

# GOOD NEWS for ASHMONT

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## FROM THE EDITOR - Rev Rob

*This Newspaper is part of claiming a 'Community Spirit' for Ashmont.*

Community Spirit is a reflection of ...the individual beliefs of its members, and  
...the effect the community-environment has on them.

We'll feature both these areas in each issue of this Newspaper.

*Please place your snippets of news or articles in the contribution's box located at the Ashmont Fish and Chips shop.*

## New Life! Is it possible?

In the past issues of 'Good News for Ashmont' we've highlighted the debate of what needs to change in Ashmont to make it a better community in which to live. The 'Advancement Committee' continues to promote those changes that would make it a better physical environment to live-in, but we also need to ask, ...

***What social, spiritual and emotional changes are necessary, within our hearts to hearts, to make Ashmont a better 'home' to live-in?***

In the last issue of 'Good News for Ashmont' a member of the 'Relationships Australia' local counselling team, shared her experience of how to address the tensions in our relationships that are often brought to a focus at Christmas. She highlighted the possible negative sides of Christmas, where we can so focus on the celebrations of the present that we can deny past painful relationships that may catch up with us. She encouraged us to recognise the past and plan to counter its negative effects.

*In this way new beginnings are possible, by facing the past and walking more equipped into the future.*

Christmas has gone and we now fast approach Easter when the Christian church celebrates 'new-life' made possible by Jesus Christ. It is celebrated at Easter because it is then in particular we remember, not only Jesus's death on Good Friday but also His rising to new life (resurrection) on Easter Sunday. In the 6 weeks leading up to Easter the Anglican and Catholic churches in particular celebrate Lent. They treat this as a time of preparation to welcome the new life they believe Christ offers. For this 6 weeks some people give up something like sugar or chocolate or biscuits in order to increase their sense of celebration of Easter, for it's then that they focus on the 'cream' that Jesus offers.

*Yes, it's true that this is just a quaint custom, which has no meaning unless we allow it to point towards the need to give up things that bind us to our old ways, in order to appreciate the 'new' that is possible to replace them.*

*The custom only becomes meaningful when we welcome the 'new'- home. **What new things would make Ashmont a better home?***

## Ashmont Community Advancement Committee News...

The Committee has met six times since the Public Meeting of November last year. Last year, letters were sent to Council, asking for ramps at corners of streets and crossings around the Mall. Footpaths for around the Mall have also been requested. Vacant blocks were mown in response to a letter to the Department of Housing. Further letters have been sent requesting more bus shelters. **Asking others to do things for us is part of the Advancement Committee's role but ultimately we all have to work together to change our Community.**

Webb Park has been better maintained by Council (as requested) but ridding the kid's play-area of broken glass, and such like, will depend on us. *Would you be prepared to be part of an ongoing group committed to cleaning-up Webb Park?*

Some of the neighbours of Graham Park have beautified this park with flower-beds. This is to everyone's advantage. Perhaps a similar approach could be taken for Webb Park! A drive around our streets reveals there is a beautiful display of flowers from many homes. Perhaps we should have a 'Beautiful garden Contest'. What do you think?

The Committee has circulated petitions to seek railway boom-gates at Fernleigh Rd and Bowman. Please show your support by signing this- a copy is available at most retail outlets in Ashmont. The Committee believes that with your support many more improvements can be achieved for Ashmont streets. The Committee meets monthly at Ashmont Public School from 7 till 9 on every first Monday of the month. Please offer your ideas to the Secretary- Francis, on 69314867.

## ASHMONT COMMUNITY RESOURCES CENTRE NEWS

The Community Resources Centre or Family Therapy Unit being built behind Ashmont Anglican Church (cnr. Blakemore and Tobruk St) is due for completion by June. It is still hoped that this will make available within our local community key family support organisations from Central Wagga Wagga- like Family Support, Relationships Australia, Community Health, Probation Parole officers, and Mission Australia's Gamblers Support counsellors and Budget counsellors. The success of this Resource centre will depend upon our willingness to address the past broken relationships in our own lives, and what factors may have contributed to them, and do something about how they effect us and others.

### DO I NEED THERAPY? ...NAH, NOT ME!

Experience shows that 'new-life', or change for the better, is only possible if we admit there is a need for it in our lives! A friend who was a practicing heroin addict for 15 years told me he had to admit he was one of the 'walking-dead' before he was willing to change. An abstaining alcoholic said he had to lie in the gutter to realise the need to change. Why is it we have to reach rock-bottom, and often drag other loved-ones down with us, before we realise our need to change? This question does not just apply to addicts although we might be tempted to believe they are the ones who need to change.

If we are totally honest there are some identifiable problems in our Community that can only be addressed via a therapy unit like the proposed Ashmont Community Resources Centre- Communications between family members can always be improved. Assertive behaviour, or meaningfully expressing feelings, can replace aggressive name-calling or blaming and associated abuse. Support Networks need to be established for single parents and outcast families or family members. It needs to be recognised blood-families can be either a hindrance or a help to individual growth or new life. Often 'healing the family-tree' is necessary. Addictions do need to be addressed to avoid them leading to abuse of self or others including children. These are just some of the identifiable areas that could be addressed within our lives and our community life. If we don't face these factors in our past lives it is a proven fact that they will have to be faced by later generations. *The Biblical warning that the sins of the fathers will be passed down to the third and fourth generations will ring true if we don't make steps to avoid this.*

It's a temptation to say that everyone else has a problem but not me, but how true does this ring in your family history. Is your family perfect? 'Healing the family tree', by choosing to change how problems from the past effect you, rather than closeting them until the door is prized open, has born fruit in many family lives when they have had the guts to face therapy together.

It's often a misunderstanding that one member of a family is to blame for all the problems. This is not a very helpful model- to minimise the consequences. *Lock that member up or lock them out is then the solution.* The problem is then located elsewhere but it is not constructively addressed. My experience as Chaplain at the Juvenile Justice Centre exposes me to many examples of youths who have been locked up as the 'bad one', the 'crim-type' who have lived-through tragic family circumstances of 'abandonment' and multiple foster families. Many of them still struggle with the emotional chaos of fears of abandonment in their daily lives. They then push others away for fear of them not being trustworthy of loving them. This self-protective behaviour is difficult to face for the individuals and their carers. *It is hard to say whether the sense of abandonment, which is very much part of their everyday-lives, causes rejection of others who care or is caused by the felt rejection of others who should have cared.*

A better answer is to take 'a no-blame stance' and to together share the responsibility for changing the issues that are causing the family breakdown. Many psychological disorders are now seen to result from a complex interaction of a given person... and the stressors in their nurturing environment, including their family. A wise psychologist once said to me that most of us have an inclination towards one disorder or another in our genetic makeup, and whatever is stress to any given individual can then bring this out. *Whose fault is it- the individual, the family or the environment?* Some stressors in family life are known to encourage the coming out of disorders- like repetitive untrustworthy communications, or other mental, emotional or physical abuse (sexual abuse includes all these). The disarray of emotions in the abuse then seems to become part of the regular make-up of the 'victim'.

My experience as a Chaplain at both the University and the Juvenile Justice Centre tells me we can change our individual lives for the better, if we are prepared to ask for help from appropriately trained counsellors, and the ultimate Counsellor the Holy Spirit of God. Then we also take-up the opportunity to change our collective lives for the better.

– Rev'd Rob Donald

## POET'S CORNER

### *Editorial comment:*

Two poems contributed by locals to express very different experiences of life ...despair... abandonment... comfort...comfort amidst despair?

### **Untitled** by Dorothy Rita Rigby (copyright 1 March 2001)

Life force flows,  
Down, up, between  
Across pebbles and rocks  
Of daily hopes and yearnings-  
Blowing on the breeze  
It's ebb and flow  
Renews, strengthens,  
It will sustain if invited to.

The flowing Spirit moving  
Within mankind, wipes away  
Division of the soul-  
Builds bridges,  
Across differing minds,  
Brings oneness  
Within community if allowed.  
So flow Spirit, Blow Spirit,  
Bring your calm and peace.

*Note: Writing poetry, or doing any creative art-form can be a form of therapy whereby we can work-out those inner feelings which are often bound up within, ready to explode-forth at the prick of our bubble or to remain within our control as we explore their dormant power more creatively.*

### **A LETTER FOR DAD** by Colin Fraser

I'm writing a letter for you dear old dad,  
For you are the reason I'm feeling so sad.  
A six-pence, a three-pence and an old penny too,  
Bring back the heartfelt memories of you.

I remember the night dad we came home alone,  
Went on inside, you were not home.  
I remember the night dad and your hat on the chair.  
We got up next morning, you were not there.

We were so worried, you were not in your bed,  
And my brother came running, and here's what he said:  
"Don't go down to the old shed today, don't go down to the shed.  
We have to tell mother, I don't know how, our poor old father is dead."

"Don't go down to the old shed today,  
Don't go down to the shed."  
Those are the words my brother did say,  
"Don't go down to the shed!"

Dad I think of you often, and sometimes I cry,  
Didn't have a chance dad, to say goodbye.  
The old days are gone dad, not the same anymore.  
I pray God in His wisdom, will keep you for sure.

Dad why did you leave me, I really don't know.  
But don't forget dad, we still love you so.  
We'll meet again dad, God told me, that's true.  
I miss you a lot dad and I'm feeling so blue.

When my time is up dad, I'll see you again.  
Praise God for His mercy, the angels will sing.

So long for now dad, and mum says the same.  
In heaven we'll see you, and end all this pain.  
I'll cherish the memories of the good old times we had,  
And like God in His mercy, we love you, dad.

### **Premier**

**PLUMBING HARDWARE**  
Unit 2, 133 Fernleigh Rd., Wagga Wagga  
Tel. (02) 6931 4747 FAX: (02) 6931 2747

**Proud to Support the People of  
Ashmont**

RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA  
Riverina

in association with  
THE WAGGA WAGGA FAMILY  
SUPPORT SERVICE Inc.  
Offers

**The Children's Contact  
Service- Wagga** (see article)

### **ACE Tenants Advice**

Proud 1<sup>st</sup> tenants of ASHMONT  
COMMUNITY RESOURCES centre.

Having problems with your tenancy  
arrangements...Contact Gillian Little  
On Free Call 1800 642 609  
Or (02) 6931 5785 FAX: 6921 8036

## Coming event

### Family Day at the Community Centre in Bardia St.

On the morning of Sat 26<sup>th</sup> May the Aboriginal Elder's invite you all to a tree planting and general clean-up of the old tennis court's area. This will be followed by a BBQ lunch.

## Do you know what a 'Contact Service' is?

**Relationships Australia** in assoc. with the **Wagga Wagga Family Support Service** are co-ordinating a Children's Contact service. This will promote safe and positive contact arrangements for children whose parents are separated and are unable to resolve conflict around contact arrangements for them. Thus it aims to facilitate at a small fee the possibility of ...planning, negotiation and setting up of contact arrangements; changeover (\$5 per parent); and supervised contact visits (\$10 per hour). Parents will not have to deal directly with each other but both parents can feel they are doing the best for their child/ren.

Initially the service will operate from the Wagga Wagga Family Support Services building located at 190 Tarcutta St. It will operate by appointment only ...  
for Changeover on Friday- 4pm to 6pm, Sat- 9am to 10am & 4pm to 6pm, Sun- 4pm to 6pm;  
and for supervised Contact Visits Sat- 1pm to 3-30pm and Sun- 1pm to 3-30pm.  
Contact:  
The Co-ordinator  
Children's Contact Service- Wagga Wagga  
Phone: (02) 6921 3597.

## Easter Church services...

**Anglican:** cnr Tobruk & Blakemore St  
Footwashing Service- 7pm Maundy Thurs 12<sup>th</sup> Apr  
Good Friday- 9-15am Meditations on the Meaning of the Cross!

Easter Sunday- 9-15am Holy Communion

**Baptist:** Malta Cres.

Good Friday - 9.30 am

Easter Sunday - 10.30 am

**Catholic:**

7-30pm Thurs 12<sup>th</sup>- Mass and Lord's Supper at Home of Compassion, Bardia St.

3pm Frid. 13<sup>th</sup>- Celebration of Lord's Passion at Holy Trinity

7-30pm Sat.- Easter Vigil- San Isadore

Easter Sunday- 9am Mass at Holy Trinity

10-30am Mass at Home of Compassion

5-30pm Mass at Glenfield Scout Hall

## HISTORY COLUMN

### Reconciliation featured in our History!

'Reconciliation' is the key word in relationship discussions between Aboriginal groups/Torres Strait Islanders and non-indigenous Australians. *There is a unique historical reconciliation of both the original indigenous and non-indigenous settlers of this area in the naming of Wagga Wagga.*

Robert Holt Best's property, spanning north of Ashmont Avenue to the Murrumbidgee, was in 1832 named by him- "Wagga Wagga Run". Apparently, the name was derived from the language of the Wiradjuri tribe. This is the biggest Aboriginal tribe in NSW. It embraces much of the Riverina area including Ashmont.

'Wagga', 'Wahga' or 'Wahgam' in this aboriginal dialect means crow. The repetition of the word was the method of expressing the plural emphasis, thus Wagga Wagga means 'crows' or 'the place where crows assemble in large numbers'.

### Best Family Graves

The Best Family graves can still be viewed in Ashmont (see photo below) -off Truscott Street.



### Old Wiradjuri Legend

Our indigenous ancestors- the Wiradjuri tribe, are also remembered in the naming of other key sites around Ashmont for example Mnt. Pomingalarna.

There is also an old Wiradjuri legend that continues the history of our area through the life of a young aboriginal girl named Pomingalarna. She lived on the south bank of the Murrumbidgee River. On the north bank lived another tribe, who were separated from Pomingalarna's people by a marriage taboo. Despite this, Pomingalarna fell in-love with Gobbagumbalin- a young man from this Northern tribe. They eloped but whilst swimming across the river they were killed by both tribes. As a result of this tragedy it is claimed the frogs on the Southern bank of the river make sounds like "Pomingliarna", whilst the frogs on the Northern banks sound-out "Gobbagumbalin". Thus Wiradjuri legends prescribed the naming of "Gobba" Bridge and perhaps another area just North of Ashmont -"Frogs Hollow". Frogs Hollow was not just 'the place where frogs assemble in great numbers' but also the site of a non-indigenous family-dairy and an aerodrome.

These very different ways of 'remembering' our local heritage illustrate the tensions between these two cultures and their very different 'attachments' to the land.

(We thank the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society for much of this Information)