

# 2016 Annual Review



Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association

Working together to promote the services, attributes and tourism of our region

# EDRA

The last twelve months has been very busy for EDRA. Since our formation end of June 2014, we have farwelled Committee members Owen Deppeler & Greg Thomas, who have both moved out of the area, Kym Griffiths our founding chair and Daniel DeGraaf. This left us with a very small committee during the last 12month period and doubling up of roles to meet the needs of our two subcommittees, The Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism (EDRBT) and The Local Voice Newspaper.

We are hoping to attract more members to take up informal subcommittee roles in their local townships, particularly Cockatoo & Gembrook, to help drive activities, projects & events alongside the Membership Manager.

## **Our networking, projects and activities over the last 12 months include:**

**Pro Photo Mums** – Administration for Pro Photo Mums 2015 event.

**Port Phillip & Westernport CMA – Dandenong Ranges Environmental & Bushfire Reduction Grants Round 2** - Successful funding to auspice the grant funds & facilitate the project **"Educating the Eastern Dandenong Ranges on fuel load reduction"**. The project is a collaboration between EDRA, Ash Wednesday Bushfire Education Centre (AWBEC), Cardinia Shire Council, Country Fire Authority, Gembrook Emergency & Resilience Group (GEaR), Helmeted Honeyeaters Nursery & Cardinia Hills Ragwort & Landcare Group. The project includes redesign & replant the open space in Alma Treloar Reserve surrounding AWBEC and for the work done on this site to become an education site for the Cockatoo Community. And garden plantings at the Gembrook Community Centre Car Park (the designated Neighbourhood Safer place in Gembrook) to help reduce the potential vegetation fuel loads.

**Cardinia Arts Society - Art in the Garden Event GEMBROOK** - Cardinia Shire Festivals & Events Grant letter of support & assistance with a successful grant application, Mitre 10 sponsorship of Men's Shed chair design competition, Little Gems Early Learning Centre & Emersleigh Estate participation at the Event. Event promotion in The Local Voice Newsletter and online at Visit Victoria.

**Hills Art Market EMERALD** - Cardinia Arts & Culture Small Change Grant letter of support and assistance with a successful grant application. To introduce and facilitate collaboration between the Hills Art Market & Puffing Billy Railway to enable the Hills Art Market to run a monthly Art Market on Puffing Billy land between the Emerald Railway Station and Emerald RSL commencing February 2017. Public Liability Insurance for The Hills Art Market to operate is being auspiced by EDRA.

**ANZAC Walk Video** – Letter of support for Emerald RSL Community Wellbeing & Support Grant.

**Cardinia Casey 2016 Tourism Day** – Administration of funds. See EDRBT for Event summary.

**Community Wellbeing Support Grants** – Small items of equipment grant for EDRA operation & Volunteer advertising.

**Cardinia Casey Tourism Advisory Committee** – Report on EDRBT & The Local activities.

# Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism

We started 2016 with a Members Planning Evening at the Emerald RSL. We identified a range of great projects, events and training underpinned by needing to establish a subcommittee in Cockatoo & Gembrook as we have in Emerald to assist. The information we did gather has been utilized for the projects undertaken this year. We also sent out a survey to members but the response was poor, 14 responses in total from a pool of 50 + members.

**Events & Social Media Event** – We were lucky to have Richard Cornish, Age Epicure and past Regional Melbourne Food & Wine Festival Creative Director facilitate an events & social media workshop at the new Bushfire Education Centre in Cockatoo. Richard's insights were enlightening, imparting the importance for our region to own and promote our local provenance, heritage and character.

**2016 Casey Cardinia Tourism Day** – We put a lot of effort into the content, theme & speakers for this event in partnership with Casey Cardinia Tourism and it was very disappointing we only had a few members attend from EDRBT for this caliber of event.

**EBG breakfasts** – We had another 12 months of successful business breakfasts held at the Emerald RSL. Nov 2015, Brad Battin Current Economic Climate, George Somers on Health Services in the Hill, Feb 2016, Travis Keating Government Industry Skills Fund scheme, May 2016, Paul Tero on the Future of Small Business, Aug 2016, Matt Collopy Puffing Billy major events and master plan, Nov 2016, Peter Ravenscroft Deputy Government Ombudsman.

**Eastern Dandenong Ranges website** – [www.dandenongsandranges.com.au](http://www.dandenongsandranges.com.au) We are very proud of our website and image it portrays to promote our region and member's businesses. We endeavor to keep up blogs on the homepage and links to other high ranking sites to increase our SEO and page ranking without having to pay external fees. Members can further assist by linking our site to theirs and emailing through event flyers, images and YouTubes we can promote on the website. Local hills resident & cyclist blogger Brendan Edwards will be a guest blogger on our site and Brendan has offered to provide input into the development of the Cockatoo to Gembrook Multi-use trail.

# Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism

**Dandenongs and Ranges Facebook** – We have promoted 325 posts (over 25 every month) since we launched our Facebook page in August 2015 to support member's business, products & events and cross promoted were applicable on our other Facebook pages for the Emerald Business Group & Local Voice Newspaper and other large community group pages including Hills & Dandenongs, Emerald & Surrounding region, Hills Tribe Community Noticeboard, Pakenham Noticeboard. Once again please like our page and share your events and information to promote.

**Eastern Dandenong Ranges Visitor Centre** - Thanks to the generosity of Puffing Billy Railway, we opened the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Visitor Centre on Emerald Puffing Billy Station early April 2015 to coincide with Emerald Funfest, to promote the event and take advantage to talk with people visiting the festival. Our Visitor Centre is managed by a terrific team of volunteers who generously donate their time to promote our member's products, services and attractions in our region. Some in the Tourism Industry question the value of Visitor Centre's given today's accessibility to source information digitally, however, regions such as ours, new to promoting tourism, can record beneficial statistics in relation to demographics and visitor needs.

Thus, we have developed and produced "10 Things to See & Do on Foot" for both Emerald & Gembrook and a walking map from Emerald Station to Emerald Lake Park Station highlighting the Emerald to Cockatoo Multi-use trail.

Our volunteers undergo training with us and with Puffing Billy in regards to their rail safety. Our volunteers provide visitors face to face personalised service and tailored information to make their visit/stay in our region the most enjoyable it can be.

The Statistical Chart on the next page shows the origin & nature of enquiry for the first 3month period. We also have stats on postcodes and International origins that are being sorted. International origins include Singapore, Korea, India, Italy, China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Scotland, UK, USA, Vietnam, South Africa, Canada, Japan, Pakistan, Holland, Israel, France, Germany, New Zealand and the Phillipines. On average, we have 500 visitors come through our Centre every month.

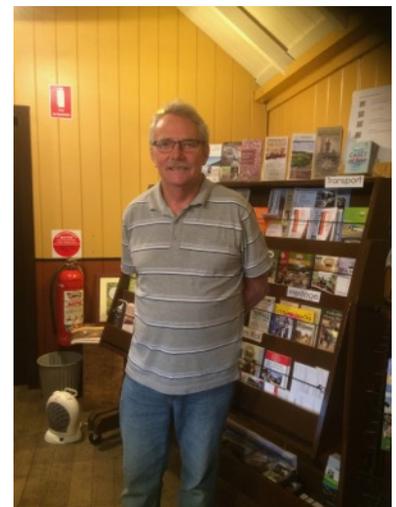
It has been disappointing many members haven't come to the Visitor Centre or dropped off their advertising material for us to promote even though we have asked them for information several times. We encourage any members that operate in the tourism & hospitality sector consider volunteering some time at the Centre. This is a great way to do your own research and recommendations.

We listed our Visitor Centre on the Australian Data Tourism Warehouse website, which is the National Platform for digital tourism information on Australia and linked to Visit Victoria's website in May 2016 under the Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Region. Our Page Views currently average 28 per month. EDRBT is also listed as the local Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism Group on Yarra Ranges Tourism regional website [visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au).

# Visitor Centre Stats & Centre Volunteers

Month	Origin of Enquiry							TOTAL Visitor	Nature of Enquiry									
	Local	Day Trip	On Hols	Staying in Region	PB Pass	VFR	Signage		General	PB	Public T/Port	Walk Trails	Dining	Tours	Markets	Heritage Trails	Region Info	Fami Attr:
Apr-16	30		26	13	5	5		227	32	43		2	2					
May-16	25	66	46	3	11	4	1	501	73	67	5	3	8	1	2	1		
Jun-16	24	64	23	4	62	4		553	68	80	3	2	22	1	4			4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1281</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>4</b>

Our Visitor Centre Volunteers man the Visitor Centre 4 hours every day of the week. Your volunteers pictured left to right are Amanda Biemans, Maggie Lambert, Trevor De'Aaan , Koos Groenveld, Pam Treeby & Anne Speedie. Pam Cahill & Lynne Trenskey are absent from the photos.





**Emerald October Business Rewards 2015** - We ran this promotion for 1 month, but the entries weren't a lot more than when we ran it for 2 weeks in previous years. The EBG subcommittee decided not to run the promo again in 2016 and Belinda Smullen came up with the idea to produce a Gift Guide instead. Thanks Belinda 😊

**Emerald Christmas Gift Guide 2016** – Coordinated and produced by The General Food Store. Free promotion to any Emerald Business to participate in. Initiated to promote shopping local to locals. Printed Guides distributed instore at participating businesses.

**Emerald Christmas Decorations, Street Busking & Santa** – It was great to have the Emerald Men's Shed make us a variety of wooden Christmas decorations for 2015 with materials supplied by Emerald Mitre 10 to adorn the Main Rd in Emerald linking the two retail areas. The Men's Shed have produced us a whole new set of designs for this year that are generously being painted by Raquel Carter, Hill Art Market.

**Our current networking, projects and activities:**

- Collaborative Events between Mt Burnett Observatory & Beaconhills Golf Club
- Collaborative Events between Mt Burnett Observatory & Restaurants
- Mt Burnett 2017 VASTROC Event
- Regional Worlds Longest Lunch 2017 – The Independent feast alongside Puffing Billy Railway
- 2017 National Heritage 18 April – 21 May Collaboration and events between our heritage businesses. Emerald Museum, The Motorist, Puffing Billy Menzies Creek Museum & Railway, Kurth Kiln, Emerald Model Railway, St Cuthberts Chapel.
- Heritage Visitor Experiences
- Puffing Billy Country Map
- Cockatoo to Gembrook Multi-use Trail
- Regional Branding & signage

# The Local Voice Newspaper

Thanks go to a very small dedicated team of volunteers to produce The Local Voice News Magazine for the Eastern Dandenong Ranges. These include Gulsen Ozer, Vivienne Masala, Kirsty Hall, Lynne Trensky, Rebekkah Wilde, Phil Byers, Daniel De Graaf & Kym Griffiths. With 23 issues under our belt and the 24<sup>th</sup> in print, we do however face challenges to keep the paper going without more support to research, write & obtain articles and attract enough advertising to cover print production costs.

Providing editorial and advertising in The Local Voice is a great medium to indirectly promote your business & events to our local community and visitors. We have received terrific support from some of our Community Groups who are encouraged through their \$75 per annum Community membership with EDRA to provide regular editorial in The Local to promote their activities, successes, events and membership. Our Community Group members include The Emerald Arts Society, Emerald Garden Club, Emerald Museum & Nobelius Heritage Nursery, The Helmeted Honeyeaters Nursey & Emerald Lions Club. Their contribution to articles in The Local have been greatly appreciated as has advertising from a small handful of business members. Special thanks go to IGA Gembrook who has supported The Local Voice since starting. Thanks Andrew ☺. We would like to see more of our business members support and advertise in the paper which is also promoted online and through The Local Facebook page.

4,000 issues, each edition 20 pages, are produced quarterly and distributed at key locations across the whole of the Eastern Dandenong Ranges including Gembrook, Cockatoo, Avonsleigh, Yellingbo, Emerald, Selby, Belgrave, Kallista, Mobulk, Upper Beaconsfield, and across to Pakenham, Yarra Valley Visitor Centre and Dandenong Ranges Visitor Centre.



# Finance Report 1/7/2015 – 30/6/2016

EDRA and its subcommittees operate a Cash entry accounting system. We have continued with the one account with Bendigo Bank for the year. Thanks to the Community Support Grant funding which was applied for by EDRA and received from Cardinia Shire, our accounts for this financial year have now been recorded in the accounting software MYOB. EDRA would like to extend a big thank you to member Richard Gaunt from RMG Accounts for setting up our Chart of Accounts and for entering & reconciling our 2016 yearend financial records. This now enables our new bookkeeper and treasurer elected for the next financial period, a platform to improve efficiencies in invoicing, recording and reporting financial transactions for EDRA & its subcommittees.

## Income, Profit/Loss Summary for the year:

Total Income:	\$40,246.05
Total Costs:	\$ 8,135.18
Total Expenses:	\$21,361.60
<b>Total Profit/Loss:</b>	<b>\$10,749.27</b>

Balance brought forward of \$5,688.76 plus operating profit from this financial year of \$10,749.27 is a total of \$16,438.03. As at 30th June 2016 we showed a closing balance for the year of \$17,808.83 which is the \$16,438.03 plus \$1,370.80 retained for GST.

In this financial year EDRA received a Dandneong Ranges Environmental and Bushfire Reduction Community Grant for \$10,000 from Port Phillip & Westernport CMA. The Grant project is for educating the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Community on fuel load reduction including revegetation plantings, presentations, training and workshops, and educational resources and displays. The Port Phillip & Westernport CMA for Bushfire Grant is still undergoing disbursement giving us a total operating balance of \$6,438.03

EDRA would like to thank its Members for their ongoing support and contributions for the year.

Moving forward for the next financial year, our goal is to continue to improve and streamline our finance and banking processes for the future.



Joshua DeBattista

Treasurer