

2026! Term 1

Welcome to 2026!

The year has started with various challenges, terrible heat and catastrophic fire danger, but also flash flooding due to storms. The weather Gods certainly have a sense of humour.

I would like to acknowledge all the people affected by the Bushfires, our hearts go out to you.

I would like take the opportunity to Thank our wonderful Fire Fighters for the amazing job you all do.

Pancake Breakfast

As usual, our free Pancake Breakfast on the first Monday each month of the school term continues. Drop in for a free feed and gossip with other locals between 8:30 and 9:30am. The breakfasts this term 2nd February, and 2nd March.

Eaglehawk UFS Sponsorship

Eaglehawk UFS Pharmacy has continued their sponsorship this year for our Blister Pack Recycling program. We sincerely thank EUFS for this ongoing sponsorship because without it we would not be able to continue this recycling program.

Easter Colouring Competition

For 5 to 9 years

Completed colouring sheets are to be returned to Marong Neighbourhood House by Monday 23rd March 2026. Winners & Prizes announced on Monday 30th March 2026.

Childs name and age, parent name and phone number are required on each sheet entered in the competition.

Solstice Energy Customers

Solstice are holding a drop-in session for all Solstice customers on Thursday 19th February at the Marong Community Hall, 36 Torrens St Marong. 2pm-8pm

City of Greater Bendigo and DEECA have planned drop-in sessions here at Marong Neighbourhood House for Marong residents that need assistance with the changeover.

CoGB Sessions

Mon 2nd February, 9:30am – 11:30am

Thurs 5th February, 4pm – 6pm

Mon 9th February, 9:30am – 11:30am

Thurs 12th February, 9:30am – 11:30am

Fri 20th February, 1pm – 3pm

Mon 23rd February, 9:30am – 11:30am

DEECA Sessions

Mon 9th February, 9:30am – 11:30am

Thurs 12th February, 2pm – 6pm

Lockwood Ward By-election

The by-election for a new ward councillor is conducted by the VEC, and voting is compulsory for everyone who is enrolled. Voting will take place via a postal vote, with ballot packs to be mailed out between Friday March 6 and Thursday March 12. Voting closes at 6pm Friday March 27.

—Janine.

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CoGB support

Solstice Energy Customers

DEECA support

From City of Greater Bendigo Website

Lisa Chesters MP

Easter Colouring Competition



Find the Palm Tree

Somewhere located in this newsletter is a hidden Palm Tree from our logo, are you able to find it?

Opening Hours (we open only during school terms)

Term	Start	Finish
Term 1:	27 Jan	02 Apr
Term 2:	20 Apr	26 Jun
Term 3:	13 Jul	18 Sep
Term 4:	05 Oct	18 Dec

Marong Neighbourhood House

Mon:	9.00am to 3.30pm
Tue:	9.00am to 3.30pm
Wed:	9.00am to 5.00pm
Thu:	2.00pm to 6.00pm
Fri:	Closed

TOFS Op-Shop

Mon:	9.30am to 12.30pm
Tue:	9.30am to 12.30pm
Wed:	9.30am to 12.30pm
Fri:	9.30am to 12.30pm
Sat:	10.00am to 12.00pm

Activity Program

M O N	1:00pm - 3:00pm	Craft Circle	Bring along your current craft project and supplies. Enjoy a cuppa and chat while crafting. \$4 per session.
T U E	9:00am - 11:00am	Playgroup	Children can play or participate in a friendly safe environment, facilitated by Ro. Bring along your own snacks. \$4 per family per session or \$20 for 6 sessions.
	9:30am - 10:30am	Walking Group	Meet at the Clubhouse at Malone Park. All ages and abilities welcome. Friendly, well-behaved dogs on leads also welcome. No cost.
	1:00pm - 3:00pm	Family History	Kath can help you research your family history. Computers for research are available if required. Cost \$4 per session.
W E D	10:00am - 11:00am	Over 60s Exercise Class	BO Co BOOKED OUT lity Exercise Class.
	1:30pm - 3:00pm	Art Class	Artist Rob shows you how to create your own piece of art. Materials and equipment supplied. \$4 per class.
	7:00pm - 8:00pm	Yoga	Dedicated instructor Nerissa leads a class suitable for all fitness levels. Cost \$10 per class.
T H U	9:00am - 11:00am	Playgroup	Children can play or participate in a friendly safe environment, facilitated by Ro. Bring along your own snacks. \$4 per family per session or \$20 for 6 sessions.
	12:30pm - 6:00pm	Tech Support	We are available if you need assistance with your smart phone, tablet or laptop. We are also able to assist with completing online forms.
F R I	9:30am - 4:00pm	Machine Embroidery	Fridays. Please call for dates. Bring your machine, supplies and lunch. \$4 per session.
S A T	10:00 - 3:00pm	Sewing Workshop	Judith and Shirley teach sewing, ideal for beginners. Bring your own machine. Usually fortnightly. Please call for exact dates. Cost \$4 each per class.

Contact Details



39 High St
Marong
Victoria, 3515

Phone: 03) 5435 2486
Mobile : 0494 102 904
Email: marongnhh@gmail.com



[Marong Neighbourhood House Page](#)



[Marong Neighbourhood House Group](#)



[Marong Neighbourhood House Playgroup Group](#)



[Marong Neighbourhood House - Op-Shop Page](#)



Website: www.marongnh.com.au



Op-shop website: marongnhh9.wixsite.com/marongopshop

Services Offered

Photocopying & Printing

For a small charge per page, document photocopying, printing of digital photographs, or printing documents in most popular formats can be done:

	A4	A3
B&W	\$0.20	\$0.30
Colour	\$0.40	\$1.00

Laminating

Documents can be protected by having them laminated. The fee per sheet is:

- \$1.50 for A4-size
- \$2.50 for A3-size

Binding

A4-size documents up to 80 pages costs \$2.00. Plastic & Card cover sheets are 50 cents each.

Community Garden

Our community garden plots provide food share for the community.

Our worm farms, herb beds and fruit trees (apricots & plums, lemons & limes) are well established. If you'd like to grow your own produce, but don't have the room, plots are available for rent at \$10/year plus \$10 deposit for a garden key.

Computer Use

It is assumed that everyone has computer and internet access these days but that is not the case for everyone. We have computers with internet access available for use.

Please drop in during open hours for this service.

Free Wi-Fi

We offer password-protected Wi-Fi internet. When you drop in just ask for the password.

TOFS Op-Shop

Our Op-Shop (The Old Fire Shed Op-Shop or just TOFS), is located at 16 Cathcart Street, Marong.

All items are affordable and in excellent condition.

Details of opening hours are on page 1.



Free Library

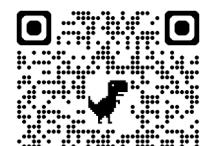
We now have included childrens books.

It is free to borrow from the thousands of books.

Drop in and have a look during our open hours.

See the "Book of the Month" on page 5.

Have a look at the catalogues on our website or via QR code



Venue Hire

The Marong Neighbourhood House is available to hire at the following rates:

- Meetings: \$10.00
- Group Bookings: \$50.00
- Birthday Parties: \$50.00

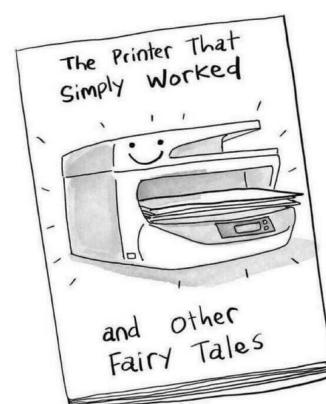
There is a limit of 50 people inside the building. Please contact us for further information.

Recycling

We are a recycling drop-off point for the CoGB e-waste programme, soft plastics, blister packs, and Mobile Muster. More details on page 4.

IT Assistance

Now days everything is online and we understand that not everyone knows how to navigate the internet. We provide assistance with safely accessing online services for everyday requirements e.g. MyGov, Centrelink, Super.



The newsletter can be emailed or posted to you at no charge. Please provide us with your details either by email, phone, or in person and we will add you to our distribution list. Your details will be kept confidence.

Recycling Programs



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

**CLOSE
THE LOOP**

We are a drop-off point for soft plastic waste. Three bins for soft plastics are situated beside the pathway at the side of the House.

An arrangement has been struck between the City of Greater Bendigo and the Close the Loop company. The plastics we collect are taken to the Council collection point at Eaglehawk, and from there it is passed to Close the Loop for recycling into pallets, crates, trolleys, and road-base additive.

Nobody wants to pick the plastic out of the bin piece-by-piece, so **please** drop it off in see-through bags. Thank you.

If you drop your old mobile in to us, we will get it started on it's recycling journey in an official MobileMuster satchel. MobileMuster and their recycling partner companies then recover over 95% of the materials—glass, aluminium, precious & rare metals, plastic—even the paper and cardboard of the packaging are all saved from land-fill.



The Pharmacy that supports your Community!



Thanks to EUFS sponsorship, we take all brands of used, over-the-counter medication blister packs and Webster packs for recycling. Please ensure your blister packs are completely empty and dry before dropping them off. The programme accepts only the actual blister packs – do not include anything else. The blister packs are sent to Pharmacycycle, then the metal foils are re-smelted and the plastics are melted down for reuse.

E-waste recycling

The City of Greater Bendigo has provided Marong Neighbourhood House with one of their small e-waste stations. Drop your e-waste items into us anytime—the e-waste station (bin) is under cover on the side verandah—and we will make sure they don't end up in landfill. We accept any small to medium sized mains or battery powered items, as well as:

Small taped-up batteries
Printer cartridges
Optical disk drives
Double adapters & power boards
USB memory/SD cards

Cables and leads
Computer keyboard & mouse
Chargers
Multi-adapter plugs



Book of the Month

Deception Bay Author: J.P. Powell

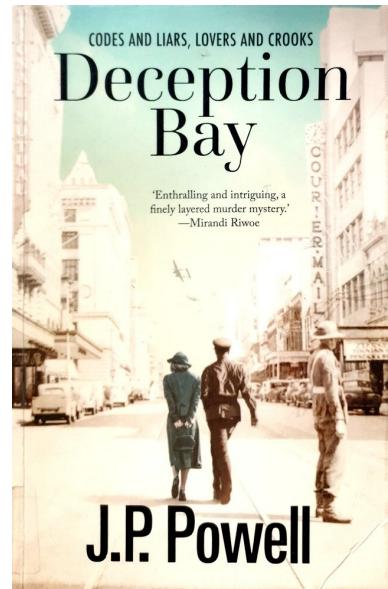
Genres: *Historical Fiction, Australia.*

Deceit is usually wrong, sometimes necessary and often the best course of action....

DECEPTION BAY continues J.P. Powell's magnificent Brisbane wartime saga. American MP Joe Washington, an investigator with the Provost Marshall's Office, and Australian Rose McAlister are swept back together when she returns to join Central Bureau, General MacArthur's code-breaking group of eccentrics in 'Brisbane's Bletchley Park'.

Again and again, Joe is drawn to the Brisbane River. Reports of a man who jumped from a bridge, a code breaker allegedly drowned by suicide, and an arm with an unrecognisable tattoo fished out of the water at the submarine base.

Together they follow the clues but are quickly drawn into the city's dark tank stream, filled with predators and conmen and Joe's nemesis, corrupt Queensland detective Frank Bischof.



Recipe of the Month

Grilled Chicken Pasta Salad

A BBQ chicken pasta salad with fresh flavors and a lightened-up creamy dressing.

Serves: 4

Prep: 15m

Cook: 20m

Difficulty: Easy



Ingredients

2-3 boneless/skinless chicken breasts
4 cups uncooked pasta
Handful cilantro chopped
1/4 medium red onion chopped (or to taste)
1 cup smoked cheddar grated
1 avocado chopped
BBQ sauce for brushing on the chicken

Marinade:

1/4 cup olive oil
Juice from 1/2 lemon
2 dashes Italian seasoning
2 cloves garlic minced
Salt & pepper to taste

Dressing:

1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt (I used 2%)
1 tablespoon BBQ sauce
1/2 tablespoon vinegar
1/2 tablespoon brown sugar
Pinch of garlic powder
Salt & pepper to taste

Instructions

Butterfly the chicken then cut it in half lengthwise to make thinner cutlets. Add the chicken and the marinade ingredients to a large Ziploc bag and place in the fridge for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, make the dressing and set it aside until needed. Prep your cilantro, onion, cheddar, and avocado.

Start boiling a large salted pot of water. Cook pasta according to package directions. Preheat your BBQ/grill to high heat. Reduce heat to medium-high and cook the chicken for about 4 minutes/side or until it's cooked through but not overdone. Brush both sides of each piece of chicken with the BBQ sauce as needed.

When the pasta is cooked, drain it and rinse it with cool water. Make sure it's drained thoroughly. Add it to a large bowl.

Add the cilantro, onion, cheddar, avocado, and dressing to the pasta. Toss. Slice the chicken and top the pasta salad with it after it cools for a few minutes. Gently mix the chicken in if desired. Season the salad with extra salt & pepper if needed.

Activity Page

Sudoku

8		2	6					4
	1			8	3		6	2
2	6		7	4		1		
		6		7	8	2	1	
		4		3	2			8
2				9				7
7				1			2	
3		8					7	
	1		2	7				6

Marong Streets Word Search

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

ADAM
DRAY
JARRUNG
JORDAN
DORSET
MALONE PARK
THOMAS
PEMBROKE
YERIN
SAMPSON
CALDER
ANTRIM
GRAFTON
CATHCART
FALLS
STERRY
MERRION
GOLDIE
OSCAR
LISBURM
GILFORD
KULIN
GARINGAL HILLS

Aussie Summer Sporting Legends Famous Faces Quiz



1. _____



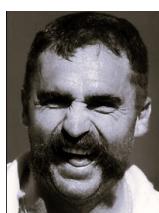
2. _____



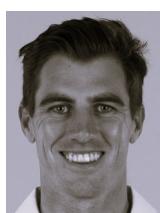
3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____

Brain Teaser

M1Y L111F1E	Get it Get it Get it Get it	Try <u>stand</u> 2
TRAVEL ccccccc	FAST	T OW N
EYE EYE	<:987	ONCE
POT oo oo oo oo	D movie D movie D movie	SECRET ← SECRET SECRET

Community Information

SUPPORT FOR SOLSTICE ENERGY CUSTOMERS IN MARONG



Solstice Energy announced it will decommission its compressed natural gas network in Marong in August 2026. Solstice Energy customers in Marong need to decide by Sunday March 15, if they will switch to bottled LPG or electric appliances.

To make your decision, you must select your option using the residential customer portal on the Solstice Energy website at <https://nextsteps.solsticeenergy.com.au>

Note: Solstice Energy has advised that if a customer in Marong does not make a decision before March 15, 2026, they will be deemed to have elected a Self-Managed conversion.

For more information

Scan the QR code or visit go.bendigo.vic.gov.au/supportforsolsticustomers

Email: energyempowerment@bendigo.vic.gov.au

Phone: 0436 461 392



Drop-In Sessions

The City of Greater Bendigo wants to support customers to make these decisions by holding Drop-In Sessions at **Marong Neighbourhood House** where you can ask any questions. Please feel free to come along at any time.

JANUARY

Tuesday January 13
9.30am-11.30am
Thursday January 15
2.30pm-4.30pm
Monday January 19
9.30am-11.30am
Wednesday January 21
1pm-3pm
Friday January 30
9.30am-11.30am

FEBRUARY

Monday February 2
9.30am-11.30am

Thursday February 5
4pm-6pm

Monday February 9
9.30am-11.30am

Thursday February 12
9.30am-11.30am

Friday February 20
1pm - 3pm

Monday February 23
9.30am-11.30am

MARCH

Friday March 6
1pm - 3pm

In Home Energy Snapshot

Book in for a free *In Home Energy Snapshot* (January - March 2026) to chat about:

- The potential electrification of your appliances
- Other ways you can reduce the need for heating and cooling
- Make a plan if you are not sure where to start



Scan the QR code to register!

Community Information

Victorian Government support for Solstice Energy customers

The Victorian Government is supporting households and businesses impacted by Solstice Energy's closure of its compressed natural gas network.

What is happening?

In parts of Victoria, Solstice Energy is closing its compressed natural gas (CNG) network from 2026. If you are impacted by the network closing, you can upgrade your appliances to electric or convert your gas appliances to run on bottled LPG.

Who is impacted?

The CNG network is closing in the following Victorian towns:

Region	Towns
Loddon Mallee	Marong, Heathcote, Swan Hill, Maldon, Robinvale, Kerang
Hume	Nathalia
Barwon South West	Terang
Gippsland	Lakes Entrance, Orbost

Why is the Solstice CNG network closing?

Solstice Energy, a private energy business, has owned and operated the CNG network in regional Victoria since its establishment. Earlier this year, Solstice made a commercial decision to close this network because it had become too expensive.

Do you have additional questions or need help to electrify?

Contact the Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (DEECA):

Email: solstice.support@deeca.vic.gov.au

Telephone: 1800 413 137 from anywhere in Australia, Monday to Friday, 8 am to 6 pm.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service at 133 677 or visit www.accesshub.gov.au

We will be visiting your area soon

Representatives from DEECA will be visiting the affected locations soon. Please check our website for details on when we will be in your area.

When this will happen

The CNG network will begin to close by mid- to late-2026. Solstice will notify you directly and we will publish a schedule of when your town's CNG network will be shut off on our website.

Talk to us if you're impacted by the Solstice gas network closure.



Marong Neighbourhood House DEECA Drop-in Sessions

Monday 9 February, 9:30am – 11.30am

Thursday 12 February, 2pm – 6pm

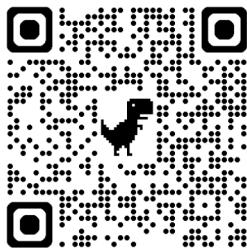
Location: 39 High Street, Marong

Community Information

From City of Greater Bendigo Website



[Dashboard](#) What's your plan?



Emergency Dashboard

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

Language: [English](#)

VicEmergency

CFA

VICSES

Road Closures

Weather Warnings

25.4°C Today's Weather

Rainfall Information

School Closures

Weather Radar (BoM)

Website link here: <https://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/emergency>

MARONG KINDER READY TO OPEN IN 2026

Construction of the new kindergarten at Marrungi Wayaparra Community Hub in Marong is now complete and ready to welcome children in January 2026.

The new kindergarten will be operated by Y Kinders and has been constructed with \$5.5M in funding from the Victorian Government.

The new kinder will help respond to unmet demand for three and four-year-old kindergarten places in the region by providing a new 99-place kinder with Allied Health rooms.

Both the City of Greater Bendigo and the Victorian Government are committed to meeting the demand for kindergarten places in Greater Bendigo and partnered to build this important new infrastructure for local families.

The new building has been designed using environmentally sustainable building standards and is fully

accessible. It features three kinder rooms, two allied health rooms, staff facilities, outdoor play area, kitchen facilities and bathroom amenities.

The construction of the kindergarten is the first stage of a two-stage project to establish the Marrungi Wayaparra Community Hub. Marrungi Wayaparra means *meeting in Marong* in Dja Dja Wurrung language. Stage two of the project is not yet scheduled for delivery with timing subject to future funding.

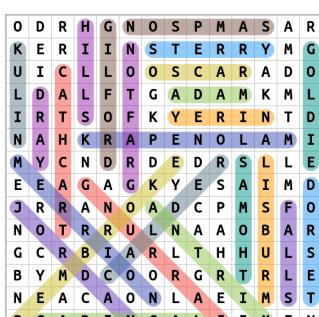
The community hub site, bordered by High Street, Torrens Street and Catchcart Street, also includes the Marong Community Hall, Marong Neighbourhood House and Community Garden, old fire shed along with the new kindergarten.



The new building has been designed using environmentally sustainable building standards and is fully accessible.

Brain Teaser Answers

1. For once in my life (four ones in my life)
2. Forget it
3. Try to understand
4. Travel overseas or overseas travel
5. Breakfast
6. Downtown
7. Eyeshadow
8. Stepfather
9. Once upon a time
10. Potatoes (pot 8 O's)
11. 3D movie
12. Top secret



Famous Faces Quiz Answers

1. Alyssa Healy
2. Richie Benaud
3. Margaret Court
4. Dylan Alcott
5. Merv Hughes
6. Pat Cummins
7. Ash Barty
8. Fred Stolle

Community Information

Changes to social security payments from 1 January

A number of changes to social security payment rates will commence from 1 January 2026, with over 41,155 people in the Bendigo Electorate receiving Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY, Youth Disability Support Pension and Carer Allowance set to see more money in their bank account each fortnight.

A single adult receiving Youth Allowance with no dependents, who lives away from home, will see their maximum fortnightly payment increase to \$684.20, making their annual payment now more than \$3,800 more since Labor came to government.

Income thresholds for student payments will also increase, as well as the parental income test threshold for Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY.

Around 2,250 people in the Bendigo Electorate receiving the Carer Allowance will see their payments increase to \$162.60 per fortnight, making their annual payment almost \$700 more since Labor came to government. This is in addition to Carer Supplement and other social security payments that carers may also be receiving.

Thanks to indexation, more than 41,155 locals balancing study or caring responsibilities will receive a boost to their payments.

Social security recipients may also benefit from Labor's tax cuts, increased rent assistance, cuts to student debt, free TAFE, cheaper medicines and more bulk billing.

If you have any questions about these payments or any other Federal Government matters, please contact the Bendigo Electorate office on 03 5443 9055 or via email

Lisa.Chesters.MP@aph.gov.au

Medicare and PSB changes making healthcare cheaper for you

Some New Year's cheer for everyone. From January 1, the Federal Labor Government is making cheaper medicines. The most you will pay for a prescription on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) will be \$25.

The last time PBS medicines cost no more than \$25 was 2004 – more than 20 years ago.

Pensioners and concession cardholders will continue to benefit from the freeze to the cost of their PBS medicines, with the cost frozen at its current level of \$7.70 until 2030.

Making PBS medications even cheaper, is just one way our Government is making your primary healthcare more affordable.

The Federal Labor Government has also expanded the bulk billing incentive to all Australians and boosted payments to GPs that bulk bill every patient.

So far in the Bendigo Electorate there are 23 fully bulk billing practices and more will join. Is your family GP one of them? If not, ask them why.

Whether your family needs urgent care, regular check-ups or prescription medication, we want everyone in the Bendigo Electorate to have access to affordable primary healthcare with their Medicare card.

Lisa Chesters MP
Federal Member for Bendigo

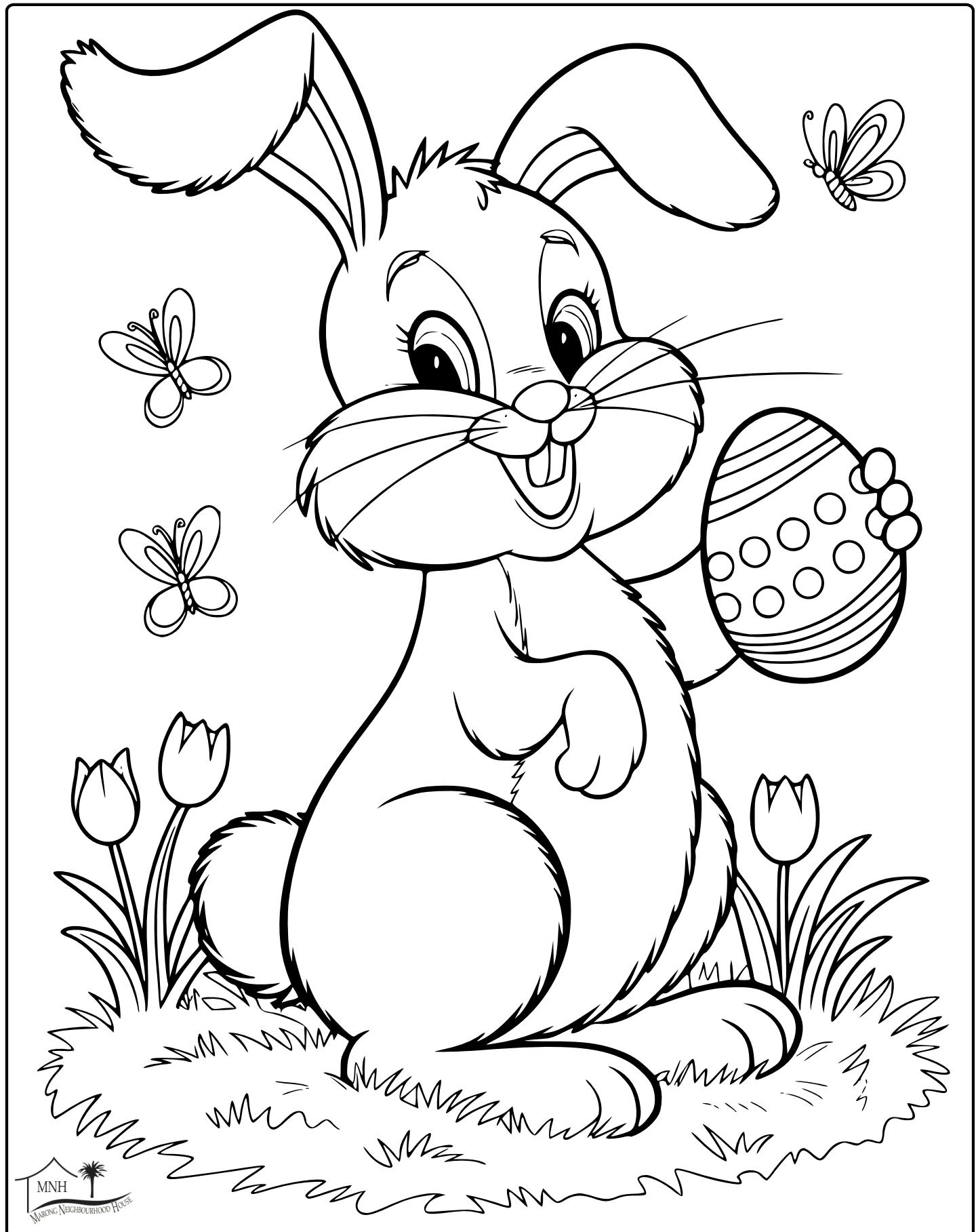


Marong Neighbourhood House acknowledges that we work and live on the country of the Dja Dja Wurrung people. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways, and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. We celebrate the rich heritage and the continuing culture of the First Peoples of this nation.



Marong Neighbourhood House celebrates, values and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

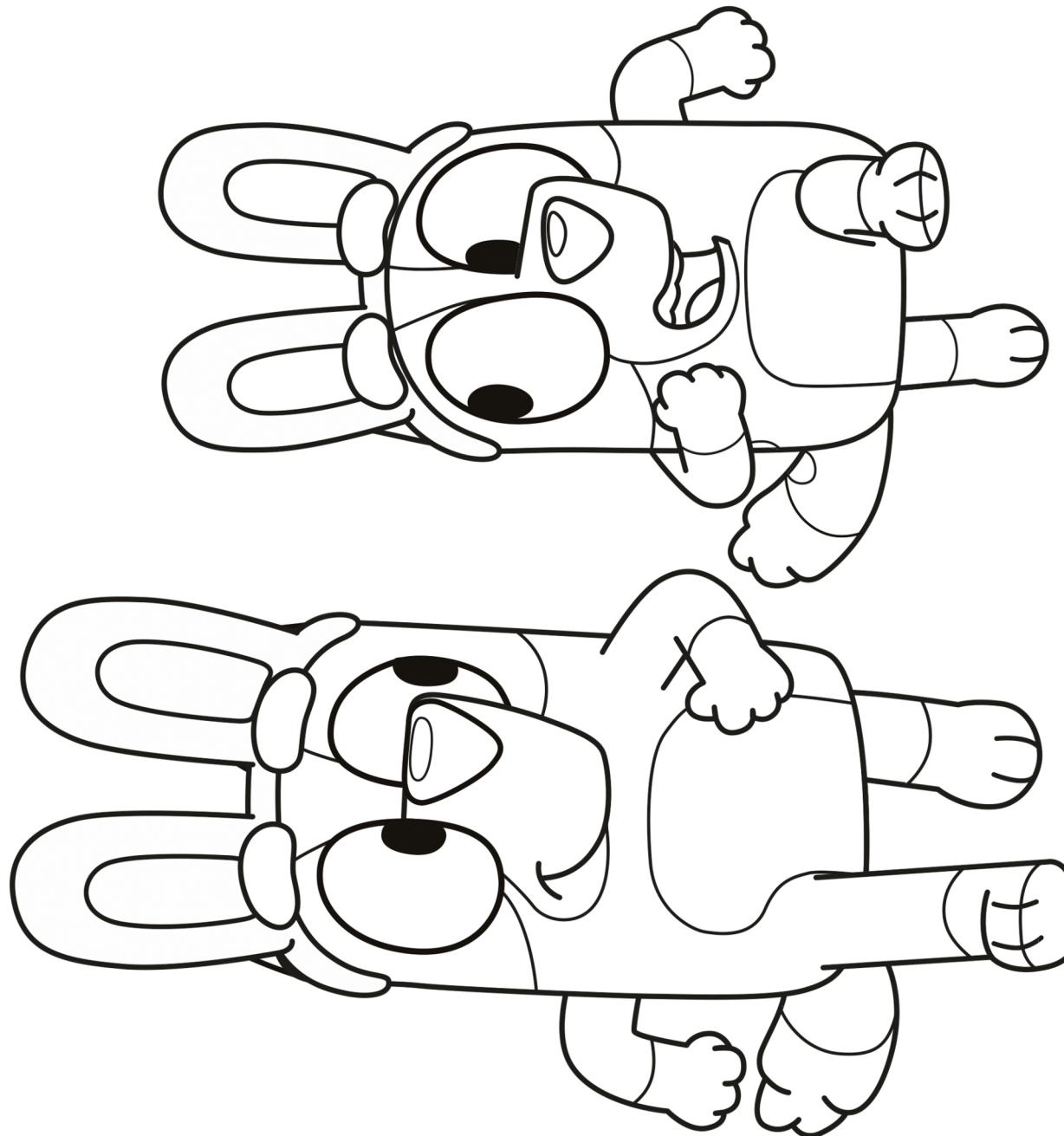




Easter Colouring Competition

Name: _____ Age: _____

Parent Name: _____ Phone: _____



Bluey

Easter Colouring Competition

Name: _____

Age: _____

Parent Name: _____

Phone: _____