

Nagambie Lakes Community House

NEWSLETTER

November 2022

Photo: GoNagambie



GoMen leader Reg Dickinson.



One Movember coming right up!

After two years of Covid putting a damper on all things Movember, GoMen and Reg Dickinson are now back with a vengeance!

This amazing group has teamed up with Nagambie Healthcare and GoNagambie to arrange an amazing Movember Event. Friday the 25th of November, the Valley has been booked from 2.30 to 5.00pm and those in attendance will be treated to

a speech by former Essendon AFL player Simon Madden. Nibbles will be supplied and there will be drinks and coffee at bar prices.

Reg himself is excited about the event and says the ambition is to raise more awareness about men's health. "I hope a lot of people will turn up to listen to, and be entertained by a great speaker," Reg says while continuing to emphasise that

although the focus is on men's health, it is a gender inclusive event.

Entry will be \$25.00 and bookings can be made by calling Sharni at Nagambie Health on 5736 2902.

All proceeds from the day will go to Nagambie Healthcare, to be used primarily for men's health, so get in and make a booking and support this great cause!

363 High Street, Nagambie, VIC 3608

Web: nagambielakescommunityhouse.org

Phone: 5794 1487 Email: nlchouse32@gmail.com

 facebook.com/NLCHouse

ABN: 37 645 422 366

Open weekdays 10.00am - 3.00pm

ART WORKSHOPS AT THE HOUSE

Asking for expressions of interest

We are very excited to welcome artist Vanessa Malandrin to the Community House! Born and bred in Venice, Italy, Vanessa was early on exposed to various art forms. Her father is a professional watercolour artist and her brother a photographer. Vanessa herself specialises in watercolour, calligraphy, writing, and science/storytelling.

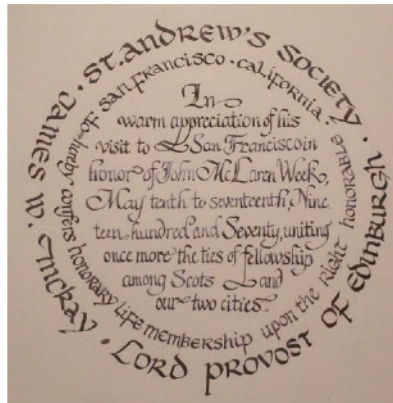
If you are interested in participating in a course led by Vanessa, please don't hesitate to comment below or send the Community House a message. A few examples of what is on offer:

- Watercolour
- Acrylic on different surfaces (e.g. paper or wood)
- Drawing (pencil or ink)
- Calligraphy
- Pyrography
- Collage

The workshop(s) would be suitable for beginners and intermediate levels. Vanessa will be following people on their artistic journey and offering prompts for new learning experiences.

LET'S GET CREATIVE!

P.S. All artwork below by Vanessa Malandrin



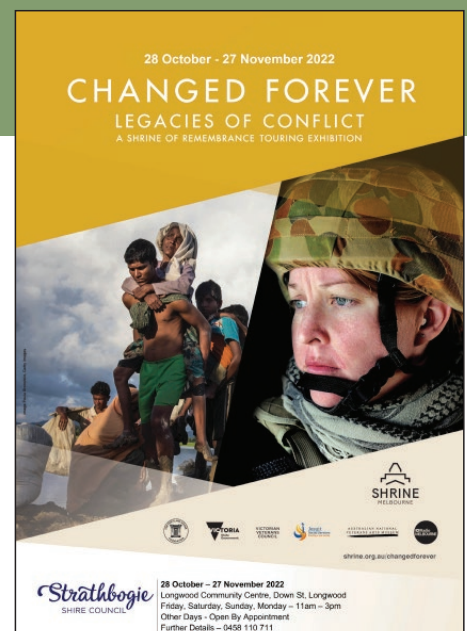
CHANGED FOREVER: LEGACIES OF CONFLICT

The Longwood Community Centre is inviting you to take part in a new exhibition from the Shrine of Remembrance, **"Changed Forever: Legacies of Conflict."**

This exhibition interweaves stories of migrants from war-torn countries and recent veterans of overseas service, reflecting the range and depth of experiences of conflict.

The exhibition, to be held at the Longwood Community Centre, will run until the 27th of November. It is open to the general public from 11am to 3pm each

Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. If you are interested in going with a group from the Community House, please don't hesitate to contact Ilona King on ilonaking2948@gmail.com



NLCH CHRISTMAS BREAKUP

It's the most wonderful time of the year...

Can you believe another year is almost coming to an end? 2022 might not have been the great relief we were all hoping for, but what we've learnt through floods, historically cold weather, and increased prices on just about anything, is that we will always have each other. Or with the famous words of Gloria Gaynor: **"We will survive"**.

It is also during times like these we see how much our relationships and friendships truly mean. As the coordinator of our House, I am so humbled and proud by the safe space we provide, both to people new in town and those who might have been here their entire lives. Our Christmas breakup is a time to celebrate this. To remember our many blessings and share in joy and thankfulness. If you are a member of the House a volunteer, a group leader or simply an avid supporter, please don't miss out on this wonderful get-together.

16th of December at the Community House

*2.00pm - 5.00pm
Food will be provided*

Please book in with coordinator Anna Close at the House if you wish to attend: coordinatornlch@gmail.com. And if you have anything you would like to contribute: a song, a poem or similar, please let Anna know as well.



IMMUNISATION AVAILABLE

**THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH
MONTH. AVAILABLE DATES:**

2022

November 16
December 21

2023

January 18
February 15
March 15
April 19
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 20
October 18

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, AND TO BOOK:
1800 655 360, EMAIL IMMUNISE@WODONGA.
VIC.GOV.AU**

What to bring:

- Your Medicare card and
- Your vaccination record/your child's health record.

Who can come:

- Children aged 0 - 5 year, preschool and school age children according to the recommended National Immunisation Program Schedule.



VIC SWIM

water safety since 1976
VICSWIM **WORKFORCE
INITIATIVE**



**BECOME A QUALIFIED
SWIM TEACHER OR SURF LIFE SAVER
FOR FREE!**

+ GUARANTEED WORK WITH VICSWIM IN JANUARY 2023

BECOME A FULLY-QUALIFIED SWIM TEACHER OR SURF LIFE SAVER **FOR FREE!**

+ GUARANTEED WORK WITH VICSWIM IN JANUARY 2023

The VICSWIM Program delivers essential water safety education to children aged 4 – 12.

We need to find 150 swim teachers and surf life savers to deliver the program in January, 2023 – and we want **YOU** to join our crew!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Once you register your interest, you will be put in touch with a VICSWIM Regional Coordinator who will arrange for you to take part in all the essential training and preparation to become a qualified swim teacher or surf life saver. This will include a Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety or Bronze Medallion accreditation and Senior First Aid or CPR.

Once qualified, you will be able to secure work as a Swim Teacher or Surf Life Saver at a VICSWIM location near you. In October 2022, you will be contacted by the VICSWIM team to finalise the conditions of your employment.

YOU MUST BE:

- ✓ At least 17 years old
- ✓ Able to commit to 20 hrs of training by December
- ✓ Willing to work for VICSWIM in January 2023
Week 1: Jan 2nd – 6th
Week 2: Jan 9th – 13th
Week 3: Jan 16th – 20th

YOU CANNOT:

- ✗ Already be a qualified teacher or surf life saver looking to renew qualifications

KEY CONTACTS – REGIONAL COORDINATORS:

- Metro Melbourne & Bass Coast: Anne Freedman - 0466 281 625
 - Surf Coast: Jillian Cooper - 0408 896 053
 - Greater Ballarat and Bendigo: Deb Gordale - 0407 882 496
 - Alpine Shire/NE Victoria: Neerah Briston - 0421 848 030
- ARV Office: 9271 3800 or email admin@aquaticsandrecreation.org.au

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Register your interest by scanning the QR code or go to www.aquaticsandrecreation.org.au/jobs/vicswim-workforce-initiative/

water safety since 1976
VICSWIM **ARV** 2022-2023



WRITING AND MANUSCRIPT ADVICE

Don't miss this unique opportunity to get help with your writing!

Do you want to write your life story but don't know how to start? Are you a compulsive scribbler and wish to learn how to turn your creativity into a manuscript? A book? A gift for your family? Or are you considering finding a publisher?

Book a 1-hour session with writer and editor Trudy Oldaker and bring some of your writing to chat about over a cuppa. Tuesdays from 10.00am.

Cost: \$2 to the Community House.
To book: Contact Trudy on 0419 894 122.
November dates: 15th, 22nd, or 29th.



Trudy Oldaker

CLOGGING



Bev Kilpatrick

Looking for expressions of interest

Do you enjoy music? Would you like to keep fit, and have fun at the same time? Then come and join our new beginner classes and learn to clog. Clogging is a little like Irish Dancing - Tap Dancing and Line Dancing all at the same time. This is a fun and easy form of non partner dancing. Sometimes called killbilly tapdancing. No experience necessary, and all ages welcome

STARTING IN OCTOBER
TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED
NAGAMBIE

COST: \$5 PER CLASS, (FIRST CLASS FREE)

Please wear flat, comfortable shoes
For inquiries and bookings, please phone Bev on 0410 063 420 or email bevalk@bigpond.com



Farewell Maureen

Maureen Collins-Binsol was a founding member of the Community House in Nagambie. She served as President and Committee Member and worked passionately for the expansion and growth of the organisation. Maureen's personality always allowed for big belly laughs and sit downs with hearty chats, but there was also a different side to her, where she put her leadership hat on and spoke with authority and knowledge. She was insistent - and rightfully so - on the committee following the letter of the constitution, and made sure no inappropriate compromises tainted the decision-making of the NLCH.

As president, Maureen also took the initiative to put local spotlight on the International Women's Day and women's human rights. She later explained that part of her motivation for arranging the IWD Breakfasts was her experience while working at the Equal Employment Opportunity Department of the State Revenue Office. There, she promoted equal opportunities for women and tirelessly hammered the infamous glass roof, enabling women to be approached and chosen for higher positions.

Maureen also worked against sexual harassment and domestic violence. Amongst many things, she advocated for the women who, at the time, were referred to as Filipino Brides. Having married Australian men, they later came to suffer both physical, sexual, and financial abuse. Maureen would support them in various ways, including helping them find alternative places to live.

Today, the NLCH International Women's Day Breakfast gathers close to one hundred people every year, but at the very start, it was mainly the committee who attended the event. These humble beginnings however, did not mean the task was taken any less seriously. Maureen - whose great, great grandmother was enrolled as a suffragette in Victoria - even decorated the function room in the suffragette colours of green, white and purple.

Maureen, alongside Di Grant, was also instrumental in the setting up of the Nagambie Men's Shed. Calling a public meeting which gathered great interest, the local men were supported in forming the association which still today, ten years later is a vibrant and active Men's Shed.

Today we gratefully remember the mover and shaker Maureen was, not just to the Community House, but to our entire town. Thank you lady, and Godspeed.

By Anna Close



VALE MAUREEN COLLINS-BINSOL

By Jeanette Murray

A group of community house members gathered together on Friday 28th October to celebrate the life and honour the memory of Maureen.

Prior to the live streaming of Maureen's funeral many happy memories were shared of Maureen's input to the community of Nagambie and particularly into the

community house of which she was the second president of the house's committee.

She was remembered as being very hard working, determined, having a great knowledge of community house operation, a great sense of humour and a survivor. Members raised a toast to Maureen's memory.



Close to twenty people met up at the House to celebrate the life of Maureen and watch the live stream of her funeral from Melbourne.

HEALTH CARE HELP LINE

There is now a new free helpline focussed on multicultural health. This line is called Multicultural Health Connect and it's starting operations in Victoria. You can check them out via their website: www.healthdirect.gov.au/multicultural-health-connect

Their aim is to support culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, in navigating the Australian health system, but they are open to **everyone** who needs the free service of 'on call nurse'.

Need health information in your language or would like to speak with a nurse about your health? Call 1800 186 815

Professional Health information and advice in your language

Call Multicultural Health Connect

- ✓ Find health services such as doctors, hospitals and community health centres.
- ✓ Get health advice from a nurse.
- ✓ Better understand Australia's health system and where to get help.
- ✓ Learn about COVID-19, including managing the disease, COVID-19 vaccines, isolation and close contacts.

1800 186 815

Available 11:30am-8pm, 7 days a week including public holidays

Health information and advice from staff who understand and respect your culture and language

healthdirect.gov.au

healthdirect

This service is provided by healthdirect, available on behalf of the Australian Government, with assistance from the Victorian Government of Health.

LAKE SIDE LARKS

By Wendy Mason

On the last day of this month we sang along at the Nagambie Hostel with the residents. We sang a collection of songs that included the word 'horse'. It was in preparation for the following day which was Cup Day.

Then we sang some joyful songs that the Larks and the residents knew well. Was fun!

The following day was Cup Day at the RSL, so we sang a medley of songs that included the word 'horse'. It was a lovely day with good food, good singing and good company.



COME JOIN THE LARKS

Do you enjoy singing or playing an instrument? Come check out Nagambie's best choir!

Practice Thursday

5:00pm - 6:30pm

At the Community House

WALKING GROUP

Because of flooding around us our October walk was cancelled.

Our final walk will be on November Friday 25th. It is planned to be from Reedy Lake to Kirwans Bridge. However adjustments may need to be made!! Hope you can join us.

Wendy Mason



WRITING GROUP

By Karyn Thompson

On October 11th, 6 members met at the Rowing Club for our normal meeting. We were all happy to enjoy a chat and coffee before sharing our stories on the theme of 'A house that intrigues me'.

As usual, the topic was covered in many different ways. We then chose a topic to write on for 10 minutes. The topic was based on something in our surroundings. Soon the pens were clicking and the brain were working overtime.

We then shared those pieces

and as usual a varied and interesting response was proven.

We discussed where we would go for our Christmas break up. Unfortunately the terrible floods ruined our choice, so we will discuss this further at our next meeting on Nov 8th.

The homework topic selected was "The

Melbourne Cup".

The writing group meets every second Tuesday of the month, 10.00am at the Community House.



Photo from Visit Victoria.

COMPUTER SUPPORT



Are you struggling with your phone, tablet or computer? Or perhaps just want to learn a few new tricks to make better use of your device? Book in a session with the ever amazing technology wiz Sally Fyfield. See dates below. (From 9.30am onwards.) Cost for members is \$2:00 for the House. Contact Sally via phone on 0408 141 969 or email: srfyfield@bigpond.com

11TH, 18TH AND 25TH OF NOVEMBER (9.30 - 12.30)

NO DATES AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER, SO MAKE SURE YOU BOOK IN WITH SALLY IN NOVEMBER IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT NEED HELP.

**HERE ARE
SOME OF THE
THINGS SALLY
CAN HELP YOU
WITH:**





COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROLS 2022

Don't miss out on one of our town's greatest events: the Community Christmas Carols. Following on from last year's huge success, the 2022 celebrations will not disappoint! This is a free, family friendly, non-alcoholic musical celebration where we come together to welcome the holiday season. Free sausage sizzle and icy poles. Drinks available to purchase. Appearance and performances by:

The Lakeside Larks

St Joseph's School

Nagambie Primary School

Fortessima

Nagambie Preschool and Kinder

Local talents

Nagambie CFA

Santa Clause

SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER
5.30PM
BY THE LAKE



CHATTY CAFÉ

Come make friends!

The Chatty Café is a warm and welcoming space open to anyone who wants to make new friends or just come and eat some yummy treats. There's no expectation on you to be anything but who you are. The Café is open to everyone, but especially welcomes those who are carers, suffer from mental health challenges, or perhaps feel a bit lonely in the wake of the global pandemic. At the Community House, everyone belongs!

The café is run by former nurse Erica Bostock and takes place at the Community House, 10.30am every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month.

COMMUNITY CAFE

10.30AM

363 HIGH STREET
EVERY

2ND AND 4TH
THURSDAY OF
THE MONTH.

Change of name

As some of you may have noticed, our wonderful Thursday get-together used to be known under the name 'Community Café'. The reason for our change of name is because we've aligned ourselves with the international movement called, yes you guessed it: **'The Chatty Café'**. The idea behind the chatty café concept was born on a wet and windy day in 2017 when Alex Hoskyn was in a supermarket café with her four month old son, who wasn't being great company at that moment and Alex was feeling fed up!

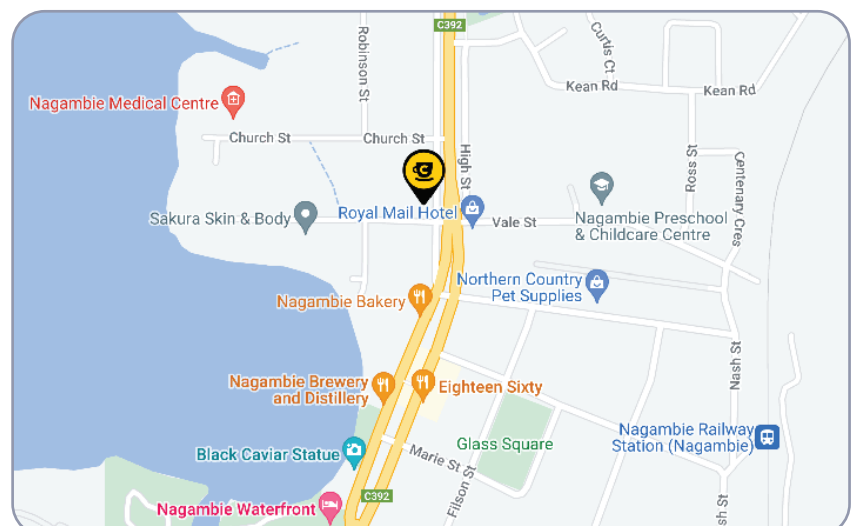
Alex looked around the café and saw an elderly lady who looked just as down as she was and on another table sat a young guy with additional needs and his support worker both looking like they had run out of conversation!

Alex started to think about the positive impact they could have had on each other if they had sat together. Alex knew from experience that when you are feeling lonely, a short conversation with another human can really brighten your day and she realised that you can be out of the house all day yet have no interaction

with another person.

It was right there and then that the concept of 'Chatter & Natter' tables in the UK began and there are now over 1,400 venues signed up in the UK alone. And now, our little venue is part of the movement! (Check out map of Nagambie below with the little logo showing!)

If you are interested in finding out more about this wonderful concept, please go to the Chatty Café website, <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au>, or why not visit the House on a Thursday and experience it firsthand!



SHARED TABLE

By Elizabeth Branagan

The September theme for our shared table was to have a picnic, having dishes which included the letter P thus making it more interesting. Our venue was to be River Street Park, usually a tranquil location. We imagined seating ourselves under the shaded tree, sprawled out on the grassy incline, watching the lake and enjoying each others company. However, mother nature had decided differently. The grassy incline became a raging torrent with debris and rubbish piled along the edges.

So we opted for our beautiful, always dry, never floods Buckley Park. The sun shone upon us and after so many days of grey wet

weather it gave our souls a much-needed positive boost. And so many Ps, in all sorts of creations.

Viv delighted our taste buds with a Persian Picnic Pack, full of Pomegranate and walnuts with Pickled olives and meatballs. We bought along some crackers topped with Pulled Pork mixed with Pineapple jam for some sweet and topped with my own Pickled cucumbers for savoury. Our newest members Maree and Tim bought along Tim's favourite, a French caramelised Pastry tart. Tim was hesitant in sharing!!!

Peter manned the barby to cook Scotty's



SHARED TABLE IS THE GROUP FOR PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO EAT, COOK, MEET UP WITH FRIENDS OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. EVERY THIRD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH, THIS FUN-LOVING CREW SHARES A MEAL TOGETHER, PREPARED WITH A FUN THEME IN MIND. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT ELIZABETH BRANAGAN ON EMMENG@HOTMAIL.COM



SHARED TABLE

By Elizabeth Branagan

famous Pork and fennel sausages and Pork spareribs. Carol brought along a lovely savoury Pumpkin Pie with Pineapple salad. Jilly had a colourful salad to add to the choices.

Desserts were overflowing. I made a shortcut Peach cobbler, Jeannette a Pavlova roulette, Judy a yummy orange Pudding cake with sauce, Carolyn a very generous Pavlova and Faye a lemon meringue Pie.

Suffice to say we were overwhelmed with choices and went home with very full tummies. Our next get together will be under the gazebo at the community house. We always meet on the third Wednesday of the month,

so 16th Nov, this time however it will be cocktail hour starting at 4pm. Feel free to dress cocktail also. Our November theme is Christmas, but with a twist. Imagine your street is getting together to celebrate this special time and each other's friendship. What would you bring to share with those you care about. It could be hot nibbles, cold delights, finger food and/or tasty desserts. Your call.

We invite other members of the community to join us, It is fun, light-hearted, supportive and I would not miss it for quids.

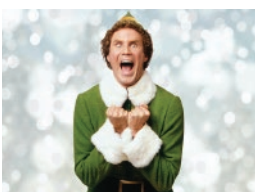


NEXT SHARED TABLE:

16th November
4.00pm

Feel free to
dress cocktail

November
theme:
Christmas, with a
twist.



WELCOME NEWS

By Jeanette Murray



June and Helen.



Mick.



Anne and Edna.



Beautiful decorations!



Watching with excitement.



June and Jeanette.



Carol and Elizabeth.



Carolyn and Joan.



Carol.



Gathering around the tables at ZephyrZ.

WELCOME NEWS

By Jeanette Murray

Allegedly the coldest Melbourne Cup Day in almost thirty years, the atmosphere at Zephyrz was all the warmer as the Welcome Group gathered to celebrate. There were hats, stunning outfits, ties and bowties. What a glorious day to be with new and old friends! (Photos by Jeanette Murray and Elizabeth Branagan.)



Bernadette, Jackie and June.



Mary and Carmel.



Cathy and Hugh.



Carol and Deb.



David and Bob.



Helen and Barbara.



Bob, Max and Mick.



Geoff and Sandra.



Jacinta, Cathy and Hugh.

NEED ASSISTANCE?

- Are you having trouble linking up with Government and Non-Government Agencies?
- Do you need assistance to fill out paperwork (i.e. Centrelink etc)?
- Or perhaps just wanting a chat about some other concerns?

Brian Hill is available to assist you as you need!

You can find Brian at the Nagambie Lakes Community House, Tuesdays from 10:00am - 12:00pm.

Contact Details:

Brian Hill 0447 636 831, hill32109@gmail.com

Community House 03 5794 1487, coordinatornlch@gmail.com

**TUESDAYS
10.00AM - 12.00PM
AT THE
COMMUNITY
HOUSE**

**BRIAN WAS
RECENTLY EMPLOYED WITH
THE STRAHTBOGIE SHIRE
AS AN OUTREACH WORKER.
EVERYTHING YOU SAY
TO HIM WILL BE STRICTLY
CONFIDENTIAL.**



Brian Hill

GARDEN GROUP

The Community Garden currently has a "Plethora of Plants" for sale at very reasonable prices. As well as our usual sensational succulents, we now have tomatoes ready to plant and raring to go!



Tomatoes include:

- Roma
- San Marzano
- Rouge De Marmand
- Money Maker
- Black Russian
- Bellino
- Sweetie
- Hungarian Heart
- Valentine.



Herbs include:

- Chives
- Mint
- Thyme
- Oregano
- Pineapple Sage



We also have strawberries and silver beet.

Please contact Robyn on 0458 147333, or Yvonne

on 0438 372304 for further information or to arrange selection or pick up times. NLCH Garden, 7 Prentice Street, Nagambie.

ABOUT THE GARDEN GROUP

Our Community House Garden Group is one of the longest running groups. It was started by some passionate people with a heart for nature, community, belonging, and health. Still this group is run completely by volunteers, with the same sort of motivations and objectives. If you would like to join this group, please don't hesitate to contact Group leader Robyn Northey, 0458 147 333, or simply pop down to 7 Prentice Street at 10.00am on any Monday morning. (Below are some old photos from when the group started.)





Summer Soirée

Our musical evenings at the House have been very much appreciated events with several people both performing or simply attending to enjoy the many talents our town can proudly claim as their own. For next year, we are aiming at arranging a summer afternoon of music in the garden of the Community House.

If you would like to perform, please contact coordinator Anna Close via email coordinatornlch@gmail.com. If you would like to attend and listen rather than performing, you are of course most welcome! Please book in with Anna at the House and prepare to bring a plate of some sort; savoury or sweet, both are equally welcome.

We welcome any and all art forms. Perhaps you would like to read a poem, sing a song, or play an instrument.

**4th of February
4.00pm
At the Community House
363 High Street**



COMMUNITY HOUSE GROUPS TO JOIN

ART GROUP

Meets Saturdays at the Nagambie Primary School. 1.00pm - 4.00pm

All Art forms welcome.

Tea break at 2.30 to share ideas. Contact Wendy Cook: wendycook.au@gmail.com 0412 103 853

BOOMERANG BAGS

Contact: Moya Stewart, 0425 796 297 or boomerangbagsnagambie@gmail.com

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Meets at the Community House.
Contact Di Proud: 5794 1520

COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Come and make new friends or hang out with old ones! Fortnightly, 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. 10.30am
Contact Erica Bostock 0400 528 892

COMMUNITY CAROLS

Meets the first Friday of each month at the Community House

COMPUTER SUPPORT

Friday mornings at the Community House.
Contact Sally Fyfield to book in an appointment: 0408 141 969 or srfyfield@bigpond.com

CRAFT GROUP

Meets Mondays, 10:00am - 12:00pm.
Contact Beryl Dukes: 5794 2829 or bgdukes@bigpond.com

GARDEN GROUP

Meets Mondays between 10.00am and 12.00 at 7 Prentice Street. Contact Robyn Northey 0458 147 333

GO MEN

Meets to bowl every Wednesday from 10.00-12.00 followed by coffee at the Valley. Also does fundraising in November.
Contact: Reg Dickinson: regmno@gmail.com

LAKESIDE LARKS

Larks is a group that likes to sing. Meeting weekly, Thursday evenings from 5.00 to 6.30 at the Community House. Leads the singing at many community events. Contact Wendy Mason: mason.wendy.m@gmail.com

MATILDAS

Attends cultural events such as plays and exhibitions. Contact Illona King: 0421 240 372 or ilonaking2948@gmail.com

PATCHWORK AND QUILTING

Meets Thursdays at the Community House. 10:30am - 2:00pm
Contact: Anne Turville, anneturville@gmail.com

SCRABBLE / GAMES GROUP

Meets Monday afternoons at the Community House. For more information, please contact Jeanette Murray on jmurray771@bigpond.com

SHARED TABLE

Meets every third Wednesday evening of the month, sharing a theme inspired meal. For more information and to book in contact: Elizabeth Branagan, emmeng@hotmail.com

TOW 'N' YARN

For people who enjoy camping, friendship and travelling. Contact Max Dunstone: 5794 1868

UKULELE GROUP

Meets Wednesday mornings at 9.30am at the Community House. Contact Robyn Northey: robynalice2004@yahoo.com.au

WALKING GROUP

Walking with friends on the last Friday of the month. Leaves from the Community House at 8.30. Contact: Wendy Mason mason.wendy.m@gmail.com or 0438 231 285

WELCOME GROUP

For new and old friends.
Contact Jeanette Murray: 5794 2115 or nagambiewelcomegroup@gmail.com

WRITING GROUP

Meets every second Tuesday of the Month. 10:00am - 12.00pm. Contact Karyn Thompson: karynthompson1952@gmail.com

FROM THE COORDINATOR'S DESK

Yesterday, for reasons a bit too complicated to explain, I came across a few articles about what scientists and researchers believe was the most difficult time ever to be alive. For those of you getting curious, I can reveal it was 536 Anno Domini. In fact, Harvard University historian Michael McCormick claims it was not just the worst year ever to be human, but also the beginning of one of the worst **periods** ever to walk the earth. A mysterious fog plunged great parts of the world into a darkness lasting over a year. Temperatures dropped radically, leading to crops failing and people starving. Then the bubonic plague struck and killed close to 50 million people throughout the entire Roman Empire. Yeah, I'm sure you get the point. It was bad.

Now, the global pandemic we've just experienced, followed by inflation, floods and mental health challenges, **might** not have been at the level of 536AD. No millions of people have died, we're not caught in some twilight horror movie nor are we close to suffering starvation.

But see, somehow I think that's part of the problem. All too often when we encounter pain - our own or others - do we fall into the trap of comparison. "You might have lost your baby, but at least you already have two healthy kids". "Just toughen up and get over it, so many people have it harder than you!" "Well, your husband might cheat on you but at least you're married and have someone to come home to."

Sure. Our thoughts or comments might not always be **that** extreme, but do we really listen when others share their pain? Do we acknowledge and see the other person before we start dishing out advice or chirpy oneliners?

Lately, I've encountered a fair share of pain. Person after person has reached out to me, sharing their stories, opening their hearts. They've let me into rooms of abandonment, betrayal, abuse, sickness and lies. As I've listened, attempted to understand and support, these encounters have inevitably also had an

impact on me. It's made me reflect on different aspects, perhaps mostly to relating.

See, for someone not entrenched in the pain, it can often be all too easy to want to jump to end; to the **'great solutions'**. To simply want to **fix it**. Whether due to good intentions, insecurities or simply lack of empathy, this option seems so close at hand. "Count to three, put a bandaid on and let's get on with it."

The problem with this approach is that I believe we miss one of the most important aspects of the healing process, which is acknowledging the pain. I personally think it's rather marvellous that the Bible has a whole book named "Lamentations", or that pretty much every other psalm is 80 percent complaining about how hard life is and how much everything sucks. It's almost as if the authors knew that we cannot heal from a wound unattended. We cannot forgive an offence that was trivialised or pretended didn't happen. We **need** to acknowledge the pain. We **need** to mourn the loss. We need to dare to sit with our friend in pain without the compulsive ambition to immediately fix what it was that went wrong or even worse, look for who is to blame and what should have been done differently.

And please don't misunderstand me here, there is of course a time for good advice and cheer-leading, but perhaps not until **after** the hug, the hot cup of tea and the "I'm so very sorry for your loss. I am here, right next to you."

**At your
service,
Anna Close**



Photo: Love by Lou Photography