THE FORREST POST

FMS

APRIL 2026

FREE

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and waters around us, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We respect their cultural heritage and knowledge here in Forrest where the waters flow over Gadubanud and Gulidjan Country.

Thank You Otway Heroes

Thank You Otway Heroes community event and fundraiser was a wonderful success, and a reminder of what small communities do best when things get tough: show up, pitch in, and look after each other.

More than 100 people came along to enjoy an afternoon of live music, hamburgers, sausages, a few well-earned beers, plenty of kids' activities, and much more. The raffle was a huge success, with everyone wanting their house cleaned, but not so happy to get off the couch for the free gym membership and workout with Matt the Copper. One of the nicest parts of the day was seeing people chatting by the hay bales, with many saying they had not caught up in far too long.

Just as importantly, the event raised $3,400, which will be shared across the Barwon Downs, Forrest and Gerangamete CFA brigades. That is a terrific result, and a credit to everyone who donated, volunteered, or simply turned up to be part of it.

The event came at the right time. 2025 was a dry year across south-west Victoria and the Otways, with real impacts on local farmers, the bush, and the broader community. Heading into the 2025–26 fire season, we knew conditions had the potential to become serious. Gellibrand, Barongarook and Kawarren had been fighting for survival since the beginning of January. But for many locals, it was that fateful day on the 27th of January, when people were asked to evacuate, that the reality of what we were facing truly hit home.

That day put a sharp focus on just how much we rely on our local CFA volunteers, emergency services and contractors. They are our neighbours, friends and family members. Coming together at the Forrest Public Hall was a chance to reconnect, regroup, have a laugh and remind ourselves that no one faces these moments alone.

Next time, let's catch up without all the smoke and dramas.

Byron Pakula - Event coordinator

SCHEDULED PLANNED BURN UPDATE FOR NORTHERN RIDGES - PAGES 6-7

Colac Otway Shire News

2026-2027 Grants Program

The Colac Otway Shire Council's 2026-2027 Grants Program is now open

Funding opportunities are available through the following streams.

- Community Grants – assists community groups with a broad range of community development projects, services, activities, equipment or new initiatives.
- Event Grants – supports community, commercial and signature events throughout Colac Otway.
- Business Grants – supports local businesses through the Building Façade Improvement program.
- Trees for Farms – Council's newest grant opportunity that supports native tree planting programs.

For more information, including eligibility criteria, key dates and how to apply, visit our website: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/grants or contact the Grants Officer on 5232 9400.

Have Your Say

PROPOSED LEASE OF COPACC

Council is considering entering into a lease with a specialist provider to manage the day-to-day operation and programming of COPACC.

Feeback is now open for four weeks on this proposal.

Submissions close at 5pm, Tuesday 7 April 2026

COLAC OTWAY SOCCER FACILITIES FEASIBILITY STUDY

A strategic approach is needed to understand how best to provide football (soccer) facilities to meet the sport's participation needs now and in the future.

Council would like your feedback on this study.

Submission close at 5pm, Sunday 12 April 2026

Visit our website for more information: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay

We're Recruiting

Colac Otway Shire Council is an exciting place to work. If you are passionate about delivering great customer service, working for a progressive and innovative council, and making a difference to your local community, we would love to hear from you!

- Supervisor Roads Gellibrand
- Workplace Health and Safety Business Partner
- Manager People and Culture
- Manager Property, Procurement and Contracts

For a position description and to apply online, visit www.colacotway.vic.gov.au/careers or contact Human Resources on (03) 5232 9400.

Council Immunisation Sessions

Council's free immunisation sessions take place on the third Monday and the first Thursday of each month and every Monday in Apollo Bay at the Apollo Bay Kindergarten at the P-12 College site (Apollo Bay sessions do not need to be booked online).

Upcoming childhood immunisation sessions at COPACC in Colac are:

- Thursday 2 April, 9.00am – 11.30am
- Monday 20 April, 1.30pm – 4.30pm

Flu vaccine is also available at these sessions for children aged between six months and five years and people aged 65 and older. To book your Colac immunisation visit: https://portal.cirv.vic.gov.au/ click on book a community immunisation appointment then follow the steps to create a new account.

Animal Registration Renewals

Attention dog and cat owners - it's that time of year again! Your annual animal registration renewals are due on 10 April 2026.

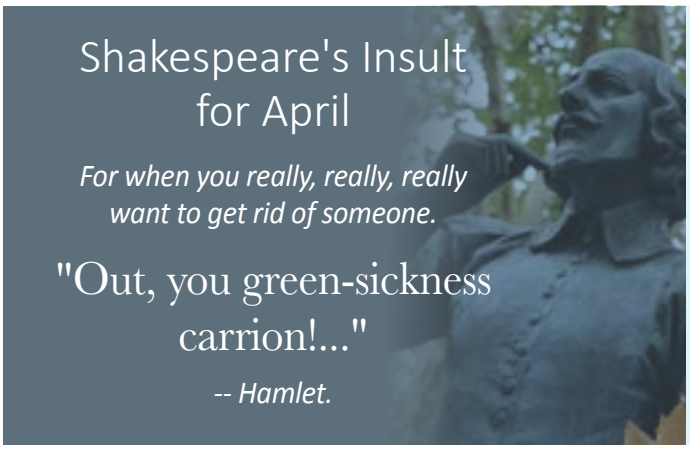
Reminder letters have been sent to all registered pet owners in the Colac Otway Shire.

You can conveniently pay your renewal:

- In person at any Council Customer Service Centre
- By phone with one of friendly customer service officers
- Online via Council's eServices portal

For more information, visit Council's website or contact us directly by calling 5232 9400.

Colac Service Centre: 2- 6 Rae Street, Colac, Open: Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5pm
Ph: 5232 9400 Email: inq@colacotway.vic.gov.au or find us online: www.colacotway.vic.gov.au



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A very funny Australian film about communism

Children of the Revolution (1996) is the funniest film you're likely to see about communism in Australia. The cast includes Judy Davis, who won best actress awards for her performance, alongside Richard Roxburgh, Sam Neill, Rachel Griffiths and Geoffrey Rush.

Set in 1950s Australia, Judy plays a passionate communist who is invited to Moscow on a work study tour. She catches the eye of Stalin himself, one thing leads to another, and she returns to Australia pregnant. Back home Judy allows confusion about son Joe's parentage to grow – it could be longsuffering husband Geoffrey Rush or even ASIO spy Sam Neill – this creates a disorienting mix of possibilities for a quirky kid to manage.

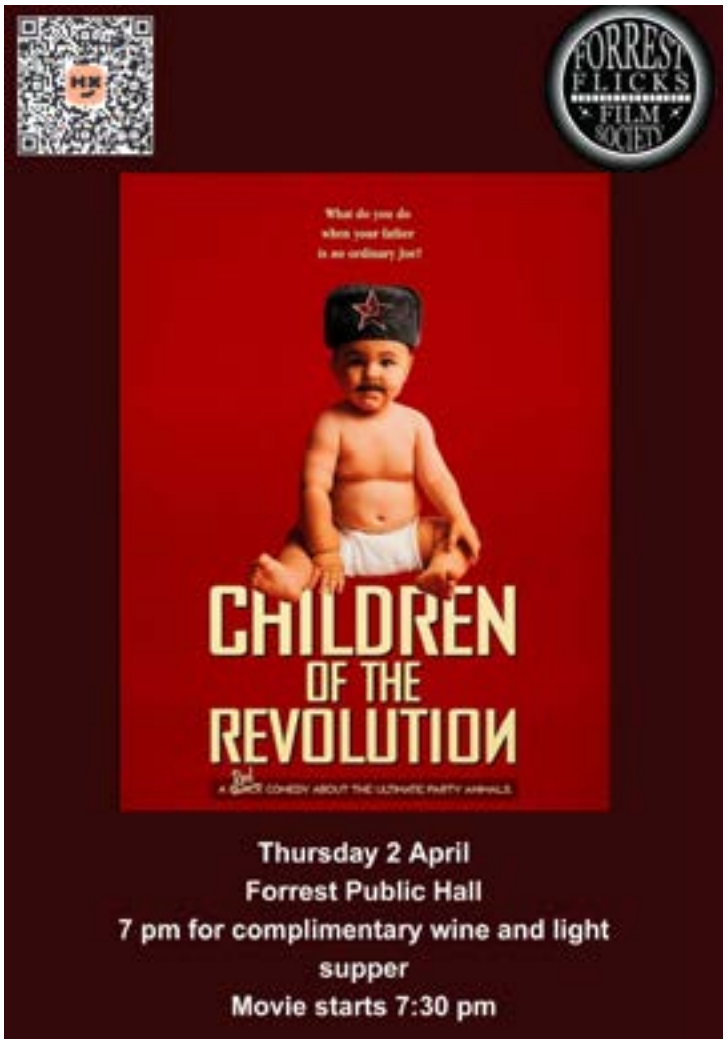
The film was written and directed by Peter Duncan (who later wrote Rake) and produced by Tristram Miall (who also made Looking for Alibrandi and Strictly Ballroom). Not surprisingly, it feels very Australian.

Children of the Revolution will be showing on Thursday 2 April at the Forrest Hall. Doors open at 7 pm with a free glass of wine and light supper. The film starts at 7:30, followed by tea/coffee, more supper and a chance to chat about the film with your neighbours. Subtitles will be shown.

Forrest Flicks Film Society 2026 subscriptions will be on sale at the door with cash, or online through Humanitix using the QR code in the picture. Subscription costs are:

- 6 films - $45/$35 concession
- 3 films - $25/$20 concession
- 1 film trial - donation of $10/$8 concession or use this as a deposit on a 3/6 film subscription.

Mary Dracup



ROAD CLOSURE NOTIFICATION

3,000 cyclists will complete a 145km cycling event throughout Surf Coast Shire and Colac Otway Shire on Saturday 2 May 2026. Starting in Torquay, cyclists will ride through Moriac, Deans Marsh, Lorne and return to Torquay. A 60km event will start in Torquay and ride to Moriac, returning to Torquay via Forest Road. A 204km course, will start in Torquay and cycle through Moriac, Forrest, Skenes Creek, Kennett River, Lorne and return to Torquay via the Great Ocean Road. There will be no road closures in place for the 204km event.

Road Closures:

- Torquay (Event Start Line), The Esplanade, from Beach Rd to Gilbert St **closed from 5:00am - 9:30am.**
- Torquay (Event Finish Line), The Esplanade, from Zeally Bay Rd to Gilbert St **closed from 9:30am - 5:30pm.**
- Section 1 - Avoid the Anglesea Rd from the Bellbrae roundabout to Hendy Main Rd 7:00am - 9:15am to minimise delays.
- Section 2 - Hendy Main Rd to Cape Otway Rd Moriac is **closed from 7:30am to 10:00am.**
- Section 3 - Cape Otway Rd Moriac at Church Rd to Winchelsea-Deans Marsh Road is **closed from 8:00am to 10:30am.**
- Section 4 - Cape Otway Rd from Winchelsea-Deans Marsh Rd to Birregurra-Deans Marsh Rd is **closed from 8:30am to 11:00am.**
- Section 5 - Birregurra-Deans Marsh Rd to Deans Marsh is **closed from 8:30am to 12:15pm.**
- Section 6 - Deans Marsh-Lorne Rd to Neade St Lorne is **closed from 9:00am - 1:00pm.** Due to the safety concerns of both cyclists and vehicles, access will not be allowed during these times unless an emergency arises. Access will be available to Pennyroyal Valley Rd from Deans Marsh General Store
- Section 7 - Great Ocean Road from Skenes Creek to Torquay will be open in both directions.

No other road closures will occur throughout the course however please be aware that there are a number of speed restrictions and other traffic measures in place to ensure a safe event. Apologies for any inconvenience that these delays may present

For more information:
www.greatoceanotwayclassicride.com.au or 0456 479 606

Forrest & District Neighbourhood House - APRIL

REGULAR ACTIVITIES AT THE F&DNH

MONDAYS - open 12pm-4pm (incorporating youth group)
Youth group: 3.30pm-4.30pm. Open to youth aged 10+. Cost is $20 per term or a gold coin each week.

TUESDAYS -open 8.30am-3.30pm
Playgroup: 10am-12pm. Gold coin. Open to all families with young children.
Craft group: 3pm-5pm each week. BYO craft project to work on. Gold coin.
Seniors morning tea: First Tuesday each month, 10.30am-11.30am. Gold coin.
Book club: 2nd Tuesday of the month 7.30pm. Gold coin
Weeding group: 4th Tuesday of the month 10am-12pm. Contact Susan Langridge for details 0498 592 364.
Pantry top up and food boxes: Please contact coordinator to arrange or visit the pantry after top up (from 12pm). Food available to all in the community.

WEDNESDAYS - open 8.30am-3.30pm
Yoga: 9.10-10.30am, $15 per class
Forrest voices (singing for fun): 11am-12pm. Gold coin.
Studio Forrest art group: 1pm-5pm, $200 per semester. Peer led local art group.
Pantry top up: evening after 8pm.

THURSDAYS - coordinator at the hall
Community lunch: Take away or dine in. Order on Wednesdays through Facebook or text 0493105502, pick up from the hall at 12.30pm on the day. $8. Return containers each week!
CHANGE OF DAY* **Forrest Osteopathy** is onsite. Call 0438 298 669 to book in.

FRIDAYS - CLOSED
Pantry top up: (late evening)

Community Gym (at the rec reserve): memberships available, contact coordinator for more info. Gym access 6am-10pm daily.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES
Tuesday 31st March-3.30pm-5pm. Easter & School Holiday Activities (see poster below for more details)

Monday 13 April School Holiday Youth group activities for children in grade 5 and up - 11.30am - 1pm

The Neighbourhood house will be closed Easter Monday 6th April

WE ALSO HAVE: Free WiFi • Printing services • Room hire • Community spaces • Reading room • Food share • Clothes swap • Forrest & District Historical Society display and library • Treatment/massage room for hire • Office space • Computers and more!

FIND US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM FOR UP TO DATE INFO AND EVENTS!

Mon 12-4pm, Tue, Wed 8.30am-3.30pm Thu - at the hall, 8.30am-3.30pmOffice hours may change or be limited if coordinator or volunteers are unavailable.
Please phone ahead if required Ph: 0493 105 502
E: forrest.nh@gmail.com A: Forrest Community Hub - 47 Grant Street, Forrest 3236

Kitchen Garden Support Worker (Part-Time)

Forrest & District Neighbourhood House and Forrest Primary School are looking for a practical, community minded person to support our shared kitchen gardens to thrive across both sites and to bring people together to grow and share food.

About the role:
- 10 hrs/week (school terms only), May–Dec 2026
- Forrest Primary School & Forrest Neighbourhood House
- SCHADS Level 2 (~$34.58/hr)

About you
You don't need to be an expert, but you should:
- enjoy gardening, growing food, or working outdoors
- be practical, reliable and able to take initiative
- feel comfortable working with people of all ages
- building partnerships
- have a genuine interest in community and sustainability

A Working With Children Check and an understanding of the Child Safe Standards is required.

Local connections to Forrest and the surrounding community is highly valued.

To request a position description and to apply:
Please send a short CV, and a 1-page cover letter outlining your relevant experience and interest in the role

Applications to: forrest.nh@gmail.com
Applications close: 8 April 2026

This role has been set up through the Neighbourhood House 2026-27 Food Security Program, funded by the Victorian Government. For questions or a chat about the role, contact Emma Pakula at Forrest & District Neighbourhood House.

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SCAN ME

MADE FOR MORE

Authorised by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne

What a summer season it has been...

The 2026 summer was a challenging period for Otways communities, with bushfires and flooding causing significant impacts to people, businesses and the environment. We acknowledge the strong community response to Vic Emergency warnings, including evacuations ahead of the Extreme Fire Danger Rating on 27 January. Leaving home is never easy, and we extend a heart felt thanks to everyone affected.

On 9 January, multiple lightning strikes ignited the Otways Complex Fires following an extended dry period. Fires burned for nearly three weeks around Kennedys Creek, Carlisle River and Gellibrand, repeatedly threatening nearby communities, including Forrest. Forest Fire Management Victoria, working closely with CFA, deployed extensive ground and aerial resources. A major factor in moderating fire behaviour was the long standing strategic planned burning program across the Otways. In several areas, bushfires entered zones treated by planned burns—some as recent as 2022—where reduced fuel loads slowed spread, lowered intensity and limited spotting. This allowed firefighters to shift from asset protection to active containment, improving the effectiveness of ground crews, machinery and aerial suppression.

The delivery of strategic planned burns creates a mosaic of fuel loads across the landscape; this also supports a diversity in the bush which is essential for forest health. FFMVic Otways District have begun the planned burn season around Lorne and also scheduled planned burns around Forrest-pending suitable conditions. One of particular interest is the Northern Ridges burn unit at Barwon Downs.

The Northern Ridges

The primary objective of this burn is to reduce the speed and intensity of bushfires, with a secondary objective to promote ecological diversity and health. The overall burn boundary is extensive, which can be confronting when first seen on a map. But operations year on year only treat a portion of this footprint, targeting ridges and spurs to create a mosaic of fire history through the landscape over time.

With over 15 years of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the burns on the northern ridges are cooler. They support an ecological community dominated by large trees, native grasses, and herbaceous species in the foothill forests, buffering unburnt wet forest on the ridge line. The northern slopes of the Otways are incredibly important to reduce the risk of fires moving quickly uphill through fuel types that burn hottest in bushfire to then impact coastal communities with long distance ember attack.

Gullies remain unburnt providing wildlife refuges in certain bushfire conditions. Decreased fire intensity can also reduce impacts to important structural features of the forest, such as tree hollows, that are important for many animals. The fire in these burns is generally low, cool and slow moving - within each target area there remain many unburnt patches and the fire self-extinguishes with aspect and moisture of the slopes.

With suitable conditions, the targeted areas within the Northern Ridges will occur this autumn. We also have the Forrest - Ridge Road burn scheduled in the next few weeks. Find more details of scheduled planned burns and the Otway's Bushire Management Strategy, register for updates here https://plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au

Supplied by Birgette Hutchins - Senior Forest and Fire Engagement Officer, DEECA - Forest Fire Management Vic

Barwon Water Updates

27% West Barwon Reservoir

43% Wurdee Boluc Reservoir

4ML Current minimum daily passing flow at West Barwon

Forrest wastewater

Barwon Water is actively working on the business case assessing the replacement of community owned septic systems with a reticulated town wastewater system. The business case is due to be completed by mid-2026.

The project team visited Forrest in February to hear directly from the community and to provide details about the current preferred wastewater management solution for the town.

We'll continue to work closely with the Forrest community to ensure residents are informed and supported as planning progresses.

Thank you to everyone for coming along to the February Listening Posts. If you were unable to make it, please visit the dedicated web page to learn more and have your say.

www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest-hub-forrest-wastewater

Make Every Drop Count

Community members are being encouraged to make every drop count, to help reduce demand and protect water storages during dry conditions. After the two driest years on record, Geelong's storages are sitting at 37.9% on 20 March.

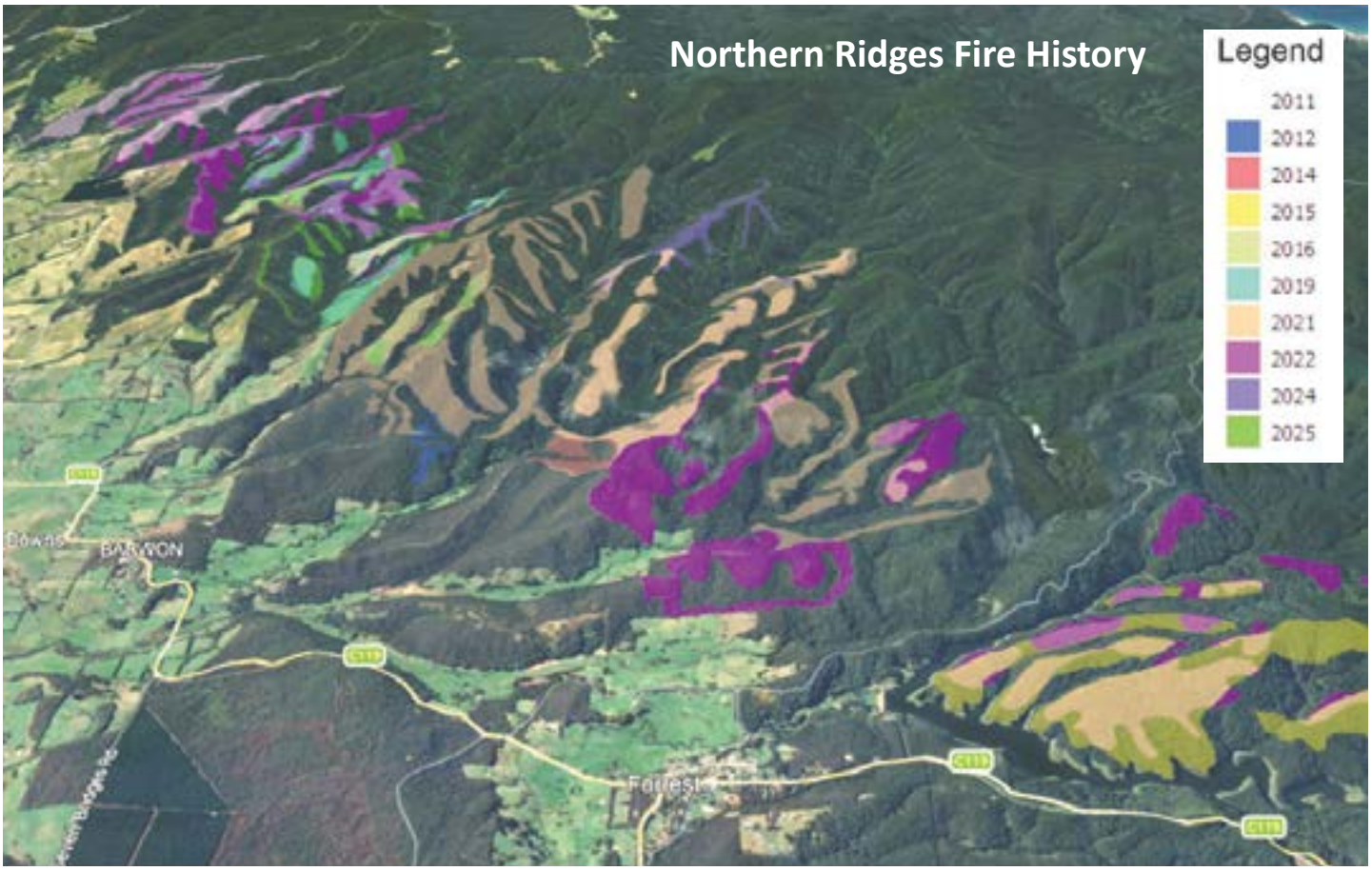
Small, everyday actions at home can help save thousands of litres every year. Keep your showers to less than four minutes, turn the tap off when you brush your teeth and only run full laundry or dishwasher loads.

Learn more!

For more information visit: makeeverydropcount.com.au

BarwonWater

For further information
1300 656 007 | info@barwonwater.com.au
www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/forrest-hub



Fire history across the Northern Ridges. Gully systems and the wet forests along the Otway ridge remain unburnt. ***Please note*** *this is common in many planned burns aiming to moderate bushfire behaviour.* *Image courtesy - Forest Fire Management Vic*

FMS

FREE WIFI AT THE SHED

Forrest Men's Shed - 6 Blundy St, Forrest

email fdms3236@gmail.com to request a username & password

Woodwork lathe machines - table saw - mitre saw - metal welding

THE FORREST POPUP OP SHOP

OPEN WHEN THE SIGNS ARE OUT

We are currently unable to take donations due to lack of space. For information contact Marita 0429 883 909

ST JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH - 18 GRANT STREET FORREST

ADVERTISE WITH US! Reach local customers and visitors and support your local volunteer run news sheet. Proceeds go to the Forrest Primary School or Neighbourhood House for printing costs and to support the Forrest Men's Shed. CONTACT US: theforrestpost@gmail.com for more information.

C to C Colac to Coast REAL ESTATE

Rebecca Graham Director/Property Manager

Andrea Ivermee Director/Licensed Estate Agent

Stuart Nelson Auctioneer/Sales Specialist

Amanda Cook Property Manager

Jacinta Mahony Assistant Property Manager

Skie Maddern Assistant Property Manager

Melinda Cass Reception

Kiahna McCoombe Administration

03 5231 3288
info@colactocoast.com.au
colactocoast.com.au
7 Dennis Street,
Colac VIC 3250

Landcare Planning Day

On Saturday 14th March, Gerangamete Forrest Landcare Group hosted the Upper Barwon Landcare Network Planning Day. It was a glorious autumn day for Network members to meet and hear about the transformation of Hennigan Crescent from weed infested to (almost!) weed free, and to walk through the area and see the plants and wildlife thriving firsthand.

A group of about 20 gathered by the river and shared a picnic as well as ideas about Network priorities for 2026. Thank you to all who joined us and we are looking forward to a great year of Landcare activities across the Network.

Freya Bennett - Gerangamete Forrest Landcare Group

Kids Corner

Have you been noticing the perfect hot cross buns at the general store? Well, I have, and I wanted to know more about where they came from, so I went to the general store and to ask Ash.

I found out that Kim and Teena (Ash's mum) are travelling around Australia and stopped to take a break from travelling here in Forrest to work in the store for the summer. Kim is making the hot cross buns and invited me to come and watch how the hot cross buns are made. Kim started making hot cross buns 10 years ago but only made them for family and friends.

He notched it up during COVID delivering to neighbours and friends. Now he has been making them at the general store for us. Kim's hot cross buns are so special for a few reasons. He covers them in a magnificent glaze, uses the best spices (not from the supermarket), he doesn't soak the fruit, and each hot cross bun is hand shaped to perfection. Each cross is piped on just before baking.

Thanks Kim for making these amazing hot cross buns for the town.

Abigail Pakula

BIRDS OF THE OTWAYS

SPONSORED BY Barwon Water

Black- shouldered Kite

The Black-shouldered Kite is a small, attractive, grey, white raptor, having yellow legs and feet, with a black patch on its wing. It is a fairly common raptor, and it occurs in all kinds of open country, grassland, and agricultural areas throughout Australia. It can often be seen hovering over a particular piece of land, waiting to spot mice, lizards, insects etc. where it pounces from above. When not hunting it often perches conspicuously on posts, or bare branches of trees.

It can be a partial nomad, staying in an area and breeding depending on the availability of its food sources. It nests in an upright leafy fork where it makes a rather large stick cup nest, or even taking over unused nests of other raptors and corvids. It usually lays a clutch of 3-4 heavily blotched whitish eggs.

Ian Davies and Adam Fry