

The Waterline News *OnLine*

Volume 8 # 14

KernArt 2022 will be held at the Kernot Hall, 1060 Loch Kernot Rd,
Kernot on the Melbourne Cup long weekend 28th – 30th October

“Federation Bouquet 2022”, by Janice Orchard





Check out our back issues at: waterlinenews.com.au

In this edition we focus on upcoming events.
Salutations, Geoff Ellis,
Waterline News in Print and On Line.

THE WATERLINE NEWS

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The Story Behind “Federation Bouquet 2022”, by Janice Orchard

Since the beginning of the KernArt Prize art show in 2016, artist Janice Orchard has produced a painting relevant to the time and based on the humble gumboot, an icon representative of life in the country.

From 2016 to 2020, the boots in her paintings told stories of drought and floods, financial hardship, and recovery. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic shut the world down and KernArt was unable to take place. And again, in 2021 with all public gatherings and events unable to proceed, to support the artists the KernArt Prize went online with a virtual show.

It is now 2022, and the world is slowly finding its way to a new normal. Here is the back story to this year's entry, “Federation bouquet.”

“When the Covid 19 pandemic shut all borders in Australia, family and friends were separated from each other for extended periods of time in an effort to halt the spread of the disease. The blue boot in this painting is the main colour of the Australian flag, and it holds the floral emblems for all the states and territories, all in together in a riot of colour.

You can see the Royal Bluebell, representing the Australian Capital Territory, the Red Waratah for New South Wales, Sturts Desert Rose for the Northern Territory, the Cooktown Orchid for Queensland, Sturts Desert Pea for South Australia, the flowering Blue Gum for Tasmania, Pink Heath for Victoria and the Western Australian emblem, Kangaroo Paw.

And right in the middle holding them all together is Golden Wattle, the floral emblem of Australia, because we are all one country, and we should never be separated in this way again. I was feeling very patriotic as I painted this year's entry. We live in a beautiful country filled with incredible people and it is good to be able to gather again,” said Janice Orchard.

KernArt 2022 will be held at the Kernot Hall, 1060 Loch Kernot Rd, Kernot on the Melbourne Cup long weekend 28th – 30th November. Entries are now open to artists of all ages and abilities. Entries close Friday October 21. Enter online at www.kernartprize.com or email kernartprize@gmail.com and you can follow KernART on Facebook.

The Waterline News is produced on the lands of the Bunurong, Boon-wurrung, members of the Kulin Nation who have lived here for thousands of years. We offer our respect to Elders and all First Nations People.

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Victoria

Brett TESSARI

FOR BASS



brett tessari.com.au

Authorised by M. Harris, National Party of Australia - Victoria,
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IMPORTANT DATES for The State Election

Wednesday 2 November

Nominations open
Postal vote applications open
Voting centre locator available

Tuesday 8 November

Roll closes at 8 pm

Thursday 10 November

Nominations for registered political party endorsed candidates close 12 noon

Friday 11 November

Nominations for independent candidates close 12 noon
Ballot draw from 1 pm

Monday 14 November

Early voting opens

Wednesday 23 November

Postal vote applications close at 6 pm

Friday 25 November

Early voting closes at 6 pm

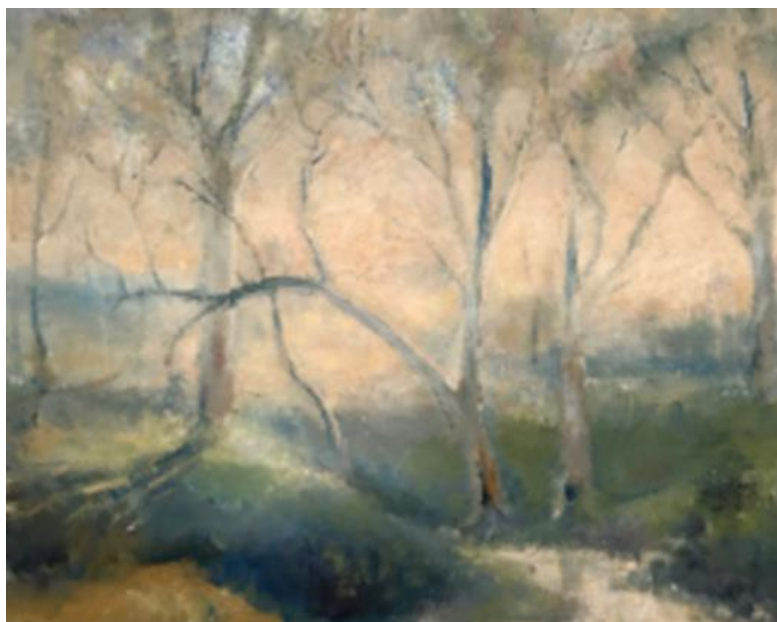
Saturday 26 November

Election day – voting is open from 8 am to 6 pm

JOHN ADAM

Artist; Teacher; Storyteller; Mentor; Influencer.

SELECTED WORKS 1956-2022



Opens October 30th

Continues:

Monday 31st October

Closed Tuesday

Wednesday 2nd November

Thursday 3rd November

Friday 4th November

Saturday 5th November

Sunday 6th November

Monday 7th November

Closed Tuesday

Wednesday 9th November

Thursday 10th November

Friday 11th November

Saturday 12th November

Sunday 13th November

Opening Hours: 11am to 3pm.

38 Leeson Street Cowes 3922
Phillip Island Victoria Australia

BASS COAST COUNCIL Western Port Ward



Cr Bruce Kent

Position: Councillor
Phone: (03) 5671 2156
Mobile: 0428 741 843

bruce.kent@basscoast.vic.gov.au



Cr Rochelle Halstead

Position: Councillor
Phone: (03) 5671 2157
Mobile: 0439 623 511

Rochelle.Halstead@basscoast.vic.gov.au



Cr Clare Le Serve

Position: Councillor
Phone: (03) 5671 2155
Mobile: 0448 083 286

clare.leserve@basscoast.vic.gov.au



**DG Nurse Practitioner
Grantville Transaction Centre
(Cnr Bass Hwy & Pier Rd)
(03) 5616 2222**

Family Violence

If you are concerned for the immediate safety of yourself or someone else, please call 000 for emergency assistance. ☎ 000

The Orange Door in Inner Gippsland ☎ 1800 319 354
For adults, children and young people 🌐 www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au
who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children.

safe steps ☎ 1800 015 188
For women and children who are victims of family violence. 🌐 www.safesteps.org.au



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**GOLD
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CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL
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INSTALLER**
Samuel Leighton

WE WILL FIGHT FOR:

-A moratorium on new mines and site expansions in the woodlands corridor.

-An environmental significance overlay for the entire woodlands corridor.

-Research funding to survey for appropriate, alternative locations.

– **MAT MORGAN**

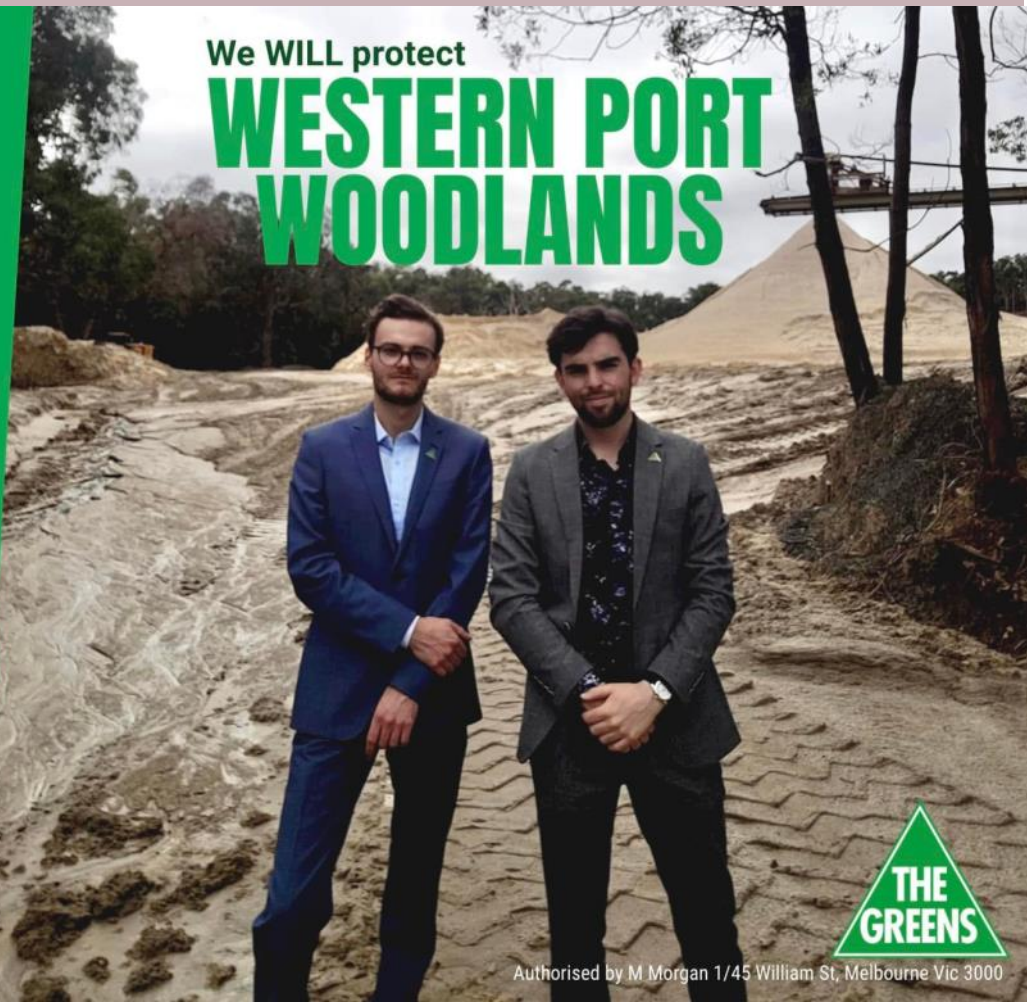
FOR EASTERN VICTORIA

– **CALLUM BUGBIRD**

FOR BASS

We WILL protect

WESTERN PORT WOODLANDS



Authorised by M Morgan 1/45 William St, Melbourne Vic 3000

Motoring with Geoff Ellis

Electricity is the thing. There are no whirring and grinding gears with their numerous levers to confuse. There is not that almost terrifying uncertain throb and whirr of the powerful combustion engine. There is no water circulating system to get out of order—no dangerous and evil-smelling gasoline and no noise.

Thomas Edison, 1903



Thomas Edison (above, left, with Henry Ford, right) was no stranger to electric cars. Edison built a battery powered front wheel drive electric in 1895 and experimented with motor vehicles till 1914.

As well as DIY vehicles, Edison owned several of the electric cars that dominated the US market before battery powered starter motors replaced the deadly crank handle on petrol powered cars.

Henry Ford and Thos. A. Edison buy



How Would You Like to Have these Master Minds Help You Choose Your Electric Car?



The Edison-Ford.

One of Ford's engineers is pictured (left) behind the tiller of the first prototype and behind the wheel of the second (right)



Henry Ford was an employee of Thomas Edison before he started the Ford Motor Company. Edison encouraged Ford's dream of a people's car while he worked on dozens of electric inventions.

In 1912 Ford let it be known that Edison and he were working on an electric car. It was a leak which went viral in a vintage context.

Pictures of the prototypes were not released. These images from the archive show that the second (and final) prototype rode on a Model T chassis with double the number of batteries of the original.



The problem with Edison's 1895 car was the batteries—they couldn't be recharged.

Over the next decade he developed a nickel-iron battery that could be quickly recharged and was suited to many applications. These batteries were sold up to the 1970s under the EXIDE brand name.

The project ended when a fire ripped through the Edison laboratories. Conspiracy theories persist that Big Oil got to Henry and Thomas but the truth is that cheap petrol cars had gained the technological ascendancy. Nearly 300,000 Model Ts were sold in 1915.



BVCG

Bass Valley Community Group Inc.

What's currently on at the Bass Valley Community Centre

- **Genealogy** Fri 12:30pm-2:30pm
- **Home & Community Care** (HACC Friendship Group) Mon & Wed 10am-2pm
- **Men's Social Group** Tue 10:30am-2:30m (in recess)
- **Op Shop** Mon to Fri 9am-3pm
- **Scope Cooking Classes** (for Scope clients) Tue 10:00am-1:00pm

Weekly Shopping Trips to Wonthaggi
Tue 10:30am-1:30pm

03 5678 2277

***Don't forget: Bass Coast's free green waste disposal period
will run from 29 October until 20 November 2022.***



During this time, Bass Coast residents and ratepayers can dispose of green waste free of charge at Council's Transfer Stations at Grantville, Wonthaggi, Inverloch and at the Cowes Recycling Bank. To ensure safe and manageable disposal of green waste for staff and the public, Cowes Recycling Bank will only accept loads up to a maximum size of 2m² or a standard 6x4 caged trailer. Loads larger than this will be redirected to Grantville or Wonthaggi during this period.

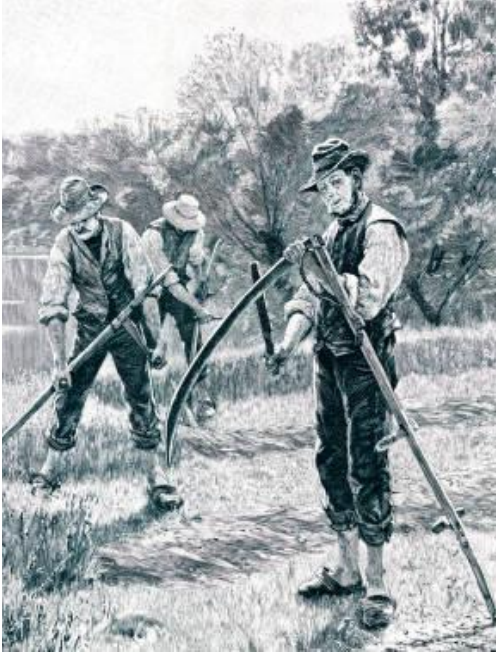
Weed species including blackberry, English ivy, agapanthus, mirror bush and plants that cannot be mulched such as palm fronds are not included in the fee-free period, however these can go in your kerbside Organics bin at any time. Contact Council's Waste Services Team on 1300 BCOAST (226 278) or (03) 5671 2211, visit www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/greenwaste or basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au.

Entry to the Cowes Recycling Bank will be via The Concourse end of Dunmore Road rather than the Settlement Road end, to assist with management of traffic.



Gardening

Gardening—sponsored by Roy's Mowing; roymows@gmail.com or text 0403917746



Those lawns at Flemington Race Course look so picturesque but round here the warmer weather and the monsoonal downpours conspire against our lawn mowing aspirations. If only we all had access to an army of gardeners. Maybe it's time to think about getting a new mower.

Mowers range from the old style push types through to professional quality ride-ons that can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Which one is best for you depends on the size of your lawn, the terrain, the type of grass and your budget.

Before mowing machines there was the scythe.

Powered by muscle and fuelled by food, scythes still have a couple of advantages—starting is just a matter of picking the thing up and swinging it. Maintenance is a simple matter of constantly sharpening the blade.

The first lawns were grass fields surrounding English and French castles, which had to be clear of trees so enemies could not sneak up on the castle through the forest.

The word lawn comes from the English word “launde” which meant a “glade or opening in the woods” or a common area in a village where farmers grazed livestock.

Back in the day, as sheep, cows and horses mowed the lawn, they left behind fertilizer ensuring the need for more mowing.

Formal, well-maintained lawns first appeared in Europe in the 1700s, but methods to maintain them were labour-intensive.

Scythes, sickles and even shears were used to hand cut the grass. Even skilled scythe handlers left swirls or sear marks on the grass, because the scythe was swung in a half circle. Mechanical mowers reduced the labour and increased the quality of the lawn.



The first mechanical lawn mower was invented and patented by engineer Edwin Beard Budding of Gloucestershire, England, in 1830. Budding got the idea after seeing a machine in a local cloth mill. The machine used a cutting cylinder with a bladed reel to trim the irregular nap from the surface of woollen and velvet cloth in order to give it a smooth finish.



Gardening Cont'd

Gardening—sponsored by Roy's Mowing; roymows@gmail.com or text 0403917746

The nature of your yard determines the best mower for your needs.

A small flat yard requires only a typical walk-behind mower. If your yard is sloped or hilly, you will want to consider a self-propelled walk-behind mower rather than one you will have to push. A walk-behind mower with big back wheels is easier to manoeuvre across rough terrain.

Generally, a walk-behind mower is a good choice for yards that are about 1/2 of an acre or less. The smaller your yard, the smaller the mower can be.

Mowers are categorised by deck size which is the actual width the mower will cut in a single pass. A 20-inch walk-behind mower may be perfect for a small yard, but you will probably want a 21-22 inch mower for a larger yard to cut down on mowing time.

For yards larger than 1/2 acre, consider a ride on mower or a lawn/garden tractor.

Ride ons with rear-mounted engines provide good visibility and excellent mobility around trees, flowerbeds and other landscape features. They are available with mowing decks that range from 28-42 inches wide and a range of engine sizes.

For yards in the one-to-three acre range, a zero-turning rider or front engine lawn tractor may be appropriate. Look for a mower with a larger motor and a wide mowing deck – at least 38 inches – to get your lawn work done quickly. The width of your mower might be restricted by gates that you need to pass through. Measure before you purchase.

Ride on mowers can handle varied terrain, although some handle slopes and rough terrain better than others.

Yards larger than three acres are best handled by a large zero turn mower or a garden tractor. Look for models in the 44-54 inch range. Yards of this could slashed by a tractor or even cut for hay. Maybe a local farmer can manage your grass cutting for you, possibly through a barter arrangement.

There is always the option of purchasing or agisting sheep, cattle or alpacas to keep the lawn under control and robot mowers are starting to become practical as technology makes them affordable and efficient.



Quiz

- 1/ Who wrote the poem 'Wait here second class'?
- 2/ Who wrote 'I love a sunburnt country' ?
- 3/ Who was the Australian Prime Minister when Ford Falcon production started in Geelong?
- 4/ Who was the Australian Prime Minister when the first Holden rolled off a production line?
- 5/ True or False? There is a street in Bass Coast named "Sir Henry Bolte Drive"
- 6/ Who penned Advance Australia Fair?
- 7/ Which member of the Royal Family opened Parliament House in 1927?
- 8/ How old is the township of Grantville?
- 9/ Ryanston is part of which Shire?
- 10/ The last Mayor of Korumburra was?
- 11/ Who is the Mayor of Bass Coast?
- 12/ Which ward does he represent?
- 13/ In which ward is Newhaven located?
- 14/ Of which 1968 Wonthaggi event is this a photo? Answers on Page 15.



The 1866 Melbourne Cup, won by The Barb is the earliest known Melbourne Cup in its original state.

First run in 1861, the Melbourne Cup was a cup in name only, with prizes including a gold watch and cash purse. The first official trophy cup was awarded in 1865.

The 1865 trophy was sold by its owner, who found it unattractive. It was rebranded and presented as the Flemington Hunt Club Cup.

The 1866 trophy is therefore the oldest Melbourne Cup in original condition. The National Museum of Australia acquired the 1866 cup in 2012. The Barb, regarded as the first great Australian racehorse was trained by 'Honest' John Tait, the 'Father of the Australian Turf'.



Heather Murray Tobias

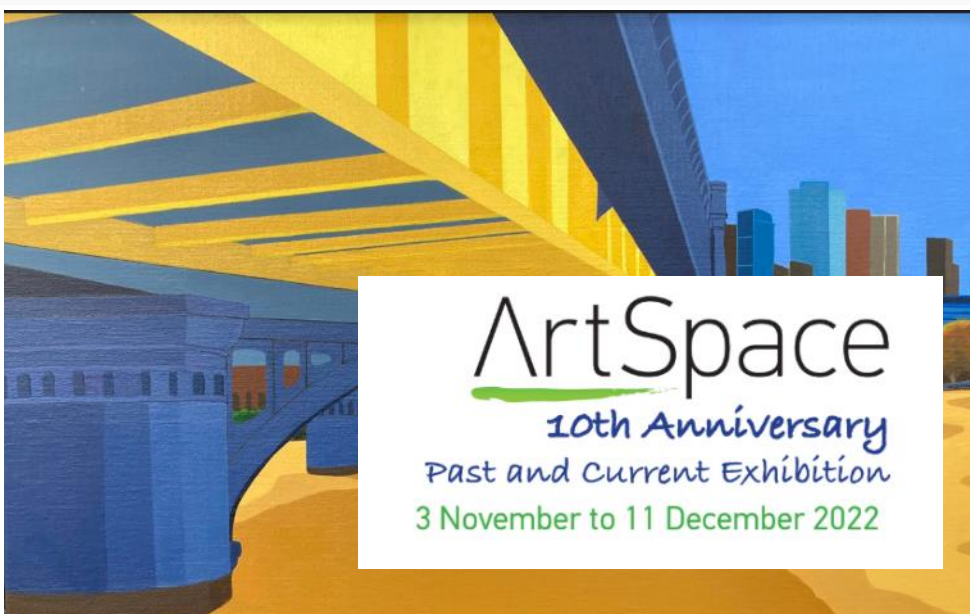
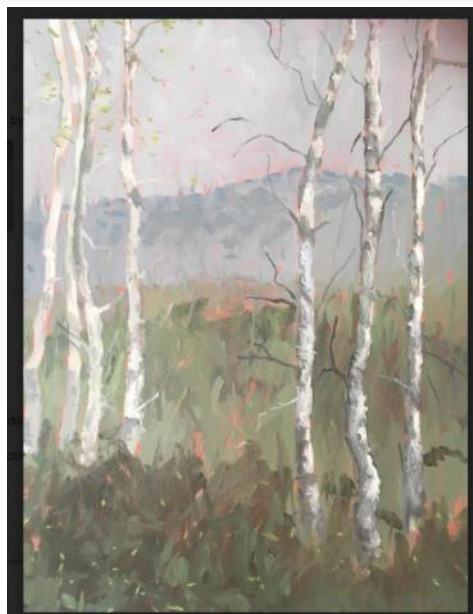
A Retrospective Exhibition

Wed 28 Sept – Sun 30 Oct

ArtSpace
GALLERY

The Centennial Centre
1 Bent Street Wonthaggi
(Opposite Aldi)

Open 7 days a week 11am – 3pm
Ph: (03) 56725767



ArtSpace

10th Anniversary

Past and Current Exhibition

3 November to 11 December 2022

Blood, Sweat and Volunteers: Ten years of ArtSpace

Official opening – Sunday 6th of November 1-3pm.

Our Past and Current Exhibition celebrating 10 years of ArtSpace Gallery Wonthaggi.

Invited Artists are exhibiting two artworks, one from the past and one from the present. Visual glimpses accompanied by inciteful Artists' statements explain the then and now.

www.artspacewonthaggi.com.au • artspaceexhibiting@gmail.com

1 Bent Street Wonthaggi Vic 3995 • +61 3 5672 5767

 ArtSpaceWonthaggi

Well the financial year has ended, the books are balanced and in the black so it is time again for our Annual General Meeting. Whilst only financial members are able to vote, all of those interested are invited to attend. The meeting will be held in the Boardroom of the Centenary Centre (ArtSpace Gallery) 1 Bent Street, Wonthaggi on Wednesday 16th November, 2022 at 4 pm.

This is your opportunity to see how we are tracking and contribute to where we head into the future. At the AGM the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee Member are all up for election.

<https://www.ozartfinder.com/artexhibitions/hidden-faces-2022>

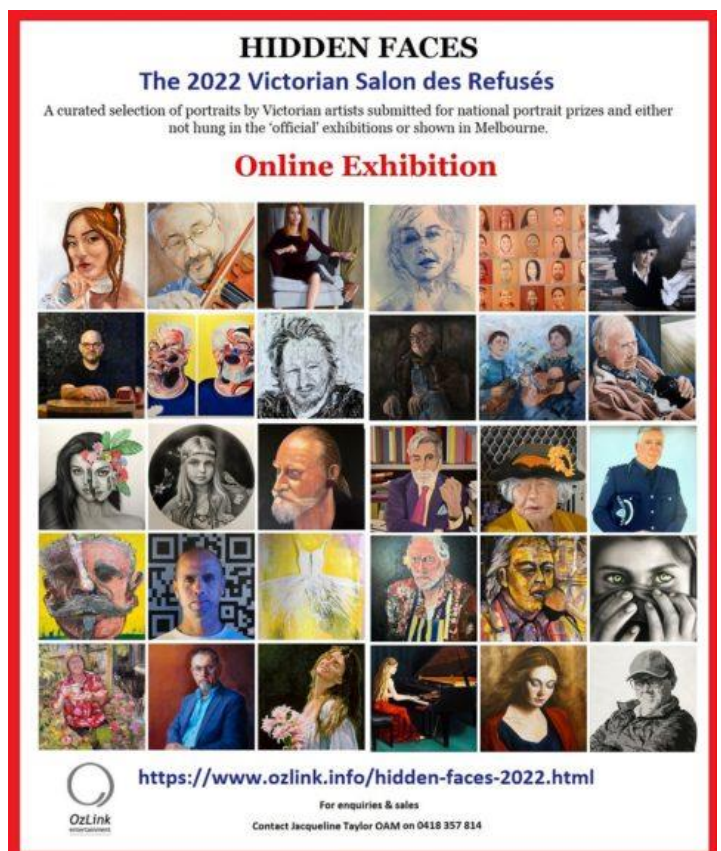
On-line until March 2023

A big shout out to our ArtSpace and Wonthaggi artist Tessa Hubble for her portrait painting of Australian music duo -OhPep! titled, '*Powerful Listening*'.

Tessa's Powerful Listening has been accepted into the Victorian portrait exhibition ***Hidden Faces- The 2022 Victorian Salon des Refusés Exhibition***

You can view the whole exhibition of portraits from 25 Victorian artists

and cast your vote for People's Choice Award through the Hidden Faces website <https://www.ozartfinder.com/artexhibitions/hidden-faces-2022>



"POWERFUL LISTENING"

Music Duo, OhPep!

Artist's Statement

Olivia and Pepita, 'OhPep!' have a passionate dynamic and power in their original music of folk, country, bluegrass and pop. Their diverse range, quirks and twists in their music has captivated me immensely.

Fast Fiction: "Ned"

By Bob Wheeler



Ned spotted the snake as it spotted him. One blast smashed it into wriggling, thrashing halves.

"Lucky this has two barrels" Ned smiled as he aimed the shotgun back toward the farmer.

"Money!" he demanded "Toss it there. Slowly..." As directed, the wallet landed near the snake's writhing head. Carefully Ned gathered it up. "... Takes a while to die out here, eh?"

Ned squeezed the trigger again. The farmer was felled as a bullet tore through his flesh and bone.

"I'd do the other knee but I can't be bothered reloading." Ned took a last look at the farmer lying in the scrub.

"You dog. Now you know not to swindle an honest working man." It sounded more like a prayer than a curse.

Ned shouldered the gun and set off down an abandoned track that led back to town.

He hid the shottie in the usual place, a hollow tree on the edge of the bush.

Then he headed to where Cobb and Co used to swap tired horses for fresh ones.

Ned sorted through the wallet. He pocketed the money and kept something in his hand.

As he entered the post office a bored clerk peered up from a ledger.

Ned leaned on the counter.

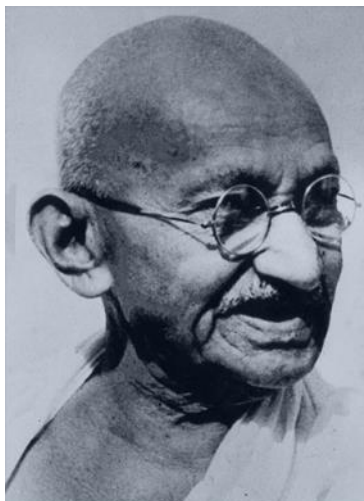
Very softly and uncertainly he asked "When does the next coach leave?" and held up a Myki card.



Fast Fiction:

Every month we will publish at least one *Fast Fiction*. Just keep it to 500 words or less and email your *Fast Fiction* to waterlinepublishing@gmail.com

Inside the Philosophers Zone



"I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. "

Mahatma Gandhi
Civil rights leader

WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM

QUIZ Answers:

- 1/ Henry Lawson
- 2/ Dorothea McKellar
- 3/ Bob Menzies
- 4/ Ben Chifley
- 5/ True
- 6/ Peter Dodds McCormick

- 7/ The Duke of York (later King George VI)
- 8/ 150 years old.
- 9/ Bass Coast.
- 10/ Des McCrae
- 11/ Cr Michael Whelan
- 12/ Island Ward
- 13/ Western Port Ward
- 14/ The closure of the State Coal Mine



BASS VALLEY FRIENDS OF THE R.S.L.

Are holding a Remembrance Day Service

On Friday 11th November

Commencing at 10.30 AM

At the Memorial Gardens

Bass Highway, Grantville

Followed by light refreshments

[You are invited to lay a wreath or flowers]

Jeni JOBE Community Independent for Bass

A Bass Perspective!

I am not limited by a political party's politics or political donors. I am here to represent all perspectives, people on farms and people living in town centres or in the waterline villages.

We need our roads maintained. Our farmlands protected from suburban sprawl and the Department of Agriculture properly staffed, red tape for small business simplified and housing.

We must support local services, protect Western Port Bay and our Woodlands, tackle costs of living, nurture the arts, small town sensitive development, better climate preparedness in planning.



Authorised by Jeni Jobe, 2150 Genista St, San Remo VIC 3925.

 [jenijobe4bass](#)
Please share social media posts
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A Strong Democracy Needs Community Independents in Parliament

Advertisement

Aaron BROWN

LIBERAL FOR **BASS**

*A strong local
voice for Bass*



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LIBERAL
VICTORIA

THE ENVIRONMENT IS THE ECONOMY!

In a shire that is literally defined by its coastline, the health of the economy is directly linked to the health of our environment. This is even more critical as we navigate through a climate emergency so it's no surprise that most of this year's Business Award winners are ambassadors for our natural assets.

This year there were 61 entrants in the judged awards and over 100 local businesses received 1,192 votes in the People's Choice Awards. The winners were announced at Silverwater Resort in San Remo on Friday October 21.

Wildlife Coast Cruises, which has been operating cruises for almost 30 years around Phillip Island, Seal Rocks, French Island, Western Port and Wilsons Promontory, won the Environmental Sustainability, People's Choice Tourism Attraction award categories as well as overall Business of the Year.

The business is proud of reducing its environmental impact as it showcases tourists our Australian fur seals, migrating whales, dolphins and coastal birdlife. Bass Coast Shire Mayor Cr Michael Whelan congratulated all the winners and finalists.

"The past couple of years have been challenging for businesses and we are privileged in our community to have such innovative, resilient and successful businesses," Cr Whelan said.

"Through hard work, commitment to customers and passion our local businesses are succeeding and doing us all proud."

This is even more obvious along the Waterline which is heavily dependent on the tourist dollar for local jobs and local business activity.

Also of note is the lack of representation of the extractive industry in the awards but perhaps profit is more important than popularity or public awareness.

Judges were Kim Storey, Heidi Hamm, Rebecca Massaro, Andrea Evans-McCall, Marcus McKenzie, Peter Clayton and Paul Drew with the support of Jayne Simpson.

2022 Business Award Winners

Business of the Year, sponsored by Bass Coast Shire Council
Wildlife Coast Cruises

Access, Equity and Inclusion sponsored by Westernport Water
Winner: Brinnie T Design
Runners up: Phillip Island Tenpin Bowling and Entertainment Centre

Environmental Sustainability sponsored by Harman Wines,
Winner: Wildlife Coast Cruises
Runners up: Bass Strait Direct, The Only Straw and French Island Cottage

Resilience sponsored by Bass Coast Shire Council
Winner: Balance Health Phillip Island
Runners up: My 24/7 Gym and VORTEX Surf Skate Snow

Business Innovation sponsored by NBN Local – Gippsland
Winner: Terralab
Runners up: Wattle Bank Farm

Leadership sponsored by Silverwater Resort
Winner: Maru Koala and Animal Park
Runners up: Sunscape Solar

Marketing and Communications sponsored by Destination Phillip Island
Winner: Connect2 Electrical Solutions
Runners up: Bass Coast Boat and Caravan Storage

2022 People's Choice Award Winners sponsored by Bass Coast Shire Council

Accommodation and Tourism Attraction

Winner: Wildlife Coast Cruises
Runners Up: NRMA Phillip Island Beachfront Holiday Park

Food and Beverage

Winner: Harman Wines
Runners Up: Mon Dieu

Hair and Beauty

Winner: Hair by Sarah Azzato
Runners Up: Hair by Karra

Health, Wellbeing and Lifestyle

Winner: Lioness Fit
Runners Up: Wonthaggi Allied Health

Online, Mobile and Home-based Business

Winner: Gippy Organics
Runners Up: Graham Lyle Insurance

Retail and Services

Winner: Bass Coast Boat & Caravan Storage
Runners Up: Bass Strait Direct

Trades and Services

Winner: Sunscape Solar
Runners Up: Connect 2 Electrical

The Awards are sponsored by Destination Phillip Island, NBN Co., Silverwater Resort, Westernport Water and Harman Wines.

VOTE FOR THE WOODLANDS



Less than half an hour's drive from here an ancient forest is waiting to welcome you.

The Western Port Woodlands is the last remaining forest corridor running parallel to the bay between Lang Lang and Bass.

Enter this magical place and watch for the flash of a scarlet robin. Marvel at a grass tree forest. Listen to the melodic trilling of a grey shrike thrush. You might be lucky enough to see a tiny mayfly orchid – or a giant lace monitor.

Stand still, be very quiet, and let the forest seep into you.

Yet this unique ecosystem faces extinction.

Despite enormous sand reserves outside this precious corridor, the State Government has designated 70% of the woodland area as a sand extraction interest area for Melbourne's Big Build. Ten sand mines already operate in the woodlands and nine more have been approved.

To date, the Labor Government has failed to respond to the community's concerns.

Before you vote

All candidates for the Bass Electorate in the upcoming election EXCEPT Labor have committed to some level of action to protect the woodlands if they are elected.

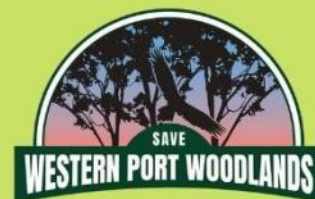
The ALP candidate and current MP for Bass, Jordan Crugnale, is the only candidate who has not yet committed to any action.

We will assess candidate commitments and publish a scorecard prior to the election.

In the meantime, please contact:

Jordan Crugnale, Bass MP, Ph 5672 4755,
jordan.crugnale@parliament.vic.gov.au
Lily D'Ambrosio, Environment Minister
lily.dambrosio@parliament.vic.gov.au

**Come on Labor! Get your act together.
Save our woodlands before it's too late.**



savewesternportwoodlands.org

savewesternportwoodlands@gmail.com

facebook.com/Savewesternportwoodlands

Quick Sand *by Catherine Watson*

For many years my only experience of the Western Port Woodlands was driving *past* them. It's a common story, even from locals.

I would occasionally wonder what was in the forest on the ridge but there's no indication that you're passing conservation reserves – Adams Creek, Hurdy Gurdy, The Gurdies, Grantville – no sign of walking tracks, no obvious way of getting in, no information about the woodlands on the Parks Victoria and Bass Coast tourism websites.

If you happened to stop at the rest area on the Bass Highway, opposite Pioneer Bay, you would have seen a map of walking tracks, but why would you stop for a rest 30kms from home?

Which is precisely why we have ended up in the bizarre situation where 70 per cent of Bass Coast's last major forest is designated Extractive Industry Interest Area. It's an open invitation to mining companies and one they've been pleased to accept.

Ten sand mines already operate in the woodlands and work authorities have been approved for another nine. Seven more are under application.

Until recently, few of us knew the sand mines were there – state government regulations require them to be concealed by an avenue of trees to spare passing tourists and locals the unsettling sight of vast pits carved out of the bush.

The other thing we didn't know was how beautiful and rare our woodlands are. The great irony is that they only survived because it's poor farming country because it's on sand.

It's also a very biodiverse environment *because* of the sand. The lack of nutrients produces the grass trees, the orchids, the wildflowers, the fungi. It's a haven for small animals – bandicoots, gliders, wombats, antechinuses. – and birds. And now the woodlands are at risk because the state wants the sand for Melbourne's Big Build.

Over the past year the Save Western Port Woodlands group has organised many walks, led by locals who have opened our eyes to how precious this place is.

Most of the walkers have been local but they also come from Pakenham, Cranbourne, the Peninsula and Melbourne. The Western Port Woodlands are as close to people living in Casey and Cardinia as they are to those of us living in Inverloch, Wonthaggi and Cowes. That's a catchment of half a million people living within half an hour's drive.

Many first-time visitors speak of the profound sense of peace and connection they felt in the woodlands. The therapeutic values of being in nature are well known. Finding a rare sun orchid, watching a pair of scarlet robins, listening to a kookaburra, even encountering a two-metre lizard, are all possible in the woodlands.

Our experience of organising walks has shown a real hunger for this sort of natural experience. We could have filled our walks many times over.

In 2000 a Grantville Native Orchid Festival, organised by the Friends of Bass Valley Bush, attracted more than 2000 people, with many coming from interstate. It was a huge event for the Waterline region, with accommodation booked out and local people and community groups roped in for catering and other fund-raising opportunities.

Once the election is over, we'll continue with our political action to stop new sand mines opening, but we'll also be pushing for signs on the highway indicating entrance points to nature reserves and tracks, maps, apps and brochures.

Because the more people who know and love our woodlands, the harder it will be for governments and industry to pretend that sand mining in woodlands is okay.

Catherine Watson is a member of the Save Western Port Woodlands group.



The Last Word: Meryl Tobin Brown

Bass Coast's priceless asset

What is remnant pre-European native vegetation worth?

Some argue that extracting sand and gravel from the remnant pre-European native vegetation that makes up much of the biolink stretching from Nyora-Lang Lang to Grantville and beyond is providing cheap sand for Melbourne.

But how much would it cost if the cost of the biolink's biodiversity, which has evolved over millions of years, were factored into the cost?

If a sand company was required after mining to rehabilitate a site to what it was before extraction took place, is the cost even calculable? Would it even be possible to rehabilitate the site to this standard?

For instance, would it be possible to reinstate wildlife if it were made locally, regionally, state-wide or nationally extinct by the removal of their habitat here?

If you had to create or recreate this virgin forest, you would need to have it evolve over millions of years and have it create ecosystems, all inter-related and where flora and fauna would be interdependent. How would you even go about it?

If you factored in the cost of the time and the ability of humans with the intelligence and expertise capable of doing such a job, if such intelligence and expertise exists, what would be a realistic price to ask for virgin forest?

The Western Port Woodlands is the biolink stretching between Nyora-Lang Lang to Grantville and beyond that locals have been fighting since 1996 to have declared a national park. It is virtually the last big stand of the 5% of remnant uncleared pre-European native vegetation left in West Gippsland. If we allow much of it to be mined for sand and gravel, what will be left of this priceless biolink, land of incalculable value, to do its bit for the environment?

Will offsets do the job? Does it make sense to you that cutting down mature forest and bulldozing the middle and under storeys and the ground cover could be compensated by and/or replaced by planting some seedlings elsewhere? Will saying we'll count another forest elsewhere as an offset do the job that, for instance, the Western Port Woodlands are currently doing?

Or is it common-sense to appreciate that native vegetation and the fauna dependent on it, once wiped out, are impossible to replicate to anything like the same standard? For instance, once wiped out on sites given over to sand mining, what will happen to the over 50 species of native orchids Bass Coast locals Ron Fletcher, the late Keith Hollole and Geoff Glare found and mapped in The Gurdies and Grantville areas?

Is our fast-disappearing virgin land so cheap we should be mining it for sand or so beyond value we couldn't put a price on it?

What is a realistic price for someone to pay to buy it or to obtain a work permit to mine it?

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The Last Word: Meryl Tobin Brown

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Are David Attenborough and top scientists correct in demonstrating our natural environment is something on which human life depends for its survival? Is it an economic, social and environmental priceless something that could go on *in perpetuity*?

Or should we continue to take notice of those who talk about 'balancing needs' and 'offsets' and continue to destroy remnant native vegetation for the 'cheap' sand underneath it? Should we ignore the fact that our biolink is being incrementally and continually nibbled at and chomped away until it is unviable?

If you were running Victoria, would you be running it with the main aim to keep yourself and your party in power for the next four years and hopefully the four years after that?

Or would you have a 10 year plan, a 25 year plan, a 50 year, 100 year, 500 year plan and 1000 year and a forever plan for your state? If not, should you?

This statement appeared in the Bass Coast Shire Council's Environment Sustainability Plan, 2008-2013: "One of the most critical local environmental issues for Bass Coast is that there is less than 10% of indigenous bush remaining from pre 1700s. There is research and a common acceptance that if there is 35% cover of native vegetation then 75-80% of species can survive, but below that level extinctions can accelerate rapidly."

Would you take action to rectify this issue or continue to exacerbate it by digging up more remnant indigenous pre-European bush?

Is opening up our Western Port Woodlands to a massive increase in sand extraction a short-sighted fate for an environmental and economic asset of value to benefit the community indefinitely?

Would you be a 'future-eater', a person who eats up the resources of not only their own generation but those of future generations and who make their profit at the expense of this and future generations?