

Women Who Mean Business

... Selling Gippsland's Finest



Project Newsletter :: Autumn Edition 2004



Official Launch by Deputy Premier

The Hon. John Thwaites, Deputy Premier, Minister for Victorian Communities, Minister for Environment and Minister for Water, officially launched the **Women Who Mean Business – Selling Gippsland's Finest (WwMB)** project at the Esso BHP Billiton Wellington Entertainment Centre, Sale, on Thursday, 19 February, 2004.

The State Government's Community Support Fund has committed to supporting the project over three years with a financial commitment of \$379,000. These funds will be utilised to facilitate community leadership, art and business workshops, community forums and employ two part-time project coordinators, a part-time networking officer and develop eight community projects.

The launch of **WwMB**, hosted by Wellington Councillor, Darren McCubbin as MC, provided an ideal networking gathering for women from across Gippsland who also had an opportunity to meet and speak with the Minister personally over an informal lunch.

Preceding the formality of the launch, representatives from the State Government, Anna Lottkowitz, Rural Women's Network and Meredith Budge, Adviser to the Deputy Premier, provided an open forum where delegates were given the opportunity to raise issues affecting their rural communities and farming business. Ms Lottkowitz and Ms Budge responded to varied questions and issues from delegates concerning rural communities and farming constraints. Both representatives were committed to seek further advice post-forum regarding some issues that could not be addressed on the day. The delegates present at the launch expressed their appreciation of this opportunity to raise issues face to face with government representatives and felt this was an effective means of having a true voice heard.

A feature of the launch was the presentation of an effective PowerPoint display, illustrating some of the projects and women who were actively involved in a previous community art project hosted in four locations in the East Gippsland region entitled – **UNITING OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES (UoRC) – Rural Women for Cultural and Community Leadership Project**. The UoRC was conducted in four locations in East Gippsland in 1997/98. Four women were on a panel and gave testimonies to the benefits and outcomes the UoRC project had brought to them personally, but most importantly, to their communities. The panel was interviewed by Deb Bye, Manager, LifeFM Gippsland

Radio Station, who had also compiled the PowerPoint display along with Beth Harris. In his address to delegates, Minister Thwaites expressed his delight and responded to the ongoing outcomes that had developed from the previous art project. During his speech he said, "if anyone's had the opportunity that we've had to sit through that demonstration of the work that the Gippsland Women's Network have been doing over the past years, you can see how you have really led the way in bringing communities together – making communities active and confident, giving people skills that they don't otherwise think they have, and doing that so jointly we do more than we can (do) individually. All of those projects that you talked about, achieved that." Minister Thwaites also said, "I see this project as one of the best projects that the Community Support Fund is able to support. It's really got everything. You've already got a track record here in the past so we know that it's going to work and I think it's the sort of project that I'd like to see replicated in other areas of the State."

Minister Thwaites was presented with a basket of Gippsland produce as a thank you gesture from the Gippsland women.

A collective exhibition of local artists' work, organised by Eileen Thurgood, EO from Arts Network East Gippsland (ANEG) was displayed in the foyer, illustrating some examples of the high standard of art being created by Gippsland women.

Wellington Shire have given their commitment and support to the WwMB project. Wellington Shire Mayor John Jago said, "We are delighted by the introduction of this fantastic initiative which promises a great deal for the women of Gippsland and significant benefits for our community as a whole. It will complement and build on existing women's network programs throughout the Shire, as well as marking a new era for local women in the fields of leadership, business and the arts."



Deputy Premier
The Hon. John Thwaites
with the hamper
presented at the
conclusion of the
official launch.

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of the **Women Who Mean Business – Selling Gippsland's Finest**.

The Gippsland Women's Network (GWN) in partnership with Arts Network East Gippsland (ANEG) are delighted to be bearers of good community news. The State Government's Community Support Fund has funded the **Women Who Mean Business – Selling Gippsland's Finest** Project for its three-year duration. The project also hopes to link and forge strong partnerships with local government and other community agencies, but most importantly, strong partnerships with YOU, the community members across all of Gippsland. The project belongs to Gippsland, and we as the facilitators, are simply the conduit for delivering the project to you.

Thank you to GWN supporters for completing and returning survey feedback!

Many GWN supporters completed a survey mailed out in the GWN April 2003 newsletter expressing preferences and ideas for community art priorities within their local communities. Belinda Brennan, consultant, facilitated eight Gippsland community location workshops in April 2003 and consolidated these recommendations along with "The Box" ideas in application to the Community Support fund. Your feedback strengthened our submission to the State Government's Community Support Fund, resulting in the successful outcome of financial State Government support.

The GWN is in the process of employing two part-time project coordinators who will oversee the project. One project officer will oversee projects in the South Gippsland, Latrobe and Baw Baw areas. The second project coordinator will work in the East Gippsland and Wellington shire areas.

A project website is currently being finalised. The website will be regularly updated with news, ideas and participant comments and project commentaries.

(Watch this space for the official launch date of the WwMB web site.)

Please remember ... the **WwMB project** is open to ALL women and community living in Gippsland, and is not a project just for artists. We believe the **WwMB** will unleash many other personal and community skills and artistic abilities to all who become involved. We look forward to working with you on this exciting project which will strengthen the talents within our rural communities and each of us.

A BIG WELCOME TO YOU ALL!

Catherine Noy

PROJECT NETWORKING OFFICER
on behalf of the Management Committee,
WwMB Project

Background to the WwMB Project

The project is supported by the State Government's Community Support Fund and is auspiced by Arts Network East Gippsland (ANEG) on behalf of the Gippsland Women's Network.

WwMB has been gathering impetus for two years. The project grew through the GWN's "The Box" initiative and is supported by the Wellington Shire Council, ABC Regional Radio Sale and Gippsland Centre Sale. The issues contributed to "The Box" were gathered and collaborated into the WwMB project.

The response was overwhelming and included issues of youth, unemployment, lack of community volunteers, apathy of community participation and pride, lack of art and culture appreciation, lack of exhibition space and many other issues which affect many rural communities.

The objective of WwMB was to increase participation through community activities. The conduit for participation will be the formation of art and community projects within each location. Community art

projects bring communities together and to work together on common goals.

The project will be featured across eight or more Gippsland locations and their surrounding districts including: Bemm River, Buchan, Rosedale, Moe, Warragul, Leongatha, Yarram and Swifts Creek.

Each of these locations will have a working party consisting of 20 to 30 interested participants. All community members are welcome to participate in one, more or all of the activities and workshops on offer over the three year duration.

The first workshops will commence in July and August 2004. (See page 3 for a brief summary of the project and benchmarking.) A Working Group Information meeting has already been hosted in Buchan.

See the next column for the first meeting location dates to be held in your area with contact details.

Come along to find out more information about the WwMB project. Please RSVP to the contact person in your locality.

Location information and dates for April-May 2004

Saturday, 3 April: *Covering:* Buchan, Bairnsdale, Paynesville, Lindenow, Johnsonville, Bruthen, Swan Reach and surrounding areas. *Report:* The Buchan Group met on Saturday, 3 April and had a successful project information session. *Contact:* Suzanne Davies, ph: 5155 9294.

Wednesday, 21 April: *Covering:* Orbost, Bemm River, Cabbage Tree, Marlo and surrounding areas. *Location:* Bemm River Community Centre, Bemm River. *Time:* 1:00pm-3:00pm. *Contact:* Pam Andrews, bemmcomm@datafast.net.au, ph: 5158 4248.

Monday, 26 April: *Covering:* Omeo, Swifts Creek, Ensay and surrounding areas. *Location:* TAFE Community Centre, Swifts Creek. *Time:* 1:00pm-3:00pm. *Contact:* Ros Smith, rsmith@egtafe.vic.edu.au, ph: 5159 4433.

Wednesday, 28 April: *Covering:* Leongatha, Meeniyan, Foster, Fish Creek, Poowong, Korumburra, Mirboo North, and surrounding areas. *Location:* Meeniyan Art Gallery, Meeniyan. *Time:* 10:00am-12:00noon. *Contact:* Meg Viney, magsie@meeniyan-gallery.com.au, ph: 5664 0101.

Monday, 3 May: *Covering:* Yarram and surrounding areas. *Location:* Yarram Shire Offices, Yarram. *Time:* 9:30am-11:30am. *Contact:* Dana (Yarram Community Learning Centre), 215 Commercial Rd, Yarram, ph: 5182 6294.

Monday, 3 May: *Covering:* Maffra, Rosedale, Stratford, Briagalong, Sale, Heyfield and surrounding areas. *Location:* Rosedale Community House, Rosedale. *Time:* 1:15pm-3:15pm. *Contact:* Connie Wilde, rosedalenh@datafast.net.au, ph: 5149 2522 (home).

Tuesday, 4 May: *Covering:* Warragul, Drouin, Ellinbank, Yarragon, Neerim South, Lardner and surrounding areas. *Location:* Warragul Neighbourhood House, Warragul. *Time:* 1:00pm-3:00pm. *Contact:* Beth Sheffield, wglcommh@bigpond.net.au, ph: 5623 6032.

Wednesday, 5 May: *Covering:* Morwell, Traralgon, Trafalgar, Willow Grove, Yinnar, Churchill, and surrounding areas. *Location:* GEST (Ian) Anzac Rd, Moe. *Time:* 9:30am-11:30am. *Contact:* Catherine Noy, noyview@vic.australis.com.au, ph: 5635 2335.

Sharing the success of Community Events!

SALE / STRATFORD

International Women's Day Card

For International Women's Health Day the Gippsland Women's Health designed and sent out a postcard to all its members. For more information contact Gippsland Women's Health on 1800 805 448.

STRATFORD

Arts and Women's Health come together

Local women from East Gippsland recently produced and performed over two nights the play *The Vagina Monologues* at the Eye2Eye Theatre in Stratford to coincide with V-Day.

V-Day is a global non-profit organisation that raises money to stop violence against women. Money is raised by charity performances of the play *The Vagina Monologues*, written by New York author Eve Ensler.

The East Gippsland group decided to donate its profits to both GWHS and Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault.

The performances by everyone in the cast were terrific, emotional and powerful and we were delighted to be included in the evening by contributing a stand on our resources and services. We were however a little abashed at the end of the evening to come forward and be called "Vagina Warriors" along with representatives from the local police services and GCASA who were also invited!

Not only do we thank the women for their support and fabulous initiative but also Eye2Eye for donating the theatre space.

The donation will be put into a special fund and will be used for the benefit of all women in Gippsland. Watch this space!

The Panel team and WwMB Launch organisers

Back (left to right):

Catherine Noy, Willow Grove; Anna Lottkowitz, Rural Women's Network; Deb Bye, LifeFM Radio; Kate Earle, Marlo and Mary Salce, Clydebank.

Front (left to right):

Di Deppeler, Bairnsdale; Alison Howe, Glenmaggie and Suzanne Davies, Buchan.



Women Who Mean Business ... Selling Gippsland's Finest

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Women Who Mean Business three year project aims to work with women across the Gippsland region to develop their talents in leadership, business and the arts.

Objectives

1. To provide local women with the opportunity to realise their full potential and to competently manage change.
2. To provide women with opportunities to develop skills, partnerships and educational opportunities leading to greater self-esteem and confidence through participation in leadership, organisational and business development courses and activities.
3. Increase business and employment opportunities for women in the region.
4. Delivery of high quality leadership, organisational, business and information technology workshops across Gippsland that are accessible to all community members.
5. To provide networking opportunities for women in Gippsland as a means of information sharing, collaboration and friendship.
6. Provision of newsletter, website and email list as a means of information sharing across Gippsland.
7. Provide an avenue for greater involvement of women in promoting Gippsland as a unique and important tourism location.
8. Provide an avenue for newly acquired skills to be utilised and further developed in a community based project.

The project will be delivered in four stages over a three-year period.

The project will be administered by the East Gippsland Arts Network on behalf of the Gippsland Women's Network.

Stage One: Project Establishment

January 2004 – June 2004

The main components of this stage are:

1. Project Management Team established.
2. Employment of Project co-ordinator.
3. Establishment of Database and Networks and email list – information sharing.
4. Development and Production of Quarterly Newsletter – paper and email versions.
5. Development of Gippsland website – business, arts, craft & fibre.
6. Establishment of eight Local Working Groups.



Stage Two: Skills Development Workshops

July 2004 – March 2005

- Leadership, Organisational, Business and Information Technology Workshops.
- Six workshops delivered in eight locations over a nine-month period – totalling minimum 48 workshops.
- Deliver high quality accredited workshops.

Stage Three: Putting Theory into Practice

April 2005 – December 2005

- Allocation of eight \$10,000 grants to eight local steering committees for the development and implementation of a business project – not confined to one based on arts or fibre.
- A detailed project plan including budget, timelines, stakeholders, strategies and actions will be prepared by each local Working Group.
- The project will be implemented by the local community, overseen by the project officer and local steering committee.
- The skills developed in Stage two will be used in the project development and implementation.
- It is envisaged that the total cost of the individual projects will be in excess of \$20,000 each, with the additional funds coming from the community or via private sponsorship.

Stage Four: Showcasing and Celebration

January 2006 – June 2006

- The final stage of the project will be to showcase all the project outcomes.
- These outcomes may include:
 - Art, craft, fibre local community markets to showcase the high quality products from the local area. Location of these markets will be determined during the second and third stages of the project, in conjunction with the Project officer and Local Working Groups.
 - Exhibitions for project products – this will incorporate opportunity for local artists to showcase their work in a formal exhibition. These will be held in conjunction with local art galleries.
 - Business outcomes – new businesses established, linkages built.
 - Tourism opportunities and linkages to existing businesses – collaborative efforts with business and the arts.
- Development and implementation of exhibitions will further enhance the skills developed in stage two of the project.
- The exhibitions, markets and other showcasing opportunities will be held in conjunction with the food, wine and tourism industry to ensure maximum exposure and to create further marketing opportunities for Gippsland's finest products.
- Project Evaluation.

For further information contact:
Catherine Noy, Networking Officer.
Email: (preferable if available)
noyview@vic.australis.com.au
Phone: 5635 2335

Upcoming Community Events!

CHURCHILL

Institute for Regional Studies, Monash University Churchill. Community Adversity and Resilience: the distribution of social disadvantage in Victoria and NSW and the mediation role of social cohesion. Guest speaker: Peter Norden S.J., Policy Director, Jesuit Social Services. When: Thursday, 29 April, 2004. For details: Mardelene.Grobbelaar@adm.monash.edu.au

HEYFIELD

To celebrate Neighbourhood House Week from Monday, 10 May to Friday, 14 May, the Heyfield Community Resource Centre will have a display of craft items made by course participants. Some of these items will also be for sale. During that week there will be a display of completed "Rhapsody In Blue" patchwork quilts. Up to 12 quilts will be on display. This quilt is a beginner's patchwork quilt specially designed for our centre by tutor Jean Hancock and has taken participants a whole year to complete.

WARRAGUL

The Community House is running a **Mural Painting class** whose role it is to paint a mural on the side of our shed. The course will run for the next term and is held on Thursday mornings at the house. Please contact Beth Sheffield, Warragul Community House on 5623 6032 or email: wglcommh@bigpond.net.au

WARRAGUL – VOCAL NOSH

Singing for fun! Come and sing and meet new people in a light and friendly atmosphere. We sing, share a light meal, then sing again. No ongoing commitment is required and no musical training needed – just a willingness to have a go. Wear comfy clothes and be prepared for fun. Participating children welcome. Cost is \$10, \$9 p/time and \$8 concession. Held on the fourth Sunday night of the month. Commencing at 6:00pm to 8:30pm at the Community House, Normanby Street, Warragul. For more details contact Jill on 5628 5486 or Jennifer 5626 1464. **Next Vocal Nosh, Warragul – Sunday, 25 April 2004**

— More Community Events on Page 4

Upcoming Community Events!

ORBOST

The Snowy River Arts Network has applied for funding from Regional Arts Funding to host a Community Singing Festival here in Orbost on the weekend of October 30 and 31. The funding that has been requested is to get 4 Singing Leaders to run workshops that will culminate in a public performance. Keep watching this space for more details or contact Mary McDonald, Orbost Community House, PO Box 527, ORBOST email: mary.mcdonald@arh.com.au

WOMEN IN BUSINESS NETWORK – GIPPSLAND

Mentoring Program. If anyone is interested in business or is considering starting a business and would like some informal mentoring, please ring Gail Robertson, Facilitator, StreetLife – Women in Business Network, 5167 1144 or email: algail@datafast.net.au for more information. Please note the network has 13 mentors who cover a broad range of industries and have vast knowledge and experience of the business world.

WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA

Women's Legal Service Victoria is a statewide community organisation providing free, confidential legal advice, assistance and referral for women.

If you are a woman living in regional, rural or remote Victoria who needs free & confidential legal advice DIAL Freecall 1800 133 302.

•Monday & Friday: 10am-1pm •Tuesday & Thursday: 6:30pm-8:30pm •Wednesday: 2pm-5pm.

WLSV Telephone Advice Line lawyers are experienced in providing legal advice and referral on issues that affect women's lives. By calling the WLSV Telephone Advice Line you will gain a clearer understanding of your legal issue and a range of possible solutions.

Interpreter service available.

INVITATION

Invitation to facilitate a Women Get Elected Workshop in your community

You or someone you know may like to participate in an exciting 2004 election strategy to encourage more women candidates in your local council elections in November 2004. You can become a trained facilitator with the Women Get Elected campaign. The only qualification you need is feel strongly about the importance of women's participation in Local Government.

The campaign is the work of the Strengthening Communities through Women's Participation Project (SCWP). More about the Project can be found on our webpage at www.vlga.org.au/issues/women_gov.html. The workshops were widely offered in both the 2002 and 2003 elections and are based on the material in A Gender Agenda (WPILGC 2002).

NETWORK MAGAZINE

Rural Women's Network Magazine (an initiative of the Victorian Government's Department for Victorian Communities). An interesting newsletter with anecdotes, stories and ideas from rural women and government agencies. If you would like to receive your free copy of Network contact, Kate Stevens, email: rural.women@dse.vic.gov.au or phone: (03) 9637 8807.

ACROSS THE STATE

Department Victorian Communities will be hosting a series of community consultative meetings across Victoria. The purpose of these round table discussions is to seek information and ideas from local groups and organisations on how to work together to help build and strengthen local communities. More information Website: www.dvc.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 366 356 for registration. Registration is free.

LOCATIONS AND DATES:

•Friday, 16 April, 2004: Berwick/Casey
•Friday, 30 April, 2004: Mornington Peninsula •Friday, 14 May, 2004: Geelong
•Friday, 28 May, 2004: Ballarat •Friday, 11 June, 2004: Bendigo •Friday, 25 June, 2004: Traralgon.

WOMEN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By Wellington Shire Mayor, Councillor John Jago

Local Government has a powerful influence on all our lives, every day.

It is the first level of government (not the third or least important), and it is the level of government at which people in the community get their most direct experience of representative democracy and citizen participation.

Local Government is *local* government. It is not *little* government. It is a parliament and a cabinet rolled into one. It has the same constituency and it deals with most of the areas that state and federal governments deal with (health, transport, education, etc.) but at a local level.

Local Government provides essential community services and networks, and also strongly advocates to the other levels of government for the needs of its community in social, cultural, environmental and economic planning and development.

Women are grossly under-represented in Local Government as Councillors and as senior executives. It is long overdue for that to change. Local Government as a business needs to reflect the perspectives of women and their special interests, and where that has happened it has resulted in more responsive Local Government.

I do not want to under-estimate the difficulties which women could face in being Councillors and senior Local Government executives, but the community will be much better off when there are large numbers of women in both the political and administrative arms of local government.

I believe the Gippsland Women's Network can exert a transforming influence in encouraging women in this wonderful region to get seriously involved in Local Government.

John Jago, Mayor, Wellington Shire (until 30 March 2004)

(See listing for a facilitation workshop titled "Women Get Elected" in the Upcoming Community Events at left.)

Somebody doing something worthwhile for someone



CAROLINE GULLY

VOLUNTEER

Radio Presenter and Technician for VISION Australia

RPH - Radio for Print Handicapped

About four years ago I was driving past the Vision Australia centre in Warragul and saw a sign outside that said "Volunteers needed", so I decided to go in and find out about it. I had recently retired as a secondary school teacher and wanted to do some voluntary work. My husband and I had moved to the country several years earlier, but I had continued to work part-time in Melbourne, so had not become involved in the local community.

I found that Vision Australia was about to trial a computer training program for vision impaired clients and they were looking for volunteer mentors. I decided to 'give it a go' and have enjoyed my involvement there ever since.

I have worked in several areas, but for the last year I have been presenting a show on Warragul RPH – radio for print – once a week. In this show, broadcast on 93.5FM, two volunteers read news from the local papers each day between 1-2pm. On Thursdays between 3-4pm, Letters To The Editor from the local papers are read. Volunteer technical operators put the shows to air. I think RPH provides an excellent service to vision impaired people, as well as people who cannot turn pages easily, or have language difficulties.

Vision Australia is a wonderful organization to work for. The staff are friendly and supportive, and training is always given so that you are equipped to do the tasks required of you. Other volunteers are a cheerful group who enjoy the work and the challenges it presents. My involvement in Vision Australia has been interesting and rewarding and has certainly helped me feel a part of the community.

Editor's note: Caroline works and lives with her husband Rob on their farming property at Nilma North where they run Angus breeding cows and fatten steers. She is also an active member of Landcare, BeefCheque and Women on Farms. Caroline enjoys spending time with her grown up family and grandchildren.

... Women who have made work an Artform

DAWN STUBBS

ENVIRONMENTAL ARTIST

MUNRO, EAST GIPPSLAND

I have painted all my life, even as a little girl living in Chelsea, Victoria. I was the second daughter of a timber worker, my father was artistic and encouraged me.

I moved to East Gippsland in 1982 onto a 68-acre property where my husband, Chris, a builder, built our home and art gallery called the Australian Wildlife Art Gallery.

We show painted and limited edition reproductions of my wildlife paintings as well as a few other artist's work.

Chris left the building industry in 1987 to pursue art as a sculptor. We raised our three children on our art which was extremely difficult struggling to keep afloat and just servicing at times.

Unlike my father, I encourage my children not to take on art as a career knowing the difficulty but the strong drive to create won through with them.

My eldest daughter, Kelly, graduated from Monash University with a Fine Art Degree in metalsmithing. Crystal, our second daughter, graduated with Honors from Monash University with Fine Art Degree in hot glass sculpture.

My son Layne, the youngest, is an auto electrician with a strong desire to sculpt so consequently spends his spare time in artistic pursuits.

I like to describe my works as environmental statements rather than wildlife art. Much of my art shows a tranquil place in the natural world, something I wish was closer to the truth in our everyday natural history.

I have printed several works that scratch the surface of the raw wounds we have inflicted on other creatures that share our planet; these are my greatest pride.

I have grown as an artist over many years and now dedicate a lot of my work to learning the truths about myself, consequently feeling my own satisfaction as being paramount above expertise and critique from outside sources. I have won several awards and although wonderful at the time, I don't feel that this is a true reflection of my aspirations as an artist.

My type of art is dismissed as sentimental and out of favour in sophisticated art communities but I feel that ultimately at the end of my life at least I tried to tell a wide audience the truth in a language more easily understood than mere abstraction.

At the end of the day I would hope that I might be judged for my life's work and not an individual painting.



MEG VINEY

MEENIYAN ART GALLERY

MEENIYAN, SOUTH GIPPSLAND

Meeniyán Art Gallery opened in March 2002. It was an enterprise initiated by several local business people who recognized that there were a significant number of talented contemporary artists in the

region, and that they needed to be supported and recognized. It began on a shoestring budget and, were it not for volunteers who put on their overalls and did the dirty work of refurbishing a dilapidated building, the doors would not have opened.

However, one thing we all know about volunteers, is that they know how to have fun whilst working, and much mirth went into those walls. Finding staff came later, and, by the time we opened, we had a group of people who were willing to come along and learn about managing a Gallery.

The thing that surprised me was that, for many of them, it was a transforming experience. They had been accustomed to being in the background, were comfortable with their reclusive status, because they lacked confidence. After a few months I began to notice that they were more talkative, were asking questions about the artists and the way the gallery functioned, so that they could talk with the customers and answer the frequent enquiries that came their way. Then I noticed that they were dressing differently, were dressing in a more stylish manner and even swishing about enjoying the experience. In short, I noticed that our volunteers had found a new voice, a new way of being, and loved their work.

Only rarely has one moved on, and that because they had commitments that precluded their continuing work - they have stayed in touch, and still come to openings.

Editor's Note: Meg Viney is the Director of the Meeniyán Art Gallery, and the inspiration for its conception, development and continued success.

... Women who have made work an Artform



CAROLYN SCHOO

MILLINER

TRARALGON, MID GIPPSLAND

Although I didn't really have an interest in making hats, I enrolled in the revived Millinery Course at GippsTAFE in Morwell in the late 1990's to "make up the numbers". What a revelation! I was so excited I made three hats in the first week (the curriculum suggested that one hat should be completed in the first fortnight). Millinery suddenly seemed to be the purpose for all of my previous studies in Art, Design, and Fashion. I was teaching music during this time, and it wasn't long before I decided to take the plunge and open my own business in Traralgon under the "HATS AHEAD MILLINERY" label.

Since that time I have made hundreds of hats and headpieces for wear at the races, weddings, parades and charity fundraisers around Victoria and Interstate. Each hat is hand blocked and stitched in the time-honoured traditions, using only the highest quality millinery materials available today, and I draw on my passion for historical research as inspiration in the development of new designs, trims and finishes so that each design is a one-of-a-kind.

I am a Member of the Millinery Association of Australia, and an active participant in their Spring Racing Parades, held this year at Flemington. My fantasy hat from those parades caught the eye of the press and was featured on the front page of the Herald Sun, generating much interest and resulting in many new customers, interviews on ABC Radio, and profiles in regional newspapers and media.

During the initial consultation with a client, we discuss their ideas, the purpose and style of the outfit the hat will complement, and very careful consideration is given to the colour and shape of the client's face.

Two of my two greatest sources of enjoyment are seeing a client's face light up with excitement when they try on the finished design, and knowing that a Regional area – Gippsland – can offer clients customised millinery that is comparable to anything that can be found in the metropolitan area.

CARMEL STEVENS

COMMUNITY MUSIC DIRECTOR

TUBBUT, FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

Being an East Gippsland woman has brought about a substantial change in my life. I live with my family in one of the most geographically isolated and remote parts of the Far East, Tubbut. In terms of distance, Tubbut is about 250 kms from the city of Sale. If you happen to be driving through, don't blink or you'll miss it! However this remote location, nestled in the lower foothills of the Snowy Mountains, about 30 kms from the NSW Border, has become my home and my workplace. For the past 10 years I have been Head Teacher of Victoria's Most Remote Rural Primary School. This challenging part of my teaching career has seen me become a passionate advocate for music education, rural education and community involvement.

Over the course of my 10 years living in the Far East, I have come to realize that community spirit is an amazing catalyst for getting things done and that in the real sense isolation becomes purely a physical

constraint. I have witnessed first hand our small community uniting during the 1997 drought, the 1998 floods and during the devastating bushfires of 2003, when our small valley was encircled by fire. During times of crisis no man or woman is an island because through common purpose communities become strongly united and are powerful forces to be reckoned with. Community is more importantly about giving. To be able to return something of substance or essence back to the community in which you live is also a very valuable component of being a part of one. My journey in remote community living has now reached this stage.

For most of my adult life I believe that I've had a sense of community, especially when my four young children were growing up, perhaps this is part of being a woman. Music has always been my consuming passion. On the Mornington Peninsula I worked as a volunteer taking my unique brand of music to play group, kindergarten and to schools. When my young family and I relocated to the Far East of Gippsland, I returned to the paid workforce as Head Teacher of Tubbut Primary School. My obsession continued and with parent and community support, music quickly became a new and exciting curriculum area for the school. Every child who passes through Tubbut's gates participates in a music program and acquires the basics of guitar. For quite some time I was reluctant to branch out into this new community and to share what I had to offer. I lacked the confidence to take my music out of the classroom, out of my comfort zone because



... Women who have made work an Artform

I felt that I was not skilled enough to offer music on an adult level.

It is strange how challenges and chance meetings present themselves. Even more incredible is how these chance occurrences can set you off in another direction and even give you strength and courage. In 1999 Breast Cancer challenged my whole physical and mental well-being. After returning to work, with self-esteem at an all time low, I decided to challenge my brain cells with a Masters in Music Education, on line via Distance Education. This I successfully completed last year. Incidentally I have discovered that my brain cells are in fine shape! It was last year when I met Val Byth from Women's Electoral Lobby as well as women from the Gippsland Women's Network. I had this yearning for wanting to give something back to my community. Of course the something had to be musical and the women just gave me the confidence and the encouraging push necessary to give it a go. I decided to start a guitar group/music jammers session at the local tavern. We started last August and the group, although fluid and mobile is still meeting. The most surprising thing about all of this is that there are many talented musicians out there who just play for themselves, alone in their lounge-rooms, thinking that they are not good enough. I am now of the belief that music is fundamental to one's existence and that everyone is good enough. I frequently travel long distances so that I can play music with friends and I have now joined the "local" Country & Western group, a round trip of 200 kms. I am soon to trial a Friday night music jammers session at the Tavern as well as the Sunday guitar lessons.

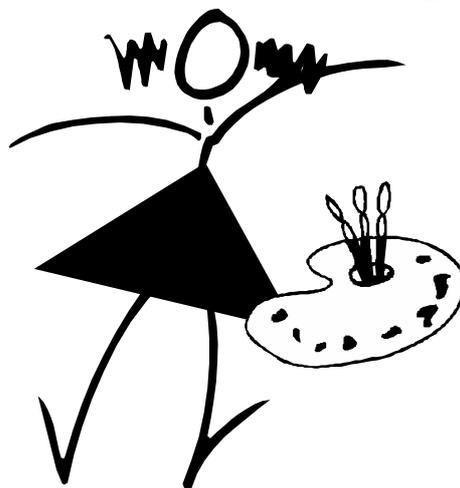
In addition to this free community guitar group, my final project for my Masters Degree focused on "Community Music Making" in particular the VicHealth funded seasonal singing program currently being run Victoria-wide by singer and musician Fay White. This involvement has taken me to an even higher level, as I was fortunate enough to network with yet another group of women from all over Gippsland. The Gippsland singing network will join forces again in April. To take this initiative a step further, I have been honored two years in a row, receiving a Country Education Project Seeding Grant of \$1000 for 2003 and \$1000 for 2004 for the promotion of Community Music. The CEP organization seeks to promote positive interactions through innovative programs that will forge connections between schools and communities. My future directions hope to see some of my work published in academic music journals as well as the possibility of continuing on with my studies, with a Music Doctorate being the next level. At the post bushfire relief dinner the vibes felt were extremely positive. The Women's

Network creed was that anything is possible, all ideas have merit and that having a go can sometimes put you on a new pathway for life. More importantly this amazing network of women are there to value, guide and support any new initiatives. This meeting also showcased the great diversity and strength of character that currently exists in women within our own localized community. Everyone is good enough and everyone has something to offer, no matter how small. Yes Rural Women, High Country Women, East Gippsland Women as well as our City Sisters have the ability to bring about

change, even sometimes seemingly against the odds.

As I have said both challenge and direction can invariably change one's life. My story is only one of many, one of an ordinary woman living in a remote area and facing challenge head-on, trying to make some sense and add direction to my life. Again no woman is an island and I know for a fact that the ability of women to network with each other makes all the difference. Women certainly do mean business and that the power and influence of women should never be underestimated.

Every Aussie girl needs a shed!



HEATHER LIVINGSTON

ARTIST
BUCHAN, EAST GIPPSLAND

My husband, four sons and I have lived on a farm in the Buchan district for most of our lives. When the boys were old enough, I went back to teaching for a few years until I retired.

It was then my husband and one of our sons built me a pole/iron gallery/studio/shed-a place-to-put-things-in. It was great! As I have always said, "EVERY AUSSIE GIRL NEEDS A SHED!"

As soon as I retired I joined the newly formed Bairnsdale Art Group and the Sale Art Group. Everyone who has an interest in art should take it on as a hobby for a start – it is so rewarding socially, culturally and financially. You cannot beat it.

One can do a diploma in art or join a group and be part of tutorials with talented artists

as tutors on a regular get together basis in a great learning situation.

The Bairnsdale and Sale groups are the most helpful and generous groups of people and also talented.

One spends a small amount on a joining fee and then is rewarded with very great opportunities.

Very capable artists are also members and generously donate their time to encouraging and helping newcomers.

Every so often a well known artist comes to facilitate a weekend workshop. These workshops have been very beneficial to participants. They have taught us how to paint in oils, watercolour, gouache, pastel, charcoals and many combinations.

We have painted in groups inside and on location; we have camped, sketched and painted in the Flinders Ranges and the mountains of the Snowy, the rivers, the gorges, the lakes. We photograph, paint and draw. We have learnt about colour perspective and atmosphere. The opportunity to travel overseas to paint and visit galleries is always available.

The outcome of my experience has been a quite profitable little gallery usually open by appointment. With over 100,000 tourists going through the Buchan caves annually now, I decided to open the gallery on a regular basis. The permit was obtained, the insurance paid, then the bushfire of January 2003 wiped out a family farm and many other people in the Wulgulmerang area just north of Buchan. This event has put my gallery on hold for some time.

In the meantime we have started to get an art group going in Buchan and are looking for a venue for local artists to exhibit. Buchan TAFE is involved through Art Network East Gippsland and we are looking forward to a good group of involved people in 2004.

A magazine entitled Australian Artists is a very helpful monthly for budding artists. Good luck to everyone who wants to have a go!

Women Who Mean Business

... Selling Gippsland's Finest



Project Newsletter :: Autumn Edition 2004



- Official Launch by Deputy Premier •Welcome!
- Background to the WwMB Project •Location information and dates for April-May 2004
 - Sharing the success of Community Events! •Project Summary
- Upcoming Community Events! •Somebody doing something worthwhile for someone
 - Women for Local Government •Profiles ... Women who have made work an Artform
 - Every Aussie girl needs a shed!

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CATHERINE NOY

Project Networking Officer, GWN

Email: noyview@vic.australis.com.au

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Project Networking Officer, GWN,

RMB 9055, WILLOW GROVE VIC 3825

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