

Issue: May 2016

FILL THE GAP

Produced by the Community Association
& Budja Budja Neighbourhood House.

CONTENTS

Editors Note	1
Stats by Chas	1
Recent Events	2
Committee News	3 - 4
Agency Update	5 - 7
Upcoming events	8
FTG Contact details	9

FROM THE GARIWERD SIX SEASONS CALENDAR

Autumn – Gwagal Moronn

(late March to mid-June)

Cool mornings and warm, still days. Red sunrises and golden evenings. Birds forming flocks and migrating north. Skinks and tortoises hibernating.

Eels heading to sea for breeding. Possums beginning to breed. Red and white “fly agaric” fungi. Flowering of Banksias and Heath. Flowering of Manna

Gums and candle barks. Honeyeaters and wrens searching for moths and insects.

EDITORS NOTE - WELCOME BACK TO FILL THE GAP...

Back by popular demand, this much loved newsletter is a great way to document the recent comings and goings within Halls Gap and surrounding area. It's also a great place to share important community news and promote upcoming event information. More importantly, this newsletter preserves the history of our community... Have you ever had the chance to go back over past Fill the Gap editions?? Well stay tuned because they will all soon be archived on the Community Association webpage!!

Thank you to everyone who has jumped on board to share information this month.

If you missed out this time, be sure to get your information in by the 20th of next month to :
leeannel@budjabudja.org.au

STATS BY CHAS - MARCH 2016

37.5mm was recorded for March bringing the progressive rainfall for 2016 to 101.5mm. This compares to the same period last year of 48mm with a progressive total of 192.5mm.

Mount William received 54.8mm for March compared to the same period last year of 84.2mm. The minimum temperature of 3.0 C. was recorded on the 28th of March and the maximum of 31.8 C. was recorded on the 8th of March 2016.

As of 06 April 2016 Lake Bellfield is holding 43,460ML or 55% full compared to the same period last year of 52,402ML or 67% full. The total system is holding 123,560ML or 22.19% full compared to the same period last year of 161,443ML or 28.99% full.

LOOKING BACK...

*Recognise any of
these faces hanging
out at the Halls Gap
Pool circa 1988?*



FILL THE GAP

RECENT EVENTS...

NATURE PLAY WEEK ACTIVITY

On Friday April 9 Margo Sietsma had the pleasure of being the official observer at a record attempt to get the most kids involved in Parks Victoria's Nature Play week Activity - 'Bush Treasure Hunt'. Twenty one children (including several locals) enrolled. The day was organised by our local Park staff Matt, Daryl and Tammy and was assisted by Caitlyn from the Victorian National Parks Association.

Children (and parents) had to find a range of natural treasures such as: an opened seedpod, a native flower, a feather, something that starts with the same letter as your own name, something that shouldn't be here, something you haven't seen before.

In addition there was a table with bones, skulls, traps etc, plus an area for colouring in and creating with playdoh. Daryl ran a session on radio collar racking where the children had to locate collars in trees and Ranger Matt! It was a fun activity that highlighted the importance of protecting the treasures of the Grampians National Park. Well done Tammy, Matt and Daryl. Let's hope you can do it again. The children had such fun and both they and their parents learnt a great deal.



Parks Victoria and VNPA Nature Play week activity - Bush treasure Hunt.

NEPAL CONNECTIONS

Several in our community, particularly the climbing fraternity, have visited Nepal over the years and have a deep sympathy with the people there in the aftermath of the earthquake there.

Cassie Hebbard and Johnno Almond held a film night on April 24 to raise funds to support #peoplefornepal. The film told the amazing story of Nepalese runner Mira Rai. Thanks to everyone that supported the evening.

Also - Adam Merrick is heading over to Nepal in May with a crew from the South West to do some fact finding for another earthquake project. Over \$25K has been raised by Adam's group for an education/community building, as well as support materials for a remote village in the Gorkha area.

Adam writes "The best way to get funds on the ground in Nepal is to go over and organise it yourself. There are lots of issues with corruption in government and bureaucracies, that means only a small proportion of the aid money makes it to small villages."

FOLK FOR REFUGEES

A stunning day saw a sold out event this year! A host of locals and visitors celebrated diversity with great food and great live music from a fantastic line up of local and out of town acts. Money raised supports the good work of Rural Australians for Refugees. Thanks to everyone for the amazing support!



Photo credit : Timothy Syrota

FILL THE GAP

COMMITTEES ROUND UP...

HALLS GAP COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

While we await further detail from the Shire regarding the Halls Gap Master plan; at our February meeting we voted to support changes to the unused Hall toilets to cater for a prospective lessee to set up a 'cafe' kitchen, therefore leaving the existing Halls kitchen and supper room for community use. (There is currently an expression of interest open on the Shire website for this Commercial Lease opportunity). We voted to continue and grow the *Fill the Gap newsletter*; discussed Hall management, GPT, Film society and the wildflower show; pledged support and money for WAMA, signed up a few new members, discussed improving community communication and involvement via the Community Association Website and created a committee Facebook page. Annual General Meeting to be held in June. If you are interested in joining please contact President David Witham. **We also heard from various other groups such as:**

Grampians Walking Track Support

The group will support Parks Victoria with various working bees in April, May and October. There is support to increase the 'Adopt a track' partnership program with bushwalking clubs and Parks Victoria. Run the Gap has agreed to put \$1 per entrant into this project.

Wildlife Action Group

Signage has been placed on the oval and other areas of town - Sadly, feeding of wildlife continues. The group will work on further projects. We encourage everyone to remember to keep our wildlife wild.

GRAMPIANS FLORA BOTANIC GARDEN NEWS

The very dry weather has taken its toll; some of our plants have died, despite our watering system, and some massive limbs have fallen, but it's still looking pretty good. As soon as it rains we have some new plants to go in, thanks to the Pomonal Australian Plant Society group.

For those who don't know it, we are situated behind the school on the path to Venus Baths. It is flat and easy to walk in, child and dog friendly. Regular working bees continue on the second Wednesday of each month. We also have volunteers who can't make the regular time, but who adopt an area and work in it when it suits them. This may suit some of you who are in businesses. The garden benefits you by providing your guests with an easy and enjoyable walk. And of course we don't say no to donations.

We would love some more helpers! Search for our Facebook page, come down on May 12, or contact Margo Sietsma.

HALLS GAP AND GRAMPIANS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A few of us gather on a Thursday mornings to maintain the growing collection of photographs, maps and artifacts related to our area.

We welcome everyone, whether you have knowledge of our town's past, or just an interest in learning more. We are currently working on a few projects and would love to welcome any newcomers. Come down any Thursday morning from about 10am or contact Janet on email at janet@witham.net.au

FRIENDS OF GRAMPIANS GARIWERD (Foggs)

Not really a Halls Gap group, as our members come from all over the state and even a couple from South Australia, but nevertheless a local group. The aims of FOGGS are:

- Promote the conservation, protection and restoration of the Grampians NP.
- Increase the community's involvement, knowledge and enjoyment of the Grampians NP.
- Assist with projects selected by FOGG and Grampians NP.
- Provide a community voice in support of the Grampians NP.

We have an activity most months, and produce a quarterly newsletter.

Our next activity is learning more about the geology of the Grampians on Saturday May 14 starting at 11 am with a talk at Brambuk by geologist Dr Ross Cayley and then going out with him to look at some interesting examples of our geological history.

Foggs have a website <http://friendsofgrampiansgariwerd.org.au> and a Facebook page. Friends of Grampians Gariwerd-FOGGS.

FILL THE GAP

COMMITTEES ROUND UP...

CRICKET CLUB

The Halls Gap Cricket Club had a good year after winning B Grade in 2015 they made their way into A Grade and also fielded a B Grade side. A grade won 7 games finishing 6th on the ladder while B Grade was made up of U/16 players and veterans showed there is a great future for the club. We also had a U/13 team as well which improved out of sight winning 6 games compared to 1 game in the last 2 seasons. We would like to thank all our sponsors and all spectators that have headed down to support the club

Award winners:

A Grade

Batting Shane Spriggs

Bowling Damon Folkes

Fielding Andrew Cameron

B Grade

Batting Scotty Marks

Bowling Jackson Thomas

Fielding Charlie McIntosh

U/13

Batting Archie Olsen

Bowling Paddy McDonald

Fielding Eugene Read/Spinks

MT DIFFICULT GOLF CLUB

Our major project is to water the fairways of the Halls Gap Golf Course. The club has set funds aside. Discussions are ongoing with GWM regarding supply of water to fairways. Two quotes have been received for the installation of the infrastructure. An additional quote is being sought from a local supplier. Discussions have taken place with NGSC regarding funding opportunities.

Concern was raised regarding the transfer of the Jazz Festival to Port Fairy. This has been the major fundraiser for the Club for years and alternative funding sources are now being actively sought including how we as a community group can participate in the new Grampians Music Festival.

A night golf tournament was recently held with a great time had by all. Attracting players from far and wide this is an activity that could become a terrific night out for golfers and non-golfers alike. It was a great social occasion with a free BBQ, prizes and a whole lot of fun.

As an indication of how well the course is (even with the lack of rain) over the Easter long weekend we received approx. \$2300 in green fees. This is such a great testament to the small group of hardworking volunteers who put in so many hours to make the course attractive to visitors.

C.E.R.T.

Your Community Emergency Response Team had a busy start to the year. Although callouts are unpredictable we average ten a month and are spot on with forty so far this year. Thirty-six of the patients were tourists. Reasons for callouts ranged from nose-bleeds that wouldn't stop bleeding, which can be rather frightening, to serious vehicle accidents. The largest category for injury has been thirteen falls, either from rocks, bicycles or balconies with two requiring helicopter transport. We also had four cases of dehydration with some people severely affected so that their symptoms mimicked a stroke, a good reminder to keep the water intake up.

Our team member numbers are down to five this year and I am pleased to report that there are ten excellent recruits waiting to be trained. I am not pleased to report that most of them have been waiting a very long time. Ambulance Victoria is expected to organise their training fairly soon. John Pearson. Team Leader.

FILL THE GAP

LOCAL AGENCIES ROUND UP...

PARKS VICTORIA

As usual there is a heap of activity occurring within the Grampians National Park. Here's a brief snapshot of the key projects:

We made it through a super busy Easter Period with minimal incidents. Visitor numbers are extremely high as was the park servicing demands. We are beginning to track visitation with track counters which will assist track upgrades and maintenance spend in the future.

Clean up Australia Day/Week -
We had a huge campaign this year with over 200 volunteers who assisted at a number of sites within the park and in our surrounding reserves. Over ten tonnes of rubbish was collected and there is a real push to ramp up the 'Leave no Trace policy into the future'. This amazing effort will be increased for next year.

Fire Recovery:

Sallow wattle mechanical control has begun at a number of locations in the park, trailing a number of different control techniques; such as mulching, the use of chemicals and manual 'cut and paste'.

Rock Art Cataloguing and registration continues at a number of sites across the park with the assistance of Ben Gunn. This important information will aid future management decisions within the National Park.

Stapylton Campground recently saw the new road and walking track footprint constructed. Fencing and other furniture will be installed throughout May/June, with a reopening as soon as possible.

YOU CAN EASILY CHECK THE LATEST ROAD, TRACK AND PLANNED BURNING UPDATES AT www.parks.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/grampiansnationalpark

Grampians Peaks Trail - The project has transitioned from the concept phase to the feasibility and delivery phase and there are a number of complexities to work through.

Alignment planning has progressed across the entire length of the trail, and ground truthing of this proposed alignment is now vital to ensure factors such as having the most environmental, cultural and sustainable alignment are well considered.

In delivery news; the Piccaninny walking track will be closed until June to cater for track improvements including more sustainable surfacing and drainage.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming business opportunity and industry updates....



Piccaninny Walking track upgrades



Community Celebrating Clean Up Australia Day

FILL THE GAP

POLICE NEWS

You will have noticed some changes around the station with new fencing being completed. A number of security upgrades have taken place internally and much of the station has undergone refurbishment. You will also notice that the residence has had a lick of paint!

For those of you I haven't met my name is Scott Olsen and I have replaced Paul Russell as Sergeant in Charge of the station following his transfer to Melbourne. I work alongside Kellie Harris who most of you will recognise from her previous stints at Halls Gap from Stawell. Kellie is now full time at Halls Gap and a great asset to the community.

From a traffic point of view you will now have noticed the reduction in speed throughout the town. This reduction was initiated by members of the community and supported by your local police. Kellie and I have exercised discretion over the past few months whilst we all make adjustment but keep your eye on the speed as we will commence a crackdown shortly. Halls Gap is overrepresented in serious injury collisions within the state, mostly involving single vehicles running off the road and striking trees. district roads.

Recently, skid marks on district roads have increased - if you see a hoon remember to call 000 and dob them in.

There have been numerous search and rescue operations in the National Park this year. Over the first couple of months we were conducting an operation every 5 days. Unfortunately these operations sometimes involve the recovery of a body which happened earlier this year and for which we are grateful for the valuable assistance of Parks staff.

We have had a number of burglaries reported on holiday houses and farms so I urge you to take precautions if you are absent for considerable periods of time. Of most concern is the number of firearms that are going missing from rural properties across the state with a campaign currently being run by police to reduce the number of firearms being stored on "absentee" farms.

I am happy to report that the revamped offender interview room at the station is getting a work out and the majority of these crimes are being solved!

I look forward to catching up with those in the community that I have not met thus far so please call in and introduce yourself whenever you can.

In the mean- time stay safe, keep the seat belts on and the speed down and remember:

"THERE IS A ZERO TOLERANCE TO DRINK DRIVING IN HALLS GAP"

**24 hr POLICE ATTENDANCE CALL
000 otherwise
Halls Gap Station 53564411**

HOT OFF THE PRESS...

**Biggest Morning Tea at Budja Budja Neighbourhood House
Tuesday 24th May 2016
10:30AM - 12:00PM**

**Please bring a plate
Gold Coin Donations (or notes accepted).**

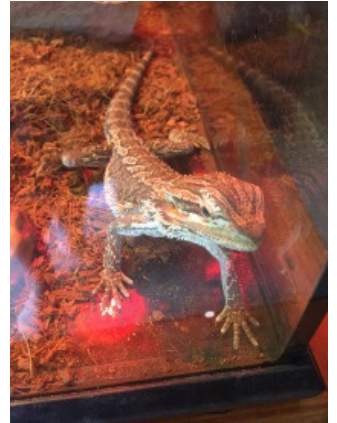


FILL THE GAP

FROM THE CLASSROOMS OF HALLS GAP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Here at Halls Gap P.S we have 29 students, three teachers, a business manager, wonderful families and a lizard called Rex. Halls Gap is a grade prep to grade six school. We all start our day with either Maths or English then we finish with subjects like art, sports, German and sometimes science. We work with other schools from the cluster, together we do sports, book week and other fun activities.

At start of the year we had swimming lessons at the Halls Gap Pool. The swimming lesson went for two weeks. Pomonal PS also joined in with the fun. There were three teachers Ange, Linda and Cat. We were split into skill and age over several group. Some of the people in the older groups, if fast enough, could go to District swimming. At Districts you compete against schools from the Black Ranges and the Little Desert at the Horsham Pool. On the last day of swimming lessons we had a fun day where we played games in the water and the older students did a time trial.



Earlier this year the year 5-6's went to Somers Camp for 9 days. Somers camp is located south east of Melbourne. The activities were both extremely challenging and fun. There was the high ropes course, challenge swing, surfing, flying fox, orienteering and environmental studies. The meals were fantastic and the staff were so nice and welcoming. It was a great camp.

On clean up Australia day we cleaned up a part of the Grampians with a park ranger who had cleaning gear. We were split into two groups - group one went to Venus baths, group two went to the back of Halls Gap primary school. Both groups ended up picking up a lot of rubbish and we were really glad that we had gloves and some groovy massive tongs.



Our junior school council was elected during term 1. In the junior school council, we have a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and a class representative. We have meetings every Tuesday to think about activities to do for a day. We've done an activity day, casual dress day and an Easter raffle at the school's market.

Written by the Grades 3-6 students



(Left) Preps show off their reading skills...



(Right) School fundraiser

FILL THE GAP

UPCOMING EVENTS...

WILDFLOWER WALKABOUT 2016

Plans are well under way for our wildflower weekend in October (1st and 2nd). This year again we will be having a smallish display in the foyer of the hub, and take people across to the Botanic Garden to look at the flowers growing there, plus two tag-along driving tours on Saturday and one on Sunday. We will also once again have self-drive/ walk notes for sale on several flowery routes. We are delighted that the Wimmera CMA have decided to sponsor us and are providing a lot of in-kind help.

But an event like this needs local volunteers. There are jobs for people with knowledge of our flora, but plenty of opportunity to help even if you know nothing! Putting flowers in vases, serving tea, selling tickets, topping up vases

Our next planning meeting is May 9 at 3.30 pm in the hub and hall. We'll be looking at the layout, as well as checking on progress of tasks. Please

contact Margo Sietsma
margo@sietsma.com

RUN THE GAP

Run the Gap is on again on the 22nd May. This year we will be celebrating 5 years!

Popular and still growing, run the Gap has cemented itself on the running calendar attracting runners (and walkers) from all over, who are keen to come and run in this spectacular backyard of ours. Event organisers are anticipating 750 + entrants will run one of the three routes on offer.

A community fundraiser - money raised from this years' event is earmarked to go toward the extension of path and boardwalk section of Tymna Drive off Grampians Road plus \$1 from each registration will be donated to Friends of the Grampians for maintenance work on the National Park walking tracks.

A big thank you goes out to all of you that have helped get this years' run organised.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK

You are invited to join other volunteers from organisations and groups in the Northern Grampians to celebrate National Volunteers Week. The combined event will be a celebration of the enormous contribution that volunteers make to our community. You will hear from inspiring guest speakers and have the opportunity to meet other volunteers.

If you are happy for our group to promote your volunteer program on the night and in the future we would ask that you provide us with the following:

1. A list of ways volunteers are involved at your organisation, group or club
2. How many volunteers you have
3. Photos of any volunteer programs (with the volunteers consent)
4. Your logo

You are welcome to provide banners or if you have any information about your program on the evening we ask that you bring these down earlier that afternoon to be set up.

For RSVP's contact:

- Kaye Devlin, Northern Grampians Shire on 5358 8700 or kaye.devlin@ngshire.vic.gov.au

For other enquires or information contact:

- Katrina Toomey, Stawell Regional Health on 5358 8611 or katrina.toomey@srh.org.au
- Jenny Greenberger, Stawell Neighborhood House on 5358 3500 or jenny@snhlc.com.au

Are you interested in joining the Halls Gap Landcare Group?



We can assist with weed spraying, pest animal control, grant applications for community projects, working bees, educational and technical information and insurance for activities. Contact Regional Landcare Facilitator Bob Wallace admin@platypus.com.au or phone (03) 5358 4410.

FILL THE GAP

**Fill the Gap Committee
Monthly Articles needed by the
20th of each month to:**

leeannel@budjabudjacoop.org.au

**Community Association
of Halls Gap:**

Upload your community events on
the webpage:

www.hallsgapcommunity.org.au

Visit our Facebook pages

Help support our great little town!

HOW HAVE YOU LIKED THIS EDITION??

Have you enjoyed reading the articles? Do you have any suggestions for next time?

Perhaps you missed the deadline this month..? No problem!

Join in the newsletter next month by emailing articles and pictures to Lee-Anne at Budja Budja Neighbourhood house by the 20th of the month. Distribution will be on or as close to the 1st of each month.

Thanks to everyone for supporting Fill the Gap this edition. If you could aim to keep your article to the same length for next time it will make it easy to compile.

We are hoping to have a community services listing next month so please send your basic business/service details in - Such as Service name, general services and contact details.

Thanks so much for your support x

Fill the Gap editors – Lee-Anne, Margo, Jenny and Tammy.



Other Submitted Pictures:

Halls Gap playgroup enjoying activities in the Botanic Garden.



A successful 25th Annual Grape Escape. Over 7000 people attended the two day festival in both stunning and testing conditions! Thanks for all of the community support.