



**10** years  
2010 - 2020

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

---

Celebrating 10 years of supporting  
our community of Mirboo North  
and surrounding district to be healthy,  
vibrant and resilient.



Mirboo North & District  
community foundation



## OUR STORY

The Mirboo North & District Community Foundation was set up in 2010 to hold the proceeds of the sale of Mirboo North's community owned aged care facility. Our mission is to support local people develop local solutions through grants for projects and capacity building, as well as facilitating community planning and strengthening initiatives.

The Community Foundation is also a channel for giving in our community. We have set up funds like the Mirboo North Swimming Pool Fund and the Chaplaincy and Well-being Fund to receive donations from the community in support of these great projects. We can also receive tax deductible donations and bequests for a particular purpose or to have a particular impact in our community.

The Community Foundation has a membership, open to all. We encourage those who are interested in the 'big picture' of how to strengthen our community to join up, become an ambassador, member of sub-committee or to share skills.

In ten years the Community Foundation has granted more than \$1.3 million into our community. Over 70 different community or not-for-profit organisations have been funding recipients, located in Mirboo North, Boolarra, Dumbalk, Thorpdale, Narracan, Yinnar and Allambee.

Funding has been well invested into the areas of Environment, Education, Youth, Health and Well-being, Arts and Culture and Community Strengthening. This ensures that there are opportunities to support local people to develop solutions, build capacity and share skills in the community,

In 2020, the Community Foundation celebrates 10 years of enabling local people to do great things through philanthropy. We gratefully thank those with the foresight who helped turn the Community Aged Care assets into a future fund for the benefit of the whole district. Together we thrive!



# 10 YEARS 10 STORIES

In 2020, we celebrate 10 years of supporting our community of Mirboo North and surrounding district to be healthy, vibrant and resilient.

Inside these pages you will find 10 inspirational stories from our 10 years of giving.



## HAYDEN'S STORY

Hayden Jones says that when he got ready to move to on-campus student accommodation at Monash University, there were a few additional costs to consider as a rural student relocating to the big smoke.

"In the first year of uni, it is hard to relocate and leave your family, community and friends. There's still the pull to come home and visit most weekends and to play sport for your local community. Finding accommodation and paying for it before finding work in the city is also another factor."

Hayden was successful in applying for the Educational Support Fund (ESF), a grant he says helped immensely while he transitioned into his first year of studying Bachelor of Nursing.

"It certainly took the stress away from having to urgently seek more employment. It gave me the extra confidence of knowing the accommodation was financially secure and I knew I could go home and visit my parents in those first couple of months."

Hayden says the grant was easy to apply for and was grateful that the Community Foundation can support rural students preparing for further studies.

"As you are already a duck out of water when you have to start over in a new place, the grant really helped with student accommodation and took the pressure off so I could concentrate on beginning my studies."

Now in his second year of study, Hayden is working as a bartender part time but still comes home to play for the Mirboo North Tennis Club.

### Educational Support Fund

The Educational Support Fund was launched in 2013 by the Community Foundation to grant financial support to students (including mature students) transitioning into third level education.

The purpose of the Education Support Fund is to provide financial support to students in the district to help overcome the challenges of transitioning to tertiary education. Whether the challenges relate to distance or location, or other specific circumstances, the ESF grants can be used for relocation costs, bonds, rent or stationary and course materials.

On top of this the Community Foundation collaborates with YouThrive Victoria to provide a small number of applicants access to a Mentoring Program and the Rural Youth Leadership Program.

#### Find out more:

[www.mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au/apply-for-a-grant/education-support/](http://www.mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au/apply-for-a-grant/education-support/)





## ELOISE'S STORY

Eloise O'Brien said that when she was approached by local boy Quinn O'Kane who asked for help to create a BMX track in the bush, she thought it would be a better idea to look for an open safe public place in the middle of Boolarra township, where the older kids could play on their bikes.

"Quinn told me that the older kids wanted a dirt track where they could do their rollers and berms, so it had bumps and hurdles that would challenge them," she said.

After in depth community consultation between the Latrobe City Council, Boolarra Community Development Group and many other organisations and people associated with the project, the kids

helped to design the circuit itself. Eloise said it was great to get the kids point of view and to see them draw it out.

"It's wonderful that older kids in the town have a sensible alternative to sitting at home. We see them coming across with their bikes to meet their friends after school and on the weekends. Families that take the rail trail have activities for all age groups to greet them in the park." Eloise says there can be up to 20 kids playing on the circuit at a time.

"The Latrobe Valley Streetgames also comes from 4.30-5.30pm on a Thursday night to do activities with the kids and we see lots of kids that have a play on their way to footy or netball."

### Boolarra BMX Park

The Boolarra BMX track has been designed by local young people with professional input from experienced BMX riders, track builders and landscapers, exclusively for the Centenary Park site in Boolarra. It was part funded by the Community Foundation.

The track itself is a 4-metre wide, groomed circuit featuring various jumps, tabletops, rollers and berms. Some of the jumps feature a split-level track to accommodate for varied skill level. It is a family friendly track, suitable for the littlest on their balance bike, to the biggest on their BMX stunt bikes.

#### Find out more:

[www.facebook.com/pages/category/Stadium--Arena--Sports-Venue/Boolarra-BMX-Track-156631715016526/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Stadium--Arena--Sports-Venue/Boolarra-BMX-Track-156631715016526/)





## JULIE'S STORY

"Frankly, I'm a little bit grumpy if I'm not being creative," chuckles Julie Joyce, Artistic Coordinator of Mirboo North's bespoke volunteer run ArtSpace store.

She says meeting people and guiding them through the store is a very nice way to spend a couple of hours. "It's a great social outlet for anyone who's interested in the arts. We have spent many hours in the sewing room making boomerang bags and teaching others skills, held workshops on everything from writing or making beeswax wraps to learning ukulele and taking part in singing groups. One of my favourite events held here was a fashion show, complete with models and runway."

Julie was an arts teacher in Melbourne before moving full time to the area. She describes the sharing of skills and having an artistic outlet for the community as great therapy, ultimately having wonderful wellbeing effects for individuals.

"In addition to providing the community with access to the arts, the ArtSpace gives local artists a place to display their wares for a very low cost, or can hold workshops and teach others a little about their own craft. I can't tell you of all the good times we have had here, we have arts lunches to share and we must have a little birthday party now and then."

"There has been a silent cottage industry going on in Mirboo North for many years, and now the ArtSpace store has brought that to the forefront. Local artists now do not have to work in isolation, they can come here and feel like they are part of something that's really connected to creativity. I've seen first hand the positivity of having a local facility right here for artists and makers." Julie finished.



### ArtSpace

Showcasing a variety of artworks and handmade artisan goods from across the district from over 40 artists and makers, Mirboo North ArtSpace is situated in the Butter Factory on Grand Ridge Road. It offers workshops, meeting space, kids art and school holiday programs as well as a unique shopping experience.

ArtSpace is a Not For Profit organisation set up with seed funding from the Community Foundation to provide the community with access to the arts.

The ArtSpace is open from 10am-4pm Wednesday - Sunday and is an especially cosy place to visit throughout the winter time.

#### Find out more:

[www.facebook.com/TheArtSpaceinMirbooNorth](https://www.facebook.com/TheArtSpaceinMirbooNorth)





## PAUL & JON'S STORY

Jon Marsh began a conversation with a group of local people at the Thorpdale Tennis Club late one summer's evening, aiming to find a better way to fundraise for local organisations and clubs.

"I was intrigued by the story of the 'Thorpdale Potato Festival' and wondered if I could get a group of interested locals together to get it going again." They put together a committee and the Spud Festival was once again on the cards.

"It takes about 8 months for the committee to organise each festival, initially it was more like a reunion, we had a Potato Festival Spring Ball to fundraise for it, we needed lots of sponsorship and support to get it going again," says Paul McLure, President of the last Potato Festival.

"With many volunteers needed, we run the festival once every two years and it's been an incredible benefit to the community, with over \$53,000 going back into local organisations last year. We'll take a break this year and go for it again in 2022," finished Jon.

### Thorpdale Potato Festival

The Thorpdale Potato Festival is a biennial event held to celebrate the humble spud and potato growing practises in the red volcanic soils of Gippsland. Historically a potato growing region the Thorpdale Potato Festival was held for many years.

After a 15 year hiatus, the return of the festival in 2015, saw close to 10,000 people flock to the rolling Thorpdale hills to enjoy picking, stacking, eating and learning all about delicious local potatoes. The Community Foundation were delighted to sponsor this event on a number of occasions.

**Find out more:**  
[www.thorpdalepotatofestival.com.au](http://www.thorpdalepotatofestival.com.au)





## PAULA'S STORY

As a teacher at Mirboo North Primary School Paula Calafiore says that the chaplaincy program that operated between the local primary and secondary school speaks for itself.

"Parents, staff, community members and children value the program. We have been lucky to have a really invested Chaplain in Norm, who provides his support throughout the community and everyone knows him," says Paula, who has been on the committee for Chaplaincy for the past 14 years.

Paula emphasises that the program is about counselling kids and families through rural hardships such as economic problems, divorce, friendships at school, even rural road trauma. "The kids know that whatever their problems are, big or small, that they have a supportive ear that can help them in the Chaplaincy program. They seek him out and they see him as a friend now," says Paula.

"The volunteer committee has successfully fundraised over the years with activities such as sausage sizzles, coin tins named 'change for chaplaincy', auctions, Arty Gras book and plant sale." Paula says this fundraising has helped keep the program running, so its not completely reliant on government funding.

"The amount of people over the last 16 years that have said to me 'if it wasn't for Norm' gives me the drive to keep on fundraising for the program. The Chaplaincy program then supported the primary school immensely in securing funding to kit out a sensory room. This aligns with our dedication to student well being in the school and making sure that all kids feel included," Paula finished.

### Mirboo North Schools Chaplaincy Program

The Chaplaincy program in Mirboo North has been operating for 16 years under the guidance of friendly Chaplain Norm De Silva. Norm is a local identity that makes an effort to meet and support many people from the community, as well as providing his expertise to student body well-being.

The Chaplaincy committee is committed to securing ongoing chaplaincy to both the schools and to assisting youth at MNPS and MNSC in other aspects of their well-being. This includes providing a welcoming and inclusive learning experience for all students, whether they have a disability, a learning difference or need wellbeing support.

The Community Foundation has a Chaplaincy and Wellbeing Fund which receives tax deductible donations to support the work of the Chaplaincy program.

#### Find out more:

<https://mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au/chaplaincy-fund/>

OR

[www.facebook.com/mirboonorthschoolschaplaincy/](https://www.facebook.com/mirboonorthschoolschaplaincy/)





## LISA'S STORY

When Lisa Anderson moved to Yinnar in 2019 to help look after her mother, she began pulling up weeds in her local community garden, tagging along with her sister Sari.

Because of her family ties to the area, Lisa had been visiting the garden regularly over the previous 9 years and had watched the garden grow into a flourishing space, which inspired her to get involved and become a new member.

"I decided that I'd help out on Wednesdays with Sari and soon found myself inspired to help design a mosaic for the new outdoor kitchen space. I did some drawings and we decided on the rooster and pumpkin design," said Lisa, who always has an artistic project, often a mosaic or a quilt, in the works at home.

The community garden ran a series of mosaic workshops on Saturday afternoons so Lisa could instruct and get help to create the mosaic. Lisa said these workshops were very popular and there were people of all ages involved. The mosaic sets off the new sink and kitchen area, which includes a pizza oven. It's a space that's now available for hire by local community members and groups.

"To my surprise we had some kids that came along, helping the adults to put the mosaic together on paper and then glue them to the mural area." Lisa is now a very active local community member, involved with the garden and on community radio in Gippsland.

"I'm happy to return now to the garden for a while and help grow and weed with Sari, though I do have many craft projects at home to keep me going," she laughed.

### Yinnar Community Garden

The Yinnar Community Garden was first established in 2011, envisioned by the community who wanted a creative and sustainable garden. Unusual and unique, the garden sits around a stunning central zodiac inspired mosaic (part funded by the Community Foundation) with four paths dividing the parterre garden beds in front, and beds filled with edible shrubs, perennial pollinator flowers, berries and fruit trees to the back.

An inspiring garden to experience, volunteer members meet weekly on Wednesdays from 10am-12pm and every second and fourth Saturday from 10am-12pm, for working bees. The garden is also used for educational purposes with gardening and kitchen workshops available throughout the year.

**To become a member:**  
[www.facebook.com/yinnar.garden](https://www.facebook.com/yinnar.garden)





## KATE'S STORY

When UnitingCare announced that it would close the doors of the Mirboo North Early learning Centre – St Andrews Childcare, then Chair of the Community Foundation, Kate Buxton, said it was important to provide support and start a conversation immediately around how to keep it open.

This key community facility had been planned, designed and built after much community collaboration and effort and was operated by UnitingCare from its opening in 2006. In 2013, UnitingCare announced that it would be suspending the service unless a suitable replacement operator could be found. A total of 559 people signed a petition to present to the South Gippsland Shire Council, in support of continuing an accessible child care service in Mirboo North.

“The Community Foundation was in a unique position as it can act quickly to provide support in times of crisis. By talking immediately with all the community organisations involved we found that if we provided a grant it would cover deficit funding to keep the childcare open, then there would be ample time for the shire to begin the tender process and appoint a new service provider.”

“Personally for me, this demonstrated how the Community Foundation can act solely in the interest of the community in a proactive and effective way to create impact.”

Kate says because of the conversations they were able to have quickly they were able to keep the childcare open for the short term but also enable planning for the long term viability of the service.

### St Andrews Childcare

St Andrews Childcare was conceptualised when a passionate group of local parents surveyed the community for interest in an 'out of school hours' daycare service. With funding from the Federal and State Governments and St. Andrew's Uniting Church (including the provision of land), parents celebrated the opening of the centre in 2006.

St Andrews Childcare is situated at 32 Ridgway, Mirboo North and is now operated by YMCA. Qualified and experienced educators deliver a wide range of activities and experiences to extend each child's learning in a play-based setting. Parents can have peace of mind knowing their children are cared for in a stimulating, caring and fun environment.

#### Find out more:

[www.facebook.com/Mirboo-North-Early-Learning-Centre-St-Andrews-Childcare-1517132441947908](https://www.facebook.com/Mirboo-North-Early-Learning-Centre-St-Andrews-Childcare-1517132441947908)





## DI'S STORY

Di Kiddell says that she quite likes driving Mirboo North's community bus because it reminds her of driving 12 seater buses at the school where she worked for many years. As a teacher, she says she is used to rounding people up!

"When the Community Foundation inherited the RSL's bus service in 2015, they were looking for a volunteer coordinator. As I spent many years organising people as a teacher. I thought well I could do that and put my hand up," said Di.

As coordinator Di takes bookings for the bus, organises driver paperwork, collects and keeps receipts and invoices, and trains fellow volunteer bus drivers. On her biggest day, Mirboo North Italian Festa, Di helped to organise 5 drivers to run a crowded shuttle back and forth around the town. She enjoys being the 'organiser' and has created systems so it all runs smoothly.

Di says some of her favourite trips have been with the local senior citizens, taking them to the shopping centres close by (where there is always time for a cuppa), out for pizza lunch in Meeniyan, seniors week concert trips and the very tasty day out at Prom Coast Cheese.

"Regular users of the service become great friends and I really enjoy meeting local people. Users really do appreciate that this service exists for them. It provides them with an added layer of independence. Locals who book and use the service really respect it, they honor the vehicle and always leave it clean. It's a very rewarding service available for the community." Di finished.

### Community Bus Service

The Mirboo North Community Bus Service is a 12 seater bus, housed at the Community Shed. A fantastic resource at the community's disposal, it simply requires a driver who has had an Australian driving licence for at least two years and is over 25 years of age (an insurance requirement). The designated bus driver must be zero-alcohol at all times.

As well as taking our local citizens to bigger towns regularly, the bus can be booked by private groups and local schools. The price of hire is very reasonable at \$0.85 cents per kilometre, and includes a tank of fuel. The bus fuel is subsidised by the South Gippsland Shire Council.

#### Find out more:

<https://mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au/community-bus/>



## ELAINE'S STORY

Elaine Snell says the decision to refurbish the aging Dumbalk Hall Kitchen was, in part, a way to pay tribute to the women who had set the kitchen up and gathered there to cook together over the past century.

"I wanted their legacy to continue, and to do that the kitchen needed to be spec'd up to meet proper OH&S standards so people could continue to use the facility for their family gatherings and events."

Elaine says she remembers the stories told of the Ladies Auxiliary "They used to bring in their own spare cups, plates and cutlery and bring their bakeware from home so they could share skills with others. Now we take advantage of modern appliances that we have been able to acquire."

"Local people can come in and steam their Christmas puddings properly in the commercial steamer here and we have had local cooking classes such as pastries and pie making, CWA sponges and healthy salads."

Elaine says that she is proud that the kitchen is now one of the best commercial kitchens listed in the South Gippsland Shire. "Professional chefs love to cook in here!" she exclaimed.

### Dumbalk Hall

Dumbalk Hall is managed by a Section 86 Committee of volunteers. The Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month at the Dumbalk Hall.

There are regular community events held in the hall including dances and meetings. The hall has a commercial grade kitchen and is available for hire.

#### Find out more:

[www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/info/20034/support\\_for\\_community\\_groups/285/dumbalk\\_hall\\_and\\_ladies\\_auxiliary](http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/info/20034/support_for_community_groups/285/dumbalk_hall_and_ladies_auxiliary)





## JODIE'S STORY

For Jodie Pincini, growing up with her family on Baths Rd in Mirboo Nth meant that the outdoor pool was an integral part of her life every single Summer.

"Living in a rural area means there are not as many public places to meet people, especially when I was a teenager. Walking across to the pool was an important way to catch up with school friends during the holidays," said Jodie.

Long gone are the days when the first kid in the morning would grab the pool gate keys from a neighbour's mailbox, but Jodie's love for the pool remains. "Because the pool was so close I became a swimmer, for fun and fitness. We would head to the pool for an hour before school most mornings and we would have our school swimming carnivals there."

When she returned to Mirboo North with her own two children, once again she headed straight for the pool, to share the experience with them.

Jodie says the pool is also important to older citizens in the community. "My mum, who is in her 70's now, has become a swimmer and going to the pool keeps her fit. Now with the early morning opening of the pool she can do a few laps in the morning in her own time, it's important for her to have that available."

She says she is proud of the work the Friends of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool and other organisations in the community have done to secure the future of the pool. "The pool has brought many years of happy times to our family and when it is renovated it is then future proofed for another 50 years of local swimming and gathering."



### The Friends of the Mirboo North Swimming Pool

The Friends of Mirboo North Swimming Pool is a community group dedicated to looking after and promoting Mirboo North's beautiful swimming pool, located in Jordan Way, just off Baths Road.

Set among beautiful trees with plenty of space to lounge on beach towels, Mirboo North Swimming Pool is the venue for a happy day out. Boasting one 9 lane 25-metre pool, a children's pool and splash park, completely shaded, free electric BBQs and ample parking, the redeveloped pool is set to open for summer 2020-2021.

The swimming pool is a much loved community asset, and the Friends of Mirboo North Swimming Pool aims to ensure this facility continues to serve the community well into the future. The Friends of the Mirboo North Pool has raised more than \$1 million as a community contribution to the redevelopment, including a grant of \$550,000 from the Community Foundation.

#### Find out more:

[www.facebook.com/mirboonorthswimmingpool](https://www.facebook.com/mirboonorthswimmingpool)



# WAYS TO GIVE



## Become a member

We encourage individuals with big ideas to become annual paid members of the Community Foundation.



## Volunteer

We love putting interested individuals in contact with our local community groups and projects.



## Work together with us

We welcome organisations to build partnerships with us, so together we can advance vibrancy, resilience and prosperity in the district.



## Leave a Bequest

We can assist individuals to leave a legacy in their will which will benefit individuals and community groups in the district for years to come.



## Create a fund

We can set up a named sub-fund with your donations and ensure they have an impact in the community in an area of your choosing. The fund may honour someone in their lifetime or preserve a memory.



## Future Fund

Our future fund enables members of the community to develop local solutions suited to their challenges and opportunities. Donate to it now online or by visiting the Community Foundation.

# GIVE WITH US

## What we do



Celebrate community strengths and tackle community challenges.



Harness donations and resources.



Link to local groups to deliver change.

## How we do it



Invest in local community and groups through grants and capacity building.



Facilitate community planning and collaboration to build a healthy, resilient and vibrant community.



Enable local solutions to overcome our challenges.



**This booklet was produced  
by the Mirboo North and  
District Community Foundation**

96 Ridgway, Mirboo North, VIC  
Ph: (03) 5668 2006

**Read the full stories online at**  
[www.mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au](http://www.mirboodistrictfoundation.org.au)



**Mirboo North & District**  
community foundation