NAGAMBIE LAKES COMMUNITY HOUSE NEWSLETTER MAY 2023

WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

he Community House is considering doing a week-long program during the winter school holidays. Although most parents/guardians would love to spend time with their children, it is an inevitable fact that many only have four

weeks off during the course of a year. (Victorian Primary School students in comparison get 12 - 13 weeks holiday.) We are therefore thinking of creating a fun holiday program, targeting Primary *Continuing on page 2*.



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

WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

School Aged children. Activities could including sports, crafts, games, maybe even a local excursion. We have the facilities, the insurance and the structure to organise this,

but would need volunteers to help us run the day to day activities.

Are you good at crafts, board sports, games, skateboarding, painting, lego or baking? Do you have your working with children's check card, and would consider helping out for half a day, a whole day or more to give local kids something fun, creative or active to do? Do you have any suggestions of activities that we could do together? Or do you have a box of lego or crafts sitting at home you wouldn't mind sharing during a week like this?

Please don't hesitate to contact coordinator Anna Close at coordinatornlch@gmail.com.



WRITING AND MANUSCRIPT ADVICE

o 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 one hour session with writer and editor Trudy Oldaker and bring some of your writing to chat about over a cuppa.

NEXT AVAILABLE DATES:

15 MAY 2023
22 MAY 2023
COST: \$2 TO THE COMMUNITY HOUSE
TO BOOK: CONTACT TRUDY ON
0419- 894 122



SPECIAL MENTIONING

do an amazing job at the House. They all create magic, whether it by leading a group, serving as a committee member, organising an event or managing our facility. It would be impossible to name them all, but this month, Des Mason and Edna James deserve a mentioning.

As coordinator Anna Close put a call out to put together some furniture, Des rocked up at the House in a matter of minutes. He spent the better part of a day assembling furniture. (See picture below.)

President Edna James has always been a hard worker, but on Friday the 28th of April, she put in what can only be described as an heroic effort, cleaning out our food pantry all on her own.

Our House is so very lucky to have people like Des, Edna and all of you as part of our family.



LID DROP Off NEEDED



The House which are ready to be dropped off in Wallan. If you would be able to help us to drop them off at our recycling point, please contact coordinator Anna Close. We are also after some larger cardboard boxes to transport the lids in, so if you have any you wouldn't mind donating to us, that would be greatly appreciated.

Ve are also on the lookout for someone with a passion for recycling who would like to take on the extended responsibility of our recyclig station. (Both blister packs and lids.) Please contact coordinator Anna Close if you think that's something you would be interested in, either via email or phone: coordinatornIch@gmail.com or 0437 347 203.

IMMUNISATION AVAILABLE

THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH. 12.30 - 1.00PM UPCOMING DATES:

2023

May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 20
October 18
November 15
December 20

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 reccomended National Immunisation Program Schedule.



AU REVOIR SALLY

s many of you already know, Sally Fyfield - long time secretary, volunteer, committee member and group leader of the House - will soon be moving to Melbourne. As sad as we are to see Sally go, we are also very happy she will be closer to family as well as have the opportunity to explore new adventures.

Knowing what a great impact Sally has had on many people in our community, we would like to invite everyone to a small 'Au Revoir gathering' at the House.

If you would like to attend and/or perhaps even share a special memory during the informal party, please let coordinator Anna Close know. If you likewise would consider bringing a plate, sweet or savoury, include this information with your booking.

FRIDAY 2ND OF JUNE
6.00PM
AT THE COMMUNITY HOUSE
BOOK IN WITH ANNA AT
COORDINATORNICH@GMAIL.COM

Welcome!



"NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE WEEK"

The House is going on the air...

Between the 8th and 14th of May, Neighbourhood House Week is happening across Australia. This is a nationwide initiative to celebrate the role of over 1,000 Neighbourhood and Community Houses and Centres. The theme is "Locals connecting Locals" and of course the NLCH would love to take the opportunity to celebrate who we are and what we do!

In the middle of the week, on the 11th of May, you can tune into Seymour FM 103.9 and the show the 'The Pulse', to hear coordinator Anna Close talk about all things NLCH. Every week, the Pulse talks to local people who are passionate about what they do: artists, authors, musicians, cyclists. etc. This year, our Community House will have the opportunity to share what matters to us: people! More information to follow, but block out the 11th of May on your calendar already!

SEYMOUR FM 103.9
THE PULSE
11TH OF MAY





HOUSE CLOSED IN MAY

uring a few days in May, the House will be closed for some external repairs. From Wednesday the 17th of May to Friday the 19th of May, no activities or groups will be able to enter the building.

This will primarily affect the following groups:

- Ukulele Group
- Shared Table

- Patchwork and Quilting
- Chatty Cafe
- Lakeside Larks
- Computer Support
- AA

Sorry for any inconvenience this causes. Welcome back to the House on Monday the 22nd of May!



TRAUMA TRAINING DAY?

Looking for expressions of interest

re you a farmer, truck-driver, CFA volunteer, rifle-owner or a motorbike rider? Do you think you could benefit from a tailor-made first aid course? What do you do for instance, if you're the first person arriving at the scene of a car crash? If someone's had an accident with a piece of farming equipment or been shot? If any of this sounds relevant, please get in touch with coordinator Anna Close at the House.

The NLCH is currently looking into the possibility of facilitating for a HLTAID014 course, which not only covers traditional First Aid Topics but also includes:

- Procedures when dealing with casualties with major and minor accidents in the workplace.
- Management of life-threatening bleeds (e.g., arterial bleeds to arms, legs, or junctions)
- Management of Crush Injuries
- Management of Abdominal Injuries
- Facial trauma
- Thorough Casualty Assessment

- Basic Triage processes
- Manage Multiple Casualty incidents (e.g.
- Co-ordination of resources
- The use of ancillary first aid equipment, such as spinal boards, pelvic binders, traction splints.

The accredited training would be provided by staff from STAR Health & Management/Allens Training, with experience from the Australian Defence Force as well as Ambulance Victoria.



Monthly Music Therapy Sessions

usic Therapy for NDIS clients is a new group which will meet monthly at the Community House. If this is something you or someone you know would be interested in, please don't hesitate to contact Music Therapist Jess Nelson for more information or to book in, phone number 0450 789 097.

9.00AM
AT THE
COMMUNITY HOUSE
363 HIGH STREET,
NAGAMBIE



FOOD SHARE SHEPPARTON



pantry, the Community House has decided to sign up for Food Share in Shepparton. This was made possible thanks to letters of support from Nagambie Primary School, Strathbogie Shire and GoNagambie. We now have the possibility of sending volunteers to Shepparton to pick up food for our pantry on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. (9.30am, 10.00am or 10.30am, with two days notice).

If you are a member of the Community House and would like to either do a pick up in Shepparton or even consider being responsible for the NLCH Food Pantry, please don't hesitate to contact coordinator Anna Close, either in person at the House or via email, or phone number; coordinatornlch@gmail.com 0437 347 203.

NAGAMBIE SAILING CLUB



n Sunday 21st May, all Sailing Club Members are invited to a Club Social Picnic Lunch. Location will be the shore of the lake, at the Sailing Club House, located at the large boatshed on the peninsula at the Regatta Centre, 69 Loddings Lane.

From 12.30pm, the Sailing Club Committee will host a Sausage Sizzle; club members are asked to BYO a salad or sweet to share, own drinks & chair. Alcohol is permitted with a meal, but not if participating in water activity.

The Committee and Crew will provide members with an update on the Club's progress with restoration of the club yacht, plans for sailing events and for developing the Club Boat Shed and Club House.

A donation of \$2 is requested for the Nagambie Lakes Community House funds. Please RSVP to: bevgsoz@gmail.com





AUTUMN SOIRÉE

Saturday 13th of May 7.30pm Community House 363 High Street, Nagambie

One hour of music, followed by supper.

Come and sing, read a poem, or play an instrument.

If you prefer to sit in the audience and listen,
you are most welcome, too,
just bring a plate for everyone to enjoy.

Book in with Anna Close at the House: coordinatornIch@gmail.com or Sally Fyfield at 0408 141 969

WELCOME!



PLAYGROUP



Come hang out with us!

re you a parent, grand parent or legal quardian? Do you want to come hang out with other mums or dads while your kid has a fun time playing in a safe environment? Then check out Nagambie Playgroup at the House! Meets every Wednesday morning 10.00am. If weather permits, we will be outside, in case of very wet or hot conditions, we'll move inside. For more information, please contact Group Leader Ana Williams on anawilliamsfdc@hotmail. com

CAROLS COMMITTEE

he Carols Committee is made up of representatives from several different community groups, organisations and churches. The group meets every month around the year in preparation for one of Nagambie's largest local events: The Community Carols.

The picture to the right was taken as the group celebrated winning "Community Event of the Year" at the 2023 Australia Day celebrations.



THE LAKESIDE LARKS

The Lakeside Larks have kept busy, singing at the ANZAC commemoration service and at the Nagambie Hostel. If you are interested in singing, please come along and see if Larks suits you. You'd be warmly welcomed. We meet each Thursday, from 5.00 to 6.30pm at the Community House.







All photos Gaye Bonde.



Singing at the Nagambie Hostel.

COMPUTER SUPPORT



SALLY FYFIELD

As many people already know, Sally will soon be leaving Nagambie for Melbourne. As long as she is in town however, she is happy to take an occasional computer support booking. Sally can also do Power Saving Bonus Applications over the phone if you have all the correct paperwork.

To book in, please contact Sally directly, either via phone or email: srfyfield@bigpond.com 0408 141 969.



SUE WEST

Do you want help claiming your power saving bonus? Please don't hesitate to get in touch! Sue West is happy to assist with your application on Monday mornings at the House. To book in, please Contact Anna Close at the House on coordinatornIch@gmail.com or call the Community House at 5794 1487. Be prepared for a half hour session. Current available dates:

Monday 1/5, between 9.00am - 12.000noon For dates past the first of May, please contact coordinator Anna Close.









rom 24 March 2023,
Neighbourhood Houses
and Centres have
supported over 10,000
community members across
Victoria to claim the new
round of the \$250 Power
Saving Bonus! Thank you
Sue and Sally for making the
NLCH such a great contributor
to that number!



FRIDAY PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

new Photography Group has started at the Community House! Led by computer savvy and incredibly creative Bevlea Ross, this group is open to anyone wanting to learn how to take amazing photos and know what to do with them. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity!

Bevlea's passion for photography began at the age of 13 when she was given a box brownie by her father, who was also a photography enthusiast. Over the following years, she progressed to 35mm film. Then to Nikon point and shoot, and to Canon DSLRs. (At one point, she had a darkroom in the bathroom to process the film.)

Her weapon of choice is now an Olympus OM -D EM1 Mk II, and her old box brownie takes pride of place on a shelf in her collection. (Please see some of Bevlea's beautiful photos on this page.)



FIRST AND THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH NAGAMBIE LAKES COMMUNITY HOUSE 12.00PM (APPROXIMATELY 1.5H - 2H)

COST: \$2





SATURDAY PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

o you love taking photos of delicious meals, but struggle to capture the perfect shot? Are you passionate about food photography and want to elevate your skills to the next level? Join us on **Saturday May 13th** at the Nagambie Lakes Community House. (The group will then continue to meet every second Saturday of the month.)

What You'll Learn:

- Composition: Learn the art of arranging food, props, and backgrounds to create visually appealing compositions that tell a story and evoke emotions. Discover the secrets of creating eye-catching flat lays, overhead shots, and close-ups that make food look irresistible.
- **Lighting:** Master the use of natural lighting to enhance the mood, texture, and colour of food. Learn how to work with different angles to create stunning visual effects that make your food photos pop.
- **Styling:** Dive into the world of food styling and learn how to artfully plate and arrange dishes for the camera. Discover techniques for garnishing and creating visual interest in your food photos.



Photo by Bevlea Ross.

What You'll Need:

- A camera or camera phone
- Food such as a cake, biscuits or bread etc
- A plate or wooden board White or plain colour plates work best.
- Optional: garnishes, knife or cutlery

MAY 13TH NLCH 1PM - 3.30PM COST: \$2

Limited to six
participants. Don't
miss this opportunity
to enhance your food
photography skills and
take your passion to
the next level.

To reserve your spot, please email name and phone number to:
bevlea@live.com.au

We will photograph all the food and then enjoy a nice afternoon tea.



CHATTY CAFÉ

Come, make friends!

ur very popular Chatty Café is excitingly taking on new challenges in 2023. Erica Bostock, who skillfully runs this group, has been approached by a few people asking if the group could perhaps also meet in the afternoons. Aiming to please, Erica will now run Chatty café twice a month in the mornings, and twice a month in the afternoons.

This wonderful group is open to anyone who wants to talk, get to know new people, or simply share life in a safe and encouraging environment. Particurlarly welcome are carers, those struggling with mental health issues or anyone feeling lonely and isolated. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact Erica via email: erica.bostock@gmail.com





AA

Is alcohol a problem for you?

re you looking for a safe place where you can receive support, share, listen and deal with your challenges instead of running away from them? Then we've got some good

OLD WAYS WONT OPEN NEW DOORS

news! Come to the Community House for a casual chat under the AA banner.

Every Friday
1.30pm
Nagambie Lakes Community House
363 High Street, Nagambie

P.S. The day and time has been picked with consideration of when the House is the most quiet. This can change depending on what suits those visiting. Regardless of when however, you will only ever be met with respect. Deciding to deal with your wounds, your challenges, your bad habits, or your addictions, is not a sign of weakness, but of strength. Welcome!

TUESDAY EVENING CRAFT GROUP

re you interested in crafts, finishing those old projects you've got lying around at home, or would you perhaps like to start something new? Then check out our evening Craft Group, happening at the House every 1st, 3rd (and 5th if there is one) Tuesday of the month. Bring any craft you would like to work on, sewing machines are available on site if you would like to use one.

if you can teach others something, then the group would love you to volunteer your time to share your skills. Please don't hesitate to contact Group Leader Heidi Dean on heidideane@hotmail.com

1ST, 3RD (AND 5TH IF THERE IS ONE)
TUESDAY OF THE MONTH.
7.00PM - 9.00PM AT THE
COMMUNITY HOUSE
\$2 TO THE HOUSE.



WRITING GROUP

The only had four writers at our last meeting with four apologies. It was Easter Tuesday and the School Holidays, so sometimes there are other priorities. The small group still had a lot to contribute. We started off by sharing our homework piece on "Broken Promises" all very interesting stories and a poem.

We then attempted three 10 minute exercises, it always amazes us that we can come up with interesting and varied ideas. The topics chosen were "Why did he/she change their name?" "What is the most dangerous or daring thing you have ever done?" Then with the beginning "One dark and stormy night..."

We also discussed a few ideas for future topics. The topic chosen for our next meeting on May 9th is a little different. The idea is to choose a famous painting and write about it. The idea is to write your own perception of it or even include your own dialogue. Your story doesn't have to be what the original painting was about, so good luck with your imagination.

Tuesday, May 9th At the Community House 10.00am \$2



Girl with a Pearl Earring by Johannes Vermeer

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Next Gathering

The Nagambie Breast Cancer Support Group will be meeting for afternoon tea on Thursday 1st of June at Nagambie Lakes Community House in High Street at 1.00 pm.

Michelle Parish, Breast Care Nurse from GV Health will be present. Please bring \$2.00 for NLCH and something to share with a cuppa and a chat.

If you are interested in being part of this social support group, please contact me on 0419 389 855 and leave a message.

THE SUPPORT GROUP IS FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER AT ANY STAGE OF THEIR LIFE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER IT WAS TWO, FIVE, TEN, TWENTY, OR THIRTY YEARS AGO!



SCRABBLE GROUP

By Jeanette Murray

o you like words, boardgames and/or good company? Come check out our Scrabble group at the Community House! Meets Monday afternoons, 1.00pm to 3.00/3.30pm at the Community House. We play two games each with two to four players. You don't have to book in - just turn up. Scrabble games and dictionaries are provided. We take turns to score games. The usual community house fee of \$2.00 applies. New and experienced players are welcome. If you have any queries, contact group leader Jeanette Murray 5794 2115.

For more information, please contact Jeanette Murray on jmurray771@bigpond.com

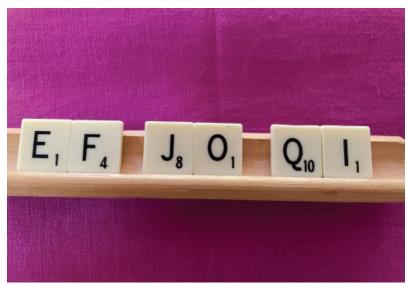
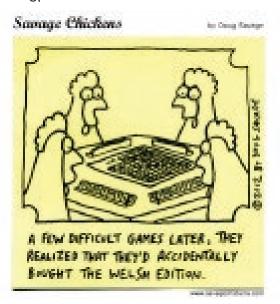


Photo by Jeanette Murray.



The Walking Group is heading out for a big adventure! This time, the course is set for Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, a Beach Walk at Balnarring, followed by Point Nepean. If you enjoy walking and/or the ocean, this is an excursion you do not want to miss! Different accommodation options available, please see below. For any questions or to book in, please contact Wendy Mason at mason.wendy.m@gmail.com

Thursday, 25th May to Friday, 26th May. Leave from the Community House at 8.30am

 Walk 1: Cranbourne Botanic Gardens at 11am. (Picnic lunch or cafe food)

Arrive at Balnarring Motel (\$155 per night) or Balnarring Foreshore Reserve (\$40 night powered site or \$30 unpowered site)

- Walk 2: Beach Walk at Balnarring Dinner: Fish n chips at Balnarring or Hastings Hotel
- Walk 3: Point Nepean Walk

Leave for home



n the 28th of April, the Walking Group headed out to Tatura. The group had the most enjoyable walk at Cussen Park, to the Anzac Water Tower and through the main street of Tatura.

Morning tea was held at Tatura Hot Bread, see picture below with the hot bread oven in the background!

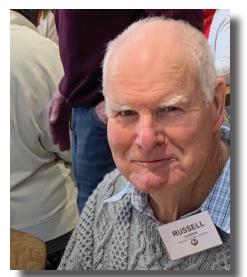






The Welcome Group had an interesting breakfast at The Providore at Mitchelton amidst the attractive winery setting. There was a comprehensive menu and the food was good. Margaret Hurren won the raffle, gift supplied by Mary Plieger,

Left to right: Helen Kennedy, Dan Kennedy, Ross Murray, Bob Arnold and Kaye Jones.







Barbara Collins



Mel Arnold, Kath Holloway

What is the Welcome Group?

The Welcome Group is one of the Community House's oldest groups. It meets monthly throughout the year, visiting different local establishements or events. It is a friendly group, not just for newcomers, but for anyone interested in making friends or perhaps sharing their local knowledge of Nagambie and its surrounds. The group is run by the ever lovely Jeanette Murray who is also very happy to hear suggestions on where to go and what to do.

Are you new to our town? Are you looking for a safe space where you can get to know others living in the area? Are you wanting to connect more with our lovely community? Check out the Welcome group! Contact Group Leader Jeanette Murray on 5794 2115 or nagambiewelcomegroup@gmail.com



Group Leader Jeanette Murray.

GROUPS TO JOIN AT THE HOUSE

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

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT

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

CHATTY CAFÉ

Come and make new friends or hang out with old ones! 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month: 10.30 - 12.00. 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month: 1.30pm - 3.00pm. Contact Erica

Bostock: 0400 528 892

COMMUNITY CAROLS

Meets the first Friday of each month at the Community House

COMPUTER SUPPORT

Contact Sally Fyfield to book an appointment: 0408 141 969 or srfyfield@bigpond.com

CRAFT GROUP

Meets Mondays, 10:00am - 12:00pm. Contact Denise Smith: jdsrm12@hotmail.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 5.00 to 6.30pm. 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

NAGAMBIE CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKING

A welcoming place where participants who access NDIS, can come with their support worker to meet others, make social connections, to take part in activities and learn how their NDIS plan works. Tuesdays, 1.00-3.00pm.

Contact Mandy 0419 114 940

PATCHWORK AND QUILTING

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

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Meets first and third Friday of the month. 12.00am at the House. And every second Saturday, at 1.00pm - 3.00pm. Contact: Bevlea Ross, bevlea@live.com.au

PLAYGROUP

Meets Wednesday mornings at the Community House. 10.00am. If weather permits, we will be outside, in case of wet or hot conditions, we'll move inside. For more information, please contact Group Leader Ana Williams on anawilliamsfdc@hotmail.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.

TUESDAY EVENING CRAFT GROUP

Meets every 1st, 3rd and occasionally 5th Tuesday of the month. Bring your own craft group and enjoy the company of others. 7.00pm to 9.00pm at the House. Contact Group Leader Heidi Dean on heidideane@ hotmail.com

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

few weeks ago, someone shared with me how they were struggling to feel like they fit in. Any day of the week, I would describe this person as beautiful and strong, and yet there it was: a hint of insecurity, summed up so well in the chorus of that old Sting hit: "I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien. I'm an Englishman in New York." As I first read the message, I actually smiled slightly to myself. See, it sounded so much like the story of my own life. I've always been a bit of an oddball. Whether playing soccer with the boys instead of dressing Barbie dolls, working with homeless children in Los Angeles instead of finishing my degree and getting married, wearing boots instead of heels or wanting to discuss politics instead of baking cookies, I seem to have always made someone shake their head at me.

Weirdly enough, I've even felt more odd in Nagambie as time has passed. With every passing year, I have noted something slightly different about myself, something I do without batting an eye-lid that seemingly no one else would even think of. And you know what? I've concluded that is perfectly fine, because from where I'm standing, 'fitting in' isn't the desired outcome. **Belonging** is. Please let me explain...

Have you ever seen a picture of a field of tulips? Or perhaps even had the privilege of visiting one in Europe? Well, they are stunning, aren't they? Perfect rows of the same size and often same colour flowers, growing for miles and miles. It can look spectacular, perhaps especially from a distance, but it's not very natural, is it? In the wild, flowers don't grow in 180 degrees straight files. They don't look the same, smell the same or even bloom at the same time. In nature, flowers come in all kinds of different shapes, colours and fragrances. They can penetrate concrete, climb on a cliff's edges or take root in a gutter. They provide bees and other pollinators with food throughout the year, but also make the world more beautiful, by their mere existance.

Man-made rows of tulips might very well 'fit in', but wildflowers *belong*, simply because of who they are. And that's also the ever so important distinction: no one should feel like they have to fit in - be, look or behave like everyone else - but all of us should know that we belong.

By this point, many of you are probably very tired of hearing me quote the same author, on the same topic, but I simply think it is so good:

"One of the deepest of all human longings is the longing to belong, to be a part of things, to be invited in. We want to be part of the fellowship." John Eldredge.

And this is where it gets really important. Who have you invited in today? Who have you asked to be part of the fellowship? Who have you lately told that they are perfect, just the way they are? Who have you asked to come alongside you in your next adventure or challenge? Who have you told that you need, or wish to be close to? Who have you confided in, seen, affirmed or encouraged? Who, thanks to you, does no longer feel the unspeakable burden of 'fitting in' or conforming to the mold, but rather the freedom of being one in the gang? Have a think about it, and tell me next time we meet.

Until then, I'll take joy in knowing that although I might very well never 'fit in' in Australia,

I do think I belong. With my quirks and weird Swedish oddities, I too, am part of the fellowship.

At your service,
Anna Close

