encourage others to pursue their interests and says that you don’t need to buy a lot of fancy gear to get started. “You really can do astrophotography with just a five year old digital SLR camera and a tripod, but of course the more advanced you get the more dedicated equipment you will probably want to invest in.”

He explains that if you want to photograph the moon and the planets then a telescope with a long focal length and a camera with small sensors is best for capturing the detail of these very small objects. However, taking photos of nebulae and star clusters which are bigger but also much fainter, requires a telescope with a shorter focal length and a camera with larger sensors. This is why photography, if the bug bites you, can become an expensive activity.

In recent years Creek has begun experimenting with another subject.

“I’ve always been interested in the art nude as an artistic subject. I love the Renaissance painters and then there’s the statue of David, which is an absolute masterpiece of human creativity,” he says.

For some, his foray into the world of the art nude pushes against the boundaries of propriety but he says in response to critics, “As an artist, I like to challenge people’s perceptions. Anyway I mostly work with friends as it can be difficult to find models who are comfortable with taking their clothes off in front of a camera. In fact that’s the most challenging part of nude photography. You need to build relationships, build trust and build a portfolio that shows that you are serious and can do what you’re talking about.” Certainly his open and friendly manner are an asset in building the trust that underpins the quality of his work in the arena of the art nude.
Whether you like nude photography or not, you’re bound to find something in Neil’s portfolio to admire. And Neil’s work is certainly being admired in some notable places too. This year he has been shortlisted for the David Malin Astrophotography Awards and will be travelling to Parkes in NSW for the event on July 19th, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the lunar landing.

Neil is available for hire as a photographer and can be contacted at neil@neilcreek.com

To see more of his amazing work go to www.neilcreek.com

MEREDITH COLE

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

The Belgrave Lantern Parade is always a joyful, fun-filled celebration of community and creativity and this year the 13th annual parade was no exception. Held this year on June 22nd, the event drew people to the hills from all over Melbourne in celebration of the shortest night of the year, the winter solstice. As always the parade provided a fun filled day of lantern making creativity for young and old alike. When the sun went down lanterns lit up faces filled with pride and wonder as performers played and danced and twirled their way down the main street of Belgrave. What better way to mark the turning of the year than to light up the night!

MEREDITH COLE

Mt Burnett Observatory’s planetary creations  Photo: Neil Creek

RUCCS circus illuminated talents  Photo: Kirsty Hall

Call now to book an appointment  T: 0478 125 865
LIFE RETURNS TO BUNYIP

In the afternoon of March 1st 2019, lightning strikes sparked a number of bushfires in Bunyip State Park. By early morning March 2nd these fires had joined and would eventually burn an area of over 15,900 hectares (approximately 9500 hectares within Bunyip State Park and 6000 hectares of private land). While the area south of Bunyip State Park was contained early, areas within the park continued to burn for some weeks.

Using infrared technology from the air and ground to identify hot spots, crews carried out fire suppression activities including back burning operations, building containment lines, removing hazardous trees and blacking out hot spots within the park. By March 14th the bushfire was contained (the spread of fire was halted) and by 1st of April it was brought under control (perimeter secured with no breakaway expected). Overall, approximately 60% of the park was affected.

The severity of the bushfire varied across the park. Some areas were particularly affected by the intensity and rapid spread of fire on the first three days with significant damage to tree canopies and all mid-storey and low-lying vegetation incinerated. Other areas burned at a much lower intensity with only parts of the undergrowth burnt and the tree canopies scorched or untouched. These areas and the remaining parts of the park outside the fire footprint, as well as the neighbouring Regional Park and state forests are providing refuge for animals while the rest of the park recovers.

In 2009 approximately 50% of the park burnt and some of these same areas burned again in the recent fires in March. It is not known exactly how these areas will respond but natural regeneration of the land had already started to happen within days. How soon and exactly how different plants and animals respond depends on a variety of different factors. Parks Victoria staff have noticed that many different species of plants have already started germinating in the blackened, nutrient rich ash beds left behind by the fires. One of the first plant species to resprout was Button Grass. This is an important local species due to its limited distribution and also because these grassy tussocks provide shelter for small animals.

Eucalypt species within the park have already started re-sprouting with epicormic growth present. A combination of ash on the ground as well as rainfall is providing the right conditions for seeds to germinate. Banksia and Hakea species will grow from seed during winter and spring. Some of the other species that can be found in the park are Coral-fern, Messmate Stringybark, Clubmoss, Wattles, Prickly Tea-tree, Woolly Tea-tree and Health Tea-tree, as well as four different types of Hakea, Drooping Mistletoe, Scrub She-oak shrubs and Swamp Bush-pea (a rare plant).

Wildlife have begun to move back in now that food is available for them. Animals such as wombats, wallabies, kangaroos, lace monitors, lyrebirds, possums and kookaburras have already been seen in areas affected by fire and the Parks Victoria staff working in the forest have heard the calls of powerful owls echoing across the landscape. A recent survey in some of the forest areas and gullies affected by the fires reported that a number of Greater Gliders had also been seen.

Park staff and contractors have been undertaking emergency stabilisation works over the last three months. This work includes the removal of hazardous trees, repairing damage to roads and tracks, ensuring that appropriate drainage and erosion control measures are in place, making sure that pest plants don’t invade the park, protecting creeks and streams from soil erosion and monitoring the response of native animals and plants, rehabilitating any dozer lines constructed during the fire fight and conducting audits of park assets impacted by the fires. Many boardwalks, seats and information posts will need to be replaced too. Both long and short term recovery plans are being developed and enacted. Some of the...
short-term recovery activities will include the control of pest animals (foxes, cats and wild dogs). To allow for nature to take its own regenerative course and to protect visitors from hazards such as falling trees, a large area of Bunyip State Park will remain closed until at least November and possibly longer depending on the weather over the winter months. The eastern section of the park is still open to park users. This area includes Lawson Falls, the Lawson Falls Picnic Area, and the Forest Road unloading area.

During the closure, four-wheel drivers and trailbike riders are encouraged to use the Yarra State Forest and Labertouche State Forest to the north and east of Bunyip State Park as an alternative. For horse riders, walkers and campers, Kurth Kiln Regional Park is another option. Please note that four-wheel drives and trailbikes are only permitted to use the public roads in Kurth Kiln. It is illegal to drive or ride off-road in these areas.

Many thanks to the tireless efforts of the CFA, Parks Victoria, private contractors and all who helped to fight the Bunyip fires. Thanks also to council staff, community groups and residents for their ongoing support.

KIRSTY HALL in conjunction with
JACK DINKGREVE
Area Chief Ranger, Parks Victoria

Full details about restrictions in Bunyip State Park - parks.vic.gov.au
Owing to my experience and knowhow with patients and the severity of the pneumonia epidemic, I was kept quite busy in the post hospital. I was always on night duty to attend to the most severe cases. It was a job taking care of one big burly boy of Polish decent in his delirium. I could hardly leave his bedside as he would get out of bed and knock me for a row as he was twice as large as I was.

One night he really went downhill about 11 pm and I called Dr Pollard as I didn't think my patient was long for this world. As he was a Catholic I thought we should call the local priest so that he could administer the church's last rites. Pollard, being Protestant, didn't know much about the last rites of the Catholic Church and couldn't see that it would be of any benefit to a dying soldier but I insisted on calling the priest anyway. Pollard didn't think any man in his right mind would come out on a stormy night on such a wild goose chase.

Pollard and the priest, a Father Numes, arrived at the hospital at about the same time. It didn't take long for the doctor to agree that the patient had little chance of pulling through and the priest proceeded to administer the last rites. Afterward they both talked together in the doctor's office for the next two hours while the patient quietly gave up the ghost. Pollard never had much respect for the Catholic religion before this but after that two hour conference with the priest he was always at the hospital every Sunday morning seeing to it that all the Catholic men went to mass whether they wanted to or not.

With the spring ice melt under way, the pneumonia and flu epidemics were also abating and that was a good thing as I was tired to almost exhaustion. Captain Pollard had long since regretted the way he had treated me and he called me into the office one day. He complimented me on the way I had helped out with the epidemic and how I had also helped my successor in running the hospital as he was brand new and knew very little about making up the hospital reports. I had nothing against him and really felt sorry for him under the circumstances.

Seeing my opportunity, I told the captain that I had been in the Army for two years and had never had a furlough in that time. The war was now on and I felt sure I would get a chance to go overseas sooner or later, thinking that it would be a good idea to have a furlough if only for 10 days. At that time, furloughs were hard to get and were only granted for very good and sufficient reasons. We regular Army men knew a few tricks so I simply wrote to my father that I was very anxious to visit home before I went overseas and asked him to send me a Western Union Telegram that my mother was very sick.

Thankfully this did the trick and I got the 10 day furlough with a promise that if any call for men came from the Post for overseas orders that I would return. Sure enough about the 6th day I got the wire that they had a request for two men for overseas and they were holding a place for me. Needless to say I hurried back as quick as the train wheels would carry me.

Soon we were packed off to Camp Upton which was located on Long Island, New York. When we arrived there we met about 28 other men, all with the same orders. Everyone was dumbfounded as to why there was such a need for so many dental assistants all at once. The Division had already left Camp Upton 6 weeks earlier, less all the bad teeth they had brought into the Army. Extractions and simple fillings was about all the dental work that the army did.

In a day or two we were taken to the Quartermaster and issued with a complete field outfit including two of everything along with two pair of split leather hobnailed shoes that weighed about 4 lbs a pair. These shoes were made in such a way that one pair would last an ordinary soldier for 5 years. I began to wonder just how long they were expecting to be at war with us soldiers toting around 10 years' worth of shoes.
drink at the bar for 10 - 15 cents and as the war was young there would be some good natured civie who would offer to buy you an extra one.

I located a Y.M.C.A. type soldier’s club right on 5th Avenue with nice clean bunks for 25 cents a night and a little cafeteria in the basement where one could get a good meal for the same. Hard to believe in these days of the 1960s. Anyway, I saw all of the city I wanted via the double decker bus service and took in 4 good shows - all movies and some with vaudeville. They let soldiers in for half price with top prices only 60 cents. Oh for the good old days…

Well I stayed my leave out and upon returning to Camp Upton no one would believe I had such good a time. The only pleasure I missed on that trip was girls. At that time it was well understood that if you wanted to have a good time leave out the girls unless you have plenty of money as girls and money always go together.

I started one day with 3 cents and two boxes of matches in a 1 cent limit poker game staying until I ran my stake up to 30 cents, then moving on to a nickel limit game. When I reached a $1 stake, I moved over to a 10 cent game, running my winnings up to a grand sum of $7. And I wasn’t what you call a poker player or gambler on any account.

The railroad fare to New York City was only $2 round trip and as I was not a heavy drinking man I figured I could stay overnight in the big burg while waiting to go overseas. I got a 48 hour weekend pass so off I went. I have been to New York City many times since under different conditions and with plenty of money but I never had such a good time as I did on this trip. It was my first time there and I was not missing nothing but I was watching my cash. You could still get a drink at the bar for 10 - 15 cents and as the war was young there would be some good natured civie who would offer to buy you an extra one.

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BILL CORKEAN
Bill Corkrean, born in 1897 is the father of a local hills resident. Running as a serial, Greenbrier Crossing is based on his memoirs.
Team surveys a diverse field

OnePlan Land Surveyors is a young, progressive Beaconsfield land surveying business offering the complete start to finish package in Title Boundary re-establishment, Land Surveying, Development, Subdivision & Consolidation of Titles.

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The OnePlan team comprises professional surveyors and specialists whose clients include land owners, architects and designers, developers, builders, engineers, town planners, solicitors, Councils and Government Authorities.

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Contact us now for professional advice in moving your next project forward.

We are situated at Suite 2, Level 1, 2 Beaconsfield – Emerald Road, Beaconsfield. Phone 0400 543 157. For more information go to www.oneplangroup.com.au
YOUTH-LED BRILLIANCE

Starting in 2018, Tribe Monbulk is a youth-directed program founded by Belinda Grooby and meets on Friday afternoons each week. There are two separate sessions – one for 8-12 year olds and one for teenagers (aged 13-17). The growing group has quickly attracted over 50 young people. They enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and the opportunity to chat, play indoor games and organise events such as bowling, swimming and trips to the cinema.

Speaking to Belinda, her dedication for supporting youth shines through and the impact of her work has been acknowledged by the community. In a short space of time, this independent, non religious youth group helps empower youth through events and activities and provides a safe space for kids to discuss topics that are important to their wellbeing. Tribe Monbulk Youth Group is proudly supported by Yarra Ranges Council, Bendigo Bank and Monbulk Police.

Tribe recently held a trivia night fundraiser at the Monbulk Hub. Tickets for the night sold out, raising $1300 that will go towards a ski day later in the year.

The group’s simple motto – ‘Be yourself, join our tribe’ – illustrates the importance of places that support self-identity and help create a strong sense of belonging.

Contact Belinda for details at belgrooby@yahoo.com.au or online at www.facebook.com/tribemonbulkyouthgroup

PHIL BYERS

WANTED

new members for

The Bluey & Alice Bunny Refuge

Volunteer Family!

Come in get involved, an hour makes a difference!

Our intention is to have these buns desexed, vaccinated and accustomed forever home.

We take in abandoned, neglected or otherwise unwanted bunnies. While to being handled. We have other family pets on the property so the buns ready for adoption, we seek out loving owners for these rehabilitated buns

About us-
you don't need to own or want to own a bunny to volunteer any and regular night availability a great help. ie: every Thursday

jobs can include - feeding, brushing, topping up hay and water, come learn about bunnies before deciding to welcome one into your family or if you already have one learn great ways to improve what

all help is appreciated. (Please note you will probably fall in love and want your own)

(Or a tall parent/sibling) to help with jobs around the refuge.

Come in get involved, an hour makes a difference!

You’re invited to the SES Emerald Community Day

Saturday 20 July 12pm to 3pm

Presentations at 12:30pm and 2pm.
Free BBQ and loads of kids’ activities.

SES Emerald Unit
Cnr Old Gembrook & Sheriffs Rds
Emerald VIC 3782
The recently formed Yarra Ranges Community DeathCare Collective received a community grant from Yarra Ranges Council to host the inaugural Yarra Ranges Dying to Know Expo. This very special Expo coincides with the nationally recognised Dying to Know Day on Thursday August 8th.

The four day event at the Tecoma Uniting Church from August 8th-11th aims to engage and empower the community around all aspects of death, dying and bereavement. Christina Reeves who is leading the project reports, “We are offering a diverse and inclusive range of family friendly educational experiences and activities to make this information accessible to all including a range of stalls and displays, talks, workshops, documentary screenings, music, art, therapy, dance, ritual and interactive experiences for people of all ages.”

Death and dying has become a bit of a taboo topic in our emotion-phobic society yet it is the one event in life that we are all guaranteed to face. “Many people are not aware of the choices available to them and what their rights are, resulting in people dying in ways that are not congruent with their values” says local End of Life Consultant Christina Reeves founder of the Yarra Ranges Community DeathCare Collective and instigator of the Dying to Know Expo.

We have gradually handed over the process of death and dying to the medical and funeral Institutions where some feel it has become impersonal, clinical and sterile.

The Yarra Ranges Community DeathCare Collective feels passionate about bringing death and dying back into the hands of the community and changing the way we think and act around death. Death is a natural part of our life cycle and should be normalised in a healthy way, especially for children.

Our event is full of interesting ways to tackle the challenging topic of having conversations around death and dying as well as contemplating our own mortality.

For more information about the Yarra Ranges Dying to Know Expo please visit our Facebook Page or website.

CHRISTINA REEVES
yrdcc@gmail.com or 0424 100 420

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THE ELECTION WAS A SEINFELD EXPERIENCE

Pondering on the results of our recent election it suddenly struck me that we had experienced a Seinfeld moment.

Readers may remember the episode where George suggests to Jerry that they pitch an idea for a new show to NBC. The show is to be about nothing. Jerry is sceptical as to how a show about nothing could appeal to the public but eventually is persuaded to go along with it when George points out that, “Everybody is doing something. We’ll do nothing,” to which Jerry replies, “I think you may have something there,” and goes along with it. NBC is delighted to go ahead.

Jerry Seinfeld later refuted the tag of his show being about nothing but it was undeniably lacking in a narrative and centred around the self-obsessive concerns of a group of characters whose main preoccupations were the daily minutiae of their lives with no regard or interest in anyone else’s welfare or what was happening around them, unless it impacted on them in some way.

So what is the connection between Seinfeld’s show about nothing and the recent federal election? Seinfeld knew who his target audience was and so too did Scott Morrison. Not for this ad man. The dangers of taking strong policies to an already cranky electorate, fearful of losing benefits held at the expense of wider social goals. Better to concentrate on denigrating the opposition and offer the electorate nothing substantive beyond clichés.

Tim Costello reminded us recently that, like the callous Seinfeld characters, we no longer understand the notion of the common good or have empathy for those who have missed out on our often-heralded uninterrupted economic growth, let alone feel any obligation for those in worse circumstances beyond our shores.

Bill Shorten and his shadow ministers tried to put out a comprehensive program of reforms aimed at taking us to the next stage of maintaining prosperity but with a more equitable distribution of social benefits as well as dealing with environmental threats. The policies would have eventually benefited us all, so we would be then able to truthfully shout, “How great is Australia!”

Regrettably we all know that this has not happened and we will now face uncertainty in so many different ways. Seinfeld ran for nine seasons on NBC from 1989 to 1998. I hope we do not have to wait that long for change!

Yada yada yada.

MARTIN MILLERS
PLASTIC FREE JULY
A global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution. www.plasticfreejuly.org

COMEDY ROCK SHOW FOR KIDS
Friday July 12th, 11am
Gemco Theatre, 19 Kilvington Drive, Emerald
Tickets available online - www.aussiekiidsrock.com

SES EMERALD COMMUNITY DAY
Saturday July 20th, 12-3pm
Cnr Old Gembrook & Sherriff Rds
Free BBQ and kids activities. Presentations - 12:30 & 2pm.

PUFFING BILLY TOY LIBRARY - WINTER FESTIVAL
Sunday July 21st, 1-4pm
5 Church St, Emerald
Escape the cold and enjoy food, kids activities, toy sale helping raise funds. www.puffingbillytoylibrary.com.au

DANDENONG RANGES ONE ACT PLAY FESTIVAL
July 20th-21st
Gemco Theatre, 19 Kilvington Drive, Emerald
www.gemcoplayers.org

COCKATOO WOMEN’S BUSINESS NETWORK
Monday July 29th, 7:30pm
42 McBride Street, Cockatoo
Monthly meetings held on last Monday each month

YARRA RANGES DYING TO KNOW EXPO
August 8th-11th
Tecoma Uniting Church, 1566 Burwood Hwy, Tecoma
www.facebook.com/yrccdc

BELGRAVE BIG DREAMS MARKET
First Sunday of every month (except Jan)
St Thomas More Pimary School
Reynolds Lane, Belgrave
Time: 9am - 2pm
Info: www.belgravebigdreamsmarket.com

BELGRAVE SOUTH COMMUNITY MARKET
First Sunday of every month (except Sept)
Gilmore Court, Belgrave South
Time: 10.30am - 3.30pm
Info: market@bsch.org.au

COCKATOO COUNTRY MARKET
First Saturday of every month (except Jan)
Alma Treloar Reserve, 77 Pakenham Road, Cockatoo
Time: 8.30am - 1.30pm
Info: cockatoocountrymarket@outlook.com

EMERALD COMMUNITY MARKET
Third Sunday of every month
Main Street & Kilvington Drive, Emerald
Time: 9am-3pm
Info: 03 5968 3881 www.emeraldcommunity.market

EMERALD LIONS GROW IT BAKE IT MAKE IT
First Sunday of every month
Gemco Theatre, 19 Kilvington Drv, Emerald
Time: 10am-3pm
Info: www.facebook.com/GrowItBakeItMakeItMarket

GEMBROOK MARKET
Fourth Sunday of every month (except Dec)
Gembrook Community Centre
Time: 9am-2pm
Info: www.gembrookmarket.com.au

EMERALD LIONS GROW IT BAKE IT MAKE IT
First Sunday of every month
Gemco Theatre, 19 Kilvington Drv, Emerald
Time: 10am-3pm
Info: www.facebook.com/GrowItBakeItMakeItMarket

KALLISTA COMMUNITY MARKET
First Saturday of every month (except Jan)
2 Church Street, Kallista
Time: 9am - 1pm
Info: kallistamkt@gmail.com

MONBULK PRODUCE MARKET
Second Saturday of every month
Top End Main Street, Monbulk
Time: 8am-1pm
Info: Teresa monbulkmarket@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/monbulkproducemarket

UPPER FERNTREE GULLY MARKET
Every Saturday & Sunday of the Month
Upper Ferntree Gully Railway Carpark,
Burwood Hwy, Upper Ferntree Gully
Time: Saturday 8am-3pm Sunday 9am-3pm
Info: www.gullymarket.com