



ISSUE NO. 133 October 2022

For the Mia Mia- Redesdale Region including:

- Heathcote • Derrinal • Glenhope • Baynton • Sidonia • Barfold
- Langley V Sutton Grange • Elphinstone • Kyneton • Metcalfe

# BRIDGE CONNECTION COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

## Steph Ryan Farewell



Federal Member Stephanie Ryan came to meet community representatives to both thank them for their support, identify further un-resolved issues, and introduce one of the potential nominations for her replacement – Annabelle Cleeland.

*Right Annabelle Cleeland  
Pan Prendagrast Steph Ryan*



We're open 9am-5pm Monday to Friday or call us on  
(03) 5433 3115 to speak to a friendly staff member.

[heathcotenagambie.community](http://heathcotenagambie.community)

Community Bank  
Heathcote & District

**Bendigo Bank**





## THE REDESDALE ART SHOW IS BACK!

Art brings people together, whether it be in a national gallery or simply in a small, rural community pavilion - and that's exactly what's happening in Redesdale, Central Victoria.

Many communities have experienced local regeneration thanks to art shows. Local community artists can inspire people to take pride in their surroundings, and create a focus for everyone to enjoy. After a five-year hiatus, the Redesdale Art Show, and Craft & Produce Market is back and aiming to do just that.

The exhibition launches on Friday October 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at its' new venue, the Pavilion at the Agnes Mudford Reserve, Redesdale, highlighting the works of regional artists and sculptors. A small \$10 entry-fee will get you into the opening night celebration till 9pm with drinks and canapes. The Art Show continues over the weekend - Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> 10-4pm, and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> 10-4pm.

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> 10-2pm a craft & produce market on the reserve will feature beautiful and original handicrafts and delicious food items from rural Victoria. A selection of food vans will also be at the market to provide you with the energy to keep looking.

Put it on your **Melbourne Cup Weekend** calendar and come along.

For any further details, please contact [info@redesdale.net](mailto:info@redesdale.net) or 0418 583 304



Artist Kevin Foley with some of the organisers (L to R) – Pan Prendergast, Lin Newton, Craig Newton

## Editorial

Dear Readers

There are a number of local activities in the upcoming months.

The Art Show is back details on page 2.

Redesdale Revellers Road Trip.

See Flyer page 17.

Next printed edition will be December.

[bridgeconnection.editor@gmail.com](mailto:bridgeconnection.editor@gmail.com)



Regina Bennett

**Regina Bennett.**

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## Bridge Connection

### - Mission Statement -

The mission of **Bridge Connection** is to bring people together by:

1. Providing information about local issues, goals and events, and to celebrate local achievements,
  2. Encouraging economic growth in the area
  3. Fostering geographic identity, and
  4. Providing a platform for public debate
- Bridge Connection is published by local people who volunteer, for local people as a **free paper** and on line at **redesdale.net** and via **face-book**



[facebook.comRedesdaleMiaMia](https://facebook.com/RedesdaleMiaMia)

## BRIDGE CONNECTION COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

### Advertising Rates/Sizes

Size	Height x Width	Price per issue	10 Editions
Business Card	55mm x 90mm	\$25	\$250
Quarter Page	130mm x 90mm	\$50	\$500
Half Page	130mm x 190mm	\$95	\$950
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or by post to **Regina Bennett 3465 Burke & Wills track Mia Mia 3444.**  
For other editorial enquiries, please phone **0437 514 223**

#### Bridge Connection Distribution

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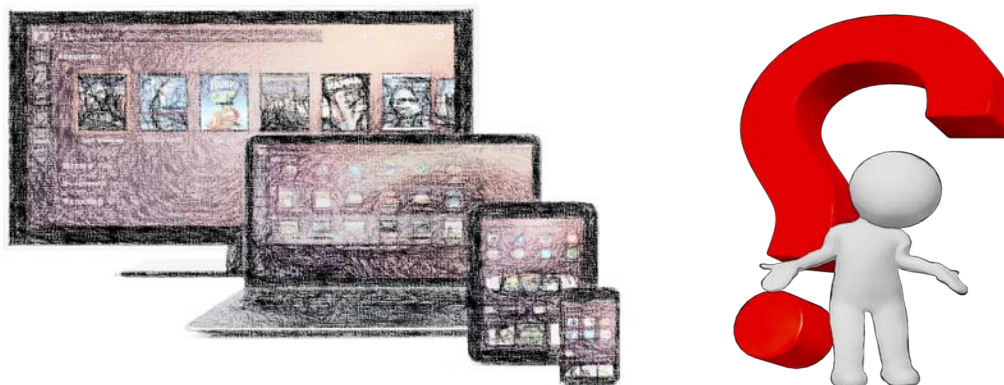
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2609 Main Road, Redesdale**

## Complimentary Drop-In Digital Learning Sessions



It's no secret companies and the government want us to use our technology more. However, some of us find this a little daunting, and need a little hands-on guidance to be more engaged.

Redesdale Recreational Reserve Committee, in partnership with City of Greater Bendigo, is planning to arrange COMPLIMENTARY DIGITAL DROP-IN SESSIONS at the Redesdale Community Pavilion using the services of Computer Coaching of Bendigo.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn how to best use your devices.</li><li>• Get assistance with internet issues.</li><li>• Connect apps across all your devices.</li><li>• Help with updating your software.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand how to use the internet for purchasing groceries, managing on-line accounts, pay utilities and other bills.</li><li>• Learn how to use Face-time or Zoom with family and friends.</li></ul> |
|--|--|

It's yet to be finalised, however our plan is for this service to be available **2:00 pm to 5:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month – commencing Oct. (6 months, excluding January 2023.)**

**Your expression of interest will assist us in getting this approved, so drop us a line and we can keep you updated on progress.**

**Contact: Craig Newton   0408 890 060      3444reserve@gmail.com**

### Digital Drop-in Training Session Report

The first Digital Drop-in Training Session was held on Wednesday 5th Oct. With more than 8 different issues being discussed and resolved with community members.

This also gave us valuable feedback on the types of issues experienced, and will help James and his team from Computer Coaching to develop short "Group Information Lessons" that we hope to have as part of the December 7th session.





# RRRC Report October 2022

The Community Pavilion project continues its' development, with the stairway from the decking to the reserve completed, tables and chairs are now available for events to capitalise on the decking view of the reserve. Additionally, carpet has been installed inside providing improved acoustics as well as giving a much "warmer" feeling to the interior.

The Pavilion continues to be used for both one-off meetings and regular activities.

## Of the One-off meetings, we had:

- CoGB Planning Permit Community consultation meeting,
- CoGB Listening Post Community meeting with councillors Margaret O'Rourke and Greg Penna, and
- Federal Member Stephanie Ryan came to meet community representatives to both thank them for their support, identify further un-resolved issues, and introduce one of the potential nominations for her replacement – Annabelle Cleeland.

## Regular activities are:

- Yoga sessions, now being held twice week (Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings), and
- The community knitting and croquet group meeting weekly on a Thursday.

Anybody interested in joining either of these activities, please contact RRRC and they will put you touch with the organisers.

Also happening are the 6 x Community Drop-in Digital Training Sessions. These will be held on the first Wednesday of each month starting Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October at 2-5pm. Professional computer coaches will be available to help anybody with a question or problem relating to their technology appliances. No appointment needed, and no charge involved - just drop-in with your questions.

During the Melbourne Cup weekend at the end of October we have the return of the Art Show! Held in the Pavilion, with its' opening event on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. (6pm), and all the art on display for Saturday and Sunday (29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>). On Saturday, the Art Show is complemented with the Redesdale Craft and Produce Market. With over 30 stall-holders showcasing their locally made craft items and produce, it is shaping up to be a great event!

## Below Photo: CoGB Listening Post



# A Redesdale Wildlife Garden

Late August to October is the time of year when most local wattles turn into an amass display of yellow flowers. Our locally rare and endangered species is *Acacia ausfeldii*. It has a small remaining distribution around Bendigo, including along the Campaspe River close to Redesdale's northern boundary and south of Lake Eppalock. It is a hardy, open small shrub, 2 metres tall, with long clusters of yellow balls along its thin upright or drooping branches. *Acacia ausfeldii* is very easy to grow in our local area because of its long evolutionary adaptation to our local soils and deserves a spot in any garden, not just because of its limited distribution in the wild, and its small size, but because of its cheerful yellow puff-balled flowers. Like all wattles it provides many benefits for other species in the environment; from adding nitrogen to the soil, to providing seed and attracting insects.

When wattles flower I am reminded of the yellow birds that visit the garden; sometimes easily camouflaged amongst the yellow wattle flowers. The brightest and most striking of these local yellow birds is the Golden whistler, who has a relatively large territory and I often spot them looking for insects amongst wattle shrubs and trees while sounding its unique tweeting song every now and then.

The Eastern Yellow Robin is another Redesdale local who prefers dense taller shrubby and shaded forested areas along the Campaspe River. These birds have started to frequent the garden from last year. Part of my experiment with planting local plants like wattles was to see if I could attract Eastern Yellow Robins and it seems to have worked. Although I cannot officially claim this is the sole reason, it has at least contributed to their ongoing presence in the garden. Research has shown Robins are dependent on low horizontal branches and the low branches of *Acacia mearnsii* I planted a few years ago are a favourite spot for them to

perch and pounce upon insects on the ground.

Another yellow bird, one who prefers to live in large stands of native vegetation connected to local waterways, is the Yellow-Tufted Honey-eater. Why this bird lives near waterways may have something to do with its ability to utilize *Acacia* sap as part of its diet, especially when nectar sources are low. I hope to see these birds visit the garden more often in future and maybe set up territory here as my wattles grow.

The Eastern Shrike-tit is also a local yellow bird, who prefers taller tree habitat because its specialized way of finding food by peeling away *Eucalyptus* bark to find spiders and insects. Its mournful whistle is one way to locate these birds; however the sound of bark being broken away from branches is more commonly a sound that signifies their presence. These birds are under pressure to find new territories as they are so dependent on older stands of Red River Gum, Manna Gum and Box trees. These trees shed their bark once a year (Box *eucalyptus* shed bark exclusively along smaller branches), but it is only the older trees that develop areas where 'peelable' bark remains throughout the year.

Yellow-Faced Honeyeaters are another local yellow bird; however their yellow is on a small spot on their face while the rest of their plumage is predominately darker brown. These agile birds are dependent on nectar from gum trees and mistletoe, supplemented with insects found in foliage. They spend a lot of their time chasing each other in flight or being chased by other honeyeaters. They need taller dense shrubs to nest in and prefer a mixture of trees and shrubs. When *acacias* host mistletoe they will be attracted to them.

Yellow Thornbills also depend on shrubby and treed areas; finding their insect food within foliage. These Thornbills are not bright yellow, but are the most yellow looking of all Thornbills from the front. They tweet away in small foraging groups, moving quickly through canopy. Alternatively, the other local yellow Thornbill, the Yellow-Rumped Thornbill, prefers open grassy areas with some shrub layer nearby. These are ground feeders and can be often spotted along roadsides, flashing their yellow rumps as they fly away to cover. Lastly, the Spotted Pardalote is the smallest of out of all the local yellow birds and has a bright yellow throat and chest on the males. Red River Gums are where to look for them, spending most of their time high in the foliage, however they commonly prefer to nest in the ground where soil is exposed and soft enough for them to burrow hollows into. Whenever I see them returning to the same spot of ground around spring time I know they are nesting and this is the time to fence their nest with a temporary ring of chicken wire netting to protect



*The Eastern Yellow Robin*



them from dogs and foxes who will dig out their nests and from cats who will prey upon them as they return to or leave their nest. Doing this has resulted in them successfully breeding and raising young in my garden. The 50cm hole size allows them to pass through the wire netting easily because they are so small. Now for any budding or experienced wildlife enthusiast, I offer a bit more detail here on the relationships between wildlife and wattles. Although I haven't focused on all the benefits wattles provide for wildlife in this article, I have hinted to some not often listed in literature elsewhere, like hosting mistletoe. When wattles are included to host mistletoe – as they commonly can do, they provide: fruit and nectar, along with pollen, seed, sap, and insect attracting 'leaves' and wood. Not many other plants can provide such an abundance or cornucopia of benefits for biodiversity, particularly for birds. Another often unmentioned benefit to birds that wattles provide has to do with their nectar glands on their 'leaves' (which I should mention are not officially leaves on some, but expanded stems containing chlorophyll, called phyllodes). These nectar glands provide tiny spots of nectar which are ideal for insects to gather and feed upon, but are too small in size and nectar amount for birds. Yet what insects are attracted to these nectar glands ultimately attract birds. A third benefit is the sap (or exudate) that wattles provide for honey-eaters, which usually appears after insect or sugar glider damage along branches. This sap is often unrecognised in the important role it plays in supporting different local bird species, including larger honey-eaters like Red Wattle-birds and Noisy Friarbirds when nectar from other flowering plants is scarce. And lastly, wattle foliage is food for wallaby's, and wattle sap is food for sugar gliders.

So as the local wattles bloom it means spring is on its way and this is a good time to be reminded of the local yellow birds and how they will be looking for food, mates and nesting sites. It is also a good time to recognize how acacias play a significant role in the environment, especially for many of these local yellow birds.

**Duncan**



**Above** *Acacia pycnantha* - Golden Wattle

**Below** *Acacia ausfeldii*



You are warmly invited to

# BARFOLD

## COMMUNITY CHURCH

Meets 10.00 am

2nd – 5th Sundays each month

followed by morning tea

at Barfold Union Church

Heathcote-Kyneton Rd, Barfold

Contact; Leigh 0425812786



## COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATOR

Located on the side of the Redesdale fire station  
Access code is 3444 ( Redesdale post code)

## DEFIBRILLATOR

The Community owned defibrillator  
is now accessible to all  
community members.

It is situated on the  
outside wall of the CFA building



## UNITING CHURCH

10am Start

Morning Tea is shared before each service at 9.40



Check the Macedon Ranges Uniting Church  
Website for extra news

[www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au](http://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au)

For more information go to

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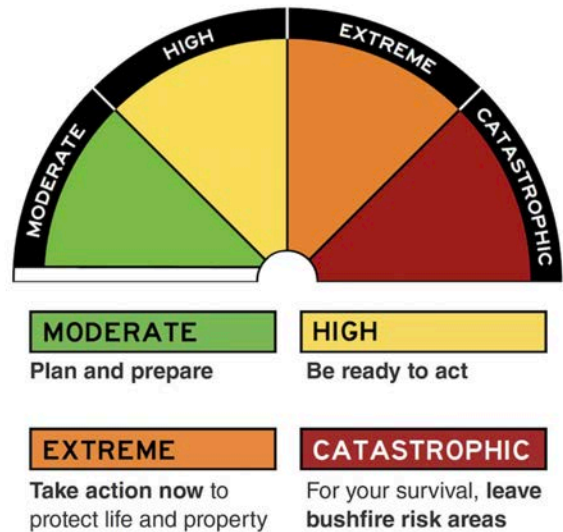
[www.tuckswindows.com.au](http://www.tuckswindows.com.au)



## As of September 1st The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System

will have four levels with action-oriented messages, logical colours and simple descriptions to encourage people to take action to protect themselves and others in the face of bushfire risks.

#AFDRS #CFA #CommunityInformation #firesafety



After a long and successful period for the brigade with Paul Atkins at the helm, a changing of brigade management has been ushered in.

At a recent election Paul stood down to make way for new Captain Mitchell Noonan. Congratulations to Mitch and many thanks to Paul for all the work he has done in his time in the position.

Also outgoing is training officer Michelle King. Thanks Michelle for taking on one of the most important positions in the brigade and handling it so professionally. The new training officer is Craig Newton. Congratulations Craig and we look forward to honing our skills under your guidance. Unfortunately we say goodbye to Brian Patterson who is hanging up the boots after a long time in the brigade. Brian has held down a number of positions including Fire-fighter, Lieutenant, Community Safety and Training. Thanks for all that you have done, Brian.

New to the management team is Andy King who was voted in as 4th Lieutenant. Well done Andy.

New also is Marissa Leahy who takes over the very important role of catering and events. Thank you Marissa.

We are continually seeking new recruits for a wide variety of jobs within the brigade. If you're interested or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.  
Regards

**Andrew Campbell**  
Fire Prevention Officer  
0428253104




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**CFM.** Weekly Market, Wednesday. **2.30 - 5.30pm**

**Clunes.** Local Farmers Market  
2nd Sunday each month. **8.30 - 1.00pm**

**Creswick.** Local Farmers Market  
3rd Saturday every month. **9.00 - 1.00pm**

**Daylesford.** Local Market.  
Every Sunday. **8.00 - 3.00pm**

**Gisborne.** Olde Time Market.  
1st Sunday every month. **9.00. - 2.00pm**

**Kyneton.** Local Farmers Market.  
2nd Saturday every month. **8.30 - 1.00pm**

**Lancefield.** Local Farmers Market.  
4th Saturday every month. **9.00 - 1.00pm**

**Maldon.** Local Farmers Market.  
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**Talbot.** Local Farmers Market.  
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**Trentham.** Local Farmers Market.  
3rd Saturday every month. **9.00 - 1.00pm**

**Woodend.** Local Farmers Market  
1st Saturday every month. **9.00 - 1.00 pm**

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If you are interested in joining please contact:  
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Regina Bennett: [reginabennett@bigpond.com](mailto:reginabennett@bigpond.com)

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Expressions of interest

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## August Rain Fall

The average yearly rainfall for **Redesdale** is about 601mms.

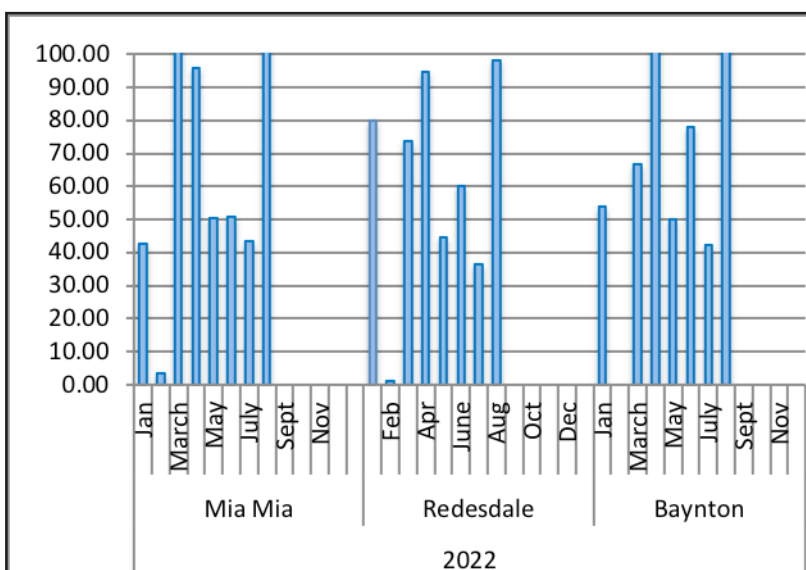
Thank you to **Helen Bennett** for the  
**Mia Mia** readings & **Belinda Ryan** for  
**Baynton** readings

**Redesdale 98.20mm Year to date 489.20mm**

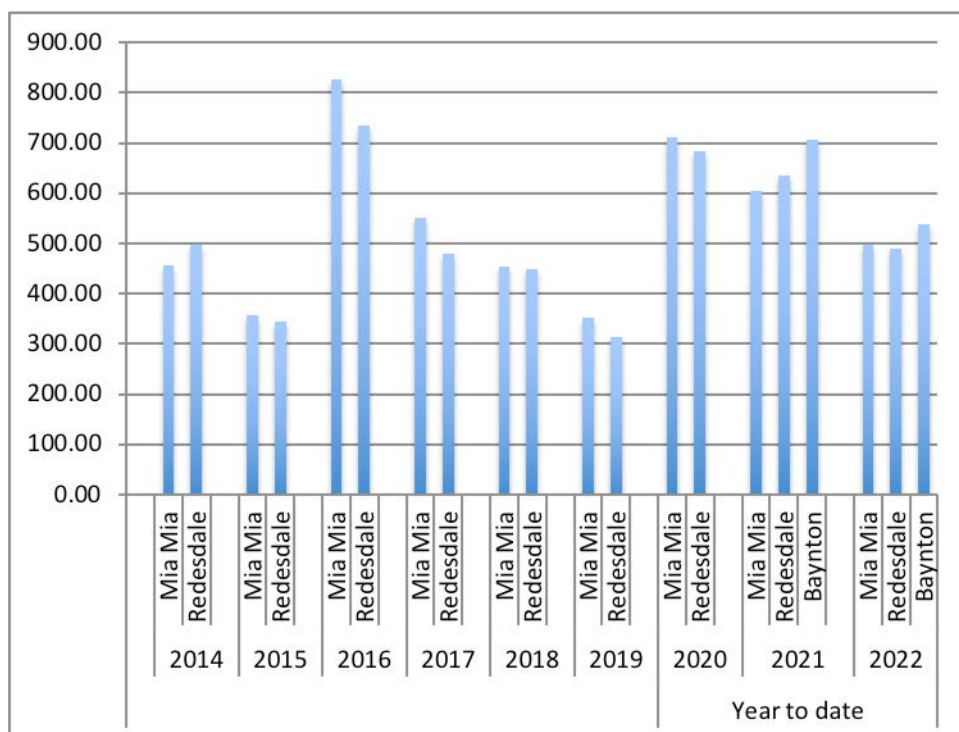
**Mia Mia 102.50mm Year to date 498.25mm**

**Baynton 143.90mm Year to date 537.10mm**

## Year Totals for Previous Years



2016	Mia Mia	826.00
	Redesdale	735.40
2017	Mia Mia	551.75
	Redesdale	479.60
2018	Mia Mia	455.00
	Redesdale	448.40
2019	Mia Mia	352.00
	Redesdale	315.00
2020	Mia Mia	711.25
	Redesdale	682.85
2021	Mia Mia	593.50
	Redesdale	634.40
	Baynton	707.80





## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Orange Coconut Cake 70



300g milk  
30g coconut  
260g self-raising flour  
120g butter melted  
220g sugar  
2 large eggs  
2 tbsp. orange zest  
Icing  
20 g butter melted  
200g powdered sugar  
2 tbsp. orange juice

Combine milk and coconut and let stand for 30minutes  
Grease a 9x5 loaf pan.  
Preheat oven to 180  
In a bowl place butter and sugar, beat until light and fluffy.  
Beat in eggs until combined.  
Add orange zest and pour in half of the coconut mixture and half the flour.  
Combine well then add the rest of the coconut and flour until the mixture is smooth.  
Pour into prepared tin and bake for 1 hour or until a skewer is inserted and comes out clean.  
Cool in pan for 15 mins, remove and cool on a wire rack.  
When cold mix all icing ingredients together and place on top of cake.

I always double this mixture as it freezes very well.

**Marisa Leahy**

## REDESDALE COMMUNITY HALL & PAVILION AVAILABLE FOR HIRE\*

Redesdale gives you a choice of venues for your next party, meeting or event.

**Redesdale Hall:** 160 sqm floor space with an overlooking stage, and expansive catering kitchen, as well as on-site restrooms.

**Redesdale Pavilion:** 108 sqm floor space with panoramic windows overlooking Redesdale Reserve.

We also have extensive **furniture & equipment** to help you hold your event at home:

Commercial sized steel spit roaster	Large marquee, 6m x 3m
Collapsible marquee, 3m x 3m	Shade umbrellas, green
Table cloths, white	Tables, 1.8m x 1m
Chairs, white plastic	

Don't forget the **Hall Kitchen** can be rented independently for preparation of your preserves and cooking demonstrations.

\* Room Hire is free for local community group meetings.

For all enquiries contact Redesdale Recreational Reserve Committee:  
E: [3444reserve@gmail.com](mailto:3444reserve@gmail.com) M: 0408 890 060

## PARTY EQUIPMENT FOR HIRE

The following party equipment is available for **HIRE** from the **REDESDALE RECREATIONAL RESERVE COMMITTEE (RRRC)**.



Commercial sized steel roaster	\$120 per weekend
Large marquee, 3m x 6m	\$225 per weekend
Collapsible marquee, 3m x 3m	\$80 per weekend
Tables, 1.8m x 1m	\$8 each per weekend
Table cloths, white	\$10 each
Chairs, white plastic	\$2.50 each
Umbrellas, charcoal	\$5 each

A bond will be required on most equipment for hire. All proceeds go to the up keep & development of the **RRRC**.

For more information or to make a booking, please email: **[3444reserve@gmail.com](mailto:3444reserve@gmail.com)**

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**Steph Ryan MP**

Member for Euroa

Deputy Leader of The Nationals  
**StephRyan.com.au**

25 Bridge St, Benalla 03 5762 1600

### Community owned hospitals thrown a lifeline

Victoria's community owned hospitals will keep their doors open under a Liberal and Nationals government.

The Nationals Deputy Leader, Emma Kealy, today announced the Liberals and Nationals would review the funding requirements of the five remaining hospitals in Euroa, Nagambie, Neerim, Heyfield and Cobden and guarantee funding to keep them operating.

"Victoria used to be home to more than 40 bush nursing hospitals. Today, just five remain because the Andrews Labor Government continues to treat them as private health services," Ms Kealy said.

"Instead of letting health services like Ballan go to the wall, we will step in and support them.

"Not only will we provide them with the operational funding they need to keep delivering services in their communities, but we will also ensure they can access capital funding streams.

"This is a win for locals who need services delivered close to home, and it will help take pressure off the overburdened public health system."

The announcement comes after Member for Euroa Steph Ryan facilitated a meeting to discuss the funding crisis facing the five remaining services several months ago.

The Nationals Candidate for Euroa Annabelle Cleeland said hospitals such as Euroa and Nagambie would only continue to operate if they were supported by government.

"We shouldn't have to fight for basic services such as healthcare, but under the Andrews Government, hospitals like Euroa and Nagambie are not funded," Ms Cleeland said.

"This commitment means locals will be able to access a greater range of services in our community, instead of being forced to travel to Shepparton because they don't have private health insurance."

Liberal Candidate for Euroa, Brad Hearn, said bush nursing hospitals were an asset to our communities.

"The services offered by bush nursing hospitals around the state are important in saving rural lives and ensure that country people can get access to health care in their home town" Mr Hearn said.

"Ensuring that the 22 beds are operational here in Euroa and easing the burdens across the remaining hospitals is essential. Improving the access to healthcare is something I am passionate about making a reality for country and rural Victorians."

Media contact: Lachlan Durling 0448 518 065 lachlan.durling@opposition.vic.gov.au

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**Lisa Chesters MP**

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR **BENDIGO**

5443 9055

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**Labor**

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

### Federal Labor Government Delivers Cheaper Child Care for Bendigo

Federal Member for Bendigo, Lisa Chesters has announced around 4800 of local families will be better off under Labor's cheaper child care plan.

The Labor Government recently introduced laws that will help cut out of pocket costs for families with children in early education and care.

These new laws mean that around 96 per cent of local families with children in early education and care will be better off.

For example a family earning \$120,000 with one child in early education and care will be more than \$1,700 better off.

Chesters said child care costs have skyrocketed 41 per cent in the past eight years.

"I know from talking to families in the region, plus my own experience with two little ones, how expensive child care is," Chesters said.

"It's a big cost to families and a massive disincentive for parents, especially mums, to do more paid work.

"Quite often, families are having to rely on grandparents to make up the extra days of care in order for parents to be able to return to work."

Ms Chesters said that 96 per cent of families with children in early education and care will be better off under Labor's plan.

"This is good for children, good for families and good for our economy.

"Not only will this help families with cost of living pressures by cutting the cost of child care, it will help get thousands of skilled workers into our economy.

"This is important economic reform that the Albanese Government promised to deliver at the election. Legislation introduced today will implement this promise.


"It means children get access to early education, and parents especially mums can do more paid work if they want to," Chesters said.

The changes to the child care subsidy will kick in on 1 July 2023.

Further, the Albanese Labor Government will launch a 12-month inquiry into the rising cost of childcare in Australia starting in early 2023.


The Government's October Budget will invest \$10.8 million to begin an Australian Competition and Consumer Commission inquiry in January.





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## Redesdale Ramblings

### Sowing the Seed

Each year we've bought punnets of seedlings to plant in our veggie patch: from sweet corn to tomatoes to cucumbers. Some have transplanted safely, grown well and provided bountiful harvests. But it's pointless to try to transplant carrots from a punnet into the garden – they are more than likely going to go straight to seed. And when do you see Okra or tomatillo seedlings available? The range of some plants such as tomatoes is slowly increasing at the nurseries and nowadays you get more than 'Gross Lisse' and 'Rouge de Marmande'; there are cherry, pear, roma, beefsteak, truss and no longer just red but yellow, green, pink and even black. But no nursery can carry every variety of every vegetable. Sadly most nurseries only carry a limited range of seeds too. One of the pleasures of late winter garden planning in the USA is when the seed catalogues arrive. I had the pleasure of participating in this annual seed indulgence when I lived in Louisiana in the late 1990s. Admittedly it was not a case of snuggling down in front of the fire while it was snowing outside but it was relatively cold. The Seed catalogues are an institution over there and I still have a couple I got back then. The description of each type of plant is detailed and helps with the decision of which ones to buy. That was a long time ago and I doubt they still send out those catalogues (some were bigger than the garden mags where they insert their cards inviting you to send away for them for free) because everything is available on-line.

So nowadays we can type in the name of a seed company or just use a search engine to see what seeds are available. I often indulge in a bit of "retail therapy" and order enough seeds to fill more than our humble acre – but not all of them get planted. So there are a lot of seed packets where only a few seeds were sown and the rest are kept for another season – most of it stays viable for a few years and you'll be surprised at how some long forgotten seed will still manage to sprout.

This year we've splashed out and bought a heat-mat as well

as a second "mini-greenhouse propagator" to try to get an earlier start on some vegies and flowers. The original propagator was simply a plastic tray with a clear cover that stands a good 10cm high, allowing the seedlings a bit of time to develop; but we had to use our own seed trays and pots (soaked in a weak bleach solution overnight to get rid of any nasties). The new one has a fitted tray of individual compartments into which you sow the seeds.

I didn't bother getting a seed raising mix and instead sifted some "premium" potting mix to remove the larger lumps/ stones/bark and added some coarse sand. I think some gardeners would also use vermiculite or perlite to aid water retention. Once the seeds were sown they were given a dunk in a tray of rainwater till the moisture showed through on the surface then the covers were put on and each tray got about 8 hours on the heat mat, being swapped at regular intervals (when I remembered).

I was impressed with how quickly some of the seeds germinated. A double red morning-glory which had never germinated before came up like cress! Because the seed was a few years old I didn't think it would be very viable so sowed 3 in each compartment – every one of them germinated. Do I try and separate them or do the "sensible" thing of selecting the strongest one and cutting off the other two. I'll let you know.

Because the weather is still cold (mid-September) it's too early to risk these tender seedlings in the open so they will have to be "potted-on" – moved into a slightly larger/deeper pot than they are in. By the time they are established the weather should allow them to be planted out.

As we don't have a green-house some of the seedlings are getting a bit lanky as they struggle up for sunlight. A couple have "damped off" – they just collapsed and seemed to rot away. Such occurrences are not unusual when raising seedlings under cover and are the result of fungal infection due to poor air circulation.

Other seedlings which are up already include tomatoes, basil, hollyhock and okra. The tricky part now is to get them to a size where they will survive in the garden.

Cheers

**Fermi**

**The Redesdale Rock Gardener**





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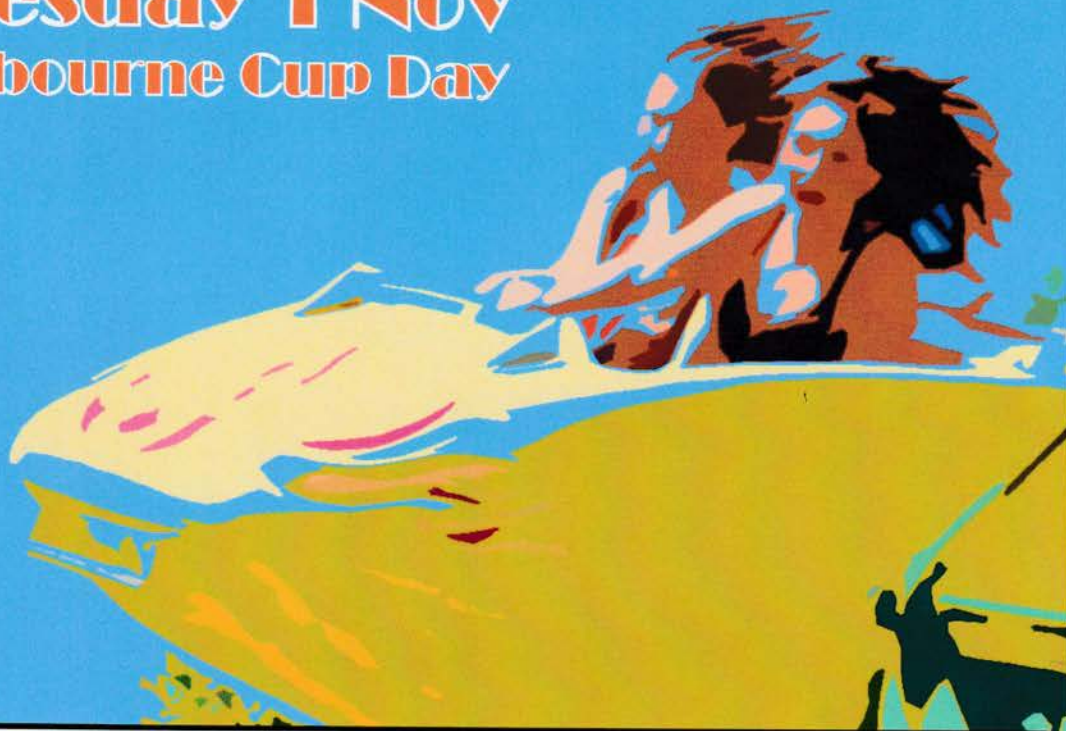
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