

# Brown Hill Community Newsletter

## Edition 46, Summer 2026

*A project of the Brown Hill Progress Association supported by the Brown Hill Community Partnership.  
We are proud to walk this land with the Wadawurrung people and all other First Nations people.*

### Line Dancing is in step in Brown Hill



Line Dancers, left to right: Cheryl, Trish, Ella, Cheryl and Annette. Image supplied.

#### El Dorado Line Dance - a truly special community

Each Monday and Thursday morning at 9.00 am at the Brown Hill Community Hall, you might hear the sound of up to 200 people taking part in line dancing.

Line dancer, Sandy, is in her early 60s and first joined in while recovering from breast cancer, looking for something that would give her joy, movement and connection. Sandy says, "I've been dancing with the beautiful Ellabella for several years and it has been one of the most rewarding parts of my life. From the very first class, Ella was welcoming, patient, inclusive and a brilliant teacher, creating a warm, non-judgemental space where everyone feels like they belong."

Sandy continues, "Line dancing ticks all the boxes - great music, movement for the body, memory for

the brain and wonderful social connection. No experience is needed, just a love of dance. Through these classes I've made some of my closest friends and found a truly special community."

Instructor, Ella Young, has been taking classes in line dancing since 2013 at the Brown Hill Community Hall.

As a girl Ella was involved in Irish dancing in the Ballarat District. Following a performance at the Ballan Festival, she decided to start line dancing classes in 1995. She has continued taking classes two days a week and the enthusiasm shown by the dancers proves that she is a winner.

Line dancer, Darryl, who is in his mid-60s says, "Ella's classes are friendly, stimulating and fun for old

and young, men and women alike."

Darryl explains, "The Monday class is a good way to start the week and we go on Thursday as well. Great exercise for both mind and body, in a comfortable atmosphere."

The age groups start at 'young at heart' up to the oldest dancer who is 97 years young. The dancers say that dancing helps them to connect with others, improves their social lives and helps their general well-being.

Line dancer, Eve, says: "I'm a women in my 40s and absolutely love Thursday dance classes. The community is very positive and Ella is patient with the Basic Beginners."

The dancers come from all over Ballarat and District and give performances at nursing homes, including Nazareth House, from time to time. While dancing at the Brown Hill Community Hall they sometimes fundraise for causes such as cancer research.

The first time someone attends a line dancing lesson with Ella it is free of charge. After that classes are \$5.00 each or three for \$10.00.

The Brown Hill Community Hall is good for line dancing - it is a good size and has a wonderful floor, good acoustics and good lighting.

"What a wonderful experience for everyone involved in our line dancing classes held by Ella. From beginners to experienced dancers everyone has the opportunity to learn and enjoy themselves in a..."

...continued p.21



*We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people and their ancestors who have been custodians of the Ballarat area for thousands of years performing age-old cultural ceremonies, celebrations and traditions. We acknowledge the Ballarat Aboriginal community, many of whom were forcibly removed from their families during the Stolen Generations decades and brought to Ballarat. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past and present.*

## About the Brown Hill Community Newsletter

This publication is a community project of the Brown Hill Progress Association. It is published quarterly.

Our volunteer team:

**Editor:** Sarah Greenwood-Smith

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**Editorial Support:** Anne Rowland, John O'Brien and Peter Morton.

**Accounts Manager:** Brendan Stevens

**Social Media:** Ellie Thacker and Sherene Mounier.

Over 20 wonderful local volunteers distribute the newsletter across Brown Hill with additional copies available at local businesses and community hubs. Electronic copies are available on the Brown Hill Online Community Hub:

[brownhill.vic.au/newsletter](http://brownhill.vic.au/newsletter) or you can subscribe online or by emailing us: [newsletter@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:newsletter@brownhill.vic.au).

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Contributions are welcome from the Brown Hill community. Articles can be emailed to: [newsletter@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:newsletter@brownhill.vic.au) or delivered in hard copy to the reception desk at Caledonian Primary School, Thompson Street, Brown Hill during school term and school hours.

Edition 47 (Autumn) expressions of interest for articles are due by **Friday 17 April 2026** and confirmed articles and images by **Friday 24 April**. Please read the editorial policy regarding contributions before submitting an article or advertising: [brownhill.vic.au/newsletter](http://brownhill.vic.au/newsletter).

The views expressed or information provided in this publication are not necessarily those of the Brown Hill Community Newsletter Committee or the Brown Hill Progress Association, including any officers, members, agents or contractors.

Layout using Canva.

Occasionally, some content included in our newsletters may be upsetting for some readers. If you need support, contact numbers are available online: [brownhill.vic.au/new-to-brown-hill/need-some-support](http://brownhill.vic.au/new-to-brown-hill/need-some-support)

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Brown Hill Progress Association meet at the Brown Hill Cricket Club on the second Wednesday every second month at 7.00 pm. In 2026, meetings will be on 8 April, 10 June, 12 August, 14 October (AGM) and 9 December. All welcome.

[bhpa@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:bhpa@brownhill.vic.au)

[brownhill.vic.au](http://brownhill.vic.au)

PO Box 6008, Brown Hill, 3350

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**69 Water Street,  
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# Welcome

# Our local crossing supervisors

This edition marks 10 years of the Brown Hill Community Newsletter! The first edition was 6-pages, published in May 2016 and delivered by Australia Post. It is now usually 20- to 24-pages and 2850 copies are hand-delivered across Brown Hill four times each year by our amazing team of volunteers.

This important community project was started by a group of local people who participated in the City of Ballarat's 'Engaging Communities Program' (also known as the 'Brown Hill Partnership'). Looking for a host, they approached the Brown Hill Progress Association, which took on the project and has kept it going for 46 editions!

We are super proud of this community newsletter and believe it is important for community connection and a sense of belonging. It has received great feedback over the years and has been recognised with several awards from the Community Newspapers Association of Victoria (CNAV).

We need more volunteers to help create each edition. Want to find out more? Please contact us (email below) and we will get in touch.

*Sarah Greenwood-Smith,*  
Volunteer Editor,  
Brown Hill Community Newsletter  
and Directory Committee  
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[brownhill.vic.au/newsletter](http://brownhill.vic.au/newsletter)



Crossing Supervisor,  
Barry. Image supplied.

On my morning walks with local parents and children I have been very impressed by the two Crossing Supervisors at Caledonian Primary School. So, I thought I would have a little bit of a chat with Sue (Thompson Street entrance) and Barry (Water Street entrance).

I spoke to them both about their duties and responsibilities. Sue has been on the job for the past three years; Barry has been on the job for the past eight years.

Each morning - rain, heat, hail or snow - both Barry and Sue safely escort the students, parents and carers over the two crossings at the school and again in the afternoon. Both of them must have good memories as I have observed them addressing the children by their first names. What an effort!

Now a little bit about them. Sue is a great grandmother and she spent a good part of her life looking after children in residential care. She told me that she wears snow boots and a



Crossing Supervisor,  
Sue. Image supplied.

heated jacket to keep warm. During the recent school holidays Sue travelled to Vietnam. When asked what that was like she replied - hot!

Barry is a grandfather and was a bricklayer by trade, so he is used to working outside and gets well rugged up for this job!

The flashing 40km sign installed in Water Street has helped to slow the traffic. Both crossings are very busy with road traffic - cars, buses, trucks etc. Unfortunately, both Barry and Sue have had close calls because of inattentive drivers and people parking illegally as they drop their children off.

Please play your part and make sure that everyone is safe.

Thanks to all the Crossing Supervisors at all schools. Congratulations - a job well done.

*John O'Brien, President,*  
Brown Hill Progress Association



**MAKING BACK-TO-SCHOOL EASIER**

## HELPING FAMILIES WITH COST-OF-LIVING

The Victorian Government is helping make it a little easier, with support like free glasses for eligible students, free dental care through Smile Squad, Breakfast Club programs, and changes this year that mean uniform items from the waist down don't need logos, helping reduce costs.

**Michaela Settle MP**  
Member for Eureka

[michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:michaela.settle@parliament.vic.gov.au) 5331 7722 /MichaelaSettleMP



# Museum Summer Fun

Discover the history behind Victoria's most fascinating objects at **Melbourne Museum**.

Explore a series of scientific curiosities at **Scienceworks**.

Share in someone else's culture at **Immigration Museum**.

Looking to savour the rest of summer?  
Make a trip out to a **Museums Victoria** museum!

Children 16  
and under  
go free



# Brown Hill Progress Association



## From the Secretary's Desk

Well, what a summer we have had. A proper run of hot, dry days and very warm nights. Some of us older community members would even say just like the old days. Anyway, our local area has been lucky enough to have not been touched by fires but please remain vigilant as March can still carry plenty of heat.

It has been great to see the crowds at the Splash Park. Kids and adults alike cooling off well into the evening on many nights. I have been moving soaker hoses in the late evening and early morning to try to keep the new turf green and soft underfoot. It seems to have held up well so far. It will be great to see more improvements to the facility with seating, BBQ and shade structure to all happen over the winter months.

Several of our Brown Hill Progress Association (BHPA) crew were kept busy on the 'catastrophic day' in mid-January, clearing away branches, bark and tons of leaves. We had planned to give out Zooper Doopers to the kids, but wisely families headed home when the wind really picked up in the late afternoon. We did manage to give



**Local school children safely crossing Humffray Street North at the new Pedestrian Refuge near Thompson Street. Photographer: Louise Jones.**

plenty of these frozen treats out at parkrun and at the Splash Park on finer days.

I really want to congratulate all the families who have used the Splash Park for their respect and care for the facility. I have probably walked around the park twenty times over the summer watering and have not had to pick up any rubbish. Everyone has taken the rubbish with them or placed it in the bin. What a great example for the kids as well. This is the way communities should treat facilities provided and take pride and ownership in the whole reserve. It is an asset others envy.

Its also great to see the new Pedestrian Refuge finished in the middle of Humffray Street North at the Thompson Street intersection. BHPA and Caledonian School have been pushing for a safer crossing point for everyone, including kids

and their supervising adults to cross this busy road on their way to and from school or kindergarten each day. At least they can now move to the centre and reassess the next move across without standing on a white line being brushed by vehicles.

I was looking over the Brown Hill Community Online Hub this week and realise that some of the contact information is at least two years old. BHPA is as guilty as anyone in not keeping information current. We will make it a priority to update our information and could other groups or organisations please let us know what has changed in their listing to make the site up-to-date and more useful. Just send an email to [bhpa@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:bhpa@brownhill.vic.au) and we will do our best to act quickly.

Cheers, Brendan.  
*Brendan Stevens, Secretary,  
Brown Hill Progress Association  
0409 018 867, [bhpa@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:bhpa@brownhill.vic.au)*



## Delivering for our community!

- Cheaper healthcare with more bulk billing
- 5 per cent deposits for first homebuyers
- Cutting student debt by 20 per cent
- Cheaper PBS medicines
- More tax cuts for every taxpayer (from 1 July 2026)



Authorised by Catherine King MP, 6 Lydiard St Nth, Ballarat, VIC 3350

**Catherine King MP** FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BALLARAT

*Standing up for our community!*

# Glen Park Country Fire Authority

## From the Captain's Desk

The volunteers at Glen Park Fire Brigade have had an exceptionally busy few months. Our activities commenced with a festive visit from Santa in December, during which our members escorted Santa around, spreading Christmas cheer and distributing lollies to children of all ages.

Following the holiday season, our members have been actively responding to call-outs both locally and across the state. We attended the Streatham and Horsham fires and deployed as far as Tallangatta, near the NSW border in North East Victoria, with our members being flown from Ballarat airport. In addition to battling grass and scrub fires, our team has also responded to house fires, car fires and incidents involving children locked in vehicles. Despite the demanding call-outs, our members have consistently participated in weekly training sessions, walked through the water treatment plant at White Swan Reservoir and organised a working bee to clean our station.

Please remember that the fire season is far from over. It is crucial to keep your house and surroundings clear of fire hazards and debris. Fire restrictions remain in place across our region. If you are uncertain about what activities are



**A Glen Park Fire Brigade Volunteer in action. Image supplied.**

permitted during the restriction period and on days of Total Fire Ban, please visit [cfa.vic.gov.au/can](http://cfa.vic.gov.au/can) for detailed information.

Additionally, we are actively seeking new members to join our brigade. If firefighting is not your preference there are numerous other roles where you can assist, including

fundraising, gardening, radio operations and many more. For further information, please visit the CFA website, [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au), or contact me on **5334 5524**.

Stay safe and vigilant.

*Tracey Webber  
Captain  
Glen Park Fire Brigade*

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# Fire Aware: Our Bushfire Season has a long way to go

*ABC NEWS: "On January 9, the Ballarat region in Victoria sweltered as the mercury edged past 40 degrees Celsius. Fires burned in the nearby towns of Skipton, Streatham, Carranballac, Bamganie, Meredith and Mount Mercer. Two hundred and ninety-one warnings were issued on the VicEmergency app, the most ever in a single day."*

We were lucky - how long will our luck hold out?

Did you take the opportunity to test-run your Bushfire Plan on what you would do **if** a fire started in the Creswick State Forest? This is the most likely starting point for a fire to threaten our Brown Hill urban fringe.

Associate Professor Kevin Tolhurst has already provided a risk assessment for the different areas of Brown Hill. For example, some of his takeaways for the estates north of the freeway were: "On a severe or catastrophic fire day a fire starting 20 to 40 kilometres to the north of the area i.e. Clunes/Creswick, would result in a large fire causing spot fires throughout the area. Newer estates may have underground power. However, it is highly likely for powerlines outside of the estates to fall down, cutting power and/or trees going down which could block access to and from the estates. This includes access for residents and emergency services..."



In 2017 the Brown Hill Progress Association identified to Council that Springs Road and Daylesford Road are major, and sometimes the only, evacuation routes available and can become heavily congested in an emergency. Nothing has been done to address this issue.

The Council does have a Municipal Emergency Management Plan **but** there is not a specific, single, publicly advertised, step-by-step "evacuation route map" solely for the suburb of Brown Hill. Instead, residents are expected to follow a personal bushfire survival plan and, during an emergency, rely on information from VicEmergency - which is not particularly appropriate for a suburban fringe area of a city, such as Brown Hill.

If you have a problem with this, email me and let me know via email (details at the end of the article).

To understand the bushfire risk for Brown Hill and how best to prepare access the Brown Hill Community Hub - Be Bushfire Ready page - [brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-are-you-bushfire-ready](http://brownhill.vic.au/brown-hill-are-you-bushfire-ready), also accessible through this QR code:



For more detailed information access the Brown Hill Community FireAware Network website - [pleanetwork.com.au/brown-hill-community-fireaware-network](http://pleanetwork.com.au/brown-hill-community-fireaware-network), also accessible through this QR code:



*Hazen,*  
*Brown Hill FireAware Network*  
*Coordinator*  
*[hmc433@hotmail.com](mailto:hmc433@hotmail.com)*



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# Ballarat Wholefoods Collective

We have started 2026 with a bang!

We had a members' day to deep clean and reorganise our shop at Barkly Square, a fresh start to the year with a focus on organisation and big impact!

We feel and see the chaos happening everywhere in the world and it is overwhelming. It can make you feel helpless and powerless, but we invite everyone to join our hope. At the Wholefoods collective our antidote to despair is action (and community!!). Now more than ever, we need to come together as a community. Real change is where you eat, where you shop, who you support. Change is a practice, a daily discipline, every time you shop. Change requires refusal to participate in unethical systems and food is one of the most powerful daily refusals we have. This is why we support small, local and community-owned farms and businesses. Our aim is to keep the dollars circulating locally. We know where our food comes from and who grew it. Our focus is on consciously consuming and supporting one another. This principle can be applied in any way / where you shop. There are many wonderful locally-owned and operated businesses in Ballarat doing great things for people and planet. Let's make this the year our people-power makes real change happen.

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Located at Barkly Square, Ballarat East, we open during Victorian school terms: Thursdays, 9.00 am - 1.00 pm and 5.00 - 6.30 pm, also Saturdays, 9.00 am-12.00 noon.

In addition to our shop, we also run regular workshops on topics ranging from making preserves to crafts, plus we run a quarterly pre-loved fashion sale!



A range of food is available at Ballarat Wholefoods Collective. Image supplied.

Our next workshop is 'Beginners Crochet' on Saturday 28 February at 10.00 am. Book tickets through our website or social media.

The next Pre-Loved Fashion Sale runs from 11.00 am - 3.00 pm on Saturday 28 February, at Barkly Square. We fill the building with stalls offering a huge range of pre-loved clothing at affordable prices. You can come along as a shopper or book a stall at future events. Stalls are \$10.00.

Details about our collective and events can be found on our website: [ballaratwholefoodscollective.com.au](http://ballaratwholefoodscollective.com.au) and also on our Facebook page.

*Grace Darke*  
Ballarat Wholefoods Collective  
[ballaratwholefoodscollective@gmail.com](mailto:ballaratwholefoodscollective@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/ballaratwholefoodscollective](https://facebook.com/ballaratwholefoodscollective)  
[ballaratwholefoodscollective.org](http://ballaratwholefoodscollective.org)  
Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street,  
Ballarat East

For those of you not familiar with our collective this is a poem written by one of our members which sums us up:

*Bring your jars and join the collective  
Wholefoods and ethics is our objective*

*Our members are the core of how we run  
We all help out while having fun*

*Refills, packaged, savoury and sweet  
Our food is hands down the best you'll eat*

*Suppliers and farmers are locally sourced  
Our environment and communities reinforced*

*Organic, sustainable, plastic free  
Moral and ethical goods are we*

*Fighting climate change and supporting our community  
Together our impact for change and unity*

*We may be small, but our impact is great  
Healthy people and homes we create.*

Written by Grace Darke.

# Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group



Volunteers planting at Ditchfield Reserve. Image supplied.

## Join the action at Ditchfield Reserve

Next time you're at Ditchfield Reserve, pause to admire the fantastic growth of the 1300 indigenous trees, shrubs and groundcovers the Brown Hill community helped to plant last year in the gully - many are now well visible above the tree-guards.

Over the next few months we'll continue our monthly brief working bees at the site so join us if you can - we'll be pulling weeds, straightening stakes and maybe even starting to remove a few guards. So BYO gardening gloves and a hammer.

### Working Bees

Join our Working Bees on Thursday 12 March and 9 April from 10.00 am - 11.00 am. Just turn up or contact Stephanie for more information (contact details in the next column).

### Planting Days

There are also several planting days scheduled so, once again, grab a friend and join in if you can. You'll meet new friends and enjoy the satisfaction of restoring the original vegetation.

Plantings Days will be on Thursdays 30 April and 7 May and Sunday 14 June from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm. Please register at [trybooking.com/CZDAG](http://trybooking.com/CZDAG) or use the QR code.

P.10



Please wear long trousers and sturdy shoes and dress appropriately for the weather for all Landcare events. We will cancel if there is a Total Fire Ban, Extreme Fire Danger or strong winds.

*Stephanie Davison*  
Wattle Flat Pootilla Landcare Group  
0437 071 317  
[wfplcg@gmail.com](mailto:wfplcg@gmail.com)

## Gardens for Wildlife

Gardens for Wildlife Ballarat have partnered with the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House to offer a series of events which celebrate our local flora and fauna. We've already held popular walks in Woookarung and Creswick Forests and a packed-out propagation workshop.

Join us for two presentations and discussions (see next column for details) and a hands-on Nestbox building workshop with Ballarat Community Men's Shed in April.

Visit the Backyard Biodiversity webpage or scan the QR code to see details of these and other events on the horizon and register for those that appeal to you. Bookings are essential as places are limited.

### Wildlife by Design: Creating a Garden That Gives Back

Want a garden that buzzes with life, sings with birdsong, and supports the creatures that call your backyard home? Join us for an inspiring presentation on how to choose the right plants and structure your garden to become a thriving habitat for wildlife. Whether you have a sprawling yard or a modest balcony, you'll leave with practical ideas and ecological insights to make your garden a haven for biodiversity.

**Where:** Barkly Square, Ballarat East

**Date:** Saturday 28 February

**Time:** 10.30 am - 12.00 noon

### Local Native Plants for Ballarat Gardens

Get to know our flowering neighbours at this presentation that introduces you to some of the beautiful small trees, shrubs and groundcovers that grow naturally in the forests and grasslands around Ballarat. We'll focus on the plants that look great and grow well in gardens, learning how to recognise them, how to grow and care for them, and how to use them in your garden to show them off at their best.

**Where:** Barkly Square, Ballarat East

**Date:** Saturday 21 March

**Time:** 10.30 am - 12.00 noon



[gardens4wildlifeballarat@gmail.com](mailto:gardens4wildlifeballarat@gmail.com)

# Justice of the Peace

Accessing a Justice of the Peace (JP) in or close to the Brown Hill area is easy, with several walk-in signing stations available throughout the week. These stations provide free of charge services for witnessing and certifying documents. No appointment is required.

## What is a Justice of the Peace (JP)?

In Victoria, a JP is a volunteer appointed by the Governor in Council to provide free, independent, and authorised witnessing services to the community and is trained to act as an independent and objective witness to documents used for official or legal purposes. They can assist you by:

- attesting the execution of a document.
- witnessing a statutory declaration.
- witnessing an affidavit for use in court.
- certifying true copies of an original document.
- certifying a person's identity.

## Where Can You Find a JP?

- Ballarat Police Station – Ballarat Central: Monday to Friday, 11.00 am to 6.00 pm. Walk-in service.
- Stockland Wendouree Shopping Centre, near the food court, opposite Coles: Available Tuesdays, 10.00 am to 2.00 pm.
- Barkly Square, Ballarat East: Thursdays, 12.00 pm to 1.30 pm.

## Need a Specific JP?

If you have a large number of documents or prefer to book, you can search for individual JPs by suburb, postcode, or surrounding areas. For a full list of JPs and signing locations, visit: [justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/legal-assistance/find-a-justice-of-the-peace-jp](http://justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/legal-assistance/find-a-justice-of-the-peace-jp)



**BIG BUILD  
ROADS**

**Western Freeway  
and Brewery Tap Road  
Intersection Upgrade**

Planning and early works are underway for a future upgrade to the Western Freeway and Brewery Tap Road intersection in Warrenheip, to improve safety and freeway access.

## Have your say

We want to hear from you. We want to know what improvements you think we should consider in our planning for the upgrade.



Online by Sunday 8 March

To have your say online, scan the QR code or visit [engage.vic.gov.au/western-fw-y-brewery-tap-rd](http://engage.vic.gov.au/western-fw-y-brewery-tap-rd)

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**YOUR TEAM YOUR STORE**

# The Man who Lost his Horse

A True Story of the Ballarat Gold Rush, by Jock Freeman



**The Western District landscape. Photographer: Jock Freeman**

It was 1849, and Will had made up his mind to quit his job in Liverpool, leave Lancashire altogether, and go on an adventure. He was 24 years old, a schoolteacher by profession, and had it on good authority that there was demand for his type in the fledging colonies of Australia. But on his arrival in Melbourne in the April of 1850, Will discovered that he had been misinformed. So, he donned the blue shirt instead and took up the first manual job that was offered.

In this new part of the world, Will would find himself in a variety of occupations: wood splitting, building, blacksmithing, mining, farming and shopkeeping. Once, while a storekeeper at Benalla, three bushrangers held him up at gunpoint. When the police arrived they were not much help, charging him not only with selling sly grog but with harbouring the very bushrangers that had held him up! But it was in 1851 that Will played a part in events that would change the course of Australia's history.

Black Thursday, 6 February 1851. On this day, the mercury climbed to 47°C. The summer of 1850-51 had been exceptionally hot and dry, and when a couple of bullock drovers left some burning logs unattended in the Plenty Ranges, the surrounding dry grass ignited. Hot winds swept the colony with the

violence of a tornado and at the end of it all 50,000 square kilometres – a quarter of Victoria – was left a charred and desolate ruin. Twelve lives were lost. Thousands of cattle perished, along with untold numbers of native wildlife and the new wool capital of the world lost a million sheep.

The intense heat was felt in the Bass Strait, where the thick, black haze reached as far as Tasmania. Over 30 kilometres out to sea, one ship came under burning ember attack and was covered in cinders and dust. Many of the brand-new colony's citizens lost everything and, in the aftermath of this tragedy, Will joined in with the work to rebuild. Acts of kindness and generosity flowed from the small population and in many cases debtors who had lost everything in the fire had their debts cancelled. The work went on for months and that winter found Will rebuilding a men's hut on the burnt-out property of Mr Gray at Nareeb Nareeb in the Western District.

It was while working at Gray's sheep station that Will heard from visitors the first rumours of the discovery of gold in the colony. Squatters and shepherds had been secretly finding gold for years and keeping it to themselves, but at the 'ancient village' of Buninyong (a town whose post office was a venerable six years

old) the local village blacksmith, Thomas Hiscock, not only found some of the coveted metal, but officially reported where he found it. Thus began Victoria's first gold rush - to Buninyong.

By the time Will got to Buninyong, the rush was already over and the few remaining people, disgusted with the insignificant specks of gold they had to show, were in the process of selling their outfits and moving out. Will put up at the hotel in town and there he met a newspaper reporter from Geelong. The reporter let slip a rumour that was circulating of another place, not very far distant, where fossickers were finding worthwhile amounts of gold.

The exact locality was being held strictly secret, so they both resolved to scour the bush on horseback the following day in search of this new find. Succeeding in their search, they found a company of about twenty diggers, including the original discoverers of gold in Ballarat, John Dunlop and James Regan. Imagine the diggers' dismay to find out that Will's companion was none other than Alfred Clarke, from the Geelong Advertiser! Regan is said to have remarked that he would rather have seen the devil himself and they all watched as Clarke galloped off to inform the world of their secret.

Meanwhile, Will watched the diggers pick out specks of gold by scratching up dirt and washing it in a tin dish and when he began to do the same they advised him to move along and find his own place. The diggers considered the gold to be confined to this immediate location and they were barring any newcomers from entering their ground on pain of 'serious

*...continued p.13*

...continued from p.12

consequences'. So, Will moved on alone, striking in on the other side of the hill which, not being so rich, had been called 'Poverty Point'. Like Dunlop and Regan, who had already found some gold there only a few days earlier, he didn't find much. The place where the diggers had turned Will away, on the other hand, later became immortalised as 'Golden Point', a goldfield rich beyond belief and the suburb where the famed Sovereign Hill now stands.

For Will, more bad luck was to follow. Each day, he would tether his horse to a nearby tree and, pan in hand, go fossicking. However, after just a few days of doing this, he returned from his gold-seeking to find that a piece of rope attached to the tree was the only indication of his horse having ever been there. Alas! He fruitlessly scoured the surrounding bushland looking for his horse, trying other places for gold as he went.

It was now early spring. Still no horse; it was gone for good. The weather had been wet and miserable and Will noted that at least there was no scarcity of water in the Yarrowee River. Then one day, about four miles from Dunlop and Regan's party at Golden Point, near a bend in the Yarrowee that had been used for years as a summer waterhole by squatters with their sheep and cattle, he struck gold. Before long, word got out of the discovery of a beautiful 11-ounce nugget, perfectly smooth and square, 'as if moulded by art,' and dozens of diggers flocked to the scene and set up camp. Within a month the tents numbered a hundred. Will's diggings received a visit from Governor Latrobe, accompanied by Captain Dana and his constabulary of Aboriginal



**The Yarrowee River in Brown Hill. Photographer: Jock Freeman**

police, and Will showed the Governor himself his method of finding gold to which the Governor exclaimed, 'Your mother did not think when you came to Australia that you were going to dig gold out of the ground in that manner!'

In an effort to halt a mass exodus of people to the newly discovered goldfields of New South Wales and California prior to the discovery of gold in Victoria, the Victorian Government had offered eye-watering sums of money as a reward to anyone who discovered a new goldfield. The strategy worked and the goldfields of Victoria proved to be richer than them all. But Will later expressed disappointment that he was never offered so much as a shilling in reward for his own discovery, his repeated applications being rejected on the grounds that his discovery was too near other existing diggings.

Who was Will? He was William Brownbill, first pioneer of the Brownbill diggings. Perhaps he'd be more famous today if it wasn't for the unfortunate administrative corruption of the name of his goldfield from 'Brownbill' to 'Brown Hill'. Following his discovery, gold continued to be mined out of Brown Hill for over 80 years.

Today, from my garden on the Brown Hill flat, I am completely surrounded by what was once the Brownbill diggings. Sometimes I look around and try to imagine the landscape of 170 years ago, pockmarked all over with mineshafts; times of fortune and tragedy, when stupendous wealth was brought up from beneath our feet. While I have never found any gold in my own garden (those diggers were much too thorough!), I did once dig up a goldrush-era copper half-penny; a reminder to me of the early settlers and of the man who lost his horse.

#### **References:**

- The Argus, Melbourne, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1851.*
- The Star, Ballarat, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1856.*
- The Herald, Melbourne, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1864.*
- Letter from William Brownbill to Graham Berry, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1880.*
- Letter from William Brownbill to James Oddie, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1884.*
- W.B. Withers, History of Ballarat, 1887.*
- Letter from William Brownbill to James Oddie, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1904.*
- The Ballarat Star, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1904.*
- Obituary in The Inglewood Advertiser, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1911.*
- Article on William Brownbill from The Ballarat Courier (20<sup>th</sup> century, date unknown, cut out and stored in the Local History Archives, Ballarat).*

# Perridak Burron Early Learning

Our Perridak Burron Mob are excited to jump into 2026 and look ahead to a year filled with meaningful acknowledgements and celebrations. We are proud to continue coming together as a community to learn, reflect and care for Country.

Just last month we celebrated our 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Once again thank you to all our families and the wider community for supporting us through the last five years. It has truly been amazing.

During Term One, our Burron will take part in Clean Up Australia Day. Keep an eye out around the community as our Burron and educators head out on Country, collecting rubbish and showing respect by caring for the land we all share.

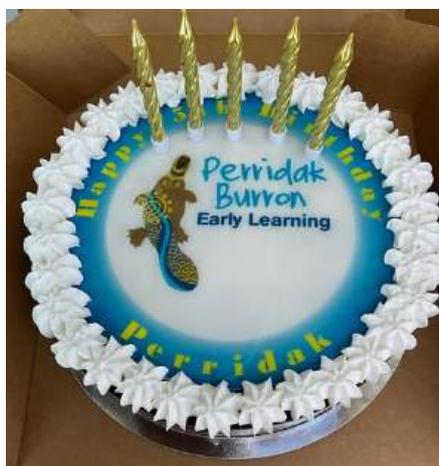
March will also see us acknowledge National Close the Gap Day. On this important day, Perridak will come together to yarn, reflect on how far we have come as a community and consider the many ways we can continue to support Closing the Gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

We currently have some availability across our service, including three-year-old and four-year-old kindergarten programs. We invite all families to pop in for a yarn and a tour of our deadly service.



A smoking ceremony at Perridak Burron. Image supplied.

For more information, please contact Perridak Burron Early Learning on **5334 4727** or via email: **admin@perridakburronel.com.au**.



Read this newsletter online:



7 Sawmill Close  
Brown Hill  
0434 522 477

# St Mary's Primary School - Clarkes Hill

## \$500 Scholarships Available

St Mary's School, Clarkes Hill is nestled in a peaceful rural setting just seven minutes from Brown Hill. We are a small school with big opportunities. Our location offers the best of both worlds: close enough to town for easy access, yet far enough away to provide a calm, safe and spacious environment where children can learn, play and grow. Families appreciate the sense of space, fresh air and freedom that comes with a country school, while knowing their children are receiving a high-quality Catholic education.

At St Mary's Clarkes Hill, we are proud of our small and close-knit community, where every student and family are known and valued. In our classrooms and playgrounds, children are not just faces in a crowd, they are individuals with their own stories, strengths and needs. This allows our staff to build strong relationships, provide genuine pastoral care and tailor learning to each child. Parents are welcomed as partners in their child's education and quickly become part of the life of the school.

Every student is encouraged to contribute to school life, whether through leadership roles, sport, the arts, community events or faith celebrations. With smaller class sizes, students



**Students from St Mary's School, Clarkes Hill. Image supplied.**

have more opportunities to participate, take on responsibility and have their voice heard. This helps build confidence, resilience and a strong sense of self-worth.

It is this strong sense of connection and belonging that makes St Mary's such a special place to learn and grow. We invite you to come and experience our community for yourself, meet our staff and students and see our learning spaces in action.

Enrolments are open at all year levels for 2026 and Foundation (Prep) enrolments are now open for 2027. We welcome new families and look forward to sharing our school spirit with you.

*Clare Scanlon, Principal,  
St Mary's Primary School  
131 Powells Road, Clarkes Hill  
cscanlon@smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au  
5334 5280  
smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au*

An advertisement for St Mary's Primary School, Clarkes Hill. It features a circular logo with a cross and a hill, labeled 'ST MARY'S CLARKES HILL'. A yellow banner reads '\$500 SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE FOR ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR'. A wooden signpost shows directions to various locations: BROWN HILL (7 mins), NEWLYN (12 mins), BLAMPIED (15 mins), INVERMAY (10 mins), WALLACE (9 mins), and BALLARAT CBD (20 mins). The text 'ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN' is prominently displayed. Below it, it says 'St Mary's Primary School' and 'ALL YEAR LEVELS All are welcome!'. At the bottom, there is a 'BOOK A TOUR!' button, the address '131 Powells Rd, Clarkes Hill', and the phone number '5334 5280'. There are also icons for a globe and an envelope, with the website 'www.smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au' and email 'principal@smclarkeshill.catholic.edu.au'.

# Little Bendigo Primary School



Little Bendigo School Leaders with their Captains' Badges.  
Image supplied.

## From the Principal's Desk

The 2026 school year started very well at Little Bendigo Primary School.

It is always nice to welcome our new Foundation students and current students back to school at the start of the year!

Our school and house captains were very excited to receive their captains' badges at our first assembly. Student leaders play a valuable role at assemblies, sports days and other school events and also participate in student

leadership development activities later this term.

Students are in training for the house athletics and cross-country events to be held later this term. Our sports houses are named after nearby streets: Lofven, Monte and Hillcrest. These names are synonymous with the history of the Nerrina and Brown Hill area.

With the new basketball and multi-sports court nearing completion at the school, students will have an all-weather sports area. The court can be used for basketball, netball and soccer. The court has been on

students' wish list for a number of years and it is great to see it coming to fruition.

Our major fundraiser for the year is coming up soon. Come and say hello at the Bunnings BBQ on Sunday 15 March!

*Anthony Tait, Principal  
Little Bendigo Primary School*

Help us to put  
together the Brown  
Hill Community  
Newsletter

Contact us:  
[newsletter@brownhill.vic.au](mailto:newsletter@brownhill.vic.au)

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Marie  
(03) 5334 7455  
mobile: 0438 689 297  
email: [marie@dazzlindoggie.com.au](mailto:marie@dazzlindoggie.com.au)  
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# Glen Park Primary School



## From the Principal's Desk

2025 was another big year here at Glen Park Primary School. In 2025 we continued our focus on science by inviting a real scientist (Heather) from Swinburne to visit for three special science incursions focusing on Chemistry, rockets and electricity. This year we have more planned. Our first one is on freshwater habitats, the animal kingdom and dinosaurs, water bugs, animal artefacts and fossils.

We went on excursions to the Ballarat Wildlife Park, Point Cook RAAF Museum and Werribee Mansion and all our grades five and six students had the opportunity to attend Somers Camp. This year we hope to make the long trip to Healesville Sanctuary as well as to Melbourne Museum.

In 2026 we are once again running a tutoring program as well as LOTE

(Japanese), MARC Van visits and Music/Arts therapy as well as our swimming/gym program.

Our library is even bigger than before. (Have you checked out our Street Library yet?) and our grounds are looking great. Last year we expanded our playground (more to come this year), installed a storage shed and we will be further improving our gardens. We are proud of our school, not only how it is looking but also what our children are achieving through personalised learning and opportunities open to them as individual learners due to our small size.



Above is a photo recently unearthed of our school in 1932. The Head Teacher is Robert Gowan who was here from 1930-1935. Some of the children here at the time had the following surnames: Coffield, Goldsmith, Jeffrey, Birch, Bradshaw, Davidson, Collins and Cartledge.

It is hard to tell exactly where the photo was taken; maybe out the back. You can see bush surrounding the school at that time.

Mr Gowan has a splendid 3-piece suit and a lot of children to teach by himself. (There isn't any record of other staff there at the time).

Just 4 minutes out of Brown Hill, Glen Park Primary School is Ballarat's best kept secret.



Visit [glenparkps.vic.gov.au](http://glenparkps.vic.gov.au) and our Facebook page: [facebook.com/learningwithliterature/](https://facebook.com/learningwithliterature/) to see what learning experiences we can offer.

Email us from our website to arrange a visit

# Caledonian Primary School

## From the Principal's Desk

To the Brown Hill Community,

Our students came in so excited, motivated and yet still somehow calm and ready to settle into the school routine. Even the newest members of our community are already writing, studying phonemic elements of reading and letter identification (the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds), working through maths tasks and possibly taking home a reasonable amount of sand in their school shoes after playing in our new sandpit!

At Caledonian Primary School we have been developing our instructional approach for many years and over the last 18 months or so we have found our rhythm, which supports highly effective teaching and learning. It has not been by accident, but through a careful study of evidence-based instruction and a deep understanding of the students we teach.

Visitors to our school, and we do have quite a few these days coming to see how we get our great results, are astonished at how calm and orderly everything is. We believe that the well-established and consistent instructional approach is a key component to this feeling of calmness.

As children move through year levels, the processes for learning remain consistent, which means each year we don't need to waste weeks of time trying to teach children "how we learn" as they already know it. This stretches, with age-appropriate adjustments, from Prep to Year 6. Additionally, this predictable model reduces any "worries" a child may have, as they



**Grade 6 School Captain, Sienna (right) and Vice Captains, Hayden (left) and Georgia (centre), celebrating the new sandpit at Caledonian Primary School.**

**Photographer, School Captain, Polly, Grade 6.**

know the day will be more or less predictable.

So why does this matter? The biggest help we can give our students is providing a safe place to learn. When a child feels secure they are able to focus on learning rather than slipping into a "worry mode" and it is pretty hard to learn when you are always worried!

For us at Caledonian this flows into play as well as the large grounds provide plenty of opportunities, whether it is creative and imaginative play, playgrounds or sports, or even just finding a quiet spot to "hang out". One of the delightful things we have seen in recent years is a whole-school tiggy game that all students are welcome to join; no one who wants to play is left out.

Granted, this can also be wild when 80 children are running around playing one game of tiggy; it is also really cool!

Building a culture around learning that includes helping children learn to play, engage and be kind to each other may sound easy – but it's not. It takes years of dedication, years of professional learning for all staff, and years of building positive and trusting relationships with our whole community.

Do we always get it right? Nope, but we are always able to take time to reflect and improve.

So, in this edition of the Brown Hill Community Newsletter, I want to acknowledge and thank the incredible team here who do an amazing job caring for and teaching the Caledonian kids!

*Benjamin Moody, Principal  
Caledonian Primary School  
332 6955  
caledonianps.vic.edu.au  
2 Thompson St. Brown Hill*

# Woodmans Hill Secondary College

## From the Principal's Desk

The start of a new school year always brings a sense of optimism, and 2026 has begun with excitement and momentum at Woodmans Hill Secondary College. After the holiday period, it has been wonderful to welcome our students back and see our school once again filled with energy, conversation and purpose.

The return of students reminds us that schools are more than buildings; they are vibrant communities of learning and growth. Our students have returned eager for new beginnings — stepping into new year levels, engaging in new subjects and continuing to build strong relationships with their teachers and peers. These moments of transition are important milestones and it is a privilege to support our young people as they continue their educational journey.

Over the past year, we have refined our school vision to ensure it clearly reflects our purpose and aspirations. Our vision affirms our commitment to striving for high-quality learning, nurturing self-belief, learning confidence and fostering an inclusive community where every student feels a genuine sense of belonging. This vision will continue to guide our work and shape the experiences we create for our students each day.

A significant milestone has been reached with the completion and opening of our new Year Seven Centre and Senior Centre extension. Receiving the Certificate of Occupancy marks an important moment in the development of our school and it is incredibly rewarding to see students and staff now learning in these modern, purpose-built spaces. These facilities have



Recreation Centre: New Entry

Woodmans Hill Secondary College

MORTON  
+∞  
January 2026

been designed to support contemporary teaching and learning while reflecting the pride and identity of our Woodmans Hill community.

The broader building project also includes additional improvements that will benefit our entire school community. Accessibility upgrades are being completed across the school grounds, including new walkways, ramps and stairs. Two former squash courts in the Recreation Centre will be converted into fully compliant learning spaces, while toilet and change room facilities will be refurbished. In addition, the existing weights room will be transformed into a dedicated wellbeing space to further support student health and wellbeing.

All construction works remain on track for completion by the end of Term Two. Woodmans Hill Secondary College continues to grow and evolve and these developments reflect our commitment to providing the best possible learning environment for our students. The year ahead holds tremendous promise and I look forward to sharing the continued progress and achievements of our school with the wider Ballarat community.

*Shannon Ross,  
Principal*

*Woodmans Hill Secondary College*

*5336 7264*

*woodmans.hill.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au*

*woodmanshill.net.au*

A poster for an Information Evening at Woodmans Hill Secondary College. The poster features the school's crest on the left, which includes a lion and a book. The text on the poster reads: "Parents of students in Grades 5 &amp; 6 are warmly encouraged to attend our Information Evening Wednesday 18th March 2026". Below this, it says "Information Sessions will be held at 5.00pm and 6.00pm in the Theatre, followed by school tours. Bookings essential." The website "www.woodmanshill.net.au" is listed at the bottom. A QR code is also present. On the right side of the poster, there is a photograph of two students, a girl and a boy, sitting and smiling. At the bottom right, the slogan "See learning as it occurs!" is written in a cursive font. The school's name "WOODMANS HILL SECONDARY COLLEGE" is printed in the bottom left corner of the poster area.

# Ballarat East Neighbourhood House



## Connect at the Neighbourhood House

Our Term 2, 2026 Activities Calendar is currently being developed. Visit: [ballarateastnh.org.au/classes/activities](http://ballarateastnh.org.au/classes/activities) to find out more.

Free activities are open to everyone and include:

### Mend-Along and Art-and-Crafter-Noon with Liz

- 12.30 pm - 3.00 pm, Mondays

### Walking Groups

- 9.30 am - 10.30 am, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from Barkly Square to Eureka Centre and back.

### Chatty Tuesdays and Wednesdays

- 10.30 am - 12.00 noon, Tuesdays and Wednesdays (drop in any time that suits you)

### Winter Woollies with Sandra

- 1.00 pm - 5.00 pm Wednesdays

### Book Group with Christine

- 10.30 am - 12.00 noon on the second Thursday each month.
- 5.30 pm - 7.00 pm on the fourth Thursday each month.

### Auslan Practice Groups

- 2.00 pm - 3.00 pm, Thursdays
- 10.00 am - 11.30 am Saturday mornings (monthly) at Sebastopol Library.

### Climate Cafe with Susan and Gerry

- 5.30 pm - 7.00 pm Monday evenings (monthly).

### Backyard Biodiversity Workshops

- Refer to details on p.10.

Paid activities at various times throughout the week which include:

- **Dance Connect Play - Tanzpro for children** with Liz (with a free 'come-and-try' session for new participants)
- **Feldenkrais** with Lynden
- **Tai Chi** with Jack
- **Community Auslan** with Jane
- **Qigong** with Klyti

The Ballarat East Neighbourhood House relies on volunteers to coordinate free and low-cost social groups, events and activities for local people. Through the generosity of these volunteers, we are able to host a range of different activities to bring together and meet the needs of a range of people from our community.

If you have ideas for new or existing groups which could meet in our welcoming community room at Barkly Square or elsewhere in broader Ballarat East, please drop in during school hours, call or text us on: **0422 612 052** or email: [reception@ballarateastnh.org.au](mailto:reception@ballarateastnh.org.au).



## Community Group Workshop days

The Ballarat East Neighbourhood House is excited to be partnering with the Community Bank Buninyong to continue to offer governance support to local community groups in 2026.

The next Community Group Workshop days will be happening on **Wednesday 29 April** and **Saturday 2 May 2026**. Topics are being confirmed and are likely to cover aspects of financial management, volunteer engagement and more.

Save the date and contact us to be notified when we have confirmed the Workshop presenters and topics.

*Liz Wade, Participation Manager  
Ballarat East Neighbourhood House  
Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street,  
Ballarat East, 0422 612 052  
[reception@ballarateastnh.org.au](mailto:reception@ballarateastnh.org.au)  
[facebook.com/BallarataEastNH/](https://facebook.com/BallarataEastNH/)  
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Ballarat Society of Artists members in action. Image supplied.

Summer - and our first meeting of the year at the Brown Hill Uniting Church Hall provided a chance for members to catch up and then spend the afternoon working together on a still life artwork. A recent purchase of stands and boards means that our artists will be well prepared for the Saturday Creative days in the hall in cooler months and future workshops.

Our members have the opportunity of workshops during the year. These will include painting with Jon Lam and a Mixed Media print and stitch with Gaye Nieuwenhof. There will be more to come!

Our exhibition at the Lake Wendouree Museum ends at the end of February and we return there in

July. With the Begonia Festival just around the corner and our Annual Easter Art Show, we all expect to be very busy preparing for these events and opportunities for *En Plein Air* have also been wonderful for members to participate in over the warmer days.

Our 70 members are looking forward to a great 2026 and if you are interested in further information about our group please contact: [membership.bsainc@gmail.com](mailto:membership.bsainc@gmail.com) We hold our monthly meetings at the Church Hall at 10.30 am - on the first Saturday of the month (except for January).

*Susan Clarke*  
Assistant Secretary  
Ballarat Society of Artists Inc.

...continued from p.1

“...very respectful and patient environment. Great friendships are formed through the experience”, says Gayle who is in her early 40s. She continues, “The Brown Hill Hall has great parking and wonderful facilities for a coffee and chat after our dancing.”

So if you would like to have a go at line dancing, you will be made very welcome and I am sure you will have a great time.

**Mondays:** 9.00 am: Basic Beginner  
10.00 am: Beginner  
11.15 am: Improver

**Thursdays:** 9.00 am: Basic Beginner  
10.00 am: Beginner  
11.30 am: Improver

To find out more about Eldorado Line Dancing, contact: Ella on **0401 017 758** or by email: [ellaeldorado@gmail.com](mailto:ellaeldorado@gmail.com).

The Brown Hill Community Hall has regular bookings ranging from line dancing, the Senior Citizen's Group, fitness classes, music and dancing groups, karate classes and many others too numerous to mention here. With great facilities, the Hall caters for many forms of entertainment and enjoyment.

*John O'Brien, President,*  
*Brown Hill Progress Association*

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# Brown Hill Uniting Church



## March Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast is on Saturday 14 March, from 8.30 am in the church hall. A representative from the Snooze Bus will share about the current homelessness situation in Ballarat and provide information about the Snooze Bus and how it can provide comfort and safety for the homeless.

\$5 for choice of cereals, toast, bacon, eggs, tomato, juice, tea and coffee. Ladies are welcome for a cuppa and the talk from 9.15 am.

The Men's Breakfast team consists of volunteers from the Senior Citizens Club, Progress Association and the Church. We welcome anyone who would like to be involved to come and join us.

## Afternoon Talks

Afternoon tea following a talk by Robyn Suttie 'Making a difference in the lives of orphans and widows in Uganda' on Thursday 12 March at 1.30 pm in the church hall. Entry by gold coin donation. All welcome.

## Annual Church Fair

Saturday 28 March from 9.00 am

Car boot sale, \$15.00 per site, please ring Bernie on 0427 310 750 to book a site. No bookings on the day.

Cakes, plants, and produce stalls, BBQ Breakfast and Devonshire Tea.

Op Shop will be open, 50% off all floor stock.

Fair proceeds go towards projects affecting our community.

Cash or EFTPOS available.

## Events and Activities

**Worship On Wednesdays (WOW)** at 1.30 pm in the church hall for those who like a midweek opportunity for informal worship and sharing of the sacraments if you choose. There is an opportunity to share a short time of fellowship over afternoon tea afterwards.

**Morning Tea** in the hall on Sunday 29 March at 10.00 am followed by discussions about issues affecting our community. All welcome.

**Craft, Cuppa and Chat** group meets on the first and third Thursdays each month at 1.30 pm in the church hall. Come along if you're interested in craft or just come for a chat!

**The Op Shop** is open on Thursdays

and Fridays, 9.30 am - 12.30 pm, providing our community with very good quality clothing and bric-a-brac at very affordable prices. We now have an EFTPOS facility.

*Louise Wright ,  
Brown Hill Uniting Church,  
0407 893 468  
louisejw63@yahoo.com*

## Brown Hill Senior Citizens

The Brown Hill Senior Citizens meet at the Brown Hill Hall every Monday afternoon. Activities commence with the board game Sequence at 12.30 pm and indoor bowls, Rummykins and euchre commence at 1.30 pm.

The first Monday in the month HOI is played. This is a fun easy game to play and is like Bingo only played with cards. Some members only come once a month to play HOI.

Never played indoor bowls? Come and learn in a fun environment, meet new people, catch up with old friends and have a talk.

New members are always welcome.

*Dianne Eden,  
President,  
Brown Hill Senior Citizen's Club  
0428 379 979*

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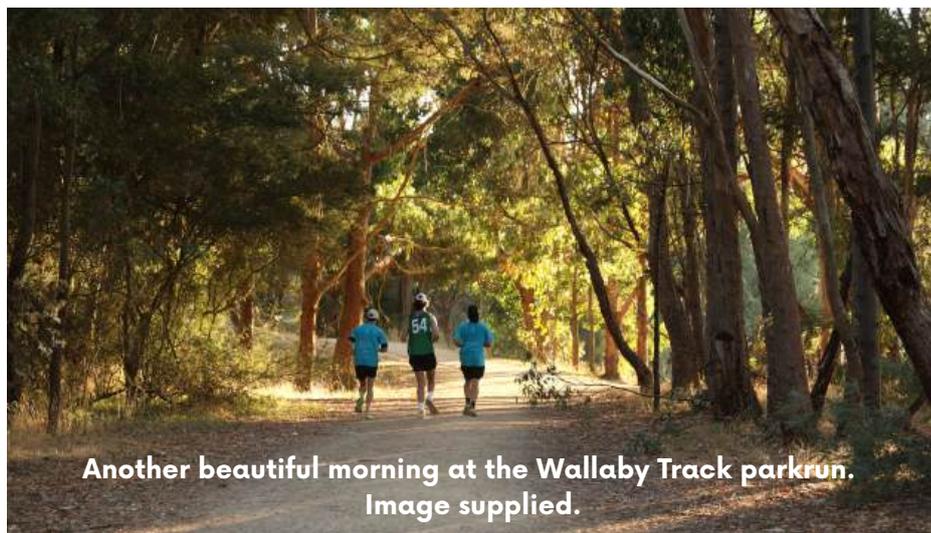
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# Wallaby Track parkrun

2026 has certainly been an eventful year already at Wallaby Track parkrun with lots of great things happening as well as a bit of a disruption to our normal event course. With the warmer weather we've seen lots of people making the most of the cooler morning conditions to come along and run, walk or volunteer before the day gets too hot. When you see the wonderful mornings we've been having, why wouldn't you want to be out early when it's fresh and cool (well cooler anyway).



Another beautiful morning at the Wallaby Track parkrun.  
Image supplied.

Over the last couple of months, we've celebrated quite a few milestones and significant events. Going back to December we had our pre-Christmas parkrun with live carols on course, then our Christmas Day event which saw 183 people complete the 5k event before they headed off for the day's festivities. On New Years Day we also had the opportunity to run an extra event for all those people who wanted to start the year off with a nice jog or walk, some perhaps with a little less sleep than others. In between those two events we also celebrated our 6th anniversary on Saturday the 27th of December. It's amazing to think we are now in our 7th year of this event!

It's also been great to see the Splash Park open up and having new toilets a bit closer to our meeting point is a real bonus for participants. A big

thanks to the Brown Hill Progress Association for once again supporting our event with icy poles. Our participants always enjoy a cold treat and they very much appreciate the friendly service provided by the volunteers.

Another big thanks also to the City of Ballarat and the Department of Transport Victoria for their support in repairing the lights in the tunnel after they were damaged just after Christmas. Unfortunately, with the lights not working, we had to run our alternative course which, whilst still a very nice track, was a little more crowded than our usual course. There was quite a bit of work needed to restore the lighting. However, the City of Ballarat were fantastic with their response and they kept us informed the whole time. Much to the delight of our participants, we were back on our usual course at the beginning of

February.

We are looking forward to the next couple of months. There seem to be quite a few people training up for an event at the Ballarat Marathon festival again this year and it's wonderful to see so many people incorporating parkrun into their training. Of course it's also fantastic to have all our other runners, joggers, walkers and volunteers as well. If you'd like to find out more about our event, visit our website (below) or you can come along any Saturday to the meeting point across the bridge at the Brown Hill Reserve at 7.45 am for an 8.00 am start.

*Aaron and Laurinda Coulter*  
Co-Event Directors  
Wallaby Track parkrun  
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[parkrun.com.au/wallabytrack](http://parkrun.com.au/wallabytrack)



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# Recognising and Protecting Our Exceptional Trees

## The City of Ballarat's Exceptional Tree Register

According to Parks Victoria website - when gold was found, they needed timber for housing, firewood, timber to build mine shafts and to build railway lines, which meant timber was used in railway sleepers. All these things led to a cascading effect where trees were cut down at an astonishing rate. We have lost more than 80 per cent of these forests since European colonisation (*Dr Rowan Mott*). Certainly the photograph below of Brown Hill with Mt Warrenheip in the background shows the extent of deforestation circa 1880s.

Today, the City of Ballarat's Exceptional Tree Register is a formal list of significant trees in Ballarat. The register helps to identify and protect exceptional trees on private and public land. It can be navigated via an interactive map.

The Exceptional Tree Register lists 136 Exceptional Trees including individual trees, groups of trees and avenues. Brown Hill has five, although there are more nearby.

### **Narrow Leaf Peppermint - opposite 94 Gracefield Road.**

This particularly large old remnant example is the only tree in Brown Hill (and the only one of a handful in the Ballarat region) recognised for its combination of outstanding size, being particularly old, being rare or localised and offering outstanding habitat value.

### **Dutch Elm and English Oak - 210 Old Melbourne Road**

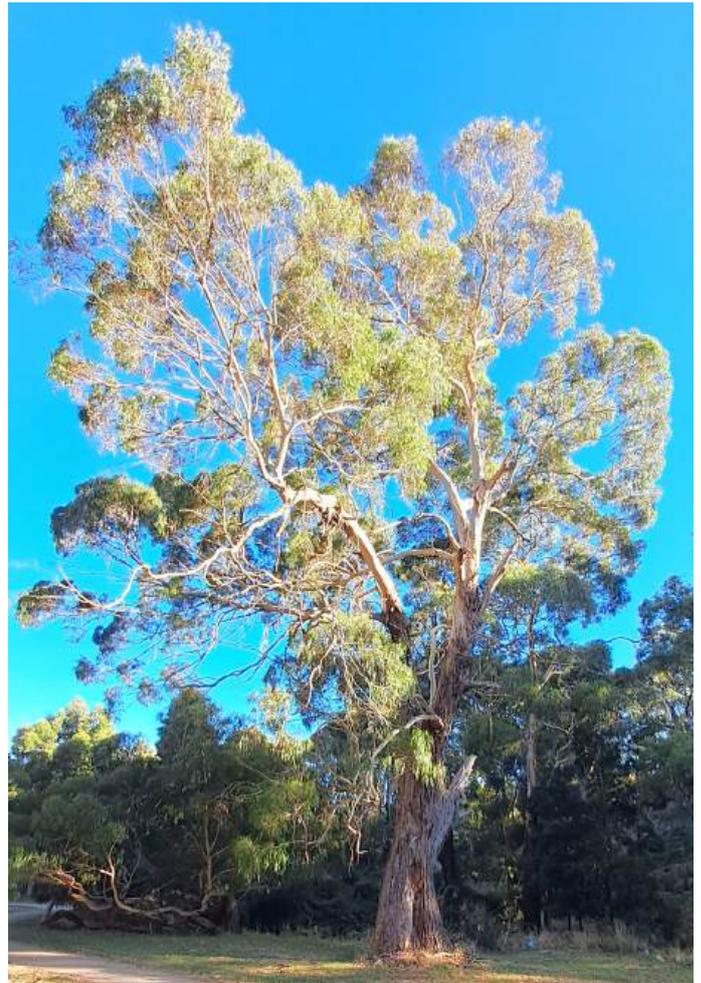
Also referred to as the Old Manse, this was a parsonage purchased by Rev Allanby in 1870. Elms and Oaks form a small avenue across the front of the property (planted during the site's time as a parsonage) and are important trees historically and aesthetically. The house itself is heritage listed.

### **American Sweetgum - 304A Humffray Street North**

Located in the front yard of this residence, this fine example of American Sweetgum dominates the skyline. This specimen is believed to have been planted in the 1950s and has gone on to thrive in its location..



Source: Max Harris Collection, Ballarat Mechanics' Institute.



**Manna Gum. Photographer: Paul Miller**

### **Manna Gum - Yarrowee River Trail East of Apple Orchard Drive playground (Pictured)**

A particularly old and massive remnant Manna Gum along the Yarrowee River. This tree represents outstanding habitat value and is a fantastic feature as you walk along the Wallaby Track/Yarrowee River Trail. This tree has lost a few large limbs in the past and has lots of hollows (essential for birds and other wildlife).

### **Coastal Redwood - Turner Court**

Located within the road reserve of Turner Court, stands a fine example of the Coastal Redwood. Redwoods are an evergreen native to California and southwestern Oregon.

To view pictures, descriptions and further details of these and all the exceptional trees in the Ballarat region, or to nominate a tree for the register yourself, visit [ballarat.vic.gov.au/property/building/tree-protection](http://ballarat.vic.gov.au/property/building/tree-protection)

*Paul Miller, Brown Hill Local*