



Upper Yarra
Community Enterprise

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Newsletter 2010

June

Nordic but nice



Warburton has a longstanding tradition of conducting successful festivals but a few weeks ago explored entirely new territory with the inaugural Nordic Festival.

Over the weekend of 22 and 23 May, an estimated 3000 people – locals and visitors from far and wide – participated in a celebration of 'everything Nordic' ... food, music, fashion, history and folklore, games, pastimes, hobbies and popular culture.

'Australia has a wide range of multicultural events but no single event celebrating all five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden),' said festival co-ordinator, Leila Myllymaeki-Hay.

'The aim of this event was not only to attract visitors to Warburton Valley but to introduce locals to another culture without them having to leave the town!

'The response from the community has been very positive. Traders up and down the main street have reported one of their busiest weekends ever and many, many people have told me they had a wonderful time,' she said.

The highlights of the weekend included the BABBA dance party on Saturday night (BABBA is a leading ABBA tribute band), a Viking re-enactment camp, the Viking Long Boat and artefacts display, Nordic films at the Mecca Theatre and music and dance performances by Nordic performers, as well as an art exhibition and a market selling Scandinavian goods.

'As this event is unique, it attracted good media coverage and publicity was tremendous,' said Leila. There were write-ups in a range of publications and Leila was interviewed by several radio programs including 774-ABC, SBS Radio and regional radio programs, while Channel 7's travel show 'Coxy's Big Break' spent the entire Sunday filming the event.

Leila expressed her thanks to the Victorian Nordic community, UYCE and Warburton Chamber of Commerce for getting behind the Festival, and looks forward to making next year's Festival even bigger and better.

'Successful businesses are essential for the wellbeing and sustainability of any town. When they do well, the benefits flow back to drive fundraising projects, while jobs are retained and new jobs created,' said Leila.



Photographs: Bobbie Wilkinson

Community Grants & Sponsorships

Yarra Junction Cricket Club – \$8000 contribution toward airconditioning of clubrooms

Although the sports clubrooms at Yarra Junction oval are one of the most popular and well-used facilities in the Upper Yarra – even serving as a meeting place during bushfire emergencies – usage of the buildings has been limited over the years due to their lack of adequate cooling in summer and heating in winter.

In order to increase the amenity of the site for existing user groups, as well as to service the needs of potential users, the Cricket Club partnered with both the Yarra Junction Senior Football Club and the Yarra Junction Junior Football Club in seeking a UYCE grant to install split-system airconditioning to the main room.

The total cost of the installations – the first phase in a program to fully aircondition the building – is \$12,320 and the Clubs will contribute the balance.



‘These improvements offer several nett benefits,’ said UYCE Executive Officer, Geoff Vickers.

‘In improving comfort for a large number of the sports clubs members, supporters and visitors, value-adding the building will make it more user-friendly and hence more attractive for a range of other community activities and functions.’

Extending multiple purpose use of existing public facilities has been targetted by the Shire’s ‘Vision 2020’ blueprint and also by the Active Upper Yarra Project.

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.

Millwarra Primary School – \$4415 for Breakaway Electives program



Millwarra established a series of elective subjects in 2006 in order to encourage hands-on learning for small groups of students in a supportive environment.

Over the past four years the program has proven both popular and successful as it continues to grow and evolve to address changing needs.

Operating in blocks of two hours a week on- and off-campus, staff and volunteers work closely with children in developing practical skills, which are documented in the students’ workbooks and evaluated by an instructor at the end of every session.

Breakaway Electives for this year build on close working relationships with Ben’s Shed in Yarra Junction and Dorothy Edgelow’s Children’s Whole Health Foundation, which was funded by UYCE last year to establish a food garden at the school’s Millwarra campus.

Elective activities include bike-building, cooking, woodcraft, sewing, pottery, flower-craft, leadlighting, claymation (and robotics) and the ‘Ground to Table’ sessions focussed around the school garden.

‘The Breakaway model enables children to relate to their instructor on a more personal level, thus giving room for mentoring relationships,’ said Coordinator, Laureen Knight.

‘Students look forward to their weekly sessions and often surprise themselves with achievements they did not know were possible.

‘There is always an overflow effect from these programs to parents and families, thus drawing greater interest and involvement. This, in turn, adds encouragement and value for the children.

‘Our hands-on electives have truly become a major, distinctive attribute of Millwarra Primary School,’ she said.

Enquiries and offers of help are always welcome: call the school on 5966 2518.

Upper Yarra Community House – \$10,000 for wheelchair access

A long-established not for profit organisation dedicated to serving our community, UYCH Inc. operates a vast range of programs and activities – both locally and further afield.

Its Out of School Hours Service, based in Little Yarra Road, Yarra Junction, provides both before and after school care as well as vacation care, catering for eight local primary schools.

With attendances up to 45 children per session, the service operates in a former church which historically has posed significant access issues for disabled people.

‘Our slogan – “Connecting people to learning and life” – highlights UYCH’s commitment to access and inclusion to everyone in our community,’ said Jenny Holinger, Manager of Family and Children’s Services.

‘However, wheelchair access to both the building and the outside toilet block has always been problematic: the existing facilities don’t really allow either independence or privacy.

‘The UYCE grant will fund renovations and additions including the construction of a wheelchair ramp with a covered walkway between the two buildings, plus sensor lights,’ she said.

The improvements promise greater amenity for a diverse range of user groups for many years to come – and reinforce UYCH’s longstanding and well-known commitment to inclusion.

Valley Rangers (Valley Christian Fellowship) – \$1500 for bus hire

Dedicated to supporting children from Prep to Year 12 since 1995, Valley Rangers has the mission of ‘Reaching out, equipping and empowering a generation’ to achieve lives of purpose and destiny, equipped with life skills and leadership ability and the know-how to tackle any challenge.

Rangers will be using the UYCE grant to fund bus-hire in order to transport children from Millgrove and Warburton to their Friday evening activities in Woori Yallock.

With their program running the full school year – from February to December, 2010 – Rangers anticipate that the bus will enable more children to participate.

Yarra Ranges Film Society – \$2000 sponsorship of 2010 Warburton Film Festival



Now in its 27th year and held every June, Warburton’s ‘Filmfest’ is firmly established as a major regional cultural event.

A principal partner alongside the Shire of Yarra Ranges, UYCE has been associated with the event for several years.


‘For the last two years we have had the privilege of having Paul Cox (Film Director) as our Festival Patron. His encouragement and interest in our progress is always a wonderful boost to our ever growing popular event,’ said YRFS President, Joseph Guthrie.

‘Special guests to the Festival over the years have included actors Chris Hayward, Christopher Bunworth, Elspeth Balantyne and Wendy Hughes; directors Sarah Whatt and Paul Cox; and Professor Ian Lang, Head of the VCA Film Department,’ he said.

The Annual Film Festival also features a relatively new event called ‘Show us Your Shorts’, now in its third year. This is a competition designed to encourage young film makers to produce a short film. These films are submitted prior to the festival and are judged accordingly. Prizes are awarded and presentations made prior to the main film festival’s weekend programme.

The Festival is run by the Yarra Ranges Film Society, one of the Upper Yarra’s most dynamic organisations and, with a current membership of 85, also one of the largest.

During the rest of the year the Society’s principal activity is its monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. After a film screening a light supper is served, giving members and visitors an opportunity to meet and chat, while an informal discussion group is held separately for members who are interested in talking about aspects of the movie.



The meetings occasionally feature a guest who has been involved in the film, and members get the opportunity to hear an insider's experiences – behind or in front of the camera.

The Society also has a resident poet, Fritz Rappold, who possesses a rare ability to precis films in poetic words. These little gems are circulated every month after the viewing of the film.

For more information about the Society, visit yarrangesfilmsociety.org.au



L2P program – \$2500 shared sponsorship with Woori Yallock Community Bank

The L2P (Learner to Probationary) program aims to match fully licensed volunteer mentors with learner drivers (aged 16–21) to successfully obtain the mandatory 120 hours of driving practice in order to gain their probationary drivers licence.

‘It’s a fact of life that not all young people have equal opportunities to learn to drive,’ said UYCE Executive Officer, Geoff Vickers. ‘L2P helps to bridge this gap by providing not only road safety education and training, but vehicles and experienced drivers to support those who don’t have access to them.’

‘The program also aims to increase the broader skills of young people, hopefully leading to education and employment opportunities and, most importantly, to build strong, trusting relationships between youth and adults by providing positive role models,’ he said.

UYCE has a longstanding commitment to better training for young drivers, having launched the ‘Class Driver’ initiative in 2007.

This program offered discounted intensive driver training courses to senior secondary students in the Upper Yarra region.

Another milestone for the Community Banks family

Over the past few weeks Bendigo and Adelaide Bank’s **Community Bank®** network celebrated a momentous achievement, announcing it had returned more than \$40 million to support local community groups and projects right across Australia.

The milestone further strengthens the importance of the **Community Bank®** network as an alternative source of funding for local community initiatives.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank’s Executive, Customer and Community Russell Jenkins, said the **Community Bank®** initiative has far exceeded all expectations.

‘Reaching \$40 million in returned profit to the community is a fabulous achievement and provides more proof that this innovative banking model is robust and sustainable,’ Mr Jenkins said.

‘Behind that statistic are hundreds of stories of **Community Bank®** branches making a real difference to the lives of everyday Australians.’

Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited Chairman, Max Magee, said he was proud to be part of a banking network that supports local communities.

‘Our Warburton and Yarra Junction Branches are dedicated to the continued prosperity of the Upper Yarra community,’ he said.

‘Since our business first turned a profit, many years ago, UYCEL have been supportive partners in countless projects with dozens of bodies – from schools and churches to environmental groups and cultural events – all focussed on empowering community: our local organisations, our local people. We look to the future with optimism that these wonderful relationships and achievements will continue,’ said Max.

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. Please forward your expression of interest to: UYCEL, P.O. Box 434, Warburton, VIC. 3799.

Celebrating all things cycling



penny-farthing races, skills competitions, chariot bike competitions, '4 cross' races, group rides, unicycles, kids' competitions and the 'Warburton adventure tour'.



Supplementary activities included a celebration of 'Art Bikes', 'Rollapolusa' – held at Cogs Café in Mt Evelyn – and the screening of the Oscar-nominated animated feature 'Les Triplettes de Belleville' at Upper Yarra Arts Centre.

Danny Kurkha is already planning for Warburton Cycle Fest 2011.

'Our first festival was a spectacular success,' he said, 'and people are excited about the next one.'



'Never having done it before we had a few hiccups, of course, but learnt a terrific amount about how we can make the event even better – and we will.'

Danny expressed his sincere thanks to everyone who supported the festival – participants, the many sponsors and, particularly, his team of volunteers.

'I'd like to single out some people for special mention,' he said. 'We couldn't have done it without Damian Auton – surely the man of the event – together with Jeff Gill and Libby.'



UYCEL Executive Officer, Geoff Vickers, congratulated Danny and the League on a sensational weekend that both promoted the region and encouraged people of all ages to get active.

For more information on Warburton Cycle Fest, visit warburtoncyclefest.com.au

The contact email address is: wcfest@gmail.com

The rapidly increasing use of the Lilydale to Warburton 'Rail Trail' over recent years has seen the Upper Yarra – and Warburton in particular – become a frequent destination for cyclists as much as for walkers.

At the same time, diverse forms of recreational cycling have become increasingly popular ways to get fit (and stay fit) while having fun in the great outdoors.

Local enthusiast, Danny Kurkha, decided to capture some of this energy and enthusiasm in organising a Warburton Cycle Fest as a true celebration of 'all things cycling'.

He approached longstanding partner of UYCE – the Warburton Advancement League – for support and the League got right behind the project, successfully applying for a one-off grant of \$2000. The grant was supplemented by a \$2000 UYCE sponsorship.

Held over the first weekend in May, the Cycle Fest proved a hit with both locals and visitors and offered a huge array of events, including cross-country, downhill, cyclocross, dirt jumps, trials, a road race, a hill-climb, bike polo, bike orienteering, 'fixie' (fixed hub) races,



Swings and roundabouts ... 2010



Warburton Primary School \$12,728 for new play equipment

Warburton Primary is a real hive of activity these days!

Infrastructure additions, promised well over a year ago under the Federal Government's 'Building the Education Revolution' program, are (at time of writing) about to commence.

When the works were announced, several people had expressed concern that the school would lose one of its most popular play areas but co-principal, Kerry Jorgensen, said this was a classic case of 'swings and roundabouts'.

'Some of our equipment is, admittedly, getting a bit long in the tooth – and many of the older timber structures don't really meet the needs of our kids any more,' Kerry said.

'In order to ensure our play installations continue to offer safe but challenging activities for children, we partnered with River Valley Church in approaching Upper Yarra Community Enterprise for funds to install a significant equipment upgrade, comprising two separate activity centres.

'Thanks to a very prompt response all round, these were erected a few weeks ago.'



The new equipment is proving extremely popular with students of all ages and has become a focal point during school recess.

'Since we have almost no budget for improvements of this nature, the School is extremely grateful to our Community Banks for their ongoing support. I don't know where we'd be without them!' Kerry said.

