

# Council hopefuls face community group's **QUESTIONS**

Since 2012, the Buninyong & District Community Association (BDCA) has organised public forums in the Town Hall prior to all State and local government elections. Large crowds of locals have attended to hear from, and to question, candidates standing for office.

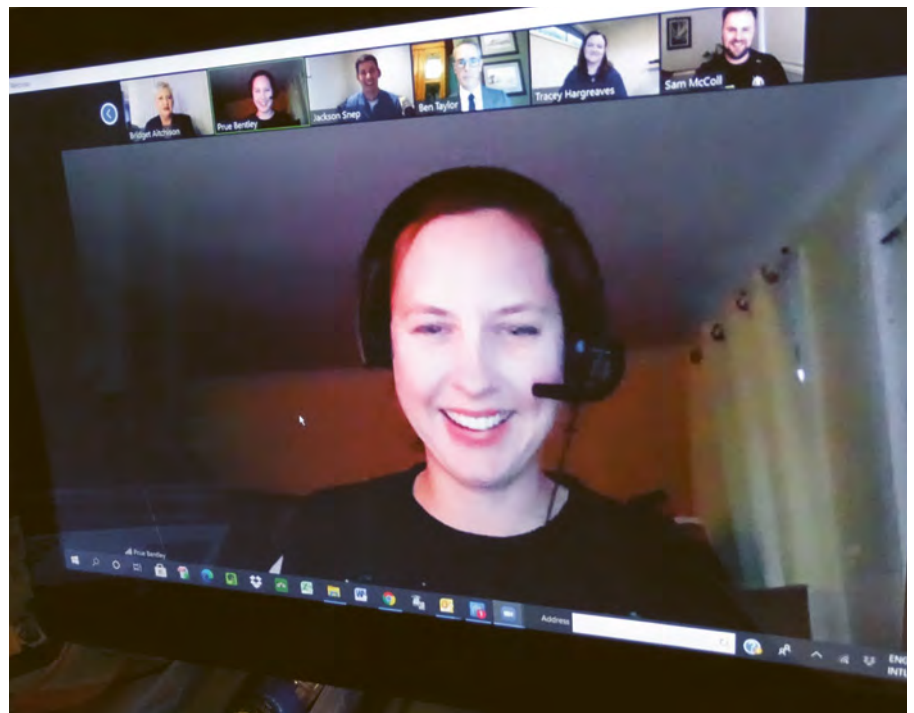
This year, because of obvious social restrictions, the BDCA arranged a Zoom forum which featured six of the eight candidates standing for election to the South Ward of the Ballarat City Council. Held on 8 October, the forum was expertly moderated by **Prue Bentley**, who is Chief of Staff of ABC Radio in Ballarat.

Each candidate was given four minutes in which to provide background on themselves and to indicate their suitability for election as a Councillor. This was followed by Prue Bentley putting two different questions to each candidate. These were prepared from community and BDCA suggestions.

The forum which ran for about 60 minutes was watched by some 100 locals and others who had registered for the forum. Technical assistance was provided by the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's **Sam McColl**.

In summary, questions covered

- community consultation
- current local issues they will support
- best and worst things done by the recent Council
- keeping in touch with community groups
- planning issues



Prior to the start of the forum the ABC's Prue Bentley is shown on screen with several Council candidates and, at top right, Sam McColl.

- protection of the district character
- local impact of population growth
- balancing demands of various parts of the South Ward
- development in context of preservation of historic and natural features
- keeping aware of community opinion on issues
- traffic issues
- the Botanic Gardens
- candidates' position on the 'barrels' on the Mount proposal

On the latter controversial issue all candidates avoided a direct response on the grounds that a response might

prejudice future discussion on the issue in the Council chamber.

BDCA President **Gayle Adams** said the association was delighted with the success of the hour-long forum and expressed warm thanks to Prue Bentley and Sam McColl for their voluntary and expert help.

News readers who missed viewing the forum are able to see the very interesting session; go to [buninyongcommunityassociation.com.au](http://buninyongcommunityassociation.com.au) for the link. In the December edition of *The News* there will be a report on some key views and statements made by the three persons who were elected.



# Police act on graffiti wave, vandalism

Over the past month or so a wave of graffiti, much of it carrying the same tag, has appeared in numerous locations all over the village.

Areas hit included the CHW pumping station, signage in Desoza Park, reflective road signage in places such as Lumeah Drive, Midland Highway and the end of Yuille Street, bus shelters, the telephone box near the post office, and areas behind the supermarket and the vet's clinic.

The BDCA reported the damage to the City Council which has responded by sending the graffiti removal trailer back to Buninyong to remove the graffiti, much of it carrying the tag LOKI.



Left: Contractors at the CHW pumping station at work near examples of the graffiti damage there. Above: Fresh from a kick of footballs in the park local lads Jacob Ellis, 13, and Rawdon Rodgers, 13, were shocked at the smashed windows of the bus shelter. The same graffiti tag is also on the rear wall.



Senior Constable **Sean Almeida** of the Buninyong Police was also briefed on the damage. He said, "Some suspects have been questioned and are co-operating with police in their investigations."

Further wanton vandalism was carried out on the night of Saturday 3 October when all the large glass panels on the bus shelter in front of Desoza Park were smashed. Police are looking for help from the public in relation to this damage which took place between 1.30am and 2.30am. Anyone with information should contact the Buninyong police station (5341 3431) or Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

Severe penalties may be imposed under the *Graffiti Prevention Act (2007)*. These may be up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to almost \$40,000.



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# Seven up since 1850 Family at local primary school

**Buninyong has had a long history and, with its stable population, there are some families living here who can trace their village ancestors back for several generations. A few families such as the Coxalls, Easons or the Scotts have been around since the mid-1800s.**

The **Innes/Bath/Robson** family is one able to count eight generations of Buninyong residents back to the 1840s. So when **Carter Robson** started in the Prep grade at the Buninyong Primary School in 2019, joining his six year old sister **Elaina**, they became the seventh generation of the one family to have been students at the school.

These two children are the latest in a family tradition that goes back to their great, great, great, great grandfather **George Innes**, who, with his wife **Euphemia** and daughter **Mary**, was a pioneer settler, arriving here from Scotland in 1841.

## Land buy

George settled in Buninyong and had two more children; **William**, who died in 1867 and **George (Junior)**. Known as 'King of the wood splitters', George soon purchased land from Yendon to Buninyong and beyond, including the property *Cairney Hill* at Pound Creek where he lived. He bought the land in 1854 for the sum of thirty-six pounds, three shillings and eight pence.

He also became a member of the Buninyong Council.

On the death of **Euphemia** in 1847, George married again to **Catherine Martin**, with whom he had ten children, four of whom died in infancy. George died in 1894.

## Mount Innes

In his will he left a gift of five acres of land, now known as **Mount Innes**, to the people of Buninyong. This is recorded on a basalt stone on the boundary of the Mount.

George had enrolled his son **George (Junior)**, in *Hastie's School* (the Buninyong Free Presbyterian day and boarding school) in 1850. At that time Victoria was

part of New South Wales. Established in 1848 the school was the first inland boarding school and the forerunner of the Buninyong State School, now known as Buninyong Primary School.

**Joseph John Innes** followed his father **George** to the school. Then came his daughter **Mavis Bath** (nee Innes), her son **Allan Bath**, followed by his daughter **Jane Robson** (nee Bath), her son **Brent Robson** and finally, his children **Elaina** and **Carter**.

**Brent's** third child **Nyah**, aged 4, currently attends the Buninyong Pre School and is expected to follow her siblings to the Primary School next year.

**Jane Robson**, who recently joined the Buninyong Cemetery Trust, and whose husband's family has run *W J Robson Glass* in Ballarat for 110 years, was excited



when her grandchildren started at the local school extending the family's links into the seventh generation.

Could there be an eighth generation? "We're firmly entrenched in the area so I would hope there could well be another," said Jane.

– Rita Russell

Above: Jane Robson in Grade Prep. Below: Three generations on the steps – (L to R) Elaina, Brent, Nyah, Jane and Carter Robson.



# History grant helps to preserve stories

**Buninyong and District Historical Society has been assisted to preserve, record and share the community's local history with a grant under the Victorian Government's Local History Grants Program.**

**Michaela Settle**, Member for Buninyong congratulated Buninyong and District Historical Society (BDHS) for receiving funding as part of the Victorian Government's *Local History Grants Program*.

She said, "Our local history is in good hands with the Buninyong and District Historical Society working hard to ensure stories and artefacts of our past are not forgotten."

BDHS received a \$1,300 grant to preserve local oral and video histories by converting cassette and video tapes to a digital format.

The digital files will be loaded onto a hard drive, and then played through a TV to allow these stories to be viewed or listened to by visitors to the historical society.

Historical Society Secretary **Anne Beggs-Sunter** said, "Over the past 30 years the group has been interviewing

locals to preserve the unique stories of growing up in Buninyong and the district.

"There has been a variety of formats on which we have recorded these stories, and this grant is a wonderful opportunity to upgrade our oral history project by transferring them to a digital format.

"This grant will help to bring these stories to life for locals and visitors alike by playing videos and spoken stories through a TV set up at the Society," she said.

The Buninyong grant was among 53 grants to community groups across Victoria sharing in \$350,000 as part of the 2020 round of *Local History Grants*.

*Local MP Michaela Settle enjoys a coffee with Anne Beggs-Sunter after making the grant announcement.*



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Copy should not exceed 400 words and a maximum of two photographs per item may be submitted. Material may be edited because of space, style, or clarity, or for legal reasons.

The name and address of the person submitting any material must be provided (address not for publication).

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# Buzz from EV charger



Getting set to charge her car at Desoza Park is local medical practitioner Dr Anna Glue.

**Since the EV charging unit was installed in Warrenheip Street in January 2020, it has proved to be highly popular with drivers, and has also helped to change the way the community thinks about future transport infrastructure.**

When *Buninyong Sustainability* first started talking about installing EV charging five years ago, there were only a few thousand EVs on the road.

There is still only a relatively small number – around 0.1 per cent of the market – but despite the lack of support from the federal government, the number of EVs is expected to double year on year.

## Booming

Overseas, EVs are dominating sales post-COVID. In the United Kingdom, demand for electric cars is up by 184 per cent, while interest in petrol cars dropped by 20 per cent and diesel vehicles dropped by 38 per cent. In Norway, almost 50 per cent of cars sold are electric, thanks to strong emission reduction targets and great driver education by the Norwegian Electric Vehicle Association.

As early adopters of EV charging, *Buninyong Sustainability* created a model for other community groups to support this growth by working with their local governments and businesses to install

green technology that supports people and the planet.

Community groups from all over Australia have been in touch with Buninyong group to find out any positive or negative lessons from this project. Additionally, there has been interest from local and state government departments about how community groups, particularly those in regional areas, can help to educate people about electric cars.

## Research

The Buninyong EV-charger project even sparked new research by the Melbourne-based company, *Evolution*, which made and installed the unit. The company has created *RegionCharge*, which helps community groups to bulk buy and partially assemble these units for installation in their own town.

It's also put a spotlight on this town. Almost 100 charging sessions have taken place, thanks to *Buninyong Sustainability* promoting this outlet on charging-app *PlugShare*, Google maps and on social media.

This EV-charging project has been incredibly positive for Buninyong. It's planned to install more as EVs become more common.

On p 17 of this edition of *The News* look for the notice about the 2020 Conference of the Australian Electric Vehicle Association.

## streettalk

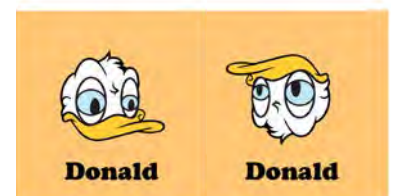
**HARD WORK** to get a date out of CFA headquarters for the start of the new \$2 million fire station project down next to the golf club. Contractors were to 'set up' down there on 19 October with construction due to start in a few days' time in early November. Expected completion date is now March 2021. They are already way over budget with the \$400 coughed up to the golf club to cut the grass a few times!

**COUPLE OF FAMILIAR** faces spotted working away out front of the old Shire Office building adjacent to the Town Hall recently. Property owner **Gerard Ballantyne** and wife **Rosie** were busy adding mulch to the garden beds. Rosie is now CEO of *Netball Victoria*.

**THE RECENT SPATE** of graffiti and other vandalism around town has brought calls for the police prosecutors and the Courts to get tougher on the culprits. It's wearying to see Magistrates continually listen to pleas of a "hard upbringing" before dishing out yet another verbal slap on the wrist.

**SEWERS ARE** causing a few problems around town lately. Connecting sewerage to that very large new home that is close to being finished on the old *Bowen Hill Vineyard* land has seen three or four trucks, excavating and drilling machinery, half a dozen workmen and several very deep holes being dug along Cathcart Street (South) for weeks. The cost of the exercise would be scary.

**GIVEN THAT** 'Sleepy Joe' might tip Donald out of the White House in a few days' time, *Street Talk* must share with readers the following Donald Duck graphic it received. Turning DD on his head brings up a head that will be hard to forget.





Skiier Ray Sullivan with First Constable Rory Mitchell who posted the snow scene on the Ballarat police Facebook page.

# Police tackle mystery skier

During the heavy snowfalls on the afternoon of 25 September, housebound local kids enjoyed pelting each other with snowballs and making the snowmen that appeared in front gardens in the village. Many photos (see also page 19) were taken around the snow-covered district.

Clubhouse Close resident and News sports reporter, Ray Sullivan, had been waiting for ten years for enough snow to be on

the ground to ski from his house down the steeply-sloping tenth hole of the Buninyong golf course.

## Big chance

He decided that this was his chance. He retrieved his ski gear from the roof of his garage, brushed off the dust and cobwebs, and headed out to the golf course to tackle the new ski run down the tenth fairway.

What was supposed to be a clandestine, quick run down the hill turned out to have an audience way beyond that of his wife **Nancye** who was there to take a photo for the family album. By the time Ray was halfway down the slope three cars had stopped in the golf club car park and more photos were being taken.

**‘Two officers got out of a police car and walked up the hill towards him’**

As the intrepid skier (who, as he was ‘exercising’ alone, wasn’t wearing a face mask) rolled to a stop, a police car also made an appearance and to his surprise two officers got out of their vehicle and walked up the hill towards him.

## Trouble

His fears of “I’m in trouble here” were soon allayed as he was asked if he would kindly go 100 metres back up the hill and ski down again so a photo could be taken for the Ballarat Police Station’s *Eyewitness* Facebook page.

After one more run, by the time he took off his skis and trudged back up the hill and into a warm home, one of the passer-by photographers had posted her photo to the Facebook page of the *Ballarat Courier*. It soon had over 200 likes and also featured on the local television news that evening.

The post on the police *Eyewitness* site also created plenty of interest with one senior officer wondering why he hadn’t been arrested as the course should have been closed. But it wasn’t!

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AUTHORISED BY CATHERINE KING, 5 LYDIARD ST NTH BALLARAT 3350



# Burns of Scotsburn Andy takes a high road

**In one way it's probably appropriate that a bloke called Andy Burns lives in Scotsburn. But forget about kilts, poetry, whisky, highland games or Scotch thistles because Andy's life centres around his passion for working on anything made of metal, especially old machinery.**

Born in Ballarat in the early 1960s, Andy attended the Buninyong Primary School and then secondary school in Ballarat before becoming a qualified boilermaker and fitter.

## Back home

While, in his early twenties, Andy moved to Western Australia to establish an engineering company. But this was recently sold, and he returned to the Buninyong and Lal Lal districts where his ancestors were early settlers.

This area has a special hold on him due to the rich history of the old sawmills, brickworks, furnaces, railways and the like that were designed, built and used in those pioneering days. He also loves the local community spirit, the camaraderie of the people and the fantastic landscapes.

Andy has a fascination for old machinery and anything mechanical. This stemmed from his childhood when, as a small boy around 1969, he was introduced to the *Ballarat Vintage Car Club* when they met at the rear of the *Vegas Theatre*.



*This 1903 engine was manufactured in the UK by Marshall & Sons of Gainsborough, then the largest ironworks in Europe. It was brought by ship to Perth and used in sawmilling.*

It's still a strong club, he says, with a lot of support there to help anyone with an interest in vintage cars, although, sadly many of the founding members have passed away. He has been a member of this club for over 40 years.

## Memories

Andy's first vintage car was an improved 1930 A-model Ford, and his first motorcycle was a 1924 Douglas which he still owns.

He also talks of early memories of visiting the *Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Society* with his grandfather. In particular, he loved riding on large traction engines with their smell of steam and grease.

Restoration has always been part of his life. For Andy enjoys restoring old cars, vintage engines, tractors; in fact, anything mechanical.

## Collection

These days, in addition to a couple of cars, his collection extends to vintage lawnmowers, chainsaws and a stationary engine or two. He has a particular interest in machines made prior to 1910 because of the ingenuity and simplicity of their design and operation.

In the mid-1980s he extended his mechanical interests to the air when he

learnt to fly with the *Ballarat Aero Club* – a passion he still enjoys today.

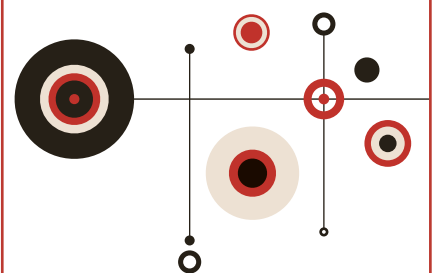
Andy Burns is always happy to share a cup of tea and a few stories with friends at the shed and enjoys meeting new people with similar interests – even those wearing a kilt!

– Russell Luckock

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# Steiner school scarecrows Friends on the fence



**During the second round of remote schooling, Class 3 at the Ballarat Steiner School enjoyed a unit on farming.**

Whilst working at home, students made butter, planted wheat grass and harvested it to make green smoothies, learnt about Aboriginal fish traps, egg production, the yearly cycle of farm life on a mixed farm, and the *Kulin* nation seasons.

They have also made scarecrows to send a cheerful message to passers-by.

*Above: Class 3 teacher Donna Pond and her class members adds scarecrow Number 9 to the line-up of scarecrows along the Moss Avenue fence of the Steiner school.*

The scarecrows are on display on the school fence, along with a message to *Be Happy*.

During that time school felt like a strange and isolated place without pupils, so making a few extra 'friends' to send a positive message, to both students and the community, seemed like a nice idea.

# One wheel to school

**De Soza Park is popular with the locals to walk the dog, chat to friends, run to keep fit, wander along drinking a coffee just bought in the Village, play on the playground equipment, kick a footy around or ride bikes. Spencer Stewart, a student at Buninyong Primary School also rides his bike in the park...but with one major difference. His bike only has one wheel.**

After seeing him riding his usual two-wheeler without using his hands, his parents thought it would be an idea for him to try a unicycle. He had tried one at the Begonia Festival and so Spencer asked his grandparents for one for his birthday in May this year. His first few attempts ended up with laughter and Spencer falling off. Then he practised by



holding on to the backyard fence. And one day it 'just clicked', as Spencer put it, and he was away.

Spencer says it has improved his balance and fitness.

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# Brigade says ‘We’re leaving’ is not a plan, it’s a headline! CUT THE DEATH RISK

**A survey by the Buninyong Mt Helen Fire Brigade has found that many local residents are inadequately prepared for a serious bushfire event and are placing themselves and their families at significant potential risk.**

Most residents were found to be doing a good job of preparing their properties ahead of the fire season. However, most also had very limited plans for the protection of themselves and their families in the event they are caught in the path of a fire.

## Vague plans

The overwhelming majority of residents say their plan is “to leave”, which is the safest strategy and what CFA recommends. However, plans for bushfire safety must be detailed and comprehensive.

The majority of residents who say they will leave early have not discussed it as a family and haven’t agreed upon the trigger point to leave. Nor have they discussed the steps they would need to take so they can leave in sufficient time.

Only a tiny handful of residents had considered a backup plan in the event of being caught and unable to leave.

There are many decisions that need to be made to leave safely. Without a well discussed plan that has been agreed on and committed to by all family members, many things can go wrong. This can result in people not leaving early enough or getting caught and putting their lives in danger.

Residents who don’t have agreed strategies on what they will take, what they will do with pets and animals, suitable clothing ready, supplies of water and snacks, agreed multiple escape routes, agreed valuables ready to take, can find themselves being disorganized, panicking and running out of time to leave safely.

## Take action

Overwhelmingly, most residents indicate that they will take action when a fire is threatening. However, most people’s interpretation of “leave early” is to get out when they notice they are threatened as they believe they can still leave safely at this point. The speed and erratic behavior of a fire is often significantly underestimated.

Leaving early actually means leaving the area before you can see fire or smell smoke.

CFA has an excellent template for developing your own leave-early plan. You can download it from [www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/leave-early](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/leave-early). Further advice or assistance can be obtained by contacting **John McLeod**, the local Brigade Community Safety Coordinator on 0408 142 031.

*CFA members are happy to discuss ‘leave-early’ plans with families and groups.*



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# Township plan still missing Four year shambles

Recent enquiries to *The News* about what is happening with the **Buninyong Township Plan (BTP)** prompted a **News investigative report** which shows that after almost four years there is no sign of the plan.

From early 2017, there was action on many fronts to get community support for and input into Council's move to prepare a township plan for Buninyong. Across many editions (see a selection above) this newspaper played its role in informing readers about happenings relating to this important exercise.

After some 45 months since then, community enthusiasm for the much-vaunted BTP has been dulled, if not extinguished, by Council's failure to produce even a draft report. Since mid-2019, the reason given has been Council's decision to prepare a cross-city "neighbourhood character study".

The following **News report** tracks the painful progress (or lack of it) in getting a township plan for Buninyong.

**April 2017.** The City of Ballarat (CoB) released its own *Council Plan 2017-2021* which included the aim of "completion of township plans for Miners Rest, Buninyong and Warrenheip".

**May 2017.** The Buninyong and District Community Association (BDCA) and the Community Bank develop an *Imagine Buninyong* project which was "designed to educate and to give voice to residents interested in contributing to the *Buninyong Township Plan*".

**June 2017.** Funded by the Community Bank, international planning guru **Peter Kenyon** is brought to Buninyong for an exciting two day seminar series involving 180 community members and business leaders. These seminars were held at the Buninyong Town Hall on 13 and 14 June 2017.

**October 2017.** A detailed report by **Jacqui Stepnell** and **Samantha Elshaug** on the outcomes of the *Imagine Buninyong* workshops was compiled and reported on in *The News*. It was based on 580 responses from the workshop participants. This report was seen to be "a strong base of community opinion relevant to the City of Ballarat's *Township Plan for Buninyong* project in coming months".

**26 April 2018.** Councillors, CoB planners and *Tract Consulting* staff from offices in Melbourne's Southbank attend the BDCA meeting. Reference is made to the Kenyon workshop and to the detailed BCDA submission *Towards a Township Plan* (April 2018). Discussion on plan, timelines.

**Mid-2018.** Action aplenty. The BDCA arranges a community-wide event (in conjunction with Council) for early September to launch the township planning process. This was aimed to "inform and motivate" the community of the process and how they might be involved. It was to kick off a "planning process that will stretch over several months and involve various opportunities for community consultation, meetings with key community groups, and direct resident feedback via surveys".

Colourful *Have Your Say* postcards were prepared by Council and distributed to all letter boxes.

**4 September 2018.** Crowds pack out the Buninyong Town Hall for the 'launch' event. Council CEO and planners address the meeting. Community interest and motivation levels are high. Music. Sausage sizzle by Lions Club.

**October 2018.** The October 2018 edition of *The News* carried a front-page report and a lift-out Council survey on the plan for completion by residents. This also was loaded onto the *MySay* section of the Council's website for several weeks.

**November 2018.** Planner **John Dyke** attends meetings of various community groups. For example he attended a meeting of the Cemetery Trust on 26 November



**LOCAL NEWS**

### WORKSHOP GETS PLAN UNDERWAY

**WORKSHOP GETS PLAN UNDERWAY**

Project coordinator John Dyke said that the response for the resident survey had been "fantastic" overall, with 201 responses received on-line and another 228 hard copy copies returned to the Council.

The new plan to meet with various local interest groups to discuss aspects of the plan is set to be completed by the end of the year. The plan is set to be completed by the end of the year. The plan is set to be completed by the end of the year.

**Catherine King MP**  
Federal Member for Ballarat

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**OPINION**

### Now's the time to speak up on Plan

**Now's the time to speak up on Plan**

It shows that significant groups of residents are unhappy with a number of recommendations in the township plan. It shows that significant groups of residents are unhappy with a number of recommendations in the township plan.

**Michaela Settle MP**  
State Member of Parliament for Buninyong

Delivering for Buninyong

June 2019

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**LOCAL NEWS**

### TOWN PLAN STALLED

**TOWN PLAN STALLED**

A decision by the City of Ballarat to take a "broader view" over the management of land use and neighbourhood character has resulted in a delay to the release of the draft recommendations of the Buninyong Township Plan.

**John Dyke** said that the additional township growth that will now be considered in all township plans will include:

- Neighbourhood character study - identifying character across the city and how character should be protected
- Compact City Housing Plan - identifying growth areas for growth and mixed-use areas (with consideration of density, location and character) and open spaces will be increased
- Living corridor protection measures - including measures of planning scheme controls relating to vegetation and environmental significance, including the banks, streets, and footpaths adjacent to the built-up areas

**Michaela Settle MP**  
State Member of Parliament for Buninyong

Delivering for Buninyong

August 2019

2018 to provide information, and to hear and receive submissions. Submitting groups have heard nothing since.

**1 December 2018.** Council/consultants conduct a two-hour workshop involving 80 attendees in discussion groups at the Town Hall. Results of workshop groups were to be analysed by highly-paid *Tract Consulting*. Reported that 201 on-line and 109 hard copy completed surveys from community members had been received.

**June 2019.** In the absence of any information/feedback on the plan, the BDCA formally asks Council about progress/completion date for Plan. Response is that work on the Plan has been "progressing well, with the completion of a biodiversity and economic assessment, and preparation of a draft *Background Paper*".

**But Council then decides to "review its overall town planning processes and to undertake (i) a Neighbourhood Character Study, (ii) a Compact City Housing Plan,**

and (iii) a *Living Corridor Protection Review*. Advice was that it has been decided to delay completion of the BTP "until this new exercise has been completed".

**August 2019.** Council planner John Dyke writes a lengthy response published in *The News* in which, *inter alia*, he said that using the outcomes of these three studies "draft characterisation details are being prepared for community consultation early in 2020".

**Early 2020.** No consultation. Nothing heard or produced.

**August 2020.** Advice is received from Council that the *Draft Ballarat Neighbourhood Character Assessment* has been completed. This attractive publication with many photographs and maps and tables is said to be at Step 3 (of seven) along the way to finalising the *Neighbourhood Character Study*! The present draft simply indicates that most of Buninyong falls into one of two categories – *Bush Suburban* or *Traditional* – two of the eight categories used.

A key finding in the report by was that "consultation on all of our recent strategic planning projects has revealed that the Ballarat community loves its heritage, parks, gardens, old buildings, greenery, beautiful gardens, streetscapes, bluestone channels, wide streets, old established trees and gravelled (road) shoulders". I could have told them all of that in five minutes...and for free!

So where are we at? Now we have a preliminary draft 'assessment' paper, which is out for consultation, to be followed by another draft, then more consultation, before the city-wide *Neighbourhood Character Study* can be completed. Then will come a *Draft Background Town Plan Paper*, feedback on which, in turn, will have to be digested and reviewed before the *Buninyong Township Plan* might see the light of day. Giddy stuff!!

There's no way known we'll see a plan for this township until well into 2021. A shambles!

– Barry Fitzgerald, Editor

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# STATE AWARD TO DELL

Each year the Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria (CCAV) makes two awards to members. One is titled the **Above and Beyond Award for an outstanding individual contributor. The other is the Innovation Award for a project that is “innovative and which positively impacts a cemetery, the community or the industry”.**

The CCAV recently announced that the Buninyong Cemetery won the 2020 Innovation Award for its *Dell of Memories* project completed about twelve months ago.

This project located in the north east corner of the Cemetery was a response to a request by someone wanting a quiet place to sit and grieve and remember a close relative whose ashes had been spread in a distant part of Australia.

Using a design by local landscape architect **David Turley**, the Cemetery Trust constructed rock pools, garden beds, a wooden bridge, and planted trees and shrubs in a corner of the cemetery shaded by 100 year old oak trees. A seat was placed near large ‘memorial’ rocks on which have been placed bronze plaques by families and friends of someone buried or whose ashes have been spread in distant places. The total cost of the project was \$19,000.

Trust Chairman **Barry Fitzgerald** said, “This quiet corner of our old

cemetery is developing into a lovely place for anyone in the community to step back for a while to reflect and remember.” He said that the Trust was delighted that its project which responded to a call for help was now widely recognised as a positive innovation by the CCAV.

There are some 400 Cemetery Trusts in Victoria. With the exception of four very large cemeteries all trust members are unpaid community volunteers.

Cemetery maintenance volunteers **Peter Barwood** (left) and **Graeme Penhall** take a break in the *Dell of Memories* and look at the Italian glass 2020 CCAV Innovation Award won by their cemetery.



## Ernie Neale's Monthly RAINFALL REPORT

### Battle of the fronts

September is usually a month of very changeable weather as cold fronts from the south battle it out with the arrival of warm air from the north. This September produced bursts of sun followed by days and days of drizzle and rain.

Then, in the last week of the month, we even scored a substantial fall of snow. It was glorious and lots of people headed up the Mount to enjoy it.

Rainfall for the month was 75.1mm, just over the decade average of 70.1mm and bringing the progressive yearly total to 640.7mm.

Spring has certainly sprung in style and BOM's outlook suggests there is more variability ahead through spring and summer. A La Nina event in the Pacific combined with the effect of Indian Ocean temperatures are likely to trigger above average temperatures and rainfall in S.E. Australia. It seems likely that despite the wet start to October, while we can't go to the tropics, they might be on their way to us.

| SEPTEMBER 2020 |      |        |      |
|----------------|------|--------|------|
| Date           | Rain | Date   | Rain |
| 4-5            | 4.6  | 17-22  | 8.3  |
| 8-9            | 1.3  | 23-27  | 27.7 |
| 13             | 32.7 | 30     | 0.5  |
| Total          |      | 75.1mm |      |
| Average        |      | 54.8mm |      |

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# After twelve years of work and leadership on the Community Bank Board Steve calls it a day

Back in mid-2008 John Emery floated the idea that it was time that Buninyong had its own bank again after the National Bank branch closed its doors here back in 1974. He was greatly attracted by the community bank model then being rolled out by the Bendigo Bank across many towns in rural Australia.

John invited a widely diverse group of residents experienced in business and industry to form a planning committee to develop and sell the concept to Buninyong businesses and locals, and to put a case together to convince the Bendigo Bank that a community bank branch here would be viable.

The initial group of volunteers consisted of **John Emery, Ron Delaland, Russell Luckock, Ian Salathiel, Neil Blanchard, Gary Trotter, Barry Fitzgerald** and the then-owner of historic *Brim Brim* **Stephen Falconer**.

This group spent some eighteen months meeting, planning, spending many days talking to and handing out pamphlets to locals, phoning groups and individuals, putting business cases together, designing buildings and, hardest of all, at the time of the *Global Financial Crisis*, raising the

\$700,000 start-up capital through the sale of \$1 shares in the proposed company as required by the Bendigo Bank to agree to a start here.

## Team role

Along with the other founding directors, Steve Falconer played an important role in these activities. Prior to his retirement for health reasons in 2008, his career background was as CEO in the automotive parts industry working in Australia, SE Asia, China, Europe and the Americas. His experience in budgeting, economic planning and business development was critical in the early work of the bank project team, which became the inaugural Board of the *Buninyong & District Financial Services Limited (BDFSL)* when the company was formed in September 2009. The Bank was officially opened in August 2010.



Above: After a period as Chairman of the Bank Board, Steve Falconer hands over to Richard McDowell in 2017. Below: prior to its major renovation the Bank's Community Cottage was open in 2015. Steve invites local residents Mitza and Graeme Clark to take a look.

For the first four formative years, as Company Secretary of the BDFSL, Steve was dedicated in supporting the bank's development. As a team, the voluntary directors saw to staffing of the branch, reports to all kinds of authorities, preparing financial projections, engaging with community and stakeholders, publicity, and strategic planning which all saw Steve's participation.

## Building community

In 2015, Steve took over as Chair after the retirement of John Emery from that role. When he stepped down in 2017, he became the director responsible for the Board's "community investment" functions – essentially the distribution of funds by way of grants and sponsorships to district groups and other worthwhile causes.

As Steve puts it, "The point of community banking is to help build and maintain happy, sustainable communities, and to help society to address disadvantage and inequality through its *Shared Value* business model."

The Buninyong Community Bank does that by retaining banking and its profits





in the community (not 'exporting' it to capital cities and highly paid executive teams), providing services to community members and business, and returning profit back to enable community projects.

Since its 2010 start, the banking transactions of the 4,000 customers of Buninyong Community Bank has enabled more than \$1,000,000 to be distributed to over 300 local projects across sixteen communities around Buninyong. This equates to many thousands of individuals and families whose lives have been improved by the presence of the Community Bank.

**Gratitude**

In addition, the Bank's Community House in Warrenheip Street provides a valuable community asset, and its fundraising efforts for bushfire, flood and cyclone relief has broadened the Bank's impact, doubling it to more than \$2 million in 10 years.

And, of course the bank continues to support *The Buninyong News* with a small annual grant to assist with its production each month.

After twelve years of leadership and hard work in helping to get the Buninyong Community Bank to its strong financial position and its now-central role in this community, Steve Falconer has decided to call it a day as a Board member. He leaves with the thanks and gratitude of Buninyong's community groups, schools, businesses, bank customers and the many others across the district helped by the funds distributed from the profit share generated by the highly-successful local community bank.



**Jacqui MacMillan** and **Honey** (Reading Dog) have been at the school gate each morning to bring a bit of joy to students and provide a little distraction for those anxious about a return to school.

# Kids all back at BPS

**Covid-19 has impacted every sector in our community and that includes schools. Buninyong Primary School is delighted to have their students back on site after two bouts of remote learning.**

Learning from home was a different experience for every student and family. Some children enjoyed the independence and freedom to structure their day of learning at home, whilst others found that overwhelming. Some parents enjoyed getting to spend lots of time with their kids, while others had smaller children to care for or were trying to work from home and found juggling the roles difficult.


All year levels have been back at school since 6 October, and everyone has done

a fabulous job of settling in and returning to learning in the classroom. All at the school have their fingers crossed for an uninterrupted term 4 and a full year of on-site learning in 2021.

## LIONS

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## Boiling over barrels

The barrels-on-the-Mount issue has been on hold during Council's pre-election 'stand down' period. It is understood that almost 50 objections to the proposal to build six barrel-shaped buildings on the southern slopes of Mt Buninyong have been lodged with Council. They have come from many individuals, community groups and even bodies such as Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Several local Councillors have said they have "called in" the controversial matter for direct Council consideration. The three present South Ward Councillors all declined to indicate their views on the issue when questioned about it at the recent BDCA Zoom forum.

## Road death

A fatal collision occurred at Napoleons on 4 October.

Two cars collided on the Colac-Ballarad Road near Nolans Road. A female passenger in one of the cars died at the scene.

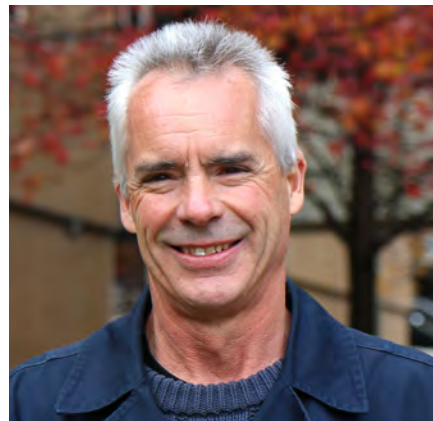
## By-pass call

Committee for Ballarat CEO Michael Poulton has made a strong call for 'collaborative' consideration of the impact of the Ballarat Link Road project on Buninyong. In a statement seeking additional funding to complete the Link Road project, Mr Poulton said that "investigating a (Buninyong) by-pass should be back on the table".

He said, "The obvious answer can't be the extension of the Link Road Stage two and putting more trucks in Sebastopol and Magpie and then through Buninyong."

He called for a collaborative effort from various authorities to plan a 'greenfield development of infrastructure' as opposed to simply saying "how are we going to fix this problem because we've realised there's too many trucks going through Buninyong?"

BDCA Executive member Robert Elshaug who chairs a working party with the by-pass issue as a key concern said that Mr Poulton's highlighting of the by-pass issue was 'refreshing'. "The Community Association has been lobbying on this matter for at least ten years," he said.



## Dumpers back

Rubbish dumpers have been back in action on the upper road to the summit of Mount Buninyong.

After recent incidents involving household rubbish and old lounge furniture, the most recent case saw four large plastic containers neatly left in the middle of the road. There's some strange people about!

## Hikers' danger

Reports have come in recently of near-misses involving hikers crossing the Midland Highway east of Buninyong. The popular Goldfields Trail walking track takes hikers up from Buninyong village, around Mount Innes, along Ogilvie Lane to cross the Midland Highway near there to reach Granny White Lane.

The point where hikers cross is below the sight lines of traffic coming from the Geelong direction in a 100kph speed zone which locals believe should be lowered to 80kph in that area.



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Shown unpacking trailer loads of donated goods and restocking shelves at the Lions Op Shop are (L to R) Leicester Cheeseman, Ondroa Cheeseman, Judy Wilson, and Jill Thomas.

## MORE BARGAINS Lions Op Shop open again

In the October issue of *The News* (p 16) the Buninyong Mount Helen Lions Club reported on the first grant from its \$5000 Primary Schools Support Program being allocated to local schools. This grant was to the Emmaus Catholic Primary School.

Now three more schools have been added to the list. Magpie Primary School asked that the donation cover the purchase of warm jumpers and coats for the students. The grant to the Napoleons School will go towards their end-of-year school camp.

At Mount Clear PS the students' lunch program will purchase groceries, as well as supplying 'stress toys' to help out with emotional support in these unusual times.

The funds for this program are derived from fundraising by Lions' members and, to a large extent, from the community support of the bookshop and the Op shop.

### Two open

The Lions' Club has now announced the reopening of these two much-loved additions to the retail landscape in Buninyong. Over the past six months, a lot of time has gone into renovations and improvements of these two shops.

This is especially evident at the Bookshop where a large additional room has been constructed at the rear of the historic old cottage once owned by a loved village identity in **Mavis Bath**. This shop has kept active during the shutdown with its books being available on the front veranda and also through the popular *Little Library* on its front fence.

In line with COVID-safe regulations, the Lions' shops can now welcome back customers and volunteers alike. The Op Shop reopened a couple of weeks ago on 15 October and the bookshop two days after that.



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# Max now a member for life

**Buninyong Golf Club president, Ron Delaland recently presented popular member Max Thorne with Life Membership of the club. Life membership is an honour bestowed on club members whose exceptional, loyal and outstanding service and contribution has provided a benefit to the club over an extended period of time.**

In Max Thorne's case that period extends over some 42 years. Most boxes are ticked when it comes to Max's involvement in the various facets of life at the golf club. He became a regular volunteer soon after joining in 1978. With his mechanical skills and background, he especially has been involved in course machinery and equipment maintenance, purchase and repairs. He is still doing this today.

## Committees

Over the years, Max has served on most club committees including the General Committee where he held positions of senior Vice-President and assistant Secretary. He also spent time on the Match Committee and on the Greens Committee.

He has made a great contribution to the social life of the club as a member of the Social Club for over twenty years, helping out with Thursday night social dinners, running raffles and organising other fund raisers for the club. He was one of the original organisers of the popular Tuesday 11-hole competition and still helps run this competition.



Max Thorne (left) receives his golf club Life Membership certificate from golf club President Ron Delaland.

Recently Max has been part of the Wood Merchants team which now has raised many thousands of dollars for Club projects through the sale of wood. He has spent hundreds of hours on the course cutting and splitting wood (with his own splitter) and assisting 'senior wood merchant' Trevor McCann in sourcing old timber around the course.

Max is also a Life Member and past President of the Buninyong RSL sub-branch. He is currently assisting with the Cambrian Hill Avenue of Honour restoration project.

– Ray Sullivan

# Pop in and help the Hall

**The Buninyong Pop-Up Shop plans to return later this year with a Buninyong Local Makers focus, and also as a fundraising initiative for the Buninyong Town Hall.**

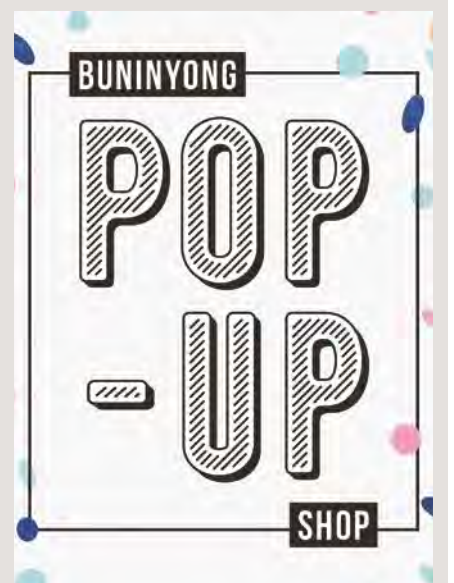
With COVID-19 restrictions, the Buninyong Town Hall's income has dropped by \$7,000 and the hall's volunteer committee is looking for a way to re-coup these funds. Even though weddings, celebrations and weekly bookings have stopped, the annual expenses have not. Funds are needed to cover ongoing expenses such as rubbish collection, maintenance, equipment purchase, cleaning products, power, gas, phone and website hosting.

The Pop-Up Shop is planned for 4 to 13 December in the Buninyong Town Hall.

## Call out

A call out is now made for local makers and crafts people. Many locals have been getting crafty over COVID-19 and this is an opportunity to show your wares. The simple conditions of entry are *locally hand-made goods or a local Buninyong business.*

A maker's fee of \$25 will apply and 20% of sales is donated to the hall. The shop will be managed and staffed by volunteers. The target is to raise \$5,000 for the hall. Organisers are sure locals will embrace this idea and welcome back the Buninyong Pop-Up Shop.



To apply or for further information call Sharron on 0418 925 322.



# Springtime in Buninyong

News reporter Russell Luckock captured this great image of a mare and her newborn foal looking puzzled by the heavy snowfalls on the slopes of Mount Buninyong on Friday 25 September.



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