

# HEARTBEAT

FREE



**MILDURA**  
BASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL

## ICU PATIENT REUNION

MEMORIES OF JAG'S CLOSE CALL RELIVED

## THE CHAFFEY FESTIVAL

COMMEMORATES MILDURA DAY AND SHOWCASES THE REGION'S RICH HISTORY

## FROM MILDURA TO THE WHITEHOUSE

MEET EX-PAT DR BRIAN RODEN

## MENTORING OUR LOCAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

FORMER ESSENDON GREAT ANTHONY MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI 'TIPPA' IS THE MBPH FOUNDATION'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

WINTER EDITION  
**2024**



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A COMMUNITY'S WARM INNER GLOW SHINES.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S MBPH NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS.

# YOUR FEEDBACK IS WELCOME!

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## FROM OUR FOUNDATION CHAIR

As we head into the second half of the year, it's an exciting time for the MBPH Foundation as we gear up for some major events.

On Friday, September 13, we are once again partnering with City Heart to showcase the best fashion at our annual fashion parade at the Powerhouse. Last year's event was a tremendous success, and we expect another great turnout as Mildura's top fashion houses display the latest styles.

October is an incredibly busy month, featuring our main event of the year — the Gala Ball on October 19 at the magnificent Willow and Ivie. The Foundation Ball has become the hottest ticket in town. Due to reduced capacity, only a limited number of people will be able to attend this year's event. To avoid disappointment, please visit the Foundation website at [www.mbphfoundation.org.au](http://www.mbphfoundation.org.au) to book your ticket.

The Foundation is also excited to announce that 'The World Game' is coming to town in October, when some A-League giants bring their men's and women's teams to Mildura for two days of exciting activities, culminating in a pre-season friendly against another A-League heavyweight.

The spectacular event will also include a children's clinic at the Mildura Sporting Precinct, followed by a coaching seminar. The following day, both the men's and women's teams will be in action. This is a unique opportunity to see the A-League's best players right here in Mildura. Never before has Mildura hosted football at this level, and the Foundation is thrilled to partner with the A-League to bring this fantastic event to our regional location.

All funds raised from these two days will support the Foundation's new skin cancer screening vehicle, which will be equipped with the latest imaging equipment and will be the first time a WB360 scanner has been mounted on a truck. We all know the effects of skin cancer, particularly in this region, and this initiative is set to be a game changer.

Finally, I would like to thank all our wonderful sponsors and everyone who has supported and continues to support the Foundation. Without your contributions we would not be able to do what we do.

Warm regards,

Ross Lake OAM  
Chairman  
Mildura Base Public Hospital



# BROOKE'S PRESTIGIOUS AWARD A TRUE RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

The Sunraysia people Brooke Shelly cares for in her work, and says, "They aren't just my patients".

---



BROOKE SHELLY  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA'S  
CREDENTIALLED  
PHARMACIST OF THE YEAR.  
PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN PHARMACIST



BROOKE AND DR BRAD MURRAY CONSULTING A PATIENT. PHOTO: VISION HOUSE

“They’re my community. They’re my kid’s sports coach, they’re my mum’s best friend, they’re people in my life,” the general practice and consultant pharmacist explains, as she talks about the professional passion that has been recognised in her being named the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia’s Credentialed Pharmacist of the Year.

Noted as a nation-leading advocate for the advancement of her profession in the care of rural and regional Australians, Ms Shelly works at the Ontario Medical Clinic, having returned in 2015 to the town where she grew up, where she first experienced the strong sense of community that now defines her work.

After leaving Mildura to pursue university studies in Bendigo, she eventually moved closer to Melbourne, where she rose through the ranks to a senior position within an independent pharmacy group, overseeing 26 pharmacies in a multisite group development role.

Her return to Mildura had been unexpected

and was triggered by a family health crisis, but it set her on a path to a greater good.

“My father had a heart attack in Bali, in a country where healthcare is perhaps considered not as forward thinking as ours is, but when he came home to Mildura and he had his review with a cardiologist, the cardiologist said that had he had that heart attack in Mildura, he probably wouldn’t have survived it,” she told *Heartbeat*.

“For me, that was an appalling lightbulb moment, that regional and rural Australians are swept under the carpet in terms of health outcomes.

“That was a big turning point for me.”

Ms Shelly initially feared that moving back might hinder her career progression. However, rather than stalling her growth, the move proved to be a catalyst, providing opportunities to engage in roles and responsibilities that would have taken longer to attain in a metropolitan setting. Working in a regional area, she found that her career was not only sustained but

accelerated, as the unique challenges and opportunities of rural healthcare allowed her to make significant contributions early on.

At the Mildura clinic, Ms Shelly is part of a multi-disciplinary team approach to patient care, working with GPs, specialists and patients themselves to reach the best health outcomes.

Her advocacy work focuses on the future of healthcare in the regions, including advocating for more opportunities for students to study more health disciplines locally and the need for established medical professionals in those regions to be able to support each other’s work as effectively as possible.

“As we’re becoming an ageing population, medicine use is on the rise and chronic disease management is becoming more complex and challenging, which has put more pressure on the GP system and unfortunately we’re having fewer medical students choosing general practice as a speciality,” she said.



PSA NATIONAL PRESIDENT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FEI SIM FPS, BROOKE SHELLY & MIMS' ROBERT BEST. AP PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN PHARMACIST

“So the need for pharmacists and other allied-health professionals to move in and be part of the GP team to support their work is rapidly becoming more important.”

“The pharmacist skillset has long been under-utilised ... pharmacists should be spending more time with the patients and doing things like , complex medication review, transitions of care stewardship, and case conferencing in the General Practice setting.”

In a rapidly changing profession that came to more public prominence as it supported the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, Ms Shelly is working on a pilot program of collaborative prescribing that would enable pharmacists to fully utilise their skillset, but she stresses that this would be about care management, rather than diagnosis, and would be carried out in a team environment that involved doctors and pharmacists working more closely together for the best outcomes for patients.

In her work at Mildura, Ms Shelly already plays a key part in medical teamwork, particularly as she visits patients in their homes, a role especially important to her

as a member of a rural community, and one in which she can develop a rapport with the people she cares for.

“It’s a different feel, caring for your own community. When I go into patients’ homes there is every chance that I’ll know someone in a picture frame on the wall,” she said.

“When a patient comes to you, you have to go by what they tell you ... but when you go into the home, you see their medication cabinet, you see all the other medicines that they’ve neglected to tell you about or that they’ve forgotten about ... they tend to open up a little bit more.

“You actually fill the gaps in for the GP.” As important as that work is at patient and community levels, it’s the bigger-picture advocacy work Ms Shelly does that has earned her the industry accolade of Pharmacist of the Year, and she is passionate about pushing for better public policy to support healthcare in the bush.

“The country wouldn’t be what it is without rural Australia, yet we consistently die younger than our metro counterparts,” she said, adding that her aim was to “ensure that we’re being heard”.

“They (governments) will make a policy decision and that’s meant to work everywhere in Australia and we know it won’t in rural/regional Australia,” she said.

“And rural towns are not all the same. We’re all different.

“We need to ensure that the policies we produce for rural Australia are flexible and they’re co-designed with the community.” In presenting the award to Ms Shelly in Cairns recently, the PSA’s national president, Associate Professor Fei Sim FPS, described her as “a trailblazer when it comes to highlighting the roles of credentialed pharmacists in medication management reviews wherever medicines are used”.

“Brooke’s leadership and contribution has had widespread, systemic impact,” she said.

“Brooke is a leading national voice for this workforce, where she continues to make significant contributions to the development of credentialed pharmacy through her own practice and as a mentor and facilitator of discussions and support.”



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# MOBILE SKIN CANCER SCREENING VEHICLE ON THE ROAD TO SAVE LIVES

BY age 70 it is estimated that two in three Australians will be diagnosed with skin cancer.

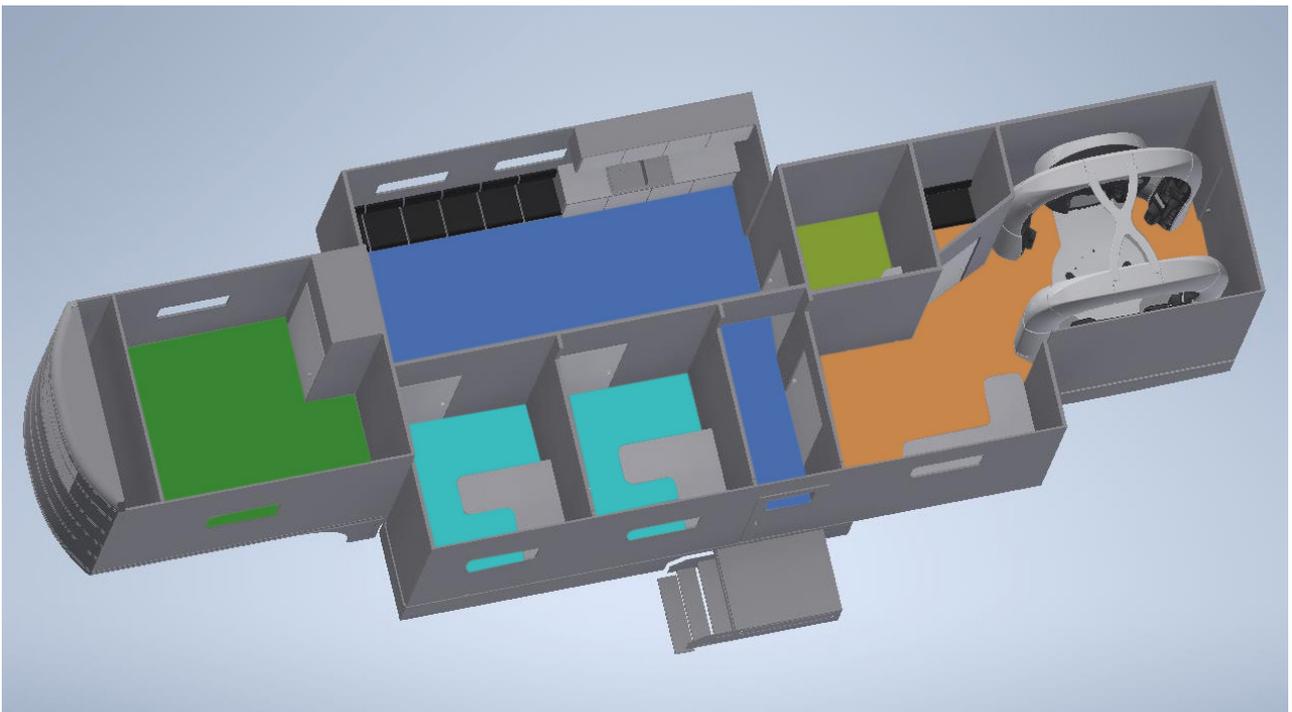
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SEN'S ANDY MAHER, MBPH CEO  
TERRY WELCH WITH ANTHONY  
MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI AND  
MELBOURNE TIGER'S ANDREW GAZE.



# A MAJOR GAME CHANGER FOR THE REGION!



INTERIOR DEPICTION OF THE MOBILE SKIN CANCER SCREENING VEHICLE.

And, it is projected that 17,000 cases of invasive melanomas and 28,000 in-situ melanomas will be diagnosed this year alone.

The other, sobering fact is that current skin cancer and dermatological care lacks quality and consistency across Australia's vast landscape. Statistically, people living in regional Australia diagnosed with melanoma have much poorer outcomes than people living in metropolitan areas. The Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) Foundation will change how skin cancer screening is done by introducing Australia's first mobile skin cancer screening vehicle.

Costing more than \$2.5million, the ultramodern mobile health care facility, will be fitted with a WB360 Vectra scanner, one of the most advanced 3D skin imaging machines in the world.

At the end of June, MBPH CEO Terry Welch visited Melbourne for the AFL Country Round at the MCG, a night match between Geelong and Essendon. Both teams have thrown their support behind the skin cancer screening truck and used the game to promote and highlight the importance of regular skin checks.

Ahead of the game, Mr Welch had the opportunity to make radio and television appearances along with MBPH Foundation Youth Engagement Officer and former Essendon star player Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti.

"The event was an opportunity for the Foundation to raise money for this amazing project, with the AFL's media partners, Channel 7, Triple M, and SEN, all supporting it," Mr Welch said.

"As we all know, the AFL is the biggest sporting code in the country, and despite the inclement weather, Saturday night's game attracted a good crowd.

"Combined with a viewing audience in the hundreds of thousands, it was a brilliant opportunity to showcase and support the truck.

"This is going to be a unique and ongoing opportunity for the Foundation with plans to have the screening truck at next year's game. To coincide with the match."

Thanks to generous donations from the public, corporate entities and local organisations, the truck is scheduled to be operational sometime in 2025.

Negating the tyranny of distance

Previously, patients in the Sunraysia and the North West region faced significant



WB360 VECTRA SCANNER ONE OF THE MOST ADVANCED 3D SKIN IMAGING MACHINES IN THE WORLD.

challenges accessing specialised dermatological services.

Due to the vast distances and limited healthcare infrastructure in remote areas, individuals often had to endure long and arduous journeys to urban centres for skin cancer screenings and treatment.

The introduction of the mobile skin cancer screening vehicle will mark a transformative shift in healthcare accessibility for residents in regional Australia.

Equipped with state-of-the-art screening technology and staffed by experienced healthcare professionals, the mobile unit will provide essential services directly to the doorstep of rural communities.

The implementation of virtual care capabilities enables patients to connect with specialist doctors remotely, ending the need for extensive travel and reducing the burden on already strained healthcare resources.

This innovative approach not only enhances patient convenience, but also ensures prompt access to critical medical expertise, ultimately improving outcomes

for individuals affected by skin cancer. The mobile unit not only addresses the immediate healthcare needs of the community but also stands for progress in the ongoing fight against skin cancer. By bringing cutting-edge medical services to underserved areas, MBPH is spearheading a paradigm shift in healthcare delivery, setting a precedent for equitable access to quality care across farming communities across regional Victoria, South Australia & NSW initially, with the long-term goal to roll the program out nationally.

Total body skin imaging, teledermatology and artificial intelligence (AI)-derived automated diagnostic technologies have the potential to reduce melanoma and skin cancer mortality and morbidity in regional and rural Australia.

Currently, these technologies and services are mainly found in metropolitan healthcare settings. This mobile skin cancer screening project will address regional and rural health disparity and the inequities in access to digital health care requiring a systematic national response.



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# JAG'S LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

## MANY HANDS MAKE LIFE WORK

---

IN early June this year there was a joyous reunion of emergency service first responders, the intensive care team at the Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) and

the work colleagues of a very grateful Jag Jayasena.

In some way or another, all of those present had played a part in saving the life

of the Wentworth Shire Council engineer. Amazingly, just two months after his ordeal, Jag was back at work.

Jag and his wife, Amila Dharmasena, who



AMBULANCE VICTORIA'S DALE RICHARDS & JIM LIVINGSTONE WITH AMILA DHARMASENA & HUSBAND JAG JAYASENA.

was by her husband's side at the reunion, expressed their deep gratitude to all those in the room for all that they had done to save Jag's life.

The couple said it was something that they would be "eternally grateful for".

Here's how this extraordinary tale of survival unfolded.

On April 24, Jag reported feeling unwell shortly before collapsing in his workplace, after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Immediately a Triple Zero (000) call was made and both Ambulance NSW and Victoria paramedics responded.

At the same time, swift action was taken by two of his work colleagues — Project Engineer Ryan Thomson and Works Manager Jarrod Roberts — leapt into action administering CPR. The council's in-house automated external defibrillator (AED) was also attached to Jag's chest. The CPR would keep the blood and oxygen

flowing to Jag's brain, and an action deemed to be a lifesaver.

The early intervention of his workmates, and the timely arrival of the ambulance first-responders, without a doubt gave Jag a fighting chance of survival.

Paramedics delivered six shocks with a defibrillator before achieving a return of spontaneous circulation.

Ryan Thomson recounted the moment he was alerted to Jag collapsing.

"I was in a meeting, and someone came in and said that Jag has collapsed. Straightaway, I went to the lunch room and got the AED," Ryan said.

"At that point, there were already other people in the office attending to him and they had put him on his side and were checking for a pulse.

"I then checked for breathing and while it didn't seem like he was choking on anything, he definitely wasn't breathing.

"I then said that we should start CPR, which we did, and Jarrod and I took turns at the same time as we were receiving advice from Ambulance NSW who were on the phone prior to their arrival on scene."

Ryan said some of the knowledge he had gained in his early years from his father "came in handy".

"My father used to be an Ambulance Victoria paramedic and worked with Dale Richards for 20 years," he said.

"I had learnt a few lessons from Dad over the years, which came into play that day," he said.

Ryan was referring to AV Clinical Support Officer and Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) paramedic, Dale Richards, who attended the incident together with colleague, MICA paramedic, Jim Livingstone.

Dale told *Heartbeat* that he had been in Irymple when he was tasked with attending the scene and arrived in a separate vehicle.

"At that point Jag was being managed brilliantly by the Wentworth Shire staff as well as NSW Ambulance who were already there," Dale said.

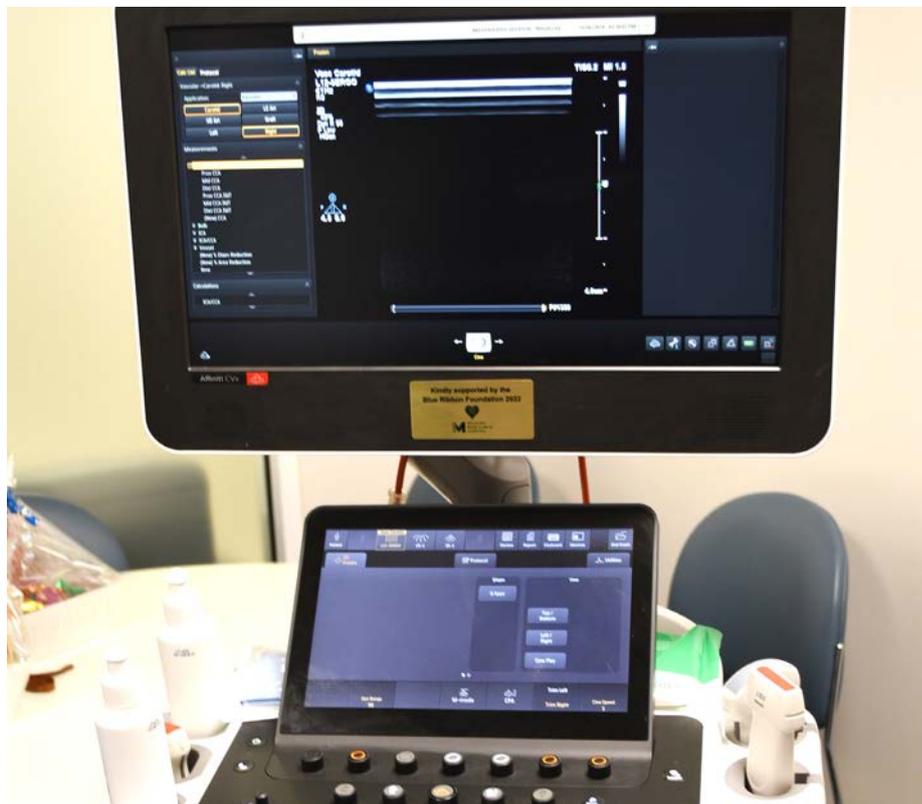
"Jim Livingstone, who was the single responder on duty in Mildura that day, was also on scene assisting his NSW colleagues to stabilise Jag's condition prior to him being taken into Mildura."

Jag commenced breathing again and the paramedics were able to stabilise him before he was transported to the Mildura Base Public Hospital's Emergency Department.

Jag's good fortune continued when he arrived at the MBPH Emergency Department.

As luck would have it, MBPH's highly experienced, Intensive Care Specialist, Dr Michael Patterson was on duty at the time.

Together with the other wonderful ICU



MBPH CARDIAC ULTRA SOUND MACHINE.

staff on the ward, he took immediate action to stabilise Jag ahead of him being airlifted to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne the next day for further assessment.

While at the Alfred, Jag would fitted with an ICD (internal cardiac defibrillator).

Dr Michael explained that when Jag arrived at the ED, he had significant adrenaline in his system which had been administered to keep his blood pressure up.

"We were able to bring that down and he was then placed on a ventilator. By the next morning he was able to be taken off the ventilator. That was quite a rapid recovery and a good sign," he said.

MBPH ICU Nurse Unit Manager, Andrea Bock, also described Jag's survival "as a truly amazing story".

"I think it's an amazing story about community and the right people being there at the right time," she said.

"The value of Jag's work colleagues' actions and having the AED on-site in their work place, is nothing short of amazing.

Added to that, the work of the attending ambulance officers and then having Dr Michael Patterson who is an Intensivist (critical care doctor) working at MBPH that day — all the planets were aligned!"

Andrea and Michael both referenced the fact that the MBPH ICU now has a

cardiac ultrasound machine that is able to create and examine very detailed images of the heart. It is something that would otherwise only be available in a metropolitan hospital, and it played a significant role in Jag's diagnosis and recovery.

"Having this ultrasound machine enables us to provide the same level of intensive care here in the MBPH ICU as we would in the hospital that I work at in Melbourne," Michael said.

"For most part, unless you need a thoracic surgeon or a neurosurgeon, we are getting to the point at MBPH we are able to manage things just as well."

"Being able to use our state-of-the-art diagnostic cardiac ultrasound was just fabulous," Andrea added.

"That's why we felt so strongly about getting everyone together today to tell this story."

A significant donation from the local branch of the Victorian Police Blue Ribbon Foundation made the purchase of the cardiac ultrasound equipment possible.

Mildura Police Blue Ribbon Foundation president, Detective Sergeant Narelle Kolpin and colleague and foundation committee member, Senior Sergeant Alex West were also present at the reunion and Narelle explained how the donation to assist with purchase of the ultrasound came about.



AMBULANCE VICTORIA OFFICER JIM LIVINGSTONE RELIVES THE EMERGENCY HE ATTENDED AS AMILA, JAG, WSC WORKS MANAGER JARROD ROBERTS & PROJECT ENGINEER RYAN THOMSON LISTEN.

“Blue Ribbon Foundation is a state-wide organisation, where police officers form committees and we raise money for our local areas and specifically to buy lifesaving equipment for our local public hospitals,” Narelle said.

“Our committee also includes some members of the MBPH staff and members of the public and we run fundraising events throughout the year. Then when we have a good amount of money, we make a donation to the hospital.

“In the case of the ultrasound, we contributed \$50,000 towards the purchase of the machine.

“Over the years, we have purchased a number of different pieces of equipment for various clinical departments in the hospital, including the ICU, where we

have been able to provide some important equipment.”

For Jag and Amila, the reunion was a very moving event and they showed their appreciation with both words and gifts for those who attended.

“I really wanted to thank everyone here who helped save Jag’s life. It was a nightmare to be honest. I didn’t know what was happening. I had never gone through anything like this before,” Amila said.

“But I said to myself that I had to stay positive and all of the hospital staff supporting Jag, including Michael, helped me enormously to stay strong that night.”

“I just want to thank you all for everything you did for Jag and myself that night ahead of Jag being transferred to Melbourne.

“I can’t thank you enough. He is like he is

now and back at work thanks to all of you.

“I think he has two birthdays now — the second being the 24th of April!”

All-in-all, it was a collaborative team effort, which literally saved Jag’s life, something he and his wife are eternally grateful for and it is testimony to what a wonderfully skilled and caring community we are privileged to live in.

“ICU at MBPH are proud of their Consumer Engagement Program which aims to touch base with patients post significant critical care events, bringing families back to the ICU to meet care providers and share experiences,” Andrea said.

“The value of drawing everyone together, is a heartfelt testimonial of community collaboration.”



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Join us for this great event in support of our fallen colleagues.

The local Blue Ribbon Foundation proudly raises money to purchase lifesaving equipment for the Mildura Base Public Hospital.  
**ALL MONEY RAISED AT THIS EVENT WILL SUPPORT THIS.**  
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JAG JAYASENA WITH BLUE RIBBON FOUNDATION MILDURA COMMITTEE MEMBER SENIOR SERGEANT ALEXANDRA WEST (L) AND PRESIDENT DETECTIVE SERGEANT NARELLE KOLPIN (R) WITH INTENSIVE CARE DOCTOR MICHAEL PATTERSON.

# BLUE RIBBON FOUNDATION PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

The Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation ensures the memory of force members who have died in the line of duty lives on through its support of worthwhile community projects across Victoria.

The organisation aims to encourage the public to remember the sacrifice of officers who have fallen in the line of duty, and to show all serving members of Victoria Police that their work, and their commitment to it, are valued by a caring community. In total, 175 Victoria Police members

have lost their lives serving communities across the State. Of that number 30 were murdered, underlining the dangers police members face each day on the job. The Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation was incorporated in 1998 after several committees, all working to memorialise

fallen Victoria Police members, combined to form one organisation. The Foundation has volunteer business units that manage and implement its fund raising events. In addition, there are 17 regional branches in country Victoria, including Mildura, which provide focus



and fundraising in their local communities under the Blue Ribbon Foundation's mission statement.

The Foundation is a non-profit, community-based association comprising members, volunteers, sponsors and supporters who share common goals:

To honour and remember our fallen police employees,

To show police that their dedication and challenging work is valued,

To create appropriate memorials to fallen police officers and employees, and

To encourage strong and supportive relationships between the community and its Police Force

The Foundation has a number of ambassadors, often leading people in

the community, who lend their voice and support to police remembrance across Victoria.

Ambassadors are engaged to connect with other Victorians, especially those in their personal and professional networks, through social media, websites and other forums. They may also be active participants during National Police Remembrance Day and Blue Ribbon Day by attending and speaking at memorial services, school assemblies and civic functions.

Policing is undisputedly a challenging and hazardous occupation. It's important to recognise those within the police family, including the ones who work in non-operational support roles, and let them

know that their service is appreciated by the community they serve.

The Mildura Base Public Hospital is proud to be associated with the Mildura branch of the Blue Ribbon Foundation. The Mildura branch has made several generous donations to the hospital over a number of years. One of those donations was used to buy a cardiac ultrasound machine for our ICU ward. See Page 17 for that story.

The hospital is asking the Sunraysia community to support the Mildura branch of the Foundation's upcoming major fund-raiser for 2024 to be held on Friday, October 4, at Mildura Setts Club. See the advertisement on Page 17 for full details.

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ANTHONY MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI 'TIPPA'.



ANTHONY MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI IN ACTION PLAYING FOR ESSENDON.



ANTHONY MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI WITH A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT RANFURLY PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MILDURA.

# TIPPA'S EMPOWERING OF YOUTH BEYOND THE AFL



SFNL FOOTBALL IMPERIALS V MILDURA. IMPERIAL'S FORWARD TIPPA, AIMS FOR A GOAL. PHOTO: BEN GROSS, SUNRAYSIA DAILY.

In the heart of Mildura, a beacon of hope shines bright, not on the footy field, but within the healthcare corridors. Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti, affectionately known as 'Tippa' to footy fans nationwide, has embarked on a transformative journey as the Youth Engagement Officer at Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH), bringing his unique blend of resilience, leadership, and community spirit to a new arena.

Anthony's story is one of perseverance and triumph against the odds. Hailing from the Tiwi Islands, he overcame numerous challenges to carve out a remarkable career in the Australian Football League (AFL). His journey to the top echelons of professional sport was not without its hurdles, but through sheer determination and unwavering commitment, he became a household name, revered for his electrifying speed and tenacity on the field.

However, Anthony's impact extends far beyond the football field. Growing up in a tight-knit Indigenous community, he witnessed firsthand the socio-economic disparities and health inequalities that continue to plague many Indigenous Australians. It was this awareness that ignited his passion for giving back and

making a difference in the lives of others. Transitioning from the AFL to a role in healthcare may seem like a leap, but for Anthony, it's a natural progression and a desire to effect positive change. As the Youth Engagement Officer at MBPH, he's on a mission to empower young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to take control of their health and well-being.

"My journey from the footy field to the hospital corridors is about using my platform to empower young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to take control of their health and well-being and lives in general," Anthony said.

"It's my mission to ensure that every young person, regardless of their background, has the knowledge and resources to lead a healthy, fulfilling life."

In his new role, Anthony wears many hats - mentor, advocate, and role model. He works closely with local schools, community groups, and youth organisations to develop programs aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, mental wellness, and preventative healthcare practices. Through interactive workshops, motivational talks, and outreach initiatives, he's breaking down barriers

and inspiring young people to prioritise their health and make informed choices.

"I'm not just a Youth Engagement Officer; I'm a mentor, advocate, and friend to young people in our community. Together, we're creating a brighter, healthier future," the former Essendon champ said.

Anthony's journey from the AFL to the healthcare sector is a testament to his unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the world. Through his leadership, compassion, and dedication, he's not only changing lives but also paving the way for a brighter, healthier future for generations to come.

MBPH CEO, Terry Welch, emphasized the importance of engaging with youth to promote health and well-being, stating that Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti's unique perspective and connection with the community is proving to be invaluable in this role.

"Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti has brought a remarkable energy and passion to his role as Youth Engagement Officer. His dedication to empowering young people and promoting health and well-being is truly inspiring," Mr Welch said.

"Since joining our team, Anthony has made a significant impact on the lives of countless young people in our community.



MONASH RURAL HEALTH'S DAVID BYRNES WITH TIPPA.

His ability to connect with and inspire others is unparalleled.

“With Anthony’s leadership, our youth programs have flourished, reaching more young people than ever before. His positive influence extends far beyond the hospital walls, leaving a lasting legacy of health and empowerment.”

However, Anthony’s journey is not solely defined by his professional accomplishments. It is a story of resilience, shaped by personal challenges and the unwavering support of his adopted family. At a pivotal moment in his life, he made the courageous decision to leave the familiarity of the Tiwi Islands behind and embark on a new chapter in Gippsland. This transition was not without its difficulties, yet he found solace and guidance in the person who would become his adopted Mum, Jane McDonald.

Anthony’s bond with his adopted Mum transcends mere familial ties - it is a testament to the transformative power of love and compassion. In Gippsland, he found not only a new home but also a nurturing environment where he could continue to flourish and pursue his dreams. The journey from Tiwi Islands to Gippsland was not just a physical relocation; it represented a profound inner journey of self-discovery and growth. Through his experiences, McDonald-Tipungwuti embodies resilience, adaptability, and the

unyielding spirit of human endeavour.

As Anthony continues to chart his path, he serves as an inspiration to all who encounter him, reminding us that no obstacle is insurmountable and that every setback is an opportunity for growth and renewal.

#### TIPPA ENGAGES WITH MONASH RURAL HEALTH

In the preparation of this article, *Heartbeat* also spoke to Monash Rural Health, Aboriginal Community Engagement Lead, David Byrnes, who has worked alongside Anthony both on the campus and at local schools.

“We have had Tippa speak to our medical students on a number of occasions, where he has imparted his story to them — an amazing story of resilience,” David said.

“He has also been out in the bush with us on overnight camps with our students and participated in artefact making and other activities and got really involved.

“We have a number of students from metropolitan and international locations and so for them to be able to go out into the bush and to be immersed in some aspects of Indigenous culture is something they enjoy and a great learning experience. We have had positive feedback from our students wanting more of this which is rewarding.”

David said the other benefit of this engagement is that it gives the student greater empathy with the Aboriginal community they engage with in a clinical setting.

“That’s exactly what it is all about. Giving them more tools, more understanding and more empathy for our Aboriginal community and treating them as patients when they become doctors. That’s what these programs are all about,” he said.

“And from our student’s perspective, it was a really good experience, particularly to hear his story about where he has come from, to where he is today. They were also interested to learn about the Tiwi Islands where he grew up and what life was like up there.

“Tippa has also been involved with some of my secondary and primary school engagements and I like to have him join me whenever he can.

“He’s now getting pretty busy with his own engagement commitments and so it’s becoming a bit harder to coordinate his participation into our calendar.”

David Byrnes also has something else in common with Tippa - they have both loved playing Aussie Rules Football for many years and have been great at it. David played junior footy for Irymple, followed by 10 years in the SANFL for Norwood and West Adelaide. He then returned to play and coach Irymple - quite stellar career.

# I WENT AND IT WAS WORTH IT!

The town on two rivers has a lot to offer.

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Wentworth. The town on two rivers. Home of the world's first tractor monument and the headquarters for all 26,269 square kilometres of the sprawling Wentworth Shire.

But there is so much more to this historic river town as *Heartbeat* discovered during a recent visit.

Wentworth Shire is home to about 8000 people, the majority of them being clustered in the towns of Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga and Gol Gol along the Murray River. The rest of the expansive Shire is sparsely populated grazing and cropping land.

But the picture could have been very different. Did you know the town was at one time considered as the site for Australia's capital?

That honour eventually went to an area we now know as the Australia Capital Territory and the purpose-built city of Canberra, but Wentworth was in the running!

Considering the town's modest population — it has a population of about 1500 — the town has a surprising amount of interesting 'stuff' to see. Much more than one might expect.

Natural wonders include the iconic junction of the nation's two mightiest rivers — the Murray and Darling; the 'curiously orange in a sea of grey clay and saltbush' Perry Sandhills; the magnificent gum known as The God Tree and Junction Island.

Then there is a long list of man-made attractions including several historic buildings, chief amongst them the Old Wentworth Gaol, but also the Courthouse complex and St John's Anglican Church. Other lures include the Pioneer World Museum, Wentworth Military Collection (see separate story), Fotherby Park and the Paddle Steamer Ruby, the town's historic wharf and, reinforcing the nautical theme, Riverboat Rod's Model Paddle Steamer Display. There is also a working leathersmith ensconced in the main street!

The are 1.8 million years of fossilised giants and more than 150 years of pioneering settlement history contained within the walls of the Pioneer World Museum. A project of the local Rotary Club, the collection boasts more than 3000 artifacts and relics from Wentworth's past, including those of the indigenous people who frequented the area.

It is also where you will find out more about the world's first tractor monument, and the role the humble grey Ferguson tractor



THE HISTORIC ST JOHNS ANGLICAN CHURCH.



THE CURLY TREE HOUSE HAS A PARISIENNE FEEL ABOUT IT.



THE PARIS END OF DARLING STREET.



RUBY'S CARGO ARTS AND CRAFTS IS ANOTHER GREAT GIFT AND HOMEWARES STORE.

played in protecting Wentworth from the ravages of the infamous 1956 flood. Meanwhile, the heritage-listed Old Wentworth Gaol, built during the period 1879-1881 and operated until 1927, is a vivid reminder of harsh and uncompromising days past and a self-guided tour can be a real eye-opener.

The town also boasts a host of interesting shops, a burgeoning arts scene, three hotels, several motels and a successful community bank that is the envy of towns across the country.

### HISTORIC RIVER TOWN

But a little history is in order...

The site for the town of Wentworth was approved in 1859 and named after the New South Wales explorer and politician William Charles Wentworth.

It was gazetted on June 21, 1859, and the surrounding area was proclaimed a municipality on January 23, 1879.

This makes Wentworth, and the Wentworth Shire, our region's oldest official settlement. But we must backtrack even further to get a clearer picture of how Wentworth came

to be, back to 1829 when exploration parties headed out west of Sydney towards the then-great unknown interior in an endeavour to discover an inland sea.

Although no inland sea was found, Captain Charles Sturt did discover the headwaters of a large river that he named the Darling. On his return to Sydney, the government of the day sent Sturt on a new mission, this time to trace the Murrumbidgee River. It was during this expedition that he discovered another mighty river, this time naming it the Murray.

Then, in 1830, while navigating the Murray he came across a river junction which he was convinced was the lowest reach of the Darling. He was right!

Following these discoveries of abundant water, squatters began to reign over the land along the Darling and Murray Rivers, expanding their holdings westwards from the Murrumbidgee area and north eastwards from South Australia.

In the mid-1840s a settlement was set up at the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers and known as 'McLeod's Crossing', named for the first white residents in the area.



FORMER WENTWORTH MAYOR MARG THOMSON.



WENTWORTH IS HOME TO THE HISTORIC CAPTAIN STURT HOTEL.



THE LITTLE FERGIE THAT HELPED BUILD THE LEVEE BANKS THAT SAVED WENTWORTH FROM THE 1956 FLOOD.



PERRY SAND HILLS.



ERIN, ABOVE, AND HER MOTHER BRONWYN ARE THE PROPRIETORS OF WATTLE HILL COLLECTIVE.



YOU WILL BE SURE TO FIND THE PERFECT OUTFIT AT WATTLE HILL COLLECTIVE

With the arrival of the river steamers in 1853, the fledgling settlement found itself to be ideally situated as an administrative and commercial centre for the grazing wealth of the vast inland plains.

For many years Sydney was the only port in New South Wales to handle more cargo than Wentworth. The steamers brought a new sophistication to the rugged river towns like Wentworth, carrying the hopes and dreams of fragile communities for more than three quarters of a century.

It was 1857, with the settlement well-established and flourishing, that New South Wales Surveyor General George Barney considered it time to establish a proper township and the rest, as they say, is history.

Throughout the prosperous river trade days Wentworth Shire suffered extremes in fortune and despair. The area suffered floods, droughts, rabbit plagues and a propensity for graziers to overstock the land all combining to promote erosion and land degeneration.

Meanwhile, an improved system of roads, state-wide rail links and motorised transport reduced the need for

riverboats as a source of transportation, communication and trade, bringing the riverboat era to a close in the early 20th century.

Settlements along the river, like Wentworth, continued to thrive and grow at a reasonably rapid pace and by 1929 a series of locks and weirs, to assist navigation and pumping, had been completed on the Murray River.

During this time, the first irrigation settlement in New South Wales was founded at Curlwaa, seven kilometres east of Wentworth.

Irrigation breathed new life into the district. It led to pastoral properties being divided into smaller allotments (referred to as 'blocks') and enabled a regeneration of the land and the production of high-quality fruits and vegetables. It's a tradition that continues to this day.

### A FIERCE PRIDE

There is a fierce pride amongst Wentworth town and Shire residents. Perhaps a legacy of the pioneering spirit that forged a prosperous region that boasts successful

primary production on many fronts - from wine, dried fruit and citrus through to wool, wheat and meat.

One of those proud residents is respected community leader, businesswoman and former Wentworth Shire Mayor Marg Thomson.

Marg served on Wentworth Shire Council for 14 years, seven of them as Mayor.

In doing so, she cemented her place in history as the Wentworth LGA's first female mayor.

"I was the first female mayor the council had since it was made a local government area (LGA) 127 years ago," Marg said.

"Even today we are still off the radar and in some respects a forgotten area. Many people just don't realise what a vibrant area Wentworth is.

"In spite of this, the community gets things done. Wentworth is a wonderful place to live, and our tourism is strong and vital for the region.

"We also have a lot of mineral sands mining happening and that brings a lot of traffic through the town. Then there is Transgrid's EnergyConnect project, which is Australia's largest energy transmission

project, building a new 900km transmission line to connect the energy grids of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. This has provided work for people in the Sunraysia region, let alone the Wentworth Shire, which is wonderful.”

## GETTING STUFF DONE

Marg said a strong and constant ‘sense of community’ is at the heart of Wentworth’s success as a town and a Shire.

“Invariably, it’s the initiative and efforts of the people who ultimately get projects started here and then the government pays attention and the funding flows,” she said.

“If the community can’t get a result seeking funding for a project in the first place, it will simply say, ‘Well, we will have to do it ourselves’.

“We might not be able to pay for the whole lot, but it gets things going and then the funding often flows.

“When you start to put your argument about many of these projects benefitting the whole region, it becomes a bit more serious, and it does get results.”

Like many rural towns, Wentworth has experienced GP shortages and a lack of funding for local healthcare. A new medical clinic now services the community which is also a step closer to a having new hospital, with construction now under way on the \$30million Wentworth Health Service. “I am really excited about what is happening in the medical area. If everything that is planned gets done, it will be wonderful,” Marg said.

“Silverline is running the medical clinic, and they are choosing to be here and are providing a wonderful service to the community.”

For those who may not know, Marg was born in South Australia.

“My father was a manager with Elders and our family moved around a bit when I was a child and then he came to Wentworth and when he left, I stayed!”

Marg has recollections of the 1956 flood which would have inundated Wentworth had it not been for the brave actions of residents and volunteers who threw up a levee around the town to save it from the rampaging floodwaters.

“I got ‘despatched’ because Dad was worried that it wasn’t going to be safe. I was sent to Broken Hill. One of my brothers went over to Mildura and the other went to Yorketown. So, I missed out on all the fun!



THE OLD WENTWORTH GAOL IS THE OLDEST OF THE AUSTRALIAN DESIGNED GAOLS, BUILT DURING 1879-1881.



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“Dad panicked when the road into Wentworth looked like it was going under. He reckoned you wouldn’t be able to get in and out.”

## LOTS OF PROGRESS

Marg said there has been much progress made in Wentworth during the time she has lived there.

“People have expectations, and they are prepared to work to make them a reality. We have many people who come to Wentworth to retire, especially from Broken Hill and so we must be doing something right!” she said.

One of the former Mayor Marg’s favourite milestone community projects, and one that she sees as having had a profound effect on the town, was the upgrade of Wentworth’s aerodrome.

The \$9million-plus project included the extension of the existing runway and sealing it to make it an all-weather surface. Along with new lighting, this made the aerodrome accessible 24 hours a day for pilots from all over the country and use it they do!

## SHOP TILL YOU DROP

Marg is also pleased about Wentworth’s retail sector expansion during recent years. Shopping in Wentworth is a great experience, Marg says, with “some wonderful speciality stores to explore, something that attracts people to the town, particularly on weekends”.

Marg is an ex-retail shop owner herself and is proud of the way Wentworth has come with a number of new shops opening. Shops like ‘Curly Tree’ and ‘Wattle Hill Collective’.

Curly Tree is both the name of the home décor and gift store as well as the neighbouring historic home, a home that was once a bank. The period style home’s exterior has a Parisienne appearance and really adds to the character and charm of the Wentworth’s Darling Street, shopping strip.

The store itself is one of those places where you can enjoy slowly browsing at some amazing, colourful, and unusual decorative ideas for the home or gifts. All manner of things from photo frames, baby accessories, lighting, cushions and throws,



FORMER JOURNALIST MARK CORLESS HAS FOUND HIS TRUE LOVE IN LIFE WORKING WITH LEATHER.



prints, dolls and even garden products, can be found here.

And be sure to wander next door into Wattle Hill Collective. This is quality, women's fashion with a difference. Operated by the friendly team of Bronwyn and her daughter Erin, this warmly welcoming store offers a beautiful range of styles to suit every taste and occasion. Whether it's a dress, tops and bottoms or fashion accessories, you'll be sure to find and outfit at this lovely fashion boutique.

### MEET THE LEATHERSMITH

While Marg has been a long-time resident of the Shire, Wentworth's leathersmith is a more recent arrival to the town. It was just a few short years ago that the proprietor of Riverbend Leather — Mark Corless started crafting handmade leather goods; goods he now sells through his Darling Street, Wentworth, store. His move to the town on two rivers was the result of a mammoth lifestyle change - from journalist to leather craftsman in one fell swoop. "I chose to make a late-in-life career

change. I am a journalist and while you never stop being one, my new career is something I really enjoy," Mark revealed. Leather smithing, he says, is an old trade "that people think is dying out". "But a lot of the old trades are coming back, and people are becoming more interested in handmade products," he opines. "I was fascinated by old crafts and making things and learning about the traditions of leather work. I'm learning to make all manner of products — wallets, bags, whips and I'm now keen to learn about making and repairing saddles." Mark confided to *Heartbeat* that he had suffered a heart attack some years ago and said he finds crafting leather "very therapeutic". "I find making things is good therapy, particularly for older people, for whom it provides a relaxing and creative outlet. But it can also be for young people," he said. "I run workshops to train people in the craft of leather making when I have time. "I am generally looking to expand what I do here in Wentworth - small businesses are, after all, the heartbeat of a country town."

Mark gained much of the knowledge and skills he uses online. "I'm a graduate of the University of YouTube! It's a fantastic resource and I get a lot of people coming into the shop — young and old — with an interest in leather work and asking questions or wanting help," he told *Heartbeat*. "There are very few places to go and learn this craft and so platforms like YouTube are brilliant," he said. "I am happy to impart my knowledge as I continue to learn and expand the products I produce here." Riverbend Leather stocks a wide range of products, some of which are sourced from other makers, but the majority are made on-site. You'll find everything from handbags, wallets and key rings to moccasins, hats, whips and belts. "I started out making belts because I couldn't find a belt that I liked, fitted me or was leather," Mark said. "When I was younger you could always get a decent leather belt. Not so when I got older. So, I started making them and now I have branched out into other products. "People will come in to have items repaired

or commission something new to be made and so the business is always evolving.

“The leather industry is actually booming thanks to some of the new leather products that are coming out featuring new colours, textures and finishes. Leather is making a comeback.”

Mark said wherever possible he looks to source his leather from Australian companies.

“Unfortunately, we are a small industry in Australia and a lot of leather comes in from overseas, but I look to Australian companies first... those that are providing Australian jobs,” he said.

“Some of the leather I source comes from New Zealand, which has a very vibrant leather production industry and makes nice leather.

“If I don’t make the products and need to buy them in, I will try to buy Australian made from Australian businesses - family businesses - making leather products.

“For the whips, moccasins, hats and bags I look toward small family-owned Australian businesses. That’s how the likes of R.M. Williams, Akubra and Driza-Bone started so where I can support a small business I always will.”

Speaking of which, make sure you put Riverbend Leather on your bucket list of places to visit when in Wentworth and you’ll be supporting a local business and the community into the bargain.

### EATING OUT

A visit to Wentworth can create quite a hunger, and there are plenty of options including the Lock 10 & Weir Restaurant housed in another of Wentworth’s historic buildings, once home to The Gem Navigation Co. It was one of the first businesses in the town, as well as becoming the town’s first motion picture theatre, The Lyric.

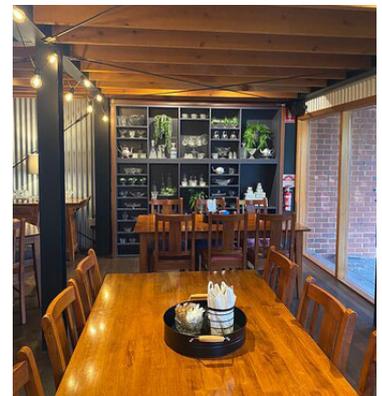
With its modern, vintage feel, laid back vibes, and alfresco or indoor dining, the restaurant provides service with a smile. A seasonal, local produce menu, is jammed with all your favourites for breakfast, lunch or your morning coffee and cake.

Some of the restaurants mouth-watering specials include Eggs Benedict, freshly made Frittata, a Swiss Cheese melt showcasing local mushrooms and a slow cooked Osso Buco, a heart-warming luncheon choice.

Lock 10 & Weir Restaurant is fully licensed



SARA MUNDAY IS THE PROPRIETOR OF LOCK 10 & WEIR RESTAURANT.



*No wonder it’s called ‘Wonderful Wentworth’!*

with local wines and gins, it also serves StAli coffee.

It’s the perfect stop while exploring Wentworth.

The restaurant opens Friday, Saturday and Sunday 9am to 2pm. For bookings ph: 0401 790 621.

Other eating options include The Jackpot Bakery and the towns three hotels — the Captain Sturt, Royal and Crown Hotels, the latter three all being great spots for a cold beverage and a pub meal.

Curly Tree. 47 Darling Street. Open Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 4pm, and Saturday, 10am - 2pm.

Wattle Hill Collective. 49 Darling Street. Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-2pm.

Lock 10 & Weir Restaurant. Corner of Darling and Adelaide Streets. Open Friday to Sunday, 9am to 2pm.

#### Resources:

Additional material sourced from: Wentworth Shire Council website, Trip Advisor, The Darling River Run & Lock 10 & Weir Restaurant Facebook page, Wattle Hill Collective and Curly Tree websites and Facebook pages.

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**PEOPLE & CULTURE**

# MUST-SEE MILITARY MARVEL WITH BIG PLANS



WENTWORTH  
MILITARY COLLECTION



WENTWORTH MILITARY COLLECTION  
CURATOR RUSSELL JAMES. BEHIND  
HIM IN THE MEDIC UNIFORM IS A  
TRIBUTE TO HIS GRANDFATHER  
'JIMMY JAMES' WHO SERVED IN NEW  
GUINEA DURING WWII

THE Wentworth Military Collection is a must-see for the avid military history buff or anyone with an Australian armed forces connection.

And the big news is that planning is well advanced for the Collection to become an even more important visitor drawcard for the historic river town.

During a recent visit to Wentworth, the Collection's curator, Russell James, showed *Heartbeat* the plans for a new, larger museum premises - a project it is hoped will be completed within the next three years.

"This is the design for the new space out at the aerodrome. It's a 2000-square metre, purpose-built display space and a 21-metre diameter poppy memorial that will be visible from the air as planes fly over," Russell revealed.

He also revealed another exciting addition to the plan - the new museum will have its own aerodrome taxiway and apron so that it will be able to host operational aircraft.

The new proposed home of the Collection will be a giant step up from its present Sandwyck Street shop front premises.

"What is currently on display is about four percent of what we have to show - the balance of the items is in storage," Russell said.

"We also have some aircraft and military vehicles waiting in the wings and the new facility will allow us to display more items and in a more professional and curated manner."

"Our business case for the expansion has just been completed and was jointly funded by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the NSW Government. The project group has also been in liaison 'Create NSW', who Russell said has shown interest in providing additional funding for the project.

"Create NSW is the NSW Government's arts and cultural driver, and they actually came to us to offer funding support for the project," Russell explained.

*Heartbeat* asked Russell what had motivated him to establish the military collection.

"I had been collecting militaria (military memorabilia) since the age of 14 and my interest in doing that was prompted by my Pop Jimmy James, who was a medic in New Guinea during World War II," Russell said.



VICTOR GRIFFIN IS ONE OF THE COLLECTION'S VOLUNTEERS.



"He had 'flat feet' and they wouldn't let him join the infantry. Instead, he became part of the 101st Australian Field Hospital, which moved around places like Wewak, Rabaul, New Britain, Port Moresby and Milne Bay.

"And when you start looking at the histories of the actions that were seen in those places - and of course the Field Hospital was following where the action was - it is quite fascinating."

Russell, together with other supporters, established the Wentworth Military Collection and it was launched at the Wentworth Services Club as a public collection on November 11, 2011.

"We then relocated with the support of the local Rotary Club of Wentworth, who allowed us to display our militaria at the Pioneer Museum, while we sourced an independent space," Russell said.

"Then, again with the support of the Wentworth Rotary Club, on October 10, 2015, we moved into our current premises and subsequently we introduced our 'Marching Matilda Experience,' which is our self-guided audio tour, that marks the 100 years since the signing of the armistice on November 11, 2018."

The Marching Matilda Experience is the first installation of its type in Australia and the next generation of audio equipment and is the same technology used at the Louvre in Paris.

"So effectively we have the most advanced system that exists in the world today, right here in our little country town of Wentworth. And that is one of the reasons that we are looking down the barrel of our \$34million project," Russell proudly proclaimed.

"Our Collection has kicked a lot of goals. The fact is, the standard of what we do here, has been the forerunner for other museums around Australia who have seen what we have done here with this technology and are looking at installing the same system.

"This is about being able to connect with our visitors and to convey information to them so that they have a better understanding of what our service personnel have been involved with. It is also a wonderful way to connect with our younger people - our school students - because it is a device that is the technology that they love using."



“The Marching Matilda Experience is a fully immersive experience that is done in your own time, you can go back and listen to stories again or keep moving forward choosing to listen to what interests you.”

The tour has two versions, one for adults and another for children.

“We had a Vietnam Veteran who was visiting the region and he stood at the door and watched in amazement as 30 students took the tour and he couldn’t hear a murmur,” Russell said.

“He was very appreciative that we have been able to come up with way for students to learn about his service in an environment that they really respond to.”

Russell also revealed to *Heartbeat* that the Collection has been successful in acquiring more significant display items including the original battle flag from HMS Ajax\*, ships plaques and tallies of the HMS Ajax, HMS Exeter and HMS Achilles together with an original Captain’s Pennant of the Admiral Graf Spee from the Battle of the River Plate.

“It is significant items like that which make our collection unique, and I am pinching myself they have even been offered to us and we are working on being able to secure

them,” Russell said. “Being able to acquire items of that significance and to tell those stories as part of our Collection creates a wider coverage of the military history timeline.”

Russell highlighted the fact that some of the Collection’s earliest pieces of militaria date back to the Boer War and the very earliest is a British uniform from the Coldstream Foot Regiment, which was formed in 1650.

“It is the oldest, most continuous regiment in the British Army,” Russell said.

“The museum bought that to mark Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and the Irish Guard’s uniform from Buckingham Palace arrived in time for King Charles’ Coronation on May 6 last year.

“Being able to display military history but also have current items of major significance is really special.”

### GETTING TO KNOW THE COLLECTION AUDIO TOUR...

#### *The Marching Matilda Experience*

The Wentworth Military Collection now boasts one of the most advanced Self-Guided Audio Tours in the world.

Comprising of Automatic Trigger points to explain the Conflict Histories, while Exhibit Scanning Points tell the histories of the items on display.

Consisting of a 70-minute Adult Tour and a 30-minute Junior Tour, this easy-to-use Audio Tour caters for all ages as you visit over 125 years of our nation’s proud military service. You will also gauge a better understanding of the world’s military history through featured international exhibits.

Ideal for individual, small and medium group visits, this immersive experience is a must-see for anyone with a passion for a military interest and a love for history in general.

The Marching Matilda Experience is the first installation of its type in Australia and the next generation up from the system currently used in the Louvre in Paris.

### OUR LOCAL MILITARY HISTORY

During World War 2, Wentworth and the surrounding Shire hosted a number or practice bombing ranges for use by the RAAF’s No.2 Operational Training Base, based at the Mildura Airport.

These sites include the Perry Sand Hills, The Mock Battleship, Lake Victoria, Lake Gol Gol and White Cliffs State Forest.

52 Pilots and ground crew were killed during the period of training in the region. Crash sites are marked by memorial plaque stones at each of the respective sites.

Local items of interest on display in this collection include ordnance from the Wentworth Range, Kitty Hawk wreckage from a number of crash sites around Wentworth and donated items from local returned servicemen and their families.

**World-wide**

The Wentworth Military Collection takes pride in being able to display for you items of interest from every major conflict that Australia has been involved in.

Together with wide-ranging items from around the world, the collection includes some of the most infamous battles and military organisations including Gallipoli, Kokoda, Guadalcanal, D-Day, Kapyong, Long Tan, Fire Support Base Coral, Desert Shield, INTERFET, Desert Storm, Operation Catalyst, Operation Slipper, The Victorian Mounted Rifles, AATTV, SAS, Russian KGB, Hitler's SS, The Viet

Cong, Polish Survivors of Auschwitz and an ever-growing representation of Corps, Squadrons and Flotillas of Australian and international forces.

\* HMS Ajax was a Leander-class light cruiser that served with the Royal Navy during World War II. She became famous for her part in the Battle of the River Plate, as well as the Battle of Crete, the Battle of Malta, and as a supply escort in the siege of Tobruk. This ship was the eighth in the Royal Navy to bear the name.

**Resources:**

Wentworth Military Museum: Shop 11 Wentworth Place - Sandwych Street (Just down from Ruby's Cargo)

Open seven days, 10am to 4pm.

Admission: Adults \$10, Concession \$8 and children under 16 \$5 (under 5 years free).

Family (2 Adults & up to 3 Children) \$25 (under 5 years free)

Please note: 'Night at the Museum' tours can only be booked online and bookings close 24 hours before a scheduled tour.



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# CHRISTIE CENTRE CELEBRATES 70 YEARS OF EVOLVING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

"Our role here is to prove that having a person with a level of impairment on your staff actually improves your productivity."

---





The hot-air balloons that lit up during Mildura's Big Balloon Bash Night Glow in June were probably the biggest birthday candles the district has seen. (See page 41 for the Night Glow story.)

The main public event to celebrate seventy years of the Christie Centre, however, wasn't designed to be ostentatious, but accessible for all, especially for the people for whom the centre exists.

"We're not the sort of organisation that's going to do a gala, black-tie, very expensive dinner, because the people who use our services wouldn't be able to participate in that fully," executive officer Florence Davidson told *Heartbeat*.

"But it was an opportunity to provide ... a bit of giveback to the community."

The Night Glow could also have been seen as symbolic of the brightly, shining light that the Christie Centre has been for local people with disabilities, and their families, since 1954.

It was originally known as the W. J. Christie Centre for Mentally Retarded Children in a time, Ms Davidson says, when such services were negatively named "for the impairment or the disability or the effect".

Now it's Christie Centre Inc. and that name very much means business, with 121 team members and an annual budget of about \$8million as it runs five enterprises across nine sites, employing 68 of its more-than 200 participants.

Those enterprises include the Mildura Chocolate Company, the AroundAgain

recycling/reuse operation, an internationally accredited confidential document destruction service, the ArtRageUs graphic arts studio and the GrowAbility plant nursery.

Ms Davidson explains that the Christie Centre, now a service for adults rather than children, provides "activities and opportunities for people to live a big life within the community, to be full citizens within the community".

"And we're very pleased to be able to offer some employment through our social enterprises that ensure there's also financial capacity building for people," she said.

"The key for me is to create aspiration and can-do. People with a level of impairment know what they can't do, they keep getting told what they can't do.

"We know what limitations there may be, but how do we get around those, can we find another way?"

The Christie Centre was in fact started by seven local families looking for another way in a time when people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities, were effectively written off by society as a burden. "They were seven families who made a very strong stance to say 'not for my family'," Ms Davidson said.

"The foundation of our organisation is to challenge and disrupt the status quo. We want to be able to say that we can find a better way.

"We are a place-based service ... we are from Mildura, we are of this community,

we're here to support this community and to do it to the very best of our ability, with quality outcomes.

"It is about creating viable businesses ... how do we show the capacity of the people we provide supports to that allows them to not just participate within the community, but to be a fully-fledged citizen of the community."

The centre's enterprises also provide some of its funding, which has been further supported by a large bequest in recent times, but most activities are funded through the client-based National Disabilities Insurance Scheme, rather than the direct government grants-style funding of the past, and Ms Davidson says this system works much more effectively.

"It means that people can have greater choice over their activities," she said.

"The disability sector has grown enormously over the past 10 years with the introduction of the NDIS."

The centre has, however, also faced some significant challenges, especially in tough economic times when its ultimate goal, supporting its participants into mainstream community life through employment, gets much harder.

"Employment is very tricky. It's often not included in the person's NDIS plan and we have to lobby for that," Ms Davidson said.

"When we have a downturn in the economy, employers might not be as willing or able to take on someone who they might not see as being as productive as someone else.



ANNA & STEPHEN ON THE JOB AT AROUNDAGAIN.

“Our role here is to prove ... that having a person with a level of impairment on your staff actually improves your productivity.” The Covid-19 pandemic had also been extremely challenging and “knocked us around”, Ms Davidson said.

“Of course we work with very vulnerable people, who couldn’t congregate, and if they were in supported accommodation they needed to remain at home, and so we had a huge downturn in our economic viability during that period and we’re still struggling with the consequences of that.”

The Murray River flood of two years ago had also taken its toll, as the Cureton Avenue Growability plant nursery was surrounded by floodwaters.

The future, however, looks as bright as those big balloons did back in June.

In an era, Ms Davidson describes as one of “a higher level of acceptance of inclusion”, the centre’s participants can hopefully expect an even broader range of opportunities in a society that’s getting better at providing them.

“When we create a level of inclusion and we accept a level of diversity, we’re all better off,” she said.

“When we look at ‘different’ without fear, we can create huge change.

“At the moment it’s tough for everyone economically and we feel that as well, but we are forever grateful to this



JAZMIN WORKING ON ONE OF HER CREATIONS AT ARTRAGEUS.

community for their ongoing support.” The Christie Centre will continue to celebrate its past on October 24, the date of its annual general meeting, when past staff and service users will get together to share stories. There’s also a special commemorative calendar coming out featuring participant artworks, and there will be an open day at the centre’s main Twelfth Street site on December 7, the International Day for People with Disabilities.

Beyond that, the future beckons.

Ms Davidson says the organisation is continuing to develop its role in the district’s cultural diversity, and is also experimenting with new technologies such as AI, virtual reality and 3D printing in its enterprises.

“We try to keep abreast of what’s new and

what’s next, and ensure we remain of value, and valued, by our community,” she said.

“If you think you’re done, think again. There will always be a ‘what’s next’.”

There will also always be a proud past, and Ms Davidson said the centre would continue with the ethos that inspired seven families to create it seventy years ago.

“It really was about keeping families together, sharing the load and finding opportunities for people and we continue to do this in our everyday commitment,” she said.

The Mildura Base Public Hospital management and staff, wish the Christie Centre a happy 70th Anniversary and may this important community service have many more successful years serving the community of Sunraysia.

# COMMUNITY'S WARM INNER GLOW SHINES BRIGHTLY

With colours rivalling nature during autumn, the Christie Centre's 'Night Glow' balloon spectacular this June proved to be a huge hit.

---



THE FIRST BALLOON TO INFLATE AT THE NIGHT GLOW EVENT.

On Sunday, June 30, 11,200 people filed through the gates of the Mildura Recreation Reserve to enjoy the Christie Centre's 70th anniversary spectacular featuring hot air balloons from around the globe.

It was a night filled with colour and light. And, it was a sight made all the more special because of the wonderful community spirit on display for all to see and because police were happy to report that despite the size of the crowd attending not one untoward incident was reported.

Those attending were treated to the most colourful display of hot air balloons seen in our region. The intermittently glowing balloons, illuminated in time with the music that echoed around the reserve. The finale was an unbelievable sight, with every balloon lit up - something that left all those in attendance in absolute awe of the spectacle the visiting balloonists had so generously created.

Christie Centre Executive Officer Florence Davidson said proceeds from the night totalling almost \$50,000, will be directed toward the expansion of the Mildura Chocolate Company.

This in turn, she said, that will mean an additional opportunity for supported employment in coming months.

"We think the balloon glow was a great opportunity for the community to come together and it really fits well with the way the Christie Centre came into being, driven by the community," Ms Davidson said.

"We remain community responsive and whilst it's our 70th anniversary, it is also the opportunity to share and give back a little to the community as well.

"Mildura has really done us proud. We had more than 6500 pre-purchased tickets and were expecting a large number of 'walk-ups' on the night. We hoped to max out at 10,000 people. To have 11,200 that was absolutely fantastic.

"It is testimony to why we kept it accessible and affordable for families so that they could come and enjoy such a beautiful night glow spectacle. What a gift for the Christie Centre from the Mildura Big Bash Balloon committee — it was just a joy!"

In her welcome address to the crowd, Ms Davidson said: "The fact that so many people have been able to come to the event is about creating community connection and that is what we do every day."

"The Christie Centre has been around since 1954 and our partnership with



L-R CHRISTIE CENTRE BOARD SECRETARY, JENNY BENNETT WITH BOARD DEPUTY CHAIR, PATRICIA D'ARANJO AT THE NIGHT GLOW EVENT.

Mildura Rural City Council was established in that year as well. "When W.J. Christie was the mayor at the time, he gave us our first donation to start the service.

"And here we are 70 years later, still in partnership with the Mildura Rural City Council but also in partnership with our community.

"This is our major fundraiser for this year and all of the proceeds will go to support those things that are not funded by government or by other revenue raising efforts.

"This means the difference between creating new opportunities or just being able to offer the status quo — and the fact is that the status quo just isn't good enough.

"I would really like to thank the generosity of the balloonists who are here this evening and who have been able to travel and to share their expertise. The great gift of the night glow is just amazing, and my cup is certainly full of an immense amount of gratitude."

Ms Davidson acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land where the event was being held and also the many valued sponsors, supporters, food vendors and stall holders who made the event possible. Her final thank you was reserved for her wonderful team, with whom she works alongside at the Christie Centre.

"I leave the last enormous thank you to our team who are visionary, who are leaders and who are doers," Ms Davidson said.

"If you want the job done, this is the team you want behind you. And we hope the Christie Centre continues for another 70 years. My thanks to you all."

*Heartbeat* attended the event and while there spoke to Christie Centre board members, vice-president Patricia D'Aranjó

and long-serving member Jenny Bennett.

"Yes, we are in our 70th year now. We started back in the 50s and at that time if you had a child who had a disability, in most circumstances that child would be placed into some form of institutional care," Jenny said.

"That was heartbreaking for the parents. Whereas, when the Christie Centre opened, parents were aware that their child could be looked after in Mildura.

"It gave a new life to the individual with the disability and of course to the parents and families as well because they all suffered - it made a huge difference to people's lives.

"Our social enterprises have become an integral part of the Christie Centre. They are fantastic and I have the greatest admiration for Florence of course, and the entire staff and supporters for the incredible work that they do," Patricia added.

"I am learning so much about this sector and I love the approach to the enterprises. You have to be sustainable in the long-term and the driver for these enterprises is creating important pathways for people with disabilities and they do it well."

Jenny described watching the expansion of the social enterprises as "marvellous".

"We have Growability — the nursery on the road to Apex Park, the Chocolate Factory, Aroundagain and the fully accredited, security document shredding business, which recently passed a stringent auditing process with flying colours! And of course, our newest partnership at Powerhouse place — SPARK.

"This is a wonderful space, that includes a kiosk and we are able to showcase other social enterprises as well as the Christie Centre - all of which provides job creation."



CHRISTIE CENTRE EXECUTIVE OFFICER FLORENCE DAVIDSON (R) WITH ST JOHN AMBULANCE VICTORIA VOLUNTEERS AT THE NIGHT GLOW.

# MBPH Foundation - Upcoming Events



**13**  
SEPTEMBER  
6.30PM



## Mildura City Heart & MBPH Foundation Cocktail Party

- Fashion Parade, canapes, live music
- Powerhouse Precinct
- \$70 per ticket
- Drinks at bar prices



**05**  
OCTOBER  
12NOON

## A-League Preseason Double Header

- See the A-League Men & Women Teams' Best in Action!
- Mildura Sporting Precinct - Gates Open 12 noon
  - Match Time: Women: 2pm - Men 5.30pm
  - Tickets: A: \$20 | 5-16: \$10 | Under 5: Free
  - Purchase at milduraartcentre.com.au or scan QR code



**19**  
OCTOBER  
5.30PM



## MBPH Foundation Gala Ball

- Live music & entertainment
- Canapes, mains, dessert & drinks inc
- Willow & Ivie - 256 Irymple Ave
- \$250 per ticket



**22**  
NOVEMBER  
12NOON



## MBPH Foundation Golf Day

- \$5000 worth of prizes
- 2 person Ambrose (group of 4)
- Coomealla Golf Club

**TICKETS ON SALE SOON!**



# RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES TO FILL LOCAL HEALTHCARE JOBS

A NEW healthcare workforce recruitment campaign has been launched by Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH). The initiative is a collaborative effort with Ouyen-based Mallee Track Health & Community Service (MTHCS).

The campaign aims to boost the local healthcare workforce for the long-term benefit of the Northern Mallee community.

From the end of July, the multi-channel campaign was rolled out across recruitment websites, social media and print and digital media, strategically targeting capital cities and major

regional hubs. The campaign is proving to be a great success so far, with substantial increases in employment enquiry levels and high traffic volumes to the campaign's official website recorded.

MBPH CEO Terry Welch said as a forerunner to the main campaign, recruitment signage had been on display around the boundary at the AFL Country Round night game between Geelong and Essendon at the MCG on Saturday, June 29.

"We are all aware of the challenges we face in recruiting professionals to our

region and thanks to funding secured through the department more than 12 months ago, we have been able to build a strong campaign," Mr Welch said.

"Our decision to launch at the MCG was very deliberate given our connection to the game through Essendon's support of our new Skin Cancer Screening truck to be on road next year.

"The Bombers have been amazing in their support, and we received enormous exposure across the whole weekend with interviews on SEN on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, as well as a story on Channel 7 News, Friday evening."

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Phase one of the recruitment campaign utilises a series of large format digital billboards in high-traffic sites in Melbourne, Adelaide and Geelong, together with online digital advertising across a number of platforms including Facebook, Google Ads, Linked-In and Instagram, spearheading the campaign. MBPH Executive Director People, Culture and Wellbeing, Janelle McGregor, who heads up the Northern Mallee Health Services Collaboration (NMHSC) - a joint initiative of the region's two major public health employers - said a strong healthcare system is at the heart of any thriving community.

"The new recruitment campaign focuses on work, life and family balance, the unique regional environment and the many other benefits offered by the Northern Mallee," Ms McGregor said.

"We know the Mildura region is a great place to live and work. But with a global shortage of healthcare workers, recruiting the skilled workforce our region needs to deliver essential services across health, mental health, aged care and community service and help our communities flourish can be challenging.

"Importantly, it includes focused wrap-around support to help new staff and their families settle into the region. This includes initiatives like visa sponsorship, relocation help and temporary accommodation, as well as supportive connections to childcare, schools, jobs for partners, community groups and welcome information."

MBPH sees this as a significant point of difference from other healthcare recruitment campaigns and it has been specifically designed to address people's core needs.

Local community groups and industry partners are also key to ensuring the campaign's success - welcoming new



## CAMPAIGN IMPACT

Results so far have seen a significant increase in traffic to the Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) website, accompanied by a substantial rise in job applications.

"This campaign's success is a testament to our efforts, and it positions us to reduce our reliance on agency staff by filling these roles with full-time employees," Mr Welch said.

"We also surveyed 1,200 individuals who engaged with us through the campaign, and received an impressive 750 responses.

"One particular survey result stands out, 86% of respondents had heard about MBPH due to our workplace culture and values.

"This is a remarkable achievement and underscores the progress we've made in aligning with our core values over the past four years."

Mr Welch added that this vision has translated into tangible results and said the numbers speak for themselves.

Website views increased by 6% Completed applications rose by 35% Nursing applications saw a 25% increase Of the new candidates, 40% are from New Zealand, and 6% are Australia-based Candidates hail from Adelaide, Riverland, Shepparton, Bendigo, Newcastle, Lismore, Parramatta, and Western Sydney.

For more information about the campaign, and to stay updated on the latest developments visit: [www.morethanahealthcarejob.org.au](http://www.morethanahealthcarejob.org.au).

residents and helping them to settle in quickly.

MTHCS CEO Frances Peart said the recruitment campaign would provide support for its regional population as it continues to grow.

"At the moment NMHSC has open

healthcare positions in acute health, allied health, mental health, aged care, ancillary and community services, so a major focus of this recruitment campaign is attracting and retaining staff across all healthcare services," Ms Peart said.



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# GRAEME'S NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE GAVE LIFE TO 'HANDS ON HEART'

While riding his bike on a hot Mildura day 10 years ago, Graeme Tulloch — former elite footballer, senior coach and school teacher — suffered a cardiac arrest.

The incident happened in Walnut Avenue and soon a number of people came to Graeme's aid, called triple 000 and began CPR on him.

It was Graeme's luck day. Onsite in almost no time, was a social worker, who called 000 for an ambulance and her husband began CPR.

The next people to render assistance included a child and health care nurse, an air-conditioning mechanic and then a Mildura police officer.

It was all hands-on-deck and with the over-the-phone assistance from the 000 operator, they all worked for eight minutes, applying hundreds chest compressions, in advance of the ambulance arriving.

Graeme's life had been saved by the timely intervention of passing strangers.

While Graeme has very little recognition of the events of that day, he "will be forever grateful to the team who saved his life".

The experience would eventually become the catalyst for Graeme, together with other supporters, including former school friend and author Phil Kettle, whose brother suffered a fatal cardiac arrest, to create the 'Hands on Heart' program that teaches emergency cardiopulmonary resuscitation - CPR - free of charge.

Graeme said that sudden cardiac arrest has a low survival rate of between 6-12 per cent in Victoria.

"On average, there are more than 6500 sudden cardiac arrests occurring in Victoria each year," he said.

"Up to 30,000 Australian people will suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in any given year, and that 27,000 will die.

"In many cases this will be because no one was able to apply CPR in the vital first minutes after collapse.

"With the support of the Mildura Lions Club, Mildura Connected Communities,

a trust funded by Bendigo Bank, the installation of nine AED's (automated electronic defibrillators) in the region, with backing from Mildura Health, was facilitated."

## BREATHING LIFE INTO HANDS ON HEART AUSTRALIA

Mildura based, Phil Kettle, one of Australia's successful children's author, joined with Graeme and approached Mildura Lions Club, who agreed to become involved in this community initiative and agreed to administer the program and work closely with First Aid Services Mildura's, Angela Izard.

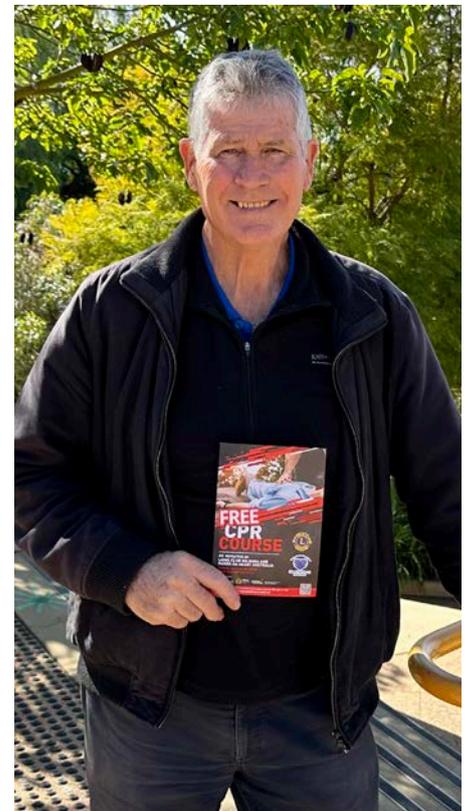
The Free CPR course was first offered to people in Mildura and surrounding areas, in May 2023.

The primary goal of this community initiative was to equip individuals with basic CPR skills to enhance the survival rate of those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. Aimed at increasing community awareness and fostering a safer community, the program has made significant strides in its mission over the review period.

Conducted by Angela Izard First Aid Services Mildura, the program offers both accredited and non-accredited two-hour CPR courses at the training centre in Twelfth Street, Mildura and where schools elect to have the course training in their classrooms this is undertaken.

Since the program commenced, students throughout Sunraysia have been given the opportunity to learn CPR.

Just seven months after the program was introduced, a total of 413 individuals received basic CPR training, reflecting the program's significant impact on community preparedness.



GRAEME TULLOCH.

In addition, eight schools in the district, five Primary Year 5 & 6 and three Secondary Year 10 participated, resulting in the training of 261 students. And the number today has grown exponentially.

Angela Izard's First Aid Services Mildura support has seen significant discounts given for larger school groups. Educating the younger generation about CPR, not only equips them with essential life-saving skills but also instils a sense of responsibility and preparedness from a young age.

The statistic highlighting that 80 per cent of sudden cardiac arrests occur in the home, underscores the critical importance of CPR training within the household setting.

By teaching CPR to students at these specific age groups, the program ensures that a significant portion of the population, including young individuals who might encounter emergency situations at home, is prepared to respond effectively.

"There is growing interest and support for Hands on Heart Australia and my hope is that it will become a word-wide program, which would be a wonderful outcome," Graeme concluded.

For further information about Free CPR courses visit: [www.firstaidservicesmildura.com.au](http://www.firstaidservicesmildura.com.au), To book call 0408 502 868 or email: [ajizard@bigpond.com](mailto:ajizard@bigpond.com).



# FREE CPR COURSE

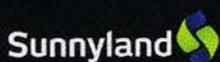
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THE KC SOCIETY LUNCHEON WAS AGAIN WELL ATTENDED.

# KC SOCIETY LUNCHEON 2024

HELD ON FRIDAY, MAY 10, THE ANNUAL KC SOCIETY LUNCHEON AGAIN ATTRACTED A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENJOYED A FABULOUS DEGUSTATION MENU PREPARED BY 400 GRADI AND STEFANO'S CAFÉ.

Due to the possibility of inclement weather, the decision was made to move the 'Alfresco' luncheon to inside 400 Gradi as a precaution. This proved to be an ideal setting for what was again a wonderful occasion.

In excess of \$50,000 was raised, with all of these funds being directed to the medical scholarship program established in honour of the late Mildura surgeon, Mr Kevin Chambers.

Here are some photo highlights taken at the event.



ANTHONY MCDONALD-TIPUNGWUTI 'TIPPA' IN A Q&A WITH MBPH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT SERVICES HEATH KENDALL



L-R MBPH FOUNDATION CHAIR ROSS LAKE, MBPH BOARD CHAIR FRANK PISCIONERI WITH JAS & SCOTT CHAMBERS.





**MILDURA  
CARDIOLOGY**

### CONSULTATIONS

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- Nine visiting Cardiologists that consult in Mildura on a regular basis
- Royal Children’s Hospital - Paediatric Cardiology Rural Out Reach Service (quarterly)
- Three visiting Haematologists from The Alfred Hospital
- Cardiology Registrar from The Alfred Hospital - rotating on a six monthly placement
- 3rd year and 5th year Medical Student placement from Monash School of Rural Health
- One visiting Respiratory & Sleep Physician

### DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

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- Echocardiogram (ECHO)
- Transoesophageal Echocardiogram (TOE)
- DCR Cardioversion
- Exercise Stress Testing
- Stress ECHO
- 24Hr Holter monitoring
- 3-5 day Holter monitoring
- Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring
- Pacemaker/ICD/Reveal follow up
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**MILDURA  
CARDIOLOGY**

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# EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY

An opportunity to learn about and to salute our emergency services.



AMBULANCE VICTORIA  
PARAMEDIC, ERIN BLACKWELL AND MICA PARAMEDIC, BRON LAMBERT.

SUNRAYSA'S emergency services were in the spotlight at a May event highlighting both professional career and volunteer opportunities.

Staged at Nowingi Place on Wednesday, May 8, the event was attended by students from across the region in large numbers, along with many members of the community keen to see our emergency services up close.

With a view to building a better-prepared and more resilient community, there was a host of educational resources and advice available.

Some of the agencies in attendance and the activities on the day included:

Victoria Police and NSW Police - Displaying a full range of policing vehicles. Fire Rescue Victoria - Community safety display and Remote Piloted Aircraft systems.

Country Fire Authority - Interactive firefighting vehicle equipment display.

Ambulance Victoria - Medical information, career guidance and vehicle tour. Forest Fire Management Victoria - Vehicle and equipment display.

Emergency Recovery Victoria - Emergency Services App demonstration.

Victoria State Emergency Services - Jaws of Life demonstration and SES vehicle display.

Mildura Life Saving Club - Rescue boat on display.

Community RoadSafe Mildura - Bus, car, walking safety as well as bike education.

Mildura Rural City Council - Public Safety information and.

The Army Reserve - G-Wagon, 40-metre truck and inflatable obstacle course.

*Heartbeat* spoke to some of the emergency services personnel working at the event, including the Mildura SES volunteers.

"Our role as Victorian State Emergency Services volunteers sees us involved in a variety of incidents and situations," SES Mildura Volunteer, Sam White said.

"We are the control agency for flood, storm, earthquake, tsunami and landslide.

"We also provide the largest road crash rescue network in Victoria."

SES Mildura Community Engagement Facilitator, Carol Brandrick said during the 2022-2023 Murray River flood, the SES had established an Incident Control Centre in Mildura to oversee regional operations.

"We had more than 70 people working in



CFA OFFICER ADDRESSES SCHOOL CHILDREN AT THE EVENT.



the control centre. In addition, there were 70-plus people working in the field," Carol said.

"SES volunteers came from as far as Western Australia.

"We are all volunteers and none of us get paid.

"Most of our people are working their day jobs as well as trying to be a volunteer.

"That's what we do when we are needed to assist in any emergency in the community."

State Emergency Services (SES) volunteers are the first responders to emergencies. They help many emergency situations including flood, storm, bush search and rescue and give relief to those impacted.

Each year, SES volunteers donate more than two million volunteer hours to help others in need and make a huge difference in their communities.

Mildura Unit volunteer James Puleio joined the organisation two years ago and loves being a part of the SES team in Mildura.

"I started when I was 16 and undertook some training ahead of being made

operational when I turned 18," James explained.

"I really like all the training we get, and the qualifications are nationally recognised. In addition, it is a great life experience which I would recommend to anyone."

Mildura Unit volunteer Kyle Jackson is also enthusiastic about his role with the SES.

"I enjoy helping the community and like giving something back. So, I do what I can to make a worthwhile contribution along with the other volunteers," Kyle said.

Many young people are drawn to the Fire Brigade as a career and local brigade members were on hand to talk to students.

Irymple Fire Brigade's Stephen Krohn said he and his colleagues were pleased to be able to attend the Emergency Services Day and speak with both the students and members of the wider community.

"It is really a day for all of the schools to come along and see all of the different emergency services from food banks to the police, fire brigades, ambulance, the SES and many others and to hear what we do and how we work together which we often do," Stephen said.



L-R SES MILDURA UNIT VOLUNTEERS KYLE JACKSON AND SAM WHITE (FORMERLY FROM SUNBURY UNIT), SES MILDURA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR, CAROL BRANDRICK AND MILDURA UNIT VOLUNTEER JAMES PULEIO.



VICPOL MILDURA LEADING SENIOR CONSTABLE LAUREN HARMER, FIRST CONSTABLE ADAM BELL AND VICPOL SWAN HILL SENIOR SERGEANT BARRY GRAY.

“The day provides a great opportunity for young people to see what career opportunities are available in the emergency services area and who knows, they might make it their career path?”

Victoria Police (VicPol) had an array of police vehicles and equipment on display, including a BMW Highway Patrol SUV and a marine vessel.

VicPol Mildura Leading Senior Constable Lauren Harmer said the day was a great initiative to bring emergency services together in one place.

“We do get to the schools every now and again but it’s good to have our other emergency services here as well and they get to see the variety that’s available and the different choices they can make once they have left school,” Lauren said.

“Our merchandise is always a hit with the kids — little footballs or hats and other items!”

Swan Hill -based Senior Sergeant Barry Gray said the day also provided an opportunity to network with the other services in attendance.

“It’s a great day for us as well. It’s a chance

for our members to see the new faces in the other services like the fire brigades, ambulance, SES and so on, and to have a chat with them to,” Barry said.

“We bump into them in real world situations and days like this are really valuable.”

VicPol Mildura First Constable Adam Bell explained that working well with the other emergency services when required was important.

“Particularly when we have some serious incidents, it’s great when we all work together. This is a great day to network with everybody and to inform the schools and public what we do,” Adam said.

The great work that our ambulance paramedics perform is on display every day at the Mildura Base Hospital and *Heartbeat* spoke with two of the officers in attendance at the event.

“Today is all about bringing the community together and to highlight preparedness for emergencies while importantly looking at recruitment and how kids can make a career in the emergency services,” Ambulance Victoria MICA Paramedic Bron Lambert said.

“Just having the opportunity for a conversation to get the ‘ball-rolling’ with kids going into Years 10, 11 and 12 is great.

“People can just come up and talk to us and know that we are just humans and are approachable.”

Bron’s colleague at the event, Ambulance Victoria Paramedic Erin Blackwell has been in the service for two years and said it had been a great career choice for her.

“I have been in it for about two years. I like the aspect of every day being different and helping your community,” Erin said.

“I always really liked healthcare and being out in the field, making your own decisions — that was really appealing.

“For every one job that’s challenging, the next 100 are a lot more rewarding. The balance is pretty good in my opinion.”

*Heartbeat* salutes all our emergency services for the wonderful work they do in our community.

\*Some reference material sourced from the MRCC website.

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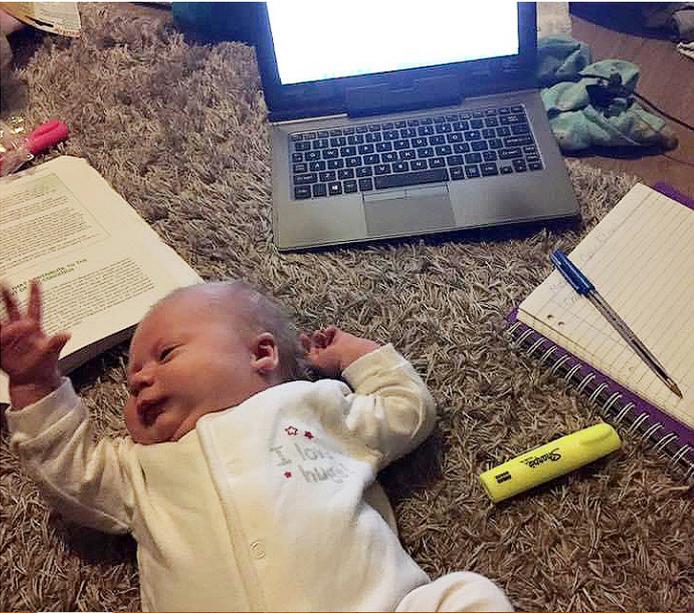
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# LA TROBE'S ONLINE POSTGRADUATE STUDY OFFERS CAREER ENRICHING OPTIONS



ERIN HEALY'S GRADUATION PHOTO.

ZOE AND HER TEAM WON THE NETBALL PREMIERSHIP FOR OUYEN UNITED FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB.

WITH increased access to online study, local nurses can upskill, specialise and develop their leadership capability via postgraduate study without having to travel to Melbourne or Adelaide.

Online study through La Trobe University is further enriched for Mildura students, as they benefit via access to staff, services and events at La Trobe's campus in Mildura.

Erin Healy is well practiced in the art of juggling. She had two babies during the time she was studying her Bachelor of Nursing degree and has now taken a further step in her career - pursuing a Graduate Diploma in Rural Nursing Practice, offered online through La Trobe University.

Erin currently works at Mildura Base Public Hospital as a Registered Nurse in the MBPH@Home program.

"During my career at Mildura Base Public Hospital, I have been able to experience a few different roles in the community space such as Hospital in the Home, and Residential in Reach. My current role sees me working with the Allied Health team in the Rehab in the Home, Transitional Care and Trial and Void programs. I love the challenge this role brings and being able to help people achieve their goals is such a good feeling."

Erin says with the support and encouragement from local nurse academics such as Sandy Connor, Tara Williams and Bev Blanch, she was inspired to consider postgraduate study.

"I love working in my current role, going from emergency to community has required me to have a major shift in focus on how I look at health," she said.

"When considering study initially I was contemplating a critical care or palliative care pathway. While these two were strong interests of mine, I didn't want to focus on just one area, as I like the complexity and broadness of my new role.

"Working in Mildura, I feel we have so much more to consider than our metropolitan hospitals. The fact that this Rural Nursing Practice qualification is tailored to what we experience in our day to day nursing, where we have limited resources, was a major factor for me.

It offers that element that applies directly to my experience of health care, no matter what role I am doing."

Erin explained that transitioning to online study was something she was at first quite nervous about.



ZOE MCSWAIN AND HER HUSBAND RYAN WITH THEIR DOG PEPPA AT THE FARM AFTER HARVEST LAST YEAR.

"Knowing that I have the support of the local La Trobe Mildura Campus and can drop in to see admin, IT and support staff is reassuring," she said.

"Having that 'back up' of staff who will always make themselves available to students, takes a lot of the pressure off and make you feel less isolated about studying online."

Zoe McSwain is working at North Eastern Urology as their private practice nurse in Mildura and also at Mildura Health Private Hospital as a theatre nurse. She'll complete her Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) this year and has been competing her study online.

"I decided to pursue obtaining my Nurse Practitioner qualification as I want to bridge the gap for our rural patients particularly when it comes to specialised care, particularly urology related issues," Zoe said.

"We already have amazing urology and continence services in Mildura, however these services have limited access to our already busy doctors. As a qualified Nurse Practitioner, I can alleviate and assist nurses, allied health professionals and

physicians who are constantly inundated with urological concerns."

As it turned out, Zoe found the transition to postgraduate study easier to adapt to than she was expecting.

"I found it hard to learn and retain everything when I was completing my bachelor's degree, but I've found postgraduate study has been a lot easier to manage," she said.

"Once I started, I found that everything began to make sense - why we do the things we do. Postgraduate study has helped with my nursing and patient care, as I've been able to educate and explain to patients why certain treatments, procedures and medications were needed to help them. Most of all it has allowed me to educate, empower and advocate for my patients."

Zoe maintains that as long as you manage your time and are well prepared, the balance of work and study is very do-able.

"My advice to other considering it is - there is no time like the present to start, don't wait for the perfect time, because if you want it, you can make it work," she said.



*Haeusler's*

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# A LONG WAY FROM MILDURA TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Who in their wildest dreams could have ever imagined that growing up in Mildura would lead them to working in the White House?. But, that is exactly what has happened to Dr Bruce Rodan.

Recently, author and feature writer Phil Kettle spoke with Dr Rodan about his journey.

MILDURA has over the years, produced a number of hugely successful people who can proudly tell the world that their journey to fame and fortune began in Mildura. Dr Bruce Rodan is an example of this, having spent his formative years in Mildura.

Bruce arrived in Mildura with his family not long after his 1st birthday. The son of Dr Brian Rodan, who was an ophthalmologist and mother Barbara, a radiographer who settled here and worked for 35 years.

“I had a great childhood of freedom, opportunity, and challenge, roaming free on my bicycle down to the river, swimming, fishing, water skiing,” Dr Rodan recalled. “Reflecting, I don’t think it could have been possible to have better start in life than I had and I loved every minute of growing up.”

Dr Rodan lived opposite ‘Number 3 Oval’ and attended Mildura Central School from Preps through to the end of Primary. From there, it was off to St Joseph’s College where he schooled from Form 1 to form 4. His year levels included Dale Weightman, (Richmond AFL legend) Andrew Keogh (now a Victorian Supreme Court Justice) and David Brooks (a GP in South Australia)

One of Dr Rodan’s teachers at St Joseph’s, Robert Wolfe, recalled the period when he taught Bruce.

“I remember Bruce from my science class early on in my teaching days at St Joseph’s in Mildura,” Mr Wolfe said.

“He was one of a number of students in the class who were highly motivated and always going to do well.

“As I recall, he was an excellent student but also like a few others in the class, a bit of a ‘rogue’ at times!

“Dale Weightman, I think was also in this class, but his abilities lay in a totally different direction.

“However, the class was one that I enjoyed



DR BRUCE RODAN WITH WHITE HOUSE COLLEAGUE, THE US PRESIDENT’S SCIENCE ADVISOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE’S OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY, DR JOHN HOLDREN.

and as a teacher, one that I found very stimulating with students like Bruce in it.

“Bruce was also an excellent swimmer and along with his older sister, he did very well at the school and inter-school carnivals.

“It doesn’t surprise me that he has done so well in life and work in the USA. It’s great to see his achievements.”

Life took a change of direction when Bruce finished 4th year at St Joseph’s.

He received a scholarship to go to Haileybury College in Melbourne, known at the time to be a very challenging school academically.

“In the summer between Forms 5 and 6, I met Mark Marrows, who was also from Mildura,” Dr Rodan said.

“Our parents figured we might have some things in common, both being boarders and water skiers.

“Indeed, Mark corrupted me to the benefits of the overnight sleeping carriages on the train to school in Melbourne. Rather than my \$10 seat with my baggage above in the luggage rack trips in the red rattler that I

had used in the previous year, I was now travelling in style!

“After that, Mark and I and other friends spent many years water skiing together and are still great friends today.”

After completing his HSC with flying colours at Haileybury, Bruce chose to study Medicine at Melbourne University, graduating coincidentally at the same time as his now good friend Mark Marrows in 1983.

“After I graduated, I did five years of clinical medicine in Melbourne, followed by doing an intern and resident at St. Vincent’s Hospital, then various training and locum positions,” Dr Rodan said.

“On the recommendation of my Occupational Health Mentor, I went on to Harvard to do a Master’s Degree in Public Health. In 1989 my working career in the US commenced.”

And of course, a person who knows Dr Rodan better than most, is indeed his lifetime, friend and popular Mildura doctor, Mark Marrows.



1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE WASHINGTON DC  
BETTER KNOWN AS THE LOCATION OF THE WHITEHOUSE

“Firstly, when speaking of Bruce, it is important to know that he is a really genuine good guy,” Dr Marrows said.

“If you met him casually, you would have no idea how high his career has taken him.

“Given a first meeting him, would just be a pleasant, fun conversation without any boasts or name dropping.

“Just a local Mildura boy like anyone else. And he is proud of his humble Mildura origins.

“His career just took-off and because of his modesty, I doubt many in Mildura know of this. Obviously, he is very intelligent, having easily been admitted into medical school.

“He was a very strong swimmer, which I only found out from others as he never boasted about it. Water skiing was what we did most summers, and he excelled at that.

After graduation from Medical School, he wanted to do more than the standard medical career, and did a master’s degree in Public Health at Harvard University.

That no doubt took a fair bit of courage for a boy from Mildura to quit his medical career and head off to the USA and he finished up working in the White House as a science advisor to the President.

Because of his seniority, Bruce was able to take me and my family on a guided tour of

the White House and especially to the West Wing Oval Office.

“Just imagine two Mildura boys wandering freely through the West Wing corridors (the Secret Service were in most corridors) as his security clearance allowed this.

“Apart from having achieved more in his life than most could ever dream of doing, I am pleased to call him my mate. Mildura should be so proud of Dr Bruce Rodan, he’s a living legend.”

Apart from a great career, Dr Rodan is a proud family man, which to him is still his greatest achievement. Together with his wife and two sons, they call Potomac, MD. 20854 Washington, their home.

Dr Rodan is currently attached to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the role of Associate Director for Science Office of Research and Development (ORD). Senior official in the ORD Immediate Office of the Assistant Administrator.

From 2010-2016, he was the White House, Office of Science and Technology Policy Assistant Director for Environmental Health. Senior environmental health advisor to the OSTP Director/Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, and OSTP Associate Director for Environment and Energy.

In these roles and others before this, Dr

Rodan worked directly with US presidents including George W. Bush, Barrack Obama and of course knew all of the presidents that have been in the White since then and up until today.

His exhaustive list of extraordinary career achievements — too many to include in this article — are something to be admired and without doubt, make him one of Sunraysia’s most successful exports.

In conclusion, Dr Rodan spoke these words...

“Thanks to my family, community, schools and teachers for giving me a great start in life.

Sunraysia, keep stepping forward, understanding what a solid foundation you are providing in life and for the community. I miss Australia — Mildura in particular. The feeling of space and freedom, the wilderness just outside the door, the chance to explore, and the feeling that we are all in this together.

And like the words from the great Peter Allan-I still call Australia home.”

**Heartbeat wishes to acknowledge Sunraysia Daily, who allowed our publication to use Mr Kettle’s article which had previously appeared in their paper.**

# CHAFFEY FESTIVAL COMMEMORATES MILDURA DAY AND SHOWCASES THE REGION'S RICH HISTORY



The success of this year's Chaffey Festival and Mildura Day celebrations far exceeded the expectations of organisers.

The highlight of the 2024 festivities was a sell-out gala evening held on Friday, May 31, at the Powerhouse complex.

With Mildura Day falling on a Friday this year, it was decided by the organising Chaffey Trail Committee to make the celebration a three-day festival by including the weekend.

So, in its inaugural year, what has become The Chaffey Festival celebrated Mildura's history by commemorating Mildura Day and expanding the celebration activities. The festival promised to be an enriching weekend filled with historical insights and community spirit — and it more than lived up to that promise.

The Friday night gala provided those attending with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the expertise of accomplished authors and historians who have catalogued our region's history through captivating photographs, compelling videos, and engaging discussions all peeling back the layers of Mildura's fascinating past. It was a wonderful event. Many people who had looked to secure a seat at the gala event were left disappointed, when those numbers

outstripped the tickets available. However, there were many more activities across the weekend for locals and visitors to enjoy.

On Saturday morning, for example, a guided tour of Rio Vista, the original Chaffey residence was hosted by Chaffey Trail historian Bob Walton. The event was free and a large turn-out of people enjoyed the occasion.

Saturday also included visits to the Mildura Station Homestead and a tour and wine tasting at the Chateau Mildura Winery. The highlight of the day was the Frames of History Part III presentation by Ian MacWilliams, staged in the historic Langtree Hall.

On Sunday people enjoyed a paddleboat cruise and the Merbein Historical Society's guided bus tour of the community art project — Mosaics of the Merbein Trail.

That evening there was a re-run of the Frames of History Part III.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILDURA DAY

Mildura Day celebrates the formalisation of Mildura as Australia's first irrigation colony.

It was 137 years ago, on May 31, 1887, that our city's founding fathers, Canadians George and William Benjamin (W.B.) Chaffey, signed an indenture with Her Majesty Queen Victoria who was being represented by Sir Henry Brougham Loch of behalf of the Colony of Victoria. Now, each year on the anniversary of this date, the district celebrates what is now known as 'Mildura Day'.

Mildura Day for many people has become one of their favourite celebrations of the year.

Commemorating the occasion is an opportunity to highlight Mildura's unique place in Australia's history as the country's first irrigation colony and gives a chance to residents, both long-time and newly arrived, to learn about our beautiful city's formative years.

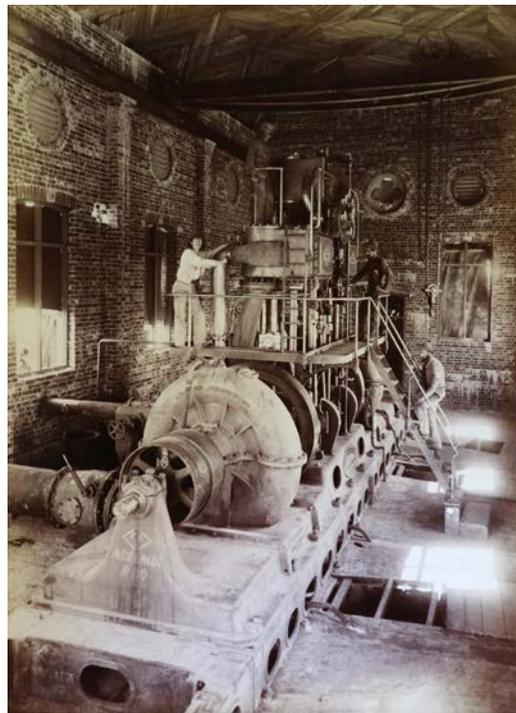
It's also an opportunity to remember and acknowledge the vision, innovation and resilience of Mildura's founding fathers and pioneering settlers and showcases the progress the community has made to become the vibrant, multicultural city that residents enjoy today.



J. W. LINDT PHOTO PS RUBY AT MILDURA LANDING, 1889.



BAKER & FARQUHAR, PHOTO CO. OLD MILDURA HOMESTEAD 1888.



J. W. LINDT PHOTO INTERIOR OF PUMPING STATION, 1889.

Describing the weekend's success, Chaffey Trail president, Mark Eckel, told *Heartbeat* "The response has been exceptional and I think having Mildura Day fall on a Friday helps because you can turn it into a three-day festival and I think the popularity of this event at the Powerhouse is testimony to that."

"The three-day Chaffey Festival also offered an excellent opportunity for out-of-towners to visit our region and they, together with a large number of locals, enjoyed the festivities.

"In particular, we are also delighted to welcome members of the Chaffey family, who travel to Mildura from different parts of Australia each year for this occasion.

"To have three outstanding guest speakers — approaching the subject from different perspectives and each of them renowned for the work that they have done in relation to compiling the history of Mildura — is also wonderful."

Mr Eckel pointed to The Chaffey Trail website, which he said is a great resource for locals and tourists alike to be able to research find out about Mildura's history. It then can point them in the right direction to visit and explore some of the iconic city locations and those in surrounding areas.

"I think one of the unsung heroes of the Chaffey Trail is our Project Support Officer, Michelle Woodhouse," Mr Eckel said.

"All the social media connected to our website and Facebook comes under her

management and she deserves recognition for the wonderful job she does." The chairman also paid tribute to the Chaffey Trail's first project officer Julie Jewell.

"Julie was our first project officer and what a gem she is. She joins us here tonight with her husband Denis and we thank them both for their fine contributions," Mr Eckel said at the gala event.

"The incredible fact is that we haven't spent one advertising cent. All our promotion and information relating to the Chaffey Trail has been disseminated through social media and it has certainly reached our target market.

"Something that shouldn't be lost here, and something I am very passionate about, is when The Chaffey Trail first came about its aim was to become a tourist icon.

"It was important that what we were tasked to do in the first instance, was to take the 'folk law' out of it and actually report it as well-researched history and to that end we have poured significant resources into that and continue to do so."

Mr Eckel explained with enthusiasm that while there is a lot of talk about the Chaffey family and their contribution to the irrigation settlement, a large part the history of the development is really about the hard work the pioneers and the citizens of Mildura put in at that time.

"This is something that comes out in Henry Tankard's book 'The Settler's Lot'," Mr Eckel said. (See Page xx for the story of Mr Tankard's book)

"Those days were hard and when people came here, they didn't have air conditioning, they didn't have houses - it was tents - and we all know what Mildura is like in the summer. Those original pioneers did remarkable work.

"Importantly, what we mustn't forget it that it was really the work of Alfred Deakin, the then Victorian Water Minister, who went overseas and came across the Chaffey Brothers by chance.

"We all know the story of George Chaffey coming out to Australia at the invitation of Deakin. This led to some political controversy in parliament and sharp criticism of Alfred Deakin, whose government gave the Chaffey Brothers 250,000 acres of land to work with.

"That was a gesture that would then see George Chaffey contacting his brother W.B. Chaffey in the USA saying: 'Sell everything we have and come over'."

Barkindji Elder Uncle Brian Hunt gave the Acknowledgement to Country to open the gala event.

"I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, the Latji Latji people, and pay my respects to Elders both past and present," he said.

Following this, he recited a poem he had written about the Chaffey Brothers and the establishment of Mildura.

Later, during his address, Mr Eckel, recounted a visit he and Uncle Brian had to the ABC studios ahead of the weekend's events.

"Yesterday we were down at the ABC studios, and he recited the Chaffey poem on air, following which, the announcer asked him about how long he had been in Mildura and about his history.

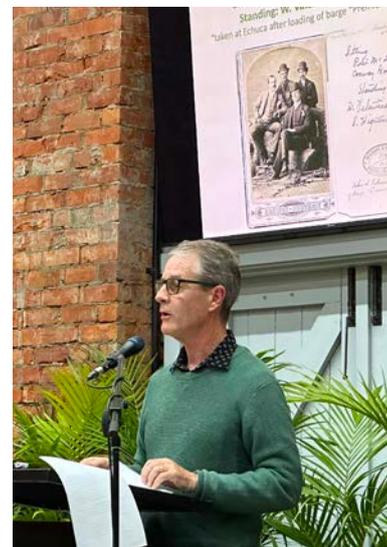
"Uncle Brian then 'rattled off' a poem about his life and history, all completely off-the-cuff, which was absolutely fabulous," he said.

Mildura Rural City Councillor, Helen Healy, who was representing Mildura Mayor Liam Wood, opened the evening and in doing so thanked Indigenous Elder Uncle Brian Hunt for his welcome to everyone and his "thoughtful poem".

"I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the country that we live, work and play on and their care of this land for thousands of years and the sharing of the country with us. I also express my sorrow for the ongoing impact and cost of that sharing," Cr Healy said.



CHAFFEY TRAIL REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS AT THE POWERHOUSE.



KEN ORCHARD MAKES HIS PRESENTATION.



AUTHOR OF MILDURA HISTORY PROJECT STUART KELLS.



CHAFFEY TRAIL REFERENCE GROUP PRESIDENT MARK ECKEL WELCOMES GUESTS TO THE MILDURA DAY EVENT AT THE POWERHOUSE.

“Tonight, in the spirit of acknowledging the traditional owners and anchoring us to the intent of the evening, I pay homage to thousands of years of passing on culture, tradition, connection and belonging through creating, keeping and sharing the stories and the songs, that tell us who we are and help us shape who we might be.” The first of the guest speakers, artist and historian, Ken Orchard, then took to the lectern to present a collection of photos taken in Mildura in the late 1800s by three different photographers — Melbourne’s Baker and Farquhar, J.W. Lindt and E.E. Oswald.

“These photographs were taken over a five-year period and they are a ‘trove’ of the very early development of the township of Mildura and all of the engineering works that were present at the time,” Mr Orchard said.

“Baker and Farquhar were commissioned by the Chaffey’s. E.E Oswald was a resident photographer in Mildura for three years, while the other photographers were just here for just a brief time. The photograph’s date from 1888 — 1892.” Mr Orchard spoke of the how the

Chaffey Brothers were renowned for their deployment of state-of-the-art engineering technology in their quest to inaugurate and develop ambitious irrigation settlements in both the United States and Australia during the 1880s.

“One of the technologies used to further the Chaffey’s aspirations to ensure the success of their ambitious irrigation scheme — and not sufficiently well recognised — was their co-opting of the medium of photography, which, during the 1880s, underwent its own technological advancements following the development and introduction of the dry-plate photographic process,” he said.

“This development, coupled with the broad-scale manufacture and distribution of photographic lantern slides, transformed the way photographic images could be made in the field and subsequently showcased to increasingly mobile and dispersed audiences both in Australia and overseas.”

Former Mildura resident, sound engineer and television producer Ian MacWilliams, then presented the Frank Jenner Collection of movies from the ‘Frames of History’

archive — a series of films of taken around Mildura over many decades. (See Page 66 for the full story).

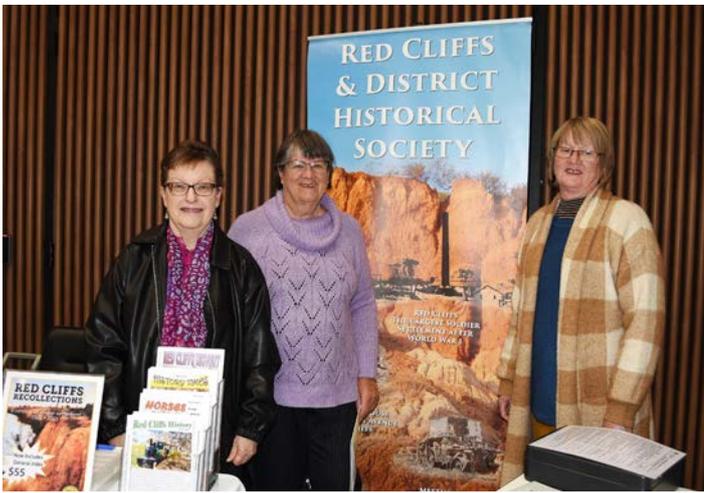
The third speaker was award-winning La Trobe University, Bundoora Campus Business School, Adjunct Professor, Stuart Kells, author of the ‘Mildura History Project’ — a book to be released next year. Professor Kells has twice won the Ashurst Business Literature Prize.

“Firstly, I just wanted to touch on why I personally have been asked to write the book,” Professor Kells said.

“My friend Professor Geoffrey Blainey said that this was an important commission and it warrants an explanation as to why me?”

“There are some specific contingent reasons as to why I have a basis for an interest and understanding and empathy with people in the region. I have been a regular visitor to Mildura for the past four or five decades. It is hard to believe but true!

“I have many friends here and have worked with local organisations including the CMA, TAFE, La Trobe University’s ‘Trust for Nature’.



RED CLIFFS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS LEANNE JARVIS, HELEN PETSCHER AND CHRIS COOK.



ROSS LAKE INTRODUCING THE Q & A SESSION.



MILDURA RURAL CITY COUNCILLOR HELEN HEALY ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE AT THE CHAFFEY FESTIVAL EVENT AT THE POWERHOUSE.



CHAFFEY TRAIL MEMBERS DENIS AND JULIE JEWELL



CHAFFEY TRAIL REFERENCE GROUP PROJECT MANAGER MICHELLE WOODHOUSE WITH PRESIDENT MARK ECKEL.

"I grew up on the river further upstream and for a while my family owned the paddle steamer P.S. Cumberland, which has Mildura connections.

"I am a historian, and I have written a number of different books as well as undertaking many other different roles.

"My main project at the moment is the writing The Mildura History book, which is being published next year by Melbourne University Publishing and I am also writing the history of La Trobe University, which will be released in 2027. So, there is a nice cross over there with La Trobe Mildura."

Professor Kells explained the background to the The Mildura History book, which has been commissioned by the Mildura Rural City Council, through Mallee Family Care and Melbourne University Press.

The book is set to cover the whole scope of the region down to Ouyen, Murrayville and Mittyack and over to the South Australian border.

"I think one of the key gaps in the previous histories — and when you remember most of the previous books written about

Mildura books were written in the 1930s and 1940s — they didn't say much about Merbein or Red Cliffs and certainly didn't say much about the growth of the region overall so it is definitely time for a new one," Professor Kells opined.

"This book will also include the post-war migration and the cultural development in the arts, food and wine and the media. "The release of the book is planned to coincide with 2025 Writers Festival in July and we may even have a launch of the book here at the Powerhouse."

Following the guest speaker's presentations, Mildura author, historian and MBPH Foundation committee chair, Ross Lake, conducted a Q&A session with the presenters.

*Heartbeat* spoke to Mr Lake at the event.

"The number of people attending this event is quite staggering. It's indicative of the amount of activity on this subject at the moment," Mr Lake said.

"Henry Tankard has written a brilliant book called 'The Settler's Lot', which is a must read and we recently had the publication of another biography of George Chaffey by Bill Dolence.

"One of the last detailed written history of Mildura was back in 1937, with the publication of Ernestine Hill's 'Water into Gold'.

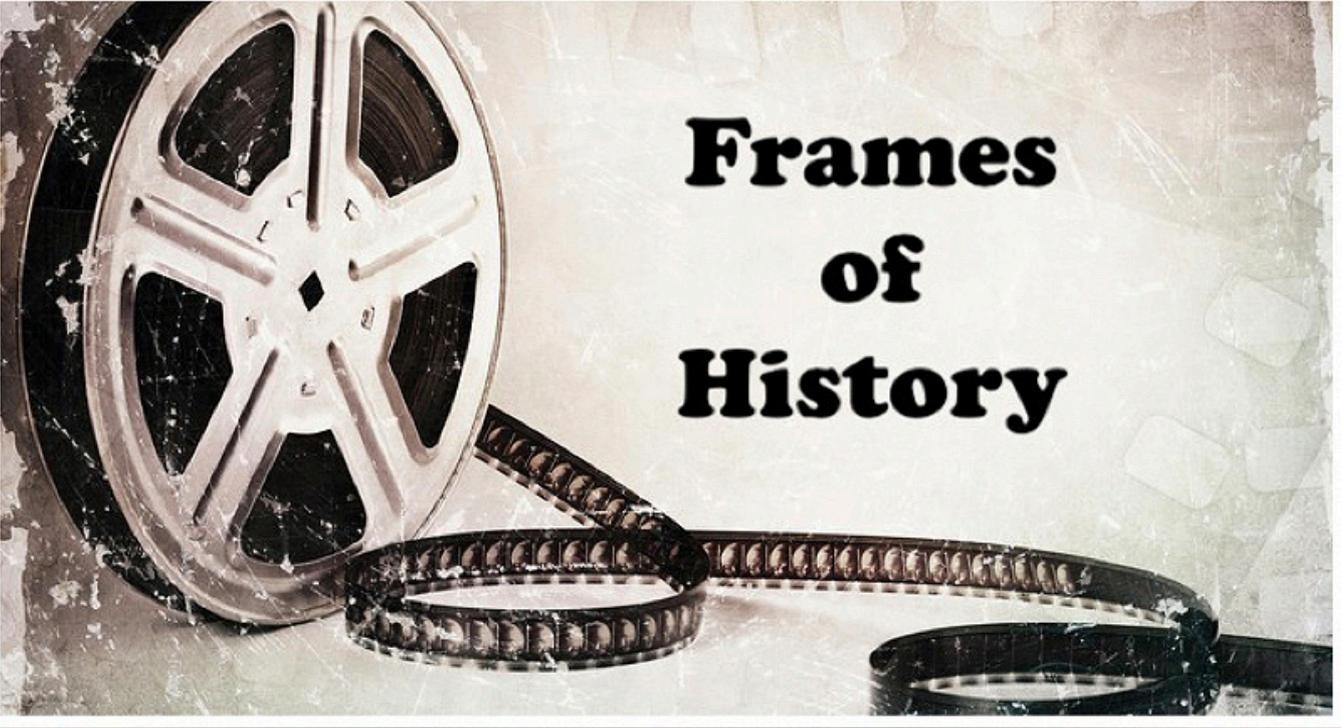
"There has other been publications since, including Alice Laphorne's 1965 'Mildura Calling' being one.

"And now thanks to Mildura Rural City Council who have provided some significant base funding, we have been able to embark with the publisher Melbourne University Press in collaboration with the author Stuart Kells on a new history of Mildura.

"Stuart has a wonderful track record in terms of the production of histories, both local and institutional and he also has a background in state government as an advisor.

"He's a wonderful character and I have been working with him for more than two years and I can't believe he's written 140,000 words that quickly. It will be a great book when it is released."

\* Resources: MRCC and The Chaffey Trail. Thanks also to Ken Orchard, Ian MacWilliams and Stuart Kells.



# Frames of History

## DISCOVERY OF A LOCAL MOVIE MAKER'S FILMS PUTS OUR HISTORY IN THE FRAME

Ex-pat Ian MacWilliams is the producer of the Mildura-based history project 'Frames of History', collecting film and videotape from Sunraysia's past to restore, preserve and publish.

NOW with more than five decades of media experience under his belt, Ian MacWilliams can reflect on his career's humble start at Mildura's STV8.

He got his grounding there before moving to Melbourne and has spent the past 50 years honing his skills in all facets of television and sound production.

These days, alongside Frames of History, Ian continues producing audio and video content for a wide range of commercial clients from his own metropolitan studios. But it is his work preserving Sunraysia's rich history that could well be his greatest achievement, and at the same time ensuring a deserved place in history for a man named Frank Jenner (dec).

Mildura Camera Club's Frank Jenner's hobby was always photography and he was also a keen cinematographer. He

spent much of his adult life capturing events and happenings in and around Sunraysia on celluloid.

After lying in suitcases for years, the first reels of his 16mm colour film were digitised by Ian's Frames of History project in 2019, bringing to life many aspects of Sunraysia's life and times from the 1940s through to the 1960s.

It turned out to be a great collaboration, and selected Frank Jenner movie clips on a wide variety of topics were the focus of a colourful and informative presentation by Ian as part of the Mildura Day celebrations on Friday, May 31, at the Powerhouse.

"I knew Ken Orchard was making a presentation of the photos of early Mildura and to have photographs being taken as far back as the late 1800s to promote the

region was quite an innovation," Ian says. "That's when I thought 'Well, what have I got that is in a similar vein?'"

"Frank Jenner for me is the star of Frames of History. He was an innovator for his time, using a 16mm movie camera to shoot mostly in colour, which was unusual in a rural area like Mildura.

"It seems he started making movies in the late 1940s. He continued through the 1950s and well into the 1960s."

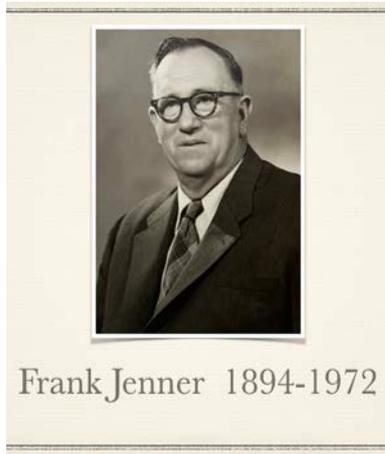
Ian was keen to point out that during this time Frank had been providing film to news outlets outside of Mildura.

"The fascinating thing is his work wasn't only for local consumption," Ian said.

"Frank was sending his films to Cinesound Movietone news and in later years supplying the ABC with news film. He was an early-day news stringer!



IAN MACWILLIAMS REVIEWING ONE OF THE MANY REELS OF FILM SHOT BY FRANK.



During his Powerhouse presentation Ian talked about the film Frank shot of the construction of the nurses' home next to the Base Hospital on the corner of Deakin Avenue and Thirteenth Street.

"An interesting discovery is the number of times in this film that Frank appeared in his role as a hospital committee member," Ian said.

This is some of the added commentary from that film Ian referenced.

"In the early 1950s cameraman Frank Jenner shot 16mm of the construction of the Mildura Nurses Home.

"During his life, Frank was a prominent figure in the organising committee of the Mildura Base Hospital and so no doubt took a special interest in this project.

"The building, comprising 149 rooms, was set to be constructed on a four-acre site next to the hospital that had, up until that time, been a fruit block.

"A gathering of people on the vacant site inspected the proposed plans one of whom was the hospital's matron at the time Rachel Wilson. The first peg was driven home and construction officially began."

Frank's footage would then go on to show some of the official ceremonies held on the site of the new nurses' home, including the laying of the foundation stone in 1951 by the Victorian Premier, The Hon. J.G.B. McDonald.

And then, in 1953, the home was officially opened by the acting Premier of Victoria, Mr Frank Galvin.

Other officials attending openings were Health minister, Mr Barry and chairman of the Victorian Hospital's Committee Mr McVilly.

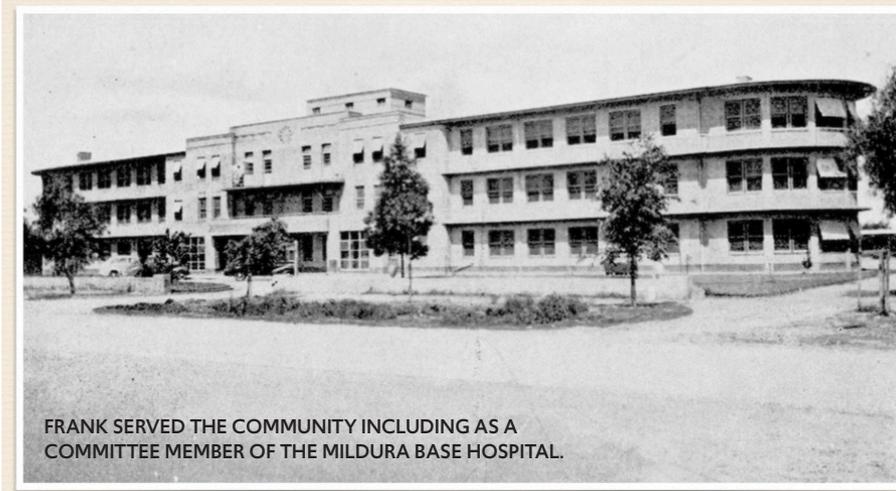
Frank's niece Barbie Cornell (nee Jenner) and her brother along with Frank's nephew Peter Jenner, were also at the screening of their uncle's film collection.

"It is just wonderful that they have been able to salvage and reproduce Uncle Frank's films," Peter said.

"When we were growing up as children, we remember enjoying the film nights that Frank would host. Every second Sunday, we would go around to his place and he would show a movie.

"And just like the picture theatre, he would always start with some other films he had, which included The Three Stooges and some Westerns."

"Tonight, we are seeing films we have never seen," Barbie added.



Ian explained stringers work as a freelancer, supplying news outlets with film or video coverage from regions where the main broadcast channels don't have crews.

"It's a practice that continues today," he added.

Ian went on to explain how, following the discovery of Frank's treasure trove of film, the decision to preserve them was made.

"After we discovered Frank's collection of films, we examined them and soon realised that we had to have them digitised," Ian said.

"It was quite a task. Easy on one hand but expensive on another...and very time-consuming. We had to sort through what we thought was worth saving.

"With the benefit of some sponsorship, we have been able to transfer many of Frank's films which covered a myriad of topics

and historical events around Sunraysia." Some of the films shown at the Powerhouse from the Jenner Collection included Queen Elizabeth's visit to Mildura in 1954; the infamous 1956 flood and another great piece of history from 1961.

"Following the Tokyo Olympics in 1960, a group of Australian Olympic medal swimmers put on an exhibition event at Mildura's Olympic swimming pool," Ian explained.

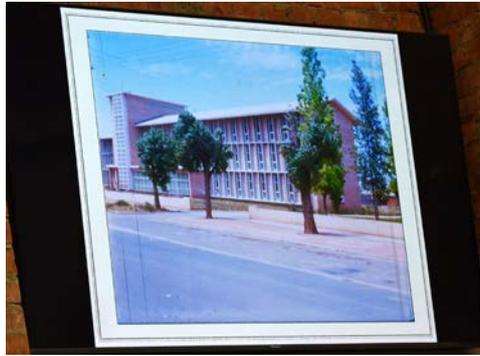
"The great freestyle champion and multiple Olympic gold medallist Dawn Fraser was no doubt the big drawcard of the day.

"Dawn held the 100-metre freestyle Olympic record for 15 years."

As Frames of History would document, Frank Jenner had a strong connection to the then Mildura Base Hospital.



THE QUEEN'S VISIT IN 1954.



THE COMPLETED MILDURA NURSING HOME.



PETER JENNER WITH HIS SISTER BARB CORNELL (NEE JENNER) THE NEWPHEW AND NIECE OF MILDURA CINEMATOGRAPHER FRANK JENNER.



FRAMES OF HISTORY PRESENTER IAN MACWILLIAMS ANSWERING A QUESTION DURING THE Q & A SESSION.



MILDURA RURAL CITY COUNCILLOR, GLENN MILNE WITH FRAMES OF HISTORY PRESENTER IAN MACWILLIAMS AT THE CHAFFEY FESTIVAL EVENT AT THE POWERHOUSE.



A RARE IMAGE OF FRANK IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA.



THE 1956 FLOODS.



THE FURGIE TRACTOR AT WORK IN WENTWORTH DURING THE 1956 FLOODS.

“This occasion has also provided an opportunity to reunite with many people we haven’t seen for some time, which has been lovely.”

Also attending the Chaffey Trail Mildura Day event was former Mildura Mayor and avid stills photographer and cinematographer Glenn Milne, who has captured some of Mildura’s more contemporary history over many decades starting in the 1970s.

“Tonight, has just been fantastic and it’s great to see all of this footage from Frames of History that has been preserved and is now actually out being viewed by the public,” Glenn said. “Ross Lake has been a fantastic support, allowing Ian to reproduce this material in a digital form.

“Both Ian and I spoke for years about losing this precious history. In time film

deteriorates and it will turn to powder one day and so we decided that it needed to be saved now and that’s what started us down this road.”

Glenn pointed out that there is a lot of other historical material still to be unearthed and preserved.

“Allied to that — post the Chaffeys — there are bound to be other photographs and also modern history that hasn’t been saved and people have forgotten about,” he said.

“We want to gather that history while people are still alive and are able to fill in the gaps.

“There is still a lot more to be done and we need to continue to document that on tape. That is what Ian is doing with his great podcasts and video interviews.”

Glenn was delighted and amazed at the number of people attending the

Powerhouse event which he said showed a keen interest in Mildura’s rich history.

“It really is a wonderful occasion, and it just shows how much interest there is in Mildura’s history,” he said.

“When you look at those films and you see the names and you look around the room, there a lot of those names still here.

“Mildura is a special place to all of us, particularly those who have got families that go back, a long way.”

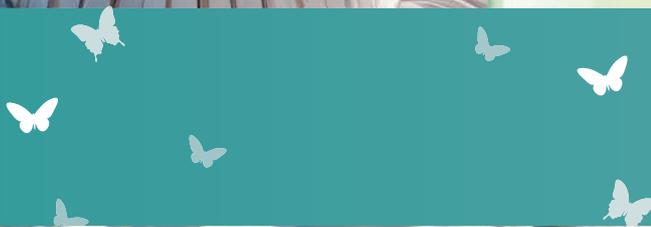
**To learn more about Frames of History and to view its priceless videos and podcasts visit [www.framesofhistory.com](http://www.framesofhistory.com).**

\* Resource material courtesy of MRCC, Chaffey Trail, Ian MacWilliams and Frames of History Frank Jenner Collection.

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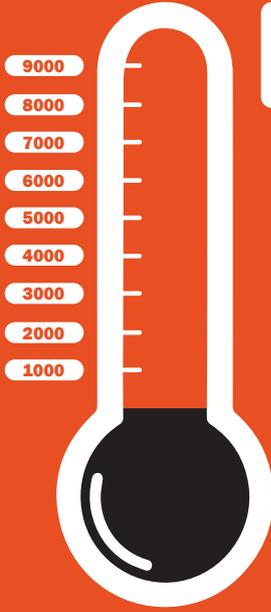
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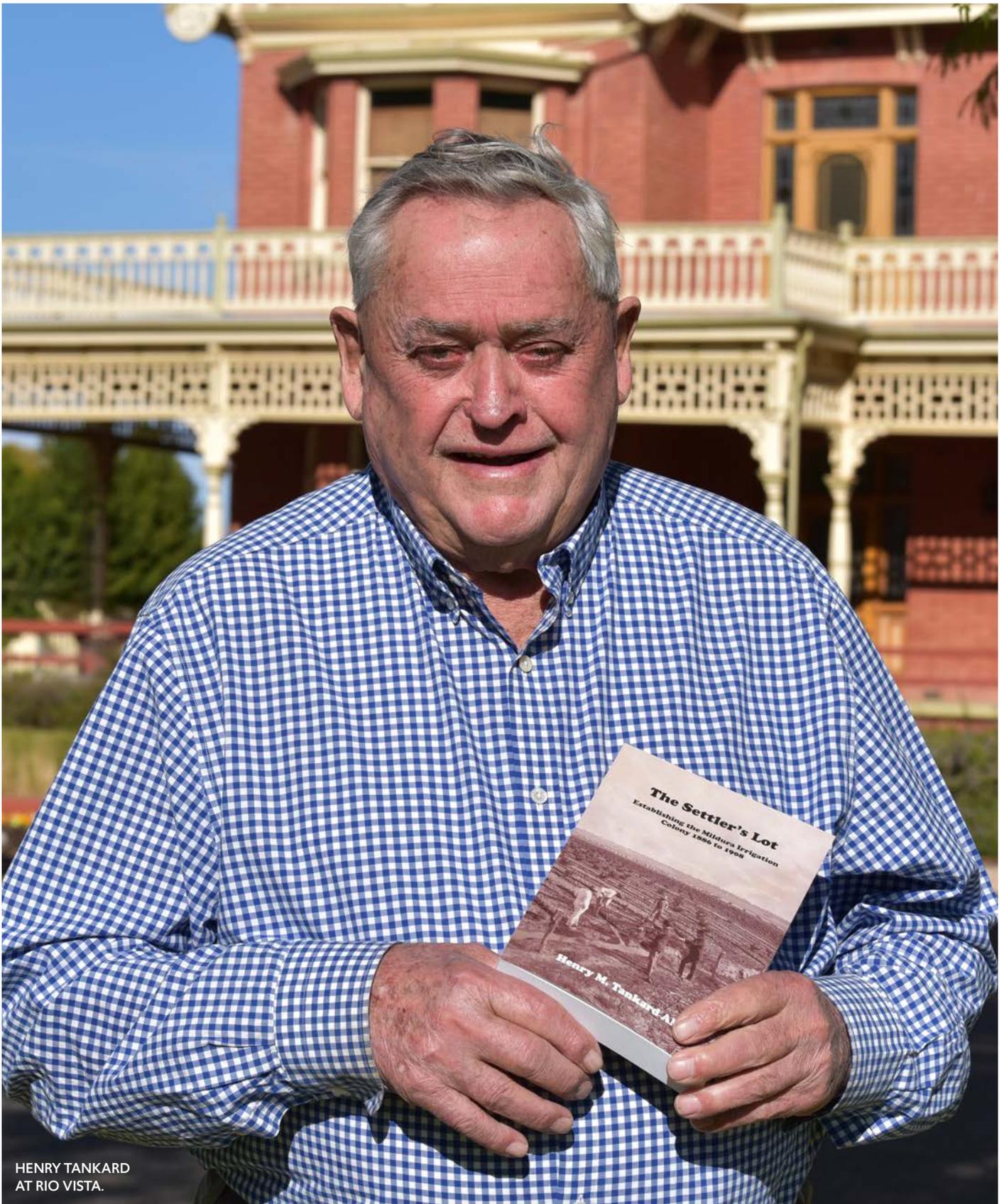
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HENRY TANKARD  
AT RIO VISTA.

# SALVATION OF THE SETTLEMENT



SETTLERS' CAMP IN MILDURA. PICTURE: VICTORIAVIC.GOV

IT took Henry Tankard a lot longer than he expected to complete 'The Settler's Lot', his definitive expose of the Mildura Irrigation Colony's early years.

The book was launched recently at an event held at the Mildura Arts Centre. It was the culmination of years of work interrupted, the 88-year-old author said, serving on numerous boards and committees, personal circumstances and shingles!

"You can't write when you've got shingles...believe me," he told *Heartbeat*. More than 130 people gathered at the Arts Centre on Thursday, June 27, for the launch of the book that details the tumultuous formative years of the colony, from boom to bust followed by the long fight back to prosperity.

Henry will need no introduction to many *Heartbeat* readers. He was the high-profile chairman of the Australian Dried Fruits Association for many years, and he was also Mildura Arts Centre Board chairman, overseeing the construction of the theatre that stands today.

"I was there when we wrecked the old theatre and built the new one," he reveals.

"It was a great board I worked with," he recalls, "and quite an exciting time as we furthered the arts in our city."

That makes it all the more appropriate that his book was launched in the arts centre foyer, a venue Henry reckons is a great setting for any number of events, not least being a book launch.

Henry was a horticulturist for "62

harvests", and his family helped pioneer the district. He can trace his ancestors' involvement here back to 1889.

"My roots are pretty deep," Henry acknowledges.

Asked about his motivation to write the book, Henry said it was his strong belief that there has been "a chapter missing in our record of history."

"Many of the writers who have dealt with this subject in the past have been visiting. They do not have the deep roots that I have here, and I felt the story of the pioneering settlers had been neglected.

"We have given all honour to the founders — the Chaffey brothers — and their great vision, but that vision came to a sticky end in the eighth year of the colony when Chaffey Brothers Ltd entered into receivership and the Settlers determined to replace The Mildura Irrigation Company with a growers Trust. "It was the Grower's Trust that saved the settlement.

"And, I think romanticism has displaced a proper respect for the great efforts that went on and the many great leaders that emerged in our community during what was a grim time.

Henry attributes those leaders with rescuing the fledgling settlement with the help of a substantial loan from government on "compassionate terms".

That loan was repaid in full by a community that relied on "co-operation, trust and a unity of purpose", he says.

The book reveals that emerging community leaders worked with W.B.

Chaffey, who had stayed on in the colony despite his financial difficulties, to fulfil a shared dream of prosperity.

"These were the critical aspects of recovery," Henry opined.

He said the Chaffey business failure and the inadequacy water distribution and the need to replant or rework trees not true to type, forced pioneering families to "pioneer for a second time" to make the colony a success.

Explaining that, Henry said the majority of the early pioneers, living in tents and rudimentary huts, thought their stay in this rough and ready accommodation was to be short-lived.

"The colony was initially booming, with plenty of work and the pioneers were expecting to build much more substantial dwelling in short order," he said.

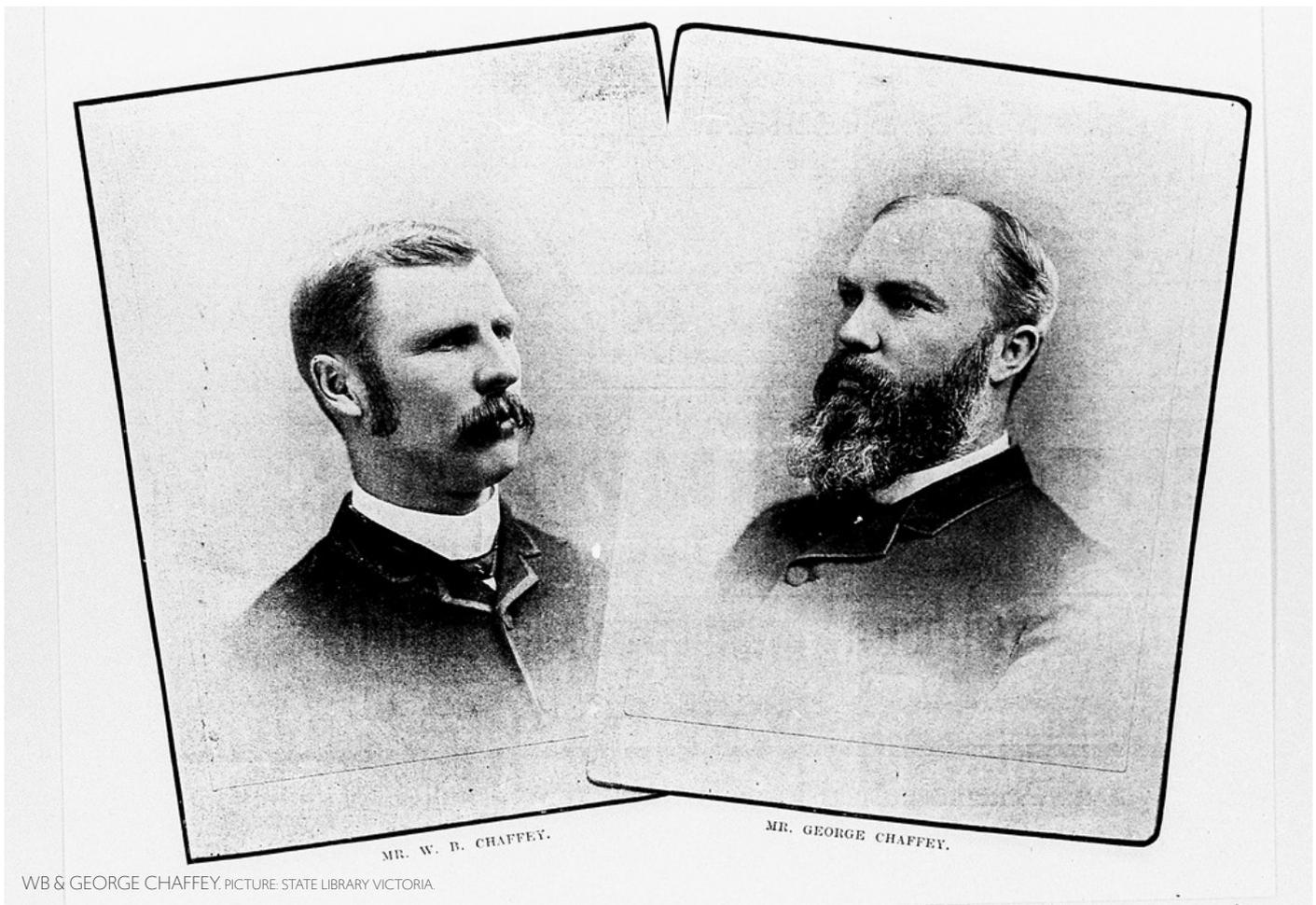
"They thought they were only living rough until they generated enough income from the first crops and also through the great work opportunities that prevailed in the first years."

But when the Chaffey's income from land sales faltered, and reality set in, numerous pioneers had to start over.

As a consequence, more than a few pioneering families "were still living in those same tents and huts well into the second and third decades of the colony," Henry said.

"It was tough."

As much time as he dedicated writing the book, Henry, with the help of his wife, Pam, spent much more time completing the necessary research.



WB & GEORGE CHAFFEY. PICTURE: STATE LIBRARY VICTORIA.

He found the First Mildura Irrigation Trust's fireproof vault to be a rich mine of information.

It was a treasure trove of original documents that included meeting minutes dating back more than a century and a mountain of 'letter books' filled with correspondence including communications with government and the public service, along with a mountain of other materials including writs and notices of unpaid debts like the money owed to the woodcutters that supplied the wood that fired the steam engines that delivered the water to the irrigated 'blocks'.

"I thought I had struck gold," Henry said. Reading the comprehensive minutes of those early meetings took Henry "on a real journey."

The minutes, he said, were an enlightening, word-for-word record of each meeting.

The extensive early records painted a picture of a colony struggling to survive and teetering on the brink of not surviving at all.

So tough was it that at times that it was Mildura's shopkeepers who became the settlement's bankers, Henry explained.

"They had a stake in trying to save the colony. They had invested heavily to set

up their businesses and therefore had a vested interest in making sure the colony survived."

So, they backed the settlers with credit and prayed that their faith would be rewarded. It was.

Henry's book also details many other people of the times that had an impact on the settlement and its struggles including politicians, civic leaders and the pioneering families.

The book details three distinct phases during the first two decades of the settlement:

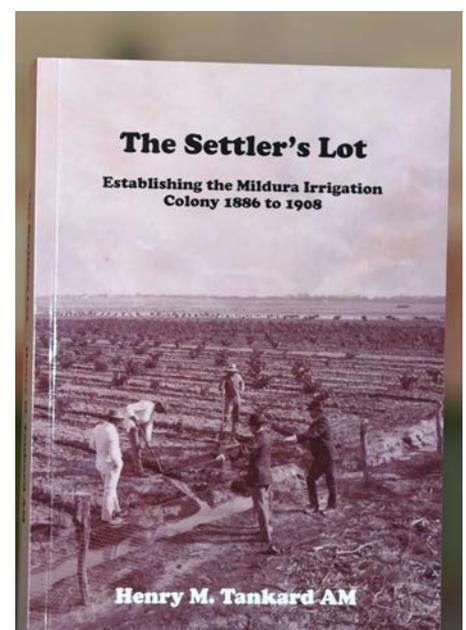
Euphoria. The feeling stimulated by convincing but deceptive promotions and bold development of irrigation infrastructure within the first four years.

Emerging limitations and accumulating debts. During the next four years financial problems prompted the Victorian Government to question if the whole Mildura experiment was worth saving? Salvation of the settlement. In the end Mildura was saved by the hardy, industrious settlers, at great cost.

What impressed Henry the most was that throughout the settlement's turbulent early days, those involved were not thinking short-term, but how they could put in place

institutions and co-operative organisations to serve Mildura well into the future. Their major institutions endured beyond the first century.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of our great city and can be purchased from Collins Booksellers in the Langtree Mall or the Mildura Visitor Information Centre on Deakin Avenue.



THE SETTLER'S LOT.



JACK WAS PROUD TO HAVE THE GREENHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS JOIN HIM AT ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS.

# A FORTUNATE LIFE

MERBEIN'S much-loved World War II veteran Jack Bradie had lived through almost all of his home town's history by the time he passed away at the age of 101, on August 5 this year, leaving a community reflecting on its past as it sadly said goodbye.

A beautiful funeral service, attended by more than 300 people was held on Wednesday, August 14, at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Merbein. The sun was shining and it was a fitting send-off for John Leslie 'Jack' Braidie, whose life was a long one, lived well. When he was 95, Jack gave a detailed interview about the Sunraysia he'd seen and created a compelling, priceless record of life in a country town. *Heartbeat* is glad to be able share it here. Rest in Peace.

The following article, written by John Dooley, was published in the *Mildura Weekly* on Friday, March 30, 2018.

## THEY DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THIS ANYMORE!

IN May this year, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Primary School in Merbein will celebrate its 90th birthday, with 95-year-old Mildura resident Jack Braidie to be among the revellers.

One of the school's two surviving original students, Jack sat down with the *Mildura Weekly* recently to recount his time at the school, and his life living and working in

Merbein. Born in January 1928, Jack was the son of Merbein Saddler Bert Braidie, who was also captain of the town's Fire Brigade, a position he held for 30 years, making him a well-known local identity. Jack's mother, Florence, was raised on Polia Station, 50km west of Pooncarie on the Darling River, and being the last born of 12, Jack said his mother's parents couldn't decide on a name for her.

"At the same time a paddle steamer named the 'Florence Annie' arrived at the

station and that's what she was named, but everyone called her Flo," Jack said.

Jack's family lived in a residence behind the Commercial Street Saddlery and it was from there, that five-year-old Jack would walk to school for the next eight years.

"I don't actually remember my first day at school, but the thing I do have strong recollection of, is that it was a Church on Sunday and a school during the week," Jack said.



JACK SITTING AT HIS 'GRUMPY'S' BAR IN HIS HOME.



MERBEIN BOWLING CLUB TEAM MEMBERS WITH JACK WHO WAS A CHAMPION BOWLER.

"The Church had a lot of long pews and on Sunday afternoon, they would be taken out and the desks put in and it then became a school for the week." Jack was barely five when he started at the school in 'bubs'.

"I remember the classroom I was in, they called it the little room, because that's where the kids in the lower grades — one to four — sat, and in Grade 5 you moved up to the big room where Sister Colette taught," he said.

"It wasn't until many years later that a new Church and school was built, and in fact I helped lay the foundation for the new church, I just can't recall when that was, the early 1950s I think."

Jack's memories of his days at the school are mostly happy ones and he recalled that he was actually three weeks late in starting his first year.

"The school only had two teachers (Sisters from the Mildura Sacred Heart Convent) Sister Colette Gleeson and Sister Bernard Smithwick and they couldn't take all the

classes," Jack recalled.

"Then Sister Terese (Margaret Yaeger) came three weeks later, and I was able to start school.

"In those days the nuns would travel from Mildura to Merbein each morning in a 'horse 'n' gig', you know, like a buggy or jinker, and eventually they had a car and drove out."

For a man of his years, Jack is remarkably fit and spritely and still has a steel-trap mind, and he recounted some anecdotes from his days at the school.

"I remember one of the kids 'pinched' Sister Colette's strap, which, if you were ever on the receiving end of on a cold morning, would sting like 'billyo'!" he said with a chuckle.

"And so, when it disappeared, she was pretty irate. She was a strict disciplinarian but a wonderful woman who had all the kid's welfare at heart.

"She tried to train us right and if you didn't adhere to her rules, she'd quickly let you know who was boss."

Jack's father was asked to make Sister Colette a new strap, and according to Jack, he made her one with a 15-inch strip of leather that was three inches wide.

"Because it was so wide in comparison to the other strap, it didn't sting when you were hit. I mean it hurt a bit but nothing like the other one, so we were glad about that!" Jack said with a smile.

At 13, Jack left school and joined the post office. "I got my Merit certificate in December 1936, and then it was time to go to high school," he said.

"School didn't start until January and so I thought I would get a job and not go back to school.

"I sat the Post Office exam and passed it. I then started work at the Merbein Post Office as a messenger boy at age 13, about to turn 14."

Jack recalled working two jobs, which he said "nowadays wouldn't be allowed".

"In those days you worked long hours, which you wouldn't be permitted to do today.

"I can't remember if it was 44 or 48 hours a week...it was one or the other," Jack said.

"The Post Master wanted someone to look after the phone exchange at night and asked me if I would. I said 'well I suppose I could' and he asked my father.

"And so I took the extra job and I was then working 114 hours a week earning 19/6 (\$1.95) for the day job, and 19/6 for the night job!"

In late 1938, Jack transferred to the Mildura Post Office as a messenger and also worked on the exchange, before being sent to Melbourne to take up a job at the old GPO on the corner of Bourke and Spencer streets, where he worked in the mail sorting section. By then he was coming up on his 17th birthday.

"The war came but I wasn't quite old enough to enlist. Then in 1941, I turned 18, and I wanted to join the Navy," Jack said.

"In those days, if you were under 21, you needed your parent's consent to sign up. A lot of people put their age up. The trouble was, when I was 18, I looked about 15!

"I got all the paperwork for my application but Mum and Dad refused to sign the papers. "Anyway a few months later, I was actually 'called-up' in August 1942, and was enlisted in the Army and commenced training. They'd brought the age forward to 18 by then."

As a member of the second AIF (Australian Imperial Force), Jack was posted to New Guinea where he saw action against the Japanese in Salamaua, Lae and also in Bougainville. At the conclusion of the war, Jack ended up in Rabaul guarding Japanese POWs and didn't return to Australia until May 1946.

When he finally returned from the war, Jack went back to Melbourne and the post office, but he wasn't really happy or settled and after 12-months, he came back to Mildura and eventually met and married his wife Nola. At the time of this article being written in 2018, Mrs Braidie was in the care of a nursing home and would pre-decease Jack.

Jack and Nola brought up six children. Nola's son Max (dec.) and Rodney and daughters Sue (dec.) and Robyn, who Jack would be a loving stepfather to. Jack and Nola's other two children were their son Robert and daughter Cheryl.

Between them Jack and Nola's children, would go onto produce 11 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild. (added to the article post 2018).

Jack said the first job he upon his return to Mildura was with the Council.

"I then got a job at Zaetta's brickworks. I only lasted three weeks there and they were the hardest weeks I ever done in my life!" Jack exclaimed.

"I then worked for my uncle on his fruit block, where I spent two years. He was a lovely man and looked after me.

"At the same time, I was working part-time at the Merbein Hotel and they asked me if I would go permanent and I did, working there for about eight years. "By this time the Merbein Club had opened and I was asked to manage it.

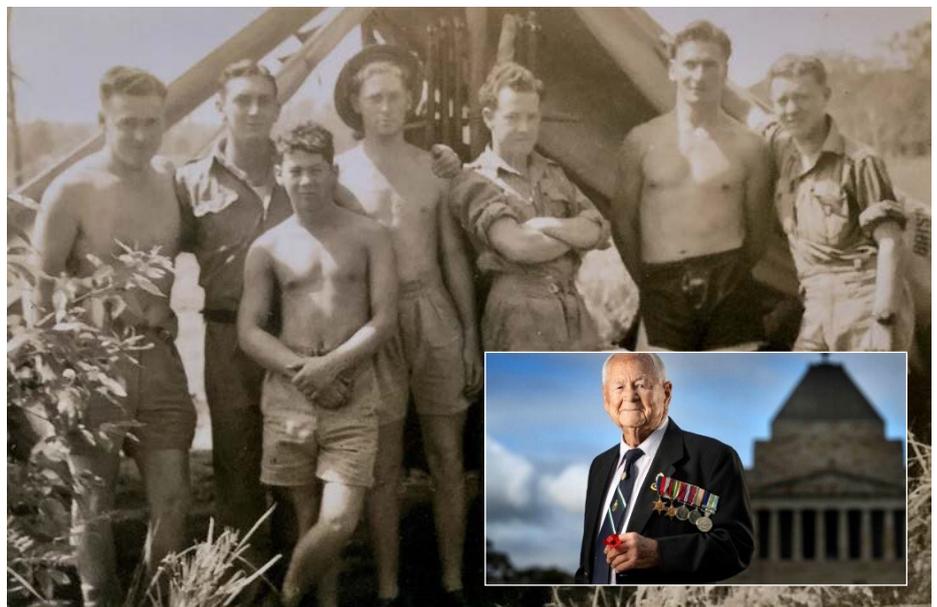
"I stayed there for 21 years before I retired in 1983."

Jack has seen the big changes that Mildura and its surrounds have undergone over the years.

"It's changed a lot from the town I used to deliver telegrams around. I used to know every street but I wouldn't know a quarter of them now," he said.

Jack is an accomplished sportsman, having played U18s football for Merbein in 1940, and said his team went through undefeated and won the flag.

"We were called the Merbein Wanderers



JACK BRAIDIE 3RD FROM THE LEFT IN NEW GUINEA WITH HIS PLATOON MATES. INSET: JACK AT THE SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE DURING ONE OF HIS ANZAC DAY VISITS.



TRUE MATES JACK SECOND FROM RIGHT WITH COMRADES AND FRIENDS LEN GLAZNER DON BAIN AND DON YATES AT ANZAC DAY 2017 IN MELBOURNE.

but once I went down to Melbourne, my footy playing days ended and then the war in a sense robbed me of my best years, when I might have excelled at sport - I'll never know," he said.

Jack is also a keen lawn bowler and still plays at least once a week at the Merbein Bowling Club, which he has been a member of for more than 35 years and is the district's oldest active bowler. Jack's numerous bowling trophies take pride of place on his 'Grumpy's' bar (identified by a name plate) but he's modest about his bowling prowess.

"I'm not going to skite but let's just say I can hold my own with a lot of the young'uns but I'm not a champion, I'm as good as average," he said.

As ANZAC Day approaches, Jack will be getting organised to travel to Melbourne for the march, something he has done most years, joining his four remaining wartime mates who still attend.

"God willing, I'll be going down. There's only four of us left now," Jack said looking

at the photo taken of him with his mates at the ANZAC Day commemoration at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne last year (2017).

"After the war, our reunions used to have 100 or more fellows attending, last year there were just four of us. There were two on walking sticks, one in a wheelchair and me hobbling!"

These days Jack and his mates aren't able to walk the route of the march, with the Army and RACV providing vehicles for elderly veterans.

"We've been in an army truck one year, but nowadays we mostly ride in cars provided by the vintage car club," he said. "They've got Mustangs, Bentleys and Rolls Royces - you name it - and as we pass the crowds, they applaud loudly but I reckon they're clapping the bloody cars not us!" (Sadly, all four men are now deceased).

**Vale Jack Braidie — your passing leaves an indelible mark on the region.**

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#### Corporate Golf Day

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### BECOME A MBPH FOUNDATION COMMUNITY AND MEDIA PARTNER



CHILDREN TAKING PART IN TRADITIONAL DANCE.



# NAIDOC WEEK 2024

THE COURTYARD AT MILDURA BASE PUBLIC HOSPITAL (MBPH) WAS THE VENUE FOR OUR ANNUAL NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATION

THE courtyard at Mildura Base Public Hospital (MBPH) was the venue for our annual NAIDOC Week celebration.

Organised by the hospital's Aboriginal Health Unit, the event was held on Thursday, July 11.

As always, Sharon Johnson and her team did a wonderful job to make the event a great success.

Highlights from the colourful event included a Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony, traditional dance performances, poems from Uncle Brian Hunt and a magnificent lunch provided by the fabulous MBPH catering team. The menu included rabbit bites, Barramundi sushi, braised kangaroo tacos and a barbecue featuring lamb chops and assorted sausages accompanied by all the trimmings.

Here are some of the images our photographer captured on the day:



AUNTY BARB WITH UNCLE BRIAN.





MBPH ABORIGINAL HEALTH UNIT CEO SHARON JOHNSON.



MBPH ACTING CEO MATTHEW DUKES' WELCOME ADDRESS.



AUNTY BARBARA AND FRIEND.



SMOKING CEREMONY.



TRADITIONAL DANCE.



MBPH STAFF PREPARED A BEAUTIFUL LUNCH.



YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE DANCE GROUP.



YOUNG BOY PLAYING THE DIDGERIDOO.



INDIGENOUS DANCERS TAKING PART IN THE SMOKING CEREMONY.



JOAQUIN LEAL COMPETING IN A BACKSTROKE EVENT. RIGHT: JOAQUIN AFTER SWIMMING IN THE SA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP 2024 REPRESENTING HIS CLUB.



# JOAQUIN'S IN THE SWIM OF THINGS

He was born in Chile, but Joaquin Leal is now a Mildura swimming star on the rise. The 14-year-old is the son of oncologist Dr Jose Leal and his wife Carolina, also a doctor.

Joaquin joined the Mildura Swimming Club soon after arriving in our city early last year. His 13-year-old sister, Mercedes, is also a member and his younger brother, Federico 'Freddie' 6, looks like he will be joining his siblings and swimming for Mildura in the future.

The Reader's Digest version of the family's back story is that after completing his medical training in Chile in 2014, Dr Leal worked as a consultant, particularly treating lung cancer patients and urological malignancies in hospitals.

Wanting an international experience he set his sights on Australia. Dr Leal and his family, including then eight-year-old Joaquin, arrived in Melbourne in 2019.

Dr Leal went to work at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, but when it wasn't possible to obtain a full-time role as a qualified oncologist there, he began seeking other opportunities, particularly in regional areas.

An opportunity arose in our city and he recalls: "I spoke to my family about whether they wanted to move to Mildura. It is very different from Melbourne and completely

different to our situation in Chile, but we decided to give it a go."

From that point on the wheels were in motion — for Joaquin's arrival in our region and his Mildura Swimming Club membership.

He had already been swimming competitively with a Melbourne aquatic club and his parents had made contact with the Mildura Club before arriving here.

Joaquin is now a Year 8 student at St Joseph's College and to give some idea of his credentials as an up and coming talent in the pool the recently released Victorian Top 10 Rankings for the 2023/24 Long Course Season (summer) have him ranked second in the State for Boys 13 200m Butterfly; 8th for Boys 13 100m Butterfly; 8th for Boys 13 200m Individual Medley, and 9th in the State for Boys 13 400m Freestyle.

He has also acquitted himself well in the pool during school swimming carnivals, qualifying to compete at the State level.

Joaquin rates his butterfly as his strongest stroke and breaststroke as his weakest.

Learning to swim is almost obligatory for youngsters in Australia. Our weather

and penchant for water-based sporting and recreational pursuits ensuring it is a necessary life skill.

It's not like that in Chile, and competitive swimming has not been a hereditary family pursuit, Joaquin explained.

He was at a bit of a loss to explain how he came to swim rather than play soccer — Chile's most prominent sport.

"I think my dad's dad was a swimmer... maybe that's where it comes from?"

Regardless, his parents ensured he learned to swim at an early age and he swam competitively in his home country before arriving in Australia.

And the recent coverage of the Olympics in Paris has whetted his appetite to one day stand on the podium in that ultimate sporting arena with a medal proudly around his neck.

And outside of swimming will he one day follow mum and dad into medicine?

"We'll have to see how I go," he says, acknowledging the medical path can one of the hardest courses to get into and generally requiring the highest levels of academic achievement.



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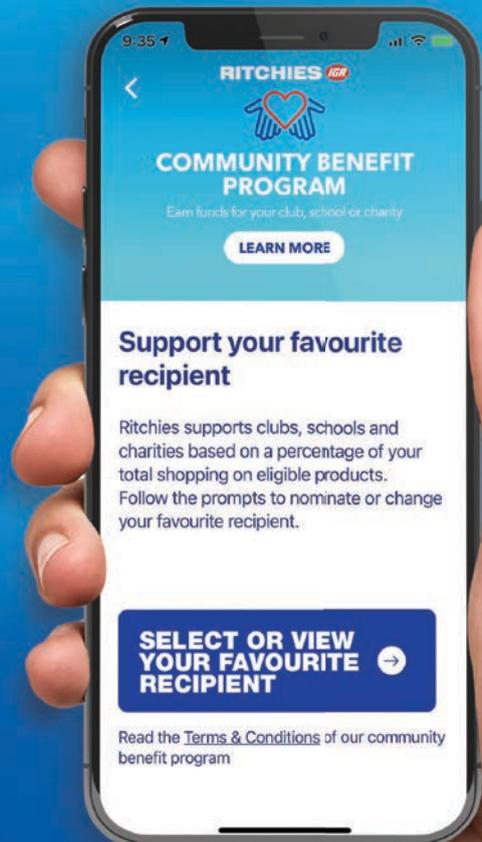
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- Seller, Helen

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