

## Celebrate Mooroolbark: a 21st to remember



# Hello from the Living Today team

**Belonging to a place is central to us as human beings.** I recently sat down with my father to record his story. He and his family were designated as 'displaced persons' in Europe during the upheaval of World War II. My grandparents and family had to leave their home country of Latvia and my dad was born during this migration. My grandparents died some years ago but I keenly remember sitting at their table hearing their stories of thankfulness and grace as they made a new life in Australia. Tears of happiness flowed as they recounted those years, and tears also flowed as they recalled their homeland being taken away from them. Leaving their country ripped them apart – belonging to a new country went some way towards mending them.

As a nation we are becoming more aware of the importance of belonging to a country or place, particularly for First Nations people who were custodians of the land well before any upheaval coming from other parts of the world. Mooroolbark, with its unique contours of land at the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, was first a place where the Wurundjeri people belonged. It was named Mooroolbark because those who belonged here designated it as a place of 'red earth' or alternatively 'moorool', meaning great water, and 'bik', meaning place.<sup>1</sup> Places that people belong to are often named from the earth or the water that defines the land.

In this issue of Living Today, we have great pleasure in bringing together various articles that speak of belonging and community. Celebrate Mooroolbark (originally called the Red Earth Festival) was held in Hookey Park on March 18-19. For my part it was a delight to volunteer at the festival and interact with the many people who call Mooroolbark and its surrounds home. A review of these festival highlights is shared, noting the sense of belonging we celebrate each year. Another article also shares the loss of our dear community member Barb Austin, a Mooroolbark local and former Celebrate Mooroolbark Committee Chair. Also featured is the local Mooroolbark Anzac Day service held in Hookey Park. And check out something new to this issue – a dedicated kids page.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Living Today

**Matthew Gudze,**  
**Lead Pastor, Grace Communion Mooroolbark**  
**(Sponsors of Living Today)**  
**on behalf of the Living Today Editorial Team.**

<sup>1</sup>. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mooroolbark,\\_Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mooroolbark,_Victoria)

## livingtoday

Issue 83 // June 2023

### Production

Living Today is produced by Grace Communion Mooroolbark, with the assistance of local volunteers.



GRACE COMMUNION  
**MOOROOLBARK**  
Formerly Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship

### Editorial Support

Matthew Gudze, Randall Bouchier,  
Ross Mackay

### Copy Editor

Dawn Volz

### Publication

Published quarterly as a service to our community by Grace Communion Mooroolbark.

### Contact

0474 365 804  
PO Box 228 Mooroolbark VIC 3138  
[editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au)

### Distribution

11,500 copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark in June and March and 2,500 copies distributed in September and December. Also available online at [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)

### Contributing Writers for This Issue

Matthew Gudze, Mary Bouchier,  
Randall Bouchier, Ian Skurrie, Kate Chivers

### Photographs

Randall Bouchier, Tracy De Feber,  
[pexels.com](http://pexels.com) and [freepik.com](http://freepik.com).

### Cover Photograph

Randall Bouchier

### Graphic Design

Ross Mackay Creative

### Printing

Print Group Australia

### Like to contribute?

If you have a good news story about people or groups who are an inspiration to the community, please contact the editor on our church-office phone number or by email (details above).

PDFs of this issue and all past issues of Living Today can be accessed at: [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)

To join the email distribution list please send a request to [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au)

### Our Sponsors

Living Today greatly appreciates the valuable contributions made by several businesses which partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. Their financial sponsorship makes the magazine possible, and we gratefully acknowledge those partners in each issue.

# Contents | June 2023

04-06

**Celebrate  
Mooroolbark:  
A 21st Party to  
remember!**

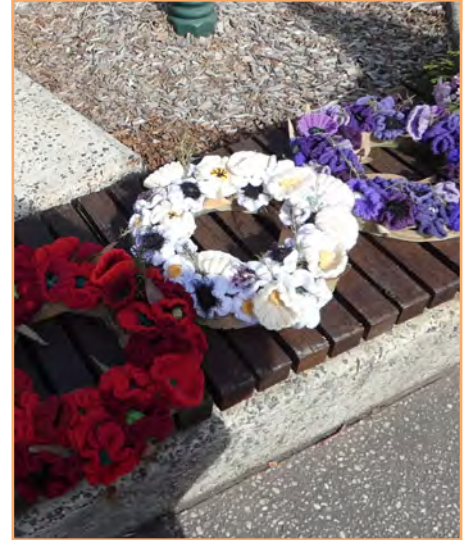


07

**Barbara Austin**

08

**ANZAC DAY**



Shop 16



10-11

**kidspages**

09

## mission statement

To contribute towards and to help to foster a growing community spirit within our neighbourhood. We seek to achieve this by:

- Highlighting the many positives within our community
- Encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- Contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns

14 **Fitting in and  
belonging**

15 **A thank you  
note from  
an Aussie  
refugee**

15

**Church Services**



16

**Upcoming  
Events**





# celebrate mooroolbark<sup>2023</sup> festival



## A 21st Party to remember!

by Mary Bouchier

### Wool Show

The 4th annual Yarra Ranges Wool and Handicrafts show was the best yet, with over 1,000 people in attendance throughout the day. The Mooroolbark Community Centre and the Senior Citizens Hall were filled to overflowing with stalls for crafters and artisans to showcase their talents and beautifully made crafts and garments were also for sale on the day. A selection of local hand-made garments was shown off to their best advantage by our local high school students during the two Fashion Shows, and in the foyer many creative entries were displayed in this Show's first knitting and crafting competitions. Visitors enjoyed scones, tea and coffee prepared by the CWA – either indoors or out on the sunny deck where a free children's activity table was operating. The Scouts organised a sausage sizzle, and icecream and fresh brewed coffee were also available.

**“ What a way to  
celebrate Celebrate  
Mooroolbark's 21st! ”**

### Entertainment

We were honoured to have this year's festival entertainment kicked off by the Yeng Gali Mullum Singers. Throughout the day, local musicians and bands entertained with music old and new. In front of the stage, children young and old were captivated by the antics of Steve the Magician. The ever popular Kofi was with us again this year sharing his joy and passion for African drumming and encouraging his audience to join in the beat! Later, the toe-tapping rhythms of O'Connor Irish Dancers made the floorboards thunder, and who could resist clapping along to the furious beat? And as the clouds cleared and the sun warmed us up, it was time to slow down, sit back and relax and watch the sinuous swaying of the traditional Rhythm of India dance group, in their graceful and colourful saris. On Sunday the entertainment didn't abate but included until the end of the day – choirs, instrumental performances from local schools, a colourful display of Burmese Chin dancing, soloists and small musical groups. During the afternoon many were on their feet responding to a joyfully active Zumba session – what a way to celebrate Celebrate Mooroolbark's 21st!





## Kids activities

An endless choice of activities, ensuring every ounce of youthful energy was spent (with a minimum of dollar expenditure for local families!) delivered over the two-day festival with lawn games, tennis and mini-golf, go-kart rides, pony rides, and Laser Tag provided by the Mooroolbark Guides. Competitions like the Amazing Mooroolbark Trail, colouring-in and cooking competitions and guessing how many lollies in the jar are always fun! There was a Gymbaroo obstacle course in the Terrace and free activities in the Kids Craft tent and in the nearby Mooroolbark Library - so there was never a dull moment! And across the road there was a ferris wheel and other amusement park rides.





## Fairground and stalls

The new arrangement of tables and chairs in the middle of the market, food and community stalls was a welcome change and patrons could sit and linger longer over their refreshments, catch up with old friends and enjoy the festivities around them.

## Vintage Car Show

On Sunday the Terrace car park was filled with 200 gleaming chrome and polished petrol-guzzlers ... er, classic cars ... delighting all auto enthusiasts and history buffs. Close by were more refreshment stalls, and the Infernos Rockabilly Band entertained us while we bopped from one car to another - drooling over an ancient Model A Ford, Chevies, Buicks, Thunderbirds, FJ Holden sedans, Bentleys, Coupes, Chryslers, Mustangs ... all immaculately presented in a huge range of colours and decorative variations!



# Barbara Austin

## Volunteering Community Spirit

by Randall Bouchier



You may have heard the announcement during our recent Celebrate Mooroolbark festival that from 2023 onwards the organising committee would be instituting an award "in the name of Barbara Austin for volunteering and community spirit".

Many of us knew, loved and deeply appreciated Barbara (or Barb as she was known) for her deep commitment to our Mooroolbark community.

At the memorial service following Barb's death, one of her colleagues from Celebrate Mooroolbark shared these words:

*Barbara joined the Celebrate Mooroolbark festival committee 12 years ago. That's one heck of a stint volunteering for a project that demands months of your time and is then over in a day (or two, as has been more recently). We did run one festival over eight days due to COVID-19 and agreed to never do that again!*

*Barb joined the committee, a retired nurse, with no prior festival experience. So I think she was a bit surprised when we asked her to become our new Stage Program Coordinator after her first festival with us. But all kudos to Barbara for taking it on despite her trepidation. We never had to worry if it was under control. Barbara had an absolute eye for the details, improving processes, spotting and picking up loose ends, and I think she gained great satisfaction in producing our main stage program - although we never did agree on how the word should be spelled! (Barb's version ended with 'mme'.)*

*But she did more than just the stage program (with one 'm', Barb). She helped out in any area that needed it. At various stages, and most of the time with overlapping roles, she was Lucky Straws Coordinator, Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, taking care of Sponsorship, and finally Chairperson. At festival time, husband Barry put up with their house being taken over with prize donations, festival posters and*

**“ She was committed to serving all of us in ways that would enhance our collective wellbeing. ”**

*paperwork, a largely missing wife and, between festivals, their garage becoming a festival storage unit. That was the commitment of Barbara to the festival.*

*As Chairperson she also knew how to keep us in line! - tapping her pen on a glass in meetings to bring us to attention when our meetings got raucous or speaking her mind clearly at the right time. I loved that about Barb, you never had to wait too long to know what she was really thinking.*

*Barb's generosity with her time and energy astounded me. I remember long working meetings together after which she would be heading home to cook up a feast for People's Pantry or to pick someone up for the Disabled People's Group gathering that she would help host at Mooroolbark Community Centre. She seemed unstoppable and I know it frustrated her when she became unwell, that she couldn't continue doing all the things that she loved. She really wanted to help with the Wool Show when she got better, and probably a dozen other projects. Instead, her mentorship and enthusiasm for volunteering will continue to inspire us.*

On a personal note, my wife and I knew Barb and Barry for over 50 years, as we attended the same church. She desired to live out her faith by growing in her love for God and neighbour. She was committed to serving all of us in ways that would enhance our collective wellbeing. Although Barb firmly believed that we will see her again, we're going to miss her terribly in the interim.



# ANZAC Day

by Randall Bouchier



I received a text message from a Vietnam veteran who attended the annual Mooroolbark Anzac Day service for the first time. For someone who doesn't usually have a lot to say, his text spoke volumes. It read: "The service was fantastic. Best one I've been to and I've been to a few."

For starters, the weather couldn't have been better – one of those mild, golden Melbourne autumn days, with the service conducted at our very welcoming, autumnally beautiful Hookey Park.

Arriving early, I was greeted by the pleasant sound of friends and neighbours greeting each other and of children happily playing in the playground and on the expanse of lawn.

Mass gatherings at places like the Shrine certainly can and do play a most significant role in our national remembrance, yet local gatherings picture the vibrant community life that our servicemen and women offered their lives and – all too often – lost their lives to protect.

Appropriately, we collectively say the words "Lest we forget" as together we remember their sacrifice – sacrifice that embodies Jesus' words: "There is no greater expression of love than to put your life on the line for your friends."\*

Local men and women contributed to the service. After our local Guides lowered the flag to half mast, our local MC introduced Cr Tim Heenan for his welcome and acknowledgment of country. Guide leader Sandy McElroy read the Anzac Requiem and Mooroolbark resident Tania Simpson led our singing of 'O God Our Help in Ages Past'.

We celebrated two military anniversaries this year – 70 years since the Korean ceasefire and 50 years since the end of the Vietnam war. Speaking about the Korean conflict, federal MP Aaron Violi

acknowledged two local servicemen named on one of our memorial plaques – G.C. Styles and B.L. West. In his address about our Vietnam engagement, local historian and author Anthony McAleer brought home to us the losses that families and communities suffer, by describing the experiences of several local people who served.

Major Kenneth Mackenzie led the Commemoration, assisted by Tom Steele who has played the bugle for us on over 30 occasions.

And then, Marion Stott, President of the Mooroolbark History Group and the prime mover behind our annual Anzac and Remembrance Day celebrations, presided over the moving and colourful laying of floral tributes from representatives of local organisations and families.

Preceding the concluding singing of 'Advance Australia Fair', MC Randall Bouchier thanked the community for attending in such great numbers. He also thanked the local organisations that had banded together to make the occasion possible.

The Scouts were busy with the sausage sizzle, and the History Group provided Anzac biscuits, fruit and cool drinks for all. Families laid out picnic rugs, children peeled off into the playground in the warm sunlight, and there was a buzz as spectators milled around the retro jeeps displayed by the Victoria Military Vehicle Corps.

Upcoming local celebrations include our annual Town Forum and presentation of Quiet Achiever awards – 7.30pm on Wednesday 18 October at the Community Centre, and Remembrance Day on Saturday 11 November – 10.45am at Hookey Park.

The Vietnam veteran whose text message was shared at the beginning of this article is already looking forward to next year's Anzac Service!

\*John 15:13 *The Message* paraphrase





# Shop 16

by Ian Skurrie



Renae Jones, supervisor for the Mooroolbark Community Connect Program, announced that the project has received a hugely significant contribution toward its ongoing sustainability from the Yarra Ranges Council through its Partnership Grant program, which gives them ongoing support for the next four years. This grant makes ongoing funding of the administration, furnishing and utility costs possible. The project has also received significant financial support through grants from Bendigo Bank.

At the heart of the Program is Shop 16, located in the Mooroolbark Terrace Shopping Centre. This shop has been made available for community use by a generous leaseholder. This is a central space that enhances and strengthens community connection and wellbeing, bringing together local community members through sharing ideas, planning and hosting activities. These activities create an atmosphere of cooperation, support and belonging.

Members of the community are invited to participate through volunteering, sharing ideas for the space and/or program, hosting their own workshops, exhibitions, activities or other initiatives. To grow and add a greater sense of connection, Shop 16 needs to be able to man their "community house in a shop" more

regularly than is currently possible without a full complement of volunteers and increased paid supervisor hours.

To fund this expansion and add to the programs they are running they need a significant boost to their funds through local support and additional grants. Ideally for long-term viability they would like to see the program being substantially supported by our local community. This may include crowdsourcing, which is currently being explored.

Shop 16 is already hosting several community activities, including the DVD library, book exchange and a homework club. In the weeks prior to the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival, the committee used Shop 16 as their base. They also provide emergency relief for those in urgent need through their relationship with the Goodness Gracious Network, and would appreciate any donations of non-perishable grocery items to their emergency food cupboard.

For those community members who would just like a spot to sit down, make a cuppa and have a chat, Shop 16 is about to provide tables and tea and coffee-making facilities very soon. To find out more, join their Facebook group to keep abreast of developments.

Proud Supporters of Living Today

**Community Bank  
Mooroolbark**

**9726 5388**

**B Bendigo Bank**



Colour-me-in!

Spot the  
difference





# Wordsearch

F G T X S J U Y D F L P X S D L D R U M M E R  
G R D E A F O W F D B Y W W H U N I F W U O C  
E S N Q E Y A D H K D Y S E D I R V K X I O Y  
W I L T C O R Y R E U F S P F R A B K V M M W  
O X T P A K R A B L O O R O O M J T Y M O C D  
O T Q V R C P H R S H N C H X Q W V U C E S Z  
L E Q D R Y P I L B Y Z E S B Z C N Y K R O S  
S E V F E R K L A V I T S E F X I L Z A X V N  
H N I K T X J N S G A L T C G T C M C Z D A X  
E M O H T R A E D E R J Z S Y W B E W Q I O V  
W O K H L T G I Z I I S F S T E G L P C B Y T  
H B R I C E A V E N U E J V J A T L I V I N G  
R Z U M Y X C C E L E B R A T E L G C G M X N  
E D K D L P N I K F S X H N S Y A L J U Q O J  
X R C J V E B A F L O G I N I M O G S J V F T  
B P A R B L C A Z N A V V M L W A A X X O M M

**ANZAC  
BRICE AVENUE  
CELEBRATE  
MOOROOLBARK  
DRUMMER  
HOOKEY PARK  
LIBRARY**

**LIVING  
TODAY  
MAGICIAN  
REDEARTH  
FESTIVAL  
TERRACE  
VINTAGE CARS**

**WOOLSHOW  
STALLS  
MINIGOLF  
RIDES  
SHOP  
SIXTEEN  
COMMUNITY**

Circles graphic by designed by Freepik

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net  
Word Search Maker



**There are 20  
differences  
between these  
two pictures.  
Can you spot  
them all?**

# Community Benefits

Why being part of community groups can do you a world of good.

by Kate Chivers

When I was pregnant with my first child, I was encouraged to join a Mothers Group. “Not for me!”, was my initial thought. I imagined being in a room of strangers, with little in common other than our crying babies. Despite these misgivings, I joined, and discovered a group of friendly, accepting women from my local area. Over the years, we were able to support and encourage each other through many challenges of motherhood and I retain valued friendships with these women to this day.

Humans are socially wired, which means that we are at our best when we regularly spend meaningful time with others. Being part of and contributing to social groups is foundational to our health and wellbeing. Having strong social connections has been associated with positive mental health and helps those of us struggling with mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. Being an active part of a community improves our resilience, enabling us to weather stressful life events, changes and upheavals. There are also surprising benefits for physical health, with research suggesting that social connectedness is as important for our health as quitting smoking, getting regular medical check-ups, or exercise.

Social connection is more than having individual relationships with a few friends. It is about developing bonds with a group, so that you feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. Once formed, these relationships tend to be ongoing and mutually supportive. Having a shared purpose, camaraderie and fun together can help to sustain the group over time.

What holds us back from connecting with others in this way? Joining a new group can be daunting. Anxiety about the ‘what ifs?’ can be a major factor – What if I don’t fit in? What if I don’t like them? What if they don’t like me? After time away from others during lockdown restrictions and keeping apart to protect ourselves from COVID-19, we may find it difficult to reconnect. Perhaps we have

made new online connections that fill the gap to some extent, but these are never quite the same as being together in person.

Rather than ruminating, it can be helpful to acknowledge anxieties as valid and work through each concern using a problem-solving approach. Evaluate the likelihood of each situation occurring, perhaps using a rating out of ten. Consider the likelihood of them not occurring – how likely is it that you won’t like some people in the group? How likely is it that you will like others in the group? Also consider what you might do next if this situation does occur. Acknowledging our concerns in this way doesn’t take them away but it enables us to see them from a more realistic perspective.

Time constraints may also be a factor that prevents us from group participation. When we have limited time, we may think that it is easier just to organise ourselves rather than accommodate what others may need or want. However, in many circumstances, we are more likely to achieve our goals when we work together with others. A prime example of this is exercising in a group, which improves motivation, makes training more fun and can lead to lasting friendships. We are much more likely to drop a fitness course shortly after beginning it if we attend on our own instead of with others.

For people with disabilities or language or cultural diversity, accessibility is often a roadblock. If there are groups that you want to be part of but are unable to access due to your individual needs, you may need to clearly define what will make a group accessible for you, such as interpreters, support workers, special equipment and so forth. Consider involving a family member or professional to support you when advocating for access, as it can certainly be challenging and frustrating at times, but worthwhile if it enables you to be part of something you enjoy and to engage with others who have similar interests. You may also pave the way for others struggling with accessibility.



# **“What life have you if you have not life together? There is no life that is not in community”**

T.S. Eliot (1934)



Before venturing out, it can be worthwhile thinking about what we hope to gain, and what we hope to give, to the group. A common trap is thinking that we need to impress or contribute more than is necessary. Offer only what you can manage in terms of time, money and resources. Trying too hard can lead to burnout and feelings of resentment when others don't reciprocate to the same level or as quickly as you would like. Remember that most friendships take time to develop, sometimes over several years. Simple companionship can be an achievable and positive outcome. If friendship blossoms, that is great too.

Perhaps you have attempted to join groups in the past and it has not gone well, leading to feelings of discouragement. In these situations, it can help to get an outside perspective from a professional, such as a counsellor or psychologist. They can work with you to identify where things went amiss, help you to hone your social skills and improve your resilience so that you can enjoy time with others.

If you would like to connect with a group, but are unsure where to start, here are a few suggestions:

- Look around your neighbourhood: It makes sense to start close to home. As well as being more readily accessible, reducing travel time and saving petrol, it means that it is easier to see people more regularly. For example, joining a local sports club means that you are more likely to see people around the neighbourhood, providing opportunities to extend the relationship.
- Follow your interests: There are often groups established for people who enjoy a particular sport, activity or hobby. Book clubs, language groups, dog groups and music ensembles are some examples. It can be easier to find your tribe when you already have some common ground. For many of these groups, you don't need to be proficient and many welcome

'newbies' as a chance to share their enthusiasm and knowledge.

- Establish your own group: Perhaps you have noticed that there are others in your workplace, neighbourhood or school who are at a loose end. Setting up your own group takes some resourcefulness but can be very rewarding. A good strategy is to arrange something with one other person and then invite others to join you both. If no one else comes, you can still enjoy time with another person.
- Volunteer: Volunteering in your local area enables you to join an established group with a shared purpose and can be very rewarding. Being busy and working alongside others towards the same goal can help smooth over any awkwardness you may be feeling around new people. The Volunteering Victoria website offers information on a range of volunteering opportunities, with some smaller roles available if your time is limited. [www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au](http://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au)
- Attempt something new: Being part of a beginner group means that you are with others who are also trying something new and perhaps looking for connection. It can be a relief to know that everyone is at the same level and that there is no pressure to perform.

Although challenging at first, connecting with others has so many benefits for our health and wellbeing. Spending regular time with groups helps us to feel that we belong, navigate challenges, and live longer, happier lives. There are plenty of opportunities available, including many within our local community. It just takes some courage, openness and a spirit of adventure.



# Fitting in and Belonging

One of my favourite movies when I was growing up was inspired by Shakespeare's play 'Twelfth Night'. The lead character is a high school female soccer player named Viola. When the school cuts the girls' soccer program, the coach for the boys' team refuses to let Viola play. She goes undercover as her twin brother and plays on a boys' soccer team for a competing school, hoping to beat the team that refused to let her play as a girl.

Though we likely haven't gone to the extremes that Viola did in the movie, we've all probably experienced something like this – the feeling that we don't fit in, being excluded based on difference, feeling pressured to change ourselves, or needing to prove ourselves to belong. Maybe we've been the reason another person felt like they didn't fit in.

Wanting to be included is natural – we all want to belong, and the Bible has good news for those who think they don't fit in. Diversity was intended by God, who determined that being unique was a blessing. Notice what Paul writes:

*"With all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."*

Ephesians 1:8b-10 (NRSV)

God's will is to unite diverse peoples and things in heaven and on earth. On our own, we struggle with diversity. When someone is different from

us, we sometimes have a hard time celebrating those differences and embracing them. But that is what Christ in us enables us to do. Regardless of our feelings of being excluded, or sometimes excluding others, we can be confident that God's perfect plan is for everyone's complete inclusion.

As you move through the world, you might feel pressured to change in order to belong to a group, or you might feel tempted to exclude someone like the boys' soccer coach did in the movie, but Christ's way is to help us lovingly celebrate, appreciate, and embrace the differences we encounter in the world. The mystery is this – when we appreciate God's loving acceptance for ourselves, we can extend it graciously to others.

May you be a gracious participant in Christ's gathering together of all people.

- Adapted from Cara Garrity, Speaking of Life

**Speaking of Life** is a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website: [gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/](http://gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/)

This magazine is sponsored by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (previously known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), a congregation of Grace Communion International. If you would like more information or pastoral support, our local congregational contact is Matthew Gudze on (03) 9737 0126.

Proudly supporting Living Today Magazine  
**P 9726 8888**

 **Professionals**  
Methuen.com.au



**Mooroolbark**  
**DENTURE CLINIC**  
... Making smiles come to life

Proudly supporting Living Today Magazine

**9726 7284**



# A thank you note from an Aussie refugee

by Max Jeganathan  
Centre for Public Christianity



It was a dark July night when a government-sanctioned paramilitary gang burned our home to the ground and left us with nothing but my baby bottle and nappy bag. We had survived our brush with Sri Lanka's civil war, but we had been thrown out of our home and – soon after – our country.

Within a couple of months, our second chance emerged in the form of a foreign land 7000 kilometres away – Australia.

From the moment we landed here in July 1984, we knew that there were two realities that would mark our identities. We would always be refugees; and we would always be Australian.

This year marks my 39th Australia Day – 39 reminders that Australia opened the pathways of welcome, belonging and opportunity to me and my family. On any measure, I've had a fair go.

I know that too many of my fellow Australians are still waiting for their 'fair go'. Being Australian means, among so many other things, that I now share in our national project of addressing

injustice, seeking truth and striving for a better Australia.

It would be wrong of me not to acknowledge the painful associations of this day for Aboriginal people, and the fraught subject of how and when to commemorate and also lament what began with the landing of the First Fleet.

It would be wrong, as well, for me not to express the gratitude I feel at the gift of being Australian.

In the Bible, King David declares: "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance."

As a refugee and as an Australian, his thankful words are also mine. My hope is that more of my fellow Australians would experience this joy, and the gratitude that comes with it.

This article has been republished with the permission of Centre for Public Christianity. [publicchristianity.org](http://publicchristianity.org)

## Local Churches

### **Mooroolbark Baptist Church**

153-157 Hull Rd Croydon

Sunday 10am

[mbc.org.au](http://mbc.org.au)

### **Mooroolbark (St. Margaret's) Uniting Church**

207-219 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark

Sunday 10am

[mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au](http://mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au)

### **St Peter Julian Eymard, Mooroolbark Parish**

240 Hull Rd, Mooroolbark

Saturday Vigil Mass - 6.00pm

Sundays at 9am & 11am

Weekday Mass: Tuesday and

Wednesday - 9.30am

[spje.org.au](http://spje.org.au)

### **Mooroolbark Salvation Army Corps**

305 Manchester Road, Chirnside Park

Sunday 10am

[salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps](http://salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps)

### **Life Ministry Church**

15-49 Old Melbourne Rd Chirnside Park

Sunday 10am & 6pm

[lifeministry.church](http://lifeministry.church)

### **Grace Communion Mooroolbark**

Mooroolbark Community Centre,

125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark

Sunday 10.30am

[mooroolbark.gci.org.au](http://mooroolbark.gci.org.au)



# upcoming events



June - October 2023



## Free Family Movie Night

**5 July 2023, 7.30pm**

Mooroolbark Community Centre

105 minutes. Rated G

Free ice-cream, tea & coffee

This is a joint community service extended to families by Grace Communion Mooroolbark and Mooroolbark Community Centre

To reserve your tickets book online at [yarraranges.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/109511](http://yarraranges.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/109511)

## Library Events

Check out all the events on at your local libraries at:

[yourlibrary.com.au/whats-on](http://yourlibrary.com.au/whats-on)



## Creative Yarra Ranges

For all the latest arts and culture events around the Yarra Ranges head over to:

[yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/The-Arts](http://yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/The-Arts)



## Beck Mitchell - "7 Marathons, 7 Days, 7 Continents"

**Wed 18 Oct, 7.30pm**

Guest at Annual Forum and Quiet Achiever Awards Night

Hosted by Mooroolbark Umbrella Group at the Mooroolbark Community Centre.

## Mooroolbark Miniature Railway



### Train rides!

We operate on the the fourth Sunday of each month excluding December between 11am-4pm, with a lunch break between 1-2pm where trains and the kiosk close. Train rides are \$3.00 each, with children under four riding free.

**Upcoming dates:** 25 June, 23 July, 27 August, 24 September, 22 October, 26 November