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Wittunga entry fee claims refuted

see story pg 3



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'parkrun' is finally up and running



THE Old Belair Golf course came alive on December 9 as the inaugural Belair National Park 'parkrun' took flight.

Around 320 people ran and walked the new course including the Premier of South Australia, Hon Peter Malinauskas and Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing, the Hon Katrina Hildyard.

"If you have been following on the journey, then you will know that parkrun Belair itself came to light after I put a Facebook call out in January last year for a working group," said Waite MP Catherine Hutchesson.

A dedicated group formed and after a lot of work with trail design, the paperwork, fundraising and negotiating with National Parks and parkrun, the day finally arrived.

"I would like to thank all of the volunteers that worked hard to get us to this point, especially Jason Hughes who has been

incredible in terms of his organisation and negotiation with parkrun. We are all very excited to welcome you to our event," said Catherine.

Without the support of the sponsors it would not have been possible. When a group is looking to establish a parkrun they need to raise \$7500 to pay for things like website, equipment, defibrillator and insurance.

"We are very grateful to our sponsors that included the Premier, CosyWrap Insulation, Trail Running SA, the Rotary Club of Coromandel Valley and our office also contributed to bring the whole event together.

"We would also like to thank the National Parks staff, especially local Senior Ranger, Brent Lores who has been very supportive and helped with trail maintenance and his team for preparing the Old Golf Course site," explained Catherine.

◆ Photo - Some of the 200 participants lined up and ready for the start of the 'parkrun' Belair event 2 held in the Belair National Park on the former Golf Course site in December

parkrun is for everyone of any age; you can run it or walk it. Kids are welcome too and if they are under 14, they need to stay with their parent, and dogs are also allowed but must be kept on a handheld leash, not a waist harness.

Afterwards, you can enjoy a coffee at the Goat Shed Café which opens early Saturday mornings for the parkrun participants.

You do need to register to be involved and you can do that through the parkrun website.

parkrun will now be operating every Saturday morning at the Old Belair Golf Course at 7:45am for an 8am start. Come along and join in the fun of the great outdoors. □



Outstanding community success

"ALL records were surpassed at last month's Christmas Tree Festival, celebrated in Tiwu Kumangka, our new community centre," said Pauline Dodd, joint co-ordinator of the 2023 Festival.

"Over 2000 people, mostly locals, came to the event to view the wonderland of trees decorated by over 65 diverse community groups, involving over 1300 people. The children's craft activities proved very popular again with the organisers and supervisors run off their feet.

"We are grateful for the efforts of over 100 local people who assisted with the festival, and to the CFS for delivering purchased trees despite the terrible weather on Sunday evening," added Pauline

Over \$15,000 was collected from people buying Christmas trees and hand crafted treasures from Santa's store, and through the gold coin donation on entry.

◆ Photo - The Christmas Tree Festival attracted over 2000 visitors to Tiwu Kumangka, including local centenarian Mary Strange (who appeared on the front page of the August edition of *The Blackwood Times* when celebrating her 100th birthday)

Once costs have been taken into account, they will be able to donate generously to the local CFS, Lions' Hearing Dogs Project and Beacon 24.

Visit www.blackwoodactiongroup.org.au in a few weeks' time, if you are keen to know the amount to be distributed.

"We are appreciative of the wonderful support from key sponsors City of Mitcham, Chandler's Hill Christmas Tree Farm, Rola Australia Lighting & Sound, and Westfield Local Heroes Award, as well as the many other local businesses that supported the community in this event.

"Special mention also of *The Blackwood Times*, Catherine Hutchesson MP and her team, Blackwood Hire, Woolworths and Coles. Please see the panel below for some of the other businesses who contributed.

"A big thank you also to all the people who have attended craft classes over the last 18 months, creating gifts for Santa's store; to the Blackwood Action Group Committee and BAG's Christmas Tree Festival core group," said Pauline.

□ See below for a list of some of the businesses who supported the 2023 Christmas Tree Festival.

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Garden remains free-to-access asset

by James Swanborough

A RECENT campaign of misinformation has left confusion and anxiety amongst some members in the community regarding the future of entry to Wittunga Botanic Garden.

"Local community members have been subjected to a barrage of false claims by the SA Liberal Opposition, alleging that the State Government plans to impose entry and car parking fees at the beloved Wittunga Botanic Garden," said Catherine Hutchesson MP, Member for Waite.

These allegations have been categorically denied and condemned by Catherine, who has taken it upon herself to correct the misinformation, which she described as causing unnecessary panic among the community.

"Wittunga Botanic Garden would continue to be a free-to-access community asset, emphasising the importance of access to nature," said Catherine.

She revealed that the Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium (BGSH) had written to SA Liberal Opposition Leader David Speirs, expressing their disappointment over the misleading "No Picnic Tax" campaign.

The campaign falsely claimed that proposed changes to the BGSH Act 1978 would introduce general entry charges to the Botanic Gardens and parking fees at Wittunga.

"These allegations were baseless and that the proposed amendments were intended to provide flexibility for commercial opportunities, such as co-branded food and drinks, to supplement the Gardens' income," explained Catherine. "Additionally, the legislative provisions only allow for entry fees to be charged for special events."

Presiding Botanic Gardens board member Judy Potter directly responded to the campaign, writing to Leader of the Opposition, David Speirs, "A central tenet of this campaign is the incorrect claim that these changes to the act will result in the introduc-

tion of general entry charges to the Adelaide Botanic Garden, the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden and the Wittunga Botanic Garden.

"No proposed changes to the Act reference general entry charging, with the exception of special sites and projects that have been subject to entry charges for many years, and across multiple governments," Potter wrote.

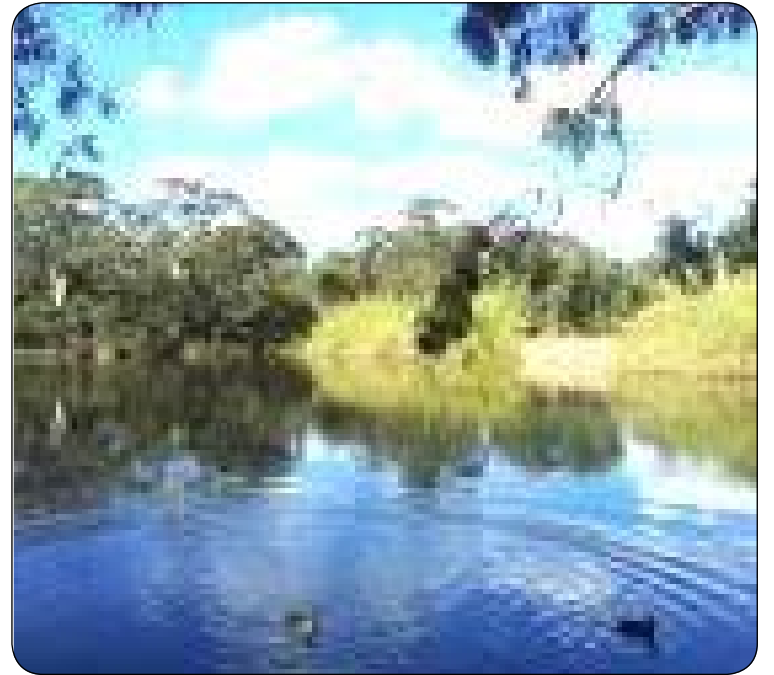
"Given that we were very clear with your team on this, statements that there is a plan to introduce general entry charges across our sites, and the stress that this claim is causing our loyal visitors and our staff, are particularly disappointing."

Catherine also condemned the SA Liberals for their deliberate attempt to mislead the community for political gain and urged Speirs to rectify the misinformation. She stressed that the suggestion of introducing general entry charges was a gross misrepresentation of the Board's position and the intended amendments to the Act.

Under the existing Act, the Board of the Botanic Gardens has always had the power to introduce entry fees. However, Catherine clarified that this power has never been enacted in the history of the Botanic Gardens and would not be supported by either the Board or the Malinauskas Labor Government.

To remove all doubts, amendments were lodged by the Labor Government on 18 October 2023 to entirely remove the power to charge general entry fees from the Act.

Catherine expressed regret if any community members had filled in a petition that had inadvertently given the SA Liberals their personal details for no reason. She reiterated her appreciation for Wittunga Botanic Garden as a community asset, includ-



◆ Photo - The beautiful Wittunga Botanic Garden on Shepherds Hill Road at Eden Hills continues to offer visitors the opportunity to explore the stunning collection of local and international plants with no entry charge

ing its array of native plants and the popular nature play area used by local kids.

She reaffirmed her commitment to ensuring the Wittunga Botanic Gardens remain a free-to-access community asset, inviting anyone with questions or who would like a copy of the Botanic Gardens Board's letter to get in touch with her office. □

Windy Point offers best seat in the house to view peleton

IF YOU don't have anything planned for Sunday, January 14 (Women) and January 21 (Men), you have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to check out the Santos Tour Down Under as it makes it way up Windy Point to Blackwood and down through Coromandel Valley.

At a glance, Stage 6 for the men, which starts from Unley, all comes down to this ... the riders will be weary, especially after tackling Willunga Hill twice the day before.

They will also be focused on the 128.2-kilometre task at hand: a sharp climb to Windy Point, then into the Adelaide Hills

for an extended loop through towns including Mylor, Aldgate, Uraidla, Stirling, Crafers and Bridgewater.

"What a great opportunity for the community to get in on the action and cheer on the riders - twice," said Catherine Hutchesson, local MP for Waite.

"I encourage everyone who lives or owns a business along the route to get involved and decorate their front yards, building facades, fences and invite family and friends to come along, have a BBQ and enjoy the races.

"Windy Point will also be an excellent vantage point as the riders painfully climb the hill. I



imagine it will be the best viewing spot available and hope we can create a bit of a party atmosphere there and throughout our community," added Catherine.

The Windy Point climb for the men is Category One and is the day's first task. It will be tackled just under four kilometres into racing - and with a maximum gradient of 20% on the 3.8-kilometre ascent, it's sure to reignite aching muscles.

From there, all eyes turn to Mount Lofty and the two passes that remain. It's stats are also formidable: Category One, with 1.3 kilometres at a maximum incline of 13.3 per cent. Will this stage winner take overall glory too?

A first pass of Mt Lofty forms part of this circuit, while the second is set to deliver the stage winner - and possibly an overall champion as well.

□ For more details, visit www.tourdownunder.com.au



Shop local to help save our community

BY THE EDITOR

ON top of the challenges faced from the Covid pandemic, small businesses are still struggling, plus many are now impacted by the current economic climate and high interest rates.

It is vitally important that you shop locally when you can, and support all our wonderful small businesses owners.

When you shop at local businesses, some of the money you have handed over, ends up back in our community.

However, when you shop at Westfield Marion, Pasadena, in the city, or 'on-line' ... you will never see your shopping dollars end up back in our community.

There are so many local clubs, groups and organisations that rely on the generosity of the local business community for sponsorship ... and where does this money come from ... that's right, you ... local shoppers.

So if you enjoy the convenience of shopping locally with friendly service, then Blackwood businesses need your support now.

When out shopping, support local and help retain the great range of businesses we have in our district.

And if you think you may be saving money by shopping online ... then think again, as with the delays and trouble being experienced in the freight industry ... your may end up waiting weeks for your goods to

arrive ... and then they may not even fit!!
Buying local, you are assured of having your purchase in your hands immediately, and if it needs exchanging or returning, can be done quickly and locally at the store you bought it from. □

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Exploring historical fauna stories of the district



This year, the Blackwood Action Group History articles will be themed around the fauna of the district as we explore historical stories of native species, conservation, feral animals and other curious animal tales.



'Feral animals in Mitcham Hills from early times with some still around today!'

IT'S interesting to learn, that in 1916, there was much discussion as to whether the 'native porcupine' (aka echidna) found in Eden Hills was indigenous to the district.

Perhaps more surprising was commentary in 1962 *The recent appearance of a large koala bear (!) in...Blackwood is not only interesting but encouraging to those lovers of nature who, for some years, have considered him to be extinct in South Australia...*

While in 1965, it seemed to be the job of Mitcham Council staff and police to catch roaming kangaroos. After about a four mile chase that...finished in Turners Avenue, one kangaroo was captured and taken to the Blackwood Police Station in a utility.

Historically, snakes were a popular topic in reporting. A 1927 *tip to campers* advised digging up ant beds and making a mud floor for your tent with the thinking being that snakes have a mortal horror of ants and that the strong scent of the ants clung to the clay for years.

Intriguingly, Mr Richard Bell of Blackwood confessed to a great fondness for big snakes, with his present (1905) boa sleeping around his feet in his bed. Mr Bell said the boa is perfectly clean, lies still, and very seldom disturbs him.

Feral animals, both those escaped from ships and those actively released to provide both recreation and a food source for the European settlers, were in the Mitcham Hills from early times with many remaining a problem to this day.

S.A. Zoological Societies and conservation groups been in the 1800s as awareness of ecological balance grew.

Locally, Edwin Ashby (of Wittunga) was prominent. In 1921, he suggested that farmers be urged to set apart on their farms small reserves and plant them with suitable bushes and small trees, where insectivorous birds would breed.

Further, that the Government, when laying out new country townships, always set apart a block of indigenous scrub for the instruction of the generations to come.

Blackwood resident Mr Brian Glover was also a notable conservationist. In 1966, he commented that the public was becoming more sympathetic to the case for conservation, but that there was much to be done, before we could consider that we were protecting our natural assets, plants, animals and scenery, as well as our own chances of survival.

It was not until 1980 that Blackwood opened its first pet shop (183 Main Road, Blackwood - next to Banner Mitre 10 Hardware) selling goats, baby emus, snakes, tropical fish, birds, mice and more. I wonder how many baby emus were sold and how their owners managed them when fully grown!

We'd love to hear your historical local animal stories via *The Blackwood Times* ... Letters to the Editor. Perhaps you even have photos?

For more information on BAG activities, phone 0408 117 003 or visit their website at: www.blackwoodactiongroup.org.au



Photo - Jackie Smith (co-partner with Steven Harbottle) of Blackwood Pets finds "some of her animals a handful at feeding time". (*Hills Gazette* 24 Sept 1980 p9)

Missed your copy of *The Blackwood Times*
View recent editions on line at
www.blackwoodtimes.com.au

Unique items bring colour to kids clothing

EDEN Hills resident, Lynne Flavel has a bright talent for bringing colour to children's lives.

"I have been moved by the plight of displaced Syrian families, many of whom

lost their lives trying to get to Turkey in small boats," said Lynne.

So in her spare time, she has used her knitting and sewing skills to make clothing for children held in Turkish refugee camps.



After retiring in 2020, she found the costs involved in sending parcels to Turkey prohibitive, but she wanted to continue to create interesting clothes for toddlers.

The current trend for pale, almost colourless infant wear sold by the large retailers prompted her to start a hobby business, *Funky Knits by Lynne*.

Putting her creative skills to work, she produces unique items for babies and preschoolers. Every item is a one-off. None are exactly the same.

Lynne uses colours,

Photo - Lynne with a selection of her stunning colourful handmade garments for kids which are available on-line

textures, images and geometric shapes to create items that are visually interesting, comfortable to wear, and machine washable. A must for 21st century mums.

For the past three years, Lynne has been a regular stallholder at the monthly Blackwood Craft Market, but has now moved to make her clothing available exclusively online.

More than 250 individual items are for sale, with prices ranging from \$20 to \$75, to fit newborn babies and children up to the age of five.

The range includes hats, shorts, dresses, summer and winter overalls, retro style rompers, winter coats, baby sleeping bags and summer and winter knitwear.

As well as making her Funky Knits clothing, Lynne is president of the Cumberland Park Orchestra where she plays the violin.

She also creates quirky garden art for her large garden and is working on textile art projects, with a view to entering them in the 2024 Blackwood Rotary Art Show.

She recently retired from the Hills Choral Society where she was the choir librarian.

Lynne offers free postage within South Australia and customers can also collect their order from her home in Eden Hills.

To see Lynne's full range of childrens-wear, visit her website at: www.funkyknits.com.au

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| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Road to golf | 1 Underground water |
| 8 Alcoholics Anonymous | 2 Fast mammal |
| 9 Toilet | 3 PNG town |
| 10 Old-fashioned fork spike | 4 Belair church complex |
| 12 Pig | 5 Wrongdoing |
| 13 Electroencephalogram | 6 Hagar brings it home |
| 14 Noun suffix | 7 Town of Christmas lights |
| 15 Half a private chat | 11 Yes (slang) |
| 16 About space | 12 Road (abb) |
| 18 Yell | 14 Old Thailand |
| 19 Every | 17 Towards |
| 21 National Orchestra (abb) | 19 Four score |
| 23 Swag | 20 Compact disc |
| 25 Light | 22 Leaf |
| 27 A US soldier | 24 Label |
| 28 Loads | 26 North-west |
| 32 Mate | 29 Record company |
| 33 Millilitre (abb) | 30 Umwell |
| 34 Sort | 31 Resort |
| 36 Aluminium (symbol) | 32 Father |
| 37 Flower | 35 Extraterrestrial |
| 38 Expressing position | |
- ANSWERS ON PAGE 10

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Main Road sites may dictate Blackwood's future

by James Swanborough

CONFIDENTIAL talks held by Mitcham Council in late November around the sale of the two sites on Main Road, look set to shape the future face of Blackwood.

As a part of the strategic aspirations for the area along Main Road, the council will seek to develop buildings that incorporate "a mix of uses over multiple levels, integrated and cohesive carparking, improvements to pedestrian connectivity and revitalised streetscapes," in accordance with their Strategic Project Overview.

Over many years, Blackwood Centre has been the subject of various masterplans, concept plans and streetscape plans.

In February 2019, Council endorsed a Spatial Vision for the City and a series of supporting Precinct Structure Plans, including for Blackwood Centre, providing its in-principle support for the sale of Council owned land located at 207-211 and 213-217 Main Road, Blackwood, housing the former Blackwood Library and Karkoo Nursery the following year, conditional on the construction of the new library and community centre.

With the construction now completed, Mitcham Council proceeded to market in relation to the sale of the subject land earlier this year, with Leedwell Property engaged as sales agents.

The council's strategy is to affirm Blackwood Centre's strong

identity as a unique hills destination supported by clear physical and cultural focal points and a broad range of services, leisure and lifestyle offerings. The plan also hopes to retain the current walkable main street, increasing vibrancy both day and night by attracting visitors and offering a diversity of housing choices nearby.

A range of transport options and improved amenity for pedestrians are also strong focal points.

With a series of offers on the table, Mitcham Council will determine which, if any, they wish to pursue for development.

Though little has been confirmed in terms of support for specific expressions of interest in the site, the zone is characterised in the Planning and Design Code as a mixed use area with a strong residential focus that provides a diverse range of medium density housing options primarily in multi-level medium rise buildings (up to three storeys) supported by compatible non-residential land uses oriented towards a primary road corridor, high frequency public transport, activity centre or significant open space.

Prior community feedback for this site has indicated a strong preference for mixed-use development with a housing focus, together with commercial or other compatible uses at ground-floor level fronting Main Road. A preference for parking within an undercroft/basement structure, and a quality design outcome

which considers the broader built form and environmental context of Blackwood.

State government planning reforms for new developments have meant significant changes are beginning to take place in terms of the height and types of buildings being constructed in urban and suburban areas.

Mayor of Mitcham, Dr Heather Holmes-Ross has referred to this as an opportunity to reimagine what Blackwood is capable of achieving as an urban centre, while retaining much of its distinct character.

"Rezoning allows us to go higher than we could have in the past. From our point of view, we have to increase density, we are required to do that by the State Government," said Heather.

"We feel the best place to have that density is around the transport hub and business precinct. By increasing density along the main road, we hope that will slow or halt an increase in density in the surrounding suburban areas," explained Heather.

"We want to provide housing diversity, in particular for older members of our community looking to downsize and live in very close proximity to the Blackwood precinct. There are many people in the community who have raised their families here, who are getting to an age where they want to downsize, and don't want to be reliant on driving to get to the shops.

So we are trying to provide that for our community." □

Student power results in new bus shelter near their school

STUDENTS in Year 5 and 6 classes at Hawthorndene Primary School have been learning about community activism and advocacy this year, when they decided there was a need for bus shelters near their school.

They wrote to local MP, Catherine Hutchesson with some very persuasive arguments that included ...

'Every few days there is an elderly woman that comes to a bus stop with possibly her grandchildren. She is gripping onto the pole as well as comforting the young children with the soft grip of her hands. There is wobbly uneven ground underneath her and all she wants is to sit down. This is where the bus shelter comes into place'

and

'Just imagine it's the middle of winter. You're outside waiting for the bus in the alarming winds and drenching rains. You open your umbrella. Too late! Before you know it, its disappeared into the murky distance. Sitting there, cold and dripping wet, you can only wish for a shelter at the Hawthorndene Primary School Bus stop.'

Catherine agreed with their argument and forwarded all of their letters to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Hon Tom Koutsantonis to review.

In August last year, the students were advised that they had been successful in their advocacy and new bus shelters would be installed both near the school, and also at the bottom of Rankey's Hill Road.

As many Blackwood High students also wait there for the bus, quite often in the rain, the students also learned that they would be able to help with the art work. The students, with the help of their very dedicated teacher, Ric MacDonald, got to work on their artwork, both native animals and their favourite sports, and the Department on the shelters.

Then on Friday, December 15, some of the students last day of Primary School ever, the shelters were unveiled.

The artwork was done by local artist Adam



Poole-Mottinshaw and he worked to transfer the students designs onto the shelter (see above).

"What a great lesson in collective action and local community advocacy these students have had. I am so glad that with the help of the Hawthorndene students, the Rail Care team and Adam, that these shelters have been delivered," said Catherine.

Feel free to wander past and have a look, and for those Hawthorndene local public transport users, the students hope that you enjoy the new shelters. □

Your donations still needed to help struggling families

"ON behalf of all of the community groups and individuals, schools and businesses that have generously participated and donated time to the rebirth of our local Beacon charity, we are genuinely thankful," said Tracey Yeend, joint co-ordinator of the program.

'Beacon 24' was officially launched at the end of October 2023 to assist local families with a 24 hour emergency food supply in times of hardship.

"We would like to thank all the generous community members who have, and continue to donate the items for collection. We do ask if you could please stick to the published list of items to donate, to enable consistency in the donations," added Tracey.

Some people and families will continue to experience hardship throughout 2024, so please pick up some of the items listed when out shopping, and drop off at one of the nominated locations.

And if you are in need of help, Emergency Food Packs can be collected from the Church of Christ, Catherine Hutchesson's MP office and on weekends from the Green Dispensary.

While over the holiday period, the packs can be collected from the Green Dispensary (except on Public Holidays).

"We wish you a very happy and healthy 2024 and once again, thank you for supporting your community. We sincerely welcome ongoing donations in 2024 - please continue to donate when you can," added Tracey.

'Beacon 24' needs for your help

... can you donate some of these items :

- ✓ Pasta sauces
- ✓ Pasta (including gluten free)
- ✓ Tinned soup
- ✓ Tinned baked beans & spaghetti
- ✓ Long life milk (including non dairy varieties)
- ✓ Breakfast cereal (with long use by dates)
- ✓ Jam (not homemade), Vegemite and/or Peanut butter
- ✓ Muesli bars (long used by dates)
- ✓ Treat foods such as chocolate / biscuits etc (long use by dates)
- ✓ Tea & Coffee
- ✓ Long life juice
- ✓ Toilet paper & Tissues
- ✓ Pet food
- ✓ Sanitary Items

□ Your donations can be dropped into the local MP office at 7 Young St; Blackwood Church of Christ (cnr Waite St and Shepherds Hill Rd); and Green Dispensary Blackwood (202 Main Road).

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Community garden celebrates 10 years



◆ Photo - Cutting of the cake with some of the members of Joans Patch Community Garden celebrating their 10th birthday (front from left): Catherine Hutchesson MP for Waite, Deb Bryant, Joans Patch co-ordinator with Mitcham Mayor Dr Heather Holmes-Ross

TEN years ago, a large patch of land behind Joan's Pantry at Hawthorndene sat empty, being over taken by weeds, until a group of keen local gardeners came up with the idea of establishing a community garden ... now known as *Joan's Patch Community Garden*.

So in November last year, about 30 people attended a function to celebrate their achievements and the 10 year birthday.

Guests included the Mayor of Mitcham, Dr Heather Holmes-Ross; the MP for Waite, Catherine Hutchesson; Councillors for Park Ward, Cr Tom Morrison and Cr Corin McCarthy; and the Councillor for Overton Ward, Cr Jane Bange who is also a past member of the garden.

There were representatives from local businesses and organisations who have supported the garden, past members, and current members of the garden. Many families attended.

Guests enjoyed wandering through the garden and observing what has been achieved over the 10 years that the garden has existed.

The pictorial timeline displayed in the Information Bay and

produced by Steve Rogers, a long-time member of the garden, shows the development of the garden over this time.

Catherine Hutchesson gave the Acknowledgement of Country in the Kaurua language and English, which was very powerful and moving.

Peter Carter, Chairperson of Joan's Patch welcomed everyone and gave an outline of the main achievements in the Garden during its 10- year History.

He thanked Lisa and Matthew Down, owners of Joan's Pantry, for their support over these 10 years, acknowledging that it was their vision and generosity that enabled a community garden behind the café to be developed.

Peter then thanked Mitcham Council, from whom they have received two grants, and local businesses and organisations who have given them such great support. He also thanked past and current members for their involvement and commitment to achieving something special.

□ If you would like to find out more on Joan's Patch Community Garden, email Deb on: debbryant@bigpond.com

Wellness sessions back in 2024 by popular demand

"IT IS with great pleasure that we can announce that the Mitcham & Hills Wellness Education sessions will return this year, commencing in February," said Tracey Yeend, joint co-ordinator of the popular program.

"There are 10 sessions planned for the year, continuing to be presented on the second Tuesday of the month and keeping the location of the Blackwood Uniting Church (at the roundabout). All seminars will be 5pm for a 5.30pm start.

The full program for the year is still to be finalised, however, the first two seminars have been organised.

The first session is on February 13, and presented by the experienced Trainer and Facilitator from Banksia Coast Consulting, Brianna Melville.

She brings years of education expertise to provide you with up to date information and training on providing First Aid for yourself and those around you. This information is so important in our daily lives, and can prepare you for appropriate action should an incident arise.

Then on March 12, the presenter is Gail Miller, Aged Care Consultant to Simplify Aged Care. If you or your family are overwhelmed, confused, stressed or completely exasperated with Aged Care issues, you need to attend this informative session.

Gail's expertise will assist you to navigate your Aged Care journey and provide information to help you get the most from available services.

All sessions are free to the public but you must book to secure your seat. For bookings, please contact Catherine Hutchesson's Office on 8278 5844 or email waite@parliament.sa.gov.au

A huge thank you to program sponsors, Peter Alexandrou of Harris Real Estate Blackwood, The Green Dispensary Blackwood and the incredible support from Catherine Hutchesson, MP for Waite, and her amazing team. □

'No Falls' program improves balance and confidence

"FALLS are the largest contributor of hospitalisation in older populations with 40 percent of these hospitalisations resulting in death," said Ms Cat Lyndon, Fitness Co-ordinator at the Blackwood Community Recreation Centre.

"While this is such an important issue, many people still don't take action with preventive or supportive exercise."

However, since 2021, the Blackwood Recreation Centre has been running a 'No Falls Program' aimed at those 65 years and older who are at risk of or have had a fall.

The 'No Falls Program' is designed to support you throughout your journey and take your balance and confidence to the next level!

Led by qualified exercise professionals, the 10-week program is divided up into three groups of beginner, intermediate and advanced abilities to ensure everyone is challenged just the right amount.

Each class is kept to a maximum of eight participants to ensure lots of individual focus is given to each participant. Each group will have weekly classes as well as personalised home programs to be used outside of class time.

Pre-program assessments are used to place participants into groups and are contrasted against post-program assessments to help show the growth and improvements developed within the program.

Many participants are preaching the benefits from the 'No Falls Program' with Tina a prime example of how this program can change your life.

When Tina started the program, she felt unsure on her feet after injuring her back in a fall and was the slowest and least confident in her walking group.

Now, she feels dramatically more confident, is one of the fastest in her walking group, and has seen great improvements in her balance.

Tina has some inspiring words for those thinking of joining the No Falls Program ...

"You won't lose anything by trying, and you stand to gain so much. Increased confidence born of the knowledge that you are more stable and less likely to fall, either in the home or in the street.

"I can wholeheartedly recommend the instructors at Blackwood Rec, they make each



◆ Photo - Members of the 'No Falls' program at the Blackwood Rec Centre getting ready for their next class with an instructor

class into such a fun occasion, it's something you look forward to each week."

The Blackwood Rec Centre is taking expressions of interest for their next No Falls Program starting February 5.

□ If you or someone you know would benefit from this program, please contact the Blackwood Rec Centre today on 8278 8833 and leave your name, phone number; and/or email: fitness@blackwood-rec.com.au for Cat to be in touch with you.

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Information session 15th of January

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- PLAN AHEAD**
Schedule activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat.
- KEEP COOL**
Seek out air-conditioned buildings, draw your blinds, use a fan, take cool showers and dress in light and loose clothing made from natural fabrics.
- HOT CARS KILL**
Never leave vulnerable people or pets in cars. The temperature inside a parked car can double within minutes.
- CHECK IN ON OTHERS**
Look after those most at risk in the heat - your neighbour living alone, older people, the young, people with a medical condition and don't forget your pets.

If you are feeling unwell, contact your doctor or call Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222.

For emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).

Catherine Hutchesson MP
Member for Waite
Building a resilient community

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waite@parliament.sa.gov.au
CatherineHutchessonMP
Authorised by C. Hutchesson, 1/7-9 Young St, Blackwood SA 5051

Environmental medallion made from items destined for landfill

EACH year, MP for Waite, Catherine Hutchesson, awards year 6 students who've displayed outstanding care and consideration for the environment, the Environmental Warrior Award.

Well, the award includes a medallion which is actually made from rubbish!! ... using old decking, soft drink and milk lids, a fan blade, cassette tape screws and second hand fabric. They were all items destined for landfill but have now been upcycled.

"The future in Waite is bright. I know our unique and special environment is in good hands," said Catherine of the students.

She wanted to create a medallion that was made from a recycled resource and started with discs made from an old decking post by her uncle and aunty, Jon and Maxine Reding of

Upper Sturt.

But when she heard about the efforts of Daniel Mee, who is turning hard-to-recycle plastic into 100% recycled plastic panels, the opportunity to take them to the next level, and really champion what the award is all about, took flight.

For the past few months, Daniel has been working to build a network of recyclers who help him collect and sort the plastic, and local tinkers and DIY'ers who design and build things from the panels he makes.

"These medallions symbolise society's need to change from linear 'take, make, waste' economy to a circular economy," said Daniel.

"Each time we send something to landfill we lose that resource. We lose all the energy and materials that went into making it and we pollute the environment. While plastic is public enemy number one, it can also be recycled and kept out of landfill," explained Daniel.

Catherine agrees, "I hope these medallions will remind and inspire the students about what can be achieved when people with the passion for sustainability, work to protect the environment."

❑ If you are interested in experimenting with the specialty panels and closing the loop on plastic waste, email Daniel: contact@recycledplasticpanels.com follow on Facebook or Instagram at [@recycledplasticpanels](https://www.instagram.com/recycledplasticpanels)



◆ Photo - Waite MP, Catherine Hutchesson, presents the Environmental Warrior Award including a medallion to Lilly from Clapham Primary School

Park show aims to deepen your connection with natural world



HILLS artists are poised to enchant audiences with a unique show set amidst the tranquil setting of Belair National Park during the upcoming Adelaide Fringe.

"Beyond the Trees," explores the transformative and healing powers of nature through a captivating blend of original music, stories, poetry, and art.

The March 2nd show commences at 6pm and aims to deepen the audience's connection with the natural world, as well as raising funds for local conservation projects.

Titled 'Beyond the Trees: Reconcile and Nurture,' the show celebrates the profound connection between humans and the natural world. The magical bushland of Belair National Park enhances the audience's experience, as the twilight symphony of birds and the fading sunset pave the way for darkness, enabling projected artwork, and beautifully illuminated trees to create a mesmerising backdrop.

Co-produced by local residents Uncle Tamaru and Matt Cattnach, in collaboration with Nature Play SA's Jason Tyndall, the show is supported by a City of Mitcham community grant. Themes explored during the show include the significant role that nature plays in fostering reconciliation between past and present cultures, as well as the reciprocal relationship shared between humans and the natural world.

◆ Photo - A traditional Kurna smoking ceremony will be a part of the "Beyond the Trees" fringe show experience in the Belair National Park

The performers, a collective of artists deeply connected to the natural world, weave together elements such as a Welcome to Country, candid narratives exploring human relationship with nature, soul-stirring folk music, nature-inspired poetry, and visually stunning textured oil paintings. The result is an immersive and inspiring experience that resonates with the audience.

Audiences familiar with the sell-out 2023 show, "Beyond the Trees, Exploring Connection Through Music, Words and Colour," can expect new songs and poetry, stalls by local artists and organisations promoting nature connection, and a food truck at the upcoming show.

Don't miss this unique and moving experience, set against the picturesque beauty of Belair National Park. Immerse yourself in a celebration of the profound connection between humanity and the natural world in the captivating performance of "Beyond the Trees."

❑ Tickets, which include free entry into Belair National Park, are available through Fringe Tix by searching for "Beyond the Trees."

"Urgent Care Clinics' to take pressure off our Emergency Departments



BY LOUISE MILLER-FROST
FEDERAL MP
FOR BOOTHBY

ACCESS to health care - affordable and timely - is a keystone to an effective health system.

Having worked in the health sector for over two decades, this is really important to me and it is one of the things I campaigned about.

So I was really pleased to be able to announce the opening of the Urgent Care Clinic at Marion Domain Medical Centre.

What is an Urgent Care Clinic? It is a bulk-billed, long-hour, walk-in clinic (no appointment needed) for urgent but non life-threatening issues that are too urgent to wait for your GP, but not life-threatening enough to need the Emergency Department.

Sports injuries, broken bones, lacerations - so long as it isn't life threatening.

The aim of this service is to take pressure off the Emergency Department at Flinders Medical Centre, to free up emergency doctors and nurses to deal with the life threatening conditions.

The Marion Urgent Care Clinic has been open since early November. Six similar clinics in Victoria have seen 40,000 patients in the first six months. That's 40,000 people seen faster and more appropriately, and 40,000 fewer people in emergency departments.

That's a lot of doctor and nurse time freed up to deal with urgent patients.

This is only one part of the work the Federal Government has done to rebuild Medicare and make health care cheaper and more accessible for all Australians.

Recently, we opened an Endometriosis Clinic at Glenelg. Endometriosis affects about 19% of women and can be a significantly disabling and painful condition.

On November 1, we tripled the bulk billing incentive for GPs. This is about making it more affordable for GPs to bulkbill patients - which makes it more affordable for patients.

In September, we introduced 60 day prescriptions for over 90 common medications for conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol.

This means people on those medications, with the approval of their GP, can get two months of medication for the price they previ-

ously paid for one month. More medications will be eligible for this in March 2024, and in September 2024.

We have increased the age range for free Shingrix vaccine. If you've ever had shingles, you would know the pain this condition can bring. This vaccine was previously only funded for people 70 years of age. For all others, it cost \$560.

Many community members spoke to me about this, and I am pleased to confirm that this vaccine is now fully funded for people 65 & over, 50 & over for first national people, and for immunocompromised people over 18 years.

I am really pleased that the SA Government has fast tracked opening new beds at Repat and Flinders Medical Centre; a part of the jointly Federal-State funded \$400m redevelopment. These two hospitals are key to health care in much of Boothby, Mayo and Kingston, and facilities needed to be upgraded.

Stay safe over the summer period. Hopefully you won't need the health system, but it's important that it is there when you do need it.

❑ If you have any queries, please contact my office on 8374 0511 or email: Louise.Miller-Frost.MP@aph.gov.au

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Scams costing us hundreds of millions

AS Australian households continue to battle rising costs across the board, alarming new research from 'Compare the Market' has revealed the staggering number of Australians that have fallen victim to a scam.

More than a third of Australians (37%) surveyed admit that they've been swindled out of cash due to scams – up 2.49% from the same time last year. Email, phone call, text message and online shopping scams were the most likely to catch Australians out.

Compare the Market's Sarah Orr said scams were becoming a worrying epidemic, costing innocent Australians hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

"The sad reality is that hundreds of thousands of hardworking Australians have been scammed in 2023, with that number expected to climb by the end of 2024," Ms Orr said.

"Any time a scam catches out an Australian is truly devastating, and the sad reality is that these scams are becoming more sophisticated and harder to decipher.

"In many cases, people are being caught out by phishing scams, where scammers act as though they're from legitimate businesses – and try to trick you into giving away your personal information or money.

"The worrying thing is that these scams, messages, emails and links often look so real, that people don't know they've been scammed until it's too late."

More people in 2023 weren't aware of how they've been scammed compared to previous years, something Ms Orr said is concerning but not surprising.

There are several things you can look out for to avoid being scammed.:

1. Beware of generic messages. Messages

that are vague and don't include any information specific to you, could be a scam. Pay close attention to the email address, phone number or social media account sending you this message.

2. Look out for spelling mistakes. Mistakes happen to the best of us, but if you receive a text or email that seems a little off or doesn't make sense, there's a good chance it might not be legitimate.

3. Know where you're being directed to. Ensure any website you're being asked to visit is authentic. If you've been asked to provide any personal information, banking details or other sensitive data, avoid clicking a link and visit the website or app directly. Similarly, you may wish to phone the company directly and verify if the info you're being asked to provide is legitimate.

4. What are you being asked to download? Where possible, download files from the provider's official website or contact them directly. Similarly, pay close attention to website addresses and URLs and if there are any errors or it doesn't seem right, be careful of what details you provide.

5. Report activity of concern. If you think you've received a fraudulent message or fallen victim to a scam, report it to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Scamwatch website and to any company you believe has been compromised. Also contact your bank or credit card company immediately, if you think your details have been jeopardised, as they may be able to freeze accounts or stop unauthorised transactions.

☐ Check out the Compare the Market website for more scam advice: www.comparethemarket.com.au

Tiny homes could reduce housing crisis



BY ANDREW TIDSWELL
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
BLACKWOOD

IN DECEMBER last year, I went to the 'Tiny Homes Expo' at Wayville Showground.

There was an impressive display of over twenty really small

houses, mostly like up-market caravans, so they could be transported on our roads.

This meant they were only two and a half metres wide, but contained some clever and efficient use of spaces.

Some were also modules of shipping containers which meant they could be added to, creating larger homes.

While I am not currently contemplating scaling down to such a tiny house, it is a growing industry with an increasing demand.

There are some important lessons we can learn from these tiny homes about how much (or little) space we really need to live a comfortable lifestyle, and how clever design can meet our needs better than just bigger houses. We don't need excessive space.

Sadly, the current range of new houses being offered demonstrates very inefficient use of space. New Australian houses are still the biggest in the world. We don't really need a large room for every activity, yet our culture seems to consider it necessary, driven by the housing industry. It is a waste of space, a waste of resources and a waste of money.

This should be something we take seriously given the current housing crisis, where smaller, smart homes must be the way of the future.



Consider our own homes and how much space we really need for our daily lives.

A few decades ago, government policies changed our culture from one where houses went from family homes to being investment properties. Prices have skyrocketed ever since, making them increasingly out of reach for so many people now. (Refer to Alan Kohler's current Quarterly Essay publication "The Great Divide" for more explanation).

Smaller homes are:

- Cheaper to build.
- Easier and cheaper to maintain.
- More efficient in energy consumption.
- Less stressful, giving more time for enjoyable things.
- Less harmful on the environment.

Minimalism is contrary to our culture (unlike many other countries) and goes against everything the advertising industry tells us. The quality of things should be more important than the quantity of stuff. This applies very much to our homes.

It is time to think creatively about how we live in our homes – smaller can be better and much more economical.

Wouldn't it be great if we had some smaller homes available in the Blackwood district?

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Editorial & advertising offices:
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Phone: 0428 246 824
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Consider the long term commitment before buying a new canine friend

PEOPLE thinking about buying a dog are being encouraged to do their research to ensure they fully understand the commitment involved and pick the right pet for them.

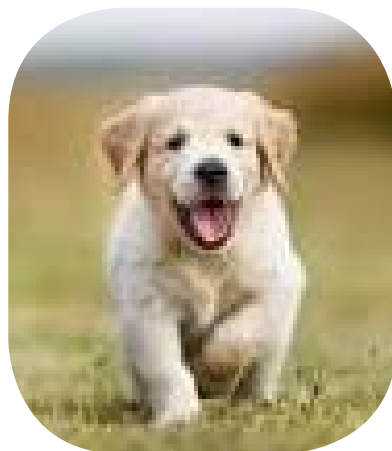
The Dog and Cat Management Board has released a short new video to educate people about the long-term responsibilities of owning a dog, including spending enough time with them and providing them a safe home.

Dog and Cat Management Board Chairman David Parkin said the Board was urging people to appreciate the commitment involved with owning a pet, and never purchase one 'on a whim'.

"We want people to understand the true responsibilities of dog ownership and to know exactly what is involved before taking on the commitment," Mr Parkin said.

"While a cute puppy might seem like a great idea, the reality is a dog can be a commitment for 10 years or more.

"As well as the basics of registering, micro-chipping and desexing, owners must be able to provide for the life-long health and wellbeing of a dog.



"Our new video explains it all simply and quickly to help potential make the right choice."

The video, which is available on the Board's website, includes tips for finding the right dog for you and your family, and how to give your pet a happy, comfortable life.

"It's heartbreaking that some people find themselves in a situation where they surrender their pets because circumstances have become untenable," Mr Parkin said.

"It is important that people take that extra time to fully understand the commitment of pet ownership."

Dogs are South Australia's most popular pet with more than 310,000 currently recorded in the state register, Dogs and Cats Online.

South Australians are also cautioned against purchasing a dog or cat from breeders not registered with Dogs and Cats Online.

The Board's website has information on the state dog and cat laws, along with a host of tips for potential and current owners.

For more information, visit www.dogandcboard.com.au



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Project reducing extinction risk of bandicoot

THE ongoing Bandicoot Superhighway Project, a community-led initiative aimed at reducing the extinction risk of the endangered Southern-Brown Bandicoot in the Mount Lofty Ranges is making significant strides.

The Project Impact Statement, and Habitat Management Guidelines were recently launched at an event attended by Catherine Hutchesson MP, Member for Waite, representing the Deputy Premier of SA at the Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall.

The Bandicoot Superhighway Project is a collaboration between the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board and the Sturt Upper Reaches Landcare Group (SURLG), with a two-year funding commitment of \$500,000 - comprising \$250,000 from the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, and \$250,000 from the Commonwealth Government's Environment Restoration Fund.

The project's ultimate goal is to create an ecologically functional 'Superhighway' of habitat throughout the Mount Lofty Ranges to ensure the continued survival of the Bandicoots.

"The Impact Report and the Habitat Management Guidelines demonstrate the maturity of this project," said Catherine during her speech at the event. "No less than seven different organisations and groups have put time and effort into this project," she added, highlighting the community-led nature of the initiative.

The project focuses on habitat preservation and connectivity, with Southern-Brown Bandicoots having an essential role in maintaining native vegetation.

Each Bandicoot contributes to soil ecosystem processes, turning over approximately four tonnes of soil in searching for food per year, and distributing important mycorrhizae fungi that support numerous plant species.

In addition to increasing the area of available habitat through community and corporate planting events, the project includes regional surveying and monitoring, fostering the use of ecological burns, weed control, and trialling Bandicoot translocations to expand the species' area of occupancy.



Catherine emphasised the importance of local community involvement in protecting and improving the Bandicoot habitat. "The area where we are now located is one of the few places where Bandicoots remain and are reasonably common locally. It is vital that we take steps to look after them," she said.

Catherine also stressed the importance of citizen science and data collection in the conservation efforts. One of the ways the project has encouraged this involvement is by providing wildlife cameras for landholders with native bushland, to set up and monitor animal activity on their properties.

This has improved the knowl-

edge of where bandicoot populations exist, and helps inform where works like weed control are best focussed. The Habitat Management Guidelines provide expert knowledge to help stakeholders understand the Bandicoot needs, identify good habitats, manage them, and prioritise efforts.

Catherine concluded her speech by thanking all contributors to the project, particularly the volunteers, community groups, and landholders working towards the conservation of Bandicoots and the thousands of species that make up healthy and biodiverse systems.

The Bandicoot Superhighway Project continues to work towards its long-term goal, ensuring the survival of the Southern-Brown Bandicoot and contributing to the broader biodiversity of South Australia.

Those interested in learning more about the Bandicoot Superhighway Project or participating in one of the activities, can contact the SURLG via their project interest form on the website at: www.surlg.org.au

Letters to the Editor

Too much carbon dioxide
Recently, I have read some rather challenging details concerning climate change.

To assist in clarifying the challenging details, I have herewith included a short precise of my finding as follows:

Scientists warn us that it is essential global warming stays below 1.5°C. Global temperatures keep on rising because there is far too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is a result of corporations in Australia and overseas burning fossil fuels to create energy.

This causes massive volumes of carbon dioxide to enter the atmosphere. Scientists have determined that the corporations can only emit a further approx. 220 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, otherwise the 1.5°C temperature limit will be in danger of being surpassed.

As the corporations are emitting 40 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide into the air every year, humans are heading for deep trouble unless the emitting corporations activities can be seriously curtailed.

Brian Measday,
Kingswood

Have something to share with Blackwood Times readers ... submit a Letter to the Editor including name and suburb ... email: info@blackwoodtimes.com.au

Prepare . Act . Survive

Leaving early is always best option

The State & Federal Governments have greatly increased their firepower with more waterbombing aircraft on call



UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM

Australia's Fire Danger Rating System has changed to make it easier for people to make decisions on high fire danger days.

Across the country fire and emergency services have applied the AFDRS program, so wherever you go in Australia you can understand the level of threat and what you need to do to stay safe.

MODERATE -

Most fires can be controlled. Controlled burning may occur in these

conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.

HIGH -

Fires can be dangerous. There's a heightened risk. If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk.

EXTREME - TOTAL FIRE BAN

Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.

These are dangerous fire conditions You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.

CATASTROPHIC - TOTAL FIRE BAN

If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost. These are the worst conditions for



a bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions.

The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.

For more information and advice go to the CFS website: www.cfs.sa.gov.au

Strengthening bushfire awareness and resilience

BY CATHERINE HUTCHESSON
MP FOR WAITE
MEMBER UPPER STURT CFS

AS A lifelong resident of the Mitcham Hills and a CFS firefighter, I have witnessed the devastating effects of bushfires firsthand.

I still remember Ash Wednesday, a stark reminder of the importance of being prepared during bushfire season. Today, I am committed to raising awareness and ensuring our community is ready to face any such disaster.

Living through Ash Wednesday, like many in our community, was a defining moment for me.

I remember being told by my

mother to grab a garbage bag and fill it with important items, ready for evacuation. This experience instilled in me a deep understanding of the importance of having a bushfire plan.

We must all take responsibility for ourselves, our properties, and our families during bushfire season. This not only ensures our safety but also allows firefighters to focus their efforts on battling the fires.

I urge everyone to discuss their plans with friends, family and neighbours so that everyone is accounted for.

Important considerations include having a plan for Catastrophic rated days, whether that is spend-

ing the day with family who live down on the flat, or asking friends or even friends of friends, if they are able to accommodate you and your family.

The Country Fire Service (CFS) provides daily fire ratings at 4pm the day before, which should guide your decision on whether to leave early in case of catastrophic conditions or being on high alert on Extreme rated days. This is an ideal decision point.

I also recommend tuning into the radio for updates, as fire ratings can change depending on conditions.

Recently, I hosted a Bushfire Resilience Forum alongside Louise Miller-Frost MP at the Blackwood Memorial Hall. We were joined by a panel of experts and had nearly 300 people in attendance. This forum provided a valuable opportunity for the community to voice their concerns and seek answers.

In response to the feedback received, my office is preparing a 'Bushfire Resilience Pack' containing localised information for our community. If you would like one of these packs, please reach out to my office.

As a volunteer with the CFS, I understand the challenges our Emergency Service Volunteers face. Being caught in a fire is a

harrowing experience – it's dark, loud, hot, and smoky. It's not a place anyone should aspire to be.

As such, going to a last resort refuge and having it as a primary option in your bushfire plan is not ideal. If a fire occurs nearby and there is no other option then sure – but it is always best to leave early, talk to your kids and family about your bushfire plan and pick a place to go. Discussing and implementing your bushfire plan is crucial to ensure your family's safety.

I am proud to serve alongside my son as a CFS volunteer, and I am grateful for the dedication of many families in our community who also serve putting their lives on the line to help and protect our community.

To stay informed during high fire danger days, I recommend having multiple forms of communications including using the Alert SA app, which provides timely incident alerts within your watch zone. Also having a battery powered radio, you can subscribe to email alerts from the CFS and also consult their webpage.

Bushfire preparedness is a collective responsibility.

Together, we can ensure the safety of our community and support our brave firefighters in their crucial work.



Free green waste disposal days at Lynton depot

PARTS of the City of Mitcham are within bushfire prone areas and residents must 'Prepare to Act and Survive' to avoid making last-minute decisions that could prove deadly during a bushfire. Thinking 'I will leave early' is not enough.

Bushfire prevention is a year-round responsibility and necessity. It is far more than a weekend clean-up just prior to the bushfire season.

So if you have a large amount of garden waste and need somewhere to dispose of it ... the City of Mitcham's Lynton Green Organics Drop-off Facility is open FREE OF CHARGE for residents of Mitcham only to dispose of green waste from 8am to 2pm on these selected dates: Saturday 6 January and Saturday 3 February.

Green waste materials can consist of grass cuttings, leaf matter and prunings (branches no larger than 200mm in diameter).

If you miss these 'free' days, then you can take your garden waste for a fee to the Lynton Green Organics Drop-off Facility which is located on Beagle Terrace in Lynton.

For a list of regular paid open days and frequently asked questions, visit www.mitcamcouncil.sa.gov.au/garden-waste-drop-off-facility

It's **bushfire season** ... do you need to clean up around your property?

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