

# HARCOURT NEWS

# THE CORE

Edition 75 – September 2020

Produced by:  
Harcourt Progress Association Inc

Online: [harcourt.vic.au/news](http://harcourt.vic.au/news)

## Harcourt Pre-School Project Update



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### DEADLINES & PUBLICATION DATES

We aim to publish by the 6th of the month. The deadline for submissions is the 24th of the month prior. Advertisers and community groups will be sent reminder emails. **There is no edition in January.**

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW HARCOURT PRE-SCHOOL, which is to be co-located in the south-east corner of the Harcourt Valley Primary School, is scheduled to commence in September. The Pre-school is currently located in Buckley Street and is managed by the YMCA and supported by a volunteer Parent Advisory Group.

Locating the Pre-school on the edge of the school site will provide the school and the broader community with better access to early childhood education.

The Project Control Group (PCG), including YMCA Early Years Manager Carina O'Neill, Harcourt Valley Primary School Principal Andrew Blake, Harcourt Pre-School Teacher Lisa Gray and Parent Advisory Group members Natalie McCarthy and Sarah Allen, and Mount Alexander Shire Council representatives, has continued to

work closely with the Victorian School Building Authority and Department of Education and Training over the last few months to progress the Harcourt Valley Pre-School project.

Despite the changed operating environment and the challenges that COVID-19 has presented, the PCG has continued to meet and progress the Pre-School project, which will include a double room modular kindergarten and a brand new 800 square metre all-abilities-accessible outdoor education space designed by local architects Thomson Hay.

The outdoor education space, which has been designed in keeping with the natural surroundings, will feature a number of zones for open-ended outdoor play including a new timber quad swing, sandpit, mud kitchen and cubby house, rock maze, musical rock, tepee and stage area.

*Continued on page 4*





## Site Works Continue

The Victorian Miniature Railway has been approved to have four people working on site. When the *Core* called in late August, two machines were busy digging trenches for drainage below what will become ‘the lawn at VMR’.

Andrew Mierisch, President of VMR said, ‘The slopes used to drain onto the road. We are stopping that from happening, which also helps to keep the whole area dry. We have directed water into the main dam on the property as well. We have been thrilled to secure a load of chequered grating, at a great price from a local salvage store. The plates are ideal for grates on the top of drainage wells, but also for the staircase we need to build up the hill.’

‘Our other big news is that the signal box in Bendigo is now fully prepared for travel. We will have it delivered to Harcourt as soon as it is possible. We are still aiming to be open at the end of the year,’ Andrew said.

It will be a great day for Harcourt and the region when the Victorian Miniature Railway opens its doors!



Looking west up the hill. The line of stone with the barbecue marks the edge of ‘the lawn at VMR’. This will be a large area suitable for displays and celebrations. Above that level is the car park. The new Lions Club rooms will be located at the north end in Signal Box A, a relic of the Bendigo railway.



The signal box has been tidied up and stripped back ready for transportation to Harcourt. The stairs and verandah will be transported separately.

## Breaking

The *Core*, on behalf of HPA, contacted the Shire today and was told that VicRoads contractors were due out at the roundabout today, Friday 4th September. Apparently, a number of complaints have been received about poor visibility at the roundabout.

Unfortunately VicRoads did not arrive as expected. HPA expects that this week we will hear from the Shire about the result of the meeting between Council and VicRoads representatives. We are hoping for a resolution of this ongoing issue.



What a pleasure it is to be in a community in which community and business members are active. In August, Landcare wrote letters of support for three local organisations – La Larr Ba Gauwa Mountain Bike Committee, Gung Hoe Growers and the Harcourt Organic Cooperative – to support them in their aspirations. We wish them every success.

The group lodged an objection against the Mining Exploration Licence obtained by Cygnet Resources Barkers Creek. More details of this are in the HPA article on page 3 of this edition.

Deputy President, Matt Hillman is working on the preparation of a website as another promotion tool in addition to our successful Facebook page. Terry Willis has prepared a grant application to develop our Action Plan into a colourful and professional brochure which will be in print and downloadable from our new website.

It has been tricky to continue with our usual program of working bees, however, until August, we had only missed one due to COVID-19 restrictions. In August, most of us took a break, but members Shelley Fiddes and Sue Albert took care of some weeds beside Barkers Creek, and other members have worked in pairs on other sites that we regularly maintain.

Our September meeting will be held over Zoom. However, we anticipate that our special spring activity, to be held on Sunday 27 September, will go ahead.

Please join our botanist, Bonnie Humphreys as she leads a wildflower identification walk in the Flora Reserve east of the Harcourt Leisure Centre in Bingham Road.

Contact: Robyn Miller, Secretary, 0467 670 271.



Fight the good fight: Shelly and Sue spent a recent Sunday morning tackling woody weeds along the path beside Barkers Creek leading from Toll Gate Bridge, (opposite the CFA).

# Harcourt Progress Association

## Concern over Mining Exploration Lease in Harcourt

A number of Harcourt residents and organisations, including the Harcourt Progress Association and Harcourt Valley Landcare have sent comments or objections concerning Mining Exploration Lease EL007218.

There is also a Mining Exploration Lease EL007262 which has been taken out over land to the east of Mount Alexander – it extends to, and includes, areas of Elphinstone. There is a petition objecting to this Exploration Licence at [www.change.org/p/victorian-state-government-stop-harcourt-project-mining-exploration-licence](http://www.change.org/p/victorian-state-government-stop-harcourt-project-mining-exploration-licence).

HPA's submission included a request that strict safety and environmental standards be adhered to and states that tourism, agriculture and aboriginal heritage are important to the Harcourt Community.

The application for the lease, which was submitted in March 2020 went via a government web site: [earthresources.vic.gov.au](http://earthresources.vic.gov.au). The company was informed that they had been granted priority over the lease area by the Victorian Department of State Development,

Business and Innovation (DSDBI). The company then advertised in local papers – the *Castlemaine Mail* and the *Express*.

Some of the conditions that the company is expected to adhere are::

- Environment and Community Impact Mitigation
- Site Risk Assessment
- Noise Management
- Water Management
- Dust Management
- Fire Prevention
- Sites will be selected to ensure minimal vegetation disturbance.
- Fauna Management
- Rehabilitation
- Environmental Monitoring and Auditing

### Community Engagement

The lease content contains the following undertakings by Cygnet Resources: The company will notify the landowners and occupiers in writing of any exploration to be undertaken. Landholder Compensation Agreements will be put in place when required.

Cygnet Resources Pty. Ltd. is committed to regular, open and honest communication with the community. The community will be kept informed of

exploration programs on the project. Communication methods used include the company's website, updates to the local council and direct liaison with the affected landholders.

**Stakeholders with an interest in the project should join the mailing list on the website to receive email alerts for updates and news:**

[www.cygnetresources.com.au](http://www.cygnetresources.com.au)

### Proposed 5-year Work Program

Year 1 (2020) Mapping, surface geochemical sampling,  
 Year 2 (2021) Follow-up surface sampling, geophysical modelling  
 Year 3 (2022) Ground gravity surveys  
 Year 4 (2023) Infill gravity and passive seismic  
 Year 5 (2024) Drilling (RC pre-collars, DD tails)

The date for submissions with the option to comment or object is now passed.

The lease has been taken out by Cygnet Resources Barkers Creek. Cygnet Resources can be contacted on:

**Web:** [www.cygnetresources.com.au](http://www.cygnetresources.com.au) or  
**Tel:** 0411 118 71;  
**Email:** [gdean@cygnetresources.com.au](mailto:gdean@cygnetresources.com.au)



## “Think about who you love, then think about them in ICU.”

For Sarah, who's been battling coronavirus for nearly 8 weeks, being separated from her two little boys, has been heartwrenching. On top of coronavirus attacking every one of her body systems, intense pain and acute breathing difficulty, she still has no idea when she will be well enough to see her boys. Sarah's hope is that by us all doing the right thing, no one else will have to experience the heartache her family has.

Please, play your part and help stop the spread of the virus. If you have symptoms - please get tested. Payments of \$450 are available to help you stay home and wait for your test result.

**To learn more of Sarah's story go to [vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS](http://vic.gov.au/CORONAVIRUS)**



Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

## Harcourt Pre-School Project Update

Continued from page 1.

There will also be a communal space to encourage and support the important partnership between the pre-school and the primary school and the transition for students. This shared area will have a focus on sustainability and environment and include a vegetable garden and chicken coop which the joint educational projects will be built around. A proposed plan of the outdoor education space is included below.

Early works are scheduled to commence onsite in September with project completion due for Harcourt's youngest learners by Term 1, 2021.



The white square indicates the approximate location of the new Pre-School in Harcourt.

More information on this project can be found at [www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/NewHarcourtEarlyLearningCentre.aspx](http://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/schools/Pages/NewHarcourtEarlyLearningCentre.aspx)

For more information about the relocation of the Harcourt Kindergarten contact:

Angela Lloyd, Team Leader Early Childhood Performance & Planning Adviser, Department of Education and Training.

Phone: (03) 44337527

Email: [lloyd.angela.m@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:lloyd.angela.m@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Kindly provided by Jess Briscoe

Senior Project Officer | Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Infrastructure  
Early Childhood Infrastructure and Grants, Victorian School Building Authority, Department of Education and Training.

## LIMERICK by The Bard of North Harcourt

A pipe smoking preacher from Poole  
Taught children The Bible at school.  
And dressed in white satin  
He also taught Latin  
And looked most remarkably cool.



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## Construction Underway at Harcourt Play Space

The new Harcourt Play Space is taking shape in Stanley Park North.

'We're really excited about this play space, and the important role that residents and our local Indigenous community have had in the design process,' said Cath Olive, Manager Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities, Mount Alexander Shire Council.

The play space will feature a large six metre high tower with an exhilarating ten metre long slide, play stalls, a climbing wall and an array of play equipment.

'Fun and accessibility are the real focuses of the play space – it will have a wheelchair accessible carousel, accessible and traditional swings, and an accessible rocker and spinner,' said Cath.

Council awarded the construction tender to the experienced Eaglehawk-based business, Ian Evans Creative Landscapes. Adventure Plus, a Victorian play equipment manufacturer and installer, will provide and install the tower and the majority of the play elements.

There will also be some creative elements incorporated into the play space, including an oak leaf seat and an apple star footstool crafted by Central Victorian artist Linton Torr.

The play space will be open to the community and ready for fun by December, weather permitting.

Council is funding the play space in partnership with the Victorian Government, which has provided \$350,000. The Harcourt Progress Association has generously contributed \$6,500, courtesy of a Maldon Community Bank grant.

From a Council Press Release



It is exciting to see the progress of the play space construction. The granite edging promises lots of fun for little ones, apart from all the other exciting features soon to come. The photo shows the three climbing poles (to the left) which will be cantilevered. The fence along Harmony Way, while not obstructive to views, clearly delineates the park area.

## Alysha Hepburn

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# Harcourt Produce Store Celebrates

On August 31, it was one year since the Harcourt Produce Store opened its doors. There were many challenges with renovating the building so it could be the welcoming venue which it is now. And a year ago, the town and the Shire were delighted that Annette Larsen-Rae had achieved her dream, with the support of her husband Bruce.

While COVID-19 has provided unique challenges to many hospitality businesses, Annette has ridden out the storm and is persevering by adapting the business and adding new product lines. With four part-time staff still on duty, patrons are visiting and are able to purchase from a large range of delicious foods, wines and gifts. Annette said, 'I want to thank our customers and local suppliers for their ongoing support and I especially want to thank our loyal staff for their commitment to the business.'

Specialist deli items include Annette's own smoked salmon and Larsen dips of hummus, beetroot and smoked trout – all fresh from the fridge. Cheeses, both local and from further afield, also

feature. Hillside Acres Farm of Harcourt have a great range of their paddock-to-plate free range meats. There are some new additions in the take-away foods like Reuben sandwiches and new toasties, and there's a great range of cakes and slices to enjoy with take-away coffee.

Annette has been regularly adding new gift lines, for example Red Tractor calendars and cards, and the Jam Smith's biscuits and preserves became available in August. Candles, flowers, preserved items, sweets, dry goods and kitchen aids all feature, and all are high quality.

If you are thinking of gifts there is a new line of hampers. Patrons can choose the contents and a hamper will be created which is attractive and practical.

Feel like joining a Wine Club? Annette will be establishing a specialist Wine Store with the choice for club members of half a dozen or a dozen bottles, delivered to the door.

Keep an eye out on the Harcourt Produce Store Facebook page for updates.

Enquiries:

Annette Larsen Rae: 0430 302 763



Choose the contents of a hamper for that special gift!



Annette and Horticulturalist Josh at work in the fresh produce garden, getting ready for spring and summer crops.

## The Best Little Chook House in Harcourt?

The Core spotted David Heath's mobile hen house a while back and was attracted by its cheerful yellow colour. We caught up with David one sunny Sunday morning to chat about 'Doris' – the name David chose for his natty construction.

Doris is mounted on an old trailer and is made of second-hand materials and is surrounded by a fox proof electric fence. It has excellent features such as two self-feeders on the outside and a self-feeding water system. 'The water is collected from the roof into a container which then keeps the drinking bowl topped up,' David said. 'Everything is attached to the trailer and it is just light enough for me to move. It has a glass front which is double glazed. It's actually the door from an old coke fridge.'

Doris can accommodate 12 chooks. The ones currently housed are Quambys (purchased from EcoThought in Eagles Road) and Lowan Browns.

David explained, 'The electric fence and the solar-powered energiser were the most expensive parts of the set up. They cost about \$700. The fence is lightweight and easy to move. Because

it's made of soft plastic, the bottom edge lies on the grass, which makes it difficult for even a mouse to cross. It saves me a lot of time. The hens put themselves to bed, and I don't need to remember to lock up every night. If I want to move them, I close them in at night and move the trailer in the morning to their new spot in the paddock.'

The challenge is out there: Is this the best little chook house in Harcourt?



David with Doris showing the sloping tin roof and the water collection system. The nesting boxes are accessed via a drop-down flap secured beneath the eaves of the roof.



Note the feed container and the two feeders at each corner of the structure. David learnt about the design for the feeders from Gardening Australia on ABC TV.



Lifting the double glazed window gives easy access for cleaning. The perches are at the front and the nesting boxes at the back.



# Chatting with Harcourt CWA

## Lois Grant 37 Years of Service

Our dear friend and Harcourt CWA member, Lois Grant, passed away recently. She was a lovely lady whom we were all privileged to have known.

Lois joined our Branch in 1983, and for her thirty-seven years of service was a loyal and dedicated member, and her comments and opinions were respected by us all. From 1988 to 1992, Lois stepped up as President and then Treasurer, at a time when the shortage of potential Office Bearers made it seem inevitable that our Branch would have to close. Lois made sure that this would never happen and gladly put her hand up for the top job.

Lois was never one to keep her opinions to herself, and if there was some disagreement in our discussions, we always looked forward to hearing Lois's input, and in many cases her opinion won out. Our future meetings will just not be the same without our Lois.

Attendances are recorded at every CWA meeting. Looking back over these attendance rolls, I was amazed at the many years that Lois's attendance was 100%, and even in the later years after her health had started to deteriorate, she made every effort to attend monthly meetings and craft days.

The CWA Central Victoria Group Creative Arts Exhibition was held in Maldon on the weekend before the first COVID-19 lockdown, and it was Lois who gained first and second prizes for her two beautiful crochet doilies.

Lois loved all our entertainment activities, and a concert always saw her in fine form. For those of you who attended our Wild West Women concert last year, you would have noticed a wheelie walker cowgirl shooting it out with the best that the OK Corral had to offer.

And, of course, our concerts always conclude with afternoon tea when people would invariably head for the table and line up for Lois's famous jelly cakes. And you had to be quick, as her plate was always the first to empty.

That was our Lois, always prepared to give it a go and do her best. She represented the best of what the CWA has to offer.

Lois, you will be sadly missed at our meetings, and you certainly will never be forgotten.

*Lyn Rule  
Publicity Officer  
CWA Harcourt Branch*



*Lois as the policeman in the 'Right Royal Occasion' concert.*



*Another successful day for Lois at a CWA Craft Exhibition.*



*Lois (circled) mixing it with the best at the Gunfight at the OK Corral from last year's concert.*

# CHIRP and Castlemaine Health Seek Sustainable Future for Community Health Services through Integration

CHIRP Community Health and Castlemaine Health have been working closely together to consider options to strengthen community health services in the local area.

The Boards of CHIRP Community Health and Castlemaine Health are developing a plan for the integration of community services and will undertake staff and community consultation.

Lexi Randall-L'Estrange, Chair of CHIRP Community Health said, 'Both Boards believe that the integration of community services provides a feasible option to ensure the continued provision of accessible and responsive community health services for our local communities.'

'A detailed plan for integration is being developed. It will consider the governance, financial, service, human resource and legal impacts of integration.'

'Working together to provide integrated community health services in the Mount Alexander Shire is a positive step forward for both organisations. This positions us well to ensure inclusive and accessible services are available to our community both now and into the future.'

Peggy Ronnau, Chair of Castlemaine Health said, 'Both organisations have a long and proud history of working together, and by combining our unique strengths, we will further enhance community health services for the communities across Mount Alexander Shire.'

'Staff and community consultation are important parts of the process and will inform the development of a comprehensive plan.'

'It is important to note that all health service staff are valued, and community health services will be enhanced. The integration will result in the combination of staffing and services currently delivered by both organisations.'

'We are both pleased to be leading our organisations into this next stage, with a firm focus on sustainability and strengthening service delivery.'

The plan to integrate community health services will aim to:

- Ensure future sustainability.
- Enhance access to community health services across the Mount Alexander Shire.
- Strengthen and enhance services to better meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Share the burden of compliance and ensure that funding can be directed to services as much as possible.
- Enhance opportunities for staff development/training/skill sharing and best practice.

As we move through this process, we will keep people informed and engaged via the website, social media, local media, letters, meetings and consultation opportunities.

*From a media release.*



## Castlemaine Health CEO signals retirement

Ian Fisher, Castlemaine Health Chief Executive Officer, has confirmed he plans to retire from his position within the next six months.

Mr Fisher took up the CEO position in January 2013. His retirement plans have been in place for several years. They come as no surprise to staff and those who know him.



Castlemaine Health Board Chair Peggy Ronnau said, 'I've been working with Ian for the last 18 months and I have the utmost respect for his knowledge, integrity and commitment to Castlemaine Health. He is a true gem and I wish him well on the next stage of his adventures.'

Mr Fisher is well known in the Mount Alexander community as Castlemaine Health CEO and as a long-standing member of Rotary. He is also a committed cyclist and member of the Castlemaine Rouleurs, riding for many years to fundraise for Castlemaine Health as part of the Murray to Moyne cycle relay. Mr Fisher is also a much-loved honorary member of the Castlemainiacs' Murray to Moyne cycling team.

Peggy described Ian's dedication to the residents, patients and staff through the COVID-19 pandemic as 'nothing short of heroic.' Peggy said, 'I've felt privileged to work alongside him.'

Advertising for a new CEO for the health service began in mid-August. The recruitment process is expected to take around six months.

*From a media release.*

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Hotcakes with cinnamon butter, maple syrup & vanilla bean ice-cream

Doughnuts – 4 small homemade raspberry jam filled balls of love

Harcourt spiced apple crumble with vanilla bean ice-cream

Sticky date pudding with caramel sauce

*Menu is subject to change without notice*



# WALKING TOGETHER

## Towards Reconciliation

# The Torres Strait Islands

Scattered between Cape York and Papua New Guinea, there are about 270 breathtakingly beautiful tropical islands, of which seventeen are inhabited.

Unless action is taken, that number will decrease as rising sea levels bring tidal surges that flood food gardens, homes and important cultural sites.

Torres Strait Islanders live permanently in twenty communities, and others are spread throughout Australia. Archaeologists have found evidence of human settlement on the islands going back at least 2500 years. The inhabitants, of Melanesian origin, relied on fishing, hunting and the growing of crops for their subsistence. Carved pearl shell and other products were important trade items.

James Cook, in 1770, raised the British flag on Bedanug, which he named Possession Island, claiming it for England without any consent from the owners.

Starting in the late 1860s, Indonesian beche-de-mer fishermen traded pearl-shell for button-making.

The arrival of missionaries on Erub Island in 1871 is celebrated by Torres Strait Islander Christians in the Coming of the Light festival.

The Torres Strait Islands became part of Queensland in 1879. These days there are three local government councils for the communities, and state and federal administration is mostly based on Waiben (Thursday Island).

A ten-year Native Title claim by Mer Islanders, led by Eddie Mabo, was accepted by the High Court in 1992; a historic win.

Every monsoon season, some islands can lose as much as 10 metres of land. Trees and sand are washed away. Buried reef habitats and coral bleaching decrease fish stocks, threatening food security. On Masig, they are picking up their ancestors' bones from the beach as if they were seashells.

Besides increasingly variable weather and seasons, oil prices are rising – with flow-on effects to goods and services, and education and technology are causing social changes.

Islanders fear that moving south would disconnect them from their culture and law, their spiritual affinity with lands and waters, and traditional lifestyle. Yet, on their traditional islands, erosion is happening so fast 'there won't be us left'.

Twelve months ago, eight Torres Strait Islanders from the Central Cluster lodged a climate change case against the Australian federal government over human rights, their fundamental rights to live on the land, within family and culture.

This is the first case of its kind in the world.

Represented by lawyers from ClientEarth, their complaint to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations alleges that the government's failure to reduce



Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and fund coastal defences to tackle the rising tides is violating their fundamental human rights. They want Australia to raise its current Emission Reduction target to net Zero by 2050, and phase out coal.

This month, the Morrison government has asked the UN Human Rights Committee to dismiss the complaint on the grounds that 'it concerns future risk, rather than impacts being felt now.'

The tide of the first world's excesses threatens to submerge the lives of our fellow Australians of the Torres Strait, home to one of the world's oldest living cultures.

More information and a petition are available at:

[ourislandsourhome.com.au](http://ourislandsourhome.com.au)

Nalderun is a service that supports the Aboriginal Community, led by Aboriginal people. Many people and organisations in the Mount Alexander Shire contribute to Nalderun; the name is a Dja Dja Wurrung word meaning 'all together'.

More information can be found at [www.nalderun.net.au](http://www.nalderun.net.au)

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# Harcourt Businesses benefit from Bank's Small Business Action Plan Program

Hi everybody,

Harcourt businesses Blumes Historic Bakery, Pauline's Real Estate and Goodness Flour have finished their participation in the first ever Small Business Action Plan Program, which was run as a collaboration between Maldon and District Community Bank (MDCB) and Bendigo small business consultancy, Sorted. The feedback from all the participants that went through the course has been overwhelmingly positive. Blume's Bakery is currently closed for renovations.

It's going to be fun to watch how these Harcourt businesses change and develop as a result of being in the program. The benefits are likely to go way beyond just what each of these entrepreneurs will achieve in their own business, because every business that does well in our town creates new ripples through the whole community.

Having Harcourt businesses participate in programs like this is particularly satisfying because since I joined the board of the bank in 2015 I've been working to build stronger connections between Harcourt and MDCB, and it feels like we've had small but regular wins.

I wanted to let everyone know that I'll be stepping down from my role on the board at this year's AGM in October. I've had a brilliant time, learned a huge amount and been honoured to have the opportunity, but after four and a half years, it's time for me to step aside.

### ***Harcourt Representative to Stand for Board of Maldon District Community Bank?***

However, I'm keen for the connection that has been built between Harcourt and the community bank to continue to grow, and I'd love to see someone else from Harcourt join the board!

Having a Harcourt local on the board keeps us front of mind when decisions are being made. For example, the Harcourt Football and Netball club and the School are now regular recipients of sponsorship or grants that would previously only have gone to Maldon, Newstead or Dunolly.

Projects like the Harcourt Play Space, the Harcourt Fruit Fly project and the Harmony Picnic that was planned by Harcourt Uniting Church (sadly cancelled due to COVID) have also received funds. Small steps, but very important ones.

I'd also like to thank Robyn and the *Core* team for the chance to contribute these regular columns, to keep the Harcourt community informed about the way the bank consistently contributes to the whole community. I've spent the last few years encouraging Harcourt locals to consider banking with MDCB, because that's how the community bank model works – the more people, businesses and organisations who choose to bank there, the more funds the bank can put back into the community – so far, this has been \$3 million, and counting! (Bank customers have complete confidentiality so, as a Director, I have no idea if this is increasing, but I certainly hope so!)

In future, I'd even love to see Harcourt get our own community bank branch or agency here in town to really get 'buy in' from Harcourt locals to just how important this model is for communities, and how much good can be achieved simply by your choice of where you bank.

So, if you'd like to get some experience on a friendly but professional board, please get in touch either with me (leave a message on 0409 706 784 and I'll ring you back), or our Chair Ross Egleton on 0425 801 959.

The board welcomes applicants of all ages, genders and backgrounds, and people with experience or interest in finance, small business, risk management, community development or communications are particularly invited to apply, though a wide range of skill sets is welcomed. It's a very inclusive board that provides a lot of guidance as to your role and responsibilities, so it's a good chance to improve your skills in this area, even if you've never been on a board before.

*Katie Finlay*

*Director, Maldon and District Community Bank*

### **These businesses have been supported by Maldon and District Community Bank**



Goodness Flour  
hello@goodnessflour.com.au  
www.goodnessflour.com.au  
Contact Liesl Malan: 0427 132 601

**GOODNESS FLOUR**



Web: paulinesrealestate.com.au  
Ph: 0468 543 589

Blumes Historic Bakery  
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# Harcourt Valley Primary School

The latest changes in COVID 19 restrictions have meant that, as of the 3rd of August, Regional Victorian school students needed to stay at home and return to engaging with Remote and Flexible learning. Just when they were all getting used to the return to school routine too! Students, who are unable to do this, can still receive supervised learning at school, however they must have their temperature checked on arrival at the school, when they sign in at reception. All staff and students who are at school must wear face masks.

Book Council of Australia, has been moved to the 17th – 23rd of October, so, at school, the celebration will be from Monday 19 to 23rd October. The date has been changed as students are expected to be back at school as normal for Term 4.

Principal, Andrew Blake, said that by the time the next *Core* is printed, he will be able to provide an update on the development of the building of the new kindergarten and ‘provide a link for prospective families to virtually peruse our school’. This is good news in these times when positive news is scarce. In the meantime, don’t forget to check out

## Book Week October 17th–23rd 2020

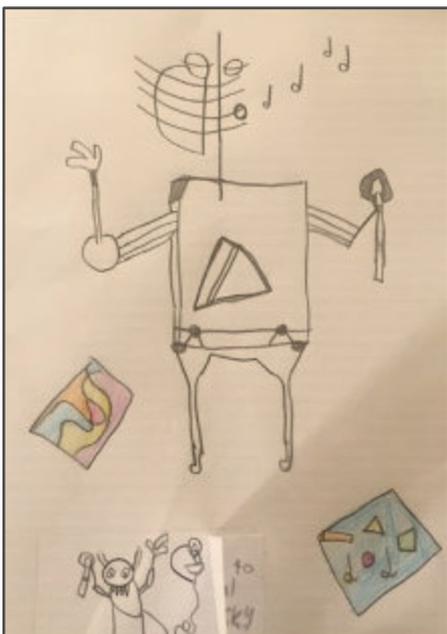


The dedicated staff at HVPS are committed to ensuring that Remote and Flexible learning can be easily accessed by all children. With the emphasis on literacy this term, they have scheduled extra Google Meet sessions to provide more support and feedback on student’s literacy skills and goals. Book Week, with the theme of Curious Creatures Wild Minds, an official activity of the Children’s

student art work on the school’s virtual gallery website: [sites.google.com/education.vic.gov.au/harcourt-valley-p-s/home](https://sites.google.com/education.vic.gov.au/harcourt-valley-p-s/home)

Art classes continue at home. The styles of Kandinsky, Picasso and Van Gogh have been experimented with by Darragh, Darcy and Olivia.

*Lois Denham*



*Kandinsky by Darragh.*



*Picasso by Darcy.*



*Sunflowers by Olivia.*



# Harcourt CFA

## Quietness in lockdown continues ...

Another month has passed while we continue with COVID-19 restrictions as part of our lifestyle.

On a positive note, it has been another quiet month, with only one turnout for August, a fuel spill at the BP Service Station.

The low turnout numbers have become a good trend, and it would be terrific if it could continue for the warmer months ahead.

So, as we move into spring, longer days and warmer weather, it is time to prepare our properties for the summer fire season. You may think that, as we finish off winter with cold frosty mornings and some more good rain, the fire season is far away, but there are parts of northern NSW (the New England fire zone), that have already instigated fire restrictions and are starting to experience some larger grass and scrub fires.

### Station and Member Activity

Recent CFA directives are for brigades to revert to previous COVID-19 safety controls, so the planned recommencing of physical training, as mentioned in the previous edition of the *Core*, has been put on hold.

There are various types of online training modules available to members, and weekly district training webinars are being produced to help maintain skills.

Our Sunday morning maintenance checks have reverted to only the first and third Sunday of the month to reduce station activity, therefore the siren is only being tested on these two Sundays as well.

There have been a couple of incidents throughout the state where CFA stations have had to be taken offline for a deep clean after the possibility of a COVID-19 infection. And, of course, masks (the 2020 fashion accessory for everyone) are to be worn by all responding members.

### Firefighting assistance required in California

While the media focus has been on the COVID virus and football, California is currently experiencing some very large wildfires, with the unfortunate loss of many homes. The call has gone out for assistance from Canada and Australia.

What this looks like will be different to previous years, due to managing COVID protocols, and highlights the need to have proper procedures in place for managing fires during this coming fire season.

### Begin property clean up early

The best scenario is not to have a fire start in the first place, and this is more true now than it has ever been. Anything that can be done to reduce the threat of fire is one of the most important lockdown activities you can do.

For more information, visit the CFA website.

Stay safe – stay committed.

*Tyrone Rice*

*Brigade Community Safety Coordinator*



## Harcourt Uniting Church

I realise that we at the Uniting Church are not alone in saying that ‘not a lot is happening at present!’ As I was doing my daily walk this morning, I was listening to

some kookaburras laughing – probably at me with my woolly hat pulled down and the mask pulled up! I thought of a favourite hymn which begins with the words, ‘Give thanks with a grateful heart’ – don’t panic, I’m not about to launch into preaching you a sermon.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, there is a lot we can be thankful for – our families, our homes, access to an abundance of food, being able to keep in touch with family and friends through technology, our well-equipped health system and, most importantly, living in a rural community. In an article from our Uniting Church UCAF Network magazine, Kristy Rebecca reminds us to, ‘Cut yourself some slack. It’s okay not to feel okay. When we first entered the pandemic we all felt stoic and determined to do our bit to stay safe and fight it, and then it dragged on ... and on.’ We’d all like our old life back thanks – well, at least to be able to meet in person at Church services and in other groups we belong to.

In previous articles I have written about Frontier Services, an organisation of the Uniting Church which provides support to people living in remote parts of Australia. We are reminded that some parts of Australia have experienced it all – drought, bushfires and COVID-19. In Victoria, the Church, ministers and chaplains have been supporting those affected by the East Gippsland fires. In a recent Frontier News article on Bushfire Recovery, chaplains spoke of the people suffering from, ‘What

we call interrupted grief. No one has been able to grieve properly, as COVID-19 hit at the worst possible moment.’ So, despite their grief, these resilient people are so thankful for the support of Frontier Services and other organisations.

In our community, we are thankful for the work being done by the many businesses which continue to provide us with our daily needs despite often working under stressful conditions. What’s that saying about looking forward? ‘There’s a light at the end of the tunnel – but please don’t let it be a train.’

Our granddaughter celebrated her 4th birthday recently and she rang me on the mobile to chat about all her presents – our daughter laughed as she explained that Hannah was holding her presents up to the phone to show me, even though we weren’t on a video call! The modern child, hey!

**In the media, we’ve heard of the stress being experienced by families living near the borders as they try to obtain Government permits to cross, and it reminded me of this story.**

**A Government Department of Water inspector arrives at a farm and tells the farmer he needs to inspect his farm for the water allocation. The old farmer says, ‘Okay, but don’t go in that paddock over there.’ The inspector replies, ‘Mister – see this card. This card means I can go wherever I wish on any agricultural land. No questions asked or answered. Have I made myself clear? Do you understand?’ The farmer nods and goes about his work. Later, the farmer hears loud screams and spies the inspector running for his life across the paddock, closely followed by the farmer’s bull. The bull is gaining rapidly. The inspector is clearly terrified, so the farmer throws down his tools, runs to the fence and yells at the top of his voice: ‘Your card! Your card! Show him your card!’**

*Jan Jenkin*

# John and Val Blake

Opportunities and strong personal interests are the hallmarks of John and Val's life together in the Harcourt district. John was born in Castlemaine in September 1945, and Val was born in Broadford and came to the area when she was nine.

John said, 'I remember my father saying that his family had lived on King Island and that as a young man there he drove a bullock team. Nanna and Pop moved the family to Harcourt. My father was in the army all through WWII. After he came home, he rode his bicycle to Laurie Dann's (in Harcourt) where he met my mother. They married and had two children, me and my younger brother David.'

When asked about his childhood memories, John said, 'As a young kid I was a bit naughty. When I was about five, I sawed the handles off a beautiful wooden wheelbarrow that Pop had had made by Jimmy Armstrong. I can't remember my punishment. Pop bolted the handles back on, and the wheelbarrow worked well.'

'Many people will remember the local milkman who delivered milk daily to every household. Our milkman carried a billy of milk to empty into a large container outside the house. I wanted to stir him up, so one day I threw a handful of sawdust into the milk. The milkman had a stutter and shouted, "You little b-b-bugger!"'

'When I was 15, I left the Tech School in Castlemaine and started my boiler-making apprenticeship at Thompson's Foundry. In those days, most of the skill development happened on the job, although I spent one day a week for a year in Bendigo at the School of Mines (now TAFE) taking additional training. As



*At the Applefest Art Show, 2019. Val won the best Oil/Acrylic for her painting titled: 'I've just had an Apple Pie', which showed John leaning against a tractor.*

time went on, I became more interested in welding than in boilermaking. A visiting Department of Labour inspector encouraged me to get some welding certificates. I followed his advice and went to Footscray Technical College for my extra qualification. I achieved further certificates in Castlemaine where I was taught by John Dessens, Ray Priest and Clarrie Armstrong in a tin shed east of the old Technical School building in Templeton Street. It was rough and ready. We had very basic amenities: a blackboard, a desk, and a 44-gallon drum as a fire bucket in between the instructor and the students. I returned later for another welding certificate with John Dessens in the same shed.

Val began her working life in 1963. 'I worked at the SEC in Castlemaine. The building, in Mostyn Street, is now occupied by CHIRP. I was about 17 when I started working in the Accounting Office.

'My co-workers and I printed the books for the meter readers who visited every house and read the electricity meters – none of these computerised ones then! They were a single-use book, and each sheet would have a customer's name on it. The books had to be compiled and then hole-punched, and we then inserted screws to hold the pages together. Books were printed for each SEC district, and we printed for districts all around Castlemaine, including down to Gisborne. When the books came back, we entered the details on accounting sheets fed into the bookkeeping machines. The machine would calculate the charges and



*John (right) and younger brother David*

we had to balance and reconcile the figures. I enjoyed that job, but when the accounting system was computerised, I was assigned to the typing pool, which I didn't enjoy as much. When I married in 1966, I had to leave work! While I was away for that year, the law changed and I went straight back to work the next year. I stayed there until our first baby was due. Andrew was born in Castlemaine and Susan was born in Ballarat.'

John, who was at the Foundry for just under 10 years, said, 'I became familiar with the huge turbines made there for the Snowy Mountains scheme. Inspectors from the scheme would visit to check the quality of the turbines. One of them encouraged me to take a job at the Snowy. We had been married for three years and had just built a house in Castlemaine. Our first son Andrew was 10 months old when we left in 1970. We spent two years away from Castlemaine. It was difficult to find accommodation, so I lived in the construction camp at Talbingo for five weeks, and when I found a flat in Tumut, Val and Andrew were able to join me.'

I worked on the Snowy Mountain Tumut 3 Power Station at Talbingo, which the workers called T3. It was the final and largest power station to be built and was the backdrop for Malcolm Turnbull's announcement in April 2017 of Snowy 2.

'Many nationalities worked on the scheme, and we made life-long friends. My boss, Peter Fiorese, who is now nearly 90 years old, is Italian by birth. He rings me two or three times a year. We met Peter and his wife at Adaminaby for the opening of the Snowy Mountain Scheme Museum in 2011. Quentin Bryce, who was Governor General at the time, opened the museum.

'In 1973, after working on the Snowy, I applied to be a teacher in Boilermaking and Welding at the School of Mines in Ballarat. The job included teacher training at Hawthorn State Teachers College. I was required to attend two days a week, for two years and teach a full



*John's Mum and Dad.*



John with his mini. Val wrote on it: 'Young man about town, Metal Fab Apprentice at Thompson's Foundry. A real terror!'

teaching load as well. I travelled up and back in a day so I didn't stay away from home overnight. I achieved a Trained Trade Teachers Certificate. For each of those two years, I had to present 50 "Crit Lessons". This involved writing up the lesson plan, showing how the concept would be taught and what resources would be required. The Head of School, or Department, or a qualified teacher, or a lecturer from the Teachers' College would assess the lessons and give feedback. I was under a lot of pressure, but got through with Val's support. We stayed in Ballarat for four years.'

John and Val then left Australia for Bougainville. 'I got a job with CRA (Conzinc Riotinto). The company constructed a training college, which was a wonderful set up. It had every type of welding equipment and other facilities. The students were apprenticed to Bougainville Copper, and the college was connected with the New South Wales Tech/TAFE system for accreditation.

'We had a remarkable flight from Cairns to Bougainville in a six-seater plane full of vegetables. We were seated in amongst the veggies! The flight took five hours, and I remember the pilot had a huge moustache, like the English actor Terry Thomas. All the while I was thinking, "What have I done?" As we came into land we could see tiny little huts.'



John at the Metcalfe Tractor Pull.

Val said, 'My heart sank at the sight of them. When we landed, there was a welcoming committee, and we instantly felt better, especially when we were taken to our house.'

John continued, 'After Bougainville, I had a job in earthmoving and maintenance in Ballarat, followed by a job at the Canberra College of TAFE for twelve months. You might remember I mentioned that Ray Priest was one of my teachers. We were still in touch and he said, "Why don't you come back to Castlemaine?"

'We had sold our house in Castlemaine and bought another in Ballarat, but we did go back. In 1983, I started at Castlemaine Tech, teaching welding and boilermaking, earthmoving and explosives, backhoe, front-end loader and forklift driving. We began night classes in Advanced Welding Certificates. I continued teaching on a sessional basis after I left TAFE in 1990 when I went to KR Castlemaine to be their very first OH&S Officer. I was there for five years before I retired.'

Val is well known in the area for her artwork and has participated in many art shows, including the Applefest Art Show. 'Before Andrew was born, I went to a night class in watercolour with Gilbert Foster, the art teacher at the Castlemaine Tech. While in Canberra, I studied Year 12 Art, then when we came back to Castlemaine, I joined the Tertiary Orientation Program in Art. I took Painting and Life Drawing with Graeme Dawes and Photography with Mary Thompson.

'I joined the Tonal Painters, which I have been a member of for 30 years. Albert Pollard led the group. We met and worked upstairs in the School of Mines in Lyttleton Street. When Albert left Castlemaine, Brian Harding taught us watercolour for six months, and then we went to the West End Hall. We decided to try painting 'outside' and have been working *en plein-air* ever since. Ian Foster and Norm Fetting joined, and other members included Brian Harding, Joy Robertson, Jean Perry and Winsome Moffat.'

'When we returned to Castlemaine, I held jobs at Barker's Accounting, the TAFE Office, and the hospital. We were living in Froomes Road, and we began planting proteas on that land and on a block which belonged to my parents. We have continued growing flowers for 35 years.

'We sold up in Castlemaine and bought our property in Harcourt in 1996 and, began planting proteas here in 1997. The site is 300 metres above the valley and has excellent soil. We had no intention to live here. Our sole intention was to grow proteas. We started with 6,000. We were



Outside their house in Bougainville.

so successful, we began exporting as many as we could grow. After being freighted to Melbourne Airport, they were flown all over the world - to Alasmeer in the Netherlands, Japan, the US and Europe. We have given away exporting and now supply outlets in Maryborough, Harcourt and Castlemaine. We have about 3,000 plants now, which include Leucadendrons and Leucospermums, and we are trying out new varieties of Australian natives.'

John said, 'As Val mentioned, we never intended to build here, but after a while, the lure of the granite won. We started building in 2004 and finished in 2006. The house was featured in the book produced by the Heritage Centre, *Granite Houses of Harcourt*. It was an epic task getting all the granite up the hill - some of the lintels are 4 metres long. We carted these in a truck on a bed of sand. I cut all the blocks, and Scott Male, a local stonemason, did the stonework.'

From his background, it's not totally unexpected that John would have an interest in machinery. His particular passion is old tractors, and he has collected several. He is a member of the Mount Alexander Vintage Engine Club, which has its clubhouse near the Muckleford Station which he regularly attends, and he enjoys participating in tractor pulls.

I asked John for one more story from his early years and he said, 'When I was an apprentice working night shift at Thompson's, I was in the section next to the moulding shop. They had a fire pot to keep warm, and the flue went through an outside wall. One night, when the blokes in the moulding shop were sitting around the fire, having a break, I put a penny bung down the flue. The fire pot exploded, cast iron went everywhere and dust filled the moulding shop to the roof and took a long time to settle. Miraculously, no one was hurt.

'I have no idea how I kept that job! If I hadn't, I would have missed out on all the experiences which followed in my working and family life.'

Robyn Miller



# Harcourt Heritage Centre

## Harcourt Granite a Record-breaker – From Harcourt to Louth NSW by Paddle Steamer

Harcourt Heritage Centre was recently contacted by Tony Hughes, who lives in a retirement village in Clyde North, a south-east Melbourne suburb. Tony has been writing his family history.

Tony’s maternal great-grandfather, Abraham (Abe) Dusting was captain of a paddle steamer plying its trade on the Murray and Darling Rivers. Tony wanted to identify the stone used in a monument at Louth, NSW, a monument notable for its size and which figured in the slowest ever riverboat journey on the Darling.

Grazier, blacksmith and publican, Thomas Andrew (TA) Matthews, had immense landholdings in north-west NSW. He had founded the township of Louth and was the first European to set foot on the copper-rich hills of Cobar. His first wife, Mary (nee Devine), died in August 1869, aged 42. After some years, Matthews decided to commemorate Mary and ordered a granite monument to be built by his friend Peter Hoey-Finn of Bendigo. The monument was to be a cylindrical shaft of granite, 7.6 metres high, mounted on a square base and surmounted by a 1.2 metre budded Latin cross (a plain cross with trefoils).

Peter Hoey-Finn, a well-known and highly regarded Irish monumental sculptor and stonecutter based in Bendigo was born in County

Monaghan, Ireland, in 1834 and came to Australia in about 1855. He began work as a monumental sculptor and stonecutter in 1863. His business grew rapidly until, by the 1880s, his yards, which were over an acre in extent, contained perhaps the most extensive polishing plant in the southern hemisphere. So great did his business become that at one time he had at least 150 men working for him to fulfill some of his large granite contracts. In 1880, his only daughter Sarah, married TA Matthews’ son, Peter, in Bendigo.

In May 1883, the monument was delivered from Bendigo to Morgan, a port on the Murray River in South Australia, where it was loaded aboard the riverboat, *Jane Eliza*, a 120-ton paddle steamer towing two barges. Most of the steamer’s other cargo was material to build a new hotel at Bourke in NSW, beside the Darling River. The riverboat and barges were heavily laden and had trouble clearing low water levels caused by an approaching drought. The boat finally became stranded in a waterhole near Tilpa, NSW, for two years. Tony Hughes’s great-grandfather was the captain of the paddle steamer. We can only conjecture as to how Abe Dusting filled in his days as the water dried up under the keel and dust accumulated on the cargo.

While the *Jane Eliza* was marooned

at Tilpa, TA Matthews arranged for the three-years-overdue monument to be off-loaded and taken to Louth by bullock team. Having travelled from Bendigo, Peter Hoey-Finn proceeded to erect what was reputed to be at the time, ‘the handsomest and costliest of its type [£600] to be found anywhere in the colonies.’

The cross on top of the grey granite monument was ingeniously positioned so that, each year, at sunset on the anniversary of the day Mary Matthews died (19th August), the sun reflects from the cross to the house that Mary had lived in at Louth.

The river eventually rose enough for the *Jane Eliza*, still under Abe Dusting’s command, to complete her journey to Bourke in June 1886, making the voyage the longest duration in the history of the rivers. Catching a Darling River flood peak, fully laden with wool and ore from the Broken Hill mines, the riverboat returned to Morgan in three weeks – making it the fastest voyage from Bourke. Thus the *Jane Eliza* held the record for the slowest voyage and the fastest. Both records still stand today.

Tony Hughes states that tradesmen from that era were special people indeed. Without the assistance of electricity, hydraulics, instrumentation and computers, they created awe-

The monument for Mary Mathews at Louth, NSW.



Each year, at sunset on the anniversary of the day Mary Matthews died (19th August), the sun reflects from the cross to the house where Mary had lived.



## Harcourt Granite a Record-breaker (continued)

inspiring works that withstand the test of time using ingenuity, skill, basic tools and sheer dedication, often in dangerous and atrocious conditions.

It is nothing short of marvellous that Peter Hoey-Finn cut and polished granite to the level of accuracy and finish as seen on Mary Matthew's monument, on the pillars of the Bendigo Town Hall and Bendigo's Alexandra Fountain.

Tony sent us several photos of the stonework. A close-up of the grain of the granite enabled us to compare it to the definitive colour charts in the Heritage Centre collection.

There are many granites in Victoria. Each cooled at a different rate, dependent on its proximity to the surface as it cooled, resulting in a crystal structure unique to that locality. The Heritage Centre has a full set of close-up photos of the grain structure of Victorian granites, be they grey,

white, red, pink or orange in colour. We were able to assure Tony that the Louth monument is of Harcourt granite.

Peter Hoey Finn was a regular user of Harcourt granite. The cylindrical columns on the Bendigo Town Hall are of Harcourt granite and were turned by the immense lathe in his workshop just a block away from the Town Hall. We



The coins show the fine and superior structure of Harcourt granite, which adds to its ability to be polished to a high lustre.

do not know of any other masonry works of the era capable of turning out a cylindrical 25-foot granite column weighing around ten tons.

Experts have stated that 'Harcourt Granite takes a splendid polish' inferring that it polishes better than other, coarser types of granite. The Louth monument's capacity to reflect derives from its superbly polished finish. The monument's capital – the plinth for the cross – is typical of Peter Hoey-Finn's work and can be found on other examples of his output to be found around Bendigo.

We are not sure if these things feature in the *Guinness Book of Records* but we have here the 'tallest, handsomest and costliest memorial' and both the slowest and the fastest journeys by paddleboat on the Darling River. A record-breaker – Harcourt Granite!

By George Milford

## Who is Your Cousin?

The investigations into your box of old photos have come to a stop. You keep finding photos of great aunt Jane or cousin Rosemary or even of 4th cousin Mary. But who are these people and how do they relate to you?

Most people might be aware of a first cousin. In many cases you might have mixed with these people when they were young, as they were the children of your aunts and uncles. With the introduction of DNA testing as a researching tool for family history, we now have 6th and 7th cousins! This relationship is seriously distant from you on your family tree. It might just be an academic exercise to show you might be related to a 'celebrity' or 'royalty'. So how can you tell this relationship between you and your cousins?

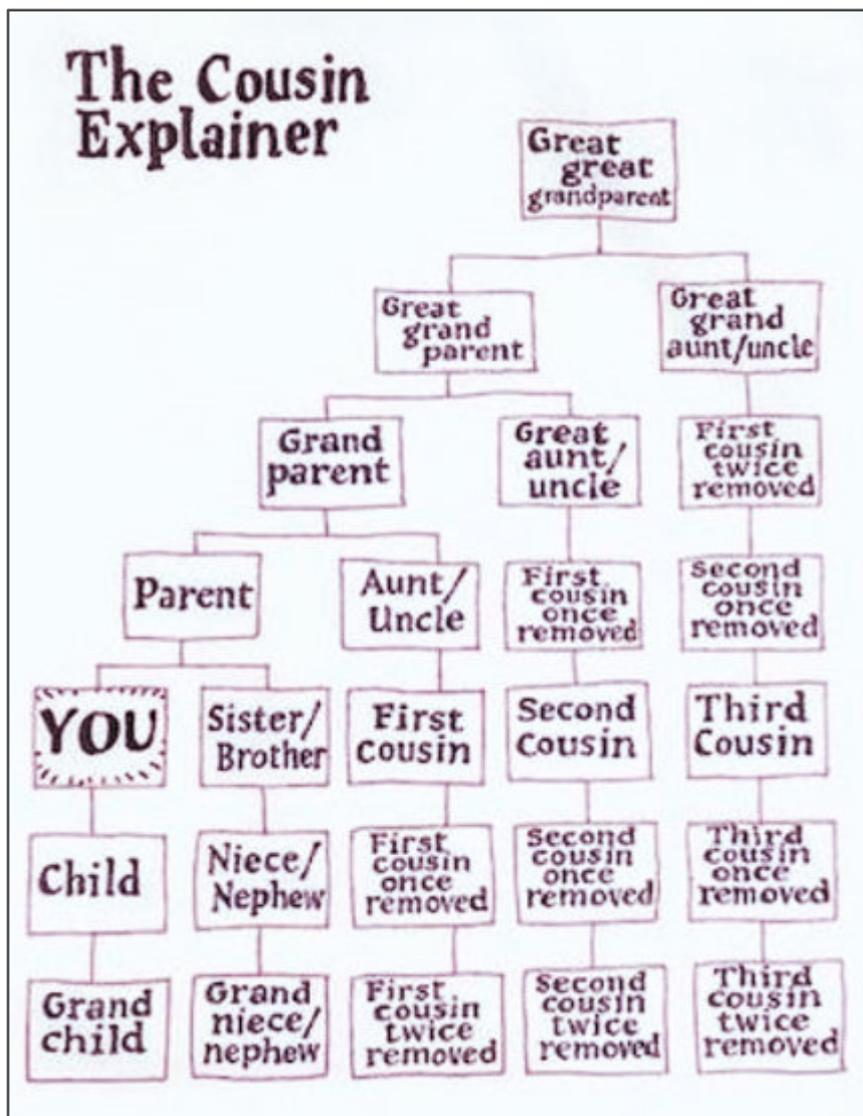
If you have a family history program, you click on the relationship button and there you will see your 3rd cousin. On the diagram opposite, 'You' go back 3 generations to your grandfather, then to his brother/sister, and then follow the descendant 3 generations.

Do you have 1st cousins twice removed?

Diana

Harcourt Heritage

[heritage@harcourt.vic.au](mailto:heritage@harcourt.vic.au)



## These Businesses Support The Core



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## Media release



### Call for Candidates for the Upcoming Mount Alexander Shire Council Election

Nominations to stand as a candidate for the Mount Alexander Shire Council election open on Thursday 17 September. The election will be held entirely by post.

'If you would like to represent your community, I encourage you to nominate as a candidate this election,' said Electoral Commissioner Warwick Gately.

'The eligibility requirements for candidates have recently changed. If you are thinking about standing for election, make sure to confirm your eligibility and complete the mandatory online candidate training before lodging your nomination. This includes candidates who are currently, or have previously been, a councillor.'

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Victorian Electoral Commission's recorded candidate information session will be streamed online from Thursday 3 September and will be complemented by state-wide interactive candidate seminars based on the information session video.

To watch the information session and find out how to join an online interactive seminar, candidates can visit the VEC website at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au). The Candidate Handbook is also available on the VEC website.

Candidates must make an appointment during business hours with the Election Manager to lodge their nomination forms and pay their \$250 nomination fee. They must have completed the online candidate training, as this is required by law and will be shown on each candidate's nomination form.

Candidates may make a nomination appointment with the Election Manager by calling 1300 128 921 from Wednesday 16 September. Candidates can also pre-fill a nomination form using the online Candidate Helper at [candidatehelper.vec.vic.gov.au](http://candidatehelper.vec.vic.gov.au), available from Thursday 3 September.

Nominations must be lodged by 12 noon on Tuesday 22 September. Late nominations cannot be accepted. It is an offence for a person to nominate as a candidate if they are not qualified to become a councillor.

More information on nominating as a candidate is available at [vec.vic.gov.au](http://vec.vic.gov.au), and Candidate Information Kits can be requested from the Election Manager.



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## Councillor Comment

Hi all

I hope this finds you well.

The weather has been a bit windy lately; I thought we were going to get blown off our hill! Fortunately, Harcourt escaped the worst of the windstorm in the last week of August.

We have been busy at Council with our briefings and getting policies and procedures up to date so we are compliant with the new Local Government Act. After further discussion, the Local Government elections will go ahead on 24 October.

We will be in caretaker mode from 24 September, so there will only be 'business as usual' decisions made at Council. The act prevents Councils from making major decisions during the caretaker period which otherwise could result in significant changes in policy or commit the next Council to projects or policy without appropriate public consultation.

As I have mentioned previously, our Council is well run and is in sound financial position ready for the next Council. I would have liked to see the Stanley Park Play Space completed sooner, but at least it has started. It will be a great facility for family outdoor fun when completed.

I also look forward to seeing the Harcourt Leisure Centre change rooms completed next year. That project is long overdue, and I am sure it will be a fantastic facility.

I have received a couple of phone calls from Castlemaine residents about master planning for the Camp Reserve, and it seems like something is happening on that front. Master planning is the first substantive stage of major projects, and needs to be completed before we can attract external funding. I am sure there will be a lot of input from the community on this project. Better facilities will assist the profile of users of the Camp Reserve, particularly the football club and can help the club attract more support from the community and possibly attract potential players.

Thank you again for all the support over this current term of Council.

Best regards,

Tony

AG Cordy

0439 742434

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**Harcourt Valley LANDCARE**

**Wildflower ID Walk**  
 With Bonnie Humphreys

**Flora Reserve**  
**Bingham Road Harcourt**

**Sunday 10 am 27 September 2020**  
 at corner Bingham Road and entry road to Leisure Centre.

**Federal Member for Bendigo**  
**LISA CHESTERS MP**

PO Box 338 Bendigo 3552  
 Cnr. Williamson & Myers Sts, Bendigo 3550

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# Give Your Fruit Trees a Head Start This Spring

It's looking like it's going to be an early season this year, with spring bursting in earnest all around us.

At this time of year, it's important to pay close attention both to our fruit trees and the weather, because a rainy spring is not the friend of the fruit grower! Rain can increase the chances of your trees getting a fungal disease, which can be quite devastating.

Peaches and nectarines are prone to Leaf Curl (it doesn't affect other types of fruit trees), and a bad case can set back a tree's growth significantly, and even infect the fruit, which can sometimes cause it to fall off. Luckily it's quite preventable by using an organic fungicide on the trees at bud-swell. Note that some varieties are already in flower and so it's too late, but some later varieties are just getting to that stage now. Bordeaux (a mixture of 50g each of copper sulphate and builder's lime in 5 litres of water) is very effective, and a relatively easy spray to mix and use at home – though it's a bit messy, and the mixture doesn't store well, so it needs to be mixed on the day



you plan to use it.

While you're spraying, you may also want to put a Bordeaux spray on your apricot trees to prevent the dreaded Blossom Blight, a fungal disease that can cause the flowers to rot on the tree and destroy any chances of getting a crop. For extra security, follow up the first spray with another one 10 days later, and unless we get more downpours of more than about 25 mm of rain, that should be enough to keep the trees healthy and

fruitful – but if we do get more rain, you might want to follow up with a sulphur spray.

Here are a couple of other tips for your fruit trees at this time of year:

- If you've just planted new fruit trees, make sure you protect the trees with tree-guards.
- If you planted new trees this winter but haven't pruned them yet, prune now so they put their energy into growing branches in the right place (i.e. where you want them).

- Once the soil has started to warm up a bit, mulch young trees or start planting a diverse understorey around them. If you're mulching, remember that fruit trees prefer woody mulch like wood chips, or use old straw. It's a good idea to put a layer of compost or worm castings under the mulch to make sure you're still feeding your soil microbes. The main drawback to mulching is that it effectively stops the rain from getting to the trees.
- Make sure you've got your irrigation system set up and ready to go, because it's not unusual to get a sudden hot spell in spring. If you've mulched, make sure you can either deliver the water under the mulch, or leave the irrigation on for long enough to be sure the mulch is really soaked and the water is getting through it to the soil below. Alternatively, wait until the weather really starts to get hot before you mulch the trees.

**Hugh and Katie Finlay are founding members of the Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op, and run Grow Great Fruit organic home fruit growing courses. Sign up for their free Weekly Fruit Tips newsletter at [growgreatfruit.com](http://growgreatfruit.com), or register for 'The 5 Key Steps to Growing Great Fruit' free webinar at [growgreatfruit.com/webinar-landing](http://growgreatfruit.com/webinar-landing)**

## Spring is Coming

Hello Garden lovers,

Spring is coming, and the weather is wonderful for gardening. The recent rain is so beneficial. What a lovely time of year.

It is the perfect time to spend a little time on your lawns to prepare them for summer. Over the winter, your lawns may have become compacted due to high rainfall and foot or pet traffic, causing the soil particles to compact and squeeze out air pockets. We can remedy this fairly easily by coring or aerating. If you are feeling energetic and your lawn is small, you can use a garden fork. Work your way around the lawn digging the fork into the soil about 150 mm apart and about 200 mm deep. Remember to stay away from irrigation lines so you don't puncture them. If your lawn is larger or you can't manage the garden fork, then it may be worthwhile hiring a coring machine which rolls spikes into the ground.

Now is also a good time to remove any flat weeds from your lawns, while the soil is moist. This is worthwhile because the spring grass growth and germination will fill in the gaps. If you just have a few weeds, you can lift them out with a hand fork, and the moist soil will make this relatively easy. If there are too

many to remove by hand, then you can water on 2 dessert spoons of iron sulphate per litre of water. This will burn the flat weeds. It can stain your hands and skin, so it is best to wear gloves when handling iron sulphate.

One little task for this time of year is to stake or label your bulbs. Marking them now while they are in flower will help you find them later when they die down below ground. The stakes or labels will make it easy to identify your bulbs when it is time to lift and divide or transplant them to new locations.

This month in our woodland and in bush reserves around Harcourt:

- Hoary Sunrays are starting to flower (*Leucochrysum albicans*)
- Sun Orchids, Milkmaids, Rabbits Ears and Chocolate Lilies are shooting.
- Riceflower, Diuris and Greenhood Orchids, Early Nancy and Sundews are flowering.
- Austral Crane's-bill and Magenta Stork's-bill and Scented Sundew are shooting.

Happy Gardening

Janyce



Sun Orchid. Image by Peter Woodard. Creative Commons license.



Hoary sunray. Image by Harry Rose. Creative Commons license.

# MAS Volunteer Training Calendar

The Volunteer Training Calendar includes workshops for local community groups and organisations such as:

- **Is your organisation child safe?**  
Wednesday 9 September (See below for details.)
- **How to be a Dynamic Committee**  
(Thursday 8 October)
- **Avoiding Burnout for Volunteer Managers**  
(Thursday 5 November).

## Child Safe Fundamentals

If you are part of an organisation that provides services, activities or facilities for anyone under the age of 18 years, you are invited to join a free online workshop to better understand how child-safe principles and standards apply.

During the two-hour session you will learn about your legislative responsibilities and elements of child-safe practice, along with practical ways to empower children and to create a child-safe culture.

This training provides a great opportunity to help clarify some of the key aspects of the current legislation and how to manage the risks, barriers and challenges of creating a child-safe

environment. It will also help to build confidence in responding to incidents, allegations or disclosures of child abuse,' said Gaynor Atkin, Manager Community Partnerships, Mount Alexander Shire Council.

'A lot of local organisations have both direct and indirect interaction with people who are under 18, but may not yet be aware of their legal responsibilities to implement the Child Safe Standards.'

There are two free sessions to choose from:

## Session details

**What:** Child Safe Fundamentals  
**When:** 12 noon to 2.00 pm or 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm on Wednesday 9 September

**Where:** Online

**Cost:** Free

**Register:** [www.eventbrite.com.au](http://www.eventbrite.com.au) – (search for Mount Alexander Shire Council)

For more details about the Volunteer Training Calendar:

[www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Volunteer](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Volunteer) or contact Council's Community Partnerships team on 5471 1700



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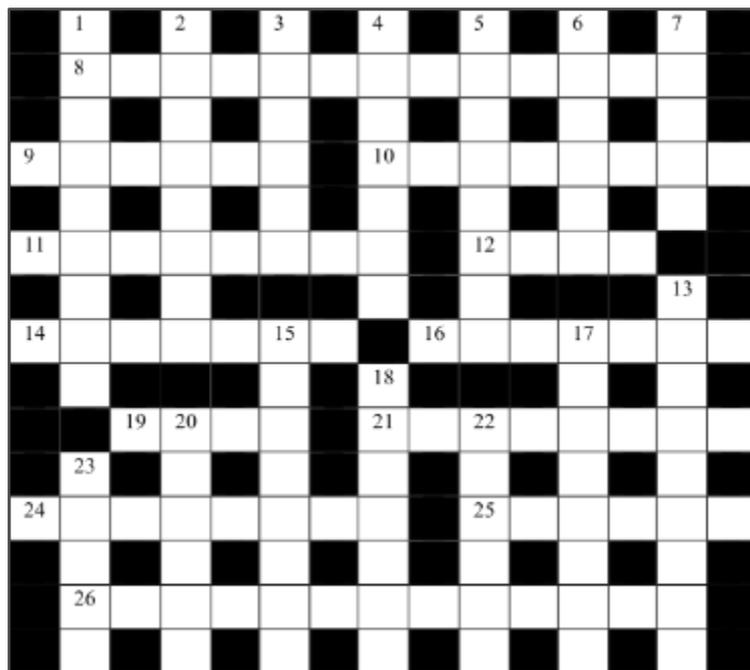
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A full colour version of *Harcourt News/The Core* is available on the Harcourt Community website: [harcourt.vic.au/news](http://harcourt.vic.au/news)

*The views or remarks expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the Editor, nor of the Steering Committee of the Harcourt Progress Association. No endorsement of service is implied by the listing of advertisers, sponsors or contributors.*

# September 2020 Xword © McW June '17



**Down:**

1. Let client decide how to frame reasoning faculty. [9]
2. Dustier 4-WD has the right to be more robust. [8]
3. Togetherness for offspring in tertiary studies? [6]
4. Result of heavy downpour on the kennel? [7]
5. Endless noise mixed in back-flipping star for big burner. [8]
6. Plain herb: subject/predicate x 1ea. etc. [6]
7. Jack-pulses? [5]
13. Mix-up gave beers out. [9]
15. Poor chap could be north-east Vic MP, perhaps? [8]
17. A new manic era is ushered in by him. [8]
18. Avoid the bloody chorus, or bits at the ends of lines... [7]
20. Utopian to a 'T', and one of which it has us in? [6]
22. Lettuce persuades when split by inappropriate tool. [6]
23. 11ac. French wizards' union? [5,8]

**Across:**

8. Would you, in a modern university, enrol in a unit on 'Foolery', taught by one loony fruit? No way!! [3,2,4,4!]
9. Brides like Smetena's might end up like this, especially if the first 'r' is replaced by a second 't'... [6]
10. Backward marketers mixed up in doping scandal are actively letting charges lapse. [8]
11. (see 23dn)
12. Apple's idea of a good lie down gets only one goat... [4]
14. Bitter top card mangled crib. [7]
16. Late donkey among students' texts. [7]
19. Taken to court about the type of car sold. (4)
21. Over the ante for previous sown lawn? [8]
24. Duck his share with a lame grin. [8]
25. Can I, male of the species, really accept this classification? (Ironically, only by dropping ends) [6]
26. This is not nice, Dear: insincere toad causes desecration in the work place with this manner. [13]

# August Xword 2020 solution © McW November '17



**Down:**

1. Cartoonishly empties parliamentary secrets? [Well?]
2. The garbologist pants? [Well? *Lonnie Donegan — 'My old man's a dustman...'*]
3. Thanks [drank] drunk from this, perhaps. (7)
4. One [un...] French isn't uniform... (6)
5. [Early bat] with no 20 involved... (8)
6. Right royal suspension component. [Well?]
7. [A line] out to the Dog Star might discover one. (5)
8. [I, Nathaniel] will obliterate my foes! (10)
12. [OK, fill a few] questionnaires and we'll establish which sort of trade or profession you should be in. (4,2,4)
15. [Rebel kind] are prevented from seeing the full picture... (9)
16. It takes a neat mind to pair-up thusly. (2,6)
18. Amphibian's walk under the [T-]intersection gives rise to polly-talk. (7)
20. [Needy CC] to fellow paedophiles neglects this. (7)
21. Knife for crutching? [Well?]
23. The cap is on the jelly. (5)
24. Conman sells his camera five times... (4)

**Across:**

1. An illuminating moment if it were hyphenated, but this way it needs current for a similar effect. [Well? *'...a light-bulb moment'*]
6. '50s Oz beer in competition with Coke? [Well? *Does anyone else remember it?*]
9. It might [anger Ra] to put it this way. (7)
10. Decades [tens] before atom manqué ramps up the mental strain. [Well?]
11. How Judy felt in the delightful unisex toilet? [Well?]
13. Give programming language [Ada] artillery to convey Spanish to English coast. (6)
14. Flesh-eater more recent (and filmic) than the Carthaginian one. {Note: two solutions are acceptable as correct, differing only in the first letter.} [Well?]
17. Openers [keys...] manner of written expression holds the arch together. (8)
19. Rootless state a Stirling Moss cornering technique? [Well? *Remember 4-wheel drifting?*]
22. Depressed, but possibly the best way to land a plane with no wheels? (4,2,1,7)
25. Forget Abbott—[Eddie, PM] just slowed things down. (7)
26. No-name brand at [cringe]-point [E]... (7)
27. Spells out who is to hold the mic. [Well?]
28. Where Christians go when gladiators win... [Well?]



# Weather and Water

What a difference an extra 140 mm makes! At the end of August last year, we had received 341.5 mm of rainfall. This year to date, here at Reservoir Road, we have received a total of 488.5 mm. The depletion in the three reservoirs to the south, caused by very dry conditions in 2019, has been eradicated, with the dams topped up by 10% to reach a total of 87.4%.

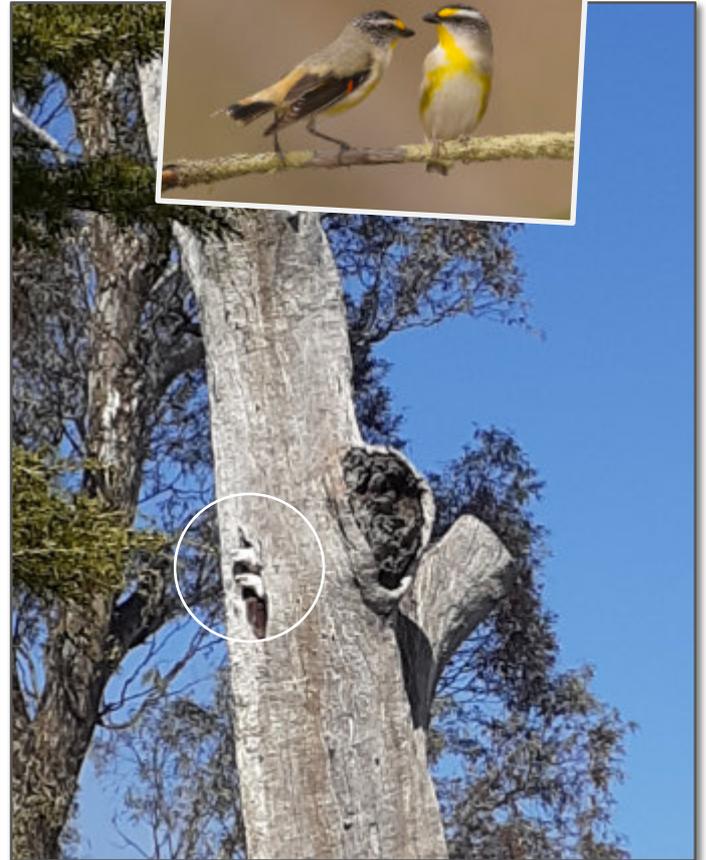
It snowed on August 11 last year and, while there was the promise of snow for at least a week this year, to my knowledge it did not eventuate in Harcourt.

The approaching spring equinox could be felt towards the end of August with some warmer mornings and lots of wind. A tree in McIvor Road was blown down cutting off the power for hours. I have been regularly picking up outdoor chairs and large pot plants which have tipped over.

The blossom has come out on the nectarine and peach and the apricot tree will soon follow. Birds are very active with nesting. I spotted a striated pardalote in our loquat tree. For such a tiny bird they can certainly make a big noise. The currawongs came through in August and did a raid on the peppercorn tree, having won the battle with the local magpies. They have since moved on.

Naturally, we hope for more rain in September to maintain this year's trend.

*Inset: Striated pardalotes. Photo by Patrick\_K59, Wikimedia, CC Commons license.*



*Is it spring yet Betty? These corellas were spotted in the scar tree near the bus stop.*

## Current Reservoir Levels

Storage	Capacity at full supply megalitres	Current volume		Volume same time last year	
		megalitres	% full	megalitres	% full
Upper Coliban	37,770	37,098	98.2%	37,890	100.3%
Lauriston	19,790	18,220	92.1%	18,610	94.0%
Malmsbury	12,034	5,524	45.9%	7,834	65.1%
<b>Total to September 3</b>	69,594	60,842	87.4%	64,334	92.4%
<b>Total to August 6</b>	69,594	53,791	77.3%	54,630	78.5%

Data from: [www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels](http://www.coliban.com.au/about-us/reservoir-levels) – September 3, 2020.

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# Connect Mount Alexander

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## Customer service update

Council is continuing to deliver essential services. However due to COVID-19 restrictions the Customer Service Centre is currently closed to the public. Contact us by phone on 54711700, email [info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or lodge a customer service request via our website. You can also get in touch to arrange a time to speak with a technical staff member in our Planning, Building or Local Laws teams.

## Election candidate training

If you are interested in running as a candidate in the upcoming 2020 Council election in October you must complete a mandatory Local Government Candidate Training course. The course is available online and takes about one hour to complete. Find a link to the training via [www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/CouncilElections](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/CouncilElections).

## Financial support is available

Castlemaine Community House (CCH) offers a range of financial services including a Centrelink Agency and specialists to assist with financial counselling, tax help and no interest loans. To make an appointment contact CCH on 5472 4842.

## Look after yourself

To help and connect our community at this time we have created a dedicated COVID-19 support number, email and virtual emergency relief centre. For local assistance, information or a referral to a local community organisation or service call us on 1800 512 446 between 8.30am and 5.00pm (Monday to Friday), email us at [covid19@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:covid19@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or visit [www.connectmountalexander.com.au](http://www.connectmountalexander.com.au).

If you are finding the current situation difficult and want to talk to a counsellor, call the friendly staff at CHIRP Community Health on 5479 1000 between 9.00am to 5.00pm (Monday to Thursday) and 9.00am to 4.30pm (Friday). Support is also available through Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au); Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au); QLife 1800 184 527 [www qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au) or Lifeline 13 1114 [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au).

The Australian parenting website Raising Children Network provides excellent resources for parents and carers trying to manage the impacts of COVID-19 on the family. For more information visit [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au).

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w [www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au)



## Castlemaine Bus Lines

### Harcourt Services Monday to Friday

	am	pm	pm
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:56	12:11	2:26
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:57	12:12	2:27
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	9:03	12:18	2:33
Halford St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	9:05	12:20	2:35
From Castlemaine to Harcourt Monday to Friday			
Castlemaine RSL/Mostyn St (Castlemaine)	8:45	12:00	2:15
Wimble St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	8:48	12:03	2:18
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:53	12:08	2:23
Coolstore Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:54	12:09	2:24
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:10	2:25

## Mum's Boiled Fruit Cake

### Ingredients

125g butter  
2 cups sultanas  
2 cups currants  
1 cup soft brown sugar  
1 tsp ground mixed spice  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground ginger  
1 tsp bicarb  
1 cup water  
2 eggs well beaten  
1 cup plain flour  
1 cup self-raising flour

### Method

1. Set the oven to 180o
2. Use butter or oil (lightly applied) to a 22 cm square tin. The tin needs to have a good depth.
3. Roughly chop butter. In a saucepan combine butter, sultanas, currants, sugar, mixed spice, cinnamon, ginger, bi-carb and water.
4. Bring to the boil while stirring, then set aside to cool.
5. When cool add eggs and beat well.
6. Sift the two flours into the mixture and beat well with a wooden spoon.
7. Bake for one hour.
8. Remove and allow to cool slightly; and remove from tin.
9. Cool and store in a cool place. Keeps well.

# Budget2020/2021

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Council adopted its Budget 2020/2021 on 18 August 2020. The \$45.9 million budget aims to maintain and improve infrastructure, and deliver important projects and services. This year we incorporated a range of projects to specifically help respond to the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Our budget includes an increase to the average rates income of 2% under the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System, as we continue to review processes to work more efficiently and advocate for funding. Kerbside bin collection charges increased by an average of 3% per property. This equates to about a \$13 increase for small bins and a \$19 increase for larger bins.

## What the budget includes

The budget includes provision for more than 100 essential services. These include the management of local roads, bridges and drains; collection of rubbish and recycling; delivery of maternal and child health programs; the provision of aged care, disability services and youth programs; maintenance and improvement of play spaces and public parks and gardens; and so much more. The budget also includes a small number of new initiatives and a mix of capital works.

### Council spending per \$100



## Key projects and programs

The budget also includes a number of new and continuing initiatives to help fulfil our vision of an innovative, creative and connected community such as:

Delivery of the **supported playgroups** program (\$67,300), delivery of programs for **young people** and quality **aged care** and **disability services** (\$2.4 million). We are investing in **community lunches** in Maldon, Newstead and Castlemaine (\$20,000) and supporting Section 86 Committees to help them maintain **community sporting reserves and facilities** (\$100,000). We will also start stage one of the rejuvenation of the **Maldon town centre**, thanks to a State Government grant (\$3.0 million).

## Our response to COVID-19

Among a number of initiatives, we will increase our investment in tourism marketing and promotion, waive a number of registration and permit fees for businesses, develop an online platform for our creative and artistic industries, and implement a Social and Economic Recovery Plan and COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy.

## Capital works

We have allocated \$11.74 million towards capital projects. Major projects include:

**Roads – \$2.95 million** includes stage 1 of works on the Muckleford-Castlemaine Road, along with road resealing and gravel road resheeting.

**Bridges – \$2.12 million** for design and construction of several bridges and culverts which includes the Eagles Road bridge at Harcourt and two bridges on Campbells Creek-Fryers Road.

**Walking and cycling – \$895,000** towards footpaths throughout the shire, along with a road crossing in Chewton town centre.

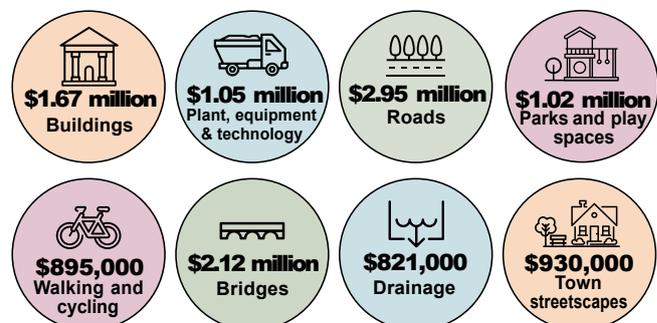
**Drains – \$821,000** to improve drainage at Saint Street in Castlemaine and funds to finalise designs and approvals for the Campbells Creek and Castlemaine levee bank project.

**Parks and play spaces – \$1.02 million** includes revitalisation of Norwood Hill Recreation Reserve in Castlemaine and the Stanley Park North play space in Harcourt.

**Buildings – \$1.67 million** to improve community facilities, which includes female friendly change facilities at the Harcourt Recreation Reserve and funds to increase accessibility at Baringhup Hall and renew recreation facilities in Guildford, Taradale and Castlemaine.

**Streetscapes – \$930,000** which includes streetscape works in Taradale, Elphinstone and Campbells Creek (subject to \$300,000 government funding).

## Major capital works



Read the budget at [www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/budget](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/budget).

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# New COVID-19 screening clinic for Mount Alexander

Local residents now have access to a new coronavirus (COVID-19) screening clinic operating at the CHIRP Community Health site in Castlemaine.

Testing is available for community members in Mount Alexander Shire showing symptoms of COVID-19 or needing mandatory testing prior to surgery.

**The drive-through screening clinic is at 13 Mostyn Street and provides testing by appointment only. Testing is available between 2.00 pm and 4.30 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays and between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon on Sundays.**

Call CHIRP Community Health on 5479 1000 between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, seven days a week to make an appointment. Those with an appointment can drive through the CHIRP Community Health carpark.

The testing clinic is supported by Castlemaine Health, CHIRP Community Health and Mount Alexander Shire Council, who have worked together to set up and operate the clinic in the community.

The clinic is operated by staff from Castlemaine Health and CHIRP Community Health, with logistical support from Council in response to the ongoing need for local access to screening.

Mark Nally, Director of Nursing Clinical Care said, 'Results will come back quickly – the service is backed up by Austin Health. Dr Sloan, Director of Medical Services at Castlemaine Health, will contact a person directly with results and will contact their GP as well. He will also follow up with the person to ensure they are stable or whether they need hospitalisation.'

Mayor Christine Henderson said, 'The Council can offer additional support, for example organising food supplies for a person or family in quarantine. Simply contact 1800 512 446 in business hours.'

'We acknowledge the great work local GPs have been doing, and this will help ease the load for their ongoing COVID-19 testing. This is not a standard medical clinic, said Di Couch, CEO, CHIRP Community Health, but is an additional service.'

'It is a service that we have set up specifically so that community members can continue to be screened for COVID-19, without needing to travel outside the Shire. This clinic does not replace testing at medical clinics in town but is an adjunct.'

'We encourage anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 to



*Di Couch, CEO CHIRP; Mark Nally, Director of Nursing Clinical Care, Castlemaine Health; and Mayor Christine Henderson with nurses and trained CHIRP staff ready to greet community members for COVID-19 testing on the first session of the drive-through clinic on Friday 28 August. The entrance to the clinic is in Mostyn Street next to CHIRP on the left hand side just before the Lyttleton Street intersection.*

get tested, no matter how mild the symptoms are, then go straight home and stay there until you get your test results back.'

'COVID-19 symptoms to watch out for are changes in sense of smell or taste, fever, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or a runny nose.'

'In certain circumstances, headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also be considered.'

Staff at CHIRP Community Health or Council can also discuss what help is available for anyone who needs to self-isolate or stay at home while waiting for results.

To access Council's dedicated COVID-19 support service

- call: 1800 512 446 between 8.30am and 5.00pm (Monday to Friday),
- email the support team on [covid19@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:covid19@mountalexander.vic.gov.au)
- visit [www.connectmountalexander.com.au](http://www.connectmountalexander.com.au).

For the latest state-wide information, general information on coronavirus and statistics

- visit [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
- or call the coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

*From a press release*