

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE

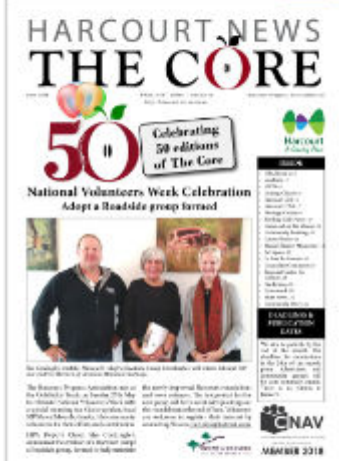


Edition 137 – August 2026

Produced by: Harcourt Progress Association Inc

Online: harcourtprogress.org.au/news or harcourt.vic.au/news

This Might be the Last Edition of The Core



Even a well-oiled machine will eventually break down. It looks like the team that produces the *Harcourt News The Core* may have reached the limit of its endurance. The volunteers who coordinate the gathering of items, the proofreading, the layout, the printing and the distribution of *The Core* have often called for volunteers. This time, it's dire. The team has been led for more than twelve years by Robyn Miller, but Robyn must now retire from the job for personal reasons.

Over the last couple of years, Robyn has been able to share the editing duties with Sha Cordingley, an exceptionally professional administrator. But Sha and her husband Geoff lost their beautiful house to the fire in January and have moved to Melbourne.

So, who can replace Robyn? No one that we know of. She is unique in her ability to get to the essence of a situation. Apparently fearlessly and with extreme grace and good humour she can glean information from the community – anything of general interest is material for the Core. She has her finger on the pulse of the community. So, who can take her place? Someone within the community who involves themselves in community activities and organisations. Someone who is known within the community. Someone who has the skills to administer the ins and outs of a small village newspaper. Someone who has time to spare.

The Core is not a one-person production. But there is one person who takes responsibility for each of the eleven issues each year.

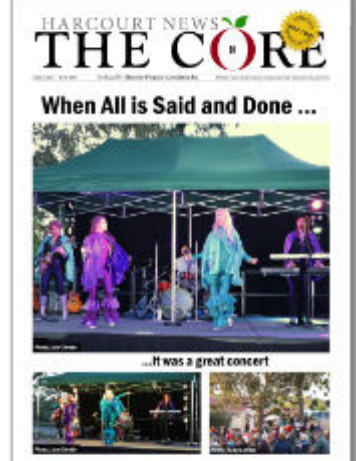
If you or someone you know has most of those skills, get in touch with The Core by email

[news@harcourt.vic.au]

by 14 September 2026. That's when we will know if this really is the last issue.

So, if this is the last edition, farewell and thank you to everyone who made *The Core* possible. If it's not the last edition, then, see you in October.

See page 13 for a list of people, organisations and businesses that deserve your thanks for their support of the Core since 2013.





Harcourt Choir

Each Sunday from 2 – 4 pm

At the Harcourt Valley Community House
23 Station Street Harcourt

First half is a singalong with words provided. These are well known songs, easy for people who are unused to reading music. After a break and a cuppa, the second half will be more challenging songs for anyone who wants to join in.

We plan to hold a concert soon.

All abilities and experience welcome,
come along and give it a try.

Text Alison on 0419 597 765 for enquiries

COMMUNITY DIARY

Each Friday: Community Lunch, 12 noon to 1.30 pm Community House, Station Street Harcourt. See page 13 for other services and

Each Sunday: Harcourt Choir 2–4pm Community House.

Carpet Bowls: 7.30 pm Wednesdays, Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

CFA: Brigade meets at 8.00 pm on the third Monday of each month. Sunday morning equipment checks and maintenance runs start at 9.00 am. Siren is tested on the first Sunday of the month at 9.15 am. Contact: Captain Andrew Wilson for further details 0428 387 339. CFA is located at 56 High Street, Harcourt.

Community House: Open each Wednesday from 12:00 am to 3:00 pm, closed in school holidays. See page 13

CWA: First Thursday of the month, 1.30 pm at Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham Road, Harcourt.

Grace Church: Sunday Service at 11.00 am at 30 Buckley Street. Prayers at 10.45 am, followed by warm fellowship and a shared lunch. All welcome. We also have House Church in various homes from 10.30 am on a Wednesday. Please ring 0422 605 897 to ascertain the location for that week.

Harcourt Bowls Club: see page 16 and the website:

www.harcourtbowlingclub.com.au

Harcourt Lions Club: Second Monday of the month at Victorian Miniature Railway, Harmony Way at 6.30 for a shared dinner and 7.30 for meeting.

Heritage Centre: Every Wednesday at the ANA Hall from 9.00 am–3.00 pm or by appointment – 0400 916 527.

Leisure Centre Committee: 7.30 pm on the fourth Thursday of each even-numbered month at the Harcourt Leisure Centre.

Pony Club: Second Sunday of the month. Contact Peggy Mills, 0419 902 400. The Pony Club is located next to the swimming pool.

Repair Café: Last Sunday of the month from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. See ad on page 23 for more information.

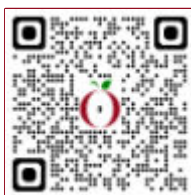
Uniting Church: Sundays at 9.00 am in the Uniting Church, Buckley Street, Harcourt. The service is followed by morning tea. All welcome. Donations of food and other household needs for St Vinnies can be left at the Church door on Sunday mornings 9.00–10.00 am or contact Jan on 5474 2226, to arrange for collection.

Victorian Miniature Railway: Open 10 to 4 every Sunday at 3643 Harmony Way C794 Harcourt.

Walking Group: Monday and Thursday at 9.30 am. Meet at the ANA Hall. The one hour leisurely walk is usually followed by morning tea, and new members are always welcome.

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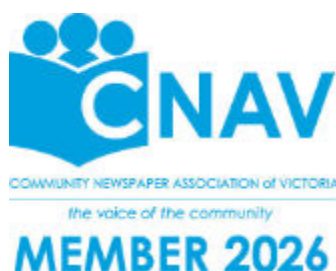
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Use this QR code to read
The Core online.

DEADLINES & PUBLICATION DATES

We aim to publish online 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.



Little Mouse Carries a Big Story of Hope



The Harcourt Valley Mouse (aka Loretta Rice), Harcourt Recovery Thinking Group for HADCRA (Harcourt & District Community Recovery Association) member Leigh Canet, Harcourt and District Lions Club treasurer Des Dooley, and VMR president Andrew Mierisch are pictured with author Rachel Vanstone and the new book.

The launch event aims to raise funds to complete the community barbecue shelter, pictured at the rear. Photo: Lisa Dennis, Midland Express

A small mouse with a big heart is helping share a powerful story of courage, connection and recovery following the January 2026 bushfires in Harcourt and District.

Harcourt Valley Mouse, a locally written and illustrated children's picture book, will be officially launched as part of a special event at the Victorian Miniature Railway (VMR) in Harcourt this Sunday July 5.

Created by Harcourt and District resident Rachel Vanstone, the book was inspired by her experiences volunteering at the Harcourt Bushfire Donation Centre.

Through the eyes of Violet, a small mouse navigating fear, change, hope and belonging, the story gently explores resilience, recovery and the importance of community.

"This story celebrates the bravery, kindness and care shown by the community, and I hope it can support other bushfire-affected communities in the future too," Rachel said.

The book honours Harcourt District's people, places and wildlife, featuring local landscapes, native animals and the Victorian Miniature Railway — a place that provided connection, support and community spirit throughout the fire response and recovery journey.

The community-led project was developed with input from local educators, community members, authors and artists, with feedback from

Harcourt Valley Primary School and Harcourt Preschool. It was printed locally by Greengraphics Castlemaine.

A generous local donor fully funded the first print run of 500 copies, allowing around 170 copies to be gifted to local families, including kindergarten and primary school families, families who lost homes, community organisations and the Castlemaine Library.

Importantly, proceeds from remaining book sales will support the Harcourt & District Lions Club and contribute to community initiatives, with a focus on supporting local children. Such is the positive response to the new book that a second print run has already been ordered, and the Lions Club will print further copies if needed.

The launch event itself also aims to raise funds for the VMR.

"VMR played a vital role before, during and after the bushfires. Their work slashing and preparing the site and their brave efforts to fight the blaze using two of their water tankers, and allowing the CFA to tap into the dams on site, has been credited with helping to save much of central Harcourt township," Rachel said.

"VMR also opened its doors in the wake of the disaster to be a base for the initial relief effort, providing a space for locals to gather as a community and access essentials such as food, water and internet services," she said.



Funds raised from \$5 train rides and donations at Sunday's event will help support the VMR's ongoing development, including the construction of a community barbecue pavilion that will allow local organisations to hold fundraising activities and community events throughout the year.

"The Lions and VMR have managed to complete Stage One of the works and had hoped to secure a Tiny Towns grant for Stage Two, but were unsuccessful. Come along and help us make this important project a reality. The barbecue facility will be used to raise funds by a wide array of community groups from the Lions to the Harcourt Football Netball Club and the pre-school to the VIEW Club (The Smith Family)," Rachel said.

The launch event gets underway at 11am Sunday and will include the first public reading of the book, author meet-and-greet, book signings, food and miniature railway rides. Community members are invited to celebrate a project that honours the strength, kindness and connection shown throughout Harcourt and District's recovery journey while helping support the future of a much-loved local community tourism asset.

Local author Carmel Bird describes the book as "a warm and charming tale" that encourages people "to persevere in hope, even in the face of great disaster."

Following the launch, copies will be available for \$17 at the Little Red Apple, Harcourt Produce and General Store, Harcourt Valley Community House, and Victorian Miniature Railway. A digital version will also be available for free download from the Harcourt Valley website.

Courtesy Lisa Dennis, editor Castlemaine Mail.



HPA Chairman's Message

Hearty greetings from our HPA Board Members

It is reassuring to observe some examples of our recovery pathway:

- ▶ with clean-up works and re-building of some homes and other properties now getting underway;
- ▶ some welcome rainfall and the resultant topping up of the dams in our region;
- ▶ to be experiencing a few more sunny days mingling with our rather dull chilly winter and,
- ▶ as someone mentioned to me the other day, the "jonquils are beginning to flower again".

I am pleased to present an update from our HPA Board on a range of issues which I trust will be of interest and importance to our wider community.

A: The proposed new Harcourt and District Community Recovery Association (HADCRA)

The public meeting to formally establish our new Community Recovery Association (HADCRA) was held at the Leisure Centre on Sunday 26 July. There was a good cross section of community in attendance and the voting to both was strong:

- ▶ proceed with the formation of HADCRA, and
- ▶ adopt the Rules of Incorporation, as circulated (with some minor amendments).

Of critical importance to the wider district community as a principal role of the new Association will be its responsibility in formally liaising with the Mount Alexander Shire Recovery Committee, to assist and guide the District's bushfire recovery over the next three or so years.

Thus, it is most important for our wider community (as impacted by the 9 January bushfire) to stay in touch with, and to support/guide, HADCRA in its important role.

B. Our Harcourt Progress Association is continuing to support our community.

Following is an update on programs which HPA is currently organising for our community.

B.1. Harcourt District Fire Recovery Fencing Appeal

We are currently liaising with the organisations of GIVIT and the Mount Alexander Shire Bushfire Recovery Committee, and about to launch a Harcourt District Fire Recovery Fencing Appeal in relation to a fence reconstruction program. The background details of this program are as follows:

- ▶ GIVIT is a state government-sponsored online platform to match donors with needs and vice-versa and which, in conjunction with Anglicare, (as a registered organisation which works with GIVIT) co-ordinates the program. (Note: If you already happen to have an appointed Anglicare case manager, you could directly liaise with that manager, should you wish to lodge an application for the fencing assistance under this program.)
- ▶ The Mount Alexander Bushfire Recovery Team is also registered to work with GIVIT, but they have a lesser number of staff to assist.

The GIVIT Assistance programs include:

- ▶ Farm Fencing – you can request fencing materials, or a donation towards required fencing materials.
- ▶ Domestic Fencing in Harcourt District – you can request materials or for a full fence reconstruction. (You will, however, firstly need to get a quote so you know what materials and assistance to formally apply for.)
- ▶ Other domestic needs related to the bushfire damage e.g. whitegoods, homewares etc.

As noted above, we at HPA are about to launch the Harcourt District Fire Recovery Fencing Appeal via GIVIT to both the broader public and corporations, to donate or assist in three possible ways:

- a. Corporate donations of either cash or fencing materials and thus contribute to a "bank" of materials to provide free fence replacement. (This program is structured to be similar to the way in which our earlier assistance program of donated fencing materials was used by the wonderful BlazeAid

volunteers, who reconstructed vast lengths of farm boundary fencing during the March/April/May period.) OR

- b. Donations by private individuals, of either cash or amounts of fencing materials e.g. a bundle of star posts, a strainer assembly, a roll of plain wire or a roll of mesh etc. OR
- c. Donations specifically for domestic fencing in Harcourt and District. This is to seek to assist many residents who were under-insured or uninsured and need assistance to rebuild.

If businesses or people would prefer to donate cash rather than materials to this Fencing Appeal program, our HPA bank details are:

Please donate to the official Harcourt Progress Association Bushfire Relief Account.
Bendigo Bank
BSB: 633000
Account Number: 239624604
Account Name: Harcourt Progress Association

B. 2. The "LandMate" Program

This program comprises Environmental Fencing crews of trusted, low security prisoners who have pivoted as part of Disaster Management Program, to rebuild burnt farm fences.

The Department of Justice has requested that all applications for such fence construction assistance come through our Harcourt Progress Association to verify entitlement.

Thus, residents who wish to access further information or application forms for such fencing assistance may contact our HPA Committee by email to: vicechairhpa3453@gmail.com

As noted above, this Assistance programme will operate in a similar way to the earlier BlazeAid program, such that the farmer / property owner, provides the materials and LandMate would supply the labour.

Note: A small amount of donated fence materials may also become available to use if they are donated to HPA, as outlined above.

B.3. Establishment of a "Tools Library"

Readers will recall my reference to this in last month's CORE. HPA already has the Tool Library up and running. If anyone wishes to borrow items, they may contact Jarrod Coote on 0438 069 849.

Tools currently available include:

Continued next page ...

wire spinner, post drivers for large and small posts, Gripple strainers, Knipex pliers.

The intent of the Tool Library is to avoid residents having to incur the expense of purchasing such tools.

B.4. A Men's and Women's Shed Facility

HPA has been approached by some community members to set up a Men's and Women's Shed facility, similar to those already established in towns such as Newstead and Woodend. Some of our committee members have just recently inspected the facility at Newstead and also, spoken to a number of their members. The representatives were most enthusiastic and showed us their facilities and equipment. They particularly made reference to the high level of enthusiasm and participation in activities at the Shed by both men and women. We were shown examples of items which members had made and repaired – (both woodwork and metalwork) by each of the men and women. The Shed currently operates a weekly schedule comprising one day for men members, a separate day for women members and a further day for both men and women to attend. The location for a Harcourt facility would be the former Scout Hall in Eagles Road.

Our HPA Board now specifically wishes to gauge the degree of community interest and support for such a "Shed" facility being established in Harcourt. We therefore, especially invite your feedback, which can be directed to our HPA Secretary via email: secretaryhpa3453@gmail.com

B.5. Update on HPA's Bushfire Appeal Funding Assistance Programs

Community members may recall HPA's "Phase Two" Funding program – being a monetary allocation to persons who lost their permanent residence in the 9 January bushfire. The initial allocation was \$2,000 per impacted property.

At our last HPA Board Meeting, it was unanimously voted that an additional allocation of \$2,000 be provided to these same persons. For those who are eligible, please keep an eye on your emails for further details.

Phase Three: I would also remind community members of HPA's Phase Three funding program that eligible applicants will need to demonstrate they have a business that is the primary source of their income and that they

suffered loss of tools of trade and/or business premises to at least \$10,000 value. (Exclusions: This funding does not cover hobby farmers, loss of income or stock in trade.)

Application forms are available from the Harcourt Post Office, the HPA website www.harcourtprogress.org.au, or the Harcourt Valley Community House.

Applications should be forwarded to the HPA Secretary:

secretaryhpa3453@gmail.com

B.6. Setting up of the Mount Alexander Shire Recovery Committee as directed by the State Government

This has now been completed. We are advised that the Shire Committee will have offices located at:

- ▶ The Harcourt Heritage Centre (the ANA Hall, which is open each Wednesday)
- ▶ The old TAFE Building in Castlemaine.

*Ivan Gilbert
Chairperson, HPA Inc.*

Tiny Towns Grant



Yesterday [2 July] I was delighted to announce almost \$50,000 for a new community garden at the Harcourt Valley Community House.

Following this year's devastating bushfires, this project is about far more than gardens. It's about creating a place where people can reconnect, heal, learn new skills and continue supporting one another.

Congratulations to the Harcourt Progress Association and everyone who helped make this happen.

*From the website of Maree Edwards:
<https://www.mareeedwards.com.au/>*

HPA Membership Renewal for 2026/2027

A big thank you to those who have already signed up or renewed their HPA membership for 2026–2027! If you haven't yet, please see the membership form on page 6 to see how HPA serves our community.

As a reminder, our Annual General Meeting will take place in October/ November and we'd love to have your voice included. Your active membership gives you a vote in shaping our community's future.

It is now time to renew memberships for the 2026/27 year and the HPA hopes you will be back to support us.

At the last AGM (Oct 2025), the HPA Board resolved to keep the annual fee structure as follows;

- \$12 concession member
- \$24 full fee paying member
- \$36 two full fee members living in the same household

Please pay your renewal amount via EFT to the HPA bank account as follows;

Name of Account: Harcourt Progress Association Inc.

BSB: 633 000

Account # 151 337 409

Please put your name/s in as a reference for the membership payment.

Please complete the renewal form and either email it to treasurerhpa3453@gmail.com or post it to HPA, PO Box 135, Harcourt, Vic. 3453.

New Membership Applications are Welcome.

We warmly invite new members to the HPA. Please use the same form and send it to the HPA by either email or post (as above). The process for new applications is slightly different as your membership application needs to be approved by the HPA Board. Once approved, you will be asked to pay the membership fee. If you pay in advance, that is fine too. In the unlikely event you may be refused membership, a full refund will be given.

The HPA anticipates determining the date of the 2026 AGM very soon (usually in Oct/ Nov). All financial members of the association will be invited to attend. Members must be financial at least 10 days before the date of the AGM in order to nominate for a position on the HPA Board and/or be allowed to vote at the AGM.

*Regards,
Bronnie Dean
HPA Membership Secretary*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM – 2026-2027

The Harcourt Progress Association is an incorporated association, governed by Rules which comply with the Victorian Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2023. It is a member-based organisation which encourages active participation in working groups to pursue specific areas of interest or projects which align with the organisation's goals.

Harcourt Progress Association Inc. Purposes are to:

1. Provide a voice for the residents of Harcourt.
2. Identify, support, facilitate or manage initiatives which benefit and strengthen the Harcourt community and increase social, economic and community inclusion.
3. Encourage, support, and facilitate volunteering within Harcourt.
4. Promote and protect the character and identity of Harcourt doing such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the purposes.

Any person who is a resident or landowner in Harcourt Valley and supports the purposes of the Association is eligible for membership. Members who do not fall within this category but still have a connection to Harcourt through employment, family ties, previous residence or similar links, may make application to the Committee for individual consideration. Members must be aged over 18 years. Annual subscriptions fall due on 1st July each year. Any renewals or new memberships **paid in 2026 will be valid until 30 June, 2027.**

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

I request to become a member / renew my membership (strikethrough the answer that does NOT apply) of the Harcourt Progress Association Inc. I agree to support the Purposes of the Association and be bound by its Rules of Association. I understand that only financial members have voting rights.

☐ Concession fee \$12 ☐ Full fee \$24 ☐ 2 x full fee persons living in the same household \$36

NAME/S:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: EMAIL:

SIGNED: DATED:

☐ I enclose the sum of \$12 / \$24 / \$36 (please circle or **make bold**) for Annual Membership

Please mail this completed form and payment to HPA Inc, PO Box 135, HARCOURT, VIC 3453 **OR**
Email to treasurerhpa3453@gmail.com

☐ I have deposited \$12 / \$24 / \$36 into BSB 633-000, Account: 151 337 409.

Please indicate your "Surname" and state "Membership" when paying online.

This application will be submitted for determination by the Harcourt Progress Association Committee and the applicant will be advised of the outcome of their application pursuant to the Rules of the Association.



Programs and services Alcohol and Other Drug Services

Winter can be a time when alcohol or other drug use increases, sometimes without us noticing. Changes in mood, sleep, motivation, relationships or daily functioning may be signs that extra support could help.

Dhelkaya Health's Alcohol and Other Drugs Service provides free, confidential and non-judgemental support for Mount Alexander Shire residents aged 18 and over. We can help you better understand your substance use, explore its impact, develop healthier coping strategies and work towards your own goals at a pace that feels right for you.

Support is available in person or by phone from our Maldon and Castlemaine campuses.

For referrals, call the Australian Community Support Organisation on 1800 524 200 and ask to be allocated to Dhelkaya Health.

For general enquiries, call 5479 1000.

Volunteering

Calling for Companion walkers

Companion Walking Volunteers make a meaningful difference in the lives of people across Mount Alexander Shire by providing one-to-one walking companionship. Volunteers walk with a participant at a pre-arranged time and location, offering companionship, conversation, and social connection. Walks are gentle and paced to suit both people, creating a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

This rewarding role is ideal for people who are friendly, empathetic, and able to relate to others from diverse backgrounds. First aid training and ongoing support is available from Dhelkaya Health.

Whether you are passionate about health, helping others, or simply enjoy walking and connecting with people, this is a meaningful way to give back to your community.

Call 5471 3566 for more information.

Get active

Maldon eucalypt walk

Join Maldon Urban Landcare for a walk to visit an incredible Yellow Box tree, estimated to be around 540 years old - growing here long before European settlement. Along the way, learn about local indigenous eucalypt species and how their ages are estimated using growth rates.

When: Thursday 27 August 2026

Meet: Rotunda in the Maldon Gardens, High Street, near the Visitor Information Centre

Time: 10:30 am

Cost: Free

RSVP: None required, just turn up

Guide: Bev Phillips

More information: Call 5479 1000

Please note: the walk will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain.

dhelkayahealth.org.au



**Harcourt Valley
LANDCARE**

Catch all the latest news for your local Landcare Group here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1LgeTeNQbJ/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/harcourtvalleylandcaregroup?igsh=NjA3a3E3czU1bHo2>

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Linda Newton Art

CDOC Festival wins to Harcourt Local



At 'LOCALS' in the Castlemaine Documentary Festival, Katherine Seppings received two awards for her documentary 'Harcourt Fires' – the Courageous Filmmakers Award, and the 2026 Audience Choice Award.

Katherine Seppings, director of 'Harcourt Fires', is a writer and photographer who lives in Harcourt. On 9 January 2026, as the Fogarty's Gap Rd fire approached, she evacuated to North Harcourt, experiencing the fire twice. Katherine captured the terror and devastation on the day, and the following weeks of recovery and renewal.

From all the Core team, Congratulations, Katherine.



BACKING LOCALLY LED BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

Labor is continuing to stand with communities affected by January's bushfires with more recovery support.

Minister Ward today announced the **Community Recovery Grants** program is now open.

Community groups and not-for-profits can apply for grants up to \$75,000 to deliver recovery programs of all sizes.

The program will back locally led projects that help people recover, reconnect and rebuild across bushfire-affected council areas.

It is based on a simple principle: **local communities know their recovery needs best.**

That's why we are giving local groups the flexibility to design and deliver the projects that matter most to them.

This can include trauma-informed training and psychological first aid.

It can also support community wellbeing events and workshops that bring locals together.

Projects may also include practical preparedness resources such as "Are You Ready?" materials to help households plan for future emergencies.

This builds on more than \$420 million in bushfire recovery support already funded, which we are delivering in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact the Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760 to be connected with relevant support.

Applications are now open and close on 31 August 2026.

For more information and to apply, visit vic.gov.au/community-recovery-grants-2026-bushfires.

From a press release

Grace Church

This is a statement of belief by Grace Church

A famous verse from the Old Testament says ...

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

Grace Church has been at 30 Buckley Street for five and a half years. The building has recently been sold and, consequently, our season there is drawing to a close. We expect to continue to be offering services at 11.00 am on a Sunday, through to Sunday the 22nd of November.

Interestingly, three weeks before the "sold" sticker went up, I felt the Lord leading our church towards the concept of House Churches. Not many people realise that the 1st and 2nd century church met in homes, as well as in more public places. The Apostle Paul had this to say to the Christians at Corinth ...

The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings.

And there are another half dozen scriptures in a similar vein that I could quote.

There is presently a House Church movement gathering momentum; for example, there are many in Bendigo already.

We have held three mid-week House Church meetings culminating in a shared lunch so far and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. They are much more intimate, and interactive, than a traditional Sunday service.

These meetings rotate around various homes in the fellowship and are held from 10.30 am on every second Wednesday. If any reader is interested in giving House Church a try, please contact our Pastor on 0422 605 897 for information about the location of the next venue.

We will continue to offer a Sunday service off into the future, should the Lord supply us with another venue in Harcourt. Otherwise, it looks like the House Church route for us.

God bless Harcourt!

Ps Roger Thurecht



Harcourt Heritage Centre

The shell of a building, a couple of legal agreements and a pile of survey forms.

Six months after the catastrophic bushfire, the shell of a brick building with a curved front and round porthole windows stands on a bare allotment in Coolstore Road, Harcourt, amid the fireground. This building is the sole relic of the busy industrial complex that was the commercial hub of Harcourt from the 1930s to the 1970s.

The building, most recently the home of the Coolstore Café, was opened in 1953 as the office, showroom and retail store of Harcourt Cooperative Fruitgrowers Ltd. It was a lively place. The building was the workplace for the manager, Alan Koochew, and the accountant, Bill Hoare. One or two female clerks kept the big Kalamazoo ledgers and filed the accounts. Norm Fisher and Lindsay Warren were counter staff. The background noises to the retail operation were the shriek of a circular saw breaking down pine logs in the sawmill, and the constant hammering in the case factory. Known locally as 'the Fruitgrowers' or 'the Co-op', with six of Harcourt's prominent orchardists on the Board and thirty people on the payroll, the company was regularly in touch with all the primary producers of the district.

The Co-op operated on an ambitious business model, acting as a bulk dealer in orchard requisites – a sawmill, case maker and fruit packer. In addition to conducting two fruit stalls in Melbourne's Wholesale Fruit & Vegetable Market, the company assisted local orchardists through its role as marketer and exporter of Harcourt apples and pears. From its heyday in the 1960s the Co-op business diminished, as there was a reduction in the acreage of the valley's orchards. The company was wound up in 1975, leaving its remaining clients to find their own sources of supply and to establish their own paths to market.

Several archive boxes of business documents of the Cooperative Fruitgrowers have been deposited with Harcourt Heritage Centre. Much of this archive awaits classification and interpretation. It is a valuable archive, providing an insight into the breadth and depth of the activities of the cooperative company. The business papers demonstrate that the Co-op was alive to many commercial opportunities. What follows is but one example of the nature and scale of the company's activities. It proves that the Co-op coordinated, in some detail, the

horticultural pursuits in this district.

From September 1966 and annually till August 1969, Harcourt Fruitgrowers Cooperative entered into a formal agreement with Rosella Foods Pty Ltd to supply between 150 and 200 tonnes (about 8,000 crates) of "KY1" tomatoes between 1 January and 14 April of the next year. Each crate was to contain about 22 kilograms of firm, ripe, well-coloured tomatoes. The role of the Co-op was to promote, encourage and coordinate the production and dispatch of tomatoes in the Harcourt district. This required the Co-op to engage with local market gardeners to plant, cultivate and care for thousands of tomato plants each year.

There was a good response from locals. Sales dockets in the Fruit Growers' archives list the names of those who produced and sold tomatoes in bulk to Rosella Foods under the agreement. The list of names recalls the personalities involved, S Broadbent, Mrs V Christopoulis, Hazel Cross, G & T Demetrious, A & I Eagle, C Forbes, C Fortis, N Holland, K Peeler, S Petropoulos, W Salam, K Semmens. Harcourt resident Ian Eagle was one who planted thousands of KY1 seedlings. Ian recollects that growing tomatoes meant spending hours and hours on your knees tending and picking.

A reminder of this era is the D B Harvey fruit sizing machine that sits in the centre of our museum display. Before it entered the museum collection, the machine was operated by Brenda and Tony Envall to grade tomatoes grown in the Envall market garden. Albert Robins, Mr & Mrs Envall and, later, from 1974, Julie and Nils Zahle were also market gardeners, but we do not know if they were part of the Fruitgrowers Cooperative–Rosella Food arrangements.

The growers had to battle with climatic conditions. For example, the most extreme climatic event during Harcourt's tomato growing era was a catastrophic hailstorm that struck at about 2 pm on the afternoon of Christmas Day 1966. Cars were dented, tile roofs shattered and windows smashed. Mrs Christopoulis not only lost 16,000 tomato plants, but all 540 glass panes in 30 tomato frames were damaged. This was such a significant loss that the Fruitgrowers sent C Rice and N Fisher to verify the claims of damage. The hail was most severe along the length of Elys Lane. Ian Eagle

recalls that after the storm Elys Lane was knee deep in shredded gum leaves and branches. All over the valley vegetables and immature apples, pears, apricots, cherries (and, of course, tomatoes) were severely cut or bruised. Thirty-six orchardists and seven tomato growers provided estimates of the hail damage to Bill Hoare at the Co-op. Only a few growers received compensation for their losses. The survey estimates underline the newspaper report of the hailstorm as "a catastrophe". Bill Hoare's calculations reveal that the orchardists had expected the 1967 harvest to yield about 232,500 cases of fruit but the hail had rendered 57% of the crop unsaleable. The seven tomato growers reported that they had suffered a total loss.

Tomato production and sales by Harcourt valley residents to Rosella Foods continued for at least two more years, and market gardening in the valley continued into the 1970s. Few residents would now recall the era when market gardens on large acreages were a feature of the Harcourt Valley. Rosella Foods Pty Ltd still processes tomatoes, but they are sourced from mechanised broadacre market gardens north of Bendigo.

We look forward to the time, not too distant, when the distinctive Fruitgrowers' Cooperative building will again be the hub of busy commercial activity. In the meantime, the volunteers at Harcourt Heritage Centre will continue sorting and classifying the information waiting to be revealed in the museum's storeroom. We shall be grateful if readers of the Core can provide us with their memories of the Christmas Day hailstorm of 1966.

George Milford

Harcourt Heritage Centre is open Wednesdays from 9 am to 3pm. Contact: heritage@harcourt.vic.au

You Can Help ...

If you know someone who would like to get a copy of *The Core*, either in print or online, but is having difficulty accessing it, let us know. We can make sure they get their preferred version – we can have it put in their letterbox, or we can send a copy by email.

Let us know by sending the person's details to: news@harcourt.vic.au



Harcourt District Lions Club

The Harcourt District Lions Club has had a busy two months since the last Core was available.

VMR BBQ Shelter

The BBQ shelter is nearing completion and is so much more user friendly than the large gazebo that had to be put up and taken down every Sunday. (Thank you to those Lions members who are there early every Sunday to do the set up and take down after each BBQ being held by a community organisation.)

Book Launch

The book launch of the *Harcourt Valley Mouse*, written and illustrated by Rachel Vanstone, was held at the Victorian Miniature Railway VMR on Sunday 5 July, and hosted by the Harcourt District Lions Club.

The event was a great success with Rachel selling and signing many books. The books have been given to many children as well, to help with their recovery after the bushfire on 9 January 2026.

Thank you to Diane, a Harcourt Lions member, for all her organisation of the event.

Thanks to the community response, a second print was arranged and the book is still available at Little Red Apple and Harcourt Produce and General Store. It's a great buy at \$17.00.

On the two Wednesdays and one Sunday of the school holidays, the Lions Club ran the BBQ at VMR to keep the kids and adults fed and happy after their ride on the miniature trains. It was good to see so many smiling faces and the excitement of the children.

Postcards

The TV program Postcards made a visit to Harcourt on 4 June, which will be aired at 5.30 pm on a Sunday early in August on Channel 9 featuring the VMR, Little Red Apple and more.

Marquees for Hire

Following the loss of the Lions Club marquees during the January fires, our Club has purchased two new marquees which will be available for hire to local organisations. Cost to hire is available on application, as the new marquees are a bit more complicated to erect and take down.

Sunday BBQs for Fundraising.

Wanting to fundraise for your Club? Then contact Diane on 0456 309 020 to book a Sunday BBQ at VMR in the new shelter.

I visited VMR on the last Sunday in July and met the newly formed Leo's Club of Carisbrooke and Maryborough busy making egg and bacon sandwiches and



cooking sausages and onion for the patrons riding the miniature trains. What a great group they are! (Photo above.)

The Carisbrook and Maryborough Lions clubs have been a great help to the Harcourt Lions Club since the fires. I heard them say they would be back again on the first Sunday in August. I wish the young people in their new Leo's Club lots of success in the future. Leo Clubs cater for 12 to 18 year olds (Alpha Leo's) and 18 to 30 year olds (Omega Leo's).

MEETING NIGHT CHANGE

The Harcourt District Lions Club will now meet on the **second Monday of each month** so as not to clash with the Harcourt Fire Brigade meetings on the third Monday of the month.

There will be a shared meal at 6.30 pm (each member to bring food to share) followed at 7.30 pm by a discussion to organise coming events.

For those interested in joining a vibrant Lions Club, speak to Lions members while at an event, or contact President Mark on 0419 828 270, avoiding business hours please.

Loretta Rice



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Councillor Comment

Hi all

A bit of rain and a bit of sunshine! It's great to see the paddocks green and the bushland trying to recover from our January fires.

I am out fencing most days. The fresh air is amazing. Today's job was patching up some fences that adjoin the neighbours, which is a lot. Friends and family ask how much to go. My standard reply is, "I will be fencing the rest of my life". If the weather is kind, a couple more months' work and I will know where the sheep are.

At Council we have had significant changes to the executive team. As you will know, Michael Annear has been appointed CEO. And we welcome Kath Skinner, Interim Director Healthy Communities and Anthony Petherbridge, Interim Director Infrastructure and Development. The team also includes Julie Landy, Director Corporate Services.

They are a fantastic team and I know they will do a great job for our community. Our council is working very well together and will continue to provide the services our community needs.

This month's Council meeting included the planning permit for the upgrade to facilities at Camp Reserve Castlemaine. Like many of you, I have been involved with sport and community events at the Camp Reserve from a young age. I even competed in sheep dog trials, when I had a couple of handy working dogs.

There has been a lot of passionate debate about this planning permit. Decision made! Job done! Well, not really. We will have a permit. The matter may go to VCAT, but that is okay. From my work in industry as an engineer, I can share with you that having a Council decision is only a small step. Until you have the money you don't have a project, you just have an idea.

For those fighting against decent change rooms and facilities at Camp Reserve, I can assure you, the sun will still come out tomorrow.

Meanwhile, enjoy our beautiful facilities at Harcourt. You would not want to be anywhere else.

Stay well all.

Best regards, Tony
AG Cordy
0439 742 434

Harcourt Carpet Bowls

As August is here it is time to remind everyone about the Harcourt Carpet Bowls Legacy Tournament held each year to raise funds for the Castlemaine Legacy Group. You are all invited.

Where: Harcourt District Leisure Centre, Bingham's Road, Harcourt

When: Wednesday, 12 August 2026

Time: Arrive 7.15pm (to enter your names) start at 7.30pm

Cost: \$5.00 per person for three games

Heaters will be on so a great venue to come to on a cold night.

There will be a raffle with some great prizes followed by a lovely supper and presentation of prizes to the winning team and runner-up team. No need to have played before; the game is easy to learn.

All ages, family or single are most welcome. Come along and support the Castlemaine Legacy Group by joining us on the evening.

The Harcourt Carpet Bowls has been going for many years and is one of the last few clubs still running in Victoria after seventy years. It would be lovely to welcome new members to keep the club going in Harcourt. The season will wind up in late September, but you are still welcome to give it a try.

The season so far has seen up to sixteen members come along for a more competitive weekly game with a great social atmosphere. So, in order to keep going, we do really need more players from the age of eight to eighty plus. Weekly games are played from 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

For further information, contact:

President – John: 5474 2226

Secretary – Loretta: 0411 193 661

or Tyrone 0409 686 738

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The January fires changed Harcourt forever.

Like so many local families, we experienced the devastation firsthand. We lost our house, fencing, gardens, and income. We understand the uncertainty, the countless decisions and the emotional toll that comes with rebuilding and moving forward.

As local residents and the team behind Wilkinson Noble Property Partners, we know that property decisions after an event like this are rarely straightforward. Whether you're wondering what your property is worth today, considering rebuilding, thinking about selling, or simply wanting to understand your options, we're here to help.

Our commitment is to provide honest, practical advice based on local knowledge, professional experience and a genuine understanding of what our community has been through. There is no pressure and no obligation—just a confidential conversation to help you make informed decisions when the time is right for you.

We proudly service Harcourt, Castlemaine, Maldon and the wider Mount Alexander region, offering personalised service and guidance tailored to each client's circumstances.

Communities recover through people supporting one another, and we are proud to continue playing our part in helping Harcourt move forward.

If you'd simply like to talk through your options or receive an up-to-date market appraisal, we'd be honoured to help.

Local knowledge. Professional expertise. Genuine care.

Helping our community rebuild, recover and move forward—one property, one family and one conversation at a time.

Pauline Wilkinson
0468543589
pauline@wnpp.com.au



Sarah Noble
0415 666 997
sarah@wnpp.com.au

The Core Team

Robyn Miller, Sha Cordingley, Bernie Schultz, Alison Curtis, Bronnie Dean, Michele O'Brien, Stephen Carthew and Gina McWilliam.

The crew who fold and distribute The Core: Liz Bini, Moira McLennan, Liz Rowe, Liz & Peter Ward.

Past members of the team have been Genevieve Ward, Lois Denham, Pauline Wilkinson, Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, Vera Hemkes.

Those Who Contributed to The Core

Kelly Aitken and her partner, Jean Paul 'JP' Frappier, had the brainwave to produce the first editions of The Core. They named it, and JP designed the masthead.

Shirley Amy, Christine Anderson, Jessica Anderson, Neil Anderson, Diane Baig, Karen Baker, Dominika Balwin, Richard Baxter, Scarlett Berger, Liz Bini, Sharon Blake, Andrew Blake, Andy Bos, Brian Brasher, Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns, Veronica Budnikas, Shannon Burdeu, Ed Butler, Serenity Campbell, Steve Carroll, Ivan Carter, Stephen Carthew, Lisa Chesters, Vanessa Chiang, Judy Coram, Sha Cordingley, Tony Cordy, Diana Cork, Dianne Couch, Jacquie Cue, Alison Curtis, Bronnie & David Dean, Lois Denham, Lisa Dennis, Mark Dorian, Michelle Dunn, Suzanne Dwyer, Maree Edwards, Ross Egleton, Troyene Evans, Paula Ewing, Doug Falconer, Hugh Finlay, Katie Finlay, David Foley, Rev Jim Foley, Kay Francis, Myra Frankling, Tina Fratta, Daryl Gale, Melva Graham, John Grant, Kathleen Gray, Bev Green, Lisa Grey, Margaret Griffin, Elsa Haebich, Faye Hards, Mrs Hargraves, Scott Harrington, David Heath, Vera Hemkes, Michael Henry, Katrina Hood, Bonnie Humphries, Glad Iskov, David jeffries, Dion Jelbart, Jan Jenkin, John Jenkin, Kerrily Jennings, Ian Johnson, Jo Kaptein, Alex Kavenagh, Alex Kelly, Danni Kent, Judi Kent, Karoline Klein, Eve Lamb, Anita Le Lievre, David Leatham, Robyn Lewis, David Ling, Jill Loorham, John Macintyre, Liesl Malan, Natalie Martin, Janine McCarthy, Natalie McCarthy, Eileen McDonald, Edna McDougall, Ken McDougall, Auntie Julie McHale, Ashlyne McInnes, Kim McKellar, Jenny McKendry, Moira McLennan, Donna McMahan, Janyce McMurtrie, Tom McWilliam, Andrew Mierisch, George Milford, Robyn Miller, Peggy Mills, Bella Mizzi, Paul Mizzi, Leah Mow-Yoffee, Linda Newton, Solway Nutting, Michele O'Brien, Lauren Peeler, Janet Phillips, Jo Pincus, Jennifer Plompen, Annette & Bruce Rae, Nicki Renfrey, Alan Reynolds, Loretta Rice, Tyrone Rice, Lisa Rowe, Liz Rowe, Lyn Rule, Max Schlachter, Bernie Schultz, Charles Scott (The Bard of North Harcourt), John Munday & Cath Scott, Jacquie Searle, Di Selwood, Katherine Seppings, Liza Shaw, Amy Simmons, Tammy Simmons, Annette Smith, Karly Smith, Sue Smith, Marie Stuart, Donna Symes, Jeanette Teague, Kathie Teasdale, Roger & Glenise Thurecht, Marie Twyford, Leonie Van Eyk, Franca Vescovi, Grant & Katrina Victor-Gordon, Francis Wade, Prue Wallduck, Ben Walter, Genevieve Ward, Liz Ward, Pauline Wilkinson, Bron & Terry Willis, Ant Wilson

Those Who were Interviewed for The Core

Sue Albert, Wendy Barron, Bruce & Ruth Bennett, Heather Braid, Andrea Brasher, Tina & Andy Buchanan, Stewart Campbell, Craig Carter, Ashlee Colquhoun, Beau Cook, Jacq Cue, Suzanne Dwyer, Jarrod Coote & Rebecca Edwards, Quinn Livingstone & family, John Flaus, Judy Foster, Janne Fowler, Jeff Gartside, Prof. Barry Golding, John Graham, Melva Graham, Kathleen Gray, Luke Hards, Ruth & Phillip Hay, Drew Henry, Michelle Holmes, Ian Johnson, Di Lederman & Phil Musat, Gavin McDougall, Ken & Edna McDougall, Bill McKellar, Colin Mierisch, Robyn Miller, Nathan Mitchell, Cath Scott & John Munday, Linda Newton, Frank Nicholson, Clair & Craig Nightingale, Brian Nunn,

Sammy O'Grady, Jodie & David Pillinger, Bryce Quill, Nick Quirk, Joe Sabire, Katie & David Schofield, Charles Scott, George Shinas, Bonnie & Remy Sowman, Leonora Ulfhager (Sweden), Chris Teed, Monique Thomson, Roger Thurecht, Troy West, Peter Wilson

Local Organisations that Supported The Core

Applefest, ASQ Skydancers, Barkers Creek Cricket Club, Bendigo Food Share, Castlemaine Community House, Castlemaine Cycling Club, Castlemaine District Community Health (CHIRP), Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club, Castlemaine Fringe Festival, Castlemaine Graffiti Busters, Castlemaine Health, Castlemaine Safe Space, Chewton Chat, CNAV, Connecting Country, Dhelkaya Health, Faraday Community Association, Fruit Crew, Gather Harcourt, Grace Church, Harcourt Bowling Club, Harcourt Carpet Bowls Association, Harcourt Cricket Club, Harcourt CWA, Harcourt Fire Brigade, Harcourt Football Netball Club, Harcourt Fruit Fly Action Group, Harcourt Heritage and Tourist Centre, Harcourt Lions Club, Harcourt Play Group, Harcourt Pony Club, Harcourt Pre-School, Harcourt Progress Association, Harcourt Supported Playgroup, Harcourt Tennis Club, Harcourt Uniting Church, Harcourt Valley Community House, Harcourt Valley Landcare, Harcourt Valley Primary School, Harcourt Walking Group, The Hub Plot, La Larr Ba Gauwa, Lifeline, Little Habitat Heroes, Malmsbury Village Fayre, MASARG, Mount Alexander Community Enterprise, Mount Alexander Community Pantry Network, Mount Alexander Shire, Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, Mt Alexander Falcons, My Home Network, Nalderun, North Harcourt/Sedgwick Landcare Group, Ravenswood Valley Landcare Group, Regional Community Vet Clinic, Repair Café, Rocky Riders, The Alluvians, The Cactus Warriors, The Growing Abundance Project, The Harcourt Company, Thompsons Foundry Band, U3A Castlemaine, Virtual Contact Centre, VMR, Vocal Nosh, XtremeInc Youth Project, YMCA/Harcourt Pool

Local Businesses that Supported The Core

Al's Plants, Alternatively Created, Black Horse Therapies, Blackwood Orchard, Blume's Bakery, BP Servo, Bruce Rae Plumbing, Business Mount Alexander, Carrs Organic Fruit Tree Nursery, Castlemaine Group Fitness, Castlemaine Mail, Circleworks, CNAV, Coffee HQ, Coliban Water, Coolstore Café, Dandura Alpacos, Property Plus Real Estate, Dichiera, Ecothought, Enviroshop, Goldfields Track Café, Granite House B&B, Gwoing Abundance, Gung Hoe, Harcourt and District Fruit Growers Association, Harcourt Auto Wreckers, Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op, Harcourt Post Office, Harcourt Produce and General Store, Harcourt Valley Vineyard, Henry of Harcourt, Hoppers Glass Studio and Gallery, Kaido Ryu Martial Arts, Knightmoves, La Larr Ba Gauwa, Lana May Photography, Le Coq Door, Lewin Fencing, MainFM, Maldon and District Community Bank, Maldon Market, MASH Mt Alexander Solar Homes, Mica Grange, Mount Alexander Fruit Gardens, Nicola Pilon Naturopath, Regional Centre for Culture, Regional EnviroSense, Rodilesa Nursery, Run Rabbit Run, Sacred Postnatal Harmony, SJK Excavations, Symmetry Yoga, Tellurian Fruit Gardens, The Good Life Careers, The Hearing Club, The Orchard Keepers, The Scout Hall, The Touch of Perfection, Thompsons Orchards, Tread Harcourt, Viatek, Virtual Contact Centre, Wilkinson Noble Property Partners, Zarlah Hair Design

If we missed your name, your business or your organisation, please accept our apologies. There are many more names mentioned in The Core, and without them and the activities they were involved with, The Core would not have been as full of interesting articles and information as it has been. And, of course, dear readers, we thank you.

A new chapter ahead for Harcourt Valley Community House

Breaking news from Harcourt Valley Community House (HVCH)! We're pleased to welcome Amy Atkinson and Kir Larwill to the role of manager, a role they'll be job-sharing for six months, starting this week.

As a duo, the two bring combined histories working in Neighbourhood Houses, with community groups, and in government and non-government organisations – mostly across central Victoria. Amy managed the Maldon Neighbourhood Centre for nine years, three of them alongside Kir, who supported programming and undertook research into social isolation.

"We feel excited and privileged to be taking up this role. We're both looking forward to supporting the program at the House, and everyone who so generously makes it happen – Jeanette Teague as the tireless voluntary Manager, the new HVCH Standing Committee, the Harcourt Progress

Association and the huge number of HVCH volunteers who do community lunch, playgroup, house maintenance, gardening, and more."

Amy Atkinson.

Both Kir and Amy share a love of Neighbourhood Houses and everything they stand for, particularly their role in connecting people socially and supporting health and well-being. They bring strong track records listening to and working with communities on what's important to them, and forging strong working relationships in community, government, business and arts.

"We're very much looking forward to working with the House and the community of Harcourt and district, to support what's already happening, particularly all the fire recovery efforts that are going on, and to throw our energy into

securing funding to ensure a sustainable future for the Community House."

Kir Larwill.

So please join us all here at HVCH in welcoming Kir and Amy. Call in to say hello and introduce yourself. They will be sharing the Wednesday and Friday open hours at the House from the first week of August, and are very much looking forward to meeting you. Alternatively, drop them a line at harcourtvalleych@gmail.com.

Harcourt Valley Community House

Room Hire

Our multipurpose room for meetings, workshops, etc, offers heating, cooling and wi-fi. It can accommodate up to 40 people seated in rows, or about 30 seated around tables. There is a fully equipped kitchen.

Hire rates are \$12/hour (community or not-for-profit organisations) or \$20/hour for business or private use. Savings are available on half or full day rates. Call or email us to book a tour of the facility or to discuss your needs.

Printing & IT Services at

HVCH

We are now offering printing, scanning and email services at HVCH during opening hours.

Printing Fees

A4 black & white @ 10c per page, colour @ 20c per page
A3 black & white @ 30c per page, colour @ 60c per page

Lamination

Lamination is available at an extra 20c for A4 or 50c for A3 documents.

Scanning and Email

Scan and email for 10c per page, negotiable for large (multi-page) documents.

Public Access to Computers

A public access computer is available at HVCH for your email access or research. It's free during drop-in hours: Wednesdays 12 noon to 3 pm. A donation for access is welcome.



Jeanette Teague (right) hands over the keys to Amy Atkinson (left) and Kir Larwill.

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Opening hours

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Fridays 10am-3pm

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Volunteers needed, scan the code



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See below**

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Email: harcourtvalleych@gmail.com Phone: 0494 808 113 (new)

Facebook: [HarcourtValleyCommunityHouse](https://www.facebook.com/HarcourtValleyCommunityHouse)

Info current
Aug 2026



Harcourt Bowling Club

As the winter descends on Harcourt, the Bowls Club and the Green are taking a well-earned rest. A number of our members have travelled north for the winter while the rest are cosying up at home beside the fire.

We are still having our **Friday night members draw**, drinks and snacks, and every fortnight our lovely Kayla Leech cooks up a yummy meal for us. Everyone is welcome to come but **bookings are essential**.

Trivia Night is back on Saturday 29th August - book your table now.

If our beautiful sunny days continue our Green should open late August in preparation for our Opening Day on Sunday 20th September and the start of Pennant Season in October.

New members and social members are very welcome. Come down on a Friday for a drink and meet some of our great members.

Any information on the above phone the secretary 0438 722 566.



Harcourt Uniting Church

On 13 August 1865 our Harcourt Uniting Church (formally the Methodist Church) was officially opened by the Reverend William Hill. The foundation stone had been laid on 14 April, so they didn't waste their time completing the

building. When admiring the timber ceiling, I wonder what scaffolding was used – no OH&S in those days. The original roof was wooden shingles, but they were covered with galvanised iron in 1882. We will celebrate the 161st Anniversary with morning tea after church, with the promise of one of Marie's delicious fruit cakes.

In June we celebrated the 49th year of the formation of the Uniting Church (Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational) in 1977. Glad Iskov – a dear member of our Harcourt Church for many years (no longer with us) wrote this poem for the 20th Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia 1997:



They say its 20 years ago It doesn't seem that long
Since we left the Methodist, the Pressy and the Cong
We've changed our hymn books quite a lot. The bible has new looks
But I often look for the good old days when we sang from Sankey's books

The Parsonage is now no more. It's called a manse today
The Circuit is a Parish now. That's what we have to say
The Stewards used to bring the plate to gather up the gold
They call them Elders now, but why? Because they're not all old
They moved the platform from the hall. Made more room than you think
The cupboards were a housewife's dream. What a shame there wasn't a sink

They put a new roof on the Church and introduced gas heating
What a joy 'twill be for aching back if they ever update the seating

Glad, if only you could see our Church today!
Hymn books replaced by a data projector, gas heating replaced with a split system. A few pews still, but comfy padded chairs In a more welcoming semi circle. And the new room at the back. I added to Glads poem with

The latest project on the books To build a room with modern looks
A kitchen and some room to chat And an inside toilet – Fancy that!
Well Glad, we now have it all. We've even been able to sell the Hall.

A priest and pastor were standing on the side of the road holding up a sign "The end is near. Turn around before it's too late."

**A passing driver yells out: "You guys are nuts" and speeds off
From around the corner, they hear screeching tyres and big splash**

"Do you think we should just put a sign that says, "Bridge out" instead?"

Jan Jenkin

HARCOURT BUSINESSES

The Uniting Church parish comprises Harcourt and Castlemaine churches, Yandoit Sacred and Sipwell faith communities. That's quite a number of people, with quite a lot of buying power.

The Harcourt congregation encourages everyone to use goods and services provided by businesses based in Harcourt. There were 157 businesses affected by the January bushfire. They are facing a huge hurdle in trying to re-establish, and we hope that our expression of support will lead to more income for them, however small.

The Harcourt Valley website has an (incomplete) Business Directory (harcourt.vic.au/business-directory), which we hope will be expanded in the near future.

Solway Nutting, Elder at Harcourt Uniting Church

Lisa Chesters MP
FEDERAL MEMBER
FOR **BENDIGO**

5443 9055
lisachesters.org

Authorised by Lisa Chesters, ALP,
16 Myers St, Bendigo



ADVERTISEMENT



Chatting with Harcourt CWA

Hello, again, from the Harcourt Country Women's Association!

We won't mention the cold or the rain or the potholes or ... any of the other wintry things.

This month it's all good news, lots of highlights and all capped off with a few more happy snaps. So, let's get started.

June and July have been very busy for us. We have been focussed on supporting mental health and community wellbeing.

Social Stuff

Our fifth Thursday Social Outing took us into Bendigo to see the free Lego exhibition at the Town Hall Gallery where fifteen or so well-known Bendigo Heritage sites have been meticulously and lovingly recreated in Lego. It was fun, and it is well worth a visit. Then, it was across the road for a delicious lunch at the Shamrock Hotel.

Harcourt CWA – Award Winners

At our recent Xmas in July Luncheon, at which all the usual Christmas trimmings and food were on offer, we had a surprise visit from newly appointed Group President, Noni Sutcliffe and Group Secretary-Treasurer Cheryl Kennedy.

It is always good to see them, however, this time it was even more so as they were in attendance to present trophies to the Harcourt CWA Branch and some of the talented Harcourt members who won the recent Creative Arts Competition in which many branches in the area had competed. These trophies will go "straight to the pool room" and into our purpose-built trophy cabinet!

Donation to the RCVC

Many of the households affected by the Harcourt fires in January are still suffering and slowly trying to get their lives back to normal. Often their pets are the most important thing in their lives.



Companion animals play a vital role in supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of individuals and families – especially women and children experiencing disaster, hardship or isolation. We felt that the RCVC was well worth supporting.

We are proud to share that the Harcourt CWA recently made a \$1000 donation to the Regional Community Vet Clinic in Castlemaine. We were met and made welcome by co-founder of the RCVC, Robin Slattery, who gave us a tour of their wonderful facilities. The donation was made as a part of CWA's commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our local community in general, and of women and children in particular.

RCVC's outreach programs make sure that local residents facing tough times don't have to choose between their car and the health of their beloved pets. RCVC provides them with affordable animal services, to increase community wellbeing, animal health and to reduce the burden on local vets, animal welfare organisations and councils.

Pet owners on low or fixed incomes often avoid taking their animals to the vet for regular check-ups or routine procedures because they are worried about the costs, and this often leads to pets reaching a point where their health issues become irreversible or incredibly

expensive, leading to early euthanasia, surrender or abandonment.

By providing a facility that provides affordable proactive care across the region and educates pet owners about the importance of routine care, RCVC can save the lives of hundreds of beloved companion animals.

We are thrilled to partner with such an impactful local organisation, just as we were last month when we made a similar \$1000 donation to the excellent work and outreach of both Sunshine Bendigo and the Annie North Women's Crisis and Refuge Centre.

A final word about the Harcourt CWA)

Whether you have recently moved to the area or have lived here for years, our CWA branch offers a warm welcome to you and a space to connect, share skills and support the local community.

CWA Victoria is all about improving conditions for women and children, advocating for rural communities, and fostering friendship and Harcourt CWA Branch has those aims, too. And, we welcome new faces!

Take it from me, no prior crafting or baking expertise is required to join us – just bring your enthusiasm and love for our community and a genuine desire to meet some interesting local women.

Harcourt CWA meets on the first Thursday of the month at the Harcourt Leisure Centre in Bingham Road, Harcourt at 1.00 pm (for 1.30 pm) for our general meeting, and then again on the third Thursday for a craft and a chat session. It's all good fun.

Contact & Enquiries

For more details or if you're thinking of coming along, contact our secretary **Helen Hand** on 0448 510 996 or email her on s.j.hand@bigpond.com

Until next time,
Beverley Orgill for Harcourt CWA



Colossus of the Goldfields

By Dr Bob Marmion

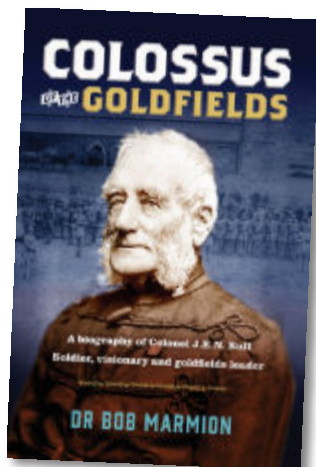
A biography of Colonel John Edward Newell Bull

Soldier, statesman, visionary and goldfields civic leader

This is the story of a man who had possibly the greatest impact of all on the Victorian goldfields during the 19th century. He was a soldier, statesman, visionary and goldfields civic leader.

He was a major player in establishing Castlemaine including being involved in the setting up of the mining and police courts, the rifle club, the Volunteer Rifles, the Hospital, Benevolent Asylum, Mechanics Institute, agricultural societies, schools, and the municipal council, etc. He was involved in over thirty different organisations in Castlemaine and central Victoria.

Whereas the poor treatment of the miners in Ballarat led to



the Eureka Stockade in December 1854, Bull handled the troubles at Mount Alexander in a completely different way. Instead of opposing the miners, he talked to them and settled many of their grievances thus avoiding bloodshed. Though he was a Goldfields Commissioner and later Warden and Police Magistrate, he was held in very high regard by miners and the general community. It was because of this high regard and his ability to talk to and be trusted by the miners, which prevented open rebellion on the Mount Alexander goldfields in 1853 – a year before the Eureka outbreak. If the Ballarat authorities had taken a leaf out Bull's play book, Eureka may never have happened.

This biography traces his life from his early days through to his death. The author looks at the highs and the lows including his various legal problems such as insolvency and the imprisonment of his son for fraud. Of major importance was Bull's impact on administering the central goldfields during very tumultuous times.

Bull was a man of vision who had the ability to make things happen. Even though he had a number of misfortunes in his private life, his sense of duty and commitment to Castlemaine and central Victoria remained with him until his final years.

A book launch for Colossus of the Goldfields will take place in Castlemaine on Sunday, 30 August at the Market Building in Mostyn St. starting at 2 pm. The guest speaker will be celebrated local historian Dr Marjorie Theobald. All welcome!



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All Welcome

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gracecastlemaine.org.au

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Council news

Equipment stream added to Community Grants program

We're excited to announce the addition of an Equipment Grants stream to our Community Grants program.

The new stream will offer grants of up to \$2,000 for purchases of essential equipment that enable community groups to operate safely, sustainably and inclusively.

Applications are open for Community Grants from Monday 3 August to Monday 24 August.

Community drop-in sessions will take place in Newstead and Castlemaine on Tuesday 11 August.

More info at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Grants.

Celebrate the festive season with a Christmas Celebration Grant

For the fifth year, we're inviting community groups across the shire to apply for a Community Christmas Celebration Grant.

The grants can be put towards outdoor decorations, community events, Santa visits, barbecues, music and other celebrations.

Applications are open from Monday 10 August to Sunday 30 August.

To discuss your application call 5471 1700 or email business@mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

More info at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/ChristmasGrants.

Working together for a healthy, connected shire
mountalexander.vic.gov.au (03) 5471 1700



Expressions of interest open for inaugural Golden Wellness Festival



Expressions of interest open for inaugural Golden Wellness Festival Media Expressions of interest open for inaugural Golden Wellness Festival Media

Golden Wellness Festival invites practitioners, makers, speakers and teachers to express their interest in a one day community retreat.

The inaugural festival is an immersive day in Central Victoria, exploring ancient and modern wellbeing practices woven with today's understanding of mind, body and spirit.

The vibrant community gathering will take place at The Sunken Oval in Castlemaine on Saturday 31 October 2026. The green space is on Djaara Country in the heart of the historic town, nestled next to Victoria's oldest regional botanic gardens, and flora and fauna reserve.

The day will bring together community, creatives and wellness professionals to take part in workshops, rituals, movement, creativity, conversations and

community spaces. There will be free entry, with a small number of ticketed events going on sale in September.

Festival Founder and Director Ciel Lindley is a Castlemaine resident with more than twenty years of experience working across festival direction, community development and health promotion. Ciel designs events and place-based initiatives that bring people together in meaningful ways.

"I'm thrilled to kick off Golden Wellness Festival in 2026. It's been a long-time passion of mine to host a community event where ancient wisdom meets modern wellbeing.

"This is a region where people live rurally, work independently, and seek support to stay grounded, connected and resourced.

"We're looking for pavilion exhibitors, presenters and facilitators, marketplace stall holders, and food vendors from across our region.

"This is a rare opportunity to join an event at the ground level – one destined to grow into a major regional

wellbeing gathering. Each expression of interest helps shape the core of our guests' experience, influencing the workshops offered, the rituals we craft and the community we foster.

"I also believe deeply in reciprocity, and all individuals, community groups and businesses involved will benefit from a listing our year-round online directory, entry into the Golden Wellness Industry Network event, direct access to your niche audience with 1000 people expected to attend in the first year, and more.

"I encourage practitioners, product makers, teachers and creatives from across Victoria to join our new regional wellness event, and contribute to a day of connection, learning and transformation."

Expressions of interest close on Thursday 20 August 2026.

Visit www.goldenwellnessfestival.com/eoi for more information.

From a Shire Media Release

KATIE FINLAY'S FRUIT GROWING TIPS

Hi everyone,
Even though it still feels like the depths of winter, spring is just around the corner and our fruit trees are on the verge of waking up. It's time to start monitoring your trees at least once a week so you don't miss signs that tell you when to take action. In particular, it's time to be on the lookout for budswell in your peach and nectarine trees. This is the trigger to put on a copper spray (e.g., Bordeaux or Kocide) to prevent leaf curl disease. Remember, this is only for peaches and nectarines — if you've had curly leaves in other trees, it's probably caused by something else.

If you planted any fruit trees this year, give yourself a big pat on the back. When properly looked after, fruit trees can live for a very long time, so it's a great legacy to create for your family, and the families that will be lucky enough to enjoy your fruit trees in years to come.

And if you sourced your trees from Carr's Fruit Tree Nursery (our nursery here in Harcourt), we'd like to say a big thank you, we love our local customers :). Our special line of Harcourt-grown citrus trees was very popular this year. We've been experimenting for a while to find the right rootstock for our climate, and we think we've cracked it!

Workshop dates for your calendar

We're running a free (online) Masterclass about pests and diseases this month, which tells you what to look for, and how to prevent and treat all the common pests and diseases for fruit trees — we highly recommend you jump on! (The details are at the end of this article). There are also a couple of in-person workshops coming up:
Sunday, August 9, 1 pm-3 pm: Pruning Burnt Fruit Trees, 19 Twyford Street, Harcourt. We'll be running a mini workshop in Liz and David's orchard, which was burnt on January 9. The damage ranges from severe (trees that have died or won't recover), medium, or mild, so it will be a great case study in how to respond to trees with different levels of fire damage. Please contact Katie on 0409 706 784 to let us know if you'd like to attend.

Sunday, August 16, Grafting Workshop, 10 am-1 pm: 69 Dann's Road, Harcourt. Neil Barraclough from the Heritage and Rare Fruit Society has kindly offered to

come and do a grafting workshop in Harcourt. The workshop is free for anyone affected by the fire - and you'll get free fruit trees, with a suggested donation of \$30 for anyone else (and suggested donation of \$12 per tree). Details are still being finalised, so please check the Harcourt Valley Community House Facebook page for details before the event.

Protecting your fruit trees

If you have a fruit tree, there's a good chance something wants to eat it, so it's worth thinking about how you'll protect your trees. It's important to make sure you protect the trunks, especially for newly planted trees, but even older trees can be attacked. The sorts of pests that like to eat bark in Harcourt are rabbits, hares, kangaroos, and wallabies. If sheep, goats, cows (or even the odd deer) find their way into your garden, they can also do damage.

You can make an organic hare-deterrent paint by mixing animal fat with any strong smelling stuff like peppermint oil, garlic, lavender, eucalyptus, tea tree, etc. and painting it on the bark. Hares are herbivores and don't like strong smells, so the combination works well to stop them eating the delicious tender bark on your trees. However, it's not very permanent, so you may need to re-apply it after

heavy rain or heat.

Animals eating the bark or branches of your baby tree can seriously stunt or disfigure your tree. If they eat the bark all the way around it can even kill the tree. Your trees may need protection for the first two or three years, or until the bark has hardened enough to lose its attraction, though even old bark can still be attractive to sheep and goats.

Tree guards, fencing, or dogs can all be effective deterrents. The type of tree guard you choose will depend on the type of animal you're preventing, and also, the shape of the tree. If the limbs of your tree start very close to the ground (up to knee height), a tree guard just around the trunk won't be enough to protect the tree adequately. You'll need to look at a taller structure around the whole tree. Traditionally old metal drums were used for the purpose, and you can often see the remnants of them around old fruit trees - which is one of the problems with this option! Once the tree has grown, the drums are hard to remove. A mini-enclosure (i.e. fence) around each tree works well but is time-consuming and expensive to build if you have a lot of trees and leads to the same problem of having a redundant enclosure that's hard to remove once the tree is mature. So, what's the solution?





Four ways to guard your trees

There are four types of tree guard that we recommend, and the one you choose will depend on your budget and goals. The first is the full "repel all enemies" enclosure fence around your property, built tall enough and engineered well enough to keep out both kangaroos and rabbits. This is a good permanent solution, but of course it's hugely expensive, and it also disconnects your property from the surrounding landscape, which may not be what you're looking for.

The second option is much more practical and multi-purpose, and works particularly well for single trees in the

garden, or short rows of trees. A simple hoop structure erected over the tree using star pickets and 2-inch poly pipe provides an affordable framework that can be used to support frost cloth, bird netting or fruit fly-exclusion netting. It can also be reinforced with a strip of chicken wire around the base to stop the 'roos and rabbits from breaking through.

The third option is somewhere in between; a simple tree guard made from a length of chicken wire rolled into a hoop and attached to the ground with a stake on either side.

The fourth and last option is to use three wooden pallets to form a triangle around the tree. Wire the pallets together and then wire them to at least one stake to hold them in position and stop the structure from falling over.

Give your young fruit trees a good start

Here are three more tips to make sure your young trees get a good start in life:

- ▶ If you didn't prune them when you planted, prune now (or before spring) so they grow into a useful shape right from the get-go. We reckon a classic vase shape suits most backyard trees.
- ▶ Once the soil has started to warm up a bit, mulch very young trees, or plant a living understory. Fruit trees prefer a woody mulch like sawdust, wood chips or 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. There's lots of eucy mulch around Harcourt at the moment, but that's best aged for a few months before you use it around your fruit trees. Once the trees are established, they're better with a 'living mulch', or even just weeds, as long as you mow them regularly.

- ▶ Fruit trees don't need watering when you plant them, and we've had a bit of rain now, so you don't need to water your trees yet. However, make sure you've got the irrigation 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.

Happy fruit growing!

Hugh and Katie Finlay are certified organic orchardists and offer Grow Great Fruit organic home fruit growing courses. They're also founding members of the Harcourt Farming Co-op. Head to growgreatfruit.com to sign up for their free Weekly Fruit Tips newsletter. Register for the free online Pest and Disease Masterclass here: growgreatfruit.com/pest-and-disease-webinar

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Maree Edwards MP

State Member for Bendigo West

Your Trusted Local Voice

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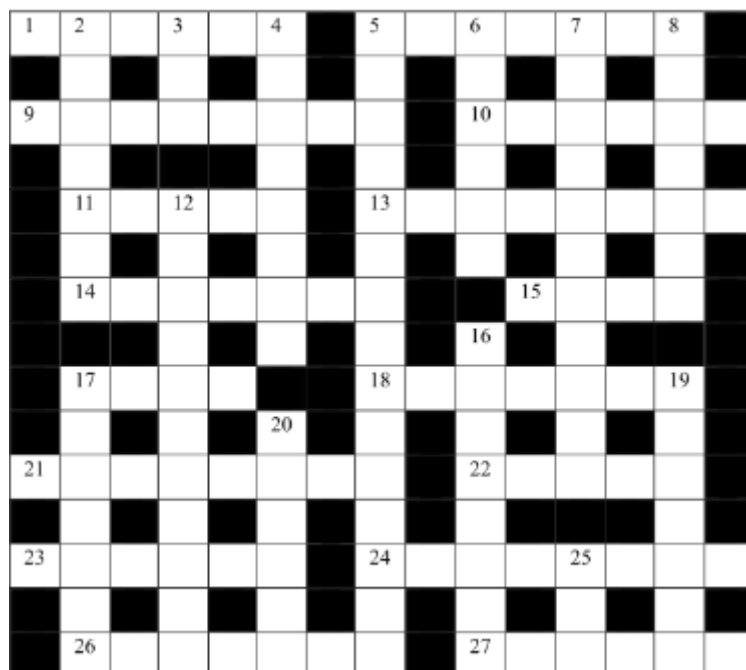
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Victorian Labor

Authorised by M Edwards MP, 16 Lockwood Road, Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo, VIC.

Phoenix 3 / 2026 Xword

©McW May Feb '26



Down:

2. What a healthy ecology fosters? (7)
3. Not for returning. (3)
4. Well-bred twelve months in the making. (3,5)
5. Second of twenty-two on stage... (12,3)
6. Scam eight-beam for art material. (6)
7. What the annoying little supervisor on your shoulder will do... (11)
8. For all the hanging round your neck it does, the beam comes back in to touch down. (7)
12. How high the cost of denial? (11)
16. Why d'Alpuget didn't drown under the pier? (6,2)
17. Half-D now apparently descriptive of feature of male torso... (3-4)
19. Tautological peak? (7)
20. Cricketer sounds like he should have had the wherewithal to join Royal Melbourne Golf Club.... (6)
25. Body part used on line to stay nice. (3)
- 14a plays fast and loose with pronoun reference. The middle one is definitive...

Across:

1. An extremely loud and incredibly close atmosphere attends their relationship! (6)
5. Carrying rodents, boy backs currency. (7)
9. They often have cold pulses. (8)
10. Half a band and small change in the way you speak. (6)
11. Egg in nest a cut above? (5)
13. Suggestion that working girl sit before metal. (8)
14. Turned inside-out, the length of time it spends in it decomposes it... (7)
15. Runs through for time. (4)
17. Don't come a cropper at fine leg! (4)
18. Brazilian diplomacy could be read in demonstration. (4,3)
21. Pre-exact; in-cut; with previous partner-complete removal. (8)
22. Peel back expurgation from the start. (5)
23. To get rid of with the required response. (2 solutions, please). (6)
24. Another one incorporated; you change to second to hear a try-out. (2 solutions, please) (8)
26. Most avid mourners at Dublin funeral? (7)
27. What's to be had at the bakery dance? (6)

Phoenix 2 / 2026 Xword Solution

© McW '26



Down:

1. I'm taking inapt god on board!
2. He looks like Death warmed up, crude as avo smashed on toast in a Brunswick Cafe.
3. Stink of social climbing. [Well?]
4. Do a rowdy moratorium in the laundry... [Well?]
5. If it looks like a riot at 4, what must the police lines be? [Well? Sydney...]
6. Widow's [mite] contribution can be a thing.
7. Beats the tripe out of Manchester [or London, or Bristol, etc...] currency?
13. As union rep., I invent foe in the daily grind...
15. Some problems won't crop up [ARISE] if you've engaged a JP to fix them... [Well?]
17. We could elect Sir Toby, with his gauntlet, to care for these birds.
18. Incorporates lithium and puts the mockers on [hexes] very basic physical structure.
20. Drier add-on to a bill, etc.?
21. Teach some top polities to become rorters.
23. I'm fit enough not to, so... promise I won't Irene!
22. Mess left by dog or cat?
24. Actually, after last 3 of 10, bloody loud [FF], etc...
25. How "back" works? [Well?]

Across:

8. Proposal that I be banker as contender for Platonic prize?
9. Obvious that retro father is one.
10. Stole ending in first 3 of 24.
11. Put money into it? Nah! Shed it!
12. State of Scots dam after spring-clean?
14. Beached with a substantive backup?
16. Strange—could even be grace...
19. A test case put paid to this in favour of different media.
21. The iciest ones are far north—or south!

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For placement of advertising please contact *The Core* via email at: advertising@harcourt.vic.au

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A full colour version of *Harcourt News/The Core* is available on the Harcourt Progress Association website and readers can receive a free copy by subscription at: harcourtprogress.org.au/news/sub *The Core* is also available at the Harcourt Community website at: harcourt.vic.au/news

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Castlemaine Bus Lines

Harcourt Services Monday to Friday

	am	pm	pm
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:05	2:25
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:56	12:06	2:26
Coolstore Road/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:57	12:07	2:27
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	9:03	12:13	2:33
Halford St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	9:05	12:15	2:35

From Castlemaine to Harcourt Monday to Friday

Castlemaine RSL/Mostyn St (Castlemaine)	8:45	11:55	2:15
Wimble St/Barker St (Castlemaine)	8:48	11:56	2:18
Blackjack Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:53	12:03	2:23
Coolstore Rd/Midland Hwy (Harcourt)	8:54	12:04	2:24
Market St/Harmony Way (Harcourt)	8:55	12:05	2:25


THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH FROM 10AM TO 1PM
Castlemaine Community House
30 Templeton St
 For information phone Chris 5470 5508
First in first served, so be prepared to wait.
 We will try to repair clothes, small wooden items and furniture, electrical appliances, toys. You can learn basic bicycle maintenance, crochet and darning. Get Apple Mac advice, knives sharpened. Consider repairs and clean items before taking them to the Cafe.
 You can join our fixers to learn how to repair your useful items and avoid tossing items into landfill. If the Cafe is busy the last item must be in at 12.15. Gold coin donation appreciated.

2026
 Aug 30
 Sep 27
 Oct 25
 Nov 29



Castlemaine Repair Cafe



castlemainerepaircafe.wordpress.com



June Solution

7	1	2	3	5	6	9	8	4
5	6	9	8	4	7	2	1	3
8	4	3	9	2	1	6	7	5
9	7	1	5	6	4	8	3	2
3	5	8	1	9	2	4	6	7
4	2	6	7	3	8	1	5	9
2	3	7	6	8	9	5	4	1
1	8	4	2	7	5	3	9	6
6	9	5	4	1	3	7	2	8

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Fill the grid so every row, column and 3x3 frame contains every number from 1 to 9.

For early access to the solution to this month's puzzles, email: news@harcourt.vic.au

	6	8			3	4		
		2		8	7	9		
				5	4	6	8	3
6			4		9	1	3	
		4				5		
	1	9						4
	7			9			5	6
				2			4	
9		6		4				



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