

Saluting our Shire's top citizens

Dual winners of Loddon Shire's Citizen of the Year award for 2014 were Thelma Powell, of Boort, and Susan Horsley-Wyatt, of Newbridge.

The pair were among 10 recipients honoured during formal ceremonies across Loddon Shire in January, when the municipality's 2014 Australia Day Awards were announced.

The award for Young Citizen of the Year was shared between Mitch Henderson, of Lake Marmal, and Tandarra's Lachlan Twigg, while the Community Group of the Year award went to Newbridge CWA.

Community service awards were also given out in all five wards. The recipients were Alister McDougall (Boort), Sue Brown (Inglewood), Lorna Stewart (Tarnagulla), Vaughan Herrick (Terrick) and Darryl Arnott (Wedderburn).

Nine centres across the municipality – from Eddington and Newbridge in the south to Pyramid Hill and Boort up north – saw residents gather around barbecues, lunches and morning tea to salute our national day.

Eight Victorians with notable records in community service visited the Shire as Australia Day Ambassadors.

Susan Alberti, successful property developer and a major supporter of juvenile diabetes research, went to Wedderburn, while medical specialist and music educator Dr Yvonne Ho visited Boort.

Mitiamo-born John Forbes, former sports administrator and Victoria Police Blue Ribbon Foundation (Tynan-Eyre Memorial Foundation) chairman since 1988, spoke at Newbridge.

Author and teacher-librarian Nerelie Teese was the guest at Mitiamo and Pyramid Hill, while Pam Adams, of Wodonga, named a Victorian Local Hero last year for her tireless volunteering, travelled to Inglewood.

Businessman and philanthropist Phil Huzzard spoke at Bridgewater, Fire Services Commissioner executive Tony Murphy at Tarnagulla and Vedran Drakulic, humanitarian and CEO of Gandel Philanthropy, went to Eddington.

Thelma Powell was born in Boort and has lived in the town for most of her 97 years.

A committed volunteer since the age of 12, her involvements have included the Boort RSL Women's Auxiliary, the Boort branch of Vision Australia, Boort's football and golf clubs, church organist, choir member, Boort show steward and Boort Probud.

Sue Horsley-Wyatt has lived in Newbridge since the 1980s, giving her time to such groups as the local progress association, football/netball club, junior cricketers, the recreation reserve committee and the hotel social club.

Young Citizen of the Year joint winner Mitch Henderson has excelled at several sports, performed at Kool Skools, led the way in church and youth activities, acted as a pool lifeguard and tutored younger students.

Fellow recipient Lachlan Twigg participates in a number of local sports, helps at Dingee's Biggest Morning Tea, has taken leadership roles at school and received a scholarship to the National Youth Science Forum in Canberra.

Newbridge CWA took the honours as Community Group of the Year for its members' dedication to raising funds for such diverse charitable causes as the McGrath Foundation, Inglewood Nursing Home, CareFlight, Travellers Aid, Alzheimers Australia and the Dunolly Hospital Auxiliary.

This small, but active, group also co-ordinates Australia Day and Anzac Day activities in the town and caters for local functions.



Loddon Shire Mayor Cr Gavan Holt congratulates joint Citizen of the Year Thelma Powell at Boort.

Our student winners

Loddon Shire's Australia Day competition attracted a large number of entries from students around the municipality.

In the colouring competitions, Dempsey Lee (from Pyramid Hill) won the kindergarten section, Ava Maxted (East Loddon) and Travis Lowe (Wedderburn) the preps, Christa Anil (Inglewood) Grade 1 and Ella Bailey (Wedderburn) the Grade 2 section.

In photography, Ashlee Bowen, of Bridgewater, won the junior category, Shelby Newton (Pyramid Hill) was the senior winner and Lorraine Douglas (Tarnagulla) took out the open section.

The winners in the literature competition, writing on the subject "Discoveries made in Loddon", were Nathan Collins, from East Loddon preps section), Mahala Brown, Boort (Grade 1), Joshua Diss, East Loddon (Grade 2), Tarneisha Mztiasi, Wedderburn (Grade 3), Kelsea Nisbet, Wedderburn (Grade 4), Matilda Gallagher, Tarnagulla (Grade 5), and Georgia Primrose, East Loddon (Grade 6).

Joint Year 7 winners were Jessica Gunther, from Pyramid Hill, and Finn Poxon, of Boort, while the Year 8 prize was shared between Steven Gunther and Bailey Pickersgill, both from Pyramid Hill.

Emily Gonder (Wedderburn) won for Year 9, Jye Moffatt (Wedderburn) for Year 10 and Alexandra Reimers (Bridgewater) took the honours in Year 11.

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Loddon Bulletin

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Easter closures

Loddon Shire offices in Wedderburn and Serpentine will close for the Easter break at 5pm on Thursday 17 April, reopening at 8.15am on Tuesday 22 April.

Council's home and community services will also be closed for the break, though a limited personal care program will still be operating. For emergency assistance over these four days, phone 0427 804 736.

Public holiday waste and recycling collections

Kerbside garbage and recycling collections around the Labour Day and Easter long weekends will be carried out on the usual collection days.

Landfills and transfer stations will be closed on Easter Saturday.



Loddon Bulletin

Strong communities proud of their individual identities

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Not even a devastating flood could douse the dream of Bridgewater Bakehouse owner Pat O'Toole, who moved to the small town several years ago. Pat's story will be one of many to be shared when Loddon Shire participates in this year's Regional Victoria Living Expo in Melbourne. Stories, Pages 1-3

Lifestyle choice a winner

Up to 10,000 visitors and 150 exhibitors are expected to attend the third Regional Victoria Living Expo, planned for the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 11-13 April.

This expo is the latest in a series of four being staged by the Victorian government to drive population and investment in regional and rural Victoria.

It brings together under the one roof all 11 regions and 48 councils operating in Victoria, as well as representatives of industry and businesses, to talk to visitors about such issues as housing affordability, job vacancies, investment prospects, education options and sporting, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Loddon Shire was represented at the expo last year by six Council staff, who did such a great job that they brought home the award for Best Council Stand.

Council's stocks of printed material and promotional DVDs were exhausted as expo patrons plied our helpers with their questions.

With 15 per cent more visitors than the previous year's inaugural event, the expo was hailed a huge success – official attendance figures showed almost 9,500 people attended.

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The grand building now home to Inglewood Emporium has a long history of commercial uses going back to 1861.

New arrivals slot right in

For Denise and Stephen Gartside, the move to Inglewood may have been pushed along by an unforeseen event, but they have no regrets.

The Gartside's own and operate Inglewood Emporium in Brooke St, a trader in Australian household collectables, clothing and furniture dating back to about 1900.

Denise, originally from Bendigo, and Steven, from Harcourt, lived and worked in Castlemaine for more than 20 years.

"We rented a shop there for our collectables business, but were always looking to buy," Denise said.

"We'd been up this way quite a few times visiting similar types of stores.

"We'd actually looked at our current building quite a few times in passing and absolutely loved the history of Inglewood – we thought it would suit our business down to the ground.

"In February, 2012, Castlemaine was flooded and a metre of water went through our store. That prompted us to explore a bit more the options of moving.

"We put our house on the market after a lot of deliberation and it sold in four weeks.

"We then put in an offer on this building, which ticked all our boxes, and here we are.

"The three shops contained in it were built in 1861 as a produce

and merchant's store owned by town identity Joseph Tivey, who ran that for many years.

"His two sons eventually took over the business and operated it until 1931, when the Nixon family bought it and ran it until the 1970s."

Denise said it was a huge effort to move all their stock as well as their home contents.

"We'd lived there for 23 years," she said.

"It's been a really good move. Location was one of the prime considerations, being on a highway, and that's proved most advantageous.

"All the second-hand stores here are very good at networking and all have been very welcoming – we all have something unique to offer.

"Inglewood has become a destination for people from Melbourne and Bendigo and that has increased business for all of us.

"We've been embraced as part of the community and genuinely welcomed and that's really nice.

"It's quiet, but still has a hospital, ambulance and chemist. It's also close enough to Bendigo in case we need something we can't get here.

"So far, it's been a very pleasant experience."

Lifestyle choice a winner

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The free event included performances from arts, cultural, music and dance groups, input from council ambassadors, seminars on practical aspects of relocating and a kids' "interactive zone".

There were also special appearances by singer-songwriter Mark Seymour, cricketers Anna and Meg Lanning and Clint McKay and former AFL footballers Brad Ottens, Cameron Mooney, Dean Rice and Robert DiPierdomenico.

Council's Director Economy and Community, Bryan McEwan, said the expo presented an unparalleled opportunity for Loddon Shire to reach potential visitors and residents.

"Over the past two years, we've found the key interest areas for expo patrons are jobs, real estate and lifestyle," Mr McEwan said.

"We can easily talk about our open spaces, our agriculture and national parks, but job prospects, house prices and lifestyle issues are what matter to the great majority of visitors to our stand.

"This year, we'll have our updated booklets, brochures and DVDs to give away, plus one or two 'extras' which should produce plenty of interest.

"We have some great success stories to share here in Loddon and we're looking forward to doing that in Melbourne."

Family's big move proves a runaway success

Pat and Theresa O'Toole came to Bridgewater looking for a better life and they're in no doubt they've found it.

Now a busy family of five – with children Hayden, 9, Hannah, 5, and Emma, 2 – Pat and Theresa are the owners of the thriving Bridgewater Bakehouse on the Calder Highway in the centre of town.

"We are originally from Seymour, where I was a baker for 10 years, but we came to Bridgewater mostly for life in a small town," Pat said.

"I grew up in Pyalong and we wanted the kids to grow up in a smaller town, too."

Pat also runs his own transport company, carting water for Coliban Water to towns such as Serpentine, Raywood and Sebastian.

"Theresa and I rented a house over here, but we felt it would be good to buy something," he said.

"We looked at some houses, then found this place and thought it would be a good idea to open a bakery.

"I wasn't initially thinking of going back to baking, but we believed we'd found the right building, so decided to do it.

"The building went up in the 1870s and was originally a pub and a bank before being turned into flats – it's still one of the oldest buildings in town."

The O'Tooles bought the property in April 2010 with the idea of opening for business within 12 months.

Their plans were tracking well, but the devastating floods of the following January brought a huge setback.

Floodwaters reached a peak of over a metre through their property, resulting in an eight-month delay and repair costs of around \$190,000.

"When the floods came through, the building dropped and we had to lift it over 40mm at a cost of \$60,000," Pat said.

The O'Tooles eventually opened the Bridgewater Bakehouse on December 26, 2011.

"These days, business is very good – we've doubled our Christmas trade over the past two years with 1,000 more customers than last year," Pat said.

"Every day, we're seeing 400-500 customers through the doors.

"Everything is made from scratch here – we produce all our own breads and pies and employ more than 20 people.

"We also buy as much of our materials as we can here – in a small town, you have to support the local businesses and they'll support you.

"Our eggs are bought locally, our meat's from the butcher in Inglewood and our flour from Laucke's.

"It's a good community – I love it. It's how life should be.

"Everything's easy – if you want something, people will put their hand up to help you. Do the right thing by them and they do the same to you."



The busy bakery at Bridgewater has become a popular meeting place for travellers and locals alike.

See for yourself

Ever wondered how grassroots democracy works?

See for yourself by taking a front-row seat at one of Council's monthly meetings, which are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month (apart from December) at the Serpentine Council Chambers in Peppercorn Way, starting at 3pm.

Council agendas provide a glimpse into the many and varied issues Councillors tackle and hearing the way the meeting is run gives an insight into the traditions and values of the Shire in which you live.

Meeting dates for the remainder of this year are 25 March, 22 April, 27 May, 24 June, 22 July, 26 August, 23 September, 28 October, 25 November and 16 December.

Interested members of the public are always most welcome to attend.



New splash of colour

Art pieces created by students at all four of the Shire's secondary colleges were placed on permanent display at Council pools this past summer.

Acting on an idea from Shire Recreation Officer Tony Bellenger, students were given supplies of blueboard and paint and asked to design a house front. The pieces shown, at Wedderburn pool (above) and Mitiamo, reveal something of the result.



Council backing a boost for local clubs



This month's Minelab Detector Jamboree and Boort Pacing Cup are two high-profile events supported in part by Council sponsorship.

Community members around Loddon Shire have been given a helping hand from Council as they plan for, and stage, their sporting and cultural events during the first half of this year.

At its meeting last December, Council approved a further \$10,400 in funding support to add to the \$11,000 it had previously allocated to cover the last six months of 2013.

Council's Events Sponsorship Scheme has seen more than \$182,000 allocated to community groups to promote events held within the municipality since its beginnings in 1999.

Two funding categories are available – major events (those of regional or state significance) and minor events (of local and sub-regional significance).

The first can attract grants of \$1,000 to help with promotion and marketing, while the other qualifies for \$400.

This time around, 18 applications were approved for funding.

The Bridgewater Water Ski Club received a \$1,000 grant for the Australian Masters Championship, as did the Bridgewater Football Netball Club (Bridgewater Triathlon), Wedderburn Tourism (Minelab Detector Jamboree), Boort Harness Racing Club (Boort Cup) and the Rheola Charity Carnival.

Among the recipients in the Minor Events category were Calivil Bowling Club (New Year's Day Tournament), Wedderburn Band

Cricket Club (Six-a-Side Tournament), Boort Lawn Tennis Club (Easter Tournament), Dingee Progress Association (Family Fun Day) and Inglewood Bowling Club (Charlie Catto Memorial Fours).

Bridgewater Football Netball Club secretary Bryan Ryan said Council's support of the club's annual Bridgewater Triathlon event was keenly appreciated.

"Along with other sponsorships we receive, it certainly helps us to stage the event," Mr Ryan said.

"The triathlon has been going now for about eight years now and there's lots to pay for, but all the major prizes are bought from within the Shire."

The 11th Bridgewater FNC Triathlon and Duathlon was held on 2 February, with 280 participants competing over three course types – 40 more than last time.

Dingee Progress Association president Robert Plant agreed Council's funding support was a significant help.

"The Family Fun Day (held on 22 February) has been going for 20 years and is a great thing to bring the local community together," he said.

"The association has 25 members and nearly all are actively involved each year, as we get an average attendance of around 150 people.

"The Shire's grant is certainly a help and we appreciate whatever Council does for us."