



Highlands Cluster Uniting Church

...space for spirituality, hospitality and learning...

Bolong, Issue 81.

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Minister: Rev. Jenny Hayes
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Chairperson: George Wicker

Secretary: Robyn Zanon

Treasurer: Lois Voterakis

Elders: *Ballan*: Glenys Eastwood, James Anderson,
Marj Mackay, Robert Leslie.

Daylesford: Malcolm Boadle, Donald McKinnon,
Marie-Louise Stafford, Lorelle Thompson-Pope.

Blackwood: Robyn Zanon and *Trentham*: George Wicker.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Summer is gone for another year and winter is coming soon. God has a way of dealing with things to calm the concerns we have within. I looked at the end of 2017 with its hot weather and lack of rain as a sign of coming Bush Fires and like every Christmas before, prayed that we would be spared and so it happened. Come what was supposed to be the two hottest months of the year (January & February) saw storms come and rain down.

There are two times of the year that I sincerely love sitting at my kitchen table typing out the Bolong, which is March and October. The weather is so beautiful with its clear blue skies and warm sunny days. It just makes me glad to be alive.

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ELECTION OF CLUSTER COUNCIL

At the AGM in February, all seats for Cluster Council were declared vacant. All re-nominated for their positions and were elected unopposed, with the exception of Malcolm Boadle who vacated the Synod Rep. Thank you James Anderson for taking up this position.

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The last year as the chair of the Cluster, I've had highs and lows. There has been a couple of times, I thought of quitting, but God's spirit within reminded me of the love of God and what God has given for me, through his son Jesus Christ, who lived, died and rose again, for the forgiveness of my sins. So I encourage you all to think of God's love for us and realize that we are the light of Jesus Christ in this world and show love and respect for each other. But looking forward, I see signs of hope and future for this cluster, with new ideas from people with a vision and hope in Jesus Christ. Thank you Cluster council members for their time and support. Thank you to Jenny for opening God's word to us and her support and hard work. In closing I would repeat what a pastor said when leaving 'A Church That Cannot Accept Change Cannot Grow'.

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SAFE CHURCH REPORT

- Some additional WWC checks have been approved, however, more are yet required. A list of all church members is provided which shows all members believed to require checks and those who are yet to obtain a WWC.
- Lorelle tabled a number of documents related to Safe Church requirements. Some of these need to be ratified and signed by the Cluster Council as part of the compliance requirements.
- Lorelle also reminded everyone that there are many documents available for people to read and gain understanding of what is required under Safe Church legislation.
- It is now important to undertake training to ensure that all members of cluster churches understand the requirements of working with children and others at risk people.

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REPORTS FROM AROUND THE CLUSTER

Ballan:

- Ballan is still sailing along. There will be a service for the World Day of Prayer at 10 am. We are pleased that Andrew Phillips is going to consult with Ross about the water rates problem to find the best way forward.

Blackwood:

- It is exciting to report that the Blackwood Church has now been included in the town septic upgrade program. Effectively this means that the council will heavily subsidize the installation of the system. Because of this we are now able to include toilets in the plan of the renovations. We have also needed to revise the best solution to the drainage problem which would involve extensive landscaping but would also include the development of a car park, disabled access and paths. These developments have meant a revision of the original quote which will be taken to Cluster Council for consideration. It is great that we have so much community support for this project.

Daylesford:

- Small Grants - Equipment that was purchased with the funds under the Small Grants in October 2017 has been used to facilitate WWCC applications as well as in a study group that was conducted late in 2017. It is anticipated that it will continue to provide benefits to the church community.
- Department of Justice - Applications for WWCC's continue to be processed and approved. Details will be reported in the Safe Church report.
- Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields - The pipe organs of the Daylesford church featured in the recitals on Saturday 18th January with approximately 170 attendees. Ken, the tuner, tuned the organ pipes prior to the event. Attendees seemed very pleased with the concert.
- Christmas Carol Services - On 23rd of December we held a Christmas Carol Service in conjunction with Christ Church, Anglicans. There was a BBQ, prior to the service held at Christ Church which was well attended. The Service was also well attended and attendees were treated to the delights of Hilary Bill's singing and Ross Bullock's organ skills. Sadly, the Daylesford Brass Band was not able to attend. Advertising strategies seem to have been quite effective with posters displayed throughout Daylesford and Hepburn Springs, pamphlets delivered to areas of Daylesford and Glen Lyan by the Anglican Church and a notice in the local newspaper.
- World Day of Prayer 2018 - This will be held at 7pm on 2nd March in the Church; a recent meeting with representatives from the Anglican and Catholic churches assigned roles for the service. A DVD has been received to be played on the day and an order of service has also been provided by the organizers.
- OH&S Issues for Church Buildings - Following further investigation the old church has been declared safe for use - needing only minor work to repair damage at the entry and removal of plantings that were retaining water and causing damage around the footings of the building - Sharyn and Lorelle have made a start with removing the problem plantings. Sadly, the safety of the building was not discovered until after the After School Program had made alternate accommodation arrangements and they have now vacated the building. It is anticipated that other groups, including a circus and a belly-dancing group, will begin to use the building in the near future.

- Wedding Bells within the Church - Our church was used on January 5th where Nola's granddaughter was married. There were canapés and drinks served in the garden.

Trentham:

- Cluster Service – we welcomed a lovely gathering of friends from around the Cluster at a service and shared lunch held on 28 January. This special New Year's get-together had been planned for Shaw's Lake, Blackwood, but was moved due to very hot weather – and a good decision it turned out to be on the day!
- World Day of Prayer – Trentham Combined Churches celebrated with an evening service and supper at St George's Anglican Church on Friday 2 March. All three churches took part in interesting readings, when we all learned about the people and culture of Suriname in northern South America.
- Trentham Combined Churches Committee (TCCC) Annual General Meeting – was held on Wed 7 March, followed by a General Meeting to start planning combined services and celebrations for this year. Newly elected President is Glenda Holmes, Secretary Peta Sherlock and Treasurer Phil Manning.
- Trentham Life Activities Club – continues to enjoy our hall and facilities for Craft Group and Ma Jong every Friday and Coffee, Cake & Company on Wednesday mornings.
- Easter Services – We look forward to this solemn and reflective time with services to be held at 8 am on Good Friday (30 March) and 8 am on Easter Sunday.
- Good Friday Procession – An ecumenical walk by the town's three churches, sponsored by TCCC, will start at 10 am from St Mary's Catholic Church and 'stop' at seven 'stations' around town. At each stop there will be a short reflection, Bible reading, hymn and prayer. St Andrew's Uniting Church is the 7th stop, where hot cross buns will be served. Everyone is welcome, for all or part of the journey.
- We send joyful Easter greetings to all our church friends around the Cluster.

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