

HARCOURT NEWS THE CORE



Edition 101 – February 2023

Produced by:

Harcourt Progress Association Inc

Online: harcourtprogress.org.au/news

harcourt.vic.au/news



Photo: Terry Willis

Mount Alexander Shire Citizen of the Year

WELL KNOWN AND LONG-TIME HARCOURT IDENTITY George Milford is the Mount Alexander Shire's 2023 Citizen of the Year. Most of us know George for volunteering in one capacity or another, but many would not know the breadth of experience that George brings to this work. *The Core* interviewed George about his award to get some understanding of his skills, values and experience of volunteering.

At 16 George began work as a junior clerk at what was then Thompsons Foundry. He was steadily promoted until becoming Financial Controller, a position he held – under four different employers as the business changed hands – for 29 years until he retired at 63 years of age.

George began part time accountancy studies at the Weroona School of Accounting night school in Bendigo. He took the Australian Society of Accountants exams (without a calculator). He received his accountancy degree and took post graduate studies for two years and was fully qualified by the time he was 21.

I asked George when he started volunteering. He answered, 'I was 22 years of age when I began volunteering.' George is now into his seventies, so this apparently simple answer shines a light on what has become an exceptional life of service.

He said, 'I was recruited as treasurer for the Uniting Church (which was then the Methodist Church) here in Harcourt 54 years ago. My volunteering grew like topsy. Shortly after, I

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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.**



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

the voice of the community

MEMBER 2023

Mount Alexander Shire Citizen of the Year – George Milford

Continued from page 1

became the church treasurer, I was asked to audit the Harcourt Scouts' books.

George has continued the treasurer's role for the church and has an additional role as an accredited Lay Preacher. He preaches six times a quarter moving between Castlemaine, Bendigo and Lockwood churches. He said, 'To become an accredited preacher I undertook four years of part time study and sat fairly stringent exams. An area of study which influenced me was the study of books in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. This study assisted with understanding social injustice particularly oppression of the voiceless.

'My volunteering with organisations focuses on management and the accounts and dealing with government requirements around legal and financial matters. This most often means assisting with annual reports and auditing. To put it frankly, the way paperwork goes these days, it's perplexing to many people. I deal with, for example, The Registrar of Incorporated Associations, the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission, Consumer Affairs Victoria, and of course banks. Banks are a world all on their own to negotiate. Some of the organisations I audit have complex requirements and the ordinary treasurer may flounder at times.'

George volunteers with a number of organisations:

- Castlemaine Legacy Secretary.
- Buda – Treasurer 12 years (just retired).
- Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum Foundation – Trustee since 1984.
- S R Stoneman Foundation at Duneira, Mount Macedon – Trustee.
- Harcourt Cemetery Trust – an ordinary member who acts as a historical resource and who works with other members to maintain the grounds.
- Harcourt Leisure Centre – Secretary/ Treasurer for 40 years. In June 1983 the centre's account was started when it was merely a concept. The centre opened in 1991. George was part of a delegation to Canberra to the then Minister for Sport, Graeme Richardson who arranged the money to finish the building. The Leisure Centre is used on a weekly basis by a number of organisations.
- Harcourt Valley Landcare – Treasurer 15 years. George joined Landcare before he retired.

- Castlemaine Community House – July to October – ATO Tax Help Scheme.
- Harcourt Heritage Centre – George was recruited by Cameron Lang as Secretary to assist with organising 150 years of white settlement in Harcourt 1995.
- The Harcourt Applefest President - sponsored by Heritage Centre.

I asked George more about his work with the Harcourt Heritage Centre. He said, 'While I was at Thompsons, I worked with the late Malcolm Blume. Malcolm was a cousin of the Blume family who ran the bakery at Harcourt. He was passionate about local history, and fostered my enthusiasm. At this time the Castlemaine Mail Archives were kept by the council. They were in an annex to the Mayor's room. Malcolm was given access and he would take home a six-month bound copy at a time and index it. Each day he would regale us with an anecdote. He was an assiduous historian and a great example to me.

'As a former employee of Thompsons Engineering Works in Castlemaine, I was also involved in efforts to preserve and save the extraordinary collection of machinery and drawings from Thompsons – some ending up at the Maldon Vintage Machinery Museum and in the archives of the University of Melbourne. When I learnt that the drawings were being disposed of I and others drove to the Eaglehawk tip to find they were already ploughed in. With great effort the rest of the drawings were rescued.'

He continued, 'The Harcourt Applefest is sponsored by the Heritage Centre. The festival has grown from strength to strength and reinvented itself, every year for 32 years. One fact we are very proud of is that it has been continuous, even throughout COVID. My introduction to event management was through the mentoring of Vin Holland who was at the Castlemaine Art Gallery and one of three Trustees. I observed Vin plan for a government minister's visit to open the Art Gallery extension in 1973. I was surprised at the time at how detailed the planning was with a schedule down to the last minute. I began to comprehend the depth of planning involved in getting ready for a major event. I have made use of that knowledge every year for the Applefest.

'At the Heritage Centre we are fully occupied building the data base. I use it regularly as a resource for my stories in *The Core*. Writing an article once a month for *The Core* has been a great discipline for

me and has enabled more people to learn about Harcourt's history. A special feature of the Heritage Centre is that, since 1997, we have had a third Sunday of the month activity – either a tour or a talk.'

George has written a number of history books, including *The Granite Houses of Harcourt*, the story of Henry Hayden, a Milford family history, various brochures for the Heritage Centre including: early days of orchards, a review of apple growing for the 150 years of white settlement and a centenary booklet on the ANA Hall. In 2018, *The Core* covered a presentation to George of The Ray Tonkin Heritage Volunteer Award by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

George's family has long been settled in the Harcourt and Barkers Creek area. He said, 'The first family member arrived in December 1851 and the rest of the family were here by 1859. I am related to many in the area, I was always amazed that my mother had 54 first cousins!'

With all this volunteering on the go, I asked George whether he ever gets the opportunity to relax. He replied, 'I relax by playing lounge room soccer and petanque with our grandson, I also grow some roses, which I consider to be special. I could not have done all this without the support of my wife Josie who enjoys coming with me to the social functions associated with my volunteering. I am planning to scale back; I recently stepped down from my role at Buda and I am very aware that succession planning is an issue for many groups.

'My life would not be as interesting if I didn't volunteer. I would say to someone who is thinking about volunteering that it's worth the effort because of the social contacts and the ability to contribute to some very worthy causes. You grow and learn new aspects of your community. My volunteering has enabled me to meet new people and learn new skills. I am inspired by the fact that when you volunteer, you come into contact with people of great intelligence and interesting skill sets who contribute to so many good causes.'

Harcourt locals may be aware that this is the second time George has been the Citizen of the Year in Mount Alexander. We asked George what he thought about this. He said, 'The first time I received this award was 2010. I think that the first award was mainly for volunteering regularly. This second award I feel, is for the sustained effort.' You can say that again George!

Robyn Miller



HPA update

We have a lot to report upon in this edition of *The Core*. Firstly, of course, we would like to wish you all a happy and successful 2023. At the Harcourt Progress Association, we are looking forward to an exciting year with

the new neighbourhood house imminent after five years of anticipation, planning and COVID-19 interruptions.

Railway Station Building Restored

We extend our thanks to Mount Alexander Shire for its support in making this a reality and of course VicTrack for its wonderful refurbishment of the building. A visit to the old railway station before Christmas with members of VicTrack, MASC and HPA was an opportunity to see the old station with a renewed lease of life. Beautifully restored, it will provide an inviting space for the Harcourt community to meet, learn and teach. Over the next few months we will be consulting to see what sort of offerings you would like; chainsaw classes is one suggestion we have already received, alongside a community garden, a choir and computer classes.

Town Centre Plan

Another important current issue is the town centre plan. After consultations conducted by Mount Alexander Shire, a document 'Harcourt Town Centre Vision' has been produced. The following is an extract from the publication which can be viewed here: <https://shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/harcourt-town-centre-action-plan>

The town centre can be difficult for visitors to recognise as it lacks the typical features of a small town such as a single main road and buildings that define the street.

'The town centre is characterised by an abundance of public open space including James Park, Stanley Park and the curtilage around the café and motel buildings, as well as vacant or underdeveloped sites. This spaciousness creates an open relaxed atmosphere that meshes well with the surrounding landscape, but also results in a large amount of space being given over to roadways and undermines the coherence of the town.

Through Plan Harcourt, the direction of growth for the town builds on place attributes. The plan emphasises landscape stories and local assets to reinforce Harcourt's character and social and economic wellbeing. The Action Plan will be used by council to prioritise projects, allocate developer contributions and seek funding opportunities. The vision celebrates Harcourt's beautiful features and conceives a town that is liveable and connected.'

There are 10 key actions proposed in the action plan. Be sure to have your say.

We anticipate that we will hold the HPA annual general meeting in February, and we hope it will take place in the old railway station. Please consider attending and joining as a member. There are also several vacancies on the HPA Committee. A notice of the date and venue will be posted on Hardcore Harcourt and the HPA websites.

Finally, we would like to thank the Shire for the Christmas grant that allowed us to put on the Christmas BBQ. A small write-up and photos are on page 6.

Sha Cordingley
Acting President, HPA

**HARCOURT
APPLEFEST
2023**

Saturday 11th March 2023 - 9am
Experience the best of the Harcourt Valley

Stall Holders Wanted
Food Vendors, Coffee, Fresh Produce, Crafts,
Collectables, Plants, Tools, Clothing etc.

To find out more go to
www.applefest.harcourt.vic.au or
email: market@harcourt.vic.au

Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op wins WWF Regenerative Farming Grant

Katie and Hugh Finlay have announced on behalf of the Harcourt Organic Farming Cooperative that the group is thrilled to have been awarded a grant from the World Wildlife Fund through their Innovate to Regenerate Program.

The program is about 'finding innovative solutions to regenerate and future-proof Australia's precious natural environment and communities.' It's an Australia-wide program, and the cooperative is one of three local projects to be chosen. You can find out some more about the overall project here: <https://www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/regenerate-australia/innovate-to-regenerate>

The group plans to use the grant to document and share their model of co-operative farming as well as develop a new whole-farm plan and measure and improve the health of the land they care for.

Katie said, 'It's a really exciting opportunity for us to learn more about how to care for our little patch of Harcourt.'

The March edition of *The Core* will feature a story on the Harcourt Organic Cooperative's plans for the use of the grant funds. Visitors to the Open Day at the co-operative on Saturday 18 March will also learn more about this exciting project.

Robyn Miller



WALKING TOGETHER Towards Makarrata

Makarrata is 'coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace.'

Women's Voices – Leadership Summit

Women's Voices (Wiyi Yani U Thangani): *Securing our Rights, Securing our Future* is a project that is a collaboration between the Australian Human Rights Commission and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). The first two stages of the project were led by June Oscar AO, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. Stage 1 was the national engagement of women and girls, and Stage 2 the delivery of the Report of the findings. Stage 3 is to happen this year.

The aim of the project is to recognise the rights and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, and to ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. It promotes the importance of basing actions on the strengths and needs expressed by the community of First Nations people. Truth-telling and healing is integral to addressing the inequalities they experience.

Throughout 2018, well over two thousand First Nations women, of all ages and descriptions and every part of Australia, met in 106 engagements, to discuss their needs and views. The roles of women in their families and communities are central to the new, inclusive and cohesive society we need to develop in Australia.

The carefully-presented Report of these sessions, released in 2020, captures what women and girls consider are their key strengths and concerns, the principles they think should be followed in the design of policies, services and programs, and the measures they want that would lead to the fair enjoyment of their human rights.

The seven overarching recommendations in the report called for a National Action Plan and an Advisory body, a Leadership Summit, empowerment of women and healing of inter-generational trauma, revival of cultural practices and knowledge systems, and actions based in the place or region where relevant - rather than centrally designed.

The findings of the Report are being disseminated in accessible ways aimed at improving understanding and participation in the Leadership Summit to come.

The government released its Response to the Report in April 2022, supporting

the recommendations, aligning them with aspects of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and listing the relevant Commonwealth Agencies that could deliver the desired outcomes, Equality and Gender Justice.

To implement the seven overarching recommendations, long-term, secure and holistic funding is essential, if Closing the Gap is to be achieved. Gender Justice is vital in this. Equality is not to make all people the same, but to appreciate and build on our differences.

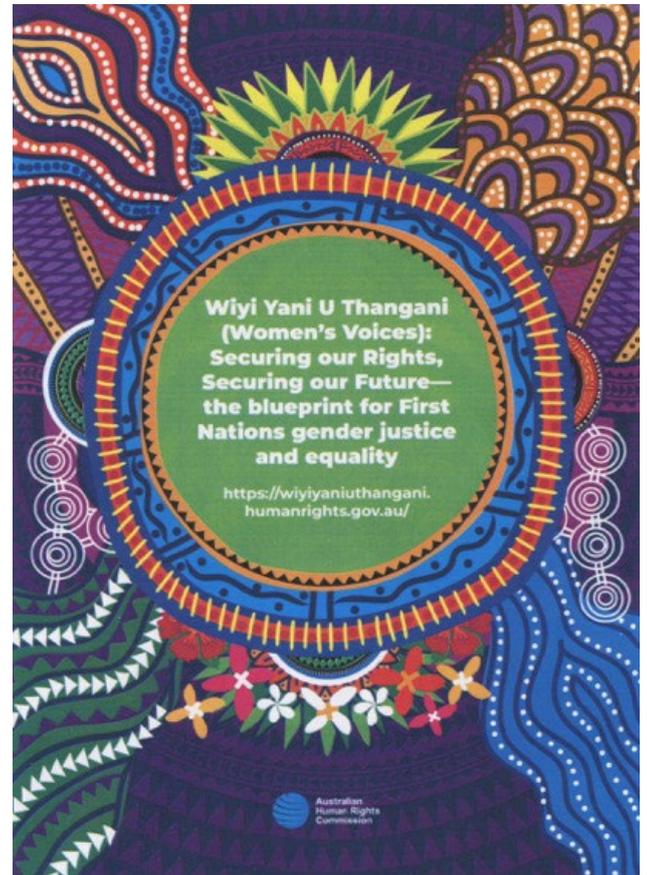
It is to be hoped that all agencies, at every level of government, will listen to the people directly involved, designing culturally sensitive programs and policy frameworks for specific individual locations. It needs to be differently done than formerly. So many of past actions were based on a Western conception of 'fixing' the issues.

The project is now into its third stage, preparing for the First Nations Women and Girls National Leadership Summit this year.

A document has already been prepared, the Wiyi Yani U Thangani Implementation Framework, to be used and refined in the First Nations Women and Girls Leadership Summit. It will form the basis of the National Framework for Action.

It makes visible and prominent the work, knowledges and initiatives already shown by women and girls in areas such as climate change, developing collective leadership, establishing Birthing on Country centres, financial institutions which invest in social projects, and prevention approaches to end violence against women and children.

The Summit is intended to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls and their communities as



they participate in government processes, programs and policy frameworks at all levels. A First Nations worldview sees human and non-human beings as equal and existing within interdependent relationships. Over tens of thousands of years, they have lived in and sustained thriving ecosystems.

Non-Aboriginal people, surrounded by a Western worldview that is based on individualism, hierarchy and compartmentalism, may have difficulty understanding the consequences of this different, more holistic worldview. Making an effort to embrace it will bring a thriving and united Australia much closer.

Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation 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



2023



HARCOURT APPLEFEST

Harcourt Applefest is a long-running country festival celebrating Harcourt apples (and more) since its beginning in 1992. Organised by a creative and lively committee of volunteers, the festival has been able to re-invent itself every year. It has a few anchor points, like the art show and the apple pies, but each year, something new can be found. The March 2023 festival offers new experiences, an expanded layout, a great children's program and some terrific entertainment.

Art Show

The Applefest Art Show is a distinctive exhibition of smaller works. The display has become central to the festival. With awards and acclaim to be won, the Art Show attracts the very best art works from well-known regional artists. Your Applefest ticket gains every Applefest-goer entry to the display at the ANA Hall. The grand opening and awards night will be held on Friday night before Applefest. The Harcourt Applefest Art Show is unique in having a significant Junior Section, delighting the viewer with emerging styles and fresh perspectives. All art works will remain on display throughout the Labour Day weekend; a feast for the eyes and a place to return to for a second viewing.

Lego Competition

A new feature of Applefest 2023 is the Lego competition. Bring your creations along to Applefest Saturday. The open section invites Lego lovers of all ages to show their creativity and dexterity from toddlers (working in Duplo) right up to big kids – see the Applefest website for more details. A special competition will award 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes for Moving Apple Orchard Sculptures in three age categories.

Cookery Competition

As in past years, Applefest has a competitive cookery competition. Apple pies get the headlines, but there

are categories for best Apple Cake, Apple Muffins, Apple Chutney and Apple and Berry Jam, all to be judged by experts who are quite at home among the ladies of the CWA at the Royal Melbourne Show. This is a dinky-di competition. It will pay to practice your recipe at home in the coming weeks so that you can deliver the very best apple products to the Fruitgrowers' tent in James Park on Applefest Saturday.

Market & Kids Entertainment

By now, the reader will have recalled the electric atmosphere in James Park at Applefest 2022. Even before viewing the attractive fruit displayed, the Applefest goer will have been caught up in the audience listening intently to the judges' comments on the entries in the Cookery competition. In the meantime, there is a vast circular market with Harcourt apples, cider, toffee apples and family-sized apple pies on offer. But, by now, the children's attention is caught by the roaming dinosaurs, and if perchance you make your way to the northern side of the ANA Hall, a complete program of children's games and entertainment (new this year) shall be on offer. Bendigo's 'The Connected Circus' will offer free games, tests of skill and face painting, while Narelle from 'Quirky Tales' will hold the children spellbound. The Applefest Committee has partnered with Kowelec Electrical Contractors to bring 'The Connected Circus' to Harcourt.

Centre Stage

Of course, there will be food and beverages on offer throughout the day and, back at Centre Stage, the main action commences from 11.30 am. One of the most memorable aspects of the Applefest is the Apple Pie Eating Competition. Who can forget the cream smothered faces of the eager competitors?

Music

Having sampled the food, and strolled around the many producers, makers and plant stalls, it will be time to grab some liquid refreshment and secure a seat in the shade to enjoy the top-notch musical program. Head of the playbill is Eliza Hull. Eliza is an award-winning musician. Her music has been described as 'stirring, captivating and heartfelt.' She is regularly played on radio nationally and internationally. To cap off the afternoon of to-notch music, the Applefest crowds will be entertained by the Australian Women's Choir. This choir focuses on Pop/Rock and takes pride in performing some of Australia's most iconic hits along with music from all over the globe. The choir has a long history of performing at country festivals, as well as in front of the crowds at the AFL Grand Final.

Harcourt Applefest 2023 is an opportunity to meet your neighbours, scan the work of community groups, and enjoy the many and varied products and talents that exist in the Harcourt Valley. This one-day event is made special by local art and live music, as well as by providing the opportunity to sample the region's best produce, tasty food, cider and wine.

**When: 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturday
11 March 2023**

**Where: James Park – right in the
centre of Harcourt**



Chatting with Harcourt CWA

I am chatting to you today from beautiful Kingston Beach in Tasmania, a mere 13 kilometres from Hobart and my favourite place in the world.

Our son moved to Tassie thirty-five years ago, so we have had many wonderful trips to visit him and his gorgeous family, and here we are again.

And, as we all know, you can't be in two places at once, which means that I have missed our first CWA get-together for the year, Friendship Day, when we catch up with other members for the first time in the New Year to hear all the latest news, but that will have to wait until our first meeting for the year in February.

CWA at HVPS Grade 6 Graduation



I do have some news from late last year, however. Harcourt Primary School students, Darcy White and Makenzie Tunn, were presented with the CWA Encouragement Award by CWA President, Robyn McConville, at the Grade 6 graduation ceremony on 12 December 2022. The award, a \$50 book voucher from Stoneman's Bookroom in Castlemaine, is given to a boy and girl (selected by the school) who have completed their final year of school. CWA member, Judy Kent was also there on the day. The afternoon was followed by a dinner in the evening with students and their parents, teachers and members of the School Council.

I am looking forward to chatting with you again throughout the year and meeting a few new faces at our monthly meetings, which are held on the first Thursday of each month at 1.00 pm at the Harcourt Leisure Centre.

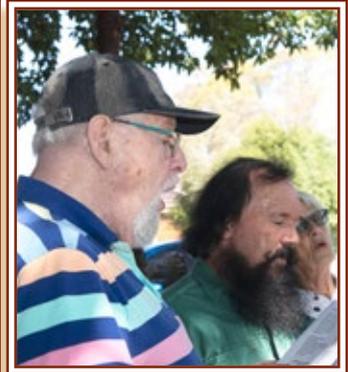
Do pop in and say hello; we are a friendly lot.

Enjoy your day,

Lyn Rule

Harcourt CWA Publicity Officer

Thank you MASC for Santa's early visit



On 18 December Stanley Park was graced by an early visit from Santa who arrived with Elf Helper, Helen, on a very shiny red fire truck driven by Tyrone and Raewyn Rice. Most people agreed that the BBQ, face painting, giant bubble making, music, visit from Santa and the Elf Helper on the CFA truck and music from Thompson's Foundry Band made for a lovely afternoon, which was capped off by the crowning of 2023's Applefest Royalty, Phil Musat and Di Lederman. The children certainly enjoyed themselves.

The Harcourt community sincerely thanks Mount Alexander Shire Council for its very welcome Christmas grant, so this very important event could be held. We were delighted that Councillor Tony Cordy came to the celebration, along with around 100 community members.

Thank you to Thompson's Foundry Band for once again supporting Harcourt's Christmas celebrations. A huge thank you also goes out to all the volunteers who made the BBQ happen, including the HPA working group, the CFA representatives Tyrone and Raewyn Rice, Nick Quirk, John Baldock, Dave Scofield, and Helen Shuffell. We are looking forward to next year's celebration.

Thank you MASC for Santa's early visit.

Photos courtesy of Bronnie Dean.



Harcourt CFA

Fire Restrictions Have Commenced

By the calendar, the summer season starts on the 1st of December. In previous years we have seen typical summer conditions start to appear before this in November. This year, however, these conditions were delayed by the influence of La Niña. This delayed the commencement of fire restrictions, with Greater Bendigo starting on the 19th of December and Mount Alexander Shire not until after Christmas on the 28th.

While, for some, this may have not allowed enough time to be ready with grass fuel management due to still having wet and boggy ground, the timing worked out about right when matched to grass curing figures.

One downside of this is the risk of fire from slashing and mowing operations, and this has been reflected in some of the fires that brigades have attended in Central Victoria. The other risk is with vehicles in dry grass which can lead to a grass fire. Avoid driving vehicles and motorbikes through dry grass. The risk of starting a fire from the hot exhaust system is high. Grass can also become caught up and accumulate around the underbody of vehicles and near exhaust systems. Even pulling over into grass at the side of the road could start a serious grassfire without you even being aware.

Brigade Incidents

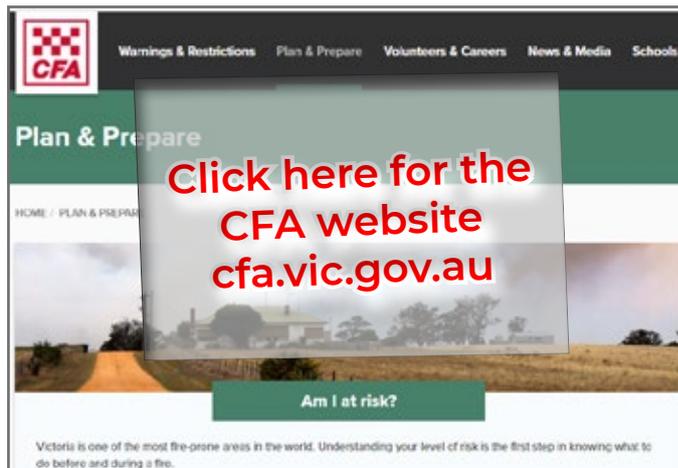
While the brigade has not attended any fires started by vehicles driving in long grass, we attended a truck fire, along with the Lockwood Brigade, to the car park below the service station at Ravenswood on the 30th November.

December saw us turnout to support the Castlemaine Brigade to a bushfire on the south end of their town. This had started from a previous burn-off when the daily temperatures became warmer.

Just before Christmas, we had a car catch fire due to an electrical fault on the Calder Freeway at Ravenswood South.

The first half of January has been reasonably quiet for us with one grass fire in Twyford Street on the 9th and a call two days later to a small grass fire in the median strip of the Calder Freeway at Faraday. This was started by a contractor carrying out slashing works for VicRoads. The Elphinstone Brigade arrived on scene first and were able to quickly extinguish the fire.

The second half of the month has been a little busier, with six turnouts from the 22nd to the 28th. There were two fires on the 22nd that the brigade attended. The first at around 4pm to a tree fire caused by a lightning strike in Moffat Drive Harcourt



North (as support to the Sedgwick Brigade). This was closely followed, at just after 6.30pm, by a grass fire in Jennings Hill Road in the Sutton Grange Brigade area.

The following day there was a call to a truck fire on the Calder Freeway which, fortunately, was a minor event.

On Australia Day, a fire started off at Morgans Road Barfold in country that is not ideal for putting out. The call was made early to escalate the response to twenty tankers which included our Tanker One to respond to the firefight.

There were another two callouts on Saturday 28th. The first at lunchtime, to a bushfire in Llewellyn Road below the Golden Point Reservoir which appeared to be started by an electric water pump. The second was that evening – we were paged to assist Castlemaine to a gas heater fire, but were not required to attend once they arrived on scene and assessed the situation.

Fire Safety Essentials Meeting

The 2022 CFA Fire Safety Essentials Community Meeting for the Harcourt area was held at our fire station in December and there were twelve attendees taking the opportunity to find out more about fire safety and gather information on how to make their home and property better prepared against the risk of fire. We appreciate those who took the time to attend as these meetings only continue each year due to community needs and support.

All the best for 2023, stay prepared. Plan. Act. Survive.

Tyrone Rice
Brigade Community Safety Coordinator

HARCOURT VALLEY VINEYARD
Visit Bendigo's Most Awarded Winery

- Weddings, events and functions
- 2021 Brides Choice Awards winner

Open Sunday 12–4 pm or by appointment only
Bookings please call Marie on 0431 996 515
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P: 03 5474 2223

Lmct:10769

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Powering Along



Happy New Year from the VMR! We have had a great start this year; the rain has finally lifted and progress is powering along. We have now completed installing 208 roofing beams, joining up the main beams to form our twin 80 metre platforms.

Platform number one has taken shape thanks to a massive pour of 56 cubic metres of concrete, and it won't be long until it's joined by platform two. All the sub-surface drainage is complete, along with the retaining walls. We are now laying large areas of mulch,

in preparation for planting to take place in autumn. Alongside other grounds clean up works, things are starting to take shape.

Another mile stone was the progression of the 'Bendigo A' signal box restoration works, at the north end of our car park. With the footings installed, we then craned the lower section into its place. As mentioned, we have had a great start to the year, all thanks to our dedicated members, volunteers and the generosity of our business partners.

*Andrew Mierisch
President, Victorian Miniature Railway*

A brief history of Signal Box 'A' at VMR

In August 2020, *The Core* was following the progress of the latest acquisition at VMR. This was Signal Box A which was once located at Bendigo Railway Station. Signal Box A, was one of four – A, B, C and D – which directed trains moving in and out of the Bendigo Train Station. Signal Box A was located near the Thistle Street Bridge and directed trains to and from Melbourne.



Photo courtesy of markbau@victorianrailways.net

Signal Box 'A' was built in 1921 and was purchased in 1990 by a collector, who then moved it onto private land. When the collector moved overseas, the land with the box on it was bought by a family nearby. The new owners tried to dispose of it, without success, but then they discovered VMR and offered it free of charge, if VMR organised the removal.

At the time Andrew said, 'We have arranged to have the box moved on a large flatbed over-size semi-trailer. We are pulling the roof off and it's going to be split in the middle; its designed to split in the middle as that's how they built them. The roof needs to come off to comply with height limits for the oversize transport.'

Signal Box A arrived at VMR in 2021 and the team at VMR have now commenced the project of restoration. Perseverance pays off at last!



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Supporting your community

**Community Bank
Maldon & District**

Bendigo Bank

03 5475 1747

MaldonMailbox@bendigoadelaide.com.au

From the Faraday Farrago

Faraday Roadside Clean Up – Sunday March 5th, 2023

The Faraday Community Association encourages you to join in a Faraday roadside clean up to coincide with Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday March 5th 2023. With enough participants we can remove litter from four major sections of the main roads in Faraday and roads branching off these.

- Harmony Way: Salathiel Road to Golden Point Reservoir Road
- Harmony Way: Pollards Road to Golden Point Reservoir Road
- Faraday Sutton Grange Road: Joseph Young Drive to Harmony Way
- Golden Point Reservoir Road: Golden Point Reservoir to Harmony Way

Additional roads may include: McKittericks Road, Faradale Drive, Kennedy's Lane, Moons Lane, Pollards Road, Musselwhite Road & Joseph Young Drive.

If you can assist, please select a section of roadside and notify Jenny (contact details below) of your preferred area so we can avoid doubling up and hopefully cover as much roadside as possible.

Dunstan's Flat Reserve on Golden Point Road will be used as the central deposit point on the Sunday. Bags and gloves can be supplied prior to the weekend or on Saturday or Sunday. Bagged litter collected is to be brought to Dunstan's Flat by no later than 4:00pm Sunday. Mt Alexander Shire has offered to assist with the disposal of litter collected. This needs to be sorted into two separate categories:

- General Waste Litter – White Bag – to be left next to the skip
- Recyclable Material Litter – Yellow Bag – to be left next to the Faraday Community sign
- Tyres and other non-landfill materials – if collected place next to the skip for separate collection

For insurance benefits Volunteers must register with the Clean Up Australia Day Council via the Faraday Community Association. Bags will be delivered to you prior to the weekend and registration forms will be provided for completion at that time.

Children under 16 years can participate but must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian.

Contact and enquiries to: Jenny Leishman: 0427931391 or by email: jenny@leishman.org



Harcourt Uniting Church

In my last article we were preparing for Christmas and now we're into the second month of 2023 and so it's back to school, back to work and back into day-to-day life. I hope everyone has been able to enjoy a break from routine and make time to be with your families.

As a lead up to Easter, we will be celebrating Pancake Day on Sunday 12th Feb at morning tea. Shrove Tuesday (Tuesday 21st in 2023) was traditionally the last day for families to eat all the 'luxury' foods in the pantry before the start of Lent in the lead up to Easter. These foods included flour, eggs, and dairy products and when mixed together they made delicious pancakes.

Pancake Sunday will be an opportunity for members to donate money for the work of Uniting – an agency of the Uniting Church fundraising in support of people in need. The Coffee Cup Challenge has been another way members have been able to support Uniting by putting their coins (for the cost of a cup of coffee) into a donation box.

On Sunday 5th February we will be celebrating the Ordination of Cath James into the ministry of the Uniting Church at a service at 2.30 pm in the Castlemaine Uniting Church. Ordination, in simple terms, is the

appointment of a person to become a minister within a Church. Cath became a candidate for the ministry through the support of our congregations and will be part of the ministry team at Brunswick Uniting Church in 2023. We look forward to supporting and encouraging her as she moves into ministry.

Every Tuesday from 11am to 11.30 am the Castlemaine Uniting Church is open for anyone who wishes to come together for prayer.

Harcourt Uniting Church warmly welcomes everyone to join us any Sunday at 9am at the Uniting Church in Buckley Street Harcourt. We always conclude with morning tea in the hall and a chance to chat with each other. On the 5th Sundays of the year we join with the Castlemaine congregation for a combined service and we plan to hold a couple of these services at Harcourt in 2023 when there are 5 such Sundays on the calendar.

A boss asked one of his employees: 'Do you believe in life after death?'

'Yes Sir,' replied the new recruit.

'Well that makes everything just fine,' the boss went on,' because just after you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother's funeral, she called in here to see you!'

Jan Jenkin

Linda Newton



Among the Harcourt Blackberries. It's a bit of a squeeze.



Harcourt Heritage Centre

Cometh the hour...cometh the man – Ken Eagle

Harcourt's 1941 harvest of apples and pears was a bumper crop. A glut of perishable fruit was going to waste in the orchards as the ground was littered with windfalls which would be fed to stock or left to rot.

Before the war, 80% of the Harcourt crop had been railed for export. In 1940 and 1941, the export market was unavailable. Without help, most growers faced the prospect of being flat broke. The Commonwealth Government, recognising that orchards are a valuable national asset, set up the Apple and Pear Marketing Board to administer an 'apple and pear acquisition scheme' under the control of a committee in each State.

The Harcourt committee, which reported to the state committee, consisted of a nominated member from each of the growers' organisations, these being RD Portwine of the Harcourt Fruit Supply Co. and G Pritchard of the Harcourt Fruit Growers Progress Association, with Kenneth V Eagle as Chairman.

Ken Eagle, then aged 38, had been a delegate to the Victorian Fruit Marketing Board from 1926 onwards, travelling to Melbourne for monthly board meetings. He was the natural choice for the role with the Apple and Pear Marketing Board.

The Harcourt Committee was to supervise and direct the picking, delivery, packing, cool storage and sale of all acquired fruit. Every aspect of the horticulturalist's activity was under government control, and that control was exercised by the chairman/manager of the local committee, Ken Eagle.

Growers had to obtain committee permission to pick their fruit, if, in fact, it was to be picked at all. It was alleged that

POVERTY AMID PLENTY "ALL WRONG" Premier's Comment

BENDIGO, Sunday. — The paradox of poverty amid plenty was all wrong, declared Mr. Dunstan, Premier, at a PSA at Eaglehawk Town Hall today.

Mr. Dunstan said he had never thought that he would live to see the day when a farmer was forced to put limitations upon the amount of produce that he grew on his land. He referred to the thousands of cases of apples left rotting on the ground at Harcourt, while thousands of people were too poor to buy an apple.

From The Argus 27 October 1941 via Trove

fruit often fell to the ground before the committee was ready to take it. One grower, speaking respectfully, said, 'the inspection of fruit has been perhaps a little erratic.'

Once picked, the fruit was to be delivered to the committee, which would then arrange storage and packing which was carried out by the cooperative packing houses (for example, the Harcourt Fruit Supply Co) at a rate per case set by the Victorian state committee.

Complaints arose as to the amount of fruit rejected by the committee. Of the fruit delivered to the depot, some growers achieved a 90% pack out. But, overall, less than half the crop was sold.

Fruit that was not considered marketable was to be left on the trees to fall to the ground. The orchardist was paid for unsaleable fruit under a scheme of 'tree measurement'. However, the compensation payments were slow to arrive. In some instances, the tree measurers employed by the Department of Agriculture, failed to fully assess the crop. A permit was required if the fruit-grower wanted to sell the windfalls.

It was not long before grumbles from all fruit growing regions reached the ears of Federal Members of Parliament. In April 1941, a joint parliamentary committee was appointed to enquire into the operation of the Apple and Pear Board. Senators and MHRs met with representative growers at Castlemaine in mid-July 1941. The evidence taken at the enquiry provides a vivid snapshot of the wartime conditions faced by the orchardists.

The enquiry was told that there were 1,815 acres of apples and 586 acres of pears growing in Harcourt. A petition requesting



that the acquisition scheme continue for the duration of the war was signed by 103 out of a total of 146 growers in Harcourt and was handed to the enquiry.

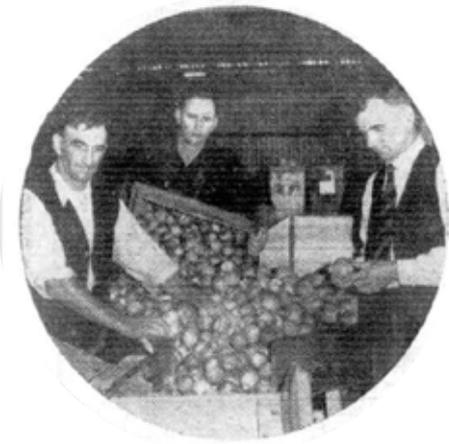
Much of the Enquiry's time was taken up with discussion of the costs of production and the desirability of fixing the retail price of fruit. It was pointed out that the cost of spray materials had risen by 10% and the cost of a new bushel case had doubled (from threepence to sixpence). Every witness spoke of the shortage of labour.

Growers spoke of fruit left in the hot sun for hours at the committee's premises, of tree-measurers who skimmed their work, and of being fobbed off by the committee's accountants when they complained about unfair reductions – for 'shrinkage' – in the pack out. One witness pointed out to the unhappy growers that their difficulties were caused, not by the Apple and Pear Board, but by a man named Hitler and his ally, Mussolini.

An enormous responsibility fell on the shoulders of the local manager, Kenneth Eagle. He was the last to give evidence at the Castlemaine hearings of the enquiry. He told the enquiry that he had been in the industry for sixteen years and, in partnership with George Michell, he conducted an orchard of 43 acres of apples and 12 of pears (this was a relatively large orchard). He addressed the allegations of maladministration that had been made. None of the criticisms were personal, rather, they had been aimed at the stifling and inflexible bureaucratic controls created by the government scheme.

The report of the joint parliamentary committee was tabled in September 1941. It recommended that the acquisition scheme be continued (with some improvements) for the duration of the war.

Continued next page ...



'Mr F.A. Murray (right), Government Fruit Inspector, examining apples at the grader' Weekly Times 5 April 1941 via Trove.

Continued from the Previous page.

Ken Eagle continued in the role of Harcourt chairman/manager of the Apple and Pear Acquisition Scheme for the remainder of World War 2. He was so impressed with the idea behind the scheme that, when the War finished in 1945, he initiated a similar scheme on a smaller scale among the local growers. This was known locally as the Harcourt Fruit Pool.

Ken Eagle, as manager of the Harcourt Orchardists Ltd, was depicted in the Weekly Times 'Harcourt Identities' of 2 August 1950 in collar and tie, striding purposefully, cigarette in hand, as he carried out his duties.

Meanwhile, the orchard work had to be continued. From 1946 to 1965, Hedley James worked as manager of the Eagle orchards. Hedley's days were spent ploughing, picking, pruning or spraying while his employer was occupied at the office and packhouse near the railway station.

In addition to his full-time role, Ken Eagle was a director of the Harcourt Fruit Growers Association, a member of the Irrigators Committee, was prominent in the ANA and Buffalo Lodges and a foundation member of Brooks Cricket Club. His advice as a prominent grower was often sought and freely given to newcomers to the industry.

For 146 Harcourt fruit growers and their families (the bulk of Harcourt's then population), the early 1940s was a time of dread. Labour shortages, rising costs, a glut of fruit and the loss of export trade threatened them with ruin. It was only by government intervention, with its attendant bureaucracy, that the orchards of the Harcourt Valley were preserved. It was during the difficult conditions of wartime that Ken Eagle, already an industry leader, became the man of the hour.

This 'thumbnail sketch' has been compiled for the Harcourt Core by the Harcourt Heritage Centre from the CH James Collection and from the report of the joint parliamentary committee tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament on 25 September 1941.

HM McLean's copy of the report was donated to the Heritage Centre by his daughter-in-law, the late Muriel 'Tuppy' McLean. The statements of our local representatives are on pages 405 to 423 of the report.

The silver lining?

FREE FRUIT BETTER IN QUALITY THIS YEAR

The standard of fruit distributed free to school children and poor families throughout the State by the State Relief Committee is better this year than last. Mr. Henderson, secretary of the committee, said yesterday.

This was because surpluses from packing sheds, which normally went to the committee, were of better quality than usual because of the apple and pear acquisition scheme. Previously the committee had to be content with lower grade fruit and windfalls; this year these were not being gathered.

In the last week-end, with the help of Harcourt and Ferntree Gully producers, 1,000 bags of apples were distributed. Pakenham and Garfield districts were expected to contribute this week as well.

From The Argus, 22 Mar 1941 via Trove.

What has changed in eighty years?

In evidence presented in 1941 to a Commonwealth parliamentary enquiry, it was stated that that year there were 146 Harcourt orchards comprising, in total, 1,815 acres of apple trees and 586 acres of pear trees.

Readers of *The Core* will have noticed that there are not as many orchards in the valley these days. The volunteers at the Harcourt Heritage Centre have set to work with metric conversion tables and calculators to gauge the extent of the orchards now occupying the fertile soils of the valley. Their findings are only ever going to be approximate.

Yes, you can count the orchardists on the fingers of two hands;-

- Blackwood Orchard,
- Chaplin Orchards
- Dash Farm
- Gee Vee Kiwi
- Geoffrey Thompson Orchards.
- Henry of Harcourt
- Geo. Kyvetos
- Langdale
- Montague Pty Ltd.
- Mount Alexander Fruit Garden

(There may be others that we have overlooked – apologies to those we have omitted.)

In 1941, the orchards covered about 971 hectares. By adding up the approximate area of each of today's ten orchards we arrive at a total of 210 hectares now under cultivation.

So, fewer orchards occupy less land in 2023 than in 1941. But are there fewer fruit trees?

In 1941 the fruit trees were planted 20 foot by 20 foot (6.1 metres by 6.1 metres) This meant that there were about 269 trees per hectare. So, there were approximately 260,000 fruit trees in the Harcourt orchards in 1941.

In 2023 the fruit trees are set out in rows about 3.5 metres apart and, within the rows, the trees are planted at 1.4 or 1.5 metres spacing. This calculates to about 2,042 trees per hectare. So, there are approximately 428,000 fruit trees in the Harcourt orchards in 2023.

Harcourt orchards of 1941 cultivated varieties that were not always prolific bearers. The trees, many of them quite large, were pruned hard and did not always get the fertiliser and water they needed. In terms of overall quality, today's Harcourt apples are first class. Apple trees in today's orchards are better fed and watered, are more efficiently managed, and fruit more regularly.

Along with increasing diversity in the use of horticultural land for specialty orchards, vines and olive groves, there have been measurable improvements in efficient land use and water use by the apple orchards.

The Harcourt valley has proven to be a winner in horticulture. The best indicator of this is that the apple crop, in total, is equal to or larger than that which was obtainable in the traditional orchard, even though there are fewer producers, and less acreage under cultivation.

George Milford

Celebrating 100 Editions of the Core

Harcourt Bowls Club was once again the host for a Harcourt celebration. Around 50 people gathered on 8 December to acknowledge and celebrate the success of *The Core* newsletter as an important and valuable town asset. The most enjoyable and fun evening was kicked off with speeches by George Milford and Robyn Miller which outlined the history of the *Core* and the dedication and skills of its editor, regular contributors, and volunteers. The evening concluded with a small presentation to Robyn Miller for her work over nine years in bringing *The Core* up to its current standard. For those of you who were unable to attend on the evening we are publishing excerpts of the two speeches below.

Sha Cordingley

Editor's comments

Thank you all for being here today to celebrate the milestone of the 100th edition of *The Core*.

It will be plain to you when you peruse the cover of this edition of *The Core* that it has taken the input of many people to make Harcourt News/*The Core* what it is today. I want to express sincere thanks to them all and thank our advertisers including Mount Alexander Shire without whom we could not survive. There were some early editions of papers in Harcourt: The Harcourt Valley News prepared by Barry Constable in the 2000's and a few early editions of *The Core* after the Harcourt Progress Association was established.

Barry Constable produced a quarterly paper in the 2000's called the Harcourt Valley News. We have only been able to find one copy which is the July/August

2007 edition. It contains an editor's message and contact details for the editor and advertising. It has a Kid's page and articles about the CWA, the Leisure Centre, a noticeboard and of course a history story from George Milford about how Blackjack Road came to be named. I believe this story has since been recycled in *The Core*.

The first editions of *The Core* were created shortly after the Harcourt Progress Association was formed. These were published by wife and husband team, Kelly Aitken and JP Frappier. We have found only one of these in the archives. JP was a graphic artist and developed *The Core* logo with the apple core and with the 'O' in the core appearing as an apple cut in half. Once JP and Kelly purchased a café business known as Run Rabbit Run in Castlemaine, they were no longer able to continue to produce the paper. In late 2013, at an HPA meeting it was realised that a more permanent arrangement for an editor was needed and I was encouraged to take up the role.

And as some may be aware the first edition of *The Core* which I produced was a single, double sided A3 sheet. I believe that after the community building process which resulted in the formation of the Harcourt Progress Association, we had a platform and a reason to feel confident that we could call on institutions, clubs and associations in Harcourt to contribute to the new newspaper. And people in Harcourt responded. They may have done so wondering, 'Will this last?' I have wondered the same, but over time *The Core* has been established and I believe people trust it, if for nothing else, its reliability.

Making a local paper dependable is a challenge but I have found great support from our volunteers who assist in the production and distribution of the paper. These people are: firstly, Bernie Schultz who does the design and layout

of the paper so professionally, and our production team: Sha Cordingley, Alison Curtis, Bronnie Dean, Lois Denham, Vera Hemkes, Michele O'Brien and Katie Petrusma.

I want to acknowledge our past Treasurer, Pauline Wilkinson, who put in the 'hard yards' setting up the electronic accounting system for HPA and then took over the advertising role for *The Core* from long-standing advertising coordinator Genevieve Ward. Thank you to our folding and distribution team of Liz Bini, Moira McLennan, Liz Rowe and Liz Ward who have been on board since the very beginning when I was producing copies in the back room at home and we would meet around my dining table to put the paper together.

Succession is always a challenge in local newspaper productions, and I have had great support from John Ellis the editor of Chewton Chat. John introduced me to the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria which provides collegiate support. With continuity in mind, I especially want to thank Sha Cordingley who is stepping up to share the editing, month about, from 2023.

Thank you to our readers who give donations to *The Core* when they collect their paper; these are used to help cover running costs. The last nine years have been nothing, if not challenging, but here we are at a 100 editions, and trusting that with good planning and willing hands we have set *The Core* on the path where it is seen as viable and worth continuing into the future.

Robyn Miller

The first number of *The Core* was issued in December 2013 by Harcourt Progress Association with the enthusiasm and editorial input of Robyn Miller and Jacqueline Brodie-Hanns. The first issue publicised the upcoming Jazz Fundraiser at Harcourt Valley Vineyard,



Robyn gave a speech



Sharing stories



Edna and Ken read the latest

the summer fire restrictions, the freshly published Community Plan, Harcourt Bowling Club, a human-interest article on Harcourt artist Janet Goodchild-Cuffley and news from Harcourt Heritage Centre, which had just then published Jase Haysom's topographical map of Mount Alexander.

The second edition of *The Core* included input from Harcourt Uniting Church, CWA and the Mountain Bike Park Committee plus news of Harcourt's Australia Day and Applefest. Edition three included contributions from Harcourt Landcare and Coliban Water together with the first of the 'Harcourtians' pen sketches. Thus, by the third monthly print run, a cohort of contributors had come into existence. It is to their credit that those contributors have met their monthly deadlines every month since then.

The Core is a very grounded publication. It is grounded in the organisational life of a community that has a dispersed town centre, no dominant civic organisation, is largely self-regulating, a community that only thrives by voluntary effort,

a community that has a thirst for information, Information that is factual.

The Harcourt News is drawn from the full range of local organisations, sporting, religious, cultural, educational, social, horticultural, environmental and an emergency service. Within its pages, incidental mention may be found as to the activities of commercial enterprises. Engagement with Shire, Regional and State matters is aided and tolerated only to the extent that it is a valid concern in this particular valley.

We have all seen newspapers and magazines that thrive on sensation... By general consensus, the contributors to *The Core* have avoided diving off to one or other side of what is a very broad spectrum. They stick to the facts, the provision of information and the promotion of worthwhile community activities.

Some of us recall having to write a composition at school. In reality we were compiling an essay. I am sure we all found that to be a chore. Little did we know that, in adult life we would enthusiastically take up the challenge of writing a composition, every month, to a deadline.

We are all in debt to Bernie for the issuance, earlier this year, of 'Guidelines for submissions to the *Core*' there were just two things missing from that page of wise pointers; (1) When you have written down all that is in your head, go back and cut up every paragraph into short sharp sentences. (2) And, avoid and. Quite often a full stop is a good substitute for the word 'and'

Today we celebrate 100 issues of a community newspaper.

We celebrate the contributors, also the editorial committee, the printers, the folders and deliverers. To you as contributors, or in whatever role you play, know this. You have achieved much. Every issue of *The Core* serves to make the reader feel informed and connected. Every issue of *The Core* makes Harcourt people feel good about being Harcourtian. Every issue of *The Core* promotes a shared sense that the Harcourt valley is a good place.

George Milford

Photos © generously provided by Richard Menegatti.



George gave a speech



They all got certificates



Katie got a certificate



So did Kay



And more catching up

Community Bank
Maldon & District

 Bendigo Bank

Community Bank Maldon and District is proud to partner with the Castlemaine & District Cricket Association for their annual T20 competition.

Prize money is up for grabs again in our second year and with this being the last round of home and away games, the winner isn't far away!

Head along to a game near you and cheer on your local team.

Community Bank Maldon & District's community partnership (sponsorships and grants) program has provided more than \$3.4million in funding and support to over 500 projects and events in our communities since 1999.

Talk to us if your community group, club or not-for-profit organisation has an activity that needs support.

You'll find the details about Community Partnerships on our website: maldoncb.com.au/helping-the-community/sponsorships-grants



La Larr Ba Gauwa Repairs Get Funding

The 2022 record winter and spring rainfall in Harcourt created severe damage to access roads and trails at La Larr Ba Gauwa, since then the park has been temporarily closed.

The La Larr Ba Gauwa Committee of Management has been working with DECCA (previously DELWP) to reopen some of the trails at the Park. Funding has been secured through the State Government and is aimed at assisting Committee of Management and other groups to repair key assets damaged through recent flood events. The committee is happy to advise that we have now engaged a local Harcourt contractor Stuart King of SJK Excavations in securing the works for road and emergency track repair within the park. Works will commence in the coming weeks. This is a critical step in our ability to start opening some trails to the public.

The committee has also been in discussion with a range of trail building and maintenance companies and can advise that we have shortlisted two companies who will submit final applications to undertake the rebuilding and maintenance on the trails damaged through the flood events.

We would like to thank everyone for your understanding and we look forward to the La Larr Ba Gauwa Mountain Bike Park re-opening for riding.

Trent Gibson

For the La Larr Ba Gauwa Mountain Bike Park Committee

BOOK LAUNCH A HISTORY OF RAVENSWOOD SOUTH

SUNDAY 19 February at 2 pm
Harcourt Valley Heritage and Tourist Centre
(ANA Hall, 7 High Street, Harcourt)



Researched and written by Ken James, this 195 page book includes 12 chapters, 2 appendices, a surname index and many photos and stories of local colour.

Previously, Ken co-authored *A history of Woodbrook* with Judy Eastwood, Ian Robins and Judy Wardlaw.

Refreshments will be available after the launch. A donation to help cover catering costs would be appreciated.

Please let Ken know if you will be attending.

Mobile: 0457 600 668

Email: knjames47@gmail.com

If you have memorabilia of the Ravenswood South/Harcourt area that can be photographed or scanned on the day, these would be highly appreciated to add to the Harcourt Valley Heritage and Tourist Centre's collection.



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Nordic New Year



Bookings are now open for Dhelkaya Health's weekly Nordic Pole Walking classes in 2023.

The classes will be held on Monday morning and Thursday evening in Castlemaine, on Tuesday evenings in Harcourt and Wednesday evenings in Maldon.

Trained volunteers, described by participants as 'patient and encouraging' lead the groups, and teach participants Nordic Pole Walking skills during the school term.

Previous participants have noted the health benefits of Nordic Pole Walking, with one saying that he can "now enjoy long walks without aggravating my foot pain".

"I knew I needed to do regular walking for my fitness, but never enjoyed it due to my health issues. Using Nordic Poles has made all the difference and I now enjoy walking," said previous participant Phil.

Another participant described Nordic Pole Walking as fun and relaxing.

"Newly retired, it was through Dhelkaya Health that I discovered Nordic Pole Walking. It's fun and a great way to relax, plus it's beneficial for my health and mental wellbeing. Thank you!"

Nordic poles are available for use in classes for the duration of the course, and volunteers can assist participants to purchase their own discounted poles if they choose to continue.

Limited spaces are available as classes are kept purposefully small to ensure safety and adequate support for participants.

The free Nordic Pole Walking classes start when school returns, but bookings are essential and interested participants are encouraged to sign up now.

For further information and bookings, please call 5479 1000.

Grace Church Paying Taxes to Caesar

There were Pharisees (members of a very strict religious sect) and Herodians (a variety of politician) who were keen to try and trap Jesus in his words

.... they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. (This was false flattery, bait) You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

These Pharisees and Herodians reasoned that any answer Jesus gave would be the wrong one. If he approved of Roman taxes, he would lose popularity with the masses. If he spoke against Roman taxes, the Jews would accuse him before the Roman government and Pilate would dispose of him for them. It looked like they had Jesus trapped:

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

The Pharisees and Herodians retreated, their plot foiled by Jesus's superior wisdom. Jesus perceived they were hypocrites trying to ensnare him. He responded in a non-politically correct way, revealing what was truly in their hearts. Jesus loved sinners, but hated sin and hypocrisy and was never soft on those issues. If these people would have truly repented, Jesus would have extended mercy to them. But Jesus, love personified, rebuked them soundly and exposed their hypocrisy openly.

Grace Church

Service: 11.00am Sunday
All Welcome

Pastors: Roger & Glenise Thurecht
0422 605 897

gracecastlemaine.org.au

30 Buckley Street, Harcourt



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Harcourt Bowling Club

During the Christmas break, our wonderful band of volunteers was busy improving the green and surrounds. New grab rails have been installed on the East and West ends, and the pace of the green has greatly improved. Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, ASQ, new matting will also be installed around the back edges and gutters on the green.

Pennant teams

Harcourt Pennant teams continue to show their earlier promise of doing well this season, and being competitive. The club has welcomed a number of new players this season who are contributing well to the teams.

Midweek

Harcourt Midweek Pennant Divisions 2 and 4 are holding their places well in the higher grades. After round 11 (of 14), Division 2 is clinging onto top spot and Division 4 is in 6th place.

Weekend Pennant

At the end of Round 10, all Weekend Pennant teams continue to provide good competition for the opposition. With four rounds to go, Division 2 holds 7th ladder position; Division 6 sits on top and Division 7 is in eighth position.

Champion of Champions

On Sunday 29 January, Harcourt Singles Champions, Carrol Frost and Phil Clarke, competed in the District Champion of Champions at Eaglehawk. Results will be in the March Core.

Barefoot Bowls

A successful night of Barefoot bowls (and a barbeque) was held on Friday 21 January with over 50 people of all ages in attendance. Another night will be held at a future date – look out for notices around the town.



Sponsors' Challenge

Round 2 of the Sponsors' Challenge is to be held on the evening of Tuesday 7 February. Results will be in the March Core.

Club 100Up Championships

The Championships are well underway for women and men, and already showing some surprises. Results will be in *The Core* as they are completed.

COMING UP IN FEBRUARY/MARCH

Sunday February 5

Men's Invitation Fours Tournament

Tuesday February 7

Sponsors' Night

Thursday February 16

Ladies' Fours Tournament

Sunday March 5

Kidman Invitation Mixed Fours Tournament

Thursday March 9

Ladies' Drawn Championship Pairs (evening)

Wednesday March 15

Men's Championship Gough (drawn) Pairs (evening)

Sunday March 19

Grant Mixed Pairs Tournament

Harcourt's Little Library

Harcourt's Little Library is outside the ANA Hall
It's available any time.

Leave, Borrow
or Take a Book

mainFM is an award winning radio station based in Castlemaine, broadcasting music, community news, talks and specialist programs and events throughout a large area of Central Victoria, serving our community.

With over 100 local volunteer presenters with a passion for radio, our programs are varied and diverse with over 70 shows across the program grid, transmitting 24 hours a day and streaming online via mainfm.net

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Harcourt Valley Primary School Core Student Writing Awards

Lois Denham, our school reporter, is in touch with HVPS staff each month to discuss and report on the latest school news and the school receives a class set of *The Core* every month for the students and staff to use as a resource.

In 2022, *The Core* Committee, wishing to increase student engagement with *The Core*, and to encourage them to write, made the decision to create a writing award for grade 6 students. Lois and I met with Principal Andrew Blake and grade 6 teacher, Kelsie Rowlands to discuss the 'mechanics' of the award. We decided that an external judge would be the fairest way of determining who should be recognised for an award. As a result, we

contacted Susan Green, local author of adult and children's books. Susan is well known for her series of young readers' books based around the character, Verity Sparks. She has 12 published children's books and one adult fiction novel, with another one in progress in 2023. Susan graciously accepted our request and judged four stories produced by young writers in grade 6. More about Susan's works and interests can be found here: <http://veritysparks.com>

Susan gave feedback to each student who submitted a piece of writing. (The entries were anonymous, except for an identifying initial selected by Ms Rowlands). Susan said, "Thank you to all four writers for giving me the opportunity to read your work. It can be intimidating to think of a stranger reading your story, so well done for being bold."

"It was a difficult choice because there was so much individuality and creativity on display. When judging a competition, I always think that it's not about "which is the best story?" but "which story appealed most to me?" So remember that a different judge could well have come up with a different winner."

"I enjoyed Neko's story, it had an intriguing beginning. What's happened

to the narrator? Is he/she a time traveller? It was very mysterious. The growing connection with the monkey was well developed, and there's a warm sense of friendship between them. Neko used very clear language and varied sentence



Lois Denham, (centre) *The Core's* School Reporter with students: Neko Gibson (runner up) and Jack Dorian, (winner), of *The Core* Writing Award. The school celebrated the grade 6 graduation on December 12, 2022.

structure effectively. The sense of an internal dialogue was also well conveyed. This was a sophisticated effort.

"Jack's story, "City Rangers" had a humorous and individual voice which was the standout attribute of this story. I liked the way Jack starts in the middle of the action, and then rewinds to reveal backstory – that's a sophisticated writing strategy. Suspense and action were conveyed through punchy sentences with no words wasted. The ending, which leaves the reader with Jerry's fate unknown, is a good example of a writer letting the audience work it out for themselves

"Struggle, danger, drama... I thought this was a satisfying and well-constructed story, with a beginning, middle and end. Jack kept a tight focus on what he wanted to convey so that, after the backstory was in place, the pace did not let up. This was a great effort. Congratulations!"

Having established *The Core* Writing Award, we hope that as each year goes by, year 6 students are encouraged to write to their best ability and aspire to receiving this award.

Robyn Miller

Councillor Comment

Hi all,

I hope you had a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Australia Day has come and gone and we continue to celebrate in a very inclusive way.

Thanks to Uncle Rick for his welcome to country.

A really nice aspect of the day was the Citizenship Ceremony. We had quite a few community members finalise becoming Australian citizens on the day.

It is great to be involved in this process and the look of joy on our newest citizens and their families is really special.

Also, a big shout out to our Citizen of the Year, George Milford. Thanks again for all your work for our community, George.

We will be working on the 23/24 budget over coming months. It is a lot of hard work but Council continues to be in sound financial shape. Let me know early if you have ideas that should be included in the budget.

There will be discussion among Councillors about the rate cap. I support the rate cap as a general principle and we have managed well so far. It will be interesting to see what Councillors think about the proposed 3.5 percent cap. Remembering that some Councillors went to the last election with a zero percent rate rise commitment the debate should be very interesting.

Many of you will know I have been concerned about the poor state of the freeway. I find it very frustrating that potholes at Woodend have been present for about ten years and the southbound section near Big Hill has had speed reductions for months. Come on Regional Roads Victoria - why is our flagship freeway left in such a poor state? It is about time Central Victoria got a fair go and the road was maintained in a professional manner.

I look forward to hearing all those budget submissions.

Best regards to all,
Tony

AG Cordy
0439 742 434



Have your say

Electoral structure review



Camping on private property



An electoral representation advisory panel is reviewing the electoral structure of Mount Alexander Shire Council and is seeking your input.

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) introduced several changes, including to the electoral structures local councils must have. Throughout 2023-24, 39 Victorian local councils will undergo electoral structure or ward boundary reviews to ensure they comply with the Act.

Mount Alexander Shire Council will be reviewed by an independent electoral representation advisory panel to consider if the council:

- has an appropriate number of councillors
- should be one large unsubdivided area, or
- should be subdivided into wards.

Public information sessions about the review will be held at 12.00pm on Monday 6 February and 6.00pm on Tuesday 7 February. Visit the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au/mount-alexander and click the link to attend the live online event

Submissions for the MASC are open between 8 February 2023 and 1 March 2023. A submission guide and fact sheet are available on the VEC website.

The panel will then make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government which if accepted will determine the structure for Mount Alexander Shire Council at the October 2024 local council elections.

To find out more about the review process and how you can have your say, visit the Mount Alexander Shire Council review page on the VEC website at vec.vic.gov.au/mount-alexander or call 131 832.

Mount Alexander Shire Council is asking for feedback on its plans to remove permit requirements for people seeking to indefinitely put a caravan, tent or tiny home on wheels on their property where there is a dwelling. Currently, property owners need to apply for a permit to do so.

Changes under the proposal would mean:

- A person would be able to camp or occupy a caravan or tiny house on wheels on property where there is an existing dwelling for an indefinite period of time. There would be no requirement for a permit.

A person seeking to camp or occupy a caravan or tiny house on wheels on a property where there is no existing dwelling is still required to apply to Council for a permit through the existing process.

To have your say:

- Visit www.shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au and complete the online survey.
- Drop-in to an information session to provide feedback and have your questions answered by Council staff. Details on information sessions will be posted on Council's Facebook page, and also www.shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.
- Call Council to provide input on 5471 1700
- Email your feedback to info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au
- Pop in to the Civic Centre in Castlemaine and provide feedback face-to-face.
- Pick up a hardcopy survey from the Civic Centre in Castlemaine.

Submissions close on 3 March 2023.

For more information, contact Mount Alexander Shire Council's Coordinator of Community Safety and Amenity, Ron Medler on 5471 1700 or r.medler@mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

From Shire Press Releases



Council news

Have your say on the future of aged care services

We're talking to senior residents across the shire about Federal Government changes to aged care services, including those delivered by Council.

Come along to one of the following drop-in sessions and help us understand your needs for in-home and aged care services.

Castlemaine Town Hall

- Monday 13 February: 9.30am-11.30am, 4.00pm-6.00pm and 6.30pm to 8.00pm
- Wednesday 15 February: 9.30am-11.30am

Maldon Neighbourhood Centre

- Tuesday 14 February: 10.00am-12.00pm

Find out more at shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au.

Working together for a healthy, connected shire

mountalexander.vic.gov.au (03) 5471 1700

Reflecting on Australia Day - Survival Day

Thank you to everyone who came along to our Australia Day - Survival Day community event.

It was a fantastic day and included a Welcome to Country, a citizenship and awards ceremony, and a Survival Day concert programmed by Dja Dja Wurrung Elder Uncle Rick Nelson.

Read more at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/News.

Apply for a Council grant

Do you have an idea for a community project or event? Apply now for a Community Grant or Events Grant to get your project up and running.

Read more at mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Grants.



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Maree Edwards MP

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Listening Posts are postponed until further notice.
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Katie Finlay's Fruit Growing Tips



Happy New Year everyone! Hopefully you've had a peaceful and relaxing break. It's been another cool and wet spring and summer, which has again wreaked havoc on the local stone fruit crop. In some cases, the trees themselves have suffered – we've lost a number of peach and nectarine trees at the farm, which has been a sad blow. The recent hot weather has made a big difference though, and many trees that looked bedraggled a month ago are now green and thriving again. The good thing about growing fruit is that there's always next season to look forward to! And the benefit of having lots of different types of fruit trees in your garden once again shines through. We've still enjoyed a hearty crop of plums, berries, loquats, strawberries, and a few cherries and apricots.

Events

We're full of news this month. First up, we have a few events coming up. The first is an online course we're running to help you write an action plan for your fruit trees. It's called Learn.Plan.Succeed and it kicks off on 14 February at 7.30pm.

Over many years growing fruit we've learned that the single thing that makes the biggest difference is having a plan. Knowing exactly what you should be doing each month (or even each week) throughout the year is very relaxing, and improves your chances of getting a good crop. You can register for the course here: growgreatfruit.com/product/learn-plan-succeed-registration-february-2023/

Next up is our Open Day. We haven't had one for a couple of years, and had planned to hold it months ago, but the weather forced several changes of plans. We're very pleased to announce that it will be held on Sunday 19 March from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. There'll be farm tours of all our enterprises (dairy, market garden, orchard and nursery), delicious food and entertainment. Save the date for now and check the Harcourt Organic Farming Co-op Facebook page for booking details.

The third event is our upcoming summer pruning workshop hosted by The Orchard Keepers and presented by me (Katie). We love holding these on-farm workshops because it gives you a chance to learn the theory and then straight away practice your new-found pruning skills on real trees in our orchard (and don't worry

about potentially damaging our trees, there will be several experienced pruners on hand to help you). The workshop is on Saturday 18 March 2023 from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm (yep, the day before the Open Day – it's going to be a big weekend!).

Our last announcement is that we're thrilled to have been awarded a grant by WWF through their Innovate to Regenerate Program. This program is about 'finding innovative solutions to regenerate and future-proof Australia's precious natural environment and communities.' It's an Australia-wide program, and we're one of 3 local projects that were chosen. You can find out more about it here: www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/regenerate-australia/innovate-to-regenerate

We plan to use our grant to document and share our model of co-operative farming as well as develop a new whole-farm plan, and measure and improve the health of the land we are so lucky to care for. It's a really exciting opportunity for us to learn more about how to care for our little patch of Harcourt.

Top tips

On to this month's top three tips to caring for your fruit trees:

- 1 If you still have fruit on your trees, it's not too late to net. Even a simple drape net provides at least some protection from hail damage and can really help prevent damage from birds, particularly cockies. Smaller and more persistent birds like parrots may need a net that goes all the way to the ground and is secured. Now that fruit fly is a real threat, if you're buying new nets consider getting nets that also exclude fruit fly, as this is the most effective prevention technique for backyard trees. We haven't found any fruit fly at our place yet this season (fingers crossed), but eternal vigilance is required! We're asking fruit fly expert Colin Bain from Biotrap back to Applefest again this year so he can answer all your fruit fly questions, as well as supply traps, baits etc. Drop into the fruitgrowers' tent to catch up with him.
- 2 Keep a close eye on how much water your fruit trees are getting, particularly in the 6–8 weeks before the fruit is ready. While we've just enjoyed

plentiful spring rain, be prepared to water a bit more often than usual if the weather gets hot and windy again. Once a tree has been harvested, you can cut back the amount you're watering to about half. Most of its work is done for the year, though early fruiting trees should keep growing for a while after the fruit has been picked, so don't cut off the water completely if you have enough to spare.

- 3 It is important at this time of year to closely monitor your trees. Try to visit them at least once a week to say g'day. You'll notice whether they're getting enough water and whether the fruit's almost ripe. It also gives you a better chance of catching the culprit if something's having a nibble on the fruit, which will help you figure out how to prevent it.

Hope we see you at one of our workshops or events soon

Happy harvests!

Hugh and Katie

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 Organic Farming Co-op. Head to growgreatfruit.com to sign up for their free Weekly Fruit Tips newsletter, and register for one of their free online workshops.

Grow Great Fruit

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Weather & Water

It will not be a great surprise to readers to learn that 2022 was an exceptionally wet year. Here at Reservoir Road the total rainfall for 2022 was 1023.5 mm. This fell just short of the amount received in 2010 when we received 1108 mm.

Most years we consider ourselves fortunate to receive over 600 mm of rainfall. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) is predicting that La Niña is expected to end in the coming months. However, the system is lingering and producing recent heavy rains in New South Wales and Queensland.

The BOM is not yet ready to say with any firmness that an El Niño is on the way or that we will enter a neutral weather phase. The last El Niño was in 2015 when the rainfall here hit a low of 399 mm. ABC meteorologist, Tom Saunders mentioned in a post on January 18 this year that the El Niño of 2015 'was responsible for Earth's warmest year on record.'

Temperatures in December and January were mostly mild for summer with only a few days nearing 35° and very few warm nights. It has been dry, though. December rainfall was 25 mm, and in January we had a total of 11 mm over two days. The dryness has contributed to a number of grass fires in the region, exactly as predicted by the CFA.

Reservoir information and levels:

Barkers Creek (as at January 9)

Blue-green algae has been identified. While on-water recreation is allowed, visitors are advised to avoid contact with the water.

As at 29 January, 2023 (source BOM)

Barkers Creek 76.7%

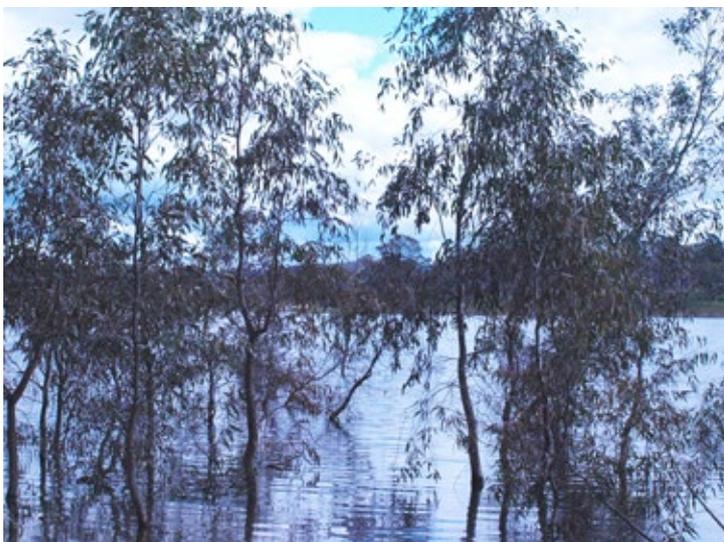
As at 3 February, 2023 (source Coliban Water)

Upper Coliban 99% full

Lauriston 94% full

Malmsbury 67% full

Robyn Miller



Barkers Creek Reservoir in flood, 2013.



Dig a little deeper with GardenSafe

A new EPA program is uncovering the gritty mysteries in your garden.

GardenSafe is a soil screening service that analyses your dirt and tells you what might be in amongst your vegetation. By sending EPA a soil sample from your home garden you can have the data you need at the tip of your green thumb. It's part of a global initiative that helps you investigate soil health and potential contaminants in your garden so you can work out the best use for your patch of paradise.

EPA's Chief Environmental Scientist, Professor Mark Patrick Taylor, says GardenSafe is a great way to dig a little deeper into your soil.

'If you are growing fruit and vegetables at home, you should use GardenSafe to check what is under the surface of your seedlings. The only cost to you is the postage,' Professor Taylor said.

'Our scientists assess each sample they get for trace elements and general soil quality indicators, including soil texture, composition, nutrients and organic carbon,' he said.

'As a science-based regulator we need this data. The findings from GardenSafe help us to build an understanding of potential contamination levels in residential gardens across Victoria. This information will help gardeners better understand what's in their soil. It will also help to reduce potential risk and exposure if soil contamination is present.'

GardenSafe data will not be used for EPA compliance or enforcement activities.

'As a partnership between EPA Victoria and members of the community, GardenSafe is a great example of how we can work together, after all, the environment is everyone's business,' he said. Victorians can send the GardenSafe team three soil samples from their gardens. They must be from a residential property. EPA scientists will analyse the samples and provide a short report detailing the results and how to interpret them. Participants can also access information on growing fruit and vegetables safely in their gardens.

Find out more about GardenSafe on the EPA website epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/get-involved/citizen-science-program/gardensafe

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Lisa Chesters MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BENDIGO

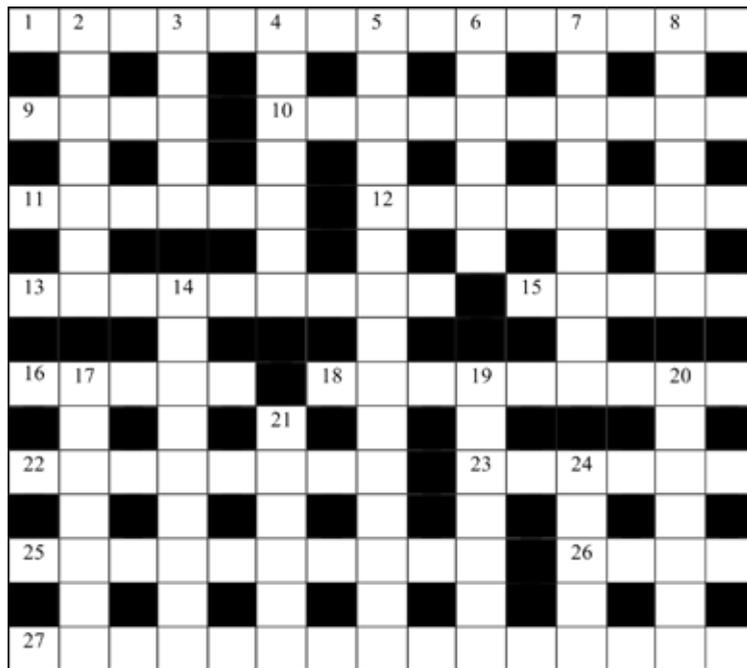
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Authorised by Lisa Chesters, ALP
16 Myers St, Bendigo



Labor

February 2023 Xwd © McW Feb '19



Down:

- 2. It raises air (e.g. in a part of Africa). (7)
- 3. I'm aghast! Your premature exposure was premature... (5)
- 4. The wind led a backflip around it to fade away. (7)
- 5. Other (sober) louts might stand in for the drunks firing problems! (7-8)
- 6. Does he reverse Pole-dancer's parents' anti-marriage stance before he races her off? (6)
- 7. They're usable, ill-formed or not, to get the progeny asleep. (9)
- 8. Strange to think that, in the present fraught climate over franking credits, one Steggles chook could provide for retirement. (4-3)
- 14. Skeleton-shaker shot a poet. (9)
- 17. We were just young start-ups looking for that niche... Er... IOU heaps, I guess, but I'm outa here—see ya later! (7)
- 19. One assumption was that he was a Spanish Cretan... (2,5)
- 20. Can we meet in a cinema for an afternoon romp? (7)
- 21. He's got the upset face in the motley crowd at the stag night! (6)
- 24. Indian opera diva's songs could be deconstructed into her garb. (5)

Across:

- 1. After the deletion, don't sign here! (2,3,6,4)
- 9. How long the first half of the first half of twelve has to ferment? (4)
- 10. Stained window-smasher—cool antics! (10)
- 11. I sound scared enough to come apart. (6)
- 12. Choice of two solutions: a) product of non-distilled process (8), or b) consuming bird with sting? (3,5)
- 13. The tree Rambo pulled apart gauges emotional intensity, weather, etc... (9)
- 15. Dog that slinks out to stop the noise? (5)
- 16. Sharp, not thick... (5)
- 18. Hero meets two others for fun in bed. (9)
- 22. First Nation's minor ego misused as term of exhilaration! (6)
- 23. Titans arranging rocks in N. Ireland? (6)
- 25. Teenager in charge, shortly: she's my relative. (5-5)
- 26. Fashionable polar watering-holes? (4)
- 27. Who scorns the solemn disavowal of it in Scotland? (4,4,7)

December 2022 Xwd solution © McW Oct '18



Down:

- 1. Well and truly mired in frog-pond mud, we hear. [Well? "Needeeep"...]
- 2. Nero's choir has a horn...
- 3. Fashionable bird new to hospital. [Well?]
- 4. Doesn't need a second serve: art gallery [Tate] for fake silk.
- 5. As well and into the bargain, shifter with bauxite [ore] on board.
- 6. Porridge stirred in the portico.
- 7. [I] am too confoundedly [deep] to hamper things.
- 13. Relatively without a doubt? [Well?]
- 15. Absence at one might give polly a chance to deny things absolutely? [Well?]
- 17. Useless to tighten our belts, now that we have fewer wants.
- 18. Put lid on grain in a whimsical move...
- 20. [A scone] might evoke the high seas for some...
- 21. In the '80s, it might have been a feminis..., but these days it's what the lies are held together with... [Well?]
- 24. A crying need, they say, for another level...? [Well?]
- 19. Way to deal with pot—point back to drunk? [Well? S-sot, and 'tosspot' gives you the drunk...]
- 21. Where a Hun may be heard on a boat? (6)
- 22. Friend [pal] scrambling madly on peak?
- 23. Leave, or I'll scramble it, or better it... [Well?]
- 25. House migrants about [re] sofa.
- 26. [I'll] meet lunatics because of my propensity to think without feeling. [Additional clue for 2dn—think Ionesco's play...]

Across:

- 8. Dr Who jailed at the last moment? [Well?]
- 9. Animal from 10's steering and let rip [vent] to create anew! (2-6 or 8)
- 10. Paint the French horse's hair [mane]—in reverse! (6)
- 11. What is it about zilch? [Well? Much...]
- 12. Set up scam for lighthouse? (2,1,3?)
- 13. Attest in stoned [rave].. (4)
- 14. Bath [spa] call not letting too much go?
- 16. Gift before [pre-] it was conveyed?

**Harcourt News/The Core
is published monthly by the
Harcourt Progress Association Inc**
(ABN: 22 887 254 268)

For inclusion in *Harcourt News/The Core* contact the Editor Robyn Miller on news@harcourt.vic.au or 0467 670 271. Contributions of news items, articles, photos, stories, poems and letters are welcome, as are advertisements which help to cover production costs.

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Circulation is 400 hard copies which can be obtained at the Harcourt Service Station, Harcourt Post Office, Harcourt Produce Store, The Little Red Apple, and various outlets in Castlemaine.

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	12:10	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

Community Diary Dates

Tuesday February 7: Nordic Pole Walking, 6 pm Tuesday evenings. Spaces are available; meet at ANA Hall, High Street, Harcourt.

Thursday February 9: 7.30 pm, Landcare Meeting. Hear about the Biodiversity Study re Plan Harcourt and planning for Landcare activities in 2023. Heritage Centre/ANA Hall, High Street, Harcourt.

Sunday February 19: 2 pm, Book Launch: A History of Ravenswood South, at Harcourt Heritage Centre, ANA Hall, High Street, Harcourt.

Saturday March 11: Harcourt Applefest, James Park, Harcourt.

Carpet Bowls: 7 pm Wednesdays, Carpet Bowls, summer and winter, Leisure Centre, Bingham's Road, Harcourt.

CFA: Brigade meeting night is the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 8.00 pm; Sunday morning equipment checks and maintenance runs starts at 9.00 am; Siren is tested at 9.15am. Contact: Captain Andrew Wilson for further details 0428 387 339. CFA is located in Bridge Street, Harcourt.

CWA: First Thursday of the month, 1.00 pm at Harcourt Leisure Centre, Bingham's Road, Harcourt.

Grace Church: Tuesdays at 10.30 am: Morning tea and prayers; Sunday Service at 11 am; 30 Buckley Street, Harcourt. Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm: Zoom Bible Study: A Christian discipleship course covering the basics of the faith. All welcome, you can commence at any time. Please contact the Pastor for a link: pastor@gracecastlemaine.org.au.

Harcourt Bowls Club: See page 16.

Harcourt Lions Club: Meetings every third Friday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Victorian Miniature Railway, Harmony Way.

Heritage Centre: Every Wednesday at the ANA Hall from 9 am – 3 pm or by appointment: 0400 916 527.

Pony Club: Second Sunday of the month. Contact Peggy Mills, 0419 924 000. The Pony Club is located next to the swimming pool.

Uniting Church: Sundays at 9 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 - 10 am or contact, Jan 5474 2226, to arrange for collection.

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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Plan Harcourt – environmental study

The first meeting of our local Landcare group will welcome Town Planners from the Shire, Nathan Lord and Lauren Watt, to discuss the plan for a biodiversity audit to take place, in relation to Plan Harcourt. Members and others interested in the biodiversity audit are invited to attend on Thursday February 9, at 7.30 pm at the ANA Hall/Harcourt Heritage Centre, High Street, Harcourt.

What's new in 2023?

To begin our twenty-sixth year of environmental care, Landcare members are beginning 2023 with a call to action by examining our Five Year Plan which was launched in 2022. Members have

been asked to read the plan and respond with areas of interest or ideas for bringing the plan to life.

At our first meeting on February 9, members will be focussing on the key activities in the plan and establishing priorities and how we will achieve them. For example:

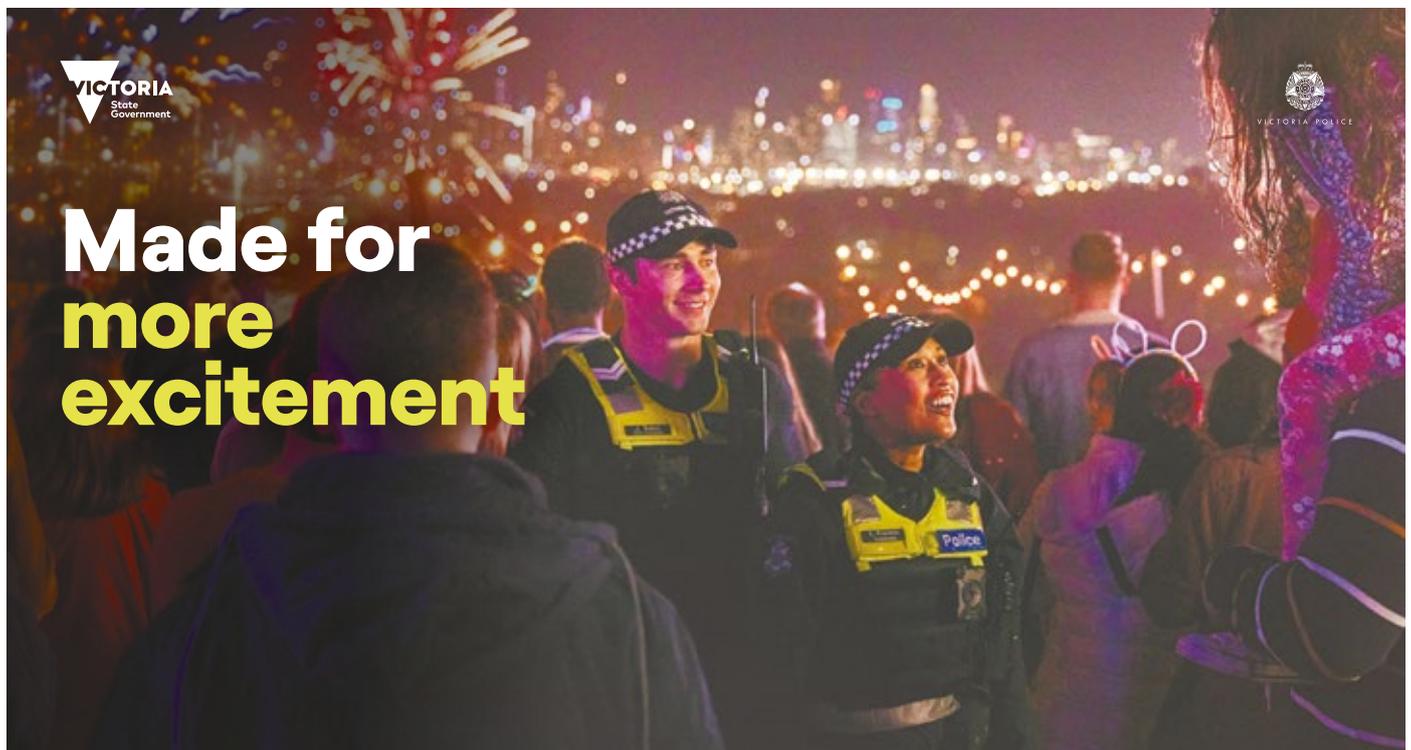
- New ideas on how our projects and working bees are going to attract new members.
- Exploring new grants that are coming up.
- How will we engage young people and families?
- Are there special areas of interest you'd like the group to explore/incorporate? For example: guest speakers on specific topics eg wetlands.
- How to make working bees more inclusive.

Members will be very pleased to know that Landcare Victoria is putting effort into capacity building for Landcare groups. Two workshops one on fundraising and the other on recruiting will be available on line for members to access. In addition Landcare Victoria has a series of webinars and workshops planned for 2023.

Robyn Miller



Harcourt Valley Landcarers celebrated their 25th Anniversary in 2022.



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