



Buninyong and District
Community News

Village VOICE

EDITION 9, FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

IN THIS EDITION

Smart Living Expo
Community Updates
What's Happening



YOUR FREE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Buninyong COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

ART LESSONS with TRUDY NICHOLSON

When – Monthly 2nd Tuesday of Month
Times – 10am to 3pm
Where – Uniting Church Hall
Contact – Trudy ph. 0407 613 038

ATA ACTING CLASSES

When – Tuesday during school term
Time – from 6pm & 7pm
Where – Buninyong Town Hall
Contact – Adam ph. 0419 593 257
Website – www.ataactingstudio.com

BUNINYONG BOOK SHOP BOOK CLUB

When – Monthly 2nd Tuesday of Month
Time – 1pm
Where – Buninyong Community House
Contact – Martine ph. 0418 503 844

BUNINYONG BRIDGE CLUB

When – Every Tuesday
Time – 10am to 12pm
Where – Buninyong Community House
Contact – Ange ph. 0402 098 267

BUNINYONG COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP

When – Every Friday – during school term
Time – 9:30am to 11:30am
Website – www.buninyongcommunityplaygroup.square.site

BUNINYONG & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When – 3rd Saturday of Month
Time – 9:30am to 1pm
Where – Buninyong Town Hall
Website – <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis/>

BUNINYONG SENIOR CITIZENS

When – Every Tuesday
Time – 11:30am to 3pm
Where – Buninyong Community Facility, Forest Street
Contact – Jan ph. 0409 174 605

CWA BUNINYONG GENERAL MEETING

When – Monthly 1st Thursday of Month
Time – 7pm

Where – Buninyong Community House

CWA BUNINYONG MONDAY CREATIVES

When – Monthly 2nd Monday of Month

Time – 10am to 12pm

Where – Buninyong Town Hall

CWA BUNINYONG MASTERCLASS MONDAY

When – Monthly 3rd Monday of Month

Time – 6pm onwards

Where – Buninyong Town Hall

CWA Contact – Sonya ph. 0417 168 456

Facebook – [CWA Buninyong](https://www.facebook.com/CWA.Buninyong)

BUNINYONG COMMUNITY CHOIR

When – Fortnightly from 6 February

Time – 1pm to 2:15pm

Where – St Peter and St Paul's Church

Email – hello@singbuninyong.com.au

DE SOZA PARKRUN

When – Every Saturday
Time – Briefing starts at 7:50am
Where – De Soza Park
Contact – desoza@parkrun.com

ELDORADO LINE DANCING

When – Every Friday
Time – 10am to 2pm
Where – Buninyong Town Hall
Contact – Ella – ellaeldorado@gmail.com

HANDMADE AT THE HALL

When – Monthly 4th Monday of the Month
Time – 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Where – Garibaldi Hall

Contact – Carli or Kristy

Email – garibaldicommunity@gmail.com

PICKLEBALL BUNINYONG

When – Tuesday & Wednesday Nights

Time – 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Where – Buninyong Primary School Gym

Cost – \$10 or 2hrs for \$15

What – Play all year around when we have at least 8 players and when the gym is available

Contact – Wendy ph. 0458 372 906

Email – wendyvorstenbosch629@gmail.com

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THE BUNINYONG HOTEL

George's Weekly Specials

Wednesday



\$30 STEAK NIGHT

Thursday



\$25 PARMA NIGHT

Friday



\$25 BURGER & BEER (lunch only)
HAPPY HOUR 4 - 7PM &
\$1 CHICKEN WINGS

Sunday



\$12 GUINNESS PINTS FROM 3PM

Visit: 508 Warrenheip St, Buninyong VIC 3357
Book: thebuninyonghotel.com.au
Call: (03) 5341 9000



An Introduction to Scott Alsop, Head Chef of The Terrace at Buninyong Golf

If you live in Buninyong, you may have heard of the new café, The Terrace, at Buninyong Golf. What you may not have heard much about is the head chef, Scott Alsop.

I recently had the pleasure of a phone conversation with Scott and learned more about how he feels about Buninyong and how he arrived at this point in his career.

Scott was born in England and, in his youth, loved football, as many Englishmen do. He even played at youth level for Aston Villa, his first passion. As he grew older, his interests shifted towards other pursuits—most notably, cooking.

Scott has over 30 years of culinary experience across multiple restaurants. Many Buninyong

residents will know him from his years at Craig's Royal Hotel in Ballarat, and more recently from his 18-month stint as head chef at The Shared Table on Buninyong's main street.

For those who may not be part of the golf club, there is a monthly pop up event at The Terrace that welcomes everyone. Scott explains it this way: "Even though it's at Buninyong Golf, it's not just for the golfers—it's for everyone in Buninyong. That's the message we're trying to send." The pop-up events are announced on their Instagram and Facebook – [theterraceatbuninyonggolf/](https://www.instagram.com/theterraceatbuninyonggolf/).

Scott is not the only chef at The Terrace. During the week, he works alongside pastry chef Laura Schultz, who previously worked with him at the Royal Hotel. On weekends, Scott and his partner, Patrycja, run the kitchen together.



So, whether you're a member of the Buninyong Golf Club or simply interested in the monthly event, The Terrace at Buninyong Golf offers a welcoming café atmosphere, friendly staff and decades of culinary experience ready to delight your taste buds.

Contributor: Kobi Riley, Village Voice Community Reporter.

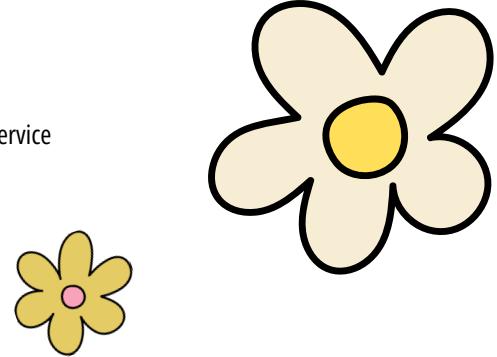
Photo taken from The Terrace web page.

Buninyong Community Bank: Supporting Our Community, Old and New

Many people in Buninyong will already be familiar with the role the Community Bank plays in supporting local projects and initiatives. For those newer to town, Community Bank Buninyong is a locally-owned organisation that reinvests its profits back into the community. Each year, Community Bank Buninyong provides support to a wide range of local groups, helping fund programs and events that strengthen community life throughout Buninyong and our surrounding areas. This support has included organisations such as The Village Voice, along with many other community groups working across education, sport, volunteering, arts, health, heritage, well-being, environment and local events.

Just to name a few, the branch's funding and hands-on involvement has:

- Enabled safe, inclusive community activities supported by trained volunteers
- Supported young people to build empathy, teamwork and social awareness through real-world service
- Brought communities together for remembrance, celebration and connection
- Boosted local tourism and small businesses through well-promoted events
- Preserved and celebrated local history and heritage
- Created shared community assets for learning, environmental stewardship and wellbeing
- Reduced financial pressure on families so all children can participate fully
- Supported everyday wellbeing through practical programs like school breakfasts



In this edition we have featured some of their stories. Overall, Community Bank Buninyong's impact goes beyond funding individual projects and helps create a stronger and more resilient community, where locals support locals. The result is a positive cycle where your everyday banking helps fund projects and support efforts that benefit the whole community.

Whether you've lived in Buninyong for years or are new to town, there are many ways to learn more, get involved or support local initiatives through Community Bank Buninyong, whose ongoing contribution continues to make a real difference.

Supporting the community in times of need, the Community Bank also steps up during times of broader need. Recently, Bendigo Bank launched the Victorian Bushfire Appeal, the official platform for the community to donate funds. Our local Community Bank will be making a significant donation to this appeal through its Community Investment Program, in line with its Natural Disasters Policy. The appeal is managed by Bendigo Bank's charitable arm, the Community Enterprise Foundation, providing a trusted and secure way for people to contribute if you are looking for ways to help at this time.

www.bendigobank.com.au/community/foundation/disaster-appeals/victorian-bushfire-appeal/

To find out more about the impact community banking makes, visit www.communitygrowhere.com.au

Contributor: Gabby Allen, Village Voice Community Reporter.

Nature Stewards Program

The popular Nature Stewards program will return for two programs in both autumn and spring 2026, continuing to inspire and empower community members to connect with and care for their local environment.

Registrations (vnpa.org.au/programs/nature-stewards-3/) are now open for the first program, a 10-week introductory environmental education program for adults, beginning in March 2026. Since its launch in Spring 2022, more than 100 participants have completed the Ballarat program across four years and five courses.

Delivered in partnership between the City of Ballarat and the Victorian National Parks Association, the program is designed to help everyday people explore topics such as biodiversity, climate change, land management, and the cultural knowledge of Traditional Owners.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn from passionate environmental experts, such as Traditional Owners, City of Ballarat Sustainable Environment Officers, Parks Victoria staff, university staff, environmental volunteers, and industry representatives.

City of Ballarat Mayor, Cr Tracey Hargreaves said the program is a fantastic way to gain knowledge, develop practical skills, and connect with like-minded individuals.

"Nature Stewards empowers everyday people to make a real difference in their local and broader habitats," she said. "Whether you are a long-time nature lover or just beginning to explore your local environment, this program offers something for everyone. You will discover all sorts of ways to help nature at home and through local volunteering."

The program is open to anyone aged 18 and over, and is especially suited to those with little or no formal environmental education who are keen to learn more about their local environment and explore opportunities to support nature through volunteering.

Sessions will be held on Saturday mornings from 14 March to 30 May, running from 9am to 1pm, with some additional field trip sessions extending to 4:30pm.

Program venues include Federation University Gillies Street campus, as well as the Clarendon Bird Sanctuary in Happy Valley.

Places are limited to 25 and available via a simple online application.

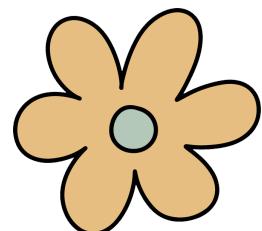
Cost:

City of Ballarat residents: \$175

Non-residents: \$350

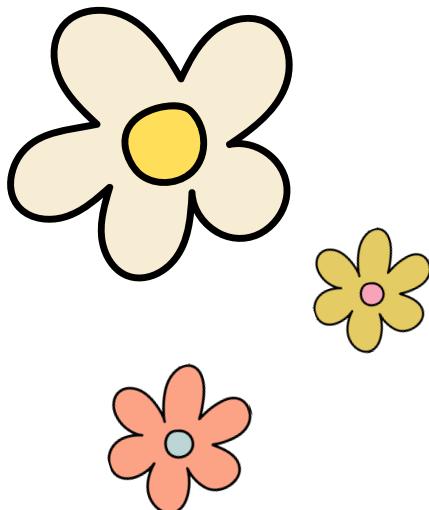
Concession non-residents: \$175 (available to full-time students, pensioner card holders, and healthcare card holders)

Applications close 1 March 2026.



Contributor: Gabby Allen, Community Reporter.

Photo Taken from: City of Ballarat Web page.



Work has commenced on the new green at the Buninyong Bowling Green

The journey towards installing the new synthetic green at Buninyong Bowling Club has been an exciting yet challenging one. Plans for the upgrade were initiated to provide members with a modern, all-weather playing surface, ensuring that bowls can continue year-round regardless of the weather. The club has worked with the Ballarat City to bring this vision to life, but as with many construction projects, the process has not been without its setbacks.

Unfortunately, there have been some unavoidable delays due to supply chain issues, which pushed back the original completion timeline. The club committee has kept members updated throughout, and everyone's patience and understanding during these disruptions has been greatly appreciated.



Now, with the finish line in sight, we are thrilled to announce that the synthetic green is expected to be completed in mid-February this year. This significant improvement will not only enhance the playing experience for all members but will also attract new players and visiting teams. With a world-class surface, Buninyong Bowling Club is set to offer one of the best bowling environments in the region, supporting both social and competitive play well into the future.

We warmly invite everyone to visit the Buninyong Bowling Club. You're welcome to drop by any time on Tuesdays and Saturdays (competition days), or join us for practice evenings on Wednesdays and Fridays from 4pm onwards. Whether you're keen to compete or just want to have a roll and a yarn with the locals, there's always a spot for you at our club.

You'll find us at Buninyong Bowling Club, 708 Inglis Street.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Ross Pilkington

Kinder Mornings Made Brighter

At Buninyong Uniting Kindergarten, mornings frequently start with a full tummy and most often with a bowl of Cheerios.

The kinder's Healthy Hearts Breakfast Program has become a cherished part of the daily routine, fuelling little bodies and big imaginations.

Over the course of the year:

- 3,810 breakfasts were served
- 1,925 of those were Cheerios, which was the clear captain of cereals
- 976 were Rice Pops, described as "the loyal, dependable best friend".

But the real impact is calm, connected and ready-to-learn children walking into their day with confidence.

Reflecting on the support from the Community Bank which makes the Healthy Hearts Breakfast Program possible, Program Coordinator Mel Dreger said, "Your Community Bank grant didn't just fund cereal, it really fuelled content mornings with calm starts. It helped our little students settle and made breakfast feel like home."

The kindergarten's note of thanks to the Bank wasn't short on humour "We adore you. Truly. Deeply. Statistically," they wrote. "We're grateful beyond words. (Though we did try words... Think of this letter)."

The program's success reflects the powerful impact of a small community grant that meets big needs and, in this case, helps ensure every kinder child starts their day feeling supported and nourished.

Contributor: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.

PRODUCED BY

This is a community project of the Buninyong and District Community Association, with the support of the Community Bank Buninyong.



Buninyong and District Community Association
Registration Number A0039386K
ABN 63 951 689 126



Management Committee

Village Voice: Buninyong and District Community News Production Team under the direction of Buninyong and District Community Association.

Key Dates

Published on the 1st of: October, December, February, April, June, August.

Publication cut-off is STRICTLY 14th of the month prior to production.

How to Contribute

Contact – news.bdca@outlook.com

Max 400 words per article. Longer submissions **WILL** be edited down.

Electronic submissions must be in either Microsoft Word or plain text only. Photographs or images **MUST** be in jpeg format.

The photographer must be identified, and have provided permission for publication prior to the photo being published.

Hand-written articles or photographs may be posted to - Village Voice: 408A Warrenheip Street, Buninyong VIC 3357. Please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope if any material needs to be returned.

The contributor's name **WILL** be published.

Where to read the Village Voice or see guidelines

Online via the website: www.buninyongcommunityassociation.com.au

Facebook: Village Voice - Buninyong and District Community News

Via Poster QR codes on local noticeboards, for you to read or download to print at home.

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For any advertising enquiries, please contact news.bdca@outlook.com

This publication can be viewed using this QR Code.



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Bob Bath (1938–2025) Buninyong's Olympic son

Bob Bath was the son of Don Bath and Mavis (née Innes), one of Buninyong's oldest families. Mavis was the great-granddaughter of one of Buninyong's pioneers, George Innes, the legendary "King of the Splitters", who arrived in Port Phillip in 1841.

Don and Mavis married in 1928, just as the country was heading into the Great Depression, which had hit Buninyong particularly hard. The closure of the Box Factory and the Tannery in the 1920s had left many local men without work.

After their marriage, Don and Mavis lived briefly in Yendon, where Don worked for a local farmer. They later returned to Buninyong, where Don obtained employment with the Shire of Buninyong. They had seven children: Don, Allan, Kenneth, Robert (Bob), Wendy, Charlie and Garry.

The family survived the Depression with a cow, a few chooks, and the help of neighbours who shared their resources. Despite the economic hardships, Mavis remembered the 1930s as a happy time. In 1939, the family purchased the cottage in Warrenheip Street beside the Old Library (now the Lions Club bookshop).

As her sons grew, Mavis encouraged them to join a youth group at the local Methodist Church, where Herman George from Magpie organised sporting contests and boxing lessons for the boys. This led local police officer Constable Len McColl, a former light heavyweight champion within the police force, to organise boxing classes at the CFA fire station. All the Bath boys became involved.

Mavis learned a great deal about boxing as her sons showed outstanding aptitude. It was a matter of great pride for her when her son Bobby was selected as a bantamweight boxer for the Australian Olympic team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Allan and Charlie also went on to win Victorian championships.

Bob won his first fight at the Olympics but lost his second. As an amateur, he recorded 48 wins from 50 fights and was Victorian bantamweight champion for three years between 1954 and 1956. After the Olympics, he turned professional and fought for the Australian featherweight title in 1958, which he lost after sustaining a badly cut eye.

In 1958, Bob briefly opened a sporting goods store before being approached by Jack Dart, Headmaster of Ballarat Grammar, to become sports master. He undertook training in physical education at Ballarat Teachers' College and went on to a 37-year career at Grammar, where he was later inducted as a Life Governor.

During his time at Grammar, Bob developed a love of art and became an active member of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery Association. He served as President from 2002 to 2004 and became the Gallery's ceramics expert.

Bob maintained a strong connection to Buninyong throughout his life. He regularly attended Buninyong Football and Netball Club matches and was delighted to be acknowledged as the oldest former pupil at the Buninyong Primary School 150th anniversary celebrations in September 2023.

He was also widely celebrated in Ballarat, with his name inscribed on the Olympic Rings monument at Lake Wendouree. In 2018, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his contributions to sport and volunteer work, particularly his involvement with Riding for the Disabled.

Bob led a very active life, befitting a sportsman, until his death in September 2025. He died at home and is survived by his two sons, Michael and Patrick.

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Anne Beggs-Sunter, Buninyong and District Historical Society.



Buninyong Community Choir Reboots for 2026: Time to Connect Through Song!

Great news for music lovers in Buninyong: the popular Buninyong Community Choir (BCC) is relaunching for 2026, bringing its unique brand of harmonious fun back to the district!

The BCC has been performing locally and in Ballarat since 2019, creating a nurturing space for singers of all levels. Led by local music educator and singer-songwriter, Georgie Williams, the choir is built on the simple but powerful idea that singing together is vital for individual and community connection and wellbeing.

The best part? The choir continues to have no auditions and no sheet music, making it accessible to everyone, regardless of experience. Participants will sing a varied repertoire of original, folk, and pop music, with many of the unique arrangements crafted by Georgie and her partner, UK singer-songwriter Geoffrey Williams.

Get ready to sing! The choir will run fortnightly starting on Friday 6 February, from 1pm to 2:15pm.

Geoffrey and Georgie will also be running a choir workshop weekend on 15 to 17 May in Buninyong.

More Music for Mums and Women!

Georgie's passion for music and connection extends to all ages. She also runs the Singing Mamas perinatal singing groups. Singing Mamas was started in the UK by NHS nurse Kate Valentine, and it's now a global movement.

The program has been brought to Ballarat by George and her daughter Milla. These sessions are for mums, bubs, and women of all ages and feature folk, pop, and lullabies from around the world. Singing Mamas runs on the same Fridays as BCC, throughout term times, from 10:15am to 11:45am at The Well sensory playspace in Ballarat East.



If you've been looking for a place to share your voice, make new connections, or simply uplift your spirits, this is it. It's all about connection!

Expressions of interest are essential. Please contact Georgie Williams directly on ph. 0434 525 595 to secure your spot in the Buninyong Community Choir or the weekend workshop, or for more information about the Singing Mamas group.

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Georgina Williams, Choir Director.



DO YOU KNOW YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE?



You've likely heard about blood pressure, but it's something most of us don't really think about. Put simply, it's the measure of pressure your blood places on the artery walls as your heart pumps it around your body. Blood pressure naturally rises and falls throughout the day depending on your activities.

High blood pressure occurs when that pressure remains higher than normal over time. It's one of the main risk factors for heart disease, such as heart attacks and strokes, and you can have it without even knowing. That's why it's important to have your blood pressure checked regularly by a health professional such as a pharmacist or GP.

This is particularly important for our local community, as the Ballarat region has one of the highest rates of cardiovascular disease in Victoria. The most recent health survey shows that heart disease affects 8% of Ballarat residents, slightly higher than the state average of 7%.

There's no single cause of high blood pressure, but several factors can increase your risk of developing it: family history; diet; alcohol intake; smoking; increased weight; low physical activity and stress.

Getting your blood pressure measured is quick and simple. An inflatable cuff wraps around your upper arm and connects to a measuring unit. As the cuff inflates, it takes two readings. The first number is the pressure in your arteries when your heart contracts (systolic), and the second is the pressure between beats (diastolic). A normal reading is generally systolic blood pressure under 120mmHg and diastolic blood pressure under 80mmHg.

If you do have high blood pressure, lifestyle changes such as healthy eating and regular exercise can help manage it. Your doctor might

also recommend medications to keep it under control.

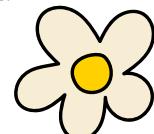
If you're unsure what your blood pressure number is, or if it's been a while since your last reading, pop into Buninyong UFS pharmacy for a free blood pressure test or book an appointment with your health professional.

References:

Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority. (2017). Ballarat Health Services cardiac catheterisation laboratory. Available at: <https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/health/regional-facilities/ballarat-health-services-cardiac-catheterisation-laboratory>

Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership. (2020). City of Ballarat LGA Data Snapshot. Available at: <https://vcpcp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/LGA-Data-Snapshot-Ballarat-C-2022.pdf>

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Pharmacist / UFS Pharmacy Manager, Shane Ingeme.



Working towards a greener streetscape

Nature strips play an important role in the beauty, environmental health and social wellbeing of our municipality. Beyond providing a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic, they help shape the character of our streets by creating space for trees and vegetation.

Key benefits of nature strip gardens include: Urban cooling and improved flood mitigation through increased vegetation and better soil absorption. Creation of wildlife habitat, supporting pollinators and small bird species. Strengthening community connections as neighbours work together to green their streets.

At November's Council meeting, the City of Ballarat formally adopted new guidelines for nature strip gardens. "Nature strips make up a large portion of our public green space. By providing clear, practical guidance, we're empowering residents to create beautiful, biodiverse gardens that cool our streets, reduce flooding, and provide habitat for local wildlife," Cr Tracey Hargreaves said. "This is about making it easier for people to contribute to a healthier, more resilient Ballarat while ensuring safety and compliance with local laws."

The new guidelines outline what can be planted, how to maintain safe clearances around infrastructure, and the responsibilities of residents. They also encourage the use of indigenous plant species, which are well-adapted to local conditions and support native birds and insects.

For information regarding native plants to Ballarat, check out the following links:

- Fed Uni Indigenous Plant Guide – www.federation.edu.au/institutes-and-schools/iiss/engagement/
- Gardens for Wildlife Ballarat – www.gardensforwildlifeballarat.com
- Friends of Canadian Corridor – www.focc.asn.au
- City of Ballarat Indigenous Plant Guide – www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/Shrubs.pdf

Or wander into a nursery, get inspired and start planning!

Contributor: Gabby Allen, Village Voice Community Reporter.

Photo Taken from: City of Ballarat Web page.



Our pool has been a splash

It has been a very mixed-weather summer to date. We have had temperatures ranging from the very high thirties to the mid-teens, while other parts of the state have experienced fires and, in more recent days, floods. Despite this, our pool has managed to be open for 21 days so far this season, with many residents availing themselves of the free season pass.

Alana Burgess, Marketing and Communications Officer with the Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre, the managing body of the Buninyong Aquatic Centre, reported that, "We have had over 1,900 people sign up for the free Season Pass, far exceeding our expectations," noting that the pass can be used at both the Buninyong and Black Hill pools.

Duty Manager Fionn Somers, a Buninyong local, commented that, "Buninyong Pool has been the busiest I have seen it in quite some time. As a local, I remember going there as a kid and it always being busy, so it's really nice to see it picking back up again, especially among families, but also independent teenagers."

Fionn further observed that, "With the free season pass in effect, I consistently see regulars coming in almost every day, as well as new patrons excited to sign up and receive the benefits. It is really nice when I see and hear old friends bumping into each other, or children making new friends in the water. I believe this free season pass has really helped bring the local and extended community just a little bit closer."

As the school holidays draw to a close, we can expect February to once again bring more hot days, making the pool a welcome respite after school. During the 2025–26 summer season, on days of 23 degrees and above, the pool will be open during the following hours:

Outside of school holidays

Monday to Friday: 4pm to 7pm

Weekends and public holidays: 1pm to 6pm



If you are not one of the 1,900 residents within the Ballarat Local Government Area who has already signed up for the free pass, you can still enjoy unlimited access to the pool by registering for a free Season Pass.

Claiming your FREE Season Pass is easy. Simply follow these steps:

- Sign up via the online portal at Season Pass – Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre
- Select Buninyong Season Pass and create an account
- Visit the Buninyong Outdoor Pool during opening hours to collect your card with valid ID (you will need to show proof of ID and residency when you collect your pass)

Contributor: Greg Dow, Village Voice Community Reporter.



Luba's Landscapes

After a hot day, it's great to get out and about and enjoy the sun setting in our surroundings.

Looking towards Mt Buninyong from Wiggins Road, Scotsburn.

Contributor & Photo Supplied by:
Luba Bradford



Students Pay It Forward

The fabulous Year 9 students at Mount Clear College delivered another powerful year of community service through their 2025 Pay It Forward – Community Impact Explorers program.

This annual initiative gave every Year 9 class a chance to take part in real-world volunteering, helping them build community connections and develop empathy, teamwork and social awareness.

The actions tell a compelling story:

- Over 400 hours of off-site volunteering completed
- Tree planting for a regional wildlife corridor
- Rubbish clean-ups across local parks and nature areas
- Conservation work with Ballarat Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation Inc. (BWRAC)
- Support for Food is Free Inc. and their community green space
- Participating in a homelessness awareness sleep-out and donating to the Soup Bus

The feedback from the community has been overwhelming. One project partner Merrie Harvey summed it up beautifully: "Could you please let the Year 9 co-ordinator and the Principal know what a fabulous bunch of young people they have at the school. They were polite, fun, interested and they worked like crazy. They're true ambassadors of Mount Clear College. 97 plants are in the ground, a mountain of weeding and mulching (occurred) ... we loved having them with us."

The program has also had measurable internal impact. According to the College, students have shown increased school attendance, stronger emotional connections and improved results on attitude-to-school surveys.

With local partner organisations already asking to host students again in 2026, the future is bright for this homegrown social impact program.

This program was supported by the Community Bank Buninyong. To apply for funding for a similar program – www.communitygrowhere.com.au

Contributor & Photos Supplied by: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.

Smart Living Expo 2026: Smarter Together for a Stronger Community

In 2026, Buninyong will once again come alive with ideas, conversations, and community spirit as the Smart Living Expo returns to Royal Park, bringing together people who care about living well, treading lightly, and supporting one another. More than an event, the Expo has become a meeting place for our region's shared values: sustainability, health, innovation, and community pride.

This year, the Expo launches a new regional campaign called Smarter Together, celebrating the people, businesses, schools, and community groups already shaping a more sustainable world including across Ballarat and Buninyong. From renewable energy projects and waste reduction initiatives, to local food growing, wellbeing programs, and environmentally responsible businesses, Smarter Together shines a light on real action happening right here at home.

The campaign invites everyone, whether you're a household, a school, a business, or a community organisation—to share your story. Big or small, every initiative contributes to a smarter, healthier, and more connected region. Selected stories will be showcased online creating a powerful snapshot of what's possible when a community pulls in the same direction.

Smarter Together Good Vibes Dinner – Friday 20 February, 6pm to 8pm

Kicking off the Expo is the Smarter Together Good Vibes Dinner, a relaxed Friday night community gathering designed to bring people together before the Expo opens on Sunday. With local food from The Shared Table and Espresso Depot, live music by Blues Infusion, friendly conversations, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere, Good Vibes is about connection first—celebrating community wins, sharing ideas, and enjoying being together. It's a light-hearted, feel-good start to a weekend focused on positive change. Book a table at www.smartlivingexpo.com.au – or use the QR Code opposite.

Across the Expo, visitors can expect engaging talks, hands-on activities, interactive displays, and practical advice on sustainable living—covering everything from energy efficiency and waste reduction to wellbeing, gardening, and future-focused ideas. Families, curious minds, and seasoned sustainability champions alike will find something to inspire and empower them.

At its heart, the Smart Living Expo is about community. It's about recognising progress, learning from one another, and building momentum for the future. Smarter Together reminds us that lasting change doesn't happen alone—it happens when people share knowledge, collaborate, and support local action.

Join us in Buninyong for a weekend that celebrates optimism, innovation, and the strength of community. Together, we can show what's possible when we live—and act—smarter together.

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Justin Weyers, Buninyong Sustainability.



SMART LIVING EXPO 26

ROYAL PARK, BUNINYONG
SUN 22 FEB, 10AM-3.30PM

FREE
EVENT



HEAT
PUMP
RAFFLE

Smarter
Together

GOOD VIBES
FRIDAY NIGHT
DINNER
Book Online

BUILD BETTER
INNOVATE TOGETHER
LIVE GREENER
BE HEALTHIER

BUNINYONG
SUSTAINABILITY

100+ Stalls & Community Groups
Educational Talks & Demos
Food Trucks & Live Music
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BUNINYONG VILLAGE
GREEN
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SMARTLIVINGEXPO.COM.AU

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Birds declare themselves Gods!

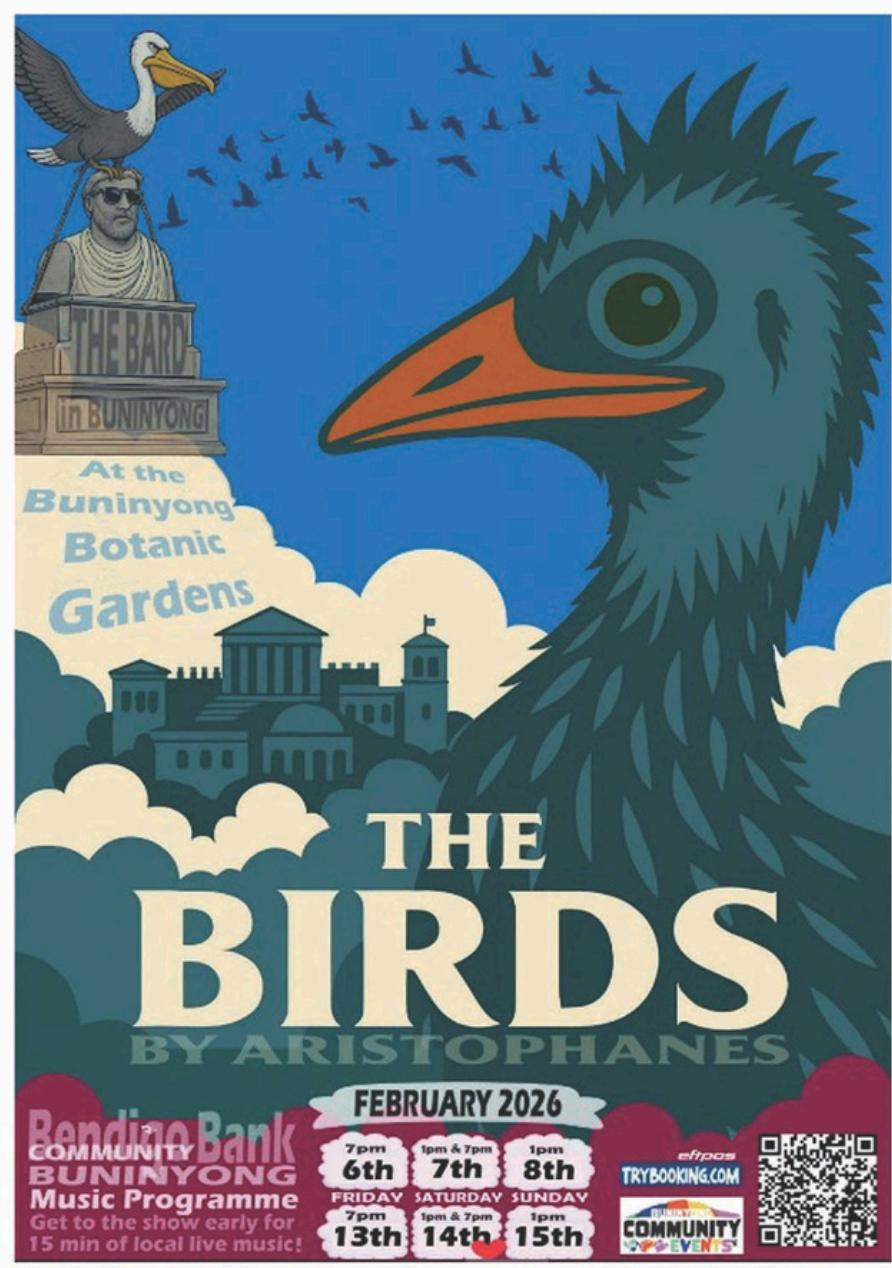
The Buninyong Botanic Gardens will become CloudCuckooLand as the birds band together to build a city in the sky. Declaring themselves the new gods, they take on the Olympian gods and their old enemy, humans.

In 2026, we will feature Greek bards, beginning with Aristophanes, the father of comedy. The Bard in Buninyong is excited to present this rarely performed fantasy, *The Birds*. We are invited to take a bird's-eye view of the world, and it has inspired us to create a family-friendly spectacle of theatre, satire, song and dance in the perfect setting.

This year, the Community Bank Workshop Program brings together a multi-age cast working with choreographer Jordyn Chapman and voice specialist Stella Savvy. The pre-show Community Bank Music Program will feature local artists performing a wide range of music. Bring a picnic and something to sit on: 6–8 February & 13–15 February (7pm Fridays, 1pm & 7pm Saturdays and 1pm Sundays).

More info: Facebook [thebardinbuninyong](https://www.facebook.com/thebardinbuninyong)
Tickets: Trybooking and at the gate.

Contributor & Photos Supplied by: Susan Pilbeam, Artistic Director, The Bard in Buninyong.



Reunited Ten Years after the Scotsburn Fire

More than 110 locals gathered at the Clarendon Community Centre to mark the 10th anniversary of the December 2015 Scotsburn bushfire; a devastating event that deeply affected the communities of Clarendon, Scotsburn, Durham Lead and Elaine.

The free community event for the anniversary brought people together for an evening of remembrance and thanks. Guests enjoyed a BBQ, a visit from Santa and a relaxed setting to catch up with neighbours and friends. Representatives from Moorabool Shire, Ballarat City Council and surrounding communities were in attendance, showing the ongoing collaboration in times of recovery.

Trevor Smith from the Clarendon Recreation Reserve Committee said the event struck a meaningful balance between reflection and celebration. "While the evening to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the bushfire brought back both good and hard memories, we hoped the event would also be a relaxing time to reconnect. Thanks very much to the Community Bank Buninyong for their generous donation; it helped make the night possible."

The evening also served as a chance to recognise the many volunteers, support crews and organisations who stepped up during and after the fires. It also celebrated a decade of resilience across the local area.

Contributor & Photos Supplied by: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.



Parkrun Brings Local Movement



Now on Saturday morning, DeSoza Park comes alive with movement, friendly chats and a growing sense of community after the launch of the DeSoza parkrun.

This free, volunteer-led weekly 5km event, involving four laps of DeSoza park, is already proving to be a game-changer for health and connection in Buninyong.

In just its first month, 277 locals of all ages and fitness levels have taken part including walking, jogging, running or volunteering their time.

DeSoza parkrun has quickly become more than a morning run. It's a place where kids and grandparents turn up together, where newcomers are welcomed and where everyone can participate regardless of ability. No one is left behind at the start line.

"Already we have seen the community come together at Parkrun, allowing people to connect as well as becoming a hub for both physical and mental wellbeing in the region," said Event Director Vicky Hallam.

Community Bank Buninyong's funding helped cover essential start-up costs for the event including things like timing equipment and safety signage ensuring a safe and smooth launch for this long-term community asset. Community Bank Buninyong's Partnership Lead Kelly Bevan said supporting projects like this is what the branch is all about.

With 34 trained volunteers already on board, the event is set to be sustainable with no fees, no barriers, just locals supporting locals.

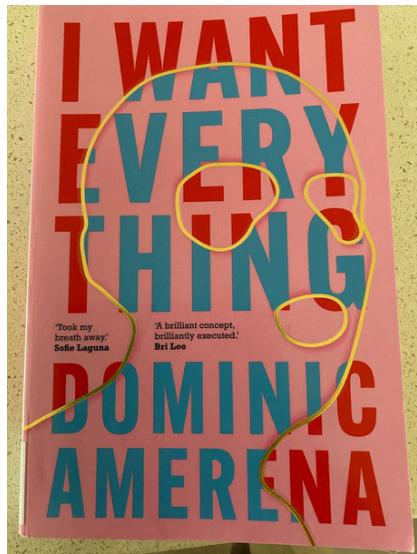
It's not about how fast you go. It's about turning up, being part of something, and leaving feeling better. That's what DeSoza parkrun brings to Buninyong.

Contributor & Photos Supplied by: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.

Book Review

I WANT EVERYTHING

by Dominic Amerena



This novel was reviewed in the Saturday Age last year, and it sounded interesting. I had not previously heard of the author and am always keen to discover someone new. Dominic is an Australian writer whose work has been widely published and anthologised. He is based in Melbourne, where the story is set. *I Want Everything* is his debut novel.

In my opinion, this is not "popular fiction" or "holiday reading". It is a challenging read, but well worth the effort. The novel contains intrigue, subplots, twists and insights and, at times, moves between fact and fiction, referring to familiar places, real people and true events.

About the Story

A former reclusive and controversial author Brenda Shales is spotted serendipitously at a local swimming pool by a frustrated and unpublished young writer. She had written two scandalous novels before disappearing from public view. He tracks her down to a Melbourne aged-care facility and, when he boldly visits her, is innocently mistaken by a nurse for her grandson. Driven by his desire to use her story to write "the great Australian novel", he does not correct the mistake. As one lie becomes a web of lies, he finds himself increasingly immersed in a plot of ethical dilemmas involving literary ambition, authorship, morality, authenticity and humanity.

Reviewer's thoughts

I found the narrator (and main character) to be weak and heartless, prepared to do almost anything to achieve his goal. This is a multilayered novel, and the subplot involving his relationship with his girlfriend Ruth—along with her sad and complicated childhood—reveals as much about him as it does about Ruth. Brenda's stories are heart-wrenching and convincing, shaped by her background, her setting and the social norms of 1970s Australia.

Amerena, the author, does not use quotation marks for speech, which may frustrate some readers and distinguishing dialogue from narrative can at times be difficult. During the main character's (Brenda's) interviews, the author's occasional shifts between narrative voices require readers concentration.

The protagonist knows he is not writing a straightforward biography and inserts himself into the work. He is a lazy author, jealous of his girlfriend's (Ruth's) success, and any guilt he feels about exploiting Brenda is quickly overridden by his obsession with being published.

The novel's ending is clever, unexpected and satisfying. I felt no sympathy for the narrator and considered the conclusion his "just desserts". The book has been described as a "black comic literary mystery" and a "delightful literary puzzle".

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Bev Elshaug



Buses, Bushwalks and Big Memories

For the Grade 2/3 students at Napoleons Primary School, this year's camp at Sunnystones, located at Merimu east of Bacchus Marsh, was more than just a couple of nights away. It was an opportunity to explore the outdoors, build friendships, and share new experiences together.

The camp program was packed with adventure, including bush art, low ropes, geocaching, movie nights and even chocolate-filled oranges cooked over the campfire.

For many students, though, the journey itself was just as memorable as the destination.

Here's what some of them had to say:

- "The buses came in handy to get us to our camp at Sunnystones. We wouldn't have been able to get there unless we walked. I really enjoyed the games room and the low ropes course." —Rusty
- "We went on a big walk and saw some kangaroos. I liked the bus because it got us to Sunnystones and back to school safely, and our parents didn't have to spend heaps of money." —Summer
- "The activities were lots of fun—bush cooking, bush art—and the bus was comfy. I was grateful they took us." —Ruby

Napoleons Primary School Principal Sue Izard said the support made a meaningful difference for students and families alike. "We are incredibly grateful for the support of Community Bank Buninyong in helping make our camp experience possible for our students."

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.

Meet a Couple of Locals!



Name: Harry and Buddy

Age: 6½ years (Harry) and 4 years (Buddy)

Breed: Labrador

Bio: Harry and Buddy live on 20 acres in Scotsburn and can be seen most mornings running in the paddock and swimming in the dams. They're from different parents but are as close as brothers can be.

Harry says:

"My mum likes to call me Mister Harry because I'm very polite and gentle. I don't jump up like Buddy does, and I love lots of cuddles—especially belly rubs! My favourite thing is eating everything I can find, even rocks. Mum doesn't like that, but I think they're tasty. I love getting splashed with the hose, too!"

Buddy says:

"Mum calls me a mermaid because I love swimming and splashing in the dam. I love bringing her everything I find in the paddock, even if it's stinky and dead. I snore a lot and make funny rumble noises. I bark to get Mum's attention—she says I'm not mean, just talkative. I really like jumping over Harry and playing fetch!"

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Georgia Thomson, Village Voice Community Reporter.

Buninyong GIFT HOUSE

Valentine's Day Sorted!

SUPPORTING OVER 95 LOCAL CREATIVES

LOCALLY GROWN FLOWERS
CANDLES | JEWELLERY | PLANTS
SCARVES | HAMPERS | POTTERY
& CURATED SPECIAL GIFTS

OPEN – WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY
10AM TO 5PM (WEEKENDS 4PM)

Blooms Despite Wild Weather

Rain, hail and thunderstorms couldn't dampen the spirit of our local Open Gardens as locals and visitors alike stepped into some of Buninyong's most beautiful private gardens for a weekend of natural inspiration this past October.

Through local funding, the event was able to elevate its promotion, drawing visitors from far beyond the local area. The result was a successful weekend that not only celebrated the unique charm of five distinct gardens, but also provided a welcome boost to local businesses.

Despite the stormy conditions, visitors continued to flow through gates, umbrellas in hand, to explore the variety of garden landscapes from mid-19th century heritage sites to native plant havens.

The President of the Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens, Lorraine Powell, said the event's success was a true team effort. "We extend our sincere thanks to the Community Bank, the Buninyong & District Lions Club and the Buninyong Information Centre for their generous support. Their invaluable assistance played a vital role in the success of our event, and we're truly grateful to have them as partners in our community efforts. Thanks also to the Buninyong Probus Club and Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens who assisted at the gardens, and of course, our wonderful garden owners whose enthusiasm and generosity brought this event to life."

Each garden reflected not just horticultural interest, but the warm hospitality of the Buninyong community.

The Open Gardens weekend fulfilled broader goals:

- Showcasing the dedication of garden owners, volunteers and community groups
- Encouraging regional tourism and supporting small businesses
- Cultivating pride in the township and its shared green spaces

The Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens look forward to growing this event in future years, nurturing our community with each open gate.

Contributor: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.



GOLF CLUB HITS 100 YEARS



What has been perhaps the busiest two or three years in the history of the Buninyong Golf Club will come to a climax over the next few weeks as the Club celebrates its Centenary.

Buninyong settlers of the 1920s would be amazed at what has happened over the years at the former local Recreation Reserve which among other things then included a rifle range and a racecourse.

Golfing started soon after the closure of the Buninyong Turf Club in 1926. The old racecourse grandstand is now located at the White Flat Reserve in central Ballarat.

Changes

In its place is the stunning refurbished golf clubhouse comprising a leased-out upmarket function centre on the upper level, and spacious dining facilities for members and the public on the lower level along with a 'pro' shop overlooking the course, a generous meeting room, and change/toilet facilities. New landscaping will soon be completed.

Spanning some three years, the massive project, together with the building of a huge new 18 ML on-course water storage and the major course improvements at the golf club were funded by the sale of vacant club land, most of which is now the site of the Buninyong Fire Station.

Locals may recently have noticed a significant increase in vehicles in the car park at the golf club. The numbers of visiting golfers and green fee players have increased significantly, as the

course is now widely regarded as near-best in the district.

Buninyong Golf's President for the past ten years has been local businessman Ron Delaland. He has spent many hundreds of hours acting as a project manager for the demolition, construction, fitting out and landscaping works at the golf course.

In recognition of his massive contribution, the Club has named the large downstairs dining and function room, the Ron Delaland Room in his honour.

New Restaurant

This area also now includes the new Terrace Restaurant open to the public and to members, and serving coffees, light meals and snacks seven days each week. The highly regarded chef is Scott Alsop.

The opening of the Terrace Restaurant also now sees the offering of periodic special degustation dinners, and the gradual recommencement of the former regular casual Thursday night low-cost dinner events. The first of these will be an Old-Time Thursday Night Dinner scheduled for Thursday 12 March from 6:30pm at a cost of \$40. Bookings are essential on ph. 4311 3805.

Open Day

As part of the club's centenary celebrations, all Buninyong residents will have a great chance to look over the new facilities at a public Open Day on Wednesday 11 March from 10am. Tea and coffee and morning tea will be provided.

To mark its 100 years, the club will produce a commemorative book and specially designed shirts. Buninyong Golf has certainly come a long way since 1926!

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Barry Fitzgerald, Buninyong Golf member.



Traffic Safety - Buninyong

Of the three projects adopted by the Buninyong Safety Committee, established by Michaela Settle MP in December 2022, two are nearing completion.

Warrenheip Street – Linemarking modifications have been completed, establishing marked bicycle lanes, and the change to a 40 km/h zone has been implemented. The bicycle lanes across intersections are still to be highlighted.

Learmonth Street (Midland Highway)

Modifications using the climbing lane to introduce right-turn lanes at each intersection up the hill have created a much safer environment for motorists to execute right turns and have contributed to lower vehicle speeds in this section. A major change was the relocation of the 80 km/h zone to approximately 150 metres east of the township boundary. This reinforces the need for motorists travelling downhill to slow to 60 km/h when entering Buninyong.

The upgrade of the school crossing on the north side is yet to be completed. This will improve children's safety by delineating an access path across the service road with a "wombat crossing" and associated works. A wombat crossing is a raised pedestrian crossing which includes raised humps and 'zebra' stripe line marking.

The Roundabout – The proposal to create legal pedestrian access at this intersection, incorporating four "wombat crossings", was not funded this year. Michaela Settle MP has assured the community she will continue to pursue government funding.

It is important that the BDCA and members of the community keep this project topical until it is realised, to ensure pedestrians have safe and legal access across the highway in our town.

Contributor & Photo Supplied by: Robert Elshaug, BDCA Safety Convenor.



Capturing History, One Lens at a Time

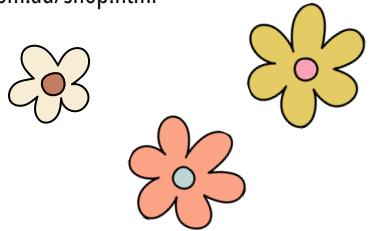
Run in mid-October 2025, the "Elaine Thru the Lens" exhibition hosted by the Meredith History Interest Group (MHIG) showcased a powerful snapshot of community, history and the people who make the region special.

Organised by the **MHIG**, the exhibition unveiled almost **450 photos** from the Elaine district, many of which had never been seen publicly. The project began as a humble idea in 2021 to collect and preserve local photos for posterity, and has grown into a treasured community event that celebrates heritage and fosters connection. This was part one of the two-part project.

The group has also published "Steiglitz Thru the Lens", "Morrison's Thru the Lens", available at www.meredithhistory.com.au/shop.html

With support from the Community Bank Buninyong, **MHIG** were able to:

- Collect, copy, save and print photos in display-ready A3 and A4 sizes
- Hire stands and the exhibition hall
- Provide food for volunteers and advertise the event
- Organise folders of photos that will be stored for ongoing browsing



Visitors to the exhibition connected over images of old homes, family gatherings, school days, sporting trophies adding personal stories that brought the displays to life.

MHIG President Marg Cooper opened the event, introducing speakers such as Paul Ryan, an Elaine local proud of his heritage, and Robin Ferry, who rang the Larundel bell to officially start the exhibition. The Larundel bell was used to call shearers to the sheds on the historic Larundel property.

One attendee reflected on the event: "At last, the Elaine/Meredith rivalry was forgotten. The exhibition didn't just highlight history; it helped build community bonds that will last for years."

Part Two will be a published book that is coming next year, capturing even more stories for the interest of future generations.

Contributor: Sam Elshaug, Communications Lead, Community Bank Buninyong.



Love Buninyong

Buninyong's community website is getting a makeover with a fresh new design, a stylish logo and exciting new features.

The current community website, www.buninyong.vic.au, will stay online until the Love Buninyong site replaces it. A team from the Information Centre are preparing for the change assisting with fact-checking and giving feedback on content.

We need your help!

Buninyong changes fast, and we need your help to check the accuracy of the information on the existing website. Please check the details in the lists for Buninyong and district's –

- community groups – www.buninyong.vic.au/community-groups
- services – www.buninyong.vic.au/services
- and businesses – www.buninyong.vic.au/business

If you see any errors, omissions or other needed changes such as:

- new organisations or businesses that are not yet listed?
- organisations or businesses that have closed or moved elsewhere? or
- contact details that have changed?

Please let us know by emailing bunlibtrust@gmail.com.

We want Love Buninyong to be as accurate as possible, making it easier than ever to find and connect with local organisations.

We'd like to give a big shoutout to the Community Bank Buninyong for supporting this project!



Contributor: Liz Lumsdon, Community Website Project Coordinator.

What's Happening in Buninyong

February & March EVENTS

FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY FLOWER THERAPY

Time – 9:30am to 11am

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

GOLDEN HOUR

Time – 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

FRIDAY 6, SATURDAY 7, SUNDAY 8,

FRIDAY 13, SATURDAY 14,

SUNDAY 15 FEBRUARY

THE BARD IN BUNINYONG presents

THE BIRDS by Aristophanes

Friday Time – 7pm

Saturday Time – 1pm & 7pm

Sunday Time – 1pm

Where – Buninyong Botanic Gardens

RSVP – Tickets www.trybooking.com/DHQDX



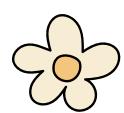
SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY

FILL A JUG

Time – 11am to 5:30pm

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au



FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY

FRIDAY FLOWER THERAPY

Time – 9:30am to 11am

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

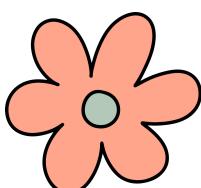
Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

GOLDEN HOUR

Time – 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au



SUNDAY 15 FEBRUARY

PAINT, POT, PETALS

Time – 10am to 12pm

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au



THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY

1ST MEETING OF YEAR - BUNINYONG

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Time – 7:30pm

Where – Buninyong Town Hall

Contact –

www.facebook.com/BuninyongHistorical/

RSVP – Visitors most welcome!!



FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY

SMART LIVING EXPO – SMARTER TOGETHER

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

Time – 6pm to 8pm

Where – Espresso Depot + The Shared Table

RSVP – To book www.smartlivingexpo.com.au

SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY

SUNRISE YOGA IN THE DAHLIA PATCH

Time – 7am to 8am

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

FILL A JUG

Time – 11am to 5:30pm

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

SUNDAY 1 MARCH

SUNRISE PILATES IN THE DAHLIA PATCH

Time – 7am to 8am

Where – The Paddock Lal Lal

Contact – www.thepaddocklallal.com.au

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

OPEN DAY @ THE BUNINYONG GOLF

CLUB

Time – from 10am

Where – Buninyong Golf Club

What – Tea & Coffee & Morning Tea provided

RSVP – Just turn up!



THURSDAY 12 MARCH

OLD-TIME THURSDAY NIGHT DINNER

Time – from 6:30pm

Where – Buninyong Golf Club

Tickets – \$40, bookings are essential ph. 4311 3805

SATURDAY 14 MARCH

SAVOY OPERA COMPANY presents

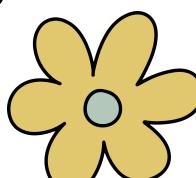
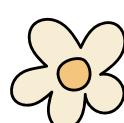
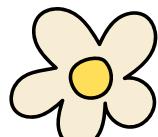
THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Time – 2pm to 5pm

Where – Buninyong Town Hall

Tickets – Trybooking

www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1522043



Catherine KING MP

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Standing up for our community!

Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au

Authorised by Catherine King MP, 5 Lydiard St Nth, Ballarat, VIC 3350



NO MORE PAYING TWO BONDS WHEN YOU MOVE

HELPING RENTERS KEEP MORE MONEY IN THEIR POCKET

A new Victorian scheme will allow renters to transfer their existing bond to their next home, easing the cost of moving.

It means renters can focus on finding a safe, suitable place to live without the stress of double payments.

Michaela Settle MP
Member for Eureka

michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au 5331 7722 /MichaelaSettleMP

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