

2018 EDRA Annual Review



Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association

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



Chair Report – David Nickell

As the new EDRA Chair, my time spent in 2018 saw me representing and advocating on behalf of EDRA and EDRBT with the aim to achieve better recognition and funding for our district since forming late 2014.

I attended the Casey Cardinia Tourism meeting February 2018 as an observer. Following this, I attended a teleconference in late April with Nicole Tehan from the Casey Cardinia Visitor Research Project, where I re-articulated previous EDRA submissions on the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy. Our contention remains that our district is distinct from Westernport and also requires unique support & assistance.

Further to having helped the Gembrook Community Group to establish in 2017, I represented EDRA at the Gembrook Community Forum they held on 30th April and their community group meeting in July.

We continued to build relationships with our regional tourism association (RTA), Yarra Ranges Tourism. I met with CEO Simon O'Callaghan in early June to discuss membership fees, equivalent district local tourism associations (LTA's) and example local government support for RTA's & LTA's.



I made a submission into the DELWP Strategic Bushfire Management Planning in June and in August a submission into the DELWP Draft 10 Year Plan for Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, both significant projects in our district from a business and tourism perspective.

On August 28th we had a site meeting with local member Jason Wood, local councillor Leticia Wilmot, mayor Colin Ross, Rail Trails Australia, and delegates from Emerald Village Committee and the Gembrook Community Group, to walk over Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail sites and point out works still outstanding.

I attended the opening of Eastern Dandenong Ranges Rail Trail at Gembrook on October 30th along with Lynne Trensky.



Chair Report – David Nickell

The 2017 EDRA strategic plan was completed ready to develop a new three year plan for 2018 -21. This was not possible due to our small voluntary committee, work and other incidences of a personal nature.

I initiated discussion with Andrew Pomeroy, Manager Economic Development, Tourism and Major Projects and Carol Jeffs, CEO from Cardinia Council in February and March 2019, seeking direct support and funding for EDRA.

And as a result, I am pleased to be able to announce for the first time, Council will provide some funding to EDRA for the next three years. This will enable us to develop specific product for our townships and district, and more training, networking and promotions for all our member types.

We have seen our townships develop with new buildings and new businesses. Gyms & health studios, giftware, jewelry, cafes and restaurants, providore, real estate, doctors and artisan producers.

To ensure longevity for these businesses, we need to work together to attract patronage from our local community and visitors to our district.

As a district we can pool resources and talents across our communities and achieve enough scale to create a compelling story to our local residents and businesses, as well as to visitors and government, about our place in the greater Dandenong Ranges region. We can continue to partner with township-based community groups who want to work with us, to amplify their voice and support their projects.

We need the support and participation from our business community to achieve this. I encourage members to take an active role by electing to be on the EDRA committee or EDRBT general sub-committee member in their township, to engage with our membership manager and businesses on local issues, needs and ideas, and to be involved in the decision making and outcomes.

David Nickell

Membership Report – Lynne Trensky

The start of 2018 kicked-off rolling out distribution of our 'Find me in the hills' maps 1 & 2. The maps have been extremely successful with only enough left to see us through the next 3 months. I am hoping we will be able to produce a bigger and better map, (A2 fold-out map) with more content this year.

During the last half of 2017, and up until March 2018, a lot of time went into planning a Dandenong Ranges Food Wine & Art Festival in March 2018 as part of the annual Melbourne Food & Wine festival, themed 'Community' to promote our district.



We had our schools, restaurants, wineries, artists and celebrities all lined-up, but unfortunately the day was declared a total fire ban with extremely high winds and we were advised by authorities to cancel.

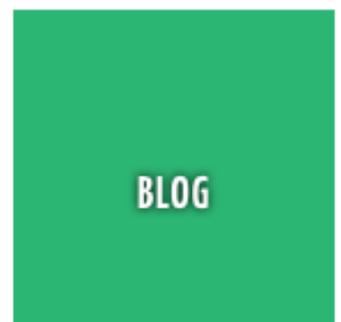
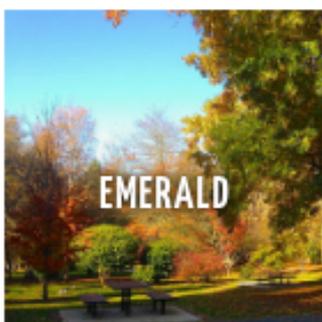


We learned a lot from the project and will use our findings to reignite a Dandenong Ranges Food & Wine festival in the future, and in a new format.

We auspice the Emerald Region Bee Club, a club of over 50 members that meet monthly at the Emerald Community House.

EDRA is also currently auspicings an arts grant through Yarra Ranges Shire for Jamie Saxe who is producing a series of videos on local female artists capturing their life stories under the title "Living Legacies Snapshots." These will be shown at the 2020 PAVE Festival, libraries and venues across the Dandenong Ranges.

We continued to increase our social posts and audience on Eastern Dandenong Ranges Facebook page, and made updates to our district website easterndandenongranges.com to include pages for each of our townships, a blog and EDRA page. We also connected our real estate agents with Fremantle Media for Escape to the Country series ideas for our district.



Membership Report – Lynne Trensky

In the latter part of 2018 we started design of our new local township websites and launched the new Emerald website emeraldvillage.com.au in April and gembrookvillage.com.au in May 2019. We would like to create a cockatoovillage.com.au and will be liaising with various groups in Cockatoo to try and achieve this.



HOME ▾ LOCAL BUSINESS CLUBS & GROUPS ATTRACTIONS WHAT'S ON GALLERY CAFES & RESTAURANTS ACCOMMODATION

HOME ▾ LOCAL BUSINESS CAFES & RESTAURANTS ACCOMMODATION CLUBS & GROUP ATTRACTIONS WHAT'S ON GALLERY CONTACT US

With changes to Puffing Billy departure and arrival points now being at Emerald Lake Park, we moved the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Visitor Centre to the Fernlea Shop of Ops in Kilvington Drive. The visitor centre operates as self-serve with support from the shop volunteers. I am also the person on the phone when people call the visitor centre providing recommendations and visitor information.

I meet on behalf of our members with the Puffing Billy Marketing Department quarterly to get an update on PB projects and to discuss issues and opportunities. We are discussing the addition of a bike carriage train to encourage and promote a dual “train and trail” experience between Lakeside and Gembrook.

The crossing into the Emerald township from Emerald station is unsafe and doesn't provide all abilities access. Puffing Billy are investigating extending the platform to the corner of Benson Street, providing easy access to Kilvington Drive at the top end and start of the Eastern Dandenong Ranges Rail Trail.

A 'Pick my Project' submission was made to develop the trail to include a Nature Arts experience. Unfortunately we weren't successful.

We kicked-off our first business breakfast in July at BAM BAM. We had over 40 members attend the session on 'Leveraging the Facebook Algorithm' delivered by Emma from Promote Social. I also presented on 'Signage for success.'



Membership Report – Lynne Trensky

Our other members networking event was held at Emersleigh Estate where we discussed the benefits of networking and promotional partnering. These events provide an opportunity for members to gain an insight to other members businesses and their products and services.



I was honored to be asked by Council to be a community representative along with artist Jenni Ivins on the selection panel for the Hills Hub Public Art consultation and Ranges Ward Public Art commission. Both projects will be popular visitor attractions.

Emerald Emergency Planning Group – Business Recovery readiness post a major disaster. Worked with Wayne Collins, from the Emerald Emergency Planning Group to develop, SES & CFA to develop the structure and outcomes to run 'Business Recovery readiness post a major disaster' in 2019.

Applied and awarded funding for Christmas decorations for Emerald township through Cardinia smarty grants. Bought decorations and assembled the street decorations for Emerald. Coordinated an Emerald Christmas Gift Guide for traders and find the elves competition for children to attract our community to shop local. We engaged Tom from Rotary once again to be our roving Santa and offered free photo sittings for families. And our Emerald subcommittee organised buskers during the week leading up to Christmas to entertain shoppers and create Christmas cheer.



12 Gnomes are hiding in shop windows around Emerald. Find a gnome and get your Passport stamped in the shop you found it. Collect all 12 stamps and take your passport to Emerald Post Office and collect your reward.



Membership Report – Lynne Trensky

I'd like to pay special thanks to our Emerald & Gembrook Subcommittees. To Ian Ash, who chairs and coordinates our business breakfast presentation materials and Louisa Lammers who writes our minutes and coordinates our Christmas buskers. To Garry McGough, who sits across EDRA, the Gembrook Community Group and Gembrook market and reports and carries out actions for all three organisations.

It was disappointing a lot of members did not pay their 2018 renewals or advise us otherwise. In good faith we have kept all members business details and social links on our district and respective township websites.

I encourage all business in the Eastern Dandenong Ranges to renew and become a member of EDRA. We have the opportunity to be recognised as the **only one (key) website resource** our local community and visitors go to, to access information on all types of businesses, community groups and clubs, accommodation, retail, hospitality and tourism, events and attractions that represents our whole district.

Our websites extend greater promotion of your business, and you can help to develop promotions, experiences/attractions and networking opportunities by electing to be on a general subcommittee in your township.

Together we can demonstrate and promote the breadth and diversity of our region and what sets us apart from the foothills and hilltop villages in the Dandenong Ranges.

Lynne Trensky

Finance Report – Josh De Battista

EDRA doesn't receive any funding from local council and relies on the membership fees as its main source of funding.

Business Insurance remained our biggest expense along with a final payment to Shepparton Printers for the very last issue of The Local newspaper produced.

Finding out what our members are looking from the association and focusing on increasing membership numbers to keep EDRA operating for the benefit of our region will again be the top priority for the newly elected Committee for 2018-19.

Opening Balance	\$3687.91
Total income	\$6171.40
Total expenses	\$7695.50
Total profit and loss	\$2163.81 CR

Joshua De Battista, Treasurer EDRA