



Upper Yarra
Community Enterprise

upperyarra.net.au

Newsletter 2010 December



Landcare HEROs

As the only community group in the McMahons Creek–Reefton area, Upper Yarra Landcare has a very diverse brief.

Its goals include raising awareness of and eliminating weed species; educating people about identifying and conserving flora and fauna; monitoring and maintaining healthy waterways; and inviting specialists to teach locals about environmental issues relevant to the district.

At the same time, Upper Yarra Landcare is committed to promoting community strength and 'connection'.

Formed only recently, the group already has reached a membership of 50.

One of its principal activities is the bi-annual Reefton R.O.C.S. (Remembering Our Community Strength) event, held to bring the community together, to promote environmental awareness and to raise funds for the Reefton CFA as well as for Landcare projects.

Upper Yarra Landcare gets together twice a month for ongoing projects such as weed eradication and revegetation, which are performed on both public and private land. Partners in these works include Yarra Ranges Council and the Scouts.

Other 'works in progress' include Waterwatch, Frog Census, fauna surveys, orchid / fungi 'walks and talks', invitations to guest speakers, establishing a website and forming subgroups in other parts of the Upper Yarra, such as Warburton.

Upper Yarra Landcare is also a key party in the *River HERO* project, an important regional initiative partnered by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and Yarra Ranges Council.

'The *River HERO* project aims to improve riparian management at a landscape scale by increasing ecological connectivity and creating biolinks on high priority Crown land,' said Upper Yarra Landcare President, Suzie Steiner.

'McMahons Creek is considered high priority and DSE has assigned Upper Yarra Landcare as the committee of management for the creek.

'Together we aim to eradicate environmental weeds, improve biodiversity and habitat and stabilise erosion problems,' Suzie said.

The partners are currently creating a management plan for the project, which will cost an estimated \$90,000 over five years. Melbourne Water has committed to providing 50% of the funds and Upper Yarra Landcare is seeking further sponsorship partners to make up the difference.

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited has committed \$4000 for the first year of the project, with future contributions subject to annual review.

'UYCE recognises the enormous environmental benefits of the *River HERO* project to our crucial waterways,' said Executive Officer, Geoff Vickers. 'Equally important, however, is Upper Yarra Landcare's commitment to making a small, strong community even stronger and more resilient.'

Suzie Steiner expects that other benefits evolving from the *River HERO* project will include training and learning opportunities for the community and even the possibility of local employment in project management, weed control works and administration.

'We are delighted that our Community Banks share our confidence in a bright future for community,' she said.

More information: upperyarralandcare@gmail.com

Community Grants & Sponsorships

Warburton RSL Sub Branch – \$2705 for a heavy duty mulcher

Warburton RSL Sub Branch was formed in 1945 to carry forward the traditions of the Returned Servicemen's League, established in 1919 after the First World War.

Its role is to care for the welfare of Veterans and their wives and families, and provide them with assistance. The RSL also represents members to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and to Legacy.

Warburton Sub Branch has a growing membership and is actively involved in the Upper Yarra community.



The UYCE-funded mulcher is being donated by the Sub Branch to the Residents Committee at AdventCare Yarra Valley residential aged care facility – which has ten adjacent units for independent living – where many war veterans and widows live.

As the facility management is unable to meet the costs involved the committee will use the mulcher to help maintain the property, cutting costs for all residents.

In turn this will reduce fire risks and produce useful mulch for the site. It will also encourage residents to get actively involved in gardening.

In appreciation for this community-spirited gesture, AdventCare has offered the Warburton RSL Sub Branch occasional use of its mini-bus so that members can attend a range of functions, which has always proven a challenge in the past.

SHARES AVAILABLE

There are currently interested parties looking to sell shares in Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited through the company's low volume market.

To register your interest in purchasing shares please contact Geoff Vickers (Executive Officer) on 5966 9028.

Yarra Ranges Enterprise Centres – \$10,000 contribution toward new decking

Yarra Ranges Enterprise Centres Ltd has been operating at its Woods Point Road site for about 10 years.

Founded under a Federal 'Business Incubator' scheme, its principal role is to provide affordable premises and utilities plus support and mentorship to newly-established local small businesses. YREC currently has 19 such businesses operating on the site.

It also hosts offices for Sarina Russo Job Access and Workbridge Disability Job Access, providing local contact points for clients and saving them costly and time-consuming trips 'down the line' for appointments.

YREC's facilities include a well-equipped meeting and training room and kitchen, for hire by other organisations and available at no charge to volunteer groups.

YREC also provides low-rent premises to Warburton Men's Shed, which provides a weekly contact point and workshop for local men.

All profits generated by YREC are used in improving site infrastructure.

UYCE's substantial contribution of \$10,000 will be used to help replace the badly deteriorated, 60-year-old decking which allows access to the meeting and training room.

The surface, at present, is a hazard to all users – particularly those with an infirmity.

The new hard timber and steel surface will complement a series of infrastructure improvements introduced in recent years.

Contact: yrec@bigpond.com

1st Warburton Scout Group – \$6200 for secure storage

Warburton Scouts has an active membership of about 40 local children – Joeys, Cubs and Scouts – supported by nine section leaders, who meet weekly in the hall at the Warburton-Millgrove Sports Club complex.

As this is a shared space, the Scouts have long needed lockable storage to keep their equipment separate and organised: formerly, the only alternative has been transporting gear to and from the site every single week.

'This generous response from Upper Yarra Community Enterprise will make life so much easier for 1st Warburton Scout Group,' said Secretary, Mary-Jane Warfield.

'We can now focus on what we do best: delivering a wide range of programs, activities and skills development to a great bunch of kids.'



EACH Social & Community Health – \$4840 for Shiralee Community Vegetable Garden

A well-known and widely respected body in the Upper Yarra (and many other regions), EACH delivers an expansive range of services and support to the community: physical and mental health services, counselling services and community inclusion programs.

EACH's *Shiralee House* program offers support and a range of activities to elderly people with dementia and people with a disability, in a community setting.



The planned Shiralee Community Garden, entirely funded by the current UYCE grant, will be located in downtown Yarra Junction and meet a diverse series of targets: developing a sense of responsibility, wellbeing and achievement among clients (many of whom are isolated and disadvantaged); encouraging both interaction between clients and partnerships with the local community; promoting the programs and services provided by Shiralee House and hence encouraging a better understanding of the issues surrounding disability; and improving nutrition and healthy food choices across the community.

Gladysdale Primary School – \$5729 contribution toward 'soft-fall' mulch

A series of improvements and changes at the School, including a new building constructed with BER funds (requiring storage and relocation of existing play equipment) and the deterioration of aged softfall in other play areas had left Gladysdale Primary with some unbudgeted costs.

UYCE's funding will cover the provision of materials for the projects, which will be undertaken later this year during drier weather conditions.

Upper Yarra Youth Theatre Group – \$2000 contribution to End of Year productions

UYCE is delighted to be able to support our Youth Theatre Group, which works so hard and achieves so much, year after year, in not only delivering some wonderful performances to the community but also in teaching performance skills to our children, youth and young adults.



Equally importantly, the Youth Theatre Group provides a welcoming, inclusive environment which helps to build confidence, a sense of achievement and friendship among its young participants.

Misfit Theatre performed *Windmills* over three days in early December, while the Youth Theatre Group delivered three performances of *Beauty and the Beast* later in the month.

Enquiries: princess.bec@hotmail.com Tickets: 5966 4500.

St Joseph's, Yarra Junction – \$9000 contribution toward Sports and Performing Arts Centre

Federal BER funding enabled St Joseph's Primary School to build a magnificent new sports and performing arts complex with a seating capacity of more than 500 – by far the largest facility in the Valley – which the School is keen to share with the broader community.

Unfortunately, the BER funds did not cover stage equipment such as curtains, sound gear and lighting.

UYCE's contribution forms part of a much broader fundraising effort by St Joseph's, which will hopefully see the Centre fully-equipped and operating to its optimum potential in the very near future.





Yarra Junction Football and Netball Club – \$4000 for canteen upgrade

The clubrooms and facilities shared by Yarra Junction Football and Netball Clubs work hard 12 months a year: the Cricket Club uses them over the summer and the Junior Footy Club makes use of them as well.

Because all of these user groups encourage involvement by families, friends and the broader community the clubrooms experience a lot of traffic and wear-and-tear at any given time, which takes its toll on equipment – and on volunteers.

UYCE's funding will provide a new gas stove (the old one no longer works properly), a new dishwasher (which will make life a lot easier for hardworking volunteers) and a wall-mounted nappy-change bench, located in the disabled toilet (enabling parents to attend to their babies in private and with dignity, rather than in public as at present).

'These improvements will be incredibly positive,' said Club Secretary, Sally Brennan. 'Operations will be more efficient, our volunteers will enjoy a greater sense of achievement and less pressure, while our user groups and guests will feel better served and more welcome.'

Songs from the Valley Below (community arts project) – \$2000 contribution

Local community artist, Santha Press, has created an ambitious performance project to combine music, poetry / spoken word, voiceover, video / photographic projection and movement in a cohesive theatrical production.

The themes of the production are our relationships with the natural environment and sharing our experiences post Black Saturday. Santha expects that *Songs* will value add other programs being run in the region and provide an opportunity for disparate members of the community to come together in a non-denominational, inclusive way.

A large number of community groups, schools and organisations are involved, providing a range of skills and resources. Collaborative workshops commenced in October, with the performance scheduled for 12 March.

Enquiries welcome: santha@hotmail.net.au

Have a say in the **future** of your **community** **Director, Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited**

Expressions of interest are invited for the position of Director of Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited, operators of Warburton and Yarra Junction **Community Bank**[®] Branches of Bendigo Bank.

As a volunteer Director you will act as an ambassador for our Branches, actively building their customer base. You will also provide the leadership and management skills at Board level to support and drive the Company's strategic direction, goals and objectives.

Although the position is voluntary, as a director of our Company you will have a real say in the future direction of both **Community Bank**[®] Branches and your community.

Further information is available from Geoff Vickers on 5966 9028. Forward your expression of interest to: UYCEL, P.O. Box 434, Warburton, VIC. 3799.

Who is Upper Yarra Community Enterprise?

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited is a community-owned company whose core purpose is the advancement of the Upper Yarra Community.

During its relatively short life since February 2000 UYCEL has provided more than \$1.2 million to local community based projects and organisations.

How can I support my community and UYCEL?

By simply doing an everyday activity, your banking.

UYCEL earns its income by operating the franchises of Warburton and Yarra Junction **Community Bank**[®] branches of Bendigo Bank. A cornerstone of the **Community Bank**[®] model is the distribution of profits to the community.

How can my community group access funding from UYCEL?

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise distributes funds to worthy community projects through Community Grants and sponsorships.

Community Grants

Applications for Community Grants are received twice a year, closing at the end of February and August.

In broad terms a Community Grant is defined as: Funds provided (after a formal submission to the Company) to meet the specific needs of a Not-For-Profit organisation.

Sponsorships

Sponsorship proposals are welcomed throughout the year; a response can be expected within six weeks of submission.

Sponsorship is defined as: The purchase of association with an event, entrant, activity or organisation which results in increased brand awareness, communication of key messages and increased customer base.

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Ltd owns and operates the Warburton and Yarra Junction **Community Bank**[®] branches. Sponsorships will be assessed on their capacity to promote these brands.

Community Grant applications and Sponsorship Proposals can be completed and submitted via our website: www.upperyarra.net.au

For assistance with grant applications and sponsorships or any other queries about UYCEL please call in to either of our **Community Bank**[®] branches or call 5966 9028.

Local food initiatives ...

A sustainable food enterprise

ECOSS – formerly Upper Yarra Community Environment Park – is developing an exciting, multi-faceted community enterprise comprising sustainable food production, product marketing and the creation of a food knowledge bank.

The *Sustainable Food Enterprise Project* will engage with a wide range of community groups, local farmers and businesses in all aspects of the enterprise.

UYCE funding of \$9000 will support the employment of a project co-ordinator to implement the development of a sustainable farm on ECOSS's Wesburn site.

The farm will yield a range of organic produce which will be sold to local cafés, markets and greengrocers.

With establishments costs of up to \$100,000 over the first financial year, ECOSS projects that revenue will increase to more than \$80,000 per annum after three years.

The project is partnered by CERES and has been



shortlisted for 'The Crunch' Social Traders social enterprise support program, while further funding is pending from ABC Open Gardens and Climate Communities.

More information: log on to facebook and search for Upper Yarra Community Environment Park.

Rediscovering 'slower' food skills

In its first year of operations, Koha Community Café has gone from strength to strength.

Having opened last February, thanks to UYCE seed funding and an affordable venue provided by Yarra Ranges Council, the Café has been serving affordable, nutritious vegetarian meals to an average number of 65–70 guests every Thursday evening at the Yarraburn Centre in Yarra Junction.

Koha's latest initiative – a pilot scheme, funded by a \$3300 grant from UYCE – is the *Not so fast Food* project, which aims to deliver simple, traditional food preparation knowledge and skills to anyone who wishes to learn them.

'Alongside the convenience of takeaway food, packaged instant meals and processed foods, many people have missed the opportunity to learn how to prepare basic meals from scratch, using fresh ingredients,' said Koha pioneer and co-ordinator, Suyin Chan. 'These "value-added" foods are also relatively expensive and can impact heavily on budgets for low-income families.

'*Not so fast Food* will also deliver useful, hands-on information about traditional kitchen techniques such as preserving, pickling and jam-making, so people can take full advantage of cheaper seasonal produce,' she said.

The café's 'pay what you can afford' principle, based on inclusiveness, trust and goodwill, has proven so effective that Koha's weekly cashflow now (barely!) covers weekly overheads – proving the concept is sustainable.

Over the past few months, Koha has engaged two paid staff – a chef and a support worker. Thanks to a Council grant it has delivered Food Safety Training (Certificates I and II) to many of its volunteers; it also has catered for a series of local community events and hosted several special evenings at the café, including plant-swaps, parties, volunteer get-togethers and a couple of special activities nights for children. Impromptu live music is, more often than not, a feature at the café.

'The beating heart of Koha is, and always will be, our volunteers,' according to Suyin Chan. 'With about 50 people donating anything from an hour a month to several hours a week, we treasure each of them. They set up, they clean up afterwards, they help with food prep, they serve meals, desserts, tea and coffee. They support and mentor each other. They entertain us ... sometimes on-stage and often on-the-job! We also have a small team of 'community gardeners' who are working to ensure our fresh produce quotas are met as often as possible.'

More info: email suyin@internode.on.net or log on to facebook and search for Koha.



Our longstanding commitment to Driver Education

For several years UYCE has prioritised the compelling need for young, inexperienced drivers to be as well-trained as possible.

'Newly-licensed drivers have long been over-represented in traffic accident statistics, including many tragic fatalities,' said UYCE Executive Officer, Geoff Vickers.

'Our Board has a history of seeking ways to equip our youth with the necessary skills, attitude and confidence to help ensure their survival on our increasingly busy roads.'

Since 2007 UYCE has been running a subsidised course in partnership with the long-established and highly regarded Driver Training Academy.



'Class Driver' delivers a comprehensive package of theory and hands-on practice over five full days (or 14 shorter sessions). There are three students with an instructor and vehicle. Students complete 16 exercises and associated assessments. At the successful completion of the assessments the student receives an accredited Statement of Attainment at Certificate I in Road Transport.

Class Driver is open to all learner-drivers who live in the region. The course fee (from \$750) can be paid in full but heavy discounts apply for customers of Warburton and Yarra Junction Community Banks – and further discounts apply for Bendigo Bank Telco customers: most Class Driver participants pay around \$350 and some as little as \$100, according to eligibility.

Further information on the Class Driver program, including a downloadable flier and registration form, is available from our website: upperyarra.net.au – click on the 'Driver Education' link.



More recently we have extended our involvement in 'Driver Ed' by partnering Yarra Ranges Council Youth Services and Swinburne University in the 'L2P' (Learner Driver Mentor) program.

Funded by the TAC and VicRoads and facilitated by the Council, L2P matches learner drivers – who don't have access to a vehicle or a suitable adult 'teacher' – with volunteer mentors and access to a vehicle in which to learn and practise.

The co-sponsorship of a new vehicle for L2P by Woori Yallock **Community Bank**® Branch and UYCE was celebrated with a sausage sizzle and Harley rides in Yarra Junction during Mentoring Week in October.

More information:

www.yrys.com/info_and_support/l2p_program

